

Sexuality: Its Beauty and its Illusions



Sex is a very central and important aspect of our lives. Some people have less sexual desire, due to a weak vital force or for other reasons, but it remains one of our most fundamental and powerful instincts. We are driven to procreate, and the motivation manifests as our desire for sex. Most people are quite dominated by their sexual desires, and are unconsciously bound by the will of life to create offspring. But life also uses our sexual desire for deeper purposes than just procreation. Before we discuss this more fully, we can begin by developing an overview of the sexuality and of the various cultural conditionings that shape our perception of it.

Sex: Physical Versus Psychological

While our body has natural sexual needs, most of our sexual desire is generated in the mind. We are physically attracted to others, but because our brain has been so artificially stimulated and programmed through television, movies, books, and advertisements, we can no longer tell whether the stimulus is coming from our body or our mind.

In nature, wildlife has developed various ways of attracting the other sex, like the male peacock's impressive feathers. In this context, procreation is often so important it can put survival at risk. For instance, the male peacock's heavy feathers make him vulnerable to predators, and some male spiders are eaten by his female partner after they have mated. Animals make extraordinary efforts and sacrifices to engage in the act of procreation, and some males fight to the death to become the alpha male with the exclusive right to impregnate all of the females in the herd. Are we humans so different? For all our airs and social sophistication, we have not really evolved far from our primate roots. In some aspects we have

actually regressed, particularly through the development of various sexual obsessions.

Unlike much of the animal kingdom, humans have sex all the time rather than at very specific times of the month or year. This may be because the woman's menstrual cycle is much shorter than in other animals; some females only menstruate once or twice a year. Another exceptional difference is that humans have sex just for the pleasure, and so have sex even when the female is not ovulating. Humans have discovered the pleasures of sex and learned how to increase them in all kinds of ways. For instance, foreplay is either absent or very limited in animals, while among humans it has become as important as the sex itself. We no longer have sex just to procreate, and have learned how to prevent conception through the use of contraceptives, avoiding ejaculation, or having sex when the woman is not ovulating. The object has been to maximize sexual pleasure, while avoiding its original intended purpose.

Sexual Attraction

The transmission and reception of sexual signals is an intrinsic part of sexual attraction. In nature, the senses of smell and sight are often the most utilized. The release of sex pheromones, usually by the female, are a major factor in attraction and mating for insects. Male mosquito antennae are especially well adapted to helping them locate the frequency of the wing beats of the females.

In humans, the visual signals are predominant, though the signal of smell is also important, either on a conscious or subliminal level. The visual signals are related to face, body, clothing, hairstyle, make-up, and other factors like jewelry. Body language is also important in stimulating sexual attraction. Different cultures and eras prioritize different body types. For instance, in times of Rembrandt, well-rounded, Rubenesque, women were considered attractive, while nowadays slender women are typecast as more desirable. Certain personal qualities can also generate sexual attraction. For instance, how a man bears himself, his confidence, or his charm can each be attracting factors for women. The human voice is one of the key mediums of human communication, and erotic signals are also conveyed through it. Spoken sounds can be noticeably masculine or feminine, seductive and intimate, soothing, or flirtatious. For instance, in Japan, some men are attracted by a woman speaking with a high pitch voice.

A great deal of social interaction is flirtatious and intended to be sexually stimulating to attract the opposite sex. Our culture is hyper sexually orientated and sexual signals can be found virtually everywhere one looks. Sexual appeal is especially widely used as a powerful marketing tool. An attractive woman is invariably placed next to the advertised goods, even when her presence has nothing whatsoever to do with the goods being promoted. While this seems rather ridiculous, human psychology is such that it sells products.

Sex as an Opium of the People

Karl Marx referred to religion as the opium of the people, but the phrase could just as easily be applied to sex. Sex is used as a way to achieve a sense of transcendence and relief from self-consciousness. People use sex much as a drug, as it has the effect of suspending the mind and making one more unconscious.

The astrological perspective on sexuality is also revealing. Each house in the astrological chart represents a different aspect of our human existence, including transcendence, which is the domain of the twelfth house. The eighth house, which is ruled by Pluto (the planet of transformation and purification) is considered the house of sex. But unlike the fifth house (zodiac sign Leo, ruled by the Sun), which refers more to love affairs and having fun, the eighth house is about experiencing deeper sexuality. It is not by chance that the eighth is also the house of the occult, paranormal, and death. It is where the soul seeks to transcend 'normal' reality and reach the final limits of her personal self by probing the unknown in order to find higher meaning and purpose for her existence. In terms of the spiritual path, this house is about stepping out of physical reality through mystical experiences. In terms of sexuality, it is about merging with the other both physically and emotionally; to possess the other completely as well as to lose oneself totally. For most people, the experience of this house is entirely unconscious. Trying to lose oneself in unconscious union with the other through sex is spiritually meaningless and can even be harmful. We should strive to bring clarity and presence into our sexuality rather than use it as a futile attempt to escape from the ego's prison.

When the eighth house is experienced in a conscious way, from the soul, its purpose is neither to lose oneself in sex or the paranormal nor to experience an illusion of transcendence through merging with someone else in sexual union or romantic infatuation. It is, rather, to purify and reach the existential limits of our human persona so that we are prepared for true transcendence of the separate self and true union with the whole. As far as the eighth house is concerned, the higher purpose of our sexual dimension is purification. And the purification is not from sex (in its natural sense), but from the many layers of unconscious and artificial psychological tendencies that have taken over and distorted our sexual life.

Sexual Repression and Indulgence

Sexual repression is a serious problem in most modern societies, and in most has always been. There are many social taboos concerning sex, and it is very often linked with immorality and guilt. The repression of sexuality and sexual desire results in completely unreal expectations being projected into sex, so much so that the mind can become infatuated with it. When the mind is so overloaded with sexual thoughts, images, and anticipation, it detaches itself from its natural connection with the body and creates a psychologically driven reality of its own. The result of this is that, even if and when one manages to have some actual physical sexual contact with another, it is never enough to satisfy the level of the mind's sexual expectations. Sex is a natural and beautiful physical expression and

sharing. It is very normal; it is not something extraordinary. But when it has been repressed, the mind will then try to satisfy its unreal expectations and projections it has developed. This is how repression turns into obsession and over-indulgence.

There is nothing wrong with indulging in sex, especially at particular stages of one's life. Exploring one's sexuality and experimenting with it in order to distinguish between what is true and healthy about it and what is only imagination can even be positive. But it is important, too, that there comes a point in one's life where sexuality takes more of a back seat, and we learn to find the right balance. In the context of the path, excessive indulgence in sex can be a sign that one is chasing an illusory external dream of happiness. Rather, an adept need to work towards the transformation of his/her sexual energy and purification of the mind.

Sex as Natural

Sex should not be a big deal. It has become a big deal because of being overly regulated by society, religions, and governments, so that it cannot be expressed naturally. For instance, when people (especially men) are young, they have an extremely strong sexual drive. Often the only way they can release it is through masturbation, which, until relatively recently, was generally viewed as wrong and sinful as well. A good deal of this can be blamed on the influence of Catholicism and other puritanical religions, which have used guilt to exploit and control society. In Victorian England, a teacher of J. Krishnamurti was expelled from the Theosophical Society because he condoned masturbation by young men. When one's natural sexual needs are denied and repressed, the imagination gradually goes wild and one accumulates layer up layer of sexual fantasies and obsessions, which is damaging and distorts our natural needs.

Sex and Its Deviations

Is there such a thing as sexual aberration or perversion, and does everyone have the right to express their sexual preferences as they please, no matter how unusual that may be (as long, of course, that it is consensual)? The key issue being explored for us here is not about judging particular people or acts, but rather helping to clarify as to when sex is artificial and distorted to the extent that it becomes a distraction, or even an obstacle, to one's evolutionary purpose and destiny.

One of the definitions of the term 'perversion' is a misapplication or corruption of what is originally intended. The word is commonly used when referring to sexual behavior that is considered abnormal and unacceptable. But just because something is unacceptable to most people does not mean that it is wrong. Until recently, masturbation and oral sex were considered 'perversions', and decent women were not supposed to enjoy having sex. These have all now come into general acceptance, so the boundaries between normal acceptable versus abnormal unacceptable may well exist, but they are not hard and fast.

Sexual perversion could be defined as the corruption or misapplication of healthy sexuality through the distorted projections of the mind. When the mind begins to control the body, there is always a danger that it will impose neurotic tendencies onto it, and will misuse sex as channel for the displacement of its own psychological problems. The deviation occurs when it is the mind that is having sex, rather than the body or the soul.

Sex is intended to be both beautiful and natural, but for many, if not most, people, it has been distorted into a mind-stimulation compulsion. People are sexually turned on by an incredible spectrum of fantasies: submission, domination, particular kinds of clothing or dress, and an infinite variety of fetishes. What is this all about? The fact is that, after some time, sex stops being exciting and becomes boring, and even a chore. However, by the time this happens, it has become such an important part of life to some people, their mind has developed something of an addiction to it and now seeks and needs constant stimulation for the body to respond to. Sex for most people is a way of escaping from their egoic reality in order to become more unconscious. They want to lose themselves in sex or to use it purely for psychological pleasure in which the act is performed more with the image in their head than with a living partner.

Guilt and Fear in Sexuality

Why is sexual activity so often seen as dangerous and threatening? Is it because, as Freud thought, Eros (life or the sex drive) and Thanatos (the death instinct) are conceptually so closely linked? Not likely. It is rather the result of guilt from so much pleasure combined with the fear of doing something wrong.

Just indulging in sex can fill one with countless unconscious fears. No wonder that Osho (also known as Rajneesh), at the end of his life, was convinced that AIDS will kill humanity, and advised his followers to wear condoms and rubber gloves during sex. This is very strange and nonsensical, but clearly demonstrates how someone who, on the surface, appeared to be very sexually permissive, could still carry seeds of guilt and fear inside. If one is afraid of sex, one should refrain from it. When one is afraid of life itself, it is a contradiction to continue being alive. Indeed, wearing rubber gloves, gas masks and living in a sterile environment will kill us even faster. It is fear and guilt which are the most contagious diseases on the planet, and everybody is in danger of being infected with these all of the time through the media and other people's minds.

Homosexuality and the Need for Polarities

In recent times the homosexual community has achieved increased freedom to express their sexuality more openly. Homosexuality is nothing new. In ancient Greece it was accepted, at least among men, in certain life stages and circumstances. Men considered the male body aesthetically beautiful and desirable. This was not exclusive to ancient Greece, and has also been noted in other cultures. Perhaps because society has generally been dominated by men,

there are less historical records of homosexuality among women, but it obviously also existed. It is perhaps worth noting that those who had homosexual relations in Greece were supposed to have a normal family as well, which means that they might more correctly be called bisexual. Their homosexual affairs usually involved an older man sharing his love with an adolescent boy.

It is positive that people can express their sexuality in a way that feels most appropriate to them (assuming it is consensual and no one is abused), but there may still be a question as to whether homosexuality is really natural, since it neither serves procreation nor seems to offer the energy exchange possible between opposite genders. Homosexual behavior of different levels can also be observed in the animal kingdom, but the motivation for this is still not fully understood, though this seems often to happen among the males when they cannot express their sexual desire with a female.

Life is based on polarities, as is depicted in the Chinese yin and yang. Why would yang be attracted to yang and yin to yin if they already possess these respective energies? Perhaps even though one may have been born a man or a woman does not necessarily imply that one has integrated the energy of his or her own gender. Another explanation is that some people fear the opposite gender, so they feel safer interacting sexually with their own. This is known to occur for women who have been violated by men or who are afraid of men's aggressiveness. Homosexuality in men is much more open and accepted now, and the motivation for it because of fear of women is much less likely, though emotional issues with mothers could be a factor in some cases.

One of the possible explanations for someone being sexually attracted to another of the same gender, and a related lack of clarity about one's own sexuality and gender, could relate to the difficulty of reconciling how we feel who we are inside and what society expects from us as the gender we have physically. A man who is sensitive has a hard time living up to the macho masculinity role imposed on him in some societies. Conversely, a woman who is strong and independent may refuse to follow the submissive female role expected of her. Such struggles between one's internal feelings and character versus external expectations may well lead one to question one's sexuality and rebel against the role which has been socially or biologically imposed on one. Many people are simply confused about who they are as respects their male or female energies, and society does not help them find their identity. However, no matter how challenging defining who we are is in a typically narrow-minded society, each person has to strive to find the identity that is most harmonious with their natural disposition.

In today's environment, it is considered politically incorrect to question the naturalness of sexual preferences, but, refusing to question such things reduces us to being unthinking puppets of the subconscious collective ideology. Things need to be questioned if we wish to break through collective dogma and improve our understanding of reality.

Some of the male homosexual community is noted for indulging in extreme promiscuity. This may be caused by not sufficiently being able to express a strong sexual drive with a single partner. Of course, sexual overindulgence is true of some male heterosexuals, too, though not to the same extent as for some male homosexuals. Such high levels of promiscuity, whichever one's sexual preference is, could well be a desperate expression of distorted psychological sexual conditioning combined with a fear of the intimacy of true love (both for oneself and one's partner).

On the other hand, an emphasis on feeling and intimacy appears to be more typical of female homosexuality, though — just as can also occur in some male homosexual and heterosexual relationships — there are also cases of extreme possessiveness and emotional dramas. In these cases, instead of over-sexed energy, an excessive emotional energy comes to the surface.

Another intriguing question is why one partner usually has the role of the opposite sex in homosexual relationships? A more masculine homosexual (whether man or woman) will play the role of the male and prefer the other more feminine one to play the role of the female, and vice versa. Why is there is a need for such polarity if one wants a sexual partnership with the same gender? Perhaps these partnerships reflect complementary masculine-feminine energy balances? It clearly shows that even in homosexual relationships people seek connecting with their opposites.

It is quite possible that, for some people, choosing homosexuality may be a correct option due to their unique constitution, or that there are some for whom there may even be genetic influences at the root of this choice. It is not in the scope of this article to express any judgment of any particular sexual preferences, but it is important to bring some deeper contemplation into this matter. Because homosexuality is now more accepted and practiced more openly, some young people who are sexually confused can be tempted to use it to try to solve their confusion or difficulties they experience in fitting into society. In these cases they may be mistakenly choosing homosexuality to avoid their problems, even though it is not in accord with their natural inclinations. This same issue happened in reverse when homosexuality was viewed as not acceptable. Many whose natural inclinations were homosexual tried to adapt to pretended heterosexual lives and relationships, usually with very unhappy consequences.

Such deeper contemplation about one's natural inclinations is a matter for each to do for him or herself from a more awakened and conscious perspective, including listening to the feeling heart. It is only from such a perspective that one can know for oneself what one's sexual truth is, what is natural for one's human self versus what is really nothing more than further psychological confusion, acting as an impediment to the more important evolution of one's soul. Such impediments to one's real purpose and evolutionary journey can come from many other possible distractions, not just from any kind of sexual confusion. It is only in such higher

conscious light, rather than from following fashionable trends of the collective subconscious herd, that the answer will be clear.

Union of Male and Female Energies

One of the reasons sex is such a magnet for us has to do with balancing our energies. Men and women are different on many levels, but they benefit from the company of each other because it is through this that they can become more complete. Energetically, no one is purely male or purely female. We are each varying combinations of both. And yet, by choosing to be a man or a woman, our soul has chosen the specific energy of one gender or the other for our emphasis in this lifetime. Otherwise we would all be androgynous or hermaphrodites.

But as we use our gender specific energy, to the exclusion of the opposite gender's energy, in our human life, we begin to become imbalanced. Life is an interplay between polarities, and sexual polarities are very important. So if we identify ourself with male or female energy, we will naturally seek out the energy of the opposite sex to help balance ourself. A natural sexual act is a healthy expression of giving and receiving to help bring about this balance. We can become more complete and this is what life is about. Of course, there are beneficial connections with the opposite gender in aspects other than sex, too, such as mental, emotional and as respects other energies.

However, the balancing of male and female energies can be taken to extremes. There are many spiritual teachers and therapies that make a business out of offering a variety of workshops and retreats where people can explore their sexual relationships and expressions. While it is obviously positive and desirable to achieve an energetic, physical and emotional balance, it is a mistake when this is emphasized to the extent of taking precedence over one's true evolution.

Making a spiritual path out of sex, whether it is called 'tantra' or something else, is one of the signs of our culture being over-sexed. However it is viewed, making sex spiritual is another way of becoming hooked by sexuality. One does not have to have sex to find the balance between opposite energies, one does not have to indulge in pseudo-spiritual practices that promise to unify the Shiva and Shakti energies within. If one walks the inner path correctly, both energies need to — and will — be utilized anyway. There is neither anything particularly spiritual — nor unspiritual — about sex. In the end, it is just one of the many manifestations of life and should be viewed in its correct and balanced perspective.

Osho made a career of exploiting the sexual repression of western seekers and Asian seekers, but he was especially interested in his western followers. Indian culture is much more sexually repressed than western culture, and this also means that the issues they are dealing with are much more difficult to solve. Many of the great Hindu sages never had sex. One wonders why not? How can one follow a teacher who has never experienced intimacy with the opposite sex? How can they offer transformation to other people and speak of enlightenment, if they have not

had such an important human experience? And what kind of enlightenment have they found if they were never human in a complete way in the first place? Indian spirituality has been rooted for millennia in sexual denial and Indian sexual morality is highly hypocritical. Despite India being so 'spiritual', women are afraid of going out on the street alone, for fear of being sexually harassed. The truth is that present-day India is no longer the spiritual place it once was, though this news has still not reached many naïve western seekers. There is indeed a very strong spiritual energy in India, but it is of the past, not of the now.

Sex and Spirituality

People imagine all kinds of things about spiritual teachers. The stereotypical one is meant either to be celibate or to practice monogamy. But even being a spiritual master does not mean that one is no longer a human with the full package of human emotional and physical needs. Because many teachers consciously or unconsciously aspire to follow the religious ideals of pseudo-purity and desirelessness, they often fall into the trap of sexual repression. At some point, if their willpower is not strong enough, they go to the other extreme and then there are the so called 'spiritual scandals'. Many people relish gossiping about such scandals, in which a teacher has been caught behaving in what is thought to be a 'spiritually unacceptable way'. But what is a scandal really? The official definition of scandal is 'action regarded as morally or legally wrong and causing general public outrage'. It is often difficult to define what really is 'wrong', since many of our ideas of right and wrong are relative and culturally conditioned.

However, it is natural that followers of a particular teacher can be disillusioned when his actions are not in accordance with what he preaches. Some teachers, like Osho, openly engaged in sex, but Osho did it more to provoke others than for his own enjoyment. He saw playing with the idea of sexual freedom and indulgence as a way of gaining popularity among his western followers. He called this new man, who could enjoy the wholeness of his being, 'Zorba the Buddha'. Some people may see his behavior as having been scandalous, but, from the viewpoint of his followers, he lived according to his beliefs as far as sexuality was concerned. So there was no scandal there for them.

No third party has the right to determine whether or not a spiritual teacher should be celibate or monogamous. It is the teacher's personal choice, so long as he is not hypocritical about it. The problem is that some teachers use sex as a pressure valve to find physical relief from their repressed energies, but forget (or do not know) that such repressed energies are much more emotional in origin than physical. This means that, even if they have lots of sex, it will not help them to transform their sexual energy and release the inner tension, because it does not address the root of the problem – which is in their emotional center and requires emotional and energetic evolution and transformation.

Sex without intimacy is just physical, it is not the experience of love between two souls. A spiritual master, sitting on his pedestal, usually finds it easier to

acknowledge physical needs than emotional ones, as admitting the latter often conflicts with the image he wishes to have — both for himself and for others.

What virtually all spiritual teachings fail to acknowledge, is that awakening and enlightenment are not just one-time one-dimensional events, but require time to deepen and mature, and then they must be brought back into the relative physical realm for the transformation and completion of the human, especially as respects psychological and emotional issues. Many, if not most, of the so-called spiritual scandals and hypocrisies are the result of the teachers involved mistakenly assuming a single partial awakening is all there is to enlightenment and that they need do nothing further as respects their human level.

There is nothing wrong with a spiritual teacher having a sexual life, so long as he does not avoid emotional intimacy, treats his partners with the true respect such intimacy deserves, and, above all, does not use his spiritual power, charisma and authority for the purpose of seduction.

There was a Japanese Zen sword master who was simultaneously infatuated with women and with the need to transcend sex. It is said that he had sexual intercourse with three thousand women and, even though he had experienced several enlightenments, he still could not free himself from his sexual compulsion. Only when he reached his 'final' enlightenment at a mature age was he able to let go of his obsession with women. We can give him credit for wishing to be complete in both areas: wanting to experience sex fully, and wanting to transcend it fully. But one wonders whether he dropped sex only because of age, rather than really transcended it. Something in his approach seems to have been lacking, and it is quite possible he did not identify the real reason for his sexual compulsion. The Japanese Zen and samurai culture was (and is) based on an excessive focus on male energy. Zen monks tend to be disconnected from their femininity and highly imbalanced in this respect. What the Zen sword master was looking for was not just repeated temporary physical relief from sex, but inner emotional and energetic balance. If he had allowed himself to experience deeper emotional connection and intimacy, perhaps he could have transformed himself on emotional and sexual levels and brought them into balance much sooner.

According to one story, after his awakening, Buddha was tempted by Mara (the devil) who conjured up images of beautiful women in front of Buddha. Stories of temptations of different kinds like this occur elsewhere, including in the biblical narrative of Jesus. This story about Buddha is just a metaphor, because he was tempted by his own desires, not by any real external devil. Obviously his enlightenment had not magically also taken away his desires, for the simple reason that they were natural. But, like so many other masters and 'saints', he saw desires (especially sexual ones) as being negative (or even as evil since the devil himself had to be involved in these temptations) and used his willpower to try to cut them off.

Perhaps it is time to look at these things more deeply, and to transcend the long-standing prejudices linked to sex and spirituality. It is not by accepting our sexuality, but by repressing it, that we make it evil. When one thinks of sex as evil, it becomes evil. The unnatural culture of monks of so many religions – Christian, Buddhist or Hindu –, who wage an internal battle with their natural human longings and needs, has been responsible for much of our mistaken sense of a correct and balanced perspective of human sexuality.

Conscious Sex and Intimacy

It is difficult to imagine a deeper connection between two people than that of a loving sexual sharing, in which they can experience profound intimacy on both body and heart levels. Existence itself uses sexuality, through physical union, as a tool to deepen our emotional experience and world. Of course, for sex to be spiritual, people need to be conscious and in touch with their feelings. One's partner should not be seen and treated as just an 'object' of attraction, but as an equal subject: sex on a spiritual level is a meeting between souls.

It is common for sex to be used to lose oneself through the other, not dissimilar to how trance music and drugs are used. However, in conscious sex, one must remain fully present to one's subjective identity beyond the mind, as well as present in one's heart. In this way, sex is included in one's state of meditation and deeper feeling center.

Sex is not about merging with the other person, but about experiencing unity. In unity we embody our light and experience our partner as an extension of our consciousness and, within this, the subjective dimensions of both oneself and the other are respected. Such unity cannot be experienced if one is too introverted. And if one loses oneself in the other, the unity becomes unconscious. So, a natural balance is to be found between being rooted in our pure nature and fully experiencing the other in non-separation.

Sex and Monogamy

Monogamy is a sensitive subject. Many people have strong views for or against it, but virtually everyone, at least at some point in their lives, experiences attraction to another person whom they are not in relationship with. The typical institutionalized version of monogamy is marriage between just two people, who are meant to be sexually faithful to each other. However, in some cultures, it is common for a married man to have a mistress or concubine. Traditionally, in most male-dominated societies, it has not been equally acceptable for women to have sexual partners outside of their marriage. In today's western society, largely based on Christian principles, monogamy is promoted as the ideal form of relationship.

Are monogamous marriages an effective solution for relationships? They may work for some people, but do not work for many others, as is evidenced by the increasing divorce rates in the west. In some other cultures, notably Asian ones, divorces are

still relatively rare. People in more traditional and less modernized cultures are more likely to surrender to their fate, which often means an arranged marriage, and stay with one partner, particularly when that is the basis of their material security. Arranged marriages were also common in the west up until relatively recently. Adventurous people in more modern cultures often have a harder time reconciling themselves to the concept of monogamy, either inside or outside of marriage.

Osho said that marriage is the coffin of love, and he was probably right. When we create the illusion of relationship security by institutionalizing love through legal means, the spirit of adventure and sense of the unknown are lost, and the relationship, through habit and feelings of confinement, is in danger of gradually withering. A healthy relationship needs to be re-affirmed every day, and to be checked as to whether it is still valid, nourishing and alive. To continue in any relationship, including a marriage, just because one expressed a commitment in the past, is foolish. When the relationship may later turn dysfunctional, as many do, people often do not end it because of wrong reasons — they fear loss of financial security, material possessions, life style, or just fear being alone. In many cases people stay together simply out of inertia. None of these reasons can justify a continuing commitment to a relationship. So, many people not only do not have loving and mutual respect for each other in their relationships, but they live weak half-lives of compromise, lacking the courage to rediscover their passion and to make their human life on earth the celebration and opportunity for growth it is intended to be.

We have all been conditioned by the idea of finding the ‘one’ with whom we could share the rest of our life. The thought is wonderfully comforting, bringing with it the illusion of security. But life in the relative world is not secure, and it cannot be cast according to the personality’s wishes. We cannot know our future. To say, ‘I shall cherish and love my wife or husband to the end of my days’ in the marriage ceremony is an extraordinarily bold statement, which is more wishful thinking than anything connected to reality. In his dialogue *The Symposium*, Plato spoke about finding one’s ‘half’ that would complete one perfectly, and it seems many people take this idea to heart in their search for a partner. In reality, however, there is no perfect half – there is only a perfect one and this one is found within, not without. In Plato’s story, people had been split in half by the gods and it was the other half of their own self they were seeking for completion. The only way two people can complete each other is when they meet not as two halves but as two wholes.

Coming back to monogamy, is having a single sexual partner natural or something which man has artificially contrived? It is difficult to say, because one answer will not suit all people. And the same answer will not be true for the same people at different ages. Younger people will want to explore their sexuality more than older ones. There are others who lack sexual energy and are not interested in having or exploring sex. For such people, staying with one partner comes effortlessly, like living in the same town and staying at the same job; they either enjoy routine,

stability and constant repetition or they fear change . . . or both. Some couples have closed relationships, spending all of their time with each other, and never get to know other people. This limits their opportunities to learn further from life through others. When some valuable lessons have been learned in such closed relationships, and both parties seem to have stopped evolving, it may be time to move on and stretch oneself through other relationships. But this does not happen easily and there are usually painful dramas attached to relationship break ups. Yet the real or imaginary broken hearts from these situations offer very important opportunities for letting go and moving forward in one's personal evolution.

Generally speaking, women tend to be more monogamous than men. This may be due to their cultural conditioning, sexual vulnerability, or simply because this is just how they are naturally. Even if men are in a monogamous relationship, they are usually still sexually attracted to other women. The root of this tendency may stem from the fact that in a number of species of mammals the dominant male is expected to impregnate as many females as possible, while the females are more focused on raising the young. If this is true, men have to struggle to find a compromise between their predatory sexual instincts and the importance of a stable relationship and the experience of intimacy with a single partner. Often men use mental discipline based on their sense of morality not to have sex outside of their relationship. But, because they are repressing their desire to have other sexual connections, they become frustrated and often then project the frustration on to their partner, which causes disharmony and stress for both parties.

In his days, Osho made his followers experiment with polygamy, having many partners or lovers. He thought that, after having as much sex as one wants, one would naturally be freed of sexual compulsions. His theory did not produce the desired results, because the more sex people had, the more they wanted. A further complication was that people inevitably became emotionally attached to others and many hearts were broken. The truth is that, for many promiscuous people, having many partners is a way avoiding intimacy and the experience of love. Promiscuity in its extreme becomes another form of sexual indulgence, distracting us from our real purpose.

So, since neither monogamy nor polygamy work, what is right? There is no clear single solution as to whether either monogamy or multiple partners is best for human sexuality and general emotional fulfillment. Between the extremes of sexual repression and indulgence, one has to find a balance. To find this balance one has to go through many experiences and to mature emotionally and energetically. After sufficient experience of one's sexuality, the issue of sex is no longer so haunting, and one can be more relaxed about it. And, unless one is relaxed about this subject, there are simply too many individual differences, permutations, and contradictions involved to answer it perfectly. It is much like the question of the perfect diet. The fact is that there is no perfect diet, and even the best of foods can be beneficial or damaging for different people in different quantities and at different times.

If any conclusion can be drawn here, it is that, for so many reasons – including repression, psychological deviations, and false sense of transcendence – human sexuality has become an obsession blown up all out of proportion to its true place. Unless it is returned to more of a balance, the confusion and distraction it is causing can never be resolved. Human life, including its sexual dimension, is like a river, needing to adjust its flow and direction continually according to what is appropriate for the time and circumstances.

Transcendence of Sexuality

Is sex to be transcended or to be embraced? Osho promised his followers that when sex is experienced fully and all sexual repressions released, one would transcend sex. This did not happen. Not even for him. He was not in good health for most of his life. When the body is sick, even the mind loses its sexual appetite. But the fact that Osho, or his devotees, did not succeed does not mean that sex cannot be transcended. But even if this is possible, is it desirable? Trying to transcend something automatically assigns great importance to it. No one wants to transcend eating, so why transcend sex? Sexual desires and attraction are deeply rooted in humans, and somehow they often conflict with the search for spiritual peace. Both repression and indulgence are not the answers to achieving freedom from our sexual impulses. As has been noted, we need to find a balance in our own individual relationship with our sexuality and, as challenging as this is, there is no other way.

The transcendence of sex and the embracing of it are not necessarily two different things. When we go beyond expressing our sexuality unconsciously, and embrace this aspect of our nature consciously and with love, sex ceases to be an issue. From that place of subjectivity beyond the mind, it no longer matters whether one drops sex altogether or enjoys it in a relaxed and playful way. What truly needs to be transcended is not a sexual act itself, but all of the psychological and emotional nonsense attached to it, the countless conditionings and projections that, for most people, are inseparable from their sexuality.

Blessings,
Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology, please visit our website:
www.anaditeaching/glossary*