

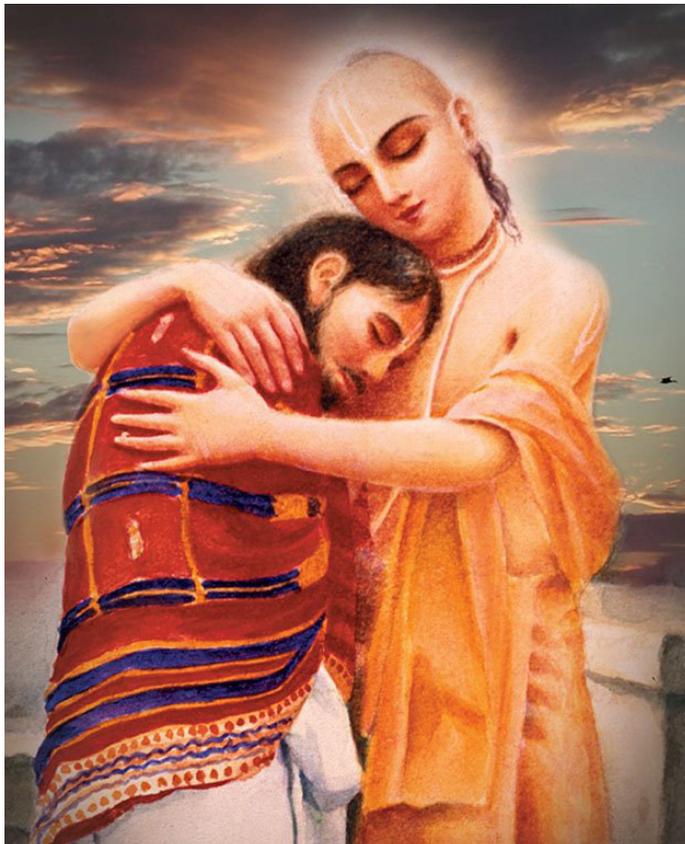
*Based on the training sessions with Sacinandana Swami on February 16–18th, 2013, London

2) COMPASSION – THE MOTIVATION FOR COUNSELLING

The best motivation for counselling is compassion. It is such an important spiritual quality that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote, “*Dayā, compassion, is the foremost Vaiṣṇava quality.*” (Jaiva-dharma, chapter 8).

The soul of compassion is empathy. Empathy means to understand the feelings and thoughts of others. Compassion requires understanding what others need, otherwise we cannot help them.

Kapila says, “*Showing compassion to all living entities, you will attain self-realization. Giving assurance of safety to all, you will perceive your own self as well as all the universes in Me, and Myself in you.*” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 3.21.31) In other words, being compassionate lifts you out of your own small self-referential universe. It makes you realize that everyone is a part of Kṛṣṇa, you will join the universal family of God. And this will also nourish your self-realization.



PRACTICE

MEDITATION TO INCREASE COMPASSION IN THE HEART



In order to increase the feeling of compassion in your heart, you can regularly practice the following meditation (taken from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura):

- 1) Meditate about the fact that spiritually all living beings are equal. When someone comes to you for counselling, do not look at them as a man, woman, educated or not, wealthy or poor. See them as souls, as parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa.
- 2) Reflect about how the experience of misery is the same for everyone. Everyone experiences misery the same way you do. When someone is experiencing too much misery, what do they think about? Misery. Their whole consciousness can shrink into the misery. They cannot progress, go beyond their suffering. It can be a real obstacle in their evolution.
- 3) Make a determined effort and take concrete measures to eradicate the misery. First of all assure the person that he or she is no longer alone in trying to get out of their miserable situation, assure them: “*We are in this together, we are now a team.*”