

# Jaiṣa Dharmā

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# Chapter Eight

## Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

One day, responding to an invitation, the Vaiṣṇavas of Godruma arrived to visit the Vaiṣṇavas living in the woods skirting the south-eastern embankment of the sacred Śrī Gorā-hrada Lake.

They were all sitting together in a secluded kuñja having just taken noon prasādam when Lāhirī Mahāśaya sang the following song, evoking vraja-bhāva, the spiritual emotions of Vraja, in the hearts of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas:

gaura! kata ilā karile ekhāne  
advaitādi bhakta-saṅge nācile e vane range

“Our Śrī Gaurāṅga has performed so many transcendental pastimes here with Advaita Ācārya and His other associates. He danced splendidly in these green groves.

kāliya-damana-saṅkīrtane  
e hrada haite prabhu, nistārile nakra prabhu  
kṛṣṇa yena kāliya-damane

“Once, whilst performing saṅkīrtana, Śrī Gaurāṅga liberated a crocodile living in these waters. Thus the Lord delivered the crocodile just as Śrī Gopāla Kṛṣṇa delivered the Kāliya snake many years before in Vraja.”

A few minutes later, a discussion began about the unity of gaura-līlā with kṛṣṇa-līlā.

Soon some more Vaiṣnavas from Baḍagāchi arrived, first offering dandavats to the Gorā-hrada Lake and then to the Vaiṣnavas, who received them heartily and offered them comfortable seats.

Like a silent sentinel in the secluded kuñja, an ancient banyan tree stood tall.

Around the base, the Vaiṣṇavas had built a concrete circular platform.

The tree was affectionately named Nityānanda-vaṭa because Śrī Nityānanda had been very fond of sitting below its fine branches.

Now the Vaiṣṇavas themselves were sitting under those same branches blissfully discussing spiritual topics.

At one point, an inquisitive young Vaiṣṇava amongst the visitors spoke up respectfully, "I would like to have permission to ask this Vaiṣṇava assembly a question.

Kindly pacify my enquiring mind.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, a resident of this secluded kuñja, was at the advanced age of nearly a hundred years a very serious scholar and among the few persons still remaining who had actually seen Śrī Nityānanda sitting in the shade of the banyan tree.

Over the years, he had single-mindedly nourished the desire to breathe his last at this site.

He seldom left the kuñja and then only to Pradyumna Kuñja to meet Paramahaṁsa Premadāsa Bābājī.

Now he spoke up, saying, “Sir, we have Śrī Paramahansa Premadāsa Bābājī here heading up this assembly, so you should not have any concern regarding an answer to your question.”

The young Vaiṣṇava from Baḍagāchi then enquired with humility, “Vaiṣṇava-dharma is nitya-dharma, I would like to learn in detail about the ideal conduct of a Vaiṣṇava, especially towards other people.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī glanced and motioned in Vaisnava dāsa Bābājī’s direction, “My dear Vaiṣṇava dāsa, a good Vaiṣṇava and scholar such as you is rarely found in Bengal, especially nowadays.

Hence, it is appropriate that you should reply to this question.

Having associated with Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī and having received spiritual instructions from Śrīla Paramahansa Premadāsa Bābājī, you are most fortunate and a recipient of Śrī Caitanya's mercy."

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī replied humbly, "Revered Bābājī, you have seen Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Balarāma's direct expansion, face to face."

You have also associated with many spiritual stalwarts and instructed many devotees in the devotional sciences; therefore, please shower your mercy upon us today and educate us."

The Vaisnavas unanimously and enthusiastically requested Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī to speak and finding no way out he agreed.



After first offering daṇḍavats to Śrī Nityānanda under the banyan tree, he began his dissertation, “First, I offer my respect to all jīvas, knowing them to be the servitors of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 6.85, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written:

keha māne, keha nā māne, saba tānra dāsa  
ye nā māne, tāra haya sei pāpe nāśa

“Some accept Him whereas others do not, yet everyone is His servant. One who does not accept Him, however, will be ruined by sinful activities.”

“I always greatly appreciate this statement of the great saint Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and bear it upon my head.

