PART FOUR

STRENGTH OF BRAHMACHARYA

Introduction:

The impact of the western culture on the minds of today's youth is crossing all danger signals. Their rudderless ships are floating on the surface of this materialistic world without any direction whatsoever. The youth who are the future of India are aimlessly wandering without any destination. The greatest fear is, what will happen to these fresh flowers if they are not well protected in time from the harmful effects of sensual pleasure. The wild fire of lust and greed is engulfing the entire youth community. They are becoming the victims of the so-called modern culture. They are falling prey to all sorts of bad habits and becoming weak, physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually. Due to lack of proper guidance from parents, elders and teachers, they are dissipating their youth energy only to invite physical and mental diseases. Forgetting their prime duty—to study and to acquire knowledge and skills through self-discipline and

concentration—students are spending most of their precious time in entertainment and enjoyment. They are least bothered about the long-cherished moral, ethical and spiritual values taught and practised by their ancestors and are blindly imitating the western culture. The result is all-round moral and spiritual degradation. Swami Vivekananda could sense this danger long ago when he said, "But mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materializing civilisation of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round."

No great things can be achieved without conservation of physical, mental and spiritual energy. The right time to achieve that is youth. The first 25 to 30 years of life is meant for learning. In ancient education system students were known as Brahmacharins. A student without Brahmacharya is like a fruit without juice, a flower without smell, a temple without deity and a body without life. Brahmacharya and student life

always go together. Running after money, sensual pleasures and spending considerable time for comforts and entertainment is a sure sign of fall from the ideal. Such students because of their scattered, restless and fickle minds will not be able to develop one-pointed concentration. And without concentration of mind great achievements are not possible. "To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts," says Swami Vivekananda.

The root cause for most of the problems our youth are facing today is sex and fear complex. Many have vague ideas about the practice of Brahmacharya. Here we are trying to answer some of the questions often asked by students regarding the practice of Brahmacharya.

Q-1. What is Brahmacharya?

Ans. The direct meaning of Brahmacharya is to restrain oneself from sexual enjoyment by thought, word and deed. Brahmacharya includes not only the control of sexual organ but also all other senses. The literal meaning of Brahmacharya is the mode of life which leads to the realisation of Brahman or God.

Q-2. Is it possible to practise Brahmacharya in this modern age?

Ans. Where there is a will there is a way. There is nothing impossible to achieve in life. It is not only possible but essential for the total development of an all-round personality and good character. Retention of *veerya* is life and loss of *veerya* is death. A student who is aware of the power of Brahmacharya will certainly try his best to practise it by all means. Do you know what Swami Vivekananda said, "Do you see simply by the observance of strict Brahmacharya (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time–one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country."

Q-3. What are the benefits of practising Brahmacharya?

Ans. It improves the power of concentration and memory. Vedic Knowledge has come down to us only through the memory. Because of strict practise of Brahmacharya students of those days were able to retain the entire Vedas

in their memory. Sexual energy when converted into Ojas, strengthens the brain and the nervous system. It helps to develop mental strength to face challenges in life and sharpens the intellectual faculty. It helps to control the negative emotions such as anger, hatred, jealousy, fear, etc., opens up the reflective and creative faculties of the practitioner and enable him to manifest great talents, creativity and originality. Practice of Brahmacharya also helps us to improve physical health, increases resistance and immunity which keeps a person away from all types of diseases. Most of the psychological problems are caused by animal passions. Brooding over lustful thoughts leads to mental problems, which can be easily avoided by the practise of Brahmacharya. Finally, Brahmacharya leads to spiritual awakening and development of divine qualities such as love, compassion, devotion, gentleness, courage, confidence, fearlessness, forbearance, contentment, tranquillity of the mind, etc.

Q-4. If everyone practises Brahmacharya, how will the creation go on?

Ans. Since we have not created this world, why should we bother about it? It is God

who has created it and therefore he will certainly take care of it. Moreover, in the Bhagvad Gita , Lord himself has declared lust and anger as most sinful and enemy of man here. People are born with different mentalities and tendencies. A person whose mind is full of inertia (*tamas*) is little better than an animal. His animal passions will not allow him even to think of the ideal of Brahmacharya.

Q-5. Does it mean that in order to practise Brahmacharya one should remain a bachelor throughout life?

Ans. If one can remain a bachelor in order to achieve high ideals and has enough strength, one can certainly do so. But for students practice of Brahmacharya is an essential discipline. Even married people can practise Brahmacharya. There are different rules for them.

Q-6. What are the rules for married people?

Ans. God has kept this urge of regeneration in human mind only to perpetuate his creation and not for enjoyment. *Veerya* is

meant to be used only for procreation and not for self-indulgence. For married people Brahmacharya can be broken only when they feel the desire for progeny. If they realise this truth they will not become a slave to lust, nor lose their stock of vital energy. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that after the birth of one or two children, husband and wife should live like a brother and sister directing their minds towards spiritual enlightenment. In *Sanatana Dharma* marriage is considered to be a sacred act. Marriage is not meant for physical enjoyment but only for good progeny. A wife is considered to be a partner in life to practise dharma; she is called *dharmapatni* or *sahadharmini.* Children born out of prayer and self-control will certainly exhibit great virtues, but children born out of lust and over-indulgence will become weak and bereft of divine qualities. Swami Vivekananda had all praise for mother Sita for her wonderful qualities as a wife, when he said, "Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience, all suffering without a murmur, she the ever-chaste and ever-pure wife, she the ideal of the people, the ideal of the Gods, the

great Sita, our national Goddess she must always remain."

Sri Ramakrishna was married to Sri Sarada Devi only to demonstrate to married people that wonderful ideal of chastity in married life. Both were free from carnal passions, led a life of self- control and realised the ultimate goal of life—spiritual enlightenment.

Therefore, controlled sex life is essential for married people. Over indulgence will only lead them to premature old age and early death.

Q-7. Some doctors are of the opinion that practise of Brahmacharya is harmful to health. How far is this true?

Ans. There may be a grain of truth in it when they look at this problem from the psychological point of view. Suppression of the sexual urge may sometimes lead to psychological problems. But just to release sexual impulse through indulgence is not at all a permanent solution to the problem. There are people who practised unbroken Brahmacharya and manifested heroic strength and vigour. They also knew the seriousness

of the problem. But they have handled this problem positively and saved the whole mankind from great disaster, by providing positive methods to sublimate sexual passions. By sublimating this baser instinct we can transform ourselves into a storehouse of tremendous physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength. So the solution to the problem is not suppression or self-indulgence but sublimation of sexual impulses.

Q-8. What are the methods to sublimate sexual passions in order to practise perfect Brahma- charya?

Ans. Practice of Brahmacharya is comparatively easy when we cherish great ideals in life. Animals are body-bound creatures. Their entire life is made up of the senses. No human being can enjoy sensual pleasures with the same intensity as animals. Great scientists, poets, artists, musicians, philosophers and spiritual seekers derive immense joy in pursuit of their goals forgetting even the existence of the body. For them sensual pleasure appears insipid and useless compared to intellectual and spiritual

joy. They can easily convert their sexual energy into intellectual and spiritual energy.

