

Bhaktyaloka Essay 4

Niyamāgraha

A person becomes qualified for karma kanda
or sakama karma yoga

when he gives up illicit activities

A person should continue to follow
varnashrama dharma as long as

SB 11.20.9

He does not develop detachment from
material world (qualification for jnana
yoga)

He does not attain faith in the process of
bhakti (qualification for bhakti)

A jnana yogi should continue practicing
the path of jnana till he gets sraddha in
the process of bhakti.

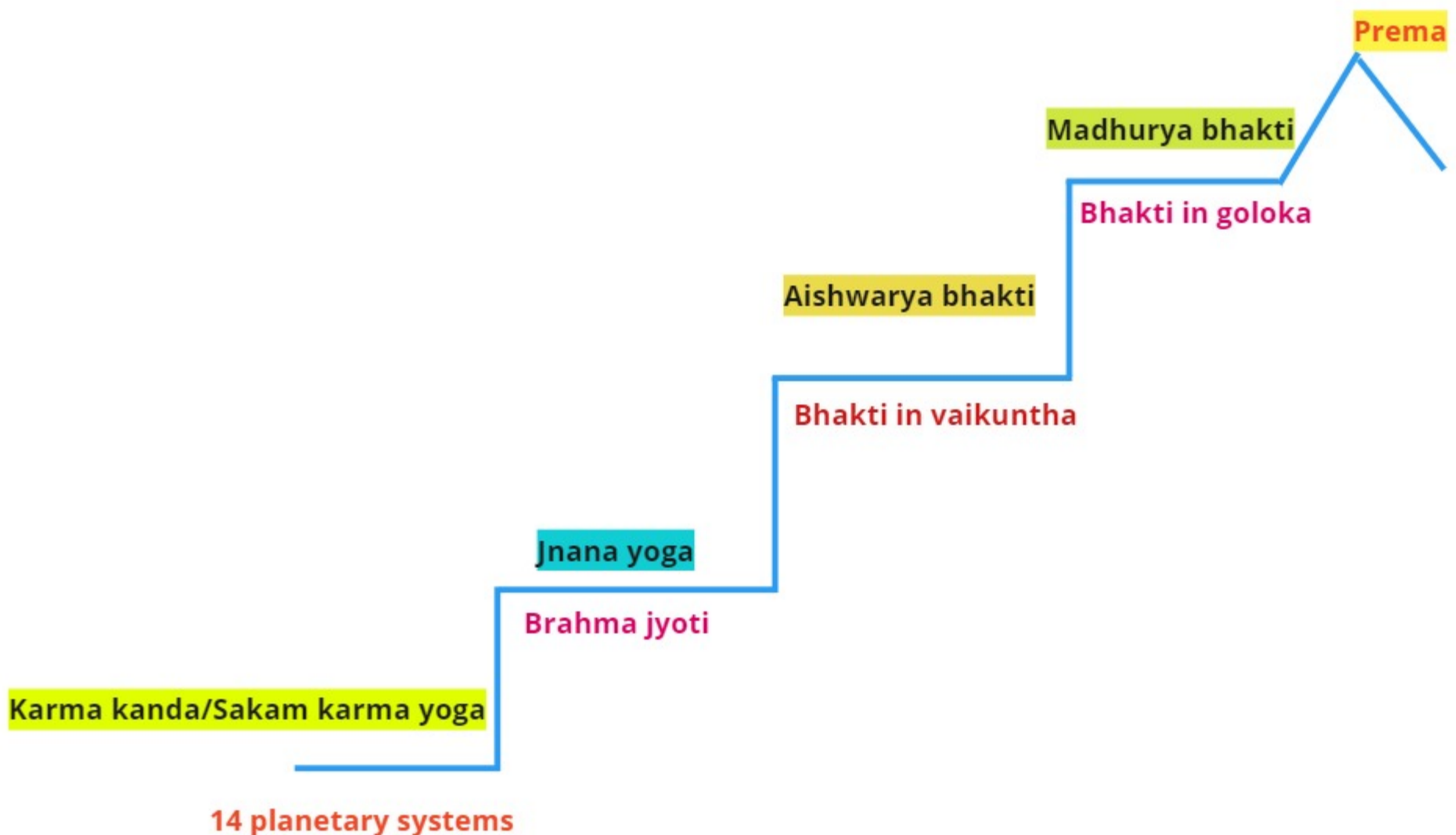
Bhakti in itself is capable of purifying the heart so a
devotee need not practice varnashrama dharma!



If after attaining faith in bhakti, one does not give up the rules of karma or jnana then he is committing niyamagraha (too much attached to the rules).

Sraddha is the only qualification for bhakti.

The temple of krishna-prema is situated on the highest peak of Goloka Vrindavan



Is a devotee avidhi-gocarah? (SB 11.18.28)

Yes and No.

YES, because he is beyond the rules and regulations of varnashrama and dharma shastras.

NO, because he still has to follow the rules of bhakti shastras.

Stages in the process of sadhana bhakti

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha
bhajana-kriyātato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ
syāttato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥathāsaktis
tato bhāvastataḥ premābhyudañcatisādhakānām
ayaṁ premṇaḥprādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

Sraddha (+sadhu sanga+ bhajan
kriya+ anārtha nivṛtti)

Nistha

Ruchi

Asakti

After crossing these 4 stages, one attains bhava bhakti.

One must follow the rules according to the stage that person is in.

One should hear and study according to one's adhikara.

Example : in anartha nivr̥tti stage, one is not allowed to focus so much on hearing and studying the pastimes of Krishna with gopis

In the initial stages, one should serve the deities of Radha-Krishna in the mood of Lakshmi- Narayana.

In the beginning, archanam should be practiced nicely but in the advanced stages, one focuses more on smaranatmika bhakti.

What is niyama at the stage of vaidhi bhakti, we may no longer follow at the stage of raganuga bhakti.

Therefore, even within the stages of devotional service, we must be careful of what rules to follow according to our stage.

As one leaves behind one level and progresses to the next, he should honor the rules of the latter and leave aside those of the former.

Otherwise he will be guilty of niyamāgraha and weak in reaching the next level.

Parent
rule

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

Ask yourself -

Are we able to remember Krishna in a favourable way?
Whether that particular aspect (or limb) of devotional service is aiding our
remembrance of Krishna or hindering it?

(ex: reading the intimate pastimes of Krishna with gopis at anartha nivṛtti stage will
hinder our remembrance of Krishna instead of aiding it)



Rules mentioned in Hari bhakti vilas are for householders and not
for renunciates

Because the renunciates are governed by taste and not by rules.
They naturally follow those rules which are favourable for their
devotional service.

Here renunciates mean those who are qualified for renunciation:
either those who have qualified themselves for raganuga bhakti
or those who have attained the stage of ruchi.



The first symptom of one who has attained sraddhā is surrender to the feet of Lord Krishna.

That surrender is of two types—for the householders and for the renunciates.

By the practice of bhakti and the rules mentioned for householders, the householders advance and they also qualify themselves for raganuga bhakti or attain the level of ruchi through vaidhi sadhana bhakti.

At that stage, they are no longer controlled by the rules. Because then they are governed by taste.

But they do follow the rules automatically out of taste.