



THE KĪRTANA ARROW

Five Powerful Tools to Bring the Chanting of the Holy Names to Perfection

A **Alignment** ~ Tune body, mind, and heart to achieve full presence and attention. Avoid *aparādha*.

R **Relationship** ~ Enter the awareness of your eternal relationship with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Infuse your practice with this connection.

R **Rendering Service** ~ Offer your chanting in the spirit of loving service. Share the glories of the holy names with others.

O **Opening the Heart** ~ Cultivate the *kīrtana bhāva* of sepeation and longing experienced by Gauracandra. Fill your chanting with genuine devotional feelings.

W **Welcome the Divine Gift** ~ Live in *śaraṅāgati* (surrender). Enter the receiver mood and patiently await your gift from Nāma Prabhu.

means someone whose face (*mukha*) is turned toward service (*seva*). Kṛṣṇa is only attracted to the sincere chanter who has a service mentality; without that mentality we will only chant the shadow of the *mahā-mantra* – only the alphabets.

So chant in a spirit of service, and pray to Kṛṣṇa to be allowed to serve Him. Take yourself out of the center of your life and place Kṛṣṇa there. We are meant for His pleasure and nothing more. If while chanting we wait for our own ecstasy to arise, Kṛṣṇa might leave us indefinitely in the desert of dry chanting. A sad, materialistic life ends the moment we understand that we are meant to please Kṛṣṇa by our chanting. One way to do this is to be mindful of the simple meaning of the mantra Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us:

“My dear Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, my dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, please engage me in Your service!”

At another time Prabhupāda condensed the meaning of the *mahā-mantra* to a simple devotional call: “Please accept me!”

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26) Kṛṣṇa gives us a hint as to how we can render service. He asks us for a fruit, a leaf, or water, but asks that it be offered with *bhakti*. In text 9.26 He mentions *bhakti* twice so we can understand that He is really only interested in our love.

So offer your chanting in a spirit of loving service and share the glories of the holy name with others by speaking them, organizing *kīrtanas*, and in other ways. When you chant both *japa* and *kīrtana* you can inform your mind of your new project: “This chanting is meant just for Kṛṣṇa.” And, address Kṛṣṇa directly: “This is just for You, my Lord!” This understanding will help tremendously.



R – RENDER SERVICE

The third step in chanting is to chant in the mood of *seva*, or service. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote a beautiful verse in this connection:

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, qualities, or pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes revealed to him.”

(*Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.234)

The body and its senses are material. Kṛṣṇa, however, is completely spiritual. With our material senses we can never hope to grasp Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, of course, can choose to appear on our tongues. However, it’s important to note that Kṛṣṇa only comes to someone who has a serving mood. *Sevonmukhe*