



THE 06 / 23
Aurora
TIMELESS

Nurturing
Human
Unity



“Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine.”

— The Mother, Words of the Mother - II

The Mother

The Unity of the human race can be achieved neither through uniformity nor through domination and subjection. A synthetic organization of all nations, each one occupying its own place in accordance with its own genius and the role of it has to play in the whole, can alone effect a comprehensive and progressive unification, which may have some chance of enduring.

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Timeless' Note

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Embracing Auroville Timeless



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Auroville Timeless, the monthly magazine that brings you closer to the vibrant and ever-evolving world of Auroville. In this issue, we place a special focus on "Nurturing Human Unity," exploring the profound journey of fostering harmony and understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In this edition, we also invite you to join us at the Lit Fest, where words come alive and creativity knows no bounds. Explore the literary achievements and cultural celebrations that make Auroville a hub of artistic expression and intellectual exchange.

Embark on an imaginary Visit of Auroville as we take you on a tour through its scenic landscapes, sacred spaces, and cultural landmarks in future. Discover the fascinating world of Collective Housing, where innovative architectural designs and sustainable practices create spaces that foster a sense of community and shared responsibility. Learn how these unique living arrangements contribute to the nurturing of human unity within Auroville.

We invite you to be a part of this enriching experience. Share your feedback, thoughts, and contributions as we embark on this collective exploration of Auroville's timeless spirit.

With warm regards,
The Auroville Timeless Team

For more information, write to timeless@auroville.org.in.



AWARE is a City-Service Unit of Auroville that aims to promote human unity through effective communication and collaboration. The organization focuses on various aspects of Auroville, including spiritual, cultural, social, economic, organizational, and ecological aspects, to help Auroville realize its vision.

On the Vision - I

Hans van Baaren

What is The Vision of Auroville?
Reply: well, what do you think it is?

It's personal, intimate and it changes. The only thing I'm able to say is that it is 'something else'. It feels far away, yet I have a connection to it. The Vision is something from and for the Future. It is not an established idea or dogma, it is an ongoing and never-ending process. There are many answers: Unending education. The advent of a new species. Human unity in diversity. The inner discovery. The subjective approach to all things. To recognize the Vision in the other, and more.

The need arises then to bring it closer to home. After all, societies or communities that have a great and high Vision often fall and are falling. What happens is: we come, take the Ideal, hang it up on the wall, and say to ourselves, "I am here for the yoga, but it is still so far away". The ideal is there, but it is far away, out of reach. Meanwhile, life goes on....and collectively we resume to doing things the usual way. And its all right, we are human after all, and have done amazing things. The Vision may be there as individuals but perhaps less so in our collective life. For manifesting this, The Mother gave guidelines and a design for the City





('cradle of the superman') and it has all the elements in it, and to help the 'community life' towards change.

When we take the Ideal off the wall we can see it is a process, and it comes very close to us. The choice to realign one's thoughts and life to the Vision and its manifestation has always been there. Very often one knows it in the heart but the peer pressure from the social surroundings is great. The choice can be taken joyfully as is being done, or it can be heavy, nervous and terrible. It is a time of opportunity.

We wish to step out of being endlessly right and wrong. To be at ease and say, we are all in the unknown here. The future is yet to come. Not knowing is all right, it's the approach aligned to the Vision that matters (to act, and risk making mistakes). It is now in front of each of us, close up and waiting for the next move. And it is

related to the direct surroundings and the City.

Some say the Galaxy plan is old etc.: this resistance is perhaps to the Vision coming to close in life.

It has been taken off the wall. This does not need to be a threat of some sorts, or unattainable. It can be joyful, a labour of love. Building the City/manifesting the Vision can be understood as Life itself, as a stepping stone to the future, a never ending process. A psychological exercise that includes everything, as it is The Consciousness involved in the material world. And it is not so much the buildings or the sustainability of it all per se, rather it is an exercise of real change towards the future, to live and to love, in all things.

Aligning ourselves to The Vision will help.

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After all, societies or communities that have a great and high Vision often fall and are falling.

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On the Vision - II

Hans van Baaren

There is the physical construction / manifestation of the City of Auroville, which is worked out according to a master plan, and this plan is based on a design/model. This model is called the Galaxy plan, given by The Mother.

We have The Charter, The Dream, To be a true Aurovilian, and we have the design of the City. They are actually one and the same.

This was a surprise to me, it only really occurred to me a few years ago (deep down I knew it always but one is not always attentive). The internal aspiration of an individual to The Vision is one thing, but the collective aspiration to The Vision, means the physical manifesting of the city.

The Galaxy model was somewhat present for me when looking at Auroville. But it was mostly seen as an image and something magical. I remember thinking, concerning the spiralling aspect.... 'this is an exercise of keeping an open mind, it is a never ending process, things are always changing'.

And that was that. We would see large posters of text about planning sometimes, and its relation to the vision of Auroville. It was not always so inspiring. The photographs were: but it is always that old feel to it, of the 'good old magical days'. In those days there was a sense of doing this in spite of the hardships, the dry earth, heat and dust. That feeling of being in a place where there was nothing.

That physical hardship created an illusion of being together, and it is part of the

baggage we now carry. As the physical comfort came closer, we no longer have this sense of suffering together against all odds. The 'hardship' became the green dream or the green doctrine. And that we should all fight together for it, or bow our heads to it, after all, who can be against greenery. And so we left it, and said to ourselves, consciousness matters, 'I am here for inner development'.

Then some bigger projects came like the Solar kitchen, Unity pavilion, Savitri Bhavan, a library, the explosion of cafes and restaurants. The 'hardship' is coming closer to our self now without the surroundings as in the past: now it is in construction and whether or not we can grow towards the vision of this place, in all aspects of life. This is also the power of the Galaxy Plan and trying to realise it. It facilitates learning, seeking, discovering. And certainly questioning what we are doing and where the Vision is in our lives and actions. And this need not be hardship as such, it can be even more of an adventure than ever before.

And the forestation turned out to be mostly a rather hostile prickly shrubbery with no sense of a city design, or for a collective life at all. We can feel yes greenery is good, the shade, energy, beauty and birds, but the dry shrubbery everywhere gave us the opportunity to withdraw as it were and to keep to oneself. The life in Auroville was more simple or naive: dirt roads, no overview of an actual city, some projects, a cinema, dance, theatre and some places to eat. We were always so proud of the greenery as an example to the world that it can be

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done. But now we know that forestation is an entirely different matter. And Auroville became a scattered tapestry of people going about their own business. Nothing wrong with that. However, The Vision and one's spiritual life is bound to a collective, material change....

Auroville consist of little islands staying away from each other. These are projects, houses, units, buildings, groups, families and people. All to themselves and all protecting their own space as it were. And that is normal because we are all doing our best to do what we do, but the lack of openness is sometimes astounding in some of these places.

This is mainly because of the lack of collective connection to The Vision and The Galaxy/City Plan. That these are one and the same is a shock to the system. One hears the argument, we must first grow in consciousness, or 'we are not there yet...'

One wonders then, why there was never a permanent exhibition of this Galaxy, when it is really of paramount importance? Because people were harshly against it more than often. And the green doctrine and general self-oriented society....

Now there is the expo at Bharat Nivas and it is becoming more alive somehow. Finally we are embarking on to manifesting the Dream on a collective level.

Physically, and thereby it is becoming a little more confronting psychologically, because the Plan has all elements of growth in it, on individual and collective level.

Ah, many will say, but is it? And so, there must be many reasons, but for sure there was a resistance to the model and especially to the building of the City. And there still is. Perhaps one of the aspects is The Issue: how can a design and physical buildings be as important as the inner aspects of Auroville? How can a design be so meaningful to the inner process, as individuals and as collective?

To manifest can be confronting and it also pretty much shows us we are not really on

track. Work is something we do because we believe in it, for money, for philanthropy, or simply for the good of it. That is wonderful. What is now happening is an opportunity to review ourselves and ask the daring question which brought us here in the first place: is this aligned to The Vision?

The trees planted along 'Auroville main road' was really well done, lots of space and shade for wide road spaces, not to mention the beauty and feeling one has when passing under them. It is a good example if I may: a great initiative with a lot of foresight, but not necessarily connected to The Vision, i.e. the Galaxy.

If we will have the same dedication and vigour to plant, for example, according to the Design we would have shaded roads, parks, beautiful and lots of fruits trees. All parts of Auroville are then easily accessible, from all angles. (That is one of the beautiful aspects of the plan). Much less motorised traffic. Now those wonderful 'Auroville road' trees provide shade for the day tourist to pass through.

With the collective connection and process with The Vision, all aspects of life can be expressed. We would be allowing for buildings to come as in the design to help it become reality. The high density building design would also provide beauty, diversity and shade. And this energy would give us energy, and inspiration. The high density will be almost like multiple villages in one area, it will help us grow towards unity in diversity.

