We Need a Different Sexual Revolution
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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

We Need a Different Sexual Revolution

Few people realize that uncontrolled sexual indulgence can lead to destruction and ruin

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Etymologically, the word brahmacharya means to dwell in, to be attuned with and to realize one's identity with Brahman, the Supreme Spirit. Vyasa, the commentator of the Yoga Sutras, however, defines brahmacharya as the control of the organ of generation and the giving up of all forms of lust. This means not only abstaining from gross sexual indulgence but also thinking, willing, seeing, talking, observing and indulging in sexual entertainment, mentally or through other senses. Thus, brahmacharya can have various dimensions: transcendental, subtle, mental, gross, physical and physiological. Finally, sex plays such a dominant role in the life of most people that it is worth considering another of its dimensions--the social.

Ever since the postulation of the theory of libido by

Sigmund Freud and the consequent sexualization of the Western culture, the social dimensions of sex and brahmacharya have gained much greater importance.

We may not agree with the postulate of Sigmund Freud that sex is the most important driving force in man and that the fullest sexual development, both physical and psychological, is the goal to be achieved for a complex-free psyche. But we must admit that Freud has provided us with deep insights into the workings of the subconscious mind. The roots of lust are indeed deep.

According to Sri Krishna, desire, especially lust, is extremely powerful and can overpower even a wise man. Lust rests in the mind. That means, an individual can Ã±enjoyÃ® lust through imagination, memory and mental cogitation also. The intellect is that function of the mind which arrives at firm conclusions and decisions which later take the form of beliefs and convictions which prompt our thoughts and actions. When one, through experience, reason or by false belief, is convinced that indulging in sex is good, that it conduces good health, peace and happiness, that it is the only true goal of life and that there is nothing wrong in fulfilling one's lustful desire by whichever means, then lust is firmly established in its deepest, surest seat in the intellect.

It is important to thoroughly understand the mechanics of lust if one really wants to practice brahmacharya. In the Katha Upanishad we find a concept of shreyas and preyas. Shreyas means that which is beneficial and conducive to our well-being in the long run. Preyas means that which is only pleasant and attractive, and, though providing momentary joy and pleasure, is harmful in the long run. Human beings are naturally attracted towards the pleasant. That lust is most attractive and pleasing need not be mentioned, but very few people know or realize that when uncontrolled, lust may lead to total destruction and ruin. And if it is rationalized that enjoyment of sex is beneficial, how difficult it can become to conquer it! Today, with the help of multi-media, this is being propagated all over the world.

In the practice of brahmacharya it is always a safe policy to avoid people, places and situations which might stimulate lustful thoughts. In spiritual warfare, flight is the best method of winning against this deadly enemy. Let us never be too self-confident. Lust should never be faced directly.

Some restrictions about food can also help in reducing the pull of the turbulent senses. Mahatma Gandhi did a number of experiments with diet and was of the opinion that occasional fasting helped in subduing lust. The

control of the palate is often underestimated and not practiced as rigorously as it should be. It is impossible to subdue lust without controlling the palate.

Lust is not outside. It is within our mind. Hence, it is more important to change our attitude towards the opposite sex. In Adhyatma Ramayana, Narada, in his hymn to Sri Rama, says that males of all species are Rama and females are Sita. This attitude is most beneficial in sublimating our outlook towards other people. The ultimate solution, however, to the problem of lust is to develop atmabuddhi (soul knowledge), to consider ourselves and others as the sexless, pure, blissful atman (soul) rather than as male or female. Unfortunately, this is not so easy and requires persistent, prolonged effort.

There is an odd, unofficial revolution taking place in modern times. It is called the Sexual Revolution and it is being carried on by millions of people all over the world. Pitrim Sorokin in his book Sane Sex Order discusses the harmful effects of sexual anarchy upon individuals and society in general. One of its most dreaded effects is the breakdown of the family.

In the USA, according to Sorokin, the epidemic of teenage pregnancy, Ã±children having children,Ã® has

become a public health crisis, and the divorce rate has doubled in ten years. Two-fifths of American youth live in single-parent homes for at least part of their youth. Although it would be erroneous to conclude that children from single-parent families cannot prosper, statistics show that they don't. In fact, they do worse in every dimension--physically, emotionally, behaviorally, educationally, economically and in terms of smoking and drinking abuses--than those from traditional families. They die earlier, perform more poorly in school, are less well nourished, suffer more unemployment, are more prone to deviance and crime, and are more susceptible to psychiatric illness. These sociological considerations that affect our understanding of sexual abstinence inspire us all the more in the practice of brahmacharya through thought, word and deed.

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