

Jaiṅva Dharma

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Chapter Three

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

Valueless
mundane.

temporary.

These categories are also specified in the Vedas, wherein corresponding vidhi, rules and regulations, are specified.

These do's and don'ts of scripture define the behaviour of the living entities grouped according to the three types of adhikāra.

→ V.S.B → one type of vaidhī dharma.

“This vidhi is described as **vaidhī-dharma**, regulative religious principles.

The tendency that impels a jīva to embrace vaidhī-dharma indicates his vaidhī nature, a love of scriptural discipline.

One who is bereft of this tendency to follow scriptural rules and regulations is an unruly, uncultured being, generally pledged to illicit, sinful activities.

People of this type are ostracised from the Vedas and condemned as mlecchas.

“The duties of the three adhikāra groups described in the Vedas have been elaborated upon by the wise sages and handed down to us as the saṁhitā-śāstras, scriptures that are corollaries to the original Vedic literature.

Manu and other great Vedic paṇḍitas have delineated the karma-adhikāra in twenty dharma-śāstras, religious treatises.

Similarly, great munis and philosophers have explained the jñāna-adhikāra in śāstras dealing with logic and empirical analysis.

The great ṛṣis, sages, authors of the purānas and the sattvika tantric treatises have conclusively propounded the duties and principles of bhakti and their practical application.

By their chaste adherence to their basis and source, the original śruti, all these smṛti-śāstras are very much a part of the Vedas.

“The marvellous conclusion of all these smṛti-śāstras is presented in the Bhagavad-gītā.

Research into the Bhagavad-gītā reveals the following formula: If karma, fruitive work, does not aim at the attainment of jñāna, knowledge, karma is rendered impotent and thus useless.

Similarly, if both karma and jñāna do not culminate in bhakti-yoga, devotional service, they must also be discarded on the grounds of having become atheistic heretical practices.

“Thus, the vaiṣṇava-siddhānta, Vedic philosophical conclusion, is that karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, and bhakti-yoga constitute ultimately the same path of yoga, process of spiritual elevation.

For the conditioned soul, the initial step towards self-realization begins with taking up karma.

Later, he is promoted to karma-yoga, then to jñāna-yoga, and finally to bhakti-yoga.

~~✗ ✗~~ Unless these different levels are properly explained to the deluded living entity, he is unable to reach the highest platform of bhakti-yoga.

“What exactly is karma? Any endeavour, physical or mental, carried out to sustain life is karma.”

It is of two kinds: śubha, auspicious; and aśubha, inauspicious. Auspicious karma begets positive results, while inauspicious karma brings negative results to the living entity.

Further names for inauspicious karma are: papa, sin; and vikarma, perverted unscriptural activities.

Abstaining from auspicious work is called akarma

→ Performance of forbidden duties.
→ Non-performance of prescribed duties

Both vikarma and akarma are bad; only auspicious work is good, which is of three kinds: nitya, daily and constant obligatory duties; naimittika, occasional, and ritualistic; and kāmya, desirous, motivated.

“Kāmya-karma is shamefully selfish, therefore in the scriptures it is considered ignoble, whereas the virtues of nitya-karma and naimittika-karma are praised.

After deliberating on the good and bad aspects of karma, the scriptures have concluded that in truth only nitya, naimittika, and kāmya—not akarma or vikarma—make up karma.

Since kāmya-karma has been rejected as being dispensable because of its selfish nature, therefore only nitya and naimittika karma really fit the descriptions of karma.

“Nitya-karma is defined as activities beneficial for body, mind, community and afterlife.

It is everyone’s duty to execute nitya-karma.

Daily rites such as sandhyā, chanting the gāyatrī-mantra thrice a day; vandana, chanting of Vedic prayers; using righteous means to protect the health of society and of the physical body; and following the path of truthfulness are all considered as nitya-karma.

Offering oblations and performing other rites for the satisfaction of the departed souls of the forefathers, executing penances to counteract sinful reactions, and so on are naimittika-karma.

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If an activity begins as a motivated action and yet gradually becomes a regulated responsibility, it is called naimittika-karma.

“In order to ensure that nitya and naimittika-karma are properly performed, the compilers of the scriptures have closely studied the characteristics and natural propensities of human beings, and to help them reach this objective, they have formulated a way of life known as varṇāśrama-dharma.

The essence of this system lies in the fact that human beings are endowed with volition, and, according to their natural tendency towards a particular occupation, may be thus categorized into four groups, which are known as the varṇas: brāhmaṇas, teachers and priests; kṣatriyas, social administrators and the martial class; vaiśyas, businessmen and agriculturists; and śūdras, artisans and labourers.

Furthermore, the stages of life are also of four kinds, known as the āśramas: brahmacāri, unmarried student life; gṛhastha, married family life; vānaprastha, retirement from family responsibilities; and sannyāsī, renounced ascetic life.

Those who are addicted to akarma and vikarma are outcastes, ostracized from the four varṇas and āśramas of the varṇāśrama system.

“The four varṇas are determined according to a person’s ^{gṛma} nature, ^{Janma} birth actions and personal qualifications.”
Varṇa *Q. difference.*

If the varṇa is decided on the basis of birth alone, then the original purpose of the varṇāśrama system is destroyed.

The āśramas are ascertained by a person's stage on the social progression:
brahmacārī unmarried; gr̥hastha, married; vānaprastha, gradual rejection and
separation from marital arrangements; and sannyāsī, final rejection of all
worldly ties with family and social friends.

“A brahmacārī is unmarried; a gr̥hastha is married and living with his wife; a
vānaprastha is cultivating disinterest in family affairs and disassociating from
his spouse; and a sannyāsī has rejected material life.”

The sannyāsa āśrama is certainly the most elevated of the four āśramas; and
the brāhmaṇa varṇa is the best amongst the four varṇas.

The crest jewel of all scriptures, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.17.15-21, states in this regard:

varṇānām āśramāṇām ca
janma-bhūmy-anusārinīh
āsan prakṛtayo nṛnām
nīcair nīcottamottamāh

“Corresponding to the specific part of the Universal Form of the Lord from which the varṇas and āśramas appeared, the respective high or low propensities are formed accordingly.

The feet and legs are of the lower anatomy, from which the śūdra-varṇa and gr̥hastha-āśrama are respectively produced; hence, the śūdra-varṇa and gr̥hastha-āśrama are afflicted with a lowly nature.

The mouth and head are of the upper anatomy, from which the brāhmaṇas and sannyāsīs are respectively produced; hence, they are of the highest nature within society.'

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ
santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
mad-bhaktiś ca dayā satyaṁ
brahma-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, cleanliness, satisfaction, tolerance, simple straightforwardness, devotion to Me, mercy, and truthfulness are the natural qualities of the brāhmaṇas.”

tejo balam dhṛtiḥ śauryam
titikṣaudāryam udyamaḥ
sthairyam brahmanyam aiśvaryam
kṣatra-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

“Dynamic power, bodily strength, determination, heroism, tolerance, generosity, great endeavor, steadiness, devotion to the brāhmanas, and leadership are the natural qualities of the kṣatriyas.”

āstikyam dāna-nisthā ca
adambho brahma-sevanam
atuṣṭir arthopacayair
vaiśya-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

“Faith in Vedic civilization, dedication to charity, freedom from hypocrisy, service to the brāhmanas and perpetually desiring to accumulate more money are the natural qualities of the vaiśyas.”

śuśrūṣaṇam dvija-gavām
devānām cāpy amāyayā
tatra labdhena santosah
śūdra-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

“Service without duplicity to the brāhmanas, cows, devas and other worshipable personalities, and complete satisfaction with whatever income is obtained in such service are the natural qualities of the śūdras.”

aśaucam anṛtam steyam
nāstikyam śuska-vigrahaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhaś ca tarṣaś ca
sa bhāvo 'ntyāvasāyinām

“Uncleanliness, dishonesty, thievery, faithlessness, useless quarrel, lust, anger, and hankering constitute the nature of those in the lowest position outside the varṇāśrama system.”

ahimsā satyam asteyam
akāma-krodha-lobhatā
bhūta-priya-hitehā ca
dharmo 'yam sārva-varṇikah

“Nonviolence, truthfulness, honesty, desire for the happiness and welfare of all others and freedom from lust, anger, and greed constitute duties for all members of society.”

