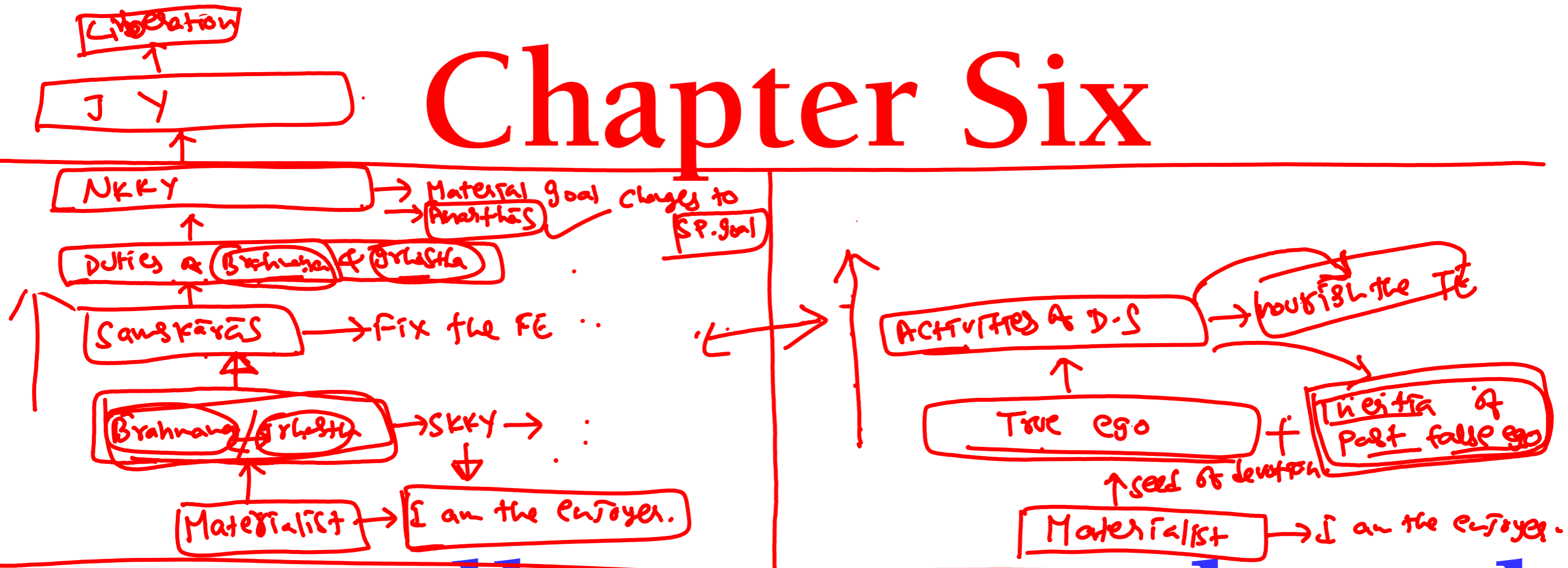


# Jaiṁva Dharmā

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Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

# Chapter Six



## Nitya-dharma: Birth and Caste Differences

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-prasadam.”

In the context of ordinary social dealings, gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇavas may not sit together with him, but there is no such objection when it comes to honoring viṣṇu-prasāda.

In fact, they are duty-bound to sit together.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Then, why are the yavana-vaiṣṇavas prohibited from touching the Deity paraphernalia in a Vaiṣṇava temple Deity room?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “It is offensive to call a Vaiṣṇava ‘yavana,’ only because he is born in a yavana family.

Every single Vaiṣṇava has the right to serve the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

If a gr̥hastha-vaiṣṇava, in serving the Deities, acts contrary to the precepts of varṇāśrama dharma, he is found guilty only of transgressing the rules of social etiquette.

For the nirapekṣa-vaiṣṇava in the renounced order, Deity worship is not recommended because nirapekṣatā, being free from all external requirements, is recommended.

The nirapekṣa-vaiṣṇava should serve the Divine Couple, Śrī Rādhā and Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in mānasi-sevā, internal meditation.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “I see. Now please tell me what you think of the brāhmaṇas?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “There are two types of brāhmaṇas: svabhāva-siddha, by qualification; and jāti-siddha, by birth only.”

The brāhmaṇas by qualification are close to being Vaiṣṇavas and should be respected by all; whereas, a brāhmaṇa by birth is to be given the conventional social respect of mundane society.

In this way, the Vaiṣṇavas respect both.

The scripture, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.9.10, comments on this point:

viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-  
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacam variṣṭham  
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-  
prāṇam punāti sa kulam na tu bhūrimānaḥ

“If a brāhmaṇa has all twelve brahminical qualifications (as they are stated in the books called, Sanat-sujāta) but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who was born as a dog-eater, but who has now dedicated everything—mind, words, activities, wealth, and life—to the Supreme Lord.

Such a devotee is better than such a brāhmaṇa because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called brāhmaṇa in his position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.'

Cūḍāmaṇi, “The lower castes, such as the śūdras, are not allowed to study the Vedas.”

Can a śūdra who has become a Vaiṣṇava scrutinize the Vedas?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “He may come from any varṇa, but if a person is a pure Vaiṣṇava, he automatically becomes a transcendental brāhmaṇa.”



The Vedas are broadly divided into two sections: that section which directs the performance of karma, prescribed duties within varṇāśrama dharma; and that section which exhorts the tattva, the Absolute Truth.

Mundane brāhmanas have only access to the former section of the Vedas, explaining karma and so on; while, the transcendental brāhmanas are fit candidates to study the latter section describing the Absolute Truth.

Regardless of a pure Vaiṣṇava's background, he is worthy of studying and teaching the essence, the Absolute Truth, from the Vedas.

This is substantiated in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.21:

tam eva dhiro vijñaya prajñam kurvita brahmaṇaḥ

“An intelligent, equipoised person who has realized Brahman must endeavour to know the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, and surrender unto Him with loving devotion.”

“In the same Upaniṣad, 3.8.10, it is stated:

yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpanaḥ  
atha ya etad akṣaram gārgi viditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ

“O Gārgi! Those who pass away from this mortal world without the knowledge of the infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead are very impious, lowly destitutes, and terrible misers; and those who have realized the transcendently situated Supreme Lord, exit from this material world as brāhmaṇas.”

“Manu offers this comment referring to the mundane brāhmaṇas, in the Manu-smṛti, 2.168:

yo madhītya dvijo vedam anyatra kurute śramam  
sa jivann eva śūdratvam āśu gacchati sāvayaḥ

“The twice-born brāhmaṇa, dvija, who after receiving the sacred thread does not immerse himself in the study of the Vedas, but busies himself with less important texts and subject matters will very soon in this lifetime, along with his family, acquire the lowly qualities of a śūdra.’

“The Vedas have clearly defined the characteristics of a deserving candidate who can delve into the essence of the Vedas.

The Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, 6.27, states:

yasya deve parā bhaktir  
yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ  
prakāśante mahātmanah

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

“The word parā-bhakti indicates śuddha-bhakti. I do not wish to delve deeper into this topic, if need be you can research further.”

To put it in a nutshell: Those who have developed śraddhā in the process of ananya-bhakti are suitable candidates to scrutinize the sections of the Vedas propounding the highest tattva, the essence of the Vedas.

As for the great souls who have attained ananya-bhakti and have thus been crowned with kṛṣṇa-prema, they are qualified as the exemplary propounders of this absolute knowledge, the conclusion of the Vedas.”

Cūḍāmaṇi, “Have you already concluded that the second section of the Vedas, dealing with the tattva, the Absolute Truth, only supports the teachings of vaiṣṇava-dharma and no other theology?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, “There is but only one dharma without plurality,  
designated as nitya-dharma, which is also called vaiṣṇava-dharma.”

The different religious instructions of naimittika-dharma are like the  
ascending steps of the ladder of vaiṣṇava-dharma.

The Supreme Lord Himself declares in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11.14.3:

kālena naṣṭā pralaye vāṇīyaṁ veda-samjñitā  
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyāṁ mad-ātmakaḥ

“The Supreme Lord said, “O Uddhava! Those instructions that propound the  
eternal dharma that inspires attachment to Me are compiled in the Vedas. By  
the ravages of time (pralaya) they seem to be lost; I will again instruct  
Brahmā at the beginning of creation with the same knowledge of the Vedas.’”

“The Kathopanishad, 1.2.15, states:

sarve vedā yat padam āmananti  
tapāmsi sarvāni ca yad vadanti  
yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti  
tat te padam saṅgrahena bravīmi  
aum ity etat

“The Supreme Being, whom the Vedic literature pre-eminently describes as  
the supreme object of attainment, is Śrī Viṣṇu, about whom, however, I will  
speak only in brief. All austerities have been ordained for performance for  
the purpose of His pleasure and satisfaction. To attain Him the brahmacārīs  
go to the abode of their guru and, maintaining celibacy, study the Vedas.  
That Supreme Absolute Truth is manifested by the sound aum.’

“Furthermore, the Kāthopanīṣad, 1.3.9, states:

vijñāna-sārathir yas tu  
manaḥ pragrahavān narah  
so’dhvanaḥ param āpnoti  
tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam

“One who possesses vijñāna, realization of the Lord, as his charioteer, and who thus maintains a steady control of the mind, which is like the reins that control the horses of the bodily senses, crosses this material reality and attains the supreme abode of Śrī Viṣṇu, who is the omnipresent Supersoul known as Vāsudeva.”

“There are many further evidences in the Vedas,” concluded Vaisnava dāsa Bābājī.



At this point in the discussion, the faces of Devīdāsa Vidyāratna and his friends were looking decidedly pinched and dry and the enthusiasm of the brāhmaṇa, Kṛṣṇa Cūḍāmaṇi, seemed to be flagging.

It was already five in the afternoon and the unanimous decision of the congregation was to halt the debate.

The brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas got up from their seats and took leave of the Vaiṣṇavas, unhesitating in their praise of the depth of Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī's erudition.

Loudly glorifying harināma, the Vaiṣṇavas dispersed to their individual dwellings.

Thus ends the sixth chapter of Jaiiva-  
dharma, entitled: Nitya-dharma: Birth  
and Caste Differences