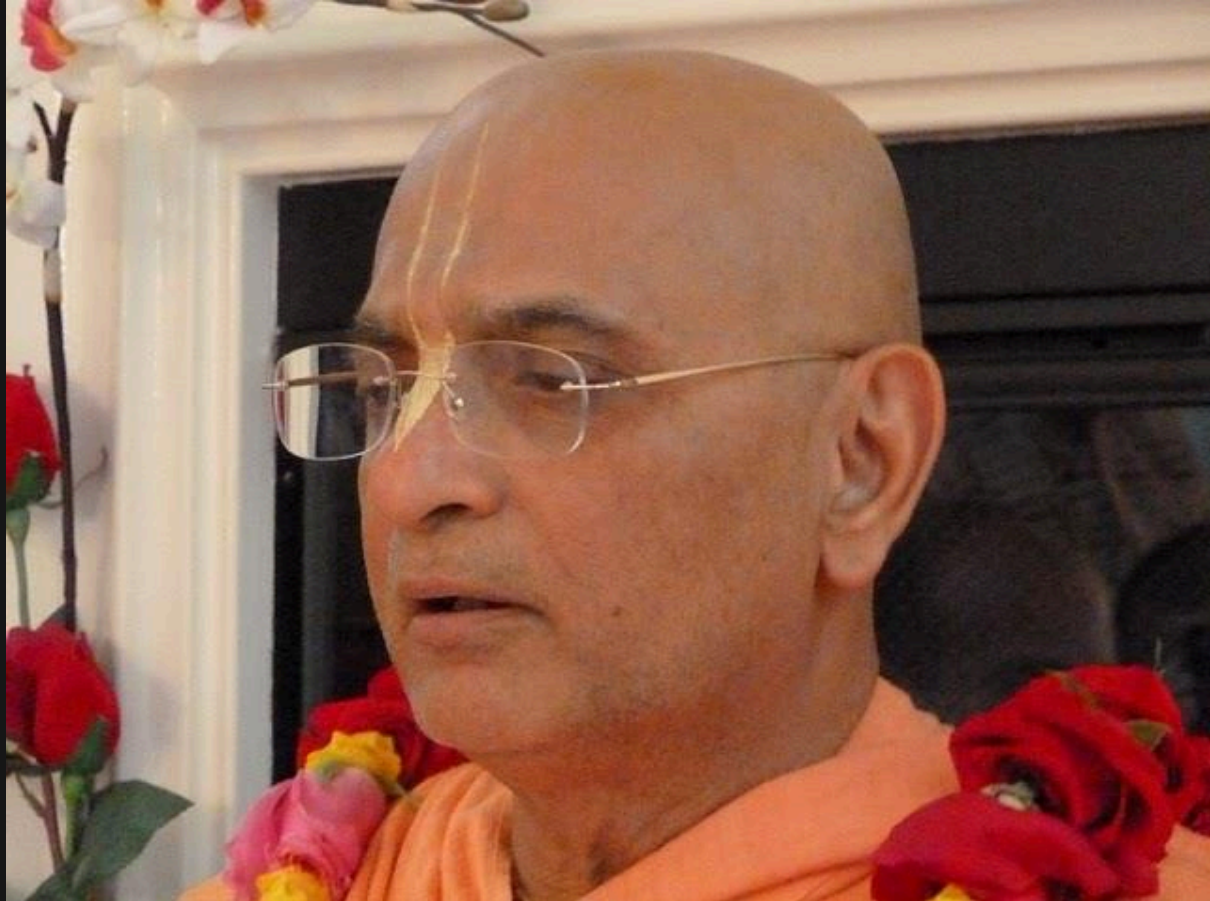


Vedic Culture is Spiritual Culture

By HH Bhakti Charu Swami



matr-bhaktih para-strisu
patnyam ardha ivatmanah
prajasu pitrvat snigdham
kinkaro brahma-vadinam

TRANSLATION: The King will respect all women as if they were his own mother, and he will treat his own wife as the other half of his body. He will be just like an affectionate father to his citizens, and he will treat himself as the most obedient servant of the devotees, who always preach the glories of the Lord.

HH Bhakti Charu Swami: While describing the glory of Prthu Maharaja in this way they came to this

point. These four points: Respect for women, for householder, treating his wife as the other half, treating the citizens as his own children and respect for the brahmanas and Vaisnavas - devotees of the Lord - these are the very foundation of Vedic culture. Vedic culture has been established, has been given by Krishna Himself. It is not any culture of any particular place as such. It is the spiritual culture to uplift the spirit soul to the spiritual platform freeing himself from the bondage of matter. In the material nature everyone is bound.

Material nature is a prison house and the shackles with which the living entities are bound in this material nature is sex desire. Therefore this material nature is described as maithunya-agara or prison house of sex desire. The Vedic culture actually teaches on

how to transcend, how to free oneself from that entanglement, how to free oneself from this shackles that is binding him into this material nature.

As I was explaining earlier why I selected this verse. It is because I felt this verse is giving a very, very clear understanding of how the leaders should conduct themselves and how the leaders must train their followers.

The first principle is respect for women. It is the respect for women that builds ones character. The Bengali expression for a debauchee is characterless, caritahi. Carita means character and hina means devoid of. So one who is a debauchee doesn't have any character. In order to develop ones noble character - in order to develop nobility in one's self one must learn, one must be trained to respect women. How? Like a mother. Actually all of us are most indebted to our mother. It is because of her we are here. She underwent so many difficulties, so many trials and tribulations, so much suffering just to bring us into this planet. And it is due to her care that we actually grew up, we developed this body and the body grew. That is why the respect for mother naturally grows and she is the ideal woman. So matr-bhaktih para-strisu. This kind of respect one should have towards all the women.

Then when he gets married he should treat his wife not as an object of sense gratification. What to speak of other women - he doesn't even treat his dually married wife also as an object of sense gratification. He treats his wife as his other half of his self, part of his self. That is another consideration that is another concept. A man, what to speak of considering other women as objects of sense gratification, he doesn't even treat his wife as an object of sense gratification. He has some responsibilities in this nature. A householder therefore gets married - putrarthe kriyate bharya. Why does one get married? In order to produce or procreate children - putrarthe kriyate bharya. Then he is saha dharmin - he conducts the same religion. He cannot perform religious activities himself alone. Therefore he needs his wife to be with him. When Lord Ramacandra banished Sita to the asrama of Valmiki whenever Lord Ramacandra would perform a yajna he had to have His wife with Him so a golden Sita was built and He conducted the sacrifice with ...Sita next to Him. This is the Vedic culture - saha dharmin. In the one hand she is ardhangini and saha dharmini - half of his self and he conducts religious activities especially the activities that one conducts in the household life along with her.

Then the third consideration is how should he treat his followers? Here they are talking about King Prthu. But King Prthu is actually an ideal leader. He is a king. Not that the king has the responsibility to treat his citizens as his own children but that is the responsibility of an ideal personality, an ideal leader. He must take care of them, guide them in their lives, take care of them. The word praja literally means someone who is specially born - that means he is his son but not born of him and his wife - children that are not born of him but still they are his children. prakrsta-rupena jayate. So that is how a king must treat his citizens. That is how a leader must treat his followers.

Then kinkaro brahma-vadinam - although he is a king, although he is such an exalted personality he is an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead but he treats the devotees as his master and he places himself as their servant, kinkaro brahma-vadinam. The kings are so humble that they treat the devotees as their honourable master. "Please tell me what can I do for you?" Prabhupada mentioned this is a very common Vedic practice. Those days when an exalted personality came, when a sage or a

devotee came to the palace of the king the king stood up from his throne and offered the throne to that person. We have seen that Krishna did that to Sudama. A brahmana came to Him. Krishna the Supreme Personality of Godhead is setting the standard. He made Sudama sit on His seat, on His throne and washed his feet. Washed his feet! So this is Vedic culture.

Srila Prabhupada came to establish or rather re-establish the Vedic culture in this planet when it is practically lost. We are seeing that the opposite things are happening now. Nobody looks up to women as mother. All over there is a massive propaganda to look at women as an object of sense gratification. Everywhere all they are showing is just women half exposed. There is no family life. Even when they get married then the marriage

doesn't last for very long. They break off. Very few marriages are lasting nowadays. To begin with they don't get married. Those who get married get divorced soon afterwards. What to speak of treating the subordinates as their own children, they don't even take care of their own children. And what to speak of having any respect for the exalted devotees of the Lord. They don't have any respect for anybody - a culture of disrespect.

The Vedic culture is established on sraddha, on respect and materialistic culture in the age of Kali is founded on disrespect. So this is the responsibility that we have as followers of Srila Prabhupada. We have to establish the Vedic culture - re-establish the Vedic culture. Why? ***Because this is the most important thing that is happening in this world. This is the most wonderful thing that is happening in this world today - revival of Krishna consciousness, revival of Vedic culture.***

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