UNIMAGINABLE BEAUTY

Open all the windows, one by one, if you wish to go back to nature

By Pranav Trivedi

Many of us might have come across a peacock displaying its glory, and paused to admire its beautiful fan of colours. One of the greatest biologists of our times, Edward O Wilson, calls the attraction that we feel towards nature and its beautiful aspects 'biophilia' or attraction to life.

We, being a part of nature, ought to be attracted to anything that is part of nature. This is normal. Nature is, all the time, inviting us to behold its beauty. A tree calls out to you by bearing beautiful flowers and tasty fruits. A butterfly draws attention by its colours. Bird calls are our constant companions right from the time when we wake up to the time we go to bed. The callers even answer those who respond to these calls by mimicking them. Who can ignore a tiger striding across a glade of grassland or an elephant herd crossing a river? Because nature is full of life and energy, we enjoy going out. Hugging a tree, touching and feeling its bark, feeling the soft earth under our bare feet, soaking our hands in a stream, watching the stars, smelling a flower, tasting fresh tamarind leaves and raw mangoes or admiring the blossoms of the Gul-mohar tree are all part of our urge to connect with Mother Nature.

A peacock.

Black widow.

Connecting with nature also teaches us to be grateful to the earth for giving us all that we need to live. This is why we must connect regularly and repeatedly with nature. I can almost hear you asking, "But, tell us how to connect with nature!"

Every child must be ready and happy to connect with nature. And here is the secret. If you wish to really go back to nature, be sure to open all your windows, one by one.

Let me tell you what these windows are. The first window is touch, texure, and feeling.

The second window is 'hearing'. By paying attention to what we hear, we begin to listen to each sound, inside and outside, from the pulse of our heart to the murmur of the breeze, the trickling sound of water and bird calls.

Sempervivum

Ulysses butterfly.

The third window is 'smell'. Most creatures have only two senses – touch and smell. Strong, light, offensive, soothing and refreshing are some of the common smells that one comes across in a natural area. And it is not flowers alone; leaves too harbour smells that can make you wonder about the secrets of nature!

The fourth window is 'taste,' a sense we use daily. We can use it to discover natural flavours – of raw and ripe fruits, leaves, bark, flowers and so on...

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The fifth and final window is 'sight' – this is the one we overuse but have not learnt to sharpen. This is because we only see, we seldom observe! Observation is similar to the process of zooming in and out on a computer screen. Where we watch the details and see the whole picture too.

No wonder these windows are also called the five senses! This is how we make 'sense' of the world, and make even better sense of the world. Opening these windows and improving our perception helps us connect better with nature and ourselves.

Observing the beauty, harmony and organisation in nature helps us recognise that whatever humanity has 'made' is copied from nature – the original exists there always! What else can the children of nature do, anyway?

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Sarus crane.