

# Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

by H.H Śivarāma Swami

# Chapter 6- Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- When the spiritual opulence of pure faith awakens in devotees, they surrender to Kṛṣṇa and revive their eternal legacy, pure devotional service.
- Captivated by Kṛṣṇa’s promise at the end of Bhagavad-gītā, [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 18.66] devotees throw themselves at the Lord’s lotus feet and pray, “My dear Lord! Lost in the material world and having forgotten You for so many lifetimes, today I surrender to You.
- Once again I am Your sincere and serious servant.
- Please engage me in Your service.” [This payer is based on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.33]
- When Kṛṣṇa hears such a sincere appeal His heart melts.
- He is called bhakta-vatsala because of His partiality toward his devotees.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Therefore He can never ignore even the slightest trace of devotion, what to speak of genuine submission to His will.
- Surrender at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet is a milestone in the devotees’ sojourn in the material world.
- The Lord acknowledges this by instilling in them fearlessness in their combat with māyā and by extending to them His infallible shelter.
- The monkeys led by Hanumān were suspicious of the demon Vibhīṣaṇa’s surrender to Lord Rāmacandra, but the eternal King of Ayodhyā replied:

sakṛd eva prapanno yas  
tavāsmīti ca yācate  
abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai  
dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- “It is My vow that if a person only once seriously surrenders unto Me, saying ‘My dear Lord, from this day I am Yours,’ and prays to Me for courage, I shall immediately award courage to that person, and he will always remain safe from that time on.” (Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-kāṇḍa 18.33)
- The material energy is ashamed to stand before Kṛṣṇa.
- Therefore the darkness of māyās illusion cannot touch devotees who maintain vows of surrender and bask in the rays of the Kṛṣṇa sun.
- Unfortunately, the pure faith of devotees is generally weak when it is new, and they are not always able to maintain their vows.
- In such cases, even in Kṛṣṇa’s presence, the powerful witch of the desire to enjoy the material world and to liberate oneself from material bondage casts a spell on the heart and obstructs the bliss of devotional service. [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.22]

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Fully aware of this, Kṛṣṇa empowers His devotees through suitable instructions to help them withstand māyās allurements.
- Inspired by Kṛṣṇa, devotees purify their hearts by practising surrender-saturated devotion.
- And in time, when but a slight fragrance of pure love appears, attraction for material enjoyment is driven away forever.
- Of course, Kṛṣṇa’s bestowal of mercy should not be misunderstood as a violation of the devotees’ free will.
- Devotees choose the direction they take in spiritual life by the company they keep.
- If they choose to associate with Kṛṣṇa, they progress in pure devotion and become eligible for His mercy.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- If they choose to associate with māyā, they regress to the service of karma and jñāna.
- Moreover, the strength to keep company with Kṛṣṇa and to resist māyā's temptations comes from chanting and hearing.
- Devotees who neglect these disciplines invariably become weak.
- In that weakened condition, unable to resist māyā, they again choose to leave Kṛṣṇa's service.
- Receiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy and advancing in devotion, then, is a matter of free will, but in order to consistently make the right choices, all devotees, be they neophyte, intermediate, or advanced—but especially the neophytes—must not neglect their spiritual practices.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- With resolute determination they should quickly move forward to the stage of advanced devotion.
- From that position they will rejoice in the mellows of love and feel repulsed by any alternative to pure devotion.
- The gusty winds of māyā may indeed toss novices about on the ocean of pure devotion, causing them to slip at times and even to engage in sinful acts. Regardless, such devotees, even though neophyte, are known as pure devotees due to their implicit faith in Kṛṣṇa's order to abandon selfish religions and to serve Him alone.
- This is Kṛṣṇa's conclusive opinion.



## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān  
mayādiṣṭān api svakān  
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān  
mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ

- “Occupational duties are described in the religious scriptures.
- If one analyses them, he can fully understand their qualities and faults and then give them up completely to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- Such a person is considered a first-class man.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.32, as translated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.62.)

