

Myths and Might of Kama Sutra

INTRODUCTION

There are many myths and theories about the Kama Sutra. People question whether or not its age old traditions are relevant in today's modern society.

This is an ancient text of thousands of year back, so it may be difficult for people living in the 21st century to relate to some of its content.

Some of the descriptions in the Kama Sutra can be read as somewhat ridiculous. But though some of these suggestions may seem ridiculous, they were designed for one purpose, "to bring harmony in marital life".

"Kama" is the name of the "God of Love" in the Hindu Mythology. Mallanaga Vatsyayana composed the original work of Kama Sutra somewhere about 2nd - 5th Century AD.

It is believed that Vatsyayana's real name was Mallanga and he belonged to 3rd century A.D. considering the fact that he displayed profound knowledge of geographic area comprising Avanti, Malava, Aparanta, Saurashtra, Maharashtra and Andhra he was most probably a resident of western or Southern India.

In Rig Veda there is a hymn titled as Naradiya Sukta which speaks of Kama and considered it as germ or essence of mind- *Manaso Retah*.

Atharva Veda, from where Ayurveda originated, says that Kama, that is love, passion, lust, desire, and was born first- *kamo jajne prathamam*. Ayurveda considers kama along with dharma, artha and moksha as base of healthy living. Health is not just the absence of illness and symptoms, but is an optimal state of harmonious well-being and a balanced way of life.

The four aims for a healthy life (Arogya) as per Ayurveda are "Dharma", "Artha", "Kama" and "Moksha". "Dharma" meaning social duty; "Artha" the collection of wealth for the family; "Kama" the physical love-making and "Moksha" the liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth and all of the suffering and limitation of worldly existence.

The Kama Sutra explores many important factors surrounding love and sex, from the preparation of the body for lovemaking, to the 69 positions of Kama, to the importance of after play.

In Kama Sutra, Maharshi Vatsyayana refers to Shakuntala story time and again narrating titillating stories, "Anurag Katha". In essence Vatsyayana wanted to say that to arose

passion, titillating stories should be narrated. Vatsyayana even named the romantic stories full of passion and love which could be used for this purpose.

Not much is known about Maharshi Vatsyayana and his time. In Panchtantra, he is referred to as a man of medicine, “Vaidyakashastrajna”. According to tradition Kama Shastra is a part of Vaidyakiya or medicine.

The tradition of writing treaties on the art of love dates back to several centuries, many precede the work of Vatsyayana.

"Kama Sutra" refers not only to the art of physical love making but also covers diverse topics such as the decoration of house, selection of wife, behavior between the husband and wife and a vast array of other subjects.

A lot of parallel references can be drawn between "Hatha-Yoga", "Tantra" and "Kamasutra". For example Vatsyayana cites Padamasana (lotus posture of yoga) as one of the position in Kama Sutra and a lot of other positions derived from Yoga. Yoga & Tantra teaches breath control. The combination of Tantra, Yoga and Kama Sutra enable the practitioner to unite with the ultimate cosmic energy, “The Shakti” which is symbolized by the Great Goddess.

The aim of Kama in Indian literature Kama Sutra deals with pleasure and love. It is a technical account of the social structure dealing with manners, morals, sexology, and culture in the third century. In this treatise, Vatsyayana describes Kama as one of the three values of life along with virtue (dharma) and wealth (artha). He states that much of the condemnation of sexual practices is due to abnormal expressions and perversions rather than due to a healthy concern for it. Vatsyayana also maintains that “sexual satisfaction, equally like food, is essential to the maintenance of bodily health” and “though evil effects may follow as a result of indulgence, passion has to be appeased” Therefore, he urges the study of the Kama literature in order to achieve the fullness of pleasure that humans solely can obtain in sexual union, which he believes can only result from following the procedure he describes.

