



In her work as a teacher of Tantra, **Mahasatva Ma Ananda Sarita PhD** is often asked, 'What is Tantra?' The mass media and subsequently the collective mind imagines this life approach to be all about six-hour sex, better orgasms, orgies, and more. In fact, it is a refined path to enlightenment which uses all facets of the human being as springboards into the vast sea of consciousness

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. Tertullian, one of the founding fathers of orthodox Christianity, said: 'Women are the gate by which the demon enters.' Tantra is not fixated on sex but simply accepts and honours it as our primordial energy. 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.

Abundance of unity

Practitioners of the Tantric arts have been described as walking on air, because they tread so lightly and joyously through life, with hearts, minds and consciousness wide open to all that is. In Tantra, there is true choice-less awareness. Sex and spirit are considered as one. Light and dark are equally revered. Life and death are both fuel for Samadhi. The path of love and devotion (primarily a feminine approach) and the path of witnessing and meditation (primarily a male approach) are embraced equally, with sensitive intelligence. Volumes have been written on Tantra, but it can truly be understood only by those who are willing to dive into the practice of Tantra techniques. Each Tantra meditation method opens a door into enlightened consciousness, using many different facets of human experience. The methods are traditionally passed on as a living transmission from teacher to student. The teacher creates a potent atmosphere for a student to be able to extract the nectar from a meditation technique through the deeply lived experience of it.

Divine spark

It is said in Tantra scriptures that each cell of the body contains the whole universe; the microcosm is the macrocosm. If we penetrate even deeper into this analogy, we can observe that our whole phenomenal world is created through opposite polarities in a constant dance together. As a song from the radio of my childhood says, 'let me tell you bout the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees, and the stars up above, and a thing called love.' Seduction, sex and love as well as cognitive manifestations are all 'God in action'. By studying our own bodies and reproductive actions as the microcosm, we may surmise that the 'big bang' was not so much a 'bang' as a great orgasm! (Perhaps scientists are aware of this but just don't have the courage to say it). In order to play

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Ultimate Unification

with the alchemical union of opposites, it is helpful to become fully empowered in our opposite polarities. When a polarity is fully charged in its unique qualities, there is magnetic attraction towards its opposite. Women need to understand and resonate in the polarity of the feminine, and men need to understand and resonate in the polarity of the masculine. When these two elements meet, it's electric!

In Shiva temples throughout India, which is the place where Tantra developed many thousands of years ago, we find beautifully sculpted images of the male phallus sitting within the female vagina. The male phallus is called lingam, meaning 'wand of light' and the female genitalia is referred to as yoni, meaning, 'sacred place'. The ancient sages from pre-Aryan history discovered a great secret: God is to be found in the harmonious union of our male and female genitals. *'Universal energy, the substance of the world, is represented by the Yoni which grasps the Lingam. It is only when the phallus, the giver of semen, is surrounded by the yoni that God can manifest and the universe appear.'*

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(From Karpatri, a Sanskrit scripture, translated by Alain Danielou). Some people may find this shocking, since as a culture we still carry a hangover from Catholic and Victorian anti-sexual morality in our mental and physical conditioning. But just imagine for a moment a whole society which envisions sex as bringing us into oneness with God. Such a society would naturally regard all of life as sacred. Rape of people or the environment would be impossible for such people.

Restoring balance

Now, let us consider the immense phallic symbols which are present in many cities of developed countries, large pillars, proclaiming the masculine as the dominant force throughout the world. These edifices are sadly lacking a feminine yoni of equal proportions to sit within. Even if we just change this one highly visible outward symbol of imbalance, transforming it into a lingam within a yoni rather than a large phallus standing alone, our society will change dramatically. Symbols, particularly sculpted ones, contain potent messages which affect our subconscious orientation.

The masculine principle is charged with testosterone, a hormone which gives rise to the urge for action, adventure, aggression, creativity, competition, hierarchy, clear structures, protection of the feminine, and goal-oriented sexuality. If the male attributes are not balanced with the female progesterone dominant qualities of love, devotion, nurturing, nesting and compassion, then we will have a world of testosterone running amok, which is the case. To bring these two polarities together we need to find intelligent ways of accepting and honouring both. Let us start by understanding something

very basic – how woman's and man's temperaments and sexuality function.

Female abundance

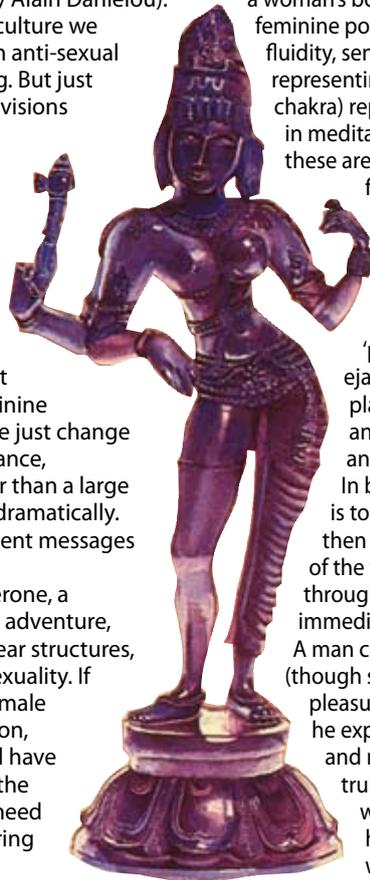
The nature of woman is yin, receptive, cool, resting, flowing, yielding, soft, dark, and mysterious. She is in essence the womb of the universe, from which all emerges and to which everything returns. She is loving, compassionate, nurturing. She is tremendously powerful in the same way a river or an ocean is powerful. Water yields, and yet it can wear away rock. She is juicy, like a ripe fruit. Her sexuality is triggered through love and sensual play which she may like to continue for hours. In general, a woman takes 20 minutes to reach full sexual arousal. Once aroused, she can have multiple and full body orgasms. After orgasm, she remains at peak arousal for another 20 minutes. When she is satiated, her love and devotion knows no boundaries. Many women are not aware of their beautiful, powerful qualities and try to emulate the masculine, thinking this will fulfil them. However, it only makes them confused and resentful. The places in

a woman's body which can best serve her in getting in touch with feminine power are: belly (second chakra) representing emotional fluidity, sensuality, birth and death; breasts, (fourth chakra) representing love, nurturing, compassion; and forehead (sixth chakra) representing clairvoyance and intuition. In sexual union, in meditation and in daily life, if the woman can be touched in these areas, or can focus on these areas, her capacity for orgasm, for abundance and for feeling at home within herself will be greatly enhanced.

Male reverence

The nature of man is yang, hot, active, hard, strong, outgoing and target oriented. He is in essence the 'protector' of the feminine. He is so powerful that in one ejaculation he offers enough sperm to populate half the planet! When he gives of his essence he gives his very life and is therefore also quite vulnerable. Balancing power and vulnerability is the lesson each man needs to learn. In biological terms, which also affects his psyche, his role is to plant the seed (not a genetically modified one!) and to then protect the delicate seedling carried within the vessel of the woman till it reaches maturity. His sexuality is triggered through visual and cognitive stimulation which creates an immediate response in his sex centre.

A man can arrive to full arousal in a matter of three minutes (though some men have discovered how to prolong their pleasure for hours). Once he is at peak arousal and ejaculates, he experiences a great loss of vital energy and needs to rest and recuperate before further arousal. When a man feels truly honoured and received by his beloved, he connects with his deep instinctual desire to revere and protect her as well as to reveal his vulnerability and tenderness with her. His full potential is realized when he is able to



"Each one regenerates the other in an infinite circle of conscious love"

become the custodian and protector not only of his woman but of the family, the community and ultimately, our mother earth. Many men are not aware of how to contact and live their full vibrant potential. Men of our days tend to vacillate between being over-dominant and emotionally cut off, or being timid and unsure of their role. Nirav Chintan, my co-teacher in Tantra, says, 'The patriarchal foundation of our society for the last few thousand years has given rise to male supremacy. However, with the recent rise in women's liberation man is now in mutation, and even in the process of losing his sense of identity.'

Divine play

Men get into stress, trying to juggle power and vulnerability. His contradictory nature has a tendency to nurture frustration and destructiveness. He reaches a point of no return, where he needs a catharsis as an outlet for the steam of his internal pressure cooker. This masculine tendency is what gives rise to war, power politics, highly competitive forms of business, or competitive sports. Luckily, nature offers a rainbow bridge between his contradictory qualities. The bridge of transformation for men is a sense of humour and playfulness, leading to detachment and relaxation. These qualities engulf and transcend the social and rational games of society. In the Indian tradition, this playful approach to life is called Leela, the 'divine play' or 'God's play'. Testosterone needs to be expressed, but it can have other outlets besides conflictual competition. If a man orientates himself around the worldview of a society based on conqueror and conquered then he will live within the law of the jungle, the struggle for the survival of the fittest in a competitive environment. If he integrates a vision of himself and the world which is larger and more fluid, the possibility for expression becomes multidimensional. He can be a clown, a lover, a practitioner of martial arts, an artist, a child, a king, and a sage all at once. The multifaceted aspects of his nature can come together in a spiral dance, making him vast enough to contain all the contradictions of life.

