

**Auroville, 2046**  
After the end of one world

Débora Nunes



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*Another world is possible,  
and already exists*

I am grateful to all the people who made the existence  
of this book and its edition in several languages possible

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Salvador, Brazil,

April 2020.

# Kali Sashtra<sup>1</sup>

Marcus Bussey

Red eyes and lightning!  
What would you expect? We've been so complacent,  
Just riding the wave of good karma  
oblivious, well mostly,  
to the cost, surrendering to a kind  
of smug progress, grown soft,  
happy to play with our toys;  
Sure in our own beguiling story,  
and she burst in, cracking the foundations.  
Our tall building rocks, the windows shatter.  
Poverty and Planet call us to account!  
Material being is empty when soul is absent,  
soul-sickness excavating the cave, hollow man-woman  
dancing in despair when the lights go out.  
The dark mother, furious in her outrage  
casts stones and thunderbolts,  
let the demons of abundance choke us,  
let the asuras of doubt, mighty miasma,  
empty the bucket and pour out hope,  
strangle agency and shroud the civilised  
in all its ugliness and pointlessness.

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<sup>1</sup> Hindu goddess who is often seen attacking evil forces. She is also the Divine mother, or mother of the universe. Sashtra means a set of rules, a treatise, lesson or manual.

That's the clincher, Kali of the awakened heart  
tears down our habits, jeers at our pride,  
poisons the future with our own muck.  
The leaders are lost and the people panic.  
Fear – everywhere – like the stench of dried blood  
and excrement, spreads to every corner.  
She will dance on our heads alright;  
She will mock us and laugh;  
She will shake the foundations of all hopes;  
crush all certitudes!  
She will wash the world in blood and  
bleed the vanities of our assumptions;  
She will turn politics on its head,  
upend relationships and smash economies;  
She will take no prisoners as we flee  
her wrath scorching the back of our heads.  
She will leave nothing untouched;  
There are no good guys now.  
The Kurukshetra is washed clean.  
Kali is Queen of both damned and shriven  
Now our dharma<sup>2</sup> is to dance with her!

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<sup>2</sup> Sanskrit term meaning roughly 'righteousness' but more than this, the principle that sustains a thing, is its defining essence.

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**A look from the future  
cast into the past**



She was 98 years old and still able to meditate comfortably in the lotus posture. It was a momentous time: the government of India was about to implement a new law for Auroville, 78 years after it was founded. She remembered how difficult it had been to obtain some level of autonomy from the country so that the human laboratory that was Auroville could develop. The government's intention was to put an end to this and to make Auroville a city like any other. As had been their custom for decades at critical moments or on a member's demise, hundreds of Aurovillians met under the sacred banyan tree. The banyan had witnessed the creation of the city and the main temple, the Matrimandir, stood right next to it. This is where they convened to meditate when the community felt particularly touched. These were essential moments for all Aurovillians, and she simply had to be there.

Auroville was the most important thing in her life. At the age of 18 she had joined the "Mother"'s project against her parents' will to realise Sri Aurobindo's ideal "City of Dawn", a prototype for the new humanity, peaceful, democratic and supportive. Along with other young people from different parts of the world, Indra joined the adventure. She had studied until then in the Sri Aurobindo ashram - her family's decision, which she had dutifully

accepted. She was born in Pondicherry and this was a common destiny for the children of Sri Aurobindo followers: it was a high standard school providing a comprehensive education involving mind, body and spirit and it accepted girls like her, who had the same education as boys, unlike other Indian schools in the 1950s. For her father, attending the school of master Aurobindo and the “Mother” was one thing, but being part of a visionary project like Auroville was not for a girl of a good family like hers. She put her foot down and left. Over time, the family accepted her choice and throughout her life she received her parents and siblings many times in her home, when she started to have one.

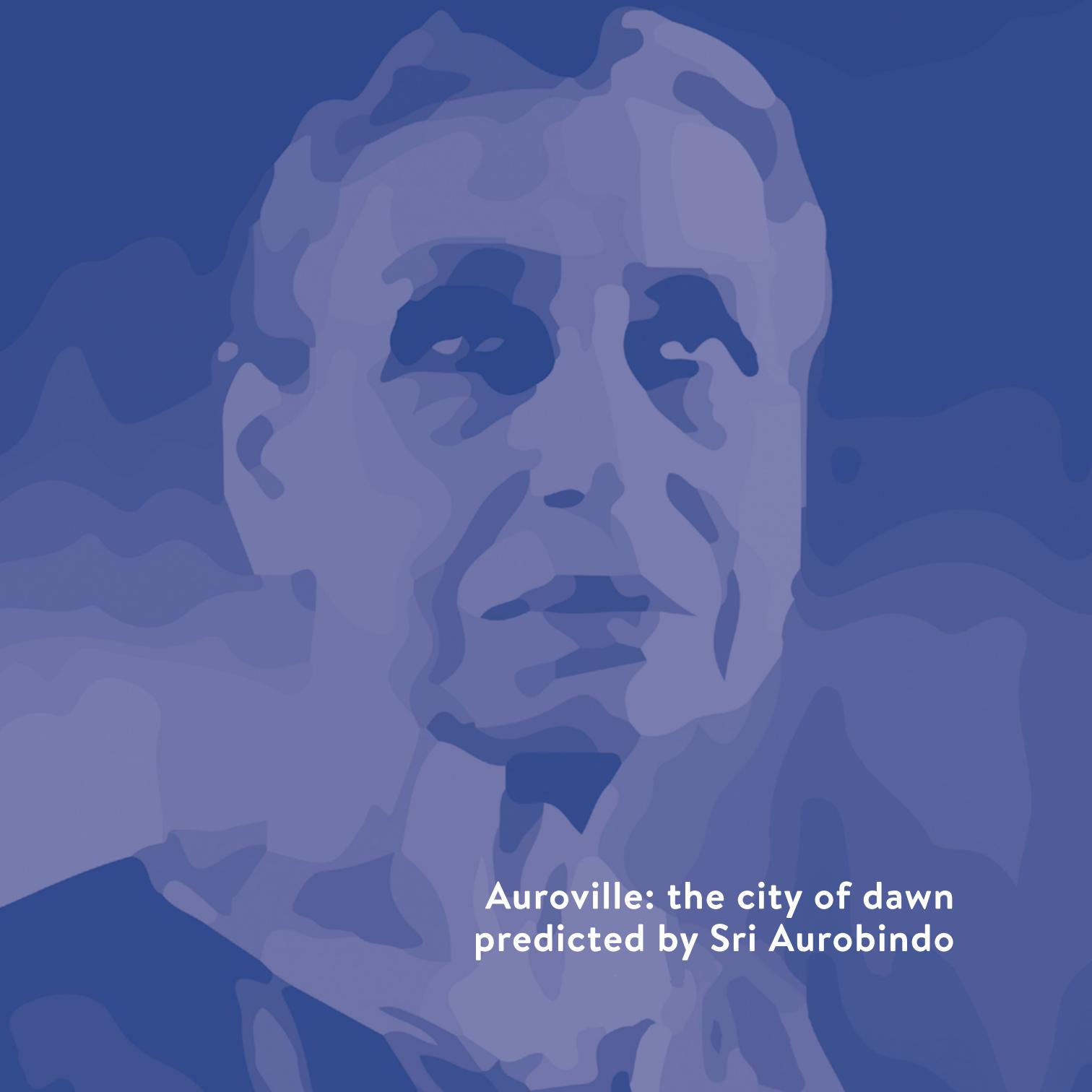
For years she lived in huts she built herself with her long-haired companions. Auroville was founded in 1968 and its inhabitants could be mistaken for the hippies of any European city, and the European founders were many, particularly French. She smiles when she remembers the crazy times of youth, solidarity and idealism, when the 12 km between Auroville and Pondicherry seemed like the distance between the earth and the moon. Conservative, sexist India saw the birth of a libertarian land where about 300 young men and women worked hand in hand, planting trees, digging cisterns, building huts,

loving, experimenting, cooking together and meditating to achieve their dream of an open city, a prototype of humanity as imagined by Aurobindo.

She had the unique opportunity of living on two planets at the same time, Auroville and the rest of the world, with their immense differences in terms of countries and cultures. India, almost a planet apart with its multimillennial history and its countless languages and state borders, was her homeland. Her job had taken her to other continents, particularly Europe, as a pioneering artist in the recycling of materials. Her family, who lived so close and visited her always, kept reminding her of Indian tradition while following her adventures as a world citizen. Her PhD in Paris, which involved a decade of travelling regularly between India and France, provided her with an ample view of what had happened to mankind over close to a century. Thanks to the five languages she mastered perfectly: Tamil, her mother language, Hindi, French, English and German, she became acquainted with many different views of world affairs in newspapers, magazines and lately exclusively by using the internet.

Auroville had been her greatest achievement, the challenge of a lifetime, as for so many other extraordinary people who participated in founding the city.





**Auroville: the city of dawn  
predicted by Sri Aurobindo**

When the “Mother”, Mirra Alfassa, the revolutionary Frenchwoman and spiritual companion of Indian philosopher and patriot Sri Aurobindo, decided to found utopian Auroville, she miraculously garnered national and international support. An auspicious conjuncture, which owed much to her tenacity and the reputation of her late partner and mentor, led UNESCO to support and publicize the project worldwide while the government of India donated part of the land where the dream of dawn would arise. The experimental city which would represent “human unity”, as stated in its founding charter written by the “Mother” in her own hand, and where everyone’s highest goal would be to develop as a human being in the outside world and to unfold in their inner possibilities.

Already as a teenager, when she heard about the Auroville project Indra wondered: how could she not participate in the wonderful vision of the “Mother”, her teacher and mentor, who wanted to implement Sri Aurobindo’s ideas? How not to dedicate her life to the extraordinary experience of creating the future in the present with other visionaries? She knew that her very traditional family, especially her father, would be against her project because she was a woman and she wanted to follow an unusual and very emancipated path for that time and place. Despite the fraught atmosphere in the family when she told them

about her wish, she could sense her mother’s secret support in her determination to follow the destiny she had chosen. She embraced the project and life at Auroville, and her children were the hundreds of students she taught throughout her life. She had dedicated 80 years to her dream and knew there would be a few more.

The sacred banyan had grown tremendously in those 80 years, covering a huge area. Beside it, the great golden sphere of the Matrimandir, Auroville’s spiritual centre, still awed her, as did its large white hall where visitors and Aurovillians had been meditating since 2008. Discreetly, she looked around her and saw hundreds of silent people, most of whom seated in the lotus posture like her, in deep introspection, seeking divine instructions to face the challenge of maintaining the statute of Auroville, but above all seeking to connect with the community’s energies. She had always enjoyed these moments, even though in the last few years they had mostly meant bidding a silent farewell to her oldest friends. She had been one of the youngest to found Auroville and almost all her companions had left the earth.

But new generations had come from all over the world to realise the “Mother’s” dream together. She remembered her sweet face as well as her defiant look if an ill-advised interlocutor dared to say that her dream would not come true. Mirra

Alfassa, as the non-Aurovillian world called her, had never lived in Auroville and was very old, but she followed everything from the Sri Aurobindo ashram, which she had helped to build and where she lived most of her life. For Sri Aurobindo and for the Auroville community, she was “the Mother”, a symbol. Indra remembered her face perfectly, just as old people remember their childhood and youth better than recent events, but the image of the “Mother” merged with the first goddesses of humanity who inspired the pioneering, “gylanic”, egalitarian societies of history, as she had learned from Riane Eisler.

These goddesses had been the object of her artistic work all her life. She had fashioned images of the primitive goddesses with all kinds of materials: first clay and straw, stone and wood, which she had found in the desert that

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### The Auroville Charter

- 1) Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But, to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
- 2) Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.
- 3) Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.
- 4) Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.

Mirra Alfassa – A Mãe

28. 2. 68

### Charte d'Auroville

1) Auroville n'appartient à personne en particulier. Auroville appartient à toute l'humanité dans son ensemble.

Mais pour séjourner à Auroville, il faut être le serviteur volontaire de la Conscience-Divine

\*

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

\*

3) Auroville veut être le pont entre le passé et l'avenir.

Profitant de toutes les découvertes extérieures et intérieures, elle veut hardiment s'élancer vers la réalisation future.

\*

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



was the land of Auroville in the early days. When she exhibited them in Paris for the first time, in a small gallery on place des Vosges owned by the mother of her then boyfriend, Michel, she was impressed by the wastefulness of the opulent society of the 80s and 90s. During her stays in Paris, she made goddess images from discarded beds, TV sets, computers, clothes, plastic and cardboard. She saw the waste generated by excess and realised early on the chaos that our consumerism and irresponsibility would bring about.

From her Aurovillian world view she saw the environmental collapse looming. She saw climate change materialising for all mankind. In 2011 hurricane Thane frightened Auroville, increasing her awareness of what was to come. When fierce winds uprooted thousands of trees that the community had planted - changing a desert into a forest - she felt something was wrong. That same night she experienced a moment of life-changing panic when in a dream she felt her world crumble, an immense and dark force overwhelming her with no possibility of escape. The nightmare is as vivid in her mind today as it was the day it happened. She, the defiant daughter of the Chandramoulis of Pondicherry, who helped create Auroville, the avant-garde artist using innovative techniques, who launched herself into the world with her work of denunciation and reverence for Mother Earth, was truly afraid for the first time in her life..



**Indra's world:  
engagement and solidarity**

Indra's dream became known in Auroville. As was customary in the community, such strong visions were shared with close friends and when perceived as "signs" were widely spread by word of mouth. The meaning of the dream became very clear to her: Mother Nature would show her strength without limits and her children would be afraid, aware of their smallness and the folly of the life they led. Already in that second decade of the new millennium, the climate was fickle, pollution was on the rise and life in cities increasingly difficult and there was much talk of ecology. Environmentalists and scientists reported on rising sea levels, food scarcity and water shortages. Outside Auroville few people wanted to heed the bleak predictions, but there, and in some communities that were already experimenting with new ways of life, everyone were getting ready in some way to face what was to come..

Indra reflected on how strange human behaviour was. She had never been able to understand her friends who chose to ignore that they would become old and die rather than preparing themselves for this to happen in the best possible way. She saw so many

people ruining their health with stress, alcohol and drugs, eating excessive and industrialized food, smoking, and wasting valuable time in the pursuit of only money and prestige. She saw them aging sick and aimless, many of them wealthy, with investments in the global casino that became the capitalist economy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Most of them deliberately avoided thinking that they would become old and die just as they ignored researchers' announcements about the end of easy living conditions on earth. Thus, they continued their lives, deepening the environmental problem with their consumerist way of life, disconnected from the limits of Nature. Indra could not forget her conflicts with Michel, who, in his dazzling consumerism of the new rich, ignored that his excessive manners were depleting the Earth, and himself. The fear of the end may explain why so many people have been deaf to the pleas for sobriety, just as they ignored their own inevitable physical decay, which was anticipated by their daily choices.

Indra lived in another world, for the meaning of life and environmental issues had been daily concerns for Aurovillians from the start. With

a limited water supply, few natural resources, huge difficulties, and reverence for the sacred, they felt close to Mother earth and were inspired to create a simpler and more spiritual way of life that almost everyone adopted. At Auroville, research on alternatives to everything introduced “green” technologies before the world even talked about these things : renewable energies, reforestation programmes, the famous “solar kitchen” which had for decades provided food for the whole community with solar energy concentrated by an immense hand-made parabolic mirror, waste water purification techniques using only its circulation through a powerful vortex, amazing recycling programs that Indra helped to build. All these discoveries arose from many people’s tenacity and creativity, from their trials and errors and from their daily contact with people from all over the world, sharing experiences and cutting-edge research. Indra’s vision of the crash made perfect sense to Aurovillians and they boosted their resilience by being the first energy autonomous city. The fuel for motorcycles, so used by everyone, was made with algae grown in the community itself and the energy for daily use came from the sun, winds, biomass and tides.





After her nightmare Indra was dogged by the prospect of the imminent collapse, a very real threat for her, which led her to convince friends to set up a school where visitors at Auroville would learn about a simpler, more environmentally-friendly way of life, a transition, as they said at the time, to a sustainable society. In those days, shortly before its 50th anniversary, Auroville already welcomed thousands of visitors a year. As a pioneer in the growing global ecovillage movement, it now catered for this new public in addition to traditional spiritual seekers.

Indra's school provided a novel service for the community, connecting the myriad projects that flourished in Auroville. For each of the alternatives to the capitalist mainstream model that prevailed on the planet at that time there was at least one exemplary Aurovillian experience: networks of cooperative and solidarity economy, permaculture food production, recovery of degraded areas, alternative medicines and technologies for better health, such as Auroville's famous dynamized water, varied spiritual practices, innovative education, avant-garde arts, the

most horizontal forms of governance, the deepest feminine sacred experiences. The “Mother”’s laboratory was operating at full capacity.

Rather than being a nightmare, the environmental collapse was full of promise for Indra. She dedicated her daily life to artistic recycling and training to build the post-collapse world, fully in tune with the way she had always lived, according to her conscience. If the world was in a bad way, dismantling it was the only way of ushering in the new one and she worked diligently in the school of deep ecology, along with other enthusiasts. About 1,000 people a year participated in the school’s activities: one-day workshops, week-, month- or year-long sessions to learn with body, heart, mind and soul. Auroville had become a living laboratory with the participation of a lot of local trainers providing learning and experience sharing opportunities for people from all over the world. These people remained connected in a vast alternative social network that kept growing, liaising with similar visionary experiments, especially ecovillages and intentional communities with the same background.

The present challenge of Auroville population, which led them to meet under the sacred banyan, was just one more among many they had faced in the past three decades. The greatest was the increase in the city’s population from 2,500 at the time of the 50th anniversary in 2018 to over 50,000 in 2046. Demand for residence in the city had been low from its foundation in 1968 to the early two decades of the 21st century. The stringent requirements - a humble lifestyle, a ban on private property, community work - attracted a lot of visitors, but few wanted and were able to pass the perseverance “tests” and become residents. Auroville developed into a forest city, a community with a lot of land and few but energetic and efficient members. The search for spiritual development and commitment to the vision and action of the founders, the “Mother” and Sri Aurobindo, was real, with varying degrees obviously. Aurovillians strived to surpass themselves and to become better human beings, transcending the limits of the individualistic culture of their time. This was and still is one of their main challenges.





The waters that scare  
and bring change

After 2020, however, everything spun out of control. There was a small immigration movement of people who were beginning to realize that the collapse was imminent and who were after a new way of life. Among these were many students who had been to Indra's school as well as relatives of community members, mainly young people though not only. The flow of "alternative" people from all over the world had a major impact on Auroville's collective governance, which used to be slow in its decision-making as it sought maximum consensus. It had to reinvent itself to accommodate such a large number of people in such a short time and to maintain horizontality. Auroville met the challenge and took in the newcomers, who were both welcome, to help reach the target of 50,000 planned by the "Mother" and the architect Roger Anger, and feared since this sudden change threatened a way of life that had taken 50 years to establish.

Around 2030 Auroville already had almost 10,000 inhabitants, multiplying its population by four in 10 years. But those of the first big wave had been willing to comply with the rules, had some money put aside, were cosmopolitan and with an innovative spirit not unlike that

of the city. The second wave was a challenge because it was much larger and made up of people who did not relate to the community's ethos. While the first arrivals were taken in by relatives or participated in the speedy construction of simple houses similar to the huts of the early times, quickly incorporating the dynamics of community work, the latter were crowded for years in the green belt of Auroville.

It all started with the crisis caused by global migration to Europe between 2015 and 2025. Amid protests from local citizens, European countries reluctantly took in thousands of people fleeing war and poverty, putting them in refugee camps and then sending them back as quickly as possible. Auroville was thriving in the mid-2020s with the proceeds of tourism and the contribution of the new inhabitants, who took to the local way of life fairly easily. With the world ecovillage network and pioneering initiatives such as Findhorn in Scotland, Damanhur in Italy, Christiana in Denmark, Terramirim in Brazil, a global policy of welcoming immigrants was initiated. Each ecovillage would welcome a few families in order to set an example for rich

countries, which were more and more averse to international solidarity. “Human unity”, which was so dear to Sri Aurobindo and so crucial to Auroville’s culture would thus prevail again. But the flow of refugees did not stop and intensified with the effects of the global financial crisis and the acceleration of climate change, totalling millions of people.

In rich countries the market disruption caused by a new financial bubble, similar to but much worse than the one in 2008, had immediate repercussions on stock exchanges, while the rise in ocean levels brought about major instability. The loss of confidence in the currencies that were being devalued every day and the inability of governments to deal with the situation because of their economic and political fragility dealt the final blow. Indra stopped traveling to her exhibitions and workshops abroad during this period, as the colossal devaluation of the Indian rupee made these trips very expensive. Added to this was the growing risk of severe flight turbulence due to climate change. Everything was unstable, increasingly dangerous, and she had a lot to do in Auroville. The countries least integrated into world capitalism, especially the

poorest ones, were the least affected by the financial crisis, but they were the main victims of climate change, which severely affected subsistence agriculture, as they did not have the resources for mitigation works to face the effects of climate deregulation. Few places on the planet escaped these “earthquakes” of human history, but they too were submerged by refugees in search of survival. This was exactly the case of Auroville..

With polar glaciers and ice on the highest mountains on earth including the Himalayas, melting, a lot of coastal towns were soon flooded. Ongoing projects to reduce rising temperatures with physical barriers to sunlight and other grandiose and artificial methods were shattered by Gaia’s wrath. Major ocean and river cities were severely impacted by rising sea levels. Their populations began to retreat inland, at first only in the rainy season then for good, emptying most big cities. As had been largely predicted, the floods were particularly devastating for island countries, which disappeared, while the Netherlands and Bangladesh, below sea level, were partially submerged.



For years, Indra followed the tragedy of people fleeing floods and the gradual widening of the big rivers' estuaries, like the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Yellow River, the Chao Phraya, the Mekong, the Niger. Deltas expanding by tens of kilometres destroyed cities and all regional agricultural production. Coastal and low-lying cities such as New Orleans, Rotterdam, Bangkok, New York, Ho Chi Minh, Belem, Dhaka, Amsterdam, Venice, Cairo and Lagos were particularly hit but coastlines on all continents were affected. Knowing about the sufferings of her friends and students across the world was like watching videos of the great human tragedy unfolding. Seeing how most of them survived through cooperation, relearning to plant their own food, reinventing their jobs and giving up their former way of life, was a privilege.

Auroville, which was just a few kilometres from the sea, had been experiencing the penetration of the Indian Ocean into its water table for decades and, had developed simple and innovative technologies to mitigate the problem. The city became known in the world on two counts: as a haven for refugees and because it was relatively protected from floods. Over the years Aurovillians had dug a belt of

thousands of small pits to trap rainwater and grow trees. Similarly, working collectively with straightforward techniques, they had built thousands of micro barriers to prevent ocean water from penetrating its soil and subsoil.

Indra remembers being detached with hundreds of others to screen the new arrivals who were put up in collective tents in the reforested green belt which had been defended for decades against real estate speculation. There were acute shortages of everything in Auroville. Yet refugees kept pouring in, seeking a shelter that could not be guaranteed. Everything was rationed and shared because rejecting the new arrivals would have been a betrayal of the city's founding principles. Coexistence with the surrounding impoverished communities had been addressed through social projects, job creation and occasional conflict resolution. But everything was different now. The people who lived close by had their families, their houses, their land and preserved their culture, but, Indra reflected, how could they not be alive to the plight of those who had lost everything and knocked on their door asking for help?

The refugees were received by the host brigade, of which Indra was a part. She

interviewed them, discovered the skills of these people and indicated them to act in the work fronts where they could contribute the most. She tried to see in each person not a burden for the community, but a wealth that added up because they brought with them talents and ways of being that, well used, would promote well-being and abundance. But not everyone thought so. Fearing the doom of the Auroville project, part of the community was determined to restrain the arrival of the mass of strangers seeking shelter. The overwhelming majority, however, were engaged in welcoming the refugees and knew that closing their doors was both selfish and non-viable since they did not have, as a matter of principle, any military force. Auroville had to face its challenge almost alone as the Indian government was concerned with other refugees - those from neighbouring flooded Bangladesh and displaced Indians from coastal areas and the banks of flooded rivers flowing down from the Himalayas. Everyone needed more and more help. Food and water were scarce in large urban areas across the world, with food shortages caused by climate change and the difficulty of transporting cargo over long distances. Because of rampant death and hunger in the early post-crash years this time was known as the "Apocalypse".





**The anastrophe announces itself:  
overcoming catastrophe**

The life of Auroville residents changed radically. It used to be rocked by creative and innovative activities but there was a certain inner calm, which was threatened by recent events. Though most people led simple lives they enjoyed comfort and abundance. Now life was becoming much more frugal. Indra had been destabilized by the frantic defence against the consequences of the invasion of people eager to join the experience not by choice but in search of a place to live. Yet she and many others felt it was essential to comply with the first aim of the city, welcoming human diversity. In a way this experience strengthened Auroville's roots. The late-afternoon meditations on Thursdays next to the Matrimandir, a decade-long tradition, became increasingly important, with Aurovillians seeking peace amid chaos and the fraternal support of old friends.

Newcomers were integrated by producing organic food, building family cabins and managing the energy and water supply, which were absolute priorities. Though the thousands of tents set up in the green belt wreaked havoc with the forest and generated refuse, they did not look like some United Nations refugee camps thanks to a welcoming local population and a horizontal governance that

had developed over decades. Each person had their place, contributing to survival and organizing, cleaning and beautifying the place, as well as working in the new solar kitchens. Each person also cared for their own health and well-being as well as taking part in the spiritual and artistic activities for which Auroville was known and which thrived with so many new arrivals, keeping them busy all day. Everything was managed collectively, to the newcomers' surprise at first and then with their full adherence, which resulted in general peace, work accomplished and meaningful lives..

Europe and the United States were in total chaos. Indra kept up with the events through different media as well as weekly contacts by telephone with former students and friends from the various countries where she had been. Thousands of organizations, networks and movements of the global civil society tried to help each other to face the huge difficulties through creativity and solidarity. Thanks to the internet, which had already become 3D, they felt physically connected even with people on the other side of the planet. Simultaneous translation into different languages facilitated communication. Indra's friends from the richest and most developed regions of the

planet, who since the beginning of the climate crisis had denounced their countries' right-wing policies that quelled the first wave of immigration, were active participants in the internal rebellions that sought to reorganize states for more solidarity, democracy and ecology. For almost a decade the world was in chaos. Unsurprisingly those who were prepared or those who lived a life so simple that they didn't have much to lose survived much better.

Bank failures disrupted economies. In a globalized and interdependent world everyone

was affected but those who had more lost more. The wealthiest, accustomed to a life of privilege, were greatly penalized by their low resilience in the face of adversity and were plagued by a spate of psychosomatic illnesses and suicides. Almost immediately a lot of communities already familiar with social currencies established local currency systems and commodity exchanges to organize survival, not without difficulties in the beginning. "Let's survive together" became the watchword to reorganise social structures in a more cooperative and supportive way, with all the systems working towards this





end being adopted and adjusted locally in each community. The slogan of Indra's school fitted in nicely: "The joy of being together for well-being" and she felt part of the whole movement.

The activities of the School of Deep Ecology were fundamentally based on understanding, by mind and work, of what had made the world sink and what could reconstruct it on other bases. Indra and the staff of the School, through experiences, helped people to reconnect with their own bodies with observation of themselves. With exercises, Yoga asanas, healthy food and drink; each

person also got closer to Nature, of which he is a part. In the School's silences, rests and meditations, people learned to allow time for the cultivation of their own inner world, which allowed their soul to have wings, giving space for its immense potential. In the affective field, when learning to listen and respect their emotions in speech circles, theatre and other arts, people learned to connect at the same time with others and to experience a genuine community spirit, which was revealed at collective work. Produce the means of living and restore the Nature in an ecological and cooperative way, with simplicity and joy, were a source of healing for lost or sick spirits.

Food production occupied all empty spaces in cities and along roadsides, and a kind of spontaneous agrarian reform was unfolding, as anyone who knew how to plant taught those who did not on all available land. Local flavours, plants that had always been there and that hardly anyone knew were edible became an important source of food sovereignty for communities. Changes in food crops caused by climate change took time to establish but they were a major way out of hunger. The infamous agribusiness had shrunk due to increased awareness in the last decades of the hazards of pesticides and fertilizers and was completely disorganized. Energy shortages and difficulties importing agricultural inputs made it unviable, as did the production of transgenic foods, which did not resist the overwhelming changes. Permaculture ceased to be an alternative mode of food cultivation and became the norm, because it was straightforward, productive and regenerated nature.

Yes, not everything was simple, Indra mused. At first, the idea of “let those who can save themselves” seemed to prevail, leading to conflicts over possession of springs, productive land and available energy. The huge arsenal of war in the world seemed like a permanent

threat and everyone feared that hungry populations looting supermarkets and shops in a lot of cities around the globe would lead to a fight of all against all. This was particularly true in societies that had recently experienced wars and knew no other way out. However, a powerful factor in rejecting war was the reaction of young people, particularly young men, who did not want to become cannon fodder as they had in all wars throughout history.

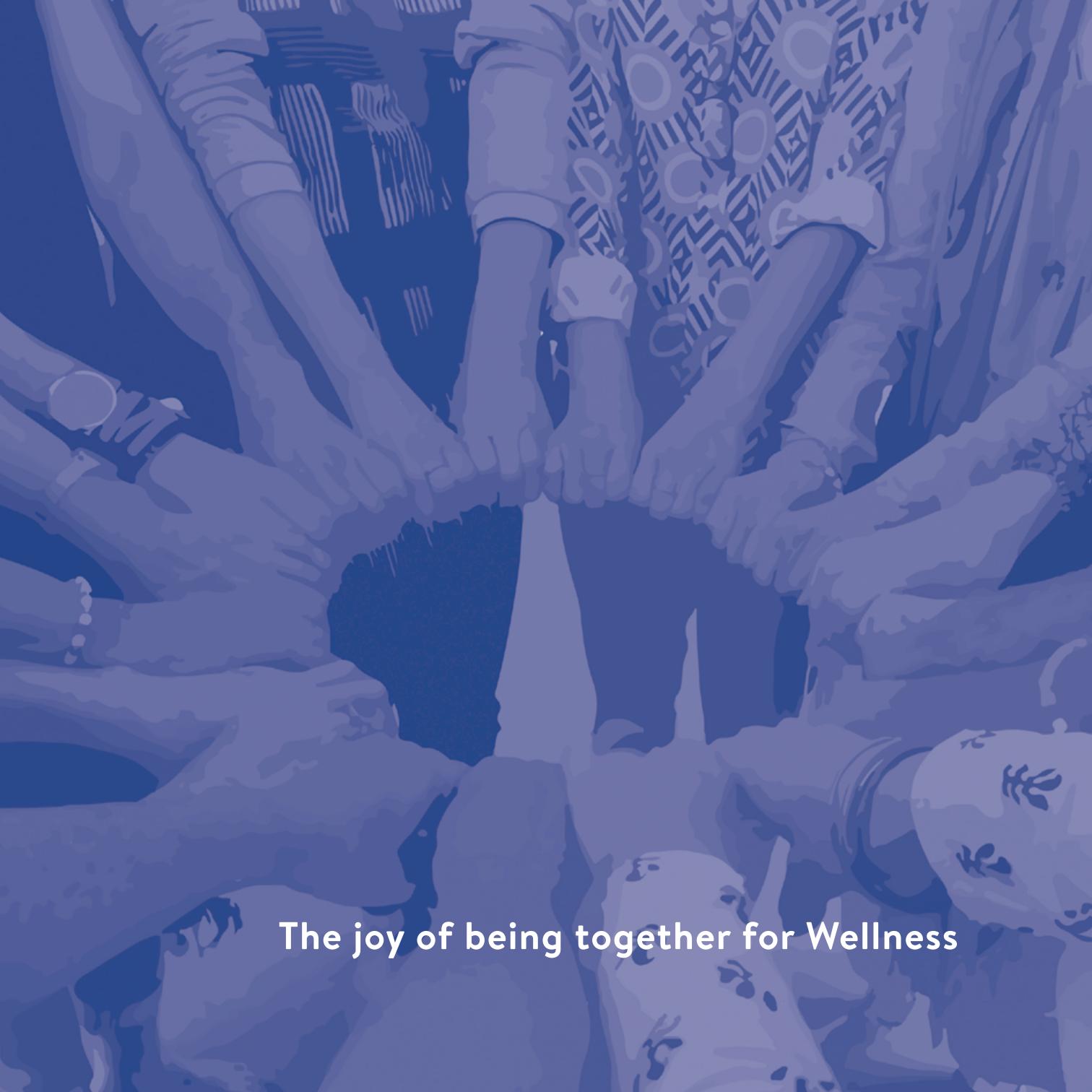
Oddly enough, the decades of hedonism and self-worship so criticized by the Auroville community since its inception had an unexpected effect: no one wanted to die in vain and no indoctrination could prevail over an ever greater respect for life, especially one’s own. Women and the so-called “feminization of the world” played a leading part in changing the culture of conflict resolution through war or of competition prevailing over cooperation. Women’s brave and patient work in conflict zones, for example marching together and seeking dialogue, challenged the war mongering logic nourished by decompensated testosterone. Faced with the countless challenges that humanity was experiencing, people showed their better sides, confirming

what the “Mother” had always said about the growth of solidarity in moments of shortage. The slogan “joy of well-being together” made a lot more sense than “let those who can save themselves” and pacification prevailed, superseding strictly individual, family or group solutions.

The most expressive example of this process came from where it was least expected. In the conflicted region of Palestine and Israel, Indra accompanied an unprecedented movement of youth and children for peace. Diana, the daughter of her close friend Sonia, visual artist

and filmmaker, became an icon of that moment when she started to produce and disseminate short videos made with a cell phone that, in her naivete and beauty, moved people. Diana spoke of her desire to be like the other children in the world who neither cultivate hatred nor have enemies. Spontaneously young people and Palestinian and Israeli children sought each other and filmed themselves on the streets, talking about peace and embracing. This provoked a political tsunami of questioning a history of war in the region, nurtured by adults, and above all by men.





**The joy of being together for Wellness**

From his privileged point of view of observing the world, Indra had seen politics change from water to wine, in a process that looked like a house of cards. The 2020 decade had provided the driving force for change precisely because the political shift to the right had scared the world. For those who resisted this conservative turn, such as Indra, were times of great pain, but these Governments less committed to the demands of society collapsed one by one in what became known as the “Icelandic wave” This term referred to political events in Iceland between 2008 and 2009, when civil society seized power and restructured the state. There was little media coverage at the time, but the pioneering example was gaining more and more traction since governments could not meet popular demand amid climate and financial chaos, causing civil societies to react.

In the twenty-first century the main threats to humanity spread to the whole world, not only the poorest or most discriminated against. The collective citizen initiatives that had emerged and asserted themselves for decades were quite different from the organized movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They paid tribute to their forebears’ struggle while moving on towards more cooperative models of social action: reinventing the world in each movement’s

territory instead of simply “being against”; seeking what unites with the construction of cooperative and interdisciplinary networks instead of competition, enmity and feud. Friendship valued as a common good not just as a personal practice was the “glue” of trust that nurtured local, national and international connection between people who testified to genuine mutual commitment with new practices, solidarity, ecological and democratic ways of life.

The networks and movements interacted easily at all territorial levels, including different countries, with concrete actions and projects to reorganize society. The immense web of people linked to the Auroville experience established in so many countries where Indra had held her art exhibitions was one of such networks. The idea of “service leadership” was spontaneously integrated into the demonstration of the capacity for action to serve a group, of non-attachment to power, and of acting in cooperative and self-managed systems. This profile was the natural passport for the responsibility of cooperatively leading the reconstruction of society in these angry times. Indra observed too that people with these qualities also worked on themselves, often of a spiritual nature. In addition to service leadership, increasingly common



in civil society organizations, the modes of democratic representation needed to be reorganized jointly with the transformation of politics in state institutions.

One of the most common ways to reorganize popular representation for decision-making then was to rely on the wisdom of ordinary citizens by forming parliaments drawing lots. Official statistics experts in each country called people at random to represent the different characteristics of the population of the city, state, region, country: so many women, so many men; so many rich, so many poor; so many university students, so many illiterate people; so many blacks, so many whites, and all the subcategories among them. This eventually led to a parliament with members entirely representative of the territory. In places with ethnic conflicts, when minorities were represented in parliament this largely contributed to pacification, as was the reorganisation of society in countries with great historical inequality, such as Brazil, South Africa and the United States.

Unlike previous parliaments full of rich men, whites, etc., these representatives of the people had no privileges and earned the salary of the average population. In India, parliament changed radically with the lower castes

taking power. Almost all the Indian students at Indra's school volunteered as advisors to these inexperienced parliamentarians without professional training but who were deeply committed to defending humanity's survival and to sharing resources. In Auroville, Indra had always worked towards expanding the community's political imagination so that they could live up to the Mother's expectation of divine governance. Being connected to an intelligence greater than that of each person's ego and thus to the heart and to the divine in each person was key to good governance. Therefore, anybody was capable of serving..

With the crisis, many national governments were slow to reorganize themselves and local, direct, participatory democracy was the most common way of managing day-to-day affairs where people lived and had their needs. Indra recalls how one day she realized that the democratic practice at Auroville, as in many other so-called "alternative" communities before the collapse, of convening its inhabitants to decide on issues and keeping silent for a moment before opening the discussions became an internationally experienced practice, and not only in small towns. . The meditation varied in duration and form depending on each community's or nation's culture and religion. But the idea of

seeking inspiration in something beyond one's person, greater than one's personal, family or group interests, had spread as a path of harmony and love in the face of penury, of the threats of barbarianism, and of the "every man to himself, may the best one win" rule..

The new parliamentarians had deep trust in local civil society movements built over decades on new political foundations and relied on them to make the necessary decisions. In the early days of chaos, after drafting new constitutions, these parliaments usually chose indirectly who would hold government positions, which had become more professional and were supervised by councils of the wise for every nation. The model was replicated for states, municipalities and even neighbourhoods. Each "wise person" was indicated by collective movements among people known and respected for serving the community to which they had dedicated their lives. The citizens chose by election those who could best serve as "wise people" and these, as well as the representatives selected by draw, were supervised by the population directly, since each meetings, commissions and decisions had internet public access.

All the citizens elected their councillors and made all the important decisions for national, regional or local communities, either in person



or online according to the global model of virtual democracy. Each citizen had their password and for each issue to be decided on at least three categories of possibilities were available online: arguments for, arguments against and arguments in favour of indecision. If the undecided had a certain weight in the election, additional information was given offering new options, with suggestions coming from the citizens themselves, and the election was repeated. The purpose was for each decision to clarify conflicts, fostering collective advancement and building consensus step by step. It sometimes took time, but more consensual decisions strengthened the sense of belonging ensuring their implementation. Virtual democracy completed the face-to-face democracy of assemblies and direct elections, improving steadily.

The focus around the world was to support the victims of climate change, both acute disasters, sudden and destructive, such as tornadoes, cyclones and floods, and endemic, repetitive calamities like desertification and rising sea levels. Cyclones became much more frequent, mainly hitting the United States, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Japan and Australia. Desertification affected the entire southern Sahara area, where the desert was gaining ground fast, as in a lot of other areas with fragile ecosystems, such as semi-arid regions. Ingeniousness and small-scale, high-impact projects carried out by thousands of people together, such as small dams, reforestation and recovery of resistant ancient seeds had been the focus of reconstruction since the crash. Ordinary people with more harmonized egos and an ability to act here and now became invaluable.





**Mother Earth regains her balance**

The refugees at Auroville were mostly farmers, food producers who had not been able to work any longer, which was a boon to the local population because food production grew sufficiently to feed everyone and “food cosmopolitanism” had always characterized the city. In her wanderings around the world, Indra had witnessed human culture becoming increasingly cosmopolitan. Literacy and internet access had grown steadily since the end of the twentieth century, reaching almost 100% of the world’s population in the decade of 2040. Indra remembered that the farmers who came to Auroville were desperate, no doubt, but most of them had attended school, knew what was going on in the world and felt they had rights almost 100 years after The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The increase in school attendance in the world and the easy flow of information through an accessible and multi-faceted medium such as the internet had wrought great changes, being powerful allies in the reconstruction, which had been carried out without “masters” thanks to each person’s talents.

Rainfall and drought patterns had gradually changed in many parts of the world - an established, harsh reality affecting major food producing countries, particularly in

Equatorial Africa and the Mediterranean, Russia, the United States, Brazil, Argentina and India. Fortunately, the food production of the decadent agribusiness had always focused on feeding animals. People had always been fed and continued to be fed by small local and family production, which was hard hit by climate change, but being small-scale, it had managed to adjust over the years, switching to crops that were more resistant to the new regime imposed by climate change. Indra had seen India’s age-old vegetarian diet gradually prevail all over the world, not on religious grounds as in her country, but because it was cheaper, healthier, and respectful of life. Scientific discoveries about the sensitivity and intelligence of mammals had led to a gradual change in the diet of the new generation, who had become virtually vegan.

The change in global diets was a relief from diseases caused both by excessive consumption of animal products and pesticides and helped to foster a generation likely to have an average 120-year life span. It also contributed to decreasing human pressure on the environment. Clearly, the production of large amounts of vegetables was compatible with the maintenance of forests, unlike livestock. The concept of “agroforestry”, so taught to

refugees in Auroville by the host brigades in which Indra had participated, and practiced in so many other alternative communities in the early 20th century, has become a worldwide known technique and this has helped to restore many forests. Even so, the global climate was slow to show signs of recovery.

The temperature issue was a tragedy apart. The whole planet was warming up gradually, with countries in the North suffering most. Not only from the temperature itself, which reached over 50° c degrees in various parts of Europe in summer but because of people's poor resilience. Though air-conditioning devices reduced the heat in the beginning, they soon

became obsolete due to the energy shortage. People in tropical countries had greater historical resilience because temperatures above 40 degrees were not uncommon in Pondicherry or Rio de Janeiro and thus, they were better adapted to the heat. Drought and high temperatures caused tragic fires in Europe, Russia and the United States, whose communications networks, which were much better structured before the apocalypse, gave visibility to the impressive blazes and mass population flight. The loss of life and property of those times left an imprint on humanity's imagination, driving the desire for profound changes in ways of life.



There had been a lot of writings and films at the beginning of the century predicting the characteristics of the collapse. Films such as “The Age of Stupidity” and “An Inconvenient Truth” became classics for having clearly shown the collapse that was to come. Most people had ignored these predictions but when the films had been shown at Cinema Paradiso in Auroville back in the 2010s - Indra could not remember exactly when - they had made a deep impression, especially on the teens of the Future School, where she taught art. The reports of the IPCC, a panel of climatologists from around the world who had been doing their utmost to publicise their research and forecasts since the beginning of the millennium, became mandatory reading. Likewise, the previously almost unknown “climate change atlases” published by scientists from UNEP, the United Nations Environment Program, who painstakingly predicted where everything would happen, became best sellers. Intended to alert, these materials which had been ignored became useful in attempting to mitigate human tragedies clearly announced many years before they happened.

