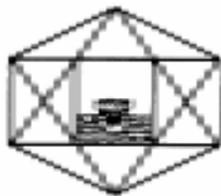


*Sri Aurobindo*  
*Divine Life Education Centre*



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## The Background

### *The Real Nature of the Present Crisis Facing Humanity*

We are living at a time of transition, at a time of decisive change. The last two centuries have seen the rise of reason, science and technology. What was merely science-fiction has become a reality in every field - computers, electronics, space travel, robots, communication, medicine etc. We are passing through revolutionary changes not only in science but also in the economic, political and social fields, However, we are not any nearer to creating a happier and a better world for all, which was the dream of science and of all the reformers and which has been the dream of man from time immemorial.

The question naturally arises, “Why is it so”? And the answer, to put it succinctly in the words of Sri Aurobindo, is,

“This erring race of human beings dreams always of perfecting their environment by the machinery of government and society; but it is only by the perfection of the soul within that the outer environment can be perfected. What thou art within, that outside thee thou shalt enjoy; no machinery can rescue thee from the law of thy being.”

This inability or failure to bring any radical change in human conditions by the outer machinery of government and society has given birth to a lot of pessimistic and cynical thinking or suggestions of fruitless remedies. As Sri Aurobindo points out,

“The more advanced minds begin to declare civilisation a failure and society begins to feel that they are right. But

the remedy proposed is either a halt or even a retrogression, which means in the end more confusion, stagnation and decay, or a reversion to "Nature" which is impossible or can only come about by a cataclysm and disintegration of society; or even a cure is aimed at by carrying artificial remedies to their acme, by more and more Science, more and more mechanical devices, a more scientific organisation of life, which means that the engine shall replace life, the arbitrary logical reason substitute itself for complex Nature and man be saved by machinery. As well say that to carry a disease to its height is the best way to its cure."

What then is the radical defect in our systems and what is the remedy? Sri Aurobindo answers:

"It may be suggested on the contrary and with some chance of knocking at the right door that the radical defect of all our systems is their deficient development of just that which society has most neglected, the spiritual element, the soul in man which is his true being. Even to have a healthy body, a strong vitality and an active and clarified mind and a field for their action and enjoyment, carries man no more than a certain distance; afterwards he flags and tries for want of a real self-finding, a satisfying aim for his action and progress. These three things do not make the sum of a complete manhood; they are means to an ulterior end and cannot be made for ever an aim in themselves. Add a rich emotional life governed by a well-ordered ethical standard, and still there is the savour of something left out, some supreme good which these things mean, but do not in themselves arrive at, do not discover till they go beyond themselves. Add a religious system and a widespread spirit of belief and piety, and still you have not found the means of social salvation. All these things human society has developed, but none of them has saved it from

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disillusionment, weariness and decay. The ancient intellectual cultures of Europe ended in disruptive doubt and sceptical impotence, the pieties of Asia in stagnation and decline. Modern society has discovered a new principle of survival, progress, but the aim of that progress it has never discovered, - unless the aim is always more knowledge, more equipment, convenience and comfort, more enjoyment, a greater and still greater complexity of the social economy, a more and more cumbrously opulent life. But these things must lead in the end where the old led, for they are only the same thing on a larger scale; they lead in a circle, that is to say, nowhere; they do not escape from the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death, they do not really find the secret of self-prolongation by constant self-renewal which is the principle of immortality, but only seem for a moment to find it by the illusion of a series of experiments each of which ends in disappointment. That so far has been the nature of modern progress. Only in its new turn inwards, to-wards a greater subjectivity now only beginning, is there a better hope; for by that turning it may discover that the real truth of man is to be found in his soul.”

In fact more and more people are beginning to realise that what we are passing through is not a social, moral, political or economic crisis but, what Sri Aurobindo has called an evolutionary crisis.

“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man’s everactive mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service

of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being: but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life-unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and

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economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideals and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the Spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life. Man has harmonised life in the past by organised ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more inter-mingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life.”

“A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past which were a combination of association and regulated conflict, an accommodation of egos and interests

grouped or dovetailed into each other to form a society, a consolidation by common general life-motives, a unification by need and the pressure of struggle with outside forces. It is such a change and such a reshaping of life for which humanity is blindly beginning to seek, now more and more with a sense that its very existence depends upon finding the way. The evolution of Mind working upon Life has developed an organisation of the activity of Mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change.”

### ***The Terrestrial Evolution and the Supramental Manifestation***

“There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and

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beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.”

The Mother

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have given humanity the vision of a divine life in a divine body — a body no longer subject to death, disease and old age. The manifestation of the Supermind, looked upon by Sri Aurobindo as “an inevitable necessity in the logic of things”, alone could lead to the fulfilment of their vision. The supramental Manifestation took place on February 29, 1956. This manifestation of a divine dynamism far greater than any that had ever before manifested in the terrestrial nature has made the eventual realisation of their vision a certainty.

Speaking in 1957 about it the Mother said,

“... What has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is born, born, born. It is not the old one transforming itself, it is a new world which is born. And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed — unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn't disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing — until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.”

This “new world” seems now to be doing just that — “asserting itself visibly”. While the complete realisation of the vision of a divine life may be looked upon as something of the distant future, the decisive turning of the human mind

towards the integral divine ideal, given to us by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, seems more and more as something which cannot be delayed much longer.

### ***The Integral Divine Ideal***

The human civilisation, in its checkered evolution through the ages, has never really been conscious of its true destiny — an ascension to a divine life in divine body. The mind of the race has wavered fundamentally between two extreme views of existence, what Sri Aurobindo has termed as the two negations: (i) the materialist's denial of the spirit and, (ii) the ascetic's refusal of life in matter.

“In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of Life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit, — or of some of them, - it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit. Nor has the intellect, which sought the solution of all problems in the one term of Matter, found satisfaction in the answer that it has received.”

Thus a true and lasting solution to the evolutionary crisis facing humanity today lies neither in the “materialist's denial” nor in the “refusal of the ascetic” but in a harmonious fusion and integration of the scientific-objective turn of the West with the spiritual-subjective orientation of the East. As Sri Aurobindo points out, “The salvation of the human race lies in a more sane and integral development of the possibilities of mankind in the individual and in the community. The safety of Europe has to be sought in the recognition of the

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spiritual aim of human existence, otherwise she will be crushed by the weight of her own unilluminated knowledge and soulless organisation. The safety of Asia lies in the recognition of the material mould and mental conditions in which that aim has to be worked out, otherwise she will sink deeper into the slough of despond, of a mental and physical incompetence to deal with the facts of life and the shocks of a rapidly changing movement. It is not any exchange of forms that is required, but an interchange of regenerating impulses and a happy fusion and harmonising.”

