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

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvāti Ṭhākura

(1)


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

duṣṭa mana—O wicked mind!; tumi—you; kiser vaiṣṇava—what kind of devotee?; pratisthār—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)

jader pratisthā, śukarer viśṭhā,
jāno nā ki tāhā ‘māyār vaibhava’
kanaka kāmini, divasa-yāmīni,
bhāviyā ki kāja, anitya se saba

jader—of the material realm; pratisthā—fame; śukarer—of a pig; viśṭhā—stool; jāno nā ki—do you not know?; tāhā—that; māyār—of the illusory material world; vaibhava—potency; kanaka—gold; kāmini—attractive women; divasa yāmīni—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’
kāminir kāma, nahe tava dhāma,
tāhār—mālika kevala ‘yādava’

tomār—your; kanaka—gold; bhoger—of enjoyment; janaka—the producer;
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 Madhava, the Lord of all wealth. Neither is it your proper place to indulge in lust for women, whose only true proprietor is Lord Yadava.

4) The demon Rāvana (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 worshiping the Lord from this position, then you will ultimately attain a hellish existence.

5) Why do you needlessly suffer the torment of blasphemying 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) 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) “I shall give up chanting the Lord’s name publicly in kirtan 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 Madhavendra Puri never deceived himself in that regard by committing theft in his own storehouse of perception the way you do.
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 Puri’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 kirtan.

9) Truly, O wicked mind, the glories of so-called solitary worship are propagated only by false yogis 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 Sanatana Goswāmī with the utmost care.

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-kāmini,’ ‘pratiṣṭhā-bāghini,’
chādiyāche jāre, sei to' vaiṣṇava
sei ‘anāsakta,’ sei ‘suddha-bhakta,’
samsār tathā pāy parābhava

kanaka-kāmini—enjoyment of wealth and women; pratiṣṭhā-bāghini—the tigress of worldly reputation; chādiyāche—has given up; jāre—who; sei—he; to’—certainly; vaiṣṇava—a devotee; sei—he; anāsakta—unattached; sei—he alone; suddha-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,’
visaya-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; visaya-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 jadete harīr vaibhava
kīrtane jāhār, ‘pratiṣṭhā-sambhār,’
tāhār sampatti kevala ‘kaitava’
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.

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.

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 Vaisnavas, 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 chādi’, ‘nirjanatā bādi,’
labhīyā 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; chādi’—rejecting;
nirjanatā bādi—residence in solitude; labhīyā—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 Vaisnava 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-dāsye rohi’, chādi ‘bhoga-ahi,’
‘pratiṣṭhāśa’ nahe ‘kirtana-gaurava’
‘rādhā-nitya-jana,’ tāhā chādi’ mana,
kenō vā nirjana-bhajana-kaitava

rādhā-dāsye—in service to Śrī Rādhā; rohi’—remaining; chādi—giving up; bhoga-
ahi—the snake of selfish enjoyment; pratiṣṭhā-āśa—ambition for recognition;
nahe—is not; kirtana-gaurava—the glory of congregational chanting; rādhā-nitya-
jana—being the eternal servant of Rādhā; tāhā chādi’—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 kirtan 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-gana, pracāraka-dhana,
pratiṣṭhā-bhikṣuka tā’rā nahe ‘sava’
18) The most valuable treasures amongst the Lord’s preachers are the eternal personalities residing in Vraja-dham. 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-dāsa, kīrtanete āś, koro uccaiḥ-svare ‘hari-nāma-rava’
kīrtana-prabhave, smarana svabhāve, se kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava
śrī-dayita-dāsa—the servant of Rādhā’s beloved Kṛṣṇa (Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati); 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-prabhave—by the power of the chanting; smarana—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.