Aims

Why are we here in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram?

There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.

You have the immense privilege of having come quite young to the Ashram, that is to say, still plastic and capable of being moulded according to this new ideal and thus become the representatives of the new race. Here, in the Ashram, you are in the most favourable conditions with regard to the environment, the influence, the teaching and the example, to awaken in you this supramental consciousness and to grow according to its law.
Now, all depends on your will and your sincerity. If you have the will no more to belong to ordinary humanity, no more to be merely evolved animals; if your will is to become men of the new race realising Sri Aurobindo’s supramental ideal, living a new and higher life upon a new earth, you will find here all the necessary help to achieve your purpose; you will profit fully by your stay in the Ashram and eventually become living examples for the world.

24 July 1951

What is the real purpose, the aim of our Education Centre? Is it to teach Sri Aurobindo’s works? And these only? And all or some of these? Or is it to prepare students to read Sri Aurobindo’s works and Mother’s? Is it to prepare them for the Ashram life or also for other ‘outside’ occupation? There are so many opinions floating around, and even those older people whom we expect to know make so many different statements, that one does not know what to believe and act by. Then on what basis can we work without any real sure knowledge? I pray, Mother, give us your guidance.

It is not a question of preparing to read these works or other works. It is a question of pulling all those who are capable to do so, out of the general human routine of thought, feeling and action; it is to give all opportunities to those who are here to cast off from them the slavery to the human way of thinking and doing; it is to teach all those who want to listen that there is another and truer way of living, that Sri Aurobindo has taught us how to live and become a true being — and that the aim of the education here is to prepare the children and make them fit for that life.
For all the rest, the human ways of thinking and living, the world is vast and there is place out there for everybody.

It is not a number that we want — it is a selection; it is not brilliant students that we want, it is living souls.

It should be known and we should not hesitate to say openly that the purpose of our school is to discover and encourage those in whom the need for progress has become conscious enough to orient their life.

From the worldly standpoint, from the point of view of result achieved certainly things can be done better. But I am speaking of the effort put in, effort in the deepest sense of the word. Work is prayer done with the body. With that effort in your work the Divine is satisfied; the eye of the Consciousness that has viewed it is indeed pleased. Not that from the human standpoint one cannot do better. For us, however, this particular endeavour is one among many; it is only one movement in our Sadhana. We are engaged in many other things. To bring one particular item of work to something like perfection requires time and means
and resources which are not at our disposal. But we do not seek perfection in one thing, our aim is an integral achievement.

An outside view may find many things to criticise and criticise much, but from the inner view what has been done has been done well. In an outside view, you come with all kinds of mental, intellectual formations and find there is nothing uncommon in what is done here. But thereby you miss what is behind: the Sadhana. A deeper consciousness would see the march towards a realisation that surpasses all. The outside view does not see the spiritual life; it judges by its own smallness.

There are people who write wanting to join our University and they ask what kind of diploma or degree we prepare for, the career we open out. To them I say: go elsewhere, please, if you want that; there are many other places, very much better than ours, even in India, in that respect. We do not have their equipment or magnificence. You will get there the kind of success you look for. We do not compete with them. We move in a different sphere, on a different level.

But this does not mean that I ask you to feel superior to others. The true consciousness is incapable of feeling superior. It is only the small consciousness that seeks to show its superiority. Even a child is superior to such a being: for it is spontaneous in its movements. Rise above all that. Do not be interested in anything other than your relation with the Divine, what you wish to do for Him. That is the only thing interesting.\footnote{Whenever the symbol § appears, it indicates a spoken comment of the Mother which was noted from memory by a sadhak and approved by the Mother for publication.}

\textit{30 November 1955}

We are not here to lead an easy and comfortable life. We are here to find the Divine, to become divine, to manifest the Divine.

What happens to us is the Divine’s affair, not ours.
On Education

The Divine knows better than we do what is good for the world's progress and for our own.

_23 August 1967_

To develop the spirit of service is part of the training here and it completes the other studies.

_13 June 1971_

You must not confuse a religious teaching with a spiritual one. Religious teaching belongs to the past and halts progress. Spiritual teaching is the teaching of the future — it illumines the consciousness and prepares it for the future realisation. Spiritual teaching is above religions and strives towards a global Truth. It teaches us to enter into direct relations with the Divine.

_12 February 1972_

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

Do not aim at success. Our aim is perfection. Remember you are on the threshold of a new world, participating in its birth and instrumental in its creation. There is nothing more important than the transformation. There is no interest more worthwhile.

In a general way, education, culture, refinement of the senses are the means of curing movements of crude instinct and desire and passion. To obliterate them is not curing them; instead they should be cultivated, intellectualised, refined. That is the
surest way of curing them. To give them their maximum growth in view of the progress and development of consciousness, so that one may attain to a sense of harmony and exactitude of perception is a part of culture and education for the human being.