

Śuddha-bhakti Cintāmaṇi

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Chapter 30- Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

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- All living entities, including Kṛṣṇa, strive for the bliss emanating from transcendental mellows.
- Vaiṣṇava ācāryas frequently quote the following śruti-mantra in support of this premise:

raso vai saḥ. rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.

- “He who understands the Personality of God, the reservoir of pleasure, Kṛṣṇa, truly becomes transcendently blissful.” (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.7.1)
- It is essential for aspiring transcendentalists to know the constituents and workings of the underlying principles of the mellows (rasa).

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- By such knowledge they can comprehend how the constitutionally pure living entities mistakenly seek material happiness, as well as how those aspiring for spiritual happiness can fail to achieve their goal.
- The following section briefly glorifies this wisdom as a prelude to the summary on hearing about Kṛṣṇa, which comprises the bulk of this concluding chapter to part four. [Based on Prema-pradīpa, chapter 8, and Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta 5]
- Altogether there are three kinds of rasa, or mellows—the one original spiritual mellow and two material ones (called “sensual” and “emotional”).
- The material mellows, being reflections of the spiritual, are greatly similar to the spiritual mellow in both their ingredients and in the way they function.
- In chapter nineteen we have described in detail the ingredients of rasa and how they combine to form the spiritual mellow.

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- The ingredients of rasa are: constitutional identity (sthāyi-bhāva), the cause of ecstasy (vibhāva), subsequent symptoms (anubhāva), transformations from emotions (sāttvika-bhāva), and further transformations (vyabhicāri-bhāva).
- The mature combination of these five ingredients constitutes mellow, or rasa.
- An explanation of the material mellow and how it functions is found in the example of a person enjoying a sweet-ball.
- A person's natural attraction to sweetness is the sthāyi-bhāva, and the sweet-ball is the vibhāva, the particular cause of the attachment.
- The tongue is the shelter (āśraya) of the attachment to sweetness, and all the qualities of sweetness itself are the subject of attachment (viṣaya).

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- The particular qualities of the sweet—its lustre and aroma, for example—are factors (uddīpana) that inspire and enhance attachment.
- While eating the sweet, the person displays symptoms of happiness (anubhāva), such as smiling and raising his eyebrows, all the while feeling emotions (sāttvika) such as joy and satisfaction.
- These emotions are reinforced by other feelings (vyabhicārī), perhaps a sense of good fortune at having found such a tasty sweet.
- When the initial attachment to the sweet is enhanced by these other factors, the person eating the sweet is said to be tasting the material sensual mellow (pārthivaraśa).
- The distinct characteristic of this sensual mellow is that there is only one type of relationship, that between a particular sense and its sense object.

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- The emotional mellow is more complex, having four types of relationships from servitude to conjugal love.
- The reason for this complexity is that the emotional mellow, unlike the sensual mellow, takes place between sentient beings and therefore displays the rewarding and binding characteristics of mutual reciprocation.
- However, both the sensual and emotional mellows are temporary and do not have Kṛṣṇa as their object.
- Of all emotional relationships, love between male and female is most intense, and of all sensual encounters, sexual union is the most intense.
- The taste of the two combined makes conditioned souls slaves to material existence.

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- In vivid contrast, the spiritual mellow is eternal, for it resonates between the eternal soul and the eternal Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa.
- It displays five relationships, beginning with neutrality, and it is the living entity's original mellow, the source of unparalleled bliss.
- Living entities fall from their transcendental position when they replace Kṛṣṇa, the original object of attraction (viṣaya), with mundane objects.
- They think that they will enjoy a higher pleasure as masters of matter than as servants of Kṛṣṇa.
- Entangled by this illusion, the living entities continue to search for everlasting bliss but are never successful.

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- The fickle joys they pursue can never satisfy them, because sensual or emotional relationships are by nature temporary and inferior.
- When living entities awaken to the futility of enjoying material mellows, they try to check the enjoying tendency.
- Yet their senses continue to be attracted to sense objects—the nose by fragrance, the eyes by objects to be seen, and so on.
- This tendency is so strong that the mind and intelligence are unable to check it.
- No matter how many religious or philosophical formulas a person takes up, he or she can never disengage from māyā's trappings.
- For conditioned souls to reverse their fortunes they must acquire a taste more attractive than the sensual and emotional flavours.

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- This superior taste is possible only when the object of rasa is all-attractive Kṛṣṇa, in relationship to whom everything acquires a taste par excellence.
- Thus when the living entities turn to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are able to check their lower inclinations for material rasa because of the pleasure they get from the higher spiritual rasa.
- Kṛṣṇa explains this to Arjuna:

viṣayā vinivartante
nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya
paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate

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- “Though the embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, the taste for sense objects remains. But ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 2.59)
- It should be noted that devotees do not acquire this higher taste by immediately assuming their constitutional relationship with Kṛṣṇa.
- Instead, the higher taste is developed by steadily connecting one’s senses and the sense objects to Him.
- Seen in relationship to Kṛṣṇa, these same material ingredients become the source of gradual purification.
- When purification is complete, all the elements of rasa manifest themselves in their full spiritual glory, combining to invoke spiritual bliss.

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- Nārada described the principle of this remedial process to Vyāsa: “O good soul, does not a thing, applied therapeutically, cure a disease which was caused by that very same thing?” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.33]
- This process of dedicating the senses and sense objects to Kṛṣṇa is called bhakti-yoga.
- The impetus for dedicating everything to Kṛṣṇa (the vibhāva) comes specifically from hearing about the Lord.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that conditioned souls have a natural aptitude to enjoy by hearing.
- He writes, “The inclination to hear something about others may be utilized in hearing the pastimes of the Lord.

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- Then one can immediately evolve to His transcendental nature.” [Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, chapter 7]
- Thus as the living entities purify the habit of enjoying material mellows, their enchantment with the spiritual mellows increases more and more.
- However, devotees should avoid the endeavour to enter spiritual mellows until their sthāyi-bhāva has been fully awakened.
- In other words, if while still influenced by matter, devotees try to mix the spiritual ingredients of vibhāva, anubhāva, and so on, they succeed only in relishing a mixed, impure rasa.
- If they identify this mellow as eternal, then, illusioned, they join the ranks of the sahajiyās.

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- Sādhana means to cultivate the relationship between viṣaya and āśraya with many stimuli (uddīpana), the result of which is the display and relish of devotional symptoms (anubhāva, sāttvika).
- However, until pure attraction (rati) for Kṛṣṇa has awakened, and until one's eternal identity (sthāyi-bhāva) as Kṛṣṇa's servant has revived, all emotions and encounters are materially tainted.
- They are not pure; they are but means to a greater end.
- The concept of God as the almighty creator inspires devotees only up to the mellow of servitude.
- But Kṛṣṇa appeared in order to reveal the higher rasas of friendship, parenthood, and conjugal love.

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- Thus by hearing of the loving exchanges between Kṛṣṇa and His companions in these three relationships, devotees are inspired to taste them.
- Kṛṣṇa's exchanges of love are so intimate that people often question why He revealed His conjugal pastimes.
- His dealings with the gopīs have confused immature Vaiṣṇavas, such confusion has led to imitation, and that imitation has led to the degradation of many a practitioner.
- However, had Kṛṣṇa not displayed His sweet pastimes with the gopīs of Vraja or the queens of Dvārakā, how would devotees have known that mādhyura-rasa exists?
- And without knowing of its existence, how could devotees aspire for it?

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- As already explained, spiritual rasa cannot be invoked artificially.
- To the degree that one is purified at heart and detached from matter, to that degree one is qualified to understand mādhubhāva-rasa and to long for it.
- However, by continuing to chant Kṛṣṇa's names, hear His pastimes, and see His form, persons are increasingly driven forward to taste nectar.
- When they are again free from matter's influence, they re-enter the realm of spiritual rasa.
- Prior to His appearance on earth Kṛṣṇa contemplated revealing His humanlike Vṛndāvana pastimes as a special favour to His devotees.

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- “When they hear about the pure love of the Vraja-vāsīs,” He thought, “they will give up the paths of mixed and regulative devotion and take to the path of spontaneous love.
- By perfecting the path of spontaneous love, they can enter My eternal pastimes in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the most spiritually exalted planet in the Vaikuṅṭha sky.” [This paragraph is based on Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.33–35]
- Although Kṛṣṇa appeared with this purpose in mind, most people misunderstood both Him and His pastimes.
- Therefore Kṛṣṇa came again as Caitanya Mahāprabhu to personally teach the living entities, especially the pure devotees, how to develop vraja-bhakti and go back to Godhead.

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- Caitanya Mahāprabhu introduced the congregational chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names as the means to qualify people to hear about Him.
- When qualified, devotees could then hear of their original relationship with the Lord from scripture and the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas.
- Then their attraction for the ephemeral would fade and they would know the bliss of eternal loving relationships.
- Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura sings of Gaurāṅga's mercy in this regard:

premā-nāmādbhutārthaḥ śravaṇa-patha-gataḥ kasya nāmnām mahimnaḥ
ko vettā kasya vṛndāvana-vipina-mahā mādhurīṣu praveśaḥ
ko vā jānāti rādhām parama-rasa-camatkāra-mādhurya-sīmām
ekaś caitanya-candraḥ parama-karuṇayā sarvam āviścakāra

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- “Who had heard of the supreme objective of human life called prema?”
- Who knew the glories of the name of Hari?
- Who was able to enter the sweetness of Vṛndāvana?
- Who knew about the supreme energy, Rādhikā, the perfection of wonderful mādhurya-rasa?
- O brother! No one in this world knew of these wonders until the most merciful Lord Caitanya revealed them and taught them to the conditioned souls.”
[Caitanya-candrāmṛta 130]
- At the conclusion of his description of the rāsa dance, Śukadeva Gosvāmī reminded Parīkṣit Mahārāja, and through him the world, of Kṛṣṇa’s special mercy to His devotees.

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- The son of Vyāsa emphasized that it was compulsory for devotees to hear about Kṛṣṇa and subsequently serve Him on the path of pure attachment (rāga).
- Śukadeva thus spoke this famous verse for our benefit:

anugrahāya bhaktānām
mānuṣam deham āśritaḥ
bhajate tādṛśiḥ krīḍā
yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet

- “Kṛṣṇa manifests His eternal humanlike form and performs His pastimes to show mercy to the devotees. Having heard such pastimes, one should engage in service to Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.36, as quoted in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.34]

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- Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes, so full of sweetness, are imbued with a special potency.
- When conditioned souls hear, remember, or sing about these līlās they are saved from the degrading influence of mundane relationships.
- More specifically, when devotees hear about and understand the conjugal love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they are freed from the grip of mundane conjugal attraction, the most powerful of all material influences.
- Similarly, when they understand the parental love of Nanda and Yaśodā and the fraternal love of Śrīdāmā and Subala, they avoid the overwhelming entanglement of mundane parental affection and friendship. [This paragraph is based on Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.35]

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- Śrī Vyāsadeva uses the imperative form of the verb bhavet in the above verse to tell his readers that one must hear about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.
- Not to comply with this order is to abandon one's spiritual duty.
- Of all the pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's conjugal exchanges with the gopīs should be given special attention, for they bestow on fit devotees the most relishable mellow.
- Thus when Caitanya Mahāprabhu asks Rāmānanda Rāya which is the best song to sing, the best thing to remember, the best meditation in which to be absorbed, and the best topic to hear, Rāmānanda replies that the loving affairs between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the one subject best suited for all of these things. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.250–54]

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- The Lord’s romantic affairs are transcendental, and they have a special and inconceivable spiritual potency to attract devotees’ hearts and draw them into intimate companionship with Kṛṣṇa.
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- Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda clarifies that hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal pastimes is not for everyone.
- It is for pure devotees who are elevated to the liberated stage of spontaneous attraction by the performance of regulative devotional service. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.35, purport, and Madhya-līlā 8.253, purport]
- Or in the words of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it is for devotees who very faithfully practise devotional service (śraddhānvitāḥ). [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.39]
- Thus neophytes or nondevotees, even though attracted to hearing conjugal pastimes, should refrain from doing so.

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- Otherwise they will degrade themselves, falling into sensual thoughts and deeds.
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- Unfortunately, there are many examples of such degradation, such as the pseudo-Vaiṣṇava sahajiyās who misinterpret the phrases tat-paro bhavet and tādrśiḥ krīḍā in the verse under discussion.
- They justify their indulgence in sex by imitating Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes with the gopīs, claiming such illicit affairs to be displays of advanced devotion.
- Ācāryas such as Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda remind us that the Bhāgavatam verses discussed here apply not only to the rāsa-līlā but to all of Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana pastimes. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.35, purport, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.36, purport]

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- Suta Gosvāmī confirms:

tasmād ekena manasā
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca
dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā

- “Everyone should very attentively listen to the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should glorify His activities and meditate upon Him regularly.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.14, as quoted in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.253, purport)

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- And while Droṇa and Dharā asked Lord Brahmā to make it easy for devotees to be delivered from material misery, the couple put forward one stipulation—that devotees would have to believe in the divinity of Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.8.49]
- Thus Droṇa and Dharā made faith the single prerequisite for devotees desiring to benefit from hearing Kṛṣṇa’s vraja-līlā.
- In this way faith, the prerequisite for attaining pure devotion, is also the qualification for hearing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.
- Devotees who do not have the quality of faith required to hear Kṛṣṇa’s rāsa-līlā should instead hear His childhood pastimes.

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- And for devotees who cannot conceive of the Supreme Absolute Truth playing in the courtyard of Nanda’s palace, it is better that they hear of the divine incarnations in which they do have faith.
- To reciprocate with His devotees’ faith, Kṛṣṇa appears in every species of life to become the object of worship for simple-hearted theists. Lord Brahmā prays:

tvam bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-hṛt-saroja
āsse śrutekṣita-patho nanu nātha puṁsām
yad-yad-dhiyā ta urugāya vibhāvayanti
tat-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya

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- “O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of Transcendence in which they always think of You.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.9.11)
- A wonderful thing takes place when devotees worship Lord Caitanya alongside the Lord’s incarnations of Nṛsimhadeva or Rāmacandra.
- As the devotees who do so regularly chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, hear of Lord Caitanya, and read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, they gradually come to appreciate Kṛṣṇa’s most merciful benediction on human society—His appearance in His original form.
- They then take to hearing about Kṛṣṇa, first as the son of Mother Yaśodā and then as the beloved of the gopīs.

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- As they advance further in pure devotional service, a natural appreciation for a particular pastime becomes the indication of their constitutional position. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.34, purport]
- In this way devotees resume their eternal service to Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.
- In his purport to the above verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda stresses that the words paribhāvita and śrutekṣita stipulate advanced devotion, or advanced faith.
- This is the prerequisite for hearing about the Lord's incarnations and deriving the subsequent benefit. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.9.11, purport]
- Conversely, casual or inauthentic worshippers fail to understand the Lord or acquire His divine grace.

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- Thus once again the inestimable benefits to be gained from hearing about Kṛṣṇa in any of His features are contingent on the quality of the listeners' faith.
- In Kṛṣṇa's own words, “One should hear with love and faith the narrations of My glories” (mat-kathā-śravaṇe śraddhā). [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.34–41]
- Impudent devotees who hear without appropriate qualification not only fail to gain the result but also degrade the quality of devotion they already possess.
- The basic principle derived from such examples is that persons must hear according to their qualification and not beyond.
- This is the theme of Śuddha-bhakti-cintāmaṇi.

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- This injunction and prohibition are in line with Kṛṣṇa’s general instruction that practitioners should take up spiritual practices only in accordance with their qualification:

sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
karmaṇām jāty-aśuddhānām
anena niyamaḥ kṛtaḥ
guṇa-doṣa-vidhānena
saṅgānām tyājanecchayā

- “It is firmly declared that the steady adherence of transcendentalists to their respective spiritual positions constitutes real piety and that sin occurs when a transcendentalist neglects his prescribed duty. One who adopts this standard of piety and sin, sincerely desiring to give up all past association with sense gratification, is able to subdue materialistic activities, which are by nature impure.”
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.26)

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- Discriminating Vaiṣṇavas know what type of hearing, reading, and speaking is appropriate for them and for those they are guiding.
- They follow the principle of hearing according to qualification and confidently advance toward the ultimate goal of life.
- Generally the topics devotees hear relate either to principles of philosophy (tattva) or to devotional mellows (rasa).
- Philosophy refers to the truths underlying all aspects of relationships, functional duties, and the goal of life, the truths of creation, māyā, the living entity, devotional service, Kṛṣṇa, His names, His associates, their pastimes, and the mellow of love.

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- Devotional taste refers to the enjoyment derived from transcendental loving exchanges when hearing of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, associates, qualities, form, abodes, and love. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.263 and 25.265]
- The wise say that without a proper grasp of the principles of philosophy a person cannot develop the faith required to properly hear, read, or speak about topics of devotional taste.
- For this reason, before entering the realm of the Lord’s pastimes, devotees must know what they are talking about.
- Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says: “Without knowledge of transcendental truth no one’s heart can ever be spiritually attuned to Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- If one lacks knowledge of his or her relationship with Kṛṣṇa, then the proper execution of devotional service in relation to Him is impossible.”

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- And, “Those who possess weak faith cannot yet understand the realm of the rasikās, enjoyers of pure transcendental mellows.” [Prākṛta-rasa-śata-dūṣaṇī 26, 61]
- However, just as the topics of devotional taste are graded in terms of their levels of confidentiality, the same is true for the principles of philosophy.
- In chapters two and three of the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa teaches knowledge of Brahman, which He calls confidential knowledge.
- Then in chapters seven and eight He introduces knowledge of mixed devotional service, which He declares to be more confidential.
- At last, in chapter nine, He explains knowledge of pure devotion, which He calls “the most confidential knowledge,” a statement He repeats at the conclusion of chapter eighteen. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 9.1, purport]

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- These Gītā teachings are followed by the even more confidential teachings of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, “This Bhagavad-gītā is the ABCD of knowledge.
- This is entrance examination, matriculation examination, school-leaving examination.
- And Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is graduate. When you become graduate in spiritual knowledge, then you can understand Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.
- And when you have passed your Bachelor degree, when you are post-graduate, that study is Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.” [Lecture, Bhagavad-gītā 13.22–24, Melbourne, 25 June, 1974]

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- In summary, knowledge increases in confidentiality the more it reveals information about the ontological aspects of the Godhead.
- This revelation culminates in a vision of the Supreme Personality, who resides on the topmost spiritual planet as a cowherd.
- The increasing confidentiality of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is based on the degree to which they reveal the Supreme Lord's character and behaviour.
- This is particularly noticeable in Kṛṣṇa's increasing intimacy with His friends, parents, and especially His wives and paramours.
- The pastimes of the Lord's puruṣāvatāras—the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the material cosmic manifestation—are the least confidential.

