Students

You who are young, are the hope of the country. Prepare yourselves to be worthy of this expectation.
Blessings.

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

2 April 1963

To be young is to live in the future. To be young is to be always ready to give up what we are in order to become what we must be. To be young is never to accept the irreparable.

28 March 1967

Only those years that are passed uselessly make you grow old. A year spent uselessly is a year during which no progress has been accomplished, no growth in consciousness has been achieved, no further step has been taken towards perfection. Consecrate your life to the realisation of something higher and broader than yourself and you will never feel the weight of the passing years.

21 February 1958
It is not the number of years you have lived that makes you grow old. You become old when you stop progressing.

As soon as you feel you have done what you had to do, as soon as you think you know what you ought to know, as soon as you want to sit and enjoy the results of your effort, with the feeling you have worked enough in life, then at once you become old and begin to decline.

When, on the contrary, you are convinced that what you know is nothing compared to all which remains to be known, when you feel that what you have done is just the starting-point of what remains to be done, when you see the future like an attractive sun shining with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved, then you are young, however many are the years you have passed upon earth, young and rich with all the realisations of tomorrow.

And if you do not want your body to fail you, avoid wasting your energies in useless agitation. Whatever you do, do it in a quiet and composed poise. In peace and silence is the greatest strength.

21 February 1968

For a happy and effective life, the essentials are sincerity, humility, perseverance and an insatiable thirst for progress. Above all, one must be convinced of a limitless possibility of progress. Progress is youth; at a hundred years of age one can be young.

14 January 1972

If the growth of consciousness were considered as the principal goal of life, many difficulties would find their solution.

The best way of not becoming old is to make progress the goal of our life.

18 January 1972
On Education

To know how to be reborn into a new life at every moment is the secret of eternal youth.

One must learn always not only intellectually but also psychologically, one must progress in regard to character, one must cultivate the qualities and correct the defects; everything should be made an occasion to cure ourselves of ignorance and incapacity; life becomes then tremendously interesting and worth the trouble of living it.

27 January 1972

The child does not worry about his growth, he simply grows.

There is a great power in the simple confidence of a child.

17 November 1954

When a child lives in normal conditions, it has a spontaneous confidence that all it needs will be given to it.

This confidence should persist, unshaken, throughout life; but the limited idea, ignorant and superficial, of its needs which a child has, must be replaced progressively by a wider, deeper and truer conception which culminates in the perfect conception of needs in accordance with the supreme wisdom, until we realise that the Divine alone knows what our true needs are and rely upon Him for everything.

19 November 1954
The most important condition is trust, a child-like trust, the candid feeling that knows that needed things will come, that there is no question about it. When the child has need of anything he is certain that it is coming. This kind of simple trust or reliance is the most important condition.

Why do children have fear? Because they are weak. Physically they are weaker than the grown-ups around them and, generally, they are also weaker vitally and mentally.

Fear stems from a sense of inferiority.

However, there is a way to be free from it: it is to have faith in the Divine Grace and to rely on It to protect you in all circumstances.

The more you grow up, the more will you get over your fear if you let the contact with your soul develop in you — that is to say, with the truth of your being — and if you always strive that all you think, all you speak, all you do should be more and more the expression of this deep truth.

When you will consciously live in it, you will fear nothing any longer, in any domain of your being, because you will be united with the universal Truth which governs the world.

8 August 1964

Sweet Mother,

_How can a child know without the help of his parents or teachers, what he is?_

You must find it out yourself, but not with your mind.

It is only the psychic that can tell you.
On Education

*Divine Mother,*

_When we are children, we are told what is good and what is bad. That's why we repeat the same all our life, “This is good! That is bad!”_. How should one know, in fact, _what is good and what is bad_?

You can know the truth only when you are conscious of the Divine.

* How can I abstain from error?

By knowing what is true.

* Lord, we pray to Thee:
  May we understand better why we are here,
  May we do better what we have to do here,
  May we be what we ought to become here,
  So that Thy will may be fulfilled harmoniously.

_15 January 1962_

* Let our effort of every day and all time be to know You better and to serve You better.

_1 January 1973_

* Permit, Sweet Mother, that we be,
  Now and for ever more,
  Thy simple children, loving thee
  More and still more.

_126_
I have a sweet little mother sitting close in my heart.
We are so happy together; never will we part.

* 

**Sweet Mother,**

*Can you hear me whenever I call you?*

My dear child,

Be sure that I hear you each time you call and my help and force go straight to you.

