



Love Needs to be Constantly Cleansed, by Ajahn Jayasaro

In the stories that I cherished in my youth, happy endings almost always involved some kind of love, and I began to observe that in â€œreal lifeâ€• love is not always a guarantee of happiness and it rarely resolves anything for very long. One of the slogans of the day which impressed me the most as a teenager was the one that asked whether you were part of the problem or part of the solution. I think that this is a question we might ask about love. Is it truly part of the solution to our suffering in life or does it merely compound it? My short answer to this question is that it depends. On what? On the kind of love and how you care for it. Even the purest love needs to be constantly cleansed.

Why is it necessary to keep cleansing love? The easy answer is that it tends to get soiled. And the dirt that soils it is suffering and the cause of suffering: craving. Since we human beings do not desire even a shred of suffering and gladly accept every little bit of happiness that comes our way, it makes sense for us to ensure that all the various aspects of our life, including love, be as conducive to happiness and as safe from suffering as possible. Love is a part of life which we need to imbue with wisdom and understanding.

Love tends to get intertwined with other emotions, making those who have never considered it closely mistake the emotions associated with love for a part of, or indeed expressions of, love itself. Usually, for example, rather than considering worries and jealousy to be impurities of love, we take them to be a proof of it, and thus gladly harbor such feelings. We tend to blind ourselves to loveâ€™s impurities. It is alarming how easily the defilements (i.e. negative mental states such as greed, hatred and delusion), which can destroy love, sneak inside a heart [...]. Most people are like the owner of a home with a wide opening instead of a door. Anyone is free to enter or exit such a house and it is no surprise that thieves abound.

It is intelligent to learn about love because knowing and understanding our own nature is the only way to the peace and happiness that we human beings can and should aspire to.