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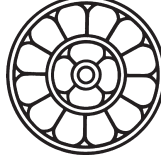
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXXI

No. 3

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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KRISHNA

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth
 Into this universe terrible and sweet,
I who have felt the hungry heart of earth
 Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.

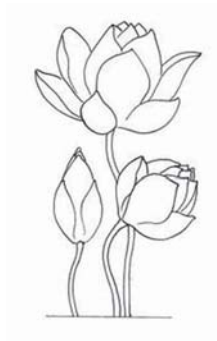
I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,
 And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,
And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise
 And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.

Nearer and nearer now the music draws,
 Life shudders with a strange felicity;
All Nature is a wide enamoured pause
 Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.

For this one moment lived the ages past;
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Collected Poems, CWSA Vol. 2, p. 608)



INTERNATIONALISM AND HUMAN UNITY

The great necessity, then, and the great difficulty is to help this idea of humanity which is already at work upon our minds and has even begun in a very slight degree to influence from above our actions, and turn it into something more than an idea, however strong, to make it a central motive and a fixed part of our nature. Its satisfaction must become a necessity of our psychological being, just as the family idea or the national idea has become each a psychological motive with its own need of satisfaction. But how is this to be done? The family idea had the advantage of growing out of a primary vital need in our being and therefore it had not the least difficulty in becoming a psychological motive and need; for our readiest and strongest mental motives and psychological needs are those which grow out of our vital necessities and instincts. The clan and the tribe ideas had a similar origin, less primary and compelling, and therefore looser and more dissoluble; but still they arose from the vital necessity in human nature for aggregation and the ready basis given to it by the inevitable physical growth of the family into clan or tribe. These were natural aggregations, evolutionary forms already prepared on the animal level.

The nation idea, on the contrary, did not arise from a primary vital need, but from a secondary or even tertiary necessity which resulted not from anything inherent in our vital nature, but from circumstances, from environmental evolution; it arose not from a vital, but from a geographical and historical necessity. And we notice that as one result it had to be created most commonly by force, force of circumstances partly, no doubt, but also by physical force, by the power of the king and the conquering tribe converted into a military and dominant State. Or else it came by a reaction against force, a revolt against conquest and domination that brought a slow or sudden compactness to peoples who, though geographically or even historically and culturally one, had lacked power of cohesion and remained too conscious of an original heterogeneity or of local and regional and other divisions. But still the necessity was there and the nation form after many failures and false successes got into being, and the psychological motive of patriotism, a sign of the growth of a conscious national ego, arose in the form as the expression of its soul and the guarantee of its durability. For without such a soul, such a psychological force and presence within the frame, there can be no guarantee of durability. Without it, what circumstances have created, circumstances easily will destroy. It was for this reason that the ancient world failed to create nations, except on a small scale, little clans and small regional nations of brief duration and usually of loose structure; it created only artificial empires which went to pieces and left chaos behind them.

What then of this international unity now in the first obscure throes of the pre-formatory state resembling a ferment of cells drawing together for amalgamation?

What is the compelling necessity behind it? If we look at outward things only, the necessity is much less direct and much less compelling than any that preceded it. There is here no vital necessity; mankind as a whole can get on well enough without international unity, so far as mere living goes; it will not be at all a perfect, rational or ideal collective living of the race, — but after all where is there yet any element in human life or society which is perfect, rational or ideal? As yet at least none; still we get on somehow with life, because the vital man in us, who is the dominant element in our instincts and in our actions, cares for none of these things and is quite satisfied with any just tolerable or any precariously or partly agreeable form of living, because that is all to which he is accustomed and all therefore that he feels to be necessary. The men who are not satisfied, the thinkers, the idealists, are always a minority and in the end an ineffectual minority, because though always in the end they do get their way partly, their victory yet turns into a defeat; for the vital man remains still the majority and degrades the apparent success into a pitiful parody of their rational hope, their clear-sighted ideal or their strong counsel of perfection.

The geographical necessity for a unification of this kind does not exist, unless we consider that it has been created through the drawing closer together of the earth and its inhabitants by Science and her magical lessening of physical distances and attenuation of barriers. But whatever may happen in the future, this is as yet not sufficient; earth is still large enough and her divisions still real enough for her to do without any formal unity. If there is any strong need, it may be described — if such an epithet can be applied to a thing in the present and the future — as a historical necessity, that is, a need which has arisen as the result of certain actual circumstances that have grown up in the evolution of international relations. And that need is economic, political, mechanical, likely under certain circumstances to create some tentative or preliminary framework, but not at first a psychological reality which will vivify the frame. Moreover, it is not yet sufficiently vital to be precisely a necessity; for it amounts mainly to a need for the removal of certain perils and inconveniences, such as the constant danger of war, and at most to the strong desirability of a better international coordination. But by itself this creates only a possibility, not even a moral certainty, of a first vague sketch and loose framework of unity which may or may not lead to something more close and real.

But there is another power than that of external circumstance which we have a right to take into consideration. For behind all the external circumstances and necessities of which we are more easily aware in Nature, there is always an internal necessity in the being, a will and a design in Nature itself which precedes the outward signals of its development and in spite of all obstacles and failures must in the long end inevitably get itself realised. Nowadays we can see this truth everywhere in Nature down to her lowest forms; a will in the very seed of the being, not quite conscious or only partially conscious in the form itself, but still present there in Nature. It is subconscious or even inconscient if you like, but it is still a blind will,

a mute idea which contains beforehand the form it is going to create, is aware of a necessity other than the environmental, a necessity contained in the very being itself, and creates persistently and inevitably a form that best answers to the necessity, however we may labour to interfere with or thwart its operations.

This is true biologically, but it is also, though in a more subtle and variable way, psychologically true. Now the very nature of man is that of an individual who on one side is always emphasising and developing his individual being to the extent of his power but who is also driven by the Idea or Truth within him to unify himself with others of his species, to join himself to them or agglutinate them to him, to create human groups, aggregates and collectivities. And if there is an aggregate or collectivity which it is possible for him to realise but is not yet realised, we may be sure that that too in the end he will create. This will in him is not always or often quite conscient or foreseeing; it is often largely subconscious, but even then it is eventually irresistible. And if it gets into his conscious mind, as the international idea has now done, we may count on a more rapid evolution. Such a will in Nature creates for itself favourable external circumstances and happenings or finds them created for it in the stress of events. And even if they are insufficient, she will still often use them beyond their apparent power of effectivity, not minding the possibility of failure, for she knows that in the end she will succeed and every experience of failure will help to better the eventual success.

Well then, it may be said, let us trust to this inevitable will in Nature and let us follow out her method of operation. Let us create anyhow this framework, any framework of the aggregate; for she knows already the complete form she intends and she will work it out eventually in her own time; by the power of the idea and our will to realise it, by help of strong force of circumstances, by pressure of all kinds, by physical force even, if need be, since that too seems still to be a part of her necessary machinery, let us create it. Let us have the body; the soul will grow in the body. And we need not mind if the bodily formation is artificial with at first a small or no conscious psychological reality to vivify it. That will begin to form itself as soon as the body has been formed. For the nation too was at first more or less artificially formed out of incoherent elements actually brought together by the necessity of a subconscious idea, though apparently it was done only by physical force and the force of circumstances. As a national ego formed which identified itself with the geographical body of the nation and developed in it the psychological instinct of national unity and the need of its satisfaction, so a collective human ego will develop in the international body and will evolve in it the psychological instinct of human unity and the need of its satisfaction. That will be the guarantee of duration. And that possibly is how the thing will happen, man being what he is; indeed if we cannot do better, it will so happen, since happen somehow it must, whether in the worse way or the better.

It may be as well to review here briefly in the light of these considerations the

main possibilities and powers which are shaping us towards such an end in the present world conditions. The old means of unification, conquest by a single great Power, which would reduce part of the world by force and bring the remaining nations into the condition of dependencies, protectorates and dependent allies, the whole forming the basic structure of a great final unification, — this was the character of the ancient Roman precedent, — does not seem immediately possible. It would require a great predominance of force simultaneously by sea and land,¹ an irresistibly superior science and organisation and with all this a constantly successful diplomacy and an invincible good fortune. If war and diplomacy are still to be the decisive factors in international politics in the future as in the past, it would be rash to predict that such a combination may not arise, and if other means fail, it must arise; for there is nothing that can be set down as impossible in the chances of the future, and the urge in Nature always creates its own means. But, at present, the possibilities of the future do not seem to point in this direction. There is, on the other hand, a very strong possibility of the whole earth, or at least the three continents of the eastern hemisphere, being dominated by three or four great empires largely increased in extent of dominion, spheres of influence, protectorates, and thereby exercising a pre-eminence which they could either maintain by agreements, avoiding all causes of conflict, or in a rivalry which would be the cause of fresh wars and changes. This would normally have been the result of the great European conflict.

But there has struck across this possibility a revived strength of the idea of nationality expressed in the novel formula of the principle of self-determination to which the great world empires have had to pay at least a verbal homage. The idea of international unity to which this intervention of the revived force of nationality is leading, takes the form of a so-called League of Nations. Practically, however, the League of Nations under present conditions or any likely to be immediately realised would still mean the control of the earth by a few great Powers, — a control that would be checked only by the necessity of conciliating the sympathy and support of the more numerous smaller or less powerful nations. On the force and influence of these few would rest practically, if not admittedly, the decision of all important debatable questions. And without it there could be no chance of enforcing the decisions of the majority against any recalcitrant great Power or combination of Powers. The growth of democratic institutions would perhaps help to minimise the chances of conflict and of the abuse of power, — though that is not at all certain; but it would not alter this real character of the combination.

In all this there is no immediate prospect of any such form of unification as would give room for a real psychological sense of unity, much less necessitate its growth. Such a form might evolve; but we should have to trust for it to the chapter of accidents or at best to the already declared urge in Nature expressed in the

1. Now also by air.

internationalist idea. On that side, there was at one time a possibility which seemed to be very suddenly and rapidly growing into something more, the emergence of a powerful party in all the advanced countries of the world pledged to internationalism, conscious of its necessity as a first condition for their other aims and more and more determined to give it precedence and to unite internationally to bring it about. That combination of the intellectuals with Labour which created the Socialist parties in Germany, Russia and Austria, formed anew recently the Labour party in England and has had its counterparts in most other European countries, seems to be travelling in that direction. This world-wide movement which made internationalism and Labour rule its two main principles, had already created the Russian revolution and seemed ready to bring about another great socialistic revolution in central Europe. It was conceivable that this party might everywhere draw together. By a chain of revolutions such as took place in the nineteenth century and of less violent but still rapid evolutions brought about by the pressure of their example, or even by simply growing into the majority in each country, the party might control Europe. It might create counterparts of itself in all the American republics and in Asiatic countries. It might by using the machinery of the League of Nations or, where necessary, by physical force or economic or other pressure persuade or compel all the nations into some more stringent system of international unification. A World-State or else a close confederation of democratic peoples might be created with a common governing body for the decision of principles and for all generally important affairs or at least for all properly international affairs and problems; a common law of the nations might grow up and international courts to administer it and some kind of system of international police control to maintain and enforce it. In this way, by the general victory of an idea, Socialist or other, seeking to organise humanity according to its own model or by any other yet unforeseen way, a sufficient formal unity might come into existence.

The question then arises, how out of this purely formal unity a real psychological unity can be created and whether it can be made a living oneness. For a mere formal, mechanical, administrative, political and economic union does not necessarily create a psychological unity. None of the great empires have yet succeeded in doing that, and even in the Roman where some sense of unity did come into being, it was nothing very close and living; it could not withstand all shocks from within and without, it could not prevent what was much more dangerous, the peril of decay and devitalisation which the diminution of the natural elements of free variation and helpful struggle brought with it. A complete world-union would have indeed this advantage that it would have no need to fear forces from without, for no such forces would any longer exist. But this very absence of outer pressure might well give greater room and power to internal elements of disintegration and still more to the opportunities of decay. It might indeed for a long time foster an internal intellectual and political activity and social progress which would keep it living; but this principle

of progress would not be always secure against a natural tendency to exhaustion and stagnation which every diminution of variety and even the very satisfaction of social and economic well-being might well hasten. Disruption of unity would then be necessary to restore humanity to life. Again, while the Roman Empire appealed only to the idea of Roman unity, an artificial and accidental principle, this World-State would appeal to the idea of human unity, a real and vital principle. But if the idea of unity can appeal to the human mind, so too can the idea of separative life, for both address themselves to vital instincts of his nature. What guarantee will there be that the latter will not prevail when man has once tried unity and finds perhaps that its advantages do not satisfy his whole nature? Only the growth of some very powerful psychological factor will make unity necessary to him, whatever other changes and manipulations might be desirable to satisfy his other needs and instincts.

The formal unification of mankind would come in upon us in the shape of a system which would be born, grow, come to its culmination. But every system by the very nature of things tends after its culmination to decay and die. To prevent the organism from decaying and dying there must be such a psychological reality within as will persist and survive all changes of its body. Nations have that in a sort of collective national ego which persists through all vital changes. But this ego is not by any means self-existent and immortal; it supports itself on certain things with which it is identified. First, there is the geographical body, the country; secondly, the common interests of all who inhabit the same country, defence, economic well-being and progress, political liberty, etc.; thirdly, a common name, sentiment, culture. But we have to mark that this national ego owes its life to the coalescence of the separative instinct and the instinct of unity; for the nation feels itself one as distinguished from other nations; it owes its vitality to interchange with them and struggle with them in all the activities of its nature. Nor are all these altogether sufficient; there is a deeper factor. There must be a sort of religion of country, a constant even if not always explicit recognition not only of the sacredness of the physical mother, the land, but also, in however obscure a way, of the nation as a collective soul which it is the first duty and need of every man to keep alive, to defend from suppression or mortal attainment or, if suppressed, then to watch, wait and struggle for its release and rehabilitation, if sicklied over with the touch of any fatal spiritual ailment, then to labour always to heal and revivify and save alive.