Hence the need of the hour is a clear mutual understanding between East and West, of the truth behind their cultural ideals.

“The message of the East to the West is a true message, ‘Only by finding himself can man be saved,’ and ‘what shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul’.”

“The message the West brings to the East is a true message. Man also is God and it is through his developing manhood that he approaches the godhead; Life also is the Divine, its progressive expansion is the self expression of the Brahman, and to deny Life is to diminish the Godhead within us.”

Sri Aurobindo

But this unity, harmony and integration of the ideals of the East and West can be realised perfectly only in the unitary consciousness of the Spirit. Sri Aurobindo, summing up the ideal to be realised, says,

“What then shall be our ideal? Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests; the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the

pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true super-manhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which Science tells us that we have issued. These three are one; for man's unity and man's self-transcendence can come only by living in the Spirit."

And such a living in the spirit is possible only by a total spiritual direction given to the whole life and nature of man and not by a return to the religious idea or society. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "There is the possibility that in the swing back from a mechanistic idea of life and society the human mind may seek refuge in a return to the religious idea and a Society governed or sanctioned by religion. But organised religion, though it can provide a means of inner uplift for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to spiritual experience, has not changed human life and society; it could not do so because, in governing society, it had to compromise with the lower parts of life and could not insist on the inner change of the whole being; it could insist only on a credal adherence, a formal acceptance of its ethical standards and a conformity to institution, ceremony and ritual. Religion so conceived can give a religio-ethical colour or surface tinge, — sometimes, if it maintains a strong kernel of inner experience, it can generalise to some extent an incomplete spiritual tendency; but it does not transform the race, it cannot create a new principle of the human existence."

"A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself. Another possible conception akin to the religious solution is the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, the brotherhood or unity of all in the faith or in the discipline,

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the spiritualisation of life and society by the taking up of the old machinery of life into such a unification or inventing a new machinery. This too has been attempted before without success; it was the original founding idea of more than one religion: but the human ego and vital nature were too strong for a religious idea working on the mind and by the mind to overcome its resistance. It is only the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental Supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle.

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer

at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance.”

Sri Aurobindo

### ***Integral Perfection***

What is traditionally termed Yoga is essentially a conscious and concentrated effort directed at self-perfection in which one may achieve in a few decades or even a few years what takes millenniums in the normal curve of Nature. The traditional Yoga systems are directed at achieving what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have termed the “higher perfection.”

“The higher perfection is the spiritual perfection, integral union with the Divine, freedom from all the limitations of the lower world. That is spiritual perfection, the perfection that comes from yoga — quite independent of the body and the physical world — which, in ancient times, meant first rejecting the body and the physical life so as to have a relation only with the higher world and finally with the Divine. That is the higher perfection.

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And the lower perfection is to be able to make the human being in his present form and in his body, in his relation with all terrestrial things, do the utmost he can. This is the case of all great men of genius: artistic genius, literary genius, genius in organisation, the great rulers, those who have carried physical capacities to their maximum perfection, human development to the limit of its possibilities; and, for instance, all those who have complete control over their bodies and succeed in doing miraculous things, as we saw, for example, during the war, with the airmen: they made their bodies do things which at first sight seemed quite impossible, they obtained from them an endurance, a skill, a power which were almost unthinkable. And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of intellectual realisation, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and superhuman. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual life, all spiritual aspiration. One can be a genius without having any spiritual aspiration. One can have all the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life.”

The Mother

The highest integral perfection is an integration of these lower and higher perfections — which means perfection of the consciousness as well as the instruments of consciousness — in the supramental consciousness. In the words of the Mother,

“Only those who are predestined can combine these two perfections and realise something integral... This is quite rare. The great spiritual leaders have very rarely been great realisers

in the physical world. It has happened, but it is very rare. Only those who are conscious incarnations of the Divine naturally carry in themselves the possibility of the two perfections, but this is exceptional. People who had a spiritual life, a great spiritual realisation, were able at certain exceptional moments to have a capacity for outward realisation; this also was exceptional, but it was intermittent and never had the integrality, the totality, the perfection of those who concentrated on material realisation. And this is why those who live only in the external consciousness, for whom the earthly material life is all that really exists, concrete and tangible, perceptible to all, always feel that spiritual life is something hazy, something almost mediocre from the material point of view.

I have met many people — “many”, well, quite a number — who wanted to demonstrate that spiritual powers gave a great capacity for outer realisation and who tried, in certain exceptional spiritual states or conditions, to paint or to compose music or write poetry; well, everything that they produced was thoroughly second-rate and could not be compared with the works of the great geniuses who had mastered material nature — and this of course gave the materialists a good opening: “You see, your so-called power is nothing at all.” But this was because in their external life they were ordinary men; for the greatest spiritual power, if it enters material that’s not educated, will produce a result far superior to what that individual would have been able to achieve in his ordinary state, but far inferior to what a genius who has mastered matter can produce. It is not enough that “the Spirit bloweth”, the instrument must also be capable of manifesting it.

I believe that is one of the things Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: why it is necessary to give to the physical, external being, its full development, the capacity of controlling matter

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directly; then you put at the disposal of the Spirit an instrument capable of manifesting it, otherwise... Yes, I knew several people who in their ordinary state could not write three lines without making a mistake, not only spelling mistakes but mistakes of language, that is, who could not express one thought clearly — well, in their moments of spiritual inspiration, they used to write very beautiful things, but all the same these very beautiful things were not so beautiful as the works of the greatest writers. These things seemed remarkable in comparison with what they could do in their ordinary state; it was true, their present possibilities were used to the maximum, it was something that gave a value to what otherwise would have had none at all. But supposing you take a real genius — a musician or artist or writer of genius — who has fully mastered his instrument, who can use it to produce works that express the utmost human possibility, if you add to this a spiritual consciousness, the supramental force, then you will have something truly divine.

And this is precisely the key to the effort Sri Aurobindo wanted us to make.

