

Connectedness means Love

Humans are social beings, need contact by nature. Also physical contact. How is it possible to bridge a time in which contacts, encounters are limited? And how could Buddhist, spiritual, tantric views help?

In my understanding, a basic idea, a root of Tantra is to let the feeling, the perception of connection, connectedness, grow. In a more general, comprehensive sense one could also speak of *love*, and I have tried to elaborate on this thought in an earlier text.

The tantric path is a path that can lead to awakening. To the experience of complete connection with the universe. With everything. The feeling of immeasurable love. And even if this goal cannot be reached consciously, willingly, it is still valuable to set out on the path. The development that comes with it has the capacity to enrich every human being. To support growth.

In times in which touching, physical sensing of other people is more difficult or even impossible, it is important to intensify other forms of connection. The occupation with one's own inner life, for example. The exchange of messages or personal conversations with others using modern means of communication. In addition, connectedness with the world beyond human beings is also important, including the animal and plant life as well as inanimate nature.

In any kind of contact, connection, their quality is meaningful. How completely in a given moment the attention is focused on feeling the connection. This aspect brings mindfulness and meditation into play. The teachings of the Buddha. When the Buddha was asked how he would sum up his teachings in a single word, it is reported that he said *Sati*. In English: *awareness* or *mindfulness*.

So a central pillar of the path is mindfulness. It can be exercised and practised in every moment. For example through the breath, some mindful, conscious breaths. The breath creates a natural connection between the outer world and the inner life and therefore plays an essential role in dissolving this arbitrary border. But mindful attention can also be given to any other activity. Cleaning a glass. Looking at a flower. Tasting an apple. Listening to the chime of a bell.

Mindfulness directs our attention to the now. The present moment. Lends reality and truth to the now. In German we have the beautiful word *Wahrnehmen*. (Perception, but the literal translation would be: *Taking to be true*.) How better to express the direct relationship between experience and reality? An entanglement of elements of the outside with sensations on the inside. This anchoring in the moment offers the chance to attenuate fears. Fears are negative, distressing feelings about events in the future. But we do

not know the future, can only predict it with larger or smaller uncertainty. Therefore, in my view, fear is an emotion that is dispensable. Does not bring with it a decisive advantage.

This does not imply that fears that arise should be suppressed. But neither should they be unnecessarily nurtured. They should only be perceived, accepted and observed. Like a separate, independent entity. A mist. This offers the best chance for existing fears to gradually dissolve. One of the four Noble Truths of Buddha is the statement that it is possible to let go of suffering. And to this suffering also belong fears and worries. Mindfulness and meditative experience of the now have the ability to strengthen the reality of the moment and make uncertain projections into the future appear less important. So that our actions are not driven by fears, but are possible with the greatest degree of freedom.

Nonetheless, it appears important to me to be able to make predictions about future developments as accurately as possible in order to obtain a good basis for planning and political decisions. But these predictions should be left to the experts in the respective fields. I myself am a natural scientist, a physicist, and I am friends with many scientists of all areas. By far the majority of them take their work very seriously and try to expand the knowledge of causal relationships on the basis of our current understanding of the world. Which enables us to make better and more reliable predictions about the future. Even though these will understandably never be accurate in all cases. Will always be afflicted with uncertainties and imponderables. Still, we should place our trust in scientists. And assume that every human being tries to fulfil their tasks encountered in life as well as possible. Also in this respect exercises mindfulness.

But what is truth? And how could it be revealed? Of course there are truths which we consider to be universally valid. At least as long as there is an Earth with life in the vicinity of its surface. For example, that tomorrow the sun will rise again. Or that leaves dropped from a tree will fall to the ground. Absolute truths in my opinion only exist in mathematics. Are there definitions and propositions derived from them. On the boundary, at the edge of science, where truths about the world begin to transform into speculation, faith, spirituality, they become more and more individual. And can only be confirmed by own, personal experience. By seeing for oneself. This seeing becomes clearer the more direct our connection with the world is. The greater and more comprehensive the love. To *being*.