Chapter Four

Sex

The Role of Sex in Nature

Of course, it [the sexual impulse] is perfectly natural and all men have it. Nature has put it as part of her functioning for the purpose of procreation, so that the race may continue. In the animals it is used for that purpose, but men have departed from Nature and use it for pleasure mainly — so it has taken hold of them and harasses them at all times.

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.

The terrestrial sex-movement is a utilisation by Nature of the fundamental physical energy for purposes of procreation. The thrill of which the poets speak, which is accompanied by a very gross excitement, is the lure by which she makes the vital consent to this otherwise unpleasing process — whatever X or others may feel, there are numbers who experience a recoil of disgust after the act and repulsion from the partner in it because of the disgust, though they return to it when the disgust has worn off for the sake of this lure.

Conversion [of the sexual movement] is one thing and acceptance of the present forms in ordinary human nature is another.
The reason given for indulging the sex-action is not at all imperative. 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.

**Sex a Movement of General Nature**

All movements are in the mass movements of Nature’s cosmic forces — they are movements of universal Nature. The individual receives something of them, a wave or pressure of some cosmic force, and is driven by it; he thinks it is his own, generated in himself separately, but it is not so, it is part of a general movement which works just in the same way in others. Sex, for instance, is a movement of general Nature seeking for its play and it uses this or that one — a man vitally or physically “in love” as it is called with a woman is simply repeating and satisfying the world-movement of sex, if it had not been that woman, it would have been another; he is simply an instrument in Nature’s machinery, it is not an independent movement. So it is with anger and other Nature-motives.

*There is no how to these things — the sex-impulse exists for its own sake and it uses the person as an instrument and hooks him on to another — whenever it can throw the hook, it throws it and once the connection is there holds on for some time at least. This is the physical vital and subtle physical action — for if it is the gross physical that dominates, there is no choice — any
woman will serve the fun. The sensation you feel is physical vital + subtle physical, that is why it is so concrete. Naturally these sensations do not stop by enjoyment — they are recurrent and so long as the pressure lasts they continue. It is only by rejection or by the domination of a contrary force that they cease.

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 sexual sensations do not “become” a principle of the physical consciousness — they are there in the physical nature already — wherever there is conscious life, the sex-force is there. It is physical Nature’s main means of reproduction and it is there for that purpose.

The sexual impulse is its own reason to itself — it acts for its own satisfaction and does not ask for any reason, for it is instinctive and irrational.

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.

The sex exists in itself — put a number of sexual men together debarred from all possibility of feminine society — after a time
they will begin to satisfy themselves homosexually.

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Sex-sensation may begin anywhere. As vital love it begins in the vital centre, heart or navel — many romantic boys have this and it starts a love affair (often at the age of 10 or even 8) before they know anything about sex-connection. With others it begins with the nerves or with that and the sex-organ itself. There are others who do not have it. Many girls would not have it at all throughout life if they were not taught and excited by men. Some even then hate it and tolerate only under a sort of social compulsion or for the sake of having children.

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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.

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Yes, it [the sex-pull] has become rampant everywhere, especially as men no longer believe in the old moral restraints and nothing else has been substituted.

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Sex and Ananda

Sex is a degradation or distortion of the Ananda Force.

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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.

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The sadhak has to turn away entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse — for, if he does not conquer the sex-impulse, there can be no settling in the body of the divine consciousness and the divine Ananda.

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The hlādikā šakti is the Shakti of the Divine Ananda and Love taking possession of the whole being down to the vital and physical. But it is the Ananda and love of the Divine — the spiritual, it cannot be turned to a human love and vital pleasure. It can have nothing to do with marriage. In your dream it was neither the divine nor the human that came, but a supernormal and supraphysical vital kāma and joy — a being from that world intervening in the sleep and trying to take possession of what should be given only to the Divine. That is a particularly dangerous kind of intervention, so I had immediately to put you on your guard against it. It was of the nature of a supraphysical temptation such as the appearance of the Apsaras to the Tapaswis in the stories of the epics and Puranas. The other dreams were dreams of success and fame and were also of the vital plane. You need not be depressed by these ordeals in the subtle worlds; they come to all in one form or another; only you have to learn vigilance and find your way through these lesser planes to the highest, so that it may be the highest that will come down into you. When these trials come, it is a sign that you are advancing, for otherwise the Powers of these worlds, whether lesser gods or Daityas, would not take the trouble to test you.

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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.

**Sex and Love**

Nature in the material world started with the physical sex-pull for her purpose of procreation and brought in the love on the basis of the sex-pull, so the one has a tendency to wake the other. It is only by a strong discipline or a strong will or a change of consciousness that one can eliminate the pull.

* 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.

* The movement of self-existent psychic or spiritual love general and without a special object can come, but it must be kept free from all taint of sex — otherwise it cannot endure.

* What is real love? Get clear of all the sentimental sexual turmoil and go back to the soul, — then there is real love. It is then also you would be able to receive the overwhelming love without getting the lower being into an excitement which might be disastrous.

* What is this idea that this desire of the heart hungering to love women is not sex-desire? That and the physical lust are both forms of sex-desire.

* Why hanker [to meet and talk with women] when it is a vital desire? It is a form of sex and usually calls up the more physical desire.

* Oneness with all [expressed through embracing and kissing] would then mean satisfying the sex-instinct with all — that would be a rather startling siddhānta, though there is something like it in the practice of Tantra of the left hand. But the left-hand Tantriks are more logical than you — for why should oneness,

\[1\] The correspondent suggested that the “lighter movements” of sex, such as embracing and kissing, seem justified as expressions of one’s love for all. — Ed.
if it is to justify sex-expression, support only the lighter and not the cruder forms of love-expression? But is sex really based on love or sex-love based on sex-instinct? and is sex-instinct an expression of the spiritual feeling of the One in all? Is it not really based on duality, except when it simply seeks satisfaction and pleasure where there is no question of love at all? Is one attracted to a woman by the sense that she is oneself or by the fact that she is somebody else attracting one by some charm or beauty which one wants to enjoy or possess or simply by the fact of the difference from oneself, the fact of her being a female and not a male so that the sex-instinct can find a full field there?

Abnormal is a word which you can stick on anything that is not quite common, cheap and ordinary. In that way genius is abnormal, so is spirituality, so is the attempt to live by high ideals. 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.² 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,

² This is from the man’s viewpoint — but the woman also has her vital motives.
Sex

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 sābhadrīmi, 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.

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There are a number of women who can love with the mind, the psychic, the vital (the heart), but they shrink from a touch on the body and even when that goes, the physical act remains abhorrent to them. They may yield, under pressure, but it does not reconcile them to the act which always seems to them animal and degrading. Women know this, but men seem to find it hard to believe it; but it is perfectly true.

Sex and the New European Mystics

The idea of the new European mystics like Lawrence and Middleton Murry etc. is that the indulgence of sex is the appointed way to find the Overself or the Under Self, for that is what it
really seems to be! Brunton of course knows better. But if the personal Overself is all that is wanted and not the Divine, then sex and many other things are permissible. One has only to realise that one is not the body, not the life, not the mind, but the Overself and then do whatever the Overself tells you to do.

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I spoke of the personal Overself — meaning the realisation of something in us (the Purusha) that is not the Prakriti, not the movements of mind, vital or physical, but something that is the Thinker, etc. This Purusha can give assent to any movement of nature or withhold it or it can direct the Prakriti what to do or not to do. It can allow it to indulge sex or withhold indulgence. It is usually the mental Purusha (Manomaya Purusha) that one thus realises, but there is also the Pranamaya or vital Purusha. By the word Overself they probably mean this Purusha — they take it as a sort of personal Atman.

**Sex-Indulgence and the Integral Yoga**

What has this Yoga got to do with sex and sex-contact? I have told you repeatedly that sex has to be got rid of and overcome before there can be siddhi in this Yoga.

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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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There is one simple answer to X's falsehood and perversions. In this way of Yoga an absolute mastery of the sex-movements and an entire abstention from the physical (animal) indulgence are first conditions, because this way aims not only at a mental and vital but a physical transformation. A psychic purity is demanded in all the consciousness and there is needed a transformation of all the vital and physical energies which in the absence of these conditions is impossible.

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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.

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I do not know what you mean by harm, but the harm of sex to a sadhak is that it stands as a strong barrier to the realisation and spiritual progress and in that way it harms not only oneself
but the person on whom one imposes the sex-touch.

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It is not a question of fear\(^3\) — 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.

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It is possible for anger to be felt as pleasant — there are many people who dislike sweet things — so also there are many, especially women, who dislike the sex-sensation, even hate it.\(^4\)

For the taste, when it exists — some eliminate it by rejection and the calling down of peace and purity into the cells, others by substituting for the lower rasa the higher Ananda — some like the Vaishnavas try to sublimate it by the _madhura bhāva_ taking up the sexual rasa from the sex-centre into the heart and turning it there towards the Divine, but the last is a rather risky method.

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\(^3\) _Fear of harm to one’s sadhana through indulgence in sex. The correspondent said that he did not wish to live in fear of harm from sex. In all enjoyment, he said, there is some risk of harm, even in eating tasty food._ — Ed.

\(^4\) _The correspondent wrote that the feeling of anger is not pleasant, whereas the taste of sugar and the sex-sensation are pleasant. Is it possible, he asked, to eliminate the liking for sugar or for sex?_ — Ed.
It is one of the aims of the Yoga to centralise and harmonise all the parts of the being—not around the ego as is done in ordinary life, but around first the psychic being and then the central being in its station above the head—or else round a nexus of the two. It is the thing that was preparing in you. The consciousness was moving to take its station above the head. But in the meanwhile it has gone down into the physical and the first result has been a relaxation and diffusion which has given an opening to the old movements to recur. 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.

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Sex is not a rational force; it is purely irrational, a power of the inferior, animal nature; you cannot therefore be rightly astonished if it acts irrationally without any justification or reason
and without any other cause than its own habit and instinct. Moreover, this force as it is now acting in you with regard to X seems to be purely vital physical and physical in its character. It is not supported by your thinking mind or your rational will, these are opposed to its continuance; it has no emotional support, for you are no longer attracted by her or in love with her; the higher vital does not seem to be concerned, for neither beauty nor passion draws or drives you. But at this level of sex none of these things are necessary. The vital physical and physical urge of sex does not ask for beauty or love or emotional gratification or anything else; desire, repetition of vital-physical habit and bodily gratification (most usually, but not necessarily by the sex-act) are its motive forces. To set it in action nothing more is needed. Moreover, by mental and other rejections it has plunged down in the subconscient and is hidden there and rises suddenly from there. It is itself born from the Inconscient as a blind push of its dark force of Nature. It owes no allegiance. It can only be got rid of by a firm and persistent rejection, separation, detachment, not yielding to it by any act, refusing to take joy in it in any part of the being, until it is a dead thing and has no longer any motive or power of existence.

* It is not meant by “the sacrifice of works” that there should be no choice between different acts, no control over impulse and desire. To regard the sex-act as an offering might easily lead to the sanctification of desire.

* A married man can get experiences, especially if he is not gross or over-sexy by nature. But if he follows this Yoga, he will have to drop copulation or he will get upsettings.

* What are these strange ideas? Do you imagine that after the transformation, copulation between man and woman and the desire to copulate will continue as the normal functionings of
the life and the body? If so, why should it be forbidden in the sadhana? The injunction would then be not to stop sex-intercourse, but to copulate freely and sublimely and divinely.

**Subtle Forms of Sex-Indulgence**

Sex (occult) stands on a fair level of equality with ambition etc. from the point of view of danger, only its action is usually less ostensible — i.e. the Hostiles don’t put it forward so openly as a thing to be followed after in the spiritual life.

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This movement [of vital interchange] is a wrong and a dangerous one. It is not so much repeating the old game under the garb of Yoga, but, what is worse, turning the Yoga-power itself into the instrument of satisfaction of a vital force. There must be absolute abstention from all vital interchange with others. The warning has often been given that no special or personal relation, even under the colour of a psychic connection or otherwise, must be formed with the women sadhakas. 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.

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 transform. 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.
The transformation of the sex-centre and its energy is needed for the physical siddhi; for this energy is the support in the body of all the mental, vital and physical forces of the nature. It has to be changed into a mass and a movement of intimate Light, creative Power, pure Divine Ananda. It is only the bringing down of the supramental Light, Power and Bliss into the centre that can so change it. As to the working afterwards, it is the supramental Truth and the creative vision and will of the Divine Mother that will determine it. But it will be a working of the conscious Truth, not of the Darkness and Ignorance to which sexual desire and enjoyment belong; it will be a power of preservation and free desireless radiation of the life-forces and not of their throwing out and waste. Avoid the imagination that the supramental life will be only a heightened satisfaction of the desires of the vital and the body; nothing can be a greater obstacle to the Truth in its descent than this hope of a glorification of the animal in human nature. Mind wants the supramental state to be a confirmation of its own cherished ideas and preconceptions; the vital wants it to be a glorification of its own desires; the physical wants it to be a rich prolongation of its own comforts and pleasures and habits. If it were to be that, it would be only an exaggerated and highly magnified consummation of the animal and the human nature, not a transition from the human into the Divine.

It is dangerous to think of giving up “all barrier of discrimination and defence against what is trying to descend” upon you. Have you thought what this would mean if what is descending is something not in consonance with the divine Truth, perhaps even adverse? An adverse Power could ask no better condition for getting control over the seeker. It is only the Mother’s Force and the divine Truth that one should admit without barriers. And even there one must keep the power of discernment in order to detect anything false that comes masquerading as the Mother’s Force and the divine Truth, and keep too the power of rejection that will throw away all mixture.

Keep faith in your spiritual destiny, draw back from error and open more the psychic being to the direct guidance of the
Mother’s light and power. If the central will is sincere, each recognition of a mistake can become a stepping stone to a truer movement and a higher progress.

