

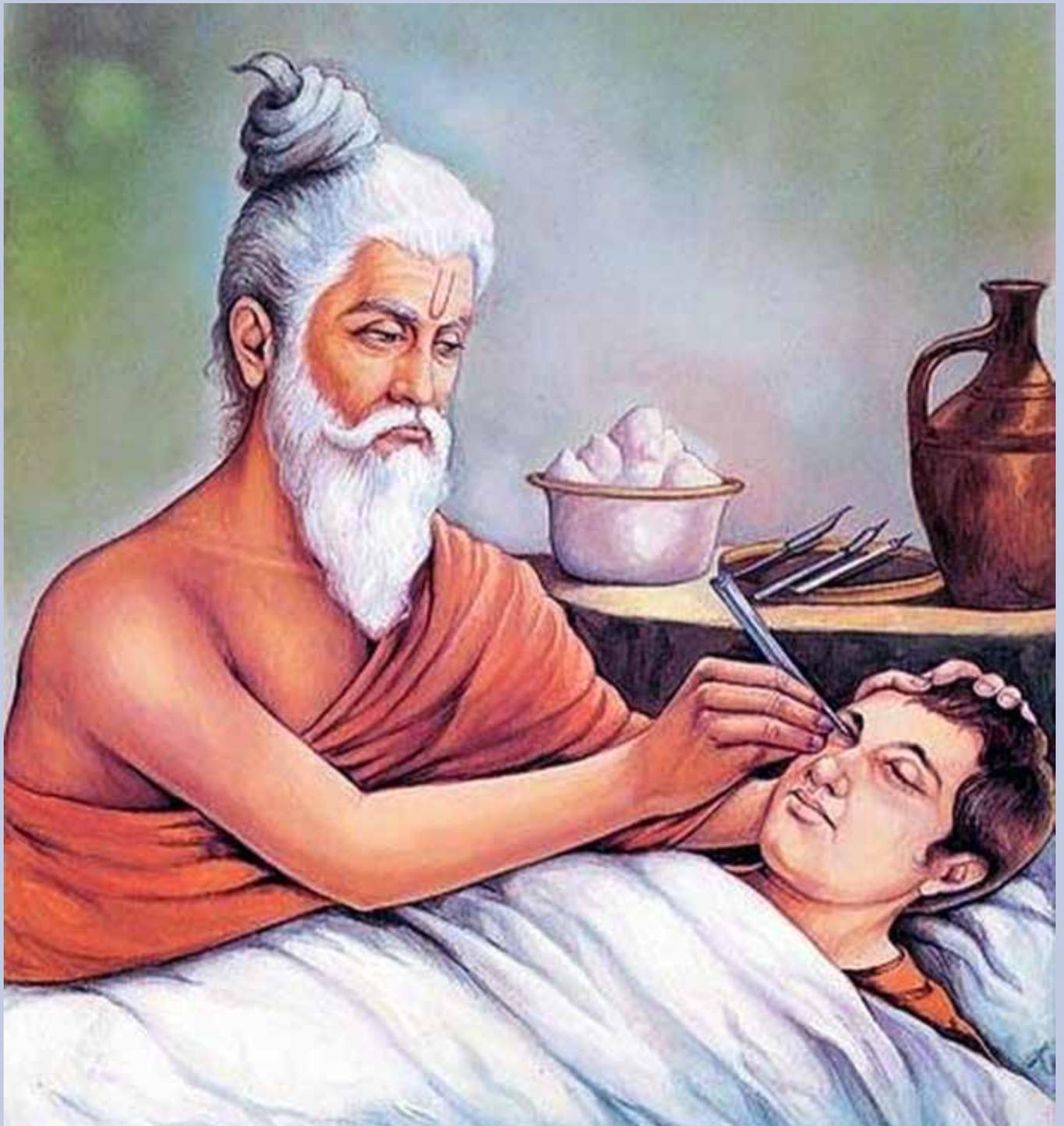
Sri Krishna Kathamrita



Bindu

Issue 540

Saints are not Seen by Material Vision





Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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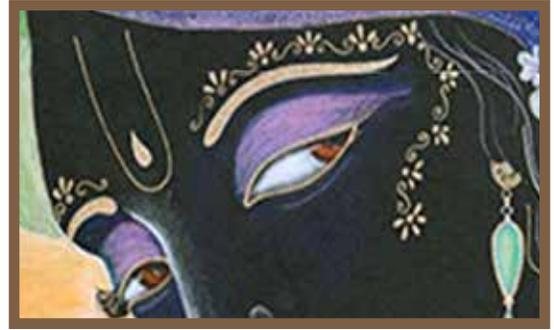
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CAN'T SEE A PURE DEVOTEE

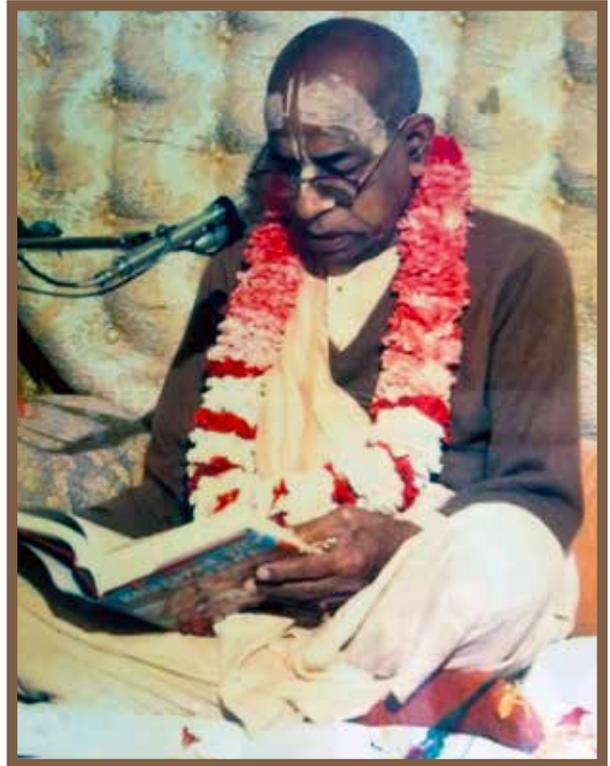


His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

... offenders cannot actually see the lotus feet of the Lord within themselves, nor are they even able to see the devotees of the Lord. The devotees of the Lord are so kind that they roam to all places to enlighten people in God consciousness. The offenders, however, lose the chance to receive the Lord's devotees, although the offenseless common man is at once influenced by the devotees' presence. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.5.45)

It is therefore said by a *Vaiṣṇava* poet, *vaiṣṇavera kriyāmudrā vijñe nā bujhāya*: no one can understand the activities of a pure devotee. A pure devotee's activities may appear like ordinary activities, but behind them there is profound significance — the satisfaction of the Lord. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.22.50.)



Cover: "Opening the eyes to see". The ancient Ayurvedic surgeon Maharshi Sushruta performs an eye operation. Unknown artist.

Painting by B. G. Sharma



Rama and Lakshman serve their guru Vishvamitra Muni

Sisupal and Dantavakra were not ordinary demons but were formerly personal associates of Lord Vishnu. They apparently fell to this material world, but actually they came to assist the Supreme Personality of Godhead by nourishing his pastimes within this world. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 7.1.33.)

It is said, *vaiṣṇavera kriyā-mudrā vijñe nā bujhaya*. Even if a man is very advanced in learning, he cannot understand the behavior of a *vaiṣṇava*. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 7.7.14.)

The inhabitants of that particular place on the bank of the Kaveri in the valley of the mountain known as Sahya were unable to understand whether that saint was the same man they had known. It is therefore said, *vaiṣṇavera kriyā mudrā vijñe nā bujhaya*. A highly advanced *vaiṣṇava* lives in such a way that no one can understand what he is or what he was. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 7.13.14.)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead can be seen or unseen according to his own transcendental desire; similarly, a devotee, being *jīvan-mukta*, can be seen or not, as he chooses. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 9.13.11.)

A Krishna conscious person must be seen by the ears and not by the eyes, or, in other words,

one should try to know the depth of realization by a Krishna conscious person and not see the beard, which has become the practice of the hippies. (Letter to Brahmananda. 11 October 1967.) 🍌

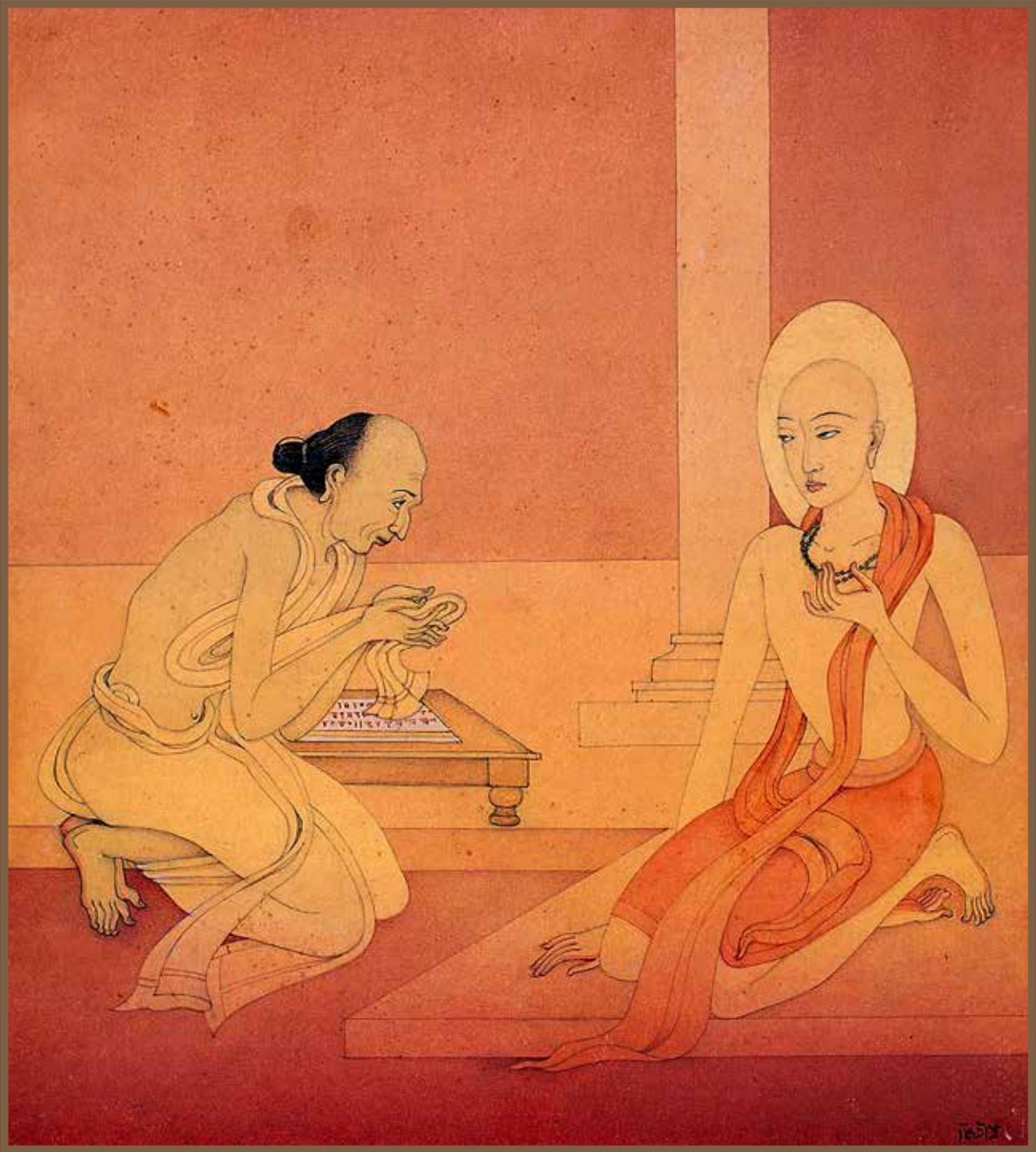
**DON'T TRY TO MEASURE
A VAISHNAVA**



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

We are often deceived into committing offenses when we try to measure the devotees of the Supreme Lord — who are his eternally perfected associates and fully transcendental — against our material understanding or the knowledge we can gain through our senses. (*Śrī Vakṛtāvalī*, lecture on 1 Feb 1925.)

As soon as we attempt to measure the guru with our mundane knowledge, and as soon as we imitate the guru rather than follow him, we invite inauspiciousness and ruination upon ourselves. We attain benefit only when we give up such a mentality. Mundane wealth, education, expertise, and knowledge are not good assets for devotees because they influence one to disregard guru and *vaiṣṇavas*.



Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu hears from Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya in Puri

As a result, one may become bereft of the guru and Krishna's service. (*Amyta-vāṇī* 5.14.)

The materialists, who are attached to sense gratification and who are greedy for material advancement, cannot measure the expertise and supremacy of the *vaiṣṇavas* through their own broken, limited yardstick. That is why they are completely cheated out of receiving the *vaiṣṇavas'* mercy and understanding the Absolute Truth. Since the value of their qualification is so meager,

the *vaiṣṇavas* conceal their real identities from them. (Purport to *Caitanya-bhāgavata ādi* 12.192.)

The characteristics of *vaiṣṇavas* are incomprehensible to the materialists. If one surrenders to the *vaiṣṇavas* without duplicity, then by their mercy one can recognize them. It is the duty of every intelligent man to stay far away from the *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* of trying to measure *vaiṣṇavas* with material knowledge. A person who is devoid of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* can easily attain love of God by chanting the holy name of Krishna

even once, otherwise *nāmāparādha* in the form of blaspheming *vaiṣṇavas* will create havoc in one's life. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata madhya* 9 chapter summary.) 🍌

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ONE CAN'T SEE A SADHU



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Today, some people say, “There is no *sādhu*.” But how can you see a *sādhu*? Have you the vision to see? A *sādhu* is not an ordinary person. He is not a living being of this material world. He has come down from Krishna's abode, from the spiritual kingdom. Just as you cannot see Krishna with material vision, you cannot see *sādhu* with material vision. You want to be a seer, but you are not a seer. Krishna is the seer. *Sādhu* is the seer. You are to be seen. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 19.151) explains:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija*

After undergoing so many species of life in hundreds of thousands of universes, if someone is fortunate enough, *bhāgyavān*, he comes in contact with a *sādhu*. When the *sādhu* casts his merciful glance on someone, then that person's good fortune arises. (*My Revered Spiritual Master*, p. 38. Lecture, New York, 10 November 1991.)

There are many pretenders and many hypocrites. But a real *sādhu* is very rare. Still, genuine *sādhus* are there. If there were no sun and moon, how would this cosmic manifestation go on? Similarly, if there were no *sādhus*, how would Krishna's *samsāra*, Krishna's *līlā*, go on? Because we are conditioned souls, our vision is defective. Even though a *sādhu* may come before us, we cannot see him. Therefore, one should not say that there are no *sādhus*. Instead, one should say, “I am a blind person. I cannot see the *sādhu*.” Then one will be very eager to acquire such vision.

Only by the help of the sunshine can you see the sun. Similarly, only by the mercy of Krishna can you see him or understand him. That mercy is received through a pure *sādhu*. Only by the mercy of a *sādhu* can you see or understand Krishna. You cannot understand Krishna through your intelligence or merit. You cannot see him by your vision. Most people think they are the seer. You are not the seer. Krishna is the seer. *Sādhu* is the seer. You are to be seen. You think it is just the opposite, so you are cheated. You have no vision, how can you see? (*The Process of Inquiry*, p. 86. Discussion, San Diego, 23 June 1992.)

Meeting such a person is Krishna's arrangement. You cannot find one on your own. You are a conditioned soul. Your conditioned senses are defective. How can you recognize a real *sādhu*? Only Krishna knows. Therefore, you should cry before Krishna, completely dependent upon his will. Krishna will arrange for you to meet such a person. *kṛṣṇa kṛpāte guru mile, guru kṛpāte kṛṣṇa mile* — by the mercy of Krishna you will get guru, and by the mercy of guru you get Krishna. First is Krishna's mercy that you get guru, and then by guru's mercy you get Krishna. (*Krishna Kathamrita Bindu*, issue 127. Darshan, Bhubaneswar, 21 November 1992.) 🍌

Ślokāmṛta

FOUR TYPES OF BLINDNESS

Cāṇakya-nīti-darpaṇaḥ 8

*na paśyati ca janmāndhaḥ kāmāndho naiva paśyati
madonmattā na paśyanti arthī doṣaṇi na paśyati*

Those born blind cannot see; similarly, blind are those in the grip of lust. Proud men have no perception of evil; and those bent on acquiring riches see no sin in their actions.

— From *Chanakya's Niti-sastra*. By Miles Davis (Patita Pavana Dasa), and Badarayana Murthy V. Lucknow. 1981.



MEETING THE GARBAGE MAN



*A memory by Vatsala Das
Photos by Guru Das*

My friend Vatsara, he came to visit me in San Francisco, and we started going to different spiritual communities. By this time, I had kind of accepted Swami Sachidananda as a spiritual master, I didn't really know that much about him, but I had read Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gītā* and I said, "Geez, I need a spiritual master." Somehow, I didn't really think of the author of that edition of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Srila Prabhupada — the old printing with the blue Vishnu on the cover. Anyway, we went to this group and that group and one day my friend said, "Well, let's go to the Hare Krishnas."

I said, "Oh, I've been there," because I had been there for a Sunday Feast. I was kind of a yogi. When I saw the devotees running around here and there,



I said, "There's too much running around for me." So I said, "You go ahead." So he went, and he spent the whole day there. When he came back, he said, "God, I went there, and I met this guy — the garbage man. He was so far out, he told me all this stuff." He was



Walking in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. 1968.

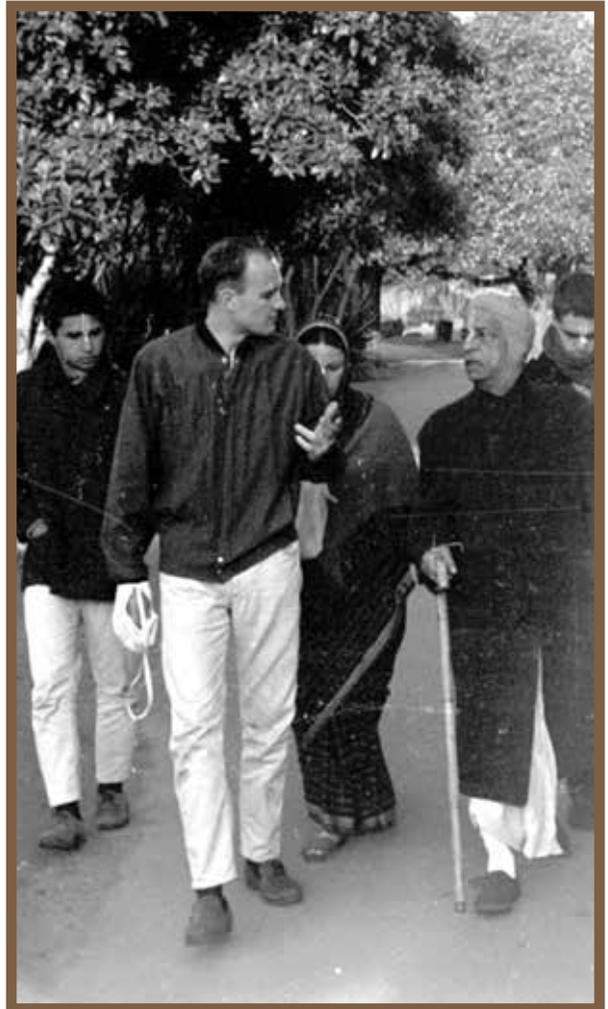
Left to right: Yamuna Dasi, Srila Prabhupada, unknown devotee, Jayananda Das, Gargamuni Das



going on and on and on. It turns out that that he spent the whole day with Jayananda, emptying the garbage and going here and there. My friend said, “They’re having another program this evening.”

So I said, “OK, I’ll go with you.” So we went and that was it. The next day we went out and purchased beads, as well as cloth for *dhotis* and *saris*. By the time we got back home, we decided, “We’re going to shave up.” So we shaved up and we shaved up the children, and then we showed up at the temple the next day. All the devotees said, “What are you doing? You can’t do that!”

We said, “Anyway, here we are. We’re doing it.” It was from this association with Jayananda that we became devotees. Being a practical, mechanically-minded person, I naturally fell in with Jayananda because he was always fixing a car or doing something. We’d go out and work, and I was kind of like Jayananda’s right-hand man at that time. We’d be out working on the carts and stuff like that or going to pick stuff up to bring back for the carts, or at the temple preparing something for *Ratha-yātrā*. When Prabhupada came, Jayananda’s mood was, “What are we going to really gain by going to see Prabhupada? He wants this service done.” That was better than being in Prabhupada’s presence. That was more satisfying to Prabhupada and, therefore, it would be more satisfying to us. So we



did that. Later in the day, after *Ratha-yātrā*, Jayananda finally went to see Prabhupada. He wasn't there for two minutes before he fell asleep. Prabhupada then made some nice comment about how Jayananda had worked so hard and now he's sleeping. 🍌

— Following Srila Prabhupada – Remembrances. DVD 7

HOW I MET SRILA PRABHUPADA



A memory by Sri Srimad Radha Govinda Swami

I was in Benares when Srila Prabhupada was touring India with his forty disciples. I read in a newspaper that *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* was being preached in America. I was a devotee of Krishna so naturally I liked this topic. So I went there [to meet Srila Prabhupada in Benares]. At that time there was a procession from Dashashvamedha Ghat to Tapan Misra's house that is now in Benares.

श्रीकृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

When the procession finished, I approached Srila Prabhupada and spoke in Hindi, “When you went to America, how did you preach?”

Prabhupada said, “I just chant Hare Krishna and give some lecture.” He said, “They need this Vedic knowledge. Just see how they are happy and they are chanting.”

Then I asked, “Where is your program after Benares?”

Prabhupada said, “I will go to Gorakhpur.”

So I wrote down the date.

Then I went to Gorakhpur, and Prabhupada was there. He was staying in Krishna Niketan [guesthouse].

When I went there, Prabhupada was alone, so I did not recognize him.

“Where is A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami?” I asked Prabhupada.

Prabhupada asked me, “Why you want to meet with him?” (continued on page 11)



Unknown photographer

Srila Prabhupada meets with Hanuman Prasad Poddar in Gorakpur 1971

Unknown artist. 19th-century. From Wikipedia



A female sannyāsī, sādhvī, with vaiṣṇava tilak

Unknown photographer



Sādhu at the Pashupatinath temple in Nepal

Photo by Tadas Juras



Sādhu with a book



Unknown photographer

Sadhu at the Pashupatinath temple in Nepal

WHO IS A SADHU?

His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Who is a *sādhu*? We know this term *sādhu*. *Sādhu* means saintly person. Generally, people accept a *sādhu* when he is dressed with the saffron garment, but there are different types of *sādhus*, *mahātmā*. Some of them may be *jñānīs* who want to merge into the Brahman effulgence.

Another type of *sādhu* may be *yogīs*, those who are trying — with the same ambition — to merge into the Supreme by finding out in the heart by meditation. They are trying to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead by meditative mind. That is a *yogī*, and he is also a *sādhu*. (From a lecture in Bombay. 17 March 1971.)

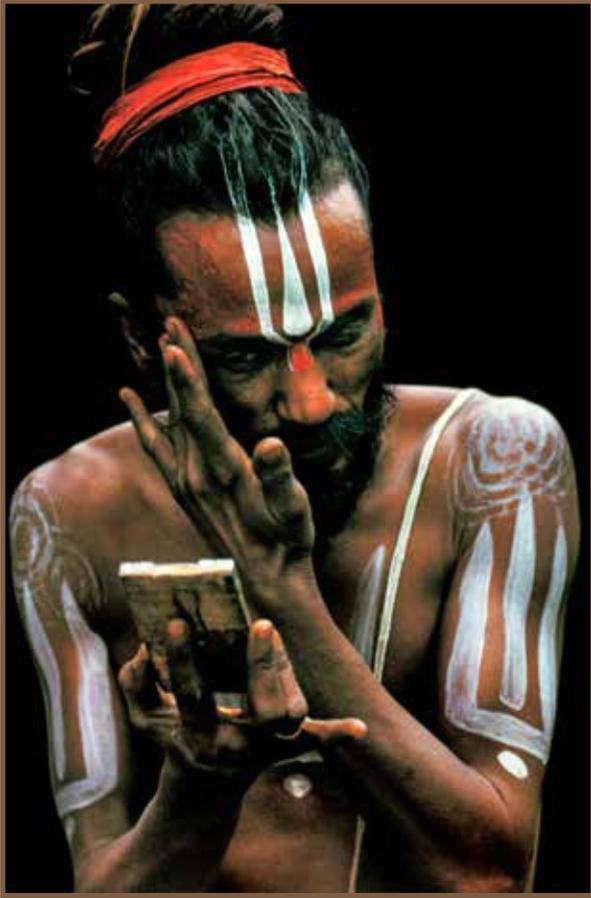


Photo by Thomas Kelly. From Wall Street Journal

Two young Vaishnava sādhus

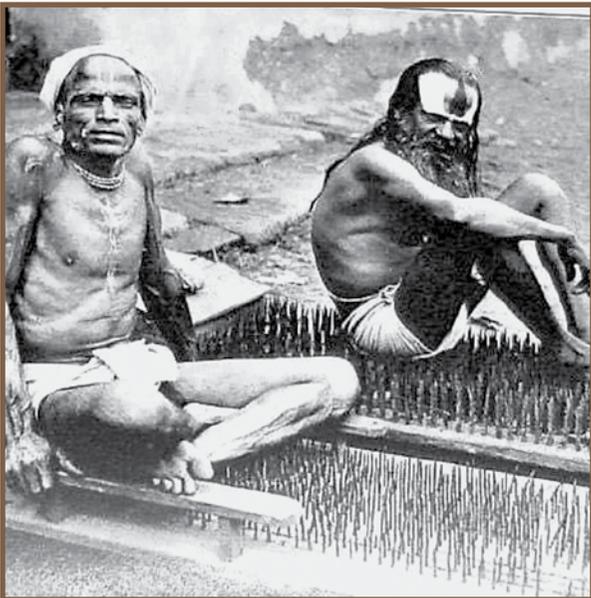
WHO IS A SADHU?

Photo by Thomas Kelly. From Wall Street Journal



Tengal Sri Vaishnava sādhu

Unknown photographer



Tyāgī (renunciate) sādhus sitting on beds of nails. The sādhu on the left is wearing Gaudiya Vaishnava tilak



Unknown artist. Kaighat painting from West Bengal. Circa 1800s.

Vaishnava with nice shoes and two women, is depicted here with some irony as being a fashionable devotee.



Unknown photographer

Sādhus playing football at Kumbha Mela



Photo by Kevin Bubriski

Vaishnava sādhu with the Rāmāyaṇa

WHO IS A SADHU?

Unknown photographer. From Wikipedia



Vaishnavi sādhvī wearing a mahā-mantra cadar



Unknown photographer.

Sādhus looking on a computer

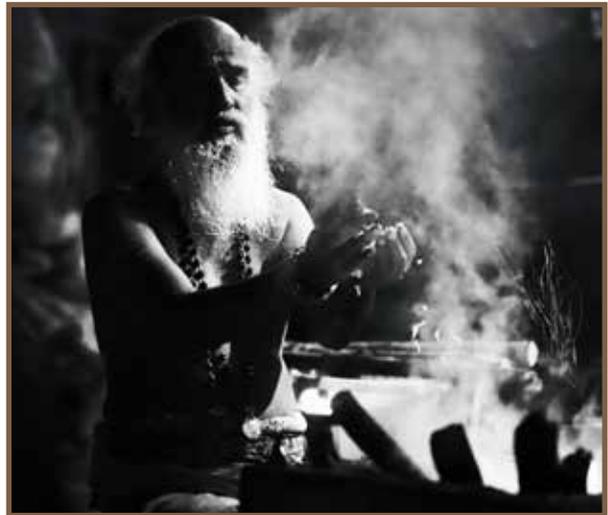


Photo by Tadas Juras

Sādhu offering oblations to a sacred fire

Photo by Thomas Kelly. From Wall Street Journal



Sādhu doing kīrtana with an ektar instrument

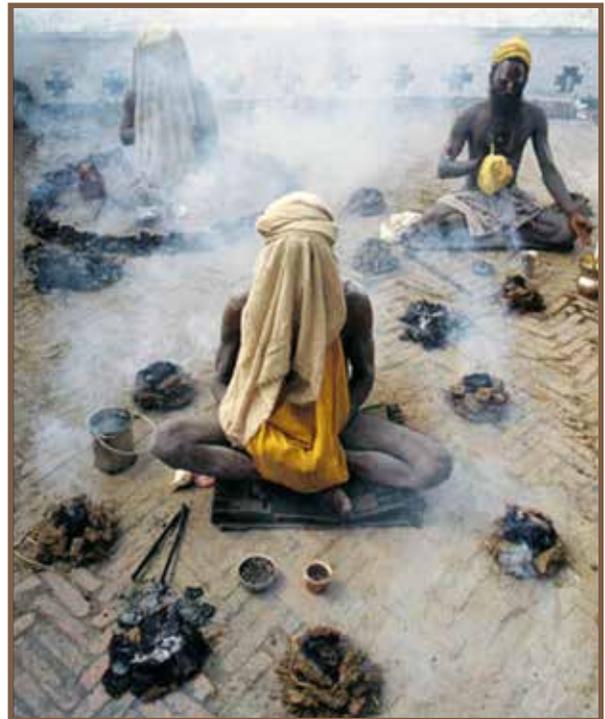
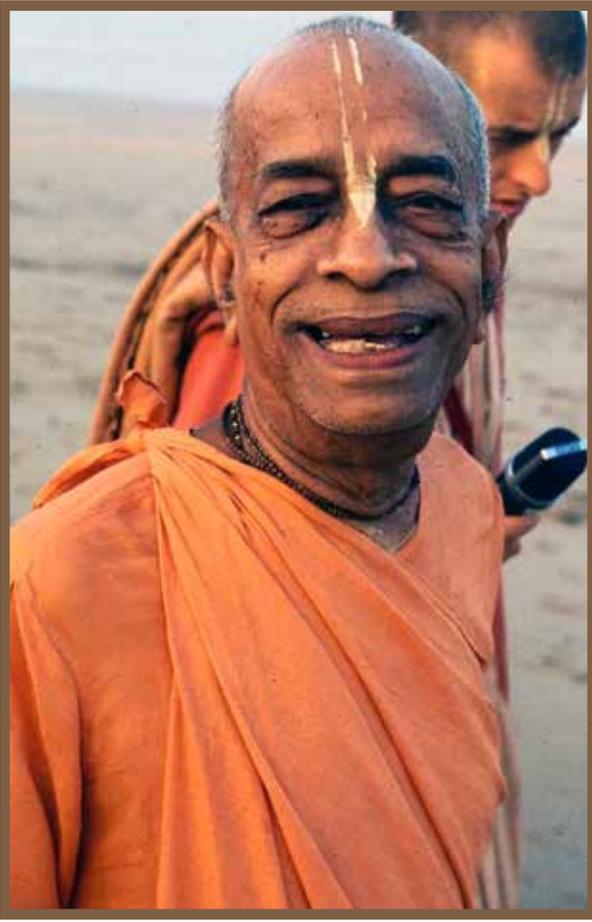


Photo by Thomas Kelly. From Wall Street Journal

Pañca-agni-tapasya, five fire practice. Sādhu on the top right is chanting japa on beads

Unknown photographer.



Srila Prabhupada on Juhu beach in Bombay

I replied, “Because he is my guru. I like him very much.” Prabhupada then asked me, “Why do you accept him as your guru?”

I said, “Because he is a servant of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.”

Prabhupada asked, “Who is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu?”

I said, “He is Krishna Himself.”

Prabhupada then said, “Why do you accept Lord Chaitanya as Krishna?”

I replied, “Because I read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that Krishna himself came as a devotee to preach.”

Prabhupada then said, “No, no, no. He’s not Krishna. He is a devotee of Krishna.”

I said, “No! He is Krishna himself!”

But Prabhupada insisted, “No, he is devotee of Krishna. He is not Krishna.”

