

The Way and the Goal

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Avatar Meher Baba the way and the goal

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Love and Sex

A Talk in Mandali Hall by Eruch Jessawala

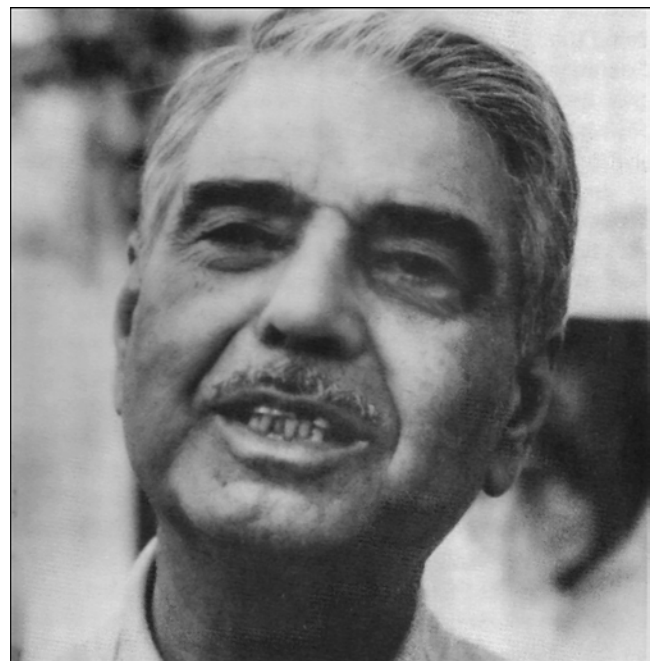
Rise Above Sex and Begin to Love

Question: There always seems to be a great deal of emphasis and discussion among Baba followers in the West concerning the matter of sex, as if Baba's instructions about it were ambiguous. Were not His instructions regarding sex quite clear? Could you clarify this?

Eruch: All that you have read in Meher Baba's books about sex is so clear and firm, indeed. We have to strive to rise above sex and begin to *love*—love in the real sense. People have come here from the West and many, many times put questions to us about sex and love; and each time I have responded by stating that Baba wants us to rise above sex, to transcend our sex impulses and begin really to love. Yet so often the question comes back, What are you talking about? How can there be love without sex? I can only reply, Well, this is what I have gathered from all that Meher Baba has said on the subject! We human beings are so often entrenched in our animality, however, so enmeshed in our carnal passions, that it has become quite natural to encounter and struggle with this problem of sex. It is not that there is anything inherently wrong in our having sex impulses—it is simply that, as sentient human beings, it behooves us to strive to live as ones who are blessed with the capacity to recognize what love really is.

Divine Love and Human Love

"Divine love is qualitatively different from human love. Human love is for the many in the One, and divine love is . . . for the One in the many. Human love leads to innumerable complications and tangles, but divine love leads to integration and freedom."
Meher Baba



Eruch Jessawala

Baba has explained to us that not only is the sex play of physical lovemaking the polar opposite of love in the truest sense, but that even the most exalted form of human love—the love which an adoring mother feels for her child—is not really love at all, but only a high degree of *affection*. Why? Because, Baba said, where there is any trace of satisfaction or expectation, there is not love, but only one level or another of affection. With *love*, according to Baba,

there can never be satisfaction, only *the* dissatisfaction of feeling that one *has* not loved enough, only the longing to love more and more with no concern whatever for the reciprocation of love. Even with a mother's love, there is satisfaction and expectation, satisfaction derived from both showing affection and in turn receiving it in response, and expectation that the "love" which is showered upon the child will be reciprocated. So it is that Baba has pointed out to us and made us aware that what we commonly take to be love is not really love, in its true sense, at all.

Love: The Well-Spring of All Creation

"Life and love are inseparable from each other. Where there is life, there is love. Even the most rudimentary consciousness is always trying to burst out of its limitations and experience some kind of unity with other forms. "

Meher Baba

Baba once told me something sublime in relation to this subject of love. He explained that it is completely natural for a human being to fall in love. Why? Because as a human being, you have been given a human form to enable you to love: to be loved, and to share love. It is for Love itself, He said, that the whole Creation sprang into existence: It was because I, Baba declared, being Love, needed to *be* loved. Being the only One, the only Being-the very Is-ness of all Existence-I had no other way to share Love. Love, being love, needs to be shared-it *must* be shared! It needs to flow: it needs, in short, to love and be loved. This trait of give-and-take is innate in Love-it is the very nature of Love.

