

# **Kīrtanīyaḥ Sadā Hariḥ**

**To always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa**

Kadamba Kanana Swami

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Kadamba Kanana Swami

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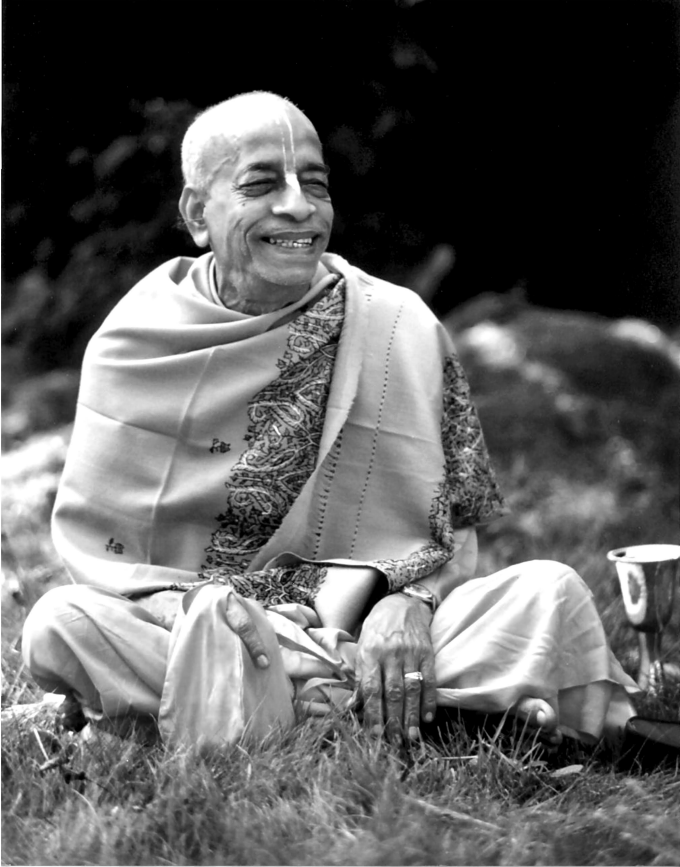
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# Dedication



For the pleasure of Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
by whose mercy the holy name has spread to every  
town and village



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# Introduction

It is stated in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā* 17.22:

*kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra  
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra*

“In this Age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, is the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Simply by chanting the holy name, one associates with the Lord directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered.”

Yet how can we truly appreciate that the holy name is actually a person, the Supreme Person, God Himself who has descended in our midst?

By associating with those who have this realization.

In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* 15.109, it is further stated,

*anuṣaṅga-phale kare saṁsārera kṣaya  
citta ākarṣiyā karāya kṛṣṇe premodaya*

“By chanting the holy name of the Lord, one dissolves his entanglement in material activities. After this, one

becomes very much attracted to Kṛṣṇa, and thus dormant love for Kṛṣṇa is awakened.”

We read these verses but how can we develop firm faith that this process will awaken our love for the Lord?

By associating with those who not only have realized the import of such verses, but who, with fixed determination, have made this the goal of their lives. By meditating on the words of the pure devotees who have developed attraction for Kṛṣṇa and have taste for chanting, we also will become inspired and convinced.

This book is a compilation of excerpts from the lectures of His Holiness Kadamba Kanana Swami, as well as his personal reflections on the holy names. Whether in the form of instructions on the process of connecting with the holy names, or in the form of poignant statements to convey a truth or reflect a mood, this collection of quotes will most certainly deepen your appreciation of the holy names.

- The Publishers



## **Let the journey begin**

I've boarded the train. I've got my seat and now let the journey begin. Like that, let me get ready to chant my rounds and get into a regular rhythm just like the train—name after name in an unbroken chain with Goloka as my destination.

## **Non-different from Kṛṣṇa**

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is descending directly from the spiritual world. It is out of Kṛṣṇa's unlimited kindness that He appears amidst us. The name of Kṛṣṇa is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, and that means the unlimited Supreme Lord, full of unlimited opulences, the all-merciful Supreme Lord, has kindly come to us!

## **Appearing in every home**

Kavi-karṇapūra writes that the Lord has appeared in every home in Navadvīpa. So has Lord Caitanya appeared in every home in Navadvīpa? No, Lord Caitanya is said to have appeared in the house of

Jagannātha Mīśra and Mother Śacī, not in every home in Navadvīpa! Then what is he speaking about? He is speaking about another incarnation of the Lord: *kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra*. It is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that in this age of Kali, the Lord incarnates Himself in the form of His holy name. It is in this incarnation that the Lord has appeared in every home in Navadvīpa.

## **The holy name is a person**

The chanting of the holy name is sometimes described as a means of meditation. Sometimes we call it mantra meditation, and I would say that is a very poor explanation of what the chanting of the holy name really is, because in meditation, we are particularly thinking about focusing the mind upon the mantra. But we must know that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is something completely different. It is not a mantra or a particular spiritual sound which is invested with transcendental energy. It is rather Kṛṣṇa personally present in the form of sound.

When we say 'meditation', it creates an idea of pacifying the mind, of gaining control over the mind, but the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa exceeds that. When we chant, we come in direct contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with His realm and His entire manifestations.

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes from the *Ādi Purāṇa*, where Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Anyone who is engaged in chanting My transcendental name must be considered to be always associating with Me.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda also states that, since we are now conditioned and our senses are not pure, we are not able to experience the full benefit of chanting.

## **Active Kṛṣṇa!**

When we understand that the holy name truly is Kṛṣṇa, then within the chanting we are exploring how Kṛṣṇa is revealing Himself. Each time we see the Deity we don't always see Them the same way. We may perceive Them in a different mood or a different atmosphere. Sometimes it seems that They're smiling at us and

sometimes it seems that They are communicating with us.

In the same way, the holy name is also communicating with us. The holy name is active Kṛṣṇa. He can do what He likes. Therefore the holy name reveals itself to us as Kṛṣṇa likes to reveal Himself. In that way, the chanting of the holy name is at all times a great adventure. One never knows where it will take us.

Rūpa Gosvāmī says *tuṅḍe tāṅḍavinī ratim vitanute tuṅḍāvalī-labdhave*. When we are chanting it is as if Kṛṣṇa is dancing on our tongue. Not only is Kṛṣṇa dancing in our tongue, but Kṛṣṇa is also dancing in the courtyard of our heart. Kṛṣṇa is dancing in our life!

I like that about Kṛṣṇa consciousness: that it's personal and that the holy name has lotus feet and a heart!

## **Many names**

Kṛṣṇa has many names because there are different devotees who have different tastes and therefore they desire to worship Kṛṣṇa in different ways. In the 23rd chapter of *Jaiva-Dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives an

extensive description about the name. He says there are primary names and secondary names.

The primary names are the names of Kṛṣṇa in His eternal pastimes in the spiritual world in Goloka, such as Govinda or Gopāla. But names like Jagat-pati, father of the universe or *sṛṣṭi-kartā*, the one who does the work of the creation, are secondary names. We are chanting particularly the primary names of Kṛṣṇa because they are manifested with the full potency.

But the potency in the *mahā-mantra* is special because the relationship in the *mahā-mantra* is of course the essence.

## **The most powerful process**

We have to know that everything is attained from the holy name and it is the most powerful of any process. People think that it's a simplified process for the fallen souls of the age of Kali, given to us because we are not qualified to do the more complex Vedic rituals. No, actually it is a more powerful process. It was there in the Vedic times but because so many rituals were followed, it wasn't in the foreground.

Then Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura read this verse in the *Nārada Purāṇa*:

*harer nāma harer nāma  
harer nāmaiva kevalam  
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva  
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“In this Age of Kali there is no other means, no other means, no other means for self-realization than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari.”

*(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 17.21)*

When he read that then he introduced *kīrtana* in Śrīvāsa-aṅgana. He had full faith in that verse, and started to make that the main activity. Śrīvāsa was outstanding in his time because he was not conforming to the social standard; he was conforming to the *śāstra*, and just chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

## **The process for this age**

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann  
asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ*

*kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya  
mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

“My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.”

*(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.3.51)*

Kali-yuga is indeed an ocean of faults but the one good quality of this age is the chanting of the holy name which is accompanied by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

In Satya-yuga the process of worship was meditation on the Supreme Lord but now in Kali-yuga, we have no power to concentrate! In Tretā-yuga, the process was sacrifice but now that is too difficult and too much trouble. In the Dvāpara-yuga, the process was through Deity worship but now the standard is lowered.

In this age, *śravaṇaṁ* (hearing), *kīrtanaṁ* (chanting) and *smaraṇaṁ* (remembering) are the three principal processes.

So what is the highest service? In the conditioned state it is *kīrtanaṁ*. In the transcendental state, it does not matter. Rādhārāṇī remembered Kṛṣṇa and then automatically chanted!

So we hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa, and then we remember. The more we hear about Kṛṣṇa, the more we begin to understand how He is all-attractive and we engage in service. Kṛṣṇa covers Himself from the conditioned souls with the curtain of illusion; devotional service opens the curtain.

Through these processes, we become transformed. But there is another dimension still. Whatever fruits of love of God we receive, if we distribute that, we find that we have more than before! So it is not just about absorbing ourselves but about giving out the holy name as well.

## **Destroying the influence of Kali**

We chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* because it is said that by chanting these 16 syllables all the influence of Kali will be destroyed. Under the influence of Kali, illicit activities such as meat eating, gambling, intoxication and illicit sex are rampant in the world. Day-by-day, we

are degraded more and more, and we sink deeper into the swamp of suffering. But the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa can liberate us from all this suffering and gives us back our sanity. Therefore we must chant that name of Kṛṣṇa as recommended in *Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad*: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

## **A revolution in consciousness**

In the introduction to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes a very famous verse:

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo  
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api  
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat  
śṛṅvanti gāyanti gṛṅanti sādhaveḥ*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11)

It means wherever there are devotees who are chanting the names of God, it can bring about a revolution in a misdirected and misguided civilization. In other words, this chanting can change everything!

We can see that in the past, people were very God-centred. Many temples, churches and famous mosques were built around the world. In modern times people have become atheistic. As a result, there is so much unrest in the world, so much anxiety, madness, aggression and unhappiness. But simply worshipping the Supreme Lord will change all that.

However, it is not required that we build big temples and large religious monuments. All that is required is that we worship the Supreme Lord and the very best way to do so is by chanting His holy name. Therefore, when we gather and chant, it has great significance for the whole world, blessing it and creating a revolution in our hearts and in our consciousness.

## **Meeting ourselves**

The chanting of the holy name is naturally at the centre of our spiritual life. In the chanting we are meeting Kṛṣṇa and when we meet Kṛṣṇa we also meet ourselves. Just as by the light of the sun one can see oneself, so by seeing Kṛṣṇa one will also see oneself. So the more we

are entering into who Kṛṣṇa is, the more we actually understand who we are.

## **Self-realization**

Self-realization means that finally we stop acting out the role in a play. We are in so many plays; we wear different masks and have different identities.

“I am the headmistress of a school...”

“I have a PhD...”

“I am an American..”

Take off those masks! Mask after mask we remove, until finally we come to our real face. And what is written on that face? Kṛṣṇa Dāsa or Dāsī! And then we realize that we are actually eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa!

But we are attached to our mask because it looks nice; it's been there so long and it is difficult to give up this false ego. But by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, by transcendental knowledge, we will cut the knot of karma and gradually our real self emerges. That is why

self-realization is the point where one becomes really happy, because then one is finally one's true self.

## **Cleansing the dust**

There are many levels on which chanting is experienced. In the beginning stages we chant while struggling with material attachments and our chanting of the holy name is dissipating the fog within our consciousness. Most of us are simply looking for purification in this chanting and looking for shelter, *mad-āśraya*, looking for shelter in Kṛṣṇa, shelter from the pangs of material existence, from the struggle with the three modes of material nature; looking for some relief. However, it not only gives us relief during the activity of the chanting but produces a lasting effect within the heart and penetrates into our entire consciousness.

The chanting will remove all the impurities from the heart, *anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje*. It not only enters our ears but also our heart, and cleanses the dust from the mirror of our heart. So the

first experience of chanting is that it alleviates the affliction of material life.

## **Unlimited benefits**

Haridāsa Ṭhākura explains how the holy name works. He compares it to the rising of the sun in the morning. Before the sun actually appears over the horizon, the light is already visible in the sky and all the darkness and fears of the night are gone. In the same way, even before the name is chanted purely, even when we begin to accidentally or incidentally chant the name, already karma is being destroyed.

But the holy name is doing more. Not only is the holy name purifying us from karma, but the holy name also gives us liberation from birth and death.

However, that is also only a side benefit. That is not the main thing. The main thing is that by chanting the holy name, we will get love of God and when we get love of God, we attain a state of happiness which is beyond anything we can imagine!

## **Just one mantra**

The holy name can reach out to the most fallen. It doesn't matter how sinful one is. By chanting the holy name once, you can be free from lifetimes of karma and you are on the way to the spiritual world.

*nāmno hi yāvati śaktiḥ  
pāpa-nirharaṇe hareḥ  
tāvat kartuṁ ṇa śaknoti  
pātakam pātakī naraḥ*

“Simply by chanting one holy name of Hari, a sinful man can counteract the reactions to more sins than he is able to commit.”

*(Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa)*

## **Additional mercy**

We have been given the gift of the holy name, but actually, we are given even more than that. We have the additional mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu! Through His mercy, what is difficult for us becomes easy. And without His mercy, what is meant to be easy becomes unexpectedly difficult.

In the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gives a lengthy and thorough explanation of all the avatars (incarnations) of Viṣṇu. He also explains what happens in the Kali-yugas of all the other universes where Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu does not appear. He says that during the Kali-yugas in these universes, there is also an incarnation of Viṣṇu that makes an appearance and brings the gift of *harināma saṅkīrtana*. So this is something really special!

However, that special mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu that enables us to easily attain love for Kṛṣṇa, is lacking in the Kali-yugas of all these other universes. Although the mission of chanting the holy name is still present there, it does not spread as widely or as successfully as it does here in this *yuga*.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya  
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te  
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-  
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden colour of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and

You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.”

*(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 19.53)*

It is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu appearing in this *yuga* as Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is widely distributing pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

So in this age of Kali, we are actually elevated even beyond the position of the pious personalities of the past. But we must never forget that we are only in this position because of exceptional grace, and not by our qualifications.

## **Unconscious transformation**

Even before the holy name is chanted purely, it already enters into the sinful life of the conditioned souls. I don't know how it happened for you but I know how it happened for me.

There was a grey van that pulled into my town and suddenly the back door of that van flapped open and all these little pink men came out—too many! I wasn't sure if they were from planet Earth! They walked in my

direction and I darted into a nearby shop. I looked from behind the glass and they were singing and clapping. Some people said, ‘It’s a dangerous sect!’ They definitely looked dangerous! Three months later I saw them on television, explaining their philosophy – no meat, fish or eggs, no gambling, no intoxication and no illicit sex – then I knew they were dangerous!

