

Bhaktyaloka

Essay 7

Utsāha- Enthusiasm

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaja on
Utsāha

Inner satisfaction can only come
through Kṛṣṇa consciousness

Enthusiasm should only be for
Krishna-bhakti

How to develop that?

With the contact of the sadhu

With the help of the scriptures

Only one thing required to
progress in bhakti

One may not be a wise man, one may not be a very energetic man,
one may not be master of opulence and other powers

Only the minimum is demanded from him - that he has very
earnest hunger.

He must have the smallest taste for the Lord.

Taste refers to sraddha/enthusiasm

Laulyam api mulyam ekalam

Our sincere earnestness /eagerness to get that is the only price
we have to pay in advance.

Substance is necessary and not form

Substance is enthusiasm/eagerness

Form can be different - ability, skillset, opportunity, etc.

If form is there and no substance is there - it is like there is chhapan bhoga - 56 items - but there is no appetite.

But if substance is there - appetite is there - even one item one can relish and eat it.

Form may be adopted only as much as it may connect me with that higher thing.

External things if they are helping me become KC, we accept them otherwise we reject.

Sarva dharman parityajya

"Give up all phases of duty that you perceive as perfect. At once try to jump into the ocean of nectar. I am the ocean of nectar. Try to jump."

Enthusiasm should only be for bhakti and not for anything else- not for varnasrama dharma, grihastha dharma etc.

We as devotees are subservient to the eagerness to please Krishna.

We accept only that which is favourable for our devotional service and we reject that which is not favourable for our devotional service.

Our goal is to become a member of Vrindavana and our eagerness must only be for that.

Bhaktyaloka

Essay 8

Niścaya

Confidence / Determination

Section-I

Kill the Demon of Doubt to gain
Confidence

*ajñāś cāśraddadhānāś ca
saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro
na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ*

Bg. 4.40

The person ignorant of scripture, or one who knows scripture but has no faith in it, or one who is doubtful of attaining the goal even with faith, perishes.

One who is afflicted with doubt attains nothing in this life, nothing in the next, and no happiness.

ajñah

The person ignorant of scripture

Plain ignorant people - don't know anything about scriptures.

No connection to guru, sadhu and shastra.

aśraddadhānaḥ

One who knows scripture but has no faith in it

Academicians who study religious/ spiritual texts.

They just want to know some philosophy but have no faith that what they are studying needs to be applied in their life.

saṁśayātmā

One who is doubtful of attaining the goal even with faith

One who had faith but who has got doubts because of unfavourable experiences within the devotional realm

'cynical insiders'

There is a chance for us (devotees) to become saṁśayātmā

saṁśayātmās or cynical insiders are the most miserable people. They can neither be happy in material life nor in spiritual life.

We all must accept the responsibility to give very favourable experience to the devotees and there must be a solid system where the doubts of the devotees can be resolved.

Doubts can be of many types- philosophical doubts, doubts regarding devotees' behaviour and their conditionings, etc

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusuna

Samśayātmā is that person who, in spite of having faith, doubts if he can attain the perfection.

This doubtful person does not have happiness from the gross world or the next world.

1. Because such a devotee has lost faith that sense gratificatory endeavours can lead to happiness.

2. His faith in bhakti has become compromised because of many doubts and therefore he is not able to progress in bhakti also.

Srila Prabhupada

Samśayātmā are those who may have faith in scriptures like Bhagavad-gītā but they do not believe in or worship the Personality of Godhead, Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Those who have no faith and are always doubtful make no progress at all.

Men without faith in God and His revealed word find no good in this world, nor in the next.

For them there is no happiness whatsoever.

One should therefore follow in the footsteps of great ācāryas who are in the disciplic succession and thereby attain success.

Questions and Answers

What if we lose faith in our immediate authority?

Our relationship with Krishna should not be compromised because of that.

We must not punish ourselves for that.

We must see there are so many great personalities who have nicely practiced devotional service and attained perfection.

Spiritual inspirational is very individual and it can not be institutionalised.

It is not that our immediate managerial authority will be our inspiration.

We must take the responsibility to seek association and guidance from where one gets proper inspiration.

Since last few years, hearing from people who give their own understanding of scriptures, I have developed a fear for hearing from anyone. What to do?

It is our responsibility to protect our faith.

One thing we must understand is that if someone is presenting and we don't get inspiration from them, that is alright.

We can choose to hear from them from whom we get inspiration.

Also we must endeavour to properly study our scriptures so that we are able to discriminate who is presenting their own understanding and who is actually presenting the scriptures.

As a speaker, we must constantly keep quoting from the words of scriptures and words of our acharyas. And also quote references for what we are quoting.

Difference between weak faith and doubts?

Weak faith is weak conviction - passive doubt - possessed by beginners.

Doubting is negative - active doubt - possessed by those who have spent sufficient time and their faiths were challenged by unfavourable experiences.

Both the persons are quoting the statement of acharyas - someone says we should engage more in preaching and someone says we should engage more in temple services.

How to decide whom to follow?

We can choose to ask someone in whom we have trust and who is superior to both of them - in their practice of Krishna consciousness, in their understanding of Krishna consciousness and in their consistency in practicing over many years.

We can approach such a devotee and seek clarification.

When we see difference in the statements of acharyas themselves?

In that case, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana says, choose one opinion and follow properly.

Does the time really indicate one's maturity in their devotional understanding? Or it depends on the quality of their practice ?

Time on its own can not be taken as the only factor.

But time also plays a role.

आचार्यात् पादमादत्ते पादं शिष्यः स्वमेधया ।सब्रह्मचारिभ्यः पादं पादं कालक्रमेण च

One learns one fourth from the teacher, one fourth from one's own intelligence, one fourth from classmates, and one fourth only with time.

But on our part, the whole evaluation process of evaluating a person has to be evaluated first.