And your body, if you draw from it all the possibilities it holds, if you educate it by the normal, well-known, scientific methods, if you make this instrument into something as perfect as possible, then, when the supramental truth manifests in that body, it will become immediately - without centuries of preparation — a marvellous instrument for the expression of the Spirit.

That is why Sri Aurobindo used to repeat and has always said: You must work from both ends, not let go of one for the other. And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; but

if you want to become an integral divine being on earth, take good care not to let go of the other end, and make your body the best possible instrument.

It is a disease of the ordinary human intellect — which comes, moreover, from separation, division — to make a thing always either this or that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that; if you choose that, you turn your back on this.

It is an impoverishment. One must know how to take up everything, combine everything, synthesise everything. And then one has an integral realisation.”

### ***Integral Yoga***

Integral Yoga is a system of Yoga revealed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which aims at an integral realisation and perfection combining both the higher and the lower perfections. Its aim is not only to rise into the divine consciousness but also to bring that consciousness

“down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter.”

“A divine life in a material world implies necessarily a union of the two ends of existence, the spiritual summit and the material base. The soul with the basis of its life established in Matter ascends to the heights of the Spirit but does not cast away its base, it joins the heights and the depths together. The Spirit descends into Matter and the material world with all its lights and glories and powers and with them fills and transforms life in the material world so that it becomes more and more divine. The transformation is not a change into something purely subtle and spiritual to which Matter is in its nature repugnant and by which it is felt as an

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obstacle or as a shackle binding the Spirit; it takes up Matter as a form of the Spirit though now a form which conceals and turns it into a revealing instrument, it does not cast away the energies of Matter, its capacities, its methods; it brings out their hidden possibilities, uplifts, sublimates, discloses their innate divinity. The divine life will reject nothing that is capable of divinisation; all is to be seized, exalted, made utterly perfect. The mind now still ignorant, though struggling towards knowledge, has to rise towards and into the supramental light and truth and bring it down so that it shall suffuse our thinking and perception and insight and all our means of knowing till they become radiant with the highest truth in their inmost and outermost movements. Our life, still full of obscurity and confusion and occupied with so many dull and lower aims, must feel all its urges and instincts exalted and irradiated and become a glorious counterpart of the supramental super-life above. The physical consciousness and physical being, the body itself must reach a perfection in all that it is and does which now we can hardly conceive. It may even in the end be suffused with a light and beauty and bliss from the Beyond and the life divine assume a body divine.”

Sri Aurobindo

To avoid any misunderstanding that may possibly arise from the above it should be very clearly understood that the object of Integral Yoga

“is not to be a great Yogi or a superman (although that may come) or to grab at the Divine for the sake of the ego’s power, pride or pleasure. It is not for Moksha though liberation comes by it and all else may come, but these must not be our objects. The Divine alone is our object.”

To love and seek the Divine for the Divine’s sake alone

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is the proper object of any spiritual seeking.

## **Integral Education**

*“Arise, O soul, and vanquish Time and Death”.*

“India has or rather had the knowledge of the Spirit, but she neglected matter and suffered for it.

The West has the knowledge of matter but rejected the Spirit and suffers badly for it.

An integral education which could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, must bring back the legitimate authority of the Spirit over a matter fully developed and utilised.”

The Mother

Integral education will be an integral and complete education, that is to say, it will aspire to encompass all the parts of the being from the physical to the supramental and would continue throughout the life of the individual. A divine life in a divine body will be its ultimate aim. The process of this education will be an effort to be guided by the soul and not by any fixed habits, conventions or ideas.

The aim of true education is not to prepare one to succeed in life and society but to permit one to discover for oneself, the aim of life in general and the specific role that one’s soul has come down to play in terrestrial life. A true integral education goes further: it aims at increasing the perfectibility of the growing soul to its utmost. Even when understood in a narrow sense, — in the sense of a certain number of years spent in an integral education institution — it may be looked upon as the best possible grooming for any kind of high pursuit. However, in its highest and widest

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sense, when it reaches the stage of conscious pursuit and continues throughout life, it becomes identical with integral yoga and represents the best possible means of realising integral perfection.

### ***The Five Aspects of Integral Education***

“Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually, these phases of education follow chronologically the growth of the individual; this, however, does not mean that one of them should replace another, but that all must continue, completing one another until the end of his life.”

The Mother

#### ***(i) Physical Education***

“All education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout life. It is never too soon to begin not too late to continue.

Physical education has three principal aspects: (1) control and discipline of the functioning of the body, (2) an integral, methodical and harmonious development of all the parts and movements of the body and (3) correction of any defects and deformities,

... from a young age children should be taught to respect good health, physical strength and balance. The great importance of beauty must also be emphasized. A young child should aspire for beauty, not for the sake of pleasing others or winning their admiration, but for the love of beauty itself; for beauty is the ideal which all physical life must realise. Every human being has the possibility of establishing harmony among the different parts of his body and in the

various movements of the body and in action. Every human body that undergoes a rational method of culture from the very beginning of its existence can realise its own harmony and thus become fit to manifest beauty.”

The Mother

**(ii) *Vital Education***

“Of all education, vital education is perhaps the most important, the most indispensable. Yet it is rarely taken up and pursued with discernment and method. There are several reasons for this: first, the human mind is in a state of great confusion about this particular subject; secondly, the undertaking is very difficult and to be successful in it one must have endless endurance and persistence and a will that no failure can weaken.

... vital education has two principal aspects, very different in their aims and methods, but both equally important. The first concerns the development and use of the sense organs. The second the progressing awareness and control of the character, culminating in its transformation.”

The Mother

**(iii) *Mental Education***

“Of all lines of education, mental education is the most widely known and practised, yet except in a few rare cases there are gaps which make it something very incomplete and in the end quite insufficient.

Generally speaking, schooling is considered to be all the mental education that is necessary. And when a child has been made to undergo, for a number of years, a methodical training which is more like cramming than true schooling, it is considered that whatever is necessary for his

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mental development has been done. Nothing of the kind. Even conceding that the training is given with due measure and discrimination and does not permanently damage the brain, it cannot impart to the human mind the faculties it needs to become a good and useful instrument. The schooling that is usually given can, at the most, serve as a system of gymnastics to increase the suppleness of the brain. From this standpoint, each branch of human learning represents a special kind of mental gymnastics, and the verbal formulations given to these various branches each constitute a special and well-defined language.