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I have stated very briefly in my previous letter my position with regard to the sex-impulse and Yoga. I may add here that my conclusion is not founded on any mental opinion or preconceived moral idea, but on probative facts and on observation and experience. I do not deny that so long as one allows a sort of separation between inner experience and outer consciousness, the latter being left as an inferior activity controlled but not transformed, it is quite possible to have spiritual experiences and make progress without any entire cessation of the sex-activity. The mind separates itself from the outer vital (life-parts) and the physical consciousness and lives its own inner life. But only a few can really do this with any completeness and the moment one’s experiences extend to the life-plane and the physical, sex can no longer be treated in this way. It can become at any moment a disturbing, upsetting and deforming force. I have observed that to an equal extent with ego (pride, vanity, ambition) and rajasic greed and desires it is one of the main causes of the spiritual casualties that have taken place in sadhana. The attempt to treat it by detachment without complete excision breaks down; the attempt to sublimate it, favoured by many modern mystics in Europe, is a most rash and perilous experiment. For it is when one mixes up sex and spirituality that there is the greatest havoc. Even the attempt to sublimate it by turning it towards the Divine as in the Vaishnava madhura bhava carries in it a serious danger, as the results of a wrong turn or use in this method so often show. At any rate in this Yoga which seeks not only the essential experience of the Divine but a transformation of the whole being and nature, I have found it an absolute necessity of the sadhana to aim at a complete mastery over the sex-force; otherwise the vital consciousness remains a turbid mixture, the turbidity affecting the purity of the spiritualised mind and seriously hindering the upward turn of the forces of the body. This Yoga demands a full
ascension of the whole lower or ordinary consciousness to join the spiritual above it and a full descent of the spiritual (eventually of the supramental) into the mind, life and body to transform it. 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.

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. It is now held by many medical men in Europe that sexual abstinence, if it is genuine, is beneficial; for the element in the retas which serves the sexual act is then changed into its other element which feeds the energies of the system, mental, vital and physical — and that justifies the Indian idea of Brahmacharya, the transformation of retas into ojas and the raising of its energies upward so that they change into a spiritual force.

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 something 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 subconscient 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 subconscient is fairly common.

*  

I have not said [in the preceding letter] that the sex-impulse has not been mastered in other Yogas. I have said that it is difficult to be free from it entirely and that the attempt at sublimation as in the Vaishnava sadhana has its dangers. That is evidenced by all one knows of what has frequently and even largely happened among the Vaishnavas. Transcendence and transformation are different matters. There are three kinds or stages of transformation contemplated in this sadhana, the psychic transformation, the spiritual and the supramental. The first two have been done in their own way in other Yogas; the last is a new endeavour. A transformation sufficient for spiritual realisation is attainable by the two former; a transformation sufficient for the divinisation of human life is, in my view, not possible except by a supramental change.

Transformation of the Sex-Energy:  
The Theory of Brahmacharya

The sex-energy utilised by Nature for the purpose of reproduction is in its real nature a fundamental energy of life. It can
be used not for the heightening but for a certain intensification of the vital emotional life; it can be controlled and diverted from the sex-purpose and used for aesthetic and artistic or other creation and productiveness, or preserved for heightening of the intellectual or other energies. Entirely controlled it can be turned into a force of spiritual energy also. This was well known in ancient India and was described as the conversion of retas into ojas by Brahmacharya. Sex-energy misused turns to disorder and disintegration of the life-energy and its powers.

That is correct. The whole theory of Brahmacharya is based upon that by the Yogis. If it were not so, there would be no need of Brahmacharya for producing tejas and ojas.

It is not a question of vigour and energy per se, but of the physical support — in that physical support the ojas produced by Brahmacharya counts greatly. The transformation of retas into ojas is a transformation of physical substance into a physical (necessarily producing also a vital-physical) energy. The spiritual energy by itself can only drive the body, like the vital and mental, but in driving it it would exhaust it if it has not a physical support. (I speak of course of the ordinary spiritual energy, not of the supramental to be which will have not only to transmute retas into ojas but ojas into something still more sublimated.)

The sex-impulse is certainly the greatest force in the vital plane; if it can be sublimated and turned upwards ojas is created which is a great help to the attainment of higher consciousness. But mere restraint is not sufficient.

Doctors advise marriage because they think satisfaction of the sexual instinct is necessary for the health and repression causes

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5 The correspondent wrote: “Is it not said that the sexual fluid, if prevented from being spent away, becomes transformed into tejas and ojas?” — Ed.
disturbances in the system. This is true only when there is no true giving up of the sexual indulgence, but only a change in the way of indulging it. Nowadays a new theory has come up which confirms the Indian theory of Brahmacharya, viz. that by continence retas can be changed into ojas and the vigour and power of the being enormously increase.

* It [inhibition of the sex-impulse] would not be permanently effective in itself, because the seed would always be there unless removed by a transformation of the sex-impulse; but the inhibition can help towards this transformation. It is now being recognised in Europe by the doctors—who used formerly to say that sex was to be inhibited at the risk of complications in the body, that on the contrary there is part of the seminal force that is used for health, strength, youth etc. (turned into ojas, as the Yogins say), another that serves for sex purposes; if a man is perfectly chaste, the latter turns more and more into the former. Only of course the external inhibition does not help this change, if the mind indulges in sex-thought or the vital or body in the unsatisfied sex-desire or sex-sensation. But if all these are stopped then the inhibition is useful.

* You mean the doctors. But even all doctors do not agree on that; there are many (I have read their opinions) who say that sex-satisfaction is not an absolute necessity and sex-abstinence can be physically very beneficial and is so—of course under proper conditions. As for scientists the product of the sex glands is considered by them (at least so I have read) as a great support and feeder of the general energies. It has even been considered that sex force has a great part to play in the production of poetry, art etc. and in the action of genius generally. Finally, it is a doctor who has discovered that the sex-fluid consists of two parts, one meant for sex-purposes, the other as a basis of general energy,

6 The correspondent wrote, “Some scientists say that sex is an absolute physiological necessity.” — Ed.
and if the sex-action is not indulged, the first element tends to be turned into the second (retas into ojas, as the Yogis had already discovered). Theories? So are the statements or inferences of the opposite side — one theory is as good as another. Anyhow I don’t think that the atrophy of the sex-glands by abstinence can be supported by general experience. X’s contention [that the sex-glands of those who practise Brahmacharya may atrophy] is however logical if we take not individual results but the course of evolution and suppose that this evolution will follow the line of the old one, for the useless organs are supposed to disappear or deteriorate. But will the supramental evolution follow the same course as the old one or develop new adaptations of its own making? — that is the uncertain element.

* You have not understood [what was said in the preceding letter]. I was answering the statement that scientists don’t attach any value to sex-gland product and think it is only of use for an external purpose. Many scientists on the contrary consider it a base of productive energy; among other things it plays a part in artistic and poetic production. Not that artists and poets are anchorites and Brahmacharis but that they have a powerful sex-gland activity, part of which goes to creative and part to (effectual or ineffectual) procreative action. On the latest theory + Yoga theory, the procreative part would be retas, the creative part the basis of ojas. Now supposing the artist or poet to conserve his retas and turn it into ojas, the result would be an increased power of creative productivity. Q.E.D., sir! Logic, sir!

* The most recent discovery about the sex is that the liquid is composed of two elements — one is used for sexual purposes, the other supplies all kinds of higher energies, vital, mental and, I would add, spiritual. It was formerly supposed by the doctors that the sex-liquid had to be spent in order to relieve its excess from time to time, otherwise there would be bad results. It is now found that that is not necessary — if the sex is controlled both in
act and thought, there is an automatic diminution of the amount of liquid used for sex and a corresponding increase of the other element available for higher energies. In other words, the old knowledge of the Vedic and Vedantic Yogis and Rishis about becoming urdhwaretah, viz. that by control one can turn retas into ojas and use it for higher energies vital, mental and spiritual is amply justified by this discovery. The use made naturally depends upon a man’s occupations and interests. The athlete etc. would use it for physical strength and its work, the poet and artist for creation, others for study or mental work of different kinds, the Yogi for the increase and use of spiritual energy.

* *

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.

Mastery of the Sex-Impulse through Detachment

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.

* 

The trouble of the sex-impulse is bound to dwindle away if you
are in earnest about getting rid of it. The difficulty is that part
of your nature (especially, the lower vital and the subconscient
which is active in sleep) keeps the memory and attachment to
these movements, and you do not open these parts and make
them accept the Mother’s Light and Force to purify them. If
you did that and, instead of lamenting and getting troubled
and clinging to the idea that you cannot get rid of these things,
insisted quietly with a calm faith and patient resolution on their
disappearance, separating yourself from them, refusing to accept
them or at all regard them as part of yourself, they would after
a time lose their force and dwindle.

*
The small tendencies, rajasic vital, which you enumerate are of minor importance. They have to be removed in this sense that attachment to these things has to be given up; the vital part of the being must be prepared to consent to their absence with quietude and indifference, taking them only if they are given freely by the Divine without demand or claim or clinging, but there is nothing very grave about them otherwise.

The one serious matter is the sex-tendency. That must be overcome. But it will be more easily overcome if instead of being upset by its presence you detach the inner being from it, rise up above it and view it as a weakness of the lower nature. If you can detach yourself from it with a complete indifference in the inner being, it will seem more and more something alien to yourself, put upon you by the outer forces of Nature. Then it will be easier to remove.

* 

There is something in that. Too much importance given [to sex troubles], too much tension does sometimes make the struggle worse. To dissociate quietly and to reject steadily without being moved by the recurrence is the best way — if one knows how to do the trick.

* 

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.

* 

It is best not to pay too much attention to this [sex-]movement,
but to let it drop off quietly by lack of support and assent from the mind and the higher vital.

* 

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.

* 

Detachment is the first step. If you can detach yourself from the sex suggestions even when having them as you say, then they do not matter so much as the tamas, inertia etc. which interfere with your sadhana. They can wait for their final removal hereafter.

* 

It is true that the removal of the sex-impulse in all its forms and, generally, of the vital woman-complex is a great liberation which opens up to the Divine considerable regions of the being which otherwise tend to remain shut up. These things are a degradation of the source in the being from which bhakti, divine love and adoration arise. But the complex has deep roots in human nature and one must not be disappointed if it takes time to pull them up. A resolute detachment rejecting them as foreign elements, refusing to accept any inner association with them as well as outer indulgence even of the slightest kind is the best way to wear out their hold upon the nature.

* 

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.

Mastery through a Change in the Consciousness

Hurting the flesh is no remedy for the sex-impulse, though it may be a temporary diversion. It is the vital and mostly the vital-physical that takes the sense-perception as pleasant or otherwise. If by the real Being you mean the silent Atman, that does not identify itself [with the sex-sensation], but is felt as standing aloof. If you mean the Purusha, the sensation is a movement of Prakriti and the Purusha can stand back from it and reject it or identify and accept it.

Reduction of diet has not usually a permanent effect; it may give a greater sense of physical or vital-physical purity, lighten the system and reduce certain kinds of tamas. But the sex-impulse can very well accommodate itself to a reduced diet. It is not by physical means but by a change in the consciousness that these things can be surmounted.

* It is only if the whole consciousness is awake and aware of its concealed movements that such [sexual] reactions can be avoided. It does not mean that you are worse than others, but that in all men the sexual element is there, active or dormant, indulged or suppressed. It can only be overcome by a spiritual awakening in all parts of the nature.

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.

* If it [peace] is established all through, then it brings purity and the purity throws off the sexual suggestions.

**Mastery through the Working of 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.

* What seems to be best is that the movement of rising above should be completed and if you can feel there the wideness, peace, calm, silence of the Self and that can come down into the body through all the centres and there can be the working of the Force in that condition of the physical being, then the vital-physical difficulty can be faced. The effort to do it by personal tapasya can carry one to a certain point, it can throw out sex etc.,
but for most it does not prevent all coming back by attack — unless the force of tapasya is so great and continuous that these forces get no chance. But the elimination of these things can only come, I think, by the descent of the higher consciousness — bringing with it the self-existent calm and wideness, the higher force and the Ananda occupying all down to the cells of the body. It is quite certain that these three together in the body can leave no room for sex — even if sex came, it would at once get so transmuted that it would be sex no longer.

* 

It is the physical centre — sex is only one of its movements. Naturally, if the sex is active (instead of giving place to Beauty and Ananda) and if the lower movements are active, it forms an obstacle to the establishment of the higher consciousness. But the higher can descend, if there is at all an opening, even before the lower movements have definitely gone — it has then to complete the work of displacing them.

* 

It [the sex-impulse] can be got rid of only when a higher consciousness comes down permanently into the vital.

* 

I don’t think it [sex] is always feeble in its going, sometimes it gets a singular intensity just before it goes — but it exhausts itself, tires and sinks, pressed out by the pressure from above. It depends of course on the nature. Sometimes it goes out like a snuffed candle, sometimes dwindles away, sometimes expires in a last flame. There is no rule applicable to everybody.

Rejection of the Sex-Impulse
from the Various Parts of the Being

The sex-impulse is the chief difficulty in your way and, if that were got rid of, it would make the ground clear for the sadhana in you to take a much fuller course. If it persists, it is because
some part of your being still clings to it and your mind and will have remained divided and found some kind of half-justification for the continuance. The first thing is for the mind and also the higher vital to withdraw their consent altogether; if that is done, it becomes only a mechanical return from outside on the physical and finally only an active memory which will disappear when it is able to find no welcome in any part of the 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 subconscient 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.

* 

Is it that the body does not accept the sex-thoughts and desires? If so, you are entitled to reject it as something external to you or at most existing only in the subconscient. For it is only what something in us accepts, supports, takes pleasure in, or still mechanically responds to, that can still be called ours. If there is nothing of that, it belongs to general Nature but not to us. Of course it returns and tries to take possession of its lost territory, but that is a foreign invasion. The rule of these
things is that they have to be extruded outside the individual consciousness. Rejected by the mind and higher vital, they still try to hold on to the lower vital and physical. Rejected from the lower vital, they still hold the body by a physical desire. Rejected from the body, they retire into the environmental consciousness (sometimes the subconscious also, rising in dreams) — I mean by the environmental a sort of surrounding atmosphere which we carry about with us and by which we communicate with the universal forces — and try to invade from there. Rejected from there, they become in the end too weak to be more than external suggestions till that too ends — and they are finished and non-existent.

* 

There are two places into which it [the suggestion of sex] can retire — the subconscious vital below or the environmental consciousness around. When it returns it surges up from below, if it is the former, or approaches and invades from outside, if it is the latter.

* 

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.

* 

Of course [the vital is connected with the play of sex]. It is the vital that gives it its intensity and power to hold the consciousness.

* 

It is the entire inner rejection of the sex-pulls and vital pulls that is necessary, a rejection by the whole lower vital itself — the
outer rejection can only be effective if this inner rejection comes to reinforce it. Usually people adopt the outer rejection because otherwise (if these things are indulged) the inner rejection is not likely to come since the vital trend is always being confirmed by the outer action — but if the outer is rejected, then the conflict is confined to the internal desire and fought out there. Naturally an outer renunciation by itself does not liberate.

* 

There are people outside the Asram even who have got free from the sex without seclusion — even sleeping in the same bed with the wife. I know one at least who did it without any higher experience. The work of these people is ordinary service or professional work, but that did not prevent their having the sex-struggle nor did it help them to get rid of it. The thing came after a prolonged struggle because they were determined to be rid of it and at a certain stage they got a touch which made the determination absolutely effective. Possibly they were sattwic, but that did not prevent their having strong sex-impulses and a hard and prolonged struggle.

I meant by cutting off \textit{the sex-impulse} a determined rejection of the inward as well as the outward movement whenever it comes. Something in the nature accepts and lets itself go helplessly and something in the mind allows it to do so. The mind does not seem to believe in its power to say No definitely to inward movements as it would to an outer contact — and yet the Purusha is there and can put its definite No, maintaining it till the Prakriti has to submit — or else till the confirming touch from above makes its determination perfectly effective.

* 

Sex is your main difficulty — it is in fact the only very serious one and it is so because it is always behind and you have sometimes pushed it back, but never cut with it entirely. It is the physical vital that is weak and when the thing comes, becomes pliant to it in spite of the mental will’s resistance. But even so; if the mental will made itself real and strong, these crises would be met and
overcome, or at least pass without leading to indulgence in one form or another. The other possibility is the settled descent of the higher consciousness into the physical being. It is in these two ways that liberation from sex is possible.

* 

The sexual urge is something that tries to take complete hold and leave no room for inhibition or control. It has a power of temporary possession which no other passion or life-impulse has to the same degree, more even than anger which comes second to it. That is why it is so difficult to get rid of it — because even when the mind or higher vital refuses, the vital physical feels this possessive force and has an ingrained tendency to be passive to its urge.

* 

In the vital physical the “[sex-]response” lingers long after the mind and higher vital have turned from it. I have seen that in men who were mentally and emotionally quite sincere. A few get rid of it easily, but these are a small minority. But there must be no justification on the “what harm” basis — that is an attempt of the lower vital to get the mind and higher vital to adhere. There is always room for harm so long as the sex-response is not eliminated in both, not in you only.

* 

It is the crude vital-physical that returns upon you in this way [sexual suggestions] — and these returns must be the cause of all the feeling of illness, weakness, tamas that you get. A purification of this part by the descent of the higher consciousness into it is a very great necessity for your sadhana.

* 

Sex is strongly connected with the physical centre, but also with the lower vital — it is the lower vital that gives it most of its intensity and excitement. It can be disconnected from the lower vital and then it becomes a purely physical movement
of a mechanical kind which has no great force except for the more animal natures. If the physical centre also is freed, then the sex-impulse ceases.

*  

It [sexual desire] is the habitual mechanical response to the sex-force in the physical nature. It gets this intensity in spite of the mind’s rejection because something in the vital physical (nervous) being still remembers and responds to the suggestion of the craving and the pleasure. If the nervous being can be got to reject it then it becomes a purely physical wave without mental assent or vital desire — that is the last stage after which it can be thrown out of even the environmental Nature through which the suggestion or denial of the general sex-force comes to the individual being.

*  

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.

*  

It is of course the physical that is at once responsive in the most material way to sex-suggestion. What you are doing [rejecting the sex-movement] is right. As you are controlling it in the waking state, it comes out at night. That too has to be got rid of.

*  

That is usual — the subconscient acts of itself on its own store of impressions or habitual past movements. When one drives sex from the mind and conscious vital and physical it remains in the subconscient and rises from there in sleep.
Sex and the Subconscient

The sex-sensation came from the subconscient. When it is unable to manifest in the waking consciousness, it comes up from the subconscient in sleep. The mind must not allow itself to be disturbed—it will go out with the rest.

* There is no reason for you to be depressed or discouraged. The defects of the nature of which you speak are habits of the lower vital and the external being; if you recognise them fully and frankly and detect them and reject whenever they act or try to act upon you, they will in time disappear. The sexual desires show that the subconscient still retains the old impressions, movements and impulses; make the conscious parts of the being entirely free and aspire and will for the higher consciousness to come fully into the subconscient so that even in sleep and dream something in you may be aware and on guard and reject these things when they try to take form at that time.

* I do not suppose the sex-touch came at all from them personally; at most some contact with the outside world and its consciousness might have touched the subconscient. But the real reason for these upsurgings of old movements is the subconscient itself where the old things remain in seed and can sprout up after long cessation or interruption. To be completely secure against all possibility of their return one must have established the higher consciousness in all the being down to the subconscient. But meanwhile these returns can be used as a test of the progress made. If for instance the sex-thought rises into the mind, but cannot remain there, that means the mind is substantially free; if the sex-desire comes into the vital and falls away without taking a hold, it is the same for the vital. The last question is for the body where it can come as a physical urge or sensation. If it can hold none of these there is no refuge left for it except the subconscient from which it can try to rise, especially in dreams,
Sex

or the environmental consciousness from which it can try to come as a wave invading the being.

*

If you can exclude sex from the waking thought and consciousness, the survival in sleep will not be so important. It will mean that the sex has sunk down from the conscious mind, vital, physical being into the subconscious; from there it comes up in sleep. But if it has no support from the conscious being, it may be active for a time but its activity will afterwards diminish, become more and more rare till it is eliminated. This may take time, shorter or longer, but in the end the elimination is bound to come.

*

If the waking state is freed from indulgence whether mental or physical in sex-thoughts, sex-impulses, sex-action, then the subconscient can be better dealt with; till then what is indulged by the mind in the waking state or else is suppressed but not yet entirely rejected can always lurk in the subconscient and rise from it in sleep. Turn away the conscious mind and vital from the sex-impulse entirely, that is the first step.

*

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

*

The sex-impulse is deeply rooted in the subconscient 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.
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.

* It is the most dangerous moment for sex things when just after waking one remains lying in bed; one should either go to sleep again, if there is time, or else fix the mind on wholesome things.

* 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.

Sex-Thoughts and Imaginations

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 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.

That support of the sex-sensation by the imagination is the difficulty. The imagination means a consent of the physical or else the vital mind. Otherwise the sexual sensation is often only due to physical causes and, if not supported by this automatic assent of a part of the mind, would before long diminish in its habit of recurrence.

Care must be taken that the sexual or erotic imagination does
not take hold of the consciousness representing itself as spiritual truth.

**Sexual Difficulties among Men**

In most men the sexual is the strongest of all the impulses of Nature.

* The vital needs something to hook itself on to, but for a sadhak women are obviously the wrong things for it to hook itself on to — it must get hold of the right peg.

* If it [the vital] admires all beautiful things, not women only, without desire — then there would be no harm [in admiring women]. But specially applied to women, it is a relic of the “sex-appeal”.

* It [the sense of one’s own vital charm and power of attraction] is the usual vanity of the lower vital — it is very common. Any man can have an attraction for any woman, and vice versa, when the sex-forces are active, but that attraction is not his, it is the pull of the sex-force.

**Sex-Dreams and Emissions**

There are two kinds of these [sex-]dreams, one kind which are things happening on the vital plane, another kind which is made up of impressions and impulses coming up from the subconscient, not actual happenings. Dreams in which emission takes place are usually of the second kind — but not always; for sometimes they come through the touch of vital beings or forces in the vital plane or through a meeting of one’s own sexual thought-forms with those of another there.
Apart from the total rejection of sex-thoughts and imaginations and actions, which ends by acting in the subconscient also, I don’t know any remedy for sex-dreams except the putting of a force as concrete as possible on the sex-centre and organ prohibiting this urge and its result, put when about to sleep and renewed each time one wakes and goes to sleep again. But this all cannot manage to use, for they employ a mental will instead of a concrete force (the mental will can be effective, but is not always so). This method, besides, only acts for the time, it inhibits but except in rare cases does not permanently cure; it does not get rid of the sex-impressions in the subconscient, and of course it means thinking of the sex-affair though only negatively.

I have heard it said that even very advanced Yogis get the dreams at least once in six months,—I don’t know how far it is true or what the Yogis themselves say about it. But the sex-impressions in the heart can be got rid of long before the end of life, and even the seed state in the subconscious which comes up in dreams, though sticky enough, is not quite so irremovable as all that.

Anyway, the dream kind is not so much to trouble about, unless it is frequent — it is the waking state that must be rigorously cleared out. Sometimes, if that is done, there is automatic extension of the habit of rejection to the subconscient, so that when the dream is coming there is an automatic prohibition that stops it. Under a regime like that I think the sex-pressure would become, if not non-existent, yet permanently quiescent in its seed state and so practically non est.

* 

Night-dreams are involuntary upsurgings of the sex-impressions from the subconscient; most men when they are not indulging in the sex-act have it from time to time though it varies in period from a week, a fortnight, a month to three or four months or even less. To have it more frequently indicates either indulgence in sex-imaginations which stimulate the sex-centre or else a nervous weakness in that part due to past indulgence. Some have
benefited by putting a will on the body before going to sleep at night that these dreams should not happen — though it may not succeed at the beginning, it tells in most cases after a time by fixing a certain inhibitory force on the subconscious from which these dreams arise. As to children indulging, that is not hereditary, but a thing taught by bad company and these children are sometimes spoiled in this way at a very early age.

* 

When the waking consciousness has renounced the indulgence of the sexual desires and impulses, these take refuge in the subconscious as impressions, memories, suppressed desires and come up in sleep as dreams and involuntary sleep emissions. If the waking consciousness is not itself clear, if, that is to say, though there is no physical indulgence, yet there are imaginations in the mind or desires in the vital or the body, then these dreams and emissions can be frequent. Even if the waking consciousness is clear, the subconscious emergences can still come for a time, but in time they diminish. Some are able to get rid of this by putting a strong prohibiting will or force on the subconscious or on the sex-centre before going to sleep, but this does not succeed with everyone. The main thing is to get the increasing force of brahmacharya in the waking consciousness, complete expulsion of sex-thoughts, speech, physical craving or impulse — the subconscious remnants will either die out or be cleared out afterwards when one is able to bring the higher consciousness down here.

* 

In order that the dream emissions may diminish or cease, it is necessary first to have complete brahmacharya, kāyamano-vākyena — 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 subconscient (especially before going to sleep) one can after a time eliminate the sex-dreams and emissions.

* 

It is obviously an attack which falls upon your nervous system through the subconscient. It comes in sleep because in the waking consciousness you are more on your guard and able to react against attacks. Usually this kind of dream and discharge come when the physical consciousness is in a tamasic condition through fatigue or strain or any other cause, in a heavy sleep or under a stress of inertia.

The first thing to do is to reject the after consequences as you have done this time — for you say you do not feel any weakness, but rather as if nothing had happened. It is not at all inevitable that one should feel weakness after a dream of this kind and a discharge; it is only by a habitual association in the physical mind that these forces can bring these reactions of nervous weakness.

As for preventing the discharge, it can be done by becoming more conscious in sleep. You were conscious of all that happened, but you must besides develop the power of a conscious will which sees what is going to happen and interferes to prevent it, either by waking in time or by stopping the dream or prohibiting the discharge. All this is perfectly possible, it is a matter of habit and a little persistence.

It is also often found very effective to put a will or force upon the body consciousness before going to sleep that it should not happen—especially when you feel the predisposing condition of heaviness or inertia, it should be done. This will is not always immediately successful, but after a time the subconscient gets the habit of responding to the will or force thus laid upon it and the trouble dwindles and finally disappears altogether.

* 

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 subconscient 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.

Physical Causes of Sex-Dreams and Emissions

This [problem of emission] is a quite usual phenomenon when one stops sexual activity and rejects it in the conscious mind and vital. It takes refuge in the subconscient where the mind has no direct control and comes up in the form of dreams causing emission. That lasts so long as the subconscient itself is not cleared. This can sometimes be done by putting a strong will or, if possible, a concrete current of Force on the sex-centre before sleeping against this thing happening. The success is not always immediate, but if effectively done it tends first to reduce frequency and finally stop it.

These things (accumulation of urine, hot stimulating food etc.) are all predisposing or auxiliary causes or can be so. There is often as described a rhythm in this subconscient urge — it happens at a particular time in the month or else after a fixed period of time (week, fortnight, month, six months).

* * *

The first thing necessary in such matters [sex-dreams and emissions] is to be perfectly calm and refuse to be upset by these difficulties. If they rise one must take it that they do so in order to be worked out. If there is nothing in the waking consciousness to encourage the sex-difficulty, then these dreams or discharges without dream can only be a rising up of old dormant impressions in the subconscient. Such risings often take place when the
Force is working in the subconscient to clear it. It is also just possible that the discharges may be due, especially where there are no dreams, to purely material causes, e.g. the pressure of undischarged urine or faecal matter on the bladder. But in any case the thing is not to be disturbed and to put a force or will on the sex-centre or sex-organ for these things to cease. This can be done just before sleeping — usually after a time if done regularly, it has an effect. A calm general pressure of Will or Force on the physical subconscient is to be put. The subconscient may be often obstinate in its continual persistence, but it can and does accommodate itself quickly or slowly to the will of the conscious being.

* The pressure from the kidneys or the intestines causing dream of sex-tendency or imagination is the last and most physical form — it often remains when the others have gone. The body dull and the mind half awake is indeed what gives it its opportunity. But if it is only for a few minutes and leaves no after effect, then the tendency ought to disappear after a time.

* Your dreams were mostly on the vital physical plane. There if there is any physical contact of a sexual or other kind that acts strongly on the sexual centre or on a sensory contact, it may even without raising any lust produce an emission by a mechanical blind and inconscient action of a purely physical (not even vital physical) kind. It is only when the sex-centre has become very strong that this becomes impossible.

**Worry, Depression and Sex-Dreams and Emissions**

People get too much worried about these [sex-]dreams which are only mechanical movements of the subconscient physical. If the conscious vital is cleared, they will after some time, with a little concentration, dwindle away.
It is a mistake to make so much of emissions — everybody has them. The subconscient has its own movement and the want of control there is a thing one can get rid of only when there is the full light down there. At most one can deal with this special factor by putting a will into the subconscient (in the sex-centre or the organ itself) for prohibition, so that even in the subconscient during sleep there may be something that reacts. Many have been able to diminish and almost get rid of the recurrence by this means, but others have succeeded less well. In one case there was a recurrence every fortnight and that stood in spite of the will. As for the waking difficulty do not make too much of it. Press on with the positive side of the sadhana towards realisation — these things will fade and disappear when the higher consciousness is down in the sex-centre. Meanwhile it has first to be controlled and got rid of as much as possible.

* 

There is no reason to be depressed to this extent or to have these imaginations about failure in the Yoga. It is not at all a sign that you are unfit for the Yoga. It simply means that the sexual impulse rejected by the conscious parts has taken refuge in the subconscient, somewhere probably in the lower vital physical and the most physical consciousness where there are some regions not yet open to the aspiration and the light. The persistence in sleep of things rejected in the waking consciousness is a quite common occurrence in the course of the sadhana.

The remedy is (1) to get the higher consciousness, its light and the workings of its power down into the obscurer parts of the nature, (2) to become progressively more conscious in sleep, with an inner consciousness which is aware of the working of the sadhana in sleep as in waking, (3) to bring to bear the waking will and aspiration on the body in sleep.

One way to do the last is to make a strong and conscious suggestion to the body, before sleeping, that the thing should not happen; the more concrete and physical the suggestion can be made and the more directly on the sexual centre, the better. The effect may not be quite immediate at first or invariable; but
usually this kind of suggestion, if you know how to make it, prevails in the end; even when it does not prevent the dream, it very often awakes the consciousness within in time to prevent untoward consequences.

It is a mistake to allow yourself to be depressed in the sadhana even by repeated failures. One must be calm, persistent and more obstinate than the resistance.

* 

It is all nervous. If you did not get depressed and despondent and create a weakness by the depression, the discharges would do no harm. All get them except those who indulge and so get out the sex-fluid or those who have a strong Yogic or other control over their sleep. That control has to be got, but the first thing is to get rid of this reaction of despondency and weakness which is quite unnecessary.

* 

There is no inevitable necessity for a dream emission making the body weak — it is probably the past sanskar that makes it have such strong results.

Masturbation

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.
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.

* 

Necessarily, you must give up the perverse habit which is one of the main causes of your despondency, vital weakness etc. There is nothing that has more power to derange and weaken the system. If not only in your mind but in your vital also you had made the resolution to give it up, it would have disappeared long ago.

* 

There is one way by which it is possible for you to get rid of the perverse habit: to establish a strong mental control and so get rid of the wrong movement. It is not true that it is unconquerable; on the contrary, the fact that you were able to interrupt it for some time shows that you can conquer it. It returned because these things are a movement of certain universal life-forces that, once allowed a habitual wrong response in the individual system, tend to continue in that form and, even if evicted, try always to recur. Your mind has rejected them, but something in your vital nature — the part that responds directly to the universal life-forces — still takes pleasure and has preserved the capacity and desire of the wrong response. A resolute and persistent effort of will can enforce in the end the rejection of the desire and finally even of any mechanical habit of the movement upon this part of the nature also. Only you must not be discouraged by relapses;
Sex

your will must be more persevering than the habit and persist till there is a complete conquest.

* 

It is of course true that the nerves get upset by the habit of masturbation (frequently done daily or continued for a long time) apart from other untoward results. In Hathayoga and Rajayoga to carry on sex along with the Yoga is extremely dangerous. But it is not safe (physically) with any Yoga, unless the practice of Yoga is only nominal or unless the mind and nerves are made of iron. The spiritual unsafeness is of course always there.

* 

Any intervention, however imperative, cannot be effective without the cooperation and assent of the being. If you continue to entertain and justify with your mind such [sexual] movements as you described and gave expression to, if you go on doing physical violence to yourself and adopting it as a means of sadhana or admitting as a part of sadhana the method of revolt or other Asuric errors, how do you expect to have the will and needed discrimination? You have first to throw out these things which have been shown to you to be false and from a hostile source. It is because the mind justified or excused them, that the will became weak to dismiss them. You have to dismiss these errors altogether, if you want to do this Yoga in which they have no place at all.

On the other hand, if you are unable to control these movements and dismiss them in spite of your mind refusing them, that means a weak condition of the nerves in which the remedy I proposed is the only one. I meant by change of air not only a change of climate, but of place, surroundings and atmosphere — to remain for a time where there will not be any pressure. You speak of the danger of not being able to come back or of losing the sadhana, but to allow these things to go farther is much more dangerous to the sadhana and, if they increase or continue, you will not be able to remain here.

As for the secretiveness you spoke of, it is one main reason
of your going astray — for it has made you shut yourself up in
your own wrong movement. If you have got yourself into an
imprisoning circle, the first thing you have to do is to get out of
it — secretiveness must be renounced altogether.

*If you cannot stop the masturbation, I think you are right in
going [from the Ashram], as to continue might have serious con-
sequences for the nervous system. It is better in that case to live
the ordinary life and let the sex-instinct have its natural outlet so
long as it is so irresistible. It is not necessary to wait for training
somebody to do the work. Mother appreciates very much all
the work you have done and we had hoped the earnest spiritual
effort you have made would prevail over this tendency. But it
would not be wise to insist too much against the obstinately
strong indication that the vital nature needs a relief. Wherever
you are, the Mother’s blessings and mine will be with you and
you will receive from us all the inner help we can give you.

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 Dianas
and Pallas Athenes. 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, per-
haps 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.?

*If there were not the sex-push in her, how could that [feeling of
unpleasant warmth] be? The sex-push is not merely the impulse
to the act, as she perhaps thinks, as the push to envelop and
occupy the man and to possess and be possessed. That is so especially with women, the sex-act being very often less attractive to them than to men; but of course always, if the vital physical reaches a certain point, the physical sex-movement tends to follow.

*  
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. There may be no specific sex-impulse in it, but it will still raise the sex-idea in the man. X naturally has no psychological knowledge and these things are too subtle for her to perceive or realise. She may easily think she is acting in a perfectly innocent and natural way and not at all know this activity of the Nature push in her.

*  
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 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. X is of the type of woman who has this instinctive movement to please the male. 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.

*  

It is of course the universal sex-force that acts, but certain people are more full of it than others, have the sex-appeal as they now say in Europe. This sex-appeal is exercised especially by women even without any conscious intention of putting it on a particular person. Consciously they may turn it on a particular person, but it may exercise itself on many others whom they do not wish particularly to capture. All women have not the sex-appeal, but some force of sex-pull there is in most. There is of course a similar pull in men for women.

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The sex-pull is that of a general force, which uses the individual for its purpose and it takes advantage of any proximity of the other sex to work in. The remedy lies in oneself — in immediate detachment (standing apart, not accepting as one’s own) and rejecting it.

*  

It is certainly naive to think that because a girl is simple, i.e. instinctive and impulsive and non-mental in her movements, she
can be relied upon to be an asexual friend. Some women can be, but it is usually those who have a clear mental consciousness and strong will of self-control or else those who are incapable of a passion for more than one person in their life and you are lucky enough not to be that person.

Tell X on behalf of myself and the Mother that she must not allow herself to be crushed by the burden of the past. All she has to do is to turn her back on this past of sexual weakness, for which she was not herself primarily responsible, and to consecrate herself entirely to the Divine. If she so consecrates herself, the past will be wiped out and a new life begin for her. This is the true atonement and the only one asked from her.

Write to X that this case of Y and Z is perfectly clear. The girl [Z] is moved by sexual desire and its impulse of vital interchange; not being satisfied in her married life, she seeks the satisfaction from others. 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.

For Y it is a test, — difficult for him because he is at an age when the sexual element is awake but there is not sufficient experience for a true understanding of its workings and not sufficient maturity of mind to make up for want of experience. If he yields to the girl's pressure, he is likely to lose his sadhana, perhaps for a long time — if he is led too far it might even be
a decisive fall. If he wants the spiritual life, he must be on his guard and draw back entirely from this movement.

**Social Contact and Sex**

In an Asram or other religious institution men and women are not usually allowed to live together. Where they do, as among the Vaishnavas, these difficulties [of sex] invariably arise. The difficulty lies in the enormous place given to sex in the lower Nature. But there is no reason if one fixes oneself firmly in the spiritual consciousness why one should not speak and act between men and women without the least reference to sex.

*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.*

*All that [mental excitement when a man meets a woman] happens because the vital is conscious of sex in the approach and immediately assumes the “man to woman” attitude. To get rid of that, one must be able to look on the woman and feel to her as to a human being only. That is difficult and needs a certain training; for even if the mind is able to take the position, the vital is unreliable and one has to be on guard that it does not suddenly or surreptitiously get in into the relation with its partiality for the sex-interchange.*

*Of course one must be able to come in contact with women without feeling or thinking about sex; but to seek contact and test is not the way, it can too easily turn the other side when the mastery is not complete. The facing and conquering must be an inner process — the Tantrik outer method is not indicated.*
It [renunciation of contact with women] has been prescribed not only in your case, but to all who drag the sex-idea into their relations with women in the Yoga. External as well as internal renunciation of the sex-relation vital or physical has been made the rule. The idea of internal detachment and external indulgence has been found always to be a cover under which the vital continues its operations. For you the continuance would be dangerous both spiritually and for the body.

* 

It usually happens that when actual indulgence of the vital is given up (external exchange, touch or contact), imagination still goes on. But if this can be overcome, then the whole thing is overcome. External indulgence on the other hand keeps the activity alive. This is the raison d’être of the external avoidance. If anything can be got rid of without the necessity of avoidance, so much the better.

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Both methods [giving up contact with women and keeping it] have their disadvantage. If one allows the opportunities, the sex-movement continues — if one suppresses only, then the movement goes back into imaginations. If it is only imaginations then there is less harm, for in the end the imaginations can be got rid of, but if the imaginations precipitate into some material act, then nothing is gained.

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The mental acceptance of X’s philosophy about sex was the mistake. It may be true that ordinarily mixing with women removes shyness etc., — though it is not always so, for many people are sex-timid by nature — but that is a means for ordinary life, not Yoga, and in ordinary life marriage is the direct means for getting rid of sex-uneasiness; marriage or else having love affairs with women and satisfying the sex. But that is not the proper means for an Asram and Yoga. In Yoga the proper means is to train the mind and vital to meet women without thought of sex, to
look on them as sadhaks and human beings only, not as objects of sexual possession and enjoyment.

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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.

**Touch and Sex**

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.

*  

It [touch] is vital-physical. All sex movement has a vital element in it, but the mere vital movement is not directly interested in touching or the sex act. It is interested more in the play of the emotions, domination and subjection, quarrels, reconciliations, the interchange of vital forces etc. It is the vital-physical consciousness that gives so much importance to the touch, embrace, sex act etc.

*  

In ordinary society people touch each other more or less freely according to the manners of the society. That is quite a different matter because there the sex-impulse is allowed within certain more or less wide or narrow limits and even the secret indulgence is common, although people try to avoid discovery. In Bengal when there is purdah, touching between men and women is confined to the family, in Europe there is not much restriction so long as there is no excessive familiarity or indecency; but in Europe sex is now practically free. Here all sex-indulgence
Sex

inner or outer is considered undesirable as an obstacle to the sadhana — as it very evidently is. For that reason any excessive familiarity of touch between men and women has to be avoided, anything also in the nature of caressing, as it creates or tends to create sex-tendency or even the strong sex-impulse. Casual touching has to be avoided also if it actually creates the sex-impulse. These are commonsense rules if the premiss is granted that sex has not to have any indulgence.

*  

It is surprising you should not see that these things [kisses and caresses] belong to the vital sex-movement, even if there is no physical sex-act. If one wants to live in the unreformed vital plane, one can indulge them — but it is certainly unyogic.

*  

The difficulty about the kisses and embraces is that they are the expression of a vital love which is not based on the psychic or spiritual or at least does not keep to that basis, so that when it touches the body, it awakens the reactions of the ordinary body love. The ordinary vital and the ordinary body love are intimately connected with sex — and for sex procreative intention is not at all necessary.

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Avoidance of touch is best so long as there is the sex-response to touch on either side. At a higher stage, it is indifferent to touch or not to touch. What it will be in the supramental culmination, let the supramental decide.

Touch may be neutral or it may imply interchange of forces. When the interchange is that of spiritual or spiritualised forces, then it has its meaning and it is that that will justify it in the supramental realisation. But till then, it is better to be circumspect.
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 bhaktimarga or karmayoga, but it is necessary for ascetic jñanayoga 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.

* 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.

* If it is like that [a natural control of sexual excitement] then it is the power of self-control, automatic and therefore belonging to the inner being that is coming — the genuine thing. Of course to be complete the sexual passion and the thoughts that encourage it should disappear also. The idea about impotence [being caused by celibacy] is rather irrational — impotence comes from over-indulgence or wrong indulgence (certain perverse habits); it does not come from self-control. Self-control means only a diversion to other powers, because the controlled sex-power becomes a
Sex

force for the life-energies, the powers of the mind and the more and more potent workings of the spiritual consciousness.

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Why impose one rule of Brahmacharya to an advanced age on all men or the age of 25 on all women? Everybody is not intended to be a Brahmachari. Men and women belong to every stage of development and need different kinds of experience suitable for their stage in order to grow and advance farther.

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.

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If she consents to marry, that would be the best. All these vital disturbances proceed from suppressed sex-instinct, suppressed but not rejected and overcome. A mental acceptance or enthusiasm for the sadhana is not a sufficient guarantee nor a sufficient ground for calling people, especially young people, to begin it. Afterwards these vital instincts rise up and there is nothing sufficient to balance or prevail against them, only mental ideas which do not prevail against the instinct but on the other hand also stand in the way of their natural social means of satisfaction. If she marries now and gets experience of the human vital life, then hereafter there may be a chance of her mental aspiration for sadhana turning into the real thing.

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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.

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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.

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You are right in feeling that the protection and grace are always there and that all has been for the best. In your wife’s condition, the best was that she should change her body and she has been able to do so in the state of mind which would give her the
happiest conditions both after death and for a renewal hereafter of the spiritual development for which she had begun to aspire. It is good also that you have been able to keep your poise and the freedom of your spirit in this occurrence.

Again, you are entirely right in your resolution not to marry again; to do so would be in any case to invite serious and probably insuperable difficulties in your following the path of Yoga, and, as in this path of Yoga it is necessary to put away sexual desire, marriage would be not only meaningless but an absolute contradiction of your spiritual life. You can expect full support and protection from us in your resolve and, if you keep a sincere will and resolution in this matter, you may be sure that the Divine Grace will not fail you.

The Relationship of Man and Woman

These are ideas of the vital plane where the strong demand subservience from those who are not physically or otherwise so strong. The spiritual truth is quite other than these things.

Skin Diseases and Sex

Yes, of course, skin diseases have much to do with sexual desires — not of course always, but often.

I suppose it [pimples on the face] is often the result of suppressed sexuality — suppressed in act but still internally active. These things do not act in the same way with all, with some it may act on the blood, with some it may not or else not in the same form. Moreover I do not suppose that sex is the only cause of pimples on the face — there are other things also that can give that.

The correspondent asked whether there was any “basic truth” in these two ideas: first, that in a relationship the woman should surrender to the man, and second, that a man has a right to be attracted to several women at a time, whereas a woman should be devoted to one man alone. — Ed.