With my blessings.

1 June 1960

* 

**Bonne Fête.**

I embrace you with all my heart and give you my blessings for the fulfilment of your highest aspiration.

With my love.

30 August 1963

* 

**Bonne Fête.**

With a whole bunch of roses (surrender) so that your aspiration may be fulfilled and you become my ideal child aware of your soul and the true goal of your life.

With my blessings and my love.

30 August 1964

* 

**MESSAGES TO STUDENT BOARDING HOUSES**

**Prayer Given to the Children of Dortoir Boarding**

We all want to be the true children of our Divine Mother. But for that, sweet Mother, give us patience and courage, obedience, goodwill, generosity and unselfishness, and all the necessary virtues.
On Education

This is our prayer and aspiration. 

15 January 1947

*

To Big Boys’ Boarding

May this day be for you the beginning of a new life in which you will strive to understand better and better why you are here and what is expected of you.

Live always in the aspiration of realising your most complete and most true perfection.

And for a beginning take care to be honest, sincere, straightforward, noble and pure in a rigorous discipline that you will impose on yourselves.

I shall always be present to help you and to guide you.

My blessings.

1963

*

To Dortoir Boarding Annex

Today, we who are united in a common remembrance aspire that this intensity may be the symbol of a true oneness based on a common effort towards ever truer and more perfect realisations.

15 January 1968

*

Young Man’s Boarding

Be always faithful to your Ideal and sincere in your action.

*
My dear child,
   The true wisdom is to be ready to learn from whatever source the knowledge can come.
   We can learn things from a flower, an animal, a child, if we are eager to know always more, because there is only One Teacher in the world — the Supreme Lord, and He manifests through everything.
   With all my love.

   9 March 1967

   *

   To do good work one must have good taste.
   Taste can be educated by study and the help of those who have good taste.
   To learn, it is necessary to feel first that one does not know.

   15 December 1965

   *

   When you feel that you know nothing then you are ready to learn.¹

   December 1965

   *

   The whole question is to know whether the students go to school to increase their knowledge and to learn what is needed to know how to live well — or whether they go to school to pretend and to have good marks which they can boast about.
   Before the Eternal Consciousness, one drop of sincerity has more value than an ocean of pretence and hypocrisy.

¹ Message for the inauguration of a course in technology.
On Education

You see, my child, the unfortunate thing is that you are too busy with yourself. At your age I was exclusively occupied with my studies — informing myself, learning, understanding, knowing. That was my interest, even my passion. My mother, who loved us — my brother and myself — very much, never allowed us to be bad-tempered or dissatisfied or lazy. If we went and complained to her about something or other and told her that we were not satisfied, she would laugh at us and scold us and say to us, “What is this foolishness? Don’t be ridiculous, off you go and work, and don’t take any notice of your good or bad moods! That is not interesting at all.”

My mother was perfectly right and I have always been very grateful to her for having taught me discipline and the necessity of self-forgetfulness in concentration on what one is doing.

I have told you this because the anxiety you speak of comes from the fact that you are far too busy with yourself. It would be far better for you to attend more to what you are doing (painting or music), to develop your mind which is still very uncultivated and to learn the elements of knowledge which are indispensable to a man if he does not want to be ignorant and uncultured.

If you worked regularly eight to nine hours a day, you would be hungry and you would eat well and sleep peacefully, and you would have no time to wonder whether you are in a good or a bad mood.

I am telling you these things with all my affection, and I hope that you will understand them.

Your mother who loves you.

15 May 1934

O Mother, I want to act according to Your will and nothing else.

Then quickly leave the path you have taken — don’t waste your time wandering about and talking to girls. Start working in
earnest again, study, educate yourself, occupy your mind with interesting and useful things and not with futile chatter, and do not give false excuses for your vital attractions. If your wish is truly sincere you can be sure that you will have my force to help you conquer.

27 September 1934

*On the days when I do not study I feel worse. But when I begin to study, happiness comes. I do not understand this process.*

What do you mean by process? It is not a process; the disappearance of the bad feeling is the very natural result of concentrating the mind on study, which on the one hand provides it with a healthy activity, and on the other draws its attention away from this morbid contemplation of the little physical ego.

3 December 1934

*Mother, is it good to go to D’s house to read the poems he has written in Gujarati?*

It all depends on the effect it has on you. If you come away feeling more peaceful and content, it is all right. If, on the contrary, it makes you feel melancholy and dissatisfied it would be better not to go there. You can simply observe and see how it affects you and decide accordingly.

13 December 1934

*In the dream I saw You had written, “My dear child, why have you stopped studying?” You had written much more, and I would like You to write it here, if possible.*

Yes, in fact last night I asked you why you had not studied, and I told you that to yield like that to the impulses of the
On Education

vital was certainly not the way to control it. You must create a discipline for yourself and impose it on yourself at all costs if you want to put an end to vital bad will and mental depressions. Without discipline one cannot do anything in life and all yoga is impossible.

* 

For physical work it is not difficult, but for study it becomes difficult to follow the discipline when I feel bad. All the same, I have decided that on the days when I do not study, I will not eat my lunch.

What a funny idea you have! To punish your body for a fault the vital has committed! It is not fair.

22 December 1934

* 

Just this morning there is a very big depression and so it is becoming impossible to study.

This will not do.

* 

O Mother, what shall I do?

Force yourself to study and your depression will go away. Can you imagine a student in school coming and telling his teacher, “Sir, I did not do my homework today because I felt depressed”? The teacher would certainly punish him very severely.

16 January 1935

* 

132
I think there is one thing You do not like very much — that I do not apply myself to my studies.

Studies strengthen the mind and turn its concentration away from the impulses and desires of the vital. Concentrating on study is one of the most powerful ways of controlling the mind and the vital; that is why it is so important to study.

28 January 1935

My mind does not become peaceful, I think, because I do not study hard. Studying does not give me much pleasure.

One does not study for the sake of pleasure — one studies to learn and to develop one’s brain.

1 February 1935

It is quite impossible for me to study, because inertia came.

If you do not study the inertia will go on increasing.

4 March 1935

I do not know how to spend my time, understanding nothing.

Study, that is the best way to understand.
On Education

You tell me to study, but I do not like 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.

10 April 1935

Which path must I take then? What is the right and true way of making the effort?

Do what I explained to you yesterday — make your brain work by studying regularly and systematically; then during the hours when you are not studying, your brain, having worked enough, will be able to rest and it will be possible for you to concentrate in the depths of your heart and find there the psychic source; with it you will become conscious of both gratitude and true happiness.

22 May 1935

My studies are suffering because of constant depression.

I have told you that it is by study that you can overcome the depression.

27 July 1935

I would like to know whether as a general rule it is good for little children to play all the time.

For children there should be a time for work and study and a time for play.

16 November 1936
Do You think my mind is developing?

Regular study certainly cannot fail to develop it.

7 December 1936

I am turning more and more towards study and giving less attention to my sadhana. I do not know whether this is desirable.

It is all right; study can become part of the sadhana.

8 December 1936

If someone is teaching me, is it necessary for him to identify himself with me, to concentrate on me?

Without concentration one cannot achieve anything.

18 May 1937

Do You think that the tiredness comes from too much mental work?

No, it comes from mental tamas.

21 January 1941

(A teacher wrote that his students did not work very hard.)

Continue to be patient — it is some kind of mental tamas; one day they will wake up.
On Education

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.

Intelligence and capacity of understanding are surely more important than regularity in work. Steadiness may be acquired later on.

Mother, how can one get rid of laziness?

Laziness comes from weakness, or from lack of interest. For curing the first — one must become strong.
For curing the second — one must do something interesting.

Sweet Mother,
You have told me that one must become strong to cure weakness. Mother, would you tell me how one can become strong?

First you must want it integrally and then you must do what is needed.

How to get rid of mental inertia?

The cure is not in trying to wake up the mind but in turning it, immobile and silent, upward towards the region of intuitive light, in a steady and quiet aspiration, and to wait in silence, for the light to come down and flood your brain which will, little by
little, wake up to this influence and become capable of receiving and expressing the intuition.

Love and blessings.

26 September 1967

* 

Sweet Mother,

We do not know what is the matter this year. We are unable to make any progress, either in our studies or at the Playground. Our minds are always restless and troubled. We have lost our concentration. We are wasting our time gossiping and thinking about bad things. We are not able to overcome our failings. Sweet Mother, we beg you to deliver us from this painful situation. We want to progress. We want to be your true children. Please show us the way.

Crying does not help at all.

You must have the will and make the necessary effort.

* 

What is to be done to make the will stronger?

To educate it, to exercise it as one exercises the muscles by using them.

23 March 1934

* 

Concentration and will can be developed as well as muscles; they grow by regular training and exercise.