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- The pastimes of the amazing incarnations such as Matsya, Kūrma, and Nṛsimhadeva are more confidential.
- The humanlike adventures of Lord Rāmacandra are still more confidential.
- And even more confidential are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, which increase in intimacy from Dvārakā to Mathurā to Vṛndāvana.
- Among Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes those with the gopīs are so confidential that the only devotees fit to hear them are those who have implicit faith in Kṛṣṇa, complete mastery over the mind and senses, and a greater natural attraction to His personality than to His divinity—in short, the liberated pure devotees in spontaneous affection.
- What happens to persons who hear subject matter beyond their qualification?

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- The answer to this question appears in the concluding verses of the account of the rāsa-līlā pastime. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.26–39]
- While narrating Kṛṣṇa’s nocturnal dance-festival, Śukadeva Gosvāmī was completely absorbed in tasting nectar.
- But Parīkṣit Mahārāja noticed that of the many sages present, those who were not pure devotees, the karmīs and jñānīs, were doubtful.
- They saw Kṛṣṇa’s intimacy with the gopīs—His dancing with other men’s wives—as a transgression of religious principles.
- Therefore the king asked a question to steer the discussion away from the topmost rasa to the reason behind Kṛṣṇa’s behaviour:

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śrī-parīkṣid uvāca
samsthāpanāya dharmasya
praśamāyetaṛasya ca
avatīrṇo hi bhagavān
amśena jagad-īśvaraḥ

sa katham dharmā-setūnām
vaktā kartābhiraḥṣitā
pratīpam ācarad brahman
para-dārābhimarśanam

- “Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O brāhmaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, has descended to this earth along with His plenary portion to destroy irreligion and reestablish religious principles. Indeed, He is the original speaker, follower, and guardian of moral laws. How, then, could He have violated them by touching other men’s wives?” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.26–27)

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- In commenting on verses 27 and 29, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, “Mahārāja Parīkṣit saw that among those present in the assembly, doubts arose in the hearts of many fruitive workers, mental speculators, and mystics...” (atha parīkṣitsabhopa-viṣṭānām vividhavāsanāvatām karmijñāniprabhṛtīnām hṛdaye sandeha-samudbhūtam ālakṣya).
- These nondevotees doubted not only Kṛṣṇa but Śukadeva Gosvāmī for his obvious absorption in what they considered irreligious acts.
- They thought, “How is it that one so committed to virtuous conduct as [Śukadeva Gosvāmī] can be so absorbed in these pastimes while narrating them?”
- (su-vrateti sad-ācāra-parāyaṇasya tavāpy asyām eva līlāyāmatyāveśa darśanād eva samśerate iti bhāvaḥ). [The Sanskrit in this paragraph is from the ācārya’s commentary, Sārārtha-darśinī]

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- In summary, people who hear or read subjects for which they have no qualification will doubt not only Kṛṣṇa but those who speak His glories.
- Such persons become doubly cursed because they lose faith in the disciplic succession as well as the Lord.
- Devotees must therefore carefully select the subjects they present to their audiences lest they be responsible for anyone's offences or loss of faith.
- Vaiṣṇava preachers live for just the opposite result.
- There is no doubt that people should hear Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.
- The indirect praise of Kṛṣṇa in the Purāṇas and Mahābhārata, for instance, did not satisfy Vidura.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- To hear more of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes he approached Maitreya Muni with the following appeal:

kas tṛpnuyāt tīrtha-pado 'bhidhānāt
satreṣu vaḥ sūribhir īdyamānāt
yaḥ karna-nāḍīm puruṣasya yāto
bhava-pradām geḥa-ratiṁ chinatti

- “Who in human society can be satisfied without hearing sufficient talk of the Lord, whose lotus feet are the sum total of all places of pilgrimage and who is worshipped by great sages and devotees? Such topics can cut off one’s bondage to family affection simply by entering the holes of one’s ears.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.11)
- Śrīla Prabhupāda reiterates that all classes of devotees should hear Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes: “Vilāsa refers to the activities or pastimes of the Lord.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- It is a prescribed duty in temple worship that not only should one visit the temple to see the deity nicely decorated, but at the same time he should hear the recitation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā, or some similar literature, which is regularly recited in the temple.
- It is the system in Vṛndāvana that in every temple there is recitation of the śāstras.
- Even third-class devotees who have no literary knowledge or no time to read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or Bhagavad-gītā get the opportunity to hear about the pastimes of the Lord.
- In this way their minds may remain always absorbed in the thought of the Lord—His form, His activities, and His transcendental nature.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.36, purport]

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- As Śrīla Prabhupāda says, hearing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes induces devotees to surrender to Him, gives them faith to hear even more confidential pastimes, and enables them to remember the Lord, especially when they chant His holy names.
- But there are different kinds of hearing or reading for the various kinds of devotees.
- There are four types of hearing: incidental hearing, where persons hear of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the order in which they are presented in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other such literature; purposeful hearing, where devotees concentrate on certain pastimes; applied hearing where devotees hear certain pastimes in order to recall them while engaged in systematic worship (bhajana); and specific hearing, where devotees hear and study Kṛṣṇa's daily eightfold pastimes in order to immerse themselves in thoughts of them while chanting His holy names.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Nondevotees, mixed devotees, and pure devotees all hear Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.
- Pure devotees with weak faith lack steadiness in their devotional practices, including in their hearing, but pure devotees with strong or deep faith are steady in the art.
- When the Lord blesses devotees with deep faith, they will then be able to hear, chant, and serve with ecstasy, and at last, with love.
-
- The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to transform nondevotees into lovers of the Lord.
- It realizes this goal through the enthusiastic preaching of pure devotees, especially the intermediate and the advanced.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- These preachers thus need to assess the qualification of those to whom they are preaching and guide them accordingly.
- Devotees should also honestly assess their own level of advancement and take up spiritual practices appropriate to their spiritual stature.
- What follows is a basic guideline to the kinds of hearing appropriate for nondevotees and for the different classes of devotees.
- Readers are encouraged to assimilate these guidelines and to understand the principles from which they derive, principles already described in detail earlier in this book.
- By doing so, they should then be able to adapt the guidelines to individual cases and exceptional times, places, and circumstances.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Dogmatic application of spiritual principles is ineffective at best and dangerous at worst.
- In contrast, realized knowledge destroys doubt and shows for each person the best path to Kṛṣṇa.
- This understanding is expressed in the final exchange between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, [Bhagavad-gītā 18.72–73] as well as in Gopa-kumāra's [Śrī Sarūpa's] final instruction to the Mathurā brāhmaṇa. Sanātana Gosvāmī writes:

śrī-sarūpa uvāca

evam yat paramam sādhyam
paramam sādhanam ca yat
tad vicāryādhunā brahman
svayam niścīyatām tvayā

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- “Śrī Sarūpa said: My dear brāhmaṇa, now think carefully and decide for yourself what is the highest goal of life and what is the best way to achieve it.” (Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 3.7.1)
- Nondevotees should hear topics that increase their faith in Kṛṣṇa’s divinity and induce them to surrender to the Kṛṣṇa conscious process, particularly to the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- Books most suited for this kind of hearing are Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa book, and Śrī Īsopaniṣad.
- It is best to hear these books systematically, reading topics in the order they appear in the books themselves.
- While reading Kṛṣṇa book and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, nondevotees will inevitably read kṛṣṇa-līlā, but they should read and hear the pastimes incidentally.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Purposeful hearing, as done in the popular Bhāgavata-saptāhas or as promoted for profit by book merchants should be avoided.
- The Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series is not meant for nondevotees.
- Mixed devotees should hear topics of Kṛṣṇa that purify their faith of selfish motives and the reticence to surrender.
- They may purposefully read and hear about incarnations of the Lord in whom they have faith, as well as the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa that reveal His opulence and divinity.
- Like nondevotees, mixed devotees may incidentally hear of Kṛṣṇa's vraja-līlā and occasionally sing songs of Kṛṣṇa's loving exchanges with the Vraja-vāsīs.
- But preachers should instruct them to keep a reverential distance from such topics and to respect Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as the divine mother.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- In teaching mixed devotees to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, preachers should encourage them to hear the holy name and give up offences.
- Beginners are incapable of any form of systematic worship of the name, but they should be encouraged to purify the heart by worshipping deities of Gaura-Nitāi, offering regular service, and remaining faithful to Lord Caitanya's teachings and mission.
- Mixed devotees should only read the Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series or other books following Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood and teachings under proper supervision.
- This means that such reading should be occasional and secondary to the regular study of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.
- Pure devotees with weak faith should hear topics that steady them in devotional practices and elevate them above the bodily conception.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- They should study philosophical truths and learn to apply them in their devotional lives.
- Because congregational chanting (nāma-saṅkīrtana) and preaching activities such as book distribution easily lend themselves to such applied devotion, neophyte devotees should learn to preach.
- And reading Caitanya-caritāmṛta along with Śrīla Prabhupāda's other books will enhance their preaching mood.
- Neophyte devotees may even purposefully read kṛṣṇa-līlā, either occasionally or briefly, in a regulated way, but they should avoid purposefully reading gopī-līlā.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- It is best for them to purposefully read the occasional pastimes that take place in Vṛndāvana, and when familiar with the truths of these pastimes they may then chant the holy names while praying for relief from unwanted habits and other obstacles to devotion.
- As long as they remain unsteady in devotion, their meditation on the meanings of the mantra and of its individual words should embrace the mood described in verse three of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka.
- Neophyte devotees may read the Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series in much the same way that they would read Kṛṣṇa book, but they should avoid intimate talks about the goddesses of Vraja.
- Intermediate devotees whose faith is either strong or deep should hear topics that increase their attachment to Kṛṣṇa and lead them to devotional ecstasy.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- For this end such devotees should read Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes regularly.
- There are two kinds of intermediate devotees: in the minority are the spontaneous devotees who hear Kṛṣṇa's pastimes out of a natural eagerness for vraja-bhakti, and the rest, the regulative devotees, hear about Kṛṣṇa to awaken that same eagerness.
- The reading of both these classes is purposeful and applied.
- The steady devotees who are attracted to hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's other incarnations should do so, but along with regular hearing of Caitanya-caritāmṛta.
- Time will reveal whether these devotees are destined for Vraja or the Vaikuṅṭha planets.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- As intermediate devotees advance to the stage of taste, their hearing may become specific, focused on Kṛṣṇa’s eightfold daily pastimes as they are described in Govinda-līlāmṛta.
- For these devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda also recommends reading Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta-mahā-kāvya.
- His Divine Grace states that such books facilitate advanced devotees’ constant absorption in kṛṣṇa-līlā:
- Since Kṛṣṇa had departed from Vṛndāvana and gone to Mathurā, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, especially Mother Yaśodā, Nanda Mahārāja, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the gopīs, and the cowherd boys, were simply thinking of Kṛṣṇa at every step.
- They were thinking, “Here Kṛṣṇa was playing in this way. Here Kṛṣṇa was blowing His flute.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Kṛṣṇa was joking with us in this way, and Kṛṣṇa was embracing us like this.”
- This is called līlā-smaraṇa, and it is the process of association with Kṛṣṇa most recommended by great devotees; even Lord Caitanya, when He was at Purī, enjoyed līlā-smaraṇa association with Kṛṣṇa.
- Those in the most exalted position of devotional service and ecstasy can live with Kṛṣṇa always by remembering His pastimes.
- Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has given us a transcendental literary work entitled Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta, which is full with Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.
- Exalted devotees can remain absorbed in Kṛṣṇa-thought by reading such books. [Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, chapter 46]

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Systematic worship of the name means to absorb the mind in these pastimes with deep faith and steady devotion.
- It is to devotees with this capacity that Kṛṣṇa recommends regular discussion of His eternal pastimes. [Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 10.9]
- The Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana series is being published with the hope that these intermediate devotees will find it a valuable tool for improving their bhajana.
- But they should not neglect preaching.
- Because they are advanced in devotion and have a strong grasp of the philosophy, intermediate devotees are best suited to bestow mercy on conditioned souls and less advanced devotees.
- Lord Caitanya is certainly pleased by this effort.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Devotees who have achieved the Lord’s mercy, who chant, hear, and remember Kṛṣṇa with ecstasy and love, are beyond the rules and regulations.
- This work will not say what they should or should not hear.
- Such devotees are directly under Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇīs guidance, and this book is meant to please them and invoke their blessings.
- Their own realizations will reveal whatever they want to know about sādhana and sādhya.
- This was Parīkṣit Mahārāja’s instruction to his exalted mother, Uttarā:
*śrī-goloke nikhila-paramānanda-pūrāntya-sīma-
gambhīrābdhau janani gamanam sādhyaya sva-prayāsaiḥ
yasmims tās tā vividha-ratayas tena nāthena sākam
yātrā-mātrān madhura-madhurāḥ santatam saṅghaṭante*

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SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- “By your own endeavours, dear mother, please try to reach Śrī Goloka, the deep ocean where the flood of all transcendental bliss finds its ultimate limit.
- Just by going there you will eternally relish all sports of the most sweet loving exchanges with the same Supreme Lord.” (Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.7.75)
- The books mentioned in this chapter are but a few of the translations available in the market today, and space does not permit listing all that have been translated.
- There are literally thousands of Vaiṣṇava books, only a few of which are now available in English.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- For example, the following is a partial list of books written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī alone: Hamsa-dūta; Uddhava-sandeśa; Kṛṣṇa-janma-tithi-vidhi; Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā, Bṛhad- (major) and Laghu- (minor); tava-mālā; Vidagdha-mādhava; Lalita-mādhava; Dāna-keli-kaumudi; Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu; Ujjvala-nīla-maṇi; Ākhyāta-candrikā; Mathurā-mahimā; Padyāvalī; Nāṭaka-candrikā; and Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 10.84]
- Many devotees doubt whether these books are necessary.
- They argue that ISKCON's members should read only the books Śrīla Prabhupāda has translated and written commentaries on.
- But Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his followers to have access to more than his books.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- He stated this directly: “[N]ow I am old man and I have inclination for philosophy and translating, and if all day and night I am reading and answering and signing letters, then I cannot utilize this, the fag end of my life, to give you so many nice literatures like the Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Ramayana, Maha-bharata, and other books in our own Gaudiya line, like Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Visvanatha Cakravarti, and others.” [Letter to Kīrtikā, Calcutta, 16 February, 1972]
- It is for advanced devotees, particularly those serving as initiating and instructing spiritual masters, to ascertain precisely which books are suitable for particular devotees.
- Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, for example, permitted Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to read Govinda-līlāmṛta, but did not permit his transcendental son to give it to others. [Room conversation, Bombay, 16 August, 1976]

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Besides their own personal qualification, devotees should bear in mind two additional points while selecting books to read: the authenticity of the books and the quality of their translations.
- Most ancient Vaiṣṇava books are written either in Sanskrit or Bengali.
- To translate these books, especially those composed in Sanskrit, requires a thorough knowledge of the language, and in many cases, a broad-ranging acquaintance with allied disciplines—logic, poetics, devotional aesthetics, philosophy, and theology.
- Unfortunately, most contemporary translators do not have the kind of thorough training necessary to do justice to Sanskrit texts, and many of those who do have such training lack fidelity to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translation style, a style that speaks for itself in its potency to communicate the substance of the scripture to its readers.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Yet the foremost qualification needed to render Vaiṣṇava texts into English or other languages is faith in the subject matter.
- In the same way that devotees require faith in order to hear, translators need faith in order to translate.
- Just as the quality of faith determines what devotees are eligible to hear, so the quality of the translators' faith determines what texts they are eligible to translate.
- In other words, to translate scripture one must be a devotee, and to translate confidential scripture one must be an advanced devotee.
- In Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "Similarly, to understand the Vedas, the necessary qualification is that one must be a qualified brāhmaṇa.
- Not that Mr. Max Muller, he has got little knowledge of Sanskrit and he translates.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- That kind of translation is no use, just like so many commentaries on the Bhagavad-gītā without becoming a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is useless.
- It has no meaning, because Kṛṣṇa says that bhaktyā mām abhijānāti, ‘Only through devotional service one can understand Me.’
- How a nondevotee can understand Him?
- He has no scope to enter into the knowledge of Bhagavad-gītā. So first qualification is that he must be a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.” [Lecture, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 6.149–50, Gorakhpur, 13 February, 1971]
- Therefore, before opening a newly translated or composed book, devotees should ask: “What is the spiritual and technical qualification of the translator or author?”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted the following verse from Padma Purāṇa to explain that “the words or songs of a person not fixed in Vaiṣṇava behaviour, not strictly following the rules and regulations and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra should not be accepted by pure devotees.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.33, purport]

avaīṣṇava-mukhodgīrṇam
pūtam hari-kathāmṛtam
śravaṇam naiva kartavyam
sarpocchiṣṭam yathā payaḥ

- “One should not hear anything about Kṛṣṇa from a non-Vaiṣṇava. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects; similarly, talks about Kṛṣṇa given by a non-Vaiṣṇava are also poisonous.” (Quoted in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.17.40, purport)

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- The second thing to bear in mind while selecting Vaiṣṇava literature, in addition to the author's and translator's qualification, is the authenticity of the books themselves.
- We will only touch on this topic briefly here, although it deserves more space than this book permits.
- There are variant readings of the original Vedic texts, such as the Purāṇas and Mahābhārata, and much debate about which reading is authentic.
- For instance, devotees curious about the future sometimes consult the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, but they get conflicting predictions about impending world events from the dozen-or-so versions in print.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- There are also records to show that Christian missionaries in India inserted biblical events into the actual Sanskrit of the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa in their attempt to convert Hindus.
- Almost all translations have been contaminated by these insertions. [This information has been documented in a number of places. See Asiatic Researches, vol. 1, 1788, 1979, pages 234–5]
- Thus, just because a book has the title of an original Vedic text does not mean that it is authentic.
- There are also books written after the Vedic period that may be popular with the public but unsuitable for pure devotees.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Śrīla Prabhupāda comments on one such book: “Regarding the two books you have mentioned, Sri Rama-carita-manasa by Gosvami Tulasi Dasa is not very authorized, and Ramayana is authorized...”
- The author of Rama-carita-manasa, Gosvami Tulasi Dasa, has a tint of Mayavadi philosophy.
- He belongs to the Ramananda sampradaya.
- They are mixed up combination of personalist and impersonalist.
- Therefore, the author is not considered as pure Vaisnava.” [Letter to Raktaka, Hamburg, 6 September, 1969]

