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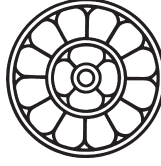
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXX

No. 11

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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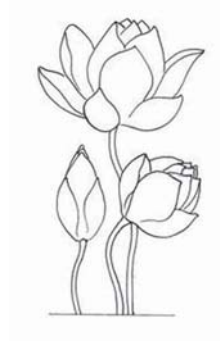
‘IT IS HE WHO TURNS HISTORY’S PAGES’

He is the witness and doer, he is the loved and the lover,
He the eternal Truth that we look in ourselves to discover.
All is his travel in Time; it is he who turns history’s pages,
Act and event and result are the trail that he leaves through the ages;
Form and idea are his signs and number and sound are his symbols,
Music and singing, the word and its rhythm are Divinity’s cymbals,
Thunder and surge are the drums of his marching. Through us, with urges
Self-ward, form-bound, mute, motionless, slowly inevitably emerges
Vast as the cosmos, minute as the atom, the Spirit eternal.
Often the gusts of his force illumining moments diurnal
Flame into speech and idea; transcendences splendid and subtle
Suddenly shoot through the weft of our lives from a magical shuttle;
Hid in our hearts is his glory; the Spirit works in our members.
Silence is he, with our voices he speaks, in our thoughts he remembers.
Deep in our being inhabits the voiceless invisible Teacher;
Powers of his godhead we live; the Creator dwells in the creature.
Out of his Void we arise to a mighty and shining existence,
Out of Inconscience, tearing the black Mask’s giant resistance;
Waves of his consciousness well from him into these bodies in Nature,
Forms are put round him; his oneness, divided by mind’s nomenclature,
High on the summits of being ponders immobile and single,
Penetrates atom and cell as the tide drenches sand-grain and shingle.
Oneness unknown to us dwells in these millions of figures and faces,
Wars with itself in our battles, loves in our clinging embraces,
Inly the self and the substance of things and their cause and their mover
Veiled in the depths which the foam of our thoughts and our life’s billows cover,
Heaves like the sea in its waves; like heaven with its star-fires it gazes
Watching the world and its works. Interned in the finite’s mazes,
Still shall he rise to his vast superconscience, we with him climbing;
Truth of man’s thought with the truth of God’s spirit faultlessly timing,
That which was mortal shall enter immortality’s golden precincts,
Hushed breath of ecstasy, honey of lotus depths where the bee sinks,
Timeless expanses too still for the voice of the hours to inveigle,
Spaces of spirit too vast for the flight of the God-bearing eagle, —

Enter the Splendour that broods now unseen on us, deity invading,
Sight without error, light without shadow, beauty unfading,
Infinite largeness, rapture eternal, love none can sever . . .

SRI AUROBINDO

(Extract from 'Ahana', *Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, pp. 482-83)



THE POSSIBILITY OF A FIRST STEP TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL UNITY — ITS ENORMOUS DIFFICULTIES

The study of the growth of the nation-unit under the pressure indeed of a growing inner need and idea but by the agency of political, economic and social forces, forms and instruments shows us a progress that began from a loose formation in which various elements were gathered together for unification, proceeded through a period of strong concentration and coercion in which the conscious national ego was developed, fortified and provided with a centre and instruments of its organic life, and passed on to a final period of assured separate existence and internal unity as against outside pressure in which liberty and an active and more and more equal share of all in the benefits of the national life became possible. If the unity of the human race is to be brought about by the same means and agents and in a similar fashion to that of the nation, we should expect it to follow a similar course. That is at least the most visible probability and it seems to be consistent with the natural law of all creation which starts from the loose mass, the more or less amorphous vague of forces and materials and proceeds by contraction, constriction, solidification into a firm mould in which the rich evolution of various forms of life is at last securely possible.

If we consider the actual state of the world and its immediate possibilities, we shall see that a first period of loose formation and imperfect order is inevitable. Neither the intellectual preparation of the human race nor the development of its sentiments nor the economic and political forces and conditions by which it is moved and preoccupied have reached to such a point of inner stress or external pressure as would warrant us in expecting a total change of the basis of our life or the establishment of a complete or a real unity. There cannot as yet be even a real external unity, far less a psychological oneness. It is true that the vague sense and need of something of the kind has been growing rapidly and the object lesson of the war brought the master idea of the future out of the nascent condition in which it was no more than the generous chimera of a few pacifists or internationalist idealists. It came to be recognised that it contains in itself some force of eventual reality, and the voice of those who would cry it down as the pet notion of intellectual cranks and faddists had no longer the same volume and confidence, because it was no longer so solidly supported by the common sense of the average man, that short-sighted common sense of the material mind which consists in a strong feeling for immediate actualities and an entire blindness to the possibilities of the future. But there has as yet been no long intellectual preparation of a more and more dominant thought cast out by the

intellectuals of the age to remould the ideas of common men, nor has there been any such gathering to a head of the growing revolt against present conditions as would make it possible for vast masses of men seized by the passion for an ideal and by the hope of a new happiness for mankind to break up the present basis of things and construct a new scheme of collective life. In another direction, the replacing of the individualistic basis of society by an increasing collectivism, there has been to a large extent such an intellectual preparation and gathering force of revolt; there the war has acted as a precipitative force and brought us much nearer to the possibility of a realised — not necessarily a democratic — State socialism. But there have been no such favourable preconditions for a strong movement of international unification. No great effective outburst of a massed and dynamic idealism in this direction can be reasonably predicted. The preparation may have begun, it may have been greatly facilitated and hastened by recent events, but it is still only in its first stages.

Under such conditions the ideas and schemes of the world's intellectuals who would replan the whole status of international life altogether and from its roots in the light of general principles, are not likely to find any immediate realisation. In the absence of a general idealistic outburst of creative human hope which would make such changes possible, the future will be shaped not by the ideas of the thinker but by the practical mind of the politician which represents the average reason and temperament of the time and effects usually something much nearer the minimum than the maximum of what is possible. The average general mind of a great mass of men, while it is ready to listen to such ideas as it has been prepared to receive and is accustomed to seize on this or that notion with a partisan avidity, is yet ruled in its action not so much by its thought as by its interests, passions and prejudices. The politician and the statesman — and the world is now full of politicians but very empty of statesmen — act in accordance with this average general mind of the mass; the one is governed by it, the other has always to take it into chief account and cannot lead it where he will, unless he is one of those great geniuses and powerful personalities who unite a large mind and dynamic force of conception with an enormous power or influence over men. Moreover, the political mind has limitations of its own beyond those of the general average mind of the mass; it is even more respectful of the *status quo*, more disinclined to great adventures in which the safe footing of the past has to be abandoned, more incapable of launching out into the uncertain and the new. To do that it must either be forced by general opinion or a powerful interest or else itself fall under the spell of a great new enthusiasm diffused in the mental atmosphere of the times.

If the politician mind is left entirely to itself, we could expect no better tangible result of the greatest international convulsion on record than a rearrangement of frontiers, a redistribution of power and possessions and a few desirable or undesirable developments of international, commercial and other relations. That is one disastrous

possibility leading to more disastrous convulsions — so long as the problem is not solved — against which the future of the world is by no means secure. Still, since the mind of humanity has been greatly moved and its sentiments powerfully awakened, since the sense is becoming fairly widespread that the old status of things is no longer tolerable and the undesirability of an international balance reposing on a ring of national egoisms held in check only by mutual fear and hesitation, by ineffective arbitration treaties and Hague tribunals and the blundering discords of a European Concert must be now fairly clear even to the politician mind, we might expect that some serious attempt towards the beginning of a new order should be the result of the moral collapse of the old. The passions and hatreds and selfish national hopes raised by the war must certainly be a great obstacle in the way and may easily render futile or of a momentary stability any such beginning. But, if nothing else, the mere exhaustion and internal reaction produced after the relaxing of the tensivity of the struggle, might give time for new ideas, feelings, forces, events to emerge which will counteract this pernicious influence.¹

Still, the most that we could at all expect must needs be very little. In the internal life of the nations, the ultimate effects of the war cannot fail to be powerful and radical, for there everything is ready, the pressure felt has been enormous and the expansion after it has been removed must be correspondingly great in its results; but in international life we can only look forward at the best to a certain minimum of radical change which, however small, might yet in itself turn out to be an irrevocable departure, a seed of sufficient vitality to ensure the inevitability of future growth. If, indeed, developments had occurred before the end of this world-wide struggle strong enough to change the general mind of Europe, to force the dwarfish thoughts of its rulers into greater depths and generate a more wide-reaching sense of the necessity for radical change than has yet been developed, more might have been hoped for; but as the great conflict drew nearer to its close, no such probability emerged; the dynamic period during which in such a crisis the effective ideas and tendencies of men are formed, passed without the creation of any great and profound impulse. There were only two points on which the general mind of the peoples was powerfully affected. First, there was generated a sense of revolt against the possible repetition of this vast catastrophe; still more strongly felt was the necessity for finding means to prevent the unparalleled dislocation of the economic life of the race which was brought about by the convulsion. Therefore, it is in these two directions that some real development could be expected; for so much must be attempted if the general

1. Written originally in 1916 before the end of the war. This happier possibility could not immediately materialise, but the growing insecurity, confusion and disorder have made the creation of some international system more and more imperative if modern civilisation is not to collapse in bloodshed and chaos. The result of this necessity has been first the creation of the League of Nations and afterwards the U.N.O.: neither has proved very satisfactory from the political point of view, but henceforward the existence of some such arranged centre of order has become very evidently indispensable.

expectation and desire are to be satisfied and to trifle with these would be to declare the political intelligence of Europe bankrupt. That failure would convict its governments and ruling classes of moral and intellectual impotence and might well in the end provoke a general revolt of the European peoples against their existing institutions and the present blind and rudderless leadership.

There was to be expected, then, some attempt to provide a settled and effective means for the regulation and minimising of war, for the limitation of armaments, for the satisfactory disposal of dangerous disputes and especially, though this presents the greatest difficulty, for meeting that conflict of commercial aims and interests which is now the really effective, although by no means the only factor in the conditions that compel the recurrence of war. If this new arrangement contained in itself the seed of international control, if it turned out to be a first step towards a loose international formation or perhaps contained its elements or initial lines or even a first scheme to which the life of humanity could turn for a mould of growth in its reaching out to a unified existence, then, however rudimentary or unsatisfactory this arrangement might be at first, the future would carry in it an assured promise. Once begun, it would be impossible for mankind to draw back and, whatever difficulties, disappointments, struggles, reactions, checks or brutal interruptions might mark the course of this development, they would be bound to help in the end rather than hinder the final and inevitable result.

Still, it would be vain to hope that the principle of international control will be thoroughly effective at first or that this loose formation, which is likely to be in the beginning half form, half nebula, will prevent farther conflicts, explosions, catastrophes.² The difficulties are too great. The mind of the race has not as yet the necessary experience; the intellect of its ruling classes has not acquired the needed minimum of wisdom and foresight; the temperament of the peoples has not developed the indispensable instincts and sentiments. Whatever arrangement is made will proceed on the old basis of national egoisms, hungers, cupidities, self-assertions and will simply endeavour to regulate them just enough to prevent too disastrous collisions. The first means tried will necessarily be insufficient because too much respect will be paid to those very egoisms which it is sought to control. The causes of strife will remain; the temper that engenders it will live on, perhaps exhausted and subdued for a time in certain of its activities, but unexorcised; the means of strife may be controlled but will be allowed to remain. Armaments may be restricted, but will not be abolished; national armies may be limited in numbers — an illusory limitation — but they will be maintained; science will still continue to minister ingeniously to the art of collective massacre. War can only be abolished if national armies are abolished and even then with difficulty, by the development of some

2. This prediction, easy enough to make at that time, and the estimate of its causes have been fully justified by the course of events and the outbreak of a still greater, more disastrous war.

other machinery which humanity does not yet know how to form or, even if formed, will not for some time be able or willing perfectly to utilise. And there is no chance of national armies being abolished; for each nation distrusts all the others too much, has too many ambitions and hungers, needs to remain armed, if for nothing else, to guard its markets and keep down its dominions, colonies, subject peoples. Commercial ambitions and rivalries, political pride, dreams, longings, jealousies are not going to disappear as if by the touch of a magic wand merely because Europe has in an insane clash of long-ripening ambitions, jealousies and hatreds decimated its manhood and flung in three years the resources of decades into the melting-pot of war. The awakening must go much deeper, lay hold upon much purer roots of action before the psychology of nations will be transmuted into that something "wondrous, rich and strange" which will eliminate war and international collisions from our distressed and stumbling human life.

National egoism remaining, the means of strife remaining, its causes, opportunities, excuses will never be wanting. The present war came because all the leading nations had long been so acting as to make it inevitable; it came because there was a Balkan imbroglio and a Near-Eastern hope and commercial and colonial rivalries in Northern Africa over which the dominant nations had been battling in peace long before one or more of them grasped at the rifle and the shell. Sarajevo and Belgium were mere determining circumstances; to get to the root causes we have to go back as far at least as Agadir and Algeciras. From Morocco to Tripoli, from Tripoli to Thrace and Macedonia, from Macedonia to Herzegovina the electric chain ran with that inevitable logic of causes and results, actions and their fruits which we call Karma, creating minor detonations on its way till it found the inflammable point and created that vast explosion which has filled Europe with blood and ruins. Possibly the Balkan question may be definitively settled, though that is far from certain; possibly the definitive expulsion of Germany from Africa may ease the situation by leaving that continent in the possession of three or four nations who are for the present allies. But even if Germany were expunged from the map and its resentments and ambitions deleted as a European factor, the root causes of strife would remain. There will still be an Asiatic question of the Near and the Far East which may take on new conditions and appearances and regroup its constituent elements, but must remain so fraught with danger that if it is stupidly settled or does not settle itself, it would be fairly safe to predict the next great human collision with Asia as either its first field or its origin. Even if that difficulty is settled, new causes of strife must necessarily develop where the spirit of national egoism and cupidity seeks for satisfaction; and so long as it lives, satisfaction it must seek and repletion can never permanently satisfy it. The tree must bear its own proper fruit, and Nature is always a diligent gardener.

The limitation of armies and armaments is an illusory remedy. Even if there could be found an effective international means of control, it would cease to operate

as soon as the clash of war actually came. The European conflict has shown that, in the course of a war, a country can be turned into a huge factory of arms and a nation convert its whole peaceful manhood into an army. England which started with a small and even insignificant armed force, was able in the course of a single year to raise millions of men and in two to train and equip them and throw them effectively into the balance. This object-lesson is sufficient to show that the limitation of armies and armaments can only lighten the national burden in peace, leaving it by that very fact more resources for the conflict, but cannot prevent or even minimise the disastrous intensity and extension of war. Nor will the construction of a stronger international law with a more effective sanction behind it be an indubitable or a perfect remedy. It is often asserted that this is what is needed; just as in the nation Law has replaced and suppressed the old barbaric method of settling disputes between individuals, families or clans by the arbitration of Might, a similar development ought to be possible in the life of nations. Perhaps in the end; but to expect it to operate successfully at once is to ignore both the real basis of the effective authority of Law and the difference between the constituents of a developed nation and the constituents of that ill-developed international comity which it is proposed to initiate.

The authority of Law in a nation or community does not really depend on any so-called "majesty" or mystic power in man-made rules and enactments. Its real sources of power are two, first, the strong interest of the majority or of a dominant minority or of the community as a whole in maintaining it and, secondly, the possession of a sole armed force, police and military, which makes that interest effective. The metaphorical sword of justice can only act because there is a real sword behind it to enforce its decrees and its penalties against the rebel and the dissident. And the essential character of this armed force is that it belongs to nobody, to no individual or constituent group of the community except alone to the State, the king or the governing class or body in which sovereign authority is centred. Nor can there be any security if the armed force of the State is balanced or its sole effectivity diminished by the existence of other armed forces belonging to groups and individuals and free in any degree from the central control or able to use their power against the governing authority. Even so, even with this authority backed by a sole and centralised armed force, Law has not been able to prevent strife of a kind between individuals and classes because it has not been able to remove the psychological, economic and other causes of strife. Crime with its penalties is always a kind of mutual violence, a kind of revolt and civil strife and even in the best-policed and most law-abiding communities crime is still rampant. Even the organisation of crime is still possible although it cannot usually endure or fix its power because it has the whole vehement sentiment and effective organisation of the community against it. But what is more to the purpose, Law has not been able to prevent, although it has minimised, the possibility of civil strife and violent or armed discord within the organised nation. Whenever a class or an opinion has thought itself

oppressed or treated with intolerable injustice, has found the Law and its armed force so entirely associated with an opposite interest that the suspension of the principle of law and an insurgence of the violence of revolt against the violence of oppression were or appeared the only remedy, it has, if it thought it had a chance of success, appealed to the ancient arbitration of Might. Even in our own days we have seen the most law-abiding of nations staggering on the verge of a disastrous civil war and responsible statesmen declaring their readiness to appeal to it if a measure disagreeable to them were enforced, even though it was passed by the supreme legislative authority with the sanction of the sovereign.

But in any loose international formation presently possible the armed force would still be divided among its constituent groups; it would belong to them, not to any sovereign authority, superstate or federal council. The position would resemble the chaotic organisation of the feudal ages in which every prince and baron had his separate jurisdiction and military resources and could defy the authority of the sovereign if he were powerful enough or if he could command the necessary number and strength of allies among his peers. And in this case there would not be even the equivalent of a feudal sovereign — a king who, if nothing else, if not really a monarch, was at least the first among his peers with the prestige of sovereignty and some means of developing it into a strong and permanent actuality.

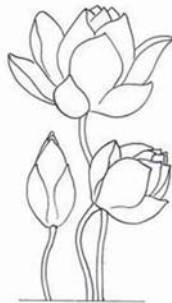
Nor would the matter be much improved if there were a composite armed force of control set over the nations and their separate military strength; for this composite would break apart and its elements return to their conflicting sources on the outbreak of overt strife. In the developed nation the individual is the unit and he is lost among the mass of individuals, unable safely to calculate the force he could command in a conflict, afraid of all other individuals not bound to him because he sees in them natural supporters of outraged authority; revolt is to him a most dangerous and incalculable business, even the initial conspiracy fraught at every moment with a thousand terrors and dangers that lower in terrible massed array against a small modicum of scattered chances. The soldier also is a solitary individual, afraid of all the rest, a terrible punishment suspended over him and ready to fall at the least sign of insubordination, never sure of a confident support among his fellows or, even if a little certain, not assured of any effective support from the civil population and therefore deprived of that moral force which would encourage him to defy the authority of Law and Government. And in his ordinary sentiment he belongs no longer to individual or family or class, but to the State and the country or at the very least to the machine of which he is a part. But here the constituents would be a small number of nations, some of them powerful empires, well able to look around them, measure their own force, make sure of their allies, calculate the forces against them; the chances of success or failure would be all that they would have to consider. And the soldiers of the composite army would belong at heart to their country and not at all to the nebulous entity which controlled them.

Therefore, pending the actual evolution of an international State so constituted as to be something other than a mere loose conglomerate of nations or rather a palaver of the deputies of national governments, the reign of peace and unity dreamed of by the idealist could never be possible by these political or administrative means or, if possible, could never be secure. Even if war were eliminated, still as in the nation crime between individuals exists, or as other means such as disastrous general strikes are used in the war of classes, so here too other means of strife would be developed, much more disastrous perhaps than war. And even they would be needed and inevitable in the economy of Nature, not only to meet the psychological necessity of egoistic discord and passion and ambition, but as an outlet and an arm for the sense of injustice, of oppressed rights, of thwarted possibilities. The law is always the same, that wherever egoism is the root of action it must bear its own proper results and reactions and, however minimised and kept down they may be by an external machinery, their eventual outburst is sure and can be delayed but not prevented for ever.

It is apparent at least that no loose formation without a powerful central control could be satisfactory, effective or enduring, even if it were much less loose, much more compact than anything that seems at present likely to evolve in the near future. There must be in the nature of things a second step, a movement towards greater rigidity, constriction of national liberties and the erection of a unique central authority with a uniform control over the earth's peoples.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 384-94)



‘THOU PENETRATEST, THOU TRANSFIGUREST ALL’

June 1, 1914

O victorious power of divine Love, Thou art the sovereign Master of this universe, Thou art its creator and its saviour, Thou hast permitted it to emerge from chaos, and now Thou leadest it to its eternal goal.

There is not a thing so humble but in it I see Thee resplendent, not a being apparently so hostile to Thy will but I feel Thee live in it and act and radiate.

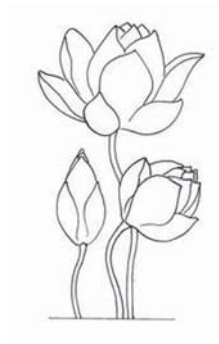
O my sweet Master, essence of this love, I am Thy heart, and the torrents of Thy love pass through the entirety of my being and flow out to awaken Thy love in all things or rather to awaken all things to the consciousness of Thy love which animates all.

All those who do not recognise Thee, all those who do not know Thee, all those who try to turn away from Thy sweet and divine law, I take into my arms of love, I cradle them in my heart of love and offer them to Thy divine flames, so that penetrated by Thy miraculous effluence, they may be converted in Thy beatitude.

O Love, resplendent Love, Thou penetrest, Thou transfigurest all.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 163)



“SAVITRI” —

Some blank verses — but as I am in the doldrums they don't go very far, I suppose.

Your impression in detail, please, about the substance, language and rhythm of this poem?

|| A rose of dawn, her smile lights every gaze¹ —
 || Her love is like a nakedness of noon:
 | No flame but breathes in her the Spirit's calm
 || And pours the omnipresence of a sun.
 || Her tongues of fire break from a voiceless deep
 || Dreaming the taste of some ineffable height —
 the one God-hush in all²
 | A cry to clasp in all the one God-hush,
 || A universal hunger's white embrace
 || That from the Unknown leaps burning to the Unknown.

[Amal's questions:]

1. I had written “her smile shines everywhere” — but I thought that “everywhere” was a little prosaic, besides rendering somewhat tautologous the expression in line 4. What do you think?
2. Does this version weaken the line?

Sri Aurobindo's comment:

1. Yes. "every gaze" is much better in all ways.
2. I think it is better than the other.

Exceedingly fine; both the language and rhythm are very powerful and highly inspired. When the inspiration is there, you reach more and more a peculiar fusion of the three influences, higher mental, illumined mental and intuitive, with a touch of the overmind intuition coming in. This last touch is strongest here in the second and the two closing lines, but it is present in all except two — the third which is yet a very fine line indeed, and the seventh where it is not present in the typed version [‘A cry to clasp in all the one God-hush’] but seems just to touch perhaps in the written one [‘A cry to clasp the one God-hush in all’]. In the typed version the higher mental is strongest but in the written one which is less emphatic but more

harmonious, the rhythm gets in a higher influence. In the other lines the illumined mental influence lifting up the higher mental is strongest, but is itself lifted up to the intuitive — in all but the third just high enough to get the touch of the overmental intuition.

26 April 1937

SAVITRI

A rose of dawn, her smile lights every gaze —
Her love is like a nakedness of noon:
No flame but breathes in her the Spirit's calm
And pours the omnipresence of a sun.
Her tongues of fire break from a voiceless deep
Dreaming the taste of some ineffable height —
A cry to clasp the one God-hush in all,
A universal hunger's white embrace
That from the Unknown leaps burning to the Unknown.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

*Against the evil at life's afflicted roots,
Her own calamity its private sign,
Of her pangs she made a mystic poignant sword.
A solitary mind, a world-wide heart,
To the lone Immortal's unshared work she rose.*

Sri Aurobindo

(*Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 33, pp. 8-9)

SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

Epilogue

AND THEN — THE INFINITE

I have become what before Time I was.
A secret touch has quieted thought and sense:
All things by the agent Mind created pass
Into a void and mute magnificence.

My life is a silence grasped by timeless hands;
The world is drowned in an immortal gaze.
Naked my spirit from its vestures stands;
I am alone with my own self for space.

My heart is a centre of infinity,
My body a dot in the soul's vast expanse.
All being's huge abyss wakes under me,
Once screened in a gigantic Ignorance.

A momentless immensity pure and bare,
I stretch to an eternal everywhere.

— Sri Aurobindo
'The Self's Infinity'¹

While the Venetian Marco Polo lay on his deathbed in 1323, a priest advised him to declare the wonderful narrative of his adventures in the East as fantasies. "What I have told is not even half of what remains untold," responded Marco with a sigh.

This author could say that the records and impressions of events in the external life of Sri Aurobindo till he reached Pondicherry collated in this work that was serialised in this journal from April 2011 to the current issue, probably constitute one-tenth, if not less, of the events in his life and the contemporary impressions of his words and actions and aspects of his personality that have remained beyond the author's ken. If we are able to trace only one personal diary of a gentleman containing an important conversation with Sri Aurobindo, that too because a limited number of

its copies had been printed for private circulation, and another of one of his compatriots, Khaparde, if we could quote from some newspapers and journals preserved in our national archives and institutional or private libraries, several more diaries and numerous papers are lost forever in the course of time, because of ignorance, apathy or necessity.

Settled in Pondicherry, even though he influenced events of great magnitude at the national and international planes, Sri Aurobindo's prime preoccupation was with Consciousness. If mankind is experiencing a crisis today, it is not just a political, economic or any such phenomenon as different experts would diagnose it, but an evolutionary crisis. Nothing short of man transcending his present state of mind-led consciousness could end the crisis. Some hints of how Sri Aurobindo was working it out in his own consciousness could be surmised from the poem, written in 1939, reproduced above. We can only faintly surmise what it could mean to wake up a "huge abyss" that lay "screened in a gigantic Ignorance" and that is probably to wake up the splendid possibility inherent in it. He alone could stand back from Time — a position none can visualise.

His was a Yoga never anticipated by any Yogi or Rishi in the history of spirituality. If its promise lay in the Vedas, it must have been there too cryptically for any mystic to decipher it. One must study his original works in order to form an idea about his Yoga, well aware that mind is not capable of truly understanding the sublime realities described through a mental language.

However, this author feels that three statements made by the Mother, when meditated upon deeply, could open up before a seeker a luminous pathway towards the profound promise of fulfilment Sri Aurobindo has left for humanity.

The first one was the instant and spontaneous revelation the Mother received upon her first meeting with Sri Aurobindo on the 29th of March 1914, by now well known to us. She wrote in her personal diary on the 30th.

Gradually the horizon becomes distinct, the path grows clear, and we move towards a greater and greater certitude.

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.²

The certitude and the faith in the inevitability of the future of mankind with which these few words vibrate are of great significance. It assures us of

The advent of which all creation waits,
The beautiful visage of Eternity
That shall appear upon the roads of Time.³

We should note the mystic connotation of ‘prove’. For the Mother’s vision, the vision of a different dimension, Sri Aurobindo’s presence was the proof.

Through the ages numerous aspiring individuals — yogis, rishis and followers of different occult disciplines — had experienced different aspects of the life divine, but the Mother saw, in her seer-vision, that it is the life divine upon earth, the manifestation of a new Consciousness, man’s elevation through transformation to a new phase of evolution, that the Mahayogi represents. And in a message she issued on the 15th of August 1961, she makes absolutely unambiguous what he represents:

What Sri Aurobindo represents in the history of the earth’s spiritual progress is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a mighty action straight from the Supreme.⁴

The third statement, almost an epic in an incredibly compact passage, is too profound to be elucidated. I refer to her words inscribed on the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo bearing the date 9 December 1950:

To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee.⁵

We must be alert enough to note that this Mantric prayer is addressed to the physical sheath of the Master. From numerous letters and writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother we can gather some idea about the Master’s complex ventures in the task of transforming the gross physical stuff that contained our consciousness, through the medium of his own body which of course represented the universal matter. But, maybe, a concentration on this Prayer may enrich our mental ideas and impressions with some subtlety indispensable for comprehending the magnitude of that task.

Shifting our attention for a while from Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual action on his body to the world of human endeavour in that regard in general, we will see that man’s effort to expunge death from his destiny made startling scientific progress in the twentieth century. Let us look at one of the testimonies of this enterprise. A noted medical researcher and author, Alvin Silverstein, dedicated his thesis, *Conquest of Death: A Controversial Look at the Revolution in Medicine and Why We May Be the Last Generation to Die*, to “Emortals” and stated in conclusion,

The 1980s will be the Decade of Scientific Payoffs. The impressive decline in the incidence and mortality of heart disease that has already begun to gather

momentum will accelerate. Cancer deaths will dip and then plunge. Dramatic progress in ageing will bring new youth for the millions. The close of the decade will bring a virtual end to disease and a welcome reduction in pain and suffering. . . . The heart-disease rate has been falling annually since the early fifties. The cancer death rate may have already turned down and will continue to do so at an accelerated pace in the years ahead. During the next decade further advances will bring a striking improvement of the odds. If you survive the next ten years, you may live on indefinitely in your youth and vigour — you may become emortal.⁶

In other words, even if the medically and academically sound prophet's readers did not become immortal, they would not be under the arbitrary rule of death!

Hardly a year had passed when this pleasant promise was shattered by the appearance on the horizon of human destiny that deadly cloud — AIDS — soon to spread and darken the global sky. I do not know if the researcher's optimism about a gradual decrease in the incidence of grievous diseases continues to be valid, but cases of new physical and psychological illnesses (such as widespread depression) hold their sway. The hopeful "Emortality" is a receding prospect.

That wakes us up to what Sri Aurobindo wrote as a footnote to the chapter entitled 'Rebirth and Other Worlds' in *The Life Divine* that almost anticipated this paradox:

Even if Science — physical Science or occult Science — were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being.⁷

The footnote reveals the contradiction underlying the evolutionary crisis mankind is passing through at present — a present that could extend its territory into what we look at as the future, if man continues to wallow in the filth of self-indulgent ignorance of multiple kinds as is the situation at the present.

We can see in the footnote, in the meagre light we have been able to derive from what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have held up before us: there is no possibility of an indefinite physical survival unless the body has become an instrument suitable enough to contain a spirit that aspires to grow. On the other hand, the body cannot become worthy of that process without the intervention of some radically powerful transforming power. All we know is, Sri Aurobindo's was a God's Labour to resolve this obvious impasse. Further, we know from the second statement by the Mother,

that “the mighty action straight from the Supreme” is bound to succeed. Things may not be evident until the right hour strikes, but if we recollect the phenomenon of Sri Aurobindo’s body, after he had left it, defying the law of Nature and showing no sign of decomposition — from 1.20 a.m., that is, a little after midnight, between the 4th and the 5th of December till the 9th of December 1950, we will have some idea of the mighty great transforming revolution the Master had wrought in his body. Let us look at an extract from an extraordinary piece of reminiscence left by Prabhat Sanyal, an eminent doctor and devotee who, along with a few others, attended upon Sri Aurobindo during that period:

I entered Sri Aurobindo’s room before dawn. Mother and I had a look at Him; how wonderful, how beautiful he looked, with a golden hue! There were no signs of death as science had taught me, no evidence of the slightest discoloration or decomposition. The Mother whispered, “As long as the Supramental light does not pass away, the body will not show any sign of decomposition, and it may be a day or it may take many more days.” I whispered to Her, “Where is the light you speak of — can I not see it?” I was then kneeling by Sri Aurobindo’s bed, by the Mother’s feet. She smiled at me and with infinite compassion put Her hand on my head. There He was — with a luminous mantle of bluish golden hue around him.⁸

How thin was the screen that separated the Mother’s normal activities and her power to unveil an occult reality — what appears to us a miracle — is another matter! But this was a rare gesture of compassion for the faithful doctor, an act of Grace that comes to us as a revelation.