Sexual desire has its roots in the mind and therefore it is necessary to change the entire thinking process by systematic training and suggestions. An empty mind is the devil's workshop. It is better to keep the mind always engaged in some kind of useful work. Sitting idle and brooding over negative thoughts is the root cause of mental depression. Thinking and planning about work, and deep study of the subject will not only help us to improve the quality of work but will help to divert the mind from evil thoughts.

PRACTICAL HINTS:

Deep-rooted lustful thoughts in the sub-conscious mind will make their presence felt, sometimes even more violently and with tremendous force, making a person absolutely helpless. When such thoughts arise, one need not be afraid or nervous. Let us face them boldly and they will disappear into thin air. When you are overpowered by lustful thoughts, introspect, analyse, discriminate and replace them with another set of powerful

and positive thoughts and you will succeed in driving them out.

1) Introspection:

i) O my mind, why are you brooding over such dirty thoughts? Don't you know I am a student? I have to concentrate on my studies. If I fail in my examinations I will get a scolding from my parents and teachers, my friends will also discard me; moreover, for a student like me, it is a sin to think of lustful thoughts. So, please concentrate on study and give up thinking of evil thoughts.

ii) O my mind, you want to enjoy sexual pleasures. Don't you know that for students, indulgence in sexual pleasures is a great sin? If something goes wrong how can I show my face to my parents, relatives, friends and society? *Veerya*, a precious gift of God, is not meant for wasting through indulgence. It will only make me weak and bereft of energy and vigour.

iii) O my mind, don't think that nobody will know about your immoral deeds. You may be able to hide your heinous deeds from others; but what about God, who is always sitting in

your heart as the innermost *Self*. He knows everything about you, your thoughts, intentions, words, deeds and everything else. How can you cheat Him?

iv) O my mind, after committing blunders people go for abortion etc. Is it not a sin to kill innocent life? Do you want to indulge in such sinful deeds?

v) O my mind, this body of mine is a temple of God. He dwells within me as the light of consciousness. Is it not my duty to keep this temple pure and clean to receive His blessings? If I indulge in wrong deeds God will be displeased with me.

vi) O my mind, my parents have full faith and trust in me. They have a very high opinion about me. They love me greatly and can never doubt my character. They have given me full freedom. Should I deceive them through such indulgence? If I do something wrong I will be causing untold suffering to my parents. Because of my misbehaviour the entire society will look down upon them.

vii) O my mind, if I indulge in sexual pleasure before marriage, I will be cheating and

deceiving my would-be wife or husband. After marriage if the truth comes out, it will only create suspicion which may lead to misunderstandings, quarrels, harassment, doubts and even separation and divorce. Should I take such a risk?

viii) O my mind, if I waste all my energy before marriage, I will be unfit for married life. I will be physically weak, mentally imbalanced, intellectually poor and spiritually bankrupt. In such a case how will I be able to run my family?

ix) Inspired by the ideal of Brahmacharya, there are many young boys and girls leading a celibate life in order to attain purity of mind to realise God. There are many brahmacharis and sannayasis, nuns, sisters, staying in Ashramas, convents and serving society. If they are able to practise life-long Brahmacharya, why not I also try, at least a bit of it? Even today, when people are practising this ideal of Brahmacharya, certainly it is not impossible.

x) O my mind, don't you know that people commit crimes forced by this most dangerous enemy of man, lust. One impulse of lust makes their entire life miserable. They have to spend

their whole life in a prison house away from their near and dear ones, kith and kin. Every day you read in the paper such cases of rape and murder caused by this deadly enemy; still you hanker after that. For temporary enjoyment you will have to suffer all your life. Poor prisoners! How they weep and cry to meet their relatives and friends but are denied an opportunity to do so. What is the use of repenting after the mistakes have been committed? So, be alert, beware, be careful.

Such powerful suggestions will make your mind serious and thoughtful. Once you are able to convince your mind, it will become your great friend and will protect you always as your very close and dear friend.

2. Study:

Books are our best friends only when we make the right selection. Otherwise, books can be the most dangerous enemies. Today, the entire market is flooded with all types of books. Those who are genuinely interested in practising Brahmacharya should never touch such literature which stimulate the desire for sexual enjoyment. It is an unfortunate state that day and night vulgarity, obscenity, and provocative

pictures, scenes, literature are displayed through newspapers, magazines, and tele media. Today, youngsters are attracted by such literature. They are corrupting their minds by reading such dirty books without discrimination only to land into trouble . They are not aware of the amount of harm they are doing to themselves. The impressions created by reading such books on the subconscious mind can lead them to many psychological and mental disturbances. The habit of reading good, positive, educative, thought-provoking, inspiring, and strengthening literature alone can help them to build right character and total personality. For modern youth, Swami Vivekananda's literature can serve this purpose. It is most relevant, practical and inspiring, particularly for youth to develop perfect character. The mind needs food in the form of great ideas to think and practise. Study of lives and teachings of great personalities and scriptures will satisfy the hunger of the mind which will result in good conduct, behaviour and character.

3. Japa: (Repetition of the Divine Name)

The divine name is a powerful weapon to destroy the demon of lust. Great people have

demonstrated the power of the divine name. They could conquer not only lust but all other negative emotions such as anger, greed. fear, etc., just by repeating the divine name. Repetition of the divine name has tremendous power to root out all negative emotions from the subconscious mind. Whenever you get lustful thoughts, just start repeating God's name. Do it mentally and let no one know what is happening within your mind. The mind cannot think of two thoughts at a time. The moment you start repeating God's name, lustful thoughts will vanish in a moment like vapour. The dark cloud of lust will be carried away by the strong wind of the divine name. Whenever your mind is free, engage it in Japa; otherwise, it will go on brooding over evil thoughts. If you continue the habit of Nama-japa with faith and devotion, it will not only help you to conquer lust but will work like a shield to protect you from psychological disorders.

4. Meditation:

Meditation is a scientific and systematic process through which we can erase the deep-rooted past impressions from the mind. It is

very easy to accumulate undesirable impressions by exposing ourselves to negative forces. But it is very difficult to destroy them. Meditation is a process of churning which replaces the bad impressions with good ones. Those who practise regular meditation will not be easily carried away by negative emotions. They develop tremendous mental strength which enables them to keep harmful emotions perfectly under their control.

5. Prayer:

Self-effort alone is not enough to fight against this deadly enemy, lust. One needs superhuman strength to encounter it. Self-effort when combined with God's grace makes the task easy. To receive divine grace, in order to conquer lust, it is necessary to pray to God with a sincere heart. Lord is the strength of the weak. He will certainly listen to the prayer of a sincere aspirant, who seeks His help to overcome animal passions. Let us pray in this manner:

"O Lord, the support of the lowly, the strength of the weak, my heart is burning with lustful emotions. My mind is weak and is always carried away by powerful, turbulent and restless

senses, in spite of my efforts. To fight against this enemy is like climbing the Mount Everest. My efforts are not sufficient to encounter this enemy. I feel depressed and frustrated when I am overpowered by it. You are the embodiment of strength and virility. Please grant me that supreme, divine strength to conquer this enemy. I seek your help and grace in my sincere efforts to practise Brahmacharya. Your help, your blessings, your grace is the only support for weak minds. Since I have taken refuge in you, please don't forsake me."