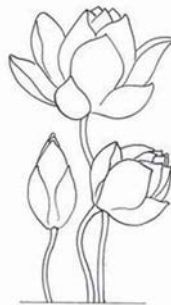
The World-State will give its inhabitants the great advantages of peace, economic well-being, general security, combination for intellectual, cultural, social activity and progress. None of these are in themselves sufficient to create the thing needed. Peace and security we all desire at present, because we have them not in sufficiency; but we must remember that man has also within him the need of combat, adventure, struggle, almost requires these for his growth and healthy living; that instinct would be largely suppressed by a universal peace and a flat security and it

might rise up successfully against suppression. Economic well-being by itself cannot permanently satisfy and the price paid for it might be so heavy as to diminish its appeal and value. The human instinct for liberty, individual and national, might well be a constant menace to the World-State, unless it so skilfully arranged its system as to give them sufficient free play. A common intellectual and cultural activity and progress may do much, but need not by themselves be sufficient to bring into being the fully powerful psychological factor that would be required. And the collective ego created would have to rely on the instinct of unity alone; for it would be in conflict with the separative instinct which gives the national ego half its vitality.

It is not impossible that the indispensable inner factor for this outer frame might be increasingly created in its very process of growth, but certain psychological elements would have to be present in great strength. There would be needed, to make the change persist, a religion of humanity or an equivalent sentiment much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country; the clear recognition by man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separativeness, — and yet there must be no destruction of individuality, for without that man would stagnate; a principle and arrangement of the common life which would give free play to individual variation, interchange in diversity and the need of adventure and conquest by which the soul of man lives and grows great, and sufficient means of expressing all the resultant complex life and growth in a flexible and progressive form of human society.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Ideal of Human Unity*, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 554-63)



THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

A religion of humanity may be either an intellectual and sentimental ideal, a living dogma with intellectual, psychological and practical effects, or else a spiritual aspiration and rule of living, partly the sign, partly the cause of a change of soul in humanity. The intellectual religion of humanity already to a certain extent exists, partly as a conscious creed in the minds of a few, partly as a potent shadow in the consciousness of the race. It is the shadow of a spirit that is yet unborn, but is preparing for its birth. This material world of ours, besides its fully embodied things of the present, is peopled by such powerful shadows, ghosts of things dead and the spirit of things yet unborn. The ghosts of things dead are very troublesome actualities and they now abound, ghosts of dead religions, dead arts, dead moralities, dead political theories, which still claim either to keep their rotting bodies or to animate partly the existing body of things. Repeating obstinately their sacred formulas of the past, they hypnotise backward-looking minds and daunt even the progressive portion of humanity. But there are too those unborn spirits which are still unable to take a definite body, but are already mind-born and exist as influences of which the human mind is aware and to which it now responds in a desultory and confused fashion. The religion of humanity was mind-born in the eighteenth century, the *mānasa putra*¹ of the rationalist thinkers who brought it forward as a substitute for the formal spiritualism of ecclesiastical Christianity. It tried to give itself a body in Positivism, which was an attempt to formulate the dogmas of this religion, but on too heavily and severely rationalistic a basis for acceptance even by an Age of Reason. Humanitarianism has been its most prominent emotional result. Philanthropy, social service and other kindred activities have been its outward expression of good works. Democracy, socialism, pacificism are to a great extent its by-products or at least owe much of their vigour to its inner presence.

The fundamental idea is that mankind is the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and the chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the State, the family nor anything else ought to take its place; they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of the human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation. But where the cult of these idols seeks to usurp the place of the spirit and makes demands inconsistent with its service, they should be put aside. No injunctions of old creeds, religious, political, social or cultural, are valid when they go against its claims. Science even, though it is one of the chief modern idols, must not be allowed to make claims contrary to its

1. Mind-born child, an idea and expression of Indian Puranic cosmology.

ethical temperament and aim, for science is only valuable in so far as it helps and serves by knowledge and progress the religion of humanity. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the State or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever specious plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by its primary tenets, to be fought against always, in no degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventable death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity.

One has only to compare human life and thought and feeling a century or two ago with human life, thought and feeling in the pre-war period to see how great an influence this religion of humanity has exercised and how fruitful a work it has done. It accomplished rapidly many things which orthodox religion failed to do effectively, largely because it acted as a constant intellectual and critical solvent, an unsparing assailant of the thing that is and an unflinching champion of the thing to be, faithful always to the future, while orthodox religion allied itself with the powers of the present, even of the past, bound itself by its pact with them and could act only at best as a moderating but not as a reforming force. Moreover, this religion has faith in humanity and its earthly future and can therefore aid its earthly progress, while the orthodox religions looked with eyes of pious sorrow and gloom on the earthly life of man and were very ready to bid him bear peacefully and contentedly, even to welcome its crudities, cruelties, oppressions, tribulations as a means for learning to appreciate and for earning the better life which will be given us hereafter. Faith, even an intellectual faith, must always be a worker of miracles, and this religion of humanity, even without taking bodily shape or a compelling form or a visible means of self-effectuation, was yet able to effect comparatively much of what it set out to do. It to some degree humanised society, humanised law and punishment,

humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern Science. It made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as imaginable even without waiting for the Christian millennium. At any rate, this much change came about that, while peace was formerly a rare interlude of constant war, war became an interlude, if a much too frequent interlude of peace, though as yet only of an armed peace. That may not be a great step, but still it was a step forward. It gave new conceptions of the dignity of the human being and opened new ideas and new vistas of his education, self-development and potentiality. It spread enlightenment; it made man feel more his responsibility for the progress and happiness of the race; it raised the average self-respect and capacity of mankind; it gave hope to the serf, self-assertion to the downtrodden and made the labourer in his manhood the potential equal of the rich and powerful. True, if we compare what is with what should be, the actual achievement with the ideal, all this will seem only a scanty work of preparation. But it was a remarkable record for a century and a half or a little more and for an unembodied spirit which had to work through what instruments it could find and had as yet no form, habitation or visible engine of its own concentrated workings. But perhaps it was in this that lay its power and advantage, since that saved it from crystallising into a form and getting petrified or at least losing its more free and subtle action.

But still in order to accomplish all its future this idea and religion of humanity has to make itself more explicit, insistent and categorically imperative. For otherwise it can only work with clarity in the minds of the few and with the mass it will be only a modifying influence, but will not be the rule of human life. And so long as that is so, it cannot entirely prevail over its own principal enemy. That enemy, the enemy of all real religion, is human egoism, the egoism of the individual, the egoism of class and nation. These it could for a time soften, modify, force to curb their more arrogant, open and brutal expressions, oblige to adopt better institutions, but not to give place to the love of mankind, not to recognise a real unity between man and man. For that essentially must be the aim of the religion of humanity, as it must be the earthly aim of all human religion, love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice of human oneness in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousands of years ago in the ancient Vedic hymn and must always remain the highest injunction of the Spirit within us to human life upon earth. Till that is brought about, the religion of humanity remains unaccomplished. With that done, the one necessary psychological change will have been effected without which no formal and mechanical, no political and

administrative unity can be real and secure. If it is done, that outward unification may not even be indispensable or, if indispensable, it will come about naturally, not, as now it seems likely to be, by catastrophic means, but by the demand of the human mind, and will be held secure by an essential need of our perfected and developed human nature.

But this is the question whether a purely intellectual and sentimental religion of humanity will be sufficient to bring about so great a change in our psychology. The weakness of the intellectual idea, even when it supports itself by an appeal to the sentiments and emotions, is that it does not get at the centre of man's being. The intellect and the feelings are only instruments of the being and they may be the instruments of either its lower and external form or of the inner and higher man, servants of the ego or channels of the soul. The aim of the religion of humanity was formulated in the eighteenth century by a sort of primal intuition; that aim was and it is still to re-create human society in the image of three kindred ideas, liberty, equality and fraternity. None of these has really been won in spite of all the progress that has been achieved. The liberty that has been so loudly proclaimed as an essential of modern progress is an outward, mechanical and unreal liberty. The equality that has been so much sought after and battled for is equally an outward and mechanical and will turn out to be an unreal equality. Fraternity is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being. It has limited his effort to the attempt to revolutionise political and social institutions and to bring about such a modification of the ideas and sentiments of the common mind of mankind as would make these institutions practicable; it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer mind much more than upon the soul of the race. It has laboured to establish a political, social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association.

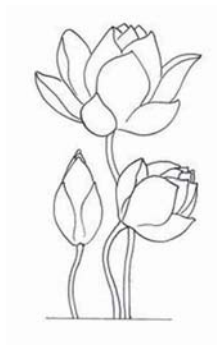
But though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as an outward expression of the larger inward life. Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society.

A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 564-70)



‘THE SPLENDOUR OF THE NEW WORD ARRIVES’

June 9, 1914

Lord, I am before Thee like an offering aflame in the blazing fire of the divine union. . . .

And what is thus before Thee is all the stones of this house and all it contains, all those who cross its threshold and all who see it, all who are connected with it in any way and from one to another the whole earth.

From this centre, this burning hearth which is now and shall be more and more permeated with Thy light and with Thy love, Thy forces will radiate over all the earth, visibly and invisibly in the hearts of all and in their thoughts . . .

Such is the assurance Thou givest me in answer to my aspiration for Thee.

An immense wave of love descends over all things and penetrates all things.

Peace, peace upon all the earth, victory, plenitude, wonder . . .

O beloved children, unhappy and ignorant, O thou, rebellious and violent Nature, open your hearts, calm your forces, for here comes the sweet omnipotence of Love, here is the pure radiance of the light that penetrates you. This human hour, this earthly hour is beautiful over all other hours. Let each and all know it and rejoice in the plenitude that is given.

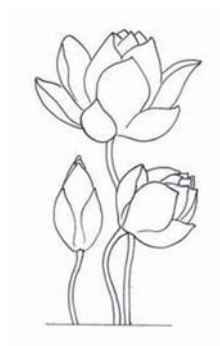
O sorrowful hearts and careworn brows, foolish obscurity and ignorant ill-will, let your anguish be calmed and effaced.

Lo, the splendour of the new word arrives:

“*Here am I.*”

THE MOTHER

(*Prayers and Meditations*, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, pp. 167-68)



ON AUROVILLE

Regarding Auroville's Charter.

Everybody wants to change my messages! . . .

Change your messages!

Yes.

Why?

(Mother laughs) Because everyone finds the words aren't the ones he wants. . . . There has been quite a to-do with the Communists and the Soviet consul, a very intelligent man, it seems, who has read Sri Aurobindo, is quite interested, wants to be useful . . . and he says, "What can I do with 'divine consciousness'!" *(Mother laughs)* In our country the word 'divine' is banned." He was told, "This has nothing to do with God" (a ban on God I quite understand, you see, because you can put whatever you like in the word), but he said, "I can't." They sent a Russian translation, which luckily came after the ceremony; it was the translation of their own thought, not at all of my text! So we answered them it had come too late. It's T. who did the translation, but she refused to read it out [at the inauguration], because, she said, it was "too heavy a responsibility"! *(Mother laughs)* They are all like that. Finally it was read out by S. But then, we have a Communist architect, a Russian, who has been working a great deal for Auroville, on the models and so on (a young man, he is very nice), and yesterday he came with a prayer: whether he could change the word "divine". I asked him, "What are you offering me?" He said, "The universal consciousness." Then I answered *(laughing)*, "You are making it shrink terribly!" He was bothered: what's to be done? I told him, "Listen, I'll make a concession for you; if you like, we'll say 'perfect consciousness', that's harmless." So he was happy, I wrote "perfect consciousness" on his paper, and he left with it!

But here, the group of . . . (what shall we call them?) Y.'s disciples, the "forward" group, don't at all like "divine consciousness", and the woman who translated it into German (not a direct disciple of Y.'s but one of M.'s) went to M. to ask for his help (moral help, probably), and the best they could find was "highest consciousness". . . . So I asked, "Where is your 'high'? Where is your 'low'?"

1. "To live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness."

They didn't ask me anything, they are too sure of themselves. But their text was read out in Auroville, and some people who heard it and know German asked me, "How come?" . . . That's how I found out. "How come in the German version they translated 'divine consciousness' by 'highest consciousness'?"

So everyone is sticking his oar in!

But we're going to prepare a little brochure with the message and all these translations — into Japanese, Hebrew, Arabic, etc. It will all be photographed, and then we'll restore the German text. Oh, the Russian text . . .

But as a "city of peace", it's amusing! (*Laughing*) It's promising! I don't care. What I find quite petty is when they don't tell me and do it on the sly. To hope I won't know is childishness, and the tendency to hide things from me isn't very nice.

But on the whole, it went off well.

We have an Auroville flag which is quite pretty, it was brought there; there were only two flags (other countries had banderoles), but there were the Ashram's flag and Auroville's. It's this colour (*Mother points to an orange hibiscus on her table*).

As to the young delegates, it was somewhat mixed: those who came spontaneously from their country or were recruited by UNESCO were quite decent; but then, in Delhi, they were recruited almost through propaganda (many came from the embassies there), and that was . . . some were dubious. Some smoke, one even got so drunk that . . . But still, when they were assembled together, they behaved decently. And one of them — a Czechoslovak — no longer wants to go! In any case he said he would wait as long as necessary, but that before going he wanted to see me.

But one can see — one can clearly see how the Force and the Grace work through everything.

Yes.

Because, really, if there had only been these elements left to themselves, well, there was nothing but confusion. One can see that it's working . . . it works making use of anything!

No, it turns even the worst things to advantage! That's what is interesting.

(Conversation of 2 March 1968)

*

[. . .] But I never said Auroville was the city of love, never, not once!

The word is too subject to misuse. It would be better not to talk about it.

In fact, the word “love” can be used only with the word “divine” before it. It’s the only way it can be used. Without the word “divine”, it becomes impossible. And these people refuse to use the word “divine”.

Yes, they’re afraid of it.

So what are we going to do? . . . If I send her paper back without saying anything, she will say I have approved of it; if I tell her it won’t do, she’ll get still more furious. . . . And she looks after everything, pokes her nose into everything — legitimately, in a sense, since I told her I put her in charge of education. But it’s *after* that she became like this. At that time, she was a bit cranky, but still quite decent.

It’s troublesome.

(Mother remains silent for a while) Should I send her this:

“Beware of the word ‘love’ if it is not preceded by the adjective ‘divine’, because in the general mentality the word evokes sexuality.”

(Conversation of 17 February 1968)

*

Auroville is the first step towards the goal of transformation

February 1968

One must have an absolutely transparent sincerity. Lack of sincerity is the cause of the difficulties we meet at present. Insincerity is in all men. There are perhaps a hundred men on earth who are totally sincere. Man’s very nature makes him insincere — it is very complicated, for he is constantly deceiving himself, hiding the truth from himself, making excuses for himself. Yoga is the way to become sincere in all parts of the being.

It is difficult to be sincere, but at least one can be mentally sincere; this is what can be demanded of Aurovilians. The force is there, present as never before; man’s insincerity prevents it from descending, from being felt. The world lives in falsehood, all relations between men have until now been based on falsehood and deceit. Diplomatic relations between nations are based on falsehood. They claim to want

peace, and meanwhile they are arming themselves. Only a transparent sincerity in man and among nations can usher in a transformed world.

Auroville is the first attempt in this experiment. A new world will be born; if men are willing to make an effort for transformation, to seek for sincerity, it is possible. From animal to man, thousands of years were needed; today, with his mind, man can will and hasten a transformation towards a man who shall be God.

This transformation by the help of the mind — by self-analysis — is a first step; afterwards, it is necessary to transform the vital impulses: that is much more difficult, and especially to transform the physical. Every cell in our bodies must become conscious. This is the work I am doing here; it will enable the conquest of death. That is another story; that will be the humanity of the future, perhaps after hundreds of years, perhaps sooner. It will depend on men, on nations.¹

Auroville is the first step towards this goal.

(CWM 13: 268)

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Difficulties at Auroville

I didn't want to make rules for Auroville, but I am going to be forced to start formulating certain things, because . . . there happens to be difficulties. I don't know what to do.

What I wanted to say came; it's very simple (*Mother takes a written note*), simply like this (it's about very small things):

“One must choose between getting drunk and living in Auroville, the two are incompatible.”

It's not an innocent drunkenness, I mean it results in acts of violence, it verges on madness.

So of course, if we start along this road, we may also say this (*Mother takes another note*):

“One must choose between living in falsehood and living in Auroville, the two are incompatible.”

May it be true!

1. Oral comments made by the Mother which were noted from memory and later approved by the Mother for publication.

We could say that those who get drunk do it to forget; but one doesn't come to Auroville to forget: one comes to Auroville, on the contrary, to remember.

Yes, we might rather put it in that form.

But the idea was mostly to insist on the *choice*. Living in Auroville is a *choice*. It's a choice, an attitude you adopt, a decision you make. Living in Auroville is a choice, you choose a certain life. But once you choose one thing, some others become incompatible. . . . At any rate, living in Auroville is an *action*, a decision you make, an action.

But this (*Mother points to her note*) is a concession to the present state of mankind, because, to tell the truth, in Auroville there should only be individual cases. What I mean is this: there may be people who get drunk and are nonetheless fit to live in Auroville. So we can't make a general rule. But if we don't make a general rule, on what ground can we say to someone (who's been accepted, that's the difficulty), "No, you must change — either you stop this, or else you can't stay in Auroville . . .?"

What is said of alcohol can be said of drugs; and it can be said of many other things.

Many, yes, lots. It's only a beginning. You understand, I have seen that we're going to be faced with the need . . . It's the need to impose a choice — to say, "You must choose between this and that."

It's the same with drugs, in some people the effects aren't dangerous, or not harmful.

Ultimately, everyone's freedom is limited by the fact that it mustn't go against others' freedom. That's the limit.

Obviously it's hard to make general rules.

It's impossible.

. . . You see, a sentence like this (*Mother shows her note*) ought to be said to only one individual, that is, "It's like this *for you* — you must choose between overcoming your weakness or habit and living in Auroville, the two can't go together." But then, it becomes a purely individual question; to another you may well not need to say it.

That's why the most general formula is to say that any self-forgetfulness is contrary to life in Auroville. One doesn't go to Auroville to forget, or to forget oneself — any self-forgetfulness, in any form.

Ah, but “self-forgetfulness”, if you take it from a moral standpoint. . . ! (*Mother laughs*)

Forgetting one’s true self.

(*Mother laughs*) The minute one formulates . . .

It would be more correct to say:

“Any pursuit of unconsciousness is contrary to life in Auroville.”

That’s more general. And if we want to be still more general, we could say,

“Any movement backward or downward is in contradiction to life in Auroville, which is a life of ascent towards the future.”

But words . . .

Some articles have appeared in newspapers about Auroville’s foundation, for instance with the theme, “A utopia on the way to realisation.” So then, there are those who tell you, “You’ll never succeed!” Their argument is, “They are human beings and they will remain human” — that’s where they’re wrong. “Human nature cannot be changed”, that’s the basis on which they tell you, “You won’t succeed.” Therefore the only thing needed is not only to accept and to want the future, but to adhere to the will for transformation and progress. As a general formula, that’s quite fine.

But you see, with drugs, for instance — take chloroform used for operations: well, on every individual chloroform has different effects (they don’t accept that in theory, but it’s a fact). We have S. here, who was an anaesthetist, and the upshot of his experience is that it has a different effect on everyone. Some it hurls into unconsciousness (the large majority, I think), but in certain cases, on the contrary, people are thrown into another consciousness.

And it’s the same with everything.

So my note won’t do, it can only do individually: “That’s how it is in your case”; but in another case, it may not be incompatible at all.

So we’ll have to deal with it little by little. . . . It’ll be interesting!

(*Conversation of 6 April 1968*)

*

The experiment in Auroville

R. [Auroville's architect] has come for five days, and he wants to make what he calls a "district" of Auroville, that is to say, instead of tackling the problem of ten or twenty thousand people at once, he wants to start with two or three thousand, on the level of infrastructure, but above all to see how it will work: the experiment of life in Auroville. . . . I had thought about it, and when I spoke to you last time, that's what came: in what direction should the experiment be carried out? You see, Y. has ideas in the field of education (I am not intervening); as for R., he has ideas in the field of construction (I am not intervening); but no one has studied the problem on the level of administration or organisation, and of money, and that was precisely what I spoke of to you about last time.

So if you could read me what I told you, if it does I'll give them the text. . . . There is also this communist Russian architect, who has become quite enthusiastic: to him Auroville is the ideal realisation. He is a very strong boy, with some power (also a power of conviction over people). So it would be interesting if he could have a glimpse of the direction in which we're going.

(Conversation of 13 April 1968)

*

No new religion

(Mother holds out a note on Auroville)

(Question:) How dependent is the building of Auroville upon man's acceptance of spirituality?

(Mother's answer:) The opposition between spirituality and material life, the division between the two has no sense for me as, in truth, life and the spirit are one and it is in and by physical work that the highest spirit must be manifested.

I got today a letter from a Swedish lady, I think (Swedish or Norwegian, I don't know), who bought a crucifixion. . . . A huge painting — huge, I forget its size, but it's fantastic, something like thirty feet high. She asks me what she should do with it! She wants to send it to me. . . . So I've told her (she paid a good sum for it, but she's a very rich woman; only she wanted to make a gift of it to me), I've told her to make an exhibition in a large hall, with, written under the painting, "The Past". Then to put next to it, quite small, a photo of the galaxy, which is almost identical to Auroville's plan — a photo of the galaxy, big as this, and below, Auroville's plan big as this (*gesture still smaller*), and to write, "The Future".

And she'll make people pay to come in and see!

Do you know that photo of the galaxy? It's really lovely. One of the plans for Auroville is almost identical, and they did it without seeing the photo of the galaxy. . . . They'll put those two photos, and if people ask questions, they'll be told, "Write there, you'll get an answer."

I thought it would be an interesting symbol.

You understand, if I put anything else, I mean a photo of Sri Aurobindo, for instance, or books, it will look like . . . it will be as if we wanted to start a new religion — I don't want religions, an end to religions!

So it's an attempt to realise.

(Conversation of 20 April 1968)

*

(Mother shows a brochure on Auroville; the first photograph in it shows the all-white urn under a vast sky.)

It's very fine. It has something . . . I don't know *(Mother drives her fist down into the Earth)*, like a Law of Destiny: something that imposes itself.

(silence)

Did I tell you that a Swedish or Norwegian lady wants to send me a big crucifixion? . . . I did. But I didn't show you the two texts. You see, I chose a photo of the galaxy, then a photo of Auroville that somewhat looks like the first, and then, under the crucifixion, we'll have in big letters *(Mother reads)*:

"The Divine Consciousness crucified by man's desires."

Then, in very small letters, like this, we'll put under the photo of Auroville:

"The Divine Consciousness manifested through human unity."

We'll see! The lady has a lot of goodwill, we'll see the response in her country.

(silence)

Yesterday, they came from the press with the brochure on Auroville and said, "Oh, there's a mistake, we've been told that the text of Auroville's Charter had to be changed." Someone told them I had said that "Divine Consciousness" had to be replaced throughout by "Perfect Consciousness". I stared at him:

“What!”

“Yes, that’s what we’ve been told.”

Then I said (*laughing*), “Who’s the idiot who told you that!”

“But he said you had said so!”

Then I asked him, “Tell me his name so I may give him a good slap!”

Naturally, there’s no question of changing anything. What happened was that people in Russia, Yugoslavia who translated it . . . (it was translated into a certain number of languages, now I don’t remember), they asked me for an alternative to the word “Divine”, because . . . In Russia, they go one better, the word is banned! Using the word “divine” is forbidden! So I said all right. I said, “*For Russia*, you may, if you wish, put ‘Perfect Consciousness’ instead of ‘Divine Consciousness’.” I pointed out to them (*laughing*), “It’s somewhat diminished, it’s brought down a little, but never mind!”

Here, in the French brochure, it’s “Divine”. I said if they wanted another word in Russian or German (in German T. translated it into “the highest” [Consciousness]; I told her, “It’s rather poor, but anyway”), well, I said I wouldn’t protest. In Chinese it’s “Divine”. I think it’s “Divine” in Japanese too.

In German, they asserted, “Oh, if we put ‘Divine’, people will immediately think of God. . . .” I replied (*laughing*), “Not necessarily, if they’re not idiots!”

But it has given me a very precise picture of what would happen if for some reason or other I were no longer here. . . . Everyone would use my name to . . . (*Mother laughs*) It would be frightening!

(*Conversation of 23 April 1968*)

*

Auroville is where man must begin to change his world through the power of the inner spirit

(*Mother listens to a long paper on Auroville, which she rejects, and prepares a note summing up the ideal of this future city:*)

“For millennia, we have been developing outer means, outer instruments, outer techniques of living — and finally those means and techniques are crushing us. The sign of the new humanity is a reversal in the standpoint, and the understanding that inner knowledge and inner technique can change the world and master it without crushing it.

“Auroville is the place where this new way of living is being worked out, it is a centre of accelerated evolution where man must begin to change his world through the power of the inner spirit.”

(*Conversation of 7 August 1968*)

*

An auditorium in Auroville

. . . Music is fine.

Oh, yes!

Because there are no words. Music is fine. I had a vision like that of an auditorium in Auroville, with a grand organ, and someone (*whom I am trying to prepare, who can play the organ very well and whom I am trying to prepare inwardly*) was playing (I saw that, I saw it), playing the music of the higher Consciousness. It was a place where all those who wanted to come and listen could do so; some people came from far away, they came in, sat down, listened, and then went away. And this music was like a Consciousness coming down and exerting a Pressure on people to make itself understood. It was very beautiful — I hope it will be like that! Much better than words; as soon as one starts speaking (*gesture at ground level*), it's no longer that.

(Conversation of 8 February 1969)

*

Sweet Mother,

There will be a general meeting tomorrow to try and see whether it is possible for all of us to agree on a course of action.

Nobody speaks the same language; all the individuals are very different and do not submit to a common discipline of action. I would like to receive some clear written answers from you so as to know what to say — something which would be the Truth and could help to dispel the confusion.

Does the construction of Auroville require a working-method, organisation and coordination?

Discipline is necessary for life. To live, the body itself is subject in all its functions to a rigorous discipline. Any relaxation of this discipline causes illness.

What should be the nature of this organisation, in the present and in the future?

Organisation is a discipline of action, but for Auroville we aspire to go beyond arbitrary and artificial organisation.

We want an organisation which is the expression of a higher consciousness working to manifest the truth of the future.

Until this group consciousness appears, and until we can work collectively in the true and right way, what should we do?

A hierarchical organisation grouped around the most enlightened centre and submitting to a collective discipline.

Must we use organisational methods which have proved effective but which are based on human logic and the use of machines?

This is a makeshift which we should submit to only very provisionally.

Must one allow individual initiative to manifest freely and inspiration and intuition to be the moving force behind personal action, and should one reject all ideas not felt as good by the interested party?

In order to be workable, this requires all workers of Auroville to be yogis conscious of the Divine Truth.

Has the time come to wish for, to set up, to try for a general organisation, or should one wait for the right attitude and men?

An organisation is needed for the work to be done — but the organisation itself must be flexible and progressive.

If to wait is the solution, is it nevertheless necessary to define organisational principles and to avoid uncontrollable disorder?

All those who wish to live and work at Auroville must have an integral goodwill, a constant aspiration to know the Truth and to submit to it, enough plasticity to confront the exigencies of work and an endless will to progress so as to move forward towards the ultimate Truth.

And, finally, a word of advice: be more concerned with your own faults than with those of others. If each one worked seriously at his own self-perfection, the perfection of the whole would follow automatically.²

6 February 1969

(CWM 13: 198-200)

*

2. Oral comments made by the Mother which were noted from memory and later approved by the Mother for publication.

Two days ago (not yesterday, the day before), this Consciousness³ told me something; I said, “Very well,” but it went on saying the same thing again and again and again, until I’d written it down! So here it is (*Mother holds out a note*). And it explained to me why there was “we”.

“We will strive to make Auroville the cradle of the superman.”

Ah . . . it’s important news! (*Mother smiles*) So then, I said, “Why ‘we’?” It answered, “It’s because the attempt will be to get those who will live in Auroville to collaborate.”

Then, once I’d written it, it left me in peace, but until I did, it came back again and again. . . .

It’s more and more active. It’s active in people: when people come and see me, it immediately starts working and . . . it’s thoroughly amusing at times! Really amusing. It says things, uncovers recesses. . . . Thoroughly amusing. But I don’t speak! It’s like this (*gesture of inner exchange*).

(*Conversation of 22 March 1969*)

*

To be united with the Supreme, one must have no more desires

The trouble is that all these people [pop musicians like the Beatles] take their desires for inspirations. And then . . . I have this difficulty with Auroville too, that’s why I take every opportunity to repeat to them (they all keep saying that they come to Auroville “to be free”), I answer them that one can be free only if one is united with the Supreme; and to be united with the Supreme, one must have no more desires!

Oh, all that [i.e., desires] was necessary, but . . . one can’t remain stuck there.

(*Conversation of 2 April 1969*)

*

To be united with the Supreme, one must have no more desires — a new consciousness is at work

Auroville also, I am constantly telling them two things (*hammering gesture*): “For those who want to be free, there is only one freedom, that is to be united to the

3. The superman consciousness.

Supreme; and to be united to the Supreme, one must no longer have any desires!”
So they’re like this (*Mother remains open-mouthed*). Very amusing!

So I’ve put the same thing here:

“A new consciousness is at work upon earth to prepare the coming of the superhuman being.

“Open yourselves to this consciousness if you aspire to serve the Divine Work.

“To come into contact with this new consciousness, the essential condition is no longer to have any desires and to be wholly sincere.”

That’s what they must be told again and again (*same hammering gesture*). I am constantly, constantly impelled to repeat it to them.

There are all the time little incidents with this Consciousness, which are quite amusing, showing why desires are . . . it really feels they’re rubbish. And it shows why; for instance, it shows the body all those little desires it has, and how they prevent the Force from acting.

(*Conversation of 9 April 1969*)

*

Auroville is the only hope for preventing a new world war

(*Account of N.S.’s visit on April 17, 1969. Mother’s words were noted down in English from memory, and are therefore approximate.*)

. . . The Mother said that Auroville is the only hope for preventing a new world war. Tensions are growing and the situation is becoming very critical. But only the Idea of Auroville, if it can become more widespread, can prevent world war.

(*Conversation of 19 April 1969*)

*

Mother explaining to Sri Aurobindo all about Auroville

The night before last, I spent more than three hours with Sri Aurobindo and I was showing him all that was about to come down for Auroville. It was quite interesting. There were games, there was art, there was even cooking! But all that was very symbolic. And I was explaining to him as though on a table, in front of a vast landscape. I was explaining to him the principle on which physical exercises and

games were going to be organised. It was very clear, very precise, I was giving as though a demonstration, and it was as though I was showing on a very small scale a miniature representation of what was going to be done. I was moving people and things (*gesture, as though on a chess-board*). But it was very interesting, and he was very much interested: he was laying down the broad laws of organisation (I do not know how to explain). There was art and it was beautiful, it was good. And how to make the houses pleasant and pretty, upon what principle of construction. And then even the kitchen; it was so amusing, each one brought forward his invention. . . . This went on for three hours — three hours of the night, it is a lot! Very interesting.

13 May 1969
(CWM 11: 174)

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The first conception of Auroville

(Regarding a letter from the Raymonds, friends of Pavitra's and the architects who built "Golconde", the Ashram's guest house.)

Have you seen the Raymonds' letter? . . . They've written a very sweet letter. In their letter, they write something I didn't know, which Pavitra had never told me; they say that when Pavitra put them in contact with here, it completely changed their lives, the aim of their lives and everything.

Raymond is a great architect. When they came here⁴ and built "Golconde", I asked Raymond to prepare the plan for the first Auroville I had conceived (that was when Sri Aurobindo was still alive), and it was magnificent! He didn't leave it here.

But it was an Auroville with, at the centre, Sri Aurobindo's house (*gesture on a hilltop*). Sri Aurobindo was alive, so we had put him at the centre.

(Conversation of 11 June 1969)

*

Mother's interest in Auroville

There was someone in America whom I would often see at night, a woman. I would go there, talk, and people answered. . . . Some of those night activities are strange: I feel as if I enter someone, because I speak, people answer me. . . . And I don't know whom I enter or what it is. But there was someone I would often see: I would

4. In 1937-38.

see her house, I would see gatherings (there were gatherings), I would see . . . I didn't know who it was. Then, one day, we got a letter from a woman who said that for 1972, she wanted to get a boat and come with a group of people in that boat. I replied, and she sent her photo — it was the person I had seen so often and was in contact with! And she is a woman who seems to have authority there (she looks like a rich woman): she has authority, she knows government people and has written to them. She already has a very large group, there seems to be some good work being done in America. Very receptive and full of energy. I still remember that my conversations [with her] were very interesting. And the other day, her letter came (it was the second or third time she wrote) along with her photo, so I recognised her. That's interesting, because . . . the contact was constant: the place is constant, the people are constant, and I see them very often, it's not something just random. She wrote to the government to tell them that they should take special interest in Auroville and do something. And she seems to have authority there.

(Conversation of 19 July 1969)

*

An international publishing house

I have wondered if we couldn't have in Auroville a publishing house, because Auroville is an international township, and so we could have an *international* publishing house. There would be books in every language. That would be interesting.

Auroville is beginning to be fairly well known in America. There's a lady (I told you about that) who is planning to come in a boat for 1972 — she is very interested in Auroville, she has gatherings and is in touch with the government. It seems to be moving fairly well there. So we could have a publishing house in several languages.

(Conversation of 30 July 1969)

*

Auroville the city of healing?

Did I tell you that in Italy a veterinarian has found a cure for cancer? . . . This man has discovered that goats, the goat species (male and female), never have cancer! They even went as far as trying to make them have cancer, and they didn't succeed. Conclusion: in their makeup, there's something opposed to cancer; they've discovered that something in the stomach (I forget the details), and he made a serum. As he is a veterinarian, he doesn't have the right to give it, but he has doctor friends, and those doctors (a dozen or so) have tried it out — extraordinary cure, without

fail. But with a difference: the female goat cures certain cases, while the male cures other cases; it's not the same with the male or the female, they cure different types of cancer (I understand nothing about it). Anyway, he lives somewhere in Italy, I don't know where, and I had him asked if he would like to come here — he has accepted. And he's going to come: there's a whole group of young Italians who want to come at the end of the year for Sri Aurobindo's yoga, and he'll probably come with them, or else he will come with Paolo if Paolo doesn't mind paying for his travel. My intention is to put him in touch with Dr. S., to let them study that together, and if it works well, I'll ask him to stay on. Because you know that S. now has a sort of dispensary in Auromodèle [in Auroville] (there's even a young French medical student who has come and stays there too, he is very happy). So we could open a "cancer clinic", that would be very interesting! Because with S.'s presence here, there's no difficulty — in Auroville he can do what he likes. That would be wonderful!

He is coming before the end of the year. And the other man, the healer, is coming in September . . . The other, we'll see if he wants to cure some people here, that would be good.

It would straight away give an interesting direction. . . . "Auroville, the city of healing"! That would be good!

(Conversation of 9 August 1969)

*

Mend one's faults before demanding others should mend theirs

What I do now is to . . . (*Mother crosses her fingers on her lips*) . . . because this Force, this Consciousness is there (*gesture of pressure*), and it's working, I see it work, and it uses all that wonderfully, so as to . . . put people (*gesture against the nose*) in front of themselves. There's a place ("Promesse" and "Auro-orchard", all that area which is concerned with agriculture), with French people, Swiss people, Italians (even Indians!), and they're all busy quarrelling . . . all the time. From every side they complain to me, asking for my support. So it's prodigiously instructive. As for me, I stay like this (*Mother crosses her fingers on her lips*), and now and then I let a drop fall. The Xs, for instance, would regularly, once or twice a week, send me a complaint against the people living there (now some, now others, all of them in succession). The first time, I didn't say anything, but after a while (*laughing*), I simply said (I don't remember the exact words, only the meaning) that the true consciousness needed to live in Auroville is to look at one's own faults first, before complaining about others' faults, and to mend one's ways before demanding others should mend theirs (I put it in a more . . . literary manner). And I sent it. Since then, silence, complete silence: I no longer exist — I don't go and give support to all their little quarrels, so I no longer exist.

But that's a way of kneading the dough. . . . They will have either to change or to go — without telling them anything, without having to tell them anything, with the pressure of the Consciousness alone. Either they will have to change, or they will be compelled to go.

It's not a method particular to this person (*Mother points to herself*): it's the method of this Consciousness.

I very clearly see the way in which it works: it puts a pressure for all that resists in someone's nature to come to the surface and manifest, and so the ridiculous or wrong side of the thing becomes conspicuous, and it has either to go or to . . . I've noticed that. It's its way of working.

But in fact, with this pressure, you realise that people are always ten times more stupid than you thought — they themselves know nothing about it (but that's the habit: one is generally very unconscious of one's own stupidity), but even when you thought you were conscious of what they're like, you weren't even remotely aware of what they're like!

(*Conversation of 23 August 1969*)

*

Auroville — a cradle of the superman

Things are beginning to come for Auroville (*Mother points to several written notes*); there are many, many others, but there is above all the internal financial question: I would like there to be no money within Auroville (we would have to work out something), I would like money to be retained only for relations with outside. But that I haven't written; I wrote something else (*Mother gives a first note*). This I have told you several times:

“Auroville wants to be the cradle of the superman.”

Then, this one:

“Auroville,
the free international township.
No army, no police. . . .”

Bravo!

“. . . They are replaced
by a battalion of guards,
consisting of
athletes and gymnasts.”

Oh, all this is splendid!

It's for now. It's to be done now.

Yes, no army, no police. Oh, yes!

And then (*Mother points to a third note*), this is for entry, because there's a port in Auroville, so naturally entry is free, but conditional: we have no borders, no walls, we're overflowing in India, so I can't impose my law to the whole of India (!), but it will be replaced by a control at the port: we'll let in only what can be consumed within Auroville — so as not to be used as a clandestine entry for a deluge of free goods.

(The disciple reads)

“No customs, but permission to import granted only for goods meant to be consumed in the town.”

That's all.

Yes, to avoid smuggling with the rest of India.

Yes. If people were honest, it would be fine, but they aren't!
No police and no army.

Yes, that's fine!

So it gives physical education a deep *raison d'être*: people capable of stopping fires, saving drowning people and so on. There needn't be many: if there were five hundred of them, it would be enough for the entire town, in little groups going about like that.

Dr. S. also has some ideas to replace jails (because we don't have jails, and we can't dump all the dishonest people into the rest of India! That wouldn't be nice). Prisons and old people's homes would have to be replaced with something. . . . It's being studied, something has been found. It's going to be interesting!

And one last thing: a place where all the children could be kept when their parents don't want to look after them, or don't look after them properly. And all of it with no possibility of accident or flight — but no prison or hospital, none of that sort of thing.

It's being worked out.

(*silence*)

North of Pondicherry, there are places by the sea where nothing could ever be done (they're constantly flooded), but there's a way to make use of them, so I am trying to get the government's permission to occupy it all. If we can get all of it, then we can have a free port, a free airport, an airfield (but more inland), also cultivation based on the new methods of irrigation with sea water, and naturally the transformation of sea water — but they've found something to transform sea water into drinkable water (*Mother takes a brochure by her side*). It's French, I think, and an economical method; it's very interesting. It's under way, and if we wait for a few more years, they'll have perfected it quite well.

(*Conversation of 30 August 1969*)

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Auroville offers itself to all those who aspire to live tomorrow's truth

I've written something for Auroville. . . .

“The earth needs a place where people can live sheltered from all national rivalries, all social conventions, all contradictory moralities and antagonistic religions. A place where, freed from all those slaveries of the past, human beings will be able to wholly dedicate themselves to the discovery and practice of the Divine Consciousness that wants to manifest.

“Auroville wants to be that place, and offers itself to all those who aspire to live tomorrow's truth.”

Now things are in the habit of coming like this (*Mother brings down her two arms*), and they keep pestering me until I've written! Once I write, it's over.

Then the President⁵ went there [to Auroville], in the afternoon, at the time of leaving, he said, “*It is a work of God . . .*” He felt something.

We'll see. Maybe we'll get somewhere — “maybe” surely.

(*Conversation of 17 September 1969*)

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5. On the 14th morning, India's President V. V. Giri met the Mother. On that occasion, Mother told him, “Let us all work for the greatness of India.”

The joy and liberation of no longer having any personal possessions

Auroville is the ideal place for those who want to know the joy and liberation of no longer having any personal possessions.

18 September 1969

(CWM 13: 202)

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Auroville is a great Adventure

And Auroville is a great Adventure.

I see how it's being organised, it's really interesting, really interesting.

(Conversation of 15 November 1969)

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Auroville is going to be a very interesting experience

. . . This Auroville is going to be a very interesting experience.

At first glance, Auroville isn't made up of people burdened with morality!

Oh, no! . . . Ah, we have many little Aurovilians, lots of them, but you know, among them some are absolutely remarkable from the point of view of consciousness; they're tall as a boot, *mon petit*, and they're conscious! It's splendid. A few days ago, I held a Tamil baby in my hands, he was as big as this, like a doll (delightfully shaped, with exquisite tiny feet), and with this child I wanted to make the experiment: I took him on my lap, and I put the Force — you should have seen the transformation of his expression! His eyes aren't open yet, but a blissful peace seemed to come over him. I thought, "Let's see whether he's asleep or conscious." Then I touched his foot — he started, which means he wasn't asleep at all. Wonderful! A wonderful expression. . . . I know another one who isn't yet two years old, but, *mon petit*, his way of seeing and acting is that of a five-year-old child! So something is happening nevertheless. And the last experience is a woman (she came with the 'caravan'), who had a first child in France: she suffered for thirty-five hours to give birth. She gave birth to another one here (the day before yesterday, I think): one hour and without suffering. An hour later, when it was over, she was up and about! So she

said, "That's Mother, because I don't know how it's done!"
 Something is happening.

(Conversation of 15 November 1969)

*

Mother's succinct answers to numerous questions on Auroville

1. Who has taken the initiative for the construction of Auroville?

The Supreme Lord.

2. Who participates in the financing of Auroville?

The Supreme Lord.

3. If one wants to live in Auroville, what does it imply for oneself?

To try to attain the Supreme Perfection.

4. Must one be a student of yoga in order to live in Auroville?

All life is yoga. Therefore one cannot live without practising the supreme yoga.

5. What will be the Ashram's role in Auroville?

Whatever the Supreme Lord wants it to be.

6. Will there be camping-grounds in Auroville?

All things are as they should be, when they should be.

7. Will family life continue in Auroville?

If one has not gone beyond that.

8. Can one retain one's religion in Auroville?

If one has not gone beyond that.

9. Can one be an atheist in Auroville?

If one has not gone beyond that.

10. Will there be a social life in Auroville?

If one has not gone beyond that.

11. Will there be compulsory community activities in Auroville?

Nothing is compulsory.

