



February 2004 Contemplation Theme

Opening into Love

By Rama Berch, R.Y.T.

The texts of yoga define love as the recognition of Self in another. You know that feeling when you look at someone and see something in them; maybe it's the light shining through their eyes. An extraordinary feeling arises inside. What is happening is that you have seen the infinite within them, and it triggered your experience of the infinite within you. The inner arising is the infinite filling you from the inside — the infinite meeting the infinite. It is called Love. I would wish that it happen to you frequently or that you live in it all the time.

Unfortunately, you limit how often you allow that feeling to be triggered inside. You even limit how many people you allow yourself to feel this with — the list is too short. Somehow, it is easier when a pet or a beautiful scene in nature triggers it. It is a little harder with a person because we attach lots of other things onto this feeling. When you say, "I love you," it ends up some baggage: unexpressed expectations that the other person will love you back and that they will prove it by supporting you, protecting you, encouraging you, acknowledging you, always being there for you and basically doing everything you want or need. But these added-on extras are not Love. They are very important in life, but they are not Love.

Love transcends all of the mundane; it is the felt-sense of the infinite within. A problem arises because you depend on someone or something outside of you to trigger this inner arising. Yoga specializes in the inner opening, so that you can experience what is already there inside you. You are the One — the infinite blissful Self-knowing Ultimate Reality that is called "That." You are That. You have always been That. You are already That. You don't have to become That; you merely need to stop blocking the inner arising.

You block this experience by tightening up and closing off from the inner infinity. *Svaroopa*® yoga opens you up by beginning with your body and going much deeper, until the opening gives you direct access to That. You come to know the pathway to the infinite within. The more you open on the inside, the more you allow the experience of Love to arise with others. Fear drops away. As it becomes easier to allow the infinite to arise within you, it is also easier to see the infinite in others — even when they are not being pretty or nice. Even when they are not doing what you want them to do. You can love unconditionally.

Also, you can allow yourself to feel that you are loved. Instead of looking to other people to love you, you know and feel that you are loved by that One Infinite Reality. Instead of having to look good or to be perfect in order to be loveable, you experience that you are loved exactly as you are. You are loved unconditionally — which is what you have always longed for. The lifelong yearning for this feeling can never be satisfied by the people around you. It can only be fulfilled by feeling God's love for you.

Yoga clearly describes God. If yoga left God out of the picture, it wouldn't be a complete science of human experience. Of course, yoga's definition of God is different. God is the One Ultimate Reality that has become everything that exists, pervading it and extending beyond it. It is translated as "God" when you find it outside and "Self" when you find it inside. There is only the One, but individuals experience it in many ways. Love, as defined by life, shows you how to find it outside —

in other people. Love, as defined in church, shows you how to find it outside — in God. Yoga shows you how to find Love inside — in Self.

Plus, there is more. When you begin yoga, you are exploring the Self from a place of inner unknowing. Your yoga practice melts away tensions and the inner blocks, and the inner veil of unknowing is gradually pierced full of holes. With each piercing, the light of your own inner radiance shines through and you are filled on the inside. This experience overflows into your life and your relationships, from the inner source. You naturally become more committed to your yoga practice and more interested in the inner filling. As you keep going, you get better at staying in that inner fullness, even when you are not doing yoga.

Then your life becomes an expression of That Love. This is very different than using your life to try to find Love, trying to get moments of the inner arising. Your inner experience of the infinite is the source from which That Love arises, and you come to experience this in every encounter, in every action and in every moment. This is your destiny. This is your goal. This is your true identity. You are not Love — you are the Source of Love. You are That.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rama". Above the signature is a small heart symbol containing the number "361".

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