

aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet, in one way or another — outwardly through reading and study, inwardly through concentration, meditation, revelation and experience — the help one needs to reach the goal. Only one thing is absolutely indispensable: the will to discover and to realise. This discovery and realisation should be the primary preoccupation of our being, the pearl of great price which we must acquire at any cost. Whatever you do, whatever your occupations and activities, the will to find the truth of your being and to unite with it must be always living and present behind all that you do, all that you feel, all that you think.

To complement this movement of inner discovery, it would be good not to neglect the development of the mind. For the mental instrument can equally be a great help or a great hindrance. In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions, and a constant effort is therefore needed to widen it, to make it more supple and profound. So it is very necessary to consider everything from as many points of view as possible. Towards this end, there is an exercise which gives great suppleness and elevation to the thought. It is as follows: a clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed its antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection the problem must be widened or transcended until a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.

Many other exercises of the same kind can be undertaken; some have a beneficial effect on the character and so possess a double advantage: that of educating the mind and that of establishing control over the feelings and their consequences. For example, you must never allow your mind to judge things and people, for the mind is not an instrument of knowledge; it is incapable of finding knowledge, but it must be moved by knowledge. Knowledge belongs to a much higher domain than that of the human mind, far above the region of pure ideas. The mind has to be silent and attentive to receive knowledge from

## On Education

above and manifest it. For it is an instrument of formation, of organisation and action, and it is in these functions that it attains its full value and real usefulness.

There is another practice which can be very helpful to the progress of the consciousness. Whenever there is a disagreement on any matter, such as a decision to be taken, or an action to be carried out, one must never remain closed up in one's own conception or point of view. On the contrary, one must make an effort to understand the other's point of view, to put oneself in his place and, instead of quarrelling or even fighting, find the solution which can reasonably satisfy both parties; there always is one for men of goodwill.

Here we must mention the discipline of the vital. The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depressions, of passions and revolts. It can set everything in motion, build and realise; but it can also destroy and mar everything. Thus it may be the most difficult part to discipline in the human being. It is a long and exacting labour requiring great patience and perfect sincerity, for without sincerity you will deceive yourself from the very outset, and all endeavour for progress will be in vain. With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. But the difficulty lies in securing this constant collaboration. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At such moments it is good to remain quiet and refuse to act; for these are the times when one does stupid things and in a few moments one can destroy or spoil the progress that has been made during months of regular effort. These crises are shorter and less dangerous for those who have established a contact with their psychic being which is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the