

A close-up photograph of a woman in a red sari looking down at a book. A man's hand is visible, pointing to a page in the book. The background is dark and out of focus.

Sankirtan Manual

Jagannatha Mishra Dasa

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Leanpub

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Philosophy

Reasons to go out on book distribution

- To please Srila Prabhupada.

yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo

yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi

dhyāyan stuvāms tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam

vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam

“By satisfaction of the spiritual master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes satisfied. And by not satisfying the spiritual master, there is no chance of being promoted to the plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I should, therefore, meditate and pray for his mercy three times a day, and offer my respectful obeisances unto him, my spiritual master.”

- Present KC to a large number of people.

- Occupy people directly in devotional service.

- For your own purification.

- To create auspiciousness in society.

- To create spiritual atmosphere in temple, preaching center or home.

- Remember, the public evaluates Srila Prabhupada and the entire parampara on your contact.

- Think of your sankirtan as a conference that people assisted and payed for.

Consciousness

Spiritual Strenght

You only need to maintain some spiritual strength by having a regular morning program.

You are, so to say, “forced” to be serious in your spiritual practices cause no warrior wants to go to war without a proper shield.

That is the most important part of the whole operation: chant at least 16 rounds of japa pronouncing and hearing properly and 1 hour reading Srila Prabhupada’s books. The quality of your day will be manifested literally from the quality of your japa.

Technique

Going out for the first time

An easy start can be going with a seasoned book distributor and repeating exactly what he/she says, and when you see some result with time, you adapt your own style and mantra.

Time quota / Books quota

Neither, the best is a combination like 100 books or 4 hours, what comes first.

Sale the books on their own merit

Always find and choose some nice statements from Srila Prabhupada and sale the book on their strength.

Begin your day

Just before beginning your book distribution day, pray to Srila Prabhupada to give you inspiration and strength.

While on sankirtan

- Meditate how you are servant of people.

- Chant between persons.
- Read a few lines of the book.

That will enhance your service spiritual quality.

Tips

Wait for the people to come from your back, so that they are not confronted directly and get scared.

How to stop people

Call their attention without persecuting or going after them, like you would do asking for street directions. Once you have their attention, ask them a question so that you can place the book in their hands “Are you local?” type. Whatever the answer, place the book in their hands. Do not say the actual mantra before that, it is waste of time.

Mantras

This sequence has to be is quick, but not rushed:

1. Present yourself (e.g. yoga students), talk about a campaign we are doing, distributing the books
2. Talk about benefits of the book Talk a little about the book, a few seconds is enough - most important is that they can see there is something in the book for them;

3. Ask for a donation, directing with a minimum price that should be a little more than usual cause majority of people they give less than asked. Clearly stating a minimum, they have an idea, and wait for their answer. If they doubt, you can talk a little about something about themselves and repeat asking for a donation. Do not yield too easily when they want to return the book back;
4. Close the interaction with card and nice words.

Whatever the outcome, always close the interaction with some nice words and an invitation card.

Selling paraphernalia

If you have some paraphernalia like incense, stickers, etc., offer it to them when they clearly refuse the book, and there is no way they will get the book, then quickly acknowledge their negative and give them the paraphernalia asking for any donation they can, this time no minimum donation or further explanation given. This way you get the max of the exchange.

Do not sell paraphernalia only, you have to put in the line the same energy, but without the book's mercy.

Sankirtan for grhastas

So, you want to serve Krishna and at the same time need to maintain yourself and/or your family nicely?

What better way is there than book distribution?

In this section we are giving you practical hints, coupled with all the other information in this book will result in a proven method to do it.

Budget sample

Lets first make your monthly budget. Say that you need US\$ 750 for your expenses You can buy medium and small books (Isopanisad, Perfection of Yoga, Coming Back, Higher Taste, Chant and Be Happy, etc) for approx. \$0.50 and sale them for an average of \$2 (that means sometimes you get \$1 donation, sometimes \$3 or more). So to make \$750 you need to sale 500 books in a month That is 25 books daily from Monday to Friday.

25 books x \$2 = \$50 x 20 days = \$1000 less \$250 BBT price = \$750 profit

So, Monday to Friday 25 small books for \$2 each and there you are! \$750 month.

Now on top of that I am using a technique to enhance the profit. When the person definitely do not want the book, but is friendly, I give a sticker and ask for a donation. You already stop the person, broke the ice and is very easy that they take the sticker. In this way, you can do another \$20 profit a day to help pay the BBT cost.

I am playing here with easy to do figures and goals, but you can increase them as you grow confident.

