
Auroville Tomorrow

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

Ushus: 1

Sri Aurobindo

Kiran: 9

24th December 2025

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

Action Freed from Claim and Reward

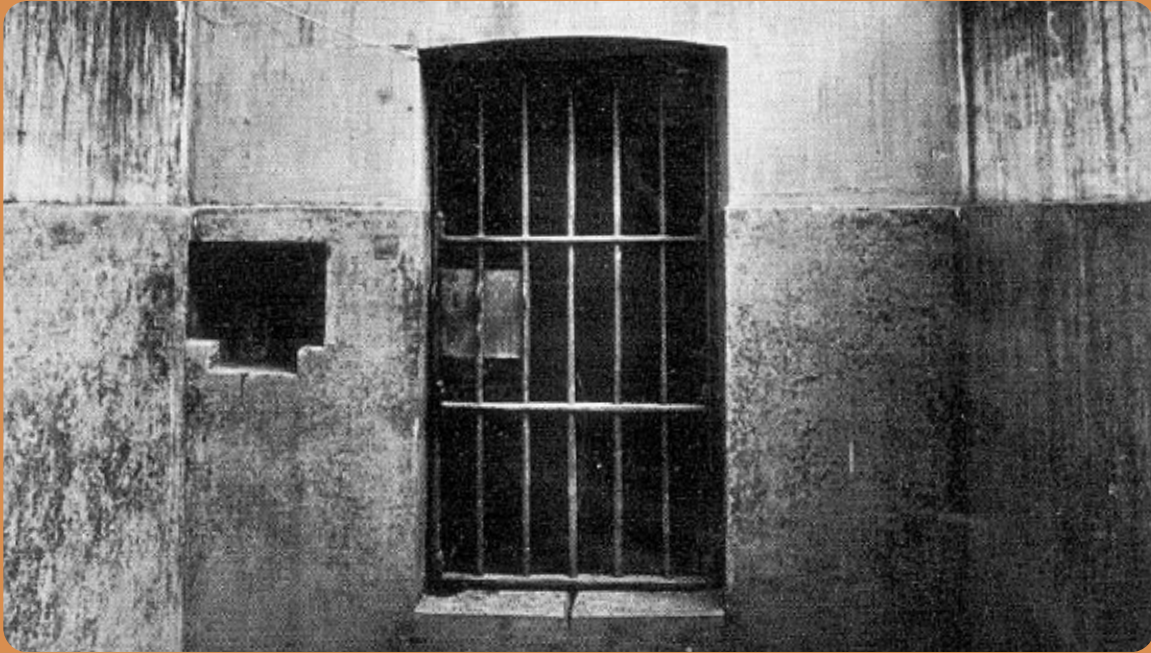


The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the Yoga.

It is the spirit and the consciousness in which it is done that makes an action Yogic—it is not the action itself.

— Sri Aurobindo, Pg 232, *Letters on Yoga - II*

From the Silence of Alipore Jail to a New Human Script



We are often like actors suddenly placed on a vast stage; a stage whose set we did not arrange, and whose dialogues were written by minds that fell silent before our birth.

We enter the world holding a script that seems to have already determined our role until the final act, even before our first cry. This old script functions as long as we believe that these words are the true voice of ourselves and that this stage is the only possible world.

Yet the history of consciousness always unfolds in fragmented moments; moments when the actor pauses in the middle of the performance. Words no longer roll off the tongue. Language suddenly stutters. The stage that was “home” yesterday transforms into a narrow, meaningless set, collapsing upon itself.

Such a pause is not merely a personal crisis. This rupture in the ordinary is the moment when the prior symbolic order begins to crack; the moment when one realizes that life can no longer proceed according to a pre-written script. Here, terror and possibility emerge simultaneously: the terror of a world without a script, and the possibility of choice. Within that possibility lies the seed of the evolutionary path of consciousness and spiritual growth; an opportunity to reconnect with the higher self and with the world.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, one of these decisive pauses occurred in the silence of a prison. Where political action, familiar language, and conventional horizons suddenly collapsed, the individual stood vulnerable before themselves. In this sense, the prison was not merely a physical space; it was a “primordial stage.” Here, the old script no longer sufficed, and an inner improvisation, quiet and perilous, began. From the heart of this silence, a path emerged that would later shape not only an individual but a new way of thinking about humanity, society, and the future, a path connected to the spiritual evolution of human consciousness.

If we move beyond the level of individual experience, this can be understood as a metaphor for the collective condition today. We, too, as contemporary societies, stand on a stage whose grand narratives have grown worn. Old languages are repeated, but they have no life. Words are uttered without generating meaning. This is the very stutter that occurs before any profound transformation, the moment when one can access higher consciousness and the experience of spiritual presence.

Society can be seen as a stage upon which identities perform. For a “we” to emerge, a collective imagination is needed; an imagination that binds scattered individuals into a meaningful whole. This imagination is neither a lie nor an illusion; it is a framework that enables coexistence. Humans never see all the members of this “we,” yet they believe in an invisible bond with them. And this faith is the spark of collective spiritual orientation that Sri Aurobindo speaks of in his works.

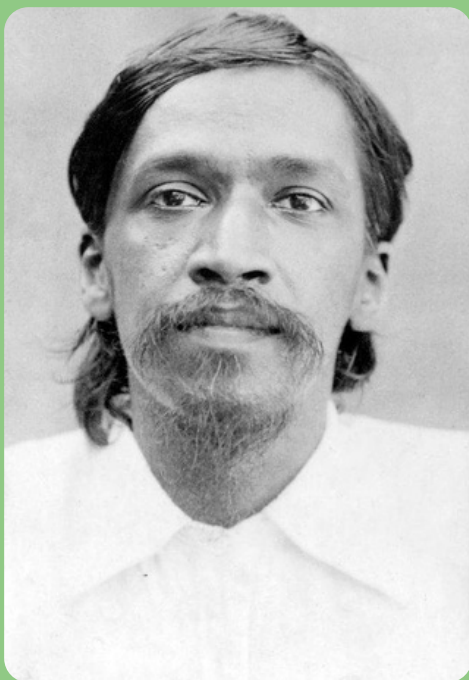
The problem arises when this imagination becomes a sacred script, a text that can no longer be rewritten or revised. In such a situation, symbols replace lived experience, and the past, instead of being a source of inspiration, becomes an inevitable fate. Death, sacrifice, and suffering become tools to solidify the narrative, and the stage narrows day by day.

Yet it is precisely at this point that another possibility emerges: the possibility of improvisation. Improvisation is not mere disorder; it is an effort to discover a new language after the collapse of worn-out languages. Improvisation means accepting the risk of speaking without a script, living without guarantees, and creating meaning in motion. In this process, one can connect with the spiritual and evolutionary dimension of the self, elevating consciousness from the individual to the collective.

Auroville can be understood as one of these laboratories of improvisation. Not as a perfect utopia, but as an unfinished stage; a place where humans consciously decide to set aside sacred scripts and, with all their stutters and contradictions, experiment with a new language of life. Here, identity is not a fixed role, but an open and evolving process, one that can pave the way for human evolution.

In this context, returning to literature and language assumes a meaning that extends beyond cultural events. Literature here is not stage decoration but an attempt to listen again to voices buried under the rubble of old narratives, and to connect with the spiritual dimension of human consciousness.

The initial pause that occurred in the silence of prison did not remain merely an inward experience; it later took the form of language. Years after that interruption, Sri Aurobindo endeavored to articulate what he had lived in that silence, not as a personal memory, but as knowledge for the future of humanity. The result was a text that was neither a political manifesto nor a purely philosophical treatise, but a contemplative narrative of human confrontation with the collapse of roles and the awakening of consciousness; a narrative in **Tales of Prison Life**, where prison is no longer simply a place of confinement but an inner stage for rethinking meaning, freedom, and presence.



In *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo writes that humans are not the end of the path; they are a passage between what has been and what can yet be. Consciousness, in this view, is not static but a continuous movement toward openness and evolution. Every moment of silence, every moment of reflection, is an opportunity to connect with the spiritual dimension of humanity and lay the foundations of higher consciousness.

Here, meaning is no longer something inherited from the past or frozen in established symbols; meaning is a process that must be collectively, consciously, and consciously, with inner presence constructed. Sri Aurobindo speaks of an evolution that is neither merely biological nor merely social, but evolutionary at the level of consciousness, a movement impossible without encountering chaos, conflict, and incompleteness.

In a world where old narratives have collapsed, and discourse often leads to confrontation and deadlock rather than dialogue, this perspective becomes all the more significant. If sacred scripts no longer suffice, perhaps the task is not to write a single new text, but to create a space in which diverse voices can approach meaning without cancelling one another; a space that activates collective spiritual evolution and consciousness.

From this perspective, Auroville can be understood not as a final answer but as a “dialogue space”; a living stage to test shared possibilities beyond differences. Linguistic, cultural, and intellectual differences here are not obstacles but raw materials for dialogue and consciousness growth. In a world full of disorder, violence, and polarization, the very practice of dialogue becomes a radical and spiritual act.

Hope, in this vision, is not naive optimism. Hope is the courage to remain in an unfinished state; the courage to construct meaning without guarantees. Just as the prison experience transformed into a narrative that opened a new horizon of consciousness and elevated the human spirit, so too today, from the chaos of the world, new languages may be emerging; languages that still stutter, yet are alive and in the process of discovering spiritual presence and meaning.

Perhaps the role of spaces like Auroville is not to provide a ready-made solution, but to preserve this very possibility: the possibility of listening, dialogue, and collective thinking for living in a world that can no longer be governed by old scripts, and within this possibility, collective consciousness and spirit flourish.

“Friday, May 1, 1908 ... I did not know that that day would mean an end of a chapter of my life, and that there stretched before me a year’s imprisonment during which period all my human relations would cease, that for a whole year I would have to live beyond the pale of society, like an animal in a cage. And when I would re-enter the world of activity, it would not be the old familiar Aurobindo Ghose ... I have spoken of a year’s imprisonment. It would have been more appropriate to speak of a year’s living ... in an ashram or a hermitage ... The only result of the wrath of the British Government was that I found God.”

— Anita Kamali, Writer and Editor of *Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter*



Flowers, Voices, and the Life Divine

Reflections from the Auroville Literature Festival

As I sit at my table, a simple flower arrangement rests quietly before me. It is placed beneath the picture of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and as I look at it, I am struck not by its design but by its spontaneity. The flowers were not arranged with careful planning or aesthetic calculation. And yet, when viewed in a meditative mood, they reveal a quiet harmony and beauty, as though each flower found its rightful place. This simple arrangement feels like an apt metaphor for the Auroville Literature Festival.

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



What unfolded there was not a tightly orchestrated event but an organic convergence of ideas, voices, expressions, generations, languages, and disciplines—each arriving in its own rhythm, yet together forming a meaningful whole. Like the flowers, the festival seemed to discover its own order.

Dawn, Children, and the Spirit of Simplicity

The early mornings of the festival were especially evocative. As dawn broke gently over Auroville, young children appeared in bright colours, their faces radiant with unguarded joy. They moved together in a Nagar Sankirtan, singing hymns of Andal, their voices light, clear, and full of devotion. There was something profoundly moving in witnessing this. In a world increasingly driven by speed, competition, and anxiety, these children offered a reminder of something elemental—joy without self-consciousness, devotion without strain. Their songs carried the spirit of Margazhi, touching something deep and quiet within the soul.

It felt like a pause granted to us in the midst of modern life—a moment to remember that beauty often lies in simplicity, and that what is most nourishing is also becoming increasingly rare.

Children's Stories and the Universality of Love

Beyond the early-morning singing, there was also an exclusive session designed especially for children, filled with storytelling and books that spoke gently yet powerfully. One book in particular, 'Cactus Wants a Hug', lingered in my thoughts. A cactus, after all, is not something one instinctively wants to hug. It is prickly, guarded, seemingly unapproachable. And yet the story revealed a deeper truth: that every being, regardless of form, longs to be loved. Love does not always arrive as a hug.

Sometimes it is a glance, a thoughtful pause, a shared idea, a gentle respect for boundaries.



The children seemed to intuitively grasp this—that love can be expressed in many forms, and that care does not require possession. This simple insight echoed one of the festival's deeper undercurrents: beneath diversity of expression lies a shared human longing—to be seen, heard, understood, and held in some form of warmth.

Body, Culture, and Devotion: An Immersive Rhythm

The festival unfolded not only through words and ideas, but through lived, embodied experience. Each day offered Kalaripayattu, the ancient Indian martial art, grounding participants in physical discipline, alertness, and balance. These sessions reminded us that consciousness is not only cultivated through thought, but through the body as well.

Evenings also brought rich cultural programmes—music, dance, and performance—that expressed both local traditions and universal themes. Adding a deeply spiritual dimension was a special session of chanting and floral offerings, and worship of the Divine Mother. In that space of collective stillness and devotion, intellect gave way to silence, and reflection softened into surrender. Together, these physical, emotional, aesthetic, cultural, and devotional elements transformed the festival into an immersive experience—one that harmonised body, mind, and spirit.

Languages as Bridges of Consciousness

Language formed another vital thread. Auroville recognises four foundational languages—Tamil, Sanskrit, French, and English—and the festival honoured them not as separate compartments but as living bridges. A simple example of parsing names of people from across Bharat helps one realise how deeply Sanskrit flowed beneath them—through meanings, sounds, and roots.

Sri Aurobindo's vision of language was never merely functional. Language, for him, was a carrier of consciousness. Translation, therefore, is not mechanical substitution but an act of patience and empathy—listening deeply before understanding. It requires humility and a willingness to be transformed by what one encounters. In an age of instant comprehension and quick conclusions, this slow attentiveness felt quietly radical.

History and Leadership: Strength in Different Forms

The festival also turned its gaze to history and leadership, particularly through reflections on the unity of India. Discussions on the partition of Bengal and the partition of India in 1947 made one question: why was the countrywide overwhelming opposition to the partition of Bengal in 1905 not seen in 197 during the partition of the country? Against this backdrop, the lives of Lal Bahadur Shastri and Subhas Chandra Bose offered contrasting yet complementary models of leadership. Shastri's quiet integrity and moral strength demonstrated that leadership need not be loud to be effective. Netaji's fiery courage and uncompromising resolve showed the power of conviction and sacrifice. Both reflected different dimensions of India's soul—discipline and daring, humility and heroism—reminding us that strength can manifest in many forms.

Sri Aurobindo: A Mountain of Many Ranges

A session on Blue Humanities, which explored environmental crises and the breakdown of world systems, offered a striking reflection. The genius of Sri Aurobindo—encompassing philosophy, poetry, yoga, politics, cultural thought, and spirituality—is often difficult to fully apprehend because of its sheer vastness, depth, and density. In each domain, his work stands like an Everest, marked by both towering heights and profound inner ranges.

Science, Spirituality, and the Shiva-Shakti Synthesis

Discussions on Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, and a post-anthropocentric world order raised urgent questions about the future. Technology today promises abundance and ease, yet risks overwhelming life with distraction and excess. Sri Aurobindo never rejected science; rather, he insisted that material progress must be matched by spiritual evolution.

Sri Aurobindo's Five Dreams, which formed the thematic core of the festival, felt especially resonant in today's unsettled world. His vision of a free and united India, a resurgent Asia, a new world order, India's spiritual gift to humanity, and ultimately the evolution of a new species, emerged not as separate ideals but as interconnected strands of a single evolutionary movement. The fifth dream, in particular, seemed to gather the essence of the other four, pointing toward a transformation of human consciousness itself. Against the backdrop of global uncertainty and the disruptive acceleration of AI and quantum computing, these dreams acquire renewed significance. While the current changes appear destabilizing, they may also be catalytic. As technology increasingly takes over mechanical and routine tasks, it opens the possibility of freeing human energy for creativity, compassion, ethical reflection, and aesthetic expression. In this light, today's turbulence may be less a crisis than a transition—nudging humanity toward a deeper evolution and, as Sri Aurobindo envisioned, toward the Life Divine.

Stepping into the New Year: Shaking Off the Dust

As the festival coincided with the closing of the year, the words of the Mother especially resonate. She speaks of the need to shake off the past like falling dust, so that it does not soil “the virgin path which, at every moment, is opening before us.” She urges us to loosen old attachments, illusions, and weaknesses, and to press our foot firmly upon ignorance, obscurity, and egoism—so that we may move toward wider horizons, deeper compassion, and a more selfless love.

In the light of all that the Auroville Literature Festival offered, this felt like a living invitation rather than a lofty ideal. It asked us to pause and reflect: Why are we here? What truly matters? What must we release in order to grow? To step into the New Year consciously is to align our entire being—all that we are, all that we have, and all that we do—towards truth.

Conclusion: Living the Harmony

The Auroville Literature Festival was a delectable feast of thought and silence, body and spirit, tradition and future, diversity and unity.

As I look again at the flowers on my table, I am reminded that harmony cannot be forced. It reveals itself when we slow down, observe, listen, and allow life to arrange itself from within.

May the year ahead invite us to live a little more consciously, love a little more generously, and walk a little more lightly—shedding what no longer serves, and holding fast to what is essential.

Wishing all readers a luminous, meaningful, and beautiful New Year.



Public Land Beyond Private Claims

A Reflection on Land, Law, and Authority in Auroville

Over the past few years, questions have been raised and articles written by anyone with a pen (or a keyboard) about land consolidation within Auroville's Master Plan area. While questioning processes and authority is healthy in any evolving community, it is equally important that such questions rest on accurate readings of law, institutional mandate, and factual context.

When conjecture is presented as legal analysis, and personal grievance is framed as public doctrine, clarity becomes essential.

This article, therefore, seeks to restore that clarity.

A fundamental mischaracterization

The Auroville Foundation is not a Land Acquisition Authority

A recurring assumption underlying recent critiques is that the Auroville Foundation, its Governing Board, and its Secretary function analogously to a State land acquisition authority and are therefore bound by the procedures of the **RFCTLARR Act**, 2013.

This assumption is incorrect.

The **RFCTLARR Act**, 2013 (Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act) is India's law that governs how land is acquired for public purposes and certain private projects.

The **RFCTLARR Act** applies only when the State exercises its power of compulsory acquisition.

It does not govern voluntary transactions, negotiated exchanges, transfers between consenting legal parties, or internal reorganization of land already vested in a statutory body.

The Auroville Foundation does not possess eminent domain, does not issue acquisition notifications, and does not compel transfer under statutory force.

Where land is consolidated through mutually executed, registered exchange deeds, the **RFCTLARR Act** is simply not triggered. Section 46 of the Act itself recognizes voluntary arrangements as a separate category, precisely because they are not acquisitions.



It is also crucial to note that “resettlement” under the **RFCTLARR Act**, 2013, is a concept framed for land-owning citizens whose land is acquired, along with the statutory package of compensation, rehabilitation, and resettlement that follows such acquisition. That framework is not analogous to the situation of Auroville residents being asked to relocate from lands outside the Master Plan area after living there for many years.

In Auroville, land is vested in the Auroville Foundation, and residents occupy housing and land as permissive occupants, not as owners. In this context, “resettlement” can only mean being provided an alternative place to live, in accordance with the Master Plan’s statutory development norms (including permissible built area per person), provided the person continues to be a Registered Resident, compliant with the Residence Criteria.

Repeatedly invoking RFCTLARR in this context—by conflating the rights of land-owning Indian citizens with the obligations of the Foundation toward permissive occupants—creates an artificial impression of illegality where none exists. More tellingly, it reflects how deeply a mindset of personal ownership can take root, even though one of the most basic commitments of choosing to live in Auroville is to let go of the sense of possession and align with the spirit of stewardship.

“Public Authority” does not mean “Paralysed Authority.”

Yes, the Governing Board and Secretary are public authorities.

No, that does not mean every decision must follow the most onerous statutory process imaginable.

Indian public law is clear: Public authorities may act through executive discretion, especially when managing assets already vested in them, provided actions align with the statute under which they operate.

The Auroville Foundation Act vests land and assets in the Foundation for development in accordance with the Master Plan and the Charter.

That is the governing public purpose.

