

YOGATM MAGAZINE

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STRETCH, STRENGTHEN, SHINE

**ECLIPSES &
YOGA
PRACTICE**

**योग &
SACRED
SEXUALITY**

**गोवर्ध
इहार्ति**

**UNVEILING
THE
Zen**

**8
PARTNER
POSES**

BEDITATION



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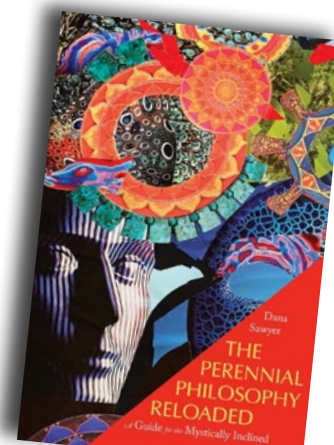
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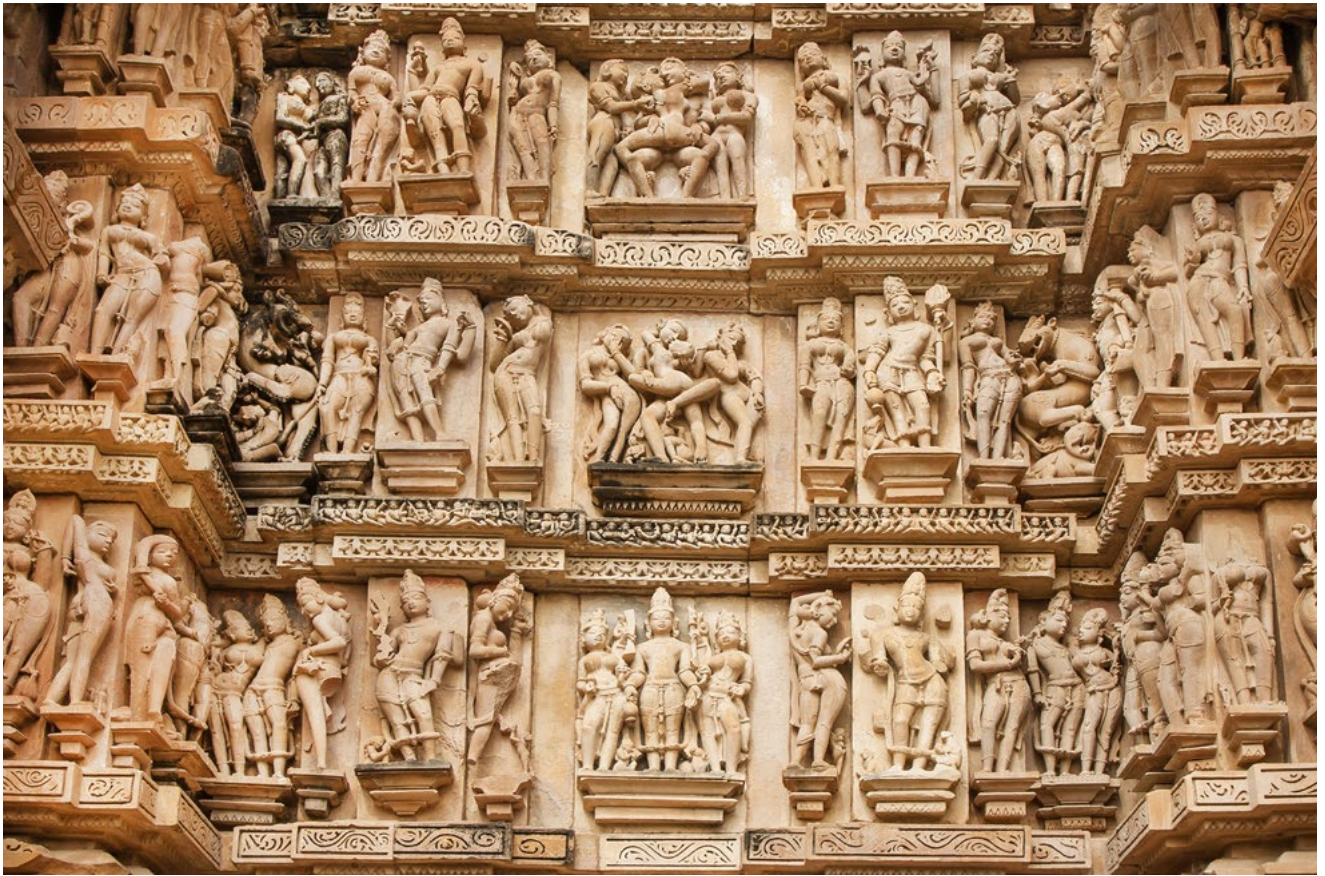
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YOGA & SACRED SEXUALITY

DEEPENING INTIMACY THROUGH CONSCIOUS CONNECTION

Words: Diana Richardson



On coming across the words 'sacred sex' it's quite possible that your next thought is - How can sex be sacred? Our association with the word sacred is often related to church and religion, however many people report having sacred moments outside of traditional gathering spaces, which establishes it is possible to experience sacredness in a variety of situations. Stone monuments or pyramids or ocean sunsets can infuse you with a sense of sacredness, as can a thundering waterfall, a majestic mountain, an ancient tree. Experiencing something as sacred, whatever its source, is characterised by qualities such as wonder, awe, gratitude, love, a sense of expansion or interconnectedness. These can be described as religious experiences even though they are not necessarily to do with being in a church or associated with a religion. The splendour, the magnificence, the grandeur, the brilliance - it touches you, opens you, expands you. You feel inspired and uplifted.

What makes sex sacred?

In reality there is no recipe for sacred sex, and there is nothing in particular that you have to do, produce, or act out. Sacred sex doesn't require some acrobatic position or involve a secret technique, and there's also no need to follow a special ritual. The single and essential ingredient that elevates sex from a commonplace, often routine act, to the sacred, is very simple - it is you! You have the power to make the difference. It is you that can make the sexual exchange sacred. You have the innate capacity to transform sex from something familiar and common into a sacred experience - where time stops, distractions seem to melt away, where you feel part of something infinite, or in the presence of a higher power. You are filled with love, peace and serenity.

Shifting focus

To access sacred experiences requires a basic shift in focus. A shift as to

where we place our attention. Generally speaking, we tend to move through our days in a relatively mechanical fashion, formed by routine, and this is understandable of course because for years on end we are probably doing the same thing, day by day. Walking, eating, sitting, standing, driving, typing, cooking, cleaning or whatever. You name it. And because of the habitual or repetitive nature of any activity, there will be the tendency to drift off into thought, getting almost 'lost' in thinking, as it were. The end result is that our attention will be displaced from the body. We are more focused on the outside of ourselves than on the inside of ourselves. We tend to be absent to what is happening within the body, and sensing how it's moving, standing, sitting, eating and so on. This means that on a body level there is a significant degree of absence.

Body is a bridge to present

The first step in remedying this absence is to realise that the body itself is the only thing that exists in the present moment. The mind moves ceaselessly between past and future while the body is always in the here and now. This means that we can use the body to access the present moment - it is available to us as a bridge to the present. This 'remembering' of the body will very simply and effectively address the absence inadvertently created by getting too involved in thought. We need to develop the practice of recognising when we are in thought, and then intentionally stepping out of the mind, and sinking with our attention into the body, feeling and sensing the body from the inside.

So, the crucial step toward opening up and inviting sacred moments into the sexual exchange is the attempt to be more present. To be more anchored in here and now. To shift from thinking to feeling, and from mind to body. This inner connection to the body instantly transports us into the present moment, and it is only when we are truly present will magical dimensions become available to us.

Sex with direction

It is interesting though, if we take a moment to observe ourselves more closely during sex, we are likely to realise that the 'how' of how we have sex is pretty much dominated by the idea of achieving a climax. Having this end goal in mind impacts everything we do along the way - it affects what we do and how we do it. In general, the aim will be to increase stimulation, build up the intensity, and do faster movements. All of these strategies are understandable if we have the climax as our target. However, it is helpful to realise that through having this focus we are displaced into the future because all of our doings are

aimed on achieving that climax. The end result is we are not truly in the present, anchored in the actual here now. It is not as if we are thinking constantly about the climax, but upon examination we may well notice that we are more interested in the next penetration or thrust or touch, we are not truly present to whatever is happening right now.

If there is the wish to elevate sex to a sacred or exceptional experience, our aim is to access the present moment - and not get ahead of ourselves - consciously or unconsciously trying to build up the energy to a peak.

One basic stumbling block is that people tend to be convinced that the climax is the reason for having sex. Of course, the climax is enjoyable, but the downside is that once that has happened then usually it's all over. The sense of connection and intimacy evaporates. There is the option of learning to be more in the

moment, to take things easy, relaxedly enjoying a slow sexual exchange, without heading off to the peak. The peak can be postponed, and if you stay in the awareness, lovemaking can be extended which will increase love and deepen intimacy and connection. Relaxing into the moment is an ongoing process of 'remembering' that can accompany us all day long, and not only during the sexual exchange.

Engaging the awareness

Essentially what is required while exploring the sacredness of sex is engaging the awareness. Nothing more, and nothing less. Anything done with awareness is transformed by that awareness. If I lift my teacup with awareness and drink the tea with awareness, the experience is will be very different. I will feel the weight of the cup in my hand, which naturally slows down the movement, the drinking will more conscious, the taste of the tea will be enhanced.





while you are doing your thing. There is no real togetherness, not really. But when a person is conscious and present with you, and you are equally conscious and present with them, a beautiful bond is formed, you are united by a common thread, and the magic of the present moment will open up, in all her timeless shining glory.

Preparing for the sacred

If you wish, you can create your own ritual to help you access the present moment. This means that you decide on a series of steps that you follow each time to support you into a more conscious and aware state. But again, it is not the ritual itself but you, together with your awareness, that makes the difference. It's also very nice to create a beautiful space around you before making love, using candles and flowers and anything else that helps you relax into the sacred and healing present - where life enters you and you are filled with love, peace and serenity.

On the surface the suggestion just to be 'more aware' sounds really flimsy. But the power of awareness is something that has to be experienced. Just reading about it, or thinking about it, awareness can easily be underestimated and dismissed as too simple. Awareness is in fact a powerful and transforming force. Awareness propels us into the present moment. This awareness and the ensuing presence will elevate the experience into a sacred happening, where you feel touched, blessed, inspired, uplifted.

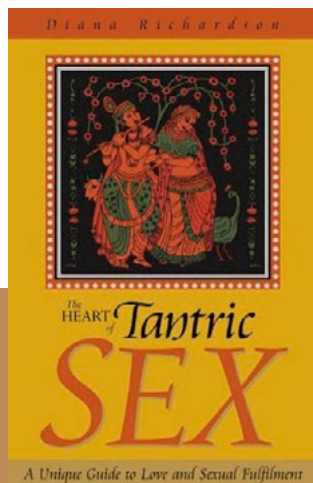
make you more conscious of what you do, and how you do it. When this level of awareness is brought into the sexual exchange, and even into the embrace of two bodies outside of sexual union, a sweet natural flow can arise, where your body transports you into the precious present moment - the source of all sacred uplifting experiences.

Often people will have the sense that, during sex, the partner is not really with you. There's no sense of connection. They are doing their thing,

In addition to the tendency to be focused on reaching an orgasm, most of us will probably have noticed that we tend to follow certain patterns or routines. We know what works and we stick to it. This can also easily lead to being relatively mechanical as we focus on reaching a climax. So, in fact we are not really 'in the awareness', not fully present. It may well seem like we are present, because we are involved and enjoying the pleasure, but involvement does not necessarily mean you are truly present.

Yoga encourages awareness

One of the many benefits of Yoga is that through regular practice an individual increases their body connection, flexibility and body awareness, which is a great advantage in that it's going to be easier to access - and to hold - the present moment through the body. Yoga practice will



Diana Richardson is acclaimed as one of today's leading authorities on human sexuality. She is known as the pioneer of the slow sex movement, and has written 8 books on how to have a more satisfying love life. Diana lives in Europe teaching couples in her very well attended week-long Making Love Retreats since 1993.

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