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"The mind is so hard that an atomic bomb will not make a dent in it, but meditation will.

Swami Ashokananda (1893-1969), monk of the Ramakrishna Order and accomplished teacher of Vedanta in the West

"The Blind Men and the Elephant, by the American poet John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) is based on a famous Indian parable. It provides a metaphorical explanation as to why the descriptions in the world's religions of the one Supreme Being they all worship can so radically differ:

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!
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!

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!

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.

On the pathway of spiritual excellence, words that discourage and those that publicize faults of others are lethal poisons. His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, spiritual head of Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha

Hinduism today is a religion of today and tomorrow. It is not just a religion of history books and yesterday. Our religion gives us strength today. It is a religion which worships one Supreme God, with vast scriptures that prescribe the worship and illumine our minds with knowledge about the one Supreme God. Never forget this. Never forsake your Vedic Hindu Dharma, but fulfill it, and you will be rewarded, generation after generation after generation. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Avoidance Of Fraud

Tirukural 281: He who wishes not to be scorned by others guards his own mind against the slightest thought of fraud.

Tirukural 283: A fortune amassed by fraud may appear to prosper but will all too soon perish altogether.

Tirukural 285: Benevolent thoughts and kindly feelings flee from those who watch for another's unwatchfulness to swindle his property.

Tirukural 286: Those who walk deceit's desirous path cannot hope to work wisdom's measured way.

Did You Know?

Yum Yum Mangos

Mango comes from the Tamil word *mankay*, adapted by the Portugese into *manga* when they settled in western India. Sometimes called "the apple of the tropics," "the peach of the tropics" or "the king of fruits," the mango originated in East India, Burma and the Andaman Islands bordering the Bay of Bengal. It has been cultivated in India for about 5,000 years. India's Alphonso variety is the most prized of the more than 1,000 cultivars known in the world today.

The health benefits of this scrumptious species are numerous. Mangos are rich in vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants, such as beta-carotene, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B, potassium, calcium and iron. High in fiber and low in calories and sodium, they make a healthy snack or a heavenly breakfast. Ayurveda praises the mango for its heating, energizing properties, and nearly every part of the plant has proven useful in folk medicine through the ages.

The many benefits of this fantastic fruit may explain its significance in the Hindu religion. The mango is a symbol of the highest spiritual attainment, as well as love, and it is believed to be a grantor of wishes. Designs of the leaves, flowers and fruit, including the ubiquitous paisley, are found on Hindu and Buddhist temples. The leaves are hung in decorative fashion to lend blessings to special pujas, festivals, weddings, New Year's celebrations and other ceremonies. Lord Ganesha, lover of all things sweet, holds a ripe mango in one hand.