

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER III



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14. The Story of the Great Forest

There was a great forest—millions of miles
Just like the space within a single atom
In it lived one person with thousands of limbs
Forever restless was his nature

He beat himself with his own mace
And ran away in panic immediately
Afraid of the beating he gave himself
And jumped into a blind well in fear

He repeated this act again and again
Now beating himself with his own mace
Then running into a banana grove
Weeping and crying aloud in fear

Witnessing this I restrained him
With the power of my own will
Asking him about his identity
Sorely distressed was he in return

Calling me enemy he wept aloud
After crying he then laughed
Next he did the strangest thing
He abandoned his body limb by limb

Immediately I saw another like him
Doing the same thing in the forest
On inquiry I was abused by some
Others held me in great contempt

Some refused to talk to me at all
Some refused to come out of the well
Others went deeper into the forest
Few listened and were enlightened

This great forest is not far away
Nor is the strange man we talked about
The world itself is the great forest
Seen as a void in the light of inquiry

The light of inquiry in the story
Is the 'I' who attempted to reason
Those accepting attain enlightenment
Those rejecting continue to suffer

The thousand-limbed person is the mind
With all its countless manifestations
Punishing its own self constantly
By its very own latent tendencies

In the world it wanders restlessly
The blind well is the hell it endures
The banana grove is the heaven
The dense forest is its worldly life

Mind's attachments are its thorns
Which hurt him all the time
Still it wanders experiencing
Hell and heaven within itself

When wisdom somehow shines on him
He rejects it considering it enemy

While still wailing and weeping for help
Drifting without proper understanding

Sometimes he does experience
An improper awakening of sorts
He renounces without understanding
Increasing the sorrow he already endures

Renunciation must be based on
Wisdom born of inquiry
And fullness of understanding
So it will lead to supreme bliss

The limbs he seemed to abandon
Were tendencies attempted to abandon
Which when there is no real understanding
Ever remain—never really getting abandoned

Great is the hurt in ignorance's play
Great panic darting from shore to sea
When wisdom dawns based on inquiry
Understanding calms the mind's passion

The absolute Brahman is omnipresent
His energy pervades and sustains all
Instruments of action, doer and deed
Birth, death, existence—all is Brahman

Duality and its resulting offspring
Such as delusion, craving and attachment
All these have no real existence
All notions the mind experiences

Listen attentively to this legend
It illustrates this point best
Don't get wrapped up in the story
Look at what it points to

15. The Story of the Three Non-Existent Princes

THE STORY

A nanny once narrated this story
To a young boy who listened attentively
Of a city of yore which did not exist
In which there were three brave princes

Of three princes two were unborn
The third had not been conceived
Since all their relatives died somehow
They left the city to go elsewhere

The heat of the sun was unbearable
Hot sands burnt their feet severely
They hastened to the shade of three trees
Two did not exist, the third was unplanted

In the cool shade they rested awhile
Eating the fruits they felt refreshed
Then proceeded to the bank of three rivers
Two were dry, third had no water

The princes had a most refreshing bath
Quenched their thirst and continued on
Towards a huge city yet to be built
Entering, they beheld three palaces

Two palaces has not been built
No walls did the third one have
They found all three most beautiful
And joyfully entered them

Gold plates they found in the palaces
Two broken, the third had been pulverized
Using the third pulverized plate
They cooked 99 minus 100 grains of rice

Three holy men they invited to dine
Two were bodiless, the third had no mouth
After they ate, the princes ate the rest
Greatly pleased by the experience

They lived there for a long time
In peace and joy in the palaces
Two of which had not been built
The third was without any walls

"Remember this well and you will be wise"
Said the nanny to the little boy
Who was thrilled to hear such story
Really creation is no more than this

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

The world we see is a notion too
Not different at all from the story
In consciousness once did it arise
An idea of creation—this is what it is

This world is nothing but an idea
All that you see are ideas too
Reject the errors—dirt in the mind
Be free of ideas—abide in truth peacefully

THE FIRE OF SELF-INQUIRY

The wise are not deluded by ideas
Fools succumb to ideas—get deluded
Egotism is an idea based on association
Of the self with bodies and physical elements

When infinite consciousness alone exists
Egotism is just like water in a mirage
Abandon your baseless imperfect vision
Rest in perfect vision grounded in truth

Inquire directly into the nature of truth
Abandon falsehood knowing for yourself
You are free just now—why for do you grieve
Who can bind the infinite and just how?

Brahman is divisionless existence
What is bondage or liberation?
Confusion of appearance with reality
Sorrow and pain is based on this ignorance

Let the body fall, rise or go somewhere
How are you affected by any of this?
Know the relationship of self and body
To be like that of the wind and clouds

Wind is one with space when clouds disperse
Self is not destroyed when the body falls
Mind too remains until it is burnt
In the fire of self-knowledge by realization

Death is a veiling by time and space
Of the ever present deathless self
Abandon all your latent tendencies
And come out of this cage and be free

Hard to destroy latent tendencies
Though they give endless sorrow and grief
Though born of deep-rooted ignorance
The fire of self-inquiry can bring their end

All effort at self-inquiry does purify
The mind's dirt born of ignorance
Seek the Self in order to dissolve the self
'Tis the supreme goal—strive for this

THE MIND SPREAD OUT

Manifesting in infinite consciousness
Mind by its nature has spread itself out
It distorts all that appears to be
And lies claim to everything too

Mind creates and destroys the world
All in the blink of an eye
Playing the part of one and all
As an actor playing different roles

It makes the unreal appear as real
Causing confusion, joy and suffering
Asserting its claim on all it sees
And suffering when this is untenable

Just as time with its changing seasons
Is able to bring about change in nature
So also the mind by its power of thought
Makes things appear different though they are not

Time, space and all things the mind controls
Regardless of whether it is big or small
The intensity or dullness of the influenced
'Tis not incapable of doing anything at all

O Rama listen most attentively
To another ancient legend I will narrate
To illustrate further this very point
Listen carefully to the Story of Lavana