



Mt Tremper, N.Y. 12457

Collaboration

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WINTER 1976-77

Vol. III, No. 2

MODEL OF AUROVILLE



CHARTER OF AUROVILLE

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring toward future realisations.

4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

In this issue we introduce our readers to Auroville, "the city of dawn" now being constructed in India. Conceived by the Mother, Auroville is a unique collective spiritual experiment. We wish to stress both its uniqueness and its collective principle. First, it is grounded in a spiritual, as contrasted with a mentally idealistic, conception envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; they worked out their conception through a lifetime of spiritual discipline in their unfaltering effort to realize and embody in the physical consciousness the highest spiritual truths. The Sri Aurobindo Ashram, created by the Mother, was a first step towards the luminous future foreseen by Sri Aurobindo. Auroville represents a second step, a collective one, reaching out to a wider circle. A final step would be a spiritualized earth and mankind and the appearance of a new race, a race of supramental beings, as Sri Aurobindo called them.

We open with a passage from Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle* outlining the psychospiritual nature of a spiritualized society, which may be regarded as the "inner" plan and goal of Auroville. This is followed by a series of statements, messages and talks of the Mother dealing with Auroville itself, arranged more or less chronologically (the date of their issue is given in brackets). They have been published in various periodicals, but we have taken them from *The Mother on Auroville*, a bound edition of *Gazette Aurovilienne* (from Vol. I, No. 3, through Vol. III, No. 6). These remarks of the Mother reveal her

plastic approach and her constant encouragement of the highest aspirations of all, and give various expression to what she and Sri Aurobindo insisted was the very basis of their spiritual discipline: aspiration, rejection (of all that impedes the Truth), and surrender (to the Truth).

Finally we present "Auroville: The Reality of the Dream," prepared especially for *Collaboration* by a group of Aurovilians.

Perhaps few fully appreciate the enormous difficulties this experiment has faced—physical, psychological, spiritual. In view of the fact that the Mother regarded Auroville as not only an expression of man's aspiration to find a new *order* of solutions to the problems of the world but also the Divine's answer, one may perhaps feel encouraged that such a heroic collective effort is being made. (And let it be clear that the difficulties are not outside man, but within his own human nature.) In a letter from Narad, an American in charge of developing the Matrimandir gardens, he said, "There is only one thing I would suggest [for your issue on Auroville]—since you have asked me—and that is to stress the sense of *collaboration* that I feel is growing in all, something true, unspoken mostly, but tangibly there, materializing whenever the need arises." It is this "materialization" of a spiritual principle we would also like to stress as being a goal not only of Auroville but of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.

We wish to thank all those Aurovilians who helped in the preparation of this issue.

A SPIRITUALISED SOCIETY

Sri Aurobindo

A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, not as the collective ego, but as the soul. This freedom from the egoistic standpoint would be its first and most prominent characteristic. But the elimination of egoism would not be brought about, as it is now proposed to bring it about, by persuading or forcing the individual to immolate his personal will and aspirations and his precious and hard-won individuality to the collective will, aims and egoism of the society, driving him like a victim of ancient sacrifice to slay his soul on the altar of that huge and shapeless idol. For that would be only the sacrifice of the smaller to the larger egoism, larger only in bulk, not necessarily greater in quality or wider or nobler, since a collective egoism, result of the united egoisms of all, is as little a god to be worshipped, as flawed and often an uglier and more barbarous fetish than the egoism of the individual. What the spiritual man seeks is to find by the loss of the ego the Self which is one in all and perfect and complete in each and by living in that to grow into the image of its perfection—individually, be it noted, though with an all-embracing universality of his nature and its conscious circumference. ... It is this kingdom of God within, the result of the finding of God not in a distant heaven but within ourselves, of which the state of society in an age of the Truth, spiritual age, would be the result and the external figure.

Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised, would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure.... It would embrace all knowledge in its scope, but would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but this self-developing and self-finding. It would pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them. It would make it the aim of ethics not to establish a rule of action whether supplementary to the social law or partially corrective of it, the social law that is after all only the rule, often clumsy and ignorant, of the biped pack, the human herd, but to develop the divine nature in the human being. It would make it the aim of Art not merely

to present images of the subjective and objective world, but to see them with the significant and creative vision that goes behind their appearances and to reveal the Truth and Beauty of which things visible to us and invisible are the forms, the masks, or the symbols and significant figures.

A spiritualised society would treat in its sociology the individual, from the saint to the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be rescued, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn by the lesser spirits who are not yet adult. The aim of its economics would be not to create a huge engine of production, whether of the competitive or the co-operative kind, but to give to men—not only to some but to all men each in his highest possible measure—the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all. In its politics it would not regard the nations within the scope of their own internal life as enormous State machines regulated and armoured with man living for the sake of the machine and worshipping it as his God and his larger self, content at the first call to kill others upon its altar and to bleed there himself so that the machine may remain intact and powerful and be made ever efficient and entire. Neither would it be content to maintain these nations or States in their mutual relations as noxious engines meant to discharge poisonous gas upon each other in peace and to rush in times of clash upon each other's armed hosts and unarmed millions, full of belching shot and men missioned to murder like hostile tanks in a modern battlefield. It would regard the peoples as group-souls, the Divinity concealed and to be self-discovered in its human collectivities, group-souls meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other, to help the whole race in the one common work of humanity. And that work would be to find the divine Self in the individual and the collectivity and to realise spiritually, mentally, vitally, materially its greatest, largest, richest and deepest possibilities in the inner life of all and their outer action and nature. [*The Human Cycle*, 1971 ed., pp. 239-242.]

THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

The general aim to be attained is the advent of a progressing universal harmony.

The means for attaining this aim, in regard to the earth, is the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One.

In other words,—to create unity by founding the Kingdom of God which is within us all.

This, therefore, is the most useful work to be done: (1) For each individually, to be conscious in himself of the

Divine Presence and to identify himself with it. (2) To individualise the states of being that were never till now conscious in man and, by that, to put the earth in connection with one or more of the fountains of universal force that are still sealed to it. (3) To speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality. It will be the synthesis of all human knowledge. (4) Collectively, to establish an ideal society in a propitious spot for the flowering of a new race, the race of the Sons of God. [1912]

A Dream

There should be somewhere upon earth a place that no nation could claim as its sole property, a place where all human beings of good will, sincere in their aspiration, all could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the supreme Truth, a place of peace, concord, harmony, where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the care for progress would get precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the seeking for material pleasures and enjoyment. In this place, children would be able to grow and develop integrally without losing contact with their soul. Education would be given not with a view to passing examinations and getting certificates and posts but for enriching the existing faculties and bringing forth new ones. In this place titles and positions would be supplanted by opportunities to serve and organise. The needs of the body will be provided for equally in the case of each and every one. In the general organisation intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority will find expression not in the enhancement of the pleasures and powers of life but in the increase of duties and responsibilities. Artistic beauty in all forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature, will be available equally to all, the opportunity to share in the joys they give being limited solely by each one's capacities and not by social or financial position. For in this ideal place money would be no more the sovereign lord. Individual value would have a greater importance than the value due to material wealth and social position. Work would not be there as the means for gaining one's livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one's capacities and possibilities, while doing at the same time service to the whole group, which on its side, would provide for each one's subsistence and for the field of his work. In brief, it would be a place where the relations among human beings, usually based almost exclusively upon competition and strife, would be replaced by relations of emulation for doing better, for collaboration, relations of real brotherhood.

The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal, for mankind does not yet possess the necessary knowledge to understand and accept it nor the indispensable conscious force to execute it. That is why I call it a dream.

Yet this dream is on the way of becoming a reality. This is exactly what we are seeking to do at the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo on a small scale, in proportion to our modest means. The achievement is indeed far from being perfect but it is progressive; little by little we advance towards our goal, which we hope, one day we shall be able to hold before the world as a practical and effective means of coming out of the present chaos in order to be born into a more true, more harmonious new life. [1954]

An Ideal Town

Is it possible to find a spot where one could create the

embryo or seed of the future supramental world? The plan came in all the details, but it is a plan which in its spirit and consciousness, does not at all conform to what is possible terrestrially now; yet in its most material manifestation, it was based on terrestrial conditions. It is the concept of an ideal town which would be the nucleus of an ideal country and which would have contacts, purely superficial and extremely limited in their effects, with the outside world. One must then already conceive—that however is possible—of a power sufficiently strong to be at the same time a protection against aggression or bad will (it would not be a most difficult protection to have) and against infiltration and admixture. But that one can conceive, if absolutely necessary. From the social point of view, from the point of view of organisation, from the point of view of the inner life, those are not problems. The problem is the relation with what is not supramentalised, to prevent the infiltration, the admixture, that is to say, to prevent the nucleus from falling back into a lower creation—the question is about a period of transition.

All those who have given thought to the problem have always imagined something unknown to the rest of humanity, like a gorge in the Himalayas, for example, a place unknown to the rest of the world. But this is not a solution; it is no solution at all.

No, the only solution is the occult power, but that already implies, before anything can be done, that a certain number of individuals must have reached a great perfection of realisation. But it can be conceived that if this can be done, one can have a spot isolated in the midst of the outside world (there are no contacts, it is understood), a spot where everything would be exactly in its place, as an example. Each thing is exactly in its place, each person exactly in his place, each movement exactly in its place—and in its place in an ascending progressive movement without a relapse (that is to say, quite contrary to what happens in ordinary life). Naturally, that presupposes a kind of perfection, that presupposes a kind of unity, that presupposes that the different aspects of the Supreme can be manifested; and necessarily, an exceptional beauty, a total harmony and a power strong enough to hold the forces of Nature under submission. For example, even if this spot were surrounded by the forces of destruction, they would not have the power to act, the protection would be sufficient. All that requires utmost perfection in all the individuals who would be the organisers of such a thing. [1961]

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

The Mother: The Supreme Lord.

2. Who takes part in the financing of Auroville?

The Mother: The Supreme Lord.

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

The Mother: To try to reach the Supreme Perfection.

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

The Mother: All life is yoga. Thus one cannot live without practising the Supreme Yoga.

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

The Mother: That which the Supreme Lord wishes it to be.

6. Will there be camping grounds in Auroville?

The Mother: All things are as should be, just when they should be.

7. Will family life continue in Auroville?

The Mother: If one has not gone beyond that.

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

The Mother: If one has not gone beyond that.

9. Can one be an atheist in Auroville?

The Mother: If one has not gone beyond that.

10. Will there be a social life in Auroville?

The Mother: If one has not gone beyond that.

11. Will there be compulsory community activities in Auroville?

The Mother: Nothing is compulsory.

12. Will there be an exchange of money in Auroville?

The Mother: No, it is only with the outside world that Auroville will have money relations.

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

The Mother: Money would be no more the sovereign lord. Individual value would have a greater importance than the value due to material wealth and social position. Work would not be there as the means for gaining one's livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one's capacities and possibilities, while doing at the same time service to the whole group, which on its side would provide for each one's subsistence and for the field of his work. [From A Dream.]

14. What will be the relations of Aurovilians with the outside world?

The Mother: To each one full freedom is given. The external relations of Aurovilians will be established according to their personal aspirations and activities.

15. Who will own lands and buildings of Auroville?

The Mother: The Supreme Lord.

16. What languages will be used for teaching?

The Mother: All the spoken languages of the world.

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

The Mother: One does not know. [Text dated 1965; some answers modified in 1969]

If you ask Mother for news of Auroville, she will answer: "Auroville is going well and becomes more and more real, but its realisation does not advance in the habitual manner, and it is more visible for the interior consciousness than for the exterior vision." [1966]

A Talk on Auroville

[*The Mother reads a note written from memory:*]

"Auroville will be a self-supporting township. All who live there will participate in its life and development. This participation may be passive or active. There will be no taxes as such but each will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money. Sections like Industries

which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township. Or, if they produce something (like foodstuff) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township which is responsible for the feeding of the citizens. No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying Truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate."

I thought I had said more than that, because I had said a good deal, a good deal about it, internally, on the organisation, the food, etc. We are going to make experiments.

There are things which are truly interesting; for example, I would like there should be...First of all, each country will have its pavilion, and in the pavilion, there will be a kitchen of that country, that is to say, the Japanese will be able to eat as they want to, etc., but in the town itself, there will be food for the vegetarians as well as food for non-vegetarians, and also there will be an attempt to find the food of tomorrow. Well, all this labour for assimilation that makes you so heavy—it takes so much time and energy of the person—it ought to be done *before* and you must be given something which is at once capable of being assimilated, as is done now; for example, they have vitamins that are directly assimilable and also...proteins, the nutritious principles that are found in such and such things and that are not bulky—a huge quantity is required to assimilate just a little. So now that they are clever enough from the chemical point of view, one is able to simplify. People do not like it simply because...they take an intense delight in eating, but when one does not take pleasure in eating, one requires nourishment and does not lose time in that. You lose time enormously: the time for eating, the time for digesting, and all the rest. And so here, I would like to have a trial kitchen, a kind of culinary laboratory, for experimenting. People will go here and there or otherwise according to their taste, and their inclination.

And then food is not paid for, but work should be offered or materials; those, for example, who might have fields, should offer the yield of their fields; they who would have factories should give their products, or one give one's labour in exchange of food.

This eliminates a good deal of the internal monetary circulation. In this way things can be found for everyone. In reality it should be a township for study—study and research as to how to live in a way at once simplified and wherein the higher qualities will have more time to develop. It is only just a beginning.

"Auroville will be a self-supporting township."

I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment, it is to make experiments—experiments, researches, studies.

Auroville will be a city that will try to be or will lead towards or will want to be "self-supporting," that is to say...

Question: Autonomous?

The Mother: Autonomous, it is understood as some kind of independence that cuts all relations with others. I do not mean that.

For instance, they who produce food...(naturally, when there will be 50,000 people, it will be difficult to meet their needs, but for the moment we are only a few thousand and at the most), well, a factory always produces too much, so it will sell outside and receive money. "Auro-food," for example, wants to have special relations with the workmen, not at all the old system, something which would be an improvement on the communistic system, an organisation more balanced than the sovietism, that is to say, which does not sin by leaning more on one side than on the other.

There is one thing I wanted to say: the participation in the well-being and life of the town as a whole is not an individual calculation: such an individual should pay so much. It is not like that. It is calculated in accordance with the means, the activity, the possibility of production; it is not the democratic idea which cuts up the whole into equal bits, it is an absurd machine. Instead, it is calculated according to means; one who has more gives more, one who has less gives less; one who is strong works more, one who is not so strong does another thing. Well, it is something truer, deeper. That is why I do not try to explain it immediately, because people will start protesting in all sorts of ways. The thing must create itself so to say automatically, as the township grows, in the true spirit. It is why this note is altogether brief.

For example, this sentence: "All who live there will participate in its life and development." All who live there will participate in the life of the town and in its growth—in accordance with their capacities and means, not mechanically, as through unity. Yes, it is that! And according to capacities, that is to say, one who has the material means, such as those furnished by a factory, should supply proportionately to its production; not so much per head and per individual.

"The participation may be passive or active." I do not understand what "passive" means (I spoke in French and this has been put into English). What can it mean exactly, "passive"? It would be rather, "on different planes, different levels of consciousness."

Question: You mean to say that they who are "wise," that is to say, who work internally, need not...

The Mother: Yes, it is that. They who have a higher knowledge, need not work with their hands, that is what I meant.

"There will be no taxes as such, but each will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money." So it is understood, there will be no taxes, no duties, but each one will be expected to contribute to the collective welfare by his work in kind or money. Those who have nothing else than money will give money. But "work" may mean truly an inner work (but this cannot be said of people who are not honest enough), the work can be an occult work, altogether within oneself, but for that, naturally one must be absolutely sincere and true, and as to capacity, there must be no pretension. But the work need not necessarily be a material work.

"Sections like Industries which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township. Or if they produce something (like food-

stuff) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township which is responsible for the feeding of the citizens." That is what we have said. The industries will participate actively, will contribute. If these are industries that produce articles that are not in constant demand, and therefore in quantity or number much too large to be used up in the town and will be sold outside, they naturally must participate with money. And I give food for example; those that produce food will give it to the town (in proportion to what they produce, naturally) and the town is responsible for the food of everyone. That is to say, there will be no need to buy food with money, but one must earn it.

It is a kind of adaptation of the communist system, but not in a spirit of levelling: according to capacity, position—not psychological or intellectual—the internal position of everyone.

What is true is that materially every human being has the right—but it is not a "right"... The organisation should be such, should be so arranged that the material necessities of everyone will be assured not according to ideas of right and equality, but on the basis of the most elementary necessities. And once this is established, each one will be free to organise his life according to—not monetary means but his inner capacities.

"No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying Truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate." What I mean to say is that usually—always till today and more and more—men are establishing mental rules according to their conceptions and ideals, and they apply them [*she puts down her fist to show the world as under the mental fist*], and that is absolutely false, it is arbitrary, it is unreal, and the result is that things revolt or wither and disappear... It is the experience of Life itself that should slowly work out rules that are as subtle and as wide as possible, so that they might be always progressive. Nothing should be fixed. That is the great error of governments: you make a frame and say there you are, we have put that up and we must live under it, and therefore naturally you crush out life, prevent it from progressing. It must be Life itself developing more and more progressively towards the Light and Consciousness and Power that should slowly establish the rules, making them as general as possible so that they are extremely supple and amenable to change according to need and as quickly as habits and needs change.

The problem finally reduces itself almost to this: to replace the mental government of intelligence by the government of a spiritualised consciousness. [1967]

Humanity is not the last stage of the terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and man will be surpassed. It is for each individual to know whether he wants to participate in the advent of this new species. For those who are satisfied with the world as it is, Auroville has evidently no *raison d'être*. [1966]

Conditions for Living in Auroville

From the psychological viewpoint, the required conditions are:

1. To be convinced of the essential unity of mankind and the will to collaborate towards the material realisation of that unity.

2. To have the will to collaborate in all that favours the future realisation.

The material conditions will be worked out gradually according to the realisation. [1967]

Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of knowledge, peace, and unity. [1967]

...It is now the big quarrel about Auroville: in the Charter I put the "Divine Consciousness" (to live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness), but they say: it makes you think of God; I said [*she laughs*], as for me, it does not make me think of God....so some translated as "the highest consciousness," others put other things. I agreed with the Russians to put "perfect Consciousness," but it is an approximation...it is That—you can neither name nor define—it is the Supreme Power. It is Power that one finds. And the Supreme Power is only an aspect: the aspect concerning the creation. [1968]

At last there is a place where one can think only of progressing and transcending oneself. At last there is a place where one can live in peace with no conflict and rivalry among nations and religions and ambitions. At last there is a place where nothing will have the right to impose itself as the exclusive truth. [1968]

Question: What is the difference between the Ashram and Auroville?

The Mother: The Ashram will keep its true role as pioneer, inspirer and guide. Auroville is an experiment in collective realisation. [1968]

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

The Mother: 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 the physical work that the highest spirit must be manifested. [1968]

It is not for comfort and satisfaction of desires that one comes to Auroville; it is for growth of consciousness and consecration to the Truth that has to be realised. Unselfishness is the first need to participate in the creation of Auroville. [1968]

All those who wish to live and work at Auroville must have: an integral good will, 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 pro-

gress 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. [1969]

Community life must necessarily have a discipline so that the weaker are not put upon by the stronger and this discipline must be respected by all those who want to live in that community.

But in order for the community to be a happy one this discipline must be established by the one or the ones who possess the greatest wideness of spirit, if possible the one, or the ones, who are conscious of the Divine Presence and are surrendered to it.

In order for the earth to be happy, power must be in the hands of only those who are conscious of the Divine Will. But for the moment this is not possible because the number of those *truly* conscious of the Divine Will is minimal and these are necessarily without ambition (to rule).

The truth is that when the time will have come for this realisation, it will take place quite naturally.

The duty of each individual is to prepare himself as completely as he can. [1972]

To be an Aurovilian one must at least belong to the enlightened humanity and aspire to the higher consciousness, that which will govern the race of tomorrow. Always higher and always better, beyond the egoistic limitations. [1971]

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

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

But the people of the Ashram are considered to have consecrated their life to Yoga (except of course the students who are here only for their studies and to whom one never asks to make a choice in life).

Whereas in Auroville the simple goodwill to make a collective experiment for the progress of humanity is sufficient to gain admittance. [1969]

I believe really that it is among the children that will be found those that can begin the new race. Men are...crusted over. Well, I am constantly struggling against people who have come here so that they may be comfortable and "free to do whatever they like," so...I tell them: "The world is big enough, you can go out"—there is no soul, no aspiration, nothing.

You know my feeling? They are all old; I am the only one to be young! It is that, yes, that flame, that will... what is called "push"—to be satisfied with petty personal satisfactions...that take you nowhere, to be busy with what one was going to eat, oh!...

I have the feeling that now there is a sort of "display" (you know what is display?), a show of all that should not be. But the flame, the flame of aspiration [*she shakes her head*], there are not many who bring it. [1971]

Question: You had said that you did not want to make rules for Auroville. But lately you have written that drugs are prohibited at Auroville. Has there been modification in your vision of Auroville?

The Mother: Perhaps the Aurovilians have not attained the level of consciousness expected of them. [1971]

[A question was put to the Mother about the use of organic fertilizers and pesticides at Auroville, asking whether Auroville should promote these methods when they were being discarded in countries such as the U.S.A. and in Europe because of the dangers they posed. The Mother replied:]

No. No. No.

Auroville should not fall back into old errors which belong to a past which tries to revive. [1971]

To Be a True Aurovilian

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery by which one learns who one really is behind the social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearances. At our inmost centre there is a free being, wide and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the acting centre of our being and our life in Auroville.

2. One lives in Auroville in order to be free of moral and social conventions; but this liberty must not be a new slavery to the ego, its desires and ambitions. The fulfillment of desires bars the route to the inner discovery which can only be attained in peace and the transparency of a perfect disinterestedness.

3. The Aurovilian must lose the proprietary sense of possession. For our passage in the material world, that which is indispensable to our life and to our action is put at our disposal according to the place we should occupy there. The more conscious our contact is with our inner being, the more exact are the means given.

4. Work, even manual work, is an indispensable thing for the inner discovery. If one does not work, if one does not inject his consciousness into matter, the latter will never develop. To let one's consciousness organise a bit of matter by way of one's body is very good. To establish order around oneself helps to bring order within oneself.

One should organise life not according to outer, artificial rules, but according to an organised, inner consciousness because if one allows life to drift without imposing the control of a higher consciousness, life becomes inexpressive and irresolute. It is to waste one's time in the sense that matter persists without a conscious utilisation.

5. The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to consciously work towards hastening that advent.

6. Little by little it will be revealed to us what this new species should be, and meanwhile the best measure to take is to consecrate oneself to the Divine.

[The Mother added at the time of publication:]

The only true liberty is that obtained by union with the Divine. One can unite with the Divine only when the ego is mastered.

Everyone has good reason to defend his own opinion and I am not an expert to judge between them.

But from the spiritual point of view I know that with true good-will all opinions can harmonise in a more comprehensive and truer solution. It is this that I expect from the workers of Auroville.

Not that some should yield to others but rather that all should combine their efforts to arrive at a more comprehensive and perfect result. The ideal of Auroville demands this progress—do you want to make it? [1971]

Auroville wants to be the first realisation of human unity based on the teaching of Sri Aurobindo, where men of all countries would be at home. [1972]

Since we have set aside all conventions, immediately too many people think: "Ah! a nice place to satisfy our desires." And there are many who come with that intention.

And because I made a maternity clinic for the children of those people that I was obliged to send away from the Ashram so that they could have a place to have their children, people think that the maternity clinic is established for all children born in an illegal way.

I am not concerned with legality, I'm not concerned with convention. But what I want is a more divine life, not an animal life.

And there are those who turn liberty into licence, for the satisfaction of desires, and they indulge in all those things that we truly have worked all our lives to master,—a dissipation.

We are here to overcome all desires and to turn towards the Divine and to become conscious of the Divine. The Divine we seek is not far away and inaccessible. He is in the very core of creation itself and what He requires of us is that we find Him, and by transforming ourselves personally become capable of knowing Him, uniting with Him consciously. It is to that that we should consecrate ourselves; that is our true reason for existence. And the very first step towards this sublime realisation is the manifestation of the supramental Consciousness.

To realise and manifest the Divine in our life is the way, not to become animals, living like cats and dogs.

Exactly the opposite! Too many people at Auroville belong to an infrahumanity and not a suprahumanity. So it is high time that all that came to an end. [1972]

The true spirit of Auroville is *collaboration* and must be more and more so. True collaboration paves the way to divinity. [1972]

Question: What political organisation do you wish for Auroville?

The Mother: An amusing definition comes to me: a divine anarchy. But the world will not understand it. Men must become conscious of their psychic being and organise themselves spontaneously, without rules and fixed laws—that is the ideal.

For this one must be in contact with one's psychic being, one must be guided by it and the authority and the

influence of the ego must disappear.

Question: Is Auroville the only solution to the misery of man and to the troubles of the society?

The Mother: Not the only one. It is a centre of transformation; a small nucleus of people who transform themselves and give an example to the world. This is what Auroville aspires to be. As long as egoism and bad will exist in the world the general transformation is impossible. [1972]

As long as they have desires, they are not true Aurovilians. They should not play on words. There is a world of difference between desires and aspiration. Every sincere person knows this. And above all they should not take *their ego* and *their desires* for the Divine. And it is because they deceive themselves that they are misled.

They must become conscious of the divine presence in themselves and for this the ego must fall silent and desires disappear. [1972]

We want the Truth. For most men, it is what they want that they label truth. The Aurovilians must want the Truth whatever it may be.

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

Programme: Research through experience of the Supreme Truth. A life divine but NO RELIGIONS. [c. 1970]

Our research will not be a search effected by mystic means. It is in life itself that we wish to find the Divine. And it is through this discovery that life can really be transformed. [2 May 1970.]

I mean by “mystic means” the way of those who retire...or like the sannyasins here who abandon life to find spiritual life, who divide the two and say: “It is either one or the other.” We say, “That is not true.” It is in life and by living life entirely that one can live a spiritual life, that one *must* live a spiritual life. One must bring the higher consciousness *here*. From the purely material and physical point of view, man is not the last race. As man came after the animal, so another being must come after man. And as there is but one consciousness, it is that same consciousness which having had the experience of man will now have the experience of a superhuman being. And so if one goes away, if one leaves life, if one rejects life, then one will never be ready to do this.

But if you had read Sri Aurobindo you would have understood, you would not have asked this question. It is because there is a lack of intellectual preparation. You want to know everything without studying. [1970]



AUROVILLE'S SYMBOL

The dot at the centre represents Unity, the Supreme; the inner circle represents the creation, the conception of the city; the petals represent the power of expression, realisation.

—The Mother, 1971

AUROVILLE—THE REALITY OF THE DREAM

Invited by *Collaboration* to write an article on Auroville from Auroville, a few people who have previously expressed in writing something of the experience of Auroville, an experience as many-sided as the international population of Auroville itself, decided that the only way effectively, or possible, to write about Auroville at this moment of its evolution would be in a collective way. That is, let each person write something of his own vision of the Vision within a framework covering some of the main lines of Auroville's development.

In this way the following six essays emerged. They are obviously personal approaches, six windows into something of the feeling and growth of the future “city.” They cannot help but echo the moment, yet this moment's apparent generalizations could easily merge into quite other generalizations tomorrow. The holes in the following accounts, the points not touched upon, could give way to other omissions of significance in a later effort to harness something of Auroville. Perhaps the one point of agreement of all Aurovilians, certainly an important ground of

our collective experience, is the fact that Auroville is an organic being, with its own pattern of growth, its own personality, its unique tendencies of expression, its traits, even its own personal appearance. And there is the knowledge that, as a baby grows from infant to child to teenager and on, so Auroville is growing. And just as one could never know at the time that the young shepherd boy who dallied with the cow girls at Mathura would reveal himself at Kurukshetra as the Lord Himself, so one can see and surmise but little of the unfolding truth of Auroville from what can appear on the surface or in a cursory description of itself. —Roger Toll

The Basis

The origin of Auroville, the Mother has assured us, is “a dream of the Lord”; and Sri Aurobindo often explained that such “dreams” are the original creative acts—the Will-seeds, which, passing through all the planes of being, result at last in a progressive, evolutionary realization of themselves in earth-substance.

The “justification” of this dream lies in the necessity for an intermediary society which can cradle and foster a new man, the intermediary being who will form the evolutionary link with the coming supramental species. This intermediary being they have called the “superman.”

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

What are the physical and social conditions which can foster this new birth? This is the question that Auroville’s growth can answer; today it appears that they can be summed up like this: (1) An ideal high and true enough to command the adherence of a very wide variety of human individuals; (2) challenging conditions, problems, difficulties; (3) a high degree of individual freedom, freedom to experiment, to do things in one’s own way, to learn by one’s own mistakes.

But though these conditions might possibly be duplicated elsewhere, Auroville is not “reproducible.” The elements which are included in its growth and development, the forces which hold them together and move them forward in ever more complex patterns and relationships have been chosen and brought together, set to work by a Conscious-Force far beyond the human—for its purposes, for its delight, for its self-expression. And since this “it” is our own truest, future Self, the goal of our struggling development from mineral to plant to animal to semiconscious man and beyond him. It is by drawing closer and truer to ourselves that we progress, simultaneously as individuals and as members of a community.

Auroville exists to provide a society which recognizes this as its purpose and justification, a society which can truly cradle the superman.

Who could attempt to assess such a process? We travel blind, not knowing really yet how far we have come, how far we have still to go, but more and more with the unshakable conviction that we are moving forward—that we are *being moved* forward—and that Auroville, the dream in the process of realization, is truly unstoppable.

About 400 people, mostly young, scattered over a wide area of rural India, faced with many physical difficulties, cultural tensions, psychological strains and deprivations, have somehow miraculously evolved in the space of a few years a society which is rich, diverse, intense, creative, dynamic, self-confident and enjoyable to a degree beyond comparison with any other group of similar size and diversity anywhere else on the planet. They are often tired, sometimes discouraged, much criticized, maybe with justification—but they are hooked—hooked on a quality of life, a stream of force, a kind of light, a dream and a task without which life would now be meaningless. They are becoming more themselves, more different from each other and other men, and yet mysteriously closer, as they draw slowly closer to the Truth. —*Shraddhavan*

Education and Culture

Since 28 February 1968, when the Charter of Auroville was read by the Mother and heard for the first time by thousands, representing a hundred nations, who came to the foundation ceremony of Auroville, the profound significance of the truths that were preeminent and power-

fully symbolized on that occasion has become increasingly apparent with each passing year. Now, after eight years of actual development, it is possible to look back over the heights of joy and depths of struggle that have been the terrain of our difficult ascent and to read in the experiences and in the living record of our experiment the meanings that might otherwise have remained obscure in the utterances, apocalyptic and prophetic, that have been the inspiring guidelines of our attempt.

The Mother’s New Year message of 1967 was “Men, countries, continents, the choice is imperative: Truth or the abyss!” and her message for 1973: “When you become conscious of the whole world at the same time, then you can become conscious of the Divine.” The implication is that *not until* we become conscious of the whole world at the same time shall we become conscious of the Divine. And the Truth which must be realized if we wish to pass on into the next *possible* stage of collective human evolution is the truth of Human Unity. Auroville, the work that has to be done if the dream is to become a reality, represents the choice and the possibility of deliberately hastening the realization of that truth.

The form is as yet undetermined and shall determine itself as we marshall our energies towards it, as a plant seeks sunlight or as consciousness develops in the light of the Ideal. And this is as it should be. For the Mother said of Auroville in 1968: “It is the experience of Life itself that should slowly work out rules that are as subtle and as wide as possible, so that they might always be progressive. Nothing should be fixed.... I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment, it is to make experiments—experiments, researches, studies.” And so it is. And though the form is elusive and transitory, we learn lightness and plasticity as against darkness and heaviness. And we learn *synthesis*.

But for the Mother to have made this kind of inner and outer freedom and autonomy the major guideline for our life in Auroville was to state simply one of the most formidable challenges of our age. For whether we have been conditioned, during our earlier education, in the aggressive and affluent (but spiritually poor) societies of the world in the poorer and more passive (but spiritually rich) ones, the fixed habits and needs that we have acquired do not change easily or rapidly.

The equivalent challenge on the more material and formal side of life, formulated by the Mother with equal emphasis as a guideline for Auroville, is one which is equally elusive and difficult to achieve: she insisted on an international cultural collaboration in the manifestation of Auroville. This idea was first elaborated by the Mother in an article on the idea of an international center of education written around 1950 in which she said:

“A synthetic organisation of all nations, each one occupying its own place in accordance with its own genius and the role it has to play in the whole, can alone effect a comprehensive and progressive unification which may have some chance of enduring. And if the synthesis is to be a living thing, the grouping should be done around a central ideal as high and wide as possible, and in which all tendencies, even the most contradictory, would find their

respective places. That idea is to give men the conditions of life necessary for preparing him to manifest the new force that will create the race of tomorrow.... A kind of world exhibition has to be organised in which all the countries will be represented in a concrete and living manner.... Each nation would thus find a practical and concrete interest in cultural synthesis and collaborate in the work by taking over the charge of the pavilion that represents it."

And this same idea of cultural synthesis and the harmonizing of differences was expressed again in the conversation on Auroville in 1968 from which I have already quoted. She said at that time:

"First of all, each country will have its pavilion.... All who live there will participate in the life of the town and in its growth—in accordance with their capacities and means.... One who has more gives more, one who has less gives less, one who is strong works more, one who is not strong does another thing. Well, it is something truer, deeper.... What I mean is that usually—always till today and more and more—men establish mental rules according to their conceptions and ideals, and they apply them under the hammer of the mind, and that is absolutely false, it is arbitrary, it is unreal, and the result is that things revolt or wither and disappear. That is the great error of governments: you make a frame and say there you are, we have put that up and we must live under it, and therefore naturally you crush out life, prevent it from progressing. It must be Life itself developing more and more progressively toward the Light and Consciousness and Power that should slowly establish the rules, making them as general as possible so that they are extremely supple and amenable to change according to need and as quickly as habits and needs change."

Life in Auroville today makes the necessity of these conditions progressively known, because they are as yet unrealizable. And this is the importance of the education that this extraordinary ground of experience makes possible. Living together with a handful of people from all over the earth and in the difficult environment of a developing nation helps us to appreciate the central corollaries of human existence upon which the culture of the future will have to be based: that it is only in the widest diversity of energy and consciousness that a perfect and lasting unity has a chance of being realized, and only in the living and intimate confrontation of the most contradictory tendencies of our age can we hope to find solutions to its most crucial problems.

India has recognized the importance of the challenge that Auroville represents and has been bold in its protection and support of the attempt.

UNESCO has given its unanimous recognition. And a community of adventurous pioneers from 20 nations have plunged into the experiment—with each other, with the rural peoples, with the land, with the inertia of the past and the promise of the future, and with the Divine Goal—to prepare the foundations for those who will come to carry our efforts forward. The stage is set. But only when the response of the world grows equal to the immense challenge and limitless hope that it signals, will the great play begin. —Rod

Fundamentally Auroville is a matter of consciousness; its outer forms must necessarily be reflections of the inner state of the community as it seeks to discover and unfold the reality wrapped within it. The community is a microcosm: while it represents the collective aspiration of humanity to move beyond itself into the next future, it embodies as well as the resistances and obstructions that seem to deny the possibility of achieving that aim, all the general earth elements that need to be worked on and transformed. So Auroville also, then, tends to be a fairly accurate reflection of the state of the consciousness of the earth body as a whole. If we look at the dialectic over the central questions of how the city is to develop, what its future should be, and how planning or nonplanning can best be utilized to aid its growth toward that goal, we can see clearly the play of opposites which have been so marked in the community and which image wider unresolved tensions in the global macrocosm.

On one hand we have those individuals who lean toward a rational, comprehensive and somewhat managerial approach toward development, utilizing modern planning methods and insisting on the need for maintaining some structured control over the community's growth. On the other hand are those, more numerous, who follow an almost wholly anarchistic approach, emphasizing the necessity for organic, spontaneous free growth orchestrated by an effective absence of outward interference. In between the two positions are a number of people who seek the truth of both and attempt to hold a middle ground between them, not so much a compromise position as a higher vantage point wherein both viewpoints are revealed as complementary and mutually indispensable aspects of one indivisible whole. A genuine synthesis indeed seems requisite in order for Auroville to move toward fulfilling the function given to it and, in fact, for it to advance at all.

We should be clear at this point about certain facts. Auroville is not now nor will it be for some time to come, anything resembling a city. It is a loosely structured assemblage of 15 communities, ranging in size from 3 or 4 people to 150, scattered over a vast 20-square-mile tract of flat, defoliated, erosion-scarred, windswept, sun-baked desert land in South India, nestled amidst 9 ancient Tamil villages, living symbols of rural India's material impoverishment. The population of Auroville, excluding villagers, has been for the past couple of years a more or less steady 400, more than half of whom are children. Most of the actual construction, other than individual homes, was done during the first four years. The Matrimandir, spiritual and geographical center of Auroville, is the only ongoing permanent construction effort. In the wide circular area designed for the Four Zones—Residential, Industrial, Cultural, International—farmers still plow their fields and harvest their crops as they have done for centuries. Only at the Center, with the slowly growing manifestation of the Matrimandir and its surrounding gardens, in Auroson's Home, a community on the outskirts of the Residential Zone where a few individual houses have risen, and in the International Zone where the lone uplifted roof of the

half-completed Indian pavilion can be discerned among the palms and palmyras, has any "permanent" building occurred, though what is to be considered "permanent" and "impermanent" is not clearly defined. The rest of the communities are agriculture-based members of the Green Belt, a wide strip of land encircling the proposed urban area, and Aspiration, the largest community, located a few miles away from the Center. Here are located the main school complex, a paper factory, post office, architecture office, health center, a machine-parts workshop, sports ground, large kitchen and dining room, and many individual and family huts for the 150 residents. Aspiration was seen to be the initial phase of the experiment of Auromodele, a place, according to the Mother, where we could "learn to make all the experiments necessary for learning to live in Auroville."

In consonance with the stress given by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to the primacy of the individual, there has been an extraordinary amount of freedom given Aurovilians to pursue their own interests unhindered by external restraints. The resulting tendency has been towards diffusion and expansion netting a diversity of individual approaches and avenues of expression, the outer forms taking shape in response to immediate needs, the stress of circumstance and the general state of consciousness of the individual or group. At the same time the opposite inclination has been present, and we have had the experience, as with the school buildings of Aspiration and with the Indian pavilion—offsprings of the architects and designers—of planned buildings that seemed to appear out of nowhere, unconnected to and detached from the organically developing process of the community. In the first mode we have witnessed random, uncoordinated and apparently chaotic growth with little outward unison of effort; in the second we have experienced the negative results of arbitrary planning unrelated to prevailing material conditions, needs and the collective consciousness.

At the present time the antinomies and unanswered questions concerning Auroville's future development are coming into sharper focus as the need intensifies for collective advance, synthesis, collaboration and the effectuation of a working philosophy on interim growth and long-range goals. With the knowledge of what "planning" and "cities" have meant in the past, there is great wariness of becoming involved in either. Having experienced and reacted against the spirit-crushing "tyranny of the experts," the rule of the social scientist and technocrat, management through computer models and the whole vast network of the modern monolithic state, many Aurovilians feel the need to assert the overriding importance of the individual and the need for his direct involvement in the affairs that concern him, and to reject anything that has the scent of management or authoritarianism. Even the "city" itself is questioned: have we left the cities, the dead and decaying remnants of the old world, only to build another one? Well, surely not; what must be built is evidently something quite different, a focal point not of the old national but the new planetary culture.

What Auroville is facing in its daily growth is a universal problem and one particularly apropos of "utopian"

efforts in the past and alternative communities today: it will not do merely to react against the old with its attendant technology and to retire into a rural insularity. We must meet squarely the fact of the modern world and not reject it, but transform it. Rejection and reaction too often lead to a wholesale negation that works against the forward movement that is so essential to the work of Auroville. The city will not build itself; we must acknowledge our need for the help of skilled technicians and professionals. And we must finally affirm, while emphasizing the indispensable inner nature of Auroville's growth, the corresponding importance of both the pace and the form of the city's outward development. Auroville is indissolubly connected to the world at large; by definition it was created to act as a catalyst and model, a meeting-ground for the emerging planetary consciousness; it must meet the demands of the Time-Spirit.

Auroville is approaching and beginning to enter the moment when the possibilities are great to draw together collectively, surrender personal preferences and transcend the clash of dualities in order to gain the wider vision and dynamism necessary to make a significant material advance. It is only when this step is taken that the individual and group energies will begin to be utilized in a clear, progressive fashion, moving in harmony and unity toward a common goal with a coherent concept of future development and growth. —*David Wickenden*

The Land

The land, the earth, it is the beginning and the end of the process we call transformation. Humble, unimpressive, yet Mother of the ten thousand things without whom none can stand.

How many civilizations have passed from the earth because they lost touch with it. How difficult it has been for the sons of heaven to honor their ancient compact with the soil.

Man looks out on this world and sees other than himself. Yet even in his denial, the earth faithfully records his acts marked by this sense of division—the etchings of his ego. Man casts the image of his consciousness in the environment he inhabits. His movements in matter set the forms of a living fossil.

I take a handful of red earth from the crust of the Auroville plateau; engrained in it I see the dweller who walked upon it, impressing the footprints of his two-footed consciousness. I crumble the soil and feel the dryness pass through my fingers, a withered, burning dust. I look at the ravines scarring the landscape and see the chisel cuttings of a mad sculptor, the claw marks of some half-blind creature whose loss of oneness threatens the ecology of all.

Over the years I have watched, through windows of bamboo and windows of glass, under roofs of thatch and roofs of tile, the seasons pass across the protean, desert-singed oasis. I have felt the fiery breath of May glaze the landscape a brittle terracotta; I have seen the dust clouds of summer turn the sky opaque swirling across the treeless plains, and I have shared the earth's joy in the first

monsoon showers; I have watched the barren carapace of matter quiver into a thousand shoots at the touch of the rains and sensed the power of life in the tropics; I have seen the alchemy of the mundane transform in a day a watercolor of muddy brown into a pastel green; I have felt the night of the autumn monsoons and seen the November air turn liquid, and I have witnessed the alchemy reversed and the work of centuries wiped out in a day—the giver of life swollen to excess taking that life away as the torrents uproot the precious topsoil; and I have seen the weather clear into the smoothly polished days of winter, when the manifold greens of the landscape sharply focussed against the endless blue of sky, undiffused by the shimmering waves of heat that for the moment have gone to seed.

I have seen this cycle pass—this procession of sun and water and life—and I have seen the promise of another rhythm. I have seen men and women who have come here from the earth to the earth, who have sought to repair the division—the life that sees other than itself—in the mundane as well as the profound...by planting trees to root the soil and shade its living organism from the sun's excess, by setting bunds and check dams along the heavily eroded slopes of the plateau to retain the sheetfloods of topsoil, and by simply protecting the growth that already inhabits the environment from the swarms of goats and cows and wood scavengers.

And perhaps in the seasons to come, the land will be more instead of less, the gullies less instead of more; and I shall take a handful of earth and it will not crumble like powder in my fingers but hold together, and in it I shall wonder of the new man who will walk upon it. —*Savitra*

October 1976

In October 1976 Auroville reaches the eighth month of the eighth year of its existence, the days before the Birth. Everything seems prepared for a new phase, all the old things, old structures, old masters, old "trips," seem to have been taken away, sweetly or violently. It looks like Auroville has come to a Zero-point, which is a Womb of the Future, containing all possibilities. Till now it was like the *Neti, Neti* of Indian spirituality, not this, not this, and not that either. We tried all forms, a multitude; it is none of them. And there we stand, a group of 400 people, out in the field, without sponsors, without masterplans, without an administration worthy of the name, without any services beyond the most basic ones, without property.

Tomorrow it may all be different. It has to be and it will be different, because Auroville is always different, at each moment of its history. But the less there is on the outside, the more the inside speaks. The aspiration, some aspiration is there, and one does not even know what to aspire for anymore, for the real Auroville is going to surpass even the forms we can aspire for; there is faith in the Future, but we know we have to break down the past for that, and not only the past forms and organization patterns, but especially the past in our heads and our hearts, in our minds and our mouths. We are going through a great silence which is both an end of an era and a beginning of something New, different, exciting, but no

longer exciting in the vitalistic sense; rather, it will be a quiet and peaceful happiness, a joy of the new and unexpected. Auroville in this eighth year seems to stand on the borderline of the past and the future. It always does, but that edge never was as sharp as right now. It is not that Auroville right now is not beautiful as it always has been and always will be; it is only that all the elements of its beauty are there, but out of place and not in a perfect harmony. It needs new adjustments here and there for everything and everybody to fall in place and for something new to be there.

We always knew, it seems, what Auroville is supposed to be. At present nobody knows, which not-knowing is a first requirement for openness to the Future. The guidance is as strong as ever, or maybe stronger, or maybe we experience it more in these days of transition. It is like a beautiful novel, or a comedy, unrolling itself and we are the actors who do what we are supposed to, at each moment, not knowing the next page. Being in the hands of an excellent author, one does not worry about that. The Auroville-dream is a divine dream which is more true than the human so-called reality, Mother said, and even the conflicts and crises are of a dreamy substance, somehow not real, because only that which plays in the depths of the individual and collective soul is real. Especially in the days when all outer support is being taken away the inner life has a chance. It is now or never. It is NOW! Let us hope and pray that the old masterplans are not going to be replaced by new, artificial projections. Let us pray for the courage to be left floating, emptyhanded and emptyminded, because only then something really new may have a chance to get through. Only in surrender, total surrender, can the New Thing be born. —*Ruud Lohman*

The Imperative

Mother Earth's hopes from The Mother's dream of Auroville naturally depend for their fulfilment upon that dream's becoming a reality. And the reality-becoming of that dream depends in its turn upon us, the residents of Auroville, our response to the call of the spirit of Auroville, our fulfilling, living up to what is expected of us.

That which is expected of us, whatever be the degrees of the difficulties in its attainment, is unambiguous. We have to prepare ourselves to undergo a spiritual change that necessitates a simultaneity of two conditions: spiritualized individuals and a spiritualized group-body. It is a long way and not at all a smooth one. But, also, there is none else.

We look forward to founding ourselves on and rediscovering ourselves in the soul of Auroville. Matrimandir's four pillars now stand on the soil of Auroville, the four aspects of the Mother. Do they remind us, sometimes, of the four aids in Yoga: knowledge of the Truth, personal effort, the teacher, and Time? Or of Sincerity, Fidelity, Peace, and Gratitude? Or of the other quaternity, Aspiration, Devotion, Faith, and Purity, the four pillars of Immortality? —*Shyam Sunder*

The spirit of Auroville is not confined to the physical city in India, but may be felt all over the world in the aspirations of those who yearn for a new way to live. Since this aspiration, as well as the practical means of fulfilling it, have been elaborated so lucidly and powerfully by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we recommend that interested readers look into some of their works, particularly Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*, *The Life Divine*, and *The Synthesis of Yoga*; the Mother's *Conversations and Prayers and Meditations*; Satprem's *Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness*; and Robert McDermott's *The Essential Aurobindo*.

Auroville needs substantial help of all kinds. It needs first the goodwill of the world. It needs money (tax-deductible contributions may be sent to the Auroville Association or the Sri Aurobindo Society of Minneapolis listed at the end of this issue). It needs clothing (especially light woollens and children's); it needs books (texts for children 6-16, instruction materials, math games, books on nature and wildlife, on solar and wind energy and alternative technology, tropical agriculture, ceramic tools and glazes, etc.). (Books, clothing, etc., may be sent to Matagiri for forwarding to the appropriate community.)

Further information on Auroville may be obtained from *Auroville: The First Six Years*; from such Auroville journals as *Sri Aurobindo's Action* and *Gazette Aurovilienne*; from *Equals One* (which contains projective pieces rather than news); from Sri Aurobindo and Auroville centers.

If you wish to visit Auroville, write to Secretary, Unity, Auroville 605101, India. Please include International Reply Coupons, available from most post offices, to cover the cost of return postage.

GENERAL NEWS

¶ **Dr. Vasant V. Merchant** of the Humanities Department of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, presented a paper, "*Savitri, Eternity in Words*," at the annual convention of the American Philological Association of the Pacific Coast, on November 26-27, in Eugene, Oregon.

¶ **Professor Robert A. McDermott** of Baruch College in New York City is giving a course on "Sri Aurobindo on Rebirth, Karma and the Bhagavadgita" at the Lindisfarne Association in New York. The series of lecture-discussions will use Sri Aurobindo's *The Problem of Rebirth* and *Essays on the Gita*. The course will run fortnightly (except 22 December) from 27 October through March 16, 1977. Anyone interested may call Lindisfarne Manhattan or Prof. McDermott at Baruch College, 212-673-7700.

