

Jaiṁa Dharmā

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Chapter Twelve

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

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?”

For instance, in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.5.15, and 2.4.24:

kena kaṁ paśyēt

“Who will perceive whom with the help of what?”

“Also, in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 1.4.10:

aḥaṁ brahmāsmi

“I, jīva soul, am of the same nature as Brahman.”

“In the Aitareya Upaniṣad, 3.1.3, we find:

prajñānam brahma

“Prajñā, consciousness, is transcendental, steeped in the supramundane nature of Brahman.”

“Further, in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 6.8.7:

tat tvam asi śvetaketo

“O Śvetaketu, you are that Brahman.’

“Therefore, where is the mistake if mukti is presented as the highest sādhyā?”

Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, “I have already explained that there are different sādhyā proposed in the Vedas according to the variety of human predispositions.”

As long as the yearning for bhukti is strongly alive in a person, he cannot
acknowledge even the existence of mukti.

For such sensually minded persons, there are also sufficient supportive
statements in scriptures.

For example the Āpastamba Śrauta-sūtra, 2.1.1, declares:

akṣayaṁ ha vai cāturmāsya-yājinaḥ

“Those who observe the vow of cāturmāsya obtain perpetual residence in
heaven.’

“Does this then imply that the desire for mukti is reprehensible?”

Simply because the bhukti obsessed karmis are unable to find any clue of mukti in the Vedas, should it then be concluded that the Vedas are silent about mukti?

In fact, the truth is that some ṛṣis in the subject of karma have advised those who are obsessed with bhukti to take up the karma-kāṇḍa performances of the Vedas, seeing that such sensually minded persons are uninterested in and incapable of cultivating the vairāgya necessary to achieve mukti.

These instructions were compiled to help these neophytes in spiritual life to develop faith in the Vedic prescriptions and thus the Vedas corresponding to their lower level of consciousness.

“Certainly, it is unproductive for the jīva, if he slides down from his present level of consciousness.

By performing Vedic duties and activities in harmony with his particular level, he gradually and comfortably ascends to the next higher state of consciousness.

Thus the Vedas do not repudiate those instructions that motivate persons to commit themselves even to bhukti and mukti because such criticism would confuse and discourage the aspirants after these lower goals and thus possibly lead them into degradation.

Everyone who has attained perfection has gone through the discipline of this gradual process of elevation by adhering to the particular Vedic prescriptions for which he was qualified.

“Jñāna is superior to karma as it bestows mukti.

Nevertheless, the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas extensively praises the performance of karma and refrains from admitting the superiority of jñāna and thus the superiority of mukti over bhukti.

In the jñāna-kāṇḍa chapter of the Vedas, knowledge of mukti has been praised as shown by the verses already quoted.

Therefore, jñāna appears there as superior to karma. Similarly, in the relevant sections of the Vedas, bhakti is expounded as clearly excelling jñāna and karma.

“Statements such as tattvam asi and aham brahmāsmi eulogise brahma-nirvāṇa, thus urging the salvationists to fully pledge themselves to the pursuit of brahma-nirvāṇa.

That is not negative, but rather meritorious. Yet, this does not make brahma-nirvāṇa the ultimate perfection.

The ultimate Vedic conclusion asserts that bhakti is the purest sādhana and prema-bhakti is the highest sādhyā.”

Vrajanātha, “Is it actually possible that the mahā-vākya, pre-eminent aphorisms, of the Vedas, that I have just quoted, present an ultimately false sādhyā and sādhana concept?”

Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, “Are these Vedic edicts that you call the mahā-vākyas really so excellent? And do they actually predominate over other Vedic testimonies?”

No. Where is such an opinion upheld? Certainly, within the Vedas themselves, these aphorisms have not been designated as mahā-vākyas.

Clearly then, the ācāryas of the path of jñāna have inventively designated these statements as mahā-vākyas for the sole purpose of lending weight to their own philosophy.

Factually, the ^{OM}pranava, the seed vibration aum, is the only and actual mahā-vākya to which all other Vedic statements are related.

“Also however it would not be exaggerated to say that every statement of the Vedas is a mahā-vākya.

To discriminate and designate one Vedic aphorism as a mahā-vākya and the others as sāmanya-vākya, ordinary, is simply mental speculation.

This bigoted provincialism is surely an offence against the Vedas.

Actually, in the relevant khaṇḍas, the Vedas praise karma as well as mukti and give suitable versions of the sādhyā and sādhanā practice for the respective attainment of both these goals.

Yet, when the final analysis is drawn, all arbitrations are harmonized in the conclusion that only bhakti is the true and actual sādhyā and sādhanā.

“The Vedas are said to be like a cow and Śrī Nanda-nandana, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is the milkman who milks her.

The following statement, made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is an absolute conclusion, as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, 6.46-47:

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah
karmibhyaś cādiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

“A yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist, and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a yogi.”

yoginām api sarveṣām mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo matah

“And of all yogis, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all.”

“The Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 6.23, declares:

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the
spiritual master are all the imports of the Vedic knowledge automatically
revealed.’

“In the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad, Pūrva-vibhāga 15, we find:

bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi
nāirasyenaivāmuṣmin manasaḥ kalpanam
etad eva ca naiṣkarmyam

“Devotional service to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Govinda, is real bhajana.
Curbing the desires for earthly as well as heavenly sense enjoyment,
absorbing the consciousness purely in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Brahman, with
love is indeed unmotivated devotional service and is known as complete
surrender.”

“Further, in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 1.4.8, we find:

ātmānam eva priyam upāsita

“One must worship the Ātmā, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, knowing Him to be very near and dear.”

“In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.5.6, it is said:

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo
mantavyo nididhyāsitaḥ

“O Maitreya! Always hear and think about, meditate upon, and see all objects
related to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul, Śrī Hari.’

“Any person who scrutinizes these Vedic postulations will automatically draw
the obvious conclusion: The path of bhakti is the real sādhana.”

Vrajanātha, “The karma-kāṇḍa instructs its adherents to perform bhakti with faith to Īśvara, who bestows the results of all action.”

In the jñāna-kāṇḍa, there are the sādhana-catuṣṭaya, one of which is bhakti, which strives after hari-toṣaṇa, satisfying Śrī Hari.

If bhakti is thus apparently employed in the achievement of bhukti and mukti, how does bhakti then uphold its claim of being the ultimate eternal goal, the highest sādhyā?

It is naturally assumed that bhakti first acting as the sādhana offers bhukti and mukti and thereafter losing its utility is abandoned.

Kindly shed light upon this topic.”

Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, “It is absolutely correct that in the karma-kāṇḍa chapter bhakti is used as a means to obtain bhukti and in the jñāna-kāṇḍa chapter bhakti is employed to offer mukti.

To understand this employment of bhakti, one fact must be clearly understood:

No goals or results can be achieved if the Supreme Lord, the fountainhead of all energies, is not satisfied.

Whatever volume of energy is found in the jīva or in matter is merely a fractional display of the potency of the Supreme Lord.

Essentially neither karma nor jñāna is able to satisfy the Supreme Lord properly and attract His mercy—only bhakti is able to attract His mercy.

Therefore, only when bhakti is applied as a part of the karma or jñāna processes do these ultimately bhakti dependent processes offer their specific results.

Thus, the paths of karma and jñāna harbour bhakty-ābhāsa, a mere semblance of bhakti, and not śuddha-bhakti.

“In fact, there are two varieties of bhakty-ābhāsa: śuddha-bhakty-ābhāsa, a semblance of pure bhakti; and viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa, a semblance of mixed bhakti.

I will describe śuddha-bhakti-ābhāsa later, but for now understand that viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa is further subdivided into three variations:

(1) karma-viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa, a semblance of bhakti mixed with fruitive action;

(2) jñāna-viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa, a semblance of bhakti mixed with monistic knowledge; and

(3) karma-jñāna-ubhaya-viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa, a semblance of bhakti mixed with both fruitive action and monistic knowledge.

