Publisher's Desk
Category : March 1991
Published by Anonymous on Mar. 01, 1991

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Abuse in the home is a difficult issue, but one we must confront openly. Our page one article and other features begin to define the problem. I urge you all to stand up and say it is no longer acceptable for a man to abuse his wife or children. It must stop.

In order to heal the differences that arise within a marriage from time to time, both partners have to give in. The best place to do this is at the feet of the Gods in their shrine room. There is often no other solution. This is the only way. The method of "giving in" is to talk it over. A major emphasis is to see the other's point of view - finding points in the disturbance they can agree with. Agreement is the key word. The relationship between the husband and wife who are also a mother and father, or potential mother and father, has lasting influence beyond their opposing. Some relationships are easy and some are hard. But here is a good practice for resolving disagreements.

Heal your differences before sleep, even if it takes all night. Don't go to sleep holding on to anger, fear, confusion or ill feelings. By doing this repeatedly, a new habit will be created. The inconvenience of this wisdom will cause each one to be careful of his or her words, thoughts and actions.

Professional people do not argue long before reconciliation in large corporations, nor do they undermine each other, lest they be looking for another place of

employment. Divorce in this modern time is like being dismissed, fired, and then the search is on for another partner with whom the same unresolved karmas will finally mature.

To build solid marriages, some Hindu institutions provide a weekly family home evening for fellowship and discussion. For young couples just starting a marriage, it can be helpful to write down mutual ideals and expectations in a three-part marriage contract written by the couple themselves before the wedding. Part one defines the overall purpose of the marriage and the aspirations and goals that the union intends to fulfill. Parts two and three are a statement of duties and responsibilities by each of the partners. This semi-corporate approach has proven successful in stabilizing many marriages, as each one clearly understands his or her role. Like a ship's chart, this more detailed vow can be referred to if the relationship gels off course.

Marriage reconciliation occurs annually in December, during the holy time of Pancha Ganapati. The couple takes out their marriage agreement and together they study where they have been lax or derelict. They trace back in their minds to incidents that are still vibrating as negative samskaras, and apologize humbly and seek forgiveness and resolution. They renew their commitment to each other.

This is a wonderful key for setting the tone for the coming year - of harmony and peace, which leads to abundance and happiness. We call this anahatha yoga, cleansing the heart chakra, bringing up that true love for one another. It is the process of bringing up all those things that were not settled before going to sleep, to retrieve those seeds before they get plowed under again and produce another crop of sorrow in the coming years. Bring up little things that each one said or did that hurt the other and were not resolved. Bring up anger that occurred, any physical violence, which should never be, but may have been. Make promises and new-year resolutions to set the course of the future on the path of dharma, which is based on ahimsa.

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