

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER V



CONTENTS

1. Section Dealing with Dissolution
2. The Story of King Janaka
3. On the Inner Intelligence

Swami Suryadevananda

Edited by Sivananda-Usha

www.suryadevananda.org

1. Section Dealing with Dissolution

RAMA'S REFLECTIONS

To the dialogue all listened most attentively
Retiring at the conclusion of yet another day
But Rama could not sleep at all though 'twas late
He pondered deeply on conquest of mind

Seeing clearly the mind as the source of all sorrow
Impossible to abandon enjoyment of pleasure
Being unable to be rid of this sorrow
Seemed tied to enjoyment of pleasure

Mind however is the crucial factor
As pursuit of pleasure arises in it
Pursuit is sorrow itself, not enjoyment
Of pleasures that come along naturally

The mind has to once taste supreme peace
This alone can end mind's relentless pursuits
In perfect fulfillment the mind too is fulfilled
Then alone will the mind abandon all craving

Pondering thus Rama fell asleep late
But awoke early contemplating again
He prayed for inner spiritual strength
To cross the ocean of worldly existence

RAMA ADDRESSES VASISTHA

Lord, deeply I have been meditating
On what your teachings may point to

Enshrining them within my heart
Pray, kindly do further enlighten me

VASISTHA CONTINUES

Listen attentively on universe's dissolution
Supreme peace you will surely attain
The seeming world-appearance is sustained
By desires or rajas and dullness or tamas

It is easily abandoned like a snake's slough
By those who possess a pure nature
As the spirit of inquiry threads through their life
Throwing light and clarity on all conditions

This spirit of inquiry must be cultivated
Study and wise company are indispensable
Light on the path is the lamp lit within
This light of clarity dispels all confusion

The truth must be directly perceived
Within oneself and by oneself too
Then alone will mind's turmoil end
You have a pure nature—be devoted to this

ON DISSOLUTION

What did not exist then cannot exist now
What appears to be will soon cease to be
That alone can be regarded as truth
Which has always been and will always be

Birth and growth are in the mind only
This has to be seen directly by oneself

The mind has to see it's ignorance as the cause
Of all sorrow and suffering it begs relief from

Hence, tread the path of righteousness always
Study and company of the wise are most vital
But you will have to exert by your very own self
To rid passion's flames and ignorance's weight

The perfected ones will point the way
Out of the prison that is self-sustained
Learn most diligently how to cultivate
The spirit of inquiry without remission

Absolute requisite is total purity
It alone becomes spirit of inquiry
Beset with dangers is life without this
Inner stillness gives vision wisdom

One cannot be rid of inner confusion
Without direct knowledge of truth
Ignorance of self is cause of all sorrow
Self-knowledge is itself tranquility

You will attain peace immediately
On resolving the conflict between body and self
The self is one thing—body is another
Unaffected and untainted by body is self

As long as the mind pursues pleasures
Darkness of world-illusion will continue
But on awakening and self-inquiry
Darkness is dispelled instantly

Dust particles do not affect the sky
The body too does not affect self
Pleasure and pain are not of body or self
They belong to ignorance—their loss is no loss

Neither identical nor apart are self and body
All these are but *reflections* of truth
Abandon these notions of differences
Rest in the truth—Brahman alone exists

The one self perceives itself within itself
Infinite consciousness alone exists
Not sorrow, delusion, anyone or anything
Abandon duality and be established in this

The steady mind is an abode of peace
Rest peacefully in this inner silence
Remain alone inwardly without self-willed thoughts
Doing what needs to be done—naturally

Be content with what comes unsought
This is the way to be desireless
Live without grabbing or pushing away
This is the way to effortless living

Be free from all mental conditioning
This is the way out of inner blindness
Rest always content in your true self
This is the way to be free of distress

Remain fully expanded within like the ocean
This is the way beyond all limitation

Rejoice in the self by the self
Nothing that happens will perturb you

Just as a crystal reflects things naturally
So also do activities reflect in consciousness
Do what needs to be done non-volitionally
Universal activity is entry into universality

Choosing not to act is utter foolishness
Those suppressing natural action do suffer
Acting volitionally is the other extreme
Self-centered action brings sorrow too

There is another way of pure action
Doing what needs to be done as a part of things
Big difference between being a part and apart
Pure action remedies self-centeredness

Those living life with the spirit of inquiry
Are blessed—they do conquer the mind
Going on to higher planes of consciousness
They attain liberation and end all suffering

Through constant effort one does evolve
Entering this birth with qualities conducive
To increasing their existing pure qualities
And attain to the utterly pure state

