

# The Ideal Life for Married Couples

आदर्श दाम्पत्य जीवन

By Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj



**Shree Ram Sharnam International Spiritual Center**

8-A Ring Road, Lajpatnagar-4, New Delhi 110024

[www.shreeramsharnam.org](http://www.shreeramsharnam.org)

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(Some Inspiring Examples)

Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj<sup>1</sup>

In *Sanatan Dharma*, the life of man is divided into four *ashramas* or stages of life. Of these four, the life of the householder holds the second place and its duties are regarded as the highest. The majority of people in the world are in this stage. If their lives were to be inclined towards *sadhana* and *bhakti*, it would be the best means to achieve world peace. Most of the religious scriptures and the teachings of sages are centered on the lives of the householder. In reality, for a happy and contented life, love is essential. As the sages say:

*On roaming the whole world, it can be seen that where there is  
love, there is happiness  
Elsewhere lies difficulty and suffering  
In relations of friendship and brotherhood, love and affection is  
the essence  
Without love, our world is meaningless!*

(Swami Satyanandji Maharaj, *Bhakti Prakash*, New Delhi)

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<sup>1</sup> Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj is Head of Shree Ram Sharnam, an international spiritual organization headquartered in New Delhi. He did his first degree at Hissar and thereafter obtained a doctorate from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi, India. He was then a Faculty Member there and was a leading Ocular Microbiologist in Asia. After twenty two years of teaching at the AIIMS, Swamiji took to the spiritual path and has since devoted himself solely to spiritual pursuits. His background as a teacher enables him to convey the spiritual beliefs of Hinduism with a scientific perspective which makes it very appealing to the younger generation, through discourses in Hindi and English. He believes in strict discipline, punctuality and does not accept any offerings, not even flowers. Even the touching of feet is not allowed. More information about Swamiji and Shree Ram Sharnam is available at [www.ibiblio.org/Ram](http://www.ibiblio.org/Ram)

Let us with the help of some unique examples, try to understand how the life of the householder can be an ideal one, full of happiness, contentment and peace

(I)

An European couple of ordinary means reached old age. As their wedding anniversary was approaching, they both wondered if they would be able to celebrate it together again. Thus, they thought that they should give each other some gifts. Their desires were strong but their means were limited. What could they do? However, they were determined in their resolve. The husband decided -I will gift my wife a gold clip for her beautiful hair. The wife resolved to gift the husband a gold chain for his watch. She went to buy the chain but for this had to sell her hair. Likewise, the husband sold his watch to be able to afford to buy the gold clip. Today is the happy occasion of their wedding anniversary. As they started to exchange gifts, the husband noticed that the wife had tied a scarf on her head. Whats this?, he asked. As she removed the scarf he noticed that she had no hair. The wife wanted to give the gold chain, but she noticed that the husband had tied a handkerchief on his wrist and the watch was missing. Their mutual love and sacrifices brought tears to their eyes. If there is such mutual love and care, then undoubtedly married life would be no less than heaven.

(II)

Once in an Indian village a farmer lived in great peace with his small family. They had enough food from the farm, a small home, a cow which gave milk, they regularly recited *Amritvani*, the children were obedient and, with simple living, the family lived peacefully. The home was akin to a joyful temple. One day a guest arrived from the city. The family served him very well – more than their means allowed. The guest said, Brother! People have progressed much and you are still living in the shabby old way. You need to change your way of living. You must improve it. Your children are beautiful and good in studies dont marry them off

within the village itself. The cities have every type of modern facility, get a dining table for your home are you always going to eat and feed everyone on the floor? You should buy a sofa set from the city for yourself and your guests. For cold water, forget about your earthen pot (*ghada*) and buy a refrigerator. To avoid the summer heat, get an air conditioner, or at least a cooler. For cooking, do not use coal but get a gas oven for sister-in-law, the poor lady's hands get soiled and eyes may go bad with coal smoke!. The farmer respectfully replied Brother! I cannot afford all this. We are happy and contented with what we have. We have no worries and no troubles. The guest explained further: Just think for a moment. In the near future you will marry your daughter, her in-laws will come to visit what impression will this simple house and your old fashioned style of living have on them? Don't worry about money, take a loan on your farm from the bank.

The company of the greedy, encourages greed, the company of a *bhakta* (devotee) encourages *bhakti* (devotion); similarly the guests company ignited the desire of the farmer to become big, it ignited the fire of greed. A loan was taken from the bank and the worry of repayment started. The worry-free person was full of worry. Both mind and body grew sick. Less work could be done on the field and the yield decreased. The happy family began to lead an unhappy life. Till now, there were enough means to cover all their needs but now their desires grew limitless. Even if you use all the means in the world, it will still be insufficient to fulfill all your desires. Peace lies in the lack of worry and in satisfaction, not in material things. Spread yourself only as much as worry, fear and dissatisfaction do not touch you! If you can't extend your means, learn to control your needs and desires —only then will you be peaceful.

### (III)

The holy sage Kabir used to give discourses on happy married life. There was always a crowd of people to see him; some would come for the *Satsang* but most would come to seek resolution of

household problems. Kabir would advise spiritual solutions, i.e. he would encourage the *jaap* of *Ram Naam*. He would turn people towards God and most would return satisfied. Today, one married youth has come to meet the Saint alone and ask something. Kabirdasji broke the silence by asking It appears that your married life is full of disturbances, devoid of happiness. Due to these difficulties, you are worried and are here! Yes, Maharaj! I have often thought of breaking relations with my wife. Both our natures are very diverse, thus there are differences between us. She does not know how to work in a proper way, she does not listen to me. The worried youth waited anxiously for the Saints response.

Kabir brought thread from inside and started weaving cloth. In a few minutes he called his wife It is getting dark, kindly bring a lighted lamp. The youth was astonished, since it was bright daylight - why did he need a lamp? Soon the Saints wife came with a lighted lamp. Even the wife had not raised any objection. After some time she brought two glasses of milk. Each one took a glass and began to drink. The wife enquired: Hope the sugar is sufficient?. It is just fine for us, was the reply. As it happened, due to poor eyesight the wife had put salt instead of sugar into the milk. Kabir was happily drinking salty milk, calling it sweet. The youth thought - what sort of intelligence is this? He does not even know the difference between sweet and savory! Why did I come to him? He then requested the Saint, Please say something on a happy householders life. Kabir Sahib replied, Son, is there something left to say? Everything has been said already, the secrets of life have been revealed. For a peaceful and ideal married life, the most essential thing is for you to become like others before you expect them to become like you. Both of you need to change to some extent- you should tolerate your wifes ways and she should listen to you. The foundation of happy family is love. What is the meaning of love? You must forgive others faults and mistakes. One must always seek forgiveness for ones own mistakes; one must always speak in a sweet tone. Where there is love, forgiveness and tolerance appear themselves.

But Maharaj, I have always only found faults in my wife, I even suspect her. Brother, you have destroyed the foundations of love. Trust is the foundation of love. This must be unshaken. Who does not have faults? If you want to lead a happy and contented life, then you must give up the habit of finding fault in others and censuring them. See everyone with the eyes of love and you will see love all around you. Remember, finding fault with each other, indulging in criticism is like poison for married life. Trust each other, kill your pride and superiority complex, respect each other more than is required, give happiness and be tolerant. Keep on increasing these qualities!

#### (IV)

A king once learnt that one of his ministers had a family of a hundred members and food for all was prepared in one kitchen. He found this difficult to believe, so as soon as he found an opportunity he went to the minister's house to see for himself. He did not even inform them in advance. The king saw that this was completely true. He enquired Have you all never fought? Has there never been disagreement on the cooking or sharing of food? No King! This has never happened till today. The king asked, Dear Minister, please tell me the secret of your compatibility? King, we know how to tolerate each other. There are two reflections of love-tolerance and forgiveness. Where these exist, however big the family may be, it will remain together, and will never fall apart. It will appear as though the loving God Himself resides there.

#### (V)

In a small town there lived a family of five in a modest home an elderly couple, two sons and one daughter. They had no means of livelihood. After getting wood from the forest, they would sell it in the city for income. There could be no control on the children, they remained uneducated and soon got spoilt. They grew quarrelsome and wild by nature. The couple's greatest worry was for their daughter how can we get her married? The brothers made

a cunning plan let us marry her to a wealthy person, then we will get him killed. We will gain much wealth in this manner and we can get her remarried and we too will get married and live happily. Soon they found a wealthy match, took Rs 20,000 from him and married off their sister. At the time of her wedding, the brothers advised the sister to get rid of the husband as soon as possible. The sister left for her in-laws place. On the third day after her wedding when, as per tradition, she visited her parents, she led her husband to the well on the pretext of feeling thirsty. Unaware of the deceitful plan, the husband began to draw water from the well. The wife pushed him and the husband fell into the well. The wife then returned to her parents house; she had already brought with her all the gold, silver and money from her husbands house. The brothers were pleased. However, the young man knew how to swim and as he shouted for help, passers-by pulled him out of the well. Soon he returned to his wifes house. Seeing him alive, everyone was astonished and unhappy. The husband made no mention of the incident. The next day the married couple left for their own home.

As time passed, the couple grew close to each other. They had two sons whom they loved dearly. The sons grew up and were married with great pomp. They had children and as grandparents the couple were pleased with the way the family had grown. The husband thanked God immensely for all this and felt deeply grateful to God he awoke at dawn each morning, chanted *Ram Naam* for hours and remained engrossed in *Jaap* and *Satsang* all day long. Once his elder daughter-in-law enquired Father, why do you chant *Ram Naam* so much? Daughter-in-law, mightier than the Lord is His Name; there is more strength in *Ram Naam* than in Ram Himself. Shri Ram in His incarnation saved a few, but *Ram Naam* saves millions each day. *Ram Naam* is immensely powerful and has limitless potential. Not only did this save my life but it saved me from anger, quarrels, dislikes, criticism of others and restlessness. The essence of chanting *Ram Naam* and *Jaap* is to never see anyones faults, never criticize anyone but to cover up for others. Daughter, then your life will be peaceful and contented. *Jaap* arouses the desire to change from within and makes you the

epitome of pure love. The wife was sitting close by and listening. She thought how blessed she was to have the company of such as a God-like husband. How fortunate I am. Despite my wanting to harm my husband, he has shown extreme forgiveness. This is the Glory of *Ram Naam*. She cried in repentance and became a disciple of *Ram Naam*. This was the miracle of love, tolerance and forgiveness!

(VI)

Once a disciple of Brahmaleen Swami Akhandanandji brought her newly-wed son and daughter in law to him for blessings. Everyone bowed and sat down. The son was restless by nature, with loose morals and spoilt *Sanskaras*. He was devoid of interest in *dharma* or regard for saints and holy persons. He thought all this was fraud. He joked about God and *dharma* and regarded saints and holy persons as a burden on society. The unhappy mother had often prayed to Swamiji, Please bless him so he changes his defiant attitude and he follows the right path. Today too he only came on the request of his wife, not due to his mothers desire. Maharaj asked, Son, how many hands do you have? Is this something to ask- two hands, responded the boy. And your wives? Irritated the son responded, She too has two. Together how many do you have? Four. Son, how many feet do you have? Hugely irritated, the son replied, Two of mine, two of my wife and together we have four. Very good son! When husband and wife lead a disciplined life, i.e. they follow *Dharma* then they become a foursome and if they lead a life which is not in accordance with the *Shastras*, which is against *Dharma*, then they are akin to animals, four-legged. Living contrary to *Dharma* implies indulging in lies, corruption, theft and dishonesty. This can bring you wealth but not peace. When you single-mindedly pursue *Artha* (wealth) it can be accompanied by many mis-happenings.

With folded hands, the youth said, I will always be mindful of your teachings. Many thanks, Son! For a happy married life, remember one more thing- learn to bow down in life. Whoever bows down is triumphant. Today's youth have this shortcoming.

Just see today's husbands they do not bend before their wives, wives do not bend before their husbands. In what way am I inferior, they think? Then, they meet in court. The intolerant mother-in-law does not bow before the daughter-in-law. She regards her position as superior and the daughter-in-law considers herself more intelligent so she too does not bow before the mother-in-law. At first they start to cook separately, then the mother-in-law has to go to an old person's home or one of them has to move out of the family home into rented accommodation. Do not think that bowing before others, i.e. being pride-less and humble is a sign of weakness; it is a sign of bravery and of greatness!

(VII)

A Saint as he moved from town to town once stopped in a village in South India. One of the villagers requested him, Baba! Please come to our home for a meal. The Saint sat to eat and the housewife respectfully placed food for him. As she arose to bring more things, the Saint noticed that she was limping. He asked, Devi, is your foot spoilt? I am handicapped Baba! But you can ask my husband if I have ever caused him any trouble. I pound the grain, I cook and clean the utensils. I also help him in his work; he is only required to fill the water. The husband immediately responded, Baba, I too do not leave anything undone in serving her. I always take care that she does not feel her handicap. I take her on my shoulder to *tirath*, I similarly take her to the temple once a week. We have never felt any shortcoming, with co-operation and love our lives are proceeding happily. The pleased Saint asked, How was your wife handicapped? Baba, she has been so since birth, replied the husband. The surprised Saint asked, Then, young man, why did you marry her? Baba, when God has given us birth, He has also granted us the right to live. If everyone started to avoid the handicapped, their lives could be difficult and full of disappointment. Thus, willingly I accepted her as my wife! Deeply impressed by the villagers' high morals, the Saint said My dear boy, a family in which there is a husband like you, with such liberal thoughts and illustrious character, where the couple has so much mutual respect and willingness to serve and such respect towards saints, the man can be compared to God Himself and the wife to a Goddess and the home is akin to heaven (*vaikunth*)!

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