



Kindness - a natural condition

Martin Wells



'Love and compassion are natural to the man lacking in self-motivation'

The lost writings of Wu Hsin ¹

In a meeting of the assertive outreach team there is a lengthy and painful discussion about the amount of NHS bureaucracy that has encroached into the work and how little face to face patient contact there is these days. The team struggled to remember the reasons that they came into the work. One member recalled a dream from the night before.

She found herself in a very large room in an NHS building with hundreds of people at computer screens. All their attention was given to the typing and the monitors. She looked up and saw that the whole ceiling was a replica of the Sistine chapel and the painting of God and Adam reaching out to each other. She shouts 'look up' to the staff in the room but no one looks up from their computer.

We could say that the dream encourages us not necessarily to do anything differently but simply to see what is there, to see the whole picture and to remember our true nature. The problem is not our actions but where we give our attention. We can so easily become caught up in the world of objects and in the foreground of our lives. This leads to a great forgetting of the source of our being and the essence of who we are. The dream might also suggest a form of mass hypnosis, a collective forgetting. Our challenge, then, is to remain awake in the face of powerful inductions where fear is often an active ingredient.

In the same way, if we fall into giving our attention to our personal fears or desires we will forget the source: the common ground from which each form springs. Instead of looking outside ourselves for the answers, we can merely turn our attention inwards. We do not need to generate kindness but simply remember. Kindness **is** what we are. Beyond the world of separate objects, separate beings, is oneness. The natural manifestation of this oneness, this union, is love. The other is no longer other. This is realised only as a problem of perspective and a creation of the mind - the conditioned mind hypnotised by what is right in front of it.

We might think of looking at a tree in a field. We call it 'a tree' and may even know the type of tree. In this way we focus our attention on its individual nature and its separateness. If we take another perspective and one that is closer to reality, we see 'treeness' entirely interdependent on its environment, on the earth, air, moisture, bird life, planet, cosmos etc. All is one.

'As long as one is mesmerised by the tree, the root cannot be understood'

Wu Hsin

¹ The Lost writings of Wu Hsin: Pointers to non-duality in five volumes (Kindle edition) tr. Roy Melvyn 2011

Rather like an optical illusion where we can only see two vases and not the face, we often can only see the foreground. Significantly, it is not through effort that we come to see the face but usually through guidance, through a realisation and an opening to another perspective. Once seen, we cannot *not* see it.

It is the same with the illusion of the separate individual. We are usually focussed on the waves of the ocean forgetting we are all ocean. Focussed on the foreground awareness only dimly remembering the background source from which we all spring; like words on a page, forgetting the background canvas. The words need the page but the page does not need the words.

So we could see kindness as the manifestation of oneness rather than the generous act of one individual to another. Kindness is what we are, not an action or a gesture... is the bee kind to the flower... or the bird of prey unkind to its prey?

Arising out of a questioning and a contemplation of how we see things, comes another perspective. We realise we are not separate. Looking deeply, we realise we are not simply body and mind, not ego, not personality and that these are merely clothing. Like the sculptor who was asked how he sculpted the horse and who said that he merely took away the bits that weren't horse.

We might think of this as awareness, as noticing and listening to our reactions and physical responses. We can view these as patterns and as memory, but not as our true nature. We may notice how personal we make everything, with our personal desires or fears in the foreground. How we resist what is, often wishing away the present moment. We may notice a need to try and control and for the ego to be fed and supported.

How much of our suffering is caused by ego, by the need to control, by the longing for recognition or the need to assert our will? How vulnerable are NHS staff to implicit and explicit statements and directives from managers that they need to do more (are not good enough)? Are not these managers simply passing on their own undigested fears? In our self enquiry we might become aware that the implied criticism only has an impact because there is already something similarly present in our psyche. A coat with no hook falls to the floor.

We can therefore engage in a form of self-enquiry, a rigorous chipping away at what is not 'horse'. This does not involve effort but more a willingness to see things as they are. When we see something as the illusion that it is, it dissolves like sugar in the liquid of our awareness. Ego comes to be seen as an imposter and attempts to control life are relinquished.

When illusion falls away in the process of self-enquiry, the question 'who or what am I?' often occurs. Here we might discover that we are awareness itself, formless being, infinite silence and unconditional love.