
Auroville Tomorrow

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

Ushus: 1

Sri Aurobindo

Kiran: 7

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

The Golden Light Comes Down



“The Bird of Peace
Descending upon Earth”

The Mother

**Light, timeless Light immutable and apart!
The holy sealed mysterious doors unclose.
Light, burning Light from the Infinite's diamond
heart
Quivers in my heart where blooms the deathless
rose.**

— Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems*, October 1939

Jane Goodall, Redefining Humanity's Place in Nature

When Jane Goodall first stepped into the forests of Gombe in 1960, she was not merely entering the habitat of chimpanzees; she was crossing an invisible line that science had drawn between them and us. At a time when objectivity was defined by detachment, Goodall's method was scandalously intimate. She named the chimpanzees instead of numbering them. She watched them not as data points, but as neighbors in a shared evolution.

Her notebooks, full of emotion, patience, and handwritten empathy, redefined what it meant to observe. Science had long believed that feeling compromised accuracy. Goodall showed that it could deepen understanding. Through her eyes, the chimpanzees became storytellers of our own forgotten origins: they made tools, mourned their dead, fought wars, and reconciled after violence. In her field, the laboratory became a forest, and the microscope turned into a listening.

She arrived with no formal degree, no academic credentials, only a passion born from childhood dreams and the radical faith of Louis Leakey, who saw in her something universities could not teach: an unmediated curiosity. Where others brought theories, she brought presence. Where tradition demanded distance, she offered her whole attention.

The early months were marked by solitude and doubt. The chimpanzees fled at her approach. Days passed with nothing but glimpses through the canopy. She learned patience not as a virtue but as a necessity; waiting became her first methodology. In that waiting, something shifted. The forest began to accept her, not as an intruder, but as a quiet, persistent witness.

It was in this liminal space—neither fully human nor animal, neither scientist nor subject—that her work truly began. She did not study chimpanzees from the outside; she entered their world and allowed it to reshape her understanding of what it meant to be a thinking, feeling being. From the anthropology of distance, she moved toward the anthropology of relationship. What she offered was not just information about primates, but a moral and existential reflection on what it means to be human.

Shattering Boundaries with Empathy

There are moments in the history of knowledge when a single observation cracks open an entire worldview. For Goodall, one such moment came when she witnessed David Greybeard strip leaves from a twig and use them to fish termites from their mound. It was not the act itself that mattered most; it was what it meant. If chimpanzees made tools, then humanity's self-definition, "man the tool-maker," collapsed. The boundary dissolved. We were not alone in our ingenuity, not exceptional in our creativity. The discovery rippled outward, forcing science, philosophy, and theology to reconsider the narratives that had long separated humans from the rest of life.



Goodall's revelations did not stop at tools. Over the years, she documented behaviors that further blurred the lines: adoption, grief, altruism, deception, and even what could only be called warfare. In 1974, she observed the four-year Gombe Chimpanzee War, a brutal conflict between two communities that revealed chimpanzees were capable of coordinated violence, strategic killings, and territorial conquest.

It was a devastating insight. The violence was not random; it was deliberate, organized, almost human in its cruelty. For Goodall, this was perhaps the most difficult observation of all, not because it diminished chimpanzees, but because it reflected something uncomfortable about humanity itself. If they could wage war, then perhaps violence was not a defect of civilization but a shadow woven into our shared evolutionary fabric.

Yet even in witnessing darkness, Goodall refused despair. She also documented reconciliation: enemies who embraced after conflict, mothers who grieved, communities that cared for orphans. The chimpanzees taught her that we carry both capacities, for destruction and for compassion. The question was not which one defined us, but which one we chose to cultivate.

Her discovery that chimpanzees use and make tools shattered the anthropocentric idea of "man the tool-maker." But more profoundly, it questioned where humanity begins. As a woman in a male-dominated scientific world, Goodall carried another kind of revolution, one of perspective. The same tenderness that was once dismissed as "unscientific" became the foundation of a new ecological ethic. She turned empathy into method, compassion into data, and listening into activism.

Unlike prior ethologists who observed from a distance, she immersed herself in the daily lives of her subjects. She learned to understand their individual behaviors, social hierarchies, and emotional bonds. This methodological shift was not merely a personal preference; it represented a critique of scientific reductionism. By documenting emotions, grief, joy, and cooperation among chimpanzees, Goodall demonstrated that cognition and social intelligence are not uniquely human traits. Ethically, this immersion posed questions that extended beyond chimpanzees to the human observer: How should scientists relate to other beings? How do empathy and ethical responsibility inform observation? Goodall's practice transformed the field into a moral laboratory where the act of seeing was inseparable from ethical engagement.

A Legacy of Interconnection

Philosophically, Goodall's journey can be seen as an anthropology of interbeing, a study of the invisible kinship that binds humans, animals, and the Earth. She stands at the intersection of science and moral imagination, where knowledge is inseparable from care. Her worldview resonates with Indigenous cosmologies and Eastern philosophies that have long understood what Western science is only now rediscovering: that separation is an illusion. The forest taught her what the Buddhists call "dependent co-arising," the recognition that no being exists in isolation, that every life is woven into a web of relationships that sustain and define it.

Goodall rarely spoke in explicitly spiritual terms, yet her work is infused with a quiet reverence. She once described a moment in the forest when she felt herself dissolve into the landscape, no longer observer, but participant. In that dissolution, there was no loss of self, only an expansion into something larger. It was not mysticism; it was ecology experienced from the inside.

This sensibility shaped her activism. Environmental destruction, for Goodall, is not merely a technical problem to be managed; it is a rupture in the relational fabric of existence. To harm the forest is to harm oneself. To protect chimpanzees is to protect the conditions of our own humanity. Jane Goodall's legacy is not confined to her discoveries. It lives in a question she left behind: How do we belong to this planet without possessing it?

Her later years expanded that fieldwork into global advocacy. Through the Jane Goodall Institute, founded in 1977, and the Roots & Shoots program, launched in 1991, she cultivated a new generation of environmental consciousness. Her lectures, quiet yet firm, remind the world that hope is a discipline, not an emotion.

Goodall's philosophy is rooted in a relational ontology: humans exist not as masters but as part of a continuum with the natural world. She challenged anthropocentrism by showing that our closest relatives in the animal kingdom exhibit behaviors previously considered exclusively human.

By observing tool use, complex social bonds, and ritual-like behaviors, she reframed discussions of cognition, culture, and morality. Her work invites us to reconsider scientific knowledge itself. Knowledge, for Goodall, is not neutral; it carries responsibility. Observing is also responding. Understanding the world involves ethical choice, and ethical choice requires intimate knowledge. In this sense, Goodall's ethnography is simultaneously scientific, philosophical, and moral.

Beyond Gombe, Goodall's insights inspired a global environmental consciousness. Her activism emerged organically from her research. Witnessing habitat destruction and the pressures of human expansion on wildlife transformed observation into action. Her approach demonstrates that research and activism are not opposing forces but complementary responses to ecological crises. By integrating ethics and science, she offered a model for engaged scholarship, one where knowledge informs responsibility and responsibility shapes knowledge.

Goodall's presence in a predominantly male field challenged both social and epistemological norms. She exemplified a way of knowing that incorporated care, patience, and attentiveness, traits often undervalued in traditional scientific practice. Her method reframed authority in research: mastery was not measured by domination or control, but by relational understanding and respect. This "feminine" approach to science, though not explicitly framed as feminist, influenced generations of researchers. It demonstrated that inclusive and empathetic perspectives enrich both methodology and the interpretive depth of scientific findings. Goodall's career shows that gender can be a source of insight rather than limitation, reshaping expectations of what constitutes valid scientific inquiry.

Goodall's legacy extends far beyond her own fieldwork. She opened a door through which countless others have walked, particularly women who saw in her a model of scientific courage and emotional intelligence. Her influence can be traced in the work of Dian Fossey with mountain gorillas, Biruté Galdikas with orangutans, and Cynthia Moss with elephants. Each of these researchers adopted elements of Goodall's approach: long-term observation, individual recognition, and a refusal to see animals as mere mechanisms.



But her impact reaches beyond primatology. Researchers studying dolphins, whales, corvids, and even octopuses have borrowed from her methodological ethos: the belief that understanding requires relationship, that intelligence manifests in diverse forms, and that empathy enhances rather than distorts scientific insight. Her Roots & Shoots program, now active in over 60 countries, has cultivated a generation of young activists who understand conservation not as preservation of distant nature, but as the cultivation of responsible relationships with all life. These young people carry forward her conviction that hope is not passive optimism but an active practice, a daily choice to care, to act, and to persist in the face of overwhelming odds.

Goodall herself, well into her nineties, continues to travel the world, speaking, teaching, and embodying the principle that knowledge must be lived, not merely accumulated. Her life is a testament to the idea that wisdom is not found in detachment but in ever-deepening engagement.

Jane Goodall's ethnography of empathy is more than a scientific legacy; it is a template for ethical coexistence. Her work compels us to question how humans interact with all life forms and challenges the assumed hierarchy separating species. It bridges observation with responsibility, curiosity with care, and knowledge with moral imagination.

Her enduring question, How do we belong to this planet without possessing it?, frames a philosophical challenge for the contemporary world. It asks us to reconcile human ambition with ecological humility, scientific curiosity with ethical engagement, and global influence with local stewardship.

In a time of climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ethical uncertainty, Goodall's work remains a touchstone for understanding the deep interconnections between humans, animals, and ecosystems. Her life exemplifies a radical proposition: to truly know the world is to care for it, to engage with it relationally, and to accept responsibility for its future.

Through her unique integration of fieldwork, ethics, and advocacy, Jane Goodall remains not just a scientist or conservationist, but a philosopher of the living world, a figure whose work redefines what it means to observe, to understand, and to act. She taught us that the forest is not a place we visit for data. It is a teacher, a community, and a mirror. And in learning to see chimpanzees, we learn to see ourselves, not as we imagined, but as we are: fragile, violent, tender, and capable of extraordinary grace.

— Anita Kamali, Writer and Editor of Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter



Lighting the Lamp Within, A Diwali Reflection in the Light of Sri Aurobindo

As the sun slips beyond the Damanganga Dam and dusk deepens into silence, the forest around me begins to hum with stillness. Sitting in a little balcony like clearing that overlooks the water, I am surrounded by outer darkness and stillness — not frightening, but complete, palpable, almost tender. The outer darkness becomes an avenue to turn the gaze inward, toward the light that never dwindles.

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



It is the same enveloping quietude one feels in the inner chamber of the Matrimandir — a space where silence does not empty but fills, where darkness does not conceal but reveals. In that deep quiet, one senses the birth of inner peace — the peace that widens the heart and connects it with something vast, immutable, luminous. In such moments, when the outer light fades, an inward stirring begins — a gentle invitation to awaken the flame within.

As Sri Aurobindo writes, “In moments when the inner lamps are lit and the life’s cherished guests are left outside, our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs.”

As I rest in this stillness, I am reminded of Meera Bai’s words, “Uṭṭṭ bhayī morī nainan kī” — my eyes have turned inward. In that inversion lies the beginning of true sight. For what we call darkness may be the womb of light, and what we perceive as stillness is often the prelude to awakening.

Across India, this turning toward the inner light finds its collective expression in Diwali. Whether in a quiet tribal hamlet or a bustling city, lamps are lit, sweets shared, laughter and crackers fill the air. Yet beyond the glow and fragrance lies a deeper significance — a remembrance of the light within that dispels the shadows without. Each flame we kindle outwardly is a call to light the lamp of consciousness inside.

The sacred verse “Shubham karotu kalyānam ārogyaṁ dhana-saṁpadām, śatru-buddhi vināśāya dīpa-jyoti namo’stu te” reminds us that the lamp we light symbolizes the inner light that destroys śatru-buddhi — the hostile and divisive tendencies of the mind. The real victory of light lies in transforming the inner landscape — turning jealousy, anger, and doubt into universal love, forgiveness, and certitude.

Diwali, therefore, is not an annual ritual but a daily discipline — a continuous turning toward the inner sun.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother embody this transformation. They described light as the living force of the Divine — the power that reveals, purifies, and uplifts. Through stillness and sincerity, we begin to receive that light, first as a tremor, then as a steady flame, until it becomes a constant radiance. Darkness, they tell us, is not the opposite of light but its undeveloped form — light waiting to be known.

The morning after, as I sit in a little veranda like clearing, after an invigorating walk through the forest, the world seems newly washed in silence. Before me stretches a breathtaking beautiful expanse — the Madhuban Dam, its waters utterly still yet shimmering with tiny ripples. Each glimmer whispers the same eternal message: that even in the deepest quiet, light continues to dance; that within stillness itself, consciousness pulsates.

**“Light, endless Light! darkness has room no more,
Life’s ignorant gulfs give up their secrecy ...
I move in an ocean of stupendous Light,
Joining my depths to His eternal height.” Sri Aurobindo.**

In the glow of Diwali and the quiet of our own hearts, may we remember this truth — that the real celebration lies in lighting the inner flame, steady and pure, guiding us always from darkness to light.

**असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।
Lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.**



Contextualizing Sri Aurobindo: Litterateur and Lord of Language



Sri Aurobindo has been widely known as a great philosopher, psychologist and yogi. His mighty status as a litterateur has been undermined by the post-50s poets and writers, possibly to make their own position secure in Indian English Scene.

It began with vehement criticism of his poetry and after Sethna, Iyengar, Sisir Ghose, Gokak and Nandakumar put up a strong resistance with their brilliant exegeses on Sri Aurobindo's poetry, the antagonistic voices fell silent.

Today we have a lot of defenders but without the critical training of our great teachers. Critical treatises in literature should not be devotional pamphlets.

One has to know the art of balance and antithesis. It is either an extreme kind of devotion with too little care for writing or insensitive interpretations by some foreigners in the name of an absurd objectivity, and the odd instances when a historian trespasses into the world of Sri Aurobindo's literary prose and stylistics without knowing its nuances and finer subtleties. What about his architectural prose, crystalline letters unfolding an old-new poetics, dramatic art, and more than 50,000 lines of epic, lyric, dramatic and narrative poetry?

Romain Rolland found in him "the completest synthesis" of the East and the West. The "East" part has been explored sufficiently in philosophical treatises (not in literary papers as such), his integral Advaitism, the concept of evolution with reference to Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Heidegger and others, and the Vedic-Upanishadic symbolism. Some of the pioneers like Haridas Chaudhary, Sisir Kumar Mitra, K.D. Sethna and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (equally proficient in literature and philosophy) were whole timers with Sri Aurobindo research, as is R.Y. Deshpande even at this age. But the ideas stand there, stagnated and staled by miserable rehash. Both the devotees and detractors are responsible.

Today we have brilliant speakers on Sri Aurobindo's yoga, but there is little interest in serious research, the literature-language part being either neglected or taken up casually for Ph.D. degrees. Since 1949, when Sri Aurobindo was alive, there has been a serious objection to Sri Aurobindo's poetry by the new poets, and Sethna was the lone defender then exchanging long letters with young P. Lal (who later changed his stance) deconstructing his negative views about Sri Aurobindo's Savitri.



The Bombay school was the most aggressive, often nasty. Adil Jussawalla found in Savitri “a vast onion of a poem”, where the layers fall away leaving nothing as substance. Nissim Ezekiel and Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (see his Introduction to The Oxford Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets) have been negative about all the poems of Sri Aurobindo.

Time has come to place Sri Aurobindo in the context of the contemporary literary and cultural scene— like post-humanism in the Life Divine and Savitri, which includes deep ecology, his concept of the women whom we see around today, culture industry of Adorno, which he had anticipated in the The Psychology of Social Development (1916-18), quantitative free verse and many other things, which will be revelations to the serious reader of Sri Aurobindo’s texts. Poetry is the highest form of art. And it has much to do with the act of triple transformation.

When I claim for Sri Aurobindo that there is no greater event after Shakespeare in the language, I wish to draw your notice not just to the fluent British English of the master, but also to his effort to globalise and enrich the language with the rhythms and vibrations of the great Sanskrit texts of the old days. Nolini Kanta Gupta would often say—Sri Aurobindo writes English like Sanskrit; there is the same density and precision.

Sanskrit is not a dead frame of reference: it aims at clarifying and purifying our consciousness. Of late, Sri Aurobindo has generated a lot of curiosity in academics with reference to world literature. But then, this writer is very special; he demands a lot of attention from his readers. One has to be a whole timer with Sri Aurobindo.

— Prof. Goutam Ghosal, Governing Board

Vision of the LiLâ Cirhu

The LiLâ Cirhu was born from a need, both subtle and pressing: the call to explore together how a collective can truly listen, evolve, and embody the aspiration of Auroville in the world.

Over the years, this experimental group has become a living laboratory where individual and collective journeys intertwine. Each participant carries their own path, with its lights and shadows, but within the circle, a common ground emerges—a place where silence, word, and presence weave together to form a subtle fabric of consciousness.

The LiLâ Cirhu is not a "working group" in the traditional sense, with defined objectives and measurable results. It is, rather, a space of research and exploration. Its fruit is not immediately tangible, but it lives in the transformation of beings, in the delicate shifts that take place in hearts, in relations, and in the collective atmosphere.

The path of silence and the six principles.

The silence, first, became the ground of this collective work. Silence is not emptiness but fullness: the presence of the invisible, of what cannot be reduced to words. It is in this silence that inspirations arise, that conflicts soften, and that a deeper listening of each other becomes possible. Alongside silence, six principles guided the experience: welcoming, suspension of judgment, authenticity, transparency, self-responsibility, and deep listening. These principles, offered as tools, became in practice living forces—sometimes difficult, always demanding, but capable of opening unforeseen doors when truly applied.

The weaving of a collective soul

Over ten years, the LiLâ Cirhu has gradually woven the threads of what could be called a "collective soul." This does not mean erasing individualities, but allowing each uniqueness to resonate within a larger harmony. Many moments have shown how, through patience and perseverance, something greater than the sum of individuals could emerge—a vibration of unity, fragile yet real. This collective soul is not a concept: it is a lived experience. It manifests in the moments when words fall silent, when hearts open, when the joy of being together surpasses all differences. It is an embryo of what Auroville itself could embody at a larger scale: an experiment in unity of consciousness, in truth, in harmony.



An inner and outer journey

The work of the LiLâ Cirhu cannot be separated from Auroville. It mirrors its challenges, crises, governance, and relationship difficulties. But it also mirrors its immense potential. The group has explored the possibility of connecting inner transformation with outer action—of rooting governance not only in structures and rules, but in the surrender to a higher consciousness. The reports reveal this dual movement: on the one hand, struggles, blockages, and resistances; on the other, breakthroughs, openings, and luminous intuitions. This journey is not linear. It is woven of advances and retreats, of moments of grace and moments of shadow. But taken together, it forms a coherent path: that of a collective learning to surrender, to welcome, to embody the supramental aspiration in its own way.

Towards the CIRHU

The LiLâ Cirhu is part of a larger movement: that of the CIRHU (Centre for International Research on Human Unity). If Matrimandir embodies the vertical axis—the link of Auroville with the Divine—the CIRHU represents the horizontal axis: the link of Auroville with the world. In this sense, the LiLâ Cirhu has been a seed, a preparatory organ. Through its experiments, it has begun to sketch what could be the sensitivity of the CIRHU: a capacity to listen to the movements of the collective soul, to welcome the research of Aurovilians, to receive the subtle fruits of their inner and outer journeys, and to transmit them horizontally, to humanity at large.

A heritage and a promise

Ten years of reports are not just archives. They are the living memory of a process, the witness of a becoming. They testify that something has been woven, patiently, stubbornly, joyfully: the first threads of a collective awakening.

The promise is not yet fulfilled. But it is there, tangible, like a seed germinating in the earth. The LiLâ Cirhu has shown that such a journey is possible, that the "great adventure" of Auroville is not only an external project, but an inner and collective mutation.

To read these pages is to feel the fragile but indelible emergence of a new way of being together. It is to hear, through words and silences, the heartbeat of a collective learning to listen to the Invisible.

This is the vision of the LiLâ Cirhu, a humble but audacious attempt to embody the future in the present, to offer itself as an organ of sensitivity to The Divine Consciousness, the becoming of Auroville, and through it, to the becoming of humanity.

— Hans van Baaren, researcher at Lila Cirhu



Morning Star

Birth, Awareness, and Healing in Auroville



A conversation with Balaganesh Siva on natural childbirth, empowerment, and the evolution of respectful maternity care.

Morning Star has become a name that many Aurovilians associate with warmth, care, and natural birth. Could you share how it all began and what vision inspired you to create a space that supports women and families through such an intimate and transformative journey?

Morning Star was born out of a question: What if birth could return to being a human, family-centered experience — both safe and sacred?

Over the years, Paula and our small team saw a need for care that honors women's choices and restores trust in the natural process of birth. Auroville, with its foundation in integral living and unity, offered the perfect environment to nurture this vision.

We started humbly — midwives offering consultations and classes in small spaces — but always with the same goal: to bring awareness, inclusion, and dignity back to childbirth. Morning Star grew into a community space where evidence-based care meets warmth and respect. It is not only a clinic but a continuum of care — from preconception and pregnancy to postnatal life, education, and research.

Your team often speaks about “natural and ecological childbirth.” What does that look like in everyday practice? How do midwifery, doula support, and holistic therapies come together in the way you care for mothers and babies?

In our daily work, holistic care means that no aspect of birth is treated in isolation. A woman is not just a patient; she's a whole person — emotional, physical, spiritual, and social.

At Morning Star, our midwives and doulas work closely with families to create a supportive environment where birth unfolds naturally. We integrate prenatal yoga, breathing, movement, and relaxation techniques with clinical expertise. Shiatsu, acupressure, and mindful touch are often part of our approach.

Even the space itself is designed to feel like home — warm lighting, familiar faces, and gentle sounds — so that women can birth in safety and confidence. Ecological care also means sustainability: using local materials, natural products, minimal plastic, and no toxic cleaning supplies. The new building will rely on solar panels and a solar hot water system as much as possible. The waste water system will include using grey water for the garden.

Being rooted in Auroville must shape your work in unique ways. How do Auroville's values, unity, respect for nature, and integral well-being guide Morning Star's approach to birth and family care?

Auroville's spirit of experimentation and human unity inspires everything we do. Birth, in many ways, is the most universal human experience — it transcends language, culture, and belief.

Morning Star reflects that universality. We welcome mothers from diverse backgrounds — Indian and international, traditional and modern — all finding common ground in respect and awareness. We see birth as a shared process of growth, not just a medical event.

Our guiding principle is integrality: physical health, emotional presence, mental clarity, and spiritual connection. That's why we include practices from Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga alongside modern science — to support both body and consciousness through the journey of birth.

Morning Star encourages active family participation, from the presence of fathers at birth to postnatal bonding and parent-baby gatherings. Why is this inclusion so important, and what changes have you witnessed when fathers or families are more involved?

When fathers are included, birth transforms from an individual experience into a shared act of creation. In India, men are rarely invited into that space — yet our research shows that 94% of fathers felt positive, grateful, and emotionally connected when involved in pregnancy and childbirth.

Morning Star's childbirth classes, retreats, and clinical care all include fathers — not just as bystanders but as emotional anchors. We teach them how to support their partners physically and mentally, how to communicate with healthcare teams, and how to bond with their newborns from the first breath. It's profoundly moving to witness their reactions: holding their baby skin-to-skin, some with tears in their eyes. Many describe it as "life-changing." And indeed, it changes the entire family dynamic — increasing empathy, partnership, and resilience.

You've been offering childbirth education, yoga, and workshops that help reduce fear and build confidence. What difference do you see in women and families after attending these programs?

Education is at the heart of what we do. Fear thrives in the absence of information — and empowerment begins when parents understand their options.

Our childbirth preparation classes focus on understanding labor stages, medical interventions, breathing, movement, and creating a birth plan. We discuss informed consent — something still new in India — and how to communicate clearly with care providers.

Every Wednesday, we hold childbirth education classes in both English and Tamil, open to mothers and fathers alike. These sessions explore every facet of childbirth — from physical preparation and partner support to newborn care and postpartum healing. They create a supportive circle where families from diverse backgrounds learn from each other and build confidence together. We've seen remarkable shifts. Women arrive feeling anxious or unsure, and over time, their posture, voice, and confidence change. They begin to trust their bodies, ask questions, and express what they truly need during birth. One mother recently told us, "The sessions made me feel seen and strong. I stopped being afraid of birth — I started looking forward to it." For us, that's the real measure of success — when knowledge replaces fear, and a woman begins to walk into birth with awareness, strength, and calm.

What challenges do women face in accessing respectful maternity care, and how is Morning Star working with hospitals and other institutions to change that?

One of the biggest challenges is the over-medicalization of birth. Many women enter hospitals without fully understanding what's being done to them or why. Consent is often assumed rather than clearly sought, and emotional safety is rarely part of the conversation.

At Morning Star, we are working to change that narrative from within the system — not against it. We actively build partnerships with major hospitals like JIPMER, PIMS, and the Fernandez Foundation, where our ongoing dialogue centers on how midwives and obstetricians can complement each other.

Our collaboration is never about superiority; it's about shared learning and shared purpose — creating the best possible outcomes for mothers, babies, and families. We've also taken these conversations to the grassroots level. Recently, we met with the Primary Health Centre (PHC) and the Block Medical Officer (BMO) in our bioregion to explore ways to integrate respectful, family-centered care at the community level. These partnerships are essential if we want to see lasting change — where informed consent, emotional support, and family inclusion become the norm rather than the exception.

The path forward is collaboration, not confrontation. By building bridges — from large institutions to local health centers — we are slowly shaping a culture of birth that is safer, kinder, and deeply human.

With your new building well underway and growing recognition nationally and internationally, what do you envision for Morning Star in the coming years? How do you see this work evolving, within Auroville and beyond?

Receiving the final NOC for our new building was a major milestone — not just administratively, but symbolically. It affirmed the trust and collective belief of Auroville in what Morning Star stands for. We are now in the construction phase, with the structure complete up to the lintel level. If everything continues as planned, we expect the birthing center to open by June 2026. The new building will feature two birthing rooms, each designed to support natural and physiologic birth. One of them will include a large granite tub, carved from a single stone — a symbol of strength, continuity, and Tamil cultural heritage. The second room will be equipped with birthing balls, comfort tools, and movement supports to help women find ease and rhythm during labor.

As we build, we continue to depend on the generosity of friends and donors — through AVI USA and Auroville's donation platforms — whose support helps sustain construction, equipment, and scholarship programs for local families.

In the coming years, our vision extends beyond the building itself. We're developing Morning Star into a comprehensive women's wellness center, offering gynecological and menopause care, lactation and breastfeeding counseling, and continuing initiatives like breast health and cancer awareness programs. We offer sex education classes in schools of Auroville, upon request.

Our long-term goal is to deepen our work in training and research, continue studies on fatherhood and family inclusion, and host international workshops on midwifery and respectful care. But at the heart of everything remains the same guiding truth: to keep birth human, kind, and conscious — to remind every parent that the way we bring life into the world shapes the world itself. We will always be a small centre, with a big heart, that will be a role model for other maternity centres in India.



Morning Star's work doesn't end at birth, the Little Red Feet initiative seems to carry that care into early parenting. Could you share how this space supports new families and what makes it an important part of Morning Star's larger vision?

Little Red Feet was created from the simple realization that the journey of parenthood truly begins after birth. Many parents, especially first-time mothers and fathers, need not just information but companionship — a circle where they can share, learn, and grow together.

Based at Humanscapes Hall in Auroville, Little Red Feet offers a warm, informal environment where parents and babies can meet weekly to play, connect, and learn through shared experience. It includes baby and toddler groups, baby massage classes, and small themed gatherings facilitated by the Morning Star team and visiting practitioners.

We've seen how transformative this has been — for mothers finding confidence in breastfeeding, for fathers discovering their nurturing role, and for families simply knowing they are not alone. Each session feels like a living classroom where emotional and physical health come together.

In essence, Little Red Feet continues Morning Star's vision of continuum care — not just delivering babies, but nurturing families. It's one of the most joyful aspects of our work because it celebrates daily life after birth: the laughter, the mess, the love, and the ongoing growth of both parents and children.



Paula Speaks, senior Midwife and Founder, Morning Star

When I first came to Auroville, I carried with me years of experience as a senior midwife at Gundersen Hospital in the United States, where I worked in a collaborative care model — one in which obstetricians and midwives shared responsibility for mothers and babies. That experience showed me that safety and sensitivity must go hand in hand, and that the best outcomes come when women are given trust, time, and informed choices.

At Morning Star, I wanted to bring that same spirit of collaboration to India — blending evidence-based care with community warmth and respect. My dream has always been to see birth as both safe and sacred, a process where families are empowered and fathers are welcomed, where women feel seen, heard, and supported.

I believe Morning Star can become a beacon of hope for childbirth in India, showing that midwives and doctors can work together with compassion and equality. Through our collaborations with JIPMER, PIMS, and Fernandez Foundation, and through sharing our experience at national conferences, I hope we can help shape a new understanding of maternity care — one where kindness is as essential as knowledge.

For me, birth is not just about bringing a baby into the world. It's about healing — for the mother, for the family, and, in a small way, for society itself.



Maheshwari Speaks, Midwife and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner

I was born and raised in Koyilapalayam, one of the villages around Auroville. Growing up, I saw how many women in my community faced pregnancy and birth with fear, limited choices, and very little emotional support. That stayed with me.

I began my journey as a nurse at PIMS Hospital, where I gained valuable clinical experience, but it was my own birth that changed my life. After having a successful VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean), I realized how powerful it is when a woman is trusted and supported during labor. That experience inspired me to join the Morning Star team and dedicate my life to helping other women experience the same freedom and confidence.

As the youngest midwife in our team, I'm training under Paula and the senior midwives — learning every day not just about medical practice, but about patience, empathy, and presence. For me, Morning Star is not just a place of work; it's a bridge between Auroville and the bioregion.

When women from my village walk in, I see myself in them — their hopes, fears, and determination. My dream is to bring respectful, family-centered birth to every woman in our region, to help them believe in their bodies and their choices. This work feels like coming full circle — from being a local girl watching others struggle, to standing beside women as they rediscover their strength.



Mapping India's Spiritual Evolution

A Journey Through the Ages

The film "The Spiritual History of India" presents a unique exploration of consciousness evolution through India's civilizational journey. Based on Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary understanding of spiritual history, the film traces how India's spiritual development unfolds through distinct evolutionary stages, each corresponding to different levels of human consciousness.

At the heart of this vision lies Sri Aurobindo's fundamental insight about spiritual evolution. As he explains: "Along with the mental evolution of man there has been going forward the early process of another evolution which prepares the spiritual and supramental being"¹. This dual evolution—material and spiritual—finds its most complete expression in India's civilizational development, where each historical epoch represents consciousness working through different levels of human nature.

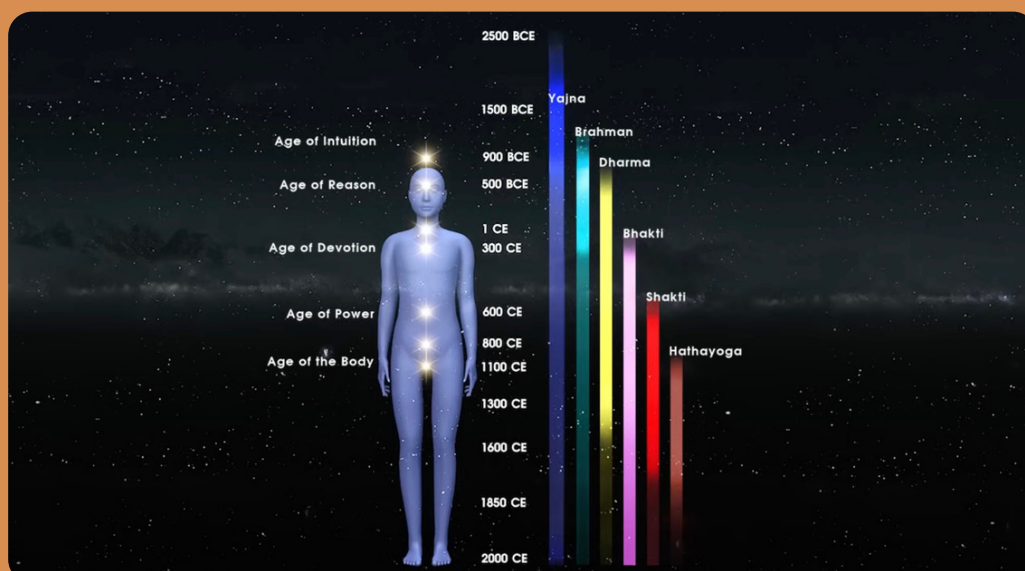
The film's innovative approach maps these evolutionary stages onto the chakra system, showing how India's spiritual development descended through the various centers of consciousness, from the planes above the crown chakra of pure spiritual realization down to the root chakra of physical transformation. This descent was not a fall but a conscious evolutionary process to spiritualize every level of human existence.

The Age of Intuition: Discovering the Spirit

The journey begins with the Age of Intuition, corresponding to the Vedic & Upanishadic period and the spiritual realm above the crown chakra. Sri Aurobindo describes this foundational epoch: "Her first period was luminous with the discovery of the Spirit"². The Rishis, working through pure intuitive consciousness, discovered the fundamental spiritual truths that would become the bedrock of Indian civilization.

As the film demonstrates, these ancient seers operated not through intellectual reasoning but through direct spiritual perception. "The Vedic age was followed by a great outburst of intellectual philosophy which yet took spiritual truth as its basis and tried to reach it anew, not through a direct intuitive or occult process as did the Vedic seers, but by the power of the mind's reflective, speculative, logical thought"³.

The Rishis established what Sri Aurobindo calls the "sacred text" of Indian spirituality—not merely as religious doctrine, but as living maps of consciousness transformation. Their mantric language encoded profound spiritual experiences that could awaken similar realizations in prepared seekers across millennia.



The Age of Reason: Spiritualizing the Intellect

The second major phase, the Age of Reason, saw consciousness descending to work through the mind, corresponding to the forehead and throat chakra. Sri Aurobindo observes that this period "completed the discovery of the Dharma, "4—the righteous law that governs both individual development and social organization.

This era witnessed the flowering of the six great philosophical systems, the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, and the composition of the epic literature, including the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The film shows how the Bhagavad Gita emerged as a synthesis of this intellectual flowering, presenting spiritual wisdom in forms accessible to the reasoning mind while maintaining its experiential core.

The development of Sanskrit as a precise philosophical language, the codification of spiritual practices into systematic yoga methods, and the emergence of great universities like Nalanda all characterize this period of intellectual spirituality. Yet as Sri Aurobindo emphasizes, this intellectual development never lost its connection to the original spiritual vision—it was always "spiritualising this mind itself at the same time"⁵.

The Age of Devotion: Spiritualizing the Emotions

The third evolutionary movement brought consciousness into the heart chakra, creating the Age of Devotion. "Then followed an era of the development of philosophies and Yoga processes, which more and more used the emotional and aesthetic being as the means of spiritual realisation and spiritualised the emotional level in man through the heart and feeling"⁶.

This period saw the emergence of the Puranic literature, the development of temple worship, and the great Bhakti movement. The film illustrates how figures like Kalidasa created literary works of extraordinary beauty that served as vehicles for spiritual transmission, while the Puranas transformed ancient Vedic truths into emotionally compelling narratives accessible to the masses. The avatar concept, temple architecture, devotional music, and arts emerged during this period as means of engaging the heart's capacity for love and surrender in the service of spiritual transformation. As Sri Aurobindo notes, this was the age when "the collective emotions of Indian civilization were refined and turned towards divine realisation"⁷.

The Age of Power: Spiritualizing the Power

The fourth stage corresponds to the solar plexus and abdominal chakra and represents the Age of Power, dominated by Tantric spirituality. "This was accompanied by Tantric and other processes which took up the mental will, the life-will, the life of sensations and made them at once the instruments and the field of spiritualisation"⁸.

The film shows how this era developed a sophisticated understanding of subtle energy, chakra systems, and kundalini awakening. Tantric practitioners explored how to harness and redirect life-force energy for spiritual evolution, developing both individual transformation techniques and powerful methods of collective spiritual influence.

This was also the period of India's greatest cultural expansion across Asia, when Indian spiritual and cultural forms established themselves from Southeast Asia to Central Asia, demonstrating the power of spiritual civilization to transform vast regions through attraction rather than conquest.

The Age of the Body: Spiritualizing the Body

The fifth stage, corresponding to the root chakra, represents the Age of the Body and the attempt to achieve physical transformation. "In Hathayoga and in the various attempts at divinisation of the body, there is also a line of endeavour which attempted to arrive at the same achievement concerning living matter; but this still awaits the discovery of the true characteristic method and power of spirit in the body"⁹.

The film documents how this period, while achieving remarkable developments in understanding the physical dimension of yoga, ultimately led to a withdrawal from active life and engagement with matter.

