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CFIL's Newsletter | August 2025

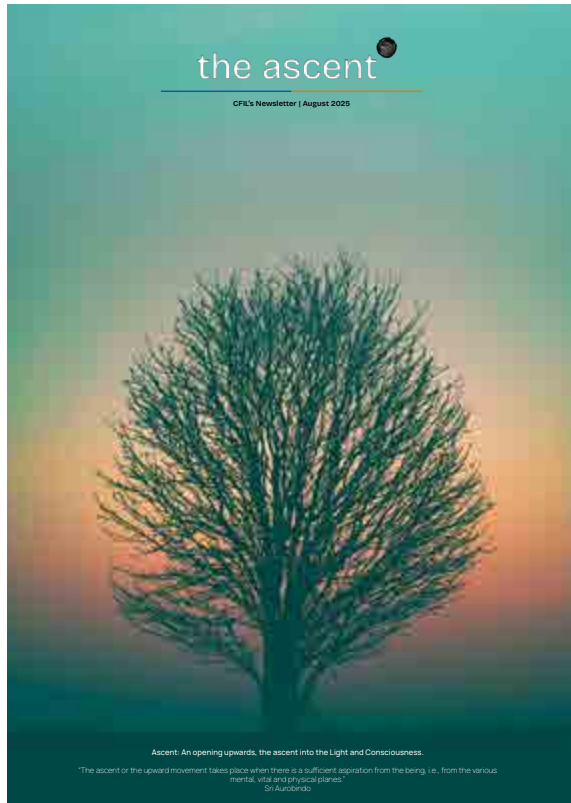


Ascent: An opening upwards, the ascent into the Light and Consciousness.

"The ascent or the upward movement takes place when there is a sufficient aspiration from the being, i.e., from the various mental, vital and physical planes."
Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial Team



Lavlesh Bhanot
Editor



Tanya Ganguly
Content Coordinator



Mohana Priya
Graphic Design

We are happy and privileged to bring you the first edition of The Ascent from the Centre for Integral Learning (CFIL). This also marks a significant milestone, as the Centre for Integral Learning has now moved to a much larger physical space.

The CFIL campus, referred to as The Centre, will house The Integral School (TIS) – the learning environment, The Integral Commune (TIC) – the engagement collective, and Integral Dialogues – the knowledge platform

The Ascent will be a monthly edition featuring an article, a summary of activities at The Integral School, updates from The Integral Commune, and an inspiring story. Each edition will also include a dedicated space for Sri Aurobindo's writings on India—that is Bharat—its spirit and mission.

The first edition covers an article on Change, philosophically and fundamentally exploring the old adage: *"change is the only constant."* The second article focuses on Harmony: as we shift to a new location, how do we establish harmony with the new space, and how do we transition from the harmony we had nurtured for so many years in the old premises?

Every edition will carry an ongoing series on India, that is Bharat, dedicated to Sri Aurobindo's writings on India, her spiritual and cultural heritage. This holds a special place, as the Centre for Integral Learning aims to create a conscious future by bringing integral learning principles into the intellectual and cultural environment of India.

There will also be a monthly update on our children's journey—what transpired, how learning unfolded, and the various experiences we shared. To further inspire our readers, each edition will include a parable from different cultures across the world.

There is a personal need, deep down, in the marrow of my bones, I sense this need. I sense this need in the waking hours, when I eat, when I walk, when I go about doing my work. This need is so intimate, so close, that I feel it is a part of me, it is the real me as it were. It is a need that is slowly and at times with a sense of urgency, awakening me to emerge from the trance.

It reminds me of the matrix movie (first of the trilogy): Morpheus saying to Neo: *"What you know you can't explain, but you feel it. You've felt it your entire life, that there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is, but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad."*

This need reminds me that there is something really not right, something pushing me to the wall, pushing me to extreme to face the extraordinary times that we are all living in, to realize and see that there is a matrix playing on us, an illusion, playing the 'real'.

