

Six Qualities that Enhance Bhakti

11. Sangha Tyaga - Giving up the
association of nondevotees

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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.

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.

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



dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsah
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah
kāmāt 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 (kāmāt krodhah abhijāyate).

krodhād bhavati sammohah
sammohāt smṛti-vibhramah
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo
buddhi-nāśāt praṇāśyati

Memory, about steps
for overcoming attachment

What is right & what is wrong.

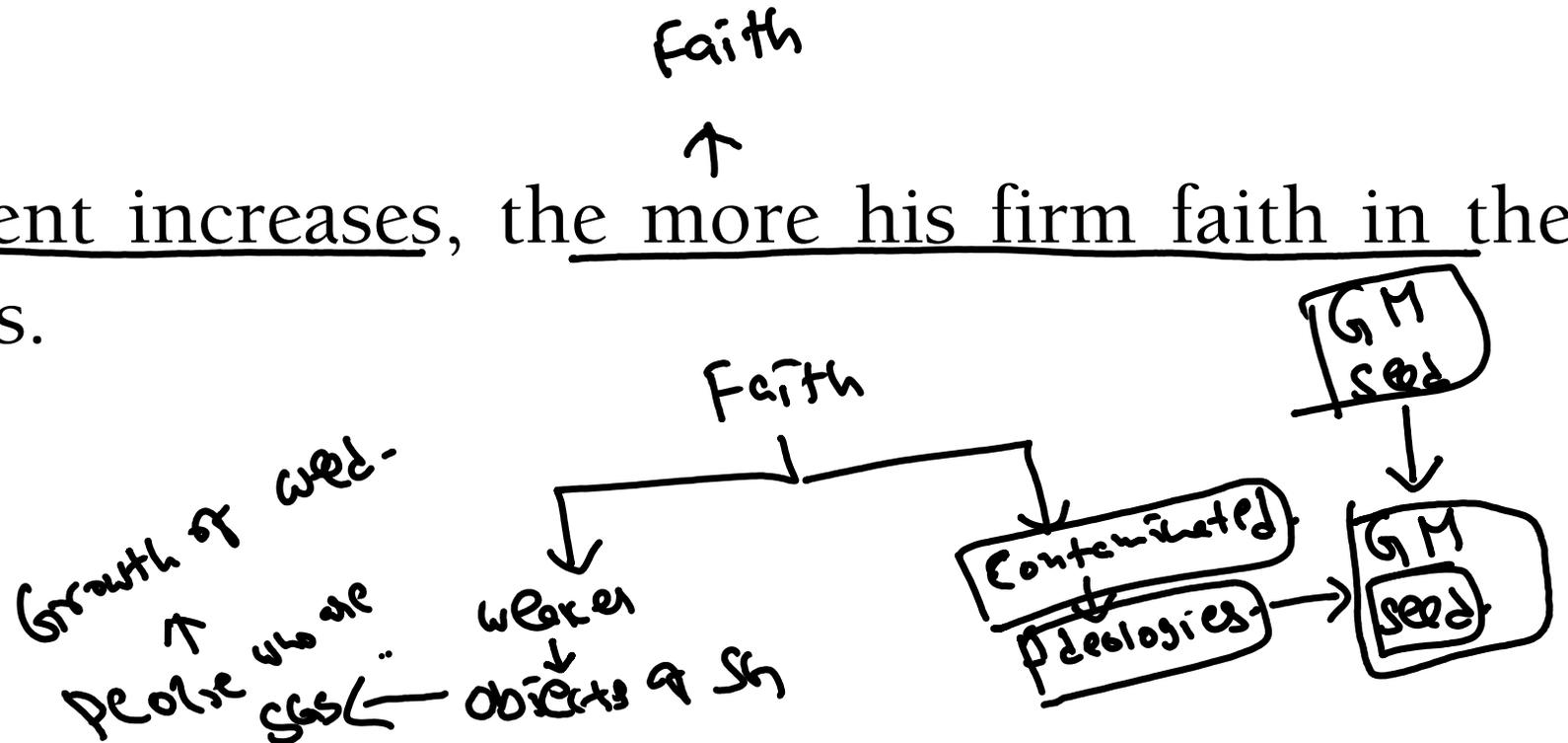
From anger arises bewilderment (krodhād bhavati sammohah).
From bewilderment comes loss of memory (sammohāt smṛti-vibhramah).
From loss of memory comes loss of intelligence (smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo).
From loss of intelligence one becomes completely destroyed (buddhi-nāśāt praṇāśyati).

Loss of determination.

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.

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.

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.

- ① māyā-vēda
- ② De hi God worship (Bhakti)

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."

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.

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.

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

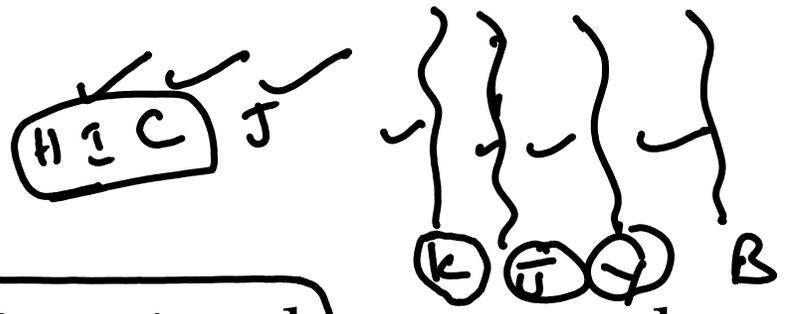
jñānī jīvan-mukta-daśā pāṇu kari' māne
vastutaḥ buddhi 'śuddha' nahe kṛṣṇa-bhakti vine

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

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 non devotees.

If anyone performs karma in order to achieve the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, then that karma is called bhakti.

① & 2°

activities which are favourable for bhakti
→ 2° limbs of bhakti

That karma which yields mundane results or mundane knowledge is adverse to the Lord.

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.

Those who are attached to discussing dry logic are also adverse to the Lord.

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ইদেওলজি

And what to speak of those who conclude that the Lord is only a figment of the imagination.

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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.

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."

There are two types of Vaisnavas-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 carāñā 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."

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.

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 gr̥ham gr̥ham ity āhur
gr̥hiṇī gr̥ham ucyate
tayā hi sahitaḥ sarvān
puruṣārthān samaśnute

"Merely a house is not a home (na gr̥ham gr̥ham ity āhur), for it is a
wife who gives a home its meaning (gr̥hiṇī gr̥ham ucyate). If one
lives at home with his wife (tayā hi sahitaḥ), together they can fulfill
all the interests of human life (sarvān puruṣārthān samaśnute)."

There are four kinds of human interests for people in general-
religiousity, 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.

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.

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.

Sāyujya mukti

↓ prove

Those whose religious lives are regulated by dry knowledge or impersonalism, for them relief from extreme distress is the prime goal.

devotees

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.

A Vaiṣṇava, whether a householder or a renunciate, is desirous of transcendental happiness.

A householder Vaisnava 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.

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