



# *Jyotirgamaya*



*The Gnostic Centre*

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# ***1. Aim of Life***

“An aimless life is always a miserable life.

Everyone of you should have an aim. But do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.

Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

But whatever your ideal, it cannot be perfectly realised unless you have realised perfection in yourself.”<sup>1</sup>

## **The Power of an Aim**

“Three school teachers who teach history in different schools are asked the same question: What is your present job? The first one replies, “Oh! I don’t do very much, I just teach history to school kids.” The second person thinks a little more deeply and says, “I am in the business of education.” The third person, in response to the same question looks straight into the eyes of the questioner, and in an inspired voice says, “I am shaping the destiny of the nation - I teach young minds how they can make history.””<sup>2</sup>

Reflect...

- What is the need of the hour... for you individually, for the collective(s) you are a part of... family, organisation, city, nation, world, humanity?
- How can you prepare yourself for it... at all levels of your being, in all aspects of your life?

## **Aspiration: a Meditation for Progress<sup>3</sup>**

“A Psychic fire within must be lit.....”

Sri Aurobindo

*Isn't the psychic fire always lit?*

“It is not always lit.”

*Then how to light it?*

“By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection. Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make - if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle-physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.”

## *2 A Story of Creation*

“One day “God” decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail. So, first of all, he emanated his consciousness (that is to say, he manifested his consciousness) by ordering this consciousness to realise a universe. This consciousness began by emanating four beings, four individualities which were indeed altogether very high beings, of the highest Reality. They were the being of consciousness, the being of love (of Ananda rather), the being of life and the being of light and knowledge – but consciousness and light are the same thing. There we are then: consciousness, love and Ananda, life and truth – truth, that’s the exact word. And naturally, they were supremely powerful beings, you understand. They were what are called in that tradition the first emanations, that is, the first formations. And each one became very conscious of its qualities, its power, its capacities, its possibilities, and, suddenly forgot each in its own way that it was only an emanation and an incarnation of the Supreme. And so this is what happened: when light or Consciousness separated from the divine Consciousness, that is, when it began to think it was the divine Consciousness and that there was nothing other than itself, it suddenly became obscurity and inconscience. And when Life thought that all life was in itself and that there was nothing else but its life and that it did not depend at all upon the Supreme, then its life became death. And when Truth thought that it contained all truth, and that there was no other truth than itself, this Truth became falsehood. And when love or Ananda was convinced that it was the supreme Ananda and that there was no other than itself and its felicity, it became suffering. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly. Now, that consciousness (if you like to call it the Divine Mother, the Supreme Consciousness), when she saw this she was very disturbed, you may be sure, she said to herself: “This has really not succeeded.” So she turned back to the Divine, to God, the Supreme, and she asked him to come to her aid. She said to him: “This is what has happened. Now what is to be done?” He said: “Be-

gin again, but try to manage in such a way that the beings do not become so independent! .. They must remain in contact with you, and through you with me.” And it was thus that she created the gods, who were quite docile and not so proud, and who began the creation of the world. But as the others had come before them, at every step the gods met the others. And it was in this way that the world changed into a battlefield, a place of war, strife, suffering, darkness and all the rest, and for each new creation the gods had to fight with the others who had gone ahead: they had preceded them, they had plunged headlong into matter; and they had created all this disorder and the gods had to put straight all this confusion. That is where the gods came from. They are the second emanations. ...

It is said also – that is the continuation of the story or rather its beginning - that the Divine wanted his creation to be a free creation. He wanted all that went forth from him to be absolutely independent and free in order to be able to unite with him in freedom, not through compulsion. He did not want that they should be compelled to be faithful, compelled to be conscious, compelled to be obedient. They had to do it spontaneously, through the knowledge and conviction that that was much better. So this world was created as a world of total freedom, freedom of choice. And it is in this way that at every moment everyone has the freedom of choice – but with all the consequences. If one chooses well, it is good, but if one chooses ill, ah well, what’s to happen happens - that is what has happened!

The story may be understood in a much more occult and spiritual sense. But it is like all the stories of the universe: if you want to narrate them so that people may understand, they become stories for children. But if one knows how to see the truth behind the symbols, one understands everything. Even with what I have told you, which seems like a little story for children, even like that, if you understand what I have told you and the meaning of what I have told you, you can have the secret of things.

There are traditions which say that it is an “accident”, in the sense that it could have been otherwise. But it happened like that. It is true, it came about like that. Only, it was quite understandable that, every one of these

elements having its origin in the Supreme, being quite close to the Emanation at that moment, quite close to the Origin, carried in itself the consciousness of its divinity and superiority, necessarily, since this is not a creation made with something foreign to the Divine: it is simply the Divine who has emanated himself, as though he were looking at himself – he objectivises himself in order to become aware of all that he is; instead of being in an inner static state of concentration in which all is unmanifested, he projects that outside himself “in order to see”, as though he wanted to see all that is within him, that is, all the infinity of possibilities. So, all was possible. It happened like that – it could have happened otherwise. Besides, nothing tells you that alongside our universe such as it is, there do not exist others which are so different that there cannot be any relation between one universe and another. It can very well be that our universe is not the only exteriorisation of the Divine. Ours is such as we know it; there may be others which are in much less sorry a state than this one! Besides, it is lamentable only in its appearance. If you go behind the appearance, you become aware that it is not lamentable at all. It is only one way of seeing. ...

### **The four emanations**

They are precisely those four persons who have naturally put forth innumerable emanations, which have again put forth others, which have made formations. And so there are millions and millions and millions of them, and it is these who have formed between themselves a certain habit and have the logic to preserve it and persist in not wanting any other rule than theirs to govern. These are what are called in India the Asuras, the beings of darkness. It is through a sort of logic that they are like that. They began by going wrong, they continue. Now, I must say, there are some among them who change their mind. But this is mentioned in the Gita also; I believe they speak of those who will be converted, and then of those who absolutely refuse any conversion, who prefer to disappear, to be destroyed rather than be converted. And that's how it is. Some are of one kind, others of another. ...

There is one of them who has been converted, and who even collaborates, he is the one of Consciousness and Light.

