

Tantra: so that the love may grow

What might *Tantra* mean? I should like to devote some thoughts to this question. Being well aware that everything written down is seemingly lifted above everything not written down. But this is in the nature of a text, and so I kindly ask the reader, to look into the possible truths of what is written down, and to leave aside for the moment the possible truths of all that is not written down.

In its spiritual meaning, *Tantra* describes one of the many ways to wake up. Or at least one ingredient of a path to enlightenment. Assuming that waking up is possible, and a path to it exists. *Tantra* in this sense is therefore a term which points to something lying beyond the objective, that goes beyond things, and hence cannot be understood intellectually. Therefore, I should like to first look a little into the etymology of the word *Tantra* to obtain food for possible interpretations.

Researching the literature, a number of meanings for *Tantra* can be found such as teaching or text in the sense of tantric teachings and texts. And from the weaving mill one could quote the translations fabric or netting. The number of possible readings can be extended by the decomposition into the word stem *tan*, to expand or grow, and the suffix *tra*, which is usually used in connection with tools. *Tantra* in this interpretation would therefore signify a tool for growth.

Leading to the question which growth could be meant? Frequent interpretations here have in mind the expansion of consciousness. But if it would be a matter of sole expansion of consciousness, perhaps this could also be achieved by taking drugs. Completely leaving aside the fact that the definition of the term consciousness is rather delicate.

Also, consciousness is more associated with perception of the world, and to me interaction, connection, linkage appears more important. How would it be, to consider love in this context? For me, to love means to get into contact in a positive, affirmative sense. With myself, other people, near and far, animals, nature, life and the world as a whole. *Tantra* could thus be interpreted as a way to build loving relations, and the fabric, the network of connections, such that love may grow further and further.

In building connections, touch is essential. To feel touched, to touch others, to let oneself be touched by others. With all senses. Whereby I can let myself be touched by art, a picture, a song, or a poem. The beauty of nature, a flower, a tree, a mountain panorama. Or by human beings. Mindful, loving touches to the body also have the ability to touch the heart, the soul. And there should be no limits to these touches, except the ones set personally. By allowing touch, love can arise and grow.

Though growth often requires stepping out of comfort zones, overcoming resistances,

crossing boundaries. Still, a desire for growth should not be demanded from the outside, but emanate from within. For as the Buddha said, “Desire has the capacity to create suffering,” and even if wishes may be uttered, there should always be a willingness to let them go. So that in the best of cases separations and differences are overcome. And an equilibrium, a balance between inside and outside arises. In which love can expand without limits.

Last but not least, *Tantra* seems to me a beautiful possibility to explore one's own path. In my opinion, personal awakening will never come along the path of another master. May they have been as enlightened as the Buddha, Jesus, or Muhammad. Even if their experiences and insights can provide much inspiration. The surest approach to one's own path is through intuition, through the feelings of the heart. And where could this be stronger than in places of great connection with this world, places of great love? Where the self can dissolve and everything becomes one.

Studying the teachings of the Buddha and the Noble Eightfold Path, I have long wondered how one can distinguish right from wrong in Right Knowledge, Right View, Right Resolve, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration? Even though the Buddha has also taught us not to judge. Today, I think it is those actions that have the capacity to increase love.