

Jaiṅva Dharma

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Chapter Twelve

Nitya-dharma: Sādhana, the
Means of Attainment, and
Sādhya, the Ultimate Goal

A Vaiṣṇava sitting close to them already knew Vrajanātha and spoke up,

“This is Vrajanātha Nyāya-pañcānana, the most learned paṇḍita of nyāya in Navadvīpa.

Lately he has developed some faith in Śacīnandana, Śrī Gaurahari.”

The aged Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, turning back to Vrajanātha, said with humility, “You are a learned paṇḍita and we are a poor wretched fool.

Further, you are a resident of this holiest of holy lands, the birthplace of our beloved Śrī Śacīnandana, so we are dependent upon your mercy.

What instruction and knowledge could we possibly impart unto you?

Kindly be gracious and teach us about the pastimes of your Śrī Gaurāṅga and in this way satiate our parched heart, which is yearning for the nectar of Śrī Gaurahari.”

As Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī and Vrajanātha conversed in this way, the other Vaiṣṇavas gradually dispersed and went to perform their particular services.

Soon only Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī and Vrajanātha remained seated under the bakula tree.

Vrajanātha said, “Respected Holiness, by birth we are brāhmaṇas and are very proud of our pedantry.”

High birth and education have made us insolent and so we look down upon the world with snobbish disdain.

We do not know how to respect spiritual preceptors and saintly persons.

It is beyond me how and by what good fortune I have learned to admire and respect your personage and activities.

Kindly answer a few queries of mine.

I have come not to challenge, but to submit and become enlightened.”

Vrajanātha then asked with deep sincerity, “Kindly tell me what is the highest sādhya, ultimate goal, and sādhana, means to attain that ultimate goal, for the jīva.

As a student of the nyāya philosophy, I have scrutinized the nyāya-śāstras and concluded that by constitution the jīva is eternally different and separate from Īśvara.

Further, the mercy of Īśvara is the sole means by which the jīva may attain mukti.

The means of obtaining this mercy is sādhana and the ultimate reward of sādhana is called sādhya.

On numerous occasions I have searched the nyāya scriptures for a clue on these two matters and have drawn a blank.

Kindly communicate to me your understanding of these two concepts—sādhana and sādhya.”

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī was a generous and noble-minded saint.

He had lived for a long time in Śrī Rādhā-kunda, Vṛndāvana, as a pupil of the illustrious Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was also known as the Dāsa Gosvāmī.

Every afternoon he had listened to the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga narrated by the Dāsa Gosvāmī himself to a small enrapt audience.

There in Śrī Rādhā-kunḍa, Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī would regularly discuss transcendental topics with Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Mahāśaya and when they were impeded by doubts on a difficult esoteric point, they would go to Dāsa Gosvāmī for clarification.

At the present time Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī was the most learned scholar in all Gauḍa-maṇḍala, having come here after the disappearance of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja Mahāśaya.

The nectarean discussions between him and Paramahansa Premadāsa Bābājī of Godruma on the topic of kṛṣṇa-prema were well known.

Vrajanātha's question evoked an immediate response in Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī who with great pleasure began to speak, "My dear Śrī Nyāya-pañcānana, any person enquiring about sādhana and sādhya after the study of the nyāya philosophical treatises is truly a fortunate soul,

because the prime purpose of the nyāya-śāstra is to prepare the seeker of truth to analyse and compile the knowledge of sādhana and sādhya objectively and without prejudice.

On the other hand, those who study nyāya simply to become great controversial argumentators have unfortunately succeeded in missing this central point and have thereby acquired negative results.

Their efforts are misapplied and their lives are an exercise in futility.

“Sādhya is the tattva attained through the practice of sādhana; thus, the method for realising sādhya is sādhana.

Each jīva entrapped by māyā sees the sādhyā objective differently—each according to his particular penchant and degree of realization.

Factually sādhyā is one, not numerous, but because of variation in the tendency and adhikāra of the conditioned jīvas, sādhyā has been divided into three types: bhukti, sense enjoyment; mukti, salvation; and bhakti, devotional service.

“Persons who are engrossed in materialistic activities, solely yearning for the material pleasures, consider bhukti as their sādhyā, their goal of life.

The Vedic śāstras are compared to a kāma-dhenu, wish-fulfilling cow, for a soul may obtain his desired object by following their respective prescriptions.

Moreover, with whatever motive a man turns to the scriptures, he finds his desires sanctioned.

For the materialistic person, the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas promulgates bhukti as the sādhyā.

The complete range of imaginable physical pleasures is delineated in the karma-kāṇḍa scriptures.

The bewildered jīva engaged within the tabernacle of the material body craves especially for the delights of the flesh and the material world has been created to facilitate this desired sense gratification.

“The sensual pleasures a man experiences from the birth ‘till the death of this body are known as aihika-sukha, the worldly pleasures of this present life.

When referring to the pleasures of the next life, after death, the enjoyment is called āmutrika-sukha, of which there are many kinds:

In the heavenly abodes of Lord Indra one sees the dancing of the beautiful apsarās, courtesans; drinks the nectar of immortality; smells the fragrance of celestial flowers in the Nandana-kānana gardens;

beholds the splendour of the Indrapurī palaces and landscapes; listens to the scintillating singing and music of the gandharvas; cohabits with the damsels called vidyādhari; and so on.

These are the pleasures in the paradise of Indraloka.

“Ascending above Indraloka are the even higher planetary systems known as Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, and Brahmalo-
ka.”

Corresponding to this ascension, the śāstric descriptions of sensual pleasure similar to that of Indraloka in these planetary systems become scantier.

In contrast to those heavenly planets, here on earth, known as Bhūrloka, sense enjoyment is on an extremely gross level, for the higher one rises into the different celestial realms, the subtler are the senses and their objects, the sensual pleasures.

That is the only distinction between all these realms; otherwise, throughout all the planetary systems, the varieties of pleasure are ultimately just material sensuality.

None of them can offer actual cit-sukha, transcendental bliss, but only material happiness, which is experienced on the mental platform by the subtle body of mind, intelligence, and false ego as an ephemeral exultation.

Bhukti comprises of these mental and physical forms of titillation.

“Caught in the intricate maze of karmic reactions, the karmic activities adopted by a sensual person are his sādhana to fulfil his desire for bhukti.”

The Yajur Veda, 2.5.5, states:

svarga-kāmo 'śvamedham yajeta

“Persons who desire to enjoy the sensual pleasures of the heavenly planets must perform the aśvamedha-yajña, horse sacrifice.”

“The karma-kānda section of the Vedas recommends many other sādhanas catering to the cravings of man for bhukti; for example:

agniṣṭoma, oblations offered to a class of devatās known as viṣvadeva-bali;

iṣṭāpūrta, the digging of wells, construction of temples, and performing similar works for the benefit of society in general;

darśa-paurṇamāsī, rituals performed on the days of the new and full moon.

All these rites and ceremonies aim at attaining benedictions from the devas for the sādhya of sensual enjoyment either in this life or the next.

“For the person with strong sensual desires, sense gratification is his sādhya.”

However, there is a smaller population who feel plagued and punished by the miseries of material existence and thus consider the fourteen planetary systems of the material creation as insignificant and merely an arena for insignificant transitory sensual pleasures.

These souls desire to break free from karmic entanglement. In their opinion mukti alone is the sādhyā.

Further, they see bhukti as an unwanted material enthrallment and bhukti-sādhana as a process aimed at those who, being incapable of giving up their self-indulgent sensual proclivities, seek misguided solace and approval for their materialistic desires in the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedic scriptures.

“On this point the principal scriptures like the Bhagavad-gītā, 9.21, agree, stating:

te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti

“When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure, they return to this mortal planet again.”

“From this verse, we understand unequivocally that bhukti is not permanent, but transitory.”

The fruits of bhukti-sādhana are destined to be depleted and are therefore indeed mundane and not spiritual.

Of course, the actual sādhana of Man, his real responsibility, is to pursue the permanent.

Mukti is eternal, hence the seeker of liberation sees mukti as unquestionably the true sādhyā of Man.

In order to achieve this goal of mukti, the salvationist considers the four sādhanas enumerated in the scriptures for this particular sādhyā as the only real and desirable sādhanas.

Known as the sādhana-catustaya, ^① the four are (nitya)(anitya)(vastu) viveka, discriminating between eternal and temporary objects;

^② iha-amutra-phala-bhoga virāga, renouncing enjoyment of the fruits of this world and the next;

^③ śama-damādi ṣaṭ-guṇa, developing six qualities, such as control of the mind and senses; and mumukṣa, cultivating the desire for liberation. ^④

“The Vedas, like the wish-fulfilling kāmadhenu cow, provide various and appropriate arrangements for the jīvas to perform activities suitable to their desires and particular level of consciousness.”

Thus, the jñāna-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas has postulated the sādhya-sādhana theory in terms attractive to the salvationist.

In the view of the salvationist, if after attaining liberation, the jīva still maintains his individual identity and separate existence, then, so say the jñānīs, this form of mukti cannot be the ultimate sādhya, which in their opinion is to merge eternally into the existence of the Brahman.

Therefore, in the eyes of the salvationist, the highest limits of liberation extend to nirvāṇa, merging eternally into Brahman.

However, in actual fact the truth is that the jīvas are eternally individuals, so an option such as nirvāṇa is thoroughly impossible for them to attain.

The Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 6.13, states:

nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām

“He, the Supreme Brahman, is the Supreme Eternal amongst all eternal beings, and He is the Supreme Conscious Being amongst all conscious beings.”

“Vedic verses such as these firmly confirm the eternality of the individual existence of the unlimited number of jīvas.

An eternal being can neither forgo his identity nor terminate his existence as is proposed in the concept of nirvāna.

Those jīvas who believe that even after mukti the jīva certainly maintains his individual identity and existence reject the proposition that bhukti or the above concept of mukti are the ultimate sādhyā.

They see both of these sādhyas as imperfect and extraneous to the true nature of the jīva.

“Every human action includes both sādhyā and sādhanā as well as other ingredients.”

Whatever goal a jīva sets for himself is sādhyā, and the means used to achieve such is known as sādhanā.

A little pondering over this matter will show that the concepts of sādhyā and sādhanā are interrelated like the successive links in a chain.

What is now sādhyā later becomes the sādhanā for the next successive goal.

The ultimate link at the end of this chain is the final sādhyā, which therefore never proceeds to another sādhanā.

Beyond this systematic arrangement of sādhyā and sādhanā as preparatory links lies the ultimate link, bhakti.

“The highest, final and absolute sādhyā is bhakti, because bhakti is the nitya-siddha-bhāva, eternal state of perfection, of the jīva.

Every human action is a link in the long chain of the sādhyā and sādhanā paradigm.

Many of the links in this chain make up the chapter known as karma, which is then followed by another set of links comprising the chapter of jñāna, after which the chapter of bhakti begins.

“The chapter of karma claims that bhukti is the prime purpose of life, the jñāna chapter upholds mukti as the highest, and bhakti proposes prema-bhakti.

Nevertheless, a thorough investigation into the perfected eternal state of the jīva, reveals the irrefutable conclusion that bhakti is the ultimate sādhyā and sādhanā.

In the systems of karma and jñāna, sādhya and sādhana are transitory and non-ultimate.

Therefore, in the final analysis, karma and jñāna are irrelevant and should only be accorded an intermediary status on the path leading ultimately to the eternality of bhakti.”

Vrajanātha, “Why is bhakti not accorded everywhere in the Vedic scriptures a pre-eminent position in spiritual science?”