The tragedies were not only human. In the whirlwind of events, the count of biodiversity loss came to a standstill, as did almost all

scientific research and, as was later realized, animals suffered even more than humans. While the change in human diets, which had become simpler, more local and more vegetarian, had saved the lives of thousands of them, they had not been spared by the devastating consequences of extreme weather events and the massive destruction of forests, one of the causes of climate change. Reconstruction was under way for people, animals, and plants.

The debate on the “point of no return”, on how long the earth system would hold out and on the resilience of the planet as a whole had been a chapter apart in the period before the collapse. Scientists got a lot of it right and they made a lot of mistakes too, especially when it came to Mother Nature’s “times”: when she decided so, everything rushed headlong for disaster, but when she wanted, reconstruction initiatives blossomed much sooner than expected. For decades Indra and her friends at the school of deep ecology had argued that complex systems like Gaia cannot be understood by the mind alone, with instruments of measurement and dual ways of thinking. Indra recalled what she had said in her lectures, that “we need to involve our hearts and hone our empathy and intuition to get a better grasp of the whole and its interdependence.”



Between the financial and climate collapse and the current era of consolidation of a new civilization, about 20 years, a major leap forward was the urban organization of the world because megacities had become unviable. As at the time of the collapse of the Roman empire, when the population of Rome, the biggest city of the time, dwindled from a million inhabitants in Christ's time to about 40,000 five hundred years later, the population drop in megalopolises was spectacular. People's ways of life had long been unsustainable, because of their total dependence on amounts of energy, food and water which were increasingly difficult to secure, generating a real "diseconomy of scale." The unsustainability of metropolises became clear with the first wave of refugees,

which brought students and relatives of Aurovillians to the city..

These first refugees came mostly from large cities around the world, reporting on expensive food, scarce transport, chronic stress and escalating violence. With the crisis worsening and the dearth of energy and raw materials, the great distances to be travelled, the high buildings with many elevators, a wasteful way of life turned daily life into a nightmare and whoever was able to leave did so. Even today, Indra muses, in nearby Chennai, where there are still billions of tons of materials to be moved from the abandoned urban areas; working like ants, Indians and people from all over the world are carrying these materials to the smaller cities in the area to rebuild their lives.



The image features a monochromatic blue color scheme. A bright, multi-pointed starburst or sunburst pattern is centered in the lower-left quadrant, with rays extending outwards across the frame. The background is a deep, dark blue, while the rays themselves are lighter shades of blue, creating a sense of depth and light. The overall effect is ethereal and hopeful.

**A ray of sunshine  
announcing a new world**

Keeping social structures going while gearing all the people's energy towards producing food and repairing environmental damage was the priority of all citizen governments. There was work for everyone but not much proper employment, thus most people worked together for food, housing, water, energy and social services in a model similar to the one Auroville had been developing since its foundation. After much violence, human energy focussed massively on reconstruction. Surprisingly, a lot of people, looking back on this period, do not think about the bad things but about the solidarity movement that took over the world. Indra saw the similarity between this era and the time of the first hippies of Auroville. There was less conflict because no one had time to waste on nonsense. The work was immense and the landfills and dumps were an impressive resource for the reconstruction; plastic waste generated by a century of excess came back to life with techniques that ranged from the simplest, like recycling, to the most sophisticated, like the production of fuel through the chemical reconstitution of the source materials. This had been Indra's most important contribution during reconstruction: accustomed to seeing wealth where others saw garbage. She coordinated garbage sorting brigades with Auroville refugees, and as garbage became a major resource, the world miraculously was getting cleaner and cleaner. The idea of a

“quantum leap” may explain this period. As with electrons, one can never predict when they will jump from one orbital to another, when they will move to another level, but it is always a function of the energy received. The sudden “coming of age” after humanity's long sleep might not have happened, but the energy that was accumulating in the “underground society”, in initiatives like Auroville, was creating new possibilities for life. It was very clear that in places where there were innovative experiments in social interaction, a strong local ethos and, effective community organization, the consequences of chaos were less drastic, and restructuring went faster. Not that everything returned to normal, in fact, nothing is “normal” any longer in the old sense of the word, Indra realized.

The proposal to change the Auroville Statute by the government of India, that worried her as much as the other inhabitants of the city makes sense in a way: Auroville is no longer a laboratory. Its way of life, its culture, its spirituality and its technologies have been massively exported, merging with other experiments and other local knowledge, thus becoming social technology for the construction of post capitalism. Perhaps, Indra thought, accepting the government's proposal to make Auroville an ordinary city was not a defeat for its inhabitants but proof that the experiment had worked and inspired the world.

Taking stock, Indra was overcome by a quiet joy. Her lifetime had been a harsh period, but she was immensely grateful all the same. Grateful to have been inspired from a young age by “the Mother” and Sri Aurobindo, with their view of life as an experiment so that each one of us can find their mission and progress in consciousness and action for a more loving world. Grateful for being both Indian and a citizen of the world, for witnessing humanity facing so many present and future challenges, with her feet firmly planted in her beloved family’s homeland and her heart connected with Mother earth and her children. Grateful for always being her deep self, without hypocrisy or compromise which would have prevented her from moving forward. Grateful to her friends and fellow travellers, for shared love, for the challenges faced, for having felt part of something. Grateful to the city of Auroville, to the achievement of the human will she had participated in, grateful to the Matrimandir and the sacred banyan under which she was sitting in the lotus position at this important moment. Her legs felt a little numb, for the meditation had been going on for almost an hour. She smiled to herself: she was almost a hundred years old; her mind had wandered instead of being focussed; her discomfort was normal. Soon she would go and have a rest.



This could be a collective book, way of ecology and cooperation. After you have read it, if you want, put your name in the column and give it to someone. Thank you.



**This tale is about the future of the planet through the history of Indra, citizen of the world. Instead of denying civilization collapse, she accepts it as a unique opportunity for reconstruction in other bases. Indra is part of the people who transform themselves to transform the world. People who are today what they want to see in tomorrow's world. Almost centenary, she tells us what happened and shows how was it worth. The story of Indra, who lives in Auroville, India, in 2046, is the tale that will accompany the last chapter of the book "Humanity in evolution", in preparation, and shows a possible future.**