

The Eight Petals

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

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Focus on Celibacy



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Whole Universe Spinning Round Sex Life



“Outside of loving God there is no possibility of loving. Rather, there is lusty desire only. Within this atmosphere of matter, the entire range of human activities -- and not only every activity of human beings but all living entities -- is based upon, given impetus and thus polluted by sex desire, the attraction between male and female. For that sex life, the whole universe is spinning around -- and suffering! That is the harsh truth. So-called love here means that "you gratify my senses, I'll gratify your senses," and as soon as that gratification stops, immediately there is divorce, separation, quarrel, and hatred.

So many things are going on under this false conception of love. Actual love means love of God, Krsna. [Source: *Science of Self Realization* 7d: Protecting Oneself from Illusion]

“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. [Srla Prabhupada, Lecture SB 5.5.8, Vrindavana, 30 Oct. 1976]

Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Celibacy

Existential Position Should Be Purified

Srila Prabhupada: Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya means completely cessation from sex life. This is brahmacharya. Tapasya begins, austerity. This is the greatest austerity, to cease sex. Tapasa brahmacharya. Our Vedic civilization, the boys are trained how to become brahmachari from the very beginning of life.Ha. [break] ... *putraka yena suddhyet sattva*. Our existential position should be purified. How? *Tapo*, by *tapasya*. *Tapo divyam putraka yena suddhyet sattva* [SB 5.5.1]. "And we are enjoying life. Why we should undergo *tapasya*?" And you are enjoying, but you are not enjoying; you are suffering. Even if you think you are enjoying, there are so many sufferings. That the foolish people, they do not know. Just like a healthy man, he



[Letter to: Koumadaki – Australia March 27, 1972]

that even he is now healthy, he will be an old man, he will be attacked with disease, he will die, and still he thinks, "I am healthy." *Janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsanam* [Bg. 13.9]. Therefore the intelligent man will see that "Where is my enjoyment if I am going to die? I don't want to die, but I am going to die." That is sure, as sure as anything. And still the rascal will think that "I am happy." He will become old man, he will be attacked with disease, and still he is thinking that he is happy. Apart from this, there are so many other sufferings, but he thinks that he is happy. And that happiness is centered around sex. That's all. *Yan maithunadi-grhamedhi-sukham hi tuccham* [SB 7.9.45]. Their only happiness is sex. Therefore in the Western countries they are simply trying to increase the sex enjoyment. That's all. Is it not?

[Morning Walk -- September 6, 1975, Vrindavana]

Because we are not pure, these thoughts of sense gratification are bound to come into our mind, but if we do not act on them and keep ourselves always engaged in Krishna conscious activities, they will have no effect. Maya is always placing the memories of our past sinful activities before us, and encouraging us to come once again into her clutches, but by always chanting Hare Krishna and keeping our mind fixed on Krishna, He will give us the strength to resist her demands, and gradually they will diminish. Krishna is like the sun, and Maya is like darkness. Where there is sun what is the question of darkness?



HH Bhakti Raghava Swami Speaks on Celibacy

60 Years of Celibacy

The topic of celibacy is not a very popular one in our present day promiscuous society. Publicity abounds inducing one to indulge as one pleases, even before marriage and even beyond the so-called antiquated thinking of sex only with the opposite sex. With the advent of the sexual revolution that trumpeted a new era of liberalism just a few decades ago, all norms and boundaries have been lifted and cleared. The motto of the day in regular parlors is “enjoy”, and this implies, enjoy without any inhibitions. And so it is that today the norm for young boys and girls is to indulge in unrestricted sex life even before they reach puberty. This is naturally creating all types of dangerous social discrepancies what to speak of causing health hazards for millions. It was not always so. When I stop and think about celibacy, I naturally analyze my own situation and I thank Lord Krishna for allowing me to remain a celibate for 60 years of this present life. Alas, if only it could have been 65.



As a young boy and a young adolescent, I was favored and protected being brought up in a very religious environment. Both of my parents were pious, my mother in particular being a stout Roman Catholic who attended church on a daily basis. Before taking our meals we would always offer our prayers to Lord Jesus. Before going to bed at night, we would thank the Lord for His blessings. All the family members would honor the yearly one-month lent period by fasting from certain foods and by daily listening to a radio broadcast entitled, in French, ‘Le chapelet en famille’, (chanting on beads with the family members). This program was aired daily on the radio in the evenings where for 15 minutes we would join a priest who would lead the chanting of the Lord’s Holy Names on the rosary. That was all before the advent of television that soon put an end to both the chanting practice and the radio program. As small children we would enact different plays, the most popular one being the “Sunday mass”. I would often play the role of the priest.

One day, during the end of my primary studies, an Oblate priest came to our school and talked about their plan to open a new minor seminary the following year in the French Province of Quebec. I was fascinated to hear about this and envisioned people living together in a large happy family atmosphere. Upon returning home that day I spoke to my mother and expressed my desire to join the seminary. We were a poor family and we didn’t know if this would be possible. We contacted the Oblate priest who made an appointment to visit our home. And so it

was that after the interview, he confirmed us that I could attend the minor seminary, Le Petit Seminaire St. Michel de Rouyn-Noranda.

During those formative years from my secondary studies up to university level, I lived with fellow seminarians in a boarding school atmosphere being surrounded and taught only by Oblate priests. Daily, in the early mornings, we attended spiritual practices and regularly followed retreats where we would take vows of silence, not to speak but only concentrate on reciting the holy rosary. In the classroom, we were following the ancient educational system called “le cour classique” (traditional classical course from France) which had Latin as part of its curriculum. The courses had eight levels which, as I later came to know from my exposure to the Vedic culture, corresponded to many of the traditional gurukula stages: 1) Element, 2) Syntaxe, 3) Methode, 4) Versification, 5) Belle-lettres, 6) Rhetorique, 7, Philosophie I and 8) Philosophie II. The other four years of theology, had I continued my studies to become a priest, would have corresponded to the 12 years one normally studies in a gurukula or, as in ancient times, the amount of years needed to study one of the four Vedas.

“If one is trained to protect his semen by observing celibacy, naturally he is not attracted by the beauty of a woman. If one can remain a brahmacari, he saves himself so much trouble in material existence. Material existence means enjoying the pleasure of sexual intercourse (yan maithunadi-grhamedhi-sukham [SB 7.9.45]). If one is educated about sex life and is trained to protect his semen, he is saved from the danger of material existence.” [SB 8.12.35]

We were 150 students during that first year in 1960 when I joined as a new intern seminarian. I had just turned 14. By the time I graduated, the number of original students has trickled down to only 8. At the end of the 6th level, I chose to continue my philosophy studies at another minor seminary in Montreal since the courses in Rouyn-Noranda ended at the “Rhetorique” level. It was in this city of Montreal that I remember attending what is known today as an interfaith dialogue that involved sharing our experiences about life with some students of public schools. The topic at hand was “celibacy” and the firm belief expressed by all those students was that it was impossible to live without sex life, especially in the teen years. I remember arguing the point very strongly as I was still a celibate student and remained so till the end of my formal studies at university and a little beyond. It was only after the age of 22 that I became misdirected due to bad association until I was fortunate to come in contact with the devotees of Lord Krishna.



Little did I know then that this method of study in a boarding school was one of the key pillars for training one to become a brahmana. Little did I know that being taught only by priests was also the Vedic standard of receiving traditional education. And little did I know that segregation of boys and girls was actually the standard educational system advocated in the ancient Vedic teachings that protected one from undesirable and unrestricted association.

After becoming a devotee of Krishna and reading the **Srimad-Bhagavatam**, only then did I come to read how important it is for young boys to retain their semen. Abstention from sex life is not simply a spiritual injunction; it is also intimately connected with physiological and psychological realities of life, most of which remain little or not at all known in present day society. I then became more and more thankful for having received such a sheltered upbringing in my youth.

Biologically, the early years of one's life, the teen years between 13 and 19, help determine one's longevity and health. During those critical years of growth, seminal retention or abstinence plays a primary role in the formation of strong tissues, both in terms of muscle and bone structure. The science of Ayurveda teaches one the benefits of celibate life and how the presence of semen, the seventh and most crucial of vital tissues or sapta dhatus, is most important to retain and direct upwards to help purify and solidify the brain tissues. It takes gallons of blood to replace one drop of semen. The retention of semen is directly connected with one's oja or the personal aura or luster of an individual. Students who follow this practice of celibacy will naturally develop good health and strong memory. One who has practiced abstinence during one's whole life, or at least who has been regulated in his sex life within married life (brahmacary grhastha) will tend to live a longer and healthier life. The sastras enjoin that for one who is a lifelong brahmacary, naistika brahmacary, the doors to the heavenly planet Satyaloka are open to him and he will be promoted to such an elevated position.

Not only are the benefits immense on the purely biological side, but psychologically, when one avoids becoming entangled in illicit sex, either outside or within married life, one's power of concentration, retention and one's determination become very very strong. One can more easily remain fixed on the primary goal of life, that of self-realization and thus make solid spiritual advancement.

The Vedic literatures remind us that the purpose of the human form of life is voluntary practice of austerity, especially in the matter of restraint from illicit sex life. Therefore, when one is a student, one should practice celibacy by controlling the mind and by controlling the senses as enjoined in the **Srimad-Bhagavatam**:

*tapasa brahmacaryena samena ca damena ca
tyagena satya-saucabhyam yamena niyamena va
deha-vag-buddhijam dhira dharmajnah sraddhayanvitah
ksipanty agham mahad api venu-gulmam ivanalah [SB 6.1.13-14]*

One who is thus fortunate to receive this type of training and education from an early age is favored by the Supreme Lord Krishna and becomes very strong physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually as well. The Vedic culture created such strong leaders who could give proper guidance and direction in society and thus the citizens would be happy under such qualified leadership. The Gurukula system and the Varnasrama College are the proper mediums to train individuals to become ideal leaders as desired by Srila Prabhupada. We can thus help foster a new generation of enlightened individuals who will help turn the tide of our present Kali Yuga and usher the predicted and much desired new era of Satya Yuga.





Teens and Celibacy



- HG Urmila Devi Dasi

Celibacy is such an important part of Vedic education that the Sanskrit word for student is brahmachari ("celibate"). The pressure to give up celibacy begins, of course, in adolescence, the most dangerous age and often the turning point of one's life. Young adults need guidance before and during the teenage years to recognize and follow the right path.