¶ At the second international congress of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, held October 20-24 at Brock University in Canada, **Pritisbhusan Chatterji** of Calcutta, presented "Plotinus and Sri Aurobindo: A Comparative Study."

¶ **Pavan K. Talwar** will teach a course entitled "Studies in the Bhagavad-Gita" during the winter quarter 1977 at the Honors and Experimental College of Kent State University. *Essays on the Gita* is one of the required texts.

¶ Anyone interested in living more fully the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in a concentrated, collective action, can participate in the planning stages of a community in the Pacific Northwest. Call or write Kenneth Carlin, 14529 32nd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98155 (telephone: 206-365-5953).

NEWS OF CENTERS

New York City: The SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTER of New York has announced that its valuable Sri Aurobindo Library is now a lending library in the home of Miss Anie Nunnally, 140 W. 58th St., Apt. 8B, New York, NY 10017. Visitors are welcome by appointment. Telephone 212-757-7584.

Silver Spring, Md.: The SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY, % Naren Raichura, 2322 Glenmont Circle, Apt. 212, Silver Spring, MD 20902 (telephone 301-942-6168) meets the second Sunday of the month, at 4:00 p.m. for discussion. The current topic is *Savitri*.

North Long Beach, Calif.: ATMANIKETAN ASHRAM (6902 Eastondale Ave., N. Long Beach, CA 90805) now keeps its library open seven days a week. The *Essays on the Gita* class has been changed from Friday evenings to Sunday afternoons. Readings of *Savitri* are held Thursday evenings. Sanskrit and German classes are given individually by appointment. There are now 3 permanent residents and 3 more expected soon.

Boulder, Colo.: SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION CENTER, AUROVILLE ASSOCIATION (% Muriel and Joseph Spanier, 2121 Canyon Blvd., Apt. 315, Boulder, CO 80302; telephone 303-447-0982; mailing address: P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306) holds weekly meetings, Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. for reading from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, discussion and meditation.

The Spaniers have given the Auroville slide presentation this fall at Chadron State College in Nebraska and at Eastern Montana State College, Rocky Mountain College and the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship in Billings, Mont. They are planning a spring trip through the west and northwest. Anyone wishing to schedule the Auroville presentation, please write for further information.

The center is also a branch of World Union and will provide information and membership forms to those interested in this international aspect of Sri Aurobindo's vision.

Auroville Voice, a quarterly newsletter-journal, is being planned, the first issue to be available February 1977, Auroville's 9th birthday. It will present news and articles covering a broad spectrum of the life and aspiration of Auroville. For further information, write to the Auroville Association at the above address.

NEWS OF FOREIGN CENTERS

Vancouver, B.C.: SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY meets every Tuesday from 7 to 8 p.m. at Auro-Book Store, 319 W. Pender St., Apt. 203, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Several members of the group have lived in both the Ashram and Auroville.

Munich, Germany: AURORA-ZENTRALE DER FREUNDE AUROVILLES was opened on 21 February 1976 for a threefold activity: first, to provide a place where people can meet for meditation, communication, study circles and information about Auroville. Second, to provide a focal point for organizing workshops and Auroville centers all over Germany. For this purpose they have a complete archive of tapes, slides, films and copies of handwritten messages of the Mother to Auroville at the Aurora-Zentrale as well as the Auroville-Verlag (which organizes the distribution of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings throughout Germany). Third, to organize the preparation for Mirapuri, a city of peace in Europe where people can live the ideal of Transformation. The planning group for Mirapuri publishes its results in *Für die Zukunft* [For the Future], a magazine of the Friends of Auroville in Germany. The basic structure of the city has been designed as well as the center and important details of the overall functions. At present investigations for the proper site are being carried out.

In Auroville the Aurora-Zentrale is actively engaged in constructing a community house called "New Community," which should serve as a communication place between Auroville in the making and friends and Aurovilians from all over the world. The building, now in the first stages of construction, is located in the beginning of the future Residential Sector of Auroville.

The center also offers for sale five films: (1) *Auroville 28.2.1968* (on the foundation day); (2) *Auroville 72*; (3) *Auroville...towards becoming* (the most recent film); (4) *17th November 1973* (on the Mother's Mahasamadhi); (5) *Meditations on Savitri*. All come with an English sound track, some are in color. Other films are planned. For further information, write directly to Aurora-Zentrale der Freunde Aurovilles, Elisabethweg 34, 8033 Planegg b. München (telephone [089] 859-6088), West Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO CENTERS—UNITED STATES

(Most centers sell the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and maintain libraries of their works. Many sell crafts from the Ashram and Auroville. They can provide information on Sri Aurobindo's teaching, the Ashram and Auroville. And most offer some sort of regular program open to the public. Call or write for details.)

Arizona: SRI AUROBINDO CENTER, Crescent Moon Ranch, Star Route 2, Sedona, AZ 86336. Tel.: 602-282-7552 and 282-5794.

PARADISE TAU, 4335 N. 36th St., Phoenix, AZ 85018. Tel.: 602-955-7398.

California: AUROVILLE ASSOCIATION, 212 Farley Drive, Aptos, CA 95003. Tel.: 408-688-4173.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION FELLOWSHIP, 2650 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94118. Tel.: 415-648-3949 and 386-9590.

EAST-WEST CULTURAL CENTER, 2865 West 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Tel.: 213-DU6-0999.

ATMANIKETAN ASHRAM, 6900 Eastondale Ave., North Long Beach, CA 90805.

SADHANA SRI AUROBINDO, % Richard Aspen, P.O. Box 715, Clovis, CA 93612. Tel.: 209-299-1326.

Colorado: SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION CENTER, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306. Tel.: 303-447-0982.

Massachusetts: SRI AUROBINDO BOOKS, 84 Charles St., Boston, MA 02114. Tel.: 617-723-5759.

Maryland: SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY, % Naren Raichura, 2322 Glenmont Circle, Apt. 212, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Tel.: 301-942-6168.

Minnesota: SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY, 3124 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408. Tel.: 612-825-5206.

New York: MATAGIRI, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457. Tel.: 914-679-8322.

Pennsylvania: ARYA, % Naren Bhatt, 5132 Haverford Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17109.

The following deal in products from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville:

MATAGIRI, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457 (wholesale and retail)

AURO-MIRA CREATIONS, 3211 College Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705. (retail)

MERE CIE IMPORTS, 6455 Geyser Ave., Reseda, CA 91335. (wholesale)

CANADA

British Columbia: FUTURE CHILD, Box 1419, Salmon Arm, BC V0E 2T0. Tel.: 604-832-2369.

SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY, % Auro-Book Store, 319 W. Pender St., Apt. 203, Vancouver, BC.

Quebec: CENTRE DU YOGA SRI AUROBINDO, 4127 St. Denis, Montreal, Que. H2W 2M7. Tel.: 514-844-7675.

SOCIETE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT D'AUROVILLE, 4461 St. Andre, Montreal, Que. H2J 2Z5.

O-PTI-ZOIZO, 1596 St. Laurent Blvd., Montreal, Que., a cooperatively owned store that sells the works of Sri Aurobindo and other products from the Ashram and Auroville, as well as organic groceries and other items.

SPECIAL NOTICE

We wish to thank all who have sent us contributions for the support of *Collaboration*. With the recent increase in postal and other costs, and since *Collaboration* is sent free, we welcome any contributions readers feel able to make. They may be made payable to Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457.

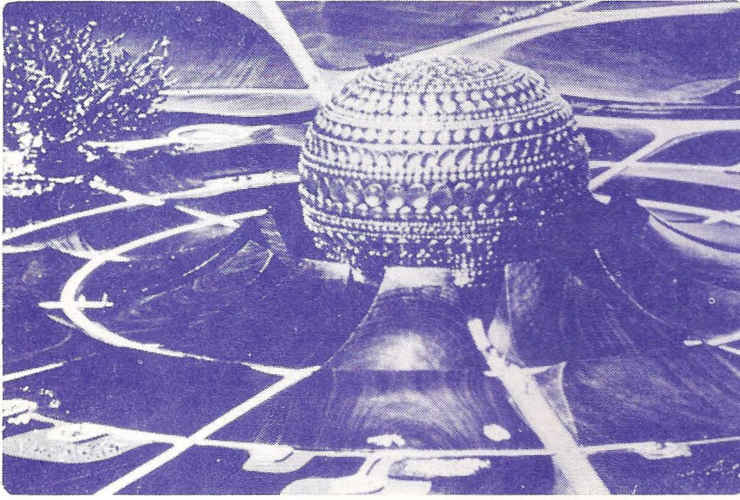
If you move, please inform us of your new address, as the cost of returned third-class mail is quite high.

