Arthur Schopenhauer and East: Compassion as the Basis of Ethics

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Abstract:
The basis of this paper was to create a new ethics statement using mixed culture of East and West philosophy about compassion. The materials I have used include some parts of the following works: books of Arthur Schopenhauer, Vedas, Confucian literature, Buddhist and also some books about Islam philosophy. The method which I have improved to explain the main idea about compassion is describe this idea not only in separate order, but also showing the long term connection this idea between different cultures. My overall approach was to remove the illusory barrier between different philosophical schools and showing the new concept of compassion. Upon completion of the assignment I found that the new concept of compassion is - a daily phenomenon which is working absolutely directly, independent of any other considerations participate primarily in the suffering of others, and through it in the prevention or termination of this misery, what, in the latter end and is all the satisfaction and well being and happiness of all. Exclusively compassion is the real basis of all true justice and humanity.

Keywords: compassion, humanity, Arthur Schopenhauer, philosophy, East and West

Introduction

Compassion is the most subtle understanding. Only a man is capable for this feeling. Compassionate person should not worry about the nonsense, which is occurring daily life. Only upon this condition, indirectly, you can help your energy of compassion to accumulate, to crystallize, to become stronger and go up together with meditation. Then on the day of happiness you will be filled with the light and you will have at least one friend - compassion. Your life will change immediately, because now you have such of wealth, which can bring happiness to the whole world (Compassion: The Ultimate Flowering of Love, 9).

For the East and West history of philosophy compassion has been a major factor in an individual's moral life and in the process of self-fulfillment. Arthur Schopenhauer was a great thinker who had wide understanding of compassion. He was one of the first Western philosophers who seriously study Indian philosophy. Schopenhauer was interested in the Upanishads, late Vedic writings. He also was familiar with Buddhism and Confucianism.

Idea of Compassion in Schopenhauer's Ethics

Arthur Schopenhauer was a philosopher who rejected many principles of classical philosophical traditions, especially the idea that morality should be formed on the basis of reasonableness. The basic idea of a thinker was expressed in the title of his main works "The World as Will and Representation". It is associated with the difference between two worlds. The first the space-time domain of phenomena, or representations, and the second a special sphere of will which does not correlated with space and time, which is unchangeable, which is identical to itself and free from the forms. Schopenhauer considers reality only one of these worlds mysterious, incomprehensible world of human thought of will, which one he understands as "a blind will to live," irrational "desire" that pervades everything, including man. Changing in "human level" will lead to life motives of individual behavior, such as selfishness, anger, but also compassion.

"**There are only three fundamental springs of human conduct, and all possible motives arise from one or other of these. They are:**

(a) Egoism; which desires the weal of the self, and is limitless.
(b) Malice; which desires the woe of others, and may develop to the utmost cruelty.
(c) Compassion; which desires the weal of others, and may rise to nobleness and magnanimity.

Every human act is referable to one of these springs; although two of them may work together". (The basis of Morality,171-172)

Last point compassion forms the source of morality. Arthur Schopenhauer argues that compassion contains certain mystical elements.

".....compassion is stirred within me, by another's pain, then his weal and woe go straight to my heart, exactly in the same way, if not always to the same degree, as otherwise I feel only my own..... It is in fact, the great mystery of Ethics, its original phenomenon, and the boundary stone, past which only transcendental speculation may dare to take a step"(The basis of Morality, 170).

The task of personality to win selfish settings that encourage his will.

Schopenhauer considers human being as an inescapable tragedy rooted in the general character of the being of the world and society. Eternal unconscious desire, constitutes the essence of the will, finds its maximum expression of man. Obsessed with the desires and aspirations, man is doomed to suffering, daily life is experienced as devoid of comforting prospects pointless vanity, joy is reduced only to the temporary absence of suffering, to be followed by a new pain or boredom. True happiness is unattainable for the individual life, as well as for the history, which ruled by a fatal case, selfishness, stupidity and malice. Our ethical goal is to give up desires and abolish the will to live and so get rid of the source of suffering. Schopenhauer thinks that a sense of compassion is formed the basis of the main virtues of mankind: justice and loving kindness.

"....I put two virtues; the one, justice, and the other, loving-kindness; and I name them cardinal virtues, since from them all others not only in fact proceed, but also may be theoretically derived. Both have their root in natural Compassion. And this Compassion is an undeniable fact of human consciousness, is an essential part of it, and does not depend on assumptions, conceptions, religions, dogmas, myths, training, and education" (The basis of Morality, 177).

The moral meaning of life is revealed through compassion, which liberates man from the burden of caring for their own lives and highlights the care for others. Moral basis of human behavior consist two pillars: ascetical attitude towards the self and the altruistic attitude toward others. As a result of this compliance should be an exemption from affiliation meaningless "will to live", elimination of selfishness and achieving a kind of irreligious "holiness".

Indian philosophy and Compassion

Indian Philosophy is not limited to a simple accentuation on the spirit of true religion. This philosophy also gives us the codex of morality. We have to notice that, without this the ideal of morality would be unreliable leader. All form into behavior, where passions are controlled and dominated by the mind, where there is self-transcendence, understood as liberation from the limitations of egoistic personality, where we are creating; because we are all involved in the implementation of the Divine Plan all of these forms are virtues, but their opposites to vice. Kindness and compassion for whole Earth is the main feature of Indian ethics.

There are sources of Hindu thought which inspired men and women to follow the ideals of compassion and nonviolence. The rishis who revealed the principles of dharma or divine law in Hindu scripture knew full well the potential for human suffering and the path which could avert it.

To them a one spiritual power flowed in and through all things in this universe, animate and inanimate, conferring existence of its presence. To them life was a coherent process leading all souls without an exception to enlightenment, and no violence could be carried to the higher reaches of that ascent (https://www.himalayanacademy.com).

If you ask to describe the idea of compassion through the Indian Philosophy only with one idea, it definitely will the next one: "**May all beings regard me with the eye of a friend. May I regard all beings with the eye of a friend**" (The Texts of the White Yajurveda, 39).

But this idea is not able to show us the whole picture. Based on this we will analyze the idea of compassion through the several schools of Indian philosophy, such as Hinduism, Jaihinism and Buddhism.

Hinduism has its roots in the Vedic civilization that is why it is called the oldest world religion. The word Hindu is derived from the Indo-Aryan word Sindhu, the Indo-Aryan name for the Indus River in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent. According to Gavin Flood, **"The actual term 'Hindu' first occurs to a Persian geographical term with the people who lived beyond the river Indus"**. (https://en.wikipedia.org)

The followers of Hinduism believe that we have positive human qualities which lead soul closer to God and away from Evil. There qualities are: Daya (compassion), Sat (truth), Santokh (contentment), Nimrata (humility) and Pyaar (love).

Daya is a Sanskrit term with the meaning "mercy", "compassion" and "desire to help all those who suffer". In Indian religion Daya is one of the "divine qualities" and one of the main virtues. Daya means to feel and understand the pain and suffering of other living beings as your own. Anyone who has the quality of daya, can not stand to see the suffering of others and immediately starts to act compassionately. Daya is opposed to the violence. Who developed a quality of daya prefers to die rather than to be a cause of the death of others.

That is why Sikh verse says:"**Keep your heart content and cherish compassion for others; this way alone can your holy vow be fulfilled**" (Unleash Your Life! Your Pathway to Inner Happiness, 136).

The next philosophical school that we are going to analyze is Jainism. This school was one of the ancient dharmic religion, which is appeared in India about IV-VI centuries BC. Jainism preaches no harm to all living beings in this world. The philosophy and practice of Jainism based, primarily, on the cultivation of the soul to attain omniscience, omnipotence and eternal bliss. Jains accept different levels of compliance for the strict followers. There are: Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (chastity) and Aparigraha (non - possession).

Ahimsa is behavior and practice, where the first requirement is no harm and non-violence. Ahimsa is defined as behavior that leads to reduction harm in the world, directed against the most evil, not against the people who create it (no hate). But as a vow ahimsa is distributed among many Eastern spiritual schools such as Buddhism,

Hinduism, Yoga and Jainism. In this part of the article we will discuss ahimsa only through the Jainist philosophy. In Jainism, Ahimsa is not mere human sympathy; it is empathy, the urge to identify oneself completely with other person, other living beings, with the whole universe. Bhagwan Mahavir said,

"If you kill someone, it is yourself you kill. If you overpower someone, it is yourself you overpower. If you torment someone, it is yourself you torment. If you harm someone, it is yourself you harm". (http://www.bodhicitta.net).

Jain concept of Ahimsa is different from the idea of non-violence, which we can find in other schools. For these schools violence associated with causing harm to others. But for Jainism violence, first of all, is injuring own self. Furthermore, this means violence to other. Besides, the followers of Jainism expanded the idea of non-violence not only for humans, but also for all animals, plants, micro-organisms and all living beings. All lives are sacred and everyone has a right to live without fear.

From its origins in India over two thousand years ago, Buddhism has spread throughout Asia and is now exerting an increasing influence on Western culture. The central teachings and practices interesting for the followers are karma and rebirth, meditation and ethics. In clear and straightforward language this part explains a basic Buddhist understanding about ethics, especially about the idea of compassion.

The experiential and emotional dimensions of Buddhism – Buddhism as a lived experience – are extremely important. The Buddha's personal experience of enlightenment is the bedrock of the entire Buddhist tradition. Time and again he invoked his own experience as authority for his doctrines, and suggested that teaching not validated by personal experience was of little value. The Buddha's enlightenment also included an emotional aspect in the form of a profound compassion which motivated him to propagate his teachings, or Dharma. Out of compassion for the suffering of mankind he spent the greater part of his life spreading a teaching which he realized was "hard to see and understand, subtle, to be experienced by the wise", for the benefit of the few "with little dust in their eyes who are wasting through not hearing it".(Buddhism A very short introduction, 6-7).

As mentioned above meditation has had deep roots in Buddhusm. The importance of meditation in Buddhism can be appreciated by recalling that it was while meditating that Buddha gained enlightment. Meditation has four measureless states. According to the texts of the Pali canon they are, loving kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha).

Karuna one of Buddhist philosophical category, which means compassion for people and for other living beings. In comments to the ancient collection of didactic poetry and prose of Sutta Nipata karuna interpreted as a desire which leads us to save other people from misery and suffering, maitri as a desire to bring them prosperity and happiness. These two are altruistic aspects of practice. As the best example of compassion is recognized Buddha himself. Combined with the wisdom compassion is one of the two pillars of Buddhism.

The Essence of the Heart Sutra, Dalai Lama wrote: **"According to Buddhism, compassion is an aspiration, a state of mind, wanting others to be free from suffering. It's not passive it's not empathy alone but rather an empathetic altruism that actively strives to free others from suffering. Genuine compassion must have both wisdom and loving-kindness. That is to say, one must understand the nature of the suffering from which we wish to free others (this is wisdom), and one must experience deep intimacy and empathy with other sentient beings (this is loving-kindness)"**.

Understanding Compassion through Chinese philosophy

Compassion (tong qing) is caring and understanding someone is hurt or troubled, even if you don't know them. It is wanting to help, even if all you can do is to listen and say kind words. You forgive mistakes. You are a friend when someone needs a friend. These same two characters contain this meaning of compassion and sympathy in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, which makes this word universal.

In this part of the article we will discuss the idea of compassion only from the Confucian of view. Confucianism often is called religion, but in it there is no institution of the church, and for them the matters of theology are not important. Confucian ethics is not religious. Their main idea is to create a harmonious society on the ancient model, where every person has his own function. Harmonious society is built on the idea of loyalty (Zhōng) loyalty in the relationship between an employer and employee, aimed at preserving the harmony of the society. Zigong asked, Is there a single word that can guide a person's conduct throughout life? The Master said, that would be reciprocity, wouldn't it? What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others (The Analects of Confucius, 7).

Even then, Confucius said that the degeneration in tradition, accompanied by a losing moral values. And as a consequence of it people have lost sense of decency and ceased to behave appropriately. Therefore, Confucius suggested changing the education system so that it will become the basis of the formation of new morality. The new generation raised on the basis of these moral qualities once again begins to perceive values of something natural and normal. Only people with sincere kindness can be the basis of the restoration of the public peace and order. Although Confucius always appealed to the authorities of the past, he still was innovator, he literally did not try to revive the old traditions, because, as he understood it was impossible and useless.

Also we ought to note that this ethical philosophy can be practiced by all members of the society. Confucian ethics is described as the promotion of virtues, encompassed by the five constants. They are: Ren (humaneness), Yi (righteousness or justice), Li (proper rite), Zhì (knowledge) and Xin (integrity).

Here we will focus only on Ren point of Confucius five constants. Confucius defined Ren in the following ways:

- Ren is a wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.
- Another meaning of Ren is "not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself.
- Ren is not far off; he who seeks it has already found it. Ren is close to man and never leaves him.(wikipedia.org)

Also it has to be noticed that Ren is not a concept that is learned; it is innate, that is to say, everyone is born with the sense of Ren. This idea has some similarity with Schopenhauer·s concept. So from the point of view of Schopenhauer also the difference of character is innate: "**Can Ethics fashion the hard-hearted man anew, so that he becomes compassionate, and, as a consequence, just and humane? Certainly not. The difference of character is innate and ineradicable**" (The basis of morality, 237).

The idea of Compassion in Islam philosophy

The next part of the article will take you to the Islam point of view of the idea of compassion. In the Muslim tradition, foremost among God's attributes are mercy and compassion. Each of the 114 chapters of the Quran, with one exception, begins with the verse; "In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful" The Arabic word for compassion is rahmah. Islam teaches compassion for fellow Muslims.

For the Islam epoch the idea of rahman had deep essential meaning. Almost every philosopher pay attention to this etical category. One of this scholar was Imam Al-Ghazali. We can say that, he was the most important thinkers of the "golden" epoch of Islam. He had a significant influence on the formation of Islamic culture. It is impossible to imagine Islam culture without the ideological legacy of Al-Ghazali.

What was the main point in his understanding of compassion? Here we can find some similarity with the Schopenhauer ideas. Three human attributes which Al-Ghazali mentioned in his book, Schopenhauer distinguished as the three human conducts:

"Some of thy attributes are those of animals, some of devils, and some of angels, and thou hast to find out to which of these attributes are accidental and which essential. Till thou knowest this, thou canst not find out where thy real happiness lies. The occupation of animals is eating, sleeping, and fighting; therefore, if thou art an animal, busy thyself in these things. Devils are busy in stirring up mischief, and in guile and deceit; if thou belongest to them, do their work. Angels contemplate the beauty of God, and are entirely free from animal qualities, if thou art of angelic nature, then strive towards thine origin, that thou mayest know and contemplate the Most High, and be delivered from the thraldom of lust and anger. Thou shouldest also discover why thou hast been created with these two animal instincts: whether that they should subdue and lead thee captive, or whether that thou shouldest subdue them, and, in thy upward progress, make of one thy steed and of the other thy weapon"(The Alchemy of Happiness,17).

The hidden force of personality that Al Ghazali seeks to apply is love. Only love frees people from the bondage of thoughtlessness, selfishness and materialism. Only love is expressed in patience, compassion, kindness and self-sacrifice. Love motivates, inspires, encourages and satisfies.

"This is not because it is paradoxical, but because it is true, and is necessary for the completeness of the thought I have to express. It is this: All love (agape, caritas) is compassion or sympathy". (The World as Will and Representation, 374)

Conclusion

Schopenhauer was the first Western philosophy who has developed a consistent world and life denies ethics. The source of his ethics was Eastern, especially Indian philosophy.

As for Schopenhauer and also for Eastern philosophy main point in the ethics - is compassion. Schopenhauer argued that all life is suffering. The will to live, become conscious, turns into a deep compassion for all beings. This will not only understand the suffering of the people, but this will understand the suffering of all living things in general. The fact that ordinary ethic called "love" is substantially only compassion. Through this universal compassion will to live renounces itself. So compassion is a beginning of true purification.

Taking all this into consideration, we can determine the similarity between the understandings the idea of compassion in the following order.

1. It is the starting point of morality;
2. Compassion contains a mystical element;
3. It cannot be explained psychologically;
4. Compassion is the ground or basis of actions of moral worth;
5. The difference of character is innate, and ineradicable.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly touch on a subject that is beyond the scope of this short essay and the topic more extensive. The happiness of one person can deepest and positively affect the well-being of the entire human community as a whole.

Eventually, humanity is a single organism, and this small planet - our only home. If we want to protect your home, each of us has personal experience to feel this universal altruism. Altruism can only eliminate selfish motives that lead people to deceive and oppress others.

I believe that at every level of society - the family, national and international - the key to happiness and success is the development of compassion. No need to take this or that belief, there is no need to share a particular ideology. All that is needed from all of us is to develop human values.

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