

We listen to Swami Vivekananda (“**The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda**”) exhort the Graduate Philosophy Society of Harvard University on 25th March 1896: *“Love everyone as your own self, because the whole universe is one.”* What does this loving mean?

Thich Nhat Hanh, in “**How to Love**” teaches us that *“True love includes a sense of responsibility and accepting the other person as she is, with all her strengths and weaknesses. If you only like the best things in a person, that is not love. You have to accept her weaknesses and bring your patience, understanding, and energy to help her....”*

The psychologist Erich Fromm writes in “**The Art of Loving**” that *“the main condition for the achievement of love is the overcoming of one’s narcissism.”* Thomas Merton explains this in “**No Man is an Island**”: *“The beginning of love is....the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image. If in loving them we do not love what they are, but only their potential likeness to ourselves, then we do not love them: we only love the reflection of ourselves we find in them.”*



Evening in Coimbatore — photograph by the Bibliophile

In a letter to his son (14 years young), written on 10th November 1958 (“**Steinbeck: A Life in Letters**”), the author and Nobel Laureate John Steinbeck writes: *“There are several kinds of love. One is a selfish, mean, grasping, egotistical thing which uses love for self-importance. This is the ugly and crippling kind. The other is an outpouring of everything good in you — of kindness and consideration and respect....The first kind can make you sick and small and weak but the second can release in you strength, and courage and goodness and even wisdom you didn’t know you had.”*

**If we want the world to heal and bloom, we would do well to ponder something in**

**Swami Vivekananda’s lines deeply — he says love “everyone”...**

Peace ☐

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