

Bhaktyaloka

By

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Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti

12. Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in
the footsteps of the previous
ācāryas

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

There are two kinds of sadhus-householders and renunciates.

I will separately describe the vṛtti, or occupation, of each.

Although ~~householders and renunciates~~ have different occupations,
there are some they have in common.

These will be discussed separately.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

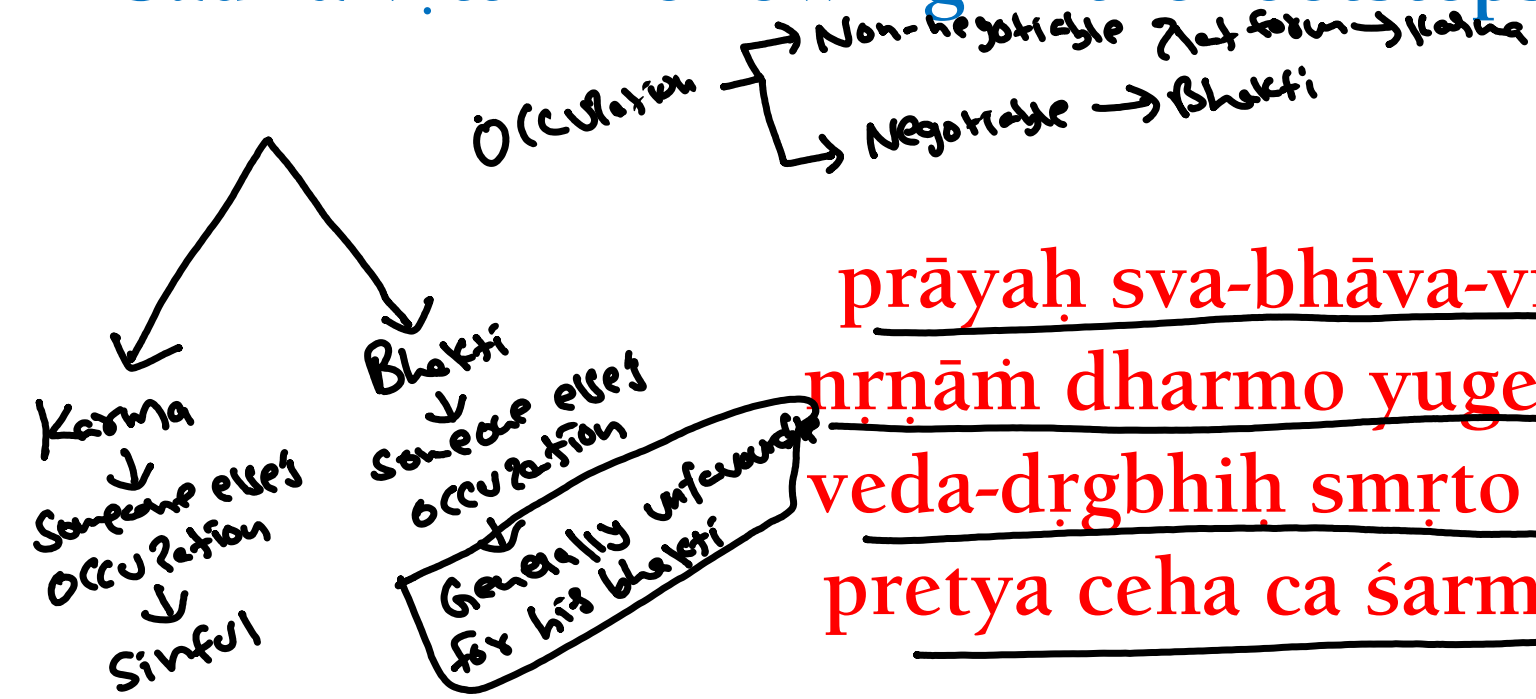
There are two meanings of the word ^{vṛtti} occupation-propensity and lifestyle

Propensity means one's nature, or svabhāva.

Those natural propensities are the living entity's dharma.

It is said in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.31):

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas



prāyaḥ sva-bhāva-vihito
nṛṇāṃ dharmo yuge yuge
veda-dṛgbhiḥ smṛto rājan
pretya ceḥ ca śarma-kṛt

O King (rājan)! Those in knowledge of the Vedas say that (veda-dṛgbhiḥ smṛtaḥ) in every age (yuge yuge) an occupation according to one's nature (dharmah sva-bhāva-vihitah) generally brings happiness (śarma-kṛt prāyaḥ) in this life and after death (pretya ca iha).

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

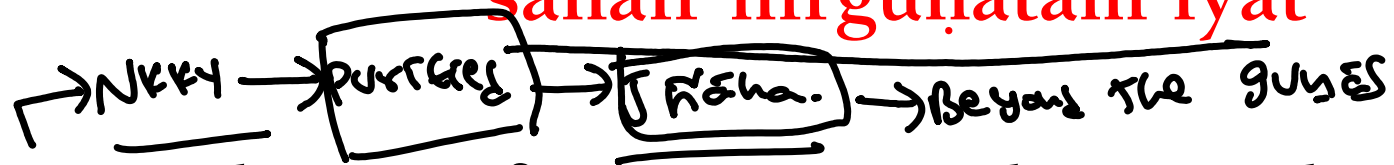
By passing life in one's natural occupation, one can attain devotional service free from the modes of nature.

Otherwise one will fall into irreligion and be unable to make gradual advancement.

It is said in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.32):

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

vṛttyā sva-bhāva-kṛtayā
vartamānaḥ sva-karma-kṛt
hitvā sva-bhāva-jaṁ karma
śanair nirguṇatām iyāt



If one acts in his profession according to his nature (sva-bhāva-kṛtayā vṛttyā), after gradually giving up his actions (śanair karma hitvā) according to his nature (sva-bhāva-jaṁ), he attains the stage beyond the guṇas (nirguṇatām iyāt).

Nirguṇatā, or the transcendental position, means devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

As stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.33):

tasmād deham imam labdhvā
jñāna-vijñāna-sambhavam
guṇa-saṅgam vinirdhūya
mām bhajantu vicakṣaṇāḥ

Therefore (tasmād), having achieved (labdhvā) this human form of life (deham imam), which allows one to develop knowledge and realization through bhakti (jñāna-vijñāna-sambhavam), those who are intelligent (vicakṣaṇāḥ) should free themselves from all contamination of the gunas (guṇa-saṅgam vinirdhūya) and worship me (mām bhajantu).

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

It has been ascertained by the Lord's use of the two words nirguṇam and mad upāśrayam.

These two words are used by the Lord in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.29) just previous to the quoted verse that whatever is performed out of devotion is called nirguṇa, or transcendental.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.34-35) states:

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

rajas tamaś cābhijayet
sattva-samsevayā munih
sattvaṁ cābhijayed yukto
nairapekṣyeṇa śānta-dhīḥ

As a preliminary, he should conquer rajas and tamas (**rajas tamaś ca abhijayet**) by engaging himself only with things in sattva (**sattva-samsevayā**). Then, being fixed in devotional service (**yuktaḥ**), the sage should also conquer sattva (**sattvaṁ cābhijayed**) by indifference toward it (**nairapekṣyeṇa**), arising from bhakti (**implied**).

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas



Therefore people can become free from the modes of nature if they pass their lives dovetailing everything-sāttvika objects, activities, time, and place-with the devotional service of the Lord.

*you can transcend the 3 modes → by first transcending the 2 modes
↓
favourable life style & Sattva is essential*

Only human beings are eligible for propensities in the mode of goodness, and remaining in that state they gradually become free from the modes.

The general propensities of human beings in the mode of goodness are described in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.8-12) as follows:

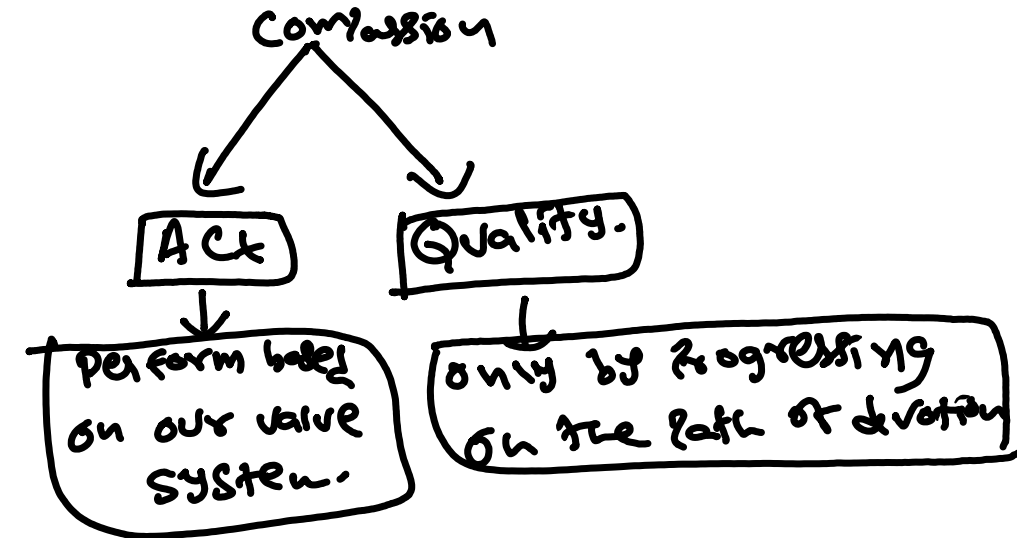
Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

1. satya - speaking the truth without distortion or deviation;

2. dayā - sympathy to everyone suffering;

3. tapah - austerities (such as observing fasts at least twice in a month on the day of Ekādaśī);

4. śauca - cleanliness (bathing regularly at least twice a day-morning and evening-and remembering to chant the holy name of Lord);



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5. titikṣā - toleration (being unagitated by seasonal changes or inconvenient circumstances);

6. ikṣā - distinguishing between good and bad;

7. śama - control of the mind (not allowing the mind to act whimsically);

8. dama - control of the senses (not allowing the senses to act without control);

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9. ahimsā - nonviolence (not subjecting any living entity to the threefold miseries);

10. brahmacarya - contenance or abstaining from misuse of one's semen (not indulging in sex with women other than one's own wife and not having sex with one's own wife when sex is forbidden, like during the period of menstruation);

11. tyāga - giving in charity at least fifty percent of one's income;

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12. svādhyāya - reading of transcendental literatures like Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata;

13. saratā - simplicity (freedom from mental duplicity);

14. santoṣa - being satisfied with that which is available without severe endeavor;

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15. samadarśi-janera-sevā - rendering service to saintly persons who make no distinctions between one living being and another and who see every living being as a spirit soul;

16. grāmya-ceṣṭā haite nivṛtti - not taking part in so-called philanthropic activities;

17. viparyayehekṣā - distinguishing unnecessary activities;

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

18. vṛthālāpa-nivṛtti (maunam) - being grave and silent;
19. ātma-vimarśana - research into the self (as to whether one is the body or the soul);
20. annādira-vibhāga - equal distribution of food and drink;
21. sakala-loke bhagavat-sambandha-buddhi - accepting all living entities as related to the Lord;

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as well as

22. śravaṇa - hearing;

23. kīrtana - chanting;

24. smaraṇa - remembering (His words and activities);

25. sevā - service;

26. ijyā - worship;

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27. nati - offering obeisances;

28. dāsya - accepting the service;

29. sakhyam - to consider as a friend;

30. atma-nivedana - surrendering one's whole self.

According to the differentiations of these thirty characteristics, the four varnas - brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra - and the four āśramas - brahmacārī, gṛhastha, vānaprastha, and sannyāsa - are born.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.18.42) it is said:

Sannyāsi bhikṣor dharmah śamo 'himsā → a) equanimity & b) non-violence
Vanaprastha tapa ikṣā vanaukaṣaḥ → a) austerity & b) ability to see the difference b/w body & soul.
Grhīṇo grhīṇo bhūta-rakṣejyā → a) shelter to living & b) sacrifices
Brahmacārī dvijasyācārya-sevanam → a) serving the guru.

The main duties of a sannyāsī (**bhikṣor dharmah**) are equanimity and nonviolence (**śamah ahimsā**), whereas the duties of the vanaprastha (**vanaukaṣaḥ**) are austerity and philosophical understanding of the difference between the body and soul (**tapa ikṣā**). The main duties of a householder (**grhīṇo**) are to give shelter to all living entities and to perform sacrifices (**bhūta-rakṣa iyā**), and the main duty of the brahmacārī is serving the guru (**dvijasya ācārya-sevanam**).

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The life occupations of the four varnas are stated as follows: Study, teaching, worship, teaching worship, giving charity, and accepting charity-these six are the brāhmaṇas' occupations; out of these they should maintain their life by teaching, teaching worship, and accepting worship.



The ksatriyas' occupations are protecting the prajā by punishing miscreants and maintaining the life by taxation.

Farming, protecting cows, and business are the vaiśyas' occupations.

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Only serving brāhmaṇas is the livelihood of the śūdras.

The traditional occupation of those who are lower than śūdras are their means of livelihood.

From all these conclusions of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it should be understood that performing devotional service to Śrī Hari is the only purpose of life, there is no other purpose.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

Unless one makes the gross and subtle bodies favorable for devotional service, one cannot engage in such.

There is a need for some arrangements in order to attain a favorable condition in those two bodies.

First in order to maintain the gross body there is a need to accumulate a house, household items, grains, and drinks.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

For the prosperity of the subtle body one needs proper knowledge and a proper occupation.

In order to make the bodies completely favorable for devotional service, there is a need to situate them above the modes of nature.

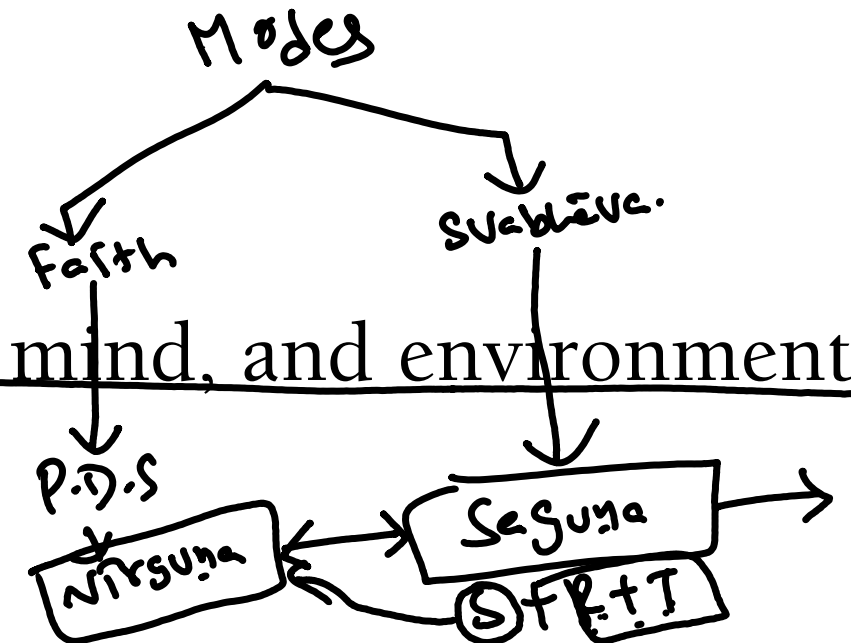
Due to the results of fruitive activities from time immemorial, whatever nature and desires a living entity develops is certainly a mixture of goodness, passion, and ignorance.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

By first enriching the mode of goodness, one should diminish and defeat passion and ignorance and make goodness prominent.

When the mode of goodness is completely under the control of devotional service, then it becomes nirguṇa.

By following this gradual process one's body, mind, and environment become fit for devotional service.

