

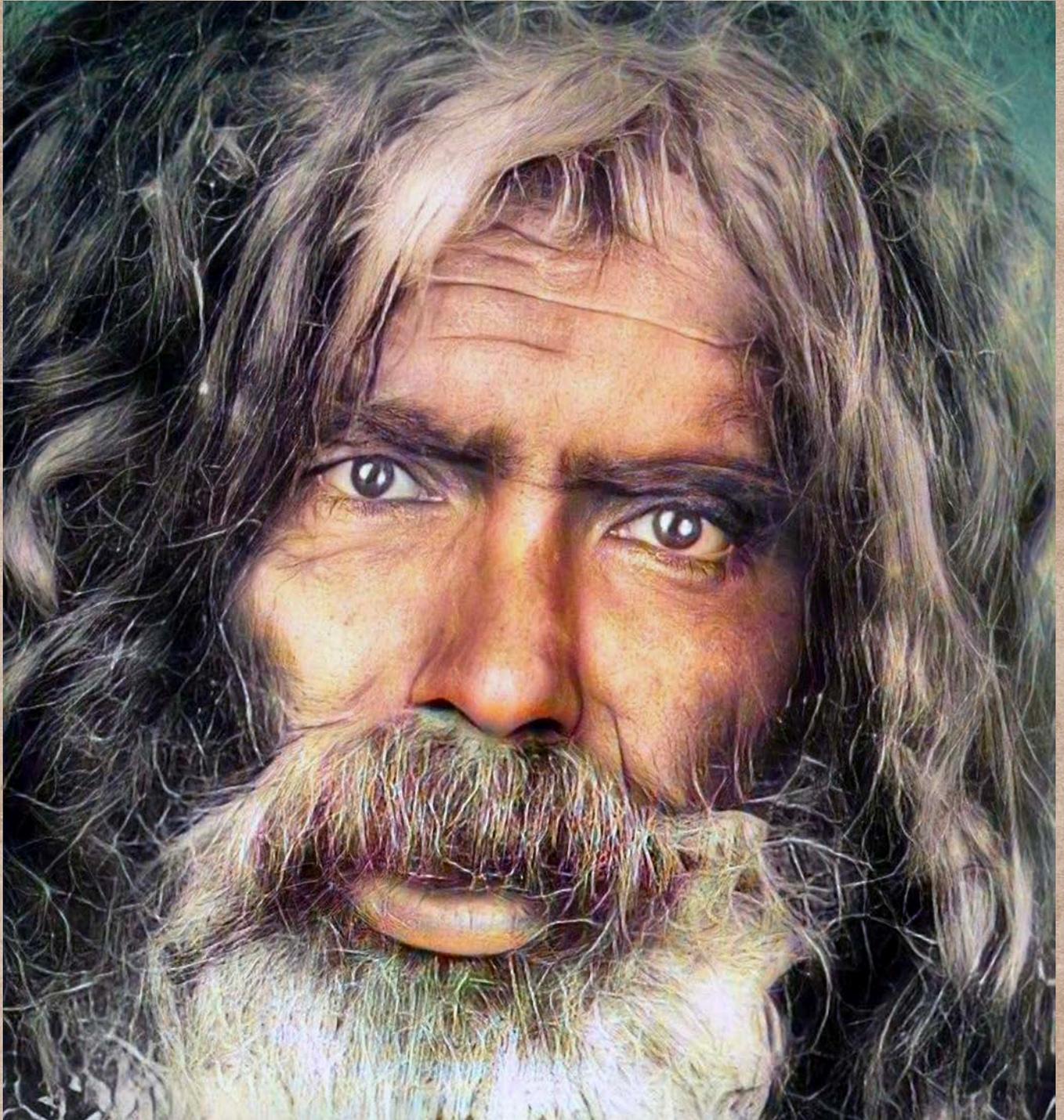
*Sri Krishna Kathamrita*



*Bindu*

Issue 554

**Vamsidas Babaji and the Madness of the Saints**





# Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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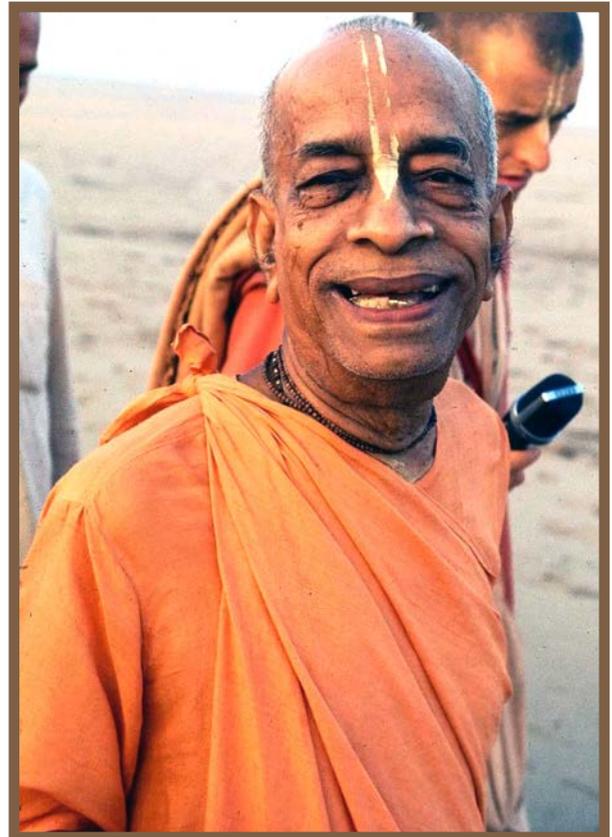
## MADNESS



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Srila Bilvamangal Thakur prays in his book as follows: “Let Srimati Radharani purify the whole world, because she has surrendered herself completely unto Krishna. Out of her ecstatic love for him, she sometimes acted just like an addled person and attempted to churn yogurt, although there was no yogurt in the pot. And seeing this, Krishna became so enchanted by Radharani that he began to milk a bull instead of a cow.” These are some of the instances of insanity or madness in connection with the loving affairs of Radha and Krishna. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam it is said that when Krishna entered the poisonous waters of the Yamuna, Srimati Yashoda Devi went insane. Instead of searching for curative herbs, she began to speak to the trees as if they were snake charmers. With folded hands she began to bow down to the trees, asking them,



Unknown photographer

Cover: Vamsidas Babaji. Unknown photographer. Adjusted with AI.



Painting by P. Ghasiram Nathdwara. S. S. Brijabasi and Sons.

### *Krishna's Flute*

“What is the medicinal herb which can check Krishna’s dying from this poisonous water?” This is an instance of insanity caused by some great danger.

How a devotee can be in a state of insanity because of ecstatic love is described in the Tenth Canto,

Thirtieth Chapter, verse 4, of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, wherein the *gopīs* were searching for Krishna in the forests of Vrindavan. The *gopīs* were loudly singing the glories of Krishna and wandering from one forest to another in search of him. They knew

Unknown artist



Krishna calls the cows

that Krishna is not localized, but all-pervading. He is in the sky, he is in the water, he is in the air, and he is the Supersoul in everyone's heart. Thus, the *gopīs* began to inquire from all kinds of trees and plants about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is an instance of ecstatic madness on the part of devotees.

Similarly, there are symptoms of diseases caused by ecstatic love. This condition is credited by learned scholars as being *mahābhāva*. This highly elevated condition is also called *divyonmāda*, or transcendental madness. 🍌

—Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 29, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Bombay, 1989.

