



From Back to Godhead

**By Urmila Devi Dasi**

Proponents of contraception claim it solves many social problems. Are they right? Thirteen-year-old Jenny broke the silence. "Rhoda, I was a birth-control baby." "Birth-control baby? I never heard of that." "The birth control my mother and father used didn't work, and the result was me." "You mean you weren't wanted." Jenny didn't answer. She hunched the covers over her shoulders. Rhoda leaned across the beds to touch Jenny's shoulder. "I'm sorry. I don't know why I said such a stupid thing." Jenny lay still for a long

time. Her thoughts drifted to her family....

"Rhoda," she said softly after a while. "Rhoda, you were right, anyway. I'm the family accident." Rhoda was sleeping already. Surprised at what [Rhoda] had said, and yet, feeling as if she'd always known it, [Jenny] understood now the plea that was always in her mother's eyes when her mother looked at her....

[Jenny] closed her own eyes and went to sleep, too. —A Figure of Speech, by Norma Fox Mazer, p. 44  
ABUSED, UNLOVED, unwanted, neglected children are an image of pain that tugs at the heart of any caring person. And what is modern technology's answer? Birth control. Politicians, scientists, educators, and even religious leaders advise contraception—and its commander in reserve, abortion—as the answer to many social and economic woes. Yet when we examine the problems that contraception and abortion aim to solve and the benefits they are supposed to give, we may be surprised to see how they fall short. In ancient history, the saint Prahlada taught that a materialistic solution is worse than the original problem. Birth control exemplifies this principle. Let's consider the reputed benefits of birth control and abortion: no more births of unwanted children, all children raised in a stable home and nurtured with affection, more freedom and respect for women, better health for women, fewer financial burdens for families, and less of a population burden on the planet. No more unwanted children? The prime objective of birth control and abortion is to eliminate unwanted children. Despite the increase of birth control and abortion worldwide, however, evidence shows that the problem of unwanted children has worsened the more the "solution" has been applied. In the essay Right Reason, William F. Buckley, Jr., writes, "The general availability of birth control information has caused a rise in illegitimacy."

In Sweden, for example, the percentage of children born out of wedlock has risen steadily and today stands at 52%. In the United States, from 1950 to 1980 the annual rate of illegitimate births increased by 450%. One might imagine that with birth control and abortion easily available, all children, or nearly all, would be born to a married couple who want a child. But that's not the case. The number of unwanted children is on the rise. A major cause is teenage promiscuity, and 81% of physicians surveyed agree that the availability of contraceptives has led to increased promiscuity among teens. (A. Pietropinto, "A Survey on Contraceptive Analysis," Medical Aspects of

Human Sexuality, May 1987, p. 147) Teenagers who have had birth control education have a 50% higher sexual activity rate than teens who have not. (Louis Harris and Associates, "American Teens Speak: Sex, Myths, TV and Birth Control," Harris and Associates for Planned Parenthood of America, Inc., 1986, p. 53)

Coleen Mast, author of the Sex Respect curriculum, compares teaching about contraceptives to teaching how to light fires "safely" in garbage cans. Such an education would no doubt increase the number of house fires. By offering some limited protection against the consequence of pregnancy, contraceptives encourage illicit sex. But contraceptives don't solve problems of poverty, illiteracy, drug use, and uncontrolled sexual desire—all of which contribute to illegitimate births. In fact, people may feel that simply by using some pill or device, they can avoid becoming responsible adults capable of moral choice.

### All Children Raised With Stability and Love?

The growing acceptance and use of birth control and abortion has also led to an increase in divorce, abandonment, child neglect, and child abuse. Half of all children in America will grow up without one parent, usually the father, because of illegitimacy or divorce. More than one million children a year live through divorce. Again in America, from 1986 to 1993 the number of abused and neglected children nearly doubled, and the numbers of children seriously injured or endangered from abuse both quadrupled. Having the right to "plan" one's children through unnatural means may lead to family instability and child abuse; it certainly has not solved these problems. If we ask, "Why are so many children today not raised with love in a stable home?" and "Why do people use birth control?" the answers will be practically the same: the parents think sex is for pleasure only, not for reproduction. Why, then, take much care with children who come accidentally? And "accidental" children will come. Women who use contraceptives with a high rate of compliance still have a 10-13% pregnancy rate. (Family Planning Perspective, Sept./Oct. 1980, p. 236)

Contraceptive use reveals a selfish attitude: one wants enjoyment without any responsibility other than giving pleasure in return. Some may argue that a married couple may be "responsible" in their contraceptive use and still

care for the children they plan for. But isn't that like a company employee who regularly steals from the business yet claims to be honest with the other employees? Perhaps some people can practice "selective love," but they remind us of an unusual creature—the scorpion mouse, which kills and eats scorpions, being immune to the poison. It also eats other mice, even other scorpion mice. But scorpion mice are some of the most caring parents in the animal kingdom, mourning long if one of their babies becomes a meal for an owl. Such "love" is a kind of extended selfishness, rather than selfless giving for the welfare of others. If the motive for our "love" is selfish, we will act without concern for our formerly lovable person if our desires appear to be better fulfilled by not loving.

Those who try to prevent pregnancy—through surgery, devices, chemicals, or unnatural sexual practices—develop a mentality of seeing their body as meant for their own purposes, rather than seeing both their body and the bodies of their children as gifts from God to be engaged in His service. The contraceptive users so much despise Krishna's plan for the human body that they alter its natural function. They come to hate the responsibilities integral to their own bodies. When those responsibilities take the form of children, they may resent the children as well. Contraceptive use means trying to outwit Krishna, to take what one wants while short-circuiting and sabotaging the system. That is the mentality of a thief. Shrila Prabhupada often said that Krishna can be the greatest cheater. We may try to cheat Him, but in the end we will find ourselves cheated of genuine spiritual life and happiness, as the cheating employee will find that his friends don't trust him and his boss fires him.

One may further argue that abuse, neglect, divorce, instability, and so on, exist, if to a lesser extent, among those who do not artificially avoid having children. Clearly, simply having children as nature intended is not enough to insure genuine love for them. Yes, without spiritual realization, our loving relationships will be more or less selfish. But the mentality of the contraceptive user is so opposed to the Lord's plan that spiritual life, with its true love and selflessness, has no chance to develop. And a life that fully respects the link between sex and reproduction is part of a foundation upon which one can exhibit real love.

More Freedom and Respect for Women?

Because of widespread contraceptive use, women have increasingly become exploited slaves of irresponsible men. Formerly, a woman who conceived a child outside marriage had choices. She could marry the child's father, raise the child alone, or give the child to an adoptive couple. If she wanted to marry the child's father, her parents and community would put moral and social pressure on him. Now boyfriends, parents, and even husbands often pressure women to avoid or kill their own children. The thinking is, "This woman entered the relationship with a stated or implied agreement that children weren't included. Why should the man be obligated now that a child has come by accident?"

Mary Pride, a leading advocate of the return to family values, writes, "Our society has been separating sex from the responsibilities and joys of having children for over thirty years.... Wives, who used to be regarded primarily as mothers and therefore sacred, are now seen as fancy vessels for men to relieve their sexual frustrations. Look at the ads in magazines, stores, TV, and billboards. Is this a noble picture of women, for their bodies to be used to sell everything from jeans to toothpaste?" (The Way Home, p. 30)

Women who rely on contraception and abortion may feel unfettered to pursue their own desires and careers, but is that real freedom? Real freedom comes in loving and serving God. Having children, even many children, doesn't interfere with that. Besides, a woman who rejects contraception is expressing her freedom to control her sexual urges. By using contraception and abortion, others show they are hopeless slaves of lust and selfish bodily urges.

