

# See the world with the right perspective

In this column the author narrates his encounters with different people elaborating on how practical experiences can teach about life's lessons most effectively. Read on ...



**ANIL GUPTA**

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In what form can wisdom strike is difficult to say. There are many encounters which have left me spellbound in terms of the way it will make sense of life and with no pretensions. Once we were walking as a part of Shodh Yatra in Kutch. It was very hot and we already walked around 20-22 km.

On the way, we saw a shepherd herding a few hundred sheep. I thought of asking a question in half serious manner, so we waved our hands to request him to stop for a while. The shepherd stopped. I asked him a question which I thought was a smart question.

## **MINDS ON THE MARGIN**



The question was that if one of the sheep of his herd got mixed with the herd of someone else, how he would find it out. He looked at me smilingly and then asked me to give him a piece of paper I was carrying in my hand which was the route plan of the Yatra. He opened the paper, looked at the writing and said, "To me all the letters look alike." I was taken aback. To me all the sheep looked alike, else why would I ask such a question. And before I talked to him further, he laughed,

handed me the paper and walked with the herd.

In a moment, he taught me a lesson which I will never forget. It was an extraordinary example of the naiveté of intellectuals. I was illiterate in his language, the language of the sheep. He was illiterate in mine and yet I was trying to make a fun of him. Many times, I began teaching with this example to narrate the extent to which one can commit foolishness. I remember another incident. This was from first Sodh Yatra, which took place 12

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years ago from Talala to Gir Gathda.

On the way to the Gir lions sanctuary, we stopped by at the house of Elias bhai. He was well known for his knowledge of wildlife. After taking water at the hand pump, we asked him a question, Elias bhai when does lion come here. Elias bhai replied in his own critical style, "Lion does not come here, it is you people come and go." Obviously, this was the abode of lion. We stayed there and yet we asked such a silly question because to us, the place looked ours.

Ability to see the world from a diametrically opposite perspective and distil the wisdom in such a critique is something common people in our country do not lack. If there is a problem, the problem is in our inability to learn from them. While thinking of rebuilding our relationships with ourselves, our peers, nature, and the common people, we should reflect on such wisdom. It is not too difficult to learn, grow, share and become humble. The more we learn, the more we realise the little that we know.