

Beyond Mars and Venus

Osho, [*From Sex to Superconsciousness*](#), Chapter 2

Early one morning, before sunrise, a fisherman went to a river. On the bank he felt something underfoot, and found it to be a small sack of stones. He picked up the sack, and putting his net aside, squatted on the bank to await the sunrise. He was waiting for dawn to break in order to start his day's work. Lazily he picked a stone out of the bag and threw it into the water. Then he cast another stone and then another. In the absence of anything else to do, he kept tossing the stones into the water, one by one.

Slowly the sun rose and it became light. By that time he had thrown all the stones away except one; the last stone lay in his palm. His heart almost failed him when he saw, by daylight, what he held in his hand. It was a gem! In the darkness, he had thrown a whole sack of them away! What had he lost unknowingly! Full of remorse, he cursed himself. He sobbed and cried, almost out of his mind with grief.

He had accidentally stumbled upon enough wealth to enrich his life many times over, but unknowingly, and in the darkness, he had lost it. Yet in a way he was fortunate: still one gem was left; the light had dawned before he had thrown it away too. Generally, most people are not even that fortunate.

There is darkness all around and time is fleeting. The sun has not yet risen and we have already wasted all life's precious gems. Life is a vast treasure trove, and man does nothing with it but throw it away. By the time we have realized the importance of life, we have whiled it away. The secret, the mystery, the bliss, the deliverance, heaven -- all is lost. And one's life is spent.

In the next few days I intend to speak on the treasures of life. But it is difficult to enlighten people who treat life like a sack of stones. People are annoyed if you draw their attention to the fact that the very things they are throwing away are jewels, not stones. They flare up, not because what has been said is incorrect but because they have been shown their own folly, because they are reminded of what they have lost. Their egos step in; they get angry.

Even with what has been lost up to now; even if the life that is left is short; even if only one stone is left, your life can still be salvaged. It is never too late to learn. Help is still possible and, especially in the search for truth, it is never too late. There is still reason to feel confident.

But out of our ignorance and in the darkness, we have taken for granted that the sack of life is filled with nothing but stones. The faint of heart simply accept defeat before they make any effort to search for the truth.

To begin with, I want to warn against the pitfalls of fatalism, against this delusion of certain defeat.

Life is not a pile of sand and stones; if you have the right eyes to see it, there is much that is good in life. In life you will find the ladder to reach God.

Within this body of blood, flesh and bones, something or someone aloof from these things exists. It has nothing to do with flesh, blood or bones; it is immortal. It has neither beginning nor end. Formless, it is at the core of each one of us. From the darkness of your ignorance, I urge you, yearn for that imperishable flame!

But the immortal flame is disguised by the smoke of mortality, and so we cannot see the light. We encounter the smoke and step back. Those who are a bit more courageous search a little, but only in the smoke, and so they cannot reach the flame, the source of illumination, either.

How can we make this voyage to the flame beyond the smoke -- to the self within the body? How can we realize the Overself, the Universal? How can we come to know that which is camouflaged by nature, that which is hidden in nature?

I shall talk about it in three stages.

In the first place, we have smothered ourselves with such prejudices, inflated ideas and phony philosophies that we have deprived ourselves of the ability to see the naked truth. Without knowing, without searching, without any curiosity, we have ready-made hypotheses about life. For thousands of years we have been taught that life is meaningless, that it is useless and miserable. We have been hypnotized into believing that our existence is useless, purposeless, full of sorrow; that life is to be despised, to be by-passed. This constant repetition keeps tightening the stranglehold that is smothering us, so now we feel that life is nothing more than a big noise, a big din, a hotbed of misery.

It is only because of this contempt for life that all joy and love have been lost to man. Man is now just a formless lump; he is a turbulent sea of sorrow. And it's not at all astonishing that, because of these misconceptions, man has stopped trying to reflect upon himself. Why try to search for beauty in an ugly lump? And when one firmly believes that life is simply meant to be thrown away, to be rejected, then what sense is there in trying to acknowledge it, in trying to cleanse it and to beautify it? The whole effort seems futile.

Our attitude to life is not unlike that of a man making use of a waiting room in a railway station.

He knows he is only there for a while, that he will be leaving shortly. So of what importance is the waiting room? It is of no importance whatsoever; it is completely insignificant. He tosses odds and ends about; he spits; he dirties it; he is thoughtless; he's not concerned with his behavior: after all, he will be leaving it in a while. In the same way, we regard life as a temporary residence.

The current tendency is to ask why one should bother searching for truth and beauty in life. But I want to emphasize that life will come to an end in due course, and then there is

no escaping the reality of life. We can change our houses, change bodies, but the essence of our life remains with us. That is the Self, with a capital "S." There is absolutely no way to be rid of it.

We are formed by what we do. Ultimately, our actions make us or maim us. They change our lives. They shape our lives and mold our souls. How we live and what we do with our lives formulates our futures. One's attitude to life guides the path of one's soul: how it will evolve, what hitherto unknown mysteries it will unravel. If man were aware that his attitude to life melodies his future, he would immediately drop this dismal view that life is discord, that it is useless and meaningless. Then he might realize the fallacy of the belief that existence is meant to be full of woe, that there is no scheme to things. Then he might come to know that everything that is opposed to life is irreligious.

But we are taught the negation of life in the name of religion. The philosophy of religion has always been death-oriented, instead of life-oriented. Religion preaches that what comes after life is important, but that what happens before death has no significance whatsoever.

Up to now, religion has revered death, but shown no respect for life.

Nowhere is the joyous acceptance of the flowers and the fruits of life to be found; everywhere there is an obstinate clinging to dead flowers. Our lives are eulogies on the graves of dead flowers!

The focus of religious speculation has always been on the other side of death -- on heaven, on *moksha*, on *nirvana* -- as if what happens before death were of no concern at all. I want to ask, if you are unable to live with what happens before death, how will you be able to cope with what comes after life? It will be almost impossible! If we cannot avail ourselves of what is here, before death, we can never prepare or qualify for what comes after death. The preparation for one's death must be done during one's life! If there is another world after death, there too we will be confronted with what we have experienced in this life. There is no escaping the after-effects of this life, in spite of all the harping about renouncing it.

I say there is not, nor can there be, any God but life itself. I also say that to love life is one's *sadhana*, one's path to God. The true religion is to avail one's self of life. To realize the ultimate truth that exists in life is the first auspicious step towards achieving total deliverance. The one who misses life is the one who is sure to miss everything else.

However, the tendency of religion is exactly the opposite: cast life away, renounce the world. Religion does not advise the contemplation of life; it does not help you to lead your life; it does not tell you that you will only find life as you live it, but it says that if your life is miserable it is because your perception of life is impure. Life can shower happiness on you if you only know the proper way to live it.

I call religion the art of living.

Religion is not a way to undermine life, it is a medium for delving deeply into the mysteries of existence. Religion is not turning one's back on life, it is facing life squarely. Religion is not escaping from life; religion is embracing life fully. Religion is the total realization of life.

As a result of these basic misconceptions, only elderly people show any interest in religion these days. You will only find old people in the places of God -- in the temples, in the churches, in the *gurudwaras* and in the mosques. You will not see any young people there. Why? There is only one explanation: our religion has become a religion for people advanced in age; it is for those haunted by the fear of death, for those at the end of their lives, for those full of anxiety about what comes after death.

How can a religion based on the philosophy of death illuminate life? Even after five thousand years of religious teachings, the earth is sinking steadily from bad to worse. Although there is no shortage of temples, mosques, churches, priests, teachers, ascetics and the like on this planet, its people have not yet become religious. This is because religion has a false base. Life is not at the root of religion; religion is built on death. Religion is not a living symbol; religion is a gravestone. This kind of biased religion can never bring life to our lives.

What is the cause of all this ?

During these few days, I shall discuss the religion of life, the religion of the living faith -- and a certain elemental principle the common man is never encouraged to discover, nor even told about. In the past, the utmost was done to throw a blanket over this primary rule of life, to suppress this basic truth. And the result of this grave mistake has grown into a universal disease.

What is the basic drive of the average man? God? No.

The soul? No.

Truth? No.

What is at the core of man? What is the basic urge in the depths of the common man -- in the life of the average man, of the man who never meditates, never searches his soul, never undertakes any religious pilgrimages?

Devotion? No.

Prayer? No.

Liberation? No.

Nirvana? Absolutely not.

If we look for the basic urge in the common man, if we search for the force behind this life, we will find neither devotion nor God, neither prayer nor the thirst for knowledge.

We will find something different there -- something that is being pushed into the darkness, that is never faced consciously, that is never evaluated. And what is that something?

What will you find if you dissect and analyze the core of the average man?

Leave man aside for the moment. If we look at the animal or vegetable kingdom, what will we find at the core of anything? If we observe the activity of a plant, what do we find? Where is its growth leading? Its whole energy is directed toward producing a new seed. Its entire being is occupied with forming a new seed. What is a bird doing? What is an animal doing? If we closely observe the activities of nature, we will find that there is only one process, only one wholehearted process going on. And that process is one of continuous creation, of procreation, of creating new and different self-forms. Flowers have seeds; fruits have seeds. And what is the seed's destiny? The seed is destined to grow into a new plant, into a new flower, into a new fruit, into a new seed -- and so the cycle repeats itself. The process of procreation is eternal. Life is a force that is continuously regenerating itself. Life is a creativity, a process of self-creation.

The same is true of man. And we have christened the process "passion," "sex." We have also termed it "lust." This labeling amounts to name-calling; it is a kind of abuse. And this very disparagement itself has polluted the atmosphere.

Then, what is lust? What is passion? What is the force called "sex?"

