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HEALING

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A boy's puberty is a time to prepare him for the responsibilities of adult life

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Puberty in boys proceeds about the same as in girls, except the changes are more external due to the differences in anatomy. On the average, puberty begins between 12 and 13 but may occur as early as nine. In some cases, the process of growing into manhood may be delayed as late as the 14th and 15th years.

Parents should help prepare their sons before puberty on what to expect. One of the first signs is some swelling of the mammary glands. This often leads to a brief but very sore and swollen nipple area. It gradually recedes and returns to a normal flatness, and the underlying muscles become harder and more prominent. This period of change may take up to one and half years to complete, but some boys may not go through this phase.

Concurrently hair will begin to grow in the pubic area and the

armpits. The sweat glands in these areas will tend to produce copious amount of sweat, more than in females. The facial hair starts as a very fine fuzz, and in late puberty it may not only be more coarse but also be quite visible. The boys take a lot of teasing about their "peach fuzz" from their peers and adults.

The gangly gait and awkwardness produced by the rapid growth of the lower extremities may be much greater than in girls. But what boys lack in grace they make up in speed. The musculature of the upper body is emphasized with a squareness to the shoulders and hardness of the muscles, unlike the soft curves of the females. Another change that opens the boys to teasing and ridicule is the change in the voice. It begins by becoming deeper and deeper in pitch, but it is not a smooth transition. The boy may be speaking or reciting in class when the voice "breaks" and returns to its soprano pitch momentarily. This may occur with concomitant blushing, something which seems to develop slightly more with boys. Of course, this occurs at all of the inopportune moments, again leading to teasing and moderate discomfort.

One of the earliest changes develops in the sex organs. The testicles tend to enlarge. It is normal for one to be larger than the other, and it is also normal for one to suspend, when standing, lower than the other. The male organ is made of erectile tissue and when it is filled with blood becomes hard and erect. This may occur at any time without provocation or apparent cause. This leads to blushing and teasing which should be understood by everyone.

As the external organs are growing in prominence there are

internal hormonal changes occurring which eventually lead to the production of semen. There may be spontaneous, sometimes nocturnal, emissions. Yogis say this is perfectly normal, but masturbation should be discouraged. Boys should be taught to save the sacred seed and trained prior to puberty to re-channel sexual desire by learning to transmute their vital energies and sacred fluids.

Other internal changes are in the boys perception of girls. The childhood joshing of "those dumb girls" changes to a new appreciation for them. But the vital life force must be focused on studies and spiritual pursuits. The sexual drives and impulses are natural but should be confined within a sanctified marriage. Celibacy until marriage will enable the boy to merit a good wife and a happy life together.

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