

Intimate Relationships: The Erotic, the Romantic and Love

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

The erotic is truly pleasurable. There is something about fleshy pleasures – eating, drinking, sex, swimming and so on which have a groundedness that is palpable in a way that mental states are not. So much so that the erotic can be isolated from romantic feelings and love. It is choosy and wants only what conventionally conforms to physical beauty or as near as can without slipping into disgust. It becomes self-seeking and in so doing turns the other into an object to gratify its lust. Lust is sexual greed and like greed consumes the other or wishes to be consumed. The other as commodity. Hence obsession and pornography and when mixed with darker motives sexual crime, some of which sinks into insanity. Romance is the eroticism of the heart. It is the touching of two personalities. It is equally choosy, but unlike sexual activity which is usually too short, the flight of romantic feelings can tinge days with kaleidoscopic delight. To be in the beloved's company, indeed to even bring them to mind, jets the lover into the seventh heaven. And such is the sweetness of it, that this also becomes a self-seeking aim. Again the other becomes an object, a commodity, to be consumed in or by. And it blinds to the fuller personality of the beloved, which when it peaks through the gossamer veil, punctures and often utterly deflates. If unrequited, it then turns vengeful, at times crimes of passion or despair to suicide. Love roots itself in the personhood of the other. In their humanity in all its fullness. Their beingness. It reaches beyond the pleasurable or the delightful to a commitment that may demand sacrifice. For better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in health and in sickness. And it has no time restriction. To love and cherish till death do us part. Indeed, time passing is not important, only time present. So no matter what the relationship – girlfriend, boyfriend, partner or spouse - it is a renewed commitment from moment to moment. Difficult! It is only when both are embedded in love can the erotic and romantic play their roles of full-filling at times the whole intimate relationship with physical pleasure and heart's delight. So it doesn't matter what sort of relationship you are in – boyfriend, girlfriend, partner or spouse.

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