

COMPASSION AND PASSIONS

- Dr. Jayanti Lal Jain

“I bow to Lord Mahavir who is devoid of blemishes of all passions and in whose pure soul the entire universe is mirror-like reflected”

- Acharya Samantabhadra

The basic instinct of all living beings can be termed as passions and these cause perpetual cycle of deaths and births. Lord Mahavir has preached that those, who have compassion for passions, lead a life of peace in this birth and ultimately achieve Moksha - a state of perpetual and eternal happiness. This concept of passion and compassion has been revealed by Lord Mahavir, having known the living beings of all times and places - in the state of omniscience and omnivision.

Passions - Passions characterize the life of everyone and even animals have passions of their own. All living beings display passions of likes, dislikes, anger, ego, greed, delusion, moments of happiness and sadness and so on. Generally, passions are classified into four - anger, ego, deceit and greed. These passions may arise in three ways - due to contemplation, preparation and commencement of any activity and carried through with the help of mind, words and body. Further, these passions may be of three types - one's own or supporting the passions of others or getting the passion accomplished by others. These passions sum up to 108 i.e. $4 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$. Passions also relate to violence, falsehood, stealing, possession and sex. Each of these passions can be of many types. Jain scriptures, therefore, talk of 18,000 passions and a more intricate classification of passions refer to control of 8.4 million passions under this five-fold category.

Based on the five senses (passions) of touch, taste, smell, seeing and hearing and states of body and mind, living beings are categorized into four - humans, animals and beings in hell and heaven. Depending on types of births, these are further divided into 8.4 million. As each of these types reflect different passions and hence living beings are further divided into 19750 billion. Thus, the passions reflected in these living beings are so many that it is beyond the understanding of an ordinary person.

Cause of Passions - Passions of attachment, aversion, friendship, alienation, anger, greed etc. arise from worldly causes, from circumstances relating to body, conduct, act, speech or senses. Taking the body for the soul is the root cause of all passions and miseries. With this false identification, one's ego and other passions are imprisoned in non-living objects and chained in desires of worldly or bodily affairs. Moths die due to passion for light, Deers get caught due to passion for sound, Elephants are overpowered when attracted by touch of she-elephants and Bees have passions for scent. Fishes get caught when lured by the taste of food. These beings are ruined due to their respective dominant passions.

Dynamics of passions over infinite cycle of births and deaths suggest that passions keep generating by the very nature of karmic bondage created by cycle of passions, begetting themselves due to ignorance of the nature of pure soul. The cycle of

passions is considered good or bad depending on one's relative views guided by times, areas, faiths/beliefs in systems and environment where one lives and so on. Social, economic, political and religious conditions dictate the type of good or bad passions one may have, for and against certain passions. Passions are generated temporarily and there is no absolute standard of measurement, as their interpretations are highly relative.

By wrong beliefs and repeated habit of such inclinations for passions, one becomes prey to temptations/passions and the mind wanders astray. The deluded one (wrong believer) turns his face away from the real knowledge of the self and nature, being engrossed in satisfying passions by means of senses. He wrongly believes his body to be his soul. The state of mind leads to type of passions one has and is responsible for bondage. It can make a heaven a hell and a hell, a heaven. In a dynamic manner, whatever the mind desires, it achieves. One will become whatever he wishes depending on good or bad passions. Therefore, Lord Mahavir taught how to subdue passions, conquer passions and contemplate on the supreme soul ever blissful, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent by its knowledge. This is the only unalterable and unchangeable law of the Universe.

Compassion - What we generally term as compassions in terms of kindness, forgiveness, pardon, sympathy, empathy, concern, fellow-feelings, pity, mercy, sorrow for sufferings of another, tolerance, non-violence, appreciation of others views, assistance to others in case of man-made or natural disaster or tragedies etc. are not real compassions as these have temporary effects and do not provide a lasting solution to human problems. These have soothing impact temporarily but do not cure for good. Suppose one provides food to a hungry person, it solves only that day's problem. What next? Similarly, some medical assistance given to an injured person may help him but does not insure him against death or next injury. If one tolerates wrong beliefs of someone, it does not help either as both are under delusion. The impact will be that both will suffer from infinite cycle of births and deaths. Briefly stated, this concept of compassion as is commonly understood, has no absolute standard measurement to judge whether it is good or beneficial ultimately and hence, becomes a relative concept and is not an absolute one. At best, it is nice and good to be compassionate and this has only temporary relevance.

There are innumerable ways in which one can control/overpower passions temporarily. Some ways are indicated below to overcome them in our daily life.

1. If one has not done any wrong to others, there is no harm in seeking forgiveness or forgetting the same as such passion is of no consequence.
2. If one has done harm to others, it is proper to seek forgiveness and there need not be any hesitation for the same.
3. If the other person has hurt/done harm to me, why should I take the law into my hands and take revenge. He will be punished for his misdeeds either in this life or next.
4. The other person has only hurt me or my feelings. He could have done or could do greater harm to me and better to forget about it.
5. In any pursuit of excellence/welfare/benevolence act, there will always be hurdles. If seeking forgiveness results in removal of hurdles, there can be no better measure.

6. If one takes revenge of the act in the same manner (tit for tat policy), there is no difference between good people and bad people. Good people will also become bad in the process. Control of such passion helps in retaining good conduct and wisdom.
7. The Doctor's job is to administer medicine if someone takes to poison. If the patient dies, the Doctor does not take poison himself and dies. In the same way, while we may want others to be good, but if the other person does not improve, it is not our concern.
8. It does not matter if the other person calls a diamond as a piece of glass. It remains diamond. While controlling passions, if the other person considers him as coward, it is the wrong perception of the other person.
9. Blinded by feeling of anger, revenge, etc., the person has destroyed himself mentally and spiritually, why to take action to aggravate his problem and destroy him further and hence better to forget about such passions.
10. As per the theory of karma, all worldly activities are regulated by previous *karmas* and there is no escape from it except spiritual upliftment. Therefore, it is nice to lift up oneself spiritually and attain salvation by forgetting and forgiving and annihilating *karmas* rather fight *karmas* and thereby generate more *karmas* and prolong worldly existence.

Often, it is easier to talk of overcoming passions but difficult to do so. This experience or saying seems to be true because there are really no ways and means to control them. A dose of medicine has to be powerful enough to cure a person. Unless a person develops an attitude/understanding of marvelous and powerful nature of pure soul, it is not possible to control passions for good. This is the only way to get rid of passions eternally.

Have compassion for passions. View our passions with abundant discretion. All beings have been afflicted with passions for infinite times and lives. Have compassion for the self. A person who has a divine view of oneself that the God lies within himself, has potential to transform himself to that state of divine existence. The moment a person views oneself as Bhagwan, it is a natural corollary that all other beings are also the same. With this realization, one gradually builds foundations of compassions for others. The passions of violence, untruthfulness, stealing, amassing wealth at the cost of others, sexual passions and so on will wither at once or slowly depending on the extent of realization of one's eternal nature. One has suffered tremendously from infinite times due to lack of compassion and will continue to do so unless develops compassion. Worldly life is characterized by passions, while the path to Moksha is full of compassion for self and all fellow beings. The concept of pure soul as taught by Lord Mahavir treats all beings as divine and the same.

Compassion means that passions are not the objectives in themselves and hence, better to ignore them, overpower or control them by adopting a sublime path of Moksha, and such compassion will ensure ultimate and everlasting happiness. Be indifferent to passions, and understand their impact on one's present life and next ones. Compassion implies focusing automatically on one's own real self. It is important to know that these passions are absent in the pure soul and hence, one loses interest in passions. Passions are like the flow of river which prevents crossing the same. Knowledge of pure soul dries up this river and thereby making crossing the river

easier. Thus, by controlling internal passions, the external activities of mind, speech and body are automatically controlled.

The self can be realized only by completely turning the back on passions, temptations and snares in our present existence. The worldly affairs have to be viewed as transient, unstable and fleeting. The wise man will remain indifferent to powerful cravings and compulsions of passions. Compassion aims at rejecting earthly passion of joys and sorrows and getting inward with a vision to realize the pure soul. This vision helps in transcending the bondage of karmas and the infirmities of body, senses and mind. Living with visions of pure soul is to be in Light House, while living with passions is like that of living in darkness. Once a person identifies himself with the pure soul, disengaging the mind from temporal viewpoint and worldly pleasures, thus conquering all foe-passions, the relative sentiments, likes and dislikes, then one has no friend or foe. The soul is non-material, intangible, and imperceptible to even human senses or by any advanced scientific, mechanical or digital contrivance. The pure soul has neither sex or senses or roaming mind. Once a person realizes to be a pure soul, one is conscious that sweet, hard or bitter words, friendly or inimical treatment are all due to the temporal desires and relations and consequent passions.

Thus, compassion provides consolation to an afflicted mind and offers an inspiring vision of divine life to all seekers of truth and delights the hearts of aspirant souls. There will be no ill-will or hatred towards anyone, but only universal brotherhood and universal peace.

About Dr. Jayanti Lal Jain: Dr. Jain currently serves as Director, Center of Philosophical Sciences, Mangalayatan University at Aligarh, India. He is a very learned Jain scholar giving daily Pravachans, covering multiple aspects of Jain studies, delivering key note speeches for many Jain programs or special auspicious events for the last 25 years. Dr. Jain holds Ph. D in Economics from Oklahoma State University, USA and Ph. D in Jainology from University of Madras, Chennai. He was Professor Emeritus at Department of Jainology, University of Madras. He worked at Indian Bank, Chennai as Chief Economic Advisor/ General Manager. Dr Jain has published many articles on Jain Philosophy and on Economics, Banking and Finance. His books on 'Pure Soul and its Infinite Treasure', 'Acharya Kundakund and Jain Philosophy' have been published by University of Madras. He has delivered many special lectures in India and abroad and has considerable teaching experience.