

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 separation 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.



O – OPEN THE HEART

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught us how to open the heart with a simple prayer in which He enshrined His whole mood of chanting the holy name:

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-pankaja-
sthita-dhūli-sadṛśam vicintaya*

“O Kṛṣṇa, I am Your eternal servant, yet somehow or other I have fallen into this dangerous ocean of birth and death, where the waves of my desires toss me back and forth. Kindly invest in our eternal relationship and pick me up from this ocean of birth and death. Alone, I am helpless. Only with Your help is there hope.”

(Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka, 5)

In Sanskrit this mood is called *vipralambha-bhava*, or the mood of separation. In spiritual life separation becomes a place to meet Kṛṣṇa. Externally the devotee feels an almost

unbridgeable distance between him and his Lord, but internally he perceives Kṛṣṇa in his heart. We can develop this mood of separation – which means we can chant with genuine devotion – by studying the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and emulating His followers. Śrīla Prabhupāda once described the highest perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, exemplified by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, like this:

“Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?’, and crying, just like a madman. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the highest perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness when one will be mad after Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed as a way. And the Gosvāmīs also showed us that way.”

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam lecture, 6.1.39, July 20, 1975, San Francisco)

This mood of separation can only be experienced by someone who has lost the illusion that this world is his real home. Most conditioned souls don’t look for a home beyond this world, but “home” really means our natural environment. When we yearn for *that*, a natural and eager aspiration enters the heart and we feel what Śrīla Prabhupāda called “the Govinda necessity.” This material world cannot answer our deepest spiritual needs. Only Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can do that.