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The concept of Brahmacharya

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THE CONCEPT OF BRAHMACARYA

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of South Asia

The American Academy of Asian Studies

College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Asian Studies

by

Evelyn Vrat

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary civilization of the western world represents a combination of material development and moral degeneration. Value is measured in 'space' not in 'spirit'. Antecedent to the complications of life with its sufferings, 'fiddlers fees' and disillusionments, how very few realize that true pleasure is not in having, but in being? Fewer still are those whose feelings, thoughts and actions are conscious, aware, self-chosen and self-directed. More often than not, introspection reveals that most are not masters, but the mastered, victims of moods and conflicts. Menninger, noted psychiatrist and chairman of the National Health and Safety Committee, writes:

Nearly half of all hospital beds in America are required for mental illness which remains the nation's number one health problem today. While severe mental illness has necessitated hospitalization for nearly a million Americans, it is reliably estimated that another sixteen million are so afflicted with nervousness as to impair their happiness and future. ¹

However, deep dissatisfaction with life as it appears to be and with the individual's adaption to everyday experi-

¹ W. C. Menninger, "What You Can Do About Mental Health", Scouting, (April, 1958), p. 21.

ence are universal among mankind and are not the symptom of any age or race or stage of civilization. In every age there have been those who were acutely aware of this dissatisfaction and whose lives were spent in a prolonged endeavor to find a remedy for it, and to help their fellowmen benefit from this remedy. In pursuit of this objective, Indian sages impressed the wisdom of brahmacharya centuries ago. Brahmacharya is an embracing principle of life and spiritual pursuits governing each of the four stages of life. Its objective being the mastery over sensuous desires.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Although the Vedas, Upanisads, the Gita and other ancient philosophical and spiritual literature deal with the concept of brahmacarya at every step in terms of control of sensual desires, no one, it appears, has undertaken to deal with the subject apart from brief mention in connection with its aspect of cold austerity. As an austerity, brahmacarya has become confused with continence. As continence, it is a solution of the sex problem, if it can be carried out by the individual without destroying his internal equilibrium and without any harmful influence on his character. If the struggle against the sex-impulse leads to confusion of the character, then continence is no solution. Brahmacarya neither implies old-fashioned physiology summarily dealing with sexual products like the excretions, nor does it suggest denial or 'repression' of sexual activity as a response to stimulation from without or within. Biochemical, physiological and psychological researches during recent years have equipped us with a new approach and understanding of brahmacarya as conveyed by the ancient literature of India. This study was undertaken to examine the concept in the light of modern knowledge, without any taboos and repressions about sexual function and to understand the principle as conveyed by the sages. Its importance being continu-

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ously affirmed in Hindu homes in diverse ways.

It has been dealt with here principally with reference to the male, although philosophically, the same applies to the female.

THE CONCEPT

According to its very basic concepts, the vital spermatic fluid (virya) is the essence of life, both in its maintenance as well as in its creative biological aspects. In its spiritual aspect, virya is the manifestation of sexual function and is the bestower of zeal and support of effort required to control and concentrate the mind toward self-introspection. As Kahn points out:

'Religion brings about the greatest degree of sublimation. No form of experience approaches so close to the sexual in the warmth of feeling as religious experience.'²

Preservation of virya, its utilization by the body and its prevention from wastage, is thus included within brahmacharya. Thoreau has referred to the state of brahmacharya as the flower of the tree, and glory, purity, bravery, etc., as

²
Fritz Kahn, M. D., Our Sex Life (Second edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 45.

its fruit. In Indian literature, Vyasa has stated:

"Brahmacarya is immortality." 3

According to Manu:

He who persists in discharging these (prescribed duties) in the right manner, reaches the deathless state and even in this life obtains (the fulfillment of) all the desires that he may have conceived. 4

In practice, marriage is considered by the Upanisads a religious ceremony and procreation one of the three essential debts of a grhastha (householder) to society and himself. In the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad the method and duty of pregnancy (garbhādāna) has been pointed out as one of the most sacred of yajña (sacrifice).⁵ For its performance, several rules were outlined. Max Muller did not translate this particular portion of the Upanisad; in his opinion the concepts contained therein were of such high order that they could not be grasped through the medium of a semi-obscured language of the West.

³ Vyasa, Mahabharata, (Delhi: Rastriya Prakasana Mandala) p. 436. (In Hindi.)

⁴ G. Buhler (trans.) The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 29.

Manusmṛti: II, 5.

⁵ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Brhadaranyaka Upanisad VI, 2, 13: (New York: Harper and Brothers, Pub., 1953), p. 313.

Eugenics, a closely related field to brahmacharya and founded on similar concepts, is of recent origin in the West. However, while eugenics is akin to brahmacharya, the latter is more developed and inclusive of the broadest concepts of eugenics. Based on the ancient teachings of the sages, brahmacharya represents a great principle in human progress. Physical, mental and spiritual, it is truly the preserver and sustainer of human society. For this, the Vedas have declared:

‘Upon attaining brahmacharya alone, the acharya (perceptor) can make the pupil brahmachari.’⁶

(Brahmachari is one who observes brahmacharya.)

This modern age with its superficial idealism, its secularity and tendency to cover cow-dung heaps with flowers, has been trying to create a glamour about ‘normal life’, the life of the senses. What else is to be expected? Behind the ‘normal life’ and the ‘natural outlook’ are the sanskāras (impressions) of innumerable births, wherein relations to other men and women have been mainly and essentially through the body. Most people never sought to perceive or love or serve them as spirit, above body and mind, but always as body and mind. It is very difficult to over-

⁶
Atharva Veda: XI, 17 (In Sanskrit, translation courtesy of Ved Vrat.)

come these associations. The mind operates within the limitations of associations on the physical and mental planes. Even the very young, innocent and pure are exposed to these 'values' in their most impressionable years.

The importance of an 'austerity' of this nature can best be understood, perhaps, in the relating of this simple tale:

In the midst of a great sea, there was an island with a great wall, a high wall. On that island lived children who sang, danced and played. One day some men came to this island in a rowboat. They called themselves, 'liberators', and said to the children,

"Who put up these walls? Who put up these barriers? Can you not see that they are restraining your freedom and liberty? Tear them down and be free."

The children tore down the walls. Now, if you go back, you will find all these children huddled together in the center of the island, afraid to sing, afraid to dance, afraid to play, afraid of falling into the sea!

Ignorance has probably caused as much trouble in the world as deliberate evil. Knowledge, understanding, a clear-eyed ability to face facts and to act in accordance with them, are man's greatest safeguards. Too often, young

people grow up ignorant of life, ignorant of sex, ignorant about themselves, ignorant of responsibilities to themselves and to others. An ignorant mind is not necessarily an innocent mind. Sexual education, in its proper perspective should not and cannot be disregarded. If a child has been taught from the very outset the truth about it and the natural part it plays in life, the child will grow up without abnormal curiosity or exaggerated carnal appetites. Unfortunately, it would appear that there will always be a group of parents who are unwilling, if not unable, to treat this subject as a natural part of a person's life, as natural as eating, or sleeping, or breathing. Reproduction is as much a process of the human body as digestion, circulation, respiration, etc. To be sure, each of the human organs, together with the knowledge of their proper function, has a significance. However, many parents handle the subject of sexual education of their children as though they were unveiling a shameful and hideous secret. A child can sense this reaction even before he opens the subject. In ignoring, or quieting down his enquiry, a sense of guilt and fear is initiated and the same child would be hesitant to reopen the subject in his home again. Shrugging off this responsibility to 'the school', suggests failure to realize that sexual education is as likely provided by the students as by the teachers, the result being misinforma-

tion usually made ugly. His questions unanswered, the child now seeks new avenues of information, usually resulting in distortions that will mar him and possibly others, for life.

Some parents with a sentimental desire to 'protect' their children, try to bring them up in a belief that life is a garden of sweetness and light, without sorrows or trials or disappointments. This is a poor preparation for living. Children should understand the dangers of life. They should know that happiness is not a matter of good luck. More important, they should know that people can and do destroy their own happiness by their own actions. For his own protection, as well as that of those with whom he will associate, he should know the havoc that unbridled passions create. Parents do not tell children that water is safe and then throw them in to struggle for themselves, and perhaps to go down. They tell them that water can be deep and treacherous and teach them to swim and master it. They do, that is, if they themselves have mastered it; most have not. Thus, the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch. The only way that children will learn to face the bigger problems of tomorrow is to face the small problems of today. The concept of brahmacharya might be compared to a beacon, a guide through life's storms, to the other shore.

CHAPTER II

LOVE AND SEX

A few years ago, under the influence of the Freudian gospel, people went to an extreme to emphasize the importance of the physical aspects of sex desires. In doing so, they overlooked the development of the spiritual and the cultural elements which make men and women friends and comrades as well as lovers. Who has not noticed the affection that flows from the kiss of the mother? Everyone knows of the bonds of love that bind a brother to his sister. This 'love' captures the entire creative aspect of the universe. It is magical. An infant is nourished from it without knowing its useful aspect and views his mother with a look which captivates the heart directly. Love, as has well been said, knows no boundaries. It mitigates the many-ness in the world and brings about unity.

The effect of love changes the child into a lover. He begins to worship the one he loves. He spends time with the object of his attention and acquires a new glow because of it. All his powers are centered in the cultivation of that love. He dreams it, he lives it and he drinks it. Even when he is awake, the object of his love is before his eyes and his heart is always seeking him out.

In western countries there are coeducational institutions of learning. Even in the neighborhood, boys and girls play together and thus come in contact freely and frequently. A boy begins to love a girl and is engrossed in her all through his daily activities. In the East, due to social customs and traditions, boys and girls attend separate schools and thus, do not have the same opportunity to mix together. The boy is attracted towards other boys with whom friendship soon develops. This friendship between boys is not only peculiar to India but is found in other countries as well. However, the friendship between the same sex soon dwindles away after marriage. Since it was a play of love enacted in everyone's life, there is no sex involved in it and yet there are two individuals, the hero and the object of worship. Early in school age, the friends separate and it is all over. The 'play' transgresses the limit because of the 'coming of age' and with it a new outlook. The same love now acquires a mysterious character. From the effervescent love of a child, it transforms into the passion of a young man. The love, which was formerly simple, untainted with sexual desire, now begins to be propelled by sexual urges and desires. This has natural physiological reasons.

The human brain can be divided into two general parts: the frontal and the occipital region. In the frontal region

is the cerebrum or the cerebral cortex. The occipital part is the smaller of the two and is called the cerebellum. The cerebral cortex occupies the larger part of brain and is divided into two lateral halves, as is the cerebellum. It possesses convoluted surfaces which divide them into sections and scientists maintain that 'their number and extent, as well as the depth of the intervening furrows appear to bear direct relation to the intellectual powers of the individual⁸ and the deeper the convolutions, the more the impressions on the mind'. Both cerebral cortex and cerebellum are within the skull protected from shock and have ample space for growth and development. The cerebral cortex, in presence of the individual self within, is responsible to interpret the messages from the five sense organs and convert them into 'savikalpa' knowledge (cognition with thought). The image is formed in the eye, the ear hears, the nose smells, the tongue tastes and the skin feels the touch, but unless these impulses be conveyed to the cerebral cortex, nothing can be perceived. The center of sense-cognition is the cerebral cortex. The cerebellum controls the activities, movements, urges and drives. Love and concern towards

⁸
Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body (Philadelphia and New York: Lea and Febiger, 1924), p. 825.

others, regulatory mechanisms of muscles and various motor organs, are under the control of this part of the brain.⁹ If perchance some injury is inflicted to this organ, a man is no longer able to control the movements of his body. He staggers upon walking.¹⁰ Narcotics and alcohol in greater part affect the cerebellum, resulting in the incoordinate movements of the drunk and the intoxicated. Emotions of love also arise in it and therefore, like alcohol, the former creates a sense of staggering. It should be adequate to outline the physiological processes in the cerebellum.

As mentioned earlier, the cerebellum has two functions:

1. It is the center of worldly activities and urges. Emotions, love of society, sex, affection for offsprings, friendship, family and determination, are all controlled by the cerebellum.
2. It imparts coordination to various organs and regulates their activities; walking, sitting, postural mechanisms and other motor activities are governed by it.

In childhood, the cerebellum is one-twentieth of the

⁹ Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body (Philadelphia and New York: Lea and Febiger, 1924), pp. 825 and 853.

¹⁰ John F. Fulton, A Text Book of Physiology (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1950), p. 186.

11
entire brain. At about the age of twenty-five years, it attains to a larger size. At this time, this smaller part of the brain begins to grow. This age is termed, 'kumara-vastha' (teenage. The word, 'kumar' means 'kutsita mara'; that is, in which age the desire for sexual indulgence can mar the growth of the individual. Normally, as soon as the cerebellum begins to increase in size the individual begins to develop sexual urges and desires and becomes interested in sex and all its by-lines. This is the first cup of youth, so to speak, and more than his head is in the clouds. This experience proves intoxicating and of life's pursuits, becomes 'big game'. Discrimination is soon over-taken.

The span of teenage though short-lived, is laden with turmoil, the result of sexual activity rising within. At this state the life force or vital fluids, commence formation and these secretions enter into the circulation of the blood. Allowed to be absorbed, the person becomes strong physically, mentally and spiritually. If these vital fluids escape prematurely, degeneration occurs. The vital fluids have an immediate effect on the mind. Directed toward physical development, they contribute to the development of muscles. Utilized properly for mental development the vital fluid results in the mental faculty shining forth.

11
Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body (Philadelphia and New York: Lea and Febiger, 1924), p. 794.

In Indian scripture, this vital fluid has been termed, 'virya' or 'retas'. An individual who has never allowed his virya to escape from the body is called, 'urdhavareta'.¹² The virya of a devoted and perpetual brahmacari (aditya brahmacari) never flows downward, but travels upward to develop and strengthen the mental faculties. This is the ideal of the Upanisads. The Self of the brahmacari abides in the Supreme Self. This is accomplished through direction of the virya to the mental center (adhyatmika kendra) in the forehead. Kundalini yoga endorses this principle.¹³ The principle here, is one of sublimation of sexual energy.

If the mental power is directed to the upkeep of the body, the virya makes the body powerful. If, with the help of the mental power, the virya is utilized for developing the memory, the memory becomes strong. The same, if diverted into the channels of sexual desire, results in sexuality that can make an individual hypersexual. The quiescent sexual desires (tanu klesa), manifesting as auto-erotic phenomenon, begin to become active. When sexual desire begins to rise in a child, gradually he diverts his attention to

12

President Ernest Wood, of The American Academy of Asian Studies, personal communication, March, 1958.

13

Havelock Ellis, On Life and Sex, (New York: The New American Library, 1957), p. 35.

similar interests. Love and its sweetness is converted into the sharpness of sexual desire. Though a child, he begins to speak as a young man. Parents often commend themselves for this obvious attainment of premature prowess and intellectual development in their children, quite unaware of what has given rise to it. The child expresses interest in some things and in others he displays a keen sense of shyness. His mind awakens the sanskāra of sexual desire and he is engaged henceforth in solving the secrets of sex. The smaller portion of his brain (cerebellum) which should have normally reached its full development at the age of twenty-five to thirty years, begins to increase in size at the age of ten to twelve years. The spring of life matures into blossom only to drop from the branches.

Due to the undesirable (premature development) of kāma sanskāra, the cerebral cortex begins to function early in life. Sadācāra (good conduct) and its teachings fall by the wayside. Having destroyed his own conduct (sadācāra) companions are encouraged toward similar experience.

Between sixteen and twenty-five years, the drives (pravṛtti) or urges, reach their maximum manifestation. At that time, even the very dull becomes romantic. On one side, the tide of sexual desire approaches and on the other, the most opportune time to mould the character of the person.

If the vr̥ttis (tendencies of the mind) can be controlled at this time, control of the mind can be acquired without particular difficulty, later. In addition to controlling the vr̥ttis, the vr̥ttis can also be directed along constructive lines. Instead of becoming the poet, musician, artist, philosopher, etc., under the fever of sexual excitement and newly acquired energy, his mind becomes content with activities that will usher him off to the land of illusions and away from the realities of life.

Moral disciplines have come to be excessively identified with 'repression' and 'suppression'. The concepts of brahmacarya do not imply that the bud of sexual love must be nipped, nor does it advocate withdrawal from experience which is the valid means of growth. The distinction between brahmacarya and what is ordinarily known as 'repression', is a real one. One really feels harmonized and integrated when one is master of one's own senses, master of one's own mind; when one can live without conflicts and in a spontaneous way. As Coster pointed out:

Experience then becomes more objective; instead of being used by it, he uses it and is the master, where he might otherwise have been the slave. He is the rider of the steed, not the passenger it carries. As such he can choose what he will think

and also what he will feel. If he chooses the experience of love, he is the conscious lover and not the victim of entangling passion. Moreover, he is no longer impelled to wallow in experience, to rest in a sense of pleasure until the pleasure is exhausted, to be shaken by grief until grief itself is a weariness. 14

On the other hand, in becoming a slave of passions, an individual creates a great disharmony within himself and his personality becomes disintegrated.

