

The Essence of YOGAVAASISHTHA

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SAMATA BOOKS
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Yogavasishtha or Yogavasishtha Maharamayana is reputed to consist of 32,000 slokas. According to the late Sri Bhagavan Das, Pandit Vrndavana Sarasvata of Benares who passed away in the year 1905 had read through this great work 165 times "and the work consists of 64,000 lines" i.e. 32,000 slokas. However, the printed editions consist of nearly 28,000 slokas. The complete edition is perhaps available in private collections. We request readers of this book to help us obtain a copy of the complete edition, if available, to enable us to publish it for the benefit of the reading public.

It is not easy to condense such a great book of Vedanta, often referred to in appreciative terms, by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and other sages and scholars. There is an abridgement known as Laghu Yogavasishtha consisting of 6,000 slokas. Sri Vasishthasangraha which forms the text of this publication is a condensation of the original in 1,698 slokas. Sri Swami Jnanananda Bharati who made this compilation, maintaining the continuity and retaining the flow of the teaching, should have read the Yogavasishtha several times and mastered it, as a perusal of the work will show. We wish to thank the Jagadgurus of Sri Sringeri Jagadguru Samsthanam for their gracious permission to utilise their publication Vasishthasangraha in this new publication of ours. We are grateful to Sri Samvid for making available to us his English translation of Vasishthasangraha.

Sri Rama Navami
2 April 1982

V. SADANAND

PREFACE

Here is a faithful and close English translation of Sri Gnanananda Bharati's condensation of the Yoga Vasishta. It is redolent with the vibrations of sincerity in the Quest, passion for communication with fellow-seekers tempered by the rectitude and austerity of the subject and a deep, overmastering concern to reflect and point to the original always. And the original is a cluster of the rays from the source (Gnana Vasishtha) trailing clouds of the glory of the Vast and Deathless Sun of Atma Vidya inducing inevitably contemplation upon, consecration to and communion with That. "Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision." The call is to pass beyond knowings and be the Light, beyond enjoyings and be the Bliss. The discerning reader has the necessary spring-board and launching-pad in the translation which helps him enter into the luminous Rocket of Bharati's Sangraha which in its turn lifts him to land in Sun-belts of Knowledge and Moon-belts of Delight. Let the Sadhaka join in the greatest adventure of Consciousness and Joy.

SEETARAMAN

ॐ

॥ समर्पणम् ॥

भद्रे भवत्यैव सौहार्दयुक्ते
श्रीकृष्णपादाम्बुजे बद्धचित्ते ।
दुष्पारवेदान्तसिन्धुस्वरूपं
ग्रन्थं तु वासिष्ठमेतं प्रसिद्धम् ॥
तीर्णोऽहमत्यल्पकालेन राधे
बह्वल्पबुद्ध्याप्रयुक्तस्ततोऽहम् ।
सर्वात्मनाह्येतमध्यात्मदीपं
तुभ्यं मुदाचाद्य नीराजयामि ॥

भाषान्तरकर्तुः मार्गप्रदर्शकाणां
परमात्मनश्च स्मरणरूपं
मङ्गलाचरणम् ॥

अविद्याजातमोहादिध्वान्तविध्वंसहेतुकम् ।
आत्मविद्योपदेष्टारं योगिनं राममाश्रये ॥ 1॥
रहस्यत्रयतत्त्वज्ञं विद्वांसं विनयोज्ज्वलम् ।
शमादिगुणसम्पन्नं वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥ 2॥
सौहार्दप्रेमवैराग्यतपोज्ञानादिभिर्युतम् ।
संविद्विद्याप्रदातारं ललितानन्दमाश्रये ॥ 3॥
चिन्तये राधिकां कृष्णप्रेयसीं ज्ञानदायिकाम् ।
मानुषीं तनुमाश्रित्य शक्तिपातं प्रकुर्वतीम् ॥ 4॥
नमः सच्चित्स्वरूपाय कृष्णाय परमात्मने ।
नित्यं श्रीगुरुरूपेण ममान्तर्यो विराजते ॥ 5॥
नमः प्रणवरूपाय नमो नारायणाय ते ।
त्वामाश्रयन्तः पश्यन्ति सिद्धाः स्वान्तस्थमीश्वरम् ॥ 6॥
ज्ञातृज्ञानज्ञेयरूपं तैः सदा परिवर्जितम् ।
सन्तं एकं स्वयञ्ज्योतिः आत्मानं समुपाश्रये ॥ 7॥

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चतुर्विंशः सर्गः CHAPTER XXIV

भगीरथोपाख्यानम्—THE STORY OF BHAGEERATHA

1. सौषुप्तमौनम् —THE SILENCE OF SUSHUPTI (OR PROFOUND REPOSE).

वसिष्ठ उवाच—Vasishtha said :

सौषुप्तमौनवान् भूत्वा त्यज चित्तविलासितम् ।

1. Be one possessing the silence of Sushupti and renounce what is manifested by the mind.

Note : Sushupti means the state of deep sleep. Saushupta, used in the text, means “of (or belonging to) the state of deep sleep”. In the present context it refers to profound repose. Saushuptamauna will be translated as “the silence of profound repose”, in the following verses.

श्रीराम उवाच—Sree Raama said :

सौषुप्तमौनमित्येतत् ब्रह्मन् ब्रूहि किं उच्यते ॥ 1॥

1. Revered Sage! Tell me what is this, that is called the “silence of profound repose”?

वसिष्ठ उवाच—Vasishtha said :

वाङ्मौनं वचसां रोधो, बलात् इन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।

अक्षमौनं, परित्यागं चेष्टानां काष्ठसंज्ञकम् ॥ 2॥

प्रस्फुरच्चित्तकलनं एतत् मौनत्रयं भवेत् ।

2-3. The silence of speech is the restraint (or stoppage) of (utterance of) words. The silence of the organs of sense is the suppression of the sense-organs forcibly. The renunciation of all actions (or efforts), with the seizing (or grasping) by the mind spreading far and wide, is designated as “Kaashtha” (or wood-like silence). These would be the three kinds of silence.

अविभागं, अनभ्यासं, अनाद्यन्तं यत् आस्थितम् ॥ 3॥

ध्यायतोऽध्यायतश्चैव सौषुप्तं मौनमुच्यते ।

3-4. That which is obtained without division, without practice, without beginning and end, while meditating or not meditating is spoken of as the silence of profound repose.

यथाभूतं इदं बुद्ध्वा जगत् नानात्वविभ्रमम् ॥ 4॥
यथास्थितं असंदेहं सौषुप्तं मौनमुच्यते ।

4-5. Having known this world which is an error of manifoldness (or multiplicity), truly and as it stands, (the state) free from doubt (which one enters) is called the silence of profound repose.

सुषुप्तमौनं योगीशैः द्विविधैः प्राप्यते खलु ॥ 5॥

5. The silence of profound repose is indeed obtained by the masters of Yoga of two kinds.

सम्यग्ज्ञानावबोधेन नित्यमेकसमाधिना ।
सांख्ययैवावबुद्धा ये ते सांख्ययोगिनः स्मृताः ॥ 6॥

6. By becoming awake to Right Knowledge and by profound meditation on the One (Truth or Reality) constantly, those who have known (the Truth) only by reason (or reflection), are regarded as Saankhya-Yogin-s.

प्राणाद्यनिलसंशान्तौ युक्त्या ये पदमागताः ।
अनामयं अनाद्यन्तं ते स्मृताः योगयोगिनः ॥ 7॥

7. Those who have arrived at the abode which is stainless and without beginning and end, on completely stilling Praana and other vital airs through proper means, are considered as Yoga-Yogin-s (or those who have attained to absorption in Absolute Consciousness through the path of Yoga).

यत् सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं परं योगैः तदेव हि ।
एकतत्त्वधनाभ्यासः प्राणानां विलयः तथा ॥ 8॥
मनोविनिग्रहश्चेति मोक्षशब्दार्थसंग्रहः ।
एकस्मिन्नपि संसिद्धे ते सिद्धयन्ति परस्परम् ॥ 9॥

8-9. The same Supreme state that is reached by those following the

path of knowledge, is arrived at by those following the path of Yoga. The intense (or uninterrupted) practice of the One True Principle, the dissolution of the vital airs (or Praana-s) and also the restraint of the mind constitute the epitome of the meaning of the word "Moksha" (or liberation). Even when one is accomplished, all of them are mutually fulfilled.

अविनाभाविनी नित्यं जन्तूनां प्राणचेतसी ।
कुसुमामोदवत् मिश्रे तिलतैल इव स्थिते ॥10॥

10. Praana (or vital air) and the mind of beings are ever inseparably connected. They are associated like flower and its fragrance and they exist like sesamum seed and its oil.

आधाराधेयवच्चैव एकाभावे विनश्यतः ।
कुरुतश्च स्वनाशेन कार्यं मोक्षाख्यमुत्तमम् ॥11॥

11. Both of them perish in the absence of one of them just like a support and the supported. They accomplish by their destruction, the highest object called liberation.

2. वेतालोपाख्यानम् THE STORY OF A GOBLIN

शुभान् आकर्णय प्रश्नान् प्रसङ्गात् स्मृतिमागतान् ।
आसीत् विन्ध्यमहाटव्यां वेतालो विपुलाकृतिः ॥12॥

12. Hear these auspicious questions which have come to (my) memory in this context. There was a goblin with a large body in the forest of the Vindhya mountain.

निर्निमित्तं निरागस्कं पुरोऽप्यभ्यागतं नरम् ।
क्षुधितोऽपि न हन्त्येषः सन्तो हि न्यायदर्शकाः ॥13॥

13. Without cause and without offence, this (goblin) does not kill even a man arrived before him, even if he is hungry. For, the good ones, exhibit justice (or righteousness).

निशायां एकदा प्राप्तं भूपालं प्रोक्तवानसौ ।
"मया लब्धोऽसि राजन् त्वं भव भोजनमद्य मे" ॥14॥

14. Once, during a night, he told a king who arrived: "King! You have been obtained by me. You become my food today".

राजोवाच च "निर्न्यायं मां चेत् अस्ति बलात् इह ।
तत् ते सहस्रधा मूर्धा स्फुटिष्यति न संशयः" ॥15॥

15. The king said: "If you eat me here by force, without justice, then, your head will break into a thousand parts. There is no doubt (in this)."

वेतालश्च ततः प्राह "न्यायोऽयं हि मयोच्यते ।
राजाऽसि सकलाशाश्च पूरणीयाः त्वयाऽर्थिनाम् ॥16॥
प्रश्नानां उत्तरं दत्त्वा प्रपूरय समार्थनाम् ।

16-17. The goblin then said: "This justice indeed is told (now) by me. You are a king. All the desires of a suppliant should be fulfilled by you. Having given the answer to (my) questions, fulfil my request.

कस्य सूर्यस्य रश्मीनां ब्रह्माण्डानि कृशाणवः ॥17॥

17. To (or Before) the rays of which Sun, the Universes are small atoms?

स्वप्नात् स्वप्नान्तरं गच्छन् शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
त्यजन् न त्यजति स्वच्छं कः स्वरूपं प्रभास्वरम् ॥18॥

18. Moving from a dream to another dream a hundred times and a thousand times, who does not leave his natural state which is pure and brilliant (though) abandoning (or going away from) it?

ब्रह्माण्डाकाशभूतौघसूर्यमण्डलमेरवः ।
अपरित्यजतोऽणुत्वं कस्याणोः परमाणवः ॥19॥

19. To which atom, not abandoning its atomic nature, the Universe, the sky, the multitude of beings, the solar orb and the Meru mountain, are infinitesimal particles?

कस्यानवयवस्यैव ह्यन्तर्मज्जा जगत्त्रयी" ।
इत्युक्तवति वेताले विहस्योवाच भूपतिः ॥20॥

20. To whom, quite devoid of a body are the three worlds only the inner marrow?" When the goblin spoke thus, the king said smiling:

“त्वया प्रोक्तो हि चित्सूर्यः विज्ञानात्माऽतिभास्वरः ।
सर्वाणि भुवनानीह तस्यैव त्रसरेणवः ॥21॥

21. “The Sun of Pure Consciousness which is of the nature of knowledge and very bright, has indeed been described by you. All the worlds here are only its motes (or particles of dust seen moving in the sunbeam).

जगदाख्ये महास्वप्ने स्वप्नात् स्वप्नान्तरं व्रजन् ।
शान्तं त्यजति नो रूपं जीवभावं गतेऽपि च ॥22॥

22. Moving from one dream to another dream in this great dream called the world, it does not abandon its tranquil nature, even though it has gone to the state of the individual soul (or individualised consciousness).

सूक्ष्मत्वात् अप्यलभ्यत्वात् परमात्माऽणुरुच्यते ।
पुरतस्तस्य मेवादि परमाणुवदेव हि ॥23॥

23. On account of its subtlety and also unattainability, the Supreme Self is called atomic. Before that, the Meru mountain and others are indeed like infinitesimal particles only.

सर्वावयवरूपोऽपि निरस्तावयवः पुमान् ।
अस्य विज्ञप्तिमात्रस्य मज्जामात्रं जगत्त्रयम् ॥24॥

24. This Person, though of the form of the whole body, is devoid of body. To him, who is mere intelligence, the three worlds are, (as it were), only marrow.”

