

KIRTANA

Kirtana is not part of our movement—practically it is our movement.

Our Krishna Consciousness movement is practically based upon music and dancing.
Letter to: Mr. Levine, 25 January, 1969

Kirtana is our first duty. Letter to: Palika, 13 November, 1975

Lord Caitanya's movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is full of dancing and singing about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. CC Adi 2.2 purport

Kirtana means glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All activities in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement are meant for Kṛṣṇa-kirtana—glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although this glorification takes many forms, kirtana is particularly understood to mean chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names. This is also called *sankirtana*. The prefix "san" means "complete" or "in association." So *sankirtana* means "complete glorification" or "congregational chanting."

Kirtana means alone, and *sankirtana* means in the assembly of many others.
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Saṅkīrtana means when many persons combine together and chant and dance.
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Kirtana is central to Gaudiya Vaisnava culture. Many of Lord Caitanya's associates, such as Svarupa Damodara, Sanjaya, Mukunda and Vasudeva Ghosa, and Paramananda Kirtaniya, were reputed singers and musicians. The Gaudiya Vaisnavas have composed thousands of songs in praise of the name, fame, form, qualities, pastimes and associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya. Acaryas such as Narottama Dasa Thakura and others developed the science of kirtana to perfectly express rasa through music, and thus transport the participants and hearers to the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Alas, much of what Narottama and others taught is now lost. And, although Gaudiya kirtana culture is still very much alive in Bengal, Orissa, and Manipur, it has been contaminated by the influence of commercialism and *apa-sampradayas*. Catchy cinema tunes have been introduced into modern bhajana culture, much to the dismay of traditionalists, who want to keep the devotional mood. Nevertheless, still today, traditional kirtana, when performed expertly and without ulterior motives, is an enthralling transcendental experience.

Some musically inclined members of ISKCON (both Bengali and non-Bengali) have specialized in Bengali kirtana, and thus added a cultural asset to our movement. Srila Prabhupada did not personally introduce such kirtana in ISKCON, but he did express appreciation of it. For instance, he liked to hear the Mayapura gurukula boys singing in their sweet, high-pitched Bengali style. And he praised Acyutananda Swami in the foreword to "Songs of the Vaisnava Acaryas" for "having learned to play mrdanga like an expert professional" (which means like a Bengali professional).

However, Bengali kirtana is complex and cannot be practiced by all devotees. That does not matter, because the real essence of kirtana is the simple desire to glorify Krsna. Everyone can chant the names of Krsna and become purified. As Krsna has unlimited names, and as musical combinations of rhythms and melodies are also unlimited, kirtana can be performed in unlimited ways. However, simple kirtana, if sung with devotion, has a certain charm that cannot be had from even the most intricate musical arrangements.

Indeed, in the early recordings of Srila Prabhupada chanting Hare Krsna in New York, we hear Prabhupada repeatedly chanting a simple melody of only four notes. Although Srila Prabhupada was a competent musician, he deliberately introduced a simple style of kirtana in ISKCON so that everybody could join in without difficulty. Even much later in his pastimes, Srila Prabhupada instructed his disciples not to introduce too many different styles of kirtana, lest it detract from the devotional essence.

With regard to your question about Bengali style kirtana and mrdanga playing, one or two styles is best. To introduce more styles is not good. It will become an encumbrance. If we introduce so much emphasis on style of kirtana, then simply imitation will go on. Devotional emotion is the main thing. If we give stress to instrument and style then attention will be diverted to the style. That will be spiritual loss. Letter to Satsvarupa Goswami, 30 June, 1976

Following Srila Prabhupada's example, the standard for kirtana in ISKCON is that it should be simple, pure, sweet and thus pleasing to Srila Prabhupada and Krsna. Fortunately, Srila Prabhupada gave guidelines for standardizing the content and style of our kirtanas. As ISKCON is an international society, and kirtana is our most important activity, it is important that these points be known and followed so that the manner of performing kirtana can be more or less the same in all our centers, and to prevent speculation. Although some variation in style is inevitable, there should be a general standard. The basic points, such as singing the correct tune in mangala-arati and not introducing speculative chants, should be known and followed by all devotees.

Of course, kirtana is not meant to be rigid, but spontaneous and joyful. Kirtana, glorification of Krsna, is the natural function of the soul. Kirtana is naturally joyful, being the outflowing of the soul's love for Krsna. Even nondevotees become materially happy by mundane singing and dancing, so what to speak of devotees' glorification of the Lord of their hearts?

However, we should always remember that kirtana is not meant for glorifying ourselves, nor is it meant for our enjoyment. Although kirtana may be considered transcendental recreation, it is primarily an act of worship. It is certainly enjoyable, but we should always remember that it is meant for Krsna's pleasure, not for our pleasure. Although Lord Caitanya stated that there are no hard and fast rules for chanting,¹ this applies particularly to devotees on the spontaneous platform beyond rules, or to those who have not even begun to follow any rules but should nevertheless be induced to chant the holy names some way or other. Devotees in the stage of *sādhana* have to learn from the parampara how to chant in a way that is most pleasing to Krsna. For ISKCON devotees, that particularly means doing kirtana as Srila Prabhupada instructed.

Srila Prabhupada gave certain guidelines for kirtana to protect us from the mistakes, speculations and contaminations that can inhibit the natural flow of bhakti. These will be discussed extensively below. These do's and don'ts should be instituted carefully. The rules and regulations are to be followed, but not so as to stifle us. Their real purpose is to bring out and enhance the true spirit of devotion in kirtana, and help us become absorbed in the transcendental sound vibration of the holy names.

Many of Srila Prabhupada's guidelines for kirtana were discussed in an article titled, "Important Kirtana Instructions from Srila Prabhupada" by the erstwhile Harikesa Swami, that appeared in the Gaura Purnima 1988 issue of the erstwhile "Vaisnava Journal". The article is included in full below.

In the 1987 GBC meeting some of the members asked me to write down the instructions that I had received from Srila Prabhupada regarding kirtana.

I have not presented this in a public forum in the past for fear of creating some polemic, and further, there were some in our movement who simply didn't want to be restricted in their form of kirtana. Since we are presently trying to search out our "roots" in the form of understanding the original instructions of Srila Prabhupada on all issues, it seems wise to include the standards set by him in regards to our most important activity, kirtana.

Most devotees who were in India during the early formative years of our movement had a fairly good understanding of the standards set by Srila Prabhupada in regards to kirtana, as well as a good understanding of where the other, newer (different, "fancier") kirtana mantras and styles originated. We all know Srila Prabhupada's personal style of simple chanting in a pure and melodious fashion and this did not change when he was in India, but very few are aware of how the additions entered in.

Srila Prabhupada was very strict about the melody sung during the mangala-aratika. He wanted the morning melody and nothing else. He would sometimes stop kirtanas if other melodies were sung in the morning. Of course he was not always doing that, but when he was nearby and there was someone to appreciate the point, he would correct the mistake.¹

He objected to "Jaya Gurudeva" since it was a direct insertion into our movement from the sahajiya sampradayas in Bengal who always say things like "Jaya Guru," "Jaya Gurudeva," without referring to any particular guru. Prabhupada criticised this as impersonal and did not want his disciples chanting it. "Who is the guru?" he would challenge.

¹ A devotee had begun to lead the chanting of Gurvastakam in a non-conventional tune. I felt uncomfortable because I knew Srila Prabhupada liked us to sing the morning melody during mangala arati. Suddenly Srutakirti entered the temple and stopped the kirtana. He whispered something to the devotee leading, who then started up again singing the correct melody. Later we found out that Prabhupada had heard the singing from his room and had sent his servant down to make the necessary corrections. (Told by Gaura-mandala-bhumi dasa, as quoted in TGTA p. 523)

An understanding of how other mantras and techniques came into the movement is helpful in relieving the doubts that might arise in the minds of those who were not informed of what Srila Prabhupada expected in kirtana. Some devotees had to leave America for various reasons and had no place to stay but in Gaudiya Math temples. In some of these temples they chant all different kinds of mantras without restriction. Although these mantras are bona fide and seemingly proper, Srila Prabhupada

did not want us to use them in our temple kirtanas. However this form of kirtana filtered into our movement very quickly since it was new and exciting and therefore rapidly accepted by the kirtana leaders to increase the enthusiasm of the devotees. After all, variety is the spice of life. This variety however, did not actually please Srila Prabhupada.

Although the Vrindavana temple was opened in March of 1975, Srila Prabhupada had started establishing the standards of its functioning in the previous year. He was concentrating his energies on creating the proper Deity, kitchen, and economic standards. At this time Srila Prabhupada asked me to be the president of the temple. He instructed me in various aspects of management. Since I am writing about Srila Prabhupada's standards for kirtana, I would like to recount his specific instructions in regards to the standards for kirtana which he wanted rigidly enforced.

As far as standards go, his instructions could not have been more specific. The exact cause of these instructions was a kirtana in the temple led by Bharadvaja Dasa the night before. Srila Prabhupada had been in the habit of attending our nightly kirtanas and classes due to his being sickly and unable to speak. That evening Bharadvaja chose to sing a song (which he said he got from a book by Gopal Bhatta Goswami) which was a variation on the mantra Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna he, but instead of it being for Krsna Krsna was replaced with Gaura, so that the mantra went, Gaura Gaura Gaura Gaura Gaura Gaura Gaura he etc.

Srila Prabhupada disliked this extremely, so much so that the next morning he called me into his room and wanted from me an explanation of why Bharadvaja was chanting like that. I could not give a proper explanation at that moment, but Prabhupada said that he never wanted to hear that again in the temple and that I should never allow such kinds of 'speculation' in kirtana. He then went on to specifically describe how kirtana should be done.

More or less his words were: Now I want to establish the standards for kirtana. You may chant as follows; for mangala aratika, the samsara-dava prayer, then sri krsna-caitanya, then Hare Krsna, nothing else. For the guru-puja, the 'guru-prayer' [that's what he called it], sri krsna-caitanya, Hare Krsna, nothing else. For evening aratika, the Gaura Aratika song, sri krsna-caitanya, and Hare Krsna, nothing else. For all aratikas this basic pattern should be followed. The chanting of sri krsna-caitanya mantra should only be for three times, not more. No one should sing a bhajan unless all the devotees know what the song means. No one should sing songs in Vrindavana temple that are in languages which the people do not understand. Yasomati-nandana may be sung since the people understand that.

I did not put this section in quotes since it would be highly presumptuous of me to think that I can remember Prabhupada's exact words after 13 years have passed, but it is close enough for us to learn what he wanted.

There are some other things which he taught at the same time. The next instance relates to the methods of singing mangala aratika. We were chanting mangala aratika within the room of Srila Prabhupada each morning. Sometimes Prabhupada would appreciate the singing and sometimes not. One morning after a particularly bad kirtana, Prabhupada called me into his room and complained about the singing. He said, again, more or less, "I did not like the singing in the morning. The morning melody must be sung throughout the mangala aratika and no other melody should be sung. It should be sung sweetly and melodiously, like this ... [and he proceeded to sing the first verse of the samsara prayer in a very sweet and melodious voice with perfect inflection and musical accent]. " Prabhupada was very insistent that the singing should be done in that way only. He indicated that he wanted me to lead the kirtanas in the morning as a way to establish the standards within the temple.

The next morning I led the kirtana in his room duplicating the melodious style which he had shown me the day before. Prabhupada was pleased and seemed to enjoy the kirtana. Unfortunately I fell victim to that demon within the mind and started to speculate a couple of Jaya Radhe's at the end of the kirtana. This was one of the bigger mistakes made by me at that time. Although there is nothing wrong with Jaya Radhe, Prabhupada simply didn't want us to chant it. He once explained that Sukadeva Gosvami did not feel himself qualified to chant the name of Radha in the Srimad-Bhagavatam and therefore only indicated her name with the word aradhana while describing the topmost gopi friend of Krsna.

Furthermore he had said that he did not feel himself qualified to enter into the seva-kunj area of Vrindavan (and therefore we should not either), and again, when taking a bath in Radha-kunda one should not place his feet in the water. These are all things which Prabhupada had said at that time or before that time, although perhaps others might have another experience with Prabhupada at Radha-kunda, but this was his statement in September, 1974. Prabhupada also said to me, just for the record, that the entire spiritual world was to be found within the walls of the Krsna-Balarama Temple and therefore there was no need whatsoever to ever go outside these walls on some pilgrimage.

Anyway, to continue the story, I had just started to chant Srimate Radharani's holy name within Vrindavana dhama, Her beloved Lord's abode, within the presence of Her most intimate devotee, during the most auspicious hours of the day, when Her most intimate devotee looked at me with eyes blazing like fire and desirous of initiating my immediate destruction. Voice choked and gagging, I ended the kirtana immediately without further formalities, never again to make the same mistake.

Prabhupada never ended kirtanas with various extra mantras, especially not Jaya Radhe, so why should I?

I would like to give some examples regarding Prabhupada and kirtana in order to illuminate the subject further. My personal experience with Prabhupada began when I was his servant for a while in July of 1971. At that time he had described to

me in his room that the chanting of the Panca-tattva maha-mantra was much more powerful than the Hare Krsna mantra. I immediately asked him that since this is so, then why don't we chant some rounds of this mantra after finishing our 16 rounds of the Hare Krsna mantra each day? Prabhupada replied that we should not do so since Lord Caitanya came just to show us how to worship Lord Krsna and that the Lord wanted us to chant the Hare Krsna mantra and therefore we should follow His advice and example. Therefore he later restricted the chanting of this mantra in kirtana to only three times.

Specifically he placed this restriction on the chanting after one incident with Isan prabhu in Vrindavana. In July of 1974, when Prabhupada first moved into his new quarters, we were holding kirtanas in his room in the afternoon and then Prabhupada would give class. One of the first days Isan prabhu, who at that time was doing what was to be later known as FATE doll exhibition, led a kirtana. He was simply repeating the Sri Krsna Caitanya mantra over and over again, perhaps for fifteen times, when Prabhupada demanded that he stop and chant Hare Krsna. It was after this that Prabhupada became quite strict on the number of times that mantra was sung.

There are two stories relating to the singing of the mantra Gaura Nityananda bol, hari bol etc. The first relates to a time when Prabhupada stopped a kirtana in England when this mantra was being sung, and the second to when Prabhupada stopped a mangala aratika kirtana in Vrindavana. Since I was directly involved in the second instance and only heard about the first, I will only relate the second story.

One morning in the winter of 1975, after the temple was opened, Ananda prabhu was leading kirtana. Ananda prabhu was a Godbrother of Srila Prabhupada who had been living in our temple for many years, humbly engaged in serving the devotees with great love and devotion. He was the personal cook of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati and was extremely expert in preparing foods from simple indigenous leaves, roots and fruits, as well as preparing emergency medicinal herbs when the need arose (as when a scorpion stung Saurabh Das and was saved by Ananda Prabhu's timely herb application). He was also an enthusiastic kirtana leader.

