

Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava
The conclusive comparison between brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas

Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Translated by Bhumiapati Dāsa

Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa
Section Concerning Worldly People

The pure tracts of land known as Āryāvarta and Dakṣiṇāṭya, which have existed since time immemorial and which stretch from the eastern ocean to the western ocean and from the Himālaya Mountains in the North down to the abode of the demons in the South, are presently known as Bhārata-varṣa, or India. Being known since time immemorial as karma-kṣetra, or the field of fruitive activities, this Bhārata-varṣa is the land of various activities of innumerable expert fruitive workers. Sometimes the skies of Bharata-varṣa are saturated with the ṛṣis' chanting of hymns from the Vedas and the smoke emanating from the sacrificial fires, sometimes the land of Bhārata-varṣa is soaked with blood from battles between the demigods and demons, sometimes the demons are destroyed by the wonderful prowess of incarnations of the Supreme Lord, sometimes philosophers debate, poets compose sweet verses, scientists display extraordinary expertise—foreigners are astonished on seeing these social and cultural arrangements—in this way various scenes appear in one's heart while reflecting on the land of Bhārata. In all these scenes we can see one community as the principle hero; that is the community of brāhmaṇas. The creator of this universe is Lord Brahmā; so those who are born from his head, his principle limb, into the field of fruitive activities, those foremost sons and their descendants accepted the designation of brāhmaṇa and thus spread his glories. Even today in India the glories of the brāhmaṇas are accepted as truth by men and women, from childhood to old age. From time immemorial the prestige of the brāhmaṇas has surpassed all opposition and remained intact. Many historical incidents support this fact. All Sanskrit literatures proclaim the glories of the brāhmaṇas. It is stated in the Mahābhārata (Vana-parva, Chapter 206):

indro 'py eṣāṁ praṇamate	kiṁ punar mānavo bhuvi
brāhmaṇā hy agni-sadṛśā	daheyuḥ pṛthivīm api
apeyaḥ sāgaraḥ krodhāt	kṛto hi lavaṇodakaḥ
yeṣāṁ krodhāgnir adyāpi	daṇḍake nopaśāmyati
bahu prabhāvāḥ śrūyante	brāhmaṇānām mahātmanām

“Even Indra, the King of the demigods, offers obeisances to the brāhmaṇas, so what can be said of the people of earth? The brāhmaṇas are as powerful as fire; if they want they can burn the entire world to ashes. The water of the ocean is salty and therefore undrinkable due to the anger of the brāhmaṇas. The fire in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest

started by the brāhmaṇas' anger cannot be extinguished even today. Many similar glories of the pious brāhmaṇas are heard.” A compiler of Dharma-śāstras, Viṣṇu (19.20-23), has stated:

devāḥ parokṣa-devāḥ. pratyakṣa-devāḥ brahmaṇāḥ.
brāhmaṇair lokā dhāryante.
brāhmaṇānām prasādena divi tiṣṭhanti devatāḥ
brāhmaṇābhīhitam vākyam na mithyā jāyate kvacit
yad brāhmaṇās tuṣṭatamā vadanti tad devatāḥ pratyabhinandayanti
tuṣṭeṣu tuṣṭāḥ satatam bhavanti pratyakṣa-deveṣu parokṣa-devāḥ

“The demigods are not seen by gross senses. The brāhmaṇas are manifestations of the demigods. The brāhmaṇas sustain all the planets. The demigods reside in the heavenly planets by the mercy of the brāhmaṇas. The brāhmaṇas' words can never be false. Whatever the brāhmaṇas speak in great satisfaction is accepted by the demigods. When the manifested forms of the demigods, the brāhmaṇas, are satisfied, the demigods, who are beyond sense perception, are also satisfied.” Another compiler of Dharma-śāstras, Bṛhaspati (49, 50, 52), has stated:

śastram ekākinam hanti vipra-manyuḥ kula-kṣayam
cakrāt tīvra-taro manyus tasmād vipram na kopayet
rājā dahati daṇḍena vipro dahati manyunā

“A weapon can destroy only one person, but the anger of a brāhmaṇa can destroy one's entire family. The anger of a brāhmaṇa is more fiercely powerful than a disc, so one should not make a brāhmaṇa angry. A king burns through his punishment, while a brāhmaṇa burns through his anger.”

Other compilers of Dharma-śāstras, Parāśara (6.60, 61) and Śātātapa (1.27, 30), have stated:

brāhmaṇā yāni bhāṣante bhāṣante tāni devatāḥ
sarva-deva-mayā viprā na tad vacanam anyathā
brāhmaṇā jaṅgamam tīrtham nirjanam sarva-kāmadam
teṣām vākyodakenaiva śudhyanti malinā janāḥ

“Whatever the brāhmaṇas speak, those are the words of the demigods. The brāhmaṇas are the manifestation of all the demigods. Their words never prove false. The brāhmaṇas are moving secluded holy places that fulfill all desires. Sinful persons are purified by the pure as water words of the brāhmaṇas.” A compiler of Dharma-śāstras, Vyāsa (4.9, 10, 54), has stated:

brāhmaṇāt paramam tīrtham na bhūtam na bhaviṣyati
yat phalam kapilādāne kṛtīkyām jyeṣṭha-puṣkare
tat phalam ṛṣayaḥ śreṣṭhā viprāṇām pāda-śaucane

vipra-pādodaka-klinnā	yāvat tiṣṭhati medinī
tāvāt puṣkara-pātreṣu	pibanti pitaro 'mṛtam
yasya dehe sadāśnanti	havyāni tri-divaukasāḥ
kavyāni caiva pitarāḥ	kiṁ bhūtam adhikaṁ tataḥ

“There is no other, nor will there be, a superior holy place than a brāhmaṇa. O best of the sages, simply by honoring the water that has washed the feet of a brāhmaṇa one achieves the same result that one attains by donating a brown cow on the full-moon day of Kārtika. As long as the earth is moistened by the water that has washed a brāhmaṇa's feet, the forefathers will drink nectar from lotus vessels. Through the body of a brāhmaṇa, the demigods, though living in heaven, always eat havya offerings and the forefathers in Pitṛloka always eat kavya offerings, so who can be superior to such brāhmaṇas?” In the Bhārgaviya Manu-saṁhitā (1.93, 94, 96, 99-101) it is stated:

sarvasyaivāsya sargasya	dharmato brāhmaṇaḥ prabhuh
havya-kavyābhivāhyāya	sarvasyāsya ca guptaye
buddhimatsu narāḥ śreṣṭhā	nareṣu brāhmaṇāḥ smṛtāḥ
brāhmaṇo jāyamāno hi	pṛthivyām adhijāyate
īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām	dharmakoṣasya guptaye
sarvaṁ svaṁ brāhmaṇasyedaṁ	yat kiñcij jagatī-gatam
śraiṣṭhyenābhijanenedaṁ	sarvaṁ vai brāhmaṇo 'rhati
svam eva brāhmaṇo bhukte	svam vaste svaṁ dadāti ca
ānṛśamsyād brāhmaṇasya	bhuñjate hītare janāḥ

“The brāhmaṇas have become the lords of the entire creation through their religious counsel. The brāhmaṇas were born in order to receive havya and kavya offerings on behalf of the demigods and forefathers. Among those with developed intelligence, the human beings are the highest. Among the human beings, the brāhmaṇas are the highest. As soon as they are born, the brāhmaṇas assume the topmost position in this world, and in order to protect religious principles they become the lords of all living entities. All the wealth of this world belongs to the brāhmaṇas. Due to their high birth, the brāhmaṇas are meant to receive all sorts of wealth. Whatever foods a brāhmaṇa accepts from others, whatever clothes he accepts from others, whatever items he accepts from others, and whatever items he gives in charity in fact belong to him. Only by his mercy can other people enjoy these things.”

Śrī Parāśara (8.32) further says:

duḥśīlo 'pi dvijaḥ pūjyo	na śūdro vijitendriyaḥ
kaḥ parityajya duṣṭām gām	duhec chīlavatīm kharīm

“Even if a respectable brāhmaṇa who has undergone all reformatory processes is sinful, he should still be worshiped. A self-controlled śūdra who is always lamenting, however, should never be worshiped. Who will reject an ill-natured cow to milk a

well-behaved she-ass?” Forsaking the Vedic way of life can never be compared with the godless, ever-lamenting, averse to the Vedas state of the śūdras.

The prestige of the brāhmaṇas is seen throughout the Rāmāyaṇa, the Purāṇas, and the Tantras. Religious-minded people always carefully protect the prestigious position of the brāhmaṇas. In fact throughout the four yugas, religious-minded people of India have neither disrespected nor considered that others should disrespect the brāhmaṇas. In a place where proper respect for each of the varṇas is found in social dealings, each varṇa displays its own greatness by endeavoring to increase the prestigious position of the brāhmaṇas.

All brāhmaṇas are superior to, the protectors of, and more powerful than the demigods, the other castes headed by the kṣatriyas, the animals, the birds, the reptiles, and the plants. Due to their sharp intelligence they are capable of acquiring all kinds of knowledge and are exclusively qualified to impart knowledge to others. By virtue of their keen intelligence, they are worshipers of the demigods, they are respectful to the kṣatriyas, they are the well-wishers of the vaiśyas, śūdras, antyajās, and mleccas, and they assist in the worship of the demigods. On the strength of their renunciation, they are unattached to their assets, they earn their livelihood by begging, and they give their surplus in charity.

Those who have accepted the Āryan way of life in India—the followers of the Vedas, the smārtas, the followers of the Purāṇas, the followers of the Tantras—all offer respects to the brāhmaṇas. The brāhmaṇas are the only masters and experts in executing the three types of rituals. Animals and persons other than brāhmaṇas are naturally obliged to these persons who are endowed with such influence. We are unable to understand who would not desire the mercy of personalities who have such authority, respect from the demigods, and omnipotency. Not only the Āryans, but every Indian; not only the Indians, but the people of the entire world; not only the people, but all living entities; not only the living entities, but even the inanimate world—all should more or less know the uncommon power and influence of the brāhmaṇas and thus certainly consider them to be in the topmost position. The statements of Vaiṣṇava literatures, the far-sighted teachings of sages who are adorned with varieties of knowledge and transcendental opulences, and the unwavering faith of perceptive Indians who respect the scriptures cannot be considered by us as simply encouragement for the wild dancing of useless gossipers.

If one studies the statements of the scriptures of India regarding the prestigious position of the brāhmaṇas with a narrow mind, then all the expected conclusions will turn into churning waves within the ocean of arguments. Such heaps of biased arguments are not pleasing to the ears of opposing thinkers; they only promote the interest of the propounder. The esteemed logicians who maintain such ideas soon fall from their own self-interest and display their narrow sectarian spirit by disrespecting impartiality. Such logicians go to England, Japan, Germany, or America but are unable to attract the faith of intelligent people of those countries in their biased

interpretations of the scriptures. If they give up their self-interest and consider things impartially, however, then the deep meaning of the scriptures' purports will easily be revealed in their hearts. In brief, we can say that things in general are perceived as auspicious or inauspicious when seen by swanlike or asslike people respectively; such distinctions of auspicious and inauspicious are the result of these person's language and mentality. As far as we are concerned, we are not busy in simply carrying the load of the scriptures, rather we are on the front line of accepting their essence. I cannot say whether those who have given up the path of reasoning and foolishly accepted carrying the load as the goal will be happy by our presentation.

If we want to analyze who is actually such an influential brāhmaṇa, we can find in Manu's Dharma-śāstra that in the beginning of creation the universe we now see was devoid of characteristics, invisible, and full of darkness. Thereafter the self-manifest Lord agitated the mahā-bhūtas and other material elements and entered within in order to illuminate this unmanifest universe. Lord Nārāyaṇa first created water, and with a desire to produce various progeny from His own body He then placed His seed in it. From His seed a golden egg as brilliant as a thousand suns appeared. Lord Brahmā, the creator of all the worlds, was born from that egg. In order to increase the population of all planets, brāhmaṇas were born from the mouth of Brahmā, kṣatriyas were born from his arms, vaiśyas were born from his thighs, and śūdras were born from his feet. Thus the four varṇas were created. This is explained in the first chapter (5, 6, 8, 9, 31) of Manu's Dharma-śāstra as follows:

āsīd idam tamo-bhūtam aprajñātam alakṣaṇam
tataḥ svayambhūr bhagavān avyakto vyañjayan idam
mahābhūtādi vṛttaujāḥ pradurāsīt tamo-nudaḥ
so 'bhidyāya śarīrāt svāt sisṛkṣur vividhāḥ prajāḥ
apa eva sasarpādau tāsu bījam avāsṛjat
tad aṇḍam abhavad dhaimaṁ sahasrāmśu-sama-prabham
tasmin jajñe svayaṁ brahmā sarva-loka-pitāmahaḥ
lokānāṁ tu vivṛddhy-arthaṁ mukha-bāhūru-pādataḥ
brāhmaṇaṁ kṣatriyaṁ vaiśyaṁ śūdraṁ ca niravartayat

In the Ṛg-pariśiṣṭa it is stated:

brāhmaṇo 'sya mukham āsīd bāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtaḥ
ūrū tad asya yad vaiśyaḥ padbhyāṁ śūdro `jāyata

“The brāhmaṇa appeared from his face, the royal class from his arms, the vaiśya from his thighs, and the śūdra was born from his feet.”

A compiler of Dharma-śāstras, Hārīta (1.12, 15), has stated:

yajña-siddhy-arthaṁ anaghān brāhmaṇān mukhato 'sṛjat
brāhmaṇyāṁ brāhmaṇenaivam utpanno brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ

“From the mouth the sinless brāhmaṇas were created for the purpose of performing sacrifices. The child born of a brāhmaṇa in the womb of his brāhmaṇa wife is known as a brāhmaṇa.” Yājñavalkya (1.90) has stated:

savarṇebhyaḥ savarṇāsu jāyante vai sva-jātayaḥ

“When men of the various castes headed by the brāhmaṇas produce children in the wombs of their wives belonging respectively to the same caste, their sons attain the same caste as their fathers.”

When intercaste marriages first became current, the sons born from brāhmaṇas in the womb of either a kṣatriya or vaiśya woman were also accepted as brāhmaṇas.

brāhmaṇyām brāhmaṇāj jāto brāhmaṇaḥ syān na saṁśayaḥ
kṣatriyāyām tathaiva syāt vaiśyāyām api caiva hi

“The son born of a brāhmaṇa in the womb of a brāhmaṇa woman is undoubtedly a brāhmaṇa, and the son born of a brāhmaṇa in the womb of a kṣatriya or vaiśya woman is also a brāhmaṇa.” But medieval smārtas such as Kulluka, a commentator on the Manu-saṁhitā, and Vijñāneśvara, the author of the Mitākṣara, consider that these intercaste children belong to the caste of their mothers. In the Manu-saṁhitā (10.6) it is stated:

strīṣv anantara-jātāsu dvijair utpāditān sutān
sadrśān eva tān āhur mātṛ-doṣa-vigarhitān

“Sons begotten in the wombs of women belonging to castes lower than that of the father are considered as similar to the father but contaminated due to their mothers' inferior position.” In the opinion of some commentators like Kulluka, the caste status of such sons is inferior to that of their fathers and superior to that of their mothers. In some places these sons are given designations like mūrdhābhiṣikta. It is stated in the Manu-saṁhitā (10.41) as follows:

viprasya triṣu varṇeṣu nṛpater varṇayor dvayoḥ
vaiśyasya varṇe caikasmin ṣaḍ ete 'pasadāḥ smṛtāḥ
sajāti-jān antara-jāḥ ṣaṭ sutā dvija-dharmināḥ
śūdrāṇām tu sadharmāṇaḥ sarve 'padhvāmsa-jāḥ smṛtāḥ

“Children born from a brāhmaṇa father and a kṣatriya, vaiśya, or śūdra mother; from a kṣatriya father and a vaiśya or śūdra mother; and from a vaiśya father and a śūdra mother—these six are inferior to the children born of parents belonging to the same caste.”

Sons born of brāhmaṇa parents, sons born of kṣatriya parents, and sons born of vaiśya parents, as well as sons born from brāhmaṇa father and either kṣatriya or vaiśya mother and sons born of kṣatriya father and vaiśya mother are all considered among

the dvijas, or twice-born. They are therefore all eligible for accepting the sacred thread and the other brahminical saṁskāras. Those sūtas, māgadhas, and others who are born through pratiloma marriages involving the twice-born classes, such as śūdra father with brāhmaṇa mother, vaiśya father with brāhmaṇa mother, or kṣatriya father with brāhmaṇa mother, śūdra father with kṣatriya mother, śūdra father with vaiśya mother, and vaiśya father with kṣatriya mother, are all considered śūdras and therefore do not undergo the sacred thread ceremony.

When the sages who compiled the twenty Dharma-śāstras assisted the kings in controlling and maintaining human society, they directed society in following the path of ritualistic fruitive activities. The compilers of the Purāṇas also recorded the customs and activities of those times. The methods found in the Itihāsas and Purāṇas for ascertaining who was a brāhmaṇa are often more or less the same as those found in the Dharma-śāstras. Although the Dharma-śāstras are composed of rules and regulations, how those rules and regulations were followed in practice and respected by the people of this world has been described by the learned writers of the Itihāsas in the course of their describing historical events. In ancient times the activities of the varṇas were determined in different provinces by the various textbooks of practical application of rituals belonging to the different branches of the Vedas. That is why the behavior of a family in one region was different from that of a family in another region.

Textbooks of practical application like the Aśvalāyana-gr̥hya-sūtras and Śāṅkhāyana-śrauta-sūtras among the Ṛg Veda branches, the Lāṭyāyana-śrauta-sūtras and Gobhiliya-gr̥hya-sūtras of the Sāma Veda branches, the Kātyāyana-śrauta-sūtras and Pāraskariya-gr̥hya-sūtras of the Śukla-yajur Veda branches, and the Āpastambīya-śrauta-sūtras of the Kṛṣṇa-yajur Veda branches, as well as the Kauṣītaka-sūtras of the Atharva Veda branches were more or less mastered under the support of kings by the sages who compiled the twenty Dharma-śāstras.

Moreover, the rules and regulations of a particular Dharma-śāstra were followed according to the particular place. In the opinion of some persons, at the beginning of the Kali age the Manu Dharma-śāstra and the doctrine of Parāśara Muni were prominently accepted, while the other twenty Dharma-śāstras were neglected. Others say that the doctrine of Hārīta was prominent and the activities prescribed by the other Dharma-śāstras were neglected. Generally, whatever one found convenient was accepted, without regard for other's consent and liking.

In the medieval age, many new smṛtis were compiled on the basis of the Dharma-śāstras in various parts of the country. Sometimes people gave special credence to certain parts of the Dharma-śāstra lawbooks to suit their own taste, and sometimes they neglected the main purpose of the Dharma-śāstras by rejecting those portions that did not suit their taste. Those who are conversant with various scriptures can often see this from their study of various books. When the ritualistic smṛti-śāstras are effective for a particular person, in a particular place, at a particular time, then that

particular person at that particular place and time has a high regard for those scriptures. But we cannot say whether this same regard was felt or accepted by other persons in other places and times.

One cannot expect that the ritualistic smṛti-śāstras will be fully honored by all persons, at all places, and at all times. At those times, in those places, and for those persons for which ritualistic practices are prominent and the topics of jñāna and bhakti were not respected, are not respected, and will not be respected, any conduct other than that prescribed in the smṛti-śāstras have certainly been neglected, are being neglected, and will be neglected. Evidence from the many Vedic sūtras, the twenty Dharma-śāstras, the Purāṇas, the Itihāsas, the Yāmalaś, the Pañcarātras, and the Tantras is found in the writings of the learned compilers of smṛti-śāstras of our country, Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya and Kamalākara. Mādhava's Kāla-mādhava, Kamalākara's Nirṇaya-sindhu, Caṇḍeśvara's Vivāda-ratnākara, Vācaspati's Vivāda-cintāmaṇi, Jīmūtavūhana's Dāya-bhāga and Kāla-viveka, Halāyudha's Brāhmaṇa-sarvasva, Śūlapāṇi's Prāyaścitta-viveka, Chalāri Nṛsiṃhācārya's Smṛty-artha-sāgara, Ānanda Tīrtha's Sad-ācāra-smṛti, Nimbāditya's Surendra-dharma-mañjarī, Kṛṣṇadeva's Nṛsiṃha-paricaryā and Rāmārcana-candrika—in all these digests differences of opinions due to different tastes are found. Whatever opinion the author nourishes has been supported by those statements of previous sages that suit their taste.

In regards to a brāhmaṇa's qualification by birth: in the Anuśāsana-parva of the Mahābhārata and in other scriptures, the apasadas, anulomajas, mūrdhābhiṣiktas, and ambaṣṭhas are specifically accepted as authorised brāhmaṇas. In many parts of India the sons of apasadas, mūrdhābhiṣiktas, and ambaṣṭhas are known as brāhmaṇas and considered equal to those born in strict brahminical lineage. In some parts of India, however, they are rejected and not included amongst the brāhmaṇas. If one studies the Saṃhitās and certain other parts of the Vedas, the reader will obtain a clear impression that the overall message of the Vedas is the path of fruitive activities. But if one studies texts like the Upaniṣads, which are the “head” of the Vedas, then one will certainly receive the impression that the science of self-realization is superior, and consequently the path of fruitive activities will appear less important. Moreover, there are two tendencies among the readers of the Upaniṣads. Some, with a desire to enhance their knowledge of the self, take help from fruitive activities in order to attain the contrary mentality of monism, in which they ultimately give up all activities and practice renunciation. Others, who neither accept nor reject the fruitive activities of this world, neither accept the help of karma-kāṇḍa nor the philosophy of jñāna-kāṇḍa, rather they realize that the Truth established in the Vedas is full of spiritual variegatedness, and thus they engage in His devotional service. A certain great soul who understood that religious persons belong to three categories expressed his understanding in the following verse, quoted by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his Śrī Padyāvalī:

karmāvalambakāḥ kecit kecij jñānāvalambakāḥ
vayaṁ tu hari-dāsānāṁ pāda-trāṇāvalambakāḥ

“Among religious-minded people, some follow the path of fruitive activities and some follow the path of mental speculation, but our only resort is to carry the shoes of Lord Hari's servants.” Karma and jñāna are two branches of the Vedic tree. Those who have taken shelter of these two branches have certainly fallen from the standard of pure devotional service. Pure devotional service is the topmost ripened fruit of the Vedic tree. In the field of fruitive activities all people are bound by the fruits of their actions. Although one is freed from bondage to the fruits of karma by the process of jñāna, until one takes to pure devotional service he remains bound by the fruits of his karma. Therefore the jñānīs are by their own identification bound in fruitive activities. The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.23.56) says:

neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvann api mṛto hi saḥ

“Anyone whose work is not meant to elevate him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must be considered dead, although he is breathing.” People engage in fruitive activities according to their own desires. These activities are divided into four categories—akarma, or actions without fruitive reactions, vikarma, or unauthorized or sinful work, kukarma, or acts against the principles of religion, and sat-karma, or pious activities. From the mundane point of view, those activities that are in the mode of goodness, or that are moral and beneficial for others, are called sat-karma. If one's activities are meant only for fulfilling one's own desires and do not benefit others, they cannot be called sat-karma. Those who give up sinful activities, which harm the performer and others, and engage in activities that are not meant for the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu are actually dead, although breathing. Everyone who is on the platform of fruitive activities should execute his own duties for the purpose of dharma. But if one does not engage in all his religious duties for the purpose of developing renunciation, they simply generate ignorance. When a person becomes overly proud of being situated in the mode of goodness, then he gives up pious activities and again becomes attached to activities in the modes of passion and ignorance. The perfection of knowledge is to destroy ignorance by passion, to destroy passion by goodness, and to become detached from goodness by pure goodness. This state is called nirguṇa, or transcendental to the material modes of nature. Without attaining the state of nirguṇa, a life of renunciation nourished by ignorance is as good as death. Therefore a person who has acquired knowledge takes shelter of the service of the Supreme Lord, at whose feet are found all the holy places. In other words, he takes shelter of the activities of bhakti. This is the symptom of real life in a living entity. When one surpasses whimsical, unregulated activities, he comes to the level of regulated, pious activities. When he further advances from pious activities, he comes to the level of knowledge, or renunciation, wherein he gives up activities. When a person loses interest in the paths of karma and jñāna, he comes to the path of bhakti, which is the highest development of human consciousness. In the pure devotional

path there is no scope for fruitive activities, which are meant for sense gratification, or impersonal knowledge, which is meant for renunciation.

Although the three paths and their practices are different, they appear the same in the eyes of foolish people. The people of India who are engaged in karma-kāṇḍa consider every human being under the jurisdiction of karma-kāṇḍa like themselves. Until one personally understands the powerful reactions of karma, he cannot avoid glorifying karma and desiring to achieve its fruits. When knowledge is awakened, fruitive activities subside and one's self-realization becomes completely purified, then one can finally identify with the propensity for devotional service. One who misunderstands the path of bhakti as another version of the path of karma considers himself a practitioner of jñāna and simply creates anxiety for himself. Yet the activities performed by such jñānīs fall more or less under the category of karma.

Although the self-realization of those who follow the path of bhakti is not actually under the jurisdiction of karma, it appears as such to the eyes of the karmīs and jñānīs. Respectable persons who are attached to fruitive activities mistakenly consider that the devotees who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord are on the same platform as themselves and forced to enjoy the fruits of karma. Thanks to their poor fund of knowledge, the jñānīs have convinced themselves that the devotees are chained by the laws of karma. Indeed, other than those engaged on the path of bhakti, all people—the karmīs, the jñānīs, and the whimsical—consider that devotees are forced to enjoy the fruits of karma. But in the pure devotional path this conclusion is actually very weak. Intelligent followers of the above-mentioned three paths will undoubtedly profit in this regard by referring to the innumerable books, life histories of sages, and historical incidents connected with these paths.

Those who have accepted the rulings of the scriptures on karma with unshakable faith and fixed minds are naturally indifferent to the scriptural conclusions of jñāna and bhakti spoken by the Upaniṣads. That is why we have written this present essay to appeal to those who are attached to karma. This present essay will consist of topics related with the realm of karma and its logical analysis. Therefore this chapter is being named Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa, and the next chapter must be named Hari-jana-kāṇḍa. In that chapter we will discuss topics concerning the communities of jñānīs and hari-janas, who are both beyond the jurisdiction of karma. Since worldly people do not completely reject the statements of literatures that respect the jñāna and bhakti scriptures, there will be no fault in quoting herein evidence and arguments from those literatures.

It is an established fact that the descendants of those who were even once known in society as brāhmaṇas are all considered brāhmaṇas. The descendants of those who have once somehow been designated brāhmaṇas—in Satya, Tretā, or Dvāpara-yugas—have kept their claims to the brahminical designation and authority intact with the help of the twenty Dharma-śāstras and social customs. In this regard we can only say that in early times ten saṁskāras, or purificatory processes, were followed by the

brāhmaṇas. Among these, one is the garbhādāna ceremony, which was based on seminal line. It has, however, been changed and perverted in the course of time. According to the opinion of Devala, if the womb is once purified before intercourse then it is not necessary to purify the womb before every pregnancy. He states this as follows:

sakṛc ca saṁskṛtā nārī sarva-garbheṣu saṁskṛtā

“A once-consecrated women is consecrated for all her pregnancies.”

The respected smārta Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Bengal was also of the opinion that the saṁskāra need only be performed once. But if this saṁskāra was taken more seriously, then seminal consideration would have been more applicable. In the Mahābhārata (Vana-parva 180.31-32) it is stated:

jātir atra mahā-sarpa manuṣyatve mahā-mate
saṅkarāt sarva-varṇānām duṣparikṣyeti me matiḥ
sarve sarvāsv apatyāni janayanti sadā narāḥ
vān-maithunam atho janma maraṇam ca samam nṛṇām

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira said to Nahuṣa: O broad-minded, great serpent, because there are persons born from mixed marriages among each of the varṇas, it is extremely difficult to determine an individual's caste. This is my opinion. The reason for this is that men of all castes are able to beget children in the women of any caste. Speech, sex, birth, and death are similar for men of all castes.”

It is especially difficult to ascertain whether a given person is born from a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, or other caste father. Other than trusting a person's words there is no way to investigate his caste. The caste of those belonging to brāhmaṇa and other caste dynasties coming from Lord Brahmā and said to be purely descending to the present day cannot be known in truth without definitely validating every person in the line. In his commentary on the above verse, Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator on the Mahābhārata, quotes from the Vedas as follows:

na caitad vidmo brāhmaṇāḥ smo vayam abrāhmaṇā veti

“We do not know whether we are brāhmaṇas or non-brāhmaṇas.” Such doubts arose in the hearts of the truthful sages.

The qualification of those who take birth in brāhmaṇa families but are unable to maintain brahminical qualities and the qualification of their descendants needs to be considered. By immoral activities the qualification and potency based on seminal descent is reduced, and by sinful activities persons become sinners and fall from their positions. The compilers of Dharma-śāstras Viṣṇu (93.7-13) and Manu (4.192, 195-200) have stated as follows:

na vāry api prayacchet tu vaidāla-vratike dvije
 na baka-vratike vipre nāveda-vidi dharma-vit
 dharma-dhvajī sadā lubdhaś chādmiko loka-dambhakaḥ
 vaidāla-vratiko jñeyo himsra-sarvābhisandhikaḥ
 adho-dr̥ṣṭir naikṛtikaḥ svārtha-sādhana-tatparaḥ
 śaṭho mithyā-vinītaś ca baka-vrata-paro dvijaḥ
 ye baka-vratino viprā ye ca mārjāra-liṅginaḥ
 te patanty andha-tāmisre tena pāpena karmaṇā
 na dharmasyāpadeśena pāpaṁ kṛtvā vrataṁ caret
 vratena pāpaṁ pracchādya kurvan strī-śūdra-dambhanam
 pretyeḥa cedṛśo vipro gṛhyate brahma-vādibhiḥ
 chadmanācaritaṁ yac ca tad vai rakṣāṁsi gacchati
 alīngī liṅgi-veṣeṇa yo vṛttim upajīvati
 sa liṅgināṁ haraty enas tiryag-yonau prajāyate

“Religious-minded persons should not give even a drop of water to the hypocritical son of a brāhmaṇa, the follower of the “vow of a cat.” One should not give even a drop of water to the son of a brāhmaṇa who is either a sinful imposter or ignorant of the Vedas.

“One should know that a dharmadhvajī (who makes a false show of being religious), a person who always desires other's wealth, a duplicitous person, a cheater, an envious person, and a blasphemer is a hypocritical brāhmaṇa who follows the ‘vow of a cat.’ “An imposter brāhmaṇa, the follower of the ‘vow of the duck,’ is he who always looks down in order to make a show of humility, who is cruel, and who pretends to be submissive.

“As a result of their sinful activities, those who are hypocrites and imposters go to the hell known as Andha-tāmisra.

“Such people make a show of being religious in order to impress women and śūdras by pretending that their acts of atonement, which are meant for counteracting their sins, are simply pious vows.

“Such people are condemned in this world and the next by those who are conversant with the Absolute Truth. Vows that are executed with duplicity are simply demoniac.

“If someone accepts the symptoms and occupation of a status for which he is not qualified, he is guilty of breaking the principles of varṇāśrama, and as a result of those sins he will take birth as an animal.”

The Dharma-sāstra compiler Viṣṇu (82.3-29) also states:

hīnādhikāṅgān vivārjayet, vikarma-sthānīs ca, vaidāla-vratikān, vṛthā-liṅgināḥ, nakṣatra-jīvināḥ, devalakānīs ca, cikitsikān, aṅṅdhā-putrān, tat-putrān, bahu-yājinaḥ, grāma-yājinaḥ, śūdra-yājinaḥ, ayājya-yājinaḥ, tad-yājinaḥ, parva-kārān, sūcakān, bhṛtakādhyāpakān, bhṛtakādhyāpitān, śūdrānna-puṣṭān, patita-samsargān, anadhīyānān, sandhyopāsana-bhraṣṭān, rāja-sevakān, nagnān, pitrā vivādamānān, piṭṛ-māṭṛ-gurv-agni-svādhyāya-tyāginaś ceti, brāhmaṇāpasadā hy ete kathitāḥ paṅkti-dūṣakāḥ. etān vivarjayet yatnāt śrāddha-karmaṇi paṇḍitaḥ.

“One should reject the following brāhmaṇas: those with missing limbs, those with extra limbs, those who behave unjustly, hypocrites, those who falsely accept the signs of some status, professional astrologers, professional priests, physicians, the sons of unmarried women, their sons, worshipers of many gods, priests of the village, priests of the śūdras, priests of the untouchables, those who have failed to take their second birth, their priests, performers of religious rites, betrayers, **salaried teachers, the students who pay the salaries**, those who are nourished by the food of śūdras, those who associate with fallen persons, those who are ignorant of the Vedas, those who fail to observe the sandhyā rites (chanting the Gāyatrī mantra), government servants, those who do not wear clothes, those who quarrel with their fathers, and those who reject their father, mother, spiritual master, the sacred fire, or the study of the scriptures. Such persons are considered the worst kinds of brāhmaṇas and are disgraces to their line. Learned persons should carefully reject these persons while performing the śrāddha ceremony for their fathers.”

Since brāhmaṇas are also capable of committing any of the nine types of sinful activities—atipātaka, mahāpātaka, anupātaka, upapātaka, jāti-bhramśa-kara, saṅkarī-karaṇa (killing animals), pātrī-karaṇa, malāvaha, and prakīrṇaka—it is difficult to know how far a brāhmaṇa is qualified if he conceals these sins without undergoing atonement. It is true that a brāhmaṇa can escape reproach from society if he successfully conceals those sinful activities by which he becomes fallen, but if he does so his truthfulness is ruined and as a result he is degraded. The descendants of such a person will then surely and proudly accept that same sinful way of life.

According to their occupations, there are many types of brāhmaṇas. Atri (364-374) has stated:

devo munir dvijo rājā	vaiśyaḥ śūdro niṣādakāḥ
paśur mleccho 'pi cāṅṅḍālo	viprā daśa-vidhāḥ smṛtāḥ
sandhyām snānam japam homam	devatā-nitya-pūjanam
atithim vaiśvadevam ca	deva-brāhmaṇa ucyate
śāke patre phale mūle	vana-vāse sadā rataḥ
nirato 'rahaḥ śrāddhe	sa vipro munir ucyate
vedāntam paṭhate nityam	sarva-saṅgam parityajet
sāṅkhya-yoga-vicāra-sthaḥ	sa vipro dvija ucyate
astrāhatāś ca dhanvānaḥ	samgrāme sarva-sammukhe
ārambhe nirjitā yena	sa vipraḥ kṣatra ucyate

kr̥ṣi-karma-rato yaś ca	gavāṁ ca pratipālakaḥ
vāñijya-vyavasāyaś ca	sa vipro vaiśya ucyate
lākṣā-lavaṇa-sammiśra-	kusumbha-kṣīra-sarpiṣām
vikretā madhu-māmsānām	sa vipraḥ śūdra ucyate
cauraś ca taskaraś caiva	sūcako daṁśakas tathā
matsya-māmse sadā lubdho	vipro niṣāda ucyate
brahma-tattvaṁ na jānāti	brahma-sūtreṇa garvitaḥ
tenaiva sa ca pāpena	vipraḥ paśur udāhṛtaḥ
vāpī-kūpa-tadāgānām	ārāmasya saraḥsu ca
niḥśaṅkaṁ rodhakaś caiva	sa vipro mleccha ucyate
kriyā-hīnaś ca mūrkhāś ca	sarva-dharma-vivarjitaḥ
nirdayaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu	vipraś caṇḍāla ucyate

“There are ten kinds of brāhmaṇas mentioned in the scriptures—devas, munis, dvijas, rājās, vaiśyas, śūdras, niṣādas, paśus, mlecchas, and caṇḍālas.

“One who regularly bathes, chants japa, performs fire sacrifices, daily worships the demigods, observes the sandhyā rites, honors his guests, and worships the fire-god is a deva-brāhmaṇa.

“One who always lives in the forest, eats only spinach, leaves, fruits, and roots, and regularly performs the śrāddha rites is called a muni-brāhmaṇa.

“One who gives up all association and spends all his time reading Vedānta and studying Sāṅkhya-yoga is called a dvija-vipra.

“One who publicly attacks opponents who confront him with weapons and defeats them with his own weapons is called a kṣatra-vipra.

“One who likes to cultivate the land, protect cows and other animals, or accept the profession of trade and commerce is called a vaiśya-vipra.

“One who sells varnish, salt, safflower oil, milk, honey, or meat is called a śūdra-vipra.

“One who is a thief or a rogue, who gives bad counsel, who is a betrayer, who bites with his harsh words, and who is always greedy to eat fish and meat is called a niṣāda-brāhmaṇa.

“One who proudly advertises himself as a sanctified brāhmaṇa but is ignorant of the Absolute Truth is because of this sin called a pasu-vipra.

“One who prevents others from using ponds, wells, lakes, or gardens is called a mleccha-vipra.

“One who is devoid of pious activities, who is a fool, completely irreligious, and merciless to all living entities is called a caṇḍāla-brāhmaṇa.”

Apart from these ten kinds of brāhmaṇas, Atri Mahāśaya (376-379) also describes:

gyotir-vido hy atharvāṇaḥ kīra-paurāṇa-pāṭhakāḥ
āvikaś citrakāraś ca vaidyo nakṣatra-pāṭhakaḥ
catur viprā na pūjyante bṛhaspati-samā yadi
māgadho māthuraś caiva kāpaṭaḥ kauṭa-kāmalau
pañca viprā na pūjyante bṛhaspati-samā yadi
yajñe hi phala-hāniḥ syāt tasmāt tān parivarjayet

“There are three types of brāhmaṇas—those who know astrology, those who know the Atharva Veda, and those who recite the Purāṇas like parrots.

“Goat traders, painters, physicians, and astrologers—these four kinds of brāhmaṇas never become worshipable, even if they are as learned as Bṛhaspati.,

“Māgadhas, Māthuras, Kāpaṭas, Kauṭas, and Kāmalas—these five kinds of brāhmaṇas never become worshipable, even if they are as learned as Bṛhaspati.

“Such brāhmaṇas will spoil the results one's sacrifice, so they should be rejected.”

In addition to this, Atri (287) also says:

śaṭham ca brāhmaṇam hatvā śūdra-hatyā-vratam caret

“If one kills a deceitful brāhmaṇa he should perform the same atonement as prescribed for killing a śūdra.” According to Atri, a compiler of the Dharma-śāstras, besides these above-mentioned twenty-three types of brāhmaṇas, there is one other kind. He says as follows (Atri 375):

vedair vihināś ca paṭhanti śāstram
śāstreṇa hīnāś ca purāṇa-pāṭhāḥ
purāṇa-hīnāḥ kṛṣiṇo bhavanti
bhraṣṭās tato bhāgavatā bhavanti

If a brāhmaṇa is unable to extract any benefit from his hard studies of the Vedic literatures, he begins to study the Dharma-śāstras. If he is unable to abstract any benefit from studying the Dharma-śāstras, he becomes a reciter of the Purāṇas. If he fails to get any benefit from reciting the Purāṇas, he considers that it is better to earn his livelihood by farming. In other words, such people consider that studying the Vedic literatures, the Dharma-śāstras, or the Purāṇas is simply meant for earning one's livelihood; they see no other purpose in these activities. When such brāhmaṇas are unsuited for all these engagements, they even take to farming. When they cannot be

successful even in reciting Purāṇas, they decide that farming is the best occupation for them. And when due to incompetence and lack of skills they fail to fill their bellies even by farming, they become spiritual masters of the Vaiṣṇavas, accumulate wealth, and advertise themselves as great devotees, establishing this as their means of livelihood.

In this way, including this pseudo-devotee brāhmaṇa, there are twenty-four varieties of brāhmaṇas described by the Dharma-śāstra compiler Atri Mahāśaya. Manu (2.157-158, 168, 172, and 4.245, 255) has stated:

yathā kāṣṭha-mayo hasti	yathā carma-mayo mṛgaḥ
yaś ca vipro 'nadhīyānas	trayas te nāma bibhrati
yathā ṣaṅdho 'phalaḥ strīṣu	yathā gaur gavi cāphalā
yathā cājñe 'phalaṁ dānaṁ	tathā vipro 'nṛdho 'phalaḥ
yo 'nadhītya dvijo vedam	anyatra kurute śramam
sa jīvan eva śūdratvam	āśu gacchati sānvayaḥ
śūdreṇa hi samas tāvad	yāvad vede na jāyate
uttamānuttamān gacchan	hīnān hīnāmś ca varjayan
brāhmaṇaḥ śreṣṭhatām eti	pratyavāyena śūdratām
yo 'nyathā santam ātmānaṁ	anyathā satsu bhāṣate
sa pāpa-kṛt-tamo loke	stena ātmāpahāraḥ

“A vipra who does not study the Vedas is similar to a wooden elephant or a deer made of skin, which are an elephant or deer only in name but do not effectively function as such.

“As a eunuch is of no use to women and a cow cannot be impregnated by another cow, giving charity to a foolish brāhmaṇa who does not study the Vedas yields no result.

“One who in his lifetime does not endeavor to study the Vedas but labors hard in other pursuits quickly becomes a śūdra along with his family.

“One should know that until a brāhmaṇa is qualified in the Vedas, he is on the same level as a śūdra.

“If a brāhmaṇa disassociates himself from lower caste people and associates only with higher caste people, he attains greatness. If he does the opposite, he becomes a śūdra.

“A person with a particular nature who claims to be different when coming before a sādhu is the topmost sinner, a cheater of himself, and a thief.”

In the Anuśāsana-parva, Chapter 143, of the Mahābhārata it is stated:

guru-talpī guru-drohī	guru-kutsā-ratiś sa yaḥ
brahma-vic cāpi patati	brāhmaṇo brahma-yonitaḥ

“One who has sex with the wife of his spiritual master, one who is envious of his spiritual master, one who habitually criticizes his spiritual master such a brāhmaṇa, even if he knows the Absolute Truth, falls from his position.”

śruti-smṛtī ubhe netre viprāṇām parikīrtite
ekena vikalāḥ kāṇo dvābhyām andhaḥ prakīrtitaḥ

“The śruti and smṛti scriptures are the two eyes of the brāhmaṇas. Lacking one of them, a brāhmaṇa is half blind, and deprived of both he is considered completely blind.”

It is stated in the Kūrma Purāṇa:

yo 'nyatra kurute yatnam anadhītya śrutim dvijāḥ
sa sammūḍho na sambhāsyo veda-bāhyo dvijātibhiḥ
na veda-pāṭha-mātreṇa santuṣyed eṣa vai dvijāḥ
yathoktācāra-hīnas tu pañke gaur iva sīdati
yo 'dhītya vidhi-vad vedam vedārtham na vicārayet
sa cāndhaḥ sūdra-kalpas tu padārtham na prapadyate
sevā śva-vṛttir yair uktā na samyak tair udāhṛtam
svacchanda-caritaḥ kva śvā vikrītāsuḥ kva sevakaḥ
pañī-krtyātmanaḥ prāṇān ye vartante dvijādhamāḥ
teṣām durātmanām annam bhuktvā cāndrāyaṇam caret
nādyāc chūdrasya vipro 'nnam mohād vā yadi kāmataḥ
sa sūdra-yonim vrajati yas tu bhunkte hy anāpadi
go-rakṣakān vāṇijakān tathā kāruka-śilinaḥ
preṣyān vārdhuṣikāmś caiva viprān sūdra-vad ācaret
ṛṇām kāṣṭham phalam puṣpam prakāśam vai hared budhaḥ
dharmārtham kevalam vipra hy anyathā patito bhavet

“O brāhmaṇas, one who does not study the Vedas but carefully endeavors for other pursuits is certainly foolish and ostracized from Vedic life. Brāhmaṇas should not speak with such a person.

“A brāhmaṇa should not be satisfied merely with studying the Vedas, for if he does not act accordingly he will be as helpless as a cow that has fallen in the mud.

“One should know that a person who has studied the Vedas but does not properly consider their purport is like a blind person or a sūdra and will never attain the supreme goal of life.

“Those who describe the occupation of a servant to be like that of a dog are unable to give a proper comparison. How can a freely wandering dog be compared to a sold out servant?”

“If one eats food cooked by fallen, sinful brāhmaṇas who have sold themselves to others, then one must atone by observing candrāyaṇa.

“A brāhmaṇa should never eat food cooked by a śūdra. If other than in an emergency one either willingly or mistakenly does eat food cooked by a śūdra, then as a result of eating such food he is born as a śūdra.

“Those brāhmaṇas who protect cows, engage in trade, become artists, take the occupation of servants, and loan money on interest are no better than śūdras.

“If a brāhmaṇa does not accumulate grass, wood, fruits, and flowers for religious purposes, he becomes eligible for falling down as result of such actions.”

By seminal consideration, the descendants of a brāhmaṇa are also brāhmaṇas—this belief has been generally accepted for a long time. There is no shortage of evidence from the smṛtis, Purāṇas, and histories in support of this belief. Yet by the evidence that we have presented regarding the degradation of brāhmaṇas, the disqualification of brāhmaṇas who commit sinful activities, and the uncertainty of who is a real brāhmaṇa, every listener will be able to understand how qualified the present day descendants of brāhmaṇas are.

Why should those who are brāhmaṇas by birth but have taken to other occupational duties and not shown any interest in acquiring the characteristics of properly initiated brāhmaṇas be respected? The word bandhu generally means relatives like one's son, but the word brahma-bandhu cannot be simply used for those who are related to brāhmaṇas by birth. Since the word brahma-bandhu has been used in a derogatory way, such descendants of brāhmaṇas have not accepted this designation very proudly. Women, śūdras, and brahma-bandhus all belong to a particular category that is inferior to the class of topmost brāhmaṇas. These people have no qualification to study the Vedas. Brahma-bandhus are those who are devoid of brahminical culture, engaged in abominable activities, and brāhmaṇas simply by birth. It is stated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

asmat kulīno 'nanūcyā brahma-bandhur iva bhavati

“A brahma-bandhu, or a mere relative of a brāhmaṇa, is one who who belongs to our brāhmaṇa community but has not studied the Vedas.”

Śrīpāda Saṅkarācārya has commented on this verse as follows: he saumyā ananūcyā anadhītya brahma-bandhur iva bhavati brāhmaṇān bandhūn vyapadiśati, na svayam brāhmaṇa-vṛtaḥ.—“O beautiful woman, one who has not studied the Vedas is like a mere relative of brāhmaṇas. He calls the brāhmaṇas his relatives, but he does not have the behavior of a brāhmaṇa.”

It is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.4.25):

strī-śūdra-dvijabandhūnām trayī na śruti-gocarā

“The Rg, Sāma, and Yajur Vedas should not be recited before women, śūdras, and dvija-bandhus.”

One should neither kill nor award physical punishment to brahma-bandhus. This is confirmed in the following words of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.7.57):

eṣa hi brahma-bandhūnām vadho nānyo 'sti daihikaḥ

Persons who are engaged in fruitive activities are less-intelligent than those who have the nature of either a jñānī or a bhakta. The goal of fruitive workers is to attain worldly or heavenly happiness. The majority of people in this world are inclined towards fruitive activities. Only the devotees and jñānīs have become liberated from this fruitive mentality. Ordinary people are unable to realize knowledge higher than their mundane experience.

The descriptions of the heavenly planets given in the karma-śāstras are for persons who are attached to the material world. Such persons are also familiar with the presence of misery. The prototype misery described in the karma-śāstras is that found on the hellish planets. It is a fact that on the strength of their pious and sinful activities less-intelligent, ordinary people who are attached to karma-kāṇḍa achieve either heaven or hell in the next life and distinction or atonement in this life.

In order to attract the minds of such persons and entice them to behave in appropriate ways, various flowery exaggerations are found in the instructions of their scriptures. Then again, the condemnations are also exaggerated so that these people will not engage in sinful activities. The fear of misery, dishonor, and condemnation stops many of these people from becoming degraded. In this way, such persons are regulated by required atonements and by hell and other punishments.

The glories, prestige, and prowess of the brāhmaṇas are profusely sung in the scriptures. Similarly, the excellence of brāhmaṇas when they are qualified and their degraded condition when they are disqualified are also found described in the same scriptures. Such principles need to be prescribed for those who are directed by the ideas of relative good and bad. In order to minimize the disappointment of the cripple-minded, incapable, weak, foolish, fearful brahma-bandhus, we can respectfully quote a few statements from the scriptures. The Mahābhārata, Vana-parva, states:

nādhyāpanāt yājanād vā anyasmād vā pratigrahāt
doṣo bhavati viprāṇām jvalitāgni-samā dvijāḥ
durvedā vā suvedā vā prākṛtāḥ saṁskṛtās tathā
brāhmaṇā nāvamantavyā bhasmācchannā ivāgnayaḥ

yathā śmaśāne dīptaujāḥ pāvako naiva duṣyati
evam vidvān avidvān vā brāhmaṇo naiva duṣyati

“Brāhmaṇas are like burning fire; therefore even if they do not study the Vedas, even if they act as priests for those who should not perform Vedic sacrifices, or even if they accept charity from low-class people, they are not at fault.

“Whether brāhmaṇas possess knowledge of the Vedas or are devoid of knowledge of the Vedas, whether they are worldly or have undergone the reformatory processes, they do not deserve to be disrespected, for they are like fire covered by ashes.

“As the bright fire of the funeral pyre is not considered impure, a brāhmaṇa, whether foolish or learned, is not faulty.”

Parāśara says:

yuge yuge ca ye dharmās tatra tatra ca ye dvijāḥ
teṣām nindā na kartavyā yuga-rūpā hi te dvijāḥ

“The predominant religious principles of a particular age are followed by brāhmaṇas (who are twice-born according to those principles) according to the time, therefore such brāhmaṇas should not be condemned.”

The purpose of these statements found in the scriptures is to somehow minimize the unfortunate condition of the incapable living entities. But those who fall down from the position of real brāhmaṇas with the help of these statements destroy their religious principles. Bṛhaspati says:

kevalam śāstram āśritya na kartavyo vinirṇayaḥ
yukti-hīna-vicāre tu dharmā-hāniḥ prajāyate

“One should not conclude that the statements meant to minimize the disappointment of unqualified persons who are unable to follow the real instructions of the Dharma-śāstras comprise the actual purport of the scriptures.”

The statements of Parāśara, the narrations of the Mahābhārata, and other such authoritative sources are just like lamps of hope for those whose desires are thwarted in the kingdom of hopelessness. If one carefully considers, then he will understand that the aim of the scriptures is to minimize the hopelessness of the living entities, encourage them to behave better in the future, uplift the non-brāhmaṇas to the level of brāhmaṇas, and prevent the further degradation of non-brāhmaṇas.

The compilers of the scriptures did not ever intend to block the living entities' path of progress and perfection. That is why the most intelligent Bṛhaspati Mahāśaya has said that one should not ascertain the conclusion by simply reading the scriptures, because

if one considers without proper reasoning he becomes irreligious. A compiler of Dharma-śāstras, Viṣṇu (71.1), states as follows:

atha kañca nāvamanyeta—“Do not disrespect anyone.”

A person should not in any way disregard or condemn even the lowest class of men in this world, and what to speak of the brāhmaṇas, who are the highest class. A person who condemns or insults another certainly commits a sin. Even to hide the real truth for the benefit of the world is also a sign of cheating. The Mahābhārata, Vana-parva, has established that simplicity is the only identification of a brāhmaṇa. Therefore we find that by the influence of this extraordinary quality the ideals of simplicity are found in scriptures that are written by brāhmaṇas. Neutrality is the ornament of the simple-minded brāhmaṇas. A brāhmaṇa proves his simplicity by opening his heart and speaking the truth, even if it hampers his own self-interest. Wherever there is a lack of simplicity one should know that there is no question of brahminical culture.

The statements of the Vedas, the practical ritual textbooks, the Dharma-śāstras, the Purāṇas, the Itihāsas, the Pāṭalas, and other literatures compiled in a spirit of simplicity by the sages are meant only for the benefit of the people of the world, not for condemning or insulting incapable persons. When neutral, thoughtful persons who follow the authority of these scriptures disclose the real purport of the Dharma-śāstras to ignorant, selfish people, then those who try to hamper the prestige of such truthful persons and safeguard their own interests like low-class people by publicly criticizing the śāstras and the speaker of the śāstras are cowards and violators of religious principles.

If someone blasphemes the Vedas, the ritual textbooks that follow the Vedic version, the Dharma-śāstras, the Purāṇas, the Tantras, as well as neutral speakers of the truth and think that this will enhance the prestige of degraded persons like themselves, then honest fruitive workers will never approve. Let the brāhmaṇas become purely brahminical, and let the prestige of the brāhmaṇas who have actually become brahminical remain intact forever—this is the intention of the śāstras and the speakers of the śāstras; they never want to condemn the brāhmaṇas. We are also of this opinion. One should not engage in the sin of criticizing brāhmaṇas like low-class, selfish proponents of argumentative views who hanker after high prestige; rather one should study the following verses of Manu. There is no use of gaining prestige from such people. The Mānava-dharma-śāstra (2.162-163) says:

sammānād brāhmaṇo nityam uddhijet viṣād iva
amṛtasyeva cākāṅkṣed avamānasya sarvadā
sukhaṁ hy avamataḥ śete sukhaṁ ca pratibudhyate
sukhaṁ carati loke 'sminn avamantā vinaśyati

“Throughout his life a brāhmaṇa should consider material prestige to be like poison and dishonor to be like nectar.

“After all, if one learns to tolerate dishonor, then his agitation will subside and he will happily sleep, happily wake, and happily move about. The person who insults him will as a result of his sin become embarrassed, and his happiness in this and the next life will be vanquished.”

