

Bhaktyaloka
Essay 5

Jana-saṅga

Association with worldly-minded
persons

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar
Maharaja

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

Whoever wants to speak on these topics, we are
readily available - we have eagerness to associate
with such persons.

Jana-sanga

So many ideologies are there all around and to chase
them or be captivated by them is jana sanga.

We are refusing to be captivated by the ideologies of
our acharyas and we are ready to be captivated by the
ideologies of other people.

Sadhu-sanga

Sadhu-sanga means that association which promotes us towards a higher cause.



Higher cause : surrender to Hari, Guru and vaishnavas

Sadhu-sanga v/s
Jana-sanga

And that which takes us away from that cause is jana-sanga or asat-sanga



ex: surrender to demigods, planetary systems etc

Anything that is vedic is not necessarily conducive to our devotional service.



Anything that has sanskrit verse is not bonafide- ex: carvaka philosophy.

or it may be bonafide but not meant for us - meant for people with different adhikara.

Eagerness for the association of devotees

Eagerness should be to associate with more advanced devotees.



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 on the way to prema but the journey is very long- --we have to run a long distance..

but we can have water and good shoes

Association of affectionate, like minded devotees does the job of water and good shoes and help us forget the weariness of the journey!

Lack of good association and lack of satisfying loving exchanges--- cause us to get attracted to other ideologies.

When we don't feel sheltered in the association of devotees, then we try to seek shelter elsewhere - like astrology, modern self- help gurus etc..

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

Dependence on association of devotees - a sure sign of our progress

The symptom of progress in bhakti is : we feel more dependent on devotees.

We feel our spiritual life is completely dependent on devotees.

The more one progresses, the more one feels the need of association of devotees.

Hankering for the association of devotees

Advanced devotees can practice devotional service alone but they feel they are hopelessly dependent on devotees.

A sincere devotee will always hanker after good association with those who will be able to help him, giving encouragement at every stage.

Association of devotees -only solution for avoiding jana sanga

sat-saṅgān mukta-duḥsaṅgo : the ability to give up bad association comes from the empowering association of devotees

Solution to jana sanga is : Invest in proper vaishnava relationships.
If you don't have meaningful exchanges with devotees, avoiding jana-sanga is very difficult.

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami in Manah-siksha:

Verse 5 :

The solution to lust, envy, greed is crying out for help to devotees.

hanye 'ham hanye 'ham

Manah-siksha verse 5

What does it mean to cry out for help?

To cry out for help means we should seek help.

To seek help, we need comfortable relationships where we can open our heart.

For that to happen, we need to invest in relationships.

verse 7:

Subtler anarthas : pratistha-asa - desire for fame, honour, recognition, distinction...

Solution :Serve exalted devotees. By serving exalted devotees, we see that this person deserves all glories, all honour, all fame and the desire for pratistha-asa within our hearts go away.

Manah-siksha verse 7

Solution for most of the anarthas and solution to avoid jana sanga is investing in good association.

The Four Kinds of Anarthas

Asat Trsna - Thirst for the Impermanent

1. Desire for material objects
2. Desire for heavenly comforts
3. Desire for mystic powers
4. Desire for liberation

Solution

Follow NOI-2

Hrdaya Daurbalyam - Weakness of Heart

1. Envy
2. Desire for fame
3. Deceitfulness or fault-finding
4. Attachment to objects unrelated to Krishna

Solution

Follow NOI-4

Tattva Vibhrama - Misunderstanding of Spiritual Truths

1. Misunderstanding one's own identity
2. Misunderstanding the Supreme Lord
3. Misunderstandings about the process of devotional service
4. Misunderstandings related to subjects un-favourable to Krishna consciousness

Solution

Surrender and Chastity to
Guru, Sadhu and Sastra

Aparadha - Offenses

1. Offences to the holy name
2. Offenses to the Lord's deity form
3. Offenses to devotees
4. Offenses to other living entities

Solution

Follow NOI-1