

Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti

11. Sangha Tyaga - Giving
up the association of
nondevotees

Saṅgha Tyāga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- In his Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said that one's devotion is enhanced by utsāhā, niścayā, dhairya, tat-tat-karma-pravartana, saṅga-tyāga, and sad-vṛtti (the devotee's lifestyle or propensities).
- Out of these items, utsāhā, niścayā, dhairya, and tat-tat-karma-pravartana have already been separately discussed in the previous essays.
- Now I will try to discuss the meaning of the word saṅga-tyāga.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- There are two types of saṅga-association and attachment. Association is of two types-with nondevotees and with women.
- Similarly, attachment is also of two types-attachment for prejudices and attachment for assets.
- Those mahatmas who wish to attain perfection in devotional service should carefully give up saṅga in the form of association and attachment.
- Otherwise this saṅga will gradually and surely ruin everything.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā (2.62-63):

**dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsah
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah
kāmat krodho 'bhijāyate**

For the person who meditates on the sense objects (**dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsah**), attachment arises (**saṅgah teṣu upajāyate**). From attachment arises desire (**saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah**). From desire arises anger (**kāmat krodhah abhijāyate**).

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ
sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ
smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo
buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati

From anger arises bewilderment (**krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ**). From bewilderment comes loss of memory (**sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ**). From loss of memory comes loss of intelligence (**smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo**). From loss of intelligence one becomes completely destroyed (**buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati**).

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- A practitioner should always remember this instruction of the Lord.
- If a practitioner engages in prohibited association, then gradually his attachment increases.
- The more this attachment increases, the more his firm faith in the supreme goal diminishes.
- The purport is that the living entity is spiritual; being conditioned by māyā and falsely proud due to ignorance, the living entity has forgotten his constitutional position.
- In his pure state the living entity does not associate with māyā, rather he remains fully spiritual.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- In the spiritual world all the association of the living entity is spiritual, therefore the eternal saṅga of the living entities in that state is desirable.
- The saṅga in the conditioned state of a living entity is polluted.
- That aṅga, being polluted with nescience in the form of association with nondevotees and women and attachment for family and assets, is unfavorable for one's advancement.
- Spiritual saṅga of the living entities is compatible, and mundane saṅga is incompatible.
- To get free from this incompatible saṅga is the living entity's liberation. Now we will be considering incompatible saṅga.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- First we will consider the association of nondevotees.
- Who is a nondevotee?
- Those who are not subordinate to the Lord are called nondevotees.
- The jñānīs are never subordinate to the Lord.
- They think that they can become one with the Lord on the strength of their knowledge.
- They think, "Jñāna is the topmost object; the Lord cannot keep one who attains jñāna under His control; the Lord became Supreme by the strength of this jñāna, and I too will become Supreme."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Therefore all the endeavors of the jñānīs are to become independent of the Lord.
- The Lord's power does not act on one who achieves liberation in the form of merging with the Lord, which is attained by jñāna.
- This is the attempt of the jñānīs!
- The jñānīs and mundane scholars do not depend on the mercy of the Lord.
- They try to achieve everything on the strength of their knowledge and reasoning, they do not care for the Lord's mercy.
- Therefore jñānīs are nondevotees.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Although some jñānīs accept devotional service as their process of sādhana, at the time of perfection they discard it.
- In all their activities there are no symptoms of eternal serving mood or subordination to the Lord.
- Such are the symptoms of the jñānī-sampradāya, or philosophical speculators.
- They only get a glimpse of real knowledge.
- That real knowledge is only a different aspect of pure devotional service.
- Only pure devotees, by the mercy of the Lord, can attain that.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructs Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.29) as follows:

**jñānī jīvan-mukta-daśā pāinu kari' māne
vastutaḥ buddhi 'śuddha' nahe kṛṣṇa-bhakti vine**

"There are many philosophical speculators [jñānīs] belonging to the Māyāvāda school who consider themselves liberated and call themselves Nārāyaṇa. But their intelligence is not purified unless they engage in Kṛṣṇa's devotional service."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Therefore those who are attached to philosophical speculation are counted amongst the nondevotees.
- There is a fruit called mukti, and that is the supreme goal of their sādhana.
- It is not the purpose of their life to attain the Lord's mercy through His service.
- People who have faith in fruitive rituals are not devotees. Therefore they are also nondevotees.
- If anyone performs karma in order to achieve the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, then that karma is called bhakti.
- That karma which yields mundane results or mundane knowledge is adverse to the Lord.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Karmis do not exclusively search for the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.
- Although they respect Kṛṣṇa, their main purpose is to attain some kind of happiness.
- Karma is nothing but selfish activities, therefore karmis are also called nondevotees.
- Yogis sometimes search for liberation, the fruit of jñāna, and sometimes they search for vibhūti, or opulence, the fruit of karma.
- Hence, they too are called nondevotees.
- Due to lack of full surrender, worshipers of the demigods are also called nondevotees.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Those who are attached to discussing dry logic are also adverse to the Lord.
- And what to speak of those who conclude that the Lord is only a figment of the imagination.
- Those who are attached to sense gratification and thus have no opportunity to remember the Lord are also counted among the nondevotees.
- If one associates with these nondevotees, then in a very short time one's intelligence is polluted and one's heart is overcome by their propensities.
- If anyone desires to attain pure devotional service, then he should carefully give up the association of non-devotees.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Second is association of women.
- Association with women is detrimental.
- In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.87) Śrī Caitanya instructs Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī as follows:
asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgī'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra

"A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- There are two types of Vaiṣṇavas-the householders and the renunciates.
- Renunciates are forbidden from speaking with any woman.
- By the instruction to give up the association with women, they have been forbidden from conversing with women.
- As stated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 2.120):

**kṣudra-jīva saba markāṭa-vairāgya kariyā
indriya carāṇā bule 'prakṛti' sambhāṣiyā“**

"There are many persons with little in their possession who accept the renounced order of life like monkeys. They go here and there engaging in sense gratification and speaking intimately with women."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Regarding Vaiṣṇavīs, the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 12.42) says:

**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."

- This is the prescription in regard to householder Vaiṣṇavas.
- Householders should not associate with others' wives or prostitutes.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- They should not indulge in any association other than with their own wives according to religious scriptures.
- One should give up the uxorious mentality of being excessively fond of one's wife.
- The instructions of the scriptures regarding the smārtas is given in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 15.27) as follows:

**na gṛhaṁ gṛham ity āhur
gṛhiṇī gṛham ucyate
tayā hi sahitaḥ sarvān
puruṣārthān samaśnute**

"Merely a house is not a home, for it is a wife who gives a home its meaning. If one lives at home with his wife, together they can fulfill all the interests of human life."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- There are four kinds of human interests for people in general-religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation.
- The prescriptions of the scriptures regarding varṇa and āśrama are called religion.
- Whatever is prohibited in the scriptures is called irreligion.
- A householder should follow all those prescriptions and give up all those prohibitions with the help of his wife.
- Whatever is achieved by following religious principles is called artha, economic development.
- Assets of the house, sons, daughters, cows, and animals are all artha.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- For enjoying those objects there is kāma.
- Dharma, artha, and kāma-these three are called trivarga, the pursuits of human life.
- Practicing these three vargas is the life of a conditioned living entity who is wandering in the cycle of fruitive activities.
- It is the duty of the smārta householder to practice trivarga with one's wife.
- A householder should practice trivarga with his wife day and night.
- The wife can accompany one while visiting holy places.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Until one endeavors for the supreme goal of life, what else is there except pursuing trivarga?
- Liberation is the living entities' fourth human interest.
- There are two types of liberation-relief from extreme distress and attaining spiritual happiness.
- Those whose religious lives are regulated by dry knowledge or impersonalism, for them relief from extreme distress is the prime goal.
- Those whose hearts are filled with pure knowledge ultimately search for transcendental happiness and do not remain bound in simply gaining relief from extreme distress.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- A Vaiṣṇava, whether a householder or a renunciate, is desirous of transcendental happiness.
- A householder Vaiṣṇava always works together with his wife with the aim of achieving transcendental happiness.
- Although engaged in all work in this way, he never becomes uxorious.
- In this way he remains free from women's association throughout his life.
- He totally gives up illicit intimate speaking with women and the mundane uxorious mood in licit association with his wife.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.9-10, 13-14), Sūta Gosvāmī has briefly explained the rules for a gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava as follows:

**dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ**

"All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, according to sages, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

kāmasya nendriya-prītir
lābho jīveta yāvatā
jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā
nārtho yaś ceha karmabhiḥ

"Life's desires should never be directed toward sense gratification. One should desire only a healthy life, or self-preservation, since a human being is meant for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Nothing else should be the goal of one's works."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā
varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya
samsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam

"O best among the twice-born, it is therefore concluded that the highest perfection one can achieve by discharging the duties prescribed for one's own occupation according to caste divisions and orders of life is to please the Personality of Godhead."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

tasmād ekena manasā
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca
dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā

"Therefore, with one-pointed attention, one should constantly hear about, glorify, remember and worship the Personality of Godhead, who is the protector of the devotees."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- The purport is that in twenty religious scriptures there are mainly instructions about trivarga.
- For the welfare of the karmis, the merciful sages have composed twenty religious scriptures that are suitable for karmis.
- In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9) it is said:

**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**

"As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ, one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- For the karmis mentioned by the Lord in this verse, trivarga is the only prescribed occupation.
- Those who have become indifferent and attained jñāna, for them there is no longer a need for trivarga activities.
- They give up those activities and become eligible for sannyāsa with dry knowledge.
- Those who are faithful in hearing the topics of the Lord after receiving His mercy on the strength of their accumulated pious activities from many lifetimes are no longer attached to karma.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- They are called Vaiṣṇavas.
- Among them, those who are gṛhasthas enjoy whatever artha they obtain while practicing dharma for the purpose of liberation, not for the purpose of sense gratification; rather, this artha helps them purely maintain their lives in the favorable cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the purpose of understanding the Absolute Truth.
- In this, the difference between karma and spiritual activities can be seen.
- Therefore, to attain the mercy of the Lord, a gṛhastha Vaiṣṇava should accept the divisions of varṇāśrama and along with his wife practice dharma , artha, kāma, and mokṣa in order to maintain his life.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Whenever his house becomes unfavorable for this purpose, he should give it up out of disgust.
- Thus by properly performing the activities of trivarga, the gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava's character becomes pure.
- With such pure characteristics, he should hear, chant, and remember the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord with full surrender.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- The wife should also always endeavor for spiritual perfection with the help of subordinate women such as her sister and daughter.
- There is no illicit conduct in this, so there will not be any association with women.
- Therefore, whether one is a householder or a renunciate-all practitioners should totally give up the association with women.
- The devotees should carefully give up the above mentioned saṅga in the form of association.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Now let us consider saṅga in the form of attachment.
- Attachments are of two kinds-attachment for prejudices and attachment for assets.
- First I will discuss the attachment for prejudices.
- There are two types of prejudice-ancient and current.
- The conditioned living entity has been performing fruitive activities and endeavoring for knowledge since time immemorial, and the prejudices that have developed in his subtle body as a result are called ancient prejudices.
- Those prejudices are known as one's nature.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā (5.14):
**na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi
lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karma-phala-samyogam
svabhāvas tu pravartate**

"The embodied spirit, master of the city of his body, does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he create the fruits of action. All this is enacted by the modes of material nature."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments: anādi pravṛttā pradhāna vāsanātra svabhāva śabdenokta-prādhānika dehādīmān jīvaḥ kārayitā karttā ceti na viviktasya tattvam iti
- "The primordial material desire that is active since time immemorial is called one's nature. Due to such a desire the living entity is supplied with material bodies and other paraphenelia. False identification with the bodies causes one to act and causes others to act, although this is not the pure soul's real constitution or nature."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Again from the Bhagavad-gītā (18.60):
svabhāva-jena kaunteya
nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yan mohāt
kariṣyasy avaśo 'pi tat

"Under illusion you are now declining to act according to My direction. But, compelled by the work born of your own nature, you will act all the same, O son of Kuntī."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Regarding the bondage of the prejudice of knowledge, the Bhagavad-gītā (14.6) says:

**tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt
prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti
jñāna-saṅgena cānagha**

