

Passion, Dispassion, and Compassion

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I feel both proud as well as humbled by the invitation extended to me to deliver the Besant Lecture as part of the 140th International Convention of the Theosophical Society.

Proud, since I perhaps happen to be the only sitting Judge of the Madras High Court, in independent India, to have ever been invited to deliver the Besant Lecture. I am aware that great lawyers like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Nani Palkhivala, Soli Sorabji, Fali Nariman and Ashok Desai; and great Justices like Venkatachalaiah, Jeevan Reddy, Dharmadhikari and J. S. Verma have delivered the Besant Lectures in the past, but no Judge of the Madras High Court appears to have been ever invited to deliver the Besant Lecture, at least from 1950 till date. This is despite the fact that it was Sir S. Subramania Iyer, a Judge of the Madras High Court, who was instrumental in incorporating the Theosophical Society in 1905 and of which he became the Vice-President in 1907. Justice Subramania Iyer's contribution was unique, since he served the Society as its lawyer, before he went

on to become a judge. At the peak of his judicial career as the Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, he relinquished office, citing ill health. Apart from serving the Theosophical Society as its lawyer, he also served the Society by volunteering to be a witness in the famous child custody case, in the Court he presided over for more than twelve years. Towards his last days, Subramania Iyer lived the life of a saint with no more possessions than a pair of clothes and a *dhand* (staff) in his hand.

We, in this part of the world, believe that the number 108 is mystical. Therefore, in the Society where Justice Subramania Iyer was the Vice-President in 1907, I, his namesake Justice Ramasubramanian, have come to deliver the Besant Lecture after 108 years. This is the reason why I feel proud.

The reason why I feel humbled is that this is the soil on which the seeds of great philosophical thoughts of the 20th century were sown. This is the land where destiny demonstrated that its ways are always inscrutable. When the Theosophical Society anointed Jiddu

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Krishnamurti as a World Teacher via the Order of the Star in the East, he denounced the claim that he was a Messiah. People thought that Annie Besant's predictions about Mr Krishnamurti being a Messiah went wrong. But, he later turned out to be one of the most celebrated philosophers of the 20th century, proving Annie Besant right and his own disclaimer wrong. Therefore, I feel humbled to have been invited to deliver the Besant Lecture.

Dear friends, I do not know how you chose 'Compassion and Universal Responsibility' as the central theme of the 140th Convention. The recent monsoon and the floods that devastated Chennai about three weeks ago, brought to the fore the compassionate face of this city and the universal responsibility that youngsters assumed to themselves to save the city. As soon as the floodwaters abated, we realized that compassion had not completely drained out of the hearts of the people of Chennai. Therefore, I feel that the central theme of this Convention was perhaps dictated from above, by the same forces that dictated many things to Madame H. P. Blavatsky, Col H. S. Olcott, and C. W. Leadbeater. Otherwise, the choice of the theme could not have happened by mere coincidence.

There is also another coincidence. On 13 May 2015, Pope Francis marked the second anniversary of his election as pontiff by declaring 2016 as an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. A jubilee year, rooted in the Old Testament, is a special year called by the Holy Father

for remission of sins and universal pardon. Since the year 1300, the Church has declared jubilee years every 25 or 50 years. The jubilee year traditionally starts with the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, followed by the opening of the Holy Doors of the other three major basilicas in Rome: St Mary Major, St Paul Outside the Walls, and St John Lateran, as well as the holy doors of other basilicas around the world. The opening of the doors signifies God opening a new pathway to salvation, mercy, and grace. Therefore, the central theme you have chosen for this International Convention appears to be most appropriate.

The topic that I have chosen for this lecture is 'Passion, Dispassion, and Compassion'. While passion and compassion are attributes of *manas* (the mind), dispassion is an attribute of *buddhi*, the intellect. But, fortunately or unfortunately, it is the mind that either binds or liberates. This is why the Upanishads declared *manayeva manushyānām kāranam bandhamokshayoh* — the mind is the root cause for both bondage as well as salvation. When *buddhi*, the intellect, reigns supreme having absolute control over the mind, an ordinary emotion which takes the form of passion gains *viswarupam* (sublime form) to become compassion. In other words, it is dispassion, the Sanskrit equivalent of which is *vairāgya*, that transforms passion into compassion. This, in essence, is the connecting thread between passion, dispassion and compassion, which is why,

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I chose this topic to share a few of my thoughts. In a way, it can be stated that the two great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, were composed by sages who were known for their *vairāgya*, or dispassion. But they composed the epics in moments when they were overwhelmed by passion at the sufferings of other creatures, and when such passion transcended the normal emotional upheaval to one of compassion.

Most of you may be aware of the story as to how Valmiki composed the Ramayana. When Valmiki and his disciple Bharadwaja arrived at Tāmasa Teertham on the banks of the river Ganga, they saw a pair of *krauñcha* birds making love. Suddenly, a hunter appeared from nowhere and shot down the male. The great sage Valmiki, who had already renounced the world and was fully conscious of the inevitable cycle of birth and death through which every creature has to go, was suddenly overwhelmed by sorrow upon seeing the plight of the female bird. Overcome by passion, he said:

*mā nishāda pratishthām tvam agamah
śāśvateeh samāh
yat krauñcha mithunāt ekam avadheeh
kāma mohitam*

Scholars attribute three different types of meaning to this utterance of Valmiki. The literal meaning of this verse is:

‘O! ill-fated hunter, you have killed a bird when it was in lustful passion with its mate,

Therefore, you may not attain immortal life.

After making this utterance, sage Valmiki regained his composure and wondered how he could have been overcome by passion. He understood that he had uttered those words out of sorrow. But immediately, he also realized that this utterance was poetic, composed in a particular metre and also capable of giving an opposite meaning. Therefore, he told his disciple, *śokārtasya pravṛtto me śloko bhavatu na anyathā* (let this utterance be treated not as a curse, but as a sloka).

Thus, it is clear that the great epic Ramayana was born when a renunciate, who was supposed to be dispassionate, was overcome by passion at the sight of the suffering of a pair of birds. The passion ultimately transformed itself into compassion and a great epic was born.

Similarly, Mahabharata, composed by Krishna Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, was narrated by his student Vaiśampāyana immediately after a huge snake sacrifice organized by Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, was brought to a halt by a young lad named Āstika. The passion for revenge of Janamejaya had to be neutralised by Āstika, a lad of immeasurable compassion and *vairāgya*.

Interestingly, Veda Vyāsa did not attain fulfilment, even after codifying the Vedas into four, and composing the fifth Veda, the Mahabharata (*bhāratah pañchamo vedah*). Thus Vyāsa is said to have reached the banks of the river Saraswati in a perturbed state of mind.

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*tathāpi batame daihyo hyāthmā cha
ivāthmanā vibhuh
asampanna ivābhāti brahmavarchasya
sattamah*

Vyasa said to himself: 'Though I am fully equipped with everything that is prescribed by the Vedas, I feel incomplete and dissatisfied.'

It is out of this emotion that Srimad Bhāgavatam was born. Therefore, even those who have renounced the world and have attained a state of *vairāgya*, or dispassion, are at times moved by passion, which assumes a universal character, thereby becoming compassion. Therefore, passion, dispassion, and compassion constitute the three legs of a tripod on which our lives are mounted.

The words 'dispassion' and 'compassion' have as their root the word 'passion', though they convey emotions of the opposite nature. The word 'passion' has its origin in the Latin *patoir*, whose literal meaning is 'suffer'. This is why in Christian theology 'passion' is used to indicate the crucifixion, pain, suffering, or agony of Jesus Christ.

In religion, your passion is always measured by the amount of pain or suffering that you are able to take upon yourself. Take the case of Abraham from the Old Testament. The Lord himself declared Abraham to be a prophet. But, Abraham was ordained by the Lord to sacrifice his own son, Isaac. According to the Old Testament, Isaac was born to Abraham when he was 100 years of age through his wife Sarah, who was also old. Abraham's act is celebrated as holy from

the theological point of view, though it meant pain and suffering to him.

But, in the modern world, 'passion' does not denote pain and suffering alone. It is defined as an intense desire for something, or a very powerful feeling. Robert J. Vallerand, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Quebec, Montreal, did extensive research on passion and proposed a Dualistic Model of Passion for activities. His research showed that a large percentage of people have passion for a variety of activities. He classified such passion into two types, namely, Harmonious Passion and Obsessive Passion. Harmonious passion is one where the person controls his favourite activity. Obsessive passion is one where the favourite activity controls the person. For instance, if I am passionate about tennis and devote one hour in the morning for playing it, it is harmonious. But, once I get addicted to it and cannot resist the temptation to play on and on unmindful of my regular work schedule, it becomes obsessive.

What modern psychology has categorized as harmonious passion and obsessive passion is not something new to the world of religion and spirituality. We know that passion is born out of desire and it leads to attachment. When someone asked a guru whether it is good to have attachment, the guru narrated a short parable. Mulla Nasruddin was on a horse. The horse went around the same place again and again. When people asked him where he was going, Nasruddin replied: 'I do not know. Ask the horse.'

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Great teachers say that our desires should be like horses. We must be in a position to mount or dismount the horse when we want. Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa gave a wonderful narrative to explain this. While standing on the banks of a river, a man saw a black woollen blanket floating in the water. He jumped into the river and caught hold of it. When he attempted to swim to the banks, he felt that the woollen blanket was pulling him in the opposite direction. Terrified by this, the man attempted to discard it. But, then he realized that though he was not holding on to the blanket, it was holding on to him. A closer look revealed that it was not a woollen blanket, but a bear.

Paramahansa says that, to begin with, we jump into the river of samsāra and catch hold of the blanket of desire. Eventually, we do not possess it, but we are possessed by it. When we are in control of our desires, with an ability to discard them as and when we please, we are said to have harmonious passion. But, when desires take control of us, we suffer from obsessive passion.

Interestingly, the word ‘passion’ is synonymous with the word ‘rage’. The Sanskrit equivalent of the word ‘passion’ is ‘rāga’. What is ‘rāga’ in Sanskrit is ‘rage’ in English. In other words, both Sanskrit and English have similar words to describe the emotion of passion.

Passion is born out of desire that leads to attachment. The state of desirelessness, or non-attachment, is known as dispassion. The Sanskrit equivalent of the

word ‘dispassion’ is *vairāgya*. All the religions of the world accept the fact that desire leads to attachment and attachment leads to sorrow. The great Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar proclaimed, ‘Once one’s attachment to an object is removed, the pain and suffering that is likely to arise out of that object is also removed.’ (*Thirukkural* 341, under the chapter named ‘Turavu’, or ‘Renunciation’)

Therefore, the oriental religions advocate *vairāgya*, or detachment, as the panacea for the ill of sorrow. The difficulty with *vairāgya* is that detachment, or non-attachment, is a disincentive to action or karma. The word *kāma* (desire) is only one letter short of the word ‘karma’ (action). The letter ‘r’ probably stands for *rāga*, which induces all human beings to achieve their *kāma* through karma.

In order to clear the doubt about the relationship between action and attachment, the *Bhagavadgītā* advocated a love for action, but a detachment towards the fruits of action, by proclaiming, *karmanyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadāchana*. If you carefully look at the background from which the *Bhagavadgītā* emerged, you may see that Arjuna, the greatest archer of all times, who had fought many a battle before Kurukshetra, and who never hesitated to kill fellow human beings on the battlefield, suffered from delusion, in a state of mind known as *vishāda yoga*. This was actually born out of his attachment to his own kith and kin. Since the enemy army was comprised of his cousins, teachers, grand-uncles, maternal uncles and nephews,

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he was overcome by confusion. But, if the enemy army was not comprised of relatives, would he have refused to fight? How did Arjuna, a great warrior, suddenly become a non-violent mendicant? After all, Emperor Ashoka faced the same dilemma at the battlefield. But, Ashoka's predicament was not born out of passion or attachment. It was born out of compassion that eventually led to *vairāgya*, or dispassion.

In the compilation of his famous lectures on *Bhagavadgītā*, the celebrated āchārya and *karmayogi* Vinoba Bhave narrates an interesting parable. Once there was a judge who had already given death sentences to hundreds of culprits during the course of his usual judgments. People thought he was wooden-hearted, but he considered himself a typical *karmayogi*. One day, the police brought a culprit into his court. Unfortunately, the culprit happened to be the judge's own son. Immediately, the judge began what we can term as 'judge *vishāda yoga*'. He started questioning the rationale of giving capital punishment. He questioned how a civilized society can impose the death sentence and how the death sentence can enable a culprit to rectify and improve himself? It then became clear that what prevented the judge from pronouncing the death penalty was not his sudden transformation to the path of ahimsa, but his attachment to his own son. The case of that judge was similar to that of Arjuna.

Thus, passion born out of desire, leads to attachment. Attachment leads to con-

fusion and engulfs one in sorrow. This is why the Indian scriptures advocated *vairāgya*, a sense of detachment, which we can term as dispassion.

The Hindu shastras speak about two types of *vairāgya*: *prasava vairāgya* and *śmaśāna vairāgya*. The first is the detachment that a woman develops towards marital love while undergoing labour pain. The second is the detachment that one develops in a crematorium after performing the last rites to one's near and dear. But, these *vairāgya*-s remain short-lived and are forgotten in a matter of hours, days or months.

The great siddha Thirumoolar said that the moment life goes out of the body, friends and relatives assemble and wail over the body, and the name with which the deceased person was called also goes. Mr/Ms/Mrs so-and-so, is no longer identified by that name, but identified only as a corpse. It is taken to the crematorium, burnt to ashes, and the people who accompanied it take a bath, and sooner or later forget the person, his memories, and also the *vairāgya* they gained temporarily at that moment. Therefore, our scriptures advocate *vairāgya* as a tool to overcome sorrow.

The difficulty with detachment is that it serves as a disincentive to work. Without desire and attachment, there is neither the passion nor the motivation to work. It is this dilemma that pushes people to the extremes.

Desire and attachment act as the prime movers for action, and action is inevitable

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to sustain the world. Thus all oriental religions advocated a desire of a different nature, different dimension, different force, and different type, which is actually compassion.

The story of creation and the answer to the questions, 'How did the world come into existence?' and 'Where did it come from?' can be found in a Vedic hymn, the English translation of which as presented by Swami Vivekananda, goes as follows:

Then there was neither aught nor naught,
nor air, nor sky beyond.
What covered all? Where rested all?
Nor death was then, nor deathlessness,
nor change of night and day.
Now first arose desire, the primal germ
of mind.
Sages, searching in their heart by wisdom,
found the bond
Between existence and non-existence.

Therefore, it is clear that the Vedas, which are considered to be the treasure-house of knowledge, declare that the universe came into existence from out of a desire. This desire of the cosmic consciousness is completely different from the desire that you and I possess. It is this desire which takes the form of compassion.

That takes us to the next question: 'What is compassion?' Is it simply a sense of sympathy or caring for the person suffering? Is it simply a warmth of heart towards the person before you, or a sharp clarity of recognition of their needs and pain? No, it is not. Compassion is a sustained and practical determination to

do whatever is possible and necessary to help alleviate the sufferings of others.

In 'Śānti Parva', the 12th canto of the Mahabharata, Yudhishtira asks Bhishma to tell him by what condition of mind could one kill his grief when he loses his riches, his wife, son, or father. Bhishma narrates the conversation that took place between a king named Senajit and a man of wisdom who visited his court. Senajit was grief-stricken due to the death of his son. The man of wisdom asked Senajit:

Why are you stupefied? You are yourself an object of grief, and why do you grieve for others? A few days hence others will grieve for you and in their turn, they will be grieved for by others still.

Upon hearing these words, king Senajit asked:

What is that intelligence, what that penance, O learned man, what that concentration of mind, what that knowledge, and what that learning, by gaining which you do not give way to grief?

Then, the person of wisdom replies:

Grief is the child of the disease created by desire. Happiness again comes when the disease of desire is cured. From joy originates sorrow, and sorrow comes again and again. Sorrow comes after joy, and joy after sorrow. The joys and sorrows of human beings are revolving on a wheel. Friends are not the root of one's happiness. Enemies are not the root of one's misery. Wisdom cannot bring on wealth; wealth cannot give happiness. Intelligence cannot

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give wealth, nor is stupidity the cause of poverty. Only a wise man, and none else, understands the order of the world. If objects of desire are renounced, they become sources of happiness. The man who follows objects of desire is ruined in that pursuit. When a person withdraws all his desires like a tortoise withdrawing all its limbs, then its soul, which is self-luminous, can see itself. Renouncing both truth and falsehood, grief and joy, fear and courage, the agreeable and the disagreeable, you may acquire equanimity of soul.

But even a man of wisdom cannot be devoid of compassion. In Buddhism, Avalokiteshvara is called the Buddha of Compassion. He is often represented in Tibetan iconography as having a thousand eyes that see the pain in all corners of the universe to extend his help. The goal of every Buddhist is to attain Buddhahood. Shantideva, a Buddhist teacher, talks about how one can attain Buddhahood:

What need is there to say more?
The childish work for their own benefit,
The Buddhas work for the benefit of
others;
Just look at the difference between them.
If I do not exchange my happiness
For the suffering of others,
I shall not attain the state of Buddhahood,
And even in samsara, I shall have no
real joy.

Asanga was one of the most famous Indian Buddhist saints, who lived in the fourth century. He went to the mountains to do a solitary retreat, concentrating all

his meditation practice on the Buddha Maitreya, in the fervent hope that he would be blessed with a vision of this Buddha and receive teachings from him. For six years Asanga did not even have one auspicious dream. He was disheartened and left his hermitage. On the way back home, he saw a man rubbing an enormous iron bar with a strip of silk. When Asanga asked him what he was doing, he said, 'I'm going to make a needle out of this iron bar.' Asanga was astounded by the trouble people were prepared to give themselves over things that are totally absurd. Therefore, he returned to his retreat.

Another three years went by, still without the slightest sign from the Buddha Maitreya. So he left again, and soon came to a bend in the road where there was a huge rock. At the foot of the rock was a man busily rubbing it with a feather soaked in water. When asked about what he was doing, he said, 'This rock is stopping the sun from shining on my house, so I'm trying to get rid of it.' Asanga was amazed at the man's indefatigable energy, and ashamed at his own lack of dedication. So he returned to his retreat.

Three more years passed, and still he had not even had a single good dream. He decided, once and for all, that it was hopeless, and he left his retreat for good. On the way, he came across a dog lying by the side of the road. It had only its front legs, and the whole of the lower part of its body was rotting and covered with maggots. Asanga was overwhelmed

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with a vivid and unbearable feeling of compassion. He cut a piece of flesh off his own body and gave it to the dog to eat. Then he bent down to take off the maggots that were consuming the dog's body. But he suddenly thought he might hurt them if he tried to pull them out with his fingers, and realized that the only way to remove them would be by his tongue. Asanga knelt on the ground, and looking at the horrible festering, writhing mass, closed his eyes. He leaned closer and put out his tongue. The next thing he knew, his tongue was touching the ground. He opened his eyes and looked up. The dog was gone; there in its place was the Buddha Maitreya, ringed by a shimmering aura of light. Asanga asked Maitreya as to why he did not show mercy on him for such a long time. Maitreya replied:

It is not correct to say that I never appeared before you. I was with you all the time, but your negative karma and obscurations prevented you from seeing me. Your twelve years of practice dissolved them slightly so that you were at last able to see the dog. Then, thanks to your genuine and heartfelt compassion, all those obscurations were completely swept away and you can see me before you with your very own eyes. If you don't believe that this is what happened, put me on your shoulder and try and see if anyone else can see me.

Asanga put Maitreya on his right shoulder and went to the market place, where he began to ask everyone: 'What have I got on my shoulder?' 'Nothing',

most people said, and hurried on. Only one old woman, whose karma was slightly purified, answered: 'You've got the rotting corpse of an old dog on your shoulder, that's all.' Thus Asanga understood the boundless power of compassion that purified and transformed his karma, and made him a vessel fit to receive the vision and instruction of Maitreya. It is said that Buddha Maitreya, then took Asanga to a heavenly realm, and gave him many sublime teachings that are among the most important in the whole of Buddhism.

While talking about compassion, we must understand that it is far greater and nobler than pity. Pity has its roots in fear, and a sense of arrogance and condescension, sometimes even a smug feeling of 'I'm glad it's not me'. As Stephen Levine says: 'When your fear touches someone's pain it becomes pity; when your love touches someone's pain, it becomes compassion.' To train in compassion, then, is to know all beings are the same and suffer in similar ways, to honour all those who suffer, and to know you are neither separate from nor superior to anyone.

Mother Teresa said:

We all long for heaven where God is, but we have it in our power to be in heaven with him at this very moment. But, being happy with him now means:

Loving as He loves,
helping as He helps,
giving as He gives,
serving as He serves,
rescuing as He rescues,

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being with him for all the twenty four hours,
touching him in his distressing disguise.

A Gift for God

The Sanskrit equivalent of the word compassion is *daya*. The Śāndilyopanishad defines compassion or *daya* as *dayānāma sarva bhuteshu sarvatra anugrahaḥ*. *Daya* means compassion towards every object, every creature present everywhere. Since compassion is something that transcends *kāla*, *desa*, *vartamānam* — place, time, object, and action — it is nothing but love that is universal in nature.

We always identify the heart as the organ that melts to the sufferings of others. The Sanskrit equivalent of the word ‘heart’ is *hr̥daya*, which has as its root, the word *daya*. The person who is good-hearted is identified as *sahr̥daya*. Therefore, a person who has no compassion is universally termed as heartless.

Today, we are driven by a passion to be successful in life. But after succeeding, we realize that there is no fulfilment. Then we start making an introspection. I shall give you a real-life example. Some of the world’s most successful financiers met in 1923 at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Present were the president of the largest independent steel company, the president of the largest utility company, the greatest wheat speculator, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, a member of the cabinet of the President of the USA, the greatest bear on Wall Street, the president of the Bank of International Settlements, and the head of the world’s greatest monopoly.

These eight men together controlled more wealth than the US treasury. Success stories of these men had featured in magazines and journals for many years. But all of them had something in common towards the end of their lives. Charles Schwab, president of the steel company lived the last years of his life on borrowed money and died a broken man. Arthur Cutten, the greatest speculator died abroad insolvent. Richard Whitney, President of the New York Stock Exchange served a term in Sing Sing prison. Albert Fall, member of the US President’s cabinet was pardoned from prison to die at home. Jessie Livermore, the greatest bear on Wall Street, Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlements and Ivan Krueger, head of the world’s largest monopoly, all committed suicide. Thus seven out of those eight successful men ended their lives in tragedy and sorrow. So, of what use their successful career? This is why Adi Sankara commanded us to ask ourselves a question, *tatah kim?* So what? Of what use my money, my Mercedes car, my beach villa, my Swiss bank account, my turnover, my lifetime achievement award, my Forbes 20?

Dear friends, I came across a poem whose author’s name is not known. With due apologies to its author for infringing on his copyright, it reads:

Ready or not, someday it will all come to
an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes,
hours, or days.

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All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.
Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.
So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end.
It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.
Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.
So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?
What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave.
What will matter is not your success, but your significance.
What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.
What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged

others to emulate your example.
What will matter is not your competence, but your character.
What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.
What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.
Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.
We make a living by what we earn; but we make a life by what we give.

Dear Theosophists, to summarize, passion which is born out of emotion and is an attribute of the mind, if channeled properly, can be converted into Bhakti Yoga. Dispassion, or *vairāgya*, if consecrated as the *peetha* or foundation of all our activities, we may become *karmayogi*-s. But, if we have eyes that well up with tears and a heart that melts at the sufferings of all creatures, living or dead, animate or inanimate, we might possibly have reached the state of Gnana Yoga. This is how I look at passion, dispassion, and compassion. ✧

Compassion in its higher aspects ascends from general kindness, through tenderness in protection and guidance, to the noble heights of passionate sympathy.

G. S. Arundale