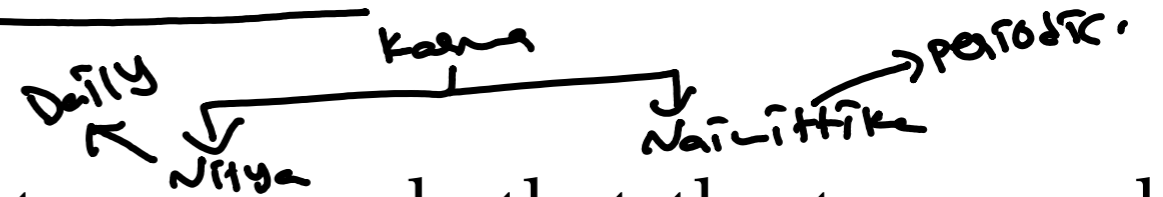
“I refrain from elaborating upon these ślokas, as I am in an august assembly of devotees and all of you are able to comprehend their import.”

I simply want to point out that the system of varṇa and āśrama is the only foundation upon which a civilized society may thrive and the basis for living according to scriptural injunction.

To the degree the varṇāśrama system is not practiced in a country, irreligiosity will be prominent there.



“Let us now further analyse the usage of the two words, nitya and naimittika.



A deep probe into the essence of the scriptures reveals that the two words, nitya and naimittika, when they relate to the performance of karma are never meant in the pāramārthika, purely spiritual sense, but are used in the vyāvahārika sense—terms to indicate the vaidhī discipline for everyday, routine, material life.

“On the other hand, expressions such as: nitya-dharma, eternal religion; nitya-karma, eternal, unmotivated spiritual duties; nitya-tattva, eternal spiritual principle; and nitya-satya, eternal truth, are to be used only to describe the living entity’s pure and transcendental state of consciousness and should actually not be used for another purpose.

“Previously, the term nitya was used to denote a type of fruitive activity aimed at giving someone in material life a taste and inclination for the absolute transcendence and eternal life upon that plane.

However, karma can never be eternal.

Only when by the process of karma-yoga, karma seeks to achieve jñana, and jñana in turn is sublimated into bhakti, can karma and jñana be described as nitya, but there also solely in an attributive, figurative sense.

The brāhmaṇa's sandhyā-vandana has therefore been termed nitya-karma only because these physical and psychical activities direct the living entity from a backward state of conditioned consciousness to the pure devotion that is bhakti.

“Since bhakti is the actual transcendental nitya-karma, a path starting from any backward position that ultimately helps in progress towards bhakti may also be called nitya, eternal, though actually, in itself, such a position is not eternal.

In a pedantic sense, it is therefore better to describe it as naimittika, rather than nitya.

In conclusion, therefore karma, including its two divisions, nitya and naimittika, is merely a means and not an absolute principle.

“Thus, an analysis on the basis of Vedic siddhānta, ultimate truth and conclusion, establishes that the search for the absolute transcendental reality is the living entity’s only nitya-dharma; and all other religions and performances are naimittika.

Varnāśrama-dharma; aṣṭanga-yoga, the path of eight-fold mystic yoga; sāṅkhya, speculative and deductive knowledge; and tapasya, austerity, are all naimittika.

If the living entity were not in a conditioned state, encaged in matter, all these religious practices would be redundant.

The living entity's conditioned state is thus actually the cause that has created all these religious duties and (lent credence) to them.

Therefore, in fact, they are all naimittika-dharma.

“The brāhmaṇa's superior status in society, the vandana prayers, and his final graduation from fruitive work through the acceptance of sannyāsa are all naimittika dharma.