
Auroville Tomorrow

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

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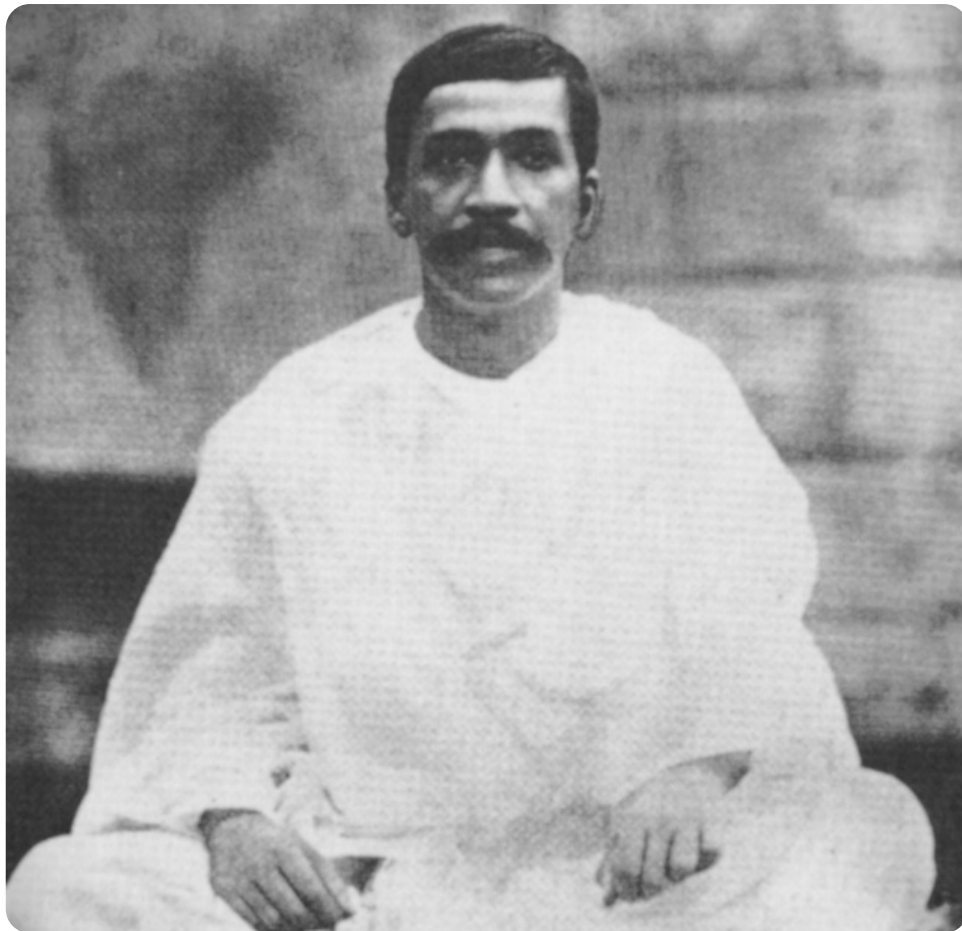
Sri Aurobindo

Kiran: 6

24th September 2025

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

Equality and the Annihilation of Ego



"The greatest of the mystics have always given a luminous lead to men and never acquiesced in a mere passive enjoyment of their bliss, steeped in their solitary contemplation."

" accepting life, he has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden too, along with it, as a continuation of his own sufficiently heavy load. Therefore, his Yoga has much more of the nature of a battle than others; but this is not only an individual battle, it is a collective war waged over a considerable country. He has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder, but to conquer them as representatives of the same adverse and inexhaustible forces in the world.

— Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, Chapter II.

3I/ATLAS, A Visitor from the Stars, A Call to Awakening

After five Kiran-issues of writing to **Auroville Tomorrow**, I decided to turn to a subject somewhat different this time: one not directly related to Auroville and, at first glance, perhaps not especially appealing to some. Yet when we look a little deeper, we realise that the skies and the boundless universe offer us another perspective, a broader, more distant, and perhaps more real view of where we stand. This is why the world of space has always held a special fascination for me.

There is no need to imagine ourselves on the surface of Mars. It is enough to rise just a few minutes beyond Earth's atmosphere to see that we are not even a speck in the scale of that immensity. And yet, we continue to regard ourselves as the centre of the universe. Space is a world with its own worldview, a realm that evokes both fear and wonder simultaneously.

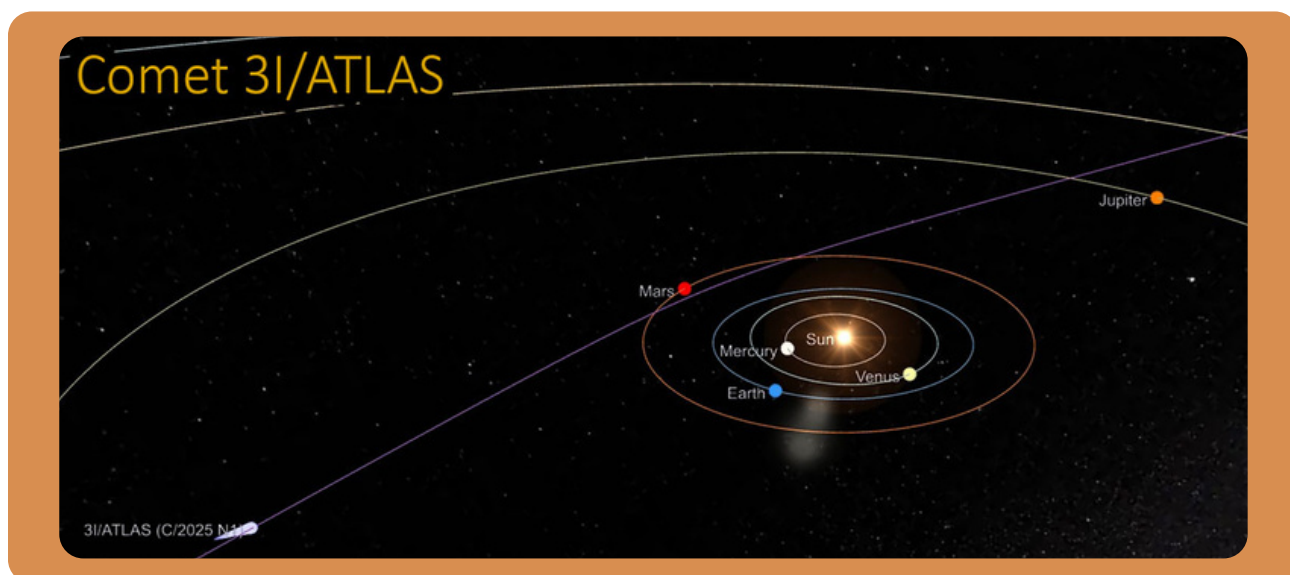
And it is precisely in this vastness that mysterious messengers sometimes arrive from the depths of the cosmos: unknown objects, interstellar wanderers that slip into our solar system without leaving a trace, once again reviving ancient questions in the human mind: "Where do we stand in this universe?" and "What connection exists between us and these unknown visitors?"

From this perspective, celestial events are not merely scientific news or cosmological marvels; they are new windows opening onto deeper questions about life, the future, and the destiny of humankind. One such event is the discovery of a new interstellar object recorded in July 2025: 3I/ATLAS, the third interstellar body humanity has ever detected.

