

The First Ashrama : *Brahmacharya*

The classical or philosophical stages of a Hindu person's life are called ashramas. There are four main ashramas and Brahmacharya is the name for the first stage. This stage generally begins with the entry into formal schooling and ends with marriage. During this stage, young people are expected to prioritize their education, the instructions of their parents, and other pursuits with a particular focus on learning about and practicing, *Dharma*.

Dharma is a complicated word to translate, but it is popularly understood as personal responsibilities that one has towards oneself, ones' family, society as a whole, and to God. For most Hindus, the concept of *Dharma* is something essential to all parts of life and not only a spiritual concept relevant to certain practices.

Many parents mark their child's first experiences with great celebration. In Hindu families, you will find ceremonies marking a child's first taste of rice, their first birthday, their first day of school, the arrival of puberty, and so on. Raising children is often seen as a duty not to be neglected. Whole families, extended and immediate, will participate in the raising of children, working together to mark these rites of passage and attempting to ensure that the child stays on a clear path to success.

This phase of life leads up to the attainment of full adulthood which happens upon marriage.

How can we pray

Pray that Hindu children will encounter the love of Jesus and find joy and purpose in Him.

MARK 12:4

Pray that Hindu communities will discover the great love of Father God.

1 JOHN 3:1

Pray that young Hindu children will be protected from evil and empowered to discover God in their formative years of study and preparation for life ahead.

1 JOHN 2:1