And the wonderful actions of individuals would have the spiritual meaning of collective life. This is not easy, however if we start more reflection about this we would form an idea of what The Vision really could be. And flow in the process, hopefully with Joy.

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Aurocracy

Evolution of Governance in Auroville

Lakshay Dharan

The evolution of governance in Auroville has witnessed the exploration and experimentation of various models over time. While Auroville's governance structure has not followed a linear progression through these models, different elements and aspects of each model have been explored and adapted based on the community's needs and values. Here's a brief overview of how these governance models have been considered in Auroville's evolution:

Phase of Meritocracy:

In the initial five years of Auroville, Mother was physically present and perhaps made merit-based selection, as

can be seen through her decisions regarding Roger, Dayadand, etc. She laid importance on goodwill, expertise, experience, and competence in leadership positions. Individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications were chosen for specific roles and went about delivering results depending on best of their abilities. Otherwise, in general, the residents' took whatever role they liked. Unless, specified by Her, specifically.

Phase of Socialism/Communism:

After Her passing to different realms, the residents were affected by the usual ailment, being human. Mistrust, misunderstanding, and mismanagement



grew wild, and without the resort to Mother, Aurovilians revolted against the previous leaders. Perhaps, they were inspired by principles of equality, cooperation, and collective ownership. Elements of socialist and communist governance, such as communal living, shared resources, and a focus on community well-being, have influenced the initial phase of Auroville's development. There were the so-called "Pour Tous meetings" (For All Meetings). Perhaps, this is when the Auroville residents "discovered" their collective ego.

Phase of Anarchy:

In those days, the resources were short, and given the temperature, tempers were even shorter. The principles of equality soon got replaced by egoality. Everyone might have felt, 'Apun ko lagta hai, apun hi Divine hai' and slowly anarchy might have crept in, wrapped with the meaning of self-governance and as a resistance to hierarchical authority. The emphasis on personal freedom, random-responsibility, and decision-making through shouting fests and fistfights aligned with certain narrow principles of anarchy.

Phase of Democracy:

After 1988, with the intervention of the parliament through an Act, it dawned that anarchy cannot continue for long, and as result democratic system of governance was sought. Where decisions were made through the participation of the people, and for a decade or so the residents found a new toy to toy with. The Resident's Assembly, WC, FAMC, etc. were conceived and born during those wild days.

Phase of Oligarchy:

In the phase of democracy, as the name suggests, demography expanded. When the number of new members increased, the entrenched powerhouses were not ready to share the hard-won governance with the newer players. Perhaps, this is when the oligarchy (rule by a small group) emerged and created rules, regulations, guidelines, codes, mandates, policies, etc. to win and rule with a quorum of 5%. This meant a few could play musical chairs across multiple floors and multiple buildings in the newly built Town Hall then. Till 2021.

Phase of Technocracy:

After the arrival of a seasoned bureaucrat, in June 2021, she has slowly brought in and explored the elements of technocracy, where decision-making is based on the 'so-called' expertise and knowledge of technical specialists. Now, Auroville's technocratic considerations and appointments are carried out top down, through the ever-present Secretariat, and almost never-present Governing Board. The buy-in for this model in the community is extremely low, and thus the ecosystem required to implement the incredible out-of-the-world ideas of the technocrats of Auroville are non-existent. Thus, defeating the purpose for which they're appointed in the first place.

Phase of Participatory Democracy:

In reaction to the rigid and opaque technocracy, some residents have resorted to participatory democracy, which emphasizes active involvement and participation of 'all' community members in decision-making processes. This has been a significant aspect of Auroville's underground governance model which is closed and exclusive in essence. The engagement of residents in the nomination, feedback, and selection processes, as well as the emphasis on community input, boasting a participatory approach, is carried out within the closed coterie of trusted and loyal residents.

Well, all the above need to be put in context that Auroville's governance is an evolving experiment which is the expression of a higher consciousness working to manifest the truth of the future. By whatever means, our society innately seeks to create a harmonious and inclusive environment that fosters individual growth, collective well-being, and the realization of Auroville's broader ideals.

Need for a new Governance model

The above-mentioned governance models have been tried at various times and none seem to be fitting Auroville's requirements precisely. They all have pros and cons. Perhaps, what we need is not an imported model, but a conscious governance model that fits the specific needs of Auroville. In truth, none of the existing models will work for us, as we're trying to tread unchartered waters here. We need to

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The governance model described in the given scenario combines elements of meritocracy and collective decision-making.

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evolve our own governance model to suit our needs.

The proposed governance model, referred to as Aurocracy - a participatory action model, incorporates elements of various yogic disciplines (Raja, Jnana, Bhakti, Karma Yoga) and emphasizes the importance of discipline, knowledge, devotion, and action. The governance model described in the given scenario combines elements of meritocracy and collective decision-making. It includes specific processes for WG member selection and functioning. Here's an overview of the model:

Nomination:

Residents cannot directly nominate themselves or others for the WG membership.

Individuals interested in membership of a working group must first work in it for a minimum of one year as a team member, and the experience cannot be from more than five years in the past.

Nominees must commit full-commitment to the working group. No other part-time or full-time engagements for utmost attention to serve Auroville. (This will ensure efficiency and quicker decision-making)

Residents can nominate themselves or others with at least one year of working experience as a team member of that WG, before applying for the membership. (For eg. Before applying for ATDC, the nominee should have worked in ATDC's office in some role. This would ensure a deeper understanding of the work.)

The Auroville Council scrutinizes the applicants and shortlists eligible candidates. (Only to ensure the above criterias are met)

Presentation and Feedback:

Shortlisted candidates are required to make a presentation on how they will contribute to advancing Auroville's interests in that particular WG. (Let's say there are 20 applicants to ATDC, they may have to come up with interesting and creative ideas to prove their mettle and capability)

Residents can attend the presentation in person or watch it online and provide qualitative feedback within a week.

Nominees may need to incorporate the feedback or provide valid reasons for disregarding it and make a final presentation. (The ones who fail to do this will be removed from the shortlisted list.)

Random Selection:

The final selection of working group members is made through a draw of straw method or another random selection process. (Continuing with the same example, irrespective of the impressiveness of the presentation, everyone stands a chance.)

Typically, 5 or 7 members are selected randomly. (Again, they may not be the best ones, but it doesn't matter. We all are one here and there is no competition. As it was a random selection, there is no resentment or disappointment. Anyone could have been the winner. A great equalizer. If the ones with the best ideas get in, they've their role cut out and can go implement. And, even the ones whose ideas were not great, can simply invite the co-applicants to share the ideas and implement. In fact, might include them in the project them)

Facilitation and Role/Project Assignment:

Once the working group is selected, a facilitator can be involved to align all the new members and assign responsibilities. (This is necessary, as all the 7 members of ATDC might have various ideas and some even conflicting. In fact, the 7 members can even invite the 13 other co-applicants who didn't make it and try to integrate their ideas too. The facilitation also will ensure that the WG has a definite comprehensive and cohesive roadmap in place before starting working together.)

Working Working Group

The working of the WG may mainly entail taking policy decisions, resource mobilisation, work assignment and facilitation, monitoring and evaluation, etc. (For eg. ATDC may pass resolutions to award the DDP project to right team or experts, instead of holding the work inhouse)



Working Group members are not allowed to take up any power/role/project themselves. (ATDC doing DDPs, Crown, WTHC, etc. has only resulted in delay and wastage. At the same time, the MM lake team independent of ATDC could quietly finish the test lake, almost without any noise.)

They work closely with the Resident's Assembly Service (RAS) to identify and select interested residents who can fulfill specific roles or projects. (It is the job of the RAS to ensure the residents enlisted in the RoR are indeed serving Auroville. It is their job to nudge the residents to take up responsibilities and contribute to the progress of Auroville. It is RAS' responsibility to ensure the new entrants to the RoR are properly oriented towards the purpose and propose multiple possibilities to serve Auroville, motivate and align the existing / continuing Aurovilians to contribute according to the best of their abilities. And, facilitate those who wish to leave Auroville.)

This governance model aims to foster participatory action, far beyond participatory planning, emphasizing the importance of discipline, knowledge, devotion, and action. It includes elements of merit-based selection, community feedback, and randomization to ensure a fair and inclusive process. The involvement of a facilitator and collaboration with the RAS supports coordination and the distribution of responsibilities within the working groups.

Aurocracy may also prove to be a possible solution to our current logjam. The folks in the Town Hall will never agree to a number based governance model, as one

can easily predict the results. On the other hand, even if the TH WG agrees to work with Aurovilians of opposing views, the appointment process has to go through the Secretariat and wait for Office Orders from GB. This is not going to be easy to accept for the Kailash folks. The above-mentioned selection process may mean that those with ideas from both sides will present, and the random selection process will ensure that there is no foul play. Whatever is the eventual composition of the team, can be considered as the divine play and work with the given team.

