



## Rebirth of the Lover

This is the text of an article that appeared in the British magazine *Kindred spirit* in two parts in the spring and summer issues of 1999.

This is a time of identity crisis for many men. Much has been written about changing roles and work patterns; many questions have arisen. Men are confused about masculinity and sexuality; about what they themselves, as well as the women in their lives, want and need in relation to love and love making. Contemporary relationships seem fraught with fear, with deep emotional and sexual conflicts. In the first of a two part article Andy Portman discusses the healing and evolution of male sexuality.

Throughout the last four thousand years in patriarchal societies men have been subjected to indoctrination about what it is to be a 'real man'. A real man will be tough, strong, able to carry out orders, able to serve the elites. He will be able to resist the tides of nature and of emotions and be in control. Adaptation, change and growth are regarded as feminine traits, signs of 'weakness' that many men still resist.

It wasn't always like this. Our far history - the time we know of mostly through myths and legends. Feminist historians have done much valuable work in uncovering and more clearly interpreting the myths and legends of our cultural ancestors. Some of the oldest myths are about the Goddess and her son/lover. This is told in different versions around the world. The Goddess has many names, many forms: she is the feminine force, the source of life, the mother of all. In our ancestral culture, the Goddess's son/lover was the horned god, Pan, Cernunnos or Dionysus, the Green Man, lord of the woods. He was the fertile, potent masculine principle who as lover of the Goddess unites with her in sacred sexual union and so the endless cycles of life are continued. The energy of the horned god, or Pan, was vast, earthy and powerful. He was the laughing, free, rejoicing spirit of the wild. This was the male that loves every aspect of woman, seeing the divine goddess within each woman, igniting the flame of passion within her, so she flows with the ecstasy of life and sexual energy in her body. In that merging of body and divine energy, in the sacred marriage, Pan, the masculine principle, is reunited with his own origin, the source of life in the Goddess. It is a mutual love and a divine unfolding. By entering into this love, mortals become as god and goddess, and we discover our origin.

Then at different times, in different places, the myths all change and the great Goddess became an evil enemy, the nature that was against mankind, that had to be conquered. In many myths world wide, the goddess is depicted as evil and terrible 'monster', dragon or serpent. In many she is brutally killed and torn asunder, and her son lover destroyed, vilified or demonised. In the west the horned god, Pan, became the devil, the sexual debauched demon of woodland ritual and magic who became the master of hell, to be feared by all 'good' souls. Both the Goddess and her lover, the potent, empowered female and male, were a threat to the newly advancing hierarchal order and had to be controlled.

These myths tell the story of the overthrow of the ancient Goddess based cultures by patriarchally based ones who followed male gods and eventually the one male God. These mythologies are based on a polarisation of light and dark, good and evil, male and female. This was so different from the earlier understandings of the goddess centred cultures which honoured all aspects of life as part of the whole. Polarisation was the conceptual foundation of the subsequent fragmentary ways of living that developed from this time on.

### The rise of the patriarchy

The myths from western cultures tell the story of how from around four thousand years ago the goddess centred cultures of old Europe were affected by migrating nomadic tribes. These tribes imposed their own patriarchal customs, often violently, onto the agricultural people. From then onwards, rapidly in some places, and over a long period of time in others, a ruling patriarchally based elite took power in virtually all the previously goddess centred communities.

The destruction of goddess honouring cultures by this ruling elite meant the disempowerment of the people within them. The institution of patriarchy could not tolerate the magical knowledge, nor the procreative and sexual power that women had. It sought to oust women from the central position they held in society. As well as removing their rights, women were increasingly sexually suppressed. Men within these cultures were also traumatised and suppressed and both men and women were brought into virtual and actual slavery. The patriarchs wanted control over the land, its resources and peoples to

consolidate their power.

Myths about the male gods creating women and world show how the male elites took power. The omnipotence of the Father was substituted for that of the Mother; it was he that could procreate by insemination of matter and life as represented by nature. The female became the lesser being, the dangerous, the sinister, to be formed, controlled and dominated by 'God' and his agents on Earth - men. Patriarchy can be seen as a reaction to the seemingly all powerful feminine. There was very likely an envy in men of women's life giving power. The elite that took power was fuelled by resentment against the feminine, determined to take control over women and nature.

Patriarchal conditioning is based on separation and polarisation from the female. Women became the other, the lesser. Having claimed his superiority, the male then had to protect himself from the female so as not to be tainted by her femininity lest he lose his manhood, his differentiation, his position, and identity. Because of this, the patriarchal male is permanently on the defensive against the feminine in order to resist a union with her, through which he could lose his 'male' identity and the approval of society with it. This defensiveness and separation is required by patriarchal society and involves the denial of a man's deep connection to life and to the source of his being. This forced separation leads to fragmentation of the heart and soul, cutting boy and then man off from his own feeling nature. In the west, this cultural conditioning has been deeply and insidiously entrenched, passed on from generation to generation.

## A climate of sexual fear

Much of patriarchal mythology is full of fear of sexuality, especially women's sexuality. In the Adam and Eve myth for instance, both are ashamed of their genitals and Eve's sexuality is blamed for tempting Adam and having him thrown out of paradise. Many patriarchal institutions, political and religious, used such myths as a rationale for their oppressive misogyny and male primacy. Our patriarchal ancestors wanted to be in control. They didn't want to be helpless in the the cycles of life and death of the great Goddess nor immersed in her cycles of transformation. By making themselves separate from these cycles they wanted to make their ego's, their personalities immortal in heaven. Love with a woman brings a man face to face with death of the imposed self image (separate ego) and too close to being consumed in the inter-connectedness of all things. Therefore, to a patriarch, love, sex and the female needed to be resisted and controlled. He feared being lost in the massive sexual surges of the wild female, the enveloping energy of creation being too threatening for the fragile evolving ego identity.

When the horned god was vilified and made into the devil, man's wild and empowered sexual nature were both demonised and then suppressed and sanitised, as was woman's. The living Pan archetype was then equally suppressed and hounded out of men, as Goddess like qualities were hounded out of women. High value was placed on celibacy, abstention and limited sensual arousal. The powerful, sexual potency of Pan almost died. The lover of the goddess in woman was all but lost, and the potential for sacred and empowering union between male and female, virtually crushed.

This sexual suppression developed as patriarchy progressed. Much violence and intimidation was used to keep the 'engulfing monster' of sexuality, both male and especially female, at a distance. This led to a culmination of sexual repression in Victorian times. By then, both male and female sexuality were diminished to a shadow of of their potential. In 1961 an anthropological study of the Irish island of Inis Beag revealed what 19th century Christian patriarchal patterns in sexual life were like. Female orgasm was unknown. Women were trained to endure rather than enjoy sex. Men habitually ejaculated within seconds. Man and wife never saw each other naked. This repression resulted in quarrelsomeness, alcoholism, violence and frequent mental disturbances. There was also no contraception or abortion, resulting in often enforced multiple childbirth. This is how people lived in general, all over the Christianised world in the 19th century.

The suppression of sexuality created deep confusion within, as an essential part of the self was rejected. As sexuality was judged as sinful and evil, so what is fundamental to life became wrong. Thus a major root cause of fragmentation came about. Both men and women came to judge and fear their sexuality. Women became the evil temptresses that men have to resist. In this confusion, shame and guilt, men felt themselves justified in the continued suppression of women. In a further turn of attitudes, women often came to view men's sexuality as a low and repulsive thing that one had to put up with for reproduction. With all the ignorance and guilt in patriarchal male sexuality, this was probably the case most of the time.

Patriarchal religion, with its remote and polarised god, has separated sexuality from spirituality, spirituality from body, and mind from heart. This has led to a devaluing of the physical processes and cycles of life, the sexual processes of reproduction, the life force in nature, and our physical bodies. In modern times, after the god had been dropped from main stream culture, the result was the dominant materialistic, reductionist view of life, which denies the spiritual immanence in all things and thus the life of the soul. What has resulted from thousands of years of patriarchy has not been the glorification of the male and his patriarchal god but his weakening through loss of the horned god's potency and direct spiritual connection.

Cut off from full flow of sexual energy, cut off from his true feeling nature, his feminine side, man has become fragmented and unbalanced. The male does not mature in full potency, wisdom, wholeness and balance but in the main stays as a boy, a lad, who unquestioningly follows so called 'male' ways, unable to truly love a woman, or be in an empowered and empowering relationship with her.

## The power of the lover-god

The horned god actually represents the fully realised divine male with his kundalini energy having risen to his crown, connecting his sexuality with his spirituality bringing full power and self realisation. This level of male empowerment was considered dangerous, evil, destructive to the fabric of patriarchal society and family. So instead of being a lover, men were taught to fear women and fear their own capacity for spiritual self realisation and empowerment through the flow of their own sexual energy. This has driven many men into fragmentation and separation from life in and around them, and it has driven a wedge between male and female and severely affected our capacity to open in love together, or often love at all. The inner fragmentation has led to emotional isolation, alienation, sexual fragmentation and relationships breaking down, as well as the perpetuation of destructive attitudes towards life. This cultural conditioning is so deeply rooted that it lives on subconsciously in many of us. and healing still needs to be done at the deepest of levels.

We are in a process of great change as we start to release ourselves from the old conditioning and bring our children up differently. But there is much to do because although on the surface now many have become liberated from old repressive attitudes, in reality we now live with a mass schizophrenia around sex. Our surface minds and egos may say that we are at ease with it, but the shame many people have about their bodies or sexuality tell another story. Such shame robs both men and women of the natural ability to be really present with a partner in intimate and truly erotic flow of love. and join in the natural erotic flow that spontaneously happens between lovers. What I am concerned with here is helping men root out where the past lives on unconsciously in them so they can truly set themselves free of the patterns that have continued for so long and reclaim a truly empowered and authentic sexuality and ability to love and be loved.

## Finding an authentic male sexuality

If we are to transform our sexual energy into the potentially immense reservoir of spiritual energy that it can be, we need to make some changes in the way we act sexually. We need to relearn how to relate and share love and sex with our partners in a much deeper and more fulfilling way than our society has equipped us for. We can then wake up and come alive with that powerful and potent masculinity that has become but a dim memory from distant history before the process of patriarchal civilisation.

Male sexuality has become orientated to releasing tension and having pleasure, often also with an element of increasing self esteem through a conquest. There is also often an element of getting emotional security from being allowed in close with our partners and given what we want. The misogynist male culture that fears women and their sexual energy, has objectified them and consequently created prostitution and pornography as an outlet for sexual tension. Pornography has become the main means of transmitting this culture of objectification and usage. What many men seek from sex has been at least partially shaped by our exposure to pornography as boys. It gave us a narrow view of sexuality, designed to make us addicted to release with visual titillation. This has reduced men's' sexuality to being motivated by the neurotic impulse to be rid of sexual energy and has prevented the majority of men from becoming aware of it as a sacred force running through their beings.

The big surprise for most of us as we grow up into men is that women, as they mature, find the narrowness and self seeking nature of male sexual motives a turn off, even when we have taken on board that we should give women pleasure as a fair exchange. Of course it is not that our partners don't experience sexual needs and desires, but for them there usually needs to be more than a mutual relief and pleasure. Love is the issue here. Do you want sex to get sexual pleasure and release, or do you want it to be a deep and fulfilling expression of your love together that takes you ever deeper into that love? If a man only wants the former then the one night stand, prostitutes, pornography or other forms of self gratifying sex perhaps can give him it, but he will stay caught in the addictive trap that western male sexuality is confined to. If a man wants the latter, the love, then he has to approach the gritty bit: though many of us want love it terrifies most of us. This is not surprising as it is a very profound thing that threatens to shake us to our core if we immerse ourselves in it.

But what is love? And why does it threaten us so? Have you noticed when you are deeply in love how, despite the excitement and euphoria, in a strange way your mind is quiet at the times of deepest and most intimate sharing? And that if you start to think about it, you are no longer in it, the spell is broken and you are more alone. Love is not of thoughts, it overwhelms thoughts and opens up a whole other level of awareness. It emerges from the deepest level of our beings when we are quiet

yet extraordinarily conscious and aware. We are very alive when we are in love, but the ramblings of our minds take us out of it, just as love lifts us out of the limiting patterns of our minds. Within this lies a key. Our self image, self esteem, in fact all the parts of our ego's exist within our minds, and love exposes all our limiting imprints and patterns. It pushes us to grow, in order to open to more love as a more fully aware person. It wants us to expand our sense of self to include the deepest parts of ourselves, the living centre that experiences life beyond the rational confines of our thought processes. This is frightening to most of us since it means challenging the precious self images that we carefully preserve. But such fear around our self images, in fact, robs us of a relaxed life, full of the pleasures of deep and fulfilling relationships.

It only takes the decision to challenge yourself and look deeper into love, to start you on a journey of self learning and understanding. This in itself can bring about a major change in man to woman relationships because a man who is really able to be present and loving, rather than locked away in his thoughts and hidden fears and emotions, is immediately more relatable with and attractive to most women.

## Obstacles in the way

One major behaviour pattern that greatly interferes with the flow of love in a relationships is when we demand sex for release and pleasure. A partner becomes less than a person when they become simply the object of desire and means of release. If the desire for sex includes the desire for truly sharing in love, it can become more than a demand. It can become the way into joining together in the full spiritual and emotional depths, along with the deepest of mutual pleasures. I know for myself that it was not until I made joining in love more important than sexual release that my relationship with my partner changed from being one of lovers in conflict to one of lovers regularly joining together in a harmonising, enlivening and spiritually transformative union. To make this change sustainable and be able to enter into such deep lovemaking I needed to understand more about my sexual drive and habits.

As men, we usually develop various survival strategies and behaviour patterns to deal with the issues of our often insecure masculinity and sexuality. These, often unconscious, behaviours create defences against love and intimacy to help maintain a sense of power and sexual identity. These strategies maintain separation and fear and reduce our masculinity and true nature to a shadow of their potential. Honestly facing ourselves and recognising these strategies is a first step out of false identity and all its limitations.

## Revisioning sexual love

Making love from the soul instead of the ego, is simple yet extremely challenging. It is about being there, being in love, being fully present in your sexual flow and dancing the divine dance of union with your partner. It is as powerful as it is simple. To do this involves men going beyond fearing women. It means going beyond denying fearing women and then oppressing them in an attempt to get back what power is given away in fear. This takes men becoming empowered in their own right, not at the expense of the women in their lives. It means finding the source of love within themselves rather than searching for love in women. It means accepting that love is not something that can be milked out of a partner, only to resent the power that this gives to them. It means men being responsible for their own sexual needs, rather than wanting women to service them, and then again resenting the power that this gives to them. It means being prepared to explore other forms of sexual exchange than the 'sex is penetration and orgasm' one. It means being emotionally responsible and willing to learn what we are doing in relationships and how this affects ourselves and our partners. By facing up to the sexual and power games that are unconsciously or semi consciously played with women, men can reclaim their own authentic male sexuality and rekindle the flame of love and union in their lives.

As we reclaim our full flow of sexual energy, a fully empowered and balanced masculinity comes into being. As we heal sexually and become fully alive and conscious in the present moment, then we become capable of passion, true love and union.

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## Part 2

# Reawakening our sexual power

There are various routes that we can take to reclaim and connect with our true selves and thus discover our real masculinity. Quietening our minds and meditating connects us with the core of our beings, our souls. Opening our hearts to love, recognising and learning how to release conditioned and imprinted thought and behaviour patterns, releasing body shame and guilt and connecting with our bodies and genitals in loving conscious ways - these are all parts of the healing process. But what I want to share here is a way of directly healing, evolving and reintegrating ourselves sexually and spiritually, which when used as part of this wider healing process can form the most powerful path to transformation I know.

Reclaiming our true power and passion, reclaiming the horned god within us takes moving the sexual energy up our spines to our crowns. It means becoming fully sexually alive through the entire body. This was a path of spiritual awakening known to our ancient ancestors in the west. But the path was suppressed, the knowledge lost. To reclaim this knowledge we can look to the East, for the Taoist and Tantric traditions have carried through this ancient knowledge. The Celtic and Tantric traditions share a common ancestry. They both had horned deities. "Horns were connected with the oldest Tantric belief concerning male vitality: that by suppression of ejaculation, mystic energy mounts up the spine to the head and flowers forth in wisdom and magic power, made visible by the horns."<sup>2</sup>

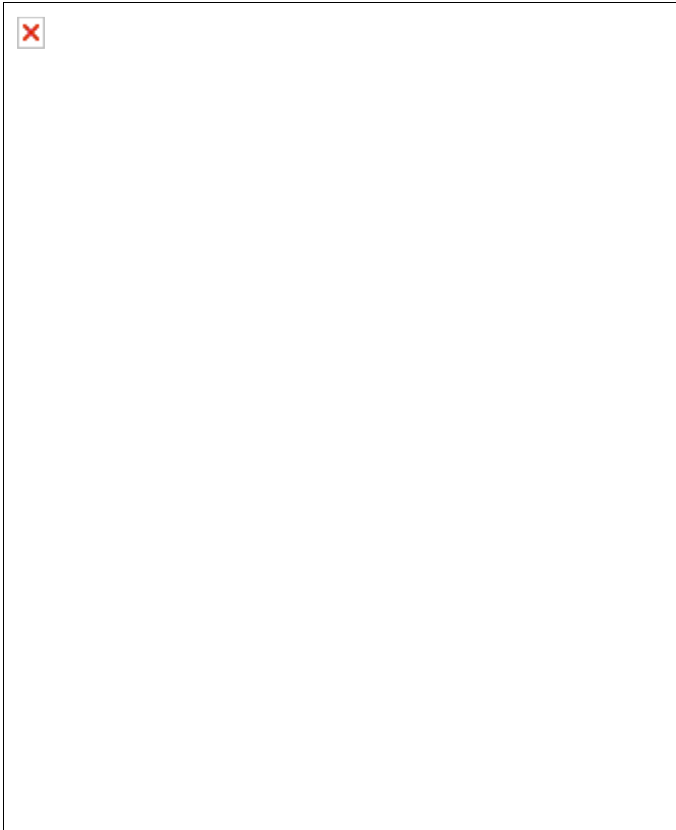
Both Tantric and Taoist traditions share similar understandings about the cultivation of sexual energy to increase vitality and facilitate spiritual awakening. I personally have followed a Taoist inspired path for the last ten years. I was drawn to the transformative sexual practices and the spiritually deep, yet eminently practical philosophy. I liked the idea of building up vitality and catalysing spiritual growth through drawing sexual energy up into the body and I could relate with the principle of the Tao as the beingness of the universe itself which is the source that exists in everything. Putting the Taoist understandings and sexual techniques into practise, at first challenged and then completely transformed my sexual nature and my life. I share enough here to enable you to start working with them.

As we have seen, many men experience addiction to sexual release. This is often about relief that happens in our testicles when we ejaculate. This is the release of sexual tension and usually a lot of emotional tension with it. The Taoists saw ejaculation as the ejection of sexual energy (in the semen) that is generated in our testicles. This energy is called ching by the Taoists, and is understood to be a 'dense energy' that is full of potential for creating life. They found that if semen and the ching is not ejaculated it can then be safely reabsorbed into the body and bring about a host of benefits including revitalisation, rejuvenation, increased awareness, longevity and the ability to become a skilful lover with staying power. "But hang on a minute," you may be saying, "its the orgasm that is the release and the great pleasure of sex, take that away and its no fun." Well there are two things to understand here; one, that orgasm and ejaculation are not the same thing and can happen independently of one another, and two, that by not focussing on orgasm and ejaculation as the main point of sex, the build up to orgasm becomes much more pleasurable and the orgasm itself is more powerful, whether you ejaculate or not.

So how do you control the ejaculation reflex? Just as a sneeze is the involuntary and coordinated contraction of many muscles that can be suppressed, so can the muscles involved in ejaculation be controlled and the trigger of the reflex suppressed. At first this will prevent orgasm from happening, but with practice and increased muscle control they can happen

while you are sealed shut. What is more, you can then become multiply orgasmic and keep on going for as long as your partner wants or your stamina permits without depleting your energy. Also, in time the orgasm can become a very deep, full body and multi-dimensional experience. (It beats the magic erection pill approach to enhanced performance hands down, and is also a safe and effective way through premature ejaculation and various kinds of impotency.)

The muscle that seals the semen in is the urinogenital diaphragm , see diagrams 1 and 2. This muscle along with the prostate gland and the help of the pubococcygeal (or PC) muscle, contracts rhythmically at orgasm to pump out the semen. But the urinogenital diaphragm actually crosses the urethra and the vas deferens, so if you learn to keep it shut tight at orgasm, you won't emit any semen. This is surprisingly easy to learn, but first the muscle, which is usually weak, needs strengthening. This requires a regular perineal exercise programme. The muscle is the one you use to stop the flow of urine, and so relatively easy to find. To exercise it, contract and relax it ten times, then have a rest, and then do ten more and so on until you've reached fifty. Do this ten times a day and you'll soon have a muscle quite strong enough to hold back the ejaculation, plus through the act of exercising it you will gain greater control of it.



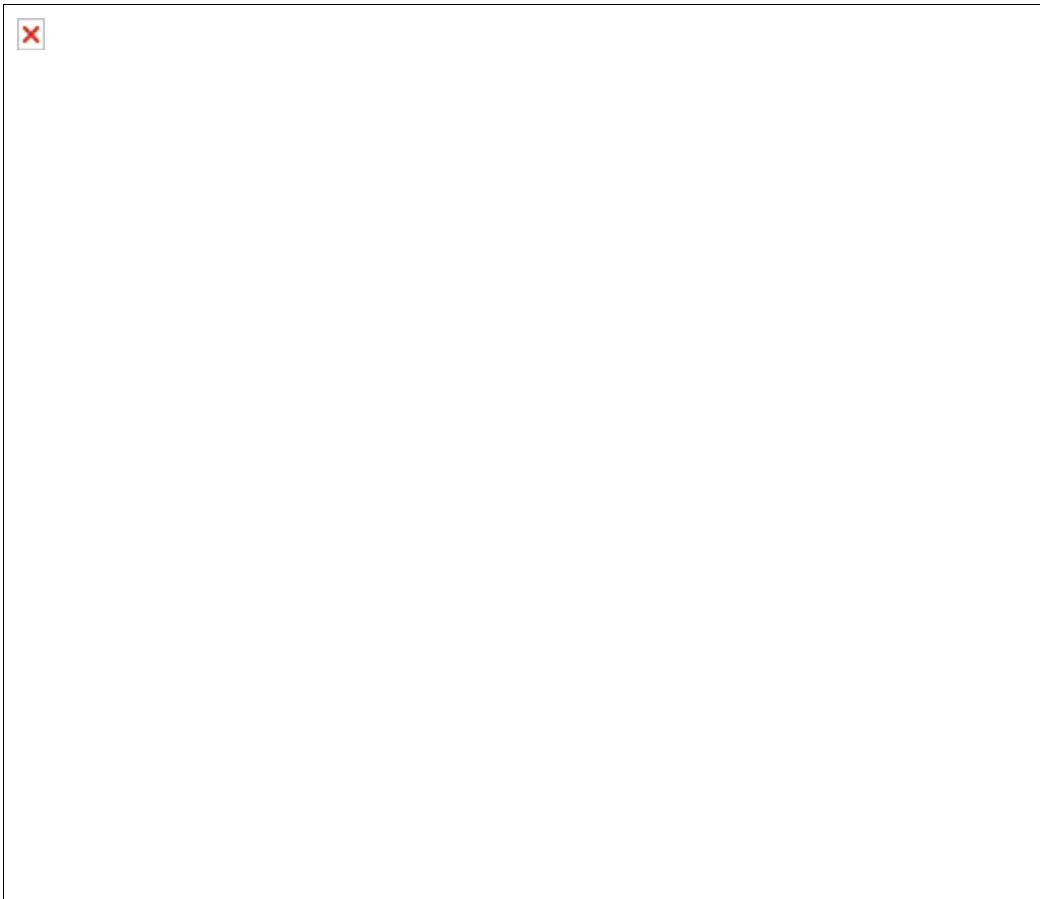


diagram 2 Urinogenital diaphragm from the side

Once you have a strong urinogenital diaphragm, you need to learn to contract it tightly before you get to the point of no return, and then keep it tightly shut while the intense pleasure and the urge to ejaculate passes. It can become a fully orgasmic experience, though it takes time for this to develop. Simply stopping the outward flow of the semen is only part of the story. If all you did was to stop the ejaculation, you would still feel very turned on and at the edge, with a big horny feeling that is demanding that you go the whole way and fast! So you need to learn how to move all that sexual charge out of your genitals, into your body and up the energy channel that runs along your spine. This means learning some simple energy recirculation techniques. This is more than can be properly covered in a short article, but briefly the energy is pumped up the spinal energy channel using a rhythmical contraction of the perineal and anal muscles. The energy can be further drawn up to the crown by moving your point of conscious focus up your spine. Visualisation can also be helpful here, though when the energy begins to move, it is very tangible, much more definite than the faint tinglings that may come from a visualisation meditation.

It usually takes ten to twenty seconds for the ejaculation urge to pass and to pump the energy upwards, this will result in a partial softening of your erection. It is very helpful at this point to have a lover who is cooperating with you on this and will stop moving and draw her sexual energy up as well. However, it is in fact almost impossible to learn this technique during actual intercourse. Thus solo practice is recommended at first, as you probably will need to really concentrate on the matter in hand! After a couple of weeks of solo practice, perhaps ejaculating once every other time at first and then building up in your capacity for holding in, it is time to start using semen retention in your lovemaking. By then you should have enough self control at the point of ejaculation to hold it back.

Semen retention is a safe process that has been practised in the East for thousands of years. The testicles are constantly reabsorbing any sperm that is not ejaculated, and the prostate gland is likewise reabsorbing unused semen. This is a natural bodily function without which we would get sick, as old semen would ferment after every arousal without a resultant ejaculation. When you actually make love without ejaculation you produce even more semen and sperm and so there is more to reabsorb, so you have to build up your capacity to do this gradually otherwise you will get achy balls. The younger you are the more you will need to ejaculate, so perhaps once every three days is a good goal for a man in his twenties while once or twice a month is suited to a man in his forties. The rate at which you ejaculate though can only be really judged by yourself, but as you experience the benefits so the old compulsion to regularly ejaculate will diminish. It is a good idea however, to not

get obsessive about retaining your semen. It takes a fairly long time to become really adept at reabsorbing the energy and semen and so as the pressure builds you will need to release it.

With practice the results are profound. Orgasm gets deeper and more full bodied as well as happening more than once in lovemaking. But because you are no longer focussed on orgasm there is plenty of time to make love with your whole bodies, have deep eye contact and explore loving together, being together. This has the effect of quieting the mind, which in turn makes the whole experience more likely to become blissful and ecstatic. After lovemaking you feel energised rather than depleted. This is especially true if you are over forty since as you get older your capacity to generate sexual energy diminishes and so recirculating what you generate in sex is a powerful tonic for your whole system. On the most physical of levels you reabsorb all the precious minerals and vitamins that go to make the sperm and semen. So by generating lots of it in lovemaking and then keeping it in you are making and taking a highly potent nutritional supplement. According to the Taoist sages, this practice leads to a fitter old age and a longer life and the earlier it is started the better. Many of the Taoist masters reputedly lived well over one hundred years, so if it worked for them, why not you?

Speaking from my own experience the Taoist methods directly addressed my own addiction to ejaculation and orgasm. This had become a problem in my relationship as it made my partner back off sexually. What I learnt was that the pleasure of orgasms wasn't actually ejaculation. The real pleasure happened when the tremendous energy that built within flowed through my entire body. It made me feel alive and regenerated. Because it was no longer about ejaculating, lovemaking became more of a time to join in love and less of a time to achieve orgasm. This was the key change. Whether I had an orgasm or not (ejaculatory or non ejaculatory) became less important - it was the sharing that mattered. The cycle in our lovemaking became - feeling turned on, choosing to join lovingly, our energies then meet and generate more sexual energy which is drawn up into both our bodies, sometimes orgasmically, sometimes not. We finish feeling fully alive. Also knowing I could do that for myself was an important part. It took the pressure off intercourse and made lovemaking easier. This gave my partner the space she needed for her own healing and the relationship deepened immensely. As her healing deepened through this, her early imprints from childhood abuse, that had so sensitised her to any sexual pressure or demand, started to heal and release.

For anyone who has a partner who has suffered any sexual trauma or abuse, these practices can be of tremendous help. This is mainly because the change of the sexual orientation is away from the orientation of the abuser, which is one of self interest and release of tension, both emotional and sexual, onto the object of abuse. Any woman who has experienced this will be very sensitive to any hint of usage. This is a common problem as to various degrees our culture has habitually conditioned men to treat women as object for use and sexual release.

To take up semen retention means radically changing your sexuality, but it is easier than it may appear at first, and a whole lot more satisfying a form of sexual loving. It sets you free to really love your lover with a powerfully alive, potent masculine sexual energy. The free sexually alive spirit of Pan can be reborn within you. You can become a sensitive and caring lover and simultaneously overflowing with high quality masculinity. On the spiritual side, the love becomes deeper and deeper and the greater flow of sexual energy provides a constant source of high quality spirit fuel that initiates a profound process of soul evolution. The orgasm evolves into an ecstatic opening into other dimensions where one can commune with your partner in the very source of existence or the Tao. So what looks like a simple physical technique is in fact a profound spiritual practice that transforms the way of the lovers ultimately to the way of enlightenment.

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Footnotes:

1: from B Walker.

2: from The Women's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets by Barbara Walker on Horns

[www.az.com/~katrinat/whacko/links1.htm](http://www.az.com/~katrinat/whacko/links1.htm)



