



Compassion

Talks with Babaji

If you see another person is suffering and you do something to alleviate it, it could be done out of compassion or it could be done with a sense of feeding your ego or the other person's ego. Sometimes I get frustrated in trying to act with compassion and feel I don't know how.

Love in action is compassion. It has two forms: 1) physical expression of love, 2) love for all in one's heart. There is no end of needs and no one can get all needs fulfilled. Those who live a life of compassion, they do their best to express love in action. But you have to know that needs are unlimited. Whatever help you can give to a sufferer it should be out of love and compassion.

What word is used for compassion?

Karuna.

It seems that Arjuna's compassion is somewhat sentimental in Chapter 1 of the Gita. Is there an appropriate compassion in that situation?

It's natural to become sentimental in such situations when one sees all his clan people were standing in the battlefield ready to fight. Arjuna's compassion was originated out of attachment to his clan people. It's like graveyard dispassion.

Wouldn't Arjuna have a compassion that was less based on attachment?

Arjuna came with a motive to fight. Fighting and compassion don't go together. Until he saw the whole Kuru clan in the battlefield, his fear of destruction of the clan created compassion.

His fear seems to be coming out of compassion. Was it fear of death?

Not of his death. Destruction of Kuru clan and fear of sin which he will incur by killing his own kith and kin.

Did you mean to say that you can't fight in a compassionate way?

If you are talking about external war, then the aim is to win and use all kinds of foul tactics. In the war of Mahabharata, there were set rules of war and that's why it was called dharmic war. Where there is dharma, there is compassion.

What about our divine wars, when deities kill demons and free them from their karmic negativities and demonic karma, such as Rama killing the demons?

They got liberated from their demonic karmas. Those demons are within us. They get killed when a person chooses to tread on spiritual path.

So that is compassion?

Its result was compassion. People put their sick dogs to sleep. The result is for the good of the dog's miseries. The action of killing is violent but out of compassion.

But really it's compassion for the world because you are ridding it of the evil people.

What was the motive to fight the battle? To destroy the enemies. Krishna put the chariot in such a spot that in one glance Arjuna could see the whole Kuru clan. It was a shock to him. But Krishna advocated that fighting with these evil enemies is a war of dharma, it is the duty. Yes, it was a divine compassion to remove evilness from the mind of human beings.

How do we see the inner battle in terms of compassion and anger?

How would you deal with your negative action? You go through a hard austerity in order to remove your anger. When anger is removed, compassion takes its place.

By getting angry or depressed.

We cannot win the inner battle by being angry. It is won by living a disciplined spiritual life.

Don't we need compassion for ourselves even to see the truth of ourselves?

We need compassion but compassion is neither only self-pity nor is it only words. It purifies the mind and that purified mind perceives the Truth.

Isn't it better to oppose the negative with compassion rather than with violence?

It depends on situation. In some situations, violence is used and in certain situations compassion is used.

Can you oppose something without violence?

"Oppose" is violence, but we can oppose some thing without using negativity in our actions, thoughts and feelings.

Ahimsa is such a high value.

Ahimsa means not to harm anyone including yourself. You are harming yourself by your negativities. So it is not ahimsa. Ahimsa is the base of all 10 rules of restraints and observances of Ashtanga Yoga. But it is not easy to understand Ahimsa. A lion kills a deer. For us it is violence but for a lion, deer is his food. Nature created that relationship of consumer (lion) deer (food).

If I have a bad habit and I want to get rid of it, I can get depressed, I can get angry, or I can deny that I have it.

If you really want to get rid of the bad habit, then you have to fight with all those elements which support that bad habit.

What really works for me is when I realize it and then the action just stops with no effort.

Yes. When one understands that the bad habit is damaging one's life and that bad habit is his/her own creation, then the person automatically removes that habit.

Anger gets Arjuna to the battle before he sees his attachments. Then he begins to have compassion; then he realizes that tapas is the only way out. Is that what the whole Gita is teaching?

Yes. That's the way Gita started, but Lord Krishna gives the whole philosophy of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga to remove the delusion from the mind.

In our inner battle, is there the same pattern?

Yes. Gita uses Mahabharata battle symbolically to explain the inner battle.

In this case, it's really attachment and not compassion?

It is attachment which deluded Arjuna and blocked his path of liberation. Krishna out of compassion removed those blocks by his teachings.

So it's showing a big trap right at the beginning of sadhana?

Yes. Arjuna grew up in a Vedic culture. He was not illiterate. He knew dharma and adharma but attachment (moha) is a very powerful energy. Even the wise can get deluded by it.

Wasn't Krishna's action actually compassion in opposition to Arjuna's ignorance? We have to fight against the things that are harming us. That's a compassionate act but it's also painful.

Out of love Krishna yelled at Arjuna to remove his deluded ideas. It was out of compassion.

It's not the act but what is behind the act. When we do tapas, we are knocking on our own heads.

Yes. Motive behind any action brings its result accordingly.

So it's out of love for the higher Self so it's compassionate even though it seems violent?

It is a compassionate act on the part of Lord Krishna to pull out Arjuna from the mire of delusion by force. Even though it was mixed with violence.

So we are supposed to beat ourselves up compassionately? The real thing is the same to seek liberation not for selfish gain.

To achieve that aim, what do we do? We are fighting with our inner demons. To be honest to ourselves is compassion to ourselves.

Tapah, Swadhyaya, Ishwara Pranidhana. Those three make more sense in that context.

It's a method called Kriya Yoga in Patanjali Yoga Sutras.

I never understood why those were selected as one method.

Those three cover all the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. Those who are more sharp-minded people, they can grasp the essence of Kriya Yoga and for others, Ashtanga Yoga is the method.

Actually you could divide it as Krishna on one side and all the others on the other side?

If we say that way, then no Gita. We have to see the individual life in positive and negative sides. Krishna, the higher Self, was on both sides and also separate from both sides.

But in reality Krishna is not involved in the war?

Krishna was not fighting in the war but his army was on Kaurava's side and he himself chose not to fight but worked as Arjuna's charioteer.

Why does Krishna have to break down Arjuna's habit pattern of being a warrior before he can rebuild him?

Krishna knew his weakness. He brought his weakness to the surface so he could see it. Arjuna is the jiva (embodied soul) trying to get liberated. In getting liberation, first we have to know what we want to get liberated from.

So Arjuna's compassionate nature was okay but in this case it was interfering with his duty?

He was compassionate but at the wrong time and in a wrong situation. Such compassion indicates his weakness.

So for Arjuna going to battle was a tapas?

It is called yajna. It is sacrifice. Sacrifice is tapas.

Is this story showing that if you look at negative things through a colored lens, then grace might be on the other side?

Both negative and positive are mental perception. The ego is the perceiver which colors everything with a color of selfish interest. Grace is always there for everyone but those who make themselves fit to have it by purifying their mind, they achieve it. Others miss it.