

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER IV



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3. The Story of The Three Demons

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3. The Story of The Three Demons

FIRST BATCH: DAMA, VYALA AND KATA

A powerful demon Sambara once existed
Master of magic, he invaded heaven
Afraid of his powers, gods hid themselves
And continued to fight—though invisibly

He created three demons for protection
Dama, Vyala and Kata were their names
They were totally fearless and bold
As they did not have any mental conditioning

Unafraid of death, they fought fiercely
But unable to find the gods at all
The gods sought relief from Brahma
Who advised them to lie low for a while

BRAHMA'S ADVICE TO THE GODS

Sambara cannot be killed right now
Best for you to retreat a while
His three demons are invincible
As they have no mental conditioning

The ego-sense 'me' binds the mind
Conditions it positively or negatively
Abodes of suffering and sorrow are they
But the unconditioned mind is unbeatable

Do what you can to arouse in them
Feelings of ego: 'I' and 'mine'

Since they are ignorant by nature
They will easily fall for this bait

RISE OF EGO IS SELF-DEFEAT

The gods fought the demons and their army
In such a way to arouse thoughts in them
Of victory—they felt they were winning
Of fear—when they saw others die

The idea of 'I' and 'mine' began to seed
Notions gave rise to much confusion
Jubilee at winning but fearful of loss
Their armor of courage began to rust

As a mirror reflects objects close to it
One's behavior reflects inner content
So too ego-sense reflects in consciousness
But if held distant would not do so

With the ego-sense arose desires
To prolong life and acquire more
This weakened their will-power
Generating confusion in their minds

Feelings of possessiveness and greed
Result in inefficiency and inability
As uncertainty generates fear
Based on attachment to notions

With fear comes loss of heart
The demons lost their courage

Demoralized they fled the scene
To find refuge in the netherworld

Though free from birth and death's grip
The rise of ego-sense reversed their fate
Thus they underwent many life cycles
And live now as fish in a deep lake

In time they will hear their story
And recollect their true nature
They will then abandon their ego-sense
And attain the state of liberation

The rise of ego-sense was their fall
Cravings resulted in loss of will-power
Notions of 'I' and 'mine' are the ropes
Which bind one to ignorance and delusion

Pure consciousness entertains impure notions
It experiences its distortion within itself
Without renouncing its essential nature
Experiences delusion without being deluded

THE WISE

The wise do not get caught in polemics
They exert relentlessly—but are patient
They know all craving and desires
Will instantly lead to their downfall

They study but are light on their own path
Direct experience is their inner flame

Self-led—they do not lead others either
As each must awaken and exert individually

Wealth and comfort bring a host of ills
Complacency and ideas of dependency
Misfortune is the very best fortune
Rejection by all is the greatest victory

When cravings' pull is abandoned
Goodness glows within the heart
One's life is a reflection of this light
Shining from the lamp of contentment

Sincere zealous efforts must fructify
Hence never abandon right effort
Direct all energy towards self-discovery
'Tis the only remedy for every condition

Natural restraint is wisdom in life
The idea of suppression never arises
Energies are channeled to what is best
Like autumn leaves fall to their rest

There is no use crying for liberation
If the mind has not been well purified
The purified mind is liberation itself
The unpurified mind is itself sorrow

The feeling of 'I' as a separate entity
Is the root, branch and stem of grief
All cravings are its many thorns
Self-knowledge alone is the remedy

Get rid of the feeling of 'I-ness' ruthlessly
'Tis ignorance itself—harbinger of pain
Gradually expand the idea of 'I'
Till you abide in the divisionless state

SECOND BATCH: BHIMA, BHASA AND DRIDHA

After Sambara experienced defeat
When the first batch of demons deserted
He realized they had entertained egoism
With self-knowledge things would be different

He created three demons most fierce
Bhima, Bhasa and Dridha were their names
Endowed with self-knowledge were they
Full of dispassion and without previous birth

Fiercely they fought with the gods
The idea of death did not exist for them
Though they caused and saw many deaths
As they were fearless due to self-knowledge