This was on the 6th of December 1950. Despite thousands of people filing past the body through the non-air-conditioned room, the unearthly brightness of Sri Aurobindo’s body remained undiminished, to the great surprise of the doctors, Indian and French, till the 9th of December when the Mother decided to enshrine it in the Samadhi.

It is amazing and beyond our grasp how, despite remaining engrossed in his unprecedented Yoga, Sri Aurobindo could devote a colossal amount of time to oblige his ever-growing number of disciples as well as seekers in general, by answering their queries of widely different varieties, through hand-written letters. He managed also to exercise his will on some of the momentous world events such as World War II. But that is a terrific saga by itself — its backdrop being the invisible war between the forces of progress and those of violent obstructions. The occult implication of Hitler representing the dark Asuric forces telling a stunned world that he would announce the Nazi victory from the Buckingham palace on the 15th of August 1940, Sri Aurobindo’s birthday, cannot be missed. But for the spiritual intervention, the course of world history would have taken a different turn, rather a

plunge into a hell-hole in the mid-20th century.

With the hope that a time will come before long when a reasonably fuller account of this phase of Sri Aurobindo's life emerges and the exposition of the saga of his Yogic adventures — probably for readers of a more receptive generation, — this author concludes his present work.

(The End)

MANOJ DAS

Notes and References

1. *Collected Poems*, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 610.
2. *Prayers and Meditations*, CWM, Vol. 1, p. 113.
3. *Savitri*, CWSA, Vol. 33, p. 200.
4. *Words of the Mother – I*, CWM, Vol. 13, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
6. Macmillan, New York and Collier Macmillan, London.
7. *The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 22, p. 854.
8. *To Thee Our Infinite Gratitude: Writings on the Passing of Sri Aurobindo*; Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

When I suffer from pain or grief or mischance, I say "So, my old Playfellow, thou hast taken again to bullying me," and I sit down to possess the pleasure of the pain, the joy of the grief, the good fortune of the mischance; then He sees He is found out and takes His ghosts & bugbears away from me.

Sri Aurobindo

(*Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, p. 490)

RISHI

Gently you walk, old man
Crowbar and *mumtee* hoisted on shoulder
Aimed neither earthward nor skyward
Poised, you move forward, unhindered, unbothered
Drawn to the unyielding land.

Your firm feeble shoulder with its dark deeper lustre
Carries the scale of Time,
Neither past-heavy, nor future-bowed
Perfectly poised you stand
Only in touch with gravel and cloud
And the moment's weightless chime.

Your right shoulder holds
Two *mumtees* mud-bold,
Sky-baked in yester-earth's toil,
Will resound in the shade of your dumb shoulder blade
Their dull metallic rhyme.

Old man without fear,
With *mumtee* and spear,
Which veils do you seek to pierce

Coercing your will
Until life's mighty keel
Bursts forth into the Valley of Seers.

SHERLIN DAY

(For V.B., "whose gaze lay ever transfixed on the luminous oceans of The Beyond".)

‘The Dreams of God Are Truths and He Prevails’

Sri Aurobindo
‘The Rishi’,
CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 232

Sources:

AA: Auroville Archives

B: *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*

C: The Mother’s Conversations and Correspondence with Satprem

G: *A Glimpse of the Mother’s Love and Action* (ed. Vijay)

H: *The Spirit of Auroville* by Huta (© Havyavahana Trust)

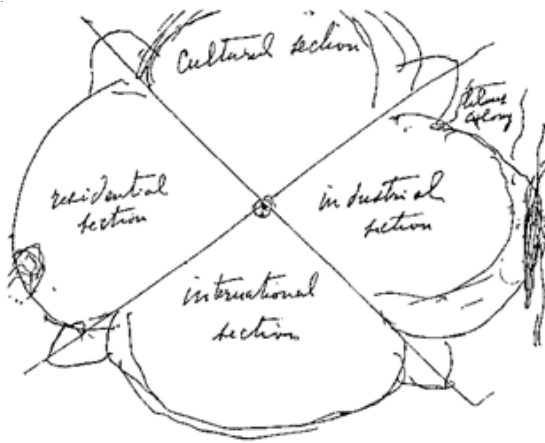
M: *Collected Works of the Mother*, 2nd Ed.: volume & page

K: *I am with You* by Kailas Jhaveri

Note:

The sign § at the end of a text indicates that Mother replied orally and her answer was noted down afterwards.

The new town



The Mother's sketch for the new town

The Mother explained:

This drawing is divided into four petals with small semi-circles between their divisions. They are meant for Civil Services like Post Offices, Banks, Telecom, Telegraph and so on. The four petals represent four Powers of the Supreme Mother: they are Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati.

Mahakali: Industrial area. Small industries will be in this place. The big ones will be on the seaside. And further towards Madras the land will be extended covering some 50 miles or so. Also the land of Auroville will be extended towards Lake Estate southward.

Big industries will be far away from the inner parts, which must be in total silence and peace. They must not be affected by smoke and noise from heavy machinery.

Maheshwari: the Residential area. Here the ground must not be levelled but be kept as it is with hillocks. There will be tall trees, grass, flowers, small ponds, fountains, rockeries — all natural things — nothing should be artificial.

Mahalakshmi: Cultural zone. In this area there will be art galleries, studios, museums, exhibition halls, an auditorium, schools, colleges and so on. Musicians, dancers, painters, sculptors and other artists will have their houses — surrounded by natural beauties. The artists will be undisturbed and free to create new things.

The Mother smiled and said to me:

You will paint the walls of the Auditorium.

I raised my eyebrows and returned no answer.

She continued:

Mahasaraswati: International Zone. Pavilions of all the countries which present their customs and cultures.

(H: 10-11)

*

A report

We publish in the issue some pictures of Auroville, our new project. This project which has been inspired by “A Dream” of the Mother is for a full township named after Sri Aurobindo, “Auroville”, which is the “City of Dawn”. This township, situated about 3 to 5 miles from the Ashram, will contain not only residential houses but also industrial establishments . . . flower gardens and all that goes to make up a complete town. There will be in addition separate Pavilions where the culture of different countries will be expressed in architecture and living.

(B: April 1965, p. 80)

*



The site for “Auroville” from various angles



The site for “Auroville” from various angles

From the Sri Aurobindo Society Information Letter

You will be glad to know that the Mother has taken up the model township project. She has named it “AUROVILLE”.

...

All of you are welcome to co-operate in this effort.

7 March 1965

(AA)

*

A letter from Navajata

We have purchased, under the Auroville project a sixty acre plot with well, pump, trees, a temple (Ganesh), a small house, etc. for Rs. 65,000/-. Out of this 20,000/- are to be paid now and 45,000/- after six months.

The agreement is to be signed today. The sellers wants in writing an undertaking from us that though the temple will be The Mother’s property, we will maintain it and furnish people to do puja. If The Mother approves, we will accept this.

Pranam.

28 March 1965

The next day Amrita presents Navajata’s letter to Mother and notes down that She said “all right” to the inclusion of the Ganesh Temple in this land deal.

(AA)

*

Mother’s letter to Roger

My dear Roger,

It is with a real joy that I read your letter of the 24th replying to my project of an “ideal” town. With joy, but also with no surprise, as I always felt that you are the man for this project.

In any case, it is with impatience that we wait for your arrival to show you the site and that you see by yourself the best use we can make of it.

See you soon, I hope

with all my tenderness and my blessings.

Mother

30 March 1965

(AA)

*

Some answers

*Which standing should we adopt for these accommodations?
(Mother writes at the bottom of the page:)*

*La beauté dans la simplicité - confortable mais
sans luxe pour le luxe, l'harmonie dans l'utilité*

Beauty in simplicity — comfortable but without luxury for luxury, harmony in usefulness.

Mother writes the second part of this note on top of the following page of this report:

*Rien n'est plus beau qu'une
harmonieuse simplicité.*

Nothing is more beautiful than a harmonious simplicity.

Will they all be equipped in the same manner? The number of rooms, the percentage of homes for single persons, for couples with and without kids, large families? Could some houses be rented to visitors?

(Mother writes in the margin and then below:)

en accord avec les types des occupants

*Je suis pour
une certaine
diversité de types*

I am in favour of some diversity in the types [of accommodations] in accordance with the types of residents.

(Mother's comments on the pages of a small note pad:)

Pour le moment
la section d'enseigne-
ment est moins
urgente que les
autres -

Près du centre de
la ville je veux
auditorium, musée,
salles d'expositions etc.

Les sports sont
moins importants
plus pour une
possibilité des
Olympiques que
pour l'éducation
physique des
enfants.

L'éducation
des enfants de
l'ashram
académique et
sportive continue
à l'ashram avec
son développement
normal qui n'a
rien à faire
avec la création
d'Auroville.

For the time being the education section is less urgent than the others.
Near the centre of the town, I want auditorium, museum, exhibition halls, etc.

The sports are planned more for a possibility of the Olympic Games than for the physical education of the children.

The education of the Ashram children, both academic and sportive, continues at the Ashram with its normal development, which has nothing to do with the creation of Auroville.

(AA)

*

Q.: What is the right way of achieving lasting world unity?

To realise the consciousness of the ONE.

13 October 1965

(M15: 61)

*

Q.: Auroville will be an ideal town with all the comforts and facilities needed for each one to freely develop the higher consciousness and aspire for the Divine life. But isn't there a danger that people will get involved in material things and in competition to enhance their pleasure and material progress, thus forgetting that Auroville should only be the background for clinging to the Truth and realising human unity in order to achieve the goal of Divine life?

This will depend on the sincerity of each one and cannot be enforced by exterior means.

27 October 1965

(AA)

*

Messages

Auroville is going well and is becoming more and more real, but its realisation does not proceed in the usual human way and it is more visible to the inner consciousness than to the outer eye.§

January 1966

(M13: 190)

*

Mother's second message for Auroville:

Bénédiction pour
la naissance, la croissance
la vie et le rayonnement
d'Auroville
16.3.66

Blessings for Auroville's birth, growth, life and radiance.

16 March 1966

(AA)

*

Auroville is in great need of workers. It would be good if you could give more time to it. Work done in a spirit of consecration is as useful for "sadhana" as studies.

27 March 1966

(AA)

*

From the Mother's comments on Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms*

118. The love of solitude is a sign of the disposition towards knowledge; but knowledge itself is only achieved when we have a settled perception of solitude in the crowd, in the battle and in the mart.

119. If when thou art doing great actions and moving giant results, thou canst perceive that thou art doing nothing, then know that God has removed His seal on thy eyelids.

120. If when thou sittest alone, still and voiceless on the mountaintop, thou canst perceive the revolutions thou art conducting, then hast thou the divine vision and art freed from appearances.

121. The love of inaction is folly and the scorn of inaction is folly; there is no

inaction. The stone lying inert upon the sands which is kicked away in an idle moment, has been producing its effect upon the hemispheres.

That’s interesting! It’s precisely the experience I’ve had these last few days, yesterday and the day before. The sense of an irresistible Power directing everything: the world, things, people, everything, but everything . . . without one having to move materially. And the sense that that material over-activity is just like the foam formed by fast-running water — the foam on the surface — but underneath, the Force flows in an all-powerful stream.

There’s nothing else to say.

We always come back to this: to know is all right; to say is good; to do is fine; but to be is the only thing that has power.

(*silence*)

That experience came in relation to Auroville. You know, people get restless because “things aren’t moving fast”; then I had that vision of the divine formation, the divine creation taking place underneath, all-powerful, irresistible, regardless of that whole external hubbub.

(C: 16 July 1966)

*

Raison d’être

. . . We’re still receiving a number of letters because of the article in [*the French magazine*] *Planète*, or from people who have read your book. And there are lots of them who want to come here! That’s more serious! . . . But anyway, we send them literature. We tell most of them that they have to prepare themselves. And I direct a large number towards Auroville; maybe that’s the essential *raison d’être* of Auroville. . . .

(C: 23 July 1966)

*

Auroville must be at the service of the Truth

You know that scores of people have come for Auroville. . . . Instead of working, they spend their time talking and chatting! And they send me letters. Their whole mental ego is bubbling with excitement, all of them. Have you seen them?

No. I am afraid they may “summon” me!

They've already begun discussing what the city's political situation will be — even before the first stone has been laid! And one of them, the one with a Communist creed (he is the one who has the greatest energy and power of realisation), is scandalised: he wrote to me yesterday, saying he couldn't take part in something that wasn't "purely democratic"! . . . So I answered him this (*Mother hands the disciple her note*):

"Auroville must be at the service of the Truth, beyond all social, political and religious convictions."

I told him many things (*Mother makes a gesture of mental communication*), but above all, I insisted a lot on the fact that it would be better to build the city first! And that we would see afterwards. Because he told me it was important for him that we should remain in the democratic system "until something better has been found." I felt like answering him, "How do you know that something better hasn't been found?" But I didn't say anything.

Then I also wrote something for J. He had asked me for a "message" for his school (*Mother hands another note*):

"He who lives to serve the Truth is unaffected by any external circumstance."

(C: 13 August 1966)

*

Truth cannot be put into words

. . . As for me, I can't see anymore.

The way in which I see is something very interesting — I can't say that I can't see anymore. It's very interesting. Something suddenly comes alive (an object or a face or a letter or . . .), clear, precise, almost luminous. The next minute, everything is blurred. I seem to be told, "This is worth seeing." So I look at it. "And (*laughing*) don't bother about that"!

On the 15th, that boy, the Communist architect who was here left, because he found that "moral laws aren't sufficiently respected"! . . . His very words. He left. But then, his thought keeps coming all the time — not "thought": something from here (*the heart*), it keeps coming and coming. He must be quite unhappy at having left! And he asked me — It was on the afternoon of the 15th, it kept coming and it was tormented and it asked: "How can one know the Truth? What is the Truth? How can one know? . . ." Sri Aurobindo was there, and he said to me *in French* (!):

Truth cannot be put into words, but it can be lived if one is pure and plastic enough.

It's fine, isn't it! And the perception was so present: to let oneself be guided by the Truth all the time, like that.

“Pure” means pure of ego, pure of all desire, all preference, all idea: all that must be gone — one must be supple, like that, and let oneself be driven along.

And he gave me the experience at the same time.

I translated it into English — so Sri Aurobindo speaks to me in French and I translate into English! It's amusing.

(C: 17 August 1966)

*

Answer to a question — noted down by Roger

Q.: What will the political organisation of Auroville be like?

There will be no politics.

The town will be directed by a Municipal Council, a committee of technicians, headed (in order to avoid any arbitrariness) by two people in authority who are no longer imprisoned by the mind, who possess true knowledge.

Any regulations will be as liberal as possible and very flexible. Rules should arise according to the requirements. Plasticity and swiftness are needed in order to keep up with world-movements, so as not to fall behind the universal progress.

Truth is a totality, not an exclusion.

Future man will not be an intellectual.

The rules of life within the city should comply with those of the country.

19 August 1966

(AA)

*

A note by the Mother on Auroville

Humanity is not the last rung 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 obviously has no reason to exist.

August 1966

(M13: 191)

*

Some practical matters

Begging is not permitted in Auroville. Persons found begging on the road will be distributed as follows: children to school, the old to a home, the sick to the hospital, the healthy to work.

A school, a home, a hospital and special work areas will be arranged for this. They will not be mixed with the others, because some people may come from outside and begin to beg in the street.

There are no police. We have . . . we haven't found the word . . . a band of guards, a battalion of guards, something like the firemen in Japan, who are gymnasts and who do everything when there are accidents — anything, earthquakes — they do everything. They climb up into houses. Instead of police, there will be a kind of battalion of guards, who will go out regularly into the various parts of the town to see if they are needed. And if they come across people begging, they will be distributed as I said. There will be a school for the children, a home for the old, a hospital for the sick and disabled, and a place where work will be provided for all those who . . . There will be every possible kind of work, from sweeping to . . . anything, and work that is needed, they will do it, according to their abilities. This has to be organised.

A special school for the children to teach them to work, to teach them the things that are indispensable for them to be able to work.

No prison, no police.§

September 1966

(M13: 261-62)

*

Why Auroville was created — Auroville has an action in the invisible

I had a revelation, in the sense that it was more on the order of a vision.

For external reasons, I was looking at the sorry state in which all countries find themselves, the truly painful and dangerous conditions of the earth, and there was a sort of all-embracing vision showing how nations (men taken as nations) have acted and are increasingly acting in a growing Falsehood, and how they have used all their creative power to create such formidable means of destruction, with, at the back of their minds, the really childish notion that the destruction would be so terrible that no one would want to use them. But they don't know (they ought to know, but they don't) that things have a consciousness and a force of manifestation, and that all those means of destruction are pressing to be used; and even though men may not want to use them, a force stronger than they will be pushing them to do so.

Then, seeing all this, the imminence of the catastrophe, there was a sort of call

or aspiration to bring down something that could at least neutralise that error. And it came, an answer . . . I can’t say I heard it with my ears, but it was so clear, so strong and precise that it was indisputable. I am obliged to translate it into words; if I translate it into words, I may say something like this: “That’s why you have created Auroville.”

And with the clear vision that Auroville was a centre of force and creation, with . . . (how can I explain?) a seed of truth, and that if it could sprout and develop, the very movement of its growth would be a reaction against the catastrophic consequences of the error of armament.

I found this very interesting because this birth of Auroville wasn’t preceded by any thought; as always, it was simply a Force acting, like a sort of absolute manifesting, and it was so strong [*when the idea of Auroville presented itself to Mother*] that I could have told people, “Even if you don’t believe in it, even if all circumstances appear to be quite unfavourable, *I know that Auroville will be*. It may be in a hundred years, it may be in a thousand years, I don’t know, but Auroville will be, because it has been decreed.” So it was decreed — and done quite simply, like that, in obedience to a Command, without any thought. And when I was told that (I say, “I was told,” but you understand what I mean), when I was told that, it was to tell me, “Here is why you have made Auroville; you are unaware of it, but that’s why. . . .” Because it was the *last hope* to react against the imminent catastrophe. If some interest is awakened in all countries for this creation, little by little it will have the power to react against the error they have committed.

I found this very interesting, because I had never thought about it.

And naturally, when I was shown that, I understood; I perceived how the creation of Auroville has an action in the invisible, and what action. It’s not a material, outward action: it’s an action in the invisible. And since then, I have been trying to make countries understand it, of course not outwardly because they all think they’re much too clever to be taught anything, but inwardly, in the invisible.

It’s fairly recent, it dates from two or three days ago. I had never been told this. It was said very clearly — “said,” I mean seen, shown like this (*gesture of a scene offered to the sight*). So my interest in Auroville has considerably increased since then. Because I have understood that it isn’t just a creation of idealism, but quite a practical phenomenon, in the hope . . . in the will, rather, to thwart and counterbalance the effects — the frightful effects — of the psychological error of believing that fear can save you from a danger! Fear attracts the danger much more than it saves you from it. And all these countries, all these governments commit blunder upon blunder because of that fear of the catastrophe.

All this is simply to tell you that if nations collaborate in the work of Auroville, even to a very modest extent, it will do them good — it can do them a lot of good, a good that can be out of proportion to the appearance of their actions.

You speak of the imminence of a catastrophe, but still Auroville will take some time to be realised?

No! I am speaking of the countries' collaboration in *creating* something. It's not when Auroville has been completed: it's the nations' collaboration in creating something — but creating something founded on the Truth instead of a rivalry in Falsehood's creation. It's not when Auroville is ready — when Auroville is ready, it will be one town among all other towns and it's only its own capacity of truth that will have power, but that . . . remains to be seen.

No, the point is a combined interest in building something founded on the Truth. They have had a combined interest (combined without any mutual liking, of course) in creating a power of destruction built on Falsehood; well, Auroville means diverting a little of that force (the quantity is minor, but the quality is superior). It's truly a hope — it's founded on a hope — of doing something that can be the beginning of a harmony.

No, it's *right now*, right now. The force of propagation is far greater, it's out of proportion to the transmitting centre [*Mother*], which, on a world scale, is so to say unknown and almost non-existent. But the centre, the power of radiation and propagation is out of proportion, it's rather remarkable: the response [*to Auroville*] is everywhere, everywhere; a response from new Africa, a response in France, a response in Russia, a response in America, a response in Canada, and a response in numerous countries, in Italy . . . everywhere, everywhere. And not just individuals: groups, tendencies, movements, even in governments.

What's proving to be the most refractory (and the irony of it is wonderful) is . . . the United Nations! Those people are outdated, oh! . . . They haven't yet gone beyond the "materialistic, antireligious movement," and they made a derogatory remark about the Auroville brochure, saying it was "mystic," with "religious" tendency. The irony is lovely!

Besides, even quite outwardly, that fight between India and Pakistan¹ was clearly . . . (how can I put it? . . . The words that come to me are English) *initiated and driven*, that is to say, set in motion by and under the impulsion of the forces of Truth that wanted to create a great "Asian Federation" with the power to counter-balance Red China and its movement. It was a federation that, as a matter of fact, needed the return of Pakistan and all those regions, and which includes Nepal, Tibet, also Burma, and in the south, Ceylon. A great federation with each country having its autonomous development, perfectly free, but which would be united in a common single aspiration for peace and fight against the invasion of forces of dissolution. That was very clear, it was willed — and it's the intervention of this

1. Mother is referring to the previous year's conflict of September 1965, on the occasion of which Mother had publicly encouraged India to fight to the end.

United Nations that stopped everything.²

I am not saying anything officially; because I have said and always repeat that politics is in complete Falsehood, based on Falsehood, and I am not dealing with it, meaning that I am not in politics, I don't want to be — but that doesn't stop me from seeing clearly! . . . People have come and asked me (from every side, by the way) for my opinion, view or advice; I said, “No, I don't deal in politics.” You see, all diplomacy is absolutely based on a *deliberate* Falsehood. As long as it is like that, there's no hope: the inspirations will always come from the wrong side; inspirations, impulsions, ideas, everything will always come from the wrong side — which means the inescapable blunder, for everyone. A few rare individuals feel that and are aware of it, and they are half desperate because nobody listens to them.

Unfortunately, following the present tendencies, for Auroville they are trying to get UNESCO's support (!) I, of course, knew beforehand that those [*UNESCO*] people couldn't understand, but . . . they are trying. Because everywhere people (it's a sort of superstition), everywhere people say, “No, I'll open my purse strings only with UNESCO's approval and encouragement” — I am talking about those whose contribution matters, lots of people, so . . .

Only, to me, all this is the crust, the quite superficial experience — the crust; and things have to happen underneath, beneath that crust. It's just an appearance.

I said that to those who look after Auroville, I told them, “Those people [*of UNESCO*] are two hundred years behind the earth's march, so there's little hope they'll understand.” But anyway, I didn't tell them not to deal with them — I don't give any advice.

But tiny details such as the one we spoke of just before are an indication: it's countries collaborating in the Truth without knowing it. And it's very good, it will do them good. It's good for them. It doesn't matter if they aren't aware of it (*smiling*): they won't have the pleasure of having done it, that's all!

(*silence*)

But I was the first to be very interested, because it came like that (*gesture of irresistible descent*), with all-powerful authority: “That's why Auroville has been created.”

(*Mother goes into a contemplation, then resumes*)

I see all kinds of very amusing things pass by; just now, this reflection: “Ah, it's a Tower of Babel in reverse.” (*Mother laughs*) That's interesting! They united and divided in the construction, so now, they come together to unite in the construction. That's it: a Tower of Babel . . . in reverse!

2. Under United Nations pressure, India gave up its advantage over Pakistan and “surrendered” at Tashkent.

(Mother stops for an instant, as if she saw something)

One suddenly sees . . . It's a certain region, there, a region in the earth atmosphere, vast and imperishable, where things take on a new importance, which sometimes belies appearances, and one sees a sort of great, immense current carrying circumstances and events along towards a goal . . . always the same goal, and through very unexpected paths. It becomes very vast, and despite the horror of details, as a whole it takes on a very smiling Rhythm. . . .

Now I know, I remember, this whole experience came after I saw a book that was published quite recently in India, in English, which they entitled *The Roll of Honour*, and in which there is a photo and a short biography of all those who died in the fight against the British, for India's freedom. There were photos everywhere, lots of them (some were only photos the police took after they had just been killed and were lying on the ground). And it all brought a certain atmosphere: the atmosphere of those disinterested good-willed people who meet with a tragic fate. It had the same impression on me as the horrors of the Germans during the war over there. These things are obviously under the direct influence of certain adverse forces, but we know that the adverse forces are, so to say, permitted to work — through the sense of horror, in fact — in order to hasten the awakening of consciousness. So then, that experience, which was very strong and was very like the one I had when I saw the photographs of German atrocities in France, put me in contact with the vision of the human, terrestrial, modern error (it's modern: it began these last one thousand years and has become more and more acute in the last hundred years), with the aspiration to counterbalance that: How to do it? . . . What is to be done? . . . And the answer: “That's why you have created Auroville.”

There is a perception of forces — the forces that act directly in events, material events, which are . . . illusory and deceptive. For instance, the man who fought for his country's freedom, who has just been assassinated because he is a rebel, and who looks defeated, lying there on the edge of the road — he is the real victor. That's how it is, it clearly shows the kind of relationship between the truth and the expression. Then, if you enter the consciousness in which you perceive the play of forces and see the world in that light, it's very interesting. And that's how, when I was in that state, I was told, clearly shown (it's inexpressible because it isn't with words, but these are facts): “That's why you have created Auroville. . . .”

(C: 21 September 1966)

*

Auroville, the free international city.

No army, no police.

They are replaced by a battalion of guards made up of athletes and gymnasts.

September 1966

(AA)

*

The nations have got hold of the means to destroy everything. And they try in complete falsehood and by means of falsehood to avoid war, and instead of avoiding it, they attract it, of course; all this attracts it. So when I saw this it was suddenly shown to me:

That is why there is Auroville.

Auroville is the effort towards peace in sincerity and Truth.

It became clear like that. This is almost the sole and last hope of avoiding the catastrophe.

This is the importance of Auroville. If Auroville is successful, that is to say, if nations consent to understand that it is a means of avoiding war, Auroville will have the power to prevent war.

Auroville is not for those who are satisfied with the ordinary world.

20 September 1966

(AA)

*

Message for the American Consul in Madras

Auroville is an attempt towards world peace, friendship, fraternity, unity, and I would be very happy if America could collaborate.

20 September 1966

(AA)

*

A confirmation

The Mother gave this confirmation to people on 24.9.66:

Even if you don't believe it, even if the circumstances seem quite unfavourable, I know that Auroville will be.

(H: 58)

*

Auroville should be at the service of Truth, beyond all social, political and religious convictions.

Auroville is the effort towards peace, in sincerity and Truth.

20 September 1966

(M13: 191)

*

UNESCO's approach

On the basis of my talk with Dr. Adisheshiah [*Deputy Director General, UNESCO*] in 1965, I told the Mother that since Auroville was to be an international township, we should work for this purpose through UNESCO. For this I proposed that the Society should be affiliated with UNESCO as a non-governmental organisation. She appreciated this idea.

So when Navajata was going to Delhi, I asked him to meet the President of the Indian National Council for UNESCO for this purpose. He came back and said that it was not possible since UNESCO did not accept affiliation with religious organisations. I said: “We are not a religious organisation but a spiritual one. We should explain them the difference between the two.” He said: “I put you in charge. You do it.”

I prepared a paper on “Religion and Spirituality”, pointing out the difference between the two in the light of Sri Aurobindo and stated that our aim covered the whole of life, its relationships and activities, on the spiritual basis, the aim of Auroville being the realisation of Human Unity. To begin with we were admitted in 1966 to the “C” category of relationship, which meant an exchange of information of our mutual activities. . . .

I was asked to go to Delhi to contact the Embassies about the project of Auroville . . . It occurred to me that I needed some designation to approach the Embassies. [Navajata] sent me a telegram saying the Mother had designated me as “Secretary-in-charge, UNESCO section.” . . .

Later, in 1966, Shree E. Pouschpa Dass from India, who was the Director of the Division of Cultural Development at UNESCO, eloquently presented the resolution which I had prepared with Salah-E-Din Tewfik.

(K: 105-06)

*

The resolution at UNESCO’s General Assembly, 1966

While introducing this resolution, Mr. Pouchpa Dass said:

A little more than 50 years ago, Aurobindo, a young and ardent partisan in the struggle for the liberation of India, moved by the Grace while in the prison of Calcutta where he was interned, came to take refuge in the South, at Pondicherry, then a French territory. There he took the decision to give up all political activities so as to consecrate himself to a life of concentration and meditation. Very soon disciples came to join him and thus was created one of those astonishing spiritual communities known in India as “Ashrams”. There, Sri Aurobindo lived, meditating and writing. There reigned around him, by his subtle influence, an atmosphere of deep faith and peace of heart. From all parts of the world people came in search of ‘that knowing which we know all the rest’, and where there one single look of the master changed the entire life.

From 1926, Sri Aurobindo who had retired from active life to enter into the silence of the sages, confided the direction of the Ashram to an early disciple, a French lady who thus became the Mother of the Ashram. Since 1950, when the Master left his body, the Mother animates this astonishing collectivity where ‘the multifarious play of life’ goes on alongside the most implacable renunciations, where people, carrying in their secret heart the nostalgia of that immutable serenity which shines on the faces of sages and happy souls, mingle in the atmosphere of intense work and joy.

They are 1,200, coming from all the corners of the world: engineers, architects, foremen, doctors, advocates, accountants, teachers, artists, agriculturists, and simple folk all of them exercise the same productive activity for the good of the community that they have joined, in the same way as they would for their own good in their ordinary social life. Thus they form a vast industrial and commercial collectivity with its stadium, swimming pool, hospital, playground, school, cinemas, foundries, its workshops for mechanical constructions and prefabricated concrete, its press, automobile workshop, bank, stores, dairy farms and poultry farms, etc.

Now this extraordinary institution, unique in the world, by its natural progression, seeks on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of our organisation and in harmony with its aims and principles, to enlarge its action and to radiate still further. It wants to regroup, in a vaster centre, a real town where people of the entire world will be ready to live according to the ideal of Sri Aurobindo’s thought. It will be a town of beauty, of culture, of research, where each one will be able to live in harmony and freedom.

‘Auroville’, for that will be its name, will stretch some kilometres from the north of Pondicherry. It will be on the Coromandel Coast, facing the Bay

of Bengal, a vast territory covering 20 sq. kilometres, offering, by virtue of its geography, an infinite variety of possibilities for housing. An area of great natural beauty will be preserved intact all around the city. At the centre of the town there will be the Park of Unity, a circle of gardens overhanging a lake.

All this, you will say is a mental construction, a dream. Perhaps. But does it not awaken an echo in the greatest depth of our soul? Don't we find there again that marvellous world of our hopes of long ago, the kingdom glimpsed and then lost, the castle where the beautiful princess sleeps, expecting the look of him who will awaken her? Don't we all carry in some part of our secret heart, the nostalgia of that immutable serenity, of that pure light, of that indefinable joy which radiates on the face of those happy beings and sages, of that smile which illumines the face of the Buddha?

Since those who live at Sri Aurobindo Ashram approach a certain perfection and marvellous plenitude, why should Auroville be different? For, in fact, the will to live, 'the aspiration for happiness' and the desire of an incessantly renewed quest translated by the great questions 'Why am I here? Where am I going? Do I have an aim? What is the meaning of my life? What is my own position considering the fact that I exist and I live?' are the only references which will ever be demanded for entry into Auroville and the only baggage truly necessary to sojourn there. All the rest will be given including the spirit of sacrifice, faith, hope and love.

That is why the Government of India wishes that the General Conference, acting in conformity with the aims of our organisation, whose ideals we solemnly reaffirm on this 20th Anniversary, give to this unique and exceptional project in some respect unprecedented, its moral support and its confidence.

Then UNESCO's General Conference passes unanimously the following resolution:

Resolution 4. 36: The General Conference.

Being apprised that in connection with the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of UNESCO, the Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, India, a non-governmental organisation affiliated to the Indian National Commission for UNESCO, proposes to set up a cultural township known as 'Auroville' where people of different countries will live together in harmony in one community and engage in cultural, educational, scientific and other pursuits,

Noting that the township will have pavilions intended to represent the cultures of the world, not only intellectually but also by presenting different schools of architecture, painting, sculpture, music, etc. as part of a way of living,

Appreciating that one of the aims of 'Auroville' will be to bring together in close juxtaposition the values of different civilisations and cultures,

Expresses the belief that the project will contribute to international understanding and promotion of peace and commends it to those interested in UNESCO’s ideals.

[Note: this resolution (by which UNESCO and its members were not committing themselves to anything serious) was passed unanimously.]

(AA)

*

For and against

As long as you are *for* some and *against* others, you are necessarily *outside the Truth*.

You should constantly keep goodwill and love in your heart and let them pour out on all with tranquillity and equality.

16 December 1966

(M13: 191)

*

Going well

Auroville is going well and is becoming more and more real, but its realisation does not proceed in the usual human way and it is more visible to the inner consciousness than to the outer eye.§

January 1966

(M13: 190)

*

At last . . .

Auroville: At last a place where one will be able to think only of the future.

January 1967

(M13: 192)

*

No churches, no temples

... Oh, by the way, it seems the Pope was approached about Auroville and he asked if there would be a Catholic church! ... They put the question to me. I said, “No. No churches, no temples.”

But it might be funny if we put together one specimen of every religion from every country and every epoch. A city of religions, can you see that? ... The totem pole next to the cathedral! Oh, that would be very funny! All the ancient religions — the Egyptian, the Tyrian, the Scandinavian gods ... — and then the new religions.

They'd all quarrel with each other!

It's a pity, men have too little sense of humour! Otherwise we could have great fun. It's a wonderful remedy.

(C: 15 February 1967)

*

A message written on Auroville letterhead

Sri Aurobindo has come on earth not to bring a teaching or a creed in competition with previous creeds or teachings, but to show the way to overpass the past and to open concretely the route towards an imminent and inevitable future.

The past has been a preparation and still quite a portion of humanity needs to be prepared.

Sri Aurobindo gives help to all equally, but each one receives according to his fitness and receptivity.

Those who are ready to overpass the past and run unloaded towards the Future will reach the goal quicker.

But the help is for all, and all are welcome.

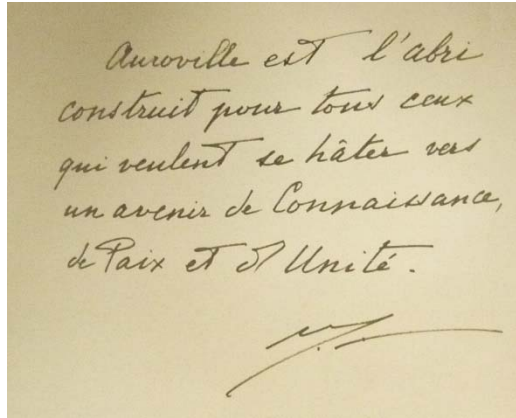
27 February 1967

(AA)

*

“Promesse”

Message carved in stone and placed beside a pond with red lotuses at “Promesse”.



Auroville is the shelter built for all those who want to hasten towards a future of Knowledge, Peace and Unity.

16 March 1967

(AA)

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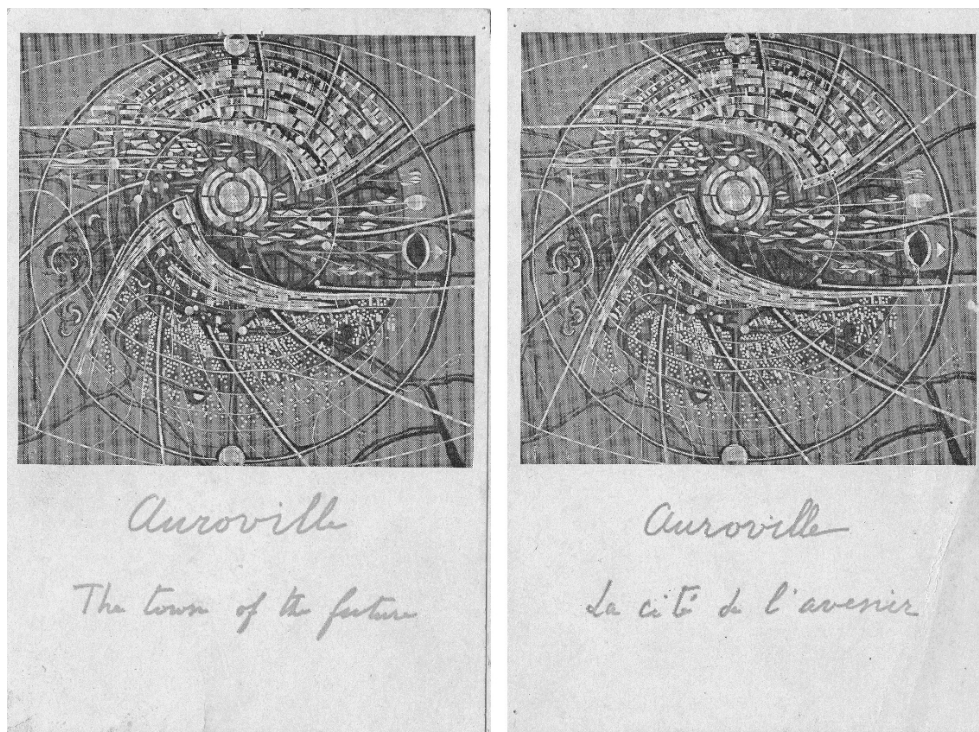
We have a small place called “Promesse”, where there will be six or eight rooms, an office which will be Auroville’s first administrative office, and also a guest house with a few rooms, five or six rooms for visitors. It’s quite a small place, with a pretty garden and trees, on the Madras road. It’s on Auroville’s outer border.

And so it’s being built. There will be a lotus pond in the middle and a sort of big bowl, made of marble, I think, on which this text will be engraved to let people passing by know what Auroville is.

(C: 3 May 1967)

*

The town of the future



Below two photos of this new model, Mother wrote in English and in French:

“Auroville, The town of the future”

“Auroville, La cité de l'avenir”

*

The centre of Auroville

In 1996, Roger, the architect, said:

“I had asked [Mother] to point where the centre should be. So she pointed to it [on a map]. We made a mark there and we went to identify the place with a jeep. There was no [visible] road. There was nothing. The land was vacant. The only place where there was a bit of greenery was the Banyan and that's where She placed the centre. That's how it all started.”

March 1967

(AA)

*

Decades later, Frederick remarked:

According to one of the early residents, when the Mother was told that there was a Banyan Tree at the spot She had indicated as the centre of the city, She said:

“I know.”

And then the planners said it would have to be cut down. She answered:

“No.”

(AA)

*

On the significance of Sri Aurobindo’s birth

(The outline of a study project “On the Spiritual History of India” was read to the Mother. She commented:)

No! It won’t do. It is not to be done that way. You should begin with a big BANG!

You were trying to show the continuity of history, with Sri Aurobindo as the outcome, the culmination. It is false entirely.

Sri Aurobindo does not belong to history; he is outside and beyond history.

Till the birth of Sri Aurobindo, religions and spiritualities were always centred on past figures, and they were showing as “the goal” the negation of life upon earth. So, you had a choice between two alternatives: either

— a life *in* this world with its round of petty pleasures and pains, joys and sufferings, threatened by hell if you were not behaving properly, or

— an escape *into* another world, heaven, nirvana, moksha. . . .

Between these two there is nothing much to choose, they are equally bad.

Sri Aurobindo has told us that this was a fundamental mistake which accounts for the weakness and degradation of India. Buddhism, Jainism, Illusionism were sufficient to sap all energy out of the country.

True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than Matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere. . . . That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that the truth does not lie in running away from earthly life but in remaining *in* it, to *transform it, divinise it*, so that the Divine can manifest HERE, in this PHYSICAL WORLD.

You should say all this at the first sitting. You should be square and frank . . . like that! (*With her hands Mother makes a big square sign on the table.*)

Then, when this is told, strongly, squarely, and there is no doubt about it —

and then only — you can go on and amuse them with the history of religions and religious or spiritual leaders.

Then — and then only — you will be able to show the seed of weakness and falsehood that they have harboured and proclaimed.

Then — and then only — you will be able to discern, from time to time, from place to place, an “intuition” that something else is possible; in the Vedas, for instance (the injunction to descend deep into the cave of the Panis); in the Tantras also . . . a little light is burning.§

31 March 1967

(M12: 210-11)

*

The Future advancing towards its realisation

Sri Aurobindo does not belong to the past nor to history.

Sri Aurobindo is the Future advancing towards its realisation.

Thus we must shelter the eternal youth required for a speedy advance, in order not to become laggards on the way.

2 April 1967

(M12: 211-12)

*

Requests for information

André writes that he received in Paris people who asked for information on Auroville. He answered with a letter, and when he was about to send it, he thought, “Maybe I’d better show it to Mother, after all.” He sent his letter — and he did the right thing! Those people asked him the conditions to be admitted to Auroville; he replies, “Oh, that hasn’t been decided yet!”

[*Mother laughs*] So I’ve prepared a little note; because he just says, “Oh, nothing has been decided, we’ll see,” as though there weren’t any Aurovilians yet. I don’t know if he did it purposely to discourage people; at any rate, it’s not good to write like that. At least three or four hundred Aurovilians have been accepted and I signed them in. So one can’t answer like that. . . .

I know what he based himself on: I had told him that, naturally, from the material point of view, the *conditions of life* in Auroville were not arbitrarily fixed in advance. Here is what I wrote:

From the psychological point of view, the essential conditions are:

- 1) Being convinced of the essential human unity and having the will to collaborate in the advent of this unity.
- 2) The will to collaborate in all that furthers future realisations.

That’s all, it’s not complicated.

Then, from the material point of view:

The material conditions will be worked out as the realisation progresses.

It’s not too complicated.

Of course, we’ll add a note saying that for the time being, after they have read the brochures on “Why Auroville?” and have adhered to that, people will have to send their photograph along with their request, and I am the one who will accept them or not. As long as the number remains limited, a few hundreds, it’s very easy to see their photos and thus have a minimum guarantee that tricksters won’t come in. Because it’s very easy to say, “Oh, I am thoroughly convinced and eager to participate,” but that’s just words. . . . I can’t see each and every one, but even with their photograph one can see clearly enough whether they are sincere or not. . . .

(C: 3 June 1967)

*

Mental speculations

Q.: If a world-war breaks out,¹ it will not only destroy major portions of humanity but may even make living conditions for those who survive impossible due to the effect of the nuclear fall-out. In case the possibility of such a war is still there, will it not affect the advent of the supramental Truth and the New Race upon earth?

All these are mental speculations and once you enter in the domain of mental imaginations there is no end to the problem and their solutions. But all that does not bring you one step closer to the truth.

The safest and most healthy attitude of the mind is like this: We have been told in a positive and definite way that the supramental creation will follow the present one; so, whatever is in preparation for the future must be the circumstances needed

1. 1967, June 5th-10th: Six-day war between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

for this advent, whatever they are . . . and as we are unable to foresee correctly what these circumstances are, it is better to keep silent about them.

(C: 17 June 1967)

*

Yoga

(About certain individuals and groups willing to aid Auroville’s development)

They may not practise themselves, but if they do not know about yoga, how can they understand the purpose of Auroville?

19 June 1967

(M13: 247)

*

Passports and Auroville

(About an Indian disciple from South Africa.)

. . . They have no government to protect them. Before India’s independence they had a British passport, but now the government of South Africa doesn’t recognise them, the government of India doesn’t look after them, so they’re like that, neither fish nor fowl, and with no one to protect them. It’s rather peculiar.

There are a few here [*in the Ashram*] who still have a British passport, and they don’t know what to do. They’re neither this nor that, they’re nothing.

To those who are nice I say, “Never mind, you will become Aurovilians.” That saves everything. Because the principle has been recognised by UNESCO, they’ve recognised the idea: everyone becomes Aurovilian, no more separate nationality. So it’s very good.

As an idea, it’s interesting.

(C: 30 June 1967)

*

If a single country . . .

If a single country follows the Truth, the world will be saved.

(28 June 1967)

(AA)

*

On Auroville

If it remains according to plan, that is if it is not distorted in execution, it will be a place where no one will ask: What is your religion, your nationality, social rank . . . all work towards the progress of expressing the supramental. While I am there, there will be control.

30 June 1967

(AA)

*

One Truth

Man is one. All races, civilisations, human realisations are all meant to manifest One Truth!

(AA)

*

Message for World Union’s seminar on “Education for one world”

The unity of humanity is an underlying and existing fact. But the external union of mankind depends on man’s goodwill and sincerity.

August 1967

(B: November 1967)

*

UNESCO’s co-operation

The Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO has written about Auroville to all National Commissions for Cooperation with UNESCO in the world, India’s Ambassadors and High Commissioners abroad, foreign countries, Ambassadors and High Commissioners in India and Education Secretaries in the Indian States, stating that Auroville “will add a new dimension to UNESCO’s activities for the promotion of international cooperation and understanding between different nations and peoples by bringing together in close juxtaposition in one centre the values and ideals of different civilisations and cultures.”

September 1967

(AA)

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Inauguration Ceremony

[Regarding the invitation to the upcoming Ceremony, G. suggested this text:]

“The 650 children of the Ashram representing several nations invite you to the laying of the foundation stone of Auroville, the town dedicated to the youth of the world in order to establish peace and fraternity in the humanity of tomorrow.”

[Mother changed the end of the sentence to read as follows:]

. . . to establish a union of comprehensive harmony.

[She explained:]

It is all right; I have changed the terms of the invitation so as not to use words which have lost their force, because they have been used too often.

(AA)

*

On 7th September 1967 I went to the Mother in the afternoon. She told me:

Child, now I am collecting the money you are giving me. I am collecting it in the leather bag which also you have given me.

We are planning for 1968. We haven't decided who will lay the first stone, but it is very interesting to find who it will be. I am now waiting for an order.

Later, one afternoon the Mother told me:

Child, it is very interesting. You see, we have invited the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to lay the foundation stone of Auroville on 28.2.1968.

On 11.9.67, the Mother saw me in the morning. After the work, she said with a charming smile:

Ah! Now I am telling you how it will be. We want young people — young in body and mind.

Here we have 600 children who will invite the children of the world. They will come with a handful of soil of their own countries. This soil will be collected in a marble lotus-urn of a special kind and then this urn will be sealed up.

The Mother went into trance for a moment or two. She awoke, and said:

The Truth Pavilion and your tiny house will be very close to each other — your house will stand between the banyan tree and the Truth Pavilion. All these will be on an island — surrounded by water, trees and the garden of Unity. It will take five years if we have sufficient money. Yes . . . otherwise . . . But I want the whole town to be built within ten years’ time.

I said, “Mother, nothing is impossible for You and the Lord.”

She affirmed:

Exactly, this is what I tell people who are anxious, that the Lord will do everything.
(H: pp. 63-64)

*

The invitation

The founders of "Auroville"
invite
~~the founders~~ — — — — —
to participate in the ceremony which will
dedicate Auroville as a universal
Cultural township) on Wednesday
the 28th Feb, 1968 at 10.30 A.M.
R. S. V. P.
Navajata
(General Secretary)
Sri Aurobindo Society
Pondicherry - 2
India.

The Founders of “Auroville” invite ~~Mr. & Mrs.~~.....
to participate in the ceremony which will dedicate Auroville as a universal
cultural township on Wednesday the 28th Feb. 1968 at 10.30 a.m.

R.S.V.P.

Navajata

General Secretary

Sri Aurobindo Society

Pondicherry - 2

India.

For the Foundation Ceremony of Auroville, on 28 February 1968, each item of the programme was referred to the Mother. Even the draft of the invitation card was submitted to her for her approval. She cut out "Mr." and "Mrs." before the names of the guests and added the word "cultural" before the word "township". Indeed nothing was too trivial for her attention.

(G: 133, 137)

*

Interesting life, but not for earning money

You are welcome [*in Auroville*]. You will have an interesting life. But not if you want to 'earn money'.¹

(AA)

*

May take a hundred years but it will be built

On Auroville:

It may take 100 years, but the city will be built. Not an ascetic set-up; a respect and education for beauty; replete with full creature comforts and conveniences: Aurovilians should be regarded as citizens of the world — free entry everywhere.

She [*Mother*] has no use for 'discussions' — a useless waste of time and energy.¹

21 September 1967

(AA)

*

1. Oral comment noted down by a disciple.

A ‘press release’

This announcement appeared in the newspaper:

‘AUROVILLE’ WORK TO BEGIN FROM FEBRUARY 1968

PONDICHERRY, Oct. 3 1967 (PTD) – The foundation stone of “Auroville” new international cultural township, sponsored by the Sri Aurobindo Society, will be laid on February 28th next year, the General Secretary of the Society, Shri Navajata told Pressmen here today.

The new township, about three miles from Pondicherry, would cover an area of 15 sq. miles.

The twin conditions laid by the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for those desirous of becoming citizens of Auroville – “The City of Dawn” – are: To be convinced of the essential unity of mankind and the will to collaborate in the material realisation of that unity.

The project was endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO which met in Paris in October last year. It had been approved by the Government of India. Shri Navajata added:

The township would take shape over the next 15 or 20 years, and eventually accommodate 50,000 residents.

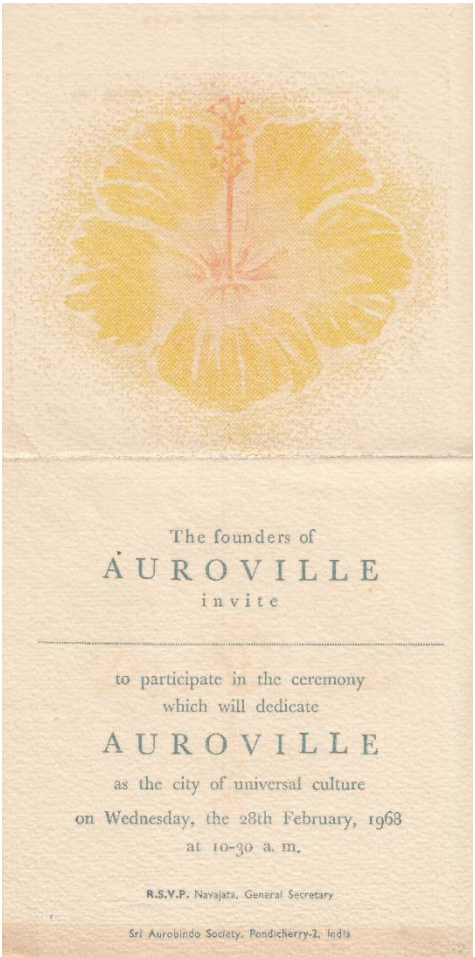
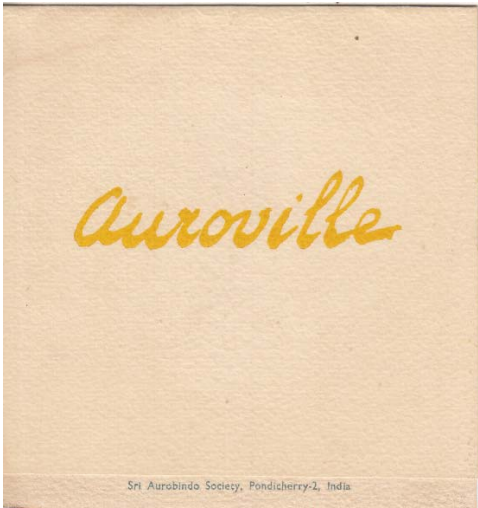
3 October 1967

(AA)

*

Invitation

The invitation cards for the Dedication Ceremony are sent:



(AA)

*

Then, regarding the Auroville Inauguration Ceremony:

Instead of putting a stone in the earth, 2 children (14 to 18) from every country will bring a cup of earth and it will be deposited by them in the centre of the city. . . .

I asked whose idea it was. She said:

I don’t know — perhaps mine — it is not an earthly idea.¹

6 October 1967

(AA)

*

‘Godhead’

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if people could be like this flower [‘Godhead’²] spontaneously harmonious?

13 October 1967

(AA)

*

Admissions to Auroville

I met Y. They’re preparing an issue on Auroville, and she came with a list of questions this long (*gesture*), saying, “I don’t know Auroville’s sociology too well.” I told her, “Neither do I!” Then she asked me questions (very intelligent ones, mind you), and I answered her. But there was one thing about the selection of people and admissions to Auroville; I told her that naturally, the essential condition to be able to select people was that preferences, attractions and repulsions, likes and dislikes, all moral rules, all of that must have completely disappeared — not that one should be on the way to overcoming it, it’s not that: it must have disappeared (*laughing*), there must be no more ego! Then I told her, “It’s not a judgment, it’s not that you look at people and judge whether they are fit to be there or not, destined to be there or not, it’s not that at all — you don’t ‘judge’ . . .” And after she left, I noted the end of the thing (*Mother takes a note and reads it out*):

1. Oral comment noted down by a disciple.

2. ‘Godhead’ — spiritual significance given by the Mother to the flower hibiscus Hawaiian ‘Cromwell’. She chose this flower to be the flower of Auroville. About ‘Godhead’ she said, “Pure and perfect, it puts out its force in the world.”

"The Force is put on all, identical and supreme . . ."

The Force is identical for all (*uniform gesture all over the earth*) and supreme, that is . . . well, it means supreme, like this (*same even, outspread gesture*). Whoever they are, whatever their attitude, the Force is put on all identically — and *they* are the ones who classify themselves; it's not that you decide that such and such person goes here or there or here: they classify *themselves* according to . . .

". . . And everyone classifies himself, by himself, according to his own receptivity and the quality of that receptivity — or else his refusal or incapacity."

All degrees are there, of course. When it's refusal or incapacity, then the person flees *by himself*, saying, "They're fools, they are trying to do something impossible and unrealisable." (I know many such people, they think they have superior intelligence.) But even to place themselves, it's people themselves who will do it. . . . She came with the idea of a hierarchy. I said, "Yes, everything is always in a hierarchy, especially all conscious individuals, but not out of any arbitrary will: it's people themselves who spontaneously take their place without knowing it, the place they must have. It's not," I told her, "it's not a decision, we don't want categories: this category, that category, and so this person will go here, that person will go there — all that," I said, "is mental constructions, it's worthless!" The true thing is that *naturally*, according to his own receptivity, his own capacity, his inner mission, everyone takes up the post which in the hierarchy he truly and spontaneously occupies, without any decision.

What can be done to make the organisation easier is a sort of plan or general map, so that everyone need not build his position but will find it ready for him — that's all.

It was amusing, but very interesting.

(C: 11 October 1967)

*

Requests for admission to Auroville have been pouring in at a frightful pace these last few days — every day a stack big as this — so naturally, everyone must send his photo along with his request and say why he wants to be in Auroville, what his skills are, and which category he belongs to: there is the category of those who want to work to build Auroville, and the category of those who want to come and sit peacefully in it once it's ready. And what a humanity, *mon petit!* . . . In fact, all those who come are generally dissatisfied people. Now and then, one of them has a light in his eyes and a need for something he hasn't found (then it's very good). There are those that weren't successful in anything and are completely disgusted,

so they wonder if they might not be successful here. Then there are the old ones who worked hard and want to rest. There are very few young people — the few young people are all people of worth (the ordinary youth aren’t interested). And the few I have seen are those who want to work: they don’t want to come and take advantage from others’ work, they want to work. So we’ll soon have a rather interesting team. But (*laughing*) with the satiated old ones, I . . . *postpone decision, put under observation* (*Mother laughs*). Yesterday, there were a number of them. We’ll see: if they want to be useful, that is, give money or things, or propose to do something, then we’ll see. . . .

The workers aren’t asked anything, that is, they don’t have to pay: they can come and work, on condition that they prove they are useful. But those who want a piece of land or a house to live in have to pay. And then, some have limited confidence (*laughing*) and say, “I’ll give you a little money right now and will pay the rest little by little, in instalments” — those I generally turn down. Some are so eager to come that they send money in advance, and when there’s some life or something in them, I accept them. But to nearly all, except two or three, I say, “Under observation” — we’ll see how they react!

(C: 14 October 1967)

*

Auroville has more weight in the earth’s history than all the groups of the world

“Sweet Mother, why are we, in the Ashram itself, inclined to create small groups and societies, such as ‘World Union,’ ‘New Age,’ etc.? What is their purpose?”

Purpose! (*Laughing*) Do they have a purpose? . . . I’ll simply answer him, “Because men are fond of forming groups.” Quite simply, nothing else to say.

(Mother writes, then stops; after a silence)

I am going to shock him a bit, no?

Yes.

(Mother completes her writing and holds out the notebook)

“Because men still imagine that in order to do anything useful, they must gather together in groups. It is the caricature of organisation.”

It will do, won’t it?

. . . But when I tell people that the creation of a city like Auroville has more weight in the earth's history than all the groups of the world, they don't believe me. They don't believe me, to them it's totally unimportant, a fancy.

Once I asked Sri Aurobindo (because we had talked about Auroville a great deal, there were lots of difficulties), I asked him (because it was an idea I had — not an "idea" but a need that expressed itself some thirty years ago — more than thirty, almost forty years ago), so I asked him, and he answered me this (which I told you, I think): "*It is the best chance men have to avoid a general conflict.*" There.

So, since he told me that, I have been working very seriously. Of course, it wasn't "said," it was *lived*.

Only, I see quite clearly that they don't believe in it, there is no one who feels. So does it . . . ? And the concrete materialisation of the spirit of Auroville hasn't taken place yet, it doesn't exist, there isn't in the earth atmosphere a formation of the "spirit of Auroville," which is a spirit . . . (*Mother remains absorbed for a long time*) . . . At bottom it is "The art of building unity out of complexity." Without uniformity, you understand: unity through harmony in complexity, with each thing in its place. . . .

It's very difficult.

When R [*Auroville's architect*] was here last time, he told me, "When are we going to create Auroville's atmosphere? Everyone is quarrelling!" (*Mother laughs*) I said, "Yes, that's the difficulty. . . ." And it's going on. But anyway, there is a Pressure from above, like that, a Pressure. We shall see.

It's still a symbol.

Each little group thinks it is a symbol — that too is a symbol.

And as the formation descends in order to manifest, all oppositions arise, contradictions arise, complications arise, and within you clearly see that they don't understand. So I spend my time telling them, "Don't try to organise, don't try, you are going to fossilise the whole thing before it's begun."

For my part, I wanted it to grow like that, spontaneously, with the full play of the unexpected. But then, you are confronted with all the rules and regulations: we are in a country [*India*] — we should do it on a desert island! But that no longer exists on earth, there isn't any island left that doesn't belong to a nation — we are caught, bogged down.

Anyway, we'll muddle along as best we can.

It's an attempt, that's all.

But what Sri Aurobindo meant was that the movement, the general movement was towards a catastrophe, and this was to divert the current of force.

But I have wondered whether the Tower of Babel, insofar as the story is true, wasn't a similar attempt? An attempt to harmonise men? . . . It's presented to us the other way around, but I have wondered if it wasn't that.

We'll see.

Now there is integrally, even for the most material consciousness, the body consciousness, this: to leave the entire responsibility to the Lord — what He wants will be, and that’s all. When He wants us to do something, we do it, but after all . . . We do it simply because He tells us to do it. And what will happen will happen. Then, if you want to know, you put yourself in the attitude of the Witness and look on. And that’s very amusing! As soon as you are in the attitude of the Witness, it becomes very interesting — very interesting — and you smile.

That’s how it is.

The body too has learned to be like that with the smallest things. Then it’s good.

Voilà.

(C: 25 October 1967)

*

A talk

This is perhaps the very first talk on Auroville delivered over All India Radio on November 11, 1967. It was given by Navajata, General Secretary and Treasurer of Sri Aurobindo Society.

It is of significance because the entire talk was first read out to the Mother and approved by her.

The main aim of Sri Aurobindo Society which has sponsored the project of Auroville is to work for ‘the advent of a progressive universal harmony’. Auroville is being established to give a concrete shape to this ideal. Introducing the project, The Mother, President of the Society, declared:

“Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony, above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities.

The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity.”

It proposes to realise this unity in diversity and not in uniformity. It will bring together those who believe in progressive universal harmony and want to work for it. In fact, “the first condition for living in Auroville is to be convinced of the essential unity of mankind and the will to collaborate in the material realisation of that unity.” Named after Sri Aurobindo, Auroville literally means the “City of Dawn”.

...

The site selected covers areas both in Pondicherry and in Madras States, and provides

a beautiful panoramic view with the sea on the east and a number of lakes on the west and north, with the centre of the town on a high level land.

Architects and engineers from different countries have volunteered their services free. Mr. Roger Anger of France is the Chief Architect.

The town is divided into four zones: Residential, Cultural, International and Industrial. Nothing necessary for Life is forgotten. The activities in the project cover a very wide range: industrial, agricultural, educational, artistic and others. Each nation will participate in the projects in which it specialises. Each resident will be free to choose the work for which he has special aptitude, and will be given the necessary training for it.

The work in Auroville will not be a field which one is compelled to accept for earning one's livelihood but a joyful means whereby to express oneself while doing at the same time service to the whole group.

There will be no unemployment and no beggars. The township will provide for both the field of work and the basic needs of all. Rules will be as few as are unavoidable. Guiding principles will help each person to develop self-discipline in freedom. Auroville will also participate in the design of integrated living programme of UNESCO. There will be an integrated effort and a practical research towards creating conditions, where each individual can occupy the place for which he is best suited, develop himself to his highest possibilities, inner and outer, and give his maximum to mankind.

Permanent cultural pavilions for each country and also for each State of India are an important feature of Auroville activities.

...

Here is the dream city of which you and I have dreamt as little children and hoped that someone someday will fulfil it.

And now it is on the way to fulfilment — the city of happiness, harmony and progress with no politics, no economic exploitation, no rich or poor, no employer or employee, but all sons of God.

On 28th February 1968, will be held the ceremony for laying the foundation stone of this unique town. On this occasion, people will come from all over the world, bringing love in their hearts and the soil of their country in their hands for placing it in the lotus of mosaic specially made for the purpose, as symbolic of their co-operation in this project which has been unanimously accepted by the General Assembly of UNESCO.

Auroville invites all those who are dreaming of a better humanity and a better world to participate in this saga of world progress.

(G: 138-42)

*

For Auroville’s inauguration ceremony, Air France will deliver one kilo of earth from every country in the world.

8 December 1967

(AA)

*

Auroville

[Mother reads a disciple’s notation of comments she made about her conception of Auroville.]

“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 foodstuffs) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township, which is responsible for feeding its 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 said a good deal about it, inwardly — on the organisation, the food, etc. We are going to make experiments.

Some things are really interesting; first of all, for example, I would like each country to have its pavilion, and in the pavilion there will be the cooking of that country — that is, the Japanese will be able to eat Japanese food if they want to, etc. But in the town itself there will be food for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians, and there will also be some attempt to find the food of tomorrow.

The whole process of assimilation which makes you so heavy — it takes so much of a person’s time and energy — that should be done beforehand, you should be given something which is immediately assimilable, like the things they are making now; for example they have vitamin pills and proteins which can be assimilated directly, nutritious elements which are found in one thing or another and which don’t have much volume — a huge quantity is needed to assimilate very little. Now that they are skilful enough in chemistry, it could be simplified.

People do not like this simply because they take an intense pleasure in eating;

but when you no longer take pleasure in eating, you still need nourishment without wasting your time on it. An enormous amount of time is wasted — time in eating, in digesting, and all the rest. And there, I would like an experimental kitchen, a kind of culinary laboratory for experimenting. People would go to one place or another according to their tastes and inclinations.

And they don't pay for their food, but they should offer their work or their produce: those who have fields, for example, should give the produce from their fields; those who have factories should give their products; or one gives one's labour in exchange for food.

That in itself eliminates much of the internal exchange of money. And for everything we would find things like this. Basically, it should be a city for study, for study and research into a way of life which is both simplified and in which the higher qualities will have more time to develop.

It is only a small beginning.

[Mother goes through the text sentence by sentence.]

"Auroville will be a self-supporting township."

I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment, it is for making experiments — experiments, research, study. Auroville will be a city that will try to be, or will tend to become, or attempt to be "self-supporting", that is to say . . .

Autonomous?

"Autonomous" is understood to mean some kind of independence which breaks off relations with others, and that is not what I mean.

For example, those who produce food, like Aurofood — of course, when we are 50,000 it will be difficult to provide for all the needs, but for the moment we are only a few thousand at most — well, a factory always produces far too much, so it will sell outside and receive money. Aurofood for example wants to have a special relationship with the workers — not at all the old system, something which would be an improvement on the communist system, a more balanced organisation than sovietism, that is, something which does not err too much on one side at the expense of 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 something calculated on an individual basis; that is, this individual should give so much, it is not like that. It is calculated according to the means, the activity, the capacity for production; it is not the democratic idea which cuts everything up into equal pieces, which is an absurd machinery. It is calculated according to one's means: one who has much gives much, one who has

little gives little; one who is strong works hard, one who is not strong does something else. You see, it is something truer, deeper. That is why I make no attempt to explain now, because people will start to make all kinds of complaints. All this must come about automatically, so to speak, with the growth of the city, in the true spirit. That is why this note is extremely concise.

For example, this sentence:

“All who live there will participate in its life and development.”

All who live there will participate in its life and development according to their capacities and means, not mechanically — so much per unit. That’s it, it must be something living and true, not a mechanical thing; and according to each one’s capacities: that is, one who has material means, such as those provided by a factory, should give in proportion to its production, not so much per individual, per head.

“The participation may be passive or active.”

I do not understand what “passive” means; I said it in French and it has been put into English. What could that mean, “passive”? . . . It would be something more like planes or different levels of consciousness.

You meant that those who are wise, who work within, do not need to . . .

Yes, that’s it. Those who have a higher knowledge do not need to work with their hands, that is what I meant.

“There will be no taxes as such, but each one will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money.”

So that is clear: there will be no taxes, but each one will have to contribute to the collective welfare by his work, in kind or in money. Those who have nothing but money will give money. But to tell the truth, “work” can be inner work — but one cannot say that, because people are not honest enough. The work can be an occult, completely inner work; but for that, it must be absolutely sincere and true, and with the capacity for it: no pretension. But not necessarily a physical 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 foodstuffs) that is useful to the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township, which is responsible for feeding its citizens.”

This is what we were just saying. The industries will participate actively, they will contribute. If these industries produce articles which are not constantly needed and therefore in amounts or quantities that are too great to be used within the city but which will sell outside, they, of course, should participate with money. And I give food as an example; those who produce food will give what they produce to the town — in proportion to what they produce, of course — and the town is responsible for feeding everyone. That means that people will not need to buy food with money; but it must be earned.

It is a sort of adaptation of the communist system, but not in a spirit of levelling; according to the capacity, the position — not the psychological or intellectual, but the inner position of each one.

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 needs of everyone are assured, not according to ideas of rights and equality, but on the basis of the minimum needs. And once that is established, each one should be free to organise his life according to — not according to his financial 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 is that usually — always so far, and now more and more — men lay down mental rules according to their conceptions and ideals, and then they apply them (*Mother brings down her fist to show the world in the grip of mind*), and that is absolutely false, it is arbitrary, unreal — and the result is that things revolt or wither and disappear. . . . It is the experience of life itself that should slowly elaborate rules which are as flexible and wide as possible, to be always progressive. Nothing should be fixed.

That is the great error of governments; they make a framework and say, “There you are, we have set this up and now we must live by it”, and so of course they crush life and prevent it from progressing. Life itself must develop more and more in a progression towards Light, Knowledge, Power, little by little establishing rules that are as general as possible, so that they can be extremely flexible and change with the need — and change as quickly as the needs and habits do.

(silence)

The problem finally comes down to this: to replace the mental government of the intelligence by the government of a spiritualised consciousness.

(C: 30 December 1967)

*

Auroville will provide a model for those who aspire for a better and higher collective life everywhere.

1967

(AA)

*

The New Year message

1.1.68

Remain young,
never stop striving towards
perfection

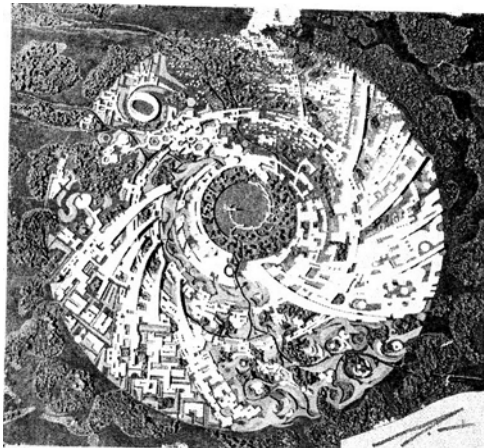
Remain young,
never stop striving towards perfection.

(M15: 175)

*

Models

Roger visits Mother and presents her his latest models.



In a 1996 interview, he explained to Luigi and Aryamani how she received this new model:

I went back [to India] with a model which was the small model at that time — and I came to see Mother — and Mother found it . . . this time it was accomplished. She said “It is movement of Nebulas which already exists . . . in the cosmos.” For us it was an achievement. And the Galaxy, I don’t know who gave it this name. It remained the Galaxy. Then there was the 28th February.

(AA)

*

Probably because many more people are expected, a new plan is produced (dated 24th January) showing the Amphitheatre’s inner and outer radiuses as being 37.5m and 47.5m respectively. A shallow pond is also planned close to the Banyan tree. Nata will be asked to execute these works.

24 January 1968

(AA)

*

Information given by the Sri Aurobindo Society to its members:

Invitation

Dear Members,

The Foundation stone of Auroville will be laid on 28th February 1968 at 10.30 a.m.

Countries all over the world have been invited through UNESCO to send a teen-age boy and a teen-age girl with a handful of soil from their homeland for placing in the lotus-shaped mosaic foundation structure of Auroville. It will be a symbol of dedication of Auroville to human unity.

. . .

Navajata

General Secretary

18 January 1968

(AA)

*

Clarifications

Since the Mother had been telling me all about The Mother’s Shrine, I asked her whether her precious things could be arranged in it. She answered:

My very dear little child Huta

Indeed it is a very good idea to collect and keep my precious things that are to go in the Mother’s Shrine.

The only obstacle is that I have no precious things . . . neither in my rooms nor in Dyuman’s stores — no precious things at all . . . and the Mother’s Shrine will be an empty place, empty of all material things, meant only for meditation, and prayer . . . and I hope, filled with light, spiritual force and the presence of the Truth.

With all my love.

(H: 65-66)

*

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India visited the Ashram on 12.2.68. and she saw the Exhibition of Auroville Plans.

After seeing the plan of the International Zone, she remarked:

Auroville is an exciting project for bringing about harmony among different cultures, and for understanding the environmental needs of men’s spiritual growth.

(H: 67)

*

The Mother called me in the morning on 16.2.68. . . .

[*She explained:*]

The city will have four zones representing the four Powers of the Supreme Mother.

I want that in each part of the town, houses should be built in particular shapes: Square, Hexagon, Round and Triangular. Each shape will have a special colour: Rainbow, Orange, Gold, and Light Blue.

Mahakali: North — Industrial zone

The shape will be square, colour will be rainbow – it has seven colours. The number seven represents Realisation.

There will be five Industrial zones. Some are on the sea-side where the big factories, godowns, stores and sheds, will be built to export goods.

Small scale industries like handicrafts, bakeries, potteries and other workshops will be built for things of immediate need. Also there will be showrooms, manufacturing and displaying things and guiding people where things can be obtained and bought. Also there will be schools to learn handicrafts, offices, and this zone will be surrounded by trees and gardens.

Maheshwari: South — Residential zone

The shape will be Hexagon. The colour will be gold, golden pink. The shape signifies 'Perfect Creation'.

The Residential zone will have 3 sections.

(1) People who wish to stay in a collectivity, that is to say as neighbours, can stay there.

(2) There will be old men's and women's houses. Also big houses like management houses where people can have all the facilities, because they work outside in various places. All these houses will be surrounded by gardens and trees.

(3) There will be independent houses with gardens and trees.

Mahalakshmi: East — Cultural zone

The shape will be round — the circle means 'integral Power'. The colour will be pale orange. This zone will have 3 sections.

Mahasaraswati: West — International zone

The shape will be the triangle, which signifies wisdom. The colour will be pale blue, which means peace.

The Pavilions of all the Nations will be in this area. They will represent their culture and customs.

(H: 68-70)

*

Message to be put around the banyan tree at the centre of Auroville

*Pour mettre autour de
l'arbre
Auroville la Cité au
service de la Vérité.*

Auroville the City at the service of Truth

(AA)

*

Nata and his team start the preparatory works for the Inauguration Ceremony on 1 February 1968. They have just 25 days because everything had to be completed for the 26th.

Years later, Nata explained:

The work went on 24 hours, with 8-hour shifts.

The work involved the construction of an amphitheatre with a diameter of 150 metres, and around it, space for 10,000 persons sitting on mats, on the ground, and stands and steps for 2,000 persons. Towards the south-east of the centre of the amphitheatre, rose a mound of about 6 metres high on which was an urn which would contain the earth from all the countries of the world. And there had to be adequate sanitary arrangements as well as provision for drinking water.

On the 25th of February, that is 3 days before the scheduled date of the ceremony, everything was ready, including 8 km of road, 1.5 km of water pipes, and a parking space for 300 cars.

(AA)

*

A brochure for the Press



L'Inde est devenue la
représentation symbolique de
toutes les difficultés de l'humanité
moderne.

L'Inde sera le lieu de sa
résurrection, la résurrection à
une vie plus haute et plus vraie

India has become the symbol
representing all the difficulties
of modern humanity.

India will be the land of
its resurrection, the resurrection to
a higher and truer life

Then I've written something else. . . . They wanted to prepare a sort of brochure on Auroville to distribute to the press, the government, etc., on the 28th,¹ and before that, there is in Delhi in two or three days a conference of all nations ("all nations" is an exaggeration, but anyway they say "all nations"). Z is going there, and she wants to take with her all the papers on Auroville. They have prepared texts — always lengthy, interminable: speeches and more speeches. So then I asked, I concentrated to know what had to be said. And all of a sudden, Sri Aurobindo gave me a revelation. That was something interesting. I concentrated to know the why, the how and so on, and all of a sudden Sri Aurobindo said . . . (*Mother reads out a note:*)

"India has become . . ."

It was the vision of the thing, and it instantly translated into French words.

"India has become the symbolic representation of all the difficulties of modern humanity.

"India will be the land of its resurrection — the resurrection to a higher and truer life."

And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work on one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the . . . cure will be found. And then, that is why — *that is why* I was made to start Auroville.

1. February 28, Auroville's inauguration.

It came and it was so clear, so tremendously powerful!

So I wrote it down. I didn’t tell them how or why, I told them, “Put this at the beginning of your paper, whatever it is; you can say whatever you like, but put this first.”

(*silence*)

It was very interesting. It remained the whole time, for more than an hour, such a strong and clear vision, as if suddenly everything became clear. I often used to wonder about it (not “wonder,” but there was a tension to understand why things, here in India, have become such a chaos, with such sordid difficulties, and all of it piling up), and instantly, everything became clear, like that. It was really interesting. And immediately there was: “Here is why you have made Auroville.” I didn’t know it, you understand, I did the thing under pressure, and it took larger and larger proportions (it’s becoming really worldwide), and I would wonder why. . . . For a time I thought it was the only present possibility to prevent a war, but it seemed to me a somewhat superficial explanation. Then it came all of a sudden: “Ah! That’s why.”

And as that whole power was in it, I said, “Put it.” We’ll see — they won’t understand anything, but that doesn’t matter, it will act.

(C: 3 February 1968)

*

Sincerity — an absolute law

Regarding the Inauguration Ceremony, the Mother has said that sincerity is an absolute law.

(AA)

*

The Charter

In 1968, we were preparing for the Foundation of Auroville. I requested the Mother to write a Charter for Auroville, indicating its status, aims and objectives. She wrote a succinct and most magnificent Charter.

...

The inauguration function of Auroville would be marked as decisive for the advent of a new consciousness, uniting the whole of humanity as the soil from different

countries was poured into a three-feet high urn, shaped like a lotus bud.

. . .

All the projects of Auroville will be oriented towards bringing about a change of consciousness, the realisation of human unity and the manifestation of progressive universal harmony. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "When we find this oneness, the principle of variation is not destroyed, but finds rather its justification. It is not by abolishing ourselves, our special temperaments and power that we can get at the living oneness but by following out and raising it to its highest freedom and action."

(K: 125,127,133)

*

Auroville's Charter

(Mother starts copying Auroville's Charter while commenting on it.)

1. *Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. . . .*

So this is the material fact. Auroville belongs . . . I didn't put "to no nation" because India would have been furious. I put "belongs to nobody" — "nobody" is a vague term which I used precisely so as not to say "to no human being" or "to no nation." And I put "Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole" because it amounts to nothing! Since people can't agree together, the thing is impossible! I did it deliberately.

Then I don't say anything about "citizens" and all that, I say:

. . . But to live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

They will all balk at "Divine," but I don't care! You understand, it's the explanation of the Matrimandir¹ at the centre. The Matrimandir represents the Divine Consciousness. All that goes unsaid, but it's like that.

