

# Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

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# CHAPTER 3 - Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2

- To help the reader avoid or rise above impure faith and to recognize it in others, this chapter further discusses the underlying principles of the complex subject of the semblance of faith (śraddhābhāsa).
- Caitanya Mahāprabhu warns devotees to protect their devotional creeper from the weeds of unwanted desires and crooked behaviour, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa directs Vaiṣṇavas to give transcendental knowledge according to their audience’s qualification or faith.
- In either case, while practising devotional service or teaching it to others, devotees must learn to identify pure and impure faith by their characteristics.
- This study begins with an analysis of the term “semblance” (ābhāsa).
- In Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī briefly introduces the concept of “semblance” in his discussion of ecstatic attachment.

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- There, he states, pratibimbas tathā chāyā raty-ābhāso dvidhā mataḥ:
- “There are two types of raty-ābhāsa—pratibimba and chāyā.”
- The words pratibimba and chāyā may be translated as “reflective” and “shadowy” respectively.
- In the same way that the word “semblance” was used to describe the broader category of impure faith, so “reflective” and “shadowy” will be used to describe the two divisions of impure faith.
- The reader may ask, “How can you apply the terms ābhāsa, pratibimba, and chāyā used by Rūpa Gosvāmī to delineate rati—to śraddhā?”
- The use of ābhāsa, pratibimba, and chāyā in relation to faith follows the standard usage employed by Vaiṣṇava ācāryas.

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- In Jaiva-dharma and Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda uses -ābhāsa as a suffix to various terms. [Jaiva-dharma, chapter 25 and Śrī Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi, chapter 3]
- Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the suffix -ābhāsa with the words bhakti, rasa, bhakta, nāma, and rāga.
- Other ācāryas have also used the suffix in compounds such as muktyābhāsa, bhāvābhāsa, śraddhābhāsa, and premābhāsa, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura confirms that the two divisions, pratibimba and chāyā, apply wherever the suffix -ābhāsa is used.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda translates -ābhāsa variously as “hint,” “tinge,” “shadow,” “semblance,” “dim reflection,” and “a little light.”
- Throughout this book -ābhāsa is translated as “semblance,” and the words pratibimba and chāyā are translated as “reflective” and “shadowy” respectively.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- Reflective semblance of faith is the distorted conviction of Māyāvāda philosophy that Lord Viṣṇu is a temporary manifestation of impersonal Brahman.
- This type of faith manifests in the hearts of cunning, duplicitous persons hopelessly addicted to sense gratification or liberation.
- Such persons take up devotional activity after hearing that bhakti easily awards heavenly enjoyment or impersonal liberation.
- They have no faith in the eternality of the Lord's form, abode, or service.
- Their outward respect for these things is only a means to fulfil selfish ulterior goals.
- Māyāvādīs are commonly depicted as austere scholars who desire to merge into the impersonal Brahman.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- But there are other types of impersonalists, who practise various types of sādhana to reach goals other than liberation.
- Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes three types of reflective semblance of faith (pratibimba-śraddhābhāsa) expressed by impersonalists. [These three are elaborately described by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his Bhakti-tattva-viveka, chapter 2]
- The first is the well-known reflective semblance of faith inspired by the overwhelming desire to merge into the impersonal Brahman.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes extensively about this doctrine, which is espoused by the followers of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya.
- The second is the type of faith caused by a strong desire for sense gratification.

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- Impersonalists with this type of faith selectively embrace those parts of Māyāvāda philosophy that allow them to rationalize hedonism as the ultimate goal of life.
- For example, to enjoy intimate contact with others' wives in the way that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the rāsa dance, they propound that “ultimately, we are all God.”
- The third type of reflective semblance of faith is similar to the second, except that it is not directly caused by a desire for sense gratification but for devotion or love.
- Māyāvādīs who embrace this type of reflective faith think the demigods equal to Viṣṇu.
- Thus bewildered, they worship demigods and Viṣṇu indiscriminately, thinking that the demigods, like the Lord, can bestow pure devotion, liberation, or love.



## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- For example, Ramakrishna of Bengal, also known as Gadadhara Chatterjee, was falsely reputed to have achieved prema through worship of the demigoddess Kālī.
- Caitanya Mahāprabhu condemned Māyāvāda precepts as offensive to the Lord and to His name.
- Persons who cultivate such doctrines certainly ruin their spiritual lives, leaving little hope that they will be redeemed (māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa). [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 6.169]
- Why condemn reflected semblance of faith? Aren't the activities of devotional service powerful enough to purify it?
- Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have rejected this idea.
- The offensive and distorted ideology inherent in reflected semblance of faith cannot be purified.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- A person travelling north from Delhi cannot reach Vṛndāvana unless he changes direction. Similarly, the adherents of Māyāvāda philosophy can achieve auspiciousness only after abandoning their false precepts and embracing the correct Vedic conclusion: brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham, “And I [Kṛṣṇa] am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.” [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 14.27]
- Only then can Māyāvādīs acquire the type of faith that leads to eternal liberation. [The above paragraph is based on Śrī Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi, chapter 3]
- Examples of jñānīs saved from the path of impersonalism are Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, who heard the real teachings of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, renounced their distorted beliefs, acquired pure faith, and took up the path of pure devotional service.
- But such examples are extremely rare.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- The seed of reflected semblance of faith is inherently antagonistic to Kṛṣṇa and thus tends to degrade into habitual offence.
- It is extremely difficult, therefore, to root it out and replace it with a healthy seed of devotion.
- Persons with reflected semblance of faith may take to devotional service and even chant Hare Kṛṣṇa with apparent enthusiasm, yet Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda forbids us to call them Vaiṣṇavas.
- Because their mentality is offensive, they are classified as materialistic fruitive workers (karmīs) or speculative philosophers (jñānīs). [Bhakti-tattva-viveka, chapter 2]
- They are not devotees (bhaktas).

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- In fact, because of their errant mentality these impersonalists uproot their own creepers, destroy their own meagre faith, and ultimately abandon their spiritual disciplines.
- The following famous verse describes this self-defeating faith of the Māyāvādīs:  

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas  
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ  
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ  
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ
- “O lotus-eyed Lord, although nondevotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure.
- They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for Your lotus feet.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.32)

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- That said, an extraordinary phenomenon requires clarification.
- Sometimes karmīs and jñānīs display symptoms of advanced stages of pure devotion.
- Rūpa Gosvāmī raises this apparent contradiction at the beginning of his deliberation on the semblance of love. Our rasācārya writes,

vimuktākhila-tarṣair yā muktair api vimṛgyate  
yā kṛṣṇenāti-gopyāśu bhajadbhyo 'pi na dīyate

sā bhukti-mukti-kāmatvāc chuddhām bhaktim akurvatām  
hṛdaye sambhavaty eṣām katham bhāgavatī ratiḥ

- “Although love for the Supreme Lord (bhāgavatī rati) is searched for even by liberated persons who are free from all material urges, Kṛṣṇa keeps it very hidden and does not easily give it even to those who worship Him.

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- How then can this attachment for the Lord arise in the hearts of those who do not engage in the practice of pure devotional service because of their desiring enjoyment or liberation?” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.3.42–43)
- This question is relevant to the study of śraddhā because if it were possible for Māyāvādī offenders to experience ecstatic attachment and display its symptoms, then the distinctions between pure faith and the reflected semblance of faith would not hold true.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda summarizes and elaborately comments on this question in The Nectar of Devotion.
- The essence is that Māyāvādīs cannot even feel true symptoms of ecstatic attachment, what to speak of display them.
- What they experience is the reflection of the love radiating from the moonlike hearts of pure devotees.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- The moon-rays of pure transcendental love are so powerful that they induce a semblance of love even in the hearts of offenders. [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 18]
- How can one distinguish the symptoms of reflective semblance of love from their pure counterparts?
- This question is more than just philosophical. It hints at a real problem that has plagued Vaiṣṇava society throughout history: the imitation of ecstatic symptoms.
- For example, Rūpa Gosvāmī writes of a class of materialists who pose as great devotees and publicly display symptoms of ecstasy.
- Motivated by a desire for fame, followers, wealth, and women, these public displays are nothing more than dramas.
- Unfortunately, ignorant and uninformed persons fall for the show and perpetuate a fools' paradise of cheaters and the cheated.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- For this reason, Vaiṣṇava ācāryas, including Śrīla Prabhupāda, have educated their followers to distinguish between real and imitative devotion.
- And of course, as already established, such analysis pertains equally well to the semblance of faith itself.
- Jīva Gosvāmī describes the characteristics of the reflective semblance of ecstatic attachment.
- He points out that of the eight genuine ecstatic symptoms, Māyāvādīs display reflective symptoms of only two, crying and horripilation, and even then only to a very small degree.
- These reflective symptoms are short-lived and take place only in the company of pure devotees.



## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Reflective Semblance of Faith)

- They are rare, manifesting only in those Māyāvādīs directly favoured by Kṛṣṇa, and they appear only in persons who maintain attachment for liberation or sense gratification. [Durgama-saṅgamanī, Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.3.46–48]

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to the second type of semblance of faith, chāyā, as “shadow.”
- He also displays high regard for the concept of chāyā by calling it parā, or transcendental. [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 18]
- Compared to the devious nature of reflective faith, shadowy faith is innocent.
- Persons with shadowy faith worship Kṛṣṇa, but improperly, out of ignorance.
- That is, although they are distracted by material desires or are weak at heart, they have not embraced a philosophy that rejects the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- As already mentioned, reflective semblance of faith cannot transform into pure faith.
- It must be rooted out and replaced with faith that is devoid of the wickedness characteristic of Māyāvāda philosophy.
- In contrast, shadowy semblance of faith can unfold into pure faith by virtue of its simplicity and absence of philosophical contamination.
- Impressed by externals, the uninformed sometimes mistake persons with reflective faith to be more advanced than those with shadowy faith.
- Māyāvādīs, be they karmīs, yogīs, or jñānīs, due to their meticulous rituals, strict regulated practices and sense control, may appear to have strong faith.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- In contrast, a novice with shadowy faith, irregular devotional practices, and uncontrolled senses—or even an ordinary person serving Kṛṣṇa out of social convention—may appear to have weaker faith.
- But this false perception is corrected when the meanings of the words pratibimba (reflective) and chāyā (shadowy) are clearly understood.
- A reflection resembles an object in detail, but it is always separated from it; a shadow, though a mere silhouette, is always connected to the object it silhouettes.
- Thus a shadow is more closely related to an object than a reflection.
- To make this concept clear, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives the following example of a tree reflected in water.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- The reflection in the water closely resembles the tree but is not physically connected to it; the tree's shadow, however, silhouettes the tree and also proceeds from it. That is, the shadow and the tree are joined.
- In the same way, although reflective semblance of faith appears stronger than shadowy faith, it glares out from the separatist mentality of austere Māyāvādīs and thus remains disconnected from pure faith.
- In contrast, the seemingly weaker shadowy faith of a less regulated neophyte remains connected to real faith through sincerity. With time, it can develop into pure faith.
- A rhetorical question nicely sums up the idea: Which is of greater and more lasting value, a large tree whose roots are pulled from the ground or a sapling well-rooted in fertile soil?

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī applies the understanding of chāyā to the development of practical devotional life. He writes in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.49–52):

*kṣudrā kautūhala-mayī cañcalā duḥkha-hāriṇī  
rateś chāyā bhavet kiñcit tat-sādrśyāvalambinī  
hari-priya-kriyā-kāla-deśa-pātrādi-saṅgamāt  
apy ānuṣaṅgikād eṣā kvacid ajñeṣv apīkṣyate*

*kintu bhāgyam vinā nāsau bhāva-chāyāpy udañcati  
yad abhyudayataḥ kṣemaṁ tatra syād uttarottaram  
hari-priya-janasyaiva prasāda-bhara-lābhataḥ  
bhāvābhāso 'pi sahasā bhāvatvam upagacchati*

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- A paraphrased summary of these verses appears in The Nectar of Devotion: [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 18]
- At that time, simply by the association of such pure devotees, the moonlike rays from their hearts reflect on him, and by the influence of the pure devotees he may show some likeness of attachment caused by inquisitiveness, but this is very flickering.
- And if by the manifestation of such shadow attachment one feels the disappearance of all material pangs, then it is called parā attachment.
- Such shadow attachment (or parā attachment) can develop if one associates with a pure devotee or visits holy places like Vṛndāvana or Mathurā.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- If an ordinary man is fortunate enough to develop such attachment for Kṛṣṇa and performs devotional activities in the association of pure devotees, then he can also rise to the platform of pure devotional service.
- The conclusion is that transcendental attachment is so powerful that if even a common person displays such attachment, by the association of a pure devotee, that person can be brought to the perfectional stage.
- But such attachment for Kṛṣṇa cannot be invoked in a person unless he is blessed by the association of pure devotees.
- Combining Rūpa Gosvāmī's comments above with those of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda in Bhakti-tattva-viveka throws even more light on the subject. [Bhakti-tattva-viveka, chapter 2] The remainder of this section is a synthesis of those comments.



## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Shadowy semblance of faith awakens in two types of persons, those seeking a solution to material existence and those who inadvertently come in contact with pure devotees and other things related to Kṛṣṇa. [Bhakti-tattva-viveka, chapter 2]
- Persons of the first type take to devotional service with a desire to cross the ocean of material existence, but they do not have transcendental knowledge.
- When they become knowledgeable their shadowy semblance transforms into pure faith.
- The class of demigod worshippers who stay aloof from Māyā-vāda philosophy provide an example of this type of person.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Their shadowy semblance of faith is based on the conviction that their deity is an expansion of Viṣṇu.
- But because their faith in Viṣṇu is indirect—through a demigod—it is weaker than the faith of devotees exclusively attracted to the Lord.
- Thus although possible, it is highly unlikely that they will succeed in the arduous journey to pure faith because of the intricacies of the process involved in properly worshipping their deity.
- Space does not permit a detailed account of such extremely complex rituals, but worshippers of Durgā, for example, would have to come to pure faith by elevating themselves from their foundation of Durgā worship to the ritualistic worship of Sūrya, then Gaṇeśa, then Śiva, and finally Viṣṇu.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Then they would have to adopt the worship of Viṣṇu as it is practised by pure Vaiṣṇavas.
- Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda discouraged demigod worship.
- He vigorously distributed transcendental knowledge and reassured the followers of demigods that serving Kṛṣṇa was the best way to satisfy their respective deities.
- Those who follow Prabhupāda's prescription, who acquire full transcendental knowledge and abandon demigod worship, awaken pure faith and ultimately achieve perfection.
- In addition to demigod worshippers, mystic yogīs and brahmavādī-jñānīs also have a shadowy semblance of faith.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- The Brahmavādīs are different from Māyāvādīs.
- Although they too are attached to worshipping the impersonal form of Godhead, unlike the Māyāvādīs they do not deny the Lord's superiority and eternality.
- Thus they are not offenders.
- Like the four Kumāras and Śukadeva Gosvāmī, they can by right association become pure devotees. [Morning Walk, Denver, 2 July, 1975]
- Many other kinds of fruitive workers, speculative philosophers, and yoga practitioners also have shadowy faith.
- Such diversity in the types of persons who develop shadowy faith is due to the complex permutations and combinations of the modes of nature.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Impelled by mixtures of faith, living entities adopt one of a wide spectrum of spiritual practices and worship an equally wide spectrum of deities.
- But in each case their motivations—no matter how slight or well-meaning—are impure because they aim at goals different from those prescribed by the Lord in the science of pure devotion.
- Candidates for devotional service, be they worshippers of demigods or of Lord Viṣṇu, cannot progress to pure devotion without pure Vaiṣṇava association.
- Only chanting and hearing in the company of pure devotees instils and nurtures the seed of devotion in a neophyte’s heart.
- Only when that seed of devotion is nurtured can pure faith develop.
- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī mentioned a second type of person who awakens a shadowy semblance of faith.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says that the activities, times, places, or persons dear to Hari have great spiritual power.
- These items can invoke shadowy faith in even ignorant or undeserving persons who come into contact with them.
- “Activities related to Kṛṣṇa” refers to devotional activities such as hearing and chanting; “times related to Kṛṣṇa” refers to occasions such as Janmāṣṭamī and other festivals; and “persons related to Kṛṣṇa” means great devotees with whom one associates by hearing from them.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda often interprets the phrase “places related to Kṛṣṇa” as holy places such as Vṛndāvana or Mathurā.
- When common people visit such places, out of curiosity as tourists or out of religious custom as pilgrims, they get immense spiritual benefit.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Śrīla Prabhupāda highlights the essence of spiritual advancement by stressing that one should visit holy places in the company of pure devotees.
- The history of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja is an example of the way faith inadvertently awakens by contact with things dear to Kṛṣṇa.
- In his previous life, he unknowingly fasted on Nṛsimha-caturdaśī, a time connected to Kṛṣṇa.
- Consequently he became a great devotee in his next life. [The Prahlāda Mahārāja spoken of here is not necessarily the same one mentioned in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Seventh Canto]
- Jīva Gosvāmī writes: “In the Nṛsimha Purāṇa it is said that in his previous birth Prahlāda Mahārāja had an argument with a prostitute on the holy day of Nṛsimha-caturdaśī.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Shadowy Semblance of Faith)

