

Bhaktyaloka

By

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Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

1. *Atyāhāra* - Overeating or
too much collecting

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

- In his Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written the following verse:

**atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyaṁ ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati**

"One's devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities: (1) atyāhāra, eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) prayāsa, overendeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) prajalpa, talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) niyamāgraha, practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) jana-saṅga, associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and (6) laulyaṁ, being greedy for mundane achievements."

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

It is most important to consider the deep meaning of this verse.

For anyone who wants to engage in pure devotional service, it is especially necessary to follow the instructions of this verse.

For one who neglects to follow these instructions, attaining devotion to Lord Hari is extremely rare.

We are hereby elaborating the meaning of this verse for the benefit of those who have a strong desire to attain pure devotional service.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

In this verse six impediments to devotional service are mentioned- atyāhāra, prayāsa, prajalpa, niyamāgraha, jana-saṅga, and laulya.

We will separately discuss each of these six items.

In this small chapter only the meaning of the word atyāhāra is being discussed.

Many people may think that the word atyāhāra refers only to overeating, but this is not so.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

It is explained in the first verse of Upadeśāmṛta:

vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo visaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīm sa śisyāt

"A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world."

In this regard, the urge of the tongue is the desire to taste foodstuffs. The urge of the stomach is the desire to overeat.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

If we understand the word atyāhāra in the second verse as overeating, the fault of repetition occurs in this condensed collection of essential instructions.

Therefore it is the duty of the learned readers to find other meanings for the word atyāhāra as used by the most grave Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Although bhojana, or eating, is the principle meaning of the word āhāra, the word bhojana also means to enjoy the objects of the five senses.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

Form by the eyes, sound by the ears, smell by the nose, taste by the tongue, feeling of heat and cold, soft and hard by the touch-in this way, the five senses enjoy.

This type of material enjoyment is compulsory for an embodied soul.

Without enjoying the sense objects, a living entity cannot survive.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

As soon as the living entity gives up sense enjoyment, he leaves his body. Therefore, giving up sense enjoyment is only a figment of the imagination, it can never be applied in practice.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gītā (3.5-6):

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

na hi kaścit kṣanam api
jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma
sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ

No one (**na hi kaścit**) can remain without doing activity (**jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt**) even for a moment (**kṣanam api**). All are forced to engage in action (**sarvaḥ avaśaḥ karma kāryate**) by the guṇas arising from prakṛti (**prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ**).

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya
ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate

He who, controlling the action of senses (karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya), remains remembering those objects of the senses (ya āste indriyārthān smaran) in his mind (manasā), is bewildered (vimūḍhātmā), and is called a pretender (sah mithyācāraḥ ucyate).

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

Since maintaining one's life is not possible without action, one must work to maintain his life.

If such activities are done in the mood of enjoyment, then one's qualification as a human is lost and he becomes like an animal.

Material life → sensory engagement → Rāga Life Dveṣa Dislike
Devotional life → Sensory engagement → Ahukāra for Bhakti Preṣa Kūla Bhakti

Therefore if one can transform all his bodily activities into activities favorable to the devotional service of the Lord, then that is bhakti-yoga.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

Again, the Lord says in the Gītā (6.16-17, 5.8-9):

nāty-aśnatas 'tu yogo 'sti
na caikāntam anaśnataḥ
na cāti-svapna-śīlasya
jāgrato naiva cārjuna

Yoga is not possible for one who eats too much (na aty-aśnatas 'tu yogo 'sti), or who does not eat (na ca ekāntam anaśnataḥ), for one who sleeps too much (na ca ati-svapna-śīlasya), or does not sleep, O Arjuna (jāgrato na eva ca arjuna).

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

yuktāhāra-vihārasya
yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya
yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā

If one has regulated eating, regulated walking/recreation (yukta āhāra-vihārasya), regulated use of organs in both material and spiritual activities (yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu), regulated sleep and regulated waking (yukta-svapna avabodhasya), his yoga destroys all suffering (yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā).

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattva-vit
paśyañ śṛṇvan sprśañ jighrann aśnan gacchan svapan śvasan

pralapan visṛjan grhṇann unmiṣan nimiṣann api
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan

The person engaged in karma-yoga (yuktaḥ), having knowledge (tattva-vit), understanding that the senses alone are interacting with the sense objects (indriyāṇi indriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan) while he is seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating (paśyañ śṛṇvan sprśañ jighrann aśnan) [Note: These are the actions of the jñāna indriya.], going, sleeping, breathing (gacchan svapan śvasan), speaking, excreting (through genital or anus), receiving (pralapan visṛjan grhṇann) [Note: These are the actions of the karma indriya, except for sleep and breathing, which are activities governed by the prāṇas. Opening and closing eyes are representative of the five secondary prāṇas.], opening and closing the eyes (unmiṣan nimiṣann api), thinks, “I am doing nothing at all. (naiva kiñcit karomīti manyeta)”

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

Although these instructions are effective for jñānīs, still, their purport is favorable for devotional service.

The concluding verse of Bhagavad-gītā explains about śaranāgati, or full surrender.

Keeping this in mind, one should renounce fruitive activities and philosophical speculation and accept sense objects as the Lord's mercy.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

This is known as pure devotional service.

Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.255-256):

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

4 levels of sensory engagement
in KC

- ① Stage of succumbing & getting v?
(viṣaya saṅgā)
- ② Doretailing
- ③ yukta vairāgya
- ④ Spontaneous D-S

How should & How much should a devotee engage his
senses in sense objects?

anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayauñjatah |
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate ||

- ① Detachment from sense objects.
- ② only suitable objects should be utilized.
- ③ persistent utility only in P's service.

The vairāgya of that person who employs objects suitable for devotional development (yathā arham upayauñjatah), while remaining detached from them (anāsaktasya viṣayān), is said to be suitable for bhakti (yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate). The objects should be persistently related to Kṛṣṇa (nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe).
(BRS)

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

prāpañcikatayā buddhyā
hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ |
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo
vairāgyam phalgu kathyate ||

Rejection (parityāgaḥ) of things related to the Lord (hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ) by persons desiring liberation (mumukṣubhiḥ), who think that these things are simply material objects (prāpañcikatayā buddhyā), is called useless vairāgya (phalgu vairāgyam kathyate). (BRS)

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

The purport of these two verses is repeated in Śrī Upadeśāmṛta by the instruction to reject atyāhāra.

Definition of atyāhāra

The purport is that if one accepts sense objects in the spirit of enjoyment, that is atyāhāra.

But if sense objects are accepted as the Lord's mercy and only as far as required and favorable for devotional service, then it is not atyāhāra.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

If sense objects are (honestly accepted as the Lord's mercy) then yukta-vairāgya is easily attained.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's order is to accept sense objects without attachment and chant Kṛṣṇa's name.

Don't endeavor for palatable foodstuffs and fine clothes.

Accept the sanctified bhāgavata-prasāda that is easily obtainable.

Atyāhāra - Overeating or too much collecting

This is the devotee's lifestyle.

Whatever is required, take only that.

Taking more or less will not yield auspicious results.

If the practitioner takes or accumulates more than necessary, his spiritual life will be lost due to his being controlled by material mellows.