Religious principles stood on four legs in Satya-yuga, on three legs in Tretā-yuga, on two legs in Dvāpara-yuga, and on only one leg in Kali-yuga. The brāhmaṇas, who are the priests of these religious principles, also become proportionately degraded. If one ascribes the prestige of a Satya-yuga brāhmaṇa to a Kali-yuga brāhmaṇa, the result is simply a distortion of the truth. If one offers a brāhmaṇa more respect than he deserves, then the glories of he who offers the respect will increase and the respected brāhmaṇa's affection for him will increase. But if a respected brāhmaṇa forgets his actual position out of pride, then when he remembers the following statement from the Viṣṇu-yāmala he will be agitated and lose sleep at night, as previously confirmed by Manu. When those brāhmaṇas who know the condemnations of the Viṣṇu-yāmala hear such things, they should keep their mouths shut. The Yāmala says:

aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ

“The brāhmaṇas born in Kali-yuga are impure and no better than śūdras.”

In Kali-yuga, or the age of quarrel, seminal lines are not pure, so those born as brāhmaṇas are equal to śūdras and qualified only in name. Such brāhmaṇas cannot be purified by Vedic rituals. Rather they can be purified by following the Tantras.

Has the king of smṛtis, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, been neglected by such persons because the above verse from the Viṣṇu-yāmala is quoted in the beginning of its fifth Vilāsa? This is the age of Kali, so anything is possible! In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.7.5) it is stated:

jano 'bhadra-rucir bhadra bhaviṣyati kalau yuge

“O gentle one, the people in Kali-yuga will be addicted to all types of sinful activities.”

We have thus discussed seminal considerations regarding persons and time. Now we are quoting Manu regarding the question of place. The Manu-saṁhitā (2.17-24) states:

sarasvatī-dṛṣadvatyor deva-nadyor yad antaram
tat deva-nirmitam deśam brahmāvartam pracakṣate
tasmin deśe ya ācāraḥ pāraparya-kramāgataḥ
varṇānām sāntarālānām sa sad-ācāra ucyate
kurukṣetram ca matsyās ca pañcālāḥ sūrasenakāḥ
eṣa brahmaṛṣi-deśo vai brahmāvartād anantaraḥ
etad-deśa-prasūtasya sakāśād agra-janmanaḥ

svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran pṛthivyāṁ sarva-mānavāḥ
 pratyag eva prayāgāc ca madhya-deśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ
 ā-samudrāt tu vai pūrvāt ā-samudrāt tu paścimāt
 tayor evāntaraṁ giryor āryāvartaṁ vidur budhāḥ
 kṛṣṇa-sāras tu carati mṛgo yatra svabhāvataḥ
 sa jñeyo yajñiyo deśo mleccha-deśas tataḥ paraḥ
 etān dvijātyayā deśān saṁśrayeran prayatnataḥ
 śūdras tu yasmin kasmin vā nivased vṛtti-karśitaḥ

“The tract of land founded by the demigods between the celestial Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī Rivers is called Brahmavarta.

“The traditional behavior of the people in the various castes and mixed classes of that land is called sad-ācāra, or proper behavior.

“Kuruṣetra, Matsya, Pañcāla, and Śūrasena, or Mathurā—these four sacred provinces situated in the south of Brahmāvarta are called Brahmaṛṣi-deśa.

“The people of this world should mold their character after the brāhmaṇas who originally inhabited all these provinces.

“The province west of Prayāga is named Madhya-deśa.

“The area between the Himālaya and Vindhya Mountains and stretching from the eastern ocean to the western ocean is called Āryāvarta by those who are learned.

“The place where spotted deer naturally wander is suitable for sacrifices. Other places are known as Mleccha-deśas, the lands of barbarians.

“Those who are twice-born should endeavor to take shelter of these pure tracts of land. There is no restriction, however, on where a śūdra may earn his livelihood. Therefore brāhmaṇas of places other than where sacrifices are performed are understood to be residents of Mleccha-deśas and behaving improperly.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.21.8) a mood opposite to that described above is seen in the following words:

akṛṣṇa-sāro deśānām abrahmaṇyo 'sucir bhavet
 kṛṣṇa-sāro 'py asauvīra- kīkaṭā saṁskṛterīṇam

“Among places, those bereft of the spotted antelope, those devoid of devotion to the brāhmaṇas, those possessing spotted antelopes but bereft of respectable men, provinces like Kīkaṭa and places where cleanliness and purificatory rites are neglected, where meat-eaters are prominent or where the earth is barren, are all considered to be contaminated lands.”

Anyway, leaving aside the evidence we have quoted so far from the scriptures regarding seminal brāhmaṇas, we will now discuss the processes mentioned in the śāstras by which a person attains the position of an actual brāhmaṇa, and who is a fit candidate for becoming a brāhmaṇa.

In the Muktikopaniṣad there is a list of one hundred eight Upaniṣads, among which, the thirty-eighth is named Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya became famous by composing an elaborate commentary on this Upaniṣad.

In the Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad it is stated:

yaj jñānād yānti munayo brāhmaṇyaṁ paramādbhūtam
tat trai-pada-brahma-tattvam aham asmīti cintaye
om āpyāyantv iti śāntiḥ
cit-sad-ānanda-rūpāya sarva-dhī-vṛtti-sākṣiṇe
namo vedānta-vedyāya brahmaṇe 'nanta-rūpiṇe
om vajra-sūcim pravakṣyāmi śāstram ajñāna-bhedanam
dūṣaṇam jñāna-hīnānām bhūṣaṇam jñāna-cakṣuṣam

brahma-kṣatriya-vaiśya-śūdrā iti catvāro varṇās teṣāṁ varṇānām brāhmaṇa eva
pradhāna iti veda-vacanānurūpaṁ smṛtibhir apy uktam. tatra codyam asti ko vā
brāhmaṇo nāma. kim jīvaḥ kim dehaḥ kim jātiḥ kim jñānam kim karma kim
dhārmika iti. tatra prathamo jīvo brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. atītānāgatāneka-dehānām
jīvasyaika-rūpatvād ekasyāpi karma-vaśād aneka-deha-sambhavāt sarva-śarīrāṇām
jīva-svaikarūpatvāc ca. tasmān na jīvo brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi deho brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na
ā-caṇḍālādi-paryantānām manuṣyāṇām pāñca-bhautikatvena dehasyaika-rūpatvāj jarā-
maraṇa-dharmādharmādi-sāmya-darśanād brāhmaṇaḥ śveta-varṇaḥ kṣatriyo rakta-
varṇo vaiśyaḥ pīta-varṇaḥ śūdraḥ kṛṣṇa-varṇa iti niyamābhāvāt. pitrādi-śarīra-dahane
putrādīnām brahma-hatyādi-doṣa-sambhavāc ca tasmān na deho brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi
jātir brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. tatra jāty-antara-jantuṣu aneka-jāti-sambhavā maharṣayo
bahavaḥ santi. ṛṣyaśṛṅgo mṛgaḥ. kauśikaḥ kuśāt. jāmbuko jambukāt. vālmīko
valmīkāt. vyāsaḥ kaivarta-kanyāyām. śaśa-prṣṭhāt gautamaḥ. vaśiṣṭhaḥ ūrvaśyām.
agastyāḥ kalase jāta iti śrutatvāt. eteṣāṁ jātyā vināpy agre jñāna-pratipāditā ṛṣayo
bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na jātiḥ brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi jñāno brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na.
kṣatriyādayo 'pi paramārtha-darśino 'bhikṣā bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na jñānam
brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi karma brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na. sarveṣāṁ prāṇinām prārabdha-
sañcitāgāmi-karma-sādharmya-darśanāt karmābhipreritāḥ santaḥ janāḥ kriyāḥ
kurvantīti. tasmān na karma brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi dhārmiko brāhmaṇa iti cet tan na.
kṣatriyādayo hiraṇya-dātāro bahavaḥ santi. tasmān na dhārmiko brāhmaṇa iti. tarhi ko
vā brāhmaṇo nāma. yaḥ kaścid ātmānam advitīyaṁ jāti-guṇa-kriyā-hīnam ṣaḍ-ūrmi-
ṣaḍ-bhāvety-ādi-sarva-doṣa-rahitam satya-jñānānandānanta-svarūpaṁ svayaṁ
nirvikalpaṁ aśeṣa-kalpādhāraṁ aśeṣa-bhūtāntar-yāmitvena vartamānam antar bahiḥ
cākāṣa-vad anusyūtam akhaṇḍānanda-svabhāvaṁ apremeyaṁ anubhavaika-vedyaṁ
aparokṣatayā bhāsamānam kara-talāmalaka-vat sākṣād aparokṣī-kṛtya kṛtārthatayā

kāma-rāgādi-doṣa-rahitaḥ śama-damādi-sampanno bhāva-mātsarya-tṛṣṇāśā-mohādi-rahito dambhāhaṅkāradibhir asaṁsprṣṭa-cetā vartate. evam ukta-lakṣaṇo yaḥ sa eva brāhmaṇa iti śruti-smṛti-purāṇetihāsānām abhiprāyaḥ. anyathā hi brāhmaṇatva-siddhir nāsty eva. sac-cid-ānandaṁ ātmānam advitīyaṁ brahma bhāvayed ātmānam sac-cid-ānandaṁ brahma bhāvayed ity upaniṣat. om āpyāyantv iti śāntiḥ.

“I meditate on that sac-cid-ānanda supreme knowledge, endowed with three features, by which sages attain the wonderful platform of brahminical culture.

“I invoke peace by reciting the mantra beginning, “May You be pleased.”

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Brahman, who possesses unlimited forms, who is known by the Vedānta, whose form is sac-cid-ānanda, and who is the witness of all activities of living intelligence.

“I am now speaking the Vajra-sūcī-śāstra. This knowledge dissipates ignorance, reproaches the ignorant persons, and is the ornament of intelligent persons with vision.

“There are four varṇas—brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra. According to the statements of the Vedas, the brāhmaṇas are the highest class. This is confirmed by the smṛtis as well. Therefore the question now comes: Who is a brāhmaṇa? The living entity, the body, the caste, the knowledge, the activities, or the religionist—of these, which is the brāhmaṇa? If it is proposed that the living entity is the brāhmaṇa, that is not correct. The living entity remains the same in the past, present, or future. Though he receives various types of bodies according to his karma, he remains unchanged. Therefore the living entity is not the brāhmaṇa. Then is the body the brāhmaṇa? No, it is not. The bodies of human beings down to the caṇḍāla are all made of the same five gross elements. Therefore birth and death and religion and irreligion equally effect all bodies, and since there is no law that the brāhmaṇas are white, the kṣatriyas are red, the vaiśyas are yellow, and the śūdras are black, the body is therefore not the brāhmaṇa. Moreover, when the son of a brāhmaṇa burns the body of his dead father, he does not commit the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa. Therefore the body is not the brāhmaṇa. So, then, is caste the brāhmaṇa? No, this is also not the case. Many great sages have been born of other living entities. Ṛṣyaśṅga was born from a deer, Kauśika was born from kuśa grass, Jāmbuka Ṛṣi was born from a jackal, Vālmīki was born from an ant hill, Vyāsadeva was born from a fisherman's daughter, Gautama was born from the back of a rabbit, Vaśiṣṭha was born from Ūrvaśī, and Agastya was born from a pitcher. Apart from these personalities, there are many other wise persons born from other castes who became sages. Therefore caste is not the brāhmaṇa. So, then, is knowledge the brāhmaṇa? No, it is not that either. Because many persons, such as some kṣatriyas, were very learned and knew the Absolute Truth. Therefore knowledge is also not the brāhmaṇa. Then are activities the brāhmaṇa? No, they are not. Because every living entity shares the common nature of having to suffer the matured reactions

of his karma that come to him in the future. By karma, human beings are engaged in further karma. Therefore activities are not the brāhmaṇa. Then is the religionist the brāhmaṇa? No, he is not. Because many kṣatriyas give gold in charity. Therefore the religionist is not the brāhmaṇa. **Then who is the brāhmaṇa?** Anyone who knows the Self as one; devoid of mundane caste, qualities, and activities; devoid of contamination by the six enemies¹ and six waves²; the personification of transcendental knowledge and bliss; beyond duality, yet the basis of all material dualities; the Supersoul of all living entities; all-pervading inside and outside like the vast sky; endowed with uninterrupted bliss; immeasurable; known only through spiritual realization; and directly self-manifesting—one who directly realizes the Self (as one sees an āmlakī fruit in the palm of his hand), who lives always satisfied, devoid of faults like lust and anger, who possesses qualities like peacefulness and self-control, who is devoid of envy, the thirst for material enjoyment, illusion, and other faults, and who is untouched by pride, false ego, and so on—such a person is a brāhmaṇa. This is also the opinion of the śrutis, smṛtis, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures. Otherwise one cannot be a real brāhmaṇa. The Upaniṣads instruct us that the Supreme Soul is sac-cid-ānanda and the Absolute Truth, one without a second.”

It is stated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of the Sāma Veda (4th prapaṭhaka, 4th khaṇḍa) as follows:

1. satyakāmo ha jābālo jābālām mātaram āmantrayām cakre brahmacaryam bhavati vivatsyāmi. kiṁ gotro 'ham asmīti. 2. sā hainam uvāca. nāham etad veda. tāta yad gotras tvam asi. bahv-aham carantī paricārīṇī yauvane tvām alabhe. sā aham etan na veda. yad gotras tvam asi. jābālā tu nāmāham asmi. satyakāmo nāma tvam asi. sa satyakāmo eva jābālo bruvīthā iti. 3. sa ha hāridrumataṁ gautamaṁ etya uvāca. brahmacaryam bhagavati vatsyamāmy upeyām bhagavantam iti. 4. tam hovāca kiṁ gotro nu saumyāsīti. sa hovāca. nāham etad veda bho yad gotro 'ham asmi. apṛccharṁ mātaram. sāmā pratyabravīd bahv-aham carantī paricārīṇī yauvane tvām alabhe. sāham etan na veda yad gotras tvam asi. jābālā tu nāmā aham asmi. satyakāmo nāma tvam asīti. so 'ham satyakāmaḥ jābālo 'smi bho iti. 5. tam hovāca na etad abrahmaṇo vivaktum arhati. samidham saumya āhara upayitvā neṣye. na satyād agā iti.

2.

“Once Satyakāma, the son of Jābālā, asked his mother, ‘I want to live as a brahmacārī. Which dynasty do I belong to?’ In answer, Jābālā told Satyakāma, ‘My son, I do not know which dynasty you belong to; in my youth I served as a maidservant in various places and at that time begot you as my son. Therefore I don't know which gotra you belong to. My name is Jābālā and your name is Satyakāma. Therefore you should say that you are Satyakāma Jābāla.’ Thereafter Satyakāma Jābāla approached Hāridrumata Gautama and said, ‘I wish to live with you as a brahmacārī.’ Gautama inquired, ‘O gentle one, which dynasty do you belong to?’ Satyakāma replied, ‘I do not know which dynasty I belong to. I asked my mother and she said, “I begot you as my son when I was wandering in my youth as a maidservant. Therefore I do not know which dynasty you belong to. My name is Jābālā, and your name is Satyakāma.” So I am

Satyakāma Jābāla.' Gautama then said to him, 'My dear son, no one other than a brāhmaṇa can speak such truth that you have spoken. Therefore you are a brāhmaṇa, and I accept you. O gentle one, go bring wood for sacrifice.' Jābāla replied, 'I am going right now to bring wood.' Gautama said, 'Never divert from the truth.'"

In the Mahābhārata (Śānti-parva, Mokṣa-dharma, Chapter 188) our first evidence is given as follows:

bharadvāja uvāca

jaṅgamānām asaṅkhyeyāḥ sthāvarāṇām ca jātayaḥ
teṣāṃ vividha-varṇānām kuto varṇa-viniścayaḥ

bhṛgu uvāca

na viśeṣo 'sti varṇānām sarva-brāhmam idaṃ jagat
brahmaṇā pūrva-sṛṣṭāṃ hi karmabhir varṇatām gatam
hiṃsānṛta-priyā lubdhāḥ sarva-karmopajivinaḥ
kṛṣṇāḥ śauca-paribhraṣṭās te dvijāḥ sūdratām gatāḥ

“Bharadvāja said: There are innumerable categories of animate and inanimate living entities. How can one determine their various varṇas?”

“Bhṛgu replied: There are no real differences among varṇas. When Brahmā first created the universe, it was inhabited only by brāhmaṇas. Later on, as a result of their activities, people attained the designations of different varṇas.

“When the brāhmaṇas commit violence, speak lies, become greedy, earn their livelihood by any and all activities, lose their purity by sinful activities, then they become degraded into sūdras.”

In the Śānti-parva, Chapter 189, our second evidence is given as follows:

bharadvāja uvāca

brāhmaṇaḥ kena bhavati kṣatriyo vā dvijottama
vaiśyaḥ sūdraś ca viprarṣe tad brūhi vadatām vara

bhṛgu uvāca

jāta-karmādibhir yas tu saṃskāraiḥ saṃskṛtaḥ śuci
vedādhyayana-sampannaḥ ṣaṭsu karmasv avasthitaḥ
śaucācāra-sthitaḥ samyag vighasāśī guru-priyaḥ
nitya-vratī satya-paraḥ sa vai brāhmaṇa ucyate
satya-dānam athādṛoḥ ānṛsamsyam trapā ghṛṇā
tapaś ca dṛśyate yatra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ
sarva-bhakṣa-ratir nityam sarva-dharma-karo 'śuciḥ
tyakta-vedas tv anācāraḥ sa vai sūdra iti smṛtaḥ

śūdre caitad bhavel lakṣyaṁ dvije tac ca na vidyate
na vai śūdro bhavec chūdro brāhmaṇo brāhmaṇo na ca

“Bharadvāja said: O best of the brāhmaṇas, O sage among the twice-born, O best of eloquent speakers, please explain how one becomes a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, or śūdra.”

“Bhṛgu replied: A person who has been purified by the reformatory processes like jāta-karma, or name-giving ceremony, who is clean, devoted to studying the Vedas, expert in the six occupations like worship and teaching worship, situated in pure conduct, eating the remnants of his spiritual master, dear to the spiritual master, regularly engaged in performing vows, and fixed in truthfulness is considered a brāhmaṇa. A human being who is truthful, charitable, shy, not hateful, austere, not vengeful, and not cruel is a brāhmaṇa. One who is attached to eating all kinds of foods and performing all kinds of activities, who is impure, deviant from the principles of Vedic culture, and ill-behaved is known as a śūdra. If the symptoms of a brāhmaṇa are found in a śūdra and if the symptoms of a śūdra are found in a brāhmaṇa, then the śūdra should not be called a śūdra and the brāhmaṇa should not be called a brāhmaṇa.”

Our third evidence is given in the Vana-parva, Chapter 211, as follows:

śūdra-yonau hi jātasya sad-guṇānupatiṣṭhataḥ
vaiśyatvaṁ labhate brahman kṣatriyatvaṁ tathaiva ca
ārjave vartamānasya brāhmaṇyam abhijāyate

“O brāhmaṇa, if a person is born in the family of a śūdra and possesses good qualities, he becomes a vaiśya or a kṣatriya. And if he possesses the quality of simplicity, he is a brāhmaṇa.”

Our fourth evidence is stated in the Vana-parva, Chapter 215:

brāhmaṇo vyādhāya
sāmprataṁ ca mato me 'si brāhmaṇo nātra saṁśayaḥ
brāhmaṇaḥ patanīyeṣu vartamāno vikarmasu
dāmbhiko duṣkṛtaḥ prājñaḥ śūdreṇa sadṛśo bhavet
yas tu śūdro dame satye darṁe ca satatotthitaḥ
taṁ brāhmaṇam ahaṁ manye vṛttena hi bhaved dvijaḥ

“The brāhmaṇa told the pious hunter: In my opinion you are still a brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt about it. After all, a brāhmaṇa who is proud and engaged in various sinful activities that result in his falling down into the degradation of being contaminated by impure karma is equal to a śūdra. And I consider a śūdra who is self-controlled, truthful, and always enthusiastic about executing his religious duties to be a brāhmaṇa. Indeed, the only criteria for being a brāhmaṇa is to possess pure characteristics.”

Our fifth evidence is given in the Śānti-parva, Chapter 318, as follows:

sarve varṇā brāhmaṇā brahmajāś ca
brahmāsyato brāhmaṇāḥ samprasūtāḥ
bāhubhyām vai kṣatriyāḥ samprasūtāḥ
nābhyām vaiśyāḥ pādataś cāpi sūdrāḥ
sarve varṇā nānyathā veditavyāḥ
tat-stho brahmā tasthivāms cāparo yas
tasmai nityam mokṣam āhur narendra

“Persons of all varṇas are brāhmaṇas, because they are all born from Lord Brahmā. The brāhmaṇas were born from the mouth of Brahmā, the kṣatriyas were born from his arms, the vaiśyas were born from his navel, and the sūdras were born from his legs. Do not consider the varṇas in another way. One who is fixed in knowledge is a brāhmaṇa. Therefore, O king, this mokṣa-śāstra was spoken for the benefit of those brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas who have attained knowledge. This is the opinion of ancient scholars.”

In his commentary on these verses Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha has stated: tat-stho jñāna-niṣṭho yaḥ sa eva brahmā brāhmaṇaḥ. aparo kṣatriyādir api tasthau tasthivān.—“Persons who are born from Brahmā and fixed in knowledge are called brāhmaṇas. The other castes like kṣatriyas were also born from Brahmā.”

Our sixth evidence is stated in the Vana-parva, Chapter 180, as follows:

sarpa uvāca
brāhmaṇaḥ ko bhaved rājan vedyam kim ca yudhiṣṭhira
braviḥy ati-matiṁ tvām hi vākyair anumimīmahe
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
satyam dānam kṣamā-śīlam āṅśamsyam tapo ghrṇā
dṛśyante yatra nāgendra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ
sarpa uvāca
śūdreṣv api ca satyam ca dānam akrodha eva ca
āṅśamsyam ahimsā ca ghrṇā caiva yudhiṣṭhira
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
śūdre tu yad bhavel lakṣma dvije tac ca na vidyate
na vai śūdro bhavec chūdro brāhmaṇo na ca brāhmaṇaḥ
yatraital lakṣyate sarpa vṛttam sa brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ
yatraitan na bhavet sarpa tam śūdrām iti nirdiśet

“The snake asked: O Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, who is a brāhmaṇa, and what is the object of knowledge? You are very intelligent, therefore I will be enlightened by your statement.

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied: A person who possesses truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, sobriety, gentleness, austerity, and lack of hatred is called a brāhmaṇa.

“The snake said: Śūdras also possess truthfulness, charity, freedom from anger, nonviolence, noneviousness, and lack of hatred.

“Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira replied to this: If such symptoms are found in a śūdra he should never be called a śūdra, just as a brāhmaṇa is not a brāhmaṇa if he does not possess these qualities.

“O snake, only a person who is endowed with the characteristics of a brāhmaṇa can be called a brāhmaṇa, otherwise he is a śūdra.”

By these six separate evidences quoted from the Mahābhārata, it is clearly understood that one should be accepted without hesitation as a sāvitrya or daikṣya (Vedic or spiritually initiated) brāhmaṇa if he possesses simplicity and the nature of a brāhmaṇa, regardless of his birth. Those who are brāhmaṇas by birth are very orthodox in regards to their eating and sexual relations. But these principles are not obstacles for the sāvitrya brāhmaṇas. We do not find any obstacles in the smooth performance of such persons' spiritual brahminical duties. All śāstric evidence that is unfavorable to the ascertainment of who is a brāhmaṇa on the basis of seminal descent are reasonable and unrefutable by argument. The Dharma-śāstras that support the seminal brāhmaṇas do not contradict Vyāsadeva. The evidence in Śrī Mahābhārata, however, is more important and more respected than that of the Dharma-śāstras. The evidence of the Dharma-śāstras is only theoretical, while the evidence in the Mahābhārata is practice. Those who oppose this principle will simply confirm themselves as evil doers of this world.

Just as the Vedas and the Mahābhārata have confirmed that a person who is not a seminal brāhmaṇa yet possesses the qualities of a brāhmaṇa is accepted as a qualified brāhmaṇa, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which is the crest jewel of all scriptures, the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, and the literature for perfect swanlike men, bravely and neutrally supports this doctrine.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.21-24, 35) it is described:

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
jñānam dayācyutātmatvam satyam ca brahma-lakṣaṇam

“The symptoms of a brāhmaṇa are control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity and penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, mercy, truthfulness, and complete surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

śauryam vīryam dhṛtis tejas tyāgaś cātma-jayaḥ kṣamā
brahmaṇyatā prasādaś ca satyam ca kṣatra-lakṣaṇam

“To be influential in battle, unconquerable, patient, challenging and charitable, to control the bodily necessities, to be forgiving, to be attached to the brahminical nature and to be always jolly and truthful—these are the symptoms of the kṣatriya.

deva-gurv-acyute bhaktis tri-varga-paripoṣaṇam
āstikyam udyamo nityam naipuṇyam vaiśya-lakṣaṇam

“Being always devoted to the demigods, the spiritual master and the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu; endeavoring for advancement in religious principles, economic development and sense gratification [dharma, artha and kāma]; believing in the words of the spiritual master and scripture; and always endeavoring with expertise in earning money—these are the symptoms of the vaiśya.

śūdrasya sannatiḥ śaucam sevā svāminy amāyayā
amantra-yajño hy asteyam satyam go-vipra-rakṣaṇam

“Offering obeisances to the higher sections of society [the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas], being always very clean, being free from duplicity, serving one's master, performing sacrifices without uttering mantras, not stealing, always speaking the truth and giving all protection to the cows and brāhmaṇas—these are the symptoms of the śūdra.”

yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktam puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

“If one shows the symptoms of being a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.”

Although we have collected six different evidences from the Mahābhārata regarding the eligibility for a person born from any of the varṇas to become a qualified brāhmaṇa and we have also seen verses from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam that corroborate this evidence, we will nevertheless quote the conversation between Umā and Maheśvara from the Mahābhārata (Anuśāsana-parva 163.5, 8, 26, 46, 48, 51, and 59) in order to further strengthen this evidence.

Special Evidence

śrī-umā uvāca
etan me saṁśayam deva vada bhūta-pate 'nagha
trayo varṇāḥ prakṛtyeha katham brāhmaṇyam āpnuyuḥ
maheśvara uvāca
sthito brāhmaṇa-dharmeṇa brāhmaṇyam upajīvati
kṣatriyo vātha vaiśyo va brahma-bhūyaḥ sa gacchati

ebhis tu karmabhir devi śubhair ācaritais tathā
 śūdro brāhmaṇatām yāti vaiśyaḥ kṣatriyatām vrajet
 etaiḥ karma-phalaiḥ devi nyūna-jāti-kulodbhavaḥ
 śūdro 'py āgama-sampanno dvijo bhavati saṃskṛtaḥ
 karmabhiḥ śucibhir devi śuddhātmā vijitendriyaḥ
 śūdro 'pi dvija-vat sevyā iti brahmābravīt svayam
 svabhāvaḥ karma ca śubham yatra śūdro 'pi tiṣṭhati
 viśiṣṭaḥ sa dvijāter vai vijñeya iti me matiḥ
 na yonir nāpi saṃskāro na śrutam na ca santatiḥ
 kāraṇāni dvijatvasya vṛttam eva tu kāraṇam
 sarvo 'yam brāhmaṇo loke vṛttena tu vidhīyate
 vṛtte sthitas tu śūdro 'pi brāhmaṇatvam niyacchati
 etat te guhyam ākhyātam yathā śūdro bhaved dvijaḥ
 brāhmaṇo vā cyuto dharmād yathā śūdratvam āpnuyāt

“Umā said: O Lord, O sinless master of the living entities, I have some doubt about how members of the three castes—kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra—will attain through their own nature the platform of brāhmaṇas.

“Maheśvara replied: If kṣatriyas or vaiśyas become situated in the behavior of brāhmaṇas and spend their lives in the occupations of brāhmaṇas, then such persons can attain the position of brāhmaṇas.

“O goddess, by the same procedure a śūdra can become a brāhmaṇa and a vaiśya can become a kṣatriya.

“By the results of these activities and by becoming an adherent of the āgama scriptures, or in other words, by taking initiation through the pañcarātrika system, then a low-born śūdra also becomes a brāhmaṇa.

“O goddess, Lord Brahmā has personally declared that by performing pure activities, a self-controlled śūdra is fit to be served just like a brāhmaṇa.

“In my opinion, if pious activities and good character are found in a śūdra, it should be understood that he is better than a brāhmaṇa.

“Birth, purificatory processes, study of the Vedas, and good birth are not the criterion for being a brāhmaṇa. The only criterion is one's behavior.

“A person is born as a brāhmaṇa in this world simply as a result of his nature. A śūdra situated in the profession of a brāhmaṇa also becomes a brāhmaṇa.

“I have thus explained to you the secret of how a person who is born as a śūdra becomes a brāhmaṇa and how by deviating from his occupational duties a person born in the family of a brāhmaṇa becomes a śūdra.”

In the Brahma-sūtras (1.3.37) it is stated: tad-abhāva-nirdhāraṇe ca pravṛtteḥ—
“Whether a person belongs to a varṇa other than that of his birth may be ascertained by considering his qualities.”

Pūrṇaprajña Ānandatīrtha (Śrī Madhvācārya) has written in his commentary on the story of Jābāla in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad as follows:

nāham etad veda bho yad gotro 'ham asmīti satya-vacanena satyakāmasya
śūdratvābhāva-nirdhāraṇe hāridrumatasya na etad abrahmaṇo vivaktum arhatīti tat-
samskāre pravṛtteś ca.

“By Satyakāma's truthful statement, ‘I do not know, sir, which dynasty I belong to,’ Hāridrumata ascertained that he was not a śūdra and therefore said, ‘A non-brāhmaṇa cannot speak like this.’ He then proceeded to perform the purificatory rituals for him.” Although there was no evidence that Satyakāma Jābāla was a brāhmaṇa by birth, Gautama Ṛṣi accepted him as a brāhmaṇa upon hearing his truthful words.

In his commentary on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Madhvācārya quotes the following verse from the Sāma-samhitā:

ārjavam brāhmaṇe sāksāt śūdro 'nārjava-lakṣaṇaḥ
gautamas tv iti vijñāya satyakāmam upānayat

“A brāhmaṇa possesses the quality of simplicity, and a śūdra possesses the quality of crookedness. Knowing this fact, Gautama awarded sacred thread initiation to Satyakāma and made him a first-class brāhmaṇa.”

Furthermore, Tribandhana was born in the family of the kṣatriya king Māndhātā. Although his son, Triśaṅku, was born as a kṣatriya, he became a caṇḍāla. This is confirmed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.7.5) as follows:

tasya satyavrataḥ putras triśaṅkur iti viśrutaḥ
prāptaś caṇḍālatām śāpād guroḥ kauśika-tejasā

“The son of Tribandhana was Satyavrata, who is celebrated by the name Triśaṅku. Because he kidnapped the daughter of a brāhmaṇa when she was being married, his father cursed him to become a caṇḍāla, lower than a śūdra.”

In the narration regarding Pauṛāyaṇa in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (4th prapāṭhaka, 2nd khaṇḍa) it is stated that although he was not born in the family of a śūdra, he became a śūdra.

In the Brahma-sūtras (1.3.34) it is stated:

śug asya tad-anādara-śravaṇāt tad-ādravaṇāt sūcyate hi.

“When he [Jānaśruti Mahārāja] heard words of condemnation against himself, he became overwhelmed with sorrow and immediately went to take revenge.”

In the Pūrṇaprajña school of philosophy, Śrī Madhvācārya has written in his commentary on this sūtra of Vedānta:

nāsau pautrāyaṇaḥ śūdraḥ. śucād dravaṇam eva hi śūdratvam. kambara eṇam etat santam ity-anādara-śravaṇāt. sahasam jihāna eva kṣattāram uvāceti sūcyate hi.

“King Pautrāyaṇa was not actually a śūdra. One is a śūdra if he is overly affected by lamentation. When Pautrāyaṇa heard the disrespectful words, ‘This person is a spotted deer,’ he immediately wanted to retaliate and reply accordingly to the chariot driver. This implies that he was like a śūdra.”

In his commentary on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Śrī Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya has written:

śucā dravaṇāc chūdraḥ. rājā paturāyaṇaḥ śokāc chūdreti muninoditaḥ. prāṇa-vidyām avāpyāsmāt param dharmam avāptavān iti pādme.

“One who is overwhelmed by lamentation is a śūdra. In the Padma Purāṇa it is described that although Pautrāyaṇa Mahārāja was a kṣatriya, he became overwhelmed with lamentation and thus was declared a śūdra by Raikva Muni. Later the king attained the goal of life by learning the confidential meditation on prāṇa from Raikva Muni.”

Again [from the Brahma-sūtras (1.3.35)] it is stated:

kṣatriyatvāvagateś cottaratra caitrarathena liṅgāt.

“As previously understood from the concluding words of this incident and by using the word caitraratha, it is understood that Janaśruti was a kṣatriya.”

In his commentary on this sūtra, Śrī Madhvācārya has written:

ayaṁ aśvatarī-ratha iti citraratha-sambandhitvena liṅgena pautrāyaṇasya kṣatriyatvāvagateś ca. rathas tv aśvatarī-yuktaś catra ity abhidhiyata iti brāhṁe. yatra vedo rathas tatra na vedo yatra no ratha iti ca brahma-vaivarte.

“It is stated in the Brahma Purāṇa that because Mahārāja Pautrayana had a mule-driven chariot it is understood he was a kṣatriya. The chariot was called a citraratha because it was pulled by mules. According to the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa wherever the Vedas are present a chariot is also, and wherever the Vedas are not present, a

chariot will not be present.” Because the citraratha was present, he is considered a kṣatriya. From all these Vedic narrations it is understood that a person's varṇa is known by his symptoms.

Ṙṣadhra, the son of Manu, was the only kṣatriya to become a śūdra because of unknowingly killing a cow. As stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.2.9):

na kṣatra-bandhuḥ śūdras tvam karmaṇā bhavitāmunā
evam śaptas tu guruṇā pratyagrhnāt kṛtāñjaliḥ

“In your next life you shall not be able to become a kṣatriya. Instead, you shall take birth as a śūdra because of killing the cow.' When the hero Ṙṣadhra was thus cursed by his spiritual master, he accepted the curse with folded hands.”

Diṣṭa was a son of Manu. The son of the kṣatriya Diṣṭa was Nābhāga, who became a vaiśya. As stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.2.23):

nābhāgo diṣṭa-putro 'nyaḥ karmaṇā vaiśyatām gataḥ

“Diṣṭa had a son by the name Nābhāga. This Nābhāga, who was different from the Nābhāga described later, became a vaiśya by occupational duty.”

Moreover, his descendants gradually became kṣatriyas. As described in the Hari-varṇa (10.30):

nābhāgoriṣṭa-putrās ca kṣatriyā vaiśyatām gatāḥ

“Nābhāga and the sons of Ariṣṭa were kṣatriyas but they became vaiśyas.”

One's varṇa is currently ascertained only by seminal consideration. But the ancient and rational system approved of by scriptures is to ascertain one's varṇa by considering one's symptoms. This is not the new imagination of selfish persons. In his commentary on the Mahābhārata (Vana-parva 180.25, 26), Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha clearly says:

śūdra-lakṣma kāmādikam na brāhmaṇe 'sti. nāpi brāhmaṇa-lakṣma śamādikam śūdre 'sti. śūdro 'pi śamādy-upeto brāhmaṇa eva. brāhmaṇo 'pi kāmādy-upetaḥ śūdra eva.

“The symptoms of a śūdra, such as lust, are not present in a brāhmaṇa. Similarly the symptoms of a brāhmaṇa, such as peacefulness, are not present in a śūdra. A śūdra who possesses the quality of peacefulness is certainly a brāhmaṇa, and a brāhmaṇa who possesses the quality of lust is certainly a śūdra.”

In his commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.35), Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has clarified the above statement as follows:

śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādi-vyavahāro mukhyo na jāti-mātrād ity āha yasyeti—yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaram tenaiva lakṣaṇa-nimitenaiva varṇena vinirdiśet na tu jāti-nimitenety arthaḥ

“The brāhmaṇas' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as brāhmaṇas, then such persons should be considered brāhmaṇas. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth.”

Many persons who were not born in brāhmaṇa families have become brāhmaṇas by proper initiation. Innumerable incidents illustrating this fact are known to those who read Indian history. After such persons became qualified and initiated brāhmaṇas, their descendants became known as brāhmaṇas by virtue of their birth. Today the whole of India is filled with such descendants of brāhmaṇas. Even though one became a qualified and properly initiated brāhmaṇa, he was still considered a brāhmaṇa simply on the basis of his birth. But since nowadays the social system is deformed, such qualified, initiated, seminal brāhmaṇas are rarely found.

We heard that in Vārāṇasī there was a learned, unrivaled sannyāsī whose name was respected by educated people throughout India. He bestowed brāhmaṇa initiation on one of his disciples in whom he saw brahminical qualities. When speaking the name of his gurudeva, this disciple would announce that he was awarded the purified status of a brāhmaṇa by the power of the sacred thread initiation.

We are now presenting an incomplete list of intellectuals who were born in families lower than brāhmaṇa but who were considered brāhmaṇas on the strength of their qualifications and thus conferred the status of brāhmaṇa on their descendants.

Gādhi was the son of Kuśika of the Candra dynasty. He was the king of Kānyakubja, and his son, Viśvāmitra, although born a kṣatriya, became a brāhmaṇa on the strength of his austerities.

In the Mahābhārata (Ādi-parva, Chapter 174) it is stated:

kṣatriyo 'haṁ bhavān vipras tapaḥ-svādhyāya-sādhanāḥ
sva-dharmam na prahāsyāmi neśyāmi ca balena gām
dhig balaṁ kṣatriya-balaṁ brahma-tejo-balaṁ balaṁ
balābalaṁ viniścitya tapa eva param balaṁ
tatāpa sarvān dīptaujāḥ brāhmaṇatvam avāptavān

“Viśvāmitra said to Vaśiṣṭha: You are a brāhmaṇa, endowed with the qualities of austerity and Vedic study. I am a kṣatriya, so on the basis of my nature I will forcibly take this cow, Nandinī.

“Later, when Viśvāmitra was defeated, he declared that the strength of the kṣatriyas was inferior to the strength of the brāhmaṇas. He thus decided that the performance of austerities endowed one with superior strength.

“The greatly effulgent Viśvāmitra thus performed all kinds of austerities and attained the position of a brāhmaṇa.”

In the Mahābhārata (Anuśāsana-parva, Chapter 30) there is the following description of how the kṣatriya-born Mahārāja Vītahavya became a brāhmaṇa:

evam vipratvam agamad	vītahavyo narādhipaḥ
bhṛgoḥ prasādād rājendra	kṣatriyaḥ kṣatriyaṣabha
tasya gr̥tsamadaḥ putro	rūpeṇendra ivāparaḥ
sa brahmacārī viprarṣiḥ	śrīmān gr̥tsamado 'bhavat
putro gr̥tsamadasyāpi	sucetā abhavad dvija
varcāḥ (sutejasaḥ) sucetasāḥ	putro vihavyas tasya cātmajaḥ
vihavyasya tu putras tu	vitatyas tasya cātmajaḥ
vitatyasya sutaḥ satyaḥ	santaḥ satyasya cātmajaḥ
śravās tasya sutaś carṣiḥ	śravasaś cābhavat tamaḥ
tamasaś ca prakāśo 'bhūt	tanayo dvija-sattamaḥ
prakāśasya ca vāgindro	babhūva jayatām varaḥ
tasyātmajaś ca pramitir	veda-vedāṅga-pāragaḥ
ghṛtācyām tasya putras tu	ruru-ṇāmodapadyata
pramadvarāyān tu ruroḥ	putraḥ samudapadyata
śunako nāma viprarṣir	yasya putro 'tha śaunakaḥ

“This is how Mahārāja Vītahavya attained the position of a brāhmaṇa: O best of the kṣatriya kings, although Vītahavya was a kṣatriya by birth, by the mercy of Bhṛgu he became a brāhmaṇa. His son Gr̥tsamada was equal in beauty to Indra. He became a brahmacārī and a brāhmaṇa sage. Sucetā, the son of Gr̥tsamada, also became a brāhmaṇa. The son of Sucetā was Varcā, whose son was Vihavya. The son of Vihavya was Vitatya, and his son was Satya. The son of Satya was Santa, whose son was Ṛṣiśravā. The son of Ṛṣiśravā was Tama, and his son, Prakāśa, was the best of the brāhmaṇas. The son of Prakāśa was Vāgindra, whose son, Pramiti, was learned in the Vedas and Vedic supplements. Pramiti begot Ruru in the womb of Ghṛtācī. In his wife, Pramadvārā, Ruru begot a son named Śunaka, who became a viprarṣi. The son of Śunaka was Śaunaka Ṛṣi.” This is the dynasty of Gr̥tsamada. The dynasty of Vītahavya is found in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.13.1, 12-27) as follows:

nimir ikṣvāku-tanayo	vasiṣṭham avṛtartvijam
deham mamanthuḥ sma nimeḥ	kumāraḥ samajāyata
janmanā janakaḥ so 'bhūd	vaidehas tu videha-jaḥ
tasmād udāvasus tasya	putro 'bhūn nandivardhanaḥ
tataḥ suketus tasyāpi	devarāto mahī-pate
tasmād bṛhadrathas tasya	mahāvīryaḥ sudhṛt-pitā

sudhṛter dhr̥ṣṭaketu vai	haryaśvo 'tha marus tataḥ
maroḥ pratīpakas tasmāj	jātaḥ kṛtaratho yataḥ
devamīdhas tasya putro	viśruto 'tha mahādhṛtiḥ
kṛtirātas tatas tasmān	mahāromā ca tat-sutaḥ
svaṇaromā sutas tasya	hrasvaromā vyajāyata
tataḥ śīradhvajo jajñe	yajñārtham karṣato mahīm
kuśadhvajasya bhrātā	tato dharmadhvajo nṛpaḥ
dharmadhvajasya dvau putrau	kṛtadhvaja-mitadhvajau
kṛtadhvajāt keśidhvajaḥ	khāṇḍikyas tu mitadhvajāt
kṛtadhvaja-suto rājann	ātma-vidyā-viśāradaḥ
bhānumāns tasya putro 'bhūc	chatadyumnas tu tat-sutaḥ
śucis tu tanayas tasmāt	sanadvājaḥ suto 'bhavat
ūrjaketuḥ sanadvājād	ajo 'tha purujit sutaḥ
ariṣṭanemis tasyāpi	śrutāyus tat supārśvakaḥ
tataś citraratho yasya	kṣemādhir mithilādhipaḥ
tasmāt samarathas tasya	sutaḥ satyarathas tataḥ
āsīd upagurus tasmād	upagupto 'gni-sambhavaḥ
vasvananto 'tha tat-putro	yuyudho yat subhāṣaṇaḥ
śrutas tato jayas tasmād	vijayo 'smād ṛtaḥ sutaḥ
śunakas tat-suto jajñe	vītahavyo dhṛtis tataḥ
bahulāśvo dhṛtes tasya	kṛtir asya mahāvaśī
ete vai maithilā rājann	ātma-vidyā-viśāradaḥ
yogeśvara-prasādena	dvandvair muktā gṛheṣv api

The family descent of Vītahavya:

- (1) Brahmā, (2) Manu, (3) Ikṣvāku, (4) Nimi, (5) Janaka, (6) Udāvasu, (7) Nandivardhana, (8) Suketu, (9) Devarāta, (10) Bṛhadratha, (11) Mahāvīrya, (12) Sudhṛti, (13) Dhṛṣṭaketu, (14) Haryaśva, (15) Maru, (16) Pratīpa, (17) Kṛtaratha, (18) Devamīdha, (19) Viśruta, (20) Mahādhṛti, (21) Kṛtirāta, (22) Mahāromā, (23) Svaṇaromā, (24) Hrasvaromā, (25) Śīradhvaja, (26) Kṛśadhvaja, (27) Dharmadhvaja, (28) Kṛtadhvaja, (29) Keśidhvaja, (30) Bhānumān, (31) Śatadyumna, (32) Śuci, (33) Sanadvāja, (34) Ūrjaketu, (35) Purujit, (36) Ariṣṭanemi, (37) Śrutāyu, (38) Supārśva, (39) Citraratha, (40) Kṣemādhi, (41) Samaratha, (42) Satyaratha, (43) Upaguru, (44) Upagupta, (45) Vasvananta, (46) Yuyurvān, (47) Subhāṣaṇa, (48) Śruta, (49) Jaya, (50) Vijaya, (51) Ṛta, (52) Śunaka, (53) Vītahavya, (54) Dhṛti, (55) Bahulāśva, and (56) Kṛti. “All these kings of the dynasty of Mithilā were completely in knowledge of their spiritual identity. Thus, by the grace of the supreme master of yoga, even though staying at home, they were liberated from the duality of material existence.”

(2)

This passage of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam does not mention the Gṛtsamada brāhmaṇa dynasty coming from Vītahavya, as described in the Mahābhārata. Vītahavya is also addressed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as Śaunaka Ṛṣi.

The Kāruṣa kṣatriyas descended from Karuṣa, the son of Manu, and the Dhārṣṭa kṣatriyas, who descended from Dhṛṣṭa, the brother of Karuṣa, attained the position of brāhmaṇas. This is confirmed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.2.16-17) as follows:

karūṣān mānavād āsan kārūṣāḥ kṣatra-jātayaḥ
dhṛṣṭād dhārṣṭam abhūt kṣatram brahma-bhūyam gataṁ kṣitau

“From Karūṣa, another son of Manu, came the Kārūṣa dynasty, a family of kṣatriyas. From the son of Manu named Dhṛṣṭa came a kṣatriya caste called Dhārṣṭa, whose members achieved the position of brāhmaṇas in this world.” In his commentary on this verse, Śrīdhara Svāmī has written that the word brahma-bhūyam means “the position of brāhmaṇas.”

Devadatta was the tenth descendant from Nariṣyanta, the son of Manu. The son of the kṣatriya Devadatta was Agniveśyāyana, who became a maharṣi-brāhmaṇa, thus inaugurating a dynasty of brāhmaṇas.

As stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.2.19-22):

citraseno nariṣyantād ṛkṣas tasya suto 'bhavat
tasya mīdhvāns tataḥ pūrṇa indrasenas tu tat-sutaḥ
vītihotras tv indrasenāt tasya satyaśravā abhūt
uruśravāḥ sutas tasya devadattas tato 'bhavat
tato 'gniveśyo bhagavān agniḥ svayam abhūt sutaḥ
kānīna iti vikhyāto jātūkarṇyo mahān ṛṣiḥ
tato brahma-kulam jātam āgniveśyāyanam nṛpa

- (1) Nariṣyanta, (2) Citrasena, (3) Ṛkṣa, (4) Mīdhvān, (5) Pūrṇa, (6) Indrasena, (7) Vītihotra, (8) Satyaśravā, (9) Uruśravā, (10) Devadatta, and (11) Agniveśya. The fire-god Agni himself appeared as Agniveśya, the son of Devadatta. This son, who was a celebrated saint, was well known as Kānīna and Jātūkarṇya. O King, from Agniveśya came a brahminical dynasty known as Āgniveśyāyana.”

(2)

Jahnu Muni took birth as the son of Hotra of the Candra dynasty. His dynasty is listed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.15.1-4) as follows:

ailasya corvaśī-garbhāt ṣaḍ āsann ātmajā nṛpa
āyuḥ śrutāyuḥ satyāyū rayo 'tha vijayo jayaḥ
śrutāyor vasumān putraḥ satyāyoś ca śrutañjayaḥ
rayasya suta ekaś ca jayasya tanayo 'mitaḥ
bhīmas tu vijayasyātha kāñcano hotrakas tataḥ
tasya jahnuḥ suto gaṅgām gaṅdūṣī-kṛtya yo 'pibat
jahnos tu purus tasyātha balākaś cātmajo 'jakaḥ
tataḥ kuśaḥ kuśasyāpi kuśāmbus tanayo vasuḥ

kuśanābhaś ca catvāro gādhir āsīt kuśāmbujah

(1) Candra, (2) Budha, (3) Purūravā, (4) Āyu, Śrutāyu, Satyāyu, Raya, Vijaya and Jaya, (5) Vijaya's son Bhīma, (6) Kāñcana, (7) Hotraka, (8) Jahnu, (9) Puru, (10) Balāka, (11) Ajaka, (12) Kuśa, (13) Kuśāmbu, or Kauśika, and (14) Gādhi.

(2)

Kṣatrapṛddha was the son of Āyurāja, of the Candra dynasty. The son of Āyurāja was Suhotra, whose son was Gṛtsamada. From Gṛtsamada came Śunaka, and from him came Śaunaka, the great saint, the best of those conversant with the Ṛg Veda. This is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.17.3) as follows:

kāśyaḥ kuśo gṛtsamada iti gṛtsamadād abhūt
śunakaḥ śaunako yasya bahvṛca-pravarō munih

“[Suhotra had three sons, named] Kāśya, Kuśa and Gṛtsamada. From Gṛtsamada came Śunaka, and from him came Śaunaka, the great saint, the best of those conversant with the Ṛg Veda.” In the dynasty of Puru, the youngest son of Mahārāja Yayati of the Candra dynasty, Kanva Ṛṣi was born. His son was named Medhātithi, from whom the Praskanna brāhmaṇa dynasty came. This is confirmed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.20.1-7) as follows:

pūror vaṁśam pravakṣyāmi yatra jāto 'si bhārata
yatra rājarṣayo vaṁśyā brahma-vaṁśyāś ca jajñire
janamejayo hy abhūt pūroḥ pracinvāms tat-sutas tataḥ
pravīro 'tha manusyur vai tasmāc cārupado 'bhavat
tasya sudyur abhūt putras tasmād bahugavas tataḥ
saṁyātis tasyāhaṁyātī raudrāśvas tat-sutaḥ smṛtaḥ
ṛteyus tasya kakṣeyuḥ sthaṇḍileyuḥ kṛteyukaḥ
jaleyuḥ sannateyuś ca dharma-satya-vrateyavaḥ
daśaite 'psarasaḥ putrā vaneyuś cāvamaḥ smṛtaḥ
ghṛtācyām indriyāṇīva mukhyasya jagad-ātmanaḥ
ṛteyo rantināvo 'bhūt trayas tasyātmaṁ nṛpa
sumatir dhruvo 'pratirathaḥ kaṇvo 'pratirathātmaṁ
tasya medhātithis tasmāt praskannādyā dvijātayaḥ
putro 'bhūt sumate rebhir duṣmantas tat-suto mataḥ

“O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, descendant of Mahārāja Bharata, I shall now describe the dynasty of Pūru, in which you were born, in which many saintly kings appeared, and from which many dynasties of brāhmaṇas began: (1) Pūru, (2) Janamejaya, (3) Pracinvān, (4) Pravīra, (5) Manusyu, (6) Cārupāda, (7) Sudyu, (8) Bahugava, (9) Saṁyāti, (10) Ahāmyāti, (11) Raudrāśva, (12) Ṛteyu, (13) Rantināva, (14) Apratiratha, (15) Kaṇva, (16) Medhātithi, and (17) Praskanna and other brāhmaṇas. The son of Rantināva named Sumati had a son named Rebhi. Mahārāja Duṣmanta is well known as the son of Rebhi.”

Mahārāja Bharata, the son of Duṣmanta, had no descendants, therefore the Maruts gave Bharadvāja to Bharata as his adopted son. Bharadvāja was born as the fallen son of Bṛhaspati in the womb of Mamatā, the wife of Utathya. Thereafter, as the adopted son of Bharata, Bharadvāja became known as Vitanva. The son of Bharadvāja was Manyu, whose sons were Bṛhatkṣatra, Jaya, Mahāvīrya, Nara, and Garga. The son of Nara was Saṅkṛti, whose sons were Guru and Rantideva. The son of Garga was Śini, who had a son named Gārgya. Here is another example of a kṣatriya giving birth to brāhmaṇas. This is described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (9.21.19-21, 30, 31, 33) as follows:

gargāc chinis tato gārgyaḥ kṣatrād brahma hy avartata
duritakṣayo mahāvīryāt tasya trayyāruṇiḥ kaviḥ
puṣkarāruṇir ity atra ye brāhmaṇa-gatiṃ gatāḥ
bṛhatkṣatrasya putro 'bhūd dhastī yad-dhastināpuram
ajamīdho dvimīdhaś ca purumīdhaś ca hastinaḥ
ajamīdhasya vaṃśyāḥ syuḥ priyamedhādayo dvijāḥ
nalinyām ajamīdhasya nīlaḥ śāntis tu tat-sutaḥ
śānteḥ suśāntis tat-putraḥ purujo 'rkas tato 'bhavat
bharmyāśvas tanayas tasya pañcāsan mudgalādayaḥ
mudgalād brahma-nirvṛttam gotram maudgalya-samjñitam

“From Garga came a son named Śini, and his son was Gārgya. Although Gārgya was a kṣatriya, there came from him a generation of brahmaṇas. From Mahāvīrya came a son named Duritakṣaya, whose sons were Trayyāruṇi, Kavi and Puṣkarāruṇi. Although these sons of Duritakṣaya took birth in a dynasty of kṣatriyas, they too attained the position of brāhmaṇas. Bṛhatkṣatra had a son named Hastī, who established the city of Hastināpura [now New Delhi]. From King Hastī came three sons, named Ajamīdha, Dvimīdha and Purumīdha. The descendants of Ajamīdha, headed by Priyamedha, all achieved the position of brāhmaṇas.

“Ajamīdha had a son named Nīla by his wife known as Nalinī, and the son of Nīla was Śānti. The son of Śānti was Suśānti, the son of Suśānti was Puruja, and the son of Puruja was Arka. From Arka came Bharmyāśva, and from Bharmyāśva came five sons, headed by Mudgala. From Mudgala came a dynasty of brāhmaṇas known as Maudgalya.”

Mahārāja Nabhi, the son of Priyavrata, had a son named Rṣabha. Rṣabhadeva begot one hundred sons in the womb of His wife, who was given to Him by the King of heaven, Indra. Bharata and his next nine younger brothers became the kings of the nine varṣas. Nine sons headed by Kavi and Havi, known as the Nava-yogendras, became Vaiṣṇavas. The other eighty-one sons became brāhmaṇas.

This is confirmed in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.4.13) as follows:

yaviyāmsa ekāśītir jāyanteyāḥ pitur ādeśa-karā mahā-śālinā mahā-śrotriyā yajña-śīlāḥ
karma-viśuddhā brāhmaṇā babhūvuḥ.

“In addition to these nineteen sons mentioned above, there were eighty-one younger ones, all born of Ṛṣabhadeva and Jayantī. According to the order of their father, they became well cultured, well behaved, very pure in their activities and expert in Vedic knowledge and the performance of Vedic rituals. Thus they all became perfectly qualified brāhmaṇas.”

It is explained in the Hari-vaṁśa (Hari-vaṁśa-parva 11.9):

nābhāgādiṣṭa-putrau dvau vaiśyau brāhmaṇatām gatau.

“Nabhaga and the son of Dista, although vaiśyas, both became brāhmaṇas.”

According to their individual natures, among the sons of Gṛtsamada there were brāhmaṇas headed by Śaunaka as well as kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and śūdras. This is stated in the following words from the Hari-vaṁśa (Hari-vaṁśa-parva 29.7-8):

putro gṛtsamadasyāpi śunako yasya śaunakāḥ
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyāś caiva vaiśyāḥ śūdrās tathaiva ca

In his commentary on this verse, Nīlakaṇṭha says: gṛtsamada-santatau śunakādayo brāhmaṇā anye kṣatriyādayaś ca śūdrāntāḥ putrā jātāḥ—“Among the offspring of Gṛtsamada, some, headed by Śunaka, were brāhmaṇas, some were kṣatriyas, some were vaiśyas, and some were śūdras.”

Apart from his five kṣatriya sons, Bali Mahārāja also had sons who founded brāhmaṇa dynasties. This is explained in the Hari-vaṁśa (Hari-vaṁśa-parva 31.33-35) as follows:

mahā-yogī sa tu balir abhūta nrpatiḥ purā
putrān utpādayām āsa pañca vaṁśa-karān bhuvi
aṅgaḥ prathamato jajñe vaṅgaḥ suhmas tathaiva ca
puṅdraḥ kaliṅgaś ca tathā bāleyām kṣatram ucyate
bāleyā brāhmaṇāś caiva tasya vaṁśa-karā bhuvi

“Bali Mahārāja was a great yogi who became a king long ago. He begot five sons in order to increase the population of the earth.

“The first of his five sons was named Aṅga, the second was Vaṅga, the third Suhma, the fourth Puṅdra, and the fifth was Kaliṅga. These sons were known as Bāleya kṣatriyas.

“In the dynasty of Bali there were also Bāleya brāhmaṇas, who increased their descendants on the earth.”

The sons of the great sage Kaśyapa were divided into various varṇas according to their nature. One can find ample evidence of this in the historical scriptures. It is not a fact that only one born in the family of a brāhmaṇa is a brāhmaṇa and those qualified as brāhmaṇas by initiation and behavior are not brāhmaṇas. This has been adequately confirmed by the above-quoted evidence. Even if the truth remains covered due to insufficient study of the śāstras and intense selfishness, it will certainly become apparent in due course of time.

In this age of Kali there is often no respect for the truth among persons who are blinded by selfishness. Rather, disqualified persons are rewarded. Anyway, if after seeing all this evidence someone's selfishness is even slightly reduced, it will yield some kind of auspicious result in the world. By its own concocted arguments, an unqualified community can never put real obstacles on the path of qualified brāhmaṇas.

The Brahma-sūtra's (1.3.28) statement: ata eva ca nityatvam—“Therefore it is also eternal,” has been explained as proving that the statements of the Vedas are eternal and the disciplic succession of brāhmaṇas, who represent the demigods, is also eternal. Although brāhmaṇas are “visible demigods,” they are nevertheless eternal servants of Lord Viṣṇu. The brāhmaṇas' eternal source of knowledge is the Vedas. By studying the Vedas, they realize that they are eternal and become situated in the eternal devotional service of the Lord. Many persons become brāhmaṇa even though they were not born in families of brāhmaṇas engaged in studying the Vedas. In order to confirm this statement, Śrīla Jayatīrthapāda, in the sixth generation from Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya, has cited vṛścika-tāṇḍulī-nyāya, the logic of “the scorpion and the rice,” in his Śrūta-prakāśikā commentary as follows: brāhmaṇād eva brāhmaṇa iti niyamasya kvacid anyathātvopapatte vṛścika-tāṇḍulīyakādi-vad iti.

When the seed of one scorpion is placed in the womb of another scorpion, a scorpion is born—this is the general law of nature. Yet sometimes it is seen that scorpions or other insects are born from rice. Although in this case the placement of seed is not seen, the inconceivable potency of the Absolute Truth, which makes the impossible possible, brings about the scorpions' appearance. Great sages like Vaśiṣṭha, Agastya, Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, and Vyāsadeva were not brāhmaṇas by ordinary standards. Later, however, their descendants, being fully conversant with transcendental knowledge, became recognised as self-realized brāhmaṇa Vaiṣṇavas.

The various scriptural references describing the qualifications of brāhmaṇas and showing respect for brāhmaṇas refer to both seminal brāhmaṇas and those who have become brāhmaṇas by initiation. These references from scriptures on karma, jñāna, and bhakti do not refer only to seminal brāhmaṇas. In no case are brāhmaṇas by initiation disregarded. Although in the opinion of some scriptures there is no possibility of becoming an initiated brāhmaṇa unless one is a seminal brāhmaṇa, this restriction was imposed only because of narrow-minded social traditions. When this narrow-mindedness is given up by deep research and higher education, then the entire

world will be illuminated by the glories of the eternal Āryan culture. Then we will understand how futile is the attempt of frogs to fill the universe with the sound of their croaking.

Hari-jana-kāṇḍa

Section Concerning the Devotees of Hari

We have already discussed the conceptions of worldly people in the previous chapter. In this present chapter we will discuss the devotees of Lord Hari. In ancient times the Hari-janas and the Prakṛti-janas had a debate over Ajāmila. Due to their nature, Prakṛti-janas tend to consider the Hari-janas to be similar to themselves. In this incident, the Prakṛti-janas finally understood from their master that the Hari-janas are not subjected to the fruits of karma. We are herein quoting some essential points from this narration of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (6.3.25-28) by which we can realize the difference between the Prakṛti-janas and Hari-janas.

prāyeṇa veda tad idaṁ na mahājano 'yaṁ
devyā vimohita-matir bata māyayālam
trayyāṁ jaḍi-kṛta-matir madhu-puṣpitāyāṁ
vaitānike mahati karmaṇi yujyamānaḥ

“Because they are bewildered by the illusory energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Yājñavalkya and Jaimini and other compilers of the religious scriptures cannot know the secret, confidential religious system of the twelve mahājanas [or Hari-janas]. They cannot understand the transcendental value of performing devotional service or chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Because their minds are attracted to the ritualistic ceremonies mentioned in the Vedas—especially the Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda and Ṛg Veda—their intelligence has become dull. Thus they are busy collecting the ingredients for ritualistic ceremonies that yield only temporary benefits, such as elevation to Svargaloka for material happiness. They are not attracted to the saṅkīrtana movement; instead, they are interested in dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa.

evaṁ vimṛśya sudhiyo bhagavaty anante
sarvātmanā vidadhate khalu bhāva-yogam
te me na daṇḍam arhanty atha yady amiṣāṁ
syāt pātakam tad api hanty urugāya-vādaḥ

“Considering all these points, therefore, intelligent men decide to solve all problems by adopting the devotional service of chanting the holy name of the Lord, who is situated in everyone's heart and who is a mine of all auspicious qualities. Such persons

are not within my jurisdiction for punishment. Generally they never commit sinful activities, but even if by mistake or because of bewilderment or illusion they sometimes commit sinful acts, they are protected from sinful reactions because they always chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

te deva-siddha-parigīta-pavitra-gāthā
ye sādhaḥ samadṛśo bhagavat-prapannāḥ
tān nopasīdata harer gadayābhiguptān
naiṣāṁ vyaṁ na ca vyaḥ prabhavāma daṇḍe

“My dear servants, please do not approach such devotees, for they have fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are equal to everyone, and their narrations are sung by the demigods and the inhabitants of Siddhaloka. Please do not even go near them. They are always protected by the club of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore Lord Brahmā and I and even the time factor are not competent to chastise them.

tān ānayadhvam asato vimukhān mukunda-
pādāravinda-makaranda-rasād ajasram
niṣkiñcanaiḥ paramahansa-kulair asaṅgair
juṣṭād grhe niraya-vartmani baddha-trṣṇān

“Paramahansas are exalted persons who have no taste for material enjoyment and who drink the honey of the Lord's lotus feet. My dear servants, bring to me for punishment only persons who are averse to the taste of that honey, who do not associate with paramahansas and who are attached to family life and worldly enjoyment, which form the path to hell.”

In Śrī Nṛsimha Purāṇa it is stated:

aham amara-gaṇārcitena dhātrā
yama iti loka-hitāhite niyuktaḥ
hari-guru-vimukhān praśāsmi martyān
hari-caraṇa-praṇatān namas karomi

“Yamarāja said: `I have been appointed by Lord Brahmā, who is worshiped by the demigods, to judge people's pious and impious activities. I severely punish the worldly fruitive actors who are averse to the spiritual master and Lord Hari, and I offer my obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas who have surrendered themselves at the lotus feet of Lord Hari.’”

Śrīmad Prabhu Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted the following verse from the Skanda Purāṇa, as found in the Amṛta-sāra:

na brahmā na śivāgnīndrā nāhaṁ nānye divaukasāḥ

śaktās tu nigrahaṁ kartuṁ vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām

“Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Agni, Indra, myself (Yamarāja), and other demigods are unable to chastise the broad-minded Vaiṣṇavas.”

Needless to say, every created living being is subjected to the punishment of the demigods and Yamarāja; only the Vaiṣṇavas are exceptions. (A Vaiṣṇava is respected by he who judges pious and impious actions.)

The Padma Purāṇa has stated:

na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣṇavānām ca vidyate
viṣṇur anucaratvaṁ hi mokṣam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ

“Vaiṣṇavas are not bound by fruitive activities or forced to take birth, because learned persons have firmly declared that service to Lord Viṣṇu is itself liberation.”

It is stated in the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa, Chapter 59 as follows:

vahni-sūrya-brāhmaṇebhyas tejyān vaiṣṇava sadā
na vicāro na bhogaś ca vaiṣṇavānām sva-karmaṇām
likhitaṁ sāmni kauthumyām kuru praśnaṁ bṛhaspatim

“The Vaiṣṇavas are always more powerful than Agni, Sūrya, and the brāhmaṇas. Vaiṣṇavas do not have to suffer the reactions of fruitive activities or concern themselves with analyzing these activities. This is stated in the Kauthumī branch of the Sāma Veda. You may ask Bṛhaspati for confirmation of this.”

The Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Supreme Lord are not like ordinary human beings, who are forced to enjoy the results of their karma—this fact is stated in many places in the scriptures. The Vaiṣṇavas are a particular type of incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and therefore they are not enjoyers of the fruits of karma. By the will of the Lord, they appear for the benefit of the people of the world just like an incarnation of the Supreme Lord.

It is stated in the Ādi Purāṇa as follows:

aḥam eva dvija-śreṣṭha nityaṁ pracchanna-vigrahaḥ
bhagavad-bhakta-rūpeṇa lokān rakṣāmi sarvadā

“O best of the brāhmaṇas, in My disguised form as a devotee, I always protect the people of this world.

jaḡatām guravo bhaktā bhaktānām guravo vayam

sarvatra guravo bhaktā vayam ca guravo yathā

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: The Vaiṣṇavas are the spiritual masters of the entire world, and I am the spiritual master of the Vaiṣṇavas. As I am the spiritual master of everyone, the devotees are also the spiritual masters of everyone.”

In the entire world there is no object as worshipable as the Vaiṣṇavas. The ultimate conclusion of the scriptures is that the Vaiṣṇavas are better than the best, or the topmost ideals in the world.

The Skanda Purāṇa, Utkala-khaṇḍa, says:

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

“Persons who are not very highly elevated in pious activities cannot believe in the remnants of food (prasāda) of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nor in Govinda, the holy name of the Lord, nor in the Vaiṣṇavas.” By the strength of their atheistic temperament, such persons are unable to properly see the Vaiṣṇavas.

Unless they are fortunate, the karmīs, jñānīs, and gross materialists are naturally cheated from achieving the fruit, even when they do see such objects. They are so burdened with their respective rules and regulations that they are unable to lift their heads to look at these four transcendental objects. Being bound by their own narrow-mindedness, such pitiable souls cannot make any progress on the path of devotional service. Although they know that devotees and devotional service are most rare in this world, they make no endeavor to attain them; rather they glorify their own fallen condition, commit offences at the feet of the devotees, and ultimately clear their path for further degradation.

In the Padma Purāṇa it is stated:

arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir
viṣṇor vā vaiṣṇavānām kali-mala-mathane pāda-tīrthe 'mbu-buddhiḥ
śrī-viṣṇor nāmni mantre sakala-kaluṣa-he śabda-sāmānya-buddhir
viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

“One who thinks the Deity in the temple to be made of wood or stone, who thinks of the spiritual master in the disciplic succession as an ordinary man, who thinks the Vaiṣṇava in the **Acyuta-gotra** to belong to a certain caste or creed, who thinks of caraṇāmṛta or Ganges water as ordinary water, or who considers the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra to be a material vibration is taken to be a resident of hell.” The difference between devotees and nondevotees is scientifically and philosophically exhibited in these six considerations.

The nondevotees like karmīs, jñānīs, and whimsical persons think of themselves as dutiful followers of the smṛti-sāstras, yet they cannot concur with the transcendental devotees. The practioners of devotional service purify their intelligence, attain the position of Vaiṣṇavas, and give up the desire for and absorption in material enjoyment on the strength of worshipping the transcendental Lord. Controlled by pride and desiring to go to hell, the materialistic non-Vaiṣṇava householders do go to hell because they have the nature of nondevotees, who are punishable by Yamarāja. Therefore there are always differences between the devotees and nondevotees.

The unfortunate hellish people, bewildered by the material modes, forget their spiritual identity and their spiritual duties. Material greed captures them and sets them on the platform of mundane reputation, and they then claim that there is no devotion for Hari in this world, there are no devotees in the world, there have been only twelve devotees of Hari in the four yugas, and other similarly useless statements that dominate the thoughts of such people. Thus the material kingdom becomes their own asset and course of wanderings. When the ascetics and materialists, following in the footsteps of Hiranyakaśipu, who is attached to women, gold, and household, proceed to cheat the world by exhibiting their pride while relishing hog stool-like fame, then such materialism will certainly be vanquished by reciting the statements of Prahlāda Mahārāja. For the benefit of the materialists we herein quote the easy path exhibited and glorified by Prahlāda Mahārāja. By this path the Prakṛti-janas qualify themselves to become Hari-janas.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.5.30-32) it is stated:

matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta grha-vratānām
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām

“Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons too addicted to materialistic life make progress toward hellish conditions and repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa are never aroused, either by the instructions of others, by their own efforts, or by a combination of both.

na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ
durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ
andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās
te 'pīśa-tantryām uru-dāmnī baddhāḥ

“Persons who are strongly entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material life, and who have therefore accepted as their leader or guru a similar blind man attached to external sense objects, cannot understand that the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Viṣṇu. As blind men guided by another blind man miss the right path and fall into a ditch, materially attached men

led by another materially attached man are bound by the ropes of fruitive labor, which are made of very strong cords, and they continue again and again in materialistic life, suffering the threefold miseries.

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
sprśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthāḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛñīta yāvat

“Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination.”

The subtle realization of the Vaiṣṇavas is that worldly brāhmaṇas who call themselves gurus and engage in fruitive activities and sense enjoyment advertise nondevotional activities as spiritual in such a way that they will never attain freedom from the material world either by becoming disciples or gurus, by maintaining smārta, or ritualistic, mentality, or by the help of their smārta friends. If, however, they accept the dust from the lotus feet of an advanced paramahansa Vaiṣṇava as the supreme goal, then they become freed from the ropes of karma, in the form of worldly brahmanism, and they then take shelter of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu by giving up advancement in the materialistic way of life, which is the path to hell. Such unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas achieve the transcendental lotus feet of Lord Hari.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.12.12) says:

rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam

When King Rahūgaṇa was going to visit Kapila Muni in search of the truth and the great soul Bharata was carrying his palenquin, the king submitted to the great devotee Bharata, who then explained how the living entity could attain the highest benefit in the following words:

“My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Absolute Truth. One cannot realize the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [brahmacarya], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a vānaprastha, accepting sannyāsa, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute

Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee.”

This instruction expresses the same message as the instructions of Prahāda Mahārāja to Hirāṇyakaśipu. The instructions that smārta gurus give to the attached householders, those who desire material advancement, the less-intelligent, the followers of the smṛtis, those who meditate on Kali with closed eyes, the students, wrestlers, market salesmen, and sense gratifiers, who are all qualified for such instructions, are not at all pleasing to the transcendental, liberated, advanced Vaiṣṇavas. Those who have already attained the highest goal of the smārta regulations in their previous life take birth as Vaiṣṇavas in the homes of Hari-janas. To broadcast the glories of mundane ritualists before such persons is simply a matter of arrogance. In this material creation there are two types of living entities—one is conditioned by the three modes of material nature and the other is transcendental. The conditioned souls who are averse to Lord Hari consider themselves weak, imperfect, controlled by their enemies lust, greed and so on, forced to accept the results of pious and impious activities, prone to be influenced by the three modes of material nature, eligible for becoming ghosts, materially designated, situated in Devī-dhāma, proud of being materialistic, servants of the demigods, conditioned by matter, and unqualified for serving Lord Hari. They thus praise the nondevotees' philosophy based on the smṛtis, which is suitable for fools. The transcendental Hari-janas, however, realize that their Lord is most merciful, omnipotent, and most affectionate to His devotees. Although they consider themselves materialists, they actually realize themselves as eternal servants of Hari, beyond the fruits of karma, beyond the three modes of material nature, eligible for attaining Goloka, devoid of material designations, beyond Devī-dhāma, not of this world, eternal, beyond the control of the demigods, liberated, beyond material prestige such as received by brāhmaṇas, endowed with pure brahminical qualities, appreciative of the fact that mundane honor is less valuable than straw, free from false pride, completely tolerant, and ready to offer respects even to insignificant persons. In this way they obtain ecstasy while chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas are beyond the material creation. **For them, the illusory identification as brāhmaṇas of this world is secondary and irrelevant.** When a living entity identifies himself as Kṛṣṇa's servant, māyā cannot act him.

The Lord Himself says in Bhagavad-gītā (7.14):

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.”

The servants of the rules and regulations may themselves attain high qualifications, yet they cannot cross beyond *māyā* by their own strength. Only the Vaiṣṇavas on the strength of their devotional service are able to serve the Lord, who is beyond *māyā*.

As stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (2.7.42):

yeṣāṁ sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyaḷikam
te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyāṁ
naiṣāṁ mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śṛgāla-bhakṣye

“But anyone who is specifically favored by the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, due to unalloyed surrender unto the service of the Lord, can overcome the insurmountable ocean of illusion and can understand the Lord. But those who are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals, cannot do so.” Those duplicitous persons who consider “I” and “mine” in relationship with the material body, which is ultimately eaten by dogs and jackals, become Vaiṣṇavas out of fashion while internally maintaining a desire for material happiness. Such persons cannot attain the good fortune of devotional service to the Lord, because they have a fruitive mentality and are still under the influence of *māyā*.

The pleasure-seeking worldly *smārtas* are generally unable to understand the exalted position of a self-satisfied Vaiṣṇava.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.7.10) states:

ātmārāmās ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ

“All different varieties of *ātmārāmas* [those who take pleasure in *ātmā*, or spirit self], especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including liberated souls.”

Therefore devotional service alone is the wealth of the liberated souls.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.24.29) also says:

sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
viriñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām
avyākṛtaṁ bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavaṁ
padaṁ yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye

“[Lord Śiva said:] A person who executes his occupational duty properly for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā, and if he becomes more qualified, he can approach Lord Śiva. A person who is directly surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, in unalloyed devotional service is immediately promoted to the spiritual planets. Lord Śiva and other demigods attain these planets after the destruction of this material world.”

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.28.44) states:

tasmād imāṁ svām prakṛtiṁ daivīm sad-asad-ātmikām
durvibhāvyaṁ parābhāvya svarūpeṇāvatiṣṭhate

“Thus the yogi [or Hari-jana] can be in the self-realized position after conquering the insurmountable spell of māyā, who presents herself as both the cause and effect of this material manifestation and is therefore very difficult to understand.”

Materialistic persons who are proud of their varṇa and who are puppets in the hands of māyā try to act independently while glorifying the wheel of karma, but the devotees know that attempts to become the master of māyā are in reality service to māyā, which is the cause of bondage, so they give up hellish fruitive mentality and understand the eternal service of the Supreme Lord as their constitutional duty.

By following the principles of varṇāśrama, one accumulates pious activities in material life. And by engaging in activities outside of the varṇāśrama system in this world one amasses sins. Sinful and pious activities are inevitable for those who proudly consider themselves Prakṛti-janas in this kingdom of desire. This is not the case with the Hari-janas.

In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.3) it is stated:

yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam
kartāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya
nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti

“When a person with transcendental vision, that is, a devotee of the Supreme Lord who has the eyes of devotion, is able to see the Supreme Person—His creator and master, the Lord of the brāhmaṇas whose bodily complexion is golden—then that person is endowed with transcendental knowledge and liberation, uplifted from the material ego. He gives up piety and sin, becoming completely pure and equipped.”

If one follows a few of the sentiments of Ācārya Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, the king of tridaṇḍīs following in the footsteps of Śrī Mahāprabhu, then he can realize who is a Hari-jana and who is a non-Vaiṣṇava engaged in devotional service mixed with karma.

kaivalyaṁ narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate
durdāntendriya-kāla-sarpa-patalī protkhāta-damṣṭrāyate
viśvaṁ pūrṇa-sukhāyate vidhi-mahendrādiś ca kīṭāyate
yat kāruṇya-kaṭākṣa-vaibhavavatām taṁ gauram eva stumaḥ

“For a devotee who has received Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's merciful glance, kaivalya, merging into the existence of Brahman, appears hellish, the heavenly planets appear like phantasmagoria, the senses appear like serpents with broken teeth, the entire world becomes a replica of Vaikuṇṭha, and the position of demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Indra is considered equal to that of tiny insects. We pray to that Lord, Śrī Gaurasundara.”

upāsatām vā guru-varya-koṭīṅ
adhīyatām vā śruti-śāstra-koṭīḥ
caitanya-kāruṇya-kaṭākṣa-bhājām
bhavet param sadya rahasya-lābhaḥ

“Whatever result one achieves by worshiping millions of the best of the wayward karmī and jñānī spiritual masters or by studying millions of Vedic literatures, we don't care. But by associating with devotees who have received the merciful sidelong glance of Śrī Caitanyadeva one can immediately understand the great secret of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is useless for those who are attached to the principles of varṇāśrama to accept millions of gurus or study millions of Vedic literatures unless they become unalloyed devotees.”

kriyāsaktān dhig dhig vikāṭa-tapaso dhik ca yaminaḥ
dhig astu brahmāhaṁ vadana-pariphullān jaḍa-matīn
kim etān śocāmo viśaya-rasa-mattān nara-paśūn
na keṣāñcil-leśo 'py ahaha milito gaura-madhunaḥ

“Condemned are those who are fond of the Vedic fruitive rituals! Condemned are those self-controlled persons who are fond of severe austerities! Condemned are those persons with material conceptions who nevertheless take pleasure in declaring ‘I am Brahman!’ How much more shall I lament for these karmīs, jñānīs, and tapasvīs, who are absorbed in sense gratification and are just like two-legged animals. Alas! They were not fortunate enough to have tasted even a drop of the nectar of Lord Gaura's kīrtana.”

kālaḥ kalir balina indriya-vairi-vargāḥ
śrī-bhakti-mārga iha kaṇṭaka-koṭi-ruddhaḥ
hā hā kva yāmi vikalaḥ kim ahaṁ karomi
caitanya-candra yadi nādyā kṛpām karoṣi

“Now it is the age of Kali. My enemies headed by the senses are very strong. The beautiful path of bhakti to the Supreme Lord is spiked with countless thorns like karma, jñāna, and unregulated sense enjoyment. O Lord Caitanyacandra, if You do not bestow Your mercy on me today, then, being confused, where will I go and what will I do?”

duṣkarma-koṭi-niratasya duranta-ghora-
durvāsanā-nigaḍa-śṛṅkhalitasya gāḍham
kliṣyan-mateḥ kumati-koṭi-kadarthitasya
gauram vinādyā mama ko bhaviteha bandhuḥ

“I have committed millions of sinful activities while wandering the path of karma. I am tightly bound by the shackles of uncontrollable material desires. My intelligence is afflicted by the misguidance of the karmīs, jñānīs, and unregulated sense enjoyers. Other than Lord Gaura, who will be my friend in this world?”

hā hanta hanta paramoṣara-citta-bhūmau
vyarthī-bhavanti mama sādhana-koṭayo 'pi
sarvātmanā tad aham adbhuta-bhakti-bījaṁ
śrī-gauracandra-caraṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ karomi

“Alas! The seeds of millions of karma and jñāna rituals have failed to fructify in the barren field of my heart. Therefore I will now take full shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Gauracandra, who is the seed of wonderful devotional service.”

mṛgyāpi sā śiva-śukoddhava-nāradādyair
āścarya-bhakti-padavī na davīyasī naḥ
durbodha-vaibhava-pate mayi pāmare 'pi
caitanya-candra yadi te karuṇā-kaṭākṣaḥ

“O Lord Caitanyacandra, O You who enlightens the ignorant, if You grace me with Your merciful glance, then even though I am a wretch I will not be far away from the wonderful path of pure devotion, which is rarely attained by Śiva, Śukadeva, Uddhava, Nārada, and other great souls. Due to their poor fund of knowledge, the karmīs understand their inability and become averse to devotional service, but this is not the case with the devotees. Serving Kṛṣṇa is nothing like fruitive work.”

niṣṭhām prāptā vyavahṛti-tati-laukikī vaidikī yā
yā vā lajjā prahasana-samudgāna-nātyotsaveṣu
ye vābhūvann ahaha sahaja-prāṇa-dehārtha-dharmā
gaurāś cauraḥ sakalam aharat ko 'pi me tīvra-vīryaḥ

“My faith in Vedic and ordinary duties, my embarrassment to sing, dance, and laugh, and my natural tendency to be absorbed in material activities for the sustenance of my life air and body have all been forcibly stolen away by the golden-complexioned thief,

Gaurahari. When one becomes a Vaiṣṇava, all insignificant endeavors are automatically reduced.”

patanti yadi siddhayaḥ kara-tale svayaṁ durlabhāḥ
svayaṁ ca yadi sevakī-bhavitum āgatāḥ syuḥ surāḥ
kim anyad idam eva vā yadi catur-bhujāṁ syād vapuḥ
tathāpi mama no manāk calati gaura-candrān manāḥ

“What to speak if the rarely attained eight mystic perfections—*aṇimā* and so on—fell into my hands without endeavor and the widely-served ideals of enjoyment, the demigods, willingly came to me as my order-carriers offering heavenly pleasures, even if I were awarded the four-armed form of Nārāyaṇa in place of my present material body my mind would still not move an inch from the service of Gaurahari, the Supreme Lord dressed as a devotee.”

The glory and prominence of devotional service is not at all subordinate to karma, *jñāna*, or uncontrolled sense gratification. The devotees firmly believe that they will never fall prey to insignificant greed. But those persons who, due to their duplicitous nature, do not understand the real characteristics of devotional service and who, due to their fruitive mentality, consider devotional service as another category of karma-*kāṇḍa*, quickly commit offenses at the feet of devotees and fall down into the kingdom of sin. As a result of their offenses, they are greatly disturbed by various impediments beginning with caste consciousness, such as considering themselves *brāhmaṇas*, attachment to occupations like giving and receiving charity, and, ultimately, their own envious mentality. These fruitive workers, who are envious of the devotees, are swallowed by false ego in the form of considering Govardhana-*śilā*, the life and soul of the paramahamsas, as stone, considering Vaiṣṇavas as belonging to a particular caste, and lack of faith in the water that has washed the feet of the Hari-janas. The devotees, however, are not greedy, foolish, or weak like them.

dante nidhāya tṛṇakaṁ padayor-nipatya
kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad ahaṁ bravāmi
he sādhaḥ sakalam eva vihāya dūrād
gauraṅga-candra-caraṇe kurutānurāgam

“Taking a straw in my teeth I fall at your feet hundreds of times and humbly appeal to you, saying: O saintly persons! Please give up your path of advancement and its goal, forget about following the principles of *varṇāśrama*, disregard religiousity and irreligiousity, remain equal to pious and impious activities, and do not consider bondage or liberation. Simply cultivate attachment for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.”

Unless one possesses unalloyed devotion, he cannot have the good fortune to receive initiation or teachings on devotional service from a spiritual master. If a person is careless, then after obtaining mantras and the process for worshiping the Lord

through aural reception, they become the source of material attachment. Those who give up duplicity and properly hear the topics of Hari from a bona fide spiritual master and those whose ears are able to properly receive such topics, only they are able to repeat the same words. The very same mercy and teachings that Tridaṇḍī Prabhu Śrī Prabodhānanda received from Śrīman Mahāprabhu were preserved by him in verses for the benefit of future devotees. Those who have a taste for the mood of Prabodhānanda are worthy of being called Vaiṣṇavas, otherwise one simply wanders about searching for insignificant eatables like banana stalks, dāl balls, and drumsticks.

strī-putrādi-kathām jahur vivaṣayiṇaḥ śāstra-pravādam budhā
yogīndrā vijahur –marun-niyama-ja-kleśam tapas tāpasāḥ
jñānābhyāsa-vidhim jahuś ca yatayaś caitanya-candre parām
āviṣkurvati bhakti-yoga-padavīm naivānya āsīd rasaḥ

“Now that Lord Caitanyacandra has revealed the path of pure devotional service, the materialists have given up talking about their wives, children, and material affairs, the scholars have given up debating the scriptures, the yogis have given up the trouble to control their breath, the ascetics have given up their austerities, and the impersonalists have given up studying Vedānta. Being attracted by the sweet beauty of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, all the shopkeepers have stopped selling their insignificant wares.”

Such is the uncommon influence of devotional service. Until one realizes the beauty of devotional service, he continues to traverse the path of karma, jñāna, and sense gratification.”

The poet Sarvajña says:

tvad-bhaktaḥ saritām patim culuka-vat khadyota-vat bhāskaram
merum paśyati loṣṭra-vat kim aparām bhūmeḥ patim bhṛtya-vat
cintāratna-cayam śilā-śakala-vat kalpa-drumam kāṣṭha-vat
saṁsāram ṭṭṇa-rāśi-vat kim aparām deham nijam bhāra-vat

“O my Lord, Your devotee considers the ocean as a palmful of water, the brilliant sun as a firefly, Mount Meru as a stone, a king as a servant, a touchstone as an ordinary stone, a desire tree as ordinary wood, the whole material world as straw, and, above all, his own body as a burden.”

The foolish, materialistic karmīs, who are attached to their bodies, consider, “I am this body, and this body is mine,” and thus differentiate between their relatives and others. They see the wonder of material objects and hanker after them. Vaiṣṇavas, however, do not have such low mentality. They are the best of all persons and therefore cannot be compared with selfish, greedy karmīs.

The Vaiṣṇava saint Śrī Mādhava Sarasvatipāda has stated:

mīmāṃsā-rajāsā malīmasa-dṛśām tāvan na dhīr īsvare
garvodarka-kutarka-karkaśa-dhiyām dūro 'pi vārtā hareḥ
jānanto 'pi na jānate śruti-sukhaṃ śrī-raṅgi-saṅgād ṛte
su-svādum pariveśayanty api rasam gurvī na darvī spr̥ṣet

“Those followers of Jaiminī, Gautama, and Kaṇāda, whose eyes of knowledge have been contaminated by Pūrva-mīmāṃsā and the related karma-kāṇḍa, who are proud of being materialistic, whose intelligence is crude, and who have no faith in the Supreme Lord always remain far separated from discussions on the topics of Lord Hari. Due to being bereft of association with the devotees of the Lord, who enjoys pastimes with the goddesses of fortune, such persons cannot relish the nectarean essence of the scriptures even though they understand the purport of the scriptures, just as a spoon is unable to relish the same palatable foodstuffs that it serves.”

Materialistic philosophers who carry the burden of sense enjoyment like asses are devoid of the service attitude towards Śrī Puruṣottama and are thus unqualified for relishing the devotional service of Lord Hari. The karmīs, jñānīs, and unregulated sense enjoyers are unable to understand the glories of devotional service. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, are not frustrated like the karmīs.

A Vaiṣṇava saint named Paṇḍita Dhanañjaya has stated:

stāvakās tava catur-mukhādayo
bhāvakā hi bhagavan bhavādayaḥ
sevakāḥ śata-makhādayaḥ surā
vāsudeva yadi ke tadā vayam

“O Lord Vāsudeva, since four-headed Brahmā, other progenitors of the demigods, and other living entities pray to You, since great yogis like Mahādeva meditate on You, and since Indra, the king of heaven, and the other demigods are Your servants, then who are we? Does this mean that we have no qualification for devotional service?”

Along with this verse, another verse from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam comes to mind.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.8.26) states:

janmaiśvarya-śruta-śrībhir edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
naivārhaty abhidhātum vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram

“The glories of high birth as a brāhmaṇa or demigod, the glories of opulence equal to that of Kuvera, the glories of sages who strictly follow the Vedas, and the glories of beauty equal to that of Cupid simply increase the madness of materialists. Therefore, O Hari, You are the Lord of the poor, and as such materially prosperous persons have no taste, opportunity, or qualification for chanting Your holy names.”

Vaiṣṇavism is the only wealth of the poor. False prestige and dominance, which are the assets of nondevotees, are not aspired for by Vaiṣṇavas. The wealth of the Vaiṣṇavas is Lord Hari. Being maddened with excessive material attachment and being either puffed-up from cheap brahminical prestige and learning or from the cheap wealth of the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, people disrespect the swanlike Vaiṣṇavas and as a result of sinful activities become nondevotees. Since the Hari-janas, who are poor, fallen, indifferent to material enjoyment, and dedicated to serving Lord Hari, do not desire to accumulate material assets, understanding that desires for high brahminical birth, opulence, knowledge of the Vedas, and beauty equal to Cupid are all useless, they therefore engage in chanting the glories of Lord Hari, free from the desires for engaging both in brahmanical ritualistic ceremonies and study of the Vedas, both of which aim at sense gratification. In brief, the prestige of brāhmaṇas expert in Vedic study, the opulence of kṣatriyas having vast wealth, followers, and kingdom, and the prosperity of the vaiśyas' wealth and beauty obtained through farming and trade, are not qualifications for becoming a Vaiṣṇava; they are simply means of bondage to material enjoyment, which is due to disinterest in devotional service and which increases one's godlessness. Because the Vaiṣṇavas are not busy for such insignificant things, they are more humble than the straw, more tolerant than a tall tree, not interested in personal prestige, and always ready to respect others. In this way they attain devotional service to Lord Hari. Moreover, after completing their term, the demigods, who are situated on the highest platform in the kingdom of fruitive activities, attain the position of Vaiṣṇavas due to the influence of their devotion for the Lord. But their exalted position is glorified only for the benefit of the conditioned souls. When material qualifications are exhausted, then one's identification with pure Vaiṣṇavism is awakened. If a powerful person is capable of killing innumerable living entities, yet instead of misusing his power he remains peaceful, that does not mean that he lacks power. Similarly, even though Lord Brahmā and his descendants headed by the brāhmaṇas may consider that becoming a Vaiṣṇava is the highest goal of life, the position of a living entity who has actually acquired the taste for serving Kṛṣṇa is even higher. Such persons are confidential associates of the Lord.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 4.66-68) Śrīman Mahāprabhu has instructed Śrī Sanātana as follows:

nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ayogya
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajanera yogya

“A person born in a low family is not unfit for discharging devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor is one fit for devotional service simply because he is born in an aristocratic family of brāhmaṇas.

yei bhaje sei baḍa, abhakta—hīna, chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra

“Anyone who takes to devotional service is exalted, whereas a nondevotee is always condemned and abominable. Therefore in the discharge of devotional service to the Lord, there is no consideration of the status of one's family.

dīnere adhika dayā kare bhagavān
kulīna, paṇḍita, dhanīra baḍa abhimāna

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always favorable to the humble and meek, but aristocrats, learned scholars and the wealthy are always proud of their positions.”

The prestige of high birth promotes material enjoyment. Persons of lower castes, however, are restricted in their ability to enjoy in various ways. Though they are not eligible for material auspiciousness, they have every right and opportunity to attain eternal auspiciousness by serving the Supreme Lord. Even if one who is mad after material enjoyment attains the highest position and facility, it is all temporary and unfavorable for real auspiciousness.

One who serves the Absolute Truth is the best of all, and one who is uninterested in the service of the Absolute Truth simply wastes his time trying to become the master of all temporary activities. He is certainly distinct from and inferior to the real servant of the Absolute Truth.

Worldly education, high birth, and prestige of high position cannot hinder the genuine devotees of the Lord, especially those who accept only what is required rather than being maddened by the spirit of enjoying this world created by shadows. Such self-satisfied, humble devotees, who know the art of engaging everything in the service of the Lord, can actually attain the mercy of the Supreme Lord. And those who try to become more powerful by the help of various opulences like high position, high birth, and material erudition thereby simply exhibit indifference towards receiving the mercy of the Lord. Therefore there is no possibility of their achieving real auspiciousness. Sinful propensities, which increase unwanted nescience, are reflected in the hearts of people and stand in opposition to the service of the Lord, which is spiritually illuminating.

The great devotee Śrī Mādhavendra Purī says:

sandhyā-vandana bhadram astu bhavato bhoḥ snāna tubhyaṁ namo
bho devāḥ pitaraś ca tarpaṇa-vidhau nāhaṁ kṣamaḥ kṣamyatām
yatra kvāpi niṣadya yādava-kulottamasya kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ
smāraṁ smāraṁ aghaṁ harāmi tad alaṁ manye kim anyena me

“O my prayers three times a day, all glory to you. O bathing, I offer my obeisances unto you. O demigods! O forefathers! Please excuse me for my inability to offer you my respects. Now wherever I sit, I can remember the great descendant of the Yadu

dynasty [Kṛṣṇa], the enemy of Kaiṁsa, and thereby I can free myself from all sinful bondage. I think this is sufficient for me.”

One devotee emotionally expressed himself to the Lord as follows:

snānam mlānam abhūt kriyā na ca kriyā sandhyā ca vandhyābhavad
vedaḥ khedaḥ avāpa śāstra-pāṭalī samṛitāntaḥ sphuṭā
dharmo marma-hato hy adharma-nicayaḥ prāyaḥ kṣayaḥ prāptavān
cittam cumbati yādavendra-caraṇāmbhoje mamāhar-niśam

“My daily bath has been contaminated, my activities have been ruined, my sandhyā prayers have become fruitless like a barren wife, my study of the Vedas has been disturbed, my scriptures have been retired to a box, my religious principles have become afflicted, and my irreligiosity has been diminished, all because the bee of my heart is constantly kissing the lotus feet of Yadavendra, the king of the Yadu dynasty.”

These sentiments of devotees who are free from material existence can never be understood by people who are sinful, low-class, and either regulated or unregulated followers of rituals. If a sinful, fallen living entity guided by the smṛtis actually realizes these sentiments of the devotees, then no one can describe his good fortune. Many persons foolishly criticize the short-sighted or blind persons' right and necessity for wearing glasses without realizing the utility of the glasses; similarly the smārtas consider the Vaiṣṇavas ordinary living entities like themselves. Actually there is a gulf of difference between the smārtas and the devotees. We have already quoted the statements of a few scriptures and the confidential mood of some devotees in this regard. The intelligent Prakṛti-janas will realize the position and respectability of the Hari-janas from these statements.

It is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.51) as follows:

na yasya janma-karmabhyāṁ na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate 'sminn ahaṁ-bhāvo dehe vai sa hareḥ priyaḥ

“If one does not become proud of one's material body made of skin and flesh in spite of taking an aristocratic birth, such as that of a brāhmaṇa, executing pious activities, like giving and accepting charity, and having a prestigious position within varṇāśrama society, then one is to be considered the dearest servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Although Vaiṣṇavas may appear in a family of brāhmaṇas, act as ācāryas, and be respected by the entire world, they never become proud of their high social order as brāhmaṇas, their high social position as sannyāsīs, or their seminal or initiated high caste. Only the smārtas, who are attached to fruitive activities, develop strong aversion to Lord Hari due to their excessive attachment to material life.

In order to understand the adverse mentality of materialistic karmīs one should study the following verse of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.84.13):

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

“The Supreme Lord said: Anyone who, because of giving up the transcendental realization of a Vaiṣṇava and developing excessive attachment to the material world, accepts this bodily bag of three elements [bile, mucus, and air] as his self, considers the by-products of the body to be his kinsmen, considers material objects as worshipable, considers ordinary bodies of waters as holy places of pilgrimage, and lacks proper understanding of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, is no better than an ass or a cow.”

The devotees of the Lord do not praise their intelligence.

One should attentively consider verse 38 from the Fifth Chapter of the Brahma-saṁhitā, which says:

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, [whom the materialistic sahajiyās—due to their fruitive mentality, enjoying spirit, and mundane imagination—think that they have seen, and] whom the pure devotees [Hari-janas] see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.” The smārtas and devotees have different methods and objects of vision, which foolish ordinary people cannot understand. According to the realization of Ṭhākura Bilvamaṅgala-deva, if such devotion awakens in one's heart, then the mood of a real Hari-jana will automatically manifest in that devotee's heart.

As stated in the Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (107):

bhaktis tvayi sthira-tarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrṭiḥ
mukṭiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ

“O my Lord, if one engages in Your pure devotional service [free from karma, jñāna, and sense gratification] with determination, You become visible in Your original

transcendental youthful form as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As far as liberation is concerned, she stands before the devotee with folded hands waiting to render service. Religion, economic development and sense gratification [which are difficult to achieve for nondevotees with material desires] are all automatically attained without separate endeavor.”

The smārtas, or nondevotees who are simply attached to rules and regulations, are content with the fruits of the four aims of life—religion, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation. Yet these four principles naturally and submissively remain under the feet of the Hari-janas. The Hari-janas are liberated persons, so they have no enthusiasm for conditioned life.

When do the karmīs give up their occupational duties and understand the glories of devotional service to the Lord? The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.14.14) gives the following illustration:

na pārameṣṭhyaṁ na mahendra-dhiṣṇyaṁ
na sārvabhaumaṁ na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā
mayy arpitātmecchati mad vinānyat

“The Supreme Lord said: The devotee who has offered his soul to Me does not want anything if it is separate from Me—not the position of the supreme demigod of the universe, Brahmā, nor that of Lord Indra, nor kingship over the entire earth or over the lower planetary systems, nor the mystic perfections of yoga, nor even freedom from the cycle of rebirth.” These are constitutional symptoms of devotees.

Śrī Hari is the only goal and objective of the Hari-janas. Others naturally become bewildered by the good birth and education of the brāhmaṇas or by the wealth, opulences, and success in trade of the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas. The feelings and behavior of nondevotees are completely different to the feelings and behavior of devotees. The former are influenced by contamination and lamentation, whereas the later are full of ecstasy in the service of Hari.

The saint Kulaśekhara Ālvār (a perfect devotee), who was the king of Kerala, has stated:

nāsthā dharme na vasu-nicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
yad bhāvyaṁ tad bhavatu bhagavan pūrva-karmānurūpam
etat prārthyaṁ mama bahu mataṁ janma-janmāntare 'pi
tvat-pādāmbhoruha-yuga-gatā niścalā bhaktir astu

“My Lord, I have no attraction for performing religious rituals or holding any earthly kingdom. I do not care for sense enjoyments; let them appear and disappear in

accordance with my previous deeds. My only desire is to be fixed in devotional service to Your lotus feet, even though I may continue to take birth here life after life.”

According to the nondevotees, the three aims of religion, economic development, and sense gratification are to be enjoyed and the fourth aim, liberation, is the ultimate goal of life, but the Vaiṣṇava Kulaśekhara Ālavār thinks, “Let them come on their own accord,” as he considers the eternality of devotional service in the following words:

maj-janmanaḥ phalam idaṁ madhu-kaiṭabhāre
mat-prārthanīya-mad-anugraha eṣa eva
tvad-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-paricāraka-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-
bhṛtyasya bhṛtya iti mām smara loka-nātha

“O enemy of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, O Lord of the universe, the perfection of my life and my heartfelt prayer is that You consider me the servant of Your servant.”

In summary, we can say that Kulaśekhara, the king of Kerala and ornament of the kṣatriya dynasty, did not pray to become a brāhmaṇa. He was always eager to attain the eternally glorious position of a devotee of the Lord. This great personality was a spiritual master in the Śrī Rāmānuja-sampradāya and an incarnation of a devotee.

Mahātmā Yāmuna Muni [Yamunācārya] has written:

na dharma-niṣṭho 'smi na cātma-vedī
na bhaktimāms tvac-caraṇāravinde
akiñcano 'nanya-gatiḥ śaraṇya
tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye
tava dāsya-sukhaika-saṅginām
bhavaneṣv astv api kīṭa-janma me
itarāvasatheṣu mā sma bhūd
api me janma catur-mukhātmanā

“O Hari, You are the object of my surrender. I have no faith in varṇāśrama-dharma, and I have no knowledge of the soul. Furthermore, I have no devotion to Your lotus feet. I am utterly destitute, a rogue with no idea of the goal of life. Therefore I take shelter of Your lotus feet. O my Lord, I think it is better to be born as an insect in the house of a Vaiṣṇava, than to be born as Lord Brahmā in the house of a nondevotee.”

Although this mahātmā was recognised as a seminal brāhmaṇa, the extent to which he accepted subordination to his spiritual master, Bakulābharāṇa Śaṭhakopa, who was considered a seminal śūdra, incarnation of devotee, and perfect Vaiṣṇava associate of the Lord, is understood from Stotra-ratna (7), wherein he declares:

mātā pitā yuvatayas tanayā vibhūtiḥ

sarvaṁ yad eva niyamena mad-anvayānām
ādyasya naḥ kula-pater bakulābhirāmaṁ
śrīmat-tad-aṅghri-yugalaṁ praṇamāmi mūrdhnā

“I reverently bow my head to the blessed feet, attractive as bakula flowers, of Śaṭhakopa, the first ācārya of our devotional family. For our disciplic succession His lotus feet are everything—our father, mother, son, wife, and wealth.”

Even after discussing the devotion that was shown to Śaṭhakopa by the sage Śrī Ālabandaru, who was born in a very prestigious brāhmaṇa family, persons with insignificant smārta conceptions nevertheless claim to be Vaiṣṇavas in order to fill their bellies while avoiding Vaiṣṇava association and arrogantly disrespecting Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī Prabhu; yet if they are able to understand that the soothing lotus feet of Śrī Dāsa Raghunātha Prabhu are the only refuge for their mothers, fathers, wives, sons, opulences, and respect, then they will achieve devotion to Kṛṣṇa by the mercy of Śrī Yamunācārya. Otherwise they will simply prove their aversion to Hari and rejection of their guru.

Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja has stated:

vaiṣṇavānaṁ ca janmāni nidrālasyāni yāni ca
dṛṣṭvā tāny aprakāśyāni janebhya na vadet kvacit
teṣāṁ doṣān vihāyāṣu guṇāṁś caiva prakīrtayet

“(For the auspiciousness of the world and the benefit of neophytes:) Even if one knows about a Vaiṣṇava's birth, sleeping habits, and laziness, one should not (in order to proudly criticize) disclose these things in public. Rather than finding faults, one should glorify the Vaiṣṇava's qualities.”

The definitions for both Vaiṣṇavas and smārtas are given in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.1.4-5 and 3.1.1-3) as follows:

dve vidye veditavya iti, ha sma yad brahma-vido vadanti, parā caivāparā ca. tatrāparā ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharva-vedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣam iti. atha parā yayā tad-akṣaram adhigamyate.

“Śaunaka said: There are two kinds of educational systems. The knowers of supreme truth who understand the taste of the Absolute say that one of these kinds of education deals with transcendental knowledge [parā vidyā] and the other with worldly knowledge [aparā vidyā]. The Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda, and their corollaries known as the ritual kalpa scriptures comprised of the sūtras and so on, the śikṣā scriptures explaining the places and methods of pronunciations of letters, the vyākaraṇa grammar scripture teaching the proper use of words, the nirukta scripture teaching the derivation of the meaning of words, the chanda scriptures concerning meters, and the astronomical jyotiṣa scriptures concerning the correct

ascertainment of time—these all belong to the inferior system of material knowledge [aparā vidyā]. These are honored by the nondevotees. If one studies these literatures with the spirit of enjoyment, he will simply be bound up as a ritualistic student of the scriptures. That potency of scriptural knowledge by which one can understand the akṣara—Brahman or the Absolute Truth—is the higher education, parā-vidyā. When a person retires from the worldly conceptions of the smārtas, he becomes eligible for parā vidyā, spiritual education. He then accepts Viṣṇu as his only self-interest, and thus becomes a Vaiṣṇava.”

dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty
anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti
samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
'nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭam yadā paśyaty anyam īsam
asya mahimānam eti vīta-śokaḥ
yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam
kartāram īsam puruṣam brahma-yonim
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya
nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti

“There are two spiritual birds sitting together in a banyan tree. They are bound together by friendship. One of them is being supported by the other, his supporter. The two spiritual birds are the devotee jīva and the Supreme Lord, both sitting on the same banyan tree of the material body. Of the two, the jīva bird is eating the banyan fruits born from the body as the fruits of its karma, thinking them sweet tasting. The other bird, the Supreme Lord, does not partake of the fruits Himself but facilitates the eating of the other bird, who is enjoying the fruits.

“One bird (the living entity) considers his material body in terms of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Having no devotion for the Lord, he is afflicted with lamentation as the result of his karma. In this way, such a karma-kāṇḍa smārta, being averse to the service of the Lord, spends his whole life suffering material miseries. But as soon as the living entity gives up his smārta mentality and his desire for fruitive results, he immediately understands that the other bird, the transcendental Lord Viṣṇu, is distinct from all material enjoyable objects; thus realizing the eternal nature of the Lord's service, he becomes free from lamentation and comes to know the glories of the Lord's pastimes.” The platform of Vaiṣṇavism is attained when one realizes that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, and the platform of desirelessness is reached when one gives up the desire for enjoying the fruits of karma. Only when the jīva becomes a Vaiṣṇava does he become pure and liberated.

“When, upon achieving devotion to Viṣṇu, the completely purified jīva realizes his position as servant of the Lord and is able to see the golden-bodied creator of the

universe, Hiraṇyagarbha, then he gains the fruit of higher education. He completely gives up sin and piety, which were born from the worldly mentality of his lower education, and becomes altogether pure and transcendently equal with the Lord.”

When a living entity is conditioned, he develops the mentality of a smārta, and when he is liberated, he develops the mentality of a servant of Hari. This is the only purport of the Vedas.

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is stated:

viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāṇi puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ
ekaṁ tu mahataḥ sraṣṭr dvitīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitam
ṭṭīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-sthaṁ yāni jñātvā vimucyate

“Lord Nārāyaṇa has three avatāras called puruṣas. Nārāyaṇa is the source of the caturvyūha and the Lord of all Vaikuṅṭhalokas, wherein there is no trace of māyā. Māyā, who is indirectly sheltered by Nārāyaṇa, is prominent on the other side of the Virajā. Śrī Nārāyaṇa's puruṣa incarnations manifest for the purpose of empowering Māyā's creation of Devī-dhāma. The first puruṣa-avatāra is Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies on the Causal Ocean and is the cause of the mahat-tattva and false ego. The second puruṣa-avatāra is Hiraṇyagarbha Viṣṇu, who lies on the Garbhodaka Ocean and from whose navel grows a lotus stem upon which the guṇa-avatāra Brahmā is born and engaged in creating the universe, which is annihilated by the guṇa-avatāra, Rudra. The third puruṣa-avatāra is localised Lord Viṣṇu, who lies on the Kṣīrodaka Ocean and who is worshipable by all living beings. If a conditioned smārta can serve these three puruṣa-avatāras, he will be liberated from the clutches of the three modes of nature and become a Vaiṣṇava.” Viṣṇu is the eternal master of Māyā. Though the puruṣa-avatāras have a relationship with Māyā, They are not controlled by Māyā like the conditioned souls. Other than the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, all living entities are eligible for being controlled by Māyā, even though they are constitutionally servants of Viṣṇu. By surrendering to Lord Viṣṇu, the Vaiṣṇavas are no longer eligible to be controlled by Māyā. Only nondevotees like the smārtas are eligible to be controlled by Māyā and forced to accept the results of karma.

In the Skanda Purāṇa, Revā-khaṇḍa, Durvāsā speaks to Nārada as follows:

nūnaṁ bhāgavatā loke loka-rakṣā-viśāradāḥ
vrajanti viṣṇunādiṣṭā hṛdi-sthena mahā-mune
bhagavān eva sarvatra bhūtānāṁ kṛpayā hariḥ
rakṣaṇāya caran lokān bhakta-rūpeṇa nārada

“O great sage Nārada, pure devotees who are expert in protecting the interest of people wander in this world under the instructions of Lord Viṣṇu, who is situated in everyone's heart. In order to protect the living entities, Lord Hari accepts the form of a devotee and appears in this world out of His causeless mercy.”

We can see from the pastimes of Lord Śrī Rāmacandra that even though He was omnipotent, He acted like a devotee by respecting worldly morality. He did not allow anyone to engage in any kind of illicit activities that people were inclined to; rather He accepted all rules and regulations like an ordinary mortal being. In this way He benefited all the passionate and ignorant living entities.

In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is said:

kalau bhāgavatam nāma durlabham naiva labhyate
brahma-rudra-padotkr̥ṣṭam guruṇā kathitam mama
yasya bhāgavatam cihnam dṛśyate tu harir mune
gīyate ca kalau devā jñeyās te nāsti saṁśayaḥ

“Due to their fruitive mentality, the majority of foolish people in Kali-yuga do not come forward to take up the principles of bhāgavata-dharma. Therefore pure devotees are very rare. The position of a pure devotee is superior to that of the great demigods like Brahmā and Mahādeva. This is what my spiritual master has told me. If one follows the principles of varṇāśrama for one hundred lifetimes, as a result of his pious activities he can attain the position of Lord Brahmā, but the position of a Vaiṣṇava is more exalted. O sage, know without doubt that anyone in the age of Kali who possesses the symptoms of a pure devotee and constantly engages in chanting the holy names is a godly personality.”

In the Skanda Purāṇa it is stated:

śrī-kṛṣṇa-stava-ratnoghair yeṣāṁ jihvā tv alaṅkṛtā
namasyā muni-siddhānām vandanīyā divaukasām

“Those great Vaiṣṇavas whose tongues are decorated with jewel-like prayers to Kṛṣṇa are respected by the perfected beings, the ascetics, the brāhmaṇas, and the sages and worshipable for the demigods.”

According to the materialistic conceptions of the smārtas, these statements are poetic exaggerations. Such a conception, however, is the result of their sinful activities. Due to their offenses at the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas, they are unable to understand the Vaiṣṇavas' prestigious position, and instead of glorifying the Vaiṣṇavas, they glorify the status of other fruitive workers. Because the karmīs offer obeisances to the perfect sages and worship the highly placed residents of heaven, they are under the influence of material desires and not interested in the worship of Lord Hari or in the topmost position of Hari's devotees.

It is stated in the Ādi Purāṇa:

vaiṣṇavān bhaja kaunteya mā bhajasvānya-devatāḥ

“O son of Kuntī, worship only the Vaiṣṇavas; do not worship any demigods.” There is no one more worshipable in the heavenly planets, the earthly planets, or in the entire creation than the Vaiṣṇavas. Only karmīs with material desires give up the worship of Vaiṣṇavas and, being attached to household life in this miserable material existence, become disinterested in the service of the Vaiṣṇavas. They consider the characteristics of nondevotees to be superior. This is the result, or punishment, of their karma.

Who are the Hari-janas, or Vaiṣṇavas, and what makes them different from the nondevotees? I am quoting various evidence from the scriptures and sentiments of devotees in this Hari-jana-khaṇḍa to answer these questions.

Before acquiring material designations, the living entity is supremely pure. Even though he is not engaged in serving the Supreme Lord, he remains situated in the neutral position of *śānta-rasa* due to his marginal nature. Though the living entity born from the marginal potency does not at that time exhibit a taste for serving the Lord due to a lack of knowledge of self-realization, his direct propensity of serving the Supreme Lord nevertheless remains within him in a dormant state. Though the indirect propensity of material enjoyment, which is contrary to the service of the Lord, is not found in him at that time, indifference to the service of Hari and the seed of material enjoyment, which follows that state of indifference, are nevertheless present within him. The living entity, who belongs to the marginal potency, cannot remain indifferent forever by subduing both devotional and nondevotional propensities. He therefore contemplates unconstitutional activities from his marginal position. As a sleeping person dreams that he is active in the physical world without actually being involved in activities, when the dormant indifferent living entity of the marginal potency exhibits even a little apathy to the service of the Supreme Lord and situates himself in a neutral, unchanging condition for even a little time, he is infected by impersonalism. That is why the conditioned soul desires to merge in the impersonal Brahman, thus exhibiting his mind's fickle nature. But due to neglecting the eternal service of the Lord and thereby developing the quality of aversion to the Lord, he cannot remain fixed in that position. In this way aversion to the Lord breaks his concentration of mind and establishes him as the master of this world of enjoyment. *Māyā*, the external energy of the Supreme Lord, then induces the marginal living entity to enjoy this world through her covering and throwing potencies and thus shows the living entity the reality of being averse to the Lord's service. At that time the living entity considers himself the king of enjoyers, and being situated in the mode of passion he takes the position of *Brahmā* and creates progeny. The living entities who are born from *Brahmā*, the grandfather of everyone, expand themselves in families of *Āryans* and *brāhmaṇas*. In this world of duality, however, living entities who are covered and thrown under the control of the external energy naturally become envious. This enviousness further creates pride, illusion, greed, anger, and lust and induces the living entities to dance frantically in aversion to the Lord. At that time they forget both that they were born from Grandfather *Brahmā* and the Lord's instructions in the Vedas.

And on the platform of progress, if a living entity cultivates transcendental sound vibration and revives the process of remembering the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he then achieves scientific spiritual knowledge. By this process, all anarthas are destroyed and he becomes situated in a supremely auspicious position.

The mood that arises when one is manipulating his senses is called vilāsa, or enjoyment. The meaning of vairāgya, or renunciation, is to become averse to the accumulation of sensual knowledge. The conditioned souls who are overwhelmed by the illusory energy of Hari become temporary enjoyers of this world under the control of Māyā's covering and throwing potencies. But if such persons fortunately meet devotees who are constantly remembering Kṛṣṇa, then they can give up insignificant material enjoyment and receive the opportunity to attain transcendental knowledge. Although due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa the perverted movement of the senses is considered temporary and adverse, when they are properly employed in eternal subjects their disease of transience is destroyed and they give up the desire to embrace such transient objects. Then that person appreciates the following verse from the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, which is the mercy of Śrī Sanātana and compiled by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, the disciple of Tridaṇḍīpāda Śrīla Prabhānanda Sarasvatī, who was a servant of Śrī Gaurāṅga and born in an Āndhra brāhmaṇa family.

gr̥hīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjā-paro naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhīhito 'bhijñair itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ

“One who is initiated into Śrī Viṣṇu's mantras and who is devoted to worshiping Lord Viṣṇu is called a Vaiṣṇava by those who are learned. One who is devoid of these practices is not a Vaiṣṇava.”

Although the eternal living entity is constitutionally favorably inclined towards the Supreme Lord, due to his indifference towards the eternal service of the Lord he is eligible for being controlled by māyā. When one tries to measure material objects with his sensual knowledge, he simply increases his enjoying propensity day after day. That he is eligible for achieving transcendental knowledge—this ancient memory he also often forgets. As a result of being covered and thrown and considering himself the enjoyer of this world, such a person has no power to discriminate between good and bad, rather he considers temporary and unreal subjects as permanent and favorable for his enjoyment.

In order to eradicate the misfortune of the living entities, who are created by His marginal potency, the most merciful Lord in His forms as the Supersoul and the exalted spiritual master reveals the true identity of the soul. Due to this good fortune, with a small endeavor to achieve transcendental knowledge the conditioned soul gives up his propensity for enjoyment and renunciation and develops some taste for serving the Lord. If he develops a taste for receiving the mercy of a great liberated personality, who is pure, eternally engaged in service, self-realized, and the only shelter for the

living entities, then his lost Kṛṣṇa consciousness is revived. Thereafter he desires freedom from Māyā's covering and throwing potencies and searches after his own auspiciousness. As a result of this, he attains transcendental knowledge. The desire for achieving transcendental knowledge induces him to cultivate favorable service to Lord Viṣṇu. This cultivation begins with endeavoring for self-realization, reviving his lost propensity of service, and, ultimately, being reestablished as the servant of the Lord. Then he is no longer considered a nondevotee, averse to the Lord.

Unfortunate people who are offensive and devoid of service to the spiritual master and Vaiṣṇavas fall from the highest position and again become enjoyers. They then feel proud of advertising themselves as prākṛta-sahajiyās and become bound by the ropes of material conceptions. At that time they become totally aloof from following the great devotees and the system of Pañcarāta. In this way people who thus cheat themselves become misguided. Ṭhākura Śrīla Narottama has warned the devotee communities about these pseudo-devotees.

People who follow the principles of the prākṛta-sahajiyās establish themselves as Vaiṣṇavas, and though they fall down according to the opinion of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.2.32), āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam, they nevertheless declare that their nonsense activities are the transcendental pastimes of a Vaiṣṇava. Although Śrīmān Mahāprabhu has said that being proud of one's varṇa or āśrama is the business of the Prakṛti-janas, because the conditioned souls disregard this instruction of the Lord they become nondevotees, bound by the fruits of their karma. The following verse, composed by Mahāprabhu and quoted in Padyāvalī (63), is not recited by such self-deluded persons.

nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśya na śūdro
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ

“I am a pure spirit soul. I am not a brāhmaṇa, I am not a kṣatriya, I am not a vaiśya or a śūdra. Nor am I a brahmacārī, a householder, a vānaprastha or a sannyāsī. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the gopīs. He is like an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance.”

When the four types of liberated persons become weak in their conviction that they are the eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, then they again face danger in their path to self-realization. Therefore as soon as a living entity gives up the self-identification of being a Hari-jana, he immediately falls into the category of Prakṛti-jana and becomes falsely proud of himself. Then he can no longer remain a Hari-jana. The Hari-janas who have lost their devotion to Hari due to forgetfulness of their constitutional position are like soṇāra pāthera bātīs—“stone bowls made of gold,” for they are actually Prakṛti-janas or prākṛta-sahajiyās. Their entrance into the natural, transcendental abode of

Vaikuṅṭha is checked. The Hari-janas who have forgotten their constitutional position cannot understand the difference between the transcendently pure Hari-janas and the Prakṛti-janas. Due to a lack of real knowledge of the scriptures, they identify persons born in low-class families as Hari-janas and themselves as Prakṛti-janas born in high-class families. In this way they waste their time.

We will now describe the divisions of Hari-janas. Indian historians have collected from various scriptures twelve categories of Hari-janas such as sāvata, bhakta, bhāgavata, Vaiṣṇava, pañcarātrika, Vaikhānasa, and karma-hīna. But at present all of these categories are practically lost, leaving a rough division of two categories. Those who are devotees of Hari can still discern the two paths of arcana and bhāva. Of the four principal Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, Śrī Madhvācārya and Śrī Nimbāditya are on the path of bhāgavata-mārga, or bhāva-mārga, and Śrī Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī are Vaiṣṇava ācāryas on the path of pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga. Though the respected Śrī Madhvācārya and Śrī Nimbāditya were bhagavatācāryas, they nevertheless also accepted the path of arcana, meant for the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs, and Śrī Rāmānujācārya also accepted the chanting of the holy names as a part of his arcana rituals. Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī was the first commentator on the Vedānta-sūtras. These four personalities have been accepted as the four sampradāya ācāryas. At this juncture we are quoting Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on the beginning of the Third Canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

dvedhā hi bhāgavata-sampradāya-pravṛttiḥ. ekataḥ saṅkṣepataḥ śrī-nārāyaṇād brahma-nāradādi-dvāreṇa. anyatas tu vistarataḥ śeṣāt sanat-kumāra-sāṅkhyāyanādi-dvāreṇa.

“There are two ways in which the Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas originated. The first of these has come from Nārāyaṇa by way of Brahmā, Nārada, and so on. The other comes from Lord Śeṣa through Sanat-kumāra and then Sāṅkhyāyana Muni.”

Needless to say, the personalities in the above-mentioned sampradāyas are all Vaiṣṇavas. As confirmed in the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa, in the following words:

yad viṣṇūpāsānā nityam viṣṇur yasyeśvaro mune
pūjyo yasaiko viṣṇuḥ syād iṣṭo loke sa vaiṣṇavaḥ

“O sage, one who always worships Lord Viṣṇu and whose eternal Lord, only object of worship, and goal of life is Viṣṇu is known in this world as a Vaiṣṇava.”

Actually, the categories of Hari-janas are established according to two principal tastes. We should refer to the analysis of the two categories, pañcarātrika and bhāgavata, given by Śrīpāda Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu in his Śrī Bhakti-sandarbhā. It is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (12.3.52) as follows:

kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt

“Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet can be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.”

We are herein citing evidence from the Śrī Nārāyaṇa-saṁhitā quoted by Śrīmad Ācārya Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhva Muni in his commentary on the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad while teaching the bhāgavata-mārga to the fallen souls of Kali-yuga:

dvāpariyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais tu kevalaiḥ
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ

“The people of Dvāpara-yuga worshiped Hari through the system of pañcarātrika, but in the present age of Kali, rather than following the process of Dvāpara-yuga, one can worship Lord Hari only by chanting His holy names.”

Although Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha did not mention the process of pañcarātrika in his Brahma-sūtra commentary, he has not disregarded the glories of the Pañcarātras in his other commentary, the Anuvyākhyāna, which he wrote for refuting opposing opinions. It is only some less intelligent people who consider Śrī Madhva Muni as averse to the pañcarātrika system.

The pañcarātrikas are inclined to the path of arcana, and the bhāgavatas are inclined to kīrtana. In his Bhakti-sandarbhā and Krama-sandarbhā commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.5.23) Śrī Jīva Prabhu has stated:

ārcana-mārga śraddhā cet, āsrita-mantra-gurus taṁ viśeṣataḥ pṛcchet. yadyapi śrī bhāgavata-mate pañcarātrādi-vat arcana-mārgasyāvaśyakatvaṁ nāsti, tad vināpi śaraṇāpatty-ādīnām ekatareṇāpi puruṣārtha-siddher abhihitatvāt, tathāpi śrī-nāradādi-vartmānuseradbhiḥ. kṛtāyām dīkṣāyām arcanam avaśyaṁ kriyetaiva. para-dvārā tat-sampādanam vyavahāra-niṣṭhatvasyālastvasya vā pratipādakam. tato 'śraddhā-mayatvād dhīnam eva tat. mantra-dīkṣādy-apekṣā yady api svarūpato nāsti tathāpi prāyaḥ svabhāvato dehādi-sambandhena kadarya-śīlānām vikṣipta-cittānām janānām tat-tat-saṅkocī-karaṇāya śrīmad-ṛṣi-prabhṛtibhir atrārcana-mārga kvacit kvacit kācit kācin maryādā sthāpitāsti. tatra tat-tad-apekṣā nāsti; rāmārcana-candrikāyām—vinaiva dīkṣām vipreṇdra puraścaryām vinaiva hi/ vinaiva nyāsa-vidhinā japa-mātreṇa siddhidā.

“If a Vaiṣṇava sādḥaka develops faith for the path of arcana, which is meant for the followers of the pañcarātrika system, then he should exhaustively inquire about that path from the pañcarātrika guru who gave him mantra. It is said that even without arcana, by following any of the nine processes of devotional service, headed by surrender, one can attain perfection. So although according to the opinion of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam there is no need for the arcana-mārga, which is the only process for the followers of the pañcarātrika system, if one is initiated by a Vaiṣṇava guru who is

following the footsteps of personalities like Śrī Nārada, who is also a pañcarātrika, then he must engage in the arcana of Lord Viṣṇu with the mantras that he received from his spiritual master. To employ others in arcana on one's behalf simply confirms one's lack of conviction or laziness in one's duties. Therefore engaging others in arcana on one's behalf is a sign of faithlessness and is thus unacceptable. Although the bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavas do not actually need pañcarātrika-mantra-dīkṣā, pañcarātrika sages like Śrī Nārada have in some places given some importance to arcana in order to help regulate the loose character and restless minds of the people. There is no need for the support of arcana and so on, as stated in the Rāmārcana-candrikā: O best of the brāhmaṇas, even without dīkṣā, puraścaryā, and nyāsa-vidhi, simply by chanting the mantras of the Supreme Lord one achieves all perfection.”

And in the Bhakti-sandarbhā, Śrī Jīva Prabhu says:

tataḥ prema-tāratamyena bhakta-mahattva-tāratamyam mukhyam. yair liṅgaiḥ sa bhagavataḥ priya uttama-madhyamatādi-vivikto bhavati tāni liṅgāni. tatraiva arcana-mārga tri-vidhatvam labhyate. pādmottara-khaṇḍoktam mahatvam tu arcana-mārga-parāṇām madhya eva jñeyam.

“Next, we consider that a Vaiṣṇava is known as an uttama, madhyama, or kaniṣṭha primarily according to his advancement in love of God. The symptoms for differentiating the kaniṣṭha, madhyama, and uttama devotees, which reveal whether one is dear, more dear, or most dear to the Lord, are all criterion for establishing the position of devotees. In the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga there are three categories of devotees. The glories of the Vaiṣṇavas mentioned in the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa, refer only to the followers of the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga.

tatra mahattvam—
 tāpādi pañca-saṁskārī navejyā-karma-kāraḥ
 artha-pañcaka-vid vipro mahā-bhāgavataḥ smṛtaḥ

“The characteristics of the uttama or mahā-bhāgavata according to the arcana-mārga are as follows: ‘A brāhmaṇa who has undergone the five kinds of saṁskāras, or purificatory processes, like tāpa, who has executed the rituals of worship, and who has understood the Artha-pañcaka⁴ is called a mahā-bhāgavata.’

madhyamatvam—
 tāpaḥ puṇḍram tathā nāma mantra yāgaś ca pañcamah
 amī hi pañca-saṁskārāḥ paramaikānti-hetarvaḥ

“The characteristics of the madhyama according to the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga are as follows: ‘The five kinds of saṁskāras are tāpa, puṇḍra, nāma, mantra, and japa. According to the pañcarātrika teachings, one who performs these five activities is called a madhyama-bhāgavata.’

tatra kaniṣṭhatvam—
śaṅkha-cakrādy-ūrdhva-puṇḍra- dhāraṇādy-ātma-lakṣaṇam
tan-namaskaraṇam caiva vaiṣṇavatvam ihocyate

“The characteristics of the kaniṣṭha according to the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga are as follows: ‘One who marks his body with the four signs of Viṣṇu—the conchshell, cakra, club, and lotus—and who offers obeisances to other Vaiṣṇavas whose bodies are marked with these signs is called a kaniṣṭha.’

“Apart from the pañcarātrika system, we are now presenting the mental symptoms of a mahā-bhāgavata according to the bhāva-mārga, as stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.45):

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

“Śrī Havir said: The most advanced devotee, or mahā-bhāgavata, 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 impersonalists, who consider the living entity and the Supreme Lord as one, are opposed to the principle of this Śrīmad Bhāgavatam verse. To consider the conditioned living entities as equal to the Supreme Lord is extremely contrary to the principles of devotional service and to the real nature of mahā-bhāgavatas. The mood of the damsels of Vraja found in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.35.9—vana-latās tarava ātmani), (10.21.15—nadyas tadā tad upadhārya), and (10.90.15—kuravi vilapasi) indicate the mood of a mahā-bhāgavata. “Now the specific mental symptoms of a madhyama-bhāgavata are being described in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.46) as follows:

īsvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ

“An intermediate or second-class devotee, called madhyama-adhikārī, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.’

“Next, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.47) describes the symptoms of a kaniṣṭha in terms of his body symptoms of executing bhagavad-dharma and also somewhat in terms of his mentality in the following words:

arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a prakṛta-bhakta, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” The yasyātma-buddhiḥ verse is applicable to such persons.

Prabhupāda Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and other Viṣṇupāda ācāryas who are completely dependent on the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Gaura are all worshipers on the path of bhāva in accordance with the philosophy of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Among the followers of Śrī Gaura, the bhāva path is adhered to rather than the pañcarātrika-arcana path, which is followed only to some extent in the Deity worship of the kaniṣṭha devotees. Śrī Lakṣmī Purī and Śrī Śrīmad Viṣṇupāda Mādhavendra Purī, who were disciplic descendants of Śrīmad Ācārya Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhvapāda, were adherents of the pure bhāgavata system on the path of bhāva-mārga. From Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, bhāgavata-dharma on the path of bhāva has become completely manifested among the followers of Śrī Caitanya. Although the bhāgavata-mārga propounded by Śrī Madhvācārya has also been accepted by the ācāryas in his disciplic succession like Śrī Vyāsa Rāya, Śrī Rāghavendra Yati, and Śrī Vijayadhvaja as well as the ācāryas of the maṭhas of Uḍupī like Kṛṣṇapura, Puttugī, Sode, Pejāvāra, Aghanāḍu, Kaṇṇura, Palanāḍu and also the temple authorities of Kudāmbāra, Cikka, and Manakāṭṭi, these persons were nevertheless followers of the principles of varṇāśrama in the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga.

Śrī Jīvapāda has quoted the following verse in reference to the ninefold procedure for worshipping the Deity according to the pañcarātrika system:

arcanaṁ mantra-paṭhanam yogo yāgo hi vandanam
nāma-saṅkīrtanam sevā tac-cinhair ankanam tathā
tadiyārādhnam cejyā navadhā bhidyate śubhe

“O most auspicious lady, the nine aspects of Deity worship are offering pūjā, chanting mantras, meditation, fire sacrifices, praying, chanting the holy names, serving, marking the body with auspicious signs, and worshipping the Vaiṣṇavas.”

Explaining the “five objects” of worship (artha-pāñcaka), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has said: upāsyah śrī bhagavān, tat paramam padaṁ, tad-dravyam, tan-mantro, jīvātmā ceti pañca-tattva-jñātrtvam artha-pāñca-kavitvam—“The worshipable Supreme Lord, His supreme abode of Vaikuṅṭha, His assets or tadya the pure devotees, His mantras, and the living entities—to know these five subjects is knowledge of artha-pāñcaka.”

Kūreṣa, a disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja, had a son named Parāśara Bhaṭṭa. A disciple of Parāśara was Vedāntī, whose disciple was Nambur Varadarāja. The disciple of Nambur Varadarāja was Pillāi Lokācārya, who wrote a book named Artha-pāñcaka. The five subjects described by him are different from those described by Śrī Jīvapāda. He has described the subject of jīva-svarūpa (the essential characteristics of the living entity)

as having five divisions—nitya (eternal), mukta (liberated), baddha (conditioned), kevala (merged in Brahman), and mumukṣu (desiring liberation); the subject of īśvara-svarūpa (the essential characteristics of the Supreme Lord) as having five divisions—para (His original form as Kṛṣṇa), vyūha (His quadruple expansions), vibhava (His pastime forms), antaryāmī (the Supersoul), and arcanāvatāra (the Deity incarnation); the subject of puruṣārtha-svarūpa (the essential characteristics of the goal of life) as having five divisions—dharma (religiousity), artha (economic development), kāma (sense gratification), ātmānubhava (self-realization), and bhavagad-anubhava (God-realization); the subject of upāya-svarūpa (the characteristics of the means of attainment) as having five divisions—karma (fruitive activities), jñāna (cultivation of knowledge), bhakti (devotional service), prapatti (taking shelter), and ācāryābhimāna (assuming the role of a spiritual master); and the subject of virodhi-svarūpa (the characteristics of impediments) as having five divisions—svarūpa-virodhī (obstacles in self-realization), paratattva-virodhī (obstacles in God-realization), puruṣārtha-virodhī (obstacles in attaining the goal of life), upāya-virodhī (obstacles in the means of attainment), and prāpya-virodhī (obstacles in attaining the desired results). In this way, he has described twenty-five different items.

The pañcarātrika Vaiṣṇava principles of medieval South India have to some extent entered within the current practices of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Descendants of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas became more or less attached to the path of arcana, like the followers of the Pañcarātras, and spread subordination to Śrīman Mahāprabhu sometimes in its pure form but more often in a perverted form. Like the householder ācāryas of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya who are addressed as Svāmīs, Gauḍīya householder ācāryas have similarly accepted the title of Gosvāmī. While preaching the pure path of bhāva explained in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Śrīman Mahāprabhu distinguished it from mundane formalities, but in due course of time His teachings have become distorted into a branch of the pañcarātrika system. This, however, is not the purpose of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's pure preaching.

Although the followers of Rāmānuja and Madhva have remained distinct from the Śāṅkara-sampradāya, whose followers are known as pañcopāsakas, or worshipers of five gods, the Gauḍīya-sampradāya of North India was unable to remain aloof from the pañcopāsakas' influence and took to the service of such people, who are averse to Vaiṣṇavas. Actually the arrangement for arcana in the path of bhāva is not completely in agreement with that found in the pañcarātrika system. The kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs in the bhāva-mārga explained in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are practically equal to the mahā-bhāgavatas of the pañcarātrika-arcana-mārga, although there is some difference.

When these kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs advance further, they attain the position of madhyama-adhikārīs. And when the madhyama-adhikārīs advance further, they attain the position of mahā-bhāgavatas, or paramahānsas.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has quoted the following eight verses from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.48-55) to explain the position of the mahā-bhāgavatas:

gr̥hītvāpīndriyair arthān yo na dveṣṭi na hr̥ṣyati
viṣṇor māyām idam paśyan sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ

“Unlike the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī with a materialistic mentality, who engages his senses in enjoying their objects, the person who sees this variegated world as a creation of the illusory energy of Lord Viṣṇu is neither attracted nor repulsed while engaging his senses with their objects. He is indeed the greatest among devotees.” This definition is in terms of both mental and physical disposition.

dehendriya-prāṇa-mano-dhiyām yo
janmāpyaya-kṣud-bhaya-tarṣa-kṛcchraiḥ
saṁsāra-dharmair avimuhyamānaḥ
smṛtyā harer bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ

“One who simply by remembering the lotus feet of Lord Hari is no longer attached to the five objects of body, senses, life air, mind, and intelligence and who is thus no longer entangled in the miseries of birth, death, hunger, fear, and thirst is to be considered a mahā-bhāgavata, a foremost devotee of the Lord.

na kāma-karma-bijānām yasya cetasi sambhavaḥ
vāsudevaika-nilayaḥ sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ

“The seed of lusty desires cannot fructify in the heart of one who is fixed in the service of the Supreme Lord and completely peaceful because he has taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord. Such a person is considered a pradhāna Vaiṣṇava, or topmost devotee of the Lord.

na yasya janma-karmabhyām na varṇāśrama-jātibhiḥ
sajjate 'sminn aham-bhāvo dehe vai sa hareḥ priyaḥ

“If one does not become proud of one's material body made of skin and flesh in spite of taking an aristocratic birth such as that of a brāhmaṇa, executing pious activities like giving and accepting charity, and having a prestigious position within varṇāśrama society, then one is to be considered the dearest servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

na yasya svaḥ para iti vittaṣv ātmani vā bhidā
sarva-bhūta-samaḥ śāntaḥ sa vai bhāgavatottamaḥ

“One who sees no distinction of `own' and `others' in terms of his body and wealth, who treats all living beings equally, and who is always peaceful is considered to be a mahā-bhāgavata.

tri-bhuvana-vibhava-hetave 'py akuṇṭha-

smṛtir ajitātma-surādibhir vimṛgyāt
na calati bhagavat-padāravindāl
lava-nimiṣārdham api yaḥ sa vaiṣṇavāgryaḥ

“One whose mind cannot be distracted from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa for even a single moment even if he achieves the benediction of ruling and enjoying the opulence of the entire universe, which the demigods whose hearts are dedicated to Lord Ajita aspire for, is to be considered vaiṣṇava-pradhāna, the best of the Vaiṣṇavas.

bhagavata uru-vikramānghri-śākhā-
nakha-maṇi-candrikayā nirasta-tāpe
hṛdi katham upasīdatām punaḥ sa
prabhavati candra ivodite 'rka-tāpaḥ

“A person who is afflicted by the burning heat of the sun experiences no pain from the cooling moonshine. So how can the fire of material suffering again burn one's heart when it has been cooled by the rays emanating from the jewel-like nails of the most powerful lotus feet of the Supreme Lord? Such a person is a mahā-bhāgavata.

visṛjati hṛdayaṁ na yasya sāksād
dharir avaśābhīhito 'py aghaughā-nāśaḥ
praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtānghri-padmaḥ
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ

“If one even unintentionally utters the names of Lord Hari, all his sinful reactions are destroyed. That Supreme Lord Hari never leaves the heart of one who has captured His lotus feet with love. Such a person is to be known as mahā-bhāgavata, the most exalted devotee of the Lord.”

The classification of Vaiṣṇavas established in the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa, Chapter 84, cannot be accepted as the same as the pañcarātrika system of classification.

The Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa presents the characteristics of topmost devotees as follows:

tṛṇa-śayyā-rato bhakto	man-nāma-guṇa-kīrtiṣu
mano niveśayet tyaktvā	samsāra-sukha-kāraṇam
dhyāyate mat-padābjaṁ ca	pūjayed bhakti-bhāvataḥ
sarva-siddham na vāñcanti	te 'ṇimādikam īpsitam
brahmatvam amaratvaṁ vā	suratvaṁ sukha-kāraṇam
dāsyam vinā na hīcchanti	sālokyādi-catuṣṭayam
naiva nirvāṇa-muktim ca	sudhā-pānam abhīpsitam
vāñcati niścalām bhaktim	madīyām atulām api
strī-puṁ-vibhedo nāsty evam	sarva-jīveṣv abhinnaṭā

kṣut-pipāsādikam nidrām lobha-mohādikam ripum
tyaktvā divā-niṣam mām ca dhyāyate ca dig-ambaraḥ

“My devotees give up the sources of material pleasure, sleep on straw mats, engage their minds in glorifying My names and qualities, and devotedly worship My lotus feet within their hearts. They do not desire to achieve any mystic perfections like aṇimā. They do not desire happiness derived from becoming a demigod, an immortal, or Lord Brahmā. If they cannot be situated in My service, they do not even want perfections like living on the same planet with Me. They do not desire to drink nectar, nor do they desire the liberation of nirvāṇa. My devotees pray only for uncomparable and undeviating devotional service at My lotus feet. They do not discriminate between men and women, and they treat all living entities equally. Becoming free from the enemies headed by hunger, thirst, sleep, greed, and illusion, they go without clothing and meditate day and night on Me. These are the symptoms of uttama Vaiṣṇavas.”

Characteristics of the intermediate Vaiṣṇava:

nāsaktaḥ karmasu grhī pūrva-prāktanataḥ śuciḥ
karoti satataṁ caiva pūrva-karma-nikṛntanam
na karoty aparaṁ yatnāt saṅkalpa-rahitaś ca saḥ
sarvaṁ kṛṣṇasya yat kiñcin nāhaṁ kartā ca karmaṇaḥ
karmaṇā manasā vācā satataṁ cintayed iti

“The madhyama-adhikārī is already purified as the result of the pious deeds of his previous life, and although he lives at home he remains unattached. Everything he does simply helps diminish the reactions of his past activities. He is devoid of material desires and is careful to avoid accumulating further karmic reactions. The conviction that ‘Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa; I am not the doer,’ is apparent in his thoughts, speech, and actions.”

Characteristics of the neophyte Vaiṣṇava:

nyūna-bhaktaś ca tan-nyunaḥ sa ca prākṛtikaḥ śrutau
yamaṁ vā yama-dūtaṁ vā svapne sa ca na paśyati
puruṣāṅgāṁ sahasraṁ ca pūrva-bhaktaḥ samuddharet
puṁsāṁ śataṁ madhyamaṁ ca tac caturthaṁ ca prākṛtaḥ

“The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is inferior to the madhyama-adhikārī. He has material misconceptions even about hearing topics of Hari, yet he also does not see Yamarāja or his servants even in his dreams. The uttama-adhikārī is capable of delivering one thousand generations of his ancestors, the madhyama-adhikārī is capable of delivering one hundred generations, and the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is capable of delivering only four generations.”

Although a shadow of indirect devotional service is found among some pañcarātrika Vaiṣṇavas, they will also come to the stage of uttama-adhikāri by their gradual advancement. In the opinion of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, only devotional service that is pure, unalloyed, and devoid of material desires is acceptable. It is a fact that the followers of the Pañcarātras also use the word aikāntika, or unalloyed, to describe their devotional service, but because they have accepted the support of karma and jñāna in their process of worship, such a process cannot be compared with the pure devotional service preached by Śrī Caitanya-candra.

In his commentary on Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's Tattva-sandarbhā, Śrīmad Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu, who is known as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Vedantācārya, has pointed out four differences with the South Indian Vaiṣṇava followers of Madhvācārya in these words:

bhaktānām vipraṇām eva mokṣaḥ, devāḥ bhakteṣu mukhyāḥ, viriñcasyaiva sāyujyam, lakṣmyā jīva-koṭitvam ity evam mata-viśeṣaḥ dakṣiṇādi-deśeti tena gaude 'pi mādhavendrādayas tad upaśiṣyāḥ katicid babhūvur ity arthaḥ.

Śrī Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu has found the following four teachings in the philosophy of Madhvācārya to be unacceptable to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas: Only a brāhmaṇa devotee is eligible for liberation, the demigods are the foremost devotees, Lord Brahmā attains sāyujya-mukti (merging in Brahman), and Lakṣmīdevī is included among the jīvas.

Nevertheless Śrī Mādhavendra Purī and a number of others in Bengal became followers of Madhvācārya's prema-bhakti line.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned the names of Śrī Vijayadhvaja and Vyāsa Tīrtha, who were among the South Indian disciples of Śrī Madhvācārya in the Tattvavāda school. He said that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas from Śrīpāda Jayatīrtha to Śrī Mādhavendra Purīpāda were all in the line of prema-bhakti. Vidyādhirāja, the disciple of Śrīpāda Jayatīrtha, Rājendra Tīrtha, the disciple of Vidyādhirāja, and his disciple, Vijayadhvaja, all appeared in the middle of the fifteenth century. Puruṣottama, the disciple of Vijayadhvaja, had a disciple named Subrahmaṇya, whose disciple was Vyāsa Tīrtha. Vyāsa Tīrtha lived from 1548 to 1598 A.D., so he was a contemporary of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī.

This Tattvavāda, or pañcarātrika system, is not acceptable in the opinion of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Rather, He taught the path of bhāgavata-mārga. When Śrī Gaurasundara, the Lord of Goloka worshipable throughout the fourteen worlds, visited the principal maṭha in the village of Uḍupī in the district of Mangalore in the year 1511, Śrī Raghuvarya Tīrtha was the maṭha commander. There is a description of Lord Caitanya's visit in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā, Chapter 9) as follows:

tattvavādī ācārya—saba śāstrete pravīṇa
tānre praśna kaila prabhu hañā yena dīna

“The chief ācārya of the Tattvavāda community was very learned in the revealed scriptures. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu humbly questioned him.

sādhya-sādhana āmi nā jāni bhāla-mate
sādhya-sādhana-śreṣṭha jānāha āmāte

“Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘I do not know very well the aim of life and how to achieve it. Please tell Me of the best ideal for humanity and how to attain it.’

ācārya kahe,—‘varṇāśrama-dharma, kṛṣṇe samarpaṇa’
ei haya kṛṣṇa-bhaktera śreṣṭha `sādhana’

“The ācārya replied, ‘When the activities of the four castes and the four āśramas are dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, they constitute the best means whereby one can attain the highest goal of life.

`pañca-vidha mukti’ pāñā vaikuṅṭhe gamana
`sādhya-śreṣṭha’ haya,—ei śāstra-nirūpaṇa

“When one dedicates the duties of varṇāśrama-dharma to Kṛṣṇa, he is eligible for five kinds of liberation. Thus he is transferred to the spiritual world in Vaikuṅṭha. This is the highest goal of life and the verdict of all revealed scriptures.’

prabhu kahe,—śāstre kahe śravaṇa-kīrtana
kṛṣṇa-prema-sevā-phalera `parama-sādhana’

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘According to the verdict of the śāstras, the process of hearing and chanting is the best means to attain loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

śravaṇa-kīrtana ha-ite kṛṣṇe haya `premā’
sei pañcama puruṣārtha—puruṣārthera sīmā

“When one comes to the platform of loving service to Lord Kṛṣṇa by executing these nine processes beginning with hearing and chanting, he has attained the fifth platform of success and the limit of life’s goals.

karma-nindā, karma-tyāga, sarva-śāstre kahe
karma haite prema-bhakti kṛṣṇe kabhu nahe

“In every revealed scripture there is condemnation of fruitive activities. It is advised everywhere to give up engagement in fruitive activities, for by executing them no one can attain the highest goal of life, love of Godhead.

pañca-vidha mukti tyāga kare bhakta-gaṇa

phalgu kari' `mukti' dekhe narakera sama

“Pure devotees reject the five kinds of liberation; indeed, for them liberation is very insignificant because they see it as hellish.

mukti, karma—dui vastu tyaje bhakta-gaṇa
sei dui sthāpa' tumi `sādhya', `sādhana'

“Both liberation and fruitive activity are rejected by devotees. You are trying to establish these things as life's goal and the process for attaining it.'

prabhu kahe,—karmī, jñānī,—dui bhakti-hīna
tomāra sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, `Both the fruitive worker and the speculative philosopher are considered nondevotees. We see both elements present in your sampradāya.'”

It is further stated in the Antya-līlā, Chapter Five:

āra eka `svabhāva' gaurera śuna, bhakta-gaṇa
aiśvarya-svabhāva gūḍha kare prakāṣaṇa

“There is yet another characteristic of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. O devotees, listen carefully to how He manifests His opulence and characteristics, although they are exceptionally deep.

sannyāsī paṇḍita-gaṇera karite garva nāśa
nīca-śūdra-dvārā karena dharmera prakāśa

“To vanquish the false pride of so-called renunciants and learned scholars, He spreads real religious principles, even through a śūdra, or lowborn fourth-class man.

`bhakti', `prema', `tattva' kahe rāye kari' `vaktā'
āpani pradyumna-miśra-saha haya `śrotā'

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached about devotional service, ecstatic love and the Absolute Truth by making Rāmānanda Rāya, a gṛhastha born in a low family, the speaker. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, the exalted brāhmaṇa-sannyāsī, and Pradyumna Miśra, the purified brāhmaṇa, both became the hearers of Rāmānanda Rāya.

haridāsa-dvārā nāma-māhātmya-prakāśa
sanātana-dvārā bhakti-siddhānta-vilāsa

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu exhibited the glories of the holy name of the Lord through Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who was born in a Mohammedan family. Similarly, He exhibited the essence of devotional service through Sanātana Gosvāmī, who had almost been converted into a Mohammedan.

śrī-rūpa-dvārā vrajera prema-rasa-līlā
ke bujhite pāre gambhīra caitanyera khelā?

“The Lord also fully exhibited the ecstatic love and transcendental pastimes of Vṛndāvana through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Considering all this, who can understand the deep plans of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?”

It is not only the sampradāya ācāryas who mistakenly compare the principles of karma-kāṇḍa like following varṇāśrama with devotional service like hearing and chanting, there are also nondevotee sampradāyas opposed to the principles of devotional service who consider their misconceptions and various devices that bind them to material existence as Vaiṣṇava practices. Though such persons claim to be Vaiṣṇavas according to their own definition, Vaiṣṇavas who are liberated from material designations know that they are attached to material designations. In his Bhakti-sandarbhā, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhupāda has quoted various sources to describe a few categories of such Vaiṣṇavas as follows:

skānde—

dharmārtham jīvitam yeṣāṁ santānārtham ca maithunam
pacanam vipra-mukhyārtham jñeyās te vaiṣṇavā narāḥ
viṣṇu purāṇe—

na calati nija-varṇa-dharmato yaḥ
sama-matir ātma-suhṛt-vipakṣa-pakṣe
na harati na ca hanti kiñcid uccaiḥ
sthita-manasaṁ tam avehi viṣṇu-bhaktam
pādme—

jīvitam yasya dharmārthe dharmo hary-artha eva ca
aho-rātrāṇi puṇyārtham taṁ manye vaiṣṇavam janam
bṛhan-nāradye—
śive ca parameśāne viṣṇau ca paramātmāni
sama-buddhyā pravartante te vai bhāgavatottamāḥ

“In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said: ‘According to the fruitive workers, Vaiṣṇavas are those whose lives are dedicated to following religious principles, whose sex life is meant for begetting children, and whose cooking is for satisfying the best of the brāhmaṇas.’

“In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said: ‘A Vaiṣṇava is one who considers his actions are in accordance with the order of Lord Viṣṇu. He who does not deviate from the principles

of his varṇa and āśrama, who treats his friends and enemies equally, and who neither destroys nor steals anything—such a sober person is a devotee of Viṣṇu.'

“Becoming a Vaiṣṇava by offering the fruits of one's karma to the Lord is explained in the Padma Purāṇa as follows: ‘One whose life is dedicated to following religious principles, whose religious principles are dedicated for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, and whose days and nights are passed in accumulating pious activities is known as a Vaiṣṇava.’

“The symptoms of a uttama-adhikārī according to the Śaivites are given in the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa as follows: ‘Those who accept Lord Śiva, the chief of the demigods, as equal to Lord Viṣṇu, the Supersoul, are considered mahā-bhāgavatas.’”

Other similar statements are found in scriptures that are meant for pseudo-devotees and devotees who do not know how to practically apply the principles of devotional service. Actually, apart from unalloyed devotional service, all other activities of this material world fall under the categories of either impure devotional service or fruitive work with desires for the results. All such activities are subject to change, temporary, and contemptible. The imagined qualities of Vaiṣṇavas and devotional service that the karmīs, jñānīs, and sense enjoyers claim to be supreme according to their respective tastes are unscientific, imprudent, and mere products of ignorance that are situated far away from pure devotional service.

In this connection, one naturally thinks about the statements made by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the purifier of the entire world, Śrī Mahāprabhu, regarding the identity of Śrī Viṣṇupāda Prabhuvāra Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was the treasure of Mahāprabhu's heart and a mountain of transcendental opulences.

These statements are found in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, Chapter Six, as follows:

tomāra bāpa-jyeṭhā—viṣaya-viṣṭhā-gartera kīḍā
sukha kari' māne viṣaya-viṣera mahā-pīḍā
yadyadi brahmaṇya kare, brāhmaṇera sahāya
‘śuddha-vaiṣṇava’ nahe, haye ‘vaiṣṇavera prāya’
tathāpi viṣayera svabhāva—kare mahā-andha
sei karma karāya, yāte haya bhava-bandha

“My dear Raghunātha dāsa, your father and his elder brother are just like worms in stool in the ditch of material enjoyment, for the great disease of the poison of material enjoyment is what they consider happiness. Although your father and uncle are charitable to brāhmaṇas and greatly help them, they are nevertheless not pure Vaiṣṇavas. However, they are almost like Vaiṣṇavas. Those who are attached to materialistic life and are blind to spiritual life must act in such a way that they are bound to repeated birth and death by the actions and reactions of their activities.”

In the process of ascertaining who is a Vaiṣṇava, many people misidentify one who is almost a Vaiṣṇava as a real Vaiṣṇava. Materialists and karmīs are not included among the pure Vaiṣṇavas. Seeing their mundane endeavors, great personalities who are conversant in devotional scriptures call them vaiṣṇava-prāya, almost Vaiṣṇavas. They never make the mistake of regarding them as real Vaiṣṇavas. Since we will discuss the behavior and dealings of Vaiṣṇavas in a separate chapter, we will not elaborate on this point at present.

By discussing the different grades of Vaiṣṇavas, we have now been able to understand the different degrees of Vaiṣṇavism. When one gives up the materialist mentality of being covered by the conceptions of whimsical sense enjoyment, karma, and jñāna and favorably cultivates attraction to Kṛṣṇa, this is called pure devotional service. One whose heart is naturally fixed in this principle is a pure devotee. The glories of such pure devotees have already been quoted from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. The conclusion that is given by Śrī Mahāprabhu's dearest servant, Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, whose heart is nondifferent from that of Śrī Mahāprabhu, in his essay, Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, must be followed by all pure Vaiṣṇavas.

kr̥ṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īśam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā

“One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation [dīkṣā] and is engaged in worshiping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others.”

Citing the authority of the Pañcarātra-āgamas in his Bhakti-sandarbha, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhū has stated:

divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ

“Dīkṣā is the process by which transcendental knowledge is awakened and all reactions caused by sinful activity are vanquished. Learned persons who are expert in the study of the revealed scriptures declare this process to be called dīkṣā.”

A spiritual master who gives mantra, assists one in spiritual realization rather than increasing one's material knowledge, and is able to destroy all illicit endeavors for sinful activities is a real initiating spiritual master, and those who take shelter of him are his initiated disciples. The instructions given to Māyādevī by Nāmācārya Śrīla

Ṭhākura Haridāsa Prabhu, the king of devotees, regarding spiritual initiation are described in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 3.240-241) as follows:

sankhyā-nāma-saṅkīrtana—ei 'mahā-yajña' manye
tāhāte dikṣita āmi ha-i prati-dine
yāvat kīrtana samāpta nahe, nā kari anya kāma
kīrtana samāpta haile, haya dikṣāra viśrāma

“I have been initiated into a vow to perform a great sacrifice by chanting the holy name a certain number of times every day. As long as the vow to chant is unfulfilled, I do not desire anything else. When I finish my chanting, then I have an opportunity to do anything.”

Unless one becomes qualified as a sacrificial brāhmaṇa in the sacrifice of chanting the holy names, the name of Kṛṣṇa does not manifest. Although Ṭhākura Haridāsa Prabhu was not a seminal or Vedic brāhmaṇa, he attained the position of a qualified initiated brāhmaṇa:

koṭi-nāma-grahaṇa-yajña kari eka-māse
ei dikṣā kariyāchi, haila āsi' śeṣe

“I have vowed to chant ten million names in a month. I have taken this vow, but now it is nearing its end.”

A madhyama-adhikārī should mentally show respect to the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī who is properly initiated and engaged in chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. One who has surpassed the stage of kaniṣṭha-adhikāra through the process of chanting the holy names and who engages in worshiping the Supreme Lord with transcendental realization, such a madhyama-adhikārī should be offered respectful obeisances and his guidance should be followed. And one who is constantly engaged in worshiping Kṛṣṇa with transcendental realization, who has completely given up aversion to Hari, and who does not condemn even those who are envious of Hari—such a mahā-bhāgavata should be respectfully served with the conviction that his association is most desirable.

A Vaiṣṇava whose life has become successful by taking initiation has no false ego. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu quotes the following verses from the Padma Purāṇa in this connection:

ahankṛtir ma-kāraḥ syān na-kāras tan niṣedhakaḥ
tasmāt tu namaśa kṣetri- svātantryaṁ pratiṣidhyate
bhagavat-paratanthro 'sau tadāyatātma-jīvanaḥ
tasmāt sva-sāmarthya-vidhim tyajet sarvam aśeṣataḥ
īśvarasya tu sāmarthyāt nālabhyaṁ tasya vidyate
tasmin nyasta-bharaḥ śete tat-karmaiva samācaret

“The holy names of the Lord are directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the word namaḥ is added to the names of the Lord it indicates subordination to the Lord, and the combination is called a mantra. The syllable ma refers to the material ego, and the syllable na indicates its negation. Therefore the word namaḥ is used to indicate one's rejection of the false ego under the subordination of the Lord. The living entity who possesses the “field” of the material body and is thus “the proprietor of the field” is called the jīva. When the living entity uses the word namaḥ, his independence in the form of absorption in matter is counteracted.

“A Vaiṣṇava devotee of the Lord is completely subordinate to the Lord, meaning that his life is fully dedicated to the Lord. Therefore a Vaiṣṇava must completely give up his independent endeavors and concocted formalities.

“By the unlimited potency of the Lord, there is nothing unachievable for His devotees. Devotees should be fully dependent on the Lord and properly engaged in His service.”

The s̄āstras that enjoin one should take initiation from a qualified transcendentalist who has perfected his life by chanting mantras. There is no possibility of receiving transcendental knowledge from an unqualified person who is bound by the false ego of high birth and greed for money. Therefore those who desire their own welfare should give up the materialistic, proud, so-called guru and take proper initiation from a Vaiṣṇava guru. If one has a prominent false ego and a material conception of life, then he will naturally become envious of the transcendental Vaiṣṇavas. One should give up the so-called guru who is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas, knowing him to be a nondevotee. If one fails to do so, one will incur sin and deviate from the path of devotion. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu has instructed the devotees of the Lord how to nourish their practice of devotional service in the following way:

vaiṣṇava-vidveṣī cet parityājya eva, “guror apy avaliptasye” ti smaraṇāt. tasya vaiṣṇava-bhāva-rāhityenāvaiṣṇavatayā “avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena” iti vacana-viṣayatvāc ca. yathokta-lakṣaṇasya śrī-guror avidyamānatāyām tu tasyaiva mahā-bhāgavatasyaikasya nitya-sevanam paramam śreyaḥ.

“If a so-called guru is envious of the Vaiṣṇavas, then one should reject him, remembering the guror apy avaliptasya verse⁵. This so-called guru does not have the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, therefore such a nondevotee should not be accepted as a guru. Those devotees who desire eternal welfare should say farewell to such so-called gurus, knowing them to be the subjects of the avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena verse⁶. In the absence of a genuine Vaiṣṇava guru who fits the description given above, one should constantly serve a mahā-bhāgavata for one's ultimate welfare.”

Those who blaspheme Vaiṣṇavas can never become devoted to Lord Hari. Due to their sinful activities, those who are not devotees of Kṛṣṇa cannot become Viṣṇu-janas. The Vaiṣṇavas should always associate with their own compatriots and should pass their

time hearing and chanting topics of the Lord and His devotees. Otherwise, as a result of bad association, they will forget their constitutional position as Hari-janas and become greatly proud of being rich, learned, brahminical, and so on.

In His instructions to Śrī Sanātana, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has personally mentioned two main reasons why a Vaiṣṇava may lose his standing as a Vaiṣṇava. If a practitioner indulges in either of them, he can no longer remain a Hari-jana. When one ceases to perform fruitive activities, mundane pride leaves him aside. Just as a brāhmaṇa who does not behave properly and lacks the appropriate brahminical qualities becomes a śūdra or outcaste, so a Hari-jana whose devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes interrupted and who comes under the influence of women due to material absorption falls from the position of a Vaiṣṇava and then considers that following the varṇāśrama principles is of utmost importance.

In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter Twenty-two, it is stated:

asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
`stri-saṅgi'—eka asādhu, `kṛṣṇābhakta' āra
eta saba chāḍi' āra varṇāśrama-dharma
akiñcana hañā laya kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
vidhi-dharma chāḍi' bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa
niṣiddha pāpācāre tāra kabhu nahe mana
ajñāne vā haya yadi `pāpa' upasthita
kṛṣṇa tānre śuddha kare, nā karāya prāyaścitta
jñāna-vairāgyādi—bhaktira kabhu nahe `aṅga'
ahiṁsā-yama-niyamādi bule kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga

“A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Without hesitation, one should take the exclusive shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa with full confidence, giving up bad association and even neglecting the regulative principles of the four varṇas and four āśramas. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment.

“Although the pure devotee does not follow all the regulative principles of varṇāśrama, he worships the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he naturally has no tendency to commit sin.

“If, however, a devotee accidentally becomes involved in a sinful activity, Kṛṣṇa purifies him. He does not have to undergo the regulative form of atonement.

“The path of speculative knowledge and renunciation is not very essential for devotional service. Indeed, good qualities such as nonviolence and mind and sense control automatically accompany a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

The first obstacle for being able to identify oneself as a Vaiṣṇava is strī-saṅga, association with women. Association with women is of two types, the first of which is regulated association based on varṇāśrama principles. In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, Chapter One, it is said:

kṛṣṇa-bhaktira bādhaka—yata śubhāśubha karma
seha eka jīvera ajñāna-tamo-dharma

“All kinds of activities, both auspicious and inauspicious, that are detrimental to the discharge of transcendental loving service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are actions of the darkness of ignorance.”

Śrīla Ṭhākura Narottama has also said:

puṇya se sukhera dhāma, tāhāra nā laio nāma
pāpa puṇya dui parihara

“Don't even talk about pious activities, which are the source of all happiness. Give up both pious and sinful activities.”

Giving up the association of Hari-janas and becoming overly attached to the wife under one's protection is the symptom of bad association. But remaining in the gṛhastha āśrama in order to increase Kṛṣṇa's family cannot be called strī-saṅga. The second kind of strī-saṅga is unregulated association with women, which is irreligious and which creates disturbances in the varṇāśrama society, because those who indulge in such association are engaged in sinful activities, abominable activities, or inactivity, and as a result they go to hell. The sinful people of the material world are completely unqualified to be called Vaiṣṇavas. And pious people who strictly follow the rules and regulations of varṇāśrama but are indifferent to the service of Hari are also completely unqualified to be called Hari-janas.

If the lowest classes of Prakṛti-janas are addressed as Hari-janas, then those who address them as such are ineligible to have the fortune of being called Hari-janas.

If varṇāśrama and other fruitive activities enjoined in the sāstras become prominent in one's life, then one cannot become akiñcana, or fully dependent on the Lord; rather these activities provoke offenses against the chanting of the holy names in the form of conceptions of “I” and “mine.” If a person who is fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa becomes proud of following varṇāśrama principles, then it must be considered that he has become most unfortunate. Due to the influence of association with women, the whole

material world is daily advancing in aversion to Hari. No one is able to understand the position of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Moreover, even if one gets freedom from material existence by giving up the regulated and unregulated association of women, he is still not completely delivered. He may still be bound by the nondevotional behavior of dharma, artha, and kāma, which are simply three other forms of strī-saṅga. Mokṣa, though not a form of strī-saṅga, is nevertheless a relative accomplishment, being simply the absence of material conceptions. Therefore the constant favorable cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has been established as the principle item amongst the Vaiṣṇava codes of behavior for removing the illusions of the nondevotees. Those who desire liberation are also nondevotees. Such persons reject varṇāśrama principles, engage in self-worship, and falsely claim to be paramahāṁsas; therefore they cannot be Vaiṣṇavas. If one realizes the transcendental position of the Hari-janas and serves them, then he can also become a Hari-jana. If one wants to ascertain the process for achieving devotional service through material knowledge, his endeavor will simply be another form of karma. If one wants to ascertain the process for achieving devotional service through impersonal speculation, his endeavor will be dominated by the process of jñāna. And if one simply wants to immediately enjoy sense gratification without considering its good and bad effects, his endeavor will simply be another form of sense gratification. There is no possibility for these three types of persons to achieve devotional service, which is the eternal spiritual propensity of the Hari-janas. The term “nondevotees” refers to these three types of persons; Jarāsandha, Kāṁsa, Śiśupāla, and others are also among the nondevotee aspirants of liberation averse to Kṛṣṇa.

The enlightenment of the path of jñāna is considered most powerful by the karmīs who are attached to religiousity, economic development, and sense gratification. But since it is an obstacle to the cooling moonshine of devotional service, it is not regarded highly by the unalloyed devotees who have already achieved knowledge and supreme auspiciousness. When the nondevotees who are averse to devotional service see the prohibited sinful activities of the pseudo-devotees, they become eager to treat them with their own medicine. But real devotees, or Hari-janas, are not affected by such diseases. If a nonduplicious aspiring Hari-jana is in any way infected by the influence of either of these three categories, then Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself protects him.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.20.27-30) states as follows:

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu	nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmaṅ kāmān	parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ
tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ	śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān	duḥkhodarkāṁś ca garhayan
proktena bhakti-yogena	bhajato māsaḥ muneh
kāmā hṛdayā naśyanti	sarve mayi hṛdi sthite
bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś	chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi	mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani

[The Supreme Lord said:] “One who develops faith in My names, qualities, and pastimes, who has given up attachment for worldly and Vedic activities and their fruits, who has understood material sense gratification as the source of misery yet is unable to give it up—such a faithful devotee has firm conviction that all his necessities will be attained simply by the execution of devotional service, so he goes on enjoying the sense gratification that he knows will lead to misery, while condemning this sense enjoyment and worshiping Me with pure love. In this way an introspective person constantly engages in My devotional service as I have described it, and I take residence in his heart and personally vanquish the contamination of lust. If one installs Me in his heart, faults can no longer remain there; the knots in his heart are untied, his doubts are removed, and his desires for fruitive activities are eradicated.”

The conditioned souls who are attached to and maddened by material sense enjoyment proudly consider themselves the doers and thus become bound in the manifold network of karma. When such people come to understand that the results of their karma are insignificant, then only do they begin to give up their attempt to lord it over material nature and develop faith in the topics of the Supreme Lord. When one develops faith in the topics of Lord Hari, he can give up self-identification as the doer and his desire to lord it over. He then understands that all forms of material sense gratification are simply impediments on the path towards his goal of life. Yet even after understanding this, he is unable to give up his long-standing inclination for sense gratification due to bad habits and weak faith.

If one who is situated in such an unfortunate state desires to increase his faith in the topics of Hari and serve Him with strong attachment, then the firm conviction that ‘If I consider myself the doer, I will simply meet with miseries in this world’ will to a great extent protect one from material attachment.

When one takes shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master and engages in the exclusive service of the Lord, following in the footsteps of the mahājanas, then the transcendental Absolute Truth will capture his heart and all desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa will be vanquished. At that time the contamination produced from lust that has accumulated from many lifetimes, will be evacuated. He then no longer has any doubt; in other words, he understands that the path of devotional service is sublime. At that time he also understands the uselessness of considering himself the doer. When his self-identification as the doer with the aim of sense gratification becomes diminished, at that time he displays symptoms of full surrender such as all his activities are dedicated to satisfying the Supreme Lord, all his endeavors are directed towards pleasing Kṛṣṇa, and he considers “Kṛṣṇa is my only protector.”

Cherished by the paramahānsas, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.2.33) states:

tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid

bhraśyanti mārḡāt tvayi baddha-sauhrdāḥ
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho

“Lord Brahmā said: O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, Hari-janas completely in love with You do not fall like the seekers of other goals—the karmīs and the relatively superior jñānīs—fall from their respective unsteady paths. O my Lord, the Hari-janas are always protected by You and thus fearlessly traverse over the head of the commander-in-chief of those who create obstacles.”

The devotees of the Lord do not remain in a dangerous situation; rather, they continue to serve Hari with transcendental realization. But if they happen to lack transcendental realization, the Lord gives them knowledge so that they can understand themselves as Hari-janas. Needless to say, unregulated sense enjoyers, karmīs, and jñānīs are all desirous of physical and non-physical enjoyment, so there is no possibility of their achieving auspiciousness. But if they give up their respective material desires, they can become devoted Hari-janas.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.18.12) it is stated:

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ

There is no need for a devotee to separately endeavor for acquiring artificial saintly qualities, like those with concepts other than devotional service who are haunted by the ghosts of karma and jñāna. If one is on the platform of devotional service, then all saintly qualities automatically manifest in him. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said, “Those who have unmotivated devotion for the Personality of Godhead always possess all good qualities. They are perfectly established in these good qualities. Such exalted qualities, however, can never remain in anyone who is not a Hari-jana. Because the unregulated sense enjoyers, karmīs, and jñānīs desire something other than the Supreme Lord and thus their minds are attracted to changeable products of illusion and external objects of sense gratification, their absorption in various changing, ephemeral objects is only momentary. Thus the great qualities of saintly persons cannot find a place in their hearts permanently or for any duration of time.” Today we may see some good qualities in something and consider it excellent, but over the course of time that excellence does not remain constant, being differently seen in the eyes of different viewers from different points of view at different times. Hari-janas, however, are eternal and their activities are eternal. All the perceived and perceiving beings of Vaikuṅṭha, moreover, are adorned with the transcendental qualities of being eternal, faultless, unlimited, and absolutely desirable.

Pure unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas are actually very rare. Those who can say, “Such ideal Vaiṣṇava character is most desirable,” are also seldom found in this world. Therefore the only means of achieving the highest goal of life is to simply hear and chant the topics of Hari and the Hari-janas. If for even a moment anyone, whether qualified or unqualified, down to the lowest sinner, factually recognizes that the saintly Hari-janas are the topmost entities in the fourteen worlds and beyond and that they are therefore most respectable, then their respective spiritual practices will certainly increase our festive joy. The number of such qualified devotees is such a small fraction of the world's population! Therefore it is most important that the supreme ideal position of the Hari-janas should be somewhat realized in the heart of every living entity.

The wicked tendency of dedicated Prakṛti-janas is to completely reject the worship of Hari. It is stated in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā, Chapter 19) as follows:

tāra madhye `sthāvara', jaṅgama'—dui bheda
jaṅgame tiryak-jala-sthalacara-vibheda
tāra madhye manuṣya-jāti ati alpatara
tāra madhye mleccha, pulinda, bauddha, śabara
veda-niṣṭha-madhye ardheka veda `mukhe' māne
veda-niṣiddha pāpa kare, dharma nāhi gaṇe
dharmācāri-madhye bahuta `karma-niṣṭha'
koṭi-karma-niṣṭha-madhye eka jñānī' śreṣṭha
koṭi-jñāni-madhye haya eka-jana `mukta'
koṭi-mukta-madhye `durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta
kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva `śānta'
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali `aśānta'

“The unlimited living entities can be divided into two divisions—those that can move and those that cannot move. Among living entities that can move, there are birds, aquatics and animals.

“Although the living entities known as human beings are very small in quantity, that division may be still further subdivided, for there are many uncultured human beings like mlecchas, pulindas, bauddhas and śabaras.

“Among human beings, those who are followers of the Vedic principles are considered civilized. Among these, almost half simply give lip service while committing all kinds of sinful activities against these principles. Such people do not care for the regulative principles.

“Among the followers of Vedic knowledge, most are following the process of fruitive activity and distinguishing between good and bad work. Out of many such sincere fruitive actors, there may be one who is actually wise.

“Out of many millions of such wise men, one may actually become liberated [mukta], and out of many millions of such liberated persons, a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to find.

“Because a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless, he is peaceful. Fruitive workers desire material enjoyment, jñānīs desire liberation, and yogis desire material opulence; therefore they are all lusty and cannot be peaceful.”

We find it written that there are only twelve Hari-janas in the four yugas—Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. Does this mean that the Hari-janas have given up Vaiṣṇavism to serve the materialistic Prakṛti-janas? Is this the conclusion of the śāstras? Every living entity is constitutionally a servant of Kṛṣṇa, or a Hari-jana. The living entity is bound by the ropes of māyā in proportion to his forgetfulness of his identity as the servant of Kṛṣṇa. He then identifies himself as a smārta. Mundane foolishness is greatly diminished for one who realizes that an unalloyed Hari-jana is worshipable throughout the three worlds and is nondifferent from Hari, as His servant.

By His sweet will, the Supreme Lord often sends His associates into this material world in order to treat the conditioned souls. This is also one of the Lord's tests. In order to spread His glories, to show how exclusively devoted to His service certain Hari-janas are, and to bring other Hari-janas back to His abode, the supreme enjoyer of transcendental pastimes sends His own associate or associates into this material world as His “devotee-incarnations.” The actual facts are distorted if such personalities are counted among those who have become perfect by regulated practice. Those Hari-janas who appear within this world as bhakta-avatāras before, during, or after the appearance of the Lord are not in the category of sādhana-siddha devotees. And those Hari-janas who are followers of the twelve perfect devotees are counted among the sādhana-siddha devotees.

While studying the history of the Śrī-sampradāya, we came to know that twelve perfect associates of the Lord appear at different times in this world from Vaikuṅṭha in order to benefit the living entities. Also from authoritative Gauḍīya texts such as Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā we can learn of the identities the Lord and His associates of Goloka and Vaikuṅṭha assume in gaura-līlā. When a living entity achieves perfection by worshiping Hari and realizes his perfect and uncontaminated status as a servant of Kṛṣṇa, he then discovers his own eternal identity and the Lord becomes constantly manifest to him. Persons who are averse to the Hari-janas, however, can never understand this fact.

The activities and symptoms of Vaiṣṇavas are completely beyond the understanding of persons with material intelligence. During the four yugas, innumerable Hari-janas have honestly worshiped the Supreme Lord, showing a perfect example in their lives. By the hostile counteractive measures of the smārtas, they were neither broken-hearted, discouraged, nor induced to give up their position as Hari-janas. Those who

are unfortunate and less intelligent become bound by the results of pious and impious activities and create enmity with the Hari-janas.

The Vaiṣṇava-mañjuṣā quotes the following from the Prapannāmṛta, Chapter Seventy-four:

kāṣāra-bhūta-mahad-āhvaya-bhaktisārāḥ
śrīmac-chaṭhāri-kulaśekhara-viṣṇucittāḥ
bhaktānghri-reṇu-munivāha-catuṣ-kavīndrāḥ
te divya-sūraya iti prathitā daśorvyām
godā yatīndra-miśrābhyām dvādaśaitān vidur budhāḥ
visṛjya godām madhura- kavinā saha sattama
kecid dvādaśa-saṅkhyātān vadanti vibudhottamāḥ

The history of these associates of the Lord in the Śrī-sampradāya are described in Sanskrit language in the two books Divya-sūri-carita and Prapannāmṛta; in the Maṅgla language, which is a mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil, in the books Guru-paramaparāi-prabhāva, Prabandha-sāra, and Upadeśa-ratna-mālāi; and in the Dravidian Tamil language in the book Paḍa-naḍai-vilakkam.

- (1) Kāṣāra Muni, or Sara Yogī (Payaga-i Ālvār), (2) Bhūta Yogī (Pudatta Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Lord's conch, (3) Bhrānta Yogī, or Mahad (Pe Ālvār), (4) Bhaktisāra (Tirumaḍisāippirāṅ Ālvār), (5) Śaṭhāri, also known as Śaṭhakopa, Parāṅkuśa, and Bakulābharāṇa (Nammā Ālvār), (6) Kulaśekhara (Kulaśekhara Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Kaustubha gem, (7) Viṣṇucitta (Peri-i Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Garuḍa, (8) Bhaktānghrireṇu (Toṇḍāraḍippaḍi Ālvār), (9) Munivāha, also known as Yogivāha and Prāṇanātha (Tiruppāṇi Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Śrīvatsa, (10) Catukavi, or Parakāl (Tirumaṅga-i Ālvār), who was an incarnation of the Lord's bow, (11) Godā (Āṇḍāl), who was an incarnation of Nīlā Lakṣmī, (12) Rāmānuja (Yambārumanār, Uda-iyāvār, Ilāi Ālvār), who was an incarnation of Lakṣmaṇa, and (13) Madhura Kavi (Madhura Kavigal Ālvār).

(2)

It is not that only South Indian devotees have come from Vaikuṅṭha; if we look at the pastimes of the pure devotees of Bengal, we will realize that they are also eternal Hari-janas. We will now quote a few examples from the Gaura-gaṇoddeśa, Rāmānuja-carita, and Madhva-carita.

Those who have attained perfection in their bhajana have realized their own constitutional position. But nowadays in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya some immature pañcarātrika-mantra traders are presenting imaginary material names and forms as the goal of life and the path of perfection (siddha-praṇālī); in this way they gratify the minds of their disciples as well as disclose their own foolishness and ignorance of the Vaiṣṇava literatures. We are not talking about these persons. The realizations of those who came to know their constitutional position by the strength of

their authentic worship of Hari (hari-bhajana) were often written down by their disciples in various parts of India at various times.

We do not wish speak further on this subject. Yet it is also true that universally honored persons like Śrī Madhvācārya, the incarnation of Vāyu, Bhīma, or Hanumān; Śrī Rāmānuja, the incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa; and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas like Prabhuvāra Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Prabhuvāra Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Prabhuvāra Śrī Raghunātha Gosvāmī, Prabhu Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura, Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Prabhu Śrī Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura, Īsvārī Śrī Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, and others, as well as Śrīpāda Viśvanātha Cakravartī Prabhu, Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana Prabhu, various śrīpāda-siddha-bābājī Prabhus, Prabhuvāra Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīpāda Paramahansa Śrī Śrī Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrī Gaurakīśora dāsa Prabhuvāra never performed devotional service with the mentality of mortal living beings fallen in the pit of smārta attitudes. These personalities had all realized their individual spiritual identities and, being fixed in pure devotional service, they revealed the transcendental nature of their bhajana.

Mortal beings who do not understand the bhāgavata or pañcarātrika paths, who are imperfect, expert in the false egoism of material birth and so on, and desirous of taking the post of ācārya for the sake of money can never become Hari-janas. They are all nondevotees. Their acting as family gurus is just like the mundane activities of weavers, potters, blacksmiths, cobblers, shopkeepers, reciters, singers, and drummers. But this is completely different from the transcendental faith of the Vaiṣṇavas. Since we are shoe carriers for the Hari-janas, we also agree with this description. The Hari-janas are divided into five types according to their taking shelter of each of the five primary rasas—śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, and mādhyura. There is a further division into two categories: If one takes shelter of regulative devotional service, which is predominated by appreciation of the Lord's opulences on the strength of the injunctions of scriptures and the spiritual master, that is called vaidhā-mārga; and if one follows according to his own taste a particular resident of Vraja and accepts devotional service as his constitutional engagement, it is called rāga-mārga.

This is explained in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter Twenty-four, as follows:

vidhi-bhakta', `rāga-bhakta',—dui-vidha nāma
dui-vidha bhakta haya cāri cāri prakāra
pāriṣada, sādhana-siddha, sādha-gaṇa āra
jāta-ajāta-rati-bhede sādha-dui bheda
vidhi-rāga-mārga cāri cāri—aṣṭa bheda
vidhi-bhaktye nitya-siddha pāriṣada—`dāsa'
`sakhā' `guru' `kānta-gaṇa',—cāri-vidha prakāśa
sādhana-siddha—dāsa, sakhā, guru, kānta-gaṇa
jāta-rati sādha-bhakta—cāri-vidha jana
ajāta-rati sādha-bhakta,—e cāri prakāra

vidhi-mārge bhakte ṣoḍaśa bheda pracāra
rāga-mārge aicche bhakte ṣoḍaśa vibheda
dui mārge ātmārāmera batriśa vibheda

“There are two types of ātmārāmas—one is engaged in regulative devotional service and the other is engaged in spontaneous devotional service.

“The ātmārāmas engaged in regulative and spontaneous devotional service are further categorized into four groups. There are the eternal associates, the associates who have become perfect by devotional service, and those who are engaged in devotional service and are called sādḥaka.

“Those who are practicing devotional service are either mature or immature. Therefore the sādḥakas are of two types. Since the devotees execute either regulative devotional service or spontaneous devotional service and there are four groups within these two divisions, altogether there are eight varieties.

“By executing regulative devotional service, one is elevated to the platform of an eternally perfect associate—such as a servant, friend, superior or beloved woman. These are of four varieties.

“Among those who have perfected themselves by devotional service, there are servants, friends, superiors and beloved damsels. Similarly, there are four types of mature devotees.

“Within the category of regulative devotional service, there are also immature devotees. These are also of four varieties. Thus in regulative devotional service there are altogether sixteen varieties.

“On the path of spontaneous devotional service, there are also sixteen categories of devotees. Thus there are thirty-two types of ātmārāmas enjoying the Supreme Lord on these two paths.”

The supremely pure devotional service given to the Gauḍiḥya Vaiṣṇavas by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is incomparable. This devotional service is not offered to any person within the fourteen worlds. The devotees have no object of service even in the waters of the Virajā, which is situated beyond the material universe and which cleanses one of the three modes of nature. This Virajā is the highest destination for those on the path of karma. Brahmaloḥa is situated on the other side of the Virajā. In the nondifferentiated Brahmaloḥa there is no recipient for one's devotional service. This is the highest destination attained through impersonal knowledge. Passing beyond Brahmaloḥa, one comes to the abode of Śrī Vaikuṅṭha, where Lord Nārāyaṇa resides.

The regulated worshipers on the path of pañcarātrika serve their worshipable Lord Nārāyaṇa here under the shelter of two and half rasas—śānta, dāśya, and sakḥya with

awe and reverence. Above Vaikuṅṭha is Goloka Vṛndāvana, where Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, who is the perfect object for all five rasas, is eternally worshiped by His devotees, who are the repositories of love. Devotional service is meant for Him alone. Since the Hari-janas' worshipable Lord is not present within the fourteen worlds as any material object, within the waters of the Virajā as the neutral balance of the material modes, or within Brahmaloḥa in formless Brahman, they have nothing do with these places. The worshipable Lord of the pañcarātrika Vaiṣṇavas resides in Vaikuṅṭha, and the worshipable Lord of the bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavas resides in Goloka. One should worship one of these Lords.

In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 19.151-154) Śrīman Mahāprabhu speaks as follows:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
mālī hañā kare sei bīja āropaṇa
śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana
upajiyā bāḍe latā `brahmāṇḍa' bhedi' yāya
`virajā' `brahma-loka' bhedi' `para-vyoma' pāya
tabe yāya tad-upari `goloka-vṛndāvana'
`kṛṣṇa-caraṇa'-kalpa-vṛkṣe kare ārohaṇa

“The living entity is wandering up and down, from one planet to another, and he is very fortunate if by the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa Himself he can get the seed of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

“When a person receives the seed of devotional service, he should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing the seed in his heart. If he waters the seed gradually by the process of śravaṇa and kīrtana [hearing and chanting], the seed will begin to sprout.

“As one waters the bhakti-latā-bīja, the seed sprouts, and the creeper gradually increases to the point where it penetrates the walls of this universe and goes beyond the Virajā River between the spiritual world and the material world. It attains Brahmaloḥa, the Brahman effulgence, and, penetrating through that stratum, it reaches the spiritual sky and the spiritual planet Goloka Vṛndāvana.

“Being situated in one's heart and being watered by śravaṇa-kīrtana, the bhakti creeper grows more and more. In this way it attains the shelter of the desire tree of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally situated in the planet known as Goloka Vṛndāvana in the topmost region of the spiritual sky.”

Nothing material, no matter how glorious, can be compared with these superexcellent devotees of the Lord. As one cannot compare a mustard seed with Mount Meru, a drop of water with the ocean, or a dwarf with the high sky, it is similarly improper to

compare the prestige of the Hari-janas with any ordinary mundane prestige. We will now cite some examples from the scriptures and some narrations of the mahājanas regarding the pathetic results achieved by materially conditioned entities who endeavor to directly or indirectly criticize, envy, or disrespect such Hari-janas with either their speech, bodies, or minds.

The Skanda Purāṇa states:

yo hi bhāgavatam lokam upahāsam nṛpottama
karoti tasya naśyanti artha-dharma-yaśaḥ-sutāḥ
nindām kurvanti ye mūḍhā vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām
patanti pitṛbhiḥ sārddham mahā-raurava-samjñite
hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣam darśane patanāni ṣaṭ

“O best of kings, if one derides an exalted devotee, he loses the results of his pious activities, his opulence, his reputation, and his sons. Those fools who blaspheme great Vaiṣṇavas fall down to the hell known as Mahāraurava, accompanied by their forefathers. Whoever kills or blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, whoever is envious of or angry with a Vaiṣṇava, and whoever does not offer proper greetings or feel joy upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava certainly becomes fallen.”

In the Amṛta-sāroddhāra it is stated:

janma-prabhṛti yat kiñcit sukṛtam samupārjitam
nāsam āyāti tat sarvaṁ pīḍayed yadi vaiṣṇavān

“If one gives pain to the Vaiṣṇavas, then the results of his pious activities like high birth and high caste are all destroyed.”

In the Dvārakā-māhātmya it is said:

kara-patraiś ca phālyante su-tivrair yama-śāsanaiḥ
nindām kurvanti ye pāpā vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām
pūjito bhagavān viṣṇur janmāntara-śatair api
prasīdati na viśvātmā vaiṣṇave cāpamānite

“Those most sinful people who criticize great Vaiṣṇavas are subjected by Yamarāja to the severe punishment of being sliced in pieces by very sharp saws. Lord Hari, the Supersoul of the entire universe, is never pleased with the miscreant who insults a Vaiṣṇava, even if he has worshiped Viṣṇu for hundreds of births.”

Also in the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

pūrvam kṛtvā tu sammānam avajñām kurute tu yaḥ

vaiṣṇavānām mahī-pāla sānvayo yāti saṅkṣayam

“O ruler of the world, one who first respects a Vaiṣṇava and then later insults him is vanquished along with his family.”

In the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa, it is stated:

ye nindanti hṛṣīkeśam tad-bhaktam puṇya-rūpiṇam
śata-janmārjitam puṇyam teṣām naśyati niścitam
te pacyante mahā-ghore kumbhīpāke bhayānake
bhakṣitāḥ kīṭa-saṅghena yāvacaṅdra-divākarau
tasya darśana-mātreṇa puṇyam naśyati niścitam
gaṅgām snātvā ravim dṛṣṭā tadā vidvān viśuddhyati

“Those who criticize Lord Hṛṣīkeśa or the Vaiṣṇavas, who are under His all-auspicious shelter, lose all the pious credits they have accrued in a hundred births. Such sinners rot in the Kumbhīpāka hell and are eaten by hordes of worms for as long as the sun and moon exist. If one sees a person who blasphemes Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees, then the results of all his pious activities are lost. When learned persons see such non-Vaiṣṇavas, they purify themselves by taking bath in the Ganges and looking at the sun.”

Śrī Rāmānujācārya has stated:

śrīmad bhāgavatārcaṇam bhagavataḥ pūjā-vidher uttamam
śrī-viṣṇor avamānanād guru-taram śrī-vaiṣṇavollaṅghanam
tīrthād acyuta-pādajād guru-taram tīrtham tadyāṅghri-jam
pūjanād viṣṇu-bhaktānām puruṣārtho 'sti netaraḥ
teṣu tad-dveṣataḥ kiñcit nāsti nāśanam ātmanaḥ
śrī-vaiṣṇavair mahā-bhāgaiḥ sallāpam kārayet sadā
tadya-dūṣaka-janān na paśyet puruṣādhamān
śrī-vaiṣṇavānām cihnāni dhṛtvāpi viṣayāturaḥ
taiḥ sārddham vañcaka-janaiḥ saha-vāsam na kārayet

“The worship of Vaiṣṇavas is greater than the worship of the Supreme Lord. Insulting a Vaiṣṇava is more offensive than insulting Lord Viṣṇu. The water that has washed the feet of a devotee is more pure than the water that has washed the feet of Kṛṣṇa. There is no higher achievement than to worship a Vaiṣṇava. There is nothing more offensive than being envious of a Vaiṣṇava, which results in one's utter ruination. One should always converse with mahā-bhāgavata Vaiṣṇavas, and one should never see the lowest of mankind who criticizes Vaiṣṇavas. One should never reside with a duplicitous person who is attached to sense gratification and decorated with the signs of a Vaiṣṇava.”

It is described in the Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya 5.145 and 10.102):

yata pāpa haya prajā janere himsile
tāra śata-guṇa haya vaiṣṇave nindile

“The sin committed by being envious of other living entities is multiplied a hundredfold if one criticizes a Vaiṣṇava.

ye pāpiṣṭha vaiṣṇavera jāti-buddhi kare
janma janma adhama-yonite ḍubi' mare

“The sinful person who considers a Vaiṣṇava as belonging to a particular caste repeatedly takes birth in abominable species life after life.”

In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, Chapter Seventeen, and Antya-līlā, Chapter Three, it is stated:

bhavānī-pūjāra saba sāmagrī lañā
rātre śrīvāsera dvāre sthāna lepāñā

“He placed all the paraphernalia for worshipping the goddess Durgā outside Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's door.

madya-bhāṇḍa-pāše dhari' nija-ghare gela
“Then he placed a pot of wine beside all this.
tabe saba śiṣṭa-loka kare hāhākāra
aiche karma hethā kaila kon durācāra
hāḍike āniyā saba dūra karāila

“Then all the assembled gentlemen exclaimed, ‘What is this? What is this? Who has performed such mischievous activities? Who is that sinful man?’ They called for a sweeper [hāḍi], who threw all the items of worship far away.

tina dina rahi' sei gopāla-cāpāla
sarvāṅge ha-ila kuṣṭha, vahe rakta-dhāra
sarvāṅga beḍila kīṭe, kāṭe nirantara

“After three days, leprosy attacked Gopāla Cāpāla, and blood oozed from sores all over his body. He was incessantly covered with germs and insects bit him all over his body.

āre pāpi, bhakta-dveṣi, tore na uddhārimu
koṭi-janma ei mate kīḍāya khāoyāimu

“O sinful person, envious of pure devotees, I shall not deliver you! Rather, I shall have you bitten by these germs for many millions of years.

koṭi janma habe tora raurave patana
“ghaṭa-paṭiyā mūrkhā tuṅi bhakti kāṅhā jāna?
haridāsa-thākura tuṅi kaili apamāna!
sarva-nāśa habe tora, nā habe kalyāṇa”

“You will have to fall down into hellish life for ten million births. You are a foolish logician, what do you know about the devotional service of the Lord? You have insulted Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Thus there will be a dangerous position for you. You should not expect anything auspicious.

kr̥ṣṇa-svabhāva,—bhakta-nindā sahite nā pare

“The characteristic of Kṛṣṇa is that He cannot tolerate blasphemy of His devotees.”

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his Bhakti-sandarbhā:

vaiṣṇava-nindā śravaṇe 'pi doṣa uktaḥ—
nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṅvaṁs tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ
tato 'pagamaś cāsamarthasya eva. samarthena tu nindaka-jihvā chettavyā. tatrāpy
asmarthena sva-prāṇa-parityāgo 'pi kartavyaḥ. yathoktaṁ devyā—
karṇau pidhāya nirayād yad akalpa īse
dharmāvitary aśṛṅbhir ṅbhir asyamāne
chindyāt prasahya ruśātīm asatām prabhuś cej
jihvām asūn api tato viṣṛjet sa dharmāḥ

“Not only those who criticize Vaiṣṇavas are faulty, but those who hear criticism of Vaiṣṇavas are also offenders. This is described in scriptures such as the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.74.40): ‘Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.’

“The injunction to leave the place is meant only for those who are unable to take any other steps. If one is able, he should cut out the tongue of he who is blaspheming the Vaiṣṇava. And if one is unable to do this, he should give up his life.

“In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.4.17) Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, spoke like this: ‘If one hears an irresponsible person blaspheme the master and controller of religion or the Vaiṣṇavas, one should block his ears and go away if unable to punish him. But if one is able, then one should cut out the tongue of that miscreant, who is speaking such filthy language, and if unable to do this one should give up his own life—this is the religious principle.’”

Vyavahāra-kāṇḍa

Section Concerning Behavior

The readers have already been introduced to material and spiritual personalities in the previous two chapters. In this chapter we will discuss the comparison in the behavior of these two.

According to mundane consideration, one has to be qualified for any activity that he engages in. Otherwise, if an activity is performed by an unqualified person, there will be so many obstacles. Intelligent persons at different times have introduced various processes in order to benefit the people in general. Among these processes, some are beneficial for the present life and some are beneficial for the next life. Any simple-minded person can easily understand what is beneficial for the present life, yet being unable to experience subjects of the next life they introduce complex fallacious arguments. According to the variety of people's taste, behavior, and expertise, they reach various conclusions while discussing topics regarding the next life. People with similar natures who follow such people become attached to a particular opinion and reject contrary opinions. Generally, people in the mode of goodness have different opinions in every subject from those who are influenced by the modes of passion and ignorance. And when one is situated in pure goodness and exhibits a mood of indifference, his activities are distinct from the activities of one in goodness, which counteracts passion and ignorance. Conceptions regarding the next life in the hands of the four above-mentioned classes of thinkers assume four different forms. Thus there will certainly be differences among unregulated sense enjoyers, fruitive workers, mental speculators, and devotees. These four categories have descended through disciplic succession in various branches since time immemorial. People accept whatever they find favorable, and in this way they exhibit their individual qualifications.

If one speaks only of his own qualification without understanding other's qualifications, then there will be no benefit for the other party; rather this will create innumerable, never-ending arguments. That is why instructions according to one's qualification produce better results. We often hear about quarrels between two parties, and by taking sides we identify our position. This is called partiality. Yet as far as possible one should maintain neutrality on the strength of superior, noble education. When realized through only the *saṁvit* aspect, the Absolute Truth appears devoid of eternal bliss and is called Brahman; when realized through the combined *saṁvit* and *sandhinī* aspects, the Absolute Truth still appears devoid of *hlādinī*, or spiritual bliss, and is called *Paramātmā*; and when the *sac-cid-ānanda* aspects are simultaneously manifest, the Absolute Truth is called *Bhagavān*. Although the Absolute Truth is one, the knowers of the Truth have realized this *advaya-jñāna*, or nondual supreme consciousness, in three different features. An absence of *hlādinī*, or eternal bliss, from the Absolute Truth is contradictory to *advaya-jñāna*.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.2.11) it is stated:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate

Dualist consciousness is called māyā from the aspect of knowledge, viyoga from the aspects of existence and awareness, and abhakti (nondevotion) from the aspects of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Learned transcendentalists who know the science of the Absolute Truth call this nondual consciousness “the nondual reality” (advaya-tattva). They call that one entity by the three names Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. When the Māyāvāda philosophy is resorted to, Brahman and Paramātmā are considered different from Bhagavān.

Some learned scholars are brāhmaṇas, some are yogis, and some are bhāgavatas. None of these three categories of men maintain material desires. Practically it is seen that when any of the above-mentioned transcendentalists forget their constitutional position as a result of dualistic consciousness born of material absorption and they consider themselves to some extent the doers in the field of activities due to various material desires, they then exhibit mutual differences in their tastes. They are then swallowed by the material kingdom's conceptions of superiority and inferiority. But when they realize their constitutional position, their fruitive mentality is diminished and they develop equal vision. At this point we do not wish to enter further into the complexities of the scriptures. But we can say this much: for one who has a particular material taste, that taste appears supreme. The faith of living beings is determined by how they identify themselves. Therefore if we want to make an impartial comparison, we should not be overcome by distorted understanding like the karmīs. Our impartial statements will never be in agreement with those of the karmīs. Therefore, until the karmīs advance to a higher platform, they will not be able to understand our impartial statements; they will wrongly consider us selfish like themselves and hold us in contempt, thus uselessly wasting their time.

We have already discussed eligibility and position. One kind of eligibility may be strange to another person, but when he also attains that eligibility it becomes palatable to him. Although there are different positions, steadiness in one's own position is called piety and the opposite is called impiety. When one is situated in a particular position, he can see the faults of others; but if the statuses are equal, then there is no opportunity for such differences. If the brāhmaṇas, yogis, and devotees do not consider each other's qualifications, there will certainly be quarrels among them and various difficulties in ascertaining their relative positions. If one impartially and carefully determines the position and eligibility of a subject, he will be able to reconcile everything properly; otherwise he merely becomes disturbed and accomplishes nothing.

Persons whose behavior we are presently comparing have various goals. Hence, the differences in their behavior are inevitable. Prakṛti-jana refers to an enjoyer of temporary sense gratification. The term Prakṛty-atīta-jana, or one who is transcendental to material nature, is used to refer to a renunciate, while the term Hari-jana refers to the community of those who give up the propensities for enjoying and renouncing and are interested in the eternal service of Hari. Just because the Prakṛti-janas do not respect the behavior of the Prakṛty-atīta-janas or the Hari-janas, that does not mean that the behavior of the Hari-janas is not respectable. Although the Hari-janas appear similar to the Prakṛti-janas while living in this world, that does not mean that their behavior will not differ. While living with the Prakṛti-janas, the Prakṛty-atīta-janas approve their activities, and since they deny their own liberated position they do not feel inclined to behave differently from others while living in this world. But because the contrary moods of the Hari-janas' eternal position are more or less opposite to those of the Prakṛti-janas of this material world, there are bound to be differences between them. Differences in transcendental realization is the cause of this discrimination.

The three features of the nondual Absolute Truth are endowed with energies. Bhagavān is the supreme controller of all illusory and spiritual energies, Paramātmā, as the indwelling Supersoul, is the Lord of most of the illusory energy and a portion of the spiritual energy, while Brahman is pure consciousness in isolation from all qualities that are known in terms of the Supreme Lord's energies. As an object is perceived differently by different senses, so the Absolute Truth, although one, appears in three forms. These three, however, should not be considered actually different. It has already been described that the possessor of the material and spiritual energies cannot be perceived simply through impersonal knowledge. Although through the combined features of the sat and cit aspects the Supreme Lord's mastery over the illusory energy and the variegatedness of Vaikuṅṭha is found, these features do not reveal the fullness of the expanded pastimes of the energy and the energetic. The Supreme Lord fully manifests only through the combination of the sat, cit, and ānanda aspects. Thus the indifferent brāhmaṇas who know Brahman, the yogis who realize the Supersoul, and the devotees of the Supreme Lord are all engaged in serving the advaya-jñāna Absolute Truth. The karmīs, who are full of material desires, the jñānīs, who have renounced material desires, and the devotees, who have developed faith in topics of Lord Hari, are all yogis. The difference between them is that some are karma-yogīs, some are jñāna-yogīs, and others are bhakti-yogīs. These three types of persons have the advaya-jñāna Truth alone as their asset. The devotees of the Lord are in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the yogis are in full knowledge of the indwelling Supersoul, who resides in the heart of everyone and is the master of Vaikuṅṭha, and the brāhmaṇas are in full knowledge of impersonal Brahman, which is devoid of variegated, transcendental, blissful pastimes. On the pretext of philosophical argument, no one should say that the devotees have no knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the yogis have no knowledge of the Supersoul, and the brāhmaṇas have no knowledge of Brahman. All three in their own capacity are actually worshipers of the advaya-jñāna Truth.

If the brāhmaṇas who know Brahman desire to practice yoga, they can do so; and if they desire to worship Kṛṣṇa, they can also do so. If the devotees of Kṛṣṇa become averse to worshipping Kṛṣṇa, in other words, if they fall from the path of devotional service, they can become karma-yogīs or jñāna-yogīs; and if they fall from knowledge of Kṛṣṇa or knowledge of the Supersoul, they can become brāhmaṇas on the platform of impersonal knowledge. The yogis are situated on a platform below the devotees of the Lord, and the brāhmaṇas who know Brahman are situated on a platform below the yogis. The yogis who have realized the Supersoul can advance to the position of the devotees or degrade to the position of impersonalist brāhmaṇas. When brāhmaṇas accept the doctrine of fruitive activities in the world of material qualities, they also become affected by material qualities. In such a condition, the brāhmaṇas' impersonal knowledge becomes dormant. And when they are freed from material qualities by the influence of impersonal knowledge, they can also become transcendental brāhmaṇas.

When the mode of passion is mixed with the mode of goodness, then a brāhmaṇa becomes identified as a kṣatriya. When ignorance is mixed with passion, one is known as a vaiśya. And when the mode of ignorance is prominent, then one gives up the mode of goodness, the status of a twice-born, and becomes known as a śūdra. Since materialistic brāhmaṇas are conditioned by the material mode of goodness, they accept various varṇas within the material kingdom. When they are situated in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities, they become known as transcendental impersonalist brāhmaṇas in the form of knowers of exclusive, pure consciousness. When they are in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities and endowed with knowledge of both matter and spirit, they become known as yogis in the form of mixed jñānīs. When they are in the nonmaterial kingdom free from material qualities, those yogis who are knowers of Brahman endowed with all spiritual qualities are known as devotees of Vrajendra-nandana, who is the personification of spiritual pastimes. Therefore all living entities are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. Giving up their eternal propensities, these servants of Kṛṣṇa become yogis, brāhmaṇas, members of the four materially conditioned varṇas, animals, birds, insects, flies, worms, plants, and so on.

The Supreme Lord eternally enjoys pastimes in various forms as svayaṁ-rūpa, prakāśa, tad-ekātma, svāmśa, and vibhinnāmśa. The vibhinnāmśas are known as “separated parts” because there is a quantitative difference between them and the others like the svāmśa. But there is no difference in their spiritual qualities. Since the vibhinnāmśas possess spiritual qualities in minute quantity, they are prone to come under the control of māyā, the illusory energy of the fully spiritual svāmśa; but they are not eternally under the control of the external material energy. The impersonal Brahman is the incomplete manifestation of the Supreme Lord. Due to the Supreme Lord's complete manifestation, the same unbroken Truth appears as the Paramātmā, or Supersoul. When this feature of the Supreme Lord takes the role as controller of the living entities, He is known as Paramātmā.

The unlimited energies of the Supreme Lord are divided into three categories. His internal energy manifests His eternally relishable qualities in the form of His spiritual pastimes. His external energy creates superior and inferior undesirable conditions within finite time and produces the temporary nature of things. When His separated marginal energy, the living entities, become conditioned, they become enjoyers of the external energy; but when they become liberated, they eternally engage in the service of the Lord, who is the supreme enjoyer. When the infinitesimal living entities become inclined to serve the undivided supreme consciousness, they no longer remain controlled by the external energy. The multitotal energetic Viṣṇu, who resides in everyone's heart as the Supersoul, maintains entire universes through His external energy. The Supreme Lord as the antaryāmī, the inner witness, resides in the topmost abode of Goloka, in the spiritual sky of Mahā-Vaikuṅṭha, in the three bodies of water [kāraṇodaka, garbhodaka, and kṣīrodaka], in the vibhinnāmśa living entities, and in the kingdom of Durgā. In Goloka and in the Vaikuṅṭhas He is eternally present in His original identity as svayaṁ-rūpa and svayaṁ-prakāśa. He appears in the kingdom of Durgā from time to time for particular purposes. Although the fully independent Lord is the master of māyā, He descends into her kingdom. His eternal associates, the Vaiṣṇavas, can and do come to this material world in their eternal spiritual forms.

When the vibhinnāmśa living entities become averse to the service of Hari due to being subject to the control of māyā, they enjoy the fruits of their activities through their enjoyment prone material minds and bodies. But when such living entities become free from the coverings of karma and jñāna and devoid of material desires through the process of sādhana-bhakti, they then cultivate the favorable service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Being liberated from the bondage of māyā, they are established in the kingdom of bhāva and prema, or ecstasy and love, and become famous as sādhanasiddha devotees.

Due to being situated in the marginal position, living entities who are averse to Hari assume the nature of mixed consciousness; in other words, when the marginal energy living entities mix with the external energy, they consider themselves the enjoyers and then enter the material world. The cause of the spirit soul's coming to live in this world in aversion to Kṛṣṇa is his misuse of his free will. When this aversion becomes strong, the living entities accept a material mind and body in order to enjoy the temporary material world and thus come under the control of fruitive reactions. And when, on the strength of pious activities, they become transcendental to the varṇāśrama principles, which distinguish superior and inferior behavior in this world, they become paramahāṁsas by perfecting themselves through sādhana. Those who become paramahāṁsas are the Hari-janas. And those who fall from the platform of paramahāṁsa and engage in fruitive activities while associating with matter are situated on the platform of varṇāśrama. Conditioned souls who are situated on the platform of varṇāśrama consider that the Vaiṣṇava paramahāṁsas are also situated on the platform of varṇāśrama. But when they see that the Hari-janas are actually different from the Prakṛti-janas, they become favorably inclined towards Kṛṣṇa. When conditioned souls take shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas' lotus feet without duplicity, they give

up their ideas of impersonalism and fruitive work. The living entities in this material world who are subject to punishment from Yamarāja consider the Hari-janas, who are offered obeisances by Yamarāja, as Prakṛti-janas. In order to exhibit their humility, the swanlike paramahansa Hari-janas follow varṇāśrama principles and thus deceive the Prakṛti-janas. Actually the Prakṛti-janas and the Hari-janas are completely opposite in nature to each other, like illusion and reality.

While remaining in the material world, the living entities display two different tastes regarding their object of worship. The first taste is for Brahman, which is impersonal, without variety, and without qualities. Because Brahman is eternally without variety, it is not a suitable object of enjoyment for the living entities who are impelled by the illusory energy. That is why those who have a taste for impersonalism imagine five or seven demigods as worshipable, while in reality they are establishing various material things as their objects of worship. The second taste is for eternal spiritual variegatedness. The worshipable object for such living entities has an eternal name, an eternal form, eternal qualities, eternal associates, and eternal pastimes. The impersonalists, however, consider that in the liberated state there is neither variegatedness nor spiritual pastimes—this mundane, proud explanation is conceived by those who are nondevotees of Viṣṇu. Some of these persons even deny the existence of the spiritual world and become known as atheists.

There are three main opinions found among the living entities—full rejection of the existence of the spiritual world, full acceptance of the existence of the spiritual world, and the uncertain position of both accepting and rejecting the existence of the spiritual world. Among those who reject the existence of the spiritual world, some have concluded that the spiritual world has no existence at all, some have concluded that its existence is doubtful, and others say it is unknowable. Those who fully accept the existence of the spiritual world realize the supermundane Personality of Godhead in two different features—aiśvarya and mādhurya, or opulence and sweetness. And those who both accept and reject the existence of the spiritual world consider that the transcendental eternal existence of the living entities is to be either in complete knowledge or devoid of knowledge. Due to their lack of faith in the existence of the spiritual world, those who reject its existence endeavor for material enjoyment while living in this world. In their independent spirit they do not serve anyone other than themselves. Following in their footsteps, those who claim to accept the existence of the spiritual world accept the impersonal Brahman as the supreme goal while concocting various objects of worship for themselves.

There are two concepts of impersonal philosophy—denial of spiritual propensities and denial of spiritual activities, both devoid of eternal worship. When people consider the absence of the conscious function as the goal of life it results in śūnyavāda, or voidism. And when they consider the idea that consciousness is devoid of activity it is called Māyāvāda, or spiritualism without variety. In their ordinary activities, the voidists give respect to the nīti-śāstras, or social codes. And the Māyāvādīs, considering consciousness covered by ignorance as the Supreme Lord, create five different idols

and address the totality of ignorance as the Supreme Lord. Due to the absence of nondual knowledge, the so-called liberated Māyāvādīs consider themselves as temporary worshipers and worship five gods. Observing their complete absence of devotional propensities, Śrī Vyāsadeva has written in the Padma Purāṇa as follows:

dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
viṣṇu-bhaktaḥ smṛto daiva āsuras tad-viparyayaḥ

“There are two kinds of created beings in this world, godly and demoniac. Those dedicated to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu are godly, and those opposed to such service are demoniac.”

In other words, varṇāśrama-dharma is of two varieties. That which is established on the basis of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu is called daiva, and the opposite variety, meaning that kind of varṇāśrama in which there is no exclusive devotion to the Supreme Lord, which denies His eternal name, form, qualities, and pastimes, and which considers spiritual objects as illusory and thus recommends the worship of five gods is called material enjoyment-prone adaiva.

An elaboration on this verse is given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.5.3) as follows:

ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sāksād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

“If any of the members of the four varṇas (brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, or śūdras) and four āśramas (brahmacārī, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha, or sannyāsa) fail to worship or intentionally disrespect the Personality of Godhead, who is the source of their own creation, they fall down from their position, in other words, they fall from daiva-varṇāśrama into the contrary situation of the demonic varṇāśrama.”

The varṇāśrama followed by the atheists or those who worship five gods is nothing like the daiva-varṇāśrama ascertained by the devotees of Viṣṇu. It is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.35) as follows:

yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dr̥śyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

“If one shows the symptoms of being a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.” If one rejects this process, he will incur sin. The process of assigning designations is that one should give an unreformed person the opportunity to purify himself by the ten purificatory processes, engage in studying the Vedas, engage in the six activities beginning with worship and

teaching worship, become situated in pure conduct, eat the remnants of the spiritual master, become attached to the spiritual master, observe regular vows, and be truthful.

But if the symptoms of vaiśyas and śūdras appear in a brāhmaṇa who has undergone the ten purificatory processes, then either he should be deprived of his purified status or he should be engaged appropriately as a vaiśya—this is honesty. To act contrary to this is selfishness and laxity in following the injunctions of scripture.

From the statements of the smṛtis, as quoted by Nīlakaṇṭha in his commentary on Mahābhārata (Śānti-parva 189.2), we receive the following information:

yasyaite 'ṣṭa-catvāriṁśat saṁskārāḥ sa brāhmaṇaḥ

“One who has performed these forty-eight kinds of saṁskāras is a brāhmaṇa.7
In Śrī Yāmunācārya's Āgama-prāmānya it is stated:

yad apy uktam garbhādhānādi-dāhānta-saṁskārāntara-sevanād bhāgavatānām
abrāhmaṇyam iti, tatrāpy-ajñānam evāparādhyati, na punar āyusmato doṣaḥ; yad ete
vaiśya-paramparayā vājasaneyā-śākhām adhīyānāḥ kātyāyanādi-gr̥hyokta-mārgena
garbhādhānādi-saṁskārān kurvate; ye punaḥ sāvitry-anuvacana-prabhṛti-trayī-
dharma-tyāgena ekāyana-śruti-vihitān eva catvāriṁśat saṁskārān kurvate te 'pi sva-
śākhā-gr̥hyoktam artham yathā-vad anuṣṭhāmānāḥ na śākhāntariya-karmānuṣṭhānād
brāhmaṇyāt pracyavante, anyeṣām api para-śākhā-vihita-karmānuṣṭhāna-
nimittābrāhmaṇya-prasaṅgāt.

“Those who say that the bhāgavatas are fallen from the status of brāhmaṇas because they have given up the Vedic saṁskāras beginning with the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra and ending with the funeral ceremony and have accepted an alternative system of purificatory rituals are ignorant offenders. In fact, however, the long-lived speakers of these statement are not at all wrong, since having studied the Vājasaneyā branch of the Vedas which belongs to their family tradition, the bhāgavatas perform their garbhādhāna and other saṁskāras in accordance to the methods prescribed by the Gṛhya-sūtras of Kātyāyana and others. Furthermore, these bhāgavatas who have abandoned Vedic duties such as sāvitry-anuvacana (chanting the Vedic mantras which establish someone as a wearer of the sacrificial thread) and instead observe the forty saṁskāras enjoined in the Ekāyana-śruti are properly adhering to the principles enunciated in the Gṛhya-sūtras of their own branch and thus have never fallen from the status of brāhmaṇas on account of not performing the rituals of a different branch. After all, if by not following the rules of all the Vedic branches a brāhmaṇa becomes fallen, then the followers of other branches would also have to be considered fallen from brahminical status because they do not perform the rituals of other branches.”

The community of sense enjoyers who are devoid of devotional service and bereft of simplicity disrespect the Absolute Truth and can never be accepted by the initiated devotees of Lord Viṣṇu. In order to maintain their self-interest, the ignorant asslike

community exhibit envy of daiva-varṇāśrama and thus prove their disqualification. Simply because the demoniac community is fallen, that does not mean the daiva-varṇāśrama community has to join them. The devotee community is always ready to disassociate from the demoniac followers of Viśvaśravā's son [Rāvaṇa] and always eager to associate with Hiranyaśipu's son, Prahlāda. The godly devotees of Viṣṇu also appear in demoniac families. And it is not unheard of for those who are averse to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu to take birth in the families of demigods and brāhmaṇas. The devotees of Viṣṇu can take birth in all types of families. Yet if one considers that they are following demoniac varṇāśrama because they are situated in an inappropriate family due to their past activities and birth in a particular family, the daiva-varṇāśrama community, who are devoted to Viṣṇu, do not agree. The ācāryas of the Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas do not accept either the worship of five gods by the impersonalist sampradāya or the immature application of varṇāśrama principles. Due to humility, the swanlike Vaiṣṇavas do not formally accept the symptoms of varṇāśrama. That is why the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas did not always push them to give up their humility and perform ordinary Vedic rituals. Whenever the Vaiṣṇavas are abused by the followers of demoniac varṇāśrama, pure varṇāśrama is protected by the understanding that varṇa is determined according to qualification.

We have cited the histories of more than a thousand followers of pure varṇāśrama in the Prakṛti-jana-kāṇḍa of this book. Apart from those, many other topics concerning the topmost position of Vaiṣṇavas who renounce nondevotional varṇāśrama and nondevotee behavior are found in the scriptures. Particularly due to their Vaiṣṇava behavior, there was no obstacle in accepting them as initiated brāhmaṇas.

The following of pure varṇāśrama has not been stopped in the Śrī Rāmānandī branch of the Śrī Rāmānuja-sampradāya. Pure varṇāśrama was functioning in this same way in ancient times. Due to the gradual increase in selfishness and material absorption the real purport of varṇāśrama has been forgotten and a lifeless varṇāśrama has become current. We cannot call the current system daiva-varṇāśrama. Śrīmad Gopāla Bhaṭṭapāda, the smṛty-ācārya of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, has given the arrangement for purifying qualified students of all varṇas through ten Vedic saṁskāras in pursuance of the daiva-varṇāśrama principles. Following his directions, the saṁskāra of brāhmaṇa initiation by qualification was begun long ago and is still practiced today in the sampradāya of Śrī Śyāmānanda-deva, the branch of Śrī Nityānanda, the sampradāya of Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Navīna-hoḍa, and the branch of Gaura's follower Raghunandana. Moreover, descendants of various branches of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava gr̥hasthas who have fallen from the standard due to their indifference to spiritual life consider themselves as belonging to their previous seminal caste. It is the nature of unqualified people to identify themselves as belonging to a low class.

Sometimes the seminal descendants of an ācārya become bereft of devotional service and think that following the principles of demoniac varṇāśrama is their constitutional duty. Fearing their social degradation, such people even associate intimately with

nondevotee worshipers of the five gods. Such exchanges are meant only for fallen people who are indifferent to spiritual life.

Although it is accepted that out of Vaiṣṇava magnanimity a devotee of Viṣṇu can take birth among miscreants, the statement of the scriptures that says, “A Vaiṣṇava purifies and delivers whichever family he appears in,” has now simply turned into some words. All the same, we should know that a Vaiṣṇava does not take birth in any family at all. It should be understood that even if Vaiṣṇavas do take birth, demoniac self-centered communities do not accept them. The pure form of varṇāśrama can never be found in any society that has become degraded due to the absence of devotion to Viṣṇu. The Padma Purāṇa states:

śva-pākam iva nekṣeta loke vipram avaiṣṇavam
vaiṣṇavo varṇo-bāhyo 'pi punāti bhuvana-trayam
na śūdrā bhagavad-bhaktās te tu bhāgavatā matāḥ
sarva-varṇeṣu te śūdrā ye na bhaktā janārdane
śūdrām vā bhagavad-bhaktam niśādam śva-pacam tathā
vikṣate jāti-sāmānyāt sa yāti narakam dhruvam
bhaktir aṣṭa-vidhā hy eṣā yasmin mlecche 'pi vartate
sa viprendro muni-śreṣṭhaḥ sa jñānī sa ca paṇḍitaḥ
tasmai deyam tato grāhyam sa ca pūjyo yathā hariḥ

“If a person born in a brāhmaṇa family is an avaiṣṇava, a nondevotee, one should not see his face, exactly as one should not see the face of a caṇḍāla, or dog-eater. A Vaiṣṇava, however, can purify the three worlds, no matter what varṇa he was born in. “Devotees of the Lord are never śūdras, rather they are all first-class bhāgavatas. But if one is not a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he should be considered a śūdra even if he was born in a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya or vaiśya family.

“One who considers a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who was born in a family of śūdras, niśādas, or caṇḍālas to belong to that particular caste certainly goes to hell.”

“If these eight types of devotional service are seen in a person, even if he was born in a family of mlecchas, then such a topmost brāhmaṇa, best of sages, jñānī, and paṇḍita should be offered food and his remnants should be accepted, for such a Vaiṣṇava is as worshipable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

All these statements of the scriptures are meant for uplifting the fallen followers of varṇāśrama and for humiliating the followers of varṇāśrama who are devoid of devotional service.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.17.10, 12-13) states:

ādau kṛta-yuge varṇo nṛṇām haṁsa iti smṛtaḥ

kr̥ta-kr̥tyāḥ prajā jātyā tasmāt kr̥ta-yugaṁ viduḥ
tretā-mukhe mahā-bhāga prāṇān me hṛdayāt trayī
vidyā prādurabhūt tasyā aham āsam tri-vṛṇ makhaḥ
vipra-kṣatriya-viṭ-sūdrā mukha-bāhūru-pāda-jāḥ
vairājāt puruṣāj jātā ya ātmācāra-lakṣaṇāḥ

“In the beginning, in Satya-yuga, there is only one social class, called haṁsa, to which all human beings belong. In that age all people are unalloyed devotees of the Lord from birth, and thus learned scholars call this first age Kṛta-yuga, or the age in which all religious duties are perfectly fulfilled.

“O greatly fortunate one, at the beginning of Tretā-yuga Vedic knowledge appeared from My heart, which is the abode of the air of life, in three divisions—as Ṛg, Sāma, and Yajur. Then from that knowledge I appeared as threefold sacrifice.

“In Tretā-yuga the four social orders were manifested from the universal form of the Personality of Godhead. The brāhmaṇas appeared from the Lord's face, the kṣatriyas from the Lord's arms, the vaiśyas from the Lord's thighs and the sūdras from the legs of that mighty form. Each social division was recognized by its particular duties and behavior.”

In the beginning there is only one social class called haṁsa. Later, when Satya-yuga was finished and Tretā-yuga began, the four varṇas were divided according to qualifications and activities.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.5.2) it is stated:

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

“Each of the four social orders, headed by the brāhmaṇas, was born through different combinations of the modes of nature, from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in His universal form. Thus the four spiritual orders were also generated.”

In other words, the brāhmaṇas were born from the mouth of the universal form through the mode of goodness, the kṣatriyas were born from His arms through the mode of passion, the vaiśyas were born from His thighs through the modes of passion and ignorance, and the sūdras were born from His feet through the mode of ignorance.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.17.14) it is also said:

gṛhāśramo jaghanato brahmacaryam hṛdo mama
vakṣaḥ-sthalād vane-vāsaḥ sannyāsaḥ śirasi sthitaḥ

The sannyāsīs appeared from the head of the universal form, the brahmacārīs came from the heart, the vānaprasthas appeared from the chest, and the gr̥hasthas appeared from the loins. In course of time, people deviated from the principles of varṇāśrama and began to ignore the qualifications. That is why the varṇas are presently ascertained only by seminal consideration. If the ascertainment of varṇa by qualification is completely discarded, however, and ascertainment only through seminal consideration is followed, then the upanayana-saṁskāra, or sacred thread ceremony, should be given along with the jāta-saṁskāra, or birth ceremony. But instead of this, a person's propensities should be examined, and if the mode of goodness is seen, then he should be awarded the sacred thread and be allowed to study the Vedas. The upanayana-saṁskāra must be awarded in the early stage of one's life. After undergoing this saṁskāra one is allowed to study the Vedas and perform other rituals. But if one wants to become a brāhmaṇa at the end of one's life, there are many Vedic mantras that oppose this. If one does not begin to study the Vedas at the proper time, one will not have the fortune of becoming competent. If one spends most of his life uselessly as a kṣatriya, vaiśya, or śūdra, then his spiritual progress is hindered. That is why persons like Viśvāmitra and Vītahavya had to struggle hard to become brāhmaṇas. Many times kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra children were awarded the upanayana-saṁskāra and accepted as brāhmaṇas after their propensity or nature was examined by an ācārya. Those who failed to exhibit higher propensities at the proper time were obliged to accept a varṇa according to their nature. The Mahābhārata, the Hari-varṇśa, the eighteen Purāṇas, and other ancient histories of India are evidence of this fact. Whenever an ācārya was not able to determine a person's varṇa, he was considered as being of the same varṇa as his father. In the Mahābhārata it is mentioned that in the age of Kali there will be doubts about deciding a person's varṇa according to seminal consideration. The principle qualifications of brāhmaṇas, who are in the mode of goodness, are simplicity and truthfulness. But there are many opinions regarding seminal qualifications.

The time for examining a person's worldly inclination is between the ages of eight and twenty-two. According to worldly considerations, if a student's position remains undetermined through this period of examination, he is called a vrātya. This does not mean, however, that the spiritual inclinations of a person should be examined in the same way. The reason for this is that a person's inclination for spiritual life may arise by some good fortune at any time. Then he should no longer be considered a fallen vrātya, and if evidence of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu is found in him, there is no harm in calling him a Brahman-realized spiritualist. Unqualified vrātyas are often awarded spiritual or pañcarātrika initiation. The spiritual activities of a duly initiated brāhmaṇa are called performance of Vedic sacrifice. The Vedic initiation of a vrātya who has not first acquired the qualifications for brahminical initiation should not be accepted as authentic. Since it is not possible to properly execute the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies in this age of quarrel, Kali-yuga, those who have taken sāvitrya brahminical initiation should be known as śūdra-kalpa, as good as śūdras. Therefore, all sampradāyas agree that rather than considering how to enhance one's position, one

should accept initiation according to the pañcarātrika system and engage oneself in the activities enjoined in the Vedas. In this way the biased opinions of conflicting parties are reconciled through the combined help of the Vedas and Pañcarātras.

During the Buddhist revolution in India, when it became impossible to carry out Vedic duties without deviation, such instructions were often accepted in order to reestablish the principles of varṇāśrama. When people's spiritual endeavors gradually diminished and society fell from the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu, people began following a distorted system of varṇāśrama.

There are two kinds of varṇāśrama—demoniac and divine. The system of varṇāśrama that is based on fruitive activities meant for material enjoyment that is followed by those who are averse to Lord Hari is called demoniac varṇāśrama, and the other is the varṇāśrama of the community of those who want to serve Hari. This has already been elaborately described. Both the seminal brāhmaṇa community and the initiated brāhmaṇa community can progress side-by-side towards spiritual life if they put aside their quarrels. But if they fall from their goal and become the servants of worldly lust, then they will not have the good fortune of becoming eternal Hari-janas. If one gives up spiritual practices to protect demoniac society and if one glorifies the system of materialistic varṇāśrama, it will certainly hamper one's eternal auspiciousness. Pseudo devotees should impartially consider what benefit can be achieved if one's spiritual life is covered by mundane selfishness. We will hereby refrain from publicly discussing their foolishness. If we see that they are gradually and silently progressing toward the spiritual kingdom, then our happiness will increase.

The followers of varṇāśrama who are on the path of spiritual life under the guidance of the paramahamsas are not mad with the false pride of the temporary material world; therefore they can become transcendently situated. When they actually attain such an impartial platform, they will understand that worship with material desires is mundane and that there is no conflict between one's constitutional duties, in the form of love for Kṛṣṇa, and daiva-varṇāśrama. When a person is maddened to defy a Vaiṣṇava with his body and mind, it is to be understood that he is not situated in his constitutional position as spirit soul. Only Vaiṣṇavas are qualified to worship Lord Viṣṇu. The material body and mind cannot worship Viṣṇu through the medium of matter. The followers of demoniac varṇāśrama can never worship Viṣṇu. Their worship of Viṣṇu pricks Him like a pin. It is not possible to worship Viṣṇu without first worshiping the Vaiṣṇavas. Most persons who have studied the scriptures should know that before worshiping Viṣṇu one must worship the spiritual master and Gaṇeśa, who is a Vaiṣṇava and the destroyer of obstacles. According to the logic of half-hen, or ardha-kukkuṭī, there is no value in worshiping Viṣṇu without worshiping the Vaiṣṇavas.

Only a Vaiṣṇava is capable of giving others the right to worship Viṣṇu. Those who are envious of the Vaiṣṇavas can never give Viṣṇu mantras to others. A person who does not worship or who criticizes the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas is not qualified to

receive a Viṣṇu mantra. If a person is not qualified to own something, how can he give it to others? Therefore the scriptures declare that one cannot worship Viṣṇu with mantras that are received from a nondevotee. One should give up the association of such nondevotees and take initiation, in the form of transcendental knowledge, from a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. Unless one gives up the bad association of persons who are averse to the Vaiṣṇavas, he achieves no benefit. Wise Vaiṣṇava ācāryas like Śrīla Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa Cakravartī and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya took initiation from Vaiṣṇavas and thus established spiritual life as the highest goal in this world. Learned persons who want to act piously in human life perform the sacrificial performance called śrāddha in order to show gratefulness to their forefathers and deliver them from ghostly life. Although this ceremony is taken seriously by the general, ungrateful human society, in spiritual life it is not practiced in the same way.

All living entities are servants of Kṛṣṇa. When they forget that they are transcendental servants of the Lord, they are seen to traverse the field of activities through the endeavors of their bodies and minds. But this is not the eternal function of the pure soul. It is superficial and based on nothing more than material desires. The spiritual community serves their worshipable departed elders by faithfully offering them śrī mahā-prasāda. This is completely different from the fruitive method of offering śrāddha. The Vaiṣṇavas are completely unable to concur with the beliefs of the fruitive workers, because this would obstruct their spiritual progress. Simply because the Vaiṣṇavas live in the social shadow of the godless materialists, they should not deviate from their goal and forsake their spiritual life. The process of Vaiṣṇava śrāddha mentioned in Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa should be followed by devotees in all respects. The conceptions of purity and impurity and proper and improper codes of conduct are accepted by the daiva and āsura varṇāśrama systems in different ways. A Vaiṣṇava does not subscribe to any activity that hinders his spiritual life. The worldly smārtas simply consider the purity and impurity of objects. Since they have no spiritual knowledge at all, whatever standards they establish may not necessarily be accepted by transcendentalists. It is not logical to try to place the smārtas and Vaiṣṇavas on equal level, because their behavior and activities are different. Though a brahmacārī is forbidden from sexual activities, in the gr̥hasthas' code of conduct there are various circumstances in which sexual activity is appropriate. Should gr̥hasthas therefore be condemned? Behavior in accordance with one's status is said to be virtuous, although the same cannot be accepted as proper for someone whose status is different. The behavior of a Vaiṣṇava or paramahansa is totally different from the behavior of a follower of varṇāśrama. Therefore attempts to consider their activities on an equal level are offensive.

This Vyavahāra-kāṇḍa needs to be elaborately discussed, and since such discussion is not feasible at this time we are ending this comparative essay, waiting for the opportunity for further discussion.

om̐ hariḥ.

Appendixes

(written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda)

Ācārya-santāna

How to respect an ācārya and his offspring.

Those who are endowed with spiritual power and who properly follow the religious principles are called ācāryas. And those who serve Lord Hari following in the footsteps of the ācāryas are known as pure devotees under the shelter of the ācāryas. The Supreme Lord has said, “You should know Me as an ācārya, therefore never disrespect an ācārya in any way.” Just as a disciple is duty-bound to show respect and devotion to his spiritual master, he should show similar respect to the children, friends, and relatives of the spiritual master. How one should behave and respect the spiritual master's santāna, or children, is found in many places in the Dharma-śāstras.

Considering the children of the ācārya as superior to themselves, like the ācārya, the pure devotees respect them accordingly. To show respect to the family of the ācārya is also proper etiquette and approved by the śāstras. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 19, Part 2)

The difference between the parivāra
and the santāna of an ācārya.

The two principle servants of Śrī Mahāprabhu were Śrī Prabhu Nityānanda and Śrī Prabhu Advaita. Since Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu accepted the gṛhastha-āśrama, Their seminal descendants are known as ācārya-santāna. Their surrendered servants and devotees in the disciplic succession are also known as Their santāna. In Bengal, the servants in the disciplic succession are called parivāra, or family, and seminal descendants are called santāna. When one mentions the vaṁśa, or dynasty, of an ācārya, it refers to his seminal children as well as his disciples.

Due to lack of renounced disciples,
the seminal offspring are unduly respected.

Since there is an abundance of householders following the line of the smārtas in Bengal, there is a considerable lack of renounced persons in the disciplic line. That is why the seminal descendants, while attempting to impress or prove mastery over the uneducated householders, have caused great harm to the eternal religious principles.

What to speak of this, even ordinary nondevotee householders are so mad about the ācārya-santāna that they consider giving mundane social respect to those sons is actually devotional service to Hari, and thus they often became averse to Hari. In many instances these seminal sons of the ācāryas award titles like “qualified devotee” to members of the uneducated community, while in fact making them averse to devotional service.

The ācārya-santāna's activities hostile to devotional service and service to the six enemies.

The seminal offspring of the ācāryas have sometimes acted foolishly, become averse to Lord Hari, indulged in accumulating excessive wealth and women, professionally recited scriptures like the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam for the sake of money, become professional story tellers, displayed expertise in dancing and voracious eating while conducting twenty-four hour kīrtana, imparted mantras in return for money and clothes, and in the process engaged in activities hostile to devotional service.

Just after the disappearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu these misfortunes caused turmoil in the Vaiṣṇava families of the world and resulted in degradation. At that time, following in the footsteps of the eight Gosvāmīs of Vraja, ācāryas empowered by Śrī Mahāprabhu headed by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu tried to keep the preaching of devotional service intact.

Later, during the time of their descendants, the flow of pure devotional service was again covered. Again the ācārya-santāna became averse to Hari, which affected the flow of pure devotional service. This diverted the ācārya-santāna in various ways from their predecessors' line. If the children of the ācāryas lead a pious life and engage in devotional service, then the whole world will benefit from their behavior. The great disturbances that are often created by the six enemies such as lust, anger, and greed among the ācārya-santāna are not unknown to the pure devotees.

Being the offspring of Lord Brahmā,
every living entity is an ācārya-santāna.

Brahmā, the original spiritual master, is the foremost ācārya. From him the four varṇas and other living entities have taken birth. According to the different occupations, various varṇas and castes were created among the descendants. Actually all living entities are santāna of the original ācārya, Lord Brahmā. Śrī Gaurasundara and His associates especially tried to keep the ācārya-santāna's service attitude intact, just like their fathers.

The degradation of the ācārya-santāna is due to their karma.

As a result of their previous karma, the offspring of the ācārya often lack the qualities of a real ācārya. Ignorance, foolishness, and nondevotional activities have in some places influenced the ācārya-santāna and their followers to become averse to Lord Hari. In other places, hypocrisy has created confusion among the ācārya-santāna and perversity among their followers. Due to artificiality and hypocrisy some ācārya-santāna became overwhelmed by material sense objects and absorbed in sense gratification while accumulating money. Yet in other places they have propagated ignorance as an ornament of devotional service. The result has been that many nondevotees are considering that worship of Hari is a kind of hypocrisy, and thus the preaching of pure devotional service has been halted.

Instruction to the ācārya-santāna.

All living entities created by the Supreme Lord are offspring of the ācārya. Our humble request at their lotus feet is that they should learn the foremost teaching of Śrī Gaurasundara: “Being nonduplicitous and lower than the straw, more tolerant than a tree, respectful to everyone while thinking oneself most fallen, one should always chant the names of Kṛṣṇa.” Then foolish persons like us will realize the quality of an ācārya among those living entities who are ācārya-santāna, cross the insurmountable ocean of material existence, and constantly engage in the service of Hari. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol.19, Part 2)

Vaiṣṇava-vaiṣṇava

Kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs are materialistic Vaiṣṇavas.

In this material world we find that the Vaiṣṇavas are situated in three different levels. Actually all animate objects are servants of Kṛṣṇa. Ordinary people as well as kaniṣṭha-adhikārī and madhyama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇavas consider those who do not exhibit any symptoms of inclination towards Kṛṣṇa as averse to Hari. But although they are nondevotees, they are nevertheless servants of Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Vāsudeva is situated in everyone's heart. If Lord Viṣṇu were not present in every higher or lower object of this material world, then nothing could exist.

We can see that servants of Viṣṇu who are on the platform of kaniṣṭha-adhikāra have started worshipping the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu with faith but have not yet realized themselves. That is why the Vaiṣṇavas on the kaniṣṭha-adhikāra platform are glorified by Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as materialistic rather than transcendental.

The gradual advancement of kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs.

The neophytes, while serving the Supreme Lord with great faith, attain the mercy of the Lord. Then they get the opportunity to gradually give up their material conceptions. At that time, the desire for sense enjoyment, the performance of pious activities, and even the position of a mundane impersonalist who searches after Brahman appear insignificant to these kaniṣṭha-adhikārī Vaiṣṇavas. They then became detached from material objects. Then their pride born of varṇa and wealth as well as their material sense gratification begin to diminish. While cultivating spiritual life, the materialistic Vaiṣṇavas change their platform just as a leech changes its color.

The Madhyama-adhikāra of Vaiṣṇava.

We can see that due to their cultivation of spiritual life, the madhyama-adhikārīs see the same Deity form as the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs, yet with more mature spiritual vision. On that platform they do not consider the Deity as made of material elements. They then experience contact with the spiritual entity in their own existence and become qualified to discriminate between the different positions of the different devotees.

Being situated on such a platform, they love all living entities, make friendship with those who are inclined towards Kṛṣṇa, benefit others by preaching devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, and give up the association of persons averse to the Lord. At this juncture they face various obstacles. Sometimes they are subdued by self-worshipping Māyāvādīs, sometimes they are condemned by foolish pious people, and sometimes they are attacked by unregulated persons who are simply absorbed in eating and drinking.

The gradual advancement of the madhyama-adhikārīs.

The madhyama-adhikārīs gladly tolerate these disturbances and by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa never deviate from the service of Hari. Since the madhyama-adhikārī's position is more fixed than the neophytes, who are prone to fall down, they cannot be threatened by persons who averse to Hari. The madhyama-adhikārīs realize that the Lord is situated in their hearts. As caitya-guru in the heart of the devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇacandra attracts them, considering them His own. By the mercy of Hari, the spiritual master, and the Vaiṣṇavas, the madhyama-adhikārīs attain complete transcendental realization. In ordinary language this is called self-realization.

The advanced platform of Vaiṣṇava.

The position known by jñānīs as jīvan-mukta, or liberated even in this life, is known in the language of pure Vaiṣṇavas as self-realization, or being situated in the transcendental position. In that state one has no engagement other than service to Kṛṣṇa. Those who quarrel over the ingredients of service cannot imagine the advanced position. Those who consider the clay pot of Śrī Śrīmad Viṣṇupāda Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī, his eating of uncooked foodstuffs, his intense renunciation, and his encouragement to the sahajiyās as ingredients for the service of Hari, and thus become absorbed in them, will simply be pulling the skin of the fruit while rejecting the pulp. Those who are maddened by material objects rather than spiritual, will never be able to understand the activities of the mahā-bhāgavatas, or exalted devotees. As long as one considers the ingredients of service equal to those fit for one's own material enjoyment, he can never have spiritual realization.

Vaiṣṇava-varṇāśa and its reversion.

We find varṇāśas, or dynasties, of the above-mentioned three types of Vaiṣṇavas in this world. Varṇāśa does not only refer to the seminal descendants. The dynasties in this world are produced by licit association with woman according to the principles of varṇāśrama. But we cannot say that this is the only pure, unadulterated, ongoing process. By the combination of father and mother the child is born. All men are capable of begetting various offspring in the wombs of their respective wives.

Therefore unadulterated fatherhood cannot be imposed on the sons of the gross seminal dynasties.

Seminal birth and duties towards parents.

The parents are the principle servants of their sons. They serve their child from his birth by various direct and indirect activities of their body, mind, and speech. In order to repay these debts, the grateful sons must serve their parents as their primary duty. Yet the son does not become fit to serve his parents immediately after his birth. After a long time, when he grows up and becomes matured, then his service attitude is awakened. Then as a successor of his parents he realizes his duty to serve his parents. This is the seminal dynasty, wherein the experiences exhibited by the parents become prominent in the heart.

Second birth through initiation
and duty towards the ācārya.

We know that apart from seminal birth, a living entity takes another birth in the family of an ācārya. When a living entity attains his second birth, he becomes freed from the condemnation of taking only one birth. The ācārya and Gāyatrī give him a second birth, called sāvitra. At that time, having received his second birth in the family of an ācārya, he can more properly understand his duties as a servant. The parents serve their child as long as he remains at home. As soon as his knowledge is developed, he is first sent to gurukula. Then while staying in gurukula he understands his duties towards his parents. The ācārya, however, does not become a servant of the child like his parents. The twice-born child receives more opportunity to serve the ācārya. The twice-born, who is a servant of the ācārya, considers the home of the ācārya as his own and takes responsibility to serve the ācārya in various ways.

The two types of Vedic instructions.

The twice-born student receives knowledge of the Vedas and Vedic literatures from his ācārya. The Vedic literatures recommend two kinds of instructions. One is to adjust with the material nature while remaining in this world. And the other is to be educated in eternal spiritual subject matters.

If the ācārya is a worshiper of temporary religious principles, then he will instruct his disciples about temporary worship, such as karma or jñāna. But if the ācārya is a devotee instead of a smārta, then he will teach the most confidential subject matters of the Vedas. Though he receives Vedic instructions from the ācārya, a disciple who has a taste for material objects and is thus absorbed in mundane conceptions considers materialistic household duties as the purpose of human life. But if the ācārya is a devotee, then he teaches the ripened fruit of the Vedic tree, bhāgavata-dharma, from the Vedic literature and helps living entities attain eternal life. He also teaches them the difference between eternal and temporary life. Being under the control of insignificant greed or material enjoyment, a student returns home after completing his formalities with the ācārya simply to engage in fruitive activities. One who considers material assets very insignificant and useless for spiritual life and is attracted towards spiritual life accepts bṛhad-vrata (celibacy) rather than returning home, or he returns home and accepts spiritual initiation.

Initiation and duty towards the spiritual master.

The spiritual ācārya is known as guru. He awards third birth to the living entities by giving them initiation, in the form of imparting transcendental knowledge. In this third birth a person engages in spiritual cultivation and attains freedom from material conceptions. We have already discussed that a vaṁśa does not expand only through śaukra-janma, or seminal birth, rather it also expands through sāvitra and daiḥṣa janmas, or Vedic and spiritual initiations.

The differences in śaukra-janma from sāvitra and daikṣa janmas.

Although residing with an ācārya or a transcendental guru is different from extending the seminal line, due to the similarity in succession all three lines are called vaṁśas, or dynasties. In seminal birth, the son has a limited service attitude towards his father, but among those who have taken sāvitra or daikṣa-janma, Vedic initiation or spiritual initiation, the sense of serving their ācārya or spiritual master respectively is greater.

On the path of devotional service, the successors are appreciated according their degree of service. Just as the son of a doctor does not necessarily inherit his father's medical knowledge, rather his knowledge depends on his personal experience in that field, similarly being the (seminal) son of a Vaiṣṇava guru does not in itself qualify one as an ācārya or spiritual master. Nor is it found in any śāstra or spiritual practices that spiritual authority should be entrusted only on the śaukra-vaṁśa, or seminal dynasty. Only some duplicitous, selfish, nondevotee householders advertise this opinion.

The vaṁśas of sannyāsī gurus of authorized sampradāyas are confined to their disciplic succession. It is written in the Padma Purāṇa that mantras received from unauthorized disciplic lines do not produce any result.

The evil intentions of deceitful sampradāyas.

Many new philosophies have been manufactured in order to cheat foolish people, and ordinary selfish people who are maddened with material pride cannot ascertain the truth by defeating these philosophies. Thus pseudo sampradāyas spread their net to cover the truth. Falling in their trap, many unfortunate people are deviated from the truth and become entangled in the net of anarthas rather than progress in spiritual life. If the son of a doctor treats people without mastering medical knowledge, if the son of a train driver begins to drive trains without sufficient knowledge about the mechanism of the engine, or if the son of an expert swimmer who is unable to swim like his father takes others in the deep water to teach them swimming, one can easily imagine the venomous results they will produce.

The Conclusion.

We may go on bragging that we are born in the seminal dynasty of a Vaiṣṇava and we may exhibit lifeless limbs of devotional service, but unless we have firm faith in the service of Hari we will simply cheat ourselves and become enemies of society. Acyuta-gotra is never a śaukra-gotra, or seminal family, therefore Vaiṣṇava vaṁśa does not refer only to the seminal dynasty. The spiritual Vaiṣṇavas who belong to the Acyuta-gotra, or family of Kṛṣṇa, entrust their respective authority only to their most confidential servants. The unqualified descendants can never claim to be successors just because they were born in that family. Even if they achieve such a position, they are unable to protect it. These facts are similarly applicable to the dynasties of Lord Viṣṇu as well. Specifically, the Lord and His devotees appear in different dynasties at different times, and there are no obstacles for nondevotees and demons to take birth in such families. The son of Lord Viṣṇu is not Lord Viṣṇu, but a Vaiṣṇava. So from the third generation there is no difference between the descendants of Viṣṇu and the descendants of the Vaiṣṇavas. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 19, Part 7/8)

Smārta Raghunandana. (Preface)

Raghunandana, the principle smārta of Bengal.

Many children, old people, and women of the Hindu Āryan community of Bengal have heard the name of Raghunandana. Those who have not heard will naturally be curious to know who he is. Raghunandana's identification in brief is that he is the principle smārta of Bengal.

The Absolute Truth appears
through the descending process.

Smārta refers to those who know the smṛtis; therefore it is natural to inquire what is a smṛti. Knowledge of the Supreme Truth was manifested by the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha in the heart of Brahmā through the descending process. Śrī Nārada received this knowledge from Lord Brahmā and then imparted it to Vyāsadeva. Brahmā spoke about the Absolute Truth to Nārada; Nārada then spoke to Vyāsadeva. From Vyāsa, the Absolute Truth has been handed down through disciple succession in the authorized sampradāyas.

The Absolute Truth is obstructed through
the ascending process of the seminal line.

From Brahmā, the sages were born through seminal succession. Rather than descending through disciplic succession like the path of devotees, the path of the sages, being induced by material knowledge, has diverted into the ascending process. The sages and the three varṇas who are subordinate to the sages consider their material knowledge beneficial for themselves, and with the support of direct perception and hypothesis, they obstruct the descending process of disciplic succession. Those who traverse the descending process are qualified to reach the Absolute Truth. But since those who traverse the ascending process have accepted the external ascending path to reach the undisputed destination, they have become eager to minimize the glories of the Absolute Truth. As a result, even though they proudly advertise their faith in the Vedas, their actual intention is to disregard the Vedas. This is clearly understood.

Differences of opinion occur only in the ascending process; there are no differences of opinion in the descending process, rather there is complete harmony in diversity.

Whenever the sages gave explanations on the Vedas that were contrary to the actual purport of the Vedas, differences in their respective realizations arose. On the ascending path, one sage attacks another sage and tries to establish his own opinion. In the descending path, however, there is no such outrage or drawback. The varieties that are perceived are all used in the service of the nondual Personality of Godhead; one does not become puffed-up or averse to Hari.

Prediction about persons who traverse the ascending path and are faithless to the words of the spiritual master.

The words from the mouth of a bona fide spiritual master are not independent of the śāstra. They are completely nourished by and favorable to the śāstra. The favorable ascending path that is sometimes accepted to understand the Absolute Truth is simply subservient to the descending process. But whenever the descending path is neglected, the advaya-jñāna, or knowledge of the nondual substance, is more or less subdued.

Wherever respect for the spiritual master has been diminished, the ascending process, in the form of disobeying the spiritual master, has simply created a perverted mentality of vivarta-vāda, or the Māyāvāda theory of illusion, filled with pride and nourished by the four defects like committing mistakes and being illusioned. This diseased mentality eventually turns into a mine of licentiousness.

Persons who disregard the words
of the spiritual master are unable to comprehend
the Vedic instructions.

When persons who disregard the spiritual master try to understand the Vedic literatures through their evil attempts, differences of opinion automatically arise in their understanding. But if the sages give up their pride of seminal birth and become fixed in real knowledge by following the descending path, then their recitation of songs from the Sāma Veda will be nondifferent from that of the R̥g Veda. Those who are proud of seminal birth and whose bodily conception of life is very prominent are not qualified to hear the instructions of the spiritual master. When the sages subdue their material pride and live in a gurukula to study the Vedas, they are able to comprehend the hearing and studying of the Vedas. Comprehension of the heard subject matters is called smṛti, in other words, to comprehend the subject matter heard in the gurukula through the descending process and act accordingly is execution of the smṛtis.

The smṛtis of Raghunandana, who follows
the ascending process, are harmful to the devotees.

The rules and regulations our Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya has preached as smṛtis for the benefit of the persons traversing the ascending path are not acceptable to the devotees. The worldly, or social, smṛtis may please and bring auspiciousness to people, but they misguide those who traverse the descending path from their goal and cause their downfall. While following the ascending path and its code of conduct, when the smārtas, who are expert in smṛti literature, create communities to place impediments on the path of spiritual progress, then devotees consider their attempts as a hindrance to spiritual life.

The difference between smṛtis aiming at material
enjoyment and those aiming at service to the Lord.

The smṛtis of the spiritualists and those of the karmīs are not the same. The smārtas and the devotees see the smṛtis, or conceptions of the Vedas, on various levels. The spiritualists say:

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

This means that whatever a traveler on the path of bhakti does is meant for pleasing Lord Hari. And whatever fruitive activities, mental speculation, and sense enjoyment that nondevotee communities devoid of devotion to Hari engage in are simply proof of their enjoying spirit in aversion to Hari. Those who have been permanently qualified in the kingdom of aversion to the Lord are alone incapable of attaching importance to the service of Lord Hari, through worldly or Vedic performances. Such smārtas claim a difference of opinion with the travelers on the path of bhakti. There is a gulf of difference between ordinary smṛtis and spiritual smṛtis.

The spiritual smṛtis and worldly smṛtis can never be in agreement, they are eternally different.

From the gross material point of view, a strong desire may arise to find a compromise between them; but if an intelligent person carefully considers, he will understand that such an endeavor will create obstacles in worshipping the nondual Personality of Godhead. Generally material knowledge is polluted with four defects—imperfect senses, the propensity for cheating, certainty of committing mistakes, and certainty of being illusioned. The Vedic literatures, however, are beyond these defects. The smṛtis that are subordinate to the Vedas are also supposed to be beyond defect. The ordinary materialistic conception is situated in the living entities' field of fruitive activities and awards them a suitable result. The field of the devotees, however, is not the field of fruitive activities that enhances one's material enjoyment. Therefore the Vedic knowledge, or purport of the Vedas, that is heard from the mouth of the spiritual master is not same as the worldly smṛtis. Many smārtas, who oppose each other, have taken birth in different places at different times. Until a living entity's spiritual perception is awakened, he considers the smārtas, who are travelers on the ascending path, as followers of Vedic literatures who are either worldly or devoid of service to Hari; but when he leaves behind the activities at different times and places of smārtas whose attempts are always unfavorable for devotional service, he continually follows the spiritual smṛtis in the kingdom of devotional service.

The modern so-called Vaiṣṇavas under the subordination of Raghunandana are actually against the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Through his own genius our Bengali Raghunandana has accumulated certain smṛtis and preached them in various places of Bengal. At present the society of aversion to the service of Hari is being run under the subordination of those teachings. Moreover, many superficial devotees follow Raghunandana's smṛtis, which are against Vaiṣṇava principles, and thus uproot their spiritual propensities. Such people desire various forms of material enjoyment in the guise of householders and consider that following

smārta Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya is particular limb of worshiping Hari. Though this spiritual community identifies itself as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, members have in no way tried to safeguard the prestige of Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, which was compiled under the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Whenever they got an opportunity to follow the smārta doctrine, which is opposed to the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, they have readily accepted it. In this way they are accumulating Vaiṣṇava aparādhas, totally uprooting the eternal truth, and permanently obstructing the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Raghunandana's oppression
towards the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Though the position of Raghunandana is very high in the Hindu society of Bengal, in the vision of the devotees such a high position is also situated on the material platform. The harm caused by Raghunandana and his smārta followers in different parts of Bengal at different times is clearly manifested at present in every ritualistic performance. The devotees, however, cannot commit suicide by becoming attracted to the material respect and prestige of the smārtas.

Warning to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Therefore the devotees are humbly presenting these topics to the Hindu communities of Bengal and especially to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. The hearts of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are certainly shaken by seeing the smārtas disturb and harass their desired goal of worship. The Vaiṣṇavas will gradually understand that the pure Vaiṣṇava dharma preached by Śrī Gaurasundara is bound by the smārtas' ropes, which increase one's aversion to the Lord. O Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas! Do not relinquish the cultivation of spiritual life, thinking that you will transgress smārta Raghunandana. Be familiar with Raghunandana and take leave of him forever. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 24, Part 5/6)

Smārta and Vaiṣṇava

Mundane fruitive smṛtis are casual—their results—the sense enjoyers are worldly smārtas.

When a living entity considers his material body and mind as his self and thus engages in various fruitive activities with a desire to enjoy their fruits, then he is called a smārta. The rules and regulations of the smṛtis have been composed to regulate those who are not surrendered to the Lord or His devotees but are simply engaged for their

own bodily comforts. The rigid instructions of the smṛtis are meant to minimize the sinful propensities of those who always speak lies, cheat others, behave improperly, hanker after others possessions, and commit violence to achieve their self-interest.

Therefore the injunctions of the smṛtis are not eternal, but simply casual, in other words, they have been created for some specific purpose. But the spiritual activities meant for the pleasure of the Lord are eternal, because in such activities the enjoyer is the Supreme Lord, the activities are performed to satisfy Him, and they will eternally do so. Among the twenty-eight subjects dealt with by smārta Raghunandana, subjects such as dāyabhāga (inheritance), saṁskāra (purificatory processes), śuddhimirṇaya (ascertainment of purity), prāyaścitta (atonement), and śrāddha (offering oblations with prasāda) are meant for human beings who desire to live one hundred years, and the enjoyers in this case are also those same human beings. There is no mention about the science of self-realization. His mention of worshipping Durgā, observing Ekādaśī, and sacrificing oxen are meant for material enjoyment or attaining liberation.

Therefore they are casual.

The devotees follow the primary rule and prohibition.

The Vaiṣṇavas who are fully surrendered to the Lord do not engage in casual activities. They know that the Supreme Lord is the only enjoyer of everything and thus they engage in devotional service to please Him. They know that:

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

Lord Viṣṇu is to be remembered always—this is the only rule, and never forget Viṣṇu—this is the only prohibition. All other rules and prohibitions are based on this primary rule and this primary prohibition. That which by following the Lord is always remembered is a rule, and that which by following the Lord is never forgotten is a prohibition. (from Padma Purāṇa quoted in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)

The Vaiṣṇavas serve the Lord with love and devotion.

The Vaiṣṇavas are fully surrendered souls, therefore all their activities are meant to satisfy the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas are nonenvious and realistic, because they have reestablished their relationship with the Lord. They do not wish to be influential in this world or subdue others; nor do they desire any fame through the performance of various sacrifices, meditation, chanting mantras, undergoing austerities, performing funeral rites, offering oblations, travelling to the holy places, or sacrificing animals in the worship of Durgā; nor are they interested in attaining the heavenly planets.

Furthermore, they do not desire to enjoy the pleasure of liberation by attaining freedom from the clutches of birth and death. If they can serve their worshipable Lord, they do not mind to take millions of births or even reside in hell. This is their only prayer. Pleasing the Lord is their goal of life.

Exhibition of the abominable
mundane considerations of the materialists
who are bewildered by the illusory energy.

It is found in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam that in ancient times there was a debate between the Hari-janas and Prakṛti-janas over Ajāmila. In this connection, Yamarāja instructed the Prakṛti-janas (the Yamadūtas) as follows: “What to speak to others, even great personalities like Jaimini and Manu, who have fruitive mentalities, could not properly realize the characteristics of the Hari-janas. Because their intelligence has been contaminated by the flowery language of the Vedas, their power of discrimination has been overwhelmed by Māyā. Therefore they glorify the elaborate and opulent ritualistic ceremonies of the smṛtis. Because they identify their bodies as their self, according to the logic kāmukāḥ paśyanti kāmīnī-mayam jagat, or “a very lusty man sees women everywhere,” they even find various faults with the devotional endeavors of the Vaiṣṇavas; they consider the water that has washed the feet of the Vaiṣṇavas as ordinary water; and they even consider that if Lord Nārāyaṇa (śālagrāma) is touched by a śūdra He should be purified by five purificatory ingredients. In other words, they think that even the Lord is subjected to contamination and can be purified by something like cow dung. They consider that the Vaiṣṇavas belong to a particular caste, they consider mahā-prasāda as ordinary rice and dal that can be contaminated by the touch, and they consider that if they eat or offer foodstuffs cooked by their disciples they will lose their caste. They eat ātapa rice that has not been precooked, takes bath three times a day, walk abnormally on the road in order to avoid stepping on the ants, wear silk dhotīs, consider that the Vaiṣṇavas are forced to enjoy the fruits of their karma, consider that if one does not properly follow the demoniac varṇāśrama system then he will have to face the consequences, consider that religious principles are subordinate to social conventions, and glorify their godless society. Moreover, they consider that all of these activities are devotional service to the Lord.

A surrendered soul is freed from sinful reactions;
activities performed with a desire to please the Lord are helpful for achieving pure devotional service.

The Lord has personally stated in Śrī Bhagavad-gītā, which is the crest jewel of all conclusion, as follows:

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

“Give up all varieties of varṇas and āśramas and take shelter of Me. I will deliver you from all sinful reactions that will be result from not following those activities prescribed for those varṇas and āśramas.”

He also states in the Third Chapter as follows:

yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt

“Those devotees who accept the remnants of the Lord are freed from sinful reactions born from fruitive activities like the five different kinds of yajña (pañca-sūnā). And those who claim to be the enjoyers and accumulate ingredients for their own enjoyment, verily eat only sin.”

He further states in Śrī Gita as follows:

yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ

“Activities must be performed for Yajña, or the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, otherwise they become the cause of bondage.” Activities performed for Viṣṇu are devotional service. They can gradually turn into pure devotional service.

It is mentioned in Nārada-pañcarātra as follows:

surarṣe vihitā śāstre harimuddiśya yā kriyā
saiva bhaktir iti proktā tayā bhaktiḥ parā bhavet

“O sage amongst the demigods, Nārada, those activities prescribed in the revealed scriptures for satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Hari, are called the regulative principles of bhakti, (sādhana-bhakti), by practicing which one may attain the highest bhakti (prema).”

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

“One should perform only those activities—either worldly or prescribed by Vedic rules and regulations—which are favorable for the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” Therefore all the activities performed by the devotees for the satisfaction of the Lord do not yield any sinful reactions and they help one in attaining pure devotional service. And since the activities performed by the nondevotee smārtas are meant for their own enjoyment, they are simply sinful. Even the activities that are pious according to the smārtas are also not totally free from sin. For example, being vegetarian is a pious activity. But when the fruitive workers eat vegetarian food, they also commit violence to living entities. Because fruits and roots are also living entities,

if one cuts and eats them he is certainly sinful due to the act of killing. But when a surrendered devotee offers some fruits, roots, or water to Hari with devotion and according to the instructions of the śāstras, the Lord gladly accepts them. And when the devotees eat His transcendental remnants, no sinful reaction can touch them.

Without worshiping the Lord even
the followers of varṇāśrama system cannot
be freed from sinful reactions.

Statements from the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are translated by Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu in His Caitanya-caritāmṛta as follows:

cāri varṇāśramā yadi kṛṣṇa nāhi bhaje
svakarma karite se raurave paḍi' maje

“The followers of the varṇāśrama institution accept the regulative principles of the four social orders [brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra] and four spiritual orders [brahmacarya, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha and sannyāsa]. However, if one carries out the regulative principles of these orders but does not render transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa, he falls into the hellish condition of material life.” The reason for this is that other than devotional service all other endeavors are meant for material enjoyment and are therefore sinful. Only devotional service to the Lord is totally freed from sins.

In the service of the Lord,
irreligiosity becomes religious.

The Supreme Lord has said:

man nimittam kṛtam pāpam api dharmāya kalpate
mām anāḍṛtya dharmo 'pi pāpam syān mat prabhāvataḥ

“Committing sins for Me is also considered pious. But if one neglects Me and engages in religious activities, then by My influence these actions turn into sins.” (This verse is from Padma Purāṇa quoted in Bhakti-sandarbha) We will herein cite one example of the behavior of a great personality who was a predecessor ācārya in the Rāmānuja-sampradāya. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has mentioned the following incident in his commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Long ago there was a devotee of Viṣṇu named Tirumaṅgai in South India. From his childhood he traveled to various holy places in order to serve the Lord. In the course of his travels four persons with mystic perfections became his disciples. The name of his first disciple was Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi, his second disciple was Dvāra-unmocaka, his third disciple was known as Chāyāgraha,

meaning whoever was touched by his shadow became immobile, and the name of his fourth disciple was Jaloparicara, meaning he could walk on water. While travelling with these four disciples, Tirumaṅgai once came to the temple of Śrī Raṅganātha. He saw that the temple was almost falling apart and that the very narrow courtyard was filled with leather shoes. The whole temple was surrounded by bushes. Due to the fear of tigers and jackals, the servants came once a day to worship Śrī Raṅganātha. Seeing this, Tirumaṅgai Ālvār became simultaneously distressed and angry. He began to think, “The materialists are living in gorgeous palaces, surrounded by women and engaged in various lusty affairs, and the Lord of the universe, the king of kings, the life and soul of everyone, is kept in a broken temple with dire negligence. The demons are plundering the wealth of Kṛṣṇa.” But Tirumaṅgai was himself penniless, so he could not decide what to do.

Eventually he and his four disciples began to visit rich people to beg alms. But being proud of their wealth, the rich people rather than giving him charity addressed him as a thief and turned him away. Some of them taunted him saying, “What is the need of money for a sadhu?” But Tirumaṅgai did not budge from his resolve. When he saw that the rich people were plundering the Lord's wealth and enjoying, he resolved to get the Lord's wealth back from the rich thieves and utilize it in the service of the Lord.

Tirumaṅgai and his four disciples became a gang of robbers. His first disciple, Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi, would entangle the materialists in the net of argument, his second disciple, Dvāra-unmocaka, would then open the door of the treasury house, his third disciple, Chāyāgraha, then made everyone motionless, and his fourth disciple, Jaloparicara, entered the palaces that were surrounded by deep moats and plundered all the wealth. Thereafter, when sufficient wealth was accumulated, Tirumaṅgai brought many expert artists from various provinces and built a beautiful seven-story temple. But Tirumaṅgai himself cooked once a day, and after offering to the Lord he ate the remnants. He was fully surrendered and engaged in the service of the Lord with all his senses. In this way he engaged his disciples in the service of the Lord. He was a self-controlled Gosvāmī.

Actual examples of serving the spiritual master, serving the Lord, and being humbler than the grass according to the considerations of the devotees or Hari-janas.

In the vision of a smārta, or moralist, the above-mentioned activities of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār are certainly acts of robbery. Tirumaṅgai personally became a leader of thieves and inspired his disciples to perform such activities for the purpose of serving the Lord. In this activity, however, he had no desire at all for personal enjoyment or fame. He realized that all wealth belongs to Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī. Rich people are enjoying wealth meant for the Lord's service only due to illusion. Therefore they are actually the plunderers. So when the Lord's wealth could not be recovered through proper channels, then it should be recovered by any means. According to the Hari-janas, or devotees, this plundering act of Tirumaṅgai is devotional service and being

humbler than straw in the street. Just as the burning of Lanka by Hanumān is actually devotional service, service to the spiritual master, and being humbler than the grass.

The reason is that in these activities there is no tinge of material enjoyment or liberation. And those activities which aim at material enjoyment and liberation, though considered auspicious, are actually impious. The reason is that they were not solely performed for the pleasure of the Lord. Therefore Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.23.52) gives the following instruction:

neha yat karma dharmāya na virāgāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada-sevāyai jīvann api mṛto hi saḥ

“Anyone whose work is not meant to elevate him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must be considered dead, although he is breathing.” (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol. 2)

Vaiṣṇava Smṛti

Both karmīs and jñānīs are materialists,
whereas the devotees are spiritualists.

The particular śāstras by which the Indian Āryans conduct their ordinary dealings are generally known as smṛti-śāstras. The fruitive workers consider that by following certain rules and regulations their religiosity will be protected. But the mental speculators who desire liberation do not accept those rules and regulations. Rather, the jñānīs, according to their taste, become indifferent to material enjoyment and take to the path of renunciation, considering those injunctions as the only appropriate path for themselves. That is why expert fruitive workers call themselves materialists, and the renounced impersonalists identify themselves as spiritualists. But knowing the jñānīs' desire for enjoying the fruits of their activities, the devotees, who are transcendental to karma and jñāna, consider both karmīs and jñānīs as materialists and address the śānta Vaiṣṇavas as spiritualists. All actions performed with a desire for enjoying the results, up to liberation, are under the category of fruitive activities. Therefore they are simply mundane endeavors for one's self-interest.

The smṛti regulations of
the transcendental devotees are not the same
as those of the materialists like the karmīs and jñānīs.

All the endeavors of the devotees are meant for Kṛṣṇa. Since the devotees do not have material desires like the inferior karmīs and jñānīs, their endeavors are not like those of the karmīs and jñānīs. The injunctions of the smṛtis meant for regulating the materialists are not intended for the spiritualists. So we can say that there are differences between the regulative principles of the nondevotees and those of the devotees. The materialists, who want to enjoy the fruits of their karma and the devotees whose material desires are burnt to ashes are never on the same platform. The regulations of the nondevotees are meant for their own benefit, whereas the regulations of the devotees are meant for serving Kṛṣṇa. The purpose of the former is to achieve the results of their mundane realizations, and the later is to serve the transcendental Lord.

The Vaiṣṇavas accept the injunctions of Hārīta-smṛti and those supported by the Purāṇas.

Among the twenty Dharma-śāstras, the injunctions of Hārīta are applicable to the Vaiṣṇavas. Apart from the twenty Dharma-śāstras, the regulations of the Purāṇas are also accepted by the smārtas. The Vaiṣṇavas also accept necessary injunctions from the Purāṇas and Vedas. In this country and abroad some ordinary smārtas of the Medieval Age have written a few books about smṛti injunctions. The Vaiṣṇavas have collected various evidence from the śāstras for the benefit of their respective sampradāyas and have written down those rules and regulations for the benefit of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,
twenty-eight principles, and other smṛtis.

Under the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, following the pure śāstras, compiled Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa for the benefit of the Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. This Hari-bhakti-vilāsa was edited by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. Approximately fifty years after this, Śrī Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Bandyaghāṭa (Bengal) wrote a few essays called Aṣṭā-vimśati-tattva for use in the smārtas' mundane dealings. In these essays he has established different opinions from the injunctions of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. It is also found that various smṛti books were composed in various parts of India for their respective use.

Although the principle ingredients of smṛtis are the same, considerations differ due to desires for either serving Kṛṣṇa or material enjoyment.

The question may now arise in the minds of many people that when the main foundation of the smṛti writers is one, then why are the conclusive regulations different? In answer to this, we can say that the writers of the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis are servants of the Lord whereas the writers of the smṛtis meant for persons attached to material enjoyment are sense gratifiers. The materialists have no taste or faith in the worship of the Lord. Therefore it is impossible to get impartial regulations from such persons.

By following the smārta system
one cannot become a Vaiṣṇava.

Although the Hindu communities are forced to follow the regulations of ordinary smārtas, the pure devotees who also belong to Hindu communities are not obliged to follow the smṛtis of the materialists. In the society of devotees it is not possible to follow the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis and at the same time respect the smārta regulations. That would be simply a sign of weakness and foolishness. When due to the influence of their knowledge the devotee householders will come to understand their own literatures and prestige, then they will no longer be dependent on others. The devotees should lead their lives in Kṛṣṇa's family according to the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis. Then the godless smārtas will never be able to dominate them.

Instructions for the present Vaiṣṇava societies.

If the Vaiṣṇava devotees spend their lives following the instructions of the spiritual master, then there will be no possibility of disturbances in this world. Sometimes the ordinary smārtas glance menacingly towards devotional service to Viṣṇu and thus prove their foolishness, but such narrow mentality can never prove them to be magnanimous. At present it is the age of Kali, so the pure considerations of the Vaiṣṇavas are being included among the useless arguments of the mental speculators. These are all indications of apathy towards the Absolute Truth. It does not befit a great Vaiṣṇava to accept subordination of the smārtas who lack transcendental realization and who are influential by material standards. They should thoroughly follow the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis—this is our special request. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 18, Part 2)

Vaiṣṇava and other smṛtis

The two types of smṛtis such as Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava. The consideration on non-Vaiṣṇava smṛtis.

A smṛti-śāstra is that which contains various rules and regulations of the religious scriptures (Dharma-śāstras) and which is meant to regulate the living entities' ordinary dealings. The smṛti śāstras are of two types—those meant for devotees and those meant for nondevotees. Without accepting transcendental consideration, the nondevotee smārtas have accumulated many nondevotional rules and regulations from the smṛtis to protect mundane social discipline and have thus established a godless society. In such a godless society, only those who are inclined towards the Supreme Lord do not follow the instructions and regulations of the smārtas. Although the number of persons who are averse to the devotional service of the Lord is greater, they are unable to extend their authority upon the persons who are inclined towards God. The ordinary smārtas declare that if one simply follows the lifeless regulations of the śāstras without accepting devotional service, he can be famous as a pious person.

But the devotees cannot agree with such persons.

The opinion of Smārta Raghunandana
and Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

According to the propensities of people, different codes of conduct are found in the same śāstra. Śrī Raghunandana and other smārtas, who are expert in worldly dealings, have mentioned in their various essays about the separate arrangements for the Vaiṣṇavas. And spiritualist smārtas have concluded that the nondevotional statements of smṛtis quoted in Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa are not meant to be followed by the Vaiṣṇavas.

The prominence of non-Vaiṣṇava smṛtis
is due to aversion to the Lord.

Since the current of godlessness is very prominent in society, there is often no respect for Vaiṣṇava smṛtis. The consideration, “Because the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis are not always respected, they have no utility in the society,” befits a foolish society. When people consider themselves nondevotees and averse to the Lord, then their position in godless society becomes firmly established. They also think that they cannot escape from the fierce attack of the nondevotee smārtas. Being initiated by a Vaiṣṇava ācārya yet continuing to lick the feet of smārtas such as Raghunandana becomes a family tradition for such a person. But actually this is the result of his forgetfulness of the self.

Initiated Vaiṣṇavas should study the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis.

When the initiated Vaiṣṇava will observe that the behavior of the uninitiated godless society is averse to spiritual life and when he feels the necessity of requesting the nondevotees to turn towards Kṛṣṇa, then his study of Vaiṣṇava smṛtis will begin. Until one advances in the spiritual path, he will continue to regard following the ordinary smṛtis as following religious principles. But if he is determined to follow in the footsteps of the spiritual master, then such a benefactor of society will learn to respect the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis.

Even many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas
do not respect Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

Alas, what a sorrowful condition! Today in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society, the respect for the Vaiṣṇava smṛti written by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and instructed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu is no longer present! Though we identify ourselves as servants of the Vaiṣṇavas, we disgrace our line by uprooting the practice of Vaiṣṇava smṛtis! And we consider those who are trying to revive the practice of Vaiṣṇava smṛtis as enemies!

The antiquity of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's
Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā and its propagation
by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

The book, Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā, written by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī according to Vedic process, existed in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society one hundred years prior to the period of smārta Raghunandana. But so far, due to the lack of ācāryas, this book was locked in a box and thus unknown among the Vaiṣṇavas. The need of the pure devotees that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura fulfilled by preaching this book among the Vaiṣṇavas by the will of Śrī Gaurasundara, the pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society will take a thousand years to repay this debt. And if Śrī Gaurasundara desires, then Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas can unanimously adopt the principles of this Vaiṣṇava smṛti in order to protect their purity.

Instructions to the devotees of Śrī Gaura
and their followers to chant the holy names
of the Lord while remaining in pure varṇāśrama.

When Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara appeared in this world, at that time the Hindu society of Bengal was in a most miserable condition. Because He introduced spiritualism and chanting of the holy names of Hari, the godless society of that time did not refrain from opposing Him. Śrī Gaurāṅga's devotees and their followers should at present remain properly situated in varṇāśrama and continue to chant the holy names of Lord Hari.

If the godlessness of the smārtas is neglected,
then the practice of Vaiṣṇava smṛtis will be introduced.

If the activities of society are not related to Hari, then the living entities will be absorbed in matter due to their propensity of aversion to Hari born of anarthas. If in every activity of society aversion to Hari is rejected and service to Hari is accepted, and if pure varṇāśrama-dharma is widely reestablished, then we will soon be delighted to see respect for the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis.

One who is externally a devotee of Hari but internally
a smārta can never become an unalloyed Vaiṣṇava.

If we consider ourselves devotees of Hari while maintaining godlessness in all our activities and respecting ordinary smṛtis within our hearts, then we will never be established as nonduplicious servants of the Vaiṣṇavas. Unless we become genuine Vaiṣṇavas we will not receive the Lord's mercy and pure varṇāśrama principles will not be established. The pure swanlike Vaiṣṇava principles, which are beyond the varṇāśrama system, can never be practiced within the impure varṇāśrama system—this is a subject of consideration for learned people.

Equal behavior internally and externally.

“Be fixed-up internally while externally carrying out ordinary dealings.” One should not distort the real meaning of this sentence to maintain faith in impure varṇāśrama principles within. For the benefit of those who have taken shelter of devotional service to the Lord without duplicity, Śrī Rūpapāda has quoted the following Nārada-pañcarātra verse in Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:

laukikī vaidikī vāpi yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā

Those who wish to pass their lives in a way that is favorable for the cultivation of devotional service should perform all those worldly and Vedic activities that are favorable for their own service to Hari. Whatever arrangements they establish in this world should not be contrary to the internal faith of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Since the caste Gosvāmīs and their disciples
are not established in pure varṇāśrama principles,
they lack Vaiṣṇava qualities.

If we saw today that the ācāryas and their followers in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava societies were established in pure varṇāśrama principles that are favorable for devotional

service, then there would be no disturbance in the internal faith of the devotees of the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas who are internally fixed in truth feel great distress on seeing the behavior of godless society, and they are ready to disclose this outrageous behavior to the public. If the Vaiṣṇavas were not fixed in their goal, then they would not assert that both ordinary dealings and worship of the Lord should be favorable to the society. If one's heart is not fixed, or if one has a lack of determination for the lotus feet of Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas, then abominable external conceptions will not allow one to be fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Due to misinterpretation of the scriptures
by so-called ācāryas, the path of bhakti
has become full of thorns.

Taking advantage of Duryodhana's statement in Mahābhārata: yathā nijukto 'smi tathā karomi—"I will do whatever activities you will engage me in," many nondevotees are proceeding on the path of sinful activities. Taking advantage of the Bhagavad-gītā verse: api cet su-durācāraḥ—"Even if one commits the most abominable actions," hundreds of so-called Vaiṣṇavas are becoming utterly confused on the path of hell. Forgetting the real purport of the verse yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas—"Whatever action a great man performs," many so-called ācāryas like us are spreading thorns on the path of devotional service to the Lord. Since ordinary living entities are habituated to misbehavior, such ācāryas proudly and duplicitously advertise themselves as internally fixed in truth while in fact they indulge in so many unfavorable activities.

Confusions in the name of rāgānugā-bhakti.

Confusion in the name of rāgānugā-bhakti has become a standard practice, and deviated societies are affected by this, thus revealing their respective internal faith. It is our humble request that the Vaiṣṇavas should carefully discuss these topics and proceed on the path of devotional service by following the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis.

They will not benefit by attacking us unnecessarily. They should be compassionate to the body and mind and consider our humble statements. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol.23, Part 4)

The initiated

Three types of birth—śaukra, sāvitra, and daikṣa.

Three types of birth are described in Śrī Bhārgavīya Manu-saṁhitā and in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. They are also described in various branches of Vedic literatures. The Vedic sandarbhas also confirm this.

Śaukra, sāvitra, and daiḥṣa—these three births are explained in the Vedas. When one is born from a legitimate father and mother it is called śaukra-janma, or seminal birth, when one receives the Gāyatrī mantra from the ācārya it is called sāvitra-janma, or Vedic birth of receiving Gāyatrī, and when one receives initiation through fire sacrifice it is called daiḥṣa-janma, or spiritual initiation birth. The seminal birth is the original, and there is no consideration of reformatory processes in this. The sūdras are also not meant for undergoing purificatory processes. Except the sūdras, everyone else undergoes purificatory process in the form of accepting Gāyatrī mantras from the ācārya and studying the Vedas in gurukula—this is their sāvitra-janma, or birth in the form of receiving Gāyatrī. When these people take spiritual initiation in order to achieve competence in the performance of sacrifices, they became known as thrice-born. Persons other than sūdras become twice-born in their second birth and thrice-born in their third birth. Only qualified brāhmaṇas are eligible for third birth, or spiritual initiation.

Ascertainment of time for the three births;
what is vrātya?

There is no third birth for the kṣatriyas and vaiśyas. Someone born in brāhmaṇa family can be a twice-born, but if he surpasses sixteen years of age without undergoing the purificatory process of receiving Gāyatrī mantras, then instead of being a twice-born he becomes known as a vrātya. If he undergoes the twice-born saṁskāra at the age of twenty, then he will be known as a kṣatriya, and if he undergoes the saṁskāra at the age of twenty-two, he will be known as a vaiśya. Beyond that, he no longer eligible for being a twice-born and hence becomes known as a vrātya.

Religious principles decline in proportion
to the influence of the yugas; there is a lack of the three Vedic births in this age of
Kali.

From Satya-yuga to Dvāpara-yuga, the Vedic administration progressively diminished. At the arrival of Kali-yuga, the three legs of religious principles had diminished, and since the fourth leg is under attack, the Vedic ceremonies are present only in name. That is why animal sacrifices were reduced in Dvāpara-yuga, and Deity worship was introduced in its place. On the introduction of the sacrifice of chanting the holy names of the Lord in Kali-yuga, the karma-kāṇḍa sacrifices and Deity worship can no longer be performed properly. Though in this age of Kali the process of being twice-born by external purificatory rites is still current, there is no possibility for such persons to become Vedic thrice-born.

Sacrifice of chanting the holy names is the qualification for performing sacrifices in this age of Kali.

Persons who are qualified to perform the sacrifice of chanting the holy names actually do so after being initiated. The mahā-bhāgavatas are most qualified for performing hari-nāma-yajña. In order to be qualified for hari-nāma-yajña, the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs take initiation from a mahā-bhāgavata with a desire to achieve the primary qualification. When a conditioned soul takes initiation from a mahā-bhāgavata, he understands his eternal relationship with the Lord.

A liberated soul is initiated in the sacrifice of chanting the holy names of the Lord and is therefore a topmost brāhmaṇa.

A liberated soul is initiated into the chanting of the holy names. A liberated soul refers to a mahā-bhāgavata who is beyond the principles of varṇāśrama and who is the best of the brāhmaṇas. Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura is the ideal and prime example. A mahā-bhāgavata is the best of the brāhmaṇas and a Vaiṣṇava. He is capable of giving initiation to others. The chanting of mantras by a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī does not qualify him to be liberated from material existence. Whenever he attains perfection in chanting the holy names by giving up his pride for his materially conditioned life, then he immediately becomes qualified to chant Lord Hari's holy names, which are worshipable by the liberated souls.

Vedic ceremonies are not successful in Kali-yuga; the position of the brāhmaṇas in Kali-yuga.

The Vedic ritualistic ceremonies are not totally successful in this age of Kali. In Kali-yuga, which is full of contamination, those who are proud of being brāhmaṇas but act like śūdras are intoxicated for worshiping everything except the Absolute Truth. Although they are supposed to be knowers of the Supreme Brahman, due to their past misdeeds, rather than worshiping Lord Viṣṇu they engage in worshiping five demigods. They neglect the supreme position of Lord Viṣṇu and consider Him equal to the demigods. That is why such persons are disqualified from performing Vedic sacrifices in the form of worshiping Viṣṇu, the master of all sacrifices.

Introduction to Vaiṣṇava smṛtis, or Vaiṣṇava code of conduct, and their propagation.

The Vedic ritualistic ceremonies described in the Vaiṣṇava tantras according to Vedic injunctions are known as Pañcarātras, or expansions of the Vedas. This is accepted by

sages who follow the Vedic path. Under the instruction of Śrī Gaurasundara, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācārya, compiled the Vaiṣṇava smṛti called Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, an ideal mahāpuruṣa, expert in Vaiṣṇava etiquette, worshipable for the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs, and one of the six Gosvāmīs, wrote Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā and edited Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, following in the footsteps of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. Although the rituals in the Vaiṣṇava smṛtis of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have been more or less attacked by the smārtas, who are averse to the Lord, the day has come for propagating the Vaiṣṇava rituals.

Every human being has a right for pāñcarātrika initiation, whereby their position as twice-born is guaranteed.

We can know from the scriptural evidences quoted in Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa that all śūdra and non-śūdra human beings, though not eligible for sāvitra, or Vedic initiation, are certainly eligible for pāñcarātrika initiation. Whether one has resided in gurukula after accepting Vedic initiation or not, whether a brāhmaṇa has fallen from his religious vows or not, or whether one is born in a śūdra or lower than a śūdra family—through pious activities, all can become eligible for receiving pāñcarātrika initiation. If any human being receives pāñcarātrika initiation, he is certainly a twice-born. Though women do not undergo the sacred thread ceremony, they also become twice-born and are thus qualified to chant the holy names and worship the Deities. It is to be understood that persons who are not invested with the sacred thread have not received actual initiation. The qualification of paramahaṁsa, however, has no symptoms of varṇas, such as sacred thread, and no symptoms of āśrama, such as the daṇḍa or saffron robes. They do not engage in Deity worship like those who are situated in varṇāśrama. The scriptures say that as a bell metal mixed with mercury in a specific way turns into gold, when a person takes pāñcarātrika initiation from a bona fide spiritual master, he certainly becomes a twice-born brāhmaṇa.

The seminal brāhmaṇas attain the position of śūdras in this age of Kali.

Contrary to their brahminical principles, many twice-born persons in Kali-yuga worship five gods and neglect Lord Viṣṇu. They then fall from their position as brāhmaṇas and became śūdras or outcastes. What to speak of qualifying for third birth, they ascertain that the behavior of śūdras and outcastes is brahminical. In the last two or three hundred years the behavior of śūdras and outcastes has been introduced among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the name of paramahaṁsa Vaiṣṇava behavior. They actually follow the materialistic smārtas and give śūdra initiation. In this way they have caused great damage to the Vedic Vaiṣṇava religion, and by taking the role of an unqualified spiritual master, they simple increase their attachment to their stomach and genitals. Instead of giving proper pāñcarātrika initiation to their

disciples, such people turn them into monkeys instead of making them like Śiva, turn them away from Viṣṇu instead of making them Vaiṣṇavas, and allow them to indulge in the principles of varṇāśrama that are based on mundane association with women.

The current of seminal consideration is checked in the line of Rasikānanda Prabhu.

Had a bona fide spiritual master actually given pāñcarātrika initiation to any disciple, he would not have destroyed his spiritual life by becoming puffed up by his seminal birth. Such persons would not have degraded themselves by posing as spiritual masters. Since these considerations are prominently accepted in the line of Rasikānanda Prabhu, the characteristics of pure religion preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the six Gosvāmīs are beautifully protected therein. The initiation of social brāhmaṇas is not spiritual—it is a familial act and therefore must be rejected.

If the food and water of an initiated person is treated equally with the food and water of an uninitiated person (a brāhmaṇa), then intelligent people should impartially consider what injustice and outrage have been encouraged in the name of spiritualism. Our question is that if a person remains a śūdra even after his initiation, then in which varṇa does his spiritual master belong? If he was not fallen, or did not give initiation, or gave śūdra initiation, then why should he be called a spiritual master? Why is such a guru called a spiritual master instead of a purohita, or family priest? The activities of protecting one's seminal dynasty and properly regulating society that are going on at present in the name of religion are actually the duties of a priest. They are not meant for delivering the fallen souls. A spiritualist should treat such so-called gurus as priests and take initiation from a Vaiṣṇava guru in order to become a Vaiṣṇava. If, while considering them priests, family gurus are given something to maintain their livelihood, then one's spiritual activities will go on without disturbance. Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should carefully consider how to restrain the professional mantra sellers, chanters, drum players, Bhāgavatam reciters, and Deity worshipers from troubling the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society with financial pressure.

If an initiated person has not undergone the sacred thread ceremony, he is not qualified to be a guru; rather he is fit for rejection.

If an initiated person has not undergone the sacred thread ceremony, then according to the statement of Bṛhaspati, a compiler of Dharma-śāstras, he has simply transgressed religious principles. The scriptures state that after receiving initiation one becomes a twice-born. If this was not so, then it is to be concluded that he has certainly not been properly initiated. If one is properly initiated, then the results must come. The cause is known by its effects. If one claims to be a Vaiṣṇava guru while neglecting the tat tenaiva vinirdiśet—“he should be accepted according to those

symptoms of classification” statement of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.35), then he should be rejected. This is the purport of the scriptures.

yo vyakti nyāya rahitam anyāyena śṛṇoti yaḥ
tāv ubhau narakam ghoram vrajataḥ kālam akṣayam
guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate

“One who assumes the dress and position of an ācārya, who speaks against the conclusions of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and other scriptures, or who performs kīrtana opposed to the proper glorification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa certainly goes to hell for countless lifetimes along with his disciples and whoever else hears such nondevotional talks and kīrtanas.

According to these statements of the śāstras one should give up disguised enemies. If one does not give up such so-called gurus, then the prestige of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava religion will not remain intact and the living entities' path of worship will be full of thorns.

Nondevotees are neither gurus nor brāhmaṇas.

One should not accept a non-Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. The evidence of the śāstra in this regard is as follows:

mahākula prasūto 'pi sarva yajñeṣu dikṣitaḥ
sahasraśākhādhyāyī ca na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavaḥ
mahābhāgavata śreṣṭho brāhmaṇo vai gurur nṛnām
sarveṣām eva lokānām asau pūjyo yathā hariḥ

“A non-Vaiṣṇava is never fit to be guru even if he has taken birth in a great family, performed all sacrifices, and studied many branches of the Vedas. Among all human beings the brāhmaṇa who is a mahā-bhāgavata, or great devotee, is topmost and qualified as guru. He is as worshipable as Lord Hari.”

Therefore a nondevotee cannot become a brāhmaṇa or a spiritual master. The evil-minded person who proudly considers himself a spiritual master of the Vaiṣṇavas cannot be accepted as a spiritual master. One who considers himself a brāhmaṇa and servant of the Vaiṣṇavas knows that there is no possibility of becoming a brāhmaṇa without being a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas; he is a real brāhmaṇa and a bona fide guru. A person who is proud of being a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas should take pāñcarātrika initiation from such a spiritual master. After being duly initiated he will attain the position of a brāhmaṇa. He will properly follow the rules and regulations, such as the sacred thread ceremony, and in this way he will become well-behaved and humble.

Otherwise, birth after birth it will never be possible to become servant of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Those who do not accept that “only through initiation one becomes twice-born” are to be rejected by society.

According to the instruction of Śrī Gaurasundara, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has written as follows:

gr̥hīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjāparo naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhīhito 'bhijñā iritaro 'smādavaiṣṇavaḥ

“One who is initiated into the Vaiṣṇava mantra and who is devoted to worshiping Lord Viṣṇu is a Vaiṣṇava. One who is devoid of these practices is not a Vaiṣṇava.”

One who is recognized as a Vaiṣṇava by other Vaiṣṇavas should take initiation into Viṣṇu mantra from a spiritual master. On the strength of initiation, he should accept the reformatory ceremonies of a twice-born. A qualified brāhmaṇa is eligible for worshiping Viṣṇu. He can then serve his spiritual master, who is a manifestation of Viṣṇu, with water and cooked foodstuffs. At that point society cannot put impediments on his path of spiritual life. If at all they do so, then one should give up such a hated society, considering it unfavorable. Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should accept the society that is favorable for devotional service to Hari. One should not live in a society that is averse to spiritual life. It is stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.5.18):

gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj jananī na sā syāt
daivam na tat syān na patiś ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum

“One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worshipable demigod.”

After the disappearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Vaiṣṇava society fell under the subordination of smārtas.

Every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava should consider whether it is proper for a person to disassociate oneself from spiritual life while keeping faith in insignificant matter.

One's relationship of sense gratification and maintaining godless interests in this world is for up to one hundred years, whereas spiritual life without material desires and with love of Hari is for eternal life. After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanyadeva and His six Gosvāmī associates, the confusion and licking the feet of smārtas that goes on in the name of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society is simply a corruption of Vaiṣṇava

religion. In order to stop this corruption, Śrī Gaurasundara has sent His own associates from time to time. So why are we not following those Vaiṣṇava smārtas, who are mahājanas conversant with spiritual knowledge, and thereby being misguided? Why are we turning away from scriptural knowledge and falling in the jugglery of the selfish nondevotees, thus wasting our valuable lives in aversion to Hari? Will godless society remain prominent forever? Will the beneficial words of the devotees, the subtle purport of the śāstras, and the impartiality of the compilers of the śāstras be neglected forever? Will the glories of Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa ever remain fallen in the dark pit of the godless smārtas?

Instruction to follow Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā
of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

Will Bhavadeva's guidelines cover the Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā forever? Raghunandana's Saṁskāra-tattva has been permanently covered. It has never been opened up. So why will Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā be disregarded? We are humbly appealing to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who are conversant with the śāstras to open their eyes and follow the previous ācāryas. May they carefully discuss the Mahābhārata verse śūdro 'py āgama-sampanno dviḥ bhavati saṁskṛtaḥ—“even a śūdra can be purified though carefully following the proper conduct of a brāhmaṇa as prescribed in the Pañcaratra” and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam verse yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet—“if the qualities of one group are found in the men of another, those men should be recognized by their qualities, by their symptoms” and be freed from the shackles of the Hindu society that is averse to Viṣṇu. Then they will be freed from material enjoyment, and only then they will be able to worship the Deities and chant the holy names of Hari.

Assurance of reestablishment of Vaiṣṇava smṛti.

“Those who are initiated cannot be brāhmaṇas,” and “only by being born in a brāhmaṇa family does one become a brāhmaṇa”—These misconceptions have created a great deal of disturbance and caused the degradation of religious principles. These misconceptions must be eradicated. Once Tridaṇḍī Sannyāsī Śrī Rāmānuja Svāmī of South India, who was an incarnation of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, delivered the Vaiṣṇavas of this world from the clutches of the worshipers of five gods. Today by the endeavors of the weak servants of the Vaiṣṇavas like us, the religious principles of the scriptures will be again established in Āryāvarta. We are taking shelter of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga in order to deliver the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society from the clutches of the envious, pseudo Vaiṣṇavas such as āula, bāula, prākṛta-sahajiyā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāni, gaurā-nāgarī, seminal Gosvāmīs, and pseudo renunciates. Please come, O brothers! Be spiritualists, give up the conception of prākṛta-sahajiyā; let us sing, following in the

footsteps of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, who is the root inaugurator of the pure devotional current.

āmi ta' vaiṣṇava,	e' buddhi haile,	amānī nā haba āmi
`pratiṣṭhāsā āsi'	hṛdaya duṣibe,	haiba nirayagāmī
tomāra kiṅkara,	āpane jāniba,	guru ābhimāna tyaji
tomāra ucchiṣṭa	pada-jala reṇu,	sardā niṣkaṇṭe bhaji
nije śreṣṭha jāni,	ucchiṣṭhādi dāne,	habe abhimāna bhāra
tāi śiṣya tava,	thākiyā sarvadā,	nā laiba pūjā kāra
amānī mānada,	haile kīrtane,	adhikāra dibe tumi
tomāra caraṇe,	niṣkaṇṭe sadā,	kāndiyā luṭiba bhūmi

“If I consider that I am a Vaiṣṇava, then I will not be modest. Then the desire for name and fame will pollute my heart, and I will thus go to hell. I will consider myself your servant and give up the pride of being a spiritual master. I will accept remnants and the water that has washed the feet of a Vaiṣṇava without duplicity. If I think I am the best and thus give remnants to others, then I will simply become proud. Therefore I will always remain your disciple, and I will not accept worship from anyone. If I do not desire respect for myself but give respect to others, then you will give me the right to chant the holy names. I will fall down at your feet without duplicity and cry while rolling on the ground.”

Vaiṣṇavas are automatically brāhmaṇas
as well as transcendental to the modes of material nature.

The mundane fruitive workers consider
that their Vedic branch is different than the Vedic branch of the ācāryas in disciplic
succession.

The Vedic branch that the ācāryas of the disciplic succession from Lord Brahmā have
accepted appears different to the fruitive workers, because due to their narrow-
mindedness they find it unfavorable to their own Vedic branch. In the Eleventh Canto
of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam these topics are properly described. We will elaborate on those
points at the appropriate place, so we are not bringing up those innumerable topics
here.

Without undergoing sacred thread ceremony
it is impossible to become a twice-born.

Regarding saṁskāras, it is written in the Dharma-sāstra of Yājñavalkya that all one's
sins are eradicated by undergoing purificatory processes. The śūdras are simply sinful,
therefore there are no saṁskāras prescribed for them. It is not a fact that just because

one is born in a sinful family he will not be able to hear Śrīmad Bhāgavatam or worship the Supreme Lord. According to the sarveṣāṁ mad-upāsanam—“worship of Me is to be practiced by all human beings” verse of Eleventh Canto and yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktaṁ—“if one shows the described symptoms” verse of Seventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and innumerable other similar statements, it is confirmed that everyone has a right to be freed from sinful reactions and worship the Lord. That is why Ācārya Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has stated in his Durgama-saṅgamanī commentary on Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu that until one undergoes all the limbs of the initiation process, he does not become a twice-born brāhmaṇa. In order to become twice-born, the sages underwent sāvitrya-saṁskāra. Similarly, unless an initiated person undergoes the sāvitrya-saṁskāra, he will not be accepted as a brāhmaṇa in the worldly society.

Sinless Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī achieved everything
under the shelter of paramahansa Śrī Śukadeva.

According to the statements of the sages headed by Śaunaka, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī has been established as sinless. It is understood that he was not born in a sinful or outcaste family. But the fruitive workers who follow an incomplete portion of a branch of Vedic literature consider him a non-brāhmaṇa outcaste and devoid of any saṁskāras. Thus they neglect the spiritual master and commit offence. That is why Śrī Vyāsadeva has recorded the word anagha, or sinless, spoken by the sages while describing Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī in order to set an example for his successor ācāryas. Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī gave up his identification with a lower family and took shelter of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Because of accepting subordination to the spiritual master he became qualified to hear Śrīmad Bhāgavatam:

jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvantī san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vāñ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām

“Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.”

After hearing this śloka from Śrī Śukadeva, Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī Mahārāja, though born in a low class family, heard Śrīmad Bhāgavatam with his body, mind, and speech from paramahansa Śrī Śukadeva, the king of the Vaiṣṇavas. Thus he underwent all types of saṁskāras and ultimately accepted the external dress meant for paramahansas and approved by Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Unable to find any symptoms in his external dress that he had undergone any saṁskāras, the sages, who were mental speculators and controlled by the illusory energy, through their worldly godless vision simply

understood him as a non-brāhmaṇa, professional outcaste saint. But Sarasvatī Devī inspired them to address him as sinless and professor of the Dharma-śāstras. Since foolishness is an impediment on the path of good fortune to the world, it is not encouraged by Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond the jurisdiction of sense perception, because a gentle favored disciple receives all confidential mysteries from his spiritual master.

The real meaning of the word āyusman, or “O immortal one,” spoken by the sages headed by Śaunaka.

Since the sages headed by Śaunaka accepted Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī as their spiritual master, the sages prayed to Sūta Gosvāmī to instruct them in the knowledge attained by gentle obedient disciples that he had received. Many so-called spiritual masters, instead of desiring welfare for their disciples, hate them in order to fulfill their own material desires. Such so-called spiritual masters do not know what is beneficial for themselves, rather they accept something inauspicious as auspicious. The sages did not address Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī as āyusman, or “O immortal one,” merely out of affection. The word āyusman spoken by the sages is an expression of gratitude or appreciation of an experienced spiritual master by the ignorant people. Sūta Gosvāmī simply repeated the message he had heard from his spiritual master to his disciples, and therefore he was addressed as āyusman.

Śrī Vyāsadeva, Śrī Śukadeva, and others
are spiritual masters of the entire world;
they are free from illusion and liberated souls.

According to the injunction na prākṛtatvam iha bhakta janasya paśyēt—“a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic point of view,” the disciplic succession from Vyāsadeva does not consider that spiritual masters are burnt in the blazing fire of material existence. The nature of the material world is that whether one's son is honest or dishonest, everyone should give up the worship of Hari, cry out “O my son!” and forget Kṛṣṇa. But the similar expression displayed by Vyāsa is simply to increase the ignorance of the mundane fruitive workers and bewilder them. Actually Śukadeva was a great Vaiṣṇava and a renounced paramahansa. Remaining aloof from his association is not acceptable to Vyāsa and his descendants. In order to convince the materialists of this fact, such a pastime was enacted by Śrī Vyāsadeva. The pastimes of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī suffering pain from boils and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra being hit by the arrow of a hunter named Uddhava were both enacted to increase the illusion of ignorant people. It is to be understood that the propagation of Māyāvāda philosophy by Śrī Mahādeva and the propagation through Manu of social religious scriptures by Lord Brahmā were both meant for bewildering unqualified people. Śrī Śukadeva was an ideal personality and spiritual master of the entire world. As soon as he completed his study with Vyāsadeva, he set out to bestow mercy on all living entities. From the external point of view the return of paramahansa Śrī Śukadeva to the royal assembly of Parikṣit and his association with Sūta Gosvāmī may create

apparent contradictions, but according to the considerations of paramahāṁsas, these were pure standards of behavior. One who does not accept this commits an offence at the feet of the spiritual master.

The misunderstandings of conditioned fruitive workers regarding the paramahāṁsa spiritual master.

Since the mood of paramahāṁsa awakened in the hearts of all living entities, even the trees placed Śrī Śukadeva in their hearts. He remained in the hearts of the trees like the indwelling Supersoul. The whole world serves the jagad-guru. The father's call to his Vaiṣṇava son and the feelings of separation from the association of a Vaiṣṇava were reciprocated by mental agitation in every Vaiṣṇava heart, including the trees. This is indicative of hearing and chanting from a spiritual master. Following Vyāsadeva's ideal character and being controlled by devotional service in the form of chanting, the trees of the forest under the shelter of Śrī Vyāsa also worshiped the Vaiṣṇava. Those whose bondage in fruitive activities has not been untied wrongly conclude that the Vaiṣṇavas are also subjected to birth and the bondage of karma. Therefore in order to nourish their mood of ignorance, Vyāsadeva exemplified the bondage of material existence. As a result, attached householders foolishly misunderstand his lamentation for his son as a religious principle. But the descendants of Śrī Vyāsadeva understand that separation from a Vaiṣṇava is extremely painful. If one does not take shelter of such a paramahāṁsa Vaiṣṇava, he will never be relieved from the pain of material existence.

One Caste

The history of hāṁsa, paramahāṁsa,
and bhāgavata paramahāṁsa.

In the ancient times there only one caste lived in India called hāṁsa. They were yogis, devotees of the Lord, or knowers of Brahman engaged in studying the Vedas. Among the hāṁsas, those who on the strength of either devotional service, yoga, or impersonal knowledge distinguished themselves over their respective groups were accepted by the hāṁsas as paramahāṁsas. Among the ordinary impersonalists and yogis of India, the topics of the bhāgavata paramahāṁsas are particularly mentioned in a few places. The difference between bhāgavata paramahāṁsas with impersonal knowledge and yogic paramahāṁsas is clearly explained by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī when he discusses Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān as the advaya-jñāna, or nondual Absolute Truth.

The explanation of Brahman and Jīva

by Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Madhvācārya.

The word Brahman refers to the greatness and nourishment of unbroken knowledge or supreme consciousness, unalloyed consciousness, pure consciousness, and eternal consciousness. Śrīmad Ānandatīrtha Pūrṇaprajña Madhvācārya Bhagavān has fully unfolded the difference between Brahman and the living entities in the hearts of his followers. He ascertained that in the constitutional position of the living entities, they are situated in unbroken knowledge. Since the living entities are constitutionally marginal, sometimes they identify themselves as under the subordination of unbroken knowledge, sometimes they misidentify themselves as Brahman or knowers of dualistic knowledge, and sometimes they misidentify themselves as matter, which is opposite to Brahman. As soon as the living entities give up the subordination of matter they realize themselves as Vaiṣṇavas. At that time, due their spiritual nature, material desires and material conceptions of life cannot attack them.

Due to a lack of knowledge about the Supreme Brahman, unauthorized people neglect the spiritual master and glorify themselves.

The living entities' lack of knowledge about the Absolute Truth makes them ignorant of Brahman. Sometimes they accept Brahman as an inferior object and try to establish themselves as Brahman. Being desirous of material enjoyment, they sometimes determine to accept the illusory energy of the Lord as Brahman. Those who do not know the truth neglect their spiritual master and, with the help of material knowledge, follow the ascending path. They live within this world and unnecessarily praise themselves as knowers of Brahman. The hamsas, however, know perfectly well that Brahman, which is devoid of form and variegatedness, is a partial manifestation of the Supreme Lord.

Bhāgavata paramahamsas are the highest yogis and the topmost knowers of Brahman.

Some of the hamsas know the localized aspect of the Absolute Truth as Paramātmā and thus disassociate themselves from the activities of this material world, which is created by the illusory energy of the Lord. The perfection of this disassociation qualifies them to meditate on the Supersoul as yogis. It is not very difficult to attain spiritual knowledge or devotional service to Viṣṇu from the respective positions of either persons who have realized Brahman or yogis who have attained perfection, rather it is their gradual progress. The position of the devotees of the Lord, or that of bhāgavata paramahamsas, is the highest perfectional platform for both impersonal hamsas and yogi hamsas. When a devotee, or bhāgavata paramahamsa, descends to the lower levels, he should not be considered either a pseudo impersonalist or a pseudo yogi. The bhāgavata paramahamsa is the highest yogi and supreme knower of Brahman. One should not consider him inferior to either the impersonalists or yogis.

According to the symptoms of qualities and occupation, the divisions of varṇāśrama are created.

When the hamsas give up impersonal knowledge and endeavor to distinguish themselves from other hamsas while following their Gṛhya-sūtras, or social codes of conduct, then according to their qualities and activities the four varṇas and four āśramas are created. In Satya-yuga there was only one varṇa called hamsa. Later, after 1,728,000 years passed, the varṇāśrama system was inaugurated among the hamsas.

These divisions were effected according to one's occupation, qualities, symptoms, and possibility of future utility. According to the differences in the processes of one's goal, perfection, and intelligence, there can be two types of varṇāśrama. It has been a current practice in this country that the ascertainment of varṇa according to seminal consideration is based on future utility. Moreover, one's occupation, nature, and symptoms have always nourished the seminal system. When we discuss the topics of Kavaṣa mentioned in the Aitareya Upaniṣad and the topics of Jābāla mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad then we will properly understand seminal consideration. Śrī Mahābhārata, Hari-varṇsa, and the eighteen Purāṇas have mentioned both processes of varṇāśrama. It is not that the system of varṇāśrama according to seminal consideration, which began in Tretā-yuga, will continue forever and should be kept intact, though its purpose is lost—the truthful hamsas of India do not accept this. The statements of the Vedas such as the Kalpa-śāstras and the Gṛhya-sūtras of Gobhila, Kātyāyana, and others that a brāhmaṇa should undergo the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight is only a proposal. Although all hamsas are equal, those who wish to follow the Gṛhya-sūtras and their descendants are to be considered prospective brāhmaṇas. A twice-born brāhmaṇa is required to undergo social purificatory processes. Those who disagree or are unqualified for such saṁskāras, in other words, those who do not exhibit any inclination for Brahman, such people among the hamsas are non-brāhmaṇas devoid of saṁskāras, or simply seminal descendants. A twice-born must follow the rules and regulation of the Gṛhya-sūtras. According to familial tradition, those who followed were accepted as twice-born. Those hamsas who due to envious nature or laziness were addressed as śūdras by the brāhmaṇas could not become twice-born. When the descendants of such people will be in favor of undergoing social reformation, then they will not be bereft of the opportunity from being reinstated in their respective occupation, quality, and nature.

Due to forgetfulness of understanding Brahman,
the philosophy of atheism expands
and the Absolute Truth is disregarded.

Among the hamsas, the occupations, natures, and symptoms of the yogis, the worshipers, and the knowers of Brahman have always been there, are there, and will be there. In ancient times, when the varṇāśrama system was not prominent, the hamsas alone attained the platform of bhāgavata paramahamsas. There were also many paramahamsas found amongst the yogis, who were less inclined towards cultivation of

the Absolute Truth, and amongst the impersonalists, who were engaged in mental speculation. But when the impersonal conception among the hamsas of the world gradually sank in the deep water of forgetfulness, then atheism began to expand, the words of the spiritual master were reduced to chaos, and disregard for the truths of the Vedas covered the hearts of some hamsas like fog. Being deceived by their own material knowledge, they began to disrespect the Absolute Truth. In this way, the hamsas were divided into four varṇas. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol. 1)

The different varṇas

Only the varṇa called hamsa
existed among the people of Satya-yuga;
divisions were created in Tretā-yuga.

In ancient times there were no divisions of varṇa among the people of India. Later, in the beginning of Tretā-yuga the process of dividing the varṇas was introduced. It is stated in the Seventeenth Chapter of the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as follows:

ādau kṛta-yuge varṇo nṛṇāṃ hamsa iti smṛtaḥ
tretā-mukhe mahā-bhāga prāṇān me hṛdayāt trayī
vipra-kṣatriya-viṭ-śūdrā mukha-bāhūru-pāda-jāḥ
vairājāt puruṣāj jātā ya ātmācāra-lakṣaṇāḥ

“In the beginning, in Satya-yuga, there is only one social class, called hamsa, to which all human beings belong. O greatly fortunate one, at the beginning of Tretā-yuga Vedic knowledge appeared from My heart, which is the abode of the air of life, in three divisions—as Ṛg, Sāma and Yajur. The brāhmaṇas appeared from the Lord's face, the kṣatriyas from the Lord's arms, the vaiśyas from the Lord's thighs and the śūdras from the legs of that mighty form. Each social division was recognized by its particular duties and behavior.” In his commentary on Mahābhārata (Śānti-parva 188.4), Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha has said: varṇāḥ sātvikāṃ rājasāṃ tāmāsāṃ miśraṃ ceti svacchatvādi sāmāt guṇa-vṛtam varṇa śabdenocyate—“The different varṇas were created according to the mixture of the three modes of nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—as well as according to one's qualification and propensities.” The word varṇa refers to the qualities and occupation of the living entities.

The brāhmaṇas are the highest among the varṇas—
the kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and śūdras are determined according to qualities and activities. Śrī Bharadvāja has said in Śrī Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva, Mokṣa-dharma, Chapter 188, as follows:

jaṅgamānām asankhyeyāḥ sthāvarāṇām ca jātayaḥ
teṣām vividha-varṇānām kuto varṇa-viniścayaḥ

“There are innumerable castes among the animate and inanimate living entities. How does one conclusively ascertain their various varṇas?” In answer to this, Bhṛgu has said:

na viśeṣo' sti varṇānām sarvaṁ brāhmam-idaṁ jagat
brahmaṇā pūrva-srṣtam hi karmabhir-varṇatām gatam
brāhmaṇānām sito varṇaḥ kṣatriyāṇām tu lohitaḥ
vaiśyānām pītako varṇaḥ śūdrānām asitas tathā
himsānrta-priya-lubdhāḥ sarva-karmopajīvinaḥ
kṛṣṇāḥ śauca-paribhraṣṭās te dvijāḥ śūdratām gatāḥ
ity etaiḥ karmabhir vyastā dvijā varṇāntaram gatāḥ

Actually the living entity does not belong to any varṇa, in other words, a soul is devoid of any varṇa. In ancient times Lord Brahmā created this world and filled it with brāhmaṇas. Later on, according to their activities, people were divided into various varṇas, such as kṣatriya. Since the brāhmaṇas possess the qualities of goodness, such as peacefulness and self-control, they are white-colored. The kṣatriyas possess the propensities of passion such as heroism and strength, so they are red-colored. The vaiśyas possess the mixed qualities of passion and ignorance such as farming, and thus they are yellow-colored. The śūdras are simply in the mode of ignorance, devoid of any self-manifested propensity, like a cart directed by others, and thus they are black-colored. Persons who engage in all types of activities become envious, fond of speaking lies, and greedy because of being controlled by the mode of ignorance. Due to being devoid of all saṁskāras, such people become impure and thus degrade from their positions of kṣatriyas and vaiśyas to the platform of śūdras. Because of these low-class activities, the brāhmaṇas degraded from their position and attained positions such as kṣatriya. All living entities are by nature qualified to understand Brahman and possess the qualities of goodness. When they are in the mode of goodness they are white, and by the mixture of goodness and passion they become red. When people are in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, devoid of goodness, they are yellow; and people who are simply in the mode of ignorance, devoid of the modes of goodness and passion, become black. One accepts a particular color and is thus identified as belonging to that varṇa, therefore his varṇa is determined by the color and qualities that he possesses. The brāhmaṇas are situated as the root or topmost among these divisions of varṇas.

The history of the origin of the brāhmaṇas mentioned in the Vedas and Upaniṣads; the rules and regulations for undergoing the sacred thread ceremony.

The divisions of brāhmaṇas are found in the Puruṣa-sūkta section of the Ṛg Veda (10.90.11). The origin of the brāhmaṇas is described in the Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda-saṁhitā (7.1.1.4), the Śukla-yajur-veda-saṁhitā (14.28), the Atharva Veda (15.10.1 and

19.6.6), the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (1.2.6.7 and 3.12.9.3), as well as in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (2.1.4.13).

The rules for making the son of a qualified twice-born who has properly undergone the forty-eight purificatory processes a brāhmaṇa is followed by the seminal descendants of the brāhmaṇas. In this way they undergo purificatory processes and are accepted as brāhmaṇas. Knowing that the son of a brāhmaṇa is eligible for becoming a brāhmaṇa, statements such as aṣṭa-varṣaṁ brāhmaṇam upanayīta—“a brāhmaṇa should undergo the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight” are found in the Vedas. Also in the Gobhiliya Gṛhya-sūtras it is stated: garbhāṣṭameṣu brāhmaṇaṁ upanayet—“a brāhmaṇa should be awarded the sacred thread at the age of eight.” The period for undergoing this ceremony extends up to the age of sixteen. When one surpasses this age, he should not be awarded the brāhmaṇa thread. Such a person is called a fallen twice-born as well as a vrātya, or one who fails to fulfill his vow. A vrātya should neither be given a sacred thread, be allowed to study the Vedas, nor given a daughter in charity.

The upanayana-saṁskāra and qualification for spiritual initiation according to the Vedic Gṛhya injunctions.

It is mentioned in the smṛtis:

gṛhyokta-karmaṇā yena samīpaṁ nīyate guroḥ
bālo vedāya tad yogāt bālasyanayanam viduḥ

“According to Vedic Gṛhya injunctions, the ceremony in which a boy is taken to an ācārya, or Vedic teacher, for studying the Vedas is called upanayana, or the sacred thread ceremony. There is no use of studying the Vedas before one's knowledge is matured. That is why it takes a minimum of seven years to complete other necessary purificatory processes before one is ready for upanayana. It is not proper to take a boy to an ācārya for studying the Vedas before the age of eight. It is not possible for a boy of that age to live in the gurukula, away from his parent's house. During the course of his Vedic studies, a brāhmaṇa becomes qualified for following the Vedic injunctions.

Ultimately he gets the opportunity to be initiated in a fire sacrifice. If there is no possibility of sending a brāhmaṇa boy to the house of an ācārya before the age of sixteen, or if the young brāhmaṇa boy has no taste or desire for studying the Vedas, then it is to be understood that according to his taste he does not wish to become a brāhmaṇa by undergoing the upanayana saṁskāra. From the topics of Jaḍa Bharata it is understood that though he was born in a brāhmaṇa family that strictly followed the purificatory processes, he was never inclined towards ritualistic ceremonies. If the boy born in a brāhmaṇa family exhibits no taste even for becoming a kṣatriya or vaiśya, then he will neither want to go to gurukula or undergo the preliminary purificatory

processes. In the process of Vedic karma-kāṇḍa, the fire is accepted as the original ingredient in all saṁskāras. This karma-kāṇḍa process is a polished stone meant for some future purpose, but the end result is uncertain.

It is not a fact that material endeavors will always be successful. Whether a boy is interested or not, his father and society force him to go to gurukula in order to keep the family and social tradition intact. The result of this is that though the boy is induced by his father or others to follow their proposed fruitive activities, he often does not achieve the desired result due to a lack of qualification and taste. For this reason, even though a brāhmaṇa boy acts according to the instructions of his well-wishers and undergoes the sacred thread ceremony, he nevertheless later changes his varṇa to kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, or outcaste.

The varṇas are meant for only
the gross and subtle bodies of a living entity.

Only the gross and subtle bodies accept varṇas. A soul's qualification for accepting varṇas lies only in his two bodies. Although a hamsa, or a brāhmaṇa free from the three modes of material nature, accepts a body, nevertheless he is born from the limbs of the universal form of the Lord. Therefore his unchangeable transcendental existence is divided into four categories according to conditional mundane considerations. The qualities and activities produced from these qualities are the cause for dividing the varṇas of the living entities, who are otherwise equipoised. The totality of human beings are divided into four categories according to their symptoms. If one wants to know a person by his symptoms or by the process of division, then it is to be understood that his gross bodily identification is limited to his father's family. Later on his subtle identification or occupational identification helps create the division of varṇas. While observing the symptoms of a brāhmaṇa's subtle identification, we often end up analyzing the origin of his gross body. But if we conclude that the subtle body has emanated from the gross body, then we have to accept that a seed comes from the skin of a fruit. Then we will have to say that the gross body is the father of the subtle body. But actually such a fantasy is not approved in consideration of the subtle body. When the gross body is finished, the subtle body thinks of accepting another gross body, therefore it is understood that the subtle body existed before the gross body. Those who accept the process of reincarnation or karma do not believe that the subtle body has come from the gross, rather they accept that the subtle body puts on a gross covering. Material desires alone accumulate the ingredients for a gross body from this world, consisting of the three modes of nature. The ingredients that a gross body gradually accepts from this world are actually approved by the subtle body, or the mind. The living entity's tastes develop due to his subtle body, and the gross body is forced to accept them. The mind, or the subtle body, which is a reflection of spirit, is the cause for accepting gross elements.

Ascertainment of varṇas is possible only by occupation, it is not bound by seminal consideration.

The color of varṇa is determined through the process of seeing. Imagination is created or conceptions manifest through senses like the eyes. When a person's external identification is determined through the process of gross seeing, then the identification of that person's varṇa is limited to seminal consideration. But thoughtful persons ascertain that the consideration of one's occupation is the only criteria for determining one's varṇa. Since everyone will not be sufficiently thoughtful, seminal identification is given prominence in order to properly execute gross social activities or determine sexual relationships. When the seminal identification process is prominent, then there is possibility of many problems in ascertaining one's varṇa.

That is why we do not usually find an agreement on this subject in ordinary Dharma-sāstras or Gṛhya-sūtras. When the Vedic rituals are converted into the fruitive path of aslike less intelligent people, then following the injunctions of the Pañcarātras takes precedence to those Vedic rituals. The injunctions of the Pañcarātras, which replaces the Vedic ritualistic performances, consists of five forms of knowledge as found in the Vedas, the Āraṇyaka, and pure Sāṅkhya bhakti-yoga. The Vedic rituals defined by the fruitive workers are different from the rituals conducted by the followers of the Āraṇyaka. The Vedic rituals of devotees on the path of worship are supported by the Pañcarātras and the Vedas. The Vedic rituals of the impersonalists are supported by the Upaniṣads. The smṛtis and the Purāṇas have illuminated the subject of the Vedas. They did not totally discourage the polluted Vedic path of the fruitive workers, rather they consider this path as incomplete and meant for less intelligent people.

Those who reject the path of the Vedas,
the smṛtis, the Purāṇas and the Pañcarātras
are simply creating disturbances.

That is why Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra states:

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi- pañcarātra-vidhim vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate

“Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, and Nārada-pañcarātra is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.” When the rules and regulations of the Vedas are inappropriate due to differences in time, place, and persons, then tantras that are favorable to the Vedas or expansions of the Vedas that are able to fulfill such deficiency are called Pañcarātras. The Pañcarātra scriptures emanated from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa in order to keep the Vedic injunctions intact and fulfill the vacancy created by obstructions to the proper utility of the varṇāśrama principles mentioned in the Gṛhyas, which are

subordinate to the Vedic injunctions. The Vedic process that does not take support from the Pañcarātras is often obstructed. Any system followed in the name of Vedic injunctions that is opposed to the Pañcarātras and that encourages a distorted form of worshipping Lord Viṣṇu is nothing but a disturbance in the society.

The worship of the Supreme Lord that is beyond the realm of sense enjoyment and liberation is superior to the worship of either the karmīs, who are fond of sense enjoyment, or the jñānīs, who are fond of liberation.

Due to the influence of time, the rules and regulations of the Gṛhyas or Vedic injunctions are not being properly followed. The glories of Śāṅḍilya's Pañcarātra, which was misinterpreted by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya as averse to the Vedas, have been established in Śrī Mahābhārata since time immemorial as favorable to the Vedas. The activities that puffed-up fruitive workers consider Vedic are actually material enjoyment that according to the followers of Pañcarātra is averse to the devotional service of Viṣṇu. In the hands of the karmīs the Vedic literatures yield forgetfulness of the Lord, while in the hands of the followers of the Pañcarātras the very same Vedic literatures are accepted as the basis for worshipping Lord Hari. The fruitive activities based on material enjoyment, the impersonal knowledge based on renunciation, and the worship of the Lord based on service attitude, which is beyond material enjoyment and mental speculation, produce different results among the three communities.

Although they all endeavor to follow the Vedic injunctions, there are differences among them. Therefore if one wants to debate over the various Vedic injunctions and the varṇāśrama system followed by these three communities of people—the karmīs, jñānīs, and bhaktas—it is very difficult to achieve success.

We will gradually discuss the terms and conditions for accepting gṛhya-saṁskāras, which are properly established by Vedic injunctions in the Mahābhārata, the Sātvata-saṁhitās, the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, and the Pañcarātras. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol. 1, Part 19)

The third birth

There are three kinds of birth—
śaukra, sāvitra, and daikṣa.

Although “third birth” may sound new to many persons, there are so many references to this in the scriptures. Those who have studied the Bhārgavīya Manu-saṁhitā must have come across the following verse in the Second Chapter: mātur agre 'dhi-jananam dvitīyam mauñjibandhane—“a brāhmaṇa gets his first birth from his mother (śaukra-janma, seminal birth), and he gets his second birth by receiving the sacred thread

(sāvitra-janma).” When a twice-born receives spiritual initiation in the form of hearing the Vedas (about one's relationship with the Lord) along with fire sacrifice, it is called “third birth.” The first birth is the birth from one's father and mother. After duly undergoing the purificatory processes one receives second birth from a father in the form of the ācārya and a mother in the form of Gāyatrī. When a twice-born becomes qualified to serve the Supreme Lord, he gets his third birth from a father in the form of the spiritual master and a mother in the form of initiation mantras. In the ascending path, three births—the birth of the body, the birth of the mind, and the formal birth—are found. These three births are described in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as śaukra, sāvitra, and daikṣa births. It is stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.31.10 and 10.23.40) as follows: kiṁ janmabhis tribhir veva śaukra-sāvitra-yājñikaiḥ—“A civilized human being has three kinds of births. The first birth is by a pure father and mother, and this birth is called birth by semen. The next birth takes place when one is initiated by the spiritual master, and this birth is called sāvitra. The third birth, called yājñika, takes place when one is given the opportunity to worship Lord Viṣṇu.” and dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñātām—“To hell with our threefold birth, our vow of celibacy, and our extensive learning!” In his commentary on the later verse, Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has written: trivṛt śaukraṁ sāvitraṁ daikṣam iti triguṇitaṁ janma. śukra-sambandhi-janma viśuddha-mātā-pitṛbhyām utpattiḥ.sāvityam upanayanena yājñikaṁ dīkṣayā.—“There are three kinds of birth—śaukra, sāvitra, and daikṣa—according to their different qualities. The śaukra-janma refers to birth from a pure father and mother, the sāvitra-janma refers to birth by undergoing the sacred thread ceremony, and daikṣa-janma refers to spiritual initiation before the sacrificial fire.” Birth from a pure father and mother means brāhmaṇād brāhmaṇyām jātaḥ—“a brāhmaṇa is born from a brāhmaṇa father and mother.”

The qualifications of seminal brāhmaṇas
and examples of professional brāhmaṇas.

One who can ascertain the forefathers of his family beginning from Lord Brahmā without any break, who can confirm that they have all properly undergone the ten purificatory processes, who can prove that there was never any intercaste marriages in his family, and who can establish that before each pregnancy the appropriate saṁskāras have been performed—he is a seminal brāhmaṇa. The Vedic statement aṣṭa-varṣaṁ brāhmaṇam upanayīta—“a brāhmaṇa boy should be brought to an ācārya for sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight” and the smṛti statement garbhāṣṭame 'bde kurvīta brāhmaṇasyopanayanam—“a brāhmaṇa should be awarded the sacred thread at the age of eight” refer only to the above-mentioned brāhmaṇas, not to the sons of brāhmaṇas who have been accepted as brāhmaṇas only from a few generations. In other words, it does not refer to those in whose family an intercaste marriage took place, to those who have undergone garbhādhāna-saṁskāra only once, or to those who have improperly or imperfectly undergone saṁskāras. “Brāhmaṇas from a few generations” means either the descendants of those who have taken birth in other

varṇas yet qualified themselves as brāhmaṇas or those who were qualified brāhmaṇas according to the process mentioned in the Vedic literatures. Just as the Gārgya brāhmaṇas were descendants of Śini, the son of Garga; the Maudgalya brāhmaṇas were descendants of Mudgala; the Vāśiṣṭha brāhmaṇas were descendants of sage Vaśiṣṭha, the son of Mitra from the womb of Urvaśī; and so on—innumerable such brāhmaṇa families, though not śaukra brāhmaṇas, will remain glorified as brāhmaṇas as long as they continue to remain qualified, which is the root foundation of brahmanism.

One's position as a brāhmaṇa is determined according to the Vedas and the Pañcarātras.

If the descendants of either seminal or professional brāhmaṇas do not possess the necessary qualifications, then they are also fallen. It is stated in Mahābhārata, Vana-parva, Chapter 215 as follows:

brāhmaṇaḥ patanīyeṣu vartamāno vikarmasu
dāmbhiko duṣkṛtaḥ prājñaḥ śūdraṇa sadṛṣo bhavet

“If a brāhmaṇa is engaged in sinful activities, if he is proud, or if he is a miscreant, then he falls to the level of a śūdra.” According to this statement from the scriptures it is difficult in this age of Kali to ascertain who is in a pure unbroken seminal brāhmaṇa line and who is not. Therefore, through the ascending process it is very uncommon to identify a real twice-born or thrice-born. But those who receive the knowledge of serving the transcendental Lord through the process of disciplic succession and follow the Vedic injunctions, they are becoming qualified to undergo the saṁskāras mentioned in the Vedic literatures. In this age of Kali, there is no other way of becoming purified.

aśuddhāḥ śūdra-kalpā hi brāhmaṇāḥ kali-sambhavāḥ
teṣāṁ āgama-mārgena śuddhir na śrota-vartmanā

“The brāhmaṇas born in the age of Kali are merely śūdras. Their so-called Vedic path of karma is polluted and cannot purify them. They can only be purified by following the path of the Āgamas or Pañcarātras.” Therefore, at present, a brāhmaṇa should be accepted as such only if he follows the rules and regulations of the sāvata-āgamas, tantras, or Pañcarātras, since the scriptures clearly mention that brāhmaṇas born in this age of Kali are impure, or their purity is not maintained through seminal descent. Therefore according to Vedic injunctions, they cannot even become twice-born in their impure state, and what to speak of becoming thrice-born.

Necessity of the sacred thread ceremony

after receiving pāñcarātriḱa initiation.

According to the process of Vaiṣṇava literatures in pursuance of the Vedas, an impure person can become pure only by spiritual initiation; there cannot be any other arrangement for purification. It does not matter in which family one is born, either in a so-called brāhmaṇa family or a lower family, if he wants to be purified in this age of Kali then he should earn his qualification to be twice-born by first being initiated according to the rules and regulations of the Vedic Pañcarātras and thereafter accept the signs of a twice-born. It is stated in the scriptures:

yathā kāñcanatām yāti kām̐syam̐ rasa-vidhānataḥ
tathā dikṣā-vidhānena dvijatvam̐ jāyate nṛṇām

“As bell metal is turned to gold when mixed with mercury in an alchemical process, so one who is properly trained and initiated by a bona fide spiritual master immediately becomes a brāhmaṇa.” Every human being must take Vaiṣṇava initiation according to the proper Vedic Pañcarātra process, then he becomes a qualified twice-born, who must then accept the appropriate signs such as the sacred thread.

Those who consider paramahamsas, who are eternally pure and beyond the principles of varṇāśrama, as belonging to a particular caste have a hellish mentality.

The paramahamsas, who are actually eternally perfect pure souls, are beyond the principles of varṇāśrama. They need not again purify themselves. Therefore they may also not accept the sacred thread. This does not mean, however, that they are in any way less than a thrice-born. They are the spiritual masters of the brāhmaṇas, and the brāhmaṇas are their servants.

The four varṇas were created according to quality and work, and examples of twice-borns who were properly initiated.

In ancient times there was only one varṇa called hamsa. Later on, according to qualities and work, the four varṇas were created—there were not four varṇas in the beginning. Of course, there is a gulf of difference between the four varṇas and their respective qualifications. Intelligent people should carefully consider this. Apart from the four varṇas created by the Lord, the system of a son's purely inheriting the varṇa of his father has also been accepted. This is called seminal varṇa. But every reader of the scriptures knows that the seminal process is not the only way of ascertaining one's varṇa. He certainly knows that among the one hundred sons of Rṣabhadeva, eighty-one of them became brāhmaṇas, nine of them became kṣatriyas, and nine became Vaiṣṇavas. Apart from brāhmaṇa sons such as Śaunaka, Grtsamada also had kṣatriya,

vaiśya and śūdra sons. The sons of the kṣatriya Duritakṣaya—Trayyāruṇi, Kavi, and Puṣkarāruṇi—became brāhmaṇas. In the dynasty of King Ajamīdha, the brāhmaṇa Priyamedhā was born. There are hundreds of such examples in the scriptures. Though Śaṭhakopa Dāsa, the spiritual master of Śrī Śrī Rāmānujācārya Prabhu, was born in the family of a śūdra, he was a brāhmaṇa. And in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society, in the families of Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Raghunandana, Śrī Hari Hoḍa, and others, performance of the twice-born saṁskāra is still current. This spiritual position of brāhmaṇas, attained through spiritual initiation, has been accepted by intelligent people from time immemorial. There is no need to be surprised by seeing or hearing this. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol.1, Part 28)

Vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhi
Although Brahman, Paramātmā,
and Bhagavān are one nondual substance,
the materialists maintain misconceptions.

Śrī Vyāsadeva has said: agni sūrya brāhmaṇebhyas tejyān vaiṣṇavaḥ sadā.—“A Vaiṣṇava is always more powerful than the fire, the sun, or the brāhmaṇas.” Many people present false arguments on this statement and create various philosophies. Ignorance is the root cause of such mistakes or faults. The brāhmaṇas, yogis, and Vaiṣṇavas are all servants of the advaya-jñāna, or nondual substance. This is accepted by all learned knowers of the truth. So many people will not be able to understand the above statement that a Vaiṣṇava is more powerful than a brāhmaṇa or a yogi. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī Prabhu has instructed in his Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā that although Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān are one nondual substance, many people are confused about the usage of the word bhāgavata in place of Brahman, as the word Brahman is distinct from the word bhāgavata from the ignorant point of view. Whenever materialists try to separate the noun from its adjectives while considering Brahman and Paramātmā, false arguments immediately lead them to the kingdom of misconceptions. The meaning of the word Brahman that creates differentiation with the word bhāgavata in this qualitative world certainly lacks the consideration of the nondual substance. The considerations of material variegatedness and nonvariegatedness create mixed feelings in spiritual consciousness. The prominence of the inferiority of Brahman and partiality of Paramātmā in considerations of the unadulterated, pure spiritual object more or less destroys the conception of a nondual substance.

Transcendental philosophers attain
the platform of liberation while considering
the constitutional position of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Who is a Vaiṣṇava? This consideration creates different conceptions in the discriminating vision of the philosopher and points towards the existence of one's original constitutional position in the equal vision of the philosopher. There cannot be any tinge of matter in the realization of spiritual variegatedness or in the constitutional position and vision of the seer. Whenever there is an attempt of attributing matter on spirit, it should be known for certain that spiritual nature has been attacked by envy in the form of matter. When the material attachment of the sense gratifiers become very prominent in their pure hearts, then they become very proud as non-Vaiṣṇavas. This is due to their material absorption, which is unrelated to God, and it simply causes fear.

It is stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*—“Mukti, or the philosopher's liberation, means giving up all other activities and being situated in one's constitutional position (*svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*). When a philosopher is conditioned by sensual knowledge, then material vision will distract him from the truth. But if transcendental sound vibration enters his earholes, he will be freed from the contamination of mundane sound vibrations. The contamination of mundane sound is simply under the control of the eyes, nose, tongue, touch, and their leader, the mind. Since these five senses and their aggregate, the mind, are eligible for being conditioned by material conceptions, they are indifferent to inclination towards God, which is the eternal constitutional duty of the living entities. In other words, by misusing his sensual propensities a living entity cannot achieve eternal benefit. If one is entangled in unwanted desires, he will not understand the activities and characteristics of the Vaiṣṇavas, no matter how intelligent he may be. Then the conditioned soul falls into misconceptions and forgets his constitutional position. As a result, various proposals and ideas make him wander in the environment of the false ego. By the mercy of either Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, transcendental sound vibration makes friendship with a genuine desire for sādhana. In such a condition a living entity realizes his own constitutional position and experiences the difference between pure sanātana-dharma and other dharma's born of envy.

The materialists and the Māyāvādīs are unable to understand the transcendental holy names, the Lord, and the Vaiṣṇavas.

For those who consider the body and mind as nondifferent from the soul, there is no possibility of awakening transcendental knowledge. That is why they do not take shelter of the holy names of the Lord, which are nondifferent from the Lord, and therefore their material senses, which are the source of material disease, whimsically create temporary illusions in their minds. Only the transcendental holy names of the Lord can cure them from their disease.

Those who have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord no longer remain servants of temporary ignorance and unhappiness. But the mentality of 'I am a servant of māyā' captures the taste of conditioned souls and guides them to the path of either karma or jñāna. One who is freed from this can recognize a Vaiṣṇava. The material enjoyers and the Māyāvādīs are forever unable to recognize a Vaiṣṇava.

An offender who commits offences against
the holy names and the Vaiṣṇavas is fit for atonement.

Without realizing their constitutional position, many people who are averse to the Lord consider that the most worshipable Śrī Jhaḍu Ṭhākura belonged to the farmer class, consider Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the son of Hāḍo Ojhā as a simple brāhmaṇa from Mithila, and consider Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura as an outcaste. In this way they commit offences at the lotus feet of Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. Actually offences are not less grievous than sinful activities. To transgress temporary worldly moralities is called sin, and to deviate from spiritual moralities is called offence. To commit offence is an eternal fault. There is no alternative to become free from offences against the holy names and the Vaiṣṇavas other than service to the Vaiṣṇavas. The mentality of the offender of Vaiṣṇavas does not allow him to worship the Vaiṣṇavas but rather creates misconceptions that Vaiṣṇavas belong to a particular caste. That is why learned scholars say that materialists consider Vaiṣṇavas as non-Vaiṣṇavas like themselves and try to bring them on their level. Then they become proper candidates for atonement, otherwise, according to smṛti literature, they will certainly live in hell

A well-behaved Vaiṣṇava engaged
in devotional service and following sanātana-dharma
is a qualified judge of spiritual varṇāśrama.

Only a Vaiṣṇava is a qualified judge for considering a person's spiritual varṇāśrama status, because he is not infected by the four defects of life, such as to commit mistakes, to be illusioned, to cheat others, and to possess imperfect senses. Moreover, having heard the transcendental sound vibration, he regrets the misfortune of those who have not, so he specifically prays to Kṛṣṇa to bless such people.

mātur agre 'dhi-jananam dvitīyam mauñjibandhane
ṛtīyam yajña-dikṣāyam dvijasya śruti-codanāt8

The offenders who neglect the above-mentioned statement of the smṛti can never understand the subject matter of the three types of birth, beginning with seminal birth. They are always ready to insult the Vaiṣṇavas with their duplicitous nature, and

as soon as they happen to hear the statements of the scriptures they feel embarrassed. The adaiva-varṇāśrama system established by the puffed-up pseudo smārtas is not accepted either by the daiva-varṇāśrama system or by the religious scriptures. Those who have not studied the Gauḍīya magazine in the last few years may due to their duplicitous nature loudly call for establishing the adaiva-varṇāśrama system, but in reply to this, the servants of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, who are engaged in devotional service and followers of pure sanātana-dharma, will point out their immature considerations and try hard to bring them back on the proper path.

The Pañcarātras and smṛti-śāstras such as the Purāṇas accept the changing of varṇas and āśramas.

A Vaiṣṇava may live at home, yet he is able to carry out his spiritual duties. Although the materialistic followers of the adaiva-varṇāśrama system cannot understand this fact, Śrī Mahābhārata and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam will gradually help them understand these topics. The Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra literatures and the smṛti literatures such as the Purāṇas accept the changing of one's varṇa and āśrama during one's life. The childish mentality exhibited by followers of the adaiva-varṇāśrama system who pursue the nagna-mātrkā logic⁹, simply displays their foolishness and weakness of heart. The feeble thoughts of the followers of the adaiva-varṇāśrama system simply make them unsocial narrow-minded people.

Envious people who are devoid of devotional service are naturally fools and ill-behaved.

The disciples of those who repeatedly try to create disturbances and are envious of Śrī Māyāpur, the abode of the Supreme Lord, are fond of false arguments and display their poverty with their ancient language. As long as these people maintain their envious nature, they will not understand the characteristics of devotional service. The most worshipable Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu has addressed these people, who are devoid of devotional service, as fools and sinners. A hypocrite can never recognize a Vaiṣṇava. Therefore it is said:

arceye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir vaiṣṇave jāti-buddhir
viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ

“One who considers the arcā-mūrti (the worshipable Deity of Lord Viṣṇu) to be stone, the spiritual master to be an ordinary human being, a Vaiṣṇava to belong to a particular creed, or Lord Viṣṇu, who is the supreme controller, as equal to the demigods is possessed of hellish intelligence.” This statement of the smṛti spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva should constantly be considered by such people. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol.11, Part 17 and Śrī Gauḍīya Patrika, Vol.13, Part 2)

Mundane śūdras are not Vaiṣṇavas
The difference between Śrī Gaura Bhagavān's
spiritual world and material world

Lord Śrī Gaura has two kingdoms—the first consists of His eternal abodes such as Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka and the second consists of the brahmāṇḍas, or universes, known as Devī-dhāma. The existence of the Vaikuṅṭha abodes are beyond the material creation, in other words, they are situated in the spiritual kingdom. The material time factor has no entry into that realm, material qualities have no access there, and the condemned lusty activities of the conditioned souls have no jurisdiction there. In the heavenly planets of this material world one finds the interactions of the material modes of nature, the enjoyment of the results of one's karma, and absence of love of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Gaura creates the eternally manifested Vaikuṅṭhas and perishable brahmāṇḍas through Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies down on the Causal Ocean, and who is a plenary portion of Saṅkarsaṇa, who resides in Mahā-Vaikuṅṭha, and who is a manifestation of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is an expansion of Śrī Gaura. Since Mahā-Viṣṇu, who lies on the Causal Ocean, creates perishable brahmāṇḍas, nobody should consider Vaikuṅṭha as similar to Devī-dhāma. The brahmāṇḍas are material worlds and under the jurisdiction of the time factor. But the Vaikuṅṭhas are spiritual and beyond the material time.

In the spiritual world there are no śūdras.

There is no eternal gross existence of the different varṇas such as brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas in the spiritual world, rather they exist only in the form of expression. It is not that because in this material world we can see the temporary existence of brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas that there have to be śūdras in the spiritual world. The non-Vaiṣṇava sect of prākṛta-sahajiyās think that the gross existence of the temporary identification as śūdras in this material world helps one enter into the spiritual kingdom, so they disrespect the brāhmaṇas of this material kingdom.

The sahajiyās are faultfinders, śūdras, and sinful;
hence they are non-Vaiṣṇavas.

People condemn the sahajiyās because they do not respect the brāhmaṇas. Since they disregard the brāhmaṇas, they naturally consider them non-brāhmaṇas or devoid of good qualities. While travelling throughout the universes, conditioned souls engage in various sinful activities and thus lose their worldly prestige. Due to their past misdeeds, sinful people become maddened by the pride of being śūdras. By the influence of previous pious activities the conditioned soul becomes prestigious as a

qualified brāhmaṇa. Because the mundane saḥajiyās are sinful-minded, they love to address and hate the Vaiṣṇavas as śūdras; they indirectly call them sinful and claim that a śūdra cannot become a Vaiṣṇava. The saḥajiyās do not believe that all great qualities are present in a Vaiṣṇava, so they think that they will be benefited by being attached to sinful activities.

Only the brāhmaṇas are qualified
to become Vaiṣṇavas, not others.

When the brāhmaṇas, who are situated in the mode of goodness in this material kingdom, give up their relationship with other mixed qualities, then they become transcendental to all the material modes of nature. At that point he is situated in pure goodness and becomes a Vaiṣṇava with twenty-six qualities. When a brāhmaṇa gives up his authority for performing fruitive activities and the desire for accepting dakṣiṇa contributions, then his propensity for being a servant of Lord Viṣṇu is awakened. He then surpasses the kingdom of māyā, where Lord Viṣṇu is not always seen, and after achieving the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu in the spiritual world, which is devoid of material enjoyment, he cultivates devotional service.

The brāhmaṇas are situated in the mode of goodness; the śūdras are covered with ignorance and are sinful.

As long as the living entity thinks that becoming a śūdra is the basis for serving Viṣṇu, he considers himself fallen and sinful; and by serving material objects, he considers that non-Vaiṣṇavism, which is devoid of service to Hari, is Vaiṣṇavism. The living entities who are covered by the mode of ignorance are śūdras, and the living entities who are situated in the mode of goodness are brāhmaṇas. The sinful śūdras can never serve Lord Viṣṇu with their sinful ingredients. Even a pious, ambitious brāhmaṇa who is situated in the mode of mixed goodness and absorbed in matter cannot serve Lord Viṣṇu. That is why a person who is proud of his varṇa is not qualified to serve Lord Viṣṇu.

The process of becoming a Vaiṣṇava,
or servant of Hari.

When one rejects the pride arising from being a proper follower of the system of varṇāśrama, he becomes eligible for the transcendental service of Lord Hari. Unless a śūdra gives up his sinful nature he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava, and unless a brāhmaṇa gives up his pious fruitive activities with his body, mind, and speech he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava. The Supreme Lord has said in Bhagavad-gītā (4.13) as follows: cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ. The Lord has created the four

varṇas according to their qualities and activities. Until the indulgence in material qualities is not diminished by the propensity for serving Lord Hari, a living entity continues to perform fruitive activities. In other words, he continues to wander in the kingdom of material enjoyment. If a person who is situated in the principles of varṇāśrama serves Lord Hari while maintaining the pride of being a brāhmaṇa, there is no possibility of his attaining unalloyed devotional service to Lord Hari. Then the living entity engages in devotional service mixed with fruitive activities. Then the brāhmaṇa engaged in devotional service mixed with karma becomes qualified to possess the twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava and be identified as a Vaiṣṇava in this world. But when he begins to worship Hari without fruitive desires, then he achieves pure devotional service.

Examples showing a Vaiṣṇava is not a śūdra;
he is the spiritual master of the brāhmaṇas.

Many ambitious brāhmaṇas who have taken shelter of devotional service mixed with fruitive activities dare to attribute the abomination of caste upon pure Vaiṣṇavas like Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura, Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura, Navanī Hoḍa Ṭhākura, and Śyamānanda Prabhu. Moreover, fruitive brāhmaṇas who became Vaiṣṇavas like Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, and Yadunandana Cakravartī have taken shelter of the glorious lotus feet of the servants of Hari and thus established that the Vaiṣṇavas are transcendental ideals for the brāhmaṇas. If a Vaiṣṇava were a śūdra or sinful, then Śrīla Ṭhākura Narahari, Śrīla Ṭhākura Narottama, Śrīla Śyamānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Rasikānanda Prabhu, Śrīla Ṭhākura Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, and Śrīla Gosvāmī Raghunātha Dāsa would never be adored as spiritual masters of many brāhmaṇas engaged in devotional service mixed with fruitive activities.

According to social and scriptural opinion,
a non-brāhmaṇa is unqualified for serving Hari.

As soon as we give the mentality of a śūdra or ambitious brāhmaṇa, then we will not see any discrimination in the sinful or pious caste of Vaiṣṇavas who give and accept the devotional service of Hari. Otherwise, why are we so eager to classify the Vaiṣṇavas as śūdras (without saṃskāras) while performing devotion service mixed with fruitive activities meant for some irrelevant purpose. The śāstras, the religious principles, and society say that other than brāhmaṇas no other varṇa has the right to serve the Absolute Truth. That is why the ambitious brāhmaṇas who maintain irrelevant desires have a propensity to hate Vaiṣṇavas as śūdras. They do not even hesitate to say that the Vaiṣṇavas have no alternative but to become śūdras because of sinful activities. But this type of consideration is the main obstacle for serving the servants of Hari. Unless one gives up unfavorable considerations, he can not make advancement in the path of devotional service. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, No. 20)

The seminal brāhmaṇa
The symptoms of a brāhmaṇa
described in Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad.

The names of 108 Upaniṣads are mentioned in the Muktikopaniṣad. Among them, the thirty-sixth Upaniṣad is called Vajra-sūcikopaniṣad. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya composed an elaborate commentary on this Upaniṣad and thus became very famous. It is described in Vajra-sūcika-śruti as follows:

tarhi ko vā brāhmaṇo nāma. yaḥ kaścīd ātmānam advitīyam jāti-guṇa-kriyā-hīnam
ṣaḍ-ūrmi-ṣaḍ-bhāvety-ādi-sarva-doṣa-rahitaṁ satya-jñānānandānanta-svarūpam
svayam nirvikalpaṁ aśeṣa-kalpādhāram aśeṣa-bhūtāntar-yāmitvena vartamānam antar
bahiś cākāśa-vad anusyūtam akhaṇḍānanda-svabhāvam apremeyam anubhavaika-
vedyam aparokṣatayā bhāsamānam kara-talāmalaka-vat sāksād aparokṣi-kṛtya
kṛtārthatayā kāma-rāgādi-doṣa-rahitaḥ śama-damādi-sampanno bhāva-mātsarya-
tṛṣṇāśā-mohādi-rahito dambhāhankārādibhir asaṁsprṣṭa cetā vartate. evam ukta-
lakṣaṇo yaḥ sa eva brāhmaṇa iti śruti-smṛti-purāṇetihāsānām abhiprāyaḥ. anyathā hi
brāhmaṇatva-siddhir nāsty eva.

“Then who is the brāhmaṇa? Anyone who knows the Self as one; devoid of mundane caste, qualities, and activities; devoid of contamination by the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy) and the six waves (distress, illusion, hunger, thirst, old age, and death); the personification of transcendental knowledge and bliss; beyond duality, yet the basis of all material dualities; the Supersoul of all living entities; all-pervading inside and outside like the vast sky; endowed with uninterrupted bliss; immeasurable; known only through spiritual realization; and directly self-manifesting—one who directly realizes the Self (as one sees an āmlakī fruit in the palm of his hand), who lives always satisfied, devoid of faults like lust and anger, who possesses qualities like peacefulness and self-control, who is devoid of envy, the thirst for material enjoyment, illusion, and other faults, and who is untouched by pride, false ego, and so on—such a person is a brāhmaṇa. This is also the opinion of the śrutis, smṛtis, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures. Otherwise one cannot be a real brāhmaṇa.”

Questions put forth by the brāhmaṇa community
of East Bengal (Bangladesh), who are opposed to
and violators of the Vedic injunctions.

Violating the above statement of the śruti and with a desire to propagate philosophy
averse to the Vedas, the brāhmaṇa community of East Bengal put forward a question

through their representatives, the caste Gosvāmīs, in the month of October in the city of Dhaka. They requested an answer from the Śrī Madhva Gauḍīya Maṭha of Dhaka, but what to speak of hearing the answer, the way they misbehaved was condemned in the Gauḍīya magazine. Since many people requested a serial presentation of this criticism, we are publishing the following article.

The questions of the caste Gosvāmīs who are averse to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu and are harassed by the smārta community are as follows: “A brāhmaṇa boy should be brought for undergoing the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight.¹ What is the meaning of the word brāhmaṇa mentioned in this Vedic statement? Does it refer to the caste brāhmaṇas who study the Vedas and perform austerities, or simply to those who are born in the family of brāhmaṇas, the seminal brāhmaṇas?”

The answers of the spiritual brāhmaṇas from Śrī Madhva Gauḍīya Maṭha are as follows: “If one accepts persons who have undergone various austerities as brāhmaṇas, then it will certainly be improper, because they are devoid of qualities like knowing past, present, and future, they possess gross vision, they lack transcendental qualities, and they are unable to ascertain the truth because they take support of pratyakṣa and anumāna as evidence rather than transcendental sound. Therefore they are unqualified to be addressed as brāhmaṇas, and they are unfit for the sacred thread ceremony, because they do not possess the appropriate qualifications. In answer to the second question, qualities like austerity arise after the study of the scriptures, therefore the position of a brāhmaṇa is dependent both on the study of the scriptures and undergoing austerities, which are not possible at the age of eight. So undergoing the sacred thread ceremony at the age of eight is not improper, rather it is proper.

Therefore one should accept our authorized path.”

By their questions, the seminal brāhmaṇas are trying to establish that they are the real brāhmaṇas.

The caste Gosvāmīs and their descendents are unable to accept the considerations of the śrutis, smṛtis, and Purāṇas.

In Bhagavad-gītā (4.13) the Supreme Lord as said: cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ—“According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me.” And the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.5.2) states:

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

“Each of the four social orders, headed by the brāhmaṇas, was born through different combinations of the modes of nature, from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in His universal form. Thus the four spiritual orders were also generated.” The caste Gosvāmīs and their caretakers, the smārta community, who are situated in the perverted varṇāśrama system, are not ready to accept these statements of Bhagavad-gītā and Bhāgavatam with proper consideration. We will gradually and elaborately discuss the value of their considerations. But first of all we would like to say that they do not accept the smṛtis and the Purāṇas, which are in pursuance of the śruti. Therefore, being unable to accept the real meaning of the Vedas, they create confusion which in turn produces further disturbances. The rules for the sacred thread ceremony found in the fourth khaṇḍa, fourth prapāṭhaka of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad of Sāma Veda mentions that a boy should be awarded the sacred thread between the age of eight and sixteen years. Apart from that, the procedure for the sacred thread ceremony at other times is also found.

The Vedic fruitive workers do not agree to award the sacred thread to a fallen boy who has crossed the age of sixteen without undergoing the enjoined ceremony. But the mental speculators and the devotees reject the ideas of the fruitive workers and follow other branches of the Vedas. The fruitive workers, who follow the indirect path, are unable to realize transcendence knowledge and the service of the transcendental Lord. That is why they cannot imagine that the Vedic literatures teach one to become detached from fruitive activities and aspire for the ultimate goal of one's constitutional propensities. Their only asset is their seminal brahmanism.

The Vedas, the branches of the Vedas,
and the Kalpa-śāstras approve the system of Vedic tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa and the wearing
of saffron cloth.

It is stated in Bhagavad-gītā: na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām—
“Let not the wise disrupt the minds of the ignorant who are attached to fruitive
action.” The different branches of the Vedas are nondifferent from the Vedas.
Calculation of years and so on and conceptions of time are included in the Kalpa-
śāstras, which are part of the Vedic branch of astrological knowledge. In different
branches of the Vedas there are various subbranches of Kalpa-śāstras and Jyotiṣa-
śāstras. A particular branch of fruitive activities nourishes various conceptions of the
innumerable branches of the Vedas. An arrangement for wearing saffron cloth is found
in the Vājasaneyā Kātyāyana Gṛhya-sūtra of the Kalpa-śāstras while ascertaining one's
dress. In other Kalpa-śāstras of the Ekāyana branch of the Vedas, however, the
wearing of saffron robes has been forbidden. One branch of Vedic knowledge does not
reject another branch of knowledge, rather it respects it. The seminal method is not
the only method for ascertaining who is a brāhmaṇa. These topics are elaborately
described in Kāśmīr-āgama. The arguments presented by Apayya Dikṣita out of
disrespect for Śrī Yamunācārya, the king of Vaiṣṇavas, without understanding the

teachings of the Ekāyana branch, are extremely insignificant. Apayya Dīkṣita was simply an atheistic scholar attached to false arguments. He was against the Vedic tridaṇḍa system and was unsuccessful in establishing that the devotees were non-brāhmaṇas. Śrī Puruṣottama Mahārāja, a follower of the Vallabhācārya-sampradāya, has properly punished him for the mischief that he displayed in his Kalpataru-parimala commentary on Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Śārīraka-bhāṣya on the Vedānta-sūtras. If one patiently analyzes this, he will never desire to call the initiated Vaiṣṇavas “non-brāhmaṇas.” Due to absence of third birth, or spiritual initiation, the twice-born consider that the platform of sāvitra-janma is the highest. As a result, they even fall down from that platform of sāvitra due to disregarding great souls. The Vaiṣṇava brāhmaṇas of the Ekāyana branch are not seminal brāhmaṇas as the ignorant people consider, rather they are sons of Lord Viṣṇu.

The ambitious seminal brāhmaṇas are fruitive workers, yet averse to the seminal process of the Sāma Veda.

Generally there are two opinions. Being devoid of devotion to Viṣṇu, persons who belong to Brahmā's material existence identify themselves as ambitious seminal brāhmaṇas and undergo ten types of fruitive saṁskāras. Though the sons of Viṣṇu undergo saṁskāras according to Vājasaneyā Kātyāyana Gṛhya-sūtras, they do not become entangled in fruitive activities.

The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have no objection against those who try to establish the system of seminal brahmanism, but their only concern is that the seminal process should not be polluted. Those who after duly undergoing the sacred thread ceremony in the seminal line violate and reject the smṛti injunctions regarding saṁskāras simply distort the very seminal process. The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas quote the following verse from Bhārgavīya Manu-saṁhitā:

yo 'nadhītya dvijo vedam anyatra kurute śramam
sa jīvan eva sūdratvam āśu gacchati sānvayaḥ

“A brāhmaṇa who gives up the study of the Vedas to labor hard for other things becomes a sūdra in this very life along with all his family members.” How can one undergo the sacred thread saṁskāra by deviating from this instruction? If the seminal process is the criteria for a brāhmaṇa to undergo the sacred thread saṁskāra, then why did the Sāma Veda document the tradition of undergoing the sacred thread saṁskāra while rejecting the seminal process?

The seminal brāhmaṇas who follow the ascending process are averse to the Vedas.

The Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas clearly know and do not deny that the twenty Dharma-śāstras and a few Kalpa-sūtras support the process of the seminal brāhmaṇas' sacred thread ceremony, therefore they know that these seminal brāhmaṇas who follow the ascending process as averse to the Vedas because they transgress the qualities, activities, occupations, symptoms, and natures of candidates for the sacred thread. In our next article we will discuss how insignificant is the endeavor of the seminal communities, who disregard the qualities and occupation of a candidate. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol.1, Part 29)

Brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism

(by Śrīla Sac-cid-ānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

Brahmanism is a step towards Vaiṣṇavism.

Many people think that brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism are two different things. From this belief, some foolish people who are partial to Vaiṣṇavas criticize the brāhmaṇas. And some, who are partial to brāhmaṇas, criticize the Vaiṣṇavas. But persons who know the science of the scriptures do not approve of this. They say that brahmanism is a stage or qualification of a Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇavism is the fruit of brahmanism.

Śrī Mahāprabhu has said:

sahaje nirmala ei `brāhmaṇa'-hṛdaya
kṛṣṇera vasite ei yogya-sthāna haya
`mātsarya'-caṇḍāla kene ihān vasāile
parama pavitra sthāna apavitra kaile

“The heart of a brāhmaṇa is by nature very clean; therefore it is a proper place for Kṛṣṇa to sit. Why have you allowed jealousy to sit here also? Because of this, you have become like a caṇḍāla, the lowest of men, and you have also contaminated a most purified place—your heart.” The sanctified heart of the living entity is called brahmanism. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa resides in that sanctified heart.

Envy is opposite to love of God,
and envious persons are not brāhmaṇas.

If envy, which is compared to a dog-eater, captures the sanctified heart of a living entity, then devotion to Kṛṣṇa disappears from his heart. Then he no longer remains a brāhmaṇa. To feel distressed by seeing other's happiness and to feel happiness by seeing other's distress is called envy. Envy and love are diametrically opposite. Wherever there is envy, there is no love; and wherever there is love, there is no envy.

A nonenvious heart is the only identification of a brāhmaṇa. It is certainly the residence of love of God.

Symptoms of a brāhmaṇa.

The symptoms of a brāhmaṇa are described in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.21) as follows:

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
jñānam dayācyutātmatvam satyam ca brahma-lakṣaṇam

“A brāhmaṇa must possess these eleven symptoms. One who does not possess peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, compassion, and devotion towards the Supreme Lord can not be called a brāhmaṇa.” In the heart of a brāhmaṇa with such qualities the science of Kṛṣṇa always shines brightly. One who does not have devotion to Kṛṣṇa is certainly not a brāhmaṇa.

The identification of a brāhmaṇa is only by qualities, not by caste.

Śrī Nārada Muni has stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.11.35) as follows:

yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktam puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

“If one shows the symptoms of being a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya or śūdra, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification.”

In his commentary on this verse of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Śrīdhara Svāmī Mahāśaya has stated: śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādi vyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jāti matrād ity āha—yasyeti. yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dṛśyeta tad varṇāntaram tenaiva lakṣaṇa nimittenaiva varṇena vinirddiśet, na tu jāti nimittenety arthaḥ—“The brāhmaṇas' main characteristics are qualities such as peacefulness, not birth. If these main characteristics are seen in persons other than those born as brāhmaṇas, then such persons should be considered brāhmaṇas. They should not be considered according to their caste by birth.”

If we carefully analyze these statements of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures and smṛtis, such as Manu-saṁhitā, which are very helpful for maintaining one's worldly life, then we understand that there are two types of brāhmaṇas, namely ordinary brāhmaṇas and

spiritual brāhmaṇas. Ordinary brahmanism is based on caste, and spiritual brahmanism is based on qualities.

Unless one becomes a spiritual brāhmaṇa
he cannot become a Vaiṣṇava.

The symptoms of a spiritual brāhmaṇa are mentioned in Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (3.9.10) as follows:

etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ
atha ya etad akṣaram gārgi viditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ

“O daughter of Gargācārya, he who leaves this world without learning about the infallible Supreme is a kṛpaṇa, or miser. O Gārgi, one who is acquainted with that infallible truth by which one transcends death is a brāhmaṇa.”

There are ten kinds of ordinary activities like offering of oblations and funeral rites that are prescribed for the ordinary brāhmaṇas. It is written in the smṛti literature that by performing these activities an ordinary brāhmaṇa becomes prestigious. Taking initiation, worshiping the Supreme Lord, accepting the renounced order of life, and observing vows for strengthening one's spiritual life are activities by which a spiritual brāhmaṇa is honored. Unless one achieves the platform of spiritual brahmanism, he cannot achieve the platform of Vaiṣṇavism.

It is stated in Bṛhad-āraṇyaka (4.4.21) in this regard as follows:

tam eva dhīro vijñāya prajñām kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ

“A wise person who knows the Supreme Lord, Parabrahman, through the process of devotion, is a brāhmaṇa.”

A brāhmaṇa should aspire for knowledge of the relationship between matter, spirit, and the Supreme Lord. In other words, he should cultivate pure devotional service.

After considering these conclusions of the scriptures, we can certainly understand that there is no difference between an advanced brāhmaṇa and a Vaiṣṇava. When a brāhmaṇa's faith is awakened, his life becomes successful and he achieves devotion to the Lord.

There is no need to become a caste brāhmaṇa
in order to attain the Supreme Lord.

By seeing the example of Jaḍa Bharata many people doubt whether a low caste person who performs devotional service must be born in the family of a brāhmaṇa in order to achieve the goal of life. In this regard, we can always discuss the following conclusive statements of Bhagavad-gītā:

mām hi pārtha vyapāsritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim
kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām

“O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, vaiśyas [merchants] and śūdras [workers]—can attain the supreme destination. How much more this is so of the righteous brāhmaṇas, the devotees and the saintly kings. Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me.” Where is the doubt that if strong devotion for the Supreme Lord is awakened in the hearts of the brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas that they will be delivered? Because even women, vaiśyas, śūdras, outcastes, and sinful caṇḍālas can attain the supreme destination by taking shelter of pure devotional service.

By the influence of devotional service
one's position as an outcaste is destroyed
and he becomes a spiritual brāhmaṇa.

If one understands the purport of the following two Bhagavad-gītā verses directly preceding those quoted above, then he will have no doubts whatsoever.

api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ
kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇāsyati

The purport of these two verses are that living entities who become devotees or Vaiṣṇavas generally possess brahminical qualities. If by the strength of the association of devotees a person attains unalloyed devotional service before possessing the wealth of brahminical qualities, then he should also be accepted as a devotee. Because by My mercy he will soon become a pious soul. In other words, brahmanism, which is the right of a Vaiṣṇava, is attained by him as a concomitant fruit of devotional service. O son of Kuntī, such a person will never fall down in the form of taking rebirth, etc. This is My promise. I will bestow love of God by awarding him pure spiritual brahmanism in this life, without having to undergo atonement.

The brāhmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇavas
are related as brothers.

O readers, do not differentiate between brahmanism and Vaiṣṇavism. The brāhmaṇas are naturally qualified to become Vaiṣṇavas. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa has displayed so much respect for the brāhmaṇas who are qualified for pure devotional service. If we receive the causeless mercy of the brāhmaṇas, we can become pure. No one can become a Vaiṣṇava by disregarding the position of the brāhmaṇas, and a brāhmaṇa can never become successful by disregarding the position of the Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore let the natural brotherhood of the brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas shine brightly throughout the entire world. Do not let selfishness and foolishness enter between them and create enmity. In order to spread the prestige of the brāhmaṇas in this world Śrīman Mahāprabhu enacted the pastime of curing His fever by drinking the caranāmṛta of a brāhmaṇa. O brāhmaṇas (pure devotees), please be merciful to us.

The varṇāśrama of Vaiṣṇavas

In order to protect sanātana-dharma,
the followers of the varṇāśrama principles need to follow the scriptural rules and regulations.

The Āryans of India who belong to the four varṇas are situated in four āśramas. The divisions of āśramas have been produced along with the divisions of varṇas. The principles of varṇa can be protected while remaining in any one of these four āśramas—brahmacarya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha, or sannyāsa. Those who belong to any of the varṇas must certainly belong to one of the āśramas. The principles of varṇa and āśrama are under the jurisdiction of social provisions. Those who desire some benefit and reputation from the social varṇa and āśrama system should wholeheartedly protect sanātana-dharma by following the ancient rules and regulations of those systems.

Of the two propensities, pravṛtti and nivṛtti,
those following the path of nivṛtti are on
the topmost platform of society.

The social human beings have two propensities, both of which are beneficial to the society. The social Āryans have arranged various rules and regulations so that no enmity is created in society. The arrangements and behavior that are followed in order to fulfil this principle purpose simultaneously bestow many secondary fruits such as attainment of the heavenly planets and accumulation of piety. For persons who have

fruitive propensities the Dharma-śāstras prescribe the performance of sacrifices, offering oblations to the forefathers, undergoing saṁskāras, observing vows, residing in holy places, and bathing in holy waters. And for persons who possess the propensity for mental speculation the Dharma-śāstras prescribe worshipping the demigods and brāhmaṇas, respecting elderly persons, and attaining knowledge. Those who give up self-happiness and oneness with Brahman, which are the goals of these two propensities, are on the topmost platform of society.

Sectarian philosophers like the karmīs, jñānīs, and yogis, directly or indirectly desire the welfare of society.

While remaining in seclusion and eating foods cooked by brāhmaṇas, the dry mental speculators try to assist society in reaching its perfection. The yogis proclaim that happiness is possible by minimizing one's necessities and thus increase people's attachment for enjoying happiness born of renunciation. Other sectarian philosophers benefit the society endeavoring for happiness through their manipulations and actions.

The Vaiṣṇavas are beyond
the principles of varṇāśrama.

Although the behavior of people who follow the varṇāśrama system is similar to that of Vaiṣṇavas, the Vaiṣṇavas do not consider that maintaining or benefiting society is their main purpose. They do not fill their hearts with the thought of making society prosperous or ruined by their actions. The Vaiṣṇavas are not busy in establishing their own reputation in the four varṇas and four āśramas. The Vaiṣṇava is not embarrassed if his actions violate the rules and regulations of the varṇāśrama system, because the only purpose of all his activities is to increase his devotion towards the Supreme Lord. It does not matter whether a Vaiṣṇava is a brāhmaṇa, mleccha, or caṇḍāla. Whether he is a householder or a renunciate, he has no honor or dishonor. If a Vaiṣṇava goes to hell or heaven for the sake of devotional service to the Lord, it is the same thing. The love of God he exhibits while meeting the Supreme Lord does not diminish at all in separation from Him. A Vaiṣṇava does not desire anything. He has no scarcity at all. One who is desirous of merging into Brahman is overwhelmed by the excellence of his unattained goal. When attained, his long cherished wonder in the form of Brahman becomes abominable. One who desires to become one with Brahman is very restless, being bound by material shackles. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, do not become impatient. Although the appearance and activities of Vaiṣṇavas appear to be like those of people who wish to enjoy the fruits of their karma, they are actually completely different.

Unauthorized endeavor to make Vaiṣṇavas
subordinate to the varṇāśrama system.

Many people think that there is no difference between Vaiṣṇavas and those who are inferior to the Vaiṣṇavas. Hence they often inquire about the Vaiṣṇava's varṇa and try to bury them in one of the four āśramas like the socialites. Yet this endeavor is a social endeavor and totally opposed to Vaiṣṇava culture.

If we see the transcendental appearance pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga, who is the deliverer of the fallen souls and the only spiritual master of the whole world, then all our doubts will be vanquished. In the Vedas, which consist of spiritual knowledge, it is stated:

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dr̥ṣṭe parāvare

“The knot in the heart is pierced, all misgivings are cut to pieces, and the chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Supreme Lord everywhere, within all superior and inferior beings.”

Under the guidance of Śrī Gaurasundara, the Vaiṣṇavas are servants of Gopī-jana-vallabha.

If we see the characteristics of the Lord, then all our doubts are cleared, the reactions of karma are diminished and the knots of the heart are untied. Then one realizes the Absolute Truth. Even if the well-behaved brāhmaṇas who have undergone the ten saṁskāras attain the platform of Brahman, they cannot become doubtless until they see the transcendental characteristics of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

The characteristics of Śrī Caitanya are fully spiritual. Anyone who has seen this knows that a Vaiṣṇava is neither a brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya, a vaiśya, or a śūdra, nor a brahmacārī, gṛhastha, vānaprastha, or sannyāsī. He is different than all of these, a servant of the servant of the most dear friend of the gopīs. He has no other separate identification. The mundane conception of “I am great or tiny” does not touch him. A self-realized soul is unconcerned with temporary logics like “the sky in a pot,” “the vast sky,” and “the rope and the snake.”

The unauthorized interference in the authority of the Vaiṣṇavas by the smārtas, who are attached to fruitive activities, the prākṛta-sahajiyās, and the caste Gosvāmīs. Some people nowadays have acted in a most non-Vaiṣṇava manner by trying to establish the word “Vaiṣṇava” as a social designation by attributing abominable and contrary meanings to it. It hurts me even to mention such behavior. They only try to become socialites, and with their temporary material identification they endeavor to pollute the bodies of the Vaiṣṇavas.

After the disappearance of the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Gaurāṅga deva, many smārta fruitive workers and mental speculators tried their best to defame the Vaiṣṇavas, but on the pretext of cooperation the bāula, sahajiyā, and kartābhajā communities denigrated the Vaiṣṇavas even more. There is no scarcity of such type of descendants even today. Gradually the number of such types are also increasing. The attempt to make Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura a brāhmaṇa, the endeavor to adorn Śrī Īśvara Purī as a brāhmaṇa or a śūdra, and the ability or inability of varṇas other than brāhmaṇas to impart Vaiṣṇava teachings are the aspirations of the most grossly non-Vaiṣṇava society. Such aspirations do not help to increase one's devotion, therefore these activities are not acceptable to the Vaiṣṇavas.

The artificial servitorship of conditioned souls to Kṛṣṇa is an impediment for cultivation of loving devotional service.

A Vaiṣṇava should always remember that he is not independent but a dependent servant of the servant of the lover of the gopīs. Mundane independence is not possible for him, because he has purchased his servitorship to Kṛṣṇa by submitting his independence in the form of surrendering to Him. If this fact remains in the path of one's memory yet the above-mentioned arguments capture the heart, then it is to be understood that he has duplicitously submitted artificial independence to Kṛṣṇa.

Actually his subordination to the Lord has rather been sold to māyā, and he is eager to be recognized as a servant of māyā. A pseudo servant of Kṛṣṇa is situated far away from a Vaiṣṇava. Instead of cultivating love of God, he is simply suffering the temporary miseries born from cultivation of lust. The socialites have arranged their rules and regulations for the sake of these classes of people. (Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 11, Part 10)

Viprasāmya, or similarity with a brāhmaṇa

Any person initiated into Viṣṇu mantras by a bona fide spiritual master is qualified to worship śrī-śālagrāma-śilā.

While ascertaining the qualification for the kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs' worship of Lord Viṣṇu, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has concluded that although according to the concocted remarks of some envious smārtas only seminal brāhmaṇas are qualified to worship śālagrāma and uninitiated women and śūdras are not qualified, if a person, regardless of varṇa, is initiated into Viṣṇu mantras by a bona fide spiritual master, he

is qualified to worship śrī-śālagrāma. Because according to the scriptures Vaiṣṇavas are accepted as equal to brāhmaṇas even in ordinary consideration. In this regard, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has quoted many scriptural statements in his Dig-darśinī-ṭikā to prove this point. For example, he has quoted the statement of Lord Kapila from His conversation with Devahūti in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.33.6): “To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” Again, from the topics of Pṛthu Mahārāja in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.21.12), Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has quoted: “Mahārāja Pṛthu was an unrivaled king and possessed the scepter for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe. No one could disobey his irrevocable orders but the saintly persons, the brāhmaṇas and the descendants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [the Vaiṣṇavas].” In other words, Mahārāja Pṛthu treated the brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas with equal vision. Śrīla Gosvāmī Prabhu has also quoted the statement of King Purañjana from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.26.24) as follows: “O hero's wife, kindly tell me if someone has offended you. I am prepared to give such a person punishment as long as he does not belong to the brāhmaṇa caste. But for the servant of Murāripu [Kṛṣṇa], I excuse no one within or beyond these three worlds. No one can freely move after offending you, for I am prepared to punish him.” In all these places the brāhmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇavas have been equally respected even in worldly dealings.

The explanation of the word viprasāmya
by the less-intelligent people.

At this juncture a doubt may arise that while the procedure to show respect equally to the brāhmaṇas and the Vaiṣṇavas in worldly dealings is there, and the ācāryas have mentioned the word viprasāmya, and while the word vipra refers to the subject of comparison, the word Vaiṣṇava refers to the object being compared, so it is certainly indicated that the object being compared is inferior to the subject of comparison. For example, if we say that the face of Devadutta is like the moon, than we can understand that the face of Devadutta is not the moon, rather it has some similarity with the moon. Therefore, in beauty, the face is inferior to the moon. Considering in this way, some less-intelligent people may conclude that the word viprasāmya indicates that although the Vaiṣṇavas are equal to the brāhmaṇas in some ways, they are nevertheless inferior to the brāhmaṇas.

Explanation of the word viprasāmya
by intelligent people.

But before concluding in this way, one should patiently deliberate how it has been described everywhere that the beauty of the moon is more beautiful than a man's face. Furthermore it has always been the practice to exhibit the similarities of a more beautiful and famous object with a less beautiful and nonfamous object, and thus the beauty of the latter has been established. In this type of comparison the fault of exaggeration may often arise. But if we carefully analyze the statements of the scriptures, then we will find that the devotees of the Lord have always been established as the topmost. If we study the commentary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu with special attention, then we will know that a Vaiṣṇava has not been compared with a brāhmaṇa in the same way that a face is compared with the moon; rather the fact that a Vaiṣṇava is not inferior to a brāhmaṇa in any way as far as external prestige is concerned has been shown with gross external worldly considerations to envious people who are unqualified to see other's supremacy. For example when the śāstras explain the form of the Supreme Lord to a devotee who is attached to the opulent feature of the Lord, it conceals the most wonderfully sweet form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and depicts Him with names like Nārāyaṇa, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, or Brahman. By this process, the complete eternal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not indicated, yet at the same time it is not a lie to call Kṛṣṇa Kṣīrodakaśāyī or Nārāyaṇa. The knowers of the science of Kṛṣṇa understand that just as a person who possesses a million rupees also possesses a hundred rupees or a thousand rupees, or just as Brahman, Nārāyaṇa, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu are inseparably present in the form of Kṛṣṇa, or when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explained as equal to Nārāyaṇa, actually Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not inferior to Nārāyaṇa, rather He is the source of Nārāyaṇa. Similarly, though a Vaiṣṇava is accepted as equal to a brāhmaṇa in the primary worldly consideration, yet a Vaiṣṇava is nothing less than a brāhmaṇa, rather he is the crest jewel on the head of the brāhmaṇa communities. Because a worshiper of the Supreme Lord who knows Brahman is a Vaiṣṇava. If by the word viprasāmya it is concluded that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior to a brāhmaṇa or only equal to a brāhmaṇa, then the behavior of śāstras and sadhus would not have proved opposite. When Vaiṣṇavas have been glorified thousands of times as greater than brāhmaṇas, then it cannot be concluded that the word viprasāmya means that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior or equal to a brāhmaṇa. Among the brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas, the qualities of the brāhmaṇas are a common factor. For example: in the numbers five and ten, the number five is present in both. Similarly brahmanism or brahminical qualities are eternally present in Vaiṣṇavas, hence the word viprasāmya is indicated. Had it been a fact that brāhmaṇas were glorified in many places in the scriptures as greater than Vaiṣṇavas, then we would have accepted the meaning of the word viprasāmya as being equal to the comparison of a face with the moon.

A Vaiṣṇava is always a topmost brāhmaṇa.

It is mentioned in the Garuḍa Purāṇa:

brāhmaṇānām sahasrebhyaḥ satra-yājī viśiṣyate
satra-yājī-sahasrebhyaḥ sarva-vedānta-pāragāḥ
sarva-vedānta-vit-kotyā viṣṇu-bhakto viśiṣyate

“It is said that out of thousands of brāhmaṇas, one is qualified to perform sacrifices, and out of many thousands of such qualified brāhmaṇas expert in sacrificial offerings, one learned brāhmaṇa may have passed beyond all Vedic knowledge. Among many such brāhmaṇas, one who is a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is the best.”

In Nāradiya Purāṇa it is stated:

śvapaco 'pi mahīpāla viṣṇor bhakto dvijādhikāḥ

“O king, a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, though born in a dog-eater family, is higher than a brāhmaṇa.”

The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa quotes the Itihāsa-samuccaya, wherein the Lord states:

na me 'bhaktaś catur-vedī mad-bhaktaḥ śva-pacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyam sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham

“Even though a person is a very learned scholar of the Sanskrit Vedic literatures, he is not accepted as My devotee unless he is pure in devotional service. However, even though a person is born in a family of dog-eaters, he is very dear to Me if he is a pure devotee who has no motive to enjoy fruitive activity or mental speculation. Indeed, all respect should be given to him, and whatever he offers should be accepted. Such devotees are as worshipable as I am.” Even if the word viprasāmya indicated that a Vaiṣṇava should be considered equal to a brāhmaṇa, let alone inferior to a brāhmaṇa, then the Supreme Lord would have advised us to see a nondevotee brāhmaṇa who knows the four Vedas and a devotee of the Lord who is born in a dog-eater family on an equal level. Rather, He says that a devotee is nondifferent from Him, and a devotee is as worshipable as Himself; but a brāhmaṇa who knows the four Vedas is even lower than an ordinary dog-eater because he is devoid of devotion to the Lord. This is confirmed by the Lord as follows:

caṇḍālo 'pi dvija-śreṣṭho hari-bhakti-parāyaṇaḥ
hari-bhakti-vihīnaś ca dvijo 'pi śvapacādhamaḥ

“Even if one is born in the family of a caṇḍāla, if one engages in the devotional service of the Lord, he becomes the best of brāhmaṇas. But even a brāhmaṇa who is devoid of devotional service is on the level of the lowest dog-eater.”

Grantha-rāja Śrīmad Bhāgavatam
establishes the supremacy of Vaiṣṇavas.

It is stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.9.10) as follows:

viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacāṁ variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimāṇaḥ

The Vaiṣṇavas who are attached to devotional service are naturally indifferent to fruitive activities. So if according to the considerations of the materialists the word viprasāmya indicated that a Vaiṣṇava is inferior or equal to a brāhmaṇa, then the above-mentioned verse from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam would not have described as follows: “If a brāhmaṇa has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications [as they are stated in the book called Sanat-sujāta] but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who is a dog-eater but who has dedicated everything—mind, words, activities, wealth and life—to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a brāhmaṇa because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called brāhmaṇa in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.”

Immediately after using the word viprasāmya in his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has written: viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād ity ādi-vacanaiva-
vaiṣṇava-brāhmaṇebhyo nīca-jāti-jātānām api vaiṣṇavānām śreṣṭhyam—“it has been established by various statements such as viprād dvi-ṣaḍ that a low-born Vaiṣṇava is greater than a nondevotee brāhmaṇa.” When such clear understanding is there, then other concocted narrow opinions are understood to be in the language of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu as mātsarya-paraiḥ smārtaiḥ kaiścit kalpitam iti mantavyam—“the wicked imagination of some envious smārtas.”

It is prohibited to consider the Vaiṣṇavas
as belonging to a particular mundane caste.

But the word viprasāmya that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu has mentioned is only to display primary worldly considerations. In other words, one should not consider a Vaiṣṇava who is duly initiated into Viṣṇu mantras but born in a family lower than the brāhmaṇas in anyway inferior to a so-called brāhmaṇa, even by worldly considerations and mundane kaniṣṭha-adhikāra consideration. One cannot deprive a Vaiṣṇava from the qualifications of a brāhmaṇa. Because brahmanism is a common factor in a Vaiṣṇava. A person born of any family becomes a brāhmaṇa by the influence of Vaiṣṇava initiation, even at the stage of kaniṣṭha-adhikārī. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on the yathā kāñcanatām verse is proof of this fact. He has given the evidence of Kapiladeva's statement that by the influence of hearing and chanting the

holy names of the Lord a person born in the family of dog-eaters immediately becomes qualified to perform soma-yajña. But a Vaiṣṇava who is attached to the service of Kṛṣṇa does not run to perform fruitive soma-yajña by giving up the sacrifice of chanting the holy names. At the same time he is fully qualified to perform the soma-yajña. In other words, according to worldly consideration, he is not less than a brāhmaṇa who performs soma-yajña. Therefore the ācāryas and the śāstras have never said that an initiated Vaiṣṇava should be considered a dog-eater or belonging to a particular caste. By the word viprasāmya the caste mentality towards a Vaiṣṇava has been refuted.

The Vaiṣṇavas are under the shelter of the holy names, therefore brahmanism is their pre-attained right.

Then where is the question of a Vaiṣṇava's inferiority? The word brāhmaṇa indicates a majority of unnecessary fruitive actions, and the word Vaiṣṇava indicates a majority of necessary devotional feelings, hence unnecessary fruitive actions are considerably less. This fact can be understood by the logic of “bṛhad-vratī and gṛha-vrata-puruṣa.” Though a Vaiṣṇava appears in a dog-eater family, still he is not a non-brāhmaṇa. His brahminical qualifications are eternally perfected or previously acquired. This has been proved in the very next verse by Kapiladeva from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.33.7):

aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te

“Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if born in the families of dog-eaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all kinds of austerities and fire sacrifices and achieved all the good manners of the Āryans. To be chanting the holy name of Your Lordship, they must have bathed at holy places of pilgrimage, studied the Vedas and fulfilled everything required.” So when Vaiṣṇavas born in dog-eater families but engaged in chanting the holy names of the Lord possess the previously acquired brahminical qualities and are properly initiated according to the śāstra and are inclined towards chanting the holy names in this life, then those who want to see them in their ordinary respective castes are certainly opposing the principles of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and are envious towards the devotees. Such people maintain animosity towards the book Bhāgavata and devotee Bhāgavata and are proceeding towards hell, while dancing frantically like demons.

Vaiṣṇava ācāryas who were born in seminal brāhmaṇa families refuted the atheistic philosophy of considering Vaiṣṇavas as belonging to particular castes.

If the opinion of the śāstras were that Vaiṣṇavas born in families lower than so-called brāhmaṇas are inferior to the brāhmaṇas, and the word viprasāmya meant that the Vaiṣṇavas are inferior to the brāhmaṇas, then why doesn't the behavior of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas support this? Did Ācārya Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura commit a great offence by accepting as disciples Śrīpāda Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī and Śrīpāda Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, who were born in seminal brāhmaṇa families? From this example of the ācārya, it is proved that the word viprasāmya indicates that what to speak of a Vaiṣṇava's being inferior or equal to a brāhmaṇa, rather he is qualified to become the spiritual master of brāhmaṇas. Otherwise why did Śrīla Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the author of Bhakti-ratnākara and a topmost Vaiṣṇava born in a brāhmaṇa family, write as follows:

śrī-ṭhākura narottama patita-pāvana
tānra śiṣya cakravartī gaṅgānārāyaṇa
gaṅgānārāyaṇa vidyāvanta atīśaya
khaṇḍiyā `pāṣaṇḍa-mata' bhakti prakāśaya

“Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura was a deliverer of the fallen souls. His disciple was Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī. Gaṅgānārāyaṇa was learned scholar. He refuted atheistic philosophy and preached devotional service.” By using the word pāṣaṇḍa-mata, or atheistic philosophy, is it not being indicated that the envious smārtas are considering Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura as belonging to a particular caste? That is why Śrī Narahari Cakravartī Ṭhākura has mentioned the philosophy of the smārtas as “atheistic philosophy.” He has written in the Bhakti-ratnākara, Fifteenth Wave:

jaya jaya śrī-gaṅgānārāyaṇa cakravartī ati dhīra gambhīra

“All glories to Śrī Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Cakravartī, who is very sober and grave.”

śrīla narottama-caraṇa-saroruha-bhajana-parāyaṇa bhuvana-ujora

“By worshiping the lotus feet of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, I will cross over material existence.”

Under the shelter of sensual perception,
the envious smārtas and their feet lickers,
the sahajiyās, glorify the darkness of hell.

Against the offensive mundane considerations of narrow-minded envious smārtas and their feet licking saḥajiyās of today, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, instead of considering Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura as belonging to a particular caste, displayed great respect befitting an nonduplicitous disciple by composing the Śrī Śrī Narottama Prabhor-aṣṭakam prayers. This was not the exhibition of the pseudo respect of a saḥajiyā nor an offensive consideration in the guise of humility that a Vaiṣṇava belongs to a particular caste. We will present with scriptural references and conclusions the behavior of the ācāryas in our next article. But it is also a fact that envious people who are like owls cannot tolerate the sun rays of the devotee Bhāgavata and book Bhāgavata, thus they will continue to praise the darkness of hell forever. (Weekly Gauḍīya, Vol. 4, Part 16)

(End of Ācārya-santāna)