* 

Mother, how can one strengthen one's will-power?

By exercise.
On Education

It takes more than a few months to learn something. One must work assiduously to make progress.

12 November 1954

* 

It is a passing impulse which pushes me so much to study.

So long as you need to form yourself, to build your brain, you will feel this strong urge to study; but when the brain is well formed, the taste for studies will gradually die away.

* 

What is the utility of reason in our life?

Without reason, human life would be incoherent and unregulated; we would be like impulsive animals or unbalanced madmen.

6 April 1961

* 

Mother, what are knowledge and intelligence? Have they important roles to play in our life?

Knowledge and intelligence are precisely the qualities of the higher mind in man which differentiate him from the animal. Without knowledge and intelligence, one is not a man but an animal in human form.

Blessings.

30 December 1969

* 

In Your Conversations You have said that the intellect is like a mediator between the true knowledge and its realisation down here. Does it not follow that intellectual
Centre of Education

culture is indispensable for rising above the mind to find there the true knowledge?

Intellectual culture is indispensable for preparing a good mental instrument, large, supple and rich, but its action stops there. 

In rising above the mind, it is more often a hindrance than a help, for, in general, a refined and educated mind finds its satisfaction in itself and rarely seeks to silence itself so as to be surpassed.

* All that you know, however fine it may be, is nothing in comparison with what you can know, if you are able to use other methods.

* The best way to understand is always to rise high enough in the consciousness to be able to unite all contradictory ideas in a harmonious synthesis.

And for the correct attitude, to know how to pass flexibly from one position to another without ever losing sight even for a moment of the one goal of self-consecration to the Divine and identification with Him.

29 April 1964

* The important point is to know that the mind is incapable of understanding the One Supreme — that is why all that is said and thought about it is a travesty and an approximation and is necessarily full of irreconcilable contradictions.

That is also why it has always been taught that mental silence is indispensable in order to have true knowledge.

31 August 1965
**On Education**

A very, very quiet head is indispensable for a clear understanding and vision and a right action.

> Please help me to distinguish between the bubbling of ideas and an inner vision of necessities.

The mind must be quiet and silent before you can receive an inspiration from above.

> The mind must remain quiet to let the Force flow through it for an integral manifestation.

> How does one teach a student to think correctly?

Mental capacity is developed in silent meditation.

23 March 1966

> I shall try to work with the help of intuition. Help me in my efforts.

Calm the vital.
Silence the mind.
Keep the brain silent and still like an even surface turned upwards and attentive.
And wait....

29 September 1967

It is not by mental activity that you can quiet your mind, it is from a higher or deeper level that you can receive the help you need. And both can be reached in silence only.

18 December 1971
Centre of Education

*How to stop discussions in the mind?*

The first condition is to talk as little as possible.

The second is to think just of what you are doing at the moment and not of what you have to do or of what you have done before.

Never regret what is past or imagine what will be.

Check pessimism in your thoughts as much as you can and become a voluntary optimist.

*"

Mother, a free, quiet, silent mind is such a nice thing; I would like to have more of that. I want to be free from the constant whirlwinds of thoughts and emotions within me, tossing me like a toy.

It comes progressively.

Do not strain.

Be calm and confident.

12 March 1973

*"

Now, what the intellect has understood let the whole being realise. Mental knowledge must be replaced by the flaming power of progress.

*"

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
On Education

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.

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

*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, teaches 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 pleasure in such things!

* 

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 here 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.
On Education

If we could discover, either here or there, the expression of a 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 littérateur, 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.

I haven’t read much of English literature — I have gone through only a few hundred books. But I know French literature very well — I have read a whole library of it. And I can say that it has no great value in terms of Truth. Real knowledge comes from above the mind. What literature gives is the play of a lot of common or petty ideas. Only on a rare occasion does some ray from above come in. If you look into thousands and thousands of books, you will find just one small intuition here and there. The rest is nothing.

I can’t say that the reading of literature equips one better to understand Sri Aurobindo. On the contrary, it can be a
hindrance. For, the same words are used and the purpose for which they are used is so different from the purpose for which Sri Aurobindo has made use of them, the manner in which they have been put together to express things is so different from Sri Aurobindo’s that these words tend to put one off from the light which Sri Aurobindo wants to convey to us through them. To get to Sri Aurobindo’s light we must empty our minds of all that literature has said and done. We must go inward and stay in a receptive silence and turn it upward. Then alone we get something in the right way. At the worst, I have seen that the study of literature makes one silly and perverse enough to sit in judgment on Sri Aurobindo’s English and find fault with his grammar!