12. Will money be used in Auroville?

No, Auroville will have money relations only with the outside world.

13. How will work be organised and distributed in Auroville?

“Money would no longer be the sovereign lord; individual worth would have a far greater importance than that of material wealth and social standing. There, work would not be a way to earn one’s living but a way to express oneself and to develop one’s capacities and possibilities while being of service to the community as a whole, which, for its own part, would provide for each individual’s subsistence and sphere of action.”⁶

14. What will be the relations between the inhabitants of Auroville and the outside world?

Each person is allowed full freedom. The external relations of residents in Auroville will be established for each one according to his personal aspiration and his activities within Auroville.

15. Who will own the land and buildings of Auroville?

The Supreme Lord.

16. What languages will be used for teaching?

All the spoken languages of the earth.

6. Extract from “A Dream”, an essay by the Mother.

17. What will be the means of transport in Auroville?

We do not know.⁷

1965⁸
(CWM 13: 188-90)

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Will a day come when there will be no more poor people and no more suffering in the world?

That is absolutely certain for all those who understand Sri Aurobindo's teaching and have faith in him.

It is with the intention of creating a place where this could come about that we want to establish Auroville.

But for this realisation to be possible, each one of us must make an effort to transform himself; for most of the sufferings of men are the result of their own mistakes, both physical and moral.

8 November 1969
(CWM 13: 203)

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How can you believe that in Auroville there will be no more suffering so long as the people who come to live there are men from the same world, born with the same weaknesses and faults?

I have never thought that there would no more be suffering in Auroville, because men, as they are, love suffering and call it to them even while they curse it.

But we shall try to teach them to truly love peace and to try to practise equality. What I meant was involuntary poverty and begging.

Life in Auroville will be organised in such a way that this does not exist — and if beggars come from outside, either they will have to go away or they will be given shelter and taught the joy of work.

9 November 1969
(CWM 13: 203)

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7. Oral comments made by the Mother which were noted from memory and later approved by the Mother for publication.

8. Mother answered these questions orally in 1965. When she read the notation on 8 October 1969, she changed answers 12 and 17 to read as printed here.

Ideal of the Ashram and the ideal of Auroville

What is the fundamental difference between the ideal of the Ashram and the ideal of Auroville?

There is no fundamental difference in the attitude towards the future and the service of the Divine.

But the people in the Ashram are considered to have consecrated their lives to Yoga (except, of course, the students who are here only for their studies and who are not expected to have made their choice in life).

Whereas in Auroville simply the good will to make a collective experiment for the progress of humanity is sufficient to gain admittance.

10 November 1969

(CWM 13: 203-04)

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Children born in Auroville are remarkable

The children, those who are a few months old (as I said, those who were born in Auroville) are remarkable — they're remarkable. I thought it was just one case, but in all those I've seen till now, all of them, a concentration of consciousness.

That little Tamil was a marvel.

(Conversation of 22 November 1969)

*

School at “Auromodèle”

I've asked them to start a school at “Auromodèle”.

Who will look after the school?

There's a French woman who was a primary school teacher (I was told she's nice, I haven't seen her), and then an Indian woman (whom I saw) who wants to teach in Auroville, and she's fine, I mean her mental attitude is good. So the two of them will start (*laughing*): there are five children!

(Conversation of 20 December 1969)

*

Some interesting people have come to Auroville

Some interesting people have come to Auroville, people who are really seeking something. . . . So I leave them to stew there and we'll see what comes out of it!

(Conversation of 20 December 1969)

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An institute to study Sri Aurobindo's works and to put them into practice

Do you know K.S., the former prince of Kashmir? He has founded a sort of "committee for Sri Aurobindo's centenary". He's very active and they want to found . . . an "institute" or something to "study Sri Aurobindo's works" and to "put them into practice" from a governmental and international point of view. He first thought of founding it in Delhi — I said, "Fine." But there was a big movement for it to take place here, in Auroville. . . . There are two things they want to do in Auroville: that institute, and in 1972, they want to launch an Indian satellite for "communications", and they've nearly decided that it will be launched from Auroville and will be called Sri Aurobindo. . . . And then, I already told you about a boat that will leave from America also in '72 — Sri Aurobindo's Boat. They're trying to do something. . . .

But as for me, I try not to be mixed in too much because . . . as soon as it touches the Manifestation, it becomes as you felt there [in Madras], and then it's so ridiculous that as soon as it enters my consciousness, it starts a trepidation. So I prefer to stand back.

(Conversation of 20 December 1969)

*

One is free only when one is conscious of the Divine

Someone from Auroville wrote to me that he thought he had come here to obey no one but himself (or words to that effect), but he noticed there are rules and laws. And he said, "I am not going to do any of this; I am a free man and refuse to do this." This was reported to me, naturally, so I wrote to him (I don't remember): "One is free only when one is conscious of the Divine and conscious that it is the Divine who makes decisions in everyone, otherwise one is the slave of one's desires, one's habits, of all conventions. . . ." I sent him that, and he kept quiet.

(Conversation of 7 February 1970)

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Responsibility should be with people who have a universal consciousness

A system of “coupons for hours of work”, and a scale of the quality or degree of the work done.

Where is that practised?

I don't know, in my imagination!

Oh, that's you. Yes, of course, that's very good!

Something based on the work.

Yes.

Coupons for hours of work. Then if a coolie's coupon is worth one, an engineer's may be said to be worth five, for instance. That's all.

That would be a whole organisation to be worked out. We'll need . . . we'll need something like that in Auroville.

Based on the work.

Yes, an activity. That work could be defined as an activity with a collective usefulness, not a selfish one.

(silence)

The difficulty is the appreciation of the value of things. You understand, that requires a very wide vision. Money's convenience was that it became mechanical. . . . But this new system cannot become quite mechanical, so . . . For instance, the idea is that those who will live in Auroville will have no money — there is no circulation of money — but to eat, for instance, everyone has the right to eat, naturally, but . . . On quite a practical level, we had conceived the possibility of all types of food according to everyone's tastes or needs (for example, vegetarian cooking, non-vegetarian cooking, diet cooking, etc.), and those who want to get food from there must do something in exchange — work, or . . . It's hard to organise in practice, on a quite practical level. . . . You see, we had planned a lot of lands around the city for large-scale agriculture for the city's consumption. But to cultivate those lands, for the moment we need money, or else materials. So . . . Now I have to face the whole problem in every detail, and it's not easy!

There are some who understand.

You see, the idea is that there will be no customs in Auroville and no taxes, and Aurovilians will have no personal property. Like that on paper, it's very fine, but when it comes to doing it in practice . . .

The problem is always the same: those given the responsibility should be people with a . . . universal consciousness, of course, otherwise . . . Wherever there is a personal consciousness, it means someone incapable of governing — we can see how governments are, it's frightful!

(silence)

There's something very interesting on a psychological level: it's that material needs decrease in proportion to the spiritual growth. Not (as Sri Aurobindo said), not through asceticism, but because the focus of attention and concentration of the being moves to a different domain. . . . The purely material being, quite conceivably, finds only material things pleasing; with all those who live in the emotive being and the outer mind, the interest of the being is turned to . . . for instance, things of beauty, as with those who want to live surrounded by beautiful things, who want to use nice things. Now that appears to be the human summit, but it's quite . . . what we might call a "central region" (*gesture hardly above ground level*), it's not at all a higher region. But the way the world is organised, people without aesthetic needs go back to a very primitive life — which is wrong. We need a place where life . . . where the very setting of life would be, not an individual thing, but a beauty that would be like the surroundings natural to a certain degree of development.

Now, as things are organised, to be surrounded by beautiful things you need to be rich, and that's a source of imbalance, because wealth usually goes with quite an average degree of consciousness, even mediocre at times. So there's everywhere an imbalance and a disorder. We would need . . . a place of beauty — a place of beauty in which people can live only if they have reached a certain degree of consciousness. And let it not be decided by other people, but quite spontaneously and naturally. So how to do that? . . .

Problems of that sort are beginning to come up at Auroville, and that makes the thing very interesting. Of course, the means are very limited, but that also is part of the problem to be solved.

(long silence)

The conditions to organise — to be an organiser (it's not "to govern", it's to organise) — the conditions to be an organiser should be these: no more desires, no more preferences, no more attractions, no more repulsions — a perfect equality for all things. Sincerity, of course, but that goes without saying: wherever insincerity enters,

poison enters at the same time. And then, only those who are themselves in that condition can discern whether another is in it or not.

At present, all human organisations are based on: the visible fact (which is a falsehood), public opinion (another falsehood), and moral sense, which is a third falsehood! (*Mother laughs*) So . . .

(*Conversation of 25 March 1970*)

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What Auroville's language will be

The French language is very literary and mental, isn't it?

Yes, it's very rigid.

Rigid, yes.

They're beginning to wonder what Auroville's language will be.

I think it will be a language that will . . . (*Laughing*) The children are setting the example: they know several languages and make sentences with words from every language, and . . . it's quite colourful! Little A.F. knows Tamil, Italian, French and English; he is three years old, and (*laughing*), it makes a fine muddle!

Something like that.

It's like the Americans. Their language . . . the English say that have totally spoilt the language, but the Americans say that the way they speak has more life. That's how it is.

. . .

People who speak Esperanto wrote me an official letter to say how many they are (a considerable number), and that they would like their Esperanto to be Auroville's language. . . . There are lots of people who speak that language, lots. Everywhere, I think. I got that letter two or three days ago.

But Auroville's language, let it just be born spontaneously!

Yes, spontaneously, naturally! Ah, we shouldn't intervene.

(*Conversation of 28 March 1970*)

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Citizens of the world

. . . For the time being, I write birth certificates in French. . . . And when there is a central organisation (which will be like a town hall or a municipality, I don't know — anything), if passports are given, they will be citizens of the world. . . . So everywhere people will start saying, “They're a bit mad”, and then in a hundred years . . . it will be natural. I remember the beginning of the century (of this century, before you were born), and now . . . there has been a tremendous *change!*

(*Conversation of 28 March 1970*)

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Mother meets Aurovilians in rotation

And then, in the contact with people . . . I hardly know who the people I see are (just about), so I see them without a thought, you understand, as they are, and *afterwards* I ask, or I am told about them, and . . . (*laughing*) I realise that most of the time, if a contact is made (when I see them, a contact is made, a receptivity), it's with the people most scorned by others, people who outwardly behave like real boors! Just recently again I had an experience like that.

One of the things hardest to bear is obviously self-righteous indignation. You know, people tell me what's going on (everyone tells me some story), and the vibrations hardest to bear, those that cause a . . . (*gesture of unpleasant friction*) are those of self-righteous indignation.

Now, I have to say one thing: when people come to see me (people whom I don't know, not those I see all the time), all those visitors, it's the best part of them that comes out. Several times I had contacts with people and the impression that something can be done, that they have a receptivity — and afterwards, those people misbehave, they cause disorder or trouble for others! But when they are in front of me, they're not the same. They feel it, they feel it's something else becoming active. But it's the Presence that . . . compels; then they go away, and they behave very badly, they quarrel, they . . . It's very difficult!

I see people from Auroville in rotation (once a week), in fact to try and work on this material, and it's really interesting (people I don't know: every time I am brought one or two or three new ones; some stay on, and others come in rotation). I said, “Those who want a bath of silence can come in turn”, and not a word is spoken. It's really interesting. Well, there are people there who behave like . . . and despite everything, they feel that what they are here is superior to what they are there. But the others would need to have a lot of patience! . . .

(*Conversation of 22 April 1970*)

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We're going to have to give Auroville people some identity object. Yes, it has happened that some people came and settled on Auroville's lands without asking for anyone's permission, and suddenly we find ourselves faced with a man or a family. . . . So it's beginning to be troublesome. Because it's very scattered.

(Conversation of 29 April 1970)

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Notes on Auroville

I have something for you . . . (*Mother points to a written note*).

It was two or three days ago, it came imperatively like that, in connection with some business. They have gatherings in Auroville, at "Aspiration"; I think it's meditations, or something of the sort, I don't know. One of them came and put my photo; so another rushed to his room and came back with a cross! . . . And he said, "Well, if you put a photo of Mother, I'll put my cross." They told me that story. They told me, because the one who put the cross had come to see me with the others (they come once a week, a few of them, four or five), but I didn't know. He came and sat in front of me. . . . I found him a rather inquisitorial air (I didn't know anything, you understand), and after they left I asked who he was. Then they told me he is a Catholic, and they told me the story.⁹

Afterwards there came a whole series of things. But I must say there's literally an invasion there (at different places in Auroville) because it's not watched over, some plots of land are free, and at the centre especially, some people have settled there, and there are constantly people who come and settle without asking for permission. So there was a thought to have a "badge" for those who are really Aurovilians (*Mother shows a specimen of badge*). For a few days already they've been thinking of organising that: during the first year they will have a sort of identity card, and afterwards, if things are fine at the end of the year, you're given the badge.

But what came to me is this (*Mother points to her notes*). It's not over . . . (*a disciple prepares to bring a lamp for Mother to read*) I don't need light, I don't see clearly anymore.

(The disciple reads)

9. A few months later (October 21), Mother gave the disciple this note written to a French disciple, which seems to fit well with the story she has just recounted: "I am told you intend to distribute a reproduction of the portrait you did of me. It would be better not to introduce in this gathering anything personal that might suggest the atmosphere of a nascent religion."

*“Auroville is for those who want to live a life essentially [religious] but who renounce all forms of religions whether they be ancient, modern, new or future. . . .”*¹⁰

Mother, excuse me, but why didn’t you put “spiritual” instead of “religious”?

I am not sure yet.

It struck me as strange!

Yes, I saw that! . . . Maybe it’s better to put “spiritual”. I’ll see.

“. . . It is only in experience that there can be knowledge of the Truth.

“No one ought to speak of the Divine unless he has had experience of the Divine. . . .”

That’s the important point.

“. . . Get the experience of the Divine, then alone will you have the right to speak of it. . . .”

You understand, we could put “spiritual”, but . . .

“. . . The objective study of religions will be a part of the historical study of the development of human consciousness. . . .”

I place religions below, in the mental realm.

Well yes, exactly!

In the mental realm, and it was a “subject of study”.

Strangely, two days ago it came to me almost like an experience: religion is the mental world.

Yes, yes! It’s a mentalisation, an attempt to mentalise . . . what far exceeds the mind.

