

Sex After Death

The Spirits Speak About
Love & Lust In The Astral Realms



Detail from The Abduction of Psyche by William Adolphe Bouguereau, 1895

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Momentpoint Media

Sex After Death

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Dedication

To Stewart Edward White (1873–1946), the first modern writer, of whom I am aware, who was brave enough to publish reports of sexual intimacy in the afterlife.

No Cost or Low Cost

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or www.SexAfterDeath.info

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Introduction

A book titled [The Realities of Heaven](#) compares, contrasts, and critiques selections taken from 58 books written by discarnate human spirits via 50 different sources. These cover every aspect of life as it occurs in the various realms that one can experience after the demise of their physical bodies. The first chapter in this booklet that you are now reading is a copy of chapter 9 from that, much larger, compendium. The second chapter is an extract from chapter 15. The third chapter in this booklet was chapter 19 in a previous version of *The Realities of Heaven*.¹

If you harbor any doubts as to the existence of such spirit sources, I suggest you read [The Hereafter Trilogy](#), or examine the cases at: www.SurvivalTop40.com.

Each quotation is followed by two numbers in brackets – [34-56] – that indicate the number of the source as listed in Appendix 2, followed by the number of the page on which the quote begins.

My comments and critiques are enclosed in boxes like this.

The sources come from several countries and were written as far back as 1853 and as recently as 2001. Many quotes are from British writers and their characteristic spelling has not been changed.

¹ This earlier version was titled *Astral Intimacy*.

Chapter 1. Astral Relations

Companions Along the Way

"The meetings with relations and friends are something that must be experienced in order to grasp the full significance and joy of reunion. Such meetings will only take place where there is mutual sympathy and affection." [29-116]

"We can sit down together and enjoy each other's company just as you can on earth." [03-124]

"I have seen none of our acquaintances. I believe I shall find hardly any of them because no bond of love connects me with any of them; through such a bond only does one meet again!" [14-16]

"All who are in the sphere of love and light dwell in families, communities, groups ... a world of mutual loves and affections and pursuits. Parents and children are reunited only if that love tie persist, and friends and relatives have no other reason for being together but that they love to have it so." [15-96]

"We will find our friends and homes and live with those most congenial, a person under a natural law of attraction drifting to his proper sphere and surroundings." [02-62]

Families together forever sounds nice – unless, of course they're dysfunctional. The truth is rather more complex ... and reassuring.

"Do not suppose that any condition of being, whatever it may be, whether marriage or the contrary, is eternal, everlasting; for you are all creatures of change." [22-233]

"Just as we live in surroundings suitable to our mental development, so we also attract to ourselves minds of the same type as our own. Like attracts like in this world." [03-121]

"When we enter the spirit world after leaving this life, do we meet our relatives who have passed on before?" "If love exists between them, yes. If loves does not exist between them, no." [40-124]

"The family tie unites again those whom affection held together on earth." [03-170]

"If one [friend or relative] is further advanced, and progresses more rapidly than the other, they cannot remain together: they may see one another occasionally, but they can only be definitively reunited when he who was behind is able to keep pace with him who was before." [11-173]

“Those who are fond of you never go too far to come back to you — sometimes too far to communicate, never too far to meet you when you pass over.” [17-229]

“Close friends meet quickly, if upon the same sphere [*i.e.*, level]. But if one is on a lower sphere, his friends may not know of his arrival there.” [10b-172]

“Yet individuals united by the ties of consanguinity are not always linked together, even here, by the golden chain of love and benevolent affection, since it not infrequently happens that there is much more harmony existing among those who are not members of the same family.” [25-91]

“Each will be meeting beloved souls from other lifetimes and ... may elect singly or all together to live within a reunited soul cluster.” [42-59]

“Spirits visit much, and it seems as much a part of their lives to visit their friends, as it is faithfully to perform their other obligations. Thus they visit their friends in the sphere to which they belong, or the sphere below them.” [27-147]

And there will be no faking your feelings toward friends and family.

“Telepathy operates without distortion in this after-death period; you must deal with the true relationships that exist between yourself and all relatives and friends who await you.” [04a-137]

Spouses and Lovers

“As the Bible says, there are no marriages in heaven, but the bonds of true love and affection we have had with people on Earth still remain. These ties draw us together here — to share, to love, and to BE.” [32-34]

What could be sweeter than reunion with a deceased husband or wife — unless you had a second or a third?

“If [marriages in the physical realm] are based in selfishness, they necessarily terminate sooner or later; but if true and well fitted, the spiritual dominating when on Earth, they continue on in our world of spirits.” [46-93]

“You may find after death a much stronger relationship emotionally with a personality from a past life. If you are married, for example, and have no true rapport with your mate, you may find a past wife or husband waiting for you.” [04a-195]

“*In the spirit life, do we join again with those we love?*” “Wherever there has been love between a man and a woman and that love has brought them together and made them as one, and they have lived on the same spiritual plane in your world, then ‘death’ will not part them. ‘Death’ will be a door which will give them a greater freedom for their souls to be more closely united than they were in your world of matter. But if their coming together, their marriage as you

call it, was not a marriage of souls but only of bodies, and their souls did not dwell on the same plane, then 'death' will drive them further apart, for it will relegate them to their own spiritual spheres." [40-122]

"With us union means identity of development, community of interest, mutual and affectionate progression. We know no such indissoluble ties as exist with you." [05a-46]

"The marriage contracted in this world loses its binding power in the spirit world, yet may endure if mutually desired. If a husband has had several wives, or a wife several husbands, the tie endures only between the most congenial pair." [25-204]

"Let us say that you have married three women on the Earth plane and that you have three wives. They are all in the spirit world. Now when you come over here, which one are you going to go to? You may not go to any of them, ... all four of you may have grown in completely divergent directions ... However, you will visit with all three of them from time to time." [07-87]

"There is no such thing as any special and fated union between any two souls." [11-175]

"I found also that my own condition of spirituality and that of my second wife are so nearly congenial that she and I can harmonize together in the

same home over here; and therefore she and I will be united here as on Earth. I have met my first wife and find that she is in harmony with other conditions just suited to her case, and that she is entirely satisfied that it is so, leaving no unpleasant regrets with either of us." [19-392]

"Now whether one male is formed for another female and they twain go hand in hand through the various stages of eternity, I cannot say, but reasoning from what I know, I should say: No. For in one stage of existence the affinities which attract male to female, and otherwise, might act as a repellant in another stage. Besides, when the soul leaves the body, it might be attracted by its affinities to some part of the universe where the mate of this soul would not—could not follow." [27-52]

"He may learn that really, essentially, fundamentally, he does not 'belong' to either of these women. The souls out here seem to belong to themselves, and after the first few years they get to love liberty so much that they are ready to yield a little of their claim upon others." [31-57]

"There is ... no sense of possession in even the more intimate relationship." [33-71]

Astral Intercourse

As we might expect, the spirits tend to be circumspect, if not down-right enigmatic about the details of intimate unions in Summerland.² But some rather suggestive information occasionally gets through to this side. Much of such testimony favors the less-physical-but-more-intimate view.

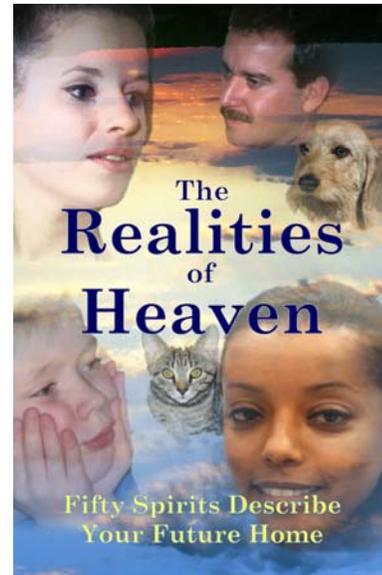
“There does seem to be a good deal of mating and rejoining of former mates. The sex distinction is as real here as on the Earth, though, of course, its expression is not exactly the same.” [31-55]

“What we experience that could be compared with your loving sexual unions is a spiritual and etheric bonding with total fusion of energies and shared knowledge of selves.” [42-68]

“If you were to make the statement that no mortal love can equal the pure joy that is experienced during ‘union’ in the higher planes, you would be coming somewhat close to the truth, although it is not strictly ‘sexual’ in the sense that the average mortal would understand the term.” [07-108]

“On this side, when I met my beloved wife, I became herself—she was transformed into me. All that she knew

and felt became the content of my consciousness. All that I had attempted and achieved, all that I had failed to accomplish, yet battled and struggled to complete, was known to her as no words, no thoughts even, as Earth uses the terms, could have conveyed. We were one, yet individually our own very separate selves, knowing as we were known, to the full extent of each other's capacity.” [15-8]



“Have spirits sex?” “Not as you understand sex; for sex, in that sense, depends on the corporeal organization. Love and sympathy exist among them, but founded on similarity of sentiments.” [11-131]

² The term “Summerland” refers to the spiritual realms that are pleasant (as opposed to the “Shadowlands”) but are still similar to our physical world (as opposed to “higher,” more ethereal heavens).

“Here, as we told you, there is no sex act since there are no sexes, but we are able to meld with those we love to such a degree that the union is far more perfect than in physical form.” [12-95]

“Those of us who have lived on Earth or elsewhere usually consider ourselves as male or female in our own thoughts. We can project our image to another soul in that form. But we have no gender, not really.” [08-101]

“Is there such a thing as sex of the soul, independent of sex of the body? The male and female forces of life, are everywhere distinct in themselves until they reach such a high spiritual altitude that they are merged in one. It is then that the male and female become one in spirit.” [22-243]

“This spiritual passion sounds almost erotic to me.” “Of course, but it is so much more. ... The rapture we feel for each other comes from all our contact together in hundreds of lives combined with memories of the blissful state we spend reunited between lives.” [06b-49]

“The beauty of physical mating is not lost, but intensively increased in the spiritual realm.” [01b-82]

“Yes, there is sex. But it is not like it is there. It is not physical, of course, but actually there is less limitation. It is more obviously like what sex really means. Here you actually can enter the whole person. It is like you are in fact

merging—becoming one.” [36-133]

On the other hand, some spirits suggest that there is a more “physical” component to sexual relations in the astral realms. After all, there is no other area of the afterlife in which spirits place limits on the power of their minds to create; why would this one be any different?

“In this sphere ... women do not bear children, though the illusion of sexual passion may be experienced as long as it is the soul's desire. The woman possesses an etheric body so framed that it can serve her as the material shape served her various purposes, wishes, and appetites on Earth.” [37-21]

“A man is still a man and a woman is still a woman in every sense of the word. You absolutely retain every component part of the human anatomy.” [07-108]

“I soon found my feet, and got very pally with a little lady. She told me she had been dead three years. She was married, and hadn't a very great opinion of her husband who seemed to have been rather a fool, according to her story. I began to make love to her, and she was by no means backwards, I can assure you.” [35-152]

“You have entertained a dim, shadowy idea that spirits stand stationary like spiritual suns, sending out beams of love, thus enveloping one another ... But you did not leave your heart behind

you with your Earthly body. You have the capacity for loving intensified; and, not only that, you have arms with which to embrace. Would you have been satisfied if, when you first beheld your long lost children, you had stood at a distance and regarded them with your imaginary spiritual affection? No; you instinctively stretched out your arms to them, and took them to your heart, and your kisses were on their lips. Is the conjugal affection less than the maternal?" [21-35]

"A man and a woman who truly love one another on Earth are already in heaven, and when you open the door of the Spirit-world to admit them, would you shut it in the face of their love? No; let it enter in all its fullness, and glorify their lives here as there. Yes; I mean all. Do not the flowers bloom, and bloom immortally here? Every opening blossom is a manifestation of love — a sexual union." [21-35]

Some ministers apparently retain their aversion to any other than the missionary position.

"Men and women, continuing as they do their individuality, sex necessarily exists in the world of spirits, but in heaven there are no perversions of these functions." [46-151]

Which brings to mind the matter of homosexuality in heaven. Only one of my sources mentions it.

"Homosexuality is an evolutionary stage of the spirit ... and it is not to be condemned or honored any more than any other physical or spiritual stage. ... If [an] Earth lifetime was homosexual in orientation, it will enter here the same way. ... Whether heterosexual or homosexual in nature, the soul-level energy and bonding commitment of all couples is totally respected." [42-61,66]

The Joy of Perfect Memory

Of course, no source has suggested that there are limits to reliving past experiences, so, if you have had a satisfying sex life on Earth, a great deal of pleasure may be yours on demand.

"Then one might almost live over again the happiest scenes of Earth life?" "Yes, we can and do. It is especially wonderful and beautiful when two recall such things together." [10b-132]

"Our life with each other — every scene — is never lost, and can be recaptured and played again in the spirit world." [06b-18]

"When a soul chooses to leave here for a learning experience, it forgets all it knows. That is so the learning experience will not be influenced in any way. When the soul returns to God and to us, it remembers all it ever knew and adds its Earth experience to its knowledge." [08-76]

“There is no such thing as forgetfulness for the soul. Memory is eternal. It is an attribute of the soul, and therefore is eternal.” [22-65]

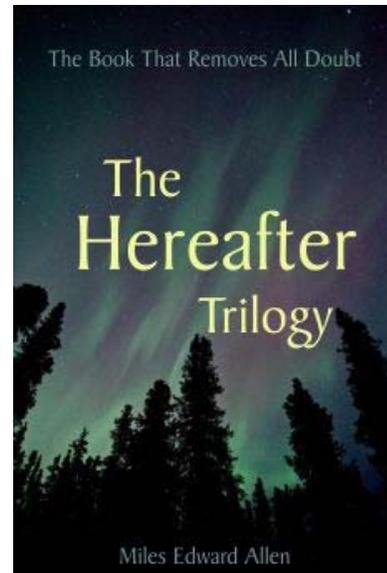
“Our memories, lacking the physical, were alert and retentive to a degree that surprised me.” [44-212]

“A spirit ... has the power of recalling the most minute details of every incident of his life, and even of his thoughts.” [11-177]

“I gather, from what you have told me, that it will be possible someday to re-enact all the brightest and best scenes of one’s Earthly life.” “Yes, and also those which one has missed on Earth; all that which once was possible, but which did not come to fruition. You will realise the good of what you have done, and the happiness which you had, and beyond that, also, the happiness which you might have had, and which, just because you might have had it, is still yours.” [10b-136]

“We know and remember in the spirit-world everything that has happened in our Earth-life (that is, if we wished to remember we could do so), as the subconscious mind is so active here.” [24-60]

“I can experience any season of my life in an expanded fashion, using a heightened memory that actively recreates events, giving me awareness of an event as I once experienced it — but expanded to include all of those personal details that escaped me at the time.” [04b-123]



Chapter 2: Roles and Gender

As we all look forward to enjoying sex in the afterlife, we shouldn't forget the changeable nature of gender. We need to know that, while we will always be who we are, we won't always be what we are.

"If a soul is reincarnated ... it does not necessarily come back to the same sex that it had before." [40-171]

If the idea of rebirth seems dubious, you owe it to yourself to read *Defending Bridey's Honor: The Reality of Reincarnation*.

"The decision as to what sex you incarnate into is, simply expressed, the need of a lesson. I can assure you there are many masculine soldiers from lives past who are now currently incarnate in the feminine form, and that is why you have such militant feminists. They're going, 'My God, what a bloody mistake I made in the past. Let's get on with equality!' " [16-248]

"[Gender changes] are necessary. Some individuals alternate their sex in each life. Others have a series of female

lives and then a series of male lives ... but the entire reincarnational framework must involve both sexual experiences." [04a-202]

"A master who had been cruel to his slaves might become a slave in his turn, and undergo the torments he had inflicted on others. He who has wielded authority may, in a new existence, be obliged to obey those who formerly bent to his will. Such an existence may be imposed upon him as an expiation if he has abused his power." [11-170]

"We might write a novel together too, and call it 'The Growth of a Soul,' and trace its evolution through various incarnations. You and I have been through many together (in different connections, relationships, and sexes); that's why we are so particularly in affinity with one another." [24-21]

"Discarnate beings ... realize that, in connection with birth and death, in the majority of cases the soul which has been a man in one becomes a woman in the next Earthly existence." [37-44]

Chapter 3. Ruminations on Sex After Death ... and Before

To my mind, the most salient points³ in the spirits' quotes are:

1. The physicality and realness of the next realms.
2. The continuation of personalities and attitudes.
3. The rejection of all religious dogma by the more advanced spirits.

These concepts have an impact on how human sexuality is viewed both in the next realms and on Earth.

As detailed in *The Realities of Heaven*, the consensus is clear that in Summerland — at least in its initial or “lower” stages — the environment, the infrastructure, and the artifacts interact with the astral bodies of humans in the same physical way that they do on Earth. One can go for a stroll, pull up a flower, and get dirt on one's fingers. One can open a drawer and find a deck of playing cards. One can don a costume and play a role in a local theater production. Such experiences prompt most spirits to claim that their world is as real as the one they recently left, if not more so.

As a spirit progresses to a somewhat more ethereal level of Summerland, the difference from this world becomes more apparent. One can communicate by projecting one's thoughts, for instance, and travel from wherever one may be to distant places without seeming to traverse the geography in between. Also, the effects of age, injury, and disease are somehow erased and the desire for food and sleep eliminated.

I must admit that I find this mix of materialistic and psychical activity rather puzzling. Most spirits who attempt to explain how such is possible speak of higher “frequencies.” Just what it is that is vibrating at these higher frequencies and how ultra-high frequencies can mimic material characteristics has not yet been revealed to us mortals. There are a couple of sources,⁴ however, that suggest an explanation that may be somewhat easier to visualize. This is the idea that the universe blinks, and that various realms blink at different rates and are interspersed or multiplexed among one another much as frames from different films might be spliced into each other.

³ This refers to the more than a thousand quotations referenced in *The Realities of Heaven*.

⁴ The sources are: *The Unknown Reality: Vol. I*, pp. 87-88; *Seth Speaks*, pp. 133 & 266, both channeled by Jane Roberts; and *The Amnesia Factor*, pp. 125-126, by Peter and Jane Boulton. For a more detailed discussion of this concept, see *The Survival Files*, pp. 140-143.

Whatever the true explanation, there is far too much testimony to reject the idea that our futures contain another physical (almost) life in which we will have bodies that are real (as far as we can tell) and that can interact with the bodies of other people (spirits) in a most intimate manner.

The degree to which these intimate interactions are faithful reproductions of sexual relations on Earth seems to vary with the level of Summerland in which they occur. In the initial (more material) levels, astral genitals are apparently capable of astral coitus nearly indistinguishable from physical sex. Except, of course, for the inability to become pregnant or to catch a disease. There are, I am sure, more than a few folks reading this who can envision no finer heaven. Nevertheless, as with most lower-astral pleasures, such relations become tiresome sooner or later and spirits seek more fulfilling encounters.

In higher levels of Summerland, the merging of genitals gives way to the merging of entire identities. This allows a degree of intimacy that Earthly couples can only dream of. To be completely open to a loved one; to see the other from the inside; to be totally immersed in another's love for you ... well, mere physical contact pales in comparison.

Not only is the ambience of Summerland little different from Earth, but the personalities, attitudes, memories, and — most critically — the beliefs are carried over intact. Naturally, these will change as time allows and experience demands; but to begin with, and sometimes for a long time, “dead” people aren't much different from who they were on Earth. We should keep in mind, though, that people on Earth have, themselves, changed quite a bit over the past two centuries, especially in their attitudes towards sex. We — at least most of us in the West — have gotten a lot more liberal of late as we are inundated with sexual allusions and images. In the 1850s — when a few of the spirits and mediums quoted in this book first began describing life in the next realms — direct references to sexual activities were taboo both here and there. Even if some mention of the subject was made during a séance, there would have been strong pressure not to report it; talking to dead people was controversial enough without mentioning the unmentionables. The dearth of references to sex should not, therefore, be taken as a lack of either interest or activity on the part of the residents of Summerland.

On the other hand, none of the quotes in this book say anything against sexual activity either in this world or some other. I assure you that this lack is not due to any selectivity on my part.

The cause most probably is that the spirits of fundamentalist Christians and Muslims (who are the most likely to have anti-sex views) do not believe in spirit communication with the living. Surprisingly, there seem to be many in Summerland who simply do not think such communication is even possible!

The Politics of Sexual Shame

Although, as I said, some readers will now be looking forward with much more pleasant anticipation to their transition, other readers will be disturbed by any talk that mixes sexuality with spirituality. I have given considerable thought to the question of why such an essential and pleasurable activity is so widely considered something to hide, something to cause shame. The answer, I believe, lies in the world of politics.

Ongoing competitions for dominance are pervasive in the governing structures of most mammalian species — someone always has to be “top dog” and boss everyone else around. Wolves and pumas and puppies and such have a limited repertoire of control techniques; stronger jaws and quicker claws are about all that one can employ to dominate another. We humans are way different. Early on, we exceeded all other life forms in devising methods to gain and exert control over one another.

Even back when humans lived in small tribes, searching the jungle for any

thing they might eat, or that might eat them, aggression and strength were not sufficient for maintaining power. No matter how tough you were when you took over the tribe, inevitably some young buck would come along and kick your butt out. It is not unreasonable to assume that the smartest chiefs quickly learned to postpone such involuntary retirement by controlling their tribes in other ways.

The way to get people to follow your commands is to constrain their ability to do something important to them. If you could, for example, ration the world’s air supply so that everyone had to please you in order to breathe, then your power would be beyond calculation. This, of course, is because air is mankind’s most critical natural need. Next in line is water, then food, and then a bunch of social and self-esteem needs, many of which involve sex.

Tribal chiefs couldn’t control the world’s air supply (although they might have forced the disfavored to sleep near the less fragrant sections of camp). Water and food, being available most everywhere, proved tough to commandeer (at least until agriculture was invented and some chieftain had the nefarious notion that the land itself could be “owned”).

At first glance, controlling sexuality might seem a daunting task, after all, social interactions are not commodities that can be monopolized or restricted. Folks are going to follow their urges, despite the urging of their leaders. Yet humans are endlessly inventive, especially when it comes to lording it over other humans. So it likely didn't take too long for leaders to discover that the key to keeping their subjects submissive wasn't to prevent them from doing this or that, but to make them believe that doing this or that was shameful. Most folks call this practice "religion" but it's really just sexual politics.

Politics is the craft of gaining and maintaining power over others. One of the most effective ways to do that is to utilize the coercive power of shame. Here's why:

- Shame lowers self-image, thus giving a relatively higher image to the leader. "The worse I look to myself, the better the chief looks."
- Shame helps convince people to accept their lot in life. "I have bad thoughts, so I am a bad person, and I deserve to be treated poorly by the boss."
- Shame is a feeling of wrongness that spreads throughout one's psyche and undermines confidence. "If I'm wrong about this, I might be wrong about that, so I should not question my leaders."

- Shame causes confusion and uncertainty. "I don't even know how I got so sinful. How can I be sure that any solution or program is good or bad? Who am I to make value judgments?"
- Shame promotes feelings of impotency. "My inability to overcome my sinful nature shows that I am weak, proving that I don't have the strength to fight the system successfully."
- Shame inhibits the interpersonal communication necessary to resist tyranny. "I don't want people to notice me because they might notice my perversion, so I won't speak out to protect my rights."
- Shame leads to isolation, so there is no strength in numbers. "If I join this organization or movement, my guilt may become known, so I'll just keep to myself."

In summary, people who are ashamed of their own actions, urges, or fantasies, can be uncertain, vulnerable, compliant, and isolated; making them more easily manipulated, misled, intimidated, and impoverished. Therefore, dictators, priests, and other sorts of tyrants work long and hard to convince each and every one of us that we should be ashamed of our bodies, of our desires, of our fantasies, of our very selves.

The First Shame

Every culture has a creation myth, except the Judeo-Christian culture ... it has two creation myths. The earliest is told in Genesis 2 through 4. The other was picked up later and tacked on to the front of the Bible, as Genesis 1. Some claim that the two stories can be reconciled one to the other, but that is impossible. Consider that in the first account God made the animals before he made humans (both male and female simultaneously),⁵ while in the second account God is said to have made man (male only) first, then the animals, and then woman.⁶

Both stories contain many outrages to astronomy, biology, and common sense. Nevertheless, the story of Eden in Genesis 2 and 3 is critical to the sex vs. spirit issue because it provides the basis for what, in later theologies and philosophies, would be called "original sin," and linked closely with sexual shame.

If you were raised in a Western culture, you've known this story since you were a child: Adam and Eve, the only two people on Earth, are living in a beautiful garden that God had planted for them in Eden. Satan lies to Eve and gets her to disobey God by eating an ap-

ple and sharing it with Adam; God retaliates by kicking them both out of the garden, thus revoking their immortality and introducing pain, suffering, and death into the world. Right?

Well, sort of right. Let's go over it again, just to clear up a few misconceptions.

After God has made woman and placed her in the garden with man, we are told that "the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed." To many people today — certainly to the millions of practicing nudists — this seems a pretty silly statement; why should they be ashamed? But to the ancient Hebrews who wrote this account, being seen naked was a terrible violation. This is evident in their numerous and strict laws on the subject and is vividly illustrated in the reaction of Noah when he realizes that his adult son has seen him naked.⁷ To these nomadic people, being naked meant being uncivilized — no better than animals. Therefore, to state that the first humans were not ashamed of being seen naked was the strongest possible way for a Hebrew writer to emphasize that the first people on Earth were completely uncivilized, like animals, with no sense of right and wrong.

⁵ Genesis 1:24-27

⁶ Genesis 2:7, 19-22.

⁷ See Genesis 9:20-23.

Next we are introduced to the serpent, a symbol of wisdom throughout many cultures. Note, that there is no reference to an evil entity; Satan was not invented by the Hebrews until relatively recent times. If there were terrible things to be done, God (that is, Yahweh or Jehovah) was perfectly capable of handling the job Himself.

The serpent asks the woman if God has told her not to eat of any of the trees in the garden. She replies that God told her not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, "lest you die." (Another note: the word "apple" does not appear anywhere in the story.) The serpent replies: "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The serpent has gotten a lot of bad press for making this statement but, in fact, everything he said was true! Neither the man nor the woman died, their eyes were opened, and they did come to know good and evil.

As the tale is told, God becomes very angry when He finds out about this infraction and He hands out curses all around. The serpent must thereafter crawl on its belly and eat dust. Yahweh says He will "greatly multiply" the woman's pain in childbirth. And He

tells the man that he will have to work for a living "until you return to the ground."

And then God is made to say, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"⁸ He sends Adam and Eve out of the garden. Note here, that there is no indication that Adam and Eve were going to live forever in the garden (and lost their immortality when they got kicked out). In fact, it seems that they were forced to leave precisely to prevent them from becoming immortal (by eating from the tree of life).

There is much high strangeness in this story. What kind of God can't see the man and woman hiding in the garden and has to call out "Where are you"? What, do you suppose, the serpent looked like before it was cursed to crawl on its belly? (Did it have legs like a lizard? Wings, like a dragon?) And, most strange indeed, what is meant by the phrase "become like one of us"? This is carrying the "editorial we" or the "royal we" much too far. Clearly, the reader is to understand that God is speaking to his peers, whoever they might be.

⁸ Genesis 3:22.

As interesting as such puzzles are, the overriding question is: What does it mean to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Many people, especially puritanical preachers, have muddied the issue with references to sexuality. This is understandable; if you can't (or don't want to) explain something, just imply that it involves sex and most people won't question you any further on the subject. But sex is never mentioned in the story. Neither is lust. Or even love. There is no talk about bodily functions or emotional urges at all.

In essence, the story of the garden of Eden is saying that when humans learn to distinguish between good and evil (that is, when they gain the mental capacity to foresee and evaluate the future impact of their actions), they lose their ability to live as the animals do, free of responsibility, duty, and the burdensome knowledge of their own mortality. In other words, wisdom brings painful awareness of vulnerability (*i.e.* nakedness) and of death.

Once upon a time, we lived in paradise, blissfully unaware of moral choices, ethical dilemmas, free radicals, and cholesterol. Then we got bitten by the wisdom snake, and we opened our

eyes to see the often troubling consequences of our actions, so we started worrying, and we stopped smelling the roses, and went out to work for our bread.

And what of the pain of childbirth? There is a direct physical link here. Wisdom requires more developed brains, which necessitate larger heads, which stretch the birth canal beyond its design specifications.

Not Your Typical Virgin Mom

Another major Biblical tale that has caused as much, if not more, sexual repression over the ensuing millennia is the story of the virginal conception of Jesus.⁹

Although divine conceptions of saviors and leaders have been claimed in almost every early civilization, ancient Greece was definitely the god-copulating capital of the world. It became so common at one time that "the reigning king issued an edict, decreeing the death of all young women who should offer such an insult to deity as to lay to him the charge of begetting their children."¹⁰ Prior to Jesus, those said to be so favored included: Alcides, Alexander the Great, Apollonius, Caesar Augustus, Genghis Khan, Hercules, Krishna,

⁹ Not to be confused with the "Immaculate Conception," a term which refers to the birth of Mary.

¹⁰ Graves, Kersey, *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors: Or Christianity Before Christ*, Peter Eckler Publishing Company, 1875, p. 18.

Mars, Osiris, Plato, Pythagoras, Vulcan, and Zoroaster.

Over the decades between Jesus' life and the writing of the first gospels, verbal traditions naturally incorporated this feature in an attempt to put Jesus in league with such luminaries. Luke, whose Roman audience would appreciate, even expect, divine fatherhood of a savior, makes a very big deal of the deific conception; Matthew, written for Jews with no such tradition, barely mentions it.

Nevertheless, being impregnated by a god did not typically require the mother to be a virgin. That little twist to the story apparently stems from the fact that the author of Matthew could read Greek but not Hebrew. In an attempt to show that Jesus' birth was the fulfill-

ment of prophecy, Matthew cites a passage from the book of Isaiah. The Greek version of the scripture that he referenced, however, inaccurately read "Behold a virgin shall conceive ..." The original Hebrew text actually reads "Behold a young woman shall conceive ..."

Sadly then, the whole virginity thing — the sin, the shame, the repression, that both men and women have suffered under for two millennia and more — was initiated by the mistranslation of a single word! This mistake was recognized by religious leaders long ago, but don't expect the Catholic church to start building shrines to "the young woman Mary" anytime soon. Perpetuating the myth of virginity has been far too profitable.

Conclusion

And so ... Considering that:

- There are no marriages in heaven; merely the continuation (for a while) of loving relationships from a previous life.
 - The physical realm is simply one of many areas in which God experiences Himself, and is no less valid than any other place.
 - Sexual intimacy does occur in other spirit realms and is said by the residents to be a wonderful experience.
 - Sexual shame is a political tool created by men not by God.
 - The Bible does not support repression of sexual expression.
- We see that sex after death (and before) can be a positive, pleasurable, and divine activity. ■

Appendix 1: The Sin of Speaking with Spirits

Some people have concerns about sitting with a medium or consulting a psychic because they think that doing so puts them at odds with certain teachings in the Bible. If such concerns are keeping you from accepting the authenticity of the statements in the first two chapters, the following discussion might help.

The main support in the Old Testament for this belief that communing with spirits is sinful is found in the book known as Leviticus. The key verse (generally labeled 19:31) says, “Do not turn to mediums or wizards, do not seek them out to be defiled by them.”

There is another verse in Leviticus and one in Deuteronomy that clearly judge those who make a practice of talking to dead people: “A man or woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death;” and “There shall not be found among you any one who ... is a medium [for they are] an abomination to the Lord.”¹¹

There can be no doubt that these statements are in the Bible and that they distinctly prohibit consultations with the spirit world. If you accept Leviticus and Deuteronomy as the inerrant word

of the Almighty, then you would be wise to avoid any contact with mediums or psychics. But, before you make such a decision, you might want to know what else you are signing on for. There are numerous other things that are likewise prohibited by these ancient writings.

Have you ever eaten a rare steak? Or a fatty hamburger? Have you ever trimmed your hair or beard? Did you ever get a tattoo; peek at your brother in the nude; fail to stand when an old man enters the room? Have you ever worn a shirt of cotton and polyester blend? Perhaps you have been upset with the government and cursed a politician? According to the Old Testament,¹² all of these acts and many others are sins against the Lord and are condemned just as strongly as consulting a medium.

And if you actually *are* a medium, do you deserve to die? These books say you do. But they also condemn you to immediate execution if you ever had an affair with a neighbor, or used withdrawal as a form of birth control, or had a homosexual encounter.¹³ Think you are safe because you never went in for such hanky-panky? Well did you ever

¹¹. Lev 20:27 and Deut 18:10.

¹². Lev 19:26, 3:17, 19:27, 19:28, 20:17, 19:32; 19:19; Ex 22:28.

¹³. Lev 20:10; Gen 38:9; Lev 20:13.

happen to get angry with mom or dad and curse them or disobey them?¹⁴ According to the Old Testament, if you've done any of these things, you are already just as doomed as you would be if you helped someone converse with their dear departed grandmother.

Still think you should follow the dictates of the ancient Hebrew tribesmen? Well then, perhaps you would be interested in learning the proper procedure for selling your daughter into slavery; that's covered in Exodus 21:7-11.

Why and how the Old Testament came to have such pernicious laws is too long a story to tell here. Suffice it to say that it is a tale of nepotism and greed beyond what any big-city politician would dare emulate today. No matter the rationale, though, there is no authority in selectively citing passages that support your point of view while blatantly violating or completely ignoring scores of other definite rules clearly laid down by the same priesthood.

For the sake of this article, I am going to assume that the reader would agree with me that being stoned to death is not an appropriate penalty for disobeying one's parents. (Although as a parent I have sometimes wavered in

that view, I admit that I wouldn't be here to write this if such a law had been in force during my own teenage rebellions.) Most reasonable people will likewise find the bulk of these Old Testament strictures to be overly harsh, if not abhorrent. If you can be comfortable getting your hair cut, then you should have no qualms about visiting a medium.

Another, less direct, argument against mediumship is that dead people cannot talk, therefore all communications are actually with demons who are trying to deceive the living and lead them away from God's word. The verses most often cited are these from Psalms: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who can give thee praise?" and "The dead do not praise the Lord nor do any that go down into silence."¹⁵

In truth, these are the words of a poet addressing his Creator and imploring Him to "Help me now; Don't wait 'til I'm dead." The author clearly is not God (Would He be composing pleas to Himself?) and is not claiming any special knowledge beyond the rather primitive beliefs of his fellow tribesmen. Besides, these exhortations could just as easily be read to imply that spirits *do*

¹⁴. Levi 20:9; Deut 21:18.

¹⁵. Psalms 6:5 and 115:17.

still exist and *are* capable of receiving favors.

Also note that the writers of the Old Testament did not connect the idea of mediums or spirits with either demons or the devil; that idea came along much later. The serpent in the Garden of Eden represented wisdom and is not linked to the devil or even to evil. The Satan so prominent in the book of Job is more of a prosecuting attorney charged with testing God's creations, he is given no power to wreak havoc on his own. Satan is mentioned, without description or comment, only two other times (Chronicles 21:1 and Zechariah 3:1-2). The term "demons" likewise only appears twice (Deut 32:17 and Psalms 106:37) and each time seems to be simply another term for "false" gods that the fickle Hebrews were punished for worshipping.

And then there is the matter of "by their fruits you shall know them." If the results of a spirit communication are alleviation of grief, enhanced compassion, reduction of anxiety, a feeling of being closer to God, and other such positive feelings and actions, then what role could the devil be playing? What sort of demon goes around encouraging folks to love one another?

Now, this is not to say that all dead people are good people. Experience teaches the opposite; people don't tend to change very much when they die. Nasty folks can thus become nasty spirits. So, it's wise to be cautious, especially when attempting contact on one's own. In more succinct terms: "Test the spirits."

Which leads us to the New Testament.

Nothing in the New Testament admonishes us not to visit mediums or speak with the spirits of departed friends and relatives.

The earliest writings in this collection are seven letters written by Paul. (Another seven letters are commonly titled as being Paul's writing, but were likely written by others.¹⁶) The earliest of these, and thus the earliest known document referencing Jesus, is *First Thessalonians*. In this letter, Paul encourages his readers, "Do not despise prophetic utterances, but bring them all to the test and keep what is good in them and avoid the bad."¹⁷ Paul's next surviving missive is *First Corinthians*, wherein he claims: "In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose. One

¹⁶. These are not exactly examples of plagiarism, but rather have been labeled as letters written "in the tradition of Paul" by early scribes. See *From Jesus to Christ* by Paula Fredriksen, Ph.D., 1988.

¹⁷. I Thessalonians 5:19-20.

man, through the Spirit has ... gifts of healing, and another miraculous powers; another has the gift of prophecy, and another the ability to distinguish true spirits from false."¹⁸ And in *1 John*, we are advised, "Do not trust any and every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they are from God."¹⁹

Such admonishments seem to indicate that early Christians spent much of their time in their meetings making ecstatic utterances and prophesying. The only concern that the apostles had is that their followers may be listening to the wrong spirits. This is a most significant shift from the attitudes expressed

in the Old Testament. Previously, anyone who approached the tabernacle without specific authorization would be struck dead by Jehovah Himself. Although a prophet's voice would occasionally be recognized as legitimate – so long as he concentrated on warning the Israelites to obey Jehovah or face terrible retribution – that's a far cry from encouraging everyman to converse directly with the Almighty. This change of attitude is likely because the early Christians had no entrenched priesthood that jealously guarded their exclusive (and highly profitable) rights to divine contact.

¹⁸. I Corinthians 12:8-10.

¹⁹. 1 John 4:1.

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