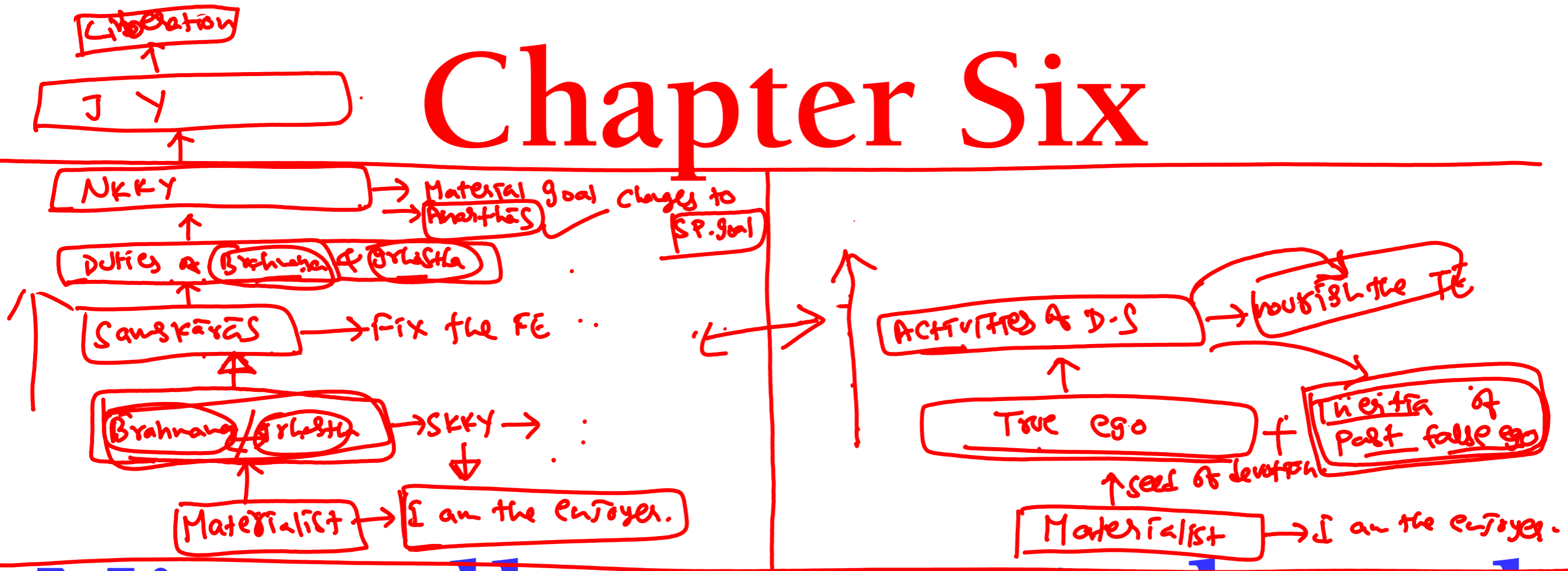


Jaiṣa Dharma

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Chapter Six



Nitya-dharma: Birth and Caste Differences

Cūdāmaṇi, “If bhakti-poṣaka-sukṛti, sukṛti that nourishes devotion, really exists it can only be the result of some other type of sukṛti.

The yavanas do not possess this other type of sukṛti, so bhakti-poṣaka-sukṛti is beyond their reach.”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “One should not think in these terms. Nitya-sukṛti and naimittika-sukṛti are independent of each other, not connected.”

In the Purāṇas, we find the story of the sinful hunter who unknowingly, by force of circumstance, fasted and stayed up the night of śiva-rātrī, thus performing a śiva-vrata.

He attained bhakti to Śrī Hari as a result of this nitya-sukṛti, because Lord Śiva is a very elevated Vaiṣṇava.

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 12.13.16, it is stated:

vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ

“Amongst all Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Śiva is the best.”

“Thus, even accidentally observing a vow in his honour enables one to attain hari-bhakti. This is substantiated by all the scriptures.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Are you claiming that nitya-sukṛti can happen by chance, under force of circumstance?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Everything may be said to occur by force of circumstance; this is true even on the path of karma.”

When the jīva was first entangled in the cycle of karma, it happened suddenly, by sheer force of circumstances, did it not?

Although the mimāṃsā philosophers have described karma as being anādi, materially beginningless, factually karma has a cause.

