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THE TEST OF BHRIGU

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A FINAL CONCLUSION
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

WHO IS BHRIGU MUNI?
Encyclopedia

THE TWO RISHIS
Srila Gaur Govind Swami Maharaja

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Shukadeva Gosvami said: Once, O King, as a group of sages were performing a Vedic sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvati River, a controversy arose among them as to which of the three chief deities is supreme. Eager to resolve this question, O King, the sages sent Lord Brahma's son Bhrigu to find the answer.

First he went to his father's court. To test how well Lord Brahma was situated in the mode of goodness, Bhrigu failed to bow down to him or glorify him with prayers. The Lord became angry at him, inflamed into fury by his own passion. Though anger toward his son was now rising within his heart, Lord Brahma was able to subdue it by applying his intelligence, in the same way that fire is extinguished by its own product, water.

Bhrigu then went to Mount Kailasa. There Lord Shiva stood up and happily came forward to embrace his brother. But Bhrigu refused his embrace, telling him, "You are a deviant heretic." At this Lord Shiva became angry, and his eyes burned ferociously. He raised his trident and was about to kill Bhrigu when Goddess Devi fell at his feet and spoke some words to pacify him.

Bhrigu then left that place and went to Vai-kuntha, where Lord Janardana resides. There he went up to the Supreme Lord, who was lying with His head on the lap of His consort, Sri, and kicked Him on the chest. The Lord then rose, along with Goddess Lakshmi, as a sign of respect. Coming down from His bedstead, that supreme goal of all pure devotees bowed His head to the floor before the sage and told him, "Welcome, brahmana. Please sit in this chair and rest awhile. Kindly forgive us, dear master, for not noticing your arrival."

"Please purify Me, My realm and the realms of the universal rulers devoted to Me by giving us the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is indeed what makes all places of pilgrimage sa-

nityam bhāgavata-sevayā

cred. Today, my lord, I have become the exclusive shelter of the goddess of fortune, Lakshmi; she will consent to reside on My chest because your foot has rid it of sins."

Shukadeva Gosvami said: Bhrigu felt satisfied and delighted to hear the solemn words spoken by Lord Vaikuntha. Overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy, he remained silent, his eyes brimming with tears. O King, Bhrigu then returned to the sacrificial arena of the wise Vedic authorities and described his entire experience to them.

Amazed upon hearing Bhrigu's account, the sages were freed from all doubts and became convinced that Vishnu is the greatest Lord. From Him come peace; fearlessness; the essential principles of religion; detachment with knowledge; the eightfold powers of mystic *yoga*; and His glorification, which cleanses the mind of all impurities. He is known as the supreme destination for those who are peaceful and equipoised—the selfless, wise saints who have given up all violence. His most dear form is that of pure goodness, and the brahmanas are His worshipable deities. Persons of keen intellect who have attained spiritual peace worship Him without selfish motives.

The Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings—the Rakshasas, the demons and the demigods—all of whom are created by the Lord's material energy and conditioned by her modes. But among these three modes, it is the mode of goodness which is the means of attaining life's final success.

Shukadeva Gosvami said: The learned brahmanas living along the river Sarasvati came to this conclusion in order to dispel the doubts of all people. Thereafter they rendered devotional service to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet and attained His abode.

Suta Gosvami said: Thus did this fragrant nectar flow from the lotus mouth of Shukadeva Gosvami, the son of the sage Vyasa Deva. This wonderful glorification of the Supreme Person destroys all

fear of material existence. A traveler who constantly drinks this nectar through his ear-holes will forget the fatigue brought on by wandering along the paths of worldly life.

Shukadeva Gosvami said: Once, in Dwaraka, a brahmana's wife gave birth to a son, but the newborn infant died as soon as he touched the ground, O Bharata. The brahmana took the corpse and placed it at the door of King Ugrasena's court. Then, agitated and lamenting miserably, he spoke the following:

“This duplicitous, greedy enemy of brahmanas, this unqualified ruler addicted to sense pleasure, has caused my son's death by some discrepancies in the execution of his duties. Citizens serving such a wicked king, who takes pleasure in violence and cannot control his senses, are doomed to suffer poverty and constant misery.”

The wise *brāhmaṇa* suffered the same tragedy with his second and third child. Each time, he left the body of his dead son at the King's door and sang the same song of lamentation.

When the ninth child died, Arjuna, who was near Lord Keshava, happened to overhear the *brāhmaṇa* lamenting. Thus Arjuna addressed the *brāhmaṇa*: “What is the matter, my dear *brāhmaṇa*? Isn't there some lowly member of the royal order here who can at least stand before your house with a bow in his hand? These kshatriyas are behaving as if they were brahmanas idly engaged in fire sacrifices.

“The rulers of a kingdom in which brahmanas lament over lost wealth, wives and children are merely imposters playing the role of kings just to earn their livelihood. My lord, I will protect the progeny of you and your wife, who are in such distress. And if I fail to keep this promise, I will enter fire to atone for my sin.”

The *brāhmaṇa* said: “Neither Sankarshana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, the best of bowmen, nor the unequaled warrior Aniruddha could save my sons. Then why do you naively attempt a feat that the almighty Lords of the universe could not perform? We cannot take you seriously.”

Sri Arjuna said: “I am neither Lord Sankarshana, O *brāhmaṇa*, nor Lord Krishna, nor even Krishna's son. Rather, I am Arjuna, wielder of the Gandiva bow. Do not minimize my ability, which was good enough to satisfy Lord Shiva, O *brāhmaṇa*. I will bring back your sons, dear master, even if I have to defeat Death himself in battle.”

Thus convinced by Arjuna, O tormentor of enemies, the *brāhmaṇa* went home, satisfied by having heard Arjuna's declaration of his prowess. When the wife of the elevated *brāhmaṇa* was again about to give birth, he went to Arjuna in great anxiety and begged him, “Please, please protect my child from death!”

After touching pure water, offering obeisances to Lord Maheshvara and recollecting the mantras for his celestial weapons, Arjuna strung his bow Gandiva. Arjuna fenced in the house where the birth was taking place by shooting arrows attached to various missiles. Thus the son of Pritha constructed a protective cage of arrows, covering the house upwards, downwards and sideways.

The brahmana's wife then gave birth, but after the newborn infant had been crying for a short time, he suddenly vanished into the sky in his selfsame body. The *brāhmaṇa* then derided Arjuna in front of Lord Krishna: “Just see how foolish I was to put my faith in the bragging of a eunuch! When neither Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Rama nor Keshava can save a person, who else can possibly protect him? To hell with that liar Arjuna! To hell with that braggart's bow! He is so foolish that he has deluded himself into thinking he can bring back a person whom destiny has taken away.”

While the wise *brāhmaṇa* continued to heap insults upon him, Arjuna employed a mystic incantation to go at once to Samyamani, the city of heaven where Lord Yamaraja resides. Not seeing the brahmana's child there, Arjuna went to the cities of Indra, Agni, Nirrti, Soma, Vayu and Varuna. With weapons at the ready he searched through all the domains of the universe, from the bottom of the subterranean region to the roof of heaven.

Finally, not having found the brahmana's son anywhere, Arjuna decided to enter the sacred fire, having failed to keep his promise. But just as he was about to do so, Lord Krishna stopped him and spoke the following words:

[Lord Krishna said:] "I will show you the brahmana's sons, so please don't despise yourself like this. These same men who now criticize us will soon establish our spotless fame."

Having thus advised Arjuna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had Arjuna join Him on His divine chariot, and together they set off toward the west. The Lord's chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokaloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness.

In that darkness the chariot's horses—Saibya, Sugriva, Meghapushpa and Balahaka—lost their way. Seeing them in this condition, O best of the Bharatas, Lord Krishna, the supreme master of all masters of yoga, sent His Sudarshana disc before the chariot. That disc shone like thousands of suns.

The Lord's Sudarshana disc penetrated the darkness with its blazing effulgence. Racing forward with the speed of the mind, it cut through the fearsome, dense oblivion expanded from primeval matter, as an arrow shot from Lord Rama's bow cuts through His enemy's army.

Following the Sudarshana disc, the chariot went beyond the darkness and reached the endless spiritual light of the all-pervasive brahmajyoti. As Arjuna beheld this glaring effulgence, his eyes hurt, and so he shut them.

From that region they entered a body of water resplendent with huge waves being churned by a mighty wind. Within that ocean Arjuna saw an amazing palace more radiant than anything he had ever seen before. Its beauty was enhanced by thousands of ornamental pillars bedecked with brilliant gems.

In that palace was the huge, awe-inspiring serpent Ananta Shesha. He shone brilliantly with the radiance emanating from the gems on His thousands of hoods and reflecting from twice as many fearsome eyes. He resembled white Mount Kailasa, and His necks and tongues were dark blue.

Arjuna then saw the omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead, Maha-Vishnu, sitting at ease on the serpent bed. His bluish complexion was the color of a dense rain cloud, He wore a beautiful yellow garment, His face looked charming, His broad eyes were most attractive, and He had eight long, handsome arms. His profuse locks of hair were bathed on all sides in the brilliance reflected from the clusters of precious jewels decorating His crown and earrings. He wore the Kaustubha gem, the mark of Shrivatsa and a garland of forest flowers. Serving that topmost of all Lords were His personal attendants, headed by Sunanda and Nanda; His chakra and other weapons in their personified forms; His consort potencies Pushti, Shri, Kirti and Aja; and all His various mystic powers.

Lord Krishna offered homage to Himself in this boundless form, and Arjuna, astonished at the sight of Lord Maha-Vishnu, bowed down as well. Then, as the two of them stood before Him with joined palms, the almighty Maha-Vishnu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.

[Lord Maha-Vishnu said:] "I brought the brahmana's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you, My expansions, who have descended to the earth to save the principles of religion. As soon as you finish killing the demons who burden the earth, quickly come back here to Me. Although all your desires are completely fulfilled, O best of exalted personalities, for the benefit of the people in general you should continue to exemplify religious behavior as the sages Nara and Narayana."

Thus instructed by the Supreme Lord of the topmost planet, Krishna and Arjuna assented by

chanting om, and then they bowed down to almighty Lord Maha-Vishnu. Taking the brahmana's sons with them, they returned with great delight to Dwaraka by the same path along which they had come. There they presented the *brāhmaṇa* with his sons, who were in the same infant bodies in which they had been lost.

Having seen the domain of Lord Vishnu, Arjuna was totally amazed. He concluded that whatever extraordinary power a person exhibits can only be a manifestation of Sri Krishna's mercy. Lord Krishna exhibited many other, similar heroic pastimes in this world. He apparently enjoyed the pleasures of ordinary human life, and He performed greatly potent fire sacrifices.

The Lord having demonstrated His supremacy, at suitable times He showered down all desirable things upon the brahmanas and His other subjects, just as Indra pours down his rain. Now that He had killed many wicked kings and engaged devotees such as Arjuna in killing others, the Lord could easily assure the execution of religious principles through the agency of such pious rulers as Yudhishthira.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 89 » Verses 1-65 » Translations by the Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

A FINAL CONCLUSION His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam these great sages are described as *brahma-vādinām*. *Brahma-vādinām* means those who talk about the Absolute Truth but have not yet come to a conclusion. Generally, *brahma-vādī* refers to impersonalists or students of the Vedas still engaged in philosophical inquiry.

Thus, it is to be understood that all the assembled sages on the bank of the Sarasvati River were serious students of Vedic literature who had not yet determined who is the Supreme Absolute Personality of Godhead. But after hearing Bhrigu Muni's account of his encounters with the three presiding deities—Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, and

Lord Vishnu—the sages unanimously concluded that Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

It is stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that the sages were astonished when they heard how, although Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva became agitated at Bhrigu's disrespectful actions, Lord Vishnu remained completely peaceful—even when Bhrigu kicked Him on the chest. The *Bhāgavatam* illustrates this with an analogy: a small lamp may flicker in the slightest breeze, but the great lamp—the sun—remains unmoved even by the strongest storm.

In the same way, a person's greatness is proven by their ability to remain steady and tolerant in provoking situations. The sages, therefore, concluded that anyone seeking real peace and freedom from fear should take exclusive shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. Because Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva were disturbed by a trivial offense, how could they ensure peace for their devotees?

As for Lord Vishnu, the *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that one who accepts Vishnu, or Krishna, as the Supreme Friend attains the highest perfection of peaceful life.

—Chapter 89 » Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead » By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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WHO IS BHRIGU MUNI?
Encyclopedia

When Brahmaji was performing a great sacrifice on behalf of Varuna, Maharshi Bhrigu was born from the sacrificial fire. He was a great sage and his very dear wife was Puloma. He could travel in the space like Durvasa, Narada and others and used to visit all the planets of the universe. Before the battle of Kurukshetra, he was one of them who tried to stop the battle. Sometimes he instructed Bharadwaja Muni about the astronomical evolution and he is the author of the great Bhrigusamhita, the astrological calculation. He explained how air, fire, water and earth generated from ether. He explained how the air in the stomach works and regulates the intestines. As a great philosopher he established with logical conclusion about the eternity of the living entity. (Mahabharat Shanti Ch. 87) He was also a great anthropologist and the theory of evolution was long ago explained by him. He was a scientific propounder of the four divisions and orders of the human society known as the Varnashram in-

stitution. He converted Kshatriya king Bitahavyak to become a Brahmin.

THE TWO RISHIS

Srila Gaur Govind Swami Maharaja

With the help of the two rishis Bhrigu and Bharadwaj, Agastya Muni once built a huge temple for Krishna at Kalahasti in Rajasthan. Many laborers had been engaged to build that temple. Bhrigu and Bharadwaj were supervising them. The laborers were working hard from morning to sunset. Every evening before sunset, Agastya would sit on the bank of the nearby river and call all of the laborers. By his order, Bhrigu and Bharadwaj would then give a handful of sand to each laborer. That was their payment for the whole day's work. But when the two rishis gave the sand, it at once turned into gold. According to how hard the laborer was working, he received a proportionate amount of gold. So whoever was working harder was getting more gold. Whoever was working less would only get a small amount, and if someone were not working at all, only cheating, they would find only sand in their hands, no gold. In this dealing there was no partiality and no complaints. Everything took place before God who is the supreme eyewitness. Each worker happily accepted his proper due, no more and no less. The laborers were thinking, "Whatever I am doing, Krishna is in my heart constantly watching me. So I am working in His presence." If one has this kind of mentality his work is called sādhu-karma, very pious work. If your heart is clear then all your activities will be clear and pious. Whatever work you touch will be successful and great. This is Gopal's work. Don't neglect it. Don't quarrel and don't be duplicitous. Don't steal anything. The temple helps area's inhabitants in their spiritual as well as economic development.

—Gopal Ji—The Beloved Deity of
Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami
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