

Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti

1. Utsāha - Enthusiasm

Utsāha – Enthusiasm

- In his Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described atyāhāra, prayāsa, prajalpa, niyamāgraha, jana-saṅga, and laulya as detrimental to devotional service.
- We have already separately described these six items.
- Now, in the third śloka he mentions the six items favorable for devotional service:

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utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

"There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) utsāha, being enthusiastic; (2) niścaya, endeavoring with confidence; (3) dhairya, being patient; (4) tat-tat-karma-pravartana, acting according to regulative principles [such as śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam-hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa]; (5) saṅga-tyāga, abandoning the association of nondevotees; and (6) sato vṛtteḥ, or sādhu-vṛtti, following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service."

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- Now we should discuss these six items separately. Therefore first I am speaking about the conclusions regarding utsāha.
- Without utsāha, one becomes negligent in his worship.
- Negligence is born out of **inactivity, apathy, or indifference.**
- Laziness and inertia are called **inactivity.**

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- When utsāha is generated, laziness and inertia cannot remain.
- The absence of desire to work is inertia. This inertia is opposite to the nature of spirit.
- If one allows this inertia to remain in his body or heart, then how can he perform devotional service?
- The state of **apathy** develops from carelessness.
- One should practice devotional service without deviation. This is instructed in the Bhagavad-gītā (6.23) in the following words:

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**tam vidyād duḥkha-samyoga-
viyogaṁ yoga-samjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo
yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā**

Know such a state, separated from all misery (**tam vidyād duḥkha-samyoga- viyogaṁ**), to be yoga (**yoga-samjñitam**). This yoga must be practiced with determination (**sa yogo niścayena yuktavyo**), devoid of depression (**anirviṇṇa-cetasā**).

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahāśaya has said: ātmanyā yogyatva-mananam nirvedas tad rahitena cetasā "one becomes **indifferent** to whatever work he feels unqualified for." Devotional service should be performed in this mentality.

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- Regarding bhakti-yoga, it is said in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.7-8):

**nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogo
nyāsinām iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām
karma-yogas tu kāminām**

"Among these three paths, jñāna-yoga, the path of philosophical speculation, is recommended (**jñāna-yogah**) for those who are disgusted with material life (**nirviṇṇānām**) and are thus detached from ordinary, fruitive activities (**nyāsinām iha karmasu**). Those who are not disgusted with material life (**teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām**), having many desires yet to fulfil (**kāminām**), should seek perfection through the path of karma-yoga (**karma-yogah**).

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yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau
jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto
bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ

If somehow or other by good fortune (**yadṛcchayā**) one develops faith (**jāta-śraddhaḥ**) in hearing and chanting My glories (**mat-kathā ādau**), such a person, being neither very disgusted (**na nirviṇṇaḥ**) with nor attached to material life (**nāti-saktaḥ**), should achieve perfection through the path of loving devotion to Me (**bhakti-yogo asya siddhi-daḥ**)."

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- The purport is this: For those who have attained **indifference** for material activities but have not yet realized spiritual activities, what can remain in their hearts besides indifference?
- For them the undifferentiated brahma-jñāna is the topmost achievement.
- For those who have not attained **indifference** for material activities due to lack of spiritual realization, there is no way to cleanse the heart other than karma-yoga.
- Those who have realized spiritual activities and understood that material activities are insignificant attain **indifference** for all material activities.

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- They accept some material activities as a support for their spiritual awakening, but they have no attachment for such activities.
- In proportion to the degree that they discuss spiritual topics in devotion, freedom from material association is awakened as an extraneous fruit.
- The symptoms of a devotee are given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.27-8) as follows:

**jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ
tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhālur drḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan**

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Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories (**jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu**), being disgusted with all prescribed activities (varṇāśrama) (**nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu**), knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery (**veda duḥkhātmakam kāmān**), but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment (**parityāge apy anīśvaraḥ**), My devotee should remain happy (**tato prītaḥ**) and worship Me (**mām bhajeta**) with great faith and conviction (**śraddhānur dṛṭha-niścayaḥ**). Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment (**juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān**), My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result (**duḥkha udarkāmś**), and he sincerely repents such activities (**ca garhayan**).

Classic Symptoms of Vaidhi Sadhaka

- **jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu** – Has awakened faith in the process of bhakti
- **nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu** – Disgusted with all prescribed duties
- **veda duḥkhātmakam kāmān** – Understands that sense gratification leads to misery
- **parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ** – Still unable to give up sense gratification
- **juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan** – Unable to give up sense gratification, he sincerely repents for engaging in such acts

Kṛṣṇa's instructions to such Sadhakas

- **tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhālur dr̥ṭha-niścayaḥ** - Remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction

Utsāha – Enthusiasm

- Karma arises from lust, jñāna arises from indifference, and bhakti arises from faith in the Supreme Lord.
- The person who has attained faith is naturally disgusted with material activities.
- He accepts without attachment only those activities that are favorable for increasing his faith in the Lord.
- Without the material body one cannot cultivate devotional service.
- So there is no benefit if one renounces the activities that are needed to maintain the physical body, thinking them to be the source of misery and lust.

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- The fruits of those activities, which are the source of misery for others, are therefore enjoyed by the devotees, who condemn them as insignificant.
- They worship Kṛṣṇa with devotion and firm faith while enjoying the fruits of their work as they fulfill the necessities of life.
- Those who enjoy the results of material activities with ardent affection are called attached.
- Those who neglect the results of karma, but accept only what is favorable to devotional service are called unattached.

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- Although they are unattached to material activity, they work enthusiastically in devotional life.
- The process of advancement for the practitioner of devotional service is stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.29-30, 35) as follows:

**proktena bhakti-yogena bhajato māsaḥṇ muneh
kāma hṛdayyā naśyanti sarve mayi hṛdi sthite**

When an intelligent person (**muneh**) engages constantly in worshiping me (**māsaḥṇ bhajatah**) through bhakti (**bhakti-yogena**), as previously described by me (**proktena**), all material desires within the heart are destroyed (**sarve kāma hṛdayyā naśyanti**), since I am situated in the heart (**mayi hṛdi sthite**).

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bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi
mayi dr̥ṣṭe 'khilātmani

Ahaṅkāra is cut (**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthih**) and all doubts are destroyed (**chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ**). On seeing the Lord in the mind and with the eyes (**mayi dr̥ṣṭe akhilātmani**), all karmas are destroyed (**kṣīyante ca asya karmāṇi**).

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nairapekṣyam param prāhur
niḥśreyasam analpakam
tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir
nirapekṣasya me bhavet

It is said (**prāhur**) that the process which is without dependence on other processes or results (**nairapekṣyam**) is the best process (**param analpakam niḥśreyasam**). Therefore (**tasmān**) a person who does not desire any rewards (**nirāśiṣah**) and does not depend on other processes (**nirapekṣasya**) develops bhakti for me (**me bhaktir bhavet**).

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- The purport is this: It is useless trying independently to destroy ignorance and lust in the heart.
- But ignorance, lust, fruitive activities, all doubts, and material bondage are destroyed by the mercy of the Lord in the course of cultivating devotional service.
- The endeavor of karmis and jñānīs does not yield such results.
- Therefore when one becomes neutral by giving up other desires and hopes, he attains pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

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- We should not lose enthusiasm because we have no strength to destroy the reactions of karma.
- In the very beginning of devotional service the sādḥaka must have faith with full enthusiasm.
- One pure Vaiṣṇava ācārya has written that the process of bhajana-kriya, devotional practice, is of two types-niṣṭhitā, fixed, and aniṣṭhitā, flickering.
- With faith, one should learn devotional service under the merciful direction of a sadhu; and when he attains the stage of firm faith, he engages in niṣṭhitā, fixed, devotional service.

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- Until he attains this fixed devotional service, his service remains flickering.
- In this stage of devotional service there are six symptoms: utsāha-mayī, false confidence; ghana-taralā, sporadic endeavor; vyūḍha-vikalpā, indecision; viṣaya-saṅgarā, struggle with the senses; niyamākṣamā, inability to uphold vows; and taraṅga-rangiṇī, enjoying the facilities offered by bhakti.
- In Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa carelessness is counted among the offenses against the holy name.
- In that scripture the word pramāda is described as inattentiveness.

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- Śrī Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi has further divided this inattentiveness in three ways.
- Apathy, inactivity, and distraction are the three types of inattentiveness. Until one gets free from these three types of inattentiveness, one cannot perform devotional service at all.
- Even if one gives up all other nāmāparādhas, if he is still inattentive, he can never have attraction for the holy names.
- If one has enthusiasm in the beginning of devotional service, and that enthusiasm does not become cold, then one will never become apathetic, lazy, or distracted in chanting the holy names.

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- Therefore enthusiasm is the only support for all types of devotional service.
- By enthusiastically performing devotional service one can give up aniṣṭhitā service in a very short time and thus attain niṣṭhā.

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- Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

**ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ**

By the awakening of faith, one becomes eligible for devotional service. When this eligibility is attained, one achieves the association of devotees. By the association of devotees, one is engaged in the execution of devotional service. In the beginning there is no niṣṭhā, or firm faith, in that service because various types of anarthas keep crushing the heart. All anarthas are vanquished, however, by performing devotional service with enthusiasm. The more anarthas are vanquished, the more niṣṭhā is awakened.

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- The word śraddhā is certainly faith, but enthusiasm is the life of śraddhā.
- Faith without enthusiasm is meaningless.
- Many people think they have faith in God, but because they have no enthusiasm, their faith has no meaning.
- Therefore, due to lack of sādhu-saṅga, they do not perform devotional service.