

## Sita Ram Dasa

### Varnasrama: Protection or Exploitation!

Maharaja Rahugana thought that the pure devotee, Jada Bharata, was a sudra. The King forced Jada Bharata to carry him in a palanquin. The King explained his reasoning, "...if one is engaged in his occupational duty by force, he benefits because he can vanquish all his sinful activities in that way" (SB, 5, 10 23). In the purport Srila Prabhupada says, "This argument by Maharaja Rahugana is certainly very effective" Srila Prabhupada further explains that the aim of ISCKON is to, "somehow or other" engage people in Krishna Consciousness and this will help them become free from material contamination. However in this instance the King was in error because he was engaging Jada Bharata in his own sense gratification. Srila Prabhupada says, "...such activities are certainly not beneficial for anyone."

Jada Bharata answered the King thus:

It is a fact, however, that these innocent people carrying your palanquin without payment are certainly suffering due to this injustice. Their condition is very lamentable because you have forcibly engaged them in carrying your palanquin. This proves that you are cruel and unkind, yet due to false prestige you were thinking that you were protecting the citizens. This is ludicrous. You were such a fool that you could not have been adored as a great man in an assembly of persons advanced in knowledge (SB, 5, 12, 7).

The King was thinking he was a protector of the citizens but was factually exploiting them by forcing them to engage in his sense gratification. Srila Prabhupada explains, "...when a King thinks that because he is the head of the state, he can utilize the citizens for his sense gratification, he is in error." The King must act under the advice of brahmanas and, "Learned circles do not appreciate the king's utilizing public endeavor for his own benefit." In his purport to SB, 5, 10, 23 Srila Prabhupada explains that if the King had engaged citizens as palanquin carriers in the Lord's service-that would have been beneficial for all.

It is not the king only, but anyone who claims to be a protector in VAD must serve the spiritual interest of those they are supposed to protect. Several devotees who are against female diksha gurus have correctly noted that in modern society an attempt to nullify the male/female divisions (in the name of equality) has actually increased mutual exploitation. They say that the distinction of the husband being the protector and the woman being the protected must be maintained. This is not denied. However the man is to protect the woman by engaging her as much as possible in service to Krishna. Some devotees say the woman is not capable of spiritual service: she has to serve the senses of her husband and the husband alone can serve Krishna. This is directly opposed to what Krishna says in the Bhagavada Gita. All humans can come to the level of spiritual perfection and anyone who knows the science of Krishna can become guru.

There are basically two possibilities; the wife is engaged in serving Krishna or engaged in serving the senses of her husband. If the husband is actually protecting his wife, rather than exploiting her, he will

engage her as much as possible in Krishna's service. That is real protection. And it is that very protection that will bring her to the level of being bona fide guru. Anyone who knows the science of serving Krishna can, and should, become a guru.

Krishna has created this material world for the jiva's that want to be the supreme controllers and supreme enjoyers: He also makes arrangements for us to become free from this disease. In virtually every human society we see divisions; there are intellectuals, administrators, producers of wealth, and servants; and of course male/female. VAD does not create these divisions; rather it establishes the correct relationships between them which minimize the tendency for some groups to exploit others.

VAD does not condone false equality; rather, it establishes real equality in various ways. First of all we understand that everyone takes birth according to the law of Karma which is applied equally to all. Secondly VAD bring to light the fact that our attempts to be controllers in the material world are overshadowed by the ontological fact that in either the material or spiritual world the jiva must be a servant. In VAD the level of control one has is proportionate with the level of responsibility one takes for serving the best interest of others.

When qualified people provide education, law and order, economic production, and manual labor, the material need of all society are easily met. Beyond occupational duties, there are duties within the family unit which are distinct for husband and wife. When these relationships are not regulated by VAD individuals from different sexes and the different classes simply try to use whatever means they have to exploit all others for their sense enjoyment. The only conclusion is to actually protect a wife the husband must engage her as much as possible in service to Krishna through her natural occupation. In that way the husband serves the best interest of the wife and the wife will be engaged in such a way that the husband will be most free from sense gratification. The external, "inequalities" remain but mutually beneficial service/protection is given and received in equal proportions.

To claim that the function of a woman is to engage exclusively in serving the senses of the husband who alone is capable of spiritual service is not supported by the Bhagavada Gita. Krishna clearly says all can achieve spiritual perfection regardless of sex or caste. Lord Caitanya says anyone who knows the Science of Krishna can be Guru. So if the husbands are performing their VAD duty and engaging their wives as much as possible in Krishna's service, it is not possible to say women are unable to know Krishna and be Gurus.

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1Unregistered

Hare Krishna!

In modern days (especially in the west) there are basically NO possibilities to engage wife in serving Krishna or in serving to the senses of her husband AGAINST HER OWN FREE WILL.

Therefore I would like to mention, that those several devotees who oppose female diksha gurus, they didnt speak about “engaging”, but rather - they call for common sense and for free will of a womens in our society.

Because care is no longer taken in marriage, we now find many divorces. Indeed, divorce has now become a common affair, although formerly one’s marriage would continue lifelong, and the affection between husband and wife was so great that the wife would voluntarily die when her husband died or would remain a faithful widow throughout her entire life. Now, of course, this is no longer possible, for human society has fallen to the level of animal society.

If “care in marriage” is not “serving to the senses of husband, kids or needs of wife” - then what is “care in marriage”? If “affection between husband and wife” are not sensual - then what is it? Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance, and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior. We didnt join ISKCON on the platform of bhagavata... Isn it? Therefore it will be correct to say - that mainly, the modern days womens greatest spiritual achievemnt will be capability to serve her husband senses in lifelong marriage.

Otherwise we will never get out from level of animal society, and as we can see, nowadays even devotees live together simply by agreement. Dāmpatyē ‘bhirucir hetuḥ. The word abhiruci means “agreement.” If the man and woman simply agree to marry, the marriage takes place. But because Vedic system is not rigidly observed, marriage frequently ends in divorce.

Therefore If the husband is actually protecting his wife, he will provide her with childrens (who will take care about her in oldage), with home (where she can take care about household, deities) and necessities

(that she should not be insulted to go out and work). This is vedic system. And this will be great service to Krishna, to ISKCON and to society.

If society can discuss such a high topics as female diksha guru issues, but at the same time can not establish basic principles - no divorce, happy marriages, hardworking husbands, chaste womans, grateful kids - then something is really wrong.

ys

Natarja dasa

Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 25th, 2012

2Kesava Krsna dasa

Sita Rama Prabhu,

The logic of your presentation centres around empowerment in service to the Lord of a wife, when given adequate protection. For example, you wrote: "And it is that very protection that will bring her to the level of being bona fide guru."

I would be curious to know, if circumstances permit a married wife to be a diksa guru – although you did not specify which – how she would publicly function. Vaisnava etiquette dictates that priority respect be given to an initiating guru.

If a wife holds a position of diksa guru, and her husband is not a diksa guru, then who will receive first respect, when the husband is her protector and Pati?

I am envisioning a scenario somewhat similar to Queen Elizabeth II. She is Head of State and receives all priority toasts and national honour, while her husband, Prince Philip, takes a publicly subordinate position.

In the spirit of VAD, are we willing to let lady gurus have publicly more prominent roles than their husbands? Is there a hint of awkwardness? Or should the husband first be qualified as a guru before conferring guruship on the wife, in which that would not be necessary according to tradition, because the wife of a guru is already not just a revered Mother, but holds as much respect as the husband.

Ys Kesava Krsna Dasa.

Comment posted by Kesava Krsna dasa on December 25th, 2012

3Unregistered

Nataraja Prabhu,

Your thesis , "Therefore it will be correct to say - that mainly, the modern days womens greatest spiritual achievement will be capability to serve her husband senses in lifelong marriage" is in direct

opposition to the purpose, understanding, and goal, of all Vedic Scriptures. Srila Prabhupada states in the purport to BG 15, 15, that these three things are clearly defined in that verse. What is the verse? Krishna says, "By all the Vedas I am to be known"

You may argue that women should be restricted to stri-dharma but you cannot argue that stri-dharma is confined to the material plane. The purpose of all dharma is to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one can say that women cannot please Krishna by performing their occupational duties. If one knows the science of Krishna Consciousness they can be Guru. What is the science of Krishna if it is not pleasing Krishna through one's activities.

When asked about this question Srila Prabhupada said, "Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru. But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection.... Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭā sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa. Then he or she can become guru. Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭā, sei guru haya. [break]( see Women Guru's: Yes But Not So Many SP) by Ajamila Prabhu.

Above, Srila Prabhupada clearly says that CC Madhya 8.128 applies to women. In the purport to this verse Srila Prabhupada points out the following:

Sometimes a caste guru says that ye kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭā, sei guru haya means that one who is not a brāhmaṇa may become a śikṣā-guru or a vartma-pradarṣaka-guru but not an initiator guru. According to such caste gurus, birth and family ties are considered foremost. However, the hereditary consideration is not acceptable to Vaiṣṇavas. The word guru is equally applicable to the vartma-pradarṣaka-guru, śikṣā-guru and dēkṣā-guru. Unless we accept the principle enunciated by Ṣré Caitanya Mahāprabhu, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement cannot spread all over the world.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 26th, 2012

4Unregistered

Kesava Kṛṣṇa Prabhu,

You ask, "If a wife holds a position of dikṣa guru, and her husband is not a dikṣa guru, then who will receive first respect, when the husband is her protector and Pati?"

Your question is ambiguous. Generally a question on the details would come after accepting that the general issue is settled. If that is the case the answer would come from the female guru, the female guru's husband, or the GBC, I am none of these.

Or you may be arguing that women should not be gurus because devotees would not know who to bow to first. I respond to that I would suggest this is not an insurmountable dilemma.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 26th, 2012

5Unregistered

In the purport to CC Madhya 8.128 there's no direct indication that women can become diksa gurus, there's not a word about females, women, or girls.

There's a long list there of who can become a diksa guru that includes brahmacharis but, interestingly, not women.

There's another list there where women could be considered under the category "whatever" but that is a rather loose interpretation, it's not direct evidence.

The quote about word guru equally applicable to diksa guru as well as all other kind of gurus is in response to a particular argument from caste brahmanas. It doesn't mean that the same answer would be given if the argument was raised about women desiring to give out diksa.

The fact is that until recently such questions were unthinkable and the default, implied answer would have been no.

Also, if we accept that there's no distinction between diksa and siksa gurus, then why this big push to legitimize this transition from siksa to diksa? Isn't this desire to obtain the status of diksa guru by all means contradicts what Prabupada stated in the purport?

Bottom line - if someone wants something badly enough it will probably happen, the whole world is created to indulge us in our desires, but that is not what Krishna Consciousness ultimately means, is it?

Comment posted by Sitalatma Das on December 26th, 2012

6Unregistered

I want to explain why I am involved in this issue. My reasoning is as follows, the purpose of all the Vedas is to know Krishna (BG 15, 15). As we are, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, we should be concerned exclusively with activities that can help people know Krishna. It is undeniable that all men as well as women can become devotees of Krishna and please Him by performing their duties. Pleasing Krishna is the essence of the science of Krishna Consciousness and, as Srila Prabhupada says, anyone who knows the science perfectly can be a guru.

I have seen several alarming statements opposing women gurus. Some imply, and others explicitly declare, that serving the sense gratification of their husbands is the highest achievement possible for women in ISKCON. They are not simply saying that women are not spiritual enough, or that women gurus will disrupt the social order in ISKCON. They are saying that women are categorically incapable of anything beyond sense gratification. They must say this because if women are able to connect to Krishna, then there can be no limit to the level of purity they can attain, including, of course, being qualified to initiate. Although I am presenting an, "either or argument" I do not think it is fallacious. Rather, I think the arguments on each side must proceed to one conclusion or the other. And the conclusion that women are confined to the material plane is absolutely wrong.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 27th, 2012

7Unregistered

Dear Sita Ram dasanudas prabhu!

Or You misunderstood me, or You are too busy with your agenda.

My thesis , “Therefore it will be correct to say - that mainly, the modern days womens greatest spiritual achievement will be capability to serve her husband senses in lifelong marriage” can never be in any opposition to the purpose, understanding, and goal, of all Vedic Scriptures. Because it is said in context.

Look at the context, please. If we look at the highest point - it sounds like opposition. But if we look from the beginner, for newcommer position to the vedic culture, to Krishna consciousness movement - its neccesity. Are we bhagavatas?

The point is - everyone within this material world is engrossed in the modes of passion and ignorance. One must promote himself to the platform of goodness, sattva-guna, by following the instructions of Rupa Gosvami. Promote. Gradually.

Srila Prabhupada acted in emergency - no doubt. But ISKCON should not become elephant movement. The elephant may get a very nice bath in the river, but as soon as it comes onto the bank, it throws dirt all over its body. What, then, is the value of its bathing? Similarly, many spiritual practitioners chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and then commit many forbidden things. Should we think that such chanting will counteract offenses in anyway?

And I will never say that women should be restricted to stri-dharma - because its impossible in modern day society. But I will never agree, that stri -dharma is confined to the material plane only. Actually - this thesis can be offensive and in direct opposition to the purpose, understanding, and goal, of all Vedic Scriptures. Why? Because we speak about devotees and for devotees.

How Stri -dharma performed by devotee can be confined to the material plane only? How? Stri dharma means service. How Service to the devotees (kids, husband), to Vaishnavas (sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers) can be considered in material plan? How?

How can You teach ladies to become prostitutes and to let down your “not a bhagavata husband” (with hes weaknesses and faults) and encourage to find a better one “more devotee”? How? May be therefore - by such logic - in our movement is so populare jumping from one Spiritual master to another, from ISKCON to Gaudiya Matha, from Gaudiya Matha to Brijabasis, from Brijabasis to Himalayas...

Are we personalists? How can we be so impersonal in our relationships?

I really hope, that you get the point.

ys

Nataraja dasa

Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 27th, 2012

8Unregistered

Hare krishna!

One more point.

Sita Ram dasanudasa said:

And the conclusion that women are confined to the material plane is absolutely wrong.

Yes! But to conclusion, that women devotee who performs stri dharma, performs materialistic activities - its also not supported by shastras.

Stridharma means duties of a woman. She has to be motherly while feeding her family, she has to be an adviser while giving her opinion in matters relating smooth conduct of family affairs, and she has to give progeny (and not varnasankara). She has to have always in mind the welfare of her husband and other members of the family. In this way, stridharma has been broadly defined in vedas.

In other words - Stri dharma means exemplary service.

The concept means that by following the footsteps of her husband, a wife should attain an elevated position in life.

May I ask - where you see material plane? And how can you considere service to the vaisnavas (I speak about devotee families and for devotee families) material? One more point - even if husband is nondevotee - the chaste wife didnt get Karma, its a husband.

Obviously, if a woman truly loves her husband, she will do everything in her power to attract him towards her Krishna conscious life. "According to the Vedic law... there is no such thing as divorce laws, and a woman must be trained to be submissive to the will of her husband. Westerners contend that this is a slave mentality for the wife, but factually it is not; it is the tactic by which a woman can conquer the heart of her husband, however irritable or cruel he may be."- SB 9.3.10p by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

ys

Nataraja dasa

Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 27th, 2012

9Unregistered

Nataraja Prabhu,

You say, " But to conclusion, that women devotee who performs stri dharma, performs materialistic activities - its also not supported by shastras."

I agree that stri dharma, SHOULD not be restricted to the material plane. Women can please Krishna by performing their occupational duties, and pleasing Krishna is the essence of the science of Krishna. As we have heard several times, the qualification of a guru is that they know the science of Krishna. So how can you say women are restricted from being guru unless you say they are unable to please Krishna by their occupation?

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 28th, 2012

10Unregistered

Sitalatma Prabhu,

You say, "There's another list there where women could be considered under the category "whatever" but that is a rather loose interpretation, it's not direct evidence." I assume you are not aware of Srila Prabhupada answer when directly questioned about this subject:

"Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru. But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection.... Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭa sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa. Then he or she can become guru. Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-veṭṭa, sei guru haya. [break]( see Women Guru's: Yes But Not So Many SP) by Ajamila Prabhu"

In ISKCON we do not accept Srila Prabhupada's answers about the meaning of verses as a relative opinion, or an interpretation; and we certainly do not consider them, "loose". He is the Founder Acharya and he says that this verse applies to women. When Srila Prabhupada is questioned directly on a subject his answer is direct evidence.

You also say, "The quote about word guru equally applicable to diksa guru as well as all other kind of gurus is in response to a particular argument from caste brahmanas. It doesn't mean that the same answer would be given if the argument was raised about women desiring to give out diksa."

You then say, "Also, if we accept that there's no distinction between diksa and siksa gurus, then why this big push to legitimize this transition from siksa to diksa?"

