

ALL
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Brahmacharya

Cover Image: Caduceus (Staff of Hermes)

The image of two snakes intertwined around a central rod with wings at the top is an ancient symbol of the Greek god Hermes. Some version of this symbol has also been used in the medical and healing professions. Hermes was a messenger between the gods and humans and a guide to the underworld.

The snakes are evolutionary energy, each representing two sides of creation, left and right or yin and yang. The central rod is the balancing of dualities thereby helping the winged ascension of lower energies towards the higher and their transmutation into health and vigour. In other words it is about transformation of the lower energies that turn us towards Death into higher energies that lead us towards the gates of Immortality.

This symbol also infers the synthesis of opposites with the goal of unification and transformation.

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BRAHMACHARYA

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial note: One of the practises recommended to spiritual aspirants is Brahmacharya. The word covers a wide range of efforts at self-mastery such as continence of speech, truthfulness in thoughts and feelings as much as in word and acts, purity of intent and motives, above all mastery over the sexual impulse. This is by no means easy, since this instinct is so deeply rooted in the very fabric of the body. And yet without this mastery an enduring Spiritual Consciousness cannot be secured. Neither repression nor negation but a sublimation and a transmutation of sexual energies into vital vigor, intellectual clarity and eventually spiritual illumination is the path. We dedicate this issue to the many facets of this fundamental process towards mastery and transformation of the sexual impulse.



The things that have to be established are—
brahmacaryam śamaḥ satyam praśāntiḥ ātmasaṁyamah:
brahmacaryam, a complete sex-purity; *śamaḥ*, quiet and harmony in the being, its forces maintained but controlled, harmonised, disciplined; *satyam*, truth and sincerity in the whole nature; *praśāntiḥ*, a general state of peace and calm; *ātmasaṁyamah*, the power and habit to control whatever needs control in the movements of the nature.

CWSA 30:32

Sri Aurobindo

Some General Truths

A Movement of General Nature

Naturally, the sex-movement is a force in itself, impersonal and not dependent on any particular object. It fastens on one or another only to give itself body and a field of enjoyment. When it is checked in the vital interchange, it tends to lose its vital character and attacks through its most physical and elemental movement. It is only when it is thrown out from the vital physical and most physical that it is conquered.

*

The sex exists for its own satisfaction and this or that person is only an excuse or occasion for its action or a channel for awakening its activity. It is from within, by the peace and purity from above coming into that part and holding it, that it must disappear.

CWSA 31: 487

The Role of Sex in Nature

Certainly, Nature gave it [*sexual pleasure*] to encourage her aim of procreation. The proof is that the animal does it only by season and as soon as the procreation is over, drops it. Man having a mind has discovered that he can do it even when there is not the need of Nature — but that is only a proof that Mind perverts the original intention of Nature. It does not prove that Nature created it only to give man a brief and destructive sensual pleasure.

*

It is only a minority that is called to the strict Yogic life and there will be always plenty of people who will continue the race. Certainly, the Yogi has no contempt or aversion for human nature; he understands it and the place given to each of its activities with a clear and calm regard. Also, if

an action can be done with self-control without desire under the direction of a higher consciousness, that is the better way and it can sometimes be followed for the fulfilment of the divine will in things that would not otherwise be undertaken by the Yogin, such as war and the destruction which accompanies war. But a too light resort to such a rule might easily be converted into a pretext for indulging the ordinary human nature.

CWSA 31: 485-86

Sri Aurobindo

Occult entities feeding upon the vital energy

There are also lots of little entities, quite repugnant, in very large numbers, which originate from that wretched sexual desire. If this desire (with its corresponding entities) is not dissolved at the time of death, these entities continue to exist and they come and settle in the atmosphere of sensitive persons to goad them, spur them on. These entities feed upon the vital force emanated at the time of the act and naturally their only desire is to get as much nourishment as they can. I have seen people enringed by dozens of these beings. It is a very concrete thing....

CWM 4: 192

The Mother

Sex and Ananda

There is no "delight" in the sex-affair, it is necessarily and can only be a passing excitement and pleasure which finally wears itself out with the wearing out of the body.

*

It is true that the sex-centre and its reactions can be transformed and that an Ananda from above can come down to replace the animal sex-reaction. The sex-impulse is a degradation of this Ananda. But to receive this Ananda before the physical (including the physical vital) consciousness is

transformed, can be dangerous; for other and lower things can take advantage and mix in it and that would disturb the whole being and might lead into a wrong road by the impression that these lower things are part of the sadhana and sanctioned from above or simply by the lower elements overpowering the true experience. In the last case the Ananda would cease and the sex-centre be possessed by the lower reactions.

*

The only truth in that [*the saying that "sexual pleasure and Brahmananda are brothers"*] is that all intense pleasure goes back at its root to Ananda—the pleasure of poetry, music, production of all kinds, battle, victory, adventure too — in that sense only all are brothers of Brahmananda. But the phrase is absolutely inaccurate. We can say that there is a physical Ananda born of Brahmananda which is far higher, finer and more intense than the sexual, but of which the sexual is a coarse and excited degradation — that is all.

CWSA 31: 488-90

Sex and Love

It is not that it is not possible to keep the love pure, but the two things [*love and sex-desire*] are so near each other and have been so much twined together in the animal beginnings of the race that it is not easy to keep them altogether separate. In the pure psychic love there is no trace of the sex-desire, but usually the vital affection gets very strongly associated with the psychic which is then mixed though still not sexual; but the vital affection and the vital physical sex-emotion are entirely close to each other, so that at any moment or in any given case one may awake the other. This becomes very strong when the sex-force is strong in an individual as it is in most vitally energetic people. To

increase always the force of the psychic, to control the sex impulse and turn it into the *ojas*, to turn the love towards the Divine are the true remedies for this difficulty. Seminal force not sexually spent can always be turned into *ojas*.

*

When the psychic puts its influence on the vital, the first thing you must be careful to avoid is any least mixture of a wrong vital movement with the psychic movement. Lust is the perversion or degradation which prevents love from establishing its reign; so when there is the movement of psychic love in the heart, lust or vital desire is the one thing that must not be allowed to come in — just as when strength comes down from above, personal ambition and pride have to be kept far away from it; for any mixture of the perversion will corrupt the psychic or spiritual action and prevent a true fulfilment.

CWSA 31: 490-91

Different gradations of love

The tendency to physical chastity in women is not abnormal, it is fairly common and includes a very high feminine type.

The mind is the seat of thought and perception, the heart is the seat of love, the vital of desire — but how does that prevent the existence of mental love? As the mind can be invaded by the feelings of the emotional or the vital, so the heart too can be dominated by the mind and moved by mental forces.

There is a vital love, a physical love. It is possible for the vital to desire a woman for various vital reasons without love — in order to satisfy the instinct of domination or possession, in order to draw in the vital forces of a woman so as to feed one's own vital or for the exchange of vital

forces, to satisfy vanity, the hunter's instinct of the chase etc. etc. This is often called love, but it is only vital desire, a kind of lust. If however the emotions of the heart are awakened, then it becomes vital love, a mixed affair with any or all of these vital motives strong, but still vital love.

There may too be a physical love, the attraction of beauty, the physical sex-appeal or anything else of the kind awakening the emotions of the heart. If that does not happen, then the physical need is all and that is sheer lust, nothing more. But physical love is possible.

In the same way there can be a mental love. It arises from the attempt to find one's ideal in another or from some strong mental passion of admiration and wonder or from the mind's seeking for a comrade, a complement and fulfiller of one's nature, a *sahadharmī*, a guide and helper, a leader and master or from a hundred other mental motives. By itself that does not amount to love, though often it is so ardent as to be hardly distinguishable from it and may even push to sacrifice of life, entire self-giving etc. etc. But when it awakes the emotions of the heart, then it may lead to a very powerful love which is yet mental in its root and dominant character. Ordinarily, however, it is the mind and vital together which combine; but this combination can exist along with a disinclination or positive dislike for the physical act and its accompaniments. No doubt if the man presses, the woman is likely to yield, but it is *à contre-coeur*, as they say, against her feelings and her deepest instincts.

It is an ignorant psychology that reduces everything to the sex-motive and the sex-impulse.

CWSA 31: 492-93

Tamasic Inertia and the Sex-Impulse

When there is the dullness — *tamas* of any kind—it is much easier for the sex-force to act.

*

Inactivity is an atmosphere in which sex easily rises.

*

A state of tamasic inertia of the mind and body is always favourable to the sex-urge by the sex-impulse. What I meant was that there is something (not the whole) of your lower vital and physical that can respond to the sex-impulse. There may be another part that has already the aspiration — but when the condition favourable to the sex-invasion comes, then the aspiration is quiescent or not strong enough and the other elements allow the sex-force to come in.

*

The exercise has probably helped [*the body*] both by engaging the vital energies of the body and by giving it strength and tone. Sex always increases when the vital physical is indolent, unoccupied or without tone.

*

There is no condition more dangerous for the sex-imagination to come than this lying in bed in a half-awake or else a relaxed inert condition unoccupied by any activity or any experience.

CWSA 31: 522

Fantasies

That [*indulgence in sex-thoughts*] is just the thing that ought not to be done. It would be merely a gratuitous increasing of the difficulties. For the spiritual endeavour is part of your nature and, if it is difficult to get rid of the sex-impulse, you would find it still more difficult to do without the spiritual life in you. Sex is the one difficulty in its way

that is hardest to get rid of, because it sticks and returns, but one has to be more persistent than the difficulty — there is no other way.

*

By giving up contact [*with women*] it [*sexual desire*] can be reduced to two forms — dream and imagination. Dream is not of much importance unless it affects the waking mind which it need not at all do; it can besides be discouraged and, if not fed, fades out in the end. Imaginations can only be got rid of by a tapasya of the will not allowing them to run their course, but breaking them off as soon as they begin. They come most easily when lying in bed after waking from sleep in a tamasic condition. One has to break them off either by shaking off the *tamas* or by emptying the mind and going to sleep again. At other times one ought to be able to stop it by turning the mind elsewhere.

*

To let the memory or imagination dwell on things that excite the sex-desire is unhealthy for the *sadhana* and an obstacle to the development of the Yogic consciousness. Discourage these imaginations and memories when they come.

CWSA 31: 522-23

Sex-Dreams and Emissions

As for the discharges, that is less dangerous; most who live unmarried have them from time to time. Only, if they occur too often, they are depressing to the vital force. Certainly, they must be stopped; but do not have exaggerated ideas on the matter. To stop them, the first necessity is to discourage sexual imaginations in the waking state. Even if that is totally done, the discharge may still continue at night, because the subconscious keeps the memory and the habit. To stop it, you have to have a strong will before

sleeping that it should not happen; also, if you can learn how to do it, direct a strong force on the sexual centre before going to sleep to inhibit this kind of accident. After a time this method usually succeeds.

*

In order that the dream emissions may diminish or cease, it is necessary first to have complete brahmacharya, *kāya-manovākyena* — not only to banish sexuality from the bodily action, but also sexual impulses from the vital and body consciousness and sexual thoughts and imaginations from the mind and speech — and not talk or like to talk about sexual things. The dreams arise from the subconscious where all impressions and instincts are stored up and any of these things stimulates the subconscious and increases its store which can well up in dreams. If one makes the waking consciousness entirely pure, then by putting a will or force on the subconscious (especially before going to sleep) one can after a time eliminate the sex-dreams and emissions.

CWSA 31: 526-28

Subconscious impressions

Naturally, if you read about these [*sexual*] things [*in novels*] they enter the mind and pass into the subconscious where they leave their impression. If the consciousness is not free from the sexual impulse, this impression can rise up from the subconscious and work in the mind.

*

The sex-impulse is deeply rooted in the subconscious and it is difficult to get rid of it. Only the full transformation of the physical consciousness can do that — except for a few who are not strongly bound by it.

CWSA 31: 521

Sexual Difficulties among Women

There is no universal rule. Women can be as sexual as men or more. But there are numbers of women who dislike sex and there are very few men. One Sukhdev in a million, but many Dianas¹ and Pallas Athenes². The virgin is really a feminine conception; men are repelled by the idea of eternal virginity. Many women would remain without any wakening of the sexual instinct if men did not thrust it on them and that cannot be said of many, perhaps of any man! But there is another side to the picture. Women are perhaps less physically sexual than men on the whole, — but what about vital sexuality? the instinct of possessing and being possessed etc. etc.?

*

She may not have the sex-feeling towards you, but there is a certain kind of vital push, throwing out of tentacles—I don't know exactly how to express it—the secret object of which in Nature is to attract the man, to draw his attention and fix it on the woman, hook and draw him in a less or greater degree. The intention may not be at all conscious in the woman's mind, that is to say, it may not be clear or even present to her mind,—it may be merely instinctive or subconscious. There need be no physical sexual intention, only the vital in spontaneous movement. All women of a strongly vital temperament (and X is that) have it — some more, some less.

CWSA 31:534-35

The starting point of sexual vibrations

A smile or any movement, appearance or action of the woman can be the starting point for these vibrations. I don't suppose it is anything inherent in the smile itself, but all these things have been the habitual means by which sex

1. *Diana: chaste goddess of Nature* 2. *Athene: virgin goddess of Wisdom*

has been excited in man (*hāvabhāva*) and the woman uses them, often unconsciously and by mere habit when coming into contact with man, whether she has or has not any intention of pleasing or moving the man, it still comes up as an instinctive movement. ... But even when the woman smiles quite casually and without even the habitual instinctive movement, still there may be the vibration on the man's side owing to the habit of response in him to feminine attractions. These things are almost mechanical in their starting. As I wrote before it is the automatic answer of the physical or vital mind (imagination etc.) that prolongs it and makes it effective. Otherwise the vibrations would die away after a time.

*

Dress has always been used by woman as an aid to her "sex appeal" as it is now called and man has always been susceptible to it; women also often find dress in man a cause of attraction (e.g. soldier's uniform). There are also particular tastes in dress — that a sari of a particular colour should attract is quite normal. The attraction works on the sense and the vital, while it is the mind that dislikes the psychological defects and gets cooled down by their exposure; but this repulsion of the mind cannot last as against the stronger vital attraction.

*

All these pleas about affection etc. are the usual tricks with which women (and men too) cover their approach to the vital and sexual interchange. Sometimes they use the trick knowingly, sometimes they try to deceive themselves also with it — or in some cases they actually believe in it, the vital covering up the mind and deluding it. It does not matter which it is, — the actual fact behind the cover and the final outcome are the same. Even sadhaks when moved by the sexual force are deceived by their vital or try to

deceive themselves, alleging spiritual affinities, psychic ties or anything else that can justify their lapse; if they yield they can go far out of the way.

*

The association [*of touch*] with sex is vital-physical — otherwise there need be no connection between the expression of affection by touch and the sex-feeling. Except in unusual cases, when the mother and son or brother and sister embrace, they do not have the sex-feeling. It is a sort of habitual conversion operated in the passage from the emotional to the physical and, being a habit only, though a strong one, can be changed.

CWSA 31: 535-36, 537, 540

Celibacy

Celibacy means first “not marrying” — it can be extended to not having sexual (physical) relations with any woman, though that is not its proper meaning. It is not equivalent to Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is not binding in *bhaktimārga* or *karmayoga*, but it is necessary for ascetic *jñānayoga* as well as for Raja and Hatha yogas. It is also not demanded from Grihastha yogis. In this Yoga the position is that one must overcome sex, otherwise there can be no transformation of the lower vital and physical nature; all physical sexual connection should cease, otherwise one exposes oneself to serious dangers. The sex-push must also be overcome but it is not a fact that there can be no sadhana or no experience before it is entirely overcome, only without that conquest one cannot go to the end and it must be clearly recognised as one of the more serious obstacles and indulgence of it as a cause of considerable disturbance.

CWSA 31: 542

Celibacy is one thing and freedom from sex-pushes is another. These have to be conquered and got rid of, but if freedom from them were made a test of fitness to go on, I wonder how many could be declared fit for my Yoga. The will to conquer must be there, but the elimination of the sex-impulse is one of the most difficult things for human nature and, if it takes time, that is only natural.

CWSA 31: 52

Sri Aurobindo

The mediaeval ascetics hated women and thought they were created by God for the temptation of monks. One may be allowed to think more nobly both of God and of woman.

*

If a woman has tempted thee, is it her fault or thine? Be not a fool and a self-deceiver.

*

There are two ways of avoiding the snare of woman; one is to shun all women and the other to love all beings.

CWSA 12: 463

What should be the ideal of a modern woman in ordinary life?

In ordinary life, women can have all the ideas they like, it is not very important.

From the spiritual point of view, men and women are equal in their capacity to realise the Divine. Each one must do so in his (or her) own way and according to his (or her) own possibilities.

CWM 10: 299-300

Sri Aurobindo

Brahmacharya and Marriage

Marriage

It is not helpful to abandon the ordinary life before the being is ready for the full spiritual life. To do so means to precipitate a struggle between the different elements and exasperate it to a point of intensity which the nature is not ready to bear. The vital elements in you have partly to be met by the discipline and experience of life, while keeping the spiritual aim in view and trying to govern life by it progressively in the spirit of Karmayoga.

It is for this reason that we gave our approval to your marriage.

*

As to the question of marriage in general, we do not consider it advisable for one who desires to come to the spiritual life. Marriage means usually any amount of trouble, heavy burdens, a bondage to the worldly life and great difficulties in the way of single-minded spiritual endeavour. Its only natural purpose would be, if the sexual trend was impossible to conquer, to give it a restricted and controlled satisfaction. I do not see in what way it could help you to keep the mind under control and subjugation; a restless mind can only be quieted from within.

*

It is not right once you have turned to the Divine, to allow despondency of any kind to take hold of you. Whatever the difficulties and troubles, you must keep this confidence that by relying on the Divine, the Divine will take you through. Now I answer the questions you put to me in your letter.

1. If to follow the spiritual path is your resolve, marriage and family life can only come across it. Marriage would be the right thing only if the sexual push was so strong that

there was no hope of overcoming it except by a controlled and rational indulgence for some time during which it could be slowly brought under subjection to the will. But you say its hold on you is diminishing, so that does not seem indispensable.

2. As for leaving all and coming away from there that must be only when there is a clear and settled decision within you. To do so on an impulse would be to feel all the pull of old things after you come here and entail severe disturbance and struggle in the sadhana. When the other things fall away or are cut away from you then it can be done. Persist in your aspiration, insist on your vital to have faith and be more quiet. It will come.

CWSA 31: 543-44

Sri Aurobindo

Curing the misunderstanding between man and woman

In any case, the indisputable fact remains: man feels superior and wants to dominate, woman feels oppressed and revolts openly or secretly; and the eternal quarrel between the sexes is perpetuated from age to age, identical in essence, innumerable in its forms and hues.

Of course man throws the whole blame on woman, just as woman throws the entire blame on man. In truth the blame should be equally distributed between the two and neither can boast of being superior to the other. Moreover, until this notion of superiority and inferiority is eliminated, nothing and no one can put an end to the misunderstanding that divides the human species into two opposite camps, and the problem will not be solved....

For in their mutual relationships, man and woman are at once rather despotic masters and somewhat pitiable slaves to each other.

Yes, slaves; for so long as one has desires, preferences

and attachments, one is a slave of these things and of the people on whom one is dependent for their satisfaction.

Thus woman is enslaved to man because of the attraction she feels for the male and his strength, because of the desire for a home and the security it brings, and lastly because of the attachment to motherhood. Man too on his side is enslaved to woman, because of his possessiveness, his thirst for power and domination, because of his desire for sexual relations and because of his attachment to the little comforts and conveniences of married life.

That is why no law can liberate women unless they liberate themselves; likewise, men too, in spite of all their habits of domination, will cease to be slaves only when they have freed themselves from all inner enslavement.

And this state of veiled struggle, often unavowed but always present in the subconscious even in the best cases, seems unavoidable, unless human beings rise above their ordinary consciousness to identify themselves with the perfect consciousness and unite with the Supreme Reality. For as soon as one attains this higher consciousness one realises that the difference between man and woman reduces itself to a purely physical difference.

CWM 12: 103-04

The Mother

Brahmacharya and married life

*I want to know what should be the way of my family life.
Should I observe Brahmacharya – celibacy?*

We do not make rules in this yoga. Of course, if you followed the direct Supramental yoga then it would be compulsory. But even in a preparatory yoga it is better if you can observe Brahmacharya. You have to grow from humanity

into something higher and so you must get away from the animal level. In the Supramental yoga no lower movements should be indulged in from the lower poise.

So it is better to observe Brahmacharya?

Yes, if you can observe it is better, though one does not make a hard and fast rule about it. There are three things in the vital nature which are very great obstacles in the yoga — there are many others besides but they are of minor importance. 1. Lust. 2. Pride and vanity — that "I am a great Sadhak" etc. 3, Ambition for success or greed for money.

Evening talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani, p.49

*

25-11-1924

(D had requested Sri Aurobindo to give his views on marriage, particularly as he intended taking up the yoga in future. He wanted to know what attitude a person intending to take up the highest spiritual life should adopt towards marriage. D. admitted that he felt sex-attraction and did not want to resort merely to repression.)

It is rather a delicate matter to answer. Perhaps the following points may be offered to him.

1. What is ordinarily known as sex-attraction is mainly a pull on the vital and physical planes between man and woman. This attraction, generally, gets mixed up with emotions and sentiments and is almost always mistaken for love, or psychic relation.

For those who want to give up life altogether — that is to say, for sannyasins etc. — marriage in the ordinary sense is out of the question. Because marriage is the one thing that strongly fixes down a person to life. Woman by nature has the strongest tendency to stick to life. She, generally,

pulls down the man and fixes him to life. This is especially intended by nature for the continuance of the race and life.

2. Secondly, there is a meeting together of the psychic of the man and of the woman, — a union of soul with soul. This, of course, is difficult to get.

The first point refers to the ordinary life in the vital and the physical planes.

In the higher life there are two types, two gradations, of meeting of man and woman. One is the psychic union, the other is the spiritual.

The man of high idealism — the poet, the artist, has a developed psychic being. In the ordinary man, it is not developed. For a psychically developed man to get a woman of the right type is rather difficult. But if such a union could come about it would be a great help to both of them.

Suppose a person aspiring for spiritual life marries what would happen to him?

If such a man marries three things might happen :

1. If it is an ordinary marriage he may be pulled down to the lower level of consciousness, apart from the cares, anxieties and responsibilities he may be burdened with. In that case he may lose his aspiration for the higher life and may be completely changed on account of the woman's influence on him.
2. He may be spiritually ruined altogether by the marriage.
3. Or if he gets the woman of the right type it may be a great help to him.

You can write to D. that Sri Aurobindo does not believe in marriage as it exists at present in society and as an institution. He does not ask a person to marry or not to marry; it is left entirely to the person concerned.

Evening talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani, pp.148-51

Sex, Morality and Yoga

In itself the sexual act is not bad as the moralists believe. It is a movement of nature which has its purpose and is neither good nor bad. But, from the yogic point of view, the sexual force is the greatest force in the world and if properly used helps to recreate and regenerate the being. But, if it is indulged in in the ordinary way, it is a great obstacle for two reasons. First, the sexual act involves a great loss of vital force, it is a movement towards death, though this is compensated by creation of new life. That it is a movement towards death is proved by the exhaustion felt after it; many people feel even a disgust.....

The second reason is: the excitement accompanying the ordinary sexual act destroys the psychic possibilities of the man. He gets separated and dissociated from the higher centres of consciousness and goes downwards. People say that they take the attitude of Shakti taking Bhoga through them, but that is only a way of saying. People indulge in lower movements, yield to hostile forces and at the same time pass as yogis. Even, the Vedantic attitude is often made an excuse for yielding to the hostile forces. "All this is Maya, illusion, there is no virtue, no sin, no good, no evil," they say and give themselves up to lower vital forces.

But are the lower movements of nature themselves not hostile ?

No, but they offer an opening to the hostile forces and the hostile forces use these lower movements for their own purpose.

As regards the degrading effects of the sexual act, does marriage and legal sanction make any difference ?

Absolutely none. These moral injunctions are for the maintenance of society, for the welfare of the children born, but so far as the yogic life is concerned the sexual act with one's own wife is as much harmful as that with any other woman. Only those who have risen above the human level, those who have a certain kind of spiritual force as well as vital force, can possibly make a proper use of the sexual act for a spiritual purpose. If Sadhakas at a lower stage take to these things they are certain to fall.

Evening talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani, p.118, 18.1.1939

You can have right relations with women only when you can forget that they are women and meet them as human beings — when you can forget sex in your feeling and action towards them.

*

Strength and purity in the lower vital and wideness in the heart are the best condition for meeting others, especially women, and if that could always be there sex could hardly have a look in.

CWSA 31: 538, 540

Sri Aurobindo

What part will man and woman play in the new life?

What relations will they have?

Why make a distinction between the two? They are both human beings trying to become fit instruments for the divine work, above questions of sex, caste, creed and nationality; they are all children of the same infinite Mother and aspirants to the one and eternal Godhead.

CWM 8: 242

The Mother

The Principle of Brahmacharya

The basis of the old Aryan system

The ancient Aryans knew that man was not separate from the universe, but only a homogeneous part of it, as a wave is part of the ocean. An infinite energy, Prakriti, Maya or Shakti, pervades the world, pours itself into every name and form, and the clod, the plant, the insect, the animal, the man are, in their phenomenal existence, merely more or less efficient *ādhāras* of this Energy. We are each of us a dynamo into which waves of that energy have been generated and stored, and are being perpetually conserved, used up and replenished. The same force which moves in the star and the planet, moves in us, and all our thought and action are merely its play and born of the complexity of its functionings. There are processes by which man can increase his capacity as an *ādhāra*. There are other processes by which he can clear of obstructions the channel of communication between himself and the universal energy and bring greater and greater stores of it pouring into his soul and brain and body. This continual improvement of the *ādhāra* and increase in quantity and complexity of action of the informing energy, is the whole aim of evolution. When that energy is the highest in kind and the fullest in amount of which the human *ādhāra* is capable, and the *ādhāra* itself is trained utterly to bear the inrush and play of the energy, then is a man *siddha*, the fulfilled or perfect man, his evolution is over and he has completed in the individual that utmost development which the mass of humanity is labouring towards through the ages.

If this theory be correct, the energy at the basis of the operation of intelligence must be in ourselves and it must be capable of greater expansion and richer use to an extent practically unlimited. And this also must be a sound

principle, that the more we can increase and enrich the energy, the greater will be the potential range, power and activity of the functions of our mind and the consequent vigour of our intellectuality and the greatness of our achievement. This was the first principle on which the ancient Aryans based their education and one of the chief processes which they used for the increased storage of energy, was the practice of Brahmacharya.

CWSA 1: 370-71

The difficulty of transforming the sex-impulse

The difficulty is dual, psychological and corporeal: the first is the effect of the unregenerated animality upon the life, especially by the insistence of the body's gross instincts, impulses, desires; the second is the outcome of our corporeal structure and organic instrumentation imposing its restrictions on the dynamism of the higher divine nature. The first of these two difficulties is easier to deal with and conquer; for here the will can intervene and impose on the body the power of the higher nature. Certain of these impulses and instincts of the body have been found especially harmful by the spiritual aspirant and weighed considerably in favour of an ascetic rejection of the body. Sex and sexuality and all that springs from sex and testifies to its existence had to be banned and discarded from the spiritual life, and this, though difficult, is not at all impossible and can be made a cardinal condition for the spiritual seeker. This is natural and unescapable in all ascetic practice and the satisfaction of this condition, though not easy at first to fulfil, becomes after a time quite feasible; the overcoming of the sex instinct and impulse is indeed binding on all who would attain to self-mastery and lead the spiritual life. A total mastery over it is essential for all spiritual seekers, the eradication of it

for the complete ascetic. This much has to be recognised and not diminished in its obligatory importance and its principle.

CWSA 13: 542-43

The principle behind the sexual impulse

But all recognition of the sex principle, as apart from the gross physical indulgence of the sex impulse, could not be excluded from a divine life upon earth; it is there in life, plays a large part and has to be dealt with, it cannot simply be ignored, merely suppressed or held down or put away out of sight. In the first place, it is in one of its aspects a cosmic and even a divine principle: it takes the spiritual form of the Ishwara and the Shakti and without it there could be no world-creation or manifestation of the world-principle of Purusha and Prakriti which are both necessary for the creation, necessary too in their association and interchange for the play of its psychological working and in their manifestation as soul and Nature fundamental to the whole process of the Lila. In the divine life itself an incarnation or at least in some form a presence of the two powers or their initiating influence through their embodiments or representatives would be indispensable for making the new creation possible. In its human action on the mental and vital level sex is not altogether an undivine principle; it has its nobler aspects and idealities and it has to be seen in what way and to what extent these can be admitted into the new and larger life. All gross animal indulgence of sex desire and impulse would have to be eliminated; it could only continue among those who are not ready for the higher life or not yet ready for a complete spiritual living. In all who aspired to it but could not yet take it up in its fullness sex will have to be refined, submit to the spiritual or psychic impulse and a

control by the higher mind and the higher vital and shed all its lighter, frivolous or degraded forms and feel the touch of the purity of the ideal. Love would remain, all forms of the pure truth of love in higher and higher steps till it realised its highest nature, widened into universal love, merged into the love of the Divine. The love of man and woman would also undergo that elevation and consummation; for all that can feel a touch of the ideal and the spiritual must follow the way of ascent till it reaches the divine Reality. The body and its activities must be accepted as part of the divine life and pass under this law; but, as in the other evolutionary transitions, what cannot accept the law of the divine life cannot be accepted and must fall away from the ascending nature.

CWSA 13: 543-44

Sex-Indulgence and the Integral Yoga

Any suggestion about Tantric practices must certainly be a trick of the vital. The sex-impulsions can be got rid of without them. They persist only because something still wants to reserve a place for them. So the best answer to the question about the sadhana (What is the place of sex in our sadhana?) is "No place". One must give up the sex-satisfaction and be satisfied with the Divine Love and Ananda.

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The whole mistake is not to have a clear and unmistakable direction that sex (whether open or masquerading as deep romantic affection) and this Yoga cannot go together. This notion of making sex help the sadhana is one that has been taken hold of by many under one form or another and it has always proved an immense stumbling block to all who indulged it. It ties the being down to the vital and prevents the spiritual liberation which is essential as the basis of the transformation of the nature. Even the higher experiences

begin to get coloured with the sexual tinge and falsified in their substance.

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The Mother has already told you the truth about this idea. The idea that by fully indulging the sex-hunger it will be finished and disappear for ever is a deceptive pretence held out by the vital to the mind in order to get a sanction for its desire—it has no other *raison d'être* or truth or justification. If an occasional indulgence keeps the sex-desire simmering, a full indulgence would only sink you in its mire. This hunger like other hungers does not cease by temporary satiation; it renews itself after a temporary abeyance and wants again indulgence. Neither sops nor gorgings are the right treatment for it. It can only go by a radical psychic rejection or a full spiritual opening with the increasing descent of a consciousness that does not want it and has a truer Ananda.

CWSA 31: 494-95

Choice between Divine Ananda and degraded pleasure

It is not a question of fear — it is a question of choosing between the Divine Peace and Ananda and the degraded pleasure of sex, between the Divine and the attraction of women. Food has to be taken to support the body but sex-satisfaction is not a necessity. Even for the *rasa* of food it can only be harmonised with the spiritual condition if all greed of food and desire of the palate disappears. Intellectual or aesthetic delight can also be an obstacle to the spiritual perfection if there is attachment to it, although it is much nearer to the spiritual than a gross untransformed bodily appetite; in fact in order to become part of the spiritual consciousness the intellectual and aesthetic delight has also to change and become something higher. But all things that have a *rasa* cannot be kept. There is a *rasa* in hurting and

killing others, the sadistic delight, there is a rasa in torturing oneself, the masochistic delight — modern psychology is full of these two. Merely having a rasa is not a sufficient reason for keeping things as part of the spiritual life.

CWSA 31: 496

Vital Interchange

The whole principle of this Yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and to nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by union with the Divine Mother Power all the transcendent light, force, wideness, peace, purity, truth-consciousness and Ananda of the supramental Divine. In this Yoga, therefore, there can be no place for vital relations or interchanges with others; any such relation or interchange immediately ties down the soul to the lower consciousness and its lower nature, prevents the true and full union with the Divine and hampers both the ascent to the supramental Truth consciousness and the descent of the supramental Ishwari Shakti. Still worse would it be if this interchange took the form of a sexual relation or a sexual enjoyment, even if kept free from any outward act; therefore these things are absolutely forbidden in the sadhana. It goes without saying that any physical act of the kind is not allowed, but also any subtler form is ruled out. It is only after becoming one with the supramental Divine that we can find our true spiritual relations with others in the Divine; in that higher unity this kind of gross lower vital movement can have no place.

CWSA 31: 499-500

Subtle Forms of Sex-Indulgence

To master the sex-impulse, — to become so much master of the sex-centre that the sexual energy would be drawn

upwards, not thrown outwards and wasted — it is so indeed that the force in the seed can be turned into a primal physical energy supporting all the others, *retas* into *ojas*. But no error can be more perilous than to accept the immixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it and look on this as a part of the sadhana. It would be the most effective way to head straight towards spiritual downfall and throw into the atmosphere forces that would block the supramental descent, bringing instead the descent of adverse vital powers to disseminate disturbance and disaster. This deviation must be absolutely thrown away, should it try to occur and expunged from the consciousness, if the Truth is to be brought down and the work is to be done.

It is an error too to imagine that, although the physical sexual action is to be abandoned, yet some inward reproduction of it is part of the transformation of the sex-centre. The action of the animal sex-energy in Nature is a device for a particular purpose in the economy of the material creation in the Ignorance. But the vital excitement that accompanies it makes the most favourable opportunity and vibration in the atmosphere for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the supramental Light. The pleasure attached to it is a degradation and not a true form of the divine Ananda. The true divine Ananda in the physical has a different quality and movement and substance; self-existent in its essence, its manifestation is dependent only on an inner union with the Divine. You have spoken of Divine Love; but Divine Love, when it touches the physical, does not awaken the gross lower vital propensities; indulgence of them would only repel it and make it withdraw again to the heights from which it is already difficult enough to draw it down into the coarseness of the material creation which it alone can trans-

form. Seek the Divine Love through the only gate through which it will consent to enter, the gate of the psychic being, and cast away the lower vital error.

CWSA 31: 500

The danger of sex in sadhana

The total ascent is impossible so long as sex-desire blocks the way; the descent is dangerous so long as sex-desire is powerful in the vital. For at any moment an unexcised or latent sex desire may be the cause of a mixture which throws back the true descent and uses the energy acquired for other purposes or turns all the action of the consciousness towards wrong experience, turbid and delusive. One must therefore clear this obstacle out of the way; otherwise there is either no safety or no free movement towards finality in the sadhana.

CWSA 31: 503

Self abuse

The theory of masturbation as a physiological necessity is a most extraordinary idea. It weakens the nervous force and nervous balance, — as is natural since it is an artificial and wholly uncompensated waste of the energy — and it disorganises the sex-centre. Those who indulge in it inordinately may even upset their nervous balance altogether and bring about neurasthenia or worse. It is not by disorganisation of the sex-centre and sex-functioning that one should avoid the consequences of the sex-action, but by control of the sex itself so that it may be turned into higher forms of Energy.

It is perfectly possible to check the habit. There are any number of people who have had it for years and yet been able to stop it.

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The habit you speak of is exceedingly harmful and dangerous; it wastes the energy that should be preserved for the sadhana; it tends to weaken the mind, dislocate the consciousness, exhaust the nervous power, diminish the life-force, create inertia and impotence in the body. The excitations etc. that accompany it build up nothing; their tendency is to disintegrate. Often the result of this habit is to destroy the health and bring in undermining illnesses — it always does so when there is unrestrained indulgence.

There is only one thing to do for those on whom it comes— to break off the habit entirely, uncompromisingly and for ever and *never to touch the sex-centre*.

CWSA 31: 531-32

Difference between mastery and suppression

The contrary opinion of which you speak may be due to the idea that sex is a natural part of the human vital-physical whole, a necessity like food and sleep, and that its total inhibition may lead to unbalancing and to serious disorders. It is a fact that sex suppressed in outward action but indulged in other ways may lead to disorders of the system and brain troubles. That is the root of the medical theory which discourages sexual abstinence. But I have observed that these things happen only when there is either secret indulgence of a perverse kind replacing the normal sexual activity or else an indulgence of it in a kind of subtle vital way by imagination or by an invisible vital interchange of an occult kind,—I do not think harm ever occurs when there is a true spiritual effort at mastery and abstinence. ...

As for the method of mastery, it cannot be done by physical abstinence alone — it proceeds by a process of combined detachment and rejection. The consciousness stands back from the sex-impulse, feels it as not its own, as some-

thing alien thrown on it by Nature-force to which it refuses assent or identification — each time a certain movement of rejection throws it more and more outward. The mind remains unaffected; after a time the vital being which is the chief support withdraws from it in the same way, finally the physical consciousness no longer supports it. This process continues until even the subconscious can no longer rouse it up in dream and no farther movement comes from the outer Nature-force to rekindle this lower fire. This is the course when the sex-propensity sticks obstinately; but there are some who can eliminate it decisively by a swift radical dropping away from the nature. That however is more rare. It has to be said that the total elimination of the sex-impulse is one of the most difficult things in sadhana and one must be prepared for it to take time. But its total disappearance has been achieved and a practical liberation crossed only by occasional dream-movements from the subconscious is fairly common.

CWSA 31: 503-04

Sexual negation and transformation

.....one of the very concrete things that brings out the problem well: humanity has the sexual impulse in a way altogether natural, spontaneous and, I would say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality. Many other things will disappear, as for example the need to eat and perhaps also the need to sleep in the way we sleep now. But the most conscious impulse in a superior humanity, which has continued as a source of... bliss is a big word, but joy, delight — is certainly the sexual activity, and that will have absolutely no reason for existence in the functions of Nature when the need to create in that way will no longer exist. Therefore, the

capacity of entering into relation with the joy of life will rise by one step or will be oriented differently. But what the ancient spiritual aspirants had sought on principle — sexual negation — is an absurd thing, because this must be only for those who have gone beyond this stage and no longer have animality in them. And it must drop off naturally, without effort and without struggle. To make of it a centre of conflict and struggle is ridiculous. It is only when the consciousness ceases to be human that it drops off quite naturally. Here also there is a transition which may be somewhat difficult, because the beings of transition are always in an unstable equilibrium; but within oneself there is a kind of flame and a need which makes it not painful — it is not painful effort, it is something that one can do with a smile. But to seek to impose it upon those who are not ready for this transition is absurd.

It is common sense. They are human, but they must not pretend that they are not.

It is only when spontaneously the impulse becomes impossible for you, when you feel that it is something painful and contrary to your deeper need that it becomes easy; then, well, externally you cut these bonds and it is finished.

CWM 11: 27-28

The Mother

The transmutation of energy

The practice of Brahmacharya is the first and most necessary condition of increasing the force within and turning it to such uses as may benefit the possessor or mankind. All human energy has a physical basis.... To raise up the physical to the spiritual is Brahmacharya, for by the meeting of the two the energy which starts from one and produces the other is enhanced and fulfils itself.

This is the metaphysical theory. The application depends

on a right understanding of the physical and psychological conformation of the human receptacle of energy. The fundamental physical unit is the *retas*, in which the *tejas*, the heat and light and electricity in a man, is involved and hidden. All energy is latent in the *retas*. This energy may be either expended physically or conserved. All passion, lust, desire wastes the energy by pouring it, either in the gross form or a sublimated subtler form, out of the body. Immorality in act throws it out in the gross form; immorality of thought in the subtle form. In either case there is waste, and unchastity is of the mind and speech as well as of the body. On the other hand, all self-control conserves the energy in the *retas*, and conservation always brings with it increase. But the needs of the physical body are limited and the excess of energy must create a surplus which has to turn itself to some use other than the physical. According to the ancient theory *retas* is *jala* or water, full of light and heat and electricity, in one word, of *tejas*. The excess of the *retas* turns first into heat or *tapas* which stimulates the whole system, and it is for this reason that all forms of self-control and austerity are called *tapas* or *tapasyā*, because they generate the heat or stimulus which is a source of powerful action and success; secondly, it turns to *tejas* proper, light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to *vidyut* or electricity, which is at the basis of all forceful action whether intellectual or physical. In the *vidyut* again is involved the *ojas*, or *prāṇaśakti*, the primal energy which proceeds from ether. The *retas* refining from *jala* to *tapas*, *tejas* and *vidyut* and from *vidyut* to *ojas*, fills the system with physical strength, energy and brain-power and in its last form of *ojas* rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy which is the most refined form of matter and nearest to spirit. It is *ojas* that creates a spiritual force or *vīrya*, by

which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength. It follows that the more we can by Brahmacharya increase the store of tapas, *tejas*, *vidyut* and *ojas*, the more we shall fill ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit.

CWSA 1: 372-73

Sri Aurobindo

Transmuting sexual energies into the energy for progress

I did not understand this passage from the text: "Continence is therefore the rule for all those who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by a total abstinence, achieved not by coercion and suppression but by a kind of inner alchemy, as a result of which the energies that are normally used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation." (CWM 12: 54)

This is quite well known in yogic disciplines in India, when one begins to become conscious of one's energies and have control over them. You know, don't you, the theory of the different "centres" where the energies are concentrated? Generally, it is said that there are five. But the true number is seven or even twelve. Anyway, these centres are centres of accumulation of energy, energies which control certain activities. Thus, there is an accumulation of energy at the sex-centre, a great accumulation of energy, and those who have control over these energies succeed in mastering them and raising them up, and they place them here (*Mother points to the centre of the chest*). And here is the centre of the energies of progress. This is what is called the seat of *Agni*, but it is the energies of progress, the will to progress, that are here. So the energies concentrated in the sex centre are pulled

upwards and placed here. And they increase considerably, so that the sex-centre becomes absolutely calm, peaceful, immobile.

The ordinary practice for controlling these energies is to manage to “uncoil” the Kundalini which is coiled up at the base of the spine and raise the energies through the spinal column to the different centres, and awaken the centres, open them, wake them up and set them in motion one after another right up to the top of the head, and then, go out from up there. And when one has succeeded in doing this (this is the first practice), when one has uncoiled the Kundalini, next to master it, guide and develop it, to guide it to all the centres, awaken all these centres. Once that has been done, one is master of the functioning. Once one is master of the functioning, instead of leaving the energies in places where they are not wanted, one pulls them up and puts them in places where they are useful, and uses them in this way for progress, for transformation.

All this is the result of enlightened, assiduous, very patient practice; this is not done *just like that*, while thinking of other things or playing about. These are disciplines. Naturally, once one is master of the working, it becomes very interesting. But this is not done in a flash without one’s doing what is necessary.

CWM 6: 77-78

The Mother

These difficulties [*of human relationship*] in one form or another are felt by all — but they take a stronger form when the root is sexual. The obstinacy with which they return is due to the obscurity of the physical which always responds to an old habit of the nature (even when the mind has rejected it) and it is this obscurity and subjection to habit that the adverse vital forces take advantage of to repeat the trouble.

CWSA 31: 519

Sri Aurobindo

The Practice of Brahmacharya

Nigraha and Samyama

The difference between *nigraha* and *samyama* is that in the first process there is a violent struggle to put down, coerce and, if possible, crush the tendency, the reality of which is not questioned, but in the second process it is envisaged as a dead or dying force, its occasional return marked with disgust, then with impatience, finally with indifference as a mere ghost, vestige or faint echo of that which was once real but is now void of significance. Such a return is part of the process of Nature for getting rid of this undesirable and disappearing quantity.

Samyama is unseasonable and would be fruitless when a force, quality or tendency is in its infancy or vigour, before it has had the enjoyment and full activity which is its due. When once a thing is born it must have its youth, growth, enjoyment, life and final decay and death; when once an impetus has been given by Prakriti to her creation, she insists that the velocity shall spend itself by natural exhaustion before it shall cease. To arrest the growth or speed unseasonably by force is *nigraha*, which can be effective for a time but not in perpetuity. It is said in the Gita that all things are ruled by their nature, to their nature they return and *nigraha* or repression is fruitless. What happens then is that the thing untimely slain by violence is not really dead, but withdraws for a time into the Prakriti which sent it forth, gathers an immense force and returns with extraordinary violence ravaging for the rightful enjoyment which it was denied. We see this in the attempts we make to get rid of our evil *saṁskāras* or associations when we first tread the path of Yoga. If anger is a powerful element in our nature, we may put it down for a time by sheer force and call it

self-control, but eventually unsatisfied Nature will get the better of us and the passion return upon us with astonishing force at an unexpected moment.

CWSA 13: 33-34

Two ways of getting rid of enslaving passion

There are only two ways by which we can effectively get the better of the passion which seeks to enslave us. One is by substitution, replacing it whenever it rises by the opposite quality, anger by thoughts of forgiveness, love or forbearance, lust by meditation on purity, pride by thoughts of humility and our own defects or nothingness; this is the method of Rajayoga, but it is a difficult, slow and uncertain method; for both the ancient traditions and the modern experience of Yoga show that men who had attained for long years the highest self-mastery have been suddenly surprised by a violent return of the thing they thought dead or for ever subject. Still this substitution, slow though it be, is one of the commonest methods of Nature and it is largely by this means, often unconsciously or half-consciously used, that the character of a man changes and develops from life to life or even in the bounds of a single lifetime. It does not destroy things in their seed and the seed which is not reduced to ashes by Yoga is always capable of sprouting again and growing into the complete and mighty tree. The second method is to give *bhoga* or enjoyment to the passion so as to get rid of it quickly. When it is satiated and surfeited by excessive enjoyment, it becomes weak and spent and a reaction ensues which establishes for a time the opposite force, tendency or quality. If that moment is seized by the Yogin for *nigraha*, the *nigraha* so repeated at every suitable opportunity becomes so far effective as to reduce the strength and vitality of the *vṛtti* sufficiently for the

application of the final *saṁyama*. This method of enjoyment and reaction is also a favourite and universal method of Nature, but it is never complete in itself and, if applied to permanent forces or qualities, tends to establish a see-saw of opposite tendencies, extremely useful to the operations of Prakriti but from the point of view of self-mastery useless and inconclusive. It is only when this method is followed up by the use of *saṁyama* that it becomes effective. The Yogi regards the *vṛtti* merely as a play of Nature with which he is not concerned and of which he is merely the spectator; the anger, lust or pride is not his, it is the universal Mother's and she works it and stills it for her own purposes. When, however, the *vṛtti* is strong, mastering and unspent, this attitude cannot be maintained in sincerity and to try to hold it intellectually without sincerely feeling it is *mithyācāra*, false discipline or hypocrisy. It is only when it is somewhat exhausted by repeated enjoyment and coercion that Prakriti or Nature at the command of the soul or Purusha can really deal with her own creation. She deals with it first by *vairāgya* in its crudest form of disgust, but this is too violent a feeling to be permanent; yet it leaves its mark behind in a deep-seated wish to be rid of its cause, which survives the return and temporary reign of the passion. Afterwards its return is viewed with impatience but without any acute feeling of intolerance. Finally supreme indifference or *udāsīnatā* is gained and the final going out of the tendency by the ordinary process of Nature is watched in the true spirit of the *saṁyamī* who has the knowledge that he is the witnessing soul and has only to dissociate himself from a phenomenon for it to cease.

CWSA 13: 34–35

Persevere, Persevere, Persevere

When a movement like that happens [*an attraction to women*], there is generally a good reason for it, something that has to be dealt with in the physical consciousness. Instead of getting upset or discouraged, one has to observe from this point of view and see what has to be done.

There is no sense in getting discouraged like this because things recur. They always do. In a transformation such as we have undertaken, movements are not got rid of once for all. They go down from one level of the nature to the other and it is only when one has got them out of the physical and subconscient that one can say “Now that is done.” If these recurrences were to be taken as a proof of failure, there are few in the Asram who should not be pronounced as failures. I don’t think more than 2 or 3 have got over some sex-trouble; it lasts in one form or another even when people are “advanced” — as they say here. It is because sex is one of the strongest things in man’s nature and cannot be overcome till one has got the sex out of the subconscient. Why then consider your case as if it were unique or build on it the idea of personal impossibility or unfitness? It is no use indulging the idea of giving up. You can’t give up. So the only thing to do is to recover yourself, look at these things with detachment and push forward to the realisation of the self that was coming.

CWSA 31: 497

Right attitude towards the sex difficulty

As for the other point, the right attitude is neither to worry always about the sex-weakness and be obsessed by its importance so as to be in constant struggle and depression over it, nor to be too careless so as to allow it to grow. It is perhaps the most difficult of all to get rid of entirely;

one has to recognise quietly its importance and its difficulty and go quietly and steadily about the control of it. If some reactions of a slight character remain, it is not a thing to get disturbed about—only it must not be permitted to increase so as to disturb the sadhana or get too strong for the restraining will of the mental and higher vital being.

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To think too much of sex, even for suppressing it, makes it worse.

You have to open more to positive experience. To spend all the time struggling with the lower vital is a very slow method.

CWSA 31: 510-11

Sri Aurobindo

Facing impulses laid bare by the purifying fire of yoga

Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the Divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to the test. The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say, "I don't want it, I don't want it", the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to dissociate from it, take as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure

of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

CWM 3: 5

This is much more difficult than to sit upon a difficulty! It is much more difficult to stand back from the difficulty, to look at it as something which does not concern you, which does not interest you, does not belong to you, which belongs to the world and not to you — but it is only by doing this that you can succeed. This demands a kind of liberation of spirit and a confidence in your inner being: you must believe that if you take the right attitude, it is the best that will happen to you; but if you are afraid when something unpleasant happens to you, then you can do nothing. You must have this confidence within you, whatever the difficulty, whatever the obstacle. Most of the time, when something unpleasant happens, you say, “Is it going to increase? What other accident is yet going to happen!” and so on. You must tell yourself, “These things are not mine; they belong to the subconscious world; naturally I have nothing to do with them and if they come again to seize me, I am going to give a fight.” Naturally you will answer that this is easy to say but difficult to do. But if truly you take this attitude of confidence, there is no difficulty that you will not be able to conquer. Anxiety makes the difficulty greater.

CWM 4: 73

The Mother

Mastery through detachment and rejection

As to the sexual impulse. Regard it not as something sinful and horrible and attractive at the same time, but as a mistake and wrong movement of the lower nature. Reject it entirely, not by struggling with it, but by drawing back from

it, detaching yourself and refusing your consent; look at it as something not your own, but imposed on you by a force of Nature outside you. Refuse all consent to the imposition. If anything in your vital consents, insist on that part of you withdrawing its consent. Call in the Divine Force to help you in your withdrawal and refusal. If you can do this quietly and resolutely and patiently, in the end your inner will will prevail against the habit of the outer Nature.

*

To be conscious [*of the sexual movement*] is the first step, but by itself it is not enough; there must come an automatic force of rejection which the moment desire and passion arise throws it off so that it ebbs back from the mind or vital or wherever it touches. This comes either by a strong will of rejection becoming habitual in its action on the consciousness, or by the detached inner being developing an automatic dynamic strength in itself so that it is not only not touched, but refuses these things by an active purifying power or, finally, by the full emergence of the psychic and its government of the mind, vital and body. The last is the most rapid and easy way. Till then these things recur. But probably in yourself there is still some sense of the old idea of sin or fault which makes you feel troubled. You must take it as an adjustment of the nature that is going on in which old movements which you no longer accept as yours return from force of habit and get a habitual response from some part of the being. But if that part of the being can be made to reject it, then the response begins to fade away. You must not allow yourself or your mind to feel troubled by the returns; for that only weakens the power of resistance. There should be calm dissociation of yourself from these things; then the detached inner being will become more easily dynamic and able to reject them from the vital nature.

CWSA 31: 508-09



If it [*turning the seminal energy into ojas*] is to be done by a process, it will have to be by Tapasya (self-control of mind, speech, act) and a drawing upward of the seminal energy through the Will. But it can be better done by the descent of the Force and its working on the sex-centre and consequent transformation, as with all other things in this Yoga.

CWSA 31: 508

Sri Aurobindo

Mastery through the Force of Purity

There is a force of purity, not the purity of the moralist, but an essential purity of spirit, in the very substance of the being. When that comes, then sex-waves either cannot approach or they pass without imparting any impulse, without touching anywhere.

*

The desires of the heart and the body which stand in the way of Brahmacharya give a glow to the vital and emotive nature and prevent it from being dry and shut to feeling. To keep the heart warm and open, not dried up or closed, and at the same time attain to spiritual purity the best way is to turn it towards that which is eternal, pure and ever true, behind and beyond these earthly emotions—the ever-living Love, Bliss and Beauty.

CWSA 31: 512

Mastery through the Higher Consciousness and Force

It is always difficult to get rid of sex when it has had a strong hold on the system. It needs probably more than a mental will, —a stronger Force from above, to get rid of it altogether.

*

X seems in his letter to want only a liberation from sexual thoughts and desires by an intervention of another's will; but this is not how it should be done. Those who practise this Yoga can escape from it by a rejection of sexual suggestions aided by the influence of the Divine Power which acts through the Mother, but it is not instantaneous, except in the case of those who have a complete receptivity and an absolute faith. Usually it takes a steady tapasya to get rid of a lifelong habit.

CWSA 31: 513

Rejection from the Various parts of nature

The sex-trouble is serious only so long as it can get the consent of the mind and the vital will. If it is driven from the mind, that is, if the mind refuses its consent, but the vital part responds to it, it comes as a large wave of vital desire and tries to sweep the mind away by force along with it. If it is driven also from the higher vital, from the heart and the dynamic possessive life force, it takes refuge in the lower vital and comes in the shape of smaller suggestions and urges there. Driven from the lower vital level, it goes down into the obscure inertly repetitive physical and comes as sensations in the sex-centre and a mechanical response to suggestion. Driven from there too, it goes down into the subconscious and comes up as dreams or night-emissions even without dreams. But to wherever it recedes, it tries still for a time from that base or refuge to trouble and recapture the assent of the higher parts — until the victory is complete and it is driven even out of the surrounding or environmental consciousness which is the extension of ourselves into the general or universal Nature.

*

It [*the pleasure of sex*] is the reason why the vital sex-difficulty is the hardest to get rid of — even those who have sincerely given up the more physical form are liable to the vital form of the impulse. But it is harmful because it allows a subtle infiltration of the forces that stand in the way of the sadhana. One must get rid of them if the vital is to become entirely pure and able to contain the divine love and Ananda.

CWSA 31: 515-16

Sri Aurobindo

The power of sincerity

Evidently there is one difficulty: in your conscious being something does not want the difficulty, wishes sincerely to overcome it, but there are numberless movements in other parts of your consciousness of which you are not conscious. You say, "I want to be cured of that"; unfortunately it is not sufficient to say "I want", there are other parts of the consciousness which hide themselves so that you may not be busy with them, and when your attention is turned away these parts try to assert themselves. That is why I say and shall always repeat, Be perfectly sincere; do not try to deceive yourself, do not say, "I have done all that I could." If you do not succeed, it means that you do not do all that you can. For, if you truly do "all" that you can, you will surely succeed. If you have any defect which you want to get rid of and which still persists, and you say, "I have done all that I could", you may be sure that you have not done all that you should have. If you had, you would have triumphed, for the difficulties that come to you are exactly in proportion to your strength — nothing can happen to you which does not belong to your consciousness, and all that belongs to your consciousness you are able to master. Even the things and suggestions that come from outside can touch you only in proportion to the consent of your consciousness, and you are made to be the master of your consciousness. If you say, "I have done all that I could and in spite of everything the thing continues, so I give up", you may be already sure that you have not done what you could. When an error persists "in spite of everything" it means that something hidden in your being springs up suddenly like a Jack-in-the-box and takes the helm of your life. Hence, there is only one thing to do, it is to go hunting for all the little dark corners which lie hidden in you and, if you put just a tiny spark of goodwill on this darkness, it will yield, will vanish, and what appeared

to you impossible will become not only possible, practicable, but *it will have been done*. You can in this way in one minute get rid of a difficulty which would have harassed you for years. I absolutely assure you of it. That depends only on one thing: that you truly, sincerely, want to get rid of it.

CWM 4: 73 – 74

The Mother

Pranayama and other physical practices like asana do not necessarily root out sexual desire — sometimes by increasing enormously the vital force in the body they can even exaggerate in a rather startling way the force too of the sexual tendency, which, being at the base of the physical life, is always difficult to conquer. The one thing to do is to separate oneself from these movements, to find one's inner self and live in it; these movements will not then any longer appear as belonging to oneself but as surface impositions of the outer Prakriti upon the inner self or Purusha. They can then be more easily discarded or brought to nothing.

CWSA 31: 511-12

Sri Aurobindo



Continence

Control over oneself.

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)



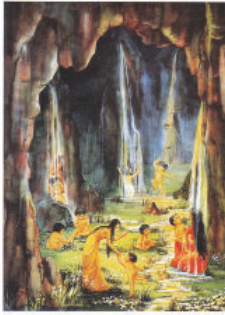
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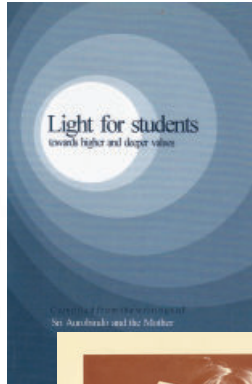
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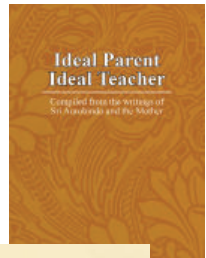


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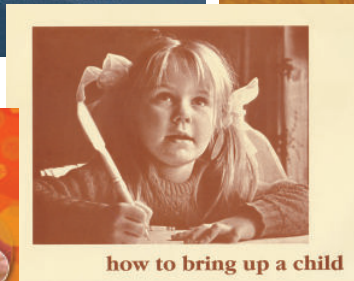
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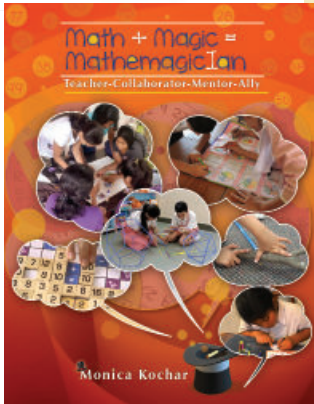


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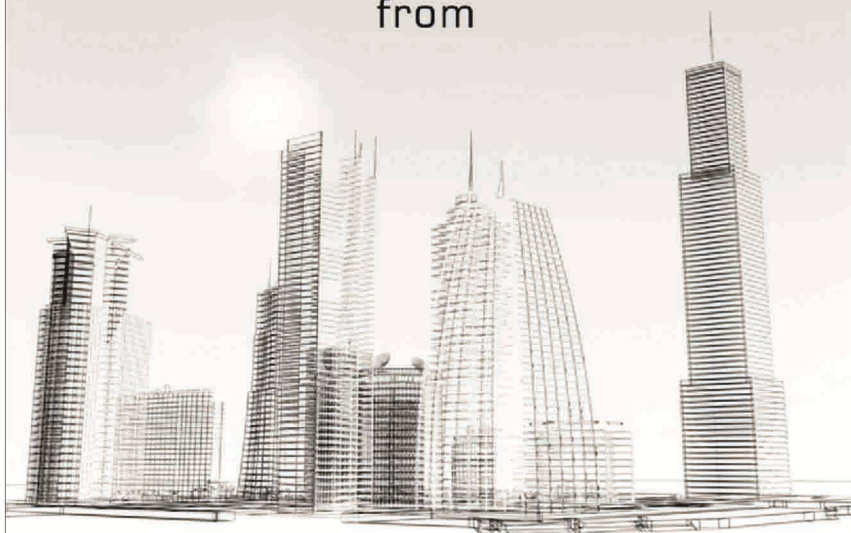
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