...but his power remains. This becomes a formidable being.

...when it became inconscience or darkness, it produced innumerable formations - emanations, formations, creations. And its conversion does not mean that all the rest follow. They obey that same law of freedom, freedom of choice. They may be converted or not. There are those who are converted, there are those who refuse. And I believe that in fact there are many more who refuse.

But the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of the Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive. Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of the Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organiser of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of the Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come - naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed. We may expect all possible catastrophes.”<sup>1</sup>

Reflect...

- Review the events of your life in the light of the above explanation.
  - Review the problems India faces in the light of the above explanation.
- What can help us to overcome them?



## **The Battle of Life: A Vedic View**

“Once upon a time... for that’s how stories begin... but in this case this once upon is the ever-present moment, for the story of the lost cows and Angirasa Rishis repeats itself constantly in our lives, since ages gone by.

Outwardly the story is simple... the Dasyus who are the antagonists steal the cows (and horses) which are the wealth of the Devas, from the Aryans, and hide them in a deep dark cave. The Angirasa Rishis come to the help of the Devas and set out to search for the cows. Upon finding them, they free them from the clutches of the Dasyus who they defeat and annihilate, and return the cows (and the horses) to the Devas.

Inwardly the meaning is simple as well, yet profound and relevant across ages and cultures. The Dasyus symbolise the powers that negate divinity and progress, the movements that narrow and limit our being, and maintain separateness, oppose all attempts at self-giving and self-exceeding. The Devas symbolise the opposite. The Aryan is one who is aligned in his being and actions to the divine. The wealth in the form of cows and horses symbolises divine knowledge, light and force, leading to divine bliss or ananda. The hiding of this wealth in the dark cave, i.e. the subconscious, is the movement of closing in upon oneself, refusing to reveal the treasures given to us by the divine in the form of our potential for divine work; refusing to share these or even use these. The Angirasa Rishis are the powers of our higher being, and also powers accessible to us through our invocation and the grace of the divine, such as Will (Agni), Illumined Mind (Indra), Bliss (Soma), Creative Word (Brihaspati), Intuition (Sarama).

The battle therefore is between our higher being and the nether self. The treasure to be regained is the divine light, knowledge, force and consequent bliss. The gain is our progress towards the divine. These inner movements of limiting our potential, refusing to give of ourselves to life or the work or relationship or the divine, hoarding up our capabilities like thieves - these occur in all of us. So too the opposite movements of expansion, self-giving, sharing, progress. Each moment we have a choice... which aspect of ourselves will we align to, how much of light we will allow to spread out of the cave of the subconscious within us - making it conscient

in the process, and open ourselves to the action of the higher self and the higher powers, to lead us closer to the divine.”<sup>2</sup>

“I am the Pani, I the Vritra;  
I am the Surya, Agni and Usha.  
The fallen self of God am I;  
The risen-rising also I.  
The Night assails me with its sleeping Might;  
The Dawn pervades me, awakening Light.  
Who can say what Path I choose:  
Cave-bound remain, all light refuse;  
Or march out with Indra, Soma-infused.

The battle has raged, ages gone by;  
The Road to Swar is long and high.  
The choice is mine, has always been;  
An inevitable Fate, long foreseen.  
The One in me who knows it all,  
Sleeps awhile, pretends a fall.  
Its Might awakened by the Mother’s smile,  
Comes forth to knit this being fragile.  
Bit by bit the cave is conquered,  
The lure of the Lord draws me onward.  
The battle becomes a happy climb;  
The journey retold many a times.”<sup>3</sup>

Reflect...

- What is the inner battle that goes on in you and what helps the light in you to win?
- What are the implications of this Vedic view for what is currently happening in the society, and its evolution towards a higher state?

### ***3. Planes & Parts of the Being***

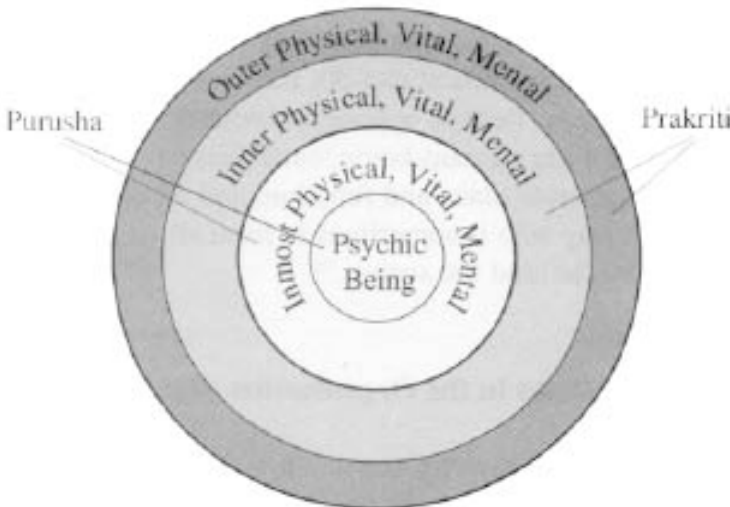
Sri Aurobindo has described the different planes and parts of the human consciousness in great detail giving us one of the most comprehensive, complex and scientific understandings of the human personality and subjectivity.

According to Sri Aurobindo there are two systems that can help us to understand the structure of the human being. He states,

“There are, in fact two systems simultaneously active in the organization of the being and its parts: one is concentric, a series of rings or sheaths with psychic at centre; another is vertical, an ascension and descent like a flight of steps.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **The Parts of the Being**

“The concentric system of the organisation of the human individual is like a series of rings or sheaths, consisting of the outer being, the inner being and the inmost being.”<sup>2</sup>



Source: A.S. Dalal

## **The Outer Being**

The outer being is our surface personality and has three parts – the physical, the vital and the mental.

The Physical: The outer physical consciousness of the human being is characterised by inertia, resistance to change, mechanical repetitiveness, slow arousal and passivity. It is the resistance to change in the human body that gives it a fixed form and stability. Body consciousness is a part of the physical consciousness and is individualised and unique for each person.

The Vital: The outer vital consciousness or the Life-force contains the desires, feelings, instincts, impulses, passions and ambitions of the human being.

“It is concerned with self-affirmation, with life-growth, with possession, with satisfaction of impulse, with satisfaction of all desire.”<sup>3</sup>

The vital is the storehouse of energy and supports all dynamic human action.

The Mental: According to Sri Aurobindo,

“Mind is an instrument for analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge.”<sup>4</sup>

“Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer.”<sup>5</sup>

The outer Mind of the human being is concerned with functions of sensation, perception, conception and creative thought.

The interaction between these three parts of the being is complex and they act in different combinations e.g., the physical-vital, the vital-mind, the physical-mental etc.

## **The Inner Being (The Subliminal)**

“Behind the surface or frontal consciousness of the outer being there is an inner or subliminal consciousness upon all the three levels – physical, vital, mental. Thus there is an inner mind, an inner vital and an inner physical. The inner mind is in touch with the universal mind, the inner vital with the universal life-forces, and the inner physical with the universal physical forces around us. Thus whereas the outer being knows things only indirectly from their outer touches as perceived through the senses and the outer mind, the inner being is directly aware of the surrounding universal forces that act through us.”<sup>6</sup>

## The Inmost Being – The Psychic Being

“Sri Aurobindo uses the term “psychic being” (from Greek *psukhe*, meaning the soul) for the inmost being which supports the outer and the inner beings. The psychic being in its essence, called the psyche or psychic entity, is a spark or portion of the Divine present in all things and creatures. In the course of evolution the psyche grows into an individual psychic personality in the human being and is then called the psychic being.

Whereas the universal Self, the Atman, is unborn, and stands above the evolutionary process and is unaffected by it, the psychic being is the evolving soul which, though immortal, passes through cycles of physical birth and death, growing from life to life.”<sup>7</sup>

## **The Planes of the Being**

“The vertical system of organisation of the structure of human individual is like a staircase, consisting of various levels, planes or gradations of consciousness ranging from the lowest – the Inconscient – to the highest, Sachchidananda.”<sup>8</sup>

Besides the conscious outer personality made up of physical, vital and mental layers, there are planes of consciousness that are below or above the general human perception. The layers below the conscious human mental perception are the Inconscient and the Subconscient and above are the Superconscient.



Source: A.S. Dalal

## The Inconscious

“The Inconscious is sometimes known as the Non-Being or Asat and is characterised by darkness, inertia, insensibility, disharmony and disintegration. It harbours forces that are interested in the maintenance of all the negations of the Divine – error, unconsciousness, pain, suffering, obscurity, death, weakness, illness, disharmony and evil. Yet in this very base all that is Divine is involved and pressing to evolve into Light, Consciousness, Power, Perfection, Beauty and Love.”

## The Subconscious

“This is the half-conscious part in us. ‘Sub’ means ‘below’ the consciousness. In the subconscious there is an obscure mind full of obstinate *sanskaras*, impressions, associations, fixed notions, habitual reactions formed by our past, an obscure vital full of the seeds of habitual desires, sensations, nervous reactions, a most obscure material that governs much that has to do with the conditions of the body. It is largely responsible for our illnesses; chronic or repeated illnesses are indeed mainly due to the subconscious and its obstinate memory and habit of repetition of whatever has impressed itself on body consciousness. The Subconscious is the cause why people say that character cannot be changed, the cause also of constant return of things one hoped to have got rid of forever. All that is suppressed without

being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as a seed ready to surge up or sprout at any moment.”<sup>10</sup>

### **The Superconscient**

“The Superconscient consists of higher levels of consciousness above the ordinary mind from which the higher consciousness comes down into the lower planes of the being. “The role of the superconscient has been to evolve slowly the spiritual man out of the mental half-animal.”\* The superconscient includes the higher planes of mind – Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind – as well as what is beyond mind, namely, Supermind and the Supreme Reality called Sachchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).”<sup>11</sup>

### **Integral Education for the Fivefold Being**<sup>12</sup>

## ***4. Becoming a True Individual***

### **How can one unify one's being?**

“The first step is to find, deep within oneself, behind the desires and impulses, a luminous consciousness which is always present and manifests the physical being.

Ordinarily, one becomes aware of the presence of this consciousness only when one has to face some danger or an unexpected event or a great sorrow.

One has, then, to come into conscious contact with that and learn to do so at will. The rest will follow.

Generally it is in the heart, behind the solar plexus, that one finds this luminous presence.”<sup>1</sup>

“The work of unifying the being consists of:

- (1) becoming aware of one's psychic being.
- (2) Putting before the psychic being, as one becomes aware of them, all one's movements, impulses, thoughts and acts of will, so that the psychic being may accept or reject each of these movements, impulses, thoughts or acts of will. Those that are accepted will be kept and carried out; those that are rejected will be driven out of the consciousness so that they may never come back again.

It is a long and meticulous work that may take years to be done properly.”<sup>2</sup>

### **What is the way to establish unity and homogeneity in our being?**

“Keep the will firm. Treat the recalcitrant parts as disobedient children. Act upon them constantly and patiently. Convince them of their error.

In the depths of your consciousness is the psychic being, the temple of the Divine within you. This is the centre round which should come about the unification of all these divergent parts, all these contradictory movements of your being. Once you have got the consciousness of the psychic



being and its aspiration, these doubts and difficulties can be destroyed. It takes more or less time, but you will surely succeed in the end. Once you have turned to the Divine, saying, “I want to be yours”, and the Divine has said, “Yes”, the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, “I am here and I am yours”, then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Remain Individualised In a Collectivity**

“You must also understand that you are not separate individualities, that life is a constant exchange of forces, of consciousness, of vibrations, of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd, you see: when everyone pushes all go forward, and when all recede, everyone recedes. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. There are all the time forces and influences acting and reacting upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you, and it is only when they have gone well in and come out as if they came from you, that you become aware of them. How many times people meet those who are nervous, angry, moody, just like that, without knowing why. Why is it that when you play against certain people you play very well, but when you play against others you cannot play? And those very quiet people, not at all wicked, who suddenly become furious when they are in a furious crowd! And no one knows who started it: it is something that went past and swept off the consciousness. There are people who can let out vibrations like this and others respond without knowing why. Everything is like that, from the smallest to the biggest things.

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self? – the self which is above all intermixture, that is, what I call the Truth of your being. And as long as you are not

conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all kinds of things, without taking any note of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions are a formidable influence which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it. One believes that one thinks “like that”, but in truth it is the collectivity which thinks “like that”. The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals with similar qualities, of similar categories, well, when they are alone these individuals are at least two degrees better than people of the same category in a crowd. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness, and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there is but one means: to become consciousness of oneself, more and more consciousness and more and more attentive.

Try this little exercise: at the beginning of the day say: “I won’t speak without thinking of what I say.” You believe, don’t you, that you think all that you say! It is not at all true, you will see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out and that you are compelled to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

I have known people who were very scrupulous about not telling lies, but all of a sudden, when together in a group, instead of speaking the truth they would spontaneously tell a lie; they did not have the intention of doing so, they did not think of it a minute before doing it, but it came “like that”. Why? – because they were in the company of liars; there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they had quite simply caught the malady!

It is thus that gradually, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and much attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and then to become master of oneself.”<sup>4</sup>

### **One’s Own Way Of Thinking**

“One needs years of very attentive, very careful, very reasonable, very coherent work, organisation, selection, construction, in order to succeed simply in forming, oh, simply this little thing, one’s own way of thinking!

One believes he has his own way of thinking. Not at all. Its depends totally upon the people one speaks with or the books he has read or on the

mood he is in. It also depends on whether you have a good or a bad digestion, it depends on whether you are shut up in a room without proper ventilation or whether you are in the open air; it depends upon whether you have a beautiful landscape before you; it depends on whether there is sunshine or rain! You are not aware of it, but you think all kinds of things, completely different according to a heap of things which have nothing to do with you!

And for this to become a coordinated, coherent, logical thought, a long thorough work is necessary.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Crystallising Your Thought**

“The usefulness of work is nothing else but (this): to crystallize this mental power. For, what you learn (unless you put it in practice by some work or deeper studies), half of what you learn, at least, will vanish, disappear with time. But it will leave behind one thing: the capacity of crystallizing your thought, making something clear out of it, something precise, exact and organized. And that is the true usefulness of work: to organize your cerebral capacity....

I am going to explain it to you: when you have understood, it forms a little crystal in you, like a little shining point. And when you have put in many, many, many of these, then you will begin to be intelligent. That is the utility of work, not simply to stuff the head with a heap of things that take you nowhere.”<sup>6</sup>

# 5. Inner & Outer Attitudes

“Broadly speaking, there are two divisions in the human being - the **outer being**, which constitutes the personality (from the Latin *persona*, “mask”), and the **inner being**, the true being or the Person who uses the outer mask of the personality.\* The outer being is only an instrument as a means of expression; it is not one’s real self. However, ordinarily we are identified with the outer being and regard it as our self. Therefore it is the outer being that usually expresses itself in our attitudes and actions.”<sup>1</sup>

## Attitudes of the Outer Being

<i>Attitudes towards Life</i>	<i>of the Physical</i>	<i>of the Vital</i>	<i>of the Mental</i>
	Aimlessness; life governed by habit & routine.	Pursuit of wealth, sex & power; life governed by desire.	Pursuit of knowledge; life governed by moral & mental principles.
<i>Oneself &amp; Others<sup>+</sup></i>	Identification with the body.	Identification with impulses & emotions.	Identification with the mind.
<i>Work</i>	Chore; drudgery.	Means of earning, exercising power & exhibiting one’s skills & abilities.	Performance of duty; rendering a service; means of self-expression & self-improvement.
<i>Difficulties</i>	Indifference; passive resignation; avoidance or escapism.	Struggle, anxiety & tension; irritability & aggression.	Dispassionate problem solving.

## Inner Attitudes

<b><i>Towards Life</i></b>	Search for the purpose and meaning of life; pursuit of inner growth; life governed by what is felt to be the truth of one's inner being.
<b><i>Oneself &amp; Others</i></b>	Looking upon oneself and others as more than a physical-vital-mental being - as a Person.
<b><i>Work</i></b>	A means of inner growth, self-offering and self-consecration.
<b><i>Difficulties</i></b>	Viewing difficulties with equanimity, as opportunities for inner growth.

\* In the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy, the outer and the inner divisions of the being are called Prakriti (Nature) and Purusha (Person).

+ The basic attitude towards oneself and others pertains to identification. All other attitudes stem from the nature of one's identification.

Note: Since all human beings have physical, vital and mental components in the make-up of their personality, the attitudes pertaining to these parts of the being exist in everybody. The attitudes vary in different persons in the degree of their predominance, depending on the extent to which each of the three parts of the being is dominant in a person.

## *6. Knowledge and Learning*

### The Vedic way<sup>1</sup>

“Veda, then, is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies. In that original epoch thought proceeded by other methods than those of our logical reasoning and speech accepted modes of expression which in our modern habits would be inadmissible. The wisest then depended on inner experience and the suggestions of the intuitive mind for all knowledge that ranged beyond mankind's ordinary perceptions and daily activities. Their aim was illumination, not logical conviction, their ideal the inspired seer, not the accurate reasoner.”

“In the Vedic idea of the revelation there is no suggestion of the miraculous or the supernatural. The Rishi who employed these faculties, had acquired them by a progressive self-culture. Knowledge itself was a traveling and a reaching, or a finding and a winning; the revelation came only at the end, the light was the prize of a final victory. There is continually in the Veda this image of the journey, the soul's march on the path of Truth. On that path, as it advances, it also ascends; new vistas of power and light open to its aspiration; it wins by a heroic effort its enlarged spiritual possessions.”

“The hymn was to the Rishi who composed it a means of spiritual progress for himself and for others. It rose out of his soul, it became a power of his mind, it was the vehicle of his self-expression in some important or even critical moment of his life's inner history.”

“...in the early days the priest was also the teacher and seer.”

Reflect...

- What kind of knowledge is deeply satisfying for you and how do you gain it, through what faculties?

## **The Triple Method of Learning in Ancient India**

1. Repetition
2. Meditation
3. Discussion

“The awakening of illumination was actively effected by the triple method of repetition, meditation and discussion. *Avrtti* or repetition was meant to fill the recording part of the mind with the *sabda* or words, so that the *artha* or meaning might of itself rise from within: needless to say, a mechanical repetition was not likely to produce this effect. There must be that clear still receptivity and that waiting upon the word or thing with the contemplative part of the mind which is what the ancient Indians meant by *dhyana* or meditation. All of us have felt, when studying a language, difficulties which seemed insoluble while grappling with the text suddenly melt away and a clear understanding arise without assistance from book or teacher after putting away the book from our mind for a brief period.”<sup>2</sup>

## **The Integral way**<sup>3</sup>

“Teaching, example, influence, - these are the three instruments of the Guru. But the wise Teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he will throw in only what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow under the divine fostering within.”

**Example:** “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.”

**Influence:** “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.”

### **The Three Principles of True Teaching**<sup>4</sup>

“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. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand 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 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.

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 breathes, 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 its 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. There are souls which naturally revolt from their surroundings and seem to belong to another age and clime. Let them be free to follow their bent; but the majority languish, become empty, become artificial, if artificially moulded into an alien form. It is God's arrangement that they should belong to a particular nation, age, society, that they should be children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education."

Reflect...

- What do these three principles of true teaching mean to you?
  1. Nothing can be taught
  2. Mind has to be consulted in its own growth
  3. To work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be.

### **The Finest Present one can give to a Child**

“Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness beyond the frame of his normal life through which he can participate in a higher and vaster life. Indeed, in all exceptional beings it is always this consciousness that governs their life, and organises both the circumstances of their life and their individual reaction to these circumstances. What the human mind does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the centre of the being radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness. Some have a vague perception of its presence; a good many children are under its influence which shows itself very distinctly at times in their spontaneous actions and even in their words. Unfortunately parents most often do not know what it is and do not understand what is happening in their children; therefore their reaction with regard to these phenomena is not happy and all their education consists in making the child as unconscious as possible in this domain, to concentrate all its attention upon external things, thus forming the habit of looking upon those alone as important.”<sup>5</sup>

“Essentially, the only thing you should do assiduously is to teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves and to will what they want to be. That is infinitely more important than teaching them what happened on earth in former times, or even how the earth is built, or even... indeed, all sorts of things which are quite a necessary grounding if you want to live the ordinary life in the world, for if you don't know them, anyone will immediately put you down intellectually: “Oh, he is an idiot, he knows nothing.”

But still, at any age, if you are studious and have the will to do it, you can also take up books and work; you don't need to go to school for that. There are enough books in the world to teach you things.”<sup>6</sup>

“It is an invaluable possession for every living being to have learnt to know himself and to master himself. To know oneself means to know the motives of one’s actions and reactions, the why and the how of all that happens in oneself. To master oneself means to do what one has decided to do, to do nothing but that, not to listen to or follow impulses, desires or fancies....

The finest present one can give to a child would be to teach him to know himself and to master himself.”<sup>7</sup>

“There is another quality that must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.”<sup>8</sup>

Reflect...

- What is the inner quality of your interaction with your students?

## ***7. The Human Mind***

“The “Mind” in the ordinary use of the word covers indiscriminately the whole consciousness, for man is a mental being and mentalises everything; but in the language of this yoga the words “mind” and “mental” are used to connote specially the part of the nature which has to do with cognition and intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, the reactions of thought to things, with the truly mental movements and formations, mental visions and will etc., that are part of his intelligence.”<sup>1</sup>

“Mind, as we know it, is a reflective mirror which receives presentations or images of a pre-existent Truth or Fact, either external to or at least vaster than itself.”<sup>2</sup>

“...Mind is only a preparatory form of our consciousness. Mind is an instrument of analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Myths about the Role of the Mind**

#### **1) That the Mind is an instrument of Knowledge**

“It is not an instrument of knowledge.

But it can use knowledge for action, to organise action. It is an instrument of organisation and formation, very powerful and very capable when it is well developed.”<sup>4</sup>

#### **2) It is in the Mind that thoughts originate**

“The mind is actually like an antenna, a television set and a viewer combined in one. It tunes in and receives signals which it translates into some form. If it is well tuned, the reception is sharp; if the machinery is functioning well, the form is clear. And one can select what to view, on which channel.”<sup>5</sup>

## **The True Role of the Mind**

“Mind is a passage, not a culmination.” (The Mother)

### **1) Formation and Organisation of Action**

“For the true role of the mind is the formation and organisation of action. The mind has a formative and organising power, and it is that which puts the different elements of inspiration in order, for action, for organising action. And if it would only confine itself to that role, receiving inspiration – whether from above or from the mystic centre of the soul – and simply formulating the plan of action – in broad outline or in minute detail, for the smallest things of life or the great terrestrial organisations – it would amply fulfill its function...

...One can feel this very clearly when one wants to organise one’s life, for instance – to put the different elements in their place in one’s existence. There is a certain intellectual faculty which immediately puts each thing in its place and makes a plan and organises. And it is not a knowledge that comes from the mind, it is a knowledge which comes, as I said, from the mystic depths of the soul or from a higher consciousness; and the mind concentrates it in the physical world and organises it to give a basis of action to the higher consciousness.

One has this experience very clearly when one wants to organise one’s life.”<sup>6</sup>

### **2) Controlling Force, an Instrument of Control**

“Then, there is another use. When one is in contact with one’s reason, with the rational centre of the intellect, the pure reason, it is a powerful control over all vital impulses. All that comes from the vital world can be very firmly controlled by it and used in a disciplined and organised action. But it must be at the service of something else – not work for its own satisfaction.

These are the two uses of the mind: it is a controlling force, an instrument of control, and it is a power of organisation. That is its true place.”<sup>7</sup>

“...it is an instrument of formation, of organisation and action, and it is in these functions that it attains its full value and real usefulness.”<sup>8</sup>

“The utmost mission of Mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and this higher ascension.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Do you know that your Brain...**<sup>10</sup>

- Is more flexible and multidimensional than any super computer.
- Can learn seven facts per second, every second, for the rest of your life and still have plenty of room left to learn more.
- Will improve with age if you use it properly.
- Is just not in your head. “...intelligence is located not only in the brain but in the cells that are distributed throughout the body....The traditional separation of mental process, including emotions, from the body is no longer valid.”
- Is unique. Of six billion people currently living and the more than ninety billion people who have ever lived, there has never, unless you are an identical twin, been anyone quite like you. Your creative gifts, your fingerprints, your expressions, your DNA, your dreams are unprecedented and unique.
- Is capable of making a virtually unlimited number of synaptic connections or potential patterns of thought.
- That an average human brain can comprehend about 500 words per minute, but the average human being can speak only about 100 words per minute?

## The Layers of the Mind<sup>11</sup>

### Human Mind: Antahkarana

(instrument of the educationist)

consists of four layers

- 1. "...*Citta* or storehouse of memory... All experience lies within us as passive or potential memory; active memory selects or takes what it requires from that storehouse."
- 2. "Mind proper or *manas*, the sixth sense of our Indian psychology, in which all the others are gathered up. The function of the mind is to receive the images of things translated into sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, the five senses and translate these again into thought-sensations. It receives also images of its own direct grasping and forms them into mental impressions. These sensations and impressions are the material of thought, not thought itself; but it is exceedingly important that thought should work on sufficient and perfect material."
- 3. "...intellect or *buddhi*, which is the real instrument of thought and that which orders and disposes of the knowledge acquired by the other parts of the machine."

<u>Left-hand</u> (comprehensive, creative & synthetic)		<u>Right-hand</u> (critical & analytic)	
FUNCTION	FACULTY	FUNCTION	FACULTY
Distinguish	Comparison	Comprehend	Observation
Compare	Reasoning	Command	Memory
Classify		Grasp	Imagination
Generalise		Hold	Judgement
Deduce		Manipulate	
Infer		Judge in their own right	
Conclude			

- 4. Higher Faculty: If developed in man, chiefly known to us from the phenomena of genius:
  - sovereign discernment
  - intuitive perception of truth
  - plenary inspiration of speech
  - direct vision of knowledge

## **Educating the Mind**

“A true education of the mind, that which will prepare man for a higher life, has five principal phases. Normally these come follow one after another, but in exceptional individuals they may come alternately or even simultaneously. These five phases, in brief, are:

- Development of the power of concentration, the capacity of attention.
- Development of the capacities of expansion, wideness, complexity and richness.
- Organisation of ideas around a central idea or a higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life.
- Thought control, rejection of undesirable thoughts, so that one may, in the end think only what one wants and when one wants it.
- Development of mental silence, perfect calm and a more and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being.”<sup>12</sup>

## **Remain Silent**

“... to know how to remain silent before what one does not understand is one of the things which would help most in the progress – to know how to remain silent, not only externally, without uttering a word, but assert its ignorance with its usual presumptuousness, does not try to understand with an instrument that is incapable of understanding, that it may know its own weakness and open simply, quietly, waiting until the time has come for it to receive the light, because only the Light, the true Light, can give it understanding. It is not all that it has learnt nor all that it has observed nor all its so-called experience of life, it is something else which is completely beyond it. And until this something else – which is the expression of the grace – manifests within it, if, very quietly, very modestly the mind remains silent and does not try to understand and, above all, to judge, the things would go much faster.

The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.



To learn to be quiet and silent... When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head – I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! But inside in your head – remain quiet. And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.”<sup>13</sup>

### **How does it manifest?**

“...It is something which takes place without any reasoning, any analysis, any deduction. Suddenly one knows a thing, without having reasoned, without having analysed, without deducing, without having reflected, without having made use of one's brain, without having put together the elements of the problem and tried to resolve them – it is not like that. All of a sudden it comes like a light in the consciousness; it can be in the head, it can be lower down, elsewhere; it is a light in the consciousness which brings a precise knowledge on a particular point and it is not at all a result of analysis and deductions. In fact, it is the first manifestation of the knowledge by identity...”<sup>14</sup>

### **The Faculty of the Future**

“This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quiet common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man, this ability to deceive himself and others.”<sup>15</sup>

## **A Note for Teachers**

“The fact is that, like all the other parts of the human being, the mind too needs rest and this rest it will not have unless we know how to give it. The art of giving rest to one’s mind is a thing to be acquired. Changing mental activity is a way of rest; but the greatest possible rest lies in silence. And in the case of mental faculties, a few minutes passed in the calm of silence mean a more effective rest than hours of sleep.

When one will have learnt to silence the mind at will and concentrate it in the receptive silence, then there will be no problem that one cannot solve, no mental difficulty to which a solution will not be found. Thought, while in agitation, becomes confused and impotent; in an attentive tranquility, the light can manifest itself and open new horizons to man’s capacity.”<sup>16</sup>

## **Establishing Peace in the Mind**

“First of all, you must want it.

And then you must try and persevere, continue trying. What I have just told you is a very good means. Yet there are others also. You sit quietly, to begin with; and then, instead of thinking of fifty things, you begin saying to yourself, “Peace, peace, peace, peace, peace, calm, peace!” You imagine peace and calm. You aspire, ask that it may come: “Peace, peace, calm.” And then, when something comes and touches you and acts, say quietly, like this, “Peace, peace, peace.” Do not look at the thoughts, do not listen to the thoughts, you understand. You must not pay attention to everything that comes. You know, when someone bothers you a great deal and you want to get rid of him, you don’t listen to him, do you? Good! You turn your head away (gesture) and think of something else. Well, you must do that: when thoughts come, you must not look at them, must not listen to them, must not pay any attention at all, you must behave as though they did not exist, you see! And then, repeat all the time like a kind of - how shall I put it? - as an idiot does, who repeats the same thing always. Well, you must do the same thing; you must repeat, “Peace, peace, peace.” So

you try this for a few minutes and then do what you have to do; and then, another time, you begin again; sit down again and then try. Do this on getting up in the morning, do this in the evening when going to bed. You can do this... look, if you want to digest your food properly, you can do this for a few minutes before eating. You can't imagine how much this helps your digestion! Before beginning to eat you sit quietly for a while and say, "Peace, peace, peace!" and everything becomes calm. It seems as though all the noises were going far, far, far away (Mother stretches out her arms on both sides) and then you must continue; and there comes a time when you no longer need to sit down, and no matter what you are doing, no matter what you are saying, it is always "Peace, peace, peace." Everything remains here, like this, it does not enter (gesture in front of the forehead), it remains like this. And then one is always in a perfect peace... after some years.

But at the beginning, a very small beginning, two or three minutes, it is very simple. For something complicated you must make an effort, and when one makes an effort, one is not quiet. It is difficult to make an effort while remaining quiet. Very simple, very simple, you must be very simple in these things. It is as though you were learning how to call a friend: by dint of being called he comes. Well, make peace and calm your friends and call them: "Come, peace, peace, peace, peace, come!"<sup>17</sup>

## *9 The Power of Words*

“Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there is something behind. Have you never noticed that when you speak to certain people, you may express yourself quite clearly and yet they understand nothing; and to others you say just two words and they understand immediately? You have not had this experience? No? I have had it often. Therefore, it does not depend upon the external form, the words one speaks, but on the force of the thought one puts into them; and the greater, stronger, more precise and clear the thought-force, the more the chance of what you say being understood by people who are able to receive that force.”<sup>1</sup>

“The words spoken have a power of evocation or creation or formation or transformation; the words... sound always has a power; it has much more power than men think. It may be a good power and it may be a bad power. It creates vibrations which have an undeniable effect. It is not so much the idea as the sound; the idea too has its own power, but in its own domain – whereas the sound has a power in the material world.

I think I have explained this to you once; I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to you about “Bonjour”, “Good Day”, didn’t I? When people meet and say “Bonjour”, they do so mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying “Good Day” which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: “Ah! I hope he has a good day”, without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, “Good Day”, you make it more concrete and more effective.

It’s the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and say bad things to people. This can do them as much harm – more harm sometimes – than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive

people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction.

It is not at all ineffective to speak. Naturally it depends a great deal on each one's inner power. People who have no strength and no consciousness can't do very much – unless they employ material means. But to the extent that you are strong, especially when you have a powerful vital, you must have a great control on what you say, otherwise you can do much harm. Without wanting to, without knowing it; through ignorance.”<sup>2</sup>

## ***9. Power or Persons: Two trends in Education***

The educational system is probably the most influential of all institutions – outranking the family, the church, the police, and the government – in shaping the interpersonal politics of the growing person. We will take a look at the politics of education as it is and has been in this country and compare it with the politics of an educational enterprise when it has become infused with a person-centered approach.

Here is how the politics of the traditional school is experienced:

*The teacher is the possessor of knowledge, the student the recipient.* There is a great difference in status between instructor and student.

*The lecture, as the means of pouring knowledge into the recipient, and the examination as the measure of the extent to which he has received it, are the central elements of this education.*

*The teacher is the possessor of power, the student the one who obeys.* The administrator is also the possessor of power, and both the teacher and the student are the ones who obey. Control is always exercised downward.

*Authoritarian rule is the accepted policy in the classroom.* New teachers are often advised, “Make sure you get control of your students the very first day.”

*Trust is at a minimum.* Most notable is the teacher’s distrust of the student. The student cannot be expected to work satisfactorily without the teacher constantly supervising and checking on him. The student’s distrust of the teacher is more diffuse – a lack of trust in teacher’s motives, honesty, fairness, competence. There may be a real rapport between an entertaining lecturer and those who are being entertained. There may be admiration for the instructor, but mutual trust is not a noticeable ingredient.

*The subjects (the student) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear.* There is today not much physical punishment, but public criticism and ridicule, and a constant fear of failure, are even more po-

tent. This state of fear appears to increase as we go up the educational scheme, because the student has more to lose. In elementary school the individual may be an object of scorn, or scolded as stupid or bad. In high school there is added to this the fear of failure to graduate, with its vocational, economic and educational disadvantages. In college all these consequences are magnified and intensified. In graduate school, sponsorship by one professor offers even greater opportunities for extreme punishment due to some autocratic whim. Many graduate students have failed to receive their degrees because they have refused to obey every wish of their major professor. They are like slaves, subject to the life and death power of an Oriental despot. It is the recognition of this abjectness which caused Farber to title his biting criticism of education *The Student as Nigger*.\*

*Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice.* The student does not participate in choosing his goals, his curriculum, his manner of working. They are chosen for him. He has no part in the choice of teaching personnel or in educational policy. Likewise the teachers have no choice in choosing their principal or other administrative officers. Often they, too, have no participation in forming educational policy. The political practices of the school are in striking contrast to what is taught *about* the virtues of democracy and the importance of freedom and responsibility.

*There is no place for the whole person in the educational system, only for the intellect.* In elementary school the bursting curiosity of the normal child and his excess of physical energy are curbed and, if possible, stifled. In secondary school the one overriding interest of all the students – sex and the relationships between the sexes – is almost totally ignored and certainly not regarded as a major area for learning. In college the situation is the same – it is only the *mind* that is welcomed. ...

Although this traditional picture of education is exceedingly common, it is no longer the one and only way by which education may proceed. A decade ago, only a few lonely, quiet pioneers offered an alternative to the traditional picture. Today, in every major city in the United States. There are dozens of “alternative schools,” “free schools,” “universities without

walls” in which humanistic, person-centered, process-oriented learning is taking place.



Here are the fundamental conditions that may be observed when person-centered learning develops in a school, college, or graduate school.

*Precondition.* A leader or a person who is perceived as an authority figure in the situation is sufficiently secure within himself and in his relationship to others that he experiences an essential trust in the capacity of others to think for themselves, to learn for themselves. If this precondition exists, then the following aspects become possible.

*The facilitative person shares with the others – students and possibly also parents or community members – the responsibility for the learning process.* Curricular planning, the mode of administration and operation, the funding, and the policy making are all the responsibility of the particular group involved. Thus a class may be responsible for its own curriculum, but the total group may be responsible for overall policy.

*The facilitator provides learning resources – from within himself and his own experience, from books or materials or community experiences.* He encourages the learners to add resources of which they have knowledge, or in which they have experience. He opens doors to resources outside the experience of the group.

*The student develops his own program of learning, alone or in cooperation with others.* Exploring his own interests, facing the wealth of resources, he makes the choices as to his own learning direction and carries the responsibility for the consequences of those choices.

*A facilitative learning climate is provided.* In meetings of the class or of the school as a whole, an atmosphere of realness, of caring, and of understanding listening is evident. This climate may spring initially from the person who is the perceived leader. As the learning process continues, it is more and more often provided by the learners for one another. Learning



from one another becomes as important as learning from books or films or community experiences, or from the facilitator.

It can be seen that *the focus is primarily on fostering the continuing process of learning*. The content of the learning, while significant, falls into a secondary place. Thus a course is successfully ended not when the student has “learned all he needs to know,” but when he has made significant progress in learning *how to learn* what he wants to know.

*The discipline necessary to reach the student’s goals is a self discipline* and is recognized and accepted by the learner as being his own responsibility.

*The evaluation of the extent and significance of the student’s learning is made primarily by the learner himself*, though his self-evaluation may be influenced and enriched by caring feedback from other members of the group and from the facilitator.

*In this growth-promoting climate, the learning is deeper, proceeds at a more rapid rate, and is more pervasive in the life and behavior of the student than learning acquired in the traditional classroom.* This comes about because the direction is self-chosen, the learning is self-initiated, and the whole person, with feelings and passions as well as intellect, is invested in the process.<sup>1</sup>

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\* J. Farber, *The Student as Nigger*, North Hollywood: Contact Books, 1969.

## ***10. From Teaching to Facilitation***

“...the first thing to do, in order to be able to educate the child, is to educate oneself, to become conscious and master of oneself so that one does not set a bad example to one’s child. For it is through example that education becomes effective. To say good words, give wise advice to a child has very little effect, if one does not show by one’s living example the truth of what one teaches. ... you should have a high ideal and act always in accordance with that ideal. You will see little by little your child reflecting this ideal in himself and manifesting spontaneously the qualities you wish to see expressed in his nature. ...

If you wish to be respected by your child, have respect for yourself and be at every moment worthy of respect.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Personality Traits of a Successful Teacher**

1. “Complete self-control not only to the extent of not showing any anger, but remaining absolutely quiet and undisturbed under all circumstances.
2. In the matter of self-confidence, must also have a sense of the relativity of his importance.

Above all, must have the knowledge that the teacher himself must always progress if he wants his students to progress, must not remain satisfied either with what he is or with what he knows.

3. Must not have any sense of essential superiority over his students nor preference or attachment whatsoever for one or another.
4. Must know that all are equal spiritually and instead of mere tolerance must have a global comprehension or understanding.
5. “The business of both parent and teacher is to enable and 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.” (Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle)”<sup>2</sup>

- Quality of Trust and Impersonal Love
- Self-offering and Devotion in Work<sup>3</sup>

### **Practical Guidelines**

- “Never be arbitrary, despotic, impatient, ill-tempered.
- When your child asks you a question, do not answer him by a stupidity or a foolishness, under the pretext that he cannot understand you. You can always make yourself understood if you take sufficient pains for it.
- Do not scold your child except with a definite purpose and only when quite indispensable. A child too often scolded gets hardened to rebuke and no longer attaches much importance to words or severity of tone.
- Particularly, take care not to rebuke him for a fault which you yourself commit.
- When a child has made a mistake, see that he confesses it to you spontaneously and frankly; and when he has confessed, make him understand with kindness and affection what was wrong in his movement and that he should not repeat it. In any case, never scold him; a fault confessed must be forgiven.
- 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.
- Only an affection that is discerning, firm yet gentle and a sufficient practical knowledge will create bonds of trust that are indispensable for you to make the education of your child effective.
- And never forget that you have to surmount yourself always and constantly so as to be at the height of your task.”<sup>4</sup>

Reflect...

- To what extent are you in harmony with the above checklists?

### **From Information to Knowledge**

“Every child is a lover of interesting narrative, a 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.”<sup>5</sup>

### **The Three Stages of Learning**

1. Information.
2. Assimilation (the process of imbibing and making the information a part of oneself).
3. Utilisation (putting the information to actual use in life).

Reflect...

- What do you do to deepen the learning process for your students?
- To what extent and how do you ensure the three stages of learning in your lesson-plans and actual teaching?
- What more can you do?

## ***11. What does a Teacher make?***

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, ‘What’s a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?’ He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: ‘Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.’

To stress his point he said to another guest; ‘You’re a teacher, Bonnie. Be honest. What do you make?’

Bonnie, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, ‘You want to know what I make?’ *(She paused for a second, and then began...)*

‘Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.

I make a C+ feel like the Congressional Medal of Honor winner.

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can’t make them sit for 5 without an I Pod, Game Cube or movie rental.

You want to know what I make?’ *(She paused again and looked at each and every person at the table.)*

‘I make kids wonder.

I make them question.

I make them apologize and mean it.

I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions.

I teach them to write and then I make them write Keyboarding isn’t everything.

I make them read, read, read.

I make them show all their work in math. They use their God given brain, not the man-made calculator.

I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know about English while preserving their unique cultural identity.

I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe.

I make my students stand, placing their hand over their heart to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, One Nation Under God, because we live in the United States of America.

Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life.' (*Bonnie paused one last time and then continued.*)

'Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, with me knowing money isn't everything, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant.... You want to know what I make? I MAKE A DIFFERENCE. What do you make Mr. CEO?'

His jaw dropped, he went silent.

When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast  
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,  
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread  
Of one who steps unseen into his house.  
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,  
A Power into mind's inner chamber steal,  
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors  
And beauty conquer the resisting world,  
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,  
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss  
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.  
In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,  
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;  
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,  
The days become a happy pilgrim march,  
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,  
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.  
A few shall see what none yet understands;  
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;  
For man shall not know the coming till its hour  
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

- Sri Aurobindo  
(Savitri)

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