

# **SEMINAR ON BRAHMACARYA : PART 1** **– Radhadesh 7-8 December 2000**



**Transcription & Editing: Vinod-Bihari Dasa (our Webmaster)**

The topic for seminar is sensitive, but it is important that we have a proper understanding of what brahmacarya actually is because spiritual life rests on it.

The word itself will clarify:

Brahman means spiritual reality, and acaran means to practice, to act upon. To act in order to be situated on the spiritual platform is brahmacarya. The Greek definition is not really brahmacarya. Celibacy alone is not brahmacarya, which is actually a far broader concept.

..We are spirit souls. To become situated in that identity is brahmacarya. According to Srila Prabhupada's teachings, even the householders are brahmacaries. So ISKCON is a movement to make people brahmacaris, man or woman, married or not, everyone should become a brahmacari. That's why we decided to conduct this seminar on this topic.

..We have 2 identities: physical and spiritual. The body is material and the soul spiritual. The body remains alive only as long as the soul is in the body. The soul keeps the body alive. When we say I, we mean the soul. But we identify with our body, which is the source of our bondage. The soul is the source of consciousness. When it is projected through the nervous system, one thinks that one is the body and acts in a detrimental way to our spiritual identity. He is a spiritual soul, but he identifies himself with matter and becomes materialized. When a mosquito bites him, he thinks, "the mosquito is biting me." When the body feels pleasure, he identifies with it.

In Bhagavad Gita, Krsna describes the body as a dress that one puts on and takes off. If you are wearing a dress and someone pinches your dress, do you feel pain? The body, however, has an intricate nervous system which ends in the senses. The senses feel and send messages to the brain which registers it. The sensation is carried on to the brain to be registered. Actually, the body is a lump of matter; it is the soul which identifies with the body and its pains and pleasures, which he resents and appreciates respectively.

The lump of matter called body is subject to the desire for sense gratification, eating, sleeping, mating and defending. These are common to the animals. They are very strong propensities. Now in winter, all the animals are wondering, where is food? Where is food? Then sleep, then defending from calamities. Then maithun, mating, copulation.

These propensities are called animal propensities. Man is a civilized animal who lives in cities and villages in houses and defends with nuclear weapons. The man is also doing the same way, but in a civilized way. Animals are controlled by nature's arrangements when it comes to mating whereas a man is free to copulate whenever he wants.

This freedom to mate any time he wants has been given to him to overcome the urge, not to indulge in it.

The urge is there by nature's arrangement, a need for procreation to maintain the situation. It is a very painful affair, so nature has arranged pleasure. But the real purpose is allure people so that procreation can continue. That is the purpose of mating, or copulation.

Unfortunately, humans have given up the procreation aspect and engage in this process simply for some pleasure. Therefore it is important to remember the purpose of mating and not get deviated. We must become aware of the purpose of our spiritual practice.

Because of bad association, people are being drawn to this activity.

In the material world, for everything you have to pay a price. The price is the loss of one's vitality: Virya or shukra, or semen. What is semen? It is the essence of life energy which comes originally from the soul. Matter in the form of food becomes transformed in different elements of body, activated by the soul. The three most important systems in the body are the respiratory system, circulatory system which pumps blood about seventy five times a minute, and digestion system, which burns the food and extracts the rasas, or juices, from the food which then transforms into seven different elements: 1. Rasas, 2. Blood which transforms into flesh, from which comes fat, from which comes bone, from which comes bone marrow, from which comes semen.

So the finest element is semen. It is the storehouse of vital energy. All vitality comes from this element. Therefore it is called Virya, which means strength. Interesting, isn't it? The strength of a man rests in this vital energy which spreads throughout the body. Just like butter is the essence of milk that is spread throughout milk and when churned it comes out, similarly, when someone becomes agitated by sexual desire, it comes out in the form of semen. What happens then? What about the milk when the butter is taken out? It becomes thin. Similarly, a man becomes devoid of vitality when he engages in unrestricted sex.

We can notice that all great men usually stay away from sexual indulgence. I was reading an article about the Olympic trainers telling their athletes, "no sex for one month before your competition."

