

CIRHU MEETING
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We would like to present to ourselves the idea of what we can do, what we should do, and how we can do and how should do to move forward in the field of education.

The paper that I have written here on CIRHU is a kind of a rough draft, which can ultimately be torn away and replaced by another paper. But it can be a starting point for our deliberations together.

We have already one research program that we have started many years ago, a research programme under which two books have been published, *The Aim of Life* and *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil*. Both these books have been appreciated very widely.

The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil was sent by the then Prime Minister to the Education Ministry for evaluation, and the Secretary of the Government of India was in charge of evaluation and, after reading the whole book, he recommended that every teacher in the whole country should be given a copy of that book. But thereafter there was no follow-up. The then Prime Minister also passed away and the recommendations made by the Secretary are also lost somewhere now in the Ministry; one does not know where the recommendations are.

Recently the new Secretary to the Government of India in charge of education has requested that every Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Education should have in his office a copy of that book. And this has been done. Every Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Education should have in his office a copy of this book, *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil*.

Now this research work started with some nebulous idea; there was no great clarity as to the target group for whom it is to be meant. Even the subject matter was also nebulous. But to explain that research work, I would like to present to you three ideas which were in my mind, at least, when I proposed that research work.

The first idea was connected with a problem which was asked of The Mother at one time: "*Is there something essential that every human being and every student ultimately should learn about?*" This was the question. And Mother's answer was, "We are here to find an answer to that question". That was her answer. Is there something essential which every human being and therefore every student should learn about? This is the question. And I have been reflecting on this question since then, as a researcher. It's a very difficult question and requires a lot of reflection, experience, exchange and maturation. I would like to present this question to all of you so that we can share our reflections on this subject.

My second idea behind the proposal to make this research was: Mother had once said, while we were starting to study works of Sri Aurobindo in the Ashram School and some questions were put to the Mother, "*How should we study the works of Sri Aurobindo?*"

So Mother's answer was long but I can give you the brief essence of the answer: the teacher should not become a screen between Sri Aurobindo and the pupil. The task of the teacher is to give all the background materials to the students and prepare them in such a way that Sri Aurobindo comes to the pupil with all the freshness, and students feel a direct contact with what Sri Aurobindo has written. This was her answer, basically. So since that time I have been trying to reflect on this question. And I have constantly asked myself, 'Can we collect background material for the works of Sri Aurobindo?'

In regard to *The Life Divine*, for example, Mother had said that it requires ten years of preparation to study *The Life Divine*. And I fully realise it. *The Life Divine* is in a sense a very technical book, just as *Savitri* also is a very technical book. One who does not know poetry in its technicality, one who does not know the perception of Sri Aurobindo in regard to the future poetry may not be able to appreciate *Savitri* in its technical aspects. So if one has to study *Savitri* for example, one has to study a good deal of background material to be able to appreciate properly *Savitri*. One can read *Savitri* for many purposes: for inspiration, for refreshment, for illumination, sporadic or — like a torchlight. You can put a torchlight and see what is just in a spot. A torchlight is a spotlight. So all these purposes are understood; you don't need to be highly technically efficient in the technique of poetry. One can derive benefit from *Savitri* in many ways; similarly with *The Life Divine* also one can open any page, any particular chapter, any particular topic, and can be illuminated.

But to understand *The Life Divine* properly, one has to have a good technical knowledge of many things. First of all, one needs to learn what is philosophy, because it is a philosophical work, what is the method of philosophy, and the purpose of philosophy, the

limitations of philosophy, philosophy and spiritual experience. This is only from the point of view of the technical understanding of *The Life Divine*, the very structure in which the whole *Life Divine* is designed. It's like an orchestra played by a thousand musicians at the same time.

Then, the subject matter of *The Life Divine* and this subject matter is so vast and so difficult that one needs to have a lot of background, and I can fully understand when Mother says, 'It requires ten years preparation to be able to begin *The Life Divine*.' That is why Mother started when the children were being taught at the beginning and Mother herself was reading the *The Life Divine*; she selected to read only the last six chapters, from 'Man and the Evolution' to the end of the book. But all the rest was not touched upon by the Mother.

But I have been constantly trying to find out what is the background material that we need to prepare. And when this project of research came up, this was also in my mind. In selecting the title, 'The Aim of Life', I was guided by one of the chapters of *The Life Divine*. The chapter is 'The Aim of Life and Four Theories of Existence'. This is the title of the chapter in *The Life Divine*. And I tried to make a compilation of background material, so I would say that this whole book is only background material for this one chapter and, that too, not sufficient. Only for that chapter, this particular book can be used as background material. Now, if you count so many chapters of *The Life Divine* and if you want to work out background material for each chapter, it'll be a huge material. It would be very interesting. Actually Auroville, I personally believe, has to carry out that task: background material relevant to every chapter of *The Life Divine*. In fact, every chapter requires so much background material.

For the very first paragraph of *The Life Divine*, for example, one requires the entire history of human thought. In one paragraph, Sri Aurobindo has summarized it. Sri Aurobindo starts with the first awakened thought of mankind and the first formula of wisdom and the development of that thought throughout history, both East and West. And how Sri Aurobindo says that there have been periods of scepticism; there have been periods of deviation from that aspiration, but mankind comes back again and again. And how modern science has changed the scenario so much and yet, he says, we are satiated but not satisfied with all the modern knowledge of science. So if we want to explain the meaning of 'having been satiated but not satisfied', how shall we explain it to the students? It requires a lot of material. And then Sri Aurobindo says we have the promise ? the first formula of wisdom promises also to be its last. Now, that this statement, which is futuristic, promises to be its last, raises many questions: how can you say it promises to be its last?

Even in that statement, in one paragraph, there is a statement where he uses the word 'may' and somewhere uses the word 'is'. And from a philosophical standpoint it is very important a distinction. How much can you declare something philosophically in terms of 'may' and how much can you declare philosophically in terms of 'is'? 'Is' is a statement of certainty; 'may' is a question of speculation and of doubtful validity. And in this very paragraph, at a very significant point, there is a use of the word 'may' and a use of the word 'is'. And if you want to explain to students why this distinction, you are required to explain the philosophical method of the exposition of a truth and in what way the word 'may' used by Sri Aurobindo is justified and in what way the word 'is' used in that paragraph is justified.

Now, if you can give all this material and then if the first paragraph is given, it will really come with a freshness to the student, that everything that is said there is so perfect. Now this is material required even for the first paragraph of *The Life Divine*. And then, similarly, the first chapter if you take it up ? now the first chapter is only four pages but the material required to introduce this first chapter would be so heavy... but that work somewhere *has to be done*. *The Life Divine* to my mind is the epochal book and the future generations are bound to return to that book again and again, as we today return again and again to Plato, or refer to Aristotle. More than Plato and Aristotle, this particular book will be referred to as we move forward in the history of mankind. And this kind of a need will be always felt as to how shall we introduce *The Life Divine* to our students.

Now, the same thing with regard to *The Synthesis of Yoga*: there is no book comparable to *The Synthesis of Yoga* in the history of the world. There are many treatises, but this particular book is of a very special kind and requires a lot of background material.

And the same thing can be said about every important book of Sri Aurobindo, like *The Secret of the Veda*. To introduce this book would require a hundred lectures, just to introduce the book — a really good introduction. And then if you go more and more into detail, it is a very difficult book, a very technical book, in fact. It's a book of exegesis, a book of

interpretation. And there are laws of interpretation. You cannot just write a book of interpretation unless you are technically equipped to interpret *any* text.

How do you interpret any text? It requires a tremendous amount of mastery over the subject matter and methods of interpretation. So that when you interpret a thing, from a technical point of view, you follow all the tenants of interpretation. In fact, in modern times, the philosophy of interpretation has become a very specialised subject. And lots of books have recently come out on how you interpret. And if you read Sri Aurobindo's method of interpretation in the whole book, it is such a technically perfect book.