A true mental education, which will prepare man for a higher life, has five principal phases. Normally these phases follow one after another, but in exceptional individuals they may alternate or even proceed simultaneously. These five phases, in brief, are:

(1) Development of the power of concentration, the capacity of attention.

(2) Development of the capacities of expansion, widening, complexity and richness.

(3) Organisation of one's ideas around a central idea, a higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life.

(4) Thought-control, rejection of undesirable thoughts, to become able to think only what one wants and when one wants.

(5) Development of mental silence, perfect calm and a more and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being."

The Mother

***(iv) Psychic Education***

"The three lines of education — physical, vital and mental — deal with that and could be defined as the means

of building up the personality, raising the individual out of the amorphous subconscious mass and making him a well-defined self-conscious entity. With psychic education we come to the problem of the true motive of existence, the purpose of life on earth, the discovery to which this life must lead and the result of that discovery: the consecration of the individual to his eternal principle.

... It is through this psychic presence that the truth of an individual being comes into contact with him and the circumstances of his life. In most cases the presence acts, so to say, from behind the veil, unrecognised and unknown; but in some, it is perceptible and its action recognisable and even, in a very few, the presence becomes tangible and its action fully effective. These go forward in life with an assurance and a certitude all their own; they are masters of their destiny. It is for the purpose of obtaining this mastery and becoming conscious of the psychic presence that psychic education should be practised.”

The Mother

The integral education can truly begin only after one has become conscious of one's psychic being.

(v) *Spiritual Education*

“A perfect self-expression of the spirit is the object of our terrestrial existence. This cannot be achieved if we have not grown conscious of the supreme Reality; for it is only by the touch of the Absolute that we can arrive at our own absolute.”

Sri Aurobindo

“... the psychic life is immortal life, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change, unbroken continuity in the universe of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and the eternal, to be projected beyond all creation, beyond time and space. To

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become conscious of our psychic being and to live a psychic life you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life you must no longer have an ego.”

The Mother

*(vi) Supramental Education*

“From beyond the frontiers of form a new force can be evoked, a power of consciousness which is as yet unexpressed and which, by its emergence, will be able to change the course of things and give birth to a new world. For the true solution to the problem of suffering, ignorance and death is not an individual escape from earthly miseries by self-annihilation into the unmanifest, nor a problematical collective flight from universal suffering by an integral and final return of the creation to its creator, thus curing the universe by abolishing it, but a transformation, a total transfiguration of matter brought about by the logical continuation of Nature’s ascending march in her progress towards perfection, by the creation of a new species that will be to man what man is to the animal and that will manifest upon earth a new force, a new consciousness and a new power. And so will begin a new education which can be called the supramental education; it will by its all-powerful action, work not only upon the consciousness of individual beings, but upon the very substance of which they are built and upon the environment in which they live.

In contrast with the types of education we have mentioned previously, which progress from below upwards by an ascending movement of the various parts of the being, the supramental education will progress from above downwards, its influence spreading from one state of being to another until at last the physical is reached.”

The Mother

This education will culminate in the transformation of the human body into a divine body, leading in the end to the appearance of a divine race upon earth which will not be subject to death, disease and ignorance.

It should be obvious from the above quotations that the degree and the extent of perfection aimed at in integral education is not even easily conceivable for most educationists and Yogis. Neither the lofty spirituality of the East, nor the best educational disciplines and cultures of the West had ever seriously held such a perfection in view. And this was quite understandable, for such a thing would have been utterly impossible in the absence of the direct working of the supramental power in terrestrial nature — a thing made possible only by the 1956 Supramental Manifestation. Even the best of traditional spirituality tends to be top-heavy but lifeless and even the best of modern education tends to be soulless even though vibrant with life. Incidentally, India seems to have, somehow, arrived at an educational system which is virtually both soulless and life-less. The secret of the possible success of an earnest integral educational endeavour lies in its ability to combine the best of both these (spiritual and educational) endeavours at perfection in such a way as to make available to the educator all the potent instruments of perfection at the disposal of a Guru or a teacher of integral Yoga.

### ***The Instruments of the Teacher***

“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

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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.”

Sri Aurobindo

Compulsion is never used by a wise teacher. His three instruments are, Teaching, Example and Influence. However, in our present day system of education compulsion plays a very important part.

**(i) *Compulsion***

Compulsion has a place in the nature’s scheme of things as long as there are crude elements in human nature. In the present day educational setup, the gross physical form of compulsion is generally absent but a subtle form of it, buttressed by the competitive spirit, is the foundation on which the entire structure rests. The performance of both the teachers and the students depends crucially on this and in its absence practically no formal education may take place. In fact without at least an element of it, it may be very difficult to maintain discipline and order in most educational institutions. Even in an integral education setup, an element of it may creep in if the teacher lacks complete self-control. Since all external compulsion subtle or gross — and absence of genuine freedom is inimical to psychic emergence, it can have no place in an institution aspiring for integral perfection.

**(ii) *Teaching***

Teaching, backed by a subtle compulsion, is often the main instrument of a teacher in the education that is followed

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today. But the efficacy of teaching primarily depends on the consciousness with which it is done. By itself, that is to say, without an opening to a deeper or higher consciousness or influence — it can be only marginally effective. It is of little or no use for the vital education and either useless or counter productive for the psychic and spiritual education.

Thus, if the teachers are persons living in ordinary surface consciousness and without a sufficient opening to their deeper and higher parts, it will be impossible for them to impart any true integral education. However, when supported by a higher or deeper consciousness, teaching can become effective for all the aspects of integral education because in such a case the two higher instruments, Example and Influence permeate whatever teaching activity — or for that matter any activity — that may be undertaken by the teacher. In an atmosphere charged with a higher consciousness, all acts assume a deeper power and significance which in an ordinary atmosphere they could not have conceivably had. Then, Teaching ceases to be mere Teaching and tends to assume the efficacy of Example and Influence also.

*(iii) Example*

Teaching becomes truly effective when backed up by Example. In the words of the Mother,

“...the first thing to do, in order to be able to educate a child, is to educate oneself, to become conscious and master of oneself so that one never sets a bad example to one’s child. For it is above all through example that education becomes effective. To speak good words and to give wise advice to a child has very little effect if one does not oneself give him an example of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness,

unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches.”

