MANY years ago, I decided to go on an expedition from Gopalswami Betta to Nagarhole, which is a range of forests in Karnataka. This is proper elephant and tiger country, as well as king cobra land. I wanted to walk through this forest to see tigers, and this is the place in India for that.

I packed some food and set off. I climbed every tree I saw and swam in every pool of water. I was a big eater in those days, so doing all this and walking a lot I ran out of food after four days. After that, I just ate off the forest - all kinds of things - mostly honey, fruits, termites and bees.

Somewhere along the way, in one of the thorny areas, half my shirt was torn away and I had to walk the rest of the way with only half a shirt. I did not want to give up that half shirt, you don’t know where it might come in handy! I did not have a torch either and my matchbox got all wet and destroyed in the rain.

I just walked like that for 23 days and saw all kinds of wildlife at close quarters - tigers, elephants and buffaloes. But when I came out and looked back, what had the biggest impact on my life in those 23 days of being alone in the forest were the insects. At night they started off with their symphony and I observed one set of them go off at exactly a particular time on the dot. Then it would stop and the next set would start. I don’t know how they were communicating or timing it, but it was going on very purposefully every day. My watch was the only thing I had left, so I could check the time.

Even now, with just the thought of those 23 days, the planet literally hums through me. It is very difficult to explain what it is. For these 23 days, I never saw a human face or a light or anything. The planet itself just beats within my heart when I think about it. If someone experiences this, their very perspective of life will change.

Later on, my father used to always worry, “Oh! What will happen to this boy? He’s not qualified for anything.” My father’s idea of qualification was that you must either become a doctor or an engineer. And I would tell him: “If I can’t do anything else, if nothing interests me, I will go off into the jungle. I know how to live there.”

Human beings are just living without experiencing the planet itself, without knowing the beauty, intricacy and sophistication with which everything is happening. Unfortunately, we think just being ahead of someone else is what matters. But human intelligence is capable of making life anywhere.

Survival should be the least of concerns when your brain has blossomed this big.

We have reached a level of technology where, for the first time in the history of humanity, if you go into a shop and have the money, you can buy whatever you need for the next year and not have to step out of your house. This was never possible before, but it is possible now. For a large number of people, their survival is organised in a way that they don’t have to bother much about it.

Once survival is organised, it is time to think of higher possibilities. It is time to look for the bigger scope of life and not invest your whole life and your children’s life only in survival. Human life does not end with survival; human life begins only when survival is taken care of. Unfortunately, most people choose to complicate their survival. When you have nothing to eat, you think one meal a day is survival. When you get one meal, you think two meals’ when you got two, you think five, and now you think unless you have a Rolls Royce, you are not even surviving.

It is very important that you simplify your survival process so that the deeper dimensions of who you are find expression in your life. A human being should find out what it means to just sit and reverberate as a piece of life, because that is the ultimate ecstasy of being here. People have come to the conclusion that a human being means a miserable, useless nothing. When you use the expression “Oh, I’m just human,” it usually means: “I’m just helpless nonsense.” We need to change the context of what it means to be human. When someone says: “I am human”, it should mean “I am ecstatic. I am capable of wonderful things within myself.”

[Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and best-selling author. Sadhguru has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan by the government of India in 2017. http://isha.sadhguru.org/]}