To suggest that every internal land reorganisation requires social impact assessments, public hearings, or rehabilitation frameworks under RFCTLARR is not only absurd because it does not apply to the Auroville context at all, and it is aimed merely at paralysing the very function the Government of India intended the Foundation to perform through the Auroville Foundation Act 1988.

The Misuse of “Public Purpose” as a Veto

“Public purpose” in Indian law is not defined by individual comfort, tenure length, or emotional attachment.

It is defined by statutory mandate.



In Auroville's case, public purpose is explicit:

- **implementation of the Master Plan,**
- **consolidation of city land,**
- **creation of shared infrastructure for 50,000 people (not 2000)**
- **orderly urban development.**

The argument that "public" should be read as the Residents' Assembly - and that too a very select definition of the "Residents' Assembly" which is a self-proclaimed title of a small clique of people who are all opposed to the decisions of the current Governing Board - is legally untenable. For the record, the Residents' Assembly is every single resident on the Register of Residents, not any subset or faction of it.

The Residents' Assembly is advisory under the Act, not a sovereign land authority. Public purpose cannot be reduced to a plebiscite of those immediately affected, nor vetoed by those whose occupation, however long-standing, conflicts with the approved plan. Let us not forget that The Mother wanted Auroville to be built first and then Residents invited to live in it - probably for the precise reason that she foresaw this sort of claim to "rights" and for the struggle between a multitude of "opinions" stemming from nothing more than personal preferences.

Auroville is meant for 50,000 people, not for the 2,000 adults alone living here for the time being.

The false equivalence between Stewardship and Ownership

A persistent rhetorical move is the conflation of long-term residence, ecological care, or emotional investment with legal title or veto power.

Stewardship does not convert occupation into ownership, nor does it override registered land titles, statutory vesting of land in the Foundation, or approved planning instruments.

Auroville land has always been held under conditional tenure, explicitly subordinate to the Master Plan and the implementation of the City.

This was never hidden, nor retroactively imposed. Just long forgotten, it seems.

Land Exchange Is Not "Private Enrichment"

Another serious distortion is the suggestion that land exchanges inherently constitute private enrichment or fiduciary breach.

In reality:

- Land exchange is a recognized planning tool worldwide,
- used precisely to avoid coercive acquisition
- and to consolidate fragmented parcels efficiently.

An exchange does not mean "giving away" public land arbitrarily.

It means substituting parcels to achieve a net public planning gain. In our case, an unmeasurable public gain of consolidating all the lands required to finally build The City The Earth Needs.

We are not called here to squat on 18 acres of precious beach land somewhere far away from the city and claim rights that we never had over it.

Unless evidence is shown of personal benefit to decision-makers, diversion from Master Plan objectives, or violation of statutory prohibitions, the allegation remains rhetorical, not legal.

Natural Justice is not a weapon against planning

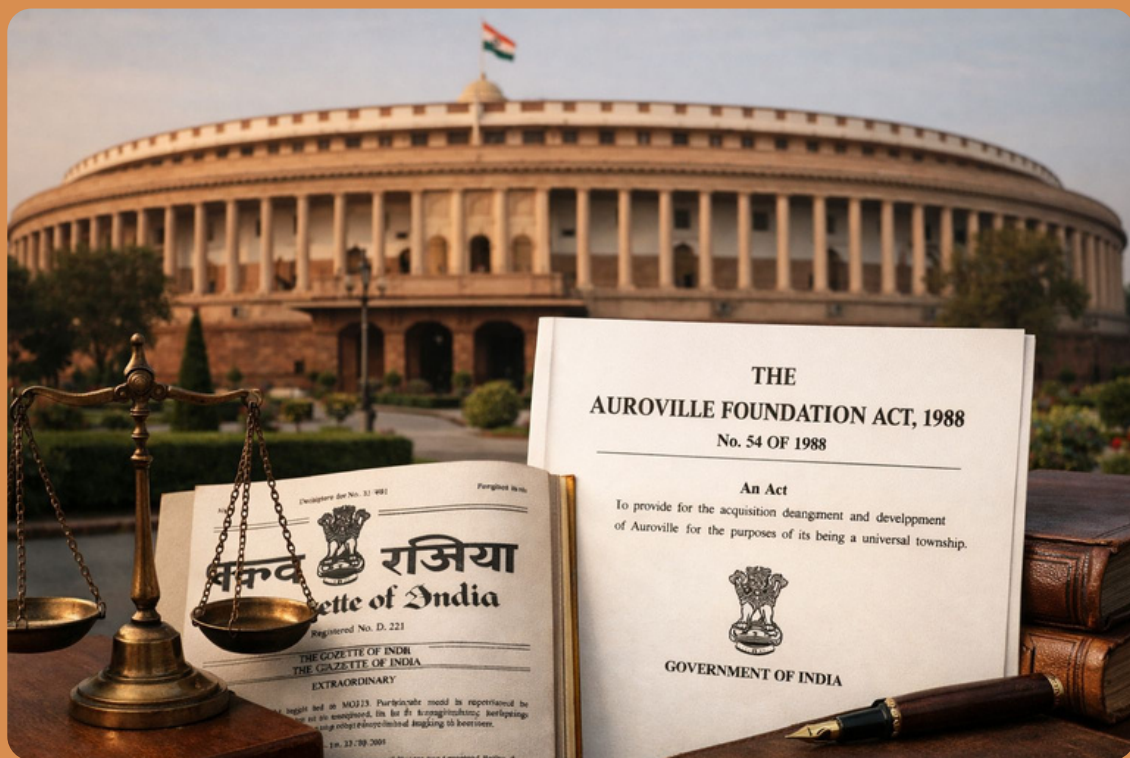
Natural justice requires fairness, reasoned decisions, absence of arbitrariness.

It does not require consensus, unanimity, or immunity from outcomes one disagrees with.

Being informed of a decision does not equate to having the power to block it.

Being heard does not guarantee that objections prevail.

To suggest otherwise is to redefine natural justice as a right to perpetual status quo, which courts have consistently rejected.



The real risk: eroding institutional authority through misinformation

The gravest concern is not disagreement.

It is the systematic delegitimisation of statutory authority through selective legal quotation, speculative interpretations, and emotionally charged narratives presented as legal doctrine. Worse yet, it is the presentation of falsehood as fact.

Such approaches do not protect Auroville. They are aimed at nothing more than undermining confidence in governance, confusing residents about their legal position, and creating fear where clarity is needed.

Responsibility over Rights

A lot is said about the rights of residents. It is equally important to speak about responsibility. For decades, residents—often with minimal institutional oversight—were entrusted with the sensitive task of helping to consolidate the remaining lands required to build the City. Yet alongside genuine service, there have also been persistent and serious allegations over the years about unethical practices in land dealings: use of unaccounted money, negotiations conducted in ways that appeared to artificially inflate prices, and arrangements suggestive of proxy/benami-style control over lands within the Master Plan area. Whatever the full truth in each instance, the cumulative effect has been damaging: it risks eroding the trust with which donors and well-wishers contribute to land consolidation for the Mother's work.

