



*At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property.  
To be utilised with my blessings for the welfare of all.*

*The Mother*

## THE AUROVILLE FOUNDATION ACT AND THE MOTHER'S GUIDELINES



A comparative study with regards to the “Auroville Prosperity” in kind system  
established by the Mother on the basis of minimum needs

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been writing this paper with the same spirit I have been trained for to do research on history at a Northern Italian university, with no preconceived ideas, letting the documents speak for themselves. This last research is but a continuation of all the research work on the Mother's true Auroville that I have been pursuing since 1985 when first I joined Auroville, coming from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In spite of initial difficulties in going through legal jargon, the more I read the Auroville Foundation Act the more I found striking similarities to the atmosphere of the archival documents drafted under Mother's guidance. I have arranged, in chronological order, all the material I have so far gathered on Auroville as forerunner to the ideal society, and it appears to be in perfect harmony with the Auroville Foundation Act.

Many of the Mother's texts that I am presenting come from "Auroville Prosperity", a compilation of the Mother's messages and archival material revolving around the theme of the 'in kind' economic system that she instituted in June 1968, three months after founding Auroville; the emphasis was upon minimum needs, as one would expect in a truly spiritual society. Sponsored by the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000, this compilation was distributed for free to the entire community as a vision for the new millennium. Other texts come from one of the Matrimandir trustees, Gilles Guigan's compilation consisting of all available statements by the Mother, as well as all the archival documents and publications still available. Some of the texts presented in the chapter "The Avatar's model town" are a re-working of the introduction and concluding parts that I wrote for the "Auroville Prosperity" compilation.

This and related issues are going to be an integral part of the research to be published in my fifth book of the series on the ideal society, compiling from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; this time focusing on the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. Besides the Mother's statements I will present archival documents that have been approved and blessed by her.

I am submitting this work with infinite gratitude to the Mother, as well as to all those who have made possible the coming into existence of The Auroville Foundation Act, and to the Parliament of India for passing it. I recognise the Act as the Mother's guidelines taking legal form, as binding legally as the Mother's original statements are spiritually. It is for us Aurovilians to honor such lofty premises in respect to the Mother's vision and will, of which the Act is but the legal representation.

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*Note:* Often the quotes have been reproduced in several publications; in this case the reference is taken from the most well-known. The parts in italic refer to someone other than the Mother.

## PART ONE

### THE GOVERNMENT TAKING OVER

*The Auroville Foundation Act*

By the mid seventies the Sri Aurobindo Society, heavily indebted, had blocked all flow of money directed towards Auroville; there were law and order problems as well. On 21.12.1976 the Government of India passed a resolution constituting an Auroville Committee *“under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant-Governor of Pondicherry with representatives of the Government of Tamil Nadu and of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Central Government”* for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the Sri Aurobindo Society’s affairs and *modus operandi*. The committee submitted its report in 1977. Because of its findings, with the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance, first promulgated by the President of India on November 10, 1980, one month later replaced by an Act of Parliament, the Government of India took over management of Auroville from the Sri Aurobindo Society, appointing as Administrator, a retired Judge from the High Court assisted by a Deputy Administrator. This came into immediate force. The argument runs as follows:

*“AND WHEREAS in view of the serious difficulties which have arisen with regard to the management of Auroville, it is necessary to take over, for a limited period, the management thereof and any delay in taking over the management of Auroville would be highly detrimental to the interests and objectives of Auroville;*

*AND WHEREAS Parliament is not in session and the President is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of article 123 of the Constitution, the President is pleased to promulgate the following Ordinance”...*

The Sri Aurobindo Society, which was registered in 1961 in Calcutta, challenged the initiative in the Calcutta High Court with a writ petition contesting the constitutional validity of the Act. The Government had the case transferred to the Supreme Court, which decided that constitutional matters were involved and set, for this purpose, a special Constitutional Bench consisting of five judges. In 1982 a judgment was passed in favor of Auroville against the Sri Aurobindo Society, upholding the validity of the Act. Major Gen. Krishna Tewari, retired, was the signatory for Auroville. At first valid two years, and extendable for not more than five, the Emergency Provisions remained in vigor for eight consecutive years, as it kept being extended from year to year. At last, in 1988, the Parliament of India passed the Auroville Foundation Act, binding on all parties.

Someone has referred to the Auroville Foundation Act as the equivalent of nationalization. Struck by the term I discovered that Chapter II, *“Acquisition and transfer of undertakings of Auroville”*, indeed, gives a detailed description of a legal procedure evoking nationalization. However, the appropriate expression is ‘temporary taking over’ by the Government of India, as the latter did not want to run Auroville but some organizational creation was needed. How to do this was the issue. The debate in Parliament went on for years, throughout the transitional period under the Administrator’s umbrella, until the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance (shortly afterwards turned into an Act by the Parliament then in session), gave way to the final legislation. On September 29, 1988 the Auroville Foundation was established by an Act of the Parliament.

Within the context of the present research, Section 4.(1), which first appeared in the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance (and Act) and then was repeated without change in the Auroville Foundation Act, is of a particular importance:

*“4. (1) The undertakings vested under section 3 shall be deemed to include all the assets, rights, leaseholds, powers, authorities and privileges, and all property (movable and immovable), including lands, buildings, works, workshops, projects, stores, instruments, machinery, automobiles and other vehicles, cash balances, funds, including reserve funds, investments and book debts of the Society, trust or body as form part of, or are relatable to, Auroville and all other rights and interests arising out of such properties as were immediately before the appointed day in the ownership, possession, power*

*or control of the Society, trust or body, whether within or without India, and all books of account, registers, maps, plans and all other documents of whatever nature relating thereto.”*

In the Act, Section 2.(b) it is specified that *“Auroville” means so much of the undertakings as form part of, or are relatable to, the cultural township which is known as Auroville and the charter of which was proclaimed by the ‘Mother’ on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1968”*. Henceforth it cannot be contended that the Act is to refer only to the Sri Aurobindo Society’s undertakings, while excluding those that came into existence afterwards: the Act refers to ALL past, present and future Auroville’s undertakings. Moreover, such a phrase as *“whether within or without India”* stresses that no distinction is to be made whether the above Auroville-related undertakings are in India or abroad.

The Government of India having acquired the whole gamut of the Sri Aurobindo Society’s undertakings as described in Section 4, in Section 6.(1), we read that, by notification, *“... instead of continuing to vest in the Central Government, [those same undertakings], vest in the [Auroville] Foundation ...”*. How this happens is explained in Section 6.(2): *“...the Foundation shall, on and from the date of such vesting, be deemed to have become the owner in relation to such undertakings and the rights and liabilities of the Central Government in relation to such undertakings shall, on and from the date of such vesting, be deemed to have become the rights and liabilities, respectively, of the Foundation.”*

This marks the transition from the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance, 1980, later changed into Act – and the Auroville Foundation Act proper, legislated in 1988, by which the Government of India has vested in the Auroville Foundation the ownership of all the undertakings as mentioned in Section 3 and 4, while vesting the property to the Auroville Foundation as described in Section 6.(1) and (2). According to the Act:

*10. (2) The Foundation shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract and shall be the said name sue and be sued.*

*(3) The Foundation shall consist of the following authorities, namely: –*

- (a) the Governing Board;*
- (b) the Residents’ Assembly<sup>1</sup>;*
- (c) the Auroville International Advisory Council”.*

This first came into existence in 1980, with the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance (afterwards Act). This is of a paramount importance for, at this point, being one of the three authorities of the Auroville Foundation, the Residents’ Assembly no longer deals with the Government take over as in phase one (where the State of India was the owner and remained so for eight years as a temporary provision only), but with legislation indicating that everything is owned by the community as a whole. This power is shared with the two other constituents of the Auroville Foundation, the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council. Regarding the specific role of the Governing Board the Act states:

*“11. (3) The general superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Foundation shall vest in the Governing Board which may exercise all the powers and discharge all the functions which may be exercised or discharged by the Foundation.”*

The powers of the Governing Board, particularly with regard to the management of finances and all of Auroville’s undertakings, are defined in the Rules passed in 1997. Nowhere in the Act or Rules is it mentioned that the Residents’ Assembly is empowered to formulate policies that are legally binding; it ensues that all such policies are

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2.(i) specifies that *“ ‘Residents’ Assembly’ means the Residents’ Assembly of the Foundation.”*

subject to the previous approval of the Governing Board. Nor is this the final authority. As outlined in Chapter 4, Miscellaneous, the Governing Board has to submit any rules/regulations etc. agreed upon to the Central Government, which after due examination notifies them in the Official Gazette; then only they become operative.

*“32. (3) No regulation made by the Governing Board shall have effect until it has been approved by the Central Government and published in the Official Gazette, and the Central Government, in approving the regulation, may make changes therein which appear to it to be necessary.*

*33. Every rule or regulation made under this Act shall be laid as soon as may be after it is made before each House of the Parliament. (...)*

*34. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, remove the difficulty:*

*Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of two years from the appointed day.*

*(2) Every order made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament.”*

The question arises: what is the message behind such extraordinary measures, first enforced by the President of India in 1980, then by Parliament in 1980 and in 1988, and further specified in 1997? Isn't the Act an exhortation to return to the Mother's instructions on how Auroville should be run, no private profits, no private property? If it is so, isn't the "Auroville Prosperity" Service, in kind, which the Mother instituted right away, the natural follow-up of the economic system to be put in place by the Act, faithfully implementing Mother's directives? The answer is once more given by the Mother: those who work proficiently for the community and as such are accepted as Auroville residents are to be taken in charge on the basis of minimum needs and expected to surrender to Auroville all they have – as stated in the original admission form to be submitted for approval to the Mother. This leads automatically to the "Auroville Prosperity" and related services. We have thus squared the circle.

Besides Section 4. (1), already discussed, the answer is to be found in the debate in Parliament that, ultimately, culminated in the legislation of the Auroville Foundation Act, as it emerges from some of the speeches of the parliamentarians, to begin with, the inspired presentations of the Bill to both the Lok and the Rajya Sabha by Shri Shiv Shankar, Minister of Human Resources Development, on August 27<sup>th</sup> and on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1988. On both occasions the issue that is the main concern of this research paper was presented with identical words, with only a few introductory lines varying between the two speeches.

*“3. The properties relatable to Auroville which are currently owned by Sri Aurobindo Society and other trusts and bodies founded by the Residents of Auroville will vest in the new body corporate [The Auroville Foundation]. The management is presently with the Administrator of Auroville appointed under the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1980.” (August 27, 1988).*

This reiterates the take over by the Government of India “of all properties and assets relatable to Auroville” from 1980 until 1988, managed by the Administrator appointed by the Government, then to be vested in the Auroville Foundation. The manner in which the topic is introduced four days later leaves no doubts about the real purpose:

*“The Bill which is before us has certain special features. In the first place, the Bill seeks to acquire all properties relatable to Auroville which are currently owned by several societies, trusts and other bodies.” (September 1, 1988).*

What follows enhances this pronouncement:

*“These assets were created by Sri Aurobindo Society and other bodies founded by the residents of Auroville<sup>2</sup> substantially with the aid of donations received from different organizations and individuals in and outside India (including the Central and State Governments) for purposes and activities of Auroville, which under the proposed legislation, will become the responsibility of the Foundation. The Government, therefore, proposes to acquire these assets without payment of any compensation and vest these in the proposed Auroville Foundation whose primary objective shall be to encourage and promote ideals and programmes envisaged in the Charter of Auroville.”*

*“...and other bodies founded by the residents of Auroville”,* introduced in the Minister’s second speech marks the only difference between the first and the second speech, which are otherwise identical. The complete list of *“trusts and bodies”* is published in the last page of the Auroville Foundation Act, presented accordingly:

THE SCHEDULE  
{See Section 2.(1)}  
TRUSTS AND BODIES

1. Auroville Trust, Auroville.
2. Artisana Trust, Auroville.
3. Auroservice d’Auroville Trust, Pondicherry.
4. Aurelec Trust, Auroville.
5. Auromitra, Auroville.
6. Centre for Scientific Research, Auroville.
7. Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, Auroville.
8. Altecs Trust, Auroville.
9. New Engineering Trust, Auroville.
10. Auro Trust, Pondicherry.
11. Service Trust, Pondicherry.
12. Auro Press Trust, Pondicherry.
13. New Trust, Pondicherry.

S.RAMAIAH  
Secy. To the Govt. of India

The excerpts indicated below (as with other speeches, these texts too are kept in the Auroville archive as anonymous), taken from the speeches of two other parliamentarians, move in the same direction. Highlighting that the acquisition of all properties relatable to Auroville, with no distinction made between economic, scientific, cultural, artistic, educational or any other undertakings, is a return to the Mother’s instructions and expressed will: Aurovilians were expected to hand over all property in their possession to the common property of the Auroville Foundation with no compensation.

*“The Bill aims at acquisition of the properties relatable to Auroville. The acquisition is in the public interest; acquisition is made for the same purpose for which the assets of Auroville were originally created. The Bill also envisages the creation of a new Foundation to be called the Auroville Foundation in which the Central Government will vest all the properties acquired under this Bill.”*

*“I am happy to note the residents of Auroville have willingly surrendered their rights over properties created by them without any demand for compensation.”*

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<sup>2</sup> “Founded by the Residents of Auroville” has been introduced in the second speech only.

This gives a measure of the spirit by which the Auroville Foundation Act was passed. The question is how far has this been respected. From all that has been so far expounded, it is evident that the Auroville Foundation Act provides the legal framework for two of the major tenets of the Mother's directives: no private property, and no private profits. Following the logic expounded above in Section 2.(b), Auroville [= the Auroville Foundation] is the sole owner of all past, present and future Auroville undertakings. In light of this, what is the sense of the contested thirty-three percent [33%] to be given to Auroville by all productive units or of any other eventual percentage? Hasn't everything to be handed over to the common fund, as it was pointed out during the two day visit by the Government officers on the occasion of the visas issue? Moreover, as the Act makes no distinction between "within or without India", it follows that all the products manufactured in Auroville and sold abroad, in their being owned by Auroville, fall under the jurisdiction of the Auroville Foundation Act and the exporting units are subject to the same norms.

### *Rules: a major addition to the Act*

There was a substantial addition to the Auroville Foundation Act with a section entitled Rules, as notified on November 10, 1997 by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resources Development (Department of Education), and subsequently published in the Gazette of India Part II, Section 3, sub section (1). A copy of the Rules, both in English and in Hindi, was sent to all members of the Governing Board, the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Lt.Governor of the Union Territory, Pondicherry.

In its presentation of the three 'authorities' of the Auroville Foundation, the first one mentioned in the Act is the Governing Board, then the Residents' Assembly and finally the International Advisory Council. Rule 4 of the Auroville Foundation Rules, 1997, notified by the Government of India, Ministry of HRD on 10.11.1997 prescribes the powers of the Governing Board that are quite comprehensive and cover practically all aspects of Auroville activities including its movable and immovable properties and how they would be managed. The said Rule 4 is reproduced as an Annexure. In the Rules the Governing Board is further defined as the one authority of the Auroville Foundation responsible for all that concerns funds, finances and the sale and purchase of movable and immovable assets etc. – "in consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC". In the case of "purchase, gift or otherwise" exceeding 1 crore of rupees, as well as when the need arises "to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any immovable property of the Foundation", if the value is more than Rs.5 lakhs, "the previous sanction of the Central Government" is required.

Ratified by the Parliament of India, this is a most important statement: the Central Government is the ultimate authority in all financial matters. This is no surprise, as under Section 26 (3) and (4) the Act already stated that "The Comptroller and Auditor General of India and any person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the Foundation (...) shall have the right to demand the production of books, accounts, connected vouchers and documents and papers, and to inspect the office of the Foundation." All accounts shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and, besides, "forwarded annually to the Central Government and that Government shall cause the same to be laid before each House of Parliament."

In the Rules, under 'definitions', a new body, the Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC) is defined as follows: "FAMC" means the Funds and Assets Management Committee constituted by the Governing Board under sub-section (1) of Section 16." That the FAMC is to be constituted by the Governing Board is repeated again on page 3 and 4. Under "Section 5. Committees" it is further specified that:

*"(1) The following shall be the Committees of the Foundation namely: --*

(a) *Finance Committee constituted by the Governing Board under sub-section (1) of section 16;*

(b) *Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC) constituted by the Governing Board under sub-section (1) of section 16 with the Secretary of the Foundation as its Convener and with not exceeding ten other members including the Financial Adviser, Ministry of Human Resources Development.*

(c) *Such other Committee or committees as may be constituted by the Governing Board under sub-section (1) of section 16 or by the Residents' Assembly under sub-section (3) of section 19 as the case may be.*

(2) *Subject to the provision of sub-rule (1), the Governing Board shall determine the composition and functions of every Committee constituted by it.*

(3) *The Residents' Assembly shall determine the composition and functions of every Committee constituted by it.*

(4) *Subject to the provisions of these rules, the FAMC shall administer the funds and assets of the Foundation tender advices, make recommendations and carry out such works as may be assigned to it by the Governing Board."*

The way the FAMC is codified in the Rules has never been implemented; something else came into existence, which has never been ratified by the Residents' Assembly. So far the suggested amendments to the Rules have not been passed, one being that the FAMC is to be constituted by the Residents' Assembly, instead of the Governing Board as in the present Rules. The question arises: if this is a mistake, as it is contended, how did it happen? This takes us back to the main issue, the coming into existence of the Auroville Foundation and the necessity for it, given the emergency situation.

One has to keep in mind the historical circumstances triggering this event, which compelled the President of India to use his special powers to proclaim an Ordinance with immediate effect. The first two pages of the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance present dramatic evidence of the reasons, in the public interest, for the Government take over of whatever undertakings, movable and immovable, within as without India, related to Auroville. It called for extreme measures and very strict legislation. Given this precedent, no wonder that the Government of India, having the legal responsibility for the experiment carried on in the name of Auroville, has to proceed in an extremely cautious manner, particularly in the economic/financial sector.

This leads to a wider issue: as long as Auroville is not legally granted an international status, or a status of its own the laws of India are binding. This had already been stated in the general guidelines passed under Mother's direct guidance, and repeated in the guidelines for industries she approved and signed. This goes even further. According to the Auroville Foundation Act and the successive Rules, in all sectors and activities we are directly accountable to the Government of India. As the elected representative of the Indian State, the Government of India is the supreme authority not only in all financial matters, but also as the one entity that appoints the people needed to make the Act operative; namely the Secretary (an IAS officer and the Government's direct representative), the Chairman of the Governing Board, the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council. Besides, among the Governing Board's members there are *ex officio* "two representatives of the Central Government to be nominated by it". The Ministry of Human Resources has also framed the Rules and, within the Rules, the functions of the Governing Board, those of the FAMC constituted by the Governing Board, and those of the Secretary to the Auroville Foundation.

The Chairman of the Governing Board and the Secretary to the Auroville Foundation, being on the Government's payroll regarding "salary and allowances and such conditions of service in respect of leave, pension, provident fund and other matters" are to be approved directly by the Central Government. As the powers, functions and responsibilities of the Chairman of the Governing Board have not been specifically defined, either under the Act or the Rules framed thereafter, it can be assumed that the Chairman's role is to mainly preside the meetings (with a casting vote in the case of equality of votes) of the Governing Board to take decisions on whatever relates to the discharge of the functions, duties and responsibilities of the said body and to lay down its own policy guidelines –

as well to amend/approve policy proposals submitted by the Residents' Assembly through Auroville Foundation Secretariat.

The day-to-day workings of the Auroville Foundation are to be carried out by the Secretary in his capacity of "*Principal Executive Officer of the Foundation*", under Rule 6 (1) of the Rules framed under this Act. Besides the many functions, duties and responsibilities he has to discharge, the Secretary is the convener of the Governing Board, the International Advisory Council and the FAMC as well; he represents the Foundation in any court or before any authority and signs powers of attorney; he maintains the register of Residents; he maintains the accounts of the Foundation and has them "*finalised in consultation with the Working Committee in respect of units, trusts, schools and other institutions run by the Auroville residents*"; "*furnish to the Central Government the statements and other papers required to be laid before the Houses of Parliament under the Act*" – and so on.

