

Selfishness and the Discipline of the Will

Syriac culture regards the human struggle with the animal nature within not merely as a moral responsibility, but as an existential duty.

This ancient understanding highlights love, compassion, and kindness—the balanced powers of the mind, the soul, and the heart—against the harsh and unchecked force of selfishness. For true humanity begins with inner discipline. And this discipline requires not only shaping the outward self, but also cultivating the inward being.

Selfishness appeals to comfort and pleasures; yet in doing so, it cuts away the delicate shoots of compassion that lie at the core of a human being, and poisons the soul.

Selfishness and compassion cannot coexist. One nullifies the other.

Selfishness destroys compassion; it hardens the spirit and the mind. This deepens inner emptiness, undermines sincerity, and feeds complexes.

Where complexes multiply, values, decency, and etiquette begin to erode.

How beautifully it has been said: **“Whoever sows with compassion shall also reap with compassion.”**

If self-love, self-compassion, self-respect, self-worth, and self-control are worn down, inner turmoil becomes inevitable.

Some philosophers have compared the human being to a rider on a horse:

The horse is the body; the rider, the soul; the reins, the will.

If the rider does not hold the reins firmly, the horse will go wherever it pleases—perhaps even towards a cliff.

The soul's mastery over the body is possible only through the strengthening of the will.

The discipline of the will is an inner training that directs a person's desires and inclinations towards what is good, refines them, and elevates the soul.

As a way of preserving life's meaning and joy, the discipline of the will is of vital importance—both for the spiritual health of the individual and for the peace of society.

With the cultivation of compassion, I wish health and well-being to all.

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