10 April 1957

“Another invaluable result of these activities [sports, etc.] is the growth of what has been called the sporting spirit. That includes good humour and tolerance and consideration for all, a right attitude and friendliness to competitors and rivals, self-control and scrupulous observance of the laws of the game, fair play and avoidance of the use of foul means, an equal acceptance of victory or defeat without bad humour, resentment or ill-will towards successful competitors, loyal acceptance of the decisions of the appointed judge, umpire or referee. These qualities have their value for life in general and not only for sport, but the help that sport can give to their development is direct and invaluable. If they could be made more common not only in the life of the individual but in the national life and in the international where at the present day the opposite tendencies have become too rampant, existence in this troubled world of ours would be smoother and might open to a greater chance of concord and amity of which it stands very much in need.... even a highest and completest education of the mind is not enough without the education of the body.... The nation which possesses [these qualities] in the highest degree is likely to be the strongest for victory, success and greatness, but also for the contribution it can make towards the bringing about of unity and a more harmonious world order towards which we look as our hope for humanity’s future.”

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 2–4

1 This “Message” of 30 December 1948 was given for the first issue of the Bulletin of Physical Education of the Ashram (February 1949). It forms the introduction of The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth, which contains eight articles originally written by Sri Aurobindo for the Bulletin.
Sweet Mother, during our tournaments there are many who play in a very bad spirit. They try to hurt others in order to win. And we have noticed that even the little ones are learning to do this. How could it be avoided?

With children it is above all ignorance and bad example which cause the harm. So it would be good if, before they begin their games, all the group-leaders, the captains, call together all those they are in charge of and tell them, explain to them exactly what Sri Aurobindo says here, with detailed explanations like those we have given in the two little books *The Code of Sportsmanship* and *The Ideal Child* (or *What a Child Should Always Remember*). These things must be repeated often to the children. And then, you must warn them against bad company, bad friends, as I told you in another class.

And above all, set them the right example.... Be yourself what you would like them to be. Give them the example of disinterestedness, patience, self-control, constant good humour, the overcoming of one’s little personal dislikes, a sort of constant goodwill, an understanding of others’ difficulties; and that equality of temper which makes children free from fear, for what makes children deceitful and untruthful, and even cunning, is the fear of being punished. If they feel secure, they will hide nothing and you will then be able to help them to be loyal and honest. Of all things the most important is good example. Sri Aurobindo speaks of that, of the invariable good humour one must have in all circumstances, this self-forgetfulness: not to throw one’s own little troubles on others; when one is tired or uncomfortable, not to become unpleasant, impatient. This asks for quite some perfection, a self-control which is a great step on the path of realisation. If one fulfilled the conditions needed to be a true leader, even if only a leader of a small group of children, well, one would already be far advanced in the discipline needed for the accomplishment of the yoga.

It is from this aspect that the problem should be seen, the
Questions and Answers

aspect of self-mastery, of control, of the endurance which will not allow your personal condition to react on your group-work or collective action. To forget oneself is one of the most essential conditions for being a true leader: to have no selfish interests, to want nothing for oneself, to consider only the good of the group, of the whole, the totality that depends on one; to act only with that aim in mind, without wanting any personal profit from one's action.

A leader of a small group can thus become a perfect leader for a large group, for a nation, and prepare himself for a collective role. It is a training-ground of great importance, and that is truly what we have attempted and are continuing to try out here: to give to everyone as soon as possible a responsibility, big or small, so that he learns to become a true leader.

To be a true leader one must be completely disinterested and efface from oneself as much as possible all self-regard and all selfish movements. To be a leader one must master one's ego, and to master one's ego is the first indispensable step for doing yoga. And this is what can make sports a powerful aid for the realisation of the Divine.

Very few people understand this, and generally those who are against this outer discipline of sports, this concentration on the material realisation, are people who completely lack control over their physical being. And to realise the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo the control of one's body is a first indispensable step. Those who despise physical activities are people who won't be able to take a single step on the true path of integral yoga, unless they first get rid of their contempt. Control of the body in all its forms is an indispensable basis. A body which dominates you is an enemy, it is a disorder you cannot accept. It is the enlightened will in the mind which should govern the body, and not the body which should impose its law on the mind. When one knows that a thing is bad, one must be capable of not doing it. When one wants something to be realised, one must be able to do it and not be stopped at every step by the body's inability or ill-will or
lack of collaboration; and for that one must follow a physical
discipline and become master in one's own home.

It is very fine to escape into meditation and from the height
of one's so-called grandeur look down on material things, but
one who is not master in his own home is a slave.

(Silence)

No questions over there? No?

Mother, one of the problems that arises in physical ac-
tivities is that in order to be perfect at one game or one
particular activity, one needs to concentrate only on that
game or activity.

That is quite wrong. In the very first issue of the Bulletin I
explained this in full detail.² It is altogether wrong. Indeed some-
one who has acquired control over himself and developed the
power of concentration can apply this power of concentration to
things that are apparently extremely different, even sometimes
opposite, and he ought to be able to do them without one thing
interfering with the other.

There is only the question of time to be considered, but this
question may be resolved by two things: first by an enlightened
and methodical organisation of one's life, then by doing away
with the wastage of time which most people spend in useless
activities—if these were to disappear it would be a blessing
for everyone—and first among them I put chattering, that is,
speaking uselessly, among friends, colleagues... in all activities.
The time one can waste in talking is tremendous! When one
word would be enough, one says fifty. And that is not the only
loss of time.... Actually, when one is short of time, it means one
does not know how to organise one's life. Of course, there are

² "Concentration and Dispersion", Bulletin, April 1949.
Questions and Answers

people who do too many things, but that too shows a lack of organisation in life.

A true organisation gives a place to each thing to the extent that it is required. You all know very well that with ten to fifteen minutes of well-coordinated exercises, you can give your body all the necessary training. This you have been taught here and it has been proved to you. For the balance of the body this is enough. Naturally there are all sorts of other qualities given by games, but you don't play for more than an hour each day at the most, as far as I know, and that is not much time spent in the day.

It is an excuse! Organise your life and you will see that you have room for everything... even for being a good student.