Although inherently all jīvas are the servants of Kṛṣṇa, one class of jīvas does not accept their position of subservience to Īśvara, the Supreme Lord, whereas another class humbly accepts this eternal truth.

Thus, there are two kinds of men in this world: kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha, those who deny Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme; and kṛṣṇa-unmukha, those who accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme.

The majority of people in the world are kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha, amongst whom many reject any form of religion at all.

There is little to say about them except that they have no sense of moral obligation and their only aim in life is to increase their material power, rank and wealth.

Ⓚ - bahirukta  
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However, there are those who are religious and accept a sense of moral responsibility for their behaviour.

For their guidance, the great Vaiṣṇava sage Manu has stated in the Manu-saṁhitā 6.92:

dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damo 'steyaṁ śaucam indriya-nigrahaḥ  
dhīr vidyā-satyam akrodho daśakam dharma-lakṣaṇam

“The ten characteristics of religiosity are dhṛtiḥ, contentment; kṣamā, forgiveness, that is not revenging a wrong; dama, self-control, that is remaining in control of the mind in spite of the presence of allurements; asteya, honesty; śaucam, cleanliness; indriya-nigraha, withdrawing the senses from sense-objects; dhīḥ, scriptural knowledge; vidyā, education, that is knowledge of the soul; satyam, truthfulness, that is awareness of reality; and akrodha, freedom from anger, that is to be not angered when provoked.”

“Of these, dhṛtiḥ, contentment; dama, self-control; śauca, cleanliness; indriya-nigraha, withdrawing the senses; dhīḥ, scriptural knowledge; and vidyā, knowledge of the soul are the six duties and characteristics directed towards oneself.”

Whereas, kṣamā, forgiveness; asteḥya, honesty; satyam, truthfulness; and akrodha, freedom from anger, are the four obligations towards others.

However, the duty of worshiping the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, is not clearly delineated in any of these ten characteristics, which have been enumerated to encourage us in following the moral religious principles.

Furthermore, it cannot be said that human life becomes pure and perfect by only developing these characteristics.

In the Viṣṇu-dharmottara, which is quoted in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 10.317, it is explained:

jīvitam viṣṇu-bhaktasya varam pañca-dināni ca  
na tu kalpa-sahasrāṇi bhakti-hīnasya keśave

“If a devotee of Śrī Viṣṇu stays in this world for even five days, it is a great blessing to humanity. However, if a non-devotee—one who has no devotion for the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa—lives in the world for hundreds of aeons, it will not benefit humanity; in fact it will usher in misfortunes.’

“A person who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa cannot be labelled a human being.

Without devotion, men are mere biped animals, not humans.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 2.3.19, states the same:

śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ samstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ  
na yat-karṇa-pathopeto jātu nāma gadāgrajaḥ

“Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from evils.”

“However, the present inquiry is not about the duties and responsibilities of those unfortunate persons mentioned above.

The discussion is regarding the conduct of a devotee towards the people in general.

Those who have embraced this path of bhakti are divided into three groups: kaniṣṭha, neophyte; madhyama, intermediate; and uttama, topmost.

The first of these types is described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.47 in the following verse:

ārcāyām eva haraye pūjām yah śraddhayehate  
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prakṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A prakṛta, materialistic devotee, does not purposefully study the śāstra and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service.

Consequently, he does not show proper respect to advanced devotees.

He may, however, follow the regulative principles he has learnt from his spiritual master or family tradition and worship the Deity in the temple.



He is to be considered as being on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service.'

“Such a person is a bhakta-prāya, or bhakta-ābhāsa, a neophyte devotee, for he is but a little enlightened about the Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

One who worships the Deity of the Lord with faith, but neither respects the created living creatures of the Lord, nor worships and serves His devotees with devotion is a prākṛta-bhakta.

Already, it has been established that śraddhā, faith, is the seed of devotion.

To worship the Deity of the Lord with śraddhā is certainly bhakti, but  
without worshiping and serving the devotee of the Lord one cannot execute  
śuddha-bhakti.

This position of serving the Lord but not His pure devotee can be described  
as being, at best, a step inside the portals of the realm of bhakti.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.84.13, explains:

4 Identification  
 1) ātma buddhi → self identification  
 2) sva buddhi → mine-ness  
 3) ijya buddhi → worship of words  
 4) tīrtha buddhi → place of Pilgrimage

yasya ātma-buddhiḥ kūṇape tri-dhātuke  
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ  
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij  
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

“One who identifies his self (yasya ātma-buddhiḥ) as the inert body composed of mucus, bile, and air (kūṇape tri-dhātuke), who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own (sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu), who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth are worshipable (bhauma ijya-dhīḥ), or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there (yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile), but who never identifies himself with (na karhicij yasya ātma-buddhiḥ), feels kinship with (implied), worships (ijya-dhīḥ) or even visits (implied) those who are wise in spiritual truth (abhijñeṣu janeṣv)—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass (sa eva go-kharaḥ).”

“The purport of these verses is that without worshiping the Deity of the Lord, one’s devotion cannot even begin.”

If one rejects the personal Deity form and enters into argumentative debate in a futile attempt to attain spiritual knowledge, then the heart becomes dry and hardened and the true goal of devotion is lost in bewilderment.

Jiva

However, the worship of the Deity should be performed with ever-increasing suddha-cinmaya-buddhi, transcendental consciousness.

- ① Jiva → always beyond 3 modes
- ② Suddha → beyond 3 modes only for devotees
- ③ Svabhava → beyond 3 modes for perfected devotees

Though living in this material world, the jiva is cinmaya-vastu, a conscious spiritual entity, and amongst all the jivas, the kṛṣṇa-bhaktas are endowed by the Lord with suddha-cinmaya-buddhi.

→ pure devotional faith.

JIVAS

Both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His bhakta are purely spiritual beings and to properly comprehend their transcendental position sambandha-jñāna—knowledge of the interrelationships between śakti, matter; jīva, the living entity; and Śrī Kṛṣṇa—is imperative.

If Deity worship is conducted with sambandha-jñāna, then the consequent transcendental understanding will naturally stimulate both bhakta-sevā, spiritual service to the Lord's devotees, and the transcendental esoteric perception and service of the Deity.

“When there is a perfect marriage of śraddhā with transcendental understanding, then this is called śāstrīya-śraddhā, faith based on proper scriptural conclusions.

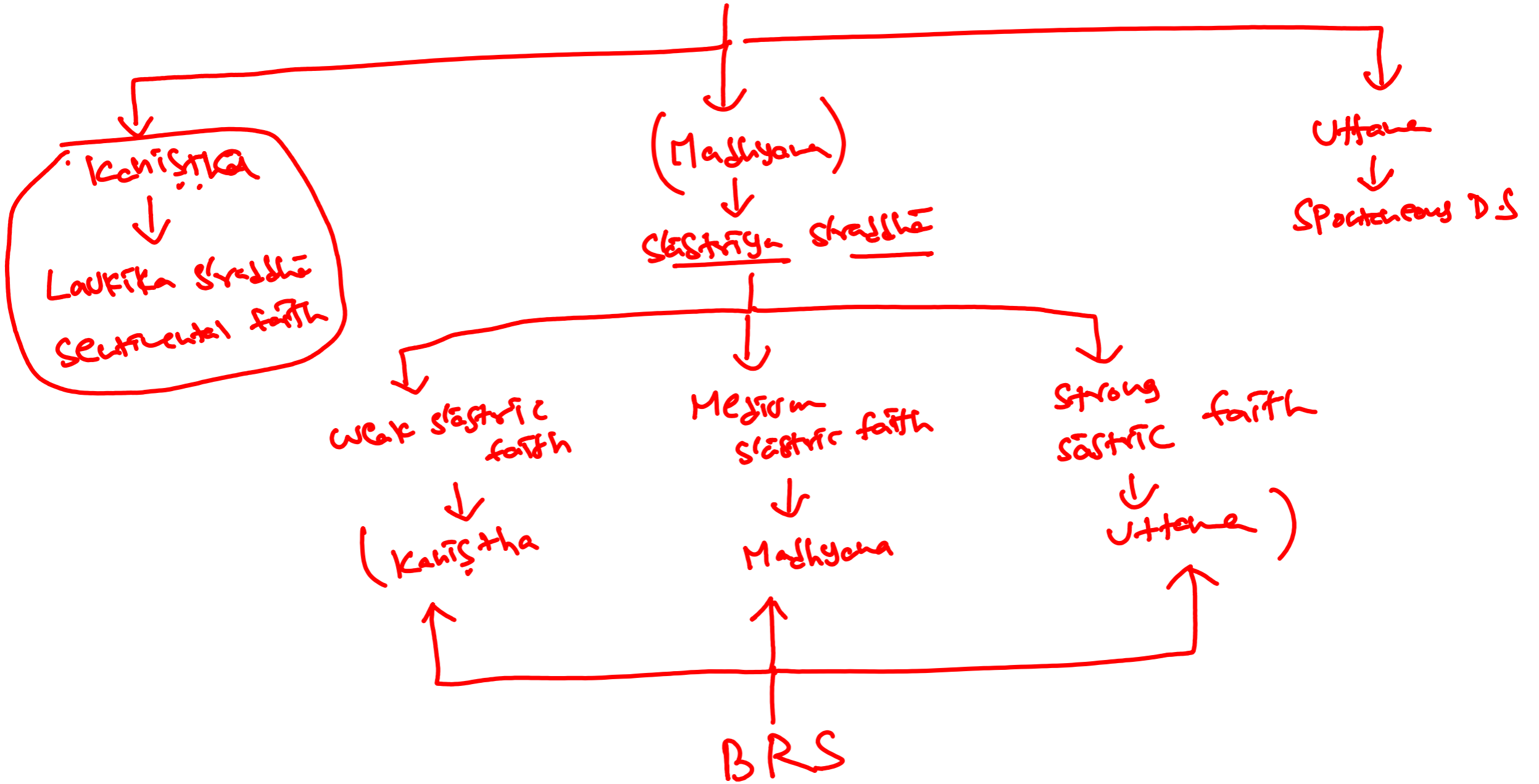
In contrast, Deity worship bereft of a clear and correct concept of sambandha-jñana is conducted on the level of mechanical, ritualistic laukika-śraddhā.

*Scriptural faith → Maṅgala*

Hence, we deduce that although this is the initial stage of bhakti it is certainly not śuddha-bhakti.

This group of devotees has been described in the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 1.55, as follows:

Bhāgavatam



grhīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjā-paro narah  
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijñair itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ

“One who has been initiated with the viṣṇu-mantra in accordance with the regulations of scripture and is worshiping the Deity of Śrī Viṣṇu is considered a Vaiṣṇava by the learned scholars. All others are non-Vaiṣṇavas.”

“Kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas or prākṛta-bhaktas are those who have received initiation from hereditary gurus, known as kula-gurus, out of family tradition; or those who feel sentimentally inspired upon seeing others worshiping the Deity of Śrī Viṣṇu and so then worship the Deity in imitation; or those who have accepted initiation into the viṣṇu-mantra with laukika-śraddhā.”



They are not in the category of śuddha-bhakti.

These unrefined devotees are on the level of chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa, a shadow-like semblance of devotion.

However, they are above those on the platform of pratibimba-bhakti-ābhāsa, a reflective distorted semblance of bhakti, because pratibimba-bhakti-ābhāsa being offensive in nature is devoid of actual Vaiṣṇavism.

stayed.

A person elevated to chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa is immensely fortunate because from this preliminary stage he may be eventually promoted to the madhyama-vaiṣṇava and uttama-vaiṣṇava platforms.

“These immature practitioners of chāyā-bhakti-ābhāsa, however, are certainly not pure devotees.

They worship the Deity with sentimental faith and their behaviour in society is inspired by the ten religious characteristics mentioned earlier.

The scriptural injunctions that direct the conduct of an actual devotee are not meant for these kaniṣṭhas, for they cannot even discriminate between a devotee and a non-devotee.

“In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.2.46, there is an instruction for the madhyama-vaiṣṇavas: