

Belvan / [बेलवन](#)

- This forest is called Belvan because, during [Krishna's](#) manifest pastimes, there was an abundance of bel (bilva) trees here. While grazing the cows in this most captivating and pleasant forest, Shri Krishna and His sakhas would play different kinds of sports and relish the ripe bel fruits.
- Once, goddess [Lakshmi](#) heard a description from the mouth of [Narad](#) about Vrajendra-nandan Shri Krishna's sweet ras-lila and the good fortune of the [gopis](#). An eagerness to behold this ras-lila arose in her heart. No one but the gopis has the qualification to enter ras-lila, since they are the true emblem of undivided and pure prem. It is only possible to gain entrance into ras-lila by receiving the mercy of [Radhika](#), the embodiment of mahabhav and the crest jewel of all Krishna's beloveds, and by the mercy of Her true representatives, the gopis. At that time, one can gain entrance very easily. Thus, to enter the ras-lila Lakshmi began performing severe austerities at this place, but to no avail. To this day, she is performing austerities here with this desire.

Bilvavan



This forest is called Baelvana or Bilvavan because, during Krishna's manifest pastimes on this planet, there was an abundance of bael (bilva) trees here. While grazing the cows in this most captivating and pleasant forest, Shri Krishna and His cowherd friends would play different kinds of sports and relish the ripe bael fruits.

This is described in BhaktiRatnakar:

**Ram Krishna sakhasaha e bilvavanete
pakkabilvaphalabhunjemahakautukete**

"It was here that Rama and Krishna along with their sakhas ate ripe bilva fruits with great festivity."

This is also the place where Lakshmi devi is sitting, performing tapasya wanting to cross the Yamuna to enter the rasa leela. For this reason, this forest is also called Shri Van or the forest where Lakshmi devi is residing.

Once, Lakshmi devi heard a description from the mouth of Narada about Vrajendra-nandana Shri Krishna's sweet rasa-leela (Krishna's dancing pastimes with the Gopis) and the good fortune of the Gopis (cowherd girls). An eagerness to behold this rasa-leela arose in Lakshmi devi's heart. No one but the Gopis has the qualification to enter rasa-leela, since they are the true emblem of undivided and pure prema (love of God). The Gopis have such unconditional and unmotivated love for Krishna that they are ready to do anything to please Krishna, to the extent that if by giving the dust of their feet, Krishna's headache is relieved for even a moment then they are ready to give that dust even if they have to go to hell for such offence for the rest of eternity. But Lakshmi devi being the Goddess of fortune is not willing to do simple village chores like the Gopis such as picking up cow dung paddies, milk cows, churn butter etc. So Lakshmi devi can witness rasa-leela but she cannot cross the Yamuna to enter rasa mandala. In order to enter the rasa-leela Lakshmi began performing severe austerities at Bilvavan and to this day, She is performing austerities here with this desire. So, this is a very important place in Shri Braj dham where the ultimately supremacy of Braj leela, the supreme devotion of Gopis of Vrindavan is gloriously explained and proven.



- In Shrimad-Bhagavata, the wives of the serpent Kaliya refer to this pastime in their prayers to Shri Krishna: "Bhagvan, we are unable to understand what sadhanaKaliyanag performed that He became a proprietor of the dust of Your lotus feet. It is so rare to procure this dust that even Your wife Lakshmi was unable to obtain it, even after giving up all sense-

pleasures and performing austerities for a very long time in conformity with the prescribed rules and regulations."

- Just nearby are Krishna Kund and a sitting-place (baithak) of ShriVallabhacharya. There is also a temple of goddess Lakshmi here.



It is only possible to gain entrance into rasa-leela by receiving the mercy of Shrimati Radhika, the crest jewel of all of Krishna's beloveds, and by the mercy of Her true representatives. At that time, one can gain entrance very easily. We do not deserve to be in Vrindavan but if we sincerely try to follow the footsteps of the residents of Vrindavan we will be awarded with the consciousness by which we can actually enter into Vrindavan.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is a pure devotee and resident of Vrindavan. If we simply learn how to follow the footsteps of the six Goswamis from Prabhupada's instructions we can enter into the Braj Leela by his causeless mercy. Thus when we come to Vrindavan, our mood should be that we have come to speak and to act in such a way that we can please Shрила Prabhupada and all the previous Acharyas. If we think that we can make some independent plans to enter into Braj leela, we have actually missed the essence.

We should offer our heads to the dust of this holy place and pray that we may always remain faithful servant of the servant of servant of Shрила Prabhupada and all the previous Acharyas and in this way we can gain entrance into the divine pastimes of Krishna at Vrindavan.