

Love Is in the Koshas by Carolyn Reynolds

Do you know what love is? That has been a constant wonder to me for decades. What starts as love can turn into lots of scary stuff. Mental abuse, physical abuse and homicide are all too common in the family structure. Mother love is the deepest and most enduring love we observe. Yet lately the news tells us of mothers who have killed their children. What is going on here?

Love is described in 1 Corinthians: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong doing. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseverates. Love never fails.” If love never fails then what is it we are doing with each other?

Then I read an excerpt from a book titled The Dark Side of the Light Chasers by Debbie Ford. The concept was presented that just like all the colors of the rainbow are contained in white, so are all the emotions contained in love. Really? If everything is part of All-That-Is, or God, and God is love then the logic follows. But on a feeling level the logic seemed to fall apart. I needed some counsel on this one so I turned to one of my teachers, Swami Jnaneshvara. This is what yoga’s got to do with it:

At our center is our God consciousness, or Atman, the part of us that is eternal. The sheath around that center is the bliss or love sheath. It is called anandamayakosha. Next there is the discriminating aspect of us, the intellectual sheath called vijnanamayakosha. It is here that the love is filtered through the discriminating and particularizing aspects of latent impressions of aversions, attractions, addictions, wants, wishes, expectations, etc. These colored aspects of love then manifest as emotions in the sheath called manamayakosha. In that way the passion of love is in the emotions but the emotions are not necessarily in the love. Like the clay is in the pot, the pot is not in the clay. These emotions are further modified through the next sheath, pranamayakosha, our energy body, before being manifested in anamayakosha, the physical aspects of us.

Love is not an emotion. Love is an entirely different order of reality. Yoga is a system that can teach us how to get back to our Love center. There are eight means of attaining Yoga, and five of those are regularly practiced in hatha yoga class. The yoga mat is your practice field because it reflects how you are in life. The more you practice yoga and meditation, the more the sheaths fall away, the more you are Love. That Love does not discriminate. And it brings with it an incredible sense of peace and well-being. That Love is already within you and the learning through the practices is simply a method of letting go of the stuff that is covering your brilliance.