

To Be a *Vraja-vāsī*

Instructive excerpts from a speech by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on 8th October, 1932 in Mathurā which was later published in the *Gauḍīya* 11.218-21.

The subject of *rasa* in the twelve forests is Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the form of all *rasas*. He is the only subject of genuine *rasa*. The subject of all five *rasas* – *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā* and *mādhuryā* – is only Śrī Vrajendra-nandana.



Vraja-vāsī means a servant of Hari possessed of spiritual understanding – not an enjoyer of material objects who is averse to serving Him. If I am not subservient to Citraka, Patraka and Bakula, if I am not a follower of Kṛṣṇa, if I become a material enjoyer subservient to the objects of the eyes and ears, then I do not live in Vraja and do not have spiritual love. “I am enjoying; this object is giving me pleasure” – that is called material enjoyment, the opposite of service to Kṛṣṇa. If I do not have love for such shelters of *dāsyā-rasa* as Citraka, Raktaka, and Patraka, shelters of *sakhyā-rasa* such as Śrīdāmā and Sudāmā, shelters of *vātsalyā-rasa* like Nanda and Yaśodā, and shelters of *mādhuryā-rasa* like Rūpa Mañjarī and others, then how can there be *Vraja-vāsa*? All of them are *nitya-siddha Vraja-vāsīs*... To become a *Vraja-vāsī* one must attain exclusive service to (such) *nitya-siddha Vraja-vāsīs*.



We cannot attain *Vraja-vāsa* without the mercy of the *Vraja-vāsīs*. But why should they speak to us? How will we see them with material eyes? Because we are covered with pride and envy, they will not listen to what we say. Because we have no attachment for them, they do not speak to us. They say, “You are searching for material pleasure. Has Kṛṣṇa become a material object for your pleasure?” One cannot know about Vraja except through subservience to Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī. When we receive the mercy of Prabhu Nityānanda, on that very day we will understand the mercy of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī.



One should ask about a particular *rasa* from one who possesses it. If I ask about *mādhuryā-rasa* then you should take me to a *Vraja-vāsī* who exemplifies *mādhuryā-rasa*. If I ask about it from those who have not associated with Lalitā and Viśākhā, or who have not met Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, they may start talking about the *rasa* of Rāvana stealing Sītā.



By worshipping the dogs one becomes a *bhaṅgī*; by worshipping horses one becomes a groom; by worshipping iron one becomes a blacksmith; by worshipping gold one becomes a goldsmith. To become a *Vraja-vāsī* one must attain exclusive service to the *nitya-siddha Vraja-vāsīs*.

