

KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2024

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CHANTING WITH MEDITATION

Welcome to this *Kartik Inspiration*.

Today, I meditated about a scene from the *Bhagavatam* that I found very evocative. It inspired me greatly during my *japa*, and I'll do my best to reproduce the scene as best as I can for you.

This is about king Prithu, who performed a *yajna* for the Lord, worshiping His lotus feet extensively. The king's ecstasy in devotional service kept increasing. Although the Lord never touches the ground when He appears in this world—always remaining above it—this time, in loving reciprocation, the Lord stood on the ground while still taking support from Garuda's shoulder. He wanted to show Prithu, *'I am with you, I am standing here where you also stand.'*

When the time came for the Lord to leave, He stayed longer than necessary because He was so inclined toward King Prithu's devotional behavior. The Lord stayed on because He is always the well-wisher of His devotees.

Maharaja Prithu could see that the Lord should have disappeared already, but He stayed for him. Not only was He staying with him, He was *standing* with him. Prithu's eyes filled with tears, and his voice began to falter, choking him to the point where he could not directly address or speak to the Lord. What did he do? He did what great devotees do: he embraced the Lord within his heart and remained standing with folded hands.

When I chant, I try to keep these devotional images in my mind. Once, Srila Prabhupada advised a devotee who felt spiritually "dried out" to stop all his activities, sit before the deities, look at Them, and chant. In this way, he would regain his spiritual strength. The same happens when we absorb ourselves in a thought of Krishna, particularly in an endearing scene. Then, like Phoenix rising from the ashes, our devotional feelings awaken, allowing us to soar very high in the unlimited sky of Krishna consciousness.

Welcome to our next *Kartik inspiration*.

Śacīnandana Praviśi

ŚACINANDANA SWAMI