

Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti

7. Utsāha - Enthusiasm

Inattention While Chanting

Utsāha – Enthusiasm

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.



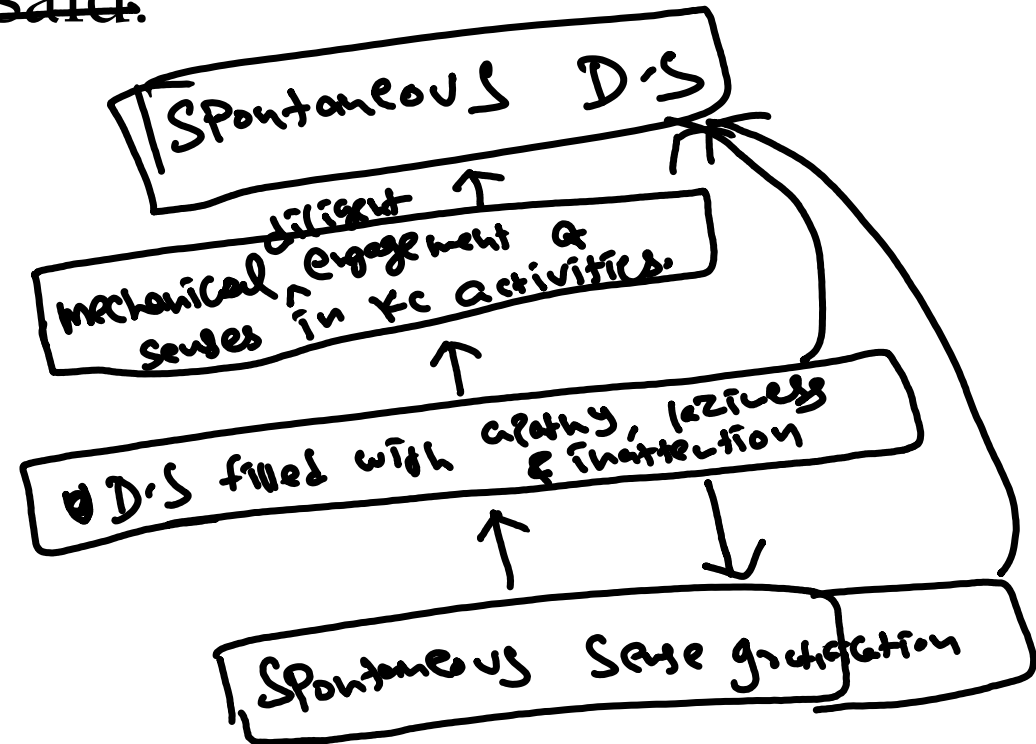
Therefore enthusiasm is the only support for all types of devotional service.

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Utsāha – Enthusiasm

By enthusiastically performing devotional service one can give up anīṣṭhitā service in a very short time and thus attain niṣṭhā.

Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:



Utsāha – Enthusiasm

ādau śraddhā tatah sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivrttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tatah

By the awakening of faith, one becomes eligible for devotional service. When this eligiblity 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 nisthā, 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.

Utsāha – Enthusiasm

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.

Srila Prabhupada on Utsāha

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Devotional service is not a matter of sentimental speculation or imaginative ecstasy.

Its substance is practical activity.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his Bhakti-rasāmata-sindhu (1.1.11), has defined devotional service as follows:

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anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvatam
ānukūlyena Kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā
[Cc. Madhya 19.167]

"Uttamā bhakti, or unalloyed devotion unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, involves the rendering of devotional service in a way that is favorable to the Lord. This devotional service should be free from any extraneous motive and devoid of fruitive karma, impersonal jñāna and all other selfish desires."

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anusilanam

Bhakti is a sort of cultivation.

As soon as we say "cultivation," we must refer to activity.

Cultivation of spirituality does not mean sitting down idly for meditation, as some pseudo-yogīs teach.

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Such idle meditation may be good for those who have no information of devotional service, and for this reason it is sometimes recommended as a way to check distracting materialistic activities.

Meditation means stopping all nonsensical activities, at least for the time being.

Devotional service, however, not only puts an end to all nonsensical mundane activities, but also engages one in meaningful devotional activities

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Prahlāda Mahārāja recommends:

śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoh
smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
[SB 7.5.23]

The nine processes of devotional service are as follows:

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1. hearing the name and glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead
2. chanting His glories
3. remembering the Lord
4. serving the Lord's feet
5. worshiping the Deity
6. offering obeisances unto the Lord
7. acting as the Lord's servant
8. making friends with the Lord
9. surrendering oneself fully to the Lord

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Śravanam, or hearing, is the first step in acquiring transcendental knowledge.

One should not give aural reception to unauthorized persons, but should approach the proper person, as recommended in the Bhagavad-gītā (4.34):

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tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas (tattva-darśinaḥ)

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth."

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It is further recommended in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet: [MU 1.2.12]

"To understand that transcendental science, one must approach a bona fide spiritual master."

Thus this method of submissively receiving transcendental confidential knowledge is not merely based on mental speculation.

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In this regard, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Rūpa Gosvāmī:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-Kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja

"In the course of traversing the universal creation of Brahmā, some fortunate soul may receive the seed of the bhakti-latā, the creeper of devotional service. This is all by the grace of guru and Kṛṣṇa." (Cc. Madhya 19.151)

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The material world is a place of confinement for the living entities who are by nature ānandamaya, pleasure-seeking.

They actually want to be free from the confinement of this world of conditional happiness, but not knowing the process of liberation, they are bound to transmigrate from one species of life to another and from one planet to another.

In this way the living entities are wandering throughout the material universe.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

When by good fortune one comes in contact with a pure devotee and hears from him patiently, one begins to follow the path of devotional service.

Such an opportunity is offered to a person who is sincere.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is giving such a chance to humanity at large.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

If by fortune one takes advantage of this opportunity to engage in devotional service, the path of liberation immediately opens.

One should accept this opportunity to return home, back to Godhead, very enthusiastically.

Without enthusiasm, one cannot be successful.

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Even in the material world one has to be very enthusiastic in his particular field of activity in order to become successful.

A student, businessman, artist or anyone else who wants success in his line must be enthusiastic.

Similarly, one has to be very enthusiastic in devotional service.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Enthusiasm means action, but action for whom?

The answer is that one should always act for Kṛṣṇa—Kṛṣṇārthe
akhila-ceṣṭā (Cc Madhya 22.126).

In order to attain perfection in bhakti-yoga, one has to perform
devotional activities under the direction of the spiritual master in all
phases of life.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

It is not that one has to confine or narrow one's activities.

Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading.

Therefore nothing is independent of Kṛṣṇa, as Kṛṣṇa Himself states in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.4):

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mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ
jagad avyakta-mūrtinā-
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni
na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ

"By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded.
All beings are in Me, but I am not in them."

our enthusiasm should be directed to



Under the direction of the bona fide spiritual master, one has to make
everything favorable for Kṛṣṇa's service.

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For example, at present we are using a dictaphone.

The materialist who invented this machine intended it for businessmen or writers of mundane subject matters.

He certainly never thought of using the dictaphone in God's service, but we are using this dictaphone to write Kṛṣṇa conscious literature.

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Of course, the manufacture of the dictaphone is wholly within the energy of Kṛṣṇa.

All the parts of the instrument, including the electronic functions, are made from different combinations and interactions of the five basic types of material energy—namely, bhūmi, jala, agni, vāyu and ākāśa.

The inventor used his brain to make this complicated machine, and his brain, as well as the ingredients, was supplied by Kṛṣṇa.

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According to the statement of Kṛṣṇa, mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni: [Bg. 9.4] "Everything is depending on My energy."

Thus the devotee can understand that since nothing is independent of Kṛṣṇa's energy, everything should be dovetailed in His service.

Endeavor executed with intelligence in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called utsāha, or enthusiasm.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

The devotees find the correct means by which everything can be utilized in the service of the Lord (nirbandhaḥ Kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktam vairāgyam ucyate).

The execution of devotional service is not a matter of idle meditation but is practical action in the foreground of spiritual life.