### Better Health for Women?

We're told it's dangerous for women to have "too many" children, or to have children later in their childbearing years. Actually, having and nursing children prevents many of the health problems of modern women. For example, a woman who breast feeds for a total of at least seven years has nearly a zero percent chance of breast cancer at any time in her life. Most women who get various cancers of the reproductive system have had no or few babies. Conversely, many medical problems come directly from contraception. And abortion is not only very risky physically, but often brings

the mother lifelong psychological problems. Of course, as with anything in this world, pregnancy and childbirth include risks. The risks, however, need not deter us from doing what is best for us and most pleasing to God. Those devoted to illicit sexual life are willing to sacrifice their money, health, and reputation to maintain their way of life. Even the fear of AIDS doesn't discourage them. Can we not be at least as willing to sacrifice for the right cause?

### Fewer Financial Burdens for Families?

It is common in modern society to think of children as a problem rather than a blessing. And today, children may indeed be financial burdens, especially if they're extravagant consumers. On the other hand, many parents find that their children are a blessing and enrich their lives in many ways, even economically. Despite their freedom from the financial burden of children, childless couples face financial burdens nonetheless, because their desires induce them to work hard for money. Instead of spending money on educating and training their children, they spend for an extra car, a vacation home, a large-screen TV, and so on. Do these acquisitions bring more joy and fewer burdens than children would? Which life inspires one to be a better person? Certainly having children costs money, time, and effort. But, again, life is full of sacrifice and responsibility. A man who works hard so he can raise children dedicated to Lord Krishna is blessed with spiritual growth and satisfaction.

### Less of a Population Burden on the Planet?

Many people will argue that without birth control, families will have a dozen or more children. Yet in societies where birth control isn't practiced, the average number of children per family is six. Six children per family may seem too many for the earth, but the entire present world population could fit in France or in the state of Texas, with 1,500 square feet per person. We could feed ten times the present population on an American-style diet, and thirty times the population on a Japanese-style diet. (Colin Clark, Oxford University) All the world's scriptures urge us to have many children, and describe children as a blessing. The only burden on the earth mentioned in the Vedic scriptures is that of a large population of sinful people who live lives of crime and deceit. The Lord, Sri Krishna, is unlimitedly wealthy and can

easily provide adequately for all His obedient children. Harmful Side Effects  
Not only does birth control not solve the problems for which it claims to be the solution, but it has harmful side effects as well.

Homosexuality: Contraception may lead to increased homosexuality. If the purpose of sex doesn't include children, then why not relations between two women or two men? Why not any type of unnatural relations? (note: The GVT does not promote homophobia, or gay basing. While ISKCON takes a rather conservative position about homosexuality like most religions, the GVT supports the idea that everyone must be treated with compassion and respect. Within and out of ISKCON you will find the whole spectrum of opinions regarding homosexuality. I have received a number of emails complaining about this article's statements here so I have added this disclaimer. The GVT has not formulated an official view regarding homosexuality. The web servant and his wife are on the more liberal end of the debate, while others differ. Karnamrita )

Abortion: Acceptance of birth control leads to acceptance of abortion. Fifty percent of women who have had abortions say they were using birth control and it failed. Abortion is simply a more extreme way of saying that one's personal needs, desires, status, and so on, are more desirable than the birth of a child. And being a form of child abuse (torturing and killing an unborn child), abortion leads to abuse of children in general. Why not hurt or kill a child who interferes with my life? People may claim that an unborn child is not yet human, but is an acorn seedling not simply an immature oak? The fetus is growing because the soul is present from conception. In any case, all life is sacred, not just life outside the womb, and not just human life.

Illicit sex: Immoral sexual relationships increase when contraception and abortion are available. People feel that with control over pregnancy, they need not consider commitment or the criticism of society. And because birth control promotes a mentality of separating sexual pleasure from procreation, people begin to feel that relationships based only on physical pleasure are not only morally acceptable, but natural.

Loss of respect and love for God: The spiritual harm of birth control is its most damaging—to individuals and society. The contraceptive user doesn't respect Krishna's design and plan. How can I love God if I don't even respect

Him? Rather, I think I would be a better God and am ready to redesign the world according to my vision. The mentality of envying Krishna's supremacy and control is the root of material consciousness.

The Spiritual Solution All the arguments for the benefits of contraception presume that people cannot control their sexual appetites. We expect adults to control their appetites for food, so why not for sex? Of course, modern society doesn't expect much self-control in eating, either. The artificial sex created when using contraceptives has its parallel in the artificial foods that have taste but no calories or nutrition. Sterilization has its parallel in stomach stapling. Krishna's devotees know that mastery over our bodies, senses, and minds is both desirable and possible. Those who dedicate their lives to worshiping and pleasing Lord Krishna know that real pleasure comes from serving His plan, including His plan for the human body. They don't try to separate physical pleasure from the whole of the reproductive function. In fact, those completely serious about spiritual perfection in this lifetime either live as unmarried celibates or, in marriage, restrict sexual union to the time when the wife is most likely to conceive. Before conception, the husband and wife meditate on the Lord and chant His holy names to purify themselves of selfish desire so as to offer the procreative act as a sacrifice to Him. Krishna says that He is present in such a union, and the couple therefore feels not only bodily pleasure but also spiritual bliss. They don't feel a burden in raising their children to love Krishna; rather they take it as great happiness.

For people in general, a return to a life where children can assist their parents with running the household and earning the livelihood would greatly contribute toward the vision of children as a blessing rather than a burden. Spiritually, when children are raised to grow in love of God they are a great blessing to their families and society in all respects. The unlimitedly wealthy Lord will surely provide for those who wish to raise such children. Society must also return to the vision that this entire creation, including one's own body, operates according to the plan of an unlimitedly intelligent and caring Supreme Being. We only hurt ourselves when we try to circumvent or obstruct that plan, even when dealing with our body, which we can't truly claim to be our own.

Urmila's official website: <http://urmiladevidasi.org/>

Urmila's blog: <http://urmiladasi.com/>



Hare Krishna! Movie Screening at PVR Cinemas, Manisquare,...

Santiago Municipality in Chile treat Iskcon's Ratha Yatra as their own festival and provide all facility

### 3 Responses to "Birth Control Myths"

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1. *Visakha Priya dasi* says :

What does GVT stand for? I googled GVT and found nothing relevant to your article.

*Campaka* says :

GVT stands for Grihasta Vision Team. (As far as I know.)

2. *Dhameshvara Mahaprabhu Dasa* says :

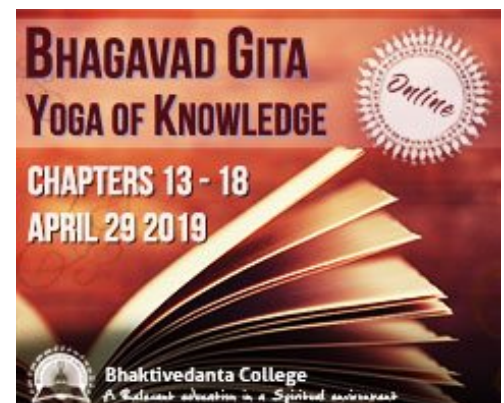
"If he does not require children, he should not enjoy sex life with his wife. Modern society enjoys sex life with contraceptive methods or more abominable methods to avoid the responsibility of children. This is not in the transcendental quality, but is demoniac."

Bg 16.1-3 purport

"Sex life, illicit or legal, the after-effect is suffering."

(Shrila Prabhupada, Morning Walk — October 18, 1975, Johannesburg)

"But because these mudhas, they are taking that "Fetus has no life. Kill it, finish it and eat it." It is going on. You know that?" Room Conversation with Siddha-svarupa — May 3, 1976, Honolulu



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Random FB posts

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View as a Magazine

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