

Bhaktyaloka

By

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11

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

18. Do not expect charity

It is not proper for a renunciate to expect unasked for charity.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 6.284, 286) it says:

prabhu kahe,—bhāla kaila, chāḍila simha-dvāra
simha-dvāre bhiksā-vṛtti—veśyāra ācāra
chatre yāi yathā-lābha udara-bharaṇa
anya kathā nāhi, sukhe kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana

Hearing this news, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "He has done very well by no longer
standing at the Simha-dvāra gate. Such begging of alms resembles the behavior of a
prostitute. If one goes to the booth where free food is distributed and fills his belly
with whatever he obtains, there is no chance of further unwanted talk, and one can
very peacefully chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra."

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

20. Do not construct big temples or residences

A renunciate should not construct big temples or residences.

By doing so, he becomes entangled in household activities.

21. Rather be absorbed in worshipping their Lordships

He should meditate on the service of worshiping govardhana-śilā.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 6.296-297) it is stated:

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

eka kuñjā jala āra tulasī-mañjarī
sāttvika-sevā ei—śuddha-bhāve kari
dui-dike dui-patra madhye komala mañjarī
ei-mata aṣṭa-mañjarī dibe śraddhā kari

"For such worship, one needs a jug of water and a few flowers from a tulasī tree. This is worship in complete goodness when performed in complete purity. With faith and love, you should offer eight soft tulasī flowers, each with two tulasī leaves, one on each side of each flower."

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

22. Sannyāsa can be accepted only in special situations

Devotees accept the sannyāsa order of life only in special situations; it is not always required.

A Vaiṣṇava born in a brāhmaṇa's family ^{is allowed} can take such sannyāsa when he leaves home, but he should not accept the limbs that are averse to his devotional service.

Regarding the characteristics of Svarūpa Dāmodara Prabhu, it is stated in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 10.107-108):

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

'niścinte kṛṣṇa bhajiba' ei ta' kārane
unmāde karila tenha sannyāsa grahaṇe
sannyāsa karilā śikhā-sūtra-tyāga-rūpa
yoga-paṭṭa nā nila, nāma haila 'svarūpa'

"He was very enthusiastic to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa without disturbance;
therefore it was almost in madness that he accepted the sannyāsa
order. Upon accepting sannyāsa, Puruṣottama Ācārya followed the
regulative principles by giving up his tuft of hair and sacred thread,
but he did not accept the saffron colored dress. Also, he did not accept
a sannyāsī title but remained as a naisthika-brahmacārī."

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

23. One may accept sannyāsa in the form of minimizing his needs

Someone may accept sannyāsa in the form of minimizing his needs.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 20.78, 81) there is the following statement regarding the character of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī:

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

tabe miśra purātana eka dhuti dila
teṅho dui bahirvāsa-kaupīna karila
sanātana kahe,— "āmi mādhuakarī kariba
brāhmaṇera ghare kene ekatra bhikṣā laba?"

"When Tapanā Miśra gave Sanātana Gosvami a used dhoti, Sanātana
immediately tore it in pieces to make two sets of outer cloth and
underwear. Sanātana replied: I shall practice the process of
mādhuakarī. Why should I accept full meals in the house of a
brāhmaṇa?"

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

The Lord's response is found in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 20.92):

tina mudrāra bhoṭa gāya, mādhuakarī grāsa
dharmā-hāni haya, loka kare upahāsa

"It is contradictory to practice mādhuakarī and at the same time wear a
valuable blanket. One loses his spiritual strength by doing this, and
one will also become an object for jokes."

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

24. A renunciant should rather stay alone rather than associating with non-devotees & unqualified

Regarding the association of a Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī, the character of Śrī Madhavendra Puri is described in the Caitanya-bhāgavata (CB Antya-khaṇḍa 4.419-421, 423-424, 426, 428):

viṣṇu-māyā vaśe loka kuchui nā jāne
sakala jagat baddha mahā tamo-guṇe

"People were conditioned by the mode of ignorance and had lost all knowledge due to the influence of viṣṇu-māyā.

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

loka dekhi' duhkha bhāve śrī mādhavapurī
hena nāhi, tilārdha sambhāṣā yā're kari

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī was deeply pained by the godlessness of the
people, and he found no one to speak to.

sannyāsira sane vā karena sambhāṣaṇa
seha āpanāre mātra bale 'nārāyaṇa

Sometimes he would speak to the sannyāsīs, but to his dismay he
found that they claimed to be Nārāyaṇa.

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

jñānī, yogī, tapasvī, sannyāsī' khyāti yā'ra
kā'ra mukhe nāhi dāsya mahimā pracāra

Jñānīs, yogis, tapasvīs, and famous sannyāsīs never spoke about the
glories of serving the Supreme Lord.

yata adhyāpaka saba tarka se vākhāne
tā'rā saba kṛṣṇera vigraha nāhi māne

All the teachers and professors were only interested in logic and
argument. They refused to accept the spiritual form of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

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

loka madhye bhrami kene vaiṣṇava dekhite
kothāo 'vaiṣṇava' nāma nā śuni jagate

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī thought: Why am I roaming amongst people
searching for a Vaisnava? Wherever I go I don't even hear the word
'Vaiṣṇava'.

eteke se, vana bhāla e saba haite
vane kathā nahe avaiṣṇavera sahite

"Therefore he considered it better to stay in the forest where he did
not have to speak with non-devotees."

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

25. A Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī should give up Māyāvādī markings

A Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī should give up the use of Māyāvādī markings.

Concerning the character of Śrī Brahmananda Bharati, the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 10.154) says:

brahmānanda pariyāche mṛga-carmāmbara
tāhā dekhi' prabhu duḥkha pāilā antara

"When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees approached him, they saw that he was covered with a deerskin. Seeing this, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became very unhappy."

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

26. A renunciant should receive women from a distance

Regarding the pure gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇavīs, the lady devotees, the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 12.42) describes the procedure for seeing a sannyāsī:

pūrvavat prabhu kailā sabāra milana
strī-saba dūra ha-ite kailā prabhura daraśana

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu received them all, just as He had in
previous years. The women, however, saw the Lord from a distance."

27. Giving of enjoyment is prohibited

A renunciate Vaiṣṇava is prohibited from all kinds of enjoyment.

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

As stated in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 12.108):

prabhu kahe,— "sannyāsīra nāhi taile adhikāra
tāhāte sugandhi taila,—parama dhikkāra!

The Lord replied, "A sannyāsī has no use for oil, especially perfumed
oil such as this. Take it out immediately."

28. A renunciant is forbidden from hearing the singing of a woman

A renunciate Vaiṣṇava is forbidden from hearing the singing of a
woman. As described in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 13.78, 80, 83-
85):

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

eka-dina prabhu yameśvara-toṭā yāite
sei-kāle deva-dāsī lāgilā gāite
dūre gāna śuni' prabhura ha-ila āveśa
strī, puruṣa, ke gāya-nā jāne viśesa
strī gāya' bali' govinda prabhure kailā kole
strī-nāma śuni' prabhura bāhya ha-ilā
prabhu kahe,-govinda, āji rākhilā jīvana
stri-paraśa haile āmāra ha-ita maraṇa

"One day when the Lord was going to the temple of Yameśvara, a female singer began to sing in the Jagannātha temple. Hearing the song from a distance, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately became ecstatic. He did not know whether it was a man or a woman singing. Just then Govinda caught the Lord in his arms and cried: It is a woman singing! As soon as He heard the word 'woman,' the Lord became externally conscious. My dear Govinda, He said, you have saved My life. If I had touched the body of a woman, I would certainly have died."