So although I had heard the chanting of the holy name, I had mental resistance. I saw them sometimes in the city, on the streets, ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!’ – the ultimate example of religious fanaticism. I saw them distributing books. They never stopped me and I never bought one of those books.

But then, I met a girl. She had a dog and the name of the dog was Kṛṣṇa! What could I do? At night, walking with this dog who would always run off, I would be calling out aloud, ‘Kṛṣṇaaaaaa!’ many times and in this way I started *harināma saṅkīrtana!*

## **The eternal perspective**

In my many years of chanting, not every day was an optimal one. I have chanted when I was tired, when I

was ill and injured, in cars, on planes and boats. Once I even chanted on a horse racing track! The quality of the rounds has varied due to my own physical condition, external circumstances and due to the state of my consciousness.

But the holy name has stayed as an integral part of my life. The name is like a friend, always there, soothing my mind, creating stability in the turbulence of life in the material world and making me detached from the ongoing affairs. The holy name helps me remember the eternal perspective, that what really matters is my service to Kṛṣṇa.

## **Nāmābhāsa**

When the holy name comes into our lives, we may not consciously accept, but it doesn't matter. It enters in the form of *nāmābhāsa* and transforms us. So this *nāmābhāsa* is very powerful. When the *harināma* party comes through the street, everyone gets touched, knowingly or unknowingly.

Chanting cleanses the consciousness of everyone – those who are chanting, those who are responding, and those who are just hearing.

Some people cover their ears but it goes in anyway because it's very loud. In Amsterdam we would pass by a vegetable store and a man would always fling rotten tomatoes at us. But later he started to offer vegetables to the temple.

So a little bit of service rendered to Kṛṣṇa, willingly or unwillingly, will act. The holy name transforms everyone. Like fire burns wood to ashes, all sins will be burnt to ashes.

## **Attracted to Kṛṣṇa**

The more we are chanting the *mahā-mantra*, the more we are becoming freed from the influence of ignorance and darkness. 'Kṛṣ' means 'dark' and 'ṇa' means 'no', so one meaning of the name Kṛṣṇa is 'no more darkness.' So 'Kṛṣṇa' means that we become free from the influence of ignorance in the material world.

There is also another translation of the word Kṛṣṇa: – ‘Kṛṣ’ for the one who can attract, and ‘ṇa’, for *ānanda*, for happiness. After some time, we come to *nāma-gāne sadā ruci* – to always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa with taste. We become more and more attracted to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa becomes more and more attracted to our service.

## **Strength to conquer the mind**

If we engage in the regular chanting of a fixed number of rounds of *japa* on beads, that will give us strength to conquer the restless mind and we will become fixed in devotional service in practice.

We can meditate on so many things – freedom, sex, money, etc. but meditation on *kīrtana* is the ultimate goal of life. If the connection with *kīrtana* is strong then there is nothing in this world that we cannot face – even death.

The *mahā-mantra* is known as the great mantra. Mantra means ‘to deliver the mind’ - ‘man’ refers to the mind and ‘tra’ is to deliver. The mind goes into many things and things go into the mind. *Kīrtana* lifts us above the

mental platform and above the physical platform to the platform of the soul.

## **A shallow life becomes profound**

When the name of Kṛṣṇa enters our mind, gradually everything else in the mind becomes small. Our perspective broadens and we see the bigger picture.

By chanting the mantra, we get the intelligence and the understanding of the purpose behind everything. As it is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the purpose of everything is to be understood in respect to its relationship with Kṛṣṇa. So in this way, through the *mahā-mantra*, it all starts to become crystal clear, little by little.

Without the *mahā-mantra*, everything is shallow but with the *mahā-mantra*, a shallow life becomes profound!

## **Transforming places**

Prabhupāda said when the *harināma* party is going through the street, not only are the people purified, but the street itself is purified. Anybody who goes through

that street later on also becomes purified. In this way, the holy name transforms places.

## **The echo purifies**

Lord Caitanya was feeling great sadness, “How will all these living beings who cannot chant be delivered? There are so many small living beings; how can they chant?”

Haridāsa said, “My dear Lord, please don’t be sad because the echo of this chanting will purify all these living beings.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* Chapter 3)

## **Unlimitedly pure**

Sometimes when we are chanting *japa*, our mind is causing us disturbance and constantly distracting us. Chanting with that materialistic mind is like chanting in a room with a television that is on. You’re walking up and down in the room, “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa” (look at TV) “Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare” (look at TV) “Hare

Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare” (blocks face)  
“That’s Māyā! Hare Kṛṣṇa... the bad scenes!”

And of course, on this television there is the favourite series—a series which regularly plays and what is it called? “Starring Me!” Yes! This series never ends; there are many episodes starring me and all my adventures are there.

So this is our condition more or less. We struggle with our mind. But even if we are chanting imperfectly, even if we are chanting with limitations, the holy name is Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa is unlimitedly pure. The effect of chanting the holy name is so great that even the unlimited mountain of sinful reactions that is stored in our heart cannot overshadow the purity of the holy name. All our imperfections cannot minimize its glory.

## **Our best friend**

The *mahā-mantra* is our best friend. In fact, it is a very close friend of all living entities. The mantra is always there for us, and whoever wants it is able to turn to it wherever they are and whenever they want to. It does not discriminate. It is always available at our command

and it does not cost anything either. So if we desire, we always have our friend, the *mahā-mantra*. And if we do not desire, the mantra will still come anyway, rolling through the streets!

Sometimes people are resistant, perhaps because they associate the mantra with an angry and punishing God, one who is up there ready to send down thunderbolts! But no, our mantra is joyful and blissful, meant to be fun and happy, something good that brings out the best of everything. The mantra is not just a sound or some words. It is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and through this *mahā-mantra*, Kṛṣṇa is always with us, always blessing us. In this way, the *mahā-mantra* is our best friend.

## **Not a material cure**

Chanting may not necessarily be the solution to all our material problems. Sometimes the question is asked, “How is it possible that I am chanting and still have so many material problems!” Yes, chanting is not necessarily going to cure all our material difficulties.

Nonetheless, we carry on because this chanting is giving us something much greater than any material benefit. It brings us to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet!

## **The most precious jewel**

Kṛṣṇa's transcendental treasure house is filled with so much amazing wealth. Just like the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which gives us eternity in verses such as *ṇa tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ*: “never was there a time that I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings...” or when He says, *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi*: “whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice, whatever austerity you perform, do it all as an offering to Me.”

Kṛṣṇa's treasure house is filled with unlimited wealth but the most precious jewel of all is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

We remember the time when Sanātana Gosvāmī had a *sparśa-maṇi*. A *sparśa-maṇi* is a touchstone. When you touch metal with this stone, it turns to gold. Ooh, we wouldn't mind a few stones like that, hmm?

Nowadays such stones are very rare, but Sanātana Gosvāmī had such a stone. Whatever he touched with the stone turned to gold. And what did Sanātana do? He threw it over his shoulder on the garbage heap, and then sat down and began to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra!*

Everybody knew that Sanātana Gosvāmī had such a stone. So one day a man came and said, “Sanātana Gosvāmī, I have heard that you have in your possession a touchstone. Is it true? A stone that can turn metal to gold?”

Sanātana Gosvāmī said, “Hmm..”

“Is it really true? You have this stone? Can I borrow it, please?”

“Oh, you can have it.”

“Really! Where is it? Where is it?”

“Oh, just look over there, in the garden – that stone is right there.”

So the man picked up the stone from the garden, took it and went home. Gold! Gold! Gold! Everything gold! It was great!

But then, at night, he was thinking, “Why did Sanātana Gosvāmī throw this in the garbage? What was it that made him throw it away? What secret does he know? He must have something better!”

He went back and pleaded, “Please tell me your secret. You have given me this stone but I know you have something better. Give me that.”

Sanātana Gosvāmī replied, “Alright, throw away the stone and sit down next to me.”

Then he gave him a *japa mālā*, and they started chanting the holy name.

## **Creating auspiciousness**

Lord Caitanya appeared under a *nima* tree at the time of a lunar eclipse when Rāhu was attacking the moon. It is considered to be an inauspicious time, therefore everyone, in order to counteract this inauspicious time, enters into holy waters.

So the Gaṅgā was filled with people, and all these people were chanting the holy names of the Lord. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared at a time which was apparently inauspicious in terms of the lunar eclipse but that inauspiciousness became completely auspicious when there was the chanting of the holy name. Suddenly everything was transformed and the spiritual world manifested. Everyone was touched by the transcendental influence and became completely blissful.

So wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, there is victory and auspiciousness. No need for pumpkins to drive out inauspiciousness!

## **No anxiety**

Everyone in this world is in need of spiritual life – some people know it; some people don't, but it is a fact.

We see so much unrest. We see that people are not peaceful. We see that in this world there is a lot of anxiety. There is a lot of insecurity because people are not satisfied within themselves.

This chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* can give people deep inner satisfaction. This satisfaction is higher than anything in the world and brings one to the point of no longer depending on so many external things.

We have the holy name and it will be successful without a doubt. The holy name is Kṛṣṇa and what in the world can obstruct Kṛṣṇa? Nothing! He is supremely powerful and the name is non-different from Him, so what are we worried about? Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and everything will be great!

## **Complete satisfaction**

The mind says, “What am I doing here chanting for so long? I am missing so many opportunities to do other things, and I am very busy; I have so much to do.”

*Śraddhā-bindu*, the drop of faith. Faith is where we think we will find happiness. Our faith is the key to chanting. Are we sure that all benefits are to be attained by the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa?

The daily work of Kṛṣṇa is a labour of love. He is somehow or other, whether by His noble nature or by tricks and play, making arrangements to increase the love that the devotees feel for Him.

The mind thinks, "Yes, but there are other things that attract the heart and these feelings are very strong."

But Kṛṣṇa will surprise us and give us beyond our expectations. By serving Him and chanting His name all the time, we will be ever-increasingly satisfied. The Sanskrit word used in *Bhāgavatam* is *suprasīdati*; 'sīdati' means 'satisfied'; 'pra' is *prakṛṣṭa-rūpeṇa*, which means, 'in its fully-fledged form', and *su* magnifies what follows. So a modern translation could be 'super completely satisfied.'

## **Kṛṣṇa will lift you!**

From the day you start chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, you have the blessings of Kṛṣṇa upon you. From that day on, you are no longer an ordinary person. You don't know your own limitations any more. You don't, because Kṛṣṇa will lift you!

## **Offering protection**

The process of chanting is certainly potent because it attracts the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and by that mercy we are protected. In the 6th Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is pointed out that Kṛṣṇa thinks, “Because this man has chanted My holy name it is My duty to protect him.”

So it is very significant that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is something very personal; it’s something very direct. Kṛṣṇa is directly touched by our chanting, attracted by our chanting and then reciprocating by protecting us, first from ourselves, protecting us from our lower nature and protecting us from *māyā* in so many ways.

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita says that as soon as you turn to the material energy, *māyā* is nearby waiting to slap you down. I have chanted my 16 rounds. I am under Prabhupāda’s protection. I will be on guard for *māyā*’s tricks that could distract me from Kṛṣṇa. Oh Kṛṣṇa! May I offer you this day.

## **Our shelter**

When the name becomes our shelter then chanting is something that's always accessible. So many things can happen in life. There are so many surprises; years go by but the holy name stays. And it becomes a shelter. Then it's not that we have to tell ourselves to take shelter in the name; the name becomes a shelter because it's the one thing that's sure.

What do you do when your loved one dies or leaves you? It is totally heart-breaking and rips you apart. Where is your shelter then? It is the *mahā-mantra*.

What do you do when you are in your car and suddenly the tyre squeaks and you can see the wall coming towards you? You know there is trouble coming, so where do you go? You go to the *mahā-mantra*.

What do you do at the end of your life, when you feel that life is slipping away? There is the *mahā-mantra*.

So the holy name is our only solace, our only shelter.

## **Eternal advancement**

Within these names, Kṛṣṇa has invested all His transcendental energies. And there is no limit to Kṛṣṇa. Can we limit Kṛṣṇa in any way? So therefore there is no limit to what the holy name can bring. There is no end to what one can realise. Up to eternity, even in the spiritual world, all the residents of the spiritual sky are making advancement all the time, every moment. There, the love for Kṛṣṇa is increasing, eternally so, as they discover more about Kṛṣṇa and embrace every aspect of His qualities.

Therefore the chanting is also going on in the spiritual world. Prabhupāda once told Umāpati, “What do you get from chanting? More chanting!” It goes on forever! All Kṛṣṇa’s energies are invested in His holy names: *nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis*.

## **The whole truth**

The whole truth is summarised in the *mahā-mantra*: ‘Hare’ is the service that attracts Him and ‘Rāma’ refers to the pleasure we derive from the service.

## **The perfect process**

The wealth of the spiritual world is that everyone in great love and ecstasy is chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa and then taking *prasādam*. And we are doing the same! Thus I can see that the process and the goal are the same; Lord Caitanya gave us the perfect process!

## **The life of transcendental knowledge**

This chanting of the holy name is the life of all transcendental knowledge. Without the holy name, transcendental knowledge will be dry. But if we chant then everything comes to life. Without the chanting, one can never understand Kṛṣṇa.

## **Unconditionally available**

It is not difficult to engage in devotional service especially if one has received the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and is aware that this chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the process for connecting with the Supreme Lord. It is the most merciful process because it reaches out without any condition.

Any other process offered in the scriptures for elevating oneself always has some conditions attached to it, but the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* doesn't have any conditions attached to it. This devotional service is unconditionally available to the living beings... that's amazing!

It can be chanted anywhere, at any time, by anyone... if we want. And if we don't want then we can hear other devotees chanting or unknowingly we can chant the name through *nāmābhāsa*, like if we live in the town of Ramarama in New Zealand!

## **Permanent transformation**

When we descended to the material realm, our consciousness became clouded and we took the body to be ourselves and this physical world perceived through the senses, as reality.

When the *mahā-mantra* made an entry, everything changed. We didn't understand the force that had appeared. As soon as we were touched by it, the transformation was permanent. Our interests changed

and now our feet may be in the material world, but our eyes are always on Kṛṣṇa. Let's just simply chant.

## **Full of transcendental potency**

We visited Tompkins Square Park and there is the tree where Prabhupāda stood and chanted. The New York city council had put up a sign on the tree which says, 'Hare Kṛṣṇa tree' and on the side of the park is a sign which explains a little about A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. I was standing under the tree for a moment and saying a little prayer, and a boy came up and said, 'You know, I want to become a monk. What do I have to do?' And guess what the answer was: chant Hare Kṛṣṇa!

