

NAIROBI CENTRE – NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2012

<https://sites.google.com/site/savitrinairobi/>

Dates to remember:

1st November 2012 – Thursday – Prosperity Day – Meditation at 6.30 p.m.

13th November 2012 – Tuesday – Diwali – Festival of Lights – Candle lighting and Meditation at 6.30 p.m.

17th November 2012 – Saturday – The Mother's withdrawal from the physical body.

20th November 2012 – Tuesday – The Mother's Samadhi Day – Meditation at 6.30 p.m.

24th November 2012 – Saturday – Day of Realisation – Darshan Day.

Every Saturday: 5.15p.m. to 6.30p.m.: Meditation, "SAVITRI" studies, readings from "De luxe Volume 15 – COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER – Centenary edition."

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 8a.m. to 7p.m. All are welcome. It is a place for silent meditation.

NEWS

Twenty sets of booklets in ten titles were presented to the coordinator of German International Cooperation an NGO working with Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims and is running a clinic in the slums of Eastleigh, Nairobi known as Biafra Clinic. The clinic deals with patients of domestic and gender based violence. It also provides them with counseling services.

On 26th September 2012, Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society presented six hundred booklets in twelve titles to Kenya Institute of Social Work and Community Development on their request for the booklets. The co-ordinator of the institute confirmed that these booklets go a long way in helping the readers and the booklets will be distributed throughout their many outlets in the country.

Nairobi Centre presented 390 booklets on Ideal Child, Ideal Parent and Ideal Teacher to the headmistress of Covenant Academy Primary School which is situated in Kwangware, Nairobi. The headmistress will distribute them among the students and the teachers of the school.

(All the articles in the newsletter are taken from Vol.12, 'On Education', of the Collected Works of The Mother. This volume is a compilation of the Mother's articles, messages, letters and conversations on education and self-development.)

Part Two. Messages, Letters and Conversations

1. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. This section consists mainly of the Mother's correspondence and conversations with the students and teachers of the Ashram's school, the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

READING

Sweet Mother, You have said that I do not think well. How can one develop one's thought?

You must read with great attention and concentration, not novels or dramas, but books that make you think. You must meditate on what you have read, reflect on a thought until you have understood it. Talk little, remain quiet and concentrated and speak only when it is indispensable.

31 May 1960

I am reading a book on motor-cars, but I read it hastily; I skip the descriptions of complicated mechanisms.

If you don't want to learn a thing thoroughly, conscientiously and in all its details, it is better not to take it up at all. It is a great mistake to think that a little superficial and incomplete knowledge of things can be of any use whatsoever; it is good for nothing except making people conceited, for they imagine they know and in fact know nothing.

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Read carefully whatever you read, and read it again a second time if you have not understood it properly.

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Y has just written to me about the great number of novels that you read. I do not think that this kind of reading is good for you - and if it is to study style, as you told me, an attentive study of one good book by a good author, done with care, reaches much more than this hasty and superficial reading.

I had two reasons for reading novels, to learn words and style.

In order to learn you must read very carefully and choose with care what you read.

25 October 1934

Do you think I should stop reading Gujarati literature?

It all depends on the effect this literature has on your imagination. If it fills your head with undesirable ideas and your vital with desires, it is certainly better to stop reading this kind of book.

2 November 1934

Is there any harm in my reading novels in French?

Reading novels is never beneficial.

24 April 1937

When one reads dirty books, an obscene novel, does not the vital enjoy through the mind?

In the mind also there are perversions. It is a very poor and unrefined vital which can take pleasures in such things!

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In unformed minds what they read sinks in without any regard to its value and imprints itself as truth. It is advisable therefore to be careful about what one gives them to read and to see that only what is true and useful for their formation gets a place.

3 June 1939

I do not approve of these literature classes in which, ostensibly for the sake of knowledge they flounder in the mud of a state of mind which is out of place there and which cannot in any way help to build up the consciousness of tomorrow. I repeated this to X yesterday in connection with your letter, and I explained briefly to him how I saw the transition period between what was and what will be.

If we could discover, either here or there, the expression of sincere and luminous aspiration, it could be made into an opportunity for study and become an interesting development.

Examine the matter together and let me know what you decide.

In any case: no more "literature classes".

18 July 1959

What is the value of literature?

It depends on what you want to be or do. If you want to be a litterateur, you must read a lot of literature. Then you will know what has been written and you won't repeat old things. You have to keep an alert mind and know how to say things in a striking manner.

But if you want real knowledge, you can't find it in literature. To me, literature as such is on a pretty low level - it is mostly a work of the creative vital, and the highest it reaches is up to the throat centre, the external expressive mind. This mind puts one in relation with outside things. And, in its activity, literature is all a game of fitting ideas to ideas and words to ideas and words to one another. It can develop a certain skill in the mind, some capacity for discussion, description, amusement and wit. ...

But, of course, I am not discouraging the teaching of literature altogether. Many of our children are in a crude state and literature can help to give their minds some shape, some suppleness. They need a good deal of carving in many places. They have to be enlarged, made active and agile. Literature can serve as a sort of gymnastics and stir up and awaken the young intelligence. ...

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There is a subtle world where you can see all possible subjects for paintings, novels, plays of all kinds, even the cinema.

It is from there that most authors receive their inspiration.

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(A teacher suggested that books dealing with subjects like crime, violence and licentiousness should not be available to young people.)

It is not much a question of subject-matter but of vulgarity of mind and narrowness and selfish common-sense in the conception of life, expressed in a form devoid of art, greatness or refinement, which must be carefully removed from the reading-matter of children both big and small. All that lowers and degrades the consciousness must be excluded.

1 November 1959

The selection (of books) has to be carefully done. Some of the books contain ideas which are sure to lower the consciousness of our children. Only such books are to be

recommended as have some bearing on our Ideal or contain historic tales, adventures or explorations.

One is never too careful with books which have the most pernicious effect.

Blessings.

17 April 1967

I have been laying great stress on the stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata and on the songs of Kabir, Mira, etc. Is it against your way to continue these old things?

Not at all - it is the attitude that is important. The past must be a spring-board towards the future, not a chain preventing from advancing. As I said, all depends on the attitude towards the past.

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Stop reading all this nonsense. The occultism that can be found in books is vital and most dangerous.

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If you want to know what is really happening in the world, you should not read newspapers of any sort, for they are full of lies.

To read a newspaper is to take part in the great collective falsehoods.

2 February 1970

Mother,

How can one know what is happening in other countries and even in our own, if we do not read papers? At least we get some idea from them, don't we? Or would it be better not to read them at all?

I did not say that you must not read papers. I said that you must not blindly believe in all that you read, you must know that truth is quite another thing.

Blessings.

4 February 1970

I want to see what will happen to me if I stop reading completely.

It is difficult to keep one's mind always fixed on the same thing, and if it is not given enough work to occupy it, it begins to become restless. So I think it is better to choose one's books carefully rather than stop reading altogether.

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(Written on a slip placed in a copy of 'Prayers and Meditations' by The Mother)

Do not read this book unless you have the intention of putting it into practice.

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A library should be an intellectual sanctuary where one comes to find light and progress.

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