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

29. Bedding of a renunciate

Concerning a renunciate's bedding, the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 13.5-7, 10, 12, 14-15, 17-19) states as follows:

kalāra śaralāte, śayana, ati kṣīṇa kāya
sahite nāre jagadānanda, sṛjilā upāya
sūkṣma vastra āni' gaurika diyā rāṅgāilā
śimulīra tulā diyā tāhā pūrāilā
tulī-bāliśa dekhi' prabhu krodhāviṣṭa ha-ilā
govindere kahi' sei tūli dūra kailā
prabhu kahena, -khāṭa eka ānaha pādite
jagadānanda cāhe āmāya viṣaya bhuñjāite
sannyāsī mānuṣa āmāra bhūmite śayana
āmāre khāṭa-tūli-bāliśa mastaka-muṇḍana
svarūpa-gosāñi tabe sṛjilā prakāra
kadalīra śuṣka-patra ānilā apāra
nakhe ciri' ciri' tāhā ati sūkṣma kailā
prabhura bahirvāśa duite se saba bharilā
ei-mata dui kailā odana-pādane
aṅgikāra kailā prabhu aneka yatane

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

"The Lord was very thin, and He would lay down to rest on the dry bark of plantain trees. Jagadānanda could not tolerate this, so he devised a remedy. He acquired some fine cloth and colored it with red oxide. Then he filled it with cotton from a śimula tree. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw the quilt and pillow, He was immediately very angry. The Lord asked Govinda to put aside the quilt and pillow. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said: You should bring a bedstead here for Me to lie on. Jagadānanda wants Me to enjoy material happiness. I am in the renounced order, and therefore I must lie on the floor. For Me to use a bedstead, quilt, or pillow would be very shameful. Then Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī devised another method. First he secured a large quantity of dry banana leaves. He then tore the leaves into very fine fibers with his nails and filled two of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's outer garments with the fibers. In this way, Svarūpa Dāmodara made some bedding and a pillow, and after much endeavor by the devotees, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu accepted them."

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

30. Renunciants should accept very simple food. & only to keep the body functional

Regarding a renunciate's food, the Lord has said in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 8.84-85):

prabhu kahe,— "sabe kene purīre kara roṣa?
'sahaja' dharma kahe teṅho, tānra kibā doṣa?
yati hañā jihvā-lāmpaṭya—atyanta anyāya
yatira dharma,—prāṇa rākhite āhāra-mātra khāya

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, "Why are all of you angry at Rāmacandra Purī? He is expounding the natural principles of sannyāsa life. Why are you accusing him? For a sannyāsī to indulge in satisfying the tongue is a great offense. The duty of a sannyāsī is to eat only as much as needed to keep body and soul together."

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

All the above mentioned items are accepted as the proper occupations of renunciate Vaiṣṇavas.

proper occupation for both Vaiṣṇava-householders & renunciates

Now the proper occupations for all Vaiṣṇavas-householders and renunciates-will be explained.

① Always chant the HNs

There is no duty in the age Kali other than chanting the holy names and mantras of Kṛṣṇa.

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

② Accelerate initiation into chanting

It is necessary for everyone to take initiation into the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

As stated in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 7.73-74, 97 and 17.30, 75):

kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa

Simply by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa one can obtain freedom from material existence. Indeed, simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord.

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

nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma, ei śāstra-marma

In this Age of Kali there is no religious principle other than the chanting of the holy name, which is the essence of all Vedic hymns. This is the purport of all scriptures.

kṛṣṇa-nāme ye ānanda-sindhu-āsvādana
brahmānanda tāra āge khātodaka-sama

Compared to the ocean of transcendental bliss that is tasted by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the pleasure derived from impersonal Brahman realization [brahmānanda] is like the shallow water in a canal.

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

- ③ Do not over endeavor for maintenance
sadā nama la-iba, yathā-lābhetē santōṣa
eita ācāra kare bhakti-dharma-poṣa

One should strictly follow the principle of always chanting the holy name, and one should be satisfied with whatever he gets easily. Such devotional behavior solidly maintains one's devotional service.

- ④ Do not try to mix your practice with jñāna, karma & yoga
jñāna-karma-yoga-dharme nahe kṛṣṇa vaśa
kṛṣṇa-vaśa-hetu eka—prema-bhakti-rasa

By following the paths of speculative philosophical knowledge, fruitive activity, or mystic yoga to control the senses, one cannot satisfy Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. Unalloyed devotional love for Kṛṣṇa is the only cause for the Lord's satisfaction.

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

⑤ Proper procedure to accept a guru

The proper procedure and proper instruction for accepting a spiritual master is given in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.128, 221, 229) as follows:

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya
rāgānuga-mārgē tānre bhaje yei jana
sei-jana pāya vraje vrajendra-nandana
siddha-dehe cinti' kare tāhāññi sevana
sakhī-bhāve pāya rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa

"Whether one is a brāhmaṇa, a sannyāsī, or a śūdra-regardless of what he is-he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa. If one worships the Lord on the path of spontaneous love and goes to Vṛndāvana, he receives the shelter of Vrajendra-nandana, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. After thinking of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Their pastimes for a long time and after getting completely free from material contamination, one is transferred to the spiritual world. There the devotee attains an opportunity to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as one of the gopīs."

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

⑥ Always associate with devotees

One needs to always associate with devotees.

⑦ What kind of devotees

~~a) Sābhāṅgīc āśāye~~ ~~b) Śhigḍhe~~ ~~c) Śādhū saṅga~~ ~~d) Śvetu-vare~~

One should associate with affectionate devotees who are more advanced, yet of the same temperament

As explained in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.251):

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

śreyo-madhye kona śreyah jāvera haya sāra?

'kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga vinā śreyah nāhi āra

Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked, "Out of all auspicious and beneficial activities, which is best for the living entity?" Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "The only auspicious activity is association with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa."

Ⓢ. Avoid associating with other scriptures vaiṣṇavas who may have traces of karma & jñāna in their practice

Although a Vaiṣṇava comes from a bona fide sampradāya, his association should be considered according to the Lord's statements in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 9.276-277):

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

prabhu kahe,-karmī, jñānī,—dui bhakti-hīna
tomāra sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna
sabe, eka guṇa dekhi tomāra sampradāye
satya-vigraha kari' īśvare karaha niścaye

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "Both the fruitive worker and the
speculative philosopher are considered non-devotees. We see both
elements present in your sampradāya. The only qualification that I see
in your sampradāya is that you accept the form of the Lord as truth."

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

⑨ Don't stay in a place where rasābhāsa (or) a-siddhanta is present

One should not remain in a place where incompatible mixtures of mellows or contradictions in the conclusions of devotional service are presented.

The Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 10.113) has the following statement:

bhakti-siddhānta-viruddha, āra rasābhāsa
śunite nā haya prabhura cittera ullāsa

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was never pleased to hear books or verses opposed to the conclusive statements of devotional service. The Lord did not like hearing rasābhāsa, the overlapping of transcendental mellows.”

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

10. one should carefully try to cultivate qualities favourable for D.S

One should carefully gather the good qualities needed for devotional service.

The nature of a devotee is described in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 7.72) as follows:

mahānubhāvera cittera svabhāva ei haya
puṣpa-sama komala, kaṭhina vajra-maya

“This is the nature of the mind of an uncommon personality. Sometimes it is soft like a flower, but sometimes it is as hard as a thunderbolt.”

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

11. The welfare activity of a Vaiṣṇava is to deliver (P) to the fallen

The welfare activities of a devotee are described in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.39) as follows:

mahānta-svabhāva ei tārīte pāmara
nija kārya nāhi tabu yāna tāra ghara

"It is the general practice of all saintly people to deliver the fallen.
Therefore they go to people's houses, although they have no personal
business there."

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

12. One should accept a siddhantic point based on its merit.

In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 11.4) the Lord gives an example of how a devotee should pledge:

prabhu kahe,—kaha tumi, nāhi kichu bhaya
yogya haile kariba, ayogya haile naya

"The Lord gave the Bhaṭṭācārya assurance that he could speak without
fear, but added that if his statement was suitable He would accept it,
and if it were not, He would reject it."

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

13. One should try to develop affection towards devotees

The benefits of dealing affectionately with a devotee are described in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 11.26) as follows:

prabhu kahe,—tumi kṛṣṇa-bhakata-pradhāna
tomāke ye prīti kare, sei bhāgyavān

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu then said, "My dear Rāmānanda Rāya, you are the foremost of all the devotees of Kṛṣṇa; therefore whoever loves you is certainly a very fortunate person."