“. . . Religions make up part of the history of mankind and it is in this guise that they will be studied at Auroville — not as beliefs to which one ought or ought not to fasten, but as part of a process in the development of human consciousness which should lead man towards his superior realisation.”

10. The next time the Mother omitted the words “forms of” and simply left “all religions”.

So then, “Programme” . . . [Mother laughs]:

*PROGRAMME
Research through experience of the
Supreme Truth.
A life divine
but
NO RELIGIONS.*

That’s fine!

Oh, very fine! . . . It’s only the word “religious” there, it bothers me.

Then we’ll take it out!

Because you do say, “No religions.”

No, I took “religious” in the other sense, but it will always create a confusion.

It has taken on such a false meaning.

Yes. I’ll explain: I did not want to put “spiritual”, first because in French, the word ‘spirituel’ has a different meaning [i.e., witty], and then because people living a “spiritual” life reject Matter, while we do not want to reject Matter. So that would be false.

I admit that “religious” isn’t a good word, because it immediately . . . I used “religious” in the sense of “a life essentially occupied with the discovery or the search of the Divine”. There are no words in French, and it’s not “spiritual”.

“Divine”?

We have to find a word — we could put this:

“Auroville is for those who want to live a life divine . . .”

Yes, “a life essentially divine”, yes. “Divine”, that’s vast, Mother.

(silence)

Is that all? . . . There was so much, I didn’t note everything. . . . It was the day before yesterday, I think, the whole day was taken up like that in the experience, and I felt

it was the revelation of Auroville's true goal, and that this was what had to be told, and *this* is what . . . *will select the people*, the Aurovilians. The true Aurovilians are those who want to make the search and discovery of the divine. But, as I said, not through mystic means: it's in life.

That too should be said.

(Mother writes)

"Our research will not be a search effected by mystic means. It is in life that we wish to find the divine."

(after writing her note, Mother runs her hand over her eyes)

It's a very strange thing: as the . . . Let's see, there are two ways of putting it. One is: as the natural sight and hearing decrease, the others grow. But I think it's much truer to put it the other way round: as the . . . what shall we call that hearing and sight?

"True"? Or "superior," in any case.

Superior. Let's say "superior", because "true", they may not be the supreme truth. . . . As the superior hearing and sight develop, the material sight and hearing fade away.

All manners of speaking seem to me . . . not quite true.

With certain people or a certain kind of occupation, for instance, my experience is that the . . . let's call it the "next way", dominates: the next way of seeing, the next way of hearing. And then, any intrusion of the old way instantly decreases the perception. Which means that the ordinary sight is as if behind a veil, and then the veil grows thicker. But if the circumstances, the people or the work allow me to go more completely into the new consciousness, the perception grows clearer and clearer.

The body has understood that, it has been led to understand: it isn't worried about the decreasing sight or hearing, and it notices, it realises that the more this way, the ordinary way, fades away, recedes, the more the other one increases — provided I make no effort to retain the ordinary way. If I naturally let go, then that's how it is.

Any effort to retain the old way has become . . . it brings about a discomfort, an almost intolerable discomfort. Whereas a trusting acceptance of the conditions gives a sort of . . . yes, I don't know, it can't be called "well-being", it's . . . a trusting peace.

But now, it's no longer just sight and hearing: it's everything. Speaking becomes increasingly difficult. . . . Eating is very difficult: it's a mixture of something going on quite easily, without your noticing it, or else a struggle against a great difficulty.

It's only now, because I want to say it, that I observe it and try to express it, otherwise there is no mental activity.

Those things have imposed themselves.

(Mother plunges in)

Shall we put a title to these notes on Auroville? . . . For instance, "Auroville's Stand on Religions"?

What about "We Want the Truth"? . . . I use the word because no one in the world would dare to say, "We don't want the truth!" (*laughter*)

For most people, that's how it is: "What *we* want is the truth!" (*laughter*)

I showed R. the "Programme" (*laughing*), and his hair stood on end: "But . . . but people can't tolerate this now!" — Ah . . .

So then, Aurovilians must want the Truth whatever *it* may be. . . . They call "Truth" what they want, while they must want the truth whatever it may be.

(Mother writes her last note on Auroville)

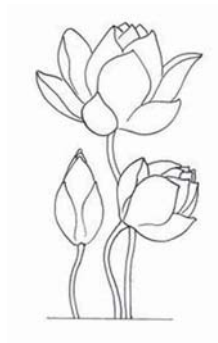
We want the Truth.

For most men, it is what they want that they label truth.

Aurovilians must want the Truth whatever it may be.

I put "Truth" with a capital "T". (*Mother laughs*) Because, to tell the truth, that's not the word. It is: "We want *the Divine*." But then they instantly start arguing! So it's better to put "Truth".

(Conversation of 2 May 1970)



PILGRIMAGE TO THE MATRIMANDIR

A Diary-Note

. . . When we reached the Matrimandir [31 March 1993] a number of old acquaintances, who had had news of my trip, came to greet me. Divakar, a foreigner Aurovilian of long standing, was the first to shake my hand vigorously and he proved also to be one who took part in the difficult task of carrying my chair to the top of the Matrimandir. Two others who greeted me with enthusiasm were Arjun and Barbara. Afterwards I had the pleasure of meeting Shraddhavan and Helmut, the two Aurovilians with whom I am most in contact.

Clean white socks were to be worn by all who entered the inner chamber. As soon as we got there I felt a sudden stillness and a sense of inexpressible mystery. They seemed to draw me in with a silent welcome of enfolding love. My chair was placed in front of the crystal globe forming the centre of the chamber and receiving a beam of light through an aperture in the domed roof. My first response was a flush of emotion and a vague feeling of tears in the eyes — tears of joy as if something precious long lost or long hidden away had swum into sight. Then the impression took shape of an immense height meeting an intense depth. Spontaneously there arose in my mind a line from *Savitri* I had quoted to the Mother more than fifty-five years ago as an ideal experience for me. She had smiled and nodded. At that time she used to come every week to Lalita's room which is now Huta's bedroom. The Mother would sit in a specially draped chair and Lalita and I would be on the floor at her feet. On one such occasion I quoted to her that line. I had picked it out from the passages which Sri Aurobindo had been privately sending me for typing and comment every morning. It ran:

All was made wide above, all lit below.

Now it appeared as though the Yogic state caught in these words had been given a concrete exteriorisation in the inner chamber for all aspirants to get an inkling of a double divine action by which heaven and earth would both be equal components of an all-round self-manifestation by a Supreme Presence.

For nearly twenty minutes I sat in the inner chamber, facing the mysteriously gleaming crystal globe poised unmoving in an atmosphere of what I can only call intimate remoteness. When I was carried out into the common world again, I felt washed clean of all impurities and given a new birth. Indeed, as promised at the very initiation of the Auroville project, here in the inner chamber was the Soul of the "Dawn-City", with the creative consciousness of the Divine Mother at concen-

trated work in harmony with the world-regenerating Power at the heart of Her Pondicherry Ashram.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

(Reprinted from *Mother India*, May 1993, pp. 329-30.)

. . . the sadhaka who has once seen firmly the essence of things and tasted thoroughly the peace of the silent Self, is not likely to be content with any state which involves loss of self-knowledge or a sacrifice of the peace of the soul. He will not precipitate himself back into the mere individual movement of mind and life and body with all its ignorance and straining and disturbance. Whatever new status he may acquire, will only satisfy him if it is founded upon and includes that which he has already found to be indispensable to real self-knowledge, self-delight and self-possession.

Sri Aurobindo

(The Synthesis of Yoga, CWSA, Vol. 23, pp. 406-7)

VRAJA¹

Why do you say Vraja is lost to us?
Lo! in every flash of every atom,
What shines is only the light of Vraja.

You may all deride and say:
“Where is Vraja now, and where is Kana?”
But in the harmonious pattern
Of my body’s myriad cells,
I hear the melody of his flute,
The self-born sound for ever in flow.
And then on the numerous tracks
Of my being’s conscious woods,
I keep moving about,
Enraptured, lost.
Why do you say Vraja is lost to us?
In every flash of every atom
What shines is only the light of Vraja.

Why do you consider as past,
That which we experience
From day to day, even to-day?
This teasing, toying naughtiness
Is measure enough of Mohan’s features.
And look into his twin eyes,
Yamuna is dancing in full delight.
Why do you say Vraja is lost to us?
Vraja shines in every atom-spark.

And Vraja is not a particular spot on earth
That I can point a path to reach.
Vraja is not a happy childhood,
Nor is it a ripe old age.
Vraja is the state of bursting youth-energy.

1. ‘Vraja’ is the place associated with the childhood of Krishna (also called Kana or Kanha); it is the place of enchantment where the human soul is close to and lured by the incarnate Divine.

It is the eternal game of hide and seek,
 The Leela unfolding from moment to moment.
 Who says Vraja is lost to us?
 Vraja shines in each and every atom-spark.

PRADYUMNA TANNA

(Translated by Dhanavanti from the original Gujarati)

The mental man, the man of a self-dominating and self-formative mind and will conscious of an ideal and turned towards its realisation, the high intellect, the thinker, the sage, less kinetic and immediately effective than the vital man, who is the man of action and outer swift life-fulfilment, but as powerful and eventually even more powerful to open new vistas to the race, is the normal summit of Nature's evolutionary formation on the human plane.

Sri Aurobindo

(The Life Divine, CWSA, Vol. 22, pp. 748-49)

MEDITATIONS ON SRI AUROBINDO'S 'KRISHNA'

I

Life in this universe with its bedrock of Ignorance and inertia, its meandering streams and whirlpools of desire and its cloudy skies of gloomy thoughts and flickering half-truths and misleading lights, has always been a paradox and an insoluble enigma to the human reason.

Its highest wisdom is the cultivation of a detached poise of contemplation of this meaningless sequence, with a tragic or comic perspective, a stoical endurance of the inevitable shocks in one's personal life and a comprehensive sympathy for all struggling mortals trying to snatch moments of pleasure in sensation and therefore forgetfulness from the agonising circumstances of this harsh world. But there is a deeper vision of the subliminal Intuition born of the cultivation of inner life by the practice of the methods of religious disciplines of purification and concentration and it declares that beyond the clouds is a whole region of multitudinous stars, moons and suns, angels, goddesses and gods and man can receive through the rifts in the cloudy sky of the mind or better still by clearing the mind of the thick cloud of thoughts a steady stream of the rays of these luminous bodies even in this mortal tenement and can indeed acclimatise and prepare himself for residence in those heavenly realms of light after shuffling off this mortal coil. This life is a preparation for another and greater, more glorious life; this world of darkness a prelude to the worlds of light.

The way of wisdom is not to concentrate on the murky darkness but to contemplate with devotion on the lights beyond and merge with these when the muddy vesture of decay drops in death. This universe may have no meaning in itself but there are other luminous worlds which can engage the energies of a man's life and this world forms a good training ground, in fact the best of all possible worlds from this point of view, for other worlds are not worlds of progress but of Bhoga or enjoyment of the accumulated stock of good and bad karma in this world.

There is a whole hierarchy of the worlds of light, with the Heavens of the Overmind at the summit where the Supreme Lords, Shiva, Vishnu and Parashakti have their own home, the mental heavens below where the Rishis, Manus and Archetypal Thinkers enjoy the beatitudes of Thought and the vital heavens lower still where Indra, Manmatha and the celestial dancers revel in the ecstasies of aesthetic and sensual pleasures of the greatest intensities and varieties. Every man has only to choose his Ishta Devata according to his taste, temperament and degree or kind of light and delight he aspires to and undergo the discipline outlined so clearly in the Agamas and finally attain Mukti or release from this world negatively, and positively

ananda of nearness, contact, mutual presence, mutual reflection, likeness and even identity — *sālokya*, *sārūpya*, *sādṛśya* and *sāyujya* — with his Ishta in His Heaven.

There is a still more profound Intuition which directs its penetrating gaze behind and beyond all worlds and kinds of life, sees the very substratum of all, a vast Consciousness or Zero which contains all, the static foundation of all this dynamic play of force or manifestation. Behind the rock, the waters, the clouds and the light is the Supreme Ether in which all are, from which all have become and to which all have to return in the final dissolution. Here is the Heaven beyond all Heavens, a Heaven which is no Heaven. The supreme wisdom is to pass beyond all manifestation in oneself and the worlds one sees and be the Ether. The seer and the seen, the subject and the object (and therefore all *lokas*, worlds — *alokyante*, *athā eva lokah*) are to be dissolved in the Consciousness of the Brahman, the Absolute. The real paradox is not so much the absence of purpose within the scheme of manifestation or the created worlds but the appearance of manifestation at all in the Unmanifest Ultimate Reality. *Aghaṭana-ghaṭana patīyasī māyā*.

But there is a more comprehensive vision and integral knowledge which sees the Supreme Reality as a Transcendent Purusha who includes and transcends the Saguna and the Nirguna and all manifestation in the created worlds is the play of this Purushottama with his Shakti, the Paraprakriti. So the supreme felicity for a mortal is to dissolve the ego in him which deludes him into assuming a separative and exclusive outlook, and live in the wider consciousness of the Divine Lord and see all as Vasudeva. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*. This magical Essence interpenetrates all and embodies as the ether the lights, the clouds, the waters and the rock. They are the deployings in several planes and poises of the same Sachchidananda. *Sarvāṇi vijñāna vijṛmbhitāni*. But even in this view this universe has no special purpose in its organisation except to serve as one variation on the theme of the play of Conscious Force and perhaps the strangest and most fantastic because the foundation of all here is the very denial of light, the most obscure Inconscient. This world is a demonstration that the Superconscient can masquerade even with the cloak of the Inconscient.

This monstrous python, the black dragon of the Inconscient adorns the body of the Superconscient Siva. But there is a crowning spiritual experience of the Supramental World-vision which sees the Purushottama as drawing all towards Him and pouring all Himself into the created world and therefore transforming it progressively into His image. The Divine is a great alchemist infusing the elixir of His magical Essence into all the elements from the Ether down even to the rock and transmuting them into the gold of His divinity.

Sri Aurobindo's sonnet, 'Krishna', describes this profoundest experience of the Transcendent Grace of the Divine Lover descending in answer to the human aspiration and therefore fulfilling the age-long quest and making the creation or manifestation meaningful and significant.

