

# Jaiiva Dharmma

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# Chapter Eight

## Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- One day, responding to an invitation, the Vaiṣṇavas of Godruma arrived to visit the Vaiṣṇavas living in the woods skirting the south-eastern embankment of the sacred Śrī Gorāhrada Lake.
- They were all sitting together in a secluded kuñja having just taken noon prasādam when Lāhirī Mahāśaya sang the following song, evoking vraja-bhāva, the spiritual emotions of Vraja, in the hearts of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas:

*gaura! kata ilā karile ekhāne  
advaitādi bhakta-saṅge nācile e vane raṅge*

- “Our Śrī Gaurāṅga has performed so many transcendental pastimes here with Advaita Ācārya and His other associates. He danced splendidly in these green groves.

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*kāliya-damana-saṅkīrtane  
e hrada haite prabhu, nistārile nakra prabhu  
kṛṣṇa yena kāliya-damane*

- “Once, whilst performing saṅkīrtana, Śrī Gaurāṅga liberated a crocodile living in these waters.
- Thus the Lord delivered the crocodile just as Śrī Gopāla Kṛṣṇa delivered the Kāliya snake many years before in Vraja.”
- A few minutes later, a discussion began about the unity of gaura-līlā with kṛṣṇa-līlā.
- Soon some more Vaiṣṇavas from Baḍagāchi arrived, first offering daṇḍavats to the Gorā-hrada Lake and then to the Vaiṣṇavas, who received them heartily and offered them comfortable seats.

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- Like a silent sentinel in the secluded kuñja, an ancient banyan tree stood tall.
- Around the base, the Vaiṣṇavas had built a concrete circular platform.
- The tree was affectionately named Nityānanda-vaṭa because Śrī Nityānanda had been very fond of sitting below its fine branches.
- Now the Vaiṣṇavas themselves were sitting under those same branches blissfully discussing spiritual topics.
- At one point, an inquisitive young Vaiṣṇava amongst the visitors spoke up respectfully, “I would like to have permission to ask this Vaiṣṇava assembly a question.

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- Kindly pacify my enquiring mind.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, a resident of this secluded kuñja, was at the advanced age of nearly a hundred years a very serious scholar and among the few persons still remaining who had actually seen Śrī Nityānanda sitting in the shade of the banyan tree.
- Over the years, he had single-mindedly nourished the desire to breathe his last at this site.
- He seldom left the kuñja and then only to Pradyumna Kuñja to meet Paramahaṁsa Premadāsa Bābājī.
- Now he spoke up, saying, “Sir, we have Śrī Paramahaṁsa Premadāsa Bābājī here heading up this assembly, so you should not have any concern regarding an answer to your question.”

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- The young Vaiṣṇava from Baḍagāchi then enquired with humility, “Vaiṣṇava-dharma is nitya-dharma, I would like to learn in detail about the ideal conduct of a Vaiṣṇava, especially towards other people.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī glanced and motioned in Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī’s direction, “My dear Vaiṣṇava dāsa, a good Vaiṣṇava and scholar such as you is rarely found in Bengal, especially nowadays.
- Hence, it is appropriate that you should reply to this question. Having associated with Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī and having received spiritual instructions from Śrīla Paramahansa Premadāsa Bābājī, you are most fortunate and a recipient of Śrī Caitanya’s mercy.”

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- Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī replied humbly, “Revered Bābājī, you have seen Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Balarāma’s direct expansion, face to face.
- You have also associated with many spiritual stalwarts and instructed many devotees in the devotional sciences; therefore, please shower your mercy upon us today and educate us.”
- The Vaiṣṇavas unanimously and enthusiastically requested Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī to speak and finding no way out he agreed.
- After first offering daṇḍavats to Śrī Nityānanda under the banyan tree, he began his dissertation, “First, I offer my respect to all jīvas, knowing them to be the servitors of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 6.85, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written:



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*keha māne, keha nā māne, saba tānra dāsa  
ye nā māne, tāra haya sei pāpe nāśa*

- “Some accept Him whereas others do not, yet everyone is His servant.
- One who does not accept Him, however, will be ruined by sinful activities.’
- “I always greatly appreciate this statement of the great saint Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and bear it upon my head.
- Although inherently all jīvas are the servants of Kṛṣṇa, one class of jīvas does not accept their position of subservience to Īśvara, the Supreme Lord, whereas another class humbly accepts this eternal truth.

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- Thus, there are two kinds of men in this world: kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha, those who deny Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme; and kṛṣṇa-unmukha, those who accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme.
- The majority of people in the world are kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha, amongst whom many reject any form of religion at all.
- There is little to say about them except that they have no sense of moral obligation and their only aim in life is to increase their material power, rank and wealth.
- However, there are those who are religious and accept a sense of moral responsibility for their behaviour.
- For their guidance, the great Vaiṣṇava sage Manu has stated in the Manu-saṁhitā 6.92:

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*dhṛtiḥ kṣamā dama 'steyam śaucam indriya-nigrahaḥ  
dhīr vidyā-satyam akrodho daśakam dharma-lakṣaṇam*

- “The ten characteristics of religiosity are dhṛtiḥ, contentment; kṣamā, forgiveness, that is not revenging a wrong; dama, self-control, that is remaining in control of the mind in spite of the presence of allurements; asteya, honesty; śaucam, cleanliness; indriya-nigraha, withdrawing the senses from sense-objects; dhīh, scriptural knowledge; vidyā, education, that is knowledge of the soul; satyam, truthfulness, that is awareness of reality; and akrodha, freedom from anger, that is to be not angered when provoked.’
- “Of these, dhṛtiḥ, contentment; dama, self-control; śauca, cleanliness; indriya-nigraha, withdrawing the senses; dhīh, scriptural knowledge; and vidyā, knowledge of the soul are the six duties and characteristics directed towards oneself.

