D.H. Lawrence, a great genius, was blessed with a prophetic vision which he incorporated in his writings. Like most of his contemporaries, Lawrence was disenchanted with the ways of the modern world which tilts towards mechanism and materialism. David Daiches pertinently remarks: "He (Lawrence) soon came to feel the deadness of modern industrial civilisation, with mechanising of personality, the corruption of the will, and the dominance of sterile intellect over the authentic inward passions of men, which he saw as the inevitable accompaniment of modern life." In an urbanized, overpopulated, over-organised industrial society, there is no room for the healthy vital instinct to express itself in its natural way.

Lawrence thinks that not only scientific civilization but also Christianity have played a pernicious role in the suppression of man's sexual instincts which has resulted in psychological ills afflicting the modern mind. Salvation, believes Lawrence, can come through sexual grace. He rejects the intellectual and rational approach towards life and advocates sex as a door to the beyond.

Lawrence, through his writings, focuses attention on the problem of religious belief which suffered a great set-back in the early years of the present century. In the opening
passage of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) he states:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes, it is rather hard work; there is now no smooth road into the future; but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.  

Lawrence traces the roots of this tragedy to the loss of man's moorings in religion. The Victorian Values were rooted in the belief in materialism and progress. All old values including religious faith were in a state of dissolution after World War I. A.C. Ward rightly observes that "at no time since Constantine made it an official religion has Christianity been so seriously shaken as in the years since the War." The post-war writer found it difficult to accept Christianity as the source of values. Lawrence thinks that "if all men in the world lost their courage and their newness, the world would come to an end." Therefore, Lawrence not only rejects Christianity but also emphasises the need of some new ways to achieve oneness with God. He says:

I know the greatness of Christianity: it is a past greatness..........the Christian Venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a new venture towards God" (Phoenix-734).

Lawrence wants to seek out something new because in his opinion Christianity has little to offer man living in an age of chaos and dissolution. In a letter to Catherine Carswell he writes: "The great Christian tenet must be surpassed, there
must be something new." Hence Lawrence rejects Christianity and seems to be in search of a new philosophy.

Though the novels and poems of Lawrence are "pure passionate experience" they are nevertheless a means of exploration into the very nature and meaning of existence. They are an expression of his ontological necessity to discover a satisfactory philosophy that could be a substitute for the lost faith and give unity and shape to his artistic experience. Lawrence believes that "art is utterly dependent on philosophy ...... on a metaphysic" and that it is "a metaphysic that governs men at the time and is by all men more or less comprehended, and lived." Lawrence was an artist and he knew that "one has to be so terribly religious, to be an artist." In a letter to Garnett, Lawrence writes "I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience" (Letters-273).

With his keen religious insight, Lawrence shows a deep concern for the spiritual degeneration of modern life. He acknowledges the lack of a genuine relationship between man and God when he tells us that "We have lost Him" (Phoenix-727). He, however, conducts his search for the lost God, outside the Christian tradition. Lawrence has subtly perceived the religious heresy of "the Christian attitude towards self-transcendence. Eugene Goodheart rightly points out that, 'the essential animus of his work is aversion to Christianity'. In The Man Who Died Lawrence opines that Christ's mission to
convert man to the God of Love is an attempt 'to lay the compulsion of love on all men'. He says:

So he went on his way, and was alone. But the way of the world was past belief, as he saw the strange entanglement of passions and circumstance and compulsion everywhere, but always the dread insomnia compulsion...... It was the mania of cities and societies and hosts, to lay a compulsion upon a man, upon all men. For men and women alike are mad with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness.3

Lawrence's search for some form of transcendence, completely divorced from dogmatic religion, makes him try other means of Salvation. He observes that "never did God or Jesus say there was only one way of Salvation, for ever and ever. On the contrary, Jesus plainly indicated the changing of the way" (Phoenix, 729). He rejects the traditional religions, for they lay stress on renunciation of the worldly life and require a rigorous, self-denying ascetical discipline in order to debase and subordinate the flesh to the spirit for the attainment of salvation.

Lawrence was dissatisfied with Christianity because Christianity rejected the flesh as unholy and sinful and upheld the life of abstract spiritualism. When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire it inevitably made a distinction between the spiritual and the material realms, and became a purely spiritual religion. A purely spiritual religion is necessarily an idealistic religion completely divorced from the realities of life. Moreover, the Christian
revelation comes to us 'from outside' it is an historical affair. It conceives God to be so transcendent that he can no longer have any contact with man at all. He is thus reduced to a kind of abstract idea, which has no value for actual life.

Perhaps Lawrence's main emphasis is on the point that Christianity is rather defective in as much as it considers the ideal of spontaneous and natural living as a silly delusion. The Christian vision, splendid as it is, is incomplete. It fails satisfactorily to reconcile 'spirit' and 'matter'. It views spontaneity as irreligious and prescribes the most unnatural repression on the mind of a man. There has certainly been a tendency in Christianity to regard even 'marriage rather as a concession to human weakness than as anything good in itself'. It is easy to exaggerate this tendency, as Feuerbach does when he says: "Marriage in itself is, in the sense of perfected Christianity, a sin, or rather of weakness......"[10]

Christianity, like other dogmatic and traditional religions of the world, lays stress on renunciation of the worldly life and suppression of desire, but this suppression is beyond the capacity of the mass of people who live in an age whose tempo, to quote J.B. Coates, "is determined by machine."[11] Lawrence regrets that the "instinctive policy of Christianity towards all pagan evidence has been and is still to suppress it, destroy it, deny it."[12] Here, Lawrence seems
to believe in the ideal of life-worship. The life-worshipper lives in 'the eternal present.' Lawrence tries to mould our instincts and emotions into harmony with eternal bliss to arrive at truth, goodness and beauty through this body. He values the truth of the present reality as distinct from dogmatic or systematic morality. Thus, for him, the purpose of life is to live and one should live it fully and truly.

Lawrence rejects Christian ethics, for, he thinks that Christian ethics is not a way of life for this world. In his Gifford lectures, Professor W. Manceile Dixon raises the question, "What has Christianity to say of love between the sexes?" and answers: "Apprently not a word, or a derogatory word, The father have little pleasant to say to women or love-making. They commend and exalt celibacy Chrysostom spoke of a woman as a 'desirable calamity', and we are all familiar with St. Paul's remarks on marriage...... upon this transcendent theme with its endless ethical ramifications, a strange silence reigns in the Christian document."[1] Christianity never compromised with the world. It looked upon sex as something disgraceful and unclean. Lawrence perceives the life outside the Christian tradition. He says, "There was life outside the Church, There was much that the Church did not include."[4]

Though Lawrence rejects Christianity and other missionary religions, the main impulse that informs his principle writings is essentially religious. He tells his sister Ada
that there "still remains a God......... vast shimmering impulse which waves onwards towards some end."\textsuperscript{15} This end, as he suggests in his essay, "The Real Thing", is to get into "contact again with the living centre of the cosmos" (Poenix, 202). Though he affirms, "I don't like mysticism" (Fantasia, 23), yet he, time and again, talks about it. In the essay "The Reality of Peace", the experience he presents has all the major attributes of the mystical experience: "When we have become very still, when there is an inner silence............. we hear the rare, superfine whispering of the new direction............. after the pain and death of destruction in the old life comes the inward suggestion of fulfilment in the new" (Phoeniç, 670).

Lawrence however, believes that isolation of modern life, which he defines as "the cruel sense of finished aloneness" (LCL-150), can only be overcome in a transcendental experience when all differences between the ego and its objects disappear. His highest spiritual ideal remains salvation which Aldous Huxley defines as the deliverence "out of separate selfhood in time into eternity as realized in the unitive Knowledge of the Divine Ground."\textsuperscript{16} Lawrence shows a similar ideal, when he says:

\begin{quote}
\textbf{.......... the individual is only truly himself when he is unconscious of his own individuality, when he is unaware of his own isolation, when he is not split into objective and subjective, when there is no me and you, the me and it is a living continuum, as if all were connected by a living membrane.}
\end{quote}

It was perhaps this spiritual ideal that earned his Sri
Aurobindo's remark that Lawrence was "a Yogi who had missed his way and come into a European body to work out his difficulties."\(^1\)** Lawrence thinks that Salvation can be attained by divine grace and a seeker after salvation can experience it without the intervention of Christianity. V. DeSola Pinto rightly regards Lawrence as "the prophet of the free soul"\(^1\), and points out that Lawrence's creed is "the salvation of the individual soul: the dignity of man saved by divine grace without the intervention of priest and Church."\(^1\)

Lawrence as a prophet of body believes that in any satisfactory view of existence, human body is as important as the soul. He rejects Christianity for it neglects the physical side and acclaims the life of abstract spiritualism. Lawrence gives his own well-known philosophy of blood, with which he tries to reveal the importance of physical passions.

