

# The Cult of the nose-less ones

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Once, a mendicant who became a dacoit was captured and brought before the king. The punishment was mutilation of the nose. When his nose was cut off the mendicant began to shout, " I CAN SEE GOD! I CAN SEE GOD !". He began to roam the countryside shouting on this way. When people asked him why they could not see god too, he replied, "You cannot see him because your nose comes in the way. Cut off your nose and you too will see him".

One man, desperate for a vision of god, cut off his nose. "Now can you see god?" asked the mendicant. "Yes, Yes, I can see god." Replied the man. Thereupon several others cut off their noses too.

The cult of the Nose-less grew by leaps and bounds. Soon their number had crossed several thousand. The king heard of the cult and had the leader, the former mendicant to the palace.

The king asked the mendicant, "CAN YOU REALLY SEE GOD?".

"Yes", said the mendicant.

"If I cut off my nose, will I see him too?", asked the king.

"Undoubtedly", answered the mendicant.

When the mendicant had gone, the king confided to his chief minister that his desire to see God was so great that he would not mind joining the cult of the Nose-less.

The minister was aghast. "One should not act hastily," he advised. "The eyes are situated above the nose. I cannot understand how it could obstruct one's vision. The man is a fraud."

"What about his followers?" asked the king? "They too claim they can see God", the king questioned.

"They do not want to admit they were fooled," said the minister. "So they too keep

chanting: I can see God, I can see God."

The king was not convinced. The minister took him to the royal prison and asked the warden to bring out a certain dacoit who



had recently been imprisoned there. When the man was brought before them the king saw that he was nose-less.

"Did your life change when your nose was cut off?" asked the king.

"Yes," said the dacoit. "I can breathe easier, now. No more stuffy nose."

"But can you see God?" asked the minister incredulously.

"My king is my god." said the prisoner, unctuously. "Only he can save me from this awful prison."

The king shouted at him, "CAN YOU REALLY SEE GOD?"

The mendicant shook his head.

The king now became convinced that the mendicant was a fraud. He was furious and sent his men to fetch him. When the man saw the soldiers coming, he realized that the game was over.

"Better to be nose-less than headless!" was his last message to his followers, shouted as he fled from the back door. He was never seen or heard of again.