The implications of all that has been so far expounded are deep and far reaching. At the discretion of the Government in office at that time the Act states:

*"22.(1) The Central Government may, by notification and for reasons to be specified therein, direct that the Foundation shall be dissolved from such date and for such period as may be specified in the notification.*

*Provided that before issuing any such notification, the Central Government shall give a reasonable opportunity to the Foundation to make representation against the proposed dissolution and shall consider the representation, if any, of the Foundation.*

*(2) When the Foundation is dissolved under the provision of sub-section (1),—*

*(a) all members of the Governing Board, notwithstanding that the terms of their office had not expired, shall, from the date of dissolution, vacate their offices as such members;*

*(b) all powers and duties of the Foundation shall, during the period of dissolution, be exercised and performed by such person or persons as the Central Government may appoint in this behalf;*

*(c) all properties vested in the Foundation shall, during the period of dissolution, vest in the Central Government; and*

*(d) as soon as the period of dissolution expires, the Foundation shall be reconstituted in accordance with the provision of this Act.*

*23. For the purpose of enabling the Foundation to discharge its functions under this Act, the Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, pay to the Foundation, in each financial year, such sums of money as that Government considers necessary by way of grant, loan or otherwise.*

It should be noted that with the change of Government following the last national elections all members of the Governing Board had to vacate their post, though re-appointed, to be substituted by a differently composed Governing Board; the Chairman had to vacate as well. Particularly relevant to the present research is "*(c) all properties vested in the Foundation shall, during the period of dissolution, vest in the Central Government*", which further confirms the Government takeover of all the assets and undertakings gathered under the legal umbrella of the Auroville Foundation. With such a statement as "*For the purpose of enabling the Foundation to discharge its functions under this Act, the Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, pay to the Foundation, in each financial year, such sums of money as that Government considers necessary by way of grant, loan or otherwise*" the picture is now complete.

## *The Act and its Rules in the light of Mother's guidelines*

Taken by surprise by this sudden revelation, I decided to check how this tallies with the Mother's statements, not only regarding industrial and other productive units, but also in terms of all the individuals being directly taken in charge by Auroville. Whereas, in a nationalized enterprise, the State is the owner and all people involved, including the manager(s), are on wages, in a kibbutz-like organization the kibbutz is the owner and all are taken care of without any remnant of private property at all. The recommendations made by the Mother, as well the natural outcome of a faithful implementation of the Auroville Foundation Act seem to be similar to the latter.

Discussing these findings with some long-term Aurovilians it was acknowledged that what happened was indeed nationalization, but of a unique type, for nationalization typically implies compensation, whereas the Sri Aurobindo Society withdrew entirely without claiming any property or asking any monetary remuneration. But, as the Minister of HRD made clear in his speech, the Government also expected the complete take over of all properties relatable to Auroville (and which were owned by several societies, trusts and other bodies) – including all those *“bodies founded by the residents of Auroville substantially with the aid of donations received from different organizations and individuals in and outside India (including Central and State Governments) for purposes and activities of Auroville”* without making any distinction between economic activities or other, with no compensation! The Government take over was meant to be temporary only, while another long-term solution, which was to become the Auroville Foundation, remained to be found. There are no precedents for such a transaction in the whole history of India. Could this have been any different, given the postulates highlighted by the Mother? Here are two of her well-articulated messages, both well known:

**“Auroville is the ideal place for those who want to know the joy and liberation of not having any personal possession.”**

*September 18, 1969*

**“At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property. To be utilized with my blessings for the welfare of all.”**

*May 14, 1970*

The Mother's statements on industries and economic activities, to be examined next, further define the issue. In our discussions it was also acknowledged that there is a striking similarity between the Auroville settlement, as legally defined in the Foundation Act, however more complex, to a kibbutz-like organization. One Aurovillian went so far as to declare, “According to the Foundation Act our sole property is the shirt we wear and nothing more.” Another one told me how the Aurovilians, who were in Delhi when the Act was being passed, tangibly felt the Mother's presence there.

Nonetheless, the impact of the Government take over and its successive vesting of all undertakings in the Auroville Foundation was to be countered by the refusal of Aurelec<sup>3</sup> to participate. Court litigation ensued and went on for years. This paved the way to a gradual erosion of the Act, whose original spirit proved too lofty for the average human nature – for the very same reasons for which the Mother's instructions and detailed guidelines remain inaccessible to most of us. Whether we refer to the Act, or to the Mother's guidelines, the question to be answered is the same: can we still go back to the vision and make it real?

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<sup>3</sup> Constituted in 1980, this company assembled computer components on Auroville's land; it had a large turnover and was considered one of the most promising computer companies in India. Only one trustee was an Aurovillian, while the other two lived in Pondy. After the company was dismantled (or rather 'emptied') and other operations followed, the Aurovillian trustee offered over Rs. 3 crores to Auroville, while the other two walked out without giving one paisa.

What are the implications, legally, financially – ethically, spiritually? As already presented, the Act did not only concern Sri Aurobindo Society undertakings, but those of Auroville in its entirety, as indicated in the last page of the Act. Aurelec’s rejection of the proprietorship of the Auroville Foundation triggered several court cases. But there have been less obvious ways as well, which keep surfacing and are taken for granted, all which undermine the fundamental principle of the Auroville Foundation Act: no private property, since everything belongs to Auroville as a whole, which is exactly the way the Mother had expressed her will. A second important principle articulated by the Mother, which penetrates to the very foundation of life in Auroville, regards minimum needs, to be provided by the “Auroville Prosperity” Service.

These two principles differentiate Auroville from what is happening elsewhere, where the satisfaction of individual desires are the main aim. Everything in Auroville belongs to the community as a whole, while individuals, who work proficiently for the common well being, are taken in charge on the basis of minimum needs. As long as we are not ready to surrender all our attachments and jump into the real thing, the Auroville Foundation Act is the Mother’s instrument to remind us of the goal. Meanwhile, we should be grateful to Mother India for the infinite patience and broad-mindedness by which we are allowed to conduct our experiment at our own pace.

I am painfully aware that to implement the Auroville Foundation Act in its true spirit is as demanding as it is to implement the Mother’s original guidelines, of which the Act is but the legal counterpart. If our call is sincere, if we truly have come to fulfill Sri Aurobindo and Mother’s vision of a Gnostic society, of which Auroville is meant to be the crucible, we have to jump above our human impossibilities, throwing all we have and are at the stake. Then, governed by the collective psychic being, Auroville’s group-soul will be one with the Auroville consciousness. In a place where, to experience at last the joy of no longer having personal possessions and no more ties with a senescent world, a new society will be born and vision and reality become one.

## PART TWO

# THE MOTHER: NO PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO PRIVATE PROFIT!

## Mother’s guidelines on industries and economic activities

Attended by more than 400 delegates from all over India and other countries, the First World Conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society was held in Pondicherry from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 1964. The Mother approved and blessed the entire program. The main focus was on human unity; the agenda for a seminar on this topic was set by the Mother, who noted down a series of questions and answers. At the conference it was announced that a new township, for those wishing to prepare for a new life, was to be founded at the outskirts of Pondicherry. Among the major decisions taken was to set up industries that would find a true solution to labour and industrial problems. Some months later the Mother named this new town Auroville.

Part Two gathers the Mother’s statements on industries and other economic activities to be established in Auroville. Documents drafted by others that she approved and conversations on these and other relatable subjects are presented as well. Listed in chronological order, they harmoniously complement the Mother’s guidelines, where the absence of all private property and/or private profit, along with the absence of monetary transactions, is an essential tenet. During the Mother’s time and immediately afterwards, the community as a whole was gathered under the legal umbrella of the Sri Aurobindo Society, of which she was the Chairperson. Because an emergency situation had been created, the Government of India had no choice but to take over management until the whole of Auroville’s undertakings were re-vested in the Auroville Foundation, the new legal owner, who was mandated to preside over the faithful implementation of the Mother’s vision.

The Mother's economic directives and their direct counterpart, the minimum needs to be assured by the Auroville Prosperity 'in kind' service, are the *conditio sine qua non* to even begin evolving in the direction the Mother indicated for life in Auroville. The Mother stressed that all the economic activities (industrial, agricultural, services, crafts etc.) were to be carried out by Aurovilians, without any monetary emolument or profit of any sort. The material needs being provided by the Auroville Prosperity Service, 'in kind', established on the principle of the minimum needs, "*the question of salary does not arise*". Aware that the optimum goal could not be reached all at once, during this transitional period, the Mother allowed that specialists and technicians were hired for a wage under an annually renewable contract, as long as they were also made aware of the ideals of Auroville. She also stressed, at the same time, that Aurovilians had to be trained as quickly as possible to do the job.

Ideally, from the beginning, all industries belonged to Auroville and, as long as Auroville did not acquire international status, they were subject to the Indian laws. According to the guidelines approved and signed by the Mother as early as 1969, when Auromodel was being established, "*all surplus profit will go to the Central Fund*" set up to provide assistance to all developing economic activities. To dispel any doubt about the meaning of this statement, the guidelines stipulated that "*those who wish to donate only a part of their profits to the Central Fund, could start their industries anywhere in the world*".

Here are the documents:

*[In 1965 Gilbert Gauche submitted a series of questions and proposed answer about Auroville to the Mother, who wrote her answers. Among these were:]*

*12. Will money be used in Auroville?*

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

*13. How will work be organized and distributed in Auroville?<sup>4</sup>*

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

*MCWCE, 13, pp. 195-6, 1965*

*In answer to a question about people who would like to start industries in Auroville and the nature of industries in Auroville.*

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

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 62, 11.4.66. The origin is unknown*

*[The following is an excerpt from notes written by Shri Aravind Shankar Baan, ICS, after an interview he and his family had with the Mother on 24.2.1967.]*

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<sup>4</sup> At first the Mother wrote 'Good' on Gilbert's proposed answer: "*The aim to attain is to distribute activities not according to the 'wealth' or the social position of the individuals, but according to each one's capacities. Work must become a way to express one's personality and to develop one's specific aptitudes, not to 'earn more', but to serve better the general evolution of the society towards a better human life.*" Afterwards she substituted the whole with that excerpt from "A Dream".

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

*Shyam Sunder's file, Auroville Archives*

*[Drafted in French, the following guidelines for industries were approved and signed by the Mother when the plans for Auromodel were being made. There are, in addition, interesting documents on an ideal organization and the true hierarchy drafted by Roger Anger, along with the Mother's comments, concerning Auromodel. This text on industries is of a particular importance because three years later, on May 23, 1972, it will be presented to the Mother with minor changes, and she will sign it again, see page 18.]*

## PRINCIPLES FOR STARTING INDUSTRIES IN AUROVILLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*[Drafted in English, the following guidelines were approved and signed by the Mother.]*

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN AUROVILLE

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

*[In Gilles Guigan's compilation the following text, in English, is presented in a conversation format with André Morisset, the Mother's son, and perhaps Laljibhai Indocha, whom the Mother had originally put in charge of the industrial zone in Auroville. At that time the Ford Foundation was willing to finance a rupees 5 crores feasibility study to build Auroville within five years, using the newly discovered systems engineering.]*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Auroville in Mother's words, pp. 163-4, 22.1.69*

*[Written questions, in French, submitted to the Mother by Roger Anger.]*

*Does the Mother agree that Auromodel is to be an autonomous organization within the Sri Aurobindo Society?*

Yes.

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

Yes.

*Can a separate bank account be opened for Auromodel?*

Yes.

*If property is only collective can industries, for instance, take loans from banks? This will mean that the legal responsibility for such loans will ultimately be that of the Sri Aurobindo Society, as Auromodel is part of Auroville that is sponsored by the Sri Aurobindo Society.*

Each case must be studied separately.

*Roger Anger's archive, 12.2.69*

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

*MCWCE, 13, p. 208, 18.9.69*

Have you seen this?

*(Mother holds out a note)*

Auroville is the ideal place for those who want to know the joy and liberation of not having any more personal possession.

It's the last thing that has come. "Personal possession" in the singular: I mean the sense of personal possession.

*Mother's Agenda, 10, 20.9.69*

*Mother,*

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

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

*MCW03, 17, p. 322, 17.10.69*

*[The Mother tells Satprem about "the Persian" who "has already founded a society called 'Auroville International' with members in Europe and its head office in the United States":]*

But he is among those people who really aren't bourgeois from the standpoint of money, that is, who don't have much notion of personal property. So then I caught myself (that's how I caught myself!) .... I myself made an effort to reach the viewpoint that money is a force that must circulate and must not be a personal property. In the consciousness, everything is fine, but the body has its old habit, and it observed the state in which this man is: for him money is a force that must circulate, go where it has to go, it doesn't belong to this or that person – so it [the body] first had this reaction: "Oh, watch out, he's an adventurer." (Mother laughs) I caught myself, I said, "See, you preach, and when someone does as you say ...!" I found it very amusing. But I saw how he is enthusiastic about the idea of Auroville, and it seems to be quite sincere, he even said it's what he has been looking for for a long time. So he goes about it "fair and square".... He was a minister in Persia, but there were revolutions in Persia and he left, he is in America. But he's a man who's used to earning money.

I really caught myself there, I had some real fun. I said to myself, "See, you've come across the man who understands you!" (Mother laughs) It's funny, you know!

This Auroville is going to be a very interesting experience.

*Mother's Agenda, 10, 15.11.69*

*[Between March and August 1970 the Mother met, once a week in her room, with a few Aurovilians, mostly from the community of Aspiration. Twenty-two meetings were recorded on tape. This excerpt is taken from the first of those conversations.]*

*A: We would like to speak to you about work in Aspiration. What we would like to know, what we are looking for, is the right attitude...*

*What is the trouble?*

*A: The trouble is...*

*Each one pulls in his own direction.*

*A: Each one pulls in his own direction. No one is really in contact with what is true.*

We have to bear in mind that we are starting from the present state of humanity. So you must face all the difficulties; you must find the solution.

*(Pointing to the tape-recorder) What is that?*

*B: I am recording for the people of Auromodele, Sweet Mother.*

*(Mother laughs)* You shouldn't have told me!

*A: But, Sweet Mother, you know, several solutions are open to us. For instance, on one hand...*

Each man has his solution, and that is the great difficulty. To be in the Truth, each one has his solution. And yet we must find a way for all these solutions to work together.

*(Silence)*

So the framework must be vast, very flexible, and there must be a great goodwill from everyone: that is the first condition – the first individual condition – goodwill. To be flexible enough to do the best thing to be done at each moment.

*A: But for example, we are told that we must have factories, that we must produce, and some of us have no feeling for that sort of work. We would prefer a seeking which is more...*

More inward?

*A: More inward, rather than to launch into factories, work, production for the sake of money, etc. That is not what we feel, that is not what we want to do in Aspiration at the moment. We would like to know what you think about it.*

*(Mother concentrates and there is a long silence.)*

To be practical, you must first have a very clear vision of your goal, of where you are going. From this point of view, take money for example. An ideal which may be several hundred years ahead of its time, we don't know: money should be a power which belongs to nobody and which should be controlled by the most universal wisdom present. Put on the earth someone who has a vision vast enough to be able to know the needs of the earth and precise enough to be able to tell where the money should go – you understand, we are very far from that, aren't we? For the moment, the gentleman still says, "This is mine", and when he is generous, he says, "I give it to you." That's not it.

But there is a long way to go between what we are and what must be. And for that we must be very flexible, never losing sight of the goal, but knowing that we cannot reach it at one bound and that we must find the way. Well, that is much more difficult, even more difficult than to make the inner discovery. Truly speaking, that should have been made before coming here.

For there is a starting-point: when you have found within yourself the light that never wavers, the presence which can guide you with certitude, then you become aware that constantly, in everything that happens, there is something to be learnt, and that in the present state of matter there is always a progress to be made. That is how one should come, eager to find out at every minute the progress to be made. To have a life that wants to grow and perfect itself, that is what the collective ideal of Auroville should be: "A life that wants to grow and perfect itself", and above all, not in the same way for everyone – each one in his own way.

Well, now there are thirty of you, it is difficult, isn't it? When there are thirty thousand of you, it will be easier, because, naturally, there will be many more possibilities. You are the pioneers, you have the most difficult task, but I feel it is the most interesting one. Because you must establish in a concrete, durable and growing way the attitude that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson of the day... Each sunrise is an opportunity to make a discovery. So, with that state of mind, you find out. Everyone does.

And the body needs activity: if you keep it inactive, it will begin to revolt by becoming sick and so on. It needs an activity, it really needs an activity like planting flowers, building a house, something really material. You must feel it. Some people do exercises, some ride bicycles, there are countless activities, but in your little group you must all come to an agreement so that each one can find the activity which suits his temperament, his nature and his need. But not with ideas. Ideas are not much good, ideas give you preconceptions, for example, "That is a good work, that work is not worthy of me," and all that sort of nonsense. There is no bad work – there are only bad workers. All work is good when you know how to do it in the right way. Everything. And it is a kind of communion. If you are fortunate enough to be conscious of an inner light, you will see that in your manual work it is as if you called the Divine down into things; then the communion becomes very concrete, there is a whole world to be discovered, it is marvelous.

You are young, you have plenty of time before you. And to be young, to be really young, we must always, always keep on growing, developing, progressing. Growth is the sign of youthfulness and there is no limit to the

growth of consciousness. I know old people of twenty and young people of fifty, sixty, seventy. And if one does manual work, one keeps in good health.

So now you must find the solution.

*A: All right.*

Everything you can do... there are all sorts of things, all sorts. And you should see among yourselves how it can be arranged. You will come and tell me, all right?

*B: Yes, all right.*

Then, good-bye. Come again in a week.

*MCWCE, 13, pp. 310-3, 10.3.70*

At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property. To be utilized with my blessings for the welfare of all.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 213, 14.5.70*

*[Excerpt from "To Be a True Aurovilian"].*

3. The Aurovilian should lose the sense of personal possession. For our passage in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and to our action is put at our disposal according to the place we must occupy.

The more we are consciously in contact with our inner being, the more the exact means are given to us.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 214, 13.6.70*

*In Auroville "all is collective property." Does this mean that everything can be used by everyone? Or should things be given only to those who treat them well?*

*I have also noticed that delicate pieces of equipment become attached to one person and do not work well if they are lent to others.*

All this implies a consciousness which is not very widespread on earth.

This does not mean that things should be given to people who do not know how to use them.

What is needed to administer Auroville is a consciousness free from all conventions and conscious of the supramental Truth. I am still waiting for someone like that. Each one must do his best to achieve that.