Butter churned out of milk being similar to someone losing one's vitality through sexual indulgence is an important analogy.

Sex indulgence is strictly reserved for householders, and that only for procreation. They must remember that the purpose of their getting together is simply for the sake of procreation, not for anything else. If men and women, husband and wife, restrict sex to mere procreation, then that is brahmacharya. Therefore brahmacharya doesn't only mean celibate but to be situated on the spiritual platform.

What is this very very strong sex desire and most difficult hurdle to cross over? When we follow the four regas, after a while the three other are easy to give up, but sex desire just increases! Therefore we should be aware that it is the hardest struggle. It is the chain by which a living entity is chained to the material world. It is a prison house named maithuna-agara, a prison of sex desire. As long as sex desire is there in the heart, we will not be able to be free. It is caused by maya, and the more we try to get free, the more she will tighten the shackle. It is said that before a living entity is about to leave this material nature, maya-devi herself comes and says, "why are you leaving? Stay here and enjoy with me." At that time, Sanatana Goswami recommends that one say, "please bless me that I can serve your brother." Maya is Krsna's sister. So we should always pray to her that we never deviate to the platform of sense gratification.

Ultimately, what is it? In our Vedic scriptures it is described that although sex desire is there and is difficult to cross, it is ultimately just an itch. If you scratch, you get pleasure. It is an itch-and-scratch pleasure. It gives illusory pleasure and a real disastrous effect on one's spiritual life. One must guard oneself from this pitfall.

Yogis try to suppress it. Suppression is not a solution. One must overcome this desire by getting the higher taste. When the husband and wife get a child, their mutual attraction becomes centered on their child and the carnal desire disappears. Similarly, when a living entity loves Krsna, then it is easy for him to overcome sex desire by the higher taste of love of Krsna which makes the whole business disgusting. To begin with it is disgusting, but nature has made it pleasurable out of necessity.

The first illusion is to think that we are our bodies. When we identify with the body, the male body becomes attracted to a female body, and vice-versa. But we are not this body! We are part-and-parcel of Krsna, connected to Him through love that brings us closer to Him. When love is projected to something in the material nature, it is called lust, not love. When this love is directed to Krsna, then only is it actually love, or devotion. The expression of love is in doing something for the pleasure of the object of love. That activity is called devotional service. The more we do for Krsna, the more our love for Him becomes intensified. It is reciprocal: a devotee loves Krsna, and Krsna reciprocates multifold. That joy of reciprocation is what we all are really looking for.

We all are here to achieve that goal. And when we achieve it, then all the sex life will become secondary business, as Yamunacharya pointed out when he said that his lips curl in distaste and he spits at the thought. Ultimately the thought will not even come to us. Today, we don't think of,

for example, a sand castle that we always meditated on as a child. Similarly, as we grow up, we will forget sex desire.

The most important factor is for the men, being the aggressors, to respect women. Therefore Vedic injunction is for a man to respect a woman as a mother. In a society where they don't know how to respect women, that society is useless. Today's society is simply exploiting women. Whereas Srila Prabhupada has created a spiritual society where men will learn to give the highest respect to women. If we want a wonderful society throughout the world, we have to establish this spiritual culture. Thank you very much.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Answer: there is no copulation in the spiritual world, but there is an exchange of love, but it is not expressed through copulation. So our love for Krsna in the spiritual world is perverted way here in the form of sex life. So there is union, but not sex. From this point we cannot understand. For example, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Radha and Krsna together. Theoretically, we can understand that when Radha and Krsna embrace, they become Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. That personality has come down to give us the highest love, not sexual indulgence. Sunrise and sunset may look alike, but they are completely different.

Question: The Bhagavatam says that as time goes on, the sex desire goes away. But you said that the urge gets stronger.

Answer: Initially, one does not feel so strong for sex because the milk is already free from butter. But as the Virya gets more and more, the urge becomes stronger. But also when the love for Krsna increases, he feels such joy that he doesn't feel for the sex urge.

Question: can sex desire come out in the form of other desires such as desire to eat too much.

Answer: Yes, therefore artificial repression is not what we prescribe; rather, we prescribe a natural process.