

KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024

IN KRISHNA'S WORLD

Welcome to this *Kartik inspiration*.

Today, I'd like to offer you a little glimpse into my life here in Vrindavan, as I observe my *vrata*, a special vow and effort for this month of Kartik.

My day starts early. I begin by chanting in a room with a large window, through which I can see the sun rising over Giriraj Govardhan. So, for the first hour or two, I chant by candlelight until the “big candle”, the sun, spreads its light over Giriraj. At that time, the peacocks call out their intoxicating chords, “yau, yau”, and the parrots land on a neighboring balcony.

Then, after a brief yoga session, I head to a *bhajan-kutir*. But before entering, I seek blessings. I perform a small *aratik* to a beautiful, sacred Tulasi plant, who stands in front of the main entrance.

Then, I enter the *bhajan-kutir*, sit down, and look at Tulasi and the many birds that live in the garden and who already know that I am coming to chant. Sometimes, I also sing, and they seem to enjoy it.

While chanting, I try to connect with the seed of *bhakti* that was given and planted into my heart. Jiva Goswami calls this seed a *matih*, an inclination or a certain leaning

towards Krishna. So, I connect with that seed, and from it arises a genuine desire to perform my devotional practices for Krishna's pleasure.

Jiva Goswami continues by saying that once that inclination and desire to give Krishna pleasure are present, something beautiful happens; we remove ourselves from the center and place Krishna there. Jiva Goswami explains that from this initial orientation—*'May I now please Krishna'*—comes the desire to live in Krishna's world and to offer *seva* there. In simple terms: you unplug from the thousand “urgent” things you have, or think you have to do, and let one thought be very prominent, *“I want to be with Krishna now.”*

This is a very, very wonderful shift in perspective, and it doesn't end there. Jiva Goswami describes a third result that comes from nurturing the initial seed: Krishna offers us a taste of His *madhurya*, His sweetness. It is this sweetness, this experience, that we all need.

Once we are philosophically convinced, we don't need much more philosophy. What we need is *paesanubhavo—experience*. Because it is this experience that sustains us on the spiritual path. At that point, we no longer just believe; we know by our experience.

See you for the next *Kartik inspiration!*

Śacīnandana Śraṇī

ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

WHILE CHANTING, CONNECT
WITH THE SEED OF BHAKTI THAT
WAS PLANTED IN YOUR HEART:
'MAY I NOW PLEASE KRISHNA.'
FROM THIS INTENTION,
GREAT SPIRITUAL TREASURES
WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU!