

Devaki Devi Dasi

The Hot Issue - Female Diksa Guru

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I would like to share some thoughts on this widely discussed topic, not wanting to agitate anybody's mind or fueling heated discussions and tension, but simply wanting to add one important aspect which I have not heard being mentioned in this connection. At least it is not mentioned in any of the documents presented by our senior leaders on this issue.

One main difference between the male and female "vehicle" is the fact that the female nature is more emotional. This is according to Krsna's Divine plan - otherwise who would give all the necessary care and affection to the small children and play the role of their very first Guru?! So this emotional need and nature impells most ladies to learn how to become selfless servants by raising children, and it also impells us ladies to take shelter of a man. And it adds more colour and feeling to life. Wouldn't life be boring and grey if we all had a man's nature...?!

However, this emotional nature can also become an impediment and obstacle, especially since emotions tend to cloudy our vision and intelligence to such extent that we cannot see things as they really are. Material emotions are connected to the platform of the mind, which is a very unreliable foundation to stand on.

Most of us in a female body can surely agree that sometimes our emotions get the better of us and distort our vision of things. And as a result we over-react, we jump to wrong conclusions and do or say exactly what we shouldn't be doing or saying. And we make a fool out of ourselves. This is simply the effect of emotions clouding the intelligence.

In the Bhagavatam we have the story with Lord Siva and Parvati, where she curses Citraketu because she thought that he was offending her husband. Prabhupada gives the following explanation in the purport to SB 6.17.34-35:

"Here is a difference between male and female that exists even in the higher status of life - infact, even between Lord Siva and his wife. Lord Siva could understand Citraketu very nicely, but Parvati could not. Thus even in the higher statuses of life there is a difference between the understanding of a male and that of a female. It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man. In the Western countries there is now agitation to the effect that man and woman should be considered equal, but from this verse it appears that woman is always less intelligent than man. It is clear that Citraketu wanted to criticize the behavior of his friend Lord Siva because Lord Siva was sitting with his wife on his lap. Then, too, Lord Siva wanted to criticize Citraketu for externally posing as a great devotee but being interested in enjoying with the Vidyadhara women. These were all friendly jokes; there was nothing serious for which Citraketu should have been cursed by Parvati. Upon hearing the instructions of Lord Siva, Parvati must have been very much ashamed for cursing Citraketu to become a demon. Mother Parvati could not appreciate Citraketu's position, and therefore she cursed him, but when she understood the instructions of Lord Siva she was ashamed."

So even Parvati exhibited this quality of being led by her emotions and thus over-reacting and cursing Citraketu. And after her husband instructed her she felt foolish, covering her face with the head piece of her sari.

And Prabhupada clearly makes the point that the female vision and intelligence is always inferior to the man's - even on such high levels.

I have to be honest, it took me many years to not only swallow Prabhupada's comments, but actually deeply within my heart accept them. And the more we identify with the body - gross and subtle, the harder it is to accept Prabhupada's words. The entity which rebels the most is nothing but the false ego.

It is not that any man's vision is superior to any woman's vision. No, but if we have a Vaisnava and a Vaisnavi, who are somewhat of the same caliber - with similar status, advancement and commitment to devotional life, the man's vision of things is always superior to the woman's vision, because of her tendency to be emotional, which cloudies her intelligence.

I have to admit, I do have this practical experience also in my devotional life: if I have the choice when inquiring and asking for guidance, I always prefer to go to a senior devotee in a male body, because I know I get a more cool headed and clear answer, and often the discussions are so much more to the point, whereas discussions with ladies often end up being emotional and getting lost in little details. On the other hand, if I need advice which requires feminine intuition and wisdom, then I rather consult with a senior lady.

So men and women are very different - they don't only differ in the gross body, but also very much in the subtle body. Krsna has given both men and women the perfect gross and subtle body to play certain roles and functions in this world, while at the same time making spiritual progress. Thus it is the nature of being emotional which makes us unqualified to perform certain functions: Guru, and also taking posts in leadership and management roles. Even being able to lecture to the point is often much more difficult for ladies because of the very same reason.

Infact, I dare say being on the emotional platform makes it impossible to uplift others to the transcendental platform - no matter whether we are in a man's or woman's body, and not only in regards to Diksa, but also in regards to more serious and deeper Siksa. Maybe this explains why Prabhupada says that there will not be many female Diksa Guru's - because it is rare to find a woman who is not controlled by her emotions. Of course, these days also many men have a very emotional nature, and their intelligence will also be clouded by their emotions and thus will not be able to uplift others onto the transcendental platform.

I know several ladies who are serving in high managerial roles of leadership and are suffering emotionally, having sleepless nights and so many anxieties. Why would a Vaisnavi want to ruin her bhajan by occupying such posts, which cause so much distress to her?! Only to get some little ego satisfaction?

Once a very senior and educated brahmacari in Bangladesh shared the following with me, saying: "Mataji, my Guru Maharaja is our father, and you are our mother." And with an affectionate smile he added: "And often mother is more important than father - yes, mother is more important...!"

Such is the sweetness and beauty of spiritual culture. Why would any Vaisnavi who has insights into the deeper secrets of spiritual culture want to exchange her position of an affectionate spiritual mother for another, just to be accepted as Diksa Guru or a leading manager?!

Women can exert their influence through selfless service and affection, which by far exceeds that of a man with a big title and position! Woman's energy is much more powerful and influential than man's energy. After all, Srimati Radharani controls the Supreme Controller - not by being a Diksa Guru or carrying a big title.

Finally, Siksa is more important than Diksa. The purpose of Diksa is to receive Siksa. Sad Guru does not need authorisation. Sad Guru can't be stopped being Guru! People will come, take inspiration and guidance. They will know where they can find some nourishment and upliftment. Nobody can bar Sad Guru from being Guru. There are thousands of devotees out there who are starving for spiritual nourishment. Let us simply uplift them and nourish them, without running after recognition and fame, by playing the roles and duties we are meant to play.....!
Your servant, Devaki dd