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## THE GLORIES OF SRI VRINDAVAN

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### LORD BRAHMA GLORIFIES VRINDAVAN

*Srila Sukadeva Goswami*

*aho 'ti-dhanyā vraja-go-ramanyaḥ  
stanyāmṛtaṁ pītam atīva te mudā  
yāsāṁ vibho vatsatārātmajātmanā  
yat-tṛptaye 'dyāpi na cālam adhvarāḥ*

O almighty Lord, how greatly fortunate are the cows and ladies of Vrindavan, the nectar of whose breast milk You have happily drunk to Your full satisfaction, taking the form of their calves and children! All the *Vedic* sacrifices performed from time immemorial up to the present day have not given You as much satisfaction.

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam  
nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām  
yan-mitraṁ paramānandanāṁ  
pūrṇam brahma sanātanam*

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Maharaja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhumi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth,

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nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

the source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.

*eṣāṁ tu bhāgya-mahimācyuta tāvad āstām  
ekādaśaiva hi vayanā bata bhūri-bhāgāḥ  
etad-dhṛṣika-caṣakair asakṛt pibāmaḥ  
sarvādayo 'ṅghry-udaja-madhv-amṛtāsavaṁ te*

Yet even though the extent of the good fortune of these residents of Vrindavan is inconceivable, we eleven presiding deities of the various senses, headed by Lord Shiva, are also most fortunate, because the senses of these devotees of Vrindavan are the cups through which we repeatedly drink the nectarean, intoxicating beverage of the honey of Your lotus feet.

*tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy atavyāṁ  
yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhīṣekam  
yaj-jīvitāṁ tu nikhilāṁ bhagavān mukundas  
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajāḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva*

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is still being searched for in the *Vedic mantras*.

*eṣāṁ ṅhoṣa-nūxāsīnām uta bhavāṁ kinī deva rāṭeti naś  
cetovīṣa-phalāt phalaṁ tu vad-āparāṁ ikuṭrāpyayam muhyati  
sad-veśād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā  
yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyāṁ ma-tanaya-pṛāṇāśayāstut-kṛte*

My mind becomes bewildered just trying to think of what reward other than You could be found anywhere. You are the embodiment of all benedictions, which You bestow upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vrindavan. You have already arranged to give Yourself to Putana and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vrindavan, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You?

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*tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās  
tāvāt kārā-gr̥ham gr̥ham  
tāvan moho 'ṅghri-nigado  
yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ*

My dear Lord Krishna, until people become Your devotees, their material attachments and desires remain thieves, their homes remain prisons, and their affectionate feelings for their family members remain foot-shackles.

*prapañcam niṣprapañco 'pi  
viḍambayasi bhū-tale  
prapanna-janatānanda-  
sandoham prathitum prabho*

My dear master, although You have nothing to do with material existence, You come to this earth and imitate material life just to expand the varieties of ecstatic enjoyment for Your surrendered devotees.

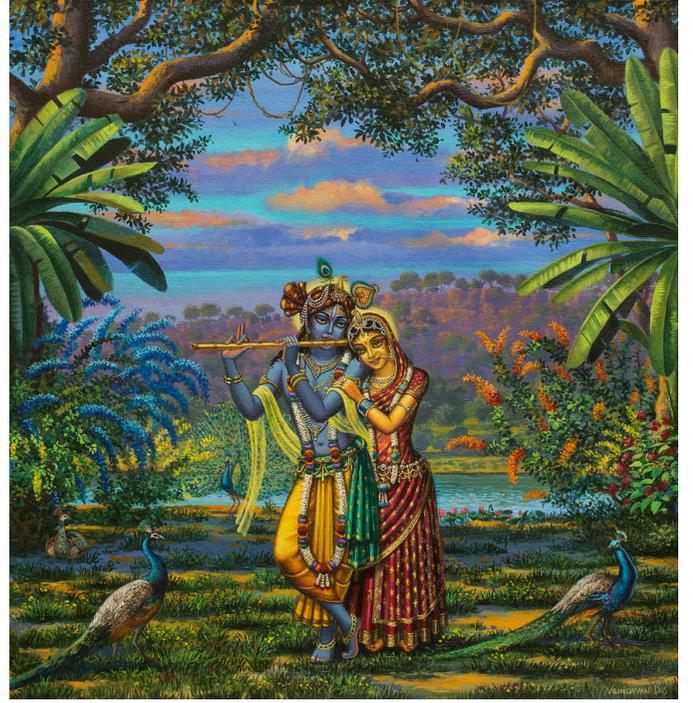
— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāna) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter Fourteen » Verses:31-37.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO LIVE IN VRINDAVAN?

*His Divine Grace*

*A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

To go to the forest and live there with the animals, meditating upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the only means by which to give up lusty desires. Unless one gives up such desires, one's mind cannot be freed from material contamination. Therefore, if one is at all interested in being freed from the bondage of repeated birth, death, old age and disease, after a certain age one must go to the forest. *Pañcāśordhvaṁ vanam vrajet.* After fifty years of age, one should voluntarily give up family life and go to the forest. The best forest is Vrindavan, where one need not live with the animals but can associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who never leaves Vrindavan. Cultivating Krishna consciousness in Vrindavan is the best means of being liberated from material bondage, for in Vrindavan one can automatically meditate upon Krishna. Vrindavan has many temples, and in one or more of these temples one may see the form of the Supreme Lord as Radha-Krishna



or Krishna-Balarama and meditate upon this form. As expressed here by the words *brahmaṇy adhyāya*, one should concentrate one's mind upon the Supreme Lord, Para-brahman. This Para-brahman is Krishna, as confirmed by Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramam bhavān* [Bg. 10.12]). Krishna and His abode, Vrindavan, are not different. Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said, *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam*. Vrindavan is as good as Krishna. Therefore, if one somehow or other gets the opportunity to live in Vrindavan, and if one is not a pretender but simply lives in Vrindavan and concentrates his mind upon Krishna, one is liberated from material bondage. One's mind is not purified, however, even in Vrindavan, if one is agitated by lusty desires. One should not live in Vrindavan and commit offenses, for a life of offenses in Vrindavan is no better than the lives of the monkeys and hogs there. Many monkeys and hogs live in Vrindavan, and they are concerned with their sexual desires. Men who have gone to Vrindavan but who still hanker for sex should immediately leave Vrindavan and stop their grievous offenses at the lotus feet of the Lord. There are many misguided men who live in Vrindavan to satisfy their sexual desires, but they are certainly no better than the monkeys and hogs. Those who are under the control of

maya, and specifically under the control of lusty desires, are called *māyā-mṛga*. Indeed, everyone in the conditional stage of material life is a *māyā-mṛga*. It is said, *māyā-mṛgaṁ dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad*: [SB 11.5.34] Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* to show His causeless mercy to the *māyā-mṛgas*, the people of this material world, who suffer because of lusty desires. One should follow the principles of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and always think of Krishna in full Krishna consciousness. Then one will be eligible to live in Vrindavan, and his life will be successful.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 9: Liberation » Chapter 19 » Verse: 1.*

### GOKULA AND GOLOKA

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

Gokula, like Goloka, is not a created mundane plane-unbounded character forms the display of His unlimited potency and His propagating manifestation. Baladeva is the mainstay of that energy. The transcendental entity of Baladeva has two aspects viz., infinite spiritual manifestation and infinite accommodating space for insentient gross things. The unquadrantal delineation of material universe will be dealt within the proper place. The triquadrantal extensions of the transcendental infinitary field of the almighty, unlamenting, nonperishing and nonapprehending unlimited situations of halo which are fully spiritual majestic foliage. This very majestic extension portrays the manifested lofty rich feature of the vaster unlimited region or greater atmosphere which has its resplendent location wholly beyond the realm of mundane nature, on the further shore of Viraja surrounded by the halo of Brahman or indistinguishable entity. This majestic power of unlimited spirit emanates on the upper portion of the luminous sphere into the most charming Gokula or eternally existing Goloka, exceedingly beautified by the assorted display of effulgence. Some designate this region as the abode of the Supreme Narayana, or the original fountainhead. Hence Gokula, which is identical with Goloka, is the supreme plane.

Bhāgavata Mahāvidyālaya



The same sphere shines as Goloka and Gokula respectively by its upper or transcendental and lower or mundane situation.

Sri Sanatana Goswami has told us as follows in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* which embodies the final essence of all the books of instructions: "He displays His pastimes here in this land as He is used to do in Goloka. The difference between the two planes lies only in their locations as high and low; that is, in other words, Krishna plays exactly the same part in Goloka as He exhibits on the mundane plane of Gokula. There is practically no difference between Gokula and Goloka save that this what exists in the shape of Goloka in the upper region is the same as Gokula on the mundane plane when Krishna showed His various activity there. Sri Jiva Goswami has also inculcated the same in the *Bhāgavata-sandarbha* of his 'Six Treatises.' " To ascertain the plane of Goloka-Vrindavan is the eternal abode of Krishna and Goloka and Vrindavan are identically one, and though both are identical, yet Krishna's inconceiv-

able energy has made Goloka the acme of this spiritual kingdom and Gokula of Mathura province forming a part of the mundane plane which is also a manifestation of triquadrantal *vibhūti* (conducting majesty). Poor human understanding cannot possibly make out how the extensive triquadrantal, which is beyond human comprehension, can be accommodated in the limited nether material universe of a uniuadrantal disclosure. Gokula is a spiritual plane, hence his condescended position in the region of material space, time, etc., is in no way restricted but unlimitedly manifested with his full boundless propriety. But conditioned souls are apt to assert a material conception in regard to Gokula by their miserable senses so as to bring him below the level of their intellect. Though the eye of an observer is impeded by a cloud when gazing at the sun and though the tiny cloud can never really cover the sun, still the clouded vision apparently observes the sun as covered by the cloud. In just the same way the conditioned souls with their obscured intelligence, senses and decisions, accept Gokula as a piece of measurable land. We can see Gokula from Goloka which is eternal. This is also a mystery. The attainment of final beatitude is the success in attaining one's eternal self. The success in identifying the true self is finally achieved when the screen of gross and subtle coils of conditioned souls is removed by the sweet will of Krishna. However, the idea of Goloka is seen to differ from Gokula till the success in unalloyed devotion is achieved. The transcendental plane of infinite spiritual manifestation having thousands of petals and corolla like those of the lotus, is Gokula, the eternal abode of Krishna.

—*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* » Chapter 5 » verse 2 » *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*.

### HOW TO ENTER INTO THE PASTIMES OF THE LORD?

*Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura*

Goswami, “All in all there are five *daśā*: *śravaṇa-daśā*, hearing; *varaṇa-daśā*, acceptance; *smaraṇa-daśā*, remembrance; *bhāvapāñā-daśā*, attainment of ecstatic spir-

itual emotion; and *prema-sampatti-daśā*, attainment of the ultimate goal, *kṛṣṇa-prema*.”

Vijaya, “Kindly describe *śravaṇa-daśā*.”

Goswami, “When a person develops faith in hearing Krishna conscious topics we understand that his taste for the inane and mundane has decreased, and that correspondingly his desire for esoteric transcendence has increased. Krishna conscious topics should be heard from an elevated devotee, as explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, (4.29.40):

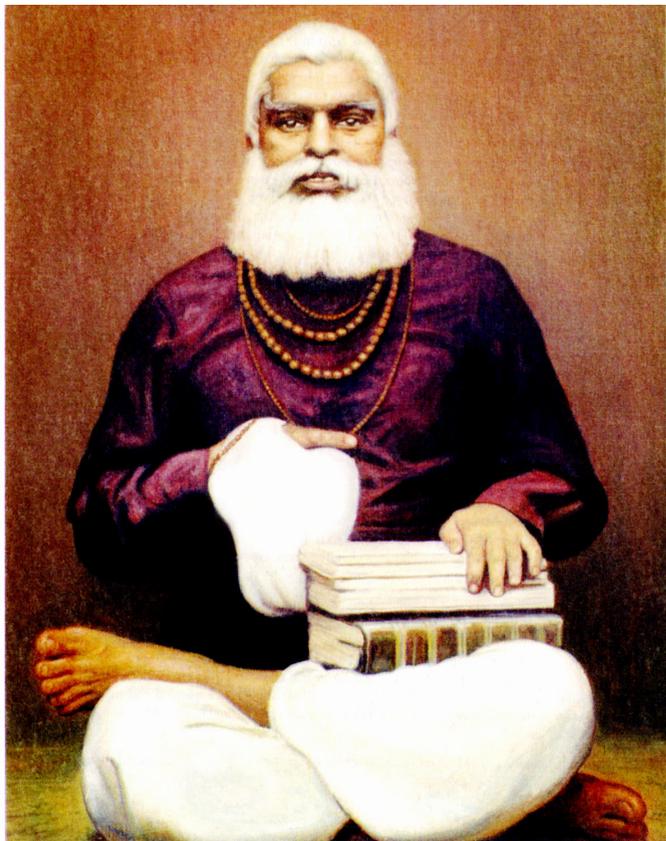
*tasmin mahān-mukharitā madhubhic-caritra-  
pīyūṣa-śeṣa-saritaḥ paritaḥ sraṁvanti  
tā ye pibanty avitṛṣo nṛpa gādha-karṇais  
tān na spṛṣanty aśana-tṛḍ-bhaya-śoka-mohāḥ*

“O king, if one gets the chance to hear from elevated saints the topics of the qualities of Sri Krishna, which are like a flowing river of nectar, and drinks this nectar with single-minded absorption and faith, then hunger, thirst, fear, lamentation, illusion and other such unwanted detriments will never be able to assail one.”

Vijaya, “Occasionally, materially engrossed people feel interested to hear Krishna conscious topics, what is the nature of such hearing?”

Goswami, “There is a gulf of difference between a person who is *bahirmukha*, constantly attracted by external material nature, and a person who is *antarmukha*, looking inwards to the real self and the Supreme Lord. For *bahirmukha* materialistic persons hearing about Krishna occurs by chance, not because of applied *śraddhā*. However, such hearing is designated as *bhakti-unmukhī-sukṛti*, piety based on nascent devotional inclination, and if continued may eventually beget *śraddhā* in some later life. However, having gained *śraddhā* the eager *sādhaka* thirsts to hear the qualities and pastimes of Sri Krishna from an elevated devotee; this is the required condition for hearing at *śravaṇa-daśā*. *Śravaṇa-daśā* is of two types: *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*, hearing in proper sequence; and *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*, hearing in a haphazard fashion.”

Vijaya, “Kindly explain *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*.”



Goswami, “Hearing the different pastimes of Krishna in an improper sequence and manner is known as *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā*. In addition, hearing without aspiration to a particular *rasa* results in a barrier to the flow of *rasa*, thus preventing the hearer from finding entrance to the pastimes.”

Vijaya, “Kindly explain *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*.”

Goswami, “*Kṛṣṇa-līlā* should be heard in proper sequence with resolute enlightened intelligence by a soul thirsting to augment *rasa*, then such focused hearing becomes conducive to the actual evocation of *rasa*. In this manner hearing the *nitya-līlā* of *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* and the *naimittika-līlā*, such as of the birth of Krishna, is *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*. On the path of *bhajana*, constant engagement in this *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa* is essential for the proper and successful unfolding of *bhakti-rasa*.

“The sweet relish of the Lord’s pastimes is progressively manifested through committed *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa*, and thus the hearer’s latent taste for *rāgānuga-bhakti* is spontaneously aroused. The hearer thinks, ‘Oh, how wonderful is the *sakhya-bhāva* of Subala. I wish to serve Krishna in that mood of camaraderie exhibited by Subala.’ This eager

*nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā*

tendency is called *lobha*. Pursuing with *lobha* the devotional sentiments of the residents of Vraja is the essence of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

“I have given an example of *sakhya-rasa*, similarly in the other three *rasas*—*dāsya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*—*rāgānuga-bhakti* also finds full expression. You are eligible for *śṛṅgāra-mādhurya-rasa* by the mercy of Sri Nimai, the Lord of my heart. Hence, you have developed *lobha* inspired by the service and mood of the *vraja-gopīs*, and this *lobha* has brought you to your present path of attainment. The confidential instructions given by the *guru* to his disciple for the evocation of *rasa* are in essence *śravaṇa-daśā*.”

Vijaya, “At what level is *śravaṇa-daśā* completed?”

Goswami, “When the *sādhaka* comes to perceive *kṛṣṇa-līlā* as transcendental and eternal, he completes *śravaṇa-daśā*. Since *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is on the platform of pure transcendence, the *līlās* are enchanting, and so the devotee becomes eager to gain entrance to them. Then, seeing the dexterity of his disciple, the *guru* enumerates to his disciple—who is still a *rāgānuga-sādhaka* following the *rāgātmikā-bhakti* of the *vraja-vāsīs*—the *eka-daśa-bhāva* that I have explained previously. When the disciple’s consciousness has become nicely tuned to the ecstatic transcendental dynamism of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, *śravaṇa-daśā* is consummated. The disciple’s *lobha* and *ruci* are then unrestrained, and he is promoted to *varaṇa-daśā*, the stage of acceptance.”

Vijaya, “What are the symptoms of *varaṇa-daśā*?”

Goswami, “The heart’s spontaneous attraction is linked by the chain of the *eka-daśa-bhāvato Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. The heart of the disciple in whom the *eka-daśa-bhāva* is established is inundated with thirsting spiritual emotions; he comes weeping and throws himself at the lotus feet of his *guru*. At this juncture, the *guru* reveals his *sakhī* form, and the disciple realizes his form as the *gopi* maidservant of his *guru-sakhī*. The disciple-turned-young-*gopī* is yearning to serve ‘her’ dear Sri Krishna; and the *guru* is a beautiful *vraja-gopī-sakhī* who has already attained the highest perfection. The disciple gives expression to his *bhāva* at this juncture

by the following *śloka*s, eleven and twelve, from *Śrī Śrī Prema-marandākhya-stava-rāja*, Regal Prayers Bearing the Nectar of Pure Love, of Srila Raghunatha dasa Goswami:

*tvām natvā yacate dhṛtvā  
tṛṇam dantair ayaṁ janah  
sva-dāsyāmṛta-sekena  
jīvayāmuṁ su-duḥkhitam*

*na muñcec charaṇa-yātam  
api duṣṭam dayāmayah  
ato gāndharvike hā hā  
muñcainam naiva tādṛśam*

“O Radhika! This most despicable and fallen soul throws herself at Your feet. Holding straw between the teeth I impetrate you, to shower upon this inconsolable wretch the immortal nectar of servitorship at Your feet, thereby resuscitating her. The kind-hearted never abandon those who are surrendered to them. Thus, compassionate as You are, do not forsake me, a soul surrendered to You. I am anxious to serve the Divine Couple in Vraja under the shade of Your lotus feet.’

“This mood of surrender and heartfelt yearning for the intimate service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna permeates the devotee’s devotional fervour in *varaṇa-daśā*. Now the *guru* in his form as a *sakhī* gives his disciple residence in Vraja, instructing him to meditate upon *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* through the *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā* and to take full shelter in chanting *harināma* and assures him that soon his heart’s desire of intimate loving service will be realized.”

Vijaya, “Kindly elaborate upon *smaraṇa-daśā*.”

Goswami, “Srila Rupa Goswami states in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Purva Vibhāga*, 1.2.294-6:

*kṛṣṇam smaran janam cāṣya  
preṣṭham nija-samīhitam  
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau  
kuryād vāsam vraje sadā*

“One should always think of Krishna within oneself and should choose a very dear devotee who is a servitor of Krishna in Vrindavan. One

should constantly engage in topics about that servitor and his or her loving relationship with Krishna, and one should live in Vrindavan. If one is physically unable to go to Vrindavan, he should live there mentally.’

*sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi  
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kārya vraja-lokāmusārataḥ*

“In the transcendental realm of *Vraja-dhāma* one should serve the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, with feelings similar to that of His associates, and one should place himself under the direct guidance of a particular associate of Krishna, following in his or her footsteps. This method is applicable both in the stage of *sādhana* and in the stage of *sādhya*, when one is a *siddha-puruṣa*, a spiritually perfected soul.’

*śravaṇotkīrtanādīni vaidha-bhakti-uditāni tu  
yāny aṅgāni ca tāny atra vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ*

“According to spiritual preceptors, the essential accessories of *vaidhī-bhakti* such as *śravaṇam*, loud *kīrtanam*, and so on, are still most suitable and should be continued for the cultivation of *rāgāmuga-bhakti*.”

Before Srila Goswami could explain the purport of these verses, Vijaya eagerly interjected, asking, “*Gurudeva*, what is meant here by *kuryād vāsam vraje sadā*?”

Goswami, “Srila Jiva Goswami has stated that the devotee should reside physically in Vraja. If he cannot be present there physically, then he should dwell in Vraja within his mind. Residence within the mind and physical residence in Vraja both bestow the attainment of the final goal. The devotee must always meditate upon Krishna and the *sakhī* whose *bhāva* he is emulating, knowing that he in his internal *svarūpa* is her assistant *kuñja-sevikā* for the rendering of service to Sri Sri Radha and Krishna in the love groves of Vraja.

“As a *sādḥaka*, the aspirant must continue to perform *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam*, and *ātmā-nivedanam* in his external gross body though they form the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti*. However, having acquired the *eka-daśa-bhāva* of intimate worship, the

*sādhaka* evokes in meditation his spiritual identity as a perfect *vraja-gopī* and executes his specific duties in the *aṣṭa-kālīya-kṛṣṇa-līlā* that are allocated to him by his *sakhī* leader. The *sādhaka* must maintain and discipline his external life upon earth according to scriptural norms and internally nourish his *siddha-deha*, spiritual identity, by *bhāva*. Such an arrangement will ensure a growing distaste for things and subjects not related to *vraja-līlā*.”

Vijaya, “*Gurudeva*, I desire to understand this system still more clearly.”

Goswami, “The purport of *vraja-vāsa*, residence in Vraja, is to live in solitude with a consciousness steeped in transcendence and *bhāva*. Chanting *harināma* a designated number of rounds while meditating on practical devotional service in the *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* is essential. Furthermore, one should be always alert that one’s external activities of bodily maintenance and the like do not neutralize or deprecate one’s *bhajana*. Thus, all external work should be carried out with the consideration that it must be conducive to further development in devotional service.”

Receiving these instructions somewhat gravely, Vijaya said, “*Srila Gurudeva*, I have understood your instructions, but how do I steady the mind in such *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* meditation?”

Goswami, “The mind becomes equipoised automatically as soon as the devotee actually



attains *rāgāmuga-bhakti*, because at this level the consciousness naturally flows to *vraja-līlā*, being spontaneously attached to *bhakti*. Concomitantly, there is a lack of interest in mundane matters, and thus the *sādhaka*’s consciousness shies away from materialistic involvement. However, if there are still hindrances and material perturbations upon this path, then one should carefully follow the *krama*, gradual, course that I have mentioned previously. Then, once the mind and consciousness are fixed and steady by the resultant purification, nothing will be able to unsettle them.”

—*Jaiva-dharma* Translated by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. & Sarvabhāvama dāsa.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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