

THE BEE AND THE SPIDER

From: Stories, Parables and Fables of life of P. Ribes, s.j.

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Intent of the Fable:

There are two opposing attitudes in life: To get or to give. Self-centered or other-centered attitude

Self-centered people just exist. Other-centered people live

There is more joy in giving than in grabbing.

What are we, givers or grabbers??

The Fable.

Once upon a time, a bee was trapped in the treacherous net of a spider. The spider began taunting the bee: “You bees are fools, forever, out of your hives in the outside world flying from flower to flower to collect nectar and more nectar which, later on, you freely offer to one and all. You have never experienced what an easy and leisurely life is! Actually, you die that others may live! Fools!

We, spiders, on the contrary, never move out of our webs. We need not go to the outside world to satisfy our needs, nor are we foolish like you trying to gratify others’ needs. We build our world and we live in it.

It is only thoughtless creatures like you, who moving freely in the outside world are trapped in our nets. You provide us with nourishment to sustain our lives and to build our world. We need not toil and moil. Our little spidery world is enough for us. Who cares for the sun, the flowers and the light of the sun? Our inner little world is more than sufficient for us.”

The bee replied: “You spiders are prisoners in your own nets which you build from your inner entrails. Truly, you build your own prisons. You are caught in your own webs. You can’t bring joy or beauty to life. You swallow the outside world to build your “make-belief” spidery world. You cannot even guess the joy of being free, the exhilaration of moving from flower to flower, of enjoying the warmth of the sun and the scent of multicolor petals. You are selfish and self-centered. You die without having lived. On the contrary, when we die, we have lived a satisfying and fruitful life!”

**POINTS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION,
AND FOR GROUP SHARING AND DISCUSSION**

First step: Spend time in personal reflection, take some jottings thereon

1. In human life, who do 'BEES' stand for? Describe their characteristics. .
2. And "The SPIDERS" whom do they signify? Describe their characteristics.
3. What do 'bee-like' people contribute to our world?
4. What do 'spider-like' people do to our world? What are the results?
5. In your life have you found spider-like people and also bee-like people? Without giving their names, explain your experience.
6. According to you, what sort of people abound more, spider-like or bee-like?
7. Explain how and why some people have become 'spiders' and others 'bees' in life. Give reasons for it.
8. Can 'spiders' find happiness in life? Why?
9. Are 'bees' happy and contented in life? Why? How?
10. Can you describe what's going to be the prayer life of spider-like person? How will he relate to God?
11. What sort of prayer a beelike person enjoys most?
12. Is the "Our Father", the prayer that Jesus taught us, a bee-like, or a spider-like prayer? Explain.
13. Whose prayer will more acceptable to God: a bee-like or a spider-like one?
14. Do you agree with the following statement: "In real life, in different proportion, every person is both a spider and a bee"? Comment why and to what extent.
14. How can we, from now on, become more 'bee-like' in our dealings with people and with God? Give hints and ways how to do it.

Second Step: Share your reflections with the group and discuss them. .

IDEAS FOR AN INPUT

- In life there are two basic attitudes: The Bee's, is **to give**, and the Spider's, **is to get**. Unselfish vs. Selfish. Outgoing vs. Inward looking.
- There are two possible ways of living life: A **"Self-centered"** life lived for oneself, and an **"Other-centered"** life, lived for others.
- **All of us, in different proportion, have within us, an inborn bee and inborn spider.** We are forever pulled between two drives or tendencies: The **'centripetal'** one, impelling us to satisfy our selfish interests and the other, **'centrifugal'** one pulling us away from ourselves to others.
- In themselves, both tendencies are good and necessary. **We have to love ourselves and we have to love others in equal measure.** Already Jesus told us that we have to love others as we love ourselves. There is, however, a danger, that the 'spider' in us takes the upper hand and makes us love self more than others. Thus, making us egoists and self-centered persons to the point of disregarding the needs and the well being of others.

- Life is a continuous struggle to keep the proper balance in between those two drives.
- We have to be, aware, aware of our inborn bee-selfishness and keep it under control.
- When we love others as we love ourselves, we live in the real world of people, of friendship and of satisfying love. Then, life is worth living.
- The spidery world is very narrow, closed and lonely. Someone defined it as a world whose population is only one inhabitant: **“I, Me and Myself”**
- Spider- like people are caught up in their own nets, their illusory and selfish world. In order to carry on living - rather existing - they are forced to selfishly swallow up and cannibalize others in their webs.
- Spider like people cannot give anything of themselves to others they only grab.
- Their life is drab; they cannot experience beauty, love, friendship and intimacy.
- Be-like people, on the contrary, are in touch with reality. They live sane and interesting lives; they are able, both, to give and receive love, joy and friendship.

POINTS FOR PERSONAL INTROPECTION.

1. AS WE HAVE SEEN, There are two attitudes towards life; the bees and the spiders, the one of the bees_outgoing, lived for others. The one of the spiders self-centered lived for oneself.

People can live in two different worlds, one is real, the outside world with all its beauty and splendor – the objective world – the other is a “make-belief” world, locked within oneself, gloomy, small and cavernous, selfish and self-enclosed. The spiders weave their own “subjective” world from within by cannibalizing on the outside world. Their world is dark, paralyzing and parasitic. The bees do not weave or build a world of their own. They just live in the true, objective world.

What’s your attitude? Are you more of a bee or more of a spider?

2. AS WE HAVE SEEN There are two different sets of minds

The spiders are caught in their illusory mind. The bees are in the real world. The spiders, in order to carry on living – rather existing – have to sustain their illusion by rationalizing their poverty, selfishness and blindness. The bees need not rationalize, they just live full lives in the outside world..

**In what world do you live? Inside yourself or outside yourself?
Are you rationalizing your selfish style of living?**

3. AS WE HAVE SEEN, bees live by giving themselves to otherm spiders by cannibalizing on others. The spiders cannot give at all, they can only grab. People caught up in their selfish, imaginary world cannot give love, enjoy friendship nor bring joy to others.

Are you able to give and share what you have and what you are with others?

4. AS WE HAVE SEEN, Bees only exist, do not live. Bees live full lives.

Are you fully alive, or are you just existing?