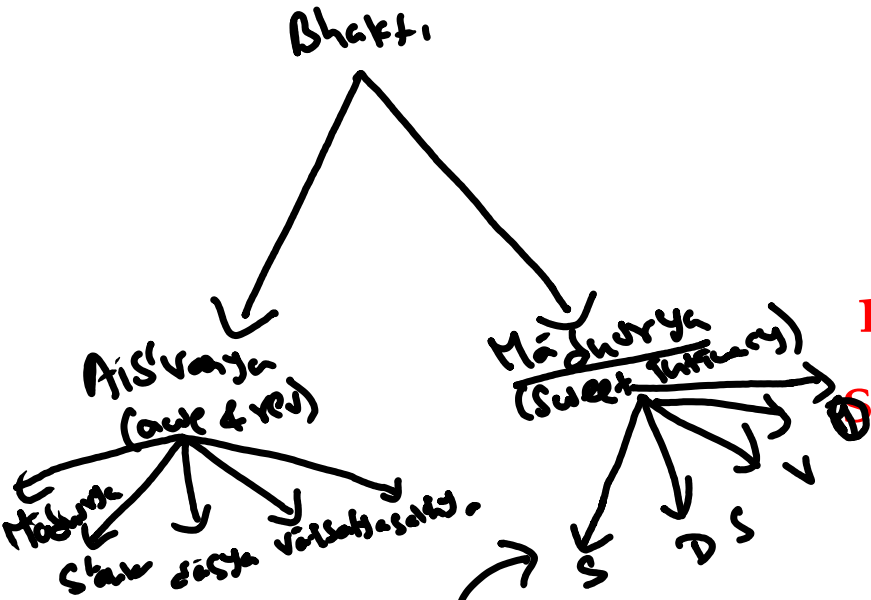


# Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

Niyamāgraha → Niyama + agraha → reject + wht usually absorbed only in the rule + not in the presence.  
→ Niyama + (agraha) → rule

4. Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

# Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations



jñāna-niṣṭho virakto vā  
mad-bhakto vānapekṣakah  
sa-lingān āśramāms tyaktvā  
cared avidhi-gocarah

"A learned transcendentalist dedicated to the cultivation of knowledge (jñāna-niṣṭhah) and thus detached from external objects (virakto vā), or My devotee (mad-bhakto vā) who is detached even from desire for liberation (ānapekṣakah) - both neglect those duties based on external rituals or paraphernalia (sa-lingān āśramāms tyaktvā). Thus their conduct is beyond the range of rules and regulations (avidhi-gocarah)."

↓ rules & regulations of VA

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of,  
rules and regulations

ekāntitām gatānāntu  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇābjayoḥ  
bhaktiḥ svataḥ pravartteta  
tad vighnaiḥ kiṁ vratādibhiḥ

"When one becomes a pure devotee of the Lord (ekāntitām gatānām tu), then devotion (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇābjayoḥ bhaktiḥ) is spontaneously established in his heart (svataḥ pravartteta). What then is the need to observe rituals (kiṁ vratādibhiḥ) that simply obstruct one's devotional service (tad vighnaiḥ)?"

# Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām  
guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ  
sādhūnām sama-cittānām  
buddheḥ param upeyusām

"Material piety and sin, which arise from the good and evil of this world (**guṇa-doṣa udbhavā guṇāḥ**), cannot exist with My unalloyed devotees (**na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām**), who, being free from material hankering (**sādhūnām**), maintain steady spiritual consciousness in all circumstances (**sama-cittānām**). Indeed, such devotees have achieved Me, the Supreme Lord (**upeyusām**), who am beyond anything that can be conceived by material intelligence (**buddheḥ param**)."

# Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

In the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa it is stated:

evam ekāntinām prāyaḥ  
kīrtanam smaranam prabhoh  
kurvatām parama-prītyā  
kṛtyam anyan na rocate

vihiteṣv eva nityeṣu  
pravartante svayaṁ hi te  
ityādy ekāntinām bhāti  
māhātmyam likhitam hi tat

The devotees whose minds are fixed on chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa's glories in pure love have no taste for activities prescribed for lower stages. Although they are not attached or bound to follow the prescribed rules of the scriptures, they sometimes follow out of their own accord.

## Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

This is nicely explained in the eighth verse of the Upadeśāmṛta:

tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-  
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya  
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī  
kālam nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram

The essence of all advice (upadeśa-sāram) is that one should utilize one's full time-twenty-four hours a day (akhilam kālam nayed)-in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities and eternal pastimes (tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtana-anu-smṛtyoḥ), thereby gradually engaging one's tongue and mind (krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya). In this way one should reside in Vraja [Goloka Vṛndāvana dhāma] (tiṣṭhan vraje) and serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of devotees. One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service (tad-anurāgi janānugāmī).

## Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

These are the glories of the pure devotees; that is, their glories are not diminished by neglecting other's prescribed rules.

The purport is that exalted devotees follow whatever rules of the lower stages they like.

The jñānīs follow the varṇāśrama-dharma of the karmīs by their own will, not by rule or obligation.

## Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Similarly the devotees, out of their sweet will, also follow the rules of the karmis and jñānīs for some purpose.

This means that although they are not obliged to follow the prescriptions and prohibitions, they do so on their own accord.

The topmost pure devotees are also not considered overly attached to regulations when they follow the rules of karma, jñāna, and ordinary sādhana-bhakti.



## Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Independently they are engaged in the unalloyed devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The practicing devotee who gives up niyamāgraha but spontaneously follows the rules achieves auspicious results.

The conclusion is that the practitioner attains a higher level as a result of following the rules prescribed according to his qualification.

## Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

He should not maintain attachment for the rules of his previous level.

Keeping this instruction always in mind, he should always engage in chanting and remembering Lord Kṛṣṇa and thus continue advancing to higher levels.

# Srila Prabhupada on Niyamagraha

## Niyamāgraha – Nectar of Instruction

Accepting some of the scriptural rules and regulations for immediate benefit, as utilitarians advocate, is called niyama-āgraha, and neglecting the śāstric rules and regulations that are meant for spiritual development, is called niyama-agraha.

The word āgraha means "eagerness to accept," and agraha means "failure to accept."

By the addition of either of these two words to the word niyama ("rules and regulations"), the word niyamāgraha is formed.

## Niyamāgraha – Nectar of Instruction

Thus niyamāgraha has a twofold meaning that is understood according to the particular combination of words.

Those interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should not be eager to accept rules and regulations for economic advancement, yet they should very faithfully accept scriptural rules and regulations for the advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

They should strictly follow the regulative principles by avoiding illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling and intoxication.

**Commentary by Srila Bhakti  
Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj**

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Niyamagraha means to give abnormal attention to any particular ruling.

Rulings are always meant for some particular stage, and after passing that stage that ruling is no longer applicable and another ruling we shall have to mark.

Just as on Ekadasi – we may be very firm to such a ruling that we must fast wholesale, without taking even a drop of water.

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

But the general rule is that I must keep my body fit for the service of the Lord, so I may take some water.

I must not be overly strict to a particular rule, so that the general law will be hampered.

Niyamagraha has a twofold meaning.

Niyama-aagraha means too much affinity to abide by the law.



## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Another meaning is niyama-agraha when one does not accept any law at all and is not willing to abide by any law.

Both these aspects are bad.

We should follow the middle path, the easy path, not the extreme.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

yuktahara-viharasya  
yukta-cestasya karmasu  
yukta-svapnavabodhasya  
yogo bhavati duhkha-ha

Yoga destroys the suffering of one who is moderate in his eating and relaxation, performs all his activities in a regulated manner and is well balanced in his sleeping and waking. (Gita 6.16-17)

# Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Nisedha – prohibition.

For example, one should not steal, but the ananya-bhak devotee may steal a flower, take it away and offer to his Deity, but he is stealing.

Then how should he be dealt with?

Stealing is a crime.

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The society has set the laws that we will accuse him that, “Why you have stolen?” And he may say that, “I have not stolen.

It all belongs to Krsna and for the service of Krsna I am taking it.”

If that is his [sincere vision] then he is not to be punished.

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

If one is stealing for the purpose of Krsna, then that is not stealing, because his vision is so deep he sees that everything belongs to Krsna.

It may be forbidden by the laws of society, and even by the sruti-sastra, but if he is really a sincere exclusive devotee of the Lord, none should interfere with his apparent misdeeds.

The Lord is seeing from the absolute standpoint and the relative standpoint cannot come and clash with that.

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

His movements are nirguna (transcendental).

But on this saguna (mundane) plane there is a gradual development from tamo-guna (ignorance) to rajo-guna (passion), then sattva-guna (goodness).

If they encroach upon the rights of the nirguna, on those who are Krsna's direct servants, then their relative vision is wrong. He is on the absolute plane.

## Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Whatever he is doing, if he considers Krsna to be the unchallenged master of everything, then he is right and they are wrong.

That thing belongs to him, this belongs to them, this woman belongs to that gentleman – this is simply a contract amongst you.

But from the absolute sense, it does not have any position.

Everything belongs to Krsna, and one who works backed by Krsna consciousness is right.

Anuvrtti Commentary by  
Srila Bhakti Siddhanta  
Saraswati Thakura



## Anuvṛtti

The dry scholarship of the jñānīs, which amounts to nothing more than useless scriptural argumentation; praise of the benefits of pious deeds, which generates fondness for religious rituals in the karmīs; and the talks pleasing to the senses of those who are possessed of many desires, are called prajalpa.

## Niyamāgraha

To accept the rules of the jñāna-śāstras in order to obtain liberation is called āgraha, over-zealousness.

## Anuvṛtti

Attachment for the rules outlined in the scriptures promoting pragmatism (practical as opposed to idealistic results) with a desire for sensual enjoyment both in this world and the next is known as niyama-āgraha.

Establishment of certain rules of conduct appropriate for one's own status in order to achieve immediate happiness as advocated by the utilitarians or those who promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number is also known as niyama-āgraha.

To remain indifferent to the rules that are prescribed for the attainment of bhakti is known as niyama-(agraha)

## Anuvṛtti

Salajīya

Such persons are so audacious that they try to pass off even their detestable wantonness and depravity as the most sacred and elevated path of spontaneous devotion (rāga-mārga).

In Hari-bhakti-vilāsa the disposition of such persons has been explained in the following words:

## Anuvṛtti

For Śāstrīyaś

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi  
pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā  
aikāntikī harer bhaktir  
utpātāyaiva kalpate

Although engaged in single-minded devotion to Lord Hari, if one  
transgresses the regulations mentioned in the Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇas  
and the Nārada-pañcarātra, great misgivings (anarthas) are produced.

## Anuvṛtti

In the Kalyāṇa-kalpataru also, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has said,  
“My dear mind, what have you done?”

Being in a very immature stage you have cheated yourself  
unknowingly by perpetrating the fault of narrow-mindedness upon  
the pure Vaiṣṇava sampradāya.

You have supposed the pure conceptions and validity of the  
sampradāya to be hypocrisy and thus abandoned them.

## Anuvṛtti

You have given up wearing the Vaiṣṇava tilaka markings and neck beads (tulasī-mālā) and put aside your chanting beads (bhajana-mālā).

You think, 'What is the use of wearing tilaka?'

I can chant within my mind, so what need is there of beads?

## Anuvṛtti

One's diet has nothing to do at all with bhajana.

So don't think that you have to give up eating meat, fish or eggs.

Don't think that you must stop drinking wine or tea and taking intoxicants such as pāna, tobacco, marijuana, hemp or opium.'

## Anuvṛtti

You have cast aside the need for taking initiation (dīkṣā).

You have begun to refer to yourself as an incarnation.

You have begun to propagate your new theories very powerfully through different agents.



## Anuvṛtti

You are criticising the opinions of the previous great personalities (mahājanas) and ācāryas of the path of bhakti, considering them to be mistaken.

Some cunning persons put on tilaka and tulasī-mālā and cheat others.

Therefore you avoid the association of anyone who wears tilaka and mālā, considering them all to be cheaters.

# Anuvṛtti

But, my dear brother mind, please consider, what have you gained by this?

You have given up gold for ashes.

Your present life and the next have both been utterly ruined.

You address everyone as a hypocrite, knave and cheater.

## Anuvṛtti

But you have failed to attain bhagavad-bhakti.

What will be your fate at the time of death?

“O mind, what should I tell you?”

You utter the words ‘prema, prema’ but what good will it avail?

## Anuvṛtti

Prema is a rare and priceless jewel.

You will have to undertake arduous sādhana to attain it.

By deceitful practice you make a show of tears, trembling, horripilation and fainting at the time of kīrtana or hearing spiritual discourses, yet your real business is simply to accumulate wealth, women and prestige.

## Anuvṛtti

When you have not even a trace of attachment for pure sādhanabhakti, which is essential for the acquisition of prema, then how will you obtain such pure bhagavat-prema?

1st Step

You will have to first give up the ten offences against the holy name and chant harināma continuously.

You should hear harikathā in the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas.

## Anuvṛtti

Then, by the mercy of Śrī Nāma Prabhu, unalloyed prema will arise automatically in your heart.

“You have not performed bhajana in a regulated manner; you have not performed saṅkīrtana in the association of pure devotees.

You have not withdrawn your mind from sense objects and engaged it in remembering the Lord in a secluded place.

## Anuvṛtti

Without first climbing the tree, your attempt to pluck the fruit with your own hand has simply gone in vain.

The most sacred and pure kṛṣṇa-prema is extremely rare.

By misleading others you will simply cheat yourself.

First make yourself fit by performing sādhana.

## Anuvṛtti

Then prema will become easily accessible to you.

“O brother, although lust (kāma) and love (prema) appear identical by external indications, they are not at all the same.

Kāma is like rusted iron, whereas prema is like pure gold.

You have seized kāma, imagining it to be gold.



## Anuvṛtti

Can anyone obtain prema by such absurd means?

“O foolish mind, you have become intoxicated by uselessly considering kāma to be prema.

The lust for bones and flesh appears alluring for the time being.

That lust chases endlessly after the objects of the senses.

## Anuvṛtti

But unalloyed love is the natural disposition of the jīva.

That prema is fully sentient and spiritual by nature.

The object of that prema is Śrī Hari alone – not a dressed-up doll of bones and flesh.

At present prema is in a dormant condition being covered by kāma.

## Anuvṛtti

Therefore you must endeavour to dispel this lust and to initiate the awakening of love.

① Ajñāta sukṛti accumulates over many lifetimes

“First, by good fortune due to the devotional pious credits (sukṛti) accumulated over many previous lifetimes, pure faith (śraddhā) arises.

② Śraddhā → ③ śedhu saṅga + Bhajantī ④

Then, by hearing hari-kathā and performing harināma-kīrtana in the association of pure devotees, śraddhā is matured and evolves successively into steadfastness (nisthā), taste (ruci) and deep attachment (āsakti).

## Anuvṛtti

From āsakti, bhāva makes its appearance, and from bhāva, prema is manifested.

This is the order of development by which prema is awakened.

Prema may be obtained only by taking support of this progressive evolution and never by any other means.

## Anuvṛtti

“O wicked mind, why do you fear to take up this step-bystep method of sādhana?”

By mere imitation of prema you will not obtain anything.

By such an imitative display you will attain only the temporary happiness of sense enjoyment, which will also result in misery in the end.

## Anuvṛtti

With this understanding, you should give up all offences and impediments (anarthas) and engage yourself in pure sādhana-bhakti.

In this lies your good fortune.”