



The Essence of Ayurveda

by Greg Stein

What I am coming to understand is that **Ayurveda—the Science of Life—is really about Love, first and foremost.** In Ayurveda, many different methods, practices, and techniques of healing have been elucidated and passed down through the generations. This incredible body of teachings was originally realized by deeply insightful and profoundly intuitive individuals. The vast ocean of Ayurvedic knowledge cannot possibly be crossed by anyone in its entirety in one lifetime! Yet, the essence of it all—the essence indeed of any truly holistic path to healing and wholeness—is so beautiful and simple.

Let us explore this experience or state of being that we call Love. Contrary to what may be a popular belief about Love, ***Love is not an emotion.*** Emotions are always changing—like the waxing and waning of the Moon. **Emotions are an experience of the mind—a combination of thoughts and sensations that create a movement of energy through the body.**

Love, however, is not an experience of the mind; it is not rooted in thought. How do we know this? One way this has been made clear is through the testimony of countless individuals who have attained deep states of meditation—they have had the experience of the usual, everyday thought patterns of the mind stopping for a time, as they enter into a deep flow state. This is an experience of total inner stillness and inner silence.

In that state of quietude, what have these individuals found? A nothingness? A void? No—most report a sense of profound connectedness to everything, and a blissful perception of the Unity underlying all of creation. **They enjoy the experience of Universal Love.** This suggests that **Love is not merely an emotion—but is interwoven into the fabric of consciousness itself.**

Modern science speaks of the unified field of consciousness—and has thus been moving closer and closer to the same conclusion that the great masters of meditation have come to since time immemorial: **Oneness—a unity underlying the apparent diversity that we see all around us—is the Highest Truth, the Ultimate Reality.** This experience is like the Sun—always there and ever shining, even if it is often covered over by clouds (that is, thoughts).

When the heart is wide open, the connection to the Ultimate Reality is perceived in its fullness with utter clarity. This experience is what we call **Divine Love.** In the words of Rumi, **“Love is the bridge between you and everything.”**

So why is Love *the most essential ingredient* to health, healing, and well-being? **Wholeness can only be experienced when any obstruction to this Universal Connection has been removed.** We cannot be healthy in isolation. Consider a tree: if you isolate it by uprooting it from the Earth and keep it in a room with no light, soil, or water, it will certainly die. It needs to exist as a part of a greater whole—a healthy ecosystem with good soil, sunlight, and pure water—in order to thrive. It cannot flourish as a separate, isolated entity. In fullness, the tree receives nourishment as it contributes to the welfare of the whole.

All beings—including, of course, human beings—share the same need for connection in one way or another. The reality is that everything is already connected. When we, through our thoughts, words and actions, align with this truth of Oneness, health and well-being are the natural and inevitable outcomes. **The simple, powerful and only way to do that is to open ourselves to Love.**