Celibacy trains adolescents for self-restraint, whether they stay single or get married. It develops their inner strength, self-control, and good character. It also fosters good health and a fine memory. Without celibacy we can never realize that we are spirit soul, distinct from the body. Sex reinforces the illusion that we are these bodies. Sexual attraction and its extensions in family and society are the main knots that bind us to material identification. Vedic education aims to free the child from these knots so the adolescent can act on the spiritual plane. Children, of course, have no knowledge of sex. How do we train them to value celibacy before they reach puberty? By association and environment. Modern educators know well how children's early impressions influence their later moral behavior. And these educators are passing on their decadent moral values to our children. For example, the New York City public school board recently introduced textbooks in the first grade that show families with two

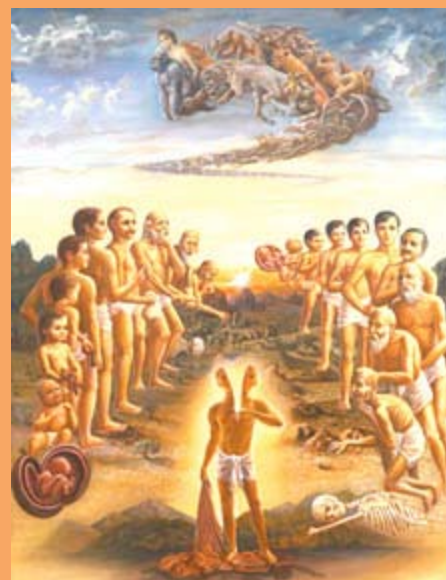
Prabhupada: ... That is animalism. You avoid it. Our Vedic civilization is to avoid it. Therefore they remain brahmachari, naisthika-brahmachari, no sexual intercourse in the whole life. That is perfection.

Yogesvara: But that's not possible for the mass ...

Prabhupada: No, why not possible? We have got so many, just like Sukadeva Gosvami. He remained completely brahmachari, although he is naked ... He doesn't require, and neither he is agitated. Just like when he was passing, the girls were taking bath. They did not take care. They knew that he is not at all affected by any woman. And when his father was going, they covered. So father inquired, Vyasadeva, ... "Why you covered? I am old man, and my young son he was passing naked." They said that "He is paramahansa. He has no agitation of the mind. But you are grhastha. You live with woman. You have got distinction, man and woman." So this is civilization. What is the use of sex life? It is simply entanglement. Therefore, at the last stage, one is supposed to become sannyasi. What is sannyasi? *Vanaprastha, sannyasi, brahmachari* - no sex life. ... Only the *grhastha*. That means it is prohibitory. It is allowed - it is simply concession to the person who cannot remain without sex life. ...Otherwise, according to Vedic civilization, there is no need of sex life. Because it is ...simply entanglement. *Yan maithunadi-grhamedhi-sukham/ hi tuccham kanduyanena karayor iva duhkha-duhkham [SB 7.9.45]*. The example has been given. There is itching between the two hands. That's all. That means the itching disease is increased. This has been the description of sex life. *Trpyanti neha krpana bahu-duhkha-bhajah*. [Morning Walk, May 28, 1974, Rome]

“mommies” or two “daddies,” to get children used to homosexuality. And schools aren't the only place kids learn to think well of illicit sex. Role models such as those on television, on radio, and in politics keep reinforcing the message. Parents add to the negative influence by using contraceptives or cheating on their marriage vows. The result, of course, is that children enter adolescence with attitudes that lead them away from self-realization, or even civilized life. The illicit sex that results from years of indoctrination leads to chaos. Yet the very educators and politicians who promote illicit sex to children talk on about fatherless families and unwanted kids who turn to crime and drugs. To be trained in celibacy, our young students should live with people who take pleasure in Krsna consciousness. Our first task is to shield our children from materialistic influences and surround them with positive, transcendental life. That's the only way to get them ready to face their transition into adulthood. But childhood training isn't enough. Prabhupada told us we must carefully guide our children during their teens. Then surely they will come out first-class Krsna conscious devotees. We should be like a commanding officer who not only trains his soldiers but also serves with them on the battlefield.

Traditionally, a spiritually guided society helped young people with good association, vocational training, and marriage. Our teenagers need to train and study with Krsna conscious friends and teachers. Otherwise, Prabhupada once said, if from twelve to fifteen years of age they go to an ordinary school, by bad company they become rotten. It is sad to see this happen to a child who had strong childhood training and could have become a first-class human being.



Despite the best training and the best company, most teenagers want to associate with the opposite sex. Therefore, Vedic culture prescribes early marriage, on religious principles. That kind of marriage makes the mind peaceful and receptive to spiritual instruction. Parents must help their sons and daughters find suitable marriage partners, except for children who are going to stay happy in lifelong celibacy. Parents should understand that adolescents have only three choices in sexual morality: celibacy, marriage, or immorality. Because of the danger in a society where boys and girls mix freely, marriage should be encouraged.

We sometimes mistakenly think that an “arranged” marriage means that the parents force a twelve-year-old girl to marry a thirty-year-old man—and they meet for the first time at the wedding. Prabhupada gives us a different picture. He tells us of a gradual process, usually spanning several years. The parents look for a suitable partner for their child, taking into account that the boy and girl should be equal in character, qualities, social position, and renunciation. The parents judge the match through their own observations, by asking others, and through astrology. The wishes of the boy and girl are also important. Once the families and the boy and girl agree, a period of occasional, supervised association begins. It's as if the parents introduce their child to a suitable

mate and then chaperone formal “dates” to prepare the children for marriage. When the children are old enough to marry, the girl may still spend long regular visits at her parents’ home so she may gradually get used to being a wife. An extended family makes this easier by helping the new couple in their duties and relationship. This time-tested process can be easily followed today. The girl engaged to a suitable boy doesn’t have to advertise herself to find a man. And the boy knows he can’t marry until he becomes responsible. He is therefore motivated to mature into a conscientious man of good character. Built on the early training in renunciation, their marriage will be dedicated to Krsna, fulfilling our hope for their future.

[Source: <http://www.brahmacarya.info/2010/03/teens-and-celibacy/>]

Eight aspects of Subtle Sex Life

- (1) *Smaranam* - One should not think of the opposite sex.
 - (2) *Kirtanam* - One should not talk of sex life. (Prajalpa)
 - (3) *Kelih-* Don't (play) or dally with the opposite sex, (even if it is your service to deal with them, try to minimize it). 'Avyarthakalatvam'- Rupa Goswami says in NOD.
 - (4) *Preksanam-* Don't look lustfully at the opposite sex.
 - (5) *Guhyabhasanam-* Don't talk intimately with the opposite sex in a secluded place.
 - (6) *Sankalpo-* Don't decide to engage in sexual intercourse. (Thinking, feeling, willing).
 - (7) *Adhyavasayas-* Don't endeavor for sex life.
 - (8) *Ca kriyanirvrttir* - Don't engage in sex life.
- nirvrttir eva ca* - One executes real brahmacharya when all these activities come to a halt.

Sri Yamunacharya sings,

*yad-avadhi mama cetah krishna-padaravinde
nava-nava-rasa-dhamany udyatam rantum asit
tad-avadhi bata nari-sangame smaryamane
bhavati mukha-vikarah sushthu nishthivanam ca*

"Since my mind has been engaged in the service of the lotus feet of Lord Krishna and I have been enjoying ever-new transcendental pleasure in that service, whenever I think of sex with a woman my face at once turns from it, and I spit at the thought."

This way in a very simple way Yamunacharya gives us the solution to overcome lust and lead a pure celibate life. Engagement of senses in His transcendental service. For He is Madanamohana, enchanter of Madana, the personality of Cupid.





The Process of Celibacy As Given to Us By Srila Prabhupada

- HG Yugal Kishor Das

The process of celibacy as given to us by Srila Prabhupada is rather simple. **T**Self-control in matters of sex starts with brahmacharya, passes through grhastha and eventually goes back to absolute celibacy in sannyasa.

Brahmacharya means several things, namely, not associating with women, eating properly, taking appropriate association, and engaging oneself in active devotional service.



a) *Vow of Not Associating With Women.* This includes the mind, body and the speech. Pure and simple, brahmacharis are not to think of women, nor in being in physical contact with women (it includes actual sexual indulgence), nor are they to speak about women. There goes out TV, newspapers, magazines, movies, and no-devotional entertainment. Sometimes, even so-called devotional entertainment may be detrimental to brahmacharya vows. Nowadays, it is very common to see, in ISKCON temples, dance performances by young, attractive girls and young women. In my humble opinion, even these kinds of entertainment events are to be avoided, at all cost, by someone who is serious about

celibacy.

b) *Eating Properly.* This is another big one. People interested in celibacy are not free to eat any kind of foodstuff, even it is prasadam.

First of all, sweetmeats are to be avoided. This includes not only Indian sweets (even though mahaprasadam) but also cakes, pies, and a myriad of all kinds of tempting preparations. Secondly, vegetarian food even though cooked by non-devotees must be avoided. In the West, we often see ISKCON devotees going to vegetarian restaurants, Buddhists, Indians, Chinese, etc. to consume their bhoga. Eating food cooked by non-devotees carries a great risk of contamination. (The story of Bhisma-deva, as found in Mahabharata, comes to mind). And one of those is the aggravation of sex desires.

Thirdly, avoid at all cost eating late in the day. Specifically, avoid eating after sunset.

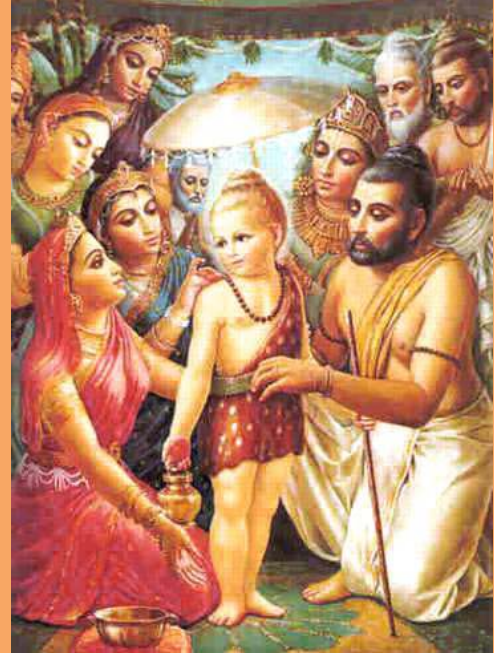
Fourthly, avoid food that is pungent, spicy, and too sweet. Avoid food that is aphrodisiac, which does include many non-animal-based foodstuff. Avoid yogurt late in the day!

c) *Taking Proper Association.* This is also crucial. Brahmacharis should hang around other brahmacharis or sannyasis. In turn, sannyasis should take association of other sannyasis, or give association to brahmacharis. As far as grhasthas is concerned, they

should practice, more or less the same restrictions, save and except those necessary to handle their secular duties, in which case, avoiding women's association is not practical.

d) *Engagement in Devotional Services.* This is equally important. One should pick a specific service, related to some ISKCON Temple or center, and serve the Deity, in a humble way.

e) *Praying.* Make a habit to visit the Deity, in your temple, and beg the Lord for his mercy, by way of controlling your senses. Do it daily. After all, Sri Krishna is known as Hrishikesh, because He fully controls the senses, the mind and the intelligence. If you do not reside nearby a temple, then obtain a picture of the Lord and have His darshana every single day, in your home, and ask for help from Him. We should start with the conviction all problems of material life (sex included) are not overcome on our own. The help of the spiritual master and the Lord Himself is required. Even though we may have an addiction to sex indulgence or aberrant sexual behavior, as in addiction to pornography, we ought to start with the realization that we can't do it alone. Hence, praying is essential. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!



King Kulasekhara and Cupid

madana parihara sthitim madiye / manasi mukunda-padaravinda-dhamni

hara-nayana-krisanuna kriso 'si / smarasi na cakra-parakramam murareh [MMS, Text 22]

[O Cupid, abandon your residence in my mind, which is now the home of Lord Mukunda's lotus feet. You have already been incinerated by Lord Siva's fiery glance, so why have you forgotten the power of Lord Murari's disc?]

PURPORT: This is a bold challenge to Cupid, who can usually subdue everyone, including aspiring transcendentalists. As Lord Kapila says to His mother, "Just try to understand the mighty strength of My maya in the shape of a woman, who by the mere movement of her eyebrows can keep even the greatest conquerors of the world under her grip" (SB 3.31.38).

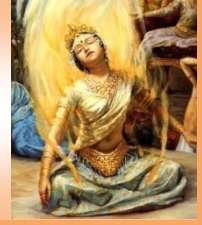
A devotee can challenge Kamadeva (Cupid) in such a feisty way because devotees constantly meditate on Lord Krishna, who destroys Cupid's influence. Here King Kulasekhara is giving fair warning to Kamadeva to leave the king's mind or risk destruction for a second time. ...Kamadeva is also called Madana, a name that means "one who attracts." But Lord Krishna is known as Madana-mohana, "the bewilderer of Cupid." In other words, Krishna is so transcendently attractive that anyone who absorbs his mind in Him will not be troubled by sex desire. ...In all the world's religions, ascetics have practiced renunciation, and Kamadeva always tests them and gives them trouble. ...Even the powerful mystic Visvamitra became a victim of the beauty of Menaka... But the bhaktas have discovered an infallible shelter from Cupid -- absorption in the beauty of Krishna. One who is captivated by the beauty of Krishna is not victimized by lust.





The Structural Gambit for Celibacy and Chastity

- Vrndavanlila dd



Despite this fast changing world where promiscuity encouraged by the hedonist approach to life is overtaking almost everywhere, India still preserves its age old veneration towards celibacy. The vast majority of girls and boys still remain celibate till their marriage and even post-marriage lead a regulated life. Of course in cities, this 'conservative' species are on the brink of extinction, and even when preserved, generally make the person a butt of ridicule and curiosity. However, fortunately in villages it is still a norm.

What is it which still allows the virtue of celibacy still thrive in India? It would be interesting to know this as this would help us build a similar structure elsewhere.

A country's spiritual culture can be felt in its social structure. A broad system is supported by number of social systems that in turn help realizing the primary objective. The primary Indian philosophy rests on the principles of *karma*, *punar janma* (rebirth) and departure for *param dhama* when one is successfully able to break the cycle of birth-death-rebirth. Even the common people were aware of the two big obstacles on the path of spiritual evolution:

bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām' / tayāpahṛta-cetasām

vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ / samādhau na vidhīyate [BG 2:44]

[In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination for devotional service to the Supreme Lord does not take place.]

Therefore, we had the social structure that encouraged "simple living and high thinking". Sex desire, identified as the most serious obstacle was thus most cautiously addressed. Its seriousness can be understood if we remind ourselves that every *jiva* has enjoyed this facility in so many forms (84,00,000 forms atleast) in the body of a dog, cat, rabbit etc and still we are foolishly chasing it again – *punaḥ carvita carvitaṁ* –

śrī-prahrāda uvāca

matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā / mitho 'bhipadyeta gr̥ha-vratānām

adānta-gobhir viśatām' tamisram' / punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām [SB 7.5.30]

[Prahlaḍa Mahārāja replied: Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.]

Even an illiterate fool knows that sexual attraction is the most fatal one, containing the seed of one's material attachment and spiritual suicide it was addressed in several ways in the social set up.

pumśaḥ striyā mithunī-bhāvam etam' / tayor mitho hṛdaya-granthim āhuḥ

ato gr̥ha-kṣetra-sutāpta-vittair / janasya moho 'yam aham' mameti [SB 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."]

Celibacy and chastity. A boy is encouraged to remain celibate with its supportive system of encouraging a girl to be chaste. Chastity and celibacy are interdependent virtues. One virtue helps the other to prosper. A girl's natural attribute of shyness was encouraged in the culture. It not only fortified her defence, but also supported a brahmachari's vow to remain a celibate. Even Srila Prabhupada gave the famous example of a sweeper woman who would not enter because of shyness. The men had to get up and make way for her to enter. Her shyness had only made men to get in her honor. Bashfulness is considered a woman's most precious ornament and evokes honor and respect by civilized people. This idea was further effected by subsystems that did not allow free mixing of girls and boys at any stage of life. A girl was always protected, by her father and brother before marriage, by her husband after marriage, and by her son in the absence of her husband. Even schooling was done separately. Girls were homeschooled in different arts that suited their temperament and their role to support and serve their husbands. Even princess Uttara (ref. Mahabharat) was trained in the art of dancing at the palace itself (by Arjuna in disguise as Brahnalla); even Queen Madri (King Pandu's wife), Kaikeyi (wife of King Dashrath) were well versed in the art of charioteering during war. There is famous instance of Satyabhama driving Krishna's chariot when He defeated Narakasura. The women were well trained to follow

their temperament, but they were never sent outside to schools along with boys or other men. Though now women are encouraged to be financially independent, go out to study, play and work; but earlier it was unimaginable. Queen Draupadi, one of very chaste women, had never been beheld even by wind or sun [*Mahabharata, Sabha Parva*!] Those were the ideals of chastity then! As India is replete with wonderful examples of chaste women, no wonder there have been similar examples of celibate men like Hanuman, Parashuram, Haridas Thakur, the goswamis of Vrindavan, Narada muni, Sukadev Goswami, Bheeshma pitamah and so on.