What is also telling is that many of the loudest voices today, who present themselves as guardians of legality and ethics, were largely silent when these concerns were widely spoken of within the community. That silence has allowed a culture of impunity—whether advertent or inadvertent—to take root.

Against this backdrop, the present hue and cry around land consolidation and exchange appears to draw from two underlying impulses. First, a resistance—conscious or otherwise, to the practical steps required to consolidate City lands and finally move implementation forward. Second, an attempt to reclaim influence for those who have lost informal leverage or benefit from opaque land-related arrangements. When transparency and consolidation advance, certain entrenched interests inevitably feel threatened—and that, more than principle, often explains the intensity of the opposition.

Closing Perspective

Auroville's future depends on implementation, not perpetual contestation, on lawful authority, not narrative pressure, on planned evolution, not frozen occupation.

The Governing Board and Secretary do not act as private land dealers, nor as arbitrary rulers. They act as statutory custodians executing a mandate given - often in difficult circumstances, balancing competing interests, and having to make decisions that will never please everyone.

Discomfort does not equal illegality.

Change does not equal injustice.

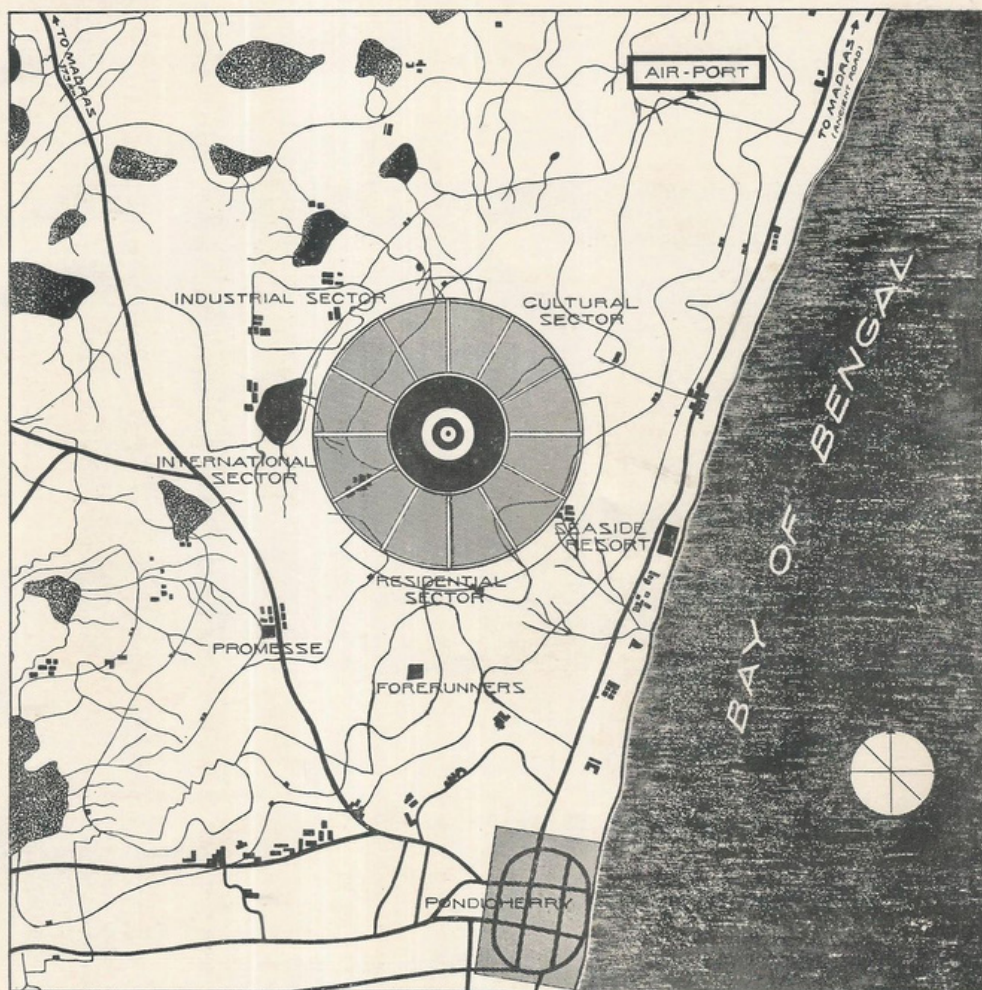
And development, when anchored in law and plan, is not betrayal - it is responsibility.

Auroville will move forward not by resisting every decision that unsettles, but by ensuring that critique remains accurate, proportionate, and grounded in the very legal and ethical frameworks it claims to defend.

For those who are still waiting for a "divine intervention"... The Divine has already intervened in 2021, if you have the eyes to see.

In faith and service to the Divine Mother.

— Sindhuja, Auroville Resident, Contributor for Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter



Geographical position of Auroville, 175 Km. south of Madras

What is 'New' in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga



Sri Aurobindo gave repeated emphasis on his book *Essays on the Gita*, wishing all to read it to prepare for his new path of yoga, wishing all to know what was concealed in the dense verse of the old-new text.

He shows how the Gita hides in its texture the "synthesis" of the three paths, Karma, Jnana, and Devotion.

He highlights the issue of equanimity, which the Gita prescribes as essential to yoga.

— **Prof. Goutam Ghoshal,**
Governing Board

In the *Life Divine*, he goes back to the Upanishads to speak of the Purushantaratma, or the Psychic being, which is the leader of his yoga, along with the Cosmic Feminine, of whom he elaborately explains in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

As for Nirvana, he speaks of it as the starting point of his yoga, because his yoga is earth-oriented, an effort to change the earth-consciousness, as a contrast to the old ways of liberation of the individual personality by ascending above. Sri Aurobindo brings in the issue of descent, an obscured or untold element in the Vedas.

**Thy golden Light came down into my feet;
My earth is now Thy playfield and Thy seat.**

It is not solo. This yogic labour is meant to light up others surrounding us. One has to lift the earth, like Shelley's Skylark, and simultaneously one has to bring down the light from above. He indicates in two poems clubbed together in his later life. In the first he goes down into the Silence of the Infinite; in the second, he returns to earth to uplift it.

Rise with the world in thy bosom

Sri Aurobindo was the first to tell us how the individual and the collective would work simultaneously and harmoniously. The final goal is the creation of a new species beyond Man but through Man.



Standing Report & Sitting Reality

Auroville is often spoken of as an ideal — a city born of aspiration, dedicated to human unity, guided by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. What is less often acknowledged is that ideals, left unattended, can rot into rituals. Institutions, left unexamined, can quietly replace purpose with habit. What we are witnessing today in Auroville is not a crisis imposed from outside, but a reckoning long deferred.

The recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report on Auroville has been received with disproportionate drama. It is being waved about — by different sides, for different reasons — as if it were a verdict. It is not. At best, it is a mirror. And mirrors do not solve problems; they only reflect them.

The real question is not what the Committee said, but how we, as a collective, are responding to it.

The clash beneath the noise

The tensions in Auroville are often framed as ideological: internationalism versus nationalism, freedom versus governance, pioneers versus newcomers. These binaries are convenient and largely false. The deeper issue is institutional fatigue — the slow erosion of collective responsibility, replaced by personality-driven influence, informal power networks, and habitual resistance to structural change.

For decades, Auroville has relied on moral authority without building robust systems to carry it. Decisions have been mediated by trust rather than process, by proximity rather than accountability. This worked — until it didn't. When pressure mounted, the absence of resilient institutions built within the Residents' Assembly became visible.

Some factions respond to this by litigating, externalising conflict, or appealing to international sentiment. Others respond by retreating into rhetoric, assuming that ideals alone will protect the City. Both approaches avoid the harder task: redesigning how we organise ourselves.

The Standing Committee report: diagnosis, not deliverance

The Committee's recommendations — improved governance, clearer tenure, consultation on planning, land consolidation, sustainable funding — are neither radical nor new. They echo conversations Auroville has been having internally for years. Their significance lies not in originality, but in the fact that they expose our collective inability to resolve these matters ourselves. Moreover, most of the the recommendations are to the Government and the Ministry, and for us residents, there is nothing as such to be jubilant or mourn about.

Yet the report is now being used tactically. For some, it validates a narrative of siege. For others, it becomes a convenient cover, shifting responsibility upward to government structures instead of inward to collective responsibility and reform. In both cases, the report becomes a shield — not a spur to action.



Where we have failed — repeatedly

Auroville's organisational failures are not mysterious.

We personalise leadership and then lament weak institutions. We delay land consolidation and then panic when land becomes scarce. We invoke internationalism but fail to activate the International Zone meaningfully. We demand autonomy while resisting transparency.

The Master Plan has existed for decades. The land boundaries are known. The legal framework is clear. What has been missing is not permission, but will — the willingness to place collective interest above private comfort.

Internationalism, too, must be reclaimed from nostalgia. Being “international” does not mean privileging a few geographies or identities; it means consciously building structures that allow all cultures to participate meaningfully.

Tactical arrogance and its cost

One of the gravest mistakes any interest group can make is to confuse tactical manoeuvres with strategic progress. Inviting external political actors into internal conflicts without broad-based consultation may produce headlines, but it corrodes redlines of trust. Conventional politics is not a neutral tool; it extracts a price — and Auroville pays it in credibility. And, in other ways. Some known, and many unknown.

Every leaked letter, every anonymous brief, every theatrical intervention weakens the very autonomy it claims to defend. This is not idealism; it is short-term calculation masquerading as principle.

What actually moves the needle

If Auroville is to survive — not sentimentally, but structurally — certain shifts are unavoidable.

First, self-organisation must return to daylight. Informal influence and shadow mechanisms must give way to traceable decisions and documented processes.

Second, the Residents' Assembly must evolve beyond arithmetic majorities and emotional mobilisation. It must become a space of work — finite mandates, rotating responsibilities, and accountability tied to outcomes.

Third, external political engagement must be disciplined, transparent, and collective — or not undertaken at all.

Finally, media must be used to articulate Auroville's work, not to air its internal fractures.

None of this is glamorous. None of it feels “spiritual.” But without this hygiene, no higher aspiration can hold.

Beyond piety, toward responsibility

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother did not call for the worship of ideals divorced from action. They called for transformation — inner and outer. Perhaps, Human Unity may emerge from the patient construction of forms that can hold diversity without coercion.

Unity without organisation dissolves into potluck sentiment. An organisation without consciousness degenerates into control. The task is to hold both rigorously.

Maybe, Auroville is not meant to be a museum of past sacrifices, nor a battlefield for ideological purity. It is a 'living' experiment, subject to constant trial. If we continue to choose personal certainty over collective discipline, the City will slowly hollow itself out.

The choice is stark: remain trapped in recurring dramas, or do the uncelebrated work of rebuilding trust, systems, and shared responsibility.

The city the Earth needs will not be saved by declarations. It will be saved — by all means — by work.

— Lakshay Dharan, Aware Auroville



The Auroville Literary Festival, A Celebration of Language, Thought, and Living Traditions

The second edition of the Auroville Literary Festival revealed that language is far more than a tool of expression; it is a cultural lever, a means of connection, memory, and collective reflection. The simultaneous presence of four languages, **Tamil, Sanskrit, English, and French**, was not a decorative gesture of multiculturalism, but a living structure that enabled a profound form of mutual listening, moving well beyond mere translation.

In this space, Tamil, as the lived language of the land and its people, carried a memory rooted in daily life, local history, and the rich lifeworld of South India. Sanskrit, resonant with intellectual depth and cosmic significance, opened expansive horizons of thought, myth, and philosophy. French, intimately linked to Auroville's own history, acted as both a carrier of European intellectual heritage and a bridge between lived experience and philosophical reflection. English, as a mediating language, provided a platform for broader dialogue, facilitating communication among diverse voices and global audiences.

The interplay of these languages created a shared field of meaning, where each illuminated a facet of the whole, enabling human experience to be understood from multiple perspectives. Language became memory, a living source for the present, and the possibility of dialogue that embraced differences. This experience resonated profoundly with the spirit of Auroville, where diversity is the essential condition of unity.

The festival thus showed how language can transcend mere communication, becoming a space for collective reflection, mutual listening, and the redefinition of human bonds, in a world where language often enforces boundaries, a reminder that it can redefine the possibility of being together.

Sanskrit: A Gateway to India's Timeless Wisdom

Sanskrit, with its history spanning several millennia, is a gateway to the philosophy, wisdom, and spiritual arts of India. Four eminent speakers exemplified its living power: Dr. Sampadananda Mishra (specialist in Sanskrit grammar, philosophy, and Yoga; founder of the 24-hour Sanskrit radio channel Divyavani; Director of the Centre for Human Sciences at Rishihood University), Udaya Shreyas (founder of The Sanskrit Channel, combining traditional teaching, storytelling, and modern technology), Sri Rangan Ramakrishnan (spiritual teacher, Ramayana scholar, founder of Shruti Ram Gurukulam and Sitalakshmi Gurukulam, author of the ten-volume Rig Veda Bhashyam), and Sushrut Badhe (disciple of Shri M.R. Dalme, author of works including Bhagvad Gita: Rhythm of Krishna and Rhythm of Veda, inspired by Sri Aurobindo). Their presence offered a living encounter with India's timeless wisdom, illuminating the mind and inviting the spirit on an inner journey.



