

## Can Tantra be meaningfully unfolded in everyday life?

Recently, in the final round of a Tantra seminar on the theme of *Love and Freedom*, once again the question arose as to how what was experienced in the seminar, tantric encounters and tantric spirit, can be transferred and integrated into everyday life? To this end, it would first be necessary to specify what actually characterises tantric encounters and tantric spirit. This is an undertaking that has countless aspects and facets and would actually require entire books to do it justice. Nevertheless, I should like to try to pick out a few viewpoints that are significant in my opinion.

In an earlier text, I have tried to summarise my personal view of Tantra, and here I would like to elaborate on this more concretely in the context of the question posed. I myself see Tantra as a tool to let love grow, whereby I would like to understand love more generally as the feeling of connectedness. Connection to myself, other people, animals, nature, or objects that seem valuable and important to me.

In a Tantra seminar, the focus is of course on connecting with people. Encounters and touching moments with myself and others, both on a more emotional, felt level, for example in meditation or through intensive eye contact, as well as more physical, such as in a heartfelt embrace or during a Tantra massage. The tantric aspect for me is both special awareness and mindfulness, as well as non-intentionality. My whole attention is focused on the present moment and my activity, and I don't try to plan next steps with a specific goal in mind, but to feel them as intuitively as possible, to let myself be guided by the moment.

Tilopa has expressed this approach in wonderful words in his song to Naropa: *Without making an effort, but remaining loose and natural, one can break the yoke, thus gaining liberation.* This is an essential aspect of Tantra: *Without making an effort.* Or, nowadays one would perhaps rather say: By being in a *flow state*. Because, when you make an effort, the ego emerges, the *Self* enters the stage. Sometimes taking oneself, the *Inside*, more important than the *Outside*, and sometimes too little important. But only when *Inside* and *Outside* are equally important, are in balance, does the Self no longer need to play a role, can leave the stage, and the connection to the *Whole* can be experienced.

The song of Tilopa has been analysed and interpreted very extensively and profoundly by Osho in a series of lectures, and from these comprehensive, explanatory reflections I would like to quote a short paragraph:

*So love is not an effort, you cannot make an effort to love. If you make an effort, there is no love. You flow into it, you don't make an effort, you simply allow it to happen; you don't make an effort. It is not a doing, it is a happening: without making an effort. And the same is the case with the total, the final; you don't make an effort, you simply float*

*with it: but remaining loose and natural. This is the way, this is the very ground of Tantra.*  
(Osho, Tantra - The Supreme Understanding)

How can I transfer this approach to daily life? A fundamental component, a supporting pillar of Tantra is awareness, mindfulness. I can practise and deepen this in any activity of everyday life. Be it in my job, my hobbies, gardening, cooking, washing up, or cleaning, by all means also the toilet. And you will find that mindfulness can be trained like a muscle. It strengthens and deepens through constant practice. And the greater awareness intensifies the perceived connection to the objects of daily interaction. Which in turn increases the sense of connection to the world and the love felt through it.

And another cornerstone of the tantric mind can also prove very helpful in everyday life: *non-attachment*, being able to let go. According to the second Noble Truth of the Buddha, suffering arises from desire, and therefore it is worth striving to avoid desire, if possible to constantly reduce it. Of course, wishes may still arise, be expressed, perhaps even point us in the direction of the next step from a given moment. But if the fulfilment of a wish, for whatever reason, is not foreseeable, it is necessary to let it go, to hand it over to the universe so that no desire arises. Such a way of life will ultimately lead to the reduction of suffering, potentially dissolving it completely, in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha.

In addition to the application of tantric ideas in everyday life, tantric encounters, tantric rituals, can of course also be cultivated in private spaces. The acquired awareness and attentiveness is of great importance, because physical closeness, lived sexuality, often unfolds a strong force that can be helpful for personal development - this is also a fundamental aspect of tantra, as nothing should be excluded, everything is allowed to arise - but the preoccupation with one's own sexuality, and that of others, may also touch on resistances and bring one closer to one's own limits and taboos.

But the breeding ground of growth is not the comfort zone, growth takes place at the boundaries, as soon as we literally grow beyond ourselves. And those who are prepared to grow beyond all limits, and yet remain in balance, have practically already left behind those summits that can be climbed just with effort alone.