Srila Prabhupada was in his room as usual during the mangala aratika kirtana and I was in the room next to his waiting some order or command. I was not to be disappointed. The kirtana was loud and the speakers, combined with the reverberation of the hall, projected the sound into Prabhupada's room with great ease. Prabhupada called me into his room. I already knew what was going to happen since I was trained by him the previous year and knew his standards for kirtana. Ananda prabhu was chanting Gaura Nityananda bol etc. I knew that this was not what should happen, but I was Prabhupada's servant at this time and not the president any longer.

Much to my surprise he said, "Go to the temple room and stop him from singing the kirtana. Tell him that this is your temple and that you will lead the kirtanas the way you want." Well, this was quite a shock. It was the first time that I ever had to stop one of his own Godbrothers from singing a kirtana, but I dutifully marched off to the temple room to fulfill the order. I was not at all feeling good

about this as I was afraid of making some offense or being crass or crude about it. Being fallen I just couldn't bring myself to say it exactly as Prabhupada had said it, but I managed to mutter out some words to the effect that Prabhupada didn't want this mantra in the temple and that would he please chant Hare Krsna instead? This made a little scene with the devotees not understanding what was going on, so I managed to explain something to some others since the kirtana was still going on without interruption, but soon the kirtana was stopped and taken over by others.

Prabhupada was never abrasive towards others and especially I had never seen him act like this in the temple, but he was so determined that the kirtana standard be maintained and not changed by the introduction of 'other' mantras which were commonly heard in other temples and maths, that he sent me to stop his own godbrother from singing in the temple. This incident impressed me greatly as to his determination in this regard.

There were other occasions when Prabhupada had me stop kirtanas which had elements he didn't like. In July of 1976 Prabhupada was in New Mayapur, France. A raging kirtana was going on somewhere below his room while he was dictating his mail. I was taking the dictation sitting in front of him. One could hear that there was a kirtana going on, but I, at least, could not make out any individual words or understand who was singing since it was all muffled by the solid floors of the castle.

Prabhupada, however, could hear everything and was very disturbed by something he heard. "Do you hear that?", he asked me. "What is that, Srila Prabhupada?",

"Listen to what he is saying."

"I cannot hear anything special. What is wrong?"

"He is chanting something before the Hare Krsna mantra. Go and stop this immediately."

Immediately I ran downstairs, danda in hand, and started pushing aside the crowds of ecstatic chanters to get at the leader of the kirtana. I could still not hear exactly what was being chanted, and neither could I imagine how Prabhupada could hear it, but I had experience that he had super senses and therefore with full faith I plunged through the crowd expecting to soon be close enough to know who was leading the kirtana and what it was that he was saying before the Hare Krsna mantra. When I was about 2 meters away from the leader I saw that it was Prtha Putra Swami leading the kirtana and then I finally heard that he was faintly saying Bhaja before each Hare Krsna mantra. With this confirmation I demanded, in the name of Srila Prabhupada, that he not chant that before the mantra and that he never do it again. This caused a bit of a pause in the kirtana while everyone tried to understand what was going on, but before too long I was again going back upstairs and he was chanting correctly.

When in Prabhupada's room again he asked me for a report on what happened and I told him who led the kirtana and that the mistake was corrected. One should never chant anything before the maha-mantra.

Now there are of course some extraordinary variations on these rules. The ones that I know of shall be described herein for completeness and fairness. At the end of 1975, Srila Prabhupada and crew went up to Sanand, a nice small kingdom

somewhere north of Ahmedabad. There we were having kirtana within the palace of the King, where Prabhupada stayed. These kirtanas were mostly filled with the village women. Prabhupada had me lead the kirtanas but he would instruct me what to sing and how. One time he asked me to make a kirtana with Govinda Jaya Jaya which went on for about a half an hour. Another time he asked me to sing just Hare Krsna, but one line at a time, as these people were accustomed to sing it. That is, just Hare Krsna . . . Hare Hare the first time, they would respond, and then Hare Rama . . . Hare Hare, the second time, and they would respond. It seems that if the people are accustomed to certain types of kirtanas that we could adjust somewhat to avoid disturbing their minds.

One item, which I find to be significant despite my personal fanaticism in regards to kirtanas (in my zone we have been following these standards all along, and other forms of kirtana are not appreciated), was something which occurred in Bombay in 1976 (month not remembered). There was a kirtana in the temple which was basically a lot of Hari bols. During this kirtana I was highly skeptical and looked often to Srila Prabhupada to see if he wanted me to stop this kirtana or not. I think that Prabhupada knew why I was looking at him and he specifically avoided me by looking downward or to the side the whole kirtana. At the end, when we were walking back to his flat at the back of the land, I asked "Srila Prabhupada, "should I have stopped that kirtana since it was not proper?" "No," he said, "at least they are chanting."

You decide what is best.

There is one other kirtana factor which is extremely significant and which should definitely be discussed here. In June 1977 Srila Prabhupada was not very pleased with the kirtanas of the group next to us. There kirtanas were with the speculated mantra, (Bhaja) Nitai Gaura Radhe Syama (Japa) Hare Krsna Hare Ram, which especially got on one's nerves if he had to live on the side of the building which faced their asrama. Prabhupada wanted that all mantras be bona-fide so he requested the devotees to stop chanting the word bhaja before our Panca-tattva maha-mantra since the word actually is not part of the mantra.

Then Prabhupada thought about using some mantra from the Caitanya-caritamrta which he considered might go, Jaya Sri Krsna Caitanya prabhu Nityananda, Jayadvaita Gadadhara Srivasadi Gaura bhakta vrinda, so he had his servants and sanskritists look it up to see if they could find it. After a thorough search they realized that there was no mantra like that and that the closest mantra was Jaya Sri Krsna Caitanya prabhu Nityananda, Jayadvaita candra jaya goura bhakta vrinda, which was not what Prabhupada wanted and therefore was not the change which was to take place. However, Prabhupada insisted on the change from bhaja to jaya to definitively delineate us from the chanters across the road. When he was asked about the change from "Sri Advaita" to "Jaya Advaita" he simply said, "Sri Advaita, Jaya Advaita, what is the difference?"

Now on the basis of this the devotees of the world were told that Prabhupada definitely wanted that we chant "Jaya Advaita" instead of "Sri Advaita" and that this should happen immediately. Since I was in Vrindavan at the time and heard this incident immediately after it happened in the room of Prabhupada from one of the

sanskritists who were engaged in the search, I knew that this was not actually the case, and that the purpose of the changes were mainly to stop the chanting of bhaja in order to make a distinction between us and the speculated mantra chanters.

However, this idea became so much entrenched within the movement that it became the fashion to even change the mantra in the prema-dhvani and even in such independent songs as Hari haraye namah krsna, wherein one line says sri caitanya nityananda sri advaita sita which now due to this absolute change had to read sri caitanya nityananda jayadvaita sita.

I have always felt that this is very damaging to our movement in general for the following reasons. (1) Prabhupada himself always chanted the mantra in the original fashion and there are hundreds of tapes to testify to that. Changes in the mantra weaken the position of those who have followed Srila Prabhupada since it can be challenged as to why this change was made. I also challenged it in the same manner. (2) Prabhupada writes the original mantra everywhere in his books. Prabhupada once chastised me for listening to someone else's idea with the following words. "Regarding this idea that Where have you heard this? Is this found in our books?" Whatever is written in the books is law. If the mantra is found everywhere within Prabhupada's books do we think that he would just change it like that? All he was doing was changing the introductory word which is not at all part of the mantra. (3) Why were we so eager to change some of the basic institutions of the society, such as one of the two basic mantras of the movement, so quickly without even examining what this would mean in the future? After all, as mentioned before, this mantra is carved in stone and marble on all the temples and everyone can see for time immemorial what the correct mantra is. It just doesn't look good or feel good to have a different mantra than that which is preserved in temple walls and within Prabhupada's books and tapes. It weakens our authority to some extent.

I recommend that we change back to the original "Sri Advaita" although we must change bhaja to jaya, as we already have to preserve Srila Prabhupada's sentiments in this regard. This is my personal opinion and nothing more.

I hope that I have fulfilled the wishes of the Vaisnavas by describing these incidents in detail for the benefit of all.

Besides the mantras and prayers discussed above, devotees who come to Vrndavana think it is very transcendental when they pick up the local songs and prayers. They think that by such practice they are assimilating the culture and entering into the Vrndavana mood. Subsequently their example is carried back to other temples by devotees who don't know any better and think that whatever they heard chanted in Vrndavana is safe to import. This was not Srila Prabhupada's view. He did not even chant Radhe-Syama as a greeting when in Vrndavana. He would always say Hare Krsna.

There is some confusion over what Srila Prabhupada actually approved of, because some chants that he allowed or even appeared to enjoy, he later expressed disapproval of. Devotees who were present in kirtanas with styles that Srila Prabhupada later disapproved of, are often convinced that such styles were actually approved by him. Srila Prabhupada's lenience in such cases may be understood in light of the incident of Srila Prabhupada tolerating the

“Haribol” kirtana, as mentioned by in the above article. Although Srila Prabhupada had previously expressed disapproval at such a chant, in particular circumstances he allowed it to go on so as not to stifle the enthusiasm of the chanters.

Such objections, however, do not invalidate the points made in the article, and it can be accepted as a valuable guide to how Srila Prabhupada wanted kirtana performed. On occasions, Prabhupada may have tolerated different kinds of chanting, but that doesn’t mean that he approved of them. And he did make it known, at least to some devotees, what kind of kirtana he wanted and what he did not want.

Srila Prabhupada was more insistent on some standards than others. Some points, such as the correct tune in mangala-arati, he insisted must be followed. On other points, he let it be known what standard he wanted, but didn’t always enforce it. As followers of Srila Prabhupada, we should know and follow what he wanted in all aspects of Krsna consciousness, especially in kirtana, our central activity.

Therefore, several other points have been discussed below, to ensure that our kirtanas are pleasing to Srila Prabhupada and Krsna.

Specific Tunes at Specific Times²

Comment: name of cassette to be inserted

Harikesa’s article describes Srila Prabhupada’s strictness about singing the morning melody during mangala-arati. According to Vedic musical science, specific ragas (basic melodies) should be sung or played at certain times of the day. The scriptures describing the science of music state that there are as many ragas as there are species of life. Among them there are sixteen thousand principal ragas that were previously manifested by the gopis of Vrndavana, which have become disseminated throughout the world.ⁱⁱ Each day has eight divisions (astaprahara), for which there are eight corresponding ragas. The eightfold eternal daily pastimes of Radha and Krsna and of Lord Caitanya also take place according to the eight divisions of the day. Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas have revealed that the ultimate purpose of the science of music is to complement and enhance the moods of the Divine Couple during Their variegated eightfold daily pastimes. Gaudiya kirtana therefore employs traditional Vedic ragas during the same divisions of the day, with the specific purpose of pleasing the Supreme Lord.

These ragas, performed at the correct times, enhance and enforce the subtle energies prevalent during those periods. However, ragas performed at the wrong time disturb the psychic balance. Those who are aware of the Vedic science of music can perceive the awkwardness and rasabhasa of ragas being played or sung at the wrong time. The rendering of ragas at inappropriate hours is considered inauspicious, sinful, and disruptive to cosmic harmony.

In this regard, the Garga-samhita tells the story of Narada Muni and the broken ragas.

² A cassette by Bhakti Vikasa Swami has been made so that devotees can hear these tunes and learn them.

Once, while traveling throughout the universe, Narada came to a planet inhabited by many beautiful people. They lived in gorgeous palaces, dressed in splendid clothes, and were ever engaged in singing and playing on musical instruments.

However, they were all deformed. Some had no feet, some no ankles, and some no knees. Some had twisted hips, some had shriveled thighs, some had disfigured torsos, some had loose teeth, some had hunched shoulders, some had bowed heads, and some had no necks.

Astonished, Narada asked them who they were. The people unhappily replied, “We are the personified ragas. We have become deformed by the sage Narada. Mad with love, he sings the wrong melodies at the wrong time, with the wrong notes and without proper rhythm. In this way he has broken the limbs of our bodies.”

Narada inquired from the ragas how his fault could be rectified. They directed him to propitiate the goddess Sarasvati; he then learned from her the science of music and became an unrivaled musician.

It is unlikely that many devotees will become deeply acquainted with the Vedic science of music. But kirtana leaders should at least know which tunes to sing at which times of the day.³

Srila Prabhupada particularly stressed that the morning melody (*prabhati-sura*) be sung during mangala-arati. This raga should generally not be sung after 10 a.m. Srila Prabhupada taught the morning melody in its simplest form to be sung in mangala-arati. This tune corresponds to that in which the song beginning *jīva jāgo* is usually sung.

The Gurvastakam should be sung in an ‘up-down’ pattern. One verse is sung with the melody in the first line going down, and the third line going up. The next verse is sung with the first line going up, and the third line going down. Then again the next verse is sung with the first line going down, and so on. Some devotees sing the correct tune in mangala arati but don’t touch this ‘up-down’ pattern. They simply sing every stanza up or down, and thus lose much of the sweetness of the morning melody.

After the Gurvastakam has been sung, the mangala arati kirtan continues with the same tune. Some devotees sing the Gurvastakam with the correct tune but then change to another tune after that. This is incorrect. Those who are unsure how to continue the kirtan in the correct tune can simply remember the tune of the Gurvastakam, or of *jīva jāgo*, and sing the Srila Prabhupada pranama mantra and the rest in the same tune.

The Panca Tattva maha-mantra and the Hare Krsna maha-mantra are sung in the same tune as the Gurvastakam with the same ‘up-down, up-down’ pattern. When chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, one mantra can be chanted with the melody going up and the next down; otherwise, two mantras at a time can be chanted up and the next two down.

³ Traditional tunes, including the morning and evening melodies, are given in Western musical notation in the Hare Krishna Music Book, by Joan Wilder (published by BBT)

Srila Prabhupada taught this most simple form of the morning melody to be chanted in mangala arati. However, variations on the morning melody, with added musical ornamentation, have been introduced in our society. Some devotees opine that because Srila Prabhupada did not introduce these, they should not be sung by ISKCON devotees. Others think that because they are not digressions from the morning melody, but only elaborations of it, because they are sweet and thus enhance the mood of devotion, and because they are part of our Gaudiya-Vaisnava musical tradition, that they are acceptable. If variations of the morning melody are sung, then the basic morning melody as taught by Srila Prabhupada should be sung at least several times before variations are sung. In other words, the simplest form of the morning melody as taught by Srila Prabhupada should form the greater part of chanting Hare Krsna in mangala arati.

In accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, the mangala arati kirtana should be kept simple. Mangala-arati is meant for giving a powerful spiritual charge at the beginning of the day. All in attendance will certainly feel purified and enlivened in Krsna consciousness if the prayers are sung to the correct raga, and with devotion and reverence. If mangala-arati is led in this way, by a devotee whose only motive is to satisfy guru and Krsna, the effect is most enchanting. The minds of all present are captured and drawn to the lotus feet of guru and Krsna. There can be no better way to start the day.

Many devotees feel that the mangala-arati kirtan should be sweet and gentle, as if to gently awaken the Lord. Dancing in mangala-arati is also nice, as Srila Prabhupada once recommended. (cf. letter to Upendra, Feb 19, 1973) And there is no restriction against the mangala-arati kirtana being lively. However, it is generally more appropriate that ebullient kirtanas be kept for later in the day.

There is another well-known tune for Sri-Guruvastakam. This tune should not be sung during mangala-arati. It is suitable for singing when Sri Gurvastakam is sung in the day, such as on the appearance day of sampradaya acaryas.

Srila Prabhupada also taught the evening melody for sandhya-arati. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught a simple form of the raga. A slightly less simple variation was introduced during Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal presence. Śrīla Prabhupāda apparently never commented on this tune, which is now the one generally sung in ISKCON temples. If this variation is sung, the rest of the Gaura-arati kirtana also generally follows the same tune.

At evening arati, devotees sometimes, after singing the Gaura-arati song (jaya jaya gauracander....) in the evening melody, revert to the morning melody for the rest of the kirtana. This is totally wrong. The morning melody should never be sung in the evening.

It is inappropriate to sing the Gaura-arati song or tune before the evening, e.g. during the midday arati.

Of course, singing Krsna's names is transcendental and purifying—even when sung in an inappropriate tune. Srila Prabhupada once wrote to a disciple that "Any tune can be used. When it is in relationship with Krishna, that makes it bonafide." Letter to: Ekayani, 31

August, 1971 Still, it is better to sing the correct melody at the appropriate time. That will be more pleasing to Krsna.

Specific Songs and Mantras At Specific Times

Certain songs are meant for particular times of day, and should not be sung at other times. For instance, Arunodaya- kirtana (Udilo aruna... and Jiva jago...) and Vibhavari Sesa are meant to be sung, not exactly during the brahma-muhurta, but at daybreak—just before, during and after sunrise. Vibhavari sesa literally means “the moon is finished”. Aloka pravesa means “the light is entering”. To sing it during the pre-dawn brahma-muhurta is clearly inappropriate. Once in Bhubanesvara early in 1977, Srila Prabhupada corrected a disciple for singing Udilo aruna... in the evening.ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly, Gaya gaura madhura svare is meant for early evening.

Sri Gurvastakam, although meant to be sung during the brahma-muhurta, is not specifically a mangala-arati song. The Gaudiya Math standard is to sing it before mangala-arati. However, Srila Prabhupada told us to sing Sri Gurvastakam during mangala-arati, so we do.

In the Gaudiya tradition, there are many arati songs, such as those for Radha-Krsna and Gaura-Gadadhara, yet Srila Prabhupada established that Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Gaura Arati (jaya jaya Gauracander) be sung at evening arati in every ISKCON temple. This song is specifically meant for singing during sandhya-arati (evening arati).

When Srila Prabhupada was asked about singing other bhajanas in arati, he said jiva jago was alright, but “better stick to Hare Krsna.” (From ISKCON in the 1970’s by SDG, Vol.1, p. 118)

Srila Prabhupada instituted the chanting of prayers to Lord Nrsimhadeva after each Deity arati. A recent speculation is to sing the refrain Jaya Jagadisa hare two or four times, but Srila Prabhupada taught to sing it three times (c.f. 700801SB.LA), and there is no need to change from this standard.

Srila Prabhupada instituted the chanting of Jaya Radha-Madhava before class. He personally sang it in the original form as written by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. There is a variation with many extra “Jayas,” which Srila Prabhupada liked, but he did not personally sing it.

Emphasizing the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission was to spread the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. Along with chanting of Hare Krsna, he taught other chants also, yet in innumerable written and spoken instructions, Srila Prabhupada made it clear that he wanted his followers to emphasize the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra above all others. He wanted that the chanting of Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare remain the central activity of the Hare Krsna movement.

In our temple, strictly Hare Krishna chanting should be given more importance. There is no harm in this mantra you have heard, but it is not very important. There are many such common songs composed by common devotees out of sentiment. But our

principle is to stick to the authorities, and always remember that Hare Krishna is the prime authorized mantra. Letter to: Malati, 28 January, 1969

Srila Prabhupada had great faith in the maha-mantra, and everything he did was based on popularizing it. Even in Vrindavana when he was greeted with “Radhe Radhe” or “Jaya Radhe,” he would respond only with “Hare Krishna.”

Srila Prabhupada did not want the maha mantra to come to be thought of as just one among many mantras. “Maha mantra” means it is the greatest of all mantras. Although Srila Prabhupada himself taught us many other mantras, he always stressed the chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra. He said that at least half of the arati kirtana should consist of chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra. For example, in a temple where mangala-arati only lasts for 20 minutes, devotees should only sing each of the Gurvastakam once, in order to leave ten minutes for chanting Hare Krsna. This was a well known dictum in the “early days.” (This was told by Acyutananda, who heard it from Srila Prabhupada. The author heard it from two disciples of Srila Prabhupada, Radhanatha Swami and Purnaprajna Prabhu.)

Of course, Krishna has unlimited names, and great devotees have composed innumerable songs in His praise. From Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta and Sri Caitanya-Bhagavata, we understand that Lord Caitanya chanted Krsna’s names in various ways, such as : “Krsna he,” and *haraye namah krsna yadavaya namah/ gopala govinda rama sri madhusudhana* (cf. Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi 17.122, and Madhya, 25.64)

Srila Prabhupada also chanted these and several other chants. But Lord Caitanya stressed the Hare Krishna maha mantra as most important in this age of Kali. And Srila Prabhupada, the founder of the Hare Krsna movement in accordance with the will of Lord Caitanya, wanted to emphasize the chanting of Hare Krsna, lest devotees nearly neglect it amidst so many other chants. Sometimes a devotee leading the kirtana chants the maha mantra only two or three times, or even not at all, throughout the whole kirtana. They like to sing so many things, but seem to have an allergy to chanting Hare Krsna. Our kirtanas should not become a morass of all kinds of speculative chanting sans the Hare Krishna maha mantra.

Even if one chants many mantras, it must be preceded by glorious sankirtana. Sankirtana is the maha-mantra. Letter to: Yamuna, Dinatarine, 13 January, 1976

This is the Hare Krishna Movement—not the Radhe Radhe movement or anything else. Let it remain famous as such.

The Panca Tattva Mantra

Srila Prabhupada instructed Harikesa to limit the chanting of the Panca-tattva maha-mantra to three times. Some may protest that because Srila Prabhupada told this to only one person, that it is not a very important instruction. Others question why Srila Prabhupada would want to limit the chanting of the Panca-tattva maha-mantra to three times, he sometimes chanted it much more than three times (as in New York in 1966). Certainly extra chanting of the names of the Panca-tattva is not intrinsically bad. But again, Srila Prabhupada wanted to emphasize the chanting of Hare Krsna. Also, the standards Srila Prabhupada set towards the end of his

stay with us are the standards that we should follow (cf. page x, discussion of this point), so his later instruction to limit the chanting of the mantra supercedes his early practice of chanting it repeatedly.

The mantra Panca Tattva Maha mantra is derived from an invocatory verse that appears in each chapter of the Caitanya Caritamṛta:

jaya jaya śrī-caitanya jaya nityānanda

jayādvaita-candra jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

There is of course no harm in chanting the original Caitanya-Caritamṛta verse in kirtana, but it is better to chant the form in which our recent acaryas have given it, namely “*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*”

Sometimes devotees neglect to chant the Panca tattva mantra before the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, but this is incorrect.

As preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we first offer our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting this Pañca-tattva mantra; then we say Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare...Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is known as mahā-vadānyāvatāra, the most magnanimous incarnation, for He does not consider the offenses of the fallen souls. Thus to derive the full benefit of the chanting of the mahā-mantra, we must first take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, learn the Pañca-tattva mahā-mantra, and then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. That will be very effective. CC Ādi 7.4 purport

The Panca-tattva maha-mantra, along with Srila Prabhupada’s pranama mantra, is usually chanted at the beginning of kirtana only. After chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra begins, the general practice is not to chant these mantras again.

Harikesa discusses why we should chant Sri-advaita rather than Jaya-advaita in the Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya mantra. The proper chanting of the mantra (i.e. with Sri-advaita, not jaya-advaita) is now well re-established in our society.

In the early New York kirtana recordings, we hear Srila Prabhupada chant, “bhaja gaura-bhakta-vṛnda” two or three times after chanting the Panca-tattva mantra. But later Srila Prabhupada instructed devotees to chant jaya instead of bhaja before the Panca-tattva mantra.

There is no harm if jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda is chanted after the Panca-tattva mantra, although it is not essential and should not be chanted repeatedly.

Jaya Radhe

Harikesa notes that Srila Prabhupada did not want us to chant Jaya Radhe. This may seem surprising, as some of our Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas have praised the chanting of Radha-nama. Chanting of Radha-nama is also an integral part of North Indian folk kirtana, especially in the Braja area. However, it is not what Srila Prabhupada told us to do. Srila

Prabhupada told us not to chant Jaya Radhe, so we shouldn't. Srila Prabhupada was always careful to protect his disciples from artificially jumping up to "higher levels" of devotion. His restriction on our chanting of the name of our topmost object of worship, Srimati Radharani, seems to be a manifestation of such caution. Whatever the reason may be, neither Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati nor Srila Prabhupada encouraged or introduced the chanting of Radha-nama, and it behooves their followers to be similarly conservative.

Some devotees go on chanting Jaya Radhe, Jaya Radhe, as if simply by that they have become advanced to the platform of Radha-prema. Achieving devotion to Srimati Radharani is not so easy or cheap. First we have to follow the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, who taught us not to chant Jaya Radhe. Srila Prabhupada emphasized that we chant the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, in which we pray to Radha and Krsna together. We cannot pray to Radha separately from Krsna.

There is another popular chant, Radhe Radhe Govinda, Govinda Radhe, which is sung to an attractive tune and has become popular in our society. Again, it is better to stick to the chanting of Hare Krsna maha-mantra, which we know is authorized and that Srila Prabhupada wanted us to chant.

Incidentally, even Harikesa's article says that it is all right to chant Jaya Radhe on Radhastami.

Jaya Everything Else

At the end of ISKCON kirtanas, it has become customary to chant, Jaya Prabhupada, Jaya Radha-Govinda (or whatever the name of the Deities in the temple are) and Nitai-Gaura Haribol. Although this is not essential, it brings the kirtana to a musically satisfying finale. Srila Prabhupada did not personally introduce this; he finished kirtanas simply with the maha-mantra, without adding any other chants. Yet it was an accepted practice in ISKCON during Srila Prabhupada's personal presence, and Srila Prabhupada never expressed disapproval of it—although he specifically stated that he did not like that "Jaya Prabhupāda" be repeatedly chanted.^{iv}

In 1977 Srutadeva Dasa, the Temple President in London, wrote to Srila Prabhupada asking if it was acceptable to chant "Jaya Radha London Isvara... Prabhupadera prana-dhana he" in kirtana, (adapted from the song, Radha Krsna Giti). Srila Prabhupada replied in the affirmative (Letter to: Srutadeva, 30 October, 1976).

However, kirtanas should not go on and on with many Jayas—Jaya this, Jaya that, Jaya every name the lead singer can think of. It is suggested that the name of each Deity be chanted once only. Their names are already included in the maha-mantra, so chanting of the Deities' names is in one sense superfluous. In ISKCON Bombay, where the Deities of Sita-Rama-Laksman-Hanuman are installed, Srila Prabhupada instructed not to chant, "Jaya Sita-Rama-Laksman-Hanuman." He said that Their names are included in the maha-mantra and that further chanting was therefore unnecessary.^v

If the names of the Deities are chanted, the names of Gaura-Nitai should not be neglected. We can directly chant Jaya Gaura-Nitai rather than Nitai Gaura Haribol. The names of Gaura and Nitai should not be separated by chanting Jaya Gaura and then Jaya Nitai. This is a speculation directly introduced from a Bengali apa-sampradaya.

Kirtanas should not begin with the singing of Jaya. It is a common practice to chant “Jaya Prabhupada” before Srila Prabhupada’s guru-puja and to chant Jaya with the names of the Deities just before an arati begins. But once the conch has blown, the singing of Jaya should cease and the appropriate arati song should be sung.

One phenomenon giving much room for speculation is to mix up chants beginning with “Jaya” (E.g.: to chant Jaya Vrndadevi, Jaya tulsi maharani, Jaya Vrndadevi, Jaya tulsi maharani.) Recently I heard the chant “Jaya Jagat Guru Srila Prabhupada Jaya Gurudeva Jaya Jaya Prabhupada (!!).” It is better to sing, for example, Jaya Vrnda Devi (x 4), then Jaya tulsi maharani (x 4). Otherwise there will be no end to the Jaya permutations and combinations. And even if we don’t sing all these Jayas, our kirtana will be perfect by chanting Hare Krsna more, as Srila Prabhupada did.

Other Unauthorized or Dubious Chants

Devotees should not invent or sing unauthorized chants. Kirtana is not meant to be an arena for singers to express their creative imaginations by introducing varieties of tunes and songs. Everything should be according to parampara.

When we offer our prayers to Krsna, they are not ordinary words. Therefore those who are not liberated souls, they cannot actually offer prayers. We have to repeat the prayers offered by liberated souls, not by an ordinary man. Because he is not yet *uttama*, he is not yet on the transcendental platform. Therefore we don’t allow songs which are not sung by liberated souls like Bhaktivinoda Thakura, or Narottama dasa Thakura. 720821SB.LA

One should chant the bona fide songs received from the disciplic succession. In Bhagavad-gītā it is said that the chanting is powerful when one follows the disciplic succession (*evam paramparā-prāptam imāṃ rājarṣayo viduḥ*). Manufacturing many ways of chanting will never be effective. However, chanting the song or the narration left by the previous ācāryas (*mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*) is extremely effective, and this process is very easy. SB 7.9.18 purport

Authorized songs means the songs which were sung or composed by self-realized Acaryas. It is an injunction in the Vaisnava regulations that unauthorized songs or statements should never be heard. The comparison is given that milk, although very nutritious food, if it is touched by the tongue of a serpent, it acts like poison.^{vi}

Devotees should also be careful not to pick up jingles from here and there, but to stick to bona fide chants given by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We cannot follow an upstart, manufacturing some song. What is authorized song, we shall sing.^{vii}

One devotee had picked up a chant in India: he krsna, govinda, hari, murari/ he natha, narayana, vasudeva. When Prabhupada heard it, he called us into his room and said, “This is not a Vedic mantra; this is a cinema song.⁴ An intelligent disciple just takes whatever his spiritual master provides for him, considering that to be sufficient. PG p.192

Even if we are chanting God’s names, it may not be very authorized. Srila Prabhupada said, “There are many names of God you can chant, but it’s best to take what comes in disciplic succession and what the spiritual master introduces.” PG p.192

All kinds of chants are now extant in our society that were neither introduced by Srila Prabhupada, nor composed by any liberated acharya. This produces a severe “cat at the wedding” effect. (cf. page x) New people come to our society, hear all kinds of chants that have been picked up here and there, then go and institute them in their home sadhana or, worse, teach them to others, confident that these are “genuine” ISKCON kirtanas.

Comment: layout man take note

Srila Prabhupada expressed different levels of acceptance for different chants. He absolutely forbade apasiddhantic concoctions such as “Nitai Gaur Radhe Syama.” He expressed disapproval of, but sometimes tolerated, chants such as “Gaura Nityananda Bol.” The best are those personally introduced and stressed by Srila Prabhupada, especially the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, the Panca-tattva maha-mantra, and the songs of authorized acaryas.

In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we do not allow any song that has not been approved or sung by bona fide devotees. We generally sing two songs. One is śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda. This is bona fide. It is always mentioned in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, and it is accepted by the ācāryas. The other, of course, is the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. We may also sing the songs of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, but these two songs—“śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya” and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—are sufficient to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. SB 8.5.25

Some speculations are particularly bad. For instance, the inventor of the chant, bhaja Nitai Gaura Radhe Syama japa Hare Krsna Hare Rama speculated that Nitai Gaura are non-different from Radhe Syama, i.e., that Lord Nityananda is Srimati Radharani. This is nonsensical and offensive.

The Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is prescribed in the śāstras, and they have invented so many. Although there is the name of the Supreme Lord, still you have to follow the śāstra. If

⁴ "Cinema song" is Indian usage for "popular, commercial style music for cheap entertainment."

you say Rāma Rāma Rāma, Rādhe Rādhe Rādhe, Kṛṣṇa, there are so many mentioned. That is also name, but you have to follow the śāstra. Śāstra says:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

You have to take that. Not that you can say, nitāi-gaura rādhe-śyāma, hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma, no. Why? Is that in the śāstra? No, you have invented. What is the value of your invention? You are not perfect. 761102SB.VRN

There are saḥajiyās who, not knowing the importance of the Pañca-tattva, concoct their own slogans, such as bhaja nitāi gaura, rādhe śyāma, japa hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma or śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma śrī-rādhe govinda. Such chants may be good poetry, but they cannot help us to go forward in devotional service. In such chants there are also many discrepancies... One should not foolishly adopt any of the slogans concocted by imaginative devotees. If one actually wants to derive the effects of chanting, one must strictly follow the great ācāryas. CC Adi 7.168 purport

Jayadvaita: ... Sometimes I'll hear that our devotees will be chanting Kṛṣṇa's name in different ways that I haven't heard, in kirtana...Like yesterday I heard that someone was chanting, "Nitai-Gaura, Nitai-Gaura, Nitai-Nitai-Gaura." Someone is chanting: "Radhe, Radhe, Radhe, Radhe," like that, at kirtana.

Prabhupada: Well, that is not done by the acaryas. There is no harm chanting "Radhe", but sometimes it is degraded to make something new, invention. Therefore better to stick to "Hare Kṛṣṇa" and to "Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda." Otherwise... Just like the saḥajiyas, they have invented: "Nitai-Gaura Radhe Syama, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rama." These things will come gradually. But they are not approved. They are called chara kirtana (?), which means "concocted kirtana." There is no harm chanting "Radhe, Nitai-Gaura." But better stick to this Panca-tattva, and maha-mantra. We have to follow the mahajana.

Satsvarūpa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes during āraṭi, many bona fide bhajanas are sung, but not much Hare Kṛṣṇa. Is that not a good tendency, that maybe just two or three minutes of Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and many other bhajanas?

Prabhupāda: No. We should stick to Hare Kṛṣṇa. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya Prabhu-Nityānanda, jīva jāgo jīva jāgo..., these are authorized. But Hare Kṛṣṇa is the mahā-mantra. What is sung by mahājana, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, that can be sung.^{viii}

So one reason Srila Prabhupada was so strongly against unauthorized chants is that we might, in our "cleverness," invent something that is totally bogus.

There is no need to invent any “new” kind of kirtana. What the sastra and acaryas have given us is complete and perfect. We cannot improve what they have given us. It is haughtiness to presume that we need to introduce something new.

God’s names may be chanted in any way, and that will purify the chanter. But if God’s representative tells us to chant in a particular way, it is best to follow that. Srila Prabhupada told us thousands of times to chant Hare Krsna. But there is not even one case on record of him telling us to chant, for instance, Gaura-Nityananda bol. When asked about this chant, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied as follows.

Lokanātha: We chant, “Gaura Nityānanda bol, haribol, haribol...”

Prabhupāda: That is alright.

Lokanātha: “Gaura śrī advaita...” Is it recommended by you? That is in our paramparā? And what about “jaya jagannātha, jaya jagannātha”?

Prabhupāda: Yes. That’s alright.. ...anukīrtanam, to chant always the Lord’s name. So these are Lord’s name. Jagannātha is also Lord’s name. Nityānanda is also Lord’s name. Harer nāma harer nāma eva kevalam. So harer nāma can be chanted.^{ix}

However, later Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped Lokanatha Maharaja from chanting this.

After singing the standard prayers and the maha-mantra, Lokanatha Maharaja began chanting “gaura-nityananda bol, haribol, haribol; gaura-sriadvaita bol, haribol, haribol; gaura-sri gadadhara bol, haribol, haribol...” with a lot of emphasis on the response of haribol, haribol. Srila Prabhupada suddenly signaled him from the stage to stop it; he apparently didn’t like it, although he didn’t say why. (TD4, p. 282)

On another occasion, during Mayapura festival of 1976, devotees were chanting “Haribol, Haribol, Haribol, Haribol!” again and again in a huge, exuberant kirtana. After several minutes of this Srila Prabhupada sent word down from his room to chant the Hare Krsna mantra. Srila Prabhupada said that we are not the Haribol sampradaya.^x (In Bengal there is a group of deviant Vaisnavas known as the Haribol sampradaya who wildly chant Haribol! Haribol! over and over for hours on end.)

And at the first Mayapura festival in 1973, Srila Prabhupada expressed displeasure about the chanting of many different mantras. He said, “They can chant their ‘Nitai Gaura, Hari Bols’, but I will chant Hare Krishna and go back home, Back to Godhead.”^{xi}

Another time, devotees asked Srila Prabhupada about the kirtana that Lokanatha Maharaja’s party often performed, singing haribol for five or ten minutes back and forth.

Prabhupada, although not too upset by the kirtana, made it clear that such chanting was not approved by him. He told us that we should mainly chant the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. He said ‘nitai-gaura haribol’ is all right, because they are bona fide names of the Lord, but the real point is that we should strictly follow only what the acaryas have given. This is the process. He said that the acaryas only chant all five names of the Panca-tattva, not just two. So although there is no offense in chanting the names of Gaura-Nitai, if we deviate and chant our own

made-up mantras then this is *guror avajna*, or disobeying the orders of the spiritual master, and the line of the *acaryas*. To make advancement in spiritual life one must always follow the line of *acaryas*. (TD4, p. 361)

There is only one known instance of Srila Prabhupada chanting Nitai Gaura Haribol. Revatinandana Dasa reports that at a park engagement in Amsterdam, where degraded hippies were causing much disturbance, Srila Prabhupada simply closed his eyes, spread his arms, and, with a look of deep concentration chanted into the microphone, long and slowly, Nitai Gaura Haribol, Haribol, Haribol, Haribol.

Of course, the word Haribol is written many times in Caitanya-Caritamṛta. It is a standard greeting used by devotees, and is often chanted in North Indian folk bhajanas. It means “Chant the name of God,” and is therefore auspicious and purifying. The chant Nitai Gaura Haribol, Haribol, Haribol, Haribol may sometimes be used in ISKCON to bring kirtanas to an end. However, Srila Prabhupada did not like this to be chanted excessively.

On the other hand, in Baltimore, where the presiding Deities are Sri Sri Gaura Nitai, Srila Prabhupada encouraged the devotees to go on chanting Nitāi-Gaura, Jaya Sacinandana and Hare Kṛṣṇa.^{xii} Srila Prabhupada also said, “hat is the difference, Nitāi-Gaurāṅga and Hare Kṛṣṇa? Nitāi-Gaurāṅga and Hare Kṛṣṇa, there is no difference. Nitāi-Gaurāṅga is also nice. Whatever he finds convenient, let him chant.”^{xiii} Bhaktivinoda Thakura predicted that the day would come when devotees from overseas would chant “Jaya Sacinandana.”^{xiv} Jaya Sacinandana is usually chanted in sequence with Nitai-Gauranga. So based on these references it appears to be acceptable to chant Nitai-Gauranga and Jaya Sacinandana sometimes, but not to make them the principal content of our kirtanas. As Srila Prabhupada states:

Strictly speaking, when chanting the names of the Pañca-tattva, one should fully offer his obeisances: śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda. CC Adi 7.168 purport.

A more recent speculation is the chanting of Nitai Nitai Nitai Nitai Nitai Gauranga. This should be stopped. There is no reason to chant the name of Nitai more than that of Gauranga, except for linguistic effect. We have no right to play around with the names of God.

Srila Prabhupada did not want anything chanted before the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha mantra. Once he stopped Jaya Pataka Maharaja from chanting “bolo” before the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha mantra. *Bolo* simply means “chant” but Srila Prabhupada did not like it and therefore we should not add it, or anything else, to the maha mantra.

Bhakti Caru Swami relates another occasion on which Srila Prabhupada gave this instruction:

One devotee was leading the guru puja kirtan in a very ecstatic way. Then all of a sudden this devotee started to sing “bhaja Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare...” and Prabhupada became very, very angry and stopped the kirtan. Everyone was so ecstatic that they were jumping three to four feet high, but then Prabhupada just shouted “Stop that!” and the kirtana immediately stopped. Prabhupada asked him

“Where did you learn this bhaja Hare Krsna? Did you ever hear me singing bhaja Hare Krsna?” And Prabhupada just chastised him for about five minutes. He was very heavy. He told him “Never add anything to Hare Krsna maha mantra and never subtract anything from Hare Krsna maha mantra. Sing the maha mantra just as it is”. Prabhupada also explained that “This is how deviation starts. Somebody puts in his own concocted thing and then somebody else comes, he adds some more concoction to it and with time it becomes a complete distortion”.

Some devotees have the habit of inserting such words as bhaja, bolo or jaya here, there and everywhere in kirtanas. Sometimes devotees, especially lead singers, make a noise like “ooo” or “eee” before the first syllable of the maha mantra: “Ooo, Hare Krsna ,” “Eee Hare Krsna.” Or they add a pop-style “Hey! Hey!” or “Woa, Woa” to the maha mantra. Such interpolations are not only unnecessary, but can be confusing. For instance, the line *krpa kari koro tare vrndavana-vasi* is simple, clear Bengali and the meaning is easily understood. However, if the word bhaja, bolo or jaya is placed before it, it doesn’t make any sense. The song should just be left as it is.

Another popular, unnecessary and meaningless interpolation is the line, *dui pade loilo sarana*, often inserted at the end of *Sri Guru Vandana*. This means to order the guru to take shelter at two undefined feet. A similar interpolation, *prabhupada loilo sarana*, is an order to Śrīla Prabhupāda to take shelter. Correct, in archaic Bengali, would be, *tua pade lainu sarana*: “I took shelter of your lotus feet.” Just passable is, *prabhupada, lainu sarana*: “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I took shelter of you.” These are grammatically better interpolations than the ones mentioned above, but nevertheless interpolations and therefore unnecessary.

Caitanya Caritamṛta (Madhya 13.87) states that Advaita Acarya used to call out loudly during kirtana. Devotees desiring to do this should better call out “Haribol!” or “Hare Krsna,” rather than making sounds resembling Red Indian war whoops. For women, screaming or shrieking is unsuitable, being an inauspicious sound and unsuitable for reserved and chaste ladies. In Bengali culture, women make the *ulu* vibration to express appreciation or enhance auspiciousness during a religious activity. This is done by moving the tongue within the mouth to make a loud, high-pitched, rolling sound. Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas indicate that the gopis in Krsna-lila also ululate, and Srila Prabhupada wanted his Western women disciples to learn to do so⁵ (at the present time this practice is practically unknown in the West, and requires to be learnt from Bengali women).

...

In some areas of India, it is traditional for the maha-mantra to be chanted in two parts. And from Harikesa’s essay, we see that Srila Prabhupada allowed such chanting in a particular preaching situation. Sometimes in ISKCON kirtanas the mantra is broken into eight parts, with devotees responding after every two words, or into sixteen parts, with devotees responding after each word. However, no acarya has taught like this and the norm for

⁵ See Srila Prabhupada is Coming! Pg. 104

ISKCON devotees should be to chant the whole maha-mantra together at one time, not in two or more parts. This also applies to the Pañca-tattva mantra (*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*).

...

Radharani ki jaya, maharani ki jaya (a Brijbasi folk-song) and *Jaya jaya radha-ramana haribol* (an invented pop “bhajana”) are other examples of catchy jingles that have been introduced in ISKCON kirtanas. Considering his attitude towards similar non-standard chants, it is unlikely that Srila Prabhupada would have approved these innovations. Preferably, they should be discontinued in all our centers.

Some kirtana leaders stop the kirtana to call out “Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!” or some other “ki jaya!” This is another speculation. “Ki jaya” is meant for the prema-dhvani at the end of the kirtana, not in the middle.

...

We cannot allow cinema songs to be sung in the temple. SB 8.5.25

Temples are meant to be places of pure spiritual sound vibration, not places for cinema music, or even bhajanas set to cinema music.

The essence of all instructions on kirtana standards is that kirtana is meant for the glorification and pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, and should be performed according to the parampara system. Indeed, if we are in doubt about any chant, better not chant it. If we stick to Hare Kṛṣṇa we can't go wrong.

As far as music is concerned, we have got our standard of music, the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra. We do not require to introduce anything new. Letter to: Bhakta Wayne, 3 January, 1977

What May Be Sung: Authorized Chants

In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we do not allow any song that has not been approved or sung by bona fide devotees.^{xv}

Authorized songs means the songs which were sung or composed by self-realized Acaryas. It is an injunction in the Vaisnava regulations that unauthorized songs or statements should never be heard. The comparison is given that milk, although very nutritious food, if it is touched by the tongue of a serpent, it acts like poison. So I am giving herewith a few lines of authorized songs which you may deliver to George. They are as follows:

1. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

2. Hari Haraye Namah Krsna Yadavaya Namah

Yadavaya Madhavaya Kesavaya Namah

3. Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna He

Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna He

Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Raksa mam

Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Pahi mam

Krsna Kesava Krsna Kesava Krsna Kesava Raksa mam

Rama Raghava Rama Raghava Rama Raghava Pahi mam

So these songs were sung by Lord Caitanya Himself, therefore they are the most authorized songs.^{xvi}

“Krsna He”

Lord Caitanya used to chant this as He was traveling in South India (CC Madhya 7.96 text). Kirtana leaders singing this sometimes leave out lines, mix them up, or get them in the wrong order. It is best to learn this, or any other song, properly before leading it.

Hari Haraye

Lord Caitanya would chant, *haraye namaḥ, kṛṣṇa yādavāya namaḥ/ gopāla govinda rāma śrī-madhusūdana*. (cf. Caitanya-caritamṛta, *Adi 17.122*, and *Madhya, 25.64*) Srila Prabhupada recommended that these two lines be sung after the Hare Krsna mantra in our centers, particularly in Mayapura. (cf. *Adi 17.124*, purport) These two lines were later expanded by Narottama Dasa into the song beginning *Haraye Namah Krsna* (Nama-Sankirtana). In Bengal this is often sung as a finale to Vaisnava functions. Usually ISKCON devotees only sing the first four verses, but there is no particular reason for this. If we are going to sing a song, we might as well sing it in full.

Some devotees blend in the word *hari* at the end of the line *haraye namaḥ krsna yadavaya namaḥ* so that it becomes *haraye namaḥ krsna yadavaya nama hari*. However, apart from being grammatically incorrect, this is not the way that Lord Caitanya sung it or Narottama dasa rendered it. Even the word *hari* at the beginning of this line (*hari haraye namaḥ krsna yadavaya namaḥ*) is not essential, as Lord Caitanya did not sing it like this and it is doubtful that Narottama dasa rendered it thus.

Srila Prabhupada Pranama

Harikesa writes that Srila Prabhupada wanted specific chants to be sung in the mangala-arati, guru-puja and sandhya-arati. Although Srila Prabhupada did not specify that his own pranama-mantra be sung in any of these aratis, devotees generally do so. This is a special case of singing something in kirtana that Srila Prabhupada, maybe out of humility, did not tell us

to sing. Proponents of this view reason that it is important that in all ISKCON kirtanas, now and in the future, Srila Prabhupada's pranama-mantra should be chanted. This will help us all to develop our relationship with him, express our love and gratitude for him, and keep him clearly in the center as the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON and the guru of all gurus to come.

Jayadvaita Swami^{xvii} has suggested that grand disciples of Srila Prabhupada sing om ajnana... before the Srila Prabhupada pranama-mantra. He writes: "Properly, a disciple should offer respect first to his own spiritual master, then to the previous ones. At any kirtana, the leader should first chant a generic mantra of obeisances to the spiritual master, such as Sri Gurvastakam or om ajnana timirandhasya, and then Srila Prabhupada's pranama mantra. The idea here is that with the first mantra Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples offer obeisances to their spiritual master. Then only can they properly offer obeisances to Srila Prabhupada."

To keep the proper sequence of offering respect, it is best that Srila Prabhupada's pranama mantra be sung before the Gaura Arati song, rather than after or not at all.

In chanting the Srila Prabhupada pranama-mantra, devotees occasionally chant the first stanza only, neglecting to chant the second. This is incorrect. Also, if the first stanza is chanted twice, the second stanza should also be chanted twice; and if the first stanza is only chanted once, the second stanza should not be chanted twice. Each stanza should be chanted once or twice only, not more.

Govinda Jaya Jaya

Govinda jaya jaya, Gopala jaya jaya/ Radha-ramana hari Govinda jaya jaya is a popular kirtana in India. Although not specifically from sastra, it is simple, inoffensive chanting of Krsna's names. Srila Prabhupada liked this and sang it with his disciples. Usually the first line is sung with response twice, followed by the second line with response twice, then back to the first line, and so on. ISKCON devotees should not sing the variation "Govinda bolo Gopala bolo/Radha-ramana hari Govinda bolo." This was not authorized by Srila Prabhupada, who never liked all these "bolo's."

Sri Rama Jaya Rama

At the end of one lecture (680910BG.SF) Srila Prabhupada taught the devotees to chant Sri Rama jaya Rama jaya jaya Rama (also, Letter to: Mukunda, 6 June, 1967). This is another popular kirtana in India. It is especially suitable for singing on Ramanavami or when visiting a temple of Lord Rama. But even then the Hare Krsna maha-mantra is quite appropriate, for it also contains the name of Lord Rama.

Another traditional chant in praise of Lord Rama is Raghupati Raghava Raja Rama, patita pavana Sita Rama. Although in 1968 Srila Prabhupada taught this to devotees,^{xviii} Mohanadasa ("Mahatma") Gandhi added to the original chant the lines,

Isvara Allah hi tera nama

sabko sanmati de bhagavan

(Isvara and Allah are your names. Oh Lord! Bestow upon all proper understanding.”)

Hence the following instruction from Srila Prabhupada.

Regarding the Raghupati Raghava song, we are not concerned with this song because it had a political motive; it is not pure devotional service. Gandhi was a great statesman in the garb of a saintly person, so that the Indian population would blindly follow him. But his motive was political and we are therefore not very interested with it. However, you can sing the first two lines, (Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram, Patita Pavana Sita Ram). Letter to: Krsna dasa, 13 February, 1969

However, in 1976 (in accordance with Srila Prabhupada’s policy of gradually becoming stricter in implementing standards) he stopped devotees from singing this chant in the midday arati (and that was on Ramanavami). Srila Prabhupada said that Rama was automatically included in the maha-mantra and there was no need to sing anything else.^{xix}

On the appearance days of other Visnu-tattva personalities or Srimati Radharani, we can chant their names throughout the day (like Nityananda, Rama, Jaya Radhe).

And during Ratha yatra, “Jaya Jagannatha” should be chanted. Srila Prabhupada Lilamrta (IV.25) says that Srila Prabhupada told devotees to change the chanting from Hare Krsna to Jaya Jagannatha at the San Francisco Ratha Yatra.

As SP wanted only a few chants (the designated arati song, Panca tattva mantra, and Hara Krsna mantra) to be sung during mangala-arati, guru-puja and sandhya-arati, it may be questioned when other authorized chants could be sung. In some temples kirtana is extended after guru-puja and sandhya-arati, and these are appropriate times for such chants. They may be sung also during festivals, when kirtanas often go on for several hours, and any in other kirtanas apart from arati kirtanas with specific chants.

Bhajan

All the above mentioned chants are usually sung in kirtanas (i.e. standing up and chanting, often with dancing). There are also many bhajanas that are rendered sitting down. There is no intrinsic difference between kirtana and bhajana, but in ISKCON parlance *kirtana* has come to mean those songs that are generally sung standing, and *bhajana*, those sung when sitting. In bhajanas also, we should be careful to sing those that are authorized.

Srila Prabhupada explained the importance of Vaisnava bhajanas in the following exchange.

Devotee: Is chanting Vaisnava songs on an equal level with maha-mantra?

Prabhupada: Yes. But first of all understand what is the maha-mantra. He krsna, Hare Krsna, “O the energy of Krsna, please accept me.” This is the prayer. This is addressing, He Krsna, Hare Krsna, “Hara, Please, now I am engaged in this material service; kindly accept me in Your service.” This is the meaning of Hare Krsna. So a relationship, requesting something. So all these songs are like that, requesting relationship. Therefore they are the same. 740120SB.HAW

The Gaudiya Vaisnava heritage is rich with song. *Songs of the Vaisnava Acaryas*, the popular songbook of ISKCON, has but a few of the many bhajanas composed by our acaryas. It would be nice if our devotees could become acquainted with this wealth left to us by our preceptors. These songs contain, in most beautiful poetic language, all instruction in philosophy, devotional practice and attainment of the ultimate goal of life. Singing these bhajanas is an important devotional practice. It is an inherent part of our Vaisnava tradition and should be taken up seriously by ISKCON devotees. At least if our devotees learn the songs in *Songs of the Vaisnava Acaryas*, that will be a great cultural and spiritual asset for them.

Time permitting, a bhajana can be sung before class, or at any other time.

Regarding the morning kirtana songs, what you have given is all right. If time permits there are other songs that can be sung, such as jiva jago, udilo aruna. letter, 73-10-14

Each bhajana expresses a particular sentiment and message, so most benefit from singing bhajanas will be had if the singers are aware of the meaning of the song and try to enter into its mood. It is inappropriate to sing a plaintive bhajana (such as that beginning *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-prabhu dayā koro more*) or one of lamentation (such as that beginning *je ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracur*) in a fast tempo or joyful tone. Most bhajanas are traditionally sung slow and sweet.

If several bhajanas are to be sung, they should be sung in ascending order: First, those in glorification of guru, then prayers to other Vaisnavas, then to Lord Nityananda, then Lord Caitanya, then Srimati Radharani, then Kṛṣṇa. Even if only two or three bhajanas are sung, this order should be observed.

As we come by parampara system, it is our duty to go through the right channel—namely, first the Spiritual Master, then Lord Caitanya, and then Krishna. So when we chant prayers, we do this, *Bande ham Sri Guru...* and gradually to the Goswamis, then to Lord Caitanya, and then to Radha Krishna. That is the praying system. Letter to: Harer Nama : 68-05-28

The songs composed by Srila Prabhupada (as featured near the beginning of *Songs of the Vaisnava Acaryas*) are also important for ISKCON devotees, and, as suggested by Srila Prabhupada, can be sung in kirtana like the songs of Bhaktivinoda Thakura and others.^{xx}

Many bhajanas are traditionally sung to specific tunes, that in many cases are different to the tunes widely known in ISKCON. Many of the tunes known in ISKCON in the West were composed by Visnujana Swami at Śrīla Prabhupāda's behest.^{xxi}

A common practice in singing bhajanas is to sing the first line of the first verse again after completing the song. In some songs, simply to sing the first line is insufficient. At least the second line is needed to make a complete sentence. For example, *je ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracur* means, "He who brought the treasure of love and was full of mercy...." The second line completes the stanza: "heno prabhu kotha gela, acarya thakura" "Where has such a great master as Srinivasa Acarya gone?" Similarly, "gaurangera duti pada, jara dhana-sampada",

“Whose property and wealth is the two feet of Lord Caitanya...” is completed by “se jane bhakati-rasa sara,” “he knows what is the essence of devotional mellows.”

Srila Prabhupada also authorized the chanting of slokas in kirtana. Suitable mantras are those beginning, *namo mahā-vadānyāya...*, *harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam...*, and so on.

There are many bona fide devotional songs in the regional languages of India that ISKCON devotees from such backgrounds may like to sing. For instance, the Hindi bhajanas beginning “Krsna jinika nama he” and “Jaya kesava kalimala hari” are acceptable. However, it is best to stick to known authorized songs of our own sampradaya. There may be philosophical mistakes in apparently devotional songs that are so subtle that even many senior devotees may not detect them.⁶

It is best to stick to the songs of our Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas, for they are meant to guide us gradually to the highest level of devotion. Until we reach that level, we should be cautious in selecting which bhajanas to sing, even from our own tradition. Many of the songs of our Gaudiya acaryas are written from a high level of realization beyond the comprehension of ordinary devotees. For instance, Srila Prabhupada instructed that the song with refrain “Jaya jaya deva hare” by Jayadeva Gosvami not be sung. (Letter to: Acyutananda 15 July, 1972) An exception to this standard is “Tulasi krsna preyasi,” a prayer expressing elevated sentiments that is sung daily in ISKCON temples.

Examples of unacceptable songs are (a) Mira Bhajanas, many of which go against the whole spirit of our sampradaya (as Mira places herself in the position of a direct lover of Krsna, without reference to Radharani); and (b) concocted commercial bhajanas sung by professionals for profit motive. Although some are quite tasteful, many can at best be considered semi-religious, semi-entertainment. Because such bhajana cassettes are sold indiscriminately from our temples, devotees naturally tend to accept them as bona fide, but often they are not. Commercially minded devotees are eager to record and distribute any nice sounding song, and in this way all kinds of things get spread. However, “We should not try to make a profit out of the Hare Krishna Mantra; then our spiritual enlightenment will be hampered.” (Letter to: Mukunda, 2 July, 1969)

Srila Prabhupada warned that,

This chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord, so that immediate effects can be achieved. As far as possible, chanting from the lips of nondevotees should be avoided. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects.^{xxii}

This is further explained as follows.

⁶ An example of this is given in Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta (Antya lila Ch. 5) The compositions of a poet from Bengal were much appreciated by many of Lord Caitanya's followers. Svarupa Damodara Gosvami, however, descried the latent Mayavada in them and rejected them.

One cannot offer prayers to the Lord with mundane words. One must become spiritually advanced by controlling the mind and senses. Then he can find suitable words to offer in prayers to the Lord. Quoting the following verse from the Padma Purana, Srila Sanatana Gosvami forbids us to sing any song not sung by authorized devotees.

*avaisnava-mukhodgiram
putam hari-kathamrtam
sravanam naiva kartavyam
sarpocchistam yatha payah*

The words or songs of a person not fixed in Vaisnava behavior, not strictly following the rules and regulations and chanting the Hare Krsna mantra should not be accepted by pure devotees. SB 6.16.33 purport

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that professional bhajana singers are chanting “money money”, not Hare Krsna. They may be musically appealing, but are spiritually dead. Commercial kirtana is fake because it is not meant wholly and solely for the glorification of Krsna. It is meant for titillating the ears with sense gratificatory sounds for making money.

I understand also, there was a Kirtana performance given by Sri Purna das. You have rightly remarked whether they are devotees. You are right. These people are professional singers. Krishna Kirtana is not for earning a livelihood. Krishna Kirtana is not meant for entertaining the public for demonstration of arts. It is dynamic service to the Lord. We do not therefore mind so much about the artistic presentation of Krishna Kirtana but we want to see how much a devotee is satisfying the Supreme Will. Letter to: Jadurani, 12 December, 1967

Sometimes popular professional singers are invited to perform at ISKCON functions, to attract the public to attend or for fund raising. Apparently Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed such performances, with some reservations. Such professional performances should not, however, be held before the Deities.

Commercial bhajanas should certainly not be played over the loudspeakers in ISKCON temples. Nor should devotees privately listen to them. The most important function of ISKCON centers is to disseminate purified sound vibrations, not to pollute the atmosphere with sounds of cheap entertainment.

Ākharas

Ākharas are lines added to songs for poetical effect. They are commonly used in Bengali kirtana to repeat or explain a point already made. They sometimes take the form of long poetical digressions. There are many standard ākharas for well-known Bengali songs. In ISKCON, only two simple ākharas are common: the lines gaurangera arotika sobha jaga jana mana lobha and sankha baje ghanta baje madhura madhura baje, sung in the Gaura-arati

kirtana. Some ISKCON devotees, especially from Bengal, sing ākharas for every line of the Gaura-arati song. However, as Srila Prabhupada wanted that chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa take up at least half of the arati kirtana, and as he did not like new innovations, it is suggested that we stick to the form approved by Srila Prabhupada.

Enthusiasm for Kirtana

Our only life and soul is Kirtana. Letter to: Kirtanananda, 14 July, 1968

So long our kirtana is alright there is no difficulty at all. Letter to: Rayarama, 30 January, 1967

An advanced devotee likes to dance and chant with similarly developed Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees. Adi 7.92 purport

Every kirtana should be an event. Kirtana should never be considered a drudgery—something that we attend just because we have to. Enthusiasm for kirtana is essential. Enthusiasm means not to avoid kirtana and, having come, to participate wholeheartedly. As it is offensive to be inattentive while chanting the holy names, devotees should be mentally as well as physically present in kirtana. They should get involved by carefully chanting and hearing the holy names—not just let their attention wander here and there. While chanting before the Deities, with great respect we should meditate on the holy names as non-different from Them.

Caitanya Caritamṛta relates that “As long as the devotees remained at Jagannātha Purī with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the pastime of saṅkīrtana was performed with great jubilation every day. CC Madhya 11.241 text

There is no reason why we also cannot have ecstatic kirtana every day. We should consider how fortunate we are to get the chance to join in kirtana, and how we can be benefited by participating with enthusiasm.

kali-kale nama-rupe kṛṣṇa-avatanama haite haya sarva jagat-nistara

In this age of Kali, the holy name of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-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. CC Adi 17.22

Kṛṣṇa is so kind that he has come in the form of His name to save us. “Everyone engaged in the practice of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra will be completely cleansed, from the core of his heart, and be saved from the cycle of birth and death.” (SB 7.6.1 purport)

There are innumerable quotes about the holy name, many of which are compiled in the book Sri Namamṛta. By studying these quotes and learning slokas about the holy names, we can remain enthused for kirtana, and help enthuse others. It is also essential to regularly discuss the glories of Kṛṣṇa-kirtana in our classes, and also informally among the devotees.

Without enthusiasm for chanting, all the do's and don't's about kirtana discussed herein will not help much. However, as in any service - cooking, Deity worship or whatever - enthusiasm in itself is not sufficient. We have to learn the techniques also.

Doing Enough Kirtana

This Krsna consciousness movement is principally chanting. 721123bg.hyd

It is very good news that Kirtana and all is going on nicely; that is our life and soul. And it will make us advanced. Letter to: Mukunda, 9 April, 1968

In the early days of our movement, the main engagement for most devotees was simply to go out on the streets all day to chant Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. Also, in the "early days," Srila Prabhupada used to hold kirtanas after morning class. Later, many different services were introduced as our movement expanded. Most devotees now only join in kirtanas at the prescribed temple programs. However, devotees should strive to do as much kirtana as possible.

In most ISKCON temples, there is an arati just after morning Bhagavatam class, so it is nice if devotees attend it and chant in kirtana before breakfast. Another relishable habit to develop is "singing the Deities to sleep" at the last arati of the day (sayana-arati). Where Radha-Krsna Deities are established, a soft, mellow rendering of "Jaya Radhe Jaya Krsna Jaya Vrndavana" is most suitable and pleasing. It is also nice, if devotees are free, for them to sing at the midday and afternoon aratis.

Even when devotees are traveling or in other circumstances when they might not be able to maintain a regular program of kirtan, they should not neglect to do kirtana daily. It is especially important that devotees recite the Gurvastakam every morning, even if quietly to themselves.

While driving, while traveling together on trains—wherever the opportunity arises, devotees can perform kirtana. It is a good habit to cultivate. Actually, there is no question of "doing enough kirtana." We cannot do enough. The point is that we should not limit ourselves to doing kirtana only within the temple schedule. We should always try to do more.

Chanting and dancing make one relieved of all material burdens. Letter to: Hamsaduta, 23 March, 1969

Musical Style: Mood, Speed, Rhythm, and Tone

Kirtana is prayer set to music. However, the music is not meant only as a background to the chanting. Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura writes in his *Madhurya Kadambini* (5) that persons of impure heart only experience pleasure from kirtana if it is pleasing to the ear and artistically sung. At the Mayapura festival in 1977, some devotees had organized a "kirtana competition." Groups of both local Bengali kirtanias and ISKCON devotees from centers around the world took turns doing short stints of singing and dancing. The idea was to encourage kirtana, and was received with much enthusiasm. Srila Prabhupada, however, let it

be known that he did not like it, and that was the last kirtana competition held in Mayapura.^{xxiii}

Purity is the force behind good kirtana. Musical arrangements are incidental. However, having nice music is important because Kṛṣṇa likes it, and it is the nature of the soul to enjoy.

And music can help uplift the consciousness when performed properly. Therefore our previous acaryas greatly developed the science of music to enhance the effect of kirtana. However, if we put more stress on the music than on the meaning of the song, we again miss the point.

The other musical instrument, if he plays his attention will be diverted to the musical instrument, not to chanting. “We have to see the melody, whether it is going on nicely.” But that is not good. Our concentration should be hearing Hare Kṛṣṇa. That is bhakti. 761226rc.bom

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura once wrote that “The delightful tune, time, cadence alone do not constitute the Hari-kirtan of the Gaudiya Math; those are found even in the performances of the gramophone or of harlots.” From *The Harmonist* Volume XXV, No. 1, June 1927

Kirtana that is musically pleasing can attract the mind, but kirtana that is real prayer reaches to the soul. Real kirtana can be performed by a devotee who is convinced that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose song is a fervent prayer to be engaged in His service. Conviction resounds in the voice of such a pure devotee and invokes the presence of Krishna as His name within the hearts of the kirtana participants.

The principle of chanting is to glorify the Lord and not to attract a crowd. If Krishna hears nicely then He will ask some sincere devotees to gather in such a place. Letter to: Subala, 12 November, 1967

Devotees should try to chant as Srila Prabhupada did—not mechanically, but with great devotional feeling. Srila Prabhupada’s voice is directly *golokera prema dhana harinama sankirtana*—the sound of the spiritual world.

Nevertheless, even the most sincere chanting is more attractive if performed with nice musical accompaniment. Best is to have both: sincerity and musical competence.

Chanting Hare Krishna does not require any artificial artistic sense, but still, if the procedure is presented rhythmically, then the people may be attracted more by the transcendental music. Letter to: Upendra, 1 June, 1968

The perfection of kirtana is achieved when the musical is conducted nicely and the prayerful mood of the devotees is genuine.

Perform kirtana very rhythmically and melodiously. Letter to: Mukunda, 11 June, 1968

Srila Prabhupada taught a kirtana style that was melodious and attractive, yet simple and easy to follow. As early as 1968, Srila Prabhupada wrote of training a kirtana party for stage performances.^{xxiv} The letters from this period reveal Srila Prabhupada's preference for kirtana that is musically pleasing and, most importantly, devotionally attractive. Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta describes how Srila Prabhupada carefully trained the devotees he was sending to London.

Prabhupada asked the three couples to remain with him in Montreal for a week or two, so that he could train them to perform kirtana expertly. Chanting Hare Krsna was not a theatrical performance but an act of devotion, properly conducted only by pure devotees—not by professional musicians. Yet if Prabhupada's disciples became proficient in their singing, Londoners would better appreciate Krsna consciousness. In the daily kirtana rehearsals, Prabhupada taught the devotees to chant Hare Krsna and other devotional songs, beginning with a slow tempo and building gradually.^{xxv}

Revatinandana Dasa describes a lecture Srila Prabhupada gave on kirtana.

He said a good kirtana lasts half an hour to forty minutes and the first half an hour is all slow and then it speeds up to a crescendo the last ten minutes. He liked the kirtana that was slow. Also in public programs whenever there were guests he almost always sang (sings standard Hare Krsna tune) or some similarly very simple melodies slowly and just gradually building to a crescendo. He didn't like harmonizing, and he didn't like melodic instruments during kirtana because the melodies of the instruments would detract from listening to the mantra; although he liked rhythm. Srila Prabhupada said that harmoniums and other melodic instruments are not meant for kirtana, as the ear will follow the music and be diverted from the holy names. Rhythm instruments are good, he said, because they increase the motivation to dance, and dancing in turn invokes devotion.

Following in the spirit of these instructions, there are several points of musical understanding that devotees in general, and kirtana leaders in particular, should be aware of. Kirtana conducted according to these guidelines will enhance the flow of bhakti towards Krsna. Conversely, if the kirtana is performed unenthusiastically, as a kind of entertainment or sport, or if it is musically unpleasing due to the devotees being musically inept (unable to properly follow the tune or rhythm), the effect of generating devotion will be stunted.

In general, kirtanas should begin slowly and develop smoothly. The leader should not let the kirtana run out of control. A good kirtana leader knows how to start a kirtana at a slow or slow to moderate tempo and gradually build it up to a steady or slightly faster speed. Or, he can start with steady tempo and keep it at that. Kirtana maintained at a steady tempo can go on for a long time without a break. A steady tempo is suitable for graceful dancing, and does not quickly exhaust the energy of the devotees. Satsvarupa Dasa Gosvami notes:

Srila Prabhupada didn't usually speed up the kirtana to a frenetic pitch, and then stop and start again. He gradually built up to a steady, medium-slow rhythm. This gave a

chance to enter into the kirtan and meditate on the chanting. The melody was simple, and he didn't change it. pps. 10-11, Prabhupada Meditations III

However, “slow-fast-stop-restart” kirtana is now common in ISKCON. Fast kirtana usually cannot be maintained for long, as the mrdanga players and devotees dancing quickly tire. Also, although fast kirtana can be stimulating and exciting, for periods of longer than a few minutes it does not sound as pleasant as kirtana at a steady tempo. So, when a fast tempo is reached, it is usually brought to a crescendo fairly soon. Then the kirtana is started again at a slower pace. This process of building-up kirtanas from slow to fast and then restarting slow should be done gradually, as Srila Prabhupada describes: ““In Bengal we have a style of kirtana where we bring it up slowly till it gets very fast and then they stop and start over and go slow again.” Jivananda Many stops and starts do not sound good. Another technique is that before the kirtana becomes uncontrollably fast, the leader changes the beat and tempo from fast back to steady.

Speed is usually connected with loudness. As the tempo increases, so does the volume. The rule is to follow the leader. The instruments should be played softly when the leader leads slowly, and gradually more strongly as the pace increases.

Some devotees equate “good kirtana” with “loud, fast, wild kirtana.” They only know two speeds: fast and very fast. Of course, we want kirtanas to be ecstatic—but not simply passionate. Kirtana does not have to be, and should not always be, fast, loud and heavy. Slow tempo kirtanas, focusing clearly on the holy names, have a special charm that is especially conducive to entering into absorbed meditation on the names. Unfortunately, such kirtanas are little known in our society.

Sometimes kirtanas are speeded up to such a fast pitch that it becomes impossible to pronounce the holy names. The whole purpose of kirtana—to glorify the names of God—becomes lost in a frenzy of banging and crashing. But kirtana is not a mundane activity meant for our amusement or taking out frustrations.

It is to be understood that when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted and danced, He did so by the influence of the pleasure potency of the spiritual world. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never considered the holy name of the Lord to be a material vibration, nor does any pure devotee mistake the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to be a material musical manifestation. CC Adi 7.95-96 purport

In some temples, energetic young devotees dominate the kirtanas, without considering that other devotees might sometimes prefer a more sedate offering of song to God. However, lower voltage devotees should not denigrate their more high-charged godbrothers for dovetailing their energy into the yuga-dharma. It is far better for kirtanas to be a little boisterous than dull and lifeless. Lively kirtanas help keep us inspired and are particularly powerful for driving out anarthas.

If kirtana is performed either unenthusiastically, or with enthusiasm but as a kind of entertainment or sport, it cannot be very pleasing to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, although Srila

Prabhupada encouraged energetic kirtanas, he also made it known that they should not be too wild and chaotic.

Kirtana is also devotional service, and should be done with a service attitude, praying, “Hare Kṛṣṇa—O Rādhā, O Kṛṣṇa, please engage me in your service.” We should not chant and dance in an egotistical way, to attract attention to ourselves. Consciously or unconsciously, we may be trying to impress others, including the opposite sex. The ethos of a rock musician as a hero, attractive to women, should especially be avoided. We should sing to please Kṛṣṇa, and for no other reason.

Srila Prabhupada once stopped a disciple’s showy kirtana.

At one of the ISKCON international festivals in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada rejected the singing of one of his disciples. The devotee had previously been a singer in a band, and his kirtanas were much appreciated by some devotees, especially those from his home temple. But when, with showy professionalism, he began leading the guru-puja in Prabhupada's presence, making the tune sound like a rock and roll ballad, Prabhupada didn't like it. He shook his head and indicated that someone else lead. The "great" kirtana singer was devastated by the rejection, another form of Prabhupada's mercy.^{xxvi}

Humility, not ostentatiousness, is the true mood for performing kirtana, as demonstrated by Lord Caitanya.

I never chanted and danced to make an artificial show. I dance and chant because I firmly believe in the words of My spiritual master...I deserve very little credit for these activities of chanting and dancing, for they are being done automatically by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. CC Ādi 7.95-96 purport

Devotees should be careful not to be influenced by saḥajīyā contaminations prevalent in modern Bengali kirtana, such as feigned shows of devotion and a highly affected style. Many Bengalis sing plaintively, as if their heart were about to break, and some of our Western devotees have successfully imitated this style. Some have even adopted the mannerisms and facial expressions of genuine Bengali saḥajīyas. However, affectedness and exhibitionism are definitely not wanted in kirtana. Although a little artistic flourish is not unexpected, excessive showiness is not good. Best is to come to the completely spiritual platform of service to the holy name, and forget all artificial, extraneous performances.

It is to be understood that when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted and danced, He did so by the influence of the pleasure potency of the spiritual world. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never considered the holy name of the Lord to be a material vibration, nor does any pure devotee mistake the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to be a material musical manifestation. Lord Caitanya never tried to be the master of the holy name; rather He taught us how to be servants of the holy name. If one chants the holy name of the Lord just to make a show, not knowing the secret of success, he may

at least sing quietly, so that they don't spoil the whole kirtana for everybody else. (The same applies to devotees who cannot sing in tune).

However, devotees with a lack of musical sense need not feel discouraged. They should still join in kirtanas, but in a restrained way so as not to disturb. Unless they measurably improve, they should not attempt to lead kirtanas.

There can be many moods in kirtana: Slow, grave and sweet, energetically exuberant, or even light-hearted transcendental fun. Caitanya-Caritamrta (Madhya 25.4) records that Paramananda Kirtaniya's funny chanting of Hare Krsna used to make Lord Caitanya laugh! Whatever mood we chant in, the basic spirit of kirtana is one of coming together to glorify Krsna.

Leading Kirtana

Leading kirtana is an important service. A good kirtana leader can uplift the temple atmosphere, help keep the devotees inspired and enthusiastic, and attract newcomers to participate in sankirtana. The key to leading inspired kirtanas is enthusiasm to glorify Krsna, which is the essence and very meaning of kirtana. Such enthusiasm is a symptom of spiritual advancement, and develops in one who seriously dedicates his life to Krsna by following the rules and regulations of devotional service. Enthusiasm born of the mode of passion can also make for a lively kirtana, but it will not have the same purifying effect as chanting born of real advancement.

Therefore Srila Prabhupada stressed that as far as possible, chanting should be heard from the lips of pure devotees of the Lord. A kirtana can be lively, sweet and musically integrated, but spiritually empty also if not sung by devotees who are consciously surrendered to Krsna. Hence, first preference should be given to advanced devotees to lead kirtana, and next to others competent to lead.

Along with enthusiasm and spiritual advancement, another good qualification to lead kirtana is to have a strong, clear voice. Also, a kirtana leader should have a feeling for raga (melody), tala (rhythm) and laya (tempo). This doesn't mean that he has to study music, but he should have some basic musical sense—he cannot be unsure of the tune he is singing, mixing up tunes, breaking the rhythm by coming in at the wrong times, or unable fit the words to the melody. Those devoid of such simple musical sense are advised not to lead kirtanas.

The kirtana leader should also know the words of the song he is singing and how to pronounce them properly. He should know the correct order of the lines of the song. Sometimes devotees sing the first half of a verse followed by the second half of another, leave out verses, or get them in the wrong order. Those who are not sure can have someone hold a songbook for them to see, but really the kirtana leader should know the song he is singing. If the devotee leading kirtan does sing a line or verse of a song out of sequence, the other devotees should not follow the mistake, but should sing the correct line or verse.

All participants should follow the kirtana leader, and not try to supersede him.

Prabhupada was present during a kirtana performed by his disciples in the Brooklyn temple. The mrdanga player had been practicing to learn complicated beats, and he was demonstrating his rapid and intricate abilities in the kirtana. But Prabhupada stopped the music and said to the drummer that he should follow the leader. Then he started the kirtana again, but it happened again and again Prabhupada stopped the kirtana and asked the drummer to follow the leader.^{xxxii}

Those following should not attempt to change the tune or tempo independently of the leader. Some devotees, consciously or unconsciously, play the instruments fast and loud and thus speed up kirtanas that they are not leading.

If, however, the kirtana leader is singing the wrong words, the wrong tune, or in an unauthorized manner, he should be corrected. If he is doing a really bad job, a devotee more senior than him may take over the leadership. However, as the general principle in kirtana is to follow the leader, it is best that only those competent enough to lead should attempt to do so.

Sometimes the devotee leading kirtana may ask one or more devotees to join him in leading. This is especially done in large kirtanas without amplification.

In big temples, where there are many devotees eager and capable of leading kirtanas, a roster may be made up so that they all get a chance. A roster is also useful for excluding devotees who indulge in deviant styles. On the visit of a senior devotee, the roster may be adjusted to let the senior devotee lead. In temples without roster systems, the seniormost devotees present should first be given the chance to lead.

If those more senior don't want to lead, they should indicate to others to do so. And after the conch is blown and devotees have offered their obeisances, someone should lead—not that everyone simply waits for someone else. In such a situation, someone—anyone—should start the kirtana, for the Deities should not be kept waiting.

Sometimes the opposite situation occurs. A devotee rushes his obeisances, or doesn't even offer them at all, and just jumps in and starts singing, to ensure that he will lead the kirtana. Such persons should know that they cannot please Krsna by leading kirtana without properly offering obeisances to Him first. Such "kirtana hogs" are usually only enthusiastic for kirtana if they are leading it. Their leading is for sense gratification, not for service. They want to put themselves in the center instead of Krsna. Their voice may be sweet, but their heart is not.

Comment: is the word "hogs" appropriate here?

In some kirtanas, all attention is centered on the lead singer. The Deities, whom the kirtana is meant for, seem to be almost forgotten. A really devotional kirtana leader directs attention towards the Deities and the holy names, not to himself.

Opportunities should be given to all devotees to lead kirtanas, at least from time to time, to encourage them to develop this important service. As mentioned above, Srila Prabhupada spent more than a week training devotees in kirtana before sending them to London. Following Srila Prabhupada's example, we should take the trouble to train devotees in this most central of all Krsna conscious activities. That means not only should all devotees be

encouraged to lead kirtanas, but if anyone has difficulty in learning some aspect of this service, the more knowledgeable devotees should help him. Even the less competent may be given a chance, for practice makes perfect. But those who are incorrigibly musically inept should simply join in the kirtana, and not try to lead it.

Still, for most devotees to lead a kirtana is not a very difficult thing.

It does not require any artificial musical knowledge or dancing knowledge. Out of your own ecstasy, you will dance, you'll chant. You don't require to study. Just like our playing of mrdanga. Nobody has gone to an expert mrdanga player to learn it. Whatever I play, I sing, I never studied under some expert teacher. But by practice, chanting, it may be melodious, it may be very nice or not. That doesn't matter. We are not concerned about that, whether it is appealing to the people or not. It will appeal; there is no doubt about it. But we don't require to divert our attention to these things. Simply because there is glorification of the Lord, it will be palatable. 690610SB.NV

But to lead a kirtana *well* is an art. A good kirtana leader personally tastes the nectar of the holy name, and helps others relish it also. He doesn't just stand with his eyes closed. He interacts with the other devotees, and encourages them to dance and chant enthusiastically.

Kirtana Techniques

Some techniques used by kirtana leaders to enliven the devotees are listed below:

- (1) To suddenly change the tempo from slow to fast.
- (2) The lead singer starts to sing the beginning of the maha-mantra while the other devotees are still singing the last part of the mantra. The lead singer simultaneously changes the tempo. This has an exciting effect, but is nevertheless not good. The maha-mantra should not be cut in on just to gain some musical effect.
- (3) To suddenly stop a fast kirtana and then again quickly start fast.
- (4) In a fast kirtana, to stop singing for some seconds so that only the instruments are heard, then again start singing. This technique is often combined with change of tempo, as mentioned in technique (2) above.
- (5) In a steady or fast kirtana, to gradually or suddenly stop the instruments so that only voices are heard or to reduce the tone of instruments and singing to very slight. This may go on even for a few minutes, accompanied by dancing. Then, at the indication of the kirtana leader, the instruments are suddenly brought back loud and strong.

Although not traditional, such techniques can add zest to kirtanas. However, if used often they may lose their stimulating effect.

How Loud Should Kirtana Be?

Lord Caitanya's kirtanas were often extraordinarily loud. It is described in Lord Caitanya's pastimes that "When the tumultuous vibration of sankirtana resounded, all good fortune immediately awakened, and the sound penetrated the whole universe throughout the fourteen planetary systems." (cc Madhya 11.217)

Srila Prabhupada recommended that chanting be performed very loudly.^{xxxii} However, loudness can also have deleterious effects. Regular exposure to loud sounds often gradually leads to deafness.^{xxxiii} This is a real danger, for most ISKCON kirtanas are, from the medical point of view, too loud.

Furthermore, if the sound of the instruments drowns out that of the singing, the whole purpose of kirtana—to hear and chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa—is lost. Some so-called kirtanas are simply bang-bang-bang-bang-bang. The voices are either almost or completely inaudible. In such so-called kirtanas, many devotees jump, dance, bang and shout but do not sing at all! These athletic performances may be good for letting out excess passion, but cannot be called kirtana - glorification of God. Passion is not ecstasy. Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "The drum should not be louder than the voice."^{xxxiv}

Amplification of kirtana is not always required.

For more than a month, Prabhupada has had to ask daily that devotees not use the microphone for performing kirtana: "They think that their voice becomes sweet from using it. Actually, they sound exactly like a raksasa."^{xxxv}

Proponents of super-loud kirtanas may cite that in Lord Caitanya's kirtana parties at Rathayatra eight men played mrdangas and thirty-two played kartalas.^{xxxvi} However, Bengali kirtana is generally sung in a high octave that can be heard even over the sound of many kartalas. Furthermore, Bengali kirtana is mostly played with fairly small kartalas (diameter approx. 6 cm.) that add a sweet chime to the singing, rather than drowning it out altogether. Another consideration is that traditionally, Bengali kirtana was generally conducted in the open air or in an open pavilion, so even if loud percussion instruments were used, the volume would not be increased by reverberation against walls.

Big kartalas are more suitable for outdoor kirtana than for inside, where the sound reverberates and amplifies. It is suggested that ISKCON leaders purchase small kartalas for use in their temples. This will improve the quality of kirtanas and protect the devotees' eardrums. When purchasing kartalas, each pair should be tested individually. They should have a sweet, resonant ring, not a dull clank.

What Are We Singing?

As we have committed ourselves to sing certain songs and mantras every day of our lives, it makes sense to learn what they mean! Srila Prabhupada said, "There is no need of understanding the language for chanting this maha-mantra." (Purport to Maha-mantra) But he never said there is no need to understand the language of the other prayers we sing.

And after learning the meanings, we have to consciously apply our minds and meditate on the import of what we are singing. Otherwise our chanting will become a ritual.

You cannot understand the meaning of the Indian songs, and simply parrot like chanting of these songs has no value. Letter to: Damodara Pandita, 17 July, 1976

Realization is more important than parrotlike chanting. SB 1.4.13 purport

Musical Instruments

Good mrdanga playing can really add zest to a kirtana. And the sound of two or more mrdangas expertly played together wonderfully pleases the heart and mind. Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings, mrdanga vadya, sunite mana/ abasara sada yace: "I always desire to hear the sound of the mrdanga." Srila Prabhupada also advised his disciples to hold mrdanga concerts. (Letter to: Dvarakesa, 29 September, 1976)

Advanced mrdanga playing is an art and a science that entails not only learning various beats, but knowing when to employ them, in accordance with the tempo set by the kirtana leader. For instance, increase of tempo calls for strong beats, especially on the male (large) side of the drum. Inexpert players sometimes trill away on the female (small) side when pounding on the male side is required.

It is good if some devotees become expert, but for our day to day kirtanas, a simple rhythm is sufficient. It is good to let those who are more expert play mrdanga in kirtana. Devotees who are not expert in playing mrdanga and kartalas should not try to play complex beats. Those who are learning to play mrdanga should do so at a time and place so that the Deities and devotees are not disturbed.

Mrdanga players should also sing. Some mrdanga players put all their concentration into maintaining a complex rhythm and thus neglect to sing. But it is better if they play a more simple beat and sing also.

Mrdanga players should be given enough space to move their arms.

After the lead singer, the mrdanga player is the main leader in the kirtana. All the kartala players are meant to follow him. Mrdanga and kartalas should be played together harmoniously to enhance the transcendental sound vibration of the holy names. Kartalas should be chimed sweetly, like gopis' ankle bells, especially when the tempo is slow. They should not be clanked together like dustbin lids.

Kartalas should be strung with cloth sufficiently wide (at least 1.5cm) that it does not cut into the finger, and sufficiently long (at least 20cm) that it can be wrapped several times around the fingers for firm grip. The cloth should always be clean, therefore it should be washed or changed from time to time. Colored ribbons are ideal, being attractively colorful, thin enough to be easily strung through the kartala hole, and also strong. Each kartala should be strung on a separate cloth. If two kartalas are strung on the same cloth, free movement of the hands is inhibited.

For kartala playing, Srila Prabhupada taught and usually played a simple 1-2-3, although he did sometimes play a slightly more complex rhythm. Bengali kirtanias know how to do all kinds of wonderful things with a simple pair of kartalas, but for our day to day kirtanas in ISKCON, 1-2-3 is quite sufficient.

Sometimes in a kirtana no-one takes up mrdanga or kartalas, except the devotee leading. This is not proper. Best is if, even before the kirtana begins, devotees have the instruments ready to play. Otherwise the kirtana is often disjointed at the beginning, as devotees gradually get instruments and join in one by one.

Use of Other Instruments

Caitanya-caritamṛta describes that in Lord Caitanya's sankirtana, the only instruments used were mrdangas and kartalas.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu, simply this karatāla, khola, that's all. In those days... Of course, there was no harmonium, but many stringed instruments were there—Sitar, esārāja—but these things were not used. 761226rc.bom

Later, other instruments such as harmoniums, violins and ektars were introduced into popular Bengali kirtana. To restore kirtana to an act of worship rather than a musical performance, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura restricted the use of instruments to mrdangas and kartalas only. Srila Prabhupada upheld this standard.

Regarding instruments for temple kirtanas, kartala and mrdanga are sufficient. There is no need of other instruments. Letter to: Rupanuga, 2 February, 1975

Practically we are not concerned with the instruments. They are used sometimes to make it sweeter, but if we divert our attention for using the instruments more, that is not good. Generally kirtana is performed with mrdanga and kartalas, but if somebody is an expert instrument player, he can be admitted to join sankirtana. We can accept everything for Krishna's service, but not taking the risk of diverting attention to any other thing which will hinder our Krishna Consciousness. That should be our motto, or principle. Letter to: Jadurani, 26 May, 1969

Srila Prabhupada even said that it is not necessary to have any instruments in kirtana.

Anyone can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. There is no need for instruments, although Caitanya Mahāprabhu introduced the mṛdaṅga (drum) and karatālas (cymbals). Otherwise, clapping in itself is sufficient. TLK Vs. 42 purport

This does not mean that instruments are unimportant, but stresses the importance of chanting over that of musical accompaniment.

Srila Prabhupada specifically mentioned that he did not want harmoniums used in kirtana: "The harmonium may be played during bhajan if there is someone who can play melodiously. But it is not for kirtana and arati." Letter to: Bahudak, 11 January, 1976 This instruction has

come to be understood that harmonium can be used for sitting-down bhajanas, but not in standing kirtanas. Despite this well-known instruction, some devotees still play harmonium in arati and other kirtanas. It may sound nice, but it is not what Srila Prabhupada wanted.

Srila Prabhupada was not, however, completely against the use of harmoniums. He was himself an expert harmonium player, and recorded many bhajanas with harmonium accompaniment. Undoubtedly, harmonium accompaniment enriches the musical effect of kirtana. That may be why Srila Prabhupada cautioned against its use, lest we become overly concerned with the musical effect.

In the early days of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada allowed all kinds of instruments in kirtana. In the first temple at 26 2nd Avenue, guests even played on the innards of an old upright piano (Srila Prabhupada Lilamrta II. 146). There was no mrdanga, so Srila Prabhupada played a bongo drum. This was in accordance with Bhaktivinoda Thakura's advice: (REF)(any instrument according to local use). At the Honolulu temple, Srila Prabhupada also participated in kirtanas where the devotees played electric guitars and bass guitars. Even later on, Srila Prabhupada allowed the use of tamboura and other instruments—not in the regular temple kirtanas, but in preaching programs, festivals, etc., as an attraction for the public: "Sometimes we do use [other instruments] to attract, but it is not required." 761226rc.bom

In other words, he allowed stringed instruments only under special circumstances.

Stringed instruments are Vedic, but the real Vedic instrument is mrdanga and kartala. Anyway, you have to do according to the time and circumstances if you use these other instruments. So you have got my approval and you can go on. Letter to: Bahudak, 10 November, 1975

Once Bhurijana Prabhu asked Srila Prabhupada,

"We have been holding kirtans using guitars. Is that all right?"

"Kirtan means khol (mrdanga) and kartala. That's all."

"But it is so difficult to preach in Hong Kong. And the Chinese people like kirtanas better when they are soft and with guitars. They don't like loud kirtanas with many instruments."

Prabhupada acceded to my pushing and gave us permission to also use guitars in our kirtans along with the standard khol and kartala.

Bhurijana Prabhu later comments that he feels that Prabhupada didn't really desire the use of guitars, but submitted because the idea was forcefully presented to him. MGM p.201

If outside guests occasionally bring musical instruments like guitars and want to play on them during kirtan, it is probably best to encourage them to play along, if they can follow the tune. This may be especially at Sunday feasts programs, that are like an open house where maximum participation is encouraged with least formality. Kirtana is our religion, and it is

good to encourage all to participate, as long as the chanting goes on without too much disruption.

Jhāñja (“whompers”) and gongs are not mentioned in Caitanya-caritamṛta, but have become accepted in the Bengali kirtana tradition. They were widely used in ISKCON in Srila Prabhupada’s personal presence. Srila Prabhupada often played a gong while chanting Jaya Radha Madhava before class. Among gongs, flat brass ones give the best sound: sweet and chiming, like a bell. The temple bell may also be pulled in time with the kirtan. Gongs, jhajhas and bells are all loud instruments, and should be played with care, so as not to drown out the sound of the singing, as described above.

Srila Prabhupada also mentioned that “Blowing of the conch shell and horns is very nice [in kirtana].” Letter to: Hamsaduta, Himavati, 3 March, 1968

Care of Instruments

Bengali Vaisnavas venerate their instruments as part of the Lord’s paraphernalia. Before starting a formal kirtana, they worship them with flowers, sandalwood paste and prayers—or at least respectfully touch them to the head. A professional Bengali mrdanga player chooses a good instrument, then looks after it and keeps it for years. Despite traveling constantly under rough conditions, he makes sure his khol (another name for mrdanga) does not break. He cannot afford to smash and buy drums at whim.

The resonant boom of a good mrdanga adds life to kirtanas, so every temple should have at least one good mrdanga. Srila Prabhupada said that we should have good quality mrdangas and that they should always be covered for protection. (cf. 761104RC.VRN and Lilamṛta III.63) Each mrdanga should be purchased with a cover, which should then always remain on the drum. Clay mrdangas are fragile and should be handled carefully. They should be carried properly (see diagram) by conscientious devotees. Srila Prabhupada discussed care of mrdangas in 761104RC.VRN

If the large (“purusa”) end of a mrdanga becomes loose and flat, its tone may be restored by beating. Better than beating the edge of the mrdanga on the floor to revive its tone is to beat it with the type of hammer specially made for that purpose, or on a wall. Exposing to heat is also effective, but must be done carefully, as excessive heat will cause the skin of the drum to rupture. It is safer to slowly heat a mrdanga head in the sun or near to a radiator than by a naked flame.

If a high-quality, expensive mrdanga is purchased, it is best if it is handled and played only by experienced devotees. For general use, (at least outside India where clay mrdangas are not easily available) it is best to use fiberglass or other unbreakable mrdangas. Although they do not sound as good as properly tuned quality clay mrdangas, they are more or less devotee-proof.

After a kirtana, the instruments should not be left scattered here and there, but put away tidily. It is best not to put them directly on the floor. A mrdanga stood on its end on a cold

floor will lose its tone. An arrangement can be made for mrdangas to hang on the wall in the temple room, or to sit in specially made slots. (see diagrams)

After using a harmonium, the bellows should be clipped closed, and any keys briefly pressed to release the air inside. If this is not done, the pressure of trapped air will strain and eventually lead to bursting of the air sac.

Care of the Voice

Singing too high or loud can lead to voice strain. Strained voices require rest. Pushing a strained voice can lead to permanent damage, as has already happened to several devotees in our movement.

In both Indian and Occidental music, singers are trained not to strain their voice box. A trained singer can sing for hours daily, even in old age. A trained singer also knows when to rest his voice. Unfortunately, although ours is a singing movement, most of our devotees are unaware of these things.

If a devotee needs to rest his voice, he may also attend kirtana, but should sing very softly or not at all. Good kirtana leaders are often pushed to lead even if their voice needs a rest. But they should refrain from doing so.

Long Kirtanas

Long kirtanas blissfully help devotees to become deeply absorbed in the holy names. When Lord Caitanya was residing at Puri, He would hold kirtana for at least four hours each evening.^{xxxvii} And for one year in Mayapura, He would perform kirtana during the night.^{xxxviii}

Following Lord Caitanya's example, some devotees like to organize all-night kirtanas. However, this is inevitably followed by missing the morning program. It is better to follow the standard program of hearing and chanting given us by Śrīla Prabhupāda than to introduce a substitute. Long kirtanas may be held in the day so as not to render the participants incapable of taking part in the morning program that Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his followers to attend every day.

Long kirtanas are certainly wonderful, yet they are best planned in advance, as devotees have various responsibilities and temple schedules should be adhered to. For instance, a kirtana leader may feel like spontaneously prolonging a guru-puja kirtana throughout the time allotted for class, but without consideration of the devotees' need to hear class or of the devotee who was prepared to give class.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's instituted continuous nonstop chanting—permanent 24 hour kirtanas—in his Mayapura and Vrndavana temples. Sometimes in other centers also, continuous kirtanas are held for some days, especially if devotees wish invoke the Supreme Lord's protection from a certain danger or inauspiciousness that has arisen. It would be wonderful to have continuous chanting in all ISKCON centers, but lack of manpower may render it impractical in most, as noted by Śrīla Prabhupāda.^{xxxix} Important in Bengali Vaishnava culture are festivals of nonstop chanting that last at least a full day, or three days, or even seven days.

Such festivals (known as *nama-yajna*—“sacrifice of chanting the holy names”—although actually any kirtana is a *nama-yajna*, not just these festivals) are now sometimes organized in ISKCON centers throughout the world. Such continuous kirtanas are performed by groups of devotees in shifts.

In the spirit of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s first kirtanas in New York, devotees sometimes organize “Stay High Forever” kirtanas. These consist of chanting only the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra with only one melody—Prabhupada’s simple tune^{xl}—for at least three hours. Otherwise it’s pull-out-the-stops, hang-up-the-rules. No limitations on types of instruments, changing keys, dancing, etc.

Festivals provide good opportunities for devotees to soak themselves in the nectar of kirtana. Festivals are often celebrated with hours and hours of kirtana. At such times, devotees who are generally otherwise engaged can take a deep bath in the holy names.

NAGARA KIRTANA

Nagara kirtana means public group chanting (*nagara* means “town”). In our movement, public chanting is often called harinama, an abbreviation of harinama sankirtana. This abbreviation was introduced to distinguish public chanting from book distribution. Book distribution is also called sankirtana, which it certainly is, but the generally accepted usage of the word *sankirtana* in Gaudiya Vaisnava parlance is “group chanting”. To call public chanting *harinama* is also misleading, because *harinama* simply means “the name of God”, and does not specifically refer to public chanting. Thus it is better to use the Bengali term *nagara kirtana*, or *nagara sankirtana*.

Regardless of what we call it, nagara kirtana is of immense value to the devotees who participate and all others who see or hear it. Nagara kirtana was Lord Caitanya’s principal preaching method. It is also the best way to keep our movement prominent in the public’s minds. Blissful chanting parties show people that our movement is active and alive with the color and joy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

It is essential that nagara kirtana be a regular function of every temple and Nama Hatta group. Nagara kirtana should be held as often as possible with as many devotees as possible. The more devotees present, the better.^{xli} In important cities like New York, London and Paris, where there are always thousands of visitors from all over the world, the preaching effect of nagara kirtana is immeasurable. Ideally, such cities should have all day, every day chanting parties. It is also nice to go to small towns and villages and to residential area in towns with our kirtana parties, benedicting people where they least expect it. But even if devotees go in the same area every day, that is also perfect.

The sankirtana party should be festive. The devotees should be dressed nicely--no torn dhotis, odd socks or socks with holes. Śrīla Prabhupada suggested that devotees wear silk turbans on harinama sankirtana (quoted by Jaya Pataka Swami). Yellow bundis (Indian tie-up shirts) kept especially for nagara kirtana parties, can be used by male devotees, both married and unmarried, to give a uniform effect. Ideally, the men should have shaved heads,

and certainly should not have stubby faces. A special touch is using heavy ankle bells specifically made for dancing (available in India).

All devotees should have fresh tilaka. Deity prasada flower garlands add to the color. Re-usable silk garlands may also be kept especially for nagara kirtana. Karatalas are best shined and tied with clean, colorful ribbons. Flags and festoons with pictures of Srila Prabhupada, Krsna etc., or banners with the maha mantra, all add to the pageantry. For creating a highly festive mood, devotees can dress in costumes and be made up as Gaura and Nitai, Radha and Krsna, Narada Muni, and so on.

The idea of introducing Panca-tattva in the kirtana party was also contemplated by me. Not only that, we have to prepare different dresses for Radha and Krishna, and Their eight confidential associates, the sakhis. Sometimes you have to dress somebody as Nrsimhadeva and Prahlada. In this way, we shall have varieties of show along with the kirtana. Letter to: Hamsaduta, 4 March, 1968

Yes, if you like, you can also arrange for costumes and wigs. One boy may be dressed as Lord Caitanya, another as Nityananda, as well as Gadadhara, Advaita with white beard and Srivasa with shaven head. Letter to: Hamsaduta, Himavati, 3 March, 1968

The kirtana party should be kept in together and in order--not stragglng here and there. Preferably, a megaphone should be used. Devotees can also blow conch shells. Dancing should be harmonious, graceful and aesthetic. It is better that the dancing does not get wild in the public view.

There should always be some attractive sweet prasada, preferably in packets, for free distribution. Handbills with the maha-mantra, an invitation to our nearest center, and perhaps a little philosophy, can also be distributed for free. Distributors of books and Back to Godhead magazines should go along with the kirtana party.

Even without so many arrangements, and even if there are not many devotees, devotees should still try to go out. Even three devotees or two, or even one, can chant in public.^{xlii} All that is needed is enthusiasm. At least people will hear the holy names and be benefited.

For public kirtana, Srila Prabhupada approved of chanting Sri Krsna Caitanya etc., the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, and "Govinda jaya jaya". (told to Visnujana Swami—related by Mahamantra dasa). It is best that we mostly chant the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. That is what the public expects of us, and what we want to familiarize them with. Śrīla Prabhupāda approved of slokas, such as those from Sri Isopanisad and Bhagavad-gita, being chanted in public kirtanas.^{xliii} As in all kirtanas, we should start with the Srila Prabhupada pranama-mantra. If demons disturb the sankirtana party, devotees can invoke the protection of Lord Nrsinghadeva by chanting the prayers to Him.⁷

Comment: the footnote states: "Nagara kirtana has been dealt with in more detail in *The Harinama Manual*, by Indradyumna Swami." Check to see if it has been published.

⁷ *Nagara kirtana* has been dealt with in more detail in *The Harinama Manual*, by Indradyumna Swami.

Other Points

It is best to sing each line of “Sri Guru Carana Padma” twice, not once; otherwise it is finished too quickly.

In kirtana, devotees not playing instruments should clap their hands, join them in respect or hold them above their heads. They should not cross their hands, hold them behind their backs, or keep them in their pockets. (see diagrams)

Unless devotees have severe health problems, they should not sit during standing kirtanas. This is especially true of arati kirtanas.

Conversations should not be held in the middle of kirtanas. Anything that has to be said can be said later. If necessary, those needing to speak urgently can go away from the kirtana, say what they have to say, and come back. To go on talking during kirtana constitutes the offense of inattentiveness to the holy name, and disturbs the other devotees. If done in front of the Deities, it is also an offense to Them.

Kirtana in arati should continue until the conch has been blown at the end. Only then should the kirtana finish and the prema-dhvani be said—not before.

It is best not to eat substantially before engaging in kirtana. Singing and dancing on a full stomach is neither healthy nor comfortable.

Chant Hare Krsna and be happy!

Comment: Type in from p.4 section 2 of kirtana transcription. (Can't find. Try in Baroda) REMIND ME

ⁱ Siksastaka 2

ⁱⁱ From Visvanatha Cakravarti and Jiva Gosvami's commentaries on SB 10.33.8

ⁱⁱⁱ Told to the author by Jagannatha Ballabha Pattnaik, an Oriya devotee who had come to take darsana of Srila Prabhupada and who noted the incident.

^{iv} Told by Janananda dasa. Çréla Prabhupāda said this in 1977 in London.

^v Told by Bhima Dasa

^{vi} Letter to: Syamasundara -- Los Angeles 25 February, 1970

^{vii} The Nectar of Devotion -- Vāndāvana, November 13, 1972

^{viii} Morning Walk -- April 8, 1975, Māyāpur

^{ix} Morning Walk -- November 17, 1975, Bombay

^x Heard by Bhakti Vikasa Swami who was present in the kirtana.

^{xi} Told by Srutakirti dasa

^{xii} ===== REF. Çré Caitanya-caritāmāta, Madhya-lélā 20.102 -- Baltimore, July 7, 1976

^{xiii} ===== REF. Room Conversation with Yoga Student -- March 14, 1975, Iran

^{xiv} C.f. Morning Walk -- March 6, 1974, Mâyâpura

^{xv} SB 8.5.25

^{xvi} Letter to: Syamasundara -- Los Angeles 25 February, 1970

^{xvii} In his "Memo to: North American GBC members and temple presidents, re: Bugs in ISKCON liturgy," dated April 8, 1992. This essay is in a similar vein to Harikesa Swami's article and, for the sake of brevity, has not been included here.

^{xviii} Lecture -- San Francisco, April 2, 1968

^{xix} TD 1 pps.530-1

^{xx} Letter to: Jayasacinandana -- Mayapur 8 February, 1976

^{xxi} C.f. Radha-Damodara Vilasa 1, p. 141

^{xxii} Kâñëa Consciousness, the Topmost Yoga System, Ch. 6

^{xxiii} Told by Hari Sauri Prabhu

^{xxiv} Letter to: Hamsaduta -- Los Angeles 22 January, 1968

^{xxv} SPL 29

^{xxvi} PN

^{xxvii} Ādi 7.95-96

^{xxviii} Told by Tejiyas dasa

^{xxix} Told by Revatinandana Dasa

^{xxx} Told by Harikesa

^{xxxi} PN 1.22

^{xxxii} SB 7.5.23-24

^{xxxiii} As explained by Jayadvaita Swami in his essay, *Noise-Induced Hearing Loss*.

^{xxxiv} PN 1.22

^{xxxv} TKG'S Diary, page 149

^{xxxvi} C.f. Cc. Madhya 11.216

^{xxxvii} The Nectar of Devotion -- Vândâvana, October 23, 1972

^{xxxviii} C.f. Ādi 17.34

^{xxxix} C.f. Letter to: Bali-mardana: -- Vrindaban 5 September, 1974

^{xl} As heard on cassettes recorded in that era.

^{xli} C.f. The Perfection of Yoga (Chapter 3)

^{xlii} C.f. Letter to: Ravindra Svarupa -- Bombay 5 January, 1973

^{xliii} C.f. Letter to: Yamuna, Gurudasa -- Los Angeles 7 July, 1970