

# KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024



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A PILGRIMAGE TO VRINDAVAN IS  
A SURE WAY TO FILL THE EMPTY  
HEART WITH KRISHNA.

## FILLING THE EMPTY HEART

Welcome to this *Kartik Inspiration*.

Yesterday, Vrindavan-dham taught me an important lesson. We went to Nandagram to observe a special ceremony. As part of the ceremony, the deities of Krishna and Balarama were brought out of the temple to the terrace so that the brightly shining moon could touch their lotus feet with its rays.

Many devotees from the village assembled and sang the traditional *samaj* from a book that has been passed down through the centuries. It's very interesting how they start their singing. They open the book, which is well covered with beautiful, shiny cloth, and then they sing—about thirty or forty men—in a very high pitch, accompanied by a big drum. It was a wonderful atmosphere, sitting there under the full moon with the Lord, who was dressed in white, moon cloth.

Afterward, I went inside the temple, and I met a priest whom I have known for a few years. He asked me, “What have you brought from Germany?” I knew how he meant it; he thought perhaps I had brought a new mobile telephone—a new version of the distraction

monster. But I wanted to answer the question on a different level. Also, I don't use mobile phones, so I replied with sincerity, “I have brought an empty heart.”

Of course, what we do in the West is a lot, and we have many things on our minds. But when you are here, you see this more like smoke or the breath of a buffalo on a winter morning—it soon evaporates. What the heart seeks is really a living connection, a loving connection. Fortunately, in Vrindavan, one can fill one's heart quite easily. For instance, one can simply visit these amazing places of pilgrimage and engage in worship—worship of Giriraj, for example—or have a deep conversation with a *sadhu* who practices lifelong Krishna consciousness. One can also circumambulate a holy place or ‘catch’ the sound of longing that has been expressed by all the pilgrims who have been here through the centuries.

For me, the most reliable way to fill my empty heart is to chant, but then I also stop in between to sing kirtan, read appropriate literature, and meditate on what I have just read. In this way, Vrindavan pilgrimage is always an effort to fill my empty heart with Krishna.

*Radhacandana Pranis*

ŚACINANDANA SWAMI