

Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

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Chapter 22- Hearing Without Faith

SBC 22 – Hearing Without Faith

- Three types of people come in contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness: the faithless contact devotional service by the Lord's arrangement; those with impure faith contact it through ritualistic endeavours; and those with pure faith systematically cultivate devotional service.
- In the category of the faithless are persons whose goal in life is sense gratification (karmīs), those who strive for liberation from material suffering (jñānīs), and those who aspire for mystic perfections (yogīs).
- These three groups, though couched in Vedic terms, are universally found in any human society.
- Even today in the West's developed countries people's goals correlate with the aims of these three groups mentioned in Vedic literature.

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- Kṛṣṇa asserts that perfect mystics and seekers of liberation are rare, and that tallies with the fact that today the vast majority of people are fruitive workers. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 7.3]
- In short, people with a serious interest in spiritual life are uncommon.
- Among those with a serious interest only a few are fortunate enough to have a semblance of faith in Kṛṣṇa—that is, faith mixed with desires for material improvement (sa-kāma), salvation (mokṣa-kāma), or mystic perfection (yoga-kāma).
- As stated above, fruitive devotees are in the majority.
- Even in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, many devotees, happy to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and lead a pious life, still cling to the hope that Kṛṣṇa will fulfil their material desires.

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- These persons are sa-kāma-bhaktas.
- Rarest among all types of devotees are those who have pure faith in Kṛṣṇa (śuddha-bhaktas).
- Even neophytes in this category, despite being handicapped by reactions to past sins, dwarf all other spiritualists.
- This is because their accumulated devotional credits allow them to accept Kṛṣṇa as the only goal of life.
- Pure devotees chant and hear about Kṛṣṇa to perfect their devotion.
- After achieving perfection, they continue to hear and chant out of love.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda often said that he would consider his mission a success if it were to produce one such perfect devotee.
- In his preface to Bhagavad-gītā As It Is he writes, “We hope, therefore, that people will derive the greatest benefit by studying Bhagavad-gītā As It Is as we have presented it here, and if even one man becomes a pure devotee of the Lord, we shall consider our attempt a success.”
- Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presentation of the Bhagavad-gītā indeed, of the entire Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement—is meant to inspire all three—the faithless, the motivated worshippers, and the pure devotees—to become perfect Vaiṣṇavas.
- Prabhupāda followed the instructions given by Nārada to Vyāsa, instructions prescribed by all Gauḍīya ācāryas.

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- This timeless wisdom encapsulates the complete spectrum of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy into a set of teachings suitable for everyone.
- Some people neglect these teachings, others respectfully acknowledge them, and still others put them into practice.
- Of those who apply Prabhupāda’s teachings, some take them up gradually and others without delay.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings are a treasure house of spiritual knowledge, and anyone may plunder this treasure house according to his or her qualification.
- Whether the plunderers seek moral wisdom, peace of mind, pure devotion, or divine love, all can have their desires fulfilled through His Divine Grace’s teachings.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda withholds nothing about the Supreme Absolute Truth.
- The bulk of his teachings may aim at elevating novices from the bodily to the spiritual concept of life, but a good portion of his instructions guide advanced devotees to ultimate perfection.
- As explained earlier, sincere devotees can achieve success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by applying the teachings for which they are fit.
- Such practice may include studying the books of previous ācāryas or those of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s followers, but this reading should be done in light of and in harmony with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings, not in opposition to them, and certainly not as an alternative to them.
- And devotees should definitely refrain from delving into the higher teachings in Prabhupāda’s books without having the corresponding qualification.

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- Such efforts are fruitless, and they transgress devotional principles.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda’s sublime presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness centres on the inconceivable potency of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.
- His motto is “Everyone should chant.” [Lecture, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.15, Los Angeles, 1 June, 1972]
- Those who do so elevate themselves, be they nondevotees, mixed devotees, or pure devotees.
- He also encourages people to seek out the company of Vaiṣṇavas, to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and to worship the deity.
- For those who cannot go to the temple or who choose not to, Śrīla Prabhupāda has arranged to take Kṛṣṇa consciousness to them.