As one of the philosophers in India wrote, "It's amazing how Sri Aurobindo read the Veda from 1910 to 1914 ? only four years ? and when he began to write *The Secret of the Veda*, the mastery of the work of the Veda and the way in which he interprets and gives an exposition of it at a technically perfect level is amazing! It's miraculous and magical, in fact. There are people who write books of interpretation, but they read books for 30, 40, 50 years before they attempt to make an interpretation. Here it is a historical fact that Sri Aurobindo had not read the Veda before 1910. And it is a fact that he began to write on the Veda in 1914. It's a historical fact. Anybody can verify these facts. And how could one write that kind of a book? It's an amazing phenomenon.

The same thing about *The Future Poetry*. Of course, about *The Future Poetry*, we can say that Sri Aurobindo himself was a poet from an early stage of his life. But what he has written, the wealth of information that is needed to expound what Sri Aurobindo has written, you can write volumes on it, because the entire English literature and poetry, particularly, has been expounded in detail.

And *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. how can anybody appreciate *The Human Cycle* without having a detailed knowledge of social organisations, the main theme of social organisations, the main theme of the history of social organisations? Namely, the theme of unity is the basic theme. Even to bring out that the whole human society, the whole theme of the development and history of society is the theme of unity; and by what means human societies have tried to achieve unity; and Sri Aurobindo's grasp of all the levels of social development. In fact, Sri Aurobindo has said that it is a psychology of social development. At a psychological level, if you want to explain to students, how much work is needed!

So it is in that sense that I feel that a lot of research work requires to be done, by us and by those who will come after us, because it's a huge work and will require a tremendous programme.

So that was my second reason for preparing the materials for *The Aim of Life*.

My third reason was that a lot of the material that is given to students is usually given in a very highly technical manner, which is very uninteresting, very dry, very scholastic. And to all those who participated in the research work at that time, I had told them that our compilation should not be scholastic. Our emphasis should be on stories. Stories are easier means, or vehicles, of approach to students.

So we should try to find out stories that are relevant to the material that we want to present. We should have good introductions, where scholastic material can come; there can be good notes where scholastic expertise can be manifested. But the body of the story itself should be a very interesting story. Now, this is a very difficult task. But that also was a point of view that was kept in view.

So these are three things that were in my mind and I'm happy to say that all who participated participated in a tremendous spirit. And we had very, very good, very fruitful workshops, several times. In fact, in the CIRHU paper that I have written, I have given one full faculty of the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And there I have written that the main task will be to collect and develop background material relevant to the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. That would be one full faculty.

I would like people in Auroville to reflect upon any work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and ask themselves this question, 'How can this material be presented, can be made accessible to students of various levels, but particularly to the teachers?' Because if teachers have understood the material very well, then they will be able to transmit to the students in due course. But we should also have materials which can be given directly to the students. Now these two works which we have produced, *The Aim of Life* and *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil* — at the beginning, we had no idea of the target group at all; we just allowed the things to come up sporadically and spontaneously. And now, when people read them, they all feel that these works are good for teachers: that is, if you want a target group, it is to

teachers that you should present them and, that too, to teachers who have already quite a good deal of background. This material itself is quite difficult. You might need another research work based upon this to prepare materials which will be easier for students to grasp, for teachers at different levels to grasp. That also is necessary. In any case, people do appreciate that these two books are very good for teachers of a certain level.

So I would like to continue this, at least one target. We can continue with this series of research work. So let me complete this statement of this research work that we have started, that one line: I said the question was: *what is essential for every human being, every student to learn about?* And the answer that we are trying to arrive at ? we cannot say definitively; it is still a question to be explored. And I would like a very collective exploration of this question.

But more and more it becomes clear to me that when Mother wrote her book, *On Education*, that book is actually an exposition of what every human being and every student needs to learn. I mean, there was already an answer given by the Mother, although Mother said, "We are here to answer that question". But when I read again what Mother has written in that book *On Education* I find she'd already answered that question. Everybody needs to know what is education because everybody is, in one way or another, a teacher and a pupil. Whether we like it or not, our whole human life is nothing but a process of education. Both psychologically and biologically, we are educationists. Everyone either becomes a teacher or becomes a parent and parents have to develop the children and they have to understand what is education. You cannot be a good parent unless you know what is education and how you can bring up the children properly.

Psychologically also, every human being ? in fact, it is an inherent tendency to learn and to teach. How the cat, for example, teaches the kitten is a wonderful experience to watch; how a mother bird teaches the young one how to peck at things and how to grasp the grain and how to eat. It is inherent in all of us. The moment you learn, you want to transmit it. So everybody needs to learn what is education. And this is how the Mother wrote her book, *On Education*. The whole book is on education. That is the first answer I gave to myself.

The second answer was, education consists of what? And Mother described physical education, vital education, mental education, psychic and spiritual education ? leading up to, promising a supramental education.

So, according to my understanding now, it means that every human being has a body, therefore has to learn about the human body. Everybody has a vital energy, therefore has to understand what is vital. Everybody has a mind, therefore has to understand what is mind. Everybody has a soul and spiritual goal, ultimately. Therefore one has to understand it.

So these are what I think are essential elements that every human being and every student ultimately should be acquainted with. Up to what degree depends on your individual exploration, your needs, and so on. But something that is basic should be introduced at least to students and teachers and to everybody. So we have planned now on this basis, these two books are only preliminary books. *The Aim of Life* is directly connected with the psychic and spiritual education. Because Mother says ? when she comes to discuss psychic education, she says psychic education is related to the aim of life.

So we have started with the fundamental problem of the aim of life. But much more work has to be done later on, when we come to purely psychic and spiritual education. This is, as it were, a kind of a preliminary to psychic and spiritual education.

The second book that we have prepared, *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil*, is designed to explain what is education. Since everybody has to be a teacher, everybody has to be a pupil, one has to understand what is a good teacher, what is a good pupil. So these two are preliminary books.

A third book is already almost ready and we have titled it *The Mystery and Excellence of the Human Body*. We already have got texts collected, mostly stories ? very interesting material, useful material: what is body, what is the mystery of the body, and how the body can be led to its excellences, until we arrive at what Sri Aurobindo calls a divine body, starting with a normal kind of body, and the questions of health, first aid, nutrition, exercises of various kinds and systems of physical education, and marvels of perfection of the body, and then transformation of the human body leading up to the divine body. I mean, this is the one spectrum of the whole book and yet it's a small book. The texts which are taken are very simple. A lot of work has been done in this field and already it is almost ready, You might say.

Now, the fourth book that we want to work on, and where I invite all of you is a very difficult book and it cannot be done except with the collaboration of all. And that pertains to vital education. In a sense, we might say vital education is the most difficult part of the

process of education. Physical education is much easier because you can see the physical, physically. The mental education is simpler because mind is a very specialised instrument. But vital is present ? it is a connecting link, as Sri Aurobindo says. It is present in the physical; it is present in the vital, of course; and it is present in the mental and also at the higher levels.

What is the vital and how the vital can be educated? What is essential about the vital that we must present in this book? What are the dimensions of the vital education? So one day, when I come here for quite some time, I would like to have a workshop especially on vital education, where we can all sit together and we can explore and contribute ? everyone can contribute because, as I told you, our whole idea is to have stories. We can have texts that are not stories but, basically, our approach is to present everything through stories, so that the presentation is very interesting and people like to enter into it. This is the pedagogical aspect of the writing of the book. Everything that you prepare should be interesting. Now, we are only at the planning stage, as far as this aspect is concerned.

Now, in this connection I have also, with the help of people in Auroville, prepared a kind of a syllabus, a curriculum. I am opposed to curricula, myself, but I am not opposed to making flexible programmes. A curriculum which is closed and which has got its own edges marked out, I don't like. But there can be programmes, flexible programmes. So, a flexible programme of vital education which ultimately amounts to emphasis on the vital impulses and the methods by which vital impulses can be trained. It has physical aspects; it has mental aspects; it has spiritual aspects. All of them are to be taken into account, but the focus is vital education.

And, in this respect, a curriculum of vital education ultimately results in a very important education called *character development*. No character can be built unless you deal with vital education properly. This basic stuff of character development is a vital force. And no character development can be complete without spiritual education.

So it's a kind of a syllabus or a curriculum and, for purposes of presenting to the country as a whole, I have of course made it a little artificial in the sense that there is Class I, Class II, Class III, Class IV, Class V, up to Class XII, because that is how people in our country at least today demand the programme to be classified. But it is only a kind of an artificial thing which can be forgotten, as far as we are concerned. But all the topics which I have written there could be quite relevant to the work that we want to do in this book. This is not complete; it is only a first draft, as it were, and much more can be done and we can, by collaboration, develop it further. I would like to invite all people in Auroville, because this is a subject in which everybody can participate and can contribute, to find stories which are relating to the vital and vital education.

Now, here again, there is a very important chapter in *The Life Divine* which is entitled 'The Problem of Life'. The title of the chapter itself is 'The Problem of Life'. And in respect of that problem Sri Aurobindo has said there are three powers in the human being by which the vital can be uplifted: the power of illumination, the power of love, and the power of heroism. These are the three powers by which the vital can really be uplifted from its normal moorings to instincts and impulses and wildnesses of various kinds which create the problem of life.

So I have been guided by this insight that Sri Aurobindo has given as to what should be our fundamental thrust in collecting stories from all parts of the world which will illustrate the problem of life and how that problem can be resolved, how a particular situation or how a particular aspect of human personality can be resolved by power of illumination, or the power of heroism, or the power of love.

Now, I must say that the Mother preferred the use of the word 'harmony' instead of 'love' because once when I wrote down to the Mother that the aim of education has to be the development of wisdom, strength, love and skills, the Mother said that it was a good formulation, but she struck off the word 'love' and she put the word 'harmony'. So, because the word 'love' is very much misunderstood in the world today and the word 'harmony' is the real word that should be made current. So, I have put down these three words ? stories that illustrate the power of illumination, the power of harmony and the power of heroism ? these three powers.

Now, as I make exploration in this field ? I am telling you more in detail about this because I am inviting you all to participate in this research programme. I would like to tell the students the stories of human culture. That is to say, that these stories will have – that by telling these stories, the students will also be introduced to the history of culture, history of Eastern culture, history of Western culture. It will serve a purpose of introducing the students,

through these stories, into the heart of culture. Because if you examine the stories, actually, one of the best uses of stories is to bring children to the heart of the culture. If you read *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, you enter into the stories of India which give you real insight into the culture of India.

If you want to understand Indian culture, one of the important characteristics of Indian culture is that the genius of the mentality of Indians is basically, from a certain point of view, very slow, as compared to dynamic cultures of many countries, where the development and movement is very fast. In India, the human mind seems to be ? not that it is slow; it seems to be ? working slowly. That is because it has a tendency to assimilate any actions or reactions which are around in the surroundings ? an assimilation around a spiritual centre. And since the spiritual centre is very deep and very remote, this tendency of assimilation is a long process. And assimilation is an inner process...

(Side B of cassette)... but outwardly it seems to be a very slow process. It arrives at a conclusion after a very long period of assimilation, consideration, and arrives at a conclusion. And having arrived at a conclusion, it has a capacity to adhere to that conclusion or decision and would not easily change it. And this is a very important aspect of Indian mentality.

There is a very fine sentence in *Ramayana* of Tulsidas: *prana jayai baru batchanan jayai*: one word that you have spoken cannot be shaken, once you have pronounced it, even if it means the cost of your life. This is the character of Rama. Once you have made a statement, the word you have spoken cannot be violated afterwards. Now, that means that you take a long, long time before you make a statement, because your honour, your sense of honour ? every culture is fundamentally having a terminal point. It ends in some kind of honour.

To be a Frenchman, you have an honour in being precise, in being aristocratic in intellectual power. You are really French if you can have ? if somebody says, "Oh, your ideas are very poor, very nebulous" a Frenchman will feel very hurt. The Frenchman has an honour in being precise. And even in the language you can see that the word 'précisément' is a word which is very often used in the French language. It's not used in India, for example. That is to say, you have stated everything precisely and yet, to make it more precise, in brief, you make a statement. So the French culture is very much expressed in the language itself. This is how we must understand every culture has something very special which is even expressed in the language.

Now, Indian culture has this very great speciality, as I told you; it takes time to make a statement but it is a dishonour if you are afterward required to change it. In the West, you make a statement now because you find it is right at present, but there is no shame at all if tomorrow new facts come in your picture and you say, "Tomorrow my opinion is different". It's a fact. It's a fact: "Tomorrow new facts have come into my vision and therefore my opinion is different tomorrow."

In India, it's a shame. "Why did you not take into account that tomorrow new facts will come into your picture? Therefore be very slow; assimilate all that could be; try to understand, you take into account everything that has come into your ken, assimilate properly, then you come to a conclusion, then you make a statement, so you don't have to retreat afterwards."

Now, this is a speciality of Indian culture. If you look at Indian minds, you will find that they are hardly promising. They will hardly make any promises. Human beings in India will not make promises easily. They'll take a long time before a promise is made, but you can be sure that once a promise is made, the genius of India does not allow you to change it after so easily. There can be changes, but not so easily. That is why also in India there is a lot of conservatism, conservation. To change, to make India radical, it takes a lot of time. But once it takes up the problem of radical change ? it takes time to make it, but once it does it, it does it marvellously. And suddenly, there is a mutation, as it were: a new face comes up. That's why Sri Aurobindo said the renaissance of Indian culture will be such that the spirit will remain the same, but the entire mind, body, life will be quite new. That will be the Indian renaissance; that is what is going to happen.

So I have found that for this particular book that we are planning about vital education we will also collect stories that are particularly indicative of various cultures, so that a student enters into the very heart, through stories. If you study Rama's character, you enter really into Indian culture. If you read *Mahabharata*, for example, one illustration: Arjuna decides, on a particular day, before sunset I will kill my enemy, Jayadratha, who killed my son illegitimately. That was the promise he makes in the morning. He says, "Before sunset, I must kill Jayadratha and if I cannot kill him, I'll kill myself." That's the promise he makes. And almost it

was evening, actually. And Jayadratha was not killed. It's a very important story in *Mahabharata*. And it became evening already. The sun seemed to have set. And the birds came out, in the evening. And Jayadratha, knowing very well that now Arjuna will kill himself and that there is no danger at all ? he was hiding himself the whole day, so that he does not face Arjuna; Arjuna does not know where Jayadratha is hidden. He now, in his exuberance, came out of his hiding. And suddenly the sun was again seen on the sky. The story is that Sri Krishna, who was the charioteer of Arjuna and who knew the promise of Arjuna, and who knew that if this vow is not fulfilled that Arjuna will be finished and the whole Mahabharata will be over. The entire purpose of Mahabharata will be defeated. So it is said that Sri Krishna made that play, that magic – it is said in many ways. It was also said that it was a day of eclipse which took place at that time and only a short time of that eclipse. And because of the eclipse the sun seemed to have set and Jayadratha came out. And that was how Arjuna was enabled to fulfil his promise, because as soon as Jayadratha came out, Sri Krishna told Arjuna, "Now, here's your enemy in front of you. You kill him."

This is also to show you how the Indian culture ? it takes a long time before promises or vows are made but, once a vow is made, there is a tremendous force in fulfilling it. In fact, one of the important aspects of Indian culture is a series of vows. Indian culture is nothing but a series of vows. If you go to villages, out of 365 days, nearly 300 days are days of vows, of one kind or another. Today is 11th day of the month and therefore only fruits are to be eaten; nothing else can be eaten. On such and such a day, you cannot eat before evening; only after the evening can you eat. For ten days in a month you can only drink water and nothing else. Various kinds of vows: you can only wear such colours of cloth, a white colour, or green colour, or red colour, and so on. This is because the whole system is based upon promises that you make to yourself and your desire to keep to your promises. So Indian culture cannot be understood without entering into stories of this kind.

I would like therefore stories of harmony, stories of illumination, stories of heroism, not necessarily separately, because stories of heroism can also be stories of harmony and illumination at the same time. And vice versa. Either in their simplicity or in their singularity or in a combination of all three elements. I would like stories to be told from all cultures of the world, or all major cultures of the world, or at least Eastern and Western, so that ultimately the two cultures can come together, understand each other more properly. There is a great need among human beings today to understand different cultures. I was told when I went to Holland once that in Holland nobody gives you an answer 'Yes' very easily. Even the method of saying 'yes' will be almost 'No'.