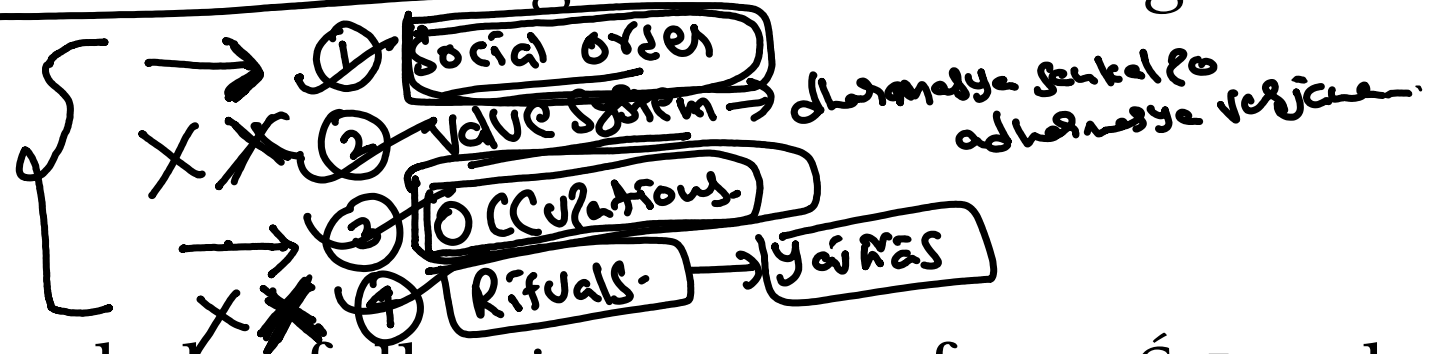


Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

There is a need for varṇāśrama-dharma while a human remains in the stage of piety and impiety that are born of his nature.

Varṇāśrama dharma

The main purpose of varṇāśrama-dharma is this: By gradually following varṇāśrama-dharma a human being will become eligible to perform devotional service.



Śrīman Mahāprabhu has quoted the following verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.2-3) to Sanātana Gosvāmī:

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śrī-camasa uvāca

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sāksād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

Camasa said: Each of the four social orders (**catvāro varṇā**), headed by the brāhmanas (**viprādayaḥ**), was born (**jajñire**) through different combinations of the modes of nature (**pṛthak guṇair**), from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Lord in his universal form (**puruṣasya mukha-bāhu-ūru-pādebhyaḥ**), along with the āśramas (**āśramaiḥ saha**).

If any of the members of the four varṇas and four āśramas (**yaḥ eṣāṁ**) fail to worship the Lord (**īśvaram na bhajanty**) and thus disrespect the Lord (**avajānanti**), who is the source of their own creation (**ātma-prabhavam**), they will fall down from their āśrama (**sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ**).

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Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya said that the process for achieving the supreme goal of life is given in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3.8.9) as follows:

varṇāśramācāra-vatā
puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān
viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā
nānyat tat-tosa-kāraṇam

The Supreme Lord Viṣṇu (**paraḥ pumān viṣṇuh**) is to be worshipped by man (**puruṣeṇa ārādhyate**) through the duties of varṇāśrama (**varṇāśrama ācaravatā**). There is no other path for satisfying the Lord (**na anyat panthā tat-tosa-kāraṇam**). (**Viṣṇu Purāṇa 3.8.9**)

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Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, however, rejected this process as external and requested him to give a higher conclusion.

The purport of Śrī Caitanya's statement is this: → पुरुषोत्तम

"O Rāmānanda! Varnāśrama-dharma is meant to regulate the gross and subtle bodies. If someone is satisfied only in that, without engaging in devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, then what is his gain? Therefore, although the process of varnāśrama is the only means of purification for a conditioned soul, still it is external."

Sādhū-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.8):

dharmah svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsām
viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratiṁ
śrama eva hi kevalam

Varṇāśrama-dharma (svanuṣṭhitaḥ dharmah) of the human being (puṁsām), which does not produce (yaḥ yadi na utpādayed) attraction (ratiṁ) for topics of the Lord (viṣvaksena-kathāsu), is only wasted effort (śrama eva hi kevalam).

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

From this one should not conclude that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has ordered us to discard varṇāśrama-dharma.

If that would have been the case, then He would not have instructed all living entities through His pastimes of completely following the orders of grhastha and sannyāsa.

20 limbs of bhakti

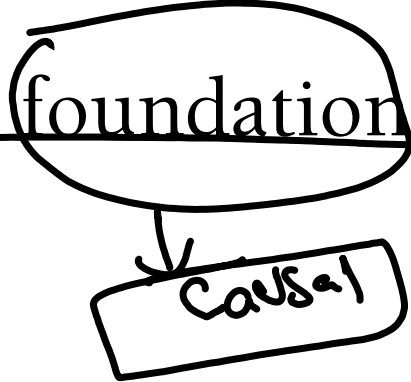
Varṇāśrama aspects accepted in the mode of caturvīdyā sankalpa.



As long as one has a material body the system of varṇāśrama-dharma must be followed, but it should remain under the full control and domination of bhakti.

Sādhu-vṛtti - Following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas

Varnāśrama-dharma is like the foundation of one's supreme occupational duty.



When one's supreme occupational duty is ^{bhāva} matured and one achieves his goal, then the process is gradually neglected.

Again, it is also abandoned at the time of death.