
Auroville Tomorrow

We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future.

Ushus: 1

Sri Aurobindo

Kiran: 10

24th January 2026

Auroville's newsletter, rooted in the present,
focused on the future

A Sun, for the Evolution of Consciousness



**But when God's messenger comes to help the world
And lead the soul of earth to higher things,
He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;
He too must bear the pang that he would heal:
Exempt and unafflicted by earth's fate,
How shall he cure the ills he never felt?
He covers the world's agony with his calm.**

— Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book VI: The book of Fate

Revisiting Ancient Concepts: Tagore, Persia, and Hafez

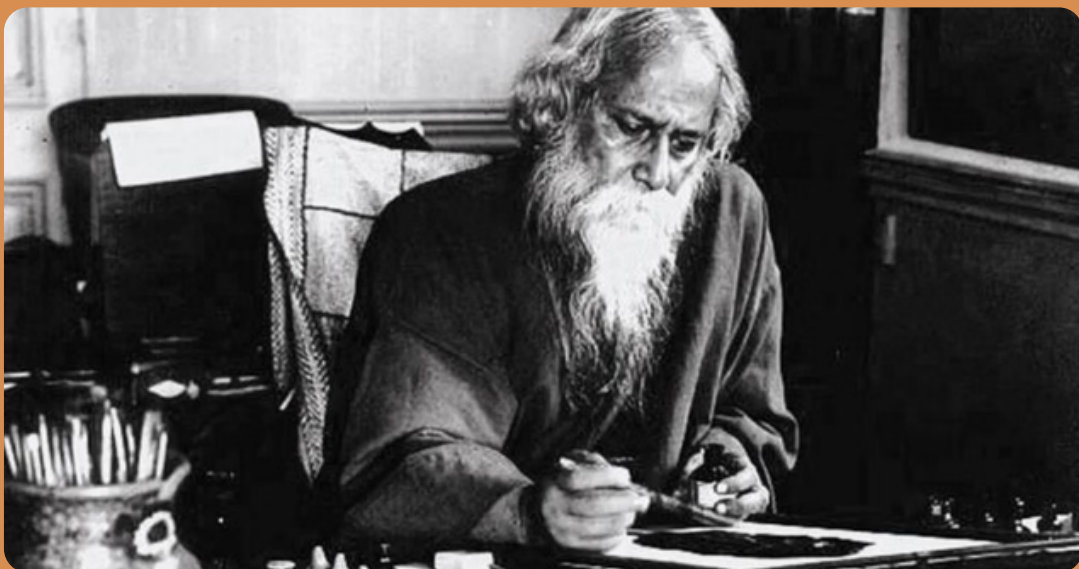
My first encounter with the term “Arya” in Auroville was neither as a historical term nor as a theoretical concept, but in an everyday conversation, almost by chance. Yet, for me as an Iranian, this word carried a dense and layered significance; it simultaneously evoked a long history of appropriation and misuse, an ancient designation, and a contemporary sensitivity to a concept that once signified moral character, cultural orientation, and human dignity.

At this point, a question arises: Do you think Auroville can be approached from this perspective? Can this space allow ancient concepts to be understood not as fixed identities, but as grounds for inquiry, experience, and ongoing experimentation? This approach enables us to see “Arya” not as a historical identity, but as an ethical and spiritual concern, a question of how we live, how we pay attention, and what relation we maintain with ourselves, others, and the world. This encounter guided me to a gradual return to streams of thought and culture that once connected Persia and India, not through politics or lineage, but through language, ethics, and spiritual sensibility. Within this context, two figures stand out: Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, each of whom followed a unique path in engaging with ancient concepts.

Sri Aurobindo approaches “Arya” philosophically and as part of a process of evolution. For him, “Arya” is not the name of a historical group, but a marker of conscious orientation toward inner discipline, ethical action, and openness to higher levels of consciousness. An Arya is not someone who is born, but someone who becomes; a continuous process that involves sustained work on oneself, moral responsibility, and the practice of life in relation to the world. In this sense, Sri Aurobindo frees the term “Ārya” from racial or biological readings and returns it to a quality of consciousness and inner action. For him, the past is not a point of return, but a source of re-orientation; reference to the Vedas or terms like Arya is not nostalgic, but part of a project aimed at expanding human consciousness through tradition, yet without being enslaved by it.

At this point, Aurobindo himself writes:

“Originally, this term expressed differences of culture, not differences of race. In the Vedas, Aryan peoples were those who embraced a certain inward and outward self-discipline, idealism, and striving toward excellence... Essentially, at its most fundamental meaning, Arya signifies effort, rising, and overcoming... An Aryan is one who removes what stands in the way of human advancement—both externally and internally—and his first law of nature is the conquest of the self.”



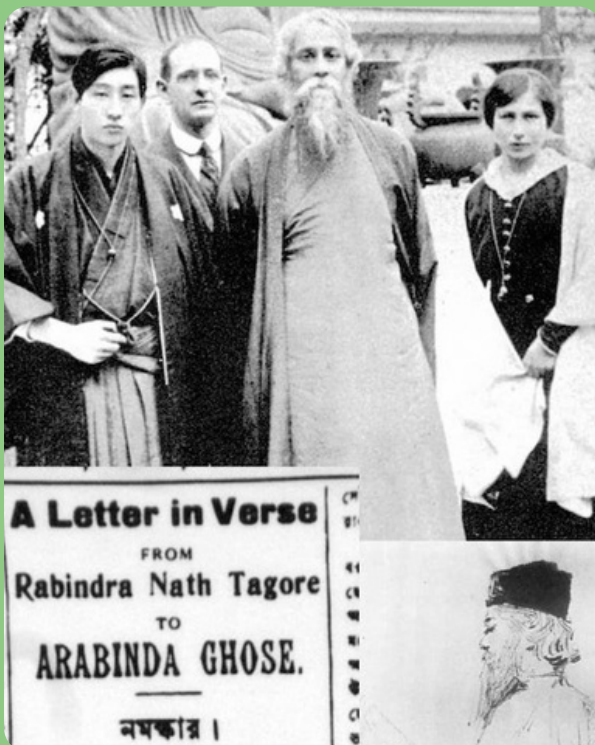
In this view, "Arya" represents an ethical and spiritual potential that is realized only through practice and action.

Tagore, in contrast, takes a less philosophical and more poetic and lived approach. He does not concern himself with systematic definitions of concepts, but demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the danger of appropriating ancient concepts, especially when such concepts are turned into tools for political or racial identity. For Tagore, cultural and ethical concepts are legitimate only when they pass through human experience and lived moments. This lived experience is realized not through theory, but through poetic language, art, and human relations. In this regard, Tagore complements Sri Aurobindo's perspective: both emphasize that ancient concepts remain alive and ethical only when they are enacted and engaged with conscious attention.

Tagore's connection with Persia, the Zoroastrians, and Persian poetry is an inseparable part of this perspective. He traveled to Persia and engaged with Iranian culture, philosophy, and literature, especially with the poetry of Hafez and Saadi, from a standpoint of dialogue and human experience. He did not seek to establish historical kinship, but to recognize a shared ethical and human sensibility that can flow across different cultures and traditions. Through his interactions with the Zoroastrians, Tagore also experienced the possibility of recognizing a quality of ethical and human life inspired by ancient traditions.

This view suggests that the cultural connection between India and Persia is based not on lineage or shared history, but on a common sensitivity to language, ethics, and human responsibility. Tagore saw culture not as a closed heritage, but as a field of relation and experience. His sensitivity to the danger of abstraction aligns him with Sri Aurobindo; although Tagore engages less in philosophical formulation, his concern about the appropriation of ancient concepts and their conversion into political or racial tools resonates with Aurobindo's project.

Auroville, in this analysis, can be approached as a question: can this space allow ancient concepts to be understood not as fixed identities, but as grounds for ongoing testing, experience, and reinterpretation? From this perspective, concepts like "Arya" are examined not as a name or historical identity, but as a process of conscious becoming, moral responsibility, and human experience. This analytical and inquisitive approach shows that ancient concepts come alive only when mediated through human experience, intercultural interaction, and living relational engagement.



Finally, Tagore's cultural connection with Persia and Hafez demonstrates that human experience can serve as a bridge between different cultures and traditions, without being confined by the past or fixed identities.

Through his engagement with Hafez's poetry, Tagore did not seek antiquarianism or historical roots, but a shared ethical and human sensibility that enriched lived experience. This shared sensibility is the very bridge that illuminates "a sun for the evolution of consciousness": the light of awareness born from the encounter of cultures, traditions, and human experience, not from lineage, race, or history alone.

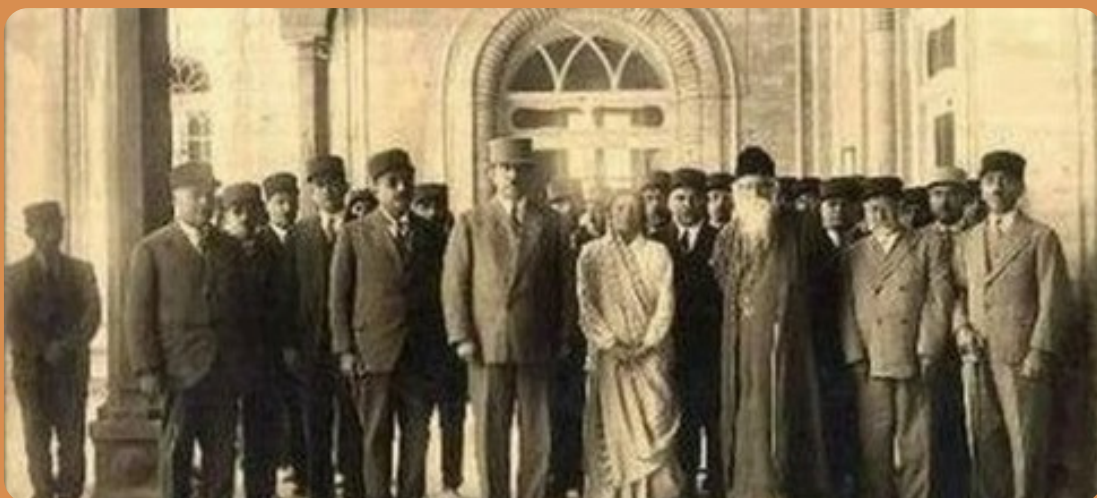
In this sense, Auroville symbolizes a space that keeps concepts alive and enables their experience and reinterpretation—but as noted, approaching it requires an analytical and inquisitive perspective, not merely accepting it as a fixed reality. In this space, "Arya" is no longer a name or historical identity, but a process of conscious becoming, moral responsibility, and human experience that gains meaning in contact with other cultures, languages, and traditions. This approach reminds us that consciousness and culture evolve only when brought into living experience and relation, not through reduction to fixed identities or static pasts.

"For the Persians, my identity has another special feature. I am Indo - Aryan . . . I have a blood relationship with them."

— Rabindranath Tagore



Trip to Iran, 1932



At the Majlis (Iranian parliament) in Tehran, Iran, 1932

— Anita Kamali, Writer and Editor of Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter

Margazhi to Uttarayan From Devotion to Union From Harvest to Conscious Abundance

As the sacred month of Margazhi gently recedes and the sun turns northward in Uttarayan, India enters a luminous threshold. Known variously as Pongal, Makara Sankranti, Magh Bihu, Lohri, or Uttarayan, this transition is not merely an astronomical one. It marks a profound movement in consciousness—from inward austerity to outward abundance, from aspiration to fulfilment, from devotion to union.

— *Dr. Jayanti Ravi, Secretary Auroville Foundation, IAS*



In the southern cultural and spiritual imagination, Margazhi is inseparable from Āṇḍāl, the mystic-poet saint whose thirty verses of the Tiruppāvai express an intense and intimate longing of the soul for the Divine. These thirty days of early-morning prayer, discipline, and surrender culminate symbolically in divine union, often celebrated as a celestial wedding with Śrī Krishna. This sacred culmination coincides with the harvest festival, revealing a timeless truth: when inner effort ripens, life responds with abundance.

From Aspiration to Fulfilment

Margazhi is the month of tapasya—of restraint, silence, early rising, chanting, and inner purification. Pongal, by contrast, is celebratory and generous. Rice overflows, homes are adorned, cattle honoured, and the sun thanked. Together, they mirror the deeper yogic movement of life itself: aspiration followed by realisation.

Āṇḍāl's devotion was not a passive yearning. It was fearless, total, and joyful. Her longing culminates not in separation but in oneness—the soul recognising itself in the Divine. This sacred wedding, celebrated as Krishna Kalyanam or Radha Kalyanam, becomes a living metaphor for yoga itself.

