

YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER V



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9. The Story of Suraghu

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8. The Story of Suraghu

BACKGROUND

Suraghu was a Himalayan tribal chief
He ruled his kingdom justly and wisely
Rewarding those who did good
And punishing those who did wrong

This constant activity made him feel
That his spiritual vision had been obscured
When one is not lodged firmly in wisdom
One second-guesses and doubts arise

One day sage Mandavya happened to visit
Suraghu placed his doubts before the sage
Telling him plainly of his inner torment
As he rewarded some and some he punished

He humbly requested the sage to instruct him
So equal vision might somehow arise
Which would free him from anxiety and doubt
And from prejudice and partiality experienced

SAGE MANDAVYA'S INSTRUCTION

All mental weaknesses come to an end
By self-effort based on wisdom
Which arises in one well established
In self-knowledge by direct experience

Distress in the mind is eliminated
By inquiry into the nature of self

When consciousness expands infinitely
The pull of self-centeredness snaps

Only when one renounces everything
Is the supreme gain of self-knowledge had
When all points of view are abandoned
What remains—is the self alone

Just as in that which is called worldly life
Obstacles must be removed for any gain
Even so is it with self-knowledge
There must complete renunciation

SURAGHU CONTEMPLATES

Immediately did Suraghu contemplate
"What is it that is known as 'I'
I'm not the hill tribe nor is it mine
This is merely called 'my kingdom'

This capital city too is not mine
Neither is family or relationships
How have I come to regard these as 'mine'
I abandon all these notions this moment

This body contains inert substances
Flesh, blood, bones and organs
Mind is the cause of all sorrow
Neither is mind nor ego-sense mine

What is this feeling of individuality
That is involved in myriad relationships

How can an object of knowledge
Be the self which alone is pure subject

I abandon all that is knowable
I am distinct—the knower of all
Pure consciousness—free from doubt
I am indeed the infinite self

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT

By direct inquiry into the nature of self
Suraghu attained to the supreme state
All sorrow and anxiety left him completely
He ruled the kingdom with a balanced mind

He realized diversity was but an appearance
Of and in pure infinite consciousness
Not intellectually which is utterly useless
But by unmistakable direct experience

The mind is indeed fickle and unsteady
Equanimity seems difficult to reach
Kindly listen to an earlier incident
Which will throw light on just this

SURAGHU AND PARIGAHA

Parigaha was a friend of Suraghu
He too was a chief of a kingdom
A great famine came to his land
Fruitless were all attempts at relief

Sorely distressed he went away
To the forest to perform austerities

After a very long time of hard penance
He attained self-knowledge and quiescence

Thereafter he roamed the land freely
One day he met up with his old friend
Most happy were both on meeting again
As now both had attained self-knowledge

Parigha asked Suraghu about his state
If he was established in perfect equanimity
If all his subjects and kingdom were at peace
And if he was firmly established in dispassion

Suraghu most humbly replied to Parigha
Attributing all success to the divine
Grateful for the chance to see his friend
As he felt the holy company was a treasure

Parigha inquired about duties performed
Of their being a possible hindrance
To being established in peace and equanimity
And disrupting the state of samadhi

Suraghu's enlightened reply was inspiring
"Why should only that mind without thoughts
Be called samadhi for a knower of truth
As constant contemplation is what is samadhi

The enlightened ones are always in samadhi
Whether they be active in work or not
Though one could sit for hours in lotus' pose
One's mind may not be at peace at all

Merely sitting in the lotus pose is not samadhi
All desires must be burnt by self-knowledge
What results is the real state of samadhi
Not just sitting and remaining silent

In samadhi there is eternal satisfaction
Clear perception of what really is
Egolessness, freedom from the opposites
Freedom from anxiety and the wish to possess

When self-knowledge dawns truly in one
One is established in unbroken samadhi
He neither loses it nor is it ever interrupted
The state of samadhi becomes permanent

Just as time never forgets to move on
One in self-knowledge never forgets the self
Just as material objects stay material
The sage of self-knowledge is always one

I am fully awakened, pure and at peace
Unbroken is the state of samadhi
I behold the self as all—at all times
There is no other state but samadhi"

Parigha saluted Suraghu, his friend
"Surely you've attained total enlightenment
You shine radiant, resplendent and pure
In you there is no ego-sense or opposites"

Suraghu replied to the sage—his friend
"There is nothing worth desiring or renouncing

When objects are recognized as concepts
It is notions that masquerade as objects

There is nothing worth acquiring either
Following the understanding of renouncing
Good, evil, great, small and the like
Are all notions based on desirability

When desirability itself has no meaning
Renouncing and acquiring are meaningless
Objects and things that we see before us
Have not the real substance they appear to have

If this is known by direct experience
How can any desire arise for them
In the absence of any and all desire
Supreme peace reigns in the heart"

VASISTHA'S INSIGHT CONTINUES

Thus continuing appearance's illusion
And enjoying each other's good company
They both continued to engage themselves
In their respective duties with enthusiasm

Be firmly established in this wisdom, O Rama
Discard impure ego-sense from the heart
Engage yourself in your own duties
Unattached—therefore untrained by them

Just as the eyes of fish in sea-water
Are never affected by its salinity

Befriend scriptures, generate dispassion
Make each day a march towards self-knowledge