Benefits of the new Governance model

The new governance model - Aurocracy - proposed in the previous description has several potential advantages:

Slay the tyranny of numbers:

Divine anarchy to play its role:

Work experience and knowledge as the base for decision-making:

Wider population willing to work in working groups:

Reduced Influence of Popularity or Political Campaigning:

Community Input and Feedback:

Collaboration and Effective Teamwork:

Balanced Power Distribution:

Efficiency, Adaptability and Focus:

Enhanced Accountability:

Long-Term Perspective:

Reduced Polarization and Partisanship:

Continuity and Stability:

Development of Leadership Skills:

Collaboration and Networking:

In summary, the new governance model - Aurocracy - offers a holistic and conscious approach to governance, tailored to suit the specific needs and aspirations of Auroville.

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Aurocracy may also prove to be a possible solution to our current logjam.

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Lit Fest is coming to Town

Anu

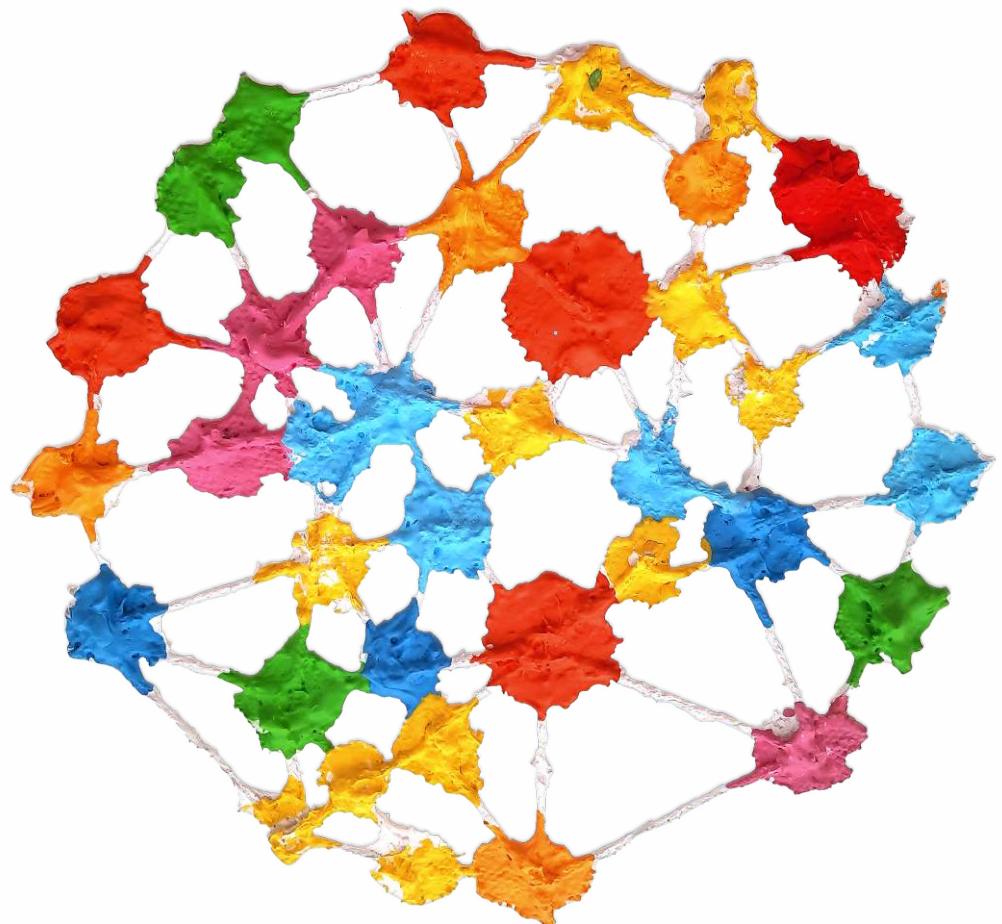
During a conversation about Satprem's novel, *The Sanyasin*, in the *Agenda* of July 1969, the feedback received from various publishers, both good and bad, was being discussed. It will take at least fifty years for people to understand your book, the Mother tells him. It is a book about tomorrow and your this gentleman of yours is probably a man of yesterday, and then goes on to muse: I have wondered if we couldn't have in Auroville a publishing house because Auroville is an international township, so we could have an INTERNATIONAL publishing house. There would be books in every language. That would be interesting.

Earlier, the Mother had set up the Ashram Press to ensure that Sri Aurobindo's massive output of 30 volumes would reach people everywhere.

Auropress was started in April 1971, in Auroville, and would go on to publish the first edition of *The Sanyasin*. Distribution remains an issue, unless there is an active culture of reading, of writing, and of thought explorations amongst the people, creating a natural outreach. Auroville still dreams of that International publishing house, but to get there a rich milieu needs to form in this place announced to the world as a town of Universal Culture in Feb 1968.

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Auroville takes its name from Sri Aurobindo. He was an evolutionary philosopher and visionary, an epic poet, playwright and social & political thinker and a revolutionary during India's struggle for freedom.

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Something seems to be waking up. Auroville's first Literature Festival will take place from 25 - 27th August, 2023, bringing together some of the best Indian and International and local writers and thinkers, in the categories of Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry and Translations, and a special focus on Sri Aurobindo.

Auroville takes its name from Sri Aurobindo. He was an evolutionary philosopher and visionary, an epic poet, playwright and social & political thinker and a revolutionary during India's struggle for freedom. Variousy defined as a City of Universal Culture, City of the Future or the City the Earth Needs, the Mother, Sri Aurobindo's spiritual collaborator, set Auroville on course as a unique international city experiment, embracing multiple tracks which now hosts people from 60 countries and from across India.

As the culminating event of Sri Aurobindo's 150th year commemoration, the two and a half day festival will be held across different pavilions of Auroville's International Zone, Bharat Nivas, Unity Pavilion and Savitri Bhavan, named after Sri Aurobindo's epic, Savitri and is a place dedicated to his works. The festival will also have space to explore books, exhibitions, installations, cultural events and more.

Already, we rejoice to have several award winning writers, thinkers and poets on board this August, such as the International Booker Prize, the Miles Franklin Award, the German Book Prize, the JCB Prize for Literature, the TS Eliot Prize, Sahitya Akademi Awards and more. Names and details will be shared in our July issue with details of the programme.

As the culminating event for Sri Aurobindo's 150th year we are honoured to have on board the Chennai International Centre and the Valley of Words Literature and Arts International Festival as our festival partners and the generous support of the Ministry of Culture and the Auroville Foundation.

We welcome book lovers to stay tuned!



AUROVILLE Literature Festival

With some of the best
International writers,
Indian writers,
Poets
&
Sri Aurobindo
150th birth anniversary

SAVE YOUR DATES
25 to 27 August 2023
Venue: International Zone, Auroville

Contact:
aurovillelitfest@auroville.org in
www.auroville.org



*"The purpose of Auroville
is to realise human unity"*



*The festival
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What is the IZ of Auroville

AWARE Editorial

Auroville began with a charter and a city plan, to be an active training ground for human unity through a change of Consciousness. Foreseeing the crisis of humanity and the plight of cities worldwide, Auroville was planned as a model of spiritual urbanism. The spiralling circular city plan, for 50,000 people, known as the Galaxy, integrates social, cultural, educational, economic and environmental factors to create the conditions of change. It has four overlapping zones: Residential, Cultural, International and Industrial, held together by the Crown, the Peace Area with the Matrimandir at the centre, and the surrounding Greenbelt. Together they form this city of Universal Culture.

Conflict, upheavals and war define the ongoing state of the world but Auroville was created to find a solution for all this and change the destructive current of the

world – it is a challenge that is unavoidable as we see the trajectory of the world and humanity move through major transformations.

The International Zone is the site where cultural pavilions of nations or continental clusters will be housed, carrying their fundamental genius or, the soul of each nation. They will be centers of research, and study of creative and cultural activity, literature, art, science and exchange, conducive to the manifestation of a real human unity by emulation and working together across the barrier lines of conflict.

Bharat Nivas, the Pavilion of India, was the first to start in the International Zone with a well equipped auditorium for programmes, performances and conferences; spaces for research, activities and events, a restaurant and more. A





As the world changes, instead of individual pavilions, and nations we may see the rise of more federated continental clusters as indicated in The Ideal of Human Unity and the possibility of a more conscious unity amongst people.

The continental clusters are to be set in a continuous park with gardens representative of different flora and fauna. Walls and borders are not part of this zone but interconnecting water-ways, shared facilities and infrastructure with areas of common activities. In this our fast evolving world, this hub of universal culture will also favour flexible designs that can adapt with change, allowing countries or regions with close common cultures to group together while interacting with others.

Auroville's International Zone is an invitation to all countries of the world, old and new, to bring their capacities, knowledge, innovations and cultural richness to this beautiful meeting point and melting pot.

It is equally an invitation to the People of the World: university students, professionals, researchers, creators, people from all walks of life to participate in this experiment directly, or in collaboration with their Embassies.

As Unity is Auroville's purpose, making this manifest in its 'world arena' in all its beauty, is the full and fortunate role of the International zone.

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The International Zone is the site where cultural pavilions of nations or continental clusters will be housed, carrying their fundamental genius or, the soul of each nation.
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walking tour of the campus takes one to different exhibitions including a state of the art exhibition on the City and other activities. The Tibetan House, French/European and Africa House startups and the Unity Pavilion are some of the other places.

The Centre of International Research in Human Unity (CIRHU), still to come, will be a unifying institution for this zone, where cutting edge research on Consciousness influencing societies, economies, policies and innovations of the future will harness the dynamic aspirations and innovations of each nation, in tandem with Auroville's own research.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and vision for humanity in The Ideal of Human Unity forms the basis of the International Zone. The Ideal of Humanity maps the progressive social /political phases of the world morphing through wars, monarchy, birth of nation states, world empire, attempts at world state, communism, democracy, capitalism - a world struggling through many upheavals towards its soul, towards a free federation of mankind in all its diversity, possible only through a sustained spiritual change.



Nurturing Human Unity

Pashi Kapur

In a world filled with divisions and conflicts, Auroville stands as a visionary experiment—an endeavor to transcend the limitations of the physical, vital, and mental dimensions of human existence. To truly understand the essence of real human unity, one must embark on a journey of self-discovery, unburdened by preconceived notions and prejudices.

Matrimandir serves as a symbol that epitomises the city's purpose and provides a reference point for its growth in spiritual consciousness, thus encouraging all Aurovillians to embody values such as sincerity, humility, gratitude, perseverance, and peace.

Central to Auroville's ethos is the notion of willing servitude to the Divine Consciousness. The Mother and Sri

Aurobindo sought not followers or worshippers, but collaborators—individuals who actively engage with the evolutionary process.

As Auroville stands on the cusp of its unique experiment, the time has come for introspection and a renewed commitment to its founding principles. It beckons individuals to reflect on their willingness to be servitors of the Divine Consciousness and to transcend the limitations of the physical-vital mentality. Auroville holds the potential to be a beacon of unity for the entire world, inspiring it with its magnificent vision of a society totally dedicated to a higher spiritual cause. But in order to realise such a lofty ideal, we all have to keep reminding ourselves why we came here in the first place.





Patience, Patience, Patience

Auroville was conceived by The Mother as a place where a collective endeavour could be made in raising the human consciousness to collaborate in the largely subconscious evolutionary process of Nature. Human unity, as understood today, usually implies only a period of absence of visible conflicts. But the natural aspiration for man has always been for something more permanent that transcends the physical, vital, and mental dimensions.

When The Mother invited 50,000 people to come and live together as a large family, participating consciously in the evolutionary process, she had to provide a place for them, and that is how the city was conceived - not as an ashram, not as an institution of education, but as a living city consciously working towards the attainment of the highest spiritual values.

While it may sound like a beautiful utopian idea that we imagine to be impracticable, the word impossible does not exist in the dictionary of Sri Aurobindo. Difficult - yes. Impossible - no.

Collective consciousness cannot be raised to the spiritual levels overnight, - it may take decades or even centuries, - we don't know it, since it's the first experiment of its kind.

When we come to Auroville, we inevitably bring with us the DNA of our cultural,

religious, and political background that we have inherited from our previous environment.

It is never easy to shed our conditioning, so we start looking at Auroville from our prejudiced perspectives. However, to participate in Auroville, we must get rid of all our accumulated burdens and, like a baby, start from scratch. Only then can we begin to comprehend what real human unity means.

The Soul of Auroville

Why did Auroville start with the construction of Matrimandir? The Mother realised that there should be a reference point that every Aurovillian can relate to for the city to grow in spiritual consciousness. The Mother called it the soul of Auroville. And its completion is imperative for the development of the rest of the city.

Each of the 12 petals surrounding Matrimandir carries a certain spiritual frequency, - Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Kindness, Generosity, Equality, and Peace.

These are the values that every person who wants to become an Aurovillian, that is, a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness, must consciously imbibe in himself.

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As Auroville stands on the cusp of its unique experiment, the time has come for introspection and a renewed commitment to its founding principles.

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One beautiful condition in this charter is, - to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
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So, these are not mere buildings and names, - because The Mother is no longer with us physically, this becomes the focal point for us, a place where we can concentrate our energies and efforts when possible, and grow into these values that we can impart to our children in turn.

An Important Qualification for Freedom

Mother was very clear that a disciplined life is very important for Auroville because, without it, the collective cannot move forward. And as a means of maintaining that discipline, she suggested that each one of us works a minimum of five hours a day.

The next question that arises is, - what are the 5 hours to be spent on? Whatever the area of one's competence, they should contribute to building the city. For example, if you have the capacity to generate revenue, that's what the bulk of

your efforts should go into. If you have expertise in agriculture, you will benefit the community the most by contributing your knowledge in this area.

Here, we are very fond of quoting the charter of Auroville. One beautiful condition in this charter is, - to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

What does it mean?

As opposed to a servant, who simply surrenders passively and does whatever they are asked to do, a servitor is not under force to submit but is enacting a dynamic free-willed surrender.

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo wanted collaborators, not worshippers or followers. And each one of us has to ask ourselves what it means to be a willing collaborator.

The Inner-Outer Mystery

It is crucial for us to understand that our external life is a direct reflection of what we are inside. So, whenever any kind of problem arises in our life, we should first go inside ourselves to seek to discover the element in us that is the cause of that particular problem, so that the next time a similar situation arises, we are no longer contributing to it. Only then will we be growing in consciousness. Self-justification only creates a short-circuit that limits the scope of our own development, and thus we remain what we are.

To a great extent, today's Auroville still exists in that physical-vital mentality where we blame others and not ourselves. So it occurs to me again and again that enough is enough, - it is high time for us to sit back and reflect a little on whether we want to be willing servitors of the divine consciousness, or not.

In conclusion, Auroville presents us with a unique opportunity for self-transformation and spiritual development that we ought to be grateful for. However, the journey towards realising Auroville's fullest potential is fraught with challenges.

As a society, it is vital for us to cultivate a spirit of collaboration, open-mindedness, and collective empowerment. Only by fostering an environment that nurtures innovation, embraces diverse perspectives, and supports constructive action can we accelerate this process.

In this pivotal moment, let us pause and reflect on the deeper meaning of our presence in Auroville. Let us recommit ourselves to the ideals described in the Charter of Auroville. It is no coincidence that Sri Aurobindo's "The Life Divine" begins with a chapter entitled "The Human Aspiration". We must never cease to aspire.

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...it is high time for us to sit back and reflect a little on whether we want to be willing servitors of the divine consciousness, or not.

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Collective Housing

Uma Prajapati

Future housing in Auroville will be a game changer! It will be radically different, prefinanced, beautiful, fast, affordable and good quality.

Housing has been a challenge for a long time within Auroville. Lack of housing inside Auroville has given a boost to a lot of housing options in the nearby villages. A few hundred young people, who are interested in Auroville, are staying in villages.

Similar numbers are waiting for the possibility to come to Auroville.

Future Housing of Auroville should be community living rather than individual houses. It is only possible when housing is

created as a collective effort on a larger scale. That will open doors to welcome new people.

Investment in good quality collective housing is the need of the hour.

For housing development elsewhere, land is usually the main constraint. Auroville has the land and the means to attract low-cost funding. This combined with a renewed focus on collective housing will provide a sustainable long-term solution.

There is a need for collective pre-built housing so that volunteers and newcomers are able to start work in Auroville right away. Collective housing will be created in the form of studios,





apartments, dormitories and family units. Low-cost pre-financing options will be found to fund housing development with repayment from Auroville's internal resources as part of the aim of making Auroville a self-supporting township.

When housing, food and other essential needs are provided, people's energy can be channelled towards Auroville. Common facilities will be an integral part of the collective housing projects.

Auroville collective housing is the creation of community living spaces designed for sharing and collective living.

It is low rise dense housing with food and a common facility is at centre. Per person cost of these houses is budgeted at INR 10 lakh.

This target cost can be achieved by

1. Donations
2. Low-cost financing options
3. Efficient Building Practice
4. Non-profit focus
5. Mix arrangement of dormitory - single and family

Each unit catering to 100 people is budgeted at an estimated INR 10 crore.

These clusters can be created at multiple

locations. To begin with industrial zone and international zone radial.

The collective housing initiative will be under ATDC with a project management body which is responsible for its running and financial commitment to pay back loans. It will be a service with project implementation accountability.

Collective Housing experience

A collective housing experience might look and feel like a thriving guesthouse with the component of service. Collective housing will eventually be part of prosperity and the Auroville in-kind economy.

Last 25 years of my work has been in Conscious clothing. It has created a milestone for the fashion industry in India. To move forward I see myself in creating conscious living spaces as the future for my work. I am attaching a case study of "Rohini"- non-profit volunteer housing which was created in the Swayam community.

<https://youtu.be/G-K2RXSarOM>

If you like to join please write to Umah@auroville.org.in

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“Auroville can make use of offered work in a way that benefits the community and provides an outcome that will allow Auroville to provide prosperity to all.”

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A visit to Auroville 2030

Torkil

I had taken a day off from work and was driving down the Highway from Chennai to Auroville. I had been hearing about this place from friends for sometime and was curious to see what this Auroville was all about. It turned out to be just over a two hour drive from Chennai, I was surprised that Auroville was so close.

Turning off the highway I followed a forested road to something called the Gateway. After about a kilometer I finally entered a large parking area. I parked my car, got out and began following the arrows through a leafy park marked Auroville Gateway: City of Human Unity, and suddenly, I saw a tall, minimalist building, rising from the ground in the colours of the earth, gradually softening, growing lighter and more transparent as it reached towards the sky. I stood before it for several minutes, I had never seen anything like this, a building that seemed to carry such a quiet and powerful aspiration, perhaps a dream? I shook myself and kept walking, even more curious now.

I moved through a beautiful landscaped garden towards the big red ramp which led up to a huge opening. Just as I entered the doorway I noticed a small white plaque which said: Greetings from Auroville, to all men of goodwill. Are invited all those who thirst for progress and aspire for a higher and truer life.

I took a deep breath and walked right in. It was a vast space, a plaza that seemed fully open inside and, at the top, it was open to the sky. There was a sound of water somewhere, but my attention went straight to the high white wall directly

before me, embedded with the most astonishing four sentences – about a place for humanity as a whole, about consciousness, unending education, the future and human unity. This was the Charter of Auroville.

As I read it again, slowly, I saw where the sound of water was coming from. A huge waterfall flowed down gently from above. There were gardens up there and long creepers flowing down. It was a real Vertical Garden, catching the light of the sky. The sound of water created a very special atmosphere, a quietness and a listening, despite that there were many other visitors. It was all so intriguing, I wanted to know more and I needed to sit down somewhere for a bit.

That is when I notice two wings branching out of the Plaza area. One led to the Reception and a Welcome desk. There were restrooms further on and small cafés. As I walked up the Welcome desk, I saw large moving slides on a wall that offered quick information about the Gateway and images of the city of Auroville.

I picked up a few leaflets and a brochure from the Welcome desk and headed for a restroom stop. Now that was a refreshing surprise. Wonderfully clean, well looked after, it was set as though in an indoor garden. From there I walked over to a smart but very charming coffee shop run by an Auroville company and ordered a croissant and an excellent coffee. Even the furniture catches your eye, simple but elegant, it can actually be ordered. I noted down the contact details. Looking out of the windows, all I see is trees on every

side and small gardens. It is very restful here but I want to know more about Auroville, why people choose to live here and build this city and about Matrimandir of which I have heard so much for years. But before rushing to go in, a friend advised me yesterday, try to know Auroville first.

I go back to the Information desk, and they point me to the main Auroville exhibition area on the other wing of the plaza from where one can also reach the Matrimandir Access desk.

The exhibition area was like entering a new universe. Two extraordinary spiritual beings, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had founded the city. Named after Sri Aurobindo, Auroville is meant to be a first realization of human unity based on his teachings where people of all countries will be at home. Such a place exists! As I go through the exhibition I am amazed by the daring, the joy and experimentation this project has implied, but also the challenges and the depths it has encountered with that unique inner drive that seems to touch all things here. The city plan has four zones: Cultural, International, Residential and Industrial. One of its key spiraling features is achieved by curving lines that pass through green corridors and urban spaces. The Gateway is actually the far end of one such line, known as the Line of Goodwill. The exhibition has so much

more: on organization, education, environment....I could stay here the whole day, there is so much history, so much real work, and so many funny anecdotes. As I leave the exhibition area my eye falls on a line: At last a place where one can think only of the future... And what an invitation that is, to explore new concepts, ideas and experiments that this place seems to asks from everyone, in all areas of life and work and play!

I had only planned for a day visit, but I need more time and I don't want to leave without experiencing something of the Matrimandir. The Matrimandir Access desk is a quiet zone of information. To go inside I will need to make a booking so. A line of images greet me as I walk down a beautiful corridor to the Booking Office. Matrimandir is also known as the soul of Auroville. It was built from scratch, on an absolutely barren land, now golden and complete, surrounded by very special gardens and a lake that is now in process of being completed. It is inspiring to see how far determined people can reach in a relatively short time span. Human beings are very strong when they can work together in unity for a common higher goal.

It is past noon and I am lucky the Matrimandir Booking Office is open and I am even luckier when they say I can get a reservation to visit the Inner Chamber tomorrow at 9. Could I stay somewhere for

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I know most of the Auroville products, but here they are presented together like in a very large home. The many life style interior products, design and style products are also socially and environmentally aware.

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the night? I return to the Welcome desk where I am informed about overnight budget dorms for students and groups or the rooms that the Matrimandir allots to people who have already made prior booking but want to arrive a day early. Then there are simple Japanese Style sleeping cubicles and rooms and other more comfortable options. I opt for a Zen room on the 13th floor cluster called Forest View. I take the lift up to my room and sit down for a moment of wonder and enjoy how lucky I have been. My hotel room is very elegant but also very simple and minimal. Everything is white and serene I feel very calm and quiet here. The window overlooks a forest but I also get a sense of the curving Line of Goodwill that leads to the centre of town through the trees and, of the International Zone that borders the building. The pamphlet in the room indicates that there is a Sunset meditation in the highest of the gardens open for resident guests. I don't want to miss that, but now I have all day to explore.

How does such a city function, I wonder? How does it sustain itself, what does its Industrial zone offer? I head back to the plaza, to the wing that leads off to the ground level, to an area where all the Auroville production units are represented. I was looking forward to this. I had heard so much about this conscious retail centre. Even shopping mall people come here to see what Auroville calls a conscious consumer experience. And it is very different! It is a huge area in two floors with many small green spaces in a two-floor height with light coming down from the big plaza above – and not a single shop! It all seems to be woven seamlessly together with no visible borderline between different areas. A very elegant bookshop, more like a private library, is woven together with a French café, people can look at magazines and read books, surf on internet while having a coffee or juice. There are books on Auroville and by Aurovilians and the place seems very popular with young people. I know most of the Auroville products, but here they are presented together like in a very large home. The many life style interior products, design and style products are also socially and environmentally aware. There are

furniture, lighting, art and craft and music products, but none of these are displayed as in a shop but as in living areas. The area for all the Specialty Food products that Auroville makes is woven together with small cafés, and you can even taste some of these before buying. In a number of places you can see the chefs working behind glass walls, and follow the production process as in the bakery or, watch fascinating tofu recipes come to life with fresh organic salads and vegetables from Auroville farms or, get pizzas topped with your favourite Auroville cheese. I choose to lunch in a quaint Korean restaurant which invites you to eat mindfully. Some of the people working here have lived in Auroville for decades or have grown up here. Some are volunteers making their experience by living and working here.

All this leads to the next two floors where it is all about the research and experiment that has led to all kinds of truly interesting sustainable innovations in solar energy, windmill technologies, bio-dynamized water, now recognized for its healing properties, waste management, plus waste water management, sustainable building practices, afforestation and soil regeneration, organic farming and much more. Solar panels that line the roof of the Line of Goodwill are produced in the Industrial zone and supply a good chunk of energy to the Gateway as well. All this knowledge, the practices and the products can be transferred to other places and institutions as it is already being done in different places in India and around the world. My nephew needs to come here! But it doesn't stop there. There are innovations in education and in organization seeking new, conscious models and there is art and music and literature in this city of Universal Culture. Some works of art are on par with Indian and international artists, yet unique. Some of the art is inbuilt in spaces in the Gateway, in the Line of Goodwill and elsewhere in Auroville, bringing an inward magic, a higher frequency of beauty in dialogue with all the rest. A sizable earning from all the retail products, industrial products, services and innovations and research in design contribute to the running and growth of the city and its greenbelt.

Higher up the building has different types of hotel options and a number of offices, also a health zone with a gym, quiet zones to relax and rejuvenate, plus other services. But, before getting that far, there is a whole floor with conference rooms and auditoriums and open plazas with many events, workshops and talks and some cafeterias. Because I am staying overnight I could access some of the talks and events, but to participate in workshops I would need to register beforehand and stay longer. I attended a session on the possibilities of Unending Education and one on Garbology, and education module created to deal with the humungous garbage problem in India and elsewhere. I know now that I am coming back with my daughter during her holidays.

On the fifth floor I came across a running ticker listing all the programmes, talks and events in different parts of the building and also programmes and places where one can volunteer should one want to spend more time in Auroville. As a place of Karma Yoga, one is encouraged to join in activities and work in order to participate in some way, be it in a farm, or in a school, a building project, or a Tai Chi workshop and not just hang around if one plans to stay longer, for it is such a vast place of learning and experience. The brochure lists guest spaces in the Line of Goodwill and other parts of Auroville if one wants to stay longer.

There is also the possibility of joining a guided tour of the International Zone, but I need time to absorb what I have already seen so far. It will have to wait for another day and I still have some shopping to do, for my family and friends, and for myself and a few books and brochures to pick up. An hour later, shopping done, I take the elevator up to my room, leave all the bags there and go to the 15th floor for the Sunset Meditation. On the high terrace I join a dozen people watching the sun go down. As we sit in meditation the sun spreads like a sunset masterpiece through the clouds and such a vast silence embraces us.

I return to my Zen room and order a light salad. All day I was in a sound space of so

many languages, many Indian varieties plus Italian, French, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, African, Brazilian and so many English accents, all in harmony, together. I set the alarm clock and fall into a deep and peaceful sleep, the best sleep I have had for years. Tomorrow is a big day, and I must be ready for an encounter with the soul of this city...

At 7 am I get a delicious idli breakfast downstairs and exit the plaza from the back entrance. To reach the Matrimandir Access entrance one must walk through a forested green corridor that traverses a canyon. It is a short but amazing walk through the trees and permaculture gardens and the recycled waste water waterfall that services the gardens. The Matrimandir access group welcomes us, check our passes and directs us to a video room where one gets an introduction about what Matrimandir really is, not some golden temple or golf ball but place of concentration at the very centre of the city. A place of silence to find one's soul... We board a monorail along a flank of the Line of Goodwill that takes us gently through the landscape to our point of exit at the Crown. From here, for the time being we are carted in electric vehicles to the Matrimandir gate. A lake is being built and will be ready in a year. From there we walk through the gardens, past the legendary banyan tree and up inside that golden sphere, where suddenly, the world seems to change from inside. We move up a spiraling ramp to a silent white chamber where a single ray of sun falls on a crystal. I can't translate the experience in words yet, for it is at another frequency of silence. Suffice to say that it is something that will stay with me forever.

But it is time to get back home – family and work are waiting. I have only been away one day and one night, but it feels like much, much longer. I even don't feel like the same person I was when I arrived. Life feels so much wider and richer. I have often felt a deep need for change in the way we live, but the daily routines do not leave much space. Now I feel I have been given tools and inputs to change.

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A Call for Serenity and Unity

Anandi

It has been 40 years since the Aurovillians requested the protection and support of the Government of India, almost 40 years after the approval of the Auroville Foundation Law in Parliament, an event that was considered by many as a miracle at that time. And this is many years of relationship and help that the Government has extended to Auroville and its inhabitants. Land protection, tax exceptions, special visa considerations,

grants and donations, and continued generous support. All has been granted with minimal conditions in exchange.

Perhaps the fate of Auroville could have been different, if an agreement with the Sri Aurobindo Society had been possible. Perhaps an inability to dialogue marked the future forever. But it could be that Auroville's destiny was already intrinsically linked to India, as the



spiritual country par excellence and the birthplace of Sri Aurobindo. A country that concentrates all the challenges and that has the capacity to overcome them. And it may be that in order to have international relations through its International Zone, Auroville will need the support of the Government of India.

What is clear is that Auroville has much to thank the Government of India and its leaders and administrators.

For all this and because the Aurovilians are supposed to refrain from doing politics and creating conflicts, it is not understandable that there are Aurovilians willing to insult, attack, and embarrass representatives of the Government of India, whatever their personal justification may be.

It is in this context that if an Aurovilian receives a 'leave India notice' we should reflect on the reasons and not get emotionally carried away by information that seeks only sensationalism and manipulate opinions.

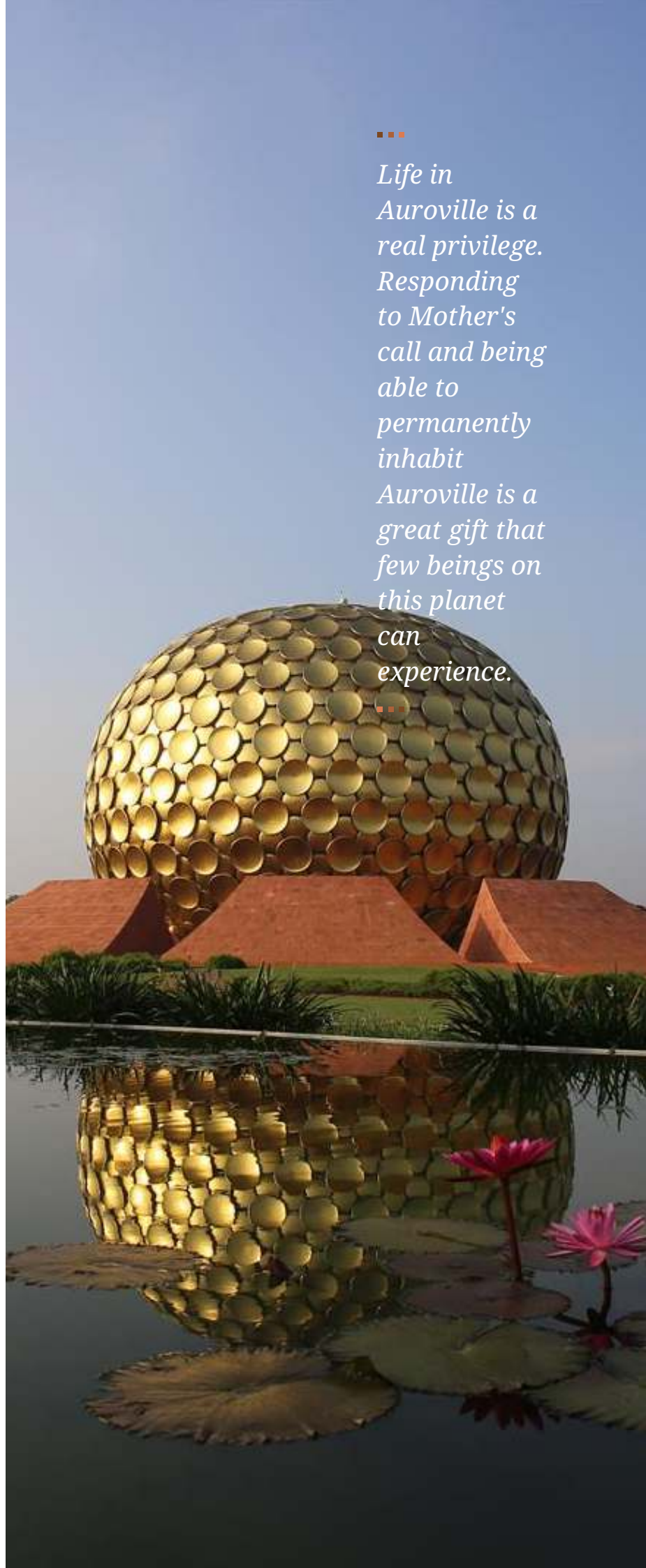
Life in Auroville is a real privilege. Responding to Mother's call and being able to permanently inhabit Auroville is a great gift that few beings on this planet can experience. It is our responsibility to appreciate it and be as neat as possible in our attitudes.

Along the guidelines given by The Mother for Aurovilians there are two non-negotiables to be honoured: the Charter and the building of the city that will house the experiment for humanity that is embedded in the Charter. All this is inseparable from our practical life in Auroville.

Endangering this privilege for political, social, cultural or technical battles makes no sense, because here we have come to overcome all that for the sake of an ideal much higher than all our ideas together.

I trust that the deep aspiration of the Aurovilians will return to a serene attitude of respect and understanding. Surely that will create the foundations for the development that Auroville needs.

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Seeking Understanding and Collaboration

I do feel your pain and anger and deeply appreciate your sincere attempt to connect and understand. As a response, I will do my best to deeply reflect on the current situation and share what I see from my perspective. My perceptions may or may not be the Truth, however, they are my personal truth. It is the same inner seeing that gave me the courage to stand up against my family and friends while I was joining Auroville, and I have complete trust in that guidance and I cannot follow any other.

I am here in Auroville for the yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and therefore looking at our situation from the perspective of yoga and not from a legal, moral, emotional or political angle. In outward appearances, the GB & the Secretary have taken up the leadership role in the material and economic development of Auroville and have rejected some of our old ways of functioning and we are losing the autonomy we have enjoyed so far. The methods used are not at all what we would naturally expect to see happening in Auroville and it is shocking to us. I know that my mind cannot fully grasp the ways and processes of the divine shaping individuals, communities and humanity toward a greater evolutionary possibility. From Sri Aurobindo's own life we learn that the Divine had put him in jail for solitary imprisonment for a year to show him a greater possibility. Such events, outwardly cruel and violent, may appear to our tender heart's emotions to be an inappropriate process to manifest human unity or a new consciousness. The ways of Nature and the Divine are indeed beyond our human moral codes of conduct, however noble we may consider our ways to be. From the perspective of yoga, we exist in the Divine and all things are nothing but That.

Whatever these outer appearances, in my understanding and experience, the soul of

Auroville is indestructible, incorruptible and mighty. So there is no trace of anxiety in me regarding the future of Auroville. Yes, there is chaos on the surface but nothing can stop the manifestation of Auroville, this is my absolute faith and certitude and nothing will shake it. At the most what can happen is a delay and detour in the manifestation of Auroville due to a lack of receptivity in people to Her force. But such a delay and detour are not something new to us as evident in our own lamentations expressed internally over many decades regarding our internal state of affairs. Now such lamentations are coming from the GB & the Secretary and they are doing their hammer blows to change the status quo.

I keep hearing again and again from many Aurovilians that the GB, the Secretary and the IAC are outsiders. From the legal view of the present Auroville Foundation Act, brought in by our own elder Aurovilians to protect Auroville, it will be sheer ignorance to look at them to be outsiders. You may feel it to be so emotionally, but that won't help much. Please note that they will be held responsible for the success or failure of Auroville by the laws of India. They do have legal roles and responsibilities to follow in the manifestation of Auroville and as long as the Auroville Foundation Act exists, they will remain insiders at least legally.

Spiritually whether the members of GB, IAC and the Secretary are willing servitors of the divine consciousness or not is something that our little human mind can judge. How the divine Mother acts and what type of instruments She uses to accomplish Her mission is not within the scope of the human mind to grasp and judge. Such speculations are likely to reveal more of our ignorance than the Truth.

Receptivity to be a willing servitor of the divine consciousness does not depend on one's legal status as Aurovilian, nor does it

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My perceptions may or may not be the Truth, however, they are my personal truth.

...

depend on whether an individual is living in Auroville or not. Such formal status has only some pragmatic utility for legal purposes and should not be taken as a sign of receptivity to Mother's Force. Similarly, the number of years one has lived in Auroville can not be held as a measure of receptivity to the divine consciousness. So it is better not to delude ourselves with such notions.

The Context

Auroville exists in the context of India and it is important that we understand this context that is changing rapidly. What is happening on both sides of the road to Kuyilapalayam is an alarming sign of the rapid pace of changes taking place around us and there is nothing much we could do using our internal processes. We have been very successful in terms of generating great creative diversity in Auroville with a large number of islands of excellence doing admirable work, your Earth Institute being one of them. However, when it comes to protecting the integrity of our masterplan area or simplifying our complex internal bureaucracy and non-transparent and complex financial system, or building common infrastructure like housing or roads to meet the growing demands, our internal processes have been hopelessly inadequate or even counterproductive. We had been helplessly stagnating, entangled in our own never-ending internal processes that cannot go beyond endless discussions and the creation of documents with wonderful ideas of change without any power of execution. The number of studies, workshops, and documents created in the last two decades is enough proof. When it comes to collective systemic transformation, there was no executive power that could effectively put things into action. We were living like a collection of fiefdoms that could never come to an agreement on action for the larger good of the whole. There is no point in denying it.

Besides such internal stagnation due to disagreements on joint action, we were constantly under attack by people like Vikram Ram who were putting pressure on the government at all levels and the GB accusing Auroville of all kinds of misdeeds. In fact, the previous GB had to even initiate an Enquiry Committee. On the other hand, the previous WC had filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court demanding government protection of the land designated for Auroville. It is in this context the new GB & the Secretary was put in place by the Gov. for direct intervention to help Auroville to come out of the internal deadlock, or at least that is how I understand it, especially as a gift on the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. However, the work culture of the Gov of India is quite different from our internal work culture and this difference has led to deep misunderstanding and resultant conflicts.

Intervention

The first report of the GB [see the report of the 57th Governing Board Meeting held on 2nd November 2021] was accurate with surgical precision on the issues we were entangled with. While I would consider the goal of 15,000 people by 2025 to be unrealistic, overall I saw a great deal of benevolence and goodwill coming from the side of the GB. The Secretary made it clear that being a government official she has four references - the Constitution of India, the Auroville Foundation Act, the gazetted masterplan and the Charter of Auroville within which she can operationalise her responsibilities. The very first intervention was the successful recovery, in July 2021, eviction of the occupied land at Auro Orchard, a problem that was festering for 20 years, something that our internal processes couldn't resolve.

When it came to the Crown, it is a well-known fact within the community that the Youth Centre was intentionally placed

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Similarly, the number of years one has lived in Auroville can not be held as a measure of receptivity to the divine consciousness. So it is better not to delude ourselves with such notions.

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You cannot greenwash such a violation of trust, you can't cover it up with slogans of human unity, you can't cover it up in the name of love for youth, you can't cover it up by saying it is now the ground reality.

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decades ago on the Crown by the people who did not want the Crown and so was the planting of the trees in the area designated for the Crown. The intentions of the people who did it were loud and clear as you can see in the message below which was put near the Youth Centre where crown development was blocked.

The development of the road was blocked, the laying of cables was blocked even though we had a gazetted masterplan and there was nothing our internal process could do to resolve this conflict. Rather our internal process was well suited to block any development if you get a group of people together and glorify it as a participatory process. All Working Groups are disempowered to do anything about it and the dysfunctionality and injustice were well wrapped under the cover of the internal community process and human unity. Any group can impose their will on the collective development based on their self-interest and there was no internal power to deal with it. When a piece of land is given to you to be a custodian till the time comes for the development of the city and when you intentionally build structures over a planned road or plant trees over them to block the development, and then when the time comes for the development of the planned things, you refuse to give back the plot given to you in good trust, you are destroying the very fabric of trust that builds a society. You cannot greenwash such a violation of trust, you can't cover it up with slogans of human unity, you can't cover it up in the name of love for youth, you can't cover it up by saying it is now the ground reality. It is not about a road or its shape or materials used, fundamentally it is a breach of trust, a rupture in the very foundation of our social fabric. It is such violations that give birth to written laws, courts and police in society. It is such violations that dishonour the psychic purity

and its spontaneous self-governance that requires no mental rules. To top it all, when someone questions you and holds you accountable, you call them religious fanatics who blindly want a perfect circle.

Who are you fooling?

Without intellectual honesty and sincerity, there is no way forward if you want a city at the service of Truth. This is not the new humanity Roger spoke about that can build the city of the future. When people quote Roger I don't know what they are justifying. You can't hide dishonesty under the garb of ecology and human unity and community process and pretend to be the saviour of the earth.

The Secretary made it very clear that the Indian laws are the same whether it is in Auro Orchard or the Mahakali park, she must abide by the laws and the four references she has. Her first six months went on for consultations and meetings with all the concerned people but I guess being a well-experienced person she could see through the dishonesty parading in the garb of ecology, human unity and Community process - a process that wouldn't go beyond endless discussions, a process that retained the status quo. Behind it was the resistance, every time coming up with a new excuse. In 1995 when I joined Auroville I read a lot on Auroville News about how obsolete the Galaxy plan or the idea of the four zones were claiming that all these are ideas that come from the sixties and we must go beyond. Anyone who loved the galaxy was treated as a religious fanatic. The resistance was always there and I believed in that narrative for some time but over the years I could see through the falsehood. The resistance took many different forms, every time coming up with a new excuse and the latest is the inappropriateness of the means used by the Secretary, but I must say we have made



huge progress. Now people say we are not against the Galaxy - this was not so in the past.

I guess the Secretary realised that this so-called community process was not going to make any breakthrough as the goalpost kept changing and she decided to use her authority and enforce the law of the country. We can argue that she should have shown more patience or used softer means. Anyway, such enforcement gave a grand and dramatic opportunity for people to play the role of a victim, play the classic drama triangle and demonise the Secretary, a narrative that is easy to sell in the mass media and gather mass support. People love such stories, stories that are simple and black and white, stories that are gripping in which there is a demon out there. The rest is a deep downward spiral into the pit of our own shadow where we are co-creating a painful reality constantly blaming the demon out there. If the Secretary is handling the situation in a heavy-handed authoritarian way, can't you see the crudeness and verbal violence of our own response to her? This is a co-created reality, you can't wash your hands off.

Dear Satprem, I don't see the Secretary as a demon who is here to destroy Auroville, nor is she giving me orders that I obey like a sheep. These are products of your imagination. I have had many occasions to sit with her and have deep discussions and I don't doubt her sincerity and genuineness of intentions. We can debate the means she has used. Her ways of doing things are different and way too fast for us and she follows the work culture of the government officials. It is quite different from ours and the difference doesn't make them demons. The Government of India is not a demon though many international media houses are doing all they can to demonise the present Government of India and equate it with the Nazi regime of Germany. I know there are many Aurovilians who deeply believe in such narratives and fears born of such narratives are fueling the media violence unleashed upon the Secretary. India had never been a predatory nation in its entire history and when some nations and their media demonise the present Government of India, they are projecting their own shadow coming from their own past. If you do not understand how the shadow works, you

cannot transform it.

Even though we have already seriously damaged our relationship with the Government of India due to our own smallness, I believe it is still not too late to course correct and find ways to collaborate. The land consolidation, the building of the houses and infrastructure necessary for the city, transforming our financial system for simplicity, transparency, accountability and compliance, birthing an economic system that can move towards increasing financial independence, birthing an internal governance system beyond the vote bank politics, steering Auroville towards an international campus for lifelong integral education, all this requires serious support and the GB and Secretary are here to provide that. But their work culture and language are different and we need to understand each other's ways.

If you read Sri Aurobindo's five dreams you can see from dreams 3,4 and 5, that the destiny of India and the destiny of Auroville are woven into each other. We must find ways to collaborate not only among ourselves but also with local, State, national and international governments and institutions. It requires a great deal of maturity and fearless self-confidence. It is easy to come together against a demon out there, that is not human unity. That is our natural unconscious instinct when we are in the grip of fear. Auroville is a place where "...all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries".

I also know that the world is only a mirror showing us what we are and what we find shocking in others is lurking secretly in our own subconscious. The demon out there in the mirror is our own reflection. Human unity is different from tribal affinities and a sense of bonding within a clan. We must go beyond these identifications and see the divine self in all and feel the universality of our being in which all are manifold expressions of the One. All processes are processes of the One shaping the future. It is only in our deep inner silence, quietude and peace we can experience the One in all. **In my understanding, this is a basic proposition for our progress here.**

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Budget Reallocation: Towards Abundance and Prosperity

Lakshay Dharan

In light of ongoing social unrest and the fundamental flaws in resource allocation highlighted by the BCC report, it is imperative for Auroville to reassess its budget allocation. By addressing the existing imbalances, Auroville can pave the way for a more prosperous and harmonious community. This article proposes a revised budget composition that aligns with the core principles and needs of Auroville, promoting the well-being of its residents and the sustainable development of the township.

Analyzing the Current Budget Allocation:

The current budget allocation in Auroville reveals certain shortcomings that need to be addressed. Some of the key issues include:

Imbalanced allocation: The forests receive more funds than the farms, which may not align with the community's objectives of sustainable agriculture and food security.



Insufficient investment in the city: The proactive development of the city receives less than 1% of the budget, leading to challenges in urban planning and infrastructure.

Inadequate focus on mobility: With only around 1% allocated to mobility, the proliferation of private vehicles becomes a concern, leading to congestion and environmental issues.

Limited investment in economic development: Auroville's growth and prosperity require greater emphasis on economic development initiatives to foster self-reliance and sustainability.

Misallocated resources in the neighborhood: Spending nearly 10% on the neighborhood while ignoring pressing issues within Auroville itself, such as mental health and suicide prevention, is a tragic oversight.

Neglected areas of research and communication: Insufficient resources allocated to research and communication hinder innovation and effective dissemination of Auroville's principles and achievements.

Lack of investment in resource mobilization: Auroville could benefit from dedicated efforts to mobilize resources, including financial contributions and partnerships.

Proposed Budget Reallocation:

To address the identified issues and align the budget with Auroville's vision and needs, a revised budget composition is proposed:

People:

Welfare: Children, Social Support, and Security (20%)
Education and Sports (15%)
Healthcare and Prosperity Services (10%)

Place:

City: Planning, Land, and Matrimandir (12%)
Infrastructure: Housing, Energy, and Mobility (8%)
Green Zone: Farms and Forests (5%)

Prosperity:

Organization (5%)
Research and Communication (5%)
Economic Development (5%)
Resource Mobilization (5%)

Peace:

Art and Culture (3%)

Partnership:

Bioregion Outreach (2%)

Others:

Contingency/Utilities (5%)

Conclusion:

Reallocation of the budget in Auroville can lead to a more balanced and prosperous community. The proposed budget composition aims to address the current shortcomings and promote key areas such as welfare, education, healthcare, infrastructure, economic development, and sustainability. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this reallocation may create challenges for those whose allocations are reduced. Therefore, transitioning from a scarcity-based economy to an abundance-based prosperity model is necessary. This may require an increase in the overall budget to 4 Crores.

To fund this reallocation, various avenues can be explored, including the revival of commercial units to generate increased revenue, a shift in service-based transactions, and reducing financial burdens on Aurovilians. Additionally, Auroville can pursue external contributions, government support, institutional/CSR contributions, project-based and individual/guest contributions, and foreign funding.

By implementing a revised budget composition and adopting a proactive approach to resource mobilization, Auroville can create a path towards abundance and prosperity while staying true to its core principles.

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Volunteering in Auroville



Great numbers of people, of youth, pass through Auroville's Visitor's Centre each day. They explore the information desk, the books and journals, they watch a couple of videos, and some go to the Matrimandir, where they have a booking for a meditation. Often, as they leave, they ask: "How can I participate? Can I join or contribute in some way? I'm interested in green work or farming, town planning or design, solar energy or fashion, sport or culture. Some come with exceptional qualifications and capacities in different fields, some are onto path breaking research and are raring to do something, some just want to absorb the presence in the air and peel potatoes somewhere, sweep the Matrimandir pathways in the morning or design a pathway. Are we ready for them?

Auroville is a city in the making where everybody is invited to come and make a

difference in this universal experiment for the future, for humanity. Many people find their way to Savi, the one stop address to find out about volunteering and internship opportunities in the different units and services of Auroville, but lately volunteers have been expressing the need to know more, engage more deeply with Auroville's vision, the city meant for the future and its founding ideas and spirit to see how they can best help in translating all that into reality and to work and grow in potential and consciousness from within.

Savi is teaming up with Involve-Auroville to make these bridges to enhance their work and bring more capacities in to be able to welcome the people waiting to come. Volunteering periods typically stretch from a minimum of 3 months to 6 months to 1 year. Often university students only have a two month break which is also being considered. Apart from the Units that usually take in and train volunteers, service areas like the Matrimandir gardens, Solar Kitchen, Bharat Nivas welcome volunteers. As the farming sector is now picking up that is a place to sign up for a very hands on experience.

The Charter of Auroville welcomes the whole world, the youth of course but not only, young and older professionals of all types, artists and dreamers all make up this adventure: Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. The Charter becomes interesting, as it outlines all four points on which Auroville stands, specially for those who have been asking to know more, discover and deepen with the this experiment where people from the world, from across India, and the bioregion meet.

To find out more, ask questions, or register go to:
<https://involveauroville.org>
<https://auroville.org/page/savi-volunteering>

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*I invite you to
 the great
 adventure...*
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Donate

Like any other initiative, AWARE requires various resources to carry out its missions and programmes. However, AWARE still needs financial resources to access different types of talent, tools, technology, time of experts, etc. Towards this, we appeal to you to donate generously to enable us to create better AWAREness around Auroville.

<https://awareauroville.com/support/donate/>



Contribute

Contribute to the AWAREness of Auroville. AWARE is created as a resident-run independent information portal to provide authentic unbiased information on Auroville – its ideas, ideals, and ideology. Pls. submit your written pieces to aware@auroville.org.in.

<https://awareauroville.com/support/contribute/>



Volunteer

Auroville is a city in the making. The vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is its raison d'être. Many people over the years have voluntarily offered their energy and some of them have stayed or come back to stay. To come to Auroville as a volunteer implies that you somehow resonate with the city's aims and ideals; that you are ready to give your energy to its various projects and services and take part in its development.

<https://awareauroville.com/support/volunteer/>



Serve

We request the willing servitors of Auroville to contribute to AWAREauroville.com, which is the voice of the residents of Auroville. By sharing your point of view, the world as a whole will come to know the pulse of our society and learn from struggles and successes. Together, we can reach out and touch the souls waiting to be aware of Auroville and contribute towards a new future for the world.

<https://awareauroville.com/support/serve-auroville/>



Champion

As a champion you can share information about AWARE with your friends and family, and encourage them to regularly access to AWAREauroville.com. You can also attend AWARE workshops, seminars, and conferences, and help to spread the word about the important work that AWARE is doing.

<https://awareauroville.com/support/donate/>



Contact

Your support and engagement are essential to achieving our mission. We look forward to hearing from you and working together towards a better future.

Write to aware@auroville.org.in



www.awareauroville.com