Sri Aurobindo reminds us with luminous simplicity: **“All life is Yoga.”**

Yoga, in this sense, is not an escape from life, but a conscious union with the Divine in every action, relationship, challenge, and responsibility. Life itself becomes the field of realisation.

The Seven Steps: A Map for Conscious Living

In the Indian wedding, the seven steps (saptapadi) taken together symbolise union and shared commitment—nourishment, strength, prosperity, harmony, creativity, endurance, and spiritual companionship.

Interpreted inwardly, these steps become a profound map for conscious living:

- Sustenance – nurturing body, mind, and soul with the right nourishment
- Strength – cultivating resilience through faith and sincerity
- Prosperity – seeking abundance aligned with truth and values
- Harmony – living in balance with others and nature
- Creativity – manifesting new possibilities in life
- Endurance – walking through changing seasons with equanimity
- Unity – abiding in oneness beyond ego and division

These steps are not limited to marriage as an institution. They are invitations for each of us to live wedded to consciousness itself—to become active participants in a life of yoga.

Sri Aurobindo affirms this possibility succinctly: **“All can be done if the God-touch is there.”**

When the Divine Presence is consciously invited into our actions, even the ordinary becomes luminous.

Living Margazhi at Savitri Bhavan

At Savitri Bhavan in Auroville, Margazhi unfolded not merely as ritual but as lived experience. Each dawn at 6:30 a.m., the space came alive with devotion. Children dressed as Āṇḍāl and Krishna, voices rose in Nama Sankirtanam, and the community gathered around the statue of Sri Aurobindo. Little Anand dancing with abandon became a reminder that joy itself can be a form of worship.

The month was enriched by literary gatherings, recitations, and celebratory evenings where devotion and creativity met naturally. The culmination in Pongal brought this collective journey to a gentle fullness—rice boiling over, sweetness shared, gratitude expressed.

In a world shaken by turbulence, conflict, and uncertainty, these moments stood as quiet affirmations: consciousness, when chosen deliberately, has the power to transform chaos into harmony.

Grace, Surrender, and the Sunlit Path

Āṇḍāl sings in her verse “Kūḍārai Vellum Sīr Govindā”—that even the most subtle and difficult truths can be made simple by the grace of Govinda. She affirms that divine grace can melt even resistant hearts, that transformation happens not through force, but through love.

The Mother often spoke of surrender not as weakness but as the highest strength. She offered the unforgettable image of the baby cat and the baby monkey. The baby monkey clings anxiously, relying on its own effort. The baby cat, by contrast, lets itself be carried, trusting completely in the mother.



This surrender, the Mother explained, allows Grace to act freely. She also spoke of following the sunlit path—a life consciously turned toward truth, beauty, harmony, and progress. Consecration, for her, was simple yet radical: to offer every act, every moment, to the Divine. And with her characteristic clarity and compassion, she reassured ‘No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou’ In that spirit, life becomes lighter. Even challenges are met with trust.

Grace in the Ordinary

To sing the glory of the Divine is not confined to hymns or rituals. It is to perform our smallest tasks and greatest responsibilities with sincerity, faith, and surrender. When work becomes offering, action becomes prayer.

Sri Krishna, in the Gita, assures us that no effort made in consciousness is ever lost. Each step taken with remembrance draws Grace closer.

As we walk through life—meeting success and setbacks alike—when we receive all experiences as offerings of the Divine, gratitude becomes natural. Gratitude, in turn, opens the heart further to Grace.

The Taste of Simplicity

As Pongal was shared—sweet chakkarai pongal and savoury ven pongal—there arose a quiet recognition: how something so simple can be so beautiful. A few ingredients, prepared with care, offered with love, tasted with awareness—this too is yoga.

Life, like Pongal, overflows when approached with reverence.

The northward journey of the sun—Uttarayan—symbolises an inner ascent. Despite life’s inevitable ups and downs, the invitation remains to orient ourselves toward light.

Toward Conscious Abundance

True prosperity is not accumulation but alignment—with the soul, with nature, with the Divine Will. As we enter this new phase of the year, may we hold a collective aspiration: to be more conscious, more united, more loving.

Only then does abundance reveal its deeper meaning—not merely wealth, but goodness, beauty, joy, health, harmony, and well-being in all dimensions of life.

As Margazhi gives way to Pongal, devotion flowers into union. As we now step towards the birthday month of the Mother and her magnum opus, Auroville, may we walk on the sunlit path. As the sun moves northward, may our consciousness rise. And as we celebrate harvest, may we also harvest grace, gratitude, and inner fulfilment—walking together, gently and trustfully, on the sunlit path.



New Birth: A Homegrown Leap Toward The Galaxy

@Sector 1, Residential Zone

**Let the birth of the new year be the new birth of our consciousness.
Leaving the past far behind us, let us run towards a luminous future.**

-The Mother, 1933, message for New Year

What if the heart of the Residential Zone invited you to slow down, walk together, and live a little closer—closer to neighbours, to nature, and to the spirit that brought Auroville into being? New Birth is that invitation.

Designed by the ATDC Planning Group in 2023, New Birth is a community-oriented housing initiative that brings three compact clusters of homes—a mix of family apartments (2-BHK) and single-occupancy studios—together with shared, people-friendly spaces: a shared parking, community kitchen and dining, laundry, and a crèche. Threaded through and between the clusters is the Yellow Network: shaded walkways and bridges that make Sector 1 permeable, walkable, and open.

New Birth gently challenges the “my garden / your garden” habit that has crept into many neighbourhoods of Auroville. Instead of fences, it proposes shared courtyards and green passages; instead of car dependency, it promotes cool shade and short, friendly journeys on foot or pedal; instead of isolation, it offers common spaces and everyday meeting points. It is urban design as social architecture—quietly re-stitching community life.

Why Now?

In 2023, we asked Aurovilians and Newcomers to share their interest and capacity to help launch this project. The response was heartening: many households expressed readiness to contribute, fully or partially, towards apartments and shared infrastructure. The design is done. The intent is clear. What remained was the catalytic push needed to mobilise Cluster 1 and set the pace for Clusters 2 and 3.

With New Birth, we also respond to a very real need: youth housing and starter homes for individuals and young families who want to root themselves in Auroville’s future. A town that aspires to grow must create space—literally and figuratively—for its next generation.



For Whom?

The project will house registered Newcomers and Residents of Auroville.

What Makes New Birth Different

Collective by design: Common kitchens, laundry, and crèche areas reduce duplication, save costs, and invite shared rhythms of life.

Permeable & inviting: The Yellow Network flows through the site, linking neighbourhoods and enabling car-light movement.

Right-sized living: A mix of studios and 2-BHK units answers diverse life stages—from single volunteers to growing families.

A living piece of the Galaxy: Situated in Sector 1, New Birth helps animate the Master Plan's intent through a tangible, replicable model.

How We'll Phase It

The project unfolds in three clusters, each composed of blocks that can be easily constructed in sub-phases, allowing progress to respond organically to fund flow. At full capacity, the development can accommodate approximately ~388 persons (adults and children combined), with an overall estimated project outlay of around Rs. 57 crores.

Homes are realised through contributions rather than purchase. As an indication, a compact studio typically emerges through contributions in the range of the 20 Lakhs bracket, while family units ranging around 60 Lakhs take shape through higher contributions reflecting their size, shared spaces, and long-term stewardship. These figures are not prices per flat but expressions of collective participation in creating a living environment rooted in nature, simplicity, and community.

We prioritise Cluster 1 as a demonstrator: the moment its funding basket is ready, we break ground. As donations towards Cluster 1 arrive, they create a revolving momentum for Clusters 2 and 3. Simple, transparent, and paced by community will.

Important note: New Birth is not a sale. Homes are realised through donations and contributions to the Auroville Foundation, aligned with Auroville's ethos. This is a collective effort—a shared build, not a market transaction.



How You Can Participate

1- Sign up if you wish to live here

Register your interest (household size, preferred unit, availability of funds): newbirth@auroville.org.in

2- Contribute if you have the means

Your donation—large or small—helps us launch the project. Those with capacity, whether you need an apartment or not, are warmly encouraged to donate generously so that youth and families can be housed swiftly.

3- Support the commons

Earmark your donations to shared infrastructure (kitchen, crèche, shaded walkways). These are the spaces that knit us together.

4- Spread the word

Share New Birth with friends, devotees, volunteers, and well-wishers who believe in Auroville's experiment and wish to see it grow, and most importantly, to manifest the City The Earth Needs, of which housing is a key component.

Transparency & Trust

Receipts & reporting: All contributions are donations to Auroville Foundation; official receipts will be issued.

Clear accounting: Funds will be tracked by clusters and components (units / shared spaces), with periodic public updates on progress and utilisation.

Open process: Key milestones—ground-breaking, cluster handovers—will be communicated to the world.

The Spirit of New Birth

New Birth is modest in footprint and ambitious in spirit. It's a small but meaningful act of urban courage: to live more openly, to live more together, share more, to walk more, to meet more. This is the spirit of the Galaxy. It is a step—concrete, buildable, and replicable—toward the Galaxy we speak of so often.

If Auroville is an evolving experiment, then New Birth is one of its living labs. Let's build it together.



A Warm Ask to Well-Wishers

If Auroville has touched your life—through a visit, a workshop, a friendship, a sunrise at the Banyan—this is your chance to seed a home for its next generation. Your contribution will directly translate into youth housing, shared spaces, and the shaded paths that carry us to each other.

- Project details: <https://auroville.org/page/new-birth>
- Donate: <https://donate.auroville.org/>
- Sign up / Volunteer: newbirth@auroville.org.in

This is a collective act of manifesting a piece of the Galaxy - together. For more information on the project, phasing, funding, design, and more, please write to us. We will be delighted to share.

— **Sindhuja, AVF architect, ATDC member, Planning & Project Development Coordinator**



Reflections on the Residents Assembly and Auroville's Founding Principles

When we return to the guidelines and foundational texts of the Mother that have inspired, and should continue to inspire, any proposal for the future organization of Auroville, an important observation emerges quite clearly: no positive references or indications are supporting the necessity of a Residents Assembly as it is currently understood and functioning. A careful reading reveals no evidence that such a body, in its present form, was envisaged as essential to Auroville's governance. On the contrary, we find several remarks expressing caution, even criticism, regarding collective decision-making structures driven by group psychology.

One well-known observation by the Mother states:

"Usually, collective egos are inferior in quality to individual egos. Instead of being a multiplication or even an addition, it becomes a diminution, usually. Psychologically, it is a well-known fact. Take men individually, and they show common sense. But put them all together, it makes a stupid mass."

Many residents may recognize how easily this description can apply to the atmosphere and outcomes of numerous Residents' Assembly meetings, particularly since the beginning of the present crisis. Rather than serving as a space for clarity and alignment with Auroville's founding vision, the Assembly has often become a forum where confusion, conflicting interpretations, and resistance to the original purpose of Auroville have proliferated. Instead of strengthening the foundations of the city, this dynamic has at times contributed to questioning its very *raison d'être*, especially the central importance of the construction of the City as envisioned from the outset.

If we wish to reconnect with the deeper yogic inspiration of Auroville, it is essential to turn again to documents such as the Auroville Charter. The Charter functions as Auroville's true constitutional reference, offering a concentrated synthesis of the project's meaning and direction. It clearly states the fundamental condition for living in Auroville:

"But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness."

For many Aurovilians, the most direct way to embody this requirement is through the practice of Integral Yoga.

Integral Yoga places unconditional surrender at the heart of its discipline: the surrender of our ideas, preferences, likes, and dislikes to the Divine. Over time, life in Auroville reveals how subtle and persistent resistance can be, not only at the individual level but also collectively.





In this light, it may be worth asking whether the Residents' Assembly has genuinely supported this inner orientation. Too often, it appears to have functioned primarily as a platform for opinions, collective identifications, and entrenched positions, rather than as a space where the psychic consciousness can guide collective discernment.

Past and present conflicts offer concrete illustrations. The prolonged struggle around the Matrimandir, including attempts to modify the design approved by the architect of the Mother, remains a painful memory. More recently, efforts to change Auroville's urban vision and substitute it with an eco-village raise serious questions. Do these repeated struggles point to difficulties in surrendering to a vision greater than our individual or group preferences? The current crisis may be revealing a deeper challenge in our collective understanding and application of the Yoga that Auroville is meant to embody.

Historically, it is also important to note that the Residents' Assembly does not originate in the writings of the Mother or Sri Aurobindo. Its first formal appearance is in the Auroville Foundation Act. This Act was drafted to address an exceptional situation, using legal means to safeguard both the spirit and aims of Auroville as expressed in the Charter, and the physical realization of the city according to its Master Plan. Within this framework, the role of the Residents' Assembly was defined as organizing the activities of Auroville and deciding on the admission of new members.

Over the years, however, the Residents' Assembly has gradually extended its role beyond these functions, moving away from both the letter and the spirit of Auroville's founding ideals. Three developments are particularly significant.

First, the Assembly has increasingly positioned itself as an "apex decision-making body," requiring working groups to submit their decisions for final approval.

Second, it has adopted voting as a primary mechanism for decision-making. This represents a departure from earlier practices of consensus that guided Auroville for many years. Notably, Dr. Kireet Joshi, former Chairman of the Governing Board and a contributor to the drafting of the Foundation Act, explicitly argued that the Residents' Assembly should not rely on voting as its principal mode of functioning. But this has been "conveniently" forgotten.

Third, participation in the Assembly has steadily declined, with decision-making often dominated by a relatively small and organized group. Rather than fostering broad engagement, this dynamic has led to increasing disengagement and a sense of alienation among many residents. Meaningful collective processes normally require substantial participation; when engagement drops far below this, the legitimacy and representativeness of decisions naturally come into question.

The situation was further exacerbated when proposals emerged to validate decisions with participation as low as 10 percent of residents. Such thresholds risk undermining the very purpose of a Residents Assembly and may encourage political maneuvering rather than collective responsibility.

In light of this trajectory, including the emergence of legal disputes and persistent misunderstandings regarding the Foundation Act and the role of working groups, it seems necessary to pause and reflect seriously. Continuing with a system that has progressively lost coherence and trust may not serve Auroville's future. In light of this negative evolution, which has culminated in court cases initiated by this faction and in the misrepresentation of facts regarding the Auroville Foundation Act and the role of working groups, maintaining the present Foundation Act without changing it would be a serious mistake and harmful to Auroville.

Urgent reform of this point is required, and it is hoped that the Governing Board will address this matter without further delay.

—Joseba Martinez, Resident of Auroville, Member of the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly



Auroville at the Threshold

The Work Ahead, 2026–2050



2026 arrives globally with lots of caution. This year carries with it consequences, responsibility, and the possibility of breaking out of old forms and making way for a new Creation.

In Auroville, if 2025 was a year of churning — when old structures cracked under pressure and uncomfortable course corrections were forced upon us — then 2026 appears as something possibly quieter transformation. A year in which a path begins to show itself. All is not resolved, but perhaps ambiguity has reduced. Lack of clarity, confusion, and a sort of *tamas*, more than conflict, has been Auroville's most paralysing force.

Globally, the last few years have felt crushing. Systems have strained, institutions have been exposed, and long-held certainties have dissolved. Yet from a slightly detached view, this breaking does not look like a collapse alone. It looks like tempering. Civilisations, like individuals, are often broken only to be remade at a different pitch. Across the world, endless debate is giving way — by crushing circumstances— to action. Talking has become expensive. Doing has become unavoidable.

Auroville, as always, has preemptively experienced this global pattern in concentrated form.

From churning to grounding

The last four years have been unusually intense for the City of Dawn. Perhaps. Organisational uncertainty, legal confrontation, and internal polarisation converged at once. But by the end of 2025, something important shifted.

Key court verdicts clarified the legal and administrative setting and official frameworks of the current governance of Auroville. A ambiguity and leeway around the respective roles of the Governing Board, the Secretariat, and the Residents' Assembly reduced substantially. The Supreme Court's interventions did not resolve ideological disagreements — nor were they expected — but they did re-establish once more constitutional ground on which the City now stands.

At the same time, October 2025 marked the formal conclusion of a four-year Governing Board tenure, along with the dissolution of a very ordinary International Advisory Council. Though there is a semblance of continuity in the Secretariat, which may overlap with the tenure of the next GB. Even where continuity continues, it must be treated as a fresh chapter. A new phase cannot begin if it remains burdened by unresolved resentments from any side.

In parallel, the Master Plan 2035 moved decisively from aspiration to blueprint.

The Crown Road, the four zones, the long-delayed physical coherence of the city — these are no longer abstract diagrams. The skeleton is visible from above. The question now is whether we choose to flesh it out or continue arguing around and against it.

Power, named honestly

It would be dishonest to suggest that politics has disappeared. It has not. Colonial power habits still linger, dressed in contemporary language. Coalitions of the power-hungry continue to organise themselves on all sides, poised less by service and poisoned more by position.

Let us name this plainly. Much of what is parallelly unfolding has been a game of power — not a struggle to collaborate and contribute to the collective, eg. for waste management, road repair, water systems, or afforestation. Nobody is queuing up to quietly hold the unglamorous responsibilities that actually build a City. The fight has largely been for influence, not for work.

To be fair, even the new organisational structures are not immune to this logic. When immersed in adversarial environments, people often begin to operate by those rules. But survival strategies cannot become ideals. Auroville was not founded to refine political cleverness. Weren't we founded to outgrow it?

Work as the real centre

Now that the dust of the past is settling/has settled, one truth remains unavoidable: no amount of meetings, appeals, or manifestos builds a city or the collective. Auroville was never meant to be a project of governance. It was meant to be a project of work. The squabble over 'powers' and 'functions' was mindless. We all have the freedom and power to function. All inner. Instead, we are fighting for the external functions of power. The Charter speaks of unending education and constant progress — not constant representative planning or perpetual participatory negotiation.

In this quarter, hopefully, going forward, to "settle in Auroville" will not mean stagnation. It may attempt to mean an inner quietude that allows collective work to happen. In work, the ego has fewer places to hide. In the forest, in units, in schools, and even on the Crown Road, there exists a common language that transcends court orders and administrative memos. Hands in the soil shall dissolve arguments faster than any loud microphones ever will. If Auroville is to move forward, we must realign ourselves here, and participatory actions may well be the name of the game.

A larger alignment

This moment is not occurring in isolation. 2026 marks one hundred years since the Siddhi of **Sri Aurobindo**. 2028 will mark 150 years since the birth of **The Mother**. A forthcoming Governing Board is likely to span much of the current central government's tenure, till 2029. In 2027, Bharat turns eighty.

These are symbolic curiosities, perhaps. But, together, they form a rare alignment of time, intent, and possibility. The next decade matters — for Auroville, for Bharat, for the World.

For a few, even if the past four years felt like steps backward, they may reconsider and see if it has been nature's recoil before a larger movement. At any rate, a leap into the future cannot be made while dragging unresolved identities from the past.

From here, the task is no longer an endless correction. We must pivot to creation. New creation demands sincerity and selectivity. It demands that attention and energy are not endlessly diverted by noise.

At any given time, a small minority will demand disproportionate attention. This is not unique to Auroville; it is human behaviour. Leadership that attempts to absorb every grievance exhausts itself and produces nothing.

If Auroville is serious about moving forward, it must place its light deliberately — on those who wish to build, serve, and align. Not everyone will come along. That is neither failure nor fallback. It is reality. The City the Earth Needs was never meant to be a repair shop for unresolved personal histories and past traumas. It was meant to be a field of conscious experiment for future humanity.

The work ahead

In Auroville, The coming years demand focus on fundamentals. If the next quarter-century is to count, make a mark, clarity of priorities is essential.

First, the land must be secured. This is non-negotiable. The land is the body of Auroville. Without statutory protection, the twenty square kilometres envisioned remain vulnerable — to land sharks, speculative interests, and tourism-driven erosion. Some form of strong governmental safeguard is the only realistic way forward. Auroville is not just land for some fancy project; it is a civilisational asset to humanity itself.

Second, the Galaxy must be embodied. The skeleton is now visible; it must be lived into. Roger Anger's design is not aesthetic nostalgia but functional symbolism. Its twelve defining elements must guide infrastructure, habitation, mobility, and ecology. Otherwise, the plan remains a drawing rather than a conscious City.

Third, Auroville must welcome at least five thousand more servitors over the next decade — not residents by entitlement, but participants by aspiration. Growth must be qualitative, not merely numerical. At Aware, we commit ourselves to working toward this through orientation, preparation, and aligned communication and related actions.

Fourth, Auroville must speak to the world — not as a brand or project, but as a relevance. The world is desperate for workable models of peace, prosperity, and progress. Sri Aurobindo's Five Dreams and Mother's Charter demand an outward responsibility to humanity as a whole.

Finally, Integral Education must move from margin to centre. The industrial-age education system, designed for scarcity and compliance, is becoming obsolete. AI and automation are not future threats; they are present realities. We are entering an abundant world without the inner capacity to live in abundance.

As a species, we do not yet know how to share, how to be, or how to locate meaning when scarcity and survival is no longer the primary question. Integral Education is not an alternative curriculum; it is preparation for a new condition of existence, for a new being, in a new era. The Mother's Science of Living could well become a practical handbook for the children of the coming decades. If this is undertaken seriously, a generation by 2047 could emerge — with Auroville as a spearhead and Bharat as the arrow — contributing meaningfully to humanity's aim of conscious evolution.

The temptation to cling to the past is understandable. It offers familiarity. But familiarity is not fidelity. Fidelity lies in consecration — to the Future, to the Light, to the Mother.

We must stop wasting time in litigating old battles or polishing old grievances. It is time to place ourselves, in collaboration, once again, or for the first time, at the threshold, with humility, courage, and imagination.

The stars may be aligning, but alignment does not guarantee success. It can be considered as an occasion to remove excuses. Auroville must now choose to become what it has always claimed to be. Not perfect — but pioneering.

2026 is a year to celebrate the present responsibility. It is a year to consecrate ourselves to the future. To the Quarter. To Humanity. Quietly, steadily, and through work. Thanks to all the clearing, the path is clearer than it has been in years. The tools and resources are already in our hands. What remains is the willingness to use them — together.

—Lakshay Dharan, Aware Auroville



The Mother's Dream, The Economy of Auroville

The economic ideal of Auroville arises from a vision that The Mother held for many years, until she felt that the time had come for it to take concrete form. This vision does not describe an economy in terms of numbers, growth, or accumulation, but rather a radical transformation of life and society itself. In this new approach, money and wealth cease to be the driving force and ultimate goal of human activity—the cause of labor, struggle, and anxiety—and become instead simple instruments placed at the service of the Divine work.

—Anandi Breton, Executive of PTDC



If we look closely at history, money as we know it today is a relatively recent phenomenon. For most of human existence, it did not dominate life as it does now. It began as a practical tool for exchange, something useful and secondary, but over time, it gradually became the center around which society organizes itself and the main measure of value for nearly all human activities.

Perceiving this imbalance, The Mother envisioned a place where money would no longer reign as the supreme power. In her conception of Auroville, money would not circulate within the city itself, but would be used only for interactions with the outside world. This is an idea so far ahead of its time that it is difficult not only to implement but even to fully grasp with our present mental frameworks.

In such a society, Auroville's residents would be freed from constant concern about money and material security. Their basic needs would be met, allowing them to live without the pressure of earning and accumulating.



Liberated from this burden, individuals could turn their energy toward what truly matters: inner discovery, the growth of consciousness, and the harmonious development of all aspects of their being. Human relationships, too, would undergo a profound change. Instead of being based on competition and personal gain, they would naturally evolve toward cooperation, mutual support, and collective progress.

All ideals are challenging to manifest, and even more so those that demand not only an individual transformation but a collective one. It is therefore not surprising that money still plays a significant role in Auroville today, and that true Prosperity—understood not as wealth but as a state of conscious abundance—has appeared only in brief and partial glimpses. Yet the future of Auroville depends on the extent to which we are willing to move away from conventional economic thinking and step into the deeper meaning of its founding dream.

This implies a gradual detachment from personal ownership, an offering of our work and our lives to the Divine purpose, a sincere gratitude for what we receive, and a willingness to grow together within the means that Auroville can collectively provide. The more we cling to private bank accounts and individual financial security within Auroville, the less space there is for shared services and collective resources to develop. When personal economies dominate, the collective economy weakens—and as a result, the full manifestation of Auroville is delayed, even though its realization is ultimately assured.

This is, therefore, a call to work together for true Prosperity: to have faith in what The Mother envisioned for Auroville, to trust in the future of an experiment that is unique in the world, and to respond to its essential invitation—to let ourselves be carried by it, with trust, openness, and a sincere act of surrender.



Between Art, Teaching, and the Dream

We are pleased to begin this conversation with Sasi Somu, a teacher at Future School since 2010. Over the years, Sasi has taught Art and Design, and more recently Physics, bringing together creativity and inquiry in his approach to learning.

We thank him for taking the time to share his reflections and experience with us.