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also comments on books apparently written by Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas but which are unsuitable for persons in pursuit of pure devotion: “There are several other new books or books that were written a little later (such as Jayānanda’s Caitanya-maṅgala, Govinda Dāsa’s Kaḍacā, Vaṁśī-śikṣā, Advaita-prakāśa, and Nityānanda-vaṁśa-viśṭāra).
- Although it is said that these books are old, we have no interest in them.
- They are distinct in the way that they are incorrect in their philosophical truths and conclusions.
- Their narrow-minded, evil intentions are obvious and highly noticeable due to the absence of any effort and proper teachings in them.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- The Caitanya-caritāmṛta is said to be the original book, and these apagranthas [bogus books] are not recognized.” [Introduction to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura]
- And then there are modern-day publications of ancient authentic books by authors who are either critical of ISKCON or of Śrīla Prabhupāda.
- Such books are obviously not suitable reading for devotees whose spiritual lives are based on faith in His Divine Grace and service to his Society.
- All in all, what may appear to be a shower of nectar is in reality a mixed blessing.
- Devotees must learn to separate milk from water.
- Fortunately, additional help is available.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- The Special Projects division of the BBT has established a Sanskrit school at Govardhana with the aim of training devotees to translate and comment in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s style on authentic books.
- This training will enable Śrīla Prabhupāda’s followers to read without fear literary treasures such as the recently published Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta.
- Still, devotees should not fail to cultivate the discrimination needed to judge which books are authentic and, of those, which are suited to their own level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Such discrimination is best achieved when devotees are educated in the principles that govern hearing.
- Then they will be able to honestly choose books that will inspire their Kṛṣṇa consciousness and avoid those that will impede it.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- Proper education is the best system of checks and balances, and it is also the best means to protect ISKCON's members from indiscriminate reading of the multitude of books currently raining down on our Society.
- This book is an effort to provide such education.
- It was written with the hope that it will help guide devotees to make hearing, chanting, and remembering (bhajana) the life-breath of their Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- What is bhajana and who is it for?
- In his small book, Śrī Bhajana-rahasya, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda describes the path of systematic worship (bhajana) for pure devotees.
- The Ṭhākura correlates the development of pure devotion from faith to love with the verses of Lord Caitanya's Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- He speaks of the qualifications of devotees at the various levels of advancement to worship Kṛṣṇa according to their realization.
- This worship is performed by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—the quality of the devotees' chanting determining the spiritual quality of their worship.
- Devotees keen to systematically understand the nature of pure worship should read Śrī Bhajana-rahasya and become aware of the path of worship as it ascends to the stage of perfection known as siddha- or prema-bhajana, worship in pure love.
- According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, confidential worship (bhajana-rahasya) takes place when devotees know the truths of Kṛṣṇa's relationship with His energies, and based on that knowledge follow in the footsteps of sādhus by cultivating worship of the Lord with feelings of friendship.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- In other words, confidential worship takes place when devotees freed from material affinity and bad association worship on the path of spontaneous devotional service.
- The worship of advanced devotees still conditioned by the material modes is of the nature of practice; whereas, the worship of those who have realized their spiritual form due to its being the same as their eternal service, is of the nature of relish.
- The object of worship in Śrī Bhajana-rahasya is Lord Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes originally described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra and elaborated on by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in his epic, Govinda-līlāmṛta.
- There are other books and many songs that glorify Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes with the Vraja-vāsīs.

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- The verses of Rūpa Gosvāmī summarizing Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes are described below. [Śrī Rādha-kṛṣṇa-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram, quoted in Śrī Bhajana-rahasya]
- Immature devotees may offer their respects to these verses from a distance, advanced devotees should try to remember them, and realized devotees, no doubt, discuss these verses while chanting in great ecstasy, remaining constantly absorbed in thought of them.
- May all these classes of devotees be pleased with this book and may they bestow their blessings on its insignificant author.

rātry-ante trasta-vṛnderita-bahu-viravair bodhitau kīra-śārī
padyair hr̥dyair api sukha-śayanād utthitau tau sakhībhiḥ
dr̥ṣṭau hr̥ṣṭau tadātvodita-rati-lalitau kakkhaṭī-gīḥ-saśaṅkau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau sa-tr̥ṣṇāv api nija-nija-dhāmny āpta-talpau smarāmi

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- “At the end of night, Vṛndā, fearful of the approach of daybreak, prompted the parrot and the myna to awaken Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.
- Although the birds sang sweetly, their songs were not at all pleasing, for they awakened Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from Their sleep.
- The sakhīs watched from a distance as the Divine Couple stirred, looking very charming because of the deep love and affection They shared at that moment.
- Being suspicious of the voice of the she-monkey, Kakkhaṭī, and desirous to continue Their association, They gazed longingly at each other.
- Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa then reluctantly departed for Their respective homes where They quietly lay down on Their own beds.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

rādhām snāta-vibhūṣitām vraja-payāhūtām sakhībhiḥ prage
tad-gehe vihitānna-pāka-racanām kṛṣṇāvaśeṣanām
kṛṣṇam buddham avāpta-dhenu-sadanam nirvyūḍha-go-dohanam
susnātam kṛta-bhojanam saha-carais tām cātha tam cāśraye

- “I take shelter of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. After finishing Her ablutions and ornamenting Her body, Rādhārāṇī responds to the early-morning call of Mother Yaśodā. Rādhā, along with Her girlfriends, then goes to the house of Mother Yaśodā and prepares varieties of delicious foodstuffs that are offered to Kṛṣṇa. Rādhārāṇī then eats Kṛṣṇa’s remnants. During this time, She occasionally gets the chance to meet Kṛṣṇa.
- “I also take shelter of Kṛṣṇa. After rising from His bed early in the morning, Kṛṣṇa first goes to the cowshed to milk the cows. Following His daily routine, He then returns home, and after taking bath, takes His meals in the company of His cowherd friends.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

pūrvāhṇe dhenu-mitrair vipinam anusṛtaṁ goṣṭha-lokānuyātaṁ
kṛṣṇaṁ rādhāpti-lolaṁ tad-abhisṛti-kṛte prāpta-tat-kuṇḍa-tīram
rādhāṁ cālokya kṛṣṇaṁ kṛta-gr̥ha-gamanāṁ āryayārkārcanāyai
diṣṭāṁ kṛṣṇa-pravṛtṭyai prahita-nija-sakhī-vartma-netrāṁ smarāmi

- “I remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who in the forenoon goes to the forest, followed by the cowherd boys and the cows. Nanda Mahārāja, Yaśodā, and other Vraja-vāsīs also follow along. Being anxious to meet Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa leaves the cowherd boys and cows behind and comes to the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa.
- “I also remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who returns to Her home from Nanda-grāma after She has caught a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa’s signal indicating Their future meeting. Her mother-in-law, Jaṭilā, orders Her to worship the sun god. Rādhārāṇī casts Her eyes down the pathway by which Her sakhīs will return with the news about Kṛṣṇa’s location, for which She eagerly awaits.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

madhyāhne 'nyonya saṅgodita vividha-vikārādi-bhūṣā-pramugdhau
vāmyotkaṅṭhātilolau smara-makha-lalitādy-āli-narmāpta-śātau
dolāraṇyāmbu-vaṁśī-hṛti-rati-madhu-pānārka-pūjādi-līlau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau sa-trṣṇau parijana-ghaṭayā sevyamānau smarāmi

- “I remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who enjoy each other’s company at midday. They are both decorated with different types of ecstatic symptoms such as aṣṭa-sāttvika and vyabhicārī. Their eyes show symptoms of opposition, then eagerness, as They become unsteady in Their loving affairs. They are pleased by the jokes of Lalitā and the other sakhīs, and surrounded by these friends They become eager to engage in sports such as swinging, roaming in the forest, playing in the water, hiding Kṛṣṇa’s flute, love-making, drinking honey, and worshipping the sun god.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

śrī rādhām prāpta-gehām nija-ramaṇa-kṛte kl̥pta nānopahārām
su-snātām ramya-veśām priya-mukha-kamalāloka-pūrṇa-pramodām
śrī kṛṣṇam caivāparāhṇe vrajam anucalitam dhenu-vṛndair vayasyaiḥ
śrī rādhāloka-tṛptam pitṛ-mukha-militam mātr-mṛṣṭam smarāmi

- “I remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who in the afternoon returns to Her home and prepares many sweets, such as amṛta-keli and karpura-keli, for Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After bathing and dressing in beautiful clothes and ornaments, She is filled with ecstasy, seeing the lotus face of Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa as He returns from the forest to the cow pen.
- “I also remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who returns home in the afternoon to Nanda-grāma along with His cows and cowherd boyfriends. As they arrive on the path, He feels satisfied glancing at Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. After meeting with Nanda and other elders, He is then bathed and dressed by Mother Yaśodā.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

sāyam rādhām sva-sakhyā nija-ramaṇa-kṛte preṣitāneka-bhojyām
sakhyānīteśa-śeṣāśana-mudita-hṛdam tām ca tam ca vrajendram
su-snātam ramya-veśam gṛham anu janani lālitam prāpta-goṣṭham
nirvyūḍhosrāli-doham sva-gṛham anu punar bhuktavantam smarāmi

- “In the evening Śrī Rādhā sends Her girlfriends with many exquisite sweet preparations for Her beloved Kṛṣṇa. When Her friends return with Kṛṣṇa’s remnants, Rādhā becomes very happy by tasting those remnants.
- “Vrajendra Kṛṣṇa bathes at home and is then very nicely dressed, as Mother Yaśodā lovingly attends Him. Kṛṣṇa then goes to the cow pens, and after milking the cows, again returns home to take His meals in great happiness. I remember these pastimes with affection.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

rādhām sālī-gaṇāntām asita-sita-niśā-yogyā-veśām Pradoṣe
dūtyā vṛndopadeśād abhisṛta-yamunā-tīra-kalpāga-kuṣjām
kṛṣṇam gopaiḥ sabhāyām vihita-guṇi-kalālokanam snigdha-mātrā
yatnādānīya saṁśāyitam atha nibhṛtam prāpta-kuṣjam smarāmi

- “I remember Śrī Rādhā in the late evening. She dresses Herself in clothes suitable for the dark and light fortnight for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. In accordance with Vṛndā’s advice, She takes shelter in a secluded bower on the banks of the Yamunā in the company of Her sakhī messenger.
- “I also remember Kṛṣṇa sitting in an assembly of cowherd boys and watching their various feats. His affectionate mother, Yaśodā, brings Him home and attempts to put Him to sleep. Remembering the company of Rādhā, He soon quietly slips out of bed and leaves for the forest bower.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

tāv utkau labdha-saṅgau bahu-paricaraṇair vṛndayārādhyamānau
preṣṭhālībhir lasantau vipina-viharaṇair gāna-rāsādilāsyaiḥ
nānā-līlā-nitāntau praṇayi-sahacari-vṛnda-samsevyamānau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau niśāyām su-kusuma-śayane prāpta-nidrau smarāmi

- “I remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who at night are anxious for each other’s company. After They meet, Vṛndādevī serves Them in various ways as They roam throughout the forest. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa appear very charming with Their sakhīs as They sing and dance in Their rāsa pastimes. Becoming fatigued from Their sportive activities, They are served by Their many loving friends (mañjarīs). As the night ends, They lie on a bed of flowers where They sleep. The sakhīs drown in an ocean of ecstasy as they observe these pastimes.”

SBC 30 – Summary of Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

- At the end of Śrī Bhajana-rahasya, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda concludes, “One gradually attains perfection by always remembering the treasure of these eightfold daily pastimes while engaged in devotional service.
- The sādhakas who attain the stage of svarūpa-siddhi while practising gopī-bhāva relish these aṣṭa-kāla pastimes while residing in the Vraja manifest in the material world.
- After achieving Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, when they leave their material bodies, such devotees attain the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as Their companions within the realm of Vraja in the spiritual world.”