- Arguing with her all day and night, he neither ate nor slept.
- And because in this way he fasted and kept an all-night vigil on that holy day, he became a great devotee of the Lord.” [Bhakti-sandarbha, anuccheda 152]
- This raises a question in relation to common people who come into contact with things related to Kṛṣṇa.
- Don’t the offences they inevitably commit nullify the spiritual benefits they gain?
- Because their offences are inadvertent, they do not nullify the shadowy semblance of faith.
- By keeping company with Vaiṣṇavas and by acquiring full transcendental knowledge, with time, common people also receive true faith and become candidates for pure devotion.
- Such are the miraculous effects of the shadow of pure faith—chāyā-śraddhābhāsa.



## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- In summary, the semblance of faith is either a reflection or a shadow of pure faith.
- Although these two types of semblance of faith have many subdivisions, the characteristic common to all of them is the conviction that happiness can be found in some activity outside pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa.
- Although reflective semblance of faith is difficult to purify, shadowy semblance of faith is not.
- Shadowy faith is easily purified in the company of pure Vaiṣṇavas.
- When persons with shadowy faith carefully understand the principles of transcendental knowledge, when they worship Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of pure devotees, they purify their conditioned natures.
- Pure faith then enlightens them and makes them eligible for pure devotion.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- But persons who do not avail themselves of the company of pure devotees and who do not apply themselves to understanding pure devotion remain under the influence of the modes.
- In this way past conditioning dominates and determines the nature of their faith.
- The semblance of faith may be a key to the heavenly planets or even to a semblance of liberation, muktyābhāsa, but it can never grant the type of liberation that awakens the soul’s original form, as described by Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

*muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ  
sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitīḥ*

- “Liberation is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.10.6)

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- O Vaiṣṇava readers possessed of pure faith! Guard your treasure carefully and nurture it with pure devotional activities.
- There are many people in the dress of Vaiṣṇavas who market distorted ideologies.
- These miscreants can contaminate your faith and turn you from the path of pure devotion left to us by our ever well-wisher.
- Please be on guard!
- What are examples of such contemporary ideologies?
- The “ṛtvik philosophy,” concocted by apparently well-wishing followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is one.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- Ṛtviks claim that even after the departure of His Divine Grace one can become his direct, initiated disciple.
- The ṛtvik philosophy accepts Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and so it is not overtly Māyāvādī; still, it is distorted and thus impure.
- It has impersonalist undertones characteristic of traditional sahajiyās, and is an obstacle to pure devotion for the following reasons:
- Ṛtviks agree that their understanding of initiation is not standard, but they say that their recommended process for connecting with the disciplic succession is acceptable due to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s extraordinarily empowered status.
- Yet the suggestion that Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered to act contrary to scripture and Vaiṣṇava tradition—or would use his empowerment to do so—is an insult rather than praise.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- Why?
- Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly emphasized that his empowerment came from strictly following scripture and his predecessors. [Bhagavad-gītā 3.27, Madras, 1 January, 1976; Lecture, Vṛndāvana, 7 April, 1976]
- He was proud of his fidelity. To suggest that Prabhupāda was unchaste to his spiritual heritage—that he was an independent, absolute authority—is to attribute to him a status the kartābhajā saḥajiyās attribute to their gurus. [Kartābhajā saḥajiyās believe that the guru is the “boss,” the ultimate and final authority]
- It also resembles the Māyāvāda philosophy in the way it twists the meaning of scripture to suit its own preconceived conclusions by means of the indirect explanations called gaṇa-vṛtti. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.110, purport]

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- Moreover, the ṛtviks' core argument that ISKCON's future generations have an inherited right to a direct dīkṣā connection with Śrīla Prabhupāda is much akin to the jāta-gosāṇi sahajiyās, who claim a spiritual lineage to Lord Nityānanda, for instance, solely by seminal ties.
- Both groups lay claim to a concocted spiritual heritage without the explicit empowerment from their founder.
- This core argument also clears the way for all devotees for all time to jump over the line of disciplic succession to Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- It obscures the truth that serving the servant of the servant is superior to direct service.
- It also opens a Pandora's box by allowing anyone direct access to any member of the disciplic succession, including Kṛṣṇa Himself.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- In this sense it is similar to the rebellious mood of Māyāvādīs who accept the disciplic succession not as an eternal reality but as a temporary means to liberation, and who then want to be the Lord rather than anyone's servant.
- Ṛtviks may have strong faith, but like other wayward Vaiṣṇava groups, their faith is based on defective knowledge.
- Thus it should be recognized as a mere semblance of faith and rejected.
- Vaiṣṇavas should not be surprised by the weedlike ideologies that grow in the pristine garden of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings.
- The Lord Himself predicted that such growths were in-evitable.
- In the quotation below, He reassures devotees that they can indeed remain on the path of pure devotion by carefully following the teachings and examples of His empowered devotees.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- Lord Caitanya said, “O Haridāsa! Listen attentively to what I have to say.
- The truth about the holy name will be hidden by mischievous rascals who will create a dark shroud of ignorance over the entire world.
- At that time, these excellent and unrivalled instructions of yours about chanting in the association of saintly persons shall be understood only by a remaining handful of devotees.
- “The true path of the holy name will be followed by saintly souls who are totally detached from material life.
- They will chant the holy name with bhāva and will therefore be known as rasika-bhaktas.
- Their mood will be that of separation, and by their chanting they will relish the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the eight principal gopīs.



## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- “The jīva is blessed with pure bhakti only on the strength of his sukṛti, or piety and faith.
- Not everyone is entitled to have such devotion, but in order to instil such devotion in the hearts of the faithful I have descended to propagate the chanting of the holy name as the religion for this age.”<sup>119</sup>
- Another faction that may damage the faith of Prabhupādānu-gas—Śrīla Prabhupāda’s strict followers—warrants mention.
- It contains some (but not all) of the Vaiṣṇavas outside our Society.
- These devotees are either former members of ISKCON or current members of the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- From a theological and philosophical viewpoint they are more or less in harmony with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings, but from the point of view of how Lord Caitanya’s mission should be structured, guided, and presented they are at odds with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mandate.
- Such organizational disparity is tolerable as long as institutions and their members do not mix too closely.
- Unfortunately, certain Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas do everything but keep a healthy distance from ISKCON. They make it their mission to impose their views on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Society.
- By subtle politics, word jugglery, or plain intimidation, they try to infiltrate ISKCON and convert its followers.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- With flowery words of praise for Śrīla Prabhupāda they attempt to qualify his teachings, undermine his representatives, and reroute his movement to another ultimate authority.
- In short, they want to share at best, or supplant at worst, Śrīla Prabhupāda's position as founder-ācārya of his own Society.
- In this case the threat is to devotees' faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda, not to their faith in Kṛṣṇa.
- The pure faith of a Prabhupādānuga is that all perfection will come from exclusively following Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions.
- When ISKCON's members concede that Śrīla Prabhupāda's guidance and authority may be tempered or even diluted by the guidance and authority of another Vaiṣṇava, theirs becomes a semblance of faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda.

## SBC 3 – Eligibility for Devotion - Part 2 (Summary, and Contemporary Examples)

- That semblance of faith, even if it leads to Kṛṣṇa, is unacceptable to pure followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- It was he who said, “Always follow my instructions and my example. This should be your life and soul.” [Letter to Hamsadūta, Māyāpur, 1 October, 1974]
- Prabhupādānugas want the result awarded by following Śrīla Prabhupāda without external interference.
- They want Śrīla Prabhupāda as he is.

*ei saba sdhanera ati tucch balaei saba sādhanera ati tuccha bala  
kṛṣṇa-bhakti vinā tāhā dite nāre phala*

- Without devotional service, all other methods for spiritual self-realization are weak and insignificant. Unless one comes to the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, jñāna and yoga cannot give the desired results. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.18