Understanding Indian-Value System through
Sri Aurobindo’s Education System
(An online anthology of Sri Aurobindo's Ideas)

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2011
First Edition, December 06th 2011

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Publisher:
Centre for Positive Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies (CPPIS), Milestone Education Society (Regd.), Balmiki Dharmashala, Ward No.06, Pehowa (Kurukshetra)-136128 (Haryana) Emails: mses.02@gmail.com, dr.sirswal@gmail.com
“Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world.” Sri Aurobindo

India was always rich in the establishment of centers even in Vedic times where the first principles of education were to be found in the Ashrams and Gurukuls and later on in the great universities of Nalanda and Taxila. The term education usually refers to the technical sense and is generally limited to the context of teachers instructing students. Teachers may draw on many subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. The true aim and principle of national education according to Sri Aurobindo is to take our culture as its foundation while not ignoring modern truth and knowledge. Education provides conditions for all human beings towards their divine perfection and to achieve the power, the harmony, the beauty and joy of self-realisation. According to him education brings out, “to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter his right relations with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member.”(Sri Aurobindo, Vol.17, p.198)

In this approach we can study his ideas on the nature of education and objectives of education, its basic principles, how we develop curriculum for students, methods of teaching etc. Besides this we can also study the role of students and responsibility of a teacher to student’s education. Because according to him the teacher is only a guide and he shows the pupils how to
perfect their instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages them in this process. Instead of imparting knowledge he shows how to acquire knowledge for himself. A teacher must be a student, so that he can understand student’s problems, motivate them to solve their problems and helps in the development of successful life. The main themes of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy of education are as follows:

THE DISEASE OF UTILITARIANISM

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that the development of science and technology results merely in Utilitarianism. According to him educational aims may continue to remain largely utilitarian that is valuing merely what is useful rather than what is Good, True and Beautiful. It also continues to construct “products” whose personalities are oriented mainly towards the pursuits of successful careers and money making. So, when we go to study Sri Aurobindo’s educational philosophy we should study the relation between utilitarianism and education. According to utilitarianism greatest value to them in their education is merely what may be useful when they grow up so that they too can earn a lot of money. It dominates educational pursuits and institutions, handicapping and drafting what should be a sacred vocation. In the words of the Mother:

“For the last hundred years or so mankind has been suffering from a disease which seems to be spreading more and more and which has reached a climax in our times; it is what we may call “utilitarianism”. People and things, circumstances and activities seem to be viewed and appreciated exclusively form this angle. Nothing has any value unless it is useful. Certainly something
that is useful is better than something that is not. But first we must agree on what we describe as useful - useful to whom, to what, for what ?” (The Right Object of Education, p.13)

“At an age when they should be dreaming of beauty, greatness and perfection, dreams that my be too sublime for ordinary common sense, but which are nevertheless far superior to this dull good sense, children now dream of money and worry about how to earn it. So when they think of their studies, they think above all about what can be useful to them, so that later on when they grow up they can earn a lot of money” (ibid,14)

Children who are infected with this ‘disease of utilitarianism’ shall be out of place in an institution striving for integral education. But children who aspire for a higher and better life, who thirst for knowledge and perfection, who look forward eagerly to future that will be more totally true, will feel at home there and shall have enough opportunities to fulfill their aspirations. (Diary, p.15)

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

According to him we should know the history of great cultures and civilizations so that we have the knowledge and understanding of their eminent values. There has been cultures and civilizations in humanity’s past that based their self-development upon deeper and truer value-systems- Ancient Indian, Hellenic Greece, Renaissance Europe all are counted as the greatest ages of mankind. But the malady of modern man is the extreme importance he gives to the aptitude for and acquisition of money alone. It is
first and foremost a reversal of this perspective, of this economic barbarism that can give education a new value-orientation conation. He said:

“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 Life Divine, p.1055)

Writing in the Karmayogin in 1910 Sri Aurobindo spoke of the necessity of evolving A System of National Education of India. Many of his suggestions remain extremely relevant today. An education based upon the Indian spirit is indeed something we should have already developed for it would have served us well in meeting the many challenges of Indian mind which, functioning under an imitative foreign impress, has not been allowed to impress, has not been allowed to flower into its innate genius.(Value-education,p.132)

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF-DEVELOPING SOUL

The present education system is in a deteriorating state mainly because it is divorced from the real social content and soul goals. Education should enable
a human being to attain the greatest possible harmony, internal & external, spiritual and material, for the fullest possible development of human potentialities and capacities. Education is meant to develop every child’s character, personality and culture and as much knowledge as the child can assimilate not merely memorize.

Sri Aurobindo’s ideas of an integral, a universal education describe that all energies, all processes of education should be directed towards seeking this part of the being which exists veiled and concealed behind one’s familial, social, moral, religious, ethical and cultural background. It gives birth to a new arid vibrant method of education, revolutionary in its results for the individual, the society, the nation and also humanity. He said: “each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material.” (The Human Cycle, p.26-27)

**A VALUE-ORIENTATION BASED UPON THE INDIAN SPIRIT**

Education should not merely equip an individual to adjust with society to its customs and conventions, but it should enable him to bring desirable changes in the society. It is suggested that every educational institution from secondary school to University College should be developed to become an agency of change. Acquisition of values is needed for social transformation. If we concentrate on this, we should need of ancient Indian values because the solution can be found in the Indian Spirit, in her subtle and psychical sciences
of Yoga alone can bring about an accelerated development not only in the powers of the mind, but in the psychological personality and character of our people. This will be of great benefit not only for Indians themselves but a confident assertion of this culture’s unique contribution towards the concert of human progress. He said, “Spirituality (does not mean) the moulding of the whole type of the national being to suit the limited dogmas, forms, tenets of a particular religion, as was often enough attempted by the old societies...Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion.....” (The Renaissance in India)

**THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION**

It is said that education without aims is like a rudderless ship. We must therefore understand education in its widest and deepest sense. Education is meant to bring out the best in Man, to develop his potentialities to the maximum, to integrate him with himself, his surroundings, his society, his country and humanity to make him the “complete man”, the “integrated man”. In Sri Aurobindo’s words:

“That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate yet inseparable member.”

If this is the meaning of education, then what passes in its name today in our educational institutions, is obviously very far from the mark. The purpose of education cannot be, even at its best, to merely create a literate individual, or a
highly informed person crammed with information and facts, or to prepare an individual to find a job, or to create a good worker, or a skilled technician and scientist, or an efficient doctor or lawyer, or a capable industrialist or politician, even to create a good and law abiding citizen. These may be needed but they are not sufficient in themselves. Nor do they create the whole man or a great nation.

**The True Aim of Education**

Education should produce effective individuals in the sense that they realise their responsibilities towards the society. Being the citizen of the republic, we are constitutionally committed to democracy, social justice, equality of opportunity, secularism and above all to a welfare state. For Sri Aurobindo individual and social aims of education are not contrary to one another. He emphasised on both.“Everyone has in him something divine, something his own, a charm of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.” (*Diary*, p.13)

“The aim of education is not to prepare a man to succeed in life and society, but to increase his perfectibility to its utmost.”

(The Mother in *The Right Object of Education*, p.12)

“To be repeated each day by all the students:
It is not for our family, it is not to secure a good position, it is not to earn money, it is not to obtain a diploma, that we study.
We study to learn, to know, to understand the world, and for the sake of the joy that it gives us.” *(Diary, p.13)*

The purpose of education should be the development of the fullest possible capacities and potentialities, physical and spiritual of a ‘total man’. We should take into account the even more important aspects of the individual - his character, his personality, his values. Would we not like our children to be truthful, courageous, generous and benevolent? The question is what is meant by bringing out the best in man. India has always seen in him not merely a body, an emotional and aesthetic being, a rational and thinking mind, but much more fundamentally a soul, evolving gradually into a higher consciousness, towards truth, light, freedom, harmony and immortality. It is this concept which has made India a nation apart and our education too must reflect this attitude. It must lay stress on the emergence of the spirit, not rejecting but embracing and perfecting matter and life.

New education policy of India should be built on the foundation of ancient spirituality and modern culture and technical sophistication. It should develop scientific temper and spirit of enquiry in the students. One of the suggestions explicitly points out that education should integrate and unite the people of India, modernise society while preserving what is authentically Indian in our culture and spiritual heritage.

**THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF TRUE EDUCATION**

The education should make a man capable of earning his livelihood reasonably well to enjoy a happy and secure life while making effective contribution to the society and national effort of making India strong, advent
and prosperous. In his earlier preliminary writings on education, Sri Aurobindo speaks of three principles of education. It is easy to see that these are fundamental verities which, sincerely and comprehensively applied, could in themselves bring about a complete change in the way teaching and learning take place.

1. “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, rather 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.”

2. “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. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange before hand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a prearranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own dharma is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have
given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common. Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere, which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself, which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.”

3. “The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. The basis of a man’s nature is almost always, in addition to his soul’s past, his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil from which he draws sustenance, the air which he breadths, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is accustomed. They mould him not the less powerfully because insensibly, and from that then we must begin. We must not take up the nature by the roots from the earth in which it must grow or surround the mind with images and ideas of a life, which is alien to that in which it must physically move. If anything has to be brought in from outside it must be offered, not forced on the mind. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development. (A New Education for a New Consciousness, pp.119-121)

The teacher is only a guide and he shows the pupils how to perfect their instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages them in this process. Instead of imparting knowledge, he shows how to acquire knowledge for himself. The second principle is to help the growing soul to draw the best in
each individual and make it perfect for a noble cause. The third principle is to work from the near to the far, from the present to the future. The past is our foundation, the present is the material and the future is our goal.

**THE INDIVIDUAL, THE NATION AND HUMANITY**

Individual and social aims of education are not contrary to each other. In his Preface to *National Education* (1920) Sri Aurobindo spoke of the three things that had to be taken into account in any true or living education. The first was the individual in his commonness and in his uniqueness; the second was the nation or people and the third universal humanity. And of all these education had to take proper account if it wanted to be a living evocation of the powers of the mind and the spirit of the human being. It is without dispute that each element must be brought out to its fullest advantage, but there can be so many varying conceptions that may radically alter approaches to the problem. The unique features of the thought of India is that it has not looked at man merely from his outward aspect either as a physical being alone or a thinking, feeling and willing natural existence, a mental son of Physical Nature. (*Value-Education*, p.135)

The parts of the Physical Nature are as follow:

- The Mental Being
- The Aesthetic and Ethical side of the Being.
- The Vital Being
- The Body
- The Fourfold Personality
Nor has Indian thought conceived of man solely as a political, social and economic being. These things have been accepted as part of the instrumentation of man’s mind and life and action but not his whole being.

We have put before ourselves an integral goal, so also the process of education must be integral. According to the Indian yogic psychology, the personality of an individual has four main aspects:

a) The Physical, formed of our body and all its inner and outer functioning.

b) The Vital, the seat of our impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy, passions and will.

c) The Mind, formed of our thinking and reasoning parts.

d) The ‘Psychic’, or soul which is “the psychological centre of our being, the seat within of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know and manifest the truth.”

Up to now our education has been mostly confined to developing a very small part of our mental being. Recently, with the increase of interest in sports, the development of the physical has begun to gain importance. Conscious work on the vital is very limited and confined to the kindergarten. As for the psychic we are not even aware of its presence.

But our education, to be integral, must help all these four aspects of our personality to grow to the fullest. New methods and processes have to be found which will enable us to first become conscious of these different parts of our being, to develop them, and to integrate them fully with one another.
INTEGRAL EDUCATION

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Sri Aurobindo says, “The children should be helped to grow up into straightforward, frank, upright and honorable human beings ready to develop into divine nature.”

Education must prepare us for life in the widest sense. It must help blossom the very best in an individual, the unique and exquisite something which every individual is born to offer to the world.

Integral Education based on the Indian yogic science aims at the total and complete development of the individual: a strong, supple, well formed and healthy body; a sensitive unselfish and mature emotional nature, a positively energetic vital, an enlightened mind, a wide-ranging and vibrant intelligence, a strong will, a balanced and pleasant personality; and the subtler spiritual qualities that can channelise, harmonise and direct all the different parts of an individual into a life that is beneficial to the individual and to his fellow-men.

For no aspect of knowledge is outside the scope of an education aiming at integrality. Rather than a linear development, one adopts a spherical method that enfolds all the world and nature too and studies its many processes from the physical to the psychical. All subjects: ethics, aesthetics, the humanities and the sciences are means by which one can touch the overarching aim which is to arrive at a unity and synthesis of knowledge based upon a deeper poise of the being. It is such an Integral education built upon a deeper centre of gravity, a psychic and spiritual education that Sri Aurobindo envisioned for the youth of India. Commenting on this ‘knowledge of the Spirit’ that India nurtured through millennia, Mother remarked:
“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, CWM, Vol.12 p.251)

THE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION

An integral education would provide the best possible conditions and atmosphere for the flowering and growth of individual souls. It will focus at the all round development of a child through a perfect development of his body, emotions, mind and psychic and also thorough his spiritual development. We propose to study five aspects of education one by one and also their interrelationships in the following manner:

“The education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life....Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principle 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, “The Education of a Human Being” pp.5-6 in A New Approach to Education)

A LEARNING SOCIETY

Such a gigantic and difficult work cannot be the sole responsibility of the teachers or confined to the schools and educational institutions. The entire society must participate in it and its structure should be so designed that every aspect of social life and every experience of the child becomes a means and an opportunity for learning and progressing. The process of learning should expand into the homes and outside. The classroom should only be an occasion for a concentrated and systematic working on a specific topic.

LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

Finally this process of learning and education should not be confined to a short period in the early stages of the life of a child but should continue throughout life. The student must develop this constant thirst for knowledge and perfection, and the society should create educational institutions which can help him at each and every stage of his life and growth.

LOVE FOR THE MOTHERLAND

Another important aspect of education should be to develop a love for our Motherland, an understanding of our culture and the values which have given it birth. In the words of the Mother:
“Each nation has a psychic being which is its true being and moulds its destiny from behind the veil: It is the soul of the country, the national genius, the spirit of the people, the centre of national aspiration, the fountainhead of all that is beautiful, noble, great and generous in the life of the country. True patriots feel its presence as a tangible reality.”

THE FAMILY OF MAN

But our nationalism is not a narrow, fanatical self-assertion. We must also inculcate in the children the feeling of human unity, of the brotherhood of man, of the common destiny of mankind, enriched by the diversity and uniqueness of each individual and nation.

PSYCHICAL EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

Andre Malraux, the great French thinker and writer, speaking of the future, is said to have remarked that the Twenty First Century would either have to be spiritual or else it would not be. India with her ancient capacity, her long and thorough exploration of the subtle and psychical sciences, can take the lead here for all humanity. She must give her youth the opportunity of attempting an integral education aimed at bringing the fruits of the psychic and spiritual discovery into outer life and action in the world. This is Sri Aurobindo’s dream for his beloved motherland. (Value-Education, p.146)

“One can say that 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
become conscious of your psychic being and to live a psychic lift you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life you must no longer have an ego.”

The teachings of Sri Aurobindo are multi facet and all-embracing but unified by his central vision of a spiritual and divine destiny which must evolve. 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 beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During his whole life, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish upon earth this consciousness, which he called Supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it. For it is only the descent of the Supermind which can create the perfection dreamt of by all through the ages and remould, not only the individual but also his social existence, into a divine pattern. His teachings centered on the following:

(i) The integral growth and perfection of the individual.

(ii) Social transformation and the development of a collective life where each one can occupy the place for which he is best suited and pour him out as a force for the growth and perfection of humanity.

(iii) The realisation of human unity in a harmonious and organised diversity, where each nation will become conscious of its true genius and offer its best for the whole mankind. (*Towards the Future*)
Students often question the relevance of spiritualism in their modern life. They want to know why they should know what they are within and why should they bother to change themselves. With rapid changes in the socio-economic aspects of life all over the world, students are under intense pressure, and are seeking something, which will help them to successfully deal with union with the universal and transcendent existence. Sri Aurobindo’s approaches will help in the same.

In ancient India the principal aim of education was to enlighten and prepare human consciousness and its instruments for both the inner and outer realisation of the highest potential of students. For example, *Taittriya Upanishad* enumerates some methods by which the Self can be realised. They are:

1. Ritam (Righteousness)
2. Satyam (Truthfulness)
3. Tapasaya (Meditation)
4. Dama (Discipline of senses)
5. Sama (Discipline of organs of perception)
6. Swadhaya (Learning about the Self)

If we want to find out the spiritual foundation to education we should move to our ancient education systems and scriptures. For this, orientation to teachers to take up new roles and responsibilities and counseling to students will form a continuous process in the most organise and professional manner help them to cope with expectations and pressures of emerging demands.
THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

An important question with which we have to deal immediately concerns the meaning of “spiritual education” and its place in our system of education.

Today, because of the situation which prevails in India, there is a very strong emphasis on “secularising” education. On the other hand it is interesting to observe that all those who were the leaders of Indian Renaissance, who are revered by the country and who helped India to come out of the darkness into which she had sunk, nearly all of them affirmed categorically that the fountainhead of India's greatness is her spirituality. It is this, they insisted, which had to permeate every aspect of life, including education, if India had to rise again.

We find ourselves in front of a paradox. How do we reconcile the need for “secularism” with the need for “spirituality”? But this is not a real contradiction. The difficulty arises because we are confusing “morality” and “religion” with “spirituality”. Spirituality is something much deeper and higher than religion, where all divisions, fanaticism, exclusiveness, ritualism and religiosities fall away. Spirituality is the aspiration to find and express the Reality behind all existence, the unity behind the diversity of creation. Spirituality can embrace in its scope not only all religions, morality, and ethics, but even science and technology.

