The Call Beyond



Volume 49 No.2

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Cover Picture: A Painting by an Italian Artist, Aghni, based on Sri Aurobindo's 'Savitri', Book 2, Canto 1



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Why Spiritualize Education?

Education to be complete must have five principal aspects relating to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual.

The Mother

It is widely accepted, at least in principle, that education should address not just the mind but also the body. In practice, however, the body is generally neglected because 'time is not enough to cover the syllabus', and we do a rather poor job of educating even the mind. But even the best education of the body and the mind is still incomplete education. Complete education, or integral education, should address all parts of the being – not just the body and the mind, but also the spirit. This raises at least two questions: why that is necessary, and how it can be done.

Why is it necessary?

Perfect education of the child's body and mind, if successful, will give us an adult who is physically fit, emotionally stable, and intellectually agile. Such an individual has the basic equipment necessary for becoming a good teacher, a good doctor, a good engineer, a good scientist, a good farmer, or a good manager. But it is exactly the same attributes that are necessary also for becoming a 'good' terrorist. Unless the terrorist is also physically fit, emotionally stable, and intellectually agile, he will not be able to plan or execute a successful attack. After all, the body and the mind are mere instruments. Perfecting an instrument is never enough. A sharp knife can cut a fruit as well as the finger better than a blunt knife. Therefore, our system of education should be designed not only to sharpen the body and the mind, but also to help the child learn how to put these sharpened instruments to good use. That is why education is incomplete if it addresses only the body and the mind; what completes it is the spiritual element.



How can it be done?

One way in which schools sometimes try to address the spiritual element is by including moral education as a subject. This is not the best approach for a variety of reasons. First, nobody, not even a child, likes to be told what to do, or what not to do. Secondly, any set of dos and don'ts is somewhat arbitrary - it cannot be valid for all times and at all places. Thirdly, even a comprehensive set of dos and don'ts is always incomplete because it cannot anticipate all the situations in which a person might have to take moral decisions. Finally, once moral education becomes a subject in the curriculum, the focus shifts from morality to clearing an examination. One of the best approaches is not to treat this aspect of education as an add-on, but as something that is woven into the system. Using the body-mind complex appropriately involves making choices. The best choice is based on the guidance that emanates from the deepest part of the being, which is the dynamic aspect of the soul: Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have called it the psychic being. Making a choice based on the voice of the psychic being gives a sense of joy, and leads to lasting mental peace. Making a choice that is in conflict with this voice leads to a sense of guilt, a sense of uneasiness. Thus, the psychic being is not only an infallible guide, but also an in-built reward and punishment system. Making the child conscious of this in-built system is the crux of addressing 'the spirit' in school education. This is in marked contrast to the prevalent tendency to reward the child for doing the right thing, and even more commonly, to punish the child for doing the wrong thing. The message that this tendency sends is that the purpose of not doing what is wrong is to escape getting punished by the teacher or the parent, and in later life, by the law-enforcing agencies. In other words, one may do anything so long as nobody is watching. Even when nobody is watching, God is. The all-seeing God is within us, and that is why the person feels uneasy after doing something wrong. This is what the child has to learn to appreciate. And it



is easy for the child to appreciate it because the psychic being is wide open in children. All it needs is the right environment. The right environment has a few components. First, everything good that the child does should be encouraged, be it lifting up a friend who has fallen in the playground, or sharing food with a classmate who has forgotten her lunchbox at home, or putting the right way up a struggling upside-down insect. Secondly, when a child has done something wrong - be it unintentional, accidental or deliberate - the child should be able to summon the courage to confess the mistake. This will happen only if the child is sure that confession will not invite punishment. An environment in which a fault confessed is not punished builds up the habit of speaking the truth. The aim in such a situation should be to initiate a reflection. The reflection would lead the child towards appreciating the burden that the child felt till she had confessed, and the relief and joy that the confession brought. Last, but most important, the children should also see the teacher doing what she expects from them. What the teacher does has a much greater influence on the children than what she says.

See also the related articles, 'MIS Under the Scanner of Research', p. 7 and 'Use the Rod and Scar the Mind', p. 14



Brahmajnana, Yoga & Dharma are the three essentialities of Hinduism; wherever it travels & finds harbourage & resting place, these three must spread.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p 64)

A saint forgives because it is his native dharma, even as the blind man's is to stumble and slip.

Dilip Kumar Roy ('The Immortals of the Bhagavat', p. 25)



MIS Under the Scanner of Research

In a research study on the pre-primary and primary wings of The Mother's International School (MIS), it was found that the school truly implements integral education, the system of education proposed and put into practice by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The impact of the system is that learning is fun; exploration and creativity find ample expression; spiritual inclination is nurtured; and children develop strength of character.