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- He organized book distribution, public hari-nāma parties, grand festivals, and outreach preaching at homes, schools, and just about everywhere else.
- The more systematically aspirants study Śrīla Prabhupāda's books the more regularly they worship Kṛṣṇa.
- And the more attached they become to the company of devotees, the more perfectly they chant the holy names.
- As their chanting improves from offensive, to clearing, to offenceless, they advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, tasting ever-increasing spiritual happiness.
- Who takes up Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and to what degree, depends on each person's good fortune, and the good fortune of the people in general depends on the willingness of ISKCON's preachers to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's order to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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- People should be ushered into the house of devotion and taught to hear, chant, and remember Kṛṣṇa according to their qualification.
- This chapter examines the practices appropriate for nonbelievers who come in contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- By Kali-yuga’s pitiless intrigues, today’s people are becoming increasingly faithless.
- In most European countries, for example, a mere fifteen percent of the people attend church—an all-time low. [Time, volume 165]
- Of those who profess a specific faith, many concoct teachings that are without scriptural basis.
- Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda often said that to preach means to inject faith into the hearts of the faithless.

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- Without faith no one can take up spiritual life, what to speak of make tangible spiritual progress.
- Two types of faithless souls contact Kṛṣṇa consciousness: those who know nothing about Kṛṣṇa and those who know relatively little.
- The latter are better situated, of course, because knowledge is the precursor to faith.
- Still, for the sake of brevity, this section will apply the principles for reaching out to the faithless to both categories.
- The faithless are just as individual as the faithful, so the way to elevate each of them is unique.
- Preachers must therefore carefully balance purity with utility.

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- Preaching must adhere to the principles of devotion, yet be tailored to suit individual needs.
- Success in preaching can be measured by how effectively the faithless come to pure faith and the faithful to advanced Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- For ISKCON preachers Bhagavad-gītā As It Is is the basic textbook.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda calls it “the ABC’s of dharma.” [Teachings of Lord Kapila, chapter 6, text 11]

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- Yet in Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa prohibits teaching its more confidential portions to nondevotees:

idaṁ te nātapaskāya
nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyaṁ
na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati

- “This confidential knowledge may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me.” (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 18.67) [The confidential knowledge Kṛṣṇa refers to here is summarized in the two previous verses (18.65–66)]

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- Were unqualified people to receive such knowledge, they would become envious of Kṛṣṇa.
- Envy results in offences, and offences obstruct the awakening of faith.
- Therefore the first step in preaching is to establish openness to and appreciation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- These attitudes make of the heart a fertile field in which the seed of devotion can take root.
- Lord Caitanya introduced public hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana to prepare faithless people for devotional service as much as to inspire the faithful to continue chanting.

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- Hearing the Lord’s holy name purifies the ignorant; if they repeat the name even unintentionally, cynically, neglectfully, or in jest, the seed of faith will still sprout.
- The public’s favourable response to the hari-nāma party is often this kind of faithless yet offenceless chanting, exemplified by the innocent expression, “Here come the Hare Kṛṣṇas!”
- That sinful people can chant without offence—a grade of chanting neophyte sādhakas aspire for—often amazes practising devotees.

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- Yet Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam confirms the special benefit of accidental chanting:

sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyam vā
stobham helanam eva vā
vaikuṅṭha-nāma-grahaṇam
aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ

- “One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly [to indicate something else], jokingly, for musical entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.2.14)

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- Even though done without faith in the name or the owner of the name, the four types of chanting mentioned in this verse are considered offenceless. [Śrī Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi, chapter 3, and lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.2.12–14, Allahabad, 17 January, 1971]
- Still, such accidental chanting is not a form of sādhana because it is neither systematic nor faithful.
- Yet it is a foundation from which devotional practice may grow.
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- In addition to chanting, further means to introduce people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to the Lord's names include devotional festivals, prasāda distribution, book distribution, and dramatic performances.

