

Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

5. *Jana-saṅga* - Association
with worldly-minded persons

The word jana means both male and female human beings.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: sadho saṅgaḥ svato vare, "a devotee should associate with devotees who are more advanced."

Conditioned.

Generally the practicing devotees are superior to karmis and jñānīs in all respects.

→ No conditioning.

In the Bhagavad-gītā (7.28) it is said:

yeṣāṃ tv anta-gataṃ pāpaṃ
janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā
bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ

But those whose sins have been destroyed (yeṣāṃ janānāṃ
tv anta-gataṃ pāpaṃ) by acts pleasing to the great souls
(puṇya-karmaṇām), who are free of the ignorance arising
from duality (te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā), worship Me with
determination (bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ).

Therefore devotees are naturally (pure) → Faith.

Conditioning.

They may lack
the capacity to
always follow their
ideal standard

(They have a very clear understanding
of activities which are favourable &
unfavourable for bhakti.)

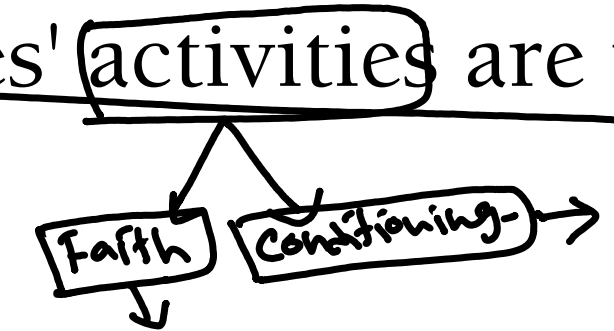
There is no possibility for them to commit sin.

They are not less intelligent like the karmis and jñānīs,
because they have taken shelter at the lotus feet of the
omniscient Supreme Lord.

Faith in the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa is achieved as a
result of many lifetimes of pious activities. → Aṅketa (Sukṛti)

So there is no doubt that the devotees' activities are pure.

A n, phalbhakti activity performed by a sādhu
is with pure faith only. → But the pure act is
a byproduct of his intense conditionality.



From faith, the desire to associate with devotees naturally arises.

Shradhā → Sādhu saṅga

By associating with devotees, everything is achieved.

The glories of sādhu-saṅga is mentioned in the Ādi Purāna as follows:

ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktāś ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās
te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ

Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, "Those who are My direct devotees (ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha) are actually not My devotees (na me bhaktāś ca te janāḥ), but those who are the devotees of My servant (mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās) are factually My devotees (te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ)."

Regarding the need to associate with devotees, it is said:

darśana sparśanālāpa
sahavāsādibhiḥ kṣaṇāt
bhaktāḥ punanti kṛṣṇasya
sākṣād api ca pukkaśam

"Even an outcaste (pukkaśam api) becomes completely pure (punanti) by seeing, touching, conversing with (darśana sparśana ālāpa), or living with (saha vāsādibhiḥ) Kṛṣṇa's devotee (kṛṣṇasya bhaktāḥ sākṣād) for even a moment (kṣaṇāt)."

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.32) states:

naiṣām matis tāvad urukramānghrim
sprśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthah
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat

As long as their intelligence (yāvat matis) does not accept (na vṛṇīta) the dust from the feet (pāda-rajo-abhiṣekaṁ) of devotees (mahīyasām) having no material desires (niṣkiñcanānām), the intelligence of these people (eṣām matis) will not realize the lotus feet of the Lord (sprśaty tāvad urukrama anghrim), whose secondary goal (yad-arthah) is destruction of saṁsāra (anartha apagamah).

The scriptures often state that without the association of the Lord's devotees, Bhaktidevi does not manifest in the heart.

It is most necessary for sādhakas to associate with devotees.

Therefore, in this context, the word jana-saṅga is understood to mean persons who are devoid of devotion.

That is why Śrīla Rūpa Prabhu has included the instruction to give up worldly association as one of the limbs of devotional service.

In the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.43) it is said:

saṅga tyāgo vidureṇa bhagavad vimukhair janaiḥ

"One who desires to attain devotion to Kṛṣṇa should carefully give up the association of worldly people."

That means the devotees should not engage in the activities mentioned in the fourth verse of the Upadeśāmṛta with worldly people.

Defining Sangha

Sangha means →

Prīti (affection)
↓
bhāṣati — pralobhāṭi
gūḍha ākhyati — pralobhāṭi
bhunkte — bhojyate

Activities like talking with worldly people in the course of one's work is not considered association.

When the same activities are done with affection for someone, then that is considered association with that person.

Every practicing devotee should know the various kinds of worldly people.

Therefore we are hereby most unwillingly enumerating these people.

These worldly people are of seven kinds: (1) Māyāvādīs and atheists, (2) sense enjoyers, (3) those who fond of the sense enjoyers, (4) women, (5) womanizers, (6) the hypocritically devout, and (7) the ill-behaved foolish outcastes.

1. Mayavadis and Atheists: The Māyāvādīs do not accept the eternal name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

They consider the living entity as a product of māyā; therefore in their opinion the living entity has no eternal existence.

They do not consider devotional service eternal; rather, they consider it a temporary method to cultivate knowledge.

All the Māyāvādī conclusions are opposed to the principles of devotional service.

Therefore by associating with Māyāvādīs, one's devotion gradually disappears.

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara gave the following instruction in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 2.94-95):

buddhi bhraṣṭa haila tomāra gopālera saṅge
māyāvāda śunibāre upajila raṅge
vaiṣṇava hañā yebā śārīraka-bhāṣya śune
sevya-sevaka-bhāva chāḍi' āpanāre 'īśvara' mane

"You have lost your intelligence in the association of Gopāla, and therefore you are eager to hear the Māyāvāda philosophy. When a Vaiṣṇava listens to the Śārīraka-bhāṣya, the Māyāvāda commentary upon the Vedānta-sūtras, he gives up the Kṛṣṇa conscious attitude that the Lord is the master and the living entity is His servant. Instead, he considers himself the Supreme Lord."

Those who do not accept the Supreme Lord, who is glorified by the Vedas, are called nāstikas, or atheists.

Their minds have been polluted by false arguments; therefore one's devotion is lost in their association.

2. Sense Enjoyers: Association with sense enjoyers is harmful.

Those who are always busy associating with sense enjoyment are filled with blasphemy, envy, and violence.

Quarrel, argument, and hankering for sense enjoyment is their life.

The more they enjoy, the more their thirst for sense enjoyment increases.

The sense enjoyers do not get time to speak or hear topics of Kṛṣṇa.

Whether they engage in pious activities or sinful activities, the sense enjoyers always remain far from knowledge of the self.

Therefore in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 6.278) Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said:

viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana
malina mana haile nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa

"When one eats food offered by a materialistic man, one's mind becomes contaminated, and when the mind is contaminated, one is unable to think of Kṛṣṇa properly."

Those persons who externally engage in sensual activities and accept sense objects just to maintain body and soul together but internally engage in their constitutional position as servants of Kṛṣṇa are not counted amongst the sense enjoyers, who are attached the fruits of their activities.

The sense enjoyers and persons fond of sense enjoyers are both worldly-minded.

3. Persons who are fond of Sense Enjoyers: Persons who are fond of sense enjoyers are themselves also sense enjoyers, because they always think of sense enjoyment within their hearts.

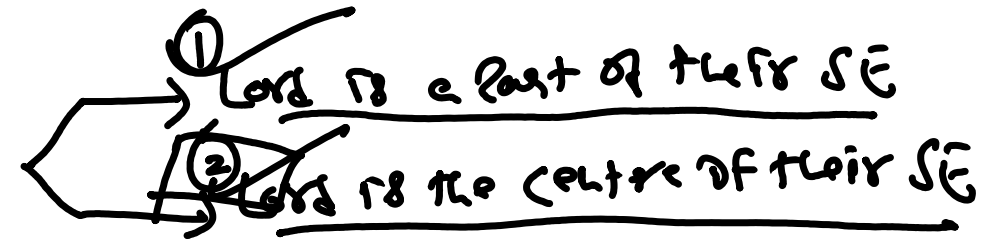
There are some people who are not themselves sense enjoyers, but they take pleasure in associating with sense enjoyers.

Their association should also be renounced, because they will soon become sense enjoyers and bad association themselves.

Sense enjoyers
→ Materialistic sense enjoyers ~~enjoyers~~
→ Devotees who are attached to sense enjoyment.

There are two types of sense enjoyers—those who are extremely attached to sense enjoyment and devotees who are attached to sense enjoyment.

Associating with those who are extremely attached should be totally rejected.

Devotees attached to SE 

① Lord is a part of their SE

② Lord is the centre of their SE

The devotees who are attached to sense enjoyment are also of two types—those who have included the Lord as a part of their sense enjoyment and those who have kept the Lord in the center of their sense enjoyment.

Association with the latter type is preferable to association with the former.

Although those who engage in sense enjoyment according to religious codes are better than the sinful sense enjoyers, still the practicing devotee should not associate with them until they become devotees.

Simply by wearing the dress of a renunciate one does not become a devotee free from sense gratification, because renunciates often collect and save objects of sense enjoyment.

On the other hand, many persons resemble sense enjoyers but utilize everything in the worship of Lord Hari in the mood of detachment.

Considering all this, the practicing devotee should give up the association of sense enjoyers and those fond of them and engage in devotional service in a secluded place or, if he is fortunate, in the association of genuine devotees.