

## NATUR, YOGA UND EIN WANDEL DES BEWUSSTSEINS

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*Ich habe viel über den Klimawandel nachgedacht. Wenn wir versuchen, den Klimawandel von global messbaren Variablen wie Kohlendioxid oder Treibhausgasen abhängig zu machen, werden wir die ökologische Krise noch verschlimmern, selbst wenn es gelingt, diese Variablen zu reduzieren. Wir kennen die Geschichte: Gesetze werden mit Geld und politischer Macht durchgesetzt. Es gibt immer einen Weg, sie zu umgehen. Heute gewinnt man in Europa, besonders in Deutschland, einen hohen Prozentsatz der Energie aus erneuerbaren Ressourcen, also aus Windenergie, Solarenergie und Biomasse. Die Zahlen machen also einen guten Eindruck, aber dahinter verbirgt sich die Tatsache, dass Wälder zerstört werden, um Holzspäne für Kraftwerke zu gewinnen. Das gilt als CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, weil die Bäume wieder nachwachsen werden. Die Entwaldung hat sich an einigen Orten aufgrund dieser Form von „Nachhaltigkeit“ vervierfacht. Es ist vollkommen verständlich, dass so etwas passiert, weil wir unsere Weltsicht nicht verändern. **Aber das erfordert einen Wandel unseres Bewusstseins.** Ein Bewusstseinswandel transformiert unsere Wahrnehmung und unsere Geschichten. Ich persönlich denke, dass es tiefere Ursachen für den Klimawandel gibt, Treibhausgase sind nur ein Grund dafür. Aber unser Verständnis der Natur ist einfach zu rudimentär.*

*Wenn wir in der Lage wären, die Natur als ein intelligentes, eigenständiges und heiliges Wesen zu erkennen, würden Gesetze eine Form der Erinnerung oder rituelle Übereinkünfte sein, die mit unserer Weltsicht übereinstimmen. Wenn wir unsere Weltsicht nicht verändern, dann wird uns kein Gesetz helfen, weil es immer umgangen werden kann. Aber wenn wir den Ökozid stoppen wollen – und mit Ökozid meine ich die schwere Schädigung und Zerstörung von Ökosystemen, egal wie klein sie sind –, ist das viel bedrohlicher für den normalen Gang der Dinge, unseren Status quo. Jedes wirtschaftliche Projekt hat auch eine Wirkung auf ein Ökosystem. Wir müssen also die Regeln für unseren Umgang mit den „Ressourcen“ unseres Planeten vollkommen umschreiben. Sogar die Bezeichnung „natürliche Ressourcen“ ist Teil des Problems, weil wir damit sagen, „der Planet ist für uns da, die Natur ist für uns da.“ Auch der Begriff „Umwelt“ ist problematisch, weil er suggeriert, dass wir davon getrennt sind.»*

(<https://www.evolve-magazin.de/blog/charles-eisenstein/>)

### Die Yogavasishta über Natur, Meditation und Verantwortung

Die Yogavasishta (Jahr 1000 u. Z.) enthält gefühlvolle Beschreibungen darüber, wie die Göttin (Devi) die natürliche Welt in ihrem Tanz erschafft. Ausserdem enthält sie Beschreibungen von aufeinander folgenden Meditationen über die fünf grossen Elemente, mit denen sie die Menschen aufruft, ihre Verantwortung für die natürliche Welt mit ganzem Herzen zu übernehmen.

Die Yogavasishta ist nicht das einzige klassische Werk Indiens, das die Schönheit und Bedeutung der Natur feiert und sich gegen ihre Ausbeutung ausspricht; aber sie bietet ein ansprechendes Beispiel für diese Art von Literatur. Sie erkennt die Natur und die Gefühle des Menschen gegenüber der Natur als wertvoll an und ermutigt dazu, eine wertschätzende Haltung gegenüber der Natur zu entwickeln.

In der (Yoga)-Tradition der Yogavasishta werden der menschliche Körper und der Atem als ein Zusammenspiel der natürlichen Elemente und Landschaften interpretiert, das die Bedeutung der gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit betont und kultiviert. Yoga bringt den Menschen in einen Zustand des Nach-Innen-Schauens (pratyahara), das zum Verstehen des eigenen Seins (in Verbindung zur Natur) führt.

## The Earth

In volume VII, chapter 89, Vasiṣṭha describes looking down upon the earth. From this vantage point, he sees soil, plants, mountains, rivers and relates them to his own body:

58. Through performing concentration on the earth, I dissolved into the form of the earth. While still retaining this expanded consciousness, I became like a universal ruler (surveying his domain).

59. And indeed, through my concentration on the earth, I went to the mines at the root of the earth. I came to understand my body as the trees, the grasses, the mountains, the continents, and more.

60. As I took possession of the throne of the earth, forests sprouted from my body. I became adorned with cities as if laced with strings of pearls.

61. I was endowed with forests separated by villages. The regions of the netherworld were sunk deep in my bowels. My arms embraced the mountain ranges and my continents were encircled with oceans like bracelets.

62. I felt my body covered with grasses like hair, as well as tree-tangled mountains, held up by the heads of ten elephants and the hundreds of heads of the primal serpent Sesa. The beautiful ridges of the Himalayas and the Vindhya, the clouds high on Mount Meru, the abundance of the rivers such as the Ganges: all this evokes a delicate string of pearls.

65. Caves and thickets and marshes appear to encircle the ocean. The white salts of the desert shimmer like a beautiful garment.

66. In ancient times (of the great flood) the ocean purified all things. When it receded, the flowery forests were resplendent with fragrant pollen.

67. Repeatedly, the ground is plowed and turned: cooled by the winds of the winter, warmed by the heat of summer and moistened by the waters of the rainy season.

68. My chest became the expansive plains. My eyes became pools of lotuses. My crown was the light and dark clouds. My body (mandiram) contained the ten regions.

72. Filled with floods, deserts, farms, kingdoms, as well as people, on named continents of stone with rivers, forests, and oceans to the end of the horizon, the Earth is an assemblage of vessels and designs connected with various adorning marks, as if flecked with groups of lotuses in a raging river, or like a pond laced with vines.

Vasiṣṭha describes the planet with great precision and emotion. He sees mountains, forests, deserts, caves, plains, and oceans. He describes the seasons and, like the anthropo-cosmic sections of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, makes correlations between his body and the body of the world. He feels vegetation sprout from his body. His arms embrace the mountains. His chest becomes the broad plains, his eyes become lotus pools, and clouds gather around his head. He becomes entranced and absorbed into the beauty of the earth.

## The Waters

In the next chapter, Vasiṣṭha explores various forms of water. He again performs dhāraṇā (concentration), defined by Patanjali as “the binding of the mind to a place” (deśa-bandhaś-cittasya dhāraṇā, Yoga Sūtra III:1). This practice, when extended, moves one into a state of meditation (dhyāna) and ultimately into samādhi. Patanjali describes samādhi as a state of emptying (śunya) that

allows the higher self to shine forth. Vasiṣṭha attains a state of transparency first to earth and then to water, blending and merging with the experience of each:

90.9. Just as I experienced the earth-plane by earth contemplation (pṛthivī dhāraṇā), then, just as I saw those many worlds held in the form of the earth, so also I became water, which was seen by me in the same way (as from above).

10. By concentration on water, I became water, as if this unconscious (substance) took on consciousness inside the abodes of the oceans with its quiet gurgling.

11. [The water] slowly rose up into the veins and trunks of creeping vines, grasses, trees, tendrils, and groves, as if a caterpillar were mounting your limbs.

12. That [water] lifts everything like the [rising of sap in] the trunk of a tree, cutting patterns like bracelets, roiling the water worms gently with undulating movements in its hollows.

13. Having rested, [the water] formed beautiful lines, its full shape taking the form of the leaves and fruits of vines, hardwood trees, and palm trees.

14. [Water] enters into the hearts [of plants] as if through their mouths. It lets the roots in the bodies [of plants] hold firm during the adversity of the [monsoon] season, [growing back] when cut, shaken, eaten, or harvested.

15. [Water] takes the form of drops of dew asleep in the beds of leaves, constant at all times, tirelessly gleaming in all directions.

16. Along its endless journey, [water] takes a home in various lakes and rivers, occasionally resting gracefully by a bridge, like an old friend.

17. Like the consciousness of a simpleton, searching out a purpose but lacking support due to his stupidity, water swirls up into whirlpools, unaware of its brilliance.

18. By my bad deeds, I was lifted up to a waterfall at the peak of a huge mountain and then that self same swirling whirlpool was dashed into a hundred rivulets.

19. Having arisen from the woods in the form of mist into the ocean of the sky, this indwelling gem stuck as tear drop jewels in the blue stars.

20. [Water] took rest in the thrones of the clouds, accompanying Lady Lightning whose blue sapphire light illuminated Vasudeva on his Snake Throne.

21. Atoms of water gush forth in tiny drops. Each holds its essential nature, like Brahman is found in all souls.

22. Having reached a connection with the highest experience through the taste buds, my soul was delivered from the body to the singularity of knowledge.

23. That sweetness is not achieved by me, nor by my body, nor by anything else. It is revealed inside, to consciousness. At that point, ignorance disappears.

24. The bee tastes and takes nectar from various flowers in all directions across all seasons. It takes this enjoyable elixir and passes it along to the next bee.

25. In the connecting joints of the fourteen classes of beings, water dwells as if it were conscious, though by its inert nature it has no consciousness.

26. In the form of a rising mist, [water] ascends on the chariot of the winds, bestowing joyous fragrance in the channels of the pure sky.

27. Rama, by dwelling in that [water concentration] from the smallest particle to the ultimate experience of it, the whole world comes into existence.

28. Through this unconscious thing appearing as if conscious, through the sameness of myself with this water, all inner meaning of what is known and unknowable was revealed to me.

29. I have seen the ascent of hundreds, thousands, of worlds arising and falling there, like layers of leaves in a banana tree.

30. Whether a world is beautiful or a world is ugly, all of them are consciousness only, like the sky. Though [they seem] numerous, they are spacious and pure.

31. This knowledge shines forth as the highest purity. It indeed appears to us as empty. This vast space, in its expansiveness, is who you were and who you are.

Vasiṣṭha experiences water in its various forms. Just as he discussed the fragrance of the earth, he mentions the sense of taste in regard to water. In Sāṃkhya, foundational awareness of the earth arises from the power of smelling, and the capacity of tasting is known through and linked with water. He describes dew, drops of rain, the gathering of moisture in clouds, mist, rivers, and waterfalls. Vasiṣṭha talks of how sap rises in plant life. He also discusses how the beauty of water brought him again to a deep appreciation and awareness, stilling his thoughts and revealing vast empty space.

## The Fire

Fire (agni, tejas) finds an important role in the earliest literature of India. The very first hymn of the Ṛg Veda offers praise to the god Agni (cognate with the Latin word “ignite”) and more Vedic hymns address Agni than any other deity. Vasiṣṭha finds fire in a myriad of forms, from the sun and moon and stars to the simple oil lamp. Through light one experiences deep delight and a feeling safety and security. The correlated sense, seeing, can only function through the presence of light. For Vasiṣṭha, light becomes truly revelatory:

91.1. Then I disappeared into fire through the brilliant concentration on fire. I became linked with its various parts such as the moon, lightning, stars, flames, and so forth.

2. From its essential nature as eternally luminous, it spreads light like a beloved prince. It makes all things visible. It makes all things right. Thieves fail to conceal themselves in its glow.

3. Through its gentle, friendly lamps it provides thousands of delights. It allows all purposes to be seen in every house, like a good prince.

4. It brings good cheer to all the world through the sparkling rays of the moon and sun. Through its singular delights it casts light into the distance, lifting up and pervading the circumference of the sky.

5. Light destroys the combined qualities of blindness and affliction. It possesses the quality of revealing all truth and awakening.

6. The people proclaim with gusto: “[Fire] is the axe [that cuts] the tree of darkness. It provides the foothold for making things exceedingly pure. It is golden, the ruby among gems.”

7. It [energizes] reds, blacks, and whites; it abides eternally through its gleaming limbs, like a father gives shape to the bodies of all his sons.

8. Fire, through its blessings, chooses to spare the house of children from destruction. It also protects [the people] from piercing winds throughout the land.
9. I saw the master [burning] brightly in the darkest forms of the hell region. With eyes half open, I saw its active form, on the surface of the earth and at the crown of existence.
10. I saw [fire] in the abodes of the gods, where illumined souls are eternally in great splendor, as well as the light on the ruined huts of the people and in the recesses covered in great darkness.
11. [I saw] that stainless radiant virgin sky become smeared with the color of saffron [at sunset], making way for the illumination of the moon and stars, as well as the winds that bring night dew.
12. Her grace causes the fields of corn each day to ripen and grow up out of the darkness. Her radiance [draws water up] into the clouds that fill the vast crystal dome [of the sky] and bring cleansing rains.
13. By her, meaning is bestowed. Through her, comes illumination. Like a younger sister, she reveals the highest truth: there is consciousness only.
14. Her lustre on the lotus pool reflects the actions of living beings on the earth and below, just as from consciousness emerges the wonderment of thought, perception, and form.
15. A necklace of innumerable jeweled stars is called together from the mist. Light increases with the days and seasons throughout the year and froths in fires under the ocean.
16. The moon and sun move briskly inside the great darkness of the night sky, just as the one who stands deep in the great universe is the one eternally moving and imperishable.
17. Fire is the brilliance in gold, the strength in men, the crystal gleam in all jewels, and the flash in lightning storms.
18. It is the splendor in the phases of the face of the moon. It is the mark of beauty in long eyelashes. Its undying love flows abundantly. It glitters in the laughter of friends.
19. Fire is in the love that arises and shines forth and can be found in the innate allure of the movement of a face, an arm, an eye, an eyebrow, a hand, or a lock of hair.
20. Fire shows that these three worlds are as flimsy as straw. It burns in the slap of one's worst enemies. It starts the thunderclap and dwells in the heart of the strong lion.
21. Among excellent, active warriors, fierce fire can be found in the sound of their clashing swords, breaking through armor, and in their harsh, noisy battlecries.
22. It emboldens the gods to fight the Danava demons and the demons to resist the gods. Fire is the force that moves all beings. It causes plants to sprout upward.
23. Bright-eyed one, I experienced those things in these coverings of space that make up the world as if they were shimmering in the desert.
24. I saw the phoenix sun as its streams of light scattered over all ten points of the horizon. I saw its limbs flash on chosen mountains, making them appear as if they were villages on the face of the earth.
25. The wheel of the sun is filled with treasure like the desire within a flower's blossom. Light sits within the universe like phosphorescence in the darkened sea. Its continuous line of days unfolds just a fruits ripen on the tree.

26. The face of the moon in the sky forms a pool of elixir. Each evening it smiles cheerfully on the people of the night.

27. (The moon's) power reflects all lovely good fortune in the world. His wife, Rohini, (shines) in the night as the most beloved white lotus flower.

28. To me appeared a gentle trail of stars, arrayed like nectar flowing through the heavens, like a web of shining flowers on a vine, twisted and heaped together. (The Milky Way!) [Note: commentary suggests marakaṇḍa (nectar) in place of masaka (mosquito).]

29. I saw jewel-like waves in the hands of the oscillating ocean, as if merchants' hands were tossing them on their scales to weigh them.

30. I see whirlpools of fish in the water of the ocean, multitudes of sunbeams on that water, and in the delicate clouds, (portents of) lightning igniting a forest fire.

31. I saw the beautiful burning of the sacrificial fire, its tenacious flames devouring the wood, spreading throughout all that can be burned, roaring, strong, and crackling.

32. I saw the brilliance in gold and rubies that is called great in things made of jewels. I also saw things reduced to ash by fire just as knowledge is destroyed by the wicked.

33. The wives of the rulers of men, as well as those of the Asuras, Uragas, and Gandharvas, are adorned, each of them, with strings of pearls placed on the summits of their breasts.

34. Just as a bride applies the marriage mark to her forehead delicately as if treading a path without causing harm, so also my wavering vision catches glimpses of flickering fireflies.

35. I saw the gleaming flash of those little fish in the waves, standing transfixed in the roar of the water of a beautiful whirlpool.

36. Tender stalks of flowers engaged in amorous activities in the women's quarters of the palaces, rising as if illuminated by lamps.

37. Having given forth their radiance under the cover of darkness, they then retreated, exhausted, wilted, like the steady turtle draws its limbs inside its shell.

38. Due to weariness at the end of these times, when all the world wanes as if sinking into a whirlpool, I sat as the clouds disappeared into space with a flash like that of a roaring elephant.

39. The sun expanded at the end of the day as its fires were absorbed into the waters, into the skies at the end of the world's horizon, dancing in endless waves of water.

40. With my teeth like kindling sparks and my arms aflame, my tangled hair ablaze, I generated a powerful roiling whirlpool of smoke.

41. I burned the towns made of wood. My flaming mouth chewed on all creatures. I devoured all things made of the eight forms of wood and brought them to their ultimate dissolution.

42. Through striking forth fire as with axes, spears, and knives, I caused a furious arc of sparks to fly forth, giving vent to the purpose of fire.

Vasiṣṭha explores various metaphors of fire and light including its ability to dispel ignorance, its ability to provide comfort "like a good prince," its ability to protect and illumine. Like a Buddhist, he proclaims that fires remind us that all things are fleeting. Like a Vedāntin, he hints that just as fire can be found in all manner of things, so also it resides the soul. Through thinly coded language he

applauds the sexual power associated with fire, and celebrates the beauty not only of the passing of each day at sunset, but the stark beauty of fire's destructive power.

### **Air and Wind and Space**

When Vasiṣṭha practiced concentration on the wind (vāyu dhāraṇā), he proclaimed:

VII.92.1. Next, I came to concentrate on the operations of the wind, spreading my thoughts resolutely to examine the world and satisfy my curiosity.

2. I rose up into the wind [that surrounds] the earth, playing with the people, the trees, and the beautiful blooming flowers, protecting the water lilies.

3. Desiring to bring some relief to the exhausted bodies of these amorous ones, I sprinkled down drizzle and mist with the higher purpose of bringing them joy.

4. I became the teacher of the dancing leaves on grasses, trees, and tender vines. I was adorned with the fragrance of flowers and the splendor of medicinal plants and fruits.

5. At times of quiet and celebration I fondly caressed the worlds of beautiful women. At times of calamity (such as earthquakes) I tossed rocks as if they were feather.

6. In heaven, I carry the earth's honey and pollen, arising from the jasmine that adorns the trees in paradise. In hell, my gathered fires illuminate the thick fog.

7. In the ocean my undulating movements can be seen in the pounding of the surf. In the sky, I move the clouds to hide and then reveal the mirror of the moon.

8. I support that beneficial vehicle, the powerful army of stars, moving perfectly through the three worlds on their powerful, speedy chariot.

9. Closely resembling how thought quickly appears and disappears, it touches the body though it has no body, inducing bliss through its movement (spanda) like the fragrance of sandalwood.

10. [The wind drives] the hard showers of rain and snow. It brings infirmity to the old. It makes the young drunken with joy. For the gentle ones, it brings silence and innocence.

11. Its course lifts up sweetness, and brings the nectar of happiness to the heavens. The beloved [winds] of March take away the fatigue that comes with long love making.

12. Though tired from the incessant swinging and swaying and undulations of the Ganges, the wind [in the mountains] does not recognize its own fatigue and fends off extended exhaustion.

13. Through its caresses, it bends the abundant flowers and the vines waiting like wives in springtime. It incessantly shakes and moves the palm fronds. It dislodges bees from the plants.

14. Having enjoyed pleasures for a long time under the face of the moon, the full cloud of sleepiness comes upon the bed. Exhausted from making love, [the wind] is taken away to that splendid lotus that throbs in the heart.

15. The wind, like a horse, moves through the sky, established in and combined with the clouds. It resembles a dancing elephant in the throes of sexual desire.

16. (The wind) as herdsman of the clouds at the top of the mountains energetically casts down lightning and rain. He extends soothing rain to the liberated ones and destructive dust over the enemies of dharma.

17. The fragrance of flowers pervades space as if it were sound. Devoted to the limbs of each being as well as the earth itself, [the wind] rises up as the pulse of breath.

18. (This breath) is the one self behind all actions, hidden in the heart of this splendid body. It serves as the guide to eternal oneness. Educated families know its essence.

19. (The wind) steals away the treasured fragrance that traverses cities and rivers. (It beckons) the cool moon, that orb shining in the darkness, rising from the ocean of milk.

Swami Ventatesananda continues this translation as follows: I taught the grass, leaves, creepers and straw the art of dancing. Wafting a cool breeze, I became the dear friend of young ladies. At the same time, I was dreaded for my heat wave, hurricane and tornadoes. In pleasure gardens I carried sweet scent; in hell I carried sparks of fire... I was operating the body-machine of all embodied beings by being their life-breath.... Being the element air, I perceived within each molecule of air a whole universe. From this expansive moment, Vasiṣṭha roamed into vast space. In words that echo centuries later in Emerson's grand pronouncement quoted above, Vasiṣṭha claims:

*The netherworlds were my feet, the earth my abdomen, and the heavens my head... I was spread in all directions everywhere at all times and I did everything. I was the self of all. I was all. Yet I was pure space. From Vasistha's Yoga, I experienced being something and being nothing. I experienced universes within every atom and universes within the atoms of those universes. I myself became all these universes. In this proclamation, Vasiṣṭha's body expands to encompass the universe. He has attained the pureness of space and hence liberation.*