

From Competition to Co-Existence

Do We Look After Ourselves Without Anyone's Help?

I had always thought that I could look after myself, until, that is, I became bed-ridden after a motorcycle accident. Only then did I become aware of the other forces that were keeping me alive. In my bed-ridden state, it was natural to feel this way, but the more shocking realization was that even in my normal state of well-being, the reality was still the same: other forces were keeping me alive.

Micro-cosmos

I saw some spherical glass containers filled with water at a department store. The label read, "place in the sun." There were some water weeds, water fleas and a few shrimp swimming in the containers.

I was surprised to see how living creatures could survive in these airtight containers. They can apparently live for two or more years in this environment. There is a delicate balance in the photo-synthesis and the food chain within these containers, and if just one aspect of this delicate balance is broken, everything dies. I was impressed with the innovation behind this product, but at the same time, I was deeply disturbed by the realization that our earth is no different from the glass sphere.

Everything Is Mutually Supportive

Whether we recognize it or not, everything is mutually supportive. Humankind's reckless complicity in excessive fishing, hunting and farming has resulted in the extinction of many species. What are more contemptible are the selfish excuses we give for such actions:

they are pests; they make us itchy; they hurt us; they make us feel uneasy; they are dirty; they sell well; they are a good source of income; they look pretty; they are convenient; they taste nice and so on.

We fail to understand how closely each and every life form is related to our own existence. If colon bacillie, the mitochondria, enzymes and micro-organisms in our bodies die, we too die.

Our bodies are already so polluted that life forms, which we call parasites, can no longer live within us. We now suffer from higher rates of cancer, allergies, atopic dermatitis (eczema), immune deficiency, AIDS, Ebola virus, 0157 bacteria, melanoma (skin cancer) and hospital acquired diseases than ever before.

Sharing

If ten people fought over food for ten people, how many people would have enough to eat? Everyone will probably get hurt and no one is likely to have enough to eat. But if the food were shared, ten or even twenty people would be able to eat peacefully. If one person tries to survive, at the cost of everyone else, everyone dies. The way we all survive is to help each other and to give to each other.