Each has to earn everything by themselves
Every step towards the light has to be tread
As one marches on—darkness is abandoned
One gradually reaches the goal of liberation

A master can help and point the way
One will have to tread each step on his own
Most rare when self-knowledge happens instantly
I shall narrate an ancient legend that illustrates this

2. The Story of King Janaka

SONG OF THE PERFECTED ONES

Janaka is a great monarch with unlimited vision
A righteous king and benefactor to good people
One day as he roamed in a garden
He heard an inspiring song of the perfected ones

They sang a song of their contemplation
On that pure divisionless experience
Of seer or experiencer in contact with the seen
Without any division or conceptualization

They sang about the self they contemplate
In which creation is inherently reflected
When the subject-object division has ceased
The pure self, in which all is, is reflected naturally

They sang about the light that illumines all
Shining as subject and object as well
Shining within all, within the middle too
Divisionless—only appearing divided

They sang of the reality that encompasses all
To which all belongs, from which all emerges
Which is the only cause of all and everything
The reality which is verily everything indeed

They sang of the self—the basis of all
The entire field of language and expression
Indicated by the word 'I' or aham
Pure existence—the supreme reality

They sang beautiful words of compassion
For those who pursue shadows—not truth
Pursuing pleasures abandoning the Lord
Ever they dwell in their own hearts as self

They sang about the worthlessness of objects
The pursuit of which is bondage itself
Resulting in sorrow most unimaginable
Never bringing the joys that they promise

They sang about ending sorrow completely
By striking down craving with wisdom's rod
Whether the craving has surfaced or not
Urgent it is—abandon craving ruthlessly

They sang about the delight that peace brings
To one self-controlled—established in peace
The joys and pure bliss that do arise
Without any delay in the well-controlled

VASISTHA'S COMMENTS

Hearing the words of the sage's song
King Janaka became terribly depressed
He immediately repaired to his chamber
And contemplated the words in intense anguish

KING JANAKA TO HIMSELF

I am helplessly swinging like a stone in life
I am in love with this life though short it is
I feel I cannot do without life, foolishly
All the while it is amidst eternity itself

How is it that I've become so deluded?
Knowing all differences exist in the mind alone
The business of the world never decreases
Business is in and of the mind—not of the world

All that is seen and experienced changes and ends
The wise never rely on things that change
What is cherished today is despised tomorrow
Into what shall we lay trust, O foolish mind?

I feel tethered firmly without a cord
I feel tainted too without impurity
Fallen am I while remaining on top
What mystery is this, O my self?

Strange is this delusion that has gripped me
Who are these friends and so-called relatives?
I'm deluded by relationships thoroughly
My clinging to them is my bondage

So many have come, so many have gone
Why am I anchored to what must go too
Even powerful kings and gods come and go
Fie on me for snaring myself so pitifully

Like an ignorant fool I live—completely deluded
Feeling 'I am so-and-so'—full of vain cravings
From sorrow to greater sorrow have I fallen
Yet, dispassion has not arisen in me!

The world and people are just as they are
In every life the story is exactly the same
Why have I not arisen above this delusion?
Knowing full well the flames I roast in

Religious rites bring better conditions at best
But all conditions have the same sorrows
Sorrow and happiness chase each other
Till one wears out and is consumed by death

Life-span is nothing in time's grand scale
Time is opportunity for trials to come
Mind alone is the seed of this delusion
Sense of 'I' and 'mine'—is seed of the mind

Accidental coincidence is the sole designer
In delusion we see connection with all that occurs
A coconut falls when a crow alights on the tree
The connection between these is imagination

Far better to spend time in seclusion
Than to suffer the pains of delusion
Intention or motivation gives rise to all
I shall now dry up this motivation!

I have suffered enough—now I shall rest
I have grieved enough—no more shall I

I will slay the mind—thief of wisdom
Instructed well—I will seek self-knowledge

VASISTHA'S COMMENTS

Thus sat the king in deep contemplation
Not noticing attendants who came to awaken
Fully engrossed and absorbed was the king
Finding a way was his only urgency

KING JANAKA TO HIMSELF AGAIN

Short-lived are royal life and duties
No use to me—what to do with them?
I shall renounce all activities and pleasures
And stay ever immersed in the self

Abandon craving for sense-pleasures, O mind!
Be free of these repetitive cycles of bondage
Enough of vain living in pleasure-seeking
Seek ye now the bliss inherent in the self

What is worth gaining—nothing ever stays
On what in this world can I place confidence
Whether active or idle—all things must go
I must be established in equanimity—else great is the loss

Not longing for what is mine or what is not mine
Let what comes naturally come—what is the harm?
Nothing to work for but inactivity does no good
Let me be established in equanimity and act naturally

