

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER V



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6. The Story of Prahlada

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6. The Story of Prahlada

BACKGROUND

Though Prahalada was a demon's son
His love for God was an inborn trait
In spite of his surroundings and conditions
The flames of his devotion blazed ever high

His wicked father was slain by the Lord
Due to his reign of evil and tyranny
Rulership was bestowed on Prahlada
Who discharged his duties as worship

Even the gods were perplexed at this
Demons seemed to be transfigured to good
Jealously they inquired of the Lord
How was such a phenomena possible

The Lord told them about Prahalada
Lineage and appearances mean nothing
Each earns every cent of his inner growth
Prahlada was at the doorway of liberation

PRAHLADA'S PRAYER TO THE LORD

I take refuge in the supreme Lord
Supreme light in whom creation abides
Refuge of those who do sincerely seek
Radiant, unborn—the only security there is

LORD'S BLESSINGS

With a spirit of inquiry may you be endowed
Till the absolute is realized directly

May all your delusions end once and for all
May you attain the highest blessedness

PRAHLADA CONTEMPLATES

The Lord protects and upholds every thing
He alone is the refuge of one and all
I should take complete refuge in Him
I will live as if filled by His presence

To worship the Lord, one must verily be Him
I must realize that I am none other than Him
Thus did Prahlad contemplate deeply within
Till he proclaimed, "I am Him, salutations to Him"

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Prahlada transfigured himself into the Lord
Worshipping the Lord mentally within himself
Once he attained direct self-realization
He saw the whole world pervaded by the Lord

The gods were puzzled by his attainment
A demon member had attained enlightenment
Becoming the foremost devotee as well
They took this difficulty to the Lord

The Lord explained it was Prahlada's last birth
By his own efforts he burnt his ignorance
Purifying himself in every way
His change would be for the good of all

Prahlad continued his prayer and meditation
Taking complete refuge in the supreme Lord

Praising the Lord within himself gloriously
Intense was his prayer and meditation

The Lord appeared before Prahlada again
Granting him any boon of his choice
Prahlada asked the Lord to bestow on him
That which the Lord considered limitless

The Lord bestowed on Prahlada
The unceasing spirit of inquiry
Which would continue till final liberation
Till all limitations and bondage were exceeded

PRAHLADA'S REALIZATION

I shall engage myself in self-inquiry
I am not things I see or this body
Nor am I the air that is breathed
Nor the senses or the sense-principles

I now recollect that I am the self
Omnipresent—without concepts
I am that peace beyond all thought
Everything shines because of me

I salute the self—my own light
In it do all things and all worlds exist
Infinite objects appear in me only
Rising and falling like water drops

Pure experiencing—is the one self
Therefore I am the experiencer in all

I am the wise, the child and the foolish
I pervade this entire creation

This world exists in me—the self of all
I exist in all as pure existence
Past, present and future exist in me
Without division or any distinction

How has this infinity limited itself
How has the ego-sense arisen at all
What has given rise to this delusion
What is it that says, 'This I am'?

What is the body and bodilessness
What is it that seems to live and to die
Why do people not experience the truth
That nothing whatever is outside pure consciousness?

Everything everywhere is pure consciousness alone
The light of the sun, moon and all stars
All gods, the elements and the vast space
All this is consciousness—my own self

I see now that transformation never was
Realizing this—I know I was never bound
Movement of thought was the only wickedness
Thought's abandonment is the lifting of the veil

Salutations to the Lord—myself, self of all
Pure, undivided infinite consciousness
This truth has been reached directly
All things are seen as my own self

Death of the body does not affect self
Neither does happiness or unhappiness
These are but notions which have ceased
No longer am I enslaved by ignorance

The Lord who is the self of all has been seen
By total dedication and pure devotion
By unceasing prayer and meditation
By simple and disciplined living

The forest of ignorance has deadly inhabitants
Most deadly of all is the ego-sense
By grace of God and my own self-effort
The inner intelligence is fully awakened

Where now is there room for delusion
Heaven and hell have now fallen away
When the intelligence is freed from ego-sense
It shines with the light of self-knowledge

O self, free from ignorance—salutations to you
The raging senses and mind find quiet in you
O dispeller of darkness and supreme love
Sustainer of all creation—salutations to you

As tempered steel cuts beams of steel
I have subdued the mind with the tempered mind
The body functions naturally now—without ego
All past tendencies have been destroyed completely

For such a long time I was caught up
In the powerful trap of the ego-sense

I now see that bondage was only delusion
The mind has reached utter quiescence

Beyond all modes of consciousness is the self
Real parent, only friend and trusted guide
Realizing the self is the only gain
It collapses the wall of endless suffering

Salutations to the self—sole experiencer
Hereafter you will not be deluded
Sense pleasures are unworthy of attention
Now that you have been realized—salutations

The former self has found its true place
Dwelling within in perfect equilibrium
I realize now it was mind's agitation
That stirred the senses and caused expansion

It was desire that empowered the mind
Which created division within itself
Giving the illusion of people and things
A great delusion in the divisionless

Salutations to you, O supreme Self
You yourself appear as this creation
As cosmic space and infinite beings
You yourself are what we called objects

Abandon vanity, anger and impurity
These do not overpower great souls
Inquire without remission 'Who am I?'
Inquire persistently how this has come about

Only self-inquiry is the surest way out
Of this trap of bondage and suffering
Purify the mind first to make it fit
Know by direct experience you are the self

O self, you are the string that strings all
All worlds are in you in a potential state
All worlds are made manifest by you
Nothing has existence without you

In a flash do things come and go
All opposites owe their existence to you
They are born in you, they lose their identity
When their dependence on you is realized

Hail to you, O self of one and all
Manifested as this limitless universe
Beyond the reach of all scriptures
Self-knowledge have I reached—hail to Thee

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Thus contemplating his realization
Prahlada again entered deep meditation
The Lord saw that he still had work to do
And roused him from his deep meditation

He explained that embodied he would remain
Till the world-cycle had completed
So best to do his duty naturally
As he was liberated and without delusion

When one is freed from likes and dislikes
One reaches the state called 'no-mind'
He experiences great joy while living
This he said was Prahlada's attainment

Since Prahlada had attained enlightenment
Body and embodiment meant nothing
There was nothing to gain or abandon
Best to be engaged in useful activity

The enlightened really do nothing at all
As doership is completely absent in them
Firmly grounded in peace—they're liberated
Nothing to acquire or renounce for them

Prahlada confessed he was just fatigued
And took a rest for a few moments
But he would happily discharge his duties
As worship of the divine omnipresence

Prahlada was crowned king by the Lord
He ruled wisely and justly for a very long time
Peace and prosperity he brought to all
'Tis extraordinary to have an enlightened king

O Rama, you too should reach the vision
Prahlada attained by ceaseless inquiry
Reach the supreme state of enlightenment
Be liberated while living right here and now

Self-inquiry is indeed the foremost means
To attain self-knowledge and be free

If the guru can uplift one without self-effort
Why does he not uplift a bull or camel?

Hence, adore the self by the self
Worship the self by the self
Behold the self by the self
Be established in the self by the self