Instead of transforming the body, many spiritual seekers began to reject it as a hindrance to liberation. This contributed to India's political and cultural decline as its spiritual leaders retreated from worldly responsibilities.

India's Rebirth: The Integral Synthesis

The final section of the film explores India's Rebirth through the emergence of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, which synthesizes and completes the entire evolutionary process. As Sri Aurobindo explains: "Our Yoga is in its principle a taking up and summarising and completing of this process, an endeavour to rise to the highest possible supramental level and bring down its consciousness and powers into mind, life and body"¹⁰.

The film shows how Sri Aurobindo's vision provides the missing key to physical transformation that eluded the Hatha Yogins—the discovery of the supramental consciousness that can truly divinize matter. This represents not just India's spiritual rebirth, but the next stage of human evolution itself.

The Universal Message

Through its visual presentation the film reveals how India's spiritual history represents a universal pattern of consciousness evolution. As Sri Aurobindo concludes: "India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great"¹¹. The film demonstrates how India's unique spiritual experiment offers vital guidance for humanity's evolutionary future—not as an ancient curiosity, but as a living laboratory for consciousness transformation that remains profoundly relevant to our contemporary world.

- **Research, Script and Director: Manoj Pavithran, Auroville**
- **Visuals, Editing: Hemant Shekhar, Auroville**
- **Music, Composition: Arnab B. Chowdhury and team, Sri Aurobindo Ashram**
- **Voice Over: Ravi Shankar, Puducherry**

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A Bridge Between Knowledge and Sustainability

On September 9 and 10, 2025, the Dr. Moonje Institute of Management and Computer Studies (DMI), a leading B-School in Nashik under The CHMES Society, hosted the International Conference on Intelligent and Sustainable Innovation (ICISI 2025) in a hybrid format. The inaugural event was honored by the distinguished presence of honourable Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Echoing Auroville's timeless ethos as a universal township where diverse human aspirations converge towards human unity and earth's transformation, ICISI 2025 wove a tapestry of global wisdom in Nashik. The conference, inaugurated by honourable Shri Devendra Fadnavis, spotlighted Track 2: Sustainable Technology and Innovation as a vibrant nexus of ideas. Here, two distinguished guests from Auroville were specially invited: **Mr. Janmejaya Mohanty**, Trustee of Bharat Nivas, The Pavilion of India in Auroville, who delivered the opening address, sparking a profound dialogue on harmonious innovation and sustainability; and **Mr. Giacomo Colomba**, an Auroville-based researcher from Italy, whose evocative presentation explored regenerative design and eco-innovative practices from Auroville's working laboratories. Their contributions unfolded alongside eminent international speakers from around the world, including Prof. Neil Bendel from the Terry College of Business, Georgia, USA, sharing insights on ethical AI governance; Dr. Sachin Kamble from EDHEC Business School, Lille, France, discussing digital transformation's role in equitable growth; Mr. Kamlesh Solanki, Barclays Local Specialist from the UK, on fintech for green finance; Mrs. Shweta More from DHL Supply Chain in Benelux Europe, addressing logistics for circular economies; Dr. Priya Rao, Dean of External Relations at Avantika University, Dubai, on cross-border sustainable education; and Mr. Amit Bal, Procurement Lead at Haleon, Malaysia, on supply chain resilience in tropical climates.

This array of voices, from Auroville's yoga-inspired sustainability to cutting-edge global perspectives, enriched discussions on critical topics such as AI for Climate Action, Smart Energy and Green Computing, Edge and Federated Learning for Industry, Digital Twins for Environmental Monitoring, and Blockchain for Sustainable Supply Chains, all aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Complementing these were deep Indic insights from Dr. Rajnish Mishra and Dr. Krishna Mohan Pandey, Professors at the Centre for Sanskrit and Indic Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, who connected ancient wisdom with modern eco-innovations.

The broader conference highlighted 10 dynamic tracks, from Artificial Intelligence & Smart Systems to Reimagining Finance in the Age of Intelligence, Innovation, and Sustainability; Industry 5.0 and Technological Disruption; Marketing Management in the Digital Age; and Human Resource Management & Talent Transformation—each bustling with papers and panels reflecting Auroville's vision of collective growth through conscious technology and earth-centered progress.

On the side-lines, a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Bharat Nivas and DMI, represented by Mr. Janmejay Mohanty. This agreement, rooted in Auroville's spirit of collaboration, emphasizes:

➤ **Exchange of Art & Culture, blending Nashik's Marathi heritage with Auroville's multicultural expressions**

➤ **Sustainable Education, co-creating curricula inspired by Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of integral learning**

➤ **Initiative collaborations to explore and test innovative practices, from bio-mimicry labs to community-led renewable energy models**

This partnership serves as a living bridge between academia, culture, and sustainable development, much like Auroville itself: a radiant link between knowledge, awareness, and the creative spirit of humanity, inviting future pioneers to shape a harmonious tomorrow. As Auroville celebrates its milestones, may the echoes of ICISI 2025 inspire endless cycles of renewal.





We are on earth in order to progress and to perfect ourselves in the course of many successive lives. What we cannot do this time, we shall do next time; and every progress we make this time will help us then. Kali always helps those who call on her, and with her help the progress comes more quickly.

Blessings.

15 November 1971

The Mother (More Answers from The Mother, Volume-17, page no.374-375)

The aims of Auroville

Peace upon earth -