

Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

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

4-5. Opposite Sex: Do not associate with women.

On the other hand, when a woman is engaged in sādhanabhakti, she should not associate with men.

Associating with the opposite sex is very inauspicious for the advancing devotee.

There are two types of men and women.

When a man and woman are married according to religious principles, there is no sin in their touching and talking with each other; rather, this touching and talking is beneficial because of the scriptural sanction.

There is, however, no provision for illusory activities other than the execution of reciprocal duties.

If they are illusioned by each other and they engage in activities other than prescribed duties, then that is called strī-saṅga and puruṣa-saṅga, or association with the opposite sex.

For those who are engaged in worshiping Kṛṣṇa, such association yields inauspicious results.

If either one is guilty of such association, then they become an obstacle for the other party.

If the wife is helpful in the discharge of devotional service,
then the fault of strī-sanga does not arise.

But if the wife is an impediment in the discharge of
devotional service, then one should carefully give up her
association.

We should consider the behavior of the great Vaiṣṇava
ācārya, Śrīmad Rāmānujācārya.

Śrīmad Rāmānujācārya sent his wife to her parent's home
after she offended his guru's wife.

He then took sannyāsa, in this connection.

When there is no marital relationship and one converses
with a woman with evil intentions, then this is strī-saṅga.

That is sinful and detrimental to devotional service.

Considering these points, the practicing devotee should very carefully give up the association of women and persons fond of women.

As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.31.35):

na tathāsyā bhaven mohō
bandhaś cānya-prasaṅgataḥ
yoṣit-saṅgād yathā puṁso
yathā tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ

Man's bondage and bewilderment (**asya mohah ca bandha**) is not due to (**na tathā bhavet**) attachment to objects (**anya-prasaṅgataḥ**) as much as (**yathā**) it is due to his association with woman (**yoṣit-saṅgād**) and to his association with men who associate with women (**yathā tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ puṁsah**).

For a householder devotee, touching and speaking to his wife in the above mentioned manner is not detrimental to devotional service; but for a renunciate there cannot be any type of talking or touching a woman, otherwise his practice of devotional service will be completely spoiled.

Association with such a deviated person should be totally rejected.

6. Hypocritically Devout: One should give up the association of dharma-dhvajīs, the hypocritically devout, with special care.

Those who accept the external signs of dharma but do not actually follow dharma are called dharma-dhvajīs.

There are two types of dharma-dhvajīs—the hypocrites and the fools, or the cheaters and the cheated.

Such hypocrisy in jñāna-kanda and karma-kanda is also
condemned.

In devotional service this hypocrisy ruins everything.

Better associate with sense enjoyers, for in this whole world
there is no worse association than the dharma-dhvajī.

The deceitful dharma-dhvajīs accept the signs of dharma with a desire to cheat the world, and to fulfill their crooked desires they cheat the foolish by helping them in their rascaldom.

Some of them become gurus and others become disciples, and by trickery they accumulate wealth, women, false-prestige, and material assets.

If one gives up the association of crooked hypocrites, then he can honestly engage in devotional service.

Honest worship is the only way to attain Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.38):

sa veda dhātuḥ padavīm parasya
duranta-vīryasya rathāṅga-pāṇeh
yo 'māyayā santatayānuvṛtṭyā
bhajeta tat-pāda-saroja-gandham

with total sincerity
without hypocrisy

"Only those who (yah) render unreserved (amāyayā), uninterrupted (santatayā), favorable (anuvṛtṭyā) service (bhajeta) unto the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa (tat-pāda-saroja-gandham), who carries the wheel of the chariot in His hand (rathāṅga-pāṇeh), can know the creator of the universe (sa veda dhātuḥ) in His full glory (duranta-vīryasya), power (padavīm) and transcendence (parasya)."

Again in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.7.42) Lord Brahmā tells Nārada:

yeṣām sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantah
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalikam
te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyām
naisām mamāham iti dhīh śva-śrgāla-bhakṣye

Those to whom (sah yeṣām) the infinite Lord shows mercy (dayayed bhagavān anantah) -- when they attain devotees who are surrendered completely to the lotus feet of the Lord (yadi sarvātmanā āśrita-pado) and who have no material desires (nirvyalikam) – cross (atitaranti) the insurmountable ocean of māyā (dustarām deva-māyām) and understand the Lord (ca). They (eṣām) are devoid of the intelligence (na dhīh) which thinks in terms of “my body” and the “bodies of my family members” (mama aham iti) which are worthy food for dogs and jackals (śva-śrgāla-bhakṣye).

Externally exhibiting the symptoms of a Vaiṣṇava while internally remaining a Māyāvādī is actually pseudo-Vaiṣṇavism, or hypocrisy.

In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 13.93, 109-110) there is a description of Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa, who was externally a great Vaiṣṇava, devoted to Lord Rāmacandra:

aṣṭa-prahara rāma-nāma japena rātri-dine
(sarva tyaji) (calilā jagannātha-daraśane)

Rāmadāsa had renounced everything and was going to see Lord Jagannātha. While traveling, he chanted the holy name of Lord Rāma twenty-four hours a day.

rāmadāsa yadi prathama prabhure mililā
mahāprabhu adhika tānre kṛpā nā karilā

When Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord did not show him any special mercy, although this was their first meeting.

(antare mumukṣu) tenho, (vidyā-garvavān)
(sarva-citta-jñātā prabhu) — (sarvajña bhagavān)

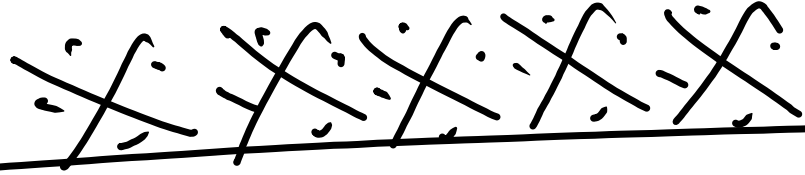
Within his heart, Rāmadāsa Viśvāsa was an impersonalist who desired to merge into the existence of the Lord, and he was very proud of his learning. Since Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the omniscient Supreme Personality of Godhead, He can understand the heart of everyone, and thus He knew all these things.

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura, in his great humility, has stated:

kāma, krodha chaya jane
lañā phire nānā sthāne
viṣaya bhuñjāya nānā mate.
haiyā māyāra dāsa
kari nānā abhilāsa
tomāra smaraṇa gela dūre
artha-lābha-ei āśe
kapata-vaiṣṇava-veṣe
bhramiyā bulaye ghare ghare.

"The six enemies, beginning with lust and anger, are taking me here and there to enjoy various forms of sense gratification. Being a servant of Māyā, I have unlimited desires and have therefore forgotten You. Hoping to gain wealth, I wander from house to house in the dress of a pseudo-Vaiṣṇava."

Unless one gives up the association of this type of dharmadvajī, one cannot purely engage in devotional service.



Most of the people in the world are of this type.

Therefore until one gets the opportunity to associate with a pure devotee, he should pass his life engaged in devotional service in a solitary place.

7. The ill-behaved foolish outcastes: The worship of Kṛṣṇa is not enhanced by associating with ill-behaved, foolish outcastes.

They are naturally attached to eating meat and drinking wine, and they are not situated in varṇāśrama-dharma. Their character is always unregulated.

By associating with ill-behaved persons, the mind becomes polluted.

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But if those persons become faithful in devotional service by associating with a Vaisnava and they gradually get a taste for worshiping Kṛṣṇa with a pure heart, then their association is auspicious.

Even if they commit abominable actions for some time due to their former nature, still they are sadhus.

In Bhagavad-gītā (9.30-31) it is said:

api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

Even if (api cet) the most sinful person (su-durācāro) worships Me (bhajate mām) with no other desire than to please Me (ananya-bhāk), I consider that person to be My devotee (sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ), as he ~~has fixed himself~~ completely in Me (samyag vyavasito hi saḥ).

kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

Very quickly he becomes a righteous person (kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā), and becomes completely devoid of contamination (śaśvat-śāntim nigacchati). O son of Kuntī (kaunteya), you declare (pratijānīhi) that My devotee never perishes (na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati).

The purport is this: If the outcastes attain (faith) in unalloyed devotional service by some good fortune, then it can be said that they have attained the genuine path.

There is no doubt that in a short time they too will become pure and peaceful by following the footsteps of Haridāsa Thākura.

Ill-behavior, due to one's nature, necessarily remains for some time.

nisthā

Even then, such association cannot be called bad.

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.27-29) the symptoms of such persons are described as follows:

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu
nirvinnah sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ
śraddhānur drdha-niścayah
juṣamānaś ca tān kāmān
duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan

Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories (**jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu**), being disgusted with all prescribed activities (varṇāśrama) (**nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu**), knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery (**veda duḥkhātmakaṁ kāmān**), but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment (**parityāge apy anīśvaraḥ**), My devotee should remain happy (**tato prītaḥ**) and worship Me (**mām bhajeta**) with great faith and conviction (**śraddhānur dr̥ṭha-niścayaḥ**). Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment (**juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān**), My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result (**duḥkha udarkāmś**), and he sincerely repents such activities (**ca garhayan**).
(**SB 11.20.27-28**)

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu – Has awakened faith in the process of bhakti

nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu – Disgusted with all prescribed duties

veda duḥkhātmakaṁ kāmān – Understands that sense gratification leads to misery

parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ – Still unable to give up sense gratification

juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan – Unable to give up sense gratification, he sincerely repents for engaging in such acts

Kṛṣṇa's instructions to such Sadhakas

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhānur dṛṭha-niścayaḥ - Remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction

proktena bhakti-yogena
bhajato māsaḥ muneh
kāmā hṛdayyā naśyanti
sarve mayi hr̥di sthite

When an intelligent person (muneh) engages constantly in
worshiping Me (bhajato mām asakṛt) through loving
devotional service as described by Me (proktena bhakti-
yogena), his heart becomes firmly situated in Me (mayi hr̥di
sthite). Thus all material desires within the heart are
destroyed (sarve kāmā hṛdayyā naśyanti)."

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The conclusion is that the association of pious and sinful persons who are bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is undesirable.

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On the other hand, the association of persons who are sinful, yet devoted to the Lord, is desirable.

The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.51) quotes the following verse spoken by Mahārṣi Kātyāyana in the Kātyāyana-saṁhitā:

varam huta-vaha-jvālā-
pañjarāntar-vyavasthitih
na śauri-cintā-vimukha-
jana-saṁvāsa-vaiśasam

It is preferable (varam) to remain within a cage (pañjarāntar vyavasthitih) of blazing fire (huta vaha jvālā) than to have the misfortune (vaiśasam) of living in association with persons (jana saṁvāsa) who are opposed to thinking of the Lord (śauri cintā vimukha).

While practicing devotional service one should carefully understand this subject and act accordingly.

Srila Prabhupada on Jana Sanga

Jana Sanga – Nectar of Instruction

One should also avoid association with Māyāvādīs, who simply blaspheme Vaisnavas (devotees).

Bhukti-kāmīs, who are interested in material happiness, mukti-kāmīs, who desire liberation by merging into the existence of the formless Absolute (Brahman), and siddhi-kāmīs, who desire the perfection of mystic yoga practice, are classified as atyāhārīs.

To associate with such persons is not at all desirable.

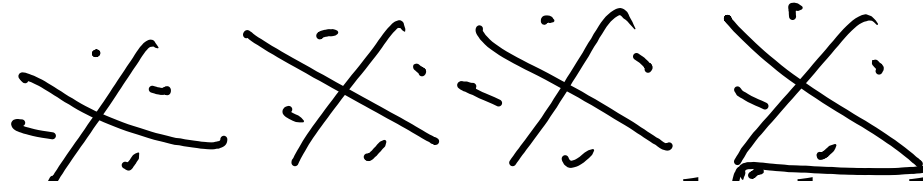
Jana Sanga – Nectar of Instruction

Desires to expand the mind by perfecting mystic yoga, merging into the existence of Brahman, or attaining whimsical material prosperity are all included within the category of greed (laulya).

All attempts to acquire such material benefits or so-called spiritual advancement are impediments on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Srila Bhakti Rakshak
Sridhara Maharaj**

Jana-sanga means to be very approachable to the ordinary public, for politics, sociality, feeding the poor etc.



So many conceptions and ideals are there all around, and to chase them or to be captivated by them is jana-sanga.

Sadhu-sanga means that association which promotes us towards a higher cause, and that which takes us away from that cause is jana-sanga or asat-sanga – just the opposite, a perverted reflection.

It must not be maladjusted.

Each person should be properly adjusted.

We must have eagerness to mix with the sadhus of a higher type.

Instead of that, if we allow ourselves to mix with the ordinary public, in the name of preaching or collection or any other thing, that will be detrimental to our cause.

We are finite beings that are lost here.

We have a long journey ahead with much trouble, but the disappointment and dejection is minimized if we have good association on that long journey.

By talking with them about the Lord, we can go on.

We forget the weariness of the journey.

krsna-bhakti-janma-mula haya 'sadhu-sanga'
krsna-prema janme, tenho punar mukhya anga

The root cause of devotion to Krsna is association with advanced devotees. Even when one's dormant love for Krsna awakens, the association with devotees is still most essential.
(Cc. Madhya 22.83)