In fact this apparent contradiction may have become acute at present, but the problem is not new. This is what the Radhakrishnan Commission had to say on this point, as early as 1949, “To be a secular is not to be religiously illiterate. It is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious.”
In ancient India the seats of learning were the Ashrams of the Rishis. The son of the king and the son of the labourer went to the same Ashram and lived together and followed the same discipline. The stress was not on studying subjects but on Brahmavidya, the knowledge of Self and the knowledge of the Reality. Without this basis all other knowledges were considered limited and insufficient.

But they too had their importance and place in life. The Rishis also imparted training in state-craft, in the use of weapons and the art of war, in the 64 arts or kalas, even in the rearing of elephants and horses. There was no division between spiritual and secular.

It was because of such an outlook that ancient India was great in every field. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, India created “abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies, and sciences and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples, and public works, communities and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual and arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts - the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity.”

We see therefore that it is essential that we understand the true meaning of spirituality and yoga, their importance for India and the role they have to play in a truly national education. Because, without this understanding, we will continue to merely imitate, and that too poorly, some often discarded values and structures of a purely western education and culture. And we may then be able to contribute more meaningfully to a greater perfection in the world also.
THE TEACHER AND HIS ROLE

Sri Aurobindo discuss about the teacher in details. He says, “The school should be an opportunity for progress for the teacher as well as for the student. Each one should have the freedom to develop freely.” And “To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child, to learn always and everywhere.” (Diary, p.253) He gave a vast emphasis on the all aspect related to teacher and his students. We can summaries it in the following manner:

**Personality Traits of a Successful teacher**

In the words of the Mother, “The business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material.” (Diary, p.253)

“Be very calm and very patient; never get angry; one must be master of oneself in order to be a master of others.” (Diary, p.253)

**The Role of the Teacher**

“The teacher should be the living example of what he asks the students to become.” (Diary, p.254)

“The teacher must not be a machine for reciting lessons, he must be a psychologist and an observer.” (Diary, p.255)
“I must tell you that if a teacher wants to be respected, he must be respectable.” (The Mother “A good teacher” in *The True Teacher*, p.2)

“The teacher must absolutely possess the qualities and the consciousness he wants his students to acquire.” (*Diary*, p.261)

**Medium of Instruction and languages**

“The mother-tongue is the proper medium of education and therefore the first energies of the child should be directed to the thorough mastering of the medium. Almost every child has an imagination, an instinct for words, a dramatic faculty, a wealth of idea and fancy. These should be interested in the literature and history of the nation. Instead of stupid and dry spelling and reading books, looked on as a dreary and ungrateful task, he should be introduced by rapidly progressive stages to the most interesting parts of his own literature and the life around him and behind him, and they should be put before him in such a way as to attract and appeal to the qualities of which I have spoken. All other study at this period should be devoted to the perfection of the mental functions and the moral character. A foundation should be laid at this time for the study of history, science, philosophy, art, but not obtrusive and formal manner. Every child is a lover of interesting narrative, hero-worshipper and a patriot. Appeal to these qualities in him and through them let him master without knowing it the living and human parts of his nation’s history. Every child is an enquirer, an investigator, analyser, a merciless anatomist. Appeal to those qualities in him and let him acquire without knowing it the right temper and the necessary fundamental knowledge of the scientist. Every child has an insatiable intellectual curiosity and turn for
metaphysical enquiry. Use it to draw him on slowly to an understanding of the world and himself. Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power. Use it to give him the groundwork of the faculty of the artist.” (Diary, p.257-258)

**The Moral Training**

“There are three things which are of the utmost importance in dealing with a man’s moral nature, the emotions, the samskaras or formed habits and associations, and the svabhava or nature. The only for him to train himself morally is to habituate himself to the right emotions, the noblest associations, the best mental, emotional and physical habits and the following out in right action of the fundamental impulses of his essential nature. You can impose a certain discipline on children, dress them into a certain mould, lash them into a desired path, but unless you can get their hearts and natures on your side, the conformity to this imposed rule becomes a hypothetical and heartless, a conventional, often a cowardly compliance.” (Diary, p.258)

**THE INSTRUMENTS OF A TEACHER**

“The school be an opportunity for progress for the teacher as well as for the student. Each one should have the freedom to develop freely.” (Diary, p.226)