Now, unless you know the culture of Holland, you may misunderstand why somebody takes so much time to answer the question in the affirmative. Why the first answer is why no. It can be misunderstood. Now, I don't know if this is the culture of Holland. I may be wrong. I'm only telling you an example of why, if it is so, it should be understood.

In England, for example, I know that there is one sentence which is clinching an argument, which you can argue and come to the ultimate point where conviction is to be generated, you should say, "If it pays, it pays." You can argue as you want, but the final conviction will come when you can say, 'It pays. It pays.' So, look it pays. Argument is complete.

So we can collect stories of these three things from Eastern and Western culture. But we can also give them — basic themes — of cultures, if possible; not that you should be absolutely rigid about it.

I would very much like, first of all, good stories from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, as far as Indian culture is concerned. I would very much like the stories from Iliad, Odyssey, Greek mythology — some very good stories; if you can put them side by side, I would like to bring out the first volume only on this.

And many other stories, for example, the Vedic cycle. The Vedic cycle of Indian culture was devoted to the search for immortality. And the story of Savitri, for example, refers to that particular cycle, where the entire thrust of the whole story is search for immortality; it's the search of the conquest over death. In fact, I would like very much that the series would start with the story of Savitri, as told in *Mahabharata*. It's a story of the Vedic cycle, a brief story, and I would like to end the whole series of the stories on vital education, at the end, with *Savitri*, as expounded by Sri Aurobindo. This is how I conceived it: what's at the beginning is also at the last. We begin our story telling with the story of Savitri, as told in *Mahabharata* and end with the story of *Savitri*, as told by Sri Aurobindo. This is the first and the last, as it were.

This is my first draft thinking I'm just putting before you. There can be four or five volumes of stories. We can have the story of Draupadi, for example, the story of Damayanti and Nala; these are special stories of Indian culture. Many of you may not know these stories at all, but they are very very interesting stories; they tell you what life is. If you read the story of Nala and Damayanti, the entire gamut of human life is described through this story. The stories of normal experience, stories of occult experience, stories of supernormal experience, stories of the action of man, action of Gods, the vicissitudes of human life, from rise to fall, and fall to rise, the entire vision of Indian life is portrayed in one story, Nala and Damayanti. Therefore I give a great importance to this story, Nala and Damayanti. In one story, the Indian vision of human life is described. I'm told that Sri Aurobindo, if someone wanted to learn Sanskrit, used to recommend *Mahabharata's* account of Nala and Damayanti. If one wants to learn Sanskrit very easily, he used to recommend the story of Nala and Damayanti as told in the *Mahabharata* in Sanskrit. It's very well told and very easily told. And if you have a little bit of Sanskrit you can go into this story much more easily.

Similarly, *Illiad* ? most of you know better than I do ? has many interesting stories. The *Odyssey* also has got many interesting stories, stories of heroism; even stories of harmony, although most often there are stories of war, their main thrust is toward harmony.

So I would very much like stories from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the stories from *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, particularly. The first volume should contain stories of this kind so that the children who read or teachers who read get into the heart of the Western and Indian culture quite well.

And there are many stories. For example, in the middle, I want to put only four stories from Shakespeare. I consider four stories as told by Shakespeare extremely important for vital education. So that if you read these four stories, the vital being is purified; there is a catharsis of the vital being in the story of Hamlet, the story of Othello, the story of Macbeth, and the story of King Lear.

Hamlet is the story of an intellectual man who has not been able to arrive at a conclusion and remains in a state of doubt, and how tragedy overtakes him and gives a catharsis, actually, as to how not to allow doubt to prevail upon you. If you are intellectual, it is good; intellectual people always remain doubtful for a long time. Scepticism is a normal characteristic of the intellectual personality. But if you remain only in that field, then the vital being overtakes you ultimately and the intellect is not able to illumine you, and therefore ultimately it results in a tragedy. And when you read the whole drama, you find a Hamlet in each one of us, in some way or the other, at a certain stage of our life. And then we become illuminated: "Well, I should not live like Hamlet."

Macbeth is a purely ambitious personality which is overtaken by a tragedy.

Othello is a story of a true lover overtaken by doubt, jealousy; ultimately he kills his own wife whom he loved most dearly. And ultimately, when he finds the truth, he kills himself. When you read the story, the lesson goes home: let us not be jealous. Jealousy is overcome through this very story itself; when you read the story; it's a tremendous cultural catharsis that occurs in our consciousness. This can happen ? when you are jealous, when you being to doubt, the doubt can be completely unfounded. We become much wiser, much better.

King Lear is a man of attachments, petty attachments, vital attachments, who expects so much from his daughters that ultimately he gets disillusioned and becomes mad. It's a tragedy arising out of the pettiness of the attachments to which you reduce yourself to and then how you are ruined. It's a great lesson for humanity: how not to be attached in this way, and to rise above it.

So I would like these four stories somewhere in the series. I already collected a number of stories which I shall present to you in the next workshop on this book that we shall arrange. I'll request Alain to arrange when I come next, we can have all those of you who are interested and who can bring treasures from your own knowledge to this banquet. We shall be very happy to receive good stories from you think can go into this collection.

So I'll bring whatever collections I have made so far and exchange our views on them and see how they can be arranged.

So this is the project that is already on and I want to develop it. And you can see that these stories, once you combine them, how useful it will be to the teachers of Auroville and to the children of Auroville. You will have good material, a new kind of material and new kind of education.

And then I want to start already the next book which, provisionally, I have entitled *Ideas*. It's about mental education. And the title of the book will be *Ideas*. Just as vital

education is basically through stories, so mental education will be mainly through ideas. It's very difficult to find stories to illustrate ideas because, most often, the stories are written around our vital impulses and our vital emotions. You don't easily find stories which can illustrate ideas. But if you can find stories that can illustrate ideas, I'd be very happy. In any case, I would like to have short statements which are clear and which, when presented to the children, their own mind becomes clear — so a statement of clear ideas, so the children understand what is clarity. In fact, Descartes said that clarity is a sign of truth. An idea which is clear and precise, it's a definition of truth, according to him. So I would like to have examples of clear ideas, stated clearly. Then I want ideas which are subtle. Children should know what is subtlety. And children should have the experience of what may be called complex ideas. We should be able to give an anthology of ideas which are complex in character and, finally, ideas which are global in character. So I want a compilation of clear ideas, subtle ideas, complex ideas, and global ideas. So think about it. It may come to us after two years, this particular programme, in the meantime kindly collect in your own mind, in your own notebooks, ideas which can illustrate these four themes: clarity, complexity, subtlety and globality.

And then I want to come to the fourth book: psychic and spiritual education. And I have not yet reflected upon it, so I'll not yet be able to tell you how I think of planning about it. But here also I invite you all to think about it and see how best we can collect materials which are pertaining to psychic and spiritual education.

I would like to register you all in this programme, whether you like it or not, because I am really very, very keen to harvest ? because I know that you are well-read, have thought a lot and are interested in education. You've had the benefit of very high education in your own life, so you can make a very good contribution. So I would like to register you all. Afterward you can retire if you don't like but in my registration I would request Alain at least to put down the names of everybody who is present now and open the register: from Auroville, anyone who wants to register himself or herself or anyone whom you want to suggest; if a person does not come forward, I would like to go to him or to her and request him or her to participate in this programme.

To my mind, this is a programme of CIRHU, the Centre of International Research in Human Unity, because these books are ultimately targeted toward unity of mankind. Through this kind of educational material, the basic theme is unity of mankind.

And I want international research, that is to say, people of both East and West to be engaged, to be brought together in this research work. And once we start this work, I will say to myself, "CIRHU has started", under the trees, benign shadow under which we are sitting today. In fact, I would say this is the inauguration of CIRHU, because we've already started here. I would like to register your names, as researchers, and I want your help.

Now, this is one important programme of CIRHU. And, before we disperse, I would like to introduce to you the second programme that I would like you to participate in, you and others who are not here, but who can.

