

Notes from Swedenborg - The Spirituality in Sexuality

Transcripts of YouTube clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaOJGcmb2GA> based on the insights Emanuel Swedenborg experienced as recorded in his writings. Produced by the Swedenborg Association of Australia (SAA) www.swedenborg.com.au
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Swedenborg wrote quite a lot about what he interestingly called the marriage of good and truth. Notice he uses the word *marriage*. Marriage, for us, is usually taken to mean a marriage between two people, traditionally of course between a man and a woman. Let's also add that ideally, they love each other, and they are attracted, even sexually attracted, to each other. And finally, while the two of them are both human beings and have a lot in common, they are also quite different to each other, not just sexually and physically, but also in how they think and feel and see things being important or not.

So Swedenborg for some reason used this word marriage when he talks about these two qualities called good and truth. He also wrote a whole book on marriage and love, and in it he talks both about women and men being wives and husbands, and also about pairs of qualities like good and truth and love and wisdom, being called 'marriages'.

He says that the same strong attraction of two pretty different people - a man and a woman - to each other is the same as well with these pairs of qualities. So, the quality of good which involves caring, nurturing, empathy, and so on, longs for and needs the connection and the input from the quality of truth which is understanding how, realising, knowing why and so on. And truth needs and seeks to come through into what is good, loving, kind, and useful, and real, or else it is all ideas and theory and pretty dry.

The parallels between people and qualities we've just run through are quite fascinating. The similarities are there, but it would be missing the point if we then equated goodness to one sex and truth to the other sex. Men and women might have different outlooks but on a deeper level they are similarly spiritual, and each of them and in fact every human being has an ability and a need to work with thoughts and feelings, true ideas which bring understanding and meaning, and good intentions which bring kindness and love into our shared humanity. We need both of them joined, and we need them in this mutual relationship of a kind of marriage of good and truth.

People sometimes talk about our inner feminine and inner masculine, as well of course, our inner child. It might not be very clear exactly what people mean by these, but it serves to establish that they are both there in a person, one of them being brought out more in this situation and the other coming into play with something else. They are best seen as reference points or as the language of our spiritual life. But it's important to see that both the feminine and the masculine in us have good and truth together in their make-up.

Swedenborg brings this up, in saying that the masculine (but not only men) is outwardly involved in seeking to understand but inwardly this desire is driven by a deep love of everything, especially the meaning about life, being, and God. The feminine (but not only women) is outwardly involved in living, nurturing, caring and being useful, but inwardly, it is in a deep love for what is true which is innate, present and active.

Just as most people are grouped in family units where intimacy brings the gift of children to grow and form another family with its intimacy, so the marriage interaction of good with truth is the way in which everything comes to be done in virtually every plan and project or

personal wish. Put it like this, just as sexuality is embedded in us as a major drive so our personal life is established by unions of love and wisdom.

It is quite remarkable how this similarity between sexuality and spirituality shows itself even in the detail. A man's sexuality and ability takes the form of penetrating and giving the seed. In basic, giving. A women's sexuality and ability is to be penetrated and receptive of seed which will unite with her egg to bring a child into being. In basic receiving. This physical activity resembles very closely the way in which truth enters our mind to give life and meaning to our loving. But it is always the love itself which grows and gives birth to the 'new child'.

Relationship, whether in a married couple or in a spiritual union of good with truth, is a subtle thing. Sometimes it is almost beyond words to frame it. Think perhaps of the pas de deux in so many classical ballets where the ballerina in her shining white is dancing in the air almost feather-like, so fluid and graceful. Her consort, the male ballet dancer, is in black and hardly seeable, but he is enabling her to float with his support and strength. The two are one together, but distinct. So with the partners in their marriage, and so with the marriage between good and truth in everything that comes to pass.