

The Blind Men and the Elephant

*Instructive Stories from the teachings of
Srla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur*

A group of blind men heard a strange animal called an “elephant” from some elderly people. Naturally they had a very strong urge to have first-hand experience of such an animal through their sense of touch.



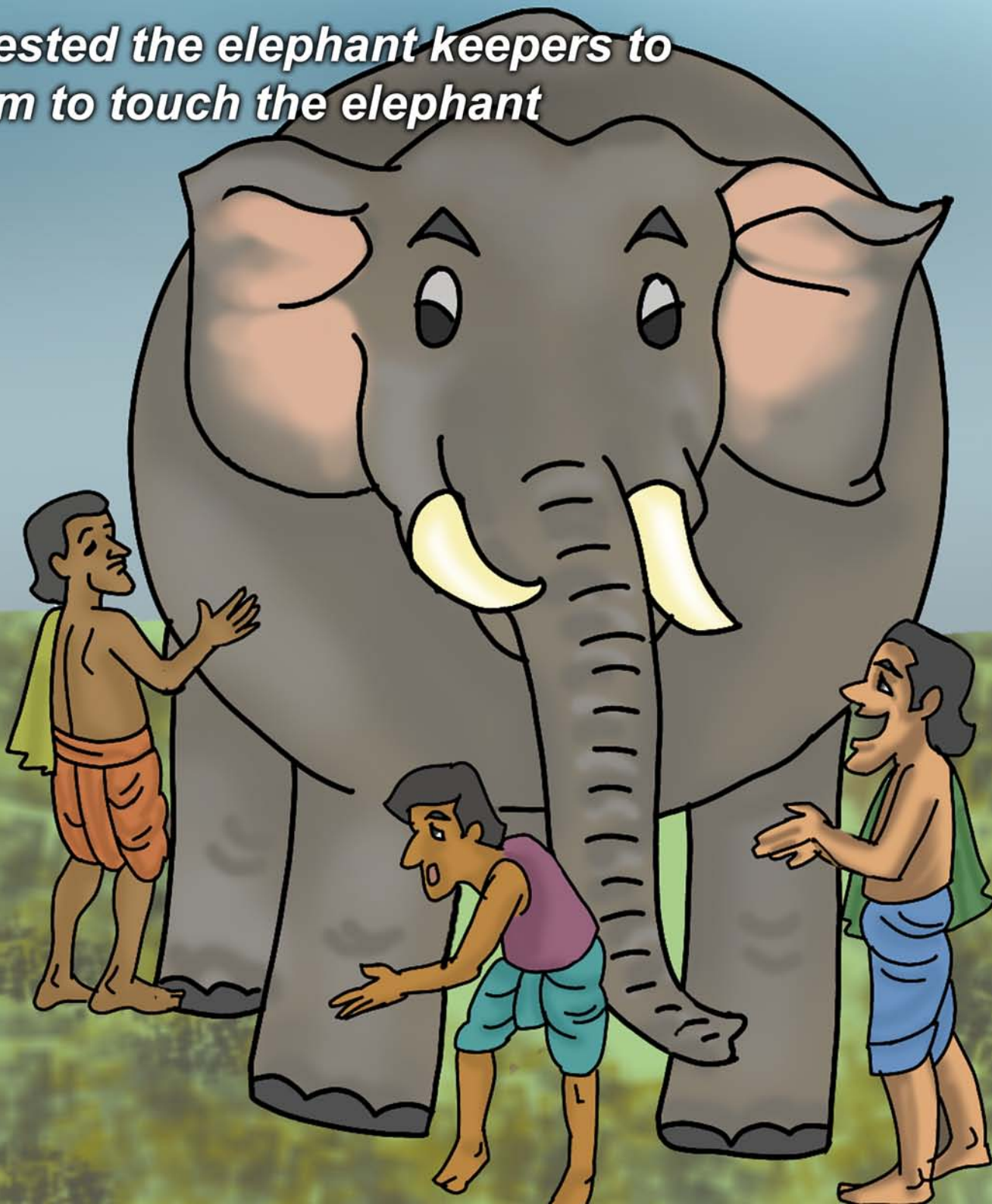


Oh, nice! We should go to have an experience of what this animal is all about. Let us go to the stable.

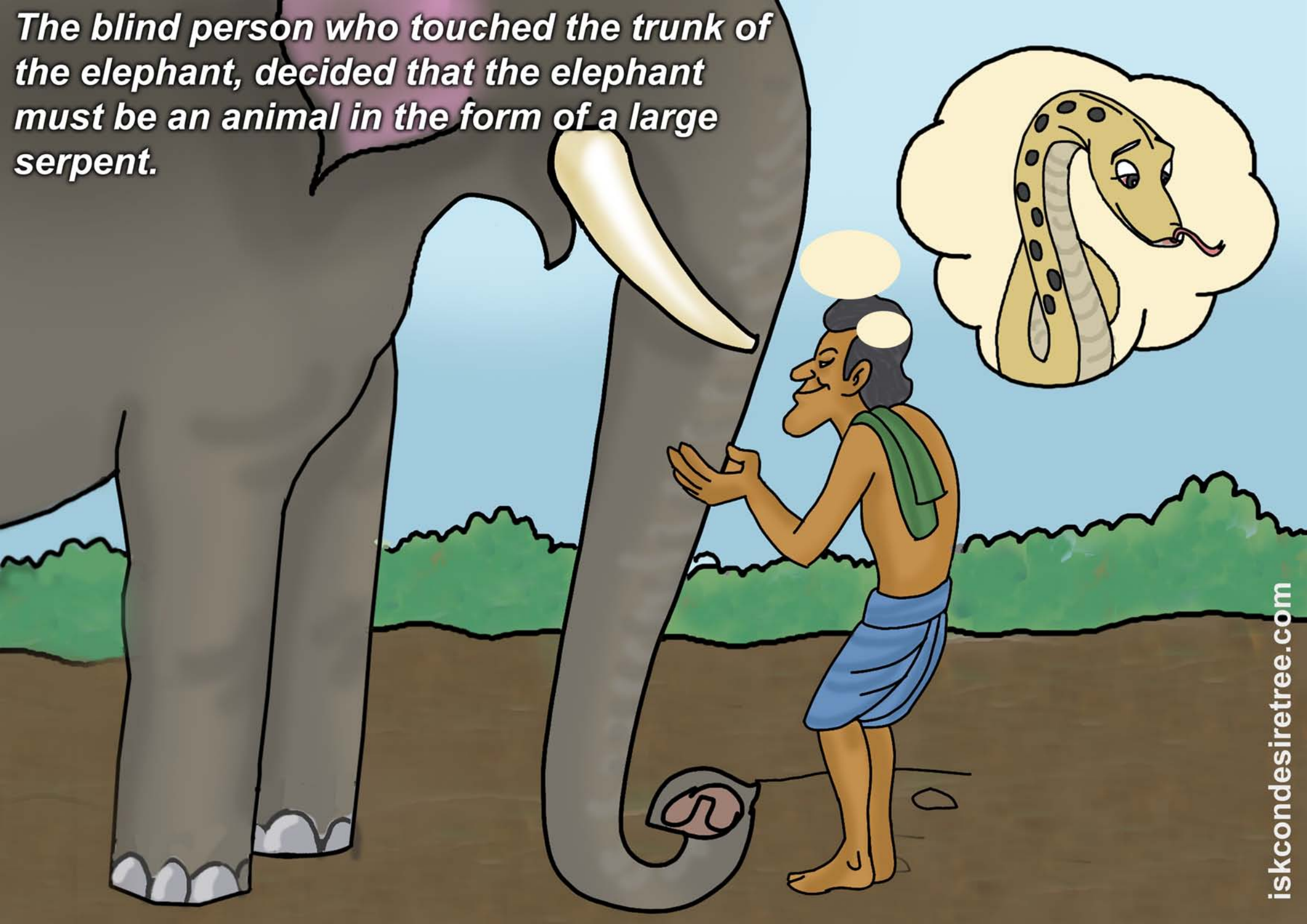
With walking sticks in hand, the blind persons arrived at the elephant stable in the royal palace



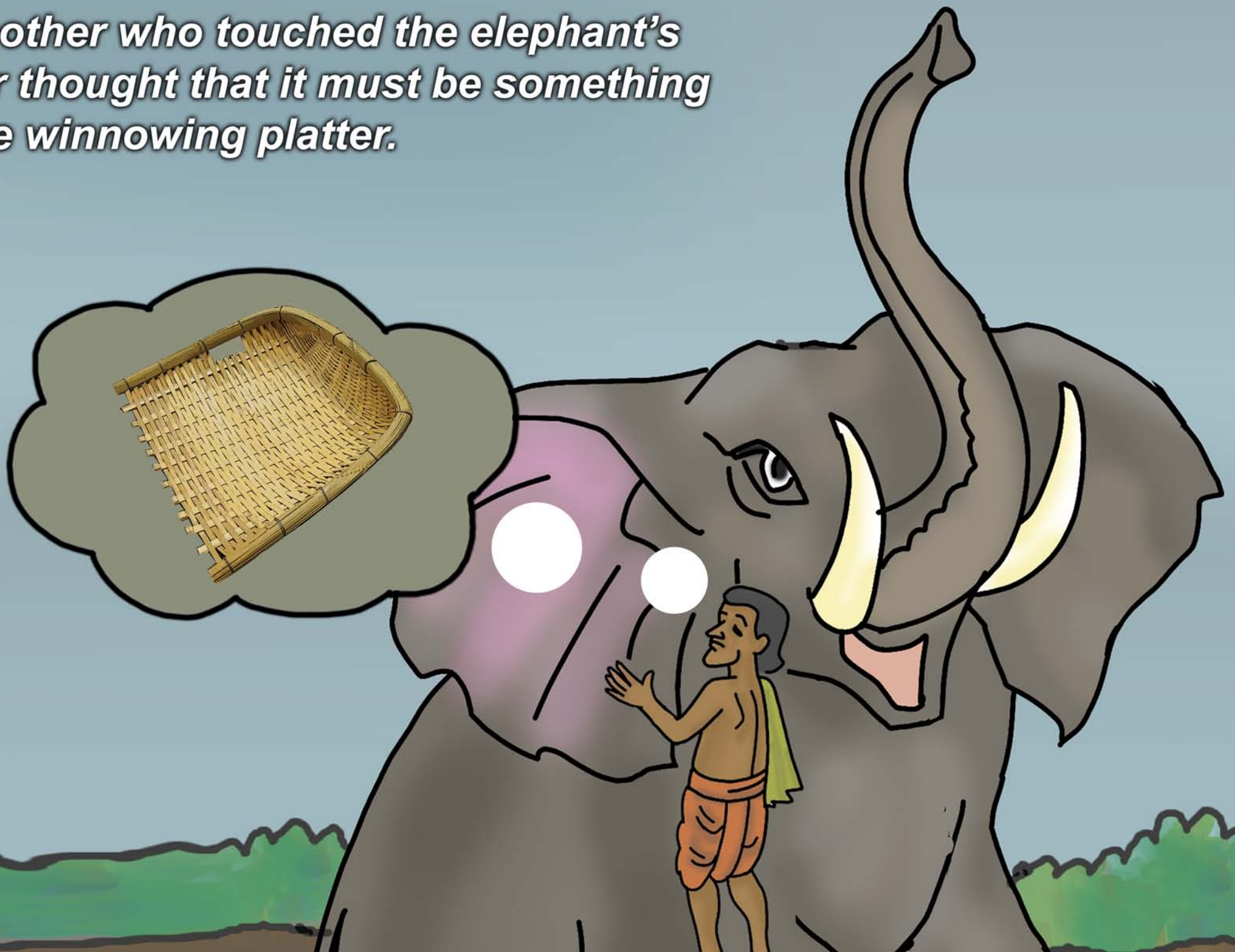
They requested the elephant keepers to permit them to touch the elephant



The blind person who touched the trunk of the elephant, decided that the elephant must be an animal in the form of a large serpent.



Another who touched the elephant's ear thought that it must be something like winnowing platter.





Another who touched the elephant's belly thought that it must be an animal like a big wall.

The one who touched the legs assumed that it was just like a pillar.



The one who touched the tusk assumed that it was just like a sword.



The one who touched the tail assumed that it was just like a rope.



Thus, the understanding-of-the elephant was not perfect to any of the blind persons.



Purport :

Those who arrive at their own conclusion about the constitutional form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by applying their materialistic knowledge, so-called mundane education or objective observation also suffer from such imperfect and concocted conception of the truth.

It is because of this kind of endeavour for realisation of the Supreme Godhead through one's direct observation and speculation that various atheistic philosophies like illusionism, skepticism etc. have become established. But when one is enlightened, which means, initiated into transcendental knowledge from a real devotee of the Supreme Lord, and is fortunate enough to enjoy a vision of the Lord, then,

and then only, the perfect constitutional form and position of the Lord can be properly realized.

Those who are not devotees of the Lord and are under illusion from material knowledge, deliver only such ideas about the Supreme Lord that are simply imperfect, concocted and speculated -isms only.

Any conception of formlessness of the Lord, or of his transcendental form, is to be considered imperfect and unfounded, unless and until it is supported by a true vision and realization of his real position of a true devotee.