

One Moment of Experience

After going through a book on birds when Ishaan came out from the classroom he found a small twig. He seemed very happy and showed me the twig saying, 'Didi, look I have got a stick...' As I was busy helping children wear their shoes so I could only say, 'Oh... really? Show me,' and turned my face towards him to see his treasure. The size of the twig must have been 2"-3" with a very tiny broken stem in between. After helping the children I got involved in playing imaginary games in the sand-pit with them. As I was playing, Ishaan came to me and said, '*Didi mujhe in ek story batani hai.*'¹ So I welcomed him and asked him to share his story. He replied, 'Not here...there... *uss tree ke neeche,*'² ...showing with his finger. He had chosen a beautiful site to narrate his story, so both of us went and sat under the tree to listen to his story.

The story began with a sound... love doing thak...thak on trees...'

As soon Ishaan started his story, without experiencing it my mind went on judging about his way of narrating the story.... the clarity in his speech...whether there is order in his story or not and on. Anyways Ishaan continued his story....

'One day the woodpecker got fever and when he started doing thak...thak... his beak suddenly went inside his mouth and disappeared. The woodpecker became sad and without saying anything he flew up to sleep in his nest.'

'But why did his beak disappear?' I questioned. Ishaan replied, '*Kyunki usse fever thi na esliwob weak ho gaya tha aur jab usne thak...thak... kiya to woh andar chala gaya.*'



After responding to me Ishaan continued his story further ... 'When there was no sound of thak... thak... on the tree then his friends came to see him. You know, dog, turtle, rabbit and elephant were his friends. One-by-one they climbed up on the tree and went inside the nest to meet their friend woodpecker. You know... when elephant started

climbing up on the tree, the tree fell down on the ground. As soon as it fell on the ground the grass got hurt, stones broke into two pieces, flowers dried up but nothing happened to the nest. All the friends were waiting for the elephant to come inside the nest and say hello to woodpecker. When the elephant went into the nest the woodpecker became all right and again he started doing thak...thak... on another tree.'

As I was listening to Ishaan's story suddenly in the midst I felt my mind cutting off from judging Ishaan and beginning to live with the story. Though I still struggled and questioned how to fit all the animals in the woodpecker's tiny nest, all became possible once I started experiencing the moment as though I was also a part of that story. This one moment of experience touched me deeply. There was not a sign of real and unreal, everything was possible and alive. This whole incident made me think, dream and see like a child.

- Sunaina Singh

¹ 'Didi, I want to tell a story.' ² 'Under that tree.'

³ 'He had become weak due to fever and when he did *thak thak* it went inside.'