

# YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

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## CHAPTER V



## CONTENTS

- 4. The Story of Punya and Pavana
- 5. The Story of King Bali

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## 4. The Story of Punya and Pavana

### BACKGROUND

Once lived a holy man with his family  
Wife and two very dutiful sons  
Punya, the first son reached enlightenment  
Pavana the second only had semi-wisdom

In time the old man and his wife died  
The unenlightened son was sunk in grief  
While the enlightened remained unmoved  
Performing last rites without bereavement

### PUNYA'S ADVICE TO HIS BROTHER

Why do you bring sorrow upon yourself  
Our parents have attained liberation  
'Tis the high exalted state—difficult to attain  
This is natural to holy ones like them

Your suffering is self-inflicted  
Caused by notions of father and mother  
You grieve for those who are liberated  
Why do you suffer unnecessarily?

Inquire into the nature of self  
See it as different from the body  
There is nothing called 'you' or 'I'  
These are but unexamined notions

Even if the notion of 'I' seems real  
You have had many relatives in the past

You have had countless births before  
You do not grieve for earlier ones

I too have had many embodiments  
Being enlightened, I see them all clearly  
I too have had countless relatives  
Considering this—I do not grieve

Abandon all arising notions of 'I'  
Realize you are the self—directly  
You've no unhappiness, father or mother  
You are the self and naught else

Sages know well this middle path  
They've firmly established themselves in it  
They're always at peace within and without  
Established always in witness-consciousness

#### **VASISTHA'S INSIGHT**

Thus instructed by his brother Punya  
Pavana was awakened—enlightened  
Both lived as enlightened beings  
Endowed with wisdom of direct realization

Craving is the root of all sorrow  
Renounce all cravings completely  
Never sow these seeds of sorrow  
Lead a pure life—free from all ills

Utter dispassion is the only way  
For the mind to attain fulfillment

Never by appeasing its desires and hopes  
Which are fuel for its wild raging fires

Now listen attentively to this story  
About bringing about complete change  
Complete transmutation of the mind  
Just as King Bali of yore did

## **5. The Story of King Bali**

### **BACKGROUND**

Bali was a powerful demon king  
He ruled for a long time unchallenged  
Dispassion arose in him in due time  
He began to inquire within as such

### **KING BALI'S INQUIRY**

How long will I continue to rule this way  
What shall I gain in continuing to rule  
Everything is subject to destruction after all  
How can all this give me real happiness?

Again and again the same pleasures  
They seem disgusting after a while  
The same shameless acts are repeated  
How is it that I am not ashamed of this?

Doing the same thing day-in and day-out  
How can one ever reach the exalted state  
Cessation of the cycle of birth and death  
What is the use in revolving like this?

I remember well now my father's advice  
When I asked him about ending samsara  
The tyranny caused by the deluded mind  
And the means for gaining total satisfaction

#### **BALI'S FATHER'S ADVICE IN A STORY**

There's a vast realm of endless expanse  
In it are no lakes, oceans or mountains  
No forests, sky, winds or moon  
No high, no low, not even you or I

Only One is there—the supreme Light  
Omnipotent, omnipresent—he is the all  
Remaining silent as if inactive is he  
Prompted by him, his minister does all

This minister is incapable of enjoying anything  
Ignorant—he knows nothing at all  
He does everything for his master's sake  
The king remains alone established in peace

All the gods and demons are no match  
They can never challenge this minister  
Love and anger too derive power from him  
His wish is the reason for all conflicts here

The king alone can defeat this minister  
Quite easily whenever he wishes to  
All creation is this ministers handiwork  
You are a true hero if you can conquer him

When the minister arises—worlds arise  
When he retires—worlds subside as well  
You must be free of all delusion and ignorance  
Have an utterly one-pointed mind—to conquer him

If he is not conquered—nothing can be attained  
If he is conquered—everything is had at once  
Hence strive with all your might in every way  
Overcome any obstacle and conquer him

Most invincible is he—but, hear, there's a means  
He can be overcome by intelligent action  
The absence of which is indeed travesty  
As he burns everything if one is not vigilant

One has to approach him most intelligently  
And subdue him as one plays with a child  
When the king is seen—the minister is controlled  
When the minister is controlled—the king is seen

Great havoc he creates if the king is not seen  
Till you conquer the minister—the king is unseen  
It requires intense effort—steady intelligent practice  
To subdue the minister and to behold the king

Intense effort and steady intelligent practice  
Both are needed to go beyond all sorrow  
To the region inhabited by holy ones  
Those who are forever established in peace

This region is the state of liberation  
Sorrow and grief never enter here

The supreme king is the absolute Self  
The minister to conquer is the mind

All that you see is fashioned by the mind  
Mind conquered—everything is conquered  
Almost invincible is this powerful mind  
But it can be overcome by intelligent practice

Now listen to the most intelligent means  
Of conquering this mind of great power  
Free yourself of hope, desires and expectations  
In regards to all and everything at all times

Very easy yet most difficult is conquest  
Difficult for those who are not serious  
But easy for the one who is most earnest  
Ready and eager to renounce *all* impediments

Until you turn away from every sense pleasure  
You will continue to roam in this world in grief  
Total dispassion takes persistent practice  
It can be attained by relentless right exertion

No other means exists to conquer the mind  
Talks about fate and destiny are mere talk  
What brings equanimity is also called grace  
Right exertion is the way to equanimity

What the mind conceives of through right exertion  
Mind conceives, creates and brings to fruition  
Either counter to or with the natural order  
You can call it the prompter of natural order

Though certain actions appear to be selfish  
Each act in accordance with their own nature  
But as long as there is mind—God is not known  
When the mind ceases—let be whatever is!

Self-knowledge alone can yield the fruit  
Of cessation of all cravings permanently  
Dispassion is natural when the self is seen  
Intelligent self-inquiry ends all craving

When the intelligence is still unawakened  
Spend half your time in your normal duties  
Quarter in self-study through scriptures  
Quarter in service of the teacher

When the intelligence is partially awakened  
Spend half your time in service of the teacher  
Quarter in self-study through scriptures  
Quarter in tending to normal duties

When the intelligence is fully awakened  
Spend half your time in service of the teacher  
The other half in self-study through scriptures  
All with dispassion as your constant companion

Only when one is filled with natural goodness  
Is one qualified to listen to the highest wisdom  
Hence educate, purify and nourish the mind  
Transforming it by your sincere study

The transformed mind will see clearly  
Hence strive to see the self sincerely

Self-realization and cessation of craving  
Go hand in hand simultaneously

True dispassion does not come  
By austerities, charity or pilgrimage  
Right self-exertion is the only way  
Hence exert rightly to rid all craving

When dispassion matures within one  
The spirit of inquiry arises as well  
Dispassion and the spirit of inquiry  
Are interdependent—best friends to have

Abandon dependency on external factors  
Grind your teeth, gird up your loins  
Set your whole being to exert relentlessly  
Inquiring and studying till you reach the Truth

Support yourself financially by your work  
Work to support your basic needs  
Utilize wealth to have the company  
Of the good and holy with noble qualities

Company of the holy generates dispassion  
Their company helps the spirit of self-inquiry  
Company of the worldly increases passion  
They help destroy all higher aspirations

When you turn away resolutely  
From the pursuit of all pleasures  
You can then attain to the highest state  
Through the means of self-inquiry

When the self has been thoroughly purified  
It is then that you have the foundation  
To begin ongoing relentless self-inquiry  
And be established in the supreme peace

The purified self is your only best friend  
It will keep you from falling into delusion again  
It will keep you from sorrow and suffering  
It will give you a life of joy and auspiciousness

Acquire a little wealth while you are young  
Utilize this wealth to have holy company  
Adore and serve the holy ones sincerely  
Tremendous will be your gain in their company

#### **BALI CONTINUES TO RECOLLECT**

Luckily I remember my father's teachings  
Now that craving for pleasure has ceased in me  
I shall renounce all—withdraw from pleasures' pursuits  
And stay happily established in the self

This universe is a creation of the mind  
Nothing is lost by abandoning it  
Bali thus sat and remembered his teacher  
Sukra materialized before him instantly

#### **BALI ASKS HIS TEACHER SUKRA**

No desire for pleasure have I  
I wish to learn the truth is all  
Who am I and who are you  
What is this world?—kindly instruct me

### **SUKRA'S REPLY**

Consciousness alone exists—it is all  
You, I, the world—all of this  
If you are humble and sincere—see directly  
There is no need for any further explanation

### **BALI REFLECTS AGAIN**

My teacher's instructions were most correct  
All this is indeed consciousness—naught else  
If consciousness did not recognize the mountain  
Would this exist as a mountain at all?

Contact is possible due to consciousness  
Bodies and objects always stay apart  
Who is my friend and who is my enemy  
Since consciousness alone exists as all

Hate and attachment are modifications  
Of consciousness only—apparently modified  
Consciousness being infinite in nature  
How can perversions arise in it?

Consciousness is just a word—it has no name  
I am that pure infinite consciousness  
All craving has ceased in me completely  
I shall continue till I reach absolute quiescence

### **BALI ENTERS DEEP MEDITATION**

Thus contemplating he uttered OM  
And became quiet and contemplated  
Its meaning and real significance  
And entered into the supreme state

All divisions melted in king Bali  
Thinker, thought and thinking too  
Meditator, meditation and the object  
He existed in stillness for a very long time

All his subjects were greatly perturbed  
As their king sat showing no let up  
They finally cried out to his teacher  
Who once again appeared instantly

Sukra told them about Bali's condition  
He had entered the perfect state  
He asked to let him remain undisturbed  
He would emerge from meditation on his own

### **BALI EMERGES FROM MEDITATION**

It was indeed a most wondrous state  
Though it seems to be just one moment  
I am pure consciousness without perversion  
What to acquire, what to abandon?

I long for liberation but who has bound me  
What shall I gain by continuing meditation  
Salutations to myself—the infinite being  
I will do what is needed as king

There is absolutely nothing to be done  
By that entity which is known as 'me'  
Let me do what seems natural to me now  
And rule this kingdom spontaneously

## VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Bali ruled the kingdom without premeditation  
Worshipping gods and the holy ones  
Treating his relatives with deference  
Rewarding servants and giving in charity

Gain the wisdom that king Bali had  
You are the light of consciousness  
In you are all the worlds rooted  
Who is your friend and who is enemy?

Know this by your direct realization  
All worlds are strung in you as a rosary  
Unborn art thou, deathless thou art  
The self is real—all else is imagination

Inquire into the nature of craving  
The root virus of all illnesses  
See directly that it is wrong notion  
Give up all notions and be free

In whatever the mind tends to sink  
Retrieve and reorientate it to truth  
This will tame the wild elephant mind  
Now listen to another illustration