

The Sunlit Path



Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies

Sardar Patel University

Vallabh Vidyanagar

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Contents

	Page No.
Editorial	3
Living Words	
• Darshan Message : 15 August, 2019	4
Integral Education	
• The Teacher of The Integral Yoga Sri Aurobindo	7
• National Education Sri Aurobindo	9
• Reforms: Intellectual Education Sri Aurobindo	11
 Acknowledgements	 16

Editorial

My dear friends,

I am happy to bring to you the 15st September, 2019 issue of The Sunlit Path.

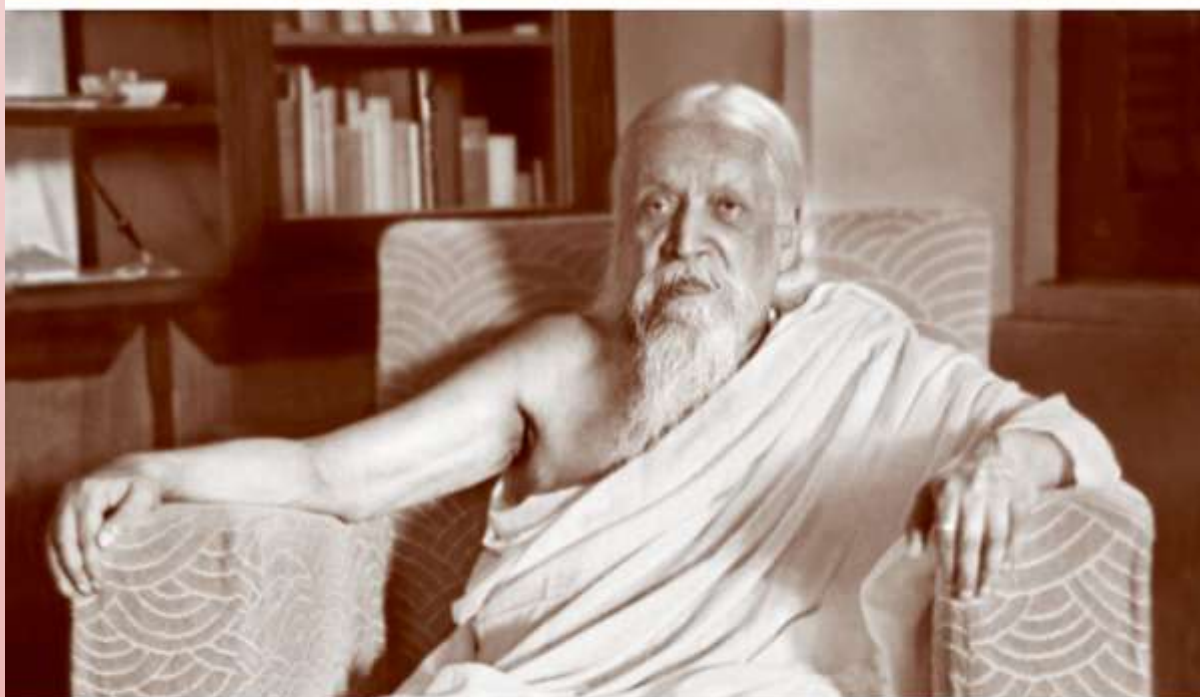
'Living Words' contain Darshan Message distributed on the occasion of 15th August, 2019. 'Integral Education' contains three inspirational writings of Sri Aurobindo on the theme of Education written more than a century ago.

I do hope you will find the contents inspiring.

Sincere regards,

Dr Bhalendu Vaishnav

15th September, 2019





If you have faith and confidence,
it is not the human form of the guru
that you worship, but the Supreme
Lord who manifests through him

Be not troubled and give yourself
unreservedly to the Supreme Lord through
whatever channel helps you

With love and blessings

If you have faith and confidence, it is not the human form of the guru that you worship, but the Supreme Lord who manifests through him.

Be not troubled and give yourself unreservedly to the Supreme Lord through whatever channel helps you.

With love and blessings
The Mother



Si vous avez la foi et la confiance, ce n'est pas la forme humaine du gourou que vous adorez, mais le Seigneur Suprême qui se manifeste à travers lui.

Ne soyez pas troublé et donnez-vous sans réserve au Seigneur Suprême, quel que soit l'intermédiaire qui vous aide.

Avec mon amour et mes bénédictions
La Mère

15 August 2019

The Teacher of the Integral Yoga Sri Aurobindo

The Teacher of the integral Yoga will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the disciple. **Teaching, example, influence, —these are the three instruments of the Guru.** But the wise Teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he will throw in only what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow under the divine fostering within. **He will seek to awaken much more than to instruct; he will aim at the growth of the faculties and the experiences by a natural process and free expansion. He will give a method as an aid, as a utilisable device, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine.** And he will be on his guard against any turning of the means into a limitation, against the mechanising of process. **His whole business is to awaken the divine light and set working the divine force of which he himself is only a means and an aid, a body or a channel.**

The example is more powerful than the instruction; but it is not the example of the outward acts nor that of the personal character which is of most importance. These have their place and their utility; but what will most stimulate aspiration in others is the central fact of the divine realisation within him governing his whole life and inner state and all his activities.

This is the universal and essential element; the rest belongs to individual person and circumstance. It is this dynamic realisation that the sadhaka must feel and reproduce in himself according to his own nature; he need not strive after an imitation from outside which may well be sterilising rather than productive of right and natural fruits.

Influence is more important than example. Influence is not the outward authority of the Teacher over his disciple, but the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another, infusing into it, even though in silence, that which he himself is and possesses. This is the supreme sign of the Master. For the greatest Master is much less a Teacher than a Presence pouring the divine consciousness and its constituting light and power and purity and bliss into all who are receptive around him.

And it shall also be a sign of the teacher of the integral Yoga that he does not arrogate to himself Guruhood in a humanly vain and self-exalting spirit. His work, if he has one, is a trust from above, he himself a channel, a vessel or a representative.

He is a man helping his brothers, a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights, an awakened Soul awakening souls, at highest a Power or Presence of the Divine calling to him other powers of the Divine. (1)



National Education Sri Aurobindo

India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit. Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic, a vital and physical being, but all these have been seen as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth, and yet they are not all the soul, because at the summit of its ascent it arises to something greater than them all, into a spiritual being, and it is in this that she has found the supreme manifestation of the soul of man and his ultimate divine manhood, his *paramartha* and highest *purusartha*.

And similarly India has not understood by the nation or people an organised State or an armed and efficient community well prepared for the struggle of life and putting all at the service of the national ego,—that is only the disguise of iron armour which masks and encumbers the national Purusha,—but a great communal soul and life that has appeared in the whole and has manifested a nature of its own and a law of that nature, a Swabhava and Swadharma, and embodied it in its intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, dynamic, social and political forms and culture. And equally then our cultural conception of humanity must be in accordance with her ancient vision of the universal manifesting in the human race, evolving through life and mind but with a high ultimate spiritual aim,— it must be the idea of the spirit, the soul of humanity advancing through struggle and concert towards oneness, increasing its experience and maintaining a needed diversity through the varied culture and life motives of its many peoples, searching for perfection through the development of the powers of the individual and his progress towards a

diviner being and life, but feeling out too though more slowly after a similar perfectibility in the life of the race. It may be disputed whether this is a true account of the human or the national being, but if it is once admitted as a true description, then it should be clear that the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation.

That is the principle on which we must build, that the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being.(2)



Reforms: Intellectual Education

Sri Aurobindo

We now come to the intellectual part of education, which is certainly larger and more difficult, although not more important than physical training and edification of character.

The Indian University system has confined itself entirely to this branch and it might have been thought that this limitation & concentration of energy ought to have been attended by special efficiency & thoroughness in the single branch it had chosen. But unfortunately this is not the case. If the physical training it provides is contemptible and the moral training nil, the mental training is also meagre in quantity and worthless in quality. People commonly say that it is because the services & professions are made the object of education that this state of things exists.

This I believe to be a great mistake. A degree is necessary for service and therefore people try to get a degree. Good! let it remain so. But in order for a student to get a degree let us make it absolutely necessary that he shall have a good education.

If a worthless education is sufficient in order to secure his object & a good education quite unessential, it is obvious that the student will not incur great trouble and diversion of energy in order to acquire what he feels to be unnecessary. But change this state of things, make culture & true science essential and the same interested motive which now makes him content with a bad education will then compel him to strive after culture and true science. As practical men we must recognise that the pure enthusiasm of knowledge for knowledge's sake operates only on exceptional minds or in exceptional eras. In civilised countries a general

desire for knowledge as a motive for education does exist but it is largely accompanied with the earthier feeling that knowledge is necessary to keep up one's position in society or to succeed in certain lucrative or respectable pursuits & professions. We in India have become so barbarous that we send our children to school with the grossest utilitarian motives unmixed with any disinterested desire for knowledge; but the education we receive is itself responsible for this. Nobody can cherish disinterested enthusiasm for a bad education; it can only be regarded as a means to some practical end. But make the education good, thorough & interesting and the love of knowledge will of itself awake in the mind and so mingle with & modify more selfish objects.

The real source of the evil we complain of is therefore something different; it is a fundamental & deplorable error by which we in this country have confused education with the acquisition of knowledge and interpreted knowledge itself in a singularly narrow & illiberal sense.

To give the student knowledge is necessary, but it is still more necessary to build up in him the power of using his knowledge.

It would hardly be a good technical education for a carpenter to be taught how to fell trees so as to provide himself with wood & never to learn how to prepare tables, chairs & cabinets or even what tools were necessary for his craft. Yet this is precisely what our system of education does. It trains the memory and provides the student with a store of facts & secondhand ideas. The memory is the woodcutter's axe and the store he acquires is the wood he has cut down in his course of tree felling. When he has done this, the University says to him "We now declare you a Bachelor of Carpentry; we have given you a good & sharp axe and a fair nucleus of wood to begin with. Go on, my son, the world is full of forests and provided the Forest Officer does not object you can cut down trees & provide yourself with wood to your heart's content."

Now the student who goes forth thus equipped, may become a great timber-merchant but unless he is an exceptional genius he will never be even a moderate carpenter.

Or to return from the simile to the fact, the graduate from our colleges may be a good clerk, a decent vakil or a tolerable medical practitioner, but unless he is an especial genius, he will never be a great administrator or a great lawyer or an eminent medical specialist. These eminences have to be filled up mainly by Europeans. If an Indian wishes to rise to them, he has to travel thousands of miles over the sea in order to breathe an atmosphere of liberal knowledge, original science and sound culture. And even then he seldom succeeds, because his lungs are too debilitated to take in a good long breath of that atmosphere.

The first fundamental mistake has been, therefore, to confine ourselves to the training of the storing faculty memory and the storage of facts and to neglect the training of the three great manipulating faculties, viz. the power of reasoning, the power of comparison and differentiation and the power of expression.

These powers are present to a certain extent in all men above the state of the savage and even in a rudimentary state in the savage himself; but they exist especially developed in the higher classes of civilised nations, wherever these higher classes have long centuries of education behind them. But, however highly developed by nature, these powers demand cultivation, they demand that bringing out of natural abilities which is the real essence of education. If not so brought out in youth, they become rusted & stopped with dirt, so that they cease to act except in a feeble, narrow&partial manner. Exceptional genius does indeed assert itself in spite of neglect and discouragement, but even genius selfdeveloped does not often achieve as happy results and as free & large a working as the same genius properly equipped&trained.

Amount of knowledge is in itself not of the first importance; but to make the best use of what we know. The easy assumption of our educationists that we have only to supply the mind with a smattering of facts in each department of knowledge & the mind can be trusted to develop itself and take its own suitable road, is contrary to science, contrary to human experience and contrary to the universal opinion of civilised countries.

Indeed the history of intellectual degeneration in gifted races always begins with the arrest of these three mental powers by the excessive cultivation of mere knowledge at their expense. Much as we have lost as a nation, we have always preserved our intellectual alertness, quickness & originality; but even this last gift is threatened by our University system, & if it goes, it will be the beginning of irretrievable degradation & final extinction.

The very first step in reform must therefore be to revolutionize the whole aims & methods of our education. We must accustom teachers to devote nine-tenths of their energies to the education of the active mental faculties, while the passive retaining faculty, which we call the memory, should occupy a recognised & well-defined but subordinate place, and we must direct our school & university examinations to the testing of these active faculties & not of the memory.

For this is an object which cannot be effected by the mere change or rearrangement of the curriculum. It is true that certain subjects are more apt to develop certain faculties than others; the power of accurate reasoning is powerfully assisted by Geometry, Logic & Political Economy; one of the most important results of languages is to refine & train the power of expression, and nothing more enlarges the power of comparison & differentiation than an intelligent study of history. But no

particular subject except language is essential, still less exclusively appropriated, to any given faculty.

There are types of intellect, for instance, which are constitutionally incapable of dealing with geometrical problems or even with the formal machinery of Logic, and are yet profound, brilliant & correct reasoners in other intellectual spheres. There is in fact hardly any subject, the sciences of calculation excepted, which in the hands of a capable teacher, does not give room for the development of all the general faculties of the mind. (3)





Acknowledgements

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1. Sri Aurobindo, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 23; 66-68
2. Sri Aurobindo, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 1;426-27
3. Sri Aurobindo, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 1;357-61

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Editor: Dr. Bhalendu S. Vaishnav, Chairperson, **Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, 388120, Gujarat, India.** **Contact:** Department of Medicine, Pramukhswami Medical College, Karamsad 388325, Gujarat, India.

e mail: Sriaurobindochair@gmail.com