इति राजवचः श्रुत्वा वेतालः शान्तिमाययौ ।
बभूव च सदा ध्यानी विस्मृत्य सकलां क्षुधाम् ॥25॥

25. Having thus heard the words of the king, the goblin attained to calmness. He became ever meditative forgetting all hunger.

3. ज्ञानसाधनानि — THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

संहृत्य सर्वतः चित्तं सर्वत्र समदर्शिनः ।
 स्थिरबुद्धेः अमूढस्य यथाप्राप्तानुवर्तिनः ॥26॥
 राज्ञो भगीरथस्येव दुःसाध्यमपि सिध्यति ।

26-27. To one who is perceiving equally everywhere, withdrawing his mind completely, who is of firm understanding, who is not infatuated (or dull) and who is conforming to what is suitable to circumstance, even what is difficult to be accomplished is fulfilled, as happened for King Bhageeratha.

आसीत् भगीरथो राम राजा परमधार्मिकः ॥27॥
 यौवने वर्तमानोऽपि लोकायात्रां विचारयन् ।
 अत्युद्विग्नमनाः भूत्वा सोऽपृच्छत् त्रितुलं गुरुम् ॥28॥

27-28. Raama! The king Bhageeratha was a very virtuous person. Though being in his youth, reflecting on the course of worldly life and becoming extremely sorrowful in mind, he asked his preceptor Tritula (as follows) :

“जरामरणमोहादिरूपाणां भयकारिणाम् ।
 भगवन् सर्वदुःखानां कथमन्तः प्रजायते ॥29॥

29. “Revered Sage! How is the end of all sorrows of the form of old age, death, delusion and the like causing fear, produced?

चिन्मात्रं सर्वगं शान्तं अस्ति निर्मलं अच्युतम् ।
 देहादि नेतरत् किञ्चित् इति वेद्मि मुनीश्वर ॥30॥

30. Great Sage! I know that there is (the Reality) which is only Pure Consciousness, all-pervading, tranquil, stainless and imperishable and there is nothing different whatever such as the body.

किंत्वत्र प्रतिपत्तिः मे स्फुटतां एति न प्रभो ।
 एतावन्मात्रसंविद्धिः स्यां अहं सर्वदा कथम् ॥31॥

31. Lord! But, in this respect, my perception (of the Truth) does

not arrive at clarity. How may I remain always as just this Pure Consciousness of such nature?"

त्रितुल उवाच—Tritula said :

ज्ञानेन ज्ञेयनिष्ठत्वं एति चेतो हृदम्बरे ।
ततः सर्वात्मको भूत्वा भूयो गच्छेत् न जीवताम् ॥32॥

32. The mind attains to fixity in (or the accomplishment of) what is to be known (i.e. Truth or Reality), in the space of the heart through spiritual knowledge. Then, becoming of the nature of the "Whole", it does not again go to the state of the individual soul (or individualised consciousness).

असक्तिः अनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वं इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥33॥
आत्मनोऽनन्ययोगेन तद्भावनं अनारतम् ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वं अरतिः जनसंसदि ॥34॥
अध्यात्मज्ञाननिष्ठत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतत् ज्ञानं इति प्रोक्तं अज्ञानं स्यात् इतोऽन्यथा ॥35॥

33-35. Non-attachment, absence of identification (through intense attachment) with son, wife, home and the like and constant even-mindedness (or equanimity) on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable, the contemplation of the Self continuously by undivided union with it, resort to sequestered places, absence of pleasure in an assembly of people, fixity in Self-knowledge and perception of the object of True Knowledge; this is declared to be knowledge. What is different from this would be absence of knowledge (or ignorance).
Note: These verses are identical with verses 10, 11 and 12 of chapter XIII of the Bhagavad Geeta excepting the first half of verse 34, corresponding to the first half of verse 11 of the Geetaa. Even here, it is only explanatory of the Geetaa-concept of Bhakti in its higher form.

अहंभावोपशान्तौ तत् राजन् ज्ञानं अवाप्यते ।

36. King! On the cessation of the sense of 'I', that knowledge is obtained.

भगीरथ उवाच — Bhageeratha said :

शरीरेऽस्मिन् अहंभावः चिरस्थः त्यज्यते कथम् ॥36॥

36. The sense of 'I' (or the ego) is existing for a long time in this body. How is it relinquished?

त्रितुल उवाच — Tritula said :

पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन त्यक्त्वा विषयभावनाम् ।

सत्तां आश्रित्य संपूर्णा अहंकारो लयं व्रजेत् ॥37॥

37. Having abandoned the thought (or contemplation) of objects of sense (or the pleasures of sense) by manly effort and having resorted to Being (or Existence) which is whole (or full), the ego can be dissolved.

सर्वैषणाः परित्यज्य शान्ताशेषविशेषणः ।

अकिंचनत्वं आयातः स शान्ताहंकृतिः भवेत् ॥38॥

38. Having renounced all desires, with all distinctions extinguished, one who has arrived at complete absence of voluntary possessions, he can become one whose ego has subsided.

4. चित्तविश्रान्तिः — THE REPOSE OF THE MIND.

एवं श्रुत्वा गुरोः वक्त्रात् सर्वमेव परित्यजन् ।

राज्यं स्वं अरये दत्त्वा खिन्नप्रकृतिपौरकम् ॥39॥

अधोवासोवशेषोऽसौ निर्जगाम स्वमण्डलात् ।

यत्र न जायते ह्येषः तत्रैवोबास धैर्यवान् ॥40॥

39. Having heard thus from the mouth of the preceptor, renouncing just everything, handing over his kingdom, with citizens dejected in temper (for losing a good king), to the enemy and with only the under-garment as the remnant, he went out of his territory. Where this king is not known, there alone did he live possessed of courage (or fortitude).

ततोऽल्पेनैव कालेन प्रशान्तसकलैषणः ।

परमेण शमेनासौ प्राप विश्रान्तिमात्मनि ॥41॥

41. Then, in just a small time, with all his desires ended, he attained to repose in the Self through Supreme tranquillity.

एकदा स भ्रमन् भूमौ स्वस्यैव पुरमाययौ ।
प्रभो राज्यं गृहाणेति प्रार्थितोऽप्यरिणा तदा ॥42॥
नाददे तृणमप्येषः ऋते भिक्षां भगीरथः ।

42-43. Roaming on the earth, he once came to his own city. Then, even when requested by his enemy (saying), "Lord, take (back) the kingdom", this Bhageeratha did not accept even a straw with the exception of alms.

आत्मारामं कदाचिच्च स प्राप त्रितुलं गुरुम् ॥43॥
किञ्चित्कालं उवासासौ तेन सार्धं वनादिके ।

43-44. At one time, he reached his preceptor Tritula, who delighted in the Self. He lived with him for a short time in forests and the like.

समतां उपयातौ तौ गच्छन्तौ तु वनात् वनम् ॥44॥
न ननन्दतुरानन्दं न दुःखं न च मध्यमम् ।
सिद्धैः अर्पितमैश्वर्यं मेनाते जर्जरं तृणम् ॥45॥

44-45. Those two, who had attained to equality (in spiritual perception), going from forest to forest, did not rejoice at pleasure; nor (did they experience) sorrow; nor also the middling. They regarded even the wealth offered by Siddha-s (semi-divine beings possessed of supernatural powers) as worn out straw.

अथैकदा मृतो भूपः कस्मिंश्चित् मण्डलान्तरे ।
तत्प्रजास्तु परिज्ञाय मुनिरूपं भगीरथम् ॥46॥
तं आसाद्य समानीय मोदात् चक्रुः महीपतिम् ।

46. Once thereafter, in a certain country near by, the king died. Its subjects, having recognised Bhageeratha with the appearance of a sage, approaching him and fetching him, made him (their) king with delight.

एवं तत्र स्थिते राज्ञि प्राक् प्रकृतय आययुः ॥47॥

आभिश्च प्रार्थितो राजा पुनः तासां अभूत् नृपः ।

समः शान्तमनाः मौनी वीतरागो विमत्सरः ॥48॥

47. When the king thus remained there, his former subjects arrived (there). Requested by these subjects, the king again became their ruler; he remained equable, of tranquil mind, silent, devoid of passion and free from jealousy.

अथ वर्षसहस्राणि तपः तप्त्वा सुदारुणम् ।

पितामहान् समुद्धर्तुं भुवि गङ्गां अयोजयत् ॥49॥

49. Then, having performed intense penance for thousands of years for lifting up (or saving) his ancestors, he brought the celestial river Gan'gaa to the earth.

Note: The allusion is to the account given in the Puraana-s of the bringing down of the celestial river to the earth and then to the nether worlds by King Bhageeratha through severe austerity to purify the ashes of his 60,000 ancestors and thus save them.

इति श्रीवासिष्ठसंग्रहे भगीरथोपाख्यानं नाम चतुर्विंशः

सर्गः ॥

Thus ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter titled "The Story of Bhageeratha" in the abridgement of Yogavaasishtha.