

Spousal Mysticism

Courting the Beloved takes on new meaning when God is mystically experienced as Spouse, as “Other.” Spousal mysticism is a direct way of experiencing God’s love for us. During the medieval period in which courtly love arose, “spousal mysticism” emerged among the religious as a love relationship between the spiritual aspirant and God. These mystics approached the divine with a devotional attitude and commitment to embody spiritual tenets. Spousal mystics partake in a dialogic communion to access the depths. They are passionate toward their union with the Beloved. The lover enters the realm of the imaginal and shuttles between worlds, in and out of the mystical field of perception, the place of revelation in which the contemplative becomes aware of the Absolute.

Spousal mysticism is a process of being open to the influences of the “Other” through symbols, dreams, and images that hold personal meaning and expand individual consciousness. There is an intrigue and desire for the unknown, which encourages a receptive state for the unknown to make itself known through the seeker. The mystic attends to multiple perspectives by seeing through the eyes of the “Other” and listening to the unifying principles. The pursuit of “knowing thyself” is especially activated during personal trials and tribulations. The aspirant explores material he/she has marginalized or sanctioned to the unconscious and accesses information that assists with the deepest confrontations.

“I was out on a walk one day contemplating my value, worth, even my innocence. I was feeling as if something wanted to break through, a realization about myself that I could not identify. I was in a full blown dialogue with God, talking away as I struggled with my self-image. I remembered a time when I was a little girl and an uncle said to me, ‘You know you are pretty... pretty ugly.’ I felt a flush of anger come over my body and out of nowhere I heard a voice say, ‘You are so beautiful.’ At that precise moment a car stopped and the driver rolled down the window and said, ‘You are precious!’ and then drove on.”

The unconscious is accessed by the process of contemplation, focusing on an idea or question, a thought, or a recent dream. Contemplation alters the state of consciousness and fosters the emergence of the deeper self as it enters into conscious life. The mystic crosses the boundaries of existence and passes over into that boundless life where subject and object, desirous and desired, are one.

Mysticism parallels experiences that facilitate contact with the deeper Self. The mystic attends to what is taking place on the fringes of consciousness. The lover is in possession of an instinct for the absolute, and is joined by the psyche, which directs us toward the meaning and purpose of our life. The deeper Self is the primary agent of mysticism, and lives a substantial life in touch with the “real” or transcendent world. Depth occurs whenever the personal experience goes beyond the control of the ego and brings us into a numinous encounter.

Spousal mysticism is the relationship between the individual soul, male or female, and the Divine. It is a spiritual marriage between the heavenly and the human. The aspirant surrenders to the loving embrace of God as a bride to her bridegroom. These are the “Beloved Ones of God,” men and women madly in love and burning to know Him ever more deeply, to love Her ever more fully. They are lovers who have heard the divine love song and sing back, harmonizing with Divinity. Knowing God, as Love, Lover, and Beloved, opens oneself wholly and completely to the Divine. God is felt as a deep unity and love for all of humanity.

Romancing the Beloved: Time with the Beloved

Mystics are not dreamy believers out of touch with reality; they, in fact, are the ones potentially in touch with Reality.

“My friend signed me up to do a Buddhist retreat. It was eight days in the silence. In thirty-one years I had never stopped talking. I was panicked! Everything was done as a meditation: sitting, walking, and eating. There were at least a hundred people doing the retreat with me, together and yet completely and