Tantra: Conscious Sexual Loving

As written in Tantra: The Art of Conscious Loving™
Couples who want to sustain love and passion for a lifetime together, and who are open to new ways to make their sexual relationship richer and more meaningful, may find some valuable lessons in an ancient discipline known as Tantric sex. The Tantric lifestyle derives from a series of Hindu books containing sexual rituals, exercises, and meditations. These ancient books were written in the form of a dialogue between the Hindu god Shiva and Shakti, his female consort.

Tantra is a spiritual system, and in the Tantric teachings, sexual love is a sacrament. But Tantra's goals are more exalted and broader in scope than simply to accomplish proficiency in sex. The ultimate goal is union with God, the cosmic consciousness, or whatever your words are for a higher power. Tantra can elevate a couple's relationship to the level of art; we refer to it as the art of conscious loving. What follows are some of the basic principles and exercises in Tantric sex—steps that all lovers can follow in their dance of love.

THE DANCE OF LOVE

Focusing one's mind on one's partner and nurturing the relationship are at the heart of conscious loving. Therefore, the act of love is performed quite literally with pre-meditation. Conscious lovers ritually designate a time for loving trysts; they prepare themselves mentally for their lovemaking; they prepare a place to assure privacy and comfort; and they bathe and prepare their bodies for the delight and delectation of the other.

In the dance of love, each step has two aspects, the receptive yin and the active yang. And each step has seven gradations or levels of expression-from the slowest and most gentle, or most yin, to the fastest and firmest, or most yang. This yin/yang concept is really the foundation on which the love dance rises to its astonishing heights.

Another important element of Tantric sex is the concept of chakras, or disks of energy, that correspond to specific areas of the body; the base of the spine, the genitals, behind the navel, the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows and the crown of the head.

Each one of the seven chakras represents a different natural human desire—to possess, to copulate, to achieve, to love, to communicate, to understand, and finally to ascend; to exceed ourselves by touching God. The tantric way uses these natural urges in men and women as the basis for establishing a continuously passionate loving relationship.

Kisses can range from a superficial peck on the cheek to a deep, soul shaking experience. Kissing is especially recommended on the seven energy centers, front and back, but kiss any other part of the body as well. Kisses should run the seven-level gamut of expression from yin to yang, from softest to firmest, from most shallow to deepest.

There are five basic methods for kissing mouth to mouth, and they apply as well when delivered to any part of the body. Lipping is the kissing technique partners use to contact the soft, moist inside of each other's upper and lower lips, as well as

the drier, rougher-textured outside. Tasting uses the tongue to lick the lover's lips, to touch the inner cheek or explore the upper palate or to caress the other's tongue. Love bites are little nibbles on the inside and outside of the other's lips. The sucking and blowing kisses are a kind of inhalation and exhalation against the lover's lips or chakra areas or across any expanse of skin.

An especially potent kiss is known as the kiss of the upper lip. Your lover sucks gently on your upper lip, using his tongue and lips to draw in on the frenulum, which stretches from the inside of the upper lip to the point on the gum directly above the two front teeth.

As he sucks your upper lip, you suck his lower lip and visualize the subtle channel that runs from the frenulum to your clitoris. Once the channel opens as a conduit for sexual energy, you may be able to experience deep clitoral stimulation-even orgasm from the kiss alone.

The receiving of kisses is as important as the giving of them. Remember that in conscious loving, partners continually change roles as active and receptive lovers, and it is suggested that you share these roles equally.

STEP TWO:

THE CONSCIOUS TOUCH

Touching might be called kissing with the hands. If you can imagine an energetic flow coming from your hands and fingers when you touch another person, you will be able to connect on a deeper energetic level. Touch your lover everywhere, especially on the seven chakra centers. Employ the seven levels of speed and pressure, from the most yin, or slowest and lightest, barely brushing the skin of your lover, to the most yang, or fastest and strongest. Alternate yin and yang strokes as well as types of touches.

The static touch is performed by resting both hands upon your lover and not moving at all. As your hands lie still, you consciously direct energy from your right hand into and through you lover, then you accept it back into your left hand. The moving touch travels in short or long strokes across the skin or in specific patterns (circles, spirals, triangles, crosses, etc.).

Squeezing includes a kneading touch and gentle pinching. Scratching with the fingernails or tips of the fingers, like love bites, it is usually preferred more yin than yang; most couples prefer to stop at around level five. Tapping or slapping can arouse great passion, and there are obviously certain parts of the body that are more suited to receive

this kind of touch than others. But again, be conscious of your lover's level of tolerance; Tantra does not promote masochism sadism, and this is a dance, not a fight.

There is another yin/yang aspect to touching. As you pleasure your partner with your touch, you also receive sensual pleasure from the contact. Consider it the other side of the touch, and delight in the feel of your lover's skin against your hand, its texture, its softness or hardness, its warmth, and the energy it emits. Your hand, active because it is touching, is also receptive because it is feeling.

Once again, these various means of touching require the conscious participation of both partners as givers and receivers. For instance, when a man bestows a long, smooth caress with the palm of his hand over his beloved's back and down to her buttocks, squeezes the flesh of her buttocks, and continues down her thighs with the slightest possible brushing of his fingertips, he is consciously trying to arouse her passion-her Shakti, or sexual electricity-with his touch. But no matter how good his technique, or how loving his caress, if she is not consciously receptive, if her mind is a million miles away, nothing will happen. The receiver must be as aware of the gift being offered as the giver is of bestowing it because, ultimately, it is the mind that directs the touch, and it is the mind that accepts it.

STEP THREE:

1,001 MOVEMENTS

When describing the steps in the dance of love, it helps to communicate using words with a positive spiritual connotation. Tantrists use old Sanskrit words to describe the male and female genitalia: lingam for the male sexual organ, meaning literally a "wand of light," or God's organ; and yoni to describe the female genitalia, literally translated as "sacred space."

If toughing is the hand's way of loving, and kissing is the mouth's, pelvic movement is the way the lingam and yoni demonstrate love. We call it the 1,001 movements because in the Tantric texts, 1,001 means infinite. This part of the dance is not for men only, because while it is his organ that dances, it is her yoni it dances with, and in this aspect of the dance of love, as in all the others, the partners alternate the lead

Just as the kissing and touching steps of the dance of love have a variety of yin and yang expressions, so too do the 1,001 movements. Although the lingam is a yang organ during intercourse, it must manifest both yin and yang energy; it can express the seven levels of gradation by varying depth and speed. The lingam's most yin expression of depth is the shallowest, teasing or rubbing against the vaginal lips; a little more yang penetrates just a little deeper; and the most yang expression manifests the deepest contact.

Even non-movement can become powerfully yang when the man uses his lingam while he is inside to pulse, tighten, or flex. A woman can also become expert in lingam manipulation for her own pleasure, as well as for the delight of her partner.

In addition to the back-and-forth sexual motion, Tantrists also use circular pelvic movements and side-to-side movements. These variations are very pleasurable for both partners, and because they don't encourage ejaculation, as the typical in-and-out motion does, these movements can help to make lovemaking last longer.

Angle of entry also influences pleasure. Varying the angle of entry allows the lingam to contact places it may never have touched before and the yoni to experience levels of feeling it may never have known. And don't neglect the angle of exit, which need not be the same. In addition to these three steps, there are many other Tantric techniques that can heighten the sexual experience.

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REACHING NEW HEIGHTS OF PLEASURE

To increase the length and power of your orgasm, start to inhale (as slowly as possible) about halfway into its peak. The building-up feeling of climax will continue for as long as you can sustain the inhalation. When you begin to release the breath, do it with as much sound as possible.

Really sing out. Don't be afraid of your neighbors hearing you—you may inspire them. More important, the volume of your sound influences the volume and depth of your orgasm. But you want to stay in control of the sound and not use it up too fast; the orgasm will last as long as you continue to vocalize it in your exhalation. With practice, both men and women can learn to keep the orgasm going for more than one complete breath, up to four or six, possibly more.

The moral of the story is if you practice breathing exercises to strengthen your lungs and improve your lung capacity, you'll have much longer orgasms, because you will be able to make longer inhalations and exhalations.

And there can be even more to these orgasms than extraordinary length. When you open the throat center, the fifth chakra, with sound, you can reverse the direction of your orgasmic energy, which has been mostly flowing south, toward the second chakra, the genitals. Opening the fifth chakra is like unveiling a magnet, and, in some cases, the force of the fifth chakra's "magnet" is powerful enough to pull your orgasmic energy into the sixth chakra, the area of the 'third eye," between the eyebrows, and up even further into and out of the seventh chakra, or crown of the head.

Such explosive occurrences are profoundly moving, both physically and spiritually. They are considered enlightening experiences to Tantrists, and can lead to the ultimate Tantric goal of unity.

STIMULATING THE SACRED SPOT

Like the clitoris, the sacred spot (we know it as the G-spot) is a pole for sexual fulfillment in women. Deep inside, protected, the sacred spot is capable of producing the most profound physical and psychic pleasure. But because it is hidden so deep inside, it is often a receptacle for storing all manner of hurtful things associated with sexuality. If that is the case, the spot's negative charge can be shocking-and it is important to know this when you begin the process of arousing it. If a woman has had painful experiences with sex, either physically or emotionally, her first contact with the spot may be unpleasant, even slightly painful. If she and her loved one persevere slowly and tenderly, however, the sore spot inside her will heal, and with it her past wounds.

The first few times you experiment, the man should begin by using only one finger to make contact. We suggest the ring finger, which is said to have harmonic affinity with the second chakra (the genitals) and is smaller than the index or middle finger. He should slip his finger in gently, and then curl it so the pad of the first joint touches the ceiling of the yoni. Using the same crooked-finger gesture as "comer here", your partner slowly pulls the finger forward along the ceiling toward the front of the yoni, as if returning to the clitoris. Somewhere in this forward stroke-usually about halfway between the back of the pubic bone and the clitoris, in the area of the front wall toward the opening-both lovers will be able to distinguish the sacred spot.

The heart of the sacred spot does not actually lie on the wall but can be felt through it, and its texture is different from the smooth, silky tissue around it. The sacred spot feels tougher and ridged, or bumpy, like the nipple's areola when aroused, or the mouth's upper palate. The sacred spot varies in size from that of a pea to a half-dollar, and it swells when stimulated, rising slightly in the middle.

The sacred spot can usually take more intense stimulation for longer periods than the clitoris can. In the beginning though, the man must be extremely gentle. His goal should be to charge the sacred spot with positive power, to afford her a healing or pleasurable touch. He should not think about orgasm now. The woman should try not to think at all. She should concentrate on feeling. For her this is a sensory rather than a cerebral pursuit.

CREATING HARMONY:

THE NURTURING MEDITATION

The nurturing mediation is one of the simplest yet most profound of the Tantric secrets for sustaining love's energy in a relationship. It allows couples to communicate on at least three levels: on the conscious level, skin to skin; on the respiratory level, breath to breath; and on the most subtle level chakra to chakra. Over a period of time such regular communication creates a kind of synergy between the partners' chakras.

Couples lie together spoon fashion on their left sides (for reasons of energy flow, according to the Tantric texts). Whoever feels the most in need of nurturing, whoever has experienced the most stress that day, should take the inside.

As you lie together, close your eyes and relax. Quiet your mind by focusing on deep breathing. After a while, become aware of your partner's breath. Two breathing techniques may be performed in this position. The first, used during the first few minutes of the meditation, is called the harmonizing breath. The couple inhales together, holds the breath together, exhales together, and repeats. During this harmonizing breath, the partner on the inside is the receptive body, accepting energy through the back and into the chakras with each exhalation and filling up with that energy with each inhalation.

The second breathing technique is called the reciprocal charging breath. This time one partner breathes in as the other breathes out. During the several seconds that the breath is held, one partner will be holding the inhalation, the other the exhalation. As you practice, the reciprocal charging breath, be conscious of the energy your partner is imparting to you as well as the energy you are giving back.

Before you go on to whatever you have planned for the rest of the day, look at each other. Look into each other. Don't speak, just gaze upon the face of your partner with whom you now feel so ell connected. Notice the light that radiates from your lover's eyes. This light is another by-product of the nurturing meditation; it is the light of love that comes when harmony exists.

EYE CONTACT

Closing the eyes during lovemaking is common among Westerners, but among Tantrists it is considered to eliminate potential for a much deeper bonding. Closing the eyes shuts out the lover and creates darkness during what is a potentially enlightening experience. Conscious lovers should try to maintain contact with each other in as many ways as possible during their lovemaking, and the eyes offer perhaps the most important way of doing so. In Tantric loving, the eyes are considered a primary organ of intimacy. They are not only the gateway, but also a means of extending and receiving energy, especially from the fourth chakra, from the heart.

THE COUPLE AS A TEAM

Remember that the ultimate goal of the Tantric teachings is unity. Sex is one of the most basic, pleasurable ways of achieving unity, but the principles of Tantra can be applied to other areas of life as well.

Tantric couples often meditate together; they share their thoughts, dreams, fears, hopes, and fantasies. They work together-they may share a career, as we do, or they may do the dishes together, or garden together, or clean out the garage as a team. No matter what work you do as a couple, collaboration is a cornerstone of a good relationship. Working together on a project or at job is symbolic of working on the relationship-paying attention to it, and in so doing, paying it homage. As you work together, whether it be on a mundane chore or on some inspired creative endeavor, you will also be working together toward the goal of harmony, that honeyed atmosphere in which love grows and passion is an eternal flame.