Tamil: A Dynamic Tradition of Poetry, Ethics, and Collective Life

Tamil, one of the world's oldest living languages, carries an unbroken memory of poetry, ethics, philosophy, and collective life in South India. Five distinguished figures exemplified its continuity and dynamism: R. Meenakshi (author of 20 books, founder of the Illiangarkal Education Centre in Auroville, engaged in education and social work for over 45 years, former editor of Auroville Seythimadal), Jataayu (scholar of the Ramayana and Tamil literature, bringing Hindu philosophy into contemporary dialogue), Dr. S. Jagannathan (Assistant Professor of Tamil Literature, specialist in Sri Vaishnava studies, author of *Kambanil Kathiruppu*), Dr. Rajalakshmi Srinivasan (former Chairperson of Poornaprajna Samsoda Mandiram Research Institute, with over 200 *Katha Kalakshebams* and translations), and Sudha Seshayyan (former Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, author of over 30 publications, Tamil translator of works by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam). Together, they offered a living image of Tamil as a tradition rooted in history yet alive in the present.

English: Convergence of Thought, Politics, Science, and Public Responsibility

The English section served as a convergence of thought, politics, science, art, and lived experience. From Narad (Richard Eggenberger, long-time member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, musician, poet, and founder of Om Choirs) and Devika Cariapa (award-winning author making history tangible for younger generations) to Dr. Mritunjay Guha Majumdar, Chandrachur Ghose (bestselling historian), Dr. Jayanti Ravi, Sridhar Vembu (founder of Zoho), and figures including Dr. Sanjeev Chopra, Prof. Hindol Sengupta, Arundhati Subramaniam, Chaitanya Giri, Prof. Anupama Kundoo, Amb. Navtej Sarna, Amb. T. S. Tirumurti, Harsh Gupta Madhusudan, and Aravindan Neelakandan—this section transformed English into a living stage for reflection on power, truth, history, and collective responsibility, where dialogue became a cultural and political act.

French: A Living Space for Thought, Theatre, and Intercultural Dialogue

French maintains a vibrant presence in contemporary intellectual traditions. Four distinguished figures illustrated its living practice: Gérald Garutti (writer, theatre director, translator, and lecturer at Sciences Po), Jean-Paul Sermadiras (actor with over thirty productions, adapter of Dostoevsky's works), Jean-Yves Lung (joined Auroville in 1993, teaching history and Sanskrit at Last School since 1996), and Dr. Ritu Tyagi (Associate Professor at Pondicherry University, researcher in postcolonial and feminist Francophone literature). They revealed French not merely as a language, but as a space for thought, performance, critique, and intercultural dialogue.

The festival concluded as a vibrant testament to how language can unite, inspire, and illuminate the shared human journey.



On the evening of December 17, the opening day of the Tamil Literature Festival, **Selvi Vaidehi Rangan** delivered a luminous performance that deserves special remembrance. Through the traditional art of Puranic storytelling, she wove together the ancient tale of **Savitri** from Mahabharata with the profound spiritual symbolism revealed by Sri Aurobindo.

In her narration, the timeless story of Savitri's love became a living symbol of the soul's evolution, touching hearts across generations.

With devotional eloquence, Vaidehi's voice carried a mantric resonance as she recited lines from Savitri, awakening a quiet transformation in the atmosphere. The audience found themselves drawn into a space where art became sadhana, and storytelling, a path to the spirit.

This moment held historical significance as well, for the first time since Sri Aurobindo composed Savitri, his epic vision was expressed through the living cadence of traditional storytelling.

The poem penned by **Dr. Rangan, Vedic and Ramayana scholar**, in homage to Savitri and rendered with sacred intensity by his daughter, added yet another dimension of spiritual grace to an evening that bridged the ancient and the eternal.



A Tango of Spirit and Matter

**“Spirit shall look through Matter’s gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit’s face.”**

In recent years, growing attempts to bridge quantum mechanics and spirituality have generated genuine excitement. There is intellectual brilliance, sincerity, and a clear movement away from rigid materialism. Consciousness is increasingly spoken of as fundamental to reality. Yet something essential often remains missing. The bridge, more often than not, stays at the level of ideas—elegant, persuasive, but rarely embodied in the lived realities of daily life.

What we are now beginning to “rediscover” feels uncannily familiar.

When the West Rediscovered What Was Already Known

For much of the modern Western world, integral spiritual visions have remained peripheral—admired at times, selectively referenced, but rarely engaged with as complete and rigorous frameworks of reality. The dominant narrative of progress has long been shaped by materialism: matter as primary, consciousness as secondary, and life as an accidental by-product of physical processes. That narrative, however, is beginning to fracture.

Recently, a widely circulated article celebrated a contemporary thinker credited with “rediscovering” consciousness as the foundation of matter. While this recognition is significant, it carries a deeper irony. What is presented as a breakthrough was articulated, lived, and systematically explored decades ago by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

They were not philosophers speculating from the margins. They were explorers of both inner and outer reality. For them, consciousness was not merely fundamental—it was evolutionary, dynamic, and transformative. Spirit and matter were not opposing principles, but two movements of a single unfolding reality.

Spirituality, therefore, was never an abstract pursuit or an escape from life. It was meant to act upon life itself—thought and emotion, relationships and society, culture and the body, even matter down to its cellular foundations.

Sri Aurobindo’s words in *Savitri* are not poetic idealism; they point toward a destiny where spirit and matter learn to recognize one another in an unfolding dance of consciousness—where science and spirituality meet not in theory alone, but in lived transformation.



If Truth Cannot Be Lived, Is It Truth at All?

A persistent question returns: what is the value of the highest philosophy or the most refined science if it cannot be integrated into life? Of what use are enlightenment or cosmic theories if they do not change how we think, relate, suffer, heal, and act?

Sri Aurobindo confronted this question directly. He dismantled fragmented approaches to spirituality that treated inner realization as a flight from life. In their place, he presented Integral Yoga and declared with uncompromising clarity:

“All life is Yoga.”

This was not an inspiring phrase but a demand. Spirituality had to descend into life—into work, relationships, society, and the body itself. Otherwise, it remained incomplete.

Spirituality as Conscious Evolution

For Sri Aurobindo, spirituality was not a ladder out of the world. It was the secret fire within evolution itself. Existence, he saw, unfolds through a double movement:

first involution, where the Divine descends and conceals itself within matter; then evolution, where that hidden consciousness gradually awakens through life and mind, pressing toward a higher, yet-unmanifested possibility.

Modern science now touches the edges of this truth. Through the double-slit experiment and the observer’s effect, quantum physics reveals that observation influences reality—that what exists as potential collapses into form through consciousness. The universe appears participatory, unfinished, alive with possibility.

This insight echoes ancient wisdom. We hold this divine potential inside us - it is symbolized by the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh—creation, sustenance, and dissolution occurring in every moment. Each thought, choice, and intention participates in this rhythm. Conscious evolution means creating what serves life, sustaining what supports growth, and dissolving what no longer aligns.