"O sinless one, the mode of goodness, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode become conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments: 'jñāny ahaṁ,' 'sukhy aham' ity abhimānas tena puruṣaṁ nibadhnati
- "'I am wise.' 'I am happy.' By this pride, the living entity is bound by goodness."
- People's association with karma and jñāna is the result of attachment born from the prejudices of one's nature that are produced from past karma and jñāna.
- In the previous verse, the Māyāvādī's bondage of jñāna is displayed.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Regarding the karmis, the Bhagavad-gītā (3.26) says:

**na buddhi-bhedam janayed
ajñānām karma-saṅginām
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi
vidvān yuktaḥ samācāran**

"So as not to disrupt the minds of ignorant men attached to the fruitive results of prescribed duties, a learned person should not induce them to stop work. Rather, by working in the spirit of devotion, he should engage them in all sorts of activities [for the gradual development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness]."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- From ancient prejudices one develops association with karma and jñāna.
- Association with these ancient prejudices is inevitable.
- Despite all attempts, up to suicide, one cannot give up one's prejudices.
- The prejudices or attachments for good and bad attained in this life due to association are called modern prejudices.
- Everyone in the world is under the control of these two kinds of prejudices.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- When a living entity is not bound by māyā, then by nature he is a servant of Kṛṣṇa.
- Being bound by māyā, a living entity cannot give up ancient and modern wicked prejudices.
- At that time ancient wicked prejudices become his second nature.
- Only sādhu-saṅga can reform the attachment to prejudices.
- Sādhu-saṅga is the only remedy for this disease.
- Unless one reforms his attachment to prejudices, one cannot attain perfection in devotional service by any means.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Due to association with materialistic people, the living entity is bound in the cycle of birth and death.
- Even if one unknowingly associates with a materialist, the result must come.
- And if one unknowingly associates with a real sadhu, he attains freedom from material association.
- Again in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.12.1-2) it says:

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

na rodhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā

vratāni yajñas chandāmsi tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām

The Supreme Lord said: O Uddhava! Only by associating with my pure devotees (**sat-saṅgaḥ**) one can destroy material attachment (**sarva-saṅgāpaho**) and attain me (**yathā mām avarundhe**). One cannot attain me (**na mām rodhayati**) by aṣṭāṅga-yoga (**yogo**), distinction of ātmā from body (**na sāṅkhyam**), practice of nonviolence (**dharma eva ca**), study of the Vedas (**na svādhyāyah**), austerity, sannyasa (**tapas tyāgo**), sacrifices, charitable projects, donations (**neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā**), vows, worship of devatās, secret mantras (**vratāni yajñas chandāmsi**), holy places, or observing prohibitions and rules (**tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ**).

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Association with prejudices is very dangerous.
- By affectionately associating with pure devotees of the Lord, one's association with prejudices, in the form of karma and jñāna, is destroyed.
- Due to this association with prejudices a living entity's propensity for ignorance and passion becomes stronger.
- Whatever propensities for goodness, passion, and ignorance are seen in people's eating, sleeping, and sensual activities are all due to association with prejudices.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Karmis and jñānīs disrespect Vaiṣṇavas only due to this attachment for prejudices.
- Until the attachment to prejudices is destroyed, the ten offenses in chanting will not be uprooted.
- Offenses at the feet of sadhus is due to being proud of one's karma and jñāna.
- The offense in chanting in the form of blaspheming devotees enters the heart of the nondevotee and takes up residence there.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Worldly attachment is contrary to acceptance of Kṛṣṇa's undisputed supremacy, and it therefore does not allow the unfortunate living entity to fully surrender to the Lord.
- Thus disobeying the spiritual master, blaspheming the Vedic literatures, interpreting the holy name, considering the chanting of the holy names as equal to the pious activities offered in the Vedas, committing sinful activities while pretending to chant the holy name, aversion due to conceptions of I and mine, selling the holy names to unfit persons-all these offenses against the holy names continue.
- In such a condition, how can one be benefitted?

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Therefore it is said:

asadbhiḥ saha saṅgas tu
na kartavyaḥ kadācana
yasmāt sarvārtha hāniḥ syād
adhaḥ pātaś ca jāyate

"One should never associate with materialistic persons, for by doing so all one's assets are lost and he falls from his position."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- It has been seen that many fortunate souls have given up attachment for prejudices by the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas.
- From the scriptures it is well known that by the association of Śrī Nārada Muni the hunter (Mṛgāri) and Ratnākara (Vālmīki) attained auspiciousness.
- The foremost instruction of Śrī Rāmānujācārya is this: "If you cannot purify yourself by any endeavor whatsoever, then just go sit with the Vaiṣṇavas and you will achieve all auspiciousness."
- By observing the pure characteristics of a devotee, in a very short time a person's mind is changed, his attachment for sense enjoyment decreases, and the seedling of bhakti sprouts in the heart.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- One even gradually develops a taste for the Vaiṣṇavas' food and behavior.
- We have seen how by associating with Vaiṣṇavas, people have given up many anarthas-taste for associating with women, thirst for wealth, desire for sense enjoyment and liberation, inclination for karma and jñāna, eating meat and fish, drinking wine, smoking tobacco, and the desire to chew pan.
- By observing a Vaiṣṇava's quality of not uselessly wasting time, many people have easily given up anarthas such as laziness, oversleeping, useless talk, urge of speech, etc.
- We have also seen that by associating with Vaiṣṇavas for some time someone's cheating propensity and desire for fame have been destroyed.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- We have seen with our own eyes that by associating with Vaiṣṇavas with a little affection all other association, such as attachment for prejudices, has been vanquished.
- Those who are attached to winning fights, those who are expert at attaining dominion, those who are eager to accumulate great wealth-all such types of people have attained devotional service by being purified in the association of Vaiṣṇavas.
- Even the hearts of persons who think, "I will defeat the world by my arguments and attain supremacy," have been pacified.
- Without the association of Vaiṣṇavas there is no alternative for rectifying the attachment for prejudices.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- One should carefully give up attachment for material assets.
- People in general have spontaneous attachment for house, household paraphernalia, clothes, ornaments, wealth, wife and children's health, their own health, eatables, trees, and animals.
- Some people are so addicted to smoking, chewing pan, eating fish and meat, and drinking alcohol that their practice of spiritual life is obstructed.
- Many people do not respect the Lord's remnants out of great attachment to eating things like fish.
- Because of the desire to constantly smoke, many people's study of devotional scriptures, relish for hearing and chanting, and remaining long in temples is obstructed.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Attachment for these things is averse to the constant practice of devotional service.
- If one does not carefully give up these things then he cannot get happiness from his devotional service.
- Attachment for these things is easily destroyed by the association of devotees.
- Still, one should try to destroy these petty attachments by fully engaging in devotional service.
- By observing vows approved in devotional service, those attachments are vanquished.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- By properly observing hari-vāsara, Ekādaśī, and appearance days of the Lord, those attachments are vanquished.
- The rules of such vows are the provisions for diminishing one's attachments.
- There are prescriptions for practicing devotional service while giving up all types of enjoyment on those days.
- There are two types of eatables-those which sustain one's life and those which gratify the senses.
- Eating grains and drinking are life sustaining.
- Fish, meat, pan, intoxicants, and smoking are all for gratifying the senses.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- On days of vows, unless one totally gives up sense gratifying items, it is not a vow.
- As far as possible, life sustaining items should also be given up.
- According to the prescribed needs of one's bodily condition one must try as far as possible to reduce the acceptance of life sustaining eatables.
- There is no prescription for acceptance of sense gratifying items, the only prescription is to reject them.
- One of the limbs of a vrata is to diminish the devotee's propensity for enjoyment.
- If one thinks, "Today somehow or other I will renounce, but tomorrow I will enjoy profusely," then the purpose of the vow will not be successful.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- The reason is that vows have been prescribed to give up the association of such items by gradual practice.
- Vows are usually for three days.
- First by practicing vows for three days, then by practicing for one month, then by practicing for four months (Cāturmāsya)-in this way gradually one should completely uproot the attachment for sense gratifying items and leave them forever.
- For those who cannot remember the statements of Bhagavad-gītā: kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā "He quickly becomes righteous," in regard to the observance of vows, their renunciation is temporary like the bathing of an elephant.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- For those who desire to attain pure devotional service, the association of nondevotees and women is meant to be given up.
- It is extremely necessary for them to associate with sadhus in order to give up the attachment for prejudices.
- They must follow all vows meant for Vaiṣṇavas in order to give up the attachment for material objects. One should not be negligent in these practices.
- One should follow these instructions with great care and respect. If one does not follow carefully, then cheating in the form of duplicity renders the whole endeavor useless.
- For those who do not have respect in this regard, attaining devotion to Śrī Hari becomes very rare, even after hearing for many births.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- What is association and giving up association?
- Many people have doubts about this.
- Doubts may be there, because if just by coming close to a materialist or material object is consider associating with them, then there is no way to give up this association.
- As long as the material body is there, how can one give up the proximity of these things?
- How can a gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava give up his family members?

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- One cannot give up the association of deceitful persons, even if they are renunciates.
- One will have to come across materialists in one's life, whether one is a gr̥hastha or a renunciate. Therefore the limit for giving up the association of materialists is prescribed in Śrī Upadeśāmṛta as follows:

**dadāti pratigr̥hṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
ṣaḍ-vidham prīti-lakṣaṇam**

"Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting prasādam and offering prasādam are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another."

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- O sādhakas! One must accept proximity with both bad and good people as one passes his life.
- This equally applies to householders and renunciates.
- Proximity must be there, nevertheless one should not engage in bad association.
- Giving in charity, accepting charity, revealing one's mind, hearing one's mind, accepting foods, and giving foods-if done with love, these are called saṅga, or association.
- Giving some foodstuffs to a hungry person and accepting some charity from a pious man is done out of duty, not out of love.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Even if they are materialists, this type of engagement is not considered association.
- But if they are pure devotees, then such activities are performed out of love.
- When acts are performed out of love, then it is association.
- Therefore giving charity to pure Vaiṣṇavas and accepting items or wealth from them becomes sat-saṅga.
- Giving charity to a materialist or accepting charity from one, if done out of love, becomes asat-saṅga.
- When a materialist approaches you, whatever is required to be done should be done only out of duty.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- One should not speak confidentially with a materialist.
- Generally there is some love involved in confidential speaking, therefore it is association.
- While meeting a materialistic friend, one should speak only what is extremely necessary.
- At that time it is better not to exhibit heartfelt love.
- But if that friend is a proper Vaiṣṇava, then one should accept his association by speaking to him with love.
- This type of behavior with relatives and friends creates no hostility.
- There is no association in ordinary talk.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- One should behave with ordinary people as one externally behaves with a stranger while buying something in the market.
- The same dealings with a pure devotee of the Lord should be done out of love.
- If one is obliged to feed hungry people, needy people, and teachers, he should do so as a host dutifully cares for his guest, there is no need to exhibit love.
- Care for them, but not out of love.
- One should feed pure Vaiṣṇavas with love, and when required accept the remnants given by them with love.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- If one can behave in this way while giving in charity, accepting charity, speaking confidentially, hearing confidentially, feeding, and accepting food with one's wife, children, servants, maidservants, strangers, and whoever else one meets, there will be no unholy association, only good association.
- There is no hope of achieving devotion to Kṛṣṇa until one gives up unholy association in this way.
- A renunciate Vaiṣṇava should accept whatever alms he receives by mādhuḱarī, or begging, at the house of a honest householder with the above mentioned consideration.
- He should always remember the difference between gross begging and mādhuḱarī.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- A gr̥hastha Vaiṣṇava should accept prasāda-grains and drinks-in the house of another gr̥hastha who has pure character.
- One should always be cautious about taking prasāda in the house of a nondevotee and one with bad character.
- There is no need to speak further about this.
- Due to their pious activities, those who have developed faith in devotional service have a little intelligence by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the association of nondevotees

- Due to that intelligence they can easily understand the essence of the ācāryas' instructions.
- Therefore only a few words are needed to instruct them.
- Those who have no pious credits have no faith.
- Even if they are given volumes of instruction, they will not understand a thing.
- Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given only a few words of instruction in Śrī Upadeśāmṛta.