

Jaiṡa Dharma

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Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Chapter Eight

Nitya-dharma and Vaiṣṇava Behaviour

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “In which cases?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In cases where both sādhu-saṅga and dveṣi-saṅga exercise equal influence upon the kaniṣṭha, his devotion maintains the status quo.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What ensures certain progress?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “When devotee association is frequent and powerful and non-devotee association minimal, the kaniṣṭha progresses swiftly.”

Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “How would you describe the tendency of the kaniṣṭha to perform both punyā, piety, and pāpa, impious deeds?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the initial stages of a kanīṣṭha’s devotional development this tendency to puṇyā and pāpa is very similar to that of the karmī and that of the jñānī.”

Flow of bhakti

However, with the burgeoning of bhakti, the propensity for puṇyā and pāpa reduces in concomitant degrees as the endeavour to satisfy the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari gains strength.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Revered master, I have understood your explanations of the kanīṣṭha devotee, now kindly describe the mukhya symptoms of a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta.”

- ⑤ offensive hearing & chanting
- ⑦ freedom of profession
- ⑥ full fledged sambandha jama
- ④ dvaitatsa upadesa
- ⑤ abhidhaya B PDS
- ① ananya-bhakti
- ② ātma, sva, tirtha & ijya buddhi are in relationship with devotees
- ③ bāhishkṛya kṛpā

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The mukhya symptoms of a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta are first, ananya-bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; second, four qualities are found in his dealing with his fellow devotees, which are ātma-buddhi, he considers the devotees more dear than his own self; mamatā-buddhi, intimate affection for the devotees; ijya-buddhi, he considers the devotees worshipable; and tīrtha-buddhi, he considers them places of pilgrimage; third, being naturally compassionate the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is mercifully disposed towards those who are ignorant about the Absolute Truth; and, finally, fourth, he strictly avoids the company of those inimical to Bhagavān.

“The principal activity of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is to execute bhakti-sādhana, devotion in practice.”

This consists of abhidheya, devotional performances, within the sphere of fully realized sambandha-jñāna, eternal knowledge, to attain prayojana, the prime perfection, kṛṣṇa-prema.

↓ Fully realized Sambandha Jñāna

Essentially, this means that when the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta performs hearing and chanting, etc., in the association of sādhus he does so offenselessly.

→ Madhyama adhikārī is offenseless.

↳ Means

↳ Conscious endeavor to overcome offenses.

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What are the gaṇa symptoms of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “The gaṇa symptoms are seen in the way the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta lives his life.

The madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta lives fully surrendered to the desire of Kṛṣṇa and his life is so arranged as to execute bhakti favourably.

2^o symptoms → avoids *atyāśā, praṇaya, praśaṅkā, nitya-śraddhā, Janasēva & kulya*
→ accepts *utseha, hiṅśya, dhṛtya, fat*

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Does he still commit pāpa and aparādha?”

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Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the earlier stages, the tendencies to commit pāpa and aparādha may be slightly present, but gradually they will dissipate.

These residual tendencies are just like chickpeas being quickly ground away into powder.

Whatever pāpa and aparādha that sometimes shows in the beginning stages of madhyama-adhikārī are minute residues, but soon they will disappear completely.

Thus, the life of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta is characterised by śuddha-bhakti with the practice of yukta-vairāgya, appropriate renunciation.

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Do they hope for a long life?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “They desire to live only to mature and intensify their bhajana.

They aspire neither for a long life, nor even for mukti.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Why do they not desire for death? What pleasure is there to remain alive in this body?”

Only after death can one by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa become eternally situated in one’s svarūpa, original spiritual identity?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “All their aspirations are obedient to the will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, thus they do not have any wish which is not Kṛṣṇa’s wish.”

Having realized that all events in their life occur on the express wish of Kṛṣṇa, their lives are surrendered—they have no need to express any independent desire.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “I now have a proper understanding of the symptoms of the madhyama-adhikārī-bhaktas.”

Is an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta seen to have any gauṇa symptoms?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “If at all gauṇa symptoms are to be discerned then they are the natural activities of his body; and even then these activities are to such an extent subservient to the demands of his kṛṣṇa-prema that such gauṇa symptoms are practically impossible to identify.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Revered master, I know that kaniṣṭha-adhikārī-bhaktas are not encouraged to leave family and home, the madhyama-adhikārī-bhaktas can be both in household life and in the renounced order, but can an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta be in household life?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “These three grades—kanīṣṭha, madhyama, and uttama—are assigned according to the level of bhakti and elevation to one of these grades does not depend upon whether one is a gṛhastha or a sannyāsī.”

An uttama-adhikārī-bhakta devotee can very well be in gṛhastha life—all the devotees of Vraja are gṛhastas and yet they are the most elevated uttama-adhikārī-bhaktas.

Many amongst the most intimate associates of our beloved Śrīman Mahāprabhu are gṛhastha-bhaktas and again they are uttama-adhikārīs.

Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda is an illustrious example.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Dear master, how then should a madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta in the sannyāsa order and an uttama-adhikārī-bhakta in grhastha life behave towards each other?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Vaisnava etiquette demands that a lower order bhakta offer prostrate obeisances to the more elevated bhakta.”

This stipulation applies specifically to the madhyama-adhikārī-bhakta, because the uttama-adhikārī-bhakta does not expect or demand any respect or obeisances for himself, for he sees the presence of the Supreme Lord within every living entity.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Is it the duty of Vaiṣṇavas to assemble in large groups and make arrangements for mahotsavas, festivals, to honour the bhāgavata-prasāda, sanctified food remnants of the Lord?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “In the course of some work if many Vaiṣṇavas come together and a madhyama-adhikārī gr̥hastha-vaishnava desires to offer them prasādam, there can be no objection from a spiritual standpoint.

However, care must be taken not to make the affair very elaborate and ostentatious then the whole endeavour may become mundane, coloured by the material mode of passion.

Show off
↑

Certainly, it is recommended that one should invite pure Vaiṣṇavas and with care and affection serve them prasādam.

Such observances manifest real love and respect for the pure Vaiṣṇavas.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “In our village Baḍagāchi a caste called vaiṣṇava-
santāna, the children of Vaiṣṇavas, has sprung up.”

→ *Nityānanda Parivāra.*

The kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas of the village invite them for prasādam and call it
vaiṣṇava-sevā, serving the Vaiṣṇavas. Is this correct?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Have these vaiṣṇava-santāna attained śuddha-bhakti?””

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “I do not see the symptoms of śuddha-bhakti in
any of them.”

They introduce themselves simply as Vaisnavas and some of them even wear the loincloth of the renunciate even though they are householders.”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “I am at a loss to explain why such practices are becoming prevalent.

Certainly, they are undesirable. I can only surmise that it is happening because the kaniṣṭha-bhaktas are unable to discern who is a true Vaiṣṇava.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Should the vaiṣṇava-santāna caste command a special position of honour?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Honour is for those who are actually true Vaiṣṇavas.

If the vaiṣṇava-santāna members are śuddha-bhaktas, then they should be offered honour according to their individual level of śuddha-bhakti.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “What if the vaiṣṇava-santāna members are simply a community of ordinary people in material society?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “Then they should be respected according to their status in material society, and certainly not honoured in the same way as true Vaiṣṇavas, or even be considered true Vaiṣṇavas.

Always try to remember the instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu regarding Vaiṣṇava behaviour in the third verse of the Śikṣāṣṭaka:

trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ

“One should not expect any honour for oneself but must be ready to offer
respect to everyone, each according to his spiritual elevation.”

A Vaiṣṇava must be accorded the respect and honour due to a Vaiṣṇava.

One who is not a Vaiṣṇava must be shown the proper respect becoming for a
human being.

If a devotee fails to develop this attitude of offering appropriate respect to all,
then the eligibility to chant harināma purely and constantly is not born.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “How does one give up the aspiration for respect?”

Śrī Haridāsa Bābājī, “One must relinquish false pride, and not proudly think, ‘I am a brāhmaṇa,’ ‘I am accomplished,’ ‘I am well-versed in the śāstras,’ ‘I am a Vaiṣṇava,’ ‘I am a renounced person,’ etc.

One must never even dream of receiving any respect because of such qualities.

People may well offer respect, but one should simply acknowledge that one is unworthy, insignificant, indigent and humbler than a blade of grass.”

Śrī Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī, “Indeed, by your words I can understand that without dainya, humility, and dayā, compassion, one cannot be a Vaiṣṇava.”