“Example is the most powerful instructor. Never demand from a child an effort of discipline that you do not make yourself. Calm, equanimity, order, method absence of useless words, ought to be constantly practised by the teacher if he wants to instil them into his pupils.”

***(iv) Influence***

An influence can be predominantly physical, vital, mental, psychic, spiritual or a mixture of these. When Sri Aurobindo says, “Influence is more important than example,” he means the psychic and spiritual influence. Psychic and spiritual education cannot happen without the presence of this most powerful instrument. It is only when they are permeated by it that the other two instruments — Teaching and Example — can play a powerful role in true education. By itself, Teaching could often mean advising someone to do what one is unwilling or unable to do oneself. “Example” goes a step further; here one actually manifests what others may want to emulate. But, one who wants to develop the inspiring qualities has to do so by his own unaided strength. That is why “Influence” is so important; it goes still further by providing the psychic and spiritual help necessary to facilitate the attainment of what one is striving for.

Even when a teacher is not in full possession of psychic and spiritual influence he can open to it and invoke it to make his teaching considerably more effective.

The power and efficacy of this instrument of education depends on the level of consciousness behind it. As the consciousness grows deeper and higher it tends to become

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all-powerful — in fact, so powerful as to transform the whole being directly without even going through the process of purification.

It should be clear from the above that a teacher of integral education has very powerful instruments at his disposal to enable him to perform his task. The next question that naturally arises is “what are the principles that govern the use of such potent instruments?”

### ***The Principles of True Teaching***

“The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface. The distinction that reserves this principle for the teaching of adolescent and adult minds and denies its application to the child, is a conservative and unintelligent doctrine. Child or man, boy or girl, there is only one sound principle of good teaching. Difference of age only serves to diminish or increase the amount of help and guidance necessary; it does not change its nature.”

“The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature.”

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“The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be.”

Sri Aurobindo

The fourth principle is to be flexible, which means not to make rules or be bound by rules. In the words of the Mother,

“One must never make rules.

Every minute one must endeavour to apply the highest truth one can perceive. It is much more difficult, but it’s the only solution.

Whatever you may do, don’t make rules beforehand, because once you have made a rule you follow it more or less blindly, and then you are sure, ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred, to be mistaken.

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a comfortable *tamas*; one must be always awake — I am not speaking of physical sleep — one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill. To want always the best, always the best, always the best, and never tell oneself, “Oh! it is tiring! Let me rest, let me relax! Ah, I am going to stop making an effort”; then one is sure to fall into a hole immediately and make a big stupid blunder.”

This last principle is a supreme or a basic principle not only of teaching but of all action. A living aspiration to lead a conscious existence and an endeavour to act according to

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the supreme principle of action — that is to try at each moment, in each movement, to express only the highest truth one can perceive — has to be the basis of an institution like the Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre. If this basis is there then all the frameworks, methods, techniques and the psychological structures that evolve during the process of the development of such an institution do so because the spirit chooses to pour itself into this specific mould. However, it is crucial to keep this specific mould — however sublime it may appear to be — utterly plastic to the touch of the spirit. And to do this, one has to be always conscious and ceaselessly endeavour to keep this mould from crystalizing. In other words, one has to live the spiritual truth.

“For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration, accepted only as a partial influence. The ideal is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it; it is often used even as a cover and a plea for things that are diametrically opposed to its real spirit. Institutions are created which are supposed, but too lightly supposed to embody that spirit and the fact that the ideal is held, the fact that men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient. The holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal; the existence of its institutions is sufficient to abrogate the need of insisting on the spirit that made the institutions. But spirituality is in its very nature a thing subjective and not mechanical; it is nothing if it is not lived inwardly and if the outward life does not flow out of this inward living. Symbols, types, conventions, ideas are not sufficient. A spiritual symbol is only a meaningless trinket unless the thing symbolised is

realised in the spirit. A spiritual convention may lose or expel its spirit and become a falsehood. A spiritual type may be a temporary mould into which spiritual living may flow, but it is also a limitation and may become a prison in which it fossilises and perishes. A spiritual idea is a power, but only when it is both inwardly and outwardly creative. Here we have to enlarge and to deepen the pragmatic principle that truth is what we create, and in this sense first, that it is what we create within us, in other words, what we become. Undoubtedly, spiritual truth exists eternally beyond, independent of us in the heavens of the Spirit; but it is of no avail for humanity here, it does not become truth of earth, truth of life until it is lived.”

Sri Aurobindo

It should be clear from the above that a teacher of integral education must be at least an earnest spiritual aspirant if integral education is to happen at all. Therefore the real foundation of an integral education institution would be a community of spiritual aspirants who, would aspire to rise above the human ways of thinking and doing and who would have taken to heart the following words of the Mother.

“When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingings altogether, to pluck it out of your Consciousness and be born a new, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE”.

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In a Community of such aspirants, there would be created an atmosphere where integral education would take place spontaneously and naturally, as much for the teachers as for the students.

### ***The Spirit of Integral Education***

All life is an education pursued more or less consciously, more or less willingly. All that one experiences — even if predominantly either physica-vital, mental, psychic or spiritual — touches all the parts of the being and is a part of the process of the increasing mastery of the spirit over matter. In this sense, one may look upon the whole terrestrial existence as a grand integral educational effort and the only essential difference between this and the educational effort in an institution of integral education is that although in an ultimate sense itself a part — and a very important part — of the evolutionary effort of Nature at this crucial stage of the terrestrial evolution; the latter is a specially concentrated and conscious and hence a very much more swift and effective effort. The effectivity and integrality of an educational effort depends crucially on the consciousness supporting it. It is true that, in a deeper and integral view of education, every educational effort — even that which is aimed exclusively at the development or cultivation of a specific capacity or faculty — will be seen to touch and effect all the parts of the being, for, nothing can really be piecemeal in this world. However, the lower the consciousness supporting an educational effort, the lower will be its effectivity and the more will it tend to be limited to the education of the specific part or faculty. The power and effective integrality of an educational effort increases with consciousness. It reaches almost an absolute intensity and power, when the

consciousness rises high enough to permit the descent of the Supreme Divine Love which transforms the whole being instantaneously and directly, without even going through the preliminary process of conversion.

