

InPresence 0018: Tantra with Jeffrey Mishlove

Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove
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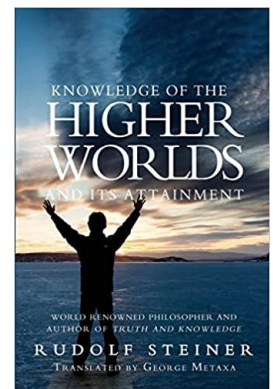
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(00:39) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today I'm going to talk a bit about Tantra, especially as it pertains to psychic functioning. Let me explain it this way. In a sense, there are two different approaches to the development of psychic abilities. You could call it the "Right-Hand Path" and the "Left-Hand Path". You could say it's the Victorian approach or the Tantric approach.

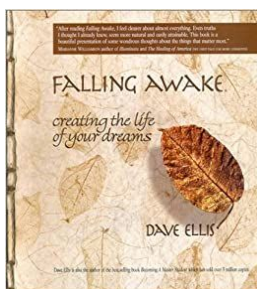
(01:06) So let's discuss them. I've begun this series by emphasizing the work of Rudolf Steiner, who said, take two steps towards ethics before you take one step toward power, or knowledge. That would be, I guess, a right-hand path. Or perhaps, really more accurately, a "middle path", because he's not saying avoid knowledge and power completely. There are those who say, with regard to psychic functioning: avoid it altogether, it's the work of the devil, you can be misled and duped, it is a realm of darkness and deception.



(01:48) Let's call that the "right-hand path", and the "left-hand path" is just the opposite. The Tantric path is more about: this is a natural human ability, it is your birthright and inheritance, you can cultivate these abilities, you can use them for benefit in your life. You can use them for investing in the financial markets, or for understanding the people you're negotiating with in business negotiations. It's an evolutionary advantage to have psi or psychic abilities, so why not cultivate them to the fullest?

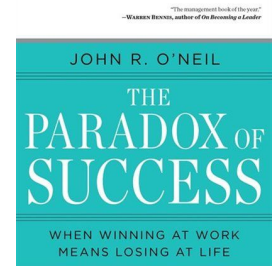
(02:27) And then on the other side of the argument, you get, for example from mainstream yoga practice, the notion that, when you're on a spiritual path, these abilities will develop, but you shouldn't seek them, and you shouldn't strive for them. They will come naturally, and you can enjoy them, but if you become ego-attached to such abilities, then what happens is you're blocking your path toward enlightenment because enlightenment involves the sacrifice of the ego. The ego is a barrier to

enlightenment, and the more ego attachments you have, the further you will be from enlightenment. Becoming enlightened is about letting go of all attachments, so the Buddha once said. I'm not attached to life or death, either is fine with me.



(03:22) That's letting go of attachments. But then, on the other side, there are those... I took a wonderful seminar once called *Falling Awake*, led by a man named Dave Ellis, and he used to say, the more desires you have the more desirable you become. The approach is a very American approach, in this sense, that we are a "can-do" country, and it's good to have desires, and it's good to actualize your desires, make things happen, be successful.

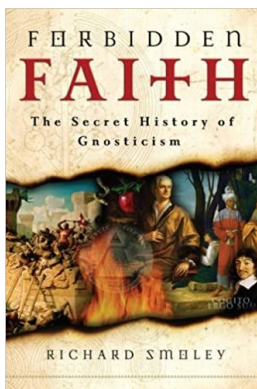
(03:56) Well, on the other side of that is what we call the "dark side of success", people who become so successful that they lose all compassion. All they think about is how many toys they're going to die with, or how big is their bank account. So, this is the realm of different thinking with regard to the cultivation of psychic abilities. I guess, as you've probably surmised by now, I'm stressing what I would call the "middle path". But let's come back to Tantra for a moment.



(04:33) Traditionally – as I understand it – the original Buddhist and Hindu Tantric practices involved various rituals done in a highly disciplined fashion, but they involved breaking social taboos. One can see today in India the great Tantric temples that are filled with erotic statues. My understanding is that there were sexual practices that took place right there in the temple. But it wasn't limited just to that. It involved eating meat, which was forbidden. It involved alcohol, which was also forbidden. So the idea here is that we are sometimes overly constrained by the taboos that society imposes on us, and that, by engaging in certain disciplined rituals to break those taboos, we free our mind.

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(05:38) And so you might ask yourself now – because we've all grown up and become acculturated into the family, into the tribe, into the community in which we were brought up – in what way are the mores, the values, the practices of your upbringing, constraining you? In what way would it be valuable for you to break free of them? And how does that relate to psychic functioning?



(06:08) For example, there was, around the early years of the Christian Church, a major movement called Gnosticism. Gnosticism kind of edged into the Tantric, in the sense that it involved direct revelation of spiritual realities. And the Catholic Church, at the time, went to great lengths to suppress Gnosticism, and did so almost entirely successfully, although it is being reborn in our current age.

(06:41) The Church maintained that revelation had to come through the church hierarchy. The idea that a citizen could have a direct revelation of the deity, of spiritual realities – things of that sort – was threatening to the Church. And various institutions today try to control your mind, by telling you that the only proper way to have certain experiences is under their auspices. I gather that probably was the case in ancient times as well. It could have been the Brahmin priests, or the Buddhist monks, or whoever the

religious establishment of the day may have been – the Jewish priests, for all I know – and that’s why there have always been esoteric counterculture movements that challenge those orthodoxies.

(07:41) Now it seems, if you go back to the earliest human cultures – even in India, where Yoga developed – it was a shamanistic practice. From what we know from the statuary and remnants of culture left from the most ancient cities in India – the Harappa culture – and places like Mohenjo-daro, the earliest leaders were shamans themselves. They acquired shamanistic powers, probably including psychic powers, and they had a certain dominion over nature, over animals, and over the society. That was their charisma. That was their form of leadership.

(08:27) I should mention another thing. Tantra is also associated with the feminine and the worship of the feminine. We live in a male-dominated culture, almost universally across the planet right now, to the detriment of women. That shows up in murder statistics and violence statistics against women, for example. But in Tantra there has been a tendency to elevate the female goddess, and even to elevate the dark female goddess, Maha Kali. And I’m showing you an image now of Maha Kali. It’s gruesome, it’s horrifying, it makes one think of evil and crime. And yet, in a certain sense, it’s liberating, because it challenges the orthodoxies. And orthodoxies, for all of the benefits that they provide humanity – and I think they do – they are also constraining.

(09:33) So the middle path that I would advocate is one that appreciates both postures, the posture of not striving, and yet the posture of appreciating what has been accomplished in your life with regard to psychic functioning. I’m assuming – and maybe wrongly so (at some point I’m going to post a questionnaire) – I’m assuming many, probably most, of the viewers of the “In Presence series, are interested in what I have to say because of my parapsychological background, and in particular my emphasis on applied parapsychology, and on training, cultivating, psychic abilities. If you fit into that category, you might ask yourself, where do you stand in this balance? Are psychic abilities a gift of the spirit, or are they the natural possession of your ego? Where do you draw the line there? And can you live with both? I’ll leave you with that thought. Thank you for being with me. (10:42)

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