

# YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

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## CHAPTER IV



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## 4. The Story of Dashura

### FROM ORPHAN TO SAGE

Dashura was the son of a great sage  
Both parents died when he was young  
The forest he lived in nurtured him well  
Teaching him wisdom—he became a sage

His earlier rigorous austerities were physical  
Hemmed in by rules—do's and don'ts  
Immersed in rituals, injunctions and prohibitions  
Hoping to realize the truth he was taught

In a huge tree he took up abode  
Which seemed to bridge earth to sky  
He felt creation to be the Lord's cosmic form  
Sun and moon as eyes—nature sounds as hymns

He sat on the topmost branch of this tree  
His vision traversing far and wide  
Immersed in this—cosmic being appeared  
On that very spot he commenced his austerities

His later austerities were performed through the mind  
The mind is a magazine of tremendous power  
Heart and mind were thoroughly purified  
He shone as a sage with the highest wisdom

A most beautiful lady came by one day  
As deity of forest she greeted him  
Expressing her sadness at being childless  
Asking the sage's blessing for a son

The sage handed her a nearby creeper  
And assured her she would soon have a son  
Just as the creeper would have flowers  
The grateful forest deity departed gracefully

She came again after twelve years had passed  
With a young lad about that age—sage's son  
She had instructed the boy in branches of learning  
And asked the sage to teach him self-knowledge

Without self-knowledge one is only a fool  
No matter what might be his accomplishments  
So she implored the sage to care for him  
The sage consented—she departed gracefully

#### **STORY IN A STORY**

Listen attentively to this inspiring story  
It gives great insight concerning this world  
Once lived a mighty king called Khotta  
Capable of conquering all the worlds

His every command was honored by all  
His deeds—too innumerable to list  
Productive of both—happiness and sorrow  
He reigned supreme—challenged by none

His three bodies engulfed the worlds  
Best, middling and least they were  
Established in space—a city he built  
With fourteen roads and three sectors

High peaks, gardens and seven lakes he built  
Adorning all with beautiful things  
Two lights—one hot and the other one cold  
Undiminished were they in their brilliance

Several types of beings he created too  
Arranged with different appearances  
Different life-spans to each he assigned  
Each had nine gates and were well ventilated

Five lamps and three pillars had each  
Whitish wood-like poles supported them  
Soft outer coverings offered protection  
Creations of maya—the king's illusory power

Here the king besports himself  
In the company of ghosts and goblins  
Fearful of inquiry or investigation  
Protectors of the mansions—different bodies

Thinking to move to another land  
And envisioning this place he migrated  
With his entourage of ghosts and goblins  
Occupying the new but similar mansion

Just like this does the cycle repeat  
Construction, destruction and migration  
Wailing aloud—helpless and ignorant  
Sometimes in joy but mostly sunk in misery

## VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Thus does he live—comes, goes and flourishes  
Tossed in the ocean of world-appearance  
This illustration is creation, universe and man  
The king in the story is but a notion or wish

Arising in the great void of its own accord  
'Twill dissolve in the great void of its own accord too  
All that you see and know are similar notions  
The intention alone is responsible for creation

The city built by the king is the entity  
The ghosts guarding the city are ego-principle  
The king roams this world in waking and dream  
From one city, body and realm to another

After tireless walking about here and there  
Exhausting desires—wisdom develops within  
He reaches the end of his wandering  
By the cessation of notions and experiences

He still drifts between wisdom and pleasure-seeking  
As all notions have not yet been abandoned  
This causes even more suffering and torment  
Till he renounces all notions for liberation

No amount of religious activity  
Even the best of teachers will not do  
Unless all notions are completely abandoned  
For only then can the mind go beyond itself

When infinite consciousness is somehow aware  
Of consciousness itself as an object  
This consciousness now perceived as an object  
Becomes gross and seemingly fills much space

Engrossed in ideation about this object  
It imagines itself distinct from itself  
Then ideation grows and multiplies rapidly  
This becoming is the cause of all sorrow

Hold on to existence—abandon all ideas  
By ideas does future come into being  
Abandon thought—'tis the seed of ideas  
Without thought-seed—ideas and notions cease

Abandoning thought and ideas is easier  
Than dealing with the sorrow they bring about  
Far easier than crumbling a flower in your palm  
As this takes effort—abandoning thought does not

As notions weaken—great joy is experienced  
One feels freer from earlier turmoil  
The ropes that bind are thought constructions  
Abandoning thought is abandoning bondage

This story illustrates the nature of world-appearance  
Therefore it is as true as the world itself  
Whether you believe creation to be real or not  
Rest firmly in your own self—existence is truth

Infinite consciousness is itself pure existence  
Do not let ideas or thought cloud your vision

Rest established in the self—in consciousness  
'Tis what the best of holy men ever dwell in

When one's house is on fire is not the time  
To inquire about the world's existence  
All in its own time—what is important now  
Is abandoning thoughts and notions as poison

Gird up your loins for this task on hand  
With the self—seek the self of all  
Fuel for the journey is self-effort  
Clarity will be had as you tread along

Bondage is bondage to thoughts and notions  
Freedom is freedom from both of these  
Cultivate the good in every way  
Abandon all that results from notions

All notions including that of ego-sense  
Must be ruthlessly abandoned—let go  
The heart will be flooded by infinite space  
'Tis verily the presence of the supreme Lord

Live then an active life or a quieter one  
There is no detriment in either choice  
But renunciation of notions is requisite  
'Tis the seed of all sorrow and suffering

These forms you consider so desirable  
All these things that seem worth striving for  
Are all formations of the very same substance  
That you yourself are also composed of

Pursuit of these forms is self-destruction  
Trying to preserve the ever-changing too  
Shame on those who still pursue them  
They themselves relinquish their real heritage

The wise are not enamored by these forms  
They ever abide in the truth—substance of all  
Hear now the most inspiring song of Kaca  
Son of the preceptor of the gods

## **5. Kaca's Song**

### **I AM THE FULLNESS**

What shall I do? Where shall I go?  
What to hold? What to renounce?  
The entire universe is permeated  
By the one self—the self is the all

Unhappiness and happiness are self  
Desires are empty voids that appear  
Having known all this by direct experience  
I'm free from sorrow's grip while still living

Everywhere I go I move within self  
Everything that exists is self alone  
I myself exist as this universe  
I am the cosmic ocean's fullness

### **VASISTHA'S INSIGHT**

As Kaca sang he intoned the holy OM  
Which resounded like a bell everywhere

Inside and outside did not exist for him  
Remaining fully absorbed in the self right there

Living beings are natural in world-appearance  
But all of this is in infinite consciousness only  
As ripples and waves in the great ocean  
Non-different though they are seen to exist

Some beings are born with a purer nature  
Having turned away from impurity earlier  
Others have degrees of impurity  
As they still continue to function impurely

Purity is firm rootedness in the truth  
Infinite consciousness is the only reality  
Impurity is total forgetfulness of truth  
Pursuing pleasures with different excuses

The pure have abandoned thoughts and desires  
The impure still seem them worth pursuing  
They continue to live in delusion by choice  
Abandon all thoughts and notions and be free

Let there be unbroken self-inquiry  
Who am I? How has all this arisen?  
Abandon egoism and all attraction  
Realize the truth as divisionless

The same consciousness illumining the sun  
Dwells in the little worm that crawls around  
Relentlessly inquire into the nature of truth  
The holy ones and scriptures are great help

Approach the teacher—wise and capable  
He must be free from all pleasure craving  
Study the self with the aid of scriptures  
Practice the great yoga and realize the self

Only a person intelligent like you, O Rama  
Good natured and with equal vision  
Is entitled to behold the wisdom unfolded here  
You are already liberated—live like one!

END OF CHAPTER IV