*MCWCE, 13, pp. 214-5, 15.7.70*

*Aurela Soap Industries had charged the first pan for making 501 Brand soap on 21.02.72. One soap tablet was offered today to Mother. Even the markings on the wrapper were noticed by her. Champaklal will send it for washing clothes.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 124, 24.2.72*

*Auroville has taken 26 lakhs from the State Bank of India. The lands are given as security. Six lakhs are to be repaid by 30.06.72 and the balance by 31.12.72. It is not expected that we will accumulate this big sum to be paid off at one time. So, although we are in financial shortage at present, from the monies which come I can go on repaying 50% to the Bank. Mother said, "Yes, yes. This is what should be done."*

\*

*The Polyester unit's construction has stopped for want of money. Louis Cohen could not bring money from France. The bank is willing to give money for it. It is an industrial unit and repayment can be made out of its earnings.*

*Mother approved.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 149, 3.4.72*

*Mother made a card for Auroshilpam, the Sanskrit name for Auroindustries, the industrial sector of Auroville.*  
Shyam Sunder, *Down Memory Lane*, p. 149, 4.4.72

*In the Industrial sector of Auroville we have got sufficient lands for four five industries. We wish to start Workshops, Soap, etc.*

*Mother liked the idea of starting.*

*Regarding the optical lens industry in particular and industries in general there, Mother answered that we could have local paid labour, but as for technicians from other places, they should be those who have understood and liked and accepted Auroville and its life. "Otherwise", she said, "you will not come out of the old thing."*

Shyam Sunder, *Down Memory Lane*, p. 165, 17.4.72

*A technician candidate for Auroville who wanted Auroville to bear his expenses from the beginning although he has money, was asked to wait until he understands and accepts Auroville's ideal and way of life.*

Shyam Sunder, *Down Memory Lane*, p. 170-1, 27.4.72

*Jean Pierre [later known as Bhagawandas], Louis [Cohen] and Jacques have returned after a month from Bombay where they had gone to bring money for the Polyester unit. They haven't brought any money. (Mother had a laugh). They have procured some orders for decorative things in polyester. (Samples were shown to Mother). They want to make it self-supporting by external orders and wish to know if it is in accordance with Mother's will.*

*Mother asked, "Where will it be produced?"*

*"At Aspiration."*

*"That is a place for experiences. It can be there."*

*She wanted to know more about polyester.*

*In the end she said that it will be good if it were done well. She also added that Auroville is for new things.*

Shyam Sunder, *Down Memory Lane*, p. 177, 11.5.72

*[This text on industries, appearing in Syham Sunder's journal, is particularly relevant because the Mother did sign a similar one in 1969 (see page 13). As there are only marginal changes, these are to be considered the Mother's consistent guidelines for industries (and productive units in general). This includes "Since the requirements of the Aurovilians are completely looked after by Auroville, the question of salary does not arise. This objective, which should not in any case be forgotten or delayed in its application, is the ideal to be attained." Here is the text:]*

*(A note put up before Mother on 23.5.1972 and signed by her)*

#### Some guidelines for setting up industries at Auroville

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, pp. 180-81, 23.5.72*

*Ved Prakash letter.*

*Mother said that it is a good chance for him to work in Auroville. His should be the first industry there. The Aspiration people are to be told not to meddle in his work; they have nothing to do with it. Aspiration is not Auroville; real Auroville has not started.<sup>5</sup>*

*Mother does not agree to see him every week for the work.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 182, 26.5.72*

*The soap unit is to be set up at Aurogarage.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 182, 28.5.72*

*I spoke to Mother about Roger's letter to me and Mother's approval for the soap industry in the industrial zone of Auroville.*

*Mother confirmed it, also the fact that Roger is in charge of the architecture of Auroville. She laid stress on harmony.*

*(...)*

*In the evening I informed Mother that I have asked the soap industry man to construct at Aurogarage and that when Roger comes she can reassure him that he is the only person responsible for the Auroville architecture and its execution.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 184, 1.6.72*

*The question was raised regarding Aurofood being shown as a part of Auroville when it is neither on the Auroville land nor run according to the Auroville way nor does any part of its income come to Auroville.*

*Mother said that the Aurofood man [Manibhai Patel] should be asked whether it is part of Auroville.*

*Down Memory Lane, p. 185, 2.6.72*

*Aurela Soap Industries have offered Rs 5,000/= to Auroville. We expect more sums now. The sum of Rs 5,000/= will go to meet a part of our food and rent expenses for the members.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 207, 4.8.72*

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<sup>5</sup> The Mother is reported as having said "I am a benevolent dictator". So, for example, she repeatedly made clear that no one was to interfere with her work with Roger Anger, the chief architect whom she went on minutely instructing, day in and day out, about the plans for Matrimandir and the town. From the above quote, it appears that she also had the same attitude towards industrial operations and the first company that was to be established in Auroville in 1972.

*Louis [Cohen] wanted Mother's authorisation to operate the Bank account of Auropolyester. Mother said, "After the Bank loan is repaid."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 214, 24.8.72*

*The subject of the soap industry came up again. Mother's remark,*

*"I do not change my decision. When I say a thing, for me it is done, and then I forget it. I had thought it was done. Why quarrel? It is out of my consciousness."*

*I prayed to Mother for her help in this knotty problem.*

*And she helped.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 221, 9.9.72*

*Mother signed the resolution authorising loans from SBI to Auropolyester.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 245, 15.11.72*

*Industries in Auroville should pay for Aurovilians if they are prospering. If any industry is in difficulty, I have not to ask for it.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 268, 23.1.73*

*Aurofood is not on Auroville land. Nor is it contributing anything to Auroville in money or by produce. Is it correct to include Aurofood in Auroville brochures? (Mother nodded negatively.) Even Roger asked the television team to go to Aurofood.*

*Mother remarked:*

*"When they are having Auroville's name, they should contribute at least something to Auroville."*

*Manibhai has offered personally big amounts to Mother.*

*"That cannot be doubted."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 269-70, 29.1.73*

*To the Bhatt couple, confused due to difficulties in the soap industry, suggesting sale of the unit in Pondicherry and change to Auromodel, Mother replied, "If you run away from difficulties, you will have to run away from life."*

*Mother doesn't like the change. She remarked, "Life, everywhere, is full of difficulties."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 275, 18.2.73*

## *The yoga of wealth*

After visiting the Ashram for fifteen years Shyam Sunder, a successful lawyer from an extremely wealthy Marvadi family, surrendered all he had to the Mother and settled at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, which in turn provided for his needs and those of his wife and children. Many other wealthy Indians likewise surrendered, eventually living in single rooms provided by the Ashram. We find such people in all ashrams and true spiritual communities. Despite a refined way of living where, in terms of material possessions, individuals have everything, something within is starving, leading them to the pursuit of the highest spiritual goal. Nor is this an exclusive feature of India: such people take birth in all countries and all ages and the quest is same. The fact that, particularly during Sri

Aurobindo's and the Mother's years, their Ashram has harboured a concentration of such personalities goes along with their system of yoga, which an elite humanity finds especially appealing. To some ashramites, the Mother confided living spaces largely exceeding their needs and with which they did nothing. For the Mother had her own unfathomable ways to look after her children and no sadhana is alike. One of such cases was Parichand – like his relative Rishabhchand, a foremost sadhak and cultured man – a hard worker who was in charge of all the Ashram gardens. Then there was Hu Tsu, the Chinese mandarin and scholar – and the artist, Jayantilal, who turned the space the Mother had allotted to him into the Ashram Archives, which he founded, keeping just one room for himself.

The scholar, Tehmi, who was an authority on "Savitri", and her parents equally surrendered their wealth, spending the rest of their lives in their single rooms in Golconde. Formerly involved in the silk trade like his well-to-do family, the highly cultured Rishabhchand, the author of a well-known biography on nationalist Sri Aurobindo as well as an excellent introduction to Integral Yoga, also lived in one room, as did other members of his family who joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram one by one. Hailing from an affluent family and a reputed professor of psychology at Delhi university, Indra Sen joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a few years after his wife (one of the Mother's *sakis* or companions) and two children. During the last years of his life, this savant also felt the urge to withdraw into a single basic room of the largest Ashram guest house.

Then there was Rajangam, a graduate from a Medical College, who forced his Brahmin family to give him his share of property to place at Sri Aurobindo's feet, with all his belongings, including brooms, packed in bundles! The section of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram complex where the present Reception and Reading Room are located was probably bought with his money. As for himself, he lived in a room within the Sri Aurobindo Ashram's precincts, for which he opened the gate at 4.30 in the morning and closed it at 11.30 at night. The Italian countess, Marta Avogadro, blissfully working at the binding section of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, also lived in a single room of an antiquated French house, which was transformed into an Ashram guest house. After a whole life wasted playing bridge she once told me, laughing...

At the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, to live in a simple room is common practice, often with toilets and showers shared in common. The first example was that of major sadhaks living in the Ashram compound. Even Golconde, the most prestigious Ashram guest house and run according to very precise rules, has common bathroom facilities. There was also the case of six people, without any family ties, living in a single room on the Mother's instruction. One of the Mother's attendants shared a bathroom and shower with another five ladies, all living in the same old house next to the Ashram. For, as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother observed, material needs drop in a spontaneous, effortless way as people advance on the path. No outer rules are needed, one just cannot live otherwise, this being a foremost sign of spiritual conversion. In traditional yoga this essential tenet is called *vairagya*, detachment from worldly needs; this is a basic requisite for any yogic path.

In February 1971, the Mother asked Shyam Sunder to be the Liaison with Auroville, adding, "*I will hold you morally responsible for all that happens in Auroville.*" There are two written statements by the Mother about the responsibilities she entrusted to Shyam Sunder. In "Down Memory Lane" Shyam Sunder observes "*The land for the Matrimandir building had not yet been purchased. Its construction was a priority of which Mother had been reminding before. Land purchase for the other zones of Auroville was another neglected priority of Auroville. Regulating the admission of people to Auroville and making the people aware of the needed discipline for the Auroville life was another. Financial management was absent. I had to look after almost every detail.*" (pp.89-90)

For this purpose, Shyam Sunder used to report daily to the Mother, receiving instructions directly from her. The following correspondence between the Mother and Shyam Sunder is taken from “On the Path”. Like the rest of the book, it is a moving witness to the soul’s yearning for light; the following excerpts are specifically about the struggle to free oneself from the forces of money and material possessions:

One day, if it interests you, I will explain what should be the true role and true place of money.

*Yes, Mother, I pray to You to explain the true role and place of money.*

In a truer world, towards the realization of which the creation is moving, money has to be one of the earthly forces placed at the disposal of the Divine Consciousness for its work on earth.

The first step towards this realisation is the abolition of the sense of ownership. Each one is the user and distributor of the money at his disposal – and this leads naturally to the next step: those who have the truest and vastest vision and knowledge have to become these distributors and users.

The processes to arrive at this result should be elaborated and put in execution in accordance with the need and possibilities.

29.6.69

*Isn’t the sense of ownership an attribute of the ego?*

The sense of ownership is surely a manner of being natural to the ego, but in spite of his blindness man has not the sense of ownership for the air he breathes, the water of the river or the falling rain.

1.7.69

*If the Mother has the time I can note down my financial situation in four or five pages of this note book. I want to act according to the Truth.*

Very good, I will find time to read it.

3.7.69

*My offerings to Mother are still not free from the sense that it is I who offer.*

Perhaps because that way they give me more pleasure.

11.7.69

*The pleasure of possession now appears like dust in front of self-giving.*

The pleasure of possession is a purely vital and physical thing which, to the extent that the inner being is developed and the consciousness is enlarged, gets replaced by the sense of judicious employment, and becomes a clear vision of the true use of all things.

6.8.69

*I understand that the true use of things depends on the loss of the sense of ownership and on the growth of consciousness.*

The sense of ownership belongs to the ego, and when the ego disappears the sense of ownership is replaced by the correct vision of the true use of each thing (money or object), and it remains only to act according to what one sees.

8.8.69

*I find that I still have attachment to money – direct or indirect.*

It is the contagion of collective attachment. Money is a god universally worshipped on the earth and difficult to dethrone. When it will be nothing but an instrument of divine work, the difficulty will disappear.

28.1.70

*Is it something in my vital aided by mental wisdom that preserves the dirt of money?*

The physical atmosphere is full of the suggestion and one cannot breathe without absorbing it; and the attachment in the vital comes from the collective conviction of the invincible power of money. This is the cause of almost all difficulties.

30.1.70

*One cannot breathe without absorbing what is in the terrestrial atmosphere. Mother, what is the solution?*

To become more and more constantly conscious of the Divine Presence that counterbalances marvelously everything which may be absorbed in an automatic consciousness.

9.2.70

*For most of the problems there is now only one answer: self-giving.*

When self-giving is truly and completely realised, there is no longer any problem, all becomes simple.

30.5.70

*An integral love seems to me to be the first necessity for self-giving to be integral.*

From the moment the first contact with the Supreme Lord takes place, one feels overwhelmed and enveloped by so marvellous a love that the response is spontaneous and natural.

1.6.70

*Isn't the Divine Will the only Truth to be followed in Action?*

All exists in and by the Divine Consciousness, and the place which each being and each thing occupies in the whole depends on the extent to which a thing or a being is aware of the Supreme Consciousness and identified with it.

5.6.70

## PART THREE

# THE AVATAR'S MODEL TOWN

## *The vision*

The Mother had been dreaming of an ideal society since an early age; as a young girl, she had a recurring vision of herself harbouring suffering humanity. In her youth she came across people who wished to consecrate their life at the pursuit of a noble, spiritual existence but were stuck in the dire struggle for material necessities; since then she had wished to create a place where all basic necessities were freely provided so that those spiritual travelers could concentrate full time on the inner quest. The Mother's words to a group of women in Paris in 1912, with hints of the supramental society of Gnostic beings heralded by Sri Aurobindo, her talks in 1920 to some Japanese women, all point in the same direction. Not only in terms of Yoga, but also in terms of a new world and society, the Mother was Sri Aurobindo's equal partner, as he repeatedly stressed. How is the pursuit for a new world to manifest? Sri Aurobindo wrote:

**“...there has even been the dream or a psychic prevision of a realization exceeding the individual transformation, a new earth and heaven, a city of God, a divine descent upon earth, a reign of the spiritually perfect, a kingdom of God not only within us but outside, in a collective human life. However obscure may have been some of the forms taken by this aspiration, the indication they contain of the urge of the occult spiritual being within to emergence in earth-nature is unmistakable.**

**If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth in Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit, Mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; Mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional**

**being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.”**

*Sri Aurobindo, “The Life Divine”, SABCL 19, pp. 846-847*

And the Mother:

**“The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he needs no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.”**

*CWMCE, 3, pp. 178-179, 1930-1931*

Sri Aurobindo foresaw the big change to be initiated by a spiritual community or *sangha*. For the mutational transformation that is the object of Integral Yoga cannot happen through one or two individuals alone. It needs a preliminary nucleus of individuals, eventually to be enlarged to the whole of humankind as it turns progressively more receptive. The transforming Force acts both individually and collectively by contagion; all individual progress (or regression) reflects automatically on the outer environment. Hence, the initial necessity of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where the disciples followed the path chartered by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Significantly, it was none other than the Mother herself the Shakti power who created its organizational structure, supervising it down to the least detail. Sri Aurobindo followed the work from his room, where he lived in seclusion for the last twenty-four years of material existence.

Since early on the Mother’s vision was that of an ideal town. The symbol of the Self, specifically the Mother’s symbol, with all its archetypal power, has often been expressed in the form of a mandala in all traditions. In the Thirties the Mother consistently envisioned the formation of a town named after Sri Aurobindo, where he was to live at the centre surrounded by his disciples. Encircled by walls isolating it from the external world, the town was conceived as being economically self-sufficient. The Mother considered it to be a real potential; having the dimensions of an ideal country, it was to be established on a much larger scale than her conception of Auroville three decades later. Sir Akbar, the Nizam, had offered the Mother land with a river flowing at the foot of a hillock in the state of Hyderabad that he ruled at the time.

This early vision marks the first conception of Auroville, named after Sri Aurobindo. The town was meant to develop as an ideal settlement reflecting the materialization of a spiritual transformation. At that time the architect Antonin Raymond was drawing the plans for the construction of the Golconde guest house. On the Mother’s request, he drew a mandala-like layout for Sri Aurobindo’s town, which was the material realization of the Mother’s symbol. Significantly, thirty years later, a similar plan resurfaced with the first layout designed by Roger Anger, on the Mother's request for a layout plan for Auroville and its sacred centre.

In the Fifties and early Sixties, the Mother had disclosed to a few people the urge for the realization of such a town. On 18.7.1961, she unveiled her vision of an ideal city as preliminary to the advent of the supramental world, foreseeing as well the tremendous challenge that this event implies. From Mother’s Agenda, 18.7.61:

**“What I myself have seen... was a plan that came complete in all details, but that doesn’t at all conform in spirit and consciousness with what is possible on earth now (although, in its most material manifestation, the plan was based on existing terrestrial conditions). It was the idea of an ideal city, the nucleus of a small ideal country, having only superficial and extremely limited contacts with the old world. One would already have to conceive (it’s possible) of a Power sufficient to be at once a protection against aggression or bad will (this would not be the most difficult protection to provide) and a protection (which can just barely be imagined) against infiltration and admixture... From the social or organizational standpoint, these problems are not difficult, nor from the standpoint of inner life; the problem is the relationship with what is not supramentalised – preventing infiltration or admixture, keeping the nucleus from falling back into an inferior creation during the transitional period.”**

Concluding with these words, while hitting straight at the core of the problem, the Mother observes:

**“But the problem remains: Buddha and all the rest have FIRST realised, then resumed contact with the world. That makes it very simple. But for the total realization of what I envisage, isn’t it indispensable to remain in the world?...”**

No longer an ideal town to be encircled by walls to carry on an extreme experiment in isolation from the external world, but right in the midst of it: was this the answer? This corresponds to a radical shift in the Mother’s occult strategy. When she envisioned that early town, where she would have re-located the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the fast progress of the ashramites was made possible only by isolating the Sri Aurobindo Ashram from the outer world. The number of inmates was settled around one hundred twenty, there were no new admissions and the gates were closed to visitors. The situation changed entirely with the war, by the will of both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and remained so.

Auroville was founded with even further complexities: it was meant to be not an ashram but a town; its citizens could still have a family life and were not necessarily engaged in the yogic pursuit. Simple goodwill, the thirst for progress and the ideal of human unity was sufficient to gain admittance. On such a broad basis, with all the risks that this entails, the experiment was launched.

In 1963, the Mother requested the Sri Aurobindo Society to announce at a conference her call for a new town and to begin fundraising. At a gathering of people from all nationalities, as living symbols of human unity, Auroville was founded on February 28, 1968. The Mother temporarily confided the management to the Pondy-based Administrative Committee of Auroville (C.A.A.). The Sri Aurobindo Society, of which the Mother was the President and Navajata the Secretary, was entrusted with the financial and material assets. From 1971 onwards, day-to-day’s affairs were carried on via Shyam Sunder, a brilliant lawyer and millionaire, who had surrendered his fortune to the Mother. He met with her daily, acting as the liaison between her and the community, to which he conveyed her messages and instructions, often in writing, which he received from the Mother.

In 1970 the Mother had approved, with a full-page ‘Blessings’, the fundraising brochure of the Matrimandir, which included an itemised breakdown of time-lines and costs, to be completed according to the plans indicated there. At first the Mother expected the Matrimandir to be completed by 1972, Sri Aurobindo’s Birth Centenary Year, then by 1978, her own Birth Centenary year. Perusing the brochure, it appears that the original concept the Mother had approved was a mixture of High Tech and standard architecture. The light-weight tubular metal structure was to be assembled within two months and covered by a light membrane. For this last purpose the rust-proof net enwrapping the surplus warships that were sunk in the ocean when World War II was over, was the first solution that came to Roger Anger’s mind. The prefabricated structure supported disks in polyester or a similar material that was so light that the disks would have moved with the wind, graciously emitting sounds.

The final lay-out of the town, popularly known as the ‘galaxy’, which the Mother had approved in March 1968, was also portrayed in that brochure – as it was in all other official publications. Repeatedly stating that no one was to interfere, the Mother, herself being the sole authority on both the town and Matrimandir, confided the execution of the plans to her chief architect, Roger Anger. For this purpose, Roger Anger met daily with the Mother for six months a year, from 1965 onwards. Working out the detailed plans with her, he then returned to his studio in Paris to work out their execution with his collaborators. Nor was Roger’s task confined to working on the town and Matrimandir alone. Along with these responsibilities Roger was receiving the Mother’s minute instructions on how life in Auroville was to be organized; Roger’s archive is a gold mine for the researcher trying to reconstruct the atmosphere of Auroville during the Mother’s years, under her direct guidance.

After the Mother left her body on November 17, 1973, the internal dissensions that she had managed to keep under control burst open. Some conciliatory attempts between the C.A.A. and Aurovilians failed. An insurgency against the Sri Aurobindo Society in the mid-seventies took place in the name of self-government. Other major problems became apparent as well. In the uproar that followed everything was put into question, including the original concepts of both the town and Matrimandir approved by the Mother, her will for 50,000 inhabitants, the “Auroville Prosperity” in kind system and so on.

By 1978 a deadlock had been reached, further exacerbated because of the lack of funds that resulted from the protracted war raging between Aurovilians and the Sri Aurobindo Society, and which had heavy implications at all levels. Sometimes there wasn’t money enough to eat and Aurovilians sunk below survival level. The newly introduced system of ‘Pour Tous baskets’ was an extreme attempt to counteract the chronic shortage of money, for which even the most basic necessities often could not be covered. And yet, Aurovilians who went through those terrible times have often told me, with a heart-rending smile, that those were the most beautiful years! As a matter of fact, the precarious financial situation had begun long before the open conflict itself, accumulating to the point that finally, in 1977, when a peak of 18 lakhs debt had been reached, the State Bank of India refused to further extend its loan to Auroville through its legal representative at the time, the Sri Aurobindo Society.

The question became: how could the grand plan of the town and its golden Matrimandir carry on? Aurovilians who kept a distance from both parties, known as ‘the Neutrals’, also underwent considerable hardships. The conflict reached extreme peaks and court cases followed court cases, forcing at last the Government of India to intervene. At first designating a Custodian to oversee the situation as an emergency provision, the matter was later settled for good with the Auroville Foundation Act, passed by the Parliament of India on September 29, 1988, which stated “...it is necessary in the public interest to acquire the undertakings of Auroville and to vest them in a body corporate established for the purpose.”

## *Towards the ideal society*

The Mother’s early messages for Auroville may appear to have been very general, perhaps in order to attract a large variety of people on the basis of goodwill and human unity. However, as the abyss between vision and reality kept widening, the messages became more and more sharp, until, in her latest years, the Mother shifted the focus to the unique purpose of Auroville, to be “the cradle of the superman” heralding the advent of the supramental world and a society governed by it. This is Auroville – and the consciousness to be achieved. For Auroville, named after Sri Aurobindo, is “the Avatar’s model town”, “the city of God” that has been sought down the ages. But the Avatar cannot fulfill his mission alone; a preliminary nucleus of individuals is needed. To provide this was the function of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a spiritual community or *sangha*. But Auroville, conceived as a town of 50,000 inhabitants, exceeds the dimensions of a *sangha*. In fact, it is meant to be the incubator of the ideal society, the new *satyayuga* or ‘golden age’ that a spiritualised humanity alone can make true. It is this ideal that defines the destiny of Auroville; its realization or failure determining its fate.

**“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.”**

*MCWCE, 13, p. 197, August 1966*

**“We would like to make Auroville the cradle of the Superman”**

*MCWCE, 13, p. 197, 1966*

Always behind even the Mother's simplest messages to the Aurovilians, those quoted over and over again, is the Truth-Consciousness or Supramental Gnosis. The guidelines given to us by the Mother are those of a spiritual society. As she observes, a truly spiritual being has no material needs. The treasure is within; it is a jewel that no outer riches can buy. Thus, commenting on the nature of the true hierarchy in Auroville, the Mother stated:

**“There again, X once said—he was speaking of the true hierarchy, the hierarchy based on each one’s power of consciousness—the individual or individuals who are at the very summit necessarily have the least needs; their material needs become less as their capacity of material vision grows. And that is very true. It is automatic and spontaneous, not the result of an effort: the wider the consciousness, the more it embraces things and realities—the less its material needs, automatically, because they lose all their importance and value. The need for material necessities is reduced to a minimum, which will itself change with the progressive development of Matter.**

**And that is easily recognisable, isn’t it? It is difficult to act the part.”**

*MCW03, 13, pp. 269-274, 10.4.68*

**“There is a psychological viewpoint: there is something very interesting, it's that the material needs diminish in proportion to the spiritual consciousness. Not (as Sri Aurobindo said), not through asceticism, but the attention, the concentration of the being changes its field...”**

*Mother’s Agenda, 11, 25.3.70*

Did the Mother not stress that the first necessity is the inner discovery, and that this should happen *before* coming to Auroville? Then only do things make sense. In those days not even the bicycles, to be shared because their number was insufficient, belonged to anyone in particular! Everything was collective property, with the Mother’s blessings, to be used for the wellbeing of all! Then the 1969 concept of Auroville with 42,000 people living in the residential zone in high raise buildings, progressively sloping down, acquires its true significance. The town was originally meant to be built within five years thanks to the newly discovered systems engineering (using computers); once the town was completed the Mother would have selected the inhabitants. The Ford Foundation had offered five crores of rupees to carry on the preliminary feasibility studies. According to the original concept, the smaller the area individual Aurovilians occupied, the closer to the Matrimandir would they live. Bachelors were allotted 27 sq ms. The town was to be encircled by a luxuriant green belt where, apart from guardians in temporary huts, no one would have lived. All polluting traffic was stopped outside the green belt, whereas inside the town only bicycles and slow electric vehicles were allowed. All fast traffic and the carrying of goods were to happen underground via electronically driven capsules.

It is within the context of this futuristic city, that “town of the future”, fostering the transition to a new species, that the Mother's guidelines unveil their true dimensions for the building of a new society of free beings representative of Auroville’s group-soul. As in the ultimate stage of Communism, at the border line with Anarchy, there is no central government and no police, no outer hierarchies and no social classes, no taxes and no money circulation, and no private property. Ideally, there is no more family either. In the Mother’s Auroville, needs are reduced to “the most elementary necessities”, to be met by the community at large in exchange for a minimum of five hours a day work for the community (six hours, if Sunday is a holiday); work for oneself or one's family is not counted. Farmers and industrialists would contribute in kind, while sales of surplus goods to the outside would bring in cash for the township. Money came last, and was the medium of exchange only if nothing else of

value was offered. To be an Aurovilian was to be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness. The way is self-government by the psychic being, individually and collectively in, what the Mother called, “divine anarchy”.

**“It is a sort of adaptation of the communist system, but not in a spirit of leveling; 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.”**

*MCW03, 13, pp. 266-7, 30.12.67*

The Mother stated that money is in the hands of asuric forces and must be returned to the Divine; only those in contact with a higher consciousness can administer it. Banning all money circulation along with all private property, three months after founding Auroville, the Mother introduced a collective ‘in kind’ system called “Auroville Prosperity”, an organization paralleling the one she had established since decades as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Prosperity Service. Those who did useful work for the community were taken care of on the basis of minimum needs; this meant free food, toiletries, basic items, simple clothing (shorts and T-shirts were the most popular), day-to-day necessities – plus a little pocket money. The Mother’s message for the recipients of these essential items, distributed to Aurovilians through the “Auroville Prosperity” system, was: **“Auroville is not meant for the satisfaction of desires but for the growth of the true consciousness.”** Three years later the Mother gave this message to be displayed in the rooms where the Prosperity items were distributed: **“One does not live in Auroville to be comfortable but to grow in consciousness and to serve the Divine.”**

To someone asking “How will work be organised and distributed in Auroville?” the Mother replied, talking in terms of ‘subsistence’:

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

A major difference from the Ashram was that, in the pioneering community of Aspiration, and later with the Matrimandir Camp and the mushrooming new communities, people lived in huts, the first thirty-four paid by an Aurovilian who also lived in one of them. At the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, under Mother’s direct supervision, life was simplified to the utmost thanks to the efficient organization of even the smallest details, allowing the sadhak to fully concentrate on the inner quest, where work as service to the Divine played the major role. In contrast to life at the Ashram, life in Auroville was so tough that even a drop of water was a conquest! Most of the year, scorched by the burning sun, the place was a barren desert, only to be flooded by torrential rains during the monsoon season. When a choice needed to be made between watering the newly planted vegetables and trees versus satisfying human needs, it was often the trees and vegetables that won!

In the Mother’s vision there were obviously no servants. As we read in the Mother’s Agenda, a new world cannot be built with coolies! As for the workers and skilled technicians, these were to be hired on a temporary basis only, while waiting for an Aurovilian to pick up the job – or the worker’s/technician’s integration as an Aurovilian. The Mother emphasized the need for manual work, the body’s prayer. Thus, the pioneers worked in the fields, built their own huts and, from 1971 on, worked at the Matrimandir construction site. Many offered their work there, at least on shifts, or on special occasions like concreting on full moon or *darshan* days. Integration of the villagers was encouraged by all means; but before this happened, whenever the worker accepted, the Mother recommended the Prosperity-like ‘in kind’ system instead of wages; the workers’ children were welcomed in the Auroville’s school on an equal basis. The Mother also sought the creation of model villages along with rural cooperatives, where villagers and Aurovilians were to work side by side; not only in order to make Auroville self-sufficient but also as an effective training in human unity.

## *The true guidelines: the Mother's*

On what basis were people accepted by the Mother for the Auroville's experiment? Between 1986 and 1990, as a member of the Laboratory of Evolution and the Centre for Human Unity, I put together a series of stenciled compilations on Yoga and Auroville during the Mother's years. Financed with grants from the Government of India, these were distributed for free to the whole community. The purpose for the initiative was to share the attitude the Mother expected from us, along with the Mother's concept and reasons for the establishment of the 50,000 inhabitant's town. In the course of that research I came across the guidelines formulated during the Mother's time and approved by her; I have copies of the original leaflet and related documents, kept in the Auroville archives. The admission leaflet is a simple document revolving around the Mother's text "To be a true Aurovilian"; some basic information and questions are also included. Auroville's first inhabitants were admitted on the basis of these guidelines.

Life in Auroville was meant to begin with the inner quest, which would have a determining effect on the outer life. This transformation was to proceed hand in hand with the coming forward of those minimum needs in the name of which the Mother had started the Auroville Prosperity system, in March 1968, two weeks after founding Auroville. What, then, were the Mother's real guidelines, in their practical aspect (outlining the inward quest would take volumes)? Not only as they are presented in the original leaflet, but taking into account other essential documents, such as statements by the Mother as well as drafts by her chief architect, Roger Anger, her designated Auroville liaison officer, Shyam Sunder, and other people as well, all which she approved? This is the outcome:

- 1. The inner discovery: the psychic opening.**
- 2. Aspiration to reach Auroville's true consciousness.**
- 3. Goodwill.**
- 4. Nurturing human unity.**
- 5. Working for the community five hours a day, including Sundays; this was later changed into a minimum of six hours a day, if Sunday was excluded. One's activity should correspond to the effective needs of the community. Work for oneself or one's family doesn't count. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should work as receptionists at guesthouses, kindergartens etc.**
- 6. Newcomers who have no money but do a useful work are taken in charge by Auroville right away and basic accommodations are allotted to them.**
- 7. Minimum needs. "When Auroville meets the individual's needs and requirements, one is expected to offer to Auroville all that he has and can in terms of material possessions." [Mother's years form].**
- 8. The children born in Auroville are naturally Aurovilians and Auroville has the full responsibility; however, this ceases if the parents take them away.**
- 9. All is collective property, to be utilized for the welfare of all, with Mother's blessings.**
- 10. All industries/productive units etc. belong to Auroville as a whole; each case is to be considered separately, but within a context where private property and money circulation have no place.**
- 11. Paid workers and paid technicians are allowed only on a temporary basis, until an Aurovilian picks up the job, and anyhow for not more than one year.**
- 12. No servants.**
- 13. No politics.**
- 14. No drugs, no alcohol and ideally no tobacco.**
- 15. No violence.**
- 16. No police, only battalions of Auroville guards made up of athletes and gymnasts.**
- 17. Integration of the villagers. Preferably replacing the wages, the Mother had instituted for the workers and their families an in kind system similar to that of the "Auroville Prosperity", as long as the workers weren't ready to join Auroville. Their children went to school together with the Auroville children.**

18. **No polluting traffic. Collective transport, bicycles, electric cars etc. (now, solar system!) at a speed of no more than 15 kms per hour.**
19. **No chemical fertilizers and pesticides.**
20. **Abiding by the laws of India, the country hosting Auroville: this covers the whole spectrum. During Mother's years people with a turbulent past had been accepted, both at the Ashram and Auroville – but on the basis that this was their past to be worked out. As for those undergoing a period of mental imbalance, the Mother had advised a protected, secluded place.**

Having fulfilled the basic conditions the person was accepted as an Aurovilian within one year, although this period could be shortened or lengthened according to the peculiarities of the situation. It should be noted that the Mother never enforced the practice of Integral Yoga as an absolute necessity. This would have been in contradiction to the call for human unity, as well with the *sanatana dharma* and the oneness of all creeds and religions, heralded by Sri Aurobindo since his revolutionary years and by all yogis. Auroville, where simple goodwill is sufficient to gain admission, is not the Sri Aurobindo Ashram! In the application form one is simply asked, “*How did you come in contact with Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Sri Aurobindo Society and/or Auroville?*” and, “*Have you studied any literature of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? Which books?*” – and nothing more. In fact, in connection to Auroville, the Mother referred to Sri Aurobindo's yoga only twice.

### *A first embryo of communal life within Mother's vision*

One should be aware of the role that Aspiration was meant to play in the context of the Mother's vision. The problems of organisation, different ways of life and the many challenges of Aspiration's pioneers were discussed step by step with the Mother; her comments were displayed on the community's blackboard. The inhabitants of Aspiration were living in graceful huts, paid by an Aurovilian who also lived there, with electricity, running water and toilets. They cultivated flowers and bushes without the need for any gardener, as in those early days there were no servants or hired labour. The meals were taken collectively at the cafeteria; the food was excellent and included meat and fish (as long as the financial conditions permitted it), various salads etc. The laundry service was provided by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Daily transport to and from Pondy was operated by a community bus service; in Pondy the Aurovilians had free access to the bicycles kept in the yard of the Sri Aurobindo Society, could have their free meals there and sleep on the roof-terrace, if they wished so. The vehicles at the disposal of the community were meant for work only. People traveling to Madras would do so by taking the ordinary inter-city bus and the ticket could be booked via an Auroville service.

The Aurovilian chosen by the Mother for liaison with the Pondy-based members of the C.A.A. (Comite' Administratif d' Auroville), the book-keeping and management of Aspiration, received money for the community once a month. All were provided with the basic needs, within the limits accorded by the possibilities of the moment. The system was similar to that of Sri Aurobindo Ashram “Prosperity”, but with a larger selection of items. When the first productive unit, *Toujours Mieux*, began operating, the Aspiration “Prosperity” system still continued to provide for all members of the community.

Everyone shared in the work. Some worked in productive units, while others attended to the chores of the community's daily life, often until late in the evening. The more intensely they worked, the happier they professed to be. There was no money exchanged and no servants, the Mother having stated that neither had their place in the true Auroville. Life was simple. Bicycles were available, but only a limited number and they belonged to the community as a whole. Due to the shortage of huts, the Mother had proposed night-shifts somewhere else, a few kms away, for the inhabitants of Aspiration. The construction of a dormitory to house twenty-five people, considered indispensable at the time, was also approved by the Mother. Roger Anger also made a request to the C.A.A. for the construction of a 50 bed-dormitory, which was granted.

Tamilian integrated families had been given huts like the rest of the community. If the transition were too sudden for the adults, it proved to be a more spontaneous process for the children, the values they assimilated being but a mirror of that for which Aurovilians strived. On February 1968, the Mother was asked whether “*at the beginning of Auroville, the Westerners’ houses would be different from those foreseen for the Tamils (experimental huts).*” She replied, **“Those who can’t accept to have the same houses are not ready to live in Auroville. Meanness must cease. It is not only houses, but the soul state that must be built in Auroville.”**

Auromodel was meant to evolve out of this preliminary collective experiment. At a certain stage, the community would have shifted to Auromodel and the huts in Aspiration would have been inhabited by the villagers. This was part of the pilot experiment for model villages foreseen by the Mother. She had also envisaged co-operatives of villagers farming together with the Aurovilians on an equal basis. In fact, the Mother considered the local villagers to be Auroville’s first inhabitants. On 23.11.1969 she wrote:

**“To the inhabitants of Aspiration:**

**A relationship that is not only cordial but friendly with the inhabitants of the neighbouring village is absolutely indispensable. For the realization of Auroville the first step is to establish a true human fraternity – any shortcoming in this regard is a grave mistake which can compromise the whole work.”**

And again, on February 8, 1972:

**“... a simple and ignorant peasant here is, in his heart, closer to the Divine than all the intellectuals of Europe.**

**All those who want to become Aurovilians must know this and behave accordingly; otherwise they are unworthy of being Aurovilians.”**

Auromodel, expected to house 2,000-3,000 technicians and staff members needed to build the town, was meant to be a prototype to experiment with life, work and organization in all the multiple complexity of Auroville. The town was to be built on the basis of that communal experience. The transition from Aspiration as a village to Auromodel as a preliminary urban settlement, and finally Auroville as a futuristic town, was to take place along with the individuals’ evolution towards the Auroville consciousness informing the whole of life and society. Far from being imposed by external means and authorities, one’s being an Aurovillian would progressively attain to maturity by the force of that “inner discovery” that the Mother saw as having to begin much before joining Auroville, the one reason for being called here and the sole lever of transformation.

### *Apprenticeship for the Auroville consciousness*

Auroville, not unlike Sri Aurobindo's system of Integral Yoga, begins with average humankind and the complexity of unregenerate human nature. Both individually and collectively, the ideal is attained step by step. Hence there was initially a need for Auromodel, expected to be the living quarters for the technicians and volunteers required to build the town. In its original purity, the prototype of Auromodel, “the advanced colony” of the future Auroville, was meant to be much more than a mere experimentation of housing models, futuristic technologies, research on alternative sources of energy and materials etc. Meant to be a prototype to experiment with life, work and organization in all the multiple complexity of Auroville, it was based on the necessity of learning to function as a group-soul, while experimenting collectively with new aims and modes of life. Striving inwardly to reach the new consciousness the Mother expected from Aurovilians, along with communal interaction and experience, it was expected that the town would emerge spontaneously through the harmonious blend of both attitudes as conducive to the one goal.

All the practical details of day to day life had to be worked out with precision and integrity in search of a synthesis

where spirit and matter, inner and outer, individual and collective are one reality. Self-governance, radiating from within, is an indispensable corollary of the steadfast ascension towards the ideal society that only the inner change, individual and collective, can make true. Arbitrary authorities, self-imposed oligarchies or autocratic machinery have no place in a self-governed community where the sole ruler is the psychic being, which must be nurtured in all ways until it comes forward and thoroughly takes the lead, both individually, collectively.

The more one grows beyond the narrow self, the more one unites with the universal soul. The physical reality of the Mother's vision of the town, or its negation, corresponds with the awakening (or not) of the group-soul. For Auroville has no meaning if it is just an ordinary town. The need for living together, the need for sharing arise from within; individuals then cease living in isolation at the centre of their own world in order to meet and unify with others. This is the embryo of the group-soul. Ideally, this small nucleus of people, sharing aspirations and aims, grows progressively into a larger one, while the *sadhana* evolves gradually from an individual level to a collective one. This progression eventually culminates with the entire town becoming a single group-soul. The process starts all over again as other 'Aurovilles' are born.

At first, simplicity and frugality may be dictated because of limited means, but the more one evolves, the more this becomes a natural way of life. When concentrated within, all that is not essential loses value and material cravings become irrelevant. The means to build Auroville are given in proportion to the sincerity, the intensity of aspiration, the integrality of surrender and the wideness of the quest. And the more that is given, the more beautiful the town will be. Through an attitude of detachment and the absence of personal needs, individual efforts produce a collective well being; everything is shared from within as from without.

Progress and unending research then attain an inner dimension. Beauty, harmony, art and culture become a living part of one's daily life, a permanent education and self-education towards the new consciousness of Auroville. The buildings are collective and similar or interrelated activities are concentrated together echoing the inner process. Architecture, space, forms, nature, indeed the entire environment become a radiant expression of Auroville's group-soul, the outer beauty mirroring the inner one. Humans also become universal, exceeding their tiny selves to merge into the One.

Time does not exist, when Vision seeks to manifest – yesterday, today or tomorrow, a sparkle of eternity in the ocean vastness. No one has ever dared the path. No one can tell us how. A town in quest of its group-soul.

#### PART FOUR

### THE "AUROVILLE PROSPERITY" SERVICE: MINIMUM NEEDS, IN KIND!

To understand the spirit behind Mother's creation, three months after founding Auroville, of the "Auroville Prosperity" service, in kind, one should be aware of how the Prosperity service functions at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, this being the model. Besides the meals at the Dining Room (whose menu had been decided by none else than Sri Aurobindo) and the basic Prosperity items, via its own departments the Ashram provides to the inmates simple clothing, leather or wood chappals, kitchen vessels, essential furniture and appliances and whatever other item, service or repair is necessary for day-to-day living.

Lodging is provided as well, consisting in most cases of a single room, without any luxury, with or without bathroom facilities and/or kitchenette, attached or to be shared. After the Mother discarded the body the Ashram has built for its inmates a number of new guest houses following the same pattern, with the scope to allot to each

and all a decent place to live, providing all the essential facilities, yet without waste of space or money for fanciful arrangements. The scope being to simplify life to the extreme so that the sadhak can consecrate his/her full potential in work for the Divine: Mother's old dream coming true.

However by Mother's inscrutable will there have always been exceptions, in both directions. When the exception was on the small side some astounding situations arose. This was certainly true regarding Pavitra, a French engineer who, having graduated at the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique, had turned afterwards into an adept of Tibetan Buddhism. On Mother's instructions Pavitra went on sleeping... under a bench! After endless tests, the Mother stated that Pavitra (one of the greatest sadhaks) was a reincarnation of Sri Ramakrishna. But there were other 'Ramakrishnas', at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as there are in all ashrams, coerced into impossible situations yet living content on the basis of no material needs.

Auroville is not an ashram and such rigors are not demanded for our being here; nevertheless the pioneers, young and brave, had to undergo considerable hardships because of the primitive condition of the newly-founded place. While to live in simple huts was common practice (in selected areas this still happens), the Mother never wanted us to shrink to poverty levels; yet even today some Aurovilians are given unacceptable places to live, or not even these, and are forced to find accommodations in the villages – in sharp contrast to the opulence of the many. By allowing this, a social order is established upon extreme disparities, like anywhere else in the world. Is the trend reversible? The answer depends on how deep is the quest, human unity being the starting point.

The way the Mother pointed us is that of material needs progressively shrinking to nothing; which goes hand in hand with the inner progress, both being interdependent and equally necessary to the establishment of a spiritual society. Then the craving for expensive dwellings (to be maintained by servants; even people living in tiny places are addicted to servants) doesn't even arise – nor does the bent for fancy food and entertainments, here awkward, for exuberant and costly living, for polluting private transport, for the summer exodus (in most cases protracted for months, year in and year out) depleting Auroville of most of its population and so on.

There is no ceiling to 'needs', money is never enough. However a moment comes, as one advances on the path, when there is nothing to renounce to. All material cravings collapse, effortlessly, giving way to the real thing: sadhana as service to the Divine, without expecting anything in return, just content to serve. When the spiritual conversion is made a few square metres to rest at night, simple food and inexpensive clothing are enough. The Mother was the foremost example of parsimonious living. Underneath the precious clothes offered to her by the devotees she wore mended lingerie! Handling the humblest things with such a graceful touch that they seemingly lasted forever, the Mother recycled every scrap of paper! I was fed with such gems by one of Mother's attendants, this being the type of sadhana that that yogini had picked up, straight from the Mother, at whose direct service she was for twenty-eight years, eight hours a day.

In the years immediately preceding World War II the Ashram was living its golden days; the material needs had shrunk to nothing, the collective sadhana proceeded at light speed. At a certain point money was so scarce that tea once a day was all that the ashramites got for drinking apart from water! Daily queuing to get the soup served by the Mother, who was often seen remaining with the spoon in the air, suddenly absorbed in a samadhi state... Then, once a week, queuing like children to get a mint candy put in their mouth by the Mother herself! Sri Aurobindo felt that the supramental manifestation was imminent...

What about us? Stringing together Mother's messages to the Aurovilians it emerges that the path to be tread is that of a simple, happy life spent in integral consecration to the Divine as service to the community; in exchange all essential needs in terms of housing, food, clothing, transport, medical assistance etc. are assured. Leisure and entertainments too. The "Auroville Prosperity" service is the tool the Mother chose to fulfill this task. Here are the Mother's texts:

*Someone asked the Mother:*

*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?*

*The Mother replied:*

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

*Auroville Gazette, VIII ¾, 27.10.65*

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.

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.

*MCW03, 13, pp. 262-7, 30.12.67*

There again, X once said—he was speaking of the true hierarchy, the hierarchy based on each one's power of consciousness—the individual or individuals who are at the very summit necessarily have the least needs; their material needs become less as their capacity of material vision grows. And that is very true. It is automatic and spontaneous, not the result of an effort: the wider the consciousness, the more it embraces things and realities—the less its material needs, automatically, because they lose all their importance and value. The need for material necessities is reduced to a minimum, which will itself change with the progressive development of Matter.

And that is easily recognisable, isn't it? It is difficult to act the part.

*MCW03, 13, pp. 269-274, 10.4.68*

*(Message for the recipients of the essential material items distributed by Auroville Prosperity:)*

Auroville is not meant for the satisfaction of desires but for the growth of the true consciousness.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 202, 16.6.68*

The push towards the future is to be ready to give up all gains, moral and material, in order to acquire what the future can give us.

Very few are like that, there are many who would like to have what the Future is bringing, but they are not ready to give up what they have in order to acquire the new wealth.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 203, 5.11.68*

It is not for comfort and satisfaction of desires that one comes to Auroville; it is for the growth of consciousness and consecration to the Truth that has to be realised.

Unselfishness is the first need to participate in the creation of Auroville.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 203, 5.11.68*

*[These last three paras, which are part of a draft approved by the Mother, were first published in the Auroville Gazette.]*

*Auroville is the meeting point between the inner and outer world. In fact the two are one and Auroville wants to be a living example of this truth; the concrete demonstration that Spirit and Matter are one.*

*This can only come about if the first Aurovilians decide voluntarily to subordinate their personal convictions to the common aim in a total self-abnegation.*

*Auroville aims for the greatest possible freedom – but to achieve this demands an effort. At the beginning the Aurovilians as a group will need to observe the same self-abnegation as the members of a tribe. As this group develops, growing from a village to a small town and then into a big city, it will be easier for each individual to express himself in a progressively less limited way. Tomorrow's freedom depends on today's self-abnegation.*

I am in full agreement and my blessings accompany the realisation.

*Auroville Gazette, VIII ¾, 13.2.69*

*The Auroville's future Liaison person asked, "Does the Aurovilians' lack of consecration, and the wastage that takes place there, have something to do with the fact that money does not come for Auroville?"*

Certainly the attitude of most of them is not conducive to the wealth of Auroville and does not create an attractive atmosphere for money.

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 178, 5.3.69*

Every good Aurovilian should strive to free himself from all desires, all preferences and all repulsions. Equality in the face of all circumstances is the chief aim to be attained in order to live in Auroville.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 208, undated*

*[The following text gives an ideal picture of life in Aspiration, set up on the basis of the "Auroville Prosperity" (in kind) system similar to that of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Approved and signed by the Mother, it was drafted by Roger Anger, the chief architect who used to meet her daily and also had the function of ideologue.]*

Aspiration is the embryo of Auromodel, therefore of Auroville, and should represent both inwardly as outwardly the ideal of Auroville.

Inwardly, everyone should seek an inner progress and the higher consciousness; the first necessity is a rigorous inner discipline.

Outwardly, Aspiration should be a model of cleanliness, ideal living and order freely chosen and self-imposed, and of productive activities.

The time has come for Aspiration to prove its existence and capacity to organize itself. The chores to be performed in the day-to-day life should be defined and assigned. The inventory of everything at Aspiration should be made and maintained up to date.

All vehicles should be under the charge of one competent person having the responsibility for their maintenance and use.

All those who participate in the productive activities should keep in mind that they form part of a group; the results will depend on the steady work and efficiency of each member.

The liaison between Aspiration and the Auroville Administrative Committee will be carried out by a person deputed by common consent.

The allocation of Rs. 3.00 per head, per day, will be made weekly to the person responsible for the use of the funds and the maintenance of the persons involved. The needs other than food will be provided by the Auroville Prosperity to the extent of its capacity.

The use of the vehicles will be limited to one or two journeys to Pondy per day; petrol will be allocated accordingly.

Those who do not want to participate in the activities of Aspiration will inform the Auroville Administrative Committee that will decide their future status.

*Roger Anger's archive, 1970*

1. Do work as *sadhana*. You offer to the Divine the work you do as the best of your capacities and you leave the result to the Divine.
2. Try to become conscious first above your head keeping the brain as silent as possible.

If you succeed and the work is done in that condition, then it will become perfect.

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 305, 2.4.70*

*An Aurovilian asked, "Should I spend some time in solitude?"*

It is the old methods of yoga which demand silence and solitude.

The yoga of tomorrow is to find the divine in work and in relation with the world.

Look within yourself, reflect upon it and tell me what your choice is.

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 365, 24.1.71*

True spirituality lies in the service of the divine work.

To refuse to work for all is only a demonstration of selfishness, and has no spiritual value.

The first thing to do to be able to live in Auroville is to consent to free oneself from one's ego.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 216, 24.1.71*

*[On 16.6.68 the Mother had delivered the first message defining the true spirit of the "Auroville Prosperity" that, paralleling the Ashram Prosperity Service, supplied to accepted Aurovilians clothing, toiletries and other basic necessities. This second message was to be displayed in the rooms where the items were distributed:]*

One does not live in Auroville to be comfortable but to grow in consciousness and to serve the Divine.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 217, 1.3.71*

Is it to satisfy little personal needs that you have come to Auroville?

That was really not necessary. The ordinary world is there for that.

One comes to Auroville to realise a divine life which wants to manifest on earth.

Each one should make an effort in this direction and not remain hypnotised by the so-called 'needs' which are nothing but personal fancies.

Look upward and forward, strive to surmount the animal human nature. Make the resolution and you will see that you are helped on the way.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 217, 3.3.71*

*A rich woman, residing at the Ashram and working for Auroville, wanted to know about bringing down her standard of living to "the present Auroville minimum".*

Mother answered orally,

"You should grow in consciousness.

You should feel that you are working for the Divine, living for the Divine.

You should want the Divine alone.

You should not be affected by the opinion of others. You should try to know and do only what the Lord wants you to do.

Don't think of pleasing others. If you try to please others, some others will be displeased. I also do not try to please.

You have made your life simpler. If you decide to make it still simpler, my help will be there.

All the circumstances are there as opportunities so that you can grow in consciousness, sincerity and consecration. You can always have my help for it.

This is the only solution.”

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 111-2, early March 71*

Spirituality is supreme simplicity.

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 375, 6.3.71*

It is in work done as an offering to the Divine that the consciousness develops best.

Indolence and inaction result in *tamas* which is a fall into inconscience and the very opposite of progress and light.

To surmount one's ego and to live only in the service of the Divine, that is the ideal and the shortest way to acquire the true consciousness.

*MCWCE, p. 218, 27.4.71*

### Notice Auroville Transport

The vehicles in “Auroville Transport” are to be used for the work of the Auroville community and Auroville projects.

Those wanting transport for personal purpose can make use of the available space in the regular bus services of Auroville or the public buses.

Trips to Madras are discouraged unless sufficient material is to be brought or the work demands such movement in Madras. Persons wanting to go for personal purposes can make reservation in the public bus. “Auroville Transport” can help in getting the reservation if 24 hours notice is given.

Blessings.

THE MOTHER

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 114, 27.4.71*

*Regarding a separate kitchen for integrated families she said, “Why division, division?” They should be encouraged to feel that they are Aurovilians and not different, integrated, etc.*

\*

*Mother said that in Auroville she did not want number but quality. Twelve good men would be better than hundreds of stupid persons. Auroville is not for comfort but for the servants of the Divine. People in Auroville should not shirk hard work. They should not think of escaping from the outer control until the divine control is there.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 117, 9.6.71*

All fancies are vital movements and most undesirable.

Liberty does not mean to follow one's desires but, on the contrary, to be freed from them.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 219, 27.8.71*

The ideal of the Aurovilians must be to become egoless – not at all to satisfy their ego.

If they follow the old human way of selfish claim, how can they hope the world to change?

*For those in Auroville who want to be true servitors, is Sunday a holiday?*

In the beginning the organisation of the week was conceived in this way: six days of work for the collectivity to which the individual belonged; the seventh day of the week was reserved for the inner quest for the Divine and the offering of one's being to the divine will. This is the only meaning and the only true reason for the so-called Sunday rest.

Needless to say, sincerity is the essential condition for realisation; all insincerity is a degradation.

MCWCE, 13, p. 220, 25.10.71

The only true freedom is the one obtained by union with the Divine.

One can unite with the Divine only by mastering one's ego.

MCWCE, 13, p. 221, 1971

*[Mother approved this quotation from Sri Aurobindo for publication in the Auroville Gazette.]*

“Therefore if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. There must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate both their idea and its power to the mass. And there must be at the same time a mass, a society, a communal mind or at least the constituents of a group-body, the possibility of a group-soul which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and effectively arrive, not compelled by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation to stop on the way or fall back before the decisive change is made. Such a simultaneity has never yet happened, although the appearance of it has sometimes been created by the ardour of a moment. That the combination must happen some day is a certainty.”

*Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, Chap. XXIII*

*Udar read the preceding quotation to Mother and asked her if the time has come when the conditions of which Sri Aurobindo writes, and of which a simultaneity has never yet happened, will now happen. The first condition has been fulfilled regarding the individual and the individuals, in this case Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. But what about the second condition, that of a mass, society, communal mind or group-body, group-soul capable of receiving and assimilating?*

This is exactly what Auroville is for. But Auroville is still far from fulfilling the necessary conditions.

*Auroville Gazette, I, 5/6, p. 31, 22.12.71*

*(To one who asked Mother about stopping his activities because his mind is not pure.)*

If men had to stop work when they are not perfect, everybody would stop working. It is in the work that we must progress and purify ourselves.

Continue to do the work you are doing but never forget that it can and must be better.

Blessings.

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 120, 23.12.71*

I can see, I have truly the occasion to see that if I left, I have nobody here, it would be our destruction.

*(R.:) Oh, complete collapse – nothing!*

Then if the work must be done, if Auroville must be built, not only do I have to remain in my body but the body must be strong.

*“Mother, the people in Auroville want to know what she has said about the fire accident. I have prepared a note.”*

*When I came to the words, ‘There was no harmony’, Mother said, “Not only harmony, there is no unity, no sincerity, no consecration to the Divine, no faith, no confidence in the Divine. It was not the Divine's fault.”*

*She asked me to continue to read. At the end she said, “It is alright.”*

*Then I added the words, ‘no sincerity, no faith and no confidence in the Divine’ and when I read the whole sentence again, she nodded.*

*The whole statement then read as follows:*

In connection with the fire in the Workshop at Aspiration Mother has said that Her protection was not effective because the atmosphere there was very bad. There was no harmony, no sincerity, no faith and no confidence in the Divine. Each one worked for his own proper satisfaction and not with an aspiration to the Divine.

The blow was big, but it is a lesson to learn.

We should start again, start again with the right attitude of working for the transformation.

*(Note corrected and approved by Mother.)*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 135, 12.3.72*

*[Claire had sent to the Mother, via Shyamsunder, this letter:*

*“Mother – Since one day Auroville must function fluently for need and demand without the internal exchange of money, perhaps the time has come to create that proper channel. We could begin this process in a temporary building. If this is the work to do, and money comes for this work, what should be the name of the Bank Account?” Shyamsunder told her that he had never seen the Mother so happy; he wrote in his notes:]*

*Mother approved of the so-called ‘Shop-project’ of Claire and in response to her request for a name, she first uttered ‘Aurofraternity’, then ‘Auroutility’, but remarked. “These are not the right words.” Then came ‘Pour Tous’, ‘For All’ and she wrote the name with blessings. She dated it as March 1972 after enquiring today’s date.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 136, 14.3.72*

*An old man from Bengal wants to come to Auroville to spend the last days of his life. Mother said, “Auroville is not for the last days of life.”*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 172, 1.5.72*

*Mother wrote a reply to a question raised about the conquest of the ego:*

*“The best way to get rid of the rule of the ego is to find the psychic being, instrument of the Divine in the human beings.*

*Go deep in yourself (in the heart region) and aspire steadily. The true meeting of the psychic is unmistakable.*

*Blessings.”*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 175, 8.5.72*

*A family in Auroville wants pocket money.*

*Mother said, “No, no. They can make arrangement for pocket expenses as they have done for other family obligations.”*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 181, 25.5.72*

*I wanted to know what reply is to be given to those who wish to come to Auroville after 7 to 10 years.*

*Mother said, "We will see at that time."*

*"Yes, Mother, but some of them wish to know now, so that they can start saving money for the purpose and depositing it here."*

*"It depends on who they are."*

*"So, they will have to be examined individually."*

*"You send them the conditions of Auroville and ask for their acceptance."*

*"But if they reply now, it may not be true after ten years for themselves or their children."*

*"Yes", Mother said with a smile, "and they may feel what they are saying is not true."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 183, 29.5.72*

*[The original of this message was posted in the Matrimandir Worker's Camp. A similar message is reported two days later in Shyam Sunder's notes.]*

Matrimandir Workers' Camp is meant for those who

1. Work whole time at the Matrimandir or in the Matrimandir Garden Nursery.
2. Do not take alcohol or drugs, and live cleanly.
3. There should be no smoking or sex-indulgence in the Matrimandir area.

With blessings

*Auroville in Mother's words, p. 437, 6.6.72*

*Requests for joining Auroville were disposed of. Most of them were not approved.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 189, 13.6.72*

*D. has committed a grave wrong act. She first said that it was her personal matter. Now she has written to Mother saying that she was blind to the light and now she should not be asked to go; she will try.*

*Mother wrote a message which, she says, should be used largely:*

*To follow all the impulses of the lower nature is surely not the supramental way and has no place here.*

*What we want is to hasten the advent of the supramental, not at all to fall into the ugly condition of a humanity full of desires and low impulses.*

*D. is to be given a chance, not for a short period, otherwise she may make an effort and pretend. She is just to be told that she has been given a chance, if she does a mistake, she has to go.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, pp. 197-8, 10.7.72*

*J, a Frenchman, had promised to be at his expense for a year. Now it is six months and his money has run out as he went on a trip to Bombay with his friends on their persuasion.*

*Mother said, "No. A man of no character and will."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 203, 23.7.72*

*Veronika feels lonely and like a stranger.*

*Mother's reply,*

*"Your feeling comes from the fact that you are doing nothing useful for the community.*

*Take up some work that you can do regularly and it will be alright."*

*Ajit Rao wants to build a house in Auroville. Roger has told him that unless he works for a specific project, he should not have a house; but if Mother says that he can have it even without such a work, he will make the design. Ajit insists that only his wish to build a house in Auroville be placed before Mother, and he is prepared to work if she wants him to do so. He drinks and smokes.*

*Mother said, "To build a house in Auroville, one should not drink or smoke."*

*She asked laughing, "Is he prepared to exchange smoking and drinking for a house in Auroville?"*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 213, 20.8.72*

*For one who reported progress in sadhana and asked about going to Madras for some days, Mother said, "If the thing is to progress, he should not go."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 213, 21.8.72*

*J's mother can come to Auroville, if it does not mean increase of expenses. (J has asked for it)*

*About people in Auroville, Mother remarked,*

*"They have no conscience, no consciousness, no aspiration.*

*They are for a comfortable life."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 215, 26.8.72*

*There was a question from Navoditte,*

*"Two years ago you told Aspiration to meditate each evening at 7:45. Now you suggest 'once a week' for the Centre.*

*Could you comment?"*

*Mother said, "It is a compliment. Are they taking it as a punishment?"*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 218, 2..9.72*

*For a person working satisfactorily since a year, who now asks for maintenance by the Auroville Prosperity, Mother said neither yes nor no, but asked after a while, "How to know that they have no money?"*

*"It is very difficult to know. In some cases where they demanded Prosperity and were asked to wait, they managed to continue some more months with their money."*

*"Yes, how to know? What to do? What can I say?"*

*"To this man I can say clearly that Prosperity is for those who have no money left with them, and if he says that he has nothing, we give him the Prosperity and leave him to his conscience."*

*"Yes, yes, it is a very good idea. Speak to him."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 221-2, 11.9.72*

*N.K. Dasgupta wants refund of his contribution of 10,000/= for residence in Auroville. He came to stay here but could not like the life here.*

*Mother remarked, "It will be impossible if we start refunding."*

*I read the last para of his letter in which he said he will take the money as a blessing for this unfortunate son of Mother that he is.*

*Mother remarked, "When he comes to visit Auroville he needs not pay."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 227, 26.9.72*

Auroville wants to shelter people happy to be in Auroville. Those who are dissatisfied ought to return to the world where they can do what they want and where there is place for everybody.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 222, 2.10.72*

Those who  
do not stop telling lies,  
do not stop drinking or  
do not work regularly for the community,  
are a burden on Auroville  
and Auroville has no place for them.

Blessings.

