

## **Bhaktyaloka Essay 5**

### **Jana-saṅga**

**Association with worldly-minded persons**

### **Position of a devotee**

**The practicing devotees are superior to karmis and jnanis in all respects.**

**The faith of the devotees is pure.**

**They try their best to accept things favourable for their devotional service and reject things unfavourable for their spiritual progress.**

**(But sometimes they may fall prey to their conditionings.)**

## Glories of association of devotees

Srila Rūpa Gosvāmi writes in BRS : sadho sangah svato vare, "a devotee should associate with devotees who are more advanced."

krishna says , "Those who are My direct devotees are actually not My devotees, but those who are the devotees of My servant are factually My devotees."

Adi  
Purāṇa

Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord.

ŚB  
7.5.32

### Taking bath in the dust of lotus feet of the devotees:

1. Understand one's helpless dependence on devotees.
2. Be willing to serve them, hear from them and take their guidance.

It is most necessary for sādhakas to associate with devotees.

**Like-mindedness (sajatiyasaye snigdhe  
sadho sangah svato vare)**

**What do we mean by like mindedness at different stages?**

1. A devotee (any sampradaya)
2. Devotee of same parampara
3. Appreciation for same limbs of service  
or  
shares the same definition of success in devotional service
4. Raganuga sadhana - devotees aspiring for same rasa of relationship with Krishna.



**Definition of like-mindedness will change according to the level of our advancement and we have to calibrate our definition of like mindedness according to what is available for us - a beggar can not be choicer!**

**Q: Case of chhota haridas. Should we associate with such devotees who have such conditionings?**

**A: What if other devotees see our conditioning and decide to not associate with us?!**

**We may not try to take association and nourishment from their association but we have to be there for them to support them and encourage them.**

**Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had the responsibility to set the right standards.**

**But the whole vaishnava community came together to support Chhota haridas and Kala Krishna das.**

**If the devotees don't support struggling sadhakas, then who will support!**

**So we must try to support devotees to our best capacity!**



## What is sanga?

Sanga means relationship involving the 6 exchanges as given in NOI verse 4.

These 6 exchanges allow the flow of emotions between 2 people.

Sanga: conscious endeavour from the individual side to enhance the quality of relationship between individuals.

### Favourable sanga/sat-sanga

having the 6 exchanges with eagerness with devotees

If we are staying with devotees but doing just the needful that is not considered sadhu sanga.

### Non- favourable sanga /asat-sanga

having the 6 exchanges with eagerness with worldly people

If you are just doing the needful (in a work environment or so), it is not asat sanga.

The exchanges with devotees should be meaningful and not meaningless.

Heart transforming association can happen only when these 6 exchanges happen with affection!

## Jana-sanga

Jana-sanga is understood to mean persons who are devoid of devotion.

NOI Verse 2 and 3 advise on abstaining from jana sanga. One of the 64 limbs of bhakti also does so.

These worldly people are of seven kinds:

1. Mäyävädīs and atheists
2. sense enjoyers
3. those who are fond of the sense enjoyers
4. women
5. womanizers
6. the hypocritically devout
7. the ill-behaved foolish outcastes

## Mayavadis and Atheist

Mayavadis :

1. do not accept the eternal name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Supreme Lord
2. consider the living entity as a product of mäyā
3. do not consider devotional service eternal

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

Nāstikas or atheists: Those who do not accept the Supreme Lord.

The problem with associating with them or such organisations is that we borrow their value systems and start seeing devotees with that borrowed value system.

We have borrowed their definition of advancement so we start judging devotees and leave their association and offend them thus ending up losing faith in bhakti.

What to do if such ideologies exist in our family?

Not a big problem! We may have affection for that person but not affiliation to his ideology. They can be our role models but for different things. Like our father can be our role model in how he provides for the family, how he takes the responsibility, etc. whereas we can have someone else in the family as our role model for devotional service.

But association with such organisations is dangerous!



We are against deviant ideologies but not against any religions

Our acharyas starting from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. they have been against deviant ideologies but they never took any strict stance against any religion.

Our acharyas never spoke in terms of pro hindu, anti- muslim, anti-christian...

They were opposed against ideologies even if that ideology exists in hinduism (Mayavadis fall within the category of hindus only).

Pure devotional principles exist in other religions also. Deviant ideologies exist like mayavad etc also exist in other religions.

### Sense Enjoyers

#### Why should their association be avoided?

Because it removes the guilt from our temptations.

When we see someone enjoying something that is forbidden then our own guilt for indulging in that forbidden activity becomes very low and we may ourselves start freely enjoying that thing.

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

Because if they don't blaspheme those who are not indulging then there will not be a significant validation for what they are doing.

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

Because they are busy in sense enjoyment : whether pious sense enjoyment or sinful sense enjoyment.

One way of associating with them is to accept food cooked by them or offered by them.

viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana  
malina mana haile nahe kṣṣṇera  
smaṛaṇa

CC Antya  
6.278

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 Krishna are not counted amongst the sense enjoyers.

Just because someone has many facilities and objects of enjoyments , does not mean they are sense enjoyers.  
Example: Prataparudra maharaja

## Persons who are fond of Sense Enjoyers

If we appreciate them that is worldly mindedness. Because we are not able to differentiate between what is good and what is bad.

If we don't see it as bad then when we get an opportunity, we would not think twice before indulging in the same activity.

The only thing that is differentiating me and them is that they are having an opportunity to enjoy whereas we don't have that opportunity.

2 types of sense enjoyers:

Type 1:  
Materialistic sense enjoyers

Type 1 must be totally rejected!

They are very clear on what they want to enjoy. They will use Lord to validate their sense enjoyment. Whatever I want to eat, I will purchase from outside, offer to Krishna and eat. I offered it anyway!

In this case, Lord is seen as a purifying factor rather than a person who must be served.

Type 2:  
Devotees attached to sense enjoyment

Those who have included the Lord as a part of their sense enjoyment

Those who have kept the Lord in the center of their sense enjoyment

He wants to live a comfortable life in a good house but in that house he has given the best place for the Supreme Lord. And best food is cooked for the Lord and Lord gets his bhoga at the right time everyday and the devotee partakes of the remnants of Lord.

Associating with this type of devotees is better.



### How to be non-judgemental?

1. Learn to give benefit of doubt. The devotee is convinced of not doing it but succumbed to it unwillingly.

2. He is attached to eating chocolates and I am attached to so many other things which are not favourable for my KC. And the way I am going to deal with him - in a judgmental or non judgmental way, that is exactly how people will treat me for my attachments..

If I am trying to be understanding and trying to be non -judgmental and willing to give the other person benefit of doubt, then I can expect the same when I am struggling.

Simply by wearing the dress of a renunciate one does not become a devotee free from sense gratification.

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

Example: Dhanurdas (Ramanujacharya used him to teach a lesson to his brahmachari disciples)

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.