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- Whereas, kṣamā, forgiveness; asteya, honesty; satyam, truthfulness; and akrodha, freedom from anger, are the four obligations towards others.
- However, the duty of worshiping the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, is not clearly delineated in any of these ten characteristics, which have been enumerated to encourage us in following the moral religious principles.
- Furthermore, it cannot be said that human life becomes pure and perfect by only developing these characteristics.
- In the Viṣṇu-dharmottara, which is quoted in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 10.317, it is explained:

*jīvitam viṣṇu-bhaktasya varam pañca-dināni ca  
na tu kalpa-sahasrāṇi bhakti-hīnasya keśave*

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- “If a devotee of Śrī Viṣṇu stays in this world for even five days, it is a great blessing to humanity.
- However, if a non-devotee—one who has no devotion for the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa—lives in the world for hundreds of aeons, it will not benefit humanity; in fact it will usher in misfortunes.’
- “A person who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa cannot be labelled a human being.
- Without devotion, men are mere biped animals, not humans.
- The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 2.3.19, states the same:

*śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ saṁstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ  
na yat-karṇa-pathopeto jātu nāma gadāgrajāḥ*

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- “Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from evils.’
- “However, the present inquiry is not about the duties and responsibilities of those unfortunate persons mentioned above.
- The discussion is regarding the conduct of a devotee towards the people in general.
- Those who have embraced this path of bhakti are divided into three groups: kaniṣṭha, neophyte; madhyama, intermediate; and uttama, topmost.
- The first of these types is described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.47 in the following verse:

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate  
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

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- “A prākṛta, materialistic devotee, does not purposefully study the śāstra and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service.
- Consequently, he does not show proper respect to advanced devotees.
- He may, however, follow the regulative principles he has learnt from his spiritual master or family tradition and worship the Deity in the temple.
- He is to be considered as being on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service.’
- “Such a person is a bhakta-prāya, or bhakta-ābhāsa, a neophyte devotee, for he is but a little enlightened about the Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

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- One who worships the Deity of the Lord with faith, but neither respects the created living creatures of the Lord, nor worships and serves His devotees with devotion is a prākṛta-bhakta.
- Already, it has been established that śraddhā, faith, is the seed of devotion.
- To worship the Deity of the Lord with śraddhā is certainly bhakti, but without worshiping and serving the devotee of the Lord one cannot execute śuddha-bhakti.
- This position of serving the Lord but not His pure devotee can be described as being, at best, a step inside the portals of the realm of bhakti.
- The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.84.13, explains:



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*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke  
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ  
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij  
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

“One who identifies his self (*yasya ātma-buddhiḥ*) as the inert body composed of mucus, bile, and air (*kuṇape tri-dhātuke*), who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own (*sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu*), who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth are worshipable (*bhauma ijya-dhīḥ*), or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there (*yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile*), but who never identifies himself with (*na karhicij yasya ātma-buddhiḥ*), feels kinship with (*implied*), worships (*ijya-dhīḥ*) or even visits (*implied*) those who are wise in spiritual truth (*abhijñeṣu janeṣv*)—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass (*sa eva go-kharaḥ*).’

- “The purport of these verses is that without worshiping the Deity of the Lord, one’s devotion cannot even begin.

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- If one rejects the personal Deity form and enters into argumentative debate in a futile attempt to attain spiritual knowledge, then the heart becomes dry and hardened and the true goal of devotion is lost in bewilderment.
- However, the worship of the Deity should be performed with ever-increasing śuddha-cinmaya-buddhi, transcendental consciousness.
- Though living in this material world, the jīva is cinmaya-vastu, a conscious spiritual entity, and amongst all the jīvas, the kṛṣṇa-bhaktas are endowed by the Lord with śuddha-cinmaya-buddhi.
- Both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His bhakta are purely spiritual beings and to properly comprehend their transcendental position sambandha-jñana—knowledge of the interrelationships between śakti, matter; jīva, the living entity; and Śrī Kṛṣṇa—is imperative.

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- If Deity worship is conducted with sambandha-jñāna, then the consequent transcendental understanding will naturally stimulate both bhakta-sevā, spiritual service to the Lord's devotees, and the transcendental esoteric perception and service of the Deity.
- “When there is a perfect marriage of śraddhā with transcendental understanding, then this is called śāstrīya-śraddhā, faith based on proper scriptural conclusions.
- In contrast, Deity worship bereft of a clear and correct concept of sambandha-jñāna is conducted on the level of mechanical, ritualistic laukika-śraddhā.
- Hence, we deduce that although this is the initial stage of bhakti it is certainly not śuddha-bhakti.

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- This group of devotees has been described in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 1.55, as follows:

*grhīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjā-paro narah  
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijñair itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ*

- “One who has been initiated with the viṣṇu-mantra in accordance with the regulations of scripture and is worshiping the Deity of Śrī Viṣṇu is considered a Vaiṣṇava by the learned scholars. All others are non-Vaiṣṇavas.’
- “Kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas or prākṛta-bhaktas are those who have received initiation from hereditary gurus, known as kula-gurus, out of family tradition; or those who feel sentimentally inspired upon seeing others worshiping the Deity of Śrī Viṣṇu and so then worship the Deity in imitation; or those who have accepted initiation into the viṣṇu-mantra with laukika-śraddhā.

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- They are not in the category of śuddha-bhakti.
- These unrefined devotees are on the level of chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa, a shadow-like semblance of devotion.
- However, they are above those on the platform of pratibimba-bhakti-ābhāsa, a reflective distorted semblance of bhakti, because pratibimba-bhakti-ābhāsa being offensive in nature is devoid of actual Vaiṣṇavism.
- A person elevated to chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa is immensely fortunate because from this preliminary stage he may be eventually promoted to the madhyama-vaiṣṇava and uttama-vaiṣṇava platforms.
- “These immature practitioners of chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa, however, are certainly not pure devotees.

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- They worship the Deity with sentimental faith and their behaviour in society is inspired by the ten religious characteristics mentioned earlier.
- The scriptural injunctions that direct the conduct of an actual devotee are not meant for these kaniṣṭhas, for they cannot even discriminate between a devotee and a non-devotee.
- “In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.2.46, there is an instruction for the madhyama-vaiṣṇavas:

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca  
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

- “An intermediate or second-class devotee, called a madhyama-adhikārī, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord,

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- shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent, and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His devotees.’
- “Naimittika-dharma is not addressed in this verse.
- The standards of devotional behaviour enumerated in this verse are a part of nitya-dharma and in the life of a madhyama-vaiṣṇava these four practices are the ideal and essential conduct; and for the madhyama-vaiṣṇava other etiquettes that are not contrary to the above four practices may be adopted where necessary.
- Therefore, we see that the conduct of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava is differently directed towards the four categories of persons: the Supreme Lord, His surrendered devotees, the ignorant materialists, and the persons inimical towards the Lord or His devotees.

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- The madhyama-vaiṣṇava directs his prema, transcendental love, to the Supreme Lord; his maitrī, friendship, to the devotees; his kṛpā, compassion, to the ignorant; and is upekṣā, indifferent, towards the envious.
- “As described in the verse, the first characteristic of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava is his prema for Īśvara, which indicates Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all Lords.
- Furthermore, prema also implies śuddha-bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- This is how the scripture Bhakti-rasāmṛtā-sindhu, Purva 1.1.11, defines śuddha-bhakti:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*



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- “One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, favourably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is pure devotional service.’
- “The symptoms of bhakti just described are first seen in the sādhana practices of the madhyama-adhikārī-vaiṣṇava, and extend up to the level of bhāva and finally into the blossoming of prema.
- Worship of the Deity form of the Lord with immature śraddhā is the only characteristic of the kaniṣṭha practitioner.
- Such a person does not display the symptoms of śuddha-bhakti, which are anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṃ, freedom from material aspiration; jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam, freedom from the inebriations of impersonalism and fruitive desire;

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- and ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam, absorption in the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa favourably with transcendental love.
- As soon as the kaniṣṭha progresses to manifest these symptoms in his heart, then he is considered to have become a madhyama-vaiṣṇava and thus a genuine devotee.
- Prior to this, he is a prākṛta-bhakta, also known as a bhakta-ābhāsa or vaiṣṇava-ābhāsa, a neophyte shadow of a Vaiṣṇava.
- The word kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam refers to kṛṣṇa-prema and is qualified by the word ānukūlyena, favourably.
- Thus, this combination refers to practices that are conducive to the growth of kṛṣṇa-prema.

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- These are, as we have said, maitrī, friendship with one’s fellow devotees; kṛpā, mercy to the ignorant; and upekṣā, indifference to the inimical, which are also the hallmarks of a madhyama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava.
- “Now to the topic of second characteristic, the friendly attitude of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava adopts towards his fellow surrendered devotees of the Lord—those who are blessed by śuddha-bhakti.
- The kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava is not on the platform of śuddha-bhakti—that is to say, he does not serve and satisfy the pure devotees.
- Therefore, maitrī can only be properly extended by the madhyama-adhikārī to his fellow madhyama-vaiṣṇavas and the higher level uttama vaiṣṇavas.

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- “In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Śrī Caitanya is asked by a devotee of Kuliyā-grāma, “Please let me know who is actually a Vaiṣṇava, and what his symptoms are.”
- In response, Śrī Caitanya describes the different characteristics of the various levels of Vaiṣṇavas.
- As we have explained, the true practice of śuddha-bhakti is absent in the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava, who is solely engaged in Deity worship with immature śraddhā devoid of sambandha-jñana.
- The three types of Vaiṣṇavas described by Mahāprabhu as worthy of service are within the pure realms of madhyama and uttama Vaiṣṇavism.

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- Pure harināma does not manifest on the tongue of the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava because his chanting is on the level of chāyā nāmābhāsa, the shadow form of harināma, and therefore the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava does not warrant service.
- “Śrī Caitanya instructed the madhyama-vaiṣṇava-gṛhastha to serve these three types of pure Vaiṣṇavas: vaiṣṇava, one who has chanted once harināma purely; vaiṣṇava-tara, one who constantly chants harināma; and vaiṣṇava-tama, one whose presence spontaneously inspires others to chant harināma.
- These three grades of pure Vaiṣṇavas alone are worthy of his worship.
- The madhyama-gṛhastha is instructed to serve only these three, who chant pure harināma; not the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava, who chants only the shadow form of harināma and is therefore not a suitable object of service.

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- Only the madhyama and uttama Vaiṣṇavas who utter śuddhānāma are fit to be served.
- “Service to the Vaiṣṇavas should be in accordance with their respective levels of advancement.
- The word maitrī encompasses association, discussion and service.
- When one sees a śuddha-bhakta must greet him and offer respects immediately, give full hospitality affectionately, discuss Kṛṣṇa conscious topics with him, and care for all his needs.
- One should serve him properly in all these ways. One must be extremely cautious not to envy a śuddha-bhakta.

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- He should not be shown irreverence or criticized even inadvertently and he must not be disregarded because of some physical deformity or ailment.
- “The third practice of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava is the bestowal of kṛpā upon the ignorant.
- The word bāliśā implies an ignorant person without spiritual knowledge, or an idiot, fool, etc.
- Gross, uneducated materialists whose false ego and strong material attachments do not allow them to cultivate śraddhā to the Supreme Lord are bāliśā.
- The bāliśā are without correct spiritual guidance, yet, fortunately, they are uncontaminated by false philosophies such as impersonal māyāvāda.

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- Thus, their saving grace is that they have no antipathy towards bhakti or bhaktas.
- Even a so-called highly learned scholar who has of yet failed to achieve śraddhā in the Supreme Personality of Godhead may be accurately characterised as a bāliśā, ignoramus.
- “In addition, there is the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī. Though he is at the doorstep of bhakti, he lacks the proper grasp of sambandha-jñāna; thus, he is deprived of śuddha-bhakti.
- As long as this condition persists, he is also known as a bāliśā.
- Of course, when he faithfully acquires the knowledge of sambandha-tattva and begins to chant pure harināma in the association of pure devotees, his bāliśātva, ignorance, is dissipated and he is elevated to the level of a madhyama-vaiṣṇava.



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- These are some of the different kinds of bāliśā and it is very essential for the madhyama-vaiṣṇava to show mercy to them.
- The madhyama-vaiṣṇava must deal graciously with the bāliśā, as he would do with an honoured guest—but this is not enough.
- To show real mercy to the bāliśā, he must ensure that the bāliśā develops śraddhā in pure devotional service and a taste for chanting harināma.
- “The unknowing bāliśās are uneducated in the teachings of the scriptures, and so are susceptible to falling prey to the lures of bad company.
- The madhyama-vaiṣṇava, being compassionate, offers the bāliśās his association, instructing them about the scriptures and the glories of harināma.

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- An ailing person cannot treat himself—he needs a doctor.
- Just as the angry and frustrated outbursts of a sick patient are excusable, the misdemeanours of the bālīśā are also to be forgiven.
- That, indeed, is an act of mercy.
- “The bālīśā may be easily diverted from bhakti at any time, his consciousness being clouded with misconceptions, such as believing in karma-kāṇḍa;
- being sometimes drawn to speculative knowledge; worshiping the Deity of the Lord with ulterior motives; having faith in the yoga process;

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- being indifferent to association with pure Vaiṣṇavas—something which would actually be beneficial for him; being attached to the rules and regulations of varṇāśrama; and so on.
- A diseased person cannot treat himself; he must be given the compassionate care of an expert physician who tolerates the expected misbehaviour of his patient.
- By administering his association, compassion, and spiritual instructions, the madhyama-vaiṣṇava can correct the wrong views of the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava and promote him to the level of a madhyama-adhikārī pure devotee.
- This practice of mercy is essential for the madhyama-adhikārī-vaiṣṇava.

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- “Once a person begins to worship the Deity of the Supreme Lord with a trace of actual bhakti, it is to be understood that he has sown the seed of his own good fortune and that he is free from corrupt ideologies.
- Therefore, it is understood that he possesses a touch of śraddhā.
- Whereas, a person who worships the Deity while indoctrinated with the māyāvādī philosophy and therefore has not the slightest śraddhā for the actual Deity form of the Lord is thus an offender.
- Hence, the expression śraddhayehate, with śraddhā, is used in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam to describe the kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- The heart of the māyāvādī philosopher is contaminated by the false conclusion that the Supreme Absolute Brahman, the Parabrahman, is ultimately formless.
- On this basis, he falsely considers that the worshipable transcendental Deity form of the Lord is ultimately a product of the imagination.
- Holding such tenets, how deep can his so-called śraddhā be in the Deity form?
- Therefore, there is a distinct difference between the Deity worship of the māyāvādī and the Deity worship of the very neophyte kaniṣṭha-adhikārī.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- “If for no other Vaiṣṇava characteristic, then it is for being free from the abomination of the māyāvāda doctrine that the kaṇiṣṭha-adhikārī has been awarded the status of a prākṛta-vaiṣṇava, a neophyte materialistic Vaiṣṇava.
- On the strength of his minuscule Vaiṣṇava quality and through the mercy of a pure devotee, he is eligible to rise to the perfectional stage in devotional service.
- However, the genuine mercy of the madhyama-adhikārī pure devotee is indispensable for the further progress of the kaṇiṣṭha-vaiṣṇava and by such mercy his Deity worship and chanting can quickly become purified of their tainted, shadowy nature and acquire the true transcendental character.
- “Now we come to the fourth quality, upekṣā, indifference, neglect and avoidance, of those who are envious.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Firstly, an envious person has to be defined and the different types of envious persons have to be delineated.
- Dveṣa, enmity, is a human trait also known as matsaratā, envy and hate.
- This heinous propensity is the exact opposite of prema. The Supreme Lord alone is ultimately the sole recipient of prema.
- Antipathy against the Lord is known as dveṣa of which there are five kinds: (1) scepticism, not having faith in God; (2) the belief that the Supreme Lord is nothing more than a natural potency of the creation, which automatically brings about the result of one's karma; (3) not believing in the transcendental form of the Lord; (4) not accepting the position of the jīva as an eternal servant of the Lord; and (5) the absence of mercy.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- “Persons who are polluted by such dveṣa can never attain pure devotion, and they do not possess even a slight tinge of the inchoate devotion possessed by the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī in his Deity worship.
- These five dveṣas are generally found in persons overly attached to the material world and the sense enjoyment thereof.
- The third and fourth types of dveṣa are sometimes accompanied by the propensity for suicidal renunciation often found in māyāvādī sannyāsīs, which culminates in spiritual self-annihilation.
- “How should the devotees deal with such envious persons? It is recommended one should avoid their company.
- Upekṣā, however, means neither that one should put a stop to all the usual human exchanges, nor that one should refuse help to such bewildered persons.



## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- On the contrary, if an envious person is in danger or in distress, everything should be done to ameliorate his agony.
- A gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava has to interact with so many different persons in the course of his daily life.
- Through marriage, he acquires many new acquaintances. While shopping, while taking care of family matters, in business, in property deals, in sickness, in maintenance, in all these matters and more, normal human dealings are an ongoing and unavoidably necessary performance.
- “How then is it possible for the gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava, with one final stroke, to curtail all simple day to day interactions with this envious lot? This is not the meaning of upekṣā.
- Upekṣā is to terminate all spiritual exchanges with the atheists, not social exchanges.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- As a result of one's karma—the resultant material reactions from previous lives—even some of one's own family members may be dveṣīs, envious persons.
- Should they be excluded? No, that is not the solution.
- “Social exchanges are part of human behaviour, so the envious persons should be dealt with, but without getting into deep involvement or emotional relationships with them.
- In contrast, for spiritual practice serious commitment is mandatory and spiritual association with one's fellow devotees means to interact upon the spiritual platform by discussing transcendental topics, serving and assisting one another in spiritual progress.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Thus, one should avoid the association of persons with whom such spiritual practices are not possible or suitable. This is upekṣā.”
- “An envious person is generally very self-opinionated; hence, if he hears praises or explanations about the science of pure devotion, he will immediately start an unnecessary argument, which will be of use neither to you, nor to him.
- Instead of such barren debates, one should simply restrain one’s dealings to a social level with such types.
- If someone whimsically proposes to include the envious persons into the ranks of the bālīṣā so that he may practice compassionate association upon them, then such a person should first understand that this course of action would be very detrimental to his own spiritual progress.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Certainly, one must help others, but not without caution or care.
- “It is essential for the madhyama-adhikārī śuddha-bhakta, to act according to these four guidelines.
- Any slackness in this regard will culminate in malpractice, increased lethargy, and apathy towards executing spiritual discipline.
- In the end, the deviation will become too overwhelming.
- “Thus, it is stated in the Śrīmad Bhagavatam, 11.21.2:

*sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ  
viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād ubhayor eṣa niścayaḥ*

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- “A person’s steadfast attachment to practice according to his level of advancement is his real qualification; deviation from practice suitable to his level of advancement becomes a disqualification.
- These are the symptoms of good behaviour and faulty behaviour, piety and impiety.’
- “Thus, in accord with scriptural injunctions the prime duties of a madhyama-adhikārī śuddha-bhakta are to cultivate love for the Supreme Lord, friendship with pure devotees of the Lord, compassion for the innocent, and aloofness from the envious.
- The degree of friendship that the madhyama-bhakta establishes with other bhaktas of this level should correspond to the level of their devotion.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Similarly, the degree of compassion he bestows upon the ignorant will depend upon the sincerity and state of knowledge of that innocent person.
- In the same way, avoidance of association with envious persons is also in accordance with the degree of their envy.
- The madhyama-adhikārī śuddha-bhakta must carefully consider all these points and then conduct his spiritual life accordingly.
- Simultaneously, his social behaviour should be conducted with simplicity and faithful obedience to these guidelines—and always with consideration of the ultimate spiritual goal.”
- At this juncture Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī of Baḍagāchi village interjected, “How do the uttama-adhikārī śuddha-bhaktas conduct themselves?”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī replied, “Dear son, when you have already asked me a question please allow me to complete my answer.
- I am aged; my memory is weakening. Whatever I have in mind I might forget.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī was a strict and straightforward devotee. True, he never looked for fault in others, but he would instantly point out something that was out of place.
- Everyone fell silent upon his admonition.
- Then after a few moments Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī again offered his obeisances to the sitting place of Śrī Nityānanda under the banyan tree and resumed his dissertation, “As the bhakti of the madhyama-adhikārī ascends to the level of prema, he gradually becomes an uttama-adhikārī.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- The characteristics of an *uttama-adhikārī* are mentioned in the Śrīmad Bhagavatam, 11.2.45:

*śrī-havir uvāca*

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah  
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

- “Śrī Havir said, “The *uttama-adhikārī* devotee sees within everything the Soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.’
- “The *uttama-adhikārī* is also known as an *uttama-vaiṣṇava*, the most advanced and elevated Vaiṣṇava.



## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- He sees everything in terms of prema and thus prema is the constant emotion that adorns the character of an uttama-vaiṣṇava.
- At times, various differing bhāvas manifest in his personality but they are all transformations of prema.
- Kindly observe the character of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, an uttama-bhāgavata, topmost devotee.
- He referred to Kāmsa as bhoja-pāṁśula, the most sinful of the Bhoja dynasty.
- Ostensibly, such an expletive appears to be a display of anger towards Kāmsa but actually the statement is stimulated by and is thus a manifestation of kṛṣṇa-prema.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- When śuddha-prema becomes the all-in-all, the very life force of a devotee, he is to be known as a bhāgavatottama.
- Upon this platform of devotion, the four distinctions in attitude—prema, maitrī, kṛpā, and upekṣā—that are the hallmarks of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava cease and the bhāgavatottama exudes only kṛṣṇa-prema.
- He does not discriminate among a neophyte, an intermediate, or an advanced Vaiṣṇava, or even between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava.
- This elevated position is very rarely attained.
- “Do you notice something unique?”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- The neophyte kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava is generally not enthusiastic about serving Vaiṣṇavas, and the topmost uttama-vaiṣṇava makes no discrimination between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava because he sees all jīvas established as servants of Kṛṣṇa.
- Consequently, we see that only the intermediate madhyama-vaiṣṇava consciously practices respect and service to the Vaiṣṇavas in a deliberate sense.
- Thus, the intermediate madhyama-vaiṣṇava will serve all three categories of Vaiṣṇava: vaiṣṇava, vaiṣṇava-tara, and vaiṣṇava-tama.
- The madhyama-vaiṣṇava must serve each Vaiṣṇava in accordance with his status.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Only the uttama-vaiṣṇava does not consider or analyse whether a Vaiṣṇava is kaniṣṭha, madhyama, or uttama before he interacts with him.
- If a madhyama-vaiṣṇava artificially adopts this mentality, he becomes an aparādhi, offender.
- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed these truths of Vaiṣṇava etiquette in a very concise manner in His discussions with the residents of Kulīna-grāma.
- All His instructions on this topic are more significant for the madhyama-vaiṣṇavas than the original Vedas.
- Actually, what is the definition of śruti—the Vedas? The answer: The words of the Supreme Lord are Veda.”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī fell silent after he had spoken these words.
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī of Baḍagāchi now spoke with palms folded, “May I ask a further question?” Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī replied, “You may do so without hesitation?”
- The young Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī enquired, “Respected Bābājī, into which category of Vaiṣṇava would one place me? Am I a kaniṣṭha or a madhyama? I am certainly not an uttama-vaiṣṇava.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī smiled and said, “Is anyone who has received the name Nityānanda dāsa constrained from becoming an uttama-vaiṣṇava? My beloved Śrī Nitāi is extremely merciful.
- He offers prema even after being beaten. If one utters His name and becomes His servant, everything can be achieved easily.”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “With utmost humility, I beg to know my present level.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Then you must reveal everything about yourself.
- If Śrī Nityānanda prompts me, then I may say something of relevance.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa started, “I was born into a low-class family in a village upon the bank of the River Padmavatī.
- I married young and never left the righteous path. However, after my wife’s early demise I developed detachment from family life.
- In Baḍagāchi, I met some renounced Vaiṣṇavas who had left household life.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- I saw they were well respected by others.
- Desiring such respect and swayed by the passing mood of renunciation caused by my wife's demise I ended up taking bheka initiation from these Vaiṣṇavas in Baḍagāchi.
- A short time later my mind was attacked by immoral thoughts and became very difficult to control.
- Fortunately for me, I happened upon the good association of a true Vaiṣṇava—presently he is in Vraja.
- He gave me sound advice and kept me by his side; in this way, he gradually purified my consciousness.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Now I am not troubled by any mundane desires and have developed a taste for chanting harināma; daily I chant one hundred thousand names upon my tulasī beads.
- I have realized that nāma, the holy name, and nāmī, the possessor of the holy name, the Supreme Lord, are transcendental and non-different.
- I observe Ekādaśī vows strictly according to the scriptures and daily offer gee lamp and water the sacred tulasī plant.
- “When the Vaiṣṇavas sing in kīrtana I participate gladly and my heart stirs with spiritual exultation.
- I drink the caraṇāmṛta of the Vaiṣṇavas with relish and daily study the devotional scriptures such as the Caitanya Bhāgavata and Caitanya-caritāmṛta.



## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- I have lost interest in eating elaborately and putting on fine clothes.
- Upon hearing mundane prattle, I feel ill at ease and disinterested.
- When I see the bhāva of the pure Vaiṣṇavas I desire to roll upon the ground at their feet, but must admit that I do it mostly for winning acclaim and attention.
- Kindly now tell me to which level do I presently belong, and accordingly what are my duties?”
- With a smile, Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī looked in the direction of Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī and said, “Let us hear from you. To which level does Nityānanda dāsa belong?”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī replied, “From what we’ve just heard. I would say he has progressed from the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī neophyte stage to the madhyama-adhikārī intermediate stage.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “I second that opinion.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Wonderful! Now I know my level of spiritual progress directly from the lips of the Vaiṣṇava mahātmās, great souls.
- Kindly shower your grace upon me so that I may be gradually promoted to the stage of uttama-adhikārī.”
- Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī continued his assessment, “At the time of your formal initiation, bheka, you were motivated by pratiṣṭhā, mundane desire for position, fame, and adoration.

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- Though you were not eligible for bheka, you still accepted that position; that was an offence and so you were becoming degraded.
- Fortunately, however, you received the kṛpā of a pure Vaiṣṇava, which pulled you out of the mire.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Even now slight residues of desire for pratiṣṭhā remain in my heart.
- I think that by shedding tears and exhibiting bhāva I can impress others and receive respect and honour from them.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Try diligently to rid yourself of this, otherwise you run the big risk of gradually constricting your devotion.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- If that were to happen, you would be demoted to the level of kaniṣṭha-adhikārī.
- Even though a Vaiṣṇava may resolutely drive away lust, anger, greed, etc., the desire for pratiṣṭhā does not leave easily and is truly detrimental.
- Especially beneficial for the sādḥaka-vaiṣṇava is that he categorically rejects chāyā-bhāva-ābhāsa, the shaming of spiritual emotions, and sincerely endeavours for even a minute drop of real bhāva at the heights of his devotional feelings.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī fell at the feet of Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī and begged for his vaiṣṇava-kṛpā, the grace of a Vaiṣṇava.
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī reacted out of humility, lifting up Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī and embracing him.

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- The result of being touched by a great Vaiṣṇava is astounding:
- Incessant tears cascaded down from the eyes of Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī.
- Awed by his own reaction, Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī was overcome with deep humility and continuously murmured, “I am so low and wretched, I am a fallen soul!” Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī again embraced him as tears streaked down his own quivering cheeks.
- What glorious spiritual sentiments! Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī felt the fulfilment of his life.
- When after a while the exultation subsided, Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, now looking up to Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī as his guru, asked, “What are the mukhya, principal, and gauṇa, secondary, symptoms of a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī?”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The mukhya symptom of a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is faith in the eternal form of Bhagavān, which results in the worship of the Deity form of Bhagavān.
- The gaṇa symptoms of a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī are the devotional activities he performs such as hearing, chanting, remembering, offering prayers, and so on.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “One cannot become a Vaiṣṇava unless and until one develops implicit faith in the eternal transcendental form of Bhagavān, nor can one become a Vaiṣṇava without worshiping the Deity through the regulations of śāstra.
- That these two symptoms are mukhya is easily comprehensible, however I find it difficult to grasp why hearing and chanting, etc., are considered the gaṇa symptoms. Why are these deemed subordinate?”

## Chapter 8: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī cannot properly perceive the science of śuddha-bhakti.
- Certainly, hearing, and chanting, etc., are the limbs of śuddha-bhakti, however, as the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is unable to realize the transcendental nature of śuddha-bhakti, such devotional activities like hearing and chanting do not take the mukhya position in his spiritual practice.
- Therefore, for the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī these activities are designated as being at the gaṇa level.
- Another reason why they are gaṇa is that the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī performs these activities under the influence of the three guṇas—the material modes of: sattva, raja, and tama.

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- Only when hearing, chanting, and remembering, etc., are executed on the nirguṇa platform, which by definition is beyond the influences of the three guṇas, can they be designated as the limbs of śuddha-bhakti.
- And as soon as these activities rise above the three guṇas, the level of madhyama-adhikārī is attained.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “The kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇava suffers from anyābhilāṣa, material hankering, which manifests as desire for karma, jñāna, the mystic powers of aṣṭanga-yoga, and mundane sensuality.
- How then may he be recognised as a devotee?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The root of bhakti is śraddhā, faith.



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- Therefore, one who has developed śraddhā is eligible for executing bhakti and is certainly at the threshold of pure bhakti.
- The word śraddhā includes viśvāsa, firm belief. Since the kaniṣṭha-bhakta has viśvāsa in the eternal Deity form of the Supreme Lord, then he is indeed a proper candidate for bhakti.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “At which stage will he actually attain bhakti?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The kaniṣṭha-bhakta becomes elevated to madhyama-adhikārī when his desire for karma and jñāna, etc., begins to wane; when concomitantly he aspires only for ananya-bhakti, unalloyed devotional service;

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- and when instead of enthusiastically extending hospitality to all guests, he realizes the particular spiritual benefit of serving the Vaiṣṇava devotees.
- At this time, the kaniṣṭha-bhakta becomes a śuddha-bhakta of the madhyama-adhikārī status.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “It is said that śuddha-bhakti begins to manifest with the attainment of sambandha-jñāna—realization of the eternal relationships between the jīvas; Bhagavan; and the śakti of Bhagavān.
- Therefore, how and when does sambandha-jñāna manifest, bestowing the eligibility for śuddha-bhakti?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “As soon as one’s knowledge is completely cleansed of the minutest traces of māyāvādī philosophy, both sambandha-jñāna and śuddha-bhakti manifest simultaneously.”

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What is the period of time required for this?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “It all depends upon the strength of one’s sukṛti—the higher the sukṛti, the quicker the result.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What are the initial results of sukṛti-bala, the power of previous piety?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “One attains sādhu-saṅga, association with saintly persons.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “And then what are the step by step developments as a result of sādhu-saṅga?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 3.25.25, states:

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*atām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido  
bhavanti hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ  
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani  
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

- “In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ears and heart.
- By cultivating such knowledge, one gradually advances along the path of spiritual liberation.
- Thus, one is freed from material contamination and one’s attraction to the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.’
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What factors help one obtain sādhu-saṅga?”

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- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “As I’ve already mentioned before, sādhu-saṅga is caused by sukṛti, as corroborated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.51.53:

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhaved  
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ  
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau  
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate matiḥ*

- “When the time arrives for the cessation of the material life of a wandering soul, O Acyuta, that soul attains sādhu-saṅga.
- And when he associates with the sādhus there awakens in him devotion unto You, Who are the goal of the sādhus and the Lord of all causes and their effects.’

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “If the kaniṣṭha devotee develops śraddhā and an inclination for arcana as a result of his association with sādhus, then why do we say that he does not serve the Vaiṣṇavas?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Gradually, on account of sādhu-saṅga one develops śraddhā in the eternal form of the Supreme Lord’s Deity.
- However, what is imperative is that Deity worship and service to devotees are performed simultaneously.
- Until śraddhā has developed to this level it is too weak to give one the eligibility to execute ananya-śuddha-bhakti.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What are the gradual steps that elevate a kaniṣṭha-bhakta?”

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- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The kaniṣṭha devotee has developed śraddhā in the eternal form of the Supreme Lord and the divinity of His Deity form, but he is not purified from mundane desire for karma, jñāna, name and fame, etc.
- However, he performs daily Deity worship and as a matter of coincidence he meets sādhus at his place of worship who are greeted with the hospitality naturally accorded to any respected guest.
- The kaniṣṭha keenly observes the activities and behaviour of these sādhus.
- He absorbs the spiritual discussions of the devotees on the different devotional texts.
- By such constant observation and hearing, he develops attraction and affection for the ways and words of those devotees.

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- He then begins to rectify his own faults and weaknesses of character.
- Gradually the mundane desires for karma and jñāna begin to reduce to the extent that his heart and consciousness are cleansed and he becomes unburdened of anyābhilāṣitā, material hankering.
- Listening to Kṛṣṇa-conscious topics and the transcendental philosophy expounded by the sādhus, his knowledge and realization of the scriptures increases.
- In the process of analysing the transcendental truths about the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari, harināma, and the devotional processes of hearing, chanting, etc., his realization of sambandha-jñāna and his own innate spiritual identity expand.



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- When this initial process of development matures, he gains the adhikāra to enter the madhyama-adhikārī level.
- Only then does he associate with devotees and serve the devotees in the true sense.
- At this stage he no longer perceives the sādhus as ordinary guests, but serves them reverentially as gurus.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Many kaniṣṭha-bhaktas do not progress, what is the reason for this?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “If the kaniṣṭha-bhakta’s, dveṣi-saṅga—association with the inimical agnostics, atheists and impersonalists, etc.,—is frequent, very soon he loses the kaniṣṭha status and becomes entangled in the pursuit of karma and jñāna, etc.

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- In some cases the kaniṣṭha neither progresses nor regresses, just remaining at the kaniṣṭha level.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “In which cases?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In cases where both sādhu-saṅga and dveṣi-saṅga exercise equal influence upon the kaniṣṭha, his devotion maintains the status quo.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What ensures certain progress?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “When devotee association is frequent and powerful and non-devotee association minimal, the kaniṣṭha progresses swiftly.”
- Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “How would you describe the tendency of the kaniṣṭha to perform both puṇyā, piety, and pāpa, impious deeds?”

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- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the initial stages of a kaniṣṭha’s devotional development this tendency to puṇyā and pāpa is very similar to that of the karmī and that of the jñānī.
- However, with the burgeoning of bhakti, the propensity for puṇyā and pāpa reduces in concomitant degrees as the endeavour to satisfy the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari gains strength.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Revered master, I have understood your explanations of the kaniṣṭha devotee, now kindly describe the mukhya symptoms of a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The mukhya symptoms of a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta are first, ananya-bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; second, four qualities are found in his dealing with his fellow devotees, which are ātmā-buddhi, he considers the devotees more dear than his own self;

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- mamatā-buddhi, intimate affection for the devotees; ijya-buddhi, he considers the devotees worshipable;
- and tīrtha-buddhi, he considers them places of pilgrimage;
- third, being naturally compassionate the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is mercifully disposed towards those who are ignorant about the Absolute Truth;
- and, finally, fourth, he strictly avoids the company of those inimical to Bhagavān.
- “The principal activity of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is to execute bhakti-sādhana, devotion in practice.

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- This consists of abhidheya, devotional performances, within the sphere of fully realized sambandha-jñāna, eternal knowledge, to attain prayojana, the prime perfection, kṛṣṇa-prema.
- Essentially, this means that when the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta performs hearing and chanting, etc., in the association of sādhus he does so offenselessly.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What are the gauṇa symptoms of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The gauṇa symptoms are seen in the way the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta lives his life.
- The madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta lives fully surrendered to the desire of Kṛṣṇa and his life is so arranged as to execute bhakti favourably.”

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Does he still commit pāpa and aparādha?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the earlier stages, the tendencies to commit pāpa and aparādha may be slightly present, but gradually they will dissipate.
- These residual tendencies are just like chickpeas being quickly ground away into powder.
- Whatever pāpa and aparādha that sometimes shows in the beginning stages of madhyama-adhikārī are minute residues, but soon they will disappear completely.
- Thus, the life of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is characterised by śuddha-bhakti with the practice of yukta-vairāgya, appropriate renunciation.”

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Do they hope for a long life?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “They desire to live only to mature and intensify their bhajana.
- They aspire neither for a long life, nor even for mukti.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Why do they not desire for death? What pleasure is there to remain alive in this body?”
- Only after death can one by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa become eternally situated in one’s svarūpa, original spiritual identity?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “All their aspirations are obedient to the will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thus they do not have any wish which is not Kṛṣṇa’s wish.

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- Having realized that all events in their life occur on the express wish of Kṛṣṇa, their lives are surrendered—they have no need to express any independent desire.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “I now have a proper understanding of the symptoms of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhaktas.
- Is an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta seen to have any gaṇa symptoms?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “If at all gaṇa symptoms are to be discerned then they are the natural activities of his body;
- and even then these activities are to such an extent subservient to the demands of his kṛṣṇa-prema that such gaṇa symptoms are practically impossible to identify.”



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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Revered master, I know that kaniṣṭha-adhikārī-bhaktas are not encouraged to leave family and home, the madhyama-adhikārī-bhaktas can be both in household life and in the renounced order, but can an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta be in household life?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “These three grades—kaniṣṭha, madhyama, and uttama—are assigned according to the level of bhakti and elevation to one of these grades does not depend upon whether one is a gṛhastha or a sannyāsī.
- An uttama-adhikārī-bhakta devotee can very well be in gṛhastha life—all the devotees of Vraja are gṛhastas and yet they are the most elevated uttama-adhikārī-bhaktas.
- Many amongst the most intimate associates of our beloved Śrīman Mahāprabhu are gṛhastha-bhaktas and again they are uttama-adhikārīs.

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- Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda is an illustrious example.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Dear master, how then should a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta in the sannyāsa order and an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta in gṛhastha life behave towards each other?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Vaiṣṇava etiquette demands that a lower order bhakta offer prostrate obeisances to the more elevated bhakta.
- This stipulation applies specifically to the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta, because the uttama-adhikārī-bhakta does not expect or demand any respect or obeisances for himself, for he sees the presence of the Supreme Lord within every living entity.”

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Is it the duty of Vaiṣṇavas to assemble in large groups and make arrangements for mahotsavas, festivals, to honour the bhāgavata-prasāda, sanctified food remnants of the Lord?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the course of some work if many Vaiṣṇavas come together and a madhyama-adhikārī gṛhastha-vaiṣṇava desires to offer them prasādam, there can be no objection from a spiritual standpoint.
- However, care must be taken not to make the affair very elaborate and ostentatious then the whole endeavour may become mundane, coloured by the material mode of passion.
- Certainly, it is recommended that one should invite pure Vaiṣṇavas and with care and affection serve them prasādam.

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- Such observances manifest real love and respect for the pure Vaiṣṇavas.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “In our village Baḍagāchi a caste called vaiṣṇava-santāna, the children of Vaiṣṇavas, has sprung up.
- The kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas of the village invite them for prasādam and call it vaiṣṇava-sevā, serving the Vaiṣṇavas. Is this correct?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Have these vaiṣṇava-santāna attained śuddha-bhakti?”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “I do not see the symptoms of śuddha-bhakti in any of them.

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- They introduce themselves simply as Vaiṣṇavas and some of them even wear the loincloth of the renunciate even though they are householders.”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “I am at a loss to explain why such practices are becoming prevalent.
- Certainly, they are undesirable. I can only surmise that it is happening because the kaniṣṭha-bhaktas are unable to discern who is a true Vaiṣṇava.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Should the vaiṣṇava-santāna caste command a special position of honour?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Honour is for those who are actually true Vaiṣṇavas.

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- If the vaiṣṇava-santāna members are śuddha-bhaktas, then they should be offered honour according to their individual level of śuddha-bhakti.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What if the vaiṣṇava-santāna members are simply a community of ordinary people in material society?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Then they should be respected according to their status in material society, and certainly not honoured in the same way as true Vaiṣṇavas, or even be considered true Vaiṣṇavas.
- Always try to remember the instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu regarding Vaiṣṇava behaviour in the third verse of the Śikṣāṣṭaka:

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*tr̥ṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

- “One should not expect any honour for oneself but must be ready to offer respect to everyone, each according to his spiritual elevation.
- A Vaiṣṇava must be accorded the respect and honour due to a Vaiṣṇava.
- One who is not a Vaiṣṇava must be shown the proper respect becoming for a human being.
- If a devotee fails to develop this attitude of offering appropriate respect to all, then the eligibility to chant harināma purely and constantly is not born.”

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- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “How does one give up the aspiration for respect?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “One must relinquish false pride, and not proudly think, ‘I am a brāhmaṇa,’ ‘I am accomplished,’ ‘I am well-versed in the śāstras,’ ‘I am a Vaiṣṇava,’ ‘I am a renounced person,’ etc.
- One must never even dream of receiving any respect because of such qualities.
- People may well offer respect, but one should simply acknowledge that one is unworthy, insignificant, indigent and humbler than a blade of grass.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Indeed, by your words I can understand that without dainya, humility, and dayā, compassion, one cannot be a Vaiṣṇava.”



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- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Quite true.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Does this indicate that Bhaktidevī, the goddess of śuddha-bhakti, is dependent upon humility and compassion?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Bhaktidevī is independent. She is herself beauty personified and the most valuable jewel; she does not require support from any other excellences.
- Dainya and dayā are not separate or independent excellences, but inherent to the very character of Bhaktidevī herself.
- When the devotee feels: ‘I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, without possessions and penniless, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is everything to me,’—the emotion expressed therein is dainya.

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- Essentially, bhakti is the bhāva of tender affection for Kṛṣṇa; while tender affection for other living entities—who are all eternal servitors of the Lord—is dayā.
- Therefore, both dainya and dayā are naturally embodied in bhakti.
- Kṣamā, forgiveness, is a bhāva between dainya and dayā. When the bhāva of dainya: ‘I am wretched and lowly, how could I be the judge and punisher of anyone?’ mingles with the bhāva of dayā the feeling of kṣamā is produced.
- Therefore, kṣamā is also inherent to bhakti.
- “Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the jīva, the subservience of the jīva to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the unwanted sojourn of the materially conditioned jīva within this mundane world are all satya, truth.

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- Therefore, bhakti must also be satya because all these truths are based upon the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the jīva, which is in essence bhakti.
- Hence, we see that satya, dainya, dayā, and kṣamā are all intrinsic to the very nature of Bhaktidevī.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “How should the Vaiṣṇava behave with persons of other systems of dharma?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The Śrīmad Bhagavatam, 1.2.26, states:

*nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā  
bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ*

- “‘Saintly personalities who are fully peaceful and free of the propensity to enviously criticize others worship the all-blissful forms of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, and His plenary portions.’

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- “Actually, there is no dharma other than vaiṣṇava-dharma.
- All other religions propagated in the world, including those to be propagated in future years, factually comprise different steps upon the ascension to vaiṣṇava-dharma, or alternatively they are deviations from the essential vaiṣṇava-dharma.
- When another religion complements vaiṣṇava-dharma, the devotee should respect that religion in accordance with its degree of purity.
- Thus, the followers of those religions, which actually constitute different stages on the path to pure vaiṣṇava-dharma, must be accorded proper appreciation and respect.

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- And, on the other hand, whilst dealing with groups that have deviated from pure vaiṣṇava-dharma, one must never bear malice, but engage oneself in the culture of one's own devotional truth.
- Thus, devotees should never be hateful and show intolerance towards other religious practices.
- When the auspicious moment comes in a person's life, he will easily embrace pure vaiṣṇava-dharma, of this there is no doubt.”
- Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Is it necessary to actively propagate vaiṣṇava-dharma?”
- Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Indeed, by all means, it is the duty of everyone to do so.

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- Our beloved Lord Śrīman Mahāprabhu has entrusted everyone with the responsibility to preach, as stated in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.92 and 9.36:

*nāca, gāo, bhakta-saṅge kara saṅkīrtana  
kṛṣṇa-nāma upadeśi' tāra' sarva-jana*

- “My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing saṅkīrtana in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting kṛṣṇa-nāma, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls.’

*ataeva āmi ājñā diluṅ sabākāre  
yāhān tāhān prema-phala deha' yāre tāre*

- “Therefore, I order every man within this universe to accept this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere.’

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- “However, one should remember that an unworthy candidate must first be made qualified before one instructs him in the glories of kṛṣṇa-nāma.
- In certain situations, for instance in speaking to inimical persons, upekṣā is required and so one should not speak anything that would spark off bitter controversy and thus cause impediments in the preaching work.”
- The nectarean words of Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī had had a wonderful effect upon Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī—he was overcome with prema and began to roll upon the ground.
- The assembled Vaiṣṇavas broke out into loud chanting of kṛṣṇa-nāma, and they all paid prostrated obeisances to Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī.

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- Thereafter, the meeting in that secluded grove broke up and everyone gradually went away to their individual dwellings.

Thus ends the eight chapter of Jaiva-dharma,  
entitled: Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava  
Behaviour