THE MOTHER

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 231, 3.10.72*

For those who have been taken into Auroville on a wrong statement of theirs, there is only one solution: it is to cure in themselves all falsehood, that is to say, all that contradicts in their consciousness the Presence of the Divine.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 222, 22.10.72*

*About a person wishing to come back to Auroville, Mother said,  
"Auroville is not a refuge for unsuccessful people."*

*About a Swiss who is very ill and not happy, Mother said:*

*"He is not ready for Auroville. He should go back."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 244, 9.11.72*

*One person who has gone abroad, wishes his 100/= food prosperity to go to his wife here to meet her needs.  
Mother does not like these things.*

*When asked I said, "Her special needs may be considered sympathetically."  
She remarked that these are too small things.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 246, 17.11.72*

*Letter of Stephan and Pierre regarding the cafeteria [in Aspiration].  
Mother said to close the cafeteria. About the use of the place she asked me. I said that if the community wants the Pondy office to go there it can go, or some other activity may be chosen.*

\*

*Shanti's letter.*

*Mother gave a reply in one word and then went into trance.*

*After a while, Mother wanted to write a message.<sup>6</sup> She wrote it and wanted a copy immediately.*

26.11.72

Before dying falsehood raises in full swing.

Still people understand only the lesson of the catastrophe. Will it have to come before they open their eyes to the Truth?

I ask an effort from all so that it has not to be.

It is only the Truth that can save us, truth in words, truth in action, truth in will, truth in feelings. It is a choice between serving the Truth or being destroyed.

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 248, 26.11.72*

*(About a cyclone on the night of 5 December 1972)*

It is a warning that nature is giving, that those who do not have the true spirit of Auroville will have to change or to go if they do not want to change.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 224, 7.12.72*

*As a result of the cyclone that came in the night of 5<sup>th</sup>, the community kitchen in Aspiration has fallen down.*

*“The kitchen or the dining place?” asked Mother.*

*“The dining place. The kitchen and store room have asbestos roof and they have remained. At the farm, banana plants are destroyed. At Aspiration some other structures also have been destroyed.”*

*“The fruits in the banana trees can be used even if they are unripe.”*

*“ Yes, Mother.”*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 250, 7.12.72*

*The English translation of Mother’s message of 1<sup>st</sup> December was read.*

*Mother made a correction.*

*The text of the 1<sup>st</sup> December message as corrected:*

Auroville has been created for a progressive superhumanity, not for an infra-humanity governed by its instincts and dominated by its desires. Those who belong to the infra-humanity, the animal humanity, have no place here.

Auroville is for those who aspire for the supramental and make an effort to reach there.

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 250, 8.12.72*

*Mother’s replies:*

Everybody has to progress and to become more sincere.

Auroville has been created not for the satisfaction of the egos and their greeds, but for the creation of a new world, the supramental, expressing the Divine perfection.

Everybody is imperfect and has to progress.

Keep firm and confident.

Blessings.

(...)

*The Aspiration community should devote two days now to the cleaning work and then every Sunday.*

*Mother wrote ‘Benedictions’ on this proposal of Vincenzo.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> This message was posted everywhere, including on the Auroville Notice-Boards.

(...)

Raoul Mercier's letter. He speaks of the attitudes he is facing in the work, like "At Auroville one is free", "One has eternity before oneself", etc.

*Mother said, "Haven't I already said that the Aurovilians have to work according to the supramental discipline?"*

*"Yes, Mother, but they say that regular work is not the supramental way."*

*"Do they know the supramental?"*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 253-4, 17.12.72*

Auroville has been created for a superhumanity, for those who want to surmount their ego and renounce all desire, to prepare themselves for receiving the Supermind. They alone are true Aurovilians.

Those who want to obey their egos and satisfy all their desires belong to a subhumanity and have no place here. They must return to the world which is their true place.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 224, 18.12.72*

*For one who is not satisfied with Auroville, Mother replied,*

*"If he is not satisfied with Auroville, it is better for him to go back to the world; it is wide enough."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 255, 20.12.72*

As long as they have desires, they are not true Aurovilians.

Let them not play with words: there is a world of difference between desires and aspiration. Every sincere person knows this. And above all let them not mistake *their ego and their desires* for the Divine. It is because they deceive themselves that they make this confusion.

They must be conscious of the divine presence in themselves, and for that, the ego must be silenced and desires must disappear.

*MCWCE, 13, p. 225, 28.12.72*

*Nowadays many requests are coming for joining Auroville. But most of them are not acceptable to us. Is each case to be referred to Mother?*

*Mother said, "No."*

*"We will refer cases where we have doubt or where we accept."*

*"Yes."*

*"And before accepting, I am now giving them a chance of two to three weeks to see Auroville and choose their work and settle their financial position, otherwise they say something but forget it when Mother's approval comes."*

*"Have I not said that the first condition to live in Auroville is not to tell a lie?"*

*"Yes, and Mother has on several occasions recently written on truth and explained about it."*

*"Show it to them."*

*"Yes, Mother, but they call me a policeman when I do so."*

*"You can tell them", Mother said laughing, "that you are Mother's policeman."*

*After a pause Mother said,*

*"There is no need to build another ordinary city in Auroville; already there are so many. If people are like that, it will become an ordinary city and our money and efforts will be wasted. You have to be strict. If they say, well, they will say so easily, that they wish to change, they can be there if they are sincere."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 263-4, 8.1.73*

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<sup>7</sup> This is Vincenzo's original text: "Sweet Mother, The cyclone has damaged and destroyed the camp and the gardens. For everything to be clean, it would be good if everybody at Aspiration, school included, could devote two days to put everything back in order. This action could then continue every Sunday."

*Hedi, who manages the Hope kitchen, left suddenly for a few days saying that she will not be here for some days.*

*When she comes, she is to be told, "Sorry, there is no work for you."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 274, 15.2.73*

*There are people in Auroville who say that it is against the spirit of Auroville when I ask people there to work or when I allot work to them.*

*Mother wrote a message,*

*Auroville is still in the state of elaboration, and those who want to remain there have to collaborate to its erection according to the plans made and to be made, approved by me and signed by Shyam Sunder.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 278, 4.3.73*

*A request for Prosperity was answered in the negative.*

*Mother remarked, "The first condition is not to tell a lie and this person started with a big lie."*

*First Mother wanted to write, "No liars in Auroville" or "No lies in Auroville," but then she wrote, "Auroville will become what it must be, only if and when the people living there will stop lying."*

\*

*A request for joining Auroville was not approved.*

*One person in Aspiration gave up a work, for which he had taken a name from Mother, without asking anyone and closed it.*

*I asked him, "When you got a work from Mother, was it proper for you to give it up without referring it to her?"*

*"Yes," he replied.*

*"Was it correct according to the spiritual discipline of Mother?"*

*"Yes."*

*And now he has written me a four page letter in criticism of mental morality, of people in Pondicherry, of Auroville architecture, stating that he has acted from inner guidance.*

*Mother made a remark and asked me to tell it to him, "The guidance can come also from the ego-devil".*

*She concentrated, made some remarks, and then wrote,*

*"When you say I want to serve the Divine, do you believe the All-Knowing does not know that it is a lie?" and asked me to show it to him.*

*"There is no way" was one of her remarks.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 281-2, 18.3.73*

*Louise Forjette is not working.*

*"Perhaps she does not know how to work."*

*"She may be left as she is and I forget about it, or she may be told that if she does not work she is a burden on Auroville as she is at Auroville's expense and she may go."*

*"Tell her and let us see."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 283, 22.3.73*

*Mother disposed of a letter and wrote a message:*

*Auroville is created to realize the ideal of Sri Aurobindo who taught us the Karma Yoga. Auroville is for those who want to do the Yoga of work.*

*To live in Auroville means to do the Yoga of work. So all Aurovilians must take up a work and do it as Yoga.*

*She also mentioned a letter from Sri Aurobindo read yesterday about the importance of work.*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 284, 27.3.73*

For those who refuse to conquer their ego.

Do you really want to turn Auroville into the triumph of undisciplined ‘egos’, governed only by desire?

So, humanity is still not ready to get out of its egoist mire.

*Auroville Archives, undated message in French*

## PART FIVE

# THE SPIRIT OF THE “AUROVILLE PROSPERITY”

### *Admission to Auroville: who?*

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; but as such, the satiated fat fellow with his leaden-seated fat missis who want to come and spend the rest of their lives in peace, to them we say, “Wait a bit, 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 installments” – 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!

*Mother's Agenda, 8, 14.10.67*

### *A self-supporting township*

*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 leveling; 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.

### *The true hierarchy: minimum needs*

The conflict about money is what might be called a “conflict of ownership”, but the truth is that money belongs to no one. This idea of *possessing* money has warped everything. Money should not be a “possession”: like power it is a means of action which is given to you, but you must use it according to... what we can call the “will of the Giver”, that is, in an impersonal and enlightened way. If you are a good instrument for diffusing and utilising money, then it comes to you, and it comes to you in proportion to your capacity to use it as it is meant to be used. That is the true mechanism.

The true attitude is this: money is a force intended for the work on earth, the work required to prepare the earth to receive and manifest the divine forces, and it—that is, the power of utilising it—must come into the hands of those who have the clearest, most comprehensive and truest vision.

To start with, the first thing (but this is elementary) is not to have the sense of possession—what does it mean, “it is mine”?... Now, I don’t quite understand. Why do people want it to belong to them?—so that they can use it as they like and do what they want with it and handle it according to their own conceptions? That’s how it is. On the other hand, yes, there are people who like to store it up somewhere... but that is a disease. To be sure of always having some, they hoard it.

But if people understood that one should be like a receiving and transmitting station and that the wider the range (just the opposite of personal), the more impersonal, comprehensive and wide it is, the more force it can hold (“force” that is translated materially: notes and coins). This power to hold is proportional to the capacity to use the money in the best way—“best” in terms of the general progress: the widest vision, the greatest understanding and the most enlightened, exact and true usage, not according to the warped needs of the ego but according to the general need of the earth for its evolution and development. That is to say, the widest vision will have the largest capacity.

Behind all wrong movements, there is a true movement; there is a joy in being able to direct, utilise, organise in such a way that there is a minimum of waste and the maximum of result. It is a very interesting vision to have. And this must be the true side in people who want to accumulate money: it is the capacity to use it on a very large scale. Then, there are those who very much like to have it and spend it; that is something else—they are generous natures, neither regulated nor organised. But the joy of being able to satisfy all *true* needs, all necessities, is good. It is like the joy of changing a sickness into health, a falsehood into truth, a suffering into joy; it is the same thing: to change an artificial and foolish need—which does not correspond to anything natural—into a possibility which becomes something quite natural. So much money is needed to do this or that or the other, so much is needed to arrange this, to repair that, to build this, to organise that—that is good. And I understand that people like to be the channels through which the money goes exactly where it is needed. That must be the true movement in people who like to... translated into foolish egoism, who need to appropriate.

When the need to accumulate and the need to spend (which are both blind and ignorant) are combined, they can lead to a clear vision and a most efficient utilisation. That is good.

Then there comes, slowly and slowly, the possibility of putting it into practice.

But, naturally, the need is for very clear heads and for intermediaries of high integrity (!) to be able to be everywhere at the same time and do all at the same time. Then this famous question of money would be solved.

Money does not belong to anybody. Money is a collective possession which should be used only by those who have an integral, comprehensive and universal vision. I would add something to that: not only integral and comprehensive, but essentially *true* as well; a vision which can tell the difference between a use which is in accord with the universal progress, and a use which could be termed fanciful. But these are details, for even the mistakes, even, from a certain standpoint, the waste, help the general progress: these are lessons learned the hard way.

*(Silence)*

I always remember what X used to say (X was completely opposed to philanthropy); he used to say: Philanthropy perpetuates human misery because without human misery philanthropy would have no more reason to

exist!... And you know the great philanthropist, what was his name?—during Mazarin’s time; he founded the Little Sisters of Charity....

*Vincent de Paul?*

That’s it. Mazarin once told him: There have never been so many poor people as since you started taking care of them! (*Mother laughs.*)

(*Later*)

I have been rethinking what I said about money. That is how life in Auroville should be organised, but I doubt whether people are ready.

*That is to say that it is possible so long as they accept the guidance of a sage?*

Yes. The first thing that should be accepted and recognised by everyone is that the invisible and higher power—that is, the power which belongs to a plane of consciousness that is mostly veiled, but which is within each; a consciousness which can be called anything, by any name, it does not matter, but which is integral and pure in the sense that it is not false, it is in the Truth—that this power is capable of ordering material things in a way that is truer, happier and better for everyone than any material power. That is the first point. Once people agree on that...

It is not something one can pretend to have; an individual cannot pretend to have it, either he has it or he hasn’t, because (*Mother laughs*) in any circumstance of life, if it is a pretension, it will show clearly! On top of that, it does not give you any material power. There again, X once said—he was speaking of the true hierarchy, the hierarchy based on each one’s power of consciousness—the individual or individuals who are at the very summit necessarily have the least needs; their material needs become less as their capacity of material vision grows. And that is very true. It is automatic and spontaneous, not the result of an effort: the wider the consciousness, the more it embraces things and realities—the less its material needs, automatically, because they lose all their importance and value. The need for material necessities is reduced to a minimum, which will itself change with the progressive development of Matter.

And that is easily recognisable, isn’t it? It is difficult to act the part.

And the second thing is the power of conviction; that is, the highest consciousness, when it is brought into contact with Matter, spontaneously has a greater power of conviction than all the intermediary planes. By mere contact, its power of conviction, that is, its power of transformation, is greater than that of all the intermediary planes. That is a fact. These two facts together make it impossible for any pretension to last long. I am looking at it from the standpoint of a collective organisation.

As soon as you come down from this supreme Height, there is all the play of the various influences (*gesture of mixture and conflict*) and that in itself is a sure sign: even a slight descent—even into the domain of higher mind, higher intelligence—and the whole conflict of influences begins. Only what is right at the very summit and is perfectly pure, has this power of spontaneous conviction. Therefore, whatever one may do instead of that is an approximation and it is not much better than democracy—that is, the system which wants to rule by the greatest number and the lowest level—I mean social democracy, the latest trend.

If there is no representative of the supreme Consciousness —that can happen, can’t it?—if there isn’t any, there could be instead, it could be tried, government by a few—a small number set between four and eight, something like that, four, seven, eight—who have an *intuitive* intelligence: “intuitive” is more important than intelligence—with an intuition that is manifested intellectually.

This would have its drawbacks from the practical point of view, but it would perhaps be closer to the truth than the lowest level—socialism or communism. Everything in between has proved to be incompetent: theocracy, aristocracy, democracy and plutocracy, all those have been a complete failure. The other one, the socialist or communist government is proving itself a failure as well.

Basically socialism and communism correspond to a kind of absence of government, because they do not have the power to govern others; they are obliged to transfer their power to someone who exercises it, like a Lenin for example, because he was a brain. All this has been tried and proved to be incompetent. The only thing that could be competent is the Truth-Consciousness, which would choose instruments and express itself through a certain number of instruments in the absence of one—“one” is not enough either, “one” would necessarily have to choose a group.

Those who have this consciousness may belong to any social class: it is not a privilege of birth, but the outcome of personal effort and development. In fact, that is an outward sign, the obvious sign of a change from the political point of view—it is no longer a matter of classes and categories nor of birth—all that is obsolete. It is the individuals who have attained a certain higher consciousness who have the right to govern—not others, regardless of their social class.

This would be the true vision.

All those who participate in the experiment should be absolutely convinced that the highest consciousness is the best judge of the most material things. What has ruined India is this idea that the higher consciousness deals with higher things and that lower things do not interest it at all, and that it understands nothing about them! That has been the ruin of India. Well, this error must be completely eradicated. It is the highest consciousness which sees most clearly—most clearly and most truly—what the needs of the most material things must be.

With that, a new type of government could be tried.

MCW03, pp. 269-274, 10.4.68

### *All work is good*

*[Between March and August 1970 the Mother met, once a week in her room, with a few Aurovilians, mostly from the community of Aspiration. Twenty-two meetings were recorded on tape. This excerpt is taken from the first of those conversations.]*

*A: We would like to speak to you about work in Aspiration. What we would like to know, what we are looking for, is the right attitude...*

*What is the trouble?*

*A: The trouble is...*

*Each one pulls in his own direction.*

*A: Each one pulls in his own direction. No one is really in contact with what is true.*

*We have to bear in mind that we are starting from the present state of humanity. So you must face all the difficulties; you must find the solution.*

*(Pointing to the tape-recorder) What is that?*

*B: I am recording for the people of Auromodel, Sweet Mother.*

*(Mother laughs) You shouldn't have told me!*

*A: But, Sweet Mother, you know, several solutions are open to us. For instance, on one hand...*

*Each man has his solution, and that is the great difficulty. To be in the Truth, each one has his solution. And yet we must find a way for all these solutions to work together.*

*(Silence)*

*So the framework must be vast, very flexible, and there must be a great goodwill from everyone: that is the first condition—the first individual condition—goodwill. To be flexible enough to do the best thing to be done at each moment.*

*A: But for example, we are told that we must have factories, that we must produce, and some of us have no feeling for that sort of work. We would prefer a seeking which is more...*

*More inward?*

*A: More inward, rather than to launch into factories, work, production for the sake of money, etc. That is not what we feel, that is not what we want to do in Aspiration at the moment. We would like to know what you think about it.*

*(Mother concentrates and there is a long silence.)*

*To be practical, you must first have a very clear vision of your goal, of where you are going. From this point of view, take money for example. An ideal which may be several hundred years ahead of its time, we don't know: money should be a power which belongs to nobody and which should be controlled by the most universal wisdom present. Put on the earth someone who has a vision vast enough to be able to know the needs of the earth and precise enough to be able to tell where the money should go—you understand, we are very far from that, aren't*

we? For the moment, the gentleman still says, “This is mine”, and when he is generous, he says, “I give it to you.” That’s not it.

But there is a long way to go between what we are and what must be. And for that we must be very flexible, never losing sight of the goal, but knowing that we cannot reach it at one bound and that we must find the way. Well, that is much more difficult, even more difficult than to make the inner discovery. Truly speaking, that should have been made before coming here.

For there is a starting-point: when you have found within yourself the light that never wavers, the presence which can guide you with certitude, then you become aware that constantly, in everything that happens, there is something to be learnt, and that in the present state of matter there is always a progress to be made. That is how one should come, eager to find out at every minute the progress to be made. To have a life that wants to grow and perfect itself, that is what the collective ideal of Auroville should be: “A life that wants to grow and perfect itself”, and above all, not in the same way for everyone—each one in his own way.

Well, now there are thirty of you, it is difficult, isn’t it? When there are thirty thousand of you, it will be easier, because, naturally, there will be many more possibilities. You are the pioneers, you have the most difficult task, but I feel it is the most interesting one. Because you must establish in a concrete, durable and growing way the attitude that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson of the day...

Each sunrise is an opportunity to make a discovery. So, with that state of mind, you find out. Everyone does.

And the body needs activity: if you keep it inactive, it will begin to revolt by becoming sick and so on. It needs an activity, it really needs an activity like planting flowers, building a house, something really material. You must feel it. Some people do exercises, some ride bicycles, there are countless activities, but in your little group you must all come to an agreement so that each one can find the activity which suits his temperament, his nature and his need. But not with ideas. Ideas are not much good, ideas give you preconceptions, for example, “That is a good work, that work is not worthy of me,” and all that sort of nonsense. There is no bad work— there are only bad workers. All work is good when you know how to do it in the right way. Everything. And it is a kind of communion. If you are fortunate enough to be conscious of an inner light, you will see that in your manual work it is as if you called the Divine down into things; then the communion becomes very concrete, there is a whole world to be discovered, it is marvelous.

You are young, you have plenty of time before you. And to be young, to be really young, we must always, always keep on growing, developing, progressing. Growth is the sign of youthfulness and there is no limit to the growth of consciousness. I know old people of twenty and young people of fifty, sixty, seventy. And if one does manual work, one keeps in good health.

So now you must find the solution.

*A: All right.*

Everything you can do... there are all sorts of things, all sorts. And you should see among yourselves how it can be arranged. You will come and tell me, all right?

*B: Yes, all right.*

Then, good-bye. Come again in a week.

*MCW03, 13, pp. 310-3, 10.3.70*

### *A system of coupons for hours of work*

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

Where is that practiced?

*I don’t know, in my imagination!*

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

*Something based on work.*

Yes.

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

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

*Based on work.*

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

*(silence)*

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

There are some who understand.

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

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

*(long silence)*

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

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

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

*(long silence)*

The conditions to organize – to be an organizer (it's not “to govern,” it's to ORGANIZE) – the conditions to be an organizer should be these: no more desires, no more preferences, no more attractions, no more repulsions – a perfect equality for all things. Sincerity, of course, but that goes without saying: wherever insincerity enters, poison enters at the same time. And then, only those who are themselves in that condition can discern whether another is in it or not.