Remember to keep money always aside specifically to buy the books upfront from the BBT. Avoid at all costs spending that money on anything else.

Logistics

Workshop structure

If you want to organize a sankirtan workshop, this is a nice structure:

- Day One

Theory, techniques and theater

- Day Two

Practice going out in a relaxed way with instructor by the side.

- Day Three

Discuss about experiences on the field. Doubts, problems, successes.

You can also do it in two days, namely Theory in the morning, going out in the afternoon and Discussing next day.

Variety of books stored as Deities, in their own nice place.

You need a variety of books in stock and a nice place (exclusive if can be, as they are Deities) to store them.

Location

Choose a downtown location preferably where the shops and banks are. Look for the small streets affluent to the main one and work there, in this way, you go unnoticed in the main street and you avoid the rush.

Invitation cards

This the most important preaching item apart from the books themselves: invitation cards. An invitation can be a simple card with the word “Invitation”, telephone and address and a short description of activities. Each person contacted, especially on sankirtan, must be given a card. All temple devotees should carry always a few cards.

Numbers and objectives (book keeping)

Remember to keep money always aside specifically to buy the books upfront. Avoid at all costs spending that money on anything else.

Results (long term are more important)

We do not need to say half truths or strange lines to distribute. Better to sale the books on its merit and explain (if asked) what the donation is for.

Example

Explain about Science Self Realization that “is a compendium of letters, conferences and articles on very interesting transcendental subjects”.

If asked “what is the donation for?” I say “thank you for asking this question, because it is important that you know how your money is being used”. “part of the money is for paying for the book and the rest is for my maintenance, cause it is my occupation”. Or something like that...

People appreciate the truth, that keeps your principles intact and you only get strengthened and able to do the service on the long run. There is no need to be money minded. As long as you keep this direction, you will see how the books go out and the lakhs in, fulfilling material and spiritual needs at the same time.

You will be enlightened and joyful and at the same time keep your mind free of anxiety.

Frequent Questions about Book Distribution

People go away in the donation part

People go away when hearing the “donation” part. That happens if in your mantra, you make a difference between the presentation, the book and the donation part. Make it all the same importance. Actually make the donation part the least important, but at the same time mark very clearly what you expect from them. When asking for donation look at their eyes while doing it and then be silent.

No proper cash for books ratio

You have to tell them a minimum donation which has to be a little more than what they actually give... cause people almost always gives less that what you tell them.

Little distribution

Reasons can be spacing out between people, talking too much with every person, bringing too few books to the field.

Is sankirtan only for brahmacaries?

As long as you are conducting a brahminical simple life, does not matter if you are grhasta.

I am not so advanced to go out and preach

In sankirtan we put in motion the order of uttama adhikari HDG Srila Prabhupada, that's all. And by his order we are engaged in helping his intimate devotional service to his spiritual master and Krishna. Essentially we are kanishtas performing successfully a madhyama activity by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada.

Must we find out if the person is eligible for a book?

The argument that we should choose or try to know who is eligible for the book is dropped simply by knowing that many times the person who buys the book is not the person who will benefit from reading it but another person who will see that book once its out.

Of course everything is connected: both the person who buys the book has a benefit and the person who does not buy it but reads it too.

You do not know and can not know who is going to buy the book. We can not because it is a personal decision among the soul and the Supersoul; That relationship is very intimate and everything happens in fractions of a second when you tell the mantra and the person decides.

One can only try to be the best vehicle, the best means to make that happen as many times as possible and with as many people as possible. We have to try it with everyone who has a certain kindness to stop and listen.

Some people have a certain piety and buy the book and there are those who are a little more advanced and read it. It may be the same person but many times it is not.

That is precisely the beauty of Krishna consciousness that benefits everyone no matter what state they are in.

The supposed problem of knowing who is eligible is solved immediately when you apply the appropriate technique to stop people and to show them the book. You have the answer in seconds.

In other words, if we try to stop everybody with the right technique, it quickly sorts out if the person is ready for the book or not. Your judgment is used how to present nicely to facilitate Paramatma.

Your judgment must be constant, but of yourself, your attitude, your motivation and your focus. Then the right words will come out of you to influence even the ones that are not 'fit' from the point of view of logic.

How can we avoid losing energy and enthusiasm while stopping the wrong people?

The main purpose of sankirtan is to stop as many people as possible, say the mantra and wait for their decision. You have to do it in an intelligent way and using the right technique and focused energy.

For example, one does not go after people, force people to stop, do not try to evaluate the person spiritually, or engage in philosophical discussions during sankirtan. Those are the energy suckers. There is a negativity and a natural rejection that we have to face and it is part of the activity. That is solved by being spiritually strong.

We should try to stop everybody with the right technique, then there is no "becoming fried", just the austerity needed to perform your service which in turn is made possible by a good sadhana. When you distribute in the mode of goodness, you ask people to stop and then wait for their reaction.

We can't avoid the austerity to receive the Nos, but unnecessary anxiety is avoided with spiritual program and correct techniques. But some anxiety will be there sometimes and the sense of helplessness is actually part of the process, when you HAVE to depend and

cry for help to Krishna.

Regarding someone being rude or insulting you have no business even being there listening. You go away and continue your service. That is sometimes unavoidable and will happen even if you are not trying to stop the person sometimes.

We do not beg people to at least touch the book... that is insane. You do your duty with the appropriate technique, you don't have to beg anything. They will at least touch the book, at least stop to listen. If we believe scripture that means this person has begun his devotional service.

Externally we are there to distribute the books, but it works on more ways than we know. Atmosphere is cleansed by the only act of being out there with the books, people getting in touch even slightly that means Krsna starts taking care of them directly.

That is why the demons don't even want to approach you or to touch the book. They instinctively know how it works. We are not concerned and have no power on WHO is the worthy recipient, we just do our service nicely.

I am 38 years on sankirtan and I don't have any trauma by people telling me NO. And that has happened probably hundreds of thousands of times. It's part of my purification and trying to become humble and a sure sign that the philosophy in the books is exactly right.

But I cannot ascertain how one is going to judge who you have to call and who you won't. You are actually playing controller in that case, and that will be the end of your book distribution career in time. Lord Caitanya will not allow us to become judge because even He is not acting in that capacity. Eventually the spiritual potency and Krishna's help will abandon you.

We have no business in pre selecting who we are going to try to stop, and some bad words or disdain is something that does not affect you provided you have your spiritual program in place. In fact

it is the price we have to pay to try to stop everyone and probably our only austerity worth of mentioning in elevated spiritual circles.

Must we engage in philosophical discussion while doing sankirtan to decide on which platform the person is?

As I have already explained in another point, the philosophical discussion and the evaluation of the person have nothing to do with the activity of sankirtan. There is an evaluation, but it is done to discern the best way to encourage him/her to buy the book. We are not trying to convince philosophically anyone when we are on sankirtan.

Book distribution is to distribute books not to engage philosophically. You can always politely invite the person to the temple to discuss. One way of depleting yourself very quickly of spiritual energy and feeling bad in sankirtan is loosing time in debates while the books are in the bag waiting to be distributed.”

Books are tossed in trash and that's bad

If we distribute the books in the mode of passion for personal results, through mental strength and tricks, then the persons are left with the sense they have been cheated and the book can end in the trash or worse.

We practically solve that by distributing in the mode of goodness which means you let the people choose. If they feel they have chosen to get the book they are not going to throw it away. If you distribute the book correctly they will not end in the garbage can, cause you have given the person the choice.

Having said that, it is sometimes unavoidable that some books end in the trash can. Even that's fine: so many devotees have been made

by finding a book in the trash.

Only the very prepared mode of goodness people are the recipients of the book

Experience shows that if you are in the mode of goodness and properly situated on sadhana, you can distribute books to ‘unqualified’ people. In fact that is the beauty of sankirtan, changing people’s normal behavior. Of course the sattva guna person will easily take, but also so many others in theory ‘not qualified’.

So if you want to distribute books only to very pious people to avoid being fried or “lose time”, you are missing the whole point.

Sankirtan seminar on video

Part 1

<https://youtu.be/w73opG9L978>

Part 2

<https://youtu.be/8-OYl-9-76M>

Sankirtan Stories

This part is being prepared and will be added to the book very soon

If you would like to have the completed book with the stories, just get the free version with this coupon and you will be able to download for free when ready:

<http://leanpub.com/sankirtanmanual/c/uMCzHNGeo7d4>

Detained and jailed because a women said I stole money from her purse in street sankirtan.

Nail biting story in Barcelona train station

The men in Zaragoza who said your job is to tolerate

The men that screamed to me and after was sorry and bought the book

The story in the parking lot in Madrid with the devotee

The women i knew the name place of residence etc and finally got the book

The 36.000 ptas Krishna book given by a young argentinian lady at Barcelona airport

The story of the very old lady that said whoever stops learning gets old

The story of who is this Krishna the chief of the gang?

Lady who returned Cc and was cheated

Contact

Any questions or comments you can privately write to me at info@juanferrera.com