As Sri Aurobindo wrote, **“The evolution of consciousness is the central motive of terrestrial existence.”**

Human beings, therefore, are not passive spectators of life, but active co-creators of reality.

From this perspective, humanity is not the peak of evolution, but a transitional stage—a bridge toward a higher, divinised consciousness yet to fully manifest on Earth. A new destiny awaits: the emergence of the supramental consciousness, capable of transforming mind, life, and matter itself. This future is not imposed by nature; it is invited through conscious choice, inner discipline, and collective aspiration.

The Yoga of the Cells: When Spirit Meets Matter

The Mother carried this vision directly into the body. She discovered that the cells possess consciousness—obedient, habitual, and deeply responsive. She described them as “stupidly good-willed.” They follow whatever is impressed upon them.

There are no immutable physical laws, she observed—only habits of matter. And habits can be changed.

When consciousness descends with peace, wideness, and joy, the cells respond. This is the Yoga of the Cells, where spirit educates matter and matter responds with total goodwill. Here, science and spirituality truly meet—not in explanation, but in transformation. Not as escape, but as the divinisation of life on Earth.

A New Paradigm: Toward a New Earth

This marks the profound difference between recent attempts to unite science and spirituality and the Integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. They were not content to explain reality. They sought to transform it.

They offered a new paradigm in which spirituality is not a withdrawal from life, but the means to divinise life—individually and collectively.



As consciousness stabilizes in individuals, it naturally seeks expression in relationships, communities, and social structures. They envisaged an enlightened society: a conscious collective forming a living nucleus of truth-consciousness, capable of radiating a new possibility for humanity.

The Invitation

The question they leave us with is simple and unavoidable:

If spirituality cannot change our lives here—our behaviour, our bodies, our relationships, our world—then what does it truly mean for?

Their answer was not belief or doctrine.

It was a path.

A living experiment.

A conscious journey where spirit and matter learn to recognize one another.

The dance has already begun.

The invitation is simply to step into it—consciously.

— Preeti Mahurkar , Life Coach, Author, Integral yoga & human development trainer



Contemplation on being a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness

In the Charter of Auroville, there is only one essential condition for those who wish to live there: to be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

This single statement is radical in its simplicity and profound in its implications. It does not define citizenship in terms of nationality, belief systems, social roles, or personal ambitions. Instead, it proposes service as an intentional choice of life, as the very signature of material existence when aligned with a higher truth.

To serve, in this sense, is not a temporary action or a moral obligation imposed from outside. It is a deliberate orientation of being, a way of standing in the world. Service becomes the axis around which life turns.

To fully understand the depth of this condition, it is useful to explore the etymological roots of the words "servitor" and "to serve," for language often preserves ancient wisdom that has long been forgotten by modern usage.

In its most ancient Indo-European origins, we find the root *ser*, from which the Latin *servus* and *servatur* emerge, and connected with the Sanskrit *seva*.

Interestingly, *servus* did not originally signify someone humiliated or deprived of dignity. In its earliest meaning, the *servus* was the one who had been saved, protected, preserved. The *servatur* was the one kept safe under the protection of a higher authority.

From this perspective, to be a servitor of the Divine Consciousness automatically implies being under the protection of Grace. Service is not abandonment to vulnerability but rather conscious placement within a field of protection, guidance, and meaning. One serves not because one is powerless, but because one recognizes a greater order worthy of trust.

This ancient paradox appears clearly in the expression *Servator Mundi* — the Savior of the world. The savior is simultaneously the servant of the world, because salvation does not come from domination, but from total participation in the burden of existence. Sri Aurobindo captures this paradox beautifully in Aphorism 512, where he suggests that to be happily the master of the world, one must also be its slave. True mastery arises only when the ego relinquishes its need to possess and control. No ownership.

The Sanskrit tradition adds another essential dimension to this understanding through the word *seva*. Derived from the root *sev*, *seva* denotes devotional service, service offered not for reward but out of love, reverence, and inner alignment. From the same root comes *seu*, meaning to follow. Service, therefore, is not merely action; it is following the movement of Grace, allowing oneself to be guided rather than insisting on personal direction.



In this light, service becomes a dynamic relationship with the Divine Consciousness — listening, responding, and adjusting one's life to its flow. It is an act of trust.

This attitude of surrender finds a powerful symbolic expression when the archangel Gabriel announces to Mary a miracle that defies all human logic — an impossibility — her response is simple and absolute: “Ecce ancilla Domini” — “here is the servant of the Lord.”

This is not resignation; it is total surrender.

The word surrender itself reveals something profound when examined etymologically. It comes from sub-rendere: to give back completely, to place entirely into the hands of another. To surrender to the Divine Consciousness is to return fully what was already given — one's life, capacities, and existence — and to recognize that nothing truly belongs to the individual self.

In doing so, one does not lose freedom; rather, one enters into a deeper form of it. To place oneself at the service of the Divine Consciousness means to trust its wisdom more than one's own intelligence, to allow it to shape action, rhythm, and purpose. And once again, it means to live under its protection.

This mystical and contemplative approach to the condition set by The Mother for living in Auroville as Aurovilian offers a radical shift in perspective. It invites certainty — not the certainty of personal success or fulfilment, but the certainty of being guided and held.

Such an understanding must inevitably transform the fundamental question one brings to Auroville. Instead of asking, “What can I gain from Auroville? What does Auroville offer me?”, the servitor asks, “What can I give to Auroville? How can I serve its manifestation?”

A servitor does not place conditions. Service is not negotiated. It does not depend on recognition, comfort, or personal advantage. It arises from an inner alignment with purpose.

To be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness, then, is not a role to perform but a state of being. It is the acceptance that true growth, true protection, and true fulfilment emerge not from taking, but from giving oneself entirely to the unfolding of a higher will. To our own Source.

In this way, Grance is both offered and received; we become its channel, and we can be transformed by it. That is why Sri Aurobindo adds in the aphorism 512: God's servant is something; God's slave is greater.

— ***Giacomo Colomba, Willing Servitor of the Divine Consciousness: The Aurovilian Condition***





From the darkness of that room
 From the immensity of the ocean waves
 From amidst the burning fire of gazes, of words
 From the heart of the solitude of dark and endless forests

Everywhere, there were traces of you
 Everywhere, you were
 And now I am on my way, Toward you
 Toward the veins of the sunrise
 Upon the Sakura blossoms of Mount Yoshino
 Or the sweet scent of summer oranges in the orchards of Valencia
 Or perhaps among the rustling of autumn leaves
 Of the Chinars of Srinagar
 And perhaps the silence and the whiteness of snow
 Settled in the homeland

Everywhere, you will be
 And I am still on the journey

— from your little child, Anita

12.2.69.

Be more eager
 for truth than for
 success.

blessings

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