

## OSHO'S INSIGHT ON 'VIGYAN BHAIRAV TANTRA'

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### ABSTRACT

*Osho is known for his revolutionary ideas and distinguished interpretations of various ancient and modern texts of both east and west. His discourses on the ancient scriptures are available in the form of books as well as in audio recordings. Not only that he has interpreted various philosophers and texts like Upnishads, Gita, Vigyan Bhairav Tantra, Yoga, Vedant Kabir etc. but has also propounded his own philosophical thoughts while answering questions of audience and followers. The emphasis of Osho's philosophy is on 'man-making'. He wanted to create a new and transformed man and inturn a transformed society. He used to say that meditation is the womb out of which his new religion and ultimately new man will be born. The effort of this research paper is to put forward the rational and logical understanding of Osho on Vigyan Bhairav Tantra and also to show that the concept of meditation given by Osho is based on Tantra philosophy.*

**Keywords:** *Tantra, Self Actualization, Transformation, Religious Teachings, Yoga.*

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### Introduction

'Rajneesh Chandra Mohan' first came to be known as Bhagwan Shree 'Rajneesh' is now known simply as 'Osho'. Osho has explained that his name is derived from William James' word Oceanic, which means, dissolving into the ocean. Oceanic describes the experience of a person and for this experience the word 'Osho' is used. Later on he found that 'Osho' has also been used historically in the far east meaning "the Blessed one on whom the sky showers flowers."

During his life Osho was viewed as a controversial leader and mystic. In the 1960s he travelled throughout India as a public speaker and was a vocal critic of socialism, arguing that India was not ready for socialism and that socialism, communism and anarchism could evolve only when capitalism had reached its maturity. He always emphasized the importance of meditation, mindfulness, love, celebration, courage, creativity, and human qualities that he viewed as being suppressed by adherence to static belief system, religious tradition and norms of socialization.

Osho's teachings delivered through his discourses were not presented in an academic setting but interpreted with jokes. The emphasis was not static but changed over time. Osho revelled in paradox and contradiction, making his works difficult to summarize. He delighted in engaging in behavior that seemed entirely at odds with traditional images of enlightened individuals. All such behavior, however capacious and difficult to accept was explained as "a technique for transformation", to push people "beyond the mind".

There are widely divergent assessments of Osho's qualities as a thinker and speaker. Khushwant Singh an eminent author, historian and a former editor of The Hindustan Times had described Osho as "the most original thinker that India has produced. The most erudite, the most clear

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headed and the most innovative." Singh believed that Rajneesh was a "free thinking agnostic" who had the ability to explain the most abstract concept in simple language, illustrated with witty anecdotes: who mocked gods, prophets, scriptures and religious practices and gave a totally new dimension to religion.

Osho's great contribution is that he helps man to look at things in a new way. He gives an absolutely fresh insight into everything. He does not look at things according to certain pre-conceived ideology. He is not obsessed with any idea and he does not want to propound a certain philosophy or a certain religion. He does not teach what to see but simply teaches how to see clearly. According to him the clarity of vision will bring the truth.

He was against following anything unconsciously or blindly. In most of his speeches and books the whole emphasis is on awareness. He wanted man to use reason to its extreme. He always supported a sceptic mind. He said that blessed are those who doubt because they shall inherit the kingdom of truth. For him doubt is the most sacred value of human beings. It simply means that if one is prepared to know the truth, he would not want to accept things blindly as they are but would like to search and find the truth himself.

The whole emphasis of Osho's concept of religion is on 'Man-making.' The center point of his whole philosophy and thought system is the development of human consciousness. He has a staunch faith that human beings can be transformed into complete, undivided, united personalities. For this he advocates the transcendence of the basic energies into higher energies. Just as coal gets transformed into diamond in the long span of time, the basic instinctive energies in a man can also be transcended into the highest possibility, that is into the intuitive state. According to him, man as he is now is either living at the instinctive level or at the intellectual level of consciousness. Though intellectual level is better than the instinctive level, there are much higher possibilities towards which man should make efforts to grow. Only from the highest peak of consciousness, i.e. at intuition level, man can know the truths of life. The religiousness, godliness, love, existence etc can be experienced only from this peak of intuition.

This awareness, consciousness, oneness of mind can come only through meditation. In meditation one has to enter within and search himself. The meditation methods are the essential and unavoidable part of Osho's whole ideology. He says, "It is the womb out of which a new man is going to be born."<sup>1</sup>

Osho defines meditation is not a belief; neither is it a faith, nor any ritual. It is a science; an experiment that takes place in the inner world of the experimenter. The science explores the world outside, meditation explores the world which is hidden inside. The seeker does experiment with himself to reach the truth."

To reclaim the science of meditation from the past and make it fresh and relevant to modern man was the whole life's work of Osho. His commentaries on the 112 meditation techniques are contained in *Vigyana Bhairav Tantra* which is a collection of sutras given by Shiva to his consort Devi. *Vigyana Bhairav Tantra* is a book of techniques. These techniques are like keys which can unlock the door towards the inner world. Every lock has a specific key but to get that particular one, one will have to experiment with many keys. Similar is the case with these techniques, so one will have to become a scientist and experiment with his inner world.<sup>2</sup>

### **Vigyan Bhairav Tantra**

The *Vigyan Bhairav Tantra* is a collection of sutras given by Shiva to his consort Devi. Tantra begins with Devi's questions. Her questions are philosophical in nature, but Shiva is answering them not philosophically but existentially. That means, he is not proposing any theory or doctrine or any hypothesis. He is not giving any direct answer. On the contrary, he is giving some techniques in reply to every question. By practising these techniques one will find the answers.

For Tantra, doing is knowing. That is, experience brings true knowledge. Actually there are two ways of tackling a question. Either a question can be tackled existentially or it can be tackled intellectually. Tackling a question intellectually means proposing theories for it or giving arguments for a particular hypothesis or creating a system or a doctrine around it. That is philosophising around it. But through philosophy one cannot reach at any definite answer. It is just an exercise of the intellect.

To create theories and doctrines experience is not necessary, only an imaginative mind is enough. But to deal with a question existentially means, living through the question. Not just thinking about it, but experiencing it, allowing one's transformation through it. That is, if one is to know what is love, he has to be in love. It cannot be known through discussions, but only through experience.<sup>3</sup>

Osho says, The word 'Tantra' means the method, the path. Methods are not concerned with the 'why' of things. It is concerned with 'how'. How the truth can be attained. That is why Osho calls "The Vigyan Bhairav Tantra" a scientific book. Science is always concerned with 'how'. That is the basic difference between philosophy and science. Philosophy is concerned with 'why this existence'. Science deals with 'how this existence? The moment one asks the question how, experience becomes the centre, technique becomes important.<sup>4</sup>

Tantra is not an intellectual, but rather an experience, and experience demands not just the involvement of the mind, but of the total being. For Tantra everything is divine and everyone is equal. It does not fix any criteria for practising the methods. It starts working on a person from the point where he is. When someone asks a question, it shows where he stands. If someone asks, what is light, it shows that he is blind. Then there are techniques in Tantra for transforming the man, so that he could see the light. Tantra will tell how to attain insight. Now, if someone defines light to a blind man, that will be intellectual. If the blind man himself becomes capable of seeing the light it is existential. Tantra is existential in nature.<sup>5</sup>

Tantra is a dialogue between two lovers, not a teacher and disciple. Osho emphasizes the importance of love in transmitting deeper teachings, as words cannot express knowledge beyond heart-to-heart relationships.

When there is pure love, one becomes receptive. When with this attitude a disciple approaches a teacher, the teacher can very easily transfer the knowledge into him. Vigyan Bhairav Tantra came into existence at the moments of deep love between Shiva and Devi. In a way Tantra is a language of love.<sup>6</sup> Devi is the symbol of receptivity. So, the disciple must have a feminine attitude of receptivity like Devi. Devi is the symbol of that feminine attitude. Devi is called the other half of Shiva. This is also symbolic; symbol of oneness. Unless the disciple becomes so much integrated with the master, unless that feeling of oneness occurs, it is impossible to convey the higher teachings. By higher teaching Osho mean the esoteric knowledge. When someone becomes one with the master, there remains no argument, no logic, no reason. Then the teaching begins to grow in him.<sup>7</sup>

Osho distinguishes between two types of languages, logical language and love language.<sup>8</sup> Logical language is aggressive. It is argumentative. When one uses logical language, he becomes aggressive upon other's mind. Logical language is egocentric. One tries to convert the other. One is not concerned with the other, but with his own ego.

In love language one is not concerned with his ego. He is concerned with the other; is concerned to help the other, so that he may grow. There is compassion. Logical language is intellectual. In this language arguments are significant. In love language, on the other hand, words are not significant. The content, the message is more important. It is a heart to heart talk; not a mind to mind discussion. It is not a debate, it is a communion.<sup>9</sup>

Between Shiva and Devi there is love dialogue. There is no conflict. Through technique Shiva is giving telegraphic message to Devi. There is no view to convince, but just to relate the heart. If someone with a closed mind encounters a master, then the master will have to break this enclosure first. He will have to bring him into a state of receptivity. For that he will have to be aggressive. He will destroy the prejudices and preconceptions. But this is not the case with Devi. She is totally submissive. There is nothing to be cleared or changed in her.

Another basic concept of Tantra is the concept of Ardhanarishwara. Shiva is depicted as half man and half woman. Explaining this concept Osho says that, every child is made up of both male and female. For western psychology this is a very new topic of research. Modern psychology says that everyone is bisexual. But in Tantra this has been one of the most basic concepts for thousands of years. 'Ardhanarishwara' is again symbolic. It is a symbolism of totality. It means, to be total and to be whole, one has to meet his other half. The normal outer search for a man or a woman is just an inner expression. Only when the search is turned inwards, one can find the real companion. When one meets the male or the female inside ones own self the concept of 'Ardhanarishwara is actualized'.

All the religious teachings are concerned with how man can be more conscious and how he can be more alert. People like Krishnamurti, religion like Zen and systems like Yoga are all concerned to create more and more consciousness. But the teaching of Tantra is to move beyond both. Tantra says that, unless one goes beyond both one can never reach the ultimate.

'Vigyan' means consciousness. 'Bhairav' means the state which is beyond consciousness. 'Tantra' means the method. Thus 'Vigyan Bhairav Tantra' means the method of going beyond consciousness. Consciousness includes both unconscious and conscious state of mind.

Going beyond consciousness means going beyond mind. Achieving the state of Bhairava means, one becomes capable of knowing something without the mind.<sup>10</sup> Bhairava is a specific Tantric term. It is used for the one who has gone beyond the dualities of the mind. That is why Shiva is known as Bhairava and Devi is known as Bhairavi.<sup>11</sup>

Osho says that the state of Bhairava is of absolute love. When one reaches at this state, he reaches at the peak of love. According to Tantra, once on the peak, none can fall back; then he lives with Shiva forever.<sup>12</sup> Kailash parvat is said to be the abode of Shiva. Kailash is the symbol of the highest peak, which is possessed by Shiva. Shiva is the possessor of the highest peak of love. That is his home. Osho is explaining that "Tantra is the technique to reach the peak. The peak which is beyond every kind of duality. Beyond the body and even beyond the soul. That means beyond the world and beyond liberation."<sup>13</sup>

When love reaches at its peak, the lover disappears. This happens because in reality everyone is formless. Though we live as a body but we are something beyond the body. Body is just a covering. Love has the power to penetrate through this covering and at this stage the formless is revealed and a door is opened to the infinity.

When one comes across the formless, he arrives at the truth beyond the body. That is called the knowledge of the soul. But this state is temporary. In the meditative state, many a times one may touch the peak, but to be established at the peak is something different. Many doubt arises in the mind. Only the transformation of the mind can make the mind clear of all doubts. As doubting is the nature of the mind. It can put a question mark to any given answer. The problem for Shiva is not how to answer the question. He is concerned about converting the doubting mind into a trustful one. Osho mentions Bertrand Russell while discussing this point. Russell writes that when he was a child he used to think that all his doubts would be cleared, once he would grow mature enough to understand all philosophy. But even after arriving at his eighties nothing became clear to him. Russel wrote, "My own questions are standing there, as they were standing when I was a child. Now other questions have come up because of these theories of philosophy."<sup>14</sup>

According to Tantra, a doubting mind is the problem in the spiritual journey. One question creates one answer and several other questions. Actually answers cannot fulfil the needs of a spiritual seeker. That is the reason why Shiva answers in an altogether different way. He gives techniques to dissolve the mind. The 112 methods constitute the whole science of transforming the mind. Although these methods are the most ancient, they are as effective today as they were before. The reason is nothing but the fact that for all these centuries the mind had been the same.

Tantra is universally applicable, regardless of religion, and can be beneficial for any chosen path, according to Osho.

Tantra is scientific and science does not belong to any sect or religion. The scientific inventions and discoveries are for the progress and development of the whole humanity. Same is the case with Tantra techniques. Osho says that we cannot call the theory of relativity as Jewish, just because Einstien conceived it; or we cannot call radio and television as Christian just because a Christian mind conceived them. Similarly Tantra cannot be called as of Hindu.

We should approach these methods with full awareness and alertness. For Osho these are the methods for treating the spiritual diseases. Unawareness, ignorance and inner conflict are known as spiritual diseases. In order to be cured our cooperation is inevitable. The methods can work only with our cooperation. They can work only when the body is totally receptive. The Tantra methods are like medicine prescribed by the doctor. Whether a patient is a saint or a thief doesn't make much difference. The only difference is of following the precautions told by the doctor. The one who listens to the doctor will be cured rapidly. It is also a fact that medicines always work easily on a man having a positive attitude.<sup>15</sup> The Tantra methods also needs a positive and receptive attitude from us, only then it can be effective.

Tantra does not stipulate any preconditions for practising these methods. It does not make any differentiation amongst people on any basis. For practising these methods no particular morality is needed. According to Tantra, the mind is nothing but subtle matter. It can be changed. Once the mind is changed, the world too gets changed. We look through the mind. So whatever is appearing to us, is

because of a particular mind. Hence, if the mind is changed, then the world will be different. If there is no mind, then we can look at the world without any mediation. We can encounter the real world. This is the ultimate aim of Tantra. When there is no mind, there is the state of Bhairava.<sup>16</sup>

Shiva gives techniques. These techniques are non intellectual. By practising them, the mind gets arrested. The mind gradually stops its journey into the future and the past. It starts getting situated in the present. When the mind totally gets fixed in the present, the truth reveals itself. Osho says that being totally in the present is 'Nirvana'.<sup>17</sup>

### **Tantra Meditation Techniques**

The first nine techniques mentioned in the 'Vigyana Bhairav Tantra' are concerned with breathing. Breath is a bridge. It is constantly bridging the soul to the body. Not only it bridges the soul to the body but also us to the universe. Through breath we are connected with space and time. So the breath is the most significant thing. Following the breathing techniques one can attain the source of life.

All the seekers of the world, according to Osho, have attained the ultimate through some techniques. All these techniques used by various seekers can be found in these one hundred and twelve techniques. The first one is now known in the world as a Buddhist technique since Buddha used this method. In Buddhist terminology it is known as 'Anapanasati yoga.'

The second technique tells to watch the fusion point of two breaths.<sup>18</sup> When the breath has penetrated in and starts moving out, there is moment when the breath is static. At this moment, it is neither going out nor moving in. When the breath is moving out or coming in it is dynamic. But when it is neither, it is silent and non moving. This is the fusion point of the in and outgoing breath. This fusion takes place in our centre. That is in the navel. But ordinarily, we do not know our centre. The continuous process of breathing goes on, but it never reaches the centre. It just touches the chest and goes out.

The third technique is to be aware when breathing stops.<sup>19</sup> The sutra says "When the breath is all out (up) and stopped of itself of all in (down) and stopped in such universal pause one's small self vanishes."<sup>20</sup> According to Osho, Zen monks have been trying this method in Japan. To create a pause, strange methods were used by the Zen masters. Creating a pause means to create a moment when the ego vanishes. In emergencies we cannot remember the ego. When suddenly something happens, which we have not expected, we get arrested. When we say 'I was shocked' it means for a moment everything was forgotten. Such strange and unexpected moments were created by the Zen masters.

The fourth technique is for opening the third eye. "Focus your attention on the third eye".<sup>21</sup> Between the two eyebrows is the gland which is the most mysterious part of the body. In scientific terminology it is called the pineal gland. In Tantra terminology it is called the 'Shivanetry', that is, the eye of Shiva. This is also known as the third eye, which is normally non functional. We can make it work. The fourth technique is to open this third eye.

Tantra says that while breathing we are not only breathing the air, but also prana. Air is only a vehicle which carries the 'prana'. The prana is the content, that is vitality. Prana is the very essence of breathe. According to Tantra air is only a material. Actually prana is moving through it. Through this method we can observe the essence of the breath.

The fifth technique is for being attentive towards the breath during the daily activities of life. It says 'When in daily activities, be established between two breaths.

The sixth technique is for being aware of breathing, even in sleep. When this happens dreaming ceases. With the cessation of the dreams, we can remain the master, even in sleep. That is how we can become totally conscious.<sup>22</sup>

Other than these six techniques, there are three more breathing methods, which are mentioned in Tantra. These breathing methods are a gradual process towards self realization. In Tantra seven such methods are also given, through which a master can enlighten the disciple at the very moment. But, Osho says that, they cannot be applied on common man, because they are not capable of bearing so much of bliss. We know only the world of dreams and live in these dreams. For us they are the reality.

After enlightenment the world will no more be the same. It changes altogether. Our mind which is working in a continuous pattern cannot tolerate this sudden change, that's why, for enlightenment the present pattern of the ordinary mind has to be changed. These methods are only helping to change the mind, so that we could bear the happening or showering of bliss.

Exploring the creativity within oneself is not self actualization. Becoming a great man, an eminent poet or a painter is not self actualization. It is only a partial actualization. But this partial

achievement is very helpful in actualizing the total being. Osho says that a self actualized person should have these characteristics. He should be centred, he should be balanced and if these two things happen then he will be at ease.

### **Meaning of Being Centered**

Man is momentarily centered, each moment having its own center. When mind is functioning, the head feels the center, while in love, the heart feels the center. While doing something, a particular part of the body becomes active, and one feels that this active part is the centre.

For Osho, the navel is the centre of existence. Every actualized person remains centred at the navel.

Secondly, when one becomes centred, he also becomes balanced. Buddha has called this balanced situation as the middle path. This is not a forced situation. It is only an outcome of being centred. When one gets established in the navel centre, mind gets arrested. When the mind gets fixed then the extremes are simply dropped. The extremes are created by the mind when it moves from heart to head and again from head to heart.<sup>23</sup>

Every act becomes meditation and every moment becomes pleasant. The inner quality of such a person always remains the same. Nothing disturbs a self actualized person. Nothing can dislodge him from his centre.<sup>24</sup>

So, there are three basic things for actualization. One must be centred, rational and balanced. Remaining always in the middle without any effort and this balance, makes one at ease with the universe.

Everyone is born with a navel centre. The techniques of 'The Vigyan Bhairav Tantra' are for uncovering this navel centre. These meditation methods help one to be aware of his Buddha-hood. Only techniques can be helpful in self-actualisation and not words because only techniques can give the experience, the meaning is not carried by the words. The meaning comes through experience. When the Guru says, "Move within and you will find the centre", one may understand the word 'within' but even then he cannot know it. He cannot understand the meaning of 'moving within' unless he experiences it.

In everyone the basic existential centre is the navel but the functional centre may be anywhere in the body. The functional centre means, that centre which is used for concentrating the consciousness. From the functional centre, one automatically gets established to the navel centre. So the basic thing is to be fixed or concentrated at any point in the body. It can be the spine or the heart or the head or any other point. The functional point is not very important, only getting the consciousness centred is important. So, once anyone gets concentrated anywhere, according to Osho, he will be settled at the navel.<sup>25</sup>

Buddhists talk about nine dynamic centres in the body. Hindus talk about seven centres. Tibetans talk about thirteen centres. Any point in the body can be made an object of centering. Osho says "any centre will do. Because the thing happens due to centering. Not because of the centre."<sup>26</sup>

The emphasis of Tantra is on sex centre. Though Tantra works with other centres too, it is mainly concerned with sex centre. The energy naturally flows towards this centre. So it becomes easy to concentrate on this point. If the energy can flow towards this centre without any inner conflict, then this functional centre can also take us towards the existential centre.

When one gets connected with the navel centre the energy continuously flows into the navel and the explosion takes place. The energy bursts out and becomes one with the cosmos. This is the state of Samadhi. When this state happens to a person, then he can be called self actualized.<sup>27</sup>

Tantra, which is one of the most ancient philosophical system is also a device through which man can attain meditative state. Buddha, Mahavira, Shiva and Shankara were all enlightened people. They wanted to share their bliss with everyone, so they created such devices through which people could be initiated into meditation. But the problem is that we have converted them into theories. We do the mental exercise with them, but do not allow them to penetrate into our being. Studying them as theories can give us a lot of knowledge, but to get the experience, their application is needed. For attaining the ultimate truth, these thoughts should be used as devices.

To conclude, the concept of meditation given by Osho is based on Tantra philosophy. He not only explains in detail the techniques given in Vigyan Bhairav Tantra but also elaborates about the effects which these techniques will bring forth. He says that techniques are not meditation but it is the path which leads towards meditation. According to Osho meditation is a state which is to be achieved by

refining the basic energies within a person. Self actualization is the highest possibility which a man can achieve and only after achieving this highest possibility man can enter into religiousness. Osho says that meditation is the womb out of which a new religion and ultimately a new man will emerge.

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