

SEX

The personal self is the ultimate liar. It constantly tells you it cannot be happy without the fulfillment of its desires. Nowhere are its desires more extravagant than in its urge to be sensual and to be loved.

commentary from an Indian sage

A number of years ago, as a friend and I walked through a run-down section of Los Angeles, we passed a black teenager who had a look on his face that was hard and mean. I hadn't been paying much attention (I was talking to my friend), but when the young man got near I looked up, noted his general demeanor, and smiled at him. Almost immediately, he responded with a smile that was like sunshine.

What the young man was doing was something that was, most probably, very useful in that rough neighborhood. He was presenting a facade to the world that said, "Don't mess with me." It wasn't until he realized that we weren't threatening that the facade fell, exposing what I suspect was probably a very nice disposition.

What is important to notice here is that it is not unusual for a typical child-self to project some kind of facade when it is in a situation in which it is insecure and unsure.

Speaking of insecure, if there is one area most selves are unsure about it's dealing with the opposite sex. Have you ever noticed that when you meet someone in that context who you want to impress, you change. You suddenly get witty or sedate or strike any one of a number of poses that aren't really characteristic of the way you are in real life.^{††} What the child is doing is presenting to the new acquaintance a view of the self that it believe is appealing, all the while unconsciously obscuring qualities that are not appealing. The

^{††} My parents' generation called this *putting your best foot forward*. Nobody wants to look like a goof right off the bat, especially if it means screwing up a meeting with someone desirable.

child is saying to the world: *I am nice* (even though I am often selfish and, hence, am not nice when crossed), or; *I am funny* (even though I am also *moody* and not-so-funny when in a funk), or: *I am secure in myself* (even though I am not secure in myself and would prefer to crawl under a stone rather than take the initiative to talk to you and possibly be rejected). In all these cases, the self is presenting to the world a facade, a view of itself that can be intentionally or unintentionally misleading.

This kind of deception is rarely conscious, but it does exist as an avenue for the child-self to appear appealing when it may not be. It is a symptom of the child's insecurity. It isn't something to fear; it is something to understand . . . especially in situations in which one is dating people one doesn't really know very well.

Although a *facade* is not a particularly good reflection of the state of a person's child-self, it does highlight what the individual wants the world to believe he or she is like. Yet there is still something more going on when people first begin to date. There is the problem of *the glamour*.

The first time I remember coming under the influence of a glamour had nothing to do with dating. It was 1963. I was a sophomore in high school, and at the time the aim of my life, the hope of my heart, the desire that loomed beyond all others . . . was to own a Chevrolet Corvette. I found a 1960 edition I thought I could afford, approached my parents with the stealth of a man about to tickle a tiger, and popped the question: "Oh please can I buy this toy?" (we called Corvettes *stingie toys* in those days).

To my considerable surprise, they *didn't* say *no*. Instead, my step-dad said, "Sure, on three conditions. You have to be able to make the payments on the car; you have to pay for your own insurance; and you have to be able to buy gas and keep it running . . . all on your own. If you can deal with that, you can get the car."

I was ecstatic. Visions of cruising in my fuel-injected Vette flooded into my head. All I had to do was to accommodate those minor parental requisites, something I could surely do, and the Vette was mine.

Then my dear mother hit me with the kicker. "Of course," she said sweetly, "you'll have to give up your free time so you can get a job . . ."

It was brutal. My mind came out of its reverie like a shot as the glamour I had unconsciously cast over the situation dissolved and the disaster that was waiting to happen

loomed out at me. I was no more interested in marrying myself to the financial sinkhole that car would have become than I was in contracting a social disease!

Mom's few words totally changed my perspective, and when that happened the glamour went poof and there I sat looking smack into the reality of the situation. It wasn't a pretty sight . . .

A glamour is an illusion we cast over something we want. It highlights the points of desire while selectively ignoring all the detriments. Although the example given above has nothing directly to do with boy/girl relationships, the idea of a glamour is relevant in that kind of situation, also. How so?

