
SAC response to Bhanu Swami

The SAC thanks Bhanu Swami for his succinct pro/con analysis. We note that he does not refer to, or even allude to, any areas of the SAC paper on the six GBC questions. This “two positions” paper thus appears to be an analysis independent of our paper. We have thus prepared this table to compare the two. There are also a number of topics in the SAC paper that are not at all addressed in Bhanu Swami’s comments.

Topic	SAC paper: Prudent Questions, Sastric Answers	Bhanu Swami's "The Two Positions" comments
1. Women's roles as preacher/guru and role within varnasrama	Shows how both can be complementary, with historical and modern examples	Presents them completely separately from each other with no discussion of how they can work in a complementary fashion
2. Women's roles as preacher/guru	Suggests that the way men and women fulfill these roles may be somewhat different as modified by varnasrama considerations	States that roles on the spiritual platform can be taken up the same by men and women without any distinction
3. Women's roles in varnasrama	Gives evidence and quotes from sastra and Srila Prabhupada that men and women have some distinct roles and <i>some overlapping roles</i> both in the area of asrama duties and in the area of varna duties	States that the roles of men and women in varna and asrama are distinct from one another
4. Prabhupada's emphasis on spiritual and varnasrama roles	Concludes that Srila Prabhupada emphasized spiritual roles with varnasrama as support	States that there are "some" quotations showing spiritual equality and that Prabhupada supported varnasrama roles "to some extent"
5. Women's roles in ISKCON, other than those within varnasrama or that of guru	Does not discuss	States that on the spiritual platform Vaisnavis can do any service in ISKCON
6. Prabhupada's letter stating that it is "my program" to have all his "spiritual sons and daughters" initiate disciples and carry his Bhaktivedanta name through the generations	Understands Prabhupada's later and repeated statements that "all" of his disciples should be guru to be a repetition of his desire, as well as notes his use over the years of the words "boys and girls", when asking all of his disciples to be guru.	Says that letter is not definite because it could have been subject to later change and that the 11 gurus were all male
7. Reasons to have women initiate	Gives three reasons for women to initiate: siddhantic principle OR long-term time/place/circumstance adjustment OR temporary adjustment. Also gives suggestion for those who do not want women to initiate	Gives siddhantic principle as reason for women to initiate. Gives reasons of social convention for women not to initiate. For those opposed, suggests that FDGs be allowed as an exception, without giving implementation ideas
8. "Not so many"	Detailed analysis of history and sastric reasons for "not so many", as well as specific guidance for implementation	In the "pro" section, does not address this point. In the "con" section, uses the words "very rare" and "very few" rather than "not so many", and suggests "exception rather than norm" without any specifics of implementation or definition
9. Jahnava Ma	Accepted as example	Accepted as example