6. Attitude:

It is not necessary to run away from society in order to practise Brahmacharya. While living in the world, mixing with people and leading a normal, active life one can practise Brahmacharya just by changing one's attitude. Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinobha Bhave, Paramahamsa Yogananda lived in this world like you and me, led a very active life, mixed with people freely but were always above all temptations. How could they achieve that? By

developing the right attitude. Here are few hints to cultivate that attitude.

i) Every man should look upon every woman as his mother, sister or daughter except his wife. Similarly, every woman should look upon every man as her father, brother or son except her husband.

ii) The Divine Mother herself has taken the form of all women in this world. Therefore, look upon every woman as the manifestation of the Divine Mother.

iii) The Spirit within the body has no sex. Man-woman, black-white, short-tall—all these differences are only on the physical level. Self or Atman is beyond gender, caste, creed and all such attributes. Transcend the idea of body; look upon everyone as divine spirit or self or soul. Possess childlike innocence while dealing with the opposite sex. Children are free from the sex idea. Let us respect and admire the beauty of the soul, beauty of character, the beauty of purity and never be carried away by the physical appearance of man or woman.

Since it is not possible to change the world, let us change ourselves. Let us change our

attitude towards others and nobody will dare to approach you with a wrong motive.

7. Food:

Food plays a vital role in controlling sexual passions. One who has not been able to control his tongue, will never be able to control other senses. Food is meant for the preservation of the body and not for satisfying the palate. One should take just enough for the sustenance of the body and no more. Our diet should be healthy and well-balanced. The habit of eating in between meals must be given up. As far as possible, one must avoid rich food. Eating too much of sweets, oil, spices, chilli and tasty dishes are harmful to the practise of Brahmacharya. Over-eating leads to indigestion which makes the task more difficult.

8. Exercise:

In order to practise Brahmacharya we need to burn the excess energy in the body. Accumulated energy in the body gives rise to lustful thoughts and bad dreams. Regular physical activities or exercise such as yogasanas, walking, swimming will keep the body fit and free from

diseases. A sick and weak body cannot withstand the force of lust and anger and often succumbs to temptations.

9. Will-power:

To fight against lust is not an easy task. Deep-rooted impressions are so powerful that a little carelessness or over-confidence can lead to a drastic fall. But one need not be afraid because it is difficult; it will bring great joy when we succeed in our practice. Even a little success will give us a sense of satisfaction. This is a great challenge, and heroic souls alone can accept it since it needs tremendous will-power. In order to strengthen our will, it is better to take resolutions or vows. It does not mean we are able to observe the vows completely from the very beginning, but it means that honest and sincere efforts are made in order to reach perfection.

10) Some More Suggestions:

1) Keep away from bad habits such as smoking, drinking, drugs, etc., which excite the nervous system and stimulate sexual desire.

2) Keep your body, clothes and surroundings neat and clean

3) Be moderate in everything. Over-exertion—mental as well as physical—should be avoided.

4) Whenever you feel a craving for sexual indulgence take a cold water bath. It will cool down the heat of passion.

5) If free mixing with the opposite sex gives rise to lustful thoughts causing sexual excitement in your mind, it is better to keep away from such associations.

6) Idle gossip and indecent talk leads to distractions of mind. Therefore, keep yourself away from such useless gossip.

7) Fasting twice a month (Ekadasi days) will help to curb the senses and to control the excess energy in the body.

8) Regular practice of pranayama, simple breathing exercises twice a day for 10 minutes at a time will make your mind calm.

9) 'Simple living and high thinking': let this be your motto; clothes are meant for protecting and covering the body and not for decoration.

Fancy and fashionable dresses will only increase your attachment to the body, making practice of Brahmacharya difficult.

10) Talking, listening, viewing things which stimulate the urge for sexual enjoyment should be shunned.

11) Always keep good company. Be selective while choosing friends. Associate with holy and noble people and avoid bad company by all means.

Q-9. Some are of the opinion that long practice of Brahmacharya may lead to impotency. Is it true?

Ans. Perfect control over lust and impotency are totally different things. Don't get confused and mix them up. A person who has self-control is not an impotent person; but he has perfect control over his animal passions. He is not a slave to lust; whereas an impotent person is not free from lust but due to some biological disorder he is unfit for ordinary worldly life.

Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra, a man of perfect control, lived with his young wife, Sita, for many years in the forest but was never

overpowered by lust. That does not mean that he was impotent. He broke Brahmacharya only after returning to Ayodhya when he felt the need for progeny. The result was the birth of two heroic, bright, courageous, bold, intelligent, strong, fearless and glorious children, Lava and Kusha.

Q-10. How to avoid and prevent wet dreams? Are they harmful to health?

Ans. It's a natural phenomenon. With the growth of the body there will be a change in hormones. Those hormones create disturbances and restlessness in the minds of adolescents. These changes in the body and the mind give rise to lustful thoughts, which find expression through wet dreams. There are several other reasons too. Over-eating, over-sleeping, exciting food, exposure to stimulating pictures and literature, etc. Since this is a natural process, one need not get panicky about it. Loss of *veerya* in dream is not so harmful. But one should not lose *veerya* consciously by all sorts of artificial methods and indulgence. In order to minimise wet dreams certain precautions are to be taken.

1. Light food at night.

2. Cold water bath

3. Reading good books, repetition of God's name and sincere prayer before going to bed.

4. Looking at the picture of God before falling asleep.

5. Early to bed and early to rise will help in minimising wet dreams. Most of the dreams occur in the early hours of the morning. Those who develop the habit of getting up early in the morning can easily avoid wet dreams.

Q-11. Is it possible for those who have lost *veerya* in the beginning out of ignorance but are interested in practising Brahmacharya again?

Ans. There is no need to feel guilty or depressed on account of this. Swami Vivekananda said that man travels not from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth. The beauty of human birth is that we can undo what we have done. The solution to the problems is not in brooding over problems but thinking of the strength to overcome them. Let us forget about the past and taking fresh resolutions, start with new zeal and enthusiasm.

Even married people can practise Brahmacharya. Mahatma Gandhi took a vow of Brahmacharya in 1906, at the age of 37. He could succeed considerably in his efforts. It was the power of Brahmacharya that gave him a tremendous moral and spiritual strength to fight for freedom.

Q.12. What is the role of Brahmacharya in spiritual life?

Ans. According to *Sanatana Dharma*, the goal of human life is freedom. That can be achieved only through the realisation of our real nature. We know everything about this external world through our senses but are ignorant about our innermost self. How beautifully a poet has expressed this idea! 'How wretched is the man, with honours crowned, who having not the one thing needful found, dies known to all but himself unknown!' Self-knowledge cuts asunder all relative bondages such as birth, death, old age and sufferings. Realising the immortal soul within this mortal body, one attains freedom, eternal life, eternal peace and infinite happiness. In order to realise this truth, one has to transcend body consciousness. Self-control is an essential

requisite for progress in spiritual life. Indulgence in sense enjoyment only strengthens our body-consciousness, obstructing the way towards spiritual realisation. The sages of Vedic period were married; at the same time they were men of realisation because of their perfect self-control.

A weak mind and a weak body are not fit for higher realisation. To withstand long hours of meditation one needs strong nerves and a chaste brain. An unchaste brain gets heated even by a little practice of meditation. Headache, trembling of the body, hallucinations these are all signs of a weak mind and a weak brain. Practice of Brahmacharya makes brain and nerves strong by transforming sexual energy into Ojas. Therefore, almost all spiritual organizations insist on the practice of Brahmacharya for speedy progress in spiritual life.

Q.13. The West does not believe in the ideal of Brahmacharya; still people there are strong and live a long life. How is this so?

Ans. Do you mean that we are perfect in this matter? Rather, we are becoming worse than animals. In the list of AIDS and HIV cases.

India's name figures among the top few countries. In spite of having such a wonderful cultural heritage, how have we become so degraded? There are a good number of people in the West who, realising the emptiness of materialism, are turning towards spirituality. Christianity also emphasises the ideal of chastity. Poverty, chastity and obedience are the three main pillars of Christianity. Inspired by these ideals there are many sisters, nuns, fathers leading chaste lives in the service of God. Saint Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa of Avila and many Christian mystics have practised and preached this ideal of chastity. There are many foreigners settled in India and leading pure lives in different Ashramas and holy places. They are disgusted with sensual pleasures and are earnestly seeking real peace and happiness. They are looking towards India for spiritual guidance. It is high time that we equip ourselves by studying and practising these great eternal values in order to share this treasure with others.

Just living long and becoming physically strong is not the purpose of human life. Plants and trees can also live for thousands of years. There are animals like elephants, tigers, lions, and bulls, much stronger than human beings.

But brute strength is not enough for human growth. The practice of Brahmacharya alone can give us not only physical but mental, intellectual and spiritual strength, resulting in infinite peace and happiness.

Q.14. What is Ojas?

Ans. Ojas is not something that you can see through your physical eyes. It is like butter hidden in the milk. Ojas is a refined and purified part of human energy. By the constant practice of Brahmacharya this *veerya* again is transformed into Ojas. Here are the words of Swami Vivekananda on Ojas:

All the forces that are working in the body in their highest become Ojas. You must remember that it is only a question of transformation. The same forces that are working as muscular energy will be changed into Ojas. That part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily changes into Ojas.

The great sexual force, raised from animal action and sent upward to the great dynamo of the human system, the brain, and there stored

up, becomes Ojas or spiritual force. All good thought, all prayer, resolves a part of that animal energy into Ojas and helps to give us spiritual power.

Of all the energies that are in the human body the highest is Ojas. This Ojas is stored up in the brain, and the more Ojas is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong.

It is only the chaste man or woman who can make Ojas rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. That is why in all religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants, you will always find absolute chastity insisted upon.

Ojas is that which makes a difference between one man and another. The man who has much Ojas is the leader of men. Ojas gives them a tremendous power of attracting people.

This Ojas is the real energy and in human beings alone this storage of Ojas is to be accomplished. One in whom the whole animal sex-force has been transformed into Ojas is a god. He speaks with power, and his words regenerate the world.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LUST

I am lust. I am most powerful and I could even defeat the so-called great heroes. Though I stay very close to human beings, close within their minds, they are not able to detect me. Even the learned ones are unable to trace my origin. Sometimes I attack them directly, sometimes when they try to capture me I take a different route altogether which no one can even imagine. I catch them unawares. I present myself in the form of sympathy, compassion, love and slowly appear before them in my real form. Some wise ones try to catch me even in those forms; then I pretend as if I am left out of their minds altogether, but the moment they think that I am out they try to behave carelessly out of over-confidence, and I again show my face to them unawares. I have no mercy. I do not care what happens to the victims. That is not my business. My job is to swallow as many as possible and burn them alive. I am the descendant of demons. In our race of danavas, we don't care much for relations. When I enter into the minds of people, the very first thing that I do is to convert them into demons. I make them forget all relations and they commit heinous deeds. A lustful father does not think

about his relations with his daughter, overpowered by me. I create doubt and suspicion in the minds of people. I try to break families, creating suspicion in their minds. Our ancestors were not that powerful because people used to believe in God. But in Kaliyuga, it is very easy for me to catch my prey. People have no faith in divine power. I am utterly helpless when people take shelter under the divine protection and can never go near them. Their weapon of divine name makes me weak and powerless. I could delude Ravana, though he belongs to our race but was very arrogant and dominating. In order to teach him a lesson, I influenced him to abduct Sita, and destroyed him. I could capture even the great Vishwamitra and he fell flat just seeing the beauty of Menaka. But he was a strong-willed man, a hero, indeed; ultimately I had to accept my defeat, when he became Brahmarshi Vishwamitra. Great kings and ministers lost their kingdom when they came under my spell. Their self-indulgence made them weak and careless only to be captured by enemies. I have ruined even the demi-gods like Indra, who committed a blunder with Ahalya, wife of the great sage, Gautama. I even tried to capture

Lord Rama, when I presented myself in the form of Shurpanakha. But Lord Rama could sense my presence in Shurpanakha and I had to accept my defeat; but poor Shurpanakha had to suffer on account of my mischief. I tried even to distract the mind of Lord Shiva when he was in deep meditation. But he could sense my presence and burnt me into ashes by opening his third eye of knowledge. I am terribly afraid of him. I usually don't want to destroy the people of my race, but at the command of Lord Narayana I had to destroy Bhasmasura when the Lord Himself took the form of Mohini. When I capture the mind of a person, I make him blind; that's why they say love is blind. When I possess the mind then even an ugly face appears to be a beautiful one for a lustful person. Wherever I go, my friends always accompany me only to increase my power. I am like a fire and they are like ghee and butter. They are anger, jealousy, greed, hatred, egotism, fear, attachment, etc. Most of the criminals are victims of our mischief. The whole world is under my grip. When I forget that it is the Lord's creation and He is the ruler and out of ego start thinking that I am creating the world, I am ruling the world,

the Lord appears on this earth as an incarnation taking the human body only to crush my ego and make me realise that it is He who rules and not I. I am afraid of that *supreme being*. As long as people follow His teachings and take refuge in Him by cultivating devotion to His lotus feet, I keep myself away, but again when they forget the glory and power of God and start doubting His very existence, I appear in my terrible world- bewitching form only to attack them mercilessly. That's why the Incarnation of this age Sri Ramakrishna said, 'O good man, beware of lust and greed' *(Sadhu Savdhan)*.

