



Familiarity breeds contempt — and children

— Mark Twain

DISCUSS

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03



MODERN CLASSICS

Pale Blue Dot

Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilisation, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer,



every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every 'superstar,' in the history of our species lived there — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe, are challenged by this point of pale light.

— Carl Sagan

Pacific Resistance

The alternative to violence is nonviolent resistance. This method was made famous in our generation by M K Gandhi, who used it to free India from the domination of the British Empire. This is not a method for cowards: it does resist. The nonviolent resister is just as strongly opposed to the evil against which he protests as is the person who uses violence. His method is



passive or nonaggressive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent. But his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade the opponent that he is mistaken. This method is passive physically but strongly active spiritually: It is nonaggressive physically but dynamically aggressive spiritually. A second point is that nonviolent resistance does not seek defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding... I still believe that love is the most durable power in the world. Over the centuries, men have sought to discover the highest good. This has been the chief quest of ethical philosophy.

— Martin L King Jr, A Testament of Hope



Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school

— Albert Einstein



God In Your Bedroom

PADMA A PRAKASHA is the author of The Power of Shakti. He talks to POONAM JAIN about sacred sex and feminine energy

What happens when God enters the bedroom?

■ When this happens, more love than you ever imagined possible occurs! This is not just human love: Divine love is entirely different and infinite. Much healing can arise in this meeting of human and Divine love; you become more humble and emotional. You develop more emotional intimacy and openness within your own self, and with the other. You experience heightened states of pleasure, for God's love is the most pleasurable feeling a soul can experience. You bond deeper with your partner, and both can then use this sexual energy as a fuel to touch the Divine.

You talk a lot about sacred sex as opposed to sex without God. Please elaborate.

■ The characteristics of largely unconscious sex are: having lustful sex, to relieve and release oneself. Having sex even when you are sexually wounded and are unaware of those wounds; you indulge without investigating, seeing them, wanting to see them or becoming conscious of them or healing them. Having sex to cover your wounds, to be liked, to be loved, to get attention, to get love, to take energy from another, to get something from another rather than to share, exchange, and to give.

There is a core belief that sex is dirty and shameful. A direct way to heal this is to engage in some intimate sexual touch, touching areas of the body with appreciation, gratitude, and loving feeling such as the lips of the yoni, the clitoris, the 'Gratitude' spot and the womb, so we can begin to feel different qualities of love in these sacred areas, releasing old and unloved parts of us in the process. Often, we can feel repulsion even in getting close to these areas, or feel drawn to them out of lust. Either way, there is healing to be done to release emotions.

How did we omit remembering God before love making?

■ Indians remember God, which is very commendable, yet the true 'remembering of God' and 'His love' come from a deep, sincere, yearning desire in the heart,

not just a bowing of the head and a mental note. God does not care about your mind's rote and ritual learnt from others: He cares about your heart's feelings, yearnings, and sincere, passionate desire for Him. Bringing God into the bedroom comes from this desire, and is amplified when you have deep love and commitment to the other person.

Can sex, used appropriately, be an enlightening experience?

■ Sex becomes a tool for love when fully connected to the heart. The male lingam, when healed and connected to love, is no longer a sex toy or experienced as such. It is sweet, gentle and loving in its nature. The healed and sacred lingam is open, supple, flexible, a servant of love. It is not rigid, overly hard and stiff. The woman feels the desire to totally surrender and give all of her to this act of love, to expand tremendously and totally welcome and embrace all of this through her man.

You begin to desire God the way you have so been wanting, needing and desiring the men and women in your life. Take all this valuable energy and redirect it into the pure desire that lies underneath it all.

Does God walk out when women and men have multiple partners?

■ God does not walk out as He does not judge. We ourselves block this love if we are having multiple partners for the wrong reasons: fear of intimacy, fear of being vulnerable, shame or running away from a deeper part of ourselves. We are not here to judge, neither does the Almighty. Yet, many people having multiple partners are scared of true intimacy and a deeper bonding, and have childhood wounds around these issues.

Why can't men understand the feminine aspect?

■ They are afraid of the wild, untamable, unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of reality and feminine part of themselves. The repression men and women hold within is dark, and when it is confronted and unleashed, brings up these emotions in both sexes. Wild freedom and shakti is part of life, and cannot be

intellectualised or understood without experiencing it directly and allowing it to flow through one's own self.

What makes a woman attractive?

■ The purity of her soul, her wisdom, the way she holds herself and the amount of love she is holding within herself for all beings. The more a woman respects herself, the more radiant and attractive



CONVERSATIONS

GOD DOES NOT CARE ABOUT YOUR MIND'S ROTE AND RITUAL,

LEARNT FROM OTHERS: HE CARES ABOUT YOUR HEART'S

FEELINGS, YEARNINGS AND SINCERE, PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR HIM

she will be to both men and women. The more she loves her own Self, the more she will love others, and that quality will ooze out of her. The more kind and compassionate she is, the more men will flock to her.

What do you mean by the words: woman's magnetic ground?

■ It is the feminine principle that consciously holds together the web of life, the interconnectedness of all existence. For a woman, the gender that generally carries more of the feminine principle, the energetic node that gives and receives from the web of life is inside the

core of her womb, known as her magnetic ground.

A woman's energetic signature is magnetic, whereas a man's is electric. When a woman is centred in her womb, it is her magnetic ground that is the central point. From an experiential perspective, you would feel this place in the deepest centre of your womb as having a downward pull, a sensation of being dragged down deep into the earth, linking with the core elements and intelligence that created our known existence.

An experiential path is the most authentic. Meditation, healing and 'learning' about this is not enough, this awakening has to be 'lived'. Working intimately with your conscious partner is the best way, again utilising physical, emotional, sexual, mental and soulful energy.

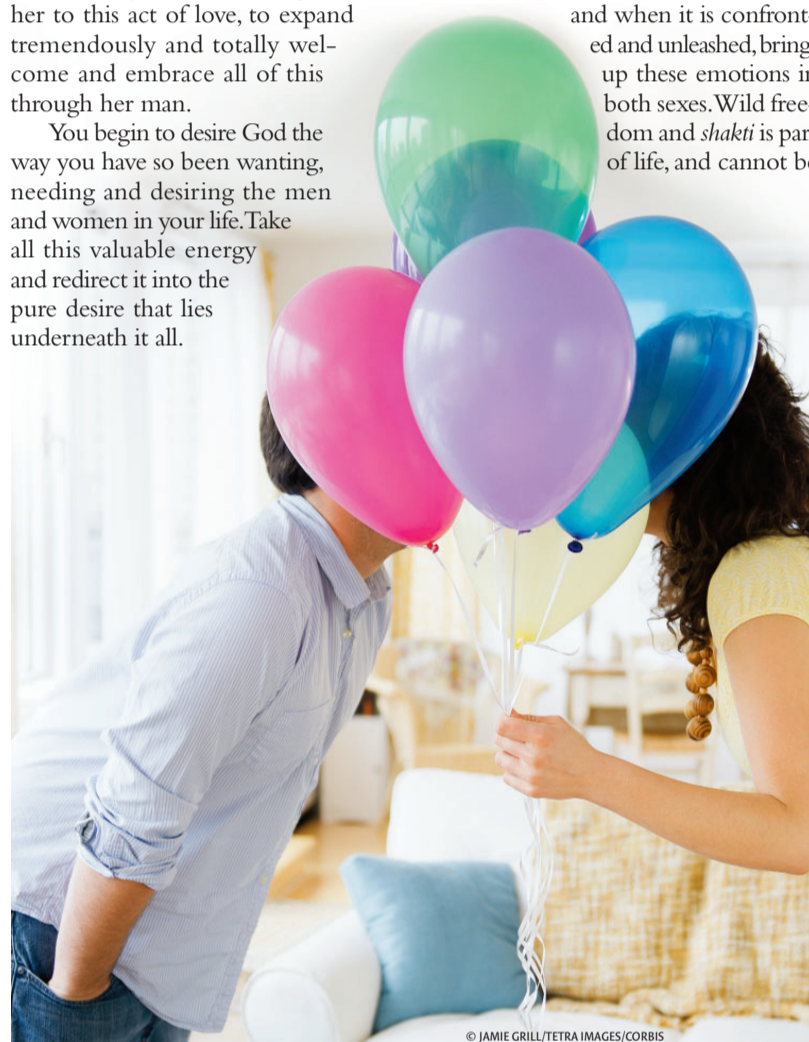
What is the importance of menstruating with the new moon?

■ A woman who is healthy will naturally menstruate on the New Moon or Full Moon. The 'White Moon' cycle is a menstrual cycle that bleeds during the New Moon, whereas the 'Red Moon' cycle is one that bleeds during the Full Moon. Many women's cycles tend to be either a White Moon cycle, a Red Moon cycle, or a Transition cycle where the cycle is moving from one orientation to the other.

The White Moon cycle according to legend, mystical arts and yogic philosophy is the most preferred cycle for inner work as a woman is naturally pulling her energy in, and is able to utilise vast rich resources for the expansion of consciousness. The Red Moon cycle is one where the natural tendency of the woman will flow externally, outwards into her community and circle.

To orientate your cycles towards the White Moon, consciously link your womb to the moon in meditation, prayer, journey work and ritual. Ask for your womb to align with the White Moon cycle, consciously linking your awareness to bleed on the next New Moon. ■

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We need both good skills and ethics to make it big in life, writes Sikkim Governor B P SINGH



COMMENTREE

Educational institutions aim at enabling students to have the faculty to form their own opinions and judgements and to express them eloquently. It develops in them ethical values. It's equally important to make the students skilled enough so that they can earn a living. Reconciling these two different roles is the mark of a great educational institution.

A Better World

The main focus should be to make future leaders and policy makers compassionate and tolerant. The educational system must evolve to meet the daunting challenges of the 21st century. It must nurture the heart as well as mind of the individual to lay the foundation for compassion so that every person utilises his skills and ability not only to move forward professionally, but also to build a better world.

Education is a transformative experience. For good education, we need good teachers. It is the duty of teachers to ensure that educational institutions become centres, both for attaining proficiency in science and the arts and also in cultivation and enrichment of self-discipline and social and moral values.

Religion has played a great role in providing moral foundation for individual and social development. But in the age of science, we cannot be called upon to accept dogmas. Scholars need to reflect and bring to public notice stands taken in a scripture which have been sci-

entifically proven as being no longer valid. This approach may also apply to gender biases and caste and community prejudices. A fundamental change in attitude is necessary. When we investigate certain descriptions in sacred texts and find that they do not correspond to reality, then we must accept reality, and not literal scriptural explanation.

The interdependent world demands a new vision. It is time for



scientists, educators and spiritual masters to come together to plan how contemplative practices can be adapted to classrooms. The impression that the spirit of science is opposed to that of ethics and spirituality is both unfortunate and untrue. The basis of both science and spirituality is to construct a reasoned argument of nature and way of life.

A knowledge-based world is an open world. When we talk of the

fusion of science and ethics, we are not putting any limitations on the autonomy of either scientific or ethical endeavour. Any limitation on the objectivity and autonomy of science and any prescription for a singular path of ethical conduct would come in the way of progress and peace and thus cannot be beneficial for a harmonious world. The need is to work for the development of a more inclusive worldview in which science and ethics are mutually reinforcing.

Future Leaders

It is only through spirituality and ethical conduct that forces of greed, hatred, and despondency can be overcome. The world's great traditions provide us wisdom which promote peace of mind and cultivate qualities such as compassion. The important question is: can we combine the progress of science and technology with progress of mind and spirit?

We have to embrace science and technology for it represents the basic facts of life. At the same time, we cannot ignore values of compassion and tolerance. Industrial progress need not lead to negation of our civilisational strengths. Science will triumph over ignorance and ethics will prevail over selfishness. It is only through education that people and nation states can be empowered to build a great future for humanity. Education should play a significant role in cultivating knowledge of ethical conduct in the minds of future leaders. ■

A Religious Ritual As Well As A Science

CHAMUNDA SWAMI

What is the meaning of the word tantra? The word is composed of two words, *tan* (body) and *tra* (to control). It effectively means subjugating a person or element to one's advantage.

The Sanskrit verse *tanyate gyan manain iti tantram* defines tantra as a scripture whose study will enhance one's knowledge. It's a science propagated by the sages of yore for the overall benefit of mankind. Just as Brahma created the Vedas, Shiva created tantra.

The science of tantra consists of two methods: rightist and leftist. The rightist is a method that entails simple and pure actions and is followed for the success of good intentions, whereas the leftist is employed to fulfil evil intentions.

Mantra or chants and yantra (instruments) hold distinct place in tantra. It is possible to recite a mantra without the practice of tantra, but tantra cannot be practised without a mantra. Yantra (instrument) is also associated with tantra. Therefore, yantra, mantra and tantra are interrelated. If mantra is the very soul of the gods, yantra constitutes the body of the gods. Yantra comprises an amalgamation of various figures, lines, points, numerals and characters.

Tantra consists of *shat karma*, or the six ritualistic acts: It consists of *Akarshan* karma (attraction), *Vashikaran* karma (hypnosis), *Uchchatan* karma (causing aversion), *Stambhan* karma (obstructing), *Vidveshan* karma (causing conflict) and *Maran* karma (obliterating).

Akarshan Karma: It means to fascinate and to attract. It is widely used to infatuate the opposite sex with sinful design. In ancient times, this spell was used for purposes such as calling forth a lost horse belonging to a king or persuading someone



who has run away from home, to return.

Vashikaran Karma: It means to subject someone else to one's own will. This karma is wrongly used to overpower

someone and to influence him mentally, whereas positive uses include reforming a person who has gone astray.

Uchchatan Karma: This karma causes aversion in a human being. It can be misused by making a man unable to concentrate on completing his task. It also helps in making someone averse to bad company.

Stambhan Karma: Stambhan signifies constraining or obstructing someone's progress or activities. You must have heard people say that they have been hedged in and that their efforts have been thwarted. This is a negative example of this karma whereas the same can be harnessed to curb a fire from spreading or to contain the flow of flooding water.

Vidveshan Karma: As the name suggests, this karma aims at causing friction between two partners. The negative aspect of this karma is that if someone is jealous of a couple's amity, they can cause friction between the couple by using this ritual. It can also be mischievously used to cause misunderstanding or for creating discord between two business partners for one's own selfish ends. Positively used, this karma can be employed to reform a child and bring him back to good company if he has gone astray.

Maran Karma: As the name suggests, this karma is used to kill someone. In modern times, this ritual is strictly prohibited. But in ancient times, it was deployed during wars. ■

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