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- On rare occasions, however, an ācārya will refer to a neophyte pure devotee as a semblance of a devotee (bhaktābhāsa) and his effort at service as a semblance of devotion.
- The reason for this is explained later, in chapter eight.
- In the interval between Kṛṣṇa's departure and Lord Caitanya's advent, the science of pure devotion spoken in the Bhagavad-gītā was almost lost.
- By the influence of Kali-yuga, forms of the semblance of devotion and, worse, fabricated devotion, had become synonymous with the ultimate goal of life.
- Consequently, the general mass of people had no access to the teachings or practice of pure devotional service, and the few souls who did search for it were misled by ignorant and devious advocates of falsity.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Caitanya Mahāprabhu again revived that science by His example and precept, yet the only written work directly attributed to Him is the eight-verse Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka.
- Because people are no longer able to maintain or follow the oral tradition of disciplic succession, the Lord instructed His confidential disciples to record His bountiful teachings and substantiate them with references from revealed scripture.
- He specifically empowered Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī to write bhakti scriptures.
- Kavi-karṇapūra records the history in this way:

kālena vṛndāvana-keli-vārtā  
lupteti tām khyāpayitum viśiṣya  
kṛpāmṛtenābhiṣiṣeca devas  
tatraiva rūpaṁ ca sanātanam ca

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- “In the course of time, the transcendental news of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana was almost lost.
- To enunciate explicitly those transcendental pastimes, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with the nectar of His mercy, empowered Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī to carry out this work in Vṛndāvana.” (Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam 9.38)
- Rūpa Gosvāmī followed Lord Caitanya’s order and wrote the most authoritative guide to pure devotional service, the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.
- Based on a precise definition of pure devotion, he described the distinctive characteristics of pure devotional service in practice (sādhana), in ecstasy (bhāva), and in love of God (prema).

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- In the following well-known verse, Śrī Rūpa introduced his definition of pure devotion with the innovative term *uttama-bhakti*, “first-class devotional service.”

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam  
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-  
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

- “When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action.
- The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favourably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11)

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- This definition of bhakti is in essence no different from the definitions given in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Nārada-pañcarātra; but its preciseness clarifies lingering misconceptions about devotional service. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.11–14 and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.170]
- Moreover, the specific term Śrī Rūpa chose, *uttama-bhakti*, distinguished Lord Caitanya’s movement from the cheating religions that had popularized many impure forms of devotion.
- Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda comments that just as a person says to a friend, “Here is some pure water,” to distinguish his offering from contaminated water, so Rūpa Gosvāmī welcomes his reader with the words “first-class devotion” to distinguish it from any type of mixed devotion. [eka, chapter 1]
- What Rūpa Gosvāmī calls first-class (*uttama*) is also referred to in scripture as exclusive (*kevala*), unalloyed (*ananya*), untainted (*akiñcana*), and pure (*śuddha*).

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- This definition of uttama-bhakti is the most important verse of Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.
- It is the paribhāṣā-sūtra, the verse on which rests the correct understanding of other statements in the book.
- More precisely, a paribhāṣā-sūtra is an unequivocal statement that establishes the theme of a text in which there may be apparently unrelated or even contradictory statements.
- Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives an elaborate and fascinating argument [Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā, anuccheda 29] to establish that the paribhāṣā-sūtra of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the śloka beginning ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.28]
- In his Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā commentary he gives the following definition:

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- “A paribhāṣā-sūtra explains the proper method for understanding a book.
- It gives the key by which one may understand the true purport of a series of apparently unrelated facts and arguments.” [Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha, anuccheda 29]
- Thus if the direct meaning of a statement seems to contradict the paribhāṣā-sūtra, then such a statement should be interpreted in such a way that it conforms to the governing theme of the paribhāṣā-sūtra.
- In a similar sense one could say that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is based on pure devotion, which Rūpa Gosvāmī has clearly defined.
- Therefore the many facets of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in both its practice and distribution, must conform to this definition.



## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- If statements or conclusions appear incongruent or opposed to this definition, either they should be adjusted to conform or rejected outright.
- In other words, Vaiṣṇavas must constantly refer to this verse as their mission statement and devotional template.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda and his predecessors analyse in minute detail the meaning of each word and phrase of this verse. By doing so they dispel ignorance about pure devotional service and protect devotees from the influence of the semblance of devotion.
- This book strives to follow their example and thus serve their purpose.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda's word-for-word translation and rendering of Rūpa Gosvāmī's defining verse is as follows:

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam  
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-  
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā

- anya-abhilāṣitā-śūnyam—without desires other than those for the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, or without material desires (such as those for meat-eating, illicit sex, gambling, and addiction to intoxicants); jñāna—by the knowledge of the philosophy of the monist Māyāvādīs; karma—by fruitive activities; ādi—by artificially practising detachment, by the mechanical practice of yoga, by studying the Sāṅkhya philosophy, and so on; anāvṛtam—not covered; ānukūlyena—favourable; kṛṣṇa-anuśīlanam—cultivation of service in relationship to Kṛṣṇa; bhaktiḥ uttamā—first-class devotional service.
- When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favourably, as Kṛṣṇa desires. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.167)
- The reader may question the need for studying such a familiar verse in detail.
- This book intends to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instruction to devotees that they make an effort to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious by scrutinizingly studying the glories of the Lord and of devotion to Him.
- Each devotee has a unique intellectual capacity.
- Kṛṣṇa asks devotees to worship Him with their intelligence. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.17.9, purport]
- If out of laziness they neglect to do so, the seed of pure devotion will fail to produce pure faith.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Instead, devotees will only cultivate the weeds of the semblance of devotion, which sprout into mixed faith.
- The following verse and purport should eradicate any lingering doubts in this connection.

siddhānta baliyā citte nā kara alasa  
ihā ha-ite kṛṣṇe lāge sudṛḍha mānasa

- “A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind.
- Thus one’s mind becomes attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 2.117)

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Śrīla Prabhupāda comments,
- There are many students who, in spite of reading the Bhagavad-gītā, misunderstand Kṛṣṇa because of imperfect knowledge and conclude Him to be an ordinary historical personality.
- This one must not do.
- One should be particularly careful to understand the truth about Kṛṣṇa.
- If because of laziness one does not come to know Kṛṣṇa conclusively, one will be misguided about the cult of devotion, like those who declare themselves advanced devotees and imitate the transcendental symptoms sometimes observed in liberated souls.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Although the use of thoughts and arguments is a most suitable process for inducing an uninitiated person to become a devotee, neophytes in devotional service must always alertly understand Kṛṣṇa through the vision of the revealed scriptures, the bona fide devotees, and the spiritual master.
- Unless one hears about Śrī Kṛṣṇa from such authorities, one cannot make advancement in devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- The revealed scriptures mention nine means of attaining devotional service, of which the first and foremost is hearing from authority.
- The seed of devotion cannot sprout unless watered by the process of hearing and chanting.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- One should submissively receive the transcendental messages from spiritually advanced sources and chant the very same messages for one's own benefit as well as the benefit of one's audience. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 2.117, purport]
- Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of "pure" devotional service speaks solely of the constitutional nature (svarūpa) of the living entity as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.
- It does not cater to the designations the soul acquires in contact with the material modes of nature through the gross and subtle bodies.
- The first two lines of the verse describe the marginal characteristics (taṭastha-lakṣaṇa) of pure devotion, and the second two its principal characteristics (svarūpa-lakṣaṇa).
- In The Nectar of Devotion, Śrīla Prabhupāda describes the primary characteristics of pure devotion:

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- “First-class devotional service is known by one’s tendency to be fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, serving the Lord favourably.” [The Nectar of Devotion, introduction]
- Thus the three primary characteristics of pure devotion are: it is full engagement (kṛṣṇānuśīlanam), it is performed with intent favourable to Kṛṣṇa (ānukūlyena), and it has Kṛṣṇa as its sole beneficiary.
- Full engagement in devotional service has many aspects.
- Whether performed at the stage of practice or perfection, all aspects culminate in activities authorized by the disciplic succession.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda often uses the word “cultivation” to indicate activities in full engagement that reawaken or are characteristic of the dormant spirit of loving service.



## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Jīva Gosvāmī, in his commentary on this verse, divides the cultivation of devotion into two aspects, the activity itself (ceṣṭā) and its underlying mood of devotion (bhāva).
- Both are connected; however, the activities of devotion may be said to include the mood of devotion.
- In the final analysis, since verbs predicate action, a study of the activities of devotion explains fully the word cultivation.
- As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Without activity, consciousness alone cannot help us.” [The Nectar of Devotion, introduction]
- There are two sides to the cultivation of the activities of devotion: accepting activities that are favourable (pravṛtti) and rejecting activities that are unfavourable (nivṛtti).

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- As already mentioned, these are the first two of six stages of surrender in pure faith.
- A devotee performs both pravṛtti and nivṛtti with the body, words, and mind.
- Such cultivation is said to increase in difficulty as it progressively increases in subtlety from bodily to mental activities.
- Examples of activities favourable for devotion are the first ten of the sixty-four items of sādhana-bhakti delineated in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, beginning with taking shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 6]
- Examples of activities to avoid are the second ten of those sixty-four items, beginning with rigidly giving up the company of nondevotees and including avoiding offences in service (sevāparādha), to the holy name (nāmāparādha), and to holy places (dhāmāparādha).

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The prefix anu- in the word anuśīlanam means “following.”
- The cultivation of devotional service must follow the guidance of spiritual masters connected to Kṛṣṇa through the chain of disciplic succession.
- Such connection ensures that activities in devotion are performed according to Kṛṣṇa’s instructions and liking.
- Connecting with Kṛṣṇa not only authorizes activities in devotion but also spiritualizes them.
- Devotional service is an aspect of Kṛṣṇa’s internal potency (svarūpa-śakti).
- When a devotee performs activities following Kṛṣṇa’s desire, the svarūpa-śakti coming from Kṛṣṇa through the spiritual master spiritualizes those activities.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that the energy by which devotional service is performed “can be spiritualized by the mercy of both the bona fide spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa.” [The Nectar of Devotion, introduction]
- To the untrained eye, the activities of pure devotion may appear mundane.
- For instance, a materialist may exhibit affection for his child in so many ways, and a devotee may exhibit affection for the Lord’s deity form.
- Despite appearances, the devotee’s activity is under the direction of the internal potency and is therefore supra-mundane (aprākṛta).
- 
- The following discussion describes the second of the primary characteristics of pure devotion: that it is performed with intent favourable to Kṛṣṇa.
- The qualifying adverb ānukūlyena is precise and means “with favourable intent.”

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- When kṛṣṇa- is added as a prefix, it means that the cultivation of devotional activities must be done in a mood favourable to Kṛṣṇa.
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has carefully responded to scholars who consider that the definition of pure devotion would also be complete if ānukūlyena were to mean simply “pleasing to Kṛṣṇa.”
- The Ṭhākura has shown this to be incorrect.
- Any meaning other than the one intended by the author imposes a definition on pure devotion either too broad or too narrow.
- How could “pleasing” be a definition too broad or too narrow for the word ānukūlyena?

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- If ānukūlyena were to mean the cultivation of activities that are simply pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, then some nondevotional activities would be included in the concept of pure devotion and some devotional activities would not.
- An example of an interpretation that would be too open concerns the gigantic wrestler Cāṇūra.
- He was beating Kṛṣṇa’s butter-soft body with his fists in the presence of Mathurās residents, and Kṛṣṇa was feeling pleasure by tasting the mellow of heroism (vīra-rasa).
- Scripture confirms that kṣatriyas enjoy a good fight, even when they experience bodily pain: himālayam nyasta-daṇḍa-prahaṛṣam manasvinām iva sat samprahāraḥ, “The Himalaya Mountains...are the delight of those who have accepted the staff of the renounced order like fighters who have accepted a good lashing from the enemy.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.13.30]

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Thus if we were to accept the meaning of ānukūlyena as “pleasing,” then the definition of pure devotion would be too open.
- It would include the mood and behaviour of an antagonistic demon, a mood never accepted as devotional service.
- Cāṅūra surely did not intend to please Kṛṣṇa.
- An example of an interpretation that would be too narrow concerns Mother Yaśodā.
- She once stopped breastfeeding Kṛṣṇa in order to attend to milk boiling over on the stove.
- Kṛṣṇa, being displeased with His mother, bit His lips, trembled, and began to cry.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The Bhāgavatam affirms: “Being very angry and biting His reddish lips with His teeth, Kṛṣṇa, with false tears in His eyes, broke the container of yogurt with a piece of stone.
- Then He entered a room and began to eat the freshly churned butter in a solitary place.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.9.6]
- Again, if we were to accept the meaning of ānukūlyena as “pleasing,” then the definition of pure devotion would be too narrow.
- Kṛṣṇa’s feigned displeasure would exclude Mother Yaśodā’s pure loving service to Kṛṣṇa.
- Her only intention was to please Him.



## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- In other words, it is not correct to describe ānukūlyena as simply “pleasing” to Kṛṣṇa.
- The word must mean “with intent to please” Kṛṣṇa.
- As clear as this logic is, a diehard critic may still argue, “Accepting that ānukūlyena means with a favourable attitude, which is the same as saying in the absence of an unfavourable attitude, what need is there to further qualify bhakti with the word anuśīlanam?”
- Why not just say kṛṣṇānukūlyena bhaktir uttamā, ‘pure devotion exists when there is an absence of an unfavourable attitude toward Kṛṣṇa’?”
- Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura answers that the meaning of pure devotion is not established by the mere absence of an inimical attitude.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- A clay pot has no animosity toward Kṛṣṇa, but because it has neither a service mood nor active service one can hardly say it has pure devotion. [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu]
- One last point on ānukūlyena: Śrīla Prabhupāda and his prede-cessors concur that because Kṛṣṇa’s devotees ”and’ paraphernalia ”are’ integral to Kṛṣṇa’s service, service with the intent to please them also constitutes ”pure’ devotion. [The Nectar of Devotion, introduction]
- Thus Rūpa Gosvāmī’s use of the word ānukūlyena in conjunction with kṛṣṇānuśīlanam must be accepted as perfect because of its ability to stand firm against all challenging arguments.
- There is no need to modify or qualify that usage.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The third and final primary characteristic of pure devotion is that Kṛṣṇa is its sole beneficiary.
- Of the primary characteristics, this one is the most important.
- When we say “Kṛṣṇa” we mean Kṛṣṇa, His personal expansions (svāmśa), His separated parts (vibhinnāmśa), and His various energies (śaktis).
- The Garuḍa Purāṇa originally defines bhakti as service to the Lord alone, which means Kṛṣṇa and his personal expansions (svāmśa). [This definition of devotion from the Garuḍa Purāṇa, Pūrva-khaṇḍa 231.3 was given in chapter one.]
- But when devotees engage in exclusive service to Kṛṣṇa, by their connection with Him they also become eligible to receive pure loving devotion.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Śrīla Prabhupāda lists Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees, His paraphernalia, and His abodes as objects of loving affection. [The Nectar of Devotion, introduction]
- That said, two aspects of Kṛṣṇa are not objects of pure devotional service: His all-pervasive feature as Brahman and His localized feature as Paramātmā.
- One realizes Brahman by spiritual knowledge in the philosophical process of eliminating the mundane (neti neti, “not this, not that”).
- Brahman consists only of the existence (sat) feature of the Godhead.
- It does not include His features of cit (knowledge) or ānanda (bliss).
- By definition, then, Brahman is devoid of personal qualities and therefore cannot be an object of service.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Four-armed Paramātmā is the object of meditation on the paths of aṣṭāṅga-yoga, haṭha-yoga, and rāja-yoga.
- Although this meditation contains some attributes of devotion, it is not pure because Paramātmā manifests only the qualities of existence and knowledge, not the essential feature of bliss.
- Furthermore, the Paramātmā aspect is not the eternal form of the Godhead.
- His function relates more to displaying the external potency than to the internal potency, and He does not display all the variegated characteristics of transcendence.
- Thus He is also not the object of pure devotion.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The Supreme Personality, Bhagavān, is the only feature of Godhead to whom uttama-bhakti flows.
- The juxtaposition of kṛṣṇa and anuśīlanam implies the confidential truth that the favourable cultivation of activities to please Kṛṣṇa is topmost (uttama).
- This means that from the point of view of transcendental mellows (rasa), the pure devotion shown to Kṛṣṇa by His devotees is superior (uttama) to that shown to Kṛṣṇa's svāmīśa expansions by their devotees.
- True, pure devotional service is abundant in the countless Vaikuṅṭha planets, where Lord Nārāyaṇa's eternal associates adore Him in forms such as Nṛsimha and Vāmana, but vaikuṅṭha-bhakti cannot compare in purity to the vraja-bhakti of the inhabitants of Goloka Vṛndāvana, the abode of the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- How should devotees understand this transcendental dichotomy between devotion to Kṛṣṇa and devotion to His personal expansions?
- Śrī Rūpa explains it like this:

siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi  
śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ  
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-  
rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitih

- “According to transcendental realization, there is no difference between the forms of Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa. Yet in Kṛṣṇa there is a special transcendental attraction due to the conjugal mellow, and consequently He surpasses Nārāyaṇa. This is the conclusion of transcendental mellows.” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.59)

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- To further substantiate the above statement, Rūpa Gosvāmī has made a careful study of the qualities of the Supreme Lord.
- This study reveals that in total Lord Nārāyaṇa has sixty transcendental qualities and Śrī Kṛṣṇa sixty-four.
- The additional four extraordinary qualities unique to Kṛṣṇa testify to His supreme sweetness and to the supremacy of pure devotional service to Him.
- These four qualities are: His wonderful pastimes (līlā-mādhurya), His unique loving exchanges with the Vraja-vāsīs (prema-mādhurya), His flute playing (veṇu-mādhurya), and His extraordinary beauty (rūpa-mādhurya).
- A strong evidence of the superiority of these qualities is that by their influence, even Lakṣmīdevī, Nārāyaṇa's eternal consort, always desires Kṛṣṇa's company. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.29.36]



## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- The internal potency (svarūpa-śakti) has two aspects: complete opulence (aiśvarya) and supreme sweetness (mādhurya).
- When complete opulence dominates the internal potency, the Lord appears as Nārāyaṇa, and when supreme sweetness dominates He appears as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- Divine opulence invokes vaikunṭha-bhakti, also known as vaidhī bhakti, and divine sweetness invokes vraja-bhakti, also known as rāgātmikā-bhakti.
- Later chapters will show that there are two types of vaidhī bhakti or regulative devotion, one that leads to the Vaikunṭha planets and another, practised by ISKCON members, that leads to spontaneous devotion in Goloka.
- Here a question arises.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- Since complete opulence accompanies the Lord in the material world and, with only one exception, in all the planets of the spiritual world, is not complete opulence (aiśvarya) preeminent?
- The answer to this question is an emphatic no.
- Despite the predominance of complete opulence almost everywhere the Lord appears, in the presence of supreme sweetness, the charm of aiśvarya is completely eclipsed.
- Lord Caitanya substantiated the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness in a conversation with the great devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, Venkata Bhaṭṭa, by citing the gopīs' behaviour in Lord Nārāyaṇa's presence. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 9.147–50]

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

gopīnām paśupendra-nandana-juṣo bhāvasya kas tām kṛtī  
vijñātum kṣamate durūha-padavī-sañcāriṇaḥ prakriyām  
āviṣkurvati vaiṣṇavīm api tanum tasmin bhujair jiṣṇubhir  
yāsām hanta caturbhir adbhuta-ruciṁ rāgodayaḥ kuñcati

- “Once, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa playfully manifested Himself in the form of very beautiful, four-handed Nārāyaṇa. When the gopīs saw this exalted form, however, their ecstatic feelings were crippled. A learned scholar, therefore, cannot understand the gopīs’ ecstatic feelings, which are firmly fixed on the original form of Lord Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda Mahārāja. The wonderful feelings of the gopīs in ecstatic parama-rasa with Kṛṣṇa constitute the greatest mystery in spiritual life.” (Lalita-mādhava-nāṭakam act 6, scene I, text 54)
- Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda submits a wonderful way to test the superiority of the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness over the opulent devotion to Lord Nārāyaṇa.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- He says, “Dear devotees! Just once deliberate on supreme opulence and then lovingly bring the sentiments of supreme sweetness into your hearts.
- By doing so, you will understand the truth.
- Just as the rising sun consumes the moonlight, so the rise of supreme sweetness in a devotee’s heart overwhelms the taste of supreme opulence.” [Bhakti-tattva-viveka, chapter 1]
- To help the reader make this experiment, the following two paragraphs are meditations worthy of comparison.
- “Lord Nārāyaṇa was seated on the shoulder of Stotra, or Garuda, who had big wings.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- As soon as the Lord appeared, all directions were illuminated, diminishing the lustre of Brahmā and the others present.
- His complexion was blackish, His garment yellow like gold, and His helmet as dazzling as the sun.
- His hair was bluish, the colour of black bees, and His face was decorated with earrings.
- His eight hands held a conch shell, wheel, club, lotus flower, arrow, bow, shield, and sword, and they were decorated with golden ornaments such as bangles and bracelets.
- His whole body resembled a blossoming tree beautifully decorated with various kinds of flowers.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.7.19–20)

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- And, “Wearing a peacock-feather ornament on His head, blue karnikāra flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayantī garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints.
- He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.21.5)
- Seen through the eyes of transcendental realization (siddhānta), pure devotion means service rendered to Kṛṣṇa and His personal expansions.
- Seen through the eyes of transcendental mellows (rasa-tattva), however, the taste of pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa’s expansions pales next to that of devotion to Śyāmasundara.
- This is the conclusion of all rasa-śāstras, foremost of which is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

## SBC 6 – Pure Devotional Service Defined - Part 1

- This completes the analysis of the primary characteristics of pure devotional service.
- Chapter seven will study its secondary characteristics.

ei 'śuddha-bhakti'—ihā haite 'premā haya  
pañcarātre, bhāgavate ei lakṣaṇa kaya

- These activities are called śuddha-bhakti, pure devotional service.
- If one renders such pure devotional service, he develops his original love for Kṛṣṇa in due course of time.
- In Vedic literatures like the Pañcarātras and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, these symptoms are described. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.169