

the ascent[®]

CFIL's Newsletter | June 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



What's Inside?

- 2 Foreword
- 3 Dharma, Education, and the Quiet Mind
- 5 India, that is Bharat - It's Spirit and Mission
- 6 Symbolism
- 7 At The Intergral School
- 9 Invitations to Notice
- 10 Reflections and Trends
- 11 The Integral Vocabulary
- 12 A Parable



Lavlesh Bhanot
Editor



Tanya Ganguly
Graphic Designer

Month by month, our collective journey, continues to unfold revealing new stories, insights, and possibilities. It is with great pleasure that we present the **11th edition of The Ascent**.

June marks our return to campus and the beginning of a new academic year, carrying with it a renewed aspiration to progress further. This year, we embrace the theme of **Rigor**, following last year's theme of **Transition**. We aspire to bring greater discipline into our work and to deepen our practice. This rigor is not only for our children, but equally for our facilitators and parents.

Our first article continues the discussion from the previous newsletter—*The Turning Within, Dharma, Education, and the Quiet Mind*—with a deeper exploration of education and the faculties and grades of the mind.

In the **India, That Is Bharat** series, Sri Aurobindo reflects that architecture, sculpture, and painting seek to express the invisible spirit through visible form, balancing the material and the intangible. While Western art often celebrates form as an end in itself, Indian art regards form as a transparent medium for revealing a deeper spiritual reality.

In the **Symbolism** series, we begin with the first attribute—**Sincerity**.

In **Reflections and Trends**, we explore how our behaviours are formed through a study of human habits in everyday life.

In **Invitations to Notice**, we look at the remarkable growth of the Chinese bamboo and reflect on what it can teach us about parenting.

Having now fully transitioned to our new campus, we look forward to bringing all our stakeholders together in a shared journey. We especially encourage our parent community to reflect on how they have grown over the years and what they aspire to cultivate in themselves this year. Integral Education can only be truly effective when parents are as much a part of the journey as every other stakeholder.

—Editor

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

A conversation rendered into a narrative essay—Part II

If people encounter multiple trigger points throughout life, why do so few respond to them?

If education concerns itself only with information retention and memory, while neglecting the deeper faculties of the human being, does it not become more difficult for a person to remain sensitive enough to life's invitations?

The question then becomes: what would education look like if it helped human beings remain both strong and sensitive—capable of recognizing those moments that invite them to turn inward?

To answer that, one must first understand what this turning means. If education is fundamentally about knowing oneself and knowing the truth of one and it's existence, then the turning is already taking place.

The gaze is directed inward.

Who am I?

What am I?

It is a beautiful exploration. As one goes deeper within, the world reveals itself more fully. The deeper one goes, the more the world is revealed.

Can education bring children to a point where they are constantly in *sakshi bhava*—standing behind their minds and thoughts and observing life as one watches a movie? That, perhaps, is education.

When one is fascinated by the mind & it's workings and experiences a moment of complete quiet, something changes.

Children are rarely given this experience. Instead, there is constant external stimulation—more of it, and more of it, and more of it.

The mind is not the physical brain.

Consciousness requires a medium through which it can operate, and the mind becomes that medium.

Through this medium, consciousness expresses itself through various faculties.

If one is able to place attention steadily upon an object or thought, that is concentration. The ability to watch becomes the faculty of observation. The ability to imagine becomes imagination. Imagination operates beyond what is already known; otherwise, there is no novelty. Memory allows experiences to be retained and reproduced when required.

Judgment is another faculty. A practical example illustrates this well. Imagine reversing a car without cameras or sensors. Somehow, one knows exactly when to brake. Stepping out of the car, one finds the vehicle perfectly positioned. How does that happen?

Consciousness expands, assesses the space, and informs the mind, and action follows.

All of these processes occur simultaneously. Concentration, observation, imagination, memory, judgment—these are faculties through which consciousness expresses itself.

This process led to perhaps the most important part of the discussion.

What does it mean to quieten the mind?

A quiet mind is a state that is not disturbed by what is happening around it.

Thoughts may come and go, but the mind does not engage with them. It is a state where nothing unnecessary is happening. The classical image is a lake without ripples. A ripple appears because something is thrown into the water or because the wind disturbs it. Imagine instead a lake that is still.

No disturbance.
No agitation.
No movement.

When this state occurs, there is no sense of time. The sense of time exists because of thought. Thought takes us into the future or into what has already happened. Without that movement, there is simply presence.

A mind in such a state can do whatever is required in a given situation. In practical terms, this refers to having a quiet mind. Yet quietening the mind does not mean becoming passive. A quiet mind can still concentrate. It can still observe. It can still act.

In fact, it functions more effectively. Some of the greatest moments in sport occur because of this. Timing comes together. Everything comes together. Higher possibilities of consciousness require this condition. If the mind is not quiet, no amount of intuition or higher faculties can truly operate.

Most human beings live largely within what Sri Aurobindo described as the physical mind. At best, perhaps, ideas begin to form and expression becomes possible. Beyond that lie further possibilities.

There are descriptions of various grades of mind—the idea mind, intuition, and beyond. Yet these remain theoretical until they are experienced.

That process does little to benefit the deeper mental faculties. The more one learns to live within, the more one is able to live without. The conversation then turned toward the faculties of the mind.

What matters is not the concept but the experience. One sits quietly, and something happens. One goes deeper into quietude, and something else becomes possible.

Writing becomes more refined. The choice of words becomes more refined. Decision-making becomes clearer. One knows that something has simply come. These experiences may later be categorized according to different grades of mind, but categorization is secondary. The invitation is much simpler. Experience it yourself. See what happens. Then categorize it however you wish.

The conversation had begun with Dharma, with that which sustains, holds together, and brings harmony. It arrived finally at observation, self-knowledge, and the quiet mind. Perhaps the movement is not as distant as it first appears.

The deeper one looks within, the more clearly one begins to see the world without. And the more clearly one sees, the greater the possibility that harmony is not merely understood as an idea but lived as a reality.

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

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

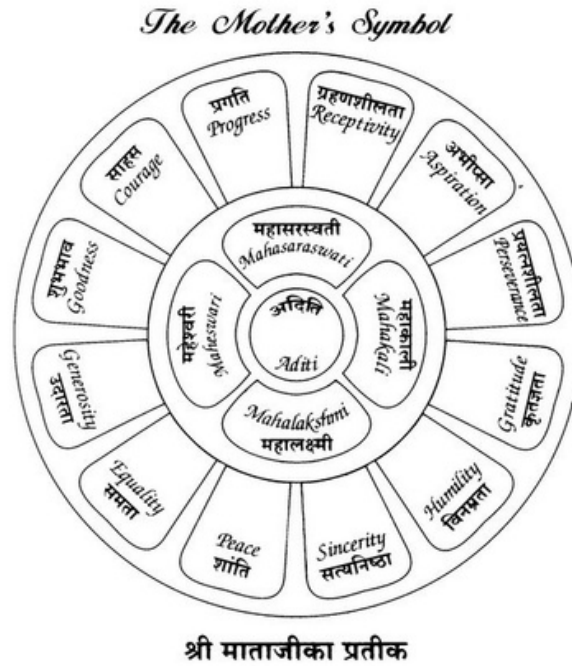


Architecture, sculpture and painting, because they are the three great arts which appeal to the spirit through the eye, are those too in which the sensible and the invisible meet with the strongest emphasis on themselves and yet the greatest necessity of each other. The form with its insistent masses, proportions, lines, colours, can here only justify them by their service for the something intangible it has to express; the spirit needs all the possible help of the material body to interpret itself to itself through the eye, yet asks of it that it shall be as transparent a veil as possible of its own greater significance. The art of the East and the art of the West—each in its characteristic or mean, for there are always exceptions,—deal with the problem of these two interlocking powers in a quite different way. The Western mind is arrested and attracted by the form, lingers on it and cannot get away from its charm, loves it for its own beauty, rests on the emotional, intellectual, aesthetic suggestions that arise directly from its most visible language, confines the soul in the body; it

might almost be said that for this mind form creates the spirit, the spirit depends for its existence and for everything it has to say on the form.

The Indian attitude to the matter is at the opposite pole to this view. For the Indian mind form does not exist except as a creation of the spirit and draws all its meaning and value from the spirit. Every line, arrangement of mass, colour, shape, posture, every physical suggestion, however many, crowded, opulent they may be, is first and last a suggestion, a hint, very often a symbol which is in its main function a support for a spiritual emotion, idea, image that again goes beyond itself to the less definable, but more powerfully sensible reality of the spirit which has excited these movements in the aesthetic mind and passed through them into significant shapes.

Symbolism



Sincerity

The first thing is not to deceive oneself.

One knows one cannot deceive the Divine; even the cleverest of the Asuras cannot deceive the Divine. But even when one has understood that, one sees that quite often in one's life, in the course of the day, one tries to deceive oneself without even knowing it, spontaneously and almost automatically. One always gives favourable explanations for all that one does, for one's words, for one's acts. That is what happens first. I am not speaking of obvious things like quarrelling and saying, "It is the other one's fault", I am speaking of the very tiny things of daily life.

I know a child who knocked against a door and he gave a good kick to the door! It is always the other one who is in the wrong, who has committed the mistake. Even when you have passed the stage of the child, when you have a little reason, you still give the stupidest of all excuses: "If he had not done that, I wouldn't have done this." But it should be just the other way round!

This is what I call being sincere. When you are with someone, if you are sincere, instantaneously your way of reacting should be to do the right thing, even when you are with someone who does not do it.

Take the most common example of someone who gets angry: instead of saying things that hurt, you say nothing, you keep calm and quiet, you do not catch the contagion of the anger. You have only to look at yourself to see if this is easy. It is quite an elementary thing, a very small beginning to know whether you are sincere.

And I am not speaking of those who catch every contagion, even that of coarse joking nor of those who commit the same stupidity as the others.

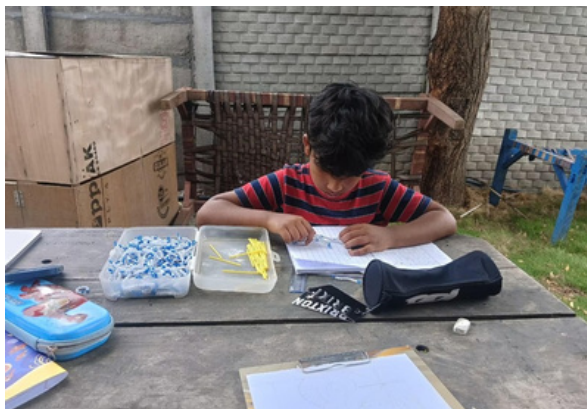
I tell you: if you look at yourself with sharp eyes, you will catch in yourself insincerities by the hundred, even though you are trying to be sincere in your general attitude. You will see how difficult it is. To be perfectly sincere it is indispensable not to have any preference, any desire, any attraction, any dislike, any sympathy or antipathy, any attachment, any repulsion. One must have a total, integral vision of things, in which everything is in its place and one has the same attitude towards all things: the attitude of true vision.

- Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained.
- Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will.
- Whenever there is sincerity, you find that the help, the guidance, the grace are always there to give you the answer and you are not mistaken for long.

-Editor

At The Integral School

A brand new beginning with the new academic year !



The beginning of the academic year started with the children of **Progress** and **Courage** happily settling back into the school routine with ease and enthusiasm. They enjoyed classroom free play, building train tracks and gardens with blocks, solving puzzles, and engaging with one another through imaginative play. Each day, they were immersed in a variety of craft activities that helped strengthen their fine motor skills. They practised using scissors, tearing paper by hand, and sticking materials with glue, while also exploring colours, textures, and shapes creatively.

As the second week progressed, we began our theme on the human body. Through discussions, activities, songs, and rhymes, the children became more aware of different body parts and their functions. They participated with curiosity and joy, sharing what they already knew and asking thoughtful questions. These experiences helped them reconnect with school life while learning, playing, and expressing themselves confidently in a warm and joyful learning environment.

Aspiration began their new session with great excitement as the children returned to school and eagerly shared stories of their vacation trips and the places they had visited.

In Mathematics, they were introduced to 5-digit numbers and revised number names, expanded form, missing numbers, ascending and descending order, and the concepts of greater than, less than, and equal to.

As preparation for the upcoming project, "Construction of a Mud House," the children sketched their own imaginary mud houses. Language learning was integrated through village-related vocabulary, with connections made to Telugu, Hindi, and Tamil.

To understand measurement better, the children made their own 30 cm scales. They also read village-themed stories and enjoyed singing the poem "Farmer's Friend" in their own tunes.

In Arts and Crafts, they painted envelopes, explored handprint painting, made origami models, framed flower artwork, and created colourful paper-strip hangings.

Gratitude began their academic year with a collective meditation, followed by lighting a diya to mark a fresh new beginning. The children joyfully shared stories from their summer vacations, listening to one another's experiences with a lot of interest and warmth.

They then decorated and arranged their individual cubbies, taking ownership of their personal spaces. They also created birthday-date house hangings, which now brighten our group area.

Together, we reflected on what we would like to learn this year and the projects we wish to explore. The children chose My Body as their first project. As part of this study, we explored the sense organs and imagined how life might be without them. The children discussed which sense organ they felt was most important and which might be least important. We also introduced internal and external organs.



Humility began the new session with Aditri, Smriti, and Avyan joining Ruthwik, Bharanan, and Ritvi. Carrying the diya to Humility after quiet time created a warm sense of belonging and togetherness. The new members were curious to understand the weekly schedule. Much of the week was spent unpacking cartons and arranging books. The children enthusiastically sorted the books subject-wise and placed them neatly on the shelves. Creating the timetable was an engaging challenge, as it involved balancing days, facilitators, and subjects. As their first collective activity, the children designed the Learning Calendar for 2026–2027, reflecting on why they come to school, areas they wish to improve, and new things they would like to learn. In Mathematics, a questionnaire helped assess each child's level, leading to revision plans for place value, multiplication, division, and problem sums. English began with Greek Mythology, opening up exciting vocabulary and storytelling.

The month began on a calm and joyful note as the children of **Goodness** settled beautifully into the new academic year. We welcomed a new mix of graders and two new members, who blended in with ease. On reopening day, the children arranged books and prepared their learning space with enthusiasm, bringing order and readiness.

They began with self-reflections on their holidays and later explored major landforms, plate tectonics, and Mesopotamian Civilization through a documentary and discussion.

In Science and Mathematics, their curiosity led to thoughtful questions about nanometres, acidity, skin tone, and more, opening meaningful conversations and planning for an integrated activity.

English began with Greek mythology through The Odyssey, where the children enjoyed the characters, vocabulary, and pronunciation challenges while practising reading, writing, and comprehension. Art included crochet basics and painting boxes. A touching highlight was caring for a lost baby squirrel, lovingly named Squeaky, with care and gentle teamwork.

The boys of **Equality** began the new academic year by bringing their learning space together and preparing themselves for an important preparatory year. They started by discussing the syllabus to be covered and finalising the subjects they will take for their Class 10 Board examinations. This gave them a clear overview of the work ahead, from in-depth topics in each subject to the practice of previous years' question papers.

The beginning of the year brought with it thoughtful planning for the next two years. The boys also engaged in morning play sessions, bringing energy and physical activity into their routine. In project work, they explored the anatomy of article writing, identifying the essential parts of a well-structured article. They also began meaningful discussions on themes such as democracy, equality, responsibility, and the role of individuals in society, setting a focused and purposeful tone for the year ahead.

Reflections and Trends



Around 43% of our daily behaviours are performed out of habit rather than conscious decision-making.

This finding comes from a study by Wendy Wood and David T. Neal, published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2002). The researchers found that nearly half of participants' everyday actions were repeated in stable contexts and carried out with minimal conscious thought.

Reflect: Much of life isn't shaped by our intentions but by our routines.

Question: What habits are quietly creating the person you're becoming?

Source:

Wood, W., Quinn, J. M., & Kashy, D. A. (2002). Habits in Everyday Life: Thought, Emotion, and Action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Invitations to notice



Some species of Chinese bamboo are popularly described as showing little or no visible growth for about five years while developing an extensive underground root system, before growing up to 90 feet in just five to six weeks

How do you, as a parent look at your child during the initial and formative years?

Aspiration

As.pi.ration (as-puh-RAY-shun)

Noun

Aspiration is a call to the Divine.

It is the call of the being for higher things—for the Divine and for all that belongs to the higher or Divine Consciousness.

A Parable



Once upon a time, the animals of a forest decided that their children needed an education. After much discussion, they appointed a hen as the teacher.

On the very first day, a young swan said, "Teacher, may I go to the lake? I am keen to learn to swim." The hen quickly replied, "No, no! The water is dangerous. Stay on the ground where it is safe." The swan obeyed.

Next, a young eagle spread its wings. "Teacher, I want to fly." The hen became anxious. "Don't be foolish! You will fall. Stay close to the ground." The eagle obeyed.

A squirrel wanted to climb trees. "You'll slip and get hurt," said the hen. So it stayed on the ground. A monkey wanted to swing from branch to branch. "That's too risky," the hen warned. So it learned to walk. A deer wanted to run across the meadow. "You'll stumble," said the hen. So it slowed down.

Years passed. The swan never learned to swim. The eagle never discovered the sky. The squirrel forgot how to climb. The monkey stopped swinging. The deer lost its speed.



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

CFIL's Expressions:



the ascent[®]

CFIL's Newsletter | June 2026