

# Jaiṡa Dharma

by Śrīla Saccidānanda  
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

# Chapter Eight

## Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

At this juncture Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī of Baḍagāchi village interjected,  
“How do the uttama-adhikārī śuddha-bhaktas conduct themselves?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī replied, “Dear son, when you have already asked me a  
question please allow me to complete my answer.”

I am aged; my memory is weakening. Whatever I have in mind I might  
forget.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī was a strict and straightforward devotee. True, he never  
looked for fault in others, but he would instantly point out something that  
was out of place.

Everyone fell silent upon his admonition.

Then after a few moments Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī again offered his obeisances to the sitting place of Śrī Nityānanda under the banyan tree and resumed his dissertation, “As the bhakti of the madhyama-adhikārī ascends to the level of prema, he gradually becomes an uttama-adhikārī.

The characteristics of an uttama-adhikārī are mentioned in the Śrīmad Bhagavatam, 11.2.45:

śrī-havir uvāca

sarva-bhūtesu yah paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanah  
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamah

“Śrī Havir said, “The uttama-adhikārī devotee sees within everything the Soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.’”

“The uttama-adhikārī is also known as an uttama-vaiṣṇava, the most advanced and elevated Vaiṣṇava.”

He sees everything in terms of prema and thus prema is the constant emotion that adorns the character of an uttama-vaiṣṇava.

At times, various differing bhāvas manifest in his personality but they are all transformations of prema.

Kindly observe the character of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, an uttama-bhāgavata, topmost devotee.

He referred to Kāṁsa as bhoja-pāṁśula, the most sinful of the Bhoja dynasty.

Ostensibly, such an expletive appears to be a display of anger towards Kāṁsa but actually the statement is stimulated by and is thus a manifestation of kṛṣṇa-prema.

When śuddha-prema becomes the all-in-all, the very life force of a devotee, he is to be known as a bhāgavatottama.

Upon this platform of devotion, the four distinctions in attitude—prema, maitrī, kṛpā, and upekṣā—that are the hallmarks of the madhyama-vaiṣṇava cease and the bhāgavatottama exudes only kṛṣṇa-prema.

He does not discriminate among a neophyte, an intermediate, or an advanced Vaiṣṇava, or even between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava.

This elevated position is very rarely attained.

“Do you notice something unique?”

The neophyte kanistha-vaiṣṇava is generally not enthusiastic about serving Vaiṣṇavas, and the topmost uttama-vaiṣṇava makes no discrimination between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava because he sees all jīvas established as servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Consequently, we see that only the intermediate madhyama-vaiṣṇava consciously practices respect and service to the Vaiṣṇavas in a deliberate sense.

→ LC a Sēdhā

Thus, the intermediate madhyama-vaiṣṇava will serve all three categories of Vaiṣṇava: vaiṣṇava, vaiṣṇava-tara, and vaiṣṇava-tama.

The madhyama-vaiṣṇava must serve each Vaiṣṇava in accordance with his status.



Only the uttama-vaiṣṇava does not consider or analyse whether a Vaiṣṇava is  
kanīṣṭha, madhyama, or uttama before he interacts with him.

If a madhyama-vaiṣṇava artificially adopts this mentality, he becomes an aparādhi,  
offender.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed these truths of Vaiṣṇava etiquette in a very  
concise manner in His discussions with the residents of Kulīna-grāma.

All His instructions on this topic are more significant for the madhyama-vaiṣṇavas  
than the original Vedas.

Actually, what is the definition of śruti—the Vedas? The answer: The words of the  
Supreme Lord are Veda.”

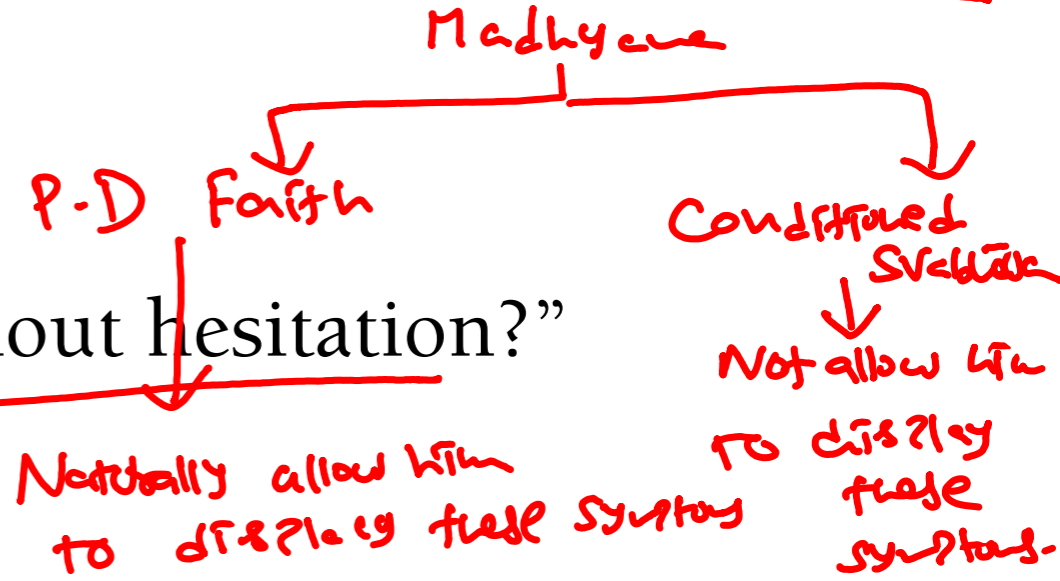
Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī fell silent after he had spoken these words.

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī of Baḍagāchi now spoke with palms folded, “May I ask a further question?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī replied, “You may do so without hesitation?”

The young Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī enquired, “Respected Bābājī, into which category of Vaiṣṇava would one place me?”

Am I a kaniṣṭha or a madhyama? I am certainly not an uttama-vaiṣṇava.”



Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī smiled and said, “Is anyone who has received the name Nityānanda dāsa constrained from becoming an uttama-vaiṣṇava?”

My beloved Śrī Nitāi is extremely merciful.

He offers prema even after being beaten.

If one utters His name and becomes His servant, everything can be achieved easily.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “With utmost humility, I beg to know my present level.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Then you must reveal everything about yourself.”

If Śrī Nityānanda prompts me, then I may say something of relevance.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa started, “I was born into a low-class family in a village upon the bank of the River Padmavatī.”

I married young and never left the righteous path.

However, after my wife’s early demise I developed detachment from family life.

In Baḍagāchi, I met some renounced Vaiṣṇavas who had left household life.

I saw they were well respected by others.

Desiring such respect and swayed by the passing mood of renunciation caused by my wife's demise I ended up taking bheka initiation from these Vaiṣṇavas in Baḍagāchi.

A short time later my mind was attacked by immoral thoughts and became very difficult to control.

Fortunately for me, I happened upon the good association of a true Vaiṣṇava—presently he is in Vraja.

He gave me sound advice and kept me by his side; in this way, he gradually purified my consciousness.

Now I am not troubled by any mundane desires and have developed a taste for chanting harināma; daily I chant one hundred thousand names upon my tulasī beads.

I have realized that nāma, the holy name, and nāmī, the possessor of the holy name, the Supreme Lord, are transcendental and non-different.

I observe Ekādaśī vows strictly according to the scriptures and daily offer gee lamp and water the sacred tulasī plant.

“When the Vaiṣṇavas sing in kīrtana I participate gladly and my heart stirs with spiritual exultation.

I drink the caranāmṛta of the Vaiṣṇavas with relish and daily study the  
devotional scriptures such as the Caitanya Bhāgavata and Caitanya-  
caritāmṛta.

I have lost interest in eating elaborately and putting on fine clothes.

Upon hearing mundane prattle, I feel ill at ease and disinterested.

When I see the bhāva of the pure Vaisnavas I desire to roll upon the ground  
at their feet, but must admit that I do it mostly for winning acclaim and  
attention.

Kindly now tell me to which level do I presently belong, and accordingly what are my duties?”

With a smile, Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī looked in the direction of Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī and said, “Let us hear from you. To which level does Nityānanda dāsa belong?”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī replied, “From what we’ve just heard. I would say he has progressed from the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī neophyte stage to the madhyama-adhikārī intermediate stage.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “I second that opinion.”



Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Wonderful! Now I know my level of spiritual progress directly from the lips of the Vaiṣṇava mahātmās, great souls.”

Kindly shower your grace upon me so that I may be gradually promoted to the stage of uttama-adhikārī.”

Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī continued his assessment, “At the time of your formal initiation, bheka, you were motivated by pratiṣṭhā, mundane desire for position, fame, and adoration.”

Though you were not eligible for bheka, you still accepted that position; that was an offence and so you were becoming degraded.

Fortunately, however, you received the kṛpā of a pure Vaiṣṇava, which pulled you out of the mire.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Even now slight residues of desire for pratiṣṭhā remain in my heart.”

I think that by shedding tears and exhibiting bhāva I can impress others and receive respect and honour from them.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Try diligently to rid yourself of this, otherwise you run the big risk of gradually constricting your devotion.”

If that were to happen, you would be demoted to the level of kanīṣṭha-adhikārī.

Even though a Vaiṣṇava may resolutely drive away lust, anger, greed, etc., the desire for pratiṣṭhā does not leave easily and is truly detrimental.

Especially beneficial for the sādḥaka-vaiṣṇava is that he categorically rejects chāyā-bhāva-ābhāsa, the shaming of spiritual emotions, and sincerely endeavours for even a minute drop of real bhāva at the heights of his devotional feelings.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī fell at the feet of Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī and begged for his vaiṣṇava-kṛpā, the grace of a Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī reacted out of humility, lifting up Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī and embracing him.

The result of being touched by a great Vaiṣṇava is astounding: Incessant tears cascaded down from the eyes of Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī.

Awed by his own reaction, Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī was overcome with deep humility and continuously murmured, “I am so low and wretched, I am a fallen soul!”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī again embraced him as tears streaked down his own quivering cheeks.

What glorious spiritual sentiments!

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī felt the fulfilment of his life

When after a while the exultation subsided, Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, now looking up to Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī as his guru, asked, "What are the mukhya, principal, and gaṇa, secondary, symptoms of a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī?"

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, "The mukhya symptom of a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is faith in the eternal form of Bhagavān, which results in the worship of the Deity form of Bhagavān.

Entry level Symptoms of  
a Madhyama (Bhāgavata)  
(Sādhakā)

- a) Jāta śuddho mat karmīṣu
- b) hruvinaṅṅa sarva karmasu
- c) veda duhkṛtubau kēvāḥ
- d) parityāge aḥi anīśvarāḥ
- e) tuṣānāśaḥ a ten kāmān  
dukkṛdātānāḥ a garhyan