It is a fact. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and everything will come. Prabhupāda had faith that simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, this movement would spread. He knew the power of the holy name.

*tasmāt saṅkīrtanaṁ viṣṇor  
jagan-maṅgalam aṁhasām  
mahatām api kauravya  
viddhy aikāntika-niṣkṛtam*

“Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, the chanting of the holy name of the Lord is able to uproot even the reactions of the greatest sins. Therefore the chanting of the *saṅkīrtana* movement is the most auspicious activity in the entire universe. Please try to understand this so that others will take it seriously.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.31)

We know this holy name is full of transcendental potency. We know that this holy name has tremendous effect. But still we cannot estimate the effect. If we could, we would not be so calm. We would not be so composed. We would by no means be so rational. We would be just completely overwhelmed and we would seize this amazing opportunity we have received!

Join the *kīrtana* and chant the holy names. Sit and chant; dance and chant; run around and chant; lie down and chant; take *prasādam* and chant in between bites; chant, chant, chant!

The whole world should be encouraged to take up the culture of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dive in these

pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and they will be immersed in an ocean of nectar!

## **The well-wisher of all**

The well-wisher of all—that’s a noble thought and that is the mood of Kṛṣṇa and the mood of Kṛṣṇa’s devotee. Those who chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa get into that mood. Instead of thinking about themselves: ‘me, I and mine and as much as I can get,’ they think of the benefit of all. It’s not just about my happiness which is based on the suffering of others. No, our happiness is to include the happiness of all! That is something and if we can take up that, then that’s a very great goal.

One can find the inspiration to really take that up by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. When we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, we become purified from our lower nature and we begin to develop an attraction to serving Kṛṣṇa. The more we serve Kṛṣṇa, the more taste we get and the more we become dedicated to serving Kṛṣṇa, to the point where we become His instrument.

Only then can we be the well-wisher of all living beings and that becomes our meditation. Then we are on fire! Then we are so inspired! Then our whole life becomes meaningful!

## **Transforming lust to love**

The material world is dominated by lust in so many varieties and forms. The spiritual domain however, is dominated by love.

Lust is self-centred; lust is ultimately asking, “What is in it for me?” Love, on the hand, is giving; love aims to please others. So that is spiritual consciousness—pleasing others. That is the essence of the spiritual world.

This mantra comes directly from the spiritual world, and it is this mantra that leads us to the spiritual world. It lifts us up gradually to the spiritual platform, where we begin to understand that giving is the essence of existence. That is the only way we will be satisfied. It is at this point that we realise that service to the Supreme Lord is really what our existence is all about. That is the perfection of life.

## **Entering the festival**

Those who really, seriously chant are the ones who are going to penetrate; they are going to enter that domain which is now invisible to us—the ecstatic festival of Lord Gaurāṅga.

Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī one day wanted to observe the disappearance of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī with a feast. Devotees who were present said, “That is a wonderful idea, Bābājī Mahārāja.” Then after some time they asked, “But where are we going to get the ingredients for the festival?”

Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī pointed at his *japa mālā* and said: “All the ingredients for a festival are here.”

## **Mad with transcendental love**

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, after Lord Caitanya takes *sannyāsa*, we get a description of His travels throughout South India, chanting and displaying His great ecstasy. People all over were swept up in the chanting and became ecstatic. They went back to their villages and made whole villages ecstatic! The holy name was

echoing everywhere. Lord Caitanya's chanting was flooding all of India like a tidal wave!

So if we do a lot of hearing and chanting, our mind begins to remember Kṛṣṇa, but that's not the actual, full state of remembering. This happens at a deeper level—the soul gets awakened and begins to remember. At this stage, hearing and remembering Kṛṣṇa is no longer in the mental sphere of the head, but right there in the heart! Then we will become mad with transcendental love!

## **Directly in Vṛndāvana**

In the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī prays, “Oh my Lord, when will You appear in My meditation?”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “My Lord, may You always remain on the pathway of my mind.”

In Jagannātha Purī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was so absorbed in remembering Kṛṣṇa, in always chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa and in only hearing about Kṛṣṇa that whatever He saw, it was related to Kṛṣṇa. When He saw

the ocean, it was the Yamunā—any water was the Yamunā! Any hill was Govardhana! As simple as that! He saw the Yamunā and jumped into the ocean in great enthusiasm. He floated for a long time and only came back to the shore when He was caught in the net of a fisherman. When the bewildered fisherman touched this unusual ‘thing’, he became overwhelmed by an overpowering force and immediately started jumping up, chanting ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.’ He thought that he was being overpowered by a ghost.

The associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared on the scene and chanted very loudly. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to His external senses and explained, “What is all this noise? I was in Vṛndāvana. I was just witnessing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Why have you brought Me here?”

So Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was directly in Vṛndāvana in His chanting. And not only Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu but also His followers like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī or Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, as described in the *Bhakti-ratnākara*. Kṛṣṇa began to

*Kīrtanīyaḥ Sadā Hariḥ*

manifest Himself to all these personalities, and they began to see Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.



## **A conscious choice**

In the first stage, we are hearing and it will awaken some desire in us to chant also. Then at one point, we make a conscious choice and we say, “Yes, I want to start chanting. I think it is a good thing; it is powerful. I think it will bring something good in my life.” At that stage we begin to chant regularly by the mercy of the association of devotees.

## **Try it for a month!**

It is said that when we chant, we gradually become free from all oppressive things. If only we can do that, at least one round every day and if possible more, then we will see a change after some time. Try it for a month because psychologists have discovered that if you do something for one month, it becomes a habit. So just try it for one month; sign on the dotted line and see what happens!

After one month you’ll say, “Well, maybe I’ll try another month...” and then maybe another and another and

then you've done one year and then maybe go for a second year... I am in my 42nd year now! In time the beads will start to shine because by moving the beads you polish the beads. As the beads start shining then something in you starts shining also! That is the secret of Lord Caitanya's movement.

But before you start your one round, always say,

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita  
gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

then it will work.

## **Starting the day**

One should start the day hearing only transcendental sound vibration. According to *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, one should, early in the morning, wake up and remember his worshipping Deity. One should offer obeisances, then one should recite different prayers even while bathing.

The whole idea is to avoid mundane influence in the morning and postpone that as long as possible. Only Kṛṣṇa as long as possible. From the moment I get up I

try to avoid any mundane sound vibration and only hear spiritual sound vibration. If we make that a culture then our rounds will improve a lot.

## **Chanting is the core**

Chanting is not casual. It is not something additional. It's the very core and that was Prabhupāda's idea. Prabhupāda designed a morning programme with the idea that one could chant 16 rounds within that morning programme. He calculated it, so one could chant 16 rounds with complete focus; not a few rounds and a few messages and a few mantras and so on.

Previously it was easy because all you had to do was wake up early and you would be ahead of the world; the world would still be asleep, but nowadays it's tough because your phone is awake! So it's easy to waste your time on the phone and break your concentration.

## **A priority**

One has to arrange one's life in such a way so that chanting doesn't become an austerity. Devotees must

arrange their lives according to the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and make this a priority. Our whole spiritual life depends on the quality of our rounds.

Quality chanting will never happen until you make time for it. Real chanting means making real time for it.

## **Gaining momentum**

We need to have some sort of discipline and therefore to chant every day at the same time is recommended because in that way we regulate ourselves. Then you really gain some momentum.

So it's good to chant at the same time every day. Just stop everything and chant 16 rounds in one stretch. Or a few rounds before *maṅgala-ārati* and the rest after, that's even better. Or all rounds before *maṅgala-ārati* is the very best! And the worst are those late night rounds!

## **Be here now**

It is said that one should not think about the number of rounds one has to chant, but one should try to go from

mantra to mantra and from name to name. We shouldn't count the rounds, '15 to go...14 to go...13 to go...12 to go...' No, we should just 'be here now' type of thing. Just be with each mantra and hear each name.

## **Invest in tomorrow**

Bedtime has come. I must stop the activity of the day although I want to do a lot more. I am now going to invest in tomorrow, so that I can rise early.. then chanting is easy.

## **Most important**

There are many other regulative principles that will help to make our spiritual life successful but the chanting is the most important of all our services. So we must therefore chant every day very seriously, with great attention.

## **The mercy of the spiritual master**

The mercy of the spiritual master comes in the form of the holy name, to enable us to take shelter and serve the

holy name. So first upon opening our eyes, we offer obeisances to the spiritual master. *Ādau guru-pādāśraya* means that in every situation, the desire of guru has the priority; then chant and nothing else.

The initiation vows are so nice. They will never leave us even if we try to leave them. If we give ourselves to following them with dedication they will uplift us, and if we take the vow casually, we become dry. If we neglect our chanting completely, giving up our promise to chant 16 rounds, then these vows will beat our heart.

So I think that there is a great blessing in taking initiation and promising to chant a minimum of 16 rounds without fail. At initiation we are receiving the holy name along with the prayer of the spiritual master, who has his credit with Kṛṣṇa as a result of his service and his sacrifice in devotional service. That mercy is something special!

## **The mercy of Lord Caitanya**

How can we chant without a prayer to Lord Caitanya for His mercy while chanting?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, "When we touch our beads, we are touching Lord Caitanya's lotus feet." Now that's a very nice statement. More than just appreciating hearing it, it becomes a meditation.

It's a very special time! Not only did Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu give us a great gift by the process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but He helps everyone who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. He is invisibly helping us all the time. That's very important because, without it, we wouldn't make it. We are weak, very weak!

But Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is present and is actively helping us. He makes difficult things easy: *kathañcana smṛte yasmin duṣkaram sukaram bhavet*. Now, in this time, it is possible for anyone and everyone to elevate himself to the platform of a pure devotee and, very quickly, perfection is attained. That is possible now by Mahāprabhu's mercy.

Therefore the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* is always preceded by the Pañca-tattva mantra. We must first take shelter of Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya and then we get Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa remain covered by darkness.

## **A blessed number**

Here we are, sitting at the feet of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and we are chanting a minimum of 16 rounds. Not that it is forbidden to chant 64 rounds but at least 16, because 16 is a blessed number and not less, not 12. Some people say, “Oh, I cannot manage 16; I can manage only 12.” Well, you are on the slow boat to China and that is not good and it may take too long!

Somehow or other, one has to adjust to increase one’s chanting, to reduce other commitments and make time. One must go to bed earlier and get up earlier. Chanting 16 rounds makes all the difference!

## **Absorption of the *ācāryas***

Look at Haridāsa Ṭhākura—everyday chanting 300 000 names—what absorption! Look at Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who followed the vow for a period of time to chant one billion names! And then he gave those very beads to his son, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who also chanted one billion names. Who are

these *ācāryas* that they are so absorbed in the spiritual realm?

And where are we...? We struggle to chant a few rounds, but all these great *ācāryas* have given us hope in Lord Caitanya's mercy.

## **Inspired chanting**

*Nāmācārya* Haridāsa Ṭhākura was absorbed in *nirantara kara kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, chanting the holy name incessantly. How deeply did he relish the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's holy name! We do not have that level of love for Kṛṣṇa to always chant His name. So we also need other engagements in devotional service.

The quality of our chanting will come back in the quality of our service and the quality of our service comes back in our chanting. When we regularly do some nice service for Kṛṣṇa, gradually our whole experience of chanting will change. Our service will increase in quality and quantity and we will come to the inspired stage of chanting.

## **Developing faith**

We are bathing in transcendental sound. That is the recommended process. And hearing is the oil of the lamp of chanting. We hear about Kṛṣṇa so that our hearts become purified and we can develop faith. It is not an intellectual type of hearing where we are categorizing and analysing; it is hearing that goes hand in hand with faith. Faith is developing, and as faith in Kṛṣṇa develops, then a shift takes place.

When we look at faith, the living entity by nature is *ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt* – pleasure seeking. That's our constitutional position. And we place our faith where we think this pleasure can be found. Our faith has become misdirected due to our poor vision, but due to this bathing in transcendental sound, by hearing, by chanting, it will spill over and we will develop faith in Kṛṣṇa, in nothing but the holy name.

## **Start with enthusiasm**

This movement offers the opportunity, the eagerness required to become a pure devotee. We have the

opportunity of beginning the day with an offering to the Lord. No day is ordinary; every day is special. All that matters is what we really want to do.

What have we tried today? Have we read enough *śāstra* or could it have been more? Have we finished our rounds and how nice were they? We should try again and again, each day to have the opportunity to do something special, beginning with chanting good rounds.

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, it is mentioned that when the cowherd boys wake up in the morning, their hairs stand on end in ecstasy. Our mornings in spiritual life should not be like an old car where a push is needed; it should be able to start with enthusiasm.

## **Keep the fire blazing**

The current temple of Lord Jagannātha in Purī is over 800 years old and during that time, the fire in the kitchen of the Lord has never gone out. In the same way, we must keep the fire of our *bhajana* going and make sure it never goes out. Every day we must throw in big logs of worship to the Deities, serving and hearing

from the Vaiṣṇavas, and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

Then that fire will burn forever and increase and increase – let us just add more fuel, as much as we can, to the fire of pure devotional service!

## **Keep on chanting**

Māyā is there in so many ways, ready with temptations to capture us. We can hide behind the name, but Māyā is there also, in our material desires.

Oh, no taste for this chanting, because I have a taste for something else!

But we keep on chanting hanging on a thread; then some attachment to Kṛṣṇa develops and gradually we can let material attachments go. In this way it takes time to come to chanting with deep absorption.

It's a matter of practice. But if we do so, our chanting will become more meaningful.

## **Optimism despite failure**

If we are sincere, we can go back to Godhead in this lifetime. Even if we made some mistakes in the past, if we correct ourselves and again take up devotional service, we are immediately properly situated. Immediately, we are again eligible to return to Godhead. So we must be very optimistic that all success will be there.

## **Fixed in commitment**

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said, “I will hear from that person who has bound Kṛṣṇa with such a strong bond of love in his heart, that even Kṛṣṇa cannot break it!”

So, keeping the goal in mind, let’s fix ourselves in commitment: let’s fix ourselves in some service. Let’s fix ourselves in commitment to chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and then maintain it... and then fix ourselves in more of the same and never take a step backwards. Just follow in the footsteps of the great devotees, *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*.

Then one day, we will obtain that unbreakable love!

## **A fight!**

When it comes to our rounds then we have to be ready: “Now, I go in for a fight! Now I go into the ring with my mind!” That is the situation. For most of us at this stage, chanting means going into the ring with our mind. But in this fight one can never lose because *yātrā yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yātrā pārtho dhanur-dharaḥ tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir*—wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, there will be victory!

## **Lazy by nature**

We are lazy by nature. “Do I really have to put my hand all the way in that bead bag, lift those heavy beads and move them through my fingers? Do I really have to move my hands?”

