

The Eight Petals

In Support of Varnasrama to Attain the Lord's Lotus Feet

Advisor:

HH Bhakti Raghava Swami
bhakti.raghava.swami@pamho.net

Editor: Vrindavanlila dd

vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com

Co-Editor:

HG Rasamandal Das
Rasamandal.BRS@pamho.net

Editorial Consultant:

HG Hari Kirtan Das
hkd75@yahoo.com

Conception & Design:

Vrindavanlila dd
vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com

Vamana Mas

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Focus on Astrology



Highlights of the issue:



Astrology and Krishna Consciousness



Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star...



Astrology and 'Other' Visitors



Astrology and Free Will



Astrology and Harmony in Marriage



Land, Surabhi and Krishna...

Everything Has Connection...

"Uh, so, this is a bad sign. Constellation. According to astronomical calculations. Therefore we, we follow the astrology according to the constellation. The child born, everything has connection, the constellation of the star has influence on the child. So therefore the horoscope-maker takes the calculation of the constellation and then calculates what is his future. This dhūmaketu is described in Daśāvatāra-stotra, dhūmaketum iva kim api karālam. Dhūmaketum iva. Dhūmaketum iva kim api karālam. As soon as there is comet, there will be some disaster. Very great disaster. In our childhood we saw the comet, not this like. That was small comet. Still, the first world war was there declared. That we have seen in 1914." [Srila Prabhupada, Morning Walk- January 3, 1974, Los Angeles]

āra dine jyotiṣa sarva-jṣa eka āila

tāhāre sammāna kari' prabhu praśna kaila [CC.Ādi 17.103]

[On another day an astrologer came who was said to know everything — past, present and future. Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu received him with all honor and put this question before him.]

Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Astrology

Astrology and Krishna Consciousness

“Regarding astrology, you should not listen to any of these so-called astrologers—strictly avoid. Don't even see them. What is the use of seeing them? Astrology is meant for the materialist, but a spiritualist does not care for the future. Everything is dependent upon Krishna. So where is the necessity of astrology? The devotees' principle is, let there happen anything as Krishna desires. Let me remain sincere devotee, that's all. Pure devotee is never interested in this astrology.”

[Srila Prabhupada: Letter to Devamaya – Bombay; January 9, 1975]

Clapping During Arati Changes Your Fortune

“One afternoon a renowned astrologer visited Prabhupada and offered to read his palm."No," Prabhupada replied, "I am finished with that. But you may read my disciples' palms.”

The astrologer read the palms of the several devotees present, made his predictions, and then left.

The devotees turned to Prabhupada, wondering what to make of it. "As soon as you clap your hands in front of the Deities during arati," Prabhupada said, smiling, "all the lines of your palm are changed." (Cf. *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*)

One time I saw Srila Prabhupada read a man's palm. Srila Prabhupada looked at it and then, in a very heavy voice, told him “All bad. Birth, death, disease, and old age.” The man almost had a heart attack.

Then Srila Prabhupada smiled and said “But clap your hands at kirtan and all the lines go away.”

[As told by HG Badrinarayana Prabhu]

Vedic Astrology Also Indicates the Varṇa

And that is already there. Guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ [Bg. 4.13]... in Vedic astrology, jāta-karma, they will say that "This child is a śūdra, this child is a brāhmaṇa, this child is a kṣatriya." By the birth, by the constellation of the stars, it will be done.

[Srila Prabhupada, Morning Walk-June 6, 1974, Geneva]



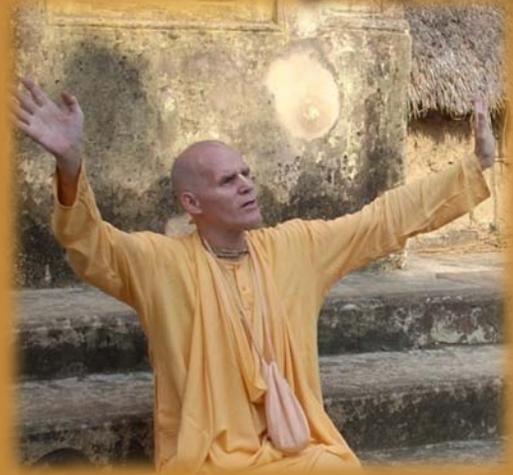
HH Bhakti Raghava Swami Speaks on Astrology

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star...

Remember the childhood lyric ‘twinkle twinkle little star, oh, I wonder who you are....? Who has not stared at night in the vast sky fascinated by the overwhelming beauty of seeing unlimited stars all of different sizes, of different brightness and sometimes even falling? Who has not pondered over the mysteries of the milkyway shining in the vast open skyline in the dead of night?

If we look at different statements from the ancient epic and the longest literary work in history (it exceeds several times the length of the bible and about eight times longer than the famed *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined), the *Mahabharata* (greater history of Bharat–varsha or India) we will find that there is more truth behind this lyric than we can imagine. For example, in the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, the following exchange takes place between Arjuna and the driver of Lord Indra’s chariot driver while ascending to the heavenly planets and seeing at closer proximity many of the stars: “...and see to your right the “sapta rishis” (seven sages), what you people on the earth planet refer to as stars”. (1)

How bonafide or authentic is ‘astrology’ one may ask? We should know that Astrology is one of the most ancient sciences of the *Vedas* known as *Jyotisastra* or scripture describing the luminaries. It comes under the *smriti* section of the *Vedas*, having been compiled by great rishis and self realized souls, foremost among whom is Srila Vyasadeva. At different times Srila Prabhupada did express reservations about its proper application and potential misuse. However, without any doubt, Srila Prabhupada, in keeping with all previous acharyas, recognized and acknowledged Astrology as an integral part of the Vedic knowledge and a great science. His own spiritual preceptor, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupada was himself honoured as one of the greatest astrologers of his times and was awarded the esteemed title of “SARASVATI” or greatly learned by scholars. He has written extensively on the subject matter and to this day the Gaudiya matha and other Vaisnavas follow the astrological guidelines given by him.



Astrology and Vastu

From his book “*Vastu, the origin of FENG SHUI*” we find the following explanation by the author, Marcus Schmieke:

“Vedic astrology is based on a very sophisticated science of astronomy which is elaborated upon in Sanskrit scriptures such as *Surya Siddhanta* and *Siddhanta Shiromani*.

Vedic astrology known as *Jyotistha* is applied in *Vastu* to determine the most auspicious time for laying a building’s foundation, the commencement of various stages of construction, and the sizes of land or house that is most appropriate according to an individual’s horoscope.

In Vedic astrology, the sun, moon and other planets circulate on elliptic orbits covering twelve zodiac signs (rashis) with each sign consisting of two star constellations called nakshatras making 27 nakshatras in all, each of which has four parts or padas.(2)

From the above brief description we get a glimpse as to the scientific nature of Astrology. What is possibly even more difficult to follow or grasp is the inference that stars, at least some stars, are not simply material objects but indeed personalities.

Planets as Personalities

Evidence abounds in the ancient Vedic literatures as to the “consciousness” of planets or stars, some of whom are designated and appointed “personalities” who oversee the management of the cosmic manifestation, including the largest and most important planet, the sun.