Due to the state of the child-self in us all, there is a constant desire within the self to be bolstered and supported and made to feel fulfilled.‡‡ What that means is that almost everyone looks at potential date-mates with an eye to meeting one's own needs. I knew a fellow in college, for instance, who was what we called a *face man* (that is to say, he was good looking and he knew it). His belief was that there are nice *ugly* girls and nice *pretty* girls in the world. He had nothing against the ugly ones, but he was willing to date only the pretty ones. Why? Although I'm sure it never dawned on him, his problem was that he measured his self-worth by the beauty of his dates. He lived for having a beautiful woman on his arm . . . and he paid for it. Every girlfriend he had for the two years I knew him (he was a junior when I was a freshman) were shrews. They were self-absorbed and constantly demanding his attention, his obedience, his money. He had what he wanted--girlfriends that were beautiful--but the glamour he placed over them was selective. There was no beauty in their dispositions, and as such his totally skewed view of reality left him supposedly fulfilled and totally miserable, all at the same time.

Another example: In the 1950's and earlier, it was not unusual for a young girl to go to college to find a husband. What often happened: the girl would find a guy who was handsome and possibly intelligent and maybe had the potential of becoming a good bread-winner, and she'd set her sights on marrying him. Unfortunately, she would completely overlook the fact that he, say, drank too much, or wasn't particularly kind, or was just plain selfish. She would place a glamour over the situation, selectively screen out qualities that would later make her life miserable in favor of highlighting what she

‡‡ Note from 2019: We are obviously not talking about people who just want to hook up, which is apparently, currently, somewhat the rage. That is a whole other thing. We are talking here about people who are going into the process of dating with the goal of finding someone to spend one's life with.

wanted to see at the time. The consequence? She would inevitably find herself in an unhappy marriage.

An old-fashion corollary to this situation: the women who say, "Oh, so-and-so is a good man, but there are things about him I don't like. That's OK, though. I'll change him after we're married."

What does this all come down to? When two people first begin to date, it is probable that neither individual will see the other clearly. Both will, to some degree, glamorize the other depending upon the viewer's needs and desires. At the same time, both will present a facade that places them in what they perceive as the most advantageous light whether it be a true reflection of their child's nature or not.²

If that were all that goes on when people date, it would be no big deal. Sooner or later the facades would begin to slip and the glammers would begin to wear off. If the couple was lucky, each would find beneath the other's deception a human being who was worthwhile, and all would be well. If they weren't so lucky, they'd find there was no harmony between them and, subsequently, they would break up. Having wasting only a few months of their lives, each could then begin looking for someone better suited to themselves.

Unfortunately, it is rarely that easy. People don't approach dating as two-friends-going-out-to-have-some-fun. Inevitably, sex gets injected into the scenario, and once people get hot and heavy, they are rarely in a position to make rational judgments as to where a relationship should go in the long run.^{§§}

The excitement of sexual relationships is powerful, and I'm not talking solely about having sex. As an example: When you talk to somebody of the opposite sex, do you act the same way you do when you talk to someone of the same sex? Probably not. You are probably kinda cute, or you verbally joust a bit, or maybe you poke at the person

² This attempt to seem other-than-what-one-is is sometimes found in the oddest situations. In my fraternity, we used to have what we called "the ass hole of the month award." It was given to the guy who had consistently been the biggest jerk over the previous month. Some very nice guys became so caught up in the farce that they actually vied for the supposed honor even though they were decent people.

Migration toward a negative facade is seen in other places. For example, the high school kid who acts out a tough-guy or bad-kid persona when he or she is, in fact, a basically nice person.

^{§§} Note from 2019: You have to remember that this was written in 1992, pointing back to the 1960s and 70s. Kids don't go out on date as much these days, choosing more to go out in groups. That doesn't lessen what is being pointed out, though. Sooner or later, dating is going to happen.

. . . you generally try to get a rise out of the individual. You don't do that with same-sex friends.^{***} With them, you talk like a normal human being.

The difference? Whether it's obvious to you or not, your normal conversation with the opposite sex is loaded with sexual interplay. That isn't bad, but it is powerful and it is so much a part of the way males and females interact with one another that most people don't even realize that it's happening.³

A problem can arise during dating when this interplay gets serious, escalates fast, and prematurely leads to sexual intercourse. Assuming the guy isn't out strictly for the sex and the girl doesn't enjoy the occasional late-night-rendezvous with the football team (that is, assuming both are looking for someone to settle down with), this can make for big complications.^{†††} How so? Consider:

One of my college friends had a very sexy girlfriend that he dated for a long time. She was sweet, a bit naive maybe, but a lot of fun. The following was his recollection of their first date.

He asked her to an overnight party being thrown by the fraternity at a neighborhood movie theater. She accepted and they went. The party broke up early (around 4 A.M.) and everyone left to go elsewhere. She wasn't at all suspicious when he suggested that they go to a friend's apartment, even though she knew the friend was out of town. When they got there, they talked for a while until the yawns were too much, then the two went up to the bedroom and lay down on the bed. He evidently kissed her a few times which she responded to, then after a short lapse he moved to undo her bra. He executed the maneuver deftly, then found to his horror that she had fallen asleep. Being adept at undoing bras but having no experience at re-connecting them, he realized he was in big trouble. What was she going to think of him when she awoke to find herself

^{***} Note from 2019: All of this assuming you are heterosexual. I would be surprised to find that this wasn't also true of the homosexual population.

³ This myopia is unfortunate when a girl wears a provocative outfit and then is surprised when guys come onto her aggressively. Most women know what they are doing along these lines, but there are some innocents out there who are truly surprised with the responses they get. For example, the daughter of one of my friends had a girlfriend who was particularly well endowed. She kept complaining about obnoxious guys bothering her at the mall, seemingly unaware of the connection between their actions and her T-shirt. It read in enormous letters across her ample upper section, "MOUNDS" (as in *Mound's candy bar*).

^{†††} Note from 2019: In reading the "the girl doesn't enjoy the occasional late-night rendezvous with the football team" phrase, I kind of bristled. It wasn't intended to be slut-shaming, but it kind of reminds one of slut-shaming. I probably should have said something more like, "she doesn't just want random sex herself."

undone. He decided the best path of action was to bite the bullet and face the proverbial music. He gave her a hard nudge to wake her up, then got up and went into the living room to await his fate.

When she came out, he immediately apologized, saying something about being from California where the girls were faster (she was from the east coast). She was indignant but willing to talk. The evening (morning) ended with conversation.

That was their first date.⁴

My friend was a normal, healthy, red-blooded male whose hormones were running like Appaloosas. There were things about her he wasn't crazy about, but she was pretty and unintentionally sexy, and she seemed to be interested in him. As such, he asked her out again and she accepted. Touched off by that first night, their sexual experimentation (she was a virgin, he wasn't) was accelerated. Within two months, they were sleeping together.

From there on, sex was a very big part of their relationship, even to the detriment of their studies.

I watched the two for the entire time they dated, and although they appeared on the surface to be OK with one another, it was really a very sad situation. Almost without exception, the only time those two were happy together was when they were in bed with one another. They clearly had nothing in common; they were constantly arguing; they basically made each other miserable, and they did it for about two-and-a-half years.

What kept them together? The sexual interaction between the two had been quite intense almost from the start, so instead of realizing in fairly short order that they didn't have a thing in common, breaking up a month or two after they started dating, they stayed together for over two years. They both obviously wanted to have somebody to love and possibly marry and hopefully be happy with, but in staying together they completely negated the possibility of actually finding someone to whom they might have been better suited.

College is a unique situation. By and large it is comprised of relatively young, energetic, single adults. There is a lot of interaction in the way of dating because there

⁴ Two years later, they were engaged to be married. It was around that time that she told him that she'd found their first-night's experience strangely exciting. Having been brought up in a very strait-laced family around school-chums who had never made advances toward her, she really didn't think of herself as being sexually desirable. The fact that he had even tried both surprised and titillated her.

are a lot of like-minded, fun-seeking people, all confined to a relatively small area (the college). Once out of college, assuming one hasn't gotten married, the situation changes radically. If the individual is fortunate enough to get a job (every parent's hope), one's daily companions will be the people at work. A lot of those people will be married; those that aren't will not necessarily be anywhere close in age.