WHAT THEY SAY

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

To be able to realise God, one must practise absolute continence. Sages like Shukadeva are examples of an *urdhvareta*. Their chastity was absolutely unbroken. There is another class, who previously have had discharges of semen, but who later on have controlled them. A man controlling the seminal fluid for twelve years develops a special power. He grows a new inner nerve called the nerve of memory. Through this

nerve he remembers all, he understands all.

Loss of semen impairs strength. But it does not injure one if one loses it in a dream. That semen one gets from food. What remains after nocturnal discharge is enough. But one must not know a woman.

The semen that remains after nocturnal discharge is very 'refined'. The Lahas kept jars of molasses in their house. Every jar had a hole in it. After a year they found that the molasses had crystallised like sugar candy. The unnecessary watery part had leaked out through the hole.

JESUS CHRIST

You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery'. But now I tell you, anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart. So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away. It is much better for you to lose a part of your body, than to have your whole body thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is much better for you to lose one of your limbs than for your whole body to go to hell.

BHAGAVAN BUDDHA

If the woman be old, regard her as your mother; if young, as your sister, if very young, as your child.

Better far, with red-hot irons bore out both your eyes, than encourage in yourselves sensual thoughts, or look upon a woman's form with lustful desires.

Better fall into the fierce tiger's mouth, or under the sharp knife of the executioner, than to dwell with a woman and excite in yourself lustful thoughts. Therefore, I say, restrain the heat, give it no unbridled license.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Civilization, true civilization, should mean the power of taking the animal-man out of his sense-life—by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher—and not external comforts.

Chastity is the life of a nation. Do you not find in history that the first death-sign of a nation has been unchastity? When that has entered, the end of the race is in sight.

No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore we must learn to control the grand powers that are already in our hands

and by will-power make them spiritual instead of merely animal. Thus it is clearly seen that chastity is the cornerstone of all morality and of all religion.

Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy, but do not emasculate, because that is throwing away the power. The stronger this sexual force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. The Brahmacharin must be sexually pure in thought, word and deed.

Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.

The purer the mind, the easier it is to control it. Purity of the mind must be insisted upon if you would control it. Perfect morality is the all in all of complete control over mind.

Be pure first and you will have power. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and that is what gave them power.

SWAMI YATISHWARANANDA

Modern psychologists have done a great service to humanity by their researches into the nature of the unconscious, dreams, motivation, complexes, repression, etc. But very many of them have in effect done an equal amount of harm by propagating the theory of free expression. Though many eminent psychoanalysts have protested against this abuse of a noble science, the idea that suppression of sex is harmful has rapidly gained popularity in the West. The Yoga psychology, on the contrary, believes that conscious suppression of sex with a spiritual aim is not only not harmful but also absolutely essential. Repression may be dangerous, but not Yogic suppression followed by sublimation of the sex instinct through love of God and meditation. At first this may lead to tension and conflicts. But then, is there any higher venture which does not cause some tension or struggle? The true and earnest spiritual aspirant soon overcomes all internal troubles, and through divine Grace reaches a higher plane where he is free from the conflicts of the lower planes.

However, through physical means alone one can never control sex which has its roots deep within the personality structure. The most important point is to tackle the problem at the mental level. We find that imagination plays a dominant role in our life.

The main point to note is that the mind should never be allowed to form wrong pictures and brood over them. This is possible only by the practice of producing counter thoughts. This is what Patanjali advises us to do in his Yoga-Sutras: "To obstruct thoughts which are inimical to Yoga, contrary thoughts should be brought." This is an important technique of great help to spiritual aspirants. By constantly thinking good thoughts the whole old bad thought structure can be changed. We may be near a bad or impure thing physically, but at the same time can be very far from it mentally and psychically. In order to remain unaffected, we should raise a strong mental barrier to insulate ourselves on the thought plane. But this is not enough. It is a negative process. We should bring in a positive factor also, i.e. we should think of the Divine or of some holy Personality most intensely, filling our whole mind with that

thought. Draw yourself away physically and mentally, and then give your whole mind and attention to the Divine alone, and do not allow it to stray away towards the object of temptation. Do not allow yourself to go near it either physically or mentally. Then, in a very easy and natural way, we learn to draw ourselves away from the things and persons that tempt us, to raise a strong barrier between them and us, and to remain unaffected.

Physical nearness is not the only danger. The person who tempts us may be far away physically, but we feel a tremendous attraction for him or her on the thought plane. So even when the person who attracts us or the object that tempts us is only on the thought plane and not physically near, we should do exactly and scrupulously what we are told to do on the physical plane, i.e. we should in no way communicate with that person, but should dissociate ourselves mentally from him or her, draw our mind away from all thoughts connected with the object of temptation, and raise a strong barrier or even a feeling of loathing or disgust for that person. And, after having done that, we should see that we give

all our thoughts and feelings to the Divine alone. Creating a strong dislike or disgust for the object of temptation is not the ultimate solution, but in many cases it proves to be very helpful as a stepping-stone to the sublimation of feelings and desires, and so it should be made use of.

It is a very vital point to do this consciously, deliberately, in a systematic way. At the same time, one may do more of japa, practise more meditation and prayer, repeat some elevating passages even if the mind is divided or is in a state of unrest, even if there is a terrible tug-of-war going on in the mind. Somehow or other, in the case of all aspirants, a strong counter-current of spiritual thought is to be raised.

Practically speaking, all our troubles are more mental than physical, and unless there be mental troubles there can never be any physical ones. Unless something in us responds to the outer stimulus, whatever it may be, there can be no object of temptation. So the defect lies in us more than in others.

If we are not able to create the higher mood as soon as the trouble arises, we should

first draw ourselves away from the person or object of temptation and then try to create that mood. There should be a conscious, deliberate cutting off in all such cases. Those who are always in higher mood will experience less temptations. It is only when a man forgets God or his higher self and dwells on the worldly plane, that temptations come upon him frequently. Always keep a good stock of holy imaginations and ideas, so that you can use them as weapons the moment any undesirable thought or feeling arises and tries to find some expression on the mental or physical plane. Suppose a person attracts you. Raise at once a very intense counter-picture of your *Istam* against that of the other person. Imagine that the person is dragging you down and think at the same time strongly of your *Istam* or chosen ideal, setting the picture of your *Istam* against that of the other person. Thus it becomes easier to evade the subtle charm of the object of temptation and change the thoughts and feelings regarding it. But one should love one's chosen ideal intensely. Those who love God intensely are not easily affected by the charms of physical beauty and sex.

MAHATMA GANDHI

I can affirm, without the slightest hesitation, from my own experience as well as that of others, that sexual enjoyment is not only not necessary for, but is positively injurious to health. All the strength of body and mind that has taken long to acquire is lost all at once by a single dissipation of the vital energy. It takes a long time to regain this lost vitality, and even then there is no saying that it can be thoroughly recovered. A broken mirror may be mended and made to do its work, but it can never be anything but a broken mirror.

