

# Defending Srila Prabhupada's Integrity

*[Just before Srila Narayana Maharaja gave his 2005 Holland class regarding Prabhupada on the subject of women, he ordered us to compile some of Prabhupada's quotes in order to eradicate any doubt.*

*The purpose of this compilation is to defend Srila Prabhupada's integrity and the integrity of the Vedic literatures (including Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita). Moreover, it is to help the devotees who have this doubt, because they don't really want to have it. They love Prabhupada and they want to serve the mission of his guru-parampara. They find some of his statements pinching, and that makes them sad because they don't want anything to come in the way of their devotional mood towards him. The purpose of this compilation, then, is to assist the devotees in reading those quotes in a different way – in the truly positive way in which Prabhupada intended them to be understood.*

*A concern was raised: "It sometimes appears that Prabhupada and the scriptures criticize women, saying that they are lower than men or that they are always compared with sudras." The quotes below have been compiled to assure such readers that this is not so. He does not criticize any particular class of persons. Rather he criticizes all consciousness other than Krsna consciousness, and his purpose of doing that is to encourage everyone to become Krsna-conscious and give up the fearful and miserable bodily concept of life.*

*The following document does not claim to be an exciting literary exposition. The quotes are arranged, not in the form of a dramatic literary article, but like a document, or something like an index. The excitement is in the quotes themselves. You will find the editors' comments in bold italics in brackets, and Prabhupada's statements in indents and normal font.]*

## I. "Woman" may mean "Man"

*[The following doubt raises itself: "It sometimes appears that Prabhupada's books state that women are stumbling blocks for men on the path of spiritual life. This seems like a bias against women." In that regard it may be noted that Prabhupada and the scriptures often mean "man" when they use the word "woman":]*

The training was that he was training to become a brahmana, samo, dama, but the progress became checked on account of being attached to a woman. Therefore according to Vedic civilization, the woman is accepted as hindrance to spiritual advancement. The whole basic civilization is how to avoid... Woman... You do not think that only woman is woman. The man is also woman. Don't think that the woman is condemned; man is not. Woman means enjoyed, and man means enjoyer. So this feeling, this feeling is condemned. If I see one woman for enjoyment, so I am

man. And if woman also sees another man for enjoyment, she is also man. Woman means enjoyed and man means enjoyer. So anyone who has got feeling of enjoyment, he is considered to be man. So here both sexes meant for... Everyone is planning, "How I shall enjoy?" Therefore he is purusa, artificially. Otherwise, originally, we are all prakrti, jiva, either woman or man. This is outward dress.  
*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Vrndavana, 1 September 1975)*

Two things: woman and money. If we become attracted... Woman means for man the woman is woman, and for the woman the man is woman. Not that woman means a particular class. Woman means which are enjoyable. So in this material world, the man is enjoyable by the woman, and the woman is enjoyable by the man. For both of them, visayinam sandarsanam atha yositam. Yosita means enjoyable.  
*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Vrndavana, 10 September 1976)*

I always say, man is good, and woman is also good, but when they combine, then they become bad.  
*(Letter to Gurudasa. Bombay, 22 December 1975)*

Illusioned by Your external energy, everyone, whether man or woman, is attached to this material existence, and all are engaged in cheating one another in a great society of the cheaters and the cheated.  
*(Krsna Book, Chapter 51)*

## **II. Spiritual Equality of Men and Women**

The spirit soul is equal in either a man or woman. In the Bhagavad-gita, 6th Chapter, 1st Verse it is stated "anasritah karma..." One who is actually engaged in the service of Krishna, there is no such distinction... phalam kariyam karma karoti yah/ sa sannyasi ca yogi ca na niragnir na cakriyah. Anyone acting for Krishna, he is a sannyasi or sannyasini. It is also stated: striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te'pi yanti param gatim. So spiritually everyone is equal. But materially a woman cannot be given Sannyasa. But you should not be bothered because you are serving on the spiritual platform.  
*(Letter to Aditya. Mayapur, 4 February 1976)*

In Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Movement, everyone is preacher, whether man or woman it doesn't matter. I do not know why Kirtanananda Maharaja is encouraging our woman devotees not to go out on Sankirtana for book distribution. Everyone should go out.  
*(Letter to Karandhara. Bombay, 6 October 1976)*

Female Reporter: "Swami, I saw a television program about your movement once, and they said that the men make the decisions and the women follow. Is that true?"  
Prabhupada: "I do not follow."  
Srutakirti: "She hears that the men make the decisions and that the women follow these decisions."

Prabhupada: "Not necessarily. We follow the decision of Krsna, men and women both. We follow the decision of Krsna. That is applicable both men and women."  
(*Interview. New York, 5 March 1975*)

Just a moment before, we were dancing and chanting equally, the boys, the girls, the men, the women. So there is no distinction. Even if we do not understand the language, what is the meaning of Hare Krsna, but because it is transcendental, because it is spiritual, from the spiritual platform, everything is equal. We forget that we are American, or we are Indian, we are child, we are youth, or man, or woman, because in the spiritual platform there is no such bodily distinction.  
(*Lecture. Montreal, 11 June 1968*)

He may be a man, he may be a woman, he may be a sudra, he may be a brahmana or he may be black or he may be white. Everyone can approach to the highest platform of devotional service. It is open field."  
(*Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Montreal, 19 August 1968*)

### **III. True Devotee Women Are Most Intelligent**

Although Kunti had the body of a woman, she was a devotee. Therefore she was not like an ordinary, unintelligent woman. Rather, she was the most intelligent, for she recognized Krsna to be the Supreme Godhead.  
(*Teachings of Queen Kunti, Chapter 3*)

Suniti, the mother of Dhruva, was a farseeing woman, and therefore she advised her son to worship the Supreme Lord and no one else.  
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.8.23, Purport*)

#### **The Gopis Are the Topmost Intelligent**

Uddhava is described as the most exalted personality in the Vrsni dynasty, being almost equal to Krsna. He was a great friend of Krsna's, and being the direct student of Brhaspati, the teacher and priest of the heavenly planets, he was very intelligent and sharp in decision. Intellectually, he was highly qualified. Krsna, being a very loving friend of Uddhava's, wanted to send him to Vrndavana just to study the highly elevated ecstatic devotional service practiced there. Even if one is highly elevated in material education and is even the disciple of Brhaspati, he still has to learn from the gopis and the other residents of Vrndavana how to love Krsna to the highest degree.  
(*Krsna Book, Chapter 46*)

The gopis are the epitome of this perfectional stage of knowledge.  
(*Krsna Book, Chapter 47*)

### **IV. Prabhupada's letters to his spiritual daughters**

My Dear Govinda Dasi,

Please accept my blessings, and offer the same to Gaurasundara. I am so much pleased by reading your letter of June 26, 1969, describing your preaching activities in Hawaii, both husband and wife together... I was so much enlivened by hearing of your spirited preaching activities. I am proud that a little young girl like you is so much spirited in preaching Krishna consciousness... The whole world is full of fanatics and atheist classes of men, so sometimes we have to face such difficulties. But this is all tapasya. Without tapasya, nobody can approach Krishna. So preachers who boldly face all kinds of difficulties are considered to be under tapasya, and Krishna takes note of such tapasya of the devotee, and the devotee is recognized by Him. I have asked the BTG men to publish your heroic preaching activities under the heading of 'Heroine Govinda Dasi.'

*(Letter to Govinda Dasi. Los Angeles, 7 July 1969)*

Now you have got a good wife who is also intelligent girl and devotee, so live peacefully working together for pushing on this Krsna consciousness movement for the ultimate benefit of all concerned.

*(Letter to Krsnakanti. Los Angeles, 1 August 1970)*

In London, the six couples who are working very hard there have been very much appreciated by the people of London, and their character, behavior, and devotion are attracting sincere people to our movement. I want similar thousands of couples for my disciples to propagate our movement throughout the world. You can always help me in this matter because you are an intelligent girl and you have many talents. So you can utilize your god-gifted qualities for utilizing in Krishna Consciousness.

*(Letter to Govinda. Los Angeles, 26 January 1969)*

Being in the disciplic succession of Prahlada Maharaja certainly we are not interested for our personal liberation as much as we want to work for the liberation of the conditioned souls because Krishna desires it. So you are an intelligent girl, I need not talk much, and be happy in Krishna Consciousness business. I am very glad to learn that Muralidhara, Devahuti and Bharadraja are working together. You simply supervise them. I know Bharadraja is a very fast working painter and if he sticks to his work, certainly he will do wonderfully.

So far Devahuti is concerned, she is elder woman but very nice and sober as well as qualified. Because she is of the age of all of your mothers, she should be treated very respectfully. Nothing should be ordered to her but simply suggested so that she may work in her own way. You should personally see to the comforts and conveniences so that she may feel very happy to stay with you all young boys and girls."

*(Letter to Jadurani. Los Angeles, 14 January 1970)*

## **V. Women as spiritual master**

My Dear Silavati... Your description of the course you are giving to the interested girls about the role they play in Krishna Consciousness is very nice, and I am pleased that you have begun this project. Actually the role of all conditioned souls is the same; to chant Hare Krishna, tell others to chant, perfect our lives in Krishna

Consciousness, and to go back to Godhead when this body is finished. Now if you can induce all the women of Los Angeles to place an altar in their homes and help their husbands have peaceful, happy home life in Krishna Consciousness, that will be very great service for you. The actual system is that the husband is Spiritual Master to his wife, but if the wife can bring her husband into practicing this process, then it is all right that the husband accepts wife as Spiritual Master. Caitanya Mahaprabhu has said that anyone who knows the science of Krishna, that person should be accepted as Spiritual Master, regardless of any material so-called qualifications; such as rich or poor, man or woman, or brahmana or sudra. So if you can show the women of the community how to help their husbands and children to perfect their home life, and all aspects of life, in Krishna Consciousness by chanting, aratrik ceremonies, and eating Krishna prasadam, then you will improve the conditions of the neighboring communities to an incalculable extent. Your ever well-wisher.

*(Letter to Silavati. New Vrndavana, 14 June 1969)*

Prof. O'Connell: "Is it possible, Swamiji, for a woman to be a guru in the line of disciplic succession"?

Prabhupada: "Yes. Jahnava devi was – Nityananda's wife. She became. If she is able to go to the highest perfection of life, why it is not possible to become guru? But, not so many. Actually one who has attained the perfection, she can become guru. But man or woman, unless one has attained the perfection... Yei Krsna-tattva-vetta sei guru haya [Cc. Madhya 8.128]. The qualification of guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Krsna. Then he or she can become guru. Yei Krsna-tattva-vetta, sei guru haya. [break] In our material world, is it any prohibition that woman cannot become professor? If she is qualified, she can become professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. So similarly, if the woman understands Krsna consciousness perfectly, she can become guru.

*(Interview with Professors O'Connell)*

Prabhupada: So a crazy man's statement is not accepted. Child's statement, crazy man's statement, unauthorized person's statement, blind man's statement, we cannot accept."

Atreya Rsi: "A woman's statement"?

Prabhupada: "Huh"?

Atreya Rsi: "A woman's..."

Prabhupada: "If a woman is perfect in Krsna consciousness... Just like Jahnava-devi, Lord Nityananda's wife, she was Acarya. She was Acarya. She was controlling the whole Vaisnava community."

*(Interview. Toronto, 18 June 1976)*

The prostitute shaved her head clean in accordance with Vaisnava principles and stayed in that room wearing only one cloth. Following in the footsteps of her spiritual master, she began chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra 300,000 times a day. She chanted throughout the entire day and night. She worshiped the tulasi plant, following in the footsteps of her spiritual master. Instead of eating regularly, she chewed whatever food she received as alms, and if nothing was supplied she would fast. Thus by eating frugally, and fasting she conquered her senses, and as soon as

her senses were controlled, symptoms of love of Godhead appeared in her person. Thus the prostitute became a celebrated devotee. She became very advanced in spiritual life, and many stalwart Vaisnavas would come to see her.

*(Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līla 3.140-142)*

## VI. Who is less intelligent?

***[Sometimes the doubt is raised that Prabhupada writes that women are less intelligent than men. This is not true. The following quotes show that he does not single out women, and not even material women. He says that all non-devotees or materialists are less intelligent.]***

### A. Every non-devotee is less intelligent

Abodha means fools, rascals, ignorant, born foolish rascals, ignorant. We are all born foolish. So if we are not properly educated, then we remain fools and rascals, and the activities of fools and rascals, this is simply waste of time. Because... What is called? Busy rascals, busy rascal. If a rascal is busy, that means he's simply spoiling the energy. Just like monkey. Monkey is very busy. Of course, according to Mr. Darwin, they are coming from monkey. So monkey's business is simply waste of time. He's very busy. You'll find always busy. So the busy fool is dangerous. There are four classes of men: lazy intelligent, busy intelligent, lazy fool and busy fool.

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Hawaii, 19 January 1976)*

Fools cannot see, but those who are intelligent can see that the hand of the Supreme Lord is in everything within the creation.

*(Teaching of Lord Kapiladeva, Verse 25-26)*

Because they have no other business than trifle things, they are very busy: "Oh, come on with me," arrested. They have built up their empire by exploiting the whole world, and if somebody takes a twig from the St. James Park, he's arrested. You see? Because there is no religious life. Fools, rascals, they do not know how to rule over. On trifle things they will, "Come on." And when there is a pickpocket, they will go away. You ask police, they will pass by. You see?

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. London, 15 August 1971)*

Srila Prabhupada: "The candidates are bribing, they are cheating, they are making propaganda to win votes. Somehow or other they get votes and capture the prime post. This system is bad."

BTG: "So if we don't choose our leaders by popular election, how will society be governed?"

Srila Prabhupada: "You require brahmanas, ksatriyas, vaisyas, and sudras. Just as when you want to construct a building, you require engineers. You don't want sweepers. Isn't that so? What will the sweeper do? No, there must be engineers. So if you follow the division of varnasrama, only ksatriyas are allowed to govern. And for the legislative assembly – the senators – only qualified brahmanas. Now the butcher

is in the legislative assembly. What does he know about making laws? He is a butcher, but by winning votes he becomes a senator. At the present moment, by the principle of vox populi, a butcher goes to the legislature. So everything depends on training."

*(The Science of Self-Realization, chapter 6)*

B. Kali-yuga brahmanas and sannyasis are less intelligent

Vipratve sutram eva hi: 'A brahmana means one, two paisa thread.' That's all. 'A sannyasi means a rod.' These are the explanations.

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam, Vrindavana, 8 September 1975)*

C. Indian university students are less than less intelligent animals

So here it is a very terse remark, that 'Anyone who has never heard the glories of Gadagraja, the Supreme Personality of Godhead – in other words, one who is not Krsna conscious, does not know anything about Krsna, or God – they are no better than these animals, especially: dog, hog, ass, camel.' Why these four kinds of animals have been selected to compare? That is explained. Sva means dog. A dog, however powerful it may be, very strong, stout, but it, unless it has got a master, its life is very precarious. Dog. Just see our education at the present moment. Very advanced education. Many Indian students come here also to take advanced education. But actually, we consider this education creating dogs. Why? Now, because however technologist you may be, if you don't get a suitable service, all your education is finished.

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam, Los Angeles)*

## **VII. How are women less intelligent than men?**

***[In some cases Prabhupada and the scriptures do say that women are less than men – in bad or useless things.]***

A. Women Are Inferior in the Knowledge of Exploitation

Machine. And he's very expert. He'll take three thousand dollars. And others will be unemployed. This is going on. And they are thinking: "Advancement of civilization." Advancement of civilization means "Exploit others and you become happy." This is advancement of civilization. "Others may die for such, out of starvation, and one man takes all the money and spends it for wine and women and motor car." That's all. This is advancement of civilization. Sarve sukhino bhavantu. This is Vedic civilization. 'Let everyone be happy.' That is Vedic civilization. And the demonic civilization, they're: "Let everyone suffer; I become happy. That's all.

*(Lecture on Varnasrama, Vrindavana, 15 March 1974)*

So those whose brains are filled up with cow dung, they want to exploit this material world. It is impossible. It is not possible. Under certain pleas only, that "This political party will give you better chance for exploiting."

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Vrndavana, 14 November 1972)*

## B. Women are inferior in useless mental speculation

The Absolute Personality of Godhead, is beyond the range of the thinking power of the greatest philosopher. He is unknowable by great learning or by the greatest brain. He is knowable only by one who has His mercy. Others may go on thinking about Him for years together, yet He is unknowable. This very fact is corroborated by the Queen, who is playing the part of an innocent woman. Women in general are unable to speculate like philosophers, but they are blessed by the Lord because they believe at once in the superiority and almightiness of the Lord, and thus they offer obeisances without reservation. The Lord is so kind that He does not show special favor only to one who is a great philosopher. He knows the sincerity of purpose. For this reason only, women generally assemble in great number in any sort of religious function. In every country and in every sect of religion it appears that the women are more interested than the men. This simplicity of acceptance of the Lord's authority is more effective than showy insincere religious fervor.

*(Teachings of Queen Kunti, Chapter 3)*

## VII. Srila Prabhupada and the scriptures reject the by-birth caste system

***[It is sometimes thought that Prabhupada's books judge women on the consideration of their birth, rather than on their qualities. This is not true. The material (by-birth) caste system is rejected by Bhagavad-gita and Prabhupada, for ladies and for everyone else. Here are some of his statements in that regard:]***

The Krsna consciousness movement, therefore, is a cultural movement that does not care about local social conventions. Following in the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Advaita Acarya, we can accept a devotee from any part of the world and recognize him as a brahmana as soon as he is qualified due to following the principles of Vaisnava behavior.

*(Caitanya-caritamrta, Antya-lila 3.221, purport)*

Krsna says in the Bhagavad-gita (9.32):

mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah  
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te 'pi yanti param gatim

'O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth, women, vaisyas [merchants] and sudras [workers], can attain the supreme destination.'

Though having taken a low birth in human society, one who accepts Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is quite competent to go back home, back to



Godhead; and one who is a bona fide candidate for going back to Godhead should not be considered lowborn persons, or candalas. That is also a sastric injunction.  
(*Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līla 3.221, purport*)

Indian man: "Srīla Prabhupada, since there is no distinction between 'man' and 'woman' – these are both designations – is it possible for a woman to become a brahmana?"

Brahmananda: "Is it possible for a woman to become a brahmana?"

Prabhupada: "He is... Woman is a brahmana's wife. Then she is automatically a brahmana."

Indian man: "Suppose she doesn't want to get married for the rest of her life, just wants to serve the Lord?"

Prabhupada: "So in his spiritual position everyone is a brahmana."

Brahmananda: "But you give brahminical initiation to unmarried women."

Prabhupada: "Yes. But on spiritual point she is brahmana. On the spiritual platform there is no such distinction."

(*Morning Walk, Nairobi, 2 November 1975*)

***[Srī Kṛṣṇa came to the material world, where everyone has material conceptions. Srīla Prabhupada did the same. He came to a world where, in the West, many women were looked upon with discrimination, in the work force and at home. He came to a world where, in India, many women were being forced into the fire at the time of their husbands' cremation. Both Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupada were against this. Therefore, when they both use the word "even women" this is not a criticism of women, but of those who discriminate against them. "Even women" means, "even though by your social customs, western or eastern caste systems and material ideas, women are considered less, they are not. They can also reach perfection. Don't think they can't." This is discussed by Prabhupada in the previous and following statements.]***

Otherwise it doesn't matter what he is, which family he's born. It doesn't matter.

Kṛṣṇa says, you'll find, mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah [Bg. 9.32]. Papa-yoni. To take birth ***[in a]*** low-grade family, or animal family, these are called papa-yoni. Kṛṣṇa says that it doesn't matter if one is born in the papa-yoni, low-grade family. It doesn't matter.

(*Lecture on Bhagavad-gīta, Hawaii, 3 February 1975*)

Strīyah sudras tatha vaisyah, including woman and sudras and vaisyahs, they are considered as less intelligent. They are considered as less intelligent. Therefore, according to Vedic system, a boy born in a brahmana family, he is allowed all the samskaras, reformatory, purificatory process, but the girl is not. Why? Now, because a girl has to follow her husband. So if her husband is brahmana, automatically she becomes brahmana. There is no need of separate reformation. And by chance she may be married with a person who is not a brahmana, then what is the use of making her a brahmana? That is the general method. ***[Note that Prabhupada says "general method" He and sastra are not approving this general method.]*** So therefore the, even born in a brahmana family, a woman is taken as woman, not as brahmana. ***[This is not daivi or spiritual varnasrama; rather it is the material caste system.]***

But Krsna says, 'Never mind. Even if she is woman, even she is sudra, even she is vaisya, or any other, I mean to say, family born in, never mind.' Mam hi partha vyapasritya, if anyone is bona fidely made Krsna conscious, te 'pi yanti param gatim, so his way is open to the path of Vaikuntha, param gatim. Kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarsayas tatha [Bg. 9.33].

*(Festival Lecture. Los Angeles, 16 July 1969)*

***[Srla Prabhupada is against the atheistic caste system of kali-yuga, which says that women are not only lower, but they also can't be elevated.]***

Because in India, according to the caste system, or varnasrama-dharma, the brahmana and ksatriyas are considered to be the highest in the society, and the vaisyas, a little less than them, and sudras, they are not taken into account. In the similarly, woman class, they are taken as sudra. Just like the thread ceremony is given to the brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, but there is no thread ceremony for the woman class. Although the woman is born in the brahmana family, she has no that reformation. Because striyah, woman class, are taken less intelligent, they should be given protection, but they cannot be elevated. ***[Note that in the next sentence, as Lord Krsna's representative, Prabhupada is rejecting this previous sentence.]*** But here in the Bhagavad-gita, He surpasses all these formalities. Lord Krsna surpasses all these formalities.

*(Lecture on Bhagavad-gita. 20 December 1966)*

Although the sudras are not given any samskara... Because those who are in the very lowest stage of life, it is very difficult for them to accept samskara, reformatory method. But this Krsna consciousness movement, under the direction of Gosvamis and pancaratra system, they are giving the opportunity everyone to become a brahmana. Because without becoming brahmana, nobody can understand what is Krsna or what is Krsna consciousness. One must be on the platform of goodness. When one is fixed up on the platform of goodness, the other two qualities – namely, ignorance and passion – cannot disturb him. Nityam bhagavata-sevaya. Nasta-prayev abhadresu nityam bhagavata-sevaya [SB 1.2.18].

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Los Angeles, 19 May 1972)*

If we make distinction between man and woman, black and white, then how in our temple we are enjoying together? Because we... Actually, we are equal on the spiritual platform. We do not say that 'You are woman. You cannot become my disciple,' or 'You are black; therefore you cannot become my disciple.' No. We welcome everyone. So they may not misunderstand. Just you can issue one statement that 'We say that if you want to see everyone equally, treat everyone equally, then you have to come to the spiritual platform, Krsna consciousness. Materially, it is not possible.'

*(Arrival Lecture., Philadelphia, 11 July 1975)*

## **VIII. In Kali-yuga all are born low**

***[It is not that Prabhupada's books say that women are less-intelligent than men. It is not that women are like sudras and that others are higher. Rather, in this Age, in Kali-yuga, before Krsna conscious training, by birth both men and women are sudras or less. They are all less intelligent:]***

To become dependent on another's maintenance is very degrading; therefore, according to the Vedic system, everyone should live independently. Only the sudras are unable to live independently. They are obliged to serve someone for maintenance. It is said in the sastras: kalau sudra-sambhava. In this age of Kali, everyone is dependent on another's mercy for the maintenance of the body; therefore everyone is classified as a sudra.

*(Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.13.6, purport)*

If a sudra gets money, however, he will spend it lavishly, without discrimination, or simply accumulate it for no purpose. Because in this age there are no qualified brahmanas, ksatriyas or vaisyas, almost everyone is a sudra (kalau sudra-sambhava). Therefore the sudra mentality is causing great harm to modern civilization.

*(Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.26.36, purport)*

## **IX. Women and Varnasrama**

Women participate in all the varnas

***[According to Prabhupada and the sastric histories he quotes, it is not that women were necessarily classified along with sudra, as sometimes doubts lead us to believe. It is not that they were considered the same – even materially. Different women belonged to different varnas. Some were in the ksatriya category, some in the brahmana category. Some were high class and some low class.]***

But sudras can do. Prostitution, these things are the low-class. The high-class, no, not allowed. The high-class society, a woman cannot mix with any man. Especially unmarried. The fathers, parents, will not allow.

*(Lecture on Srimad-bhagavatam. Detroit, 12 June 1976)*

Lord Balarama then considered the history of Romaharsana: he was born in a suta family, or a mixed family, born of a brahmana woman and a ksatriya man.

*(Krsna Book, Chapter 78)*

## **X. Protection of Women**

***[Sometimes the doubt is raised: that when Prabhupada and the scriptures say that women need protection, they mean that women are inferior. This is not true. Some of Prabhupada's statements in this regard are as follows:]***

## A. In true varnasrama – care and respect towards Women

Matrvat para-daresu. To see every woman except his wife as mother. This is education. This is education, perfection of education, when you can see all women except your wife as mother.

*(Lecture on Bhagavad-gita. London, 21 July 1973)*

So Maharaja Yudhisthira is very much repentant: "I have killed so many men, and they are, some of them are father, some of them are brother, some of them are sons, some of them are husbands of the women. And because I have killed them, now this woman class, they have become friendless." So he is... Just see how much he is aggrieved, thinking of the condition of the woman. And people accuse that India, woman are considered just like slaves. Just see. The king is thinking of woman so seriously, and is it a fact that in India woman is taken as slaves? Who cares for the slaves? So much anxiety. And that is king. Yes. A king shall give protection to everyone, especially those who are helpless."

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Los Angeles, 13 May 1973)*

## B. No independence means real independence

And the woman, the cow, the brahmana, the children – they are meant for absolute protection. That is the Vedic conception. They should always be given full protection.

*(Lecture on Bhagavad-gita. New York, 25 March 1966)*

VERSE: Riding in a palanquin covered with cloth and accompanied by maidservants, Sita Thakurani came to the house of Jagannatha Misra, bringing with her many auspicious articles such as fresh grass, paddy, gorocana, turmeric, kunkuma and sandalwood. All these presentations filled a large basket.

PURPORT: The words *vastra-gupta dola* are very significant in this verse. Even fifty or sixty years ago in Calcutta, all respectable ladies would go to a neighboring place riding on a palanquin carried by four men. The palanquin was covered with soft cotton, and in that way there was no chance of seeing a respectable lady traveling in public. Ladies, especially those coming from respectable families, could not be seen by ordinary men.

*(Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adi-lila 13.114, verse and purport)*

***[Sometimes the doubt is raised: that Srila Prabhupada is putting women down when, on the odd occasion, he writes in his purports that women should not be given freedom or independence. When Prabhupada or the Vedas say "no freedom for women," they mean "no so-called freedom." They do not mean "no freedom to act." They mean "no shelterlessness to be exploited." Prabhupada sometimes has his own vocabulary and way of speaking; and if we can learn it, we can understand him better and be free from disturbing doubt.]***

Not... Independence does not mean their position is very lower, no. Just like children. Children has no independence. No independence means they are well-protected. No independence does not mean that she has no independence to act. No. She has got. But under the protection. Just like there are some nation still now, protectorate. America is protecting. America is a big nation, and protecting another small nation. That does not mean they have no independence. They are also independent. They are acting like that. But because weaker, they should be given protection. Similarly, woman, children, brahmana, cow, old men, diseased men, they are to be protected. That is the social order.

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Montreal, 23 October 1968)*

Prabhupada: "We give Krsna consciousness both to the woman and man equally. We do not make any such distinction. But to protect them from this exploitation by man, we teach something, that 'You do like this. You do like that. You be married. Be settled up. Don't wander independently.' We teach them like that. But so far Krsna consciousness is concerned, we equally distribute. There is no such thing that 'Oh, you are woman, less intelligent or more intelligent. Therefore you cannot come.' We don't say that. We welcome women, men, poor, rich, everyone, because in that platform equality.

*(Room Conversation. Philadelphia, 13 July 1975)*

Women cannot properly utilize freedom [***This is not a criticism of women. This means their "freedom" will be taken advantage of by a more powerful, bad man who, seeing them unprotected and untrained, will exploit them. Prabhupada has his own vocabulary or way of expressing himself, which is not always like ours. If we can learn it, we can understand him better.***], and it is better for them to remain dependent. A woman cannot be happy if she is independent. That is a fact. [***Again, as Srila Prabhupada previous said, this does not mean 'no independence to act'.***] In Western countries we have seen many women very unhappy simply for the sake of independence. That independence is not recommended by the Vedic civilization or by the varnasrama-dharma.

*(Teachings of Lord Kapiladeva, Verse 5, purport)*

But still, because the leaders are rascals, they have arranged for meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling. Advertise. Advertise naked woman and, what is called, beefeaters, and liquor. This is going on. Advertise cigarettes, just to pull them down again. Go to hell.

*(Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam. Vrndavana, 28 October 1976)*

Prabhupada: "So there is no freedom; still, they think that they have freedom. That means under some plea, the men are cheating the women, that's all. So in the name of independence, they have agreed to be cheated by another class. This is the situation." Sandy Nixon: "In spite of that, can women know Krsna as..."

Prabhupada: "We have no such distinction."

*(Room Conversation. Philadelphia, 13 July 1974)*

Prabhupada:... So where is independence? Let them pass resolution that "Henceforward, man will have to become pregnant." Is it possible?

Jagadisa: Srila Prabhupada, the whole civilization, American western civilization, is now bewildered by this theory of woman's liberation.

Prabhupada: But how they will be liberated on this point? First of all let me know.  
(Room conversation after press conference. Chicago, 9 July 1975)

Prabhupada: So she is already dependent on nature's law that man is free from becoming pregnant and the woman has to take the burden. Then where is the independence, equal right? Equal right means sometimes man may become pregnant, sometimes woman may become pregnant, but why only woman should become pregnant and the man goes away and she has to take care of the children, beg from government or this and that? Is that independence?

Satsvarupa: For them, the independence has become contraception. "I don't have to have the child," they say.

Prabhupada: That means you commit another sinful activity. Then you become dependent on nature. You'll be punished. The punishment goes to you. In this way... And the whole thing becomes cumbrous. So where is the benefit of equal right, independence? Phalena pariciyate. We have to see the result of every action-whether the result is beneficial. If the result is not beneficial, the action is not beneficial. There are cases of rape. The victims are women. Why the victim is not man? Why? In every rape case the sufferer, or the victim, is woman. And why not the man?  
(Room conversation after press conference. Chicago, 9 July 1975)

On the failure of such varnasrama-dharma, naturally the women become free to act and mix with men, and thus adultery is indulged in at the risk of unwanted population. Irresponsible men also provoke adultery in society, and thus unwanted children flood the human race at the risk of war and pestilence.  
(Bhagavad-gita 1.40, purport)

## **X1. Men Must Also Be Dependent and Controlled**

***[It is not that Srila Prabhupada and the sastras say that only women should not be independent or given freedom. They say that about everyone. Everyone should be controlled by, and dependent on, pure devotees:]***

In the Bhagavad-gita (9.32) it is said by the Lord that there is no bar to becoming a devotee of the Lord (even for those who are lowborn, or women, sudras or vaisyas), and by becoming a devotee everyone is eligible to return home, back to Godhead. The only qualification is that one take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord who has thorough knowledge in the transcendental science of Krsna (Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam).

(Srimad Bhagavatam 2.4.18, purport)

We, the conditioned souls, have fallen in the ocean of nescience, but the human body fortunately provides us a good opportunity to cross the ocean because the human body is like a very good boat. When directed by a spiritual master acting as the

captain, the boat can very easily cross the ocean. Furthermore, the boat is helped across by favorable winds, which are the instructions of Vedic knowledge. If one does not take advantage of all these facilities to cross the ocean of nescience, he is certainly committing suicide. One who boards a boat made of stone is doomed. To be elevated to the stage of perfection, humanity must first give up false leaders who present boats of stone. All of human society is in such a dangerous position that to be rescued it must abide by the standard instructions of the Vedas.