I then spoke some very hard words to Srila Prabhupada. I said, “Just keep quiet, don’t speak any more.”

Prabhupada started laughing very loudly.

At that time some *bhaktas* came in the room and offered obeisances. Suddenly I realized that he is

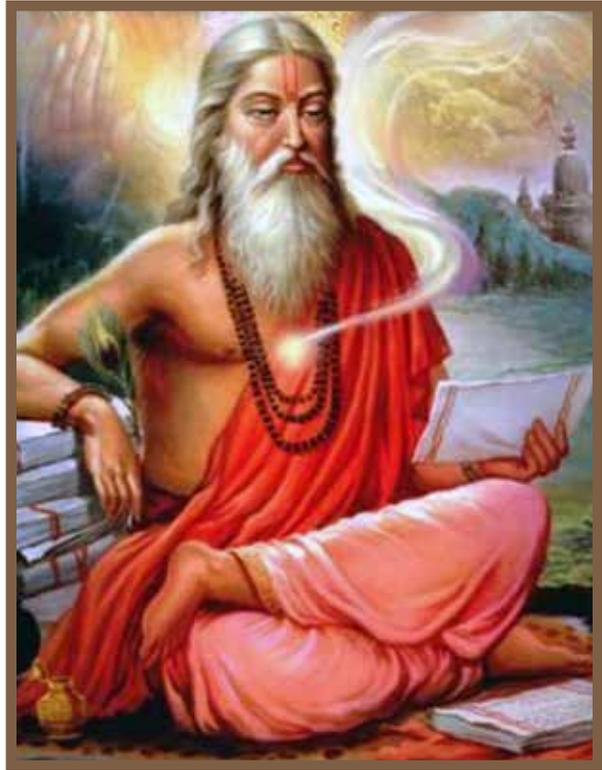
Guru Maharaja, he is Srila Prabhupada. So when they offered obeisances, I also offered obeisances.

I said, “Please forgive me, I offended your lotus feet. I did not recognize you. Please forgive me.”

Prabhupada caught hold of my hand and said, “Come to my room.”

Three disciples were sitting there and Prabhupada was laughing and laughing and continuously smiling. He told the devotees, “He knows that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna himself.” Prabhupada then told me, “You chastised me, I like that. I am very happy with your words.” 🍌

— From, *Following Srila Prabhupada - Remembrances*. ISKCON Cinema. DVD 2.



Unknown artist

THE STORY OF BHRIGU MUNI



From Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur’s Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, antya khaṇḍa chapter 9

The history of Bhrigu Muni is told in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as well as many other śāstras, often with different details. In his Caitanya-bhāgavata, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur has presented it from a perspective that is particularly relevant for devotees doing nāma-bhajan in the line of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Long, long ago, many great sages gathered on the bank of the river Saraswati to perform a great

Unknown artist. Guler, India, circa 1770



Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

sacrifice and to hear from the *Purāṇas*. Those sages were all learned in the scriptures and were expert in the performance of austerities. In this particular meeting they began to discuss the absolute truth and who was supreme among the three predominating deities — Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva. Some said that Brahma was the greatest, others said that Shiva was the greatest, and some others said that Vishnu was the greatest of all.

purāṇei nānā mata karena kathana
‘śiva baḍa’ kothāo, kothāo ‘nārāyaṇa’

Even in the *Purāṇas* different statements are found. In some places it is said Shiva is the greatest, and somewhere else it is said Narayan is the greatest. (text 320)

All the sages requested Bhrigu to gather evidence to establish the actual truth. “You are the mind-born son of Brahma. You are senior to us in every respect, and you are the best of the knowers of the truth. You go and determine who is the greatest, then return and remove our doubts. We will accept whatever you say as conclusive.” After hearing this, Bhrigu first of all went to his father’s residence in Brahmaloka.

When he arrived in front of his father, Brahma, Bhrigu just proudly stood there before him. Brahma became greatly pleased on seeing his son, and inquired about Bhrigu’s welfare. Because Bhrigu

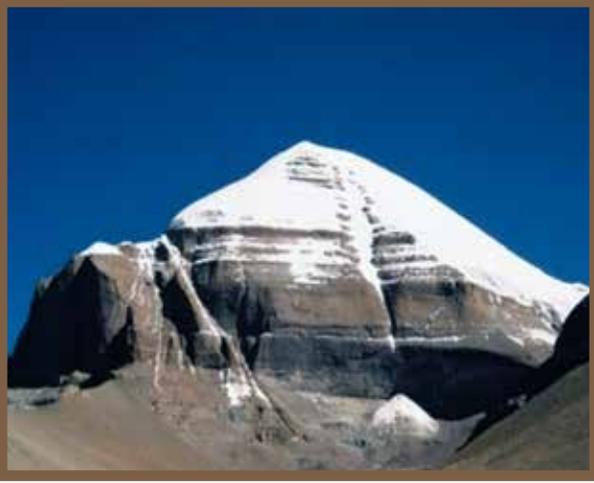
wanted to test whether Brahma had the quality of goodness, he did not listen attentively to his father. He neither offered prayers nor respectful obeisances



Unknown artist. Pahari school. Circa 1700

Lord Brahma on his swan carrier

Unknown photographer.



Lord Shiva's abode of Mount Kailash in Tibet

to his father. He neglected whatever etiquette a son is expected to show his father.

Seeing the disrespectful behavior of his son, Brahma became very angry and appeared like the incarnation of Agni, the god of fire. When Bhṛigu

saw his father's angry mood, he ran away in fear that he would be cursed and turned to ashes. Everyone present there held the feet of Brahma and pacified him, saying, "Please don't be cruel to your son." Out of affection for his son, Brahma then controlled his anger as fire is extinguished with water.

After testing Brahma, Bhṛigu Muni went directly to Kailash to test Shiva. When Shiva saw Bhṛigu Muni, he became happy. He and Parvati stood up with due respect. Displaying the etiquette of an elder brother, the three-eyed Shiva personally rose to embrace Bhṛigu with affection.

*bhṛigu bale,—“maheśa, paraśa nāhi kara
yateka pāṣaṇḍa-veśa saba tumi dhara*

But Bhṛigu Muni said, "My dear Mahesh, please do not touch me. You wear all the symbols of an atheist. (336)

*bhūta, preta, piśāca-asṛṣya yata āche
hena saba pāṣaṇḍa rākhaha tumi kāche*

Unknown artist. Gita Press



Lord Shiva and Parvati



Unknown artist.

Lord Shiva, decorated with snakes and skulls, controls those in the modes of ignorance like a puppet master.



Unknown artist. Circa 1780

Lakshmi Devi and Lord Vishnu

“You always keep *bhūtas*, *pretas*, *piśācas*, and other untouchable atheists around you. (336)

*yateka utpatha se tomāra vyavahāra
bhasmāsthi-dhāraṇa kon śāstrera ācāra*

“Your behavior is full of contradictions. What scripture says that one can decorate his body with bones and ashes? (338)

*tomāra paraśe snāna karite yuyāya
dūre thāka, dūre thāka, aye bhūta-rāya!”*

“If you touch me, I will have to bathe. Therefore, O lord of the *Bhūtas*, please stay away from me!” (339)

*parīkṣā nimitte bhṛgu balena kautuke
kabhu śiva-nindā nāhi bhṛgura śrī-mukhe*



Unknown artist. Circa 19th century

Bhṛigu Muni tests Lord Vishnu

Bhṛigu Muni spoke like this to test Shiva, otherwise he would never criticize Shiva. (340)

When the three-eyed Shiva heard Bhṛigu's insulting words, he became angry and at once picked up his trident. Shankar forgot all the respect an elder brother generally gives to his brother, and he assumed his form as the annihilator of the universe. As Shiva took up his trident to kill Bhṛigu Muni, Parvati quickly came

and caught hold of Shiva's hand. She then grabbed Shiva's feet and said, "O Lord, should an older brother become so angry?" On hearing Parvati's words, Shankar became embarrassed.

Bhṛigu then went on to Vaikuntha, the abode of Krishna. When he arrived, he found the Lord lying on a jeweled bed, and Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, engaged in massaging his lotus feet.



Unknown artist.