Because God is Love, Baba explained, there is nothing for Love to do but to placate itself by playing a game, a game of "solitaire," so to speak. Everyone knows about the card game of Solitaire-when you are alone and you want to play cards you can play a particular sort of card game in which you establish an imaginary partnership to play the game. Describing how Creation came into being, Baba said, "I started playing the game called Solitaire. Being Existence Infinite, eternally and unendingly Myself, I *imagined* a partner with which I could share My Love. Because that imagining emanated from Existence Infinite Eternal, it projected itself into Being, into Creation-because 'am Existence, that Imagination existed!"

The Birthright of Each Soul

"It is for love that the whole universe sprang into existence, and it is for the sake of love that it is kept going. "

Meher Baba

This, then, is the explanation which Baba gave for Creation: *to share His Love*. He also went on to explain how, after passing through each of the evolutionary stages, the soul then *finally* comes to inherit this human form, and He often emphasized how *sublime* this form is. It is through this form alone that each soul one day recognizes its true identity

with *the* Truth: that it is in fact Omnipotent ... in *fact* Omniscient ... in fact All-Bliss. In short, it is solely through this incredible human form that the soul realizes its own Infinity, and ultimately recognizes and claims its birthright of its true identity as God Himself.

How does Baba characterize your experience at the moment when you realize your True Self? Very simply, He says that that experience makes you realize what you already are! What is the point, then, of wasting this opportunity of a human lifetime on crazy notions of spirituality and spiritual advancement, which boil down to nothing more than seeking ways to realize what you already are? It is ridiculous, Baba says-absurd! You *are* that Infinite One; and it is your *birthright* to realize who you already are. We are not meant to waste this precious, fleeting moment of life in pursuit of intellectual or even spiritual gymnastics. What this moment is meant for is that which even the angels envy: *love*. The human heart is imbued with the unique capacity for loving-it yearns to love: it wants to share love, and it wants to be loved. So, now, while we can, we must do everything possible to derive the charm of love, for it is only as human beings that we can actually begin to love.

The Process of God's Divine Game

"God has to suffer apparent differentiation into a multiplicity of souls in order to carry on the game of love. They are His own forms, and in relation to them He once assumes the role Of the Divine Lover and the Divine

Beloved. "

Meher Baba

What is the source of that *love* which you can begin to experience as human beings, Baba would ask. It is none other than Myself. I have given that Love-shared it with you-so that you can return it to Me, and in the process, derive the charm of loving. In the course of its return, however, Baba pointed out, that Love gets dissipated in Joving shadows rather than loving the Source of Love itself!

Baba explained that, in the process of the return of love to Love itself, a man will inevitably fall in love with a woman, and vice-versa. It is natural, and there is nothing *wrong* in that. There comes a time in this process of love seeking Love, in the process of God's Divine Game of loving and being loved, that a man sees a woman, or a woman sees a man, and something flares up deep within them. According to Baba, this experience occurs only once in a great while, and it is indescribable: *all* of the heart goes out to that person, and the experience is an *agonizingly happy* one.

The result is that the person who has such an experience wants to do anything and everything for that person to whom his heart has gone out. You want to go all out for that person, thinking and caring endlessly for nothing but that person: you go truly mad with love, in short. This is a beautiful moment, the rarest moment for which this human form has been created-we have inherited this form *for* this particular moment.



Avatar Meher Baba at Arthur's Seat

Do Not Waste the Opportunity

When such a moment dawns, Baba says, we should try our utmost not to lose it. We must try to nurture it, and do everything possible to preserve it. For when we allow the feeling of that sublime moment to grow, it bursts into a flame, and then a fire. That fire is the beginning of real love, a burning experience of being *consumed*.

If at this point, Baba says, instead of allowing that feeling to be consummated, you get yourself *consumed* in it, then you are no more—you become lost in it and are yourself consumed. Unfortunately, however, what tends to happen—through our human frailties—is that we waste the opportunity; and again we get another such opportunity, and then again we waste it; and on and on it goes. How do we waste the opportunity? We waste it by consummating the feeling through sex play culminating in intercourse. We waste this divine opportunity by consummating that love rather than being consumed by it.

The stream of love can never become clear and steady until it is disentangled from the(se) limiting and perverting forms of lower love. The lower is the enemy of the higher.
Meher Baba

In giving us this explanation, Baba then demonstrated what happens as a result of consummating this divine impulse to love. You are now enmeshed in a dilemma: you put your hands over your head and you sit there, not knowing what

to do. The world now impresses itself upon you in full force, as you become surrounded by children and all the concerns of family life—and this experience, in contrast to that divine urge to love which preceded the consummation, creates within you an enormous conflict and struggle.

