Iran, my birth country, counts six thousand years of rich history. The ancient Persia, it is one of the world’s oldest living cultures. I grew up in the capital, Teheran, an industrial metropolis located on a plain 1000 feet high at the foot of the Alborz Mountains.
Densely populated and industrial, Teheran has nine million residents in the city itself, and fifteen million people if you count its suburbs as well. Along with the many historic monuments …

and living traditions of the country’s rich culture …

… the capital is also a modern cultural metropolis!
In general, Iranian culture is a relatively family-centered culture, and to my experience also it has been the same. There are five of us in my family including my parents. I have two brothers, one older and one younger than me with whom I have always had a very good relationship, and especially with my younger brother who was my best childhood playmate.

Perhaps my life’s theme can best be expressed by the old Iranian expression “The seeker is the finder” for I have always been into learning, and ever since my childhood, always seeking to learn something new.
I remember asking my mom when I was very little to teach me the Persian alphabet. Early on, I thought if I learned how to read, then I would be free - free to learn all different new things - whatever I wanted - free to learn and develop. My interest in education continued as I grew up, so I was, as I had hoped, equipped for all the new things ahead!

Besides education, I was into multiple things at different stages, from different types of sports to sewing, painting, music…. Each was for some time only and just as a hobby, so I did not get to a kind of professional level in any of them. I guess I was enthusiastic but not persevering enough. My mom sometimes got so angry with me for being like a rolling stone … but in the end she was always happy with my marks in school.

The last interest that I started experiencing in Iran was Yoga. At the beginning, It was just one of the new things that I wanted to try out and just for some time, as for my other interests. But it turned out to become a challenging, life-changing experience, and a real inspiration for me. I was tired of searching for a happy life outside myself. I saw that that was a failed attempt. Yoga taught me about balance, the missing link in the chain of my life.

My professional-educational background was Auditing and Accounting, and I graduated with a Master’s degree in Accounting from the University of Teheran, which is the oldest and highest-ranked university of Iran.

After my graduation, I started working as an External Auditor which was a tough experience but a very effective step in my professional career. It led me to become a Chartered Accountant for which I had worked so hard.

But just 6 months after getting the certification, I left it behind and came to Auroville!
I got to know about Auroville through my best friend, Sheida, who had done the same professional training and worked in the same company as I did before she came to live in Auroville. Almost 3 years back, for my 28th birthday, I travelled to Auroville to meet her during my New Year holidays. I stayed for 10 days and of course found many interesting things there.

I admired my friend for joining Auroville but I didn’t even think about me joining Auroville as my lifestyle, occupations and things that I had in Iran were not compatible with Auroville …. or at least so I thought!

But when I got back to Teheran, I started missing Auroville. I truly felt I had left something behind there. I started considering it as an option, and after one month I took my decision to give myself a chance to try another new thing!

As you can imagine, this decision sounded irrational and incomprehensible to many of my colleagues, and my boss couldn’t believe my choice!! But my parents were very supportive and encouraged me to follow my heart and do what I felt is the best for me. My relationship with them has always been so easy and friendly. I have always felt their love, trust and support in my life, which I really admire about them.

So six months later, in August 2019, I landed in Auroville as a volunteer and it took maybe just one month for me to search for a workplace to do volunteer work, and get the recommendation letter, and so on. Considering my career path, I didn’t expect it to be easy to find that type of accounting work in Auroville. But everything happened super-smoothly, and since my arrival in Auroville, I have been working in the AV Unity Fund as an accountant and one year ago, I started working in the BCC Office as well.

I became an Aurovilian last October (2021), so I guess it was supposed to happen, for as Iranian adage goes, “the seeker is the finder”. And as Hafiz, the 14th Century Persian mystic poet, had written, “The place where you are right now, God circled on a map for you.”
What I appreciate about Auroville is the diversity of opportunities it offers me, the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow in different aspects, and most importantly, to grow in knowing about myself. I find here a connection to myself and also to the world with a path to self-awareness which is a very challenging, non-ending and yet pleasant path.

I am still learning and enjoying Yoga and wish to perhaps become a teacher some day. What I am really passionate about now is Aquatic Bodywork, so I am a Watsu student. It has been another life-changing, dreamy experience for me again. I feel really blessed with getting into the water world, the world within, where I feel I can find many things that I am seeking. I feel I have finally found my thing! But, of course, I carry on with other rolling stone-y things too!

“Human Unity” was one of the most attractive and eye-catching words to me when I was thinking about joining Auroville. I had always dreamed about a border-free planet and so on. But I should confess that when I joined this beautiful multi-nationality, multi-cultural township, I didn’t find it at all easy to cope with. Long story short, it took me quite some time to adapt, learn and enjoy all the differences that I see in Auroville. Now I am truly grateful for this chance to live amongst people from around the world with all our differences - and learn from them, grow with them.

Last year, Sheida and I were interviewed for an article in “Auroville Today” where we spoke about being from Iran and the wrong images that some people have about it, which are mostly affected by media and political issues of the Iranian government with the world. I found that interview a good opportunity to talk about my country and try to give a more realistic picture of Iranian life. And we got very nice feedback afterwards.
As I couldn’t even imagine myself here now five years back, I honestly cannot say that I seek after any specific goals. So while I have no goals, I do have aspirations. I aspire to live my life happily and peacefully, to live it every day happier than yesterday, to leave it without regret.

I am still learning and practicing to be open to possibilities. To learn and learn and learn with the help of Auroville, for I believe that Auroville accelerates this process. I see myself as a seeker and my wish is to find my true self some day. I feel that Auroville gives me that opportunity for expansion on the outer and inner levels in a way I could find nowhere else! And I have met people in Auroville I could never forget, nor their impact on my life and the lessons that I’ve learned from them.

Auroville - and all the opportunities and challenges that it has with it - has become a dear and beautiful home to my heart!

As shared by Ellie
Auroville, April 2022