

**Transcript of a talk by Kireet Joshi
to the students of Auroville's 'Super School'**

The Inner Dimension of the City

Sisters and brothers,

I think Auroville as it exists today is the most precious gift that the earth possesses. It has momentous potentialities and responsibilities. All of us who are here have to bear a new kind of torch that is still in the making. I think in the background of Auroville there is, what we may call a strategy. How to bring about a radical change in humanity as a whole and how to make the whole world a happy family? A family in which there is spontaneous sharing and a spontaneous move upwards.

It was in 1912 that Mother wrote for the first time of a place – in order the whole humanity may move upwards – she spoke of a place to be created. In the last chapter of *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo speaks of the arrival or the emergence of a new humanity and he speaks of the method by which a new humanity can be created. And he says that there are two possible ways: one is that human beings in different parts of the world prepare themselves while living in the world and developing very far and then later on combining together to make a nucleus of new humanity. Or else, a method by which people who aspire for truth and truth alone would come out of the old world, built a nucleus in a favourable climate where everything is turned to the truth, and then gradually growth. And he foresaw that it is perhaps this second method which nature will prefer.

But he has laid down there a very important warning: the warning is that people who would come together with an aspiration and who would have the favourable climate; by living together they will increase the force of the truth. But at the same time by living together in a concentrated circle each one will contribute to the incapacity that each one possesses. And therefore the force of incapacities also would be concentrated. Thereafter, he said, that in the past it is this concentration of incapacities which have not been able to meet the concentration of the Truth Force and as a result there is a break down and such groups have therefore not flourished to a very long extent and there has been a failure. Lastly, he said that this failure could be prevented only if the Divine Will has taken a decisive decision to protect it, to develop it, and that Will is maintained. We have seen that the Ashram, as Mother herself pointed out in her statement of the *Dream*, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is a modest effort to build up that ideal grace, of which she speaks in her *Dream*, and for such a long period this nucleus has been developing.

At one time Mother said to me, at a very important stage in my own life, that I have three steps of my work. The first step was the Centre of Education (she referred to the Ashram Centre of Education). My second step is Auroville ? she told

me this in 1971. And my third step is India and the world. This was the time when Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary was being celebrated all over the country, and some of us in the Ashram were discussing the question of Sri Aurobindo's solutions to the problems of the country. And a group of members of the Ashram were discussing various problems, studying Sri Aurobindo's works and then writing down in brief the problem and the solution given by Sri Aurobindo. And I had the privilege of reading out to the Mother the solutions given by Sri Aurobindo and Mother was correcting the statements that we were making in regard to the solutions given by Sri Aurobindo. And then, she wanted afterwards that whatever final document we produced (it was a very short document), She wanted the country to know about this document and that it should be spread all over it. And I was to go around the country at that time.

It is this vision of the Mother that inspired me tremendously. First step was, according to the Mother, a Centre of Education; the second step was Auroville; the third India and the world. The ultimate goal is the whole humanity. How does humanity move upwards and arrive at solutions of the problems? When I try to understand this aspect I have always referred to the last prose writings of Sri Aurobindo *The Supramental Manifestation on the Earth*. In these eight chapters which he wrote in 1949, he has put forward a vision. To us it is a vision, but when we read Sri Aurobindo we feel as if whatever he is writing is actually happening. For example he wrote in these chapters a chapter on the divine body. The divine body as an important or a crucial step for the manifestation of the supermind on the earth, and at that time the divine body was already being made ready in his own body. As Mother has said: "Whatever Sri Aurobindo writes is the result of his own experiences." And then, we will read the Mother's Agenda, thirteen volumes, it is actually the fabrication of the divine body. Without the divine body ? one body at least ? which is perfected, where the matter becomes conscious of the indwelling spirit and manifests the spirit, that great task had to be completed. And on the 14th of March 1970 in the *Agenda* you read Mother's declaration "The work is done", and she repeats this statement several times: "The work is done." That is to say the divine body was ready. She says: "The work that Sri Aurobindo had given to me has been done." And the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to her was the impregnation, the permeation of the Supramental force in the physical body. And then she says, working it out may take hundreds of years, three hundred years, four hundred years, it does not matter, the work is done.

During the conversations around this time, there is a very important statement that Mother has made and that is that however great, however luminous and powerful one central body would be, there will be a necessity of a collectivity which responds to it. One superman coming on the earth, without that collectivity around, would not be able to accomplish the task.

It is very significant that it is around this time, in 1968, that Mother inaugurated this great city, Auroville. And all this has a connection with the statement of the Mother in 1912, Sri Aurobindo's statement in *The Life Divine*, the statement on the divine body, and the experiment that Mother made to manifest the divine body. All this is the inner dimension, the basic inner dimension of Auroville.

I think Mother felt a need to create a body, a collectivity which would serve the purpose of receiving the light of the divine body, of organising itself into higher and higher moulds of living ? not only of being and thinking and feeling but of living, so that the work of the Supramental Manifestation could move faster and faster, and would succeed. In other words, the most important foundation of Auroville is the Supramental Consciousness. And I think when Mother wrote the invitation to men of goodwill, it is an invitation to all to understand the supermind; to participate in the activity or action of the supermind and to respond to it.

In the book *The Supramental Manifestation on Earth*, Sri Aurobindo has made a statement in four chapters: *Supermind and Humanity*, *Supermind in the Evolution*, *Mind of Light*, and the last chapter also *Supermind and the Mind of Light*. These four chapters are directly relevant to the work of Auroville. It is, you might say, the *manifesto* of Auroville. We are here for the Divine in humanity; the Divine that is moving upward with humanity. That is why the very first article of the Charter of Auroville is that: "To live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine consciousness." Because that is the basic condition in which the study of the Supermind becomes possible.

I am reminded of the Mother's vision of the boat, many of us have read it, and I think that Auroville is a boat in which we are all recruited for purposes of training, and that is why Mother spoke in the second article of the Charter of Auroville of perpetual education. We are all under training and we must be here as candidates under training. All our imperfections, our human weaknesses, which particularly here will become manifest more and more because of the pressure... The difficulties, which I see in Auroville, are natural difficulties. There are difficulties of the pressure under which we put ourselves in the process of training. One may become disheartened to see the difficulties but that is one way of looking at it. The other way of looking at it is that we are under training and the sooner we embody more and more the aspiration and the effort to surmount the difficulties, the better and more glorious will be the outcome. But this is one part of what I call the foundational inner dimension. And there is a second aspect of the inner dimension.

The second dimension is the process of our training. Mother spoke of Auroville in two very important statements. One was that humanity has made a big mistake in the production of armaments of destruction. And, she pointed this out in this conversation which is in *The Agenda*. In 1981 when Mr M'Bow

(The then Secretary General of UNESCO, who was a member of Auroville's International Advisory Council) came to Auroville and when Deepti in a meeting read this statement it inspired Mr M'Bow tremendously, because here Mother had declared the purpose of Auroville – and it puts a tremendous light on the work of Auroville – what I call the process of training in Auroville. She said, that because this mistake has been committed there is a tremendous danger because there is a psychology of the instrument of destruction ? not only of the human beings who possess the instruments of destruction but the psychology of the instruments themselves. And that psychology propels its use. You produce an instrument of war, an instrument of destruction and that instrument by its very existence produces a propulsion: "Use me". It should be used and this is a tremendous danger. Many people have piled up the armaments with a very pious wish and hope that they will not be used. But this psychology which Mother had explained propels all the time: "Use, use me!" Now, what is the remedy for this? What is it that can counter-act this psychology of the instruments? Mother said, when I was contemplating this question I was told: it is for that purpose I have created Auroville. To counter act this mistake which humanity had made in producing armaments of destruction. How to counter-act? We have to realise that today's armaments are so deadly that if they are used there will be irremediable destruction – which cannot be remedied afterwards. Not only ecologically but even the instruments of the human body. So, this task is very important and is something that cannot avoid at all. This is the large context in which Auroville exists today. And we are undergoing a training because she said that the very process of the development of Auroville ? not only when Auroville will be completed ? but the process of its development will be a remedy to this psychology of the use of armaments.

And, it is one of the reasons why I feel Auroville has been attacked. The one instrument that Mother has produced here to counter-act all the piles of the armaments, if this instrument can be destroyed then the destruction of mankind will be very easy. Therefore it is a very precious gift which had been given by the Mother. If Auroville can survive, can develop, can move forward the whole of humanity can be saved. And therefore, in fact I am a personal witness, the terrible conflict and struggle that had gone into the process, and at many stages I could see that Auroville could be destroyed. Fortunately, I personally feel that we have passed through that difficult period. Auroville exists! Continuously exists to survive, to develop, to try. And a new consciousness is holding us on, and we are conscious today of the gift that this Auroville is for the mankind. But this gift can continue to survive and continue to develop only on one important condition: service to the Divine Will, discovery of the Divine Will and effective use of our being in the service of the Divine Will.

So, the question is what is the Divine Will? According to many religions Divine's will is manifested. It is written down in the *Bible* or the *Koran* or that kind of a scripture. It is,

as it were, revealed once and for all. And the call is to implement what is now known to be the Divine will. But in Sri Aurobindo's vision there is no book, however great it may be, it may be the *Veda*, or the *Bhagavad Gita*, or any other, in which we find an answer to the question as to what is the Divine's Will ? at the highest crest of humanity's development today. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says: "The sadhaka of the Integral yoga is not the sadhaka of any book, he is the sadhaka of the infinite." And therefore, every individual who wants to discover the Divine Will may take the help from the past, from all the revelations, but he will not be bound by any one of them. It has to be a fresh discovery. Truth is constantly manifesting and the truth of yesterday is not the truth of today. And one has to constantly be fresh to discover the truth at every moment.

Now what is the method of discovering the Divine's Will? The truth is triumphant only when it is fresh. Therefore there should be fresh inquiries every day. And the only method is a synthesis of knowledge, devotion and action. There is a very important sentence in the *Bhagavad Gita* which brings out the necessity of combining knowledge, devotion and action. In one of the chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said: "All my devotees are very dear to me, but, the devotee who combines knowledge with his devotion is particular dear to me - *Ativa priya*." And it is mentioned at a point where action is already described as a necessary part of this process and it is explained why this combination is necessary. It is said that only when the three are combined together that immortality is possible ? *Amritam*. It is a very important statement. You may have revelation at any stage without combining knowledge, action and devotion but that will not give you immortality ? it may be liberation.

Immortality was a great search of the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. And it is immortality of which Sri Aurobindo speaks now in his writings. The conquest of death, not only by going above the death because that is also one of the conquests, when death does not affect you, but the elimination of the principle of death which can be achieved when you combine these three aspects. Intensification of cognition, conation and affection ? the three powers of our psychology. To intensify them, to purify them, to combine them together progressively, potently. This particular movement is a movement that Sri Aurobindo describes in a very important chapter in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, connected with Karma yoga, where he describes the works of knowledge, the works of love and the works of life force. When the three activities in which we are constantly engaged can be constantly utilised by us as a sacrifice, as an offering to the Divine, then love, knowledge and action can be combined and we discover the Divine's Will.

In very simple terms, once Mother has explained to me, when I had to give a message from her to some group. She told me to give a message from her: "We are here to discover and

execute the Divine's Will." And then she said you tell them how to discover the Divine's will, and she said, when you go above all desire, the root of the desire, all preferences, then only are you fit to discover the Divine's Will. To my mind the second inner dimension of Auroville is connected with this. While doing every activity we offer it to the Divine in search of the Divine's Will, so that we can serve it by offering our preferences. In fact, it is easier to give up desire but preferences are extremely difficult ? our preferred idea particularly, to offer the preferred idea. The preferred idea to which you arrived after a lot of consideration, and when you arrive at a conclusion then to give it up.

We have for example Mother's statement as to how at one stage, between 1926 and 28, she was creating a new world and she was inviting the gods on the earth so the new world can be built. And she had prepared the whole strategy and every aspect of it and then she offered it to Sri Aurobindo and he said -it is a very interesting statement- that he appreciated her work very much and that it would make her very celebrated in the world, but then he added: "But this is not our work. We want the Truth in its entirety. We want the supramental Truth not the overmind Truth." And when she had heard Sri Aurobindo, she went to her room and simply destroyed the whole strategy that she had prepared. It is this attitude of surrender, that all our preferred ideas, all that we have prepared if it is necessary, if we find it is not the Divine's Will, to be able to give it up. To my mind the second inner dimension of Auroville is this fire in us, a constant fire which is in search of the Divine's Will, which wants to offer every idea, every wish which is personal to us, which does not bear the imprint of the Divine Will. This is what I call a training. We are here for a period, for a great stage of training.

The third is..._This is the outer manifestation of Auroville: the organisation of Auroville. A progressive organisation because we do not know what is the ideal organisation. It is to be worked out. We have guidelines, we have glimpses of what is to be, but how it will work out we do not as yet know. To be in search of an ideal organisation, inwardly devoted to this task, very sincerely. Our organisation should be such that it does not prevent, that it does not become an obstacle for the free growth of the Spirit. How to avoid mechanisation of life? How to avoid routinisation of life? How to make life constantly fresh? This is our search.

Fortunately, Mother has given detailed guidelines on this subject. Sri Aurobindo has given detailed ideas on this. Even recently an Aurovilian wrote a note to me in which he quoted a passage from the Mother. When an American had come to see the Ashram and yet made many remarks about the inadequacies of the processes of the organisation of the Ashram. And how Sri Aurobindo came to the Mother and said to her to write down and gave a guidance to what is the ideal way of organising. Since I do not remember every word of it I will not repeat myself but I suggest that this is a very important passage that Carel

has discovered in the writings of the Mother and it should be given to everyone, because while we are trying to make a new organisation this statement is very important.

Once Mother had told me, I do not have a set of pigeonholes in which I can then put pigeons. That is the normal mental method of organisation. You develop constantly with the fire and with the will a constant burning goodwill which simply says: truth, harmony, goodwill, discipline. In fact these are the four words which Mother has written in a message which I find in the Matrimandir. Very beautiful - goodwill, harmony, discipline, truth. If you keep in mind this proposition, all the time, these terms in all your activities and allow them to flow then gradually the ideal form of organisation will emerge. And this has a tremendous effect because the whole world today is at a halting point. The whole world is moving round and round without an issue, without a solution because the world does not know how to organise itself. The organisational problem is extremely important. If you can therefore develop an organisation with this kind of fashioning tool, a burning goodwill then it will be very useful for the whole of mankind. This is according to me the third inner dimension of the city that is in making.

Thank you.

Spring 2001

MOTHER'S AGENDA

11 March 1964

I'll read you something.

It concerns an American who came here full of all the American ideas, who did a survey of everything (the way the services are organized and so on), and who sent me his report in which he says that everything lacks organization, a mental structure.... I didn't intend to answer him, but the day before yesterday, just when I was going to retire for the night, Sri Aurobindo told me insistently - he came and told me, "Here is what you must say to T." And he insisted until I had written it down - I was forced to write it!

Sri Aurobindo has told us (it's he himself who said it) and we are convinced by experience that above the mind there is a consciousness much wiser than the mental wisdom, and in the depths of things there is a will much more powerful than the human will.

All our endeavour is to make this consciousness and this will govern our lives and action and organise all our activities. It is the way in which the Ashram has been created. Since 1926 when Sri Aurobindo retired and gave me full charge of it (at that time there were only two rented houses and a handful of disciples) all has grown up and developed like the growth of a forest, and each service was created not by any artificial planning but by a living and dynamic need. This is the secret of constant growth and endless progress. The present difficulties come chiefly from psychological resistances in the disciples who have not been able to follow the rather rapid pace of the sadhana and the yielding to the intrusion of mental methods which have corrupted the initial working.

A growth and purification of the consciousness is the only remedy.