

February 25, 1978 Class on Symbolism with Baba Hari Dass

Edit notes: The following was typed from notes handwritten at the time of the darśana. B indicates what Babaji wrote on his chalkboard, as read by the reader, and then as heard and noted by someone present. R is comments likely of the chalkboard reader. T indicates reading from an unidentified text. Comments in square brackets are generally those of the typist. Comments in parentheses are likely that of the reader. Names of individuals who are not public figures are changed to protect their privacy. There was editing for format and IAST transliteration of Sanskrit terms.

Bows [presumably, ... handwritten notes omitted to say this is about bows]

- one curve = Brahman [or Brahmā?]
- 3 curves = 3 guṇa: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva
- 5 curves = 5 elements: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Bhavānī, Gaṇeśa

Musical instruments:

- ḍamaru = two-ended drum
- vīṇā (stringed) = shown in hands of Sarasvatī, consort of Viṣṇu
- veṇu = flute = in Kṛṣṇa's hands
- ghaṇṭā = bell – in Kālī's or Vīrabhadra's hands: symbolizes nāda
- brahm [bāmsurī, wooden flute?] = śabda brahman;
- bell is destructive, sound of bīja of ājñā cakra, moon side.

Other objects shown in hands of deities:

- darpaṇa, mirror = illusion
- kapāla, bowl from human skull = bowl of nectar
- in Kālī's hands and Śiva's = Birabhi [sic, sp?]
- pustaka, book, in hands of Brahmā, Sarasvatī or Viṣṇu = the Veda
- akṣamālā rosary, 108 beads = all knowledge.

Sanskrit alphabet goes from “a” to “ksha”; 52 + 52 + first letter of each of four rows

- padma, lotus (white) or nīlotpala (blue lily [lotus?]) = creation or evolution
- mṛga, deer, in hand of Śiva = the Veda
- kukkuṭa (cock), parrot, and beetle, in hands of Durga and other goddesses

[Babaji then wrote:] All animals are symbols of dharma. Deer is Veda because of its speed.
Veda's knowledge is so fast.

[Reading continued]

Kamaṇḍalu, water jug, pitcher (various shapes) = essence of Upaniṣad because it feeds (you pour from it)

Sruc and sruva, ladles (two shapes), wood, for offering ghee in yājñā carried by goddess
Annapūrṇa = sacrifice

Kaṭi, scissors, old style [arc with blade at each end, operated by squeezing until the two blades meet] = cutting away the obstacles of ignorance

Śiva

Four hands

- triśūla (trident) = control over guṇa
- hand in fear - not pose
- kamaṇḍalu
- ḍamaru

One shoe on = pravṛtti, one shoe off (and leg up) = nivṛtti

Cobra = time

Brahmā

Immense being

First individual dwelling in creation

Masculine form of Brahman

Brahman = nirguṇa Brahman; Brahmā and others = saguṇa Brahman, beyond [sic]

Brahman....

Viṣṇu (sattva) and Śiva (tamas) are opposites, like light and darkness.

Universe was created by the result of their opposition, which is rajas guṇa. Mahābhārata says

Brahmā was born from ahaṁkāra (individuality sense). Ahaṁkāra is main creative force: asmi, I-ness.

Brahmā is rajas, but created by ahaṁkāra.

Brahmā is a creator or worker, so some sects put him in śūdra category.

Brahmā is shown bearded = the oldest of the three gods. When the three main male gods are shown together and young, it symbolizes their being born together = mahat.

Brahman incorporates prakṛti and puruṣa. Prakṛti and Puruṣa give rise to 3 guṇa which are together in mahat tattva. When they separate, they become the deva: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva.

Desire to create causes desire to act.

Viṣṇu's crown is śrī cakra.

Dormant traces of energy (power) left over from other previous creations is thought to have caused the original imbalance that motivated creation (in same way as saṁskāra are passed on in rebirth): imbalance activates unconscious will.

Prakṛti is like an unconscious energy that awakens when cosmic consciousness is reflected in it.

There is one thing which never takes birth or dies, and that is Brahman, or consciousness. That gives rise to the 3 guṇa.

Māyā is prakṛti. Active = māyā, inactive = prakṛti. When consciousness is reflected in prakṛti, that is māyā.

On gross level, 3 guṇa = 3 doṣa.

Several dozen names of Brahmā

Prajāpati = lord of progeneration

Symbols of Brahmā:

Pink-colored,

Four-headed: originally had five, but one was burned by fire from Śiva's third eye.

Four heads symbolize, among other things: virtue, wealth, satisfaction of desires, liberation.

Four arms represent four directions, may hold four Veda, or may hold them in one hand

Other things held by Brahmā: staff, ladle, mālā, bow = illusion water jug [as] creative element or nectar of immortality, pot of nectar

Swan as vehicle = peace, purity, life force, knowledge

Sits on lotus that comes out of Viṣṇu's navel = sitting on his own creation

petals of lotus = nature, prakṛti, saffron (orange) color = change, stem = knowledge

He falls asleep after creating, and is reborn on lotus, so many names come from lotus or refer to lotus.

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