Be Consumed by Love

If on the other hand, instead of allowing yourself to consummate that feeling of love, you allow yourself to be consumed by it, the result is most beautiful and sublime. Then there is no such thing as individuality left: everything and every being seem to be one. In this experience consists the meaning of rising above sex. In such a state you begin to love so intensely, Baba said, that you eventually begin to love Him, the *Divine* Beloved from whom you have received that feeling of love. The time comes, He says, in your process of loving Me, when I Myself become your lover: I, the Beloved, become your lover! And you, who began as My lover, become transformed into My Beloved. In this transformation lies the Union that is the end of it all. That Union is called Realization, and when that occurs, nothing else remains. In that ultimate experience, Baba says, "I and you become one."

Sex, then, has to play its role in order to give us that experience which can ultimately help us to lose ourselves and find our Real Self. Time and again we play with sex, but *sex is there so that we can rise above it* and find our way to the ultimate goal: to be consumed in Divine Love.

Only by Beloved Baba's Grace—or that of the Perfect Master—is it possible to reach the Goal of being completely consumed in Love Divine. Along the way it inevitably happens that we engage in various interplays, which we call little love affairs, in our unconscious attempts to find True Love in the Divine Love Affair. With respect to such "interludes," Baba was always very clear and firm: if everyone wants to consummate that feeling of love for another person, then one must do everything within one's power to remain with that partner for a lifetime, to remain constant and true to that partner. We must not flitter around from one flower to another, like birds and bees. As human beings we are expected to be steadfast.

"The aspirant must choose one of the two courses which are open to him, He must take to the life of celibacy or the married life, and he must avoid at all costs a cheap compromise between the two."

Meher Baba

In so many words, this is what Baba has said. Man tries again and again to learn through his experiences, and again and again he falters and fails. Countless times I have heard and seen people come to Beloved Baba with all their woes, with all their failures—and every time without fail He forgives and comforts them, saying, "Don't worry—it's all right. Learn from it. Don't fall again."

His Infinite Compassion

My experience of observing Meher Baba's compassion had a great impact upon me. It was this quality of His which brought me to recognize Him as the One whom He declares Himself to be—God in human form. From the time I first met Meher Baba, I had been very much a critical observer, and whenever He would make a declaration regarding His Divinity, my mind would inevitably question: Is He That? Is He That? Over time, however, having observed on innumerable occasions His infinite care, patience, love, compassion and charity. I came to see that such were the attributes not simply of an extraordinary human being, but those of God Himself.

Never have I seen Meher Baba reject anyone. Never have I seen Him say, "Get out from My sight!" to any of His lovers who had disobeyed or failed Him in some way, only to come to Baba full of remorse. On the contrary, He would comfort them to the nth degree. If you were not to falter and fail, He would ask, how would there be any scope for Me to exercise My Infinite Compassion? Look at His Compassion! He forgives the most serious breaches and adds such comforting words on top of it all! How much, then, should we forgive the weaknesses—the sins of commission and omission—of our fellow beings? Time and again the God-Man has set a guideline for us. When as Jesus Christ He was asked how many times one should forgive one's neighbor, the Lord replied, "Seventy times seven," meaning not simply four hundred ninety times and no more, but endlessly, as long as there remains anything to forgive. This has ever been the message of the Lord.

A Balanced Attitude Toward Sex

Occasionally during the travail and struggle of the spiritual path, a negative reaction develops in the aspirant in which there is a feeling of great distaste—even detestation—for the opposite sex: such a person may feel like avoiding the sight of the opposite sex altogether and having nothing to do with them. It is an understandable reaction which springs from the desire and effort to transcend sexuality, but Meher Baba would never want such feelings in His lovers. He always encouraged a balanced attitude, a perspective of true detachment and understanding. You have no idea, He would say, how valuable and helpful each sex can be to the other, each in its own way: man as the provider and protector, and woman as the comforter. How beautiful the relationship of the sexes can be, He said, if only the proper understanding and balance are there.

Let us say that, as a man, you look upon women as something degrading, as an obstacle in your spiritual path. You may feel that they tempt you, or that they want to seduce you—in other words, that they come in the way of your progress toward overcoming your inclinations toward sexuality and discovering real love. If men happen to feel this way at times, they should realize that it is the same way that women sometimes feel toward men.

Baba has told us, however, that such negative attitudes should be avoided. As men, for example, He encouraged us to respect women and always hold them in high regard, recognizing them as the ones who have the special role of bearing us all and bringing us into the world. I am the Ancient One, He would say, and I have come from the womb of a woman—remember that. Woman is the very symbol of purity, and as such, it is the sacred duty of every woman to live a life of purity, knowing well that it is woman's unique responsibility to bear *Me*, to carry *Me* in her womb—with such words Baba would inculcate in us the highest respect for women. They are like gold mines, He would say, mines of the most precious treasure, bringing forth saints and sages, Perfect Masters and the Avatar Himself from their wombs. When they become aware of this divine responsibility and live accordingly, women are themselves priceless treasures, to be honored and respected and adored, not rejected.

Mani: In India we have a phrase we often use in this regard. If a man happens to make an inappropriate remark to some woman on the roadside or in a shop, for example, or if he should whistle at her or do something to tease her, then the woman will frequently respond by saying, "Haven't you got a mother and sister at home?" I have done it myself. One time in town some overly bold fellow mistook me for an American and made some comment, and I snapped back in the local dialect, "Haven't you got a mother or a sister at home?" The man was so embarrassed that he hung his head and cycled away as fast as he could!

A Lesson In Beauty

Eruch: There is a particular episode that happened in this very mandali hall which illustrates how the human mind tends to get attached to illusion and enmeshed in it. You

know that when He was here at Meherazad, Baba would usually remain in seclusion. At these times He would not want to be disturbed by any visitors and would generally not see anybody outside of the resident mandali who lived here with Him. When He wished to give darshan, Baba would normally go to Guruprasad in Poona, a large bungalow better suited to accommodating large crowds of people. Occasionally, however, it was Baba's pleasure to allow people to come to be with Him here at Meherazad, to enjoy His personal contact and companionship here at the place where He resided. Such a special occasion would be a grand day here, so beautiful, so thrilling, and no wonder—having the chance to enjoy the company of the God-man in His very home!

One such occasion I still vividly remember. The crowd entering mandali hall was tightly pressing as each person eagerly came forth to greet their Lord. My seat, as usual, was across from Baba near the window, and in the chair near the door would be the seat of the Lord. Visitors would come through the door at the front and then, after having darshan, they would pass out through the gate-door at the rear of the hall. Sometimes Baba would allow people to sit down in the hall, but many times they would simply be standing, with the hall completely packed. A sort of aisle-way would exist in front of Baba, and the queue of people would come in and greet Him and go on through and out the back.

Naturally, when so many people would be standing like that, I could not see to read His gestures if I were to remain seated in my usual spot. What I would always do in such cases was to stand up in the same spot where I would normally sit, leaning back against the window sill for support while craning my head around and over the crowd to be able to read Baba's gestures. Inevitably I would keep my position in that manner throughout any such gatherings.

During this particular darshan I am recalling, I remember how wonderful a sight it was to see each one coming to Baba with such feeling, being greeted by Baba, Baba reciprocating their love. What an atmosphere! It was very much like it is with you all coming here now, but much more charged with His physical presence.

At one point during this darshan program, I walked an extraordinarily beautiful woman. My gaze, of course, was on Baba at the time, because He was relating Himself and gesturing to the person who was before Him. Just at the moment this woman entered, however, my eyes turned toward the doorway and fell upon her. I found her to be stunningly beautiful, such a veritable vision of beauty, in fact, that I immediately found myself attracted to her beauty. As she approached and stood before Baba, my mind said, My, what a beauty she is—a very attractive young woman, indeed! You know how the mind is—it works so fast, and all these thoughts occurred in a blink.

As this young woman stood before Him, Baba was giving His love to her and patting her cheek. She then bowed down and started to leave. Just as she began to move away, Baba



Mani Irani

caught hold of her hand and stopped her. She looked up at Baba and smiled. Baba then turned her face to me and said, "Isn't she beautiful?" "Yes, Baba, she is really beautiful," I admitted. Then again He repeated, "See how beautiful she is?" and I again responded, "Yes, Baba, indeed she is."

The young woman was very embarrassed, of course, with all the crowd standing there hearing this exchange. I looked from her to Baba, and immediately I understood what was going on between Baba and me, with His simultaneously open yet very private response to the thoughts in my mind just seconds earlier. The point He then made, however, was not meant just for me but for us all. And look at the fun of His ways—had it not been for this episode, how could I have the opportunity to recall and relate His very telling and significant statement for you all now?

With the darshan queue momentarily stopped and all attention diverted to this young woman, Baba asked her age. She replied, and it happened that she was only a budding teenager, so coy and shy. Baba once again exclaimed, "How beautiful she is! But looking at her, people admire her beauty and forget *Me*, the *Creator* of that beauty. I am the *Eternal* Beauty! It is My Beauty which is *reflected* in her. What will happen to her in the years to come? Within sixty years, she will be covered with wrinkles and people will pass her by without the slightest interest in looking at her. For the moment, however, all must certainly agree that she is dazzlingly beautiful!"