This need is very much more than an abstract intellectual idea. It is a need for exploration, it is a need that suggest that there is more to me, there is more in me. This need pushes me to recreate myself into new, to transcend my limited nature and progressively grow into higher consciousness or be the truth that I am. I refuse to consider myself as a cog that can be fitted in a social mechanism and earning a livelihood and raising a family, this for sure is not what human aspiration is all about. For me the path is set, a path towards a truer understanding of what I am and what I am meant to be.

This is what education is all meant to do, to trigger in us this inner exploration and therefore, it is education that has to take this bold step towards the future. The current age and times that we are living in is secretly pushing us towards the new, towards the unknown, towards a fulfilling and a conscious life.

Are you with us in this journey?

—Editor

Is change really the constant?

We often hear: "Change is the only constant." At first glance, it feels true—after all, everything around us seems to shift and evolve. Yet, when I look deeper, I cannot accept this statement at face value.

In a relative sense, yes, change is everywhere. But in an absolute sense, I suggest otherwise: "Changeless is the only constant."

Change has to occur somewhere—within something or out of something. That "something" which contains change cannot itself be changing. It must be the changeless.

If all is changing, who notices the change? The very fact that we can observe change suggests that there is something within us that does not change. The observer is not swept away—it is steady, still, and constant.

In yogic thought, *gati* is movement, flux, the ever-changing; while *sthithi* is stillness, the unmoving, the constant. Your body, your thoughts, your experiences—these are *gati*. Yet something within you is aware of every change. That awareness is *sthithi*—the changeless witness.

When we declare, "Change is the only constant," we are in fact stating a contradiction. We are saying: change is changeless.

But constant means that which never changes—immutable, independent, always the same. By this definition, it cannot be change, but only the changeless that is truly constant.

In yogic language, the changeless is Reality: *Satyam* (existent), *Avikarya* (unchanging). What is changeless is *Brahma*—the substratum in which all change arises, exists, and dissolves. Everything you see and experience moves through change, but it emerges from, rests upon, and returns to the changeless.

Here lies the paradox: the world of appearances is not ultimately real. Yet it is not nothing either. We live in the tension of change and changelessness. Identified with the changing body, mind, and world, we mistake the temporary for the real. And yet, in truth, we are that very Reality, *Brahma*—the changeless itself.

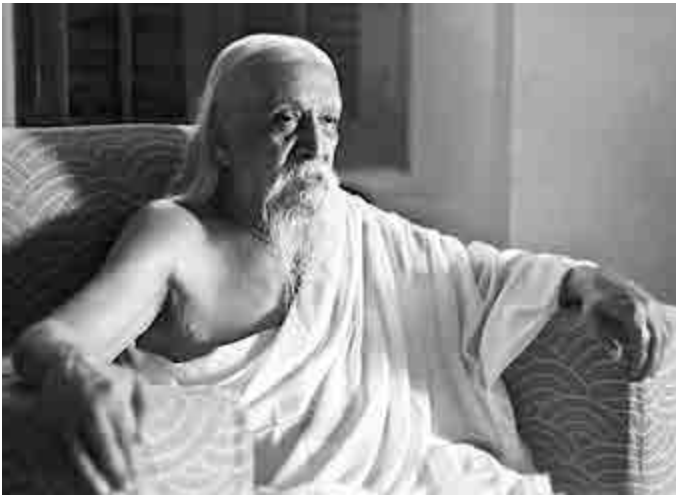
—Editor



**All changes
emerge from the
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India, that is Bharat - Its spirit and mission -

A series on Sri Aurobindo's writings



The Indian Idea

"The Indian idea of nationality ought to be truer and deeper. The philosophy of our forefathers looked through the gross body of things and discovered a subtle body within, looked through that and found yet another more deeply hidden, and within the third body discovered the Source of life and form, seated for ever, unchanging and imperishable. What is true of the individual object, is true also of the general and universal. What is true of the man, is true also of the nation."