## THE DIRTY PUJARI



### A Remembrance of Srila Prabhupada From Nanda Kumar Das

Over and over Prabhupada said that the prime prerequisites for a cook or a pujari are cleanliness and punctuality. For example, the original group of devotees that went to India would stay in wealthy people's homes, and then go to engagements in nearby villages. Once, some villagers took us to their small Krishna temple, which was unkempt. The altar was dirty, and the pujari



Photo by Ashutosh Dvivedi on Unsplash

*The 11th century Sas Bahu Vishnu Temple near the Gwalior Fort in Madhya Pradesh*

was wild. His front teeth were missing. During the *ārati* he offered the various items quickly, and after he offered the water, he turned around and threw it in our faces.

As we were leaving, I asked, “Srila Prabhupada, I have a question about this temple.” He said, “Ask me later.” Later, when there was no one else there, he said, “What is your question?” I said, “You have taught us that cleanliness is essential in deity worship, but that temple was dirty. I was wondering if Krishna is really there.” He said, “Yes, Krishna is there. Our standard is cleanliness. You keep that standard. Don’t judge anyone else by what they do. I saw that *pūjārī*. He was different, but his heart was for Krishna, and therefore that’s what we see.” Several times he either said to me or I heard him say, “All the rules and regulations are meant for us to apply to ourselves. We are not to judge anybody else.” 🍊

— From Srila Prabhupada Remembrances, Volume 2, Chapter 22.

## THE OPPOSITE PATH



### *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

There is no *dharma* at all in subjects enjoyed by the masses. Whatever ethics or morality exist within the universe, and whatever external *dharma* is present, are not pure truth. All *dharma*, all truth, is situated at

Mahaprabhu’s lotus feet. On hearing this, people may say that I am crazy, but I don’t mind. Let them say that I have given up the correct path and gone in the opposite direction. I will continue on the opposite path. 🍊

— Cited by Bhakti Vikasa Swami in *Śrī Bhaktisiddhanta Vaibhava*. Bhakti Vikasa Trust. Surat, India. 2009.

## RADHA-PREMA MAKES KRISHNA MAD



### *By Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

*In the following excerpt of a lecture, Gour Govinda Maharaja describes how paradoxically the divine madness experienced by the devotees is also experienced by the Lord himself when confronted with the topmost ecstasy of Srimati Radharani.*

Try to understand the purport of *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Krishna favorably — *ānukūla*. What is this “favorably?” This word has a deep purport. Radharani serves Krishna without desire for material profit or gain, fruitive activity, or philosophical speculation, and that is called pure devotion.



*Krishna, disguised as a gopī, serves Srimati Radharani*

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Purushottam. Still, he is completely bound up with the love of Radha. He becomes mad after *rādhā-prema*. How does he become mad? The question is who becomes mad? Let us first analyze this.

There are three reasons, three causes, why a man may become mad. Number one, if someone pays too much attention to a particular subject matter, if he thinks so much about that topic, he'll become mad.

The second reason is one's limited capacity to contain something. If something is beyond your capacity to contain then you'll become mad. The example is a fifteen-watt bulb. If a hundred watts of electricity is sent to fifteen-watt bulb then it will burst. It is beyond its capacity. If something comes that is beyond one's capacity to handle, then one may become mad.

The third reason is if someone's pure knowledge is insufficient he may become mad. These are three examples why a person becomes mad.

If we analyze, we can understand that these three reasons are not applicable to Krishna. Krishna is *pūrṇa-brahma*, completely full [completely satisfied]. So why would he think of something else?

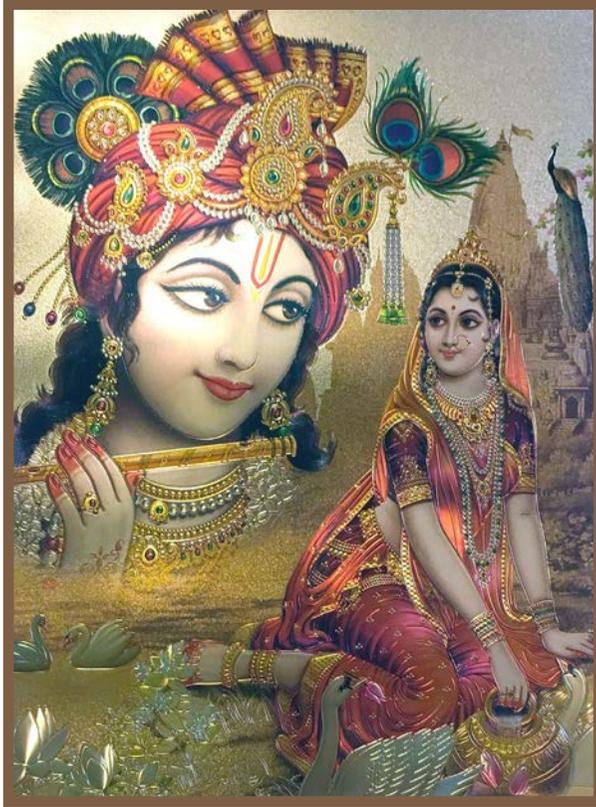
And how can his knowledge be insufficient? *Māyā* covers the intelligence, however *māyā* cannot touch him — he is *māyādhiṣa*, the master of *māyā*. He cannot become *māyā-dāsa*. He is *māyādhiṣa*. So there is no question of his knowledge being inadequate. That is also not applicable.

Krishna is the complete reservoir of all mellows, *rasas*. He is *paramānanda-rasa-svarūpa*. How could he feel some deficiency and think of something so intensely and become mad? If you analyze we'll find these three reasons are not applicable to Krishna. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 4.238-239), Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has said:

*kṛṣṇera vicara eka āchaye antare  
pūrṇānanda-pūrṇa-rasa-rūpa kahe more  
āmā ha-ite ānandita haya tribhuvana  
āmāke ānanda dibe — aiche kon jana*

Krishna thought, "I am the reservoir of all mellows, completely satisfied. *āmā ha-ite ānandita haya tribhuvana* — only I can give pleasure to the three planetary systems. Is there anybody that can give me pleasure? I give pleasure to everybody; the three planetary systems get pleasure from me. Is there anybody who can give me pleasure?

*āmā haite yāra haya śata śata guṇa  
sei-jana āhlādite pāre mora mana*



Unknown artist

*Krishna is always thinking of Radha*

“If someone is there who is hundreds of times more qualified, only he or she can give me pleasure, otherwise no one can give me pleasure.” (Cc. ādi 4.240)

Krishna is completely full, *pūrṇa-brahma*. “Only one who is more qualified than me can give me pleasure. Is there any one?” These are Krishna’s own thoughts. If you analyze them then we can understand that these three reasons of becoming mad are not applicable to Krishna.

This is wonderful. Krishna becomes mad because of Radharani’s incomparable love. In Krishna’s own words (Cc. ādi 4.121-124):

*tāñhāra prathama vāñchā kariye vyākhyāna  
kṛṣṇa kahe, — āmi ha-i raseṇa nidāna*

I shall explain his first desire. Krishna says, “I am the primary cause of all rasas.

*pūrṇānanda-maya āmi cin-maya pūrṇa-tattva  
rādhikāra preme āmā karāya unmatta*

“I am the full spiritual truth and am made of full joy, but the love of Srimati Radharani drives me mad.

*nā jāni rādhāra preme āche kata bala  
ye bale āmāre kare sarvadā vihvala*

“I don’t know the strength of Radharani’s love, with which she always overwhelms me.

*rādhikāra prema — guru, āmi — śiṣya naṭa  
sadā āmā nānā nṛtye nācāya udbhaṭa*

“The love of Radharani is my teacher and I am her dancing pupil, disciple. Her *prema* makes me dance various novel dances.”

In *Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta*, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami has describes Srimati Radharani’s words to Vrinda Devi:

*kasmād vṛnde priya-sakhi hareḥ pāda-mūlāt kuto ‘sau  
kuṇḍārānye kim iha kurute nṛtya-śikṣām guruḥ kaḥ  
tañ tvan-mūrṭiḥ prati-taru-latañ dig-vidikṣu sphurantī  
śailūṣiva bhramati parito nartayantī sva-paścāt*

“O My beloved friend Vrinda, where are you coming from?”

