

KARTIK INSPIRATIONS 2021



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COMING TO VRINDAVAN
BRINGS TO MIND THE QUESTION
“WHAT IS THE REALITY?”

REALITY CHECK

Today I'm remembering when I just arrived in Vrindavan from the Delhi airport. It was four o'clock in the morning and I came close to the Krishna Balarama temple, and saw many devotees running through the streets, coming from the side roads, coming from the opposite direction—they were all going like bees to an open glass of honey. What was that open glass? The mangal aratik of Radha Shyamsundara. Yes, in Vrindavan everyone is focused on Krishna—there is really nothing else, unless you are absolutely determined to create a false story of something that is more important. In Vrindavan, everyone chants Radha's name. That is how people greet each other, “Radhe Radhe!” You find Srimati Radharani's name in a big circle on many of the trees. It is said that even that the leaves chant Radha's name.

Krishna can be easily found in Vrindavan. Prabhodanandana Sarasvati expressed this question, “Where can pure devotion to Sri Krishna be easily found? Where is that playful deity of the Supreme Lord Krishna that is the limit of astonishment to be found? Where is the highest bliss which lies in the worship of Krishna's lotus feet attainable? O brother and sister, let me reveal this secret to you. All this is only attainable in Sri Vrindavan Dhama.”

Coming to Vrindavan puts a big question to us, ‘What is the real life?’ On that morning when I arrived in Vrindavan, it seemed really like a dream. I was jet lagged and everything was so different: it smelled different, the sounds were different, the people were different, monkeys everywhere, and no one keeps the time anywhere. But then as I became accustomed to the life in Vrindavan, the West appeared like a distant dream and most of the parts in the dream seem to be so absolutely unnecessary.

I know when one is in prison, one develops certain habits and everything there, although it is under the rules of prison life, is its own reality. And I know that people who are released from prison into freedom don't know what to do with that freedom. So yes, material life with its many conditions upon us, many duties, many responsibilities have a kind of stark reality to them. But then one goes to a place like Vrindavan, which is so pervaded with Krishna's presence that you sometimes feel you are directly there with Him in the spiritual world. Coming to such a place brings to mind the question, ‘What is the reality?’ and even more, ‘What reality makes me more happy?’

Let us turn to Srimati Radharani, the queen of this mystical and enchanted land. Let us be mindful about the question, ‘What is reality?’ and even more, ‘Which one of the two realities make me happiest?’

Prabhodanandana Sarasvati

ŚACINANDANA SWAMI