The cast brahmana's were trying to make a false distinction between siksha and diksha to prohibit other castes from initiating. The point is, if there is no distinction you cannot say siksha is allowed and prohibit diksha. You are arguing that there is no distinction but also saying the distinction of allowing women siksha gurus and prohibiting diksha guru should remain. This is not logical. The push may be to make our policies logical and consistent with the scriptures.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 28th, 2012

11Unregistered

I want to make one last attempt to explain my entire position. I do not claim to have the wisdom to know precisely how the topic of women gurus should be managed: that is up to the GBC. But I object to certain types of arguments.

I believe Mother Phalini's opposition to women's gurus uses a legitimate framework. That framework is in regard to whether women gurus are incompatible with the practical realities of this material world. It was simply my humble opinion that her arguments within that framework were not effective.

There are two other frames; that women are categorically incapable of the level of spiritual advancement required to be a diksha guru, and historical Vedic teaching as well as Srila Prabhupada's instructions prohibit women gurus. It is these arguments which I feel compelled to repudiate as objectively wrong.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 28th, 2012

12Paramananda das

Women are not objects to mens sensegratification or visa versa this is not our KC philosophy ,it has all been very nicely explained in the 7th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam chapter 11 text 25 to 30 this is the duty of women.And everythng else is not stri dhama...has one single vers in Srimad Bhagavatam stated that womens duty is to be a diksa Guru....no never ever ever. In Caitanya Caritamrta? Never. In any of Srila Prabhupadas books? Never.

Besides this diksa is not a cheap matter, many take a vow to chant even minimum 16 rounds and fail to do

that and follow 4 regulative principles.

What is the duty of a woman ? SB 7 canto chapter 11 text 29 states it very clearly ...so no matter how it is turned and twisted without referring to sastra these arguments if not based on sastra has zero value..Womens duty is never as diksa Guru, this is adharma

Comment posted by Paramananda das on December 28th, 2012

13Unregistered

Hare Krishna!

Sita Rama dasanudasa posted:

So how can you say women are restricted from being guru unless you say they are unable to please Krishna by their occupation?

Dear prabhu. I didnt say that womens are restricted from being guru. Opposit - with all my heart I stand for:

vaco vegam manasah krodha vegam jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam

etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat

A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world.

But - we speak about establishing varnasrama dharma - as Srila Prabhupada wanted. We discuss and hopefully we will continue discuss this topic till some important conclusions AND WE WILL START ACT accordingly. There are WORDS which are very, very, very important.

...is qualified to make disciples...

Its the same like with ISKCON - its International Society FOR Krishna Consciousness. If we are in ISKCON - this dosnt mean, that we are somehow in Krishna Consciousness by definition. But if we stand for it - so, its our home. And as I understand - we stand for ISKCON. Therefore we discuss.

IS QUALIFIED TO MAKE DISCIPLES dosnt mean that this person will make disciples or should make disciples.

Chaste wife, perfect stridharma practitioner is qualified to make disciples - no doubt, according qualification standart from Sri Upadesamritas first verse. Will She? We should ask Matajis, who are stridharma practitioners in our movement. They are qualified to speak about it.

For example - many devotees has a big problems with womens diksa guru issue. And not because they are against. But because they have a chaste wifes.

To know, what kind of rascals we are, and to know, what kind of tapasya our wifes perform with theyr lifes, to be able to live with us; To see everyday, how they perform theyr duties, despite all this socioeconomical system, which make normal family life allmost impossible - How we can go and listen to some Women Diksa Gurus, who will teach others in seminars/festivals/lectures how to live in family life, if those womendiksagurus had failed with qualification to back up the talk with theyr own lifes? How?

This is the problem - and not only because its on the border of aparadhas - towards women diksa gurus. But because its allready a aparadha - neglecting a stridharma womens in our movement...

If I am wrong - please correct me.

ys

Nataraja dasa

Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 28th, 2012

14Unregistered

Although Prabhupada did express a desire to add varnashrama in some way to ISKCON, he never delineated what that meant in practical terms. This gives an problematic opening to people to bring in

their own pet ideas to fill in the blanks on specifics, telling everyone what Prabhupada meant when he said varnashrama should be introduced in ISKCON. Many think he meant more Hindu, more Vedic, more in line with the dharmashastra. That assumption is then used as a basis for their debate with those opposed to their ideas.

If you look into how often Prabhupada mentioned “stri-dharma”, you won’t find a single reference outside of a passing reference in the Sanskrit of one verse in the Bhagavatam, and one reference by Hridayananda Maharaja in the 11th canto. That may not be everything Prabhupada ever said, but it shows very clearly how important Prabhupada saw the concept for his teachings, i.e for ISKCON.

It appears that many current ISKCON devotees think that Prabhupada vigorously promoted “stri-dharma” as a template for his female disciples, and for women in general. In fact, it’s a fairly recent introduction in the ISKCON community, and it fools people into thinking Prabhupada supported the wholesale subjugation of women. Although Prabhupada made several statements about a woman’s role in society, he made exceptions for his female disciples and all those interested in Krsna Consciousness. For example, he allowed women to enter the brahmachari (ini) ashrama and live as monks and priests...this is clearly outside of any context of varnashrama dharma we know of.

“Another examination will be held sometimes in 1971 on the four books, Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, and Nectar of Devotion. One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program.” (Letter to Hamsadutta 01/03/69)

Comment posted by bbd on December 28th, 2012

15Unregistered

cont...

We should consider the context of stri-dharma for the Vedic age, i.e. in pre-modern cultures women were vastly more vulnerable to exploitation than they are now. The rules for women were based upon that reality. If you lived in a society with little law enforcement compared to modern societies, and with much less government support for the people in general, the weakest in that society were clearly at a much greater disadvantage than the weakest in modern societies. In order to protect women, the elderly, and children, in pre-modern societies, family based clans and tribes were the basis for support in those societies.

In the modern world most people rely on the intimidation of police and all the legal protections of the modern world to keep them feeling somewhat safe from rogues. With modern weaponry it doesn’t matter if you’re a woman or a man, everyone is equally vulnerable or equally threatening, which is why guns have been called “the great equalizer.”

Ultimately, varnashrama dharma is an ancient social structure without a single functioning model existing showing how it all works. This ancient concept of varnashrama dharma really has no place in modern western societies, and ultimately no bearing on bhakti.

Varnashrama dharma doesn't exist today...can we say that there is no bhakti in today's world because of the absence of varnashrama dharma? No.

In which types of societies are women least protected and most susceptible to exploitation in the grossest sense? All the statistics and research show that societies that suppress women's equal social opportunities have the worst record (India, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Africa, etc.).

<http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/m.....93942.html>

<http://m.thestar.com/news/worl.....is-common>

Comment posted by bbd on December 28th, 2012

16Unregistered

Nataraja Prabhu,

Please forgive me if I have failed to understand you. Right now it seems you are saying that for a woman to be qualified to be guru she must not neglect her occupational duties. I agree, and add that is true in every way. One mataji wanted to have another woman take care of her child so she could do pujari work. Srila Prabhupada wrote that he was surprised, and said for her, baby worship is more important than Diety worship.

Devotees do not neglect their family duty, we see the example of the Founder Acharya , Srila Prabhupada. He preached as much as possible while he was married, but he fulfilled the household duty.

I was taught, in the early 1980's that am man giving a Bhagavatam class is giving empty words if he is unkind to his family. Charity must begin at home. I can only say that we teach that the disciple must be intelligent and see these things. In fact if we are doing our duty as disciple, and scrutinizing the potential guru correctly, we will not accept a guru who is not qualified.

To be an ISCKOPN guru the GBC says they have,"no objection". It is up to the potential disciple to determine if they feel someone is able to be their guru. As for inside marriages, if the husband and wife have a firm relationship they will both decide if the woman should, or should not, be a guru.

Comment posted by Sita Rama dasanudasa on December 28th, 2012

17Unregistered

Dear Sita Rama Prabhu, I was talking about the content of the purport to CC Madhya 8.128. The purport does not contain any direct references to female gurus at all, diksha, siksha, or otherwise.

It doesn't mean that the verse can't be used to support female guru issue, as Srila Prabhupada did so himself. Yet even that conversation with Prof. O'Connell is open to interpretation in the light of the current situation - GBC acknowledges that some women devotees already act as siksha gurus but none yet been approved as initiating spiritual masters.

Obviously, even if all the gurus are equal, in practice some differences are always there and need to be observed, and that is open to interpretation.

Comment posted by Sitalatma Das on December 29th, 2012

18Unregistered

Hare Krishna!

BBD posted

Varnashrama dharma doesn't exist today...can we say that there is no bhakti in today's world because of the absence of varnashrama dharma? No.

Lets be straight.

What dos it mean - bhakti?