“I am coming from the feet of Sri Hari.”

“Where is he?”

“In the forest at bank of Radha-kunda.”

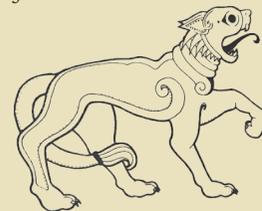
**TEMPLES ARE NOT FOR  
THE LAZY AND CRAZY**

**His Divine Grace**

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

Temples and monasteries should be constructed for the preaching of spiritual consciousness or Krishna consciousness, not to provide free hotels for persons who are useful for neither material nor spiritual purposes. Temples and monasteries should be strictly off limits to worthless clubs of crazy men. In the Krishna consciousness movement, we welcome everyone who agrees at least to follow the movement’s regulative principles — no illicit sex, no intoxication, no meat-eating and no gambling. In the temples and monasteries, gatherings of unnecessary, rejected, lazy fellows should be strictly disallowed. The temples and monasteries should be used exclusively by devotees who are serious about spiritual advancement in Krishna consciousness.

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 7.13.8





Painting by Shital Bandopadhyay, Circa 1900

Madhurya-milana —sweet meeting

“What is he doing there?”

“He is learning dancing.”

“Who is his master?”

“Your image, Radha, revealing itself in every tree and creeper, roaming like a skillful dancer, making him dance behind.” (Govinda-lilāmṛta 8.77, quoted in Cc. ādi 4.125)

*nija-premāsvāde mora haya ye āhlāda  
tāhā ha'te koṭi-guṇa rādhā-premāsvāda*

[Krishna thought:] Whatever pleasure I get from tasting my love of Srimati Radharani, she tastes ten million times more than me by her love. (Cc. ādi 4.126)

*āmi yaiche paraspara viruddha-dharmāśraya  
rādhā-prema taiche sadā viruddha-dharma-maya*

Just as I am the abode of all mutually contradictory characteristics, so Srimati Radharani's love is always full of similar contradictions. (Cc. ādi 4.127)

These verses all speak about *rādhā-prema*, the glories of Radha's love. Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami then quotes a verse from the *Dāna-keli-kaumudī* (2) of Srila Rupa Goswami:

*vibhur api kalayan sadābhivṛddhim  
gurur api gaurava-caryayā vihīnaḥ  
muhur upacita-vakrīmāpi śuddho  
jayati mura-dviṣi rādhikānurāgaḥ*

“All glories to Radha's love for Krishna, the enemy of the demon Mura. Although it is all pervading, it tends to increase at every moment. Although it is important, it is devoid of pride. And although it is pure it is always beset with duplicity.” (Quoted in Cc. ādi 4.131)

That *rādhā-prema* makes Krishna mad. Krishna thinks. “I am *śaktimān*, the possessor of all energies. I possess all different potencies. I am completely full in all pleasure, and I am completely transcendently full of transcendental knowledge. But still I am mad after *rādhā-prema*. *Rādhā-prema* makes me so mad, so much, that in that madness I don't know what I do.”

Sometimes Krishna, becoming afraid of Radharani's mother-in-law Jatila, spends the whole night behind the berry tree in the courtyard of Radharani's mother-in-law. Is that not madness?

Sometimes Krishna sits for a long time waiting on the road where Radharani will pass.

Sometimes just to have a touch of Radharani's body, Krishna comes in the guise of a barber's wife. Other times he comes in the guise of the wife of a gardener making flower garlands. “Yes, I have brought very

nice flower garlands for you, Radharani! Shall I put them around your neck?”

Sometimes he comes in the guise of a beggar woman with sandalwood paste. “I have brought this nicely scented sandalwood paste for you, Radharani! Shall I use it to decorate your face? Shall I decorate your breasts?”

Sometimes Krishna becomes so mad that when he sees a golden creeper he embraces it, thinking that Radharani will embrace him very tightly. These are all symptoms of madness. *Rādhā-prema* makes him mad!

Sometimes he sits on the path where Radha walks. When Radharani passes by he takes some dust and smears it over his whole body and dances. Yes! These are symptoms of madness.

Sometimes when Radharani takes bath in the Yamuna, upstream, Krishna takes bath downstream thinking, “Some of the flowers from her braid may come floating down and touch me.

## MAHAPRABHU'S INSTRUCTIONS TO RAGHUNATH DAS GOSWAMI

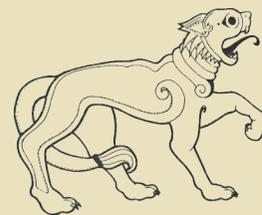
**Caitanya-caritāmṛta madhya 16.237-239**

*sthira hañā ghare yāo, nā hao vātula  
krame krame pāya loka bhava-sindhu-kūla*

*markaṭa-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāñā  
yathā-yogyā viṣaya bhuñja' anāsakta hañā*

*antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra  
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra*

“Be patient and return home. Don't be a crazy fellow. By and by you will be able to cross the ocean of material existence. You should not make yourself a show-bottle devotee and become a false renunciant. For the time being, enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it. Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Krishna will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of *māyā*.”





*Krishna serves the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani*

Her *kuṅkuma* powder will come floating down and touch my body.” Thinking like that he takes bath downstream when Radharani takes bath upstream. Is this not a symptom of madness?

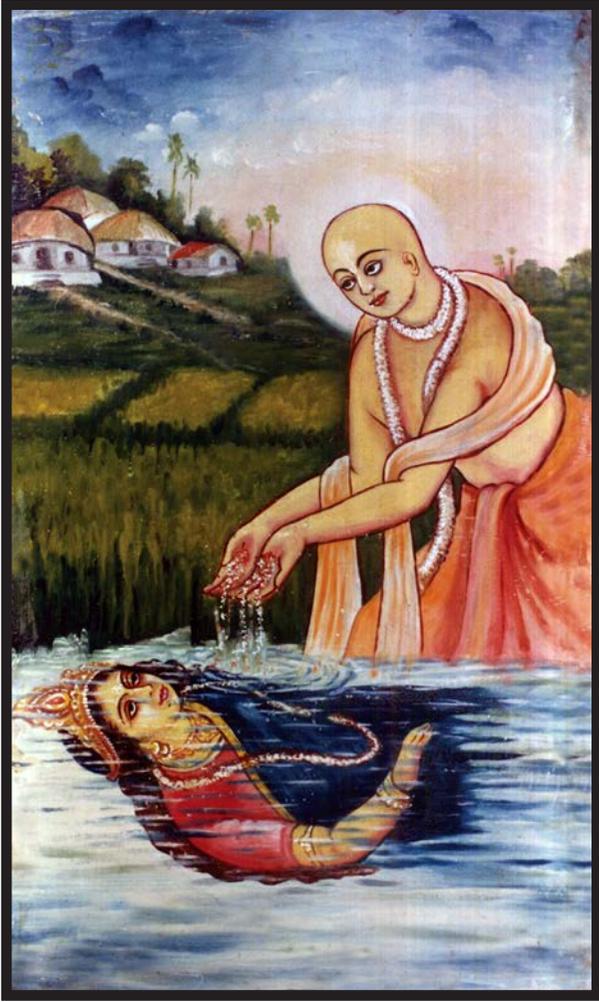
Sometimes Krishna chants the name of Radha and dances like a madman in the forests of Vrindavan or on the bank of Radha-kund. Sometimes he sits on the bank of the Yamuna, crying and crying for Radha, “Radhe! Radhe! Radhe!” These are all symptoms of madness.

This is Radha’s Krishna. *rādhā vinā tinho kārō naya* — Krishna doesn’t belong to anyone but Radha

(from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta’s commentary on *ādi khaṇḍa*, chapter 1, of *Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata*). He only belongs to Radharani. Krishna is completely submitted to *rādhā-prema*. He sometimes becomes afraid, “I may lose it! I may lose it!”

All *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* are followers of Srimati Radharani. Under the guidance of Radharani they develop *rādhā-prema*, otherwise no one can render loving service to Krishna because Krishna submits only to *rādhā-prema*. Even Chandravali’s Krishna is not *ānukūla* Krishna, only Radha’s Krishna is *ānukūla* Krishna.

Unknown artist. Painting found in Haridas Thakur's samadhi at Jagannath Puri.



*Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the mirror of Radha's emotions*

Prayojana-tattva-ācārya, Srila Raghunath Das Goswami says, “If Krishna, standing alone without Radha, calls me, ‘Come, come!’ I won’t go there. But if Krishna is there with Radharani even if Krishna is not calling me, I will run there very swiftly.”

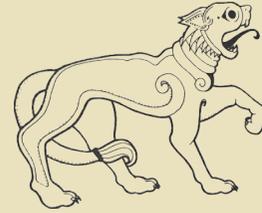
This is the very deep purport of ānukūla Krishna, favorably serving Krishna as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has explained it. Not everyone can understand this. The only ones who can understand are those devotees who have given up *varṇāśrama-dharma*, who have given up *karma-miśra-bhakti*, *jñāna-miśra-bhakti* — who given up everything — *sarva-dharmān parityajya* — who have abandoned all *dharma*, given up all the teachings of *Veda*, *Vedānta*, *Upaniṣads*, *Gītā* and *Mahābhārata*. They are *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. They have no other desires. *Karmis* desire material enjoyment, *jñānis* desire

## WHAT SRILA PRABHUPADA CAME TO GIVE

Aindra Das

“What is it that Srila Prabhupada actually came to give us? Everything else is superfluous if we don’t develop attachment to the chanting of the holy name of Krishna. If we develop attachment to the chanting of the holy name of Krishna and we serve to help everyone else develop that attachment to the chanting of the holy name, then everything else starts to make sense.”

— <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Lj1KAOCGnnw>



material liberation, but the dear devotees are completely devoid of those desires. They only desire how to get the mercy of Radharani and develop such love. That is *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādi*.

They are very dear devotees, servants and maidservants, *kiṅkarīs*, as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur says, “O when will I become a *kiṅkari* — a maidservant of Radharani?” That is called *mañjarī-bhāva*. Maidservants of Radharani’s dear *sakhīs* are *mañjarīs*. Only they can understand *ānukūla* Krishna — Radha Krishna. Otherwise, nobody can understand it.

Therefore, in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 1.6) it is discussed that Krishna is thinking, *śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kīdṛśo* — “What is Radharani’s love? I cannot understand! What is my beauty that Radharani relishes? I cannot understand! And what pleasure or happiness Radharani gets by tasting the mellow of my beauty? I cannot understand!” These three types of greed are there. To fulfill these three kinds of greed, Krishna came as Gaura, because as Krishna he couldn’t understand these things. This is *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam*. Try to understand its purport. 🍌

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar on 6 September 1995.

## THE UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR OF SRILA VAMSIDAS BABAJI



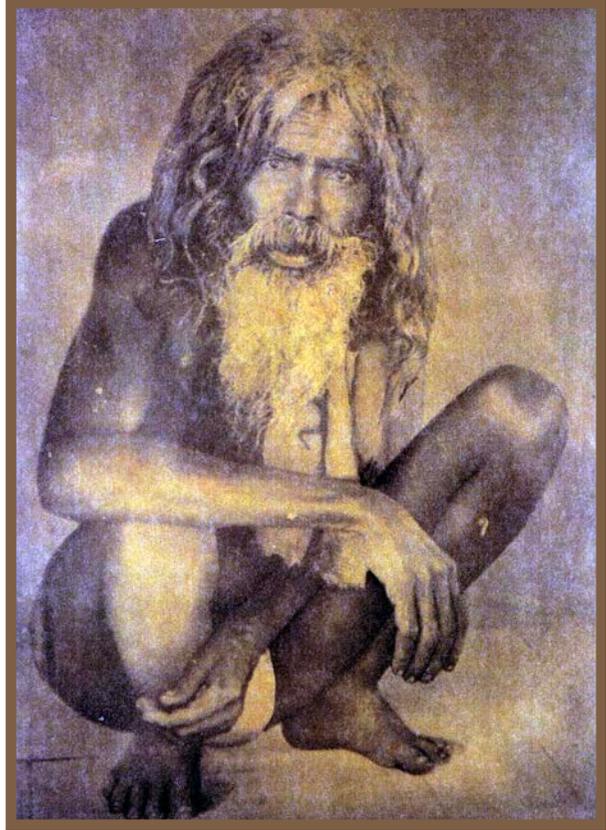
*Bhakti Vikasa Swami*

*Paramahansa bābājīs* in the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* tradition do not follow any regulations of scripture, neither the worldly ones of the *varṇāśrama* system nor those meant for spiritual advancement by the process of *sādhana-bhakti*. Thus they are known as *avadhūtas* (devotees beyond ordinary rules), and their behavior often appears eccentric to ordinary people.

However, even among *avadhūta bābājīs*, the character of Vamsidas Babaji is unique. His behavior was so unusual that in any culture less spiritually enlightened than that of India, he would almost certainly have been considered crazy. Although physically present in this world, he had little connection with it. He was about six feet tall and strongly built. His hair and beard were uncut, matted, and disheveled. He generally didn't take bath, and his eyes looked wild. He wore a loincloth only and nothing more.

Although Vamsidas looked dirty and bedraggled, he was healthy and strong due to his direct, ecstatic contact with Krishna. Sometimes Babaji Maharaja fasted for many days, not even taking water. Sometimes, when he travelled, devotees could not keep up with him even when Vamsidas was more than eighty years old. Even when he was unwell, he ate foods that were liable to increase his sickness. Still, without impediment, he continued his *bhajana* and travelling. In regard to the sage Kardama Muni (who, before marrying Devahuti, also appeared unkempt), Srila Prabhupāda makes the following remarks:

He [Kardama Muni] looked healthy because he had directly received the nectarean sound vibrations from the lotus lips of the Personality of Godhead. Similarly, one who hears the transcendental sound vibration, Hare Krishna, also improves in health. We have actually seen that many *brahmacārīs* and *grhasthas* connected with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness have improved in health, and a lustre has come to their faces. The comparison of the sage to an unpolished gem is very appropriate. Even if a gem just taken from a mine looks unpolished, the lustre of the gem cannot be stopped. Similarly, although Kardama was not properly dressed and his body was not properly cleansed, his overall appearance was gemlike. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.21.45)



Unknown photographer



Unknown photographer

(Top and bottom:) The only two known photos of Vamsidas Babaji

As with Kardama Muni, Vamsidas's uncommon appearance could not hide his transcendental prowess.

The unconventional ways of Vamsidas also remind us of Lord Nityananda Avadhuta. The behaviour of Lord Nityananda and his followers was inexplicable to all except those blessed by them. For example, Lord Nityananda sometimes came to the home of Lord Chaitanya completely naked. Although fully grown, he sometimes acted like an infant child and sucked the breast of Malini, the wife of Srivas Thakur. Gadadhar Das sometimes forgot himself and called out loudly like a *gopī* selling milk. Murari Chaitanya used to slap tigers and stay underwater for days on end. Abhiram Thakur used to beat people with a whip named *Jaya Maṅgala*. Anyone touched by that whip would immediately become ecstatic in Krishna consciousness.

Similarly, Vamsidas often spoke in an unintelligible manner, with little apparent connection between one sentence and the next. His words were rendered even more incomprehensible by his Mymensingh dialect, which was unintelligible to the residents of Nabadwip. However, he also understood and spoke standard Bengali. Sometimes what he was saying could fairly easily be understood. At other times the meaning could only be guessed at. Who he was talking to and what he was talking about was also often unclear. However, everything he said was related to Krishna. Those devotees who had a little insight into his unique realizations could have some appreciation for what he was saying.

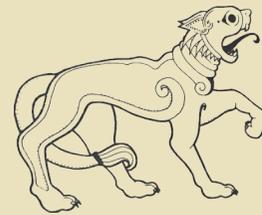
Sometimes, according to his desire, Babaji Maharaja narrated *līlās* of the different places in Vraja Mandala. Sometimes he narrated *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. At other times he heartily sang the glories of Nabadwip Mandala. Sometimes he laughed long and loud. Sometimes he madly told stories of *gaura-līlā* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in a disjointed manner — jumping from one story to another without even finishing one — according to the flow of his mind. Sometimes he was completely silent for long periods. Sometimes he talked only with his Gopal, ignoring the presence of others. Then again he would loudly call out, “Bhakata-vatsala Hari! Prana-vallabha Hari!”

Babaji Maharaja often sang songs of his own composition. Although these impromptu songs had no proper metre, rhyme, or tune, they issued from a heart filled with simple, pure devotion and thus were more pleasing to Krishna than many thousands of expertly arranged Vedic hymns.

## VAMSIDAS BABAJI AND THE THIEF

Vamsidas Baba never locked the door of his hut when he went out for *bhikṣā* or to bathe in the Ganga. If someone asked him why he did not lock the door, he said, “If the owner of the house himself does not keep a watch and has a soft corner for the thief, what is the use of locking the house? I do not even keep the keys of the lock with me. The lock has three keys. All are with the three boys [his personal deities]. One is with Gaura, one with Nitai and one with Gadadhar.” After entrusting the lock and the keys to the three boys, Baba used to be free from anxiety. If while he was out a cow entered the hut and turned everything topsy turvy, he would be angry with the boys. If someone stole something from the hut he would say, “Gaura has a soft corner for the *Nadīyāvāsīs*, the residents of his own Nabadwip dham. Therefore, he gives things away to them. I am, after all, an outsider.” Once a gold necklace, given by someone to Gaura, was stolen, when *bābājī* had gone out for *bhikṣā*. On returning to the hut, he kept on scolding Gaura and asking him to whom he had given away the necklace, for about two hours. Towards the evening he got a hint. He then went to the house of the thief and asked him for the necklace. The thief pushed him down the verandah of his house. He was hurt, but he did not say anything. How could Gaura tolerate this? The thief soon died as well as all the other members of his family.

— O.B.L. Kapoor. *The Saints of Bengal*. Sarasvati Jayasri Classics. New Delhi. 1995



Vamsidas hardly ever spoke with anyone except his deities and a few intimate devotees. He would not speak to others directly. Even if they spoke to him, he would reply to them by talking to his deities. Even with his constant associates, Vamsidas would not

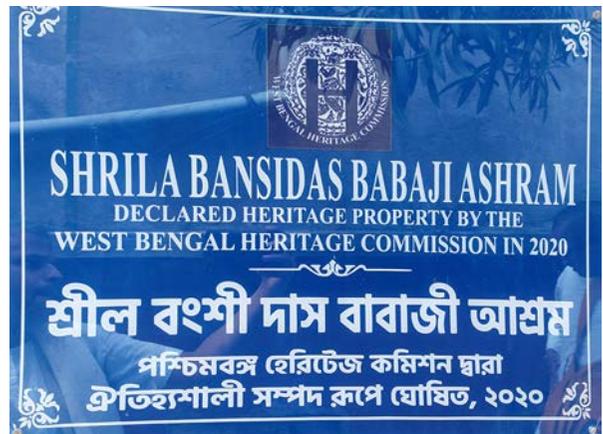


Photos by Mami Gopal Das, Mayapur

Top: The deities of Vamsidas Babaji in Nabadwip; Middle: The ashram of Vamsidas; Bottom: sign at the ashram

talk much. He would often abuse one of his servants, calling him a “*harāma jyāda*,” which means “a big pig”.

Many people approached Vamsidas with all kinds of offerings and religious questions, or simply to take his *darśana*. However, Babaji Maharaja had little interest in meeting outside people and frequently seemed to be unaware of their presence. Even if he did answer questions, his replies often seemed to make little sense. Many times such questioners would leave disappointed. Vamsidas knew the motive and mood of everyone who came to see him. If he liked a person who came and asked a question, he would answer to



his deities and not directly to that person. Generally, those who approached Vamsidas with a sincere motive would get a satisfactory reply. Sometimes devotees would go to Vamsidas with a question, but they might not express it to him directly — not saying it out loud. However, Vamsidas would speak to his deities and answer that unspoken question. Someone else might go to him and be ignored. Thus, Babaji Maharaja was unpredictable.

Not only did Vamsidas shun the company of ordinary worldly people, but he also did not mix with the many pseudo-*vaiṣṇavas* living in Nabadwip at that time. Despite his apparent wildness, Vamsidas Babaji was not without a keen sense of discrimination. He rigidly stuck to the principle of *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpa prātikūlyasya varjanam*: accepting everything favourable for the execution of his devotional service and rejecting everything unfavourable for it. He discerned the intention of those who approached him and was always careful to avoid bad association.

*Asat-saṅga tyāga — ei vaiṣṇava ācāra* — avoiding the association of persons uninterested in pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is the first principle of *vaiṣṇava* behaviour. At that time, many people belonging to *apasampradāyas* (unauthorized, deviant sects) were posing as devotees and crowding Nabadwip with their imaginative ideas and practices. Ordinary people might accept anyone wearing *tilaka* and neck beads as a great devotee. However, pure devotees of Lord Chaitanya exercise their discrimination and reject imitators. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur was particularly outspoken in his deprecation of the *apasampradāyas*.

Vamsidas often loudly called out the names of Hari. He would call out names such as “Govardhana-dhari Hari”, “Prana-vallabha Hari”, and so on. But he especially often called out, “Bhakata-vatsala Hari”, the word “Hari” being out loudly, the last syllable being drawn out plaintively. Sometimes he would go on and on, loudly calling out these names over and over again.

Babaji Maharaja was fond of Narottam Das Thakur’s songs, especially “*Nitāi-pada-kamala*,” which he would sing every day in a sweet voice. He often sang or quoted, *nitāiyer karuṇā habe, vraje rādhā kṛṣṇa pābe* — “By the mercy of Lord Nityananda, one can attain to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan.” From the free manner in which he quoted them, it appears that he had learned Narottam Das’ *Prārthanā* and

*Prema-bhakti-candrikā* by heart. Sometimes he quoted lines from these songs and spoke out his emotions generated by those words. Then again he would quote more lines, maybe from a different song or from a different part of the same song.

Vamsidas always thought of Radha’s and Krishna’s pastimes or Mahaprabhu’s and Nityananda Prabhu’s pastimes. He always sang songs about them and always served them with great love.

Vamsidas saw everything in a Krishna conscious way. For example, he might hear someone say the word “government” and he would exclaim, “Oh, Govardhan. Govardhana-dhari.” He converted everything and related it to Krishna.