It is not uncommon to see the rigidity and the fixed routine of an educational technique or process melting away under the pressure of a higher consciousness. And, the higher is the presiding consciousness, the more total is the effacement of all the fixed contours of the devised process or technique and, the greater is the power and integrality of the resulting educational effort. What may actually take place in a truly surcharged atmosphere, ceases to be analysable or even properly understandable by an ordinary intellectual effort. Thus, in an integral educational atmosphere, all the educational techniques and processes ought to be looked upon as only the starting points and the necessary supports to human intellect which needs to lean on them when it approaches a process as complex, uncharted and perhaps unchartable as the process of integral education.

Comparision of the Integral Education (IE) with the Best of the Popular Education (PE) of Today.

*(i) Coverage*

The PE concentrates — only on a part of the mental education to the virtual exclusion of all other aspects. There is no planned or systematic development of the instruments of knowledge or other faculties in the PE.

*(ii) Load*

Isn't there a far greater load in the IE? One may wonder how so much greater load — the description of all aspects of integral education is truly frightening if looked upon superficially — may be bearable by students who already

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seem to be getting increasingly overburdened in the present system of the PE. In this regard one should remember that:

(a) After a certain stage the functioning of the instruments of knowledge shall be much more efficient in an IE system; it should then be possible to handle a far greater load with ease.

(b) In an IE, there will be little stress on the memorising of a store of facts. Instead, the stress shall be on the capacity to acquire and use knowledge. This should considerably reduce the burden on the students.

(c) A systematic rigorous physical education included in the IE will certainly require much extra time and effort, but this can be expected to be more than compensated by the salutary positive effect it shall have on the functioning and efficiency of all other parts of the being.

(d) In an atmosphere proper to IE and with the necessary enabling and enlightening discipline and doctrine supplied at appropriate junctures, the education of all other (other than the physical) aspects of IE is quite capable of being carried out and, in fact, invariably does carried out along with the usual academic education. Being essentially psychological in nature and related to the deeper parts of the being, the education of these aspects of IE will be approached mainly through Example and Influence which permeate all the Teaching that takes place in an intense IE atmosphere. Thus, the higher aspects are utterly inseparable from any teaching activity. As the Mother said, “Spiritual things.... They are taught history or spiritual things, they are taught science or spiritual things. That is the stupidity. In history, the Spirit is there, in science, the Spirit is there — the Truth is everywhere. And what is needed is not to teach it in a false way, but to teach it in a true way.”

(e) The higher instruments of a teacher — Example

and Influence — cannot fail to have a powerful positive effect on the efficiency of Teaching - thus making it easier for the student to acquire a far greater proficiency even in that part of IE which is common with the PE.

### ***The Process of Integral Education***

The process of the PE is well defined and understood, but the IE is so new, complex and vast that its course — specially that pertaining to higher aspects — is virtually uncharted. However, a few remarks of general nature may usefully be made:

(i) The Consciousness is the heart and soul of the whole process of IE. It alone decides whether the IE really contours as the PE. It alone will mark the difference between an institution where the IE really takes place and an institution where it is so in name only and the actual education is, in essence, little different from the PE.

(ii) The establishment of the reign of reason over one's desires, impulses and feelings must be the aim of all education which aims at human perfection. An IE which aims at an integral perfection may also, in general, concern itself with, it in its first phase. However, an IE institution will have a relatively easy time with this task because it shall be attempted in an atmosphere supported by the deeper and higher levels of consciousness. Also, in such an atmosphere, the reason will stay plastic enough to permit its transcendence and a smooth transition to the next phase when the psychic comes in front and takes charge of the whole process of education.

(iii) The efficiency of IE, the other things remaining the same, will tend to increase over time in accordance with the general law of nature behind this tendency in all endeavours. For, if it continued to be as difficult and

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seemingly impossible as it is for the pioneers in this field, there can be little hope of it ever becoming widespread.

(iv) The process of IE shall have considerable individual variations, specially when the influence of the higher realms predominates. An IE system will, by its very nature, be utterly plastic and permit such variations.

### ***The Technology of Education***

As the efficiency of the instruments of the teacher increases with the manifestation of higher and higher levels of consciousness, the whole process of IE will undergo profound changes and will tend to become more and more swift and efficient. In other words, the technology of education advances with the advancements in consciousness. This in fact is the only way of bringing about a significant advance in the technology of education. For example, all the efforts to increase the efficiency of the educational process had only a marginal effect inspite of all possible help from science. It has to be realised, once for all, that the efficiency of an educational process is directly related to the level of consciousness supporting it and cannot be changed significantly without a corresponding change in the level of consciousness. And this becomes very obvious if one compares the advancement — or lack of it — in educational technology over the past one hundred years in the advancement in the technology of other fields such as transportation and communications. The potency of integral education lies in its ability to bring a higher consciousness into play in its educational process. And there are no limits to its potency.

## **Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre**

“Sri Aurobindo incarnated in a human body the supramental consciousness and has not only revealed to us the nature of the path to follow and the method of following it so as to arrive at the goal, but has also by his own personal realisation given us the example; he has provided us, so to say, the proof that the thing can be done and the time is now to do it.”

The Mother

### ***The Need of the Hour***

“There are, in the history of the earth, moments of transition when things that have been for thousands of years must give place to things that are about to manifest. A special concentration of the world consciousness, one might almost say, an intensification of its effort, happens at such times varying according to the kind of progress to be made, the quality of the transformation to be realised. We are precisely at such a turning of the world’s history. As Nature has already created upon earth a mental being, even so, there is now a concentrated activity to bring forth in this mentality a supramental consciousness and individuality.”

The Mother

The recent developments leading to the present condition of the world may be looked upon as the speeding up of the process of the breaking-up of the past which is indispensable to the manifestation of the “new world” that was born with the Supramental Manifestation which took place in 1956. All the religions, socioeconomic systems, political “isms” and dogmas seem to be losing their hold

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over the progressive human mind which seems now to have become plastic and volatile to an extent that could not have been imagined even a few years ago. The recognition that the old remedies are of no avail, that the lights that have guided man so far are failing him seems now to be fairly widespread. It is becoming obvious that a mere change in the form of government or even in the social or economic system is not going to help man in any way. The proposition that our problems spring basically from the present state of our consciousness has begun to receive recognition in recent years. For example, Ervin Laszlo writes in his book, *The Inner Limits of Mankind*: “There are hardly any world problems that cannot be traced to human agency and which could not be overcome by appropriate changes in human behaviour. The root cause even of physical and ecological problems are the inner constraints on our Vision and Values..... We contemplate changing almost anything on this earth but ourselves.”

