

Bhaktyaloka

Essay 7

Utsāha- Enthusiasm

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) being enthusiastic
- (2) endeavoring with confidence
- (3) being patient
- (4) acting according to regulative principles [such as śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam - hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa]
- (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees
- (6) following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas.

These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

Factors which can stunt enthusiasm/ utsāha

Without Utsāha, one becomes negligent in his worship.

Negligence is born out of:

inactivity

Laziness

inertia

absence of desire to work

apathy or

indifference

develops from carelessness

To not have genuine care :

It does not really matter much if I don't progress spiritually.

I will not lose anything tangible by not progressing in my spiritual life...

absence of desire to: work on our anarthas, work on our relationships, work on completing our services, etc

Inertia - unwilling to change oneself

Not willing to go beyond one's comfort zone

Default inertia for us who are in the material world is ātmendriya-prīti.

Whereas spiritual world is all about kṛṣṇendriya-prīti.

so we have to take a determined vow to break the inertia.

How should yoga be practiced?

taṁ vidyād duḥkha-saṁyoga-
viyogaṁ yoga-saṁjñitam
sa niścayena yoktavyo
yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā

Bg.
6.23-24

Know such a state, separated from all misery, to be yoga. This yoga must be practiced with determination, devoid of depression.

anirviṇṇa-cetasā : utsāha/enthusiasm

Why do we need enthusiasm?

Because our endeavours will not necessarily immediately turn into success.

We might endeavour with faith to progress on spiritual path but there are forces which won't let us progress so fast (example: our conditionings, aparadhas, anarthas).

Another thing is will of Krishna.

Why we should remain enthusiastic despite perceived failures to progress?

1. Krishna appreciates our sincerity.
2. Krishna is thrilled with our seemingly trivial efforts.
3. We may not see immediate effects. But progress may be there.
4. When Krishna sanctions, all our endeavors will be successful.
5. Opportunity to practice KC is in itself a great award.
6. I still get to associate with devotees.
7. My guru has accepted me - we are sanatha and no more anatha.
8. If we endeavour with enthusiasm, it will attract Krishna's mercy.
9. We value the teachings of our parampara. Since Srila Rupa goswami says to be enthusiastic and all the acharyas follow his teachings, we also value his teaching of being enthusiastic.
10. Pratyaksa pramana: I have seen great personalities with greater setbacks, endeavour with great enthusiasm and attain great success.
11. Krishna knows my heart. If I am enthusiastic for Krishna's pleasure, he will reward me for it.
12. I can not gauge the success of my endeavour by my pleasure alone. Because I am doing it for Krishna's pleasure.
13. When we show enthusiasm, Krishna will help remove our offenses and really make us enthusiastic.
14. Because we have the most worthy goal.
15. Mercy comes earlier than you deserve but later than you expect. If we think we deserve more, we will always be disappointed. So we should lower our expectations.
16. We are enthusiastic because we are grateful.

What is the cause of indifference (or) lack of enthusiasm?

In his commentary on this verse (Bg 6.23-24) , Srila Baladeva Vidyābhusana Mahāsaya has said:

ātmanya yogyatva-mananaṁ nirvedas tad rahitena cetasā

"one becomes indifferent to whatever work he feels unqualified for."

So the cause of indifference (or) lack of enthusiasm is:

Perceiving that work to be not meant for him (or) not beneficial for him.



When one feels himself qualified for a process or activity, one will actively practice it...

1. Qualification for jnana yoga : detachment achieved from purification of heart through the practice of Niskama karma yoga
2. Qualification for karma yoga: not disgusted with material life and have many desires to fulfill to enjoy in the material world
3. Qualification for bhakti yoga: sraddha (faith in pure devotional service) attained through ajnata sukriti

What is the nature of pure devotional faith?

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

ŚB 11.20.8

na nirviṇṇaḥ — not falsely detached

na ati-saktaḥ : not very much attached to
material existence

A bhakti yogi is not detached like a jnana yogi and also does not have the goal to enjoy in this material world.

They accept some material activities as a support for their spiritual awakening, but they have no attachment for such activities (ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam).

Classic symptoms of a sadhaka

SB 11.20.27-28

1. jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu - Has awakened faith in the process of bhakti
2. nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu - Disgusted with varnasrama prescribed duties
3. veda duḥkhātma-kān kāmān - Understands that sense gratification leads to misery
4. parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ - Still unable to give up sense gratification
4. juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāṁś ca garhayan - Unable to give up sense gratification, he sincerely repents for engaging in such acts

Krishna's instruction for such a sadhaka

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhātur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ :

Remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction

prītaḥ: enthusiasm

Remain enthusiastic and worship Me with great faith and conviction