

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER V



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7. The Story of Gadhi

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7. The Story of Gadhi

FIRST AUSTERITY

Gadhi was a wise and learned person
He lived a simple and righteous life
Once he went to the forest for austerity
In order to have the vision of the Lord

After eight long months of austerity
Pleased with his one-pointed dedication
The Lord graced him with an appearance
Granting Gadhi a boon of his choice

Gadhi wanted to understand by experience
Maya—the illusory power of the Lord
And then how he could overcome it
And traverse the waters of samsara

The Lord granted the boon and vanished
Gadhi continued his simple life of prayer
One day while praying at water's edge
He felt he had died and was lifeless

GADHI'S EXPERIENCE

He saw his relatives standing around
Weeping as he lay silent and still
As if in a deep long meditation
And pondered what relationships were

He experienced being carried away
And being cremated on the funeral pyre

Soon born again to a tribal woman
All this while praying at the water's edge

There in his tribal village home
He grew up with the name Katanja
Times became very difficult; he grew older
And decided to find opportunities elsewhere

While passing through a town one day
He joined a large crowd in the town square
The ruling king had died without an heir
The royal elephant would pick the new ruler

Gadhi joined the crowd to witness this event
The elephant garlanded him—the choice was made
All hailed the newly selected king
He was named Gavala—king of Kira

Ruling came to him quite naturally
He was well-respected by one and all
One day he wandered out of the palace
Unadorned, without regalia and alone

Walking the streets he heard a song
A familiar tune being sung by a few villagers
He joined them silently and started singing
As somehow he knew the tune instinctively

One of the villagers recognized him
As Katanja of the old tribal village
King Gavala ignored this completely
But some passersby picked up on this

The king's identity spread immediately
A low-caste tribal was king of Kira
Instantly he was shunned and despised
The subjects and ministers held council

They felt that king Gavala had betrayed them
Though he had done no such thing
He was selected king by a local custom
He ruled wisely and was loved by all

Anyway, they felt they were now impure
And burning themselves was the only way
They made a large fire and entered
King Gavala decided to end his life too

BACK TO THE WATER'S EDGE

The raging fire awakened him instantly
He found himself praying at water's edge
Gadhi was he—a most strange experience
While standing and praying at the water's edge

He wondered who he was in truth
How such a real experience could be had
While standing at the water's edge
But dismissed it as an illusion

THE VISITING GUEST

One day a guest came by to visit
Gadhi welcomed him as he looked tired
He looked thin and quite hungry too
Gadhi offered him food and inquired

"How is it you look so worn out?"
The guest narrated his tale of woe
He had passed through Kira kingdom
Where a low-caste tribal ruled somehow

He recounted very clearly vivid details
Gadhi was astonished to hear this
Anyway, he offered the guest hospitality
And decided to try and reconcile this

GADHI'S VERIFICATION

Finding out by his own inquiry
That Kira kingdom did exist nearby
He travelled to the place he dismissed
As an earlier illusion at the water's edge

He finally reached the place called Kira
And inquired of the citizens there
About the place and its background
What they said confirmed his earlier experience

SECOND AUSTERITY

To a mountain cave nearby he went
There he performed intense austerity
The Lord appeared before him again
And offered him a boon of his choice

Gadhi respectfully sought understanding
How the experience at water's edge came to be
Deemed by him to be an hallucination
Which was also seen in the wakeful state

THE LORD'S REPLY

That which you see now is an illusion
'Tis the self but perceived differently by the mind
It appears in the mind unpurified
In one who has not realized the truth

'Tis the mind alone that is experienced
As dreams, illusions, illness and flowers
Countless thought forms does mind contain
Including the tribesman and visiting guest

Your being born in the tribal village
And going to the Kira kingdom too
All are forms of illusion and hallucination
All incidents reflected within your mind

Though life's incidents that you encounter
Seem related to each other and yourself
They are purely accidental coincidence
Like a coconut falling when a bird sits on a tree

Sometimes the very same illusion
Is experienced by many at the same time
Like many drunks feeling the revolving world
Like many children playing the same game

What you saw in the towns was possibly true
Katanja was indeed born some time ago
He did indeed become king of Kira
All this was reflected in your consciousness

The mind sometimes forgets what was seen
Sometimes it remembers what was not
Experiencing hallucinations in the waking state
Kira's life is reflected in your present consciousness

Because you are not fully enlightened
Your mind clings to objective perception
Plunge yourself into intense meditation
Right now for ten years and realize truth

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

Maya's cosmic illusion creates great delusion
Time's not a factor in resulting hallucinations
Lifetimes can be experienced in moments
Leading the unwary mind into much turmoil

Mind is the hub around which revolves
The delusion creating the vicious cycle
Restrain the hub by intense self-effort
With keen intelligence make it stand still

When the hub is stopped—the wheel is stopped
When the mind is still—illusion ceases
One who knows *and* is able to practice this
Sees the truth directly and all sorrow ceases

Mastery of mind is the only way
To cure the disease of world-illusion
Hence, abandon other futile activities
And control the mind for your highest good

This world-illusion abides in the mind
It is like an imaginary pot that divides
Though there is no division at all
Between outer and inner space

This pot of the mind must be broken
For the space to be felt as one
As the imaginary division vanishes
So does the imaginary world-concept