What this all means is that if one's ideal is to find someone to settle down with, college is the perfect place to do so.⁵ My friend and his erstwhile girlfriend basically squandered that chance by staying together in a bad relationship. They did it because they had bonded to one another. He liked the sex and the notoriety of being her man; she had given him her virginity and, as such, couldn't bear to count-as-a-loss the emotional investment she had made in him (even though down deep I'm sure she realized she had made a big mistake). The sexually generated emotional bond turned out to be a noose. Fortunately, they didn't get married, have children, and really mess up people's lives.⁶

If you choose to go into your college experience looking for love, there is one other thing to consider. Karma.

On the down-side, if reincarnation is a reality and a person's child-self is only a small part of the Being-that-is, you have no idea what is submerged below the psyche of the person you are dating. The individual could have very noble qualities that need only the right pressure to bring them forth, or the person could have all sorts of insecurities

⁵ I should mention, though, that the current trend with young people is not to get married out of college. As of 1992, according to statistics provided on a PBS special with Bill Moyers, 53% of the 40 million adults in their twenties are not yet married; 40% are from divorced homes; 65% will not live as comfortably as did their parents; 53% will never feel financial security. Of those who responded to the poll, the overwhelming majority said that they wanted to "find themselves early as individuals" before looking for a relationship. What was not stated but is probably true is that their reticence to marry is intimately related to their upbringing. This is the first generation of latch-key kids. It may be that these people were so affected by the strife they saw in their parents' lives that they simply refuse to mindlessly marry.

⁶ I should add that if the girl had been smart from the start, she would have told my friend at the outset that she intended to date him seriously for at least two years before even considering the possibility of sleeping with him. He would have gone through the ceiling and probably would have been ready to pop after the second or third month of waiting, but at least she would have had the chance of deciding without high emotion and the specter of a sexually failed relationship whether he was the man for her. She also would have the opportunity to experience a foretaste of how he might treat her later in life (should they stay together) when other major disputes might arise. Unfortunately, most girls are not secure enough within themselves to make such a move (they also like sexual interplay as much as guys do), and most guys aren't selfless enough to accept it when girls do.

and associated problems that won't come out until later when life's little tensions begin to mount.

What should one do about this? Become a friend first, long before sex gets into the act.

That is hard for young people to accept (old people, too). The prospect of having intimate relations with another human being is an exciting unknown. Neither individual really knows what the other is thinking: the guy wonders how the girl is going to respond to his advances; the girl wonders what the guy will try next. The sexual tension involved in *the chase* is alluring, and the excitement is incredible--especially when the proposition is considered forbidden.⁷

So Henry and Matilda finally do the deed, and it's divine. Where do they go from there? Believing they are in love (they may be, then again it may be purely physical--it's hard for them to know under these circumstances), they go steady or maybe even get married.

Whatever they do, the chase will be over. Sex will still be pleasurable, but after a time it will become just another thing they do together.⁸ Being no-big-thing, the excitement will become less and less and, if it was the focal point of the initial relationship, life for the two as a couple will begin to get stale.⁹

This is a recipe for unhappy times.

Sex is primarily a mental activity. Sure, orgasms are pleasurable, but they only last for a few moments. What is really exciting is the maneuvering, the anticipation, the foreplay, the interplay between partners. Without that interaction, as George and Matilda will learn, the physical act loses its excitement and becomes humdrum.

What people do in this situation depends upon how much they have come to love and respect their partner. They could divorce, freeing each other to find someone more compatible; they could bite the bullet and stay with their partner even though they would prefer out (in the old days, this was often the choice of parents who were no longer in love but who stayed together for the sake of the children); they could look for the lost

⁷ Young adults who have not previously had sex are particularly prone to this. The very fact that they are not supposed to be doing this thing makes it titillating.