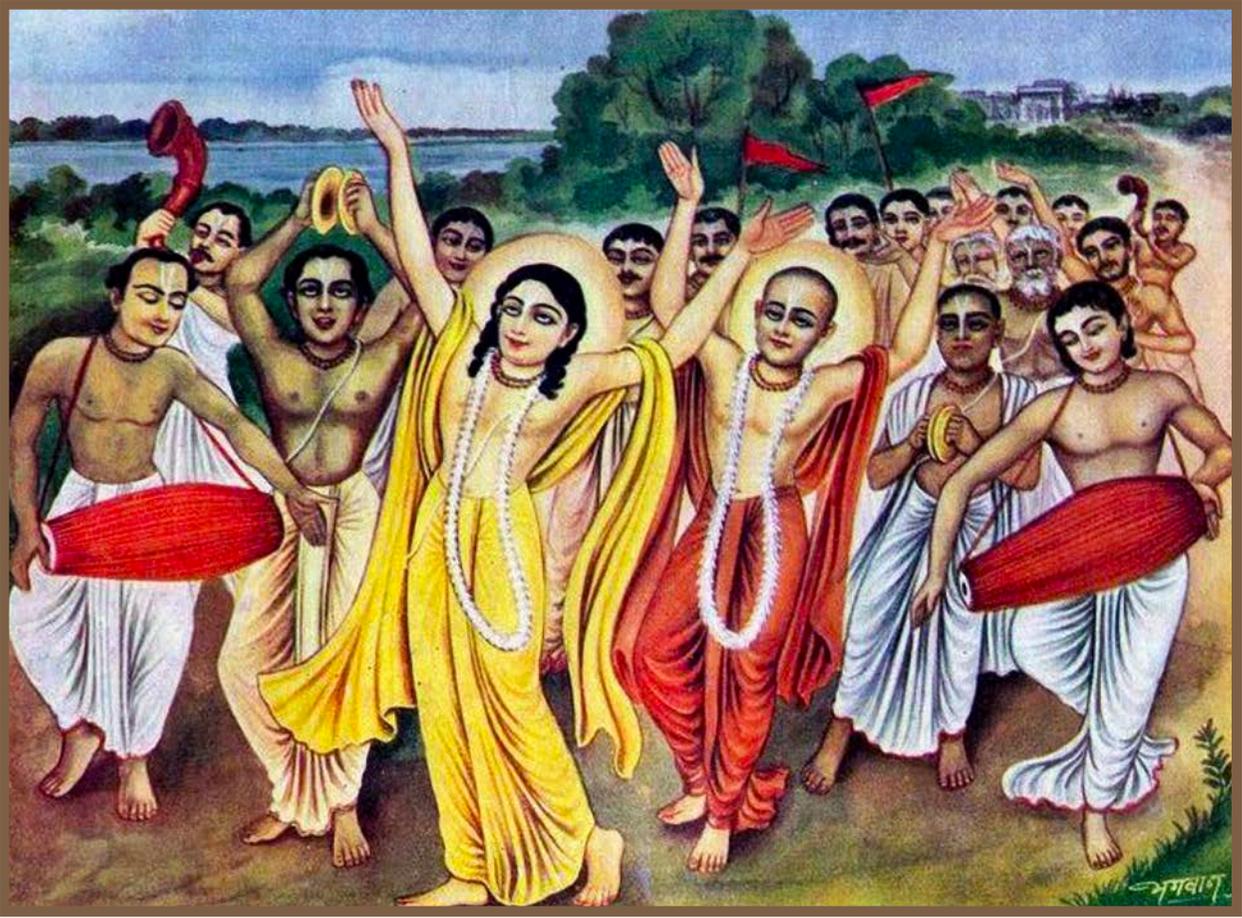
Vamsidas never referred to himself in the first person (“I” and “mine”), but spoke of himself in the third person (“Vamsidas” or sometimes just “Vamsi”). For instance, he would not say, “I had to go there,” but rather he would say, “Vamsidas had to go there.”

Although living in another world, Babaji Maharaja was not totally unaware of what was happening around him in this world. When necessary, he expressed external consciousness. For instance, he sometimes ordered his associates to make travel arrangements. He dealt with the outside world mostly through his companions, for he seldom spoke to outsiders directly.

Even though Vamsidas appeared to talk like a madman, he never said anything inconsistent with the correct conclusion of the scriptures. Everything he said was in line with the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta*. There are many people who pretend to be advanced devotees, but those who are actually absorbed in the spontaneous, loving mood of devotion to Krishna never deviate from the correct philosophy. For one who is a pretender, this is not possible.

Vamsidas Babaji Maharaja mostly stayed in Nabadwip town, in the area of Raniganj. He lived there in a *bhajana-kuṭīra* (a tiny cottage made from mud and thatch) with his deities of Sri Gaura, Gadadhar and Nityananda, Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, and Bala Gopal.

Vamsidas’s whole existence was simply to be with his deities. He would talk day and night with them and was hardly aware of anything else. His deities, some *kaupīnas*, and a few odds and ends were his only possessions.



The ecstatic kirtana of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his associates

Vamsidas was especially attached to his Gopal deity, who he carried everywhere in his right hand. His Radha-Govinda deities were six inches high and made of *aṣṭadhātu*. His Gaura-Nitai deities were three feet high and made of wood.

Vamsidas worshipped the deities in his own way, with no knowledge of rules and regulations. There was no formal system of worship, no proper routine, no *siṁhāsana*, or any other such arrangement. He simply offered flowers that he collected nearby at midday.

Without *mantras*, *pūjā*, ringing of bells, or any such thing, he offered food to his deities just by giving it to them. Sometimes he fed them and sometimes he didn't. Sometimes he cooked and offered fried chickpeas. Sometimes he cooked *kichari*.

There was no set time, system, or standard. He never put the deities to sleep, woke them up, or anything like that.

Vamsidas's mode of worship was simply to see his deities, live with them, and talk with them in a most intimate and informal manner — sometimes laughing

and sometimes quarreling with them. He hardly spoke to anyone of this world but would spend all day talking to his beloved deities, especially Gopal and Gaura-Nitai. In the morning, on rising, he would recite the first verse of the well-known Sanskrit prayers to the guru that begin with the words, "*Akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalākaram*." Then all day he would simply be plunged in *bhāva*. He would talk on and on with his deities in his thick Mymensingh dialect. Sometimes he would stop speaking as if to listen to what they were saying, and then he would again go on talking. He would ask his deities such questions as, "Did you take your food? How did you find it?" Nobody else could hear what his deities said, and he never revealed what they said to anyone.

Vamsidas had no proper dress for his deities, simply some old pieces of rag that he never changed. In winter, he covered his Radha-Krishna deities with a small cloth, but even that was torn and dirty.

When travelling to Puri or Vrindavan, he would carry Gopal in his hand. His servants would wrap the other deities in a cloth and carry them in a basket.

Even while travelling, whether on a bullock cart, in a boat, or on foot, Vamsidas would go on and on talking to Gopal. On halting, Vamsidas would spend hours on end within his tent. He did not go here and there or take interest in the place he had come to or its inhabitants. He was happy to be with his Lord and did not want anything more than that.

Vamsidas simply loved Krishna and knew nothing else, being ever absorbed in the mood of parental devotion (*vātsalya-rasa*). He cared for his Gopal as a darling child, and attended to him just as a father looks after his son. In this way he worshipped Krishna not with formal rituals but from his heart. 🍌

— *Vaṁsīdāsa Bābājī*. Chapters one and two. Bhakti Vikasa Trust. Surat, India. 2010.

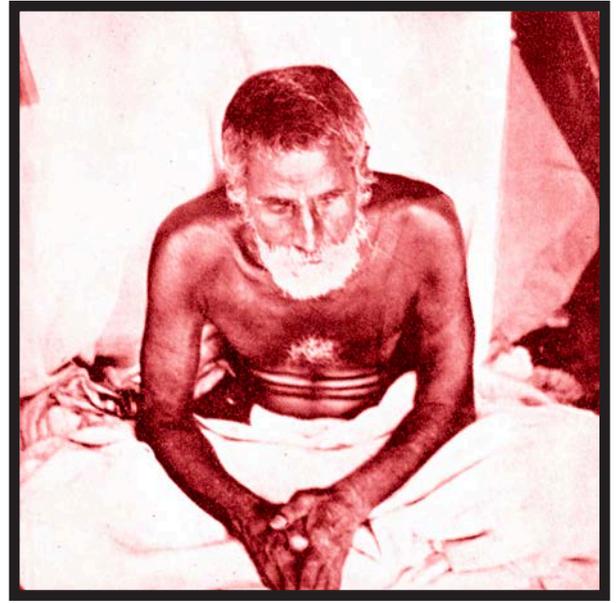
"PLEASE GIVE ME  
YOUR STOOL"



*From the life of  
Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji Maharaja*

Girish Babu, the owner of a *dharmaśālā* in Nabadwip, once came with his wife to see Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji Maharaja. Girish Babu's wife asked Babaji Maharaja, "Please instruct us how we can construct a small cottage for your *bhajan*. We feel pained to see you suffering throughout the rainy season and the hot season with very little shelter."

Srila Gour Kishor replied, "I have no anxiety residing in my small hut. I have only one trouble. Many persons come to me and very deceptively ask again and again, 'Kṛpā koro! Kṛpā koro! Please give your mercy!' They are not interested in their own genuine benefit, and as a result of their coming my *bhajan* is disturbed. If both of you could just give me some of your stool at this place where I perform my *bhajan*, that would be favorable. Then I would be able to chant 'hare kṛṣṇa' day and night. By depositing your stool, people won't like to come here. If you can't do this then many people will come and waste my time and thus, this human form of life."



Unknown photographer

*The only known photo of Srila Gour Kishore Das Babaji*

Girish Babu's wife replied, "Babaji Maharaja, we should certainly take your instruction to heart, but if we pass stool and offer it to you where you perform your *bhajan*, won't that result in unlimited sinful reactions for us?"

Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji said, "I am not a *vaiṣṇava*. Those owners of large temples who wear long matted hair are actually *vaiṣṇavas*. I have not gotten any result in the performance of my *bhajan*. Therefore, the place where I reside is fit to receive your stool. Both of you please offer me your stool, otherwise I have nothing to say to either of you."

Girish Babu and his wife agreed and said, "Even though you won't stay there, still, if we build a second hut then your servants can stay in one of them." Following this, Girish Babu and his wife constructed another small room with the help of a carpenter. Gour Kishor Das Babaji never entered the room Girish Babu had built, because for him the smell of false prestige and the desire for women and wealth was more obnoxious than the smell of ordinary stool. Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji resided for six months in the area where persons that lived at the *dharmaśālā* passed stool. 🍌

— Translated by Vyenkata Das Brahmachari from *Amara Prabhura-kathā*, a collection of articles written by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada.

## GOD'S IDIOTS



There are examples of what may be known as “divine madmen” throughout history and in all religious traditions of the world. Madness is a repugnant diseased condition, wherein the person doesn’t understand reality. However, philosophy is the questioning of reality. Great philosophers throughout history have questioned reality, yet the same act is a symptom of mental illness. Thus, the question arises what constitutes healthy philosophical skepticism and what is mental abnormality?

There was once a conversation in an insane asylum:  
Patient one said, “I am Napoleon!”

Patient two replied, “How do you know?”

Patient one said, “God told me.”

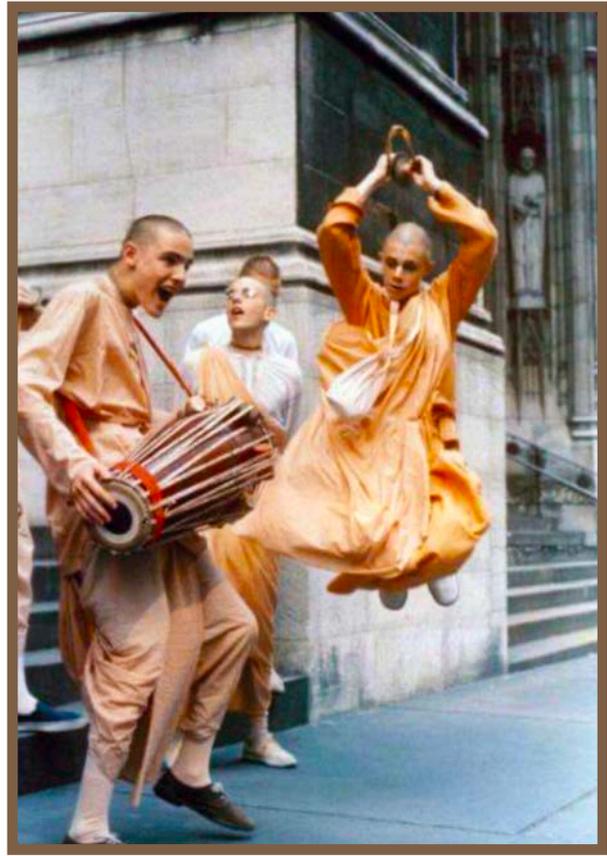
At which time patient three spoke up, “I most certainly did not!”

In a lecture in New York City on 26 December 1966, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada commented:

“...we have written a pamphlet, ‘Who is Crazy?’. Now, how to decide? You are thinking the Swamiji and the party, they are crazy. And we are thinking those who are materially engaged, they’re crazy. Now how to decide it? Can you suggest any way how to decide it, how, who is crazy? Who will decide it? Everyone, two parties, when there is something disagreement, the two parties will say that, ‘You are in wrong,’ while the other party will say, ‘You are.’ Who will decide who is wrong? Can you suggest any one of you who’ll decide? The world is going on in partyism and each opposite party is thinking that the other party is crazy. Now who will decide who is actually crazy? You have come to the point of reason, who is crazy?”

Madness in one sense then is a relative consideration. The word “idiot” is generally defined as a person of low intelligence. It comes from the Greek word *idiōtēs*, which means a private person, a layman, or ignorant person, and comes from the Greek *idios* meaning, “own”, or “private”. This is opposed to the Greek word, *stratiōtēs*, meaning “professional soldier”, a word that is a derivative of the Greek, *stratiā*, meaning “army”. So linguistically, an idiot is an individual who treads his or her own path, not marching with the army or the masses of society.

This is like the Sanskrit word, “*nir*”, which is one of the words for idiot. *Nir*, literally means, “without”, “out of”, or “less”. *Nir* also means someone who doesn’t know letters, an illiterate person. Other meanings are, “one who has lost or neglected the



Unknown photographer

*Devotees doing kirtana in New York in the 1970s*

sacred fire”, “one who is unruly”, “independent”, “completely free”, “simple”, “innocent”, “without purpose”, “with no egotism”, “steady”, “calm”, “having no lusty desires”, and “devoid of hope”. All of which are also qualities of saintly persons who are not understood or appreciated by materialistic persons.

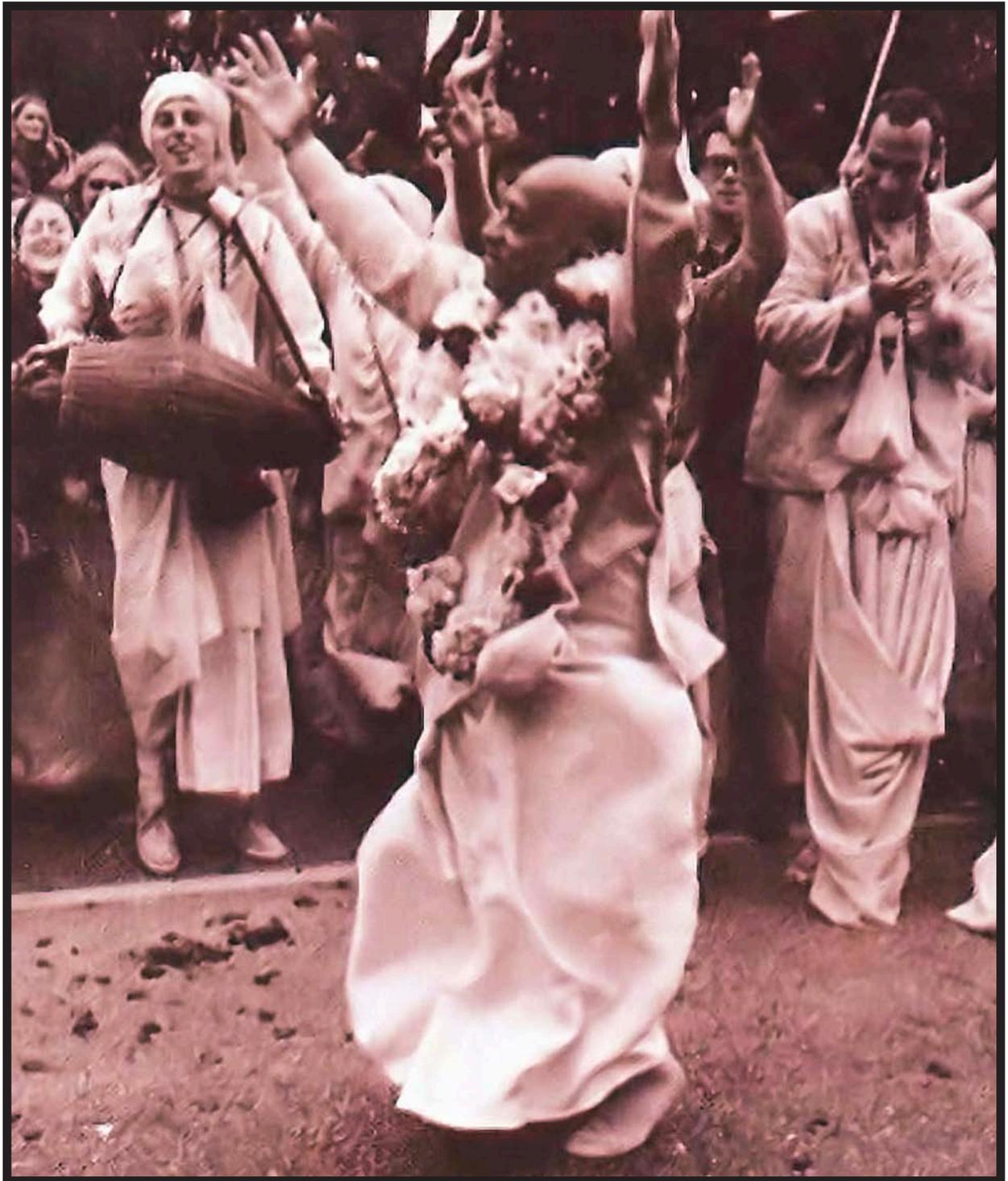
However, as Srila Prabhupada questioned, who is really crazy? In *Bhāgavatam* 3.30.3, Lord Kapiladev describes the madness of the materialists:

*yad adhruvasya dehasya sānubandhasya durmatih  
dhruvāṇi manyate mohād grha-kṣetra-vasūni ca*

The misguided materialist does not know that his very body is impermanent and that the attractions of home, land and wealth, which are in relationship to that body, are also temporary. Out of ignorance only, he thinks that everything is permanent.

Srila Prabhupada comments:

The materialist thinks that persons engaged in Krishna consciousness are crazy fellows wasting time by chanting Hare Krishna, but actually he does not know that he himself is in the darkest region of craziness because of accepting his body as permanent. And, in relation to his body, he accepts his home, his country, his society and all other paraphernalia as permanent. This materialistic acceptance of the permanency of home, land, etc., is called the illusion of *māyā*. This is clearly mentioned here. *Mohād grha-kṣetra-vasūni:*



Unknown photographer

*Srila Prabhupada dancing on the streets of downtown London at the 1973 Ratha-yātrā Festival*

out of illusion only does the materialist accept his home, his land and his money as permanent. Out of this illusion, the family life, national life and economic development, which are very important factors in modern civilization, have grown. A Krishna conscious person knows that this economic development of human society is but temporary illusion.

In another part of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the acceptance of the body as one's self, the acceptance of others as kins-

men in relationship to this body, and the acceptance of the land of one's birth as worshipable, are declared to be the products of an animal civilization. When, however, one is enlightened in Krishna consciousness, he can use these for the service of the Lord. That is a very suitable proposition. Everything has a relationship with Krishna. When all economic development and material advancement are utilized to advance the cause of Krishna consciousness, a new phase of progressive life arises.

Materialistic persons consider the purpose of religion, *dharma*, to be a means to fulfil their desires for *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*, pursuit of wealth, sense gratification, and liberation to some conception of heaven. Thus, they judge someone to be an advanced transcendentalist in terms of their wealth, prestige, and position within the church or religious group. Those persons who are pursuing those goals or helping the church attain them are considered by them to be useful, good, and normal, while someone who has no such personal motivation, but only wants to chant or pursue spiritual acts that have no external material reward are seen as useless, mad, or idiots.

However, who is really mad? Who is really useless? The *Śrīmad Bhagavatam* (1.2.26) defines genuine *dharma* as:

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje  
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati*

The supreme occupation [*dharma*] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.

Real *dharma*, therefore, does not have a tinge of the bad smell of selfish personal motivation. Yet persons who practice that kind of unmotivated devotion have historically been considered useless and mad by the materialistic leaders of organized religions.

In his book *Hymns for the Drowning* A. K. Ramanujan has given the following poetic translation of a song

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by the Sri Vaishnava *ācārya* Namalwar that describes the reaction of so-called “pious society” to the “apparently meaningless” *kīrtana* of the devotees:

Mumbling and prattling the many names,  
while onlookers say, “They’re crazy!”  
Entering and not entering cities,  
standing still or swaying  
before a laughing world,  
they dance, they leap,  
undone by feeling.  
And the gods bow down  
before them.

It was for the unmotivated purpose of spreading the holy names of Krishna that Srila Prabhupada came to the West and started his *sevā-saṅga* mission of ISKCON. On many occasions Srila Prabhupada explained his selfless motivation for his society. A few examples:

“This should be our program. Our propaganda means to make people happy. It is not a business, to make business and take some money.” (From a morning walk in Los Angeles, 3 May 1973)

“We are making little our teeny effort, how to make people happy. Our only business is to make people happy. We have no other desire. We don’t say that ‘You give us some money in exchange of your Krishna consciousness.’ No. That is not our business. We are not merchants. We are spreading this Krishna consciousness free of charge. We are engaged servant of Krishna. Krishna will provide us. Krishna will provide us. Krishna says, *yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham, teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām* [Bg. 9.22]. Those who are engaged in the service of Krishna, they have no problem. There is no problem because Krishna is their protector. (Lecture, Delhi, 12 November 1973)

“So our mission is like that. We are asking people, without any argument or political purpose or social or... No. Simply we are asking that ‘You chant Hare Krishna.’ That’s all. Wherever we are opening our branches, it is our only business that we are requesting people to chant Hare Krishna or Radha-Krishna. We don’t want anything. We don’t want to do any business, but we are simply spreading this Hare Krishna *mantra* because people are being washed away. (Room Conversation, Hong Kong, 20 April 1972)

Therefore, at one of their annual management meetings, Srila Prabhupada gave instructions to the GBC managers of his society in a comment that we have adopted as the slogan for Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu since it started in 2001:

“This chanting should go on. Instead of meetings, resolutions, dissolutions, revolutions and then no solutions, there should be chanting.”

(From Prabhupada Lilamrita. Vol.6 p.182) 🍊 — MD.