In *Brahma-Samhita*, we find the following description and translation regarding surya or the sun:

*yac-caṅsur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇām
rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ
yasyājñayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi* [Text 52]

Translation: “The sun who is the king of all planets, full of infinite effulgence, the image of good soul, is as the eye of this world. I adore the



primeval Lord Govinda in pursuance of whose order the sun performs his journey mounting the wheel of time”.

Purport: “Certain professors of the Vedic religion worship the sun as Brahman. The sun is one of the hierarchy of the five gods. Some people target in heat the source of this world and therefore designate the sun, the only location of heat, as the root cause of this world. Notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary, the sun is after all only the presiding deity of a sphere of the sum total of all mundane heat and is hence a god exercising delegated authority. The sun performs his specific function of service certainly by the command of Govinda.” (3)

And from the *Mahabharata* we find another reference in the curse given to Arundhati to become a star due to having insulted the rishi Vasishtha: “she (Arundhati) insulted even that rishi (Vasishtha) one of the seven (great rishis, the mind born sons of Brahma) on account to her insulting thought. She has become a little star and looks like fire covered with smoke, sometimes visible and sometimes invisible as if she is an evil omen” (4)

Astrology and Varnas

Varna (occupation) in life is determined by one’s *guna* (qualities) and *karma* (natural skills) [BG 4.13]. Both *guna* and *karma* are governed by the subtle laws of Astrology. In his essay entitled “Conceptions of Gita Nagari” Srila Prabhupad writes:

“By test of practical psychology and by examination of the birth horoscope of the child, with special reference to his birth

right, sect and class arrangement, a student from the very beginning shall be given the education of a *brahmana*, of a *ksatriya*, of a *vaisya* or of a *sudra*, as may be the case, according to his quality and destined work.”

“It is, however, possible to make a change of this general rule under special cases.” (5)

It is therefore clear that Srila Prabhupada upheld the science of Astrology as scientific and as one of the four ways to help determine one’s *varna* (the other three being observation, family heritage and psychological tests). Understanding one’s *varna* at an early age helps clarify two major aspects in one’s life, namely



one's immediate education and in due course of time one's *asrama*. It is for this reason that we hear the following statement, "first is *varna* then comes *asrama*".

Astrology, Yoga and Mantra

Daily, those who practice meditation following the astanga yoga system begin their exercises by reciting the *Surya namaskar* prayer "OM SURYAYA NAMAHA". The Surya Namaskar is the first yogic exercise performed as a salutation to the Sun God, Surya Narayana, and we love when the sun makes his appearance in the early morning.

Those who are brahmana initiated devotees of the lord also chant a hymn to the Sun God thrice daily, known as the GAYATRI MANTRA, OM bhuvah sva tad savit..... thus addressing the sun god for blessing.



Conclusion

The science of astrology takes many years, if not many life times to master within the context of varnasrama dharma and the need to establish a brahminical culture through the traditional gurukul system. Astrology, along with Sanskrit through which it can be more deeply studied, will play an important role in training the future Vedic teachers.

With our new study of astrology in the years to come we can expect a major change in our childhood lyric: "twinkle twinkle little star, how I marvel who you are."

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Maha Bharata, Adi Parva, ch. 233, and 631

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As the new year approaches, the newspapers and different magazines get flooded with columns on the forecast for the coming year for people born under different star influences or star signs. Everybody seems to be reading it with great interest. The mysticism of the unknown and desire to explore it is very fascinating indeed.

Now in this year there is a new fear in the people – “Will the world end in 2012?” – the fear of death, the fear of losing our objects of attachment. This question is raised even by the devotees. So much so that one of the initiating gurus, HG Sankarshan Das Adhikari replied to it directly, “There are many doomsday would-be prophets who claim that according to the calendar of the Mayan Indians the world will end on 21 December 2012. The rumored 2012 Armageddon has become so popular that even a Hollywood movie has been made depicting the complete destruction of the world civilization in 2012. But what the naysayers fail to note is that even though the Mayan writings describe 21 December 2012 as the last day of their current time cycle, there are also dates mentioned in the Mayan writings of times far beyond 2012 such as a mention of the year 4772. In other words, 21 December 2012 is definitely not the calamitous end that so many are claiming that it is. The Vedic calendar authoritatively confirms that we have another 155 trillions years to go before this universe is destroyed by being inhaled into the body of Mahavishnu. If you chant Hare Krishna, you will be in Krishnaloka at that time. You won't have to worry about being sucked into Mahavishnu.” Further, there were articles on the subject by different ISKCON astrologers on 2012. Astrology seems to have become synonymous with its branch of “Jyotish Shastra”. At the same time, a few view astrology not as a ‘good art’ and refers to dark mystic art of achieving different siddhis and using them for realizing mundane goals such as solving the non-compatibility issues between couples, settling scores with enemies, attaining prosperity in business, success in love life etc. In fact, many present day astrologers lure public by tantalizing them with their feats in the mentioned areas. Is this astrology? Though perceived with mixed feelings and widely misused, it is a genuine science.

Srila Prabhupada: No. We believe in astrology. But because it is a difficult science, people do not understand it properly. That is another thing. In my practical life I see. In my horoscope, everything is written, what I am doing. Everything is written. So...

Svarupa Damodara: That would be called like genius. Sometimes. If somebody can predict what is going to happen in the future, can be, just like, taken...

Srila Prabhupada: No, these astrologers can give everyone exact, the history of life, what is going to happen, what happened... [Conversation: LA, California, December 29, 1973]

Srila Prabhupada clearly called “astrology” as a science, “This is a science. It is a science. That science is acceptable by the human society. Medical science, legal science, engineering

science. Similarly, astrology also, another science..." [Conversation: LA, California, December 29, 1973]. He also confirmed its ability to predict and scriptural validity, "... Astrology, by calculation through the shastra, astrological calculation can say what you were in your past life and what you will become in your next life. There is an astrological system. They can say like that. So through the shastra, by right calculation, we can understand." [Conversation: LA, California, December 29, 1973]

Interestingly though he acknowledged it as a science, he was also very clear of its non-significant role in a devotee's life. In the same conversation, he therefore carefully added, "But the astrology is simply useful so long you have got this body. But as soon as your body is finished, there is no more use of astrology." He further made his views of its dismissal clearly known as he directly answered devotees' questions in this regard:

Tamala Kṛshna: What is the position of astrology in Kṛshna consciousness?

Srila Prabhupada: Astrology is a science. **Kṛshna consciousness has nothing to do with astrology**, but it is the general custom that as soon as a child is born the astrologers come. That is the Indian system, Vedic system. [Conversation: BG, Bombay, March 24, 1974]

One may find Srila Prabhupada's views little contradictory and are likely to twist it to use it support their decision to approach one astrologer after the other till they meet somebody who says what their ears yearn to hear. I wish to share my personal experience in this regard.

From the time I completed my teens, a very scary chapter of life opened itself in front of me. It all began on April 16, 1992. I had met with a serious accident about a fortnight ago and the next day I was to take my M.A. (English) examination. Accident had brought a storm in my study schedule; I nevertheless wanted to go ahead. It was well past midnight, my friend and my sister lay on the bed next to me at a little distance, I tried to concentrate on my book...It was about 3:00 am, I decided to rest for sometime. I somehow managed to get up from the easy chair that I had been sitting upon and slipped in my bed. The sleep was refusing to come so I tried to recall what I had read...suddenly I could feel the air getting heavy. I was not able to move any part of my body. I could not turn but I could still see (as if I had eyes behind too!) a tall lady sitting in the same chair where I had been, I could clearly hear her thin, squeaky laughter...soon her bony fingers were passing through my long hair which were washed but had not dried. They were loose and touching the ground. Their length was directly related to the duration for which she was holding on to them...and it was simply chilling. I wanted to run away and shout, call my parents or my friend for help, but I was totally immobile. I could feel her 'dead' fingers slowly slip through my hair to my neck...does she want to strangle me? I certainly did not want to die in such an indignified manner. In the meanwhile my friend woke up, I became little optimistic but she just got out of the room to the verandah and then to the washroom leaving our room dark... 'she' was laughing at my agony. I was thinking of all possible solutions, suddenly I remembered *Hanuman Chalisa*, it gave me little hope and mentally I started reciting, praying ardently to help me out of her clutches...She disappeared!

Being raised in a typical defence forces' atmosphere, I never believed in ghosts or spirits. But slowly her visitations grew in frequency and her behavior became more and more vicious. I was torn between believing what I was undergoing and in my non-belief in such things. But what was it that I was seeing? The fear had made me insomniac. I suffered silently with it. About seven years went by till I shared it with the temple president prabhu in my first visit to the ISKCON temple. Unlike my father, he did not disbelieve me or dismiss what I was 'seeing' as a 'fancy' or a 'nightmare'. He simply tried to explain the science behind it in a very very simplistic manner and advised me to chant the mahamantra.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Fortunately, I chanted despite my disbelief in the solution and initial hiccups of acceptance. And now when I look back I feel glad that I persevered. Her visitations stopped within a week or so. This was in June 1999! I felt free like a bird. I could sleep without being troubled. It was the magic of Mahaprabhu and Srila Prabhupada!

Now so many years later, sometime in March 2010 I worked till late on my newsletter and then somewhere round 3 am went to bed. Sleep has always been little elusive to me and I lay silently for a while looking at the open window in front of me. Suddenly I saw a figure of a lady enter floating through the narrow bars of the window. She had deep reddish brown complexion and was ugliness personified. As her apparition 'swam' closer to me with not so good intentions, I became worried for my little daughter, Radhika, sleeping beside me. I was helpless once again but I could remember His holy name. I chanted. She disappeared but I was transported to a strange place where apparently some homa had been performed and there were many people waiting in a queue to meet somebody. I also



sat and waited; finally my turn came. Everybody had queued up to meet one man who was in blue dress. He held my palm and gave one dirty smile. I squirmed and without any reason developed unexplained anathema for him. I certainly did not want to be there. I was chanting unconsciously and the scene shifted yet again and I was back in my room with a start. The face of that man in blue was still haunting me and that bitterness was not leaving me. I woke up my husband but he dismissed it to my old nightmare and told me to wash my feet, drink water and then sleep again. I tried to believe his words but I was not convinced from within. Sometime in the evening, I got a call from an astrologer (who is an ex-ISKCON person). He told me to immediately come online. Informing my husband, I once again sat in front of the system. He asked me about my 'nightmare'. I was surprised but still I told him but did not tell him about the man in blue and my negative feelings towards him. In the course of conversation, he sent me a picture and asked my feedback. I opened the file...Krishna...it was the capture of my dream sequence - the same homa scene in my 'dream' which had been haunting me. When I zoomed, I realized that the man dressed in blue was none other than he himself with whom I was speaking! Oh Krishna...he could travel through time as now he was very old. He had expected an excited adulation for him, but it only cemented my inexplicable unacceptability of his character despite his knowledge and mystic powers. What use are these kind of waste gimmicks? So many innumerable universes are floating in the air, sun despite being so far can get unbearably hot, one day the mango is sour and just within a few days it becomes so sweet, an ugly caterpillar turns to a lovely butterfly, a green plant grows multicolored flowers with attractive fragrance. One simple mahamantra and our heart gets cleansed of the material conditioning accumulated birth over birth! There is miracle every moment and everyday, still we get carried away by these 'magicians'. Who can be a bigger mystic than the Lord Himself - Yogeshwara. Simple chanting, following of regulative and instructions; and initiation by a bonafide guru, we are connected to the entire parampara! Apparently, people born under a few nakshatras can 'see' and are sensitive to 'visitors from the outer world' but what use are these? We may be working very hard to give comfort to this material body, but what use is that? "Astrology" is relevant as long as we have this material body. It is primarily meant to realize Him:

nāyam' deho deha-bhājām' nṛloke / kaṣṭān kāmān arhate viḍ-bhujām' ye

tapo divyam' putrakā yena sattvam' / śuddhyed yasmād brahma-saukhyam' tv anantam [SB.5.5.1]

[Lord Rṣabhadeva told His sons: My dear boys, of all the living entities who have accepted material bodies in this world, one who has been awarded this human form should not work hard

day and night simply for sense gratification, which is available even for dogs and hogs that eat stool. One should engage in penance and austerity to attain the divine position of devotional service. By such activity, one's heart is purified, and when one attains this position, he attains eternal, blissful life, which is transcendental to material happiness and which continues forever.] This is why Srila Prabhupada was very clear in his instructions. Though he acknowledged Astrology as a science, at the same time he also did not give it any room in a devotees' life:

“Regarding astrology, you should not listen to any of these so-called astrologers -- strictly avoid. Don't even see them. What is the use of seeing them? Astrology is meant for the materialist, but a spiritualist does not care for the future. Everything is dependent upon Krishna. So where is the necessity of astrology? The devotees' principle is, let there happen anything as Krishna desires. Let me remain sincere devotee, that's all. Pure devotee is never interested in this astrology.

So, continue nicely with your deity worship there and read my books very carefully, and without fail chant 16 rounds on your beads daily.” [Lecture: Boston, Massachusetts; March 5, 1969]

Further, in his letter to Devamaya prabhu, dated September 1, 1975 he reaffirmed his views:

“Astrology will not save you at the time of death. My Guru Maharaj was a great astrologer and astronomer, but he gave it all up. It is meant for the karmis. We have no interest in such things.”

However, I am personally of the opinion that a devotee astrologer is different from other astrologers. Surrendered unto Him, and humbly following the duty of his 'varna', he helps everybody to access Him more and more. I remember a few years ago, a senior devotee had offered to read my chart. His every word echoed of Srila Prabhupada's instruction and was inundated in devotion, thus helping cement my faith further.

At the same time, it is important that the world that we are in is “duḥkhālayam” and also aśāsvatam”, so misery is bound to come in any of the three forms, it can be caused even by a ghost or a spirit. Instead of being taken by surprise by its form, it is better that we realize our true *svarupa* (*jivera svarupa hoyā krsna nitya dasa*). Our karma may have brought us miseries, but our surrender unto His lotus feet will free us from our 'fate'-fetters. Hare Krishna!



Astrology and Free Will

- HG Abhaya Mudra Devi Dasi



Often devotees who wish to inquire about their past karma do not like to state their questions openly. The reason is because the answer to all problems is supposed to be clear for all practitioners of Krishna Consciousness: chanting the Holy Names of the Supreme Lord is the cure for all accumulated karma. Nonetheless, the question of where to draw the fine line between free will and the boundaries of karma lingers in the minds of many bhaktas.

How exactly does past karma come into being and when exactly is future karma germinated?

The Journey of Innumerable Births

All of us have lived through many, many lives. In fact, all living entities that we see all around us have been in the material world since time immemorial. We all have innumerable past lives. Is it worth remembering them? Well, one past life in particular is very significant. We all came into this material world through the highest post in the universe, as Brahma the creator (SB.9.24.58 Bhaktivedanta Purport). And since we are still here, the history of our first attempt of confidential service unto the Supreme Lord while in the material world has failed. We have become entrapped by the charms of our “own” creation. We stayed on and have gradually degraded into the lower species of life. So if we think that, “Once upon a time I occupied the post of Indra”, or “At a different time I had a body of a bug”, chances are, we are describing our own history in the material world.

Untying the knots of karma can be a very difficult, if not impossible, task. The sum total of all desires, along with the reaction we receive from interacting with their gross manifestation, is widely described as karma*. Some of our karma is burned and buried in the past. The gross form of such karma is not accessible anymore. Nonetheless, the impact of its ashes may still have an undeniable effect upon our psychology. These imprints are responsible for creating our future karma. But the hypothetical past and future karma do not touch aggressively our immediate life, especially in the field of activities. For that, there is another type of karma which we are undergoing at any moment. We denote as “current life” the experience of taste derived from karmic fruit. The culprits which prolong our stay in the material world are the concealed karma from past desires still waiting to be manifested and the karma which we wish at the present for the future.

The whole problem with satisfying desires lies in the time factor. Due to the partition of time into past, present and future, everything in the material world takes an era to manifest. Our material desires are not immediately satisfied. The cunning scenario of the material nature is: that we are in a different situation and with a different mind set when the winning jackpot of fortune hits us, most habitually as a bad surprise. This severe mismatch between desires and reality is one major device in the grand design of the material world. It is meant to make the soul frustrated with the material existence, forced to reach for the real alternative of perpetual mishaps. So where does astrology come into play in this labyrinth of karma created by desires? Shri Krishna is the greatest astrologer for He knows the karma of all living entities. The topic of astrology has been honored by many great spiritual personalities like Parashara Muni, Srila Vyasadeva, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Bhaktivinode Thakur, Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati and Srila Prabhupada with his wonderful Bhaktivendanta Purports.

The Load of Karma

A living entity has a certain baggage of karma. At the time of birth his karma is registered by the star formation in the sky. Some living entities have to wait longer than others to get the exact horoscope imprint which will supervise the execution of their karma. The stars do not tell the truth about the eternal living entity,



rather, they help to form a character based on the reflection coming from the personality of the soul. Sometimes twins are born only seconds apart. Yet we may observe that even though their lives may move along the same karmic lines they still have come with and maintain distinct personalities. The moment of birth puts the active parameters for a lifetime. At that time a relative freedom is given to the soul. This fact does not make an imprint on the eternal personality. By internal purification the soul can manifest his eternal qualities and ultimately override the impermanent characteristics given by the stars.

How does that happen?

While the living entity moves through life, he will encounter events predestined from previous births. The reaction or attitude he demonstrates towards this karma will form the base for his future. This meeting point of active interaction of the living entity with his karma is the playing field of free will. To Krishna-ise karma means to react in a Krishna conscious way to all situations presented in life. At the beginning of their devotional practice devotees often expect miracles and imagine sudden life changes to better their circumstances. When their material situation does not improve they often are quick to get disappointed. Krishna Consciousness inevitably brings prosperity in all spheres of life and still the time factor should be allotted for personal purification. Even spiritual activities in the material world come into manifestation slowly and patience is proven to be one of the greatest treasures of a devotee. When the heart is purified by the chanting of Hare Krishna mahamantra a devotee thinks about Shri Krishna all the time. His reaction to all karma is the recollection of the name, form and activities of the Supreme Lord. This remembrance, just like a weapon, destroys the active karma, until nothing else is left but Krishna karma. What a devotee of Sri Krishna is creating for the future is devotional service. This is the only proven way for changing karma in the material world. By observing our surroundings and circumstances, we come to the conclusion that getting rid of the material world can be an impossible task. A perfect situation where we are isolated from interacting with the material nature does not exist. Considering this fact, the ahimsa philosophy of the Jains which claims that by sweeping the ground before walking saves bugs from being killed, may seem to be at best just a good wish. How can they save the millions of microbes annihilated while breathing? Disconnecting from material circumstances and karma by artificial means is not possible.

Can astrology be useful even when we have learned how to transform material karma into Krishna karma? The science of astrology is valuable not only in a predetermination of future events. Vedic astrology is also used in averting unfavorable incidents by mapping out the different roads of personal karma. A birth chart can be looked upon exactly like a physical map with its many mountains, forests and rivers. There we can see optional roads we can follow and also the destination they lead to. With the light of astrology or jyotish we can cast illumination on the different paths a person can take in his allotted property bordered by limited free will. Taking charge, astrology can lead an individual to faster accomplishment of his desires. This remarkable ability of jyotish can be employed in serving spiritual desires as well.

At any given moment a person has the task to choose between two options. While for materialistically inclined individual those choices can seem to be very diverse, the devotee knows that the choice is basically picking between two masters: either Krishna or the material energy. Astrology does not have a real value for the materialist because

he desires only to perpetuate his stay in the material world. While in his service, the invaluable astrology is minimized to a tool for diversification of karma. The most elevated amongst material sciences is truly meant to facilitate devotional service.

Nakshatra–Vidya

Astrology can pinpoint the most favorable circumstances around which the right choice of Krishna consciousness can be exercised. For example, astrology can offer a better location, choice of favorable engagements in devotional service or time frame for profound commitment in Krishna consciousness according to the personality of a particular devotee. Jyotish is a science which puts the individuality in the center of its study and there is nothing more personal than Krishna Consciousness. Personality is a fact of eternal life. Personality cannot be changed by birth in the material world. Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that even a devotee who is self-realized still acts with his own nature (BG 3.33). Astrology places value upon the self and its characteristics. For this, jyotish best serves the individual who wants to purify his soul and engage in the eternal service of Sri Krishna.

One tremendous facility of astrology is that it can look at every individual chart as a unique yoga or formation of planets. Not a single person is ever born with a chart alike another. Even the same person gets born in different lifetimes with unlike birth charts. Material nature is fickle and likes to create different personas for the single individual soul. In this way she can keep his real individuality covered by illusion. Still there are hints to the real characteristics of the soul. Astrology can find them in the current birth chart of a given individual.

The Moon, ruling the mind, is the most important planet in jyotish for his ability to impart individuality (SB 5.23.9/10). The position of the Moon and his degree in a chart is very significant for judging a particular personality. In astrology, the 27 Moon nakshatras hold the key to individuality. With their help the foundation of a particular native's distinct mindset is easily ascertained. The nakshatras are divided into subdivisions determined by the 2 genders (feminine and masculine), the 3 gunas, the 4 varnas, etc. Every individual is born in one of these nakshatras which are further divided into 4 padas or steps. That makes for a total of 108 padas. Every sign of the 12 zodiacal signs holds 9 of these padas. Based upon this principle of 108 basic differences, the nakshatras constitute an exceptional system for individualistic judgment.