What is a Nation?

"We have studied in the schools of the West and learned to ape the thoughts and language of the west forgetting our own deeper ideas and truer speech, and to the West the nation is the country, so much land containing so many millions men who speak one speech and live one political life owing allegiance to a single governing power of its own choosing. When the European wishes to feel a living emotion for his country, he personifies the land he lives in, tries to feel that a heart beats in the brute earth and worships a vague abstraction of his own intellect."

A Distinct Culture

"When, therefore, we speak of a nation, we mean the separate life of the millions who people the country, but we mean also a separate culture and civilization, a peculiar national temperament which has become too deeply rooted to be altered and in all these we discover a manifestation of God in national life which is living, sacred and adorable. It is this which we speak of as The Mother. The millions are born and die; we who are here today, will not be here tomorrow, but the Mother has been living for thousands of years and will live for yet more thousands when we have passed away."

A living entity, a presiding genius

"There is a tendency among us to regard India as just a collection of human beings with certain common racial and cultural characteristics. But India is more than a collection of human beings. India is a living entity, a presiding genius [the prevalent character or spirit of a nation], the one self of all these human beings and the one consciousness that is at work in them. You cannot make a nation with a mere aggregate of individuals. A nation is a single being. It is this single being, the life of our life that we have to serve. It is the one Mother of whom we are the myriad children. Until we realise this, we shall never achieve greatness. Our first requirement is to live for and look up to a presiding genius which animates us, which unites us, which alone has made our culture and civilisation persist through thousands of years and which alone can make us fulfil our destiny. The sense of India as the living Mother is what we are aiming to kindle everywhere in this country. But to kindle this sense is not to answer the whole need of the times. Every country has a presiding genius, whether openly acknowledged or not. But every country has predominant qualities, a typical nature, a central function. We must realise what exactly are the face and form of our presiding genius."

A new harmony

The Integral School was housed at Jayabheri Four Season for a decade, from 2015 to 2025. Plot 42–43 and the adjacent ground housed our children. The design of the place offered a certain tranquility and peace that, even as a visitor walking in for the first time, you could immediately sense. Open spaces, plenty of natural light—an ideal setting for a school like ours. It established a certain harmony, both within and without.

Come September 2025, we had no option but to exit the place. It held fond memories; we were comfortable there, a convenience of status quo, if you will. Every little nook and corner in the building was an opportunity for our children to play, to create their own use of the space—an opportunity to jump, for friends to squeeze together to adjust in the little space available. An opportunity to hang a thread tied to an object from the top floor down to the ground floor and watch the pendulum swing. An opportunity to hide under the sofa or behind the door, to walk into the kitchen and smell the food and enquire when it would be served, to run around the inner circumference of the building, to climb the walls, to perch on the side walls and say “hi” to anyone entering the building through the tiny little white gate.

It was a home—a place where all of us could simply be. Rather than the design dictating our conduct, we created our own way of being and living in this home.

But the harmony had to be disturbed. We had to leave behind this harmony in order to create a new one. The old had to be done away with; the new had to be embraced.

Physical Space

One of the many things that makes us unique is our new centre. Here, children will learn in a natural environment that is open to exploration. With a design style that symbolises the “integral” philosophy, it features sustainable materials.

In the integral education scheme of things, environment is critical to the building of an Integral School. The architecture and environment of the school have a direct impact on shaping the personality and psyche of the children.

For that matter, it will shape the psyche of anyone who becomes part of the new campus. It is about creating a psychophysical environment, simply because the psychological elements of the environment are inseparable from the physical. An Integral School enables real-life learning. So, whether it is the extension of classrooms to the outdoors, recycling areas, frog ponds, kitchen gardens, solar kitchens, learning spaces for children, or outdoor laboratories, it all culminates in a learning matrix—or what may be termed a learn-scape.

Nature has the capacity to nurture. A learning environment must truly be wedded to all the universal constituent elements of nature. And because they are universal, they are deeply connected to the human psyche. These elements are: Earth, Space, Air, Fire, and Water—symbolizing stability, freedom, movement and mobility, illumination, knowledge and power, flexibility, fluidity, and creativity.

As we move into the new campus, our first task will be to establish harmony with the external environment and then to establish harmony within ourselves.

—Editor

At The Integral School

Here's a glimpse of what our children at The Integral School explored, learned and loved in the month of August.



Progress Group

Progress was introduced to sense development using a gamut of textures, tastes, smells, sounds and sights from in and around their environment, the children explored through collecting and pasting, foraging and creating art and crafts inspired by their tiny excursions. They explored the world of numbers and languages (English, Hindi & Telugu) using their newly-found albeit nascent interaction skills.

From celebrating Rakhshabandhan to Sri Aurobindo's birthday & the Indian Independence Day with song and dance, the festivities took a bittersweet turn with packing their belongings for the big move to the new premises, which was also embraced with equal fervour.

Children of **Courage** were engaged in multi-sensory activities involving various textures and sounds.

From mental maths using stick bundles and ganit-mala, active listening through storytelling, painting using different materials to explore texture, crafts such as beading and rakhi-making, the month of August brought in celebrations and team-work through festivities that fostered friendships and a greater sense of self in equal measure.



Courage Group

Aspiration brought together a cornucopia of exciting projects from collaborative work to individual projects ranging from volcanoes, sharks, birds and insects to a presentation on Indian freedom fighters for Independence Day; the children immersed themselves in gathering diverse information to showcase it to their peers with accuracy and confidence in their own inimitable style.

From using stick bundles and beads in mental maths to tracing letters and solving puzzles in Telugu, they embraced learning through various different ways. They ended the month by coming together by not only packing their own belongings but also extending their tiny hands to the colossal task of packing the school library.



Aspiration Group



Gratitude Group

From performing a play on Battle of Plassey through to the Revolt of 1857, **Gratitude** showcased their creations with an exhibition displaying India's contribution to the world with a range of indispensable solutions such as yoga, surgery and the number zero, to name a few.

From cardboard-loom rakhi-making to preparing peanut-jaggery ladoos, singing devotional songs dedicated to young Krishna for Janamashtami to poetry that paid homage to Sri Aurobindo for his birthday, the children gathered together to represent the power of teamwork. They also helped in packing their belongings and bid adieu to their learning space, which had been a distinct part of them- individually and collectively.

Humility engaged in various projects, exploring topics such as ancient civilizations, animal kingdoms, magnets, Hindu lunar calendar, and Janma Nakshatra. They explored their newfound autonomy in a safe learning space. They performed a multilingual song on Bharat for Independence Day and bonded over rakhi, ladoo-making, and origami.

They pushed the creative envelope through individual ideas and improvisations. The new learning space evoked memories and nostalgia, as children gathered together in their special corners one last time before the move.



Humility Group



Goodness Group

Goodness celebrated festivals and prepared children for their new space. They participated in various festivities, including wearing traditional ensembles for Rakshabandhan and a tribute to Sri Aurobindo on Sri Aurobindo Day.

The whole school participated with enthusiasm. Camaraderie was established within the group, with Darshad welcoming Tanmay to the new chapter. From discussing their 8 years at the school to ruminating about their respective evolution over the past decade, the children shared vivid anecdotes and clicked photos to savour memories for a lifetime!

A Parable



A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, when two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep it was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead.

The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all of their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. She fell down and died.

The other frog continued to jump as hard as she could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at her to stop the pain and just die. She began jumping even harder and finally made it out. When she got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that she was deaf - she thought they were encouraging her to jump out of the hole the entire time.



Survey No. 47AA, Muppa Greens, near WIPRO SEZ, Vattinagulapally,
Hyderabad, Telangana 500 075. Tel. No.: +91 77020 60123

CFIL's Expressions:



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