*(Srimad Bhagavatam 6.7.14, purport)*

As the earth, water, air, fire, sky, they are also controlled, the supreme controller is Krsna, similarly, the so-called man or woman in this material world, they are also controlled. Nobody can say that "I am not controlled." Who is here? You must be controlled.

*(Lecture on Bhagavad-gita. London, 18 July 1973)*

***[Prabhupada indicates that real independence belongs to both men and women equally. Real Independence means full dependence on Krsna and Guru:]***

In other words, the living entity is situated between the two energies of the Lord, and because he belongs to the superior energy of the Lord, he has a particle of independence. By proper use of that independence he comes under the direct order of Krsna. Thus he attains his normal condition in the pleasure-giving potency.

*(Bhagavad-gita 18.78, purport)*

Real independence means complete faith in the mercy of the Lord without dependence on the conditions of matter. This paramahansa stage is the highest perfectional stage in bhakti-yoga, the process of devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

*(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.18.22, purport)*

Actually the conditioned soul is forced to act under the pressure of the modes of material nature. The living entity has no independence. When he is under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead he is free, but when, under the impression that he is satisfying his senses, he engages in sense gratificatory activities, he is actually under the spell of material nature. In Bhagavad-gita it is said, prakrteh kriyamanani: one acts according to the particular modes of nature he has acquired.

*(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.27.2, purport)*

## **XII. Beyond the mundane father, husband and son**

***[Sometimes the doubt is raised: that Srila Prabhupada and the Vedic scriptures are putting down women when they write that a woman should not be given independence, but should be protected first by her father, then her husband and then her grown son. This is not true:]***

Unmarried girls worship Lord Siva so that they can expect a husband who is as good a Vaisnava as he. The girls are not taught to select a husband who is very rich or very opulent for material sense gratification; rather, if a girl is fortunate enough to get a husband as good as Lord Siva in devotional service, then her life becomes perfect.  
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.23.1, purport*)

Devahuti [*the mother of Lord Krsna's incarnation, Kapiladeva*] continued: "I have taken shelter of Your lotus feet because You are the only person of whom to take shelter."  
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.11*)

**[A lady devotee can leave her non-devotee husband:]**

As far as Sathi, the daughter of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, was concerned, she was advised to give up her relationship with her husband. Concerning this, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (5.5.18) states, *na patis ca sa syan na mocayed yah samupeta-mrtyum*: "One cannot be a husband if he cannot liberate his dependents from inevitable death." If a person is not in Krsna consciousness and is bereft of spiritual power, he cannot protect his wife from the path of repeated birth and death. Consequently such a person cannot be accepted as a husband. A wife should dedicate her life and everything to Krsna for further advancement in Krsna consciousness. If her husband abandons Krsna consciousness and she gives up her connection with him, she follows in the footsteps of the *dvija-patnis*, the wives of the brahmanas who were engaged in performing sacrifices. The wife is not to be condemned for cutting off such a relationship.  
(*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 15.264, purport*)

**[Ladies should ultimately accept Krsna as their supreme husband:]**

If a woman accepts You as the supreme husband, then she will never be bereft of her husband, as in the bodily concept of life. If we accept You as our ultimate husband, then there is no question of being separated, divorced or widowed. You are the eternal husband, eternal son, eternal friend and eternal master, and one who enters into a relationship with You is eternally happy. Since You are the teacher of all religious principles, Your lotus feet have to be worshiped first. Accordingly, the *sastras* state, *Acarya-upasana*: the worship of Your lotus feet is the first principle. Besides that, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gita*, You are the only enjoyer, You are the only proprietor, and You are the only friend. As such, we have come to You, leaving aside all so-called friends, society and love, and now You have become our enjoyer. Let us be everlastingly enjoyed by You. Be our proprietor, for that is Your natural claim, and be our supreme friend, for You are naturally so. Let us thus embrace You as the supreme beloved.  
(*Krsna Book, Chapter 29*)

Under the circumstances, what woman who has once heard of Your glories from authoritative sources and has somehow or other relished the nectarean fragrance of



Your lotus feet would be foolish enough to agree to marry someone of this material world who is always afraid of death, disease, old age and rebirth? I have therefore accepted Your lotus feet not without consideration but after mature and deliberate decision.

*(Krsna Book, Chapter 60)*

My dear Lord, You are certainly the fully independent master of all the senses. Therefore all women who worship You by strictly observing vows because they wish to acquire a husband to satisfy their senses are surely under illusion. They do not know that such a husband cannot actually give protection to them or their children. Nor can he protect their wealth or duration of life, for he himself is dependent on time, fruitive results and the modes of nature, which are all subordinate to You.

*(Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.18.19)*

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