

The Eight Petals



In Support of Varnashrama to Attain the Lord's Lotus Feet

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Focus on Women



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Loving Krsna Will Help Her To Love Her Son

Urmila devi dasi: In that meeting my son was sitting on my lap, and Prabhupada was talking to my father about Krsna, and Prabhupada looked at me and said "Just like this mother is loving her son without any expectation of return, in the same way you should love Krsna." And my father said "Will loving her son help her to love Krsna?" Prabhupada said "No. Loving Krsna will help her to love her son." And even now I hear many devotees saying things like the way you love your family members will help you understand love for Krsna, but that was not what Prabhupada said. He said "No, you have to do it the other way." He said, "If you eat good food you will have good eyesight, but if you put the food in your eye you will become blind."

*pum'saḥ striyā mithunī-bhāvam etaṁ / tayor mitho hṛdaya-granthim āhuḥ
ato gr̥ha-kṣetra-sutāpta-vittair/ janasya moho 'yam ahaṁ mameti [Srimad Bhagavatam 5.5.8]*

The attraction between male and female is the basic principle of material existence. On the basis of this misconception, which ties together the hearts of the male and female, one becomes attracted to his body, home, property, children, relatives and wealth. In this way one increases life's illusions and thinks in terms of "I and mine."



Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Women

Kunti Devi: The Most Intelligent Woman

Even the greatest philosophical speculators cannot have access to the region of the Lord. It is said in the Upaniṣads that the Supreme Truth, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, is beyond the range of the thinking power of the greatest philosopher. He is unknowable by great learning or by the greatest brain. He is knowable only by one who has His mercy. Others may go on thinking about Him for years together, yet He is unknowable. This very fact is corroborated by the Queen, who is playing the part of an innocent woman. Women in general are unable to speculate like philosophers, but they are blessed by the Lord because they believe at once in the superiority and almightiness of the Lord, and thus they offer obeisances without reservation. The Lord is so kind that He does not show special favor only to one who is a great philosopher. He knows the sincerity of purpose. For this reason only, women generally assemble in great number in any sort of religious function. In every country and in every sect of religion it appears that the women are more interested than the men. This simplicity of acceptance of the Lord's authority is more effective than showy insincere religious fervor.

Kuntīdevī prayed to the Lord very submissively, and this is the symptom of a Vaiṣṇava. The Lord, Kṛṣṇa, had come to Kuntīdevī to offer respect to her by taking the dust of her feet. Because Kṛṣṇa considered Kuntīdevī His aunt, He used to touch her feet. But although Kuntīdevī, a great devotee, was in such an exalted position, practically on the level of Yaśodāmayī, Kṛṣṇa's mother, she was so submissive that she prayed, "Kṛṣṇa, You are meant to be understood by the paramahamāsas, the most advanced transcendentalists, but I am a woman, so how can I see You?"

According to the Vedic system, there are four social divisions (*cātur-varṇyam' mayā sṛṣtam* [Bg. 4.13]). The highest members of the social order are the brāhmaṇas, those who are intelligent, and then come the kṣatriyas (military men and administrators), the vaiśyas (farmers and businessmen), and finally the śūdras (ordinary laborers). One's place in this system is determined by one's qualities and work (*guṇa-karma*). The *Bhagavad-gītā* mentions *striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrāḥ*, and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks of *strī-śūdra-dvija-bandhūnām*. According to these references women, śūdras, and dvija-bandhus are considered to belong to the same category. The word dvija-bandhu refers to one who is born in an exalted brāhmaṇa or kṣatriya family but who has no qualifications of his own. One's social standing, according to the Vedic system, is determined by one's qualifications. This is very practical. Suppose a man is born the son of a high-court judge. This does not mean that he himself is also a high court judge. Yet because one happens to take birth in a brāhmaṇa family, even if he has no qualifications and is rascal number one, he claims to be a brāhmaṇa, and although his qualifications are less than those of a śūdra, people accept him as a brāhmaṇa. This has caused the downfall of the Vedic civilization. The brāhmaṇas in India are sometimes very much against my movement because I train and accept brāhmaṇas from Europe and America. But we do not care about their arguments, nor will any other reasonable man. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:

prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma / sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma

"In every town, city, and village of the world, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will be preached." How is it, then, that Europeans and Americans will not become brāhmaṇas? In fact, one who comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness has already surpassed brāhmaṇism. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26):

mām' ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa / bhakti-yogena sevate

sa guṇān samatīyaitān / brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

"One who takes to bhakti-yoga surpasses the modes of material nature and comes immediately to the transcendental platform [brahma-bhūta]." Not to speak of becoming a brāhmaṇa, the person who fully engages in bhakti-yoga attains the highest transcendental platform.

The stereotyped, crippled idea that only a person born in a brāhmaṇa family can become a brāhmaṇa has killed Vedic civilization, but now we are reviving the correct understanding that the attainment of perfection is meant for everyone. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.32) Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya / ye 'pi syuh pāpa-yonayaḥ

striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās / te 'pi yānti parām gatim

"O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me — though they be lowborn, women, vaiśyas, or śūdras — can approach the supreme destination." Thus although women, śūdras, and vaiśyas are ordinarily considered to belong to a lower class, when one becomes a devotee he or she goes beyond such designations. Women, śūdras, and vaiśyas are ordinarily regarded as less intelligent, but if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness one is the most intelligent, as stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*kṛṣṇa yei bhaje sei baḍa catura*). And Caitanya Mahāprabhu says:

ei rūpe brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva

guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja [Cc. Madhya 19.151]

"Among all the living entities wandering throughout the universe, one who is very fortunate receives, by the mercy of the spiritual master and the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, the seed of devotional service." The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement does not consist of wretched, unfortunate men. No. It consists of the most fortunate. One who has taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to be considered the most fortunate because he has found the way to act so that his life will be perfect. One who is Kṛṣṇa conscious and discharging his duties nicely is the most fortunate and the most perfect. This is humbly stated here by Kuntīdevī.

Although Kuntī had the body of a woman, she was a devotee. Therefore she was not like an ordinary unintelligent woman. Rather, she was the most intelligent, for she recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Godhead: "He has come to me to offer me respect, materially appearing to be my nephew, but He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Therefore in a previous verse she said, *alakṣyam sarva-bhūtānām antar bahir avasthitam*: "You are not seen by ordinary men, although You are everywhere, inside and outside." In another verse also she said, *na lakṣyase mūḍha-dṛśā*: "Fools and rascals cannot see You." This indicates that Kuntī saw Him. Unless she were able to see Kṛṣṇa as He is, how could she say, *na lakṣyase mūḍha-dṛśā*? She also said, *prakṛteḥ param*: "You are transcendental to this material creation."



Now here also, in this verse, Kuntī continues to express herself with humility. This humility is very good in devotional service. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us, *trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā*: "One should be more tolerant than the tree and humbler than the grass to make progress in spiritual life." This is necessary because for one who is living in this material world there will be so many disturbances, just as if one were traveling on the ocean. One cannot expect a very peaceful situation on the ocean; even a big ship may also be unsteady, and at any moment there may be tumultuous waves. Similarly, in this material world we should always expect danger; one cannot expect a very peaceful life within this material world. The śāstra, the Vedic literature, says, *padam padam yad vipadām* (Bhāg. 10.14.58): at every step there is danger. But if one becomes a devotee, then one can escape (*māyām etām taranti te* [Bg. 7.14]).

If one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in the beginning there will be many disturbances caused by Māyā, the material energy of illusion. Māyā will test us to see how firmly we are fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Because she is also an agent of Kṛṣṇa, she does not allow anyone the freedom to disturb Kṛṣṇa. Therefore she tests very rigidly to see whether we have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness to disturb Kṛṣṇa or are actually serious. That is Māyā's business. So in the beginning there will be tests by Māyā, and we shall feel so many disturbances while making progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But if we follow the rules and regulations and chant regularly as prescribed, then we shall remain steady. If we neglect these principles, Māyā will capture us immediately. Māyā is always ready. We are in the ocean, and at any moment we may be disturbed. Therefore one who is not disturbed at all is called paramahamṣa.

Kuntīdevī therefore says, tathā paramahamṣānām: "You are meant to be understood by the paramahamṣas." The word parama means "ultimate," and hamṣa means "swan." So paramahamṣa means "the perfect swan." If we give a swan milk mixed with water, the swan will take the milk and leave aside the water. Similarly, this material world is made of two natures — the inferior nature and the superior nature. The superior nature means spiritual life, and the inferior nature is material life. Thus a person who gives up the material part of this world and takes only the spiritual part is called paramahamṣa.

One should know that the activities of the body are due to the soul within the body. That is the real fact. The body is only the outward covering. Similarly, one should know that Kṛṣṇa is the real center of all activities, and one who knows this is a paramahamṣa. Thus bhakti-yoga is for the paramahamṣa, one who knows that Kṛṣṇa is the central fact. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvam pravartate: [Bg. 10.8] "I am the source of everything; everything emanates from Me." So one who knows, not only theoretically but practically, that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes — one who is convinced of this — is a paramahamṣa.

Kuntīdevī says, "You are meant for the paramahamṣas, not for the rascals and fools. You are meant for the paramahamṣas and munis." The word munīnām refers to those who are thoughtful or to mental speculators, and the word amalātmanām refers to one who has no dirty things in his heart. The heart of a materialistic person is full of dirty things. What are those dirty things? Lust and greed. All materialistic persons are lusty and greedy, and therefore their hearts are understood to be full of dirty things, but amalātmanām refers to those who are freed from these two contaminations.

Bhakti-yoga is meant for those whose hearts are cleansed, not for the lusty and greedy. Of course, those who are lusty and greedy may try to advance, and gradually they may do so, but once one is situated in bhakti-yoga there is no more lust or greed. *Viraktir anyatra ca* (SB. 11.2.42). This is the test — when one is free from lusty desires and greed, then he is situated in bhakti-yoga and is actually a paramahamṣa. Kuntīdevī humbly submits, "You are meant for the paramahamṣas and munis, those who are cleansed in heart and are engaged in bhakti-yoga. But what are we? We are simply women. We are in a lower class. How can we understand You?" Although she understands everything, she still takes the position of an ordinary woman and says, "How can I understand You?" This is humility.

[Source: *Teachings of Queen Kuntī*]





HH Bhakti Raghava Swami Speaks on Women Vedic View of Women

Women are meant to form the pillars of a stable, happy and healthy society. In the Vedic culture, the concept of womanhood is intimately connected with that of respect, honor, chastity, home and family [the nucleus and foundation for a stable society], a loving and caring husband, planned progeny to create wanted, healthy and happy children. In her youth, a young girl is protected by responsible parents; in her adult life by the husband and in her old age by elderly children. When these principles of womanhood are no longer upheld and women become unprotected, they naturally become polluted, create *varna sankara* or instability in society resulting in physical and psychological abuses, exploitation, where co-education of boys and girls often leads to pre-marital sex, abortions, unwed mothers, unwanted progeny and single parent families. Many more serious problems abound in such a scenario.

Staggering Statistics

Some of the more recent statistics show that domestic violence is on the increase in the US, much of which involves the battering of both women and children http://www.womenindistress.org/press_release_26_524033909.pdf. Trafficking of women and minors is another major social problem and has become rampant in today's promiscuous society leading to untold miseries and abuses, all of which is the result of severe deviations from the norms of regulated family life. *"Trafficking is a lucrative industry. It has been identified as the fastest growing criminal industry in the world. It is second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable illegal industry in the world. [4]"* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking

The US Census Bureau (2011) reports that there are approximately 13.6 million single parents in the United States today, and those parents are responsible for raising 21.2 million children (approximately 26% of children under 21 in the U.S. today). <http://www.singleparentmagazine.net/single-parent-statistics/>. One can find a long list of similar statistics which all support the alarming anomalies which plague our modern day diseased society.

The Vedic View

The position and role of women in society has been thoroughly analyzed and described by various great authorities of the Vedic literatures, notably by the great moralist and State advisor Chanakya Pandita in his work *Niti-Sastra*. The renowned saint among saints, Devarshi Shri Narada Muni, the foremost of Lord Brahma's sons and one of the 12 Mahajanans (great personalities) who is a leading authority on the science of both devotional service (Bhagavat Dharma) and the science of social organization and governance (Varnasrama Dharma), has also quite conclusively spoke on the subject matter.

Modern day society abounds with such expressions as "women's liberation", "equal rights to women", "women empowerment", etc., much of which remains a source of controversy within general society as well as within the Vaisnava society of devotees. One of the fundamental questions raised is whether the traditional role of women in general is meant to remain "traditional" or whether we must learn to adapt with the changing times and allow for more flexibility, adaptability and innovativeness.

Chanakya Pandita's Teachings

In his work *Niti-Sastra*, Chanakya Pandita gave a number of instructions regarding the nature and position of women in society, one of the foremost being his statement regarding the very definition of education:

matrivat para-darshu para dravyani loshtavat / atamavat sarva bhuteshu yah pasyati sa panditah

"Someone who sees another's wife as mother, another's wealth as trash in the street, and another's suffering as his own, is actually a pandita, or wise person."

Additional quotes given by Chanakya Pandita in his *Niti-Sastra* are as follows:
[<http://www.hinduism.co.za/chanakya.htm>]

"She is a true wife who is clean (suci), expert, chaste, pleasing to the husband, and truthful." [Ch.4:13]

"The king, the brahmana, and the ascetic yogi who go abroad are respected; but the woman who wanders is utterly ruined. [Ch6:4]

"A father who is a chronic debtor, an adulterous mother, a beautiful wife, and an unlearned son are enemies (in one's own home)". [Ch 6:11]

It is clear from Chanakya Pandita's teachings that a women's place is with the home, husband and children. He warns against a woman being independent. As stated above, the Vedic culture teaches one to regard all women as mother (except one's own wife), to regard money as garbage in the streets and to treat others as one would expect to be treated. Therefore, traditionally, all women are addressed as "mataji" or mother, a highly honorific title giving them utmost respect, be they elderly or younger than us.

Other teachings of Chanakya Pandita on the role of women are more controversial when he states that women are less intelligent and are also not to be trusted. Such statements are naturally disturbing as we see in modern day society many intelligent women taking on leadership roles and responsibilities. So how to understand such statements by such a learned scholar? If we study the teachings of Srila Narada Muni, we will gain a better insight since he deals with the subject matter from a purely spiritual point of view.

Srila Narada Muni's Teachings

The instructions given by Srila Narada Muni are most significant and sobering. These are given especially in the 7th Canto of the great Vedic Epic *Srimad-Bhagavatam* while describing in detail the science of varnasrama dharma to one of the very illustrious kings of the Vedic culture, Maharaja Yudhisthira.

In the section dealing with the four social classes [Canto 7, Chapter 11 entitled The Perfect Society: Four Social Divisions] which delineate the make-up of an ideal society, Narada Muni first begins by describing the characteristics of the four social orders, beginning with brahmanas (intellectuals), and then followed by ksatriyas (administrators), vaisyas (farmers) and sudras (workers). Immediately after describing the duties of these four social orders, Srila Narada Muni covers the duties and responsibilities of women in five concise verses [verses 25 to 29]. It is significant to note that Srila Narada Muni does not include women as belonging to any of the four varnas or social orders. Rather, his description below explains how women, as a whole, are meant to assist the husband in his particular varna. In other words, social occupations that involve interaction with the outside world are not meant to be taken up by women. Or put yet in another way, varnas are for men, not for women.

Considering the modern day social structure and modern ideology based on liberalism and democracy, this in itself is a revolutionary thought, one which most women, and most men as well, will tend to question and reject. But why an exalted personality as Srila Narada Muni advanced such a theory needs to



be closely analyzed for it touches upon some of the core principles and concepts of the Vedic culture which give us clear and scientific understanding of both the material and spiritual spheres of life.

These explanations from Srila Narada Muni will initially seem to be one sided and, by some, even covered by male chauvinism, especially knowing that Srila Narada Muni was himself a life long brahmachary (celibate student). So how can he be considered an authority on women since he never got married? This obvious question was already within his mind as he explains to Yudhisthira Maharaja that he heard all this knowledge from the Lord Himself while visiting the holy place of Bhadrinatha in the Himalaya Mountains. Hence, what he will convey to the great Yudhisthira Maharaja are the wise instructions and realizations of Lord Narayan Himself who is surrounded and served in the world of Vaikuntha by hundreds and thousands of Goddesses of Fortune, surely making Him the best authority on the subject matter.

The first text describes four basic principles to be followed by women [Text 25]:

strinam ca pati-devanam tac chusrusanukutala / tad-bandhusv anuvrttis ca nityam tad-vrata-dharanam

“To render service to the husband, to be always favorably disposed toward the husband, to be equally disposed toward the husband’s relatives and friends, and to follow the vows of the husband – these are the four principles to be followed by women described as chaste.”



We must keep in mind that the Vedic culture does not favor that women remain independent. It is actually not the nature of any living entity to remain independent, not even for men. Therefore, men are meant to become surrendered to God through the process of diksa or initiation where they learn their position as servants and subordinate to Krishna. In a similar way, our Acaryas have upheld that women should be subordinate to their husband who is meant to represent God and who plays the role of spiritual master within family life. The Vedic culture therefore enjoins that all women should marry and be properly protected.

Why such a seemingly harsh view one may ask? In order to properly understand this reality, one must know the psychological nature of both men and women. This necessitates a preliminary study of human nature itself which explains that we are all conditioned by the modes of material nature and all living entities are actually prakriti (dependent and subordinate), both in our restricted state of conditioned soul (apara prakriti) as well as in our unrestricted state of liberated soul (para prakriti). Dependent and subordinate means *female*. Only Krishna is male or *purusa* and is referred to as *Govindam adi purusam*, Govinda being the original enjoyer. In the same way that the bodily structure of men and women are different, it is logical to conclude that the psychological nature of both is also different. This is very elaborately explained in several places of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* whereby it is stated that women are generally 9 times more sensual than men due to their bodily and psychological make up.

These four principles for women will help make the household become a pleasant place for all concerned. What her duties will be as a housewife are explained in the following two verses [Text 26-27]:

sammarjanoupalepabhyam grha-mandana-vatnanaih / svayam ca mandita nityam parimrsta-paricchada

kamair uccavachai sadhvi prasrayena damena ca / vakyaih satyai priyai premna kale kale bhajet patim

“A chaste woman must dress nicely and decorate herself with golden ornaments for the pleasure of her husband. Always wearing clean and attractive garments, she should sweep and clean the household with water and other liquids so that the entire house is always pure and clean. She should collect the householder paraphernalia and keep the house always aromatic with incense and flowers and must be ready to execute the desires of her husband. Being modest and truthful, controlling her senses, and speaking in sweet words, a chaste woman should engage in the service of her husband with love, according to time and circumstances.”

By this description, we can easily understand that women are meant to be part of a family as ideal housewives and affectionate mothers. Due to our having lost the notion of localized living where one's lifestyle is closely connected with land, cows, family and spiritual life in Krishna consciousness, we will find the above statements difficult to accept. Needless to say, unless there is a return to the more natural and more traditional lifestyle, such activities for women will appear as impractical and outdated.

In the same way that the husband also becomes subordinate to his guru and recognizes his position of his menial servant, similarly, the wife will regard her husband as her guru and will also serve him as a menial servant. In India today, the husband and wife are still referred to as 'swami' and 'stri' respectively, 'swami' meaning 'master' while 'stri' meaning 'dependent'. The following text [Text 28] gives more vivid descriptions of a woman's role in family life:

santustalolupa daksa dharmajna priya-satya-vak / apramatta sucih snigdha patim tv apatitam bhajet

“A chaste woman should not be greedy, but satisfied in all circumstances. She must be very expert in handling household affairs and should be fully conversant with religious principles. She should speak pleasingly and truthfully and should be very careful and always clean and pure. Thus a chaste woman should engage with affection in the service of a husband who is not fallen.”

For one who takes up such a role, the path of spiritual advancement leading to liberation is open. The Vedic culture gives prime importance and clear instructions as to what is the goal of life, that of spiritual emancipation. Both the husband and wife will help one another in progressing in devotional life and thus, similar to the goddess of fortune in Vaikuntha, will one day return to the spiritual world as outlined in the last verse [Text 29] spoken by Narada Muni.

ya patim hari bhavena bhajet srir iva tat-para

hary-atmana harer loke patya srir iva modate

“The woman who engages in the service of her husband, following strictly in the footsteps of the goddess of fortune, surely returns home, Back to Godhead, with her husband, and live very happily in the Vaikuntha planets.”

Many will frown at the above statements and conclusions given by Narada Muni considering them archaic and not in keeping with today's more liberal and advanced worldview. What most people fail to understand is the degraded position of present day society that is referred to in our Vedic literatures as 'varna sankara', a society where individuals no longer follow any principles and regulations.

The condition of many women in modern-day so called liberated society has become very degraded, miserable and most unfortunate. Independence of women has been and remains largely but an exploitative way to abuse women in so many ways as seen in the earlier references covering various statistics. To remedy such a situation, there is need to understand the perennial teachings of the Vedas which give us clear and unwavering instructions on the role and importance of women within general society. Adopting such views will help bring back to glory of women in society and help bring again the social stability and harmony we are all seeking.



Srila Prabhupada Said that Women Are Less Intelligent Than Men. Can We Support This?

- HG Hari Sauri Dasa



How do we deal with Prabhupada's statement that women are less-intelligent? Its become a big problem. There's no doubt about it.

First of all we have to not take the approach that there are two Prabhupadas. This is the approach that many are taking, that there is the scriptural Prabhupada and then there is the old Bengali gentleman Prabhupada; there is a spiritual Prabhupada and there is a material Prabhupada; there is a liberated Prabhupada and there is a conditioned soul Prabhupada. ... That if Prabhupada said something, it is a fact, from a transcendental perspective, not from a material perspective.

... He even underwent great public criticism in 1975, when he was visiting Chicago. And actually there was one TV crew that came to interview him as a result of this statement being publicized. And everyone on that TV crew were all women (laughter). The interviewer was a woman, the cameraman was a woman, all the technical team, they were all women. So they were trying to make a statement. And then they challenged him, "Do you actually think that women are less-intelligent?" They were thinking that now, by the force of their presence, they could make Prabhupada back off. And Prabhupada said "Yes." (more laughter) They said "Why are you discriminating against women?" And Prabhupada said, "I am not discriminating. Nature has discriminated."

Nature has discriminated—this is an important statement, because Prabhupada is not talking as a conditioned soul. We mentioned yesterday about the statement Prabhupada made about the varnasrama, the position of soul as seen from the varnasrama perspective, rather than being seen as 'Hindus', that actually the real situation is varnasrama. Why varnasrama? From **Sri Isopanishad** Introduction:

"You may call the Vedas Hindu, but "Hindu" is a foreign name. We are not Hindus. Our real identification is varnasrama. Varnasrama denotes the followers of the Vedas, those who accept the human society in eight divisions of varna and asrama. There are four divisions of society and four divisions of spiritual life. This is called varnasrama. It is stated in the **Bhagavad-gita** (4.13), "These divisions are everywhere because they are created by God." The divisions of society are brahmana, kshatriya, vaisya, sudra. Brahmana refers to the very intelligent class of men, those who know what is Brahman. Similarly, the kshatriyas, the administrator group, are the next intelligent class of men. Then the vaisyas, the mercantile group. These natural classifications are found everywhere. This is the Vedic principle, and we accept it. Vedic principles are accepted as axiomatic truth, for there cannot be any mistake."

Because varnasrama is divine. It is in the material world—there is no varnasrama system in the spiritual world—but, the material world is a creation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

It works according to the divine law. And the kinds of bodies that the soul gets are specifically designated, they work in specific ways, according to the plan of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, according to His creation.

So Prabhupada's stance was that there are differences between the bodies of men and women. This is how he explained it. Now I will just give you an example of this. We were on a morning walk, this was on December 10th, 1975 in Vrindavana, I had only been with Srila Prabhupada two weeks at that time, and there was a discussion about men and women:

(Quote from TD 1): "When Harikesa mentioned that nowadays there are women senators and ambassadors, Prabhupada still did not concede that this means equality." (end quote) You see, this is the big thing: men and women are equal. In the modern age everybody has to be equal. This is the great want. That if there is inequality, that means there is suppression and it means abuse. So you have to make everybody equal and then everyone will be peaceful.

Prabhupada went against the political correctness that has emerged in the last forty years by saying that women are less-intelligent than men. He didn't say that they have no intelligence, but comparatively he said, (continue quote): "He did not concede that this means equality." Why? Because "That simply requires education," (end quote) to do these jobs. In other words, Prabhupada's estimation of intelligence is different from what the ordinary calculation of intelligence means. Intelligence, yes some intelligence is there to do all these different kinds of jobs—to be a politician, to be an ambassador, to be a senator, or to be in the legal profession or to be a business person etc. That requires a certain kind of intelligence. But that's not the criteria that Prabhupada was using when he makes this comparison between the intelligence of men and women. Does anybody know what the criterion is? Who can say?

Student: Understanding of the spirit soul.

Hsd: Yes, Prabhupada defines intelligence in the *Bhagavad-gita*. What does he say? "Intelligence means the ability to discriminate between spirit and matter." That is intelligence. This other, ordinary functioning, this is just education. You learn things, so on the strength of your memory, your experience, and you do things. Of course, how you judge the quality of what you are doing, that is another thing. Just because someone is a high court judge doesn't mean that the quality of their judgements is going to be very beneficial. The American High court in 1973 in the Roe vs. Wade litigation decided that it was legal to have abortion. In other words, that children within the womb are actually just lumps of matter. They are just 'tissue' that can be removed if the parent doesn't require their presence. So that is a high court judge nowadays. That is not intelligence. That is not intelligence according to our standard.



We say 'veda' means 'knowledge', so Prabhupada was talking from the point of view of real knowledge—what is the living entity, what is his purpose in life, and what is the goal. So the first thing, the first item of intelligence is to discriminate between spirit and matter. It was on that basis that Prabhupada made relative judgements. Just as in the varnasrama system we say that a brahmana is more intelligent than a kshatriya, a kshatriya is more intelligent than a vaisya, and a vaisya is more intelligent than a sudra. There are differences. Differences in the way the brain works, the capacity to understand. In a sudra and a brahmana there is a vast difference. The occupational duty therefore is different. It is tailored to fit the developed consciousness or the development of the consciousness of that particular living being in that particular body.

There are differences between bodies. Nobody can deny it; so the idea of equality is bogus on the material platform. There is no such thing as equality on the material platform. There are differences everywhere you look. In general, in the varnasrama system, Krishna says there are four differences; brahmana, kshatriya, vaisya and sudra. And He classifies women along with sudras.

...However, we have to be careful: (quote continues from Dec. 10, 1975 MW): "However, when Caitya-guru took his comments to imply that this difference means that women are subordinate, Prabhupada corrected him. "Not subordinate, actually. Their occupations are different... That is another mistake." (end quote)

To use that discrimination in a way to subordinate someone, to control them, manipulate them—subordination implies abuse of some kind or another and taking advantage of them—no, that's not what its for. You have to recognize there are differences but its not so that you can be a manipulator and a controller with the knowledge that you have, that if you see or you think that someone is less-intelligent than you. This was the mistake Prabhupada said, how the varnasrama system broke down into what became known as the 'caste system'. The caste system was notorious for the brahmanas using their position or births to manipulate the so-called lower classes. To make them serve them. It's a misuse of their position, and it's the same idea here, that women are subordinate. No. It just means that their occupational duty is different, that's all.

... So you can't do away with these four orders of society, its not possible. You can't artificially make everyone equal. You can only make people equal when you separate them from matter and bring

them to the position of spirit souls. Everybody on the spiritual platform is equal; but on the material platform these differences are there.

So, women and men, there are differences. And I will give you one example why those differences made Srila Prabhupada say that women are less-intelligent than men, as he said that sudras are less-intelligent than brahmanas.

In modern science—you can utilize the information that comes from their studies, Srila Prabhupada did that, he wasn't against the use of science *per se*, he was against the misuse of science to deny the existence of God, but science itself can be helpful sometimes—there have been some studies done in recent times, especially in medicine, which suggest that not all medicines work the same way for everyone. There is actually a new branch of medicine that is coming out that is gender-orientated. That some medicines work better for men than they do for women, and vice-versa; some medicines work better for women than they do for men. Although they are treating apparently the same disease, but because there are biological differences the medicines don't have the same effect.

... Now, as a footnote, Prabhupada did say on quite a lot of occasions that "Yes, women are not as intelligent as the men, but when a woman becomes a devotee, then she becomes as intelligent as the man." Now, is he just fobbing us off with some platitudes, that "Oh well, I don't want to upset them." That Prabhupada didn't want to upset his own disciples so, "All the other women are less-intelligent but you are not, because you are my disciples." Is that what Prabhupada is doing? No. What is he doing? He is recognizing that here is a woman—here is a soul—who has in one sense, a bigger handicap, just like in golf, they give you a handicap...So ladies handicap is higher than a man's. That's the point.

But if one can overcome the handicap and actually come to the point of practicing Krishna consciousness, understanding that this is the real necessity of life, to come to a solution of the problems of old age, birth, death and disease, then that person becomes equally as intelligent.

So Prabhupada is not just giving some platitudes. He is speaking the truth.

[Excerpts from: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=600>]



Prabhupada's Views on Women

- HG Urmila devi dasi

Over the past months, several devotees—some of a very high devotional caliber—have directly or indirectly stated that Prabhupada's comments and instructions about women were erroneous, irrelevant to our spiritual life, or out-of-date, etc.

It is certainly true that all of varnasrama, which includes the position of women in society, is external to our spiritual life and is not important in the sense that chanting Hare Krishna, worshipping the Deity, preaching, hearing Bhagavatam, and so forth, are important. It is also true that spiritual life isn't dependent on any material situation.

However, some material situations are more favorable to spiritual life than are others. In particular, a stable society with functional families, are helpful to, as Prabhupada said, "make the mind peaceful" for spiritual life. If both men and women play their respective roles in this

world, then the truly important things, such as always remembering Krishna and serving Him favorably, become so much easier.

If we throw out the "external," instructions that Prabhupada gave us regarding society-especially instructions that he repeated very often in his purports, lectures, letters, and conversations-we risk making our advancement so much more slow and difficult. And we risk developing the mentality that we can disregard anything Prabhupada said that we can't immediately understand or apply. The fact that we may not feel able to apply something doesn't mean that we should "resent the principle," but rather we should go on trying "without consideration of defeat or hopelessness." (*Bhagavad-gita* 3. 31 purport)

Prabhupada was preaching only 20-30 years ago. Society hasn't changed all that much. And certainly, hormones haven't changed since the creation, what to speak of in the last 20 years. The different psychology of men and women haven't changed since the creation. The psychological needs of men, women, and children remain as they were. If we truly believe, even theoretically, that we "are not this body," then why do we care whether our bodily duties are "higher" or "lower" than someone else's? Such things are temporary, external, and don't touch the real self. If doing a "lower" duty will please Krishna and Prabhupada and help us fix our minds on the glorious holy name, why for the sake of pride will we reject it?

In any case, most difficulties with understanding the position of women can be solved if we understand that all of us have two duties-material and spiritual. The spiritual duties, the nine processes of devotional service, are equally available to every human being regardless of age, gender, race, intelligence, health, etc. etc. There should be full equality of doing these nine processes in our movement. The duties according to the body and mind, which should be dovetailed in the Lord's service, will, indeed, vary according to age, gender, inclination, intelligence, talent, cultural situation, and so forth. If we deny these before the stage of liberation, we will do them anyway, but in a way that will cause our bondage. (BG, chapters 3 and 18)

Also, in terms of the external duties, women have varna. When comparing men and women, one must only compare a brahmana man to a brahmana woman. For example, a brahmana woman is certainly superior to a sudra man in terms of intelligence, freedom from lust, etc. I've written a lengthy article on this subject, with full scriptural references, if one wants more details.

The "less intelligence" of women doesn't refer to IQ or talent, but the facts that women are more inclined to mundane enjoyment and are more under the control of passion and ignorance. Our logical abilities are more prone to be over-ridden by our emotions and sentimentality.

If we wish to discuss areas in which Prabhupada was mistaken about women, we could bring up where he quoted some scientist as saying that women have 32 ounces less brain substance than men. The actual statistics are that women have 4 ounces less brain substance than men; when adjusted for body size, we have 1 ounce less. (One has to compare within race as certain races have larger brains). In any case, there is ample statistical evidence that men excel women in certain types of thinking; women excel in others.



Each type of body has its material and spiritual advantages and disadvantages. While it would be scripturally correct to say that males have an overall advantage for spiritual advancement, women have some advantages, too, such as being softhearted and inclined to follow authority. We could also say that overall, human have more advantages than demigods to become Krishna consciousness. But demigods have some advantages that humans lack, and many demigods become pure devotees.

Why not just accept the body we have for this life, and work with it so as to please Krishna and make our life peaceful, so that we can concentrate our time and energy on what's truly important—loving and remembering Krishna.

[Source: http://www.chakra.org/discussions/WomenNov29_02.html]

“As soon as soft-hearted people such as women hear those transcendental pastimes of Lord Krsna, they immediately become attracted to Him. Soft-hearted women and girls are therefore very easily drawn to the Krsna consciousness movement. One who is thus drawn to the Krsna consciousness movement and tries to keep himself in constant touch with such consciousness certainly gets the supreme salvation, going back to Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana.” (*Krishna Book*, chapter 90)

Of course, being soft-hearted can also cause problems (all material facilities have their concurrent dangers), so that it is precisely the soft-hearted nature of women that demands protection: “woman are considered less intelligent. In the Bhagavad-gita... Their heart is very soft. Just like children, their heart is very soft. But their intelligence is not very sharp. ..They can be molded by another intelligent man to the proper channel. Therefore they require guidance. They require guidance.” (Lecture, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.7.43 — Vrndavana, October 3, 1976)

The ultimate protection for everyone, is the Holy Name of Krishna, “Girls and women are generally very soft hearted and they take things very easily, but then there is also chance of being misled. So you chant the Holy Name of Krishna and Krishna will keep you from being misled.” (Letter to: Indira (Iris Mendoza), Ekayani (Esther Mendoza) — San Francisco 17 December, 1967)



On Women and Education

- HG Krishna Kirti Das

What is the big plan behind these regulative principles? The big plan is: here is the attraction, *pumsah striya mithuni-bhavam* — to cut down this attraction between male and female. This is the big plan. Otherwise there is no need of the *varnasrama*. *Varnasrama* means to train the candidates gradually to become free from this entanglement of man and woman. This is the basic principle. [SP, Lecture SB 5.5.8, Vrndavana, 30 Oct. 1976]

As with all things, education must have a purpose, and if we are to have a successful system of education, we must know its purpose. According to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the highest purpose of human life is *prema pumartho mahan*, to achieve love of Krishna. But it is a rare soul who can expect to immediately make rapid progress toward developing love for Krishna, which is why purification is necessary for people in general. Essential to purification is learning how to avoid the victimization of sex attraction, and it is sex attraction that the system of *varnasrama-dharma* aims to restrict. Unless one has controlled his, or her, sexual urges, it is all but

impossible to make advancement in yoga. Controlling sexual desire throughout society must therefore be the primary goal of the *varnasrama* educational system.

In the *varnasram* system, men and women are trained differently to reach that goal. For men, celibacy is prescribed, and for women, chastity is prescribed. Celibacy is taught as a part of *brahmacharya*. From the age of five, a qualified boy must go away from his family to reside at the *asrama* of a guru, and from him be trained in celibacy along with other spiritual and material subjects for his future adult life. Women, however, must learn chastity not at a guru's *asrama* but at home.

The most important reason for learning chastity at home is that the essence of chastity is devotion to the husband. As per the *Bhagavatam*, chastity is defined as follows:

To render service to the husband, to be always favorably disposed toward the husband, to be equally well disposed toward the husband's relatives and friends, and to follow the vows of the husband—these are the four principles to be followed by women described as chaste (SB 7.11.25).

In order to learn chastity, it must be learned from someone who practices it, and that someone is almost always a girl's mother. A girl learns chastity by assisting her mother and associating with her. If we with think a little about this arrangement, it soon becomes evident that all other possible arrangements would be inferior. How little sense it makes for a girl to reside somewhere else to learn chastity and thereby associate with and serve another woman, who is serving her husband, when one's own mother is at home and herself a fit teacher.

Furthermore, as per the injunctions of *Manu-smriti*, women are always to be under the protection of a father, a husband, or a son. To reject that injunction is therefore to make sexual promiscuity a more likely occurrence within society at large. Indeed, at the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gita*, we find that a sexually promiscuous society is a society in which women no longer have this shelter. Such a society is rife with people who by nature create social disturbance and who are known by the term *varnasankara*.

In the *varnasrama* system, women are therefore trained in chastity at home, through the close association of their mothers and under the protection of their fathers. Although other educational opportunities may be available to women, they are always secondary objectives. As with celibacy, for boys who practice *brahmacharya*, these secondary educational pursuits should not be pursued at the expense of celibacy or chastity.

But then it may be asked that, in today's modern society, in which women participate almost equally with men in the workforce, in academia, and in politics, and to some extent in some national militaries, would it not be irresponsible to not provide those same opportunities to young women born in devotional families—especially when they cannot always count on a decent men to always be there for protection?

The answer is that whether out of desire or necessity, women who avail themselves of modern educational opportunities similar to those of men generally end up being insufficiently restrained in their sexual behavior. As per Stanley Kurtz, a Harvard-trained anthropologist, it is impossible for women to participate in the modern workforce without using modern birth control.

In a modern, knowledge-based economy, women suffer no physical disadvantage. The ability of women to work in turn depends upon the capacity of modern contraception, along with abortion, to control fertility efficiently. The sheer breadth and rapidity of world fertility decline implies that contraceptive technology has been a necessary condition for that change.[1]

Indeed, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in the United States contraceptive use is "virtually universal among women of reproductive age," with 99% of

women between the ages of 15 and 44 reporting to have used a contraceptive method at least once in their lives.[2] And the statistics are similar for other technologically advanced countries.

These empirical observations, of course, show how correct the Vedic tradition has been on this matter all along. Gaining a higher education, at least according to its modern understanding, necessarily brings women in close contact with men. There must necessarily be close discussion and collaboration in matters such as homework or social interaction within and between attending classes. Especially in the more advanced academic topics, where there will always be a small number of students, it is impossible to separate students by sex. Just as fire will cause butter to melt, women in close association with men will make it more difficult for both men and women to be restrained in thought, word, and deed in matters of sex. And this, of course makes it virtually impossible for individuals in such a society to practice yoga—even *bhakti-yoga*—without being checked in spiritual progress by his, or her, own illicit sexual urges.

For those who remain anxious that their daughters not miss out on all the educational opportunities on offer in modern, secular society, it should always be remembered that sexual promiscuity and, of course, *varnasankara*, or unwanted population, are encouraged, not discouraged, by following the modern educational system. The goals of modern education are clearly at odds with the *varnasrama* goals of celibacy and chastity. Indeed, the pursuit of such an education is likely to damage one's chances of making rapid progress as a yogi.

This is not to say that from this point onward devotional women should not participate in the secular educational system, for doing so at this point in the history of the world may be a necessity for many. Indeed, talents so acquired by women thus far should be utilized in Lord Krishna's service. Nevertheless, it should be clear that the materialistic objectives of modern education are incompatible with the objectives of *varnasrama* education, and hence it is against everyone's best interests to perpetuate the modern system of education. Even if we have received an advanced education by having been a part of that system, we should do whatever we can to make sure our sons and daughters are instead brought up with a first-class *varnasrama* education.

In the *varnasrama* system, becoming fit to practice yoga is the most important goal. And in order to help men and women in society achieve that goal, celibacy and chastity are among the most important codes of ethical behavior to instill in young men and women. Without sufficient sexual restraint, the practice of yoga will be virtually impossible. In order to achieve that goal, it will be necessary to create and participate in the different institutions charged with instilling those values. For boys, learning celibacy will be through the *gurukula* system, and for girls, learning chastity will be in the home alongside their mothers. Such an education is essential to the success of the *varnasram* system.

Matrvat para-daresu. Canakya Pandita, the great politician, has given the definition of a learned scholar. Who is learned scholar? He has given the definition. What is this? *Matrvat para-daresu*. To see every woman except his wife as mother. This is education. This is education, perfection of education, when you can see all women except your wife as mother. This is education. [SP, Lecture, BG 1.26 – 27. London, 21 Jul 1973].

Posted on 29 March 2011, <http://jaiprabhupada.com>

Notes:

[1] "Demographics and the Culture War," *Policy Review* Feb-Mar. 2005, No. 129, *Hoover Institution*, (Stanford University, California) 36.

[2] "Use of Contraception in the United States: 1982 – 2008," Aug. 2010, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 23 Feb. 2011

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_029.pdf>.





I Do Not Want To Be a Woman in Varnashrama

- Vrndavanlila dd

I do not want to be a woman in varnasrama. This fear like many other fears of say being branded a shudra or of a non-brahmana varna, or being permanently moved to not so luxurious or physically comfortable setting of a villages is one of the many primary reasons which have hamstrung the acceptability of varnasrama dharma even in devotee circles. Let me address the first fear here – being a woman in varnasrama set up.

The varnasrama context immediately conjures the image of a woman in traditional roles to the extent of duty sans right, tireless provider of incessant unconditional services to everybody in the family. Any kind of non-observance on account of some inability or reason is sufficient to negate her years of service and she being branded as a non-cooperative power-hungry feminist modern women.

My own journey was marked by jeer at the hands of devotees, all in the name of varnashrama. A woman's body is a disqualification enough to not even be considered for any service even in the face of non-experienced male devotees. I am aware that I am still somewhere very down in the process of self-realization, but is not service an opportunity to cleanse? If a woman is good and experienced at any service (managerial or non-managerial), it benefits both, the organization in developing further and woman in cleansing and utilizing her talents in the service of the Lord. There are several conversations by Srila Prabhupada, in which he considered protected status of a woman and management service of a woman to be compatible. After having served at senior positions in different organisations, I had decided to be fully involved in the varnashrama mission and render my services here. I rejected several lucrative offers to realize little late that I was unwanted in the spiritual circle. 'Afterall woman is just a sex object and thus has to be kept away from the sight of men and positions.' With these thoughts playing, my understanding of varnashrama as a set up which has place for everybody was challenged and I had only three options:

- Stay on and fight for the right to serve according to my nature and skills.
- Flee from the varnasrama scene and accept a regular good paying job while privately practicing at home with my husband (who had been in the movement since his childhood)
- Stay on with perseverance and faith, waiting for things to improve on their own

The first option was not for me as in my life I had never experienced belligerence even in the remotest way. My mother had been a very virtuous village lady with all her simplicity.

Now for the second option, 'fleeing' from the scene is not in my temperament. Further, I was not sufficiently materially inspired to quit the preaching mission of Srila Prabhupada and violate the desire of my gurudev.

I was left with only third option, which was very difficult to practice. I was reminded of my Guru Maharaj's (His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami) one instruction that in situations when we think

that the other person has wronged us, one must always humbly and even sincerely think that one is one self responsible for the unfortunate development and forgive the bitterness that it entails. Its implementation was very difficult. But as I prayed for little insight into understanding his instruction, its true import revealed itself in its true glory with its profundity of *karma* and *phala*.

Now it was interesting and even testy. Externally things were same, no change in my situation or in others' perception, still so much had changed. The dirt and conditioning of life times has accumulated on our consciousness – *sad+cit+ananda* – attribute of soul. How could I present myself with all its ugliness to Him? Naturally they were helping me clean my self before I stood in front of Him and I still do not know how much more is required for attaining that final goal.

What difference does it make if one is treated as a king or a beggar, a brahmana or a sudra, a man or a woman in the cleansing process as long as the result remains the same, as envisioned by Srila Prabhupada?

Many people go to Vrindavan by flight, a few by train in different classes- AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper or even unreserved bogie but as long as the transport takes me to Goloka dhama, what difference does it make as to how I reach?

My spiritual master is so merciful that he wishes to accommodate all the varnas with all their guna-deficiencies in them on the road to Back to Godhead by adopting to daiva-varnasrama set up; my grand spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada too was so

merciful that he would not rest till the last tiniest of the ant went back home, and here we have forgotten that ultimate purpose of life and would not be compassionate to a woman. The Lord is so merciful that He accepted service from Hanuman as well as from a tiny squirrel. My services may be similar to a few grains of sand that the squirrel had brought to build the bridge for Sri Ram compared to huge rocks and mountains brought by others but if it pleases the guru and the Lord, it is worth persevering. Afterall what all is happening is His desire and Varnasrama is His creation:

*cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam / guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām / viddhy akartāram avyayam [BG 4.13]*

[According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.]

Whatever teething problems it may be giving in implementing because of our wide departure from the ideal norm or misunderstanding of the concept by a few, it will still yield result if we are sincere, simply because it is His creation – perfect and complete, just like Him.

Prabhupada pointed to his coffee table and said, "Do you see this ant?"... Srila Prabhupada looked at me intensely as though, the ant issue now solved, he wanted to get on to real business. He said, "My job is to understand, 'What is my duty to this ant?'" Not only was there an ant that I couldn't see but now I had a duty to it. Prabhupada looked at me almost beseechingly, "Somehow I have to help this ant. Maybe I can chant Hare Krishna to it or feed it a little prasadam. If we can help one ant become Krishna conscious, then our whole movement is a glorious success." I realized that it was a pure metaphor. I had a duty to feed and chant to this invisible ant and if I did so, and if we all did our respective Krishna conscious duties, our whole movement would be successful. [HG Nara Narayan Das, SP's Memories]

om' pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam' / pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate

pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya/ pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate [Isopanishad, Invocation]

[The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.]

At the same time, the Lord instructs in the conclusive chapter of **Bhagavad-Gita** as:

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ / para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyatam' karma / kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam [BG 18.47]*

“It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions.” We are here to prepare ourselves to go back home and not waste our human birth in asserting our “right”. This birth is meant for higher purpose rather than settling the gender equation ‘right’.

Taking the role of women further as a wife, Chyavan Muni who was fit to be Sukanya's grandfather in age and was irritable in nature was lovingly served by his wife. Being Manu's granddaughter, any young king would have felt honored to have Sukanya as his wife, still married to him, she was totally surrendered to her husband in service. First of course is the Vedic training that the parents impart to their children and second is the husband himself. Respect and love is something which cannot be enforced, Chyavan muni though irritable in temperament was spiritually a very exalted soul. This attribute makes the process of respect and loving service to the husband come naturally to wife.

Husband is a worshipable demigod for the wife or His representative belonging to the class of guru, king, and parent for the wife and has more responsibility to follow his *dharma* and lead his dependents back home, Back to Godhead.

*gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt / pitā na sa syāj janani
na sā syāt
daivam na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān / na mocayed yaḥ
samupeta-mṛtyum [SB 5.5.18]*

[One who cannot deliver his own dependants from the path of repeated birth and death by his devotional instructions, should never become a spiritual master, a father, a mother, a husband or a worshipable demigod.]

No organization can function successfully without cooperation between a leader and his followers. Grhastha, the only ashrama that allows association of both the sexes cannot function unless there is cooperation between the two. In view of the natural ‘gunas’ it is effective (materially and even spiritually) to have ‘husband’ lead the organization of home and woman accepts the position of follower and support him in his spiritual endeavors. Afterall the only objective of our birth and follow our dharma is to go back to Him. It is so beautiful that daiva varnasrama dharma allows just not Brahmana, but even non-brahmanas and woman to go back to the Lord through a simple method – service. Distortion of the original



model and our conditioning (more so in Kali-yuga) may have strewn this simple path with difficulties and complexities. It is only our Arjun like concentration on the ultimate goal with surrender, sincerity, focus and humility can help melt all the hinderances.

Srila Prabhupada wanted the second part of his preaching to be radically different from the first one and focused on revival of varnashrama dharma. He knew that in kaliyuga it will be very difficult for devotees to even follow the four regulatives. Our food is contaminated to the extent that even without our knowledge we are taking things for which we have vowed not to touch; we vowed not to indulge in illicit sex but what are we fed in the name of advertisements or co-education or adult education? It is omnipresent in cities in both the subtle and obvious form, we vowed not to intake intoxicants or gamble but what are we taking in the name of allopathy medicines, we work for companies which thrive on stock market. We are a part of an economy that sustains itself on abominable products like liquor and cow slaughter. How is it possible to sever ourselves from this unwanted conditioning getting thicker as long as we are in a city set up? This is just a beginning of our spiritual journey. Isn't it a good enough reason to move back to simple village life style and engage in occupations that are based on land and cows with Krsna at the center? *Ugra karma*, whether on the part of men or women is the cause of many gender role confusions? The fears and insecurities in both the sexes exist as long as one has not moved to villages. Confusion, protest, and oppression, exist only in the transitory phase or when we have not taken to the rural life. Village life is a great leveler in itself. One bold decision to bring overall change and revert with firm faith in His creation and words like Arjun –

*naṣṭo mohah smṛtir labdhā / tvat-prasādān mayācyuta
sthito 'smi gata-sandehah / kariṣye vacanam tava [BG 18.73]*

[Arjuna said: My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy. I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions.]

In the same spirit we have to accept His word and follow our dharma. Men have daiva varnasrama dharma and women have – the *stri dharma*. Men being given the responsibility of protecting the women as a father, husband, and a son have more responsibility as the 'leader', their natural inclination to serve the Guru and Gauranga will elicit a natural 'follower' in a woman. A very very few women attain the stature of Jahnava mataji (Lord Nityananda's wife). It is better to follow the *sva-dharma*, the *stri dharma* for women and *varnasrama dharma* for men not just because we are still on the material platform but even if it is otherwise, still we have to follow the dharma simply because:

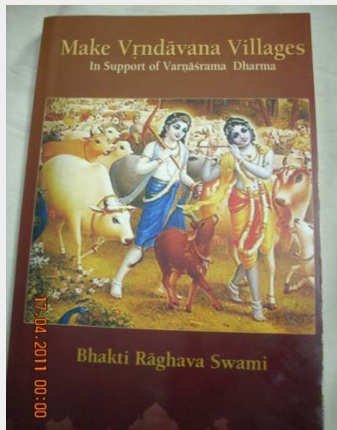
*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas / tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute / lokas tad anuvartate [BG 3.21]*

Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

Hare Krsna!



● **Varnashrama Literature**

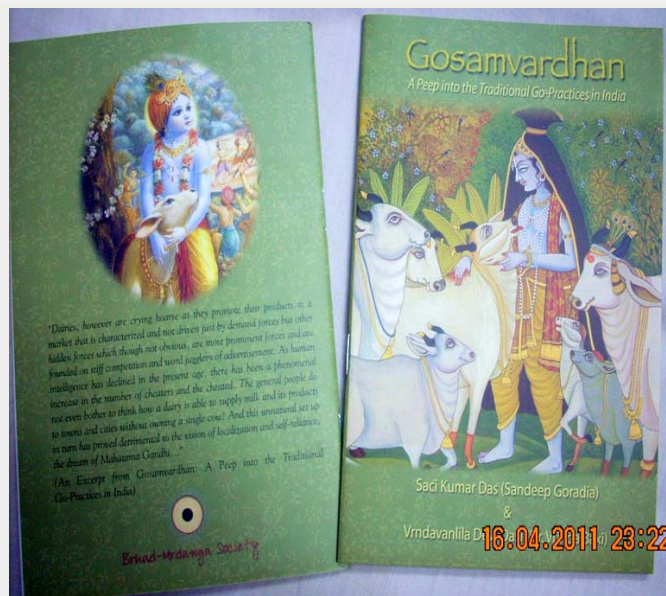


Make Vrndavan Villages

H.H. Bhakti Raghava Swami, who heads the Varnashrama Ministry, India has authored several books on Varnashrama, including this. This book is meant to serve as a general introduction to some of the basic concepts of varnashrama-dharma. In essence, the subject matter deals with both the topic of education as well as social and spiritual upliftment through a well established and scientifically planned educational system and social structure which encompass all spheres and all dimensions of life. Its revised edition includes more information on the subject and exciting additions on cow.

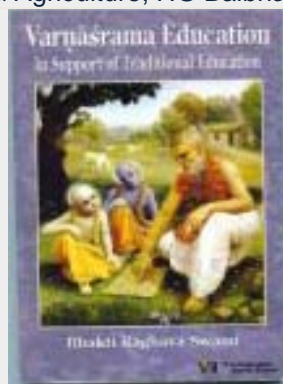
Gosamvardhan: A Peep Into the Traditional Go-Practices in India

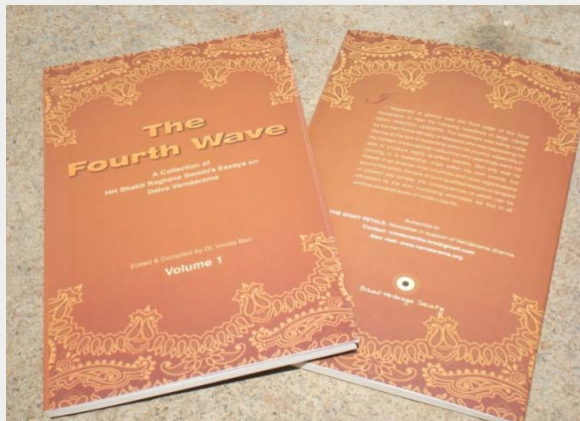
Released just last month, on the occasion of Fourth International Seminar on Daiva Varnashrama, Sridham Mayapur, is authored by HG Sacikumar prabhu (with hands-on experience in farming and cow raising) and Vrndavanilila dd (Editor, *The Eight Petals*, a monthly e-newsletter in support of Daiva Varnashrama dharma). It makes an intensive reading as it pours information about the traditional practices related to cow rearing in traditional India and fragility of present situation. It should be of great help for those who are just not interested in keeping the cows in goshala, but also in reviving an ecosystem that supports mother cow in her old glory and not as a liability. Its 'Introduction' has been written by Indian Minister for Daiva Varnashrama, HH Bhakti Raghava Swami and 'Foreword' by none other than the Global Minister for Cow Protection & Agriculture, HG Balbhadra prabhu.



Varnashrama Education

The topic of education, a highly debated and controversial subject among many many educationalists and students alike, has always been of extreme importance and relevance to any society, especially in the most traditional oriental cultures. This books deals with the aspect of Education in the context of Varnashrama.



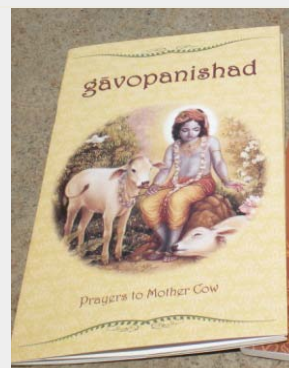


The Fourth Wave

It is a wonderful collection of HH Bhakti Raghava Swami's essays on Daiva Varnasrama addressing a wide range of concerns of daily life beginning from the very definition of the term 'dharma', administration, family system, education, food, to technology. The 'Preface' for *The Fourth Wave* has been written by HG Patita Pavan Adhikary, a senior disciple of Srila Prabhupada, a strong daiva varnasrama supporter, a prolific writer, and an astrologer who has the distinction of having served as ISKCON Temple President and Director (Book Reviews) for BBT.

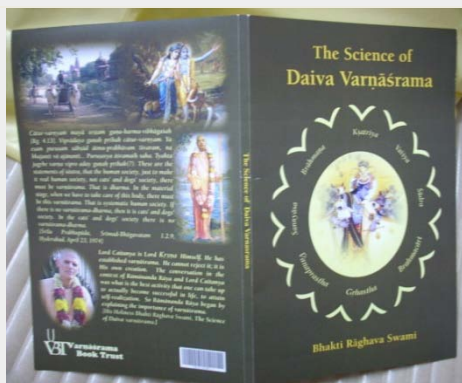
Gavopanishad: Prayers to Mother Cow

Cows, dear to the Lord Himself, have been integral to the concept of varnasrama and have functioned as the defining features of Vedic social, economic, and spiritual system. This small attractive book contains lovely prayers in the glorification of Mother Cow, complemented by short but interesting information on the significance of cow and panchgavya products. The 'Foreword' to *Gavopanishad* has been written by H.H. Bhakti Raghava Swami himself.



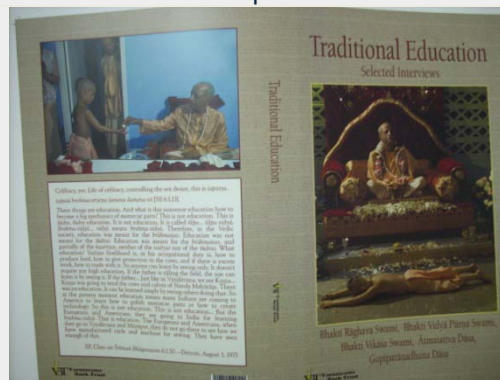
The Science of Daiva Varṇāśrama

The book by His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami is an effective attempt to address the general queries and doubts related varṇāśrama dharma. In order to make it convenient for the reader it has been divided into three sections, beginning with the very definition and understanding of the concept of varṇāśrama dharma as envisioned by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, to move to second section of the need or relevance of varṇāśrama followed by the third section dealing with the questions related to complications arising in the process of implementation of principles of daiva varṇāśrama dharma in the present situation.



Traditional Education

Traditional Education which is usually viewed with denigration if not scorn has been very interestingly dealt. It very effectively brings out the science behind the method, structure, curriculum, efficacy and even *patrata* of traditional education. It finds itself on insightful answers given to 20 questions related to different aspects of education. It includes interviews by HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, HH Bhakti Vidya Purna Swami, HG Gopiparanadhan Das and HG Atmatattva Das. It also includes an interesting lecture given by HH Bhakti Vikas Swami on the same subject.



In addition to the above there are many more books in the pipeline and several documentary movies. In order to get more information one can contact: vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com



Human Brain Shrinking

[Source: *Times of India*]

June 4, 2011. London. Contrary to perceived wisdom that humans have grown taller and larger, mankind is shrinking and people's brains are also getting smaller, say experts. A team at Cambridge University says that humans are past their peak and that modern-day people are 10 per cent smaller and shorter than their hunter-gatherer ancestors.

The decline, say the scientists, has happened over the past 10,000 years. They blame agriculture, with restricted diets and urbanisation compromising health and leading to the spread of disease.

An average person 10,000 years ago weighed between 12st 8lb and 13st 6lb. Today, the average is between 11st and 12st 8lb, according to their findings.

"We can see that humans have continually evolved but in body size it is not until the last 10,000 years that they have changed substantially, so the question is why this should have happened, Dr Lahr said.

Asia's 163 million Missing Girls

[Source: www.thedailybeast.com]

June 21, 2011. Over the past three decades, the prevalence of gender-selection abortions has spread from China to India and to parts of the U.S. Eleanor Clift on the biggest myths and most troubling stats.

China's one-child policy was put in place some 30 years ago, before ultrasound technology was widely available and used to determine the sex of a fetus. Three decades later, an imbalance of boys over girls that has been made possible by gender-selection abortion practices is visible not only in China, but in India and other developing countries -- and in ethnic Asian communities in the U.S.

Mara Hvistendahl is the author of *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men*. She puts the number of missing girls in Asia at 163

million, more than the entire female population in the U.S., and reports on the tens of millions of men in Asia, "surplus males," who without female counterparts may purchase women from poorer countries.

'Slutwalk' Plan Triggers Debate on Women in India

[Source: *The Associated Press*]

Jun 21, 2011. New Delhi. Plans by a group of women to hold a "SlutWalk" in New Delhi to protest sexual violence have triggered a debate on whether such marches are appropriate in India and can change mindsets about women's status in the conservative society.

Organizer Umang Sabarwal said Wednesday the march is aimed at shifting blame from victims to perpetrators of crimes against women.

Similar marches have been held in cities around the world. The protests, which originated in Toronto, Canada, were sparked by a police officer's remark that women could avoid being raped by not dressing like "sluts." They protest the notion that a woman's appearance can explain or excuse attacks.

Singur Land: Mamta Welcomes SC Order

(Source: *Samaylive.com*)

June 29, 2011. Kolkota. Welcoming the Supreme Court's interim order on the Singur land case, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said the apex court did not stop land survey and the "process of distribution of land".

"We welcome the Supreme court order. It will go in favour of the farmers and in favour of the people," she told reporters commenting on the apex court order.

The Chief Minister, who had a talk with government lawyer Kalyan Banerjee on the apex court order, said the Supreme Court had not stopped the land survey and process of distribution of land in Singur. "The apex court only said that distribution of land would be stopped till the Calcutta High Court passes its judgement on the case," she said.



• **Mails to the Editor**

Dear Vrindavana Lila d.d.,

Om Surabhyai namah! Om Sri Gurave namah!

Please accept the blessings of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Just read it. Looks, as usual, very attractive with a good variety of articles. I am sure devotees will be happy to finally get their long expected copy of the *Eight Petals*. Thank you for your continued service in this area.

May Lord Krishna give you all the mercy needed to carry on nicely.

Trusting this finds you well. *Krsne matir astu*.

Your well-wisher,

- **HH Bhakti Raghava Swami**

Thank you for sending me your new edition. Thank you for your excellent service.

With best wishes,

- **HH Hridayananda Das Goswami**

Mother Vrindavanlila dasi,

Thanks very much. Dhanyavad for your newsletter. I enjoy so much to read. Thanks for the including my gurudev's paper on varnasrama, Srila Hridayananda Goswami Maharaja.

Your servant,

- **HG Hare Krishna Das**

Hare Krishna. Dandavat Pranam Mataji!!

Just wanted to thank you mataji for sharing this experience in form of this wonderful article (The Gap Between Pink Slip and Red Lips). Such experiences shared by senior devotees like you help us immensely in relating back to the instructions of our Acharayas so well. This really helps me in understanding why great Acharayas like Srila Rupa Goswami have emphasized that association of devotees is essential for advancement in Krsna Consciousness in the Nectar Of Instruction and many other similar books. Your article has truly proved a source of inspiration for me and has further strengthened my faith in Krishna. Thank you mataji. Haribol.

- **HG ChitraLalita DeviDasi**

Hare Krishna dear readers, I am thankful to you all whose inspiring response to the newsletter and their interest in varnasrama dharma is truly infectious and encouraging. In addition to the above mails, several other responses were received from HG Bhadra Govinda Das, HG Hare Krishna Das (US), HG Sundari Radhika dd, HG Sita Bhakta Ravishankar (Australia), Bhakta Vibhor Kalra, Bhakta Kanak Bhaumik (Singapore), Bhaktin Johanna (US), and many more .

In view of the importance of topic such as 'women' and suggestion by devotees we have decided to take forward the discussion and thus keep the focus for the next issue same as in this one - 'Women'.

- **Vrindavanlila dd (Dr Vrinda Baxi), Editor.**

The mails/ articles can be posted to eightpetalsnewsletter@gmail.com or vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com

Focus for the next issue -

Postal address:

Women

New Govardhan, #89, 9th Cross, Trimurty Colony, Mahindra Hills, Secunderabad, AP (India)

For further details: Contact: +91-9949698297 (Vrindavanlila devi dasi)

Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare