Love, or Peace?

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Modern society has adopted romantic love as an individualistic virtue, dating back to the European age of Chivalry and its literature. As chaos and insecurity mounted in the 20th century, "love" became for many the main desired goal. When asked, those left in "peace" would say "peace would be nice too." As peace retreated in the last 100 years, love seemed more popular.

What is love? It is a large concept, going beyond romantic love to love of family, friends, pets, music, anything -- including a philosophy of loving love.
Then there's loving the planet and wanting to protect it, perhaps by honoring the goddess of the Earth (Gaia, Pachamama, Mother Earth, to give a few of her names).

However, wanting to obtain "love" or more love in one's life, from a physical lover who also is supportive, is so common that it's the prevalent idea of love. It is often a self-centered goal. Let's say finding this romantic love is successful. One then wants "everlasting love" and thus a form of security. But how can "real love" be maintained if there is no peace?

Although some would say the following statement is backwards, perhaps peace must come first, for love to flourish. This implies successful, prior activism or a new culture of cooperation and love of nature. But nothing is guaranteed or set in stone except for change itself. Therefore peace does not guarantee that one's object of love will never leave for another lover. In consolation, at least in that situation, if there were universal peace love could flourish despite some people losing in the game or dance of romance. But if peace were not reigning, love in general would be much undermined as it is today. An example of losing love when there is no peace: a lover would possibly have been driven away from his or her land, or killed by greedy, violent specimens of the human animal.

Yes, peace can be helped along by enough love. In fact it is essential. But if it is the kind of love that mainly means possessing an attractive partner, that may help neither peace nor love in the long run.

To believe in and promote peace is to love humanity and all living things as part of a beautiful whole. Randall Amster, publisher of New Clear Vision, is active with the Peace & Justice Studies Association. He recommended to Culture Change the concepts of love known as agape and ubuntu:

The Greek word and philosophical term agape is "love of one’s fellow man... divine, unconditional, self-sacrificing, active, volitional, and thoughtful love. Although the word does not have specific religious connotation, the word has been used by a variety of contemporary and ancient sources, including Biblical authors and Christian authors. Greek philosophers at the time of Plato and other ancient authors have used forms of the word to denote love of a spouse or family, or affection for a particular activity..." - Wikipedia

Ubuntu "is an African ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other. Some believe that ubuntu is a classical African philosophy or worldview, whereas others point out that the idea that ubuntu is a philosophy or worldview has developed in written sources in recent years." Archbishop Desmond Tutu explained it as "...the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity." - Wikipedia

John Lennon, after his Twist and Shout phase of promoting of love, became one of history's best known exponents of peace and love. Consider -- no, sing it -- "All You Need Is Love," the 1967 hit anthem that included a healthy dose of

humor in the production. It was not about the act of love-making, although sex was implied as most healthy and essential for life and happiness.
"Give Peace a Chance" was another one of his hits soon after, in 1969, when the 1967 Summer of Love had been tempered by both the continued atrocity against Vietnam and assassinations of peace proponents Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy.

Elvis Costello's hit "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding" from 1979 is a defense of the values of the hippies and their icon John Lennon. It was written by Nick Lowe in 1974 when the Me Generation had taken over from the hippies, when the Vietnam War was almost over. Love and peace have been on the run since their "heyday" of 1966-1970. Why? This may cover it:

In the dominant culture of commercialism and its enforced tolerance of greed and war, the ideas of peace and love are interrelated only when the terms are used together. Separately, the word "peace" is misused as a state of less war than usual, or the absence of outright hostility -- even when people are still oppressed and starving. And "love" as the modern concept of mainly self-gratification is part of the illusory separation of oneness that springs in part from the outdated scientific gospel of a mechanical universe, a.k.a. reductionism.

The reason that peace, love and understanding have failed to triumph when we need them most can be seen everywhere: the dominant culture allows for society's having a high tolerance for evil. Thus peace and love have been divided, when there can be no separation if humanity is to survive on a beautiful, loving planet who has apparently been willing to see peace millennium after millennium. This is not wishful thinking or dreaming but reality, as can be glimpsed every time we realize life is a wonderful gift that words cannot do justice to.

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