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Vaiṣṇava Ke?—“Who is a Real Vaiṣṇava?”

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

(1)

*duṣṭa mana! tumi kiser vaiṣṇava?
pratiṣṭhār tare, nirjaner ghare,
tava ‘hari nāma’ kevala ‘kaitava’*

duṣṭa mana—O wicked mind!; *tumi*—you; *kiser vaiṣṇava*—what kind of devotee?; *pratiṣṭhār*—of prestige; *tare*—on account of; *nirjaner ghare*—in a solitary dwelling; *tava*—your; *hari-nāma*—chanting of the holy name of Lord Hari; *kevala*—only; *kaitava*—cheating.

1) O wicked mind! What kind of Vaiṣṇava do you think you are? Your pretentious show of chanting Lord Hari’s holy name in a solitary place is only for the sake of attaining the false prestige of a worldly reputation—it is nothing but pure hypocrisy.

(2)

*jaḍer pratiṣṭhā, śukarer viṣṭhā,
jāno nā ki tāhā ‘māyār vaibhava’
kanaka kāmīnī, divasa-yāminī,
bhāviyā ki kāja, anitya se saba*

jaḍer—of the material realm; *pratiṣṭhā*—fame; *śukarer*—of a pig; *viṣṭhā*—stool; *jāno nā ki*—do you not know?; *tāhā*—that; *māyār*—of the illusory material world; *vaibhava*—potency; *kanaka*—gold; *kāmīnī*—attractive women; *divasa yāminī*—all day and night; *bhāviyā*—thinking; *ki kāja*—what benefit; *anitya*—temporary; *se saba*—all those.

2) Such materialistic prestige is as disgusting as the stool of a hog. Do you not know that it is only a mere illusion cast by the potency of Māyā? What is the value of contemplating day and night your plans for enjoying wealth and women? All these things are only temporary.

(3)

*tomār kanaka, bhoger janaka,
kanaker dvāre sevaho ‘mādhava’
kāmīnīr kāma, nahe tava dhāma,
tāhār—mālīka kevala ‘yādava’*

tomār—your; *kanaka*—gold; *bhoger*—of enjoyment; *janaka*—the producer;

kanaker dvāre—by wealth; *sevahō*—please serve; *mādhava*—Lord Mādhava; *kāminīr kāma*—lust for beautiful women; *nāhe*—not; *tava*—your; *dhāma*—proper place; *tāhār*—its; *mālika*—owner; *kevala*—is only; *yādava*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadu dynasty.

3) When you claim wealth as your own, it creates in you ever-increasing desires for material enjoyment. Your riches should be used for serving Mādhava, the Lord of all wealth. Neither is it your proper place to indulge in lust for women, whose only true proprietor is Lord Yādava.

(4)

pratiṣṭhāsā-taru, jaḍa-māyā-maru,
nā pela 'rāvaṇa' yujhiyā 'rāghava'
vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā, tāte koro niṣṭhā,
tāhā nā bhajile labhibe raurava

pratiṣṭhā-āsā—desire for fame; *taru*—the tree; *jaḍa-māyā*—of material illusion; *maru*—the desert; *na*—not; *pela*—reached; *rāvaṇa*—the demon named Rāvaṇa; *yujhiyā*—fighting; *rāghava*—with Lord Rāmachandra; *vaiṣṇavī*—the position of being a *vaiṣṇava*; *pratiṣṭhā*—situation; *tāte*—in that; *koro niṣṭhā*—become fixed; *tāhā*—that; *nā*—not; *bhajile*—if one worships; *labhibe*—will obtain; *raurava*—hell.

4) The demon Rāvaṇa (lust-incarnate) fought with Lord Rāmachandra (love-incarnate) in order to gain the tree of worldly reputation—but that oasis turned out to be but a mirage cast in the desert wasteland of the Lord's illusory material potency. Please cultivate fixed determination to attain only the steady and solid platform whereupon a Vaiṣṇava ever stands. If you neglect worshipping the Lord from this position, then you will ultimately attain a hellish existence.

(5)

harijana-dveṣa, pratisthāsā-kleśa,
koro keno tabe tāhār gaurava
vaiṣṇaver pāche, pratisthāsā āche,
tā'te kabhu nāhe 'anitya-vaibhava'

hari-jana-dveṣa—hatred for the devotees of the Lord; *pratiṣṭhā-āsā*—desire for fame; *kleśa*—suffering; *koro*—you endeavor; *keno*—why?; *tabe*—then; *tāhār*—its; *gaurava*—glory; *vaiṣṇaver pāche*—following behind the devotees; *pratiṣṭhā-āsā*—desire for spiritual position; *āche*—there is; *tāte*—in that; *kabhu nāhe*—never; *anitya*—impermanent; *vaibhava*—wealth.

5) Why do you needlessly suffer the torment of blaspheming the devotees of Lord Hari, attempting to achieve their eminence, thereby only proving your own fruitless foolishness? The desire for spiritual eminence is easily fulfilled when one becomes a devotee of the Lord, for eternal fame automatically follows the heels of a Vaiṣṇava. And that fame is never to be considered a temporary

worldly opulence.

(6)

*se hari-sambandha, śūnya-māyā-gandha,
tāhā kabhu noy 'jaḍer kaitava'
pratiṣṭhā-caṇḍālī, nirjanatā-jāli,
ubhaye jāniho māyika raurava*

se—that; *hari-sambandha*—relationship with Lord Hari; *śūnya*—free from; *māyā-gandha*—a scent of illusion; *tāhā*—that; *kabhu noy*—never; *jaḍer*—of materialism; *kaitava*—cheating; *pratiṣṭhā*—worldly reputation; *caṇḍālī*—female dog-eater; *nirjanatā*—solitary living; *jāli*—the net; *ubhaye*—in both; *jāniho*—you should know; *māyika*—illusory; *raurava*—hell.

6) The relationship between a devotee and Lord Hari is devoid of even a trace of worldly illusion; it has nothing to do with the materialistic cheating propensity. The prestige of so-called popularity in the material realm is compared to a treacherous dog-eating witch, and the attempt to live in solitude to supposedly engage in unalloyed bhajan is compared to an entangling network of distraction. Please know that anyone striving in either of these ways verily lives in the hell of Māyā's illusion.

(7)

*kīrtana chāḍibo, pratiṣṭhā mākhibo,
ki kāja dhuḍiyā tāḍṛṣa gaurava
mādhavendra purī, bhāva-ghare curi,
nā korilo kabhu sadāi jānabo*

kīrtana—chanting the Lord's names; *chāḍibo*—I will give up; *pratiṣṭhā*—worldly reputation; *mākhibo*—I will besmear myself; *ki kāja*—what benefit; *dhuḍiyā*—seeking; *tāḍṛṣa*—that kind of; *gaurava*—grandeur; *mādhavendra purī*—the sage Mādhavendra Purī; *bhāva-ghare*—in the storehouse of perception; *curi*—stealing; *nā korilo*—he did not do; *kabhu*—ever; *sadāi*—always; *jānabo*—I will remind you.

7) “I shall give up chanting the Lord's name publicly in kīrtan and retire to solitude, thus smearing myself with worldly honor.” Dear mind, what is the good of seeking such so-called glory? I will always remind you that the great soul Mādhavendra Purī never deceived himself in that regard by committing theft in his own storehouse of perception the way you do.

(8)

*tomār pratiṣṭhā,—‘śukarer viṣṭhā’,
tār-saha sama kabhu nā mānava
matsaratā-vaṣe, tumi jada-rase,
majecho chāḍiyā kīrtana-sauṣṭava*

tomār—your; *pratiṣṭhā*—popularity; *śukarer viṣṭhā*—the stool of a hog; *tār-saha*—with that; *sama*—equal; *kabhu nā*—never; *mānava*—an ordinary human being; *matsaratā*—pride; *vaśe*—under the control of; *tumi*—you; *jaḍa-rase*—in the mellows of mundane sense pleasures; *majecho*—you are sunk; *chāḍiyā*—having given up; *kīrtana-sauṣṭava*—the excellence of the *saṅkīrtan* movement.

