

KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024



FEELING THAT KRISHNA
LOVES US CAN IGNITE
THE FIRE OF OUR BHAKTI.

PARDONED

Welcome to this *Kartik Inspiration*.

Let me ask you a question: how do you start a fire? The answer is simple—by bringing another fire, either from a match or a lighter. In the same way, how do you love Krishna? You have to bring love to spark the fire of devotion within your heart. Feeling Krishna's love for us, knowing that He doesn't despise us, can ignite that inner flame of *bhakti*.

The other day, while I was still traveling, I met a friend who shared a story with me. He said, "Listen, Sacinandana Swami, the Lord actually loves us. But even greater than His love is Radha's love." Let me tell you a well-known story in this regard.

Once, a king took his young son into the forest. He wanted him to take over the kingdom and thought to train his son in swordsmanship. The king said to his son, "See that lion? Approach it and challenge it to a fight. I will go in the other direction to hunt some bears. We will meet here before sunset." But when the king returned, his son was nowhere to be found.

Shocked and anxious, the king informed his ministers, "He is the future king, the *yuvaraj*—we need to find him. Tomorrow, go into the forest and declare that whoever finds my son dead or alive will receive a village with rights to collect taxes, and a large property. They will not have to care for the rest of their life. Everything they need will be taken care of. Their livelihood will be my gift."

So, one of the people living in the forest was a dreaded and feared dacoit who had killed many. Hearing the king's declaration and knowing the forest like someone knows the pocket of their shirt, he set out and found the young prince in a cave. The boy had survived on berries and water. Overjoyed, the prince said, "I'm so happy! Can you bring me back to my father?"

The dacoit replied, "Let's see. Tell me, what's better for me—to

kill you and take your golden ornaments or to return you to your father? He might recognize me, or the ministers might know who I am because I'm the most feared dacoit in this area."

The prince pleaded, "Please don't kill me. I promise you, my father loves me, and out of his love for me, he will love you too and pardon you." The dacoit was convinced and decided to take him back to his father.

When they entered the kingdom, everyone rejoiced at seeing the prince alive, but they trembled in fear at the sight of the dacoit. They went to the king, who cried tears of ecstasy and embraced his son. "You are back! Who found you and brought you home?" The prince replied, "This man is my savior."

But before the king could speak, his ministers leaned over and whispered into the king's ear, "This is the most feared dacoit in the land. Earlier, you said that anyone who brings him will get a rich reward, and that you want to see him executed."

The king paused and then said, "I forgive this man. He has saved my son and brought him back to me. I am ready to forgive all his offenses." The king's order was followed, and the dacoit was richly rewarded.

My dear everyone, this story illustrates that Krishna will always love anyone who sincerely chants His holy name with affection. His love is so great that He is ready to forgive all our past offenses and accept us with open arms. Now, if this is the nature of Krishna's love, we cannot even imagine the depth of Srimati Radharani's love.

I wish you all the best in chanting with the awareness that there are divine ears that hear your chanting, eyes that see you making an effort, and hands that are willing to pick you up from this world—all because you offer this simple service to the Supreme.

See you for the next *Kartik Inspiration*.

Sacinandana Swami
ŚACINANDANA SWAMI