“A yajña—during which invocatory prayers are made, such as, ‘O Lord Indra! O Pūṣana, the sun god! Kindly grant me the results of this yajña!’—is a bhakty-ābhāsa performance constituted of karma-viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa.

Some spiritual authorities have termed this type of adulterated bhakti as karma-miśra-bhakti; still others have called it āropa-siddha-bhakti, seeking achievement through the artificial interpolation of devotion.

“Outbursts in an emotional state such as, ‘O Yadunandana, Kṛṣṇa! I turn to you, driven by fears of this fierce material existence! I am constantly chanting your sacred names—Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Kindly deliver me! Give me mukti!’ or ‘O Supreme Controller, you are the Brahman! I have fallen into this deep well of illusion, please pick me up and allow me to merge with you!’ are examples of jñāna-viddha-bhakti-ābhāsa.

Again, some spiritual authorities have called this type of adulterated bhakti jñāna-miśra-bhakti, devotion mixed with empirical knowledge, or āropa-siddha-bhakti, seeking achievement through the artificial interpolation of devotion.

“All such apparently devotional activities are very distinct from śuddha-bhakti.

The quality of bhakti described by the Supreme Lord in the śloka of the Bhagavad-gītā, 6.47, which we have previously quoted is śuddha-bhakti:

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

“Of all yogis, the one who with great faith always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.’

“This śuddha-bhakti is our sādhana; and in the perfected stage śuddha-bhakti is transformed into prema.”

The two paths described as karma and jñāna are simply related to bhukti and mukti respectively.

They do not constitute the means to guide the jīva to his highest eternal perfection, prema-bhakti.”

At this point of the question-and-answer session, Vrajanātha seemed to have run out of further questions.

He thought within, “To faithfully examine and ponder over these profound and subtle topics is better than subjecting them to the tricky rhetorical analysis of nyāya dialecticism.

Also, Bābājī Mahārāja is obviously so proficient in all these subjects that I am sure my quest for spiritual knowledge will be gradually satisfied by further enquiry in the future.

As the late night has now arrived, I should return home.”

Aloud Vrajanātha then said, “Respected Bābājī Mahārāja, I have learnt such wonderful truths from you today.

I would very much like to visit you from time to time and receive instructions and knowledge from you.

You are a vastly learned scholar, please be compassionate with me!

Yet, kindly answer just one more question before I leave: Has Śrī Gaurāṅga compiled his instructions in any book? I would like to get a copy.”

Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, “Śrī Caitanya Mahaprabhu has not personally written down any of His instructions.

His followers however have written volumes upon His order.

The Lord has personally given eight verses, known as the Śikṣāṣṭaka; the devotees cherish them as a necklace of priceless gems.

They contain all His instructions in condensed form.

The advanced devotees have probed deeply into these esoteric dictums, mining out ten fundamental eternal truths, known as the Daśa-mūla.

In the form of aphorisms, these ten truths wonderfully encompass and expound the philosophy of sādhyā and sādhanā in the three divisions of

(1) sambandha, the philosophy of the eternal interrelationships between the Supreme Creator and His various energies;

(2) abhidheya, the means of attaining the eternal goal; and

(3) prayojana, the nature of the eternal goal itself.

In the beginning, it is best that you to comprehend these truths.”

Vrajanātha replied, “As you desire. Tomorrow night, I will come and learn
from you the Daśa-mūla.”

You are my śikṣā-guru, I offer my daṇḍavat-praṇāmas unto you.”

Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī firmly embraced Vrajanātha and said, “My dear son,
you have sanctified the brāhmaṇa class. Come tomorrow and bring joy to my
heart.”

*Thus ends the twelfth chapter of Jaiva-dharma, entitled: Nitya-dharma:
Sādhana, the Means of Attainment, and Sādhyā, the Ultimate Goal*