

## *A Thought on Love – The Sails Within*

One word and its meaning have always eluded me: love. It's a common word and emotion everyone experiences, but do we really know what it is? Can it be explained? Is there an image of it other than the all too common heart? I look back at moments when I thought I had love or given love and realized that wasn't the case. Maybe it was physical attraction or desire, but not love.

Love is a force, a connection that can be explained in multiple ways, but it is certainly experienced. Anyone who follows their heart knows when they experience love, and it first comes from within. The connection between the self, body and earth is love. Performing a duty for the sake of a greater good is love. Just being alive and breathing is love. Living a dream is love. In fact, every dream leads to love. Some of the best stories and movies about individual journeys and triumphs are about love. The saying, "follow your heart" can be translated as follow love because the heart is love, and that's all the heart longs for. Society may say the point of living is to get a job, get married, procreate and so forth, but life is about love, no matter the kind of life we have.

Like following a dream, following love can be a challenge at times when we exist with people and circumstances that present difficulties. We learn easily to hate, hang on to anger, and do what other people are doing to fit in. It's true that love, like living our passions, can involve a lot of hurt and pain that can be felt on a cellular and spiritual level. Then we decide to follow our head so as not to experience those same emotions again, even if love would tell us otherwise. Who wants to love and follow their heart if it means a lot of disappointment? We hear "love hurts" for a reason. Perhaps logic would say take a safer route that doesn't expose us and keeps us safe. We all have these dilemmas. But then, like an intangible nudge or a writhing twist in the chest, we can't help but pay attention to how we really feel no matter what our minds tell us. Life is love and love is life. The people, relationships, circumstances, triumphs and failures are all aspects of it. Sometimes it makes sense; sometimes it doesn't, just like defining love itself.

If we become wise enough, we can discern what is love and what is not, just like we can discern what we think and what we feel. Love comes from within, and when we stay in touch with what's within, we can attain all the love we desire out of life. There is a knowing that some things never leave us no matter how much we try to leave it. It only keeps coming back because it's meant to be ever present in our lives. Even if we can't define it, we only need to know it's always within and around us. It's love.