With the mind established in desirelessness
The body can do what needs to be done

Inactivity is not good for body or mind
Let me do my duties without sense of 'I'

VASISTHA COMMENTS

Reflecting thus, Janaka engaged in his duties
Freed from desires, aversion and conditioning
Doing the needful with full attention
And retiring to seclusion for meditation

KING JANAKA TO HIS MIND

Worldly happiness is not happiness, O mind!
Reach now the state of perfect equanimity
There alone will peace and bliss be attained
Experience of Truth alone will satisfy

Abandon all notions, hopes and expectations
Seek that which you determine to be the truth
To all and anything you are unrelated
Any relationship felt is due to delusion

Abandon sorrow, resort to deep contemplation
Nothing in this world can give you fullness
Take refuge in courage and endurance
Overcome your waywardness—you can do this

3. On the Inner Intelligence

IGNITE THE WISDOM'S INNER LIGHT

Janaka reached perfect understanding and peace
He functioned as king but without delusion
The light of self-knowledge shone bright in his heart
He beheld all existence within cosmic-power

By his very own inquiry he attained supreme peace
All can attain the blessed state as well
Exert, inquire to the furthest limits
Stop not till the final goal is reached

Guru, study and good works are helpful
But cannot give you self-knowledge
Self-inquiry and company of holy ones
Are sure means to knowledge of self

Be alert—the inner light must be kept alive
You have to be the light on your own path
With this blazing inner light or wisdom
All difficulties and trials can be overcome

Those devoid of wisdom's inner light
Are overcome by smallest difficulties too
They react to every little change helplessly
Like straw that is knocked about by winds

So attain first wisdom's inner light
Company of holy ones will surely aid
Pursue at the same time self-inquiry
Both these will rub and ignite the flame

Thinking and living in a worldly way
Douses and soaks the logs that must ignite
Avoid the company of dull-witted ones
Remove all traces of dullness from within

This inner light of wisdom is most precious
Through it the world is seen as it really is

Neither good fortune nor bad can touch one
Who has the flame of wisdom's inner light within

The inner intelligence is one's best friend
Best guide on the path is the inner light too
Difficulties and even storms can be overcome
By the blazing flame of wisdom's inner light

Defects, desires and evils cannot touch
One who ignites and fans this inner light
Things like good fortune and misfortune
Do not exist for those with inner light

Darkness, gloom and veils are burnt
By the flame of wisdom's inner light
Purify your mind by cultivating wisdom
By kindling the flame of wisdom's inner light

Inquire into the self just as Janaka did
Gods, rituals and wealth are of no use
Self-knowledge alone can dispel darkness
World-appearance will then never delude

Firmly establish in supreme wisdom
See the self by the self alone
Ignite wisdom's bright inner flame
And leave delusion's diversion behind

It seems Janaka's lofty attainment
Of self knowledge was an act of grace
Self-effort of past lives is never seen
Making it appear to have fallen in his lap

Abandon feelings of 'I am so-and-so'
Inner intelligence cannot awaken with this
As wisdom's inner wisdom is indivisible
And feelings of *i-dent-ity* are a fragment

The mind's activity must come a standstill
Anxiety and worry are darkness not light
For this all cravings for acquisition must end
Rejection of its opposite—must be set aside too

The twin urges of acquisition and rejection
Are the storms that disturbs the mind
How can peace and tranquility prevail?
When storms are being stirred within

Again and again bring to the mind
Brahman alone exists—oneness is Truth
All expectations must be abandoned
They are contrary to unity's truth

Fearlessness, steadfastness, equanimity
Non-attachment, non-action and goodness
Wisdom, courage, endurance, friendliness
Contentment and gentleness are good friends

Restrain the mind's downward flow
By the mind itself that knows better
Having reached purity, abide in it
Doing what needs to be done without volition

Equanimity is the root for the tree of life
From it do ensure that all life's actions grow

Realize you are the knower of all—the self
Unborn, non-different from pure existence

See objects of perception within the self
And go beyond the defects of joy and grief
Be firmly rooted in infinite consciousness
Self-control is itself peace and tranquility

Be a yogi—free of all concepts
Deal with reality—that which is
Concepts are the veil that hide the truth
Without them truth is ever revealed

Identifying with body and then with concepts
You have forgotten your true nature over time
Thinking and acting on notions and ignorance
Ignite wisdom's lamp within and know the self

Without awakening the inner intelligence
You live without knowing self or reality
Though the mind appears intelligent
It is but borrowed light that is very fragmented

