



photo © Ananta Vrindavan

In kirtan, know that this is
your time with Krishna.
Focus fully on Him—sing for His
pleasure, with the sincere intention to
come closer and feel His presence.

Teach Me to Sing

Welcome to this Kartik Inspiration.

It's no longer a secret: The art of singing Krishna's holy name in kirtan is perhaps the most efficient sadhana that purifies our heart, brings us closer to Krishna, and helps us to develop attachment for Him. No wonder then that singing is one of the three main activities in the spiritual world that churn rasa, the tremendous ocean of divine taste. The first is cooking for Krishna, decorating Krishna is the second one, and then singing for His pleasure is the third.

In the spiritual world, there is one role model in singing. It is Vishakha. It is said about her, "Her sweet voice defeats the singing of a cuckoo in springtime." And Raghunatha says, "Teach me! Teach me the art of singing."

Vishakha's special quality in singing is, however, not just melody and voice. Melody and voice can be found by singers in this world who are still acting within Brahma's creation. But the singing of the spiritual world—spiritual singing—is outside of Brahma's creation; outside this wide, vast worldliness and worldly skills. It is definitely imbued with something you don't find in this world. That is, a love-drenched voice that is creating the bhava, the soul, of the singing. Without this love, or this kirtan-bhava, our kirtan could be just like a dead body without a soul.

Now, what do we do to develop this when we sit in sankirtan and join the chorus of the many voices? The first thing to do when you sit in a kirtan is to tell yourself that this is now your time with Krishna. Yes, there may be many, many people around you, but you are the one who is singing. This is the first thing, the sankalpa, "I want to be present."

The second thing is to focus your attention on the One for whom you are singing—the one whose holy name you intonate. And sing prayerfully, "Let me become closer. I am trying, but I am failing. Please, give me strength." Such types of appeals should be made during our singing of the holy name.

What is important is, don't sing like a gramophone record. That is something from the old times, when these records had their grooves on the inside and would be played again and again on the record player. And there was no feeling involved. It was just a mechanical thing that happened.

So, in the same way, avoid dry, mechanical recitations and singing. That is always possible if you focus on the Lord and sing really for Him, with the attempt to please Him, to come closer to Him, and to feel His presence in your life.

Thank you very much for listening. Please apply this in your next kirtan and see you for the next Kartik Inspiration.

Sacinandana Swami

SACINANDANA SWAMI