The nature, source, and origin of this object remain unclear. Some researchers, including Professor Avi Loeb of Harvard, have suggested that it might be alien technology or a reconnaissance probe, citing its unusual motion, its trajectory past planets such as Venus, Mars, and Saturn, and the Dark Forest hypothesis in the Fermi Paradox. Yet many scientists disagree, stressing that all available evidence points to a natural interstellar comet, its trajectory, velocity, and gaseous behaviour all consistent with such an origin.

Dr Loeb nevertheless offers his own reasoning for why he believes this object is neither a comet nor an asteroid, and why we should take seriously the possibility of extra-terrestrial visitors via 3i. Asked whether he thinks the world is ready for such contact, he replies: No, we are not ready, but after the first encounter, we will be. He even suggests that not only would governments allocate funds for the necessary equipment, but such an event could lead to greater unity among nations.

The object will remain observable with ground-based telescopes until the end of September 2025, then disappear briefly as it passes behind the Sun, before reappearing in early December 2025. Its closest approach to the Sun will occur around 30 October 2025, at a distance of about 1.4 astronomical units.





What matters is that scientists still do not know definitively where this celestial visitor came from or what it truly is, and whatever theory any scientist proposes remains inconclusive.

The interstellar object 3I/ATLAS, like a silent passerby, entered our backyard from the unknown depths. Before this, humanity had recorded such encounters only twice: first, the famous passage of 'Oumuamua in 2017, and then comet 2I/Borisov in 2019. Now, with this third visitor, 3I/ATLAS, our eyes once again turn to the skies.

These interstellar wanderers are not merely lumps of ice and rock. They are messengers from beyond the boundaries of our familiar world, bearing the memory of unknown systems, of planets we may never see, of suns that rise and set without us. Each time one of them enters our solar system, it opens a window onto another world, a world that, though distant, is deeply connected with our destiny.

For me, 3I/ATLAS was not just a scientific datum; it was a reminder that we are part of a much larger current, one that flows beyond the borders of Earth, beyond politics, beyond even human history. Just as gazing at Earth from above the atmosphere humbles us, so too does observing these interstellar travellers confront us with a fundamental question: "Are we merely spectators, or part of a much greater story?"

It is here that science and spirituality converge: the question of humanity's place in the cosmos. When an interstellar object like 3I/ATLAS enters our field of vision, it is not only a scientific discovery, it is also an opportunity for reflection. In Sri Aurobindo's worldview, evolution is not merely a biological or material process, but a cosmic and spiritual movement: a widening of consciousness from a narrow sphere into a cosmic expanse.

Auroville itself was founded with this vision: a city that seeks meaning not only on Earth but in relation to the whole of existence. To witness the trace of an interstellar visitor in the sky can inspire us to see that the Auroville project, and humanity's striving for conscious coexistence, are part of a story far greater than themselves.

The question arises again: if even a fragment of ice and stone from the unknown depths can travel such a path and share with us a fleeting encounter, then what is our place in this endless journey of the cosmos?

Sri Aurobindo believed that man is not the final station of evolution, but only a transitional stage on the way toward a wider and more integrated consciousness. Perhaps the sight of ATLAS or 'Oumuamua invites us to that very humility and awakening: to recognise that Earth is not the centre of the cosmos, but that it can be the centre of a transformation of consciousness.

For me, the story of these interstellar objects is not merely about astrophysics; it is about an invitation: an invitation to openness, to listening to the messages of the cosmos, and to rethinking why, at this point and in this time, we are witnessing such signs.

The achievements of astrophysics in recent years make it clear that we are not dealing merely with a branch of science, but with a field that shifts the boundaries of human understanding of its place in the universe. The discovery of interstellar objects such as 'Oumuamua, Borisov, and now ATLAS is only one example of such progress. Yet astrophysics is not limited to observing the silent passers-by of the cosmos;

It seeks to narrate, in the language of the universe, the birth of stars, the future of galaxies, and even the destiny of human consciousness.

But gazing at the sky not only stirs philosophical questions in us; it also opens new pathways in science, a path in which India today plays an increasingly prominent role.

From the success of the Chandrayaan mission and the SpaDeX orbital docking experiment to growing investment in advanced observatories and telescope networks, all of this reflects the nation's determination to be an active participant in the global dialogue of cosmology. These efforts have placed India in a position where it now hosts international astrophysics competitions, a symbol not only of scientific capability but also of cultural and civilizational responsibility in opening the doors of the cosmos to future generations.

In the end, astrophysics is not only about stars and planets; it is about the awakening of our terrestrial consciousness. And perhaps India today, more than ever before, is ready to be part of this global awakening.

—Anita Kamali, Writer and Editor of Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter



311/ATLAS



21/Borisov



Oumuamua

The Festival of the Mother, A Call to Action

A few years ago, I found myself sitting quietly on the banks of the Narmada at Chanod, close to Karnali. The river, flowing with calm majesty, curved gracefully before me. People gathered in silence and prayer, each carrying their own burdens, drawn to her waters by an ancient magnetism. In that stillness, I felt the deep power of Shakti — the life-force that sustains, transforms, and inspires. My thoughts turned naturally to Sri Aurobindo, who on these very banks, more than a century ago, had his first vision of the Mother as Durga.

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



He himself described the experience in unforgettable words:

“You stand before a temple of Kali beside a sacred river and see what? — a sculpture, a gracious piece of architecture, but in a moment mysteriously, unexpectedly, there is instead a Presence, a Power, a Face that looks into yours, an inner sight in you has regarded the World-Mother.”

What stirred in him that day on the Narmada was not only devotion, but the awakening of a vision that would shape his entire life: the Mother as the living Power who guides nations and transforms human destiny.

This moment of remembrance comes alive especially during Navaratri, the festival of the Mother, celebrated across Bharat in dazzling diversity. In the East, it finds expression as Durga Puja; in the North, as the fasts and austerities of Navratra; in the West, as Garba — the world’s longest dance, now inscribed as **UNESCO** heritage; and in the South, through the unique Golu tradition of arranging dolls and deities in steps.

While each form is distinct, the essence everywhere is one: honoring the Divine Mother, Shakti, who protects, nurtures, and transforms.

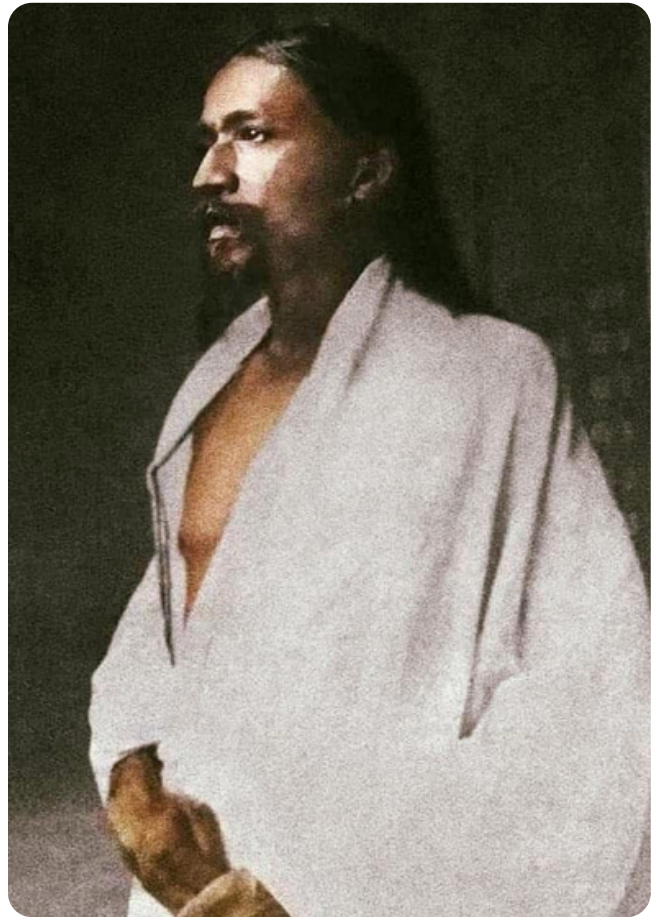
Sri Aurobindo’s own journey was profoundly shaped by this recognition. His childhood was marked by separation from his mother, Swarnalata Devi, as he was sent away to England at a very tender age. Over there, he was raised in the mould of Western ideals. Yet, in later years, the figure of the Mother became central to his vision.

In Baroda, during thirteen transformative years, he invoked Durga, composed hymns to Bhavani Bharati, and infused his revolutionary writings with the cry of **Vande Mataram**.

At first, this salutation of the Mother was tied to the freedom of the nation; gradually, it deepened into a recognition that true liberation lay not merely in political independence but in the transformation of consciousness itself.

This realization culminated in his brief but potent book *The Mother*, where Sri Aurobindo described the four aspects of the Divine Mother: Maheshwari, the vastness of wisdom; **Mahakali**, the courage of force; **Mahalakshmi**, the grace of harmony; and **Mahasaraswati**, the perfection of work. These were not abstract archetypes but living powers to be awakened in each of us. And they were embodied in a very real way by his spiritual collaborator, the Mother, **Mirra Alfassa**.

She lived as an embodiment of truth, compassion, and courage in turbulent times, fostered harmony in communities, inspired beauty in art and life, and pursued perfection in every detail — from the smallest task to her grandest vision. She was the living presence of the Mother he had written of.



Together, they dreamed not only of India's freedom but of humanity's future. **Sri Aurobindo's five dreams** — of a free and united India; the resurgence of Asia; the sharing of India's spiritual gifts with the world; the unity of nations; and the evolution beyond the mind into a higher species — continue to guide us. To cradle these dreams, and especially the last dream, the Mother founded Auroville, the city of the future.

And so, these nine nights are more than ritual; they are a call to action. For those of us in Auroville, and for all who walk in this vision, the question is not only how we worship the Mother, but how we embody her. With Maheshwari's wisdom, can we study and share the essence of Auroville? With Mahakali's courage, can we act on long-delayed tasks in governance, infrastructure, agriculture, or community life? With Mahalakshmi's grace, can we nurture harmony across communities and generations? With Mahasaraswati's exactness, can we bring perfection into our daily work?

Each time I cross the Narmada — whether over canals on the way to work, or across bridges in travel — I am reminded of that mighty flow, the Shakti that once gave Sri Aurobindo his vision of Durga. For me, these crossings deepen the resolve to align with the highest aspiration, which must be the purpose at every stage of life. And true to that, here in Auroville — the city of consciousness, the cradle of the new human — we are called during this powerful month of Navaratri to live by this message: to consciously do our part, small or big, simple or complex, to manifest the Mother's power as we strive to realize the highest aspiration.



What It Takes to Be an Aurovilian - the criteria to be a Resident

***"You know, I am forever struggling with people who've come here to be comfortable and "free to do what they like", so... I tell them, "The world is big, you can go.""* - March 3, 1971 - The Mother's Agenda**

When the Mother gave us Auroville, she also gave us clear directions for how to live here. These were not vague ideals or lofty phrases meant to be admired from a distance. They were concrete conditions - requirements for what it means to be part of this experiment in human unity. Inner discovery before outer liberty is the first necessity. Work offered to the collective, not pursued for oneself or one's family. A surrender of the sense of possession. And above all, the sincerity to live not for personal gain but as willing servitors of the Divine Consciousness.

And yet, over the last fifty-seven years, we have too often drifted away from these directions. In the name of "freedom," many have taken liberties that Mother never sanctioned. Freedom was meant to be a liberation from ego, not a license for it. But today, some hold multiple assets while others struggle with minimum needs. Some treat their Units as private livelihoods instead of collective offerings. Some do not even live in Auroville but still claim the title of Aurovilian, as if it were a one-time awarded badge of status rather than a living commitment.

Mother warned us plainly: "Whoever wants to live for himself has no place here." These words cut to the heart of the matter. To live in Auroville is not to carve out a personal niche under a noble name and continue to do whatever one wants. It is to give oneself entirely, without compromise, to the Dream She entrusted to us to REALIZE.

***"Humanity is not the last rung of terrestrial creation. Evolution continues, and man will be surpassed. It is for each individual to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species. For those who are satisfied with the world as it is, Auroville obviously has no reason to exist."* — August 1966, The Mother on Auroville**

It is sobering to admit how far we have strayed. What was meant to be a field of transformation has, in too many cases, become a settlement of convenience. The words of the Charter - "a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness" - have been repeated at ceremonies and inscribed on plaques, but they have too rarely been measured against our daily living. To work for oneself became good enough to call work for the collective. Strong attachments to houses and collective assets have been distastefully justified as normal human sentiments that have the right to exist even in Auroville. To remain without any real contribution has been outrageously tolerated. The ideals, which are the sole reason for Auroville's existence, have been shelved as "too far out" and "too unreachable", and human greed, laziness, and arrogance have happily taken over. Luckily for us, The Mother is in charge, and while she allows her children the chance to progress without pain, it won't be forever, and certainly not at the detriment of her project.





In recent times, there has been a highly necessary course correction. The Governing Board, after long deliberation and consultation with Auroville residents, issued the Auroville Residence Criteria, 2024, as a Standing Order. This document does not invent anything new; rather, it encapsulates in practical, enforceable terms what the Mother herself said on this subject. It spells out what it means to be a resident of Auroville - not merely occupying a house or drawing Maintenance, but living a life in harmony with the Charter and the original guidelines.

For some, naturally, this feels uncomfortable. It is always easier to slide into habits and to make compromises with mediocrity. But the Residence Criteria 2024 serves as a reminder that the Mother's words and collective discipline, to which we will be held accountable, are not optional; they are the very framework of our collective existence. They are the ground rules of the experiment. If we abandon them, we abandon Auroville itself. Each of us, if we are honest, knows where we stand in relation to these guidelines. We know in our hearts whether we are truly living as Aurovilians, or whether we are living for ourselves under the shelter of Auroville's name.

There are those who know very well that they are not aligned with what Mother asked. They cling to their place here for comfort, for assets, for recognition - but not for consecration. To them I say: do not block the way for those who come full of aspiration, ready to give their lives to the Dream. Do not occupy the space - physical, administrative, and spiritual - that rightfully belongs to the future. And then there are those whose flame has only dimmed, not gone out entirely. Those who came with fire in their hearts but who have let habit, disappointment, or attachment to comfort bury it under layers of dust. To them I say: rise again. Shake off the heaviness. This is our time to act. This is our time to remember why we came. Let us strive to become Sri Aurobindo's "flaming pioneers" of the new world.

"Auroville is created to realise the ideal of Sri Aurobindo, who taught us Karma Yoga. Auroville is for those who want to do the Yoga of work. To live in Auroville means to do the Yoga of work. So all Aurovilians must take up a work and do it as Yoga." - 27 Mar 1973, Pg 222, Vol 13, CWM

Auroville will not be sustained by numbers or by infrastructure alone. It lives by the sincerity of its people. Without that, we are no different from any other settlement. With it, we become what the Mother asked of us: a living laboratory for the future.

The choice lies with each of us. We can continue to drift, making Auroville smaller and smaller in spirit even as it grows in buildings. We can fight the inevitable. Or we can swing back - decisively, urgently - to the Source, and allow the Mother's own words to shape our lives again.

It is not too late. But the time for compromise is over. Auroville's future depends on those who are willing to live as true Aurovilians. For the rest, it's a big world out there...

—Submitted by Sindhuja, Aspiring True Aurovilian & Resident

From the dawn of Universal Brotherhood to the City of Universal Dawn

In an age of resurgent nativism and deepening social fractures, the ideal of human unity can feel like a distant, unrealistic dream. We are inundated with narratives of division, conflict, and irreconcilable differences. Yet, over a century ago, a seed was planted that proposed a different trajectory for our species—a journey not of division, but of evolution. This is the story of how a single, powerful voice of brotherhood, first expressed by an Indian monk in Chicago, grew into a comprehensive Darshana of human transformation, and ultimately became the blueprint for a real-world city dedicated to manifesting that future. It is a remarkable lineage of thought and action that challenges us to ask: what if unity is not merely a moral goal, but an evolutionary imperative?

This radical pilgrimage began on September 11, 1893, at the World's Parliament of Religions. A then-unknown young monk, Swami Vivekananda, took the stage and, with his electrifying opening, 'Sisters and Brothers of America', he changed forever the way history flowed for the entire humanity. This was more than a successful address; it was the sowing of a foundational seed. His call was for 'universal acceptance', which was radically more harmonious than 'tolerance'. Drawing from the Vedantic core, he asserted that all religions were paths to the same divine reality. He used the memorable parable of the 'frog in the well' to critique the 'little well' of dogmatic religion, identifying the ego that confines truth to its own limited boundaries as the source of the fanaticism that had 'drenched the earth... with human blood'. His call for brotherhood was a powerful plea for humanity to realise the spiritual unity that already existed beneath the surface of apparent difference.

For many, this powerful message of harmony would have been an end in itself. But for Sri Aurobindo, a revolutionary and philosopher who followed Vivekananda as a titan of the Indian renaissance, it was a point of a grand planetary launch. He took Vivekananda's seed of universal brotherhood and cultivated it into a vast, evolutionary vision. Sri Aurobindo effected a profound shift in the spiritual goal: from realising an existing unity to actively evolving a new, higher form of consciousness. His declaration, 'Man is a transitional being. He is not final,' which is complementary to the universal spiritual fraternity of the human species, reframing the entire purpose of human existence.



This vision is grounded in a unique interpretation of the evolutionary process itself. While scientific evolution describes physical mechanisms, Sri Aurobindonian system proposes a deeper spiritual unfolding: an evolution of consciousness.

He argued that before evolution could be a process of ascent, there must have first been an involution: a deeper descent of Divine Consciousness that veils itself in progressively denser forms, culminating in the apparent unconsciousness of Matter. This framework of involution serves as a profound bridge. Swami Vivekananda famously said that evolution presupposes involution. Involution also provides the foundation for the very 'inherent divinity' that Swami Vivekananda called upon humanity to realise. It is this involved, latent consciousness that is the object of Vivekananda's path of self-realisation and the functional core of Sri Aurobindo's evolution, which he saw as the slow, arduous re-emergence of this spirit from its material slumber.

Rather than negating physical processes like natural selection, this view offers them a spiritual teleology—a direction and a goal for the great cosmic unfolding. This evolution presses towards a new faculty destined to emerge from our current mental consciousness: the Supermind, a state of being based not on division and ignorance but on intrinsic oneness. A human being operating from this supramental consciousness would not need to be taught universal oneness; they would be the universal oneness, experiencing the self of all existence as their own, thus celebrating all diversity as well.

A vision of this intensity, however, cannot remain an abstract ideal. It demands a receptacle, a very material receptacle rooted in this earth. This is the genesis of Auroville. Founded in 1968 in southern India and based on the vision of Sri Aurobindo and his spiritual collaborator, The Mother, Auroville is the tangible, material seed designed to facilitate this next evolutionary step. It is not a utopia, but a living model, a centre of an oceanic circle whose evolution is slowly expanding as an energy wave, dedicated to the material and spiritual means for 'a living embodiment of an actual human unity'. Its founding Charter is a blueprint for a non-egoic society. Its first principle, 'Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole,' is a direct assault on the possessive instinct that fuels so much conflict. Its entire social structure is designed as a field for spiritual practice. Experiments in collective governance aim to replace power politics with a search for unifying truth. Its economic systems attempt to free work from the motive of personal profit, clannish serfdoms, framing it instead as service to the Divine and self-expression. These structures are designed to be 'evolutionary accelerators'.

By removing the social frameworks that validate the ego, life in Auroville generates an intense friction, a pressure that forces residents to either retreat into old patterns of conflict or discover a new, non-egoic basis for relationship and action. To be sure, the experiment is fraught with immense challenges. The township faces internal conflicts, governance crises, and the persistent gravitational pull of old human nature. Yet, from the perspective of its own philosophy, these struggles are not signs of failure. They are the predictable 'labour pains of the birth of a new world', the friction generated when a higher consciousness attempts to manifest in a resistant human substance. The old inertia naturally resists the creation of the physical base needed for that manifestation.

The unbroken line from Vivekananda's call for 'Sisters and Brothers' to Auroville's charter for a city that 'belongs to humanity' is a testament to the power of a spiritual idea to evolve into a lived reality. In our deeply fragmented world, this 130-year journey offers a challenging and vital perspective. It suggests that the path to a unified humanity may not be through political treaties or economic globalisation alone, but through a conscious, collective effort to evolve our very nature. It is an audacious, imperfect, and ongoing experiment, a journey from a Parliament of Religions to a city for the evolved soul of all humanity, daring to build the future in the here and now.

—Aravindan Neelakandan, Governing Board Member, Contributing Editor *Swarajya*

The Future of Leadership Values, Inclusion, and Human Potential

I am delighted to be in conversation with Mr. Bharat Wakhlu, President of The Wakhlu Advisory and former Resident Director of the Tata Group. I had the privilege of knowing him more closely during the Shakti Leadership Program, a ten-month journey that he so inspiringly facilitated. My heartfelt thanks to him for joining us for Auroville Tomorrow.



Looking back at your years with the Tata Group, which experiences most profoundly shaped your perspectives on leadership?

Among the many edifying experiences that I had within the Tata Group, I think the ones that shaped my perspectives on wholesome leadership in the business world, were those that centred around three broad themes, namely: a) The values of the group, b) The way the leadership team would act as role models, upholding the right values and creating a supportive culture thereby, and c) The manner in which senior leaders made decisions on tough choices.

Let me elaborate on these points briefly.

The Tata Group has functioned with a powerful social conscience since the time of the group's founder, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. When I joined the group as a Tata Administrative Service officer in 1985, I was inspired by the fact that group companies were driven by a strong desire to "build the nation" and serve their diverse stakeholders in ways that ensured everyone's joy, prosperity, and well-being. The purpose of business, according to the Tata values, was not just making money by any means, but doing so ethically, with the utmost care, fulfilling the aspirations of all stakeholders. This had a lasting impact on me. The upper management of the Tata Group comprised 'dyed-in-the-wool' leaders, who were humble, lived by the Tata values, and avoided pomposity and pretense while going about their work. They served as extraordinary role models. Younger leaders would emulate them, thereby reinforcing the values that made the Tatas an admired group. And finally,

By ensuring that the right behaviours and the right outcomes of decisions were measured and rewarded, leaders in the organization contributed to strengthening the values of the enterprise and creating an ethical and transparent culture.

a. The Tata culture promoted sound and ethical decision-making, made integrity and trust the norm, and encouraged open communications; all of which further stimulated superior decisions. Occasional failures were viewed as drivers for systematic improvement. Furthermore, stimulating breakthrough innovations and consistently developing talent within the group were other aspects that reinforced the fact that the creation of value was a moving target, since customer aspirations also kept growing.

How would you define authentic leadership versus ego-driven leadership?

True leaders are humble, emotionally self-regulated, and decisive. They remain open to diverse perspectives, create genuine value for stakeholders, and celebrate successes with their teams while inspiring them toward bigger goals.

Ego-driven leaders, however, are easily recognizable by their addictive need for adulation. They surround themselves with "yes-people," cannot tolerate questioning, and create toxic cultures that serve only their vanity. When their desire for absolute power goes unchecked, they become reckless and imperious.

The key difference: authentic leaders empower others and build collectively, while ego-driven leaders seek followers to feed their own needs. When dealing with the latter, it's best to maintain distance and seek environments that offer genuine growth and fulfillment.

You have collaborated extensively with educational institutions. In your view, how should leadership education evolve to meet the needs of the next generation?

Educational institutions indeed have to focus on leadership development requirements for the coming generations. A starting point for this is to help young people, who are the future leaders of the world, to become self-regulated emotionally, to understand that leadership is about serving others ethically, and to teach them the skills and capabilities of articulating their perspectives and ideas. These future leaders also need to learn to harness rapidly evolving technologies, such as Generative AI, robotic devices, biotechnology, and social media, for the benefit of all living beings. Technology must be used for the happiness and well-being of life itself, and for the protection and preservation of planet Earth. Furthermore, leadership education also needs to enable conflict resolution through discussion and dialogue, encouraging collaboration for the protection of our fragile environment and of life on Earth. This is not an exhaustive list of new leadership capabilities, but provides a drift.

You often emphasize that a leader must inspire. But is inspiration alone enough? Or is a results-oriented approach equally essential?

I agree with your view that leaders need to focus on outcomes, on doing the kind of things that create value for all: actions, which change things for the better, and contribute to making our world, and the lives of people, happy, prosperous, and fulfilling. However, let's not forget that individual leaders cannot achieve "great, audacious goals" alone; they need the involvement, collaboration, and support of many more people. To get large numbers of people to work together, leaders need to inspire others with their vision, thereby enlisting the involvement of all, and encouraging them to give the best of their unique capabilities so that the vision is brought to fruition. If inspiration is missing, then followers are difficult to align and to get them to perform above and beyond the call of duty.

When you think about the future of India, what is your vision for leadership in this country?

India, as an ancient civilization, has always valued self-mastery, critical thinking, as well as discussion and debate, as means to get to the essence of even tough problems, and to find solutions for them. Furthermore, the values of inclusivity and the protection of all living beings, including flora and fauna, are fundamental to being able to preserve life on earth, which is our only home.

I would very much like these values and approaches to be at the heart of leadership in India. The natural outcomes of these elements of leadership would be collaborative problem-solving, wholesome debates, swift and effective conflict-resolution, and enhancing collective well-being. Obviously,

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of self-mastery and emotional self-regulation - at the individual and collective levels - as the imperatives for such leadership to manifest.

In today's polarized world, how can leaders create genuine spaces for dialogue and collaboration?

I think the polarization that you mention is a result of people having "outsourced" their critical thinking skills to others - including ancient books and prophets - which leads them to adopt the easy (unthinking!) path of falling prey to dogma, beliefs, and doctrines that are completely "out of whack" with our times! When such an overemphasis on "borrowed ideas" is coupled with an inability to listen to alternative perspectives and arrive at a collective definition about something, the problem can only persist and get worse, especially in an era where social media makes dialogue and listening complicated.

That said, genuine spaces for dialogue and eventual collaboration will evolve when we all - at the individual level - make sure that we reclaim our ability to think critically, listen more to others, and then assertively articulate our points of view. The more we do this, the more we will encourage honest and non-violent discourse and discussion. That, in turn, will enable greater collaboration. But I do realise that it needs only one determined mad person, with power, to trump the collective desires of sensible and peace-loving people. We have examples of this in many parts of the world today, and while it is painful, the solution lies in thinking critically and wilfully working towards discourse and dialogue.

You have long been involved in initiatives supporting women entrepreneurs. In your view, what barriers do women entrepreneurs face in Asia and India, and how can these challenges be overcome?

The biggest barrier women entrepreneurs face is their own misperceived sense of inadequacy, rooted in millennia of patriarchal dominance and societal pressures to conform. These pressures have caused women to grow up with uncertainty about their capabilities and difficulty in speaking assertively.

Societies that don't provide full freedom for women consistently have lower quality of life and greater mental health issues. The solution involves three stages: first, enlightened women must unite in coalitions to resist patriarchal systems; second, supportive men and older women must help prevent the imposition of archaic rules; third, women themselves must reclaim their confidence and communication skills through self-reflection and coaching guidance.

Fortunately, these barriers are surmountable, and with proper training and support, women can overcome both mental and social limitations to achieve their entrepreneurial potential.

If you were to design a short "roadmap" for the next generation of women entrepreneurs, what would be the three vital steps?



The Open Cycle

The roadmap for the next generation of women entrepreneurs - not just in India - but across the globe, would comprise the following three main steps, that every woman would need to internalize:

a.Reclaim your Power: As a Vehicle of Life itself, women are endowed with enormous divine powers. Let nobody deceive women into thinking that they are weak or ignorant. Let women work consciously and systematically to know their real selves and the enormous Shakti that they all possess. Let them learn to speak up their minds, set boundaries for their own well-being and happiness, and care for themselves without guilt.

b.Discover Your Passion and Innate Gifts: Women in all walks of life (change-makers, teachers, entrepreneurs, leaders, etc.) who wish to create scalable and wholesome businesses or who wish to pursue their dreams need to ensure that their passion, their innate skills, and gifts (natural talents) are amalgamated to serve as a lodestar for their lives.

c.Create Your Business Using Your Unique Lodestar while Executing With Drive:

When women entrepreneurs pursue the vocations or businesses that are guided by their unique lodestar, the endeavour gives them joy and creates fertile ground for serving customers in creative, value-delivering ways. This stimulates growth, scaling up their enterprise, while ensuring surpluses and happiness for all.

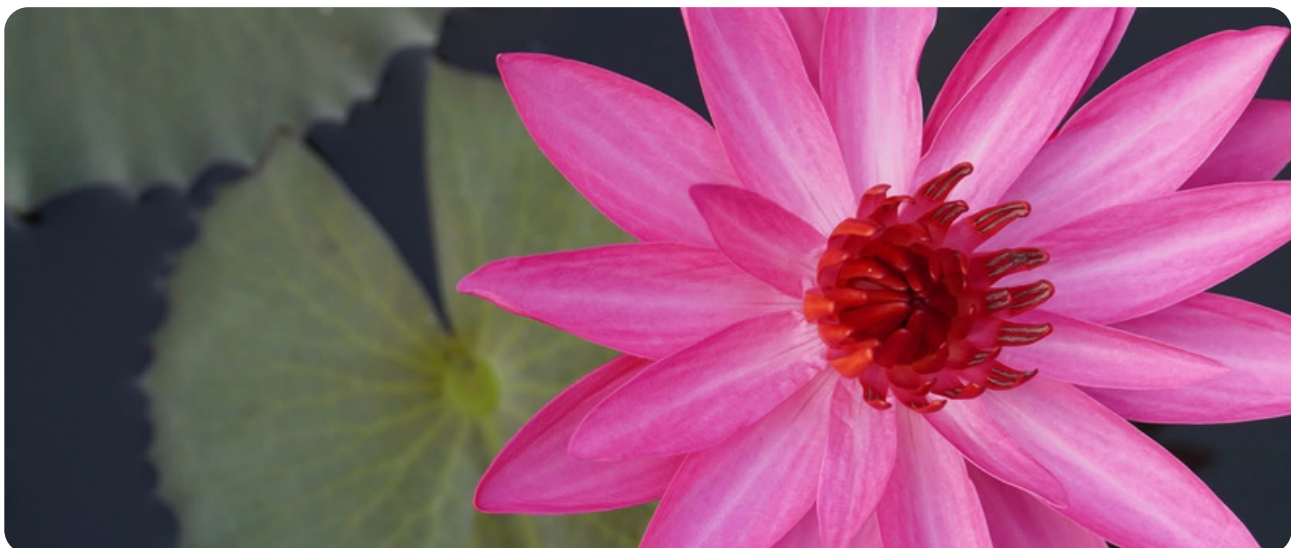
Many argue that women bring a different style of leadership—more empathetic and collaborative. From your work with women entrepreneurs, what differences have you observed?

While there is no denying that women intrinsically bring many wonderful and desirable leadership traits (there are many), the truth is that the culture of the organizations that the women leaders work in, and their early career experiences, shape their behaviour. For instance, if a woman leader, who aspires to be the Managing Director of an organization, is given feedback early in her career that she has to be “more aggressive and less compassionate” in her role (whatever it may be), she will obviously conform to that feedback and become “one of the boys”! This is where culture trumps individual leadership traits.

One is therefore likely to find many more women leaders who are nurturing, collaborative, and supportive of one another in those organizations where the culture of the organization is also complementary, and where women role models have set a healthy example of how women leaders need to function without emulating the negative approaches of their male colleagues.

Finally, who do you see as the ideal readers for your new book?

A16: My new book, tentatively called “Creating Wholesome Cultures,” is meant for leaders and executives from all walks of life. It is likely to serve as a roadmap for leaders to wilfully create organizational or national cultures that foster inclusion, creativity, innovation, poetry, service, happiness, the well-being of all earthlings, and inner fulfillment for all humans.



Tous Ensemble, Pour Tous

Auroville Prosperity System

The Mother founded the Ashram "Prosperity" system for the resident sadhaks of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on a simple basic needs distribution system. The Ashramites worked at the various "departments" of the Ashram and their simple and basic needs were taken care of by the Ashram Prosperity System. The sadhaks of the Ashram were selected by the Mother to come and join the life dedicated to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Yoga of works was the necessary principle for the daily engagement by all the sadhaks of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. "Work, even manual work, is something indispensable for inner discovery. If we do not work, if we do not put our consciousness into matter, matter will never develop. To allow the consciousness to organize a little matter by means of one's body is very good. To create order around us helps to create order within us." [To be a True Aurovilian]. There was ample time provided for the personal self-development and other community related engagement for a full and beautiful expression of life on earth.

The Mother founded Auroville, the City the Earth Needs, in 1968 inviting the youth and the peoples of the world to come live together as the willing servitors of the Divine Consciousness. The Mother provided ample guidance on collective engagement by one and all residents into their personal as well as into the communal collective well-being of the City of Dawn for the hastening of the new Consciousness. Discipline, individual and collective, was a necessary basis on which the Mother wanted the foundation of the life of Auroville to be built on. The spiritual basis and simple principle of all working for the collective and in turn the collective providing for each Auroville, was an area of implementation that went through many variations and changes over time since the founding of Auroville. Today, the system has reached its nadir with the elements of communism and capitalism, a blend at the worst of each. This is diametrically opposite to what was envisaged. Either one receives maintenance or one operates an income generating entity for fulfilling personal and family needs. It dwindled down to survival of each one by whatever means.



Today, the so-called maintenance system has become a monthly salary with parceling out of some limited set of daily needs and the support for the collective health fund. Nothing other than that. Only half of the registered adult population of Auroville is engaged in this system. The productivity of each person engaged is less than minimum expected as was announced by the Mother due to many not working or engaging meaningfully while living in Auroville.

Discipline in engagement is lacking, accountability is lacking, taking pride in work as karma yoga is inconsequential. The basis of engagement has become such as to get the monthly “maintenance” akin to a paycheck and provide minimum to the system in order to go do other income generation activity while the basic maintenance is covered by the City Services. The time provided for personal internal development, pursuit of other finer abilities, development of community and collective expression of togetherness in other forms is taking a back seat for many residents.

On the other side of the spectrum, the huge and a far growing class-divide of the rich vs poor within the Auroville life is a stark reflection of the capitalist trend that is growing across all the nations of the world. Being able, having a network and wherewithal for self from inside and/or outside, some 25 % of the residents of Auroville became the executives and managers of enterprises of Auroville. The unit executives draw large salaries, extra bonus and take unit funds for personal needs, all under the provision of a tax-exempt spiritual research society in the pursuit of Truth. The furtherance of Auroville requires a large, dedicated and spiritually committed workforce that would need to be self-driven, self-motivated to do the right and good because of inherent ideals of the call for duty for the collective. Call was to the “willing servitors of the Divine Consciousness”. Instead, the cream class of Auroville use best of what is available from Auroville community collective for personal gains, of course while using their own special skills too – goodwill of the brand Auroville, the donated collective land assets, the relatively easy and cheap labor around and of volunteers, newcomers and other aspirants of various talents that passed by Auroville experimenting to see if this was a place for them.

And then there’s the last invisible 25% of the residents who don’t work anywhere in the recognized services or units of Auroville, most of whom don’t contribute to Auroville City Services, who use the collective municipal services of benefit, work maybe for themselves, outside or online or just live on personal sources of funds while enjoying the community supported quality of life. The Mother wanted each resident to work some hours each day for the collective but these residents just live in Auroville without engaging in any collective work and yet are occupying collective housing assets of Auroville which are to be more productively offered to true aspirants drawn and committed to the ideals of Auroville.

This above outlines a very broad-based overview, which may appear biased to many residents of Auroville, as the majority fall into one of the three categories. Of course, there are exceptional, many, who are sincerely and fully committed and engage themselves in the daily yoga of works, for the transformation of self and collective. The way forward for Auroville is to now change the current limited maintenance system passed off as a “prosperity system” which is very mixed or is just fixed salary and mostly contrary to what the Mother outlined. The freedom of income utilisation by the unit executives to siphon off contributions for the growth of the collective via the complicated account keeping within “other expenses” is to be stopped. There is a need to bring about a change to implement a true Prosperity, one that fulfils the varied needs of a spiritually inclined growing community, one that encompasses the breadth of needs of the Aurovilians at individuals, children and families for their personal growth and their engagement at a community level for a full and beautiful development, in educational, social and spiritual aspects. In the metaphorical “All for one, and one for all” is the true call of the hour.



Overarching raison d'être of Prosperity Service

- Prosperity Service provisions the basic and simple needs of all Auroville Residents
- Primary goal for Prosperity Service is to make Auroville self-sustainable for the residents' simple and basic needs working within constraints
- Bring transparency, accountability from the units and services to work for and support the community as a whole
- Bring inclusivity and full participation by all in the building and life of Auroville from all its residents barring certain personal constraints
- Provide for an efficient budgeting, accounting and auditing setup to allow fund flows of the community from the units & services to effectively channel to the prosperity benefit providers for supporting the residents' needs on a phased manner moving towards increasing abundance in simple and consecrated living
- Prosperity Service aims to eliminate money circulation within Auroville and keep it only for the external transactional needs outside of Auroville

Prosperity Service Nuts & Bolts

- There are three actor sets, the residents in the Register of Residents, the municipal, educational, social and manufacturing services who as a set provide the Prosperity benefits package to all the residents of Auroville and finally the units and services who generate income and part of which is given to Prosperity Service to support the basic and simple needs for all. Progressively the basket of needs will include more items of personal growth needs and many of which may be of permanent nature and which may cost a lot more and are needed at some point in the life of the residents for a full and fulfilled living. This will be phased in later growth phase of Auroville.
- Prosperity Service will develop Zoho accounting setup for defining the movements of funds into its collection pool from the units & services on one hand. On the other it will distribute monthly or periodically as necessary, the budgets to the service providers who offer prosperity benefit package to the residents.

Different Needs for different Resident Categories

- Auroville has a variety of residents – basic, senior, maternity/infirm, children, students and finally unit or service managers who get an enhance package based on meritocracy.
- Prosperity Service will develop a Prosperity Module within Zoho accounting services to cater to these different categories of residents.
- A simple outline of each category of resident and the basket list of benefits packages is provided in an appendix I.
- In collaboration with the Admission & Termination Registry, the Human Resources Service a list of eligible residents will be maintained. Every month the prosperity benefits supported for each category will determine the budget to be provided to the service provider for the specific benefit type. This will be distributed automatically by the Prosperity service accounting system. The Prosperity Services personnel will help update, track and maintain the residents list and the benefits package for each resident.
- The budgets to be provided monthly to each of the service provider of the prosperity benefits will be calculated annually in the manner which will be structured and setup and approved by FAMC. Prosperity Service team will help maintain the accuracy and fairness in contributions collected, in budgets planned and disbursed to the service providers and assist residents to onboard or change prosperity categories for life change necessities. The accounting setup in Zoho will seamlessly in the background look into the necessary monthly calculations and do the fund flows from source to consumer services.
- The residents get the prosperity services that are provisioned and wouldn't need to pay any money for these. Two areas that are left flexible for each resident is an amount of cash for their purchases outside of Auroville and a larger amount of funds for purchases or services offered by services of Auroville. This is internal economy circulation between the residents, units and services.

The list of resident categories

1. Basic Prosperity - 2. Seniors - 3. Maternity and infirm - 4. Children - 5. Students - 6. Meritocracy, executives

Each of the above resident category has a defined set of Prosperity benefit package. Bulk of the items are common, but some vary based on the category.

The list of prosperity service providers

- Lunch Scheme - Several
- Home Needs – PTDC, PTPS, Hers
- Energy – AV Electrical Service
- Water – AV Water Service
- Communication – AV communication Service
- Mobility – Kinisi KIM scheme, bicycle (or cash for petrol/maintenance?)
- Clothing – Nadini
- Health maintenance – Health fund, Vision, Dental (Later a comprehensive insurance premium)
- Housing Maintenance – Housing Service
- Housing Scheme – Later Phase with EMI for new apartments)
- Internal Economy
- Flex Cash 1 – everyone gets this for external purchase
- Flex Cash 2 – on meritocracy
- Currently Prosperity Service is focused on personal needs mostly, in future expansion other benefits schemes will be added

Fund Flow details

- There are 650 number of residents who are engaged in municipal, social, educational services and whose prosperity basket needs will come from Prosperity Service.
- There are 510 number of residents who are engaged in units and services which are generating income from products and services for profit.
- There are also some residents who are not defined or known to engage within Auroville economic setup. Either they are self-sustaining, they work online or outside or have other sources of income.

The following are the sources of fund inflows to the Prosperity Service

1. Surplus from unit turnover
2. Individual City Services Contribution from all residents
3. Donations to Prosperity Service by well wishers who want to support Auroville residents
4. Interest Income from the fund buffer

The following services are the recipients of budgets from Prosperity Service

- AV Electrical Service
- AV Water Service
- AV Communication Service
- Health Service, Vision Service, Dental Service
- Lunch scheme supporting units
- Nadini
- Kinisi/ITS (also option petrol/maintenance?)
- (PTDC/PTPS/Hers scheme or amount from internal economy component of each residents no budget)
- The Prosperity services accounting will look up the service cost per resident category times the number supported resident and give that as a budget to the service provider, eg Total number of electrical units for all the categories for residents will be bulk transferred to AVES.
- The annual budgets for the prosperity service provider will need a one-on-one budgeting exercise with Prosperity Service, Service benefit provider and FAMC. This is to determine a complete oversight into budgetary needs for the staff, establishment, Aurovilians in the service, materials, accounting and system costs, purchases as applicable, depreciation for larger ticket items, routing maintenance budgets etc. This budget against total residents supported on a regular basis allows for determining the per unit cost of service for a given service type.

Overall, when structured, transparent and fully deterministic accounting and auditing setup is done, then it will allow FAMC to scale the Prosperity system as newcomers join Auroville. It will also allow planning for an Auroville wide economy budgetary need for future Prosperity growth in services and also growth for other long term and permanent fund needs that today is not feasible.

—Chandresh Patel, member of Funds and Assets Management Committee

The Circus to the Circle of Auroville

The factions are busy. Some continue their theatrics — radical statements, resistance campaigns, endless petitions, and court cases that echo like hollow drums. Others sit in neat little coteries, polishing their PowerPoints for Delhi, convinced that engaging the people themselves is a futile exercise. Then there are the opportunists, forever switching sides with gymnastic grace, living proof that loyalty has long been replaced by convenience. Bureaucrats, too, perform their ancient balancing act: offending no one, pleasing everyone, generating minutes of meetings that can rival khichdi in their blandness. And finally, the so-called neutrals — serene on the surface, yet quietly entangled behind the scenes, whispering to one camp or another while insisting they are untouched.

Put together, it feels less like the City of Dawn and more like a three-ring circus. Performers spinning in their own orbits, clowns juggling grievances, acrobats swinging between factions, and tightrope walkers carefully balancing their postures of neutrality. All noise, very little music. And yet, despite its absurdity, this circus holds a strange fascination. It distracts us from the deeper purpose, that beyond the drama, there is still a possible dynamism waiting to be seized.

