

Jaiṡa Dharma

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Chapter Seven

Nitya-dharma and
Samsāra, Material
Existence

You must understand that gr̥hastha-bhaktas are universally worshipable.”

Yādava dāsa, “If the gr̥hastha-bhaktas are so highly estimated and are heir to the treasure of the most sublime aspects of kṛṣṇa-prema, then why do some of them enter the renounced order of life and thus become gr̥ha-tyāgī, renouncers of home?”

Ananta dāsa Bābājī, “A very few of the gr̥hastha-bhaktas become suitable candidates for the renounced life of a gr̥ha-tyāgī and their association is extremely rare.”

Yādava dāsa, “What qualifications are required to become a gr̥ha-tyāgī?”

Ananta dāsa Bābājī, “Human beings have two propensities: bahirmukha, the external material tendency; and antarmukha, the internal spiritual tendency.”

In Vedic terms, these are known as parāk, turned away from the Supreme; and pratyak, turned towards the Lord with higher spiritual aspiration.

“The pure spiritual soul has forgotten his original identity and presumptuously assumed the gross material body and subtle mind to be his self.”

In this way, having mistakenly identified his self with the mundane mind and body, the conditioned soul views the material nature through the instruments of his senses and experiences attraction and attachment to the external objects of the phenomenal world.

This is called bahirmukha-pravṛtti, the external material propensity.

When this process is reversed and the consciousness flows inwards away from matter and the senses to the mind and then onwards to the soul, then the consciousness is termed as having the antarmukha-pravṛtti, internal spiritual propensity.

“As long as the external propensity is predominant, one must, without offence and on the strength of saintly association, unfailingly dovetail all one’s propensities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the secure shelter of the bhakti process, the bahirmukha-pravṛtti will swiftly shrink back and change direction towards the antarmukha-pravṛtti.

Ananta dāsa Bābājī, “He must be completely free from the desire to associate with women.”

He should be very merciful to all living creatures, handle money and material possessions with indifference, accumulate just enough food and clothing for times of want, have pure love of Kṛṣṇa, avoid the company of gross materialists, be unconcerned about either praise or insult, be uninterested in ostentatious show, and be equipoised and dispassionate in life or death.

→ free of prejudices

These symptoms are described in the following verses of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11.2.45:

śrī-havir uvāca
sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

Śrī Havis said: The most advanced devotee (eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ) sees (yaḥ paśyed) Supreme Lord, one's object of worship (bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah), within everything (sarva-bhūteṣu), and sees everything in the Supreme Lord (bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany).

“Further, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 3.25.22:

mayy ananyena bhāvena bhaktim kurvanti ye dṛḍhām
mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ

They perform (kurvanti ye) steady bhakti to me (mayi dṛḍhām bhaktim) with exclusive devotion (ananyena bhāvena), giving up all actions to attain me (mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas), giving up friends and relatives, (tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ).

“Further, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11.2.55:

visṛjati hr̥dayam na yasya sāksād
dharir avaśābhihito 'py aghaughā-nāśah
praṇaya-raśanayā dhṛtānghri-padmaḥ
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ

He who binds the lotus feet of the Lord (dhṛta anghri-padmaḥ) by ropes of love (praṇaya-raśanayā), and whose heart (yasya hr̥dayam) the Lord, destroyer of heaps of sin (harih agha ogha-nāśah), does not leave (na visṛjati), even if beckoned accidentally (avaśā abhihito apy), is called the best of devotees (sah bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ).

“When these symptoms manifest in a grhastha-bhakta, he becomes incapable of performing karma.”

Naturally, he leaves the household and becomes a gr̥ha-tyāgī.

However such elevated and detached saints are extremely exceptional.

If anyone in his lifetime can find the association of such a holy person, he is truly fortunate.”

Yādava dāsa, “Nowadays, I notice a tendency for some young persons to leave their home, receive spiritual initiation, construct a small temple, and start Deity worship. Nevertheless, after some time they fall into the bad company of women. Of course, they continue to chant japa and somehow maintain their situation by begging. Would you categorize them as tyāgīs or gr̥hastha-bhaktas?”

Ananta dāsa Bābājī, “You have raised many points at once. I will answer them one by one.”

The criterion is not age, old or young.

A gr̥hastha-bhakta may deserve to become a gr̥ha-tyāgī at an early age because of a combination of spiritual purification in his previous births and further spiritual enhancement in the present one.

For example, Śukadeva Gosvāmī was eligible from the moment of his birth to renounce hearth and home.

Utmost attention must be given to determine that worthiness is not postured, or acquired through artificial austerities.

When genuine renunciation manifests, youth is not detrimental.”

Yādava dāsa, “What are the differences between genuine detachment and artificial renunciation?”

Ananta dāsa Bābājī, “Genuine detachment is without vacillation, a resolve that is never broken.”

False renunciation is a consequence of material cunning, a cheating mentality, and the desire for a position of respect.

Some persons take to false renunciation with the intention of winning the respect that is naturally given to genuinely detached devotees.

All this is useless and extremely harmful.

As soon as such a person leaves home and family, the symptoms of detachment also wane and instead he becomes haunted with moral aberrations.”