The Mother's International School (MIS) has earned the reputation of having worked out the difficult combination of implementing an enlightened system of education while fitting within the formal structure prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The pre-primary and primary wings of the school were studied by Monika Davar, a teacher educator on the faculty of Maharaja Surajmal Institute, New Delhi.*

Integral Education

MIS strives to implement integral education, the system of education based on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The system is not mere philosophy: it was given a practical shape by the Mother at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry (now called Puducherry), in 1943. The school is still going strong, and the philosophy underlying integral education has since been implemented in several schools, of which MIS is one of the best known. The system seeks to educate the physical (the body), the vital (the emotional part of the being) and the mental (intellect) parts of the being, so that these basic tools not only work better, they also work harmoniously, and most importantly, they work in light of the divine essence of the child, the psychic being. The psychic being is the dynamic aspect of the soul, which is an infallible Inner Guide, and also a source of knowledge accessible only to planes higher than the mental, thereby enabling the body and the mind to transcend their usual



limitations. Psychic being is, in fact, the pivot around which the education of the body and the mind revolve. The defining feature of integral education is, in fact, the role of the psychic being as the Inner Guide. Through various age-appropriate methods, without sermonizing, the child is made aware of the not-so-visible guide, encouraged to bring it forward, and to let its voice prevail. The voice of the psychic being, sometimes called the inner voice, is a quick and clear voice that tells us what is good, and what is bad; what is right and what is wrong. Further, the psychic being is coupled with an in-built reward and punishment system. Acting upon its voice gives us joy and lasting mental peace; acting against it leads to a sense of guilt and recurrent uneasiness.

Another important feature of integral education are the three principles of true teaching enunciated by Sri Aurobindo. The first principle is that 'nothing can be taught', which implies that the teacher cannot teach unless the student wants to learn. The teacher's role is primarily to ignite the student's mind, and to facilitate learning. The second principle, 'consulting the child's mind for its growth' acknowledges the individual variation that determines the unique passions and inclinations, and the characteristic strengths and weaknesses of each child. The third principle, 'from the near to the far' emphasises moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, the simple to the complex, and from the concrete to the abstract.

The Study: what was done

Monika Davar's study investigated the extent to which the principles of integral education are implemented in MIS at the pre-primary and primary levels, and what impact the system followed by the school has on all-round development and value system of the children. The sample studied consisted of 120 students from Nursery and classes I and III; five teachers from the primary school; and the teacher-in-charge of the Nursery wing and the Headmistress of the primary school. Conclusions



were based on qualitative analysis of the observations made and the interviews with teachers.

What the study found

The study found that the methods of teaching were childcentred. Children were active participants in the teachinglearning process. Some of the methods used were the play-way method, playing in the sand-pit, drawing and art, Montessori methods for sensory-motor and skill development, and storytelling. Flash cards were used for learning languages, and concrete objects such as pebbles and pencils used for learning mathematics. The English alphabet was taught by relating the letters to their phonetic sounds. A unique activity was 'circle time', in which the students and teachers sat in a circle for informal interactions and sharing of personal experiences.

At the primary level, the project method was used for learning English and Environmental Science (EVS). The projects include study, hand-on work, field visits, preparing charts, and endof-the-project presentations.

The students were exposed to a very wide variety of activities such as dance, music, sports, yogic asanas (postures), gymnastics, clay modelling and free-hand drawing. The range of activities would help the children discover their unique interests and inclinations.

Prayer and meditation were practices introduced right at the pre-primary level. These activities, besides improving the ability to concentrate, inculcate the habits of reflection and introspection, help the children discover their psychic being and nurture their spiritual inclinations.

Last but not least, the teachers were loving and compassionate, and had an intimate relationship with the children. They inculcated values in the children by practice rather than by preaching, not by teaching morals as a body of knowledge to be learnt.



The impact

The impact of the methods and practices used in the school was pretty obvious. The children were enthusiastic about learning and participating in the activities. They were able to think clearly, and answer questions needing application of knowledge. The children observed self-discipline; they maintained order even when the teacher was not in the class. They moved in proper lines while going to or leaving the assembly, and while going towards school buses. They respected the teachers, and were "cheerful and happy most of the time."