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- Preaching ultimately guides people to the topmost theistic realizations, yet the journey often begins when they contact the Kṛṣṇa conscious culture through vegetarian cuisine, exotic music, and colourful festivals.
- Preachers must be careful, though, that the means they employ to introduce pure devotion—namely cultural practices and events—do not replace the goal, kṛṣṇa-prema.
- To avoid this pitfall, devotees need to have a clear understanding of the various means by which people are systematically elevated through the stages of devotion.
- More importantly, devotees must teach people how to appropriately apply these means.
- This is the way to do justice to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s perfect legacy as the world teacher of pure devotion.

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- Book distribution is worthy of special mention as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s favourite means to awaken people’s interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- He placed great emphasis on the distribution of his books, especially his commentaries on scriptures such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- He wanted his books to be available to everyone.
- His mood in regards to book distribution was similar to that of the Pañca-tattva’s mood toward the distribution of love of God:

pātrāpātra-vicāra nāhi, nāhi sthānāsthāna
yei yānhā pāya, tānhā kare prema-dāna

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- “In distributing love of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates did not consider who was a fit candidate and who was not, nor where such distribution should or should not take place. They made no conditions. Wherever they got the opportunity, the members of the Pañca-tattva distributed love of Godhead.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.23)
- The reader may question the validity of indiscriminately distributing teachings that include Kṛṣṇa’s esoteric philosophy and pastimes.
- Doesn’t this conflict with the Lord’s direct instruction to withhold even the Gītās less esoteric teachings from unqualified persons?
- In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s time some Vaiṣṇava’s criticized this policy, and even today some of his followers voice the same concern.

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- The answer to this question lies in the unique character of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.
- It is true that many Vaiṣṇava books are unsuitable for public consumption.
- However, Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations, with their lucid purports, are suitable and especially effective because they systematically qualify their readers.
- How do Śrīla Prabhupāda's books qualify readers to hear confidential knowledge?
- First and most obviously, Śrīla Prabhupāda's translations are empowered.
- He often referred to the fact that before the publication of the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is hundreds of versions of the Gītā existed in the West, but none of them created a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

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- In vivid contrast, his Gītā soon created thousands of devotees. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 4.2, purport; arrival lecture, Gainesville, 29 July, 1971]
- Second, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s method of presentation describes complex philosophy in easy-to-understand, nontechnical language, and confidential pastimes in an innocent, nonsuggestive way.
- Thus his books are both accessible and safe.
- Third, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports provide foundational knowledge for first-time readers while simultaneously presenting deeper understandings for more qualified devotees.

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- Thus whether persons begin by reading Nārada’s teachings to the Pracetās or Śukadeva’s description of the rāsa-līlā, they can do so without making offence. [Nārada’s teachings to the Pracetās are found in the Fourth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śukadeva’s description of the rāsa-līlā in chapter twenty-nine of the Tenth Canto]
- Of course, as wonderful as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books are, they should be understood with the personal guidance of mature devotees.
- Experience shows that we cannot fully understand scripture without the help of realized Vaiṣṇavas.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms this truth in his opening purport to the Bhagavad-gītā: “One should read Bhagavad-gītā very scrutinizingly with the help of a person who is a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 1.1, purport]

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- Combined with devotee company, the mass distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books presents Kṛṣṇa consciousness in both a safe and accessible form.
- There are other contemporary Vaiṣṇava commentaries on authorized scripture, but none with the kind of genius that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purports have to spark the spiritual intelligence of deeply conditioned souls.
- More often than not, these other authors write in a technically oriented and culturally constrained way, a way that generally limits their readership to already faithful and learned Vaiṣṇavas.
- Their books can neither match the popular appeal and preaching efficacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books nor bring about a revolution in the lives of deeply conditioned souls.

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- When it comes to introducing nondevotees to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although both hearing and reading are fully potent, reading has certain advantages.
- For this reason Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed the distribution of transcendental literature.
- It is useful to consider some of these advantages as well as to mention some advantages of the hearing process.
- One obvious benefit of reading is that books say exactly what the author intends to say and no more.
- This is an advantage in a preaching organization in which indiscriminate, immature speakers often fail to give appropriate foundational knowledge or lucid explanations when commenting on the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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- The result is that neophyte or even intermediate devotees sometimes confuse their listeners.
- Faithless people easily misunderstand the teachings when they are not properly presented, or worse, become critical of the Lord and inimical to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- The effects of this kind of “preaching” are hard to correct. Therefore Kṛṣṇa warns that His confidential teachings are “never to be spoken” (vācyam na) to the faithless. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 18.67]
- Moreover, although all devotees in ISKCON are encouraged to preach, no devotee’s preaching style or words can match that of Śrīla Vyāsadeva or Śrīla Prabhupāda.

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- Thus by giving the public the opportunity to read the words that have flowed from the pens of the most elevated transcendentalists, book distribution gives the general public the best opportunity for advancement.
- The words of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his predecessors are systematic and designed to progressively elevate readers from a broad spectrum of spiritual accomplishment—neophytes to premi- bhaktas.
- The spoken words of a Vaiṣṇava, however, in a Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam class, for example, generally lack the same systematic methodology.
- Furthermore, systematic reading generally requires greater effort than listening.
- Such effort, along with the interest that fuelled it, is indicative of the quality of the readers' faith, their initial qualification.

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- Each word of the Bhāgavatam purifies readers endowed with this faith, and consequently they wish to read more and more.
- In this regard Sūta Gosvāmī says:

ya etat śrāvayen nityam
yāma-kṣaṇam ananya-dhīḥ
ślokaṁ ekaṁ tad-ardhaṁ vā
pādaṁ pādārdhaṁ eva vā
śraddhāvān yo 'nuśṛṇuyāt
punāty ātmānam eva saḥ

- “One who with undeviating attention constantly recites this literature at every moment of every hour, as well as one who faithfully hears even one verse or half a verse or a single line or even half a line, certainly purifies his very self.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.12.59)

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda echoed this wonderful message to stress the importance of book distribution.
- He said, “Yes, if they read.
- Even if they touch...and they read one line and say, ‘Oh, it is very nice,’ they make a step forward....
- Therefore I am trying to push.
- They have paid some money.
- They will then say, ‘What these nonsense have written.

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- Let me see.’ And if they see and say, ‘Oh, it is very nice,’ then that is immediately the beginning [of their spiritual life].” [Room conversation with Mr. & Mrs. Wax, Chicago, 5 July, 1975]
- And of course books, unlike persons, are readily available at the readers’ convenience.
- Day or night, whenever someone is inspired, he or she need do nothing more than walk to the bookshelf, take down a book, and read.
- Furthermore, a person may easily reread all or any part of a book to either clarify or simply relish a topic.
- This kind of tailor-made repetition is usually unavailable when hearing directly from a Vaiṣṇava.

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- No doubt hearing directly from Vaiṣṇavas also has its advantages.
- For instance, expert preachers can pinpoint the topic most suited to their audience and can also clarify specific points by answering questions.
- These facilities are not so easily available when reading.
- However, weighing all the factors, Śrīla Prabhupāda chose to emphasize book distribution over public speaking.
- He considered that the uneducated people would be most inclined to receive Kṛṣṇa’s message by reading at leisure in the comfort of their own homes.
- Therefore he wrote, “The question you have raised about travelling sankirtana parties and selling of books, yes, we want money.