Bhṛigu Muni tests Lord Viṣṇu

*henai samaye bhṛgu āsi' alakṣite
padāghāta karilena prabhura vakṣete*

At that time Bhṛigu Muni came there unnoticed and kicked the Lord's chest with his foot. (347)

*bhṛgu dekhi' mahāprabhu sambhrame uṭhiyā
namaskarilena prabhu mahā-prīta haiyā*

Upon seeing Bhṛigu Muni, the Lord immediately got up from his bed and affectionately offered his obeisances to the Brahmin. (348)

Then the Lord, along with Lakshmi, joyfully washed Bhṛigu Muni's feet. After offering Bhṛigu an excellent sitting place, the Lord personally smeared sandalwood pulp on Bhṛigu's body. The Lord then begged forgiveness from Bhṛigu, as if he had committed an offense. He said:

*"tomāra śubha-vijaya āmi nā jāniñā
aparādha kariyāchi, kṣama more ihā*

"I have committed an offense because I was unaware of your arrival and did not receive you properly. I beg you to pardon me. (352)

*ei ye tomāra pādodaka puṇya-jala
tīrthere karaye tīrtha hena sunirmala*

"This water that was used to wash your feet is so pure it can sanctify the places of pilgrimage. (353)

"All the *brahmāṇḍas* situated within my body as well as the rulers of all the planets — all of us have been purified today by this water that has washed your feet. Therefore, let your characteristics remain imperishable.

*lakṣmī-saṅge nija-vakṣe dila āmi sthāna
vede yena 'śrīvatsa-lāñchana' bale nāma"*

"I will keep the mark of your footprint on My chest along with Lakshmi, whose residence on my chest is glorified by the Vedas as the mark of *Śrīvatsa*." (357)

Hearing the Lord's words and seeing his humble behavior, Bhṛigu Muni concluded that Lord Viṣṇu was certainly beyond the influence of lust, anger, greed, and illusion. Bhṛigu Muni was struck with wonder, and he lowered his head in shame.

*yāhā karilena se tāhāna karma naya
āveśera karma ihā jāniha niścaya*

Whatever Bhṛigu Muni did was not on his account, rather he acted on the inspiration of providence. (360)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur comments on this verse: Although Bhṛigu, the son of Brahma, was an insignificant living entity, and he performed an act that appeared most abominable to the eyes of ordinary people and that was not



Unknown artist.

Bhṛigu Muni and Lord Vishnu

befitting a devotee, yet he acted that way as an empowered incarnation for the benefit of those who out of foolishness cannot understand the supreme position of Vishnu among Hari, Hara, and Virinci [Lord Brahma]. Sri Shankar, the *māyāvāda ācārya*, concealed his mood as an eternal servant while also acting as an empowered incarnation.

Sri Shankaracharya was the empowered incarnation of Rudra, while Sri Bhṛigu and Sri Vyasaḍev were empowered incarnations of Vishnu.

*siddha-vaiṣṇavera yena viṣama vyavahāra
kahilāna, ihā bujhibāre śakti kāra*

I have thus explained the extraordinary characteristics of a perfect *vaiṣṇava*, yet who can understand this? (379)



Unknown artist. Gita Press

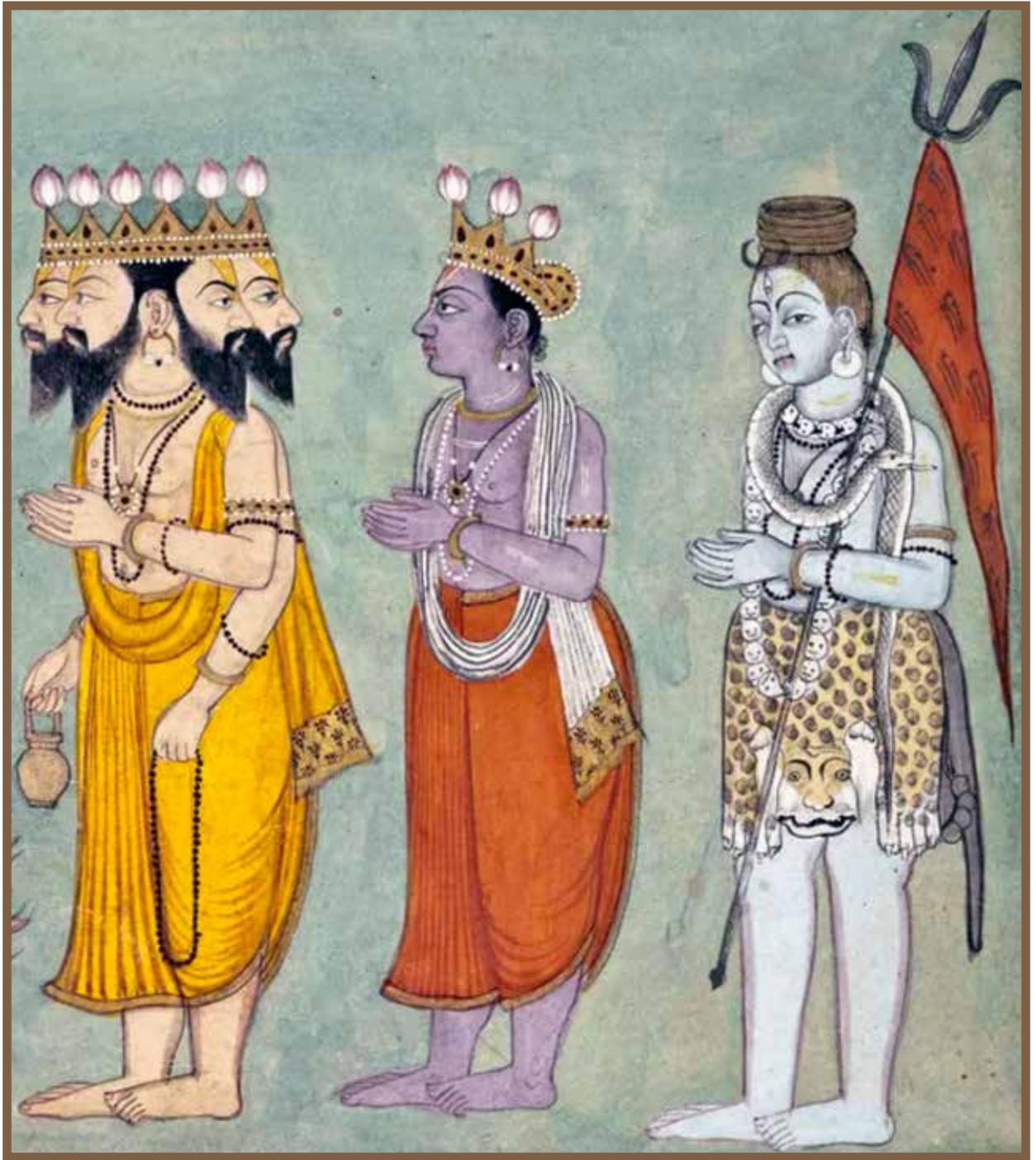
Lord Vishnu being worshiped by the Devas

*'abodhya agamya adhikārīra vyavahāra'
ihā bai siddhānta nā dekhi kichu āra*

The behavior of an exalted personality is incomprehensible and unfathomable. I do not see any conclusion other than this. (382)

*mūle kṛṣṇa praveśiyā bhṛgura dehetē
karāilā, bhaktira mahimā prakāṣite*

Lord Krishna entered the body of Bhṛgu Muni and caused this incident to take place to broadcast the glories of devotional service. (383)



Unknown artist. Basohli. Circa 1740

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

*jñāna-pūrva bhṛgura e karma kabhu naya
kṛṣṇa bādāyena adhikāri-bhakta-jaya*

Bhṛigu Muni could never perform such an act knowingly, but Krishna wanted to increase the glories of his pure devotee. (384)

*viriñci-śankara bādāite kṛṣṇa-jaya
bhṛgure ha-ilā kruddha dekhāiyā bhaya*

[The reason why] Brahma and Shankar displayed anger and threatened Bhṛigu Muni [was] to increase the glories of Krishna. (385)

*bhakta saba yena gāya nitya kṛṣṇa-jaya
kṛṣṇa bādāyena bhakta-jaya atisāya*

As the devotees always sing the glories of Lord Krishna, Krishna increases the glories of his devotees. (386)

