

Yoga Vasistha

Swami Suryadevananda

Part 2 Summary (Chapter II begins...)

The liberated sage: Mention 'a liberated sage' and the mind instantly conjures fantastic ideas of what this person should be and even look like. What does it mean 'to be liberated'? What is it that we would like to be liberated from? Is the cause of bondage outside so to say or inside? If it is inside, why can't we start working on it? It helps when we bring the cause close to heart as then we can start doing something about it.

Just like two people, one free of debt and one in debt may not necessarily look different – the liberated sage may not appear to be any different from the average person. Today, there is much emphasis on 'conformity' and so, the liberated sage may even seem like a rebel of sorts.

Two important qualities of a liberated sage are mentioned...

1. Who *by nature* is *not swayed* by sense pleasure.
2. Who *does what needs to be done* without the motivation of fame or other incentives.

Self-effort: The effort that arises from right understanding which has been felt in one's heart, exposed to the teachings of the scriptures and the conduct of holy ones. This type of self-effort is natural action but will take inner commitment and inner strength as the old ways of habit insist and must be overridden. Habit or conditioning interferes with a fresh take on things and the right response to each situation. It must be overcome by inner strength which Vāsiṣṭha calls 'grinding one's teeth' – which is the inner grinding of resistance by habit. —*In this way one should overcome evil or habit by good doing what is needed and thus change fate by present effort.*

Essence of all scriptures: The sage has a very direct approach to what may seem quite involved and daunting. The unreal appears real because of our deep conviction and this can be overcome by a firm conviction of what is real. This requires your wholehearted commitment. Overcoming habit is neither easy nor difficult. If we see the wisdom in a better way in our heart – it is easy. If however, we see the benefit in our mind while the heart holds on to something else – it is difficult. We are the only resistance in change. With inner strength, one should *continually divert the impure mind or conditioned mind to pure action by persistent effort.* Staying the course takes inner resolve and relentless vigilance.

The course of action: Action or doing things is not so much for the purpose of accomplishing the outer but to see and transform the inner while acting in the outer.

This is intelligent action and it gives us a steady window to the deepest reaches of the mind along with a way to free it of its conditioning. In the course of action, we see our conditioning which is the conditioned mind with which we are very tightly identified. When we live an examined life, the inner intelligence sees each situation in the moment and does what needs to be done also in the moment without focus on what may be preferred, beneficial or otherwise. The safest way is for the mind to rest on the eternal, on God, as then, all action flows in light of God's omnipresence.

Action is a window to the mind and the world at the same time. When we face the situation to do what needs to be done while being conscious of the movement of the mind—through the course of action, we change the course of the mind.

In this way, while living wisely, we thin conditioning and gradually revert to the unconditioned self. The purpose of action is to be acted on.



suryadevananda.org