The mind is lamenting about all these things; the mind is holding us back and we don't do it. At other times we chant like a microwave oven: “16 rounds done, ping! Finished! Done!” An automatic switch off at 16. The

electricity cuts off. “Finished my chanting. No more!” That is the most ecstatic moment!

We always find a reason to decline the opportunity to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. But there is no condition when we do not have an opportunity. Maybe someone cannot chant, at least not through the mouth, but they can chant in the mind. It is possible in any condition to be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

## **Layers of ignorance**

In the morning we come out of thick layers of ignorance, through many layers of blankets that are nice and warm, telling you, “Stay here!” Your soft mattress is embracing you and saying, “I love you.” Your pillow is telling you, “Don't do it! Don't go out into that cold bathroom with ice cold tiles; you will get sick! I warn you, stay here!” Your sweet bed is telling you, “You are tired” and your intelligence responds, “Well, I must take care of my health.”

Just then we remember, ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’ and it cuts through layers of fog. It sort of shakes us: ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa!’ Oh yes! Kṛṣṇa is there. That’s right. It’s for Kṛṣṇa's sake

that I have to get up. Yes, for Kṛṣṇa I must get out of this bed. For Kṛṣṇa, although it's in the dead of night, I'll go into that cold bathroom, taking ice cold bath. For Kṛṣṇa I'm going through all these icy things because Kṛṣṇa is kind.

Kṛṣṇa... if you chant His name, His mercy is there.

## **A process of purification**

For most of us the chanting is a process of purification, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*, purifying the heart and purifying the senses, purifying the mind, purifying the intelligence.

In one lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking about the microphone and he said, “We don’t need microphones; we are only using the microphone to purify the microphone maker! When we use the microphone, they will make spiritual advancement.”

Some man in China or Japan works in a factory and puts the microphone in a box. Every day, thousands of microphones are packed in boxes and one of these boxes goes to the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple! Suddenly this man is

becoming purified because they are using it to chant the *mahā-mantra*! So anything connected with the mantra purifies!

It is said that like a tree that is full of birds, but which fly away when you clap your hands, in the same way our sins are flying away in all directions by chanting.

### **The offering and the *darśana***

There are two aspects in chanting: the offering and the *darśana*. The offering includes our endeavour—attentive chanting, clear pronunciation, synchronizing the beads with the mantra and not skipping beads, chanting in a suitable place, after sufficient rest, in good association and trying to avoid the 10 offenses.

The *darśana* includes hearing, appreciating that the name is Kṛṣṇa and remembering while chanting that we are with Kṛṣṇa, face to face. This is even part of the practice of the beginner. Thus the *darśana* element is not just for the advanced. Of course, the advanced may have *darśana* on deeper and more complete levels but everyone gets the *darśana* of the Lord while chanting. That is His kind mercy.

In the initial stages of chanting that is something one remembers in the back of one's mind—that this name is Kṛṣṇa; we are now associating with Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa is present. And sometimes we feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa within the chanting of the holy name, at least as something we can emotionally perceive.

Gradually one becomes purified and comes to more advanced levels of chanting. Then, as described by Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī in the *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, in *bhāva* one is not simply meditating on Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa Himself appears in our meditation! So Kṛṣṇa is an active party! He actually appears in our meditation!

## **Rules for chanting?**

It is mentioned that there are no hard and fast rules for chanting but yet one hears about many prescriptions that come with chanting. Undoubtedly the holy name acts even if it is chanted improperly, even if it is not pronounced properly, and under any circumstance. The Lord is merciful and accepts the intention of the devotee.

But yes, there are also offenses in chanting. The ten offenses are not about rules. Basically if you look at the *nāmāparādha*, it's about taking Kṛṣṇa seriously and treating Kṛṣṇa respectfully. We need to be conscious that this is Kṛṣṇa, the most wonderful person, so therefore we give respect and attention.

So it's not about rules; rather we are reminded that Kṛṣṇa is a person and Kṛṣṇa reciprocates. If we chant without any attention, or without really caring for Kṛṣṇa and we just use the holy name to counteract offenses, then we use the holy name like some sort of magic tool.

However, the holy name is not some sort of magic sound. The holy name is Kṛṣṇa personally. It is Kṛṣṇa who comes when we are chanting, and we need to be conscious that we are associating with Kṛṣṇa directly. Disrespect for the holy name, for the Vaiṣṇavas, for the Deities and for the scriptures can cause a delay in spiritual progress.

## **Attentive chanting**

The importance of attentive chanting is stressed again and again. There are many things one can do, like

chanting early in the morning after enough rest, in a peaceful place, in devotee association.

Skipping beads can happen in various ways. Sometimes I see that I am not changing the beads exactly at the end of the mantra and the beginning of a new mantra. That is not good, because then one could easily go through more beads than mantras. I try to focus, and the mind sometimes drifts; when I become aware of it, I try to bring it back.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that attentive chanting means to hear oneself chanting. Then automatically the mind becomes absorbed and the transcendental sound enters into the heart.

Still, although attentive chanting is important, that is not my only meditation while chanting. If that was all there was, then chanting would be a struggle and a stressful activity. Rūpa Gosvāmī in his famous verse: *tunḍe tāṇḍavinī ratim vitanute tunḍāvalī-labdhaye*, describes how the holy name dances in the mouth and he desires millions of mouths and millions of ears. It is clear that Rūpa Gosvāmī's meditation is on the wonderful nature of Kṛṣṇa. We may not have the same deep level of

absorption as Rūpa Gosvāmī, but we can also try to appreciate Kṛṣṇa's wonderful nature, and how He is so mercifully present in His name.

## **A meditative mood**

In our consciousness there are thick layers of fog and out of the fog the name is appearing. And what kind of names are we chanting? Simply broken names.

Therefore, chanting is to be accompanied by meditation on who Kṛṣṇa is. I always meditate while I am chanting, in the sense that when I read about an aspect of Kṛṣṇa that strikes me, the thought continues to travel in my mind while I chant.

The more we hear about Kṛṣṇa, the more we find out about His wonderful qualities and His wonderful pastimes, the more we become attracted to Kṛṣṇa. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains, this chanting is not an artificial imposition on the mind. So ultimately, it is not about forcing the mind to think about Kṛṣṇa. That is only the beginning. After we find out more about Kṛṣṇa, after we become more attracted to Kṛṣṇa, we will naturally develop attraction for chanting.

Once I read that Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was the abode of the holy name. And I was thinking, “Wow! That’s far out!” The holy name was residing in him! I was thinking, “Boy, if only I could be like that. Alright, let me chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” So reading that verse increased my desire to chant.

### **Inspired by the depth of Kṛṣṇa’s heart**

The heart of Kṛṣṇa is so deep, so filled with love for His devotees, for all living beings. The heart of Kṛṣṇa is so generous!

Cruel Pūtanā offered her poisoned breast to baby Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa drank the poison, took the milk and then her life air as well. Overlooking the poison and seeing the service in the form of offering milk, He took her back to Godhead and made her one of His nurses in Goloka.

When Kṛṣṇa took the place of the calves and cowherd boys, the cows who mothered Kṛṣṇa in the form of their calves, attained an even better, more intimate position in motherly relationship in the spiritual sky.

The more we think about Kṛṣṇa's unlimited kindness, the more we feel inspired to make an effort to chant.

## **Chanting with appreciation**

Sometimes I think about how we, the *jīvas*, have turned away from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is like a loving father always thinking of His lost children who have left home. Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself, "I must give them some mercy. But why should I give them only some mercy? I will give them all the mercy! I will put the spiritual world in the material world!" Then He manifested Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Such thoughts about how wonderful and merciful Kṛṣṇa is, make me enthusiastic to chant His name.

I also think about the pastime of Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhana Hill. The thing that I like the most about this pastime is that Kṛṣṇa had unlimited cowherd boy friends who each had unlimited calves and they all fit under that hill of an otherwise limited size. So somehow Kṛṣṇa made it possible!

It touches me that the Lord is providing for everyone and no one is excluded. That remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not only a remembrance of His qualities and His pastimes, but it is also remembrance with appreciation. In that appreciation we find a development of actual attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

## **Mind, body and words**

Nārada Muni instructed Dhruva Mahārāja to chant the mantra, and to meditate and worship the Deity at the same time. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that meditation means to engage mind, body and words while chanting.

## **Remembering the glories**

One can only chant the holy name constantly if one remembers the glories of the holy name. If one remembers that the holy name is Kṛṣṇa, one can start to believe that:

“Yes, it is the holy name that will deliver me. It is the holy name that will offer me complete happiness, and it

is the holy name that will set me free. It is the holy name that will improve this situation. It is all dependent on the holy name of the Lord.”

## **Joyfully performed**

Full happiness means full freedom. As long as we are not fully happy, we are chained; we are trapped and we are not free. Therefore, only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can we be really free, because nowhere else are we able to be fully happy.

So it is nice to remember that devotional service and chanting is voluntarily performed. It should be performed joyfully out of free choice. Service and chanting can be our life, but this is our choice because Kṛṣṇa does not force us!

## **The pleasure of Kṛṣṇa**

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is known as the *nāmācārya*, or the perfect teacher of the chanting of the holy name. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was absorbed in chanting 300 000 names of the Lord every day. And it’s said that he

was chanting these names simply for the pleasure of the Lord, not for any other purpose.

That's very uncommon because we are chanting for various reasons: we may chant because we may desire blessings or protection; we may chant to become purified; we may chant out of curiosity because we heard that the chanting will give us spiritual experience and we wouldn't mind having one!

But Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting simply for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. And to him, Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself; the Lord entered into his heart and filled his heart with such transcendental ecstasy that he became overwhelmed with love for Kṛṣṇa. In his love he could only call out “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” In this way, the name of Kṛṣṇa came from his heart as an expression of his deep love. This is the nature of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

## **Turning to Kṛṣṇa**

Why is Kṛṣṇa pleased when we chant? Because we are turning to Him rather than to the things and people of this world.

The purpose of chanting is about taking shelter. Everyone needs shelter in this world; we know that very well. But where is our shelter other than at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet? There is no other shelter! Everything else is illusory shelter. Real security and shelter is found in Kṛṣṇa and that is the essence of spiritual life.

In our natural position, we belong in a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, but here in this world, we have forgotten that relationship and we preoccupy ourselves with a relationship with the material energy in the form of wealth, in the form of possessions, in the form of positions of power. We have a relationship with our house, our family, our work, our nation, but we forgot that we have a relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

This chanting of the *mahā-mantra* will reawaken our original love for Kṛṣṇa. We will awaken as if from a deep sleep.

## **My Kṛṣṇa looks at the intention**

When one tries to fix the mantra in one's consciousness and one is sincerely trying to chant, still the mind goes here and there and we get distracted. Sometimes we

think, “Kṛṣṇa is watching our chanting... and if there’s one mistake, He will note it down and will hold you back... for that you will stay in the material world!” And is that Kṛṣṇa, the all-loving, all merciful Supreme Lord?

Well, maybe that is your Kṛṣṇa but not my Kṛṣṇa! My Kṛṣṇa is very understanding; my Kṛṣṇa is very merciful. My Kṛṣṇa is very kind; He looks at the intention. He is *bhāva-grāhī janārdana*; my Kṛṣṇa cares about the intention in the heart.

My Kṛṣṇa is the one from the story about the man who, with great difficulty, was making a clay pot. He wasn’t very expert; he took the clay and after one hour of trying again and again, there was something that looked like a pot! It wasn’t perfect, but boy, it was a miracle that it even looked like a pot!

He offered it to Kṛṣṇa saying, “Kṛṣṇa, please accept this pot... it’s the best I can do. I know it’s not perfect but please accept it.” And Kṛṣṇa accepted it more gladly than the perfect pot of the potter who just threw the clay and, with one finger, made a perfect pot in a minute! But no, Kṛṣṇa was happier with that crooked pot that was made with blood, sweat and tears.

So my Kṛṣṇa looks at the intention. That's the Kṛṣṇa I turn to; that's the Kṛṣṇa I pray to. He is very soft hearted... my Kṛṣṇa!

## **A reciprocation of love**

We must chant for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, we have heard. Why does Kṛṣṇa like it when we chant His name? If you would chant my name, I might enjoy it, thinking with pride and vanity, "Ah, they know how wonderful I am."

Is Kṛṣṇa like that also?

No!

Kṛṣṇa likes the chanting of His name because He sees the love in the heart of the chanter. And He is generous, so He also recognizes the sincere effort as the seed of love in someone who is still struggling with the basics of chanting.

## **Learn to relax!**

Somewhere along the line we must learn to relax and not look at this mountain of names called 16 rounds. In the morning you get up and there it is... a huge

mountain of names that have to be chanted again and just the thought of it causes so much stress!

And we think, ‘How in the world am I going to do it again? Again... 16 rounds! A huge mountain of chanting!’ So the anxiety in the beginning is there: “Well, I better get up. I better get serious about chanting! Otherwise what am I going to do? I better have an early start and then I’ll have an early finish! Relief! Relief!” All out of fear actually of having to chant so many names.

It is described that when Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was chanting, he was not doing it in a fanatical mood. He was not pushing himself. He was chanting so many rounds but it is said that he was chanting quite slowly, almost in a musical way.

So we see that when the *ācāryas* are chanting they are not thinking, “When will I finish my rounds? I have to get seriously into it and then my chanting will be finished.” This is the nature of the conditioned soul. What we see in great devotees like Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is that they were very happy to be chanting and there was no rush!

## **The mood of the Indian villager**

Satsvarūpa Mahārāja is known for trying to consciously improve his *japa*. He wrote a *japa* reform notebook and at the time he was really into moving his lips. So he was very serious about good pronunciation and making an endeavour to chant very nicely.

Then one day he said, “Sometimes I think that we westerners make everything too difficult. I’m thinking of an Indian villager who never really worries about how he is chanting. He’s just chanting, uncomplicated with trying to chant really nicely. Round after round and name after name, he is just chanting.” Mahārāja wrote, “I think that today I am just going to chant in the mood of an Indian villager.”

And I liked that. I also tried it out, to chant in the mood of an Indian villager. Just chant without being mental and without trying so hard; just chant... you might even like it!

## **A driver on a journey**

I am chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* like a driver in a car on a journey during the dark hours of the night, who is totally focused on the white lines. In the beginning of our spiritual life, we mostly fix ourselves on the white lines of the regulative principles.

Then, with the passing of time, the day breaks and the sun begins to reveal the entire landscape in full features. Of course, we still keep an eye on the white lines, but we also see mountains, rivers, forests and many other sights.

So with time our Kṛṣṇa consciousness expands and we think more and more of Kṛṣṇa, His qualities, His name, fame and glory, or how He is behind everything. Remembering Him touches our life with magic. Staying within the white lines of regulative principles now comes with ease, although one must remain alert for the attacks of Māyā.

*smartavyaḥ satatam viṣṇur  
vismartavyo ṇa jātucit*

*sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur  
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

“Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras should be the servants of these two principles.”

