

# KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024

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TURN OFF THE MIND BY  
PULLING IT BACK FROM VARIOUS  
DISTRACTIONS, AND THEN  
TURN IT ON BY CHANTING  
PRAYERFULLY, “PLEASE, ATTRACT  
MY MIND TOWARDS YOU.”

## FIND THE SWITCH

Welcome to this *Kartik inspiration*.

As we chant the holy name, we sometimes need to turn off our world—the world of the mind, which is huge and full of stored memories. Our minds can store much more than the largest computer. We have to let go of these various distractions and practice turning our attention to Krishna.

There are different ways to turn off and turn on the mind. Various *acharyas* have given different methods for dealing with the mind.

Ragunatha dasa Gosvami, requests the mind, “Please, brother mind, think now of the land of Vrindavan, the brahmanas, the holy name, the *gayatri mantra*, and more than anything, the Divine Couple.” Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura is a little forceful with the mind. He has a statement where he says that one should beat the mind with a shoe when it resists doing what is needed. This is not cruel. When you have a buffalo who walks down the path of destruction, you take a stick and beat it to guide it, and in one stage, the buffalo knows, ‘Good. Now I go right; otherwise, I will fall.’

Srila Prabhupad, in the fifth canto of the Bhagavatam, offers another approach. He presents a simple formula for dealing with the wayward, distracted mind,

“Simply ignore it; don’t take it so seriously.” I know that modern psychology also suggests that if you don’t give a thought attention for ten minutes, it usually dissolves.

When we chant, let us forget the past and not dream of the future. Let us be fully present in what we do. In this moment, only three names are important—Hare, Krishna, and Rama—arranged in the full *maha-mantra*. If we can chant one mantra and hear it fully with nothing else going on, our life is already successful.

Try to make an exercise out of this:

When you sit down to chant either in *japa* or *kirtan*, try to turn off the mind—cultivate a little *vairagya* or as one scripture says, *manah samharaṇam*, that is, collect the mind from the various places where it has come to sit, like a fly sits on different objects. *Manah-samharaṇam*, pull it back. Then, turn the mind on to remember the meaning of the *mantra*.

In summary, you can turn the mind off by *manah samharaṇam*, and you can turn the mind on by prayerfully chanting, ‘Please, attract my mind towards You, please give me taste.’

All the best, and good chanting!

*Śacīnandana Prāsāda*  
ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI