

Compassion is Suffering with One Another Feeling of Sorrow or Pity Excited by the Distress or Misfortune of Another

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Abstract: *The word “compassion”, which is derived from the Latin “cum,” meaning “with”, and “pati”, meaning “to suffer,” has essentially retained this original etymological meaning. Thus, Webster defines “compassion” as “suffering with another; fellowship in feeling; hence, sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortune of another.” The very word “compassion” bears hope and reassurance because it suggests a promise of love’s healing power. No one must suffer alone and unaided where there is compassion. And, yet, since compassion involves suffering, it is unfortunate that it is in any way necessary.*

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Etymological meaning

Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for others who are suffering, combined with a desire to help them. It’s feeling of sympathy and misfortune of others often accompanied by a wish to elevate their suffering about understanding for the pain and wanting to ease their or often accompanied by a wish to elevate suffering as they see and is often considered a form of love for human mankind.

How to show compassion

To show compassion, focus on actively listening to others, validating their feelings and offering support or assistance when appropriate. This can involve being kind in your words, offering encouragement and being patient and understanding cultivating self-compassion is also important, as it allows you to better understanding and respond to the suffering of others.

A detailed look at how to show compassion:-

- 1) Active listening and sympathy pay attention to what others are saying, both verbally and non-verbally, without interrupting judging.
- 2) Offer help – Help someone with tasks, offer support, or land a listening corwhen they need us.
- 3) Express sympathy – Acknowledge and validate the other person feelings, It them know you understand their perspective.
- 4) Be kind and respectful – Treat others with courtesy and consideration even in difficult situations.
- 5) Practice Acts of Kindness – Engage in small, thoughtful actions like holding the door open, offering a compliment or sending a encouraging message.
- 6) Be patient – Give others the time and space they need, especially when they are struggling.
- 7) Show affection – Offer a warm smile, a hug, or a touch to convey care and support.
- 8) Communicate warmly – Use a gentle and patient tone when speaking to others and be willing to step down and offer assistance when appropriate.
- 9) Self compassion – Remember to also treat yourself with kindness and understanding.
- 10) Celebrate others – Offer support and encouragement, even when you don’t agree with their choices.

Its compassion a weakness?

No, It is a sign of strength and courage compassion according (16th May, 2023) to Oxford Learners Dictionary. It is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for others who are suffering, combined with a desire to help them. It is a feeling of empathy and understanding for the pain and misfortune of others who are suffering combined with a desire to help them. It is a feeling of empathy and understanding for the pain and misfortune of others, often accompanied by a wish to alleviate their suffering.

Golden rule for Compassion

It is passed down the ages of “The Golden Rule” embody, by implication, the principle of compassion. “Do unto others as you would have done to you (12th Feb 2009). It is to respect, love protect, and care for yourself each and every day. It is to let go of judgement and criticism and replace it with patience and gratitude compassion is rather inherited or learned. It just is self- compassion is an incredible super power.

What does the Bible say about Compassion

The Bible is a collection of religious texts that are central to Christianity and Judaism, and originally written in Hebrew and esteemed in other Abrahamic religious compassion is mentioned over a hundred times in the bible. The primary Hebrew word (rakhem) meaning womb highlights the deep, tender and nurturing nature of compassion, often described as a feeling so profound its like a bond between a mother and child Etymological meaning of the words as defined in Oxford dictionary is the study of the origin and history of words and their meanings. It is the most comprehensive etymological dictionary of the English Language ever published. It is based on the original edition of the Oxford dictionary but much augmented by further research on the Etymology of English and other two languages. The dictionary includes nearly 1,00,000 head words, with 11000 proper names over 3,50,000 words and phrases and definitions, 11,000 encyclopedic entries, 68,000 explanations.

Sages and Seers on Compassion

The living and non- living seers never thought of themselves but always thought of others. They always gave

food and clothes to others even if they had to remain hungry and without food for days together, Examples of Sri Sai Baba, Ram Krishna, Swami Bholanand Giri and S. K. Mitra of Calcutta who built the Matri Sangho temple where food is supplied to everyone free of cost.

If we are mentally and physically sound, we all feel pain when our bodies are injured or our egos wounded. Consequently, we are capable of imagining and identifying with other people's pain, of "suffering with them," at least to some extent. We wince at the sight of someone writhing in pain at the bottom of a stairway and run to get help for him. If a stranger collapses on the street in front of us, we call an ambulance and comfort him while waiting for it. And since much suffering does not come so directly to our attention, we give to charitable organizations which reach out to people we do not know.

Humanistic Compassion

This humanistic compassion does much good in the world, but, unfortunately, it has its limitations. We do not have to sacrifice much to help a stranger who has collapsed on the street or to send a small contribution for the relief of cyclone victims, but our compassion only too frequently becomes qualified when it conflicts with our personal interests. This, of course, is understandable, for, although we can imagine and empathize with someone else's joy or sorrow, we do not feel it directly through our nervous systems. When, for instance, we succeed at the expense of someone who fails in competition with us, we experience our elation much more keenly than we do his disappointment. If my friend has an abscessed tooth. I will honestly be sorry and get aspirin for him, but the chances are that I will have a tolerable night's sleep while he paces the floor.

Vedantists Conception

Vedantists do not criticize our normal human attempts to find happiness and avoid pain, although such attempts often cause us to overlook the needs of others. They understand our dismay at the mere thought of the self-sacrifice potentially involved in unqualified compassion. Nevertheless, they insist that such compassion is not only possible but also the source of supreme happiness and courage. Our apprehension regarding self-sacrifice, they explain, is the result of an erroneous identification with the vulnerable psycho-physical complex, rather than with the real self, which is divine, and therefore, unaffected by injury to the body and personality. Divinity is compassion itself, so we will feel unqualified compassion for all human beings, no matter how evil they may appear to be, when we discover that our true nature (like theirs) is divine.

Sages explanations of compassion

The sages also explain the motivation for unqualified compassion from the standpoint of non-dualism, according to which we are all one in the ultimate divine reality. "Why should I love my brother ? Because he and I are one." When we know our identity with other human beings, their concerns will be our concerns. We will be loath to rise at another's expense, and even my neighbour's abscessed tooth, which I do not feel directly through my nervous system, will be as important to me as if I did.

Abstract

Of course to most people the teachings of the divinity of man and the unity of all souls in one divine Existence will seem as queer and remote as dry Hegelian concepts having little to do with reality. Fortunately, however, Vedantists do not ask us to give these teachings total credence and application at the outset. Instead, they request us to examine them in order to test their validity for ourselves. And to assist us in doing this, Vedantists point to the lives of compassionate saints and sages who are said to have achieved Self-knowledge.

In the early days of the United States, rugged, imaginative men explored virgin territory in the west and returned with fascinating accounts of great mountain ranges, vast plains, and fertile valleys. When they could, these explorers brought back specimens such as furs, fruit, and soil samples as evidence of their findings. Like them, explorers in the world of the spirit have gone ahead and returned with reports of untold magnificence. But they carry no tangible proof of what they have seen. They do not need to, however, for their radiant faces are sufficient proof that they have found the divine bliss at the core of the universe.

The Buddha was one such successful explorer in the realm of the spirit. According to the legend, the young Buddha, who was then Siddhartha Gautama, was carefully sheltered from the sight of life's pain and tragedy by his father, the king. No war devastated the kingdom. No deadly disease struck a loved one down while Siddhartha was growing up. Thus he lived in happy innocence until after he had married and had a little son. Then one day when he was going through town on the occasion of some festival, he unexpectedly came upon a tottering old man, a distended corpse, a victim of some dreadful disease and costly a wandering monk. Aghast, he began to ask questions. Would everyone suffer the ills he had seen today ? Would his parents, his wife, his sweet little son, and his father's loyal subjects eventually fall prey so wretchedly to disease, old age, and death ? The Buddha's heart sank at the thought of so much tragedy. His gentle pleasures meant nothing to him now. So that very night he set forth as a wandering monk resolved not to return until he had found the remedy for suffering. For several years he walked about the country seeking the truth and performing fruitless austerities until one day he took a seat under a tree determined to meditate there until he either reached his goal or died. He did not die; because he valued wisdom more than life, enlightenment came to him quickly. After attaining nirvana, the compassionate Buddha continued to walk through the land, for he wished to teach as many people as possible the noble eight-fold path to freedom from suffering.

Unqualified Monism

Unqualified compassion like the Buddha's has one of its finest expressions in the Buddhist ideal of the Bodhisattva, who is happy to sacrifice salvation itself for the sake of humanity. Instead of forgetting the world in the bliss of nirvana, the Bodhisattva chooses to undergo whatever hardships may confront him in birth after birth so that he can teach others how to end suffering. He refuses to remain permanently in the secure peace of nirvana before all beings have attained it.

Although he was not a Buddhist, Swami Vivekananda, a nineteenth-century Vedantist, exemplified the Bodhisattva's unqualified compassion. "May I be born again and again," he exclaimed, "and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God. I believe in, the sun-total of all souls. And above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship."²

Summary

When Swami Vivekananda was a young man, hardly more than a boy, Sri Ramakrishna recognized his compassionate nature and gave it direction. Grieved to hear of his compatriots' terrible suffering during the many famines, floods, cholera epidemics, and other calamities that were befalling India and realizing that people in other countries were also suffering a multitude of evils, Sri Ramakrishna strove to leave behind him a band of pure young men, so firm in the spirit of compassionate self-sacrifice that they would dedicate their lives to the relief of suffering wherever in might occur. During his last illness when his body was wrecked with excruciating spasms and his thought cancer permitted him to speak only in painful whispers, if at all, he spared no effort or agony to prepare the bright young disciples who were to carry on his work of service to others. Of this period of Sri Ramakrishna's life, Swami Vivekananda wrote:

His intense love for mankind would not let him refuse to help even the humblest of the thousands who sought his aid. Gradually there developed a vital throat disorder, and yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these exertions. As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him, he would insist upon having them admitted, and would answer all their questions. When expostulated with, he replied, "I do not care. I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man." There was no rest for him.³

Knowing that he did not have long to live, Sri Ramakrishna hastened to confront Swami Vivekananda with the crucial question, "What do you want?" Upon hearing Swami Vivekananda's answer, "I wish to remain in Samadhi [unalloyed divine consciousness] for three or four days at a stretch – breaking it just to take food," Sri Ramakrishna scolded him sharply, "You are a fool! There is a state even higher than that. Do you not sing, 'Thou art all there is?'"⁴ The sublime state to which Sri Ramakrishna referred is that of the illumined soul who opens his blissful eyes after Samadhi and continues to see the divine Existence that he has just been experiencing. Perceiving God in everyone he meets, he realizes that the human body is indeed a temple of the Lord, who is to be worshipped and served there. Sri Ramakrishna wished Swami Vivekananda to become such a sage dedicating his life to humanity instead of seeking bliss for himself alone.

In spite of Sri Ramakrishna's admonition, however, Swami Vivekananda did not dedicate his life to suffering humanity immediately after Sri Ramakrishna's death. Intent upon preserving and intensifying the spiritual realizations he had

while in the company of Sri Ramakrishna, he embraced the life of a wandering monk and travelled about India for several years. He would have liked to give himself up completely to the bliss of divine communion, but he was unable to do so. Millions of people were dying of famine in India at that time, and the impoverished, illiterate masses were virtually defenseless against ravaging diseases, floods, and other frequent disasters. It was agony for him to witness the terrible condition of the masses, and he could not help himself. His compassionate nature compelled him to forget his personal welfare and give himself wholeheartedly to relieving their misery. His activities were varied. During a plague he shoveled and carted away contaminated filth from the streets in one of the poorer sections of Calcutta. In 1893 he went to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago with the express purpose of finding help for the downtrodden Indian masses. He neither intended nor expected to overwhelm his audiences with his forthright speeches on India and her spiritual contributions to the world. But he spoke the truth fearlessly in order to educate his audiences and dispel some of the misconceptions about India, her religion, and her philosophy that were prevalent at that time. Instead of responding negatively to the challenges he threw out at them, the majority of his listeners greeted him with thunderous applause.⁵ He received such widespread acclaim that he suddenly found himself sought after by intellectuals and spiritual seekers of all classes and lionized by the rich and famous. As burdensome as so much popularity must have been for one who longed to meditate in solitude,⁶ he was grateful for it. It opened many doors to him and provided him with opportunities to lay the foundations for his cherished humanitarian projects. Because these projects meant more to him than his own well-being, he ignored the dictates of common sense and worked to the point of exhaustion. His strong body finally gave way under the strain and he died before reaching his fortieth year. But he succeeded in leaving a legacy of compassion behind him. He had founded the Ramakrishna Mission, which, in conjunction with the Ramakrishna Math, has dedicated itself to the active service of God in man for almost a century and promises to do so far into the future.

Because of its multifarious humanitarian work, the Ramakrishna Mission has become one of the most loved and respected organizations in India today. It is famous for its free hospitals and dispensaries, its educational and cultural institutions, and above all, for its untiring relief work in times of floods, earthquakes, and other catastrophes. As spiritual teachers, its monks give inspiration and guidance to seekers in many countries. One of these monks of the Ramakrishna order spoke like a true Bodhisattva of the bond which exists between spiritual teachers like himself and their disciples. "After the teacher has passed away, he will continue to watch over the disciples in spirits. He will not accept his own final salvation until all are liberated."⁷

Conclusion

The lives of these pioneers of the spirit prove conclusively that unqualified compassion is possible – at least for them! But we still have difficulty relating their superb achievements to ourselves. How, we ask, can ordinary

mortals like us conceivable approach the heights reached by these extraordinary beings. ?

The illumined souls themselves, somewhat baffled by our continuing self-doubt, respond with patient love. They assure us that, since all human beings are essentially divine, the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary persons cannot be made. They ask us to remember that they, too, were once spiritually ignorant and had to struggle for Self-realization. They see our faults and weaknesses, but they do not identify us with them. Instead, they remind us that our failings are of the nature of illusion, to be dispelled and forgotten, for we are the Self, eternal and real, not the insubstantial ego imposed upon it. They also point out that, since the triumph of truth over error is inevitable, we will all realize our divine nature sooner or later. And they have set before themselves the blessed task of helping us to do it.

Language & Style

The language as given here is so simple that even a common man can understand it.

References

- [1] Swami Vivekananda, Works 1968, II, pp. 412-413.
- [2] Swami Vivekananda, Works, 1964, V, p. 136. I altered the original punctuation slightly to facilitate comprehension.
- [3] Swami Vivekananda, Works, 1962, IV, p. 185.
- [4] Swami Vivekananda's Eastern and Western Disciples, The Life of Swami Vivekananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1960), p. 131.
- [5] The following item appeared in the Herald, one of Chicago's leading newspapers in 1893: "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." Swami Vivekananda, Works, V, p. 327.
- [6] In a letter dated January 25, 1896, Swami Vivekananda wrote the following to Mrs. Ole Bull: "I long. Oh! I long for my rags, my shaven head, my sleep under the trees, and my food from begging." Swami Vivekananda, Works, 1968, V, p. 359.
- [7] Swami Vivekananda, The Eternal Companion (Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1970), p. 81.