"The cardinal principle of all religions is to serve humanity. Islam puts special emphasis on compassion and sacrifice for others. Qurbani reminds us that Islam is a religion of sacrifice and we must serve others with our time, effort and wealth. The fundamental concept of Qurbani is that we must be prepared to sacrifice everything for Allah."

results, is not the only way to go. There is nothing special about tapping in synchrony; any commonality will do. Increased compassion for one's neighbour, for instance, can come from something as easy as encouraging yourself to think of him as (say) a fan of the same local restaurant instead of as a member of a different ethnicity."



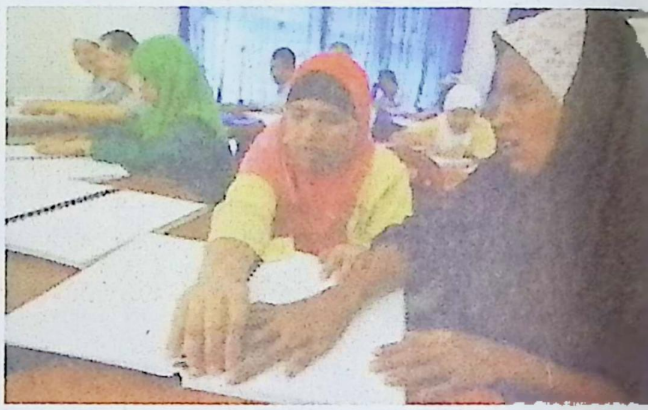


PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

We must make room in our heart for our compassionate impulses to flourish.

Philosophical perspective

You have to help those in need not because it is your moral responsibility but you love them. Dr Abdul Matin, professor emeritus, department of Philosophy, University of Dhaka says, "If you owe someone money, you must pay him or her back. That is your moral responsibly. But whether you will help someone who asks for it is a matter of compassion. I believe love for living beings is greater than morality. If you help your younger brother not out of love but of a sense of moral responsibility, will your brother be happy?

Research provides ample evidence to show what we can gain from more compassionate relationships, schools, hospitals, workplaces, and other institutions. They do more than make us reconsider our assumptions about human nature. They offer a blueprint for a more compassionate world.

Kind hearted women

Several studies have been published in the last two years — the first systematic research into gender and philanthropy — revealing that women generally donate more, are more actively involved in the giving charities, demand more proof of effectiveness and prefer somewhat different causes than men.

Think small

Bertrand Russell called his passion unbearable for he felt his passion was undercut by powerlessness. When you feel with someone his pain, it is intensified by your imagination and prolonged by countless echoes for help. The miseries of the world are overwhelming.

So let's reduce them to control. Work in a slum. Feed someone hungry. Volunteer for a humanitarian organisation. Read to the blind. Help out in a school. And your connection to all that?

Be grateful that you are able to offer some help in a world that cries out to you, to me, in the distance, every morning, every evening. ■

Compassion Made Easy

Does the experience of compassion toward one person measurably affect our actions and attitudes toward other people? If so, are there practical steps we can take to further cultivate this feeling? David DeSteno, of Northeastern University has conducted experiments that answered yes to both questions. He writes in an article, "...Effortful adherence to religious or philosophical dictums though clearly valuable and capable of producing