Since time immemorial, waves have rolled in succession and dashed against the shore. The waves come in, break apart and fall back. Again they rush in. They push, they struggle, they disperse and fall back once again. Life has an inner urge to progress, to march forward. There is a kind of restlessness in these waves, and in life's waves as well. There is a continuous effort to achieve something. What is the aim? It is an intense desire for a better position; it is a passion to reach greater heights. Behind this never ending energy is life itself -- life striving for a good life, life striving for a better existence.

It's not long at all -- only a matter of some thousands of years -- since man first appeared on the earth. Before that, there were only animals. And it's not so very long since animals came into being either. Prior to that there was a time when there weren't any animals, when there were just plants. Nor have plants existed on this planet for a very, very long time. Before that there were only rocks, mountains, rivers and oceans.

And what was this world of rocks, mountains, rivers and oceans restless about? It was striving to produce plants. And gradually, ever so gradually, plants came into existence. The life-force had manifested itself in a new form. Then the earth was covered with vegetation. It continued to bring forth life; it continued to procreate: flowers bloomed and fruit grew.

But the plants were also restless. They were not satisfied with themselves either; their inner urge was also for something higher; they were eager to produce animals and birds. Then animals and birds came into being and occupied this planet for ages. But man was

nowhere in sight. And yet man was always there, inherent in the animals, striving to break through the barrier, striving to be born. Then, in due course, man entered existence.

Now, how about man?

Man is ceaselessly endeavoring to create new life. And we have named this tendency "sex"; we have called it "passion," "lust." But what is the meaning of this lust?

The basic urge is to create, to produce new life. Life itself does not want to end. But what is it all for? Can it be that man, from within, is trying to bring forth a better man, a higher form of himself? Can it be that life is expecting a being far better than man himself? Sages from Nietzsche to Aurobindo, from Patanjali to Bertrand Russell have nurtured an image in their heart of hearts, a dream of how a man superior to themselves will come forth -- a superman. They have been asking how another being, better than man, can be produced.

We have deliberately condemned the urge to procreate for thousands of years. Instead of accepting it, we have abused it. We have relegated it to the lowest possible place. We have concealed it and pretended it is not there, as if there were no place for it in life, no room for it in the scheme of things.

The truth is that there is nothing more vital than this urge. And it should be given its rightful place. Man has not freed himself from it by covering it up and by trampling it; on the contrary, he has entangled himself in it even more. This repression has yielded the opposite result from the one expected.

Imagine a novice learning to ride a bicycle. The road may be big and wide, but if there is a small rock lying by the side of the road the cyclist will be afraid he will bump into the stone. There is a hundred-to-one chance against his running into that stone -- even a blind man would, in all probability, pass it safely by -- but because of his fear the rider is only aware of the stone. The stone looms large in his mind and the road vanishes for him. He is hypnotized by that stone, drawn to it, and in the end he dashes against it. He collides with that very thing from which he has done his utmost to save himself.

The road was big and wide, so how did this man have an accident?

The psychologist Coue says that the average mind is governed by the Law of Reverse-Effect. We collide with the very thing from which we are trying to save ourselves because the object of our fear becomes the center of our consciousness. In the same way, man has been trying to save himself from sex for the last five thousand years. And the result is that everywhere, in every nook and corner, he is confronted by sex -- in all its various forms. The Law of Reverse-Effect has arrested the soul of man.

Have you never observed that the mind is pulled towards and hypnotized by the very thing it is trying to avoid?

The people who taught man to be against sex are fully responsible for making him so

aware of sex. The over-sexuality that exists in man can be blamed on perverted teachings.

Today we are afraid to discuss sex. Why are we so mortally afraid of this subject? It is because of a presupposition that man may become sexual just by talking about sex. This view is totally wrong. There is, after all, a vast difference between sex and sexuality. Our society will only be free of the ghost of sex when we develop the courage to talk about sex in a rational and healthy manner.

It is only by understanding sex in all its aspects that we will be able to transcend sex. You cannot free yourself from a problem by shutting your eyes to it. Only a madman thinks his enemy will vanish if he closes his eyes. The ostrich in the desert thinks in this way. The ostrich thrusts his head into the sand and, since he cannot see his enemy, he thinks his enemy is not there. This kind of logic is pardonable in the case of the ostrich, but in man it is unforgivable.

As far as sex is concerned, man behaves no better than the ostrich. He thinks that by shutting his eyes, by ignoring it, sex will vanish. If such miracles could occur, life would be very easy indeed. But alas, nothing disappears just by pulling down the blinds. On the contrary, this is proof that we are scared of sex, that its attraction is more powerful than our resistance. Because we feel we cannot conquer sex, we shut our eyes to it.

Shutting one's eyes is a sign of weakness, and the whole of humanity is guilty of it. Not only has man blatantly shut his eyes to sex, he has also entered into innumerable inner conflicts with it. The devastating results of this war with sex are too well known to be enumerated here. Ninety-eight per cent of mental illness, of neurosis, is because of the suppression of sex. Ninety-nine per cent of the women suffering from hysteria and related illnesses suffer from sexual disorders. The major cause of fear, of doubt, of anxiety, of the stress and strain on contemporary man, is the pressure of passion. Man has turned his back on an inherent and powerful urge. Without attempting to understand sex, we have shut our eyes to it out of fear. And the results have been catastrophic indeed.

To see the truth of this, man need only scan his literature, the mirror of his mind. If a man from the moon or from Mars were to come here and go through our literature, were to read our books and our poetry, were to see our paintings, he would be surprised. He would wonder why all our art and literature is centered around sex.

"Why are all man's poems, novels, magazines and stories saturated with sex? Why is there a half-naked woman on every magazine cover? Why is every movie concerned with lust?" he would ask. He would be perplexed.

The alien visitor would wonder why man thought about nothing but sex.

He would be even more confused if he met a man and talked to him, because the man would try, would try very hard, to impress upon him that he was totally innocent of the existence of sex. The man would talk of the soul, of God, about heaven, about emancipation, but he would not say a word about sex, although his whole being would be

filled with ideas about sex. The alien would be stunned to learn that man has even invented a thousand and one devices to gratify a desire about which not a breath is uttered.

Man's death-oriented religion has made man sex-minded. And it has perverted him from another angle as well. It shows him the golden pinnacle of celibacy, of *brahmacharya*, but gives him no guidance in getting a foothold on the first rung, in understanding the base, in understanding sex.

First of all, we have to recognize sex and understand it; we have to comprehend this elemental urge. Only then can we strive to transcend it, to sublimate it, so we can reach the stage of celibacy. Without understanding this basic life-force in all its forms and facets, all man's efforts to restrain and suppress it will only help him degenerate into a sick and incoherent lunatic. But we do not concentrate on the basic illness, we spout the high ideal of celibacy. Man has never been so sick, so neurotic, so wretched or so unhappy. Man is completely perverted. He is poisoned at the root.

Once I was passing a hospital. I read on a sign: "A man stung by a scorpion was treated here. He was cured in a day and discharged."

Another notice read: "A man was bitten by a snake. He was treated and went home, hale and hearty, in three days."

A third report read: "A man was bitten by a mad dog. He has been under treatment for the last ten days and will be well quite soon."

Then there was also a fourth report. "A man was bitten by a man," it said. "It was many weeks ago. He is unconscious and there is a slim chance of his recovery."

I was surprised. Can a man's bite be so very poisonous?

If we are observant, we will see that a lot of poison has accumulated in man.

Perhaps it is because of his quack doctors, but the foremost reason is his refusal to accept what is natural in him, his refusal to accept his fundamental being. We have tried to curb and annihilate our inborn urges in vain; no attempts are made to transform them, to elevate them. We have forced ourselves to control that energy in a wrong way. That energy is bubbling in us like molten lava; it is always pushing from inside: if we are not careful, it may topple us at any moment. And do you know what happens when it gets the slightest opening?

I will illustrate with an example:

A plane meets with an accident. You are nearby and you rush to the scene. What is the first question that will come to your mind when you see a body in the debris?

"Is this person Hindu or Muslim?" No.

"Is this person Indian or Chinese?" No.

In a split second, and first and foremost, you will look to see whether the body is a man's or a woman's.

Are you aware why this question springs to mind first of all? It is because of repressed sex. It is the repression of sex that makes you so conscious of the difference between a man and a woman. You are able to forget the name, face or nationality of someone -- if I had met you, I might forget your name, your face, your caste, your age, your status, everything about you -- but you never forget the sex of a person, you never forget whether someone was male or female. Have you ever had any doubt that the person you had a conversation with, let's say, on the train to Delhi last year, was a man?

Why? When you forget everything else about a person, why can't you erase that aspect from your memory? It is because the awareness of sex is so firmly rooted in man's mind, in his thought processes. Sex is ever-present, ever-active.

Neither our society nor our planet can ever be healthy so long as this iron curtain, this distance, exists between men and women.

Man cannot be at peace with himself so long as this burning fire rages inside him, so long as he sits tightly on it. He has to strive to suppress it every moment of every day. The fire is burning us. It is scorching us. But even so, we are not prepared to face it, not prepared to look into it.

What is this fire? It is not an enemy, it is a friend. What is the nature of this fire?

I want to tell you that once you know this fire it will no longer be an enemy, it will become a friend. If you understand this fire, it will not burn you. It will warm your homes, it will cook for you, and it will also become your lifelong friend.

Electricity has flashed in the sky for millions of years. Sometimes it killed people, but nobody ever thought that this very same energy would someday run our fans and light our homes. Nobody could imagine these possibilities then. But today this electricity has become our friend. How? Had we shut our eyes to it, we would never have fathomed its secrets, we would never have utilized it; it would have remained our enemy, it would always have been an object of fear. But man assumed a friendly attitude towards electricity. He took it upon himself to understand it, to know it, and slowly, slowly, a lasting friendship developed. Had that not happened, we would hardly be able to manage today.

The sex inside man, his libido, is even more vital than electricity. A minute atom of matter annihilated an entire hundred thousand people in the city of Hiroshima, but an atom of

man's energy can create a new life, a new person!

Sex is more powerful than an atom bomb.

Have you ever thought about the infinite possibilities of this force, about how we can transform it to better mankind? An embryo can become a Gandhi, a Mahavir, a Buddha, a Christ. An Einstein can evolve from it; a Newton can be manifest in it. An infinitely small atom of sex energy has a towering person like Gandhi manifest in it!

But we are not inclined to even try to understand sex. We have to summon immense courage even to talk about it in public. What kind of fear is it that plagues us, so that we are not prepared to understand the force out of which the whole world is born? What is this fear? Why does sex alarm us so?

People were shocked when I spoke about sex at the first meeting last month, in Bombay. I received many angry letters asking me not to talk in this fashion, letters saying I should not speak on this subject at all. I wonder why one should not discuss this subject? When this urge is already inherent in us, why should we not talk about it? Unless we can understand its behavior, can analyze it, how can we hope to raise it to a higher plane? By understanding it we can transform it, we can conquer it, we can sublimate it. Unless that happens, we will die and still we will be unable to free ourselves from the grip of sex.

My point is that those who forbid talk about sex are the same people who have pushed humanity into an abyss of sex. Those who are frightened of sex, and have therefore convinced themselves they are innocent of sex, are lunatics. They have conspired to make the whole world a gigantic asylum.

Religion is concerned with the transformation of man's energy. Religion aims to integrate the inner being of man -- both his chaste aspirations and his basic urges. It is also true that religion should guide man from the lower to the higher, from darkness to light; to the real from the unreal, to the eternal from the ephemeral.

But to reach somewhere, one has to know the starting point. We have to start from where we are; it is imperative we know this place first. And this is more important at the moment than the place we want to reach. In this context, sex is the fact, the reality; sex is the starting point. But God? God is far from here. We can reach the truth of God only by understanding the starting point of the journey; otherwise we cannot move an inch. We will be lost. We will be on a merry-go-round, going nowhere.

When I spoke to you at our first meeting I could sense you were not prepared to face the realities of life. Then what more, if anything, can we do? What can we achieve? Then all this hullabaloo about God and the soul means nothing. It is all empty of conviction; it is all just false talk.

It is only by acquiring real knowledge about something that we can rise above it.

In fact, knowledge is transcendence. And first of all, one fact must be comprehended fully: man is born out of sex. The whole of his being exists because of the practice of sex. Man is filled with the energy of sex. The energy of life itself is the energy of sex.

What is this sex energy? Why is it such a powerful disturbance in our lives? Why does it pervade our entire beings? Why do our lives revolve around it, even to the end? What is the source of this urge?

Sages and seers have degraded sex for thousands of years, but man is still not convinced. For ages they have preached that we should defy sex, that we should banish all thoughts of it and all desires for it in order to be free from *maya*, from the illusory world -- yet man has not been able to break his shackles. You cannot be rid of sex like this; the approach is wrong.

Whenever I meet prostitutes, they never speak of sex. They inquire about the soul, and about God. I also meet many ascetics and monks, and whenever we are alone they ask about nothing but sex. I was surprised to learn that ascetics, who are always preaching against sex, seem to be captivated by it. They are curious about it and disturbed by it; they have this mental complex about it, yet they sermonize about religion and about the animal instincts in man. And sex is so natural.

We have neither wanted nor tried to understand this problem. We have never delved into the reason there is such a great attraction to sex.

Who teaches you sex?

The whole world is against its being taught. Parents feel children should not be allowed to know about it, and teachers agree. The scriptures say the same thing. There is no school or university to teach the subject of sex; every institute of learning forbids knowledge of it. But in adolescence, a young man finds out for himself that his whole being, his *prana*, is filled with an anxiousness about sex. Then the age-old precautions fall. And sex wins.

How does this happen? Truth and love are preached, but the teachings don't hold up; they prove vulnerable.

Sex is firmly rooted in the core of our beings, but where is it anchored? Where is the center of this natural pull, of this pull that is so powerful, so profound? There lies the mystery. And it is necessary to recognize the mystery first; only then can we surpass it.

Fundamentally, what we feel as the attraction for sex is not the attraction for sex at all.

After every act of orgasm, a man feels drained, empty, depressed.

He is sorry, with a pinch of heartburn. He thinks of avoiding this practice in the future. So, what is the source of this state of mind? It is because the desire is for something else, and

not just for physical gratification.

Man cannot ordinarily reach the depths of his being that he reaches in the consummation of the sexual act. In the ordinary course of his life, in his daily routine, a man has a variety of experiences -- he shops, does business, earns his living -- but intercourse reveals the deepest of experiences to him. And this experience has profound religious dimensions: there, man reaches beyond himself; there, he transcends himself.