Education. Observance of the vows of celibacy and sense control are so important in defining a person's intelligence and memory that first phase of a man's period that of student life was in itself defined as brahmachary, followed by grhastha, vanyaprastha, and sannyasi. Out of the four, three ashrams are based on observance of complete celibacy. The exception, grhastha phase, a man was allowed to mix with women but that too in restriction.

“Srila Prabhupada: One thing is that we teach our boys how to become (brahmachari)-how to live the life of celibacy, how to control their senses. In Vedic culture, marriage generally doesn't take place until the boy is about twenty-four or twenty-five and the girl is about sixteen or seventeen. And because they are experiencing the spiritual pleasure of Krsna consciousness, they are not simply interested in sex life. So we don't say "don't mix with women," or, "Stop sex life." But we regulate everything under the higher principle of Krsna Consciousness. In this way everything goes nicely.”

Further, again there was subsystem of education methodology, curriculum and the facts related to a students' eligibility for receiving education.

Education had never been a money minting industry, as it has turned now. It was given free for the sake of spreading knowledge of self realization and training a class of realized leaders of the society. No wonder even the kings were rishis and great yogis. Parikshit maharaj, Yudhisthir, Dashrath, Janaka, Sri Ram are just a few to name.

Unlike the modern schooling system where even the transportation buses, classes are air conditioned, giving a glimpse of luxury and comfort; Vedic system had system of gurukulas where life was sans sense gratification and of austerity and surrender. The student served the guru with humility and remained 24/7 under constant observance and training by a qualified teacher or acharya, who was himself a great example of what he preached. Even the Supreme Lord, as a student set the example by serving His guru Sandipani muni just like any other student and doing 'menial' work as collecting wood from the forest etc.

“The brahmacharis, or students under the care of a bonafide spiritual master, control the mind by abstaining from sense gratification. A brahmachari hears only words concerning Krishna consciousness; hearing is the basic principle for understanding, and therefore the pure brahmachari engages fully in harer namanu kirtanam – chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord. He restrains himself from the vibrations of material sounds, and his hearing is engaged in the transcendental sound vibration of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.” [Commentary by Srila Prabhupada.BG 4.26]

The educational content was not based on the speculative information furnished by the scientists whose science keeps changing its statements every day and motivated historians who would distort the facts to suit their ulterior motives. Time was regarded precious and every moment was utilized in realizing the higher truth, emphasis was not on body but on soul which is eternal. The curriculum was thus based on eternal truths, the shastras.



Further, there was no room for co-education. Boys lived separately in the gurukula under the able guidance of a qualified acharya, while the girls were educated at home by other senior women of the family and of the village. In Vrindavan, we have the example of Purnaswasi playing the role of mentor to the girls. In a few cases, they were also trained by other qualified teachers, but all at home itself.

The acharya had complete freedom to accept a student based on the latter's qualification become his student. (So different from modern system where it is only the ability to pay the fat fees that defines their ability to get admitted in a particular school. We have examples of acharayas rejecting a student's request in the history. For instance, Dronacharya rejected Karna and Ekalavya's request to be their students. The relationship between the student and the teacher was of mutual love, trust and great reverence. Truth was the founding principle. We learn that Karna in his ambition to become the world's archer wanted to receive training and education from Parasuram and lied to his teacher to learn the art. He claimed himself to be a brahmana, but later when the truth got revealed to Parasuram in a very touching situation, Parasuram did not hesitate to curse Karna. So stringent were the rules of eligibility to education

and learning (education for all?). No wonder every man was trained to see every woman other than his own wife as his mother.

Social systems. Celibacy is like going upstream. This desire has been indoctrinated in the jivas through different lakhs and lakhs of bodies; surprisingly still it has not exhausted itself and it is difficult to give it up totally in favor of the Lord for just one life. The Indian social system recognized the great power that Maya devi wielded. The structure of social system was therefore designed to be a matrix of wonderful rules that encouraged celibacy and chastity. The institution of child marriage was one of them. In our village in UP it is still prevalent. The children, after a thorough check of the background and other related details of the boy and girl by the family elders, are married at the age of 6 years or so. When they become matured and are appropriately trained and educated (somewhere round 24 years or 25 years) another ceremony called *gauna* takes place. Prior to this ceremony the girl and the boy though married, do not stay together. After the solemnization of this ceremony the girl begins to come to the boy's house for different festivals and slowly over a period of a year or so she begins to permanently stay at her in-law's place. Since the two are married at quite a young age, love for each other grows over time and there is no room for anxiety of partner-hunting. There is no concept of divorce or remarriage or even abortion; there is therefore no equivalent for these words in Hindi language.



Since men and women are comparable to butter and fire, they need to not only kept separate but attraction is further minimized by the dressing code. The nakedness of animals was not emulated by men as they were constantly aware of the significance of a human body and its goal. A decent woman was expected to keep her head covered and cover herself nicely. Srimati Radharani is the epitome of a woman's grace, no man had ever held her, even her feet are never visible except on Her appearance day. Laxman, as Sri Ramji's brother sets the ideal of conduct even with a sister in law. He had never beheld Sita devi's face and could recognize only her anklets as he had always seen Her feet while touching them for blessings. A married woman or girl is immediately recognizable by their sindoor in the parting, red bindi, toe rings, mangal sutra round her neck, and clamor of bangles while draping themselves in a sari (the 6 yard wonder) to avoid confusion. Similarly men covered themselves decently in a *dhoti*, *kurta* and *angavastram* (also known as *angochha*).

This purity in thought and action was further cemented by healthy eating habits and varnasrama system. This is why Srila Prabhupada on seeing a few sannyasis failing to keep their vows of celibacy compassionately gave the solution of reviving the institution of daiva varnasrama in the society.

Daiva Varnasrama set up is like a safety net to save the spiritual trapeze artists from falling in the circus of material life. Celibacy is purity in thought and action; and thus a great force, which is so much required.

Yoga student: "How does a devotee of Krsna control sex desire?"

Srila Prabhupada: "Automatically. Krsna is so beautiful. We are accustomed to this habit for a very long time. Become sincere, and Krsna will protect you."

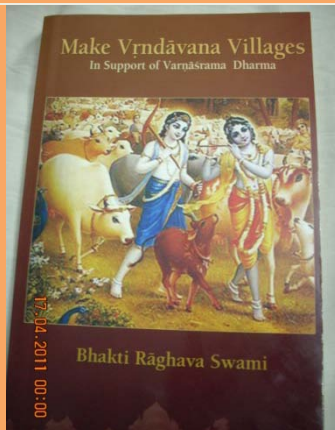
Yoga student: "Sometimes I have a sex urge..."

Srila Prabhupada: "What? You? Everybody! In birds, beasts, demigods—the binding force is sex. The material life means sex desire. Free from sex desire means advancing in spiritual desire. If you have a strong sex desire, pray to Krsna. Know that this is the attack of maya. Pray, and maya will go away. You cannot fight with maya with your own energy. Maya is presenting herself more beautiful than Krsna. But Krsna is more beautiful."

[Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita 7-3: A Visit to Boston, 1968]



• Varnashrama Literature

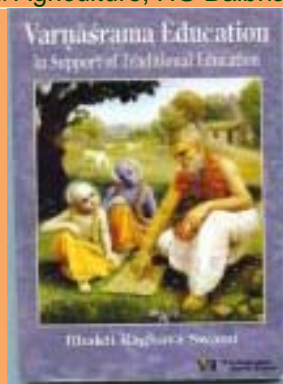


Make Vrndavan Villages

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.

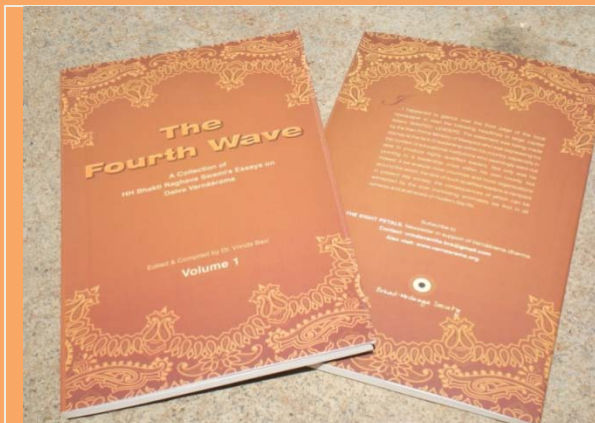
Gosamvardhan: A Peep Into the Traditional Go-Practices in India

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 Vrndavanlila 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 book deals with the aspect of Education in the context of Varnashrama.

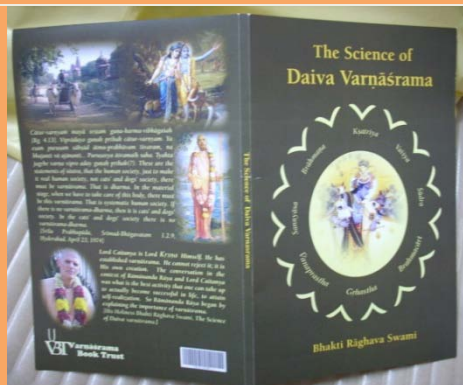
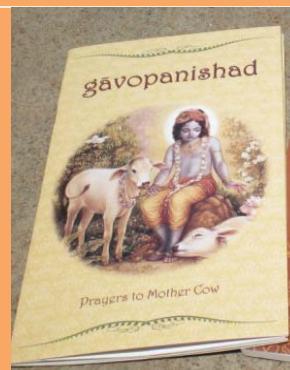


The Fourth Wave

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.

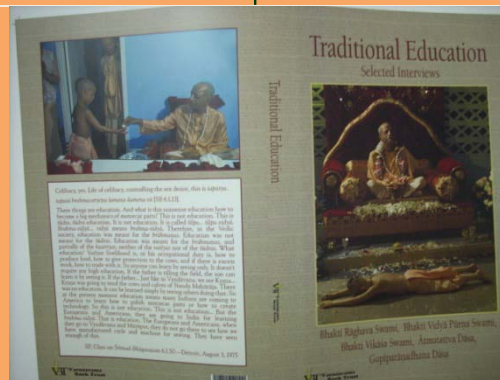


The Science of Daiva Varnasrama

The book by His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami is an effective attempt to address the general queries and doubts related varnasrama 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 varnasrama dharma as envisioned by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, to move to second section of the need or relevance of varnasrama followed by the third section dealing with the questions related to complications arising in the process of implementation of principles of daiva varnasrama 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

• Varnashrama News



Legislature turns away millions for comprehensive sex education

[Source: The Florida Independent]

September 12, 2011. The state Legislature turned away \$2.8 million in annual funding from the federal government for comprehensive sex education in Florida.

According to a spokesperson from the Florida Department of Health, funding for the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) "has been declined by DOH because we were not granted Legislative Budget Authority to move forward with the project." The funding was allocated by the Affordable Care Act.

According to information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "the purpose of [the] program is to educate youth between the ages of 10 and 19 on both abstinence and contraception for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS."

Unlike a number of abstinence-only education programs in the state, the PREP grant would have gone to educate students on contraception and STD prevention.

This year, the state Legislature did approve money from the Affordable Care Act for almost \$2 million dollars in awards for abstinence-only sex education groups in the state. These programs have been shown to place a very limited emphasis on health specifics.



End celibacy and help save the Church, says a former Irish Bishop

[Source: The Sydney Morning Herald]

September 15, 2011. Challenging centuries of Catholic theocracy, Dr Daly, the Bishop of Derry for 19 years during the Northern Ireland Troubles, has become the first senior Irish Catholic cleric to call for an end to celibacy in the church. He said that allowing the clergy to marry would solve some of the church's problems. The number of Catholic priests in Ireland is sharply declining as older clergy die and few young men commit to a celibate life. In

some parishes the church has transferred priests from Poland and the developing world to fill the gap.



53.9% of West Bengal Girls Marry Before 18: UNICEF [Source: OutlookIndia.com]

September 10, 2011. Kolkata. Every second girl in the high prevalence child marriage districts of West Bengal were married off before they reach 18, the legal age for girls to get wedded, a UNICEF report said. Murshidabad (61.04%), Birbhum (58.03%), Malda (56.07%) and Purulia (54.03%) are the districts having such dubious distinction, the report said quoting latest figures. Though only these four districts have reported over 50 per cent child marriage cases, they are enough to pull the state figure of child marriage to a staggering 53.9 percent. Jalpaiguri (17.5%) is at the bottom of the 19-district list, with Kolkata (19.04%) preceding it, said the report which was released at an event yesterday.

A UNICEF spokesperson said girls should be enrolled in schools to push down the wedding age and there should be alternatives like vocational training for school drop-outs.

Lori Calvo, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF, West Bengal chapter, said, "Evidence shows that educated girls grow into agents of change for their families, communities and societies as a whole."



Celibacy helps Anna to gain weight [Source: Hindustan Times]

September 1, 2011. Gurgaon. Anna Hazare, who had been admitted in Medanta -The Medicity here for the past four days after breaking his 12-day fast, was discharged on Wednesday.

On his last day in hospital, Anna took a normal diet — pulses, roti and khichdi. His health is improving. His blood pressure and heart beat are normal. He is also putting on weight.

Dr Naresh Trehan said, "Starvation directly affects the functioning of kidneys and liver, but in Anna's case (74 years old), it looks that his brahmacharya (celibacy) power worked."



Secunderabad Varnasrama Research Team Members celebrate Krishna Janmashtami

Secunderabad. New Govardhan, the birthplace of VRT or first Varnasrama Research Team celebrated the Lord Sri Krishna's appearance day with great gaiety both at Govardhan and at Balram Kshetra (Bolaram). Seeking blessings on the auspicious day on August 22, 2011, the Varnasrama Team Research Team members (New Govardhan, Secunderabad) began their day with mangal arati at the temple. The Lordships (Sri Sri Radha Madhava and Sri Sri Radha-Shyamsundar) were dressed in Their lovely attire by HG Vrndavanlila dd and HG Sandhini dd with the help of Bhaktin Nithika. Through out the day there was a long queue for Their darshan.



The celebration was organized in a big function hall to accommodate the huge inflow of devotees, which the small temple cannot. In a grand procession the deities were taken from the temple to the hall. It was an evening to remember with HG Gour Gopal prabhu glorifying the Lord in his melodious voice. His kirtans were followed by a crisp but interesting cultural program where in HG Gangagati dd,

ManasaGanga and her group sang soulful kirtans. Bhaktin Nandita presented danced to the tune of Madhurashtakam. Bhaktin Radhika and Bhaktin Nandita also gave a small glimpse of Krishna's beautiful pastimes of Damodarlila.



Abhishekam of the Lordships lasted for about an hour followed by mouth watering offerings of 111 bhoga items by the devotees! Last but not the least, the devotees enjoyed a grand feast celebrating the appearance of the Supreme Lord on Earth.





• Mails to the Editor

Very interesting indeed and well written. Let's look for the instructions in *Srimad Bhagavatam* for women:

SB 7.11.25: 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 7.11.26-27: 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 household 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.

SB 7.11.28: 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.

SB 7.11.29: 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 devotee husband, and lives very happily in the Vaikuṅṭha planets.

- **HG VarahaKrishna Das**

Dear Editor,

Immensely pleased to go through many a thought-provoking articles regarding the role of humans as servants of servants of servants of Lord Krishna in whose hair follicle reside infinite number of universes. Woman's role is so clearly spelt out it should be an eye-opener to all right thinking husbands too to take very good care of such divinely minded women. One important likely misconception to be clarified. *Aham brahmosmi* means think of God residing in all souls and not and never our soul is identical with Krishna and even in moksha or mukthi (Vaikunta loka) you are separate. *Mukthanam paramagathi*---there also you are dependent on Krishna for your eternal happiness. ...

With warm regards and respects,

- **Bhakta Madhava Rao**

Hari Hari! I came across quite a few enlightening articles in the last few issues of *The Eight Petals* magazine and hence thought of emailing you....

- **Bhakta Ravishanker Sangem**

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

Focus for the next issue -

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Chanting

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