

Vama Marga - The Practice of Left Hand Tantra

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Sexual life has always been a problem for mankind. From the beginning of history, the primal energy has been misunderstood. Religious teachers and moralists have denounced it. But still sexual life has continued, not because man respects it, but because he wants it. He may give it up, but he cannot remove it from his mind, for this is one of his most powerful urges.

In the context of yoga and tantra, the common definition of sexual life has no relevance. It is absolutely unscientific and incorrect. This definition has created a society and a nation of hypocrites. It has led thousands of young people into mental asylums. When you want something which you think is bad, all kinds of guilt complexes arise. This is the beginning of schizophrenia, and all of us are schizophrenic.

Therefore, the yogis have tried to give a correct direction to the sexual urges. Yoga does not interfere with sexual life. Normal sexual life is neither spiritual nor aspiritual. But if you are practising yoga and have mastered certain techniques, then sexual life becomes spiritual. Of course, if you are leading a celibate life, that becomes spiritual too.

Left hand tantra

The science of tantra has two main branches, which are known as vama marga and dakshina marga. Vama marga is the left path which combines sexual life with yoga practices in order to explode the dormant energy centres. Dakshina marga is the right path of yoga practices without sexual enactment. Previously, due to the barriers in sexual life, the path most widely followed was dakshina marga. Today, however, these barriers are rapidly being broken, and the path most sought after by the people everywhere is vama marga, which utilizes sexual life for spiritual development.

According to tantra, sexual life has a threefold purpose. Some practise it for procreation, others for pleasure, but the tantric yogi practises it for samadhi. He does not hold any negative views about it. He does it as a part of his sadhana. But, at the same time, he realizes that for spiritual purposes, the experience must be maintained. Ordinarily this experience is lost before one is able to deepen it. By mastering certain techniques, however, this experience can become continuous even in daily life. Then the silent centres of the brain are awakened and start to function all the time.

The energy principle

The contention of vama marga is that the awakening of kundalini is possible through the interaction between man and woman. The concept behind this follows the same lines as the process of fission and fusion described in modern physics.

Man and woman represent positive and negative energy. On a mental level they represent time and space. Ordinarily, these two forces stand at opposite poles. During sexual interaction, however, they move out of their position of polarity, towards the centre. When they come

together at the nucleus or central point, an explosion occurs and matter becomes manifest. This is the basic theme of tantric initiation.

The natural event that takes place between man and woman is considered as the explosion of the energy centre. In every speck of life, it is the union between the positive and negative poles that is responsible for creation. At the same time, union between positive and negative poles is also responsible for enlightenment, and the experience which takes place at the time of union is a glimpse of the higher experience.

This subject has been thoroughly discussed in all the old scriptures of tantra. Actually, the energy waves that are created during the mutual union are not as important as the process of directing that energy to the higher centre. Everybody knows how this energy is to be created, but nobody knows how to direct it to the higher centres. In fact, very few people have a full and positive understanding of this natural event which almost everybody in this world experiences. If the conjugal experience, which is generally very transitory, could be extended for a period of time, then the experience of enlightenment would take place.

The elements that are brought together in this process of union are known as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva represents purusha and Shakti represents prakriti or energy. Shakti, in different forms, is present in all creation. Both material and spiritual energy are known as Shakti. When the energy moves outwardly, it is material energy, and when it is directed upwards it is spiritual energy. Therefore, when the union between man and woman is practised in the correct way, it has a very positive influence on the development of spiritual awareness.

Retaining the bindu

Bindu means a point or a drop. In tantra, bindu is considered to be the nucleus, or the abode of matter, the point from which all creation becomes manifest. Actually, the source of bindu is in the higher centres of the brain. But due to the development of emotions and passions, bindu falls down to the lower region where it is transformed into sperm and ova. At the higher level, bindu is a point. At the lower level, it is a drop of liquid, which drips from the male and female Orgasm.

According to tantra, preservation of the bindu is absolutely necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the process of regeneration can only be carried out with the help of bindu. Secondly, all the spiritual experiences take place when there is an explosion of bindu. This explosion can result in the creation of a thought or of anything. Therefore, in tantra, certain practices are recommended by which the male partner can stop ejaculation and retain the bindu.