⁸ This will be especially true if they get married.

⁹ Interestingly enough, this doesn't happen to people who are truly in love with one another because the relationship isn't focused primarily on sex.

excitement by cheating on their spouse; or they could artificially recreate the excitement by turning to kinky sex (kinky sex is rarely something one does with someone they truly respect, but then again respect is fairly thin out there these days).

I've painted a rather bleak picture of life and relationships in this day and age. Happily, there is one other possibility that exists, especially if some of the metaphysical views out of the East are correct. It is believed that each individual has a tone that belongs to one's Being. It is further believed that there are groups of Beings whose tone is particularly compatible. Finding someone whose tone harmonizes with your own is often referred to as *finding one's soul mate*.

This is considered to be a truly blessed situation. The harmony between the two partners is so complete that a true love can exist. Each makes his or her decision with the best interests of the other uppermost in mind. It is not a possessive love; it is a cooperative love. It is a love that does not entertain the jealousies and insecurities of the child-self. It is, in short, what everyone hopes for when they choose their mate.

This is a very rare situation. Most people are so self-oriented that they would probably not know what to do with a soul-mate even if one presented itself. The life-path of most people is simply not karmically right for that kind of supportive interaction with another human being. Yet the desire to be loved exists within the child. As a consequence, if this kind of true love doesn't come, the child is usually willing to accept a replica in its place.

Sorta-love comes when people with common interests and, possibly, common goals, get together. Sexual attraction often plays a part in the scenario; so do karmic propensities. But in almost all cases, pseudo-love comes as a consequence of the child-self's desire to have someone who will love it. As such, it is no wonder that people become mean-spirited when a break-up between partners occurs. Feelings are hurt; insecurities are tweaked; personal selves become defensive and, in some cases, spiteful.

This is not meant to put you off from finding a mate. It is possible that you will find someone who is well tuned to you. If not, it is possible that you will be karmically drawn to someone who is willing to think of your own good, if not always, then at least more often than not. The key in this situation is that the individual be a friend as well as a lover. If the individual is a friend first, then when the sex gets old and the goals are all achieved, there will still be something there to hold onto. It is a path that requires the

willingness to compromise, but it is worth it if you can find a partner worthy of the effort. Just remember, in Buddhist thought the *path of the householder* is believed to be considerably more difficult than the *path of the ascetic*.

What you don't want to do is to marry because you are lonely. It is perfectly possible to be lonely in a crowded room. Loneliness is a problem within the child-self; no amount of support from the outside will cure it. So even though it is fairly common, loneliness is not a good reason to look for a relationship (and it's an especially lousy reason to have a child).¹⁰

Things have obviously changed since the 1960's. *Safe sex* or *no sex* are the by-words today. Why? Because having sex with someone is the medical equivalent of having sex with everyone *they* have had sex with in the last fifteen years. That's spooky.

How do young people learn about such things? Through education. Fortunately, there are now Sex Education classes available in at least some schools. These classes address the problems of kids who are sexually active but who don't know how to protect themselves from diseases like AIDS or from become unwilling parents. The successful programs proceed on the assumption that kids are going to be sexually active and, hence, need to know what they are doing (this includes a lot of discussion about how one deals with relationships and the emotional feelings that accompanies relationships). As noble and unfortunately needed as these programs are, they have serious drawbacks . . . especially if the Eastern metaphysical views we have been examining are anywhere close to being accurate.

1.) The first problem is endemic to humans as a whole. We have come to the conclusion that sex is a form of play. As such, very few people think much about what sex was really designed to do. Sure, it is pleasurable--nature would have been foolish to make it otherwise. But it's not a toy; it is a mechanism designed to allow humans to create a body into which a Being can meld and through which that Being can experience.

¹⁰ If you are lonely, try doing something useful for someone else. Go read a book to a blind person; help the local school tutoring kids. Do something thoughtful with your life and karma may well relieve your loneliness in ways you never dreamed possible.