Live in the present but without struggle
Externalizing consciousness momentarily
Till the mind stops linking to past and future
And becomes what is called 'no-mind'

Externalized consciousness is objective
Internalized consciousness is subjective
Pure consciousness is beyond both these
All abide in it—it abides in itself

This mind dwells from moment to moment
Doing what needs to be done and dropping it
It will not hold water like dark clouds
The 'no-mind' is light, bright and full of purity

When inner consciousness limits itself
Agitation and much turmoil do result
Expanding viciously within limitation
Struggling to feel limitless while limited

When consciousness ceases to be finite
And gives up its cloak of apparent limitation

This cyclic world-illusion will be destroyed
As consciousness realizes its perfection

Consciousness free of all limitation
Is known as the inner intelligence
Essential nature of no-mind it is
Untainted by concepts and percepts

That is reality—the supreme self
That is omniscience—the supreme truth
Infinite vision—it is free of all sorrow
Only when the wicked mind ceases to be

Those who have awakened by self-effort
Have studied the scriptures and exerted
They've resorted to holy company too
To discover the truth for their own selves

Their lives have been a journey in truth
Having lived with unceasing vigilance
Each moment, each step, a practice of truth
Their consciousness has reached the pure state

Discover the state of non-objectiveness
What others have done—you can do too
Hence, gird up your loins and be diligent
Benefit from study and holy company

The self alone is the sole aid on the path
There's no other light but your own aspiration
'Tis one's own self that seeks the beyond
Seeks the way out of sorrow and freedom

You have to raise the self by the self
Live expertly—journeying to freedom
Ruthlessly abandon notions of 'I' and 'mine'
Be established in undivided consciousness

Appearances will still be while the body lasts
But you will not be fooled by any illusion
Being established in equanimous consciousness
You will abide in the self through all the states

Abandon this defective sense-perception
Most impure—full of hopes and desires
Be established in self-knowledge
You must know this by direct experience

All notions and desires must be abandoned
To know that you are pure consciousness
The subject-object drama will continue
Without being the least bit disturbed by it

Attain equilibrium—know you are the all
Live naturally—doing what needs to be done
Free from duality and non-duality as well
Unshakeable as cosmic consciousness

Cut off all fetters of desire and hope
Solely with the inner undivided intelligence
Endowed with patience and perseverance
Go beyond unrighteousness and righteousness too

When you are firmly rooted in self-knowledge
The worst attacks of delusion are powerless

Only when self-knowledge is overpowered
Does delusion dance to ignorance's tune

Ignorance gave rise to world-appearance
All suffering will end when ignorance ends
The darkness of ignorance cannot exist
When wisdom's fire blazes ever brightly

Eagerly seek company of the wise
Those who have attained self-knowledge
Avoid deluded ones who continue to live
Like pack animals though in human garb

The company of sages is a priceless treasure
They are the sun that illumines the path
They've been a light unto their own selves
They've had no external help at all

Self-knowledge is the only light there is
Sages who've attained shine among all
Brighter are they than the sun, moon and stars
They are beyond the reach of delusion

What good is your life without self-knowledge
All that you do will soon be wiped out
All that you own—others will make claim to
Crying you came and crying you will leave

The ghost of illusion affects the deluded
Hence exert—awaken to self-knowledge
The deluded walk around like animated corpses
You are intelligent—lay claim to your heritage

Hence, abandon craving for all pleasures
Those of the past and of the future too
Cravings and desires contaminate the mind
Strengthen the mind by abandoning them

Rise above all these false relationships
They are all rooted in 'I am this body'
Then come relatives: wife, son and family
These are the ways the mind becomes gross

The gross mind is itself ignorance
Its efforts, ambitions and attachments
Are the results of its ignorant nature
Experienced as sorrow and delusion

Like a tree this mind is rooted in the body-field
Worries its blossoms, old age and disease its fruits
Desires its flowers, hopes and longings its leaves
Cut down this tree with the sharp axe of inquiry

Like an elephant which roams the body-forest
Its vision clouded by delusion, most restless
Most violent and burning with fiery lust
Tear this elephant with your sharp intelligence

Like a crow dwelling in the body-nest
It revels in filth, consuming any flesh found
Ever dark and stupid, most conceited it is
Drive this burden far away from yourself

Like a ghost severed by the goblin of craving
It rests in the forest of ignorance in delusion

With the help of wisdom and dispassion
Put this ghost to rest by arduous self-effort

Like the most venomous serpent of all
It has killed many, hurt countless people
With the help of instruction and contemplation
Destroy this vicious serpent like an eagle

Like a monkey, it roams from place to place
Seeking the fruits of reward and pleasure
Bound to the world-cycle, it dances for attention
Restrain this from all sides and attain perfection

Like a dark cloud of ignorance in the bright sky
It obscures the ever-present light of the sun
Dispel this darkness by repeated renunciation
Of its waters—all concepts and precepts

As a missile is destroyed by a deadlier one
Tranquilize this mind with the mind itself
Forever abandon mental agitation—be calm
Free of any disturbance it can possibly cause

Take not a stand on concepts and precepts
They're put together and strengthened by time
Like a creeper these vines will soon strangle you
Fell them ruthlessly by wisdom's sharp axe