*(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 22.113)*

## **Loud chanting**

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was chanting loudly and He ordered us to also chant loudly. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who also chanted out aloud, explained that by this loud chanting, he was delivering all the conditioned souls!

There is also a testimony from a neighbour of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, an elderly gentleman who lived in Māyāpur, that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura would chant very loudly, so much so that the neighbours also chanted while he was chanting! So the Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu are meant to chant loudly, to deliver the conditioned souls.

But we should also engage the mind in the chanting and not just produce the sound. The mind must be very much involved in the chanting.

## **Hope against hope**

As Śrīla Prabhupāda said on many occasions, “If you follow 4 regulative principles and you chant 16 rounds daily, then at the end of life you will go back to Godhead.” He emphasized, “I guarantee it, I guarantee it, I guarantee it...” 3 times!

So that’s pretty good! I remember that often. I need to remember that because I am only chanting for shelter and I know that my chanting is poor. But I have hope – *āśā-bandha*, hope against hope – that with Prabhupāda’s mercy it will be possible to go back to Godhead.

Therefore, let us come together again and again and let us chant together again and again, so that we can feed off each other’s strength and inspiration. In that way, carry on faithfully; just faithfully chant throughout a lifetime and take shelter of these four regulative principles. We have hope and faith in the words of Śrīla

Prabhupāda, that by his service we can go back to Godhead.

I'm sure we can get Kṛṣṇa *prema* also – latest is at the door of the spiritual world!

## **Endlessly chant**

Vasudeva, the leper, wanted to meet Caitanya Mahāprabhu but when he arrived at the spot where Caitanya Mahāprabhu was meant to be, Mahāprabhu had already left.

Vasudeva lamented and lamented and at this point, Caitanya Mahāprabhu suddenly appeared. He embraced him and cured his body. He had a beautiful healthy body after that, and Vasudeva was very happy that the Lord had bestowed mercy upon him.

But after the initial happiness was over, he said, “But my dear Lord, now that I am in this position, I am wondering how I will be saved from falling prey to pride? Previously that was very easy because I was totally abominable so I never had a chance to get carried away by pride. I was just some low leper, but now, I

might think, well, an attractive *brāhmaṇa* like me... So how do I save myself from being contaminated?”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed him to always chant the holy name of the Lord. This is a very important instruction – to endlessly chant the holy name of the Lord. He also told Vasudeva to always instruct whoever he met, about Kṛṣṇa. He said, “If you do this, you will never be overcome by the three modes of material nature, I guarantee that!”

So here, with these two principles, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is giving a guarantee! This guarantee is not only for Vasudeva, but also for us.

## **Talk about the fame of Kṛṣṇa!**

How long can anyone be quiet? The birds sing, lions roar, babies cry, people talk... Who can be quiet and for how long? And what to talk about? The best thing really is to talk about Kṛṣṇa! And that is *saṅkīrtana*, to talk about the ‘*kīrti*’, the fame of Kṛṣṇa. And then comes the chanting of His holy name and more devotional service.

## **Engaging the tongue**

Have you ever seen these huge, heavy oil tankers? Enormous ships, one kilometre long, sailing down the ocean! Imagine driving one of those!

That enormous ship is controlled by a tiny piece of metal, namely the rudder. That rudder determines the destiny of that ship, which is so difficult to steer. That little rudder is responsible for the movement of that enormous ship!

In the same way, we also have a rudder and that is our tongue. It is very small, but that tongue has the power to determine our destination. If we engage the tongue in glorifying Kṛṣṇa, in chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, then we can easily attain the spiritual world and quickly it will turn from a dream into reality.

But when we are using the tongue for all kinds of mundane talk, then it so easily takes us away from Kṛṣṇa into the material world and we become like clowns, who are playing with so many things and taking it so seriously. Just the vibration of the tongue makes all the difference. Just that tiny little piece of flesh can

determine our destiny as the rudder of a huge oil tanker can set the course for that large ship.

*Sevonmukhe* – in this age, the service has to be with the mouth, by engaging the tongue in the service of Kṛṣṇa. If we engage the tongue in glorifying Kṛṣṇa, then everything will become easy and before we know it, we will be in the spiritual world!

### **Swept by the current**

In the beginning, we chant in the mood of a *sādhaka*, in the mood of practice, where we have to push ourselves. It is similar to entering a river with a strong current; on the side, the current is not so strong, but if you go deeper into the water, the current will grab you and drag you along.

It is like that with the chanting of the holy name as well. In the beginning, we discipline ourselves to chant but then we become captured and swept up!

## **Kṛṣṇa attracts**

The meaning of “Kṛṣṇa” is ‘all-attractive’ and therefore Kṛṣṇa will attract. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.90.48, it states that *jana-nivāsa*, the shelter of all living beings, *jayati*, is victorious. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura commented that ‘is victorious’ is in the present tense and there is no question of whether the Lord will be victorious or not. Will chanting work or will it not work?

It always works. It is working whether we notice it or not.

## **Experiencing Kṛṣṇa’s presence**

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that in the beginning we enjoy the service and then later, we enjoy directly our connection with Kṛṣṇa. Initially we are selective because we care about the service and not so much about Kṛṣṇa. But gradually, we begin to appreciate that actually Kṛṣṇa has many wonderful qualities. He looks quite amazing and His pastimes are very playful and attractive.

So we don't have to wonder, "How will I become Kṛṣṇa conscious?" It happens automatically! Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta says that the word Kṛṣṇa doesn't just mean 'all-attractive,' but the word Kṛṣṇa also means, 'He who can be attracted by devotional service.'

So this is the key. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is devotional service and therefore the chanting attracts Kṛṣṇa. Everything changes when we begin to experience the presence of Kṛṣṇa!

## **Constant glorification**

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said that we are initiated into the mantra *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*. That is our mantra... to always chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa!

Prabhupāda also said, "Why 16? Why not 16000 rounds?" Expanding our small consciousness to *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* is the real objective – to be absorbed in constant glorification of Kṛṣṇa.

When we begin to glorify Kṛṣṇa, then we are acting on the spiritual platform and awakening the soul from its slumber in the embodied stage. When the soul becomes

completely awakened, it becomes completely blissful and alive! So we must constantly chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to take us to that dimension.

The mood of Vṛndāvana is constant hearing, chanting and remembering. If we do this, then we are always in Vṛndāvana.

## **Service to the Vaiṣṇavas**

By serving the Vaiṣṇavas, we get taste for hearing and chanting.

*śuśrūṣoḥ śraddadhānasya  
vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ  
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ  
puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt*

O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva.

*(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.16)*

## **Practical service**

Kṛṣṇa is so simple, so thoroughly honest and pure. There is no pretence and no duplicity on His side! As for us, if only we could go before Him with an open and simple heart, with no hidden agenda for personal sense enjoyment, then we could chant His name in pure love and with great ecstasy.

But material desires stubbornly remain. Mostly we struggle, with an occasional light beam of inspiration, like sudden sun rays in an otherwise clouded sky. Yet Prabhupāda gave us practical devotional service: pots to be washed, Deities to be cared for and gradually we can become purified and our chanting will improve with time.

## **The essence of all service**

Ultimately, all service we do must come back to the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is the essence of all service. All service begins and ends with the holy name.

## **Breaking the false ego**

When *nāmābhāsa* is present, or the dim reflection of the holy name, it is because we cover the holy name with our false ego. There is a big wall of false ego between us and Kṛṣṇa.

The wall of my false ego is thick and high, yet this chanting and devotional service in general is wearing down the stone. Here and there some holes or cracks have appeared in the surface of that wall and I am beginning to get glimpses of Kṛṣṇa.

This is how I now associate with Kṛṣṇa during my chanting. Sometimes in my wanderings, I have come across an elevated desire tree and by climbing its branches for a short while, I could look over the wall; but then I had to return to the ground. However, all these experiences have made my faith stronger and stronger that one day this wall of false ego will break down.

Poor Kṛṣṇa indeed, having to listen to all our poor chanting. But then again, because He is very broad-minded, He appreciates every little endeavour we make.

## Alone with Kṛṣṇa

Being alone with the Lord is not a luxury. It is essential to take that time to be alone with Kṛṣṇa and leave all the clutter behind; a time where there is no phone, no other people around, no children – when the little darlings are asleep!

Śrīla Prabhupāda would write his purports in the middle of the night and refer to it as his moments of ecstasy.

In the ultimate sense, we are alone with Kṛṣṇa and we should not forget to make that connection with Kṛṣṇa. We cannot just be carried by a programme or a community. Everyone on his own has to turn to Kṛṣṇa.

In the middle of a busy day, spend just one moment with Kṛṣṇa, just one round alone with Kṛṣṇa. Forget everything else, just chant... alone with Kṛṣṇa. Nothing else... just chant.

In *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that in this world, there is only the *jīva* and the holy name. What about the Deity? Yes, but in this age of Kali, everything must be preceded and followed by the

chanting of the holy name, says Jīva Gosvāmī in the *Sandarbha*. There is only the *jīva* and the holy name... not the *jīvas* and the holy name. Not that we are thinking about every other *jīva* and striking up a conversation. It's just Kṛṣṇa and us alone.

### **Preaching gives life to our *japa***

How many of us really have the time to regularly chant 64 rounds? I like the programme of rising at 1:30am, taking a bath and then only chanting. Then I can chant 64 rounds before 10am. But then there is no *maṅgala-ārati*, *guru-pūjā* and class.

Sometimes I want to hang a sign on the door, “Do not disturb—important meeting in progress” and inside the room I will be trying to meet Kṛṣṇa by chanting His holy names. Sometimes I want to be alone and at other times I want to go on *harināma* or be there at *Ratha-yātrā*. Preaching gives life to our *japa*.

## **Changing our mood**

Our problem is not that chanting doesn't work. Our problem is that we don't work when it comes to chanting. We are restless; we chant for a while and then find an excuse to stop. It's still the same old topic: "Oh, I really don't know how to fix the mind. It's very difficult!" Sometimes the rounds are chanted late at night, perhaps with one finger on the keyboard of the computer and a few rounds while driving.

So how can we improve the quality of our chanting? By service. We can serve the holy name by serving Śrīla Prabhupāda's Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. The more we serve, the more we will change our whole mood in chanting, and the more we develop the attitude of doing something for Kṛṣṇa without desiring any profit.

## **Commitment to service**

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in *The Nectar of Devotion* that *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*, the cleansing of the heart, cannot really take place unless we cooperate by adopting a service attitude. It is that commitment that

makes the difference. It's not that the holy name is sheer magic and we are just sort of passively immersing ourselves in this magic mantra that will change everything,

No, it will change things to a point where one's service attitude awakens and where we take that up. It goes hand in hand with commitment and we are seeing this commitment in service. Advaita Ācārya had taken up, even before the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the mission to explain the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the personalist understanding. His commitment was to explain the true meaning of the Gītā or the *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

Śrīvāsa was also similarly committed. After he read the verse from the *Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa* that in this age of Kali, the chanting of the holy name of Hari is the only recommended process, he became inspired to start *kīrtana* in his house, in preparation for the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prabhupāda says that one should serve the holy name and the holy name will reveal itself. Serving the holy

name means chanting, but also working to spread the glorification of the holy name.

## **Distribute the fruits**

Mahāprabhu has ordered everyone in the universe to distribute the fruits of love of God. By distributing these fruits our own stock will increase.

Chanting and service go hand in hand; one enhances the other. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is churning yoghurt and spontaneously chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa. Appreciating that Kṛṣṇa is wonderful, always absorbed in devotional service, then we will chant.

The breezes of the Ganges in Māyāpur make one chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Devotees make the difference. Together we chant and serve the holy name, by spreading the glories of the holy name.

## **Compassion in chanting**

*Saṅkīrtana* is a process based on compassion. The focus is on the welfare of others. That is what happened in Prabhupāda's movement. Prabhupāda began to chant in

Matchless Gifts in New York and so many young people came and chanted with him, and he transformed so many!

In the *saṅkīrtana* movement, we should take people with us if we can. Like Vāsudeva Datta, who wanted to take on the sins of the entire world, our mood should be one of compassion and mercy. There's no limit to the mercy of the holy name. The more we chant with quality, the more mercy we will have to give.

## **Making connections**

Like in many cities, in Amsterdam the houses are right on the side-walk, with no garden, no private space. Some who have a roof sit there in the summer time, and the locals just place the sofas right there on the side-walk; they own the place.

One summer evening, with the sun out until late, we had our chairs on that side-walk. The temple door was open onto the street. A devotee called out to the ones sitting outside, “Does anyone want some hot milk?”

A lady walked by with her dog and said, “Yes, I will have some,” and she walked into the temple with her dog.

The devotees started barking, “Out! Out, dog! Dog in the temple, out!”

The lady was shocked at how these nice people had suddenly turned into dog haters.

I calmed her down. “No, it’s not that they hate dogs. It’s just traditionally, in Indian temples, no dogs are allowed, but we can sit here on the side-walk and drink our milk.” She agreed.

We started chatting and at one point she asked what kind of meditation we were doing. I explained that it was mantra meditation, and I gave her a demonstration of chanting on my beads.

She said, “I also meditate when I walk with my dog. I walk along the river and stare into the water.”

“Oh interesting! Meditation brings more meaning to life. I also had a dog and it’s name was Kṛṣṇa. By calling the dog, I began my mantra meditation.”

She liked that and, like me, through a dog she made a connection with chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

## **True empowerment**

True empowerment means that we are able to connect with the Supreme Lord. So a devotee can empower others simply by engaging a person in devotional service because immediately the person becomes connected to the Supreme Lord. Every devotee therefore who can give devotional service, who can encourage others to chant, has the power to empower—to create the connection with the Supreme Lord.

## **Share with happiness**

Prabhupāda told the story of the old Bengali lady, who while on her death bed, is being forced by her son to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. The son says to his mother, “Chant! Chant! Hare Kṛṣṇa *bolo!*”

The mother does not respond. The son becomes more forceful and finally the lady says, “I am dying, can’t you see? What more do you want me to say?” The lady said

this whole sentence but still she could not say Hare Kṛṣṇa! Why?

This is because the lady has not seen how chanting this *mahā-mantra* will bring her eternal happiness. If her son had shown her how this chanting brings happiness, then she would be able to chant.

Therefore we must be able to show people that there is happiness coming from the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*. And of course, this is easiest through *kīrtana* because *kīrtana* brings everybody happiness.

## **The power of association**

Faith develops by association and taste – someone who will connect us with transcendental sound vibration, and someone who experiences taste, can transmit this taste. One human exchange with a devotee can open up a universe – that’s all it takes!

## **Empowered with realized knowledge**

Balarāma wears a dhoti which is exactly the colour of a dark blue rain cloud, says Jayadeva Gosvāmī. I think

that is not coincidence; rather that dark blue is His favourite colour, because it's the colour of Kṛṣṇa. In Madhuvana, Balarāma sat down to chant the name of Kṛṣṇa and He became so absorbed that His white body took on the colour of Śyāma.

Ah, mercy of Balarāma! By serving Him and assisting Him in making nice arrangements for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and interest, we become empowered—empowered with happiness and realized knowledge. Then we will also relish like Balarāma, the power of devotional service. Then in the strength of happiness, we can really chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

## **An overflow**

It is not that the Pañca-tattva broke the lock of the storehouse of love of God and then grabbed whatever fruits were there and immediately ran out of the door with their cape flapping like superman and started to flood the entire world. No! They became absorbed themselves. It began to overflow – the glory of Kṛṣṇa, the amazing qualities of Kṛṣṇa – and they appreciated

and relished it. With that relish they chanted, as it says in the next verses:

“Śrī Pañca-tattva themselves danced again and again and thus made it easier to drink nectarean love of Godhead. They danced, cried, laughed and chanted like madmen, and in this way they distributed love of Godhead.”

*(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 7.22)*

When the Pañca-tattva broke the seal of the storehouse of love of God and began to drink these fruits of love of God, their thirst was increasing. The devotees would just chant the entire night and become deeply absorbed in chanting and dancing. By drinking this transcendental sound, by engaging in this glorification of the Supreme Lord, their eagerness and thirst increased.

## **Spiritual strength**

Quality spiritual life begins at 4am. That's where concentrated 16 rounds begin. That's where 16 rounds in one block begin, with focus instead of inattentiveness.

And that's where spiritual strength begins. Where such focus exists and where there is spiritual strength, there is also the resolve to make a sacrifice.

Otherwise our own personal agenda becomes very important to us... “What I feel... What I need...” is still very strong. But when we actually chant 16 rounds with great focus, then we will be ready to make more sacrifices. So it all begins at 4 o'clock!

## **The revolutionary spirit**

If one is not deeply absorbed in chanting and in reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is not possible to develop the revolutionary spirit that Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced. Lord Caitanya's movement is a revolutionary movement and Prabhupāda was revolutionary. He was not at all for the status quo. Prabhupāda's objective was how to spread Kṛṣṇa Consciousness all over the world.

At the same time, Prabhupāda was also into devotees themselves being very dedicated and very serious about their chanting—not just to somehow or other chant 16 rounds among other things. Like Jayānanda, who is so

famous among Prabhupāda’s disciples, used to sit down and chant 40 rounds in one go!

## Complete conviction

*Nāma Haṭṭa* is a concept conceived by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He writes in the *Godruma Kalpāṭavī* about the *Nāma Haṭṭa* system which means “marketplace of the holy name”. He has different caretakers and district heads; the head of the marketplace, major storehouses and smaller outlets. So he set up a whole business model of the marketplace of the holy name and points out that the holy name is available for the price of faith.

It is said that if one tries to purchase the holy name without faith, one gets the counterfeit name. If we chant the holy name without faith, without changing our life and without surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, then we are in that category. As Bhaktisiddhānta describes it, Kṛṣṇa withdraws from that name, and all that remains is an empty shell.

Chanting the holy name with faith means that we accept the holy name as non-different from Kṛṣṇa. And when

we accept this, then we will be respectful to the holy name as our worshipping Deity and see the holy name as something very sacred. A person who chants the holy name without this faith may see it as a technique, a mantra which has power which he can use to get some benefit. He may not get into the spirit of serving the holy name.

Prabhupāda had that full faith and let the holy name act without any support and without anything behind him – no big organization behind him, no big buildings, no big money, no big campaigns behind him.

Prabhupāda wasn't trying to change the world by his power. When he was at the Boston pier, he wrote, "How will I make them understand this message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? O spiritual master of all the worlds, I can simply repeat your message..."

Prabhupāda was convinced. Are we convinced?

## **A change of heart**

How do we chant from the heart? Chanting from the heart means to chant with desire, where we want to do

it again and again. Each name enters the heart and each name brings about a change in the heart.

In one lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that if one chants the holy name even once, then one becomes a different person. The subtle body changes. Little by little, as each mantra is chanted, the subtle body gradually dissolves until only the pure, original spiritual body remains.

## **Chanting without self-interest**

If we are not absorbed in glorifying Kṛṣṇa, then we will look to glorify ourselves. So we have this tendency even while chanting. The mind goes: “I’m the first one up... I’ll chant a little louder so everyone can hear!”

That is being absorbed in being glorified ourselves. So how much devotional service are we actually doing to be glorified?

It’s not enough to say “I am chanting 16 rounds.” It’s not just about what you do, but it’s also about who you are. We have to be noble in character. We have to be ready to put our self-interest aside. As long as we chant with

self-interest, it's not possible to get the full benefit of chanting. Techniques for attentive chanting do help, but the real thing is changing our mentality.

This is what we see in saintly persons – they sacrifice their self-interest so much and that is what we have to learn to do. It's not easy at all; it's a matter of practice. But if we do so, our chanting will become more meaningful.

## **False ego aside**

Let's put all false ego aside; *sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam*, let's not look for status or designation. "I am a beginner at chanting... I am experienced... I am expert... I am an author about the holy name." Whatever we are, let's forget it and just take shelter of the holy name. Let the name act, without looking for any result. Let's make the best offering we can and let Kṛṣṇa act without getting in the way.

## Not mechanical

Govinda is the giver of pleasure to the cows and to the senses. Kṛṣṇa chants on a *japa mālā* to count His cows.

This chanting is not mechanical. Service to the cows, even before service to the *brāhmaṇas*, pleases Kṛṣṇa.

## Humility in chanting

We can only chant the holy names purely in a humble state of mind. Humility can arise naturally through the process of devotional service, and we can also make a conscious effort to always take a humble position. It's easy to be humble when we are honest – then we can see that actually we are not that great. We are full of faults and when we understand this, we realize that actually we are where we are not by our own efforts, but by the mercy of others.

It is not only scripture that teaches us to be humble; life is also our teacher. The whole purpose of material life is to bring us to the point of humility. Throughout life we are reduced, little by little, as we age, as we lose our capacities, as we are confronted with our limitations.

Humility is very central. It's what Kṛṣṇa requires – that we acknowledge our dependence on Him. Humility means simply that we give Kṛṣṇa the credit – not saying, “Oh, I cannot do anything!” Kṛṣṇa gives us abilities, *pauruṣam nṛṣu*, “I am the ability in man.” So Kṛṣṇa gives us; we can all do something, but it's not our claim to fame. Humility means that we give credit to Kṛṣṇa for whatever attributes we have, understanding that they are gifts from Him, and these gifts are not permanently ours. They are with us for as long as He desires.

Lord Caitanya says we have to be lower than the grass on the street and more tolerant than a tree. Grass is trampled upon – everyone steps on the grass and the grass doesn't protest. A tree doesn't protest against hail or snow or even the thrust of an axe. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says that the symptoms of one who chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is that he thinks that he personally has no love for Kṛṣṇa, but he offers all respects to others, knowing everyone to be the resting place of Kṛṣṇa. Like a tree that is laden with fruit, a person with good qualities will naturally bow down.

That spirit of humility is our entrance point. But in the meantime, since we are not so humble, we continue to chant, praying that the quality of humility will develop in time.

## **A submissive attitude**

Chanting means calling out for the Lord in a mood of helplessness and submission. Development of a submissive attitude will enable one to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa properly.

The holy name is the feeling of *bhāva*. Bhāva cannot be heard with the mundane ear; it can only be heard by the soul. As the Supreme soul, Kṛṣṇa can hear the quality of our chanting. The quality of our chanting is more important than the quantity of our chanting.

## **An intimate interaction**

When Kṛṣṇa is pleased with our attitude of humility and our respectful attitude towards guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra*, then He will reveal Himself. Therefore one can never say, 'If I have chanted one million names, than surely

Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself!’ There’s no such thing, since Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself whenever He desires, whenever He is pleased.

In this way, the chanting of the holy name is an intimate interaction with the Supreme Personality of Godhead!

### **Like a dependent child**

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that He was never the master of the holy name or the master in chanting the holy name but rather, he was always the servant of the holy name. It is not possible to master the art of chanting and to become expert in chanting the holy name.

One can simply realize before the holy name that one is helpless, that one is incapable of properly making the offering of chanting and that one simply depends on the mercy of the name. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that, like a dependent child calling out to his mother, in that mood of dependence it is possible to actually chant the holy name.

It is interesting that as we are advancing in chanting, we realize that we depend on the holy name and that without the holy name we are victims of our polluted mind and senses. We know that will lead us to misery and suffering. So we are desperate. We struggle and we know that it is very difficult. So there's no question of being a master of the holy name.

## **The mood of the servant**

Thus we go before the name, realising that somehow or other, I am here as a servant. Now in this process of chanting I'm offering my attention and my mental energy in the service of the Lord. I'm offering the tongue, the lips, all in pronouncing the name properly. I'm offering my heart with dedication in this chanting, and in this way I'm offering each mantra. I'm totally offering myself, my whole being, in glorification of the Lord.

That is the mood of the servant of the holy name—knowing that independent from the Lord, nothing can be done! Independent from the Lord, nothing can be achieved. Independent from the Lord, we are helpless.

Therefore we must be completely open and pray for the mercy of the Lord.

May we offer everything we have in the service of the holy name. That is what Śrīla Prabhupāda did; he sang the holy names in Tompkins Square Park and shared his ecstasy with the entire world...

## **Beggars while chanting**

In *japa* you are confronted with yourself, completely! In *japa*, you have to face who you are! When you are sitting in a group in *kīrtana*, then you can be ecstatic because the whole group is so ecstatic. But when we are alone with Kṛṣṇa and His holy name, then we are confronted with who we really are, where we are, how much we are attached to Kṛṣṇa and how much we are attracted to other things! We're far from Kṛṣṇa, that's the situation.

That is why *japa* is more difficult. In *japa* we go before Kṛṣṇa and we beg, "Kṛṣṇa, I have no taste. Kṛṣṇa, my offering is poor, but Kṛṣṇa, I really want *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Please give it to me. I know I don't even want to pay the price, but Kṛṣṇa, please give it to me... I have no love.

Somehow or other, it didn't work for me. It worked for everyone else, but with me, alas, it didn't work! My Lord, all I can do is turn to You and beg You to have mercy on me although I am not deserving. I come empty-handed; I have nothing to offer You that is not already Yours. I have no qualification but please give it to me anyway. Please! I want the taste of this *kṛṣṇa-prema!*"

So we are beggars when we are chanting. We have no capacity to chant so we take shelter alone, all alone in chanting the holy name, knowing that now I am associating with Kṛṣṇa and in this chanting the amazing thing happens—that we make an offering to Kṛṣṇa and at the same time Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to us!

## **Offer with love**

Why does it please Kṛṣṇa when we chant His holy name? Because Kṛṣṇa is non-different from His Name, and is *asamaurdhva*, unrivalled—nothing is equal to Him. Therefore the holy name is the best we can offer Him. There is only one thing that is better still, that is when we offer it with love.

If you offer your chanting to Kṛṣṇa, you chant in a nicer way. Imagine offering some *bhoga* to Kṛṣṇa – a lot of preparations are cooked – one would have to make up the plate nicely, with puffed up balloon *purīs*, *tulasī* on everything, you know! “Here’s your offering, Kṛṣṇa!”

You can’t imagine walking on to the altar saying, “Here’s your grub, Kṛṣṇa!” Clunk! “I am not going to ring any bells because I wouldn’t like it if people rang bells while I was eating!” That’s an example of casual and careless offering.

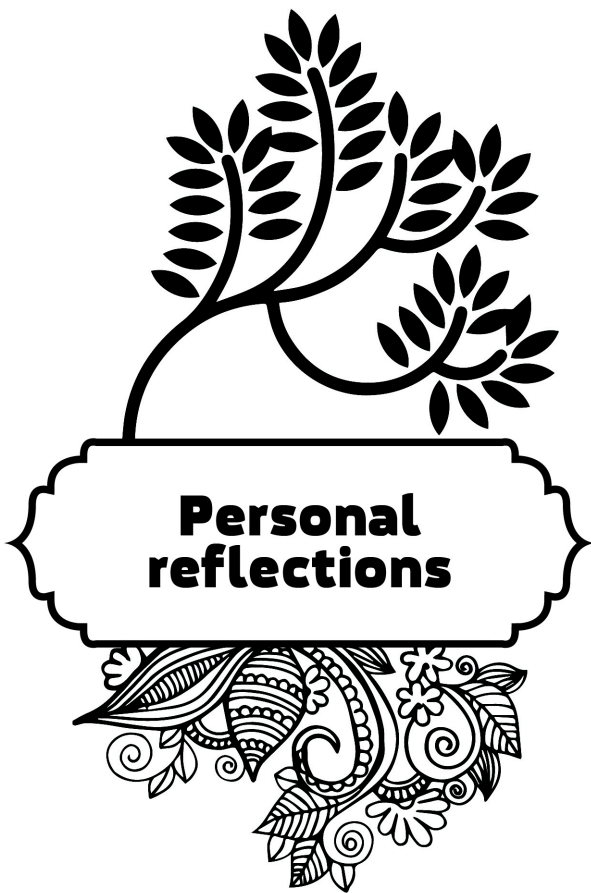
When it comes to Deity worship, we are strict and careful, so chanting in the mood of making an offering to Kṛṣṇa becomes real quality chanting.

## **Refining our behaviour**

Surrender is about refining our behaviour: refining our offerings, going into the detail and making the details perfect. How to please Kṛṣṇa? That takes more and more refinement. How to respect the Vaiṣṇavas? That takes more and more refinement. How to be in the mode of goodness? That takes more and more refinement. All these things are required to come to the

*Connecting with the holy names*

point of *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* – to always chant the glories of the Lord.



## **The sanctity of a day**

In the early morning, while the world's asleep, all I want is transcendental sound vibration and that nothing may interfere with the sanctity of a day that belongs to Kṛṣṇa.

## **No greater possession**

These are my initiation beads. I have no greater possession than them. They have been given to me by my spiritual master, who is *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale*, Kṛṣṇa's dear devotee. He has chanted on them. They are made of *tulasī*, *kṛṣṇa-preyasi*; she is also most dear to Kṛṣṇa. If I chant faithfully on these beads, then surely they can attract Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

## **No distraction**

Whatever it is that I am planning to do, let it not distract me. Whether it is favourable or unfavourable material conditions, I simply want to increase my meditation on the ecstatic platform of being always absorbed in

hearing and chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

## **The source of my service**

That transcendental flute player, Kṛṣṇa, is now present in His holy name and I have the good fortune that I'm allowed to chant!

An ocean of devotional service extends in all directions, and the source of it all, is my *japa*. Every attempt I make in service to Kṛṣṇa gets its strength and substance there.