Conclusions

The principles of integral education are put into practice wholeheartedly in MIS. Learning is fun, and fruitful. The school environment is conducive to exploration and expression of creativity. The child's development is truly holistic. Last but not least, what makes the school special is that it provides an ideal setting for nurturing spiritual inclination and strength of character. The school can serve as a model for a paradigm shift in the system of education.

*Davar, Monika. Implementation of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Education at Primary Level: A Case Study. 'The Primary Teacher', Vol. 43 (Nos. 2 & 3), 2018, pp. 41-48.

See also the editorial, 'Why Spiritualize Education?' p. 4, and the article, ' Use the Rod and Scar the Mind' p. 14

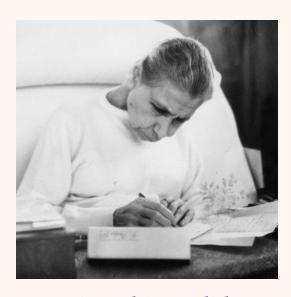


Until one can say of investigation "It is finished" and knowledge "There is nothing beyond", no one has a right to set down men as charlatans because they profess to be the pioneers of a new kind of Science.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p 67)



Pay Attention



If one does not pay attention, things slide very easily into a hole: one takes a false step, then slips and suddenly bumps against the bottom of the hole. Then one asks oneself, "But how did this come about? What happened?" Simply a false step: you did not take care, you allowed that part of the being to draw you into its own field; because you did not pull it out of its way, did not compel it to follow you, it now drags you back instead.

If one wants to lead the spiritual life, one must not be three-fourths asleep. It is necessary to be wide awake and very attentive; otherwise you are like a little boat upon a river or a great sea with terrible currents, and if you are not alert, if you do not pay close heed to these currents, if you relax, relax your vigilance, all of a sudden you find that you are at the other end from where you wanted to go! You are carried away, just like that, quite naturally. "Why, yes, I wanted to go there and I find myself here!"

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', pp. 71)

All the pages of The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, have been uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The link to the playlist is: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbJ59iL6vu-UXeufBeKQlUTwGf3GhZ9LJ



Abiding National Memories*



The Mahabharata and Ramayana are Itihasas ... The poets who wrote and those who added to these great bodies of poetic writing did not intend merely to tell an ancient tale in a beautiful or noble manner or even to fashion a poem pregnant with much richness of interest and meaning, though they did both these things with a high success; they wrote with a sense of their function as architects and sculptors of life, creative exponents, fashioners of significant forms of the national thought and religion and ethics and culture. A profound stress of thought on life, a large and vital view of religion and society, a certain strain of philosophic idea runs through these poems and the whole ancient culture of India is embodied in them with a great force of intellectual conception and living presentation. ... The work of these epics was to popularise high philosophic and ethical idea and cultural practice; it was to throw out prominently and with a seizing relief and effect in a frame of great poetry and on a background of poetic story and around significant personalities that became to the people abiding national memories and representative figures all that was best in the soul and thought or true to the life or real to the creative imagination and ideal mind or characteristic and illuminative of the social, ethical, political and religious culture of India.

Sri Aurobindo: 'The Renaissance in India', CWSA Vol. 20, pp. 345-346.



Divinity in the Ordinary Things of Life*

The Ramayana embodied for the Indian imagination its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength and courage and gentleness and purity and fidelity and selfsacrifice familiar to it in the suavest and most harmonious forms coloured so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense, stripped morals of all repellent austerity on one side or on the other of mere commonness and lent a certain high divineness to the ordinary things of life, conjugal and filial and maternal and fraternal feeling, the duty of the prince and leader and the loyalty of follower and subject, the greatness of the great and the truth and worth of the simple, toning things ethical to the beauty of a more psychical meaning by the glow of its ideal hues. The work of Valmiki has been an agent of almost incalculable power in the moulding of the cultural mind of India: it has presented to it to be loved and imitated in figures like Rama and Sita, made so divinely and with such a revelation of reality as to become objects of enduring cult and worship, or like Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata the living human image of its ethical ideals; it has fashioned much of what is best and sweetest in the national character, and it has evoked and fixed in it those finer and exquisite yet firm soul tones and that more delicate humanity of temperament which are a more valuable thing than the formal outsides of virtue and conduct.

Sri Aurobindo: 'The Renaissance in India', CWSA Vol. 20, pp. 350-351.

*Titles added, empha	sis added	
	 *	



Use the Rod and Scar the Mind

Kusum Jain

Punishment is an irrational and barbarous way to discipline children. It forces children to submit to the violence of adults for disobedience but it will not make them responsible for their behaviour. It shatters their self-confidence and self-esteem, induces fear, and worst of all, sanctifies violence as a way of dealing with a problem.