To begin, could you tell our readers a little about yourself? What was your life like before coming to Auroville, and what path led you here? How long have you been living in Auroville, and what are you currently involved in?

Born and brought up in Pondicherry, we were aware of Auroville right from our teenage years. We came cycling to Auroville to play, have picnics, and get away from the town. Though we were not aware of or did not understand the idea of AV at that time. It seemed strange to us that people would come from overseas and build and live in this desolate space. We thought they were crazy! Then, in my late teenage years, I moved to Australia, studied engineering, Media Arts, and Teaching qualifications. Did various jobs and after 20 years, decided to return to Pondy. Came to Auroville to work on projects and decided to stay for various reasons. That was 17 years ago. Now, I teach full time in Future School. I teach Art & Design and Physics. I am part of the organizing team for the Auroville Film Festival. I also run Analogue Photography Workshops.

What was that moment or spark that led you to decide to settle permanently in Auroville?

Right from my 20s, I have been reading Sri Aurobindo. Coming from Pondy, I was curious about the Ashram and the teachings of SAB. I was taken in by works such as The Life Divine, The Ideal of Human Unity, and, of course, Savitri.

But the ideals of AV that made me want to stay are the ideas that we do not own anything and of Human Unity. Where we all from different parts of the world and different walks of life come together and build this dream of The Mother.

When did you start working with analog photography? Considering that digital photography is also an option, why did you choose analog?

I was introduced to the camera and photography when I was about 10. I have been smitten ever since. My father was an avid photographer and was highly encouraging of my hobby. As Analogue Photography is the only form of photography that existed at that time, I had spent a large part of my life practicing it before digital came along.

Analog photography has its own distinct process and philosophy. How close do you feel this approach is to your experience of living in Auroville? How similar is it to your lifestyle as an Aurovilian?

Analogue Photography is Alchemy! I love the process. Light changes the property of the light-sensitive chemical crystals, which is further processed in chemistry to reveal the image; it is absolute magic. Even after all these years of tinkering with this process, it still makes my heart flutter to see the image coming up on the paper in the developer tray.

The time taken to reveal the image from shoot to developing, the use of earthly chemicals, and the act of capturing light are processes that, to me, have a value tending towards the spiritual.

I could say this does have some parallels to life in Auroville. We are here to manifest The Dream, which, through our united work and spiritual practice, will be brought to fruition. Though we are unable to envisage what form this manifestation will take, we do not shy away from the work.

How would you describe Auroville of yesterday and today from an artist's perspective?

Art has been an intrinsic part of life in Auroville; the sheer variety of Artistic Practices evident in and around AV is proof that we have a healthy arts community. And as time goes on, I see signs of an increase in Art and artistic activities.

How do you balance your artistic life with your involvement in the Future School?

With difficulty, teaching can be and has been all-consuming. Combined with everyday activities, it does not give me much time to do any of my own artistic stuff. To be absolutely frank, at this moment in time, there is no balance.

Do you observe generational progress and change within the Future School? How do you see this process in the past, present, and future?

I am assuming that you mean generational progress to do with the Arts? It has been an ebb and flow. There are batches of students that have had a lot of interest in learning Art, so much so that they go on to do exams in Art & design, while there are batches that only wanted to dabble or had no particular interest. But lately, the students who do Art just for the sake of doing something creative have diminished.



In your opinion, how can participation across generations be increased? Is there enough capacity and openness for their involvement? What obstacles do you see in this process?

Again, from an artistic perspective, especially in AV, there are multiple ways that people of all generations can and are involved. The sheer volume of Art workshops and classes, from the traditional to the contemporary, advertised in the N&N and in various WhatsApp groups, is proof that we have a healthy arts community.

With the beginning of a new year, what would you suggest for Auroville? Is there something you would like to do, or feel ready to take on yourself?

Yes, I am concentrating on my own artistic practice, though I am not sure what form or shape this would take at this moment in time. But I am working on it.

If you were asked to introduce Auroville with only one photograph and without using any words, which corner or moment of Auroville would you choose?

My last exhibition of Photographs titled Arbes Amour was portraits of the trees in Auroville. Sticking with the same theme, all I have to do is point my camera in the direction of any forest to capture the beauty of the trees.



The Goal is to complete Matrimandir

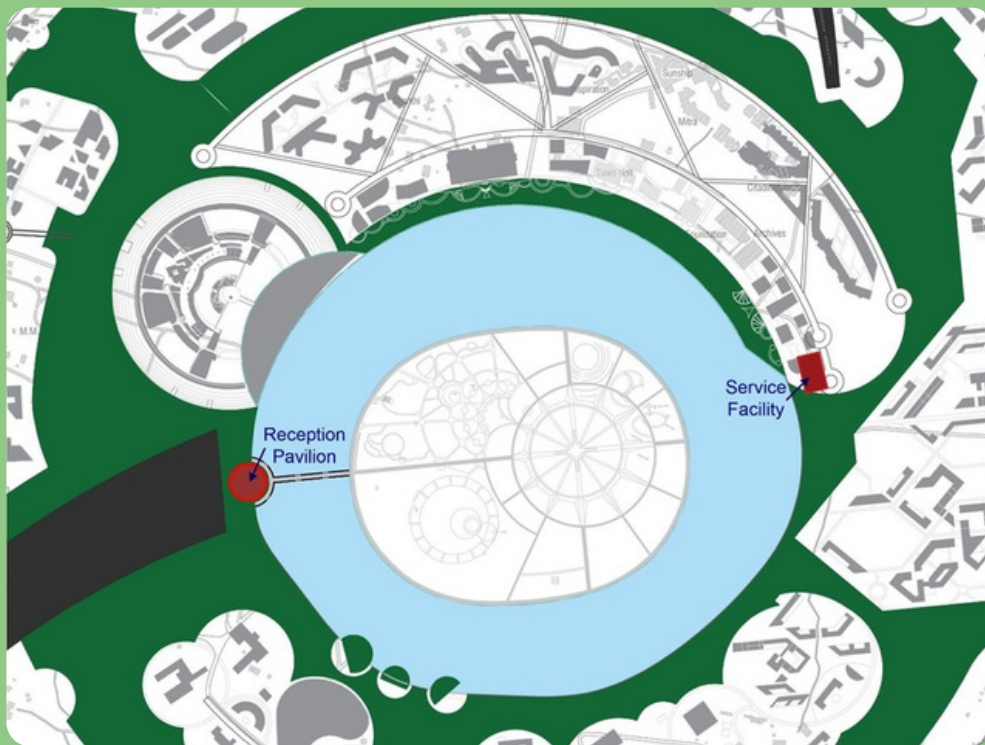
The Goal is to complete Matrimandir, including the Park of Unity and the Lake, as an offering to The Mother for Her 150th birth anniversary on 21 February 2028. So, as we enter 2026, the development work at Matrimandir is moving forward on many fronts.

At the same time, the work of maintaining all that has already been built, and of accommodating the hundreds and thousands of visitors who come to see Matrimandir each day, is an ever-increasing task. It is as if Matrimandir and the Park of Unity continue to bloom, like a giant flower bringing forth new multicolored leaves and petals with each changing season.

At the heart of all this action stands the Matrimandir main building, for which the maintenance keeps a small army busy daily. But as well, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chennai, work is progressing on two development projects. First, they are engaged in developing the drive mechanisms needed to move the sliding Golden Doors in each of the four main pillars. These doors are designed to slide out of view below the sphere of Matrimandir when open, and guided by a sophisticated set of sensors and controls, to complete the golden sphere when closed. It will be wonderful when this feature of the Matrimandir is finally in place. Secondly, IIT Madras is assisting with the upgrading of the Heliostat on the roof of Matrimandir. The Heliostat is the crucial device designed to bring the Sun's rays precisely onto the Crystal in the center of the Inner Chamber. The current heliostat is about 20 years old and needs either an upgrade or replacement by a system of another type. IIT is currently testing a device with no moving or digital parts, using a set of two lenses to focus the ray. If successful, this system will replace the current mechanically driven heliostat and provide a much simpler and maintenance-free way to capture the ray of the sun.

In the Gardens, work is proceeding steadily, with the Garden of Utility on track to be completed by mid-February this year. The vaulted stone arch bridge was freed from scaffolding in mid-January, revealing the elegant curving lines that rise above a lily pond below. The Garden of Bliss, with five marble-clad fountains, has also been refined in several aspects over the last few months. The flowing curtains of water offer a very pleasing sight and sound for all to experience.





Map showing the locations of the Service Facility on the eastern outer shoreline of the Lake and the Reception Pavilion on the west

Work in the newly started Garden of Harmony is now in full swing, with excavation of the central water body proceeding well.

In the Lake, on the southern edge of the oval of the Park of Unity, work is underway to prepare for the casting of the concrete foundation for a new wall to be built at the western end. You may recall that the central Lake wall was swept away a little over a year ago when cyclone Fengal inundated the site with huge quantities of rain. In the coming summer months, we will waterproof the 300-meter-long excavated section of the Lake. This, when joined to the already waterproofed 100 meters of Lake section 1, will create a 400-meter-long Lake section with retaining walls at both ends. It will be wonderful indeed to watch as this long lake section is filled with harvested rainwater. Beyond this 400-meter-long section, Lake Section 3 is under preparation for its excavation phase, hopefully soon to come!

And one thing leads to another. Excavation of Lake Section 2 has involved another huge project landing on the table. With all of the electricity for the Matrimandir and the Park of Unity, whether solar or generator, or state electricity, coming from the far shore of the Lake to the south, new cables have to be laid under the Lake. Such an opportunity to modernize the entire electrical distribution for Matrimandir and the Gardens could not be passed up. So, a massive work is under way as the electrical team endeavors to replace old with new without ever cutting supply.

At the same time, to complete the Lake around Matrimandir, all of the original support facilities such as laundry, catering, workers' facilities, stock room etc., have to be relocated so that the Lake on the eastern side can be excavated. To house all of these activities, a building known as the "Service Facility" has been designed over the last couple of years by two Auroville architects. The very first phase of work for this project has just begun, with test holes being drilled to ascertain the strength of the earth below the building's foundations. Structural engineers have been engaged to make all the design calculations needed for the building. We plan to begin construction of the Service Facility in early 2026 and have it ready by mid-2027.



To the south of Lake Section 2, rising 10 meters above it, is the extensive public Viewing Point. Visitors walking up from Auroville's Visitors Center come in large numbers to have a view of the growing Matrimandir project. On an average day, some 5000 people brave all weathers to come to the Viewing Point to look at the remarkable sight of the Matrimandir surrounded by the Park of Unity with the Lake project in the foreground. Improvement of the Viewing Point facilities is a constant labor of love for our Matrimandir team.

Two other projects which have been very much under study over the last several months are the Reception Pavilion, to be located on the western outer shoreline of the Lake and, associated with it, the 100-meter-long Bridge which will cross the Lake between the Reception Pavilion and the Park of Unity.

What a change it has been over the last 55 years! Digging began in the dry, dusty red earth to form the crater for the construction of Matrimandir in 1971 and now a bridge is being designed to cross a Lake surrounding Matrimandir! If anything can be called a miracle, it is this: the transformation of the land of Auroville over these last five decades and the rising of the sphere of Matrimandir at its center!

—John Harper, Executive team member at Matrimandir



MARGHAZHI MAHOTSAV-2025

Spiritual Foundation: Sri Andal and Sri Aurobindo

Can ancient hymns drive modern educational research? At Auroville, the answer is a resounding yes.

We are proud to share the success of our 2024-2025 Marghazhi Mahotsav. Hosted by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Educational Research (SAIER), and the guidance of Auroville's Secretary, Dr. Jayanti Ravi, IAS, Auroville Foundation, this month-long program brought together school children to explore the Yoga of Self-perfection through the hymns of Sri Andal.

Aligning with Auroville's mission, this project serves as a research study into "knowing oneself" and identifying innate capabilities. By applying the Vedic wisdom described by Sri Aurobindo—as "revealed verses of power" and "divine inspiration"—the program seeks to manifest "The Life Divine" in a simple, practical way within a collective setting.

By integrating the "revealed verses of power" from the Tiruppavai into our collective practice, we aim to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and Sri Aurobindo's vision of the "Life Divine." The Marghazhi Mahotsav was a resounding success, creating a deep impact on the children and the community. It provided a structured "inner journey," bridging ancient Tamil heritage with the modern spiritual evolution envisioned by Sri Aurobindo.

Kudos to the educators and students from the bio-region who made this inner journey a massive success!

—Uma, Resident of Auroville





The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly.

—The Mother, February 1954

*He who lives to serve
the Truth is not affected
by outward circumstances.*

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