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Osho: Insights on sex

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ABSTRACT

Sex is a mysterious phenomenon, which has puzzled even great sages. Human beings have researched and mastered the biology of sex. But that is not all. Sex needs to be understood from the spiritual perspective too. The vision of Osho is an enlightening experience in this regard. Out of the thousands of lectures, five lectures on sex made Osho most notorious. Born into a Jain family of Madhya Pradesh, Rajneesh, who later wanted himself to be called Osho, is a great master. He has spoken volumes on a wide range of topics ranging from sex to super-consciousness. His contributions in the area of sex are based on the principles of “Tantra” which has its origin from Buddhism. This article focuses on his life and insights on sex, which if understood properly, can be a stepping stone for enlightenment.

Key words: Love, Osho, sex

INTRODUCTION

Life began on earth millions of years ago. Though there are innumerable forms of life, as we all know, human beings evolved to be the most intelligent form of life. Yet almost all human beings fail to recognize this opportunity given by existence, by looking beyond their desires. Life can be used, misused or just wasted. Those who make good use of this opportunity not only are enlightened, but also bring light in others life. Lord Krishna, Gautama the Buddha, Vardhamana Mahaveera, Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed, Adi Shankara Charya, Shirdi Saibaba are some of them who have attained this end. Osho is also a great Master who belongs to this list. He is one of the very rare saints who have spoken on a wide range of topics, from sex and AIDS to transcendental meditations. He has spoken volumes on topics such as “trust”, “freedom”, “miracle”, and “healing”. However, he became extremely popular (unpopular as well, in the eyes of unwise) for his discourses on sex. His contributions in the area of sex are based on the principles of “Tantra” which has its origin from Buddhism. This article focuses on his insights on sex, which if understood properly, can be a stepping stone for enlightenment.

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BIOGRAPHY IN BRIEF

Osho was born as Chandra Mohan Jain on 11 December 1931 in Kuchwada village of Madhya Pradesh. Subsequently, after enlightenment, he was known by many other names like Acharya Rajneesh, Bhagwan Sri Rajneesh, Osho, and sometimes as “sex guru”.

He is the eldest of the 11 children of a Jaina cloth merchant. His father Mr. Babulal Jain, was a successful business man. His mother, Smt. Saraswathi Jain was an artist. As a child, he was rebellious and inquisitive of the conventional beliefs and rituals. He spent his early-childhood days, till he was 7 year old, in maternal grandparents' house and was greatly influenced by his grandmother who was a wise woman.^[1]

He started college in 1951, at the age of 19 at Hitkarini College, Jabalpur, but was asked to leave after conflicts with an instructor. He then completed his B.A. in Philosophy from D N Jain College, Jabalpur in 1955. Even here, having proved himself to be disruptively argumentative, he was not

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required to attend college classes, except for examinations. He then completed M.A. Philosophy from University of Sagar, in 1957 in distinction. As a college student, he was a national-level debate champion and a gold medal winner in the university exam.^[2]

Soon after M.A., he joined as a lecturer at Raipur Sanskrit College, but the vice-chancellor there asked him to take a transfer as he considered him a danger to his students' morality, character, and religion. Then he joined Jabalpur University and within 2 years, by 1960, he became a professor. A popular lecturer, he was acknowledged by his peers as an exceptionally intelligent man who had been able to overcome the deficiencies of his early small-town education. Following a controversial public speech in 1966, he resigned from his job upon request by the University. This put an end to his professional life as a professor of philosophy.^[2]

Osho declared that he became enlightened on March 21 1953, when he was 21-year-old. By this time, he began speaking in public at the annual "Sarva Dharma Sammelan" (meeting of all faiths) held at Jabalpur, organized by the Taranpanthi Jain community into which he was born. He continued his speeches here till 1968. However, 1960 onwards, he also started travelling throughout the country under the name Acharya Rajneesh, giving critical lectures on socialism and Mahatma Gandhi. He criticized orthodox Indian religions. All these made him controversial, but also gained him a loyal following that included a number of wealthy merchants and businessmen. In a 1968 lecture series, later published under the title "From sex to super-consciousness", he scandalized Hindu leaders by calling for freer acceptance of sex and became known as the "sex guru" in Indian press.^[2,3]

Osho relocated to Mumbai (Bombay) in 1970. There he introduced his disciples to a new technique of meditation given by him called "Dynamic Meditation". His travelling became rare now as he started giving lectures from his Woodlands Apartments in Mumbai. His contact with western visitors began here. He could not adjust to the humid climate in Mumbai as he developed multiple ailments like diabetes, asthma, and numerous allergies. Hence in 1974, he shifted to Pune (Poona). At Pune, he moved to a property at Koregaon Park, a six-acre land with two adjoining houses, purchased with the help of a Greek disciple. This place is still the heart of the present day "Osho Commune International". This is the period during which Osho has given maximum spiritual discourses. He used to give 90 min lecture almost every day, alternating between Hindi and English every month. In the evenings, he would answer disciples' questions. Many sannyasins were initiated. By late 1970s, ashram became too small as visitors increased rapidly. Then Osho asked for a larger place. Though some place in Gujarat was found by his disciples, it did not materialize due to mounting

tensions between ashram and Murarji Desai Government.^[4]

In 1981, the increased tensions around the Poona Ashram, along with criticism of its activities and threatened punitive action by the Indian authorities, provided an impetus for the ashram to relocate to USA. Osho and his secretary Sheela had discussed the idea of establishing a new commune in US in late 1980s. Finally, on 1 June 1981, he travelled to US on a tourist visa, ostensibly for medical purposes, and spent several months at a Rajneeshee retreat center located at Kip's Castle in Montclair, New Jersey. He had been diagnosed with a prolapsed disc and was treated by several doctors. Soon his secretary with the help of her husband, who was also a disciple, bought a huge land of 64,299 acres (260 km²) ranch for US \$5.75 million, located across two Oregon counties (Wasco and Jefferson). Later, the ranch was named "Rajneeshpuram". However, from day 1, problems persisted between the natives and ashram inmates. It became increasingly bitter and over the following years, the commune was subject to constant, coordinated pressure from various coalitions. At one point, the commune imported large numbers of homeless people from various US cities in a failed attempt to affect the outcome of an election, before releasing them into surrounding towns and leaving it to the State of Oregon to return them to their home cities at the state's expense.^[5,6]

At US, Osho had withdrawn from public speaking and lecturing during the upheaval, having entered a period of "silence" that lasted until November 1984. At the commune, videos of his discourses were played to audiences instead. He gained public notoriety for the 93 Rolls-Royces bought for his use. This made him the largest single owner of the cars in the world. His followers aimed to eventually expand that collection to include 365 Rolls-Royces—for every day of the year. Later tension also arose within the ashram due to autocratic leadership among ashram inmates. Many allegations, including Osho being abusing nitrous oxide were also in the press. Crimes like bioterror attack and violence were committed by ashram inmates which Osho claimed were without his knowledge. By August 1985, his personal secretary also left the ashram due to differences. By that time, Osho had resumed daily public lectures and gave press meets, after 3.5 years of silence. On 28 October 1985, he was indicted on 35 counts in Multnomah County, Oregon. Charges included immigration violations and making false statements on his visa application. He was jailed for 12 days. During this time, Osho, himself reports that he was poisoned with heavy-metal Thallium. He agreed to pay US \$400,000 and was deported from US.^[7,8]

On returning back to India on 17 November 1985, he planned a world tour, but 17 countries in Europe and Americas denied him a tourist visa. He finally returned back to India (Mumbai) in June 1986, putting an end to all his journeys. In January 1987, he settled back in the Poona

Ashram, where he would give evening discourses. However, health problems such as nausea, fatigue, pain in extremities, and lack of resistance to infections became frequent. In February 1989, he expressed his wish to be called as “Osho” and requested that all trademarks previously branded with “Rajneesh” be rebranded internationally to “Osho”. The word ‘Osho’ has been described to have many meanings. The meanings include “dissolving into the whole of human existence”, “the blessed one on whom the sky showers flowers”, “great gratitude and respect for one who expands consciousness”, and “a revered teacher of meditation”.^[9]

His health continued to weaken. He gave his last public discourse in April 1989. Then onwards he would simply sit in silence with his followers. Shortly before his death, Osho suggested that one or more audience members at evening meetings were subjecting him to some form of evil magic. A search for the perpetrators was undertaken, but none could be found. Osho died on 19 January 1990, aged 58, reportedly of heart failure. His ashes were placed in his newly built bedroom in Lao Tzu House at the Poona Ashram. The epitaph reads, “OSHO, Never Born; Never Died; Only visited this planet Earth between 11th Dec 1931 and 19th Jan 1990”.^[4,10]

SEX – A BIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON

Sex is a motive force bringing two people into intimate contact. Satisfying sexual experience is an essential part of a healthy and enjoyable life for most people. As defined by Kaplan, the sexual response cycle consists of three phases: Desire, arousal (excitement), and orgasm. However, the division is arbitrary and it only helps to organize clinical and research oriented problems involving sexuality.^[11] An adult's sexuality has seven components: Gender identity, orientation, intention (what one wants to do with a partner's body and have done with one's body during sexual behavior), desire, arousal, orgasm, and emotional satisfaction. The first three components constitute our sexual identity, second three comprise our sexual function, and the seventh is based on our personal reflection on the first six.^[12] Thus, sexual function is the physiological capacity to experience desire, arousal, and orgasm.

Sexual activity is a multifaceted biological activity, involving complex interactions between the nervous system, the endocrine system, the vascular system, and a variety of structures that are instrumental in sexual excitement, intercourse, and satisfaction. Normal sexual function requires the integrity of the genitalia, the reliable co-ordination of blood flow, the activation of various smooth and skeletal muscles and the stimulation of local secretions. This is linked with cognitive processes attending to the sexual meaning of what is happening. Though essentially it is meant for procreation, it has also been a source of pleasure, a natural relaxant, it confirms one's gender, bolsters one's self-esteem and sense of attractiveness for mutually satisfying intimacy and

relationship.^[13] Various neurotransmitters and hormones have their role in sexual function. This information summarizes the biology of sex. However, this is not all. Sex needs to be understood from the spiritual perspective too. The vision of Osho is an enlightening experience in this regard.

Out of thousands of lectures, five lectures on sex made Osho most notorious. It all happened when he was called to speak on love in one of the prestigious institutions at Mumbai. In order to present a complete picture of the human situation regarding love, he had to bring in sex and those responsible for destroying its sacredness. Though the organizers banned his lecture after the first day, he continued four more lectures at a different venue despite death threats. It was all about realizing the sacredness of sex to create a better humanity that can transcend sex and transform self.^[14]

Love and sex

What is love? It is unfortunate that something that humans should have been living, something, which is actually meant to be lived, has only been talked about by them for the past 5000-6000 years. Love is being talked about and discussed, songs of love are being sung, devotional hymns of love are being sung, but love itself has no place in the lives of human beings. If we search deep within man, we will find that no other word used by him is more false than “love”. Today's human being is the product of a culture that is 10,000 years old. But the human being is blamed for being wrong, not the culture. Man is rotting, yet the culture is praised. It is like blaming the bitter fruit given by a tree and not the seed responsible for the tree.^[15]

More love can be seen in the birds, animals, plants, and tribesmen who have no organized religion or culture. Why is it that the more civilized we are, more away we are from love? Actually, love is our intrinsic nature. It need not be cultivated. However, barriers for its manifestation need to be removed. The barriers are essentially man made. The first thing is that until now all of human culture has been against sex. Everybody is inimical to it: All cultures, all religions, all gurus, and all holy men. Sex is projected to be sin. But the evolution of love is nothing but transformed sex energy. It is just like how coal becomes diamond with passage of time. If lust is transformed, sex can become love. When religions proclaim that sex is unsacred and hence it has to be controlled by ones' own effort, it is suppressed. Suppression ultimately makes it to come out many times more intensely, like an obsession. Thus, people are more neurotic and perverted with anger, aggression, crime, etc. This is because it is the same energy that has taken an alternate manifestation due to centuries of suppression.^[15]

Sex and super-consciousness

Now the most important meaning of sex has to be understood. Man had his first ever glimpse of “samadhi”, of meditation, only in moments of lovemaking-nowhere else. It was only in

moments of lovemaking that human beings realized for the first time that so much bliss was possible. Those who meditated on this truth, those who reflected deeply upon the phenomenon of sex, of lovemaking, saw that in moments of lovemaking, at the climax, the mind becomes empty of thoughts. For a moment, all thoughts disappear. This emptiness of the mind, this disappearance of thoughts, is the cause of the showering of divine bliss. They had discovered the secret.^[15]

They had also discovered the secret that if the mind could be freed from thoughts through some other process, the same bliss can be attained. From this developed the systems of yoga and of no-mind that gave birth to meditation, to prayerfulness. At the root of all this is the experience of lovemaking. Thus, human beings came to experience that the mind can be stilled, that the mind can be freed of thoughts without going into sex and that the same bliss that happens in sex can be attained. Moreover, one can be in the experience of lovemaking only for a limited time because it is dissipation and release of energy, but one can remain in the experience of meditation continuously. One who attains to meditation experiences the same bliss around the clock which a couple experiences in the moment of orgasm. However, there is no basic difference between the bliss of the two.^[15]

SEX – THE FUNDAMENTAL LIFE PRINCIPLE

What is the central element in the normal life of human beings? God? Soul? Truth? What is at the core of human beings? Leave human beings aside for the moment, even if we look at the animal or vegetable kingdom, what will we find at the core of everything? What is a plant doing in essence? Its whole energy is directed towards producing new seeds. Its entire being is occupied with forming new seeds. What is a bird doing? What is an animal doing? If we look closely into nature, we will find that there is only one wholehearted process going on. It is one of continuous creation, of procreation, of continuous resurrection of life in newer and newer forms. Flowers are nurturing seeds, fruits are nurturing seeds. What will the seed do? The seed will grow into a new plant, into a new flower, into a new fruit. This way, life is an infinitely non-ending process of procreation.^[16]

The same is the case in human beings. We have named this endeavor of constant procreation in humans “sex”. This labeling has given a kind of condemnatory feeling in humans about it. Nevertheless, in humans also, a constant effort to procreate life goes on. This we have termed “sex energy”. But what is this sex energy? Long-long-ago there were only rocks, mountains, rivers, and oceans on this earth. What were these longing for? They were striving to produce better life-plants. Ever so gradually, plants came into existence. The life-energy had manifested itself in a new form. But the plants were also not content with themselves. Their inner urge and striving was also for something higher. Then animals and birds came into being. Earth remained full

of them for ages, but human beings were still nowhere in sight. Yet human beings were always there, inherent in the animals and birds, striving to be born. In due course, they came into existence. Now, the human being is ceaselessly eager to create new life. We have named this tendency “sexual passion” or “lust”. However, the meaning of this lust in its basics is only this much, that human beings do not want to just end on themselves; they want to go on furthering life. Why? This is because of the same inherent force that existed in other life forms, to produce better beings. Certainly, the soul of human beings is striving for a better human being, a superior being. However, how will a better human being take birth? Instead of respecting sex, religions have called it names. The truth is that there is nothing else more important in human life than this urge. However, it has been covered up and suppressed. People have turned their backs on this powerful life energy without trying to understand it. This has made them even more badly obsessed with sex, leading them to hasty acts like rape and perversions. Majority of mental illnesses are due to repression of sex.^[16]

The attraction

Despite the passive attitude of parents, teachers, and religious leaders toward sex, man is not able to successfully ignore sex. In fact, he can even hide pornographic books within “Bhagavad Gita” or “Bible”. Man has developed intense curiosity to watch a nude body of women. Even though they speak about “God” and “Divinity” daily, their inner core is nothing but sex. What is the attraction? What is this mighty pull? The sexual desire in the very core of humans is actually not a sexual desire. That is why after every sex act, they feel remorseful. They think about how to be free of it, because they find nothing in it. Perhaps the attraction is of something else. This something is that in their normal life, humans are unable to reach the depths of their being except in the experience of sex. Deep down, two things happen to them there. First, in the moment of orgasm, the ego vanishes. For a moment, there is no trace of “I am”. The second thing that happens is that for a while there is no time there. Timelessness emerges. There is no past, no future; there is only the present. So there is an unconsciousness urge to experience this egolessness and timelessness, which are mystic experiences. Thus, though it appears superficially that there is craving for the body of opposite sex, the craving is for something else, for the taste of egolessness and timelessness. Behind this craving is an attempt at soul searching. So the root of spiritual realization is nothing but sex.^[16]

How to transform sex energy?