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- So that is the real preaching, selling books.
- Who can speak better than the books?
- At least whoever buys, he will look over.
- If you have to sell books, do it by hook or by crook.
- The real preaching is selling books.
- You should know the tactic how to sell without irritating.
- What your lecture will do for three minutes?
- But if he reads one page his life may be turned.” [Letter to Bali-mardana, Los Angeles, 30 September, 1972]

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- Some Vaiṣṇavas argue that it is impossible to understand transcendental knowledge from books and that one must hear directly from a devotee.
- Others take this argument further, insisting that the speaker-devotee must be a mahā-bhāgavata.
- If he or she is not, they say, spiritual aspirants can make no advancement whatsoever.
- There is no doubt that reading books should be complemented with hearing from pure devotees.
- The above argument, however, distorts this truth and finds no support from either scripture or Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.18.5, purport]

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- To the contrary, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.12.64) states:

purāṇa-saṁhitām etām
adhītya prayato dvijaḥ
proktaṁ bhagavatā yat tu
tat padam paramam vrajet

- “A brāhmaṇa who diligently reads this essential compilation of all the Purāṇas will go to the supreme destination, which the Supreme Lord Himself has herein described.”
- Reading transcendental literature can purify everyone, from atheists to paramahamsas; still, scripture emphasizes the importance of hearing from devotees as the means for better understanding and putting into practice the written word.

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- If for some valid reason one has no access to pure devotees, purification and perfection can be achieved solely by reading, provided one has Kṛṣṇa's special grace. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 10.10, purport]
- Or, if no books are available, as in past ages or under extraordinary circumstances today, hearing from pure Vaiṣṇavas can bestow all spiritual success.
- But now, when books and qualified Vaiṣṇavas are both readily available, the combination of the two best guarantees one's spiritual success.
- Conversely, questionable are the motives of devotees—as are their chances for speedy advancement—who avoid reading or hearing or both when books and Vaiṣṇavas are available.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasized that devotees read and distribute books, discuss among themselves, and hear from their seniors: “I advise you to daily read our books as far as possible and try to understand the subject matter from different angles of vision by discussing frequently with the devotees.” [Letter to Bob, Los Angeles, 16 June, 1972]
- A few pages can hardly do justice to the importance of book distribution in the overall mission of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.
- The above section is but a brief appreciation of the role Prabhupāda’s books play in attracting nondevotees to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Other devotees have already written extensively on this topic, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, through his many, many unequivocal instructions, has indelibly impressed on the hearts of his followers how much book distribution means to him.

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- Persons with awakened appreciation and interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness naturally ask questions of devotees such as “What do you actually believe?”
- This type of inquisitiveness invites devotees to speak the Gītā’s basic philosophy and to encourage the inquisitive to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- The first six chapters of Bhagavad-gītā make a wonderful introductory guide to devotional service.
- There, Kṛṣṇa logically and reasonably explains topics such as the soul’s presence in the body, the importance of dutiful work, and His own transcendental position.
- Such explanations of eternal truths pleasantly surprise persons accustomed to dogmatic religious arguments that often contradict common sense.

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- Similarly, the philosophy of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—for instance, the concept of the Absolute Truth in three features—harmonizes and synthesizes seemingly contradictory concepts of God.
- This unifying approach to religion is satisfying to people who have long witnessed unnecessary violence over differences in so-called religious beliefs.
- We live in an age in which deductive reasoning has supplanted faith, especially in the field of education.
- People in general therefore invest their faith only in ideas that appear to them consistent with modern science.
- For this very reason, however, the sincere will accept that only the existence of an intelligent creator can logically explain the source of such a highly structured cosmos as the one in which we live.

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- This conclusion points to a personal God, the most complete understanding of whom may be found in the Vedic literature.
- The Vedas scientifically reveal God to be Bhagavān, the all-attractive and complete possessor of six prime attributes: strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty, and renunciation. [Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.47]
- Yet having explained such things to nondevotees, preachers should not divulge the pastimes and incarnations of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- The faithless will generally dismiss such Purāṇic narrations as myths, thereby also rejecting all revealed scriptures containing such pastimes.
- Books such as the Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series, therefore, are not for persons who lack faith.

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- If such persons have acquired these books, they should be taught to first read Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Śrī Īsopaniṣad, and introductory books such as the Science of Self-Realization.
- And, of course, they should be taught to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- When these persons' devotion awakens and matures, they can then take up books that deal exclusively with Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.
- The principle of learning and hearing according to qualification is universal.
- No thoughtful person would consider, for example, enrolling a first-grade arithmetic student in a class that teaches integral calculus.
- Even the most materialistic persons understand the principle of learning and hearing according to qualification.

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- Systematic teaching is the basis of any educational method, for people are always taught subject matter they have the ability to grasp.
- Following the universal process of step-by-step learning enables toddlers to understand the most complex topics by the time they reach adulthood.
- As discussed in chapter one, hearing about Kṛṣṇa is inseparable from chanting His holy names.
- In fact, the main purpose of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, presented in books or in the devotees' speech, is to convince people to chant.
- In the beginning such chanting may be offensive or faithless, and that is acceptable in trainees, though obviously not for senior practitioners.

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- After all, the principle of preaching is to kick-start the chanting process, and Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that only after a person's chanting has gained momentum should one introduce the rules of offenceless chanting.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda said,
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- Of course, there are some rules and regulations for chanting, but in the beginning we haven't got to observe those rules and regulation at the present.
- First of all let us have the taste for chanting; then we shall be little careful that the rules and regulations are followed....Rules and regulations are ...subordinate thing. Just like you enter into an office.
- You are appointed in some office to work.
- So on the very day, you do not know all the rules and regulations.

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- But because you do not know all the rules and regulations, that does not mean that you cannot be appointed.
- First of all let yourself be appointed. Now, working, working, yourself you will know that rules and regulations: “This is the rule, and this is the regulation.”
- Just like in my life, I will say one instance.
- When I met my spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, so as a gentleman meets as a gentleman, so he was sitting in a couch like that.
- So, and I also sat down on that very couch.
- I did not know that what are the rules and regulations.

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- Now, when I saw that his other disciples are coming, and they are sitting down, [laughs] so I thought to myself, “Oh, I have done this wrong. I should not have sat with His Divine Grace.”
- So of course, I did not get down immediately, but I took it, and from next day I did not sit.
- So rules and regulations automatically were taught.
- That rules and regulations is not very important....
- The thing is that we must take up.
- The first rules and regulation is that we must have some attachment for this. Attachment for this.

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- Attachment for this.
- Then, automatically, rules and regulation we shall learn.
- There will be no difficulty. [Lecture on mahā-mantra, New York, 8 September, 196]
- Therefore although persons may take up chanting for reasons other than glorifying the Lord, such as curiosity, to acquire peace of mind, or to keep pace with social trends, preachers should not discourage them.
- In whatever way the faithless chant, some form of faith will quickly sprout in their hearts.
- The expert preacher's duty is to nurture this faith and direct it toward pure devotion.

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- Immature preachers sometimes overburden newcomers with rules appropriate for more committed chanters.
- For instance, they may emphasize the ten offences and four regulative principles as prerequisites to chanting.
- This may discourage rather than encourage newcomers.
- We should always keep in mind the basic principle of preaching, a principle enunciated by Nārada Muni and followed by all ācāryas, and a principle Śrīla Prabhupāda expertly applied: “Somehow or other people should be Kṛṣṇa conscious.” [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 9.29–32, New York, 20 December, 1966]
- As mentioned earlier, Nārada Muni instructs us that thinking of Kṛṣṇa in any way, even inimically, gives one a foothold in devotional service. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.1.32]

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- In his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes the last line of the same Bhāgavatam verse as the introduction to devotional service in practice: tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet, “Somehow or other, one must consider the form of Kṛṣṇa very seriously.” [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.4]
- Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly cited this verse as a guideline for how to introduce people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- He practised this principle himself with great success and encouraged his followers to engage themselves and others, somehow or other, in the process of devotional service.
- By the phrase “somehow or other” Śrīla Prabhupāda meant that whatever brought someone to chant and hear about Kṛṣṇa was suitable.

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- When asked about applying the rules of sādhana-bhakti, Śrīla Prabhupāda would reply, “They can come later.
- They will come automatically.”
- It is interesting to note that in order to enunciate his preaching strategy, Śrīla Prabhupāda constructed a verse by combining the last line of the Padma Purāṇa verse beginning smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇuḥ with the last line of the above mentioned Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verse.
- He often quoted his new verse:

yena tena prakāreṇa
manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

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- “One must somehow or another think of Kṛṣṇa. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras should be the servants of this principle.”
- Śrīla Prabhupāda used this verse as a means to encourage devotees in their spiritual progress. “There are vidhi-niṣedhā, regulative principle. If you see that you are unable to follow, then chant Hare Kṛṣṇa sincerely. Then you’ll be able to follow the regulative principles. Automatically.” [Lecture, Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 7.3, Nairobi, 29 October, 1975]
- He also used the verse as a preaching policy by which devotees could introduce others to Kṛṣṇa consciousness: “General principle is that if you can engage anyone in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is good.
- That is good. That is also said in the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: yena tena prakāreṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet.” [Lecture, Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 2.13–17, Los Angeles, 29 November, 1968]

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- Armed with this preaching strategy, along with the holy name and a couple of trunks of his books, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West.
- With the same tools he empowered his followers to take Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village and to fearlessly give it to materialists, atheists, and diehard agnostics.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda’s strategy worked miraculously. No one had ever spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness so widely.
- When honest persons contact pure devotional service, their hearts change and they gain faith in Kṛṣṇa and devotional service to Him.
- Such persons become devotees of the Lord.

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- They may be mixed devotees still attached to fruitive work or pure devotees with no desire other than to please Kṛṣṇa.
- In any case, when they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa their journey back to Godhead begins.
- In summary, preachers should encourage persons who have no faith in Kṛṣṇa to chant the holy names and become acquainted with the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- In this way faith will awaken in those who were once nondevotees.
- Before it does, however, novices who have no qualification to systematically hear and chant should not be taught Kṛṣṇa's confidential pastimes.
- Instead, they should be encouraged to read and understand the introductory portions of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

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- If while doing so novices come across Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, there is no harm, for incidental hearing is unavoidable and appropriate.
- However, preachers should elaborate on Kṛṣṇa's personality in as simple a way as possible, and in a way that is commensurate with the neophytes' fledgling faith.
- If, however, even after hearing the basics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness newcomers remain faithless, then they are unfortunate.
- Until they become fortunate, the recipients of divine grace, they will continue to struggle in the cycle of birth and death.
- That is Kṛṣṇa's clear verdict.

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aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā
dharmasyāsyā parantapa
aprāpya mām nivartante
mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani

- “Those who are not faithful in this devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of enemies. Therefore they return to the path of birth and death in this material world.” (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 9.3)
- Knowing all this, devotees follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s example of boundless grace and continually try to save conditioned souls under all circumstances and in all places.

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- Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Saintly people preach God consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because they are anxious to save the general populace from the dangers of animalistic life.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.14.9, purport]

astra-dhti-bhedanma-bhedera kraaasta-dhṛti-bheda—nāma-bhedera kāraṇa
cakrādi-dhāraṇa-bheda śuna, sanātana

- “My dear Sanātana, just hear from Me as I tell you how the different viṣṇu-mūrtis hold Their weapons, beginning with the disc, and how They are named differently according to the placement of the weapons in Their hands.” Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 20.221