II

Lawrence has a great mistrust of science, which, with its emphasis on reason, destroy the 'intuitional and instinctive life of man'. An important aspect of Lawrence's thought projected in all his novels is his anti-intellectualism and his belief in what he called "blood-consciousness". He wanted to realise life through his physical sensations. Over-intellectualisation, he believed, leads to mere abstraction, and prevents a living contact with life.

Lawrence rejects intellectualism and recommends its
substitution by blood-consciousness. He had a violent hatred of the mechanised world of the twentieth century that stood for the suppression of one's instinctive response to life. He rejects abstract intellectualism as something fatal to life, something that deprives life of its thrill and gaiety and saps its vitality. He was a kind of blood-mystic. In a celebrated letter to his friend, Ernest Collings, Lawrence expresses his belief in the religion of blood:

17, January, 1913,
My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about Knowledge? All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without the fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not. I conceive a man's body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame, forever upright and flowing: and the intellect is just the light that is shed on the things around. And I am not much concerned with the things around.......... but with the mystery of the flame forever flowing, coming......... The real way of living is to answer to one's wants. Not 'I want to light up with my intelligence as many things as possible' but 'For the living of my full-flame - I want that liberty...... (Letters, 180).

This non-intellectualistic attitude towards life advocated so strongly by Lawrence need not surprise anybody. Lawrence passionately believed in the presence of the 'dark mystery' of life, and he felt that this 'dark mystery' cannot be known through the intellect. It is important to note here that the dark mysterious gods of Mexico fascinated him because they could be realised through blood-consciousness. The essence of his faith, observes Richard Church, is this:
The blood knows by intuition, instinctively. The blood also knows religiousity. The mind is non-religious.

Lawrence was disgusted with "the dominance of the sterile intellect over the authentic inward passion of man." Modern industrial civilisation with the advancement of science, believes Lawrence, mechanizes the personality of the modern man. Objective reality and scientific, facts had little meaning for him. He wanted them to be corroborated by the dictates of the blood. "It is the blood" observes Keith Sagar, "which draws the flame, the current, through the body, a fountain of life." Lawrence himself writes: You should have faith in life - Perhaps life itself is something bigger than intelligence.

Lawrence believes that man knows not only with the mind but also with a host of ganglia and 'solar plexus', and what he knows thereby constitutes real knowledge. Lawrence also affirms his faith in the 'dark mysterious gods' and rejects Christianity because the former could be realised through blood-consciousness while Christianity stood for the denial of flesh as something unholy. Lawrence's man has risen in the flesh. He writes:

For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower, beast and bird, the supreme triumph, is to be most vividly; most perfectly alive. ......... the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours and ours alone and ours, only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living incarnate consciousness.
In ‘Rainbow’, Lawrence presents before us the Brangwens, who are a satisfied and contented lot. They enjoy blood-intimacy. He writes:

Their life and interrelations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that open to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away.......... They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men......................... the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day (Rainbow-42).

The whole of this passage revolves round a half submerged metaphor of the coupling of earth and sky, the mating of human and divine. This passage suggests the blood-intimacy enjoyed by the men. But we are also told that the women were not satisfied with this blood-intimacy. They aspired to a ‘higher form of being’. These two ideas taken together project the novelist’s vision of life. Blood intimacy is an essential condition for fulfilment in life, but it is not adequate. One must work for a higher form of being.

The state of ‘higher form of being’, of ‘holy indifference’ or salvation, which is the highest ideal of spiritual life, can be attained either through contemplation and meditation or through ‘Dionysian Mysticism’. Lawrence believes that contemplation is not possible in the modern
industrialised and mechanised society. He regrets that the "great desire today is to deny the religious impulse altogether, or else to assert its absolute alienity from the sexual impulse" (*Fantasia* 19). Lawrence associates sex with spirituality and advocates sexual experience as a competent means of self-transcendence.

However, Lawrence's body-mysticism has not been unanimously hailed as a satisfactory philosophy of existence. For instance, John Middleton Murry rejects Lawrence's "Consummation" as sub-human and bestial, "a thing that our forefathers had rejected when they began to rise from the slime."\(^{25}\) Aldous Huxley, on the other hand, admires Lawrence for he was "always intensely aware of the mystery of the world and the mystery was always for him a numen, divine."\(^{26}\) Lawrence takes a sacramental view of sex and believes that the sexual experience is a potent means of liberation. He rejects the orthodox Christian view that Jesus is the only saviour: "There have been other Saviours, in other lands, at other times, with other messages............. All of them showing the............. ways of Salvation" (*Phoenix*-729).

It is interesting to examine Lawrence's body-mysticism from the spiritual angle. He advocates sexual mysticism as a valid means of spiritual sublimation.
Lawrence's work is saturated in sex. The White Peacock (1911), The Rainbow (1915), Women in Love (1926), Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), in all these novels he employs sexual themes. A superficial study of his novels might lead one to think that he was a sensualist and a voluptuary who took delight in the blatant depiction of sex. This depiction of sex was so frank and free in The Rainbow and Lady Chatterley's Lover that the English sensibility, bred mostly on the Victorian prudery of the nineteenth century, instinctively recoiled from it, Lawrence was condemned as a voluptuary or rather as a sex-maniac, and both these novels were proscribed as obscene and pornographic. But nothing could be farther from truth. T.S. Eliot, one of the harshest critics of Lawrence, writes in After Strange Gods that 'no one was less a sensualist than Lawrence'.

Lawrence believed that sex was a primary fact of life and an undeniable reality. He treated it with holy reverence that needed no unnatural secrecy and suppression about it. He believed in a kind of sex mysticism. In Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), Lawrence stated very clearly "I want men and women to be able to think sex, fully, completely, honestly, and cleanly." He believed sex to be a great life source and its consummation, a great spiritual experience that leads man towards the attainment of perfection. F.R. Leavis poits out that Lawrence instead of preaching any 'religion of sex' pleaded for the development of a 'full spontaneous being'. The
experience of sex is the experience of the infinite.

Sex is a natural activity like many other physical activities and it has a transcendental and esoteric side which can be fruitfully utilized to reveal to man the mystery of the universe. It seems to trace its roots in Hindu and Buddhist scripture - particularly in Tantric philosophy. Lawrence is of course, not only the writer to suggest spontaneous sexuality as a means of Salvation for modern man. His contemporary and admirer, Aldous Huxley also advocates in his last novel, Island, (1962) Maithuna as a means of spiritual experience. Since it is Lawrence who, of all the modern writers, speaks about the religious nature of sexual experience, Harry T. Moore rightly suggests the affinity between Lawrence and tantrism when he says that "Lawrence's God comes........... out of Indian Concept of the Chakra and the Kundalini."^[m]

Though Lawrence told Earl Brewster that he "always worshipped Shiva", there is no evidence to suggest that like Aldous Huxley, Lawrence ever came under the influence of Tantric Saivism or Tibetan Buddhism, for he rejected Buddha worship as "completely decadent" and came to the conviction that it is "ridiculous to look to the East for inspiration."^[n] Still there is a close similarity between Lawrence's 'Dionysian mysticism' and the Tantric cult because both emphasize the importance of the body for the attainment of spiritual peace, holding the view that bliss of sexual union
raises man and woman to "the height of religious experience" and a perfect apprehension of their own selves as well as "mystery of the whole cosmic process."  

The adherents of Tantrism claim that their philosophy constitutes the fifth Veda and that it is a path to Salvation for those who, because of their infirmities, are incapable of attaining the ascetic way. The Tantras "are composed of dialogues between Shiva, the personification of male power, and Shakti, the personification of female power. In these most basic texts, Shiva discourses on the Tantric origins of the universe, rituals, disciplines and the esoteric doctrines which view the changing, visible world and universe as a 'creative pleasure' of the Divine Mother, Kali; and the necessity of a ritualistic discipline to lead to the realization of the essential oneness of the self, the visible world, and the godhead." The tantric way, in Heinrich Zimmer opinion, forbids nothing, being open to all times of experience including those rejected by men of religion as sinful and profligate. Hence according to it, the sexual act is a reliable means to transcendental bliss. 

Lawrence believes that sexual love is capable of leading man to a mystical experience. From The Rainbow (1915) onwards, the authentic Lawrencian charaters are constantly striving towards a state of mystical experience for which Lawrence had several names........ "the unknown", "the creative beyond", etc. R.H. Poole is right in pointing out the with Lawrence
"the way to the central mystery lay through sensuous experience." It is through sex that Tom and Lydia discover a new fulfilment and a deep spiritual experience Lawrence suggests the authentic nature of their experience in the following words:

It was the entry into the another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their footsteps were lit up with discovery........... They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored. They had passed through the doorway into the further space where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission (Rainbow 133).

This moment of sudden enlightenment shatters the sense of isolatedness that each of them has been feeling and they are 'lit' together in one consummation that is really supreme. Tom and Lydia's experience is spontaneous, for Tom is a simple son of the soil whose mind is not obsessed by the abstractions of Christian theology, and Lydia is a woman to whom the outward form of religion was "a matter of indifference" (Rainbow 141) and "the English dogma never reached her" for the language was too foreign" (Rainbow 141). They are able to achieve, through each other, supreme consummation, a real fulfilment because they are fettered neither by theology nor the formal side of religion.
In the second generation, Will and Anna, through physical intimacy, reach "beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being......... they lay still, in each other's arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity" (Rainbow 185). But the experience of Will and Anna lacks much of the spontaneity of the experience as achieved by Tom and Lydia. The fact is that there is a great complexity due to the clash between Christian and sexual mysticism. Will had a certain spiritual passion for Christian Myths and legends but Anna just could not believe in them.

It is quite relevant to note that, the tension between Will and Anna seems to rise from the fact that Anna jeers at his dogmatic faith in Christianity. Will felt "ashamed of the ecstasy into which he could throw himself with these symbols......... he hated the lamb and the mystic pictures of the Eucharist........... she had thrown cold water on it" (Rainbow 203). After her mockery Will is filled with violent hatred for Anna. But when spontaneous love returns, it again brings peace and joy: "And ever and again the pure love came in sunbeams between them, when she was like a flower in the sun to him, so beautiful, so shining....... And ever and again, he appeared to her as the dreamed flame of power......... his face lit up, he seemed like an Annunciation to her........... She was subject to him as to
the Angel of the Presence (Rainbow 211). When Anna loved him, she felt the touch of the unknown. Lawrence writes: "she loved his ringing, eager voice and the touch of the unknown about him, his absolute simplicity" (Rainbow 212).

When Will and Anna are going to the Lincoln Cathedral, Will's heart leaps up as he behold the cathedral in the distance. He has a deep emotional attachment with the Church and feels some kind of mystical experience in the Cathedral: "There his soul remained at the apex of the arch, clinched in timeless ecstasy, consummated. And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from sky and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy. This was all, this was everything" (Rainbow 244). But Anna is not convinced. For a while, she is awed by the Cathedral. "Her soul too was carried forward to the altar, to the threshold of Eternity, in reverence and fear and joy" (Rainbow 245). However, while Will feels a sense of release there, she senses confinement. She looks beyond to a connection with something the arch can never attain. To her: "The altar was barren, its light gone out. God burned no more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there. She claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof" (Rainbow 245). So she rejects the Church.

As Anna and Will get engaged in a fierce battle of views, and Anna scoffs at his faith, Will's faith in the absolute values of the church is shattered. The cathedral is reduced
In disillusionment he realises that "the doorway was no doorway. It was too narrow, it was false...... He had lost his absolute" (Rainbow 248). When Will finds that he can no longer live in the 'darkness and mystery and abstraction of Churches', he ultimately submits to Anna and "to the spirit of her laws" (Rainbow 251). It appeared to Will that "he would be in hell until he came back to her" (Rainbow 252). "What was between him and his wife", according to Lawrence is "a great thing" (Rainbow 249).

Lawrence, through Will's submission to Anna and his rejection of traditional Mysticism, seems to justify his cult of spontaneous sexuality as a means of spiritual fulfilment. When Will's search for religious fulfilment fails, he falls back on sex. And ultimately he discovers physical beauty and through it he realises 'the supereme immortal, Absolute Beauty' in the body of woman:

He had always, all his life, had a secret dread of Absolute Beauty. It had always been like a fetish to him, something to fear really. For it was immoral and against Mankind. So he had turned to the Gothic form, which always asserted the broken desire of mankind in its pointed arches, escaping the rolling, absolute beauty of the round arch.

But now he had given way, and with infinite sensual violence gave himself to the realisation of this supereme, immortal. Absolute beauty, in the body of woman. It seemed to him, that it came to being in the body of woman under his touch (Rainbow 280).
To Lawrence, the primary purpose of the sexual act is not having children but it leads us to the unknown. Lawrence says, "It is so arranged that the very act which carries us out into the unknown shall probably deposit seed for security to be left behind. But the act, called the sexual act, is not for the depositing of the seed. It is for leaping off into the unknown....." (Phoenix 441). In this transcendent view of sex, Lawrence may be compared to Kierkegaard who believes that 'And God the Father, the Inscrutable, the Unknowable, we know in the flesh, in Woman'.

In the third generation of the Brangewens, Ursula Brangwen as she enters womanhood, realises that "The religion which had been another world for her - now fell away from reality" (Rainbow 328). She considers it "a tale, a myth, an illusion which, however much one might assert it to be true as historical fact, one knew was not true" (Rainbow 328). She rejects Christianity as she feels that "there was something unclean and degrading" (Rainbow 330). In order to bear the burden of her life she longs to find shelter and security in the male breast. She craves "for the breast of man where she should have refuge and bliss for ever. All her senses quivered with passionate yearning" (Rainbow 331). She yearned to meet others, yet deep at the bottom of her heart, there was always a "Childish antagonism of distrust". She thought she loved everybody and believed in everybody. But because she could not love herself nor believe in herself, she mistrusted everybody" (Rainbow 333).
Ursula Brangwen realises that the material world could not be reconciled with the world of religion, the world of the spirit. And, hence, she rejects the traditional religion as a means of salvation. It is through Skrebensky that she passes away "as on a dark wind, far far away into the pristine darkness of paradise, into the original immortality. She enters the dark fields of immortality" (Rainbow 502). She experiences "as if she had received another nature. She belonged to the eternal, changeless place into which they had leapt together" (Rainbow 502). They are both happy and calm. It seems that they have attained a state of perfection that lies beyond all "mortal conditions" (Rainbow 504).

Ursula and Skrebensky, however, cannot achieve this perfection for long. Their union under the moonlight fails, for Skrebensky is an incomplete lover. David Daiches observes rightly that he is "too rigid, too mechanical, too little of a whole personality, ever to be able to achieve a proper relationship with a woman." This failure is presented by love-making under the moon. As she lay motionless looking at the Moon, "He came direct to her, without preliminaries, she held him pinned down at the chest, awful. The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible. It lasted till it was agony to his soul, till he succumbed, till he gave way as if dead, and lay with his face buried, partly in her hair, partly in the sand, motionless as if he would be motionless now for ever......... he only wanted to be buried in the goodly darkness, only that and no more" (Rainbow 532). Here the
important thing is to note is that there is something wrong with sex as practised here. This wrong kind of love making is not only 'the failure of love but also the failure of Sexual technique'. Ursula "sees it as a proof of failure and loss: a tear trickles from her eye." In a dull manner she says, "It is finished. It has been a failure" (Rainbow 534). "They were like two dead people who dare not recognise, dare not see each other" (Rainbow 533).

Ursula Brengwen desires a state of "holy indifference" to worldly attachments: "If she could but extricate herself, if she could but disengage herself from feeling, from her body, from all the vast encumbrances of the world that was in contact with her ....... all her acquaintance" (Rainbow-545). In an ache of utter weariness, she cried, "I must break out of it, like a nut from its shell which is an unreality". It is through this agony that she ultimately realises that "she was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded ...... all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time" (Rainbow-545). This realisation makes her soul feel "the new air of a new world" and leads her to attain a peace which is "very deep and enriching" (Rainbow-546).

Towards the end of the novel Ursula seems to attain a state of mystical consciousness by sundering all worldly ties:
"It was the unknown, the unexplored, the undiscovered upon whose shore she had landed, alone, after crossing the void, the darkness which washed the New World and the Old" (Rainbow-546). And then she hopefully waits for the man who "would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged" (Rainbow-547). The vision of the rainbow holds out to her the hope of the future regeneration of the dead, corrupt world. "She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the overarching heaven" (Rainbow-548).

It is in *Women in Love* (1921) that Ursula finds in Birkin a perfect lover, : "One of the sons of God, the strange inhuman sons of God who are in the beginning" Ursula and Birkin seem to be an ideal pair whose unison leads to some kind of mystical experience : "But it isn't selfish at all. Because I don't know what I want of you, I deliver myself over to the unknown, in coming to you, I am without reserves or defences, stripped entirely, into the unknown............. What I want is a strange conjunction with you - not meeting and mingling; .... being but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings: as the stars balance each other" (WL-138, 139). This actual communion leads Birkin to a peace, which is completely away from the world of tension : "He put his arms round her, and she hid her face on his shoulder. It was peace, just simple peace, as he stood folding her quietly there on the open lane. It was peace at last. The old, detestable world
of tension had passed away at last, his soul was strong and at ease (WL-302). Keith Sagar rightly maintains that "Birkin has now acquired the faith to believe that they can create their own new world. Ursula feels that she has already reached her destination, fulfilled her purposes."³⁸

In a letter to Blanche Jennings, Lawrence wrote, "somehow, I think we come into knowledge (unconscious) of the most vital parts of the cosmos, through touching things" (Letters-30). Perhaps it is through this tender touching that Ursula and Birkin become aware of the ultimate mystery that surrounds our existence:

She closed her hands over the full rounded body of his loins...... she seemed to touch the quick of the mystery of darkness that was bodily him...... It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being, the marvellous fullness of immediate gratification, overwhelming, outflooding from the source of the deepest life force........ There were strange fountains of his body, more mysterious and potent than any she had imagined or know, more satisfying, ah, finally, mystically - physically satisfying. She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source" (WL-353-354).

Lawrence affirms his full faith in phallic consciousness and its greatness. He himself tells us in a letter that he sincerely believes in restoring "the phallic consciousness, into our lives" for it is "the source of all real beauty and all real greatness (Letters-1046). Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) is a novel about a phallic rather than sexual regeneration, for, "the phallus is only the great symbol of
godly vitality in a man, and of immediate contact...... in relationship to the rhythmic cosmos."^39 Lawrence believes that "The phallus is a great sacred image; it represents a deep, deep life which has been denied in us, and still is denied" (Letters-967). In *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence writes that "the phallus is the connecting link between the two rivers that establishes the two streams in a oneness ...... From it all things human spring, children and beauty and well-made things; all the true creations of humanity. And all we know of the will of God is that He wishes this oneness to take place, fulfilled over a life time, this oneness within the great dual blood-stream of humanity" (L.CL-349-350). Tommy Dukes, a minor character in this novel, tells Connie that "Civilization is going to fall............... going down the bottomless pit, down the chasm", and the "only bridge across the chasm will be the Phallus" (LCL-77).

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, we find Connie and Mellors, both disillusioned with their milieu and suffering from aloofness and forlornness. Connie recognizes his "aloneness" when she see him washing himself "utterly unaware....... subtle as a weasel playing with water and utterly alone" and considers him "a creature that lives alone, and inwardly alone". As far her, she felt some kind of aloneness that "lay inside her" (LCL-68-69). Her mind is filled with the "agony of her own female forlornness" (LCL-118). Mellors approaches her and "puts her hand out" to a woman who is in need of love and touches her with a "blind instinctive caress". Both Connie
and Mellors try to seek joy and peace through sexual experience.

In the sexual act Mellor's entry into Connie brings "the moment of pure peace for him" (LCL-120) and to Connie, Mellor's entry comes "with a strange slow thrust of peace ................. a ponderous, primordial tenderness, such as made the world in the beginning (LCL-181). This experience filled her 'with a new life' and made her feel "as if she was sinking deep, deep to the centre of all womanhood and the sleep of creation" (LCL-141). "The sense of his flesh touching her, his very stickiness upon her, was dear to her, and in a sense holy" (LCL-142). Connie has found the perfect lover, an ideal mate in Mellors : "And now she touched him and it was the sons of God with the daughters of men" (LCL-182).

Lawrence like the tantric sees 'the unspeakable beauty' in touching the human body to achieve perfection, oneness with God. Lawrence's view of the human body has been admirably summed up by Keith Sagar: God head is incarnate in the human body 'alive and potent in the flesh', beautiful. It plays not only in eyes and faces and limbs, but in buttocks and balls - 'root of all that is lovely, the primeval root of all full beauty."40 Lawrence writes, "The unspeakable beauty to the touch of the warm, living buttocks! The life within life, the sheer warm, potent loveliness (LCL-182)." When Mellor and Connie worship each other's procreative organs by placing flowers on it in chapter XV, they come near the tantric practice of the worship of the Yoni and the Lingam. Connie,
after her satisfying experience with Mellors becomes a staunch believer in the life of the body: "I believe the life of the body is greater reality than the life of the mind" (LCL-245).

Lawrence seems to put his prophecy in the mouth of Connie: "But now the body is coming really to life, it is really rising from the tomb. And it will be lovely life in the lovely universe, the life of the human body" (LCL-245). Connie becomes a spokesman of Lawrentian Vitalism and seems to echo Norman O. Brown's prophecy: "The consciousness strong enough to endure full life would be no longer Apollonian but Dionysian - consciousness which does not deserve the limit, but overflows: Consciousness which does not negate any more." To quote Keith Sagar again "The word 'physical' is retained as a protect against the idea that consciousness can ever be independent of the body, which is the only vehicle for life, and the only incarnation for the soul."

Lawrence thinks that sexual experience can be a means of salvation. In a letter to Connie, Mellors affirms his faith in the efficacy of sexual experience as a means of salvation, when he tells her, "It's my Pentecost, the forked flame between me and you. The old Pentecost isn't quite right. Me and God is a bit uppish somehow. But the little forked flame between me and you: there you are. That's what I abide by, and will abide by ......." (LCL-316). Hence both Connie and Mellors by meeting and mating, are not escaping into a dream world. They are refreshing themselves in the living stream of
desire "In a kind of accomplished innocence, not shut outside of the natural paradise."\(^4\)

**IV**

Lawrence's advocacy of sexual experience as a means of self-transcendence is as good a way of attaining salvation as the other paths. His emphasis that sex is a door to the "beyond" seems to be quite in consonance with the Tantric way to self-awareness or enlightenment. In Tantrism which is essentially a religious discipline, 'the ultimate goal of the Tantric is the realisation of **Mahasukha** in the form of perfect enlightenment.' In order to achieve this goal the tantric adopts a path which is in harmony with the natural urges of the body and entails no "unnatural strain of continual repression."\(^4\)

**Maithuna** is as difficult to practise as **Karma yoga**, **Bhakti marga** or **Jnan marga**. The fact is that **Maithuna** has the support of a strict discipline in 'self-naughting' as any other means of Salvation. An ordinary man, who has no proper training, cannot seek integration through sexual union. He can seek enlightenment only when his ego is annihilated and mind prepared for the sacred, ritual. This sexo-yogic discipline is perhaps more difficult than even contemplation. Moreover, this tantric ritual is meant only for the Chosen few, who have been declared fit for it on the basis of prolonged period of training and discipline unless the **Guru** approves the **Sadak's** (novice) intentions and will to experience the divine through...
the Yoni, which is the embodiment of Sakti, he will not be initiated into the mysteries of the cult.... According to Herbert V. Guenther, the Shakt (worshipper of Sakti) during his bhoga (sexual union) with a woman must keep his mind fixed on the transcendental goal. The swerving of his Jewel like mind will create insur-mountable hurdles and nullify his endeavours, reducing a sacred ritual to the copulation of beasts. "Maithuna is thus a kind of yoga which demands arduous mental and moral discipline."

Maithuna does not simply mean free sexual love as has been erroneously understood by many Western writers. John Passmore, in this context, ironically remarks: "The road to paradise, one might conclude, is simple: It does not involve a prolonged agony through a night of the soul; all one need do is to take off one's pants." However, he forgets that maithuna is meant only for the Vira (the heroic man) who has perfect control over his passions and enjoys bhoga as the manifestation of Siva Sakti union. The sexual experience at the ordinary level may provide a few moments of intense pleasure, but it cannot bring the unmatched bliss which transports man into region beyond time and space."

The genuine religious experience - whether induced through contemplation or maithuna, brings a permanent change in human personality. Man enjoys a state of supreme bliss and becomes indifferent to worldly gains and losses, joy and sorrow. With such experience man can achieve salvation, a
state of perfect quietude which Indian scriptures refer to as Shanti. Sir John Woodroffe rightly observes that "if sexual intercourse is done with feeling (Bhava) and under the conditions prescribed," it may become "the instrument of his uplift to a point at which such ritual is no longer necessary and is surpassed." Aldous Huxley also believes that Maithuna enables man to find his true identity.

Though spiritual experience brings saintliness, the highest achievement of spiritual life, no character in Lawrence's fiction emerges as a person with saintly attributes. He shows his concern with a deepening exploration of the nature of man, of reality leading to sexo-yogic discipline of total acceptance and of total awareness. The simple sexual act purely at the animal level can never be a means of liberation. This brutish act of spontaneous sexuality, which Lawrence repeatedly emphasises, is far away from the concept of maithuna which has as its basis a metaphysical and ethical system of thought. Graham Hough rightly attributes Lawrence's failure to the fact that he was "too isolated from any really nourishing stream of thought in his own day" and the prophet can only utter his message when his problems have been transcended as Lawrence's never were. Martin Turnell also observes that Lawrence's quest for "some kind of transcendental experience" ended in failure for he "looked for something absolute in a realm where in the nature of things, it could not exist."
Though his search for salvation through sexual experience fails, Lawrence as a prophet of body mysticism, emphasises the truth that in any search for salvation human body is as important as the spirit. G.B. McK Henery avers: "it is through sexual relationships that man is most directly confronted with the universe, Nature, the whole unknown other life beyond his egoistic consciousness - but only if he is prepared to trust himself." Lawrence believes firmly, as it appears, that if sex is treated in reverential terms it can become a potent means of Salvation.
Notes and References


35. *ibid*, p.165.

36. *ibid*


