

Oneness

by Liz Gibbons

Our egos, our beliefs, our supposed difference separate us. Because of this many do not realize that we are all one. Thus we compete, kill, ostracize, and ridicule others who are different than us. Most of us go through life with an erroneous sense of what we are. Some spiritual teachers say that this limited sense of self is the source of our suffering and unhappiness.

When I was packing to move to Denver I found a slim book in one of our bookcases titled *Oneness* by John Graven. I don't know where it came from, whether I had bought it or my husband had. It did not take long to read through it. I forgot about it until Joan gave this week's writing topic. Parts of the book I have to reread slowly to understand what the author is saying. In an early chapter he asks three questions: "Are you a body? Are you the thoughts? Are you in a body?" The answer to each of these questions is "No."

So if we are none of these, what are we? This question is frustrating because the mind wants to make us a thing or an object. Everything we think about ourselves is merely an idea or an assumption. We give attributes to ourselves to describe what the mind thinks we are. But these are just concepts. Yet we know that we exist. We do have a presence. We do have awareness. Do awareness and presence have a beginning and an ending? Do presence and awareness get older as we age? If you stopped thinking would you still have awareness? Watch out. The mind will try to label awareness and presence as attributes. Awareness and presence are not things that you have. They are what you are. The key to being in the presence or in awareness is to be in present time. I usually find that hard. I tend to be in the future a lot of the time. But the past is a dead memory and the future is imagination. If we are not careful, we try to be in the moment by being in the mind. It is subtle. You have to let go and let life flow freely as a river. You just notice each moment as it is with no judgment or thought.

What the author is trying to convey is the idea of non-duality. His message is that there is only one presence, one awareness, one being. We each are part of that being, and, within it, all possibilities arise. We are each whole and complete. We do not have to keep seeking and searching. Many use the metaphor that we are all drops in the ocean. Or some see the Universe as a big Symphony Orchestra. Each one of us has a unique song to play in this Grand Symphony. What a different world it would be if we all understood and acted as if we are one.