

# KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024



COMING TO VRINDAVAN IS ALL ABOUT EXITING YOUR OLD WORLD, STEPPING INTO THE WORLD OF SPIRIT, AND ACCESSING YOUR DEEPER ASPIRATIONS.

## A HOPE-BASED LIFE

Welcome to our *Kartik Inspirations!*

First of all, I want to share with you what it's like to come from the West with all its various experiences to Vrindavan Dhama. I can only say three things are happening. The first thing you notice is: you have exited an old world and landed in the world of spirit. It's perhaps something like how an astronaut feels when he enters the new atmosphere of planet Mars—it's absolutely different.

The second experience is totally the opposite—it's paradoxical. It feels like you're arriving home. You feel that this is a place where your deeper aspirations can be fulfilled. It feels very much like coming into contact with your real self.

The third experience is that as you enter the holy dhama, you feel like your spiritual aspirations are being nourished and becoming higher.

There is a wonderful verse that talks about this, a prayer to Vrindavan from the *Vrindavan Mahimamrita*. It talks about Vrindavan being like a mother full of affection, receiving any of her children, even if they have done wrong. Here is the verse for you:

*svotsaṅge nyasya bālān nijaṃ imam iti duṣceṣṭam  
uccairamedhya...*

“Oh Vrindavan! Full of unlimited natural affection. Oh devoted mother, full of mercy, place on your lap your own child, who has done naughty activities and played in the dirt. Tolerating his offenses, clean him as if he is covered

in dust and make him drink from your breast the Lord's attractive love, and protect him.”

Yes, coming to Vrindavan is like a homecoming. But we must know that this land will display its full magic only when we are connecting with our deeper aspirations. And, we can do this especially during the month of Kartik—we can base our activities more on our aspirations and less on our fears. Then we will live a hope-filled, aspirational life. So let's make a practice of this:

- \* Sit down for a moment.
- \* Connect with that deeper part within you—the pilgrim, the one who journeys, the one who wants to move forward and not settle for something less than ideal.
- \* Then, connect with the aspirations of that part—your spiritual hopes, your desires.
- \* Perform your *sadhana* and make your offerings from this place.

You'll see that as you practice your spiritual activities, or even just remain mindful of Krishna during this month of Kartik, these aspirations will be fulfilled. These hopes will be recognized, nourished, and they will be given their desired object. Yes, the month of Kartik is very affectionate to all who engage in even simple spiritual observances.

See you for the next *Kartik Inspiration*.

*Rāṅgānandana Prāsāda*

ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI