

Vrindavan Pilgrimage

by bhaktin Kersti



This year I have had the good fortune to do Vraja Mandala Parikrama twice. Accompanied by my husband Arjuna, we joined Parasurama Prabhu and his team to travel village to village by bullock cart. To see the simple lifestyle of the residents of Vrindaban, the vrajabasis, is such an amazing experience.

There was no hot water, no toilets, no a.c. rooms or MVT pizzas and ice cream. We preached during the day, distributing books and prasadam whilst chanting the Holy names



At night we showed devotional movies and held kirtan in the villages. After the program we would go door to door to do madhukari, which was one of my favourite activities. It is amazing how hospitable the Vrajabasis are, when you enter their home they will immediately bring you a chair and offer you some water. They might not have much, but whatever they have they are ready share it with you. Basically the Vrajabasis eat rotis, a thick chapatti, along with dahl or vegetables which are invariably full of chillis! Vrajabasi rotis are extremely tasty. Because they make them in a real fire. Instead of a rollingpin women clap their hands together very fast until the piece of dough between their palms becomes flat and round in shape. Sometimes some family would specially make a pile of hot rotis for us. A few times I tried to learn make rotis in a similar way but I was not successful. The Vrajabasis, however, had a really good laugh watching me doing it.





People in Vraja are very simple, that was one of the things that really attracted me. Although I can't speak any Hindi or they can't speak English, it is very easy to communicate. Women always asked me how many children I have. Hearing I don't have any, they were looking at me with really compassionate eyes. Another topic was how much gold I have? After searching my body and realizing I only have a little silver jewellery I got another compassionate look from them.



Another amazing thing was that even working very hard in the fields all day Vrajabasis always have energy to give you a big, sincere smile.

For Vrajabasis the real devotees live under a different trees every night. This is a traditional lifestyle of a sadhu. The Vrajabasis appreciated our endeavours as sadhus. So it was nice to get this experience



I also got to take care of the bulls – feeding them, giving them water and brushing them. The bulls are great devotees. The Vrajabasi children know the importance of the cows and bulls. They always ask us what the bulls names are.



This time we distributed 65 000 small books, 150 Bhagavad Gitas and 40 Prabhupada Lilamritas.

A little more than when we travelled in March/April. Without any hesitation I can say that travelling by bullock cart in Vraja, going village to village and distributing books and prasadam – has been one of the best thing I have ever experienced. I really hope I have a chance to do this wonderful service again.