

Love from a Spiritual Perspective

By Phylis Clay Sparks

Most people think they know what love is, but if you were to ask ten people to define it, you just might get ten different answers. Plato, the Greek philosopher who laid the very foundation of Western philosophy, defined love as a “grave mental disease.” Comedian Woody Allen said, “Love is the answer. But while you’re waiting for the answer, sex raises some pretty good questions.” Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Love is our highest word, and a synonym for God.”

In an attempt to see love from a spiritual perspective and as a synonym for God, it might make sense to draw an analogy between the connective tissue of the human body and love as the connective tissue of the Universe. The connective tissue in the body supports and connects various parts of the body, forms bone, cartilage, fat, ligaments and tendons. Without connective tissue there would be nothing to hold our bones in place. Without connective tissue there would be nothing to buffer or cushion the abrasive action that takes place in the joints as bone rubs against bone. Without the flexible nature of the connective tissue there would be no ability to bend or move freely; no range of motion.

Likewise, love is the very fiber of connection and unity. It holds everything in place. It buffers the abrasive action of hate. It clears away fear and judgement, giving us the ability to bend and move freely. Love is the opposite of separation or alienation. In a beautiful attempt to point out how fundamental love is to our spiritual nature, here’s what French philosopher Pierre Teilhard De Chardin wrote: “Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tide and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

I’m reminded of the biblical passage from I Corinthians: “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” It goes on to say that we gain nothing without love. It speaks of the patience and kindness of love; the absence of envy, boasting, rudeness and self-seeking. It ends by saying that “these three remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

Appreciation, gratitude and compassion are acts of love. Sincere joy and lightness of spirit is a side effect of love. Peace is where love lives, and reverence is the highest expression of love from a spiritual perspective. Love is a choice we have about how to respond to what’s going on, and it’s what makes the difference as to how that experience affects our life.

Okay. I’ve said a lot about love, but I haven’t actually defined it. That’s because Love is a synonym for God, and we can’t entirely and accurately define God. But I do believe we can raise love to a level of spiritual insight, intuitive guidance and a comforting sense of peace and well-being. Here’s a poem I wrote to express how I think about love:

Love

I’ve been asked what love is.
I’ve asked myself what love is.
I’ve asked others what love is.
It seems that nobody knows.
But I know when I feel it,
I know when I have it,
I know when I give it
And I know when I live it.
That’s the only answer I need.

I hope you like that, and I hope you feel what I feel when I experience love at a higher more spiritually inspired level than just romance or momentary infatuation. I find that when I practice the Presence of God in a state of complete peace, the presence of love cannot be denied.

Phylis Clay Sparks is a professional speaker, teacher, workshop facilitator, artist and author. Her recently published book is entitled "FORGIVENESS...It Is NOT What You Think It Is!" Phylis is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and the Ernest Holmes College School of Ministry. She is an ordained minister and founder of The Soul-Esteem Center in Maryland Heights, Missouri, now in its twentieth year. Visit www.Soul-Esteem.com for more information.