



# the ascent



CFIL's Newsletter | May 2026

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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**With** each passing month, our shared journey unfolds a little further. We are pleased to present the 10th edition of *The Ascent* for May.

The closure of academic year which falls around mid of April every year is a kind of a break that allows for contemplation on the year that has passed by and prepare for the upcoming year. We had witnessed extreme temperature this year. The more the challenging situation the more we feel the need to prepare ourselves for an even more demanding times ahead.

The flavor of the coming year is going to be rigor and discipline for all of us a community. Rigor in our studies and discipline in all we need to achieve this year in regards to the overall CFIL goals.

The first article, *The Turning Within: Dharma, Education and the Quiet Mind (Part I)* is a conversation that has been rendered into a narrative essay. Beginning with the question of Dharma, the conversation journeys through the play of forces in life, the purpose of education, and the discipline of inner observation, pointing towards the quiet mind as a condition for higher consciousness. Part II will explore education in some depth.

In India that is Bharat series, Sri Aurobindo recognises Indian civilisation as a profound achievement of the spirit and consciousness, while acknowledging that the fullness of culture must also manifest in the organisation of collective life. A truly integral civilisation unites inner realisation with dynamic social, political, and material progress.

In the symbolism series, we expound on the significance of Mahasaraswati as the power in work and her spirit of perfection and order.

At the CFIL Campus is a quick update on what is happening on campus in terms of construction. We have also started to shoot for our Integral Dialogues podcast. You would all be invited to view these podcasts on the Integral Dialogues YouTube channel. Some reels and shots are already up on the Integral School Instagram handle and Integral Dialogues YouTube channel, respectively.

In invitation to notice we share how our physical surroundings can impact our orientation to life and add to mental distress.

In reflections and trends, we share a trend that is fast catching up where people are designing their homes that can directly impact their psyche. The urban concrete jungle does no good to our overall wellbeing. Designing our home differently might just be the beginning.

As we enter June and the reopening of the school, we eagerly wait to see our children. For the parents' community, this year we demand and expect more alignment to what we wish to achieve collectively. We expect our parents to be more proactive this year round.

-Editor

# The Turning Within: Dharma, Education, and the Quiet Mind

A conversation rendered into a narrative essay – Part 1

## What is Dharma?

The answer did not arrive as certainty.

“I do not claim to know Dharma in its entirety, but from what I have understood, thanks to my teacher, I will try to give an answer.” (Editor)

What followed was not a definition as much as an invitation to look at life differently.

The word *Dharma*, it was explained, can have various meanings attached to it, and each meaning is valid at a certain plane. What makes sense when connected with the world situation and with life in general is that the word *Dharma* comes from the root *dhri*—that which holds, that which connects, that which sustains.

*Dharma* is that which upholds, sustains, and brings things together. Anything that opposes that is *Adharma*.

In simple terms, bringing harmony and sustaining harmony is *Dharma*. Anything that spoils harmony and destabilizes it is *Adharma*. From there, the inquiry moved deeper.

If there are forces that create disharmony, and if everything stems from a common source, how do these ideas fit together? What is this *Adharma*? What is this common source? How does it all play together?

These are difficult things for the mind to conceive because the world is not just what the mind cognizes. If our eyes cannot see beyond a certain range, it does not mean that objects do not exist beyond that range. They do.

In comparison to animals, we know what an elephant is capable of sensing, or what ranges a bat can hear. Similarly, the world appears to be manifested at various levels. At the obvious physical level is what we see, cognize, interact with, and experience as real. But there is also something above, or something behind it—, a force or forces coming together.

Consider a practical example. Do we really think that there is a government that exists and functions without forces operating behind it? Not any particular government, but government as a system, a body that governs people. Certainly not.

While it may sound like what people call a conspiracy theory—which it is not—there are things that happen behind the curtain. There are things that happen as causes. For us, they appear only as effects.

The world, as it is understood, is a web of people and forces that are operational—*Asuric* and *Daivic*.

The *Daivic* work for Dharma.  
The *Asuric* work against it.

How does this battle become operational? Through what we see around the world. The medium could be technology. It could be a war whose origins we do not fully understand. It could be a modification of the human mind. It could be a cultural or social belief that is being pushed.

The conviction is that the world is being operated at a level that the human being today cannot fathom. There are dots to be connected.

There are forces that make use of the systems already present—political, economic, cultural, technological—and they are intent on disturbing the Daivic forces. At the same time, there are forces equally intent on sustaining harmony.

It is a game, it is a battle.

If there are forces of disharmony working with great force and effect, there must also be forces working equally hard, perhaps even harder, to sustain harmony.

Naturally, this raises another question. Where is this game or battle heading? Is there a scorecard?

The answer is simple and yet not that simple. Yes there are ways to observe what is happening, a sort of a scorecard. In a world obsessed with data, there are indicators available. One can measure symptoms—mental health, the capacity to think, love, peace, progress, aspiration for higher things in life.

Is aspiration present?  
Is peace present?  
Is the capacity to think deeply present?

Language itself tells a story. What we pursue in life tells a story. What occupies our attention tells a story.

There is much that can be seen and measured. By those measures, there is certainly an imbalance. And perhaps that imbalance is by design otherwise we would not wake up.

If everything were perfect, it would be heaven. Nobody moves in heaven. Everything is already there.

Those who are in the heavens want to be here on the earth plane because it is too good to remain there. When everything is available, there is nothing to look forward to.

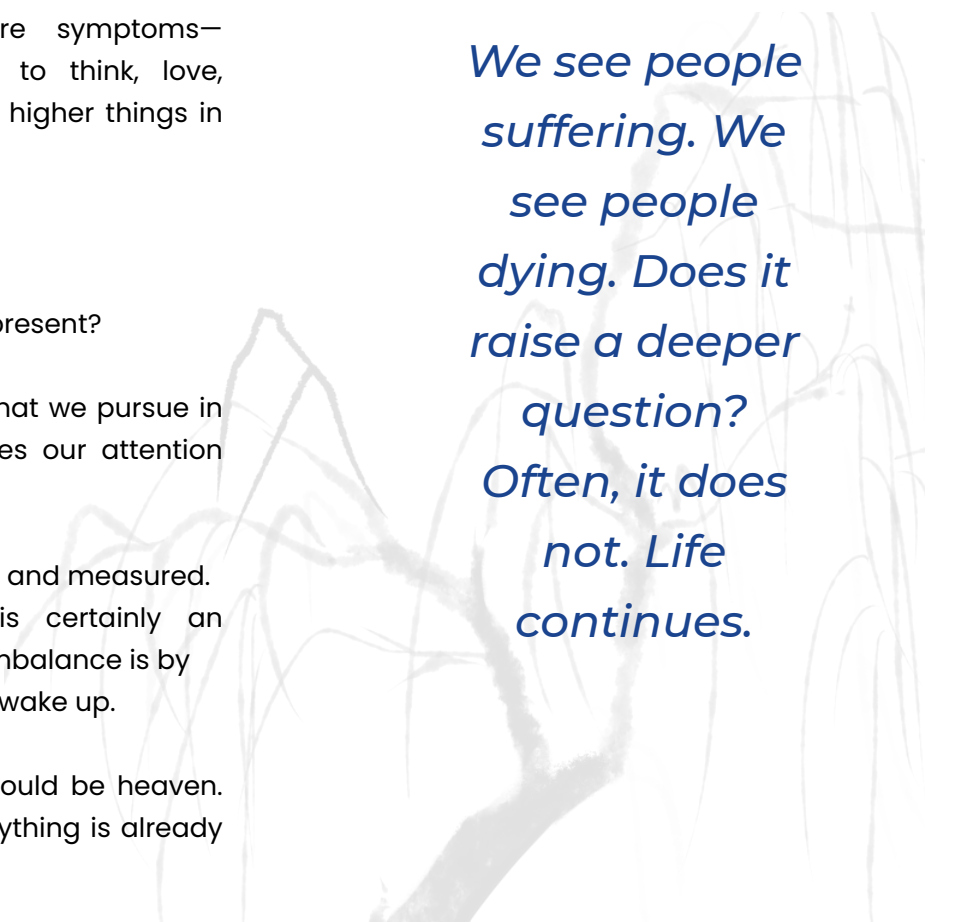
That is why, as the Mother says, the earth plane is the chosen plane for the supramental to manifest.

As long as adverse forces are not present, there is little reason to look within. This naturally led to another reflection.

How much further must the human being fall before there is a turning back? Before there is a genuine effort to seek, to understand, to aspire for something higher?

The answer is not easy.

One can witness death in the family. One can lose someone very close. For a while it affects us. Then life takes over and we move on. A crisis may occur. We deal with it and move on.



*We see people  
suffering. We  
see people  
dying. Does it  
raise a deeper  
question?  
Often, it does  
not. Life  
continues.*

So it is difficult to say how much worse things can become before humanity begins to turn.

Perhaps everything around us could be destroyed. Perhaps everyone else could be gone. Would that be enough? Even then, one cannot be sure.

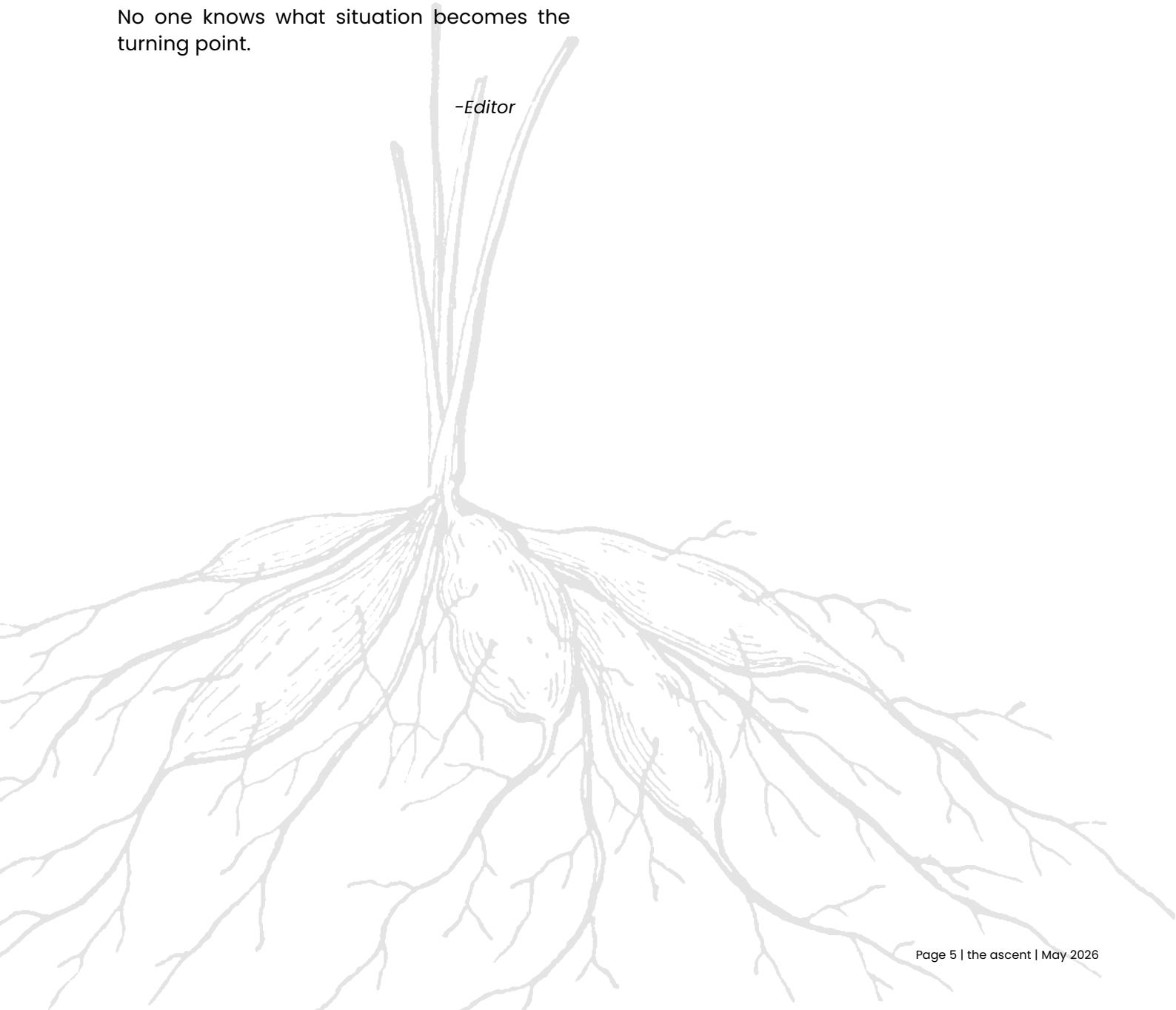
The real issue is not how far we fall. The real issue is the turning point itself.

Where does it happen?  
When does it happen?  
How does it happen?

For one person, it may be death.  
For another, it may be reading a book.

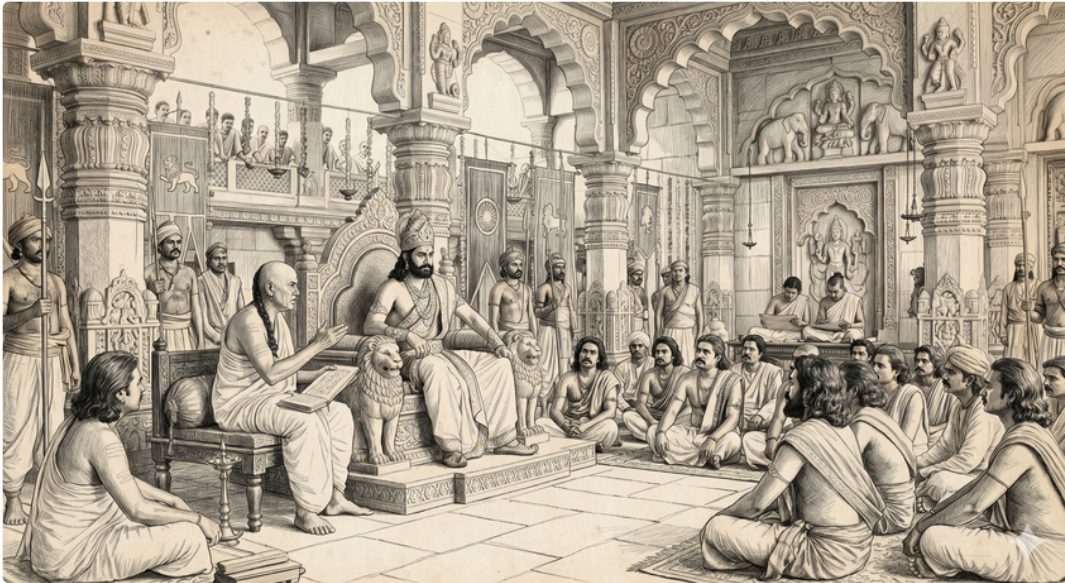
No one knows what situation becomes the turning point.

*-Editor*



# India, that is Bharat - It's Spirit and Mission

India and Her future: Compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother



## Indian Polity

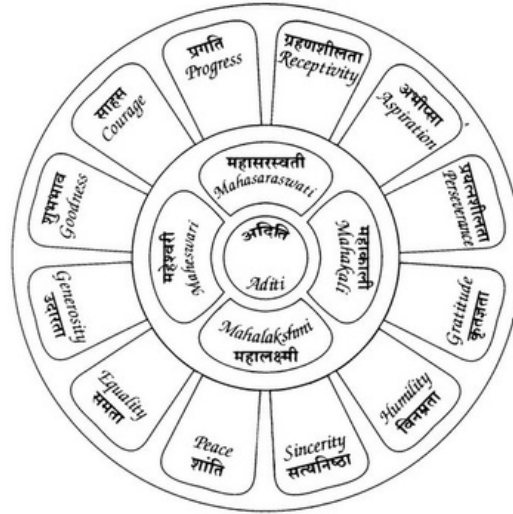
I have spoken hitherto of the greatness of Indian civilisation in the things most important to human culture, those activities that raise man to his noblest potentialities as a mental, a spiritual, religious, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic being, and in all these matters the cavillings of the critics break down before the height and largeness and profundity revealed when we look at the whole and all its parts in the light of a true understanding of the spirit and intention and a close discerning regard on the actual achievement of the culture. There is revealed not only a great civilisation, but one of the half dozen greatest of which we have a still existing record. But there are many who would admit the greatness of the achievement of India in the things of the mind and the spirit, but would still point out that she has failed in life, her culture has not resulted in a strong, successful or progressive organisation of life such as Europe shows to us, and that in the end at least the highest part of her mind turned away from life to asceticism and an inactive and world-shunning pursuit by the individual of his personal spiritual salvation. Or at most she has come only to a certain point and then there has been an arrest and decadence.

This charge weighs with an especial heaviness in the balance today because the modern man, even the modern cultured man, is or tends to be to a degree quite unprecedented *politikon zōon*, a political, economic and social being valuing above all things he efficiency of the outward

existence and the things of the mind and spirit mainly, when not exclusively, for their aid to humanity's vital and mechanical progress: he has not that regard of the ancients which looked up towards the highest heights and regarded an achievement in the things of the mind and the spirit with an unquestioning admiration or a deep veneration for its own sake as the greatest possible contribution to human culture and progress. And although this modern tendency is exaggerated and ugly and degrading in its exaggeration, inimical to humanity's spiritual evolution, it has this much of truth behind it that while the first value of a culture is its power to raise and enlarge the internal man, the mind, the soul, the spirit, its soundness is not complete unless it has shaped also his external existence and made of it a rhythm of advance towards high and great ideals. This is the true sense of progress and there must be as part of it a sound political, economic and social life, a power and efficiency enabling a people to survive, to grow and to move securely towards a collective perfection, and a vital elasticity and responsiveness that will give room for a constant advance in the outward expression of the mind and the spirit. If a culture does not serve these ends, then there is evidently a defect somewhere either in its essential conceptions or its wholeness or in its application that will seriously detract from its claims to a complete and integral value.

# Symbolism

## *The Mother's Symbol*



श्री माताजीका प्रतीक

## Mahasaraswati

Mahasaraswati is the Mother's Power of Work and her spirit of perfection and order. The youngest of the Four, she is the most skilful in executive faculty and the nearest to physical Nature. Maheshwari lays down the large lines of the worldforces, Mahakali drives their energy and impetus, Mahalakshmi discovers their rhythms and measures, but Mahasaraswati presides over their detail of organisation and execution, relation of parts and effective combination of forces and unfailing exactitude of result and fulfilment. The science and craft and technique of things are Mahasaraswati's province. Always she holds in her nature and can give to those whom she has chosen the intimate and precise knowledge, the subtlety and patience, the accuracy of intuitive mind and conscious hand and discerning eye of the perfect worker. This Power is the strong, the tireless, the careful and efficient builder, organiser, administrator, technician, artisan and classifier of the worlds. When she takes up the transformation and new-building of the nature, her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless. For the will in her works is scrupulous, unsleeping, indefatigable; leaning over us she notes and touches every little detail, finds out every minute defect, gap, twist or incompleteness, considers and weighs accurately all that has been done and all that remains still to be done hereafter.

Nothing is too small or apparently trivial for her attention; nothing however impalpable or disguised or latent can escape her. Moulding and remoulding she labours each part till it has attained its true form, is put in its exact place in the whole and fulfils its precise purpose. In her constant and diligent arrangement and rearrangement of things her eye is on all needs at once and the way to meet them and her intuition knows what is to be chosen and what rejected and successfully determines the right instrument, the right time, the right conditions and the right process. Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and à peu près and misfire, all false adaptation and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done is offensive and foreign to her temper. When her work is finished, nothing has been forgotten, no part has been misplaced or omitted or left in a faulty condition; all is solid, accurate, complete, admirable. Nothing short of a perfect perfection satisfies her and she is ready to face an eternity of toil if that is needed for the fullness of her creation. Therefore of all the Mother's powers she is the most long-suffering with man and his thousand imperfections. Kind, smiling, close and helpful, not easily turned away or discouraged, insistent even after repeated failure, her hand sustains our every step on condition that we are single in our will and straightforward and sincere; for a double mind she will not tolerate and her revealing irony is merciless to drama and histrionics and self-deceit and pretence.

-Editor

# At Centre for Integral Learning (CFIL) Campus



Construction of Latrics has also commenced. Latrics will serve as a research centre and office for Robotics and Drones. The initiative is led by Balaji (Darshad and Yashna's father). We look forward to learning more about emerging technologies through this collaboration, and we believe it will be an exciting opportunity for our children.

The month of May was a holiday period for The Integral School. However, we would like to keep you informed about all that has been happening on and off the campus.

## On Campus

We are in the process of constructing a new office building, along with a secure room for the storage of Edexcel Pearson examination papers. This is a mandatory requirement for the renewal of our IGCSE (Grade 10 Board) affiliation. The new block is expected to be ready before the school reopens for the next academic year.



# At Centre for Integral Learning (CFIL) Campus

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## Off Campus

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We have begun filming episodes for the Integral Dialogues Podcast. Integral Dialogues is CFIL's knowledge-sharing platform, and we hope to launch its social media channels soon. We warmly welcome parents who would like to contribute in any capacity. We are also looking for resources and support to help us develop this initiative to its fullest potential.

The month of May was exceptionally hot this year. We are grateful to Ankush for taking care of the campus during these challenging conditions. We will be reopening the playground for Saturday games from next week. Everyone is welcome to make use of the facilities and join in.

### Urban Indian youth disconnected from nature show significantly higher mental distress



A 2025 IIM Indore / IIT Bombay study across India's 25 most populated cities found that urban youth with access to green or blue spaces within 1 km, combined with frequent visits and high nature-connectedness, had significantly better mental health. In India's urbanisation surge, proximity to nature is becoming a public health variable.

PLOS ONE, May 2025 (IIM Indore / IIT Bombay)

# Reflections and Trends

From Smart Homes to Meaningful Spaces...



People are beginning to ask a different question about where they live:

Not "How efficient is this space?" but "How does this space make me feel?"

Design trends increasingly focus on rest, belonging, conversation, sensory comfort, and emotional well-being. Homes are becoming sanctuaries rather than showcases.

## Evolution

**E.vo.lu.shun** (ev-uh-LOO-shun)

*Noun*

Evolution is nothing but the progressive unfolding of SPIRIT out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self revelation of GOD out of his apparent animal being.

## A Parable



According to an ancient Indian fable, a mouse was in constant distress because of its fear of the cat. A magician took pity on it and turned it into a cat. But then it became afraid of the dog. So the magician turned it into a dog. Then it began to fear the panther. So the magician turned it into a panther. Where upon it was full of fear for the hunter. At this point the magician gave up, and turned it into a mouse again saying, "Nothing I do for you is going to be of any help because you have the heart of a mouse."



# Centre for Integral Learning

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CFIL's Expressions:



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Integral Commune



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