Then:

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

1. The "temple of the Mother" at the centre of Auroville.

And then:

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries . . .

All discoveries, that is, philosophical, spiritual, moral, scientific, everything — taking advantage of the past.

. . . of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.

And finally, there are two versions: “4. Auroville will be a site of research for knowledge and means of existence leading to a human unity based on mutual understanding and goodwill.”

On another piece of paper, we have, “To give a living body to an actual human Unity.”

So we’ll alter a little.

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

There.

It’s not me who wrote all this. . . . I noticed something so interesting: when it comes it’s imperative, there’s no room for arguing; I write it down — whatever I may be doing I am *forced* to write it down. But when it’s not there, it’s just not there! Even if I try to remember, nothing comes, it’s not there! So it’s clear that it doesn’t come from here: it comes from somewhere above.

(C: 7 February 1968)

*

Rijuta’s note

She explained about how She wrote the Charter for Auroville and described the plans for the ceremony. I asked what message was to be read, and we translated the Charter together.

9 February 1968

(AA)

*

Message exhibited under the Banyan during the Inauguration Ceremony

Auroville,

At last a place where one will be able to think only of progressing and transcending oneself.

At last a place where one will be able to live in peace, without conflicts and without rivalries of nations, religions and ambitions.

At last a place where nothing will have the right to impose itself as the exclusive truth.

(AA)

*

Absolutely transparent sincerity

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.

Auroville is the first step towards this goal.§

February 1968

(M13: 268)

*

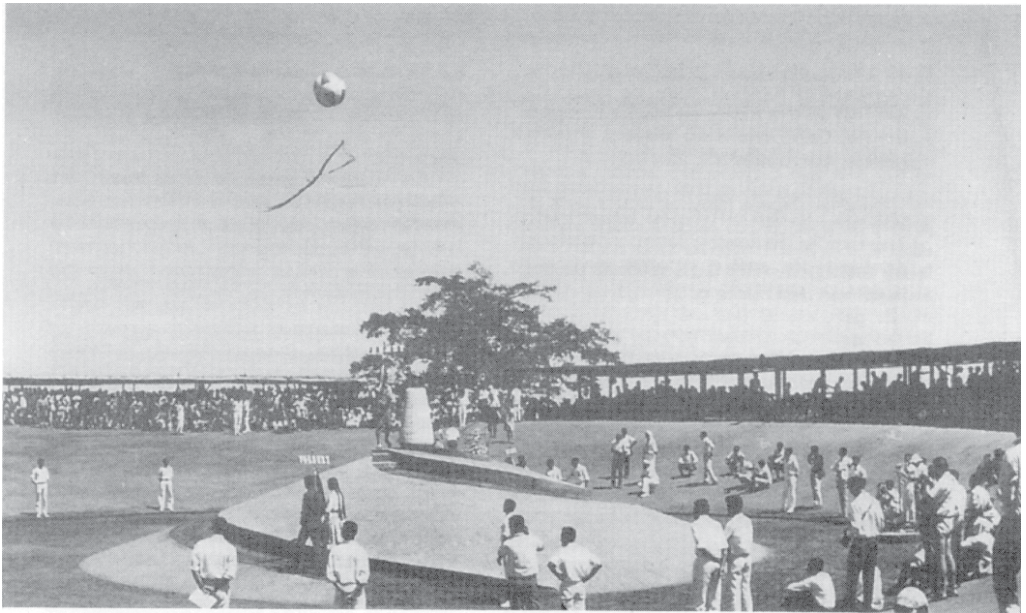
(The Charter of Auroville was sent to all invited parties such as Embassies and Consulates). Being unhappy with its first Article because it speaks of “willing servitor of the divine consciousness” the Consulate General of USSR at Madras said that its representatives won’t attend the Ceremony. Naturally other eastern-bloc countries would follow suit and this would be a major setback. Mother calls Udar and tells him to go and meet the Consul General of USSR at Madras. Udar’s mission was successful.

(AA)

*

Inauguration

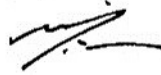
Auroville was inaugurated at 10.30 a.m. with a ceremony at the centre of the future town attended by more than 5,000 persons who first heard the radio broadcast live of Mother reading, in French, a welcoming message and then the Charter. The Charter was then read out in sixteen Indian and foreign languages while young people representing 23 states of India and 121 countries of the world placed a handful of earth from their respective states and countries in the lotus-shaped urn.



The ceremony started with Mother reading this welcoming message (in French):

Salut S'Auroville
à tous les hommes
de bonne volonté.

Sont conviés à Auroville
tous ceux qui ont soif de
progrès et aspirent à une
vie plus haute et plus vraie



28.2.68.

Greetings from Auroville
to all men of good will

Are invited to Auroville all
those who thirst for progress
and aspire to a higher
and truer life.



Greetings from Auroville to all men of good will.
Are invited to Auroville all those who thirst for
progress and aspire to a higher and truer life.

[Then Mother reads out the Charter:]

Auroville Charter

28. 2. 68

Charte d'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.

1) Auroville n'appartient à personne en particulier. Auroville appartient à toute l'humanité dans son ensemble.
Mais pour séjourner à Auroville, il faut être le serviteur volontaire de la Conscience Divine

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

2) Auroville sera le lieu de l'éducation perpétuelle, du progrès constant et d'une jeunesse qui ne vieillit point.

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 towards future realisations.

3) Auroville veut être le pont entre le passé et l'avenir.
Profitant de toutes les découvertes extérieures et intérieures, elle veut hardiment s'élancer vers les réalisations futures.

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

4) Auroville sera le lieu des recherches matérielles et spirituelles pour donner un corps vivant à une unité humaine concrète.

(AA)

Auroville's inauguration

(The entire Ashram has gone to Auroville to attend its inauguration. Mother reads out her message, which is broadcast live to Auroville through All India Radio:)

“Greetings from Auroville to all men of good will.
Are invited to Auroville all those who thirst for
progress and aspire to a higher and truer life.”

(Then Mother reads out the Charter)

(then the microphone is switched off . . . silence)

So now, till 11:30 we have a nice quiet time like princes and kings! It doesn't often happen. If you have something to tell me, I am listening.

Maybe you are the one who has something to say?

No, no! That's enough! *(Mother laughs)*

I've spent all my days and all my nights quieting the atmosphere, it had taken such proportions. . . . You know, those movements which start whirling like that, like the wind in a cyclone or at sea, and it goes on whirling faster and faster, more and more strongly, forcefully. Then people fall ill, they get worn out, they can't do anything anymore. For the past three days I've spent my time calming and calming the atmosphere. Luckily they came to me (it wasn't to “me,” naturally), they felt there was something stable here that could stop this disorder, otherwise . . . But it was very difficult because of the really large number of additions from outside: on the 21st, at the Darshan, they were more than four thousand people down in the street, and there are all those who came to be here today and tomorrow, so it must mean five or six thousand people — to feed, accommodate . . . a whole work.

Then they asked me, naturally, that it shouldn't rain, but that it shouldn't be sunny either! *(Mother laughs)* So it was a bit difficult, but a short while ago, Z came to tell me that Auroville's area was clouded, without sunshine. . . . All these little entities are quite obliging, but they're asked impossible things! I get requests, “Ah, I need rain,” and at the same time, “Oh, no, I don't want rain”; “Ah, I need sunshine,” and “Oh, no, I don't want sunshine. . . .” How can they manage it!

Are you happy?

Happy? What does that mean?

Are things moving?

I don’t know. I think they’re moving all right over there.

Two days ago Z said to me, “Oh, it has been a good lesson: now we are convinced that the Westerners’ way isn’t better than ours.” Because they kept thinking, all of them, that the materialistic way brought about better realisations — so now they are convinced.

I told you that the Soviet consul is enthusiastic! He saw the Charter — in English first (in English, there is *Divine’s Consciousness*, with the apostrophe¹). He said, “It’s a pity, it evokes the idea of God.” And S., who had been there, said, “It’s not that at all! There’s nothing religious in all this affair. We’ll show you the French.” Then he read *conscience divine* [divine consciousness], and he was satisfied. He said, “This is just what we want to realise, and without these words it would be officially recognised and supported by the Soviet government.” Then they asked him to translate it into Russian, but finally what’s being read out in Auroville isn’t his translation, it’s the one by T. She has just come, and words don’t frighten her. But I sent him my permission: I had it explained to him that words were just a more or less clumsy transcription not only of the idea, but of what is above the idea — the principle; that it didn’t matter much whether these or those words were used (each one uses the words that suit him best), and that, therefore, I allowed him to use the words that would be acceptable to his government. The Soviet consul said yes, he was very glad. He said, “When the Soviet government officially supports something, it’s serious.” — It’s true, I know it, they are very generous. So I hope it will have a favourable result. And you see, it’s just what I wanted: in America, for a long time they have been enthusiastic — which is good, but perhaps they don’t understand so well; the Russians, in their nature, are mystic, and as that has been oppressed, suppressed, naturally it has gained a lot of force. And now it tends to want to burst.

But if both together support Auroville, we won’t have any more financial hassles!

It has been coming little by little, little by little. I told you what Sri Aurobindo revealed to me about India’s condition, which was the symbolic representation of the present condition of mankind; and that’s why, Sri Aurobindo told me, “That’s why Auroville has been created.” Then I understood. Since then, it has become very clear — ‘clear’, I mean he seems to have made it spread and people seem to begin to understand.

So there.

(C: 28 February 1968)

*

1. In the final English version, the apostrophe was removed: “. . . To live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.”

After the inauguration

(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'?"

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

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

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.

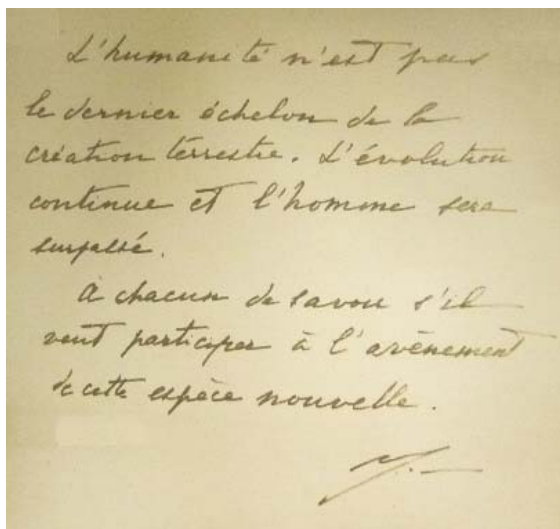
Because, really, if there had only been these elements left to themselves, well, there was nothing but confusion. One can see that it’s working . . . it works making use of anything!

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

(C: 2 March 1968)

*

The message reproduced here was exhibited under the Banyan Tree on 28.2.68.



Humanity is not the last rung 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 obviously has no reason to exist.

(AA and M13: 191)

*

Everything went on wonderfully

The inauguration ceremony of Auroville took place on 28.2.1968 at 10.30 a.m.

I did not go there, but sat quietly on a terrace close to the Mother's room in the Ashram main Building and heard the Mother's message when it was relayed by the All India Radio, Pondicherry.

Her message was given first in French and then in English. . . .

I have heard from some people a vivid description of the event.

The world assembled at the centre of Auroville. The weather was bright and pleasant. The colourful flags of various countries . . . fluttered in a gentle breeze along with the flags of the Mother and Auroville.

The youth of 124 member states of UNESCO participated in the Ceremony by depositing a handful of soil from their own countries in the foundation urn, to symbolise the coming together of the nations of the World. . . .

Also the youth of 23 Indian States collaborated in the function by bringing soil from their own places and placing it in the urn. Soil from Sri Aurobindo’s samadhi was also brought and placed in the urn . . . and also the soil of Auroville. . . .

On the following day, 29.2.68, I went to the Mother. She asked me:

Child, did you go there?

I said, “No, Mother. Remember, you told me that there would be a huge crowd, and it would be better if I did not go there.”

She smiled and nodded approvingly and told me joyously:

Oh, everything went on wonderfully.

(H: 74-78)

*

There, where breathes the spirit — Auroville

The foundation of Auroville was laid in a unique and moving ceremony. It is still remembered as an unforgettable experience by all who participated in it or had the good fortune to witness it. Here is a description of the ceremony by Mme. Yvonne Robert Gaebelé.

On the morning of the 28th of February, 1968 the Bay of Bengal woke up powdered with gold.

The gold was colouring the roofs of the houses of Pondicherry and as the splendid orb mounted up in the sky the whole countryside around appeared to be bathing in the royal light.

It was indeed the supreme festival of the light which awaited us at the place, chosen out of all others, for the construction of Auroville.

Imagine, not far from Pondicherry, a sort of immense arena with slopes around rising in grades, the whole wonderously arranged to receive thousands of spectators of whom several had come from great distances to participate in the ceremony of the day.

In the centre of the arena was an elevation of earth, where one could reach by a circular way to an urn with a lid styled as a lotus bud. This urn was to contain the earth from 124 countries, brought from all parts, on which the future city would be built. After the loudspeakers had called for silence, first arose the voice of the Mother who spoke from a distance from her room in the Ashram.

What was the Mother saying? . . . She was reading the Charter of Auroville and in the solemn silence first fell the sublime words, “Auroville belongs to nobody in

particular, it belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.” This relinquishment, absolute and deliberate, contrasted so strongly, from the first, with the spirit of the century that one could not but admire and bow down before a realisation of such amplitude and serenity. Then the procession commenced.

The first pair carried the flag of the Mother, the golden wheel on the sky-blue base, symbol of the Mother’s occult and transcendental powers. The two young ones appeared from the horizon, with slow steps they followed the triumphal path lined by volunteers and began to climb the symbolic cone. Soon the flag fluttered there, caressed by the wind while the young ones carefully placed the earth of the Ashram and the Charter of Auroville in the depths of the urn.

Then other pairs followed, with very slow steps, as if cadenced by a low-toned music, while the Charter was being read in the principal languages of the world. All were arriving, pair after pair, surging from the horizon, the young girl carrying the name of the country they represented, the young boy with the soil of the country in a vessel. When they arrived at the top, near the urn, with a pious gesture the soil was poured over the other soil already sunk there, and then they came down the opposite side. Some pairs wore the costume of the country to which they belonged. Thus one could admire the colours of the rich costumes of Africa. Immense Russia was represented by two quite small infants, blond and charming. Then each state of India had its turn. No country of the world was forgotten — from the icy lands of the Pole up to those of the tiny states of the Equator. The last pair carried the orange-coloured flag of Auroville evolving with a symbolic lotus at its centre. The silence became, if that was possible, yet profounder when was seen moving forth the noble disciple of the Ashram, Nolini, the earliest and one of the oldest, the disciple from the first days of the beloved Master, Sri Aurobindo. Accompanied by his son he came to seal the urn. When he climbed the cone and stood at the top, dressed in immaculate clothes, with his face of handsomely grave features, one could say some Vedic priest of the ancient ages was officiating at the altar, lighting there the fire of sacrifice.

Is Auroville not the altar on which must be burnt away for ever all the evil passions so that the world, grown pure, may teach the new Evangel to the earth of man?

(G: 143-46)

*

. . . On that day, 29.2.1968, at 5.15 p.m., the Mother gave darshan from her balcony to the Ashramites, Aurovilians and the representatives of different countries and the Indian States who had participated in the inaugural ceremony at the Centre of Auroville.

(H: 74-78)

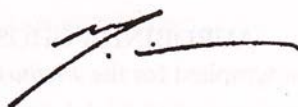
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29.2.68.

Seule la Vérité
peut donner au monde
le pouvoir de recevoir et
de manifester l'Amour-Divin

*

Truth alone can give
to the world the power of
receiving and manifesting
the Divine's Love.



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in the satisfaction of others.”*

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