

THE BEE AND THE SPIDER

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Intent of the Fable:

- ✓ *There are two opposing attitudes in life: To get and to give. Self-centered and 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 REFLECTION

- 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 an inborn spider.** We are for ever 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, 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 have 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.