We welcome not only contributions, but any expressions of interest from our readers.

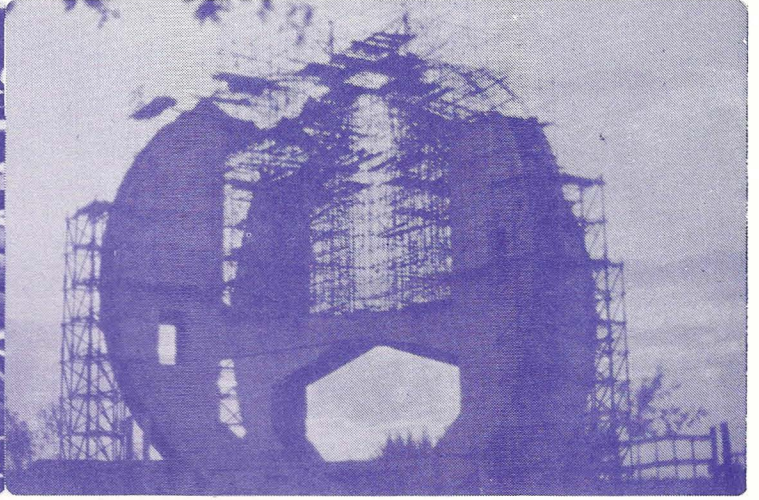
VIEWS OF AUROVILLE

Photos 1 and 2, Matrimandir model and construction; 5 and 6, Last School; 7, handmade paper factory; other photos, residences and agriculture; photos 4 and 8, courtesy Dominique Darr.

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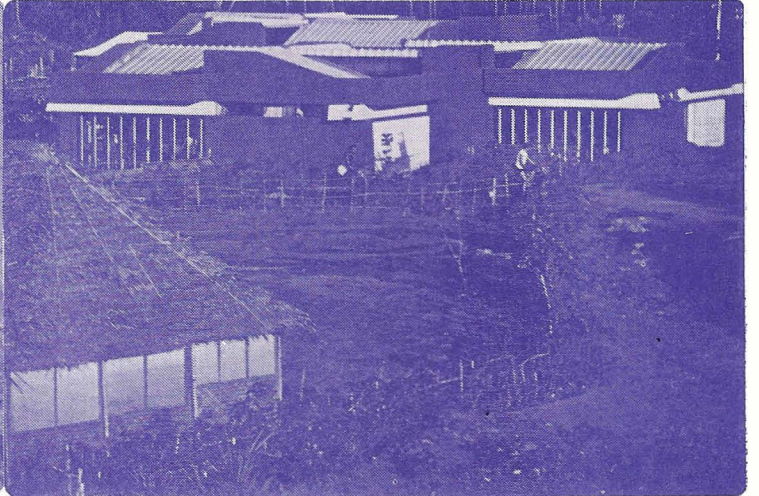
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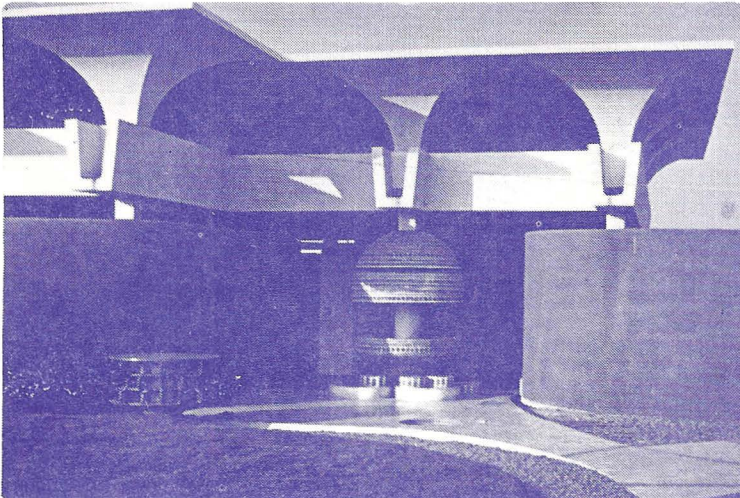
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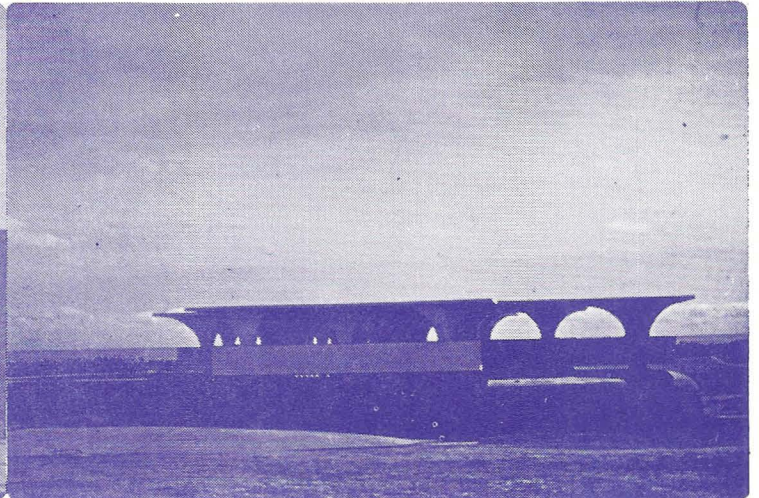
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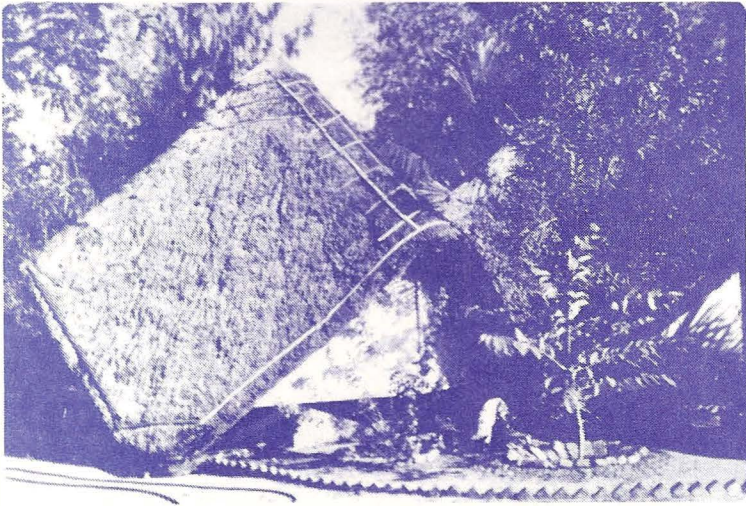
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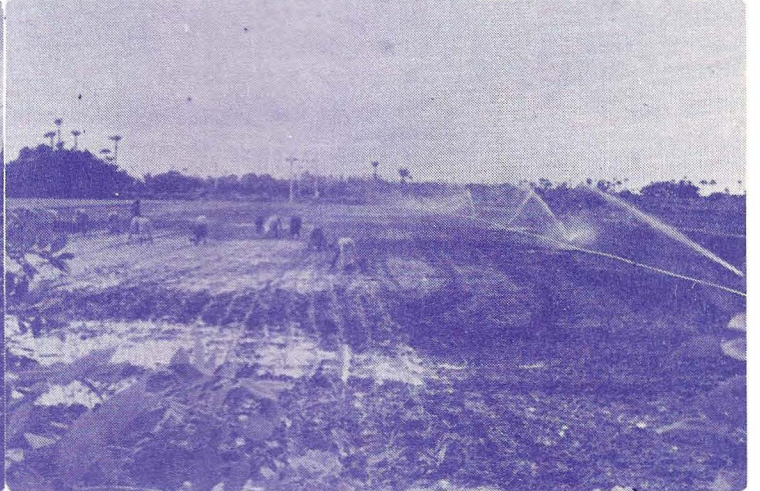
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