

Marc G - Integral Evolutionary Tantra: Domination—Submission 041016

Video: Marc G Integral Evolutionary Tantra: Domination—Submission 041016 - Part 2.mov
TRT: 1:08:38

Speaker

Marc Gafni

Marc Welcome, everyone. Let's start here. We're in Part 2 of this conversation we started yesterday. And of course you're in all of the thickness of space that you're in with everything that's happened all day yesterday, this morning. Deep bow to Kristina who is holding the space and convened the space, ably assisted in partnership with Tara. Thank you. Amen.

So I want to ask everyone maybe just to shut your eyes for a second. (Kristina, maybe collect the wallets now. That would be a good idea.) And let's just drop. I want to just find our way. One of the ways we drop in is through chant. So I want to just ask you to just if you'd like you can chant with me, but you can also just receive the chant. Chant is a form of meditation, but it's a meditation in which we access not oneness, which is what classical meditation does, or not no self or not *sunyata* (emptiness). Classical meditation, we sit zazen in, for example, Zen Buddhism in order to access the *sunyata*, the realization that all of reality is empty. When we say all of reality is empty we mean that the old patterns aren't actually true, so we can let them go.

Werner used to like to say—he told me when we were talking on the phone, Werner Erhard—he likes to say the entire world is empty and meaningless, and the belief that the world is empty and meaningless is empty and meaningless, which is of course just one dimension of reality. Werner got exactly half of it right and half of it wrong, true but partial. But that dimension is an important dimension, the dimension that yesterday doesn't determine today because it's empty. There's nothing there. There's nothing that's fixed. The only thing that's true is a new consciousness that arises in every moment. That's called *sunyata*. And that's the realization that we get when we meditate classically, classical medication, zazen, sitting meditation.

When we chant, which was the practice of the Levites in the temple in Jerusalem, when we chant we access not so much the emptiness as the inner connectivity, the wholeness of everything. We access the infinity of intimacy. We access the fullness. And, if you will, the tradition of esoteric Hebrew wisdom is a tradition not of what I would call enlightenment of emptiness, but enlightenment of fullness. We actually taste the fullness of reality, and it explodes in us, we're ecstatic.

If you will, classical Zen teaching, which is critically important, and classical Zen teaching, for example, in esoteric Hebrew wisdom, appears strongly in what's called Hasidism, which is the experience of radical being. I meditate to experience radical

being. I want to experience the One. I want to experience the deconstruction of all the constructs and the experience of myself being not separate in any way from the One. So the experience is spaciousness. The experience is bliss. It's delight.

Notice, however, that sexuality doesn't have a strong space in that experience, because although sexuality will yield on a good day a moment of spaciousness or even an aftertaste of spaciousness, spaciousness and bliss doesn't exhaust sexuality. Sexuality isn't exhausted, Eros isn't exhausted in being, which is why the deep mystics of the Hebrew wisdom tradition pointed towards a second experience of divinity, and the Kashmir Shaivite masters did the same thing. Abhinavagupta, the great master who births Kashmir Shaivism out of which all major yoga, for example, emerges, when he talks about the Shakti, he's not talking about bliss or spaciousness. He's talking about something else. It's not the experience of being that Luria talks about. It's the experience of what we might call becoming.

So if you would draw a circle of reality and you would just for pedagogical purposes split it in two, you'd say the top is being, but the bottom is becoming, and becoming isn't spaciousness. It's not bliss. Becoming is not static. Becoming is radically dynamic. It's changing in every second. It's always ephemeral. It's always moving. It's always transforming. It's the creative advance of novelty that we talked about yesterday. Buddhism talks about one taste, but actually Kabbalah and Kashmir Shaivism talk more accurately about two tastes. One taste is being, but the second taste is becoming, and the taste of becoming is ecstatic, it's urgent. You might say that there's a sense of ecstatic urgency. There's an ecstatic urgency in the taste of divinity which is becoming.

And all of a sudden the sexual begins to clarify. The sexual offers an invitation into spacious being, but it also invites us, it accesses the evolutionary Eros, the evolutionary impulse which is ecstatic urgency. And as long as a spiritual system emphasizes and prioritizes being, it can't have place for sexuality, because sexuality is about something which emerges out of being into becoming. So becoming is the experience of ecstatic urgency.

And in some sense, in submission, I access being. I deconstruct all of my patterns. I deconstruct the ego. I offer myself up to you as being, and be me as you will, I will be as you wish me to be. And in domination, when I'm accessing power, I'm accessing the thrust of the evolutionary impulse which is ecstatic urgency, which is why in practice, which is always the practice of *imitatio dei*, *imitatio universalis*, be like God, be like the universe, reflect, be aligned with reality, when you want to access this taste of sexuality.

Now, again, parentheses, if you only access this taste of sexuality then you should actually seek the kind of deconstructive work that Kristina does very importantly, which is to locate why your arousal pattern is fixated only on this particular modality. Domination and submission isn't intended to be a fixated pattern which is the only portal to sacred arousal, which arousal is.

Remember, in this new narrative of sexuality which we began to unpack yesterday, which is an affront to shame, we understand arousal as being an expression of the evolutionary Eros, an expression of the evolutionary impulse itself. But when that arousal pattern fixates and freeze-frames in a particular modality—for example, domination or submission, either one or both—then you want to go back and do the work to find out, well, why did it fixate in this way, which is usually related either to early childhood or to an earlier incarnation, to one of the two.

But in a more whole system, domination and submission is one taste of sexuality. It's one access point. It's one meditative access point. It's one urgent access point which you use along with other tastes and you access on a regular basis, but it's available to you, and you can play it. Now, if you play it only on one side of it, let's say you're always playing submission or you're always playing domination, well, then you again fixate something which lacks of the sacred in yourself and in the relationship, because you want to access not only domination, not only submission, you want to access being and becoming, domination and submission.

So if you're a woman and you're really good at playing submission, then you might want to access power. And to access that power and to feel that power coursing through you and to practice that power is one way of accessing the full power of the evolutionary impulse called Kali, called the Goddess, that lives alive and fucks you open, and then you learn to fuck someone else open and to fuck reality open and to fuck your life open.

And if you're a man and you're naturally accessing domination, you might want to actually switch and access submission and actually figure out how to access the sweet surrender to that luminous light of the One that than allows you afterwards to arise like a phoenix from the fire, filled with power and filled with the evolutionary impulse.

Because if you're only, for example, as a woman, accessing submission, then it might not actually be holy submission; it might be passivity of a kind that reflects a fundamental violation of your hieros gamos. And your hieros gamos is your divine marriage. It's your holy union. Your hieros gamos is the full expression of lines and circles, which is a whole other conversation, but for now we'll use the words masculine and feminine, although it doesn't quite capture it. But when you access the full expression and incarnation of hieros gamos—hieros gamos means the divine marriage, God is fuck—when that lives in you then you're not only accessing your submission. If you're only accessing your submission then you might be stuck in a feminine form of passivity.

If as a man you're only naturally accessing domination, well, that might just be aggression—aggression of an unholy kind, not aggression which is moving towards, which is sacred aggression. Aggression originally means moving towards, which is beautiful. But it might be unholy aggression, which is moving against, which is

disguised as domination practice, in which case you want to deconstruct it and do the work and find its holy root. Everything has a holy root.

And we're always, in Tantra, one of the basic moves in Tantra is *ein hadin nimtake ela be-shorsho*—something is only sweetened at its root. Tantra has three dimensions to it, and one of them is the trickster. Tantric is a trickster. It's all about sex. It's not about sex. We talked about it yesterday. A second dimension of Tantra is expansion. I expand the erotic beyond the sexual. The exile of the erotic, of Eros into the sexual was the exile of the Goddess. When I *tan*, when I expand the erotic beyond the sexual in order to live an erotic life in every dimension of being and becoming, then I'm engaged in Tantra. That's the second dimension or facet of Tantra.

The third facet of Tantra is tracing back to Source. So when I have an experience of domination, I want to find its holy root. I want to trace its root back to Source, and I want to be accessing the power which is the power which literally holds reality together in every second. In this very second, reality is exercising exponentialized power beyond imagination. There's no power you can even vaguely imagine. The power of rocket boosters is a joke. It's not even a mosquito compared to the power being exercised by cosmos in holding all of reality together in electromagnetic attraction and in gravity in this very moment, happening right now, infinite power beyond imagination, which is why universe/divinity is the infinity of power.

And when we access domination I want to access that root in me as I awaken, *imitatio dei*, the imitation of divinity, *imitatio universalis*, the imitation of reality, being aligned with reality, not being exiled from reality's essence, and I become that power. And as long as I don't become that power, which domination in its holy root becomes a praxis to access, then I am alienated from myself, I am alienated from my selfhood, my I is in exile, in which case I'm empty, I'm vapid, I don't have genuine Eros. Then I seek pseudo-Eros to cover up the emptiness of genuine Eros. And pseudo-Eros is every form of abuse and every form of addiction and every form of acting out.

And if as a man I don't find that holy root, as a woman I don't find that holy root of domination, I am lost in its surface, unholy aggression. And if as a man or a woman I don't find the holy root of submission, then it becomes but a bypass of my essential power in which I engage passivity and I call it holy, but actually passivity is not holy. We're not talking about being passive. We're talking about surrendering. There's nothing more active than surrender. There's nothing more audacious than surrender, when I actually surrender and I become being itself, and therefore I am putty in your hands. Do with me as you will. Here I am. I am yours. Take me now. Do with me as you will. Holy surrender. And those are the tastes of domination and submission.

So chant accesses domination (becoming), submission (being). Chant accesses both of those, but it adds to classical meditation the experience of becoming. It moves. It's alive. It's happening. It's the pulse of cosmos. It's the evolutionary impulse itself. So I want to ask you, with your permission, just to sit back. We're just going to chant for

a couple of minutes. It doesn't always work perfectly on Skype, but that's okay. We're not disturbed by the virtue of the virtual. We'll just sit in the space and let the chant arise.

[Chanting]

Amen, amen. So, let's go, if we can, two more steps. And, Kristina, when we finish and I go, you definitely want to have some time just to talk about the experience of what the chant is, but you understand that there's being and becoming in it. The first half of the chant is being—absolute radical being. The second part of the chant is becoming. In every chant is God is fuck. Every chant is hieros gamos. Even if the person who wrote the chant wasn't thinking that, that's how a chant works.

When I leave here right now I'm going to spend the day writing and practicing with a good friend of mine, Swami Durgananda, Sally Kempton, who's one of the great teachers of meditation in America today, one of the great Kashmir Shaivite teachers. She wrote a book that's actually the bestselling spiritual book in America today called *Awakening Shakti*. It's a great book on the feminine goddesses, the Hindu goddesses.

So there's one chant that Sally and I do, and I'll just do it for 10 seconds just so you feel it. It's in every tradition. It's the same move. So this chant is *Om Namō Bhagavate Muktanandaya*. *Om Namō Bhagavate*, we greet you, God, *Muktanandaya*, the ecstasy of liberation. So it begins...

[Chanting]

What's that? Being, it's just the pulse of being. Then it goes...

[Chanting]

You see the difference? The second part's a plea. It's a yearning. It's a becoming. It's wanting something. It's filled with desire. So, the first half of the chant has no desire. It is. You know, when you hear Buddhist teachers talk about moving beyond the story—how many people have heard someone talk about moving beyond your story? Classical Buddhist idea: let me get beyond my story. Well, that's being. That is true. That's absolutely true, but it's true but partial. You get that? It's true but partial. Then you want to embrace your story, which is the full yearning of your Unique Self, not your ego story, your Unique Self story—different conversation, not for now.

I want to stay focused on our track and just to try and complete with you a couple of key transmissions, what we call holy ideas or dharma or distinctions, to really understand domination and submission. So I just want to introduce three ideas. That's it.

And the reason I was violating the sound structures is because I was putting a draft of a book that I'm working on—this is a book I'm working on with Kristina on living the erotic life—and in it there's a poem by Hafiz, and Hafiz's poems are wild. We actually don't know how Hafiz really reads. Much of America reads Hafiz through Daniel Ladinsky's translation, which are beautiful poetry, but inaccurate to Hafiz, but thank you, Daniel, for his poetry, which is the way he translated it, but it's a very beautiful poem called Tripping With Joy. I'll just read you a couple of lines of it. At the end of the poem, Hafiz writes:

What's the difference
Between your experience
And that of a saint?

By 'your experience' he means the experience of you being a Separate Self, an ego, and that of a saint, essence.

The saint knows
That the spiritual path
Is a sublime chess game.

And in that game the Beloved
Has just made such a fantastic move

That the saint is
Tripping with joy and laughter
And screaming in ecstasy, "I surrender!"

Whereas you, my friend,

Speaking to the ego.

Whereas you, my friend,
You I am afraid still think

You have a thousand serious moves left.

That's surrender. You get it? What's the difference between your experience and that of a saint? The saint knows that the spiritual path is a sublime chess game, and in that chess game the Beloved has just made such a fantastic move that the saint, tripping with joy, screams out, "I surrender!" And you, my beloved, you still think you have a thousand serious moves left.

That's the experience. That's surrender. That is the experience of being fucked open by reality and knowing that what is, is. Now, that doesn't mean you don't act. That doesn't mean you don't engage. That doesn't mean you don't transform. You do everything you can do. You're in the game. You never leave the court. You're

always in the game. You're never in the stands. But even when you're in the stands there is what the Upanishads called inaction in action. Isn't that beautiful? The original Upanishads way before Kashmir Shaivism, the Upanishads talk about action in inaction, which is actually becoming in being. If you get lost in being and it loses the quality of becoming, it become vapid, it becomes limp, it loses its throbbing quality. So you have to have actually action in inaction. Then you also need inaction (being, surrender) in action. Even as you act, you're totally surrendered.

And we need to act and we need to stand for issues, but as we act there's inaction in action. In other words, even in the middle of action, there's surrender. In other words, making all the moves, and yet we don't really have a thousand serious moves. Full, radical, absolute surrender at the same moment that you're engaged in full action. You're fully becoming, so there's the ecstatic urgency of it all, and yet it's got to be okay to go live in Costa Rica and write books for 20 years and publish them the way they're published, and they get out in the world, and it's fine. It's fine. It's got to be fine.