Strip away the roles and costumes, and the question becomes blunt, bare naked and primitive — are we 'for' or 'against' the City the Earth Needs? Many will insist they are for it, of course. They will sing its praises in every speech. But always, without fail, comes the “but.” “Yes, we are for the Dream, but—” And whatever follows the “but” is where the question lies. For or against. In that binary, masks fall away.

One could argue that every faction, every individual, is simply playing out their preordained part in a larger evolutionary drama. Each soul chose this karmabhumi, knowing well the theatre it would entail. Seen this way, the circus has its necessity. Perhaps the radicals, the bureaucrats, the opportunists, and the neutrals have all been cast in roles that force us to confront ourselves. But acknowledging that does not absolve us of responsibility. If anything, it sharpens the question — what would it take for us to come together?

It will not be easy. Fifty-plus years have given us a certain talent for inertia. Ordinairiness has been refined to an art form. Squabbles are rehearsed with the same discipline as method actors' finesse. And yet — we know this cannot be the final act.



Auroville was not conceived to be another settlement of well-fed egos and exhausted committees. It was meant to be a higher stage of consciousness where human beings rise above themselves. If so, what qualities must we invoke to transcend the circus?

Perhaps the answer lies in the four aspects of the Divine Mother: Maheshwari's Wisdom, Mahakali's Strength, Mahalakshmi's Harmony, and Mahasaraswati's Perfection. Together, they form a compass for the journey. Wisdom to see clearly, Strength to act without fear, Harmony to dissolve divisions, and Perfection to keep us from settling for half-measures. Without them, we drift in the same spiral of conflict, mistaking activity for 'Action'. With them united, the possibility of a circle emerges.

Of course, one cannot delude oneself into thinking a single individual can conjure this circle into being. Many of us have tried. We've organised gatherings, dialogues, and "events," hoping to gather the collective. Reality has a way of reminding us that unity cannot be a standalone performance. It demands a collective will far larger than any personal charisma. Those who seek the throne of harmoniser often become kings and queens of their own echo chambers, too wrapped in ego to genuinely rise above.

So perhaps the work does not lie in individuals at all, but in the factions themselves. Yet here too, contradictions abound. The neutrals are too private, too atomised. Scratch their silence, and allegiances bleed through. Bureaucrats may have authority but not the stamina for the long march; they stand with a toehold, not a lifeblood. Opportunists will never harmonise; division is their marketplace. Coterie remain fragmented jungles, united only by their ability to be short-sighted. And radicals — colourful, fiery, chaotic — hold within them both the greatest danger and the faintest chance of redemption.

Why the radicals? Because they have nothing left to lose. Their privileges, their kingdoms, their exclusivities are already vanishing, if not already gone. They can either cling to the wreckage or step into a new role — not as destroyers, but as harbingers of a second beginning. They could, if they wished, turn their legacy around. They could transform "pioneer" from a curse back into a blessing, through a simple act of courage — laying down arms.

Imagine it. Imagine if those who have resisted most fiercely were to withdraw their lawsuits, silence their mouthpieces, and dissolve their shadow structures. Imagine if, with sincerity, they called for a true assembly of residents — a gathering in the spirit of Aurovilians as Aurovilians. Such a moment would disarm the coterie, liberate the bureaucrats from paralysis, expose opportunists for what they are, and awaken the silent neutrals into participation.

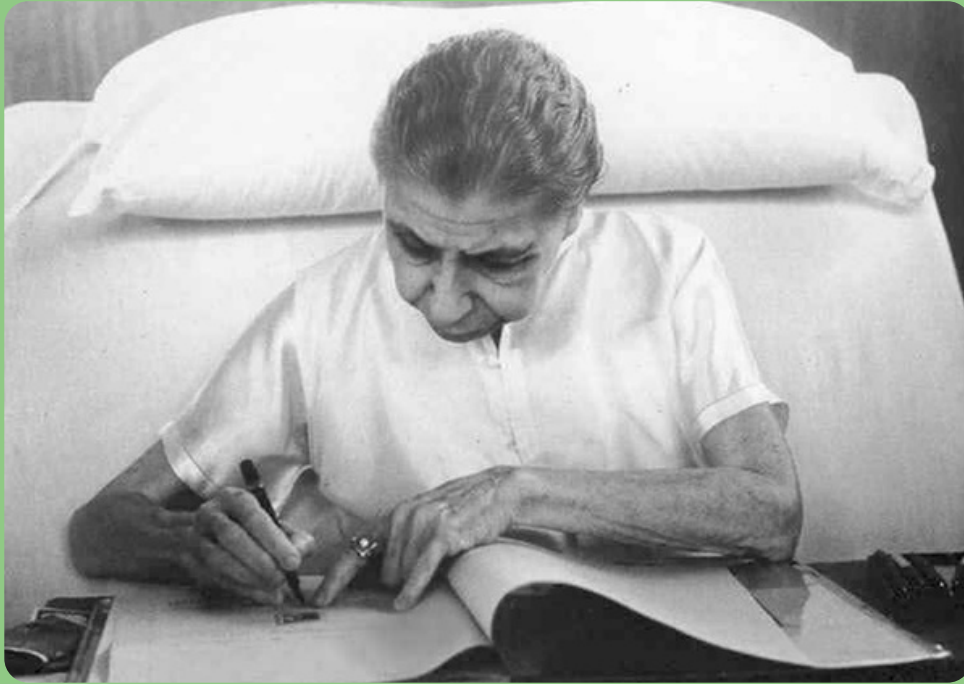
Unity is no utopian fantasy. It is possible. The logic of necessity and reality will birth it, even if its painful. Without it, the circus will go on indefinitely, a self-perpetuating carousel of grievance. With the semblance of unity, even imperfect, a circle takes shape. Work begins to move, not crawl. Initiatives find hands, not hurdles. Transparency replaces secrecy. Leadership shifts from manufactured appointees to willing servitors. The Dream of the Mother begins to breathe again.

Let us not mistake this for naïve optimism. Unity will not erase conflict. It will not make us saints overnight. But it would signal maturity — that after decades of rehearsing our differences, we are finally ready to practice our common destiny. For in the end, that was the point of this experiment: not to escape humanity's flaws, but to confront them and, by some miracle of sincerity, transmute them.

So, here we stand, with a choice as stark as it is simple. Remain in the circus — juggling, posturing, endlessly circling around ourselves. Or step into the larger, wider, higher circle — not a perfect circle, not yet, but one that carries the possibility of harmony. The difference is everything. One leads to exhaustion, decay, irrelevance. The other leads, slowly, painfully, beautifully, toward the City the Earth Needs.

Many circuses have had their season, before. But, the Circle still waits. Which one shall we choose this time?

by Lakshay Dharan



The most obvious sign of the action of an adverse force, it is this that I want to learn to see in myself and others.

1st sign : One feels far away from Sri Aurobindo and me.

2nd : One loses confidence, begins to criticise, is not satisfied.

3rd : One revolts and sinks into falsehood.

Do not grieve.

Always the same battle must be won several times, especially when it is waged against the hostile forces.

That is why one must be armed with patience and keep faith in the final victory.

The Mother, Some Answers from The Mother, Volume-16, page no.187-188)



29. 9. 71

Sri Aurobindo is always present.
Be sincere and faithful. This is
the first condition.

Blessings