

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER VI



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1. Dealing with Liberation

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1. Dealing with Liberation

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT

Contemplate the truth taught thus far
Again and again but not mechanically
Reflect on it from beginning to end
March along the path you then see

Different activities will not bind you
If your intelligence saturates with truth
Otherwise fall is most inevitable
Elephants too fall from cliffs sometimes

If you conceptualize this teaching
And do not let it act in your life
Great will be the danger to yourself
You will stumble and fall like a blind man

To attain perfection and liberation
Live a life of utter non-attachment
Doing what is best as it reaches you
This is the most important factor of all

Remember well what has been taught
It is capable of awakening inner intelligence
Resort then to this unconditioned mind
With it, you will be able to cross samsara

Cosmic consciousness is the existence
Know this and be free of the ego-sense

No mind, ignorance or individual soul exist
All these are concepts that have arisen

THE ARISING OF IGNORANCE

When the body is considered as the self
The self relates to all that is seen
Hope in the seen—will surely arise
Giving rise to delusion concerning mind

The illusory notion of mind's existence
Persists as long as truth is not realized
Hence resort to the company of the wise
Till wickedness falls, as they are unattached

THE ARISING OF WISDOM

As long as world-experience still seems real
Clear perception of truth has not dawned
Blind dependence and craving will persist
Wickedness and delusion the consequence

One who is not attracted by pleasure
Has a cool heart because of its purity
Desires, cravings and hopes are fire
That burn and cause great heat within

When the body too is seen as an effect
Of delusion arisen within somehow
The mind does not seem to arise
As it has lost its foothold and support

When incorrect perception comes to an end
The sun of self-knowledge rises within

The mind is reduced to naught and unseen
Burnt completely—just as dry leaves

LIBERATED ONES

Those who are liberated while still living
See both—truth and relative appearance
Seen directly by the inner intelligence
It is sattva, transparency—not the mind

Knowers of truth are in perfect equilibrium
Living their life here playfully, as it were
Though engaged in diverse actions
They behold the inner light continually

Concepts of unity and duality do not arise
There are no tendencies in the enlightened heart
The seeds of ignorance have been burnt
Delusion never rises in sattva's abode

YOU CAN REACH THIS STATE TOO

Reach this state of sattva or transparency
Hold onto wisdom—'tis light on the path
Infinite Brahman is Infinite Brahman
The reality of world-appearance as well

Appearances are insentient and unreal
Their substratum is pure consciousness
Since the substratum is reality itself
Appearances exist as appearances in it

Recollect your essential nature
Abandon all notions of diversity

You are the self-luminous being
Salutations to the cosmic being

That which is known as Rama
Is infinite consciousness in truth
In it rise and fall numerous universes
Remain in equanimity like infinite space

Fire is inseparable from heat
Fragrance from the lotus flower
Experiencing too is inseparable
From infinite consciousness

Experiencing is inseparable from consciousness
Ego-sense is inseparable from experiencing
The individual is inseparable from ego-sense
The mind is inseparable from the individual

The senses are inseparable from the mind
The body is inseparable from the senses
The world is inseparable from the body
And, there is nothing but this world

These dependent categories have always been
Not created or set into motion somehow
The truth is that there is naught else
But self-experiencing of the infinite

There is emptiness in the empty
Brahman pervades Brahman
Truth ever shines in truth
And fullness fills fullness

Remain so with a heart pure as space
Do what naturally needs to be done
Remain unaffected by praise or censure
Above likes and dislikes—witnessing all

Be free of egoistic volitional activity
Utterly non-attached to people and things
Free of all concepts and tendencies
Free of conditioning like a lamp without oil

If you have listened most attentively
Ignorance should have left you by now
You should be well—resting in the self
Free from all conditioning, and happy

TRUTH DECLARED AGAIN

Listen attentively while I declare again
Truth which expands one's consciousness
Even if you are not fully awakened yet
Listening attentively will save you from sorrow

In ignorance one assumes body as self
The senses then become one's worst enemies
If one is endowed with self-knowledge
The senses are then pleasant and contented

The self is never affected by the body
Nor is body related to self in any way
They are like light and darkness
You must understand this very clearly

Understanding how both really are
Gives insight into all of creation
Not from its changing appearances
But from the truth that stays unseen

When this truth is not understood
Delusion arises and flourishes within
Notions devoid of any substance
Are taken as truth—one suffers greatly

In the absence of direct self-knowledge
Notions carry one hither and thither
The senses try to apprehend objects
And imagine meaningful experience

Infinite consciousness does dwell in all
But absence of direct self-knowledge
Gives rise to limited finite appearances
One mistakes these as something real

Life-force provides energy for living
It is not meant for personal gain
In the absence of direct self-knowledge
One misuses it—and suffers dire consequences

Fools harness life-force for selfish ends
Not knowing they are playing with fire
Which will surely ricochet most fiery
And extract the price of foolish indulgence

The company of such indulgent fools
Is like sitting on a tree—soon to be felled

Anything given to them is thrown into mud
To converse with them is utterly meaningless

Ignorance of self is the seed of all trouble
All sorrows and calamities stem from it
Ignorance pervades and sustains creation
Terrible sorrow repeatedly visits the ignorant

The tree of infatuation grows in the wicked heart
The fire of hate rages in that forest too
Jealousy and destructive criticism are the floods
Flowers of envy are sought by the bees of worry

Death is meant only for such vicious fools
Birth, childhood, youth and old age
Ending again in the experience of death
Repeatedly experienced by the ignorant

With small fleshy eyes one sees some earth
He regards these as forests and cities
He sees women who are dressed nicely
And regards them as pleasure objects

He sees affluence, wealth and prosperity
And regards them as joy and security
Pain and pleasure are not in objects
They are in misguided inner 'regarding'

It is utter ignorance to regard anything
Anyone or anything as pleasurable or not
As these are not parts of people and things
These are one's self-subscribed delusions

Pursuing what one regards as pleasure
And avoiding what is regarded as pain
This is the business of ignorant fools
The price for this is their suffering

Like a beginningless river is delusion
It gets muddier as it flows along
From useless actions and reactions
Carrying great sorrow downstream

Unable to satisfy all one's desires
Overworked one is under-cultured
Outwardly rich—inwardly bankrupt
Desires and expectations invite death

Dissatisfaction and unhappiness is poverty
Affluence cannot mask inner emptiness
See—all that is chased is insubstantial
It only increases delusion and brings senility

Creation has no real substantiality
It's only substance is utter delusion
Appearances seem to invite life-force
Which takes you along if not vigilant

The decadent concept of world-appearance
Imprisoned in the senses, bound by conditioning
Hopes and desires are the threads
Of binding chords that are self-imposed

Like a delicate creeper is world-appearance
Constantly trembling against prana's winds

Which sheds all kinds of beings ruthlessly
Abandoning them to their destruction

Many have risen above this quagmire
World-appearance is indeed living hell
Actions polluted by vain desires of fruit
Swallowed by the obstinacy of action's end

Diverse scenes rise and cease daily
Like ripples and waves in the ocean
The ignorant are bound by their notions
Blow after hard blow fails to awaken them

Creatures and insects silently endure
All opposites nature afflicts them with
Contemplating as it were through it all
Of their own past evil actions until death

All prosperity and adversity in life's march
From childhood to old age and into death
Immersion in happiness and unhappiness
All extensions of dense darkness of ignorance

Ignorance expands by means of ignorance
Yielding a harvest of greater ignorance
When it seeks wisdom, it gets cleansed
Growing into wisdom like winter to spring

Ignorance's creeper twists and turns
As it wraps itself around its ignorant host
Somewhere, somehow wisdom is encountered
Purified a little but it twists and turns again

Memory of past experiences sustains ignorance
Sustained self-inquiry eats ignorance away
The creeper manifests as all the world you see
When transcended—self-knowledge is attained

VASISTHA: ON IGNORANCE

Existence-consciousness-bliss absolute
Truth concerning this is beyond thought
Beyond understanding and imagination
The faculty of conceptualization arises in it

This self-understanding is considered threefold
Regarded as subtle, middling and gross
Or sattva, rajas and tamas in Sanskrit
These three combined constitute nature

Ignorance is nature and it is threefold
Each have the same three subdivisions
These nine qualities constitute the universe
Beyond this is the source of all beings

Different beings are constituted differently
Depending on their own inner evolution
Anyone can reach the highest rung
Of liberation while living and dispel ignorance

Self-knowledge is transformation itself
Ignorance gets illumined when it dawns
Like ripples dissolving in the calm ocean
Ignorance dissolves in self-knowledge

These distinctions however are just verbal
Real distinctions do not exist at all
There is neither ignorance nor self-knowledge
Infinite consciousness is the only existence

Cease to see knowledge and ignorance
As different entities—what exists alone exists
The reflection of knowledge within itself
Is what is considered to be ignorance

Abandoning both notions—truth remains
It may be something or nothing
It is omnipotent, empty but not empty
Because it is full of consciousness

Like space in a pot is everywhere too
Indestructible—it is the reality in all things
It's very presence causes cosmic motion
Hence it is said it does nothing at all

In rocks, consciousness remains immobile
Abandoning its thinking faculty, so to say
It is like the state of deep sleep
Far away from the state of liberation

Liberation is the state of supreme peace
Intelligent inquiry is required to discover
The nature of self which ignorance covers
When brought out is called awakening

Investigation into the truth is requisite
The teachings of scriptures are helpful

As is the company of enlightened sages
For realization of identity with pure being

As long as conditioning exists in the heart
Even in its most subtle 'seed' state
It should be regarded as deep-sleep state
As it gives rise to rebirth and sorrow

Objects like rocks that appear insentient
Are not free from self-limitation or vasana
It is latent in them like flowers in seeds
Which sprout and yield flowers in due time

Where the seed of self-limitation exists
That state is like deep sleep—not perfection
All self-limitation or vasana must be destroyed
Even a trace will disallow experience of perfection

When all self-limitation is completely removed
One is established in the state of pure being
Whether such a one is alive or not
He is never afflicted by sorrow again

Energy-consciousness exists in all
But stays latent in immobile forms
It is this that determines the nature of each
The inner arrangement of molecules as well

This energy-consciousness or chit-shakti
Is the energy of infinite consciousness
Non-different from infinite consciousness
This realized directly destroys all sorrow

Non-seeing of this truth is ignorance
Cause of the world-appearance you see
Just as the rising of a thought destroys sleep
Inner intelligence awakening destroys ignorance

When approaching darkness with light in hand
It vanishes—it is simply not found to exist
So also when one begins to inquire within
Ignorance too ceases—found not to exist

Self-inquiry is direct looking within
To see the truth without any thought
'What is I' in this body of constituents
Composition of blood, flesh, bone and such

Instantly—ignorance ceases to be
That with a beginning has end as well
When all with beginning are ruled out
Ignorance ceases—what remains is truth

That which is to be sought can be regarded
Either as something or as no-thing
It IS when ignorance has been dispelled
Each has to realize that for himself

Ignorance is belief in anything as real
As existing outside cosmic consciousness
When realization dawns—all is Brahman
Ignorance ceases—it cannot be found

TRUTH DECLARED, STILL AGAIN

Let me repeat once again this truth
For the sake of your spiritual awakening
Realization of truth does not happen
Without such repetition—spiritual practice

Ignorance has become dense by repetition
In thousands of births and experiences
Expressed, experienced and expressed again
Within and outside of this body

Self-knowledge is beyond reach of the senses
It arises when mind and senses cease
Live firmly established in self-knowledge
Having known what there is to be known

Many have attained to the supreme state
You too can lead the enlightened life
Beyond the reach of sorrow and grief
Firmly established in self-knowledge