

# Seers, Gurus, Pedestals and the Spectrum of Neurodivergence

I recently finished watching Rick Archer's interview with psychiatrist Diane Hennacy Powell discussing her research into the extraordinary capacities of autistic persons. I found it to be it highly educational and fascinating.

I had already listened to *The Telepathy Tapes* on Rick's recommendation some time ago, which raised major questions about the ways we identify people as seers, gurus and enlightened persons. In that context I wrote the following:

## Parashara and Neurodiversity

Parashara's best known work is the *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra*, which is the foundational text of Jyotish (Vedic astrology). You can download a PDF of it online if you search on the book's title. If you look at it you will see it's an impressive work that demonstrates intimate knowledge of the subtle mechanics of creation and of the dynamics of karma as they relate to the birth time and place of any individual.

But Parashara is an extremely problematic figure (at least to me), the reasons for which can read in the essay, "When Sacred Scriptures Promote Unholy Agendas." Trying to come to grips with that, I wondered, how could Parashara have been so gifted but also, in another part of his personality, so bad?

Then I listened to *The Telepathy Tapes* and it became clear, not only what could very likely have been going on with Parashara's exceptional abilities, but with the whole history of thousands of years during which traditions and cultures have elevated people with unusual gifts to guru and even God status.

What were Parashara's gifts? Well, he could see the subtle mechanics of creation, as I said. He could predict all the karmas of any person's life from knowing the circumstances of that person's birth. And he could directly see the mathematics in the movements of the planets and stars (necessary to calculate astrological charts).

Such gifts, however, were not the exclusive property of sages who lived and died centuries or millennia ago. They are relatively common today. We call people who display such abilities "savants," but in our distracted and nearly unconscious modern culture, it rarely occurs to anyone to think such people might be sages in the same way the legendary sages of ancient times were sages.

But I think it must be that the ancient sages and the savants of today surely must have the same (what we are calling "neurodivergent") brain chemistry and apparatus of perception. I think it likely there was nothing "special" about the ancient sages that isn't also special in the abilities of people living among us even now.

Think, for example, of Meyer Baba, who was brilliantly insightful and also, who stopped speaking for the last 44 years of his life and communicated with a letter board and hand signals (a common feature of autism). And think of some of our own capabilities, and those of our friends. I think we are missing something important when we put the authors of ancient treatises on such a high pedestal that we can barely see them at all. I think actually, we should be looking at them eye to eye, thinking of them as human beings not different from human beings living today.

In all this, it's important to keep a balanced perspective. It is dangerous to bestow guru status on someone because they have insights or perceptions most people aren't able to access. And it's

dangerous to assume that because there may be a greater potential for empathy and for the experience of unity with all beings, that any and all who display exceptional capabilities can be trusted implicitly.

The problem until now has been, neurodivergent people have been dismissed as “different and therefore defective,” rather than valued for the special talents and gifts they/we bring to the world.

On the one hand, it is important that people who have assumed roles of spiritual authority on the basis of unusual gifts must be understood to be just human beings with particular patterns of perception and neurochemistry and not somehow above and beyond the rest of us “ordinary” humans.

And on the other hand, the huge numbers of autistic/neurodivergent people who are misunderstood and underappreciated need to be discovered and respected for the roles they/we can play in a world that desperately needs new and deeper insights and different capabilities beyond those by which conventional civilization is operating now.