In this paper I have written, I have spoken of one central faculty and seven subsidiary faculties. The conception I put forward is that the Centre of International Research in Human Unity will be a kind of an open institution, or no institution at all; it will be No School, basically. This centre is actually to be conceived as No School, in which the method will be not the method of schooling but the method of research. Even the students who will learn will learn through the method of research. And whatever is learned, even through lectures, through books, many other things which are normally connected with schooling, will be subsidiary. At a certain stage, I had written a statement about higher education. And I had made ten points. And I had sent these ten points to the Mother. And, when approving this programme for higher education, she had said, "Now it is to be implemented thoroughly and sincerely". So she had approved of the whole programme that was given here, which is not a programme really of any deep curriculum but a method of work. And I'll read out to you and I would very much like to present to you these ten points, because when we are trying to develop higher education in Auroville and when our idea is basically to develop no school, these ten points may help us. Not that we should be confined to these ten points, we can always be flexible, open; but this was the idea. It said:

Since the free progress approach governs all studies in the higher course

1. There is no compulsion with regard to any subject of study.
2. The choice of a subject for study is made by the student in accordance with his real and serious quest.

3. His course or subject thus selected constitutes a short or a long project according to the nature of the topic and the decision of the student.

4. In exploring each subject of study, the student takes the help of the teacher or teachers whom he chooses.

5. In guiding the students, the teachers are expected to widen and intensify the area of exploration to avoid narrow specialisation or wide superficiality.

6. Each student's programme of studies should be flexible and evolutionary.

7. In the selection of topics of study, the student is not confined to a single faculty such as Arts, Science, Engineering Technology, even though he may belong predominantly to any of these faculties.

8. The period of study for the predominantly Arts or Science student is three years and that of the predominantly Engineering Technology students is five years.

9. The exact quantum of work to be covered by each student for his selected course cannot be predetermined, but in order to have successfully completed his course, he should have shown regularity of sustained effort, development of capacities, understanding of his subjects, and the power of answering relevant questions orally and in writing with sufficient clarity and precision. The quality of the work is considered more important than the quantity of the work, although the latter, also, should not be meagre but commensurate with high standards.

10. There is no system of conventional examinations or tests and the system of continuous assessment and evolution of the student is continued.

As already stated, in the Centre of Education, there was no degrees or diplomas.

Then I'd stated something which I don't want to read because it is not necessary. So this is what I had proposed at that time. Now, all this may not be immediately applicable here, but it may be helpful, because while approving it, Mother had said, "You must now practise it thoroughly and sincerely".

So I would like you to study so many topics I have given here. You can add your own topics which you think are not here. You can even make a comment saying, "This is quite unnecessary". Paulette has already given me a list of topics which are not here but which ought to be here. This is very helpful. Some others have also mentioned to me something. I have received some requests from some people ? young people ? that they would like to be part of higher education. They would like to participate in this. They have their own ideas. All are welcome.

We can continue tomorrow again and I'll be happy to explore with you ? today I have spoken largely; perhaps tomorrow you would like to speak much more than I can and I would like to develop as to how we should go about ? I would like your advice. I believe that in Auroville we require to develop higher education. We require to develop research of the highest order. We have here talents, capacities which can be harnessed to this kind of research work. There are students who are in need of higher education. They need to be attended. So tomorrow we shall discuss this question in detail. I will request Deepti first of all to introduce the subject because she has been teaching some students who are, according to me, perhaps going to enter into higher education soon. I'll request other teachers also, who are not here perhaps but who can come, who may be in contact with young people of Auroville and who, in their opinion, should also be part of the higher education. Maybe in some respects they are fit for higher education and in some respects they are not. And we have open school ? I mean, it is no school, so it is not necessary that they should be fully in higher education. We can have a flexible system in which students can float between this level and that level. But all this we can discuss tomorrow, so that at the end of tomorrow we can have some clear idea, some programme of activity which we'll start with higher education.

This is what I wanted to tell you today but, if you have any questions now, if they're short questions and if you're not in a hurry I can answer or I can share with you whatever I can share; or else we can meet tomorrow.

Question: When you talk about higher education I hear implied ? I may be wrong ? that this higher education is something that we old-in-body people would offer to the younger-in-body people, but I actually feel that higher education is something that we could offer each other, irrespective of body age, actually. Because I know for myself that there are many things where I would require the instruction or the help or the guidance of someone who had taken

the subject further, but I wouldn't be able to go if we aimed CIRHU or higher education only at the young-in-body.

No, you are right.

Yeah? And I have a feeling that may be true generally, that we'll find that we have gaps in our maturity, in the education of our minds and that there really should be an effort to make this open to people of all body ages.

Yes, I agree entirely, absolutely — most enthusiastically. It is a centre of research, basically in which students of younger age will take advantage of. But basically it is for students of all ages.

All right? Thank you so much.

CIRHU MEETING
17 01 2000

Yesterday I spoke of the books that we want to bring out, that was one part. The second part is the program of research as regards the Central Faculty and the many other faculties of which I have spoken. The word "faculty" may seem to be very pompous, bombastic considering where we are now, but let the words not deter us from doing what is to be done.

I'm very much interested in two things: One is that a spirit of research be developed in Auroville; and second is that that spirit of research percolate in such a way that students benefit, that students begin to feel that research is the method of education.

So I would like to introduce to you the idea of the research projects that I have outlined. I did this to some extent with a small group at one time, but now that there are so many people here, I thought we could share what was at the back of my mind when I wrote this paper. I don't know if you have seen this paper as a whole: *The Center of International Research in Human Unity*. I have said here that the concept of the proposed Center rests upon four needs:

1. The need to deepen, widen and heighten the tasks of higher levels of educational research;
2. The need to harness expertise, scholarship and professional experience which are already available in Auroville, to invite such help as is available from relevant institutions in the country and in the world, and also from visiting scholars and teachers;
3. The need to give a more concrete form to the growing understanding of the concept of human unity that underlies the Charter of Auroville;
4. The need to provide a suitable environment and programme of higher education to the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research.

There can be many more needs also which I have not mentioned here, but I felt that these four needs, at least, exist at present in Auroville, and there has to be an answer to these needs. The question was how to answer these needs and I felt that, first of all, we must be clear as to what will be the focus of Auroville. If you look around in the world, every big research institution has what you might call a point of specialisation. For example, in India we have one very important centre of advanced research, in Shimla, called The Institute of Advanced Research, which is housed in one of the big palaces where the Viceroy used to live in the olden days when British rule was on India; its central focus is the study of man and the highest aspirations of man. We have in Bombay the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, where the focus is not man, but the nature of matter; physics, mathematics ? that is the focus. We have Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, The National Foundation for Vedic Research, where the focus is the Veda, the knowledge contained in the Veda, the contemporary crisis of man and how Vedic knowledge can be utilised for resolving the problems of today, and to what extent.

Similarly, I thought that if there is to be a focus in our research center, then we should be quite clear about it. And as I was contemplating, three terms emerged in my consciousness: One was *evolution*, the second was *human unity*, and the third was *next species*. And I thought that these three subjects could be the point of focus, of attention.

If all of us have come to Auroville, it is to advance the evolutionary purpose at this critical juncture for mankind. We have come because we are dedicated to bringing about the actualisation of human unity, and since we are inspired by the solutions that Sri Aurobindo has proposed for the resolution of the crisis of mankind in terms of the birth of a new species, it is, we might say, the highest research in the world today. Sri Aurobindo has said that it is with the birth of the new species ? in the very process of the birth of this new species ? that greater and greater harmonization in the world will be possible. The unity of mankind rests upon spiritual transformation, and spiritual transformation means to aim not at a departure from the world, as in the past, but in facing the world, taking up the problems of the world and transmuting man himself. It is in this process that the problems of today can be resolved. Now this subject is of great importance, not only to us but to the whole world ? it is as if it were the world setting up this center, and not us. As Mother rightly said at the very beginning,

“Auroville belongs to nobody in particular but to humanity as a whole.” So our perception is that it is as if human beings, who are very much concerned with the unity of mankind and the resolution of the crisis of mankind today, felt a need to establish on the earth at least one place where the highest research could be conducted. It is in that sense that I look upon the proposal, and therefore I thought that the term that we have used, *Center of International Research in Human Unity*, needed to be understood in that light. It is not we, a small group of people, as it were, but mankind as a whole that is in need of this research and that has put up this particular small space on the earth which, happily, the government of India has made some effort to support. And now support is coming from many quarters in the world.

So that was the first point I wanted to make and that is why I said that there should be a Central Faculty in this Center. It should focus upon evolution, human unity and the next species. And, while giving some further detail, I have spoken of five important topics:

1. Evolution itself
2. The synthesis of knowledge
3. The synthesis of culture
4. Human unity
5. The next species.

This is a further elaboration of these three topics. Now, these are to some extent repeated in other faculties which will be more specialised. This Central Faculty will be interdisciplinary in the fullest sense of the term. Others also will be interdisciplinary, but specialised in certain matters, in certain respects.

Those specialised faculties will be the following:

- I. The Faculty of Indian Culture and Human Unity
- II. Faculty of East, West and Human Unity
- III. Faculty of Education for Human Unity
- IV. Faculty of Arts, Crafts and Technologies
- V. Faculty of Synthesis of Knowledge
- VI. Faculty of Futuristic Sociology & Futuristic Business Management
- VII. Faculty of Studies in Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

These are the seven faculties that I have envisaged. This is only a first draft and there can be many more details, many more additions to these faculties. We may think that some of them need not be there at all, which is quite possible. This itself is a document for research; we can research into it and bring about changes in this paper.

Now, I would like to explain a little bit about each one of these seven faculties and what the thrust of each one will be.

I. The Faculty of Human Culture and Human Unity

All the cultures of the world have made useful contributions to the unity of mankind, and yet I have here focused upon Indian culture. There are three reasons for this. The first is that we are occupying a small space in India and, therefore, it has a direct relevance to India. Secondly, Indian culture has very consciously, right from the beginning, spoken of universality in a very concentrated manner. If you read the *Veda*, which is the earliest document of India, it has spoken of *vishvam*, “the whole universe”, right from the beginning. “The whole world is a family” is another proposition made in Indian culture; and the *Veda* itself speaks of a universality which will comprise the solution of the problems of different religions, different races, different levels of human beings, and so on. If you read the *Veda* you find that tremendous care is taken to understand the human race as a whole, the problems of the human race and the goals to be achieved for the entire race. This has created a certain development in Indian history, if you follow it right from the beginning to the present day. It is not an accident that Sri Aurobindo happens to be today the representative of Indian culture, and also happens to be the greatest synthesis of the East and the West ? he has spoken of the ideal of human unity in the boldest and the most courageous terms. Many have spoken of human unity, but the kind of breathtaking propositions, the boldness that is there in those propositions, is singular. So I thought that it would be very useful to bring out the lessons of Indian culture that are relevant to the unity of mankind.

II. Faculty of East, West and Human Unity

Here we are concentrating upon, not India as merely India, but India as a part of the East. I have spoken of East and West separately because very often it is thought that there are some divergences between East and West. I would like that the divergences be understood, but also that we concentrate upon convergences, and explode to some extent the myth of the division between East and West. In one of the last messages that Sri Aurobindo gave ? I think it was addressed to America ? he said that, actually, although it is said that the East is spiritual and that the West is material, this kind of a black-and-white distinction is wrong. In both the East and the West there has been a spiritual search; in both the East and the West there has been a search for material welfare, material prosperity and economic development. If there is some divergence, it is an emphasis of one kind or of the other. Not that there are no divergences at all ? there are divergences ? but they are not of such a magnitude that they could create a wall. It is not as if "East is east and West is west and never the twain shall meet", there is no such division between the two. So we need to make our research, because there is a view in the world that the two can never meet, that even if the force of circumstances was such that we had to meet, even then, it would be as if two neighbours were sitting together for a cup of tea, but nothing more. On the contrary, what we need is a *real* synthesis in which each culture can bring out its own speciality, and yet they can meet and converge together. This is a subject about which Sri Aurobindo himself has written at length, both in *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*, and we need to do a tremendous amount of research on this subject. And I have in my delineation brought out many, many subtopics of this research topic.

III. Faculty of Education for Human Unity

Since Auroville is to be a site for continuing education, unending education, and the youth that never ages, Auroville can make a very significant contribution to the field of education. I personally believe that Auroville in due course will be a site of very bold experimentations. In any case, that should happen. And if this experimentation takes place, we shall have to make contributions to the world at large in the field of education. Fortunately, today the best educational systems in the world are open. They are looking for new vistas of educational thought, new vistas of educational experience. Although these concerns are not percolating down at the lower levels of thought today, either in the East or in the West, but at the highest levels of educational thought, there is a great concern for the future, and there is a great search for the education for tomorrow.

So I think that our Center here can legitimately have the privilege of becoming a leading one, an advanced center of educational research, with the possibility of contributing to the educational experience of the world.

IV. Faculty of Arts, Crafts and Technologies

In fact, you might say that this is something connected with our concern with three important fields which have to be manifested fully in Auroville within the domain of aesthetics. Sri Aurobindo has said that no culture can survive or thrive ? however high it may be in its spiritual endeavour, or however low in its material endeavour ? unless there are instruments of transmission. Human beings do not live merely at the top or at the bottom. A human being by his very nature is integral and lives simultaneously on many planes. Unless therefore the aesthetic aspect of human being is fully developed, unless the crafts and technologies are fully developed, the culture cannot be stable. In fact, if you study the history of cultures of the world and ask why some of the cultures have died ? in fact, most of the cultures from ancient times have died ? you will find that this is the reason: that at their peak level, they developed only a specific art, but neglected crafts and technology; or they developed technology but neglected arts and crafts; or developed crafts, but neglected technologies and arts. It is only when you combine arts, crafts and technologies that a civilization or culture can continue to survive. Fortunately, in Auroville we have a number of artists, a number of architects, a number of technologists and engineers. It's a most favourable circumstance. And therefore I think that in Auroville we can do very advanced research in these three fields of arts, crafts and technologies.

I also wanted to emphasize here that normally arts and technologies are bifurcated. Those who are artists are put on one side, those who are technologists on the other. And crafts are given a minor importance, as if they were meant for villagers. I mean, this is the normal attitude ? not all over, but in general this is the attitude ? but if you examine these subjects in their totality you will find that there is no art possible without technique and without

technology. No artist can be perfect unless he is a master of technique. A good poet has to have a mastery of the technique of prosody; no artist can do a good painting unless he masters the technique of painting ? he has to have even the knowledge of how to mix the colours, and there are techniques of mixing the colours. This may look like prosaic work compared to the imagination in which the artist normally lives, but when it comes to brass tacks, when it comes to really painting, with a canvas before him and a paintbrush in his hand, it is the technical aspect that is uppermost, and if he has a weakness in relation to this he can never become a first-rate artist.

Similarly, you cannot be a master of technology unless you have a very high level of imagination and aesthetic sense. Every machine, for example, can be conceived as an expression of beauty. Every technique, once you enter into it, you find that there is in it a rhythm of poetry, or a vision of art, of painting, or a rhythm of music. Every great technologist has found in his deepest experience this play of art and aesthetics.

Now, crafts, according to many, are to be left to rural people ? but actually they are something that is so important for all aspects of life. It is crafts that synthesize both technology and art in a very singular manner. It is because of this interconnection between art, crafts and technologies, and the need for interdisciplinarity among these three, that I thought of bringing them together. This is not usually done, but I would like to give a message through this faculty that all three need each other, and that there must be a place where all three meet together.

V. Faculty of Synthesis of Knowledge

Usually, in ordinary universities, you have got Arts and Sciences. This is how most universities are ? they have schools of Arts and Science. They have got arts and sciences, and the two are bifurcated: If you do arts, you don't do science; if you do science, you cannot do arts.

But by bringing arts and technologies together I have tried to show that without science there is no art and without art there is no science. The two are complementary and even need each other. I have not proposed a special Faculty of Science as such here, and there is a reason behind it. First of all, I do not think that we shall be so equipped as to become a center of advanced scientific research. (Let us hope we can become equipped ? nothing is denied, because nothing should be denied.) But this does not mean that we shall not do science. We shall do a lot of science, but with a certain focus: namely, science as a part of the synthesis of knowledge.

At present science is done primarily as an instrument of technology. In the modern world you find that most of the science students today are leaving pure research because they feel that technology is much more lucrative, much more stable. It's a utilitarian view. But even with pure research in science, where it is done, not many scientists are aiming at bringing the different frontiers of science together in one large sweep. There's too much specialisation, so that we know more and more about less and less.

Now, one important contribution that Sri Aurobindo has made is in the field of synthesis. Synthesis is the greatest need of mankind today, and although one speaks of synthesis, one needs to do research as to what its meaning is. There can be synthesis in the form of juxtaposition: You bring so many elements together side by side, put them side by side, and many people think that is a synthesis; the mere juxtaposition of various elements is misconceived as a synthesis. There are schools which call themselves schools of integral education; they do physical education, crafts education, art education, thinking education, moral education, spiritual education ? they give periods for all of them and then say, "This is integral education". What I call it is *education by juxtaposition*. You bring all the elements together, put them side by side, but there is no attempt at synthesizing. Then there is what may be called *compromise* ? that is also very often regarded as a synthesis. Many conflicting views, many conflicting interests are brought together, somehow. For example, there is usually a conflict between aesthetics and ethics. The aesthetic man has a kind of abhorrence to the puritanism of the ethical man; the ethical man feels that the aesthetic man is very loose and doesn't care for the high endeavours of the human spirit, to rise above the impulses, and so on. So the two usually collide, and the rational man very often remains like a thin wedge between the two. He does not know where his position is in the conflict between ethics and aesthetics, and whatever he says does not have much effect either on the ethical man or on the aesthetic man, so that he seems to be living in an ivory tower somewhere above ? at least, he thinks he is in an ivory tower ? from where he can preach to many people but with

very little effect. As a result, there is a tendency today to bring about a compromise, to try to bring them together as far as possible. This is the formula: Whatever possibilities exist, try to bring them together as far as possible. But this can only arrive at a compromise. The demands of aesthetics are to be received to some extent, the demands of the ethics are to be received to some extent, the demands of rationality are to be accepted to some extent. Somehow, some kind of juxtaposition or some kind of compromise is arrived at.

If you read Sri Aurobindo's works you find out what synthesis really is ? everything is integrated. There is a very beautiful chapter in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, a chapter called "Synthesis", where he has discussed the question of how to bring about the synthesis of the different systems of yoga. Now, we need to study that chapter very much in depth, so as to get an idea of what synthesis is. If you read *The Life Divine*, you also get this great idea of synthesis. Sri Aurobindo does not need to speak of Western thought and Indian thought ? the whole thing is taken as if one principle of thought existed. The various kinds or trends of thought that can arise out of the branchings of ideation are brought into a harmony. It is not as if Sri Aurobindo says, "Here is Eastern thought, here is Western thought, and now the two are brought together." His starting point is synthesis, his middle point is synthesis, his end is synthesis. Out of that synthesis you can yourself perceive the different trends of thought, and you can find how they're already harmonised in the larger sweep. Mother once told us in the Ashram School that we should develop among children what she called "spherical thought" ? a thought which is spherical. It's a very special quality: a thought which is not linear, not angular, not compartmentalised, not fragmented, but spherical.

Now, it is in spherical thought that synthesis is automatically born. This is the theme that we need to develop most, because without this synthesis the unity of mankind is impossible. The unity of mankind will require unity of the thought of the people, unity of the culture of the people. And this can come about only when there is a solid base of knowledge. No culture can survive without a basis of knowledge, so it is only by bringing about a synthesis of knowledge that human unity can be really assured. It is here that the frontiers of knowledge in various fields are, as it were, brought together on one focus. You can have physicists, biologists, scientists, psychologists, yogis ? all kinds of knowledge, all avenues of knowledge, have to be developed and brought together and specialists should be able to have a dialogue among themselves. A real synthesis has to be constantly developed. So this will be a faculty where this great facility will be available. And if this facility exists, you can imagine what will be the facility for students. If there is a Faculty of the Synthesis of Knowledge, working at the highest level on the plane of research, the whole idea of synthesis will percolate among students, and spherical thought will be automatic. The very breath of primary school, secondary school, Last school or No school will be simply this sphericity; it will be available all over. This will be the contribution of the synthesis of knowledge of this faculty.

VI. Faculty of Futuristic Sociology & Futuristic Business Management

I have conceived of this faculty for two reasons. The first is that we are in Auroville a collectivity; the emphasis in Auroville is not on individual realisation but on collective realisation, and therefore our focus has to be on the problems of collectivity. In fact, Auroville has always been confronting collectivistic problems, and in spite of quarrels and battles and whatever there may be, the collectivity has survived, which is a tremendous achievement. And this collectivity has some kind of a oneness which you can see from outside much more visibly than may be seen perhaps from within. But it is visible. Collectively there is a kind of a thrust ? programs are conceived collectively, invitations are given to people collectively, sharing is collective, the thrusts are collective. The individualistic, egoistic tendency is at least resisted. Even if there is mutual criticism it is about this: that one has become too isolated, or tends to be isolated. Each one may think of the other as an isolationist, but the criticism is that it should not be so. How to overcome isolationism? How to develop collectivity? That has been the problem of Auroville right from the beginning, and we are developing therefore a new kind of sociology. Mr. Tata said that the fact that Auroville has survived for 25 years (it was at that time 25 years) is itself a guarantee of its power and its future, because usually societies of this kind break down quite easily. I know many centers of research, particularly in India, where money is offered to people to come to a collectivity. And they have found that people don't respond. And whatever number of people do come into that collective organisation, very soon, within six months, each one becomes an island. There is one research center which is residential, the condition is that you must reside ? if you are a

researcher, you cannot do your research in your home, or wherever you are, you must come and stay ? and very beautiful accommodations are provided by the institution, free of charge. But it has been found that they must not allow anybody to live in this center for more than three years ? this is the experience that has been gained. There was an idea that there should be what they called "Core Fellows", who would remain continuously present for 20 to 25 years and thus would give continuity to the research work. That was the idea. After experience, it was found that Core Fellows become the real center of division. They developed such rivalries that every newcomer was trapped in divisions, and vested interests began to develop very quickly. The experience has been so hopeless, instead of being a collective research effort, that now the fellowships are given for two years to begin with, to be extended for one year more, and that's the end of it! All the Core Fellows have been eliminated from the center; nobody is there permanently.

Now, this is the experience of the best institution of India, designed to create a collectivity and to do collective research. Human beings, when they begin to live with each other... It becomes very difficult. As Bernard Shaw remarked, "The only difficult thing in the world is to love your neighbour." Christ has said "Love thy neighbour as thyself", but although you can love other people in the world ? you can be very hospitable, for example, with guests who are going to live with you for 10 days or 12 days ? the moment you know someone is there for good, all kinds of problems arise.

So we have to find the deeper roots of sociology, why we come together, why we live together. And unless there is a movement for transformation, merely bringing human beings together will not bring us harmony. It is only when human beings come together in order to transform themselves, with this aim. Harmony is not possible at the physical, vital or mental levels. Many attempts have been made at harmonising people, but this is not possible, because mind, vital and physical are not the principles of harmony. They are basically rooted in division. Matter is best dealt with when it is a small piece divided from all the rest. The vital life strives best when plans are formed as against other plans. Divide this plan from another plan, then vigour and robustness begin ? there will be enmity between the two, but enmity brings about a unity of this particular plan against the other one. It is on the basis of division that people become very vigorous at the vital level. And Mind, you know, is always a dividing consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo says, the basic apparatus of Mind can do only four operations ? all other operations of the mind are only derivatives of these four ? namely: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. These are the four operations of the mind; all other operations of the mind are only specialisations of these four. And addition is not possible without division, subtraction is not possible without division, multiplication is not possible without division ? and division is division.

So the human mind is so constituted that you cannot harmonize this division at the level of the mind. It is only when human beings come together for transformation, for going beyond the human mind, that you can hope to have harmony. If our problems have been so acute, it is because very often we have come here for that purpose but we are not working so assiduously towards that program of transformation. And to the extent to which we are moving, we are harmonising. And I think that harmony will come. There is a greater and greater awareness that we have to move forward for the transformation of our nature, and this is the basis of our "futuristic sociology". And Sri Aurobindo has explained this in detail both in *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

I have joined it up with futuristic business management, and it could be questioned why I should do that. The reason is that Auroville is happily a place of business, happily a place of work, a place of commerce, a place of industry. And Mother has spoken of the Industrial Zone as one of the important zones of Auroville. Therefore it is inevitable that Auroville develop all the faculties which are required for industrial development, commercial development, business development. And I speak of "futuristic" business development because we are not here to repeat. As Mother said, the age of business is over. So we have to conceive of a futuristic industry and therefore the kind of management which will be required for this futuristic society will be quite different. That is what I want to emphasize here by speaking of futuristic business management.

VII. Faculty of Studies in Sri Aurobindo and The Mother

Now, this is obvious: We are all here because we have read Sri Aurobindo, we have been inspired by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. But to sustain ourselves we need to continuously study, which is not sufficiently recognized. People have read something of Sri

Aurobindo, they have felt inspired, and they have come here. But then, there is a psychology which has developed: "Study is not necessary, work is necessary. Do work. Study is not so necessary."

Now, I am not opposed to work at all ? on the contrary: I would very much like that work be emphasized. But at the same time I would like to emphasize that *everyone* in Auroville has to have a program of studies in Sri Aurobindo, at his own level ? maybe at a lower level, at a higher level and the highest levels. I think we need to galvanize ourselves constantly by taking a bath in the studies of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It is a daily need, as it were.

So I would very much like to emphasize studies in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ? and they are very difficult works, extremely difficult works. In fact, I have not read such difficult works in the humanities as the works of Sri Aurobindo. Most of the things are incomprehensible ? which is a fact. You may read, you may understand the English and so you may think you have understood what Sri Aurobindo has written, but it is only at our level. For example, even a small thing: I was talking the other day to the children of *Jivatman*. Now, the concept of Jivatma ? is it comprehensible? I gave a talk to the children, who gave the illusion that they had understood a little (which is a good illusion, because it is through this understanding that one moves forward), but who can understand what *Jivatman* is? And this is only one of the topics in Sri Aurobindo's writings. When he talks of the Higher Mind and the Intuitive Mind and the Illumined Mind and the Overmind and Supermind ? and Sri Aurobindo has described all these things ? as I said, we can understand the English of what he has written, but not what it exactly conveys. How can you understand? How is it comprehensible?

It is by constant study and constant growth of inner experience going side by side that we can strive to understand Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's works. But it is very necessary that at every level we read again and again and again. One person asked the Mother, "Mother, what shall I do in my life?" So Mother said, "Read Sri Aurobindo." The person said, "But Mother, I've read several times Sri Aurobindo's works." So Mother simply said, "Read Sri Aurobindo." That is the amount of study that is required, that even when you feel that you have read a lot, you still need to read a lot.

So that is why I want very much this faculty to flourish in Auroville, where all the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother are brought together. There should be people who study them in depth. Yesterday I mentioned that the Mother had said that the teacher should not be a screen between Sri Aurobindo and the pupil, that the task of the teacher is to give the background material for understanding the works of Sri Aurobindo ? I would like this faculty to do this background material. People who work in this faculty ? and I hope that in due course there will be at least a thousand ? will be working all the time creating materials which will be helpful to students in understanding Sri Aurobindo. Take for example the idea of the logic of the Infinite, which is one of the central ideas of the *Life Divine*. Background material will be: What is logic? What is the logic of the finite? Logic itself today is a very, very highly developed study. The Aristotelian logic has been surpassed, symbolic logic has come into its place, and now even symbolic logic is being surpassed. In reality people are, without knowing it, being driven into the field of the logic of the Infinite.

This is only one subject ? but how much material needs to be prepared if this subject is to be studied by our students! And since these subjects are very difficult, we have to attend to this need very urgently. I feel that, in Auroville itself, there should be a number of workshops on the studies of Sri Aurobindo, a number of them, and there should be a very large participation in them.

We all need to reread Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, all of us, and these workshops should be the life breath of Auroville. So I would like this kind of activity to be fostered in this Faculty of Studies in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Central Faculty

Finally, I have conceived this whole Center as having only one faculty ? although I have spoken of seven faculties, I have spoken of a Central Faculty ? and that is the real faculty. In fact, all the seven are only subordinate faculties, meaning thereby that these faculties have to work in some kind of unity, interdisciplinarity, so that the Center's principal subjects ? namely, evolution, human unity and the next species ? are thoroughly supported by whatever streams of knowledge that you bring through the various faculties. All of them ultimately should nurture these three important subjects.

It is to this effort that I wanted to invite all members of Auroville, even those who may feel very diffident about research. I would like to tell them that Mother has put down the program of Auroville, and the one word that she has put down is *research*. The only program of Auroville is research, so we are automatically members of this research team. It's a club of researchers, as it were, and we are all to participate in this research. Therefore I would like to invite everybody. And that will really give meaning to the idea of Auroville being a place of unending education.

I have suggested that since in Auroville there are many people who are highly educated, since there is a great expertise, I would like them to study the various themes of research delineated here. I would like them to add some new ones, or subtract some, and write a ten-page note on whatever they are good at. One may be good in music, another in painting, a third in technology, a fourth in studies of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ? whatever. The reason is that I want to present these papers to students who are now getting ready for higher education. All research thrives when there is a two-way traffic: the researcher giving the benefit of his research to the students, the students exploring the results and posing new problems to the researcher and stimulating new research. I've not seen any teacher thriving very well without students. You need students all the time ? then your own teaching becomes much more marked, precise, refreshing. So I would very much like that these ten-page notes be collected, then I want to hold a kind of conference of students in Auroville, if that is possible. I want to bring these papers and these researchers together in front of them, and tell them, "This is a kind of a small wealth that is available in Auroville ? you are free to swim in this ocean of knowledge." There is no compulsion ? it is No School, so there is no schooling as such ? but there will be this kind of opening available. You choose whatever studies you want to make out of these because the teachers and researchers are available. Maybe they don't have much time to give to the students, but then this is No School. Therefore, teachers need not come exactly at ten o'clock and go at five o'clock. It's No School. We need to develop new methods ? research methods ? of education.

This was the method in the Upanishads, the Upanishadic method of education, where a student could go to a teacher and the teacher did not engage all his time. He simply gave you a program to follow. A teacher may not have the time to deal with the program, but he gives you the program, and then you continue with it ? the student studies by himself and occasionally meets the teacher. Maybe some people have time, and they can do research and intensive education at the same time. There are some students who need, on certain topics, such help that they will require daily dialogue with the teacher. Also, because the student is doing a lot of research himself, every day he has a lot of questions to ask. In such cases, a teacher may be available who has got a lot of time also, and who may engage a student every day two hours, three hours at a stretch ? only one student. Adi Shankaracharya had only five students, but he devoted his time to these five pupils and created a great impact upon India and Indian culture. This is the system. Depending upon your availability, upon the need of the work, the need of the student, you are free to organize your research and your transmission of the results of the research to the students in a way that is suitable to you. Again, it is No School, and therefore there'll be no supervision over it. It's entirely between you and the pupils.

It is this kind of higher education that I feel we should develop in Auroville. So I invite you ? this is the practical aspect of my endeavour today ? to write a ten-page note on whatever your speciality may be. If you don't write, it doesn't matter. You simply say, "I will speak." In which case we shall arrange a talk by you to the students, where you can expound what you know and what you can do, so the students know what you are able to do. And also there is one very important thing: All teaching has to be interesting. Of course, interest depends upon many factors, and our knowledge should reach a point where it becomes interesting... But this is pedagogy, and I don't want to enter into pedagogy just now.

We want to organize events in Auroville where researchers can meet students, can transmit their experience to the students and receive questions from students. Not necessarily in a group meeting, but even individually. Such an organisation should exist in Auroville; there should be some framework for this kind of possibility. There are many students who feel that they are not being attended to, that their aspirations are not being answered, or that what they want to learn is not available here. Why should there be such a situation? There are such learned people available in Auroville! I think this problem has to be met concretely.

This was my little practical request, so that we can go forward in developing this research centre. CIRHU is not a building; it's an activity, and we are all here to do this activity. Buildings are necessary, they will come up in due course, but even without buildings, meetings and education are always possible.