

FROM MONOLOGUE TO DIALOGUE

Coronavirus maybe the voice of the Earth. What is our response to her?

The world is engulfed in an unprecedented Coronavirus crisis. I am 83 and I have never experienced such a situation in my life. Wars are initiated by humans and can be controlled or ended by humans. But Coronavirus is a show of nature's power and beyond human control. Modern humans believed that through science and technology we can conquer nature. But through Coronavirus nature is speaking to us loud and clear that the talk of conquering nature is sheer human arrogance.

Human desire to conquer nature comes from the belief that humans are separate from nature. This dualistic thinking is at the root of our problem. Humans are as much a part of nature as any other form of life. Therefore, living in a harmonious dialogue with nature is the urgent imperative of our time and the very first lesson we, humans need to learn at the moment of Corona crisis.

The second lesson of Corona crisis is to learn that all human actions have consequences. In the past hundred years human activities have been the cause of diminishing biodiversity, increasing carbon emissions and producing greenhouse gases which is causing climate change. Our oceans are polluted by plastic, our soil is poisoned with artificial chemicals and our rainforest are disappearing at an unprecedented speed. This is anything but a dialogue with the Earth. It is an oppressive human monologue. All these negative human activities are bound to result in some disastrous consequences. Coronavirus maybe that. Nature is fighting back.

In the short term we have to accept that nature is trying to send a strong message through this crisis. This is her monologue! But a crisis is also an opportunity. Corona crisis may be a wake-up call. We need to slow down and with humility listen to the voice of the Earth. We need to face this crisis with resilience, patience, solidarity and equanimity. There will be suffering. But as the modern human civilisation has inflicted untold suffering and damage on nature we have to accept the consequences of our actions.

But nature is kind and generous, benign and caring. In nature everything passes. So, this Coronavirus too will pass. So in the long term humanity collectively must respond to this crisis in a positive dialogue and use it as an opportunity to redesign our economy, our political systems and our way of life in a noble conversation with the Earth. We need to learn to respect the place of wilderness. We need to learn to celebrate the abundant beauty and diversity of life. We need to realise that humans are an integral part of nature. So, what we do to nature we do to ourselves. We are all totally interconnected and interrelated. Therefore we need to be in a constant, creative and congenial conversation with the Earth. Trees may not speak English, so we have to learn to speak with them in Treenglish!

In the evolutionary process of nature there have been many Crises. Life has evolved through struggles over a long period of geological time. Who knows, maybe this Corona crisis is here to give birth to a new consciousness, a consciousness of unity of life flourishing in diversity, a consciousness in which mutuality, reciprocity, and yes, dialogue is the foundation of human nature relationship.

SATISH KUMAR, Editor Emeritus, Resurgence & Ecologist