When so strict is the Law of Brahmacharya, what shall we say of those guilty of the unpardonable sin of illegitimate sexual enjoyment? The evil arising from adultery and prostitution is a vital question of religion and morality and cannot be fully dealt with in a treatise on health. Here we are only concerned to point out how thousands who are guilty of these sins are afflicted by venereal diseases. God is merciful in this that the punishment swiftly overtakes the sinners. Their short span of life is spent in abject

bondage to quacks in a futile quest after a remedy for their ills. If adultery and prostitution disappear, at least half the present number of doctors would find their occupation gone. So inextricably indeed has venereal disease caught mankind in its clutches that thoughtful medical men have been forced to admit that so long as adultery and prostitution continue, there is no hope for the human race, all the discoveries of curative medicine notwithstanding. The medicines for these diseases are so poisonous that although they may appear to have done some good for the time being, they give rise to other and still more terrible diseases which are transmitted from generation to generation.

I hold that life of perfect continence in thought, speech and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. And the nation that does not possess such men is the poorer for the want.

I have not a shadow of doubt that married people, if they wished well to the country and wanted to see India become a nation of strong and handsome full-formed men and women, would practise perfect self-restraint.

Let me make it clear that those who desire to observe Brahmacharya with a view to realizing God need not despair, provided their faith in God is equal to their confidence in their own effort. Therefore, His name and His grace are the last resources of the aspirant after Moksha.

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Save the spiritual store in your body by observing continence.

– Swami Vivekananda

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.

– Swami Vivekananda

HOW SRI RAMAKRISHNA TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES

Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated through his life that the practice of perfect Brahmacharya is possible even for the married people. When Sarada Devi asked him, 'How do you look upon me?' Straight came the reply from Sri Ramakrishna, 'The Divine Mother Bhavatarini who is in the temple, the mother who has given birth to this body, and staying in Nahabat now and who is massaging my feet are one and the same.' He treated every woman as the manifestation of the Divine Mother, and worshipped his own wife as Mother Shodashi. When Sri Ramakrishna asked her, 'Have you come here to drag me down to the worldly life? She also gave a befitting reply, 'Why should I drag you down to the worldly life? I have come here only to help you on your path.' Both of them were free from carnal desire, and there was perfect understanding between them. By leading a pure celibate life both could attain the ultimate goal of life. Their love for each other was not based on physical relations. Ordinary

mortals can never understand even an iota of that selfless and divine love. Sri Ramakrishna was a perfect teacher and could guide his young disciples on the path of spirituality according to their mental attitude. Here are a few examples.

1. One day, his young disciple Jogin (later Yogananda) was very much disturbed by lustful thoughts and approaching Sri Ramakrishna for a remedy asked, "Sir, could you teach me how to conquer lust?" The simple reply of the Master was, "Chant the name of Hari (Lord), then it will go." This simple remedy did not convince Jogin. He thought that the Master did not know any practical method and had prescribed something useless. The next day, Jogin went straight to a hathayogi, and while he sat listening to the yogi, Sri Ramakrishna arrived. The Master took Jogin's hand and asked Jogin to follow him. While they were walking towards his room, the Master said, "Why did you go there? Don't do that. Your mind will only stick to the body if you learn those techniques of hathayogi. It will not thirst for God."

Jogin again doubted Sri Ramakrishna. He thought that the Master had discouraged him from visiting the hathayogi to keep him from running away. However, he thought again, "Why shouldn't I do what he told me to do and see what happens?" Later, Jogin said: "Thinking thus, I took the name of Hari with a concentrated mind. And as a matter of fact, shortly afterwards I began to experience the tangible results mentioned by the Master." Swami Vivekananda complimented the great achievement of his brother disciple Jogin and once said, "If there is anyone amongst us who has conquered lust in all respects, it is Jogin."

2. Harinath, another young disciple, later known as Swami Turiyananda, approached him with the same question, "Sir, how can one become free from lust completely?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "Why should it go, my boy? Give it a turn in another direction. What is lust? It is the desire to get. So desire to get God, and strengthen this desire greatly." Sri Ramakrishna's way of teaching was simple, natural and very effective. He did not ask his disciples to mortify themselves. He said, "The more you go towards the east, the farther you

will be away from the west." The more you grow in your love for God, the more your lust, anger, and jealousy will recede.

Another day, Harinath said to Sri Ramakrishna that he was not at all interested in women; in fact, he could not bear them. To this the Master replied: "You talk like a fool! Looking down upon women! Why? They are the manifestation of the Divine Mother. Bow down to them with respect. That is the only way to escape from their snares." These fiery words permanently changed Harinath's attitude towards women.

3. Yet another disciple, Hariprasanna, had the same problem. The Master advised him quite differently. Hariprasanna himself narrated thus: "On that day, the Master said to me: 'Never get involved with women. Always be careful. Let there be no stain on your character. Never look at a woman, even if she is made out of gold,"

Sri Ramakrishna's advice to young Hariprasanna was not to be very intimate with women in order to overcome lust; but in the case of Vivekananda his advice was quite different. When Hariprasanna (Swami

Vijnanananda) questioned Swami Vivekananda about his close association with women, the latter gave a reply that made him realise the greatness of the Master's teachings. Here is that incident.

Seeing Swamiji alone in his room, Vijnanananda asked him frankly: "Swamiji, while you were in the West you associated with the women there; but didn't the Master teach the contrary in this respect? He emphatically told me not to be close to women, however devoted they might be, so I am wondering why you did so. To this doubt, Swamiji's reply was, 'Well, Peshan (Hariprasanna), do you think that what you have understood about the Master is all that he is? What do you know about the Master? Do you know that the Master eradicated the idea of the difference between male and female from my mind? Is there any distinction of sex in the Atman? Moreover, the Master came for the good of the entire world. Did he come to liberate only men? He will save all — both men and women. You people want to belittle the Master by measuring him with the yardstick of your own intellect.

Whatever the Master told you is true; you follow that implicitly. But to me his instructions were different. He not only gave me instructions, he clearly showed me everything. He holds my hands—whatever he makes me do, I do."

From these examples, we understand that Sri Ramakrishna instructed his disciples to overcome lust according to their frame of mind. Those who have enjoyed the infinite bliss of the Atman, or their own self, will cease to have any attraction for worldly enjoyment.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

1. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Narendranath (later Swami Vivekananda) also had to face some critical situations during his student life. How did he face them to protect his Brahmacharya? Here is an incident:

To prepare for his examinations, he was studying in a separate room, where there was less noise and fewer distractions. In this room Naren often used to sing between his bouts of study. There was a young widow in the house opposite, across the lane. She often

came and stood by her window, unknown to him, and listened to him singing. On one occasion, she crossed over from her house, and in the dim light Narendranath saw her standing in the doorway of his room. She was young, and she had come. She had seen him often without his knowledge, and bore great love for him. She had heard him singing this night. To her it was romantic. Narendranath was amazed. He had never seen the girl before. He fell at her feet. "Mother! Mother!" he exclaimed, emphasising the word, "why have you come? Let me regard you as I would my own mother". The girl understood. A moment later, Naren was alone. The next day he changed his room and was never seen in that room again.

In another incident, Narendranath had to face almost the same situation. But this time he was under the protection of Sri Ramakrishna, since he accepted him as his Guru.

Some of his wealthy friends one day invited him for a drive to their garden in the suburbs of Kolkota. He consented joyfully, having no idea what sort of an evening drive

it would be. They stopped in front of a house, and all alighted and entered the grounds where a garden party was being held. These people were merry-makers. Naren enjoyed their singing, and sang himself. After some time he grew tired and was told that he might rest comfortably in a room close by. His friends, seeing him alone sent a dancing girl to amuse him. He was as simple as a child and talked to her like a brother. She told him many interesting things about her life, about her sorrows and misfortunes. Seeing that she had engaged all his interest and sympathy she misinterpreted his feelings and sought to entice him. Instantly, he remembered Sri Ramakrishna and thought of God. He became serious, started to his feet, and said to the girl, "Excuse me, I must be going now. I have a genuine sympathy for you and wish you well. If you know that it is a weakness to lead such a life, you will get over it some day."

During his visit to Egypt, Swamiji went to Cairo along with his followers to visit a famous museum. One day, while sightseeing in Cairo, they found themselves in a squalid street inhabited by women of ill-fame. As

Madam Calve later told the story, a group of women sitting on a bench in the shadow of a dilapidated building began calling to the Swami and laughing loudly. His friends tried to hurry him on, but he detached himself from them and approached the bench. "Poor children!" he said, and he began to weep. The women were silenced and abashed. One of them leaned forward and kissed the hem of his robe, murmuring, "Man of God! Man of God!" Presently, he joined his party, and they walked on.

2. MAHATMA GANDHI

Putlibai, a pious and devoted mother of Mohandas, was in a dilemma when Mohandas asked her permission to go to London for higher studies. She feared that young Mohan would not be able to resist temptation in a foreign land when he was alone there. At the same time, she did not want to be an obstacle in his pursuit of higher studies. Mohandas could read her mind and said, "Mother, you don't worry about me, I shall never succumb to the temptation; if you suspect me, I am prepared to promise you

whatever you ask me for. Putlibai was relieved of tension. She took the boy to their family Guru, and asked him to take a vow that he would never touch wine, meat and woman. Mohandas gladly agreed to these conditions and promised his mother that he would stick to his vows without the slightest deviation. It was not an easy task. How much he had to struggle to keep his promises! But, of course, he could succeed in his attempt and that is what made him the Mahatma.

Here are some incidents of his heroic efforts to fight against lust.

When Mohandas was in England, how he could handle a delicate situation is given below in his own words.

"During the last year, as far as I can remember, of my stay in England, that is, in 1890, there was a vegetarian conference at Portsmouth to which an Indian friend and I were invited. Portsmouth is a sea-port with a large naval population. It has many houses with women of ill fame. The women were not actually prostitutes, but at the same time were not very scrupulous about their morals. We were put up in one of these houses.

Needless to say, the reception committee did not know anything about it. It would have been difficult in a town like Portsmouth to find out which were good lodgings and which were bad for occasional travellers like us.

We returned from the conference in the evening. After dinner we sat down to play a rubber of bridge, in which our landlady joined, as is customary in England even in respectable households. Every player indulges in innocent jokes as a matter of course, but here my companion and our hostess began to make indecent ones as well. I did not know that my friend was an adept in the art. It captured me and I also joined in. Just when I was about to go beyond the limit, leaving the cards and the game to themselves, God through the good companion uttered the blessed warning: 'Whence this devil in you, my boy? Be off, quick!'

I was ashamed. I took the warning, and expressed within myself gratitude to my friend. Remembering the vow I had taken before my mother, I fled from the scene. To my room I went quaking, trembling, and with beating heart, like a quarry escaped from its pursuer.

I recall this as the first occasion on which a woman, moved me to lust. I passed that night sleeplessly, all kinds of thoughts assailing me. Should I leave this house? Should I run away from the place? Where was I? What would happen to me if I had not my wits about me? I decided to act thenceforth with great caution not to leave the house, but somehow leave Portsmouth. The conference was not to go on for more than two days, and I remember I left Portsmouth the next evening, my companion staying there some time longer.

Here is another incident from Gandhiji's life: When he was on the way to South Africa by ship in April 1893, Gandhiji became a close friend of a captain. When their ship anchored at Zanzibar port, how he was caught unawares, Gandhiji narrates: After Lamu the next port was Mombasa and then Zanzibar. The halt here was a long one—eight to ten days—and we then changed to another boat.

The captain liked me much but the liking took an undesirable turn. He invited an English friend and me to accompany him on an outing, and we all went ashore in his boat. I had not the least notion of what the outing meant. And little did the captain know what

an ignoramus I was in such matters. We were taken to some Negro women's quarters by a tout. We were each shown into a room. I simply stood there dumb with shame. Heaven only knows what the poor woman must have thought of me. When the captain called me I came out just as I had gone in. He saw my innocence. At first I felt very much ashamed, but as I could not think of the thing except with horror, the sense of shame wore away, and I thanked God that the sight of the woman had not moved me in the least. I was disgusted at my weakness and pitied myself for not having had the courage to refuse to go into the room.

This in my life was the third trial of its kind. Many a youth, innocent at first, must have been drawn into sin by a false sense of shame. I could claim no credit for having come out unscathed. I could have credit if I had refused to enter that room. I most entirely thank the All-merciful for having saved me. The incident increased my faith in God and taught me, to a certain extent, to cast off false shame.

3. LAKSHMANA

Lakshmana sacrificed all his comforts and luxuries, all his enjoyments and pleasures in order to serve his dear brother Sri Rama and mother Sita Devi. For fourteen years, he was like a security guard to Rama. He guarded them day and night. Fourteen years of unbroken Brahmacharya gave him such a tremendous power that he could kill Meghanada or Indrajit, son of Ravana, whom even Indra could not defeat. This Lakshmana lived with Rama and Sita, but what a wonderful character! During his stay with them, not once did he glance at the face of Sita even by mistake. When the upper garment and ornaments were shown by Sugriva, Rama cried out in great grief, and asked Lakshmana to identify them. Lakshmana's answer to this appeal for confirmation is well known. He said, "I know only some; I have never raised my eyes and looked her in the face. I always saw her feet to which I bowed in reverence. I can't identify the armlet or the earrings—I can see the nupura."

4. HANUMAN

Swami Vivekananda exhorted our youth to follow the ideal of Mahavira Hanuman when he praised his character in glowing terms.

'You have now to make the character of Mahavira your ideal. See how at the command of Ramachandra he crossed the ocean. He had no care for life or death! He was a perfect master of his senses and wonderfully sagacious. You have now to build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that, all the other ideals will gradually manifest themselves in life. Obedience to the Guru without questioning, and strict observance of Brahmacharya—this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so on the other he represents leonine courage, striking the whole world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama—a supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama. Only the carrying out of Sri Rama's behest is the one vow of his life! Such whole-

hearted devotion is wanted.

The damaru and horn have to be sounded, drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes, and with "Mahavira, Mahavira" on your lips and shouting "Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom", the quarters are to be reverberated. The music which awakens only the softer feelings of man is to be stopped now for some time.

GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

आयुस्तेजो बलं वीर्यं प्रज्ञाश्री महद्यश :
पुण्यं च मत्प्रियत्वं च लभ्यते ब्रह्मचर्यया ।।

Practice of Brahmacharya will give one long life, tejas (lustre), bodily strength, valour, mental strength, virility, brilliance, wealth, great fame, merit and will make the practitioner dear to the Lord.

ऊर्ध्वरिता जितक्रोधो नियताशी य संयमी ।
निग्रहाग्रह२शक्त स्यत्यसंधो भेवेद्दषिः ।।

He who practises Brahmacharya and is free from anger, moderate in his habit of eating, self-controlled, energetic, and truthful becomes a Sage.

न तपस्तप इत्याहब्रह्माचर्यं तपोत्तमम् ।
ऊर्ध्वरिताभवेद्यस्तु स देवो न तु मानुष : ।।

Penance is not tapas. Brahmacharya is supreme tapas. A man of perfect continence is not man but God himself.

मुत्युर्व्याधि जरानाशि पीयूषं परमौषधम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं महद्यत्नं सत्यमेव वदाम्यहम् ।।

The nectar and the supreme medicine; to overcome death, cure disease and bear with old age is Brahmacharya, that can be attained only through great effort. This is the truth that I bespeak to you.

शान्तिं कान्तिं स्मृतिं ज्ञानमारोग्यं चापी सन्ततिम् ।
य इच्छति महद्धर्मं ब्रह्मचर्यं चरेदिह ।।

Those who are desirous of peace, tejas, good memory, knowledge, health and good progeny should practise this great dharma of Brahmacharya.

ब्रह्मचर्यं परं ज्ञानं ब्रह्मचर्यं परं बलम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमयोह्मात्मा ब्रह्मचर्येव तिष्ठति ।।

Brahmacharya is supreme knowledge. Brahmacharya is supreme strength. God is of

the form of Brahmacharya and is in Brahmacharya.

ब्रह्मचर्यं नमस्कृ त्य चासाध्यं साधयाम्यहम् ।
सर्वलक्षणहीनत्वं हन्यते ब्रह्मचर्यया ।।

I bow down to Brahmacharya which made impossible possible for me. All evils and weaknesses can be eliminated by Brahmacharya.

मरणं बिन्दुपातेन जीवनं बिन्दुधारणात् ।
तस्मादतियत्नेन कुरुते बिन्दुधारणम् ।।

Loss of Veerya is death. Retention of Veerya is life. Therefore one must preserve it with great effort.

ब्रह्मचर्यमवाप्तस्य सुकरश्चित्तनिग्रह : ।
भवेद्रिक्तस्य तेनासौ कष्टात्कष्टतरो ध्रुवम् ।।

Mind control becomes very easy for one who practises Brahmacharya. For one devoid of this virtue, mind control is very difficult.

भजतो ब्रह्मचर्यं स्यान्मेरु : प्रत्यन्त पर्वत : ।
ब्रह्मचर्येण रिक्तस्य भवेत्पादस्सुराचल : ।।

For one who is steadfast in the practice of Brahmacharya, the Meru mountain appears

as a hillock, and for one who is incontinent even a small hill appears as the Meru mountain.

ब्रह्मचर्यं दृढं यस्य सागरो गोष्पदायते ।
ब्रह्मचर्यविहीनस्य गोष्पदं सागरायते ।।

For a strict adherent of Brahmacharya even an ocean appears as a puddle formed of cow-foot and a cow-foot puddle becomes an ocean for a non–Brahmachari.

ब्रह्मचर्य व्रतंसारं व्रतनामुत्तमम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तपस्सारं ब्रह्मचर्यं महत्फलम् ।।

Brahmacharya is the essence of all religious vows. It is the foremost of all the sacred observances. It is the essence of all penance and is the great fruit.

ब्रह्मचर्यस्य सुगुणं क्षुणु त्वंच सुधा धिया ।
आजन्मभरणाद्यस्तु ब्रह्मचारी भवेदिह ।।

I tell you the greatness of Brahmacharya. No misery of this world can afflict a man who practises Brahmacharya for life.

न तस्य किन्चिदप्राप्यमिति विद्धि नराधिप ।
बहुकोटि ऋषीणांच ब्रह्मलोके वसन्त्युत ।।

Nothing is unattainable by a man of continence. Owing to the power of Brahmacharya crores of sages have attained Brahmaloka.

रेतो नावकिरेज्जातु ब्रह्मव्रतधरः स्वयम् ।
अवकीर्णेऽवगाह्यप्सु यतासुस्त्रिपदी जपेत् ।।

A student who has taken the vow of a Brahmacharin should never consciously allow the ejaculation of his semen to take place. If it should take place naturally by itself, he should bathe, perform Pranayama, and utter the Gayatri Mantra.

- Srimad Bhagavata

स्त्रीणां निरीक्षणस्पर्शसंलापक्ष्वेलनादिकम् ।
प्राणिनो मिथुनीभूतानगृहस्थोऽग्रतस्त्यजेत् ।।

Excepting the householder, others should not indulge in sexually motivated behaviour towards women, like viewing, touching, holding homely conversations, joking, etc. They should avoid also the sight of animals and birds copulating.

- Srimad Bhagavata

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ।।

That fool, who (outwardly) controlling the organs of action keeps dwelling on sense-objects with the mind, is called a hypocrite.

- Bhagavad Gita

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स कुखी नरः ।।

He who is able to withstand the urge arising from lust and anger in this very life, before the fall of the body, is poised and a happy man.

- Bhagavad Gita

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेतू ।।

There are three types of gates to hell destructive of the self – lust, anger and greed; therefore these three should be shunned.

- Bhagavad Gita

THE POWER OF LUST

The roots of lust are indeed deep. Even Sri Krishna has hinted at it in answer to a pertinent question by Arjuna. He not describes the power of lust but in a significant in-depth analysis, points out three seats of lust:

Arjuna asks: Prompted by what does a man commit sin, even though unwilling, being goaded, as it were, by force?

The Blessed Lord says: This is lust, this is anger, born of the constituents of rajas, of inordinate appetite and is most sinful. Know it to be an enemy here. O son of Kunti, knowledge is covered by this enemy of the wise in the form of lust which is like an insatiable fire. The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be its seats; covering knowledge by these, it deludes the embodied being. Thus knowing that which is beyond the intellect (self) and controlling the mind by the intellect (self), kill, O mighty armed one (Arjuna), the enemy in the form of lust, which is difficult to conquer."