

The Development and Dimensions of Love in Marriage

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In the world of existence there is indeed no greater power than the power of love.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INTRODUCTION

To love is a universal human attribute. There exists in man an eternal quest, a quest which is the motivating force impelling man to seek knowledge, to search for truth, to behold beauty, to experience the most, to reach the highest, to create the best, and above all to achieve union with the Beloved. This fundamental quest is the manifestation of the basic, eternal love with which every human being is endowed.

Given the central role of love in human relationships, the many attempts to understand love, to explain its nature, to describe its characteristics, and to unravel its mysteries are not surprising. Nevertheless, love remains poorly understood. Many believe that love cannot be explained but only experienced, while others consider love to be merely another human emotion. In this paper, I will attempt to describe love both from an experiential and a phenomenological perspective. The concepts presented are derived from the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith on this issue and from my clinical observations pertaining to love at the individual and marital levels under healthy and pathological conditions in the context of various social and cultural settings.

Although the main focus of the presentation is on love in marriage, the concepts presented are also applicable, with some modification, to other types of human love relationships. My main thesis is that love is developmental in its nature and conditional in its quality.

The developmental quality of love is self-explanatory. It refers to the fact that a confident, mature love manifests itself differently from an infantile, possessive type of love, or that self-centered love is an indication of an earlier stage of growth than an unconditional love. The conditional aspect of love refers to the fact that human love can be creative or destructive, enlightened or ignorant, universal or limited, and material or spiritual. These diverse, opposite qualities of love are due to the qualities of the object of the person's love. In other words, if the object of human love is beauty, knowledge, or life, love is manifested in its most beautiful, enlightened and creative manner. If the object of the person's love is untruth, cruelty, and materialism, then falsehood and destruction are the outcome. The ultimate aim of this process is the love of God which is the source of human joy and glory:

If one possesses the love of God, everything that he undertakes is useful, but if the undertaking is without the Love of God, then it is hurtful and the cause of veiling one's self from the Lord of the Kingdom.... With the love of God all sciences are accepted and beloved, but without it, are fruitless; nay, rather the cause of insanity....¹

It should be clear that the developmental nature of love and the choice of love object are totally interrelated. In other words, the more mature an individual's love, the more sublime the object of his love will be. Of all the types of love between human beings, love in marriage seems to be the most complicated but potentially the most rewarding.

While parent-child, sibling and familial types of love draw their validity and strength from already established biological, psychosocial, and spiritual bonds, the partners in marital love have to establish all these facets of their love from the beginning. Thus, the marital partners, through their own choices, create for themselves immense challenges and opportunities for the development of a unique relationship which can either withstand the vagaries of life or disintegrate in the face of relationship's tests and demands.

Love is the main force which brings the husband and wife together in the context of marriage. However, it should be remembered that love and marriage are not synonymous. There have been, and continue to be, marriages in which love is lacking or even completely absent. Conversely there are many situations in which love exists between a man and a woman, but they do not marry. The reasons for these conditions lie in the nature and expression of love, both generally and specifically in the context of marriage.

These points will be discussed more fully in the text, however, the reader should be cautioned that the stages and dimensions of love described here are not as rigid or predictable as might be inferred from reading them in outline form. Human beings are creative beings; therefore, love relationships in different couples will be unique according to each couple's qualities and characteristics. The classifications and stages of love presented in this paper are intended to facilitate study of the phenomenon of love and not to relegate it to a rigid and calcified condition.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF LOVE

O Son of Man!

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee;
therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

Bahá'u'lláh

Unidirectional Love

Love is developmental in nature. Its development is closely related to the process of maturation in the individual and parallels the stages of life—birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and maturity. At birth, and for some time thereafter, the normal human infant is totally self-centered, while at the same time dependent upon his parents and environment for well-being, growth, and security. Even at this stage of dependence and helplessness, however, the child is endowed with qualities that facilitate the development of love relationships with others. Love at this level is unidirectional. The child receives the love of his parents, grows as a result of this love's nurturing properties, and displays signs of satisfaction, comfort, and enjoyment. At this level, the parent's love is also unidirectional: giving attention, care, and comfort to the child. The parent's love is given with full awareness and consciousness, and the child accepts with total unconditional trust. At this level, unidirectional love is both healthy and essential. Other similar, but not identical circumstances, that call for unidirectional love are severe illness, extreme danger, or serious handicaps. The ultimate manifestation of unidirectional love occurs between God and man. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in his discourses on love, identifies four kinds of love, two of which (love of God for man and love of man for God) are the best examples of unidirectional love: God giving and man receiving.

...The first is the love that flows from God to man; it consists of the inexhaustible graces, the Divine effulgence and heavenly illumination. Through this love the world of being receives life....This love is the origin of all the love in the world of creation.

The second is the love that flows from man to God. This is faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the Bounties of God....This love is the origin of all philanthropy....²

Unidirectional love can become quite unhealthy in a relationship between two adults who have equal conditions and opportunities. Examples of this type of love occur quite often in those relationships and cultures in which bestowing love is considered meritorious and receiving love is viewed as a sign of selfishness and/or weakness. Consequently, the giver of such love under these circumstances gives with some degree of resentment and an aura of self-sacrifice, and the recipients of such love often feel manipulated, indebted, and humiliated. The feelings of humiliation are due to the fact that their attempts to reciprocate love are not accepted or valued. In such a relationship, unidirectional love becomes ineffective and arouses feelings of anger, resentment, and mistrust. These conditions are fertile grounds for the development of resentment and anger, which in turn become obstacles to the demonstration of love for the other person. Similar unhealthy conditions exist in marriages in which one partner assumes the role of the giver and the other that of the receiver of love.

Competitive Love

Under healthy conditions, the unidirectional love of infancy and early childhood gives way to the type of love which is most characteristic of late childhood and adolescent stages of human development. This type of love is basically intense, erratic, and often irrational. It is characterized by competitive behaviour and an "all or nothing" quality. To adolescents, both giving and receiving love are indications of their worth, ability, capacity, desirability, lovability, and goodness—in short, signs of their identity. Young individuals gradually establish their identity by comparing their own experiences and accomplishments with those of their peers. Love is no exception to this process of comparison.

The young lovers show their love by competing with their peers both with respect to giving and receiving love. They feel that they must constantly prove themselves. They tend to demand love in an absolute, exclusive manner. They, and only they, should be loved; they should love one and only one person. This “all or nothing” love is limited in scope, rigid in the way it is shown and extreme in practice, and confused in the nature and type of emotions which it creates in the minds and hearts of the lovers.

The love relationship under these circumstances becomes erratic. Competition results in the development of unhealthy extremes in behaviour and demands. An example of such a process is the manner in which a competitive lover tries to prove the extent and depth of his love by showering the other person with gifts beyond his means; by actions obviously injurious to himself and others; and by making demands which are unfruitful if not impossible. At this level, the lovers “love each other to death.” Consequently their love, instead of becoming a creative, life engendering force in their relationship, becomes a basically rigid and destructive process. They prove their identity by showing themselves more capable of love than the other person, or as it happens quite frequently, by proving the other person less capable of loving. Furthermore, the erratic nature of competitive love results in insecurity and mistrust.

This type of love, although characteristic of the developmental years of childhood and adolescence, can be modified by guidance and support so that the young individuals gradually learn that it is unnecessary to compete in their love relationship and hence gradually develop cooperative love. The phenomenon of falling in love, with its intensity, fervour, and blindness, occurs at all levels of the human love experience, but is usually most dramatic in the competitive stage. A healthy, extremely powerful and constructive version of this is the love manifested in the life of mystics and saints—a powerful, blinding and intense love, painful and all-consuming. The object of this love is God, and its intensity heralds the beginning stages of the spiritual journey of the human soul. In reality all other types of love, such as love for another individual or love for material things, are but a reflection of this fundamental and all pervasive love. Bahá’u’lláh, in *The Seven Valleys*, outlining this spiritual journey describes the Valley of Love in this manner:

In this city the heaven of ecstasy is upraised and the world illumining sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is ablaze; and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason. Now is the traveller unaware of himself, and of aught else besides himself. He seeth neither ignorance nor knowledge, neither doubt nor certitude....The steed of this Valley is pain; and if there be no pain this journey will never end. In this station the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend.³

Cooperative Love

Gradually, with further maturity, love begins to be manifested in a cooperative manner. At this stage which characteristically corresponds to adulthood in the individual, the love relationship becomes a sharing process. The lovers are now more certain of their own identity, more aware of their basic capacities, more assured of their experiences, and less threatened by the possibility of rejection. Furthermore, rejection at this level becomes more tolerable, and the ability to be objective in the evaluation of such circumstances becomes more refined and strong. A sharing relationship is indeed one of the most sought after types of love relationship. Ideally, marriage should take place at this level, or, if it occurs at an earlier stage in the love relationship, should be guided towards this objective. As a consequence of these efforts, the resultant marital relationship is characterized by a strong positive sense of identity for both the husband and the wife, a high capacity for cooperation and sharing, a fundamental belief in the integrity and nobility of each person, and a deep sense of respect for one another. Under such circumstances, love is manifested in a cooperative, assured, calm, and creative manner free from the competition, uncertainty, anxiety, and rigidity of the adolescent stage of development. During all these stages of development - unidirectional love, competitive love, and cooperative love - preoccupation with self steadily decreases. In fact, to the degree that the individual is able to focus his attention, energies, and capacities on others and at the same time maintain a basic sense of self, his strengths, and his positive capacities, he is able to engage in a higher level of love relationship and experience.

The cooperative type of love is not only possible in marriage, but also in other forms of relationship, including his relationship with his Creator. Bahá’u’lláh, in many of his utterances, challenges man to establish a higher level of relationship with his Creator. Until now, the relationship between man and God has been likened to that of a parent and child. But Bahá’u’lláh now puts forward a challenge:

O Son of Being

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.⁴

With this statement, a new era in the relationship between God and man has begun. Humanity has finally arrived at the stage of adulthood, a stage characterized by sharing.

Within the context of marriage, however, love relationships gradually move from the level of cooperation to an unconditional type of love. The husband and wife then relate to one another with such a degree of respect and comfort that the conditions usually imposed in the love relationship become less frequent, less intense, and less necessary. At this level, couples are able to broaden the scope of their love to include their children, parents, relatives, friends and eventually all of humanity, while at the same time being able to safeguard completely the sanctity of their marriage and fidelity.

Unconditional Love

Aside from these stages in the development of love, all of which require one-to-one types of relationship, there is a final stage of growth characterized by the capacity for unconditional love. In this stage, the highly matured individual no longer needs constantly to prove his abilities or to establish his identity. His capacity to love becomes unconditional and universal. Unconditional love refers to that process in which the individual loves others because of their inherent nobility, beauty, uniqueness, and his oneness with all other members of the human race. Every human being is created noble in essence, beautiful in countenance, and unique in capacities. Furthermore, all people are like the cells of one body - the body of humanity. In order for the body to survive, there must exist a fundamental unity and harmony on the part of each cell towards all other cells. This unity is a requirement for existence and therefore must take place in an unconditional manner. At the level of human relationships, unity and harmony are manifested in the form of love. Each individual, by virtue of his will and power of decision making, is able to develop both the ability and the will to love others in an unconditional and other-directed (as opposed to self-centered) manner. However, attainment of this state is not an easy task and requires a lifelong, intensive effort on the part of the individual.

Such a love may be likened to sunshine. The sun shines on everything, without any discrimination. However, not everything which is exposed to the rays of the sun is capable of taking advantage of it in the same manner. Under the influence of sunshine both the rosebush and the brambles grow, but each responds according to its nature and the degree of its ability. However, the sun is neither encouraged by one, nor dismayed by the other. Such a level of loving is not easy to acquire and as a prerequisite, the person needs to be fully cognizant of the nobility and spiritual reality of man, the basic goodness of all creation, and the developmental nature of his love. Furthermore, he must be willing to strive fully towards this achievement, a process which requires both constant diligence and the willingness to tolerate the pain of growth. Within the marital relationship, the cooperative and the unconditional types of love are required and essential.

The following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá set forth the essential aspects of an unconditional love:

When you love a member of your family or a compatriot, let it be with a ray of the Infinite Love.... Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet, whether of your country, your race, your political party, or of any other nation, colour or shade of political opinion.⁵

DIMENSIONS OF LOVE IN MARRIAGE

Real love is impossible unless one turn his face towards God and be attracted to His beauty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

In the context of marriage, love needs to be manifested in a cooperative and sharing manner. These qualities are directly related to the overall maturity of the husband and wife and are, paradoxically, best achieved in the context of the intimate and growth-inducing environment of a healthy marriage.

A close study of love in marriage shows that in addition to different stages in the development of love, there are also various dimensions or components of marital love. These dimensions consist of mutual attraction and gratification which, as a result of mutual growth of the couple, are augmented by mutual purpose and meaning for life and existence. At first glance, it is difficult to consider such issues as attraction, gratification, purpose, and meaning as constituting dimensions of love in marriage; however, as will be seen, love is a multidimensional force with physical (mutual attraction), emotional (mutual gratification), intellectual (mutual purpose), and spiritual (mutual point of attraction) facets, all of which are manifested in the context of a healthy marriage in a developmental manner.

From Mutual Attraction to Mutual Point of Attraction

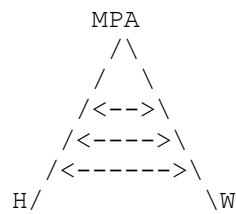
The first dimension of love between a man and a woman is attraction. The beauty of an individual attracts the attention of another, encourages an approach, and prepares the way for a response on the part of the attractive individual. If there is considerable mutual attraction a love relationship begins.

Physical attraction, however, is only the first dimension of love in any marriage. Once an individual falls in love, the beloved becomes a constant companion in the lover's mind and heart. Pangs of desire and pain engulf him. All other events and activities gain new meaning in light of this love. If love is returned, there is potential for a more permanent relationship. Gradually other attractive aspects of the person, such as thoughts, feelings, hopes, and aspirations assume greater significance. This process leads to a higher level of closeness and intimacy between the husband and wife and results, not infrequently, in each choosing the other as his point of attraction. Here, "point of attraction" refers to a state in which all of the interest, attention, and yearning, in short, all of a person's love, is directed towards one object, person, or idea. Under such circumstances, the capacity for reality testing, objectivity, independence, and sense of individuality is greatly hampered.

For the husband and wife to love one another in a healthy growth-inducing and lasting manner, they need to remain individual entities, distinct from one another—each responsible for his or her own activities, decisions, and growth, and at the same time cognizant of the needs and desires of the other person. If the husband and wife, in their attempt to create total integration and union with one another, choose each other as their mutual point of attraction, they become nonentities. Such an integration and union demand the sacrifice of one's basic self-hood and are basically unhealthy processes.

Thus, the couple must gradually find a mutual point of attraction which transcends finite limitations. They should not substitute other people, their children, or their wealth and fame, as points of attraction.

In many marriages, the mutual point of attraction at first is the couple itself, then their children, wealth, position, and possessions, and finally in old age the couple itself again. The final outcome of such a love relationship is separation, loss, and grief. However, in a healthy marriage love finally reaches that height of maturity which not only includes complete and unconditional love for one's spouse but also allows the couple to share a love for the Absolute and the ultimate. Under such circumstances the husband and wife are able to continue their individual growth and at the same time contribute to the growth of their marriage. The concept of a mutual point of attraction could best be understood by a triangular schema in which the husband, the wife, and the mutual point of attraction each constitute one of its three points. As the husband and wife approach their mutual point of attraction, the distance between them decreases.



The ultimate point of attraction is, essentially, that which is called variously God, Ultimate Truth, Absolute Love. Such a point of attraction can never fully be attained, and therefore, the couple, in their mutual quest, can never lose their identities.

The progress of the mutual attraction and its gradual evolution to a mutual point of attraction, therefore, means that in the context of a healthy marriage, the couple is able to behold each other's beauty more comprehensively and to transcend the prevalent concepts of and attitudes towards beauty. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in his description of the four kinds of love, addresses this issue and points out that true love between people is only possible through a mutual point of attraction, i.e., knowledge and love of God. Otherwise, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, what people usually call love is nothing but fascination, and is, therefore, temporary. He says:

The fourth is the love of man for man. The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

But the love which sometimes exists between friends is not true) love, because it is subject to transmutation; this is merely fascination. As the breeze blows, the slender trees yield. If the wind is in the

East the tree leans to the West, and if the wind turns to the West the tree leans to the East. This kind of love is originated by the accidental conditions of life, This is not love, it is merely acquaintanceship; it is subject to change.

Today you will see two souls apparently in close friendship; tomorrow all this may be changed. Yesterday they were ready to die for one another, today they shun one another's society. This is not love; it is the yielding of the hearts to the accidents of life. When that which has caused this "love" to exist passes, the love passes also; this is not in reality love.⁶

We live in a world which is composed of societies either already experiencing their collective adolescence or rapidly approaching that level of growth. In an adolescent world the standards of attractiveness are similar to those of adolescent individuals. Physical beauty, youth, and sex appeal are some of the qualities considered as hallmarks of attractiveness by both adolescent individuals and adolescent societies. Unless a couple progresses beyond an adolescent level in their marital love relationship, their mutual attraction will fade, and gradually their "love," which was primarily based on outward qualities, will weaken and disappear. It is only within the framework of a meaningful, enduring mutual point of attraction that marital love can become gratifying and lasting.

From Mutual Need Gratification to Mutual Purpose

Next to mutual attraction, the first common dimension of what couples usually call love is mutual need gratification. Every human being has diverse needs which can best be fulfilled in the context of an intimate relationship. Some of these needs may be due to a deprived or troubled life history of either or both persons involved in the relationship, while other needs are basic requirements for the overall growth and quality of life of any individual. Some examples of the first are such conditions as extreme dependency, loneliness, isolation, alienation, poor self image, and fear of rejection. These conditions all require another person who undertakes either to satisfy these needs or at least to decrease the extent and intensity of their effects.

The second category of needs relating to the direction and quality of life are also of considerable importance with respect to individual growth. Human conditions and functions such as intimacy, sharing, giving and receiving, encouraging and being encouraged, desiring and being desirable, helping and being helped, as well as caring and being cared for, all require the existence of a meaningful, trusting relationship which is best achieved in the context of a healthy marriage.

Many couples marry as a direct response to one or both of these categories of needs. The combination of mutual attraction and mutual need gratification creates an overcharged emotional bond and fosters an illusion of eternal, romantic, and unconditional love. However, in the same manner that attraction has both hidden and obvious sides and is subject to considerable change, the needs of each individual are complex and evolving. In a healthy marriage, the couple creates an atmosphere in which both husband and wife have the opportunity and courage for further growth and maturity. Growth is painful and requires will and courage.

When the husband and wife are cognizant of these processes and coordinate their mutual growth, they further strengthen their love relationship. However, many contemporary marriages are based on mutual attraction and mutual need gratification alone. These marriages are usually characterized by fiery, intense, romantic love which soon reaches its peak of excitement, not infrequently even before marriage or during the honeymoon, and then begins to wither and either continues as a boring relationship or ends in separation and divorce.

The choice of continuation or separation is dependent on many factors. Some couples continue to live a highly dependent and parasitic life, others find their duties and responsibilities towards their children a legitimate reason for continuing their marriage, and still a third group tries desperately to improve the love relationship and to strengthen the marriage. Separation and divorce, nevertheless, are common and usually occur under the guise of a need for individual freedom and growth. A closer look at these divorces, however, clearly shows that a large percentage of couples separate in the hope that they will find another individual with whom they could reestablish a love relationship characterized by mutual attraction and gratification and thus repeat the once exciting relationship they usually call "true love." In pursuit of this elusive goal they engage in intense relationships, erratic and erotic at the beginning but boring, monotonous, and isolating in the end.

The main reason for this tragic result is that "true love" requires that mutual attraction becomes a mutual point of attraction and mutual gratification evolves into mutual purpose. Mutual purpose is closely related to our goals, plans, and work. It is natural for human beings to pursue goals and make plans. In fact, when a person is without plans and goals, he becomes disheartened, depressed, and disinterested in life and all that it entails. Due to this fundamental need, there must be opportunities in the context of marriage for both husband and wife to pursue plans and goals both individually and as a couple.

Individual goals and projects shape our life processes, giving direction and meaning, as well as creating motivation for further achievement with a consequent sense of satisfaction and pride. Every human being needs such experiences on an ongoing basis. Through these experiences, the individual gains a sense of identity and worth and contributes to his own and society's progress and growth.

Work is an indispensable part of life, and when performed in a spirit of service it is the single most important goal and project that a human being can undertake. Work, however, has a profound effect only if it is judged to be a meaningful, productive activity both by the individual, his family and society. However, quite often a person's work is judged according to its monetary value or the power, authority, and prestige which it confers rather than according to its true value, being a cause of service, unity, harmony, cooperation, creativity, progress, assistance, and happiness to others. Any type of work which does not have such an orientation discourages closeness and cooperation, and instead, fosters isolation and competition. These latter conditions are not conducive to the development of an intimate and loving marriage.

In the future, no doubt, societies will reevaluate their views of work, especially of work performed within the framework of marriage and the family, and such activities as raising children, creating a happy home, and contributing to the stability and peace of the family and the community, will be exalted as the most meaningful, valuable and honoured type of work. The struggle to avoid such activities as is in vogue in some contemporary societies will be replaced by a desire and excitement to partake in them. Bahá'u'lláh places considerable value on work within the framework of marital and family relationships. He says:

The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds.⁷

Returning to the theme of personal goals and plans, it is obvious that both husband and wife must create opportunities in their marriage for the achievement of their personal objectives and projects. In a healthy marriage, these objectives and projects need to be in harmony and coordination with the goals and plans of the marriage. Some of the most obvious prevalent goals in contemporary marriage are: the accumulation of wealth, social advancement, bearing and educating children, and finally providing for retirement. Many couples spend all their efforts and time in the pursuit of these goals.

These goals and objectives are both meritorious and useful, and when combined with a mutual sense of direction and view of life, they provide the couple with a mutual purpose. Purpose connotes an intentional design for affecting the direction and nature of one's activities, and can encompass a number of projects, goals, and plans. In the developmental scheme of love, however, mutual purpose is, in fact, a matured and developed version of mutual gratification. As a direct result of mutual growth, the couple becomes less self-centered and preoccupied with the immediate. The partners transcend the limitations of instant gratification and begin to develop purpose in their lives. Initially, the purpose is merely a collection of individual and shared hopes, aspirations, goals, plans, and objectives. Within the framework of a growing love relationship, the mutual purpose becomes more universal in scope, more spiritual in orientation, and less materialistic in outlook. This issue is at the heart of the Bahá'í view of marriage and its purpose:

In a true Bahá'í marriage the two parties must become fully united both spiritually and physically, so that they may attain eternal union throughout all the worlds of God, and improve the spiritual life of each other. This is Bahá'í matrimony.⁸

A materialistic life which is devoted to the accumulation of wealth, power, and fame within the framework of competition, struggle, and domination ultimately results, under the best of circumstances, in a partnership rather than a love relationship, in isolation rather than involvement, and in boredom rather than fulfillment. This partnership, by virtue of its objectives, is limited both in scope and duration. Whereas, mutual purpose not only provides the couple with meaningful direction but also bestows peace of mind and certitude; allows the couple to transcend the limitations of temporary, youthful attraction, self-centered gratification, and isolated self-growth; and finally, creates opportunities for achieving the final, most crucial dimension of the love relationship: a marriage characterized by a transcendent mutual purpose and a mutual point of attraction.

SUMMARY

This paper has attempted to show that love is an essential human attribute which matures as the individual matures. Marriage is a natural, extremely effective milieu for the development of love, provided that the husband and wife are

aware of the dynamics of the development of love in human relationships and make conscious, enlightened efforts to facilitate the development and refinement of their love. Such a process requires willingness on the part of the husband and wife to assist each other in their attempts at growth, to choose meaningful mutual purpose and direction, to be willing to suffer the pain of love and growth, and to sacrifice, whenever necessary, their material pursuits for spiritual objectives. These lofty and difficult tasks are within the reach of the marital partners if only they combine their love for each other with enlightenment and wisdom and their knowledge of each other with care and compassion.

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