If it's not fine to be defeated by life, you can't be victorious. And I want to tell you something. Sometimes we're victorious and sometimes we're defeated. And one of the tragedies of New Age thinking is that every time you're defeated the New Age tells you it's because you created it, because you attracted it. That's bullshit. It's utterly nonsense. You get defeated for a lot of reasons in life. In Rwanda 800,000 people were defeated and killed in 100 days, not because they attracted it. The world is complex. There's a lot happening in the world. One incarnation doesn't work it out. And yet you've got to act with full audacity, full integrity, move to triumph, move to clarify, move for victory, that movement between surrender and domination. It's submission and domination. Control and giving up control is the key movement.

We'll leave a couple of minutes for questions, which we promised to do yesterday, which would be out of integrity not to do, so I want to make sure that we have a conversation. So I just want to go one more step, and I want to take it directly into sexuality.

So how does this work? So I want to introduce an idea which is a key idea from Sabbatean thought. Shabtai Tzvi was a great mystical messiah in Judaism who was highly controversial for very good reasons. He did the old move in the sixteenth century of converting to Islam, which never makes you popular in Judaism in the mid-sixteenth century. It doesn't do too well today either. Converting to Islam is never a good end to a good Jewish story.

And he actually wrought enormous havoc in the Jewish community. At the same time he was holding a very holy root of sacred thought that then went underground and emerged in Hasidism. I don't know how many of you are familiar with Hasidism, made popular by Martin Buber, but Hasidism is really where I live, and Hasidism and Kabbalah, it's my original root tradition. A lot of Hasidism is profound Sabbatean thought reformulated.

So one of the core ideas in this mystical messiah, Shabtai Tzvi, who also engaged in Tantra, and some of it was over the line, and some of it wasn't over the line, but he was engaged in trying to revision sexuality. He was the first person in Judaism who gave women the ability to read from the Torah scroll. He was a fascinating figure and a beautiful figure and someone who I feel connected to in soul root, at least I hope at the holy essence of the soul root.

So Shabtai Tzvi talks about an idea which reappeared in the Baal Shem Tov who was kind of a relatively mainstream figure who founds Hasidism. And the reason I'm giving you the lineage roots to it, the same way we can access Buddhism or Kashmir Shaivism, we access Kabbalah whether or not we're Buddhist or Hindu or Jewish. We're accessing in a world spirituality sense the deepest root tradition of some of our greatest instruments of spirit. So I'm speaking about it from that way. So I'm touching on the lineage roots of it, because if you want to get a transmission of it, if you want to feel it in your body, when you touch the lineage roots you can feel it in a different way than when you denude it of its source. Does that make sense? Like that.

So, the idea he talks about, he calls it—it's three words—it's *yeridah tzorech aliyah*, which is descent for the sake of ascent. Descent for the sake of ascent, what does that mean? It means when you call someone on the phone... The other day I was talking to a group of people. We were talking about when you call someone on the phone when there used to be busy signals. How many people here remember busy signals on the phone? That dates us if you remember a busy signal. Hello? You get a busy signal. There's no call wait. It doesn't roll over. You get a busy signal. And you're annoyed.

And I remember being in Columbus, Ohio, and we used to remember our phone numbers: 614-237-6928, my phone number in Columbus, Ohio, 2480 Seneca Park Place, Bexley, Ohio. Who remembers phone numbers today, because you just press send. You don't even remember a phone number. There are whole parts of our brains that are atrophying. It's why I, by the way, refuse to use a GPS, because when you use a GPS you basically de-eroticize your environment. You're actually no longer present. You're no longer located. You're literally alienated from the environment. Someone's telling you where to go. Of course, when I get desperate in San Francisco I turn it on.

But the idea is you get a busy signal. So let's say you get a busy signal and you've got this terrible piece of gossip you want to pass on. So what do you do? You keep dialing again, because you've got to tell your friend, when you're 15, this piece of crazy stuff that you heard. You keep dialing, dialing, dialing until you get through. Let's say you've got some sweet piece of like nice thing you want to share with someone. You get a busy signal. You say, okay, I'll call back tomorrow.

Does everyone get what I'm talking about? In other words, the energy of destruction is very powerful. It's really critical to get. It's why it's so easy to organize a lynch

mob. If you want to talk about a lynch mob, ask black men in the South who were lynched because a group of white women said they looked at them wrong sexually or raped them, falsely. How many black men were lynched in the South by a lynch mob aroused by some frenzy? The mob, the groupthink in its negative form is the negative face of the Goddess. The shadow of the Goddess, the shadow of the eroticized group is the lynch mob. Does everyone get that? To access that in a positive way, to have a peace room and not a war room, is a whole different energy.

It's why people go to see a horror movie. Why do people go to see a horror movie? You go to see a horror movie because you want to access the energy of aliveness that comes from radical fear, which is why in Hebrew the word fear, *yirah*, is the same word for perception and consciousness, but it's the shadow of perception and consciousness that appears in something called Freddy, Freddy's Back. Why do you want to go see Freddy's Back? Why do you want to see someone chain sawed in six pieces? Because you feel in those moments alive, that's why. Because there's a failure of Eros and you want to access an eroticized experience of reality. You can't get it by actually being on the inside of a true reality which is whole and interconnected, so you get it through the pseudo-Eros, the frenzy of a mob. That's why it's so critical to actually access the true erotic, because whenever you don't access full Eros you always look for pseudo-Eros. So, deconstructive energy, destructive energy, is always easier to access than the gorgeous energy of love.

So, for example—I'll tell you something really interesting—before you practice rough sexuality, and when I say rough I don't mean kind of needles, I mean just the normal structure, no instruments, no accoutrements. I don't know anything about the accoutrement world. I don't know anything about the actual pain world. I'm just talking about the normal play of kind of hard voice. We talked yesterday, you know, "Fuck the wall." In other words, just the normal sexual theatre play that people do in the domination-submission game.

So when you're accessing the domination energy or the submission energy, you'll notice it's totally arousing. Now, if you interrupt that in the middle and say, "Love you, baby," you lose it. You ever notice that? "Oh, love you, sweetie." Really? Oh my fucking god, did he really just say that? Oh my god, let's start again. You completely lose the arousal. Then you feel a little bad about that, because your self-image and your self-perception is that you're this noble, loving, sweet and kind person, so why the fuck are you getting aroused by domination? And when you say, "Love you, baby," it goes like this, boom, whoops, what happened? Hello? It's completely embarrassing. As a woman, you're totally aroused, and then he says, "Oh, sweetie, I totally love you." Could you stop? Hello, fuck me open. What are you doing?

So what happens? So Shabtai Tzvi talks about it. It's very beautiful. He says *yeridah*, you descend. Now, stay with me. You descend into the full energy of deconstruction, because the deconstructive energy at its core is sacred. The energy at its core of the frenzy, the mob, the deconstruction, the destruction, actually it's got a holy root. The

holy root is you deconstruct all yesterdays. The holy root is you break all boundaries of smallness. The holy root is you break everything that's contracted. You shatter all the idols. You're an iconoclast. You shatter all icons. You destroy.

It's Thanatos. It's the energy of Thanatos which destroys everything superficial. And it's Kali energy which has no patience, no willingness to engage in what Hafiz calls love parading as pretty costumes. Love, says Hafiz, is the experience of radical explosion, ecstatic, but it's urgent, it demands, it breaks through, but since we're afraid to access the energy of breakthrough, the energy of complete deconstruction directly, so we go for sweetness.

And what this deep Tantric teaching says is the practice is *yeridah*, go down, meaning go down, access the full energy of domination. Let it completely fuck the moment open in radical arousal with complete intention. And then as you emerge out of it, after the ecstatic explosion, then wrap it into the ascent, which is radical love, which is quivering tenderness, in which you call the name of your beloved and you enwrap them in love and you enrapture them in love and you take all of the energy of descent and you bring it to the ascent. So, in other words, if you stay in the descent and then there's an explosion of rapture, of climax, then you leave it there, then you're left with that energy, then you haven't actually woven the energy into the ascent.

So the practice actually is the practice of descent. It's a radical descent in every possible way, and then you ascend. That ability to descend and then ascend is the actual Tantric movement. Remember, Tantra is a trickster. That's the first principle of Tantra. It's a trickster. "Be my whore." Well, that doesn't mean that I want you to be my whore. It doesn't mean I want to degrade you. It means I want to access the energy of giving up small self. Do you get that? I want to access the energy of giving up ego.

If a woman says to a man, you know, one of the men in the room is walking down the street, a woman taps you on the shoulder, you've never met her before, and she says, "Drop your pants now." Whoa, I'd get out of there, fast, because you're talking about a femme fatale. She's dangerous. Get out of the room. The woman's crazy. You may want to have her arrested for, I don't know, violation of boundaries or anything else. Same thing with a man to a woman.

But if in the context of sacred union a woman who's accessed her power gives you a radical set of orders and you're able to submit and surrender into them, what you're doing is you're letting go of your ego, obviously, because your ego controls. No way he's going to have anybody do that. Going to punch him in the face or walk away. But actually to be able to surrender is to actually let go of the ego. It's to let go of the contraction. It's to let go of the need to be in control. It's radical surrender. And you'll actually feel in that radical surrender that you access the spaciousness of cosmos. We access a kind of relief and a kind of spaciousness and a kind of deep

relaxation and a kind of erotic joy which is not your perversion. That's the mistake. It's actually the erotic evolutionary impulse arising in you.

Now, again, if you only fetishize on this particular taste, then there's probably an old issue that needs to be worked with, but if you access at will this taste then what you're doing is you're practicing to access the actual pleasure of the vibration of the erotic evolutionary impulse, which drives all of reality. You're now aligned and not separate from reality. And there's ecstatic pleasure. And then, at the end, post-explosion, you then bring it back to mutuality. You bring it back to radical devotion. You bring it back to radical love. You bring it back to quivering tenderness. You bring it back to calling each other's name. It's utterly critical when you ascend to re-use each other's name.

So the practice is descent for the sake of ascent. In the descent I give up ego. In the descent I do what I would never do in polite society, because polite society is about egoic structures interacting with each other, as it should be, as there should be appropriate boundaries between people. But the shattering of boundaries, the moving to a no-boundary consciousness, the holy seduction, I seduce you beyond the contraction of your ego to access this full expanse, and I do it in this Tantric trickster way.

What's the Tantric trickster way? I descend. Now, if you freeze-frame in the descent then it's all about descent. But it's descent for the sake of the ascent. So you have to descend, and never forget the ascent afterwards, A, and, B, always switch roles. Never get locked into one role. And if you begin to access the practice in that way, switching roles, descent for the sake of ascent, you now have a sacred practice in which the sexual models the erotic. And the erotic is the holy. That's what the erotic is.

There are two cherubs above the Ark in the Holy of Holies at the temple. So you remember that big book in America written by what's his name a decade ago, maybe 15 years ago? It was a big book, *The Da Vinci Code*. How many people saw that, show of hands? *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown; I think Tom Hanks made a movie out of it. So *The Da Vinci Code* is about the tradition that Jesus and Mary Magdalene are a sacred couple. And the goblet, which is the woman, the shape of the feminine—*kus* in Hebrew and Arabic means vagina—so the chalice, the goblet, the grail is the feminine. It is the sacred feminine. The knight who seeks is the phallus seeking the *kus*, the cup, that experience of vagina, of cunt, of sacred feminine. That's the grail quest. That's what the grail quest is. That is precisely what it is.

And so *The Da Vinci Code* kind of pointed to it elliptically, but the source of that tradition is the temple tradition. That's why the Templars were involved in it in Christianity. But it's a temple tradition. In the temple you have an ark. Remember *Raiders of the Lost Ark* when Harrison Ford was young? So the ark is the ark in the temple in Jerusalem in the Holy of Holies, which is called the sanctum sanctorum, which is called the inside of the inside, which is called *lifnai v' lifnim*. It's *umka*

d'umka. It's the deepest of the deep. There is an ark. Above the ark there are two cherubs. The two cherubs are *meurim zeh b'zeh*, they're sexually inter-twisted one with another. And then the text reads, "*V'no'adti lcha m'bein shnei kruvim.*" The divine voice speaks from between the sexually inter-twisted cherubs.

So stay with me for a second. So the temple is called *migdash*, and *migdash* means the holy place. So the holy place is the place where you have two erotically entwined cherubs, masculine and feminine, erotically intertwined, and from that erotic entanglement the divine voice emerges, because the erotic and the holy are one. Now, why above the ark in the Holy of Holies do you have two sexually inter-twisted cherubs?

Because the temple's about sex? No. The temple is about the erotic, and the erotic is the experience of being on the inside. It's the yearning pulse of reality. It's the throb of the evolutionary impulse. It's fullness of presence. It's the experience of wholeness. It's sacred fantasy. It's what we talked about yesterday, giving and receiving, being one. It's radical giving. It's time stopping still. It's the masculine and feminine merging. That's Eros. The sexual models the erotic, which is why you have a sexual image atop the Holy of Holies in the temple. That's what the ark is, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Wow!

So in domination and submission we're not engaged in a sexual play. It's all about sex. It's all about the intensity of pleasure which is the inner pulse of the interior face of the cosmos, but it models Eros. It models the access of the fullness of my power, Tantra, to expand beyond the sexual in every dimension of life. The sexual models the erotic; it doesn't exhaust the erotic. And so it is. Amen, amen.

Let's just rest in it for a moment. Amen.

So let's take a couple of minutes for just any thoughts, questions, ideas, jokes. How are we all doing?

[Cheering, applause]

I'm sorry we took so much time. I know we went over time. But, really, I want to just invite, before we go, really any questions on anything. We have a word in our community, which we say no words that can't be spoken. So I want to invite you to kind of break the normal social structures which you hear something and your real question, your real comment, it comes up later in a quiet conversation with a friend two days later. So one of the things I just like to do is face to face.

So I invite you, full permission. And there's not always full permission, by the way. Not all questions are welcome at every time. That's actually not true. There's context. There's place. But this is a place of full permission, any question about the dharma, a question you want to ask me personally about myself, about Kristina's

love life when she was 29, anything you want to bring up is welcome in the space. I'm just fully open. So this is the moment, so anyone.

David So I'll break the ice here. I once saw an interview with Harrison Ford actually. I thought it was the best answer in any interview ever. They asked him, assuming when he dies and assuming there's actually a God in heaven and he gets to meet him, what would he like God to say to him. And he said, "You look better in person."

[laughter]

So, I'm profoundly inspired and discomforted by what you're saying and especially your connecting it to Jewish roots. My past is kind of similar to yours. I am also an ordained rabbi, I'm not a practicing Jew anymore, and it's very recent for me.

Marc You were ordained in reformed, conservative or Orthodox?

David Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, Hasidic.

Marc Where did you study?

David Chabad.

Marc Chabad, okay.

David So I am familiar with a lot of the terminology that you use. And at this point in my life I'm very skeptical of everything, like I don't even know if God exists and whatever, but what makes me very uncomfortable about what you're saying—and I just don't know how to process it—is that you're taking ancient Jewish sources like the Zohar and the Bible and the Beit HaMikdash and all of that, and I know that there's a lot in there that looks at sexuality as holy. There's a famous thing Rabbi Akiva said that the Song of Songs by Shlomo is the holiest of all the parts of the Bible.

Actually when you were talking yesterday about shameless sex I was reminded of the scene in *Gan Eden*, in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve were naked and they were not ashamed. So I clearly see that there's a lot of that in our sources, but at the same time my whole upbringing and everything I know—and this is not just my upbringing, this is actually the reality, for example, in the Beit HaMikdash, in the Holy of Holies women were not allowed...

Marc Right.

David Up until certain parts. So for me I don't know how to reconcile any of that, so it's very, very confusing, and my reaction right now is to kind of reject it.

Marc Right, I get it. Tell me your full name.

David David.

Marc So, David, let's talk for a sec. It's an unexpected question, so let me just tell you a couple of things. First off, I am a practicing Jew. As a matter of fact, this is a good moment. I put them on before, but I'm going to put my tefillin on again with you.

David You didn't keep Shabbat yesterday.

Marc Yesterday was Shabbos of course. So, really I put the tefillin on in this moment really to honor David, and only he really understands, and in some sense it's a private conversation, but he understands the full...

David I know. You said that I could ask anything, but if it really isn't the right moment, then we can take it offline.

Marc Yeah, no, totally. So as a Chabadnik the particular significance of tefillin is of course clear to you as the kind of primary initiatory mitzvah. So let me just say something about tefillin. So when you put on tefillin, what are you engaged in? Tefillin is *zivug* [Hebrew 0:56:24] *Shekhina*. It's the erotic merger with the divine. When you actually put on tefillin, what you're actually doing is you're doing two things actually in Hebrew mysticism. You're actually loving God open. You're actually [Hebrew 0:56:39] *mayim nukvim*, you're arousing the divine feminine and you're penetrating divinity. And you're becoming the feminine and you're being penetrated by divinity. The tefillin actually—and they are full black leather straps that no one ever talks about—are an eroticized expression of a full merger with divinity.

Now, let me go a couple of steps. And it's critical to understand this. I'm just going to spend a minute on it—we could spend hours on it—but just a minute. So in an esoteric tradition, the tradition attempts to articulate a subversive language which is beyond what the community can hold in practice. Now, everything that I just said, every single word that I just said will work if you're a Southern Baptist, if you're an Orthodox Jew, if you're a Haight-Ashbury hippie in San Francisco, if you're a businessman in Hong Kong.

If you notice, David, and everyone to notice, nothing I said advocates anything that an Orthodox Jewish couple couldn't do or a completely secular yuppie couple living in Madison, Wisconsin couldn't do. Actually, nothing actually violated, if you notice carefully, Jewish law at all, nothing whatsoever. Not one word I said violated anything in Jewish law at all.

Now, what you're noticing is that we shared a dimension, and of course what I'm drawing on is in part from the Hebrew lineage and in part from other places, and I'm integrating them and merging them together in a kind of new way, so it's a new lineage in that sense, but ultimately it's about living a fully erotic life. That's what

the Rebbe of Chabad would call *ahava aza*, outrageous love, [\[Hebrew 0:58:51\]](#), which is passionate and alive.

And if there's one deep understanding it is that we all have the images of our youth that we take with us. I, for example, find certain dimensions of the Jewish community to be egregious, filled with kind of a verbal violence, an intense verbal violence, an intense lack of ethics in certain very, very profound ways. And I'm madly in love with the community, because it's the community that's my root community. And even though I don't practice in it, even if I don't function in it, and even though I'm fundamentally exiled from it, I'm profoundly threatening to it, I hold it in great respect and honor, even as I go the way that I go, and I'm very careful about that.

So my tefillin are here. Believe me, no one in *The Jewish Forward* writing against me is putting on tefillin. In other words, my tefillin are always here. You always transcend and include. You've always got to be very, very careful not to let your anger and your legitimate argument with the place of your birth to have you not be able to discern and separate the wheat from the chaff. So Abraham leaves his father's house and leaves his birthplace, and he goes and finds a new place, but when we become Abraham we need to be able to leave and take with us that which is critical.

So, paradoxically, everything I'm accessing is not a clever interpretation of something, but it's actually a very deeply grounded, very little-known because you need to do a lot of, lot of, lot of depth in it, tradition within esoteric Hebrew lineage, which was picked up by different people in esoteric teachings. In Chabad you can barely find it. The Rebbes of Chabad didn't refer to it. They referred to it only elliptically. Other Rebbes did refer to it, but again it's hidden, it's completely hidden.

I wrote a book called *Radical Kabbalah*, two volumes. The second volume has about 1,000 passages from the Zohar, from Luria, from Cordovero, from major masters, which is basically this hidden tradition. So I'd say my last sentence is I would actually invite you, brother, in a radical way, gently, tenderly, with respect and honor, to actually what is it that you can actually take from your roots that you can actually integrate today? How can you actually transcend and include? How can you be totally beyond and actually include something, because whenever we dissociate, whenever I leave something totally behind and I've dissociated from it, it's still running me. When I differentiate instead of dissociate, paradoxically I take something with me.

Now, of course, the last thing you expected this morning is some rabbi telling you to take some Yiddishkeit with you. Oh my god, how did that happen? That's a surprise. Exactly, right? That's actually the process of actually opening. That's your surrender. In some sense, again, do I have permission to go one more sentence?

David Absolutely.

Marc Okay. So just watch for a second. In a certain sense you have been in domination mode. You've been in power mode. You've got your rocket boosters. You've gone out of the orbit. And probably for 10 great reasons, and I honor and I deeply bow to it, a thousand percent. Now, find the other side of the hieros gamos, and then actually receive that which you can receive. And the way you know that you want to receive something is because you're naturally defending the tradition, which means that you're connected to it. It means you're not dissociated from it. In other words, it's in you.

And when you find your way to actually be in surrender to that which you can surrender to and actually integrate, you'll actually become whole in a new way. So, Level 1: Chabad. Level 2: complete dissociation, which is beautiful. You have to. That's the only way you can lift out. Level 3: You integrate at a different level. There are always these three levels. They are always at play. One, I'm in, two, I'm out, three, I'm in-out. And finding that, I can promise you—if the only reason I did this is for you and I talk for this minute, it was worthwhile—I promise you, just you and me, when you find the in-out at Level 3, all sorts of things will begin to open up for you internally. So, deep bow and thank you, thank you for the beautiful inquiry. Amen. Anyone else? Any other Chabad Hasidism here?

[laughter]

Lucho I've got a quick question. So in breaking the moment open, can you speak about the relationship between intuition, energy, creativity, action and surrender?

Marc Yeah, absolutely. In other words, creativity and intuition only comes from surrender. In other words, creativity is precisely the hieros gamos, the fuck of surrender and domination, and creativity only comes from thrusting forward then completely giving up, which is why often when you're in the middle of trying to work something out and you're working hard, you're in thrusting forward, you're in control, power, then you go for a run. When you go for a run, you take a shower, you sleep on it, what does it mean to sleep on it? Meaning you're surrendered, you're giving up, you're completely shifting modes to move into receptivity.

What you're saying is so beautiful. It's precisely the movement between surrender and domination. It's the space. We call that the space between the cherubs. You've got the two cherubs. One is thrusting forward. The other is receiving. In the space between the cherubs creativity happens. Creativity always happens in the space in between. Whenever you're too far on the surrender side or you're too far on the domination side, nothing new is born. So you're precisely right. The muse, creativity, holy intuition explodes precisely in that space in between. That's exactly right. That's beautiful. Yeah, thank you. Does that address what you asked?

Lucho Yeah.

Marc Yeah, amen. Yeah, awesome. Anyone else? Any of the women in the room?

Student I have a question.

Marc Yes.

Student I had asked this of Kristina actually yesterday. We had some great discussion. But how far do you go into the descent for the purpose of ascent? So, in other words, what's that threshold that you reach in the descent, and can you go too far into the pain and the suffering of the descent that it becomes no longer useful?

Marc Right. Whether it's the sexual play of domination or submission or anything, how far down do you go? Even when you're in the descent, there's got to be a way to know that you can actually stop. Of course, in domination and submission they call it a safe word. That's exactly what it means. It means there's a place where you create a boundary, because you can't go too far, because you don't know how to get out. That's very important. It's why, by the way, parentheses, I always tell people to switch roles and never fetishize in one role, because what happens is you get stuck there. That's why it's always descent for the sake of the ascent. That's why you always have to ascend.

And I know quite a few people who are colleagues, friends, who when they were in their twenties and thirties played hard in the domination-submission world, and it actually left scars, because they never did the ascent. They would just play and then they would be done. That's not practice. That's just irresponsible. You've got to descend and then ascend, never complete it without ascent, and then also you've got to have an intuitive sense of how far you can or want to descend, and in that there's no rule. In that you've just got to find your way. You've got to find your way and know the place and laugh.

In other words, there's a reason why in the original biblical Hebrew the word *tzchok* which means laughter also means sexuality. It appears four times in the book of Genesis. There's got to be a sense of enormous intensity, and then at the bottom of the whole thing there's a delight, there's a laughter. You never lose access to the delight and to the laughter. Can you feel that? Yeah, amen.

So, thank you all, deepest blessing. Have the most, most awesome afternoon. You are held in the arms of the goddesses. Amen.