

Jaiṅva Dharma

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Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Chapter Three

Naimittika-dharma: Impermanent
Religious Duties Are Incomplete,
Pedestrian, Impure and Evanescent

Valueless
mundane.

temporary.

Many of the Vaiṣṇavas, after hearing Vaiṣṇava dāsa's earnest confessions,
addressed him, saying, "O saintly soul! We have always been greedy to
receive the dust from the feet of Vaiṣṇavas of your stature. Please kindly offer
it to us and make our lives worthwhile. You are the receptacle of Bābājī
Mahārāja's divine grace, thus sanctify us by your association.

As it is stated in the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa:

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate pumbhiḥ sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-saṅcitaiḥ

"Devotional sentiments are evoked by the purifying association of advanced
devotees. The jīva is able to come into close contact with a pure devotee only
by accruing sufficient pious results from many previous births."

“We were able to attain your holy association only on account of the piety we have accumulated in our past lives, which has fostered devotion.

And now, on the strength of your association, we are hopeful of achieving pure devotion to the Supreme Lord.”

Once these mutual exchanges between the sincere and humble Vaiṣṇavas were concluded, Vaiṣṇava dāsa took his place to one side of the seated assembly, enhancing its dignity.

The new chanting beads and bead-bag he carried in his hand acquired an auspicious aura, as this august assembly counted another very fortunate soul in its midst that day.

On that very day, another fortunate soul, a gentleman from Śāntipura, was seated in the gathering of Vaiṣṇavas.

From childhood on, this person had studied Arabic and Farsi, leading him to adopt the mannerisms of the ruling Muslim nobility, and bringing him position and prestige in the land.

As a resident of Navadvīpa, he belonged to a high brāhmaṇa lineage and had inherited vast properties of land.

He had become an expert in the art of diplomacy and politics and for many years he had been exploiting his position of power for his own advantage and had enjoyed many benefits, but simple happiness still eluded him.

As a last resort, he had begun to chant harināma.

Early in life, while still a young boy, experts in the field of Indian classical music had taught him, and he considered that such instruction qualified him to occasionally lead the kīrtana sessions of the Vaiṣṇavas.

However, when previously, he had lead some kīrtanas, the Vaiṣṇavas were apparently not fond of his typically palace-court classical touch.

Nonetheless, he had introduced these classical variations into the kīrtanas, oblivious of the Vaiṣṇavas' feelings.

Attempting to parade his musical ability, he had stared at the faces of the Vaiṣṇavas, awaiting a response, hoping for some appreciation.

For quite some days now, this had continued.

However, quite suddenly, a few days earlier, he had unexpectedly started to feel increasing pleasure in singing harināma.

Thus, he had taken up residence in the house of a Vaiṣṇava of Śrī Godruma to enable himself to participate more conveniently in kīrtana with the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

Today, his present landlord had accompanied him to the gathering of Vaiṣṇavas in the woody bowers of Pradyumna-kuñja.

Whilst sitting there, he had observed keenly how humbly the Vaiṣṇavas treated each other.

He also attentively listened to the talk Vaiṣṇava dāsa, during which certain doubts had welled up in his mind.

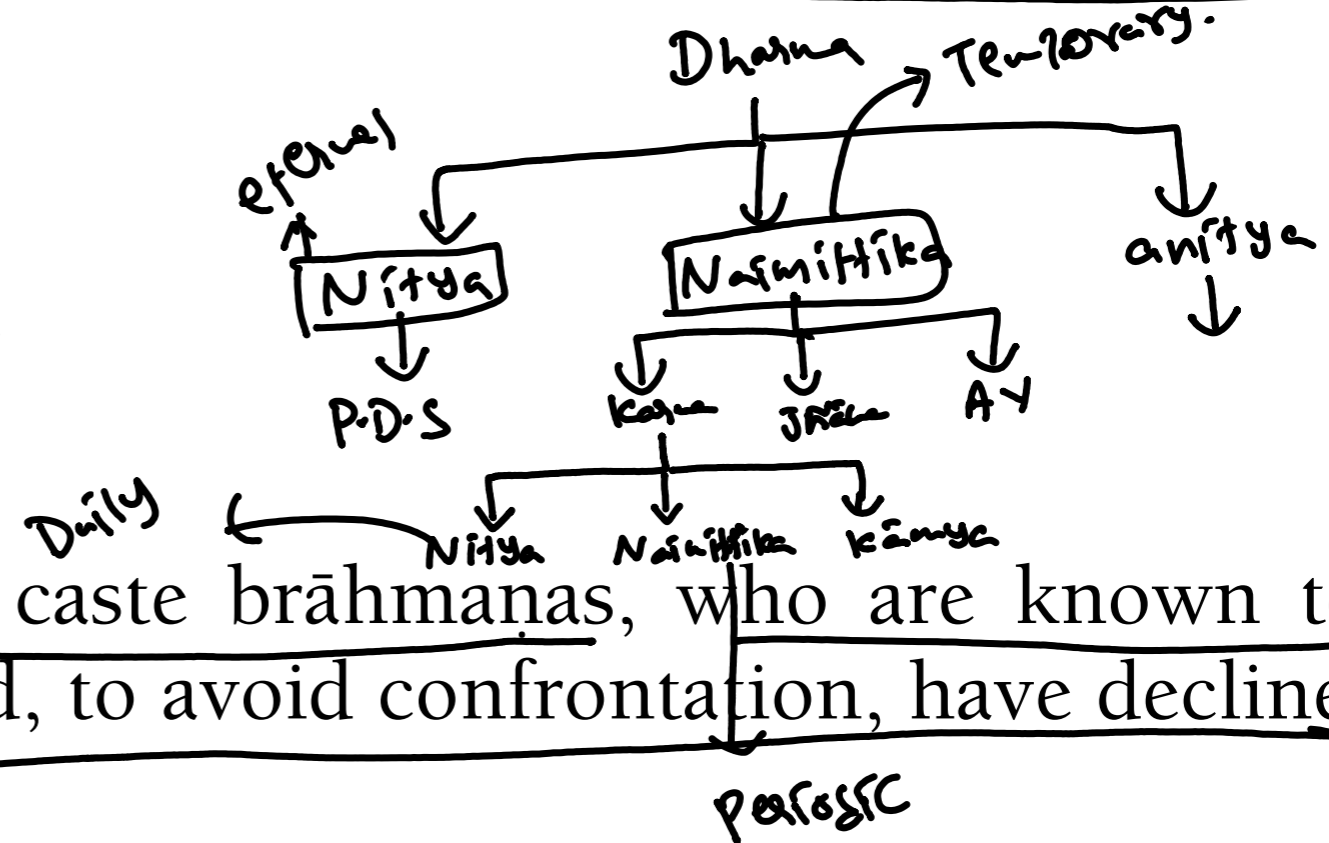
Already an eloquent speaker, he boldly addressed the assembly, enquiring as follows, “The religious scripture, the Manu-saṁhitā, and other smṛti dharmasāstras have described the brāhmaṇas as the highest class of men in the social order.

Further, they have prescribed tri-sandhyā-vandana, the thrice daily chanting of the brahma-gāyatrī-mantra and other prayers, as the nitya-karma—daily, eternal, religious duties of the brāhmaṇas to be performed without exception.

This be so, then why are the activities of the Vaiṣṇavas opposed to these religious duties?”

Vaiṣṇavas are not fond of dialectics.

Had this question been raised by caste brāhmaṇas, who are known to be argumentative, the Vaiṣṇavas would, to avoid confrontation, have declined to answer.



However, in this case, since the enquirer was devotionally inclined and a participant in their kīrtanas, everyone conceded that if Śrī Paramahaṁsa Premadāsa Bābājī were to answer the question, it would very much satisfy the assembly.

Bābājī Mahārāja respectfully heard the unanimous decision of the Vaiṣṇavas.

He first offered prostrated obeisances to the assembly and then began to speak.

“Dear exalted Vaiṣṇavas, if you have no objection, then let the stalwart Vaiṣṇava dāsa tackle this question exhaustively.” Everyone approved of this suggestion.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa felt very elated upon hearing his guru's suggestion and with sincere humility he began to deliberate aloud, "I am an extremely fallen soul in a dire condition.

It would be most presumptuous of me to speak anything before this learned and august assembly, yet also I cannot contradict the command of my guru.

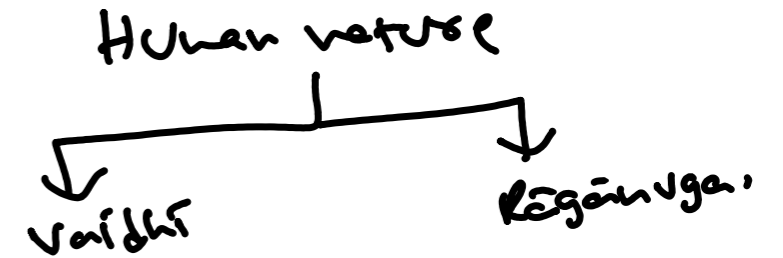
Thus, I have decided that whatever knowledge I have received by way of the nectarean instruction from the lotus lips of my guru I shall sincerely strive to repeat from memory."

He then walked up to Paramahaṁsa Premadāsa Bābājī and smeared the dust of his lotus feet all over his own body and head.

Standing erect, he started his dissertation, “Let the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the embodiment of divine bliss and the ultimate source of all partial and plenary expansions of the Absolute Lord, whose effulgence is Brahman, and whose partial manifestation is Paramātmā, the Supersoul within all living entities, inspire us with superior intelligence.

“The Manu-saṁhitā and other dharma-śāstras written down by other great sages are smṛti-śāstras, corollaries written in pursuance of the original śruti-śāstras known as the Vedas, which are eternal transcendental sound directly manifested from the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and are thus absolutely self-perfected and free of mundane defect.

Being corollaries in pursuance of the directions of the Vedas, the dharmasāstras are held in high esteem, just as the law books defining authorized and unauthorized actions in human society are similarly highly regarded throughout civilised society.



“In regard to religious practice, human nature is divided into two states: vaidhī, regulated by the rules and regulations of śāstra; and rāgānugā, spontaneous attraction to the Lord’s service.”

As long as the ^{svabhāva} (consciousness) is under the influence of māyā, material illusion, the guidance of the vaidhī practice remains an important necessity.

However, once the consciousness shakes off the shackles of māyā, it leaves the vaidhī state and manifests its innate rāgānugā nature, which is the jīva's original and pure constitution—transcendental and free from all material inebriety.

“The involvement with matter of the originally pure spirit soul is dissolved only by the desire of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, as long as Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not bestow liberation upon the aspiring sādḥaka-jīva, his material entanglement and position is kṣayonmukha—merely in the process of gradual development towards emancipation.

In this intermediate condition, the jīva, although gradually progressing towards liberation, has factually not fully attained liberation.

However, when the jīva is finally actually liberated by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his rāgātmikā nature, pure and spontaneous spiritual sentiment, becomes self-manifest as a tangible truth.

“The residents of the spiritual realm of Vraja are by nature rāgātmikā, spontaneously fixed in devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The jīvas, in the intermediate state, who strive progressively towards emancipation, take shelter of the rāgātmikā nature and thus become rāgānugās, followers of the rāgātmikā devotees.

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śākhās

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perfected devotees who are vṛjāvēstīs

This is a coveted and excellent position for the jīva because as long as the jīva lacks this position of rāgānugā, his consciousness remains unhappily engrossed in illusory material entanglement.

“As a result of close and habitual contact with the material energy, the ignorant conditioned jīva interprets his nisarga, illusory material conditioning, as his innate and original nature.”

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materially acquired conditioned nature.

At this stage, he cannot develop spontaneous spiritual attraction for the supramundane state.

In his relationships with matter, his consciousness is deeply engrossed in the false material conceptions of 'me' and 'mine'.

actions on the platform of false ego

“In the state of consciousness which dictates 'I am this body' and 'this body and its extensions are mine' the normal reactions are affection towards persons and objects providing the body with luxuries and comfort, and conversely, hatred towards persons and objects hindering the acquisition of such luxuries.

Sucked into this whirlpool of duality, the foolish jīva expresses love or hate on the physical, social, and regulative levels.

He discriminates between friend and foe, becoming caught up in trifles on the material level.

Unnecessarily, he cultivates affection for wealth and women, thereby chaining himself to the seesaw routine of happiness and distress.

This is known as saṁsāra, material life. Attached to this wheel of saṁsāra, the jīva experiences repeatedly the results of his actions, which thereby produce birth and death, success and failure.

“In this situation, the conditioned jīva finds spiritual involvement a troublesome burden and he cannot realize the truth and necessity of spiritual life.

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Such a materialistic person → with no ajīate nityā
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No śhraddhā → faith in
Bhakti

Alas! He forgets that spiritual activities are his inherent occupation and eternal nature.

Being so mesmerized by mundane attractions, he is forced to witness his own downfall—though in reality, he is an infinitesimal part of the Supreme Absolute.

“Most people caught in the wheel of saṁsāra do not see this fallen misery as a serious affliction of the enthralled jīva and thus never consider attaining the rāgātmikā nature or even the rāgānuga nature themselves.

In fact, in their present covered state this is far beyond their reach or even imagination.

Seldom does the rāgānuga nature appear spontaneously in the jīva's heart and then only by dint of the special mercy of a powerful sādhu, holy person.

Therefore, the platform of rāgānuga is very rare and almost impossible to attain, and those in saṁsāra are generally deprived of this rare state of existence.

“However, the Supreme Lord is omniscient and unlimitedly benevolent! Seeing that the living entities—imprisoned by the clutches of māyā—are deprived of a direct perception of the transcendental nature, the Lord therefore considers suitable means for their ultimate benefit:

'How may the living entities, mesmerized by māyā, best recollect their lost Kṛṣṇa consciousness?'

Association with sādhus enlightens the living entities about their real identity as the transcendental eternal servants of the Supreme.

However, there are no specific injunctions for the conditioned souls to associate with sādhus.

How then may such beneficial association be directed to take place automatically?

Therefore, for the greater benefit of the people in general, the introduction of a vidhi-mārga, a regulative spiritual discipline, carefully directing association with sādhus is imperative.

✕ Vaidhi bhakti

Thus, by the Supreme Lord's benign grace, the brilliant sun of scripture appeared in the sky that is the hearts of the devotees in order to illumine the pertinent religious regulations and instructions amongst all living entities.

“First, there were the Vedas, which were ordained to be in three sections: (1) karma, fruitive activities; (2) jñana, empirical knowledge; (3) bhakti, loving devotion to the Supreme Lord.

“The living entities, deluded by māyā, find themselves in varying degrees of conditioning.”

Some are in deep ignorance, others slightly knowledgeable, still others fairly well educated on a wide range of subjects, and so on.

The scriptures offer various instructions to the living entities in accordance with their different mentalities, which are defined as adhikāra, qualification and eligibility.

Adhikāra is as varied as the jīvas themselves; however, these various states of eligibility are grouped into three categories, according to their most obvious symptoms: karma-adhikāra, jñāna-adhikāra, and prema-adhikāra.