

Published: Monday March 23, 2017

Revive the child in you

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When Wordsworth wrote that 'Heaven surrounds us in our infancy' he was perhaps echoing the deep longing in each adult to hark back to a phase of our lives when we lived in the moment, where we were in touch with needs in us that were being met (or not) and had a complete absence of guile, with no anticipation of an unknown future.

As a child, I was unmindful of how I looked and appeared, untroubled by opinions others had of me and even able to celebrate myself with my warts and incompleteness.

Yet, as I grew older, I became preoccupied with what others thought of me, and my very existence was circumscribed by others' approval of me. It is therefore important for me, as I recognise my lost self, to revive in me the spirit of my childhood. I need to rediscover that lost self, that part of me that is now diminished and obscure; only then will I be able to revitalise my spontaneity, become natural, authentic and real. When I was a child, I made no comparisons with others, never had the need to prove a point, nor to establish my ascendancy. I played and quarrelled with them as equals.

What then happened to me as I grew up? I sometimes think that the strictures placed on me and the slow denudation that I was subjected to, dis-empowered me. I built around me a scaffolding that would, and may have, held me up and protected me from collapse.

Like the child who, when asked to draw a bridge in a war zone, puts two children on the bridge and gets admonished by his teacher who asks him to remove the children, I feel forced to disown the child in me and bury him on the side of the bridge.

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