

Self-Surrender

A story of King Janaka as told by Ramana Maharshi

King Janaka was listening to a philosophical treatise, as told by one of the court Pandits, recounting how a certain rider, contemplating upon realization, was supposed to have attained realization of the Self as he placed his foot on a stirrup and before he had time to place the other foot on the other stirrup.

Bang! There and then it happened!

King Janaka who was a great Kundalini Yogi and therefore deemed theories as useless unless there were concrete manifestations, demanded that the Pandit proved how this was possible.

The Pandit explained that he himself was just a knowledgeable person who in fact was unable to impart practical wisdom yet insisted the scriptures were true. The King was annoyed and decided that such a false person should be imprisoned.

He inflicted the same punishment on every other Pandit claiming any sort of scriptural yet useless wisdom. Some Pandits seeing their plight fled into the forest where they met Ashtvakra (Eight-Deformities). This young yet weird sage heard them and decided to teach the King the lesson he sought promising to free all Pandits if he succeeded.

Ashtvakra told the King to dismiss all his entourage. And then addressed him as Janaka to which the King did not object. Finally he told him to mount his horse but remembered that, if indeed the King desired to learn, the relationship should be one as between Master and disciple and the King should surrender all his possessions and power to himself, Ashtvakra. To this the King agreed "So be it!" and to which the sage replied:

"So be it!"

... thus running and disappearing into the forest.

King Janaka realizing his Self at that moment, was transfixed and unable to move in order to place his second foot in the other stirrup of his horse!!!

The people and courtiers came looking for him in the woods, after sometime, as the kingdom could not manage without a king. Having found him in paralysis, with one foot up in the air, transported him to the palace in a palanquin. Ashtvakra was pursued and charged with being a charlatan with ill intent.

They brought him to the court room and demanded a dissolution of the spell on the king. Ashtvakra called out "Janaka" (instead of Your Majesty) which made the King return to his senses. The King explained to the ministers the service that sage had just rendered him and invited him to stay the night at the palace.

That night Ashtvakra having found the King apt to receive *Brahm Gyana* explained to him that “Brahman is not anything new or apart from oneself and no particular time or place is needed to realize It – *That Thou Art*”. The sage also told the King to resume his normal stately duties.

**And he did so famously to the extent that many still
remember him to this day...**

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