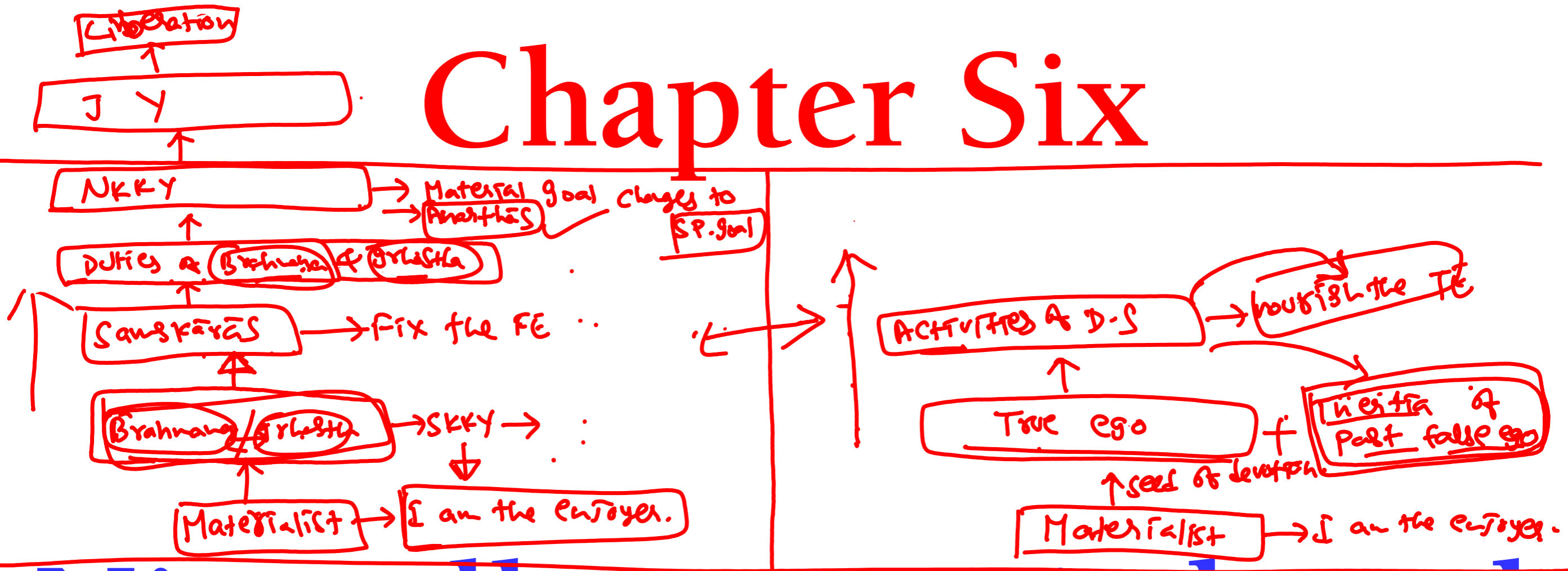


# Jaiṡa Dharma

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Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

# Chapter Six



## Nitya-dharma: Birth and Caste Differences

Whether a devotee is born in a lowly family of sinners, or in the noble brāhmaṇa caste, the supreme destination is within his grasp.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “It appears to me that the rites and rituals prescribed by the scriptures to the jīva on the basis of his birth are more satisfactory. I was born in a brāhmaṇa family.

By regular performance of my sandhyā, vandana, and so on, I am sure to acquire jñāna and finally attain mukti.

This is a tangible truth to me, but I cannot comprehend how śraddhā appears.

I have come across instructions in the Gītā and Bhāgavatam about how bhakti is begotten from śraddhā.

Kindly explain to me how the jīva may endeavour to possess that śraddhā.”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Śraddhā is an integral part of the eternal, inherent nature of the jīva.”

Б्रह्मणा कर्मा  
एव कर्मा

The inclination of the jīva towards a particular karma in the varṇāśrama social system is a product of his naimittika-svabhāva, temporary, assumed, material nature. This is substantiated in the scriptures, for example, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.19.1:

yadā vai śraddadhāti atha manute,  
nāśraddadhan manute,  
śraddadhad eva manute,  
śraddhātveva vijijñāsitavyeti śraddhām bhagavo vijijñāsa iti

“Sanat-kumāra said, “When a person develops śraddhā, respect for that which is to be known, he makes the effort to comprehend that object. Only those with śraddhā can know that object, others without śraddhā cannot. Therefore, O Nārada! First, there must be śraddhā, so it is essential to learn what is the true nature of śraddhā.”

Nārada replied, “My dear Lord, I earnestly desire to inform myself fully about śraddhā.”

“Some commentators have explained that śraddhā means faith in the words of the Vedas and the śrī-guru.”

This explanation is acceptable, but not clear. In our sampradāya, the word śraddhā carries the following definition, Āmnāya-sūtra, 57:

śraddhā tv anyopāya-varjam bhakty-unmukhī citta-vṛtti-viśeṣaḥ

“Śraddhā is that propensity in man which strives for bhakti, rejecting the attainment of bhakti by the vehicles of karma, jñāna, mystic yoga, and so on.”

“By constantly hearing about the Supreme Lord in saintly association, one’s consciousness reaches a certain elevation.”

When one realizes that karma, jñāna, aṣṭāṅga yoga, etc., cannot offer the jīva the eternal benediction of the Absolute Truth, and that there is no other option for the jīva besides taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Hari with single-minded bhakti, only then can it be said that one has developed śraddhā and faith in the words of the śāstra and guru.

“Śraddhā is further outlined in the following words of Āmnāya-sūtra, 58:

...sā ca śaraṇāpatti-lakṣaṇā...

“The different indications of surrender are the external symptoms of śraddhā.”

“Śaranāgati, surrender, is described as follows in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 11.676:

ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam  
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptrtve varaṇam tathā  
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ

“The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of things favourable to the execution of devotional service; the rejection of unfavourable things; the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection; the acceptance of the Lord as one’s guardian and master; full self-surrender; and humility.”

“Firstly, the devotee must take a saṅkalpa, solemn vow, to perform works which are ānukūlyasya saṅkalpa, favourable to unalloyed bhakti.



Secondly, the devotee must take solemn vow in the matter of prātikūlyasya varjanam, rejecting anything that is unfavourable to unalloyed bhakti.

Thirdly, He must be convinced that the Supreme Lord alone is rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso, his protector and maintainer, and that nothing positive can come from endeavouring for karma, jñāna, and yoga.

Thus the devotee expresses viśvāsa, trust, in the Lord.

Fourthly, the bhakta must develop a sense of goptrtve varanam, complete dependence on the Lord, thinking that his own efforts alone will never make him capable of succeeding in anything, not even in physically maintaining himself.

Therefore, since the Lord is taking care of him, the bhakta will serve the Lord appropriately and as well as he can.

This is known as nirbharatā, dependence.

Fifthly, the bhakta must ātma-nikṣepa, offer himself wholesale to the Lord, knowing that he is ignorant of his own spiritual identity, that he is the Lord's property, and that his actions are the implementations of the desires of the Lord. This surrender of the self is also known as ātmā-nivedana.

Sixthly and finally, the bhakta must develop the sense of kārpaṇye, humility, which makes him feel poverty-stricken, meek, and lowly.

This mood of humility is understood as kārpaṇya or dainya.

*definition of śraddhā in terms of externally observable symptoms.*

“Thus the state of consciousness that is evoked when the heart becomes infused with determination, subservience, trust, dependence, self-surrender, and humility is designated as śraddhā.

Whosoever attains this śraddhā becomes a fit candidate to execute bhakti and for the sādḥaka, devotional aspirant, this śraddhā is the initial step towards the perfection displayed by the eternally liberated pure jīva souls.

Since śraddhā is the fundamental nuance of the jīva’s nitya-svabhāva, innate eternal nature, it is therefore also his actual nitya-dharma. All other variations of the dharma of the jīva are naimittika.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Thank you, I have grasped your explanation.”

However, still you have omitted the subject of what evokes śraddhā.

If sat-karma, pious deeds, are the seeds that later sprout out as śraddhā, then my argument remains uncontested; because, if sat-karma and prescribed duties according to one’s varṇa are not properly executed within the varṇāśrama system, then śraddhā cannot manifest itself.

Thus, since the yavanas, Muslims, do not have the possibility to perform sat-karma, how can they become suitable candidates for practising bhakti?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Yes! Śraddhā is born of sukṛti, righteous activities.”

This quote, available in the Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa, 4.33, provides the required proof:

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

“Devotional sentiments are evoked by the purifying association of advanced devotees. The jīva is able to come into close contact with a śuddha-bhakta, pure devotee, only by accruing sufficient sukṛti from many previous births.”

“However, sukṛti is of two kinds: nitya and naimittika.

↓  
anīyā  
sukṛti

↓  
material piety.

Sukṛti which leads to sat-saṅga and bhakti is nitya-sukṛti, and sukṛti which results in material enjoyment and impersonal liberation is naimittika-sukṛti, otherwise known as anitya-sukṛti.

Sukṛti is differentiated on the basis of results—if the result is eternal, sukṛti is the eternal nitya-sukṛti; and if the result is evanescent, sukṛti is the temporal naimittika-sukṛti.

Bhukti, sense gratification, is fleeting; hence, that which produces bhukti is naimittika-sukṛti.

“The jīva is in himself śuddha, pure; nitya, eternal; and sanātana, primeval and ever dynamic.”

The cause of the enslavement of the jīva is his intimate intercourse with māyā, matter.

Mukti, defined as the complete nullification of this enslavement, is dependent upon (cause) and (effect), and, being achieved in a (moment), is therefore a transitory and not an eternal action.

When mukti is attained, all striving for mukti ceases immediately and is then no longer a topic of discussion.

Nevertheless, because of a lack of knowledge in this subject, many people falsely believe that mukti is eternal.

In reality, however, mukti is actually only the removal of the material cause of bondage; therefore, it is primarily naimittika.

Therefore, that process of so-called bhakti which claims to generate mukti and then ceases to exist is at best naimittika karma.

“On the other hand, that bhakti, which is present before the stage of mukti is attained, while mukti is attained, and which remains forever after mukti has been attained, is quite different from the bhakti described above—it is an absolute eternal principle and is thus the nitya-dharma of the jīva.



Attachment to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, is endless and eternal.

Hence, in a spiritual sense, no aṅga, limb, of this process of surrender can be termed naimittika. What is called mukti is simply a by-product of this bhakti.

I offer this quotation from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 1.2.12:

parīkṣya lokān karma-citān brāhmaṇo  
nirvedam-āyān nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena  
tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet  
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham

“A brāhmaṇa must realize the temporary nature of the results of karma, and that the cherished eternal Absolute Truth, which lies beyond the principle of karma, is unattainable through karma. Hence, he must denounce karma. In order to obtain the cherished objective, he must attach himself to the science of bhakti. In which case, he must humbly approach, with firewood for a sacrifice in hand, a bona fide spiritual master who is well versed in the conclusions of the Vedas and realized in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and surrender there at his feet with mind, body and words.”

“Karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, aṣṭāṅga-yoga, etc., are all in the category of naimittika-sukṛti.

Whereas, bhakta-saṅga, associating with saintly persons, and bhakti-kriyā-saṅga, contact with devotional acts, are nitya-sukṛti.

Only one who has accrued nitya-sukṛti over many lifetimes will attain śraddhā.

Naimittika-sukṛti offers many other temporary results, but cannot evoke śraddhā, leading to eternal unalloyed bhakti.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Please explain, bhakta-saṅga and bhakti-kriyā-saṅga. From what type of sukṛti do these activities stem?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “To discuss and hear Kṛṣṇa conscious topics from pure devotees and to serve them is known as sat-saṅga, also known as bhakta-saṅga.”

The pure devotees of the Lord perform the activities of bhakti such as the congregational chanting of harināma in towns and villages.

A person who participates in these spiritual activities or any other similar activities, such as cleansing the Lord’s temple, offering a lamp to the tulasī plant, observing the Hari-vāsara, different spiritual festivals such as Ekādaśī and Janmāṣṭamī, connected to the Supreme Lord, and so on, is performing bhakti-kriyā-saṅga.

“If somehow or other these activities are not executed with pure śraddhā, but accidentally or even inattentively and hastily, still they result in sukṛti that fosters bhakti to the Supreme Lord.”

śraddhā

When this sukṛti accumulates into a driving force over many lifetimes, it brings one to the stage of acquiring śraddhā for sādhu-saṅga and ananyā-bhakti, pure unalloyed bhakti.

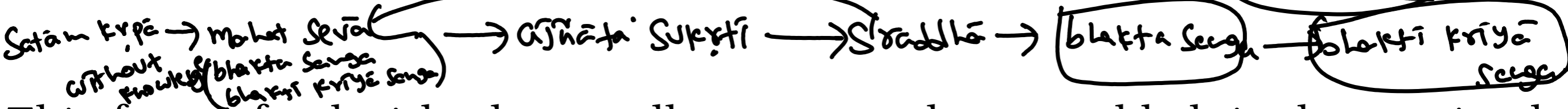
All the levels of purity within bhakti add to the development of śraddhā; furthermore, only these bhakti-kriyā, devotional activities, have the inherent potency to generate the required sukṛti.

If they are executed with śraddhā, the results are marvellous, but even when done disinterestedly or indifferently, they still increase piety in the form of nitya-sukṛti, as pointed out in the Mahābhārata, Prabhāsa-kaṇḍha, which is quoted in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 11.451:

**madhura-madhuram-etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām**  
**sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpaṁ**  
**sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā**  
**bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma**

“The chanting of harināma is the most beneficial of all spiritual and pious activities. It is more relishable than the sweetest honey. It is the transcendental fruit of all the śruti scriptures, the Vedas. O best of the Bhārgavas! If any person chants harināma offenselessly even once, be it with śraddhā, or with derisive indifference, harināma immediately offers him liberation.”

“Thus, all sukṛti which enhances one’s bhakti to the Lord is nitya-sukṛti.”



This form of sukṛti leads to sādhu-saṅga and ananya-bhakti when patiently seasoned.

Successful activities

Through performance of haimittika-duskṛti temporary impious deeds, the wrongdoer may be born in a Muslim family, whereas a person performing nitya-sukṛti develops sīradhā leading to ananya-bhakti.

Why should this come as a surprise?”