Yes, there are 64 limbs of devotional service that make up this ocean of transcendental activity; chanting the holy name is the one limb among them that nourishes all the others.

## **The principal vehicle**

A long journey ahead, the ocean of nescience still to cross... The name acts like the principal vehicle carrying us across. The prayers, well-wishes, the causeless mercy of the spiritual master protect us on the journey. The blissful Vaiṣṇavas give inspiration by their example.

The temples give us relief from the pangs of material miseries.

Everything is favourable; now all that is left to do is to keep on chanting the holy name.

### **I need to chant...**

Rats! Early morning waiting for the train. Three rats on the platform attracted to the garbage, or are there four?

Who am I? Why do I waste time? I need to chant, I need to....

### **The tunnel of mundane thought**

The train went into a dark tunnel and the phone lost its reception. In the same way, my mind during chanting entered into a dark tunnel of mundane thought and I lost all connection with Kṛṣṇa.

Meanwhile, as the train continued towards its destination, I continued chanting knowing that whether one is inspired or not, if we continue regardless of the conditions, inspiration will return and Kṛṣṇa will be attained.

## **The blind man...**

A blind man was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. If only he could see the festival taking place: Kṛṣṇa, dancing in the form of the name, is the most amazing! He is Naṭarāja, the king of dancers. He is surrounded by all His associates, who are ecstatic to see His amazing appearance. Their only interest is to please Him. What more is to come?

However, the blind man cannot see and he can't wait to finish his rounds.

## **Heart in the chanting?**

Is there heart in the chanting or are we scratching the surface? In between bites of chocolate, squirm out a holy name. “Oh, me and mine are on my mind. When will I care more about Kṛṣṇa than myself?” Only then can we chant.

## **Lifted to the lotus feet**

Welcome to the bodily platform and here goes the mind... The mind goes into the things and the things go into the mind. But just concentrate upon the

transcendental sound of Kṛṣṇa's name and gradually we will be lifted to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Then no other desire remains.

## **Invest in hearing**

The fingers are dancing on the keyboard; when are our beads in our hands? The mind is wandering all over the universe; when will it land?

Only by investing in hearing about Kṛṣṇa and then chanting and making a sacrifice in service, can one find Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

## **Life after life...**

Life after life we have engrossed ourselves in sinful relationships with matter. Now the mercy of Mahāprabhu has entered into my life. I am chanting, I am dancing, I am relishing but I am still a sinful man. My only hope is that the holy name will deliver me, and where I fall short, I pray for the mercy of my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Gaurāṅga.

## **Where would I have been?**

My life has changed so much! Where would I have been had I not developed faith in Kṛṣṇa?

Where would I be now, if I had not chanted everyday? Kavi-karṇapūra says, “Either become absorbed in an ocean of transcendental loving devotional service or otherwise in an ocean of unwanted deeds.”

Where would I be now if I had not chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa?

## **Searching for a desire tree**

Wandering into the forest in search of a wish-fulfilling desire tree, I chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. However, I got lost in the wilderness of the mind and senses. I am preoccupied with the mundane and I am in anxiety about many things. I know theoretically that actually all I need is not far away; my spiritual master placed all the treasures at my feet. Now if only I would apply myself to serving Kṛṣṇa and chanting His glorious name, then success is guaranteed and I will realize Kṛṣṇa in the heart.

## **It all comes out in the wash**

To chant peacefully, to chant faithfully, to chant passionately, to chant humbly, to chant with determination, to chant clearly, to chant softly, to chant dutifully, to chant from the heart, to chant early, to chant late, to chant alone, to chant with others, to chant in a vehicle, to chant at work, to chant in a hospital, to chant and study, to chant 64 rounds or only 16, to chant in youth, mid-life or old age, to chant on one's deathbed, to chant and dance; however we chant, all our *anarthas* come out in the wash of life.

## **Our constant companion**

To be a man is not a small thing. To be a man is to be a guru, scriptures say—to be exemplary, a source of strength, wisdom and compassion, to rise one and half hours before sunrise and chant Kṛṣṇa's name.

Nowadays many men are weak and women come forward and take the lead in spiritual practice. Men, women, young and old, let the *mahā-mantra* be our constant companion—then everyone will be strong.

When we are happy in spiritual life, then we can do anything.

## **Somehow adjust my life..**

I always chant with some sort of plan of how I will fulfil my quota of chanting for the day. Each day is different; some days are overwhelmingly busy. If every day is like that, then we may ask, does it have to be like that? Can I make a change? Somehow adjust my life, somehow adjust the day, somehow have a plan to make time for chanting.

Chanting on a busy day... I made sure I was up early enough and chanted the bulk of my rounds before I went out of the door.

## **Always with Kṛṣṇa**

I am never alone even in the most remote place because when I chant His holy name, I am with Kṛṣṇa. In the middle of the busiest crowds, I am immediately alone with Kṛṣṇa when I chant His holy name.

## **No losers**

The greatest sinners transformed can deliver the world. The past is gone, and in the present the holy name is the centre of our life. Kṛṣṇa will manifest His presence more and more in each and every devotee's life. There are no losers, only winners.

## **Who is ready?**

Who is ready? Practically no one! But they will hear the holy name, whether they want to or not and one day they will chant with higher taste! Yes, I believe in the truth of these words. I will not give up chanting, even though I only have very little taste.

## **A day off!**

A day off! First some extra rest and then what's next? A day off and still not chanting? No taste? No intelligence? Okay, to chant with taste is rare, but to chant because I understand that I have to get out of this material world, is intelligence. Still, I am weak, so I turn to praying, "Oh, Nityānanda Balarāma, please give me strength. Please give me sincerity to persevere."

## **I can serve!**

Oh, my dear holy name, please accept my most humble obeisances! Hmmm, what can I bring to you? Austerity? I don't have a lot of that. Pure love? I am afraid that in that respect I do even worse. Then what can I bring you? I can bring the result of some devotional service! That I can do.

By making arrangements for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, by spreading Kṛṣṇa's glory and assisting Him in whatever He wishes to be done, I can serve. Then I hope to attract some mercy and then chanting can be magic!

## **No perfection without struggle**

An early morning in Mauritius... It is interesting that there are cabbage patches right between the houses. I am chanting and the gardeners are there before 6am, weeding, watering, digging and cutting cabbages that are ready to be sold. Locals come with little pick-up vans and load them up with cabbage. It is business as usual. Even farmers who live closer to nature than we city people, have to find time to chant, maybe in the middle of the day.

There is no perfection without struggle in the material world.

In Vaikuṅṭha, the ladies sweep the marble floors of the palaces, although there is no dust. They don't need dust; they have service attitude.

We need struggle to stretch and grow in our surrender.

## **Juggling balls**

I spoke with my reflection in the mirror and I told him straight to his face, "You always complain about how difficult it is to chant, that you have no taste. Listen, stop

thinking about yourself! It's all about what you want, what you feel, you selfish, egocentric, small-minded, mouse of a man!

Now look outside; don't look in the mirror! Step through the door of devotional service. Do more and more service for Kṛṣṇa and more inspiration in chanting will follow.”

My reflection argued back, “When I do so much service, then I have no time to chant!”

We must approach life from the mode of goodness and find a balance in all the things we have to do. In spiritual life, there are three balls that one must juggle:

The ball of *sādhana* and *bhajana*

The ball of personal well-being

The ball of service

In juggling, the balls are in motion. One is up in the air, one we are throwing upwards and one we are catching. So balancing is also a process of constant adjustment. Sometimes the *sādhana* ball has been in the air, on automatic pilot for too long. It is time to catch it and

give it a push. Sometimes we need to focus on personal well-being and at other times we will have to focus on a lot of service.

If the three balls are permanently out of balance, then maybe the time has come to make some changes in our life.

## **The blows of time**

Oh merciless time, how have I become like this? Old age has beaten the wind out of me, through blows of time. Now, I am weak and vulnerable. Oh Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, please save me and help me chant Your holy name!

Some are bearing old age with grace, accepting the limitations, being grateful for the small opportunities. They remain positive and take advantage of these opportunities as they come; they do better than others who lament over what they have lost.

Whatever we do throughout our life becomes second nature; therefore let me chant year after year, and then in old age, it will go on automatically.

## **Let me dance**

Let me dance, let me dance! Let me jump together with devotees in the *kīrtana*! Exchanging moves, laughing – it’s transcendental, playful dance. Now the holy name is also dancing on my tongue!

## **Raining mercy**

It is raining mercy. We are touched by it whether we know or not. Now I am trying to catch it, not to miss any opportunity. Without mercy there is nothing I can do.

## **The magic number**

Soon it’s time for a *japa* walk. No talk; just chant and complete 16 rounds. The magic number! The magic number blessed by Prabhupāda. On the way back to Godhead!

## **Let me look with love**

Let me look with love upon people. Let me cast off all envy, all dark thoughts upon seeing them. Let me see

the devotee in them and let me encourage them. Then let me chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

## **Peaceful moments**

I am chanting in the pleasant afternoon sun. Now we have a few days to rejuvenate from travel. There is no pressure, nothing much to do but rest, chant, read and chant again. Modern times are so busy! How nice it is to have some peaceful moments just to chant.

## **Please bless me**

I am not Haridāsa Ṭhākura. I am an ordinary man who received and chants the holy name. Now I know that the meaning of Kṛṣṇa is “the all-attractive” and slowly I am beginning to explore how He is “all-attractive.” Oh, dear Haridāsa Ṭhākura, please accept my humble obeisances and please bless me with love for the holy name.

## **Melting hearts**

Oh, Lord Gaurāṅga, oh, *karuṇā-sindhu-avatāra*, oh, incarnation of the ocean of mercy! My life is Yours. Harināma *saṅkīrtana*, the mission of the holy name! Let me chant, in *japa* and *kīrtana*. Connecting others to the chanting has become my daily life. How nice is that! Sweet and rewarding, satisfying. You are changing the world.

Everywhere the holy name resounds. Everyone must hear it, read about it, try it, take it seriously. Selfishness will disappear. Everyone will become part of drinking and distributing the nectar of the holy name.

Yes, now *japa* has gained a new dimension. Now we bring back so much inspiration. Perennial questions like, “How can we chant attentively and how can we improve the quality of our chanting? How can we get taste?” have now disappeared like snow melted by the sun. The holy name is melting hearts.

## **A prayer to Kṛṣṇa**

Kṛṣṇa is here! He is present right now.

My dear Kṛṣṇa, may I offer You this chanting of Your holy name? I am one of Your foolish servants. May I offer You my day? May I offer You my life? Simply spreading Your glories everywhere is the goal of my life.

## **Captured by Kṛṣṇa**

Ah, the body interferes, fatigued, not feeling well. I will not let the body steal the ecstasy.

I am with Kṛṣṇa, the unlimited, amazing Lord of my heart. He will capture me with His playful pranks, with His causeless mercy and with the beautiful paintings painted by His devotees. He will capture me by letting me chant in *kīrtana*. He will capture me by sending me people that are interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Yes, then living like that, I will quietly chant *japa*, surely remembering Him.

## **The best offering**

Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He even comes with the living beings who turn away from Him, as the Supersoul within the heart. Kṛṣṇa is so kind. It is mentioned in the

first Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Chapter 16, that in this age of Kali, for sinful thought there is no reaction and for pious thoughts one is awarded benefit.

Ah, a mental rose at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet! Then maybe a lotus flower. Hmm, maybe I can do better than that? What is a better offering than His holy name? A rose and lotus are Kṛṣṇa's creation; they carry some of His beauty, but the holy name carries all of His beauty.

All right then, I think I will offer Him that and get the greatest benefit.

## **The greatest benefit**

What is the greatest benefit? To be always happy? To be free from suffering? To go back to Godhead? No, the greatest benefit is to please Kṛṣṇa. Then let me chant to please Him!

## **The real waves**

First round... I paddle away from the shore, on the way to deeper waters to catch the real waves.

Chanting.....!

Someone knocks on the door. It's my servant with a message. The ladies ask if they can come to watch the *pūjā* to Girirāja.

Not today. I need some time alone with Kṛṣṇa, some time to be absorbed. I am still on a 6-hour jet lag.

I pick up my paddle and continue chanting.

Kṛṣṇa is amazing. He has created a world full of taste, full of beauty. The sun casts its beams through the window... so many colours, so many patterns, so much *rasa* and Kṛṣṇa is the most beautiful of all! He makes the jewels that He wears even more beautiful. Isn't it wonderful that He has made the world like that? What to speak of the spiritual world which is blissful beyond imagination!

I am chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa.

He is more beautiful than His creation. Hmmm, what a concept to fill everything with taste and to give us a heart to relish it.

I am chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa.

Fifth round, chanting...

## **Never stop chanting**

I wish I was so deeply absorbed in remembering Kṛṣṇa that nothing could distract me. I wish I would see Kṛṣṇa in front of me in my mind's eye, while chanting His holy name. I wish my stone-like heart will melt and become soft like butter when I chant the holy name. I wish I could see Kṛṣṇa now in the spiritual world with head bedecked with peacock feather, served by hundreds of millions of Goddesses of fortune, surrounded by wish-fulfilling cows that produce oceans of milk... I wish that my desire to be with Kṛṣṇa would be stronger.

But I will never stop chanting. Kṛṣṇa in the form of His name will fulfil all desires.

## **If I would be honest..**

I could be humble, if I would be honest  
and admit that I have no special qualities,  
that I am full of fault  
and have no devotion.  
Then I could chant all the time;  
now I can't.

If I would be humble and tolerant  
then maybe I could attract Kṛṣṇa.  
Rūpa and Sanātana's extraordinary humility  
was more than the Lord could tolerate.  
I am proud of achievements, qualities and possessions  
that I don't really have;  
they are only lent to me  
and will be taken by time.  
All these false attributes distract me.

If only I could be humble,  
I could take shelter of Kṛṣṇa  
and chant all the time.  
I am nothing, Satsvarūpa said.  
You are not nothing but something,  
Prabhupāda retorted,  
but you are not what you think you are.  
If only I could be a servant of my spiritual master,  
of Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas,  
maybe then I could chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Can you pray for me  
that I will improve?

## **Dark corners**

I stepped on peoples' toes. I didn't care about the Vaiṣṇavas' thoughts or feelings. I thought that I was right. I was getting things done for Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa.

Now years have passed. I have asked for forgiveness where I could, but I am still carrying feelings of guilt in my heart. How can I ever chant with pure love when there are still dark corners in my heart, casting their shadow?

Oh Vaiṣṇavas, please forgive me! Please give me another chance.

## **Chanting with maturity**

“I was immature,” I said.

“We are always immature,” Karta Devī Dāsī ACBSP, replied.

That made sense! I have remembered it ever since.

To chant with maturity is recognizing and respecting guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra*. It means bringing the most

exalted principles of the topmost spiritual reality down into my dealings in human society. It means reaching up and bringing it back down.

