

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER VI



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9. The Story of the Vampire

BACKGROUND

When ignorance ceases through self-inquiry
The individual becomes non-individual
The mind ceases—becomes no-mind
This is known as moksha or liberation

Deep in the forest there lived a vampire
It appeased its hunger with the deluded
Once unable to find such in the forest
It ventured to the city and met the king

THE VAMPIRE' QUESTIONS

O king kindly answer the questions asked
What sun's rays form this universe
In what mighty wind does space manifest
What is the self that stays always unchanged

What is the essence of the world-appearance
In which atom are the universes contained
What formless rock has all worlds within
Kindly answer these questions or be my meal

THE KING'S REPLY

The sun of consciousness illumines all
In that light universes are atomic particles
All things appear real because of that light
Dust particles called creation appear in it

All shines in that Supreme Self only
As dust particles in a beam of light

Time, space, motion and intelligence
All is clothed in pure consciousness

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

The vampire became silent hearing the king
Deeply contemplating the message conveyed
You too can achieve what seems impossible
If you remain immovable in truth and live wisely

Right action is doing what needs to be done
It is effortless though effort is involved
It is free of struggle as response is always clear
Once one feels all this is indeed consciousness

Obstruction is a clash of unreal with real
The unreal being only notions in the mind
Ignore all notions—they will starve to death
Act as part of each situation, not separate from it

10. The Story of Bhagirath

BACKGROUND

There once lived a king called Bhagirath
Devoted to righteousness in every way
He worked hard to eradicate poverty
Himself living a simple and holy life

He relished the company of holy ones
In their company he was steeped in devotion
Undergoing great difficulty he propitiated
Brahma, Siva and the sage Janhu

Discrimination and dispassion arose in him
At an early age, and thus he reflected
The meaning of this life and all action
Possible gains and hidden consequences

He concluded that if anything is to be gained
It must be the attainment of the beyond
All else was time passing vain repetition
A cycle of habit most follow in ignorance

BHAGIRATH'S FIRST QUESTIONS

Humbly he approached his guru
And placed before him his observation
"How does one put an end to samsara
How to eradicate ignorance and bondage"

THE GURU REPLIES

Sorrow ceases and bondage ends
When every doubt has been dispelled
When established in perfect equanimity
And the divisionless state for a long time

When perception of division ceases to be
There is direct experience of fullness
The omnipresent self—pure consciousness
One enters into infinity and eternity

BHAGIRATH'S SECOND QUESTIONS

I know that the self alone is real
The body and such are but appearances
How to experience this directly
How to go beyond intellectual understanding

THE GURU REPLIES

Intellectual knowledge is not knowledge
Attachments keep knowledge intellectual
Be unattached to wife, son, house and wealth
Equal minded in both pleasure and pain

Love of solitude is very important
To be established in self-knowledge
Cultivate vigilance of mind's every movement
See self as distinct from thought's rise and fall

This must continue after meditation too
The mind must be continually observed
The ego-sense that gives rise to thought
Will thin and give way to self-knowledge

BHAGIRATH'S THIRD QUESTIONS

This ego-sense seems well established
One with the body and sense of self
Pray, kindly instruct me in the way
To uproot this tree that is rooted deeply

THE GURU REPLIES

Self-effort is absolutely essential
Resolutely stop 'pursuit' of sense-pleasures
By seeing the full cost of indulgence
And understanding—joy comes from within

If you abandon pursuing sense pleasures
Adopt a simple life with less concern
You will have abundant time and energy
To realize the self directly here and now

VASISTHA'S COMMENTS

Hearing the guru's succinct instructions
Bhagirath renounced all without delay
Clad in simple clothes with bare necessities
Making the forest his home—unknown to any

Very soon he attained supreme peace
Content to live on what came naturally
One day he entered a city for alms
And approached a crowd that had gathered

The old king had died without any heir
The royal elephant selected Bhagirath
As king in accordance with the tradition
He accepted, as this turn came naturally

His old kingdom was adjacent to this
The citizens heard of Bhagirath's return
They implored him to rule there as well
As a king like him was not to be found

Bhagirath accepted this duty as well
And ruled both kingdoms as one land
Treating all people fairly and equally
And once again working for their welfare

Even though he was now an emperor
Ruling a vast kingdom with a large army
He was ever at peace within himself
His mind was free of desires completely

He engaged himself with what needed doing
Shining as an exemplar of righteousness
One day there arose in him an inner urge
To do something for his departed ancestors

Once again he repaired to the forest
And engaged himself in austerities
Propitiating gods and sages too
For the task of bringing Ganga to earth

His firm resolve and relentless effort
Bore fruit in time and Ganga descended
The earth and all beings were purified
By the holy waters of the sacred Ganga

Libations were performed for the ancestors
Of the king and other departed souls
Since then Ganga continues to purify
All who come unto her for regaining purity

You too can do all that Bhagirath did
What one can do, others can do
Renounce all and attain all is the rule
Live naturally doing what needs to be done

In this connection there is another story
Pray, listen with full attention and being
To the story of Sikhidhvaja and Chudala
Reborn again due to their divine love