Lord Vishnu intervened at the gods' behest
After a long battle the three were slain
But instantly were granted liberation by the Lord
As they were enlightened—without ego-sense

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

The conditioned mind is bondage itself
The unconditioned mind is liberation
The truth must be seen—directly by oneself
For inner clarity which is liberation

The first batch of demons fled battle
Their minds were conditioned by ego-sense
The second batch required divine intervention
As their minds were free of all conditioning

True heroes are they who've conquered mind
Freed it from the shackles of ignorance
'Tis the only remedy for all suffering
In the vicious cycle of birth and death

Listen attentively to the highest wisdom
Let your whole life be perfumed by it
Bondage is craving for pleasure
Its abandonment is liberation

THE UNIVERSE IN INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS

As future waves exist in a calm sea
This universe exists in consciousness
As reflections seen appear very real
So does the universe in consciousness

As space is unaffected by floating clouds
Consciousness is unaffected by the universe
As refracting mediums reveal light's presence
Consciousness is revealed through the universe

The universe is consciousness reflecting in itself
Essentially nameless and formless 'tho visible
These appear very real to the ignorant
In spite of all their study and learning

Uncreated, imperishable is consciousness
Eternity with reflections within itself
As waves dance playfully on the ocean
All forms are the play of consciousness

Since the substratum of forms is reality
Pure eternal infinite consciousness
Forms' appearances generate confusion
As to their reality or seeming appearance

A mutual causal relationship exists
Between forms and their substratum
But just as waves on oceans' bosom
Forms and source are non-different

The deep ocean is not agitated
Waves make it appear to be so
Consciousness conscious of itself
Somehow considers itself as another

Brahman permeates all and everything
'Tis what enables all experience
Notions of agency and enjoyment
Are two phases of experiencing

Interest in action but impersonal
Is the hallmark of one with wisdom
Mental action is real action
The wise do the needful but remain free

The vast universe that you see
Is the supreme being made visible

Diversity is only an appearance
Brahman is the only reality

The accidental intention of consciousness
Solidifies into substance in appearance
The mind instantly objectifies what appears
Though its only an appearance within itself

Conscious-energy manifests space
In which diverse appearances are seen
All creation has manifested this way
All this takes place in the supreme Lord

Creation as such is a mere word
The supreme Lord alone exists
As dirt removed reveals the substance
Remove darkness and behold the Light

Do not get caught up in the words
Look at what they point to instead
Infinite consciousness alone exists
Remove ignorance and know directly

Maya is another name for ignorance
Become aware of ignorance's play
Your duty is to attain self-knowledge
Which alone can destroy ignorance

Worry not about how ignorance exists
Concern yourself instead with its removal
When ignorance has ceased to be
You will know its unreality

The forms that exist are the field
Witnessing consciousness their knower
It only seems to become involved somehow
In the field which is really its own self

If one abandons inquiry into truth
Ignorance embraces him immediately
Caught in the grip of appearances
The vise of conditioning tightens its teeth

Countless species are seen in creation
Some caught more deeply than others
Some strive hard to free themselves
Some succeed—blessed indeed are they

Those who break ignorances' fetters
And attain to the natural state
Do not return to the vicious cycle
Of birth, death, suffering and pain

That which did not exist in the beginning
Cannot exist in the end either
Yet somehow experienced in the middle
Only because of lack of investigation

All that you see is mind's jugglery
Let appearances rise—let them fall
Attachment to these appearances
Will bind one to pain as they change

Wean the mind from all craving
'Tis the way to avoid suffering

Be established in the unconditioned
Move joyfully on the raft of self-knowledge

With intelligence sharp as a razors' edge
Sift appearances from mixing with reality
You are endowed with what's needed
To break free of ignorance's citadel

Live as sages of self-knowledge do
Established firmly in reality
No need to renounce activity at all
You are free abiding in self-knowledge

Work in the world without getting lost
Pursuit of pleasure is a downward road
Rejection of appearances is the upward path
To cross the birth and death cycle and be free