

# KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024

## THE UNFAILING SHELTER

Near the village called Paitha, there is an extraordinary natural wonder: a huge tree with a branch that is completely twisted. This remarkable feature is connected to today's celebration of Govardhan Puja.

When Indra sent torrents of rain over Vrindavan, Krishna told his friends, "I need to go now and lift Govardhan Hill." But His friends were skeptical and said, "You can't even carry Your father's shoes for long. How will You lift a huge mountain? What if it falls and crushes You? We have to protect You from making this mistake!" So Krishna asked, "Okay, what can I do to convince you?"

The cowherd boys replied, "See this huge tree? If You can twist its main branch without breaking it, then we'll know You're strong enough." Krishna quickly took hold of the branch and twisted it into an unusual shape, which remains even to this day. Then He said, "Now I'm going to lift the mountain!"

He ran towards Govardhan, dug a tunnel underneath, and emerged in its center—today, the spot is known as Aniyor village. From there, He lifted the hill and called to all the residents of Vrindavan, "Come now under the shelter of Giriraj."

Meanwhile, the deluge created floods that began rushing beneath the mountain, so Krishna asked Balaram to take care of it. Balaram quickly dug a pit, which filled with the water and became the sacred Sankarshan-kund.

Through this pastime, Krishna showed that He is always ready to protect His devotees. He held the mountain for seven long days, and by His divine potency, no one felt any inconvenience. All were sheltered not only by the mountain but by Krishna's nourishing potency, his *pushti-shakti*.

The lesson of Govardhan-lila is to take shelter, not in our ego, but in the strength of the Lord. He will protect us from the miseries of material existence in the most reliable ways. Krishna promises this in the Bhagavad-gita when He says, "Become conscious of Me," or, in other words, keep Me in your heart. The verse continues, "And then, by My strength, you will be able to cross all the difficulties that are laid in your way."

Be it a flood, interpersonal challenges, or other difficulties—all can be overcome when we become Krishna conscious.

See you for next *Kartik Inspiration*.

THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD  
IS OUR MOST RELIABLE REFUGE  
FROM THE MISERIES OF  
MATERIAL EXISTENCE.

*Śaṅkara Prasad*

ŚACINANDANA SWAMI