Did bhakti means falling gurus, jumping disciples, free mixing between boys and girls, unwanted kids, divorces and marriages by agreement? Did bhakti means to be elephants and elephantinis?

Did bhakti means kids who do not want anymore anything with Krishna Consciousness and broken hearts of rejected relatives...

Did bhakti means lone elders without any help, late marriages in the time, when one should accept vanaprastha, brahmacaries businessmen and grihasthas beggars?

Are we apasampradayis?

One can say : IF YOU HAVE A BHAKTI - YOU WILL HAVE NO PROBLEM IN FOLLOWING VARNASRAMA DHARMA. And one can say opposite - If you will have no problem in following varnasrama dharma by prolonged period of time, you will have no problem in following 4 regulative principles, and you will have no problem with your Bhakti.

Looks like a varnasrama dharma is like a poison for most of the peoples. But reread please Bhagavad Gita - varnasrama is like a happiness in sattva guna. Yes - its like a poison in the beginning, but in th end its a sweet like a nectar.

May be the problem of modern days mentality is that we want everything NOW, immediately and if we have no resources - lets go to the bank. But its do not work like that. At least anymore.

Or?

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Nataraja dasa

Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 29th, 2012

19Unregistered

Nataraja dasa

You said: "Lets be straight.

What dos it mean - bhakti?"

Bhakti simply means an attitude of devotion, adoration, and love. Sentiments of bhakti cannot be checked by anything external. Bhakti in it's pure meaning is about emotion, attitude, mood, mindset, etc.

You said: "Looks like a varnashrama dharma is like a poison for most of the peoples. But reread please Bhagavad Gita"

You are proving my previous point. You have zero experience of what varnashrama actually is, or how it works. But still, you are proposing this ancient concept, of which you have no idea about. It's similar to a modern day priest explaining how an ashvamedha yajna is performed properly.

Krsna says in the Gita that everything is to be given up as external except for...

BG 18.5: Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up; they must be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity and penance purify even the great souls.

The rest is ultimately unimportant, Krsna says to give up everything else...sarva-dharmān parityajya...abandon all varieties of dharma. Mahaprabhu even rejected varnashrama dharma as proposed by Ramananda as the means to prema bhakti. Mahaprabhu said varnashrama dharma was external to Krishna prema. Mahaprabhu's mission was not to implement some ancient concept of varnashrama dharma. His mission is simply described as this:

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 1.4

"May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love."

Comment posted by bbd on December 30th, 2012

20Unregistered

Hare Krishna!

Dear BBD prabhu.

I will left to a side your comment “You have zero experience of what varnashrama...” .

You have no clue who I am and about my life.

Even if someone have zero experience, He has a right to choose and perform prescribed varnasrama duties, even if we all are varnasankaras and mlecchas and yavanas - because we will do this for Krishna, because Srila Prabhupada wanted that.

Considering our specific varnasrama duties, we should know that there is no better engagement for us than performing devotional service based on varnasrama dharma religious principles; and so there is no need for hesitation.

Considering all aspects, we have no reason to refrain from sva-dharma.

Yes, even if someone is completely surrendered unto Krishna, Mukunda, and has a right to give up all other duties (because he is no longer a debtor, nor he is obliged to anyone — not the demigods, nor the sages, nor the people in general, nor kinsmen, nor humanity, nor forefathers) - even then, he has no reason to not follow rules and regulations - as Srila Prabhupada showed.

Because, if we do not perform our religious varnasrama duties, then we will certainly incur sins for neglecting our duties and thus we will lose our reputation as a devotees.

People will always speak of our infamy, and for a respectable persons, dishonor is worse than death.

Lord Sri Krishna directly says that we should perform our duties for the sake of performing our duties, because He desires that!

There are two classes of men. Some of them are full of polluted material things within their hearts, and some of them are materially free. Krishna consciousness is equally beneficial for both of these persons. Those who are full of dirty things can take to the line of Krishna consciousness for a gradual cleansing process, following the regulative principles of devotional service. Those who are already cleansed of the impurities may continue to act in the same Krishna consciousness so that others may follow their exemplary activities and thereby be benefited. Foolish persons or neophytes in Krishna consciousness often want to retire from activities without having knowledge of Krishna consciousness.

Our desire to ignore varnasrama dharma activities are not approved by the Lord. One need only know how to act. To reject our sva dharma duties and to sit aloof making a show of Krishna consciousness is less important than actually engaging in the field of activities for the sake of Krishna.