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.

I may add that the whole controversy that has gone on among the teachers recently on the value of literature is a storm in a tea-cup. It is really part of a problem which concerns the whole basis of education. All that has been going on in every department of our School is to me one single problem at bottom. When I look at the education everywhere, I feel like the Yogi who was told to sit and meditate in front of a wall. I find myself facing a wall. It is a greyish wall, with some streaks of blue running across it — these are the efforts of the teachers to do something worthwhile — but everything goes on superficially and behind it all is like this wall here on which I am striking my hand now. It is hard and impenetrable, it shuts out the true light. There is no door — one can’t enter through it and pass into that light.

When the young students come to me and tell me about their work, each time I want to say something useful I find the same solid wall blocking me.
On Education

I have the intention of taking in hand the problem of education. I am preparing myself for it. It may take two years. But I have warned Pavitra that when I intervene and remould things, it may seem like a cyclone. People may feel that they can no longer stand on their legs! So many matters will get upset. There will be all-round bewilderment at first. But, as a result of the cyclone, the wall will break down and the true light burst in.

I thought it fair to say beforehand that there would be a radical change. This way the teachers can be prepared for it.

I do not wish to doubt or ignore the goodwill among the teachers of literature. And there are some old teachers who are sincerely doing their best. I appreciate all this. And in my decision on the alternatives set before me by the School I have taken everything into consideration. But the whole discussion, I repeat, has been a lot of unnecessary excitement — what could be called a quarrel among ants or, as one says in French, “Il n’y a pas de quoi fouetter un chat.”

§

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.

*

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

It is not so 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

2 “There is nothing to beat a cat about.”
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.

* Some of the best poets and saints have written about the love of Radha and Krishna as if it were carnal love.

I always considered it as an incapacity of finding the true words and the correct language.

*
On Education

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

* *

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.

*
Centre of Education

(Written on a slip placed in a copy of Prières et Méditations de la Mère)

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

*A*

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

*A*

CONDUCT

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER

The necessity of an absolute sincerity.
The certitude of Truth’s final victory.
The possibility of constant progress with the will to achieve.

*A*

AN IDEAL CHILD

IS GOOD-TEMPERED

He does not become angry when things seem to go against him or decisions are not in his favour.

IS GAME

Whatever he does he does it to the best of his capacity and keeps on doing in the face of almost certain failure. He always thinks straight and acts straight.
On Education

IS TRUTHFUL
He never fears to say the truth whatever may be the consequences.

IS PATIENT
He does not get disheartened if he has to wait a long time to see the results of his efforts.

IS ENDURING
He faces the inevitable difficulties and sufferings without grumbling.

IS PERSEVERING
He never slackens his effort however long it has to last.

IS POISED
He keeps equanimity in success as well as in failure.

IS COURAGEOUS
He always goes on fighting for the final victory though he may meet with many defeats.

IS CHEERFUL
He knows how to smile and keep a happy heart in all circumstances.

IS MODEST
He does not become conceited over his success, neither does he feel himself superior to his comrades.

150
IS GENEROUS

He appreciates the merits of others and is always ready to help another to succeed.

IS FAIR AND OBEDIENT

He observes the discipline and is always honest.

* Bulletin, August 1950 *

The ideal child is intelligent. He understands everything he is told, he knows his lesson before he has learnt it and answers every question he is asked.

* 

He has faith in the future which is rich with all the realisations that are to come, full of beauty and light.

Childhood is the symbol of the future and the Hope of all the victories to come.

* 

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 meal-time,
... he likes to sleep at bed-time,
... 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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On Education

The things to be taught to a child

1) The necessity of absolute sincerity.
2) The certitude of the final victory of Truth.
3) The possibility and the will to progress.
   Good temper, fair-play, truthfulness.
   Patience, endurance, perseverance.
   Equanimity, courage, cheerfulness.

*What should be the main concern in education for children aged eleven to thirteen?*

The most important thing to teach them is the absolute necessity of being sincere.
   All untruth, however slight, should be refused.
   They should also be taught to progress constantly, for as soon as one stops making any progress, one falls back and that is the beginning of decay.

*According to what I see and know, as a general rule, children over 14 should be allowed their independence and should be given advice only if and when they ask for it.
   They should know that they are responsible for managing their own existence.*

*I am very pleased to hear the ideas and sentiments you have expressed just now and I give you my blessings. Only I wish that your ideas did not remain as mere ideals, but became realities. That should be your vow, to materialise the ideal in your life and character. I take this occasion, however, to tell you something that I have wanted to tell you for a long time. It is with regard to your studies. Naturally there are exceptions,*
but it is the exceptions that give force to the rule. For instance, you asked for leave today. I did not think you required more relaxation. Your life here is organised on a routine of almost constant relaxation. However, I agreed to your request. But the way in which you received the “good news” pained me. Some of you even seemed to consider it a victory. But I ask, victory of what, against what? The victory of inconscience against the joy of learning and knowing more and more? The victory of unruliness against order and rule? The victory of the ignorant and superficial will over the endeavour towards progress and self-conquest?

This is, you must know, the very ordinary movement of those who live in the ordinary condition of life and education. But as for you, if you wish to realise the great ideal that is our goal, you must not remain content with the ordinary and futile reactions of ordinary people who live in the blind and ignorant conditions of ordinary life.

It looks as if I were very conservative when I say so, still I must tell you that you should be very careful about outside influences and ordinary habits. You must not allow them to shape your feelings and ways of life. Whatever comes from an outside and foreign atmosphere should not be permitted to jump into you — all that is mediocre and ignorant. If you wish to belong to the family of the new man, do not imitate pitifully the children of today and yesterday. Be firm and strong and full of faith; fight in order to win, as you say, the great victory. I have trust in you and I count upon you.

Until now I have not published what I told you on the anniversary day of the University. I hoped you would profit by the lesson and mend your ways, but to my great regret I am compelled to note that the situation has not improved: it seems some students have chosen the time when they are in the class to bring out the worst they have in them, they behave like street urchins; they not only take no advantage of the teacher given
On Education

to them, but seem to take a mischievous pleasure in preventing others from benefiting by the lessons.

We want to show to the world what must be the new man of tomorrow. Is this the example that we will set before them?

Published in April 1953

*(An extract from the minutes of teachers’ meeting:)* The meeting felt concern over lack of discipline, good manners and right behaviour among some students.

I insist on the necessity of having good manners. I do not see anything grand in the manners of a gutter-snipe.

4 March 1960

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.

26 February 1965

*Isn’t this immense freedom we are given dangerous for those who are not yet awake, who are still unconscious? How can we account for this good fortune we have been given?*

Danger and risk form part of all forward movement. Without them, nothing would ever move; besides, they are indispensable in forming the character of those who want to progress.

13 April 1966

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Two things need to be done. Children must be taught:
   a) not to tell a lie, whatever the consequences;
   b) to control violence, rage, anger.
   If these two things can be done, they can be led towards superhumanity.
   There is an idea that if one breaks conventions, restrictions, one is free from the limitations of ordinary humanity. But this is wrong.
   Those two things must be achieved to be able to be what may be called “superman”: not to tell lies and to control oneself.
   A complete devotion to the Divine is the last condition, but these are the first two things to be achieved.

18 July 1971

Discipline is indispensable to be a man. Without discipline one is nothing but an animal. I give you two weeks to show that you really want to change and become disciplined. If you become disciplined and obedient I am willing to give you another chance. But do not try to be deceitful... At the least sign of insincerity, I shall have to send you away.
   One begins to be a man only when one aspires to a higher and truer life and accepts a discipline of transformation.
   For this one must begin by mastering one’s lower nature and one’s desires.

8 March 1972

To the students
To be noisy in class is an act of selfish stupidity.
   If you don’t intend to attend the class silently and attentively, it is better not to come.
On Education

It is forbidden to fight at school, to fight in class, to fight in the playground, to fight in the street, to fight at home (whether at your parents’ house or in a boarding).

Always and everywhere children are forbidden to fight among themselves, for each time that one gives a blow to another, one gives it to one’s own soul.

15 January 1963

I suggest the same remedy as the one I was using in my childhood when disagreeing with my young playmates. I was at that time, as you are, very sensitive and I felt hurt when abused by them, especially by those whom I had shown only sympathy and kindness. I used to tell myself: “Why be sorry and feel miserable? If they are right in what they say, I have only to be glad for the lesson and correct myself; if they are wrong, why should I worry about it — it is for them to be sorry for their mistake. In both cases the best and the most dignified thing I can do is to remain strong, quiet and unmoved.”

This lesson which I was giving myself and trying to follow when I was eight years old, still holds good in all similar cases.

17 April 1932

Some words to the children.

1. Never make fun of anyone if you do not want others to make fun of you.
2. Always act in a respectable way if you want others to respect you.
3. Love everybody if you want everybody to love you.

As girls and boys are educated together here we have always insisted on the relations between them to be those of simple
comradeship without any mixture of sex feeling and sensuality; and to avoid all temptation they are forbidden to go in one another’s room and to meet anywhere privately. This has been made clear to everybody. And if these rules are strictly followed, nothing unpleasant can happen.

16 August 1960

Astrologers say that those who are born in November will be mad about sex.

Why do you believe in what the astrologers say? It is the belief that brings the trouble.

Sri Aurobindo says that a man becomes what he thinks he is.

Try this method of thinking that you are a good boy and will become sex-free.

Try this method for five years persistently and obstinately without admitting any doubt or discouragement, and after five years you will tell me the result.

Be very careful never to have a doubt about the result.

1965

You are attaching too much importance to this sex affair.

Do not think of it at all — be interested in more interesting activities, try to grow in knowledge and consciousness and kick away the sex thought and the sex impulse when it comes — then you can hope of becoming one of my soldiers.

1965

I have already asked of you all not to think that you are girls or boys, but human beings equally endeavouring to find, become and manifest the Divine.

16 February 1966
On Education

A complete lack of knowledge about sex can produce serious trouble. I want to give some information to children whom I know.

A simple notion of medical knowledge may be useful in taking away this silly old harmful feeling of shame which brings perversion.

Students say we are looking forward towards a sexless society, so why should we bother about genders in the language?

This is just a joke... or a twist of the mind and a clever way of refusing to understand what is meant by the advice.

Some good students give so much importance to money that it gives a shock. Can we discuss the matter?

Yes, try—it is very much needed. Money seems to have become the Supreme Lord these days—truth is receding in the background, as for Love, it is quite out of sight!

I mean Divine Love because what human beings call love is a very good friend of money.

When a child wants to impress you by telling you stories of the wealth of his family, you must not keep quiet. You must explain to him that worldly wealth does not count here, only the wealth that has been offered to the Divine has some value; that you do not become big by living in big houses, travelling by first-class and spending money lavishly. You can increase in stature only by being truthful, sincere, obedient and grateful.Ν
I have said, and I insist on this decision, that children below 15 should not go to bed later than 9 o’clock — those who do are being disobedient and this is regrettable.

*Mother, why are the hours before midnight better for sleep than the later hours?*

Because, symbolically, during the hours till midnight, the sun is setting, while from the very first hour after midnight the sun begins to rise.

Blessings.

22 August 1969

*Mother, how is it better to go to bed early and to get up early?*

When the sun sets, a kind of peace descends upon the earth and this peace is helpful for sleep.

When the sun rises, a vigorous energy descends upon the earth and this energy is helpful for work.

When you go to bed late and get up late, you contradict the forces of Nature and that is not very wise.

Blessings.

21 December 1969

*Mother, what should be our attitude towards the captains and teachers here?*

An obedient, docile and affectionate attitude. They are your elder brothers and sisters who take a lot of trouble for the sake of helping you.

Blessings.

1 February 1970
On Education

HOLIDAYS

There are two rumours in the Ashram concerning holidays.

The first is that You said that this time You are allowing us to go out during the holidays, but that You will not allow it next year. The second is that You do not want us to go out.

I would like to know which rumour is true, because many students have already received Your permission to go out during the holidays.

Neither one nor the other is true.
Neither one nor the other is false.
Both of them, and many others, are the more or less distorted expression of my synthesising and harmonising will.
To each one individually my reply, if he is sincere, is the expression of his need.

17 October 1964

*

Mother, why and how does one lose one’s spiritual gain by going outside? One can make a conscious effort and your protection is always there, is it not?

To go to one’s parents is to return to an influence generally stronger than any other; and few are the cases where parents help you in your spiritual progress, because they are generally more interested in a worldly realisation.

Parents who are chiefly interested in spiritual realisation do not usually ask their children to go back to visit them.

Blessings.

8 November 1969

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Centre of Education

The students who are not present for the beginning of the school-year on 16th December will not be allowed to attend classes for the entire school-year.

November 1969

* *

Holidays

Shall we say holy days? There are two kinds of them: traditionally, the Lord for six days (or aeons) worked to create his world and the seventh He stopped for rest, concentration and contemplation. This can be called the day of God.