The jīva's bhagavad-vimukhatā, indifference, rejection, and turning away from the Lord, is the root cause of his crucifixion upon the wheel of karma.

Similarly, nitya-sukṛti may appear to have occurred by chance.

“In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 4.7, it is stated:

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
‘nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭam yadā paśyaty anyam
īśamasya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ

“Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird (the jīva), is filled with anxiety and moroseness, and fully engrossed in enjoying the fruits of the tree. Nevertheless, if somehow or other, he turns his face to his friend, who is the Lord (the Supersoul), and knows His glories (by the mercy of the guru) then at once, the suffering bird is freed from all anxiety.”

“The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.51.53, states:

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamah
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ

“O Acyuta! The jīva is eternally enthralled in the continuous cycle of birth and death. By the mercy of the Lord, when the time for release from this vicious circle arrives, he first attains the association of saintly persons. Right from that moment, he develops attachment to Your lotus feet. You are the Lord of both the material and the spiritual worlds and the shelter of the saintly souls.’

“Again from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 3.25.25:

satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyaṇāḥ-kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

“In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the potent pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge, one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Then, according to your understanding, there is no distinction between one practising Vedic culture, an ārya, and a yavana?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “In general, there are two types of difference between men: pāramārthika, those of a spiritual nature; and vyāvahārika, those of a material nature.”

Between an ārya and a yavana, there are no absolute spiritual differences, only mundane distinctions.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Why must you always come up with lofty Vedic circumlocutions? What may be these mundane vyāvahārika distinctions between the ārya and the yavana?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Social intercourse in day-to-day material life is known as vyāvahārika. In a materialistic society, the yavana is considered an untouchable.”

This is a mundane distinction and because of his low birth āryas refuse water or food from his hands.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “If so, then clearly define how there is spiritual parity between an ārya and a yavana?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “The scriptures declare:

bhṛgu-vara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

“O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty, the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa can liberate
any human being.”

“This means that all human beings, including the yavanas, are equal in
respect to their attaining spiritual goals.”

Those bereft of nitya-sukṛti may be called ‘biped animals,’ because they have
no faith in the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa.

Thus, although they are born as human beings, they are devoid of humanity, which implies that their inhuman or animalistic nature is predominant.

It is written in the Mahābhārata:

mahāprasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaisnave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

“Persons with meagre sukṛti cannot develop faith in mahā-prasāda, the spiritual food remnants of the Lord; in the Deity of Śrī Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; in the transcendental kṛṣṇa-nāma; and in the Vaiṣṇavas.’

“Nitya-sukṛti bestows an immense piety that purifies the jīva. Naimittika-sukṛti is of meagre piety and cannot evoke śraddhā for spiritual objects.

Mahā-prasāda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His Deity form, harināma, and the pure Vaisnava devotee are the four transcendental manifestations within this material world.”

At this point, Cūḍāmaṇi said, with a short derisive laugh, “What a speech that was!”

Lack of nitya sukṛti

This is pure Vaiṣṇava fanaticism! How can a little rice, dal, vegetables, and so on become cinmaya, transcendental? I am convinced that nothing is impossible for you Vaiṣṇavas to believe in.”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Whatever you may do, please do not attempt to criticize or blaspheme the Vaiṣṇavas.”

This is my humble request. After all, in a debate one must adhere to the topic at hand, not indulge in vaiṣṇava-nindā, blasphemy of the Vaiṣṇavas.

There is no object in the material world superior to mahā-prasāda because it evokes the spiritual nature of man and dissipates the mundane conditioning.

Hence, the Śrī Īsopaniṣad, verse 1, declares:

iśāvāsyam idam sarvaṃ
yat kiñca jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhujjīthā
mā gr̥dhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam

“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord (is interwoven into the Lord’s existence and manifests His consciousness). One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself (in a mood of yukta-vairāgya) which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.”

“Everything in this world is connected with the Supreme Lord through His energies.”

If one develops the vision that everything is related to the spiritual nature,
then one does not differentiate between what is spiritual and what is
material.

Moreover, one stops trying to enjoy and exploit the material energy.

Those jīvas, whose consciousness is directed inwards, towards spirituality,
should accept their daily bodily requirements in this world with the mood
that everything is the prasāda of the Lord.

This is known as mahā-prasāda, great mercy. That you cannot relish and
appreciate such a wonderful thing as mahā-prasāda is truly a great
misfortune.

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Please leave all that aside, let us remain on the subject. How are we supposed to behave with the yavanas?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “As long as a person remains a yavana, we are indifferent towards him.”

However, when the yavana becomes a Vaiṣṇava on the strength of his nitya-sukṛti, then we do not refer to him henceforward as a yavana.

The scriptures give this advice in the Padma Purāṇa, which is also quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 10.119:

śūdraṃ vā bhagavad-bhaktam
niṣādam śvapacam tathā
vīkṣate jāti-sāmānyāt
sa yāti narakam dhruvam

“A devotee of the Supreme Lord may be born in a śūdra family, the last of the four varṇas, or lower as a niṣada, an aboriginal hunter, or even in a candāla, dog-eating family, but anyone who thinks that such a devotee is to be designated according to his birth will certainly be doomed to hell.”

na me priyaś catur-vedi
mad-bhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ
sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham

“If a brāhmaṇa, well-versed in the four Vedas (a caturvedi) is not a devotee, he is not dear to Me, but if a person, though born in a caṇḍāla family, is a devotee then he is very dear to Me. Whatever offering that has to be made must be made to him with proper faith. His remnants must be accepted by all, knowing him to be worthy of everyone’s worship just as I am.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “I understand. Can a gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava offer the hand of his daughter in marriage to a yavana-vaiṣṇava and can the yavana-vaiṣṇava in turn accept the hand in marriage of the daughter of a gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, For the world of materialistic society a yavana remains a yavana until his death, but in spiritual life when a yavana attains bhakti, he is no longer to be regarded a yavana.

The ten prescribed duties, saṁskāras, are smarta activities and vivāha, marriage, is one of them.

Hence, if the gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava is an ārya, belonging to one of the four varṇas, then he should only marry into his own varṇa.

Although the varṇāśrama dharma is a part of naimittika-karma, he should follow its principles, in order to lead a proper household life.

Loka Saṅgīcha
Dharma

Societal
Impropriety.

“It is not true that one becomes a Vaisnava simply by discarding the social rules and etiquette of varṇāśrama dharma.

For a Vaiṣṇava, anything that is favourable towards the path of bhakti becomes his duty.

Social mores → Not the value system.

Only when a person develops genuine detachment from varṇāśrama dharma by progress in hari-bhajana will he be eligible to disassociate himself from it.

Then, he must reject the varṇāśrama system and everything associated with it entirely.

“If, to a faithful Muslim, his own yavana society proves spiritually detrimental, then he may renounce it without hesitation.”

If two persons are Vaiṣṇavas, one of which has renounced varṇāśrama-dharma and the other has renounced yavana society, ultimately what is the difference?

Both have rejected the vyavahāra, materialistic norms. In the pursuit of paramārtha, spiritual reality, they are brothers.

“However, this is not applicable to gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava society.

Domestic society may place hindrances in the gr̥hastha’s path of bhajana; however, until he gains the full eligibility to reject the norms of varnāśrama society, he should not do so.

Gradually, when he spontaneously develops firm and steady attachment to practices that are beneficial to his spiritual bhajana, then he may forget his dependence on social etiquette.

For example, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11.11.32:

ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān
mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān
mam bhajet sa tu sattamaḥ

“The Supreme Lord said, “My devotee perfectly understands that
the ordinary religious duties prescribed by Me in various Vedic
scriptures possess favorable qualities that purify the performer, and
he knows that neglect of such duties constitutes a discrepancy in
one’s life. However, having taken complete shelter at My lotus feet, a
saintly person ultimately renounces such ordinary religious duties
and worships Me alone. He is thus considered the best amongst all
living entities.’

“Further, the Bhagavad-gītā, 18.66, states:

sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver
you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.’

“Elsewhere, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 4.29.46, states:

yadā yasyānugṛhṇāti
bhagavān ātma-bhāvitaḥ
sa jahāti matim loke
vede ca pariniṣṭhitām

“When a person is fully engaged in bhakti, he is favoured by the Lord, who bestows His causeless mercy. At such a time, the awakened devotee gives up all material activities and ritualistic performances mentioned in the Vedas.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “If a yavana sincerely embraces Vaiṣṇavism, will you sit together with him and eat?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “Impartial, detached Vaiṣṇavas can sit with him and honour mahā-prasādam.