



Третий международный конкурс детского творчества «Сказки Красивого Сердца»

The Great Power of Compassion

*"Compassion is the chief law of human
existence".*

(Fyodor Dostoevsky)

We live at a time of high technologies and excessive demands. The tempo of life is speeding up; the world is getting more and more competitive. Success is mostly measured by one's material or social status, therefore everyone tries to beat each other in the race for illusory happiness, getting less merciful and more selfish. I strongly believe that the only way out of the labyrinth of human delusions is to preach and practice compassion.

Compassion is defined as "a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, or in trouble", according to Webster dictionary. I like the definition of being compassionate given in my English textbook ": giving whatever necessary to meet another's needs without expecting anything in return". In my opinion, true compassion is not only the desire to help those less fortunate than ourselves, but also the understanding of our kinship with all living beings, regardless of race, nationality and religion.

In all religious traditions compassion is considered to be one of the greatest virtues. I am a Nepalese girl, brought up in the traditions of Hindu culture. I live in Russia and study in an American program based on Christian values. The school I attend is a multicultural community; among my friends and teachers there are people of different nations and confessions. Therefore, I suppose, I have all the grounds to talk about compassion from the viewpoint of different religious teachings.



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In Hinduism there are such concepts as daya, karuna, and anukampa. They convey all shades of the contents of compassion – treating each other with love, considering all living beings to be as part of one's own life, and accepting the pain and sufferings of others as your own. When I read the Scripture verse, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8), I cannot get rid of the feeling that I've already known it from Bhagavad Gita (Hindu Book of Wisdom). Once again I am convinced that the basic moral principles in all religions are love and compassion.

I was deeply touched by an inspirational parable about compassion in the Bible (Luke 10:30-36). It's about a man who was walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was robbed, severely beaten and left dying on the road. Neither a priest nor a Levite, who were passing by, helped him. When a Samaritan walked by and saw the man suffering, he felt compassion for him. He came up to him, bound his wounds, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Being compassionate is not easy. It requires certain courage and responsiveness of the heart to go to places where one meets people who are vulnerable, weak, lonely, sick. It takes much time and much work of one's mind and soul to heal those "broken hearts". In a book that my Vietnamese friend kindly lent me, I came across the statement - "Compassion is a VERB" (Thich Nhat Hanh). At first it puzzled me. Now I understand what the author meant - compassion should be expressed not only by encouraging smiles and comforting words, but also by effective, kind acts. I've found confirmation of this idea in Mahatma Gandhi's words "The simplest acts of kindness are more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer." Every year, the school I study at, the International School of Tomorrow, conducts just such a simple act of kindness. A school team, consisting of



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students and teachers, goes to an orphanage to celebrate the holidays and give them Christmas presents. This year I joined the team, and I should confess that after that visit to the orphanage, I changed some of my viewpoints. I was wrong in thinking that so little depended on me, that I couldn't do anything good for them. Everyone knows that the orphans' fate is not happy, no matter what favorable conditions are provided in the orphanage, and it was so great to see their eyes shining with joy and curiosity when we had fun activities together or simply talked. How true it is that compassion is an important part of any healing relationship.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you of what the aforementioned parable from the Bible (Luke 10:30-36) ends with. It ends with the words "Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise". Compassion is a miracle that may change our lives for the better!

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