8) Your cheap reputation is equal to the stool of a hog. An ordinary ambitious man like you can never be equated with a devotee of Mādhavendra Purī's eminence. Under the sway of envy, you have drowned yourself in the filthy waters of material enjoyment after having abandoned the excellent perfection of congregational kīrtan.

(9)

tāi duṣṭa mana, 'nirjana bhajan,'
pracāricho chale 'kuyogī-vaibhava'
prabhu sanātane, parama jatane,
śikṣā dilo yāhā, cinto sei saba

tāi—therefore; *duṣṭa mana*—O wicked mind!; *nirjana bhajan*—solitary worship; *pracāricho*—you are preaching; *chale*—by trick; *ku-yogī-vaibhava*—the opulence of a false yogī; *prabhu*—Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu; *sanātane*—to Sanātana Goswāmī; *parama jatane*—with great care; *śikṣā dilo*—gave instructions; *yāhā*—which; *cinto*—please contemplate; *sei saba*—all those.

9) Truly, O wicked mind, the glories of so-called solitary worship are propagated only by false yogīs using unscrupulous means to deceive others. To save yourself from these pitfalls, please contemplate the instructions that the Supreme Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu kindly gave us while addressing Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī with the utmost care.

(10)

sei du'ti kathā, bhulo' nā sarvathā,
uccaiḥ-svare koro 'hari-nāma-rava'
'phalgu' ār 'yukta,' 'baddha' ār 'mukta,'
kabhu nā bhāviho, ekākār saba

sei—these; *du'ti*—two; *kathā*—topics; *bhulo' nā*—don't forget; *sarvathā*—in all circumstances; *uccaiḥ-svare*—in a loud voice; *koro*—perform; *hari-nāma-rava*—the sound of chanting the Lord's holy names; *phalgu*—false; *ār*—and; *yukta*—befitting (linked with Kṛṣṇa); *baddha*—bound in *māyā*; *ār*—and; *mukta*—liberated; *kabhu nā*—never; *bhāviho*—consider; *ekākār*—one in the same form; *saba*—all these.

10) Do not forget for a moment the two most valuable concepts that He taught: 1) the principle of dry, apparent renunciation as opposed to real, appropriate renunciation; and 2) the principle of a soul being trapped in the bondage of matter as opposed to a soul who is liberated. Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that these conflicting concepts are on the same level. Please remember

this while engaging yourself in chanting the Lord's holy names as loud as you possibly can.

(11)

*'kanaka-kāminī,' 'pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī,'
chāḍiyāche jāre, sei to' vaiṣṇava
sei 'anāsakta,' sei 'śuddha-bhakta,'
samsār tathā pāy parābhava*

kanaka-kāminī—enjoyment of wealth and women; *pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī*—the tigress of worldly reputation; *chāḍiyāche*—has given up; *jāre*—who; *sei*—he; *to'*—certainly; *vaiṣṇava*—a devotee; *sei*—he; *anāsakta*—unattached; *sei*—he alone; *śuddha-bhakta*—is a pure devotee; *samsār*—the material world; *tathā*—in this manner; *pāy*—gets; *parābhava*—defeated.

11) One is truly a Vaiṣṇava who has given up the habit of falling victim to the ferocious tigress of wealth, beauty, and fame. Such a soul is factually detached from material life, and is known as a pure devotee. Someone with this consciousness of detachment has thereby become victorious over the mundane world of birth and death.

(12)

*yathā-yogya bhoga, nāhi tathā roga,
'anāsakta' sei, ki ār kahabo
'āsakti-rohita,' 'sambandha-sahita,'
viṣaya-samuha sakali 'mādhava'*

yathā-yogya—whatever is appropriate for survival; *bhoga*—enjoyment; *nāhi*—is not; *tathā*—in that way; *roga*—the disease (of materialism); *anāsakta*—detached; *sei*—he; *ki ār*—what more; *kahabo*—shall I say; *āsakti-rohita*—devoid of attachment; *sambandha-sahita*—endowed with a relationship; *viṣaya-samuha*—the multitude of sense objects; *sakali*—all; *mādhava*—Lord Mādhava.

12) One is indeed detached who moderately partakes of worldly things that are deemed necessary for living in devotional service; a devotee acting in that manner does not fall prey to the disease of material infatuation. Thus devoid of selfish attachment, and endowed with the ability to see things in relation to the Lord, all sense objects are then directly perceived as being Lord Mādhava Himself.

(13)

*se 'yukta-vairāgya,' tāhā to' saubhāgya,
tāhā-i jaḍete harir vaibhava
kīrtane jāhār, 'pratiṣṭhā-sambhār,'
tāhār sampatti kevala 'kaitava'*

se—this; *yukta-vairāgya*—renunciation that is connected with Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment; *tāhā*—that; *to’*—indeed; *saubhāgya*—great fortune; *tāhā-i*—only that; *jaḍete*—in the material world; *harir*—of Lord Hari; *vaibhava*—the opulence; *kīrtane*—in chanting the Lord’s names; *jāhār*—whose; *pratiṣṭhā-sambhār*—heaps of ambition for recognition; *tāhār*—its; *sampatti*—opulence; *kevala*—only; *kaitava*—cheating.

13) This is the standard of befitting renunciation, and one who realizes this is most fortunate indeed. Everything involved in such a devotee’s life represents Lord Hari’s personal spiritual opulence as manifest in the world of matter. On the other hand, one who engages in chanting the Lord’s name with hopes of enhancing his own material reputation finds that all his activities and paraphernalia represent only the riches of hypocrisy.

(14)

‘*viṣaya-mumukṣu,*’ ‘*bhoger bubhukṣu,*’
du’ye tyajo mana, dui ‘avaīṣṇava’
‘*kṛṣṇer sambandha,*’ *aprākṛta-skandha,*
kabhū nāhe tāhā jaḍer sambhava

viṣaya-mumukṣu—one who desires liberation from the material world; *bhoger bubhukṣu*—one who desires to enjoy sense gratification; *du’ye*—both; *tyajo*—please reject; *mana*—O mind!; *dui*—the two; *avaīṣṇava*—non-devotees; *kṛṣṇer*—with Kṛṣṇa; *sambandha*—relationship; *aprākṛta-skandha*—things belonging to the transcendental realm; *kabhū nāhe*—never; *tāhā*—that; *jaḍer sambhava*—of material origin.

14) O mind, please reject the company of two types of persons—those desiring impersonal liberation from the material world, and those who desire to enjoy the pleasure of material sense objects. Both of these are equally non-devotees. The things that are used in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa are objects belonging directly to the transcendental realm, and thus having nothing to do with matter they cannot be either owned or forsaken by persons interested in mundane enjoyment or renunciation.

(15)

‘*māyāvādī jana,*’ *kṛṣṇetara mana,*
mukta abhimāne se ninde vaiṣṇava
vaiṣṇaver dās, tava bhakti-āś,
keno vā ḍākicho nirjana-āhava

māyāvādī jana—the impersonalist; *kṛṣṇetara*—opposed to Kṛṣṇa; *mana*—mentality; *mukta abhimāne*—proudly considering himself liberated; *se*—he; *ninde*—blasphemes; *vaiṣṇava*—the devotees; *vaiṣṇaver dās*—servant of the devotees; *tava*—your; *bhakti-āś*—devotional desire; *keno vā*—why then; *ḍākicho*—you call out; *nirjana-āhava*—fighting for solitude.

15) An impersonal philosopher is opposed to thinking of Kṛṣṇa as an object of

devotion, and thus being puffed up with the false pride of imaginary liberation he dares to criticize the true devotees of the Lord. O mind, you are the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas, and you should always hope for attaining devotion. Why then do you make such a loud commotion by calling to me and trying to prove the supposed supremacy of your practice of solitary worship?

(16)

*je 'phalgu-vairāgī,' kohe nije 'tyāgī,'
se nā pāre kabhu hoite 'vaiṣṇava'
hari-pada chāḍī,' 'nirjanatā bāḍī,'
labhiyā ki phala, 'phalgu' se vaibhava*

je—who; *phalgu-vairāgī*—false renunciant; *kohe nije*—calls himself; *tyāgī*—an accomplished renunciant; *se*—he; *nā pāre*—is not able; *kabhu hoite*—to ever be; *vaiṣṇava*—a devotee; *hari-pada*—the lotus feet of the Lord; *chāḍī*—rejecting; *nirjanatā bāḍī*—residence in solitude; *labhiyā*—obtaining; *ki phala*—what result?; *phalgu*—false; *se vaibhava*—that opulence.

16) One who falsely gives up things that could actually be used in the Lord's service proudly calls himself a 'renunciate,' but unfortunately he can never become a Vaiṣṇava by such an attitude. Abandoning his servitorship to the lotus feet of Lord Hari, and resigning himself to his solitary home—whatever is gained by that exercise can only be the worthless treasure of deception.

(17)

*rādhā-dāsyē rohi,' chāḍī 'bhoga-ahi,'
'pratiṣṭhāśā' nahe 'kīrtana-gaurava'
'rādhā-nitya-jana,' tāhā chāḍī' mana,
keno vā nirjana-bhajana-kaitava*

rādhā-dāsyē—in service to Śrī Rādhā; *rohi*—remaining; *chāḍī*—giving up; *bhoga-ahi*—the snake of selfish enjoyment; *pratiṣṭhā-āśā*—ambition for recognition; *nahe*—is not; *kīrtana-gaurava*—the glory of congregational chanting; *rādhā-nitya-jana*—being the eternal servant of Rādhā; *tāhā chāḍī*—rejecting that; *mana*—O mind!; *keno vā*—why then; *nirjana-bhajana*—solitary worship; *kaitava*—cheating.

17) Ever engage yourself in the service of Śrī Rādhā, and keep aloof from the vicious snake of materialistic sense gratification. The glory of participating in the Lord's kīrtan is not meant to bolster anyone's ambitions for personal recognition. O mind, why then have you abandoned the identity of being Rādhā's eternal servant in favor of retiring to a solitary place to practice the cheating process of so-called bhajan?

(18)

*vraja-vāsī-gaṇa, pracāraka-dhana,
pratiṣṭhā-bhikṣuka tā'rā nahe 'śava'*

*prāṇa āche tā'r, se-hetu pracār,
pratiṣṭhāsā-hīna-'kṛṣṇa-gāthā' saba*

vraja-vāsī-gaṇa—the residents of Vraja; *pracāraka*—preachers; *dhana*—the treasure; *pratiṣṭhā-bhikṣuka*—beggars for worldly fame; *tā'rā*—they; *nahe*—are not; *śava*—a dead body; *prāṇa āche*—there is life; *tā'r*—theirs; *se-hetu*—for that reason; *pracār*—preaching; *pratiṣṭhā-āsā-hīna*—devoid of ambition for fame; *kṛṣṇa-gāthā*—songs about Kṛṣṇa; *saba*—all.

18) The most valuable treasures amongst the Lord's preachers are the eternal personalities residing in Vraja-dhām. They never occupy themselves with begging for worthless material reputation, which is cherished only by the living dead. The Vraja-vāsīs are truly infused with life, and therefore they preach in order to give life to the walking corpses of the mundane world. All the songs that the Vraja-vāsīs sing about the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa are devoid of any tinge of desire for fame.

(19)

*śrī-dayita-dās, kīrtanete āś,
koro uccaiḥ-svare 'hari-nāma-rava'
kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa svabhāve,
se kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*

śrī-dayita-dās—the servant of Rādhā's beloved Kṛṣṇa (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī); *kīrtanete*—for congregational chanting; *āś*—desirous; *koro*—please perform; *uccaiḥ-svare*—in a loud voice; *hari-nāma-rava*—the sound of the Lord's holy names; *kīrtana-prabhāve*—by the power of the chanting; *smaraṇa*—remembering the Lord's pastimes; *svabhāve*—in one's own original spiritual mood; *se kāle*—at that time; *bhajana-nirjana*—worship in solitude; *sambhava*—possible.

19) This humble servant of Rādhā and Her beloved Kṛṣṇa always hopes for kīrtan, and he begs all to loudly sing the names of Lord Hari. The transcendental power of congregational chanting automatically awakens remembrance of the Lord and His divine pastimes in relation to one's own eternal spiritual form. Only at that time does it become possible to go off to a solitary place and engage in the confidential worship of Their Lordships.i*