The second one is: the men, the creatures, during six days work for their personal interests and egoistic motives, and the seventh they stop working to take rest and have time to look inwardly or upwardly, in contemplation of the source and origin of their existence and consciousness, in order to take a dip in It and renew their energies.

It is scarcely necessary to mention the modern manner of understanding the word or the thing, that is to say, all the possible ways of wasting time in a futile attempt at amusing oneself.

* *

For those in Auroville who want to be true servitors, is Sunday a holiday?

In the beginning the organisation of the week was conceived in this way: six days of work for the collectivity to which the individual belonged; the seventh day of the week was reserved for the inner quest for the Divine and the offering of one's being to the divine will. This is the only meaning and the only true reason for the so-called Sunday rest.
On Education

Needless to say, sincerity is the essential condition for realisation; all insincerity is a degradation.

25 October 1971

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STUDIES ELSEWHERE

I intended to let you go for your studies to England without telling you anything about it, because each one must be free to follow the path he has chosen. But after what you have written I feel compelled to write to you.

No doubt from the exterior point of view, you will find in England all that you want for learning what human beings generally call knowledge, but from the point of view of Truth and Consciousness, you can find nowhere the atmosphere in which you are living here. Elsewhere you can meet with a religious or a philosophic spirit, but true spirituality, direct contact with the Divine, constant aspiration to realise Him in life, mind and action are in the world realised only by very rare and scattered individuals and not as a living fact behind any university teaching however advanced it may be.

Practically, as far as you are concerned, there will be a great risk of drifting away from the experience you have realised and then you cannot know what will happen to you.

That is all I wanted to say — now it is left to you to choose and decide.

22 October 1952

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We see many people leaving the Ashram, either to seek a career or to study; they are those who have been here since childhood. There is a kind of uncertainty in our young people when they see others leave here and they say cautiously: “Who knows whether it will not be my
Centre of Education

"turn one day!" I feel there is a force behind all that. What is it?

This uncertainty and these departures are caused by the lower nature which resists the influence of the yogic power and tries to slow down the divine action, not through ill-will, but in order to be sure that nothing is forgotten or neglected in the haste to reach the goal. Few are those ready for a total consecration. Many children who have studied here need to come to grips with life before they can be ready for the divine work and that is why they leave in order to go through the test of the ordinary life.

11 November 1964

*A student received an invitation to follow a course of practical studies in Calcutta.*

Those who sincerely wish to learn, have here all the possibilities to do so. The only thing that one has outside, but does not have here, is the moral constraint of an external discipline.

Here one is free and the only constraint is the one that one sets oneself, when one is SINCERE.

Now it is for you to decide.

3 August 1966

What answer should we give or what attitude should we take with regard to some of the boys and girls who say that they have come here only for studies, not for sadhana and that therefore they can do what they like?

They can be told that they should not be here. We are not imposing any Yoga on them; but they should lead a hygienic and decent life, and if they do not want it, they should go elsewhere.
On Education

_Mother, can they be sent away from here?_

You can bring me one of them who is really very poor in studies. I shall not speak, but I'll try something. If it succeeds, then you can bring me the others. §

*(A teacher wrote that some students were not satisfied with the Centre of Education.)*

You can tell them that if they do not believe they can learn here something that is not taught elsewhere, they can very well change schools. We shall not miss them.

It is better to have a selected few than a commonplace mass.

*(A student had nearly completed his course of studies. Uncertain whether to attend college in the United States or to remain at the Ashram to live and work, he asked the Mother to make the decision.)*

I can tell you immediately that all depends on what you expect from life. If it is to live an ordinary or even successful life according to the usual old type, go to America and try your best.

If, on the contrary, you aspire at getting ready for the future and the new creation it prepares, remain here and prepare yourself for what is to come.

17 January 1969

*(We want here only those children who want to prepare themselves for a new life and who put progress before success in life. We do not want those who want to prepare themselves to earn a living and to achieve worldly success. They can go elsewhere. The children — to understand what we expect of them, they should be over ten years of age — who are ready for a new)*
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adventure, who want a new life, who are ready for a higher realisation, who want that the world should change and no longer be what it has been for so long, these are welcome.

We shall help them.§

January 1972

Au revoir, my child, never forget what your experience was, and do not let any external darkness penetrate and veil your consciousness.

I am with you.

Au revoir, my children, I wish that life may prove happy for you, and that one day you may be born into the Light and Truth.