II

The supreme discovery and realisation of the meaning of the manifestation is the last reward of spiritual sadhana. It is at once a great end and a greater beginning, the end of evolution in Ignorance and the beginning of evolution in Knowledge. The way up is the way down. As the consciousness of man ascends higher and higher in the realms of the Spirit above the mind, his knowledge of the realms of Matter below increases in width and depth. So it is only when he reaches inwardly the very highest level of the dynamics of consciousness, the Supramental Truth-consciousness, that the secret heart of the cavernous depths of the Inconscient reveals itself to his vision. Till then, however advanced spiritually, no light can illuminate the impenetrable darkness, no power can annul its iron determinism and no joy remain immune from its mighty assaults of pain. So the Yogin who has traversed the Intermediate zones of the spiritual consciousness and crossed the border of the Overmind which is the very summit and the very last reach of Mind and finally entered the Supramental Gnosis, announces:

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth
 Into this universe terrible and sweet,
 I who have felt the hungry heart of earth
 Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.

The cosmos with its innumerable individuals is the creation of the Transcendent Lord and so, only the man who has liberated himself from the cramping egoistic consciousness, widened his awareness to embrace the cosmos on all its levels and glimpsed the Transcendent pressing upon its highest summit can penetrate into the mystery of creation and solve the riddle of this world. For there seems to be no logic in that an immortal and eternal entity, a child of light and a spark of the infinite should enter into the realm of death, time, darkness and finiteness. Its entry into any scheme of finite creation is puzzling enough but it is the greatest of all paradoxes that it should choose this world which is set exactly at the opposite pole of anything spiritual, for everything here — body, life and mind — has evolved out of an Inconscient base and therefore has always an inevitable downward gravitation.

We have here only cages of iron, silver and gold all from the dark mines of the Earth for the bird of the spirit. And encircling them is the black dragon with yawning mouth, waiting unperturbed for its prey to fall into it to be swallowed out of life and shape. Terrible indeed. But the soul is an adventurer and this world has acquired for the soul an irresistible attraction — “an attraction which in human terms on the terrestrial level might be interpreted as the call of the unknown, the joy of danger and difficulty and adventure, the will to attempt the impossible, to work out the incalculable, the will to create the new and uncreated with one's own self and life as

the material, the fascination of contradictories and their difficult harmonisation — these things translated into another supraphysical, superhuman consciousness, higher and wider than the mental, were the temptation that led to the fall.”¹ Terrible and sweet; terrible and therefore sweet:

The hero soul at play with Death's embrace,

a

Wrestler in the dread gymnasium of Fate

engaged in

Life's game of hazard terrible and sweet.²

But the birth of the soul on earth has kindled in it and is in answer to an undying flame of aspiration. The mental, vital and physical formations of the earth are all possessed by an insatiate desire whose inmost core is this immortal aspiration. Desire is a perversion which makes a faculty seek what it really aspires for, in the external forms and not in the inner Essence, with passion and egoistic possessiveness and not with a self-giving self-identification and identity of consciousness. And so the mind aspires for Knowledge, the vital for Power and the body for Beauty though desire drives them to seek these in the wrong place and in the wrong manner. *All human life on earth is one agonising cry of unfulfilled aspiration which is heard always deep behind the pleasures of satisfied desire or the pains of frustrated passion.* So the heart of earth as different from the surface appearances is always hungry, for the outer world cannot give what it really aspires for. When we listen to this still, sad music of humanity we realise that nothing finite can assuage its hunger and no organisation of worlds based on the principle of separation between the subject and the object is capable of answering to its aspiration. *The yearning is for communion with the Eternal Personality of Ananda and Love in all the planes and parts of the being, here and now, on this bank and shoal of Time.* No heaven can satisfy the hunger of the earth, for each heaven is only a world typical, fixed and finite in its nature containing and affording only refractions or reflections of the Divine Delight of Existence in some plane or other like sensations or imaginations, thoughts or ideas of various kinds and degrees of illumination, intuitions or even lights. And the earth seeks not refractions or reflections but the very source of all, the feet of the Divine Lord, Krishna, and an endless progression in intimacy with this *Ananta-*

1. *Letters on Yoga — I*, CWSA, Vol. 28, pp. 257-58.

2. 'The Cosmic Dance (*Dance of Krishna, Dance of Kali*)', *Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 590.

kalyāṇagūṇa. The search may be in ignorance and very obscure but Mother Earth has implanted in every one of her children this aspiration and indeed looks forward to man, the most self-conscious of her creations for its fulfilment.

The sadhaka of integral yoga is a true child of the Earth inheriting this ardent longing and pushing forward in this grand quest and the adventure towards the Infinite Person, Krishna.

III

The sadhaka's integral aspiration makes him one homogeneous being and integrated personality, psychicised and spiritualised enough to help him ascend to the very heights and inwardly plunge into the very depths of his consciousness and so to have the Darshan of the goal of his Para Bhakti, the Transcendent and Immanent Purushottama, Visvamohana, Bhuvanasundara Krishna.

I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,
 And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,
 And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise
 And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.

He has looked alive upon the Eternal's face and drunk the infinite beauty like a giant's wine. He has seen the matchless harmony of shape and colour and light and aura; he has gazed at these windows revealing and radiating endless levels and depths and widths of beatitudes of light and love and harmony.

Krishna is no cold, aloof and incommunicable impersonal Absolute but full of a divine love and divine compassion, a smiling kindness and a playful gaiety. He is in love with this green earth and all the mortals who embody its aspiration. In fact the very hunger of the earth and man for His feet is the response to His magnetic Personality secretly immanent and drawing all, Akarshan, towards Him by an entrancing music. "His flute calls the physical being to awake out of the attachments of the physical world and turn to the divine love and ananda that He embodies. It is the music of the call which seeks to transform the lower ignorant play of mortal life and bring into it and establish in its place the lila of His divine Ananda."

He seems to pour all Himself into the music and listening to it one becomes aware of an overmastering and inordinate longing passion, on His part for union with all the souls on earth and all the parts and planes of being evolved in and by the earth. The tunes of his music are not so much melodies produced by a divine ingenuity but the spontaneous outpourings of a heart of infinite and ardent love which cannot endure separation from His beloved creatures, so that one hearing his flute hears not a tune but feels the throb of the passionate heart of the Divine Lover. This is a splendid and enravishing surprise because the soul of the mortal was all along thinking

that the Divine is a Person so august and mighty that He must be approached with reverence, not at all One who makes any advance on His side. Very often the sadhaka would have cried in ignorance when the path seemed full of thorns and the goal not at all in sight, about His cruelty and wantonness and so the surprise at feeling the fire-passion of Grace. "When Love desires Love, Then Love is born"³ and when Love feels the Love of the beloved there is the consummation of Bliss, a deathless ecstasy. What a contrast to the brief ecstasy experienced by the soul when it was held by life's alluring cry and the splendours of the surface!

The human heart has realised the Infinite Delight it has been all along aspiring for and so the still, sad music voicing its essential sorrow gives place to a paean of joy and victory. No more the tyranny, the thrill or the thrust of desire and therefore sorrow for ever becomes mute, for the heart has now learnt to commune with the Divine Lover who is the Indwelling Lord of all objects and creatures and persons. The ascending movement of the human consciousness and aspiration towards the Divine is answered by the descending movement of the Divine Consciousness and Grace. The mounting Flame of aspiration, the God Agni calls the Divine Soma and the rain of His Grace. Not indeed immediately or even after a predictable interval or according to any decipherable law. All human tapasya and supreme efforts of concentration of consciousness are only attempts at self-purification leading to a sublime trance in waiting, so that at the divinely appointed moment of Siddhi, there is a sudden capture by an unexpected assault, a surprise, which gives to the realisation the highest intensity of excitement, an ecstasy.

There is then a radical reversal of consciousness from the psychic and spiritual to the supramental rhythm. A revaluation of the entire past and a transvaluation of all values are the invariable results. And so there is not even the possibility of a sorrow in retrospective remembrance of the past, for every detail in life is seen as the necessary preparation, arranged by the Omniscient and All-merciful hand of the Divine Lover who has been engaged all along in leading the soul by the quickest, safest and surest of roads to a final union with and manifestation of Him. It is His saviour passion which has done the miracle of converting the mortal heart accustomed to the rhythms of earthly pleasure and pain, into a fit instrument for receiving and retaining the divine Ananda. The black fire of pain and the gold fire of rapture have striven towards one bliss and the soul has risen by them towards a supernal plane of power and love and deathless ecstasies.

The heart in man, the psychic-emotional centre is the nearest and the purest in him which opens to the depths and the heights, feels the selfless devotion, *ahaituki-bhakti*, to the Divine and receives the descending Ananda. Very often the sadhaka of the exclusive Bhakti Yoga stations himself in this part of his being solely and enjoys the beatitude of divine union in his inner life and therefore gets the fulfilment

3. CWSA, Vol. 4, p. 534.

of his personal aspiration. But the aspiration of the sadhaka of Integral Yoga has never been personal or fractional. In fact, it would be more true to say that Mother Earth, Nature aspires in and through him. So it is not only the pure emotional centre but also the vital and physical consciousness in him and the outer personality formed and carved out of the substance of earth-life which partake of the longing for the Divine. The heart is only the spearhead of attack and leader in the conquest of the kingdom of God. The Divine Lover uses the heart as a lever for the great work of transformation of the earth-consciousness. Descending into the heart and establishing His empire in it, He touches every other part and shapes it for His advent in it. So the vital, the vital-physical, the physical and the whole of Nature through these and in these hear the music of the Lover now quite near them, and quite audible to them.

Nearer and nearer now the music draws,
 Life shudders with a strange felicity;
 All Nature is a wide enamoured pause
 Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.

The vital and physical consciousness (life) has already undergone a process of purification by tuning itself to the psychic-emotional centre and that makes it sensitive to the tunes of the music of the celestial Lover. Or rather, the Divine as Kali has prepared the mortal by her tragic and violent dance in his members, with opposition and the shocks of circumstance as her faithful attendants and therefore given him the plasticity, inwardness and divine sensibility to make the sweet dance of Krishna in him possible. The music of Krishna is at the same time a symbol and a spiritually concrete description of the ways of the Divine with the human. The movements of the Divine are always harmonious, born of delight and bringing delight, emanating from regions behind and beyond the threshold of the cerebral brain-mind organisation of consciousness which is the realm of words and constructed speech and so appealing, awakening, influencing and even transforming the subtler and deeper layers of consciousness and personality in the most direct and dynamic manner conceivable.

Every great creative artist bewitches his audience at first by the splendid audacities of his bold originalities and by slow degrees educates it to appreciate the subtleties and intricacies of his art. Appreciation is a progressive and endless process and the *rasika* feels the work of art drawing nearer and nearer to him according as his taste and concentration become deeper and deeper and with every discovery of a new element in the work of art comes the experience of a strange unearthly happiness, felicity, whose first impact on the nervous-emotional apparatus is a shudder. The response of the vital to the music of Krishna is very similar to the response of a *rasika* to a work of art. And the end is the endless journey to no end, the continuous experience of the essential creative delight. The audience is not

limited to one individual vital being, but the whole of Nature is arrested in her habitual movements and diurnal routines by the entrancing music. Suspending her externalising acts, she waits in a trance of silence, pause, all her energies captivated, bewitched and focussed and flowing towards one object, enamoured. She cannot do justice with one aspect of her being to this infinite artistry and so she widens and opens her vast, multitudinous chambers or rather they are opened by, and they respond spontaneously to, the global music. Who can so completely absorb her entire being and ravish her utterly except her Lord and Lover and Supreme Creator, Jagannatha Krishna?

The shock of recognition makes her go into a wide, enamoured pause. The One to whom all her seeking through her millionfold creatures in the physical, vital and mental domains, has been directed, the Superconscient Eternal Anandamaya, has come pouring all Himself in rapturous tunes. So she opens in a wide enamoured pause to the melody. Her aspiration is no vain dream. She can now confidently hope through a complete opening of all herself to the music, to touch her lord, then clasp him in a tight embrace and finally become one with Him and be Him always.

To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution.⁴

IV

This is the day of victory and fulfilment of the aspiration of the earth-consciousness for the Divine Consciousness.

For this one moment lived the ages past;
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.

The long and chequered history of cosmic evolution is a divine comedy of three great protagonists, God, Man and Nature. Universal Nature aspires for the Transcendent Divine with the individual Man as the intermediary. All that has gone before this moment of descent of the Divine Lord into Matter has been a preparation for it. All culture has helped in making the various faculties in man, mind, heart, life

4. CWSA, Vol. 21, p. 4.

and body plastic, pure and strong enough to receive and manifest the divine plenitude. All spiritual sadhanas of the past have opened up progressively the different phases of the multiple Personality and levels of the Divine Consciousness and have attuned the faculties to these supernal verities.

This is the time for a grand and mighty synthesis and an uplifting of all by the Divine Lord to the highest height and with the almighty power to bring about the transformation of the earth. All the ages past with their contributions have looked forward to the present moment of the advent of the Divine Love and Divine Ananda. The evolutionary urge which threw up in successive ages out of the Inconscient, Matter, Life and Mind and put them all together in the same house of Man so that they could be harmonised and integrated around a divine centre and lifted to higher and higher levels of the Spirit, reaches now the decisive stage when a new creation becomes possible. All time (the ages past) finds its redemption in the present moment when Eternity or the Timeless has chosen to descend and bind all moments each to each by a divine piety into an eternal Day, so that all streams of Time flow into the sea of Eternity. Time and all her products shall henceforward receive their true value and place in the scheme of things to be organised by an Eternal Wisdom.

For this one moment lived the ages past.

So at last, after a very long period of travail and many tragic experiments the world finds in the integral Yogi the bringer of the Ananda she has been aspiring for, not for himself in any egoistic sense, for his sadhana has been cosmic in its proportions, so that the streams of Ananda descending into the mortal tenement of a Purna Yogi will naturally overflow into the world around. The stage is set for the Supramental Manifestation. So at the moment of fulfilment of Integral Yoga in an individual sadhaka the world beats in a strong but rhythmical pulsation of ecstasy of fulfilment of its aspiration.

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth

...

The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.

The secret of the mystery of cosmic evolution and the birth of the soul in this world is Krishna's Love and Ananda. World and Man exist in Him and for Him. Krishna is the meaning and significance of all existence and manifestation and henceforth "shall Krishna's dance through Nature move, His mask of sweetness, laughter, rapture, love"!

M.V. SEETHARAMAN

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ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES: THE MOTHER'S DIRECTIVES

“One of the objectives of Auroville is that economic activities of all kinds, whether industrial, artisan, agricultural etc. should be completely taken up by Aurovilians. Since the requirements of the Aurovilians are completely looked after by Auroville, the question of salary does not arise.”

May 23, 1972

INTRODUCTION

In August 1964, at its First World Conference, the Sri Aurobindo Society announced a new township to be founded at the outskirts of Pondicherry. The Mother approved and blessed the entire programme.

The excerpts below, from *“Planning of Auroville using Systems Engineering”* by Suresh Hindocha,¹ concern the discussion that he, Roger Anger, Mother’s son André Morisset and a few others had with Sidney Firstman in Paris, fall-winter 1968, with the Mother’s blessings. This is also the background of the letter that the Mother forwarded to the Ford Foundation on March 13, 1969, with the request to partially finance the feasibility study for a preliminary master plan, the embryo of what will be known afterwards as “the Galaxy”. This was attached, along with two recommendations by UNESCO (1966 and 1968) and other documents.

To raise the capital for the town of 50,000 inhabitants, meant to materialise in five years by adopting systems engineering, it was proposed to establish the Auroville Industrial Corporation, *“an international entity, perhaps with headquarters at Paris. This corporation would sell bonds, which could be bought by financial institutions or governments. The funds generated by these bonds were to be used to promote profitable high tech industries and to buy land. The profits generated by these industries would initially be used to promote more industries and to buy more land. . . . Once surplus funds were generated, the corporation would redeem or buy back the bonds in stages. Once all the bonds were bought back, the corporation would be dissolved.*

1. Suresh Hindocha, who graduated in engineering, and his father Laljibhai, a successful industrialist, became members of the Administrative Committee of Auroville and were put in charge, respectively, of the sections ‘Technical Management’ and ‘Promotion of Industries’. This is the family that purchased most of the land for the Matrimandir. In 1968 an advertisement by the Planning Research Corporation, in the magazine *Scientific American* publishing a special edition on urban planning, caught Suresh’s attention. His letter was answered by Dr. Sidney Firstman, explaining how new towns could be built with systems engineering in a few years. Suresh informed the Mother. She asked for a photo of Dr. Firstman, liked what she saw in his eyes, and approved of Suresh’s effort to have his collaboration.

Then the Mother's vision of money-less Auroville could be eventually achieved. [The Auroville Industrial Corporation] was meant to be a temporary tool to get Auroville going."

Also, as "*UNESCO was involved, the Government of India could be approached to declare the land, in and around Auroville, as a special development zone. Land could not be bought except by Auroville, at a fair price, fixed by the Government. This would also protect the local land owners selling out to land speculators at an unfair lower price. . . . There was already a plan, by Auroville planners, for two industrial zones. One would be an external zone for polluting industries and those industries which would donate only a minor part of their profits to Auroville. The internal industrial zone would be for non-polluting industries, which would donate 100% profits to Auroville. The external zone was to be built on land already owned by Auroville on the road towards Vanur/Mailam. An example of such an industry was Aurofoods near that zone.*"

Internal rivalries sabotaged the funding request to the Ford Foundation for a feasibility study and the grand project never materialised; but the underlying principles remained. The Mother stressed that all the economic activities in the 'internal' economic zone were to be carried out by Aurovilians, without monetary emoluments or personal profits; she specified that, the material needs being provided by the Auroville Prosperity Service — 'in kind', and established on the principle of minimum needs — "*the question of salary does not arise*". However, aware that the optimum goal could not be reached all at once, she allowed to hire paid specialists and technicians under an annually renewable contract, as long as they were made aware of the ideals of Auroville; stressing that Aurovilians had to be trained at the earliest to do the job themselves.

This stood at the basis of the economically self-sufficient township the Mother envisioned, providing in kind for the material needs of its inhabitants, through agriculture and, ideally, a gamut of industrial and other initiatives (along the beach, in the Alangkuppam neighbourhood etc.), which included as well the production of construction materials (cement etc.) to build the town and keep it updated and well maintained.

According to guidelines the Mother signed as early as 1969, "*all surplus profit will go to the Central Fund*", set up to provide assistance to all economic ventures, developing or established; specifying in the same text that "*those who wish to donate only a part of their profits to the Central Fund could start their industries anywhere in the world*". However, the provision of giving the entire profits to Auroville applied only to the economic enterprises (strictly non-polluting) located in the 'internal' economic zone; the percentage of those outside this perimeter (as it would be afterwards the case of Aurelec) was to be discussed on an individual basis. Also, the Mother had agreed that "*Industries in Auroville should pay for Aurovilians if they are prospering. If any industry is in difficulty, I have not to ask for it.*"

These few quotes convey the essence:

Mother,

X, Y and Z will be the partners in this project to construct a factory named Auro-steel. They will invest various sums of money. How should the profits be distributed? In proportion to their investments or some other way? X's will be the biggest share. All told it needs Rs. 2 lakhs.

They do not seem to know that in Auroville after all expenses are paid, including their own maintenance, the profits go to the town.

CWM 17, p. 322, 17.10.1969

SOME GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP INDUSTRIES AT AUROVILLE²

One of the objectives of Auroville is that economic activities of all kinds, whether industrial, artisan, agricultural etc, should be completely taken up by Aurovilians. Since the requirements of the Aurovilians are completely looked after by Auroville, the question of salary does not arise.

This objective, which should not in any case be forgotten or delayed in its application, is the ideal to be attained.

An intermediary stage for practical reasons seems necessary before attaining this.

During this period the industries which would come up in Auroville, can engage for a certain period, according to their needs some salaried specialists or technicians.

However, engagement of this paid personnel would be only for a limited period under a form of contract, to be renewed annually. Their role will be to help start of industries and then help form a team of Aurovilians, as soon as possible, who would replace them.

Moreover, any enterprise or project undertaken at Auroville should be in consonance with Auroville's ideals.

Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, pp. 180-81, 23.5.1972

The absence of private property and private profits, along with the absence of monetary transactions, are essential.

Listed in chronological order, the texts in the present research paper complement the Mother's general guidelines. The absence of private property, of private business

2. Note signed by the Mother, similar to the one she signed in 1969; these can be considered the Mother's consistent guidelines for industries and productive units in general. This includes "Since the requirements of the Aurovilians are completely looked after by Auroville, the question of salary does not arise. This objective, which should not in any case be forgotten or delayed in its application, is the ideal to be attained."

and profit, of monetary transactions within the city-area are essential postulates within the framework of the Auroville Prosperity, in kind system, providing to the “willing servitors of the divine consciousness” subsistence, accommodations and the essential services, in an atmosphere of joyful sharing and brotherhood: everything belongs to all, at the service of the common good.

Part One of this compilation is a selection of documents envisioning the ideal set-up, when the town was to be built in five years via systems engineering. Part Two documents how the Mother and her faithful braved the challenging reality.

PART ONE

Preliminaries: raising the capital to build the town (1966 — Early 1969)

Would it be possible for people or business organisations (Indians or others), not connected with Sri Aurobindo's ideas, to establish businesses in Auroville, just for financial or commercial reasons? In general, would it be possible to establish Private or Public Limited Companies in Auroville?

Each case is a special one and must be considered separately. No categories.

Shyam Sunder's file, Auroville Archives, 11.4.1966

When asked what would happen to undesirable people who tried to get into Auroville, the Mother replied that they would not be able to stay in Auroville, but would automatically leave by themselves without being forced out. The reason they would not stay would be that there would be no profit making in Auroville, and these undesirables merely intent on profiteering, finding no gain, would leave.

Shyam Sunder's file, Auroville Archives, 24.2.1967

. . . There are industries that are already under our planning and for which we are eager to establish a PRIVATE industrial estate with financial assistance from the Bank or other financing agencies, as we believe that this could be done immediately. . . .

Suresh Hindocha archive, Progress Report on Industries, excerpt, 1.11.1968

ADVANTAGES AND CONDITIONS OFFERED TO INDUSTRIALISTS WHO WANT TO START AN INDUSTRY IN AUROVILLE

Summary of General Conditions:

- 1) In accordance with the charter of Auroville and according to the arrangements followed so far, all industries built on the territory of Auroville will belong to Auroville.
- 2) During the so-called launching — and refund — periods an absolute independence will be granted to the industrialists as far as the direction and the exploitation is concerned. This should however be done in accordance with the ideal and the experiment which is being made.
- 3) All industrial foundations are submitted to the general legislation of the government of Madras and the Central Government.
- 4) The location of the industries will be decided in accordance with the organisation of Auroville, consideration being taken of every different type. The land is presented by Auroville and, if possible, provided with the necessary equipment.

Type of industries:

- a) Foundation of industries by funds belonging to the Auroville organisation.
- b) Foundation of industries by personal funds belonging to members of the Auroville Community.
- c) Foundation of industries by groups of industrialists or financiers who do not belong to the Auroville community, but are interested in the experiment.

Basic elements for agreements:

As to the categories a + b for each foundation a special agreement with Auroville is necessary defining the principles and details of the agreement. Once all administrative steps have been taken and licenses acquired, the agreement should be specified so as to be adapted to the nature of the industry, the way of investment, the interest required and the way the production is sold.

All administrative and legal procedures should be undertaken in collaboration with the legal department of the Auroville organisation.

How collaboration could work

During the starting period of the industry that means (2 years) after the construction of the plant, Auroville will ask no participation whatever (Launching period).

After this initial period, Auroville will receive a percentage of the profit (to be specified $x\%$ over x years) calculated according to the time which is necessary to the money-lender to recuperate the totality of his initial capital together with an interest of $x\%$ over the investment.

So-called Recuperation or Refund period

At the end of this period there will be a collaboration established with Auroville (over x years to be fixed) during which the profit will be divided 50-50. This is the period in which new investments should be considered for modernisation and better return.

So-called period of collaboration

After this period Auroville should become proprietor of the whole establishment.

Suresh Hindocha's archive, undated. November 1968.²³

[This document continues the discussion, this time with the Mother answering directly, which Suresh Hindocha, Roger Anger and others had two months earlier in Paris with Sidney Firstman:]

1. Establishment of a corporation to raise finance for Auroville's industrial development only by issue of irredeemable preference shares without voting power, control or interference in Auroville.

Yes. Such a corporation can be formed initially to get Auroville going and later all preference shares should be liquidated, as we do not want to employ money to make money in Auroville.

2. Employment of paid experts, whose services are donated by the Ford Foundation,⁴ to facilitate the application of systems engineering.

Yes — but the experts who come here must work in the spirit of Auroville and as such must be chosen by me.

3. Circulate a questionnaire in Auroville amongst its personnel to discover talents and skills available in Auroville already.

Yes — but we should choose the people for a particular function.

3. This is an English translation of Roger's paper, undated (here, an excerpt) follows the previous one.

4. The Ford Foundation was *to be contacted to partly finance a feasibility study to build Auroville using the newly developed systems engineering approach to town planning.*

4. What image should Auroville project consistently to the world and to individuals?

It is only a little mental affair. You get together and decide what should be the image of Auroville and then bring it to me. I will change it if necessary; and that image must be the final image and must be consistently followed.

Auroville in Mother's words, pp. 163-4, 22.1.1969

Taking the Block Making Unit⁵ as an example, what is the best form of agreement to make with the industries that will start in Auromodel? As an example, the principle of 30% of the revenue given to Auromodel or Auroville has hints of capitalism. Isn't it preferable that the industry belongs to Auroville and that what is given is the totality of the revenue after withdrawing the manager's wage, where the manager has the freedom and responsibility to set the amount?

Yes, it is much preferable. The revenue would be distributed to Auromodel after retaining an amount for future investments and the manager's wage. . . .

Roger Anger's archive, 1.2.1969

PART TWO

The Mother's guidelines for the economic activities

PRINCIPLES FOR STARTING INDUSTRIES IN AUROVILLE⁶

The objective of Auroville, as it has been defined, is that all economic activities, whether industrial, agricultural, handicrafts or community services, shall be carried out by Aurovilians.

Since Auroville provides the material needs of the Aurovilians, they should work without any monetary recompense. This aim, which should under no circumstances be forgotten or delayed in its application, remains the ideal to be realised.

An intermediary stage of practical experimentation and 'running-in' remains necessary before reaching it.

5. A business unit linked to 'Auropress'. It was inaugurated on 23.06.69 at one of Pondy's industrial estates.

6. Drafted in French, the following guidelines for industries were approved and signed by the Mother when the plans for Auromodel were being made. This text is of a particular importance because three years later, on May 23, 1972, it would be presented again to the Mother with minor changes, and she would sign it again.

During this stage, industries to be established in Auroville, within the framework of the 'Aurovilian' conditions, may employ for some time, according to their needs, specialists and technicians who will be paid.

In any case this employment will be for a limited period, under an annually renewable contract.

Their role will be to enable the launching of the industries concerned, and to help train as quickly as possible an Aurovilian labour-force capable of replacing them.

In addition, all arrangements in the organisation of work are to be made in harmony with the ideal of Auroville.

Auroville in Mother's words, p. 161, probably early 1969

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN AUROVILLE⁷

1. All industries should belong to Auroville from the beginning or eventually.
2. Until Auroville acquires an international status, the industries will be subject to the Indian laws.
3. Beginning of industries in Auroville:
A Central Fund for the development of economic activities should be set up which would help Aurovilians to start proper industries and to provide any other assistance that may be necessary. All surplus profit will go to the Central Fund.
 - a. Those who wish to start industries may give money to the Central Fund conditionally or unconditionally, and let the Central Fund handle the money.
 - b. Others may start industries on their own and work under the supervision of the Central Fund conditionally or unconditionally.
 - c. Those who wish to donate only a part of their profits to the Central Fund could start their industries anywhere in the world.

Auroville in Mother's words, pp. 161-2, probably early 1969

Does the Mother agree that in Auromodel, property will only be collective?

Yes.

7. Drafted in English, the following guidelines were approved and signed by the Mother.

Can a separate bank account be opened for Auromodel?

Yes.

If property is only collective can industries, for instance, take bank loans? This implies Auromodel's legal responsibility, hence of Auroville, hence of the Sri Aurobindo Society.

Each case must be studied separately.⁸

Roger Anger's archive, 12.2.1969

[Compiled by PAULETTE]

8. Written questions, in French, submitted to the Mother by Roger Anger.

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