

Question Two

Is the Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa see the same as the one we see?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura tells us that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is always invisible to mortal eyes. And Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in his *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* (Ch. 7) tells us that only those on the threshold of *bhāva* and who have the appropriate *bhāva* can see Rādhā-kuṇḍa As It Is, others see it as an ordinary place.

So let's do a private Reality Check to ascertain how close we are to being "on the threshold of *bhāva*" and hence able to actively see Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the characteristics of a person who has actually developed his *bhāva* (ecstatic love) for Kṛṣṇa. The characteristics are as follows:

1. He is always anxious to utilize his time in the devotional service of the Lord. He does not like to be idle. He wants service always, twenty-four hours a day, without deviation
2. He is always reserved and perseverant.
3. He is always detached from all material attraction.
4. He does not long for any material respect in return for his activities.
5. He is always certain that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy upon him.
6. He is always very eager to serve the Lord faithfully.
7. He is very much attached to the chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord.
8. He is always eager to describe the transcendental qualities of the Lord.
9. He is very pleased to live in a place where the Lord's pastimes are performed, e.g. Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā.

— NOD, Ch. 18

Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us of two kinds of perception. Let's hear what he has to say.

There are two conceptions of presence — the physical conception and the vibrational conception. The physical conception is temporary, whereas the vibrational conception is eternal. When we enjoy or relish the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's teachings in Bhagavad-gītā, or when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we should know that by those vibrations He is immediately present. He is absolute, and because of this His vibration is just as important as His physical presence. When we feel separation from Kṛṣṇa or the spiritual master, we should just try to remember their words of instructions, and we will no longer feel that separation. Such association with Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master should be association by vibration, not physical presence. That is real association. We put so much stress on seeing, but when Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth, so many people saw Him and did not realize that He is God; so what is the advantage of seeing? By seeing Kṛṣṇa, we will not understand Him, but by listening carefully to His teachings, we can come to the platform of understanding.

*We can touch Kṛṣṇa immediately by sound vibration; therefore we should give more stress to the sound vibration.*¹

— Elevation to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

The physical conception what we see with our mundane eyes, is not only temporary but it will bind us to the temporary. If we become attached to the Rādhā-kuṇḍa we presently see, and build mental *saṁskāras* of it, that will bring us back again to this realm — and our form may not even be human!

So what does this mean for us, practically speaking? In his Text 8 purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's explanation of how we progress from *śravaṇa-dāśa* (hearing about Kṛṣṇa and His world) to *sampatti-dāśa* (the perfection of re-establishing our eternal identity and our loving relationship of service with Kṛṣṇa). So much depends on the quality of our hearing and our attachment for hearing about Kṛṣṇa and His world.

Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and the *Dhāma* in general, is a wonderful source of mercy and stimulus for remembering Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and Their world. But we should be very careful not to develop attachment for how it manifests to our conditioned vision. Best to hear from our *ācāryas*, rather than just see — for as Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us, the vibrational conception is eternal and will take up to the eternal!

¹ In both his books and lectures Śrīla Prabhupāda uses different terminology to say the same thing. Here he is using vibrational conception/physical conception. Sometimes he uses *śabdāḥ pratyakṣa* or *śāstra-cakṣuḥ* sensory perception.