

BEING PRESENT

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Desire

It is my wish to leave everything that I can think of and choose for my love the thing I cannot think, because God can certainly be loved, but not thought.

-Anonymous English Monk

Being present is like being in love. Nothing else seems to matter. Nothing else fills the heart with such joy, or brings such meaning to this thin tissue of existence; nothing else moves one from self-preoccupation to natural yet unexpressed qualities of selflessness, generosity, intimacy. In the state of love, one is sleepless and has no appetite for common food. One is alive to details, events, moments that were once commonplace, habitual, ordinary. One is on fire.

Yet this state of being in love is a representation of something else, one's real love affair with the Higher Self. Being in love is a faint echo of being present. Presence contains this tender, vulnerable encounter with the subject of desire, the beauty of the Beloved. And in this same encounter, the lover's first touch with the Beloved rekindles the desire to be reunited, to journey again from unconsummated passion to perfect union. Desire is all that a lover possesses. All other concerns, interests, attractions are lost, consumed in this desire and the lover is an ascetic, stripped of the lower functions. The lover's yearning reveals that human beings are incomplete without this union, yet for the lover, this is of no consequence. In reaching the Beloved, the lover ceases to exist in the human realm.

Sufi poetry and philosophy is rich in the presentation of the lover and the Beloved. Schools, conscious religions and esoteric traditions promote ardency for the living, conscious moment, understanding that this is the sole purpose and reason for human existence. Their work is to prepare adherents for a lasting encounter with the Beloved, to create lovers of the moment.



A Persian painting by Riza 'Abbasi of Layla and her lover Majnoon: 'I pass by these walls, the walls of Layla and I kiss this wall and that wall. It's not Love of the houses that has taken my heart, but of the One who dwells inside'.

Related thoughts

And the last desire is to be God in human form.

Lalla

If the lover is satisfied with love alone, then the beloved draws near.

Al-Husayn

They who truly love can love only one thing.

Meister Eckhart

Make God your only desire, for only he shall live eternally and never die.

Attar

Everyone in this world wants something. I have no desire save the lips of the Beloved.

Iraqi

Desire is the root of every virtue.

Shantideva