One of the great misfortunes is that we humans now perceive sex as a form of entertainment.^{11,12}

2.) According to Eastern metaphysics, when two people have intercourse their auras literally meld and become one for a short time. This is believed to have a lot to do with why the psychology of the act is so satisfying. It is a *becoming one* with another Being.¹³

The downside of this situation is multiple. For starters, there is an interchange of auric energies between the two during the melding. Not only does the female leave with whatever semen is deposited, she also leaves with a residue from the male in her aura. Similarly, the male leaves with an auric residue from the female.¹⁴

Don't misunderstand, it isn't as though you begin to *think* like the other person. It is a lot more subtle than that. If, for instance, you are having an intimate relationship with someone who is a little unstable psychologically (I might add, this could be just about anybody), mingling aurically with that person could affect your emotional body quite strongly. It is not as though you would suddenly go bonkers, but you might find yourself more tense in a psychological sense than you normally would be. Being sub-

¹¹ Two things to be noted: First, this is not unique to the East. The Vatican has long maintained the sanctity of the sex act by not allowing Catholics to use contraceptives. Second, don't get the wrong idea. People in India copulate as whole-heartedly for pleasure as we do. They aren't saints there; we are talking about the core of their philosophies, not the way they practice them.

¹² It is interesting that there are stories in the East of chelas who marry specifically so that they can create a body for a highly evolved Being. Once the baby is conceived, the chelas live the rest of their lives as brother and sister. They no longer exercise the sexual energies between them as there is no longer a justifiable reason to do so.

¹³ This is the basis for Tantric Yoga (Tantric Yoga can loosely be identified as the yoga of sex). By experiencing the oneness of sex, it is believed that a disciplined, trained individual can come into a oneness with God (remember, all things are a part of the Mind of God from the yogic view) during the sex act. There are obviously a lot of ways to *fail* this discipline.

¹⁴ For males who frequent prostitutes, the consequences are pretty grim. What the man is doing is bathing himself in the aura of a woman who has herself bathed in the auras of all the men, both high born and low lifes, she has had intercourse with in the recent past. In most cases, this means that some very heavy, vibratory stuff is being inserted in the make-up of the auric pattern ALL AROUND (i.e., both to the John and to the prostitute).

I haven't said a lot about the aura, but it is a very intricate, complex, important part of the physical structure. Example: As far as this view is concerned, *thought* doesn't originate in the human brain (activity occurs in the physical brain when you think, but that isn't where the thought actually comes from). It is first generated as an energy-form in the auric brain above the skull in the area called "the helmet." This auric energy pattern around you is not an artifact; it is a dynamic part of what you are. Messing around with it in this way is not very bright.

clinical, nobody "out there" would ever notice. But *you* might notice, and you will probably not find it pleasant.

The point is that intercourse is a considerably more intimate interaction than one might think, and that's saying a lot given the degree of physical intimacy it represents.

3.) When people have sex, it is believed that an energy vortex moves up into the inner worlds. This vortex is essentially a tone that heralds the possibility that a body may be formed through which a Being might experience. For Beings in the inner world that are ready to come back and that could karmically benefit from such a union, it is as though someone has tapped them on the shoulder.

When people have intercourse, the inner worlds ever so slightly shake. Two people having intercourse may be affecting the paths of many Beings.

4.) In an attempt to remove apparently irrational taboos, today's Sex Education class characteristically pictures masturbation as a perfectly normal and acceptable thing to do. This is good and bad at the same time. Masturbation is normal in the sense that a fair portion of the population engages in the activity at least occasionally, and it is acceptable in the sense that it's a hell of a lot safer than men going to prostitutes and women picking up just any-old-guy at a bar. With masturbation, the experiencer has control over *what happens* and *how it happens*.

What isn't talked about in these classes, probably because the significance isn't evident, is that when one fantasizes sexually, one is exercising *thought*.

Sexual fantasies are mental creations. One is thinking the fantasy into existence, or more likely, is animating and feeding thought-forms that *already* exist. In doing so, the individual is linking him or herself to thoughtforms that are *real* and *alive*.¹⁵ In many cases these thought-forms are extremely heavy, astral oriented projections. As pleasurable as the physical experience may be, one is grossening the self down by making these mental manifestations a part of the self.¹⁶

¹⁵ It is interesting that Christ said, "If you look at a woman lustfully it is as though you have done the deed."

¹⁶ If you were a porn queen, imagine what it would be like to have thousands and thousands of men creating every manner of perverse, heavy, gross thought around you. It would have to affect you psychologically, having all that thought projected at you as the center of the fantasy.

5.) And finally, abstinence is broached, but only in low tones. I assume the belief is that kids just aren't going to listen to such nonsense. Nevertheless, that very topic leads me to my parting shot on the subject.

To begin with, please understand that I am not suggesting that anybody reading this should become a celibate. The attempt here is to come into an understanding of why such a stance is so popular amongst people who are attempting to follow a certain kind of spiritual path.

Technically, a celibate is someone who has never had sexual intercourse. I have a friend who was a Tibetan Buddhist monk (all Buddhist monks are celibates in the strictest sense). When he was very young, he and the people of his monastery walked over a Himalayan pass into Nepal when the Chinese invaded Tibet. For various reasons, he was chosen to go to the U.S. to make money for his order. Being inexperienced, terribly lonely and particularly naive, the poor fellow found himself married after two years. It was ultimately a devastating blow for him as he was no longer, technically, a celibate. As such, he had to leave his beloved monastic order.

Aside from technicality, what most people don't realize is that it is perfectly possible to lead a celibate's life even if you have had sex at some earlier time in your life. Why would anybody want to take such a step? That is what we are about to discuss.

Let's begin with a story.

Two Buddhist monks were walking down a road in the countryside. Coming to a swollen river they found a woman trying to get across but having no luck. The one monk, knowing he wasn't supposed to be fraternizing with women, ignored her.¹⁷ The other monk was older and wiser. Observing the woman's dilemma, he picked her up and

If thought is a real thing, fantasizing while masturbating is the creation of something that lives, that does affect the minds of others, and that you will have to take responsibility for at some time. Karmically speaking, that is a fairly heavy thing to be doing.

¹⁷ In early times, Buddhist monks were not suppose to have any contact with women at all. The rationale was that the distraction from such contact would be so great that it would pull the monks off the disciplines they were supposed to be doing.

In a way, if you think about it, this is kind of pathetic. Basically what they were assuming was that the monks were so weak that they were unable to look at a woman without getting excited--hardly a situation one would expect of a very highly evolved Being. Nevertheless, that was the custom.

carried her across the stream. Once on the other side, he put her down, then continued on his way with his companion.

The two finally got to their destination. They begged food and sat down to eat. All the time the first monk said nothing--not a word all day. The thoughtful monk understood there was a problem, so he finally gave the first monk leave to speak by saying, "You haven't said a word all day. What is the matter?"

The first monk immediately replied, "You touched that woman. You *carried* that woman."

The wise monk shot back, "Yes, I picked her up; I carried her across the river; *and then I put her down*. You, on the other hand, have been carrying her ever since."

Celibacy is a mental discipline. Abstention from the physical act of intercourse is merely a consequence of that discipline. The individual who has never had sex but who consciously or unconsciously longs for sexual interaction is not a celibate.¹⁸

There comes a time in the spiritual development of any individual when it becomes appropriate to be able to look at another human Being and see beyond the facade. There comes a time when it is appropriate to have the ability to see what is really there in another human being without being distracted by the form of the body in which that Being resides.

When a normal male looks at a female, what does he see? He sees a face and hair, breasts, legs, hips, fanny; he focuses on the body. As long as that male exercises his right to think in sexual terms, that is what he is going to see every time he comes in contact with a woman. In short, his superficial surveillance will rarely if ever see past *the physical facade* to the real person underneath.

The mental disciplines involved with celibacy are centered on the refocusing of the self away from sexual interaction, and that means all kinds of sexual interaction. This

¹⁸ We obviously aren't talking about the New Age celibacy here. For those of you who don't know, New Age celibacy suggests that a couple should abstain from sex for a month, or at least until the two are so horny they can hardly stand it, then break the fast with an entire week of wild and crazy love-making. Once complete, the cycle is repeated.

I wouldn't want to be the one to break the news, should you know anyone who still follows this practice, but this is not celibacy. This is reining the self in sexually until the desires are so riotous that the child is about to explode, then relieving the situation by having sex. It reminds me of one of the teachers at my school who used to fast by, "not eating until noon, then eating like a pig for five minutes, then not eat until 6, then stuffing herself for five minutes, etc." In my country, we don't call that fasting. We call it *not eating between meals*.

is not an easy discipline, especially in this day and age when we are constantly being assaulted by all sorts of sexual imagery (probably half the ads you see on TV have some sort of sexual content to them).

Then there is human genetics with which to deal, that part of the self that provides us all with the driving instincts that scream for a response from the opposite sex.

Consider the dreaded *involuntary erection*. It does have to do with instinct; it is a common problem amongst males; but what most people don't seem to realize is that it doesn't have to be a problem.¹⁹ Humans can make their own instinct. If one chooses not to wallow in the sexual thoughtforms that will inevitably excite the proud owner, a male can move to a point where he simply isn't sexually excited at the drop of a hat (or the swish of a skirt). It may not be something a typical male would want to excise from his world, but that is not the point. When all is said and done, involuntary erections are not as involuntary as one might think.

Still, this is the Kaliyuga, the cycle when the sexual force fields are constantly being thrown into people's faces. Following a celibate's path is bound to be difficult, if for no other reason than the fact that the celibate is swimming upstream against some amazingly strong thoughtforms. It requires the individual to be awake and alert. It means the individual is constantly at attention so as to see what is coming at the self and not to be caught drifting mindlessly off into the sexual thought-patterns that are constantly being projected so powerfully.

Nevertheless, those who follow this kind of path say that becoming free of the ebb and flow of these instinctual patterns, even if it means foregoing sensations most young adults would delight in experiencing, is worth it in the long run. In short, exercising celibacy is not the horror the child-self would make it out to be. It is simply a refocusing one's attention away from a basically primal interplay that goes on between guys and girls, and toward disciplines, activities, and actions the celibate thinks are more important in a spiritual sense.

¹⁹ An interesting response to this observation is that even small babies get erections. This is true, though from this view you have no idea where the Being animating the body has been or what it has done in previous lives. You may have a kid who was once one hot number; it wouldn't be at all weird for the self to have brought with it within its package of skandas fairly well defined tendencies toward overt sexual behavior.

And if it additionally allows the doer of the discipline to see other human beings more clearly, so much the better.^{20, 21}

²⁰ I once had a student ask, "If that is so, then do guys see guys more clearly than girls see guys because there is no sexual tension?" The answer to that is "not really," but for reasons that may not be obvious.

The problem is that most people are so inattentive and scattered that they are rarely in a position to see anything clearly. Guys know what other guys are thinking because most guys have the same things on their minds: food and sex. It has nothing to do with sexual distraction, it has to do with common experience.

Given humanity's lack of observation, all sexual tension does between a guy and a girl is to add another level of haze to situations. What is unfortunate is that this additional confusion often leads people into accepting situations, even actively courting situations, that a more clear-sighted individual wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole.

²¹ The one thing we haven't talked about in this section is homosexuality. When you are looking at life from the perspective of *Consciousnesses experiencing in matter*, you find that topics like this are very complex. As such, I will make only one comment.

Although different groups within the East have different views about homosexuality, the perspective we are examining maintains the following: If individuals exercise their sexuality in homosexual ways, karma will respond to that choice in whatever way is appropriate for the Beings involved. That may sound ominous, but it is not. As far as this view is concerned, the only time sexual intercourse is really acceptable is when it is entered into *to create a vehicle for experience for another human Being*. Using the sexual energies for any other reason is unacceptable.

What that means is that homosexual activity is not condoned, *BUT NEITHER IS MOST HETEROSEXUAL ACTIVITY*.