The second most important chart in the varga subdivisions, the navamsha, is formed by calculating the nakshatra padas of every planet in a horoscope. The navamsha chart is derivative of the main chart controlled by the wives of the Moon god, the 27 nakshatras, who each have very distinct personalities of their own. Because of its special characteristics, the 9th sub-divisional chart is not supposed to be read like the main rashi chakra. An astrologer would look upon the navamsha chart like a chemist who determines the atomic composition of a given element. The navamsha chart plunges deep below matter and presents the primeval constitution of the individual mind.

But as much as we want to claim that the mind is very personal and particular for every living entity, this “master sense” has a basic function of choosing while presented with a selection. The function of the mind in the material world is surprisingly very much dictated by outside associations. The mind and its choices have been the domain of the

mass perceptions about the world formed from one generation to the next since time immemorial. But even in the temporary world the preferences of the mind are best reflected in the most important selection a living entity can make—choosing a life partner. And for this reason the most popular use of the navamsha chart is in determining the characteristics of one's "other half". Nonetheless, not only the life partner but everything in the material world is a reflection of the original reality of the self. The mind is an easy target for astrological examination because it has a basic function which can be easily purified. Even in a contaminated condition the mind still retains its reflectivity of original function to choose the best, or ultimately Shri Krishna. But Astrology has not only one technique of tracing back the roots of the soul via his reflections.

When the nakshatra pada is looked upon like a single sign and further divided into 9 parts the result is the nava-navamsha sub-divisional chart which gives a great precision in judging the spiritual individuality as mirrored in matter. The mind is born from the satva guna (SB 3.26.25) and for this reason the sub-divisional charts controlled by the Moon have great significance in unveiling individuality. The navamsa and nava-navamsha charts look upon the individuality like a chemical composition which has basic characteristics like taste. In spiritual sense it denotes rasa. It is a fact of life that not even a single taste can be matched twice. This proves that the eternal individual soul prevails even in his reflection of matter.

Design of Desires

We all have different desires in the material world but they are exactly like the desires of one who has lost his health. It doesn't matter how different these desires may seem to be at first glance. All the wishes of a diseased person are aimed at returning to his healthy existence. Our real desire is to get back to Shri Krishna. Desires in the material world seem to be so many and so different from their original cause. Still the design of desires in the material world is such that they ultimate lead to rejecting of matter and choosing spiritual bliss. Ultimately, astrology also comes from the desire to facilitate the individual's return to the original cause of all causes. By pointing to the supreme choice of existence in the union with Shri Krishna through surrender and devotional service, the ultimate value of astrology is to make sure that the living entity does not misuse his free will.

*The word karma as it is used in modern, colloquial context is properly understood through the shastras as karma-phal, or "the fruits of our work." Strictly speaking the work karma simply means "work" or "activities."

[Source: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=9111>]



Astrology and Harmony in Marriage

- HG Patita Pavana Das Adhikary



The value of astrology in placing a marriageable candidate in the company of a compatible partner cannot be underestimated. Properly utilized, astrology can make the difference between a life of loneliness and suffering, or a contented

platform from which to blissfully serve the lotus feet of Sri Guru and Sri Krishna. Through quotes from several sources, this article will prove that Srila Prabhupada encouraged astrological compatibility in marriage for the members of ISKCON. Of this male-female compatibility aspect of the stellar science, technically called *rasi-maitra*, Srila Prabhupada writes in his Bhaktivedanta Purports (SB 9.18.23)

“According to the Vedic system, the parents would consider the horoscopes of the boy and girl who were to be married. If according to astrological calculations the boy and girl were compatible in every respect, the match was called yoṭaka and the marriage would be accepted. Even fifty years ago, this system was current in Hindu society. Regardless of the affluence of the boy or the personal beauty of the girl, without this astrological compatibility the marriage would not take place. A person is born in one of three categories, known as deva-gaṇa, manuṣya-gaṇa and rakṣasa-gaṇa. In different parts of the universe there are demigods and demons, and in human society also some people resemble demigods whereas others resemble demons. If according to astrological calculations there was conflict between a godly and a demoniac nature, the marriage would not take place...”

The central idea is that if the boy and girl were on an equal level the marriage would be happy, whereas inequality would lead to unhappiness. 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. Marriage now takes place simply by agreement.”

Sri Krishna explained to Arjuna this understanding of various human qualities by explaining that the entire material universe is controlled by the three modes of material nature. Simply put, matching of horoscopes is based upon placing together those who are affected by similar modes of nature. After marriage, once a couple has settled into a friendly relationship, the real business of life—progressive cultivation of Krishna consciousness—can be furthered as a family unit. As stated in *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*:

“There is no being existing, either here or among the demigods in the higher planetary systems, which is freed from the three modes of material nature.” (BG 18.40) And “This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” (BG 7.14). Again, Srila Prabhupada summarizes the super-excellent value of astrology in the matter of *vivaha-yagna*, or religious marriage, in his Purport concerning Lord Brahma’s request to Kardama Muni. Lord Brahma said (SB 3.24.15):



“Therefore, today please give away your daughters to the foremost of the sages, with due regard for the girls’ temperaments and likings, and thereby spread your fame all over the universe.”

PURPORT: “The nine principal rishis, or sages, are Marīci, Atri, Aṅgirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha and Atharvā. All these ṛṣis are most important, and Brahmā desired that the nine daughters already born of Kardama Muni be handed over to them. Here two words are used very significantly—yathā-śīlam and yathā-ruci. The daughters should be handed over to the respective rishis, not blindly, but according to the combination of character and taste. That is the art of combining a man and woman. Man and woman should not be united simply on the consideration of sex life. There are many other considerations, especially character and taste. If the taste and character differ between the man and woman, their combination will be unhappy. Even about forty years ago, in Indian marriages, the taste and character of the boy and girl were first of all matched, and then they were allowed to marry. This was done under the direction of the respective parents. The parents used to astrologically determine the character and tastes of the boy and girl, and when they corresponded, the match was selected: ‘This girl and this boy are just suitable, and they should be married.’ Other considerations were less important. The same system was also advised in the beginning of the creation by Brahmā: ‘Your daughters should be handed over to the ṛṣis according to taste and character.’

“According to astrological calculation, a person is classified according to whether he belongs to the godly or demoniac quality. In that way the spouse was selected. A girl of godly quality should be handed over to a boy of godly quality. A girl of demoniac quality should be handed over to a boy of demoniac quality. Then they will be happy. But if the girl is demoniac and the boy is godly, then the combination is incompatible; they cannot be happy in such a marriage. At the present moment, because boys and girls are not married according to quality and character, most marriages are unhappy, and there is divorce.

“It is foretold in the Twelfth Canto of the Bhāgavatam that in this age of Kali married life will be accepted on the consideration of sex only; when the boy and girl are pleased in sex, they get married, and when there is deficiency in sex, they separate. That is not actual marriage, but a combination of men and women like cats and dogs. Therefore, the children produced in the modern age are not exactly human beings. Human beings must be twice-born. A child is first born of a good father and mother, and then he is born again of the spiritual master and the Vedas. The first mother and father bring about his birth into the world; then the spiritual master and the Vedas become his second father and mother. According to the Vedic system of marriage for producing children, every man and woman was enlightened in spiritual knowledge, and at the time of their combination to produce a child, everything was scrutinizingly and scientifically done.”

