



*Going Back
to the
Nature*

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Going Back to the Nature

Whenever my son watched zombie films, I used to ask him, "why do you watch such gory films, when it is not possible, humans eating and hunting other humans?". He used to say, "when Americans are making such films and watching them, there must be some fear or anticipation" That the zombies, in films, are humans who lose sense and can hunt and kill anybody, are attacked by virus or some mutants, turning them into man-eaters...led me thinking, are the Americans zombie phobic or are they seeing the future? Have we reached the tipping point? Should we be prepared? If it spreads like wildfire, what can we do? Are we heading towards doomsday, can we reflect, introspect and correct our actions?

In 2020 such fears and anxieties came true! Humans locked up in homes, the virus, which spread from other humans, was hunting people. The Covid positive people became zombies and others started fearing, attacking them and discriminating them. The best of nations, the powerful and the resourceful, fell on their knees. Unable to contain, dead bodies fell like dry leaves. Are the zombies out there without any sign, shape and invisible, first crawling into older men and women with morbidities and now savouring the young and healthy too? It is perhaps high time for some reflection on the course of our actions.

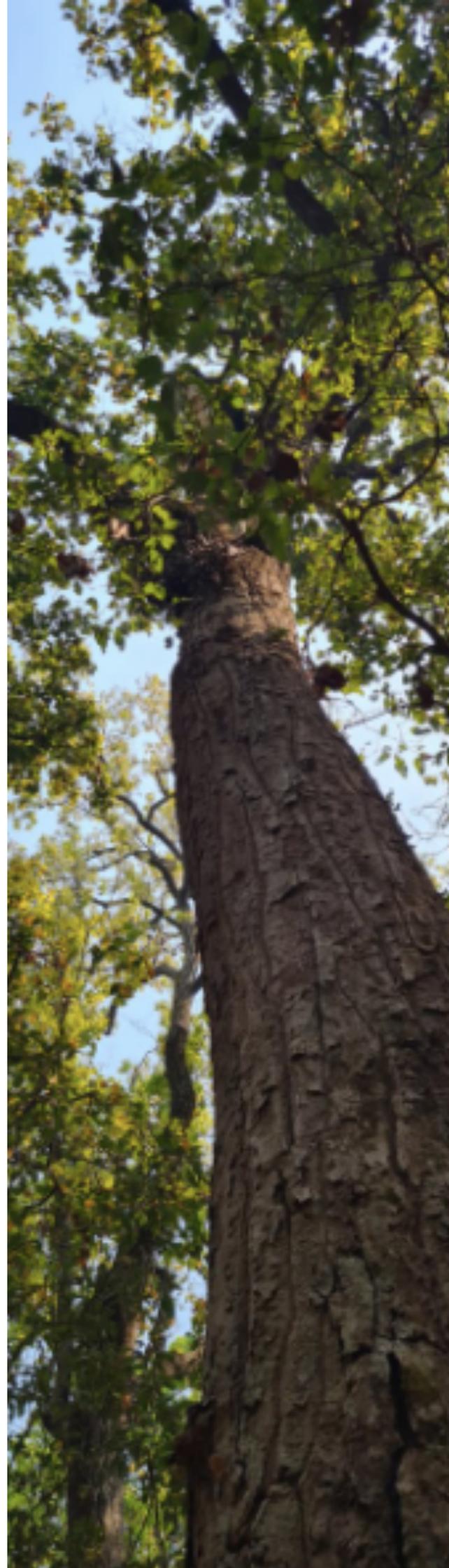
My grandfather and grandmother who lived a short life, died naturally without help in their daily chores, without any medicine and machines managing their breath and pushing oxygen into their lungs. Are we 'humans' responsible for the state of affairs of today? Yes of course! At least my generation, those who have hit a half-century, were relatively closer to nature - born naturally, breastfed, rolling in arms of mothers, fathers, grandmothers, aunts, and uncles, playing in the grounds, enjoying rains, going to the green fields, forests, watching plants grow and live in the wilderness. Then came the Netizens, the generation following us, who imagine tomatoes and pumpkins grow on the trees and who have never visited a forest or plucked mangoes.

Who is responsible for the younger generation born a few years ago, hooked to a phone or television or tablet or earphones 18 hours? Their heartbeat and lifeline flow through these devices. Cut it off and the life ends there! Lessons of the teachers are on-screen, talking to the children, captured as passport-sized images on their computers - missing the lively laughter, shouts and screams in the assembly, calling out names and in-between saying 'good morning maam'. The happy moments when they saw their friends in class, sitting through interesting and some boring classes, opening each other's tiffin boxes and then rushing to the playgrounds, and running to the bus once the school got over, are all memories from time gone by.

Once back home from school, it was routinely throwing bags and uniforms on the bed, chatting with mom and then off to the playground, playing with friends and catching up on some TV time, all of which have become things of the past. Children born in 2015, have not seen school and the idea of school, for them, are the Laptops and classes on screen. Our deeds in the past have confined the present generation to the boxes...of homes and digital screens.

Instead of giving our children a beautiful planet, are we heading towards extinction? The reason? It's our nemesis leading us to think of ourselves as the most powerful, scientific, logical and rational species. What if we introspect and find ourselves the most irrational and illogical beings, who are hoarding wealth in a few hands and letting others starve and die? I wonder, despite knowing the fact that we all are going to be dead tomorrow, why is there a craze to amass wealth by hook or crook! But that is what is happening despite knowing that nobody is taking the wealth to the grave or heaven.

Then why all the splurging, building towers, cutting forests and mining tribal homelands, just to get bauxite to make more cans for drinks, cutting trees for laying roads, blasting the hills and laying four-lane roads on hill slopes, building malls, hoarding brands and clothes, disturbing the whole ecosystem? Our cultures have taken us too far, both for good and bad but looks like we are attracted more towards evil than good, and it seems we have gone so far, from where there is no return! The Culture, of silence, of conspiracy, of consumerism, of self-centeredness, of cut-throat competition, of hoarding and of apathy for our fellow beings, leaves out the small and insignificant beings from among us.





Filling the junk all around, our bodies have become frail, empty inside, carriers of so many diseases, where an invisible virus can kill us. What more to say about Kalyug (dark ages), when humans are gasping for oxygen, isolated in the ICUs, breathing their last breath with no loved one around to even say a few words, leave alone touching and bidding goodbye in the last journey of life and dead bodies piled up in the corridors of hospitals, morgues and cremation grounds.

Why this rat race? Where are we heading? It's the time to think, what is it that gives our souls happiness? If we don't find time to see the colours of the autumn leaves falling on the ground on the onset of winter, if we don't hear the birds chirping, if we don't see the seed germinating, if we don't stop for a second to take a deep fresh breath, it's more like we are dying every moment, digging our graves.

Often, we are mistaken; we tend to think that the 'world will come to an end' rather than humans are going to be extinct if we do not stop interfering with mother nature. Nature will thrive, without us, humans! It did so in the one year of our lockdown, giving enough signals to correct our thoughts, paths, and actions.

Return to nature should be our resolution. Sustainable living is the solution. Empathy for fellow beings is the riposte. Redistribution of wealth and assets is the answer. Kindness is the key. Loving and sharing are the ways we should be longing for. Enjoying every bit of nature is the secret. Walking miles through the wilderness, watching colours of leaves and blooming flowers, witnessing sunrises and sunsets is vital. We, anthropologists, know very well, living with nature and accepting to be part of nature is the basis of any species to exist. But alas! who is listening?