I used to stay and serve in Vṛndāvana. One day Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja told me, “You don’t know how fortunate you are.”

Then my pride did not allow me to fully embrace this statement. Can I now have the humility to acknowledge in my heart that Mahārāja was right?

“One should chant the holy name in a humble state of mind... then one can chant always, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.*”

Maturity means we have to learn thoroughly from the many lessons of life. *Bhāgavatam* says that a *sādhu* is ‘thoroughly honest’ - a fully dedicated instrument of the Absolute Truth, despite all shortcomings.

## **Kṛṣṇa, I have only You!**

Kṛṣṇa, I have only You.  
Relationships with people  
come and go.

*Kīrtanīyaḥ Sadā Hariḥ*

Kṛṣṇa, only You are still here;  
all others have gone.

Kṛṣṇa, You are always present  
Kṛṣṇa, when I call out  
Your name regularly,  
then I can know it  
through understanding  
and within my heart.

## **Just relax!**

How much force should I apply to control the mind while chanting? Or should I just relax when my mind gets restless and simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?

## **Let's chant**

*ceto-darpaṇa*, cleanse the heart.

Let's chant!

*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ*, the state of consciousness attained at the end of life will determine our next birth.

Let's chant! What if we die now?

I do not wish to be old and regret time and opportunities wasted.

In Kali-yuga, we are slow-witted, lazy, unfortunate, always disturbed.

I have to constantly remind myself

Let's chant!

There is urgency, no time for complacency.

Let's give it the best we have.

Use every opportunity, the early morning, Ekādaśī, Janmāṣṭamī,

Let's chant, a minimum of 16 rounds or more.

## **Victory!**

What is the benediction moon? Chanting is the waxing moon. And what is the white lotus of good fortune? *śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*

It is said that there is a type of lotus, a white lotus which is different from other lotuses. This lotus opens in the

night with the moonshine and not by the sun during the day, like other lotuses. It represents the good fortune that is created by chanting in the darkness of Kali-yuga. That is the benediction moon.

“That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone.” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* 20.12)

So may that victory happen in the world. May that victory happen in all the universes that exist. May that victory happen on this planet. May that victory happen on this continent. May that victory happen in your lives, and finally, may that victory happen in my heart!

The holy name! May that victory be there so that we finally come to the stage where we are tasting full nectar at every step.

## Going beyond limits!

The *Ratha-yātrā kīrtana* has started! So many loud drums and the different melodies carry us away and sweep us up in whirlpools. Let's go beyond our limits!

Oh Kṛṣṇa, You know how to trick us. You put us in this wild crowd and now we chant with all our energy and dance! Then the next morning, we're alone with You, my Lord, chanting Your holy name peacefully. One thing enhances the other – *yena tena prakāreṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet*, somehow or other focus the mind on Kṛṣṇa and chant!

## Seen with pure love

Oh Kṛṣṇa, You are mysterious. You are *jagad avyakta-mūrtinā*, the unmanifest Deity of the universe. You are invisible to the eyes of a common man.

Yet when we call You by Your name, You are immediately fully present. This can be known from Vaiṣṇava *śāstra*, and only be seen with eyes anointed with pure love.

## **Everyone is chanting!**

It is everywhere now, the chanting of the holy name.

Babies are born into this world and the doctor who delivers them, chants Hare Kṛṣṇa.

As different birds fly on different levels in the sky of Lord Caitanya's mercy, now there are also pilots chanting in the cockpit.

In a commercial clip for a new car, we saw someone holding one of Prabhupāda's books. We find Prabhupāda everywhere and where we find him, we find the holy name.

## **The world revolution**

Tompkins Square Park! The hippies and the musicians saw the park and heard the exotic music. They didn't know what gift he was bringing. They didn't know that they were part of the world revolution of *harināma saṅkīrtana*. Even now, while we have become his followers, still who can understand what he is doing?

He leaves no stone unturned to give the holy name to all. He brings love of God. Even after reading his books, even after chanting for decade after decade, we don't really know the greatness of the gift he is bringing. What would it really be like to chant the holy name with pure love?

## **Opening our darkened eyes**

In the heart of Amsterdam is Dam Square. When Prabhupāda came there, he saw a hotel with a Polish name: Krasnapolsky. “Ah, Hotel Krsnapolsky!” he said. He wanted to stay there. That didn't happen, but he did give a lecture there.

Prabhupāda has opened our darkened eyes. Now whenever I pass by Dam Square, I am chanting, “Krsnapolsky, Krsnapolsky, Krsnapolsky.”

## **Thank You Kṛṣṇa!**

Thank you for always being there, Kṛṣṇa! Whenever and wherever I chant Your name, You are immediately personally present! Who in the world is so easily

available? Thank You for Your kind mercy upon a fallen soul like me.

## **Lord Caitanya's mercy**

The more I meditate on Lord Caitanya's mercy, the more I become enlivened.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī writes, “When will Lord Gaura Hari, who is more handsome than Cupid, more purifying than the celestial Ganges, more cooling than the moon, more sweet than *mādhvīka* nectar, more generous than the desire creeper, and more affectionate than a mother, appear in my meditation, and lovingly place His lotus feet in my heart?” I like this verse very much because not only is it addressing the topic of meditation, but also about Lord Caitanya 'appearing' in our meditation.

Imagine Lord Caitanya, whose eyes, like millions of rain clouds, are shedding torrents of tears. Who can remain unmoved when the Lord appears in his meditation? Even now, while meditating on the words of Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, there is at least a bit of a reflection of the Lord's appearance in my meditation.

Let me bring that meditation back to my *japa*, let me remember Lord Gaurāṅga, take my beads and start chanting again...

## **Thank you, Prabhupāda**

Oh Prabhupāda, chanting on a New York Bowery loft, chanting in a store-front, chanting under a tree in Tompkins Square Park, turning hippies into devotees, turning crows into swans! Then it started in San Francisco and thereafter went to London. One day I saw these pink-robed bald-headed extra-terrestrials in a Dutch town.

The chanting has spread everywhere, all over the world. First *kīrtana* and then *japa*, just speaking the mantra softly in a meditative way. Secrets are descending from the spiritual world, the world of pure service.

Kṛṣṇa is so amazing; everyone loves Him. It's the world of mutual appreciation, where everyone is serving Kṛṣṇa with full love. Seeing how others serve Kṛṣṇa with so much dedication, natural love for them will also sprout from the heart. That is the world of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you again and again, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We bow at your lotus feet.

## **We are the Hare Kṛṣṇa people**

I want to thank all you devotees for being there. Your chanting nourishes my chanting.

When Kṛṣṇa dug out Śyāma-kuṇḍa, He did it effortlessly with the heel of His lotus foot. When the *gopīs* dug out Rādhā-kuṇḍa, they broke their bangles and all together scraped the ground until finally they had a deep hole.

It may be a mammoth task to chant for a lifetime, but we are the Hare Kṛṣṇa people in this world. We are all chanting! And your chanting nourishes my chanting.

## **A miracle!**

It's a miracle! They are all dancing – the madman, the criminal, the addict and prostitute.

It's a miracle!

And many more will come.

It's a miracle!

And if we chant also, we will be part of the whole thing!

## **My small island**

My Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a small island. It's hard to stay there; the mind wants freedom and to explore the horizons.

I sit and chant.

The three modes of material nature touch the shores of my island. My island is glorious though. It is made of pure, transcendental, *cintāmaṇi* touchstone. It has forests of desire trees of devotional service. It also has some hills of austerity, some trees and creepers of distraction.

I sit and chant.

In the middle of my island is the reservoir of pleasure and in the heart of it there is a beautiful golden temple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy, where devotees worship the greatest ever jewel of the holy name. Prabhupāda is the *pūjārī* assisted by his dedicated followers.

That is where I sit and chant.

## **A journey with the mantra**

Throughout the millennia, many in pursuance of self-realization have taken to the path of renunciation. It is good; it gives us time for God.

I went to India and was happy with simple living, drawing water from the well, taking bath in a river and sleeping on a mat on the floor. Simple living, in a natural way, brings us closer to God.

I even picked up a mantra, but only after connecting with a bona fide spiritual master, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, did I understand that real spiritual life means to attain love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Since then, I am chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

When taking a picture, we are directing the camera to capture a particular scene, then the lens will adjust its focus to get a more clear image; in the same way, in spiritual life we are getting closer and closer to the ultimate goal.

To know that love of God is the goal is one thing; to actually develop love of God is another.

Full-blown love of God is not a casual thing, but rather an overwhelming experience. It bursts forth from the heart and is beyond control. In that stage, chanting is pure ecstasy. Tears flow like torrents of rain, while the name is dancing on the tongue and hairs stand erect. I am just carrying on chanting faithfully without such deep emotions, but how could I live without Him?

The eyes have changed. Now I see Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Every day belongs to Him. I chant the mantra softly; I sing it loudly.

## Glossary

**Ācārya:** a spiritual master who teaches by his own example and who sets the proper religious example for all human beings.

**Advaita Ācārya:** an incarnation of the Lord who appeared as a principal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Anarthas:** unwanted habits.

**Bhagavad-gītā:** the book that records the spiritual instructions given by Kṛṣṇa to His friend Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

**Bhajana:** practising one's own intimate devotional service to the Lord.

**Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura:** the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami.

**Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:** the father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and the author and pioneer of bhakti tradition in the 19th century.

**Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:** one of the spiritual works on the science of devotional service written in the sixteenth century by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

**Bhakti-ratnākara:** a book written by Śrī Narahari Cakravartī describing the pastimes after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu

**Bhoga:** food items before it has been offered to the Lord.

**Bhāva:** the stage of devotional service where transcendental ecstasy is experienced.

**Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa:** one of the eighteen ancient Vedic literatures compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva containing 25 000 verses, a synopsis of the complete philosophy and the pastimes of the Lord at Jagannātha Purī, Dvārakā, Badarīnātha and other holy sites.

**Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa:** one of the eighteen ancient Vedic literatures compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva containing 23 000 verses and a description of the Vedic social system, the six parts of the Vedas and the age of Kali.

**Caitanya-caritāmṛta:** the biography of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu composed in Bengali in the late sixteenth century by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja.

**Caitanya-candrāmṛta:** Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's work on the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Darśana:** the act of seeing the form of the Lord.

**Dvāpara-yuga:** the third out of the four ages that lasts for 864 000 years.

**Ekādaśī:** a special day for increased remembrance of Kṛṣṇa that comes on the eleventh day after both the full and new moon. Abstinence from grains and beans is prescribed.

**Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī:** the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

**Girirāja:** the form of Kṛṣṇa as Govardhana Hill.

**Goloka:** the supreme planet in the spiritual world.

**Gopāla:** name of Kṛṣṇa meaning “the protector of the cows.”

**Govinda:** name of Kṛṣṇa meaning “one who gives pleasure to the land, the cows and the senses.”

**Haridāsa Ṭhākura:** a great devotee of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu famous for chanting three hundred thousand names of God every day.

**Harināma saṅkīrtana:** the congregational chanting of the holy name.

**Harināma-cintāmaṇi:** book compiled by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on the glories of the holy name.

**Jagannātha Mīśra:** the father of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Jagannātha Purī:** the holy city of the temple and Deity of Lord Jagannātha.

**Janmāṣṭamī:** the appearance day of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa

**Japa:** chanting the holy names quietly to oneself, counting the repetitions of the mahā-mantra on a japa mālā.

**Jayadeva Gosvāmī:** a Vaiṣṇava poet who composed many works such as the Gītā Govinda.

**Jīva:** the living entity, who is an eternal individual soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord.

**Jīva Gosvāmī:** one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana and the nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs.

**Kali-yuga:** the age of quarrel, in which we are now living.

**Karma:** fruitive activities or their reactions.

**Kīrtana:** glorification of the Supreme Lord; the devotional process of chanting.

**Kṛṣṇa-prema:** pure love of Kṛṣṇa, the object of the path of bhakti.

**Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta:** one of the theological works on bhakti written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

**Madhuvana:** one of the twelve forests in Vṛndāvana where the Madhu demon was killed and where Dhruva Mahārāja performed austerities.

**Maṅgala-ārati:** the first Deity worship of the day performed an hour and a half before sunrise.

**Māyā:** the external energy of the Supreme Lord, which covers the conditioned soul and does not allow him to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**Nāmāparādha:** an offence against the holy name of the Lord.

**Nārada Muni:** a great sage and devotee of the Lord who delivers the Lord's messages.

**Navadvīpa:** a city in the Nadia province of West Bengal; the birth place of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī:** a follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who wrote many works on Vaiṣṇava philosophy; the spiritual master of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.

**Prasādam:** food first offered to the Supreme Lord and then distributed.

**Pūjā:** worship, usually in the form of making offerings to the Deity of the Lord.

**Pūjārī:** a person who performs the worship to the Deity form of the Lord.

**Pūtanā:** a demoniac witch who wanted to kill Lord Kṛṣṇa during His childhood, but who was killed by the Lord.

**Rūpa Gosvāmī:** a great Vaiṣṇava author and the leader of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, the principal followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Śacī Devī:** the mother of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Sādhaka:** one who practices regulated devotional service.

**Sādhu:** a saintly person.

**Sanātana Gosvāmī:** one of the six Gosvāmīs and brother of Rūpa Gosvāmī, who followed Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and systematically presented His teachings.

**Sannyāsa:** the renounced order of life in Vedic society.

**Śāstra:** revealed scripture, Vedic literature.

**Satya-yuga:** the first of the four yugas, characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion.

**Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:** the Purāṇa, or history, written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva specifically to give a deep understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa, His devotees and devotional service.

**Śrīvāsa-aṅgana:** the home of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura where Lord Caitanya and His associates congregationally chanted the holy names of the Lord.

**Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura:** a principal associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

**Tretā-yuga:** the second of the four yugas, characterized by temple worship.

**Vaikunṭha:** the eternal planet of the spiritual world.

**Vaiṣṇava:** a devotee of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

**Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:** a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and commentator on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*Kīrtanīyaḥ Sadā Hariḥ*

**Vṛndāvana:** the site of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes exhibited when  
He was present on earth five thousand years ago.

## **About the author**

Kadamba Kanana Swami, originally from the Netherlands, travelled to India at a young age. Once he came to Vṛndāvana in North India, the centre of Kṛṣṇa worship, he settled there and for many years was a leader in the Hare Kṛṣṇa āśrama.

These days he travels widely across the world, teaching and writing about Bhakti Yoga. In addition to his profound lectures, he is an acclaimed musician who shares the glories of the holy names in his music.

For more information about Kadamba Kanana Swami, his preaching activities, lectures and music, please visit the following websites:

[www.kksblog.com](http://www.kksblog.com)

[www.kkswami.com](http://www.kkswami.com)