

**Narada Bhakti Sutra**  
**A summary of Swami Tadatmananda's Discourse**  
**October 17, 2006**

As was noted previously, the primary means to pursue the goal of *sadhya bhakti* is *nyaasa*, which is a process of negation (rather than acquisition) that leads to the discovery that you already are what you want to become. *Nyaasa* has two aspects: *ananyata* (non-difference) and *udaasinata* (indifference). *Ananyata* implies a state of being not different (one or *advaita*), whereas *udasinata* implies a lack of interest towards pursuits other than spiritual growth.

Since sutras are terse statements, they can have more than one meaning. Thus, *ananyata* and *udasinata*, in the next few sutras have meanings applicable to both *sadhana* and *sadhya bhakti*. *Ananyata* as *sadhana bhakti* is a commitment to nothing other than the pursuit of one's goal, i.e., reaching God. With respect to *sadhya bhakti* it is the state of having reached that goal- being "no other" or being non-separate from God (*advaita*). Similarly, *udasinata*, for *sadhana bhakti* is to stay away from any other interests and attachments except spiritual growth, whereas for *sadhya bhakti* it is the state of indifference (towards non-spiritual interests) that has been achieved.

Sutra 11: *Loka-vedeshu tad-anukoola-aacharanam tad-virodhishu udaasinata*

Translation: Indifference to worldly and sacred activities that are opposed to "that" and performance of those that are conducive to "that".

Commentary: This sutra further clarifies that *udasinata* to worldly and sacred activities (prescribed by Vedas) means to avoid those worldly and sacred (Vedic) activities that hinder spiritual growth and to do the ones that are conducive to attaining "that", i.e., *prema bhakti*; specifically, make spiritual growth your number one priority. (Note that this meaning is in fact referring to karma yoga, as expounded in Bhagavad Gita).

Worldly activities such as going to work can be conducive to spiritual growth, when done with an attitude of karma yoga. In fact, not going to work and living like a homeless person in squalid conditions is a hindrance to spiritual growth. Conversely, taking on a job with three times the salary, but one with lots of pressure and stress is an example of activity, which is a hindrance to spiritual growth.

Vedas, classify all activities as four types of actions (karmas):

1. *Nitya* karmas are daily rituals. In Vedic times for example, they meant doing *agni hotra* (fire ritual) twice a day; in the modern context, it means doing *puja*, prayer, or meditation.
2. *Naimitika* karmas are rituals done occasionally; for example, religious observations (fasting, etc.) and celebrations in a religious manner (festivals, birthdays, etc).
3. *Kamya* karmas are rituals done for fulfillment of desires, e.g., *putrakameshti* for the birth of a son. In the modern context, Laxmi puja with the intent of future business success is an example of *kamya* karma.
4. *Pratishiddha* karmas are actions that are prohibited. These are any actions that go against dharma (causing harm, stealing, etc.). (See footnote below)

For spiritual growth, one should follow *nitya* and *naimitika* karma and avoid *kamya* and *pratishiddha* karmas.

Sutra 12: *Bhavatu nishchayadaardhyaad-oordhvam shastra-raksnam*

Translation: After being firmly established, may there be protection of *shastras*.

Commentary: As a means for pursuing *sadhana bhakti*, the aspirant must follow the teachings of the *shastras*, keeping in mind that *shastras* are not used as rulebooks but rather as a road map. For those who are firmly established (enlightened persons), they must also uphold the scriptures to set a right example for others to emulate. Enlightened persons must serve as role models and not abandon the *shastras* even though it's true that they don't need them for their sake.

Sutra 13: *Anyatha paatitya-shankaya*

Translation: Otherwise there is the risk of a fall.

Commentary: If the students and teachers discard *shastras*, there is a risk that dharma will decline. It is worth noting that Hindu *shastras* do not scare you into submission to follow dharma; their message is that if you want to live a life free from suffering, follow dharma. Following dharma is for your sake and that's truly what the *sadhana* is for the spiritual aspirant. For enlightened persons, who have attained the goal (*sadhya bhakti*), it is also important to follow dharma, or else they will make others fall by setting a bad example.

Sutra 14: *Loko'pi taavadeva; bhojan-aadi-vyaapaarah tvaasharira-dhaaranaavadhi*

Translation: Worldly activities also only that much; activities like eating food, to keep body fit as long as it lasts.

Commentary: Engage in worldly activities only to the extent it is necessary. When faced with a question such as "when should I retire?" The answer is,

“work as long as you need to”. One can live with a lot less than one thinks. Swamiji recalled his experience when he entered into the ashram in India, where he was going to live, and saw the room, which was going to be his residence for several months. The room was austere as a prison cell with bare minimum of amenities and he wondered how he was going to endure such austerity. But, within a short period, he very well adapted to it and enjoyed his stay.

Having more of material possessions (big home, big stock portfolio) creates more of hard work to look after them, which becomes a hindrance to spiritual growth. This gives meaning to the phrase “Less is more”.

In the next several verses we will learn about other spiritual practices (*sadhanas*) to pursue the goal of *saadhya bhakti*.

*Footnote: Eating meat is a pratishiddha karma because it causes harm and is therefore adharm in the Hindu perspective, and not a matter of ritualistic purity. This perspective is different from that of some other religions: people of Jewish and Islamic faith will eat meat as long as it is ritually pure (kosher or halal) and will shun certain meats (pork) that they consider to be impure/unclean.*

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