

„No man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the sufferings to the others. Such a sensitive heart was possessed by Former Kings and this manifested itself in compassionate government. With such sensitive heart behind compassionate government, it was easy to rule the Empire as rolling it in your palm.“

In this essay, I will explain why I agree with this quote since, to my mind, a good government must be compassionate and empathy makes ruling any „Empire“ much easier. I will talk about how empathy makes us more human and about how feeling compassion for the other means recognising that person as an equal. Finally, I wish to make clear that empathy is necessary for any society to work correctly and that trying to ignore our sensitiveness to the other's suffering only leads to hatred and violence.

I will talk about:

- a) Empathy and compassion and how they are a key to good human relationships.
- b) What a compassionate government is.
- c) How compassion would make ruling the current world easier.

a) Firstly, I wish to explain what empathy means and what it consists of. When we empathize with someone, we recognise him as an equal, we realize that he or she can suffer in the same way we can and we make him or her human. When you feel compassion for another person, you are recognising that person as human and, at the same time, due to the act of recognition of the other one, you become more human yourself.

Levinas described the sensitiveness of our hearts towards the suffering of the others by saying that we are touched when we see the Other, that we are stirred by his need and by his supplication. That way, we comprehend their point of view and understand the decisions they take. Thus, in a compassionate society there is no place for discrimination, intolerance or injustice.

b) Secondly, I will talk about where the limit of compassion is for a government, if there is such a limit. As I see it, politics can indeed be conditioned by this feeling but only to the point in which we still do not place the other's interests in front of our own. In other words, a good government should be conditioned by empathy but not by love, since love can lead to the forgetting of our suffering in favour of the other one's. We must take into account both ourselves and the others to be able to be compassionate but still effective, both as a government and as a society.

To my mind, it is also clear that, without compassion, democracy can not work properly. It is of extreme importance to empathize with the minorities so that they can have a say in our world's politics. On the one hand, a lack of compassion would lead to oppression and civil discomfort, creating continuous problems that always end up with violence. On the other hand, a compassionate society leads to an awareness of the other's suffering that allows us to take action to keep us happy.

I wish to make clear the fact that a compassionate government can only rule a society equally compassionate. In my opinion, feelings can be taught, and it is fundamental to learn to care for the others in order to create an empathetic society. Even though it is certain that we all can be sensitive to the suffering of the others it is also clear that ignoring this feeling is possible since we have a large number of examples in history, that show that a lack of empathy translates into hatred and violence. Therefore, a compassionate society in which people recognize the others as equals and learn to take everyone into account will always work better than a society that prioritizes benefit or development over people.

The concept of compassion must not apply only to human beings, but to environment too. We must extend our sense of compassion to both the human and the natural environment to rule wisely. Looking at the current world, we must realize that we have to be empathetic even towards those who have not been born, since future generations are affected directly by the way we treat the natural environment. Quoting Jeffrey D. Sachs: „We need to defend the interests of those whom we have never met and never will“. Therefore, a compassionate government of the current world would need to take ecology into account, since it is a matter of empathy and responsibility.

c)Some people would claim that a compassionate government is impossible in the current world or that it would cause many problems. The technocratic paradigm under which we live has left morality and ethics aside to claim that the aim of maximizing the benefit and accelerating the development is enough. However, it does not satisfy the ultimate goal of progress, which is in general terms the realization of the human being that can lead us to living a complete and fulfilling life. A compassionate government in the current world would need to rethink the concept of progress, so that it includes ethical and moral advances as well as technological ones, since that way a lot of our problems related to human relationships could be solved.

To explain how a society based on empathy would change the current world (and make it easier to rule), I will use one of the biggest problems that we have nowadays as an example. The inhabitants of the richest countries do not empathize with those of the poorest. Due to that, they do not see the inhabitants of these countries as equals, nor do they give the same value to their lives. That is one of the reasons why we do not put enough effort to solve extreme poverty, even if it causes millions of deaths every year. However, if we actually empathized with these people, we would all be doing more to solve this problem and probably it would have been almost solved by this time.

If we accept what has been written so far as true, we must recognize that ruling is much simpler for a compassionate government that exercises compassionate politics.

In conclusion, empathy and compassion are indeed keys to a utopian society and government and they also identify us as humans and make the ruling of our societies much easier.