The principle to be understood is that sexual gratification is different from love; love which is itself the energizer of the individual. There are many who are redeemed by the touch of human love. There are many again whose life would dry up without the springs of human love. 15 Most men are in that condition. Denied and devoid of love, the heart is broken and the cosmic symphony comes to a standstill.

14
G. Coster, Yoga and Western Psychology. (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 161.

15
Eleanor Bertine, M. D., Human Relationships (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1948), pp. 6 and 151.

CHAPTER III

REPRODUCTION AND BRAHMACARYA

All activities of life can be broadly classified into two categories:

1. Maintenance of the physical body and mental development.
2. Reproduction.

The first is a self-regarding act. It is by nourishment alone that the individual can grow and maintain life. Wherever there is life this activity can be visualized. A tree standing in a corner of a far off forest draws nourishment from the air, water, earth and sunlight, for the sake of its life-force (prāna). New green leaves appear, new branches shoot up and it develops into a tall tree. In the morning, birds leave their nests and cross several miles in the skies, reaching distant places, to return again in the evening. The next day they engage themselves once again in the search for something to eat. Their entire life span is spent in this cycle. The beasts of the jungle roam around in search of prey or green pastures and water reservoirs, making their abodes near plenty of food and water. Human beings, too, spend their life blood from childhood to old age, in solving the problem of food.

Manu, therefore, rightly remarks:

Let him always worship his food and eat it without contempt; when he sees it, let him rejoice, show a pleased face, and pray that he may always obtain it. 16

By procuring food, the plants, birds, animals and humans, strive their best to preserve and maintain their individual existence. However, this fight for existence does not last long, as every being ultimately finishes his sanskāras for that species, and dies. The individual existence lasts only as long as the living being controls and has mastery over the different changing circumstances of his life. As long as Self-fulfillment is not achieved, each has to be born, stay alive, preserve the body, fight with the forces of nature and various states and conditions of being which come in the way of his continuity. Even these are not permanent. The time soon approaches when along with other circumstances, the maintenance of life becomes impossible. The man becomes old. The sanyoga (union) between the purusa (the Self) and prakṛti (the world) is experience and life and the disunion with the particular circumstances of one

16

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 39.

Manusmṛti, II, 54.

species - the death.¹⁷ In death, the self-regarding activity of the body preservation ceases. It should be recognized that although cells and other organic structure are dying at every moment, the activity to preserve the body is always present, which is life, itself.

After body preservation, reproductive function comes to the assistance of man. Through this, even upon the termination of one physical existence, the individual makes the specific body alive and continuous. When growth of the plant stops, their life force (prāna) gives rise to beautiful, nicely scented flowers. From them arise thousands of seeds for the continuation of the species. In this way, one single plant ready to be destroyed by the forces of wind, etc., produces potential of several of its kind. In youth, during the mating season, all living beings produce young ones like themselves and in them, find in a way, their continuation to immortality. Even man, hundreds of years after his death, is born again and again in his grandsons and great grandchildren. This is the way in which death, the enemy of life, is defeated and life itself continues to flow in an

¹⁷ Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of China and India (New York: Modern Library, Random House, Inc.), p. 125.

unbroken stream.

As mentioned earlier, maintenance of the body is a self-regarding act. However, the act of reproduction is devoid of this end. Its purpose is to procreate, utilizing the forces of nature which contributed towards maintenance at one time. Just as after the vegetative growth of plants, flowers bloom, similarly, after body maintenance is at its maximum, reproduction begins. Reproduction before maturity is thus, unnatural. It should necessarily follow body growth which has reached its maximum limit. If it begins earlier, it will be at the expense of growth factors which will be hampered. The vegetable and the animal world, except man, obey this natural law. Man calls himself civilized and educated, but misuses the entire principle of growth and reproduction. The result of this unnatural behavior leads him to undesirable consequences in this life and the ruination of many lives.

The growth of life is very mysterious. Sir William Thomson believed that the life in this world came from some other planet. Darwin contended that both plants and animals originated from some unknown common ancestors. Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall believed in the spontaneous production of life from matter, but conceded that there was no proof for this viewpoint. Exactly how life began in the beginning of creation is a question which is still regarded at least by

scientists, as very inconclusive. Kahn¹⁸ says: "It is one of the greatest and most wonderful riddles of nature which we can never solve, for even if the solution were given to us, we should not be able to understand it because these things are superhuman, transcendental." However, the problem of development and growth, once life began, has been well understood by modern biological sciences.

Scientists agree that the basis of both vegetable and animal life is protoplasm. The protoplasm is a viscid substance containing two types of activities - anabolism and catabolism. The two together constitute metabolic activity resulting in the manifestation of life. The Taittiriya Upanisad has emphasized the importance of food as follows:

Do not speak ill of food. That shall be the rule. Life, verily, is food. The body is the eater of food. In life is the body established; life is established in the body. So is food established in food. He who knows that food is established in food, becomes established. He becomes an eater of food, possessing food. He becomes great in offspring and cattle and in the splendour of sacred wisdom; great in fame. 19

The protoplasmic metabolism is the principle which permeates life. Microscopic examination of amoeba reveals an-

18

Fritz Kahn, Our Sex Life (Second Edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 30.

19

S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 313.

other important structure; that of the nucleus. The nucleus is important because of its role in the reproductive process of the amoeba. Protoplasm within the nucleus is termed, 'nuclear protoplasm'. As the nucleus divides into two, each part gathers protoplasm and two amoebae are produced. These two further divide and the continuation of species occurs.

Organization of higher animal life rests along similar principles. Equipped with protoplasm and nucleus are the 'cells' of various tissues and organs. Whereas in amoeba, however, the nucleus divides into two independent units terminating its own existence entirely, in higher animal life including man, a small group of specialized cells give rise to 'ovum' (egg), or the generative cell.²⁰ These generative cells are continually produced and do not annihilate their existence as would be true of amoeba. There, the entire body (cellular protoplasm and nuclear protoplasm) is required to undergo division in the production of a new individual, while in higher forms this same objective is achieved through the specialized generative cells, a minute segment of the individual organized cellular structure.

20

J. Arthur Thomson, Outlines of Zoology, (London: Henry Frowde and Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p. 53.

This microscopic segment responsible for the principal role of reproduction, is known as 'spermatozoa' in the male and 'ovum' in the female. Spermatozoa have been described in the Ayurveda as 'utoāḍaka virya' (procreating virya) and the ovum as 'rāja-kana'. Both are essentially 'nucleus cum protoplasm'. Fertilization occurs when the sperm is united with the ovum. Growth proceeds as the fertilized ovum now divides into two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two and so on, culminating in the formation of an organized and differentiated structure. This growth is unlike that of the amoeba because here the cellular portions do not separate; they grow together and distribute amongst themselves various specialized functions. Upon completion of an organized structure, this emerges from the body of the parent and continues its existence, independent of the former. This is multiplication by division and has been called the 'cell theory' by embryologists.²¹ The cell is thus the unit to be credited for various tissue, muscle, bone, nerves, etc., and the body is the functioning unity of various cells, each specialized to perform its function.

²¹ J. Arthur Thomson, Outlines of Zoology, (London: Henry Frowde and Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), pp. 40 and 70.

The basic physiology and function of reproduction is the same throughout the world. The organs necessary to engage in this act of reproduction are known as 'generative organs'. Brief mention must be made of this process in vegetable and animal life as well as the rules which govern them.

Vegetable Life

Flowers possess reproductive organs of plants. The male organs of a flower are known as the 'stamens' and the female, as the 'pistil'. On the stamens are borne cells containing pollen; these are the bearers of essential male cells in the flowering plants. The pistil lies at the base of the flower and contains the ovule. When pollen and ovule are both present in a flower, self-fertilization sometimes occurs; otherwise, pollen from other flowers is carried to the ovule through various agencies of wind, insects, birds, etc. Insects maintain perhaps the most important role in this play, transferring pollen from flower to flower; such as the bee, butterfly, etc. In Indian literature and poetry, these same insects have been called, 'purohita' (the leader and intermediary priests arranging marriages). It is interesting, therefore, to note that even the male and female elements in flowers are brought together in union.

Lower Animal Life

Other species of the animal kingdom display various forms of sexual reproduction. In some, union of the male and female elements is brought about in an external environment. Numerous eggs are produced within a female fish during a given season. Simultaneously, the tests which lie within the abdominal cavity of a male fish become active and produce spermatazoa. Having secured a place for her to lay her eggs, the male follows to shower the sperms from his body over them. Union of eggs and sperms thus occurs and the fertilized eggs give birth to new fish. Here, there is no physical contact between the male and female parent. This reproductive process is quite similar to those of plants, in which the pollens and the pistil are present on the same plant, but located differently. Reproduction of amphibians, frogs, etc., is along comparative lines. There are certain variations, but essentially the union of male and female principles occurs outside the body of the female. This is, therefore, called external fertilization.

In several other species, internal fertilization occurs without male and female uniting together. Sperms make their entry inside the body of the female and there the fertilized ovum develops.

For production of new life among higher animals, male

and female must come together in union, involving important organs of each. In the male there is the penis; in the female, the vagina. There is a strong parallelism in the generative organs of all members of higher species. While similarities and suitability of reciprocal organs within one species is a factor for the continuation of a particular species, dissimilarities and peculiarities preclude interspecific unions. Through contact and union of the generative organs and their reproductive elements, fertilization occurs. This, in Indian literature, is known as 'garbha' (conception).

Mention might be made here of certain animal species, particularly of insects, where the male perishes soon after fertilizing eggs, as well as the female upon having laid these eggs. The drone is a representative example of this phenomenon. Another is suggested among butterflies in the great flight of the male in search of a mate, only to perish soon after copulation, followed by the female having laid its now fertilized eggs. This suicidal union of lovers climaxing in the death of both, has been a subject of romantic literature in India and elsewhere.

Human Life

To understand various references that will be made

within the scope of this subject, let us examine the generative organs physiologically. In Indian thought, these organs symbolize the creative aspect of the individual; they are not only considered sacred but their creativity is acknowledged.²² Scientific and accurate importance of these organs should be stressed in children to avert psychological difficulties and disorganized usage later on. This knowledge should be conveyed to children in the same manner and with the same ease as knowledge of other organs. It is to be noted that generative organs are one of the eleven indriyas (organs).

Those eleven organs which former sages have named, I will properly (and) precisely enumerate in due order,

(That is) the ear, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose as the fifth, the anus, organs of generation, hands and feet, and the (organ of) speech, named as the teeth.

Five of them, the ear and the rest according to their order, they call organs of sense, and five of them, the anus and the rest, organs of action. 23

Their control is as necessary as that of the mind (citta).

²² Temples of Siva in India and Jagannatha Temple at Puri, India.

²³ G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886.), p. 46.

Manusmṛti II, 89 - 92.

Control of the senses constitutes an essential part of introspection and spiritual growth.

A learned should try to control the senses whose 'nature' is to draw towards their objects much in the same way as the driver controls his horse. ²⁴

Prior to the age of fourteen, there is not much of a radical change in the physiological development of a child. ²⁵ It is only after this span that the time approaches for dynamic physiological and physical growth. About this age, a youth displays his deeper language of emotions through his general appearance and the proverbial 'innocence of the child' disappears. Actions, emotions and behavior become so apparent that they appear almost as if speaking for themselves. In spite of great effort to withhold these feelings they burst forth through various expressions and manifestations. These reveal a newly acquired outlook. Apart from mental changes, physical changes also make their appearance. From approximately fifteen to twenty-five years, a period of ten years, the mind becomes full of unexpressed and hidden desires. The young are thus secretly, but actively, engaged

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G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 46.

Manusmṛti II, 88.

²⁵

John F. Fulton, A Text Book of Physiology (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1950), p. 1197.

in searching mysteries within themselves. This period of life can roughly be divided into: 1. kumarāvastha (twelve to sixteen years of age) and 2. yuvāvastha (fifteen to twenty-five years of age). In the former, the physical changes begin to appear. The secondary sex characteristics of hairs over the face and the pubic region, etc., make their appearance. The voice also undergoes a change. Reproductive organs begin to secrete their hormones and girls begin their catamania. These are only the beginning signs of approaching youth. Mere approach of youth, however, does not qualify the entering into the married state. The ripe time for marriage should be considered only when complete development of the body and reproductive organs has been attained. No one engages in business without a good stock in trade.

Age in years is not a rigid limitation, as life is quite flexible. Some may mature earlier, others may not. This depends considerably upon nutrition, environment and the way of life. Climate also plays an important role. In rural conditions where life is simple and austere, a growing child attains kumarāvastha somewhat later. In an urban (rich and indulgent) environment, (engaged in luxuries and exposed to unorganized, uncontrolled desires) adoles-

ence and maturity occurs early.²⁶ All these secondary sexual characteristics represent the manifestation of sexual desires and activity and should not appear earlier than yuvāvastha.

What is the reason behind this sudden change which makes individuals a man from an adolescent? It is essentially the glandular activity and hormonal mechanisms playing their part in contributing to the developmental physiology of the living beings. The unbalance of endocrines can result in precocious development of sex and lead to harm in the unfoldment of life. It is like a fruit ripened out of season by artificial means, lacking the natural flavor. The salivary glands of the mouth supply the mouth with ptyalin without which life would not be possible. The stomach produces gastric juices. The liver, the pancreas and testes all produce their own secretions. Some of these secretions are for aiding the digestive process, others act as lubricants, still others are external and not internal. Likewise, reproductive elements of secretions take part in the creation of a new form. At one time, biologists knew only about those glands which had ducts for the flow of their secretions to various parts of

the body. The ducts were definite channels through which the secretions were transported. Some of these ducts led to the outside, like the sweat glands and the tear ducts. Urine, perspiration, tears, are excretory products and require elimination from the system through openings to the outside. However, bile, pancreatic juice and other internal secretions are useful and must be conserved and utilized by the body. These are transported through various ducts where needed.

It was later discovered that there are certain glands which also secrete, but their secretion is not carried by any duct. The pineal gland, thyroid, adrenal and pituitary are examples. Although there are no ducts for transporting secretions which are produced by them, they constitute important glands of human beings, exerting great influence, not only in the physiological well-being, but also in influencing and regulating the personality. These glands are known as ductless glands and their product, as hormones. These hormones are utilized as internal secretions. It is also now a matter of common knowledge that some glands have their own ducts, some are ductless, still others produce secretions part of which are transported by ducts and part without them. The example of such glands are found in the liver, stomach and testes.

Changes encountered in life, from the adolescent stage to manhood are principally due to the effect of internal and external secretions of the testes.²⁷ It is why, when the testes are removed, sexual maturity is not achieved and the secondary sexual characters are not developed. Acquaintance with the history of the Moghul rulers²⁸ reveals that in the palaces of the Moghul kings, eunuchs were employed around female quarters. Whenever supply of these neuters fell short, new ones were recruited from childhood after removal of their testes. It has been observed by modern endocrinologists that orchidectomy causes no very prominent changes in the general condition of the adult person. As with ovariectomy, the younger the individual at the time of orchidectomy, the more striking are the resulting somatic and psychic changes. In preberthally orchidectomized boys the development of the sex organs (penis, prostate, pubic hair, etc.) is markedly inhibited.²⁹ Castrate males are apathetic towards sex and some four thousand such boys were surgically prepared for work in the harems. The first authentic clinical studies

²⁷ John F. Fulton, A Text Book of Physiology (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1950.) p. 1196.

²⁸ Ishwari Prasad, History of India (Allahabad: Indian Press, 1940), p. 142. (In Hindi).

²⁹ Hans Selye, Textbook of Endocrinology (Montreal, Canada: Acta Endocrinologica Inc., 1949), p. 601.

of male hypogonadism were published by the Viennese School on the basis of investigations made upon the Skoptsi, a religious sect which in Russia and Roumania, practised castration in young children. From their observation the authors definitely concluded that the testes are not only concerned with reproduction but in addition, exert important effects upon somatic growth, fat distribution and psychic development.³⁰

Importance of the Androgenic Hormones (Internal Secretions)

While modern medical science has based their identification upon the study of the effects of castration on testicular insufficiency, the repair of these changes by the administration of androgens and the correlation of levels of excreted androgens with different bodily states, the sages of India laid down the same principle with the wisdom and broader vision for normal life and spiritual pursuits.

The action of the androgenic hormones involve many parts of the body and many physiological functions not obviously related to reproduction.^{31, 32} The list of functions

³⁰ Hans Selye, Textbook of Endocrinology (Montreal, Canada: Acta Endocrinologica Incorporated, 1949), p. 601.

³¹ J.B. Hamilton, Therapeutics of Testicular Dysfunction, Glandular Physiology and Therapy (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1942), XVII.

³² Vest, S.A. and Barelare, B.Jr., Androgens and the Treatment of Testicular Hypofunction (Clinics, 1943), I: p. 1216-1265.

or actions of androgenic hormones is impressive but probably is still incomplete.

The full development of the penis is contingent upon stimulation by androgens; it remains infantile when insufficient is available and grows when androgen is administered. The attainment and maintenance of adult size and secretory function in the accessory glands of reproduction; seminal vesicles, prostate, bulbo-urethral glands, also require adequate stimulation by androgen.

Hair is a conspicuous secondary sex character with the type, pattern and degree of growth differing in the two sexes and influenced by androgens. Hair in the axillary and pubic regions depends upon androgens for its full development; it does not appear until puberty and is sparse in castrates and eunuchoid men. Similarly, the sebaceous glands of the skin are also influenced by androgens. Acne vulgaris, an inflammation of the sebaceous glands, does not appear until puberty, but during adolescence is present in the majority of both males and females. The androgens also affect the color of the skin. In castrates and eunuchoids, the skin is furrowed or finely wrinkled, soft and sallow. After administration of androgens and in normal men, the skin is firmer, ruddier and has a darker color.

In a spectrophotometric study by Edwards et al.³³ it was found that as compared with normal man, castrates have a lower quantity of hemoglobin in the skin and that a higher proportion is reduced hemoglobin. Administration of endrogens brought the level of all these substances within the normal range.

In many instances, according to Hamilton, Vest and Barelare,^{34,35} the pattern of distribution of subcutaneous fat appears to be influenced by androgens. The voice is also affected by them. One of the most readily recognized actions is upon the depth of the voice. The eunuchoid and prepubertal castrate retain the voice of an immature boy.

It is rather easy to see that manhood is the result of secretions from the testes and womanhood from the secretions of the ovaries.³⁶ Upon removal of the testes, the male acqu-

³³ E. A. Edwards, J. B. Hamilton, S. Q. Duntley and G. Hubert, Cutaneous Vascular and Pigmentary Changes in Castrate and Eunuchoid Men (Endocrinology, 1941), 28: p. 119-128.

³⁴ Vest, S.A. and Barelare, B.Jr., Androgens and the Treatment of Testicular Hypofunction (Clinics, 1943), 1: p. 1216-1265.

³⁵ J. B. Hamilton, Therapeutics of Testicular Dysfunction, Glandular Physiology and Therapy (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1942), XVII.

³⁶ Hans Selye, Textbook of Endocrinology, (Montreal, Canada: Acta Endocrinologica, Incorporated, 1949), p. 356.

ires female characteristics. The female, on the other hand, upon administration of testoids, reacts with permanent changes such as 'masculinization' of the larynx and hence, deepening of the voice. The hirsutism caused by testoids is also noticeable.

37

Several investigators claim that 'wound healing and other regenerative processes are accelerated by testoids, perhaps due to their nitrogen-retaining protein-anabolic action. This latter property, as well as the general feeling of vigor associated with sexual stimulation, may also be responsible for the so-called rejuvenating effect of these hormones. The healthier the sex glands, therefore, the better the growth attained. Old age is primarily due to a lack of these hormones and in modern practice, the geriatric medicine supplements doses of vitamins with sex hormones. Even transplants of sex glands produce changes amongst those who have lost their masculinity. This will strengthen the concept of the ancient sages that through brahmacharya alone, death can be conquered.

37

Hans Selye, Textbook of Endocrinology. (Montreal, Canada: Acta Endocrinologica, Incorporated, 1949), p. 356.

38

Circular for Physicians on Eldec, (Detroit: Parke Davis and Company, 1958).

Brahmacarya is of three classes; the lowest, the middle and the highest.³⁹ The lowest class requires a man to live the life with self-control for twenty-four years and to undergo good training. After this, he should get married, but even then he should not be voluptuous. The middle class brahmacarya engages a person up to the age of forty-four years. This person studies under the guru (perceptor) or ācārya and his motto is, "If this first part of life is acted upon the advice of guru, with tapa, I shall be able to succeed in this middle class brahmacarya with my prāna imbibing the qualities of rudra." The highest class of brahmacarya is up to the age of forty-eight years. Those who complete this kind of brahmacarya attain the main objectives of their life; dharma (virtue), artha (prosperity), kāma (enjoyment) and moksa (liberation).

Extreme engrossment in desires or total absence of desires, are both harmful to man since, if a man has no desire, he will not acquire the knowledge of the Vedas nor will he be able to do the virtuous deeds as enjoined by the Vedas.⁴⁰ A brahmacari is enjoined to guide himself through

³⁹ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisad: Chandogya Upanisad III, 16 (New York: Harper and Bros. Pub., 1953), p. 394.

⁴⁰ G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), pp. 29 and 30.

Manusmṛti: II, 4 and 8.

life in conduct conducive to the development of health. With this objective in mind, he is to engage in samyama, or conservation and utilization of these hormones and secretions of sex glands along with the control of other senses and organs which contribute to arouse premature sexual desire. In adhering to this he acquires a longer life with better health. Simultaneously, he circumvents the loss of sexual strength, a counterpart of premature or disorganized sex activity.

As pointed out earlier, secretions from tests are both external and internal. Internal secretions or hormones commence from immediate childhood, contributing toward normal and healthy growth. The external secretion, or the semen, consisting of secretions and sperms, is produced from puberty and is responsible for the reproduction of species. Internal secretions, or the hormones, are utilized by the body in growth processes through the blood and the lymph. Through the vascular system it provides strength to the nervous system, the brain and the spinal cord. These hormones have been well illustrated to be responsible for anabolic effect and if they continue to be produced in the system, give rise to continuous anabolic effect by creating a sense of well-being. The lack of them produces old age. By misuse of the genital organs and their secretions the hormones are depleted with the result that physical,

mental and spiritual growth is impeded.

Stimulated by sexual desire through the hypophyses, the testes begin to produce spermatozoa (external secretion). This slows down the production of the internal secretions (hormones), which are important to the development and growth of the body. It is because of these that faces look bright, so characteristic of youth. This internal secretion creating all the liveliness in the face and other parts of the body of the individual is termed 'oja', in Indian literature. The external secretions (semen) is called, 'retas', 'sukra', or 'bija'. If the external secretion or sukra is not allowed to dissipate, it will endow the body with oja. Perhaps this principle would explain the youthful look of a young lady and the dull (nisteja) appearance of an older woman. Though designers of feminine fashions of the day demand a rosy and youthful appearance, they are also cognitive that this would be 'natural' only to a limited few. We are all quite familiar with their widespread advertisements of hormone creams, 'living girdles' and 'I dreamt I went romancing in my Maiden-Form bra'. The paint that it takes to super-impose this 'rosy and youthful appearance would probably cover an old barn with better results. Anyway, women will continue to gird themselves like mummies, in search of recapturing a youthful appearance long since spent. This is, in itself, an expression

of anxiety, a desire to prolong youth which is only natural with the preservation of internal secretions.

As already mentioned, the internal secretion begins with birth, but the external secretion begins only when the spermatozoa are matured. Near the onset of youth to approximately twenty-five years of age, these external secretions begin to accumulate in the testes. This accumulation either proceeds to be utilized by the body or has a tendency toward external secretion. Its emission occurs in one of the following ways:

1. Voluntary emission: When spermatoc fluid accumulates in excess it may be emitted through undesirable effort.⁴¹ It should be remembered that a married man purposefully emits this fluid in marital intercourse, either with the intention of reproduction or for inter-absorption of each other's hormones. This physical integration between married partners brings about deeper understanding and regard. Also, through this exchange of hormones, each is benefitted. Somatic ego is, in this way, nourished. The ego sense (ahankara) is normally to be overcome for spiritual self-development.⁴² This would explain why continence,

⁴¹
Fritz Kahn, M. D., Our Sex Life (Second edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 26.

⁴²
Christopher Isherwood, Vedanta for the Western World (Hollywood: The Marcel Rodd Company, 1946), p. 4.

implied in connection with brahmacharya is to be undertaken during spiritual practices. The basis of most spiritual undertakings is detachment; it cannot be achieved until attachment to sexual pleasure and acquisition of hormones from others is also relinquished.

2. Involuntary and Spontaneous Emission: The physical location of the testes is such that it can be affected by the rectum and bladder. When these are both full, their pressure on the testes and prostate may produce seminal emission.⁴³ This is an unnatural state and a person troubled with this manifestation of illness should consult a physician.

3. Emission Resulting from Erotic Dreams: When the testes are full, spermatic fluid may be expelled during an erotic dream and this is known as 'night emissions'. Even when the reservoir of spermatic fluid is low, a mind with erotic ideas produces strong sex desires during the sleep state (swapna state), which may result in consequent emission.

Emissions either without desire, or in sleep, are an impairment of physical strength and individual psychology. Each requires medical treatment.

43

Fritz Kahn, M. D., Our Sex Life (Second edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 21.

In children, the problem of bowel and bladder control being solved by the age of three, the interest shifts to himself and the outside world. He wants to know the why and wherefore of things with an ever expanding curiosity. Most of his questions are answered except in one sphere, that of sexuality. Grownups often regard this as something about which the child must not have information. Of course, this is a blind tradition without a real cause, but it is true that young children are bewildered, excited and often made anxious by witnessing the sexual act itself, before having any facts about its meaning, or before they have reached an age to appreciate its significance. There is a difference between a sudden unwarranted exposure to the sexual act and the gradual education of the child by giving factual information about sex, reproduction and brahmacharya. When such information is given gradually, the knowledge is incorporated into the rest of the personality in a healthy way. Even a child learns to control that aspect of personality, just as he controls other senses.

The imaginative adult who is very emotional and yet whose emotions are not too well under control, who is quite romantic and erotic in fantasy life, tends to act frequently more by impulse than by reason. Such people, even during the day in their characteristic form, or at night in dreams,

show sexual or aggressive acts or a punishment for the same. The accompanying sexual tension, or the hallucinated threat of punishment, calls forth larger quantities of anxieties than can be coped with by the psychic apparatus and there is an overflow through the autonomic nervous system to involve organs under its control. Palpitation of the heart, sweating, respiratory embarrassment and even a sexual emission may result. If it occurs during the day, the same psychic stimuli, as in dreams are usually at work, although there is, of course, no conscious knowledge of the sequence of events. In short, a persisting defect in control of desire leads to a lack in emotional control either in the erotic or aggressive parts of the personality, or both. If these secret erotic desires or aggressive impulses can be discovered by the perceptor or the physician and explained on a scientific basis, the person learns to express himself more maturely and with a control of his senses removing the perverted pleasure in the area involved. This circumvents the seminal emissions without proper desire and opportune time and in sleep.

From a perusal of ancient literature it is easy to see that the yogis undertook such practices to eliminate these difficulties altogether and controlled 'seminal emissions' by directing its flow inwards for the utilization by the

body giving new vigor to the undertaking of yoga. These yogis practiced control until the age of forty-eight years. For the psychological explanations given above regarding unconscious emissions, it was also considered necessary to practice brahmacharya at the home of a guru (perceptor) under his guidance. The unwarranted exposure to sexually erotic acts was thus omitted and gradual education acquired for an organized enjoyment of the sexual aspects of life. The ideals of such aspirants were high. They were, so to say, well-integrated and educated in sex physiology and psychology and thus spent their lives in the realization of the Self properly equipped, knowing that:

"maranam bindu pātena, jivanam bindu dhāranāt"

(That by the useless loss of vital fluid, death is drawn near and by its preservation, life is maintained.)

They conserved their sexual energy, converting it into zeal for spiritual attainment. Looking at this from the psychological point of view again, mind can be applied only in one object at a time.⁴⁴ If the libido is in sex, the spiritual aspect will lag. The control of the mind, which in turn controls the reproductive organs, glands, etc., is nec-

⁴⁴ Swami Tulsirama (trans. and comment.), Vaisesika darsana (Meerut, India: Swami Pustakalaya), p. 148. (in Hindi).

essary. Glandular secretions of course, physiologically contributing to the welfare of the body, produce the 'teja' which goes hand in hand with 'the control of sex desire' and 'spiritual attainment'.

CHAPTER IV

CONTROL OF THE SENSES

The process of life appears to be a natural and harmless one. However, it must be admitted that if sexual function is a major aspect of life, there has been much condemnation by parents, teachers and society without intelligent consideration of its rightful place in the pattern of life. It is generally accepted these days that with intelligent information and development of love and good will associated with sexual function, human beings will conduct themselves in a satisfactory fashion, but that fears, taboos, and prejudices on the other hand, may lead to crippling of behavior. When the maturity of intellect and sexual function is achieved and the time for procreation is imminent, Manu advises:

(A student) who has studied in due order the three Vedas, or two, or even one only, without breaking the (rules of) studentship, shall enter the order of householders.

Having bathed with the permission of his teacher, and performed according to the rule the samavartana (the rite on returning home) a twice born man shall marry a wife of equal caste, who is endowed with auspicious marks.

The vow (of studying) the three Vedas under a teacher, must be kept for thirty-six years or or for half that time, or for a quarter, or

until the student has perfectly learnt them. 45

Brahmacarya is 'the right sexuality at the right time' and does not preclude sex education, so very necessary in the maintenance of a healthy attitude towards sex. When a person has been taught to hate or fear some idea or act over a period of time, it is with great difficulty that he can change his point of view. Indian literature reveals a remarkable insight inclusive of matters pertaining to sex and the functions of the genital organs, as well as the sensations associated with them. Children who are credited with average sense and restraint in their sexual behavior will conduct their activities in a better manner than those who are assumed to be without intelligence or will power. In a gurkula where a student went to a guru to learn the brahma-vidya (Self-knowledge), a complete evaluation of his mento-emotional problems was undertaken.

But (a student) who is about to begin the study (of the Veda) shall receive instruction after he has sipped water in accordance with the Institutes (of the sacred law) has made the brahmangali (has put on) a clean dress and has brought his organs under control. 46

45
G. Buhler (trans), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 75.

Manusmṛti: III, 1 - 4.

46
Ibid. p. 43.

Manusmṛti: II, 70.

For achieving brahma-vidya, the Kena Upanisad advises that:

Austerities, self-control and work are its support; the Vedas are all its units; truth its abode.

Whoever knows this, he indeed, overcoming ignorance in the end, is firmly established in the Supreme..... 47

In everyday life the importance of brahmacharya and its implications should be properly understood. The endocrines from the gonads are perpetually functioning from childhood to the end of life. This is utilized by the body and contributes to its physical and mental development and well-being and has been previously pointed out to be the 'ojas'.
The external secretion containing minute sperms is

emitted from a mature body. The emission and production is strictly dependent upon age as it is not always that this is produced. Spermatogenic fluid contains spermatozoa and through the practice of brahmacharya may be utilized by the body. In ancient gurukulas, teachings were given to utilize this fluid and reabsorb it in the body for physical and spiritual growth. Those sannyasi (persons with mastery over

47
S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 692.

sexual desires) were termed 'urdhva-reta'. This was not mandatory to all. Only those who were engaged in the pursuit of the Self and followed yoga and acquired spiritual insight under the guidance of a guru, observed brahmacarya throughout their lives. Such a regimen on behalf of spiritual pursuit and control of senses and organs was not intended for everyone. Those who could not engage wholeheartedly in spiritual Self-realization were oriented with proper education in social ethics, codes and scriptures, toward married life.

Thus has been described the rule for initiation of the twice born which indicates a (new) birth and sanctifies; learn (now) to what duties they must afterwards apply themselves. 48

Marriage at a ripe and mature age was the proper time for spermatic fluid to disseminate. According to Ayurveda, the age for this external secretion to be utilized was twenty-five years of age, depending upon the climate. The

48
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 42.

Manusmṛti: II, 68.

division of life into four asramas were thus a guidance towards this end. In normal life, childhood, teenage and youth should never present moments of upsetness. Due to abnormal education, environment and poor understanding, anxieties are created and peace is lost. About the age of twenty-five years, sperms mature and create sexual desire spontaneously in man. Under normal conditions, this desire is quite understandable. Sexual intercourse at this age is a normal part of living and indulgence is not harmful as is often contended. Neither mental growth nor physical strength is lost through the normal sexual relationship between husband wife who are not only sexually adjusted but well adapted into other normal relationships necessary to circumvent human anxieties.

Difficulties and complications arrive through abnormal living. Nature is interfered with by our ego. Our ego usually determines what we will do and is responsible for most of our decisions. Consequently, normal functions too, are soon overtaken by it. Because of abnormal conditions of life, a child matures earlier than nature intended for his age. The role of environment in the development and control of the physiological functions is very important. Control of the physiological functions in a socially acceptable manner makes a lasting imprint upon the mind becoming a part

of mental processes. When feelings and thoughts exist which cannot be expressed by word or action, they may find expression through some organ system. Parents believe that the added interest which the sexes take in each other in adolescence will have terrible consequences, namely, sexual promiscuity and the dangers of venereal disease and pregnancy. They expect the worst rather than the best of the adolescent. A dance or party is not regarded as a pleasant occasion for the young people to learn to play together and to share each other's lives, but instead is looked upon as a meeting where free sensual indulgence and the satisfaction of all curiosity will leave these young people satiated with life on its threshold. Judging from our own evaluation of our environment and keeping in mind that if the environment was normal and healthy, these difficulties would not arise, Kinsey ⁴⁹ et al statistically summarized the ages involved in pre-adolescent sex play as shown in Table I.

49

A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), p. 162.

TABLE I
AGES INVOLVED IN PRE-ADOLESCENT SEX PLAY

AGE	AGES INVOLVED, PRE-ADOLESCENT SEX PLAY									
	TOTAL POPULATION, U. S. CORRECTION					EDUC. LEVEL 0-8				
	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %
5	4321	9.8	6.5	2.6	5.9	822	7.0	4.7	2.0	3.7
6	4321	15.6	10.1	4.4	10.0	821	13.4	7.8	4.8	10.4
7	4320	22.0	13.2	6.7	13.5	819	17.6	11.2	7.4	14.0
8	4316	26.9	17.0	8.7	18.4	820	25.7	16.0	10.0	20.1
9	4302	28.5	16.7	8.7	21.4	817	28.4	17.0	11.5	22.9
10	4216	36.6	20.8	11.2	27.5	812	36.3	21.4	15.0	28.6
11	3933	37.4	22.0	12.3	27.9	784	36.7	21.7	15.2	29.0
12	2975	38.8	22.7	12.8	29.4	677	37.4	21.9	14.9	30.8
13	1610	35.0	20.2	12.9	26.5	498	33.4	18.1	13.2	26.7
14	424	33.6	17.8	9.3	27.6	181	36.5	16.6	11.8	29.8
15	112	24.1	16.0	5.0	19.9	40	17.5	7.5	5.0	15.0

AGE	EDUC. LEVEL 9-12					EDUC. LEVEL 13+				
	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %
	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %	Cases	Any Sex Play %	Hetero-sexual %	Coitus %	Homosexual %
5	637	9.7	6.6	2.8	5.2	2862	14.0	10.2	1.5	7.5
6	637	16.5	11.0	4.6	9.9	2863	16.5	11.3	2.4	9.8
7	638	21.8	14.7	7.4	13.6	2863	18.5	11.7	2.8	11.0
8	637	28.1	18.2	8.8	17.7	2839	24.8	14.8	5.5	17.1
9	634	29.5	17.4	8.4	21.3	2851	24.6	13.2	3.5	16.2
10	623	38.2	21.8	10.9	27.8	2781	31.4	15.7	4.2	24.2
11	593	39.6	24.5	13.0	28.2	2556	30.2	15.3	3.7	24.9
12	467	41.5	25.9	14.1	30.0	1831	31.4	12.3	3.2	26.3
13	270	38.5	24.1	15.2	27.8	849	25.3	10.0	3.5	21.4
14	59	35.6	22.0	10.2	28.8	184	19.6	4.3	1.1	10.5

Table 24. Ages involved in pre-adolescent sex play

"Educ. level 0-8" are the males who never go beyond grade school. "9-12" are the males who enter high school but never go beyond. "13+" are the males who will ultimately go to college.

Due to perverted and premature sex indulgence, children mature early in the sense that their spermatic fluid finds outlet early in life. When normal physiology is studied pertaining to sex, it is imperative that the abnormal should be taken into consideration, or at least, not lost sight of. Control of senses and organs is seriously lacking in two essential manners: knowingly and unknowingly.

Knowingly - lack of control implies sacrifice of the importance of control of the body and the mind at the altar of inclinations and desires. It is possible that in the fulfillment of desires, one does not knowingly take upon himself the responsibility of the consequences; viz, the nourishment of many more desires. Manu points out:

'Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired objects; it only grows stronger like a fire (fed) with clarified butter.' 50

The point to note is that the sages who developed the concept of brahmacharya convey the desirability of organized enjoyment. As it is, when desires arise, although one does

50

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p.47.

Manusmṛti: II, 94.

not always let them have their sway, one does not ordinarily try to control them, either. The result is that one is swallowed by them. At first an ordinary inclination (pravṛtti) arises, from this inclination, desire is born.

Manu says:

Acts which secure (the fulfillment of) wishes in this world or in the next, are called pravṛtta (such as cause a continuation of mundane existence); but acts performed without any desire (for a reward) preceded by (the acquisition) of (true) knowledge, are declared to be nivṛtta (such as cause the cessation of mundane existence). 51

The desires repeated several times in its fulfillment becomes a habit or a part of one's conduct (acāra). That habit as it matures, becomes the inner nature (svabhāva). Due to this, when an individual discovers himself 'fallen' due to the grip of habits of desires, he begins to feel himself 'cursed'. He, himself, shakes the foundation of his supporting structure of Self-unfoldment and turns towards mundane affairs. This destruction is self-willed and suicidal. Engaging in a conduct (acāra) which is not conducive to Self-unfoldment is termed bad conduct (dur-ācāra) or vyabhicāra (vice).

51

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), I. 503.

Manusmṛti: XII, 89.

For such a person Manu says:

For a man of bad conduct is blamed among people, constantly suffers misfortunes, is afflicted with diseases and short-lived.

but,

A man who follows the conduct of the virtuous has faith and is free from envy, lives a hundred years, though he be entirely destitute of auspicious marks. 52

Bad conduct or lack of samyama as pointed out, can lead to various types of abuses - self-abuse and extra-marital abuse.

52
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p.153.

Manusmṛti: IV, 157 - 158.

CHAPTER V

ABUSES DUE TO LACK OF CONTROL

Self-abuse

Those unnatural circumstances which prevail in modern society emphasizing material pursuit while negating spiritual values, exercise serious effect on the youth of today. Early life becomes full of anxieties. Unable to understand the values of 'organized enjoyment' they indulge in sexual activity quite freely and lose the determination (sankalpa sakti) or will power (icchāsakti). Youngsters are confronted with situations today which make them blind to their consequences, due to sexual desires. On such occasions the interest of the Self is overlooked and attachment and the fulfillment of desire becomes their only objective in life. Even the faintest idea of organized enjoyment of life also fades away through the defect in memory which follows attachment and confusion in (buddhi) intelligence. For momentary pleasure he, so to speak, "slays the Self".⁵³ Strong, uncontrolled desire may lead to misuse of the generative powers and energy. Through even artifi-

⁵³ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 570.

cial means, if necessary, he excites the sexual psychic centers, leading to wastage of that energy. Such an act is usually undertaken alone and for this reason he easily becomes a victim of habit. The will power to preserve the vital energy weakens and is ultimately disregarded. While it is recognized that this self-abuse is considered normal from the point of view of everyday living, this sexual energy which might otherwise have been converted into spiritual energy, is lost. The elements responsible for this self-abuse are principally two - physical and mental. To differentiate between the two is quite difficult. To state that the cause of a particular excitation is physical and another mental would be incorrect because physical and mental are so intermixed that the physical cause is effected by the psychological outlook and the psychological from the physical excitation. However, to establish a premise for clarification, the two should be considered separately. From the physical aspect one should try to understand the physiological causes leading to sexual desires and from the mental aspect, attempt to outline those which are governed by our mind. In the physical aspect the cause for sexual desire is the body and the means for gratification in the other. The same is undertaken through the mind. The result of each is the same - excitement and consequent deviation from the path of spiritual attainment.

The physical aspect. Man is not made with any one inherent affective tendency or drive and associated value that can normally provide a clearly over-riding aim for all his existence. It is true that deprivation of the opportunity to pursue a given drive may cause its value to become over-riding. But be this drive sexuality, love of offspring, of his fellow beings, be it joy in domination, or in subordination, be it love of variation, or of the familiar, or of good eating or anything else, man is normally a great bundle of natural (sancita and prārabdha karma) and acquired wishes (kriyāmana karma), inter-related in a pattern that includes his cultural heritage from the great and little thinkers of his past. Thus, his values tend to be realized more fully when this objective, either of Self-realization or procreation, even if not understood, is promoted by him.

It is natural that this should be the case, since in the first place he, himself, has worked to provide himself through his own actions (karma) with predilections (sancita sanskāra) and aversions which would lead to this result. In the second place, his association has, on the whole, worked to modify the directions of these wishes and struggles so as to lead to this result under the conditions.

Katha Upanisad⁵⁴ mentions:

When the five (senses) knowledge together with the mind cease (from their normal activities) and the intellect itself does not stir, that they say, is the highest state. 54

It is also said that:

He, however, who has no understanding, who has no control over his mind (and is) ever impure, reaches not that goal, but comes back into mundane life. 55

When the body has matured and sexual desire and external flow of seminal fluid and sperms, etc., are inaugurated, the period of excitation begins. If the life has been organized and governed in a natural way, this should normally arise on or about the age of twenty-five years. If one is desirous for the organized enjoyment of life and fulfillment of the functions of married life, the married state should be entered into at this time. On the other hand, if neither marriage has been entered into nor the mental will power (sankalpa-sakti) has been achieved by practice of control, young men and women have little recourse to satisfy these

⁵⁴ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 645.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 624.

sexual desires through unnatural means. Those who do not marry at this age have not developed the will power (san-kalpa-sakti) and also do not possess (adhyātmika) tendencies towards self-realization, are treading dangerous paths. Frequently, these acquire habits of self-abuse. The married state does not produce as much psychological harm because in the warm embrace of a loving partner there are psychic compensations which bring vigor and energy in return. For those who cannot control their sexual desire, sāstras recommend entering the grhasthya āsrama (married life).

Excellent wives, learning (the knowledge of the law (the rules of purity), good advice and various art may be acquired from anybody. 56

Hindu society has not been until recently, in favor of celibates remaining in society. It has been required of them to go outside the pale. A man must either become a monk or a householder. The via media is not desireable. This attitude of Hindu society is not without its justification. The sex instinct is strong, very strong in man.

56
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886.) p. 73.

Manusmṛti: 11, 240.

The health and purity of society depends to a large extent on the proper regulation of this instinct. Unless a man is inspired by spiritual ideals, it is extremely difficult, say impossible, to keep the sexual instinct in check. Those who are not spiritually inclined had better marry for their own sake and for the sake of society. Without spirituality, sexuality must find expression somehow or other. It is better to give it a normal expression through marriage. Hindu society does not approve of 'loose bachelors', who do not marry in order to avoid domestic and social responsibilities and yet indulge in sensuality. Such lives are a plague to society and endangers its purity. In the married state this desire finds its organized fulfillment. In its organization, practice of the control of desires is necessary.

Manu says:

Such is the purification ordained for householders; (it shall be) double for students, treble for hermits, but quadruple for ascetics. 57

However, the normal recourse to marriage for those who are of marriageable age is not the point of issue as far as

57
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886.) p. 193.

Manusmṛti: V, 137.

danger is concerned. The danger is in the unnatural, ungratified and premature sex desire which has known no control whatsoever. There may be various physical factors contributing to the cause of sexual excitation, as in local irritations arising from various causes. In yoga, cleanliness (sauca) has been emphasized advocating both external and internal adherence to this observance. An innocent and spontaneous response of the hand to sensations produced because of impurities about the generative organs may arouse sexual desire which culminates in the habit of masturbation. In ancient asramas, the sages taught the students, therefore, not to touch the generative organs (indriya) with the hands. Similarly, because touch, pressure and continuous rub often incite sexual desire, the acaryas recommended:

As far as possible, do not ride an ox, horse, elephant, or a camel. 58

Perhaps the use of dhoti for a brahmacari was also designed originally to avoid rubbing of the generative organs, as is likely to happen with tight fitting clothes.

Though eating is a simple affair, it is a very important one. Without food, life ebbs away and the mind becomes

confused. Naturally, that which nourishes and sustains the body also has a tremendous influence on our mind. Stimulation of sexual desire is also determined by the type of food that a person takes. The food is conducive to tāma-sika, rājasika or sāttvika tendencies, according to its physiological function in the body metabolism. Patanjali, in his yoga darsana⁵⁹ mentions, "That the mind (citta) is created according to the birth, medicines, samādhi, etc.," The role of medicines is akin to food. The mind is a modification of mula-prakṛti (primordial matter) which is constituted of the three gunas, rājas, tāmas and sāctva.⁶⁰ The role of food which is also prakṛti, is like the addition of these gunas to the mind. Food products which are tāma-sika and rājasika, obtained by violence or through the death of some being, heavy, productive of cough or phlegm, hot, sour, spicy, stale, fried, decayed, partaken of by someone else, or intoxicants, are not conducive to sāttvika development of citta. Thus, a brahmacāri should eat only pure, light, sweet, juicy, fatty, fresh and other

⁵⁹ Ved Vrat, "Samadhi, The Psychology and Practice of Patanjali Yoga". (San Francisco: American Academy of Asian Studies, 1958), p. 484. (Book-Manuscript).

⁶⁰ Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of China and India (New York: Modern Library, Random House Incorporated), p. 121.

health giving food products which make citta 'happy, such as milk, butter, fresh fruits and dried fruits. He should partake only of fresh vegetables. All that he should take must be sāttvika and in limited quantity, only. He should not have a 'gusto' about eating. The sanskāra of 'anna' (food) is to eliminate tāmasika and rājasika food from the diet. Manu in this connection, says:

The sanskṛta anna gives rise to 'virya' and asanskṛta takes away both strength (bala) and power. 61

(Therefore, food must be taken after performing sanskara).

Further:

Gluttony (eating too much) does not bring health, longevity and happiness (sukha) and neither does it bestow punya; the people also talk bad of such a person and therefore, one should not eat too much. 62

The psychological aspect. In the younger ages, sex desire is more governed by the body than the mind, because the latter is not quite developed. However, as mentioned before, the psychological issues involved cannot be divor-

61

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p.40

Manusmṛti: II, 55.

62

Ibid. Manusmṛti: II, 57.

ced from the somatic development of sexual function. Gradually, a strong interplay of psychosomatic functions develops. At puberty, the mental desire brings about physical manifestations and vice versa. The mental images of notions of beauty, asserted by ego, soon lead to mental-sexual activity and finds its manifestation in the motor reflexes of the generative organs. Due to what may be termed a lack of control and inopportune appearance of desires, kuvikalpa and kutsita (bad and perversive (sexual) desires) arise in the minds of young men, brought on by exposure to revealing photographs, such as in the Miss America Beauty Contests, Bikini Bathing Suits, or other emotional scenes. These churn the inner heretofore 'tanu' (hidden) desires. It is doubtful if anyone can produce within himself, healthy and spiritual thoughts through such associations. The 'smoke shops' and the 'corners' are filled with magazines, novels, pictures of nudes, etc. The young soon begin to derive a peculiar pleasure in reading these issues and acquire incomplete, inaccurate and perverted information about sex, romance and love. First, the control, because of untimely appearance of sexual desire, becomes difficult, if not altogether impossible; second, psychological harm is incurred because of a society which first designs magazines of this nature for the public and then puts a taboo on them for the

63 young. It should be repeated here that when a human being has been taught to hate or fear some idea or act long enough and intensely enough, it is with great difficulty that he can change his opinion. When this opinion is acted out by an organ of the body, that organ can be stubbornly obedient to the old prohibition long after a need for change has taken place. Marriage does not change points of view regarding sexual behavior. Marriage affords only religious and moral sanctions, according to dharma. The capacity to make wholesome use of these sanctions must be present in the personality through reverence, sensibility and friendly education. Such was the education that was given through the Upanisads, Vedas and others, at the asramas. Reverence for the teacher and the learning were impressed upon the student. Manu says:

At the beginning and at the end of (a lesson in the) Veda, he must always clasp both the feet of guru and he must study, joining his hands; that is called brahmanjali (joining the palms for the sake of the Veda. 64

"The sexual feeling," Kenninger reminds us, "does not

63

Havelock Ellis, On Life and Sex (New York: The New American Library, 1957), p. 186.

64

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 43.

Manusmṛti, II, 71.

absolutely arise in the prostate gland or the uterus, even though these organs are often indicted in impotence and frigidity or oversexual indulgence.⁶⁵ The capacity for sexual feeling is present in every healthy man and woman, but whether these feelings are permitted to be felt in the sexual organs in the case of a person who cannot control desire of the spiritual Self-realization and must marry to fulfill dharma, artha, karma and moksa, depends upon whether the right ideas and emotions concerning sexual functioning have been allowed to develop during the growth of the personality or whether these ideas and feelings have been smothered by fear, shame and hatred for anything and everything sexual.

Result of abuses. The results of continued self-abuse can be roughly understood in three different ways:

1. Physical result, or the changes brought about on the body.
2. Mental result.
3. Result on spiritual Self-development.

Physical. By masturbation or self-abuse, both the body and the organs must pay some toll. While the desire for

⁶⁵
Fritz Kahn, M. D., Our Sex Life, (Second edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 135.

self-abuse is natural and arises due to lack of sense control and organ control, the result of such a lack is also natural. The hormones present in the vital fluid are shed and not utilized. Furthermore, the spermatic fluid thus emitted produces congestion in the spermatic duct and blood vessels, which creates certain irritations in the urinary passages. ⁶⁶ Besides the infection which usually proceeds from such congestion, further problems may be created by the reaction of excitation of the generative organs. Those who carelessly permit this condition to continue, discover that whereas previously, due to congestion and irritation the erection was spontaneous, upon continued congestion, passion is not aroused even when desired. It is the law of nature that a tired horse has to be whipped hard in order to enable him to take someone anywhere. Just as a very tired horse being forcibly shipped and dragged, ultimately collapses and dies, similarly, under the strain of self-abuse, the person loses all his masculine powers. The generative organs lose excitation and unconscious emission of 'virya' begins to occur day and night. Advanced symptoms of this nature are no longer confined to organic disease

and may require psychological treatment by a psychiatrist because it entails self-hate, shame and anxieties.

Apart from the adverse effect on the sexual organs, this also has a marked reaction on the body. "Habitual abuse damages the sex apparatus and above all, the nervous apparatus of the spinal cord and brain."⁶⁷ Virya is produced by the blood and when virya is lost, the blood is, so to speak, wasted away. Anemia may follow which impairs the entire bodily functions. This strength cannot be restored by medicines easily. Through the cause alone, by acquiring control of virya, the effect can be eradicated.

However, it should be pointed out that whereas the symptoms and illness above described are produced by this unnatural loss of virya, it does not necessarily follow that wherever these illnesses and symptoms have occurred they are the result of loss of virya. In modern society, unnecessary anxiety and blame is created by parents who infer that their son is weak and anemic because he has been sexually frivolous.

It should be remembered that while brahmacharya nourishes physical and mental growth, there are other factors

67

Fritz Kahn, M. D., Our Sex Life (Second edition; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 135.

contributing to this same objective.

But those who seek for the Self by austerity, chastity, faith and knowledge, they by the northern route, gain the sun. That verily, is the support of life breaths. That is eternal, the fearless. That is the final goal. From that they do not return. That is the stopping (of rebirths). About that, there is the verse. 68

However, the importance of brahmacharya should not be underestimated.

Mental result. The main physical substratum of psychological development, is the brain. Ideas that arise in the mind are through the mediation of the brain. Whatever effects the psychological aspect of human beings must have also an effect on the neurological aspect of the brain. This effect on the individual psychology incites a change in the neurological anatomy. The brain and the nervous system constitute one entity in the tripod of life (consisting of the nervous system, circulatory system and respiratory system). Without the delicate organ, the brain, neither one can move consciously move nor comprehend. Many higher animals have been observed to virtually collapse

68

S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Prasanna Upanisad I, 10, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 652.

during coitus during which the blood supply is directed toward the sexual organs. It is noteworthy that during this preoccupation, the mind is rendered incapable of lofty thoughts. During self-abuse, a similar situation develops. In the normal coitus of married adults, most of this effect is recompensated in the warm embrace, love and mutual concern which is present in the psychological relationship between the two. Moreover, the physical development matured, the external secretions are normal. Through self-abuse, psychological and physical disaster results. Havelock Ellis has mentioned that because of the relationship between husband and wife, love, fearlessness, self-pride and a feeling of contentment with each other, is produced. This feeling produces greater confidence and poise and does not lead to self-reproach with psychological fears, as is the case in self-abuse. Instead of seeking gratification of love and understanding, many substitute merely gratification of sexual erotic desires. The love which can uplift and fulfill the Self is totally lacking in self-abuse which produces aversion from the Self. Havelock Ellis has also pointed out a significant fact by quoting Godfrey's, 'Science of Sex', in which he mentions that although self-abuse is common and an activity of the sexual organs, in its true perspective it cannot be considered a sexual act. The

word, 'sex', implies bipolarity which is not found in the act of self-abuse. Self-abuse constitutes, therefore, only lack of sexual life, not its fulfillment.

It is undoubtedly true that human beings have sexual desires, but self-abuse is not the means to satisfy that desire. The sexual desire is for union with other than himself. In self-abuse, 'the other' is absent from the scene. It has little relation with the original desire or its means of gratification. While the immediate erotic sensation is quietened by self-abuse, the desire remains ungratified. Meanwhile, because of this practice, physical and psychological weaknesses attributable to fear, shame and related functional disturbances usually renders a person a 'wreck'. He is unable now, to satisfy his sexual desire even when the right time and opportunity presents itself. Thus, the lack of control on sex desire and virya, not only falls short of higher spiritual pathways, it simultaneously bypasses even the charm of living a normal, worldly life. There is an undertone of sarcasm in his laughter and he remains psychologically worried and may even become an alcoholic, with drinking serving as an escape from his anxieties. For the lack of one important control, he soon loses himself by complete lack of control in other senses, and a vicious cycle ensues. With peace of mind lost, he

soon slips back in various unhealthy activities - social and otherwise. Parents and friends are baffled by heretofore bright students who, due to self-abuse and consequent anxieties, now lag behind in their studies. The anxieties produced affect the memory, affectation of memory leads to delusion and the student is lost.

It is imperative that a student should be mindful of his desires and keep these well guarded.

Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired objects; it only grows stronger like a fire (fed) with clarified butter.

69

Also:

Whatever is hard to be traversed, whatever is hard to be attained, whatever is hard to be reached, whatever is hard to be performed, all (this) may be accomplished by austerities for austerities (possess a power) which is difficult to surpass.

70

The power of memory is one of the principal assets in acquiring knowledge and discernment relative to the value of worldly experience. This lack of control in desires and their expressions, resulting in a consequent lack of memory finds its result in the dwindling number of students who manage to complete even high school. Control over the

69

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 47.

Manusmṛti: II, 94.

70

Ibid., p. 478.

Manusmṛti: XI, 239.

'indriyas' (sense and motor organs) lacking, his energies are diverted from study and the pursuit of knowledge to day dreaming and the wasting of energy in futile imaginations (vikalpa and viparyaya). The effect of this vikalpa and viparyaya is so pronounced that instead of developing interests in books of learning, interests are limited to novels which emphasize romance, sex, murder mysteries, cartoons and fiction. As mentioned previously, the smaller part of the brain, cerebellum, is the center of emotions and movements of the body. A person ridden with lehas has a greater urge for enjoyment (pravrtti), his cerebellum overloaded with that function, tires easily. One of the consequences of this overactive cerebellum results in headaches and pains and other sense organs soon become overactive. Unable to control his emotions, sex desires and actions, he virtually acquires a compulsion neurosis and under a great stress even gets the urge, or actually attempts to commit suicide.

Spiritual result. Having sheltered desires which are premature and having permitted the organs to assert themselves, the Self, as it were, is silenced. The inner voice which might have otherwise guided an individual from wandering from the path of right knowledge and planned development soon becomes silent. Even as an alarm clock will wake a

person at an appointed hour if he heeds its call, if he postpones his rising and silences the alarm, he acquires a habit of ignoring it. In the beginning, he will hear the alarm and shut it off, thinking that he will get up after five minutes, but if he continues the practice of shutting the alarm off, day after day, he soon loses even the idea of getting up and the alarm continues to ring until it exhausts itself. The same is true of the 'inner voice' of an individual. The psychological error that follows after self-abuse is the protection of that 'inner voice'. In the beginning it is powerful and, if heeded, tends to avert misfortunes and psychological complications. Habitually ignored, however, it is very weak. Even extensive psychotherapy cannot recall the valuable time in time or energy dissipated, which might otherwise have been utilized for the proper development of physical, mental and spiritual values.

An individual becomes a victim of 'self-abuse', losing control of organs and 'self-confidence' and becomes a slave to senses, organs and desires that are their suggestions. One who practices self confidence and control wishes for 'once more'. 'Once more', always means, 'until the next time' and the next time seldom exhausts itself. The desirability of controlling this desire with its subsequent

sufferings has been emphasized in Sankhya and Yoga. Self-abuse is a curse which leads the young to doom through various temptations. A tempted individual, without having proper control, is caught in a swamp which prevents or delays life unfoldment for dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

From all that has been outlined, the observance of brahmacharya should conquer self-abuse. The means adopted for this objective are essentially two:

1. Outer means.
2. Inner means.

The outer means entail external cleanliness (saucha) which prevents any infection or irritation leading to undue excitation. Sex hygiene should be followed rigidly, even as hygiene of other parts of the body. Practice of brahmacharya has been recommended as useful towards this end. The inner means are even more important. Through these are controlled misgivings relative to sexual functions in worldly and spiritual undertakings. Undesirable habits, whether conscious or unconscious, cannot prevail for long if 'conscious' control is applied; the body responds to conscious control.

⁷¹ Ved Vrat, "Samadhi, The Psychology and Practice of Patanjali Yoga", (San Francisco: American Academy of Asian Studies)(unpublished Book-Manuscript), pp. 117 and 131.

⁷² Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of China and India (New York: The Modern Library, Random House Incorporated), p. 126.

An individual is a slave to his habits because he has split his desires - 'desire to control' and 'desire to be swayed by the senses'. This split produces a weakening of the will power which must be strengthened if habits are to be conquered. In any inner effort adopted, desire must be made 'unidirectional'. With such a determination, one can achieve his objective. This determination has been termed, 'sankalpa'. When sankalpa and control are not strengthened, even the least of habits cannot be overcome. To achieve this practice (abhyāsa) becomes necessary. Patanjali in yoga-darsana, says,

Internal and external purification, contentment, mortification, study and worship of God, are the niyamas.

Their control is by practice and non-attachment.

Continuous struggle to keep them perfectly restrained is practice. 73

Whenever a new habit is to be acquired or an established one is to be given up, a good rule is to commence this undertaking with great enthusiasm, with every determination in command. In the beginning, one should apply his full 'sankalpa' and continue the practice repeatedly

73

Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of China and India (New York: The Modern Library, Random House Incorporated), p. 125.

over an extended period of time. Emphasis on determination to one's self contributes to wonderful results in weakening the habit in a short time. Secondly, until the newly acquired desirable habit is well set, or the unworthy habit is completely mastered, laxity should not be permitted to offer its challenge. In the battlefield, even a minor victory is contributory to the major victory; in contrast, a minor defeat may result in a major defeat. Thirdly, whatever determination (sankalpa) is made, it should be seen into action. If an individual does not live as he thinks, he soon begins to think as he lives and designs philosophy to suit his behavior. Opportunity should be milked to advantage, for if the field is well-tilled, the crop will be better. The fourth point to note in this connection is that 'an idle brain is the devil's workshop'. A person must keep himself busy either in study (svāddhyāya) or 'practice of indriya-nigraha' (sense and organs control). While self evident results may not reveal itself immediately, it operates like an insurance policy - one pays the premium which does not give anything at the time, but it pays dividends at the time of disaster. Similarly, the individual who everyday works a little, gathers some courage, contentment (sāntosa), detachment (vairāgya), meditation (dhyāna) and determination (sankalpa), so to speak, insures his spiritual progress. When a chal-

lenging situation arises, he will then be in a position to rely on gradually acquired characteristics to meet this challenge. The spiritual aspect of this development will then support him like a solid rock.

With the development of determination (sankalpa) introspection into the underlying causes of desires should also be undertaken. These may be due to undesirable determination (kutsita sankalpa). Wild imagination (vikalpa) may be making its hold instead of right determination (satya sankalpa). Vikalpa is usually produced when sitting alone in quietitude. It will be seen that idleness and kutsita-sankalpa lead to anxieties and are not conducive to the practice of brahmacarya or eradication of self-abuse.

Intra and Extra-Marital Abuse

It has been pointed out that in the amoeba there is no sexual differentiation. Male and female elements or individuals are not required in its growth or reproduction. In dividing itself to produce new amoebae, the one becomes many and no new element is thus produced. The amoeba, therefore, does not 'die', but lives through a process of division. This type of reproduction is termed 'asexual reproduction'. If prakṛti were restricted to this kind of activity, change, difference or improvement would have been non-existent. To produce variations, nature (prakṛti) took recourse to a new

technique, as it were, and produced sexual differences and bisexual reproduction came into effect. In the creation of human or higher animal life, male and female elements are both required. Though distinct and different, through their union a new individual is produced. Individuals perish however their characteristics remain through the offspring produced by the union of ovum and sperm.

Rules which govern the ova and sperm also govern the organization of the body. The principal element concerned in reproduction are the female and the male principals. The union of the two for the purpose of reproduction is termed in Indian literature as 'yivāha' (marriage). Marriage is that relationship between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence mutual and the obligations reciprocal. It is based on mutual love and mutual liking, on mutual responsibility and mutual understanding. It is based on consideration and not on calculation. There is no more sordid relationship than a marriage for profit, for special position, for material gain. By a union of mutually different principles, newness is produced in various lives. Similarly, through mutual understanding and united effort between man and woman, society marches on towards progress. Keeping this in view Manu has described

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eight kinds of marriages.

1. brahma 2. daiva 3. arsa 4. prajāpatya 5. asura
6. gāndharva 7. rāksasa and 8. paisāca.

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The brahma marriage is undertaken after equipping one-self with education and good conduct. This is the highest type of marriage. In the brahma marriage, both the bride and the groom are well-educated and capable of making this important choice for themselves. This is svayamvara, where the prospective couple select each other without necessary resignation to the desires of another. The marriage entered into according to the prescribed rules of yajña in the Vedas, is known as the daiva marriage. In this type of marriage, the guru, priest or parents determine the selection, as the knowledge of the couple, in the Vedas, is not complete. In the arsa marriage, the bride is primarily given away in consideration of wealth. In prajāpatya, the couples are not quite completely equipped with the knowledge of dharma and are, therefore, joined in marriage to undertake together the practice of conduct as ordained by the Vedas. These four types of marriage constitute the

74 G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 79.

Manusmṛti: III, 21.

75 Ibid., p. 80.

Manusmṛti: III, 27.

higher types. In them there is a sense of togetherness which creates the single entity which is so much more important than two warring, independent personalities. When the bridegroom receives a maiden in exchange for wealth to the kinsmen and the bride, it is called an asura marriage. Here, the sexual desire overrides the ultimate objective of moksa (liberation). A marriage where sexual union alone is the objective and not mutual effort to help each other through life's course towards moksa is called the gāndharva marriage.⁷⁶ Forcible abduction of a maiden from her people results in a rāksasa marriage. Finally, when a man seduces a girl who is sleeping, intoxicated or mentally disordered, this is called a paisāca type of marriage.

The first four types of marriage are the result of an organized pre-married state where proper study and brahmacarya is observed. Children born of such marriages are usually healthy and the mutual love and understanding between their parents is reflected in the integration of their personalities. In the last four types because of

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G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886)p. 81.

Manusmṛti: III, 32.

dissention, force, lack of knowledge, etc., unresolved problems arise in the marriage as well as in the children born of such union. Of these, insecurity, the curse of child problems, is the most predominant.

Attraction between men and women is natural. This is the play of creation. For this reason, the sāstras have advocated marriage for those who cannot, or chose not to completely control their senses and organs, or apply themselves in the pursuit of 'Self-knowledge'. Marriage must be based on something more than sex attraction. It requires a deeper spiritual mating, a mutual respect for one another's intelligence, tastes and habits. It demands after all, that two people live together in a multitude of associations and to do so requires tolerance and a vast amount of personal sacrifice. People have long understood the perfect physical union, but they should realize that marriage can offer a far greater and more satisfactory communion than mere physical union. Marriage is thus a social institution into which one should bring his best capacities. It should be taken as an important part of living if one has failed to devote complete aspect for Self-realization. They should share life harmoniously with someone and provide a setting in which children may grow up happily and learn to be of use to themselves and to others.

lazy unwillingness of men and women to consider some of the fundamental differences in the habits and personalities of each sex. For example, a man will be annoyed and scold because his wife takes longer to dress than he, yet he would be equally angry if she did not look well. A woman will be greatly annoyed because her husband plays golf with the boys on Saturday afternoon, yet she will not take the trouble to learn to play with him and she would be unhappy if he was not popular with his friends. If the wife does a good job of decorating a room, preparing a meal, or arranging a party, she desires and requires appreciation. A man, too, after working hard to achieve a desired position, requires his wife's appreciation. This situation in life is achieved by objectives attained by a couple. It is the situation of not one individual, but both. Men and women in marriage should respect each other's goals and ambitions. The capacity to do this is an evidence of maturity and of the capacity for love. Each party, therefore, should follow dharma and proceed toward attaining karma and moksa.

Love in marriage is not kept alive merely by what is commonly read as poetry. After marriage it has been seen that people usually ignite the fires of sexual desires and plunge in. All fires soon cease and the result is a heap

of ashes. A hungry man, it is true, eats more but ends up with dyspepsia. Similarly, married couples in the beginning, although very hungry for each other's love and sex, soon outdo themselves. As with the man who eats more and creates disturbances in his digestive system leading to the disappearance of appetite, unregulated sexual desire and love usually follows an identical course. While a person lacking appetite may respond to medicines that stimulate appetite, this artificial appetite does not produce longevity. The greatest enemy of hunger is in eating and that of sexual love, in indulgence in unregulated sex. The pleasure that is experienced in the first morsel during hunger, is comparable to the first sexual pleasures of the newly married. The hungry become dyspeptic by excessive food; the newly married become cool towards sexual desire through lack of samyama. The result is often that this extends and the couples become 'cool' to one another. Unregulated sexual indulgence is, therefore, the greatest enemy of love between husband and wife. ⁷⁸Manu recommends:

He who avoids women on the six forbidden

⁷⁸ G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 84.

Manusmṛti: III, 50.

nights and on eight others, is (equal) in chastity to a brahmachari in whichever order he may live.

Further:

Let (the husband) approach his wife in due season, being constantly satisfied with her (alone); he may also, being intent on pleasing her, approach her with a desire of conjugal union expecting the Parvans.

Sheen has very aptly observed that 'one of the reasons why many modern marriages do not endure is because people do not marry a person; they marry an experience. They fall in love with an ecstasy or a thrill, loving the cake only as long as it has frosting on it'.⁷⁹ A pleasure can reach a point where it gives pain; for example, tickling. The curve of pleasure rises quickly, but when had too often, it drops suddenly. Honeymoons do not last long. To keep the wheel of rounded married life operating smoothly, the oil of love is necessary; otherwise, scratches soon appear and the vehicle comes to a halt. Unhappiness follows. For this we read:

In that family where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband

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Statement by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, American Broadcasting Company, Television Broadcast, June, 1957.

happiness will assuredly be lasting. 80

The foolish think that couples can achieve happiness through sexual interplay only. They do not understand that the sages, through the idea of brahmacharya in grahastha emphasized that physical love is only a shadow of the spiritual aspect of love. Properly observed, the love between a married couple will grow through mutual understanding and interest producing great strides toward the ideal of human life. The idea to grasp here is that by unregulated, improper understanding of sexual desire, man destroys his marriage. Each becomes averse and the life soon is lost. The sexual function merely becomes a mechanical affair without cultivation of love. Furthermore, if one partner turns away, the physical as well as the spiritual growth of both comes to a standstill. In a life now lived under a code of ethics, the man soon becomes a victim of night emissions. If sexual indulgence is undertaken alone, it will be self-abuse in marriage. In addition to the aversion within the married state, aversion usually develops for each other as a result of improper relationships. 81

80

G. Buhler (trans.), The laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1914), I, 10.

Manusmṛti: III, 60.

becomes bored and seeks more responsive interests outside indicating that the individuals have failed to absorb the physical and spiritual objectives of love. Desire overcomes them and life soon loses all sense of value and direction. The advice of Manu in this connection was:

Let man and woman united in marriage constantly exert themselves that (they may not be) disunited (and) may not violate their mutual fidelity. 81

Consider a case of a seven year old, free from undesirable sanskāras, living a life of brahmacāri and free from those associations which contribute to the rise of latent desires. Such a child will not experience loss of virya. Even when he attains the age of eighteen years, he will not have known sexual experience. Only the internal secretions will play their part in his life. The virya will be utilized inside the body instead of being discharged outside. At the age of twenty-five years or so, his external secretions will begin to be formed without the impact of mental sex desires. At this age, the appearance of external secretions is as natural as the appearance of

81

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886). p. 342.

Manusmṛti: IX, 102.

fruits on the branches of a tree. Both are a result of maturity and growth. Sexual desire produced at this time is a natural indication of the need of the growing body. At this point, there are two paths open to the person. He can either marry or become a brahmachari as long as he lives and must then learn the art of absorbing his virya in his body. This is called the path of the 'urdhvareta',⁸² a spiritual practice of 'reaching in for the Self'. Few practice it. This external manifestation in terms of spermatic fluid has the potentiality of producing a new individual. If utilized inside one's body, new power was produced in the body. If utilized outside, another physical body is normally produced. The purpose of brahmacharya therefore, implies conversion of physical and mental desires and associated powers, into spiritual power and vigor through means adopted known as 'sadhana'.

In the animal kingdom, strong sexual desire can neither be controlled or understood, therefore sexual maturity and function is limited to reproduction. In human beings, however, where this desire can be yoked in the production of new individual bodies, its direction can be altered and its

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President Ernest Wood, of The American Academy of Asian Studies, personal communication, March, 1958.

potentiality utilized in the spiritual aspect. The power in the flow of a river either can be allowed to run its course or controlled to produce electric power. Similarly, by controlling and utilizing the flow of virya, new spiritual powers can be produced by man.

If the individual after the age of twenty-five years does not propose to lead a life of intense spiritual pursuit, he should marry and thereby utilize his reproductive power in producing children. Even in marriage, then, he will fulfill his time in quite a natural way. Just as the desire for sex is a natural desire, the desire for sexual intercourse will also be governed by a natural course of events. The production of desire is immaterial if one knows what to do with it. Due to malpractices, or mental prostitution, external secretions are lost. Control of this is brahmacarya in grhastha. Indeed, this kind of brahmacarya is more difficult than that of a brahmacari. For a married man this is yoga, as the latter is another name for nirodha (restraint).

Auxillary Means of Control of the Senses

For self-fulfillment as well as for any other higher activity, the first requirement is self confidence and trust. It is the first secret of success. Tennyson has remarked, 'self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone lead life to sovereign power'. In the words of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, self-trust does not admit poverty of the spirit. He said, "There is nothing as bad as the poverty of the spirit." When a person, due to ignorance, regards himself as insignificant, he soon falls down. A very interesting tale was once related in India.

Near a certain forest, a villager was having his farm harvested by farmers. In the afternoon, he spoke to the farmers, saying, "Brothers, let us expedite harvesting and finish everything before sandhyā (dusk, or twilight). I am not so afraid of even a lion, as of sandhyā and that is now not very far. Nearby, on a farm, a lion heard all this conversation and thought that sandhyā was surely some very powerful animal. Imagining the dreadful appearance of sandhyā in his own estimation he felt himself rather small and weak. The farmer went his way with his help, but the lion, due to fear of sandhyā, sat crouched and hidden without moving a hair. In the middle of the night

there was some noise in the bushes and the lion thought that the terrible monster, sandhyā, was approaching. So he lay there with the timidity of a cat. Meanwhile, someone came along and struck him two heavy blows with a thick staff. It turned out to be a washerman who was in search of his donkey and had mistaken the lion for his lost beast of burden. So the washerman tied the lion with a rope and dragged him home and fastened him to a pole in the barn and went to sleep. Before dawn, while it was still dark, the washerman loaded his new donkey (the lion) with the load of clothes and started to drive him towards the ghāta (place where he washed the clothes). The ass-lion, being afraid of the whip, proceeded ahead swiftly and soon the washerman fell a little behind. At that time, another lion saw the pride of his kin with a long, sorry face and said to him, "Brother, when and how did you become an ass? The ass-lion replied, "O, Brother, speak softly. Behind me is the dreadful sandhyā. Run, otherwise you will also be caught. Yesterday, in the afternoon, a farmer was telling his harvesters about the dreadful monster and how much more he was afraid of it than even a lion. Hearing that and being afraid of it, I became docile as a goat and hid myself in the farm. In the middle of the night this sandhyā came and beat me and tied me up with a rope. He is very power-

ful. I am now his slave."

The fearless lion spoke, "O fool, there is no such animal as sandhyā. Sandhyā is referred to darkness and therefore, the farmer is afraid of it. At dusk his work comes to an end. Why are you afraid of it?" However, the ass-lion did not pay any attention to the fearless one and continued forward. The lion then spoke again and told the ass-lion that he had forgotten his own nature and power. He advised him to throw the load from his back and give a roar and said that he would support him by standing by. Thereupon the self-trust in him burst forth and he roared. When the washerman saw this, he noticed a lion in place of an ass and therefore, took to his heels. The assinine nature of the ass-lion vanished and he returned to the forest, fearless.

When a man forgets his own nature and because of various circumstances assumes himself to be meager, he behaves as the ass-lion. This same person, upon acquiring sound health, consciousness and the power of truth, realizes his own greatness and wakens his dormant powers. Several examples of the power in self-trust can be cited. When the Indian people regarded themselves as weaker than the English and considered them as their overlords, the nation was under subjection. Due to Gandhi's influence, their self-

trust and confidence was aroused and the nation became independent. Every idea tends to some kind of expression. Actions can, therefore, betray the ideas. It has been said that it makes no difference what you believe, it all depends upon how you act. This is nonsense, because action is an expression of beliefs. The duty of every man is to visualize the grandeur within. He should perceive the nature of Brahman within himself. Consciousness is in every being and therefore, one must realize it. One can attain within his own nature, what one searches for outside. Self-trust and confidence have the same value in times of adversity as a lamp in deep darkness. Little remains to be authenticated from ancient Indian literature regarding the importance and application of self-trust and confidence in the attainment of the desired objective. By nature man pursues with faith that which is true; through faith his individual make-up changes accordingly. In this connection, the Gita has mentioned:

He who is full of faith and zeal and has subdued his senses obtains knowledge; having obtained knowledge, he soon attains the Supreme Peace." 83

83

Swami Nikhalananda (trans.), The Bhagavad Gita (New York: Rama Krishna Vivekananda Center, 1944), p. 58.

To mould life in the pursuit of 'Self-realization', one-mindedness must be developed. Manu states:

By the restraint of his senses, by the destruction of love and hatred and by the abstention from injuring the creatures, he becomes fit for immortality. 84

One-mindedness also precludes pre-occupation with sexual undertakings. As a direct result of indecision in the formative years, an individual is shattered and outer temptations leave him devoid of objective. There should be one objective, backed by concentrated effort and application; only then attainment follows. However, mere determination or desire in itself does not solve any purpose. It has been mentioned in this connection:

Siva is only powerful when He is equipped with His power (sakti). If it be not so He cannot even move. 85

This is also true of man. Equipped with power alone he can achieve his objective. Physical prowess does not denote the primary strength of an individual because an individual is greater than his physical being. Even the greatest king could be measured in terms of an eight foot

84
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 209.

Manusmṛti: VI, 60.

85
Statement by Professor Ved Vrat of the American Academy of Asian Studies, personal interview of Padma Purana.

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bed. Man must not totally rely on his physical power for the fulfillment of life. Modern science calculates his total strength at best, to be one-eighth of horsepower and his intellect is superior to his physical aspect. "A good head is worth one hundred hands." It should be noted that the power of man is not unfolded outside, but from within. He is great because of the Self, not because of the body. The physical or material aspect is always weaker than the spiritual potential. This spiritual potential does not respond to tonics or other artificial stimulants. Self-confidence and determination are the means to self-unfoldment. To cultivate the spiritual aspect of an individual 'ātma-sanskāra' (purification) is undertaken. This is accomplished by acquiring inner-vision, organization and proper samyama. Samyama implies 'self-control' (control of the organs and control of the senses). When spiritual life governs an individual's worldly existence, he becomes independent and powerful. "Most powerful is he who has himself in his power"....Seneca. Both samyama and good conduct are attained through the practice of brahmacarya.⁸⁶

"Contentment, forgiveness, self-control, absten-

86

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 215.

Manusmṛti: VI, 92 - 93.

tion from unrighteously appropriating anything (obedience of the rules of) purification, coercion of the organs, wisdom, knowledge (of the Supreme Soul) truthfulness and abstention from anger (form) the tenfold law.

Those Brāhmanas who thoroughly study the tenfold law and after studying obey it, enter the highest state."

Various spiritual books of the sages mention the age of ⁸⁷ humans as extending to one hundred years. The Upanisad mentions that a man performing karma should live for one hundred years and yet, in the Arharva Veda it is declared, "Oh man, you should not die for the old age." The desire for immortality is natural. However, it is generally seen that even before old age appears a person may be taken by an untimely death without complete unfoldment of life, itself. Long life is difficult for an average man who must continually meet the challenge of illness and death. Man reaps the consequences of his own weaknesses. This courting of untimely death is, therefore, self-suicide. The secret of a long life according to some, is limited to good nourishment, plenty of rest, etc. The efficacy of this prescription might be visualized in a study of longevity among among the well to-do. The conclusions of such a study would suggest that the secret lies beyond food and rest. To understand it one may refer to a Jātaka tale which illustrates the point rather well.

⁸⁷
S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Isa Upanisad 1 (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 313.

"In Benares there lived a man of excellent character and conduct, Dharmapāl, by name. The entire family of Dharmapāl were people of very strong character. When his son was ready to pursue higher learning, he was sent to Taxila University where five hundred other students were enrolled. One day, unfortunately, one of the students died suddenly. Grieved at the sad demise of a fellow student, they all blamed 'untimely death' as the cause. The son of Dharmapāl also heard this and remarked that none can die while young. His fellow students asked him if none had died in his family while young. The answer was that in his family only the old died. Fellow students as well as the teachers were surprised at this statement and their curiosity was aroused. In order to check the truth in the contention, the teacher proceeded to see the father (Dharmapāl), in Benares. On his way, he collected the remains of a body and presented it to Dharmapāl, saying, "Your intelligent son met an untimely death and is here with the remains." Hearing about the death of his son, Dharmapāl was not at all upset. He laughed and said to the teacher, "Sir, you must be mistaken and the remains must be of some animal and not of my son." The teacher, therefore, learned that the son of Dharmapāl meant the truth. The teacher told the whole story to Dharmapāl and

asked him the secret of long life, wondering if he undertook some "special practices" leading to siddhis (powers) giving immunity from death at a young age. Dharmapal said, "We just follow dharma and do not indulge in undesirable actions. We keep away from the wicked, respect the good, serve the saints and the sages, feed the poor and have only one wife. Our ladies follow their dharma and the sons born of them are naturally bright, brave, and of good character. Every one in our family follows his duty. Because of this regime we are not afraid of death. The dharma preserves one who follows it and is the bestower of happiness. One who follows dharma never has an undesirable end."

Progress lies in following one's duty according to dharma. Even death then preserves the man who follows in its wake. ⁸⁸Manu in this connection says that good conduct is most important for the maintenance of life. It has been ⁸⁹said that whatever Manu has spoken is like medicine, because the laws of Manu are based on the Vedas and lead to long life. Even the Rg Veda mentions that "by not uphold-

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G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 153.

Manusmṛti: IV, 156.

⁸⁹

Ibid., p. 26.

Manusmṛti: I, 106.

ing the laws of the devatās, none can live for a hundred years." The laws of devatas include, dharma, brahmacarya, sanyama, sadācāra (good conduct), God-like vision and jñana-karma.

For the completeness of life in light of what has been reviewed, dharma (conduct and duty), is very necessary. The purpose of dharma is not merely to teach worship but contribute toward the natural unfoldment of the physical and spiritual aspect in man. Nothing in the world can remain well-protected if defective. Man's life should also be perfect. By dharma-karma (actions done according to the dictates of dharma) a man proceeds toward his growth; nature then protects him and has no control over him. This would suggest what Patanjali⁹⁰ meant perhaps, when he said, 'yogascittavrttinirodha'. That is, Yoga is to restrain the mind, etc.⁹¹ The Upanisads mention that a person through yoga, becomes

⁹⁰ Swami Vivekananda, Raja Yoga (Mayavati, Almora: Advaita Ashrama, 1951.) p. 123.

⁹¹ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Svetasvatara Upanisad (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 722.

free of disturbances, illness, old age and fear of death. Because of unnatural activities and artificial means, nature becomes defective and dependent. It cannot then lead to unfoldment of human psychical energies. By purification of the mind through yoga, happiness prevails. This happiness is the giver of light. "A light heart lives long."

A conduct in which dharma predominates is even more conducive to the body. brahmacarya, grhastha, etc., are all the dictates of dharma. Brahmacarya is emphasized because it is yoga and a means to conquer death.

(Yama said): Different is the good and different indeed, is the pleasant. These two, with different purposes, bind a man; of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good but he who chooses the pleasant, fails of his aim.

92

Both the good and the pleasant approach the man. The wise man pondering over them, discriminates. The wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant.

93

As a prerequisite to entering the grhastha āsrama, brahmacarya has another strong aspect. Merely giving birth

92

S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Svetasvatara Upanisad (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 313.

93

Ibid., p. 608.

to a son or daughter or becoming the father, does not entitle one to the rights of parenthood. Parenthood in its broadest aspect, represents the culmination of ability to not only reproduce, but reproduce a better individual. Satapatha Brahmana says that "a man becomes learned only when he has three proper instructors; the mother, the father and the perceptor (ācārya). The child whose mother and father are equipped with dharma and vidyā (learning) is most fortunate. Therefore, that man is called matrman and pitrmān who has good and virtuous parents. It is also mentioned⁹⁴ that "those parents are perfect enemies of their children who do not give them education. They are a disgrace in the society of the learned, just as a crow in the company of swans."

It is indeed the main duty, the highest obligation, of parents to devote their energies, mind and wealth to the imparting of knowledge, piety, culture, excellent education and instructions to their children. Rights exist as a consequence⁹⁵ of duties fulfilled. A person who has not obser-

⁹⁴ Canakya niti, XI, 11 (in Sanskrit).

⁹⁵ Ved Vrat, Non-Violence, The Gandhian Plan for World Problems, (Palo Alto: Palo Press, 1946), i. 2.

ved brahmacarya has essentially no right to become a parent. The ancient verse conveying that brāhmaṇa was born from the mouth, Ksatriya from the arms, etc., does not convey that brāhmaṇas represented the pathological bacterial fauna of the mouth, but on the other hand, adept in satya, dharma, learning, etc.

Importance of Association

In the observance of brahmacarya, right association is most important. Association is such a factor that it has lead to the famous maxim: "A man is known by the company he keeps." Association also gives rise to attachment. For this reason, Indian scriptures maintain that during brahmacarya, girls should go to a girl's school and boys to a boy's school; the two should not associate freely. In addition, even rules were stressed pertaining to the conduct and association with the teacher's wife.⁹⁶ The idea intended, no doubt, was to avoid temptations in a time when, due to adolescent activity, the sex urge should be understood,

⁹⁶
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 69.

Manusmṛti: II, 216 - 217.

assimilated into spiritual pathways and not dissipated in daydreaming or becoming a victim of passion. There is a story which conveys to a brahmacāri the effects of association:

"There was once a sage named, Dhenavasya, engaged in meditation in a secluded place in a forest hut. Once, a man came to him and left his axe for safe keeping. The axe lay in his hut in a corner for a long time. The sage casually examined it once in a while and put it back again. Ultimately, he thought that it should be put to use. So he set out to hunt, leaving his meditation for a short time. Soon he began to find greater enjoyment in hunting small game than in meditation. This game hunting finally culminated in eating meat which ended his mediational practices altogether.

Due to wrong association, undesirable qualities are usually imbibed. There is no educational institution which teaches these vices; the individual imbibes them from environment. Animals also are affected by association. "A parrot begins to repeat God's nam (Rāma-Rāma) in association with man, and lions, elephants, etc., learn to obey and to perform under direction. Even minerals change. Sweet drinking water of the river upon association with the sea, becomes salty. Air, in association with fragrant flowers, becomes fragrant and with the sloughs, pungent.

Tulasidas, the poet author of Ramayana, has rightly said:

The man becomes good by good company and lowly
due to bad. The same iron when used in boats
and violin produces good works, but as arrow-
head and sword becomes a killer.

Attracted by the undesirable company, man must undertake those things which are common to the company, otherwise friendship is jeopardized. With a child, even adults behave like children to make him laugh. A brahmacāri therefore, is sent to gurukula (the house of the teacher) where this undesirable association for the most part is bypassed. For undesirable action alone, a man associates with undesirable company. This leads to destruction of intellect and intelligence culminating in ruination. Associating with people who possess little or no knowledge or discrimination, their own intelligence becomes feeble, like sight in darkness. Even the two blind men together cannot find the way and likewise, unworthy companionship cannot lead to the path of Self-realization or knowledge of God. At gurukula one was advised to study for thirty-six years after the age of eight (at the rate of twelve years for

97
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 74.

Manusmṛti: III, 1.

each Veda with its auxiliary literature; thirty six years for the three Vedas), making it forty four years in all, or a study of eighteen years plus eight years (a total of twenty six years of age) or nine years of study or as long as the study was not completed.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT IS VIRYA?

According to Ayurveda, the total essence of human physiology is virya. Two views are generally prevalent. One is based on ayurveda or the Indian system of medicine and the other on Western medical science.

The Views of Indian Ayurvedic System

Astanga Hrdaya conveys:

First the ingested food is converted into juices, the blood from blood, the muscles from muscles, the fat (adipose tissue) from fatty tissues, the bones from bones, the marrow (lymphatic tissues) from marrow, the spermatc fluid (virya) is formed. 98

Thus, virya is the last and the seventh element formed in the body. In the formation of virya, the body exerts all its physiological functions and therefore, it is the end product of physical power. Ayurvedic medicine maintains that blood controls the power of life and in a manner of speaking, virya is the essence of blood. According to Ayurveda, the

location of virya is throughout the entire body. While its principal function is related to reproduction, virya is also utilized in mental and bodily growth.

The Views of Western Medical Science

In the west, virya is not regarded as the essence of the seven bodily elements as in Ayurveda. The latter contends that virya is produced from the blood. However, even western physiologists point out that:

A testicular deficiency arising before puberty is characteristically accompanied by paleness. Occasionally post-pubertal deficiency precipitates hot flashes and flushing of the skin similar to those of the menopausal female. In analyzing the apparent relationship of the cardio-vascular system and androgens, it has been found that the cutaneous vascular bed of castrates is smaller than in normal men and has less blood flowing through it and that cutaneous areas with large venous beds contain more reduced hemoglobin, suggesting a venous dilation in these areas. 100

It should also be noted that the western science does not regard virya as existing throughout the body system, but restricts it to a localized function of the testes. Accordingly, when the testes become functional, the productive, virya is produced. Just as excitatory sensations

99
Bhava Mitra, Bhava Prakasa, Shloka 240 - 242, (in Sanskrit).

100
E. A. Edwards, J. B. Hamilton, S. J. Duntley and G. Hubert, Cutaneous Vascular and Pigmentary Changes in Castrate and Eunuchoid Men, (Endocrinology, 1941, Vol. 28), pp. 119 - 128.

are produced upon seeing an object of excitement such as the production of saliva upon discerning an appetizing meal, similarly, the flow of virya commences from the glands of reproduction.

As mentioned previously, two types of secretions are produced from the ovaries or the testes; the internal secretion being hormones and the external secretion, the ova or the sperms. The internal secretion is always present in the genital glands as androgens or estrogens (male and female hormones). These are constantly being utilized by the body and can be estimated by various assay determinations in the blood. As the body progresses, these hormones or internal secretions increase and bring about changes associated with adolescence.

The importance of internal secretions (androgenic and estrogenic hormones) is recognized in growth. Treatment with androgens is reported to produce significant increases in red cell count, hemoglobin and hematocrit values. These blood changes are considered comparable to those during normal adolescence and are therefore, evidence that internal secretions, or at least one part of virya, can be utilized¹⁰¹ by the body internally. Recent work in laboratory animals

101
C. W. Hooker, Pubertal Increase in Responsiveness to Androgens in the Male Rat (Endocrinology, 1948, Vol. 30), pp. 77 - 84.

indicates that a major factor responsible for pubertal changes is a tremendous increase at this age of the responsiveness of the tissues to androgens.

Likewise, the decline in vigor in advanced age is the result of decline in testicular activity. In other words, the androgens are diminished.¹⁰² It is, of course, not established if these levels are sufficiently decreased to account for senile changes in old age. Many clinical endocrinologists recognize a male climacteric occurring at about the same age as the menopause in women. It is characterized by a decline in vigor and by vascular instability and other phenomena not unlike those of menopause. The most enlightening point is that these problems are usually alleviated through the administration of androgens, a principle which perhaps was known to the ancient Indian sages in brahmacharya.

Differences Between Eastern and Western Views on Virya

A comparison of eastern and western views on virya is very interesting. Ordinarily speaking, these are the

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C. W. Hooker, Pubertal Increase in Responsiveness to Androgens in the Male Rat (Endocrinology, 1948, Vol. 30), pp. 77 - 84; and C. W. Hooker, The Postnatal History and Function of the Interstitial Cells of the Testes of the Bull (American Journal of Anatomy, 1944, Vol. 74), pp. 1 - 37.

points of differences:

1. In Ayurveda, virya is the result of differentiation and the seventh physiological modification of elements. According to the western concept, it is derived from the blood.
2. Ayurveda regards virya as distributed throughout the body, but the west considers it related to the testes only.
3. In western medicine both the internal secretions (hormones) and external secretion (spermatic fluid) are precisely named. In Ayurveda the two are so closely intermingled that differentiation is not pointed and precise.
4. In western medical science, spermatozoa are defined as productive. The eastern medical system regards sperms as dependent upon internal secretions and considers both the internal and external secretions as virya. Both are, therefore, considered as reproductive in function.

Broadly speaking, these are what one may call differences in details only; there is no essential disagreement. Thus, while Ayurveda mentions that virya is produced after modification of body tissues, elsewhere it is also mentioned that the blood nourishes the tissues and leads to production of virya. Just as water flows everywhere but each plant draws it according to its needs, similarly, blood

nourishes all parts of the body, including the testes that produce sperms from the differentiation of tissues. Both Ayurveda and western medicine uphold that virya (sperms) is produced by the testes, but it is utilized in various ways by the entire body. While in the eastern system, internal secretions and external secretions are not well-defined, it will be revealed upon careful analysis that in Ayurveda the word, 'teja' and 'oja' refer to hormonal or the internal secretions, and the words, 'retas' and 'bija', to external secretions. Vaga Bhatta has given the description of 'oja' in the following words:

Oja is present all through the body and is the maintainer of the body. With the increase of oja, strength, stamina and power increase, and by its loss these things are lost. By oja, encouragement, patience, brightness in looks, youth and various different kinds of feelings are produced. 103

The above description agrees with the western regarding the internal and external secretions. In western physiology, sex hormones are prescribed to geriatric patients and in menopausal syndrome. The description and concept of oja as given by Vaga Bhatta differs, however, from the west-

103

Vaga Bhatta, Astanga Hrdaya, Sarira Sthana, III, 18. (In Sanskrit).

ern point of view of spermatozoa. It should be noted that external secretions, too, have been recognized by Ayurveda as follows:

Sukra (virya) is like soma, white, viscid and giver of power and health, seed of progeny, essence of body and the better aspect of refuge of life. 104

The above is in agreement with the western medical view of spermatid fluid (external) secretion. Of course, there are language differences. Nowhere in Ayurveda has it been mentioned that sukra is 'zoa' (animalcule). The word, 'sukra', is used for the entire principle of reproductive fluids consisting of secretions from the prostate glands, Cowper's gland, hormones and sperms, etc. If sukra can be taken to mean sperms there will be no objection as far as Ayurveda is concerned, or its context. The question remains whether spermatozoa can be taken to be 'animalcules' (zoa) or beings of independent existence and consciousness of their own. They move because of tail or filament, but this movement may or may not be independent.

The body grows from some nineteen inches at birth to six feet at maturity. However, throughout this growth, the same eyes, nose, ears, limbs remain, only the same smaller

elements acquire larger size and become heavier. The reason for all this is anabolism or the capacity of the body to conserve and utilize what is supplied to it. This is accomplished after gradual and unceasing effort on the part of the individual. However, this growth is not a permanent condition, for it soon stops and begins to go downhill towards old age. Why does this change take place?

Those who have investigated the geriatric problems of growth up to a certain age, mention that the greatest factor responsible is the impact of two mutually different phases of activity. These were pointed out earlier, as the activity of growth, which is 'svārtha' (for one's own sake) and the reproductive activity, which is 'parārtha' (aspect of work performed for the sake of others). The person, so to speak, constructs a house and then sits without further additions to it. Leaving the continuous practice of growth promoting activities meant for his own sake, he begins to procreate in others. Nature plays along with him, now showing this and then that, always keeping his attention directed to others. The individual who was once so engrossed in his own rest, food and bodily growth, now becomes engaged in 'parārtha'. He readily bears an endless stream of troubles and sufferings for his children. As the very most natural consequence of all, from the state

of svārtha, renunciation of svārtha steps in.

Everything that depends upon others, gives pain; everything that depends upon oneself gives pleasure. Know that this is the short definition of pleasure and pain. 105

The strength of man begins to diminish simultaneously with the reproductive activity of the individual. Not much provision remains for the development of strength after reproduction begins. The element or potential energy which would have contributed to physical growth is directed in multiplication of the species. However, it is not to be understood that reproduction is either an unnatural or an undesirable activity. From the higher point of view, reproduction is following in the footsteps of Brahman. It would be evident though, that changes do follow in the individual which cannot be stopped, or mustered into another direction. When the body stops growing, reproduction should be invoked without fear, but not before the growth has proceeded to its highest phase, otherwise serious consequences which are also natural, will be encountered. This is exactly what is implied in the concept of brahmacharya. Whenever, during the period of bodily growth, sexual indulgence is aroused, the rules for brahmacharya are broken. Indulgence in sex, masturbation, prostitution, etc., during the

105

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 154.

Manusmṛti: IV, 160.

period when the body is still growing, is to court 'death'. The reaching of climax of growth, is 'life' - its downhill trend, disastrous. With production, death is certain. In the production of new in the species, the virya is lost from the parent. For replacement energy which would normally have been utilized by the entire body, goes to replenish the supply of new sperms, secretions and hormones. "Everyone is mortal and therefore, must procreate, otherwise there will be a total extinction of the race," is the strong reason put forward by many. But then there are a very few who reason what is going to happen when they are dead. They worry about death as far as their affairs due to attachments are concerned, but none seriously considers what exactly is going to happen. From the history of the human race, the inference that can be drawn is not that they procreate because they have to die some day, but that they die because they procreate. The principle that destruction is eternally associated with anything that is produced, led the sages of the past in India, to emphasize the desirability of brahmacharya not only for spiritual pursuits when desires are to be altogether controlled, but also during the married life of the individual, so as to make it a rather organized and well-understood way of life - a life which we call 'normal living'. The emphasis put on brahmacharya was so great

that amongst several types of brahmacāris mentioned in Indian scriptural literature, Vasu was distinguished as the most outstanding example of a brahmacāri. The sages did not limit observance of brahmacarya to twenty four years of age and did not stop short at teachings only, but pursued the subject with importance of the problem on 'life and death'. They instituted various āśramas on the tenets of samyama and brahmacarya and called them 'gurukulas'. The ideals of gurukulas were not to insist that students imbibe a profession in exchange for fees to become a 'button pusher' in a factory, but to mould his conduct and learn the values of life for the elevation of the Self and for the society of which he was to become an integral part. Just as the study of books and passing of examinations is considered necessary in modern educational systems, teachings of the ideal of brahmacarya and samyama with the knowledge of the Vedas was the primary objective of the gurukulas. Their motto was:

By observing the austerity of brahmacarya
the gods conquered death.

and that:

By practising brahmacarya, physical, mental
and spiritual vigor is obtained.

CHAPTER VII

RULES FOR OBSERVANCE OF BRAHMACARYA

The sages of India knew about the body with the exact-
ness of a science.¹⁰⁶ They knew of the manner in which life
could best be spent along with the knowledge of the con-
duct most conducive for its growth. Although the rules for
observance of brahmacharya might appear simple, great psycho-
logical principles were embedded within them. Their wisdom
is fully upheld by modern thought as well as the experience
of everyday life.

Restraint from six types of sensuality was advised at
the time of 'upanayana'. At that time the guru reminded
the student,

O young man, practice restraint from these eight
kinds of sensuality and do not become a victim
of stridhyana (engrossed thinking about women),
stories, touch, sight, embrace, residence in a
lonely place and intercourse. Preserve your
virya. The man who falls a victim to these above-
mentioned, can never remain a brahmachari. 107

106

Ernest Wood, The Bhagavad Gita Explained, (Los
Angeles: The New Century Foundation Press, 1954), p. 6.

107

Statement by Professor Ved Vrat of the American
Academy of Asian Studies, personal interview on
Grhasutra.

Manu advised:

A wise man should strive to restrain his organs, which run wild among alluring sensual objects, like a charioteer and his horses.

Those (organs) which are strongly attached to sensual pleasures, cannot so effectually be restrained by abstinence (from enjoyment) as by a constant (pursuit of true) knowledge.

Neither the study of the Vedas, nor liberality nor sacrifices, nor any (self-imposed) restraint nor austerities, ever procure the attainment (of rewards) to a man whose heart is contaminated (by sensuality). 108

For the purpose of Self-unfoldment and practice of brahmacharya, these instructions were given as soon as the people entered the gurukula. In brief, the object of these instructions was to explain and impress upon the student that the means to attain knowledge rests in the control of the five senses, since undue emotionalism creeps in with their indiscreet use.

Five of them, the ear and the rest according to their order, they call organs of senses, and five of them, the anus and the rest, organs of action.

Know that the internal organs (mānas) is the eleventh, which, by its quality, belongs to both these sets, when that has been subdued, both sets of five have been conquered.

108

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), pp. 46 - 47.

Manusmṛti: II, 88, 96 and 97.

Through the attachment of his organs (to sensual pleasure) a man doubtlessly will incur guilt; but if he keeps them under complete control he will obtain success (in gaining all his aims). 109

Special emphasis was made to control each sense organ, one by one. In the prayer or worship, each organ is named with the hope of directing it in the right path. Each organ, when misdirected, brings in its turn, obstructions and afflictions (klesa) in the path of attainment of spiritual insight; hence, the sages had devised such rules of observance that prevented even the remotest possibilities of falling from the ideal. To give an example, mention may be made of the consequences that follow when these organs of sense are misdirected in a path other than that of spiritual pursuit. Mention must, however, precede the importance of opportunity. It is because of 'opportunity' that a person is afforded, that he is belabored by various temptations like 'rupa' (appearances).

It is very natural for the young to be eager and to become tempted if not properly directed. Orientation in life is a necessary duty of the parents and teachers. It is a

109

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 47.

Manusmṛti: II, 91 - 93.

mistake to suppose that a child will not become a victim of undesirable habits prematurely if unguarded and unguided in the path of conduct. Much harm, of course, comes with excessive leisure time with children. Those who are busily occupied either at play, activity or study, do not have much opportunity to entertain temptations. Accordingly, it is noted that at the initiation ceremony, the sages in charge of gurukula first emphasized the teaching¹¹⁰ of 'karma kuru' meaning, 'work, do not be idle'.

To minimize the opportunities for temptations and frivolities, co-education was not advocated during the stage when the greatest character formation was underway. Later on, with samyama and brahmacarya well-established, the two sexes mixed and even took part in debates and assemblies.¹¹¹ Gargi is a typical outstanding example of such women. The principle of minimizing contacts in early life, perhaps resulted in physically locating these gurukulas in deep forests during ancient times. Since opportunity plays such an important part in the life of an individual, in

¹¹⁰ Statement by Professor Ved Vrat of the American Academy of Asian Studies, personal interview on Grhasutra.

¹¹¹ S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publisher, 1953), .p. 230.

in the growing stage of the individual, these recourses did not allow the five senses of vision or sight (rupa), taste (rāsa), speech (śabda), smell (gandha) and touch (sparsa), to govern one's life course. In a further attempt to minimize temptations, ācāryas (teachers) and brahmacāris were closely associated throughout the day, taking care to understand the relationship between the teacher and the taught. In this way, they achieved not only the knowledge imparted by the teacher, but also the appreciation of such a relationship, which made knowledge more dynamic.

ROLE OF THE SENSES

112

Kinsey et al. observed various physical and emotional sources of first spontaneous ejaculation and mentioned that beyond earliest adolescence, it is a rare male who ejaculates when no physical contact is involved. They also pointed out cases of males who reached climax by deliberate concentration of thought on erotic situations. (See Table II).

112

A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), p. 162.

TABLE II

SOURCES OF FIRST SPONTANEOUS EJACULATION	
Chiefly Physical Stimulation	
Sitting at desk	Sliding on chair
Sitting in classroom	Sliding down a bannister
Lying still on floor	Tension in gymnastics
Lying still in bed	Chinning on bar
Urination	Climbing tree, pole or rope
At toilet	(A rather common source)
General stimulation in bath	Wrestling with female
Moving water in bath	Wrestling with male
General stimulation with towel	Riding an automobile
General skin irritation	Tight clothing
Vibration of a boat	
Chiefly Emotional Stimulation	
Day dreaming	Milking a cow
Reading a book	When scared at night
Walking down a street	When bicycle was stolen
In vaudeville	A bell ringing
In movies	An exciting basketball game
Kissed by female	Trying to finish an examination in school
Watching petting	Reciting in front of class
Peeping at nude female	Injury in a car wreck
Sex discussion at YMCA	

Beyond earliest adolescence, it is a rare male who ejaculates when no physical contact is involved. Many teen-age and even older males come to climax in heterosexual petting that may not involve genital contacts; but general body contact, or at least lip contact, is usually included in such situations. There are stray cases of males of college age ejaculating under the excitement of class recitation or examination, in airplanes during combat, and under other rare circumstances. There are two cases of older males who could reach climax by deliberate concentration of thought on erotic situations; but such spontaneous ejaculation is almost wholly confined to younger boys just entering adolescence.

It might, therefore, be desirable to consider briefly, the role of the five senses in the observance of brahma-carya.

Rupa (vision): To a large extent vision has slowly superseded the other senses and become the main channel by which one receives impressions arousing desires and

113
 emotions. Those who are to succeed in their practice of sanyama must exercise special attention on the control of 'looking'. Among non-fiction books that have become popular within recent months, "The Hidden Persuaders", has become a best seller. The advertisements relative to the topic of this book depict man as a puppet manipulated by strings that are pulled by better businessmen of the modern age. It shockingly brings home the cold fact that unless controlled, desires and consequent actions are governed by 'eye appeal'. This might, in fact, be called the age of 'eye appeal', with its lures of 'Slenderella figure', 'easy living homes', 'swept-wing automobiles', 'sheer-look appliances', etc. The eye-appeal, however, exceeds beyond that which can be managed in an 'easy installment plan'. Continually exposed to the attraction of the flesh within even the privacy of the home, invaded by television, man encounters new temptations and is confronted with their challenge.

In contrast to the rule of prostrating even before the wife of the acarya (teacher), the young and immature must, in this modern age, learn to admire and comment upon legs,

113
 Havelock Ellis, The Psychology of Sex (New York: The New American Library, 1957), p. 54.

adorned with glamorous nylons, two-piece bikine bathing suits and put-on glamour which the females are astonishingly proud to display. Dances, glamour and personal appearances, all tend to divert the attention of a young man. Even Plato¹¹⁴ mentioned that people are more easily influenced by dramatic performances, theaters and other artificialities than realities. James has illustrated this with a story of a Russian lady who pitied, sobbed and cried over a man shivering in a theatrical scene while her drivers and horses nearly froze to death outside in the penetrating cold of Russia. Kinsey¹¹⁵ et al. have recorded data on sexual sources of erotic response among two hundred and twelve pre-adolescent boys as follows:

TABLE III

SEXUAL SOURCES OF EROTIC RESPONSE
AMONG 212 PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS

Seeing females	107	Physical contact with	
Thinking about females	104	females	34
Sex jokes	104	Love stories in books	32
Pictures of females	89	Seeing genitalia of others	29
Females in moving pictures	76	Seeing animals in coitus	21
Seeing self nude in mirror	47	Dancing with females	13
		Burlesque shows	23

¹¹⁴ J. Harward (trans.), Plato, Vol. VII of the Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Maynard and Mortimer J. Adler. 54 Vols.; Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1958), p. 333.

¹¹⁵ A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), p. 162.

Sabda (hearing): To control the various sensual desires that can arise in the mind through the sense of hearing, Indian sāstras prohibited dancing. With the dance the temptations which are gathered through the ears, namely, the involvement with music, songs, etc., are also counted as prohibitive for the management of brahmacarya. Mental impressions from dances and music are natural. It is a matter of scientific knowledge that in insects and birds in particular, the purpose of music and dance is to lure the female into sexual union. Darwin has pointed out the role of music and colors for sexual selection. Although Herbert Spencer and advocates of his doctrines have raised an objection to sexual selection being the objective for such a display, modern scientific thought has amply proved that music, singing and dancing is a prelude to the drama of procreative play. It would be appropriate here to point out in order to establish the relationship of singing and sexual love, that in the animal kingdom only one of the two sexes has the better voice. Even in a young man at puberty, near

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G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 62.

Manusmṛti: II, 178.

the approach of sexual maturity, the voice box changes as a secondary sexual characteristic, indicating a very close relationship to the sexual function. Plato discusses the subject in the same light in his 'Republic', where he mentions the subject of musical instructions. Although he does not contend that the effect of music is always sexual excitation, he maintains that a particular type of music has an effect on a person. In modern times, background and functional music are utilized for better sale of merchandise by gearing a person into a mood to buy the products. Even cows have been known to produce more milk with music. Plato has recommended the employing of music only for war or worship.

When music affects animals, birds and men in the form of arousing desires, some of them pertaining to sex, it is no wonder that the ancient sages considered it proper to forbid ordinary music and singing for a brahmachāri. The recitation of the musical verses of Sam Veda, were, however, positively prescribed for developing proper mental attitude for worship.

Gandha (smell): The sense of smell and sexual desires are closely related. Even in modern concepts, smell plays an important part in the setting of sexual drama. The perfume industry survives because the bait of scent is always

in demand. Use of perfumes, especially by the female sex is very significant. Havelock Ellis stated that the sex impulse in man is of great moment but that it is fairly obvious and well-understood. He points out that in comparing the sexual impulse in man and woman, one should seek the qualitative and not the quantitative differences. The latter is approximately equal, but women exercise greater means to intensify sexual impulse, because society has approved these means of gaining appreciation of men. Ellis says,

There has been a tendency in the past to regard women as supernatural elements in life, more or less superior to men, and on the other hand, a tendency to regard them as specially embodying the sexual instinct as peculiarly prone to exhibit its manifestations. 117

Numerous other writers have been quoted by Ellis as claiming that the sexual impulse in man is greater than in woman; many of those quoted also considered that a well-developed sex impulse in woman was unnatural, suggestive of something abnormal.

No one can doubt that the sexual impulse in man and woman varies. The ancient sages, however, were quick to

117
Havelock Ellis, On Life and Sex, (New York: The New American Library, 1957), p. 32.

realize that in the members of both sexes the impulses must be, as assured by nature, complimentary to each other. In order to control the desire, as little setting as possible was advocated. Flowers, scents, perfumes, make-up and music, therefore, should all be beyond the student engaged in learning brahmavidyā (Self-knowledge). Even adornment of garlands, flowers, scented oils and other preparations, were not permitted for a brahmācāri.

Sparsa (touch): It has been contended that caress and touch is the beginning and end of sexual love. Touch is the greatest factor in arousing emotions. The sages of India, Ellis, and other contemporary investigators, are unanimous on this point. The significance of touch as a factor leading to sexual desire is clearly seen in women who have a more sensitive nervous system, a finer and more delicate skin and more acute feelings. There are special areas like the breasts, with vivid sensibility in sympathy with the womb. The breasts are erogenous zones to a marked degree, but are not solely contributory towards arousing the general sexual intent.

Modern science reveals today, what the sages know long ago, when they said:

Except when sick, he must not touch the cavities (of the body) without a reason and he must

avoid (to touch) the hair on the secret
(part). 118

Even the thoughts regarding the sensation of touch should be controlled, since impulses will produce in a normally constituted individual (lacking complete control of his senses) sexual feeling or impulse brought on by imagination, or from stimulation of erotic zones. It is easy to understand how touch can set up nervous impulses that follow sensory nerves to the centers in the brain which mediates in the feelings of pleasure and sex. This would explain why, in the āśramas, where brahmacāris resided and the only female was perhaps the wife of the ācārya, it was the rule that:

“(A pupil) who is full twenty years old and knows what is becoming and unbecoming, shall not salute a young wife of his teacher by clasping her feet.

But at his pleasure, a young student may prostrate himself on the ground before the young wife of a teacher in accordance with the rule, say, I., N. N. (worship thee, O lady). 119

Adherence to this rule tended to bypass natural temp-

118
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 151.

Manusmṛti: IV, 144.

119
Ibid., p. 69.

Manusmṛti: II, 212 and 213.

tation in avoiding the situation by not producing sensations in either the brahmacāri or in the wife, who, as a spouse of ācārya, was his sexual partner, only. It must be noticed that while staying in āśramas was allowed even upon guru's death, the brahmacāri was enjoined to serve first the son of the guru and then the widow. By this time, the widow either had developed complete control according to the ideal, or had undertaken a substitute husband, as recommended by Manu.

Young children take a special delight in the playful activity of tickling one another. While this playful activity arises because of fondness, it may acquire a different tone, and act as a stimulant in arousing sexual desire. Unnecessary touch, be it direct, in play or accidental, was recommended to be avoided by a brahmacāri. The importance of the sensation imparted by touch was considered so great that even the soft touch of silken beds was not allowed. It will also be noted that since a hand alone does not determine the effect of touch or friction, friction of any type may result in incitation of sexual impulse and desire. As an example, this would be true if an object upon which one is sitting or lying, should inadvertently be rubbed or pushed against the sensitive sexual organs. Thus, in the sāstras, the ācārya conveys to the brahmacāri, "Do not ride the ox,

horse, elephant or camel, etc." The central idea permeating these teachings suggests that anything which might upset brahmacarya is to be avoided. The very word, 'ācārya' implies 'to be approached'. He was indeed a teacher, a principal, but also, ācārya. To further instructions in the scriptures and develop righteous conduct in his pupils was his primary duty and to absorb these selfsame teachings was the duty of the student.¹²⁰

Rasa (taste): Connected with and inseparably linked to the sense of taste, are the previously discussed four senses - perception, touch, hearing and smell. The effect of these senses when not properly controlled was discussed. Taste, likewise, should also be under one's control. Generally speaking people in modern society are very calorie conscious, but cannot restrain themselves in the indulgence of overeating and are soon overcome by gluttony and gusto leads to casual drinks and very possibly to alcoholism. Under the influence of liquor one soon forgets his dharma and conduct and so we read:¹²¹

¹²⁰
G. Buhler (trans), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 501.

Manusmṛti: XII, 83.

¹²¹
Ibid., p. 223.

Manusmṛti: VII, 50.

Drinking, dice, women and hunting, these four (which have been enumerated) in succession, he must know to be the most pernicious in the set that springs from love of pleasure.

Overeating gives rise to several pathological conditions related to obesity, heart diseases, hepatic insufficiencies and others. Then even the virya cannot be conserved. A person tasting all types of tāmasika and rājasika food, creates in his mind, tāmasika and rājasika vṛttis and acts accordingly. "Wine, women and song", go together. In ancient India, it was impressed upon the minds of the brahmacāri that the type of food regulates the frame of mind to a large extent. The Upanisad says, "The food, verily, is the mind." The Upanisads and other works of the sages, are sprinkled with recommendations for taking ¹²²sāttvika only. Walsh also contends that the consumption of various foods, condiments, etc., results in the loss of spermatic fluid. When a brahmacāri entered gurukula, the ācārya advised him:

Do not eat very sour, bitter and salted foods.
By eating rājasika food, the undesirable sanskāra become dynamic.

¹²² J. J. Walsh, Psychotherapy (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1922), p. 478.

Furthermore, he was also advised to eat moderately and infrequently. A brahmacari was enjoined to eat only in the morning and evening. In this connection, Manu advised how the body was to be maintained healthy without creating unnecessary diversions in the mind, saying:

Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame and to (bliss in) heaven; it prevents (the acquisition of) spiritual merit and is odious among men; one ought for these reasons, avoid it carefully. 123

It should be apparent that the wisdom of sages outlining a structure of conduct and regulations to maintain brahmacarya was founded on very sound psychological and philosophical principles.

SUMMARY

Through the concept of brahmacarya, the Indian sages conveyed:

There the eyes goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind; we know not, we understand not how one can teach this. 124

123

G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 40.

Manusmṛti: II, 57.

124

S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads: Iena Upanisad I, 3. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 582.

The ethical system of brahmacarya expressed values were taken into cognition affording an opportunity for the fulfillment of the Self or satisfaction of the individual's effective needs, resulting in behavior conducive to the survival and extension of the group.

“Endowed with the qualities of beauty and goodness, possessing wealth and fame, obtaining as many enjoyments as they desire, and being most righteous, they will live a hundred years. 125

Despite marked differences in theories, in viewpoints and methods, a remarkable understanding is displayed in the concept of brahmacarya especially among the more adept and in others, reflecting the underlying oneness in human psychological and physical needs, combined with plasticity in adjustment to these needs.

The more successful requirement emphasized by perceivers and the training of the importance of service to others, not only in the family (as a grhastha after observance of brahmacarya) which maintained priority, but also in the group as a unit and later, more especially to the gurus,

125
G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu, The Sacred Books of the East (Oxford: The clarendon Press, 1886), p. 82.

Manusmṛti: III, 40.

ācāryas and leaders. Moreover, those specific attitudes and practices were fostered that tended to make service more effective. Practice with self-control necessitated veracity, integrity, industry and courage. In addition, practices were undertaken to arouse ecstatic emotional experiences which intensified and stabilized the individual's sense of being of greater family dominated by a greater father who provided greater rewards and everlasting happiness. These experiences and practices enhanced the individual's sense of privilege and achievement in participation in the activities of the fellowship of the Supreme.

CONCLUSIONS

Having discussed the concept of brahmacarya in its various implications in ancient Hindu thought in accordance with this thesis, it may be placed in the foremost position among psychological needs and accorded the highest value for the realization of the Self or for perceiving the deeper aspect of Reality without the diversion of mind or dissipation of vital energy. This is pursuit of truth for its own sake by the most effective kinds of methods, of which observance of brahmacarya forms a part; and, for another that is no less important, the fulfillment of love in its varied aspects. Among other values, cultivation of which is also highly important, mention may be made here as few examples, largely overlapping with one another and with the two already given, the zest for making one's own decisions (that is, exercise of freedom), for achievement of creativity, variety and adventure, and the appreciation of nature, art and artifice. All of these overlapping values have ultimately to be harmonized with one another and the seeking of them will play major functional roles in the objective as well as subjective progression.

The road to spiritual Self-development is hard and

often beset with multi-directional temptations due to various vṛttis (tendencies of the mind). It is, therefore, cruel and the vast majority ends in pitiful anti-climaxes. Yet, it is also true that intelligence and cooperation have not merely constituted one of the lines of Self-development, but the one which, through its increasing control of the rest of nature in its own interests, has become by far the most desired and therefore, prominent. Through the unprecedented human faculty of long range foresight, the wisdom of the sages and the seers jointly serviced and exercised can secure and advance the position of the people. It can avoid to a degree, the missteps of blind nature (avidyā), circumvents its cruelties, reform and assert their own natures and enhance their own values.

The Self is not to be sought through the senses. The Self caused pierced the openings (of the senses) outward. Therefore, one looks outward and not within oneself. Some wise man, however, seeking life eternal, with his eyes turned inward, saw the Self. 126

Thus, brahmacharya is not only a contributing factor in the development of man and his own advancement, but also a

126

S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, Katha Upanisad II, 1. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 630.

major step in promoting welfare of his members considered as 'all-inclusive group' in securing 'Self-awareness' and awareness of the world as it is and on the basis of a naturalistic, scientific and philosophic ethics.

The wise should discriminate between the unchanging light, the ātman from the changing objects of senses and mind (an-ātman) which it illumines. The technique for attaining the spiritual consciousness requires one to stand clear and enter into his own depth.

Katha Upanisad has, in a masterly way, declared:

Arise, awake, having attained thy boons.
Understand (them). Sharp as the edge of
a razor and hard to cross, difficult to
tread, is that path (so) sages declare. 127

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