

The Entrance Fee

What is the entrance fee to the spiritual world?

Eager longing.

In the third text of Sri Vraja Vilasa Stava, we can feel the pulse of the longing of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami when he says, “I greatly yearn to see my most beloved king and queen, Sri Sri Radha Madhava. Even a single memory is like a drop from the nectar ocean of Their sweetness, and this nectar has inflamed my heart with the desire to see Them.” Then he continues through the following verses where he bows down to the land of Vraja and its residents.

My dear everyone, let us stop here. Let us ask ourselves the question whether we have also, in our spiritual life, tasted the drop of sweetness that came from the spiritual world. Ask yourself, was it perhaps during a kirtan that something came to you like a ‘flash of light in the darkness’—as Bhaktivinoda Thakura says. Was it perhaps when you met a great devotee, or when you read a sacred text, or when you sang a bhajan? When has your heart become alive?

The Vedic literature offers us an interesting and quite thought-provoking analogy. When one places a corpse on top of a hill in the midst of a thunderstorm, lightning will strike the corpse, and it will jump up. This image is quite dramatic, I admit, but this is what happens when one has spiritual realization—it’s a lightning that comes into one’s mind, into one’s intelligence. It inspires one so much that one starts to dance and chant. This lightning is the sweetness—the sweet lightning of Radha and Krishna, whom one sees by some great indescribable stroke of spiritual good fortune.

Jiva Goswami gives us a little hint of the self-manifested sweetness of Radha and Krishna and his desire to see Them—

just like Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. Jiva Goswami writes at the end of his Kṛṣṇa-sandarbhā, “May Radha and Madhava, who are shining with a golden and bluish splendor, attack my mind in all respects with Their sweetness.” Of course, what he has in mind is that our mind, which may be full of material tendencies, will be defeated by the overriding attractiveness of Krishna.

Here in the land of Vraja, the atmosphere is pervaded with the sweetness of the divine couple. It is here in the land of Vraja where we become touched by Their indescribable attractiveness. But also here we have to come out from under the clouds of our material mind. Books containing the realized descriptions of the ācāryas can help us put in our head an utkantha - a sincere longing - above the endless chatter of the mind, which comments on everything in an almost material way.

Staying here in Vraja, for me, has always been something which happened in three phases:

First phase – I bring my whole westernness with me;

Second phase – I relax the tensions in the mind, the constant on-the-go; and

Third phase – a drop of that sweetness enlivens and awakens my soul to thoughts and feelings of devotion.

May the land of Vrindavan give its blessings to all of us. Wherever you are listening to this, please tune yourself into the mood of Vrindavan, and you will surely experience that lightning-like inspiration in your life.

See you for the next Kartik Inspiration!

May Radha and Madhava,
who are shining with a golden
and bluish splendor, attack my mind in
all respects with Their sweetness.

Jiva Goswami

Raghunatha Dasa Goswami
RAGHUNATHA DASA GOSWAMI