

Compassion and Mental Development

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TODAY we have a big gathering and I believe that many of you who are here are interested in mental development, spirituality and the deeper things of life. So that perhaps I should speak a little on this subject. Amongst us we have people who have come in different attire, different dress, with different languages, different colour, but we all share the same feeling of wanting something which is good and of avoiding something that may cause suffering. Such a feeling is shared not only by us here, but by all living beings particularly human beings. I feel that this is the basis on which we should think. We all respect ourselves and try to do something to improve ourselves, or to do what would make us happy. With this sort of selfish motive sometimes we try to achieve our goal irrespective of whether the means of achieving it are correct, right or not. For example, even conflicts, say, from the level of married couples to conflicts between nations are basically caused because there is this self-interest, the egoistic feeling that you must have the best, that you must have the better things. If we think carefully and deeply we can find that all faults, all causes for bad things, are based on this feeling, this desire.

Now if you take the opposite attitude of respecting others, having compassion for others, such an attitude will not only give happiness to yourself but it also will create a better atmosphere for others, both on the smallest level of individuals or on a national level. Therefore, I believe that having a sympathetic heart, a warm heart, a kind heart, is the essence or the most important thing. Irrespective of whether you believe in a religion or not, or no matter what religion or ideology you follow, if you have this kind heart, this good heart, this feeling of respect for others—if you have such an attitude or motive, then even such a violent act as killing someone, if it is done with a really good motive, could go beyond the usual level of killing.

But on the other hand, if you have very selfish interests, very egoistic feelings, then even if you are externally preaching religion you would basically have a wrong attitude. Therefore essentially it boils down to a good heart, a sincere heart. For human society is a community in which we are interdependent; it is almost impossible to live independently of each other. Since the natural circumstances are such, it is extremely unfortunate when we have to live under suspicion or

when people try to fool one another, take advantage of one another, or try to antagonize one another. If we have to live under such conditions, then no matter what facilities we enjoy we will not have inner peace. But if we have love for others, a sense of brotherhood, if we have compassion and respect for others, then even if we are hungry we may have this warm feeling or this feeling of trust and of satisfaction at being in this human society. For in a society where we are so interdependent, where we have to depend on each other so much, it is extremely unfortunate if we lose this sense of sympathy, or this love or compassion for others. Therefore I myself personally try to practise this philosophy as much as possible and to whomever I meet I also try to convey the same message. So I have just repeated here today the usual ideas or thoughts that I have.

In today's world we do not lack educational facilities, we do not lack science and technology; what we lack is sympathy, compassion. In terms of history my lifetime is rather short, but almost since my birth there seems to be a continual war in this world and there are always conflicts and problems. All these conflicts and wars have come because we have not been able to control our minds. I have absolute belief that if we are able to develop compassion and sympathy more, then this world would be far different from what it is today. Maybe my talk or my thought is like leaning on hope, but nevertheless our very lives are based on hope. Nobody guarantees what will

happen to us tomorrow it is all based on hope. I, therefore, think that even in more deeper things, in wider things, even though it seems impossible, it is important to hope. If we were to ask the question: "Who has the responsibility?"—and if everyone says "I don't have the responsibility" and shirks it, there will be nobody taking that responsibility. We are talking about human welfare, human happiness. Therefore the responsibility for human happiness lies in mankind itself, in human beings. Are we not human beings? We definitely have responsibility. There will certainly be difficulties, it may even take several generations, but nevertheless we should be determined to struggle.

This is like the aim, our goal. Now how should we achieve this aim? Basically we must have determination, and the discouragement of believing that you will not be able to achieve something is the main cause for failure. Therefore, if you think carefully, the question is only whether you want to do it, whether you are determined to do it or not—the facilities are there and the situation is also such that one should strive towards this. In the past, even families could live independently, but today in this world, continents have to depend on one another. So under such a situation as today's world, unless we have co-operation it is almost impossible to live, to exist, even if you speak in terms of economy.

Secondly, in human society we have certain systems. Many centuries ago, when great teachers and saints taught people the truth, or the teachings for gaining

peace of mind, they had to do it on an individual basis. The situation was also such that each family, even each single person, lived quite independently. Now today, if you think deeply, whether you like it or not, the circumstances are such that we depend on each other heavily. Therefore, it is extremely clear that this kind of path should particularly be followed today, because the need for it is clearly seen. The facility or the cause or motivation for such feeling is ripe today. Also, we have a human brain—although the size of it is not very big, it can think many things, and we can do many things. If we can do so many harmful things, why can we not do something more useful, more beneficial? Therefore, there is no need for discouragement and for that discouragement is one of the worst enemies, so we must have courage.

Those of you who are here, and those who want to try and practise this, if you make an effort, some result can be achieved. But in order to guide other people, or appeal to other people you must yourself set a good example. So it is important first of all to make yourself mentally and spiritually strong and for that patience is necessary. We cannot hope to achieve such things in a short period. For this individual mental development we should be prepared to give long periods of time. There are quite a number of people who, at the beginning, expect too much, try very hard, then within a short period become completely dis-

couraged and lose all hope of achieving it. Naturally mental development cannot be achieved within a short time: we must prepare for a long, long period. This changing of your view or your thought—mental development—takes time. Even with physical illness, one pill may not cure it, one day may not be sufficient, it takes weeks, sometimes months, years. Now in the case of mental development, naturally it will take time. For example as regards to myself, it has taken many years and still I am not developed fully—only very little. Regarding mental development I am very young, but even this small experience, this development, took many years.

Therefore, my friends you who are taking a keen interest in mental development, please do not expect too much within a short period. Since we believe in rebirth the continuation of mind, we must try to achieve what is possible within this lifetime and if we cannot do it within this life, we should be prepared to keep on struggling even in our future lives. When you are trying to achieve mental development, have patience, will power, determination, courage—these are essential. In conclusion I would like to request all or you here to practise as much as possible what I have been speaking about, so that if we have the occasion to meet a second time and if we examine ourselves, we will be able to say that the level of our mental development has improved compared to that of our first meeting.