

Gay SEX Legalization ?

Free and Miserable

“Delhi High Court legalizes gay sex” declared newspaper headlines recently. Gay rights activists welcomed the decision as “liberating”, whereas religious leaders flayed it. The media coverage of the ensuing debate tended to sympathize with the gays; statements like “repeal the law that violated the fundamental rights of the gays” or “homosexuality is a harmless form of enjoyment” or “religious leaders should not infringe on the privacy of the individual” made the religious leaders who opposed the decision seem dogmatic and regressive.



But nobody is questioning is the implicit assumption that underlies the debate: the belief that our material bodies are our gateways to pleasure. This belief is so deeply ingrained into our modern psyche that we don't even recognize that it is an article of faith; we just take it for granted as an obvious fact.

Is it?

FROM GATEWAY TO DEAD END



Even a little experience of bodily pleasure shows that this gateway turns out to be a dead end. The pleasure in sex, which is the paramount of all bodily pleasures and which is the present issue of contention, is pathetically meager. Like the water-ejecting capacity of a sponge, the body's capacity to enjoy is limited. Initially, when the sponge is filled with water, just by a slight pinch, water gushes out. But as the sponge is squeezed more and more, even a few drops of water become difficult to get. Finally, all that remains is the effort of squeezing. The sexual act similarly involves increasing effort and decreasing pleasure, leading eventually to utter exhaustion.

Although our sexual experiences are invariably disappointing, yet when we see the media portrayals of unlimited erotic bliss, we – amazingly – believe the media. We modern humans who pride ourselves for our rationality succumb to the ultimate irrationality by placing our faith in our media-stimulated imagination rather than in our down-to-earth experience. Plato warned long ago, “Of all human passions, sex is the most acute – and the most irrational.” But sadly, irrationality seems to be winning the battle in our modern times.



First, we legalized promiscuity; then, we legalized abortion (the unwanted result of promiscuity); now, we legalize homosexuality; maybe soon, we will legalize incest – and we will celebrate it all as liberating. What about the ever-increasing broken families, single mothers, abused children, AIDS victims? Never mind, if that’s the price for freedom, we will pay it. After all, we are free. Gloriously free – and piteously miserable.



As long as we hold on to the belief that our body is our gateway to pleasure, we will end up crashing into the dead end of misery – inescapably.

But thankfully we have an alternative to this irrational belief and its consequent misery.

RECLAIMING REAL HAPPINESS

The Vedic texts of ancient India point to another gateway to happiness. They explain that we are essentially souls, spiritual beings, entitled to eternal enjoyment in our devotional relationship with God, Krishna.

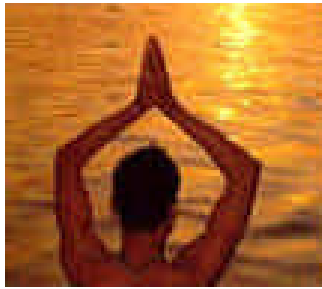


I hear the loud objection: “Believing that we are souls is also a matter of faith!”

Agreed, but it is a sensible and a verifiable faith.

Sensible because science has singularly failed to explain how matter can develop the ability to *experience* matter; nobody has seen it happen, nobody has made it happen, nobody has any clear idea of how it *can* ever happen. The only sensible explanation is that this ability comes from the non-material soul that animates the body.

And verifiable because each one of us can personally experience the spiritual happiness that confirms our identity as souls. Let’s see how.



As souls, we are eternal parts of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, who is the reservoir of all happiness. By re-connecting ourselves with Him through chanting His holy names, every one of us can easily experience our natural spiritual happiness. However, to rise to the spiritual platform, we also need to avoid those activities which drag our consciousness back to the material realm, just as to become healthy, a patient has to avoid the activities that cause the disease. And, sex, more than any other activity, strongly reinforces our mistaken belief that we are our bodies.

So, chanting the holy names like the Hare Krishna mahamantra and regulating sexual indulgence are like the prescription and proscription of the treatment meant to reinstate us in spiritual happiness. Let's see how sexual regulation (or its absence) affects the treatment:

1. **Complete abstinence:** Those who can avoid sex entirely quickly rise to the spiritual level.
2. **Regulated indulgence:** For those whom complete abstinence is not feasible, the Vedic texts prescribe marriage between a man and a woman. Knowing that sex even within marriage blocks the way to spiritual happiness, a spiritually aware couple strives for the ideal standard of sex only for procreation. This willingness to regulate lust according to scripture purifies them gradually so that they can rise to the spiritual level.
3. **Unregulated indulgence:** All forms of sex outside (heterosexual) marriage are scripturally-unauthorized expressions of lust and so will perpetuate, not mitigate, lust. Materially, there may be a difference in the harmfulness of homosexuality, rape, incest and pedophilia, but scripturally, they all fall in the same category. The Srimad Bhagavatam (3.20.26) characterizes homosexuality as demoniac. Why demoniac? Because it abuses sex, the sacred force meant to bring a new life into this world, for selfish, sensual pleasure. When we abuse sex, sex will abuse us in return. The argument that homosexuality is harmless neglects the verdict of history: abuse of sex leads to disaster. We legalized and popularized promiscuity imagining it to be harmless and thus courted the specters of divorces and diseases. Moreover, lust is dangerously contagious; when one person starts experimenting with a deviant form of sexuality, others soon imitate. We quarantine those with a contagion, knowing that infringement into individual privacy is essential for social protection. The same applies to homosexuals.

OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

Most importantly, all of us intrinsically feel that we have a right to happiness. Homosexuals attract our sympathy by appealing to this right, but if only they understood that they are working against their own interests! Instead of agitating against the laws prohibiting homosexuality, if they would agitate against the bodily misidentification that deprives them of their rightful spiritual happiness, their agitation would be truly fruitful. If they feel spiritual happiness is unrealistic, they could consider German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's insightful analysis of the quest for happiness: "It is difficult to find happiness within oneself, but it is impossible to find it elsewhere."

Restraining the sexual drive is certainly difficult, but it's possible when we taste inner happiness by chanting Hare Krishna. If the homosexuals would put into chanting just a fraction of the effort that they are putting to struggle for their rights, they could easily tolerate and even transcend their sexual compulsions.

And for the rest of us, if the current debate on sexual morality can help us discover the real gateway to happiness, then we will have reclaimed our fundamental right to freedom and happiness.