Kama Traditions

In Indian mythology during the Vedic era, Kama was the cosmic desire, and the first-born of the primeval chaos that made all later creations possible. Later, Kama is depicted as a handsome youth who carried a bow entwined with flowers and shot arrows that produced love in their targets. In one Indian myth, the king of the gods, Indra ordered Kama to break the meditation of Siva, the master yogi and one of the major gods in the Indian pantheon, and cause him to fall in love with the goddess Parvati, daughter of the mountain king Himalaya and the incarnation of the supreme goddess, Kali-Durga-Sati. The supreme goddess was also Siva’s female counterpart and projected energy whom Indra wanted Siva to recognize and know in him. Kama was able to hit Siva with an arrow, but this blow infuriated Siva, and he burned Kama to ashes with the fire of his third eye. Kama then became Ananga, or “bodiless.”

Kamasutra in Context

The literature of ancient India deals with a great number of scientific questions. Treatises and discourses on the themes of Astronomy, Geometry, Phonetics, Metrics, Grammar, Medicine, Politics, Morals and Eros were written under the motto: if a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing well.

According to ancient Indian Hindu-Wisdom, the life of a human serves a three-pronged goal (Trivarga):

1. The striving for a good dharma (the complete collection of virtuous, religious works as a basis for Families, Civil Rights, Code of Behavior, Dharmashastra written by Manu).
2. The useful artha (material possessions, earthly well-being, Arthashastra written by Kautilya).
3. The pleasant kama (love and all its associated pleasures of the senses, Kamasutra, written by Vatsyayana).

According to the Kama Sutra, all of these aspects of the life of a human being should be of equal importance, without any of these spheres taking precedence over the others. In order to attain a fulfilled and meaningful life, the striving after one goal shouldn't hamper the striving after the others. Neglecting one of these areas leads to a diminished stability and to a dangerous imbalance in man. Practicing Dharma, Artha and Kama makes it possible to lead a meaningful and joyous life in this world and the next.

Sexuality and Erotic are seen as being important, integrated elements of the human existence - the same as eating - and apart from serving the sensual pleasures, also help mankind to propagate, just as eating keeps the body alive. The sensual pleasures of erotic and sexuality not only serve to increase the joy of life and maintain psychological balance, but also aid the further development of the mental-spiritual spheres. The senses are perceived as being a refinement of the physical on a higher plane of consciousness whereby, in conclusion, sexuality and erotic contain the secret of life within them.

The Origin of the Kama Sutra

According to old Indian sources, Prjapati, an abstract deity who, for a long time, was regarded as the god of creation, announced the ten thousand chapters of the Kama Sutra.

Mahadeva (the High-Deity Shiva) compiled the ten thousand chapters, which in turn were compressed into five hundred chapters by Shvetaketu, a teacher of philosophy and the son of Udalaka. Vatsyayana in the form of Sutras written in Sanskrit, the ancient Indian tongue, which even today is a living, academic language, transcribed the Kamasutra.

Sutras are directives or memory-jogs for adepts, which because they take the form of short, maxims in prose, which are difficult to understand without a commentary. We are dealing here most probably with predecessor of the teaching-books, which was handed down by word of mouth. The treatises of Shvetaketu on which the Kamasutra was based, have been lost. The translations from the Sanskrit, which we have today, refer to recognized commentaries made in later centuries.

Hardly anything is known about the author. His real name is supposed to be Mallinaga or Mrillana, Vatsyayana being his family name. At the close of the work this is what he writes about himself:

‘After reading and considering the works of Babhravya and other ancient authors, and thinking over the meaning of the rules given by them, this treatise was composed, according to the precepts of the Holy Writ, for the benefit of the world, by Vatsyayana, while leading the life of a religious student at Benares, and wholly engaged in the contemplation of the Deity. This work is not to be used merely as an instrument for satisfying our desires. A person acquainted with the true principles of this science, who preserves his Dharma (virtue or religious merit), his Artha (worldly wealth) and his Kama (pleasure or sensual gratification), and who has regard to the customs of the people, is sure to obtain the mastery over his senses. In short, an intelligent and knowing person attending to Dharma and Artha and also to Kama, without becoming the slave of his passions, will obtain success in everything that he may do.’

In Mahabharat, the king of Virat had appointed Vrihannala (Arjun in eunuch guise) to teach his daughter Uttara in the arts. But now a day feeling of motherhood is diminishing in the society. Bearing top priority of so called modern women. Sexual desires and their fulfillment come first for such so called modern women. How much will they be concerned about the future of their daughters, no one can say that. Hence, knowledge of Kamasutra is a must for women also. Only then they can teach their daughters to differentiate between constructive and destructive carnal desires. Such ability will surely save the young girls from the bad company. In the modern society, deadly sexual diseases like AIDS are lurking at every nook and corner. A reserved behaviour of young girls will certainly act as a shield against these hard to cure diseases.

TRAINING OF GIRLS IN KAMASUTRA

To teach the young girl the practical aspect of Kamasutra, total privacy in the first requisite. All the girls-irrespective of their intelligence level must at least learn the practical aspect of Kamasutra. There are in all, sixty-four different arts like singing, dancing, playing instruments etc. that comprise Kamasutra. Experienced maids, married friends, mothers, young sister etc. can be entrusted with the job of training young girls in Kamasutra.

NEED OF KAMASUTRA FOR WOMEN

It is imperative for a woman to gain substantial knowledge about Kamasutra before marriage. During childhood years a woman body is sufficiently flexible to learn the postures and all other arts related to Kamasutra. But in young age, they become too shy to respond to these postures. After marriage they are dependent on their husband, who expects that their wives would have enough training of Kamasutra. Because of their low level of receptivity, teaching a discipline to woman is forbidden. Hence it is useless to teach the woman about subtleties of Kamasutra. Only the practical aspect of it should be taught to them.

PROSTITUTES & WIDOWS

Kamasutra shows no objection over the company of prostitutes, nor puts only restrictions on this tendency. Many well to-do people seek the company of prostitutes. Kamasutra puts them both in the category of Nayika, pretty, young woman who is the centre of every one's attraction. But excess of everything is bad. Thanks to the company of prostitutes, even the wealthiest people lose their property; and even the greatest braves fall prey to inertia. In the present age, when the danger of deadly AIDS looms large, ignorant people seek the company of prostitutes and acquire host of deadly diseases. These people, in turn, transfer these diseases to their wives. And if the wife conceives the children are sure to have AIDS since birth. As all of us know, AIDS is an incurable disease, knowledge of Kamasutra may be sure way to combat this evil.

AVOID UNRELATED WOMEN

By unrelated women, it means here women other than your wife. Reproduction and hence continuation of the family is the basic object of copulation. Copulation with just any woman may give you a son (or an offspring). But the offspring you get by copulating with your wife will be truly yours. He or she will bear your name and receive respect and acceptance in the society. On the other hand, offspring produced through extramarital affair will bear the name of some one else's. Scriptures abound in the examples of such people, who had blind desire for unrelated women' and the fate they met ultimately. True gentlemen are not allured by the beauty of unrelated women. Desire for unrelated women is thus a social evil, which everyone must fight against. Maharshi had cited the examples of Keechaka and Ravana to show the faults of unjust desires for unrelated women.

The following are the arts to be studied, together with the Kama Sutra:

1. Singing.
2. Playing on musical instruments.
3. Dancing.
4. Union of dancing, singing, and playing instrumental music
5. Writing and drawing
6. Tattooing. Etc. etc.

Kama Sutra Love

Men learned in the humanities are of opinion that love is of four kinds:

1. Love acquired by continual habit
 2. Love resulting from the imagination
 3. Love resulting from belief
 4. Love resulting from the perception of external objects
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1. Love resulting from the constant and continual performance of some act is called love acquired by constant practice and habit, as for instance the love of sexual intercourse, the love of hunting, the love of drinking, the love of gambling, etc.
 2. Love which is felt for things to which we are not habituated, and which proceeds entirely from ideas, is called love resulting from imagination, as for instance that love which some men and women and eunuchs feel for the Auparishtaka or mouth congress, and that which is felt by all for such things as embracing, kissing, etc., etc.
 3. The love which is mutual on both sides, and proved to be true, when each looks upon the other as his or her very own, such is called love resulting from belief by the learned.
 4. The love resulting from the perception of external objects is quite evident and well known to the world because the pleasure which it affords is superior to the pleasure of the other kinds of love, which exists only for its sake.

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