Sex is the energy. It is the only energy the living beings have got. The energy can be transformed, it can become a higher energy. The higher it moves, the lesser and lesser sexuality remains in it. There is an end peak where it becomes simply love and compassion. This ultimate flowering is the divine energy, but the root remains sex. This energy

cannot be killed. No energy can be killed – energy can only be transformed. Further, we cannot create energy too. Creation and destruction are both beyond human beings. Now, even scientists agree to this – not even a single atom can be destroyed. Religions aimed at becoming absolutely free from sex. That created madness. The more you fight, the more you suppress, the more sexual you become. And then sex moves deeper into the unconscious. Whatsoever we do, sex comes in. people think that devil is playing tricks. Nobody is playing tricks. If you suppress sex, you are the devil. Then start an excessive indulgence in sex. The polarity has changed, but the problem is as it is. So sex has to be transformed, neither repressed nor madly indulged. This energy is mysterious till it is used only as a biological reproductive force. It becomes divine once it is freed from biological bondage. This divine energy is nothing but the love of Jesus or compassion of Buddha.^[17]

Most of the humanity has failed to get out of this trap of powerful sex energy successfully. What is needed is an alert, conscious, mindful being? One should not allow sex to become an unconscious force. Sexual experience should be made a meditative experience. This is what the East has done through “Tantra”. For example, if we have newly learnt car driving, we will be very careful every moment while driving. The same degree of awareness and alertness is needed during sexual intercourse. This meditation changes the quality of energy. Then one can observe that during the peak of orgasm, which is the deepest of all experiences human beings can have, thinking stops completely. One becomes totally still for a second. At this point of time, an alert mind can appreciate that it is not the sex that gave this bliss and ecstasy, but it is the thoughtless state of mind. We also come to know that even ugliest women can give the same quality of orgasm as that of a pretty woman. This is because the experience is internal. From this experience, one has to further learn that such momentary experience of bliss can be experienced for longer duration too. This can happen only if the meditative alertness becomes a moment to moment living. In other words, one has to practice the art of living in the present, without preoccupations of the past and future. This is the only way of arresting the thoughts and stilling the mind. In this state there is moment to moment orgasm. The need for sex disappears.^[17]

Another most important barrier needs to be known. Because, accepting that sex is natural and sacred, will convert sex energy into love energy. Now there is something that is blocking the sex energy like a wall not allowing it to flow. This is nothing but the “ego”, the feeling that “I am”. The stronger a person’s “I” is, the smaller his capacity to become one with anybody. This wall “I” proclaims “you are you and I am I”. There is a distance between the two. No matter how closely we meet, still there is a gap in between because I am me and you are you. That is why even the most intimate

experiences fail to bring people close. So the sex is not getting transformed into love. As long as there is “I” inside, the sense of “the other” cannot be destroyed. As long as there is this separateness, there can be no experience of love, because love is the experience of oneness. For that oneness, the wall has to collapse. The ego has to dissolve.^[15]

CONCLUSION

Osho was a great gifted Master who has explained about the sexual energy in such a vast detail that no other philosopher has elaborated. The existence has given an opportunity to human beings through sexual orgasm, to experience and realize what blissful state of mind is. It is possible to live continuously in the same blissful state through meditative practices. Transcending sex and not suppressing is essential to achieve that state. Hidden deep down in sexual urge is the soul search, which is largely unconscious. This comes to conscious awareness through a proper understanding of sex which happens when the ego is dropped and sex is viewed respectfully. Thus one is liberated from the bondage of sex. This facilitates in ones’ search for higher realizations, which is not possible if the mind is obsessed with sex. This is the formula suggested by Osho to raise oneself from sex to enlightenment and make our earth a better place to live.

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