

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER VI



CONTENTS

- 16. The World Within the Rock
- 17. The Sage from Out of Space
- 18. The Story of Bhringisa
- 19. The Story of Ikshvaku
- 20. The Hunter and the Deer

Swami Suryadevananda

Edited by Sivananda-Usha

www.suryadevananda.org

16. The World Within the Rock

BACKGROUND

A woman celestial once said to me
When questioned about her identity
"You live in a corner of the universe
Beyond which are many diverse universes

On the slopes of a far-off mountain range
Is a solid rock within which I dwell
The world there is much like yours
Different inhabitants and the rest

One desire remains for me now
To be instructed by you in the truth
And to attain self-knowledge
Pray, do visit the world I dwell in"

VASISTHA'S COMMENTS

At her request I did visit
Her world within the rock
I saw the rock but not her world
She insisted it was within her only

Then by repeated affirmation
Her world I began to experience
And realized that for salvation too
One has to be totally devoted

Instruction in right effort is necessary
As the path and means are not known

Then one has to exert by one's self
Engaging in right action continually

BACK TO THE STORY

What appeared to be a rock
Shone as pure consciousness
On account of the power of illusion
The unreal becomes obvious somehow

The subtle body is the first obvious truth
The gross body follows as do all forms
But what seems obvious is most unreal
While reality stays hidden and unobvious

As the world within the rock was unseen
Within and of consciousness only
So also all this is pure consciousness
Ignorant people cling to this as reality

I followed the celestial into her world
And met her husband, a holy man
He was the creator of that world
I inquired about this world of theirs

THE CREATOR IN THE ROCK

I'm but a vibration in consciousness
Uncreated, I do not see any other
You, I and all of which is seen
Are all mere vibrations or notions

This lady you see here as my wife
Is also an uncreated vibration

Now I wish to merge in consciousness
Rising dispassion signals dissolution

This lady, my wife, feels the same
All notions have ceased in us both
At the very same time that notions' end
There is yearning for the unconditioned

Time, space, matter and motion
Are all parts of consciousness only
Consciousness exists as this immobile rock
All worlds exist in consciousness only

DISSOLUTION AND CREATION

The creator entered into deep meditation
So did the lady—his wife—and myself
Withdrawing consciousness from notions
The earth in his world started to disintegrate

Water then deluged all that existed
Flames arose high in the skies
The creator withdrew his life-force
Unrighteousness precedes natural calamities

Nothing lives without life-force
Stars, heavens and gods cannot survive
All these began to disintegrate as well
All being notions of the creator only

What survives is only the eternal
Beyond description, most minute

A particle compared to mountains here
From that everything seems to exist

Though of the nature of pure space
Matter within it appears solid
Consciousness alone appears as all
Gods and worms too are all in that particle

All worlds are contained in the minute
Pure consciousness is the only reality
The substance stays unchanged throughout
The world appears, so to say, as its body

All actions taking place originate in him
On account of him all appears so real
He exists as the cosmic body of creation
Just as you exist in your heart in meditation

As we continued to meditate deeply
I saw suns rising in each direction
Three looked like the eyes of Rudra
Their light destroyed the universe

Only two objects remained unaffected
Space because it was all-pervading
And gold because it was absolutely pure
Total darkness blanketed all directions

After the colossal destruction
Devoid of the veil of creation
Fullness that seemed hidden during creation
Was experienced as the only existence

This fullness has been there all the time
Veiled only by one's own conditioning
When conditioning is fully abandoned
Fullness alone overflows in all directions

Limitless consciousness being everywhere
I saw the creator in meditation
Not as material solid forms
But as empty dream-objects in a void

Instantly all vanished from view
A fearful and radiant form appeared
Rudra, the cosmic ego-sense it was
The one who disturbs the equilibrium

Pure space or void is his form
The five senses are his faces
Organs of actions and their fields
Are the great Rudra's ten arms

Though grand and colossal in size is Rudra
He's but a small particle in consciousness
Existing as movement in consciousness
As air, space and life-force that sustains all

In time, all his movements cease
He attains supreme equilibrium
For he is attended by goodness for all
He is known as Siva or auspiciousness

Attaining the state of supreme peace
He comes to be known as Krishna

He then starts creation's cycle
And attains to supreme peace again

Rudra began to dance in space
Casting a shadow without a sun
That danced with him emitting fire
The worlds reflected in her body

Like mirrors in one's body were worlds
Seen in Rudra's shadow which appeared
Coming into view and disappearing
From moment to moment as she danced

There was neither male, female nor any dance
Siva alone existed—pure consciousness
His own dynamic energy appeared variously
Non-different and inseparable from him

Just as gold cannot be without some form
Consciousness has all forms inherent within
Never without some movement within
Birth, death and the rest are but consciousness

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

The enlightened see not diversity
I myself saw that space of supreme peace
Experiencing the forms described earlier
As motion in that pure consciousness

All that appears and whatever there is
Is real to the self—you must realize this

Multiple reflections in consciousness
Appearing real because of the substratum

Rudra then became atomic and invisible
Becoming one with Brahman the absolute
I saw all this in the rock I entered into
With the divine eye or awakened intelligence

This cannot be seen with physical eyes
You'll just see a rock somewhere outside
But when you behold all with inner vision
Every particle of sand is pure consciousness

I saw universes past, present and future
Realizing that all this was within myself
Just as the tree exists within the seed
I myself was experiencing all these forms

I had become sub-atomic, a ray of light
Then gross with potential for sense experience
When consciousness opens its eyes, as it were
It becomes aware of its own potentialities

Pure elements and senses come into being
Though arising from and within consciousness
Seeming substantial but still most illusory
Known individually as I-ness or ego-sense

Experiencing space, I understood earth
Experiencing earth all universes were known
I myself became all that I experienced
Apart from mind, nothing is experienced

What is seen as the world does not exist
You have to observe this very carefully
With the inner eye of awakened intelligence
To know just how it seems to come into being

Pure consciousness appears as all this
False notions we hold insist otherwise
Direct self-realization must be had
To know that you are indeed the all

I experience all as Brahman only
Even elemental experiences are all him
Non-different and inseparable from him
This you have to know by direct experience

17. The Sage from Outer Space

Background

After all this I entered my cottage in space
And looked around for my physical body
Only an old sage could be seen
Absorbed in the deepest meditation

I thought he must have felt like me
Wanting absorption in deep meditation
He may have discarded my old body
And occupied the cottage he found empty

When my desire for that cottage ceased
It disappeared, simply vanished from view
The cottage fell as did the sage meditating
We both descended to the earth plane

The sage landed in the same posture
Undisturbed, still deep in meditation
In thunderstorm's form I roused him
And greeted him as he came out of meditation

THE SAGE'S STORY

I've wandered in heaven's realm
In an effort to end samsara's wheel
All this is pure consciousness only
Just what is it that one calls pleasure

Pleasure is dreadful pain only
Prosperity is adversity disguised
Sensual enjoyment invites disease
Pursuit of pleasure is most demeaning

Why even with advancing age
Does craving not diminish in people
Faculties diminish, weakness ensues
But craving soars like unquenchable flames

After a long time I've attained egolessness
Uninterested in heavenly pleasures too
Like you, O sage, seeking seclusion
I found this cottage and occupied it

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

I asked that he continue to dwell
In the cottage he had occupied
I wandered high into heaven's realms
Soon I gained another material body

To me there was no difference at all
Between subtle and material bodies
Knowing all is pure consciousness alone
Free of any notion or conditioning

Even when engaged in diverse activities
The realization of Brahman is unbroken
I am seated here instructing you
Because of your need for instruction

In truth, all this you see is pure void
All notions in the mind of the creator
When truth is realized by direct experience
The true nature behind appearance is known

Liberation alone confers supreme peace
Bondage promotes psychological distress
Yet people don't strive for liberation
And suffer in vain—how foolish they are

18. The Story of Bhringisa

BACKGROUND

Bhringisa once approached Lord Siva
For a way out of delusion and bondage
Siva gave this advice to Bhringisa
By which he attained total freedom

Give up doubts, resort to moral courage
Be a supreme doer of actions
A supreme enjoyer of delight
And, a supreme renouncer of all

BE A GREAT DOER

Be free of all doubt and confusion
Do what is appropriate in each situation
Natural action does not depend upon
Whether others consider it right or wrong

Do not be swayed by likes and dislikes
Success, failure, gain, ambition or greed
Remain steady in silence and purity
Unattached, without any selfish motive

Be a witness to all and everything
Do what needs to be done with full heart
Indifferent to how things may turn out
Do the best without any attachment

Act with a mind completely at peace
Steady, without excitement or exultation
Do the best in each situation afresh
In perfect equilibrium all the while you act

BE A GREAT ENJOYER

Free from hate or any longing
Enjoy what comes along naturally
Without clinging or rejecting
Even while engaged in action

Without experience though experiencing
Witness of world-play though unaffected
With mind balanced in pleasure and pain
These come naturally in the course of life

Free from natural changes that occur
Reactions to change cause confusion
Find joy in misfortune, poverty and calamity
In old age and death too—all natural changes

Be non-violent and an abode of virtue
Enjoy sweet and bitter with equal relish
Avoid completely all arbitrary distinctions
Enjoy each moment as it comes naturally

BE A GREAT RENOUNCER

Banish from your mind all concepts
Ideas of what is right and wrong too
What is considered pain and pleasure
Desires, doubts and all convictions too

See falsity in the experience of pain
By realizing that you are not the body
Abandon completely from the heart
The idea of world-appearance as reality

VASISTHA'S COMMENTS

Thus did Siva instruct Bhiringisa
Who then became enlightened
Adopt this very attitude yourself
And transcend sorrow completely

19. The Story of Iksvaku

WHEN THE EGO-SENSE DISSOLVES

When the ego-sense dissolves in the mind
Such a mind is free of greed and delusion

No provocation can shake the virtue
Of he who delights in the true welfare of all

Conditioning and tendencies are undone
Anger does not surge uncontrollably
Desires just do not reside within
The senses function in perfect balance

Pleasure and pain come and go
Without disturbing the inner storefront
The heart regards these as insignificant
And rests in peace and equanimity

All these virtues reside naturally in him
Effortlessly he glides through all action
Responding to situations best as they come
Without personal agenda, confusion or pain

He who ignores self-knowledge's path
Which is within reach of all, in every condition
Abandons his highest good and supreme peace
Choosing to continue in samsara's wheel

IKSVAKU, YOUR ANCESTOR

Your own ancestor, the king Iksvaku
Pondered deeply while ruling as king
The way out of suffering once and for all
And sought instruction from his father

MANU'S INSTRUCTIONS

His wise father, having attained the supreme
Instructed him thus: listen attentively

"What you see here does not exist
Beyond the senses, nothing is seen

The eternal and infinite self alone exists
The universe you see reflects within it
Because energy is inherent in consciousness
Everything appears alive and most real

There is neither bondage nor liberation
One infinite consciousness alone exists
Abandon notions of bondage and liberation
Abide in the self and rest in peace

The actions of one of self-knowledge
Are non-volitional, never motivated
Hence he is free of their merit
Beyond praise and censure is he

He is not agitated by others at all
He himself does not agitate anyone
The self isn't attained by rites or rituals
Only by worship of sages who've attained

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Thus instructed Iksvaku was enlightened
You too should adopt such an attitude
The ignorant are dazzled by cheap tricks
Cheap shows put on by two-bit imposters

Psychic ability is not holiness's sign
Only purity of mind and craving's absence

Absence of confusion and delusion
These are real characteristics of the holy

When samsara has come to an end in one
He is free from confusion and delusion
Lust, anger, grief, greed and attachment
These are totally absent in the enlightened

The Lord assumes individuality as jivas
Creation arises in Him spontaneously
Individuals too arise without reason
Individual actions bring bondage, not other

Pleasure and pain come by our choices
Limitations are they in one's understanding
Resulting in actions that are solely individual
Inviting consequences of wrong understanding

Existing notions are the cause of bondage
Absence of all notions is itself liberation
Why do you harbor such painful seeds
Abandon all notions for your own welfare

The ropes of attraction bind the careless
You are free if attraction does not attract
You can still enjoy natural pleasures as they come
Without attraction which craves and binds

Do what has to be done, as it comes
With full heart, mind and energy
Avoid all personal interests—poisons all
Bringing untold suffering and increased delusion

All notions exist in the mind
Conquer the mind by the mind
Purify the mind by the mind
Destroy the mind by the mind

A washerman washes dirt with dirt
A thorn is removed by another thorn
Poison is the antidote for poison
Resort to the all—letting go of the small

Resort to pure unmodified consciousness
The supreme reality, the cosmic being
Remain ever firmly established in it
Resolutely and firmly rejecting all else

20. The Hunter and the Deer

THE STATE OF TURIYA

That pure and equanimous state
Devoid of ego and non-ego too
Beyond real and unreal as well
Is a free fourth state called turiya

'Tis the state of liberated sages
Unbroken witness consciousness
Different from waking and dream
Both characterized by thought movement

'Tis different from deep sleep too
Characterized by inertia and ignorance
When the ego-sense is fully abandoned
Turiya manifests in that equilibrium

Hear now a story in this regard
It will bring out subtle points very well
If you hear it with rapt attention
You will certainly become enlightened

THE HUNTER AND THE DEER

In a certain forest there lived a sage
He shone with extraordinary radiance
A hunter once approached to ask
If he had seen a wounded deer recently

The sage replied to the hunter thus:
"Only holy men dwell in this forest
Our nature is peace, free from ego-sense
Ego-sense being the cause of restlessness

This ego-sense and its activating mind
Have come to a rest in us forest sages
We do not know what you're alluding to
In us, objects as such just do not exist"

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

The hunter could not understand at all
What the radiant sage was referring to
He went his way nodding his head
The sage was firmly established in turiya

There is naught but this glorious state
Turiya, unmodified consciousness alone exists
Waking, dream and sleep are in the mind
When they cease—the mind too ceases to be

The pure state that is—continues to be
This glorious state the yogis try to reach
This is the conclusion of all scriptures
Brahman alone exists—there is naught else

Some call it void, some consciousness
Others still call it the supreme Lord
Arguing foolishly among themselves
Abandon all these notions completely

Rest in nirvana without thought movement
With mind greatly weakened and at peace
The inner intelligence now fully awakened
Abide in the self, the eternal and infinite

Inwardly abandon, relinquish everything
Externally engage yourself in right action
The mind is happiness and unhappiness
Not objects, people or any conditions

Remain eternally aware of the mind
Unaffected by attraction and repulsion
By just this much self-effort you'll achieve
Freedom from samsara's grip completely

Be unaware of pleasure and pain too
And even that which lies in between
You'll rise beyond sorrow and limitation
This self-effort will take you to the infinite