

# Grihasta asrama – Practical tips

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Practical tips start from here,

**“Grihe thako, vane thako, sada ‘hari’ bole’ dako,  
sukhe duhkhe bhulo na’ko, vadane hari-nam koro re”**

Whether you are a grihasta or brahmacari or sannyasi like me, one dharma is common and same and that is chanting of hare Krishna.

**grihe thako, vane thako, sada hari bole dako**

We all are spirit souls, grihasta has soul, Sanyasi also has a soul, there is no difference on spiritual level, zero difference. We have our sanatana, eternal dharma which is also called bhagavat dharma, vaishnava dharma or jaiva dharma which was said by Bhakti Vinod Thakura, so they are same for all, for all the varnas and all the asramas. Some principles, some rules and regulations are same like chanting of the hare Krishna. Then from the vision of varna and asrama dharma is called varnasrama dharma. Varna and asrama includes brahmacari, grihasta,

vanaprastha and sannyasa. In these everyone has their own dharma, brahmacaris have their dharma, grihastas have their dharma, vanaprasthas have their dharma and sannyasis have their own dharma. Also varna includes brahmin, ksatriya, vaishya and sudra. Brahmin has their dharma, ksatriya has their dharma, if vaishya then protection of cows. Prabhupada has said

**and written many times that for grihastas vaishya dharma is nice. Sudra also have their**

dharma, to serve all the three varnas. There are some people who are called chandal or mleccha, they don't have a dharma. They are separate from varnasrama dharma, they have their own separate world, they are not even human beings they are just two legged animals.

**ahara nidra bhaya maithuna? cha  
samanam etat pashubhir naranam  
dharmo hi teshamadhiko vishesho  
dharmena hina pasunhir naranam**

The thing which is common between animal and man is food, sleep, defence and mating.

The tendency of eating, sleeping, mating are common in both humans and animals. But it is

expected from humans to become religious, dharmo hi tesham adhiko vishesho. Who is a

human being? If someone says I am a human being, then prove. When you accept dharma

then you can be called human. When you follow the dharma then you're a human being. A

person who doesn't follow dharma is like an animal only. So first of all we have to accept

dharma or understand dharma. Human birth is very rare. Sankaracarya says three stages

of life kaumaram yauvanam jara.

When we are a child then we waste our time in playing, in youth we get attached and attracted to each other, one third life gets wasted in this way and at last in old age we are in total anxiety. So Sankaracarya says where do you have time to become dharmic? In childhood you are busy playing, in youth you are busy with lusty affairs and in oldage you are engrossed in anxiety. So human life is very rare.

**durlabham manusam janma**

**tad apy adhruvam arthadam [SB 7.6.1]**

Transaltion: The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.

Prahlad Maharaja says, life is temporary and it can get wasted, but we should not do this.

Human life is very meaningful and very useful.

**durlabha manava-janama sat-sa?ge tara e bhava-sindhu re**

We should engage this rare form of human life in satsang. Satsang and devotee association is the a very important need for every human being. We can be part of any varna or asrama but specially for grihasta without satsang and sadhu sanga life is useless, then its equivalent to death. If there is no satsanga then we will not serve Radha and Krsna in grihasta life.

**manushya-janama paiya, radha-krishna na bhajiya, janiya suniya visha khainu**

Translation: 0 Lord Hari, I have spent my life uselessly. Having obtained a human birth and having not worshiped Radha and Krishna, I have knowingly drunk poison.

We will drink poison and then we will die. But if we do satsang in this life,

**urlabha manava-janama sat-sange tara e bhava-sindhu re**

Then in this human life only we can cross the ocean of material existence.

krishna-prapti hoy jaha ha'te

Those grihastas who can understand this and those who are living life with the aim of krsna prapti by taking advice from saints, diksha guru and siksha then their life will be successful. In shastras two types of grihastas are mentioned:

1. One who is in grihasta asrama, who is following all the rules and regulations of

householder life as stated in the scriptures.

2. Grihamedhi

Prahlad Maharaja says,

**Yan maithunadi-grihamedhi-sukham hi tuccham [ SB 7. 9.45]**

What are grihamedhis doing? They make their house maithunagar and thus waste and destroy their lives. They are called grihamedhi. We need to understand who are grihamedhi. Sukhdev Goswami talk about grihamedhi,

**diva carthehaya rajan ku?umba-bharanena va [SB 2.1.3]**

Translation: Householder in the daytime they are busy either in making money or maintaining family members.

These householders who are now days in majority in this world and in this modern civiliazation. Infact majority of people of this modern world are uncivilized. Such people are not grihasta asrami but grihamedhi. Highly so called education but they are not cultured. Their slogan is, 'If you feel good just do it, do not even think.' The civilized householders they think then they act. But uncivilized householders their formula is 'Just do it.'

**nidraya hriyate naktam**

**vyavayena ca va vayah [SB 2.1.3]**

Translation: The lifetime of such an envious householder is passed at night either in sleeping or in sex indulgence.

When they get up they are busy in making money, money for what? ku?umba-bharanena va.

Once when I was China, it was written on a shopping mall,

'After your work hours spend time with us.' The hidden meaning behind it was, when you work hard and then at the weekend waste that money shopping on our mall. What to talk about these grihamedhis?

**In brief Sukhdev Goswami said,  
kaler dosa-nidhe rajann. asti hy eko mahan gunah [SB 12.3.51]**

5000 years back Sukhdev Goswami has said, that the lives of followers of Kali will be filled with faults in their lifestyle. Then starts Kali-Puran. So we need to understand the difference between grihasta and grihamedhi. There are some do's and don't's, favorable and unfavorable. We need to understand both in spiritual field. Grihasta householders should understand what should be done and what should not be done. We should not follow the grihamedhis.

There is vivaha yajna, actually the whole life of grihastas should be a yajna, sacrifice. Human should do all activities for the pleasure of God. When there is marriage ceremony going on

otherwise shubhmangal savadhan, marriage is auspicious, mangal but be careful, savadhan.

**yajnarthat karmano anyatra loko yam karma bandhanah [ BG 3.9]**

Translation: Work done as a sacrifice for Visnu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Otherwise it will bound you, you will be entangled in attachment and karma fully. In Iskcon when there is marriage in the grihasta circle that time we hear that, we should make Krsna our marriage partner. It should not be that only partnership between husband and wife but Krsna out of the picture. No Krishna should be the center of the grihasta life. As we are talking about grihastas, the grihasta should also stay in asrama, those grihastas who do not stay in asrama then they are grihamedhi.

Your house where you spend your most of the time, housewives practically spend 24 hours in the house, your home is where your heart is. So make that home a temple or make your asrama as temple not just make home theater. We have to become grihasta asrami not grihamedhi. It is said in sastras grihastas make and stay in house to serve the Lord and the guests. And which type of guests? Those who are parivrajakacharya and devotees. So make your house a temple or asrama. You can have deities at home or also a picture of the Lord to make it simple. If God is in your home then make Krishna as the center of the house and let everything revolve around Krishna. If there is a Lord then there should be kitchen also and our movement is also known as kitchen religion. Krishna has a very close connection with the kitchen. Make different dishes or bhogas for the Lord. And of course when you do this then you can fulfill Lord's instructions,

**patram puspam phalam toyam,  
yo me bhaktya prayacchati [Bg 9.26]**

You will be saved from sins, sins like meat eating, egg, fish. People say, eat eggs any day Sunday or Monday then Yamraja will give you dande or punishment. Offer bhoga to Krishna and then don't sleep but sing the glories of Radha Krishna. So make your house a temple when the Lord comes and also devotees come as guests, keep it very clean as it's a temple.

King Kulshekhar was an ideal grihasta. Now-a-days people talk about swacha bharat abhiyan, it's nice but cleanliness should not only be external. First thing which should be cleansed is our mind and thoughts, ceto darpana marjanam. This kind of deep cleanliness we need. Grimedhis may look clean early morning, they say good morning but we can also say suprabhatam in place of good morning. They say good morning but hear and read all bad news and fill the mind and heart with bad news. Mind and thoughts both become dirty. You should not only keep deities and pictures of Lord but also keep sastra in the

house. Put fire to all the stock of newspapers, and decorate your house with sastras, Gita, Bhagavatam, Chaitanya Charitamrita. Keep all Prabhupada's books at home. Tulasi Maharani should be there and if you can keep a cow it will be very good. And if you have a dog then it should be kept outside. You can keep a cock not to eat but so that they wake us up early morning like in Dwaraka there were cock to wake up. Dwarkadhish Krishna used to get up with the help of them. This is all Lord's arrangement how cocks assist us. The Lord wakes up early, so if you want to have Krishna prema and also want to go back home back to Godhead then we have to practice waking up early. Early to bed and early to rise, makes men healthy, wealthy and wise. Getting up early is not hard but sleeping early is difficult.

### **asat sanga tyagat yei vaishnava acar**

If you want to become vaishnava grihasta then you have to stay away from bad association. Late night parties and all this affairs stop all this. So stop all this, the whole family gets into bed early and gets up early. Because to say, to Krishna, uthi uthi gopala, Yasoda maiya wakes up Gopal early in the early morning, brahma muhurta. So if we have Bal gopal at home you could play the role of Yasoda maiya and wake Krishna up and short mangal aarti. Or on the walls you can have paintings of Vrindavan, Mayapur, Jagannath Puri, acaryas instead of politicians, actors, etc. Throw them out, you don't need them, there should be spiritual decoration so that wherever you see that will inspire you to stay high forever, jiva jago.

Leave hi hello, it's practical why say hello hello just say Hare Krishna you don't have to invest time separately in that, it's practical just say haribol. When you are making money, keep life simple, simple living high thinking. People say just do it, do not even think, they have high living, low thinking. Not only low thinking, they do not think, don't even think just

do it. Householder is also a money holder or property holder and the other three asrama don't hold money. Whatever you have acquired should be acquired by fair means, do not go for meat

eating, gambling, illicit sex and intoxication. Don't do any job in which these activities are

done, stay away from all this. And you make money, you have the right to acquire or collect money. We brahmachari or sannyasi collect or acquire knowledge and give it to you and you should share half of your collected money for spreading Krishna consciousness or building temple, food for life, printing books, you could spend on pilgrimages, buy books. If you have a Krishna centered lifestyle then all your investments will be in Krishna consciousness. A grihasta should be selfless, parupkaraya idam sariram, this body is given for being selfless.

Rupa Goswami says that a Grishatha should share 50% of his wealth for Krishna Consciousness and keep 25% for emergency purposes. The important duty of every Grishatha is to raise Children in Krishna Consciousness and if this duty is not followed then you are irresponsible. It is said in Bhagavatam,

**gurur na sa syat sva-jano na sa syat  
pita na sa syaj janani na sa syat  
daivam na tat syan na patis ca sa syan  
na mocayed ya? samupeta-m?tyum [SB 5.5.18]**

Translation: One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod.

Don't become parents if you cannot send your children back home back to Godhead. It's your duty to make your children devotee. Providing only mundane education and providing basic necessities to children is not sufficient, then they will just have higher education and earn money and use money in wrong



ways. They are also spirit souls, the need of children's souls should be fulfilled that is to make them Krishna Conscious. For this there are various seminars in ISKCON centres on parenting. In today's world it is challenging to make children Krishna Conscious. For that we can learn parenting tips from Iskcon, sadhu sanga is important or sunday schools of ISKCON, send children to Bhakta Prahlad schools, there are so many things you can do. If you have made your home asram all the members should be Krishna Conscious and especially children should be raised in Krishna Consciousness.

**Question 1:** What is the right way to manage or balance material education as well as the spiritual culture? As they spend most of the time in school, we send them to sunday classes, read bhagavatam but what is the right kind of balance?

**Answer :** Like I said we should make our home a temple or asrama, by staying in this environment your children will get all the samskaras and impressions automatically. Make such an environment at home, parents are the first guru of their children, you get an example for them. I was thinking when Srila Prabhupada was a child, he would be sleeping, and father would be doing arati, ding ding ding, he would hear the bell and wake up and see their father bowing down before Krishna. This provides balance, prasadam at home and arati all have influence. Inspire children to chant rounds everyday.

**Question 2:** How can a devotee wife grow in bhakti and raise her kids to become devotee if the husband is not much spiritually inclined?

**Answer:** You do your duty, it is best if both husband and wife inspire children to become devotees, both wife and husband both are gurus. Maybe later he will change his mind in future but for now you do. Spiritual education can begin from mother or wife also. It is said if

you bring change in your wife's or husband's life then you change that person but if you bring change in housewife's or a mother's life then she will work on the whole family, then she makes everyone a devotee, she makes it her personal project. Make children Krishna conscious and use your intelligence how to make your husband also Krishna conscious. Hare Krishna.