“The children must be happy to go to school, happy to learn, and the teacher must be their best friend who gives them the example of the qualities they must acquire.” (Diary, p.226)
There are some important aspects of education that is the instrument of teaching for teacher. Teaching, example and influence are the three instruments of a wise teacher. To this list may be added a fourth instrument named as -Compulsion-which is never used by a wise teacher but which plays a very important part in the present day system of education. We are discussing these in short:

**Compulsion:**

All compulsion in its essence and origin is the compulsion of the Supreme Spirit and may take a predominantly physical, vital, mental, psychic or spiritual form according to the need. The compulsion may be termed external when it is predominantly physical and vital and inner when it is predominantly psychic and spiritual.

“Compulsion is neither the best nor the most effective principle of education.” (*Diary*, p.258)

Since compulsion is completely out of place in an integral education setup, the discipline and order and an atmosphere for study and growth will be maintained there by the overall psychic and spiritual atmosphere and the calm and self-control of the teachers.

**Teaching:**
Teaching backed up by a subtle compulsion is almost the sole instrument of a teacher in traditional education. The effectivity of teaching depends essentially on two things:

(i) The quality of the instrument - this includes the fund of knowledge and the endowments of teaching abilities that a teacher may have.

(ii) Consciousness - of these two, the consciousness is by far the more important and crucial element. Teachers having greater consciousness will be superior to one who has merely a better instrument. However, if two teachers have the same level of consciousness then, obviously, the one with a better instrumentally will be superior.

The efficacy of teaching primarily depends on the consciousness with which it is done. It is a common experience of teachers that there are days when everything goes well - one is eloquent, students listen attentively and understand easily and in other days it is different. If the teachers are persons living in the ordinary surface consciousness and without a sufficient opening to deeper and higher parts, it will be impossible for them to impart any true education. Thus, when charged with a higher consciousness, teaching ceases to be mere teaching and tends to assume the efficacy of the two higher instruments - Example and Influence.

**Example:**
Another important aspect of good teaching is example. “The example is more powerful than the instruction; but it is nor 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 circumstances.” (Sri Aurobindo in *The True Teacher*, p.6-7)

“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 infinity better by example than by beautiful speeches.” (Diary, p.226)

**Influence:**

An influence can be predominantly physical, vital, mental, psychic, and 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.

When a teacher is not in full possession but open to psychic and spiritual influence, he can invoke it to make his teaching considerably more effective. “...when you go to class, everyday, before you go to class, you should say a
kind prayer, make an invocation to the Supreme Consciousness, and ask it to help you to bring all this mass, this mass of living matter under its influence. Then it will become interesting, living.” (Diary, p.230)

The power and efficacy of this instrument of educator depends on the level of consciousness behind it. As the consciousness grows deeper and higher it tends to become all-powerful-in fact, so powerful as to transform the whole being directly without even going through the process of purification.

TO THE PARENTS

“The education of human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life.” (The Mother, “The New Education of a Human Being” p.5 in A New Approach to Education)

“Most parents, for various reasons, give very little thought to the true education which should be imparted to children. When they have brought a child into the world, provided him with food, satisfied his various material needs and looked after his health more or less carefully, they think they have fully discharged their duty. Later on, they will send him to school and hand over to the teachers the responsibility for his education.”

TO THE STUDENTS

“You who are young, are the hope of the county. Prepare yourselves to be worthy of this expectation.”
“The Future is full of promise. Prepare yourself for it.”

“Of one thing you can be sure- your future is in your hands. You will become the man you want to be and the higher your ideal and your aspiration, the higher will be your realisation, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life.”

Sri Aurobindo instructed students in many dimensions to develop their abilities and become a good student and a good citizen. To become an ideal student he suggests control of impulses, use of the reason, work towards perfection and learning. “School is just a preparation to make the students capable of thinking, studying, progressing and becoming intelligent if they can-all that must be done during the entire life and not only in school.”

CONCLUSION

An ideal system of education would provide an environment and frameworks that facilitate a harmonious blending presumptions, main parts teachers and educated administrators is the fulfillment of two conditions: the pursuit of the truth and the pursuit of harmony. Neither of these pursuits can be meaningful or fruitful unless they are voluntary. The spirit of liberty is a necessary condition for the search for truth and for securing cooperation, mutual good, will and feeling. In brief, it may be said that Truth, Harmony and Liberty will be the underlying principles of an ideals system of education and Sri Aurobindo’s approach helps us to find the said virtues.
SUGGESTED READINGS

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THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

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