GENERAL

christopher hitchens the missionary position

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Unpacking Christopher Hitchens and the Missionary Position: A Curious Intersection of Intellect and Intimacy

When most people think of Christopher Hitchens, the name conjures images of razor sharp wit, fearless polemics, and a lifetime of public debate. He was a writer who never shied away from the hard questions of faith, politics, and morality. Yet, as provocative as his public persona was, Hitchens also lived a private life that, like his public one, was guided by curiosity and a willingness to confront uncomfortable topics. Among the many facets of human experience that Hitchens examined, sexuality—and the ways we express it—offered a fertile ground for both critique and reflection.

In this article, we explore the curious intersection between Christopher Hitchens' intellectual legacy and one of the most common sexual positions in human history: the missionary position. While the phrase "christopher hitchens the missionary position" may sound like an odd pairing, it opens a window onto how a public intellectual might view the intimate rituals that shape our everyday lives. We'll examine Hitchens' broader views on sexuality, the cultural significance of the missionary position, and how the two worlds might overlap in unexpected ways.

1. Christopher Hitchens – The Intellectual Portrait

1.1 Early Life and Formative Years

Born in Portsmouth, England, in 1949, Christopher Hitchens grew up in a family that valued education and debate. His early exposure to literature, history, and politics laid the groundwork for a career that would span journalism, essay writing, and book publishing. By the time he moved to the United States in the early 1980s, Hitchens had already begun to establish himself as a formidable critic of organized religion and a champion of secular humanism.

1.2 Signature Works and Themes

Hitchens' bibliography is extensive, with titles such as *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa, the Catholic Church, and the World She Saved* (1995) and *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*(2007). While the former focuses on religious critique, the latter showcases his broader skepticism toward dogmatic belief systems. A recurring theme in his work is the tension between faith and reason, tradition and progress, and the role of the individual in society.

1.3 Style and Influence

Hitchens was known for his articulate prose, his fearless use of irony, and his willingness to engage in direct, often heated, dialogue with opponents. His debates—whether on television, in print, or at public forums—were marked by a blend of erudition and humor that made complex ideas accessible to a broad audience. This style would later prove instrumental in how he approached topics beyond politics and religion, including the intimate realms of human sexuality.

2. Hitchens on Sexuality and Relationships

2.1 A Pragmatic View of Human Desire

Hitchens approached sexuality with the same analytical rigor he applied to other subjects. He saw it as a natural,

biological aspect of human life that should be understood through science, history, and philosophy. In essays such as “The Ethics of Sexuality” and his commentary on the *New York Times*, he argued that moral judgments about sex should be grounded in empathy and reason rather than religious doctrine.

2.2 Critiques of Moralizing Sex

Hitchens was a vocal critic of moralizing attitudes toward sex that he believed were rooted in outdated religious teachings. He challenged the idea that certain sexual practices were inherently “sinful,” arguing instead that consensual adult relationships are a matter of personal choice and that moral frameworks should evolve with cultural shifts. This perspective set the stage for a nuanced discussion of sexual positions, including the missionary position, as part of broader human intimacy.

2.3 Personal Anecdotes and Public Statements

While Hitchens rarely spoke in detail about his own private life, he occasionally made remarks about relationships and intimacy that reflected his broader worldview. In a 2001 interview, he stated that “sexuality is a natural part of life, and any attempt to shame it is a failure of reason.” These comments, though brief, hint at a perspective that would be both critical and appreciative of the ways in which people express affection and desire.

3. The Missionary Position – A Brief Overview

3.1 Definition and Historical Context

The missionary position is a widely recognized sexual posture in which two partners lie face to face, with one partner lying on top. It is often considered a “classic” position due to its prevalence in literature, film, and cultural discourse. Historically, it has been associated with traditional values, yet it remains a staple in contemporary sexual practices.

3.2 Cultural Significance

Because the missionary position is frequently depicted in mainstream media, it has acquired a cultural shorthand for intimacy and romance. Its portrayal ranges from wholesome to erotic, depending on the context. This duality makes it an interesting subject for analysis, especially when viewed through the lens of a thinker like Hitchens who dissected cultural symbols with a critical eye.

3.3 A Non Graphic Description

In non graphic terms, the missionary position involves partners aligning themselves so that they face each other while the partner on top engages in a synchronized, mutual experience. The posture encourages eye contact and physical closeness, fostering a sense of connection that many find emotionally and physically satisfying.

4. Hitchens’ Perspective on Human Intimacy

4.1 The Role of Intimacy in Human Flourishing

Hitchens often argued that intimacy—whether intellectual, emotional, or physical—is essential to human flourishing. In his book *Letters to a Young Friend*, he wrote that “the capacity to connect with another person is one of the most profound expressions of our humanity.” This belief underscores the idea that sexual intimacy, including the missionary position, can serve as a conduit for deeper human connection.

4.2 Sexuality as a Form of Reasoned Choice

In his essays, Hitchens posited that sexual preferences should be viewed through a lens of reasoned choice rather than moral condemnation. He suggested that individuals should approach sexual relationships with the same critical thinking they apply to political or philosophical debates. In this sense, the missionary position is simply one

of many options available to consenting adults seeking intimacy.

4.3 The Missionary Position in Hitchens' Analytical Framework

While Hitchens did not explicitly discuss the missionary position

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