According to tantra, ejaculation should not take place. One should learn how to stop it. For this purpose, the male partner should perfect the practices of vajroli mudra as well as moola bandha and uddiyana bandha. When these three kriyas are perfected, one is able to stop ejaculation completely at any point of the experience.

Ejaculation is not avoided because of loss in terms of the chemical structure of semen, but because it brings down the energy level. The sexual act culminates in a particular experience which is reached only at the point of explosion of energy. Unless the energy explodes, the experience cannot take place. But this experience has to be maintained, so that the energy level remains high. When the energy level falls, ejaculation takes place. Therefore, ejaculation is

avoided, not so much to preserve the semen, but because it causes a depression in the level of energy.

To make this energy travel upwards through the spine, certain hatha yoga kriyas have to be mastered.

The experience which is concomitant of energy has to be raised to the higher centres. It is only possible to do this if you are able to maintain that experience. As long as the experience continues, you can direct it to the higher centres. But as soon as the energy level undergoes depression, ejaculation will take place.

Ejaculation brings down the temperature of the body and at the same time, the nervous system undergoes depression. When the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems undergo depression, it affects the brain. That is why many people have mental problems. When you are able to retain the semen without ejaculating at all, the energy in the nervous system and the temperature in the whole body are maintained. At the same time, you are free from the sense of loss, depression, frustration and guilt. Retention will also help to increase the sexual frequency, and that is better for both partners. The sexual act does not have to create weakness or dissipate the energy, on the contrary, it can become a means of exploding the energy. Therefore, the value of retaining the bindu should not be underestimated.

In hatha yoga there are certain practices which must be perfected for this purpose. You should begin with asanas such as paschimottanasana, shalabhasana, vajrasana, supta vajrasana and siddhasana. These are beneficial as they place an automatic contraction on the lower centres. Sirshasana is also important because it ventilates the brain so that all of one's experiences will be healthy experiences. When these postures have been mastered, shambhavi mudra is perfected in order to hold the concentration steadily at bhrumadhya. Then vajroli mudra has to be practised together with moola bandha and uddiyana bandha in kumbhaka. Practice of kumbhaka is necessary while the ejaculation is being held. Retention of the breath and the bindu go hand in hand. Loss of kumbhaka is loss of bindu, and loss of bindu is loss of kumbhaka.

During kumbhaka, when you are maintaining the experience, you should be able to direct it to the higher centres. If you are able to create an archetype of this experience, perhaps in the form of a serpent or a luminous continuity, then the result will be fantastic. So, in spiritual life, bindu must be preserved at all costs.

The female experience

In the female body, the point of concentration is at mooladhara chakra, which is situated at the cervix, just behind the opening of the uterus. This is the point where space and time unite and explode in the form of an experience. That experience is known as orgasm in ordinary language, but in the language of tantra it is called an awakening. In order to maintain the continuity of that experience, it is necessary for a build up of energy to take place at that particular bindu or point. Usually this does not happen, because the explosion of energy dissipates throughout the body through the sexual medium. In order to avoid this, the woman must be able to hold her mind in absolute concentration on that particular point. For this, the practice is known as sahajoli.

Actually, sahadjoli is concentration on the bindu, but this is very difficult. Therefore, the practice of sahadjoli, which is the contraction of the vaginal as well as the uterine muscles, should be practised over a long period of time.

If girls are taught uddiyana bandha at an early age, they will perfect sahadjoli quite naturally with time.

Uddiyana bandha is always practised with external retention. It is important to be able to perform this in any position. Usually it is practised in siddhasana, but one should be able to do it in vajrasana or the crow posture as well. When you practise uddiyana bandha, the other two bandhas - jalandhara and moola bandha occur spontaneously.

Years of this practice will create a keen sense of concentration on the correct point in the body. This concentration is more mental in nature, but at the same time, since it is not possible to do it mentally, one has to start from some physical point. If a woman is able to concentrate and maintain the continuity of the experience, she can awaken her energy to a high level.

According to tantra, there are 2 different areas of orgasm. One is in the nervous zone, which is the common experience for most women, and the other is in mooladhara chakra. When sahadjoli is practised during maithuna, mooladhara chakra wakes up and the spiritual or tantric orgasm takes place.

When the female yogi is able to practise sahadjoli for say 5 to 15 minutes, she can retain the tantric orgasm for the same period of time. By retaining this experience, the flow of energy is reversed. Circulation of blood and sympathetic/parasympathetic forces move upward. At this point, she transcends normal consciousness and sees the light. That is how she enters the deep state of dhyana. Unless the woman is able to practise sahadjoli, she will not be able to retain the impulses necessary for the tantric orgasm, and consequently she will have the nervous orgasm, which is short-lived and followed by dissatisfaction and exhaustion. This is often the cause of a woman's hysteria and depression.

So, sahadjoli is a very important practice for women. In uddiyana, nauli, naukasana, vajrasana and siddha yoni asana, sahadjoli comes naturally.

The practice of amaroli is also very important for married women. The word amaroli means 'immortal' and by this practice one is freed of many diseases. The practice of amaroli over a prolonged period also produces an important hormone known as prostaglandin which destroys the ova and prevents conception.

Tantric guru

Just as in the scheme of creation, Shakti is the creator and Shiva the witness of the whole game, in tantra the woman has the status of guru and the man of disciple. The tantric tradition is actually passed on from the woman to the man. In the tantric practice, it is the woman who initiates.

It is only by her power that the act of maithuna takes place. All preliminaries are done by her. She puts the mark on the man's forehead and tells him where to meditate. In ordinary interaction, the man takes the aggressive role and the woman participates. But in tantra, the two switch roles. The woman becomes the operator and the man her medium. She has to be able to arouse him. Then, at

the right moment, she must create the bindu, so that he can practise vajroli. If the man loses his bindu, it means that the woman has failed to carry out her functions properly.

In tantra it is said that Shiva is incapable without Shakti. Shakti is the priestess. Therefore, when vama marga is practised, the man must have an absolutely tantric attitude towards the woman. He cannot behave with her as men generally do with other women. Ordinarily, when a man looks at a woman, he becomes passionate, but during maithuna he should not. He should see her as the divine mother, Devi. In India, the appellation of Devi is still attached to the woman's name after marriage. This denotes that she is to be held in highest esteem and approached with an attitude of devotion and surrender, not with lust.

According to the tantric concept, women are more endowed with spiritual qualities and it would be a wise thing if they were allowed to assume higher positions in social affairs. Then there would be greater beauty, compassion, love and understanding in all spheres of life. What we are discussing here is not patriarchal society versus matriarchal society, but tantra, particularly left hand tantra.

Path of yogis not bhogis

In tantra, the practice of maithuna is said to be the easiest way to awaken sushumna, because it involves an act which most people are already accustomed to. But, frankly speaking, very few are prepared for this path. Ordinary sexual interaction is not maithuna. The physical act may be the same, but the background is totally different.

In the relationship between husband and wife, for example, there is dependency and ownership. But in maithuna there is no idea of ownership; each partner is independent, one unto himself. Another difficult thing in tantric sadhana is cultivating the attitude of passionless-ness. The man has to virtually become brahmacharya in order to free the mind and emotions of sexual thoughts and passion which normally arise in the presence of a woman.

Both partners must be absolutely purified and controlled internally and externally before they practise maithuna. This is hard for the ordinary person to comprehend because for most people, sexual interaction is the result of passion and physical or emotional attraction, either for progeny or pleasure. It is only when you are purified that these instinctive urges are absent. This is why, according to tradition, the path of dakshina marga must be followed for many years before the path of vama marga can be entered. Then the interaction of maithuna does not take place for physical gratification. The purpose is very clear - awakening of sushumna, raising the kundalini energy from mooladhara chakra and exploding the unconscious areas of the brain.

If this is not clear when you practise the kriyas and sushumna becomes active, you will not be able to face the awakening. Your head will get hot and you will not be able to control the passion and excitement, because you have not tranquillized your brain.

Therefore, in my opinion, only those who are adepts in yoga qualify for vama marga. This path is not to be used indiscriminately as a pretext for self-indulgence. It is meant for mature and serious minded householder Sadhakas, who are evolved, who have been practising sadhana to awaken the energy potential and to attain samadhi. They must utilize this path as a vehicle of awakening. Otherwise it becomes a path of downfall.

Practice of Vajroli

In the tantric system, there are two techniques given for vajroli - one is from hatha yoga and the other from kriya yoga. The hatha yoga vajroli is mainly directed towards maithuna, and the kriya yoga technique towards chakra awakening. Results are reached much sooner with the first method (in one or two years), but results gained with the second method are far more complete and powerful, even if it takes longer to perfect (four to five years).

The traditional hatha yoga technique involves insertion of a flexible silver or gold tube up the urethra. This method has to be utilized before puberty, when the walls of the urethra are more elastic, so that discharge of semen (which very often occurs when the tube reaches the urithroid, immediately after the curve of the urethra) is avoided. In this practice, it is not the tube which has to bend at the curve, but the urithroid which has to be stretched.

In the kriya yoga method, uddiyana bandha must be practised in siddhasana twice a day in the morning and evening, for one or two years, until mastery is achieved. Pranayama must also be continued. The practice of siddhasana places an automatic lock on mooladhara without performing moola bandha, while the practice of uddiyana bandha strengthens the urithroid. It is necessary to maintain uddiyana bandha for at least one and half minutes. Only then will it be possible to proceed to the next stage. During this first stage, techniques of the following stages are not to be performed.

When perfect control of uddiyana bandha is established, it is necessary to eliminate acidity in the body with a convenient diet. For this purpose, besides diet, it is necessary to drink a lot of water until the urine becomes clear and odourless. If diet and water are not enough to eliminate acidity, seeds of dry coriander are to be masticated. The most convenient way to check if acidity has been eliminated, is to hold back the flow of urine for a moment while urinating. If a burning sensation is felt, it means that acidity has not yet been eliminated.

When siddhasana and uddiyana are mastered and acidity is eliminated, the practice has to be continued, trying to stop the flow of urination. When a quarter is left to flow, the flux has to be stopped, then the contraction is released and the urine is allowed to flow a little, then again the flux is stopped, and so on. This is not performed while standing but in namaskara. It is necessary to practise interrupted urination for about six months.

When the flow of urine is perfectly under control and it is possible to stop and start the flux at will, it is necessary to practise sucking the urine back up again. This technique is very difficult and requires one or two years to perfect. Only a small amount of urine is actually sucked back up in comparison to that which is afterwards emitted, but the feeling of sucking is very clear.

When it is possible to suck the urine back up, the same thing can be done with semen. The next stage, therefore, is to suck the discharging semen back up. In order to master this technique, it is necessary to lengthen the gap between the moment in which the urge to discharge semen is felt and the moment in which it is actually discharged. This gap has to be gradually lengthened up to one minute, not more. At the beginning, a longer gap would cause one to lose consciousness. The experience is an explosive one. During that minute, the body must remain immobile, eyes closed, and breath retained either inside or outside. Concentration has to remain on the control of the semen only. Holding back causes a very clear sensation in mooladhara chakra like a little ball hitting it.

Finally, when perfect control of this technique is achieved, concentration is directed to the chakras.

Summing up

The complete technique of vajroli can be summed up in the following stages:

1. Sit in siddhasana and practise uddiyana, increasing gradually until it can be held for one and half minutes.
2. Eliminate acidity of urine by means of (i) diet, (ii) water, and (iii) seeds of dry coriander.
3. Practise interrupted urination while performing namaskara. Time needed: six months.
4. Suck the urine back up. Time needed: one or two years.
5. Hold back the ejaculation up to one minute.
6. Progressively increase the period of holding back until permanent retention is achieved.
7. Direct the concentration to the chakras.

Sahajoli

Sahajoli is performed in siddha yoni asana, so before beginning the practice it is necessary to first perfect this posture. Then the practice should be developed gradually along the following lines:

Seated in siddha yoni asana, after washing the legs and feet thoroughly, contract the muscles of the vagina and then relax them, repeating several times in succession.

When the vaginal muscles become stronger, contract the inner part of the vagina and hold the contraction. Gradually increase the contraction of all vaginal muscles until it becomes more intense and deep.

When deep contraction has been achieved, begin to contract the vaginal muscles, raising the opening from the heel. Then bring the heel up close to the vaginal opening, and relax the muscles so that the heel enters the vagina. Continue to contract and raise the vagina, then relax and lower it, until the heel enters approximately two centimetres into the vagina.

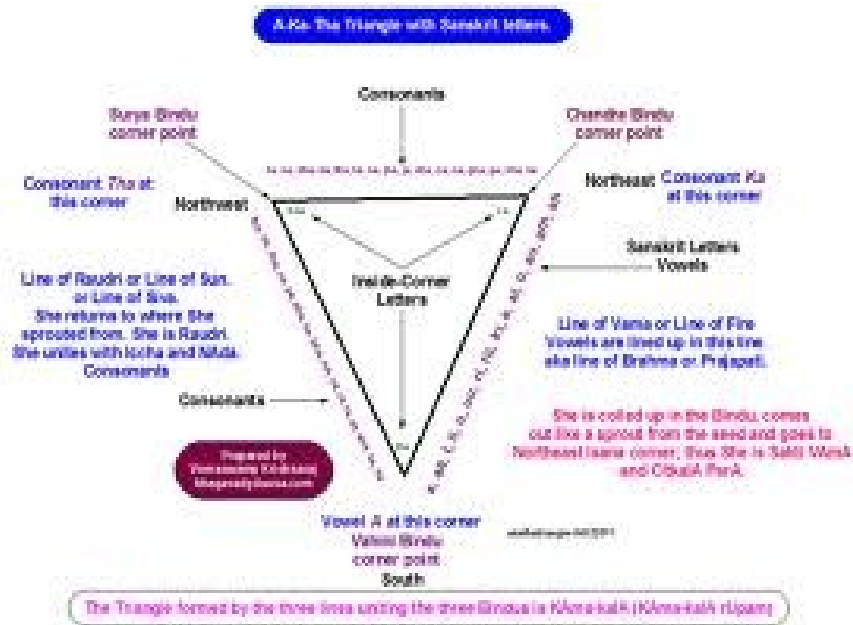
When this stage has been mastered, repeat contractions while sitting in bhadrasana and gorakshasana.

Alternate practices



1. Perform naukasana with the arms and fists clenched strongly. While holding this position, contract the vagina also. The practice has to be done holding the breath inside. When this can be performed with ease, contract the whole body, starting with the contraction of the vagina.
2. Assume namaskara with the arms outside the legs and the hands flat on the floor. Contract all the muscles of the vagina and hold the contraction for as long as possible, while retaining the breath inside and performing shambhavi mudra.

Note:

This concludes the preliminary practices for vajroli and sahajoli. These techniques are to be practised and perfected gradually, until the aspirant is ready to utilize them in combination with maithuna for awakening the spiritual energy.



English and Sanskrit Name	Location	Color Symbol	Central Issue	Goals	Intuitive Abilities
Crown Chakra <i>Sahasrara</i>	Top of head	Violet	Awareness	Wisdom, knowledge, consciousness, spiritual connection	Knowingness
Sixth Chakra <i>Ajna</i>	Center of head	Indigo	Imagination, intuition	Clear seeing, non-judgment, accurate interpretation	Clairvoyance, the ability to see spirit
Fifth Chakra <i>Vissudha</i>	Throat	Blue	Communication, creative expression	Clear, authentic communication and creativity	Clairaudience, the ability to hear spirit
Fourth Chakra <i>Anahata</i>	Heart	Green	Love, self-affinity	Compassion, tranquility, self-acceptance, good relationships	Connectedness to one's truth or soul purpose
Third Chakra <i>Manipura</i>	Solar plexus	Yellow	Power, will	Vitality, spontaneity, strength of will, purpose, self-esteem	Effortlessness
Second Chakra	Low belly,	Orange	Sexuality, emotions	Feeling, fluidity,	Clairsentience, the

<i>Svadhithana</i>	genitals			pleasure, healthy sexuality	ability to feel energy, emotions
Root Chakra <i>Muladhara</i>	Base of spine	Red 	Survival	Stability, grounding, physical health, prosperity, trust	Groundedness