

# Compassion

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## POINTS TO DEVELOP

Close relationship between compassion and morality.

Instances of moral principles/actions drawing from the roots of compassion.

Social morality also based on compassion.

Today, lack of morality can be linked to disappearance of compassion; the link should be revived.

There is no need to define morality; let man be simply compassionate.' This sentence expresses the basic essence of morality: the extent to which it relies on compassion for its definition. For when we think about it, is not that truly human feeling of compassion the basis of all morality?

Morality rests for its very meaning on the concepts of 'good' and, 'bad' where 'good' refers to all thoughts and deeds that do not aim at, or accomplish, any harm or injury or do not involve an attempt to inflict suffering on others. Thus morality (or what is not morality) is based on man's ability to understand, being able to sympathize, feel kindness and sorrow for and identify himself with the sufferings of his fellow men. 30 only compassion can give rise to moral thoughts and feelings.

If we consider all those thoughts and deeds that are truly moral in character, we will see how compassion drives morality. Depriving people of what is theirs or what must belong to them-what is called stealing-for selfish ends. taunting or insulting others through words or actions for the purpose of self-gratification, violence-expressed verbally or as acts of torture, killing, etc.-for the sake of violence contradict morality as well as an inner feeling of kindness and compassion.

Truth is indeed a controversial aspect of morality. But almost always it can be justified as a moral principle on the basis of compassion. When we talk about speaking the truth in order not to hide what, if hidden, will only prove damaging to others, we are emphasizing the ability to 'feel' for others. Again, often we purposely keep ourselves from communicating the truth as, once revealed, it may hurt someone 's feelings and sentiments. But keeping a person in the dark or denying him or her knowledge which he or she ought to have amounts to cheating another soul of its right to know that with which it has a concern. An anxious feeling to see that a person is not cheated of what is due to him or her

may make us reveal the truth ultimately. It is the same feeling of being truthful in order not to betray another person that constitutes sexual morality in any relationship. A deep-felt concern for the companion's feelings of hurt and rejection is necessary for the moral aspect to prevail.

When we talk about social morality of any kind, what comes into play is our ability to feel for the well-being of our society. A certain moral code of conduct is ultimately necessary to ensure that the society does not fall prey to degeneration of values, which would lead to rampant sufferings and ultimately chaos. It is a concern to help the society by safeguarding it from unwanted ills and malaise and ensuring its well-being that is at the root of social morality. Society's concerns are our concerns: anything capable of causing a detrimental impact on it in the short term or in course of time is ultimately bound to affect us and our children.

There is the need to realise that human beings must continue to feel compassion for the sake of themselves as individuals as well as the society. But like any other human trait, compassion ought to be continually exercised if it is to remain a dominant force. Unfortunately, in modern Society what we witness is a complete lack of kindness and Sympathy between fellow beings. One can only shake one's head and say that just like other cherished values even compassion is getting eroded in the hustle and bustle of the mechanical existence of these times. What remains is material values that look only towards immediate personal gains and in the process rid humans of whatever 'human. ness' is left in them. Morality is fast disappearing, it seems. But it need not be so if only we would tell ourselves that genuine feelings of the human heart, mainly compassion, need to survive for the betterment of the human society and mankind as a whole. After all, can humans rid themselves totally of all feelings of compassion try as hard as they may?

It is only by feeling for others' sorrows and sufferings that one can sympathies with them and help those in need. This is the underlying principle of all morality which has to survive and that too abundantly if human society is to prosper in the real sense.