How can children engage themselves in learning in a fearful atmosphere? Even verbal assaults aimed at humiliating children vitiate the atmosphere of schools. Einstein, who himself experienced such environment, said in 1936, "To me the worst thing seems to be for a school principally to work with methods of fear, force and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the sound sentiments, sincerity and self-confidence of the pupil. It produces the submissive subject."

A new approach has been adopted at the Centre of Education in Pondicherry, where the aim is growth of consciousness through love, beauty and truth which cannot be achieved by abusing children physically or emotionally. At the Ashram, though discipline is the key word, the children are generally not scolded.

Government reports on the high dropout rate and low level of learning in schools do not acknowledge that corporal punishment is one of the reasons. The 1994 report of the District Primary Education Programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development revealed an alarmingly low level of learning but failed to consider corporal punishment as a cause. A UNICEF report in 1993 finds an unattractive school environment as one of the reasons for students dropping out.

The government has enacted laws to punish parents for not sending their children to school. But it has failed to recognise the problems parents have to face with schools. Even the poorest



parent would like to send a child to school. But teachers are rarely held accountable for physically and emotionally crippling children and 'pushing' children out of school.

Child-beating should be considered an offence. People have usually little patience or inclination to listen to them. It is argued that as parents beat their children for disobedience, so what if teachers do.

Instead, other rational ways should be adopted by schools to induce discipline in students: counselling, discussing with students and parents. A rational way is to show empathy to children and to make them see the consequences of their irresponsible behaviour by one-to-one counselling.

Teachers' associations should be strengthened to allow parents to play an active role in sharing problems and responsibilities. All information about rules and regulations should be displayed on the notice board of all schools to make parents aware of their rights and duties.

To create an environment of mutual love and respect conducive for learning, Einstein suggested: "Give into the power of the teacher the fewest possible coercive measures, so that the only source of the pupil's respect for the teacher is the human and intellectual qualities of the latter."

(Kusum Jain belongs to the Parents' Forum for Meaningful Education)

Reproduced from 'The Call Beyond', Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 38, 1999

You should not allow any fear to slip in between you and your child; fear is a disastrous way to education; invariably it gives birth to dissimulation and falsehood.

The Mother (In: 'Sri Aurobindo and the Mother On Education', p. 99)

See also the editorial, 'Why Spiritualize Education?' p. 4, and the article, 'MIS Under the Scanner of Research', p. 7



Highest You Cannot Attain, If Lesser Loves You Retain* Dilip Kumar Roy

May you, darling, learn to see That the One who calls you His own Exhorts you sleeplessly To hark back to His Flute alone.

He invites you hourly to savour His world-play here below And sings: "Through courting my favour My children evolve and grow."

The world when He's unmet Is a vale of desolate pain Where even in sleep you fret And cry again and again.

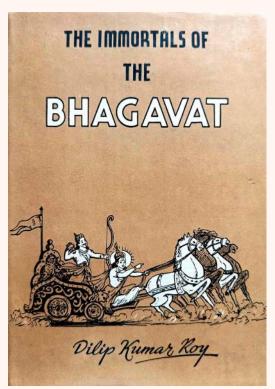
But when Him you'll know, my bird, And glimpse His marvel Face, You shall wing, fulfilled, skyward Sustained by His blue caress.

Hunting for pleasures vain You but clasp the shadows and moan, The highest you shall not attain Till the lesser loves you disown.

They stay life's underlings Who aspire not to His bliss: He alone is the King of kings Who longs but to be His.

*Title coined by the editor

[Excerpted from 'The Immortals of the Bhagavat' by Dilip Kumar Roy (page 49). This piece is the lullaby that the avatar Vaman's mother sang when He was in His cradle. It seems to be an ideal lullaby, which any mother may start singing even while her baby is in her womb.]





In this column, we try to answer three types of questions: those related to spiritual quest ('aspiring high'); those related to psychological issues ('feeling low'); and those related to physical health ('frailties of the flesh'). It is needless to say that the identity of the person asking the question is kept confidential if the question is about a sensitive issue. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in.

What Can I Do?

C wants to know:

There are so many problems in the world that I get completely overwhelmed. Can I do something about them?

Answer:

That is a very legitimate question. The following pointers might be of some help.

