

Auroville Tomorrow

Cling to Truth

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The significance of 24th April Darshan Day - The Mother's Final Arrival at Pondicherry.

It had rather seemed to me that they should be kept at a distance. With Théon, the adverse forces and hostile beings were often mentioned, they occupied a big place in self-development and in action. As for Sri Aurobindo, he used to say that that notion was useful mostly from the psychological and personal standpoint, because struggling with difficulties is easier when you see them as coming from "outside," as an attack from outside, than if you think they are part of your own nature. Not that he denied their existence, far from it, but the path depends a lot on the attitude you take and on the mental construction you have, naturally.

Sri Aurobindo insisted rather on Oneness: he used to say that even what we consider to be the worst adversaries are still a form of the Supreme, which, deliberately or not, consciously or not, helps in the general transformation. This seems to me vaster, deeper, more comprehensive.

And I tried to base action on this rather than on constant battle with opposing forces. Because, granted this idea, it makes sense that if you make the necessary progress, if you have the divine knowledge and consciousness, the very purpose of those forces disappears, and consequently they can't stay.

On the practical level, I have seen obvious examples of this; it was even my great argument with Durga (I told you, didn't I, that she used to come at the time of the pujas and that, two years ago, she "surrendered"), that was my great argument, I said to her, "But the purpose of your existence in this form - in this form of combative action - would disappear if through identification you obtained the powers that render those forces unnecessary." And it's after I told her these things that she surrendered to the supreme Will; she said, "I shall do what the Supreme wants me to do."

It was a very interesting result indeed.

- Mother's Agenda - September 30, 1964



April 24th Darshan: Victory Over Adverse Forces



The Divine Worker

I face earth's happenings with an equal soul;
In all are heard Thy steps: Thy unseen feet
Tread Destiny's pathways in my front. Life's whole
Tremendous theorem is Thou complete.

No danger can perturb my spirit's calm:
My acts are Thine; I do Thy works and pass;
Failure is cradled on Thy deathless arm,
Victory is Thy passage mirrored in Fortune's glass.

In this rude combat with the fate of man
Thy smile within my heart makes all my strength;
Thy Force in me labours at its grandiose plan,
Indifferent to the Time-snake's crawling length.

No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.
Thy presence is my immortality.

-Sri Aurobindo, II. Sonnets 1930-1950

Note of encouragement from Marc Luyckx Ghisi, a former International Advisory Council member - thank you, Marc!

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for sending me this new publication, N°1 & 2. This new publication is dynamic and Future looking.

Bravo pour cette initiative.

I fully agree with Sanjeev's last words before to leave his body. The Mother is perhaps using the actual Indian Govt to clear the way for Auroville construction.

Good work,

Marc



Exhibition at MoMA, New York, features Auroville's Galaxy Model



Photo: MoMA exhibit of the Auroville's City Model, The Galaxy

"It's a sweeping, occasionally heartbreaking exhibition full of big ideas and beautiful work, too much of it not widely known." (Ref: When Architects Made Worlds, New York Times, By Michael Kimmelman)

Roger Anger was chosen by The Mother to design and build Her city. Kireet Joshi wrote in a tribute to Roger Anger: "They want to go to the U.S.A. for studying architecture, when the greatest architect of the world is here." This was the comment of the Mother in late 60's, when a student of the Ashram Centre of Education wrote to Her that he wanted to go to U.S.A. for studying architecture. "The greatest architect of the world" was the phrase used by the Mother to refer to Roger.

It is very fitting, that when Auroville is gearing up and putting on its running shoes to go towards its next phase of growth and development, that there is such a tribute to the Galaxy Plan, the basis upon which physical Auroville is being realized.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of India's independence and Sri Aurobindo's 150th anniversary. On 24th March 1923, Roger Anger was born: 2022 marks the beginning of the Centenary year for his birth anniversary. On this significant occasion, some of his works, specifically the Auroville Galaxy Plan are exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in Manhattan, New York City. The exhibit will run until July 2nd, 2022.

The theme of the exhibition is "The Project of Independence: Architectures of Decolonization in South Asia, 1947-1985," and surveys Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh in the wake of the dissolution of the British Raj.

City talks: The Future of Water in Auroville



Photo: Matrimandir, from Auroville Radio

Water covers 70% of our planet, and it is easy to think that it will always be plentiful. However, freshwater—the stuff we drink, bathe in, irrigate our farm fields with—is incredibly rare. Only 3% of the world's water is fresh water, and two-thirds of that is tucked away in frozen glaciers or otherwise unavailable for our use.

Our aquifers are getting fast encroached by sea water intrusion, and ground water being our only source currently, Auroville and its bioregion continues to puncture the earth for access to this golden liquid that human body cannot do without.

We are made aware, again and again, of the crisis we face, if we are to rely only on the aquifers for freshwater.

Up and until very recently, humanity thought that the solution lay only in harvesting rain water. It is indeed the case for many cities; rain water harvesting is a splendid solution for cities that do not have access to a large water source, such as a river or a lake. Harald Kraft, a long-time associate of Auroville and a consulting engineer of water & wastewater resource management, has made a comprehensive proposal for Auroville in 2012.

A revolutionary proposal, this study shows how water that flows down from the "hill" of Matrimandir is stored in underground tanks in the green belt, treated and pumped back up to fill the future Matrimandir Lake. And what about ground recharge? Matrimandir Lake will have an overflow system, from where clean, pollution free water will be fed back to the earth.

To understand why all these complicated steps are necessary, we must understand one thing: modern human life make for a very polluted ground. When rainfall hits our unclean ground, with pollutants from traffic, from animal faeces, and is channelled into uncontrolled and randomly dug up ditches in the name of "water catchments", the water that enters the aquifers is highly polluted and is not fit for direct human consumption when pumped back up.

In ancient cities, water storage went hand-in-hand with gravity, and this was the only possibility until technology advanced. Today, we know that using solar power and pumps, humanity's relationship to water has changed. In continuing what must also change is the way we design our cities with regards to water.



Photo: Matrimandir test pond



Photo: Matrimandir, aerial view

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Photo: Matrimandir test pond

Harald's water proposal is a radically different one. He has gone ahead and implemented a city in Berlin based on this model, as a prototype, in Teltow. Till today, it functions efficiently. Anupama Kundoo, Head of Urban Design of the Auroville Town Development Council, also seconds Harald's proposal to nevertheless harvest rain water in addition to desalinated water. She explains that urban farming will be the norm of the future, and speaks of each building in Auroville having its own designed rain water storage system based on square meter of roof area.

But while this is a mind-blowing approach to water and shows how having the Lake on a hill is in fact to our great advantage in the Auroville context, Michael Bonke brings another perspective on water sourcing.

Varuna Pvt. Ltd., an enterprise closely associated to Auroville, has embarked on a research and implementation of a desalination plant, close to Auroville along the coast. He argues that while rainwater harvesting may be inevitable in cities without access to sea water, Auroville must take advantage of technological advancement in the desalination arena, and avoid the cost of building storage tanks for the rain water. The project has advanced quite some, and permissions are in process.

"Auroville must take advantage of technological advancement in the desalination arena, and avoid the cost of building storage tanks for the rain water." says Michael Bonke; the project has advanced quite some, and permissions are in process.

What about the environmental side-effects of a desalination plant?

Michael explains that there are three main concerns with regards to a desalination plant: Brine (the waste material left behind after filtration has shown to form a bed at the bottom of the ocean, suffocating sea life), green energy source, and chemicals used for killing algae that pollutes the water.

In the Auroville desalination plant, he explains that research has shown that a smaller desalination plant that is producing daily about 5000 cubic meter of drinking water needed for 50,000 people, produces much less brine than a large and centralized one. Additionally, the problem of the deposit is almost nil when the brine is deposited at least 500 m from the shore. Regarding the concern for energy sourcing to run the plant, Bonke explains that 3 out of the 6 windmills of Varuna will be uniquely used to power the plant, thereby making it entirely green. Lastly regarding the concern for chemicals, Bonke clarifies that this plant will use an UV light to kill the algae and plankton. This solution can be replicated along the shoreline with decentralized plants thereby solving a major looming crisis for all of Tamilnadu along the coast.

All in all, we are convinced that the future of water in Auroville looks promising, and that soon Auroville can showcase real-time solutions on clean and green water sourcing. In addition to this, Michael Bonke is part of the project of creating a test channel, that will feed water into the future Matrimandir Lake. This project, launched many years ago, is today nearing completion.

The City of the Future advances, slowly but surely.

(Article by Sindhuja Jagadeesh, based on the Webinar: "Future of Water in Auroville")

"Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations" - Auroville Charter, The Mother

In fond memory: words from Sanjeev Agarwal, 29th May, 2021



Photo: Sanjeev Agarwal and others from Auroville Archives

Who will compensate Auroville for its losses?

For over a year now the Forest Group and the Youth Centre (YC) have opposed the clearing of the Crown (ROW) and the laying of an electrical cable alongside it. Arguments have been heard from their side justifying the claim that the Crown should not pass through the YC or the Bliss Forest.

The TDC has replied to their arguments explaining why it is necessary to clear the circular Crown right-of-way (RoW) as provided for in the master plan.

Almost 300 Aurovilians have written a letter of support to the TDC requesting them to continue their work. The (Acting) Secretary of the Auroville Foundation has also directed the TDC to complete the task of clearing the

master plan RoWs and to lay the HT cable along its designated path along the cleared Crown RoW. He has also directed that other master plan RoWs must be cleared. When the TDC sent a team to survey and mark the Crown, YC residents told them that they are not welcome there and that no survey should take place.

One member of the Forest Group had remarked in a posting that proceeding with the work may lead to violence.

"We seem to be heading for a violent clash. When the TDC orders the JCB to cut through the YC it will be hard to find peaceful space for dialogue and mutual understanding".

The defiant blocking of the progress of the development work of building the Township goes against the fundamental structure of the Auroville Foundation Act, the provisions of which govern the functioning of the Auroville Foundation.

How is one to deal with such a situation? It was never expected that Aurovilians would act against Auroville. Hence this situation is new and needs some thinking on what to do...

The Mother has told us: "No big creation is possible without Discipline – individual discipline, group discipline, discipline towards the Divine" (16-09-1968). Could it be that far too many people have entered Auroville who do not have any faith in Mother's idea of Auroville and want to replace Her idea with their own? If that is so then what should be done? ...

The blocking of the work of the town development infrastructure has caused financial losses to Auroville. An issue arises about who will compensate Auroville for these losses...

Many individuals, institutions and corporations have provided donations and grants to Auroville. The Government of India has also provided grants for the development of the Auroville Township. The project of the Auroville Township has been detailed in various brochures that describe Auroville as well as the master plan that sets out how the Auroville Township is to be developed. These brochures have been circulated amongst donors who have contributed for this purpose. Land has been purchased with this plan in mind...

A masterly, continuous argumentation over some issue or the other causing long delays and effectively annulling the directives of the Governing Board has been a strategy used to good effect... This leads to the following reflection(s)...

What are the consequences for either individuals or a working group that causes financial loss to Auroville?

Source of text: Auronet

Through the looking glass: Auroville 2050

Auroville in 2050 offers two distinct possibilities. One, that I, now ninety-three, enjoy sailing across the lake on a Matrimandir gondola to the Park of Unity, with or without my dentures.

The other is that thirty-two years from now I've absconded to the lighter side of the universe yet not



Sketch: Roger Anger

"The dream that was at least a hundred years ahead of its time has deepened. Eighty two years have gone by, the population has grown to almost twenty thousand. The city buzzes with peace."



Sketch: Roger Anger

averse to visiting incognito as wonderful changes are afoot. The dream that was at least a hundred years ahead of its time has deepened. Eighty two years have gone by, the population has grown to almost twenty thousand. The city buzzes with peace.

A new generation has completely overhauled Auroville's organisation, as well as its society. Negativity has sunk to an all-time low as the cottage industry of conflict and controversy has finally decided to call it a day while bureaucracy is now only left to the bores.

Professionals are no longer those with overburdened official knowledge but those who have the deepest understanding of Auroville together with a practical capacity to make it manifest. As a result all parts of the city are now able to grow together. The International and Cultural zones are real happening places, creative in its research and of great innovative beauty. The universal town is ripening at last.

Auroville just won an award for enhanced sustainable mobility as the Crown monorail was flagged off and the inner city upto the Crown was declared almost wholly pedestrian with the exception of collective electric transport. The air is lovely. People walk under tree lined paths and streets and in between buildings.

People have actually begun enjoying working together, making sure that the city steadily takes shape in all its parts. There is great empathy amongst this new population. About five Lines of Force, big and small are now inhabited, even as twenty new farms dot the Greenbelt which is almost all there, and the forests are growing well. Buildings harvest rainwater, solar energy is well managed. There is no longer that old separation and hostility between Green belters and city dwellers. Green belters often take a week's break, reserve a room in a Line of Force to catch up with city friends and events and take a look how the hydroponic farms on rooftops are doing and note the increasing variety of bird population that comes to nest in the spring. People from the residential zone often go off for quiet retreats in the forest or go work on a farm for a month. Mongoose and porcupines cross the city at ease along paths and green corridors and the radials. No, they are not allowed to ride the monorail. There was an incident which I cannot divulge on Auroville Today.

Of course all this begs a question. How did such things happen? What about ground reality, controversy and topsoil?

Well, something happened to people between Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary in 2022 and the Mother's in 2028. The carbon footprints in our minds and hearts were the first to fade. It helped the city and society enormously as the atmosphere went through a massive change. Six sustained years of great inner transformation carried Auroville to a new place even as the world went through turmoil and change as it tried to find a new equilibrium. People came to Auroville, from the bio region and everywhere else from the known galaxy seeking another life, another kind of humanity.

Did Auroville have it in itself to offer something of greater worth?

Did it have place for these seekers of a new life from here or from there? The light that had been growing inside was starting to become visible. 'She' had once asked for our sincerity. And She wanted new forms for the new force to anchor. Form, not as flat shapes and structures but as a living, organic momentum. A new education was in the air.

When I looked in, in 2050, Auroville was steadily reaching a new equilibrium of consciousness. Tourists were still coming of course, but Auroville had changed because the Aurovilians were changing, opening to the new consciousness that inhabits the air like a miracle. Tourists don't just rush to shopping arcades or the golden ball, they are first given space and time to discover Auroville and enter an atmosphere that is different.

One day, while I was still around, I saw a group of young friends get off at the monorail stop in the Cultural Zone and walk to a café. They were young architect students coming out of a workshop and they had been given an assignment: to find the planning principles for Auroville's growth. Why were new forms needed to manifest a new force? What did that imply for the Auroville? The standard criteria of building and planning is that Form follows Function. This includes basic positioning, utilities and facilities, worked together with sustainability principles, said one participant. But what of the people, asked another. So they added another level: Form follows Fiction. Imagine the city and the Greenbelt where 2 people live, work, grow and interact, following their needs, trajectories and responses to humanize circulations within the form. But still, another participant mused, what of the dream, its poetry and its intention? So they added another level: Form follows Vision and began exploring how all these levels would percolate: function, imagination and vision, so that the city could co-exist at those levels. The owl that lived on top of the bookshelf beside their table gave a hoot and flew out of the window, satisfied.

In 2050 two young people stepped off the Lake Promenade and into my gondola. Suddenly one of them turned to me with a smile. "Guess what, building Auroville together is the most spiritual thing we've done. It is the beginning of harmony. We have crossed massive egos and entrenched positions, people are finally letting go of their fears and prejudices so we can ride this gondola together. We are on the bridge to the future!"

Truly, Auroville at 2050 is an amazing place to be in. Check it out sometime.

(Article by Anu Majumdar first published in Auroville Today, 2018, revised and re-published here, as a dream of tomorrow.)

Selection Process for Working Group Members – a spiritual perspective

Auroville wants to be a spiritual community. Its diaspora consists of peoples from around the world, from all walks of life with varied background, ambitions, aspirations, goals and their innate need to be a member of the society. Auroville also wants to invite the youth of the world to come and learn to be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness, to build a society that is self-governed, that is built with engagement in Karma Yoga in myriad areas of the community.

Auroville community has been experimenting with various methods, modalities, processes and is yet to find satisfactory or effective means to bring about selection of the members to constitute its working groups.



Painting by Huta: Beyond the Silence

Our continual seeking to bring about the members who are representative from a variety of criteria and such other means and processes to choose or to eliminate, as the case may be, makes us little different than any other society outside. The recent past has witnessed an increasing method of *voting* as the means to bring about the voice and choice of the peoples. If this "democratic" process was the best possible way for a human diaspora for selection, then America represents the widest and largest gathering of the humans in today's time and in the history of humanity is better suited to work out these modalities. India, Auroville's mother land, has an equally large and impressive gathering of varied spiritual diaspora to work out the evolutionary movement. Is Auroville only this?

Our call is to be willing servitors of the Divine Consciousness. We are invited to become a spiritual society. We are invited to explore new ways, spiritual means to seek our hierarchy for work and organization. The Matrimandir is now built and it represents our collective aspiration to the Divine. It is now open for each of us to go and learn to concentrate and be united with our psychic being. Each represents the unique aspect of what he/she is brought here to be in order to provide and take a role to partake in the building and organization of Auroville. The aspiration for whatever one wants to offer, to be, is, or needs to be will be molded into its true form when this regular engagement to seek and unite with the Divine Consciousness becomes a movement within the community. It may even open up new ways for our understanding each other when we regularly open to the collective aspiration for the manifestation of the Human Unity. Spiritual methods and means to self-organize may also emerge.

Without a collective movement for a spiritual change that is to manifest, Auroville will progress at the pace of Nature as has been witnessed over the last many decades.

(Article by Chandresh Patel)

Note on the 59th meeting of the Governing Board at Auroville



Photo: Governing Board members left to right: Prof R.S. Sarraju, Dr. Nirima Oza, Dr. Seetharaman, and Shri. Aravindan Neelakandan

In Auroville Foundation Bhavan, Auroville, was held the 59th Meeting of the Governing Board on 12th of April 2022 through hybrid mode. The meeting was attended in person by Dr. Nirima Oza (member), Shri. Aravindan Neelakandan (member), Prof. R. S. Sarraju (member) and Dr. Seetharaman (OSD), Auroville Foundation.

Honourable Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri R. N. Ravi (Chairman), Prof. Goutam Ghosal (member) & Dr Jayanti Ravi, Secretary, Auroville Foundation attended the meeting through the online video mode.

Dr. Tamilsai Soundararajan, Lt. Governor of Puducherry (member), Prof. Nandana Gurappa Basappa (member) and the two ex-officio members Smt. Neeta Prasad and Smt. Darshana M Dabral (Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor and Joint Secretary (ICC & Vig.), Ministry of Education, New Delhi) did not attend this meeting.

Dr Jayanti Ravi, Secretary, Auroville Foundation, welcomed the Chairman & the Members of the Governing Board and presented the various agenda points, accounts and reports on the various activities taken up after the last meeting. After their meeting, the Governing Board met with a group of residents regarding city development and ongoing affairs, and with various working groups of Auroville, including the Working Committee, Funds & Assets Management Committee, Auroville Town Development Council and the Entry Board who gave reports on progress made and plans ahead.

Members of the Governing Board also met with International Advisory Council members Ms. Dena Merriam, Ms. Gabi Gillissen, Mr. Hashmukh P. Rama, Mr. Michel Danino and Prof. David Frawley. Discussions were held on Auroville's current affairs and IAC's plans for the preparations of Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary.

A more detailed report of the Governing Board's meeting will soon be published as minutes.

Here's wishing all a marvelous Darshan Day and a grand victory over adverse forces!