*adhikāri-vaiṣṇavera nā bujhi' vyavahāra
ye jana nindaye, tāra nāhika nistāra*

If one criticizes an exalted Vaiṣṇava without understanding his behavior, one can never be delivered. (387)

*adhama-janera ye ācāra, yena dharma
adhikāri-vaiṣṇaveo kare sei karma*

Sometimes an exalted *vaiṣṇava* exhibits the same behavior and characteristics as a materialistic person. (388)

*kṛṣṇa-kṛpāye se ihā jānibāre pare
e saba saṅkaṭe keha mare, keha tare*

The conclusion is that only by the mercy of Krishna can one understand a great *vaiṣṇava*. Otherwise in such intricate situations one may be either liberated or destroyed. (9.389)

*sabe ithe dekhi eka mahā-pratikāra
sabāre kariba stuti vinaya-vyavahāra*

But I have found a wonderful solution to this problem: One should always glorify and behave humbly with all. (390) 🍌

— Vrindavan Das Thakur. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT



John Godfrey Saxe

“*The Blind Men and the Elephant*”, is one of the best-known poems of John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), an American poet, writer, and editor. It is based on a famous Indian parable, which as we can see from the pictures, is well-known and appreciated in cultures all over the world.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!”

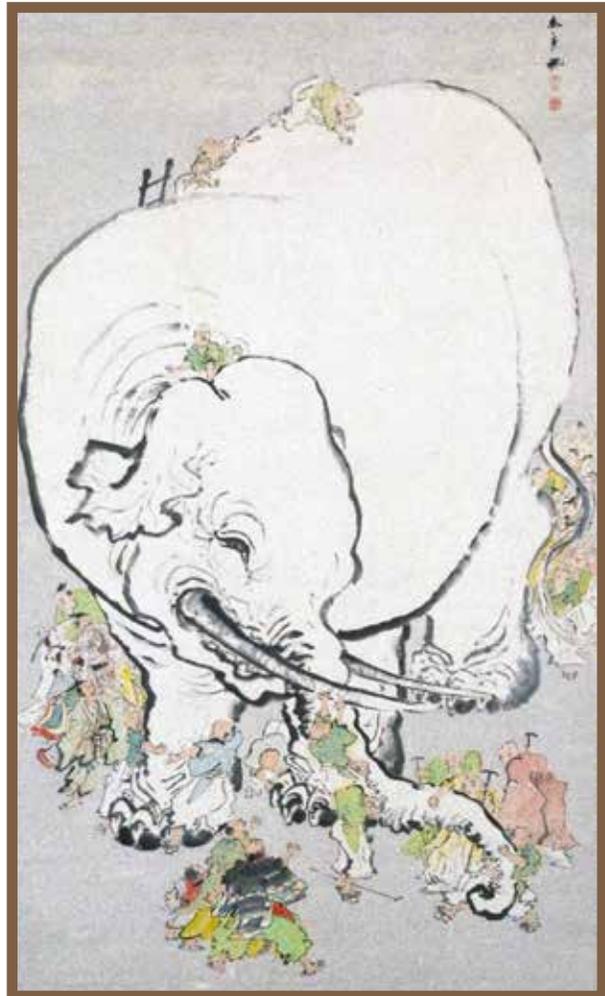
The second, feeling of the tusk
Cried, “Ho! what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me ’tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!”



Unknown artist

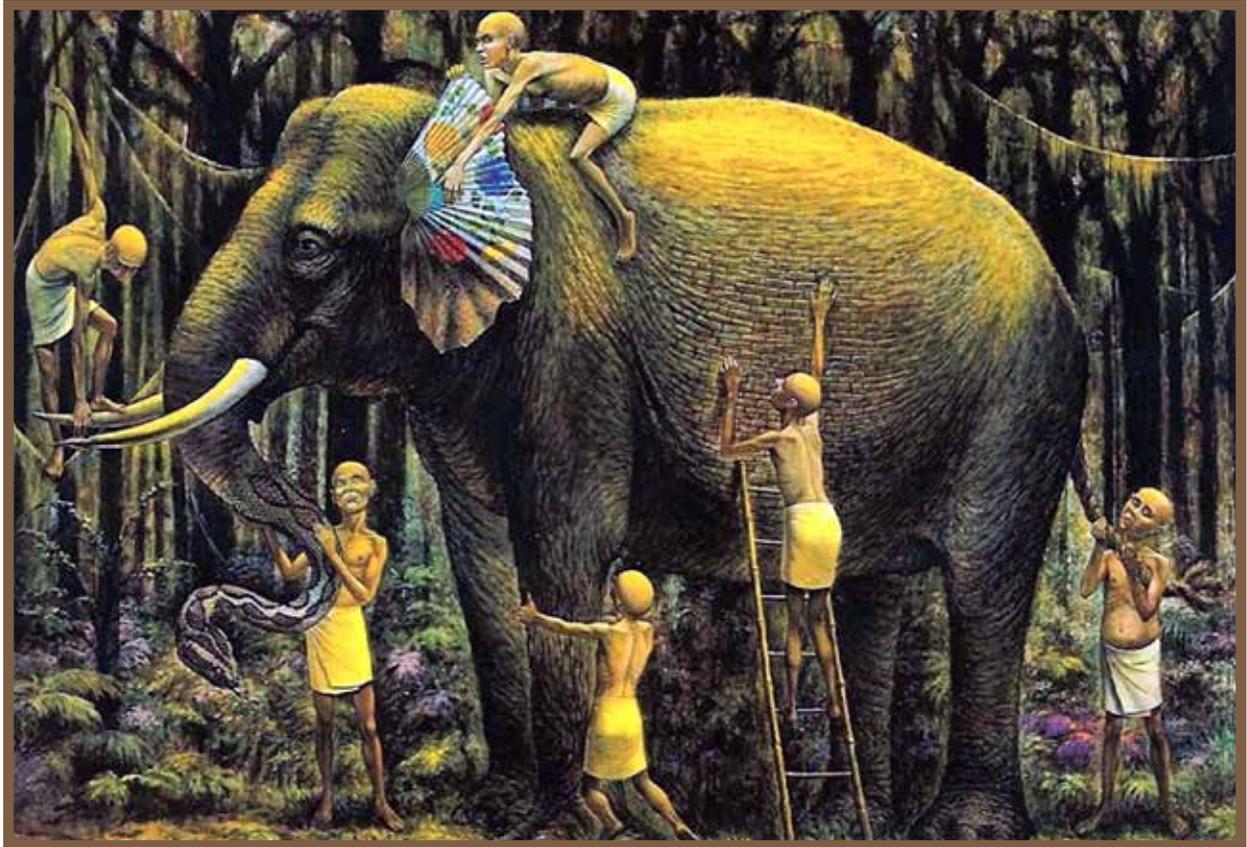
Pencil sketch of the blind men and the elephant

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up he spake:
“I see,” quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a snake!”



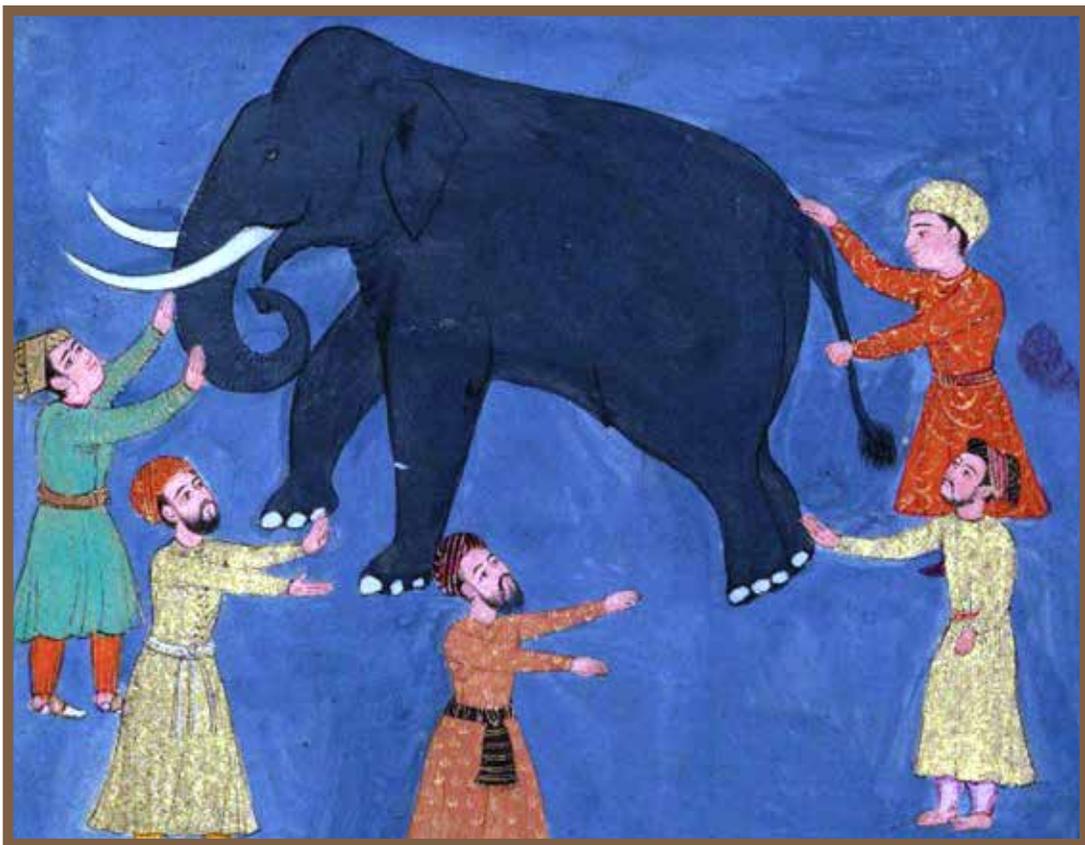
Painting by Ohara Donshu. Between 1800 and 1850. Brooklyn Museum, NY

Japanese version of the blind men and the elephant



Painting by Robert Edward Weaver. Circa 1972-1984.

American painting of blind men exploring the elephant



Painting by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi. Mid 13th century. Iran. Wikimedia Walters Art Gallery.

Sufi painting of townspeople who have never seen an elephant examining it in the dark.

Woodcut by Itcho Hanabusa 1888.

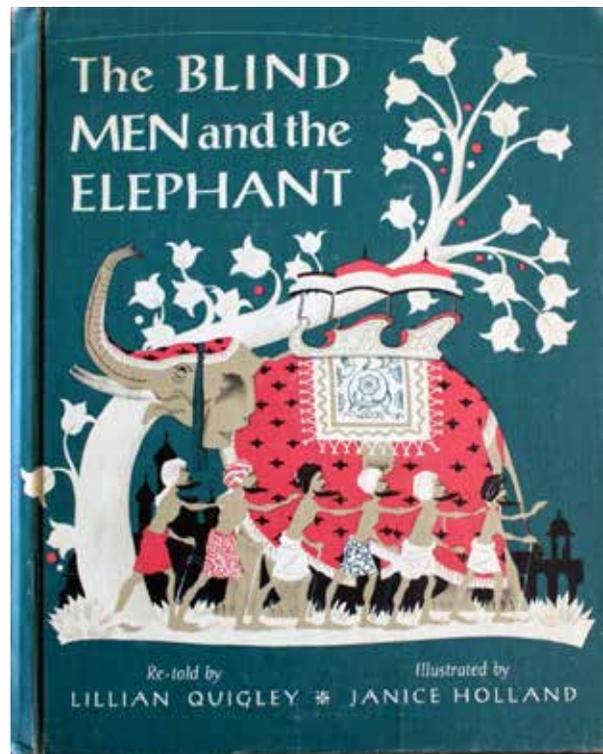


Blind Japanese monks examining an elephant.

The fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
“What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,” quoth he;
“’Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!”

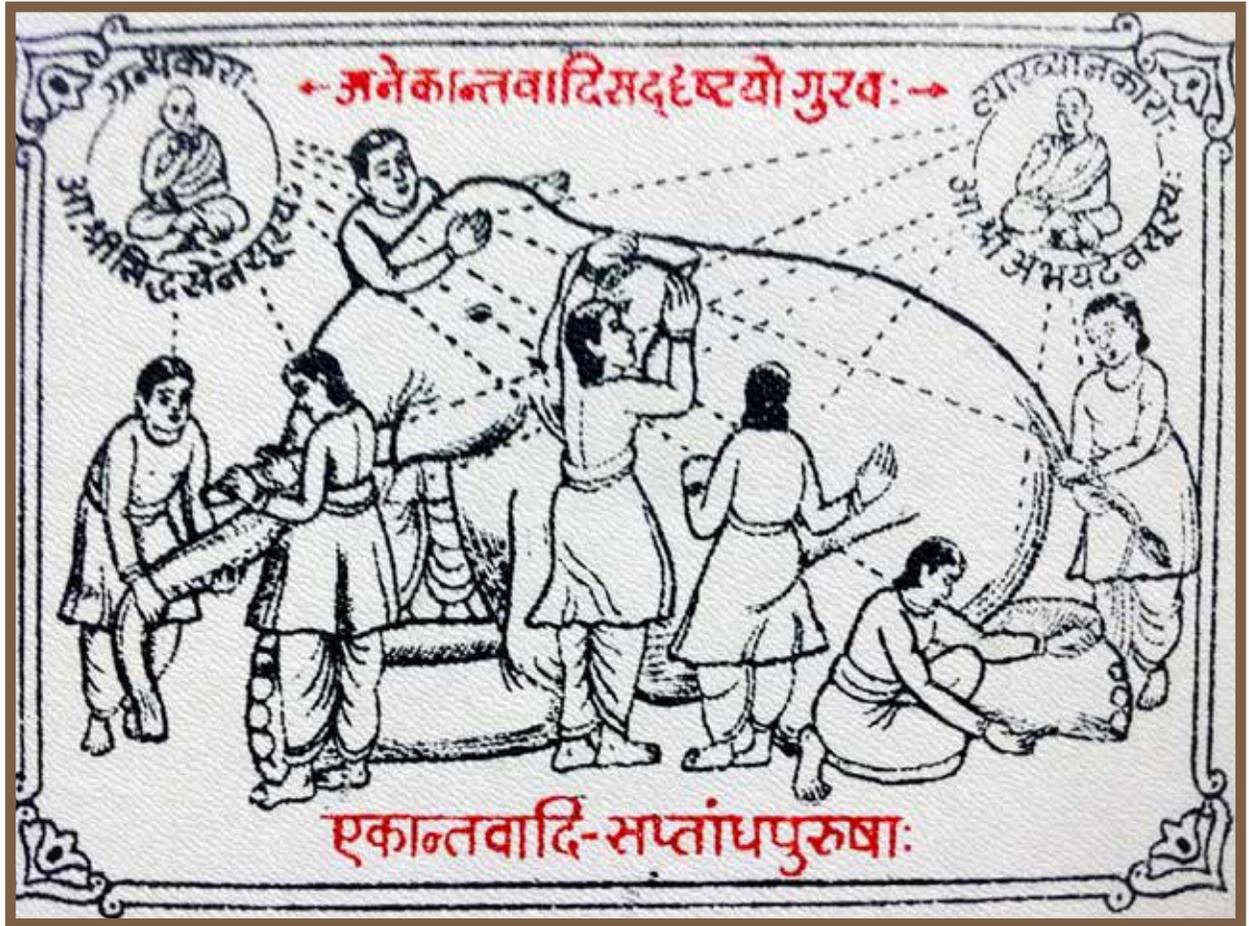
The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: “E’en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!”

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope.
“I see,” quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a rope!”



American childrens book published in 1959

Published by The University of Virginia



Unknown artist

Blind men and an elephant. Parable at a Jain temple

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And so these men of Indostan
 Disputed loud and long,
 Each in his own opinion
 Exceeding stiff and strong,
 Though each was partly in the right,
 And all were in the wrong!

Moral:

So oft in theologic wars,
 The disputants, I ween,
 Rail on in utter ignorance
 Of what each other mean,
 And prate about an elephant
 Not one of them has seen. 🍌

Bibliography

- <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/TheBlindmenandtheElephant>
- <http://www.cs.rice.edu/~ssiye/minstrels/poems/1179.html>