The awareness that what is required is not a surface sentimental, moral, religious or idealistic tinkering with the nature of man but a fundamental change in it is also gaining ground. But such a thing can be accomplished only by an ascension to a higher level of consciousness and that may look like an endeavour too high and for man as he is at present, too difficult and distant. However, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, no matter how difficult and distant it may appear, it still remains the sole possibility for a true resolution of all our problems. Moreover, with the Supramental Manifestation in the terrestrial nature, the task has become much less troublesome and distant. As Sri Aurobindo says, “As far as I can see, once the supramental is established in Matter, the transformation will be possible under much less

troublesome conditions than now are there. These bad conditions are due to the fact that the Ignorance is in possession and the hostile Powers an established authority, as it were, who do not care to give up their hold and there is no full force of Light established in the earth-consciousness which would not only meet but outweigh their full force of darkness.” The Supramental Manifestation has changed this equation.

The terrestrial evolution has so far proceeded under the pressure of nature without any conscious participation of the beings drawn along this evolution. But man has now attained a position of full responsibility and can consciously collaborate with nature. The next step would therefore be conscious and deliberate and may be relatively swift, for a new being will be evolved in man, rather than out of man.

“Therefore the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being. Even as the animal man has been largely converted into a mentalised and at the top a highly mentalised humanity, so too now or in the future an evolution or conversion — it does not greatly matter which figure we use or what theory we adopt to support it — of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity is the need of the race and surely the intention of Nature; that evolution or conversion will be their ideal and endeavour.”

Sri Aurobindo

All our problems are essentially problems of consciousness. This evolutionary world seems to be so planned as to have a built-in incentive for rising into ever higher and higher levels of consciousness. The problems, difficulties or just the limitations at any given level of

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consciousness — and they are different at different levels - can be really solved only at a higher level. One's state of consciousness determines the limitations or conditions in which one lives. One can rise above them only by ascending to a higher level of consciousness.

“The conditions in which men live on earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To seek to change these conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera. Those who have been able to perceive what could and ought to be done to improve the situation in the various domains of human life — economic, political, social, financial, educational and sanitary — are individuals who have, to a greater or lesser extent, developed their consciousness in an exceptional way and put themselves in contact with higher planes of consciousness. But their ideas have remained more or less theoretical or, if an attempt has been made to realise them practically, it has always failed lamentably after a certain period of time; for no human organisation can change radically unless human consciousness itself changes. Prophets of a new humanity have followed one another; religions, spiritual or social, have been created; their beginnings have sometimes been promising, but as humanity has not been fundamentally transformed, the old errors arising from human nature itself have gradually reappeared and after some time we find ourselves almost back at the point we had started from with so much hope and enthusiasm. Also, in this effort to improve human conditions, there have always been two tendencies, which seem to be contrary but which ought to complement each other so that progress may be achieved. The first advocates a collective reorganisation, something which could lead to the effective unity of mankind. The other declares

that all progress is made first by the individual and insists that the individual should be given the conditions in which he can progress freely. Both are equally true and necessary, and our effort should be directed along both these lines at once. For collective progress and individual progress are interdependent. Before the individual can take a leap forward, at least a little of the preceding progress must have been realised in the collectivity. A way must therefore be found so that these two types of progress may proceed side by side.

It is in answer to this urgent need that Sri Aurobindo conceived the scheme of his international university, in order to prepare the human elite who will be able to work for the progressive unification of mankind and be ready at the same time to embody the new force which is descending to transform the earth.”

The Mother

The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry came into being on 6th January 1952 and has been doing pioneering work ever since. It has been the beacon of light for all those who aspire for a divine life for humanity. We feel that the time has come for this light to spread and grow so that the future humanity may be prepared to embody the integral spiritual ideal.

### ***Objects***

The basic object of the Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre shall be to work for the realisation of Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s vision of a Divine Life for humanity.

More specifically, but without in any way limiting the generality of the basic object, the Institution shall in the immediate future work for:

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- (i) the realisation of human unity in a rich and organised diversity;
  - (ii) the establishment of the Integral Spiritual Ideal as the governing ideal of the human race;
  - (iii) a smooth transition of humanity from the present system to a system more suited to a spiritual age;
  - (iv) The creation of a Spiritual Society where every aspect of life will be taken up and perfected on a spiritual foundation.

***For an effective pursuit of the above goals the Institution shall seek:***

- (i) to establish a research and education centre which shall carry out research and provide education from the prenatal to the postgraduate and advanced levels. The proposed institution will be essentially an educational research setup organised with the objective of evolving, realising and providing education by a most perfect possible system of Integral Education as outlined by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
- (ii) to bring together and organise a community of spiritual aspirants, with an inner core consisting of seekers who wish to cast off from themselves the slavery to the human ways of thinking and doing. Such a community will be international in character and spirit and conduct itself in such a way as to contribute to the development of the sense of oneness of all mankind. It will be above all distinctions of class, caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality and shall form the nucleus of the proposed educational institution which will depend on it for the supply of needed teachers, researchers and workers. It is hoped that such an experiment in collective living will serve as a powerful “example” and

“influence” to help usher in the spiritual age of mankind.

(iii) to organise social science and research aimed at tracing out the path of transition from the present system to the one suited to a spiritual age of mankind.

(iv) to evolve, at a mature stage of its development, a setup for a systematic research in the process of the Spirit’s mastery over Matter in the terrestrial evolution.

(v) to undertake research, training and exposure programmes, to organise conferences, seminars, work-shops, etc. in all fields of knowledge and human endeavour.

(vi) to undertake publication of books and periodicals, to prepare audio-cassettes, video-cassettes and other audio-visual aids, educational games and toys, etc. and to do all else in this field that may be conducive to the attainment of its basic object.

(vii) to collaborate, associate or join with other trusts or societies or institutions whose objects and/or activities may be in harmony with the objectives of the Institution.

(viii) to do all such things as are incidental or necessary to the attainment of all or any of the specific objects of the Institution.

### ***Structure and Working***

The Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre is being established by Sri Aurobindo Society. The Society was started by the Mother in 1960 to work for the realisation of the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in every field and in every way. The Mother was the founder and the Executive president of the Society.

Though the Mother left her physical body in 1973, she is still the permanent President of the Society, shaping its destiny. Therefore the Mother is also the President, the Light, the moulding Force, the shaping Consciousness and the realising Executrix of the Sri Aurobindo Divine Life

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Education Centre.

The Sri Aurobindo Society is a society registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act with its headquarters at Pondicherry. It is an international spiritual and educational organisation with members, centres and branches in many parts of the world. It is a member of UNESCO, under category B of Non-governmental organisations and has been elected to its steering committee. It has also been recognised by the Govt. of India as a non-profit, charitable and a research institution.

The Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre is an integral yet autonomous part of Sri Aurobindo Society. It will be administered by a Governing council, which will have a maximum of 25 persons, drawn from various fields and various national and international institutions, all brought together by the ideal of a divine life upon the earth. There will also be an Advisory Council with a larger number of members.

The Centre will be international in character; that is to say not only will the students and teachers come from all parts of the world but also the best of every culture will be represented here in a living manner and the children helped to come into contact with the culture of their own country, as well as of other countries. Along with this a conscious effort will be made to help the children to rise beyond narrow divisions and to work for human unity and one world.

The medium of instruction will be English. Sanskrit and Hindi will occupy a special place and an effort will be made to create learning opportunities for as many Indian and foreign languages as possible. The education will start at an early age — even before birth with the mothers when possible — and go up to postgraduates levels. Most branches of knowledge will be represented with the most modern

facilities for laboratories, sports, arts, audiovisual presentations, work experience, with a special stress on Applied and Social Sciences and Humanities. A deeper approach to culture, a consciousness approach to management, an effort towards holistic and integral health are some of the possibilities that may be explored.

The education at Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre will be free since it is felt that true education cannot happen in atmosphere where monetary calculations become important. Also, as the Mother once remarked, true education has never really been sold in India. Hence, for the students who will be admitted to the Centre, the entire education — including even the boarding and lodging — will be completely free.

A community of spiritual aspirants would be the most important part of the Centre which will depend on it entirely for the needed teachers and teacher-cum-researchers. The entire expenses of the members of the spiritual community would be met by the Centre, according to the need of each individual.

The complex of Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre is planned to be built near the town of Jhunjhunu in north-eastern Rajasthan on a plot of land measuring about 200 acres in an area specially ear-marked for this purpose. The entire complex will try to express beauty and perfection in all its forms.

Presently the Centre is housed in the town of Jhunjhunu in a complex of buildings belonging to Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust.

### ***Legal Status***

The Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre is an

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autonomous wing of Sri Aurobindo Society. The Society is registered in Calcutta under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 (now West Bengal Act XXVI of 1961).

All donations to Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre will qualify for tax exemption under Section 80G as a charitable institution. The Centre will also be engaged in various research activities in Social Sciences, specially integral education. Donations to the Centre for research activities qualify for tax exemption under Section 35(1)(iii) of the Income Tax Act and are 100% tax exempt.

## **How you can Participate**

### ***Students***

#### ***Kind of children we seek***

In our Centre we want to admit only those children whose parents are ( or likely to be ) open to the spiritual ideal and who we feel have the potentiality of realising and manifesting the Divine in their lives or who at least can significantly benefit by their stay here in their journey towards the true Goal.

#### ***Kind of children we do not want to admit***

Our Centre neither has nor seeks to have government recognition for the education provided here. Therefore, we do not want to admit the children whose parents have any prearranged career in mind for them or who even want their child to have some kind of professional career.

#### ***The admission procedure***

( i ) *Preliminary selection:* It is done on the basis of

information contained in the application form and other communications from parents or guardians. Children who are selected would be asked to come for a personal interview with their parent or guardian.

( ii ) *Personal Interview:* A child who comes with a parent or a guardian for a personal interview will be asked to stay at the Centre for at least a few days or a little longer. After this the child may be selected for a longer stay of about a year or so after which it may be easier for all concerned to come to a decision about permanent admission to the Centre. To avoid hardships we try to call for a personal interview only those who we feel have a very good chance of being selected for a longer stay.

***Some other useful information:***

In our Centre we have provisions for vacations for only 2-3 weeks in a year and the vacations may be given at any time according to the parent's/guardian's and Centre's mutual convenience. We give total freedom to a child in our Centre and when a child is mature enough, he is free to take decision on his own. So after a stay of few years, when the child is mature enough, he may himself decide whether he wants to continue to stay at the Centre or not. We expect that the parents would not interfere in the child's decision and would let the child decide freely. We respect the child's wishes in all such matters and would like the parents also to do the same.

*Note:* After a student finishes middle school, if the Centre feels that he/she may not be able to make the spiritual ideal the governing ideal of his/her life, the student will be encouraged and helped to appear as a private candidate in the High School Examination conducted by the Board of

***Spiritual Aspirants***

The first thing that a person should have to stay in our Centre is an intense aspiration for the Divine. This is the first thing that would decide whether a person is fit to stay in our Centre or not.

***Other conditions are as follows:***

A person who wants to stay in our Centre should be single, without any family or other liabilities. The health of the person should be good and he must be physically fit and active because we seek for persons who shall look upon all work as an important element in their sadhana. A person who joins the Centre may be given some responsibility according to his capacity and interest and one should be willing and happy to discharge his services for the Mother.

***What kind of persons would find this Centre alien to their purpose***

A person who wants to stay at the Centre with the intention of acquiring mental peace and then, after a stay of few months or years, return back to his native atmosphere, would find this Centre entirely alien to his purpose. The persons who want to join the Centre with the intention of disengaging themselves from all responsibilities and then peacefully meditating all the time would find this Centre not suitable for their purpose.

***Expenses of the person***

All the expenses of boarding, lodging, medical care and

other essential requirements of the persons would be met by the Centre.

***All Others***

1) You can become a member of the Sri Aurobindo Society, and maintain a close contact with the Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre. This would mean, first of all, to aspire for a Divine Life for oneself and for humanity.

2) You can do some selfless work for the Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre and participate directly and actively in some of its various projects and activities.

3) You can contribute in funds and kind. Donations to the institute enjoy tax exemptions under section 80G for charitable activities, and section 35(1) (iii) for the research activities.

4) If you want further information or if you feel the call of the Divine deep within you and wish to explore the possibility of your participation in this adventure of consciousness, please write to:

**The Chairman,  
Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre,  
Khetan Mohalla, Jhunjhunu, 333 001,  
Rajasthan, India.**