

Yoga Vasishtha Sara *(The Essence of Yoga Vasishtha)* *An English Translation from the Sanskrit Original 1994 Edition*

Introduction

The Brihat (the Great) Yoga Vasishtha or Yoga Vasishtha Maha Ramayana as it is also called, is a work of about 32,000 Sanskrit couplets, traditionally attributed to Valmiki, the author of Srimad Ramayana. It is a dialogue between Sage Vasishtha and Sri Rama, during which Advaita (the doctrine of non-duality) in its pure form of ajatavada (theory of non-origination) is expounded, with illustrative stories in between. This vast work was abridged some centuries ago by Abhinanda Pandita, a Kashmiri scholar, into 6,000 couplets, which go by the name of Laghu Yoga Vasishtha. This is a masterpiece in itself, like the original Brihat.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi used to refer to Yoga Vasishtha frequently and has even incorporated six couplets from it in His Supplement to Forty Verses (verses 21 to 27).

A further condensation of this work was made long ago, by an unknown author, into about 230 couplets, divided into ten chapters, as Yoga Vasishtha Sara (Essence of Yoga Vasishtha), of which this translation is presented for the first time. By making this condensation the author has rendered a great service to all sadhaks. This is indeed a gold mine fit for repeated reading and meditation.

Publisher

Chapter 1

Dispersion

1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

5. The great remedy for the long lasting disease of samsara is the enquiry, 'Who am I?', to whom does this samsara belong?', which entirely cures it.

11. Following the customary method of teaching is only for preserving the tradition. Pure awareness results solely from the clarity of the disciple's understanding.

22. When pots, etc., are broken the space within them becomes unlimited. So also when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

23. Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is Brahman alone appearing illusorily in the form of the world.

Chapter 2

Unreality of the World

4. The idea of a (live) snake in a picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the truth is known. Similarly samsara ceases to exist (when the Truth is realized), even if it continues to appear.

6. O Rama, maya is such that it brings delight through its own destruction; its nature is inscrutable; it ceases to exist even while it is being observed.

25. Just as a tree consisting of fruits, leaves, creepers, flowers, branches, twigs and roots, exists in the seed of the tree, even so this manifest world exists in Brahman.

29. Just as the dream becomes unreal in the waking state and the waking state in

the dream, so also death becomes unreal in birth and birth in death.

Chapter 3

The Marks of a Liberated Person (Jivan Mukta)

14. Like an empty vessel in space (the knower of Truth) is empty both within and without, while at the same time he is full within and without like a vessel immersed in the ocean.

20. The noble-hearted man whose desires of the heart have come to an end is a liberated man; it does not matter whether he does or does not practice meditation or perform action.

21. The idea of Self in the non-Self is bondage. Abandonment of it is liberation. There is neither bondage nor liberation for the ever-free Self.

25. O Rama, there is no intellect, no nescience, no mind and no individual soul (jiva). They are all imagined in Brahman.

Chapter 4

Dissolution of the Mind

1. Consciousness which is undivided imagines to itself desirable objects and runs after them. It is then known as the mind.

18. Does not the fool feel ashamed to move about in the world as he pleases and talk about meditation when he is not able to conquer even the mind?

21. Association with the wise, abandonment of latent impressions self-enquiry, control of breathing - these are the means of conquering the mind.

23. The mind becomes bound by thinking 'I am not Brahman'; it becomes completely released by thinking 'I am Brahman'.

Chapter 5

The Destruction of Latent Impressions

1. O Rama, this enquiry into the Self of the nature or 'Who am I?' is the fire which burns up the seeds of the evil tree which is the mind.

3. The knowers of truth declare that enquiry into the truth of the Self is knowledge. What is to be known is contained in it like sweetness in milk.

8. O pure soul, cherish the association of sages and the true scriptures; you will attain the state of Supreme Consciousness not in the course of months by days.

Chapter 6

Meditation on the Self

1. I, the pure, stainless and infinite Consciousness beyond maya, look upon this body in action like the body of another.

6. I am above everything; I am present everywhere; I am like space; I am that which (really) exists; I am unable to say anything beyond this.

10. I prostrate to myself who am within all being, the ever free Self abiding as inner consciousness.

Chapter 7

Method of Purification

8. O mighty-armed, be always free from mental concepts like the heart of a rock though not in sentient like it.

9. Do not be that which is understood, nor the one who understands. Abandon all concepts and remain what you are.

Chapter 8

Worship of the Self

1. If you separate yourself from the body and abide at ease in Consciousness you will become one (the sole Reality), everything else appearing (insignificant) like grass.

3. O Raghava, that by which you recognize sound, taste, form and smell, know that as your Self, the Supreme Brahman, the Lord of lords.

5. After rejecting, through reasoning, all that can be known as 'non-truth' what remains as pure Consciousness - regard that as your real Self.

Chapter 9

Exposition of the Self

11. Just as the sky is (i.e. appears to be) stained by dust, smoke and clouds, so also the pure Self in contact with the qualities of maya is (i.e. appears to be) soiled by them.

12. Just as metal in contact with fire acquires the quality of fire (namely heat), so also the senses, etc. in contact with the Self acquire the quality of the Self.

16. The Self, is realised in the body only with effort, like sugar from the sugarcane, oil from sesame seeds, fire from wood, butter from a cow and iron from stones (i.e. ore).

29. Awareness is Brahman; the world is Brahman; the various elements are Brahman; I am Brahman; my enemy is Brahman; my friends and relatives are Brahman.

31. There is only consciousness here; this universe is nothing but consciousness; you are consciousness; I am consciousness; the worlds are consciousness - that is the conclusion.

Chapter 10

Nirvana

10. If one meditates on that state which comes at the end of the waking state and the beginning of sleep he will directly experience undecaying bliss.

28. That consciousness which is the witness of the rise and fall of all beings, know that to be the immortal state of supreme bliss.

30. That which is immutable, auspicious and tranquil, that in which this world

exists, that which manifests itself as the mutable and immutable objects - that is the sole consciousness.