Baba then turned to us and said, "I want you all to admire the beauty that has been reflected in each human being, but at the same time, *remember that I am the very Source of Beauty*, and that it is nothing else but an infinitesimal fraction

of My own Eternal Beauty which you admire in others. If you do that, there is no harm in admiring the beauty of My creatures. The beauty of Creation is *meant* for you all—everything in Creation is meant to serve as nothing less than a constant reminder for you to remember Me. If you remember me through the beauty of My creatures, how wonderful it would be! But if, instead, you dwell upon their beauty and forget me, the Source of that beauty, beware!"

He is the Sun

Mani: This story reminds me of yet another incident which is related to our discussion. For those who lived with Baba—for the nearest, closest circle of His disciples whose only home was with Him—Baba always wanted their focus to be totally and solely on Him, with no distractions whatsoever. Yet once it happened that a little "diversion" had, consciously or unconsciously, arisen within the heart of one of those with Baba. None of the rest of us was aware of it, but Baba, seeing the dilution of one-pointed focus in this person, one day turned to him and said, "I am the Sun. When you have the Sun itself, why would you want to run after My rays?"

That incident left a very strong imprint on my mind. As Eruch's story indicates, even the rays are part of the Sun—they are *from* it—but Beloved Baba cares for us so lovingly that He does not want us to be distracted from the Sun at all, not even by the Sun's own rays! It is as simple as that injunction from Baba: "I am the Sun—don't run after My rays!"

Eruch: To sum up, sex has its place, but we are not to play with sex. We must rise above it. Baba has compared love to fire, you know. You don't play with fire, do you, unless you are ignorant or are willing to bear the consequences. Love, like fire, is not something to be played with, for the results of indulging in such play can be very painful. Fire exists for us to make use of it, and look at all that can be accomplished with its energy and heat. The feelings of love, likewise, can be of the greatest value to us if only we know how to make use of them and not play with them. The feelings of love should become a springboard to our finding our true identity as Infinite Love itself. So, after a long response to your question, yes, Baba is indeed very clear and very firm about it all: we must rise above sex, and learn to love.

God as Infinite Love

"The sojourn of the soul is a thrilling divine romance in which the lover, who in the beginning is conscious of nothing but emptiness, frustration, superficiality and the gnawing chains of bondage, gradually attains an increasingly fuller and freer expression of love, and ultimately disappears and merges in the divine Beloved to realize the unity of the Lover and the Beloved in the supreme and eternal fact of God as Infinite Love."

Meher Baba

Meher Baba's Call

Age after age, when the wick of Righteousness burns low, the Avatar comes yet once again to rekindle the torch of Love and Truth. Age after age, amidst the clamour of disruptions, wars, fear and chaos, rings the Avatar's call: "*Come all unto me.*"

Although, because of the veil of Illusion, this Call of the Ancient One may appear as a voice in the wilderness, its echo and re-echo nevertheless pervades through time and space, to rouse at first a few, and eventually millions, from their deep slumber of ignorance. And In the midst of Illusion, as the Voice behind all voices, it awakens humanity to bear witness to the manifestation of God amidst mankind.

The time is come. I repeat the Call, and bid all come unto me.

This time-honored Call of mine thrills the hearts of those who have patiently endured all In their love for God. loving God only for love of God. There are those who fear and shudder at its reverberations, and would flee or resist. And there are yet others who, baffled, fail to understand why the Highest of the High, who is all-sufficient, need necessarily give this Call to humanity.

Irrespective of doubts and convictions, and for the Infinite Love I bear for one and all, I continue to come as the Avatar, to be judged time and again by humanity in its ignorance, in order to help man distinguish the Real from the false.

Invariably muffled in the cloak of the infinitely true humility of the Ancient One, the Divine Call is at first little heeded, until, In Its Infinite strength It spreads in volume to reverberate and keep on reverberating in countless hearts as the Voice of Reality ...

Live not In Ignorance. Do not waste your precious life-span In differentiating and judging your fellowmen, but learn to long for the love of God. Even In the midst of your worldly activities, live only to find and realize your true Identity with your Beloved God.

Be pure and simple, and love all because all are one. Live a sincere life; be natural, and be honest with yourself.

Honesty will guard you against false modesty and will give you the strength of true humility. Spare no pains to help others. Seek no other reward than the gift of Divine Love. Yearn for this gift sincerely and intensely. and I promise in the name of my Divine Honesty, that I will give you much more than you yearn for.

I give you all my blessing that the spark of my Divine Love may implant in your hearts the deep longing for Love of God.

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