



Navya Shāstra

A Religious Forum working for Equal Rights for Vedic Enlightenment

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नव्य शास्त्रं

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08 October 2003

I offer my Pranāms and reverential salutations to the Pujya Sri Achārya Swāmijis of the various Adheenams, leaders of Hindu Mutts and Dharmacharyas and submit the following for the blessings and the attention of His Holiness.

All of our people around the world are described as children of the Supreme Lord.

"Jagadha Pitharau Vande' Paarvathee Parameswarau |"

"Maathaacha Parvathee Davi Pitha De'vo' Maheswarah: |"

Our great ancestors of our faith have given Slokas like these to us. Now it has come to our Dharmacharyas to prove and establish this truth amidst us.

This Navyashāstra is not new and it has happened even in one event in the period of Ramayana. Sri Rama desires to perform an Aswametha Yaaga. At that time, since Sri Sitadevi was not by His side and has been sent to the forest, He could not perform it. There was a tradition of shāstra that a person should perform a Yaga ritual only with his wife by his side. Here the Navyashāstra comes into effect. A new Shāstra was accepted to the effect that a gold Vighraha of the likeness of Sita Devi was to be substituted and the Aswamedhayaga was completed. Just like this, sometimes, it becomes necessary to establish new rules for conduct and Shāstras are modified to suit the changing times of the society.

In ancient Hindu society, in the name of Kanyaka Dhaanam, child marriage was popularly performed. Later, a government minister in the 19th century named Sarda, promulgated a rule that anyone marrying their children before the age of 14 will be punished. People followed the new order and the child marriage tradition has almost disappeared now. Here, Dharmashāstra was forcibly modified by the government order. There are several similar examples that we can quote. In Chidambaram, in a Saiva Mutt, Sri Umapathi Sivacharyar was serving as a Sivanadiyar. A slum dweller named Petthan Sambaan came to the Priests at Sri Nataraja Temple and requested to offer him Sivadeekshai with training in Sivapooja. They rejected his request as he was from a lower caste. As he was sad and sleeping, the Supreme Lord Himself came in his dream and gave him a note in a palm leaf and put it under his pillow. He was told to hand over the note to the priests at the Temple. When Sri Umapathi Sivacharyar saw the note, it read as an order from the Lord asking them to give Sivadeekshai to Petthan Sambaan. So, they obliged and taught him the pooja methods and accepted him in their monastery.

Sri Aadhi Sankara Bhagavatpada has stated:

"Yatra Naaryaastu Poojyanthe' Ramante tatra Devathaha |"

It means: "Wherever women are adored Devas are pleased there"

Thus, we must all accept to teach all Vedas and Mantras to all women that will please our supreme Lord. Just as in Chithambaram Sri Nataraja has commanded to give Sivadheekshai, we must all agree to teach the Vedas without looking at ones birth or caste. We should all join together to achieve this goal. We want to keep all our glorious teachings and traditions and teach the same to all those who seek this. At the same time, we want to eliminate and erase some of the dark pages of our historical traditions, which deny easy and open access to such studies in the name of purity and preservation.

In Navya Shastra, we wish to see the following changes.

[1] Without looking into the family of birth, everyone from any Varna who desires to study should be given the privilege to get Upanayanam and Brahmopadesam.

[2] Without any discrimination, women should be given equal privileges like men to receive Brahmopadesam and study the texts, as they desire. Didn't women like Holy Mother Saradha Devi reached a high reverential status?

[3] People of any country or those born in any faith, Hindus or non-Hindus, if they desire and choose to do higher studies in the Agamas, Vedas and other Hindu religious texts, and learn, agree and follow all the rules of traditions, should be made eligible to participate in the prayer and ritual services in homes and Temples.

[4] Even though such concessions and practices are accepted by few Dharmacharyas on selective basis as an exception for few individuals or by few selected sects, we want all Hindus and the Dharmacharyas of all the sects of our society accept this as uniform rules of standard for everyone to follow. We feel that this is the only path for the growth of our glorious Hindu Dharma.

Such changes will become reality only by the efforts and support of great leaders like your Holiness and other Dharmacharyas. We, as the proud inheritors of Sanātana Dharma, believe that you are our religion's best hope for a future of goodwill and harmony among all people. On behalf of the Hindus around the world, I urge you to take up this cause in the best interest of our community.

Praying for the blessings of Ambal Sri Meenakshi Devi,

With reverential Namaskarams,

Rajarthna Bhattar

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