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Comment posted by Nataraja dasa on December 30th, 2012

21Unregistered

Comment 20:

It appears through your comments that you are still seeing the jiva as the doer of activities. Krishna gives various instructions in the Gita to those on that stage of spiritual evolution (i.e., vaidhi sadhana), however there are higher truths of reality revealed in sastra.

Mahaprabhu incarnated to give the most direct and efficient means of self realization. Although 9 processes of sadhana bhakti are described by the 6 Goswamis for those in a conditioned state, Mahaprabhu only emphasized the need for 2...sravanam and kirtanam. He did not in any way say that varnashrama dharma was necessary for self realization...nor has a single previous acharya.

Even though the teachings of the Gita and the Bhagavatam ask us to see Krishna in everything we encounter, still many devotees see the world around them as a manifestation of mahamaya. The message of the Bhagavata exhorts us to see Krishna in all of our experiences in this world. Krishna tells us we should adopt a worldview wherein God is seen as the substance and controller of reality, therefore enabling us to be in communion with God at all times through all we experience. Thus, one can see and fully understand that everything in this world is occurring exactly according to Krishna's plan. Varnashrama dharma does not exist in any correct shape or form today because that is not Krishna's plan. Mahaprabhu did not see the importance of VAD implementation in this age, nor did the direct followers of Mahaprabhu.

Once you see that Krishna is much more a direct part of your life and experiences, and you start to see Krishna's hand behind all you experience, your desire to change and control the state of the world to various degrees will come to a grinding halt.

Comment posted by bbd on December 31st, 2012

22Unregistered

Cont...

From The Harmonist, May 1932, issue number 11. Article originally titled, Sree Chaitanya in South India. Pages 325-326. By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

"The world stands in no need of any reformer. The world has a very competent person for guiding its minutest happenings. The person who determines that there is scope for reform of the world, himself stands in need of reform. The world goes on in its own perfect way. No person can deflect it even the breadth of a hair from the course chalked out for it by providence. When we perceive any change being actually effected in the course of events of this world by the agency of any particular individual, we must know very well that the agent possesses no real power at any stage. The agent finds himself driven forward by a force belonging to a different category from himself. The course of the world does not require to be changed by the agency of any person. What is necessary is to change our outlook on this world. This was done for the contemporary generation by the mercy of Sri Chaitanya. It can only be known to recipients of his mercy. The scriptures declare that it is only necessary to listen with an open mind to the name of Krishna from the lips of a bona fide devotee. As soon as Krishna enters the listening

ear, he clears up the vision of the listener so that he no longer has any ambition of ever acting the part of a reformer of any other person, because he finds that nobody is left without the very highest guidance. It is therefore his own reform, by the grace of God, whose supreme necessity and nature he is increasingly able to realize, by the eternally continuing mercy of the Supreme Lord.”

Comment posted by bbd on December 31st, 2012

23Unregistered

Hare Krishna!

Thank you very much for your precious comment:

“It appears through your comments that you are still seeing the jiva as the doer of activities.”

Yes of course - and not really.

But if we let down “Higher Truth” and if we look on the plate:

- we can discuss just one problem from many problems which will follow us, if we neglect varnasrama.

MEMBERS OF OUR MOVEMENT IN OLDAGE.

1. Its not ok, if a devotee, who has served for 25-30 years in the temples, should start to work at the age of 55-60, to pay a rent and cover all other expences.
2. Its not ok, if a devotee who was a brahmacharie (-ini) for 25-30 years in different temples/BBT, should marry at the age of 55-60, because no one can take care about him/her in the oldage and when he/she is sick.
3. Its not ok, if a sankirtana devotee, who was ill, should be left alone in the house for olders.
4. Its not ok ...

Actually - there was a beautifull speach by Bhakti Tirtha Swami maharaja, before He left this planet - when He was laying with cancer, and so many devotees helped him - He was thinking about those devotees who are not Gurus and who didnt get any help...

So many problems and questions arises from that simple ignoring of varnasrama simple truths. Because reality around us calls - deva dvija guru prajna pujanam.

So - this is varnasrama. And if we came back to the topic - womens should never be left alone without father, husband or sons. This is a care about womens, this is protection of womens. And new division of women diksa gurus will never be able to replace protection, prescribed by The Lord.

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Nataraja dasa