- 1. In a lighter vein, you can start a WhatsApp campaign. Create a message or picture or video, and send it to your contacts with the request that they forward it. This is very easy, and you can stay in your comfort zone. Clinging to the comfort zone is an expression of tamas, or the lazy part of our personality. But you would not have achieved anything significant for yourself or others except for deluding yourself that you have done something. Such perverted ego satisfaction has no lasting value, and in fact lowers the consciousness. So, if you really want to do something, have the courage to step out of your comfort zone.
- 2. Be selective. Pick up just one problem that is both significant and is something that you feel strongly about.
- 3. You may not be able to eradicate the problem, but every bit helps.
- 4. Irrespective of how much dent you make in the problem, you would have taken a few steps towards the goal of your life,



which is spiritual growth or growth of consciousness. This would apply even if you are a total failure in spite of totally sincere intentions.

5. The ultimate solution to all problems will be a significant rise in the average level of human consciousness, which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have assured would happen in not too distant a future. The efforts that you put in would contribute also to the ultimate solution.



A goal of life, a practice of perfection and a rational, yet binding law of conduct,—these are man's continual quest, and in none of these demands is modern Science able to satisfy humanity. ... What Science could not provide India offers, Brahman for the eternal goal, Yoga for the means of perfection, dharma (swabhavaniyatam karma) for the rational yet binding law of conduct.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p 64)

Who fears to lose and cries

Forfeits the little he has,

Who stakes his all wins the prize:

The prudent stays paupers alas!

Dilip Kumar Roy ('The Immortals of the Bhagavat', p. 45)

There is no law of Nature by which spiritual knowledge is confined to the East or must bear the stamp of an Indian manufacture before it can receive the imprimatur of the All-Wise.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p 67)



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback on the Occasion of the Ashram's Foundation Day

Dear All,

Hope you all are doing well!

Extending my heartfelt wishes to you and the entire Ashram family on the occasion of the 68th Foundation Day of Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch.

This sacred space has played a pivotal role in my personal growth, nurturing me inside out. Thank you all for being my mentors and guides in my journey.

May the guiding principles of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother continue to inspire and guide us on a transformative journey towards becoming better individuals and contributing to the betterment of humanity.

With love and gratitude,

Deepa Bisht (in an email dated 12 February 2024)



Until one can say of investigation "It is finished" and knowledge "There is nothing beyond", no one has a right to set down men as charlatans because they profess to be the pioneers of a new kind of Science.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p 67



From a Participant in the Yoga Retreat (22-30 Dec 2024)

Dear Dr Bijlani,

Some time has passed since our Christmas retreat and I am writing to you to express my sincere gratitude for the time and dedication you offer to the people. I have been blessed to come to the ashram and to meet you, as your presence and your work spread the most beautiful message of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother across the globe.

My life is changing constantly at the moment (although not much from outside). When I am in doubt or going through yet another difficulty as a reflection of personal impulses and impurities, I always talk to you from my place asking myself. Next thing, I offer it to the Mother and pray for her message. I am learning it to be the constant thing, a continuous practice which you have shown us so many times.

I am certain that the message of Integral Yoga will find its instrument in myself one day and I will know how to continue my work with the Mother's help.

I also feel immensely thankful to Aditi and the whole team who inspire me to seek a true meaning in every little thing I do.

With Love and Light,

Ewa Drobnica (from the UK) (in an email dated 14 February 2024)





Forthcoming Events

Balance & Reboot with Yoga

Friday, 1 March to Sunday, 3 March 2024

Embrace a weekend with a taste of holistic health and lifestyle in the serene surroundings of Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch.

The retreat is to be conducted by **Ruchi Arora Mohan**, a holistic wellness coach and a trained Yoga instructor.



What do you explore?

- Yoga Asanas
- Tratak Dhyan
- Meditation
- Restorative Practices
- Pranayam
- Nature Walk
- · and Satsang together!



Uplift energies for self and surroundings by joining us for this residential* retreat

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch (*shared accommodation in a double room)

Contribution for the Retreat:

INR 5,000 per person (in favor of The Mother's Integral Health Centre)

For Registration, Contact: 999957955 (WhatsApp) Ф



Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, 'Sri Aravind Karmadhara', is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.

For a free subscription to 'Sri Aravind Karmadhara', please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com

To get 'The Call Beyond' online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

To learn about the recent and forthcoming activities through the Ashram's e-magazine, 'Realization', send an email to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

Please follow a simple two-step process:

- Subject: Subscribe 1.
- 2. Click on Send

If you subscribe either to 'Realization', or to 'The Call Beyond', you will start receiving, month after month, both the magazines.

For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project, please visit the website www.auromira.in



Note

In view of the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to http://erp. saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.



Get in touch with Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch on:

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Twitter: https://twitter.com/saadelhibranch



Feedback

Please send your feedback to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

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