

SELFLESSNESS

A SUBTLE WAY TO SERVE



B.K. USHA

News from around the world paints a picture of widespread misery, caused by violence, poverty, and disasters. But the suffering of millions of people does not generate the response one would expect. A steady stream of news reports of unhappy events has seemingly dulled the senses of people, with the result that what used to be shocking earlier is now considered routine as long as it does not directly affect oneself or one's loved ones. Even when something does catch the attention of people and manages to elicit their concern, it is soon brushed aside by their more immediate or important priorities. Some-

one entangled in their own desires, responsibilities, and problems can hardly be expected to spare a thought for others.

This kind of an individual attitude towards those in misery has fuelled a global trend towards angrier and more divisive politics, in which 'others' are blamed for problems, and fear and scapegoating are used to offer simplistic—and often false—solutions to complex issues.

Such apathy, selfishness and disregard for others stems from ignorance of the spiritual ties that link all of us together in the human family. We are, first and foremost, spiritual beings, or souls, and the children of one father, the Supreme Soul. A person born into poverty, or another religion, or a different race, is no less a human being than we are. We all have similar hopes and aspirations, and want to live a peaceful and happy life. But we forget this basic truth and identify each other by labels of gender, nationality, race, etc. This fosters



Being compassionate is a subtle but powerful way of serving others.

feelings of 'us' and 'them', which stops us from feeling the pain of others and helping them.

But one might ask, what can an individual do for all

the people across the world who are in misery? The spiritual bonds that connect us to others are subtle, and so is the service each one of us can render to our less for-

tunate brothers and sisters. We may not be able to offer others material or legal assistance, but one thing that all of us, rich or poor, young or old, can do is to have good wishes

and compassionate feelings for others. Thoughts and feelings create vibrations, which build a corresponding atmosphere. When a sizeable number of people have

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a certain kind of thought, the power of their vibrations begins to influence the thinking of others, and this initiates change.

It is the duty of all of us who are fortunate not to have experienced the afflictions being suffered by a large part of humanity, to do all we can to reduce pain and sorrow in the world. If we are content in our personal comforts and willfully ignore what others are going through, we would be failing in our duty as members of the global human family.

Being benevolent is a subtle but powerful way of serving

others. To someone who is in sorrow, just knowing that somebody is aware of their suffering and cares about them, is a solace. Having compassionate feelings does not cost anything, and even those who are sick and infirm can be kind, as it does not require physical effort. All that is needed is a caring heart and the wish to be of help to one's fellow beings. Such thoughts and feelings eventually generate ideas and actions that alleviate the suffering of others.

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SELF COMPASSION

BEING SERIOUSLY LIGHT



AASHISH PATEL

Being seriously light starts with the heart. Our hearts are in a very delicate state because on the one hand the world is becoming increasingly violent, and on the other we have developed an immense capacity to absorb suffering, which has made our hearts almost unbearably heavy. We need to cleanse and heal our hearts, and to do this we need to take ourselves seriously, because until we take the time to understand our own suffering, we will be unable to have true compassion for others in suffering. If we continue to live with the pain in our hearts and keep absorbing more and more hurt, then all of this will be turned outwards towards others.

We hold on to deep feelings in the heart for decades. Sadness, shame, regret, all linger and weigh us down and will continue to do so until we find a way to reconcile, forgive and

release, that is, let go of it all. We need to find the roots of our sorrow and recognise how we hold on to the past within our subconscious. Within a groove in our subconscious, we not only hold the events that create pain, but also the feelings and patterns of thinking that we have developed in the face of the events, the trauma, that remains unresolved. These patterns and feelings are then triggered by the different scenes that we face in the present, prolonging our suffering.

So, first we must begin an inner dialogue with the self to discover and understand what we are really feeling. Otherwise, we either bury our head in the sand, in denial, or find ourselves trapped or just ignore and sweep our feelings under the carpet. We can only observe without judgement to deeply understand what we are truly feeling, in silence. We need to understand that we are pure consciousness, not the physical body. When we raise our consciousness to this level, not just intellectually, but through a real experience in silence, we can see not only what needs to change, but also our own goodness, and have compassion for the self. This is being spiritually awake. Being spiritually awake requires that we take responsibility for our



Being spiritually awake requires that we take responsibility for all that we experience in life.

own suffering. The ego will not allow us to take responsibility. Inner violence, confusion, waste thoughts, feelings of depletion, are all signs of a state of inner violence. This means that we cannot trust the thoughts that arise from this state of violence. We will just over-analyse, procrastinate, struggle to make decisions, and simply be unable to let go and move forward. Sometimes we may be too tired to face all this and that is okay, because at other times we will find the energy we need. Sometimes we are in denial, or we feel trapped and even if we can

see what we need to do, we are unable to do it. Knowing the truth about what needs to be done, and not being able to do that, can create a great deal of pain.

There are three ways to explore our feelings and let go.

Access the inner peace of the soul, the self, in silence, in meditation.

Begin to recognise how truly wonderful the soul is, and embrace our own goodness.

Ask ourselves really good questions, as if we were meeting ourselves for the first time. A question like, 'How long will this situation last?'

is not a good question. A good question would be 'What is the significance for me in this situation?'

Other good questions are: What am I feeling? What am I afraid of?

What am I repeatedly choosing to ignore that I need to face?

What is it that I cannot change, and that I must simply accept?

What can I let go of – the desire to control an outcome, or to be right?

What is it that I fear and why? Where there is anger, there is always fear. It could

be fear of humiliation, abandonment, rejection etc.

When we write down the answers to these kinds of questions, we can have great clarity and letting go becomes easy.

Tears may flow when we release a heavy burden, but only then is lightness possible. Four practices in a spiritual life make all of this possible. One is to meditate first thing in the morning for ten to fifteen minutes, possibly with a guided meditation to keep our thoughts in a high level of consciousness. This will change the way our day begins. After that, listen to or read words of spiritual wisdom. In the evening, join a group meditation for the power that brings.

Before sleep, take time to open our heart to the Supreme consciousness. The Divine, who is a source of unconditional benevolence, who never judges but loves and accepts us as we really are, because He is the only One who knows our whole story. In this way we surrender all the weight of the accumulated sorrow to the Divine. The help that we receive then, is incomparable.

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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

My subconscious mind is full of self-images stored as memories from the past. Some of these images are positive and inspiring. Others are limiting, tying me to a reality of myself that is old and outdated. My self-awareness influences everything I do and say. Using the power of my imagination, I can create positive images of myself as I would like to be. When I hold these not-yet-realized images in my awareness, my subconscious mind accepts them. Over time, this awareness becomes reality. Today let me create images of me at my best.

SERENE

Silent eyes and heart



ANTHONY STRANO

What are the eyes for? To enable us, in silence, to see the world with 'soul conscious' vision. Our physical eyes are very mischievous; it is far better to look at everything with the third eye. Then you see only what is useful, and the actions that

follow will benefit yourself and others.

Use your inner eye to look at others' virtues and special talents. Only the external eyes spot defects. When we see the good points in other people, they experience love and happiness. When we tell others about their specialities and virtues, they themselves realise their defects and remove them. Why insult another person? As is our vision, so too is our world. Some people have a very sweet vision, and those feelings show through their eyes and behaviour. Whatever we do outwardly can be seen by everyone.

During your silence practice, direct your third eye too at God's eyes. God for-



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gives, forgets and draws us toward Him. If someone has very weak eyesight, some quick surgery can help that person to see clearly again. In the same way, God operates on the third eye so that we can see the self, God, actions, and time. Silence is an eye spa for fast surgical operations.

If you have a generous heart, you will never have wasteful thoughts, use unnecessary words or be bombarded with extraneous noise. Introspection – which comes from silence – makes our feelings and intentions for ourselves and others good and filled with love. Others automatically sense these feelings. We do not need to move into

words. The sound from your heart travels directly to their hearts. Everything happens internally, quietly. If you apply these rules of sensory silence to yourself, you create a generous life, and others learn by example. You do not need to tell everyone. Just do good actions, motivated by humility, truth and divinity. Whatever seeds we sow, we receive the fruits accordingly. If we sow seeds that bear thorns, we cannot expect to eat mangoes. So, engage in such acts of goodness and charity that the results are of benefit not only to yourself but also to the world.

The late Anthony Strano was an author and Rajyoga teacher with the Brahma Kumaris.