This mind cannot point the way to peace
It is ignorance—itsself not peaceful, you see
A lost person cannot be helped on the way
Awaken the indivisible wisdom that lies within

The movement of life-force is not the mind
'Tis intelligence that has become identified
With notions of 'this I am' and the like
And is apparently caught up in its own web

In truth there is no mind nor intelligence
Self alone exists at all times—it is the all
Most subtle is self so it is always hidden
Within it reflections seem to be real

The individual is a thought in consciousness
Consciousness does not change due to thoughts
When consciousness is free of all identification
Consciousness rests in itself—called liberation

ON LIFE-FORCE

Control of life-force restrains the mind
As a shadow ceases without the object
The movement of life force springs memory forth
Which surge as thoughts—most eager to act

Life-force can be restrained in many ways
By dispassion and the practice of pranayama
By direct inquiry into its movement's cause
Or by direct experience of the supreme truth

Though the mind appears quite intelligent
It is ignorant—intelligence belongs to consciousness
Though the mind appears to have movement
It is inert—movement belongs to life-force

Presenting itself as intelligent and alive
The mind's claim is a dance of ignorance
It is all imagination only like a ghost story
The infinite can never be affected by the finite

This truth has to be seen in direct experience
Then false imaginations will come to an end
When perfect understanding arises within
All misunderstandings are set at naught

ON THE MIND

The mind has no existence—it is not real
Yet, all the havoc is caused by it
The mind itself has no body
Yet, it consumes so many bodies

Living beings strengthen this non-entity
Defending it and destroying others by it
If one is unable to conquer the mind
He is unworthy of hearing this teaching

There is no point in instructing one
Who continues to be befuddled by the mind
Unable or unwilling to persevere
Conquest of mind with sincerity

Just as millions of insects come and go
In a twinkling of a moment in time
Dull witted fools come and go too
On life's stage without self-knowledge

The foolish cannot be instructed
They've chosen to be tethered to the mind
Unwilling to loosen ignorance's ropes
Living miserably though they think they're fine

The wise endeavor to remove sorrow
Of those who have conquered lower instincts
Well underway to mind's conquest
Ripe to undertake self-inquiry

When objectivity arises in consciousness
Conditioning and bondage inevitably result
Abandon all objectivity ruthlessly
Being mindless is indeed liberation

Between the self as the seer
And the world as the seen
You are the seeing—pure sight
Remain in this realization firmly

When the inner intelligence identifies
With anything other than the self
That is indeed the root of all sorrow
Face the inner light and experience bliss

Craving for objects or experience has to cease
For divine qualities and virtues to enter the heart
When craving of any sort flows within
It flows downstream always to lower depths

Abandon craving, notions and concepts
The mind cannot exist without these
The ego-sense is the source of all sin
Cut at the very root and be ever free

ABANDONING NOTIONS, NOT LIFE

There are two types of abandonment
First is based on perception of truth
Second is based on contemplation
Listen attentively to more on these

When there is direct experience of non-duality
One abandons ego-sense quite naturally
Notions of 'I' and 'mine' dissolve instantly
This is the first type of abandonment

When one feels he somehow belongs
To people, groups of any sort or objects
Intense investigation by a tranquil mind
Will lead to the second type of abandonment

Some attain by direct self-inquiry
As it requires a mind free of impurity
One has to rise above body-consciousness
Becoming liberated—one with Brahman

Janaka and others followed the second path
Contemplating to uproot seeds of duality
But intense and relentless has to be effort
Everything must pass scrutiny's flame

A SAGE

He is a sage who is never swayed
By all that is desirable or undesirable
Living and functioning untouched inwardly
Seeming to function in the world normally

Natural desires may arise in the sage
But these are free of any and all craving
Hence he is never bound—remaining free
Craving for contact of any sort is bondage

Craving's impurity never enters the sage
He is ever still like the deep ocean
Knowing the self is beyond any change
Established in this truth by direct experience

FEELINGS THAT ARISE IN THE HEART

First: I am this body, born of my parents
Second: Minute and subtle am I—different from body
Third: Eternal principle am I in all diversity
Fourth: All that I see including myself is illusory

The first of these four leads to bondage
The other three—lead to freedom
Best of all is when the feeling arises
'I am the self of all'—there is naught else

Not emotional or intellectual are these feelings
But something unmistakable in the heart
These feelings must respond to life—not the mind
With its shrewd calculations to suit its convenience

Resort to the understanding of non-duality
Plant this seed deep within your heart
Let all actions sprout from this seed
Water it well with unremitting vigilance

You will realize consciousness as the sole reality
And be a liberated sage—while still living
Leave behind those that choose to be bound
Reaping pain and sorrow is their own choice