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THE FORCES OF LOVE, EROS, AND SEX

Greetings in the Name of the Lord. I bring you blessings, my dearest friends. Blessed is this hour.

Tonight I would like to discuss three particular forces in the universe: the love force as it manifests between the sexes, the erotic force, and the sex force. These are three distinctly different principles or forces that manifest differently on every plane, from the highest to the lowest. Humanity has always confused these three principles. In fact, it is little known that three separate forces exist and what the differences between them are. There is so much confusion about this that it will be quite useful for my friends to hear what the reality is.

The erotic force is one of the most potent forces in existence and has tremendous momentum and impact. It is supposed to serve as the bridge between sex and love, yet it rarely does. In a spiritually highly developed person, the erotic force carries the entity from the erotic experience, which in itself is of short duration, into the permanent state of pure love. However, even the strong momentum of the erotic force carries the soul just so far and no farther. It is bound to dissolve if the personality does not learn to love, by cultivating all the qualities and requirements necessary for true love. Only when love has been learned does the spark of the erotic force remain alive. By itself, without love, the erotic force burns itself out. This of course is the trouble with marriage. Since most people are incapable of pure love, they are also incapable of attaining ideal marriage.

Eros seems in many ways similar to love. It brings forth impulses a human being would not have otherwise: impulses of unselfishness and affection he or she might have been incapable of before. This is why eros is so very often confused with love. But eros is just as often confused with the sex instinct which, like eros, also manifests as a great urge.

Now, my friends, I would like to show you what the spiritual meaning and purpose of the erotic force is, particularly as far as humanity is concerned. Without eros, many people would never experience the great feeling and beauty that is contained in real love. They would never get the taste of it and the yearning for love would remain deeply submerged in their souls. Their fear of love would remain stronger than their desire.

Eros is the nearest thing to love the undeveloped spirit can experience. It lifts the soul out of sluggishness, out of mere contentment and vegetation. It causes the soul to surge, to go out of itself. When this force comes upon even the most undeveloped people they become able to surpass themselves. Even a criminal will temporarily feel, at least toward one person, a goodness he has never known. The utterly selfish person will, while this feeling lasts, have unselfish impulses. Lazy people will get out of their inertia. The routine-bound person will naturally and without effort get rid of static habits. The erotic force will lift a person out of separateness, be it only for a short time.

Eros gives the soul a foretaste of unity and teaches the fearful psyche the longing for it. The more strongly one has experienced eros, the less contentment will the soul find in the pseudo-security of separateness. Even an otherwise thoroughly self-centered person may be able to make a sacrifice during the experience of eros. So you see, my friends, eros enables people to do things they are disinclined to do otherwise; things that are closely linked with love. It is easy to see why eros is so often confused with love.

How then is eros different from love? Love is a permanent state in the soul. Love can only exist if the foundation for it is prepared through development and purification. Love does not come and go at random; eros does. Eros hits with sudden force, often taking a person unaware and even unwilling to go through the experience. Only if the soul is prepared to love and has built the foundation for it will eros be the bridge to the love that is manifest between a man and a woman.

Thus you can see how important the erotic force is. Without the erotic force hitting them and getting them out of their rut, many human beings would never be ready for a more conscious search for the breaking down of their own walls of separation. The erotic experience puts the seed into the soul and makes it long for unity, which is the great aim in the Plan of Salvation. As long as the soul is separate, loneliness and unhappiness must be its lot. The erotic experience enables the personality to long for union with at least one other being. In the heights of the spirit world, union exists among all beings -- and thus with God. In the earth sphere, the erotic force is a propelling power regardless of whether or not its real meaning is understood. This is so even though it is often misused and enjoyed for its own sake, while it lasts. It is not utilized to cultivate love in the soul, so it peters out. Nevertheless, its effect will inevitably remain in the soul.

Eros comes to people suddenly in certain stages of their lives, even to those who are afraid of the apparent risk of adventuring away from separateness. People who are afraid of their emotions and afraid of life as such will often do anything in their power to avoid -- subconsciously and ignorantly -- the great experience of unity. Although this fear exists in many human beings, there are few indeed who have not experienced some opening in the soul where eros could touch them. For the fear-ridden soul that resists the experience, this is good medicine regardless of the fact that sorrow and loss may follow due to other psychological factors. However, there are also those who are over-emotional, and although they may know other fears of life, they are not afraid of this particular experience. In fact, the beauty of it is a great temptation to them and therefore they hunt greedily for it. They look for one subject after another, emotionally too ignorant to understand the deep meaning of Eros. They are unwilling to learn pure love, and simply use the erotic force for their pleasure and when it is worn out they hunt elsewhere. This is an abuse and cannot continue without ill effects. Such a personality will have to make amends for the abuse -- even if it was done in ignorance. In the same vein, the over-fearful coward will have to make up for trying to cheat life by hiding from eros and thus withholding from the soul a medicine, valuable if used properly. Most people in this category have a vulnerable point somewhere in their soul through which eros can enter. There are also a few who have built such a tight wall of fear and pride around their souls that they avoid this part of life experience entirely and so shortchange their own development. This fear might exist because in a former life they had an unhappy experience with eros, or perhaps because the soul has greedily abused the beauty of the erotic force without building it into love. In either case, the personality may have chosen to be more careful. If this decision is too rigid and stringent, the opposite extreme will follow. In the next incarnation circumstances will be chosen in such a way that a balance is established until the soul reaches a harmonious state wherein there are no more

extremes. This balancing in future incarnations always applies to all aspects of the personality. In order to approach this harmony to some extent at least, the proper balance between reason, emotion, and will has to be achieved.

The erotic experience often mingles with the sexual urge, but it does not always have to be that way. These three forces -- love, eros, and sex -- often appear completely separately, while sometimes two mingle, such as eros and sex, or eros and love to the extent the soul is capable of love, or sex and a semblance of love. Only in the ideal case do all three forces mingle harmoniously.

The sex force is the creative force on any level of existence. In the highest spheres, the same sex force creates spiritual life, spiritual ideas, and spiritual concepts and principles. On the lower planes, the pure and unspiritualized sex force creates life as it manifests in that particular sphere; it creates the outer shell or vehicle of the entity destined to live in that sphere.

The pure sex force is utterly selfish. Sex without eros and without love is referred to as animalistic. Pure sex exists in all living creatures: animals, plants, and minerals. Eros begins with the stage of development where the soul is incarnated as a human being. And pure love is to be found in the higher spiritual realms. This does not mean that eros and sex no longer exist in beings of higher development, but rather that all three blend in harmoniously, are refined, and become less and less selfish. Nor do I mean that a human being should not try to achieve a harmonious blend of all three forces.

In rare cases, eros alone, without sex and love, exists for a limited time. This is usually referred to as platonic love. But sooner or later with the somewhat healthy person, eros and sex will mingle. The sex force, instead of being suppressed, is taken up by the erotic force and both flow in one current. The more the three forces remain separate, the unhealthier the personality is.

Another frequent combination, particularly in relationships of long standing, is the coexistence of genuine love with sex, but without eros. Although love cannot be perfect unless all three forces blend together, there is a certain amount of affection, companionship, fondness, mutual respect, and a sex-relationship that is crudely sexual without the erotic spark which evaporated some time ago. When eros is missing, the sexual relationship must eventually suffer. Now this is the problem with most marriages, my friends. There is hardly a human being who is not puzzled by the question of what to do to maintain the spark in the relationship which seems to evaporate the more habit and familiarity with one another sets in. You may not have posed the question in terms of three distinct forces, yet you know and sense that something goes out of a marriage that was present at the beginning; that spark is actually eros. You find yourself in a vicious circle and think that marriage is a hopeless proposition. No, my friends, it is not, even if you cannot as yet attain the ideal.

In the ideal partnership of love between two people all three forces have to be represented. With love you do not seem to have much difficulty, for in most cases one would not marry if there did not exist at least the willingness to love. I will not discuss at this point the extreme cases where this is not so. I am focusing on a relationship where the choice is a mature one and yet the partners cannot get around the pitfall of becoming bound by time and habit, because elusive eros has disappeared. With sex it is very much the same. The sex force is present in most healthy human beings and may only begin to fade -- particularly with women -- when eros has left. Men may then seek eros else-where. For the sexual relationship must eventually suffer unless eros is maintained.

How can you keep eros? That is the big question, my dear ones. Eros can be maintained only if it is used as a bridge to true partnership in love in the highest sense. How is this done?

Let us first look for the main element in the erotic force. When you analyze it, you will find that it is the adventure, the search for the knowledge of the other soul. This desire lives in every created spirit. The inherent life-force must finally bring the entity out of its separation. Eros strengthens the curiosity to know the other being. As long as there is something new to find in the other soul and as long as you reveal yourself, eros will live. The moment you believe you have found all there is to find, and have revealed all there is to reveal, eros will leave. It is as simple as that with eros. But where your great error comes in is that you believe there is a limit to the revealing of any soul, yours or another's. When a certain point of usually quite superficial revelation is reached, you are under the impression that this is all there is, and you settle down to a placid life without further searching.

Eros has carried you this far with its strong impact. But after this point, your will to further search the unlimited depths of the other person and voluntarily reveal and share your own inward search determines whether you have used eros as a bridge to love. This, in turn, is always determined by your will to learn how to love. Only in this way will you maintain the spark of eros in your love. Only in this way will you continue to find the other and let yourself be found. There is no limit, for the soul is endless and eternal: a whole lifetime would not suffice to know it. There can never be a point when you know the other soul entirely, nor when you are known entirely. The soul is alive, and nothing that is alive remains static. It has the capacity to reveal even deeper layers that already exist. The soul is also in constant change and movement as anything spiritual is by its very nature. Spirit means life and life means change. Since soul is spirit, the soul can never be known utterly. If people had the wisdom, they would realize that and make of marriage the marvelous journey of adventure it is supposed to be, forever finding new vistas, instead of simply being carried as far as you are taken by the first momentum of eros. You should use this potent momentum of eros as the initial thrust it is, and then find through it the urge to go on further under your own steam. Then you will have brought eros into true love in marriage.

Marriage is intended by God for human beings and its divine purpose is not merely procreation. That is only one detail. The spiritual idea of marriage is to enable the soul to reveal itself and to be constantly on the search for the other to discover forever new vistas of the other being. The more this happens, the happier the marriage will be, the more firmly and safely it will be rooted, and the less it will be in danger of an unhappy ending. Then it will fulfill its spiritual purpose.

In practice, however, marriage hardly ever works that way. You reach a certain state of familiarity and habit and you think you know the other. It does not even occur to you that the other does not know you by any means. He or she may know certain facets of your being, but that is all. This search for the other being, as well as for self-revelation, requires inner activity and alertness. But since people are often tempted into inner inactivity, while outer activity may be all the stronger as an overcompensation, they are being lured to sink into a state of restfulness, cherishing the delusion of already knowing each other fully. This is the pitfall. It is the beginning of the end at worst, or at best a compromise leaving you with a gnawing, unfulfilled longing. At this point the relationship turns static. It is no longer alive even though it may have some very pleasant features.

Habit is a great temptress, pulling one toward sluggishness and inertia, so that one does not have to try and work or be alert any more.

Two people may arrange an apparently satisfactory relationship, and as the years go by they face two possibilities. The first is that either one or both partners become openly and consciously dissatisfied. For the soul needs to surge ahead, to find and to be found, so as to dissolve separateness, regardless of how much the other side of the personality fears union and is tempted by inertia. This dissatisfaction is either conscious -- although in most instances the real reason for it is ignored -- or it is unconscious. In either case, the dissatisfaction is stronger than the temptation of the comfort of inertia and sluggishness. Then the marriage will be disrupted and one or both partners will delude themselves into thinking that with a new partner it will be different, particularly after eros has perhaps struck again. As long as this principle is not understood, a person may go from one partnership to another, sustaining feelings only as long as eros is at work.

The second possibility is that the temptation of a semblance of peace is stronger. Then the partners may remain together and may certainly fulfill something together, but a great unfulfilled need will always lurk in their souls. Since men are by nature more active and adventurous, they tend to be polygamous and are therefore more tempted by infidelity than women. Thus you can also understand what the underlying motive for men's inclination to be unfaithful is. Women tend much more to be sluggish and are therefore better prepared to compromise. This is why they tend to be monogamous. Of course, there are exceptions, in both sexes. Such infidelity is often as puzzling to the active partner as to the "victim." They do not understand themselves. The unfaithful one may suffer just as much as the one whose trust has been betrayed.

In the situation where compromise is chosen, both people stagnate, at least in one very important aspect of their soul development. They find refuge in the steady comfort of their relationship. They may even believe that they are happy in it, and this may be true to some degree. The advantages of friendship, companionship, mutual respect, and a pleasant life together with a well-established routine outweigh the unrest of the soul, and the partners may have enough discipline to remain faithful to one another. Yet an important element of their relationship is missing: the revealing of soul to soul as much as possible.

Only when two people do this can they be purified together and thus help each other. Two developed souls, who have a knowledge of purification in their subconscious, though they may ignore the various steps of these teachings, can yet fulfill one another by revealing themselves, by searching the depths of the other's soul. Thus what is in each soul will emerge into their conscious minds, and purification will take place. Then the life-spark is maintained so that the relationship can never stagnate and degenerate into a dead end. For you who are on this path, and follow the various steps of these teachings, it will be easier to overcome the pitfalls and dangers of the marital relationship and to repair damage that has occurred unwittingly.

In this way, my dear friends, you not only maintain eros, that vibrating life-force, but you also transform it into true love. Only in a true partnership of love and eros can you discover in your partner new levels of being you have not heretofore perceived. And you yourself will be purified also by putting away your pride and revealing yourself as you really are. Your relationship will always be new, regardless of how well you think you know each other already. All masks must fall, not only the superficial but the real, which you may not even have been aware of. Then your love

will remain alive. It will never be static; it will never stagnate. You will never have to search elsewhere. There is so much to see and discover in this land of the other soul you have chosen, whom you continue to respect, but in whom you seem to miss the life-spark that once brought you together. You will never have to be afraid of losing the love of your beloved; this fear will be justified only if you refrain from risking the journey of self-revelation together. This, my friends, is marriage in its true sense and the only way it can be the glory it is supposed to be.

Each of you should think deeply about whether you are afraid to leave the four walls of your own separateness. Some of my friends are unaware that to stay separate is almost a conscious wish. With many of you it is this way: you desire marriage because one part of you yearns for it -- and also because you do not want to be alone. Quite superficial and vain reasons may be added to explain the deep yearning within your soul. But aside from this yearning and aside from the superficial and selfish motives of your unfulfilled desire for partnership, there must also be an unwillingness to risk the journey and adventure of revealing yourself. An integral part of life remains to be fulfilled by you -- if not in this life, then in future lives.

Should you find yourself alone, you may, with this knowledge and this truth, repair the damage that you have done to your own soul by harboring wrong concepts in your unconscious. You may discover your fear of the great adventurous journey with another, which will explain why you are alone. This understanding should prove helpful and may even enable your emotions to change sufficiently so that your outer life may change too. This depends on you. Whoever is unwilling to take the risk of this great adventure cannot succeed in the greatest venture humanity knows -- marriage.

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Only when you meet love, life, and the other being in such readiness will you be able to bestow the greatest gift on your beloved, namely your true self. And then you must inevitably receive the same gift from your beloved. But to do that, a certain emotional and spiritual maturity has to exist. If this maturity is present, you will intuitively choose the right partner, one who has, in essence, the same maturity and readiness to embark on this journey. The choice of a partner who is unwilling comes out of the hidden fear of undertaking the journey yourself. You magnetically draw people and situations toward you which correspond to your subconscious desires and fears. You know that.

Humanity, on the whole, is very far away from this ideal, but that does not change the idea or the ideal. In the meantime you have to learn to make the best of it. And you who are fortunate

enough to be on this path can learn much wherever you stand, be it only in understanding why you cannot realize the happiness that a part of your soul yearns for. To discover that is already a great deal and will enable you in this life or in future lives to get nearer to the realization of this idea. Whatever your situation is, whether you have a partner or are alone, search your heart and it will furnish you the answer to your conflict. The answer must come from within yourself, and in all probability it will relate to your own fear, unwillingness, and your ignorance of the facts. Search and you will know. Understand that God's purpose in the partnership of love is the complete mutual revelation of one soul to another -- not just a partial revelation.

Physical revelation is easy for many. Emotionally you share to a certain degree -- usually as far as eros carries you. But then you lock the door, and that is the moment when your troubles begin.

There are many who are not willing to reveal anything. They want to remain alone and aloof. They will not touch the experience of revealing themselves and of finding the soul of the other person. They avoid this in every way they can.

My dear ones, once again: understand how important the erotic principle is in your sphere. It helps many who may be unwilling and unprepared for the love experience. It is what you call "falling in love," or "romance." Through eros the personality gets a taste of what the ideal love could be. As I said before, many use this feeling of happiness carelessly and greedily, never passing the threshold into true love. True love demands much more of people in a spiritual sense. If they do not meet this demand, they forfeit the goal for which their soul strives. This extreme of hunting for romance is as wrong as the other, where not even the potent force of eros can enter the tightly locked door. But in most cases, when the door is not too tightly bolted, eros does come to you at certain stages of your life. Whether you can then use eros as a bridge to love depends on you. It depends on your development, your willingness, your courage, your humility, and your ability to reveal yourself.

Are there any questions in connection with this subject, my dear friends?

QUESTION: Yes. It is so difficult for a woman to talk to a man. Men don't answer when one tries to get into a conversation touching the emotional understanding. That makes it very, very difficult for the woman.

ANSWER: Here is a great error, my dear. But let us first establish one fact that should be well understood. Woman is by nature more emotionally inclined. Man is by nature more spiritually, or on a lower level, more intellectually inclined. By that I do not mean that he has to be what you call an intellectual. It is simply that usually the reasoning faculty is stronger in men. Because of this the revealing of his emotions is a very difficult step for a man. In this a woman can help him. The man will help the woman in other ways. The mistake you make is in thinking that revelation and the meeting of souls is brought about by talking. Oh, it may be a temporary crutch, it may be one detail; or rather it may be simply a tool, a means of expressing certain facets. But this is all. It is not in the talking that you find the other soul or that you reveal yourself, though this may be a part of it. It is in the being that this whole and basic attitude is determined.

It is the woman who is stronger emotionally. For her it is usually easier to muster the courage to meet soul to soul and touch the deepest core of longing that is also in man. If she can use her

intuition and reach that part of her partner, he will respond provided he has the maturity. He must respond. Whether this response comes occasionally through a conversation or not, is not so important. It is not a question of whether a verbal discussion serves in reaching the other soul. Certainly, speaking is a part of it, together with all the other faculties. But the ability to speak about things is not the determining factor. First the inner basis has to be established. Then you will be flexible enough to use all the faculties God has given you. To find and meet the other soul means going into the state of inner being; the doing is only an incidental result, a mere detail which is part of the outer manifestation. Is that clear?

QUESTION: Yes, it is clear. And I think it is wonderful. In other words it is the task of the woman to find the other soul?

ANSWER: It may often be that it is easier for the woman to take the first necessary steps after eros is no longer capable of maintaining its own momentum. But both need to have the basic willingness to go on the journey together. As stated before, the woman often finds it easier to reveal herself, to let the emotions come out. The mature woman who is earnestly willing to undertake the adventure of true marriage will have the mature and healthy instinct to find the right partner. The same applies to the man, of course.

Once this willingness exists in both, either one may lead the way. It does not make any difference who starts. It may often be the woman, but it may also be the man at times. Whoever starts it, a time will come when the other one will also lead and help. In a relationship that is alive, healthy, and flexible, it must alternate and change constantly. At any given time, whoever is the stronger, the leader, will help in the liberation of the other. For this soul-revelation is a liberation -- liberating the other soul from the prison of loneliness, and liberating the self. This prison may even appear comfortable if you live and stagnate in it long enough. One should not wait for the other to start. Whoever is more mature and courageous at a particular instant will start, and will thus raise the maturity of the other which may then surpass his or her own. Thus the helper becomes the helped; the liberator becomes the liberated.

QUESTION: When you talk about the revelation of a soul to another, do you mean that, on a higher level, this is the way the soul reveals itself to God?

ANSWER: It is the same thing. But before you can truly reveal yourself to God, you have to learn to reveal yourself to another beloved human being. And when you do that, you reveal yourself to God too. Many people want to start with revealing themselves to the personal God. But actually, deep in their hearts, such revelation to God is only a subterfuge because it is abstract and remote. No other human being can see or hear what they reveal. They are still alone. One does not have to do the one thing that seems so risky, requires so much humility and thus threatens to be humiliating. By revealing yourself to another human being, you accomplish so much that cannot be accomplished by revelation to God who knows you anyway, and who really does not need your revelation.

When you find the other soul and meet it, you fulfill your destiny. When you find another soul, you also find another particle of God, and if you reveal your own soul, you reveal a particle of God and give something divine to another person. When eros comes to you, it will lift you up far enough so that you will sense and know what it is in you that longs for this experience and what is

your true self, which is longing to reveal itself. Without eros, you are merely aware of the lazy outer layers.

Do not avoid eros when it wants to come to you. If you understand the spiritual idea behind it, you will use it wisely. God will then be able to lead you and enable you to make the best of helping another being and yourself on the way to true love, of which purification must be an integral part. Although your purification work through a deeply committed relationship manifests differently than it does in the work on this path, it will help you toward a purification of the same order.

QUESTION: Is it possible for a soul to be so rich that it can reveal itself to more than one soul?

ANSWER: My dear friend, do you say that facetiously?

QUESTION: No, I do not. I am asking whether polygamy is within the scheme of spiritual law.

ANSWER: No, it certainly is not. And when someone thinks it may be within the scheme of spiritual development, that is a subterfuge. The personality is looking for the right partner. Either the person is too immature to have found the right partner, or the right partner is there and the polygamous person is simply carried away by eros' momentum, never lifting this force up into the volitional love that demands overcoming and working in order to pass the threshold I mentioned before.

In cases like this, the one with an adventurous personality is looking and looking, always finding another part of a being, always revealing himself or herself only so far and no further, or perhaps each time revealing another facet of his or her personality. However, when it comes to the inner nucleus, the door is shut. Eros then departs and a new search is started. Each time it is a disappointment that can only be understood when you grasp these truths.

Raw sexual instinct also enters into the longing for this great journey, but sexual satisfaction begins to suffer if the relationship is not kept on the level I show you here. It is, in fact, inevitably of short duration. There is no richness in revealing oneself to many. In such cases, one either reveals the same wares all over again to new partners, or, as I said before, one displays different facets of one's personality. The more partners you try to share yourself with, the less you give to each. That is inevitably so. It cannot be different.

QUESTION: Certain people believe that they can cut out sex and eros and the desire for a partner and live completely for love of humanity. Do you think it is possible that man or woman can swear off this part of life?

ANSWER: It is possible, but it is certainly not healthy or honest. I might say that there is perhaps one person in ten million who may have such a task. That may be possible. It may be in the karma for a particular soul who is already developed this far, has gone through the true partnership experience, and comes for a specific mission. There may also be certain karmic debts which have to be paid off. In most cases -- and here I can safely generalize -- avoidance of

partnership is unhealthy. It is an escape. The real reason is fear of love, fear of the life experience, but the fearful renunciation is rationalized as a sacrifice. To anyone who would come to me with such a problem, I would say: Examine yourself. Go below the surface layers of your conscious reasoning and explanations for your attitude in this respect. Try to find out whether you fear love and disappointment. Isn't it more comfortable to just live for yourself and have no difficulties? Isn't really this what you feel deep inside and what you want to cover up with other reasons? The great humanitarian work you want to do may be for a worthy cause, indeed, but do you really think one excludes the other? Wouldn't it be much more likely that the great task you have taken upon yourself would be better fulfilled if you learned personal love too?

If all these questions were truthfully answered, the person would be bound to see that he or she is escaping. Personal love and fulfillment is man's and woman's destiny in most cases, for so much can be learned in personal love that cannot be attained in any other way. And to form a durable and solid relationship in a marriage is the greatest victory a human being can achieve, for it is one of the most difficult things there are, as you can well see in your world. This life experience will bring the soul closer to God than lukewarm good deeds.

QUESTION: I was going to ask a question in connection with my previous one: Celibacy is supposed to be a highly spiritualized form of development in certain religious sects. On the other hand, polygamy is also recognized in some religions -- the Mormons, for instance. I understand what you said, but how do you justify these attitudes on the part of people who are supposed to look for unity with God?

ANSWER: There is human error in every religion. In one religion it may be one kind of error, in other religions another. Here you simply have two extremes. When such dogmas or rules come into existence in the various religions, whether at one extreme or another, it is always a rationalization and subterfuge to which the individual soul constantly resorts. This is an attempt to explain away the counter-currents of the fearful or greedy soul with good motives.

There is a common belief that anything pertaining to sex is sinful. The sex instinct arises in the infant. The more immature the creature, the more sexuality is separated from love, and therefore the more selfish it is. Anything without love is "sinful," if you want to use this word. Nothing that is coupled with love is wrong -- or sinful.

There is no such thing as a force, a principle, or an idea that is in itself sinful -- whether sex or anything else.

In the growing child who is naturally immature, the sex drive will first manifest selfishly. Only if and when the whole personality grows and matures harmoniously will sex become integrated with love. Out of ignorance, humanity has long believed that sex as such is sinful. It was kept hidden, and therefore this part of the personality could not grow up. Nothing that remains in hiding can grow; you know that. Therefore, even in many grownups, sex remains childish and separate from love. And this, in turn, led humanity to believe more and more that sex is a sin and that the truly spiritual person must abstain from it. Thus one of those oft-mentioned vicious circles came into existence.

Because of the belief that sex was sinful, the instinct could not grow and meld with the love force. Consequently, sex in fact often is selfish and loveless, raw and animalistic. If people would realize -- and they are beginning to do so increasingly -- that the sex instinct is as natural and God-given as any other universal force and in itself not more sinful than any other existing force, they would then break this vicious circle and more human beings would let their sex drives mature and mingle with love -- and with eros, for that matter.

How many people exist for whom sex is completely separate from love! They not only suffer from bad conscience when the sex urge manifests, but they also find themselves in the position of being unable to handle sexual feelings with the person they really love. This occurs quite often in some measure, although it does seem extreme. Because of these distorted conditions and this vicious circle, humanity came to believe that you cannot find God when you respond to your sex urges. This is all wrong; you cannot kill off something that is alive. You can only hide it so that it will come out in other ways which may be much more harmful. Only in the very rarest cases does the sex force really become sublimated so as to make this creative force manifest in other realms. Sublimation in its real sense can never occur when there is fear and escape involved, as is the case with most human beings. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: Perfectly, thank you.

QUESTION: If two young people fall in love and marry and they are not well matched and they don't understand each other, is it possible that these two people could go on this journey together and have a good marriage?

ANSWER: If both are willing to learn love for one another and gain maturity together. Even where an immature choice was made, it could still become a successful marriage, but only if both are willing and are clearly aware of what marriage is supposed to be. If both lack the will and sense of responsibility for that, they will not have the desire to make such a journey together.

QUESTION: How does friendship between two people fit into this picture?

ANSWER: Friendship is brotherly love. Such friendship can also exist between man and woman. Eros may want to sneak in, but reason and will can still direct the way in which the feelings take their course. Discretion, and a healthy balance between reason, emotion, and will are necessary to prevent the feelings from going into an improper channel.

QUESTION: Is divorce against spiritual law?

ANSWER: Not necessarily. We do not have fixed rules like that. There are cases when divorce is an easy way out, a mere escape. There are other cases when divorce is reasonable because the choice to marry was made in immaturity and both partners lack the desire to fulfill the responsibility of marriage in its true sense. If only one is willing -- or neither -- divorce is better than staying together and making a farce out of marriage. Unless both are willing to take this journey together, it is better to break clean than to let one prevent the growth of the other. That, of course, happens. It is better to terminate a mistake than to remain indefinitely in it without finding an effective remedy.

One should not, however, leave a marriage lightly. Even though it was a mistake and does not work, one should try to find the reasons and do one's very best to search out and perhaps get over the hurdles that are in the way. Since they are due to inner mistakes, the partners could try to make the best of it, if both are in any way willing. One can learn a lot from one's past and present mistakes. To generalize that divorce is wrong in any case is just as incorrect as to say that it is always right. One should certainly do one's best, even if the marriage is not the ideal experience that I discussed tonight. Few people are ready and mature enough for it. You can make yourself ready by trying to make the best of your past mistakes and learn from them.

My dearest friends, think carefully about what I have said. There is much food for thought in what I told you, for each of you here, and for all those who will read my words. There is not a single person who cannot learn something from them.

I want to close this lecture with the assurance to all of you that we in the spirit world are deeply grateful to God for your good efforts, for your growth. It is our greatest joy and our greatest happiness. And so, my dear ones, receive the blessings of the Lord again; may your hearts be filled by this wonderful strength coming to you from the world of light and truth. Go in peace and in happiness, my dear ones, each one of you. Be in God!

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