Two things happen to him in those depths. First, in copulation the ego vanishes. Egolessness is created. For an instant, there is no "I;" for an instant, one does not remember oneself. Did you know that the "I" also dissolves completely in the experience of religion, that in religion the ego also dissolves into nothingness? In the sexual act the ego fades away. Orgasm is a state of self-effacement.

The second thing about the experience of sex is that time is undone for an instant. Timelessness is created. As Jesus Christ has said of *samadhi*: "There shall be time no longer." In orgasm, the sense of time is non-existent. There is no past, no future; there is only the present moment. The present is not a part of time; the present is eternity.

This is the second reason man is so eager for sex. The craving is not for the body of a woman by a man or vice versa, the passion is for something else: for egolessness, for timelessness.

This sexual climax only lasts a moment, but for this brief moment a man loses a considerable amount of energy and vitality and later laments his loss. In some species of animals, males die after one act of intercourse alone. A particular insect in Africa can perform the act only once; its energy ebbs and it passes away in the act itself. It is not that man is unaware that intercourse diminishes his power, lessens his energy and brings death that much nearer. After each experience he regrets his indulgence, but in a short while he feels passionate again. Surely there is much deeper meaning to this pattern of behavior than meets the eye.

There is a subtler level to the sexual experience than the mere physical routine.

It is a level that is religious in essence. To understand this experience you must pay careful attention. If you cannot grasp the meaning of this experience, you will live and die in sex alone.

Lightning shines in the darkness of the night, but the darkness is not part of the lightning. The only relation between the two is that lightning only stands out at night, only in the darkness. And the same is true of sex. There is a realization, an exhilaration, a light that shines in sex, but that phenomenon is not from sex itself. Although it is associated with it, it is just a by-product. The light that shines in orgasm transcends sex; it comes from beyond. If we can comprehend this experience of the beyond we can rise above sex. Otherwise, we will never be able to.

Those who oppose sex blindly will never be able to appreciate the phenomenon in its proper perspective. They will never be able to analyze the cause of this insatiable desire for sex, of this deep craving for sex. What I wish to emphasize is that this strong and recurring pull toward sex is for the momentary realization of *samadhi*.

You can liberate yourself from sex if you can learn to attain to *samadhi* without sex. If a man who wants an article costing one thousand *rupees* is shown where one can be had for free, he would not be in his right senses if he were to go to the market to buy it so expensively. If a man can be shown how he can attain the same ecstasy he derives from sex by some other means and in much greater measure, his mind will automatically cease its rush towards sex; his mind will start racing in the other direction.

Man had his first realization of *samadhi* in the experience of sex.

But sex is a costly affair, a very costly affair indeed. And it does not last for more than a moment; after a momentary climax, we return again to our original position. For a second, we reach towards a different plane of existence; for a second, we climb towards a peak of immense satisfaction. The momentum is towards the pinnacle, but we have hardly taken a step when we fall back to first base. A wave aspires to reach the sky, but it has hardly risen noticeably when it already starts to fall. We are the same. It is for that ecstasy, for that joy, for that realization, that we accumulate energy from time to time and again start the ascent. We almost touch that subtler plane, that higher realm, but again we fall back to our original position, minus a considerable amount of power and energy.

So long as man's mind remains immersed in this river of sex he will repeatedly rise and fall again. Life is a continuous push towards egolessness, towards timelessness -- whether conscious or unconscious. The intense desire of the being is to know its real self, to know the truth, to know the original, eternal, timeless source -- to unite with that which is beyond time, to attain pure egolessness. It is to satisfy this unconscious inner desire of the soul that the world rotates around the axis of sex.

But how can we understand or develop any kind of rapport with this realization if we continue to deny the existence of this natural, inner and all-encompassing phenomenon.

When we oppose sex as vehemently as we do, sex becomes the center of our consciousness: we cannot free ourselves from it; we become chained to it. The Law of Reverse-Effect comes into play and we become bound to it. We try to run away from sex, but the more we try to rid ourselves of it, the more we become entangled in it.

A man was ill. His illness was that he felt very hungry, but in fact he had no illness at all. He had read that the negation of life was the path to deliverance. He had read that fasting was religious and that eating was sinful. He had also been told that eating was violent and contrary to the precepts of non-violence.

But, the more he thought of eating as sinful, the more he suppressed his hunger. And the

hunger asserted itself in equal measure. He used to fast for three or four days and then, the following day, he would eat anything and everything, like a glutton. After eating he felt sorry for breaking his vow -- plus, overeating has its own reactions -- and then, to atone, he would have another spell of fasting. And again, after that, he would eat for a time.

At last he decided it was not possible to follow the righteous path while he lived at home, and so he renounced the world, went to the jungle, climbed a hill and found a solitary cave. The folks at home were sad, and his wife, assuming he must have overcome his eating illness in his retreat, sent him a bunch of flowers. She wished him an early recovery and a speedy return.

The man replied with a note: "Many thanks for the flowers. They were delicious." The man had eaten the flowers. We may not be able to imagine a man eating flowers instead of food, but we have not undertaken the *sadhana* of a fast, like that man had. Of course, those who are devoted to eating will be able to understand the situation very well indeed. In more or less the same proportion, everybody is committed to sex.

Man has started a war against sex. And the results of this war with sex are difficult to assess correctly. Does homosexuality exist anywhere but in man's so-called civilized societies? Aborigines who live in backward areas cannot imagine a man having intercourse with another man. I have stayed with tribal people, and when I told them that civilized people practiced this, they were stunned; they could not believe it. But in the West there are homosexual clubs, and there are associations that claim that it is undemocratic to prohibit homosexuality when so many people practice it. They declare that the prohibition of homosexuality by law is a violation of fundamental human rights, that it is an imposition by a majority on a minority. The mentality that has given birth to homosexuality is the result of the war with sex.

Prostitution also exists in direct proportion to a society's civilization.

Did you ever reflect on how the institution of prostitution came into being in the first place? Can you find a prostitute in the hilly areas of the tribal peoples, in our far-flung settlements? Impossible. These people cannot even imagine there are women who sell their virtue, who undergo intercourse for remuneration. But this trafficking in sex has developed with the advance of man's civilization. This is an act of eating flowers. And we would be still more astonished were we to take fully into account all the other perversions of sex, were we to examine the full range of all its ugly manifestations.

What has happened to man? Who is responsible for this ugliness and debauchery? Those who have taught man to repress sex instead of understanding it are responsible. Because of this suppression, man's sex energy is leaking from the wrong pores. Man's whole society is sick and wretched, and if this cancerous society is to be changed, it is essential to accept that the energy of sex is divine, that the attraction for sex is essentially religious.

Why is the attraction of sex so powerful? For it surely is powerful. If we can grasp the basic levels of sex we can lift man out of sex. Only then can the world of *rama* emerge

from the world of *kama*; only then can a world of compassion evolve out of this world of passion.

With a group of friends, I went to Khajuraho to see the world-famous temple there. The outermost wall, the periphery of the temple, is decorated with scenes of the sexual act, with the varied poses of intercourse. There are sculptures of many different poses, all in sexual postures. My friends asked why those sculptures were there, decorating a temple.

I explained to them that the architects who had built that temple were highly intelligent people. They knew that passion and sex exist on the circumference of life, and believed that those who were still caught up in sex had no right to enter the temple.

We entered. Inside, there was no idol to God. My friends were surprised, seeing no idol anywhere. I explained to them that on the outer wall of life itself lust and passion exist, whereas the temple of God is inside. Those who are still enchanted by passion, by sex, cannot reach the temple of God inside; they simply roam about the outer wall.

The builders of this temple were very sensible people. This was a meditation center -- sexuality on the surface, all around; peace and quiet at the core, at the center. They used to tell aspirants to meditate on sex first, to reflect fully on the copulation depicted on the outer wall, and when they had thoroughly understood sex and were certain their minds were free of it, they might go inside. Only then could they face God inside.

But in the name of religion we have destroyed any possibility of understanding sex.

We have declared war on sex, on our basic instinct itself. The standard rule is not to see sex at all, but to shut your eyes and blindly barge into the temple of God. But can anyone reach anywhere with his eyes closed? Even if you reach inside, you will not be able to see God with closed eyes. Instead, you will only see the thing from which you have been running!

Perhaps some people think I am a propagandist for sex. If so, please tell them that they haven't heard me at all. It is difficult these days to find a greater enemy of sex on the face of this earth than me. If people can pay attention to what I say -- without bias -- it is possible to liberate man from sex. This is the only course for a better humanity. The pundits we consider the enemies of sex are not its enemies at all, but its propagandists. They have created a glamour around sex; their vehement opposition has created a mad attraction for sex.

One man told me he wasn't interested in anything that was not disapproved of, challenged or resented. As we all know, the stolen fruit is always sweeter than the one purchased from the bazaar. That's why one's own wife isn't as appetizing as the neighbor's wife seems to be. The other is like a stolen fruit; the other is a forbidden treat. And we have given the same status to sex. It is very tempting. It has been given such a colorful coat of lies that it has become intensely attractive. Bertrand Russell has written that in the Victorian era, when he was a child, ladies' legs were never seen in public. The clothes

they wore swept the ground, covering their feet completely. If by chance even a woman's toe were visible, a man would immediately ogle it; it would arouse his passion.

Russell further writes that today's women move about nearly half-naked with their legs fully visible, but notes that it doesn't affect us nearly as much. This proves, he writes, that the more we conceal a thing, the more it arouses our curiosity.

The first step to free the world from sexuality is to allow children to remain nude, as much as possible, in the home. As far as it is feasible, it is advisable to allow children, both boys and girls, to play in the nude, so that they become totally acquainted with each other's bodies. Then, tomorrow, there will be no necessity for them to snuggle up to each other in the streets. Then there will be no need to print nude pictures in books. Then they will be so familiar with each other's bodies that no kind of perverted attraction will be possible in the future.

But the way of the world is just the opposite.

The people who have covered and concealed the body have unwittingly created so great an attraction for it that, although it has overtaken our minds, we still haven't felt the full impact.

Children should remain nude and should play in the nude for a long time, so no seed of madness remains to plague them the rest of their lives.

But the disease is already there, and it is on the increase. The existence of the disease can be observed in the bulk of obscene literature now being published. People read it, hiding it between the covers of the *Gita* and the *bible*. We shout that obscene books should be banned, but we never pause to think where the men who read them are coming from; we protest the displaying of nude pictures but never stop to ask why they are exhibited in the first place.

Sex is natural, but sexuality is the product of anti-sex teachings. If these teachings are followed, if the advice given in these unscientific sermons is taken, the soul of man will be totally filled with sexuality. It has almost happened. But, thank God, such teachers are not very successful. And because of their failure, man has been able to salvage some of his conscience, some of his discrimination. If man understands sex properly, he can rise above it. He should rise above it; it is necessary that he rise above it.

All our efforts to date have borne wrong results because we have not befriended sex but have declared war on it; we have used suppression and lack of understanding as ways of dealing with sex problems. The deeper a man's understanding, the higher he can rise above sex; the less his understanding, the greater his attempts to suppress sex will be. And the results of repression are never fruitful, never pleasing, never healthy.

Sex is man's most vibrant energy, but it should not be an end unto itself: sex should lead

man to his soul. The goal is from lust to light.

To reach celibacy sex must be understood. To know sex is to be free of it, to transcend it; but even after a lifetime of sexual experience, a man is not able to detect that intercourse gives him a fleeting experience of *samadhi*, a peek into superconsciousness. That is the great pull of sex; that is the great allure of sex: it is the magnetic attraction of the Supreme. You have to know and to meditate upon this momentary glimpse; you have to focus on it with awareness. On everyone its pull is so tremendously strong.

There are other, easier ways to attain to the very same experience -- meditation, yoga and prayer are other alternatives -- but only the channel of sex has such a powerful influence on man.

It is very important to consider the various ways there are to reach the same goal.

One friend wrote to say that he found my topic very embarrassing. He asked me to imagine the awkward position of a mother sitting in the audience with her daughter; he asked me to think of a mother attending my lecture, accompanied by her son. Further, he advises me that such things should not be discussed in front of just anybody. I replied that his objections were groundless and that he must be out of his mind. If a mother is sensible, she will relate her experiences of sex to her daughter in time, before she slips into a netherland of sex, before she loses herself in unknown, immature ways. If a father is sensitive in discharging his parental responsibility, he must freely discuss the subject with his son and daughter -- to warn them against the common pitfalls and to save their lives from possible perversion in the future.

But the irony of the situation is that neither the father nor the mother has any deep, conscious experience in the matter. They themselves haven't risen above the level of physical sex, and so they fear their children may become entangled at the same level as well. But, I ask you, did anybody guide you? You have entangled yourself. And your children will also entangle themselves. And it will be repeated in the second and third generations and so forth. But isn't it possible if your children are spoken to, if they are taught, if they are allowed to think freely for themselves, that they may save themselves from dissipating their energy? They may conserve their energy. And they may transform it.

We have all seen coal many times. Scientists say that in a period of a few thousand years coal is transformed into diamonds, and that there is no chemical or structural difference between coal and diamonds. A diamond is the transformed manifestation of a piece of coal. A diamond is only coal.

I wish to tell you that sex is coal, whereas *brahmacharya*, celibacy, is diamond. Celibacy is a form of sex; celibacy is the transformation of sex. Celibacy is coal, but after it has undergone a certain process. And believe me, there is no enmity between the two extremes. No enemy of sex can ever become *brahmacharya*.

What do we mean by *brahmacharya*, by celibacy? It is the *charya* of *Brahma*; it is communion with God. It is the realization of the divine experience, of the experience of God. And, by the use of conscious understanding, it is possible to direct one's sexual energy on this path, on the path to God.

Tomorrow, I intend to speak to you about how the experience of *kama*, of lust, can be sublimated into that of *Rama*, of light. I wish you to listen attentively, so there will be no misinterpretation. And whatever questions come to mind, please ask them honestly. Send them to me in writing so that I can speak to you about them simply and directly in the next few days. It is not necessary to hide any questions that arise in your minds; there is no reason to hide the truth. It is pointless to try to run away from it. Truth is truth whether we shut our eyes to it or not. Only those who have the courage to face the truth are religious men. Those who are weak and cowardly, those who are not even manly enough to face the facts of life, can never be helped to become religious.

In the coming days, I invite you to consider my topic. It is one on which your aged seers and sages cannot be expected to talk. And perhaps you are not used to hearing such discourses either. Your minds may react in fear, but I urge you to be patient and to listen attentively. It is quite possible the understanding of sex may lead you to the temple of your soul. That is my desire.

May God fulfill that desire.