

Learning From Nature

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English poet Walter de la Mare once observed a lady at the dining table. There were some food items on the table like porridge, muffins and apples. He had a strange thought: outside of her these are food items, but once she eats them, they become part of her – that is, Miss T. Inspired by the thought he added these lines to a poem he was composing: 'It's a very odd thing,/ As odd as can be,/ That whatever Miss T eats/ Turns into Miss T.'

This is the miracle of Miss T's stomach. But one's mind can conceive of something that is a million times stranger than this. All these food items were produced in an external world. But, miraculously, these food items are totally in accordance with our needs. Both are complementary to each other. This complementary link between two quite different things is clear evidence that one Creator made both. It is a highly well-planned creation.

This phenomenon of nature leads us to believe that there is a single force that controls the whole of nature. This in turn leads us to believe that in nature there is unity of purpose – what may be called the oneness of God and the oneness of human beings. This phenomenon of nature gives us the right ideology of life – an ideology which is the basis of universal peace and brotherhood. This dispels the notion of 'we and they', it promotes oneness of thought. It saves us from all kinds of distraction.

This ideology inculcates the notion that nature is not hostile but friendly towards us. And when we discover that nature is of a friendly character, we also have no option but to adopt this friendly culture in our society.

Then the other aspect of this 'Miss T's' experience is that we try to turn all the things around

us to our own advantage. We try to absorb all the things intellectually that have already been physically absorbed by our stomach.

Everyone talks of spirituality. But what is spirituality? Spirituality is not anything mysterious. Spirituality can be arrived at through contemplation rather than through meditation. Spirituality is an intellectual phenomenon. In my experience, the basis of spirituality is mind rather than heart.

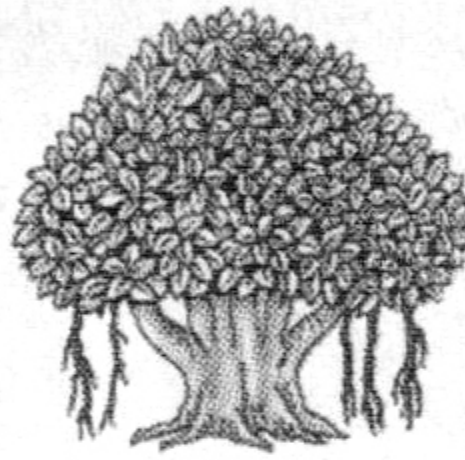
Our digestive system is a mechanism that can extract physical energy from material food. Similarly, our mind can extract spiritual energy from the same material items. Externally, these items are foodstuffs but, internally, these items are spiritual.

For example, if you think that God is constantly supplying all those natural bounties to us without asking for its price, this is a silent message to us that we too have to live as givers in our society without expecting that the receivers should give us anything in return. This kind of experience promotes the culture of selflessness, of unilateral ethics, the spirit of living as a problem-free member of society.

We need a model code of ethics, and nature serves as that model. Nature is a divine factory. It produces those items that are highly suitable for us. Strangely enough, this industry works without consulting us. The character of nature is a predictable one. So it is required of us that we live in our society as predictable members of it. Nature works in a predictable manner, thus it gives us this lesson: live as a predictable member of your society.

The highest quality of a human being can be summed up in these two words: predictable character.

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