

TANTRA

~ A lifestyle approach

Integrating Spirituality, Love & Sexuality



by Mahasatvaa Sarita

TANTRA IS A RED HOT TOPIC. JUST FOR FUN, TRY ANNOUNCING to any group of friends, acquaintances or colleagues that you are into Tantra, and enjoy the reaction, which may range from raised eyebrows, to shock, horror, disgust or extreme curiosity. And why is this? The main reason is because as a general rule, people believe Tantra is all about sex, particularly group sex, or at the very least, promiscuous sex. In a society where pornography is rampant, it is rather funny that Tantra still creates shock waves. And, people cannot digest the fact that Tantra is also reputed to be a spiritual path, the very idea is repugnant to the status quo.

I have spent the last 20 years trying to dispel the wrong notions people carry about Tantra, and spreading the good news that Tantra is alive and well in the here and now, for the benefit of all who are open minded enough to try it out. So how exactly do sex and spirituality work together as a spiritual path, what exactly is Tantra?

HISTORY OF TANTRA

In the pre-history of ancient India, before the arrival of the Aryans, there was a very advanced race of people who lived in cities with plumbing, very well designed houses, had highly developed arts and crafts and who worshipped both a phallic God with attributes similar to the Tantric God Shiva, and a Mother Goddess. No one knows if these people were the originators of the Tantric way, but their approach to spirituality certainly carries a Tantric element. With the invasion of the Aryans, this original form of Indigenous Indian worship was absorbed into the Vedic culture. Many streams and offshoots developed, there were great masters who did much experiential research, and profoundly insightful treatises and scriptures were written. Over a period of thousands of years, the art and science of Tantra was honed and refined into the most exquisite understanding of how life, sex, love, death and spirituality are woven together as one organic whole.

The word Tantra, originating from Sanskrit, has many meanings. It can mean, to weave, methods, or transformation. It may be used to indicate the transformation of poison into nectar, or the alchemy of transforming base metal into gold.

BEYOND DUALITY

The practitioner of Tantra uses various methods of meditation to discover infinite wisdom and ultimate bliss within his or her own body. The microcosm is viewed as a mirror of the macrocosm. In this sense, each and every aspect of life is experienced as a divine manifestation. There is no higher,

and no lower. There is no judgment of good and bad. There is simply the practice of methods of meditation. There is a weaving together of dualities as alchemy for transformation.

Let us look at any two dualities present in our day-to-day life. There is day and night, summer and winter, birth and death, in-breath and out-breath, male and female, sex and spirit. Tantric masters discovered by some stroke of genius, that if you bring any two opposites together as an awareness practice, in the meeting of these opposites, you will experience the God principle at play. You will in essence, become one with God. This state is called Satori by the Japanese, Samadhi or enlightenment by the Hindus and Mahamudra by the Tantric practitioners. Mahamudra means, the great gesture arising from the ultimate orgasm with the universe.

YIN AND YANG IN SEX

The male and female chakra systems fit together like lock and key. The chakras where the male energy is empowered are where the woman is receptive, and the chakras where the woman is empowered are where the man is receptive. We can become adept at making love through the whole chakra system, realising a full spectrum of ecstatic potential.

In such union, we are catapulted into a space beyond duality, expressed through the crown chakra. When we apply the refined intelligence of Tantra methods to opposite polarities in life, learning to surf the waves of yin and yang inherent in our bodies and all of nature, we are gifted with illimitable bliss. A woman who is flowing in her yin power will become an initiatrix on the Tantra path.

A man who is comfortable in his yang energy will become a master lover who carries the power of God in his magic 'wand of light'. Each one regenerates the other in an infinite circle of conscious love. A simple secret for ultimate sexual fulfillment is to give equal space to yin and yang energies during love union.

THE MUD AND THE LOTUS

There is a very beautiful Tantric saying: the lotus of consciousness arises out of the mud of our base instincts. No mud, no lotus. Sexuality and animality, which is present in each human being, is the rich fertiliser from which arises the possibility for spiritual awakening. Without the fertiliser, how can the lotus grow? It needs the nourishment provided by our basic life force energy. Sex lived with awareness is the door leading to superconsciousness. In fact, each of our sensory experiences can become a doorway into cosmic awareness.

Perhaps the Western mind has become fixated on the sexual dimension of Tantra simply because we have undergone 2,000 years of sexual repression. Certain influential individuals created a spiritual world view which repressed women and consequently diminished our potential of having direct access to the divine through sexual ecstasy.

My beloved Master Osho wrote a book called 'From Sex to Superconsciousness'. That title sums up in a nutshell the Tantra approach to life. Tantra methods offer a milieu in which an alchemical process is instigated through the union of opposite polarities. When the alchemy of union reaches a certain exquisite refinement, there is a sudden awakening into oneness with the whole. The fragrance of such experience is innocence and playfulness.

Sexuality is very important because it is our basic instinctual life force energy. We need to own it and embrace it and then that same energy can start moving through our whole body and our whole being. Essentially, we are moving on a journey which begins with sex and moves through 6 more doors of power and potential.

These are:

- 1) sex
- 2) emotions
- 3) our soul calling
- 4) love and compassion
- 5) creativity
- 6) expanded consciousness, intuition, clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience
- 7) orgasmic oneness with the whole

ETERNITY IN THIS MOMENT

The body is always in the moment. Our blood flows now. The heart is beating now. Breath is coming in or going out, now. All mystics down the ages have tried in many and varied ways to bring our awareness into the present moment. When we are in present moment awareness, we discover a quality of being, which transcends time and mind. We discover eternity. Being in that state is a kind of remembrance of our original innocence and wonder, and yet this time it is being lived in full awareness. Many Tantric methods will use the body as a vehicle into present moment awareness.

As examples, here are a few meditations from the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra, a scripture which is at least 5000 years old, but which is as timely today as it was then.

- "While being caressed, sweet Princess, enter the caress as everlasting life."

- "Listen while the ultimate mystical teaching is imparted. Eyes still, without blinking, at once become absolutely free."
- "When vividly aware through some particular sense, keep in the awareness."
- "While listening to stringed instruments, hear their composite central sound, thus omnipresence."
- "Or, whenever in-breath and out-breath fuse, at this instant, touch the energy-less, energy-filled center."

Each of the 112 methods from the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra are doorways into awakened consciousness, and the interesting thing is, only six of them work directly with sexuality.

TANTRA WORSHIPS LIFE

When I teach Tantra, which I do on a regular basis through the School of Awakening, people often remark on how wonderful it is to discover a path which feels so natural, authentic and empowering. Tantra is actually a process of remembering your true nature, and your direct connection to source. People who practice Tantra become free. They are no longer dependant on a religion, or a dogma in order to be connected to spirit. They don't need drugs to find ecstasy. They are fully activated in their joy and creativity. This happens because they become vibrantly alive to the moment and their mind expands to be 'yes saying' and inclusive rather than 'no saying' and narrow.

When I learn how to worship life, it responds by revealing its immense multidimensional beauty, ad infinitum. I become a celebrant, along with the birds and the bees, the flowers and the trees, the stars up above. In short, I awaken to love. I become conscious of an all pervading love, which is present in all aspects of life.

Mahasatva Ma Ananda Sarita is a world renowned Tantra teacher and author. She is co-director of the School of Awakening, which offers courses and trainings in Tantra, holistic healing, meditation and creative arts. She teaches seven levels of Tantra for couples. She also teaches methods from the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra through online courses and through a group called the Tantra Meditation Retreat. Another branch of her work, called Aisho, meaning Radiant Love in Japanese, teaches the art of bringing meditation into everyday life. She teaches Aisho retreats together with a Japanese spiritual master, Uezu-San. He has declared that Sarita is an enlightened mystic, who carries the transmission necessary for our world at this time.

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