

***The astonishing beauty of eyes that are moved - because
It exists the world exists (Tiruvalluvar)***

***The world has Being because eyes are moved - without it
Men burden the earth (Tiruvalluvar)***

Dear Friends,

To be unmoved by Life - by beauty, sorrow, joy, pain and love, in all their diverse forms - is to be dead inside.

The fact that conscious awareness is possible - that Life becomes conscious of itself through us - is so extraordinarily unlikely, that head-bowed reverence and uninhibited laughter, seem the fitting responses.

If wonder and awe are absent from our daily experience, we are lost. Can we see, with clarity and an absence of judgment, that this loss is not only a personal tragedy but might also be a burden to Life itself?

To experience oneness with life is not only a joyful, fulfilling realization but might it be essential for our collective survival? Inspired by a recent interview to which I was invited, this writing will explore these subjects.

A few days ago, I had an engaging conversation with Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma, the translator of "The Kural" (formal name Tirukkural), a most revered book of sacred poetry from Tamil Nadu, India. {Thomas is offering an online class based on the book. Visit thomaspruiksma.com/mountain for more information}.

Written by Tiruvalluvar, sometime between the 3rd - 5th century CE, it contains great wisdom on ethics, life and love. The form consists of two-line verses - couplets - more than a thousand profound, beautiful expressions of awakened guidance. I will offer reflections on two of the verses that I consider essential for our times.

1) The astonishing beauty of eyes that are moved - because It exists the world exists (Tiruvalluvar)

Eyes that are moved"

The physical act of seeing requires movement, if our eyes are paralyzed, we cannot see. Moshe Feldenkrais often said, "without movement there is no life", we can add that without eyes that move that is no seeing.

Going deeper, seeing is not only visual, it is also about understanding (*I see what you mean*). Eyes are a metaphor for consciousness, for the ability to know and appreciate anything. When consciousness beholds the world, the world of experiencing itself is brought into existence.

Philosophers can argue about whether a tree falling in the woods exists if it is not heard. For us, ordinary people learning and struggling to live a meaningful life, it is the gift of *awareness* that brings the conscious world into existence - *that we can know and know that we know*.

It is beautiful that we are here and can know we are here. How astonishing that two hands can touch and feel care for each other, that color and sound can thrill us, that eyes can meet in loving intimacy, that strangers can deeply care for and value each other and ...

"*Moved*" carries the literal sense of eyes in motion and the secondary sense of our hearts being moved by something ("*I was moved by what you said*"). This is astonishing - it is the foundation for Love and for meaningfulness. If we were not moved by the joy and sorrow of each other, by the beauty of the natural world, and by the incredible fact of being aware of our presence here, then life truly loses all meaning.

The astonishing beauty of eyes that are moved is US being touched/moved by life.

Because it exists the world exists: imagine a world in which we could not be touched by beauty and by each other. That would be devastating, the opposite of astonishing - a meaningful world, would cease to exist!

***2) The world has being because eyes are moved -
without it men burden the earth (Tiruvalluvar)***

Here we get to the heart of our challenge - the precise cause of how we create devastating conditions for the planet and for each other. It is well known that there is enough food on our planet to eliminate hunger, enough resources to reverse climate change, the ability to save the Amazon, and to protect most species. What stops us collectively from creating the world so many of us long for?

When our eyes stop moving,
When beauty is no longer perceived,
When we no longer see that all life is as sacred as our own,
When we live in the illusion of separateness,
We become a burden to the earth.
We become a burden to Life.

I am awed by the simple elegance and far vision of this couplet. With exquisite clarity it shows that we and the world are one, inseparable unit AND that living from this understanding is essential for our survival.

Oneness is not only a spiritual realization of mystics but a reality for all of us. Feldenkrais liked to say: *"Without light, no eyes, without eyes, no light."* Eugene Gendlin expressed it as: *"We are interaction first"* (not individuals first but we come into Being through relatedness to the world). **This relatedness also brings the world into Being.**

Implicit in the couplet is the urgent encouragement, even subtle demand, that we take note of the devastating effect of closing our hearts, of unmoving eyes.

A world worth living in comes into being if we continue to be moved by its beauty, to know love, and to care for life and each other. Without that, we all become a burden. How exhilarating, humbling, frightening and provocative!

With gratitude for the gifts you bring into our shared world...

Russell