Lock and key

In Tantra, women function as the initiatrix of the man. He surrenders himself before the power and grace of the maternal feminine. He lets go of his ego which was built around a jungle based mentality. This permits him to be reborn with the joyful innocence of his inner child intact. He discovers renewal of life with a strength which bubbles up naturally, without effort. This time, he is deeper and more authentic. His heart shines forth, his consciousness is vaster, his eyes are open to both seen and unseen worlds, and his creative masculine role is radiantly apparent. The places in a man's body which can best serve him to get in touch with his fulfilment in sexuality, creativity and spirituality are: the sex centre (first chakra) representing survival, sexuality, animal instinct; the solar plexus (third chakra) representing the meeting of all contradictions and the expression of one's individual soul calling; and the throat (fifth chakra) representing creative expression, becoming the master of your own destiny. If a man can be touched and honoured in these areas, can accept his animal nature and apply the creativity of the fifth chakra to it, and can unlock the koan of the meeting of power and vulnerability posed by the third chakra, he is well on his way to becoming a god. 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, the man is receptive. We can become adept at making love through the whole chakra system, realizing 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 fulfilment is to give equal space to yin and yang energies during love union.

A new dawn

In Tantra, there is a potent symbolism which is used to illustrate the spiritual path. A beautiful lotus floats on the surface of the water. Its roots arise from the rich mud at the bottom of the lake. The lotus represents spirit and the mud represents sexuality. It is said, 'no mud, no lotus'. By accepting these polarities and really exploring them (not just thinking about it!), we are transformed. In my Tantra groups, I have found that the deeper we can go into conscious and loving exploration of our instinctual sexuality, the higher we fly into spiritual awakening. And the more we can enhance the polarities of male and female aspects, the deeper the ecstasy which arises from such a union.

In a Singles Tantra group, we may have 40 people experimenting with opening up their sexual, sensorial and spiritual potential, within the context of a conscious, loving, sacred space. The right and left hemispheres of the brain come into balance as we embrace our inner male/inner female aspects. Suddenly, as if by magic, the air sparkles with a quality of original innocence and wonder. We expand in love and joyous celebration of all our formerly disowned parts, and in so doing discover we are one with all that is. In the Soul Mate Tantra Training, couples go to their bedroom to practise Tantra meditations in lovemaking and, over time, relationships are miraculously transformed. Men and women learn how to truly honour, accept, love and balance each other. By embracing and exploring the 'mud' of our beings, we discover the lotus of love, and in the meeting of the opposite polarities of male and female, sex and spirit, we discover innocence. We come home. The long pilgrimage away from ourselves towards an unknown god ceases, and we find a new dawn within ourselves. We are plugged into the infinity loop of the union of opposites. In Sanskrit, this is called Ardhanareeshvara, the representation of God who is half male, half female.

Mapping Tantra Alchemy

- Bring a witnessing consciousness to any aspect of life and it will automatically be revealed in its refined potential. The refined potential of each aspect of life is divine.
- Allow any two opposite polarities to meet within your conscious awareness. In the union of opposites a magical alchemy is produced and we experience a sudden orgasmic transmutation into oneness.
- Say Yes! to all dimensions of life. Embrace life with totality. Learn to extract the potent teaching from each life situation. In this way, we become capable of transforming 'poison' into 'nectar'.
- Use Tantra methods in a sacred space dedicated to the meeting of love and consciousness. Each meditation method is designed to propel us into awakened consciousness.
- Be fully present in this very moment. When we are fully in the here and now, we automatically melt into the eternal, beyond time and mind.

more information

- Mahasatva Sarita lived for 26 years in India imbibing Tantra from Osho, her spiritual Master. She is co-director of the School of Awakening in the UK which offers courses in Tantra, Holistic Healing and Creative Arts. She is author of two books, *Tantric Love* and *Divine Sexuality* and has produced several Tantra meditation CDs. Her Tantra courses include groups for singles, a 7-level training for couples and the Tantra Meditation Retreat, which explores the 112 methods from the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra.
- To buy books and CDs and to reserve courses, contact Supragya, Administrative Director of the School of Awakening: info@schoolofawakening.com Tel. 0044 (0) 1769 581232.
- Suggested reading: *Book of Secrets* by Osho, *Tantric Quest* by Daniel Odier, *Tantric Love* by Ma Ananda Sarita and Swami Anand Geho, *Divine Sexuality* by Mahasatva Ma Ananda Sarita, all available from the School of Awakening.
- www.tantralink.com
- www.dartmouthfestival.com