Once a servant of Srila Prahupada’s confided in me that Srila Prabhupada would sometimes sit very still for long hours if he became disturbed by a disciple writing to request a divorce. Gurudas Prabhu once noted that—before the days of watches with batteries—Prabhupada would sit so still that his automatic self-wind Bulova watch would stop. Once, breaking a long silence, His Divine Grace simply said, “All the

problems in our society are created by the mixing of men and women.” He also noted at another time, “The boy is good and the girl is good. But when they come together they become bad.” His Divine Grace offers the solution in his Bhaktivedanta Purports quoted above. That solution is to arrange marriage scientifically according to the tenets of Vedanga Jyotish as advocated by Lord Brahma, who created the planets under Sri Krishna’s guidance. Quite simply, there should be *rashi-maitri* or friendliness of Moon signs and nakshatras, plus an overall balance between the two horoscopes and their directions. Only then should there be talk of marriage.

As far as the actual purpose of marriage is concerned, Srila Prabhupada explains this in his Purport to SB 4.21.46:

“Marriage is not intended for sense gratification but for getting a son fully qualified to deliver his father. But if a son is raised to become an unqualified demon, how can he deliver his father from hellish life? It is therefore the duty of a father to become a Vaiṣṇava and raise his children to become Vaiṣṇavas; then even if by chance the father falls into a hellish life in his next birth, such a son can deliver him, as Mahārāja Pṛthu delivered his father.”

When the husband and wife live together as friends and companions in the mutual execution of Krishna consciousness, there is spiritual progress and abundant happiness. If, on the other hand, there is astrological incompatibility and discord, marriages lead to misery—not only for the husband and wife, but also the children. The wife is the counterpart of her husband. The shastras offer the Krishna conscious wife no end of praise for her endless contributions. As Prabhupada says in his Purport to SB 4.26.16:

“...A woman accepted in marriage by ritualistic ceremony is called dharma-patnī, which signifies that she is accepted in terms of religious principles. Children born of a dharma-patnī, or a woman married according to religious principles, inherit the property of the father, but children born of a woman who is not properly married do not inherit the father’s property. The word dharma-patnī also refers to a chaste wife. A chaste wife is one who never had any connection with men before her marriage. Once a woman is given the freedom to mingle with all kinds of men in her youth, it is very difficult for her to keep chaste. She generally cannot remain chaste. When butter is brought into the proximity of fire, it melts. The woman is like fire, and man is like the butter. But if one gets a chaste wife, accepted through a religious marriage ritual, she can be of great help when one is threatened by the many dangerous situations of life. Actually such a wife can become the source of all good intelligence. With such a good wife, the family’s engagement in the devotional service of the Lord actually makes a home a gr̥hastha-āśrama, or household dedicated to spiritual cultivation.”

The matching of birth charts according to the qualities and tastes of the bride and groom has been fine-tuned to a science by the great sages since Lord Brahma created the Universe. It is tried, true and proven and works accurately to this day. On the other hand, modern education with its emphasis upon a presumed equality of men and

women only serves to undermine the family unit and bring forth unwanted population. Of this dilemma, Srila Prabhupada writes in his Purport to BG 16.7:

“The demons have now neglected such injunctions, and they think that women should be given as much freedom as men. However, this has not improved the social condition of the world. Actually, a woman should be given protection at every stage of life. She should be given protection by the father in her younger days, by the husband in her youth, and by the grownup sons in her old age. This is proper social behavior according to the Manu-saṁhitā. But modern education has artificially devised a puffed up concept of womanly life, and therefore marriage is practically now an imagination in human society. Nor is the moral condition of woman very good now. The demons, therefore, do not accept any instruction which is good for society, and because they do not follow the experience of great sages and the rules and regulations laid down by the sages, the social condition of the demoniac people is very miserable.”

Prabhupada gives a final judgment on the practical value of marriage in the last chapter of **Bhagavad Gita** (18.5):

“The Lord says here that any sacrifice which is meant for human welfare should never be given up. Vivāha-yajña, the marriage ceremony, is meant to regulate the human mind to become peaceful for spiritual advancement. For most men, this vivāha-yajña should be encouraged even by persons in the renounced order of life. Sannyasīs should never associate with women, but that does not mean that one who is in the lower stages of life, a young man, should not accept a wife in the marriage ceremony. All prescribed sacrifices are meant for achieving the Supreme Lord.”

And once again His Divine Grace underscores this point in his Purport SB 1.2.10:

“Because the body is made of senses, which also require a certain amount of satisfaction, there are regulative directions for satisfaction of such senses. But the senses are not meant for unrestricted enjoyment. For example, marriage or the combination of a man with a woman is necessary for progeny, but it is not meant for sense enjoyment. In the absence of voluntary restraint, there is propaganda for family planning, but foolish men do not know that family planning is automatically executed as soon as there is search after the Absolute Truth. Seekers of the Absolute Truth are never allured by unnecessary engagements in sense gratification because the serious students seeking the Absolute Truth are always overwhelmed with the work of researching the Truth.”

Each of us is born under one or another of the 108 aggregate padas or quarters of the twenty-seven nakshatras. Each one of these padas has certain tastes, qualities, influences, character and preferences which correspond favorably or unfavorably to the other nakshatra-padas. When the nakshatra-padas find compatibility, only then the total analysis of the chart may be undertaken and continued. As recommended by Srila Prabhupada a better fortune follows the auspicious couple who marry with the blessings of the stars. By living together in harmony, a foundation is created from which life's real necessity, or bhakti-yoga, can be pursued in earnest. This is Srila Prabhupada's blessing.



• Varnashrama Developments



Land, Surabhi and Krishna: Surabhi at Govardhan



- Vrndavanlila dd

Surabhi – is the name given to our lovely white cow by our guru maharaj, His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami. She is our new family member at Govardhan (Secunderabad), joining us on December 25. On the day day we (myself, my daughter Radhika and my husband, HG Gour Gopal prabhu) had left early morning to bring her.

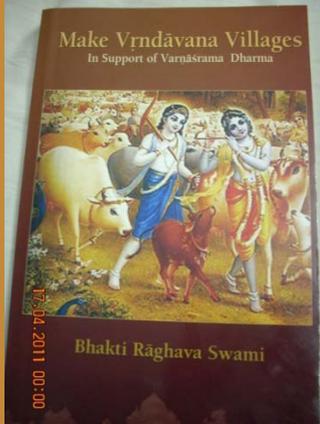
She peeped from behind the wooden pillar in the goshala where there were two more inmates, one lovely white calf and a black cow. Her lovely eyes struck me in the first glance itself – it was a case of love at first sight. She was rescued last Bakrid. Her bitter experience had left an undelible scare of vehicles on her tender mind. They were trying their best to make her board the vehicle, but she was so panicky that even as she shivered in fear, she ran helter skelter, falling dangerously at least half a dozen times and injuring herself. Again making her alight was another task wherein she again came crashing down, losing her dewclaw of the left hindleg and was bleeding profusely.

