

NAIROBI CENTRE – NEWSLETTER JUNE 2011

Date to remember:-

1st June 2011 – Wednesday – Prosperity Day Meditation at 11.00 a.m. at the Bhavan. Madaraka day holiday.

Every Saturday: 5.15p.m. to 6.30p.m.: Meditation, "SAVITRI" studies, readings from "GROWING WITHIN".

Every Sunday: 11.00a.m. to 12.30p.m.: Readings from "The Synthesis of Yoga"

Shrine: Sri Aurobindo's Shrine at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. You are welcome. It is a place for silent meditation.

NEWS

24th April 2011 - Darshan Day - The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry
Members gathered at the Sri Aurobindo Bhavan in the morning for meditation.
Members received the Darshan message of the day from the Ashram.

On 6th May 2011, Nairobi Centre presented three thousand booklets in ten titles to the Prison Headquarters at the Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Nairobi. The deputy Director and senior staff of the Welfare Committee of the Prisons department expressed their gratitude to Sri Aurobindo Society. The booklets will be distributed to the staff and inmates in the Prison.

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THE IDEAL CHILD

...likes to study when he is at school,
...he likes to play when he is in the playground,
...he likes to eat at mealtime,
...he likes to sleep at bedtime,
...and always he is full of love for all those around him,
...full of confidence in the divine grace,
...full of deep respect for the Divine.

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Student's Prayer:

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure, so that the new things may manifest and we may be ready to receive them.

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ON EDUCATION

(This Newsletter is a compilation of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo's articles, messages, letters and conversations on education and self-development.)

PARENTS

The Education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life.

Indeed, if we want this education to have its maximum result, it should begin even before birth; in this case it is the mother herself who proceeds with this education by means of a twofold action: first, upon herself for her own improvement, and secondly, upon the child whom she is forming physically. For it is certain that the nature of the child to be born depends very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as well as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. To see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity – this is the part of education which should apply to the mother herself. And if she has in addition a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the very best conditions will be realized so that the child can come into the world with his utmost potentialities. How many difficult efforts and useless complications would be avoided in this way!....

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

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...If you wish to be respected by a child, have respect for yourself and be worthy of respect at every moment. Never be authoritarian, despotic, impatient or ill-tempered. When your child asks you a question, do not give him a stupid or silly answer under the pretext that he cannot understand you. You can always make yourself understood if you take enough trouble....

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...do not scold your child without good reason and only when it is quite indispensable. A child who is too often scolded gets hardened to rebuke and no longer attaches much importance to word or severity of tone.

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When a child has done something wrong, see that he confesses it to you spontaneously and frankly; and when he has confessed, with kindness

and affection make him understand what was wrong in his movement so that he will not repeat it, but never scold him; a fault confessed must always be forgiven. You should never allow any fear to come between you and your child....

The Mother (CWM Vol.12, pp.9-11)

TEACHERS

the three principles of true teaching

“The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface. ...

The 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 barbarous and ignorant superstition. ...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 third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. ... A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development. ... The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit.

Sri Aurobindo (*Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Education, pp.20-22*)

... the finest present one can give to a child would be to teach him to know himself and to master himself.

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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.

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Mother, would you please define in a few words what you mean essentially by “free progress”?

A progress guided by the soul and not subjected to habits, conventions or preconceived ideas.

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Mother, the students cannot learn their lessons, even when they have their books.

One must have a lot of patience with young children, and repeat the same thing to them several times, explaining it to them in various ways. It is only gradually that it enters their mind.

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Sweet Mother, is it possible to teach the ideal to those who do not understand it, and how can it be taught to them? Are we, instructors and teachers, worthy of this formidable task?

What we want to teach is not only a mental ideal, it is a new idea of life and a realization of consciousness. This realization is new to all, and the only true way to teach others is to live according to this new consciousness oneself and to allow oneself to be transformed by it. There is no better lesson than that of an example. To tell others: "Do not be selfish," is not much use, but if somebody is free from all selfishness, he becomes a wonderful example to others; and someone who sincerely aspires to act in accordance with the Supreme Truth, creates a kind of contagion for the people around him. So the first duty of all those who are teachers or instructors is to give an example of the qualities they teach to others.

And if, among these teachers and instructors, some are not worthy of their post, because by their character they give a bad example, their first duty is to become worthy by changing their character and their action; there is no other way.

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Sweet Mother, should one punish a child?

Punish? What do you mean by punish? If a child is noisy in class and prevents the others from working, you must tell him to behave himself; and if he continues, you can send him out of the class. That is not a punishment, it is a natural consequences of his actions. But to punish! To punish! You have no right to punish. Are you the Divine? Who has given you the right to punish? The children too can punish you for your actions. Are you perfect yourselves? Do you know what is good or what is bad? Only the Divine knows. Only the Divine has the right to punish.

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Sweet Mother, could you write something on discipline for us?

...Discipline is indispensable to progress. It is only when one imposes a rigorous and enlightened discipline on oneself that one can be free from the discipline of others.

The supreme discipline is integral surrender to the Divine and to allow nothing else either in one's feelings or in one's activities. Nothing should ever be omitted from this surrender – that is the supreme and most rigorous discipline.

The Mother (CWM Vol.12, pp.168-192)

STUDENTS

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

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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.

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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 realization, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life.

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In order to be truly happy in life, *one must live work*.

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Mother, you tell me to study, but I dislike studying.

You do not give enough time to study, that is why it does not interest you. Everything one does with care necessarily becomes interesting.

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Practise *silence* of mind, it gives power of understanding.

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True strength and protection come from the Divine Presence in the heart.

If you want to keep this Presence constantly in you, avoid carefully all vulgarity in speech, behaviour and acts.

Do not mistake liberty for license and freedom for bad manners: the thoughts must be pure and the aspiration ardent.

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Sweet Mother, some children ask what is the best way of spending their holidays...

It is an excellent opportunity to do some interesting work, to learn something new or develop some weak point in their nature or their studies.

It is an excellent opportunity to choose some occupation freely and thus discover the true capacities of their being.

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What a Child Should Always Remember

The necessity of an absolute sincerity.

The certitude of Truth's final victory.

The Mother (CWM Vol.12, pp.122-149)
CWM stands for Collected Works of The Mother