

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 *śaraṅgati* (surrender). Enter the receiver mood and patiently await your gift from Nāma Prabhu.

- * *I am an atomic particle of consciousness and Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant.*
- * *Kṛṣṇa is the infinite conscious entity and my only master.*
- * *The material world is the prison house meant to reform my absent-minded tendencies.*

(*Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, 3.25)

This, then, is an effective cure for the spiritual under-nourishment that will force us to remain attached to this world. Chanting with a sense of relationship is nourishing. You are a soul, a part of Kṛṣṇa. You are in this world only to realize your relationship with Him. Here is a powerful prayer to facilitate this awakening:

'kṛṣṇa, tomāra haṅa' yadi bale eka-bāra māyā-bandha haite kṛṣṇa tāre kare pāra

"One is immediately freed from the clutches of māyā if he seriously and sincerely says: 'My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, although I have forgotten You for so many long years in the material world, today I am surrendering unto You. I am Your sincere and serious servant. Please engage me in Your service.'"

(*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya*, 22.33)

R – RELATIONSHIP

(SAMBANDHA – LITERARY: "TOTALLY BOUND")

The second step to enlivened, successful chanting is to chant with a sense of our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states in *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* (3.15) that if we chant with no awareness of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we will attain only a shadow of the holy name, not the real name. What happens when you eat only the shadow of a meal? You remain hungry and will feel the need to go elsewhere to satisfy your appetite. Similarly, we tend to seek happiness in illusory things when we taste only a shadow of the holy name. Our heart feels spiritually weak and we become willing to offend the holy name. By these *anarthas*, or acts against our own interest, our spiritual progress can be almost permanently blocked. To end "shadow chanting" Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recommends a simple meditation that fixes the mind in a correct understanding of our position in relation to Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*):

