

**Narada Bhakti Sutra**  
**A summary of Swami Tadatmananda's Discourse**  
**October 10, 2006**

Sutra 7: *Sa na kamayamana, nirodha-rupatvaat*

Translation: That *bhakti* (*parama prema*) is not in the form of *kama* (desire); it is in the form of renunciation (*nirodha*).

Commentary: The ultimate *bhakti*, which is *sadhya bhakti* or *parama prema*, is not driven by desire. *Kama* and *prema*, on the other hand, or driven by physical and emotional desires, respectively. *Sadhana bhakti* is also driven by desire- a desire for God. But for *sadhya bhakti*, there is no desire that is fulfilled. In *sadhya bhakti*, there is actually something that is renounced (referred to as *nirodha* in the sutra). (See footnote 1). Desire is for acquiring something; and whatever you acquire is only going to be finite and limited. You cannot acquire infinite by any amount of effort. *Nirodha* is renouncing or removing that which is an obstacle to your goal; in this way you discover what you already are!

Sutra 8: *Nirodhastu loka veda vyaapaara nayasaha*

Translation: Now, this renunciation is for the worldly activities and Vedic rituals.

Commentary: *Nirodha* is further explained in this sutra as renunciation of worldly activities and Vedic rituals (for specific purposes), in terms of their priority. One has to shift one's priorities and focus on seeking God. Vedic rituals (*Veda vyaapaara*) will not let you attain that perfect state of uninterrupted peace and contentment. When you recognize this fact, there is a big shift in your perspective. Normally, one tends to think that if I work hard, and work smartly, and make right decisions, I will reach a perfect state of contentment. But this never happens. Sooner or later one is disillusioned. At that point, some become bitter with life, some decide to work even harder, but the wise ones figure that there is a better way- the way of spiritual growth! And that is the turning point. At this point, other priorities, naturally, become less important, secondary. It is this shift in priorities that is called *nirodha* or renunciation. A personal anecdote of Swamiji illustrates this point colorfully. Swamiji recalled that when people ask him "Swamiji how did you give up such a great life of comfort in beautiful Santa Barbara, left behind your lovely home overlooking the ocean, your friends, and every thing else to a hard life of renunciation?" His response: "I never gave up anything; I pursued what I found valuable. My value for spiritual growth was so great that leaving California and everything else behind was a no-brainer." *Nyaasa* in the sutra means exactly this: it's going towards what you ultimately want and leaving behind what does not contribute to your spiritual growth.

Sutra 9: *Tasmin ananyata tadvirodhishu udaasinataa cha*

Translation: In this (renunciation) there is total unification (*ananyataa*) and indifference (*udaasinataa*) to whatever is contrary to that.

Commentary: When you have dedicated yourself to the spiritual goal of *sadhya bhakti* through renunciation (as explained above), you finally reach a state of non-duality.

In both *kama* (desire) and *prema* (love), there is distinctly an element of “me”; desire and its fulfillment is for me; love is also for me: even when one says, “I love you”, one is getting emotional satisfaction for oneself. In *bhakti*, as *parama prema*, there is no element of “me”; it is totally unconditional love, free of any desire for oneself. Because, with *parama prema*, one is already full; this in fact is the state of enlightenment! And that’s the definition of *sadhya bhakti*. At that point the renunciation (*nyaasa*) is that of “me”, a condition where there is utter non-separation referred to as *ananyataa* in the sutra.

However, *ananyataa* also has a second meaning in the context of *sadhana bhakti*. It means complete dedication without any other priorities.

Second part of the sutra: you also gain the state of being *udaasin*, meaning indifferent with regard to worldly goals, which are obstacles to spiritual growth. Then you will do only what needs to be done and nothing else. As a matter of fact, you automatically become indifferent to other activities.

Sutra 10”: *Anya-ashrayaanaam tyago ’nanyataa*

Translation: Unification means the renunciation of all other support.

Commentary: As further explanation, this sutra states that *ananyataa* means giving up all other supports you rely on, for example, support from your family, friends, co-workers, etc. You think that all such sources (supports) provide you happiness. But none of these will give you perfect contentment because the ultimate answer lies within.

Footnote: *The concept of renunciation (nirodha) as the primary means to reach a spiritual goal is a feature that distinguishes Hinduism from Abrahamic religions-Christianity, Judaism and Islam. For example in yoga, one gives up chita vriti (thought patterns in mind), in Vedanta one gives up ignorance of self. In Abrahamic religions, on the other hand, one focuses on acquiring; i.e., acquiring heaven.*

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