

Love, Deciphered

Once again, Valentine's Day is drawing near, with its overabundance of red—red flowers, red hearts, and red teddy bears. For a fresh shade, Kabbalah is here with a new, eye-opening spin on the notion of love

Interestingly, no one is really sure where Valentine's Day comes from. Its intricate history has traces of ancient pagan celebrations of fertility, Greek mythology, dramatic historic twists in the Roman Empire, adoption by the Christian church, and even some very tragic events. But most of all, and whether we like it or not, it is the Western world's annual reminder of that eternal topic—love.

Love—What You Already Knew

For some of us, this day is a welcome opportunity to bond with our partners, to buy them flowers and chocolate, and to snuggle in front of a romantic movie. And for some of us, it's a grueling, never-ending day of trying to avoid those "annoying couples," and to ignore the red hearts that menacingly grin at us everywhere we go, as if saying, "Love is something that was invented just to mock you."

Regardless of which camp you belong to, we have all experienced that feeling of being deeply, hopelessly in love, at least once. Love is blind. When we're in love, we see no faults in our loved one, justify everything they do, and see only the best in him or her. However, most of us also know that the "love bubble" inevitably pops, and looking back we ask: "Was the love I felt just an illusion? And why can't I feel now as good as when I was in love?"

Love—What Is it Really?

Thankfully, the wisdom of Kabbalah introduces an innovative explanation to the love dilemma. First, Kabbalists explain that there's a reason why we feel best precisely when we experience this "thing called love": because what we feel towards another person somewhat corresponds to the innate quality of nature.

By feeling love, we gain contact with the positive quality that invigorates and binds all parts of reality. Kabbalah calls this quality "love" or "bestowal," and explains that it is the unifying factor between all the elements in reality: minerals, plants, and animals, as well as all the happenings of man's inner world.

All parts of Nature share this quality of universal love—all except man. In other words, man is the only creature that does not enact this quality automatically, the way all other still, vegetative and animate creatures do. We are the sole exception, free to act as we like: to love or to hate, to give or to take, and so on.

When We Stand Against Love

The fact is that we tend to act contrary to Nature's general quality, and this is the root of all our negative sensations. For some reason, we usually think that we will feel better by doing things to benefit ourselves, even at the expense of others. We focus on "Me, me, me," "How can I feel better?" and "What can I do to get some more money/fame/power/[fill in the blank] in life?" And many of us know that this road is paved with competition, jealousy, loneliness, and pain.

Obviously, this is the opposite of how we think when we're in love, when all our thoughts are directed at the other, and all we care about is that person. When we're in love, the only thing on our mind is, "What can I do to make him/her feel better?"

If we zoom out of our daily reality for a moment and take a look at ourselves from a broader perspective, it's easy to see that we feel best precisely when we harmonize with the quality of love. Again, this is because we thereby tune our "inner frequency" to the frequency that prevails in all of Nature, to the flow of the whole universe.

And this isn't something that only Kabbalah points out. If you ask a biologist or a botanist, they will agree that all living organisms, all life and development, are based on "a law of love." This is because all parts of a living organism interact according to the principle of "bestowal," where they constantly give to each other. Each and every cell lives in order to take care of the whole body's essential functions and wellbeing, to sustain its vitality.

Our body also adheres to Nature's laws in this natural manner, since it functions on the animate level. It's only on the human level of our

interactionsâ€”in our thoughts and sensationsâ€”that we start veering off in another direction. The human level in us is the place where we feel our "I," our identity, and our constant concern for ourselves. Since this part of us is focused on personal interest and gain, it usually overlooks the fact that the world is whole, integral, interconnected and interdependent.

In other words, we miss the fact that another person's pleasure or pain is inextricably tied to how we will feel, and that our well-being depends directly on other people's well-being. Kabbalah helps us refocus, and look at what's going on "under a magnifying glass." We then see that Natureâ€™s law of absolute loveâ€”of universal, instinctive, natural attention and careâ€”is far from being realized on the human level.

Infinite Love Is Felt by Harmonizing with Nature

If we change this tendency, and begin regarding everyone according to the Natural law of bestowal, then we will feel that wonderful feeling of "love" all the time, not just at brief moments. It's because once we realize that weâ€™re all interconnected, the way the cells of our body are, we will participate in Nature's flow as integral elements. We will simply merge with the rest of Nature, and our attitude to itâ€”to everything around usâ€”will be pure love.

By doing so, we will harmonize with Nature on the human level, and as a result, feel what Kabbalah calls "Infinity"â€”infinite love, joy and peace. This feeling is called "Infinity" because it's a sensation that the boundaries between us simply vanish. We literally begin to feel others as if they were a part of us.

Therefore, a relation of love and bestowal isn't just a change of attitude, but a fundamental upgrade of our quality of life and the range of our perception. So let's not spend this Valentine's Day sulking about the "annoying couples," or mulling over why it never worked out with that ex, but let it instead be a reminder of the infinite love that we can reveal if we shift our focus from reception to bestowal.

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