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

*Mother's Agenda, 11, 25.3.70*

*I'm not saying that it will be supercomfortable, but it is most indispensable*

*[The Mother used to meet weekly some Aurovilians, mostly from Aspiration, between March and August, 1970. The following extract from one of those talks gives a clear picture of the idealism of the pioneers:]*

Do you know M?

A: Yes.

He has some sort of shop for selling things.

A: Yes, a store.

Yes, that's it. But there is no one to look after it at night and so there are thefts. And it seems that you have too many people and not enough accommodation. So what I suggested was that each month someone could go there to sleep at night and come back in the morning, if it's not too far.

A: It's three kilometres away.

G: Three or four kilometres, Sweet Mother.

Oh, well that's nothing.

A: By cycle it is nothing.

By cycle—do you have bicycles?

A: Yes, though actually we don't have enough. We must get some more. We don't have enough cycles but we can find some more.

And all you have to do is go there in the evening, at night, and come back in the morning. At night the bicycles won't be needed [at Aspiration]. But if you know M, he could take one of you along and show him and explain it to him.

A: All right.

I think it will be all right.... I don't know what it's like, I couldn't say, but I hope that it will be comfortable.

A: And what do you think about making a big hut to house twenty or twenty-five people? It was one of N's ideas.

I think that until there is enough accommodation for everyone it is quite indispensable. I'm not saying that it will be supercomfortable, but it is most indispensable.

*MCW03, 13, pp.322-3, 31.3.70*

*Free from the sense of personal possession*

*[The following is an excerpt from a conversation with Satprem on how the text “To Be a True Aurovillian” came into existence. The final version will be printed as the front page of the admission form to Auroville as well on all official publications.]*

So we should put: “The first condition is the inner discovery....”

*In the ideal order, the first condition is to need something other than the present world and human conditions.*

That goes without saying.

*Then, to reach there, the first condition is to descend deep down in oneself to find out what one IS behind all these hereditary, social, cultural appearances—what one truly is. Then, at that stage, things take on a meaning, but before that they don't mean anything. Before that, they have the meaning given in morality, religion, philosophy—they mean nothing.*

So we'll put (*Mother writes*): First essential condition ...

*It's more than a condition, it's a necessity.*

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery so as to find out what one truly is behind all social, moral, cultural ...

*Racial ?*

Oh, yes.

... racial, hereditary appearances.

But then, we should tell them that there is a discovery to be made, because many don't know it at all!  
(*Mother laughs*)

In the center, there is a free being, vast and knowing, which awaits our discovery and must become the acting center of our being and our life in Auroville.

Then, after that, shall we put this (*Mother points to the former first point on the consecration to the Divine*), or something else?... It seems to me that this is more an accomplishment, something that comes at the end.

(*long silence*)

We should teach them to free themselves from the idea of personal possession... You see, everything belongs to the Divine, and the Divine gives you not only a center (the center of your individuality), but also the possibility of the personal use of a number of things; but you must take them all like that, as things LENT to you by the Divine. The Divine is eternal, of course, he is *everlasting*, as they say in English, and at the same time as he creates this individual center, a number of things are there to be used for his work, so those things are LENT. That's exactly the point: you hold them in your possession for a time. It's to uproot the sense of personal possession.

(*silence*)

That would be interesting: “The description of the citizen of tomorrow's city.”

*There's the second paragraph on desires, and the third would be on personal possession.*

The only true way to cure desires is to give oneself to the Divine and accept what He gives you as the only things you need. But that's already very advanced.

*At the beginning, you said that Aurovilians have come “to escape moral conventions, etc., but not to give free rein to licentiousness. ...”*

Yes, that's right (*Mother writes*):

2. One lives in Auroville to be free from moral and social conventions; but that freedom must not be a new slavery to the ego, its desires and ambitions.

Is that all? It's enough for today!

*If you want to connect this to the other paragraph, might we say something like, "Desire is the most powerful distorter of the inner discovery"?*

Ah, yes. *(Mother writes)*

The fulfillment of desire bars the road to the inner discovery, which can only take place in the peace of perfect disinterestedness.

*One word comes to me, Mother: not only peace, but transparency.*

Yes *(Mother writes):*

... in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness.

It'll become something interesting!

*That's the basis. Then there's the third paragraph. You said, "The Aurovilian must free himself from the idea of personal possession."*

But it's not the "idea," it's the "sense"! *(Mother writes)*

3. The Aurovilian must free himself from the sense of personal possession. For our transition in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and action is put at our disposal....

*You don't say by whom?*

*(Mother laughs)* No!... By the All-Possessing!

... according to the place we are to occupy.

*Mother, I'd like to add: The more we are in contact with our inner being, the more the exact means are given to us.*

Oh, that's fine *(Mother writes):*

*The more we are CONSCIOUSLY in contact with our inner being, the more the exact means are given to us.*

*It'll become interesting!*

It gives them the basis.

*Oh, but we'll be able to do something interesting!*

*Mother's Agenda, 11, 3.6.70*

*One doesn't build a new world with hired labour!*

They're terribly angry with me because I told them discipline is indispensable.

*But of course!*

That's old hat, you see.

*But Mother, I told R. that the basic mistake is that when those people came here, everything was handed to them: he gave them ready-made houses, they were given all they needed to eat — they got everything on a silver platter. While these people should have been made to build their own houses and to plant their own potatoes if they wanted to eat; they should have done everything by themselves.*

Yes, exactly.

*And I told them, "How can you possibly build a new world with coolies? One doesn't make a new world with hired labour!"*

I think a whole group of those people should go.

*Yes, that's my feeling.*

(silence)

*To one of them I said, "If I went over there, I'd go with a whip!"*

(Mother laughs) There's really a subhuman group over there.

*Yes, certainly . . . But how can you eliminate that?*

(silence)

*Another example: they even have a hired cook to do their cooking, those people!*

Oh! . . .

*There's a fundamental flaw in all that, you know.*

But how can that be?

*That's the way it is, you see. They have a hired cook.*

Heavens!

(long silence)

What do you propose then?

*Nothing, I don't know, Mother.*

(silence)

*I feel R. should organise things in such a way that people are compelled to work.*

Yes. . . Yes, we'll have to do something.

*That way, the sorting out would be done right away.*

Yes. . . But I need to know the number of people in the group, both those who work and those who do nothing. And then. . .

(silence)

Of course, we could take very "drastic" steps.

*Yes.*

For instance, so many hours of work per day are required in order to be fed, or else you eat only if you pay for it.

*Yes, Mother, it should be done. Because, you see, they are so crafty that they all say they work: they putter around here and there, they go to work on the Matrimandir for half an hour or so. . . So, to them, they've "worked." You see, they just putter around.*

(after a silence)

I suddenly felt I had lost my influence over those people. I tell them things — they couldn't care less.

You could speak to R. and see.

*Yes, Mother. . . But R. says, "Mother doesn't want to interfere. Mother doesn't want to make any decisions." But I think perhaps it's up to him to make a decision.*

But no one will listen to him. You see, I can't make decisions anymore because they don't listen to me. As long as they listened to me, it was easy — it was easy, there was an influence. Now, something has happened, I don't have any authority at all anymore, so what can we do?

*Well, if you tell R., he will see that it's done.*

(Mother goes within for a long time)

We'll have to find some way. . .

*Mother, it seems to me you could call together those who are responsible and take some decisions.*

Yes, good idea.

*(silence)*

The trouble is that when several of them are here together, they talk among themselves, I don't hear. So. . .

*If it would help, I can be there.*

I think it would.

*(long silence. Mother goes within)*

*I really feel it is necessary to start again on a new basis and the entire place must be swept clean of all those people. We have to start afresh in a new location and make them work.*

Yes, but how about the accommodations?

*In the meantime they could live in huts, which they would build themselves.*

But they're in huts.

*I mean with thatched roofs.*

*(silence)*

I'll see.

I'll try to arrange something. I'll tell you Saturday.

*Mother's Agenda, 12, 28.4.71*

### *The first condition for living in Auroville is not to lie*

*As an offshoot from an Aurovilian's letter, Mother made remarks about lying:*

“We could say, ‘The first condition for living in Auroville is not to lie’... You wish to ask something?”

*Mother, if it is made a condition for people wishing to see Mother, she will have a very little crowd to see...*

*Mother laughed and said, “If we make it a condition for living in Auroville no one will be there.”*

*She added,*

“It is not the time; people are not ready.

When one purposely says what one knows to be not true, it is lying...

When one says something in ignorance, it is a different matter.

The supramental is a world of Truth, it is a non-lying world, but there is so much lying, that is what prevents its coming.”

*Often we put before Mother our wishes, get her approval or blessings, and when we go out we say, ‘Mother has asked me to do this or that.’*

*Mother smiled and said, “Yes, it is lying.”*

*In the end she said,*

“If you do not wish to say something which is true, instead of lying just keep silent. There is a great strength in the power to keep silent.”

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 219-20, 5.9.72*

*During the first stage of Auroville's elaboration no personal servants were allowed, whereas hired labour was accepted as a temporary measure only – when the Aurovilians were engaged in some other job or did not have the necessary training. This section also deals with the employment of the villagers during this intermediate phase –*

*unless they chose to be fully integrated as Aurovilians. The Mother was so keen about the “Prosperity” (in kind) system, in Auroville, that she wished to apply it even to the temporarily hired workers.*

## PART SIX

# NO SERVANTS, NO PAID WORKERS: INTEGRATION

*[The Mother wrote this text on 10.7.54, envisaging an ideal set up for the employees of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The idea will resurface for the Auroville “Labour Colony”, which the Mother had planned for the workers of the Auromodel construction site, and afterwards the town of Auroville. One month later the Mother wrote “A Dream” that, though meant for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, is very close to Mother’s vision of Auroville.]*

### TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

What I wish to do for you. I shall tell you how I view the solution of your problems, both individual and collective, and what is the truth of the relation between us.

But for the working out of the program I am going to place before you, two essential conditions are necessary. First, I must have the financial means to execute my plan; secondly, you must show a minimum of sincerity, honesty and goodwill in your attitude towards me and towards your work. You have most unfortunately the habit of trying to deceive me. Bad advisers have taught you that that this is the best thing to do in your relation with your employer. [. . .]

In the matter of education, what is necessary is to arrange for the moral and intellectual instruction and development of all, children and adults: various schools, technical instruction in different vocations, classes for music and dance, a cinema hall where educational films will be shown, a lecture hall, a library, a reading room, varied physical education, a sports ground and so on. Each one can choose the kind of activity that is most suitable to his nature and will receive the required training. Even small gardens will be provided where those who like cultivation can grow flowers, fruits and vegetables.

In the matter of health, there will be regular medical visits, a hospital, a dispensary, a nursing home for the segregation of contagious cases. A department of hygiene will have the exclusive function of inspecting all public and private buildings to see that the most rigorous rules of cleanliness are observed everywhere and by all. As natural adjuncts to this department public baths and common laundries will be put at the disposal of everyone.

Finally, big stores will be set up where one can find all the small ‘extras’ which give life variety and pleasantness and which one will get against ‘coupons’ that will be given in recompense for especially notable achievement in work or conduct.

I shall not give a long description of the organisation and the working of the institution, although everything in it to the smallest details has already been foreseen. It goes without saying that for admission to live in this ideal place the essential conditions that need to be fulfilled are good character, good conduct, honest, regular and efficient work and a general goodwill.

*Bulletin of Physical Education, August 1954*

*[Excerpt from notes written by Shri Aravind Shankar Baan, ICS, after an interview he and his family had with the Mother on 24.2.1967:]*

- 1. In Auroville, there will be no domestic servants. All the modern amenities will be there so that people can do all their own work. Mother said that she approves of the old joint family system in India, where some used to attend to the material side of life, some were free to pursue the spiritual life, and some, the intellectual life. But Mother said that however much a person is occupied with spiritual matters it is necessary for him to do some material work of his own too. Unless people do some work for themselves their bodies lose fitness and strength.*

[Copy of a letter dated 23.5.1967, probably from Navajata to Mrs. Anjani Dayanand:]

Ref: N/IND/110

Dear Sister Anjani,

The Mother has given you time on 28<sup>th</sup> morning at 10.a.m.

She says it is better you see Her alone.

She has seen the photo of Sri A.V. Sankara Menon. She does not approve of his paid appointment. In fact she has said that "from today no paid employee in Auroville".

With my best wishes. Yours sincerely,

Shyam Sunder file, Auroville Archives

The Mother was asked, "At the beginning of Auroville, will the Westerners' houses be different from those foreseen for the Tamils (experimental huts)?" She replied,

Those who can't accept to have the same houses are not ready to live in Auroville. Meanness must cease. It is not only houses, but the soul state that must be built in Auroville.

Roger Anger's archive, February 1968

Mother Divine,

A few points on which Thy divine guidance is required.

There is resistance from the villagers in selling their lands. This may be because we have done nothing to integrate them with Auroville. They feel it is a foreign imposition on them which will do them no good but will drive them from their hearths and homes.

Should we not demonstrate to them our real intentions by providing them with facilities such as a dispensary, a school, clean drinking water, etc.? This would be money well spent if it is done with love and humility and not as charity.

This is indispensable.

MCW03, 13, pp. 241-2, April 1969

(Someone working at the Community Workers Kitchen near Aspiration wrote:)

Some would like to continue giving food to the workers, others feel that even if funds were available they could be utilised better elsewhere. Please give us your guidance.

Once you have started giving food to the workmen, you cannot stop doing so, otherwise you would lose their confidence. This is imperative—show it to the others.

Blessings to all.

MCW03, 13, pp. 242, April 1969

(After the departure of the supervisor of the Community Workers Kitchen, someone wrote:)

The feeding of the Auroville workers has never been interrupted and I personally will manage it, till a new arrangement can be found.

Very good.

It would give all of us strength and the awareness of unity if this program of giving a free midday meal to all Auroville workers received a message from you.

Goodwill for all and goodwill from all is the basis of peace and harmony.

Blessings.

Those who are in contact with the villagers should not forget that these people are worth as much as they are, that they know as much, that they think and feel as well as they do. They should therefore never have an attitude of ridiculous superiority.

They are at home and you are the visitors.

MCW03, 13, pp. 243, September or October 1969

To the inhabitants of Aspiration:

A relationship that is not only cordial but friendly with the inhabitants of the neighbouring village is absolutely indispensable.

For the realisation of Auroville the first step is to establish a true human fraternity—any shortcoming in this regard is a grave mistake which can compromise the whole work.

My blessings are with all sincere effort towards harmony.

MCW03, 13, pp. 243, 23 November 1969

*[Roger Anger noted down the following (on 24.1.69?), after one of his conversations with the Mother:]*

Auromodèle: the inconvenience of the nearness of the Tamil village should be considered an advantage – like that it will be more difficult...

*[In Roger's notes, this undated passage appears elsewhere:]*

The greater the difficulties, the more beautiful will be the experience.

*[Taking these two notes together they appear consistent with a report of Mother's words published in the "Auroville Gazette" in 1972:]*

*Mother also says:* The nearness of Aspiration and Auromodèle to the Tamil village should be considered as an advantage. It will be more difficult but if the difficulties are greater, the experience also will be more beautiful.

*Roger Anger's archive, 1969. Auroville Gazette, 1972*

*[The Mother signed with 'Blessings' the following text calling for the abolition of servants and paid workers.]*

#### NOTE ON THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION OF AUROVILLE WORKERS AND VILLAGERS

*Guidelines are being asked from the Mother for the C.A.A. [Comite Administratif d'Auroville] to study provisory regulations that will enable us to clearly define the policy regarding the integration of Auroville workers.*

*When making suggestions in the context of these guidelines, and in keeping with the Charter of Auroville, two stages have to be kept in view: one provisory stage, taking into account the present situation; and a second, which has to be the definite future: total integration. The first study which has to be made now will render it possible to settle the problems arising out of the fact that a number of paid workers asks for an increase of salary.*

*In this context the Mother has defined:*

- 1) The notion or feelings about servitude must not make themselves felt any more in any group of Aurovilians, whether the worker is paid or not. This prejudice, which belongs to the nature of labour or to the social class, which was generally charged with it, is expired and has to disappear.
- 2) From now on no worker can be employed, that is: paid, by any group of Aurovilians whatsoever, when there are Aurovilians in the group who don't have a clearly defined occupation.

- 3) The presence of a paid worker can only be admitted as an exception, when none of the members is capable to do the work needed (or if all the members do have an occupation, which is considered to be more useful for the community).
- 4) In this eventuality the service rendered shall be only daily, within the limits of time and possibilities.
- 5) As soon as one of the workers (preferably from Auroville territory) will have shown his qualities in spirit and profession and if he is accepted by Mother, the regulations of the Auroville workers will be proposed to him, as he has to have the same rights as the workers already employed.
- 6) In case he refuses, his salary shall be decided righteously and objectively, by competent people, who will have to take into account the individual needs of each worker in order to avoid creating social misery or legitimate claims.
- 7) The provisory regulations of the workers will have to enable them to get:
  - food for their family
  - a common school for the children, shared with the other Auroville children.
  - better housing (Tamil huts with water and electricity)
  - a "prosperity" distribution, according to their legitimate needs (to be decided).

To be studied by the C.A.A.

- means regarding birth limitation
- social life (children parents, role and work of women, ceremonies)
- pocket money
- collective or individual kitchen
- geographical situation of the housing.

*Roger Anger's archive, undated*

### *Integration of the village families*

*[The Mother had decided to start on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1970, an integration program for the village families inside the Auroville area. Five families from Kulapalayam were first accepted. Vharadharajan, in charge of this program, wrote to the Mother for guidance. Probably due to her difficult health condition, the Mother replied only on September 10.]*

*In connection with the integration program of the families from the village, which starts on Friday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1970, we pray for your guidance in the following:*

*1. Whether they are to be treated as Aurovilians in all matters?*

*Yes.*

*2. Whether regular Prosperity should be issued to them?*

*Yes.*

*3. Whether all Prosperity items can be taken from Auroville Prosperity?*

*All that they choose to take.*

*4. Whether any guiding principles should be laid down for them on joining Auroville? If yes, Mother may kindly enlighten us.*

*Certainly it would be good if somebody was intelligent enough to do it and do it well.*

*5. Whether any particular amount for food should be fixed per person per day; if yes, whether Rs.2.50 per adult and Rs.2.00 per child will be all right?*

*There must be a period of at least one month during which they are given what they ask. Afterwards, we shall see what may be done reasonably.*

*MCWCE, 13, p. 250, 10.9.70*

*As we intend to serve a better type of food than the villagers usually take, is it advisable to allow those who are willing to take food from the Community Kitchen on payment at a reasonable rate?*

*Yes—at cost price.*

*[Drafted in French by Roger Anger and signed by the Mother:]*

To implement a basic principle spelled out several times by the Mother, and which form the basis of Auroville's society – no paid labour, no servants in Auroville<sup>8</sup> – it has become necessary to allow a transitional period. During this transitional period, which should not last longer than it is necessary for training a sufficient number of qualified Aurovilians so as to replace the [paid labour or technicians] who are [presently] hired or will be, Auroville will set up these collective services:

- A (Building) Maintenance Service
- A Laundry Service

These services will be made available to all the Aurovilians who meet the following requirements:

1. Their work is useful to the community and occupies them according to the minimum time requested by the Mother, which means a minimum of 5 hours a day – including Sundays.
2. Their state of health is such that they cannot work.

These services will take care of the cleaning of all collective facilities and individual huts, as well the washing and ironing of all personal laundry within reasonable limits.

Those who do not work won't have access to these services and will assume such tasks on their own.

Obviously, these measures are taken to improve the life conditions of the Aurovilians who work; also to assure that, from now on as well in the future, no one will need to hire any servant on an individual basis – whatever his/her personal reasons may be, wherever he/she may live in Auroville.

*Roger Anger's archive, 19.10.71*

*[While describing the attitude the Aurovilians should have towards the villagers, the Mother stressed her preference for "Prosperity" (in kind) items instead of cash wages – if this was done in the true spirit:]*

One should explain to the villagers that we are there to make life better and easier for them and not more difficult. We will like to take them as people of Auroville if they collaborate and are willing for it. We have to explain it to them properly and also show that we mean it.

One has to convince them that we are their benefactors, – benefactors, but not with a sense of superiority. They have been so long ill-treated as inferiors, so they are untrusting. The sense of superiority in dealing with them must not be there.

If the Divine took an attitude of superiority, men would be crushed in a minute.

Those villagers who have goodwill towards Auroville should become stronger.

\*

To give things of need in place of cash is better, but one should not give with miserliness, and those to whom we give should feel that it is better for them.

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, pp. 121-2, 31.12.71*

From the spiritual point of view, India is the foremost country in the world. Her mission is to set the example of spirituality. Sri Aurobindo came on earth to teach this to the world.

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<sup>8</sup> "Pas de main d'oeuvre payée, pas de domestiques a Auroville"

This fact is so obvious that a simple and ignorant peasant here is, in his heart, closer to the Divine than the intellectuals of Europe.

All those who want to become Aurovilians must know this and behave accordingly; otherwise they are unworthy of being Aurovilians.

*MCW03, 13, p. 244-5, 8 February 1972*

*(Someone offered to help to clean Last School)*

It is all right. But while putting things in order, be very careful not to offend the people from the Tamil village. It has been very difficult for us to win their confidence and nothing should be done which could make them lose this new-born confidence which is of capital importance.

Take with you someone who knows and speaks Tamil fluently so that you can talk with them and explain things to them.

They are your brothers in spirit—this should never be forgotten.

*MCW03, 13, p. 245, July 1972*

*Daniel's letter about Prosperity for village people who wish to join Auroville.*

*The first question is if the 'pocket money' be provided for each as part of his Prosperity.*

*Mother said, "It can continue."*

*The second question related to the cases where the person from the village continues to live in his village hut with his family, takes meals with them, and thus shares his Prosperity with them.*

*Mother was not replying. I said that it then becomes like salary. She said, "It doesn't matter."*

*"What to do?"*

*She remarked, "Human nature is like that, profiteering."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 228, 28.9.72*

*A question is raised about the village children. Will they go to Aspiration school after the pre-school or should there be an independent school for them?*

*"Why division?" remarked the Mother. "There should be unification."*

*Shyam Sunder, Down Memory Lane, p. 285, 30.3.73*

## CONCLUSIONS

Auroville goes beyond the formula of a spiritual community to be established upon the minimum material needs hierarchy. Auroville wishes to be an ideal town fostering the advent of the Gnostic society of supramental beings. But for this happening all human impossibilities have to be faced, in their infinite complexity, and thoroughly transformed. Hence the necessity of gathering at one place individuals that represent one or more of such impossibilities, the postulate being surrender of the individual and collective ego. Behind the failure of all revolutions and/or alternative forms of governance ultimately is the incapacity to work out the lacerating contradictions of human nature, perpetrating instead the condition of fragmented personalities, clashing with each other, just within one single individual. Given the premises, what kind of collectivity can be born?

Outwardly, the threat to civilization today is posed by globalization, resulting in our planet being ruled by multinational enterprises in the name of the deity of our age, consumerism. No wonder that many in Auroville, in

their representing humanity's gamut of impossibilities – as demanded by Integral Yoga – harbor within themselves the same drive. At this historical junction Mother's vision of Auroville as the last attempt to prevent a new World War acquires a tremendous significance, particularly with regards to Mother's emphasis on minimum needs, in their being the very opposite of the trend ruling all affluent countries or aspiring to.

What is at stake goes beyond the generic formulation of an ideal society that, if streaming from other quarters, may eventually take the form of a technology-based society, resurrecting the bygone vision of enlightened capitalism of which it would eventually be the natural consummation. The divide rests with the Mother's call for minimum needs, along with the rejection of private property and private profits; by this qualifying Auroville as a spiritual society, yet stretching beyond. For minimum needs left to themselves have, or rather had, a prominent place in the Israeli kibbutz, Russian kolkhoz, Chinese or other communes: at the service of the Ideal, with *satwic* Reason as social creator; yet none of them would add much to the occult economy of things. Abolition of all private property and profits is an old dream too.

What the Mother meant by 'minimum needs' and abolition of private property and private profits is elucidated by the attentive study of all that she said, wrote or approved on Auroville. On the way to a self-governed society ruled by its group-soul such precepts are the foundation stone – in Yoga, as well as in the ideal society that abolition of the ego only can make true. A spiritual awakening only can mould the new being and society, where the starting point is the inner discovery, – the absence of which triggers the failure of all revolutions, of all socio-political systems, even the most progressive ones. The "Auroville Prosperity" system, like the Mother's guidelines, is but an expression in material terms of the inner revolution a true Aurovilian is called to live. Radiating from within, remolding life and society according to the true hierarchy, which is purely spiritual, those at the summit of evolution necessarily have the least material needs. This is the true hierarchy.

## ANNEXURES

### I

#### SOME POWERS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

Section 4 of the Rules, notified on November 10, 1997 by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resources Development, and subsequently published in the Gazette of India, further defines the powers of the Governing Board, first outlined in the Auroville Foundation Act. Below is reproduced an excerpt from Section 4 shedding further light about the specific research-theme of the present paper:

- (c) *subject to the other laws, to enter into agreements with the Central Government, State Governments, public or private organisations or individuals, foreign nationals and international non-governmental organizations, Government or Non-Government organisations or International Intergovernmental organisations for furtherance of the Foundation's objectives, for implementation of its programmes and for securing and accepting endowments, grants-in-aids, donations or gifts on mutually agreed terms and conditions in consultation with the Working Committee:*

*Provided that no such agreements shall be made with any foreign Government, Foreign Governmental Organisation or International or Inter-Governmental Organisation, foreign national or International non-governmental organisations, except with the prior approval of the Central Government.*

- (d) *In consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC of the Residents Assembly to acquire by purchase, lease, gift or otherwise any immovable property which may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Foundation;*

- (e) *to acquire by purchase, lease, gift or otherwise any movable property including any equipment which may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Foundation and in consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC of the Residents' Assembly;*
- (f) *to construct, alter extend, modify and maintain any building or buildings which may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Foundation;*
- (g) *to invest the funds of the Foundation or any other investible funds at the disposal of the Foundation in such securities or in such manner as may, from time to time, be determined by the Governing Board and in accordance with Government of India's instructions on investment and from time to time, to sell or transfer such investments in consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC;*
- (h) *to take over and acquire by purchase, gift or otherwise from Central Government, State Governments, public or private organisations or individuals or, subject to compliance with the other laws and approval of the Central Government, from foreign nationals and international non-Governmental Organisations movable and immovable properties or other funds together with any attendant obligations and engagements not inconsistent with the objects of the Foundation in consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC;*

*Provided that the prior approval of Central Government shall be necessary in those cases where the value of such properties of funds exceeds rupees one crore in any financial year;*

- (i) *to sell, transfer, lease or otherwise dispose of any immovable property of the Foundation in consultation with the Working Committee and the FAMC:*

*Provided that no property of the Foundation shall be sold without the previous sanction of the Central Government if its value is more than rupees five lakhs.*

## II

### POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

Regarding the Secretary, Rule 6 (1) and (2) specify:

*(1) The Secretary shall be appointed by the Central Government and shall be the Principal Executive Officer of the Foundation and shall exercise his powers and discharge his duties under the Chairman of the Governing Board.*

*(2) The Secretary shall*

*(a) be the custodian of the records, the Common Seal and such other properties of the Foundation as the Governing Board may commit to his charge.*

*(b) have the power to grant leave to all employees of the office of the Foundation except to himself and make necessary arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such employees during their absence;*

*(c) issue notices and convene meetings of the Governing Board and its committees and the International Advisory Council with the previous consent of their respective Chairman;*

*(d) keep the minutes of the meetings of the Auroville International Advisory Council, Governing Board and the Committees of the Foundation constituted under Section 16;*

*(e) record the official proceedings and correspond on behalf of the Auroville International Advisory Council and the Governing Board and its Committees;*

*(f) supply to the Central Government a copy of the Agenda of the meetings of the Governing Board the Residents' Assembly and the International Advisory Council as soon as they are issued and the minutes of such meetings;*

*(g) represent the Foundation in suits or proceedings in any court or before any authority, by or against the Foundation, sign powers of attorney, verify pleadings and depute his representative for this purpose;*

*(h) subject to the provisions of the Act and these rules, and the regulations maintain the Register of Residents as provided under the Act;*

*(i) maintain the accounts of the Foundation and arrange for preparation of any estimates and statements of the accounts for their presentation on to the Governing Board the Residents' Assembly and the Auroville International Advisory Council;*

*(j) have the accounts of the Foundation finalized in consultation with the Working Committee in respect of units, trusts, schools and other institutions run by the Auroville residents;*

*(k) furnish to the Central Government the statements and other papers required to be laid before the Houses of Parliament under the Act;*

*(l) on behalf of the Governing Board, arrange to send all return and statements and such other particulars, as may be prescribed or as the Central Government may direct or require;*

*(m) perform such functions and exercise such other powers as may be specified in the Act, rules or regulations or as may be required by the Central Government or delegated to him by the Chairman, Governing Board or the Residents' Assembly.*

### III

## INTRODUCING THE AUROVILLE FOUNDATION BILL TO THE PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

Below is the speech delivered on September 1, 1988 by Shri Shiv Shankar, Minister of Human Resources Development, to introduce to the Raya Sabha the Auroville Foundation Bill:

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have affirmed that humanity is rapidly moving towards the realisation of an actual unity. They underlined the necessity of promoting internationalism so that the East and the West can meet for mutual benefit and mutual interchange. They also considered that the ideal of Family of Man, which is central to Indian culture, should become a living vibration all over the world. In order to hasten this development, it was thought necessary to establish a small experimental field, where people from different parts of the world can come together and engage themselves in cultural, educational, scientific and other pursuits of research, aiming at human unity. It was against this background that Auroville was set up in 1968, and Mother announced its Charter which underlined the aims of unending education, and of material and spiritual researches aiming at the actualisation of human unity.

At the initiative of the Government of India, UNESCO passed Resolutions in 1966, 1968, 1970 and 1983 commending Auroville to those interested in UNESCO's ideals. They underlined the importance that Auroville had begun to receive at the international level.

Funds for the development of Auroville were received from different organisations in and outside India as also from the substantial grants received from the Central and State Governments. However, serious problems arose after The Mother left Her body in 1973. In order to create necessary conditions in which smooth development of Auroville could be ensured, the Central Government was forced to take over temporarily the management of Auroville from Sri Aurobindo Society and others under the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1980.

Initially, the Act was valid for 5 years, but it had to be extended further in 1985 and 1987 as the efforts made to arrive at a solution, in consultation with the residents of Auroville and SAS, to provide for the permanent management of Auroville, had not succeeded. Efforts were, however, continued and a broad consensus has now

emerged that it would be in the interest of further development of Auroville to establish a body corporate called the Auroville Foundation.

It may be mentioned that during the last 8 years since the take over of management of Auroville, Auroville has developed, and the residents of Auroville have taken a number of initiatives in various fields, including afforestation, soil conservation, water conservation, agriculture, integrated rural development, educational research, scientific research, cottage industries and computer technology. The residents of Auroville have also developed a self-organising system. All this needs to be encouraged and consolidated.

The Bill which is before us has certain special features. In the first place, the Bill seeks to acquire all the properties relatable to Auroville which are currently owned by several societies, trusts and other bodies. These assets were created by Sri Aurobindo Society and other bodies founded by the residents of Auroville substantially with the aid of donations received from different organizations and individuals in and outside India (including the Central and State Governments) for purposes and activities of Auroville, which under the proposed legislation, will become the responsibility of the Foundation. The Government, therefore, proposes to acquire these assets without payment of any compensation and vest these in the proposed Auroville Foundation whose primary objective shall be to encourage and promote ideals and programmes envisaged in the Charter of Auroville.

In the second place there shall be an International Advisory Council to advise the Central Government and the Governing Board of the Foundation on matters concerning development and management of Auroville. The existing Auroville Act has also the provision for the International Advisory Council. This International Advisory Council has played an important role in guiding the activities of Auroville throughout the last 8 years. The Council met every year and reviewed the progress of Auroville and made suitable recommendations to all concerned. Considering that Auroville aims at international collaboration and human unity, it is appropriate that the Auroville Foundation should have a high level International Advisory Council.

As far as the day-to-day activities are concerned, they will be looked after by the residents through appropriate autonomous arrangements, which will include Residents' Assembly and its working Committee. The idea underlying this arrangement is that the residents of Auroville should have autonomy so that activities of Auroville can grow under an atmosphere conducive to harmonious growth.

In the third place, the Bill envisages that the management of the Foundation will vest in a Governing Board, as constituted by the Government from time to time. In order to avoid old controversies getting perpetuated in the Governing Board, the Government has decided in principle that none of the existing societies or trusts will have a right of representation on the Governing Board. All nominations to this body will, therefore, be on individual basis.

The power and the functions of the Governing Board and the Residents' Assembly are so envisaged that the governing body would be able to ensure that Auroville actually gets the kind of management which is appropriate to the ideals of Auroville. The Governing Board also will be able to provide an impartial assessment of the progress of Auroville, not only for the benefit of those engaged in the development of Auroville, but also to the Parliament and the public at large.

Auroville is to be looked upon as a vision which has a great potentiality, and this can be of tremendous service to our country and the world. Mother had declared that the Earth needs a place where the difficulties of human nature can be dealt with in the context of an arduous process of the change of human nature. In such an endeavour, difficulties can be expected, but the Government is determined to help the process of development of Auroville in such a way that the aims and goals of Auroville are made more and more realizable. Research is the watch-word of Auroville, and the Charter of Auroville has underlined that Auroville will be engaged in the material and spiritual researches. What has been achieved so far is perhaps a beginning and a good beginning. Educational research in Auroville has just started flourishing. Research in the Works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother has also received a good deal of encouragement. Research in the field of alternative sources of energy has also made some headway. The experiment in establishing a new ecological balance has succeeded to a very high degree. Above all, the atmosphere of Auroville has begun to vibrate with activities of youth and the ideal of unending education is being promoted in every field of activity in Auroville. This process must be encouraged and developed. The way is very long, but it is hoped that this Bill which aims at the establishment of Auroville Foundation will be seen as an important aid in the growing development of Auroville.

## ADDENDUM

### THE ROLE OF INDUSTRIES IN MOTHER'S VISION

To understand the magnitude of Mother's vision it is essential to introduce her early statements about the key role to be played by industries – both in terms of an economically self-sufficient town of 50,000 inhabitants, and as the crucible of the ideal society Auroville is to manifest. The Mother had boldly stressed the need for industries already in the 30s, when she first conceived of a town where Sri Aurobindo would have lived at the centre.

Attended by over four hundred delegates from all parts of India and other countries, the First World Conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society was held in Pondicherry from 10 to 15 August 1964. The Mother approved and blessed the whole programme, whose scope was to announce the launch of a new town, consecrated to human unity, to be built at the outskirts of Pondicherry. A major resolution passed during the Conference was to set up industries that ought to find a true solution to labour and industrial problems.

In the first conversation where the Mother gives an exhaustive picture of what Auroville is meant to be, she told Satprem:

“But the interesting thing is that around this central point<sup>9</sup> there are four large sections, like four large petals (*Mother draws*), but the corners of the petals are rounded and there are small intermediate zones: four large sections and four zones.... Of course, this is only in the air: on the ground it will be an approximation.

We have four large sections: the cultural section in the north, that is, in the direction of Madras; in the east, the industrial section; in the south, the international section; and in the west, that is, towards the Lake, the residential section.

(...)

Then the industrial section... Already many people, including the Madras government (the Madras government is lending money) want to set up industries, which will be on a special basis. This industrial section is in the east, and it's very large: there is plenty of space; and it must slope down to the sea. North of Pondicherry, there is indeed a rather large expanse which is totally uninhabited and uncultivated; it's by the sea, going northward along the coast. So this industrial section would slope down to the sea, and, if possible, there would be a sort of wharf (not exactly a harbor, but a place where boats can berth), and all those industries with the necessary internal means of transport would have a direct possibility of export. And here, there would be a big hotel, the plan of which R. has already done (we wanted to build the hotel here, in the place of the "Shipping Company," but the owner, after saying yes, said no – that's very good, it will be better there), a big hotel to receive visitors from outside. Quite a few industries have already signed up for this section; I don't know if there will be enough space, but we'll manage.

(...)

In the old formation I had made, there had to be a hill and a river. A hill was necessary because Sri Aurobindo's house was on top of the hill. But Sri Aurobindo was there, in the center. It was arranged according to the plan of my symbol, that is to say, a central point with Sri Aurobindo and all that concerns Sri Aurobindo's life, then four

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<sup>9</sup> The Mother's Pavilion, later evolving into the Matrimandir.

large petals (which weren't the same as in this drawing, they were something different), then twelve petals around (the city proper), then around that, there were the disciples' residential quarters (you know my symbol: instead of [partition] lines, there are strips; well, the last circular strip formed the residential place of the disciples), and everyone had his house and his garden: a little house and a garden for everyone. And there were means of communication; I wasn't sure if it was individual transportation or collective transportation (like those small open trams in the mountains, you know) that crossed the city in all directions to bring the disciples back to the center of the city. And around all that, there was a wall with entrance gates and guards at each gate, so people entered only with permission. And there was no money: within the walls, no money; at the various entrance gates, people found banks and counters where they deposited their money and received in exchange tickets with which they could have lodging, food, this and that. But no money. And inside, absolutely nothing, no one had any money – the tickets were only for visitors, who entered only with a permit. It was a fantastic organization... No money, I didn't want money!

Oh, I've forgotten one thing in my plan: I wanted to build a workers' housing estate. But it should be part of the industrial section (perhaps an extension on the edge of the industrial section).

Outside the walls, in my first formation there was on one side the industrial estate, and on the other the fields, farms, etc., that were to supply the city. But that really meant a country – not a large one, but a country. Now it's much more limited; it's not my symbol anymore, there are only four zones, and no walls. And there will be money. The other formation, you know, was really an ideal attempt... But I reckoned it would take many years before we began: at the time, I expected to begin only after twenty-four years. But now, it's much more modest, it's a transitional experiment, and it's much more realizable – the other plan was... I nearly had the land: it was at the time of Sir Akbar (you remember?) of Hyderabad.”

*Mother's Agenda, 6, 23.5.1965*

Two days later the Mother told Huta<sup>10</sup> about Auroville:

“The town will be divided into four parts: 1. pavilion of all the countries; 2. cultural pavilion; 3. residential area; 4. small scale industries.

On the seaside there will be many big industries. And further towards Madras the land will be extended – covering some 50 miles or so.”

*Huta, Matrimandir – the Mother's Truth and Love, 25.6.1965*

*In 1967 Navajata, the Sri Aurobindo Society's Secretary, delivered to All India Radio a speech, first read out to the Mother and approved by her. Among others Navajata stated:*

“Provision is made for 50,000 residents in the main town, 20,000 in the model villages in its green belt, and 30,000 in its subsidiary projects like World Trade Centre, etc.

(...)

A physical education department covering all games and sports, model agricultural villages revolutionizing agricultural life by synthesizing aptitudes of workers, suitability of land and technical assistance, for a better life and optimum production, a handloom village for the handloom weavers in the area, a model fisherman's village, a film studio with an artists' colony, a World Trade and Information Centre, industries, all with a

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<sup>10</sup> As an answer to this disciple the Mother elaborated an early concept of the spiritual centre of the town. Huta's family purchased the land needed for Matrimandir. The Mother put Huta's elder brother, Laljbai Hindocha, a wealthy industrialist, in charge of Auroville's industrial zone. He lived with his joint family nearby the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

changed outlook and consciousness, are some of the other highlights of the project which will help usher in a new era in every aspect of life.

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

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*This is the back cover:*

**At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property. To be utilized with my blessings for the welfare of all.**

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

**The organization 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 organize his life according to – not according to his financial means, but his inner capacities.**

**The individual or individuals who are at the very summit necessarily have the least needs.**

**The wider the consciousness, the more it embraces things and realities – the less its material needs, automatically, because they lose all their importance and value. The need for material necessities is reduced to a minimum, which will itself change with the progressive development of Matter.**

**And that is easily recognizable, isn't it? It is difficult to act the part.**

**THE MOTHER**