



3: “The physical is inherently inferior to the spiritual.”

This is one of “The Most Insidious Lies”¹ because it introduced priests and politicians to the idea of shame, a weapon they have wielded for millennia with catastrophic results for the minds and institutions of man. The text below explains some of the dangers of thinking that our physical bodies are intrinsically corrupt. This is followed by a rather alarming look at the way women have been held responsible for this supposed corruption.

A Spirit Playground

The Creating Consciousness expresses itself in a myriad of ways; the physical universe being one of them. Planes of existence vary in function and structure, but each is a part of God and no part of God is finer or denser, or better or worse, or higher or lower than any other part of God. To doubt that is to judge God; a risky action at best. The material world is simply one of the latest expressions of the Great Spirit — the newest resort in which spirits can play! Therefore, life in our physical bodies is to be appreciated, explored, enjoyed, and revered as much as life in any heaven.

Note that this does not mean “anything goes.” Playfulness never involves coercion. The universal virtues of compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, and respect should guide all activity in every realm of being.

A Powerful Shame

Sexologist, Dr. Marty Klein, has written a critically important, and highly recommended book titled: *America’s War on Sex*. Any student of the history of religion is aware, however, that that war started long before the 13 colonies got their act together in 1776. 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, can be found 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 anything 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").

Upon first consideration, 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 judgements?"

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.

It's All Her Fault?

Few civilized people would concur with the idea that women are inherently inferior to men. But a vast inequality of gender was once deemed to be an obvious truth, and the aftereffects of that belief still have negative impacts on our society. The arguments against this lie hardly need repeating here. The quotes below from influential people (some pretty recent) may help explain why the idea of female inferiority is taking so long to erase from the public consciousness.

In large measure, the attitudes expressed here were founded on the biblical story of Adam and Eve. The idea being that Eve, having been created as his helpmate, led Adam to disobey God. (For insight into that misunderstanding, see the Most Insidious Lie #2: "Mankind requires salvation.") Farther along in the Old Testament one can find numerous horrific tales that demonstrate the Jewish attitude towards women. Abraham, Moses, and many other biblical heroes had little regard for females; but Lot was probably the worst of them all. [See box below.]

For God and Family?

You might have learned in Sunday School that Lot was the only good man in the degenerate city of Sodom; but your teacher may have rushed past this part.²

Lot was living in Sodom when two angels—who apparently were indistinguishable from normal men—entered the city to see if its citizens were as evil as had been reported. When Lot sees the strangers enter town, he offers them food and shelter, which they accept. They eat and prepare for bed, but then a most fantastic event occurs: every single male in the city, "both young and old, to the last man," surround the house and demand that Lot "bring [the strangers] out to us, so that we may know them." The implication here is that the Sodomites desired to have homosexual relations with the strangers. But there were only two strangers, and there must have been thousands of men outside Lot's door. This scenario boggles the mind even more than all those millions of critters crammed into Noah's boat.

Lot's reaction is no less outrageous. He says to the mob, "Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men." Yes, you read it right; Lot—the most morally upright man in town—offers his virgin daughters to the crowd in place of the strangers! ... Enough said.

It was the early Christians, however, who perfected the vile art of scapegoating women.

"If a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man." — The apostle Paul, *1 Corinthians* 11:6-8

"The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." — The apostle Paul, *1 Corinthians* 14:34-35

"Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." — The apostle Paul, *1 Timothy* 2:11-13

"For women, the very consciousness of their own nature must evoke feelings of shame." — Saint Clement of Alexandria, Christian theologian (c150-215) *Pedagogues II*, 33, 2

"In pain shall you bring forth children, woman, and you shall turn to your husband and he shall rule over you. And do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your seed His punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God. It was you who coaxed your way around him whom the devil had not the force to attack. ... Woman, you are the gate to hell." — Tertullian, the "father of Latin Christianity" (c160-225)

"Woman is a temple built over a sewer." — Tertullian

"Hurtful are women ... the angel of God told me that women are overcome by the spirit of fornication more than men, and they devise in their heart against men; and by means of their adornment they deceive first their minds, and instill

the poison by the glance of their eye. ... Therefore, flee fornication my children, and command your wives and your daughters that they adorn not their heads and their faces; because every woman who acts deceitfully in these things hath been reserved to everlasting punishment." — *The Testament of Reuben, circa 3rd century*

"Woman does not possess the image of God in herself but only when taken together with the male who is her head, so that the whole substance is one image. But when she is assigned the role as helpmate, a function that pertains to her alone, then she is not the image of God. But as far as the man is concerned, he is by himself alone the image of God just as fully and completely as when he and the woman are joined together into one." —Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo Regius (354-430)

"Woman is a misbegotten man and has a faulty and defective nature in comparison to his. Therefore, she is unsure in herself. What she cannot get, she seeks to obtain through lying and diabolical deceptions. And so, to put it briefly, one must be on one's guard with every woman, as if she were a poisonous snake and the horned devil. ... Thus, in evil and perverse doings woman is cleverer, that is, slyer, than man. Her feelings drive woman toward every evil, just as reason impels man toward all good." —Saint Albertus Magnus, Dominican theologian, 13th century

"As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence." —Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, 13th century

"For good order would have been wanting in the human family if some were not governed by others wiser than themselves. So by such a kind of subjection woman is naturally subject to

man, because in man the discretion of reason predominates." — Aquinas

"All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable." — *Malleus Maleficarum* [the witch-hunters handbook], 1487

"The word and works of God is quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes." —*Martin Luther, Reformer (1483-1546)*

"No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise." —*Martin Luther*

"Men have broad and large chests, and small narrow hips, and more understanding than women, who have but small and narrow breasts, and broad hips, to the end they should remain at home, sit still, keep house, and bear and bring up children." —*Martin Luther*

"Woman, who by nature (that is, by the ordinary law of God) is formed to obey. The government of women has always been regarded by all wise persons as a monstrous thing. ... Now Moses shows that the woman was created afterwards, in order that she might be a kind of appendage to the man; and that she was joined to the man on the express condition, that she should be at hand to render obedience to him." —*John Calvin, Reformer (1509-1564)*

"Unquestionably, wherever even natural propriety has been maintained, women have in all ages been excluded from the public management of affairs. It is the dictate of common sense, that female government is improper and unseemly." —*John Calvin*

"Such be all women, compared to man in bearing of authority: For their sight ... is but blindness; their strength, weakness; their counsel, foolishness; and judgement, fantasy." — John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment [unnatural rule] of Women*, 1558

"The very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage ... for this reason a man cannot grant anything to his wife or enter into any covenant with her: for the

grant would be to presuppose her separate existence, and to covenant with her would be only to covenant with himself." — Sir William Blackstone, 18th century jurist

"The root of masculine is stronger, and of feminine weaker. The sun is a governing planet to certain planets, while the moon borrows her light from the sun, and is less or weaker." — Joseph Smith, founder of LDS movement {Mormons} (1805-1844)

"Women are made to be led, and counseled, and directed." — Heber C. Kimball, LDS apostle (1801-1868)

"A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ." — Official statement of Southern Baptist Convention, summer 1998

"The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." — Pat Robertson, Southern Baptist leader

"The Holiness of God is not evidenced in women when they are brash, brassy, boisterous, brazen, head-strong, strong-willed, loud-mouthed, overly-talkative, having to have the last word, challenging, controlling, manipulative, critical, conceited, arrogant, aggressive, assertive, strident, interruptive, undisciplined, insubordinate, disruptive, dominating, domineering, or clamoring for power. Rather, women accept God's holy order and character by being humbly and unobtrusively respectful and receptive in functional subordination to God, church leadership, and husbands." — James Fowler, *Women in the Church*, 1999

"Women will be saved by going back to that role that God has chosen for them. Ladies, if the hair on the back of your neck stands up it is because you are fighting your role in the scripture." — Mark Driscoll, preacher, circa 2001

In Summary

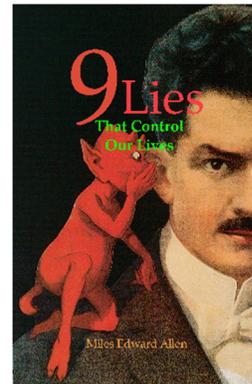
"To read the early Church Fathers is to feel sometimes that they had never heard of the Nazarene, except as a peg on which to hang their own tortured diabolism, and as a blank scroll upon which to indite their furious misogyny." — John Langdon-Davies, *Short History of Women*, 1927

"Religions are not merely belief systems but social institutions whose leaders have always understood how effectively fear, hate, and the assurance of racial, national, or sexual superiority—and sex—can be used to define and control a society. ... Some politicians have long understood that regimenting sexuality is a time-tested way of maintaining moral authority." — Francine Prose, "The Original Sin," *Lapham's Quarterly*, undated.

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END NOTES

¹ Insidious Lies are untruths that have corrupted civilization, stifled creativity, encouraged fear, and ruined lives since the beginning of recorded time. These have proven to be major stumbling blocks to the achievement of progress, peace, and human dignity. We call these "insidious" because their wide influence often goes unnoticed and the turmoil they cause often is blamed on other causes. The prime goal of **Spirits at Play** is to expose these lies so that men and women can free themselves from their bonds. The acceptance of most of these lies depends on distortions and misconceptions about what happens after death. So, convincing the public of the truth that the human personality does, indeed, survive the demise of the physical body is a key part of our efforts.

² Genesis 19:1-8.