She shivered with fear in the new place under the tree. We had not known that her arrival to Govardhan could take such a sad turn. Dispersing everybody, my sister in law (Nandita) and I took charge of comforting her. We were continuously speaking to her softly, while Prabhupada dhun played in the background. We offered her the choicest of the food items which she accepted. It was getting cold as night fell. So we burnt little fire by her side and started warming her body with a cotton cloth. She was calming down slowly...we applied medicine wherever required; put balm for internal injuries. Finally she looked little rested, though on a constant guard.

Everyday she was being brushed all over. Initially she was resistant as she was totally new to it but very soon she started liking it so much that she herself shows places where she wants. She for morning walks in our area and now roams free in the premises. She is not just a physical replica of Surabhi cow seen standing behind the Lord in the pictures, but even emotionally she is so lofty. Her innocent love has extracted love and attention from all the devotees coming here. It is really wonderful to serve Dharma or Bhumi personified, attaining the 4 purposes of life – dharma, artha, kama, moksha in one go. She has made our lives more 'grounded' as Gour Gopal prabhu experiments making dhups and patties with her aromatic dung. Our kitchen garden is flourishing, all glories to her. The first part of the prasadam is always reserved for her. I just need to call her softly – "Surabhi" – she pricks up her ears and and puts her moist nose on the mouth. Before you realize, she has planted a kiss on you! No wonder cows are so dear to Him! *Cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vr̥kṣa- / lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhir abhipālayantam [BS.29]* Thanks Surabhi for Krishna-izing our lives.



• **Varnashrama Literature**

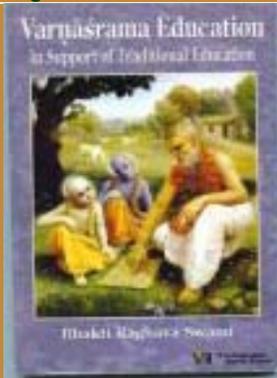
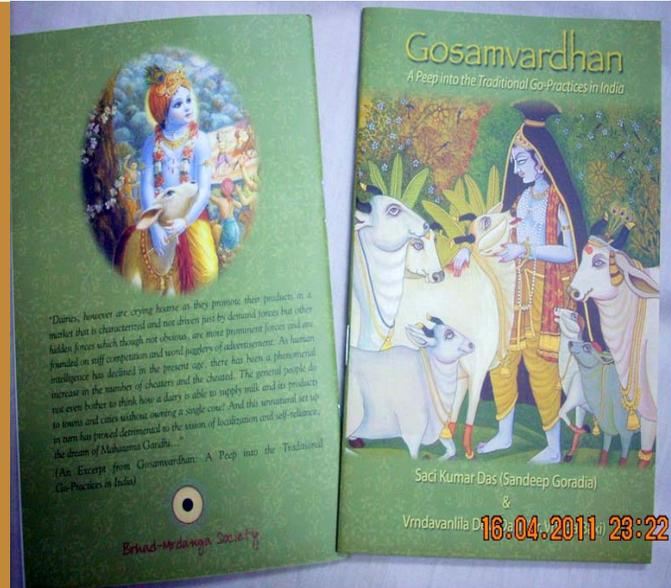


Make Vrndavan Villages

H.H. Bhakti Raghava Swami, who heads the Varnashrama Ministry, India has authored several books on Varnashrama, including this. This book is meant to serve as a general introduction to some of the basic concepts of varnashrama-dharma. In essence, the subject matter deals with both the topic of education as well as social and spiritual upliftment through a well established and scientifically planned educational system and social structure which encompass all spheres and all dimensions of life. Its revised edition includes more information on the subject and exciting additions on cow.

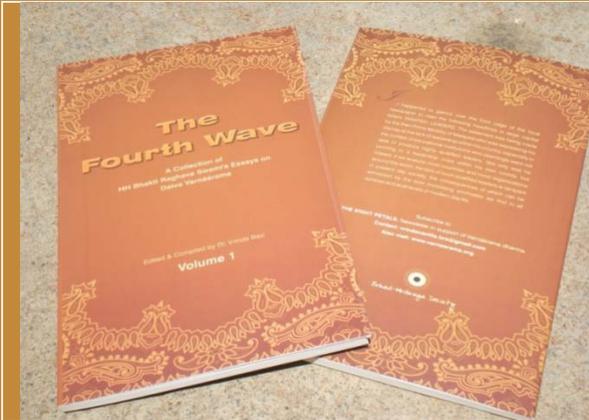
Gosamvardhan: A Peep Into the Traditional Go-Practices in India

Released just last month, on the occasion of Fourth International Seminar on Daiva Varnashrama, Sridham Mayapur, is authored by HG Sacikumar prabhu (with hands-on experience in farming and cow raising) and Vrndavanlila dd (Editor, *The Eight Petals*, a monthly e-newsletter in support of Daiva Varnashrama dharma). It makes an intensive reading as it pours information about the traditional practices related to cow rearing in traditional India and fragility of present situation. It should be of great help for those who are just not interested in keeping the cows in goshala, but also in reviving an ecosystem that supports mother cow in her old glory and not as a liability. Its 'Introduction' has been written by Indian Minister for Daiva Varnashrama, HH Bhakti Raghava Swami and 'Foreword' by none other than the Global Minister for Cow Protection & Agriculture, HG Balbhadra prabhu.



Varnashrama Education

The topic of education, a highly debated and controversial subject among many many educationalists and students alike, has always been of extreme importance and relevance to any society, especially in the most traditional oriental cultures. This books deals with the aspect of Education in the context of Varnashrama.

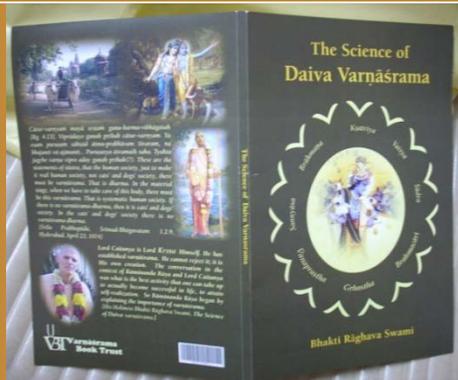
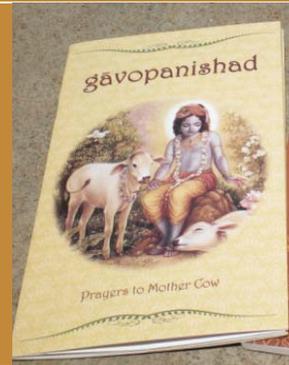


The Fourth Wave

It is a wonderful collection of HH Bhakti Raghava Swami's essays on Daiva Varnasrama addressing a wide range of concerns of daily life beginning from the very definition of the term 'dharma', administration, family system, education, food, to technology. The 'Preface' for *The Fourth Wave* has been written by HG Patita Pavan Adhikary, a senior disciple of Srila Prabhupada, a strong daiva varnasrama supporter, a prolific writer, and an astrologer who has the distinction of having served as ISKCON Temple President and Director (Book Reviews) for BBT.

Gavopanishad: Prayers to Mother Cow

Cows, dear to the Lord Himself, have been integral to the concept of varnasrama and have functioned as the defining features of Vedic social, economic, and spiritual system. This small attractive book contains lovely prayers in the glorification of Mother Cow, complemented by short but interesting information on the significance of cow and panchgavya products. The 'Foreword' to *Gavopanishad* has been written by H.H. Bhakti Raghava Swami himself.

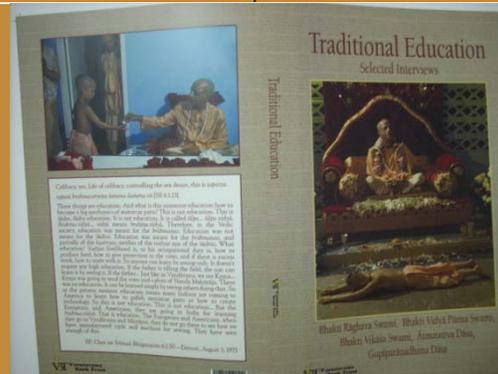


The Science of Daiva Varṇāśrama

The book by His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami is an effective attempt to address the general queries and doubts related varṇāśrama dharma. In order to make it convenient for the reader it has been divided into three sections, beginning with the very definition and understanding of the concept of varṇāśrama dharma as envisioned by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, to move to second section of the need or relevance of varṇāśrama followed by the third section dealing with the questions related to complications arising in the process of implementation of principles of daiva varṇāśrama dharma in the present situation.

Traditional Education

Traditional Education which is usually viewed with denigration if not scorn has been very interestingly dealt. It very effectively brings out the science behind the method, structure, curriculum, efficacy and even *patrata* of traditional education. It finds itself on insightful answers given to 20 questions related to different aspects of education. It includes interviews by HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, HH Bhakti Vidya Purna Swami, HG Gopiparanadhan Das and HG Atmatattva Das. It also includes an interesting lecture given by HH Bhakti Vikas Swami on the same subject.



In addition to the above there are many more books in the pipeline and several documentary movies. In order to get more information one can contact: vrandavanlila.brs@gmail.com

• Varnashrama News



Inauguration of Office of ISKCON – Daiva Varnashrama Ministry and SSKBK

[Source: www.dandavats.com by HG Ramanand Raya Das]

October 15-21. Mumbai. An office of the ISKCON Daiva Varnashrama Ministry and Sahyadri Sri Krishna Balarama Kshetra promoting Rural development based on cow protection, Vedic agriculture and Rural technologies were inaugurated today 1-1-2012 in the town of Hebri, Syndicate Bank complex, Karkalla taluk, Udupi District with the blessings of His Holiness Bhakti Raghava Swami., initiating Guru of ISKCON the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The project is functioning on a 15 acre land at Bangaragudde Village, Hebri. The office was inaugurated by Honorable MLA of Karkala Taluq Udupi District, Sri H. Gopal Bhandary by lighting the lamp.

Indians are Not Descendants of Aryans

[Source: IndiaToday]

December 10, 2011. New Delhi: Widely believed theory of Indo-Aryan invasion, often used to explain early settlements in the Indian subcontinent is a myth, a new study by Indian geneticists says. The origin of genetic diversity found in South Asia is much older than 3,500 years when the Indo-Aryans were supposed to have migrated to India, a new study led by scientists from the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, says. The study appeared in American Journal of Human Genetics. The theory of Indo-Aryan migration was proposed in mid-19th century by German linguist and Sanskrit scholar Max Muller. "It is high time we re-write India's prehistory based on scientific evidence," said Dr Lalji Singh, former director of CCMB.

Cong Afraid of Astrology, Praises 'Powerful' Mamata Banerjee

[Source: Oneindia News]

January 12, 2012. Kolkata/ Delhi. Despite all war words between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the Congress suddenly started praising Mamata Banerjee. Top Congress leaders asked its workers and ministers in West Bengal not to use harsh words against TMC workers and aslo appealed to the TMC to reciprocate. Citing the news, many started speculating - is Congress' sudden praise for Mamata coming after the astrological prediction which says that Mamata's stars are favouring her and she emerges as a towering figure nationally. If the prediction comes true, the matter could pose some serious troubles for the Congress that is already facing some great resistance from the Didi on certain policy issues.

Yamuna DD, beloved daughter of Srila Prabhupada Departs

December 20, 2011. Her Grace Yamuna devi dasi, premier disciple of Srila Prabhupada, known for her deeply spiritual qualities and connection with His Divine Grace, for her glorious offering of the *Govindam* prayers that we hear daily, for her love of pure kirtan, for her ecstatic award winning cook books which were infused with spiritual anecdotes, for greatly inspiring and encouraging the younger generation of ISKCON devotees, departed on the morning of Saphala Ekadasi, in her Melborne Beach Florida ashram-kutir which she shared with her dearest friend in devotional service, Dinatarine. Her poor health had been giving her much pain from some time but Krishna gently called her back to His loving shelter.



• **Mails to the Editor**

(In response to HH Bhakti Raghava Swami's article on "Chanting Hare Krishna"). Jai. And then you amazed everyone at the hospital by strongly preaching and not being distressed at that loss of your leg.

- *HH Kavicandra Swami*

Great article (The Structural Gambit for Celibacy and Chastity – 21st issue)! Thank you, Mother Vrindavanlila! Excellent overview of the necessity of celibacy and chastity and how they complement each other. A friend forwarded the link to me a while back, but I was too busy until today to read your article. I finally got a chance to read it just now, and it was well worth the wait. May I have your permission to quote you? I always appreciate works which support Srila Prabhupada's desire to see Daiva Varnasrama Dharma to be reestablished in the world. Thank you very much,
Your Servant,

- *HG Phalini dd*

Hare Krishna Mataji,
Dandavats. Pranams!

I have been associated with ISKCON for last 16 years. I recently read... "Who was He?" Its amazing that you have gone through a live experience, seeing either Krishna Himself or one of the Dutas sent for your protection. I totally believe your miracles, because I have undergone similar miracles in my life ...

Your servant,

- *Bhakta Ananda Gopalan*

Hare Krishna Vrindavanlila Mataji,
Pranam. Jay Srila Prabhupada.

One of the devotee friend send me your recent article *Who was he?* Thank you so much for sharing your devotional journey. It is very encouraging for everybody, devotees as well as newcomers. Please include me in your future email publication, I would like to receive prior new letters also, if possible please email those prior email news letters...

Your humble servant

- *HG Maya Candra Das*

Hare Krishna

Very well said. Thanks. The situation in the world is really becoming worse and worst. I do not know why not starting immediately the transformation of our very costly and empty temples , in to small ecovillages where all the devotees are welcome. Live together and safeguard the dharma. Building ecohouses is very cheap, many ways, many ideas, but it has not happened yet! Appreciate your message very much

- *HG Acyuta Krishna Das*

The mails/ articles can be posted to eightpetalsnewsletter@gmail.com or vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com

Focus for the next issue -

Suffering

Postal address:

New Govardhan, #89, 9th Cross, Trimurty Colony, Mahindra Hills, Secunderabad, AP (India)

Contact: +91-9949698297 (Vrindavanlila devi dasi - Dr Vrinda Baxi)

Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare