

THE YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER FIVE

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Dedicated to

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

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PRAYER BEFORE READING

Salutations to that supreme reality
In which all shine as if independently
In which they exist for a short while
And into which they merge eventually

Salutations to that consciousness
Source of apparent threefold division
Of knower, knowledge and known
Seer, sight and seen; doer, doing and deed

Salutations to that bliss-absolute
Which is the life of all beings
Deriving happiness from the shower
Of its ocean of supreme bliss

CHAPTER FIVE

1. SECTION DEALING WITH DISSOLUTION

Rama's Reflections

To the dialogue all listened most attentively
Retiring at the conclusion of yet another day
But Rama could not sleep at all though 'twas late
He pondered deeply on conquest of mind

Seeing clearly the mind as the source of all sorrow
Impossible to abandon enjoyment of pleasure
Being unable to be rid of this sorrow
Seemed tied to enjoyment of pleasure

Mind however is the crucial factor
As pursuit of pleasure arises in it
Pursuit is sorrow itself, not enjoyment
Of pleasures that come along naturally

The mind has to once taste supreme peace
This alone can end mind's relentless pursuits
In perfect fulfillment the mind too is fulfilled
Then alone will the mind abandon all craving

Pondering thus Rama fell asleep late
But awoke early contemplating again
He prayed for inner spiritual strength
To cross the ocean of worldly existence

Rama Addresses Vasistha

Lord, deeply I have been meditating
On what your teachings may point to
Enshrining them within my heart
Pray, kindly do further enlighten me

Vasistha Continues

Listen attentively on universe's dissolution
Supreme peace you will surely attain
The seeming world-appearance is sustained
By desires or rajas and dullness or tamas

It is easily abandoned like a snake's slough
By those who possess a pure nature

As the spirit of inquiry threads through their life
Throwing light and clarity on all conditions

This spirit of inquiry must be cultivated
Study and wise company are indispensable
Light on the path is the lamp lit within
This light of clarity dispels all confusion

The truth must be directly perceived
Within oneself and by oneself too
Then alone will mind's turmoil end
You have a pure nature—be devoted to this

On Dissolution

What did not exist then cannot exist now
What appears to be will soon cease to be
That alone can be regarded as truth
Which has always been and will always be

Birth and growth are in the mind only
This has to be seen directly by oneself
The mind has to see its ignorance as the cause
Of all sorrow and suffering it begs relief from

Hence, tread the path of righteousness always
Study and company of the wise are most vital
But you will have to exert by your very own self
To rid passion's flames and ignorance's weight

The perfected ones will point the way
Out of the prison that is self-sustained
Learn most diligently how to cultivate
The spirit of inquiry without remission

Absolute requisite is total purity
It alone becomes spirit of inquiry
Beset with dangers is life without this
Inner stillness gives vision wisdom

One cannot be rid of inner confusion
Without direct knowledge of truth
Ignorance of self is cause of all sorrow
Self-knowledge is itself tranquility

You will attain peace immediately

On resolving the conflict between body and self
The self is one thing—body is another
Unaffected and untainted by body is self

As long as the mind pursues pleasures
Darkness of world-illusion will continue
But on awakening and self-inquiry
Darkness is dispelled instantly

Dust particles do not affect the sky
The body too does not affect self
Pleasure and pain are not of body or self
They belong to ignorance—their loss is no loss

Neither identical nor apart are self and body
All these are but *reflections* of truth
Abandon these notions of differences
Rest in the truth—Brahman alone exists

The one self perceives itself within itself
Infinite consciousness alone exists
Not sorrow, delusion, anyone or anything
Abandon duality and be established in this

The steady mind is an abode of peace
Rest peacefully in this inner silence
Remain alone inwardly without self-willed thoughts
Doing what needs to be done—naturally

Be content with what comes unsought
This is the way to be desireless
Live without grabbing or pushing away
This is the way to effortless living

Be free from all mental conditioning
This is the way out of inner blindness
Rest always content in your true self
This is the way to be free of distress

Remain fully expanded within like the ocean
This is the way beyond all limitation
Rejoice in the self by the self
Nothing that happens will perturb you

Just as a crystal reflects things naturally

So also do activities reflect in consciousness
Do what needs to be done non-volitionally
Universal activity is entry into universality

Choosing not to act is utter foolishness
Those suppressing natural action do suffer
Acting volitionally is the other extreme
Self-centered action brings sorrow too

There is another way of pure action
Doing what needs to be done as a part of things
Big difference between being a part and apart
Pure action remedies self-centeredness

Those living life with the spirit of inquiry
Are blessed—they do conquer the mind
Going on to higher planes of consciousness
They attain liberation and end all suffering

Through constant effort one does evolve
Entering this birth with qualities conducive
To increasing their existing pure qualities
And attain to the utterly pure state

Each has to earn everything by themselves
Every step towards the light has to be tread
As one marches on—darkness is abandoned
One gradually reaches the goal of liberation

A master can help and point the way

One will have to tread each step on his own
Most rare when self-knowledge happens instantly
I shall narrate an ancient legend that illustrates this

2. THE STORY OF KING JANAKA

Song of the Perfected Ones

Janaka is a great monarch with unlimited vision
A righteous king and benefactor to good people
One day as he roamed in a garden
He heard an inspiring song of the perfected ones

They sang a song of their contemplation
On that pure divisionless experience
Of seer or experiencer in contact with the seen

Without any division or conceptualization

They sang about the self they contemplate
In which creation is inherently reflected
When the subject-object division has ceased
The pure self, in which all is, is reflected naturally

They sang about the light that illumines all
Shining as subject and object as well
Shining within all, within the middle too
Divisionless—only appearing divided

They sang of the reality that encompasses all
To which all belongs, from which all emerges
Which is the only cause of all and everything
The reality which is verily everything indeed

They sang of the self—the basis of all
The entire field of language and expression
Indicated by the word 'I' or aham
Pure existence—the supreme reality

They sang beautiful words of compassion
For those who pursue shadows—not truth
Pursuing pleasures abandoning the Lord
Ever they dwell in their own hearts as self

They sang about the worthlessness of objects
The pursuit of which is bondage itself
Resulting in sorrow most unimaginable
Never bringing the joys that they promise

They sang about ending sorrow completely
By striking down craving with wisdom's rod
Whether the craving has surfaced or not
Urgent it is—abandon craving ruthlessly

They sang about the delight that peace brings
To one self-controlled—established in peace
The joys and pure bliss that do arise
Without any delay in the well-controlled

Vasistha's Comments

Hearing the words of the sage's song
King Janaka became terribly depressed

He immediately repaired to his chamber
And contemplated the words in intense anguish

King Janaka to Himself

I am helplessly swinging like a stone in life
I am in love with this life though short it is
I feel I cannot do without life, foolishly
All the while it is amidst eternity itself

How is it that I've become so deluded?
Knowing all differences exist in the mind alone
The business of the world never decreases
Business is in and of the mind—not of the world

All that is seen and experienced changes and ends
The wise never rely on things that change
What is cherished today is despised tomorrow
Into what shall we lay trust, O foolish mind?

I feel tethered firmly without a cord
I feel tainted too without impurity
Fallen am I while remaining on top
What mystery is this, O my self?

Strange is this delusion that has gripped me
Who are these friends and so-called relatives?
I'm deluded by relationships thoroughly
My clinging to them is my bondage

So many have come, so many have gone
Why am I anchored to what must go too
Even powerful kings and gods come and go
Fie on me for snaring myself so pitifully

Like an ignorant fool I live—completely deluded
Feeling 'I am so-and-so'—full of vain cravings
From sorrow to greater sorrow have I fallen
Yet, dispassion has not arisen in me!

The world and people are just as they are
In every life the story is exactly the same
Why have I not arisen above this delusion?
Knowing full well the flames I roast in

Religious rites bring better conditions at best

But all conditions have the same sorrows
Sorrow and happiness chase each other
Till one wears out and is consumed by death

Life-span is nothing in time's grand scale
Time is opportunity for trials to come
Mind alone is the seed of this delusion
Sense of 'I' and 'mine'—is seed of the mind

Accidental coincidence is the sole designer
In delusion we see connection with all that occurs
A coconut falls when a crow alights on the tree
The connection between these is imagination

Far better to spend time in seclusion
Than to suffer the pains of delusion

Intention or motivation gives rise to all
I shall now dry up this motivation!

I have suffered enough—now I shall rest
I have grieved enough—no more shall I
I will slay the mind—thief of wisdom
Instructed well—I will seek self-knowledge

Vasistha's Comments

Thus sat the king in deep contemplation
Not noticing attendants who came to awaken
Fully engrossed and absorbed was the king
Finding a way was his only urgency

King Janaka to Himself Again

Short-lived are royal life and duties
No use to me—what to do with them?
I shall renounce all activities and pleasures
And stay ever immersed in the self

Abandon craving for sense-pleasures, O mind!
Be free of these repetitive cycles of bondage
Enough of vain living in pleasure-seeking
Seek ye now the bliss inherent in the self

What is worth gaining—nothing ever stays
On what in this world can I place confidence
Whether active or idle—all things must go

I must be established in equanimity—else great is the loss

Not longing for what is mine or what is not mine
Let what comes naturally come—what is the harm?
Nothing to work for but inactivity does no good
Let me be established in equanimity and act naturally

With the mind established in desirelessness
The body can do what needs to be done
Inactivity is not good for body or mind
Let me do my duties without sense of 'I'

Vasistha Comments

Reflecting thus, Janaka engaged in his duties
Freed from desires, aversion and conditioning
Doing the needful with full attention
And retiring to seclusion for meditation

King Janaka to his Mind

Worldly happiness is not happiness, O mind!
Reach now the state of perfect equanimity
There alone will peace and bliss be attained
Experience of Truth alone will satisfy

Abandon all notions, hopes and expectations
Seek that which you determine to be the truth
To all and anything you are unrelated
Any relationship felt is due to delusion

Abandon sorrow, resort to deep contemplation
Nothing in this world can give you fullness
Take refuge in courage and endurance
Overcome your waywardness—you can do this

3. ON THE INNER INTELLIGENCE

Ignite the Wisdom's Inner Light

Janaka reached perfect understanding and peace
He functioned as king but without delusion
The light of self-knowledge shone bright in his heart
He beheld all existence within cosmic-power

By his very own inquiry he attained supreme peace
All can attain the blessed state as well
Exert, inquire to the furthest limits

Stop not till the final goal is reached

Guru, study and good works are helpful
But cannot give you self-knowledge
Self-inquiry and company of holy ones
Are sure means to knowledge of self

Be alert—the inner light must be kept alive
You have to be the light on your own path
With this blazing inner light or wisdom
All difficulties and trials can be overcome

Those devoid of wisdom's inner light
Are overcome by smallest difficulties too
They react to every little change helplessly
Like straw that is knocked about by winds

So attain first wisdom's inner light
Company of holy ones will surely aid
Pursue at the same time self-inquiry
Both these will rub and ignite the flame

Thinking and living in a worldly way
Douses and soaks the logs that must ignite
Avoid the company of dull-witted ones
Remove all traces of dullness from within

This inner light of wisdom is most precious
Through it the world is seen as it really is
Neither good fortune nor bad can touch one
Who has the flame of wisdom's inner light within

The inner intelligence is one's best friend
Best guide on the path is the inner light too
Difficulties and even storms can be overcome
By the blazing flame of wisdom's inner light

Defects, desires and evils cannot touch
One who ignites and fans this inner light
Things like good fortune and misfortune
Do not exist for those with inner light

Darkness, gloom and veils are burnt
By the flame of wisdom's inner light
Purify your mind by cultivating wisdom

By kindling the flame of wisdom's inner light

Inquire into the self just as Janaka did
Gods, rituals and wealth are of no use
Self-knowledge alone can dispel darkness
World-appearance will then never delude

Firmly establish in supreme wisdom
See the self by the self alone
Ignite wisdom's bright inner flame
And leave delusion's diversion behind

It seems Janaka's lofty attainment
Of self knowledge was an act of grace
Self-effort of past lives is never seen
Making it appear to have fallen in his lap

Abandon feelings of 'I am so-and-so'
Inner intelligence cannot awaken with this
As wisdom's inner wisdom is indivisible
And feelings of *i-dent*-ity are a fragment

The mind's activity must come a standstill
Anxiety and worry are darkness not light
For this all cravings for acquisition must end
Rejection of its opposite—must be set aside too

The twin urges of acquisition and rejection
Are the storms that disturbs the mind
How can peace and tranquility prevail?
When storms are being stirred within

Again and again bring to the mind
Brahman alone exists—oneness is Truth
All expectations must be abandoned
They are contrary to unity's truth

Fearlessness, steadfastness, equanimity
Non-attachment, non-action and goodness
Wisdom, courage, endurance, friendliness
Contentment and gentleness are good friends

Restrain the mind's downward flow
By the mind itself that knows better
Having reached purity, abide in it

Doing what needs to be done without volition

Equanimity is the root for the tree of life
From it do ensure that all life's actions grow
Realize you are the knower of all—the self
Unborn, non-different from pure existence

See objects of perception within the self
And go beyond the defects of joy and grief
Be firmly rooted in infinite consciousness
Self-control is itself peace and tranquility

Be a yogi—free of all concepts
Deal with reality—that which is
Concepts are the veil that hide the truth
Without them truth is ever revealed

Identifying with body and then with concepts
You have forgotten your true nature over time
Thinking and acting on notions and ignorance
Ignite wisdom's lamp within and know the self

Without awakening the inner intelligence
You live without knowing self or reality
Though the mind appears intelligent
It is but borrowed light that is very fragmented

This mind cannot point the way to peace
It is ignorance—itsself not peaceful, you see
A lost person cannot be helped on the way
Awaken the indivisible wisdom that lies within

The movement of life-force is not the mind
'Tis intelligence that has become identified
With notions of 'this I am' and the like
And is apparently caught up in its own web

In truth there is no mind nor intelligence
Self alone exists at all times—it is the all
Most subtle is self so it is always hidden
Within it reflections seem to be real

The individual is a thought in consciousness
Consciousness does not change due to thoughts
When consciousness is free of all identification

Consciousness rests in itself—called liberation

On Life-Force

Control of life-force restrains the mind
As a shadow ceases without the object
The movement of life force springs memory forth
Which surge as thoughts—most eager to act

Life-force can be restrained in many ways
By dispassion and the practice of pranayama
By direct inquiry into its movement's cause
Or by direct experience of the supreme truth

Though the mind appears quite intelligent
It is ignorant—intelligence belongs to consciousness
Though the mind appears to have movement
It is inert—movement belongs to life-force

Presenting itself as intelligent and alive
The mind's claim is a dance of ignorance
It is all imagination only like a ghost story
The infinite can never be affected by the finite

This truth has to be seen in direct experience
Then false imaginations will come to an end
When perfect understanding arises within
All misunderstandings are set at naught

On the Mind

The mind has no existence—it is not real
Yet, all the havoc is caused by it
The mind itself has no body
Yet, it consumes so many bodies

Living beings strengthen this non-entity
Defending it and destroying others by it
If one is unable to conquer the mind
He is unworthy of hearing this teaching

There is no point in instructing one
Who continues to be befuddled by the mind
Unable or unwilling to persevere
Conquest of mind with sincerity

Just as millions of insects come and go

In a twinkling of a moment in time
Dull witted fools come and go too
On life's stage without self-knowledge

The foolish cannot be instructed
They've chosen to be tethered to the mind
Unwilling to loosen ignorance's ropes
Living miserably though they think they're fine

The wise endeavor to remove sorrow
Of those who have conquered lower instincts
Well underway to mind's conquest
Ripe to undertake self-inquiry

When objectivity arises in consciousness
Conditioning and bondage inevitably result
Abandon all objectivity ruthlessly
Being mindless is indeed liberation

Between the self as the seer
And the world as the seen
You are the seeing—pure sight
Remain in this realization firmly

When the inner intelligence identifies
With anything other than the self
That is indeed the root of all sorrow
Face the inner light and experience bliss

Craving for objects or experience has to cease
For divine qualities and virtues to enter the heart
When craving of any sort flows within
It flows downstream always to lower depths

Abandon craving, notions and concepts
The mind cannot exist without these
The ego-sense is the source of all sin
Cut at the very root and be ever free

Abandoning Notions, Not Life

There are two types of abandonment
First is based on perception of truth
Second is based on contemplation
Listen attentively to more on these

When there is direct experience of non-duality
One abandons ego-sense quite naturally
Notions of 'I' and 'mine' dissolve instantly
This is the first type of abandonment

When one feels he somehow belongs
To people, groups of any sort or objects
Intense investigation by a tranquil mind
Will lead to the second type of abandonment

Some attain by direct self-inquiry
As it requires a mind free of impurity
One has to rise above body-consciousness
Becoming liberated—one with Brahman

Janaka and others followed the second path
Contemplating to uproot seeds of duality
But intense and relentless has to be effort
Everything must pass scrutiny's flame

A Sage

He is a sage who is never swayed
By all that is desirable or undesirable
Living and functioning untouched inwardly
Seeming to function in the world normally

Natural desires may arise in the sage
But these are free of any and all craving
Hence he is never bound—remaining free
Craving for contact of any sort is bondage

Craving's impurity never enters the sage
He is ever still like the deep ocean
Knowing the self is beyond any change
Established in this truth by direct experience

Feelings that Arise in the Heart

First: I am this body, born of my parents
Second: Minute and subtle am I—different from body
Third: Eternal principle am I in all diversity
Fourth: All that I see including myself is illusory

The first of these four leads to bondage
The other three—lead to freedom
Best of all is when the feeling arises

'I am the self of all'—there is naught else

Not emotional or intellectual are these feelings
But something unmistakable in the heart
These feelings must respond to life—not the mind
With its shrewd calculations to suit its convenience

Resort to the understanding of non-duality
Plant this seed deep within your heart
Let all actions sprout from this seed
Water it well with unremitting vigilance

You will realize consciousness as the sole reality
And be a liberated sage—while still living
Leave behind those that choose to be bound
Reaping pain and sorrow is their own choice

4. THE STORY OF PUNYA AND PAVANA

Background

Once lived a holy man with his family
Wife and two very dutiful sons
Punya, the first son reached enlightenment
Pavana the second only had semi-wisdom

In time the old man and his wife died
The unenlightened son was sunk in grief
While the enlightened remained unmoved
Performing last rites without bereavement

Punya's Advice to his Brother

Why do you bring sorrow upon yourself
Our parents have attained liberation
'Tis the high exalted state—difficult to attain
This is natural to holy ones like them

Your suffering is self-inflicted
Caused by notions of father and mother
You grieve for those who are liberated
Why do you suffer unnecessarily?

Inquire into the nature of self
See it as different from the body
There is nothing called 'you' or 'I'
These are but unexamined notions

Even if the notion of 'I' seems real
You have had many relatives in the past
You have had countless births before
You do not grieve for earlier ones

I too have had many embodiments
Being enlightened, I see them all clearly
I too have had countless relatives
Considering this—I do not grieve

Abandon all arising notions of 'I'
Realize you are the self—directly
You've no unhappiness, father or mother
You are the self and naught else

Sages know well this middle path
They've firmly established themselves in it
They're always at peace within and without
Established always in witness-consciousness

Vasistha's Insight

Thus instructed by his brother Punya
Pavana was awakened—enlightened
Both lived as enlightened beings
Endowed with wisdom of direct realization

Craving is the root of all sorrow
Renounce all cravings completely
Never sow these seeds of sorrow
Lead a pure life—free from all ills

Utter dispassion is the only way
For the mind to attain fulfillment
Never by appeasing its desires and hopes
Which are fuel for its wild raging fires

Now listen attentively to this story
About bringing about complete change
Complete transmutation of the mind
Just as King Bali of yore did

5. THE STORY OF KING BALI

Background

Bali was a powerful demon king

He ruled for a long time unchallenged
Dispassion arose in him in due time
He began to inquire within as such

King Bali's Inquiry

How long will I continue to rule this way
What shall I gain in continuing to rule
Everything is subject to destruction after all
How can all this give me real happiness?

Again and again the same pleasures
They seem disgusting after a while
The same shameless acts are repeated
How is it that I am not ashamed of this?

Doing the same thing day-in and day-out
How can one ever reach the exalted state
Cessation of the cycle of birth and death
What is the use in revolving like this?

I remember well now my father's advice
When I asked him about ending samsara
The tyranny caused by the deluded mind
And the means for gaining total satisfaction

Bali's Father's Advice in a Story

There's a vast realm of endless expanse
In it are no lakes, oceans or mountains
No forests, sky, winds or moon
No high, no low, not even you or I

Only One is there—the supreme Light
Omnipotent, omnipresent—he is the all
Remaining silent as if inactive is he
Prompted by him, his minister does all

This minister is incapable of enjoying anything
Ignorant—he knows nothing at all
He does everything for his master's sake
The king remains alone established in peace

All the gods and demons are no match
They can never challenge this minister
Love and anger too derive power from him
His wish is the reason for all conflicts here

The king alone can defeat this minister
Quite easily whenever he wishes to
All creation is this ministers handiwork
You are a true hero if you can conquer him

When the minister arises—worlds arise
When he retires—worlds subside as well
You must be free of all delusion and ignorance
Have an utterly one-pointed mind—to conquer him

If he is not conquered—nothing can be attained
If he is conquered—everything is had at once
Hence strive with all your might in every way
Overcome any obstacle and conquer him

Most invincible is he—but, hear, there's a means
He can be overcome by intelligent action
The absence of which is indeed travesty
As he burns everything if one is not vigilant

One has to approach him most intelligently
And subdue him as one plays with a child
When the king is seen—the minister is controlled
When the minister is controlled—the king is seen

Great havoc he creates if the king is not seen
Till you conquer the minister—the king is unseen
It requires intense effort—steady intelligent practice
To subdue the minister and to behold the king

Intense effort and steady intelligent practice
Both are needed to go beyond all sorrow
To the region inhabited by holy ones
Those who are forever established in peace

This region is the state of liberation
Sorrow and grief never enter here
The supreme king is the absolute Self
The minister to conquer is the mind

All that you see is fashioned by the mind
Mind conquered—everything is conquered
Almost invincible is this powerful mind
But it can be overcome by intelligent practice

Now listen to the most intelligent means
Of conquering this mind of great power
Free yourself of hope, desires and expectations
In regards to all and everything at all times

Very easy yet most difficult is conquest
Difficult for those who are not serious
But easy for the one who is most earnest
Ready and eager to renounce *all* impediments

Until you turn away from every sense pleasure
You will continue to roam in this world in grief
Total dispassion takes persistent practice
It can be attained by relentless right exertion

No other means exists to conquer the mind
Talks about fate and destiny are mere talk
What brings equanimity is also called grace
Right exertion is the way to equanimity

What the mind conceives of through right exertion
Mind conceives, creates and brings to fruition
Either counter to or with the natural order
You can call it the prompter of natural order

Though certain actions appear to be selfish
Each act in accordance with their own nature
But as long as there is mind—God is not known
When the mind ceases—let be whatever is!

Self-knowledge alone can yield the fruit
Of cessation of all cravings permanently
Dispassion is natural when the self is seen
Intelligent self-inquiry ends all craving

When the intelligence is still unawakened
Spend half your time in your normal duties
Quarter in self-study through scriptures
Quarter in service of the teacher

When the intelligence is partially awakened
Spend half your time in service of the teacher
Quarter in self-study through scriptures
Quarter in tending to normal duties

When the intelligence is fully awakened
Spend half your time in service of the teacher
The other half in self-study through scriptures
All with dispassion as your constant companion

Only when one is filled with natural goodness
Is one qualified to listen to the highest wisdom
Hence educate, purify and nourish the mind
Transforming it by your sincere study

The transformed mind will see clearly
Hence strive to see the self sincerely
Self-realization and cessation of craving
Go hand in hand simultaneously

True dispassion does not come
By austerities, charity or pilgrimage
Right self-exertion is the only way
Hence exert rightly to rid all craving

When dispassion matures within one
The spirit of inquiry arises as well
Dispassion and the spirit of inquiry
Are interdependent—best friends to have

Abandon dependency on external factors
Grind your teeth, gird up your loins
Set your whole being to exert relentlessly
Inquiring and studying till you reach the Truth

Support yourself financially by your work
Work to support your basic needs
Utilize wealth to have the company
Of the good and holy with noble qualities

Company of the holy generates dispassion
Their company helps the spirit of self-inquiry
Company of the worldly increases passion
They help destroy all higher aspirations

When you turn away resolutely
From the pursuit of all pleasures
You can then attain to the highest state
Through the means of self-inquiry

When the self has been thoroughly purified
It is then that you have the foundation
To begin ongoing relentless self-inquiry
And be established in the supreme peace

The purified self is your only best friend
It will keep you from falling into delusion again
It will keep you from sorrow and suffering
It will give you a life of joy and auspiciousness

Acquire a little wealth while you are young
Utilize this wealth to have holy company
Adore and serve the holy ones sincerely
Tremendous will be your gain in their company

Bali Continues to Recollect

Luckily I remember my father's teachings
Now that craving for pleasure has ceased in me
I shall renounce all—withdraw from pleasures' pursuits
And stay happily established in the self

This universe is a creation of the mind
Nothing is lost by abandoning it
Bali thus sat and remembered his teacher
Sukra materialized before him instantly

Bali Asks his Teacher Sukra

No desire for pleasure have I
I wish to learn the truth is all
Who am I and who are you
What is this world?—kindly instruct me

Sukra's Reply

Consciousness alone exists—it is all
You, I, the world—all of this
If you are humble and sincere—see directly
There is no need for any further explanation

Bali Reflects Again

My teacher's instructions were most correct
All this is indeed consciousness—naught else
If consciousness did not recognize the mountain
Would this exist as a mountain at all?

Contact is possible due to consciousness
Bodies and objects always stay apart
Who is my friend and who is my enemy
Since consciousness alone exists as all

Hate and attachment are modifications
Of consciousness only—apparently modified
Consciousness being infinite in nature
How can perversions arise in it?

Consciousness is just a word—it has no name
I am that pure infinite consciousness
All craving has ceased in me completely
I shall continue till I reach absolute quiescence

Bali Enters Deep Meditation

Thus contemplating he uttered OM
And became quiet and contemplated
Its meaning and real significance
And entered into the supreme state

All divisions melted in king Bali
Thinker, thought and thinking too
Meditator, meditation and the object
He existed in stillness for a very long time

All his subjects were greatly perturbed
As their king sat showing no let up
They finally cried out to his teacher
Who once again appeared instantly

Sukra told them about Bali's condition
He had entered the perfect state
He asked to let him remain undisturbed
He would emerge from meditation on his own

Bali Emerges from Meditation

It was indeed a most wondrous state
Though it seems to be just one moment
I am pure consciousness without perversion
What to acquire, what to abandon?

I long for liberation but who has bound me
What shall I gain by continuing meditation
Salutations to myself—the infinite being

I will do what is needed as king

There is absolutely nothing to be done
By that entity which is known as 'me'
Let me do what seems natural to me now
And rule this kingdom spontaneously

Vasistha's Insight

Bali ruled the kingdom without premeditation
Worshipping gods and the holy ones
Treating his relatives with deference
Rewarding servants and giving in charity

Gain the wisdom that king Bali had
You are the light of consciousness
In you are all the worlds rooted
Who is your friend and who is enemy?

Know this by your direct realization
All worlds are strung in you as a rosary
Unborn art thou, deathless thou art
The self is real—all else is imagination

Inquire into the nature of craving
The root virus of all illnesses
See directly that it is wrong notion
Give up all notions and be free

In whatever the mind tends to sink
Retrieve and reorientate it to truth
This will tame the wild elephant mind
Now listen to another illustration

6. THE STORY OF PRAHLADA

Background

Though Prahalada was a demon's son
His love for God was an inborn trait
In spite of his surroundings and conditions
The flames of his devotion blazed ever high

His wicked father was slain by the Lord
Due to his reign of evil and tyranny
Rulership was bestowed on Prahlada
Who discharged his duties as worship

Even the gods were perplexed at this
Demons seemed to be transfigured to good
Jealously they inquired of the Lord
How was such a phenomena possible

The Lord told them about Prahalada
Lineage and appearances mean nothing
Each earns every cent of his inner growth
Prahlada was at the doorway of liberation

Prahlada's Prayer to the Lord

I take refuge in the supreme Lord
Supreme light in whom creation abides
Refuge of those who do sincerely seek
Radiant, unborn—the only security there is

Lord's Blessings

With a spirit of inquiry may you be endowed
Till the absolute is realized directly
May all your delusions end once and for all
May you attain the highest blessedness

Prahlada Contemplates

The Lord protects and upholds every thing
He alone is the refuge of one and all
I should take complete refuge in Him
I will live as if filled by His presence

To worship the Lord, one must verily be Him
I must realize that I am none other than Him
Thus did Prahlad contemplate deeply within
Till he proclaimed, "I am Him, salutations to Him"

Vasistha's Insight

Prahlada transfigured himself into the Lord
Worshipping the Lord mentally within himself
Once he attained direct self-realization
He saw the whole world pervaded by the Lord

The gods were puzzled by his attainment
A demon member had attained enlightenment
Becoming the foremost devotee as well
They took this difficulty to the Lord

The Lord explained it was Prahlada's last birth
By his own efforts he burnt his ignorance
Purifying himself in every way
His change would be for the good of all

Prahlad continued his prayer and meditation
Taking complete refuge in the supreme Lord
Praising the Lord within himself gloriously
Intense was his prayer and meditation

The Lord appeared before Prahlada again
Granting him any boon of his choice
Prahlada asked the Lord to bestow on him
That which the Lord considered limitless

The Lord bestowed on Prahlada
The unceasing spirit of inquiry
Which would continue till final liberation
Till all limitations and bondage were exceeded

Prahlada's Realization

I shall engage myself in self-inquiry
I am not things I see or this body
Nor am I the air that is breathed
Nor the senses or the sense-principles

I now recollect that I am the self
Omnipresent—without concepts
I am that peace beyond all thought
Everything shines because of me

I salute the self—my own light
In it do all things and all worlds exist
Infinite objects appear in me only
Rising and falling like water drops

Pure experiencing—is the one self
Therefore I am the experiencer in all
I am the wise, the child and the foolish
I pervade this entire creation

This world exists in me—the self of all
I exist in all as pure existence
Past, present and future exist in me
Without division or any distinction

How has this infinity limited itself
How has the ego-sense arisen at all
What has given rise to this delusion
What is it that says, 'This I am'?

What is the body and bodilessness
What is it that seems to live and to die
Why do people not experience the truth
That nothing whatever is outside pure consciousness?

Everything everywhere is pure consciousness alone
The light of the sun, moon and all stars
All gods, the elements and the vast space
All this is consciousness—my own self

I see now that transformation never was
Realizing this—I know I was never bound
Movement of thought was the only wickedness
Thought's abandonment is the lifting of the veil

Salutations to the Lord—myself, self of all
Pure, undivided infinite consciousness
This truth has been reached directly
All things are seen as my own self

Death of the body does not affect self
Neither does happiness or unhappiness
These are but notions which have ceased
No longer am I enslaved by ignorance

The Lord who is the self of all has been seen
By total dedication and pure devotion
By unceasing prayer and meditation
By simple and disciplined living

The forest of ignorance has deadly inhabitants
Most deadly of all is the ego-sense
By grace of God and my own self-effort
The inner intelligence is fully awakened

Where now is there room for delusion
Heaven and hell have now fallen away
When the intelligence is freed from ego-sense
It shines with the light of self-knowledge

O self, free from ignorance—salutations to you
The raging senses and mind find quiet in you
O dispeller of darkness and supreme love
Sustainer of all creation—salutations to you

As tempered steel cuts beams of steel
I have subdued the mind with the tempered mind
The body functions naturally now—without ego
All past tendencies have been destroyed completely

For such a long time I was caught up
In the powerful trap of the ego-sense
I now see that bondage was only delusion
The mind has reached utter quiescence

Beyond all modes of consciousness is the self
Real parent, only friend and trusted guide
Realizing the self is the only gain
It collapses the wall of endless suffering

Salutations to the self—sole experiencer
Hereafter you will not be deluded
Sense pleasures are unworthy of attention
Now that you have been realized—salutations

The former self has found its true place
Dwelling within in perfect equilibrium
I realize now it was mind's agitation
That stirred the senses and caused expansion

It was desire that empowered the mind
Which created division within itself
Giving the illusion of people and things
A great delusion in the divisionless

Salutations to you, O supreme Self
You yourself appear as this creation
As cosmic space and infinite beings
You yourself are what we called objects

Abandon vanity, anger and impurity
These do not overpower great souls
Inquire without remission 'Who am I?'
Inquire persistently how this has come about

Only self-inquiry is the surest way out
Of this trap of bondage and suffering
Purify the mind first to make it fit
Know by direct experience you are the self

O self, you are the string that strings all
All worlds are in you in a potential state
All worlds are made manifest by you
Nothing has existence without you

In a flash do things come and go
All opposites owe their existence to you
They are born in you, they lose their identity
When their dependence on you is realized

Hail to you, O self of one and all
Manifested as this limitless universe
Beyond the reach of all scriptures
Self-knowledge have I reached—hail to Thee

Vasistha's Insight

Thus contemplating his realization
Pahlada again entered deep meditation
The Lord saw that he still had work to do
And roused him from his deep meditation

He explained that embodied he would remain
Till the world-cycle had completed
So best to do his duty naturally
As he was liberated and without delusion

When one is freed from likes and dislikes
One reaches the state called 'no-mind'
He experiences great joy while living
This he said was Pahlada's attainment

Since Pahlada had attained enlightenment
Body and embodiment meant nothing
There was nothing to gain or abandon
Best to be engaged in useful activity

The enlightened really do nothing at all
As doership is completely absent in them
Firmly grounded in peace—they're liberated
Nothing to acquire or renounce for them

Prahlada confessed he was just fatigued
And took a rest for a few moments
But he would happily discharge his duties
As worship of the divine omnipresence

Prahlada was crowned king by the Lord
He ruled wisely and justly for a very long time
Peace and prosperity he brought to all
'Tis extraordinary to have an enlightened king

O Rama, you too should reach the vision
Prahlada attained by ceaseless inquiry
Reach the supreme state of enlightenment
Be liberated while living right here and now

Self-inquiry is indeed the foremost means
To attain self-knowledge and be free
If the guru can uplift one without self-effort
Why does he not uplift a bull or camel?

Hence, adore the self by the self
Worship the self by the self
Behold the self by the self
Be established in the self by the self

7. THE STORY OF GADHI

First Austerity

Gadhi was a wise and learned person
He lived a simple and righteous life
Once he went to the forest for austerity
In order to have the vision of the Lord

After eight long months of austerity
Pleased with his one-pointed dedication
The Lord graced him with an appearance
Granting Gadhi a boon of his choice

Gadhi wanted to understand by experience
Maya—the illusory power of the Lord
And then how he could overcome it
And traverse the waters of samsara

The Lord granted the boon and vanished
Gadhi continued his simple life of prayer

One day while praying at water's edge
He felt he had died and was lifeless

Gadhi's Experience

He saw his relatives standing around
Weeping as he lay silent and still
As if in a deep long meditation
And pondered what relationships were

He experienced being carried away
And being cremated on the funeral pyre
Soon born again to a tribal woman
All this while praying at the water's edge

There in his tribal village home
He grew up with the name Katanja
Times became very difficult; he grew older
And decided to find opportunities elsewhere

While passing through a town one day
He joined a large crowd in the town square
The ruling king had died without an heir
The royal elephant would pick the new ruler

Gadhi joined the crowd to witness this event
The elephant garlanded him—the choice was made
All hailed the newly selected king
He was named Gavala—king of Kira

Ruling came to him quite naturally
He was well-respected by one and all
One day he wandered out of the palace
Unadorned, without regalia and alone

Walking the streets he heard a song
A familiar tune being sung by a few villagers
He joined them silently and started singing
As somehow he knew the tune instinctively

One of the villagers recognized him
As Katanja of the old tribal village
King Gavala ignored this completely
But some passersby picked up on this

The king's identity spread immediately

A low-caste tribal was king of Kira
Instantly he was shunned and despised
The subjects and ministers held council

They felt that king Gavala had betrayed them
Though he had done no such thing
He was selected king by a local custom
He ruled wisely and was loved by all

Anyway, they felt they were now impure
And burning themselves was the only way
They made a large fire and entered
King Gavala decided to end his life too

Back to the Water's Edge

The raging fire awakened him instantly
He found himself praying at water's edge
Gadhi was he—a most strange experience
While standing and praying at the water's edge

He wondered who he was in truth
How such a real experience could be had
While standing at the water's edge
But dismissed it as an illusion

The Visiting Guest

One day a guest came by to visit
Gadhi welcomed him as he looked tired
He looked thin and quite hungry too
Gadhi offered him food and inquired

"How is it you look so worn out?"
The guest narrated his tale of woe
He had passed through Kira kingdom
Where a low-caste tribal ruled somehow

He recounted very clearly vivid details
Gadhi was astonished to hear this
Anyway, he offered the guest hospitality
And decided to try and reconcile this

Gadhi's Verification

Finding out by his own inquiry
That Kira kingdom did exist nearby

He travelled to the place he dismissed
As an earlier illusion at the water's edge

He finally reached the place called Kira
And inquired of the citizens there
About the place and its background
What they said confirmed his earlier experience

Second Austerity

To a mountain cave nearby he went
There he performed intense austerity
The Lord appeared before him again
And offered him a boon of his choice

Gadhi respectfully sought understanding
How the experience at water's edge came to be
Deemed by him to be an hallucination
Which was also seen in the wakeful state

The Lord's Reply

That which you see now is an illusion
'Tis the self but perceived differently by the mind
It appears in the mind unpurified
In one who has not realized the truth

'Tis the mind alone that is experienced
As dreams, illusions, illness and flowers
Countless thought forms does mind contain
Including the tribesman and visiting guest

Your being born in the tribal village
And going to the Kira kingdom too
All are forms of illusion and hallucination
All incidents reflected within your mind

Though life's incidents that you encounter
Seem related to each other and yourself
They are purely accidental coincidence
Like a coconut falling when a bird sits on a tree

Sometimes the very same illusion
Is experienced by many at the same time
Like many drunks feeling the revolving world
Like many children playing the same game

What you saw in the towns was possibly true
Katanja was indeed born some time ago
He did indeed become king of Kira
All this was reflected in your consciousness

The mind sometimes forgets what was seen
Sometimes it remembers what was not
Experiencing hallucinations in the waking state
Kira's life is reflected in your present consciousness

Because you are not fully enlightened
Your mind clings to objective perception
Plunge yourself into intense meditation
Right now for ten years and realize truth

Vasistha's Insight

Maya's cosmic illusion creates great delusion
Time's not a factor in resulting hallucinations
Lifetimes can be experienced in moments
Leading the unwary mind into much turmoil

Mind is the hub around which revolves
The delusion creating the vicious cycle
Restrain the hub by intense self-effort
With keen intelligence make it stand still

When the hub is stopped—the wheel is stopped
When the mind is still—illusion ceases
One who knows and is able to practice this

Sees the truth directly and all sorrow ceases

Mastery of mind is the only way
To cure the disease of world-illusion
Hence, abandon other futile activities
And control the mind for your highest good

This world-illusion abides in the mind
It is like an imaginary pot that divides
Though there is no division at all
Between outer and inner space

This pot of the mind must be broken
For the space to be felt as one
As the imaginary division vanishes

So does the imaginary world-concept

Live in the present but without struggle
Externalizing consciousness momentarily
Till the mind stops linking to past and future
And becomes what is called 'no-mind'

Externalized consciousness is objective
Internalized consciousness is subjective
Pure consciousness is beyond both these
All abide in it—it abides in itself

This mind dwells from moment to moment
Doing what needs to be done and dropping it
It will not hold water like dark clouds
The 'no-mind' is light, bright and full of purity

When inner consciousness limits itself
Agitation and much turmoil do result
Expanding viciously within limitation
Struggling to feel limitless while limited

When consciousness ceases to be finite
And gives up its cloak of apparent limitation
This cyclic world-illusion will be destroyed
As consciousness realizes its perfection

Consciousness free of all limitation
Is known as the inner intelligence
Essential nature of no-mind it is
Untainted by concepts and percepts

That is reality—the supreme self
That is omniscience—the supreme truth
Infinite vision—it is free of all sorrow
Only when the wicked mind ceases to be

Those who have awakened by self-effort
Have studied the scriptures and exerted
They've resorted to holy company too
To discover the truth for their own selves

Their lives have been a journey in truth
Having lived with unceasing vigilance
Each moment, each step, a practice of truth

Their consciousness has reached the pure state

Discover the state of non-objectiveness
What others have done—you can do too
Hence, gird up your loins and be diligent
Benefit from study and holy company

The self alone is the sole aid on the path
There's no other light but your own aspiration
'Tis one's own self that seeks the beyond
Seeks the way out of sorrow and freedom

You have to raise the self by the self
Live expertly—journeying to freedom
Ruthlessly abandon notions of 'I' and 'mine'
Be established in undivided consciousness

Appearances will still be while the body lasts
But you will not be fooled by any illusion
Being established in equanimous consciousness
You will abide in the self through all the states

Abandon this defective sense-perception
Most impure—full of hopes and desires
Be established in self-knowledge
You must know this by direct experience

All notions and desires must be abandoned
To know that you are pure consciousness
The subject-object drama will continue
Without being the least bit disturbed by it

Attain equilibrium—know you are the all
Live naturally—doing what needs to be done
Free from duality and non-duality as well
Unshakeable as cosmic consciousness

Cut off all fetters of desire and hope
Solely with the inner undivided intelligence
Endowed with patience and perseverance
Go beyond unrighteousness and righteousness too

When you are firmly rooted in self-knowledge
The worst attacks of delusion are powerless
Only when self-knowledge is overpowered

Does delusion dance to ignorance's tune

Ignorance gave rise to world-appearance
All suffering will end when ignorance ends
The darkness of ignorance cannot exist
When wisdom's fire blazes ever brightly

Eagerly seek company of the wise
Those who have attained self-knowledge
Avoid deluded ones who continue to live
Like pack animals though in human garb

The company of sages is a priceless treasure
They are the sun that illumines the path
They've been a light unto their own selves
They've had no external help at all

Self-knowledge is the only light there is
Sages who've attained shine among all
Brighter are they than the sun, moon and stars
They are beyond the reach of delusion

What good is your life without self-knowledge
All that you do will soon be wiped out
All that you own—others will make claim to
Crying you came and crying you will leave

The ghost of illusion affects the deluded
Hence exert—awaken to self-knowledge
The deluded walk around like animated corpses
You are intelligent—lay claim to your heritage

Hence, abandon craving for all pleasures
Those of the past and of the future too
Cravings and desires contaminate the mind
Strengthen the mind by abandoning them

Rise above all these false relationships
They are all rooted in 'I am this body'
Then come relatives: wife, son and family
These are the ways the mind becomes gross

The gross mind is itself ignorance
Its efforts, ambitions and attachments
Are the results of its ignorant nature

Experienced as sorrow and delusion

Like a tree this mind is rooted in the body-field
Worries its blossoms, old age and disease its fruits
Desires its flowers, hopes and longings its leaves
Cut down this tree with the sharp axe of inquiry

Like an elephant which roams the body-forest
Its vision clouded by delusion, most restless
Most violent and burning with fiery lust
Tear this elephant with your sharp intelligence

Like a crow dwelling in the body-nest
It revels in filth, consuming any flesh found
Ever dark and stupid, most conceited it is
Drive this burden far away from yourself

Like a ghost severed by the goblin of craving
It rests in the forest of ignorance in delusion
With the help of wisdom and dispassion
Put this ghost to rest by arduous self-effort

Like the most venomous serpent of all
It has killed many, hurt countless people
With the help of instruction and contemplation
Destroy this vicious serpent like an eagle

Like a monkey, it roams from place to place
Seeking the fruits of reward and pleasure
Bound to the world-cycle, it dances for attention
Restrain this from all sides and attain perfection

Like a dark cloud of ignorance in the bright sky
It obscures the ever-present light of the sun
Dispel this darkness by repeated renunciation
Of its **waters—all** concepts and precepts

As a missile is destroyed by a deadlier one
Tranquilize this mind with the mind itself
Forever abandon mental agitation—be calm
Free of any disturbance it can possibly cause

Take not a stand on concepts and precepts
They're put together and strengthened by time
Like a creeper these vines will soon strangle you

Fell them ruthlessly by wisdom's sharp axe

8. THE STORY OF UDDALAKA

1. The Dawn of Wisdom

On a peak of a mountain lived sage Uddalaka
From his very youth he aspired to attain
Supreme wisdom by his own effort
But lacked understanding and was restless

He had a pure heart—a great asset
Which can level the field over time
So he engaged himself in austerities
Study and meditation till wisdom arose

Wisdom is not knowledge about things
It is what is gained by direct insight
When one gains this—one does not delay
To act immediately and totally in its direction

If there is any delay or hesitation in action
Know that the understanding is theoretical
Intellectual, insincere—hence without energy
It cannot help you till real insight is gained

Introspection is not thinking about something
Or trying to figure it out with the ignorant mind
It is direct observation devoid of any thought
Where the flame of attention burns untruth

Real introspection must give the energy
As its clarity hath shone light on the path
Just as when real and present danger is seen
There is immediate energy right then and there

There is no need to muster sufficient resolve
Or to gather strength or support from others
Light is clarity, energy and tremendous power
If you have really seen—there is no struggle

2. Uddalaka's Introspection

In introspection everything is examined afresh
Uddalaka immediately began his introspection
"What is this great stage called liberation
When shall I rest permanently in that state

When will I be free from desires' agitations
When will I be free from self-centered thoughts
When will I be free from possessive notions
When will I see the truth of relationships

Relationships may be or may not be
Why should I feel bound by any of them
They are habits of the mind's thinking
When will wisdom dawn on darkness within

When will the subject-object tangle resolve
When will I be able to see time as a concept
When will my mind be tranquil as a rock
In a state with no movement of thought"

3. Resolving the External

Thus Uddalaka resumed deep meditation
But his mind continued to be agitated
The thoughts of objects and those of people
Troubled him often—sometimes a little less

Greatly disturbed by his changing moods
He roamed the forest till he found a spot
A cave that looked nearly unvisited
In which he entered with unyielding resolve

"O mind, what has this world-appearance
To do with you in any way at all
The wise refrain from contact with pleasure
Knowing it turns into pain soon enough

Why abandon peace already within
And search in vain for peace outside
Knowing things and relationships change
And are invitations to delusion and suffering

The best of things, places and people
Cannot quench the thirst for peace
As searching is itself exhaustive fatigue
Best to settle into inner quiescence

Abandon all hopes and desires completely
Objects and beings are not for happiness
Why run outside pulled by five senses
Even one can disrupt inner peace

When you become a victim of the five senses
You submit to being pulled in five directions
How then can you ever know true happiness
When you yourself constantly generate unrest

Like a silkworm trapped in its own cocoon
You're trapped in a web of your concepts
If you can get rid of all notions and concepts
You will discover true peace already abides

If you persist in clinging to what is not good
You will surely perish in your own sorrow
Why do I even instruct you thus, O mind
My investigation shows you do not exist

O mind, you are a product of ignorance
When ignorance ceases—you cease as well
You are in the process of being worn out
Why should I waste time instructing you

O mind, I am egoless pure consciousness
You're ego's cause—I've nothing to do with you
'Tis foolish to instruct one disintegrating
You're already falling apart—I abandon you

4. Uddalaka's Self-Inquiry Begins

The infinite self cannot be squeezed into the mind
Any more than can an elephant into a wood-apple
Consciousness burdened with concepts and precepts
Takes on limitation and is known as the mind

I've carefully examined the entire body
Nothing and no part says 'This I am'
All-pervading unconditioned consciousness
Completely free from selfhood—is the real 'I'

Indivisible, nameless and changeless
Beyond unity, diversity and all measure
Hence, I abandon you, O mind
You are the source of endless sorrow

This body consists of flesh, blood and bones
There is nothing in this that says 'This I am'
Motion is energy inherent in consciousness
The body undergoes change but says not 'This I am'

I've examined this body carefully
Nothing at all says 'This I am'
I've examined you too, O mind
I am in none of you nor am I you

For long have I been ignorance's victim
Luckily now I've discovered the thief
That robbed me of self-knowledge
Never again will I ignorance's victim be

Just as clouds sitting above a hill
Do not belong to the hill at all
Though I seem to be linked to sorrow
I am completely independent of it as well

Ignorance arose in self-knowledge's absence
But free am I of this dreadful ego-sense
Let the body and senses live or perish
What have I to do with them at all

The senses and objects interact naturally
For their own sake, not for me at all
It was a delusion to think 'I see' and such
The eyes see based on prior conditioning

Hence if actions are performed spontaneously
Without interference of mental conditioning
Free from memory, hopes and expectations
I would experience freedom while still acting

This is indeed what is called pure action
Doing what needs to be done—letting go
Conditioning strengthens on being revived
It can be dispelled by not reviving it at all

Hence, abandon perception of diversity, O mind
Realize the unreality of your own existence
Infinite consciousness is the only existence
Realize this and be liberated as well

Consciousness cannot be conditioned really
It is unlimited—beyond conditioning's influence
Conditioning reflecting within consciousness
Gives rise to the illusion of self-limitation

When the illusion of self-limitation is repeated
It only seems to acquire false validity
But I know now by my own experience
I am consciousness—untouched by any of these

Let the body live—doing what needs to be done
Being consciousness, I remain unaffected by it
Infinite, all-pervading, undecaying and unborn
Deathless and cannot be possessed at all

I've nothing to gain by living separately
Since I've discovered my all-pervasiveness
When notions of ego-sense are abandoned
The self is free—beyond being and non-being

Like a mirage is the ego-sense an illusion
So are all objects in this world-appearance
The body is but an aggregate of components
The mind vanishes on being inquired into

Concepts and notions are the limitations
We bind our own selves with ignorance's chain
Defending the ego that itself becomes the links
And cry for relief—prisoners of our own making

The senses exist to satisfy themselves
All objects in the world are their food
Nature and its qualities interacting
Where is the ego in any of these

The self is consciousness—everywhere
At all times and in all bodies as well
There is nothing called 'I' in the changing
How can relationships have substance at all

When this is realized—deep within oneself
Duality vanishes at once—self alone is
I am that reality, why do I suffer at all
When one alone exists as omnipresence

Even if one assumes objects to be real
How can things be related to the self
The senses, body and mind would exist
In their nature—what have I to do with them

Just what is this thing called relationship
With senses, body, mind or others
If a stone and iron rod lay side by side
They stay unrelated to each other always

5. Mastery Over Thoughts of Mind and Body

With the ego-sense rises perverse notions
Such as 'this is mine' and 'this is his'
All unreal notions as one alone is
What appears is an illusion like the blue sky

This ego-sense is the cause of all sorrow
All anxieties too are caused by it alone
'I've got this now, this I must have next...'
Such cravings it constantly generates

One cannot posit a cause for this creation
All has ever been inherent in the absolute
Just as various pots are inherent in clay
And waves always exist in the vast ocean

'This I am' is a notion one assumes
Based on a relationship that is not real
With the temporary appearance known as body
And consciousness which is existence eternal

Consciousness was when this body was not
Consciousness will remain on dropping this body
Why then this connection in the middle
It is an illusion that has never been examined

You have conferred reality on illusions, O mind
And made me suffer based on separation
But it is not your fault as I cling to you
While you, yourself—are a non-entity

I now see the illusion in appearances
Soon, O mind, you will become no-mind
All memories and experience will come to end
When all mental conditioning is abandoned

Gathering all rays that have been scattered
Soon I'll be free of all mental coloring
The mind will be offered as an oblation
To the fire of consciousness—freedom attained

Perceiving the body as unrelated to self
Is the key to abandoning all conditioning
Mind and body are each other's foes
Each bent on the other's destruction

Supreme happiness follows abandoning
The relationship of mind and body with self
A host of suffering both have imposed
Due to the mutual conflict beyond resolve

Mind's thought-force gives birth to this body
And continually feeds it with great sorrow
Thus tortured the body seeks to destroy
The mind—its own parent and bitter enemy

The mind and body are constantly engaged
In the timeless battle of mutual destruction
How can I ever know peace or happiness
Till both have been thoroughly abandoned

By sleep the body destroys the mind each day
The mind then awakens the body to suffer
Until self-knowledge is finally attained
I remain caught in the heavy crossfire

If the mind ceases to be—the body will too
As what is the body without thought-force
Hence you, O mind, must now be destroyed
Without you the body can never cause suffering

Concepts, precepts and conditioning cease
When self-knowledge is had by experience
I have attained that state of 'no mind' now
All relationships have now been abandoned

Rising above notions of all relationships
Of mind and body too—I am indeed free
Of ignorance's heavy influence earlier
All virtues flourish within naturally

The absence of desires is their fulfillment
Purity, truthfulness and friendship to all
Supreme magnanimity and kind speech
Such are my constant companions now

Everything in its natural order and time
Knowing this, desire and aversion have left
With the mind's demise, delusion has died
Wickedness gone—I now rest in my own self

6. Renewing the Body

Sage Uddalaka then sat in meditation
In the lotus posture with half-closed eyes
Intoning the holy Om so its vibrations
Filled his being to the crown of his head

Exhaling the breath completely
As if life force was being abandoned
Into the space of pure consciousness
The body generated much heat by this

He felt the fire from the generated heat
Burning the whole of his body
With breath retained he intoned Om again
The life force stood still in equilibrium

The body was reduced to ashes
White like camphor it was
While inhaling he intoned Om again
And drew fresh life force towards himself

The fresh life force was cool and pure
Like the silvery rays of the moon
They rained on the white ashes
That remained of his earlier body

From the cooling of the white ashes
A new body arose—most resplendent
The life force filled the inner kundalini
Spread out like a spiral—it ascended

7. Renewing the Mind

With body thus thoroughly purified
Continuing in the seated lotus pose
He firmed his posture, with senses tied
And began to extricate consciousness from thought

With senses restrained from all distractions
Eyes half-closed, still and motionless
Mind established in the inner silence

The twin life-forces he equalized

Withdrawing the inner senses
From contact with their objects
He became aware of all past conditioning
And purified it with the unconditioned

With rectum and other outlets closed
Life-force and awareness were internalized
This most perfect discipline enabled him
To hold his mind within his heart

8. Vasistha's Insight

With mind thus thoroughly purified
Made tranquil and without distraction
He beheld the inner darkness of ignorance
And dispelled it with the light within

Sleep and dullness tried to overpower
The mind threw up brilliant forms
Intoxicating inertia tried to subvert
He overcame all with the light within

In a different state he rested a while
And then awoke to something grand
Experiencing the totality of existence
He realized to be pure awareness

Earlier pure awareness was unexperienced
As other factors seemed to influence it
Now regaining its purity and independence
Uddalaka enjoyed the bliss of enlightenment

Just as waves merge into the ocean
Just as the pot merges into mud
Uddalaka merged into pure consciousness
He was liberated while still living

He beheld the gods and sages
And went far beyond those states
He was transmuted into bliss itself
He became pure consciousness

One who experiences this supreme state
For even a mere moment in time

Is never pulled by even heaven's delights
This is indeed the eternal abode

All delusion is transcended completely
The subject-object tangle lose their hold
Fully awakened and enlightened is he
Who has reached this supreme abode

This is not an attainment as such
As there is no attainer or the attained
Words are useless—they get in the way
That is known only by direct realization

Uddalaka shunned all psychic powers
These are traps for the careless one
He even declined the invitation of gods
And all the temptations they offered him

Uddalaka transformed himself
Into a liberated sage while still living
He reached the state of perfect equilibrium
Looking upon all with equal vision

Fully established in pure being was he
Duality and its perils were put to rest
The inner sun shone bright at all times
Never rising and never setting

He lived devoid of body-consciousness
Fully established in pure consciousness
With the complete absence of all notions
The mind becoming no-mind—ceased to be

9. Dropping Physical Disembodiment

In time a wish arose in the sage Uddalaka
To drop the present physical embodiment
Sitting in a nearby cave in the lotus pose
With eyes half-closed he plunged deep within

He closed off the nine body apertures
And withdrew the senses into the heart
Restraining prana or the life-force
The body was held in perfect equilibrium

With the tip of tongue against pallets' roof

Jaws slightly parted from each other
His inner vision was neither inner nor outer
Nor in substantiality, nor in the void

He was established in pure consciousness
Pure being—beyond the state of bliss
Absolutely pure—with no movement at all
Day by day he gradually attained quiescence

He remained fully established in pure being
He had risen above the cycle of samsara
Thoughts and notions had completely ceased
All heart's impurities had been washed away

Uddalaka had attained the supreme state
Bliss-absolute—beyond any description
Even heaven's pleasures do not compare
To the pinnacle of perfection he experienced

For six months he sat in that perfect state
Gradually his body withered away
Take shelter in the shade of Uddlaka's way
'Twill awaken the highest wisdom within

10. Vasistha's Insight Continues

Live a life of relentless self-inquiry
This is the way to attain supreme peace
Four things are most helpful on the journey
Though a fully awakened intelligence can suffice

Cultivate dispassion—end all craving
Through scripture—study your self
Teachings of the enlightened ones are invaluable
As is relentless, unceasing self-inquiry

In the state of tranquility called samadhi
One realizes objects as 'not-self'
Thus does inner calmness flow unbroken
As one is not disturbed by reaction

One realizes objects are related to mind
One rests in the self—pure existence
Some live in this state in isolation
Others prefer to be engaged in action

If the mind of the yogi is distracted
He has not attained inner quiescence
If the yogi however rests in equilibrium
Isolation or action make no difference

The mind free from all conditioning
Is untainted in the midst of activity
As this is non-action of the mind
Samadhana or total freedom it's called

Movement of thought in the mind
Is the way to know its true state
There is no movement in the unconditioned
The conditioned mind continues to oscillate

The unconditioned mind is firm and awake
That is meditation, freedom—peace eternal
This mind is a non-actor though actions happen
Attain this stage of supreme enlightenment

The conditioned mind is sorrow's source
Hence remove all traces of conditioning
In real contemplation—desires cease
There is freedom from sorrow completely

Mentally renounce all false identifications
Whether you live in a cave or at home
A householder too can attain this state
And experience the forest within himself

One can physically renounce everything
And live in isolation trying to meditate
Yet carry the whole world within his mind
And experience the city in the forest cave

Consciousness is the indwelling omnipresence
It becomes aware of different reflections
Seeming so real, for real is the substance
Duality seems to arise within infinite unity

Consciousness becoming aware of differences
Gives rise to the ego-sense, time and space
In deep sleep all distractions subside
Enter this state while awake consciously

11. Multiple Reflections

Each particle, atom and molecule is indwelt
By infinite consciousness—there is naught else
These atoms and molecules appear as walls
That seem to divide 'I', 'you' and 'others'

What seems to appear divided
Does so in infinite consciousness
Multiple reflections of consciousness
All within itself—appearing very real

Consciousness experiences itself only
Reflecting its own light in forms that appear
These then gain apparent self-consciousness
And think they exist independently somehow

This world-appearance which appears so real
Does so because the substratum is non-different
Infinite consciousness is without relationship
These delusions have sprung due to ignorance

Infinite consciousness never undergoes change
How can it—it is infinite and omnipresent
All that I have said is but a play of words
Just for instruction—there is no 'you' or 'I'

Neither is there mind, nor objects to know
Nor is there this tangible world-illusion
All mere appearances within consciousness
It alone thinks itself to be this and that

Diversity is the child of ignorance
What one imagines—that he sees
What is regarded as life appears so
This life too is but infinite consciousness

The individual is non-different
From pure infinite consciousness
Know all this to be undivided
Indivisible infinite consciousness

9. THE STORY OF SURAGHU

Background

Suraghu was a Himalayan tribal chief

He ruled his kingdom justly and wisely
Rewarding those who did good
And punishing those who did wrong

This constant activity made him feel
That his spiritual vision had been obscured
When one is not lodged firmly in wisdom
One second-guesses and doubts arise

One day sage Mandavya happened to visit
Suraghu placed his doubts before the sage
Telling him plainly of his inner torment
As he rewarded some and some he punished

He humbly requested the sage to instruct him
So equal vision might somehow arise
Which would free him from anxiety and doubt
And from prejudice and partiality experienced

Sage Mandavya's Instruction

All mental weaknesses come to an end
By self-effort based on wisdom
Which arises in one well established
In self-knowledge by direct experience

Distress in the mind is eliminated
By inquiry into the nature of self
When consciousness expands infinitely
The pull of self-centeredness snaps

Only when one renounces everything
Is the supreme gain of self-knowledge had
When all points of view are abandoned
What remains—is the self alone

Just as in that which is called worldly life
Obstacles must be removed for any gain
Even so is it with self-knowledge
There must complete renunciation

Suraghu Contemplates

Immediately did Suraghu contemplate
"What is it that is known as 'I'
I'm not the hill tribe nor is it mine
This is merely called 'my kingdom'

This capital city too is not mine
Neither is family or relationships
How have I come to regard these as 'mine'
I abandon all these notions this moment

This body contains inert substances
Flesh, blood, bones and organs
Mind is the cause of all sorrow
Neither is mind nor ego-sense mine

What is this feeling of individuality
That is involved in myriad relationships
How can an object of knowledge
Be the self which alone is pure subject

I abandon all that is knowable
I am distinct—the knower of all
Pure consciousness—free from doubt
I am indeed the infinite self

Vasistha's Insight

By direct inquiry into the nature of self
Suraghu attained to the supreme state
All sorrow and anxiety left him completely
He ruled the kingdom with a balanced mind

He realized diversity was but an appearance
Of and in pure infinite consciousness
Not intellectually which is utterly useless
But by unmistakable direct experience

The mind is indeed fickle and unsteady
Equanimity seems difficult to reach
Kindly listen to an earlier incident
Which will throw light on just this

Suraghu and Parigaha

Parigaha was a friend of Suraghu
He too was a chief of a kingdom
A great famine came to his land
Fruitless were all attempts at relief

Sorely distressed he went away
To the forest to perform austerities
After a very long time of hard penance

He attained self-knowledge and quiescence

Thereafter he roamed the land freely
One day he met up with his old friend
Most happy were both on meeting again
As now both had attained self-knowledge

Parigha asked Suraghu about his state
If he was established in perfect equanimity
If all his subjects and kingdom were at peace
And if he was firmly established in dispassion

Suraghu most humbly replied to Parigha
Attributing all success to the divine
Grateful for the chance to see his friend
As he felt the holy company was a treasure

Parigha inquired about duties performed
Of their being a possible hindrance
To being established in peace and equanimity
And disrupting the state of samadhi

Suraghu's enlightened reply was inspiring
"Why should only that mind without thoughts
Be called samadhi for a knower of truth
As constant contemplation is what is samadhi

The enlightened ones are always in samadhi
Whether they be active in work or not
Though one could sit for hours in lotus' pose
One's mind may not be at peace at all

Merely sitting in the lotus pose is not samadhi
All desires must be burnt by self-knowledge
What results is the real state of samadhi
Not just sitting and remaining silent

In samadhi there is eternal satisfaction
Clear perception of what really is
Egolessness, freedom from the opposites
Freedom from anxiety and the wish to possess

When self-knowledge dawns truly in one
One is established in unbroken samadhi
He neither loses it nor is it ever interrupted

The state of samadhi becomes permanent

Just as time never forgets to move on
One in self-knowledge never forgets the self
Just as material objects stay material
The sage of self-knowledge is always one

I am fully awakened, pure and at peace
Unbroken is the state of samadhi
I behold the self as all—at all times
There is no other state but samadhi"

Parigraha saluted Suraghu, his friend
"Surely you've attained total enlightenment
You shine radiant, resplendent and pure
In you there is no ego-sense or opposites"

Suraghu replied to the sage—his friend
"There is nothing worth desiring or renouncing
When objects are recognized as concepts
It is notions that masquerade as objects

There is nothing worth acquiring either
Following the understanding of renouncing
Good, evil, great, small and the like
Are all notions based on desirability

When desirability itself has no meaning
Renouncing and acquiring are meaningless
Objects and things that we see before us
Have not the real substance they appear to have

If this is known by direct experience
How can any desire arise for them
In the absence of any and all desire
Supreme peace reigns in the heart"

Vasistha's Insight Continues

Thus continuing appearance's illusion
And enjoying each other's good company
They both continued to engage themselves
In their respective duties with enthusiasm

Be firmly established in this wisdom, O Rama
Discard impure ego-sense from the heart

Engage yourself in your own duties
Unattached—therefore untrained by them

Just as the eyes of fish in sea-water
Are never affected by its salinity
Befriend scriptures, generate dispassion
Make each day a march towards self-knowledge

10. THE STORY OF BHASA AND VILASA

Background

Bhasa and Vilasa, both sons of sages
Lost their parents at the same time
Neither interested in wealth nor in fame
They both sought to attain self-knowledge

In different directions each set out
Leading a simple austere life
Then one day after a long time
They happened to meet—just by chance

Vilasa to Bhasa

Most fortunate I consider meeting you
Have your efforts been fruitful yet
Has the mind been rid of worldliness
Have you attained self-knowledge now

Bhasa Replies

Without self-knowledge one is stuck
In the cycle of suffering—birth and death
Repeating experiences of earlier times
In this very life and the lives before

Unless one crosses samsara's flow
Until hopes and desires completely end
Until self-knowledge is directly had
One cannot be either well or happy

Without self-knowledge one must return
To this same stage for another drama
In different conditions and circumstances
Still engaging in the same inane actions

Craving is the rat that gnaws away wisdom
One's appetite depletes life's energy

The mind is sunk in desire's well
'Tis a wonder how this is repeated

The mind assumes gigantic proportions
A wisp of a thought becomes a whip
Man suffers foolishly though in truth he does not
Though untouched by suffering he is miserable

Vasistha's Insight

Thus conversing on the nature of things
They shared the deepest insight gained
Both shared truths from direct experience
Both soon attained the supreme wisdom

Attaining self-knowledge is the only way
To sever the bondage of this samsara
The enlightened view the world as if from afar
Knowing things are not as they do appear

Just as a swan is not related to water
Just as a rock is not related to ground
The self too has not real relationship
To what we see as world-appearance

Things may lay in close proximity
Things may fall upon each other as well
A rock that falls on the water
Does not injure the water at all

Even so the body comes in contact
With other bodies and substances
Be it wife, children or so-called things
There is no real pain and injury to anyone

Reflections in the mirror are not real or unreal
So also with reflections of the self
The ignorant accept appearances as real
Not the wise who see not relationships

Relationships need duality to exist
But consciousness alone exists—divisionless
Subject and object division is imagination
The root of all suffering and sorrow

Just like seeing a ghost in a post

Or a snake in the rope in low light
One sees division where none exists
Due to conditioning and imagination

The abandonment of ignorance is liberation
Shedding of false identification ends sorrow
Ascetics can be bound by the conditioned mind
Householders can attain to the unconditioned

The conditioned mind is itself bondage
Freedom from conditioning is liberation
The inner contact presupposing division
Is the cause of bondage and liberation

Actions by the unconditioned mind are non-action
The conditioned mind acts even while refraining
Action or non-action is in the mind not the body
Hence one should refrain from false inner division

Vasistha: Conditioning is a Choice

Conviction in the reality of the body
In one who identifies body with self
Therefore seeking pleasure and getting bound
Is what is known as conditioning

Self-inquiry alone dispels clouds of ignorance
And establishes one in the unconditioned state
Whether pleasures come or do not come
One's balance is steady—equanimity attained

Neither addicted to action's fruit or inaction
Exultation and depression do not touch one
Rejecting conditioning one rejects bondage also
Conditioning being the cause of sorrow and suffering

Conditioning can be illustrated thus
The donkey obeys its master out of fear
The tree bears all, rooted to the ground
The worm bides its time in a small hole

The fearful bird remains hungry on the tree
The tame deer falls prey to the clever hunter
People are born as worms and insects
All creatures rise and fall like the ocean's waves

The human endowed with faculties for liberation
Still persists in subscribing to life's magazine
Again and again he comes, suffers and goes
But still does not feel to go beyond sorrow

Shrubs and creepers are deeply rooted
Fear of starvation ties them to the earth
World-illusion is like a mighty river
Carrying all in its stream of suffering

Conditioning is inner contact or limitation
Existing as sterile and adorable
Unnatural conditioning is seen in fools
Natural conditioning is seen in the wise

The fools are conditioned—they do not know
The wise know conditioning and are untouched
As they have directly attained self-knowledge
The fire of wisdom keeps conditioning at bay

The liberated sages have natural conditioning
All are but limitations of which they're aware
They do not fall prey to desires and such
They never experience delusion and its effects

The foolish have unnatural conditioning
They fall prey to desires again and again
As they feel joy is had by desires' fulfillment
Though earlier attempts have brought sorrow

As big fish eat smaller ones in the ocean
Countless beings ever feed on each other
The planets and moons stay their course
Due to some form of conditioning or limitation

Vasistha: Conditioning to Craving

Craving for pleasure is the worst cancer
It gnaws at one's vital energy from within
Creating attachment and great delusion
Destroying wisdom and sorrow's relief

Creation is a response to mental conditioning
Held firm in the hearts of countless beings
Ignorance pervades this whole universe
Bringing suffering to subscribers of ignorance

Fools are fuel for ignorance's flames
The world is hell itself with burning fires
As the river rushes speedily to the ocean
Suffering rushes to all conditioned beings

If craving for pleasure is cut at its root
Mental conditioning stops its expansion
One can then tackle existing conditioning
And destroy the seeds so they'll never rise again

Mental conditioning is attachment to the finite
'Tis burning pain—all that appears must change
Inner infinite expansion is the way out
As desires cease when one experiences self as all

The unattached mind rests always in peace
Great joy born of infinite inner expansion
Rooted in self-knowledge one is ever free
And unperturbed by any events or calamities

Only the wise live truly normal lives
They do what needs to be done naturally
Without motive or inner calculation
Or thought of fruit based on expectation

Their minds are never attached to action
Nor to objects of desire or inaction
Heavens above and external relations
Do not influence one who abides in wisdom

Desires fill the mind with insatiable hunger
The mind then resides in this appetite
Blind, thirsty, hungry for what must be had
No matter the great sorrow and untold suffering

Wisdom does not attach to anything at all
An attached mind is very blind you see
Wisdom is the eyes to its own self—untainted
Fully awake—the best protection to be had

Vasistha: Abandoning Conditioning

The mind should rest in pure consciousness
With just enough externalization of thought
Aware of non-division though division appears
The individual thus becomes the universal

One experiences peace on abandoning thought
This is known as deep sleep in wakefulness
This soon matures into the fourth state
In which reality is experienced directly

Ignorance is the cause of world-appearance
Non-investigation into the nature of reality
As a lamp dispels darkness instantly
So does self-knowledge dispel ignorance

Hence, inquire into what this individual is
Also called mind or the inner psyche
Between the inert and intelligent is the truth
This truth alone creates diversity within itself

Just as a nanny takes a child here and there
Conditioning takes fools here and there too
Self-tied by conditioning's ropes one does suffer
Enduring much sorrow repeatedly

Ignorance is self-limitation on the mind
Which becomes tainted objectively
When the same self is subjectively turned
It abandons self-limitation and awakens

The awakened self sheds ignorance
Recognizing the body as elements too
It thus transcends body consciousness
And becomes fully enlightened and free

All that appears to be is but expansion
Between pure experiencing and its experience
The experience is the delight of self-bliss
Pure experiencing itself—the absolute

Pure experiencing is *the* greatest delight
All is seen within the infinite self
The bent towards objects is bondage itself
Liberation is freedom from objectivity

Freed from subject-object relationship
The world-appearance ceases entirely
Then rises deep sleep in wakefulness
Gained by being established in self-knowledge

You will realize by this grand experience
I and space, the sun and all directions
Gods and demons too are but my own self
I'm in all beings, the earth and ocean too

I am the dust and wind, fire and world
Omnipresent am I—I alone exist
Joys and sorrows are left far behind
You rest in your self—infinite consciousness

Bondage and liberation are only concepts
Abandon them both and live an enlightened life
Liberation does not exist in some heaven elsewhere
Liberation is had right here by self-knowledge

If the mind ceases so does the ego-sense
Waste not your time in vain theory
Abandon craving—awaken the intelligence
The mind weakens when dispassion arises

Even the wish to be free must be abandoned
As it revives the mind and other notions
All notions are concepts—they are unreal
Just like mirages in hot desert sands

The absence of hopes and all desires
Is necessary to deflate false values
That have been ascribed to people and things
They are not part of things as they are

Hopes and desires are in our minds
And do not allow us to see clearly
We look at objects but see assigned values
And react to these—never to things as they are

As long as one harbors hopes and desires
One will protect these snakes in the mind
That hiss memory or situations that appear
And compel us to react to them instead

Unrelenting vigilance without compromise
Is the only way to loosen false values
And see things just as they are
And respond wisely with what is best

When hopes and desires exist in the heart
It does not matter how subtle they be
One can never see the truth of things
Only the coloring that is self-added

The wise see the truth by facing the light
And never desires which fade in the shade
Inquiry and self-effort will point the way
To see things as they are—free of coloring

Equanimity cannot coexist with hopes
Or desires of any kind—however subtle
Hence give up all hopes and desires
See sorrow and grief abandoned

Liberation is at hand—right here all the time
Many have attained while still living
You too can be liberated here and now
Utter non-attachment is itself freedom

One free from attachment is liberated
Therefore strive earnestly and sincerely
Right exertion and relentless self-inquiry
Are spiritual heroism leading to self-knowledge

Non-wisdom hides the light of the absolute
Self-sustained dark clouds of ignorance
When one is awake and facing the light
Wisdom burns the moisture of ignorance

Erroneous perception gives rise to ignorance
Binding one with self-created chains
Right perception, right attitude and wisdom
Enable one to see—bondage was an illusion

The spirit of inquiry must lodge in the heart
'Twill enable you to see things as they are
A harvest of strength, intelligence and radiance
You will soon realize the truth behind appearances

Vasistha: On Sages

A sage is one who has realized the truth
While still living—right here in this world
The secret's to see all without any craving
Without hopes and expectations of any kind

He does not seek things or conditions at all
For his heart has withdrawn into itself
Hopes and memory have no grip on him
He lives in the present in perfect equilibrium

His actions are natural—non-volitional
He is unattached to anyone or anything
His behavior may appear childish or even harsh
The attitude of others determines this

He appears devout to the devout
Harsh to the harsh he does appear
He appears as a child among children
Sorrowing he appears among the suffering

Never elated when efforts bear fruit
Never dejected when they do not
He knows infinite consciousness does everything
He is never surprised by turns of events

He knows beings are born and they will die
He never gives way to grief over this
He knows the world arises in his own vision
Even as dreams appear in one's own mind

Justification, pity and joy he's abandoned
Concepts of pleasure and pain he has dropped
In him the desirable and undesirable don't exist
When all notions cease—mind's errors cease too

When a firebrand swings, a circle of light appears
An illusion just like the world appearance
Appearing due to a vibration of consciousness
Vibration and consciousness being inseparable

Vasistha: Many Ways

Mind and movement of thought are inseparable
The cessation of one is cessation of both
This can be achieved by the yoga path
Or by direct realization—wisdom's path

The body has energy channels or nadis
In which circulate energy known as prana
Indistinguishably united with the mind it is
Consciousness tends to think due to prana

Movement of prana gives rise to thought
Movement of thought moves the prana
A mutually dependent cycle they form
Like waves and currents in the water

Some say mind is caused by pranic movement
And prana restrained is mind restrained
When thought moves not within the mind
World-appearance, its effect, ceases to be

Vasistha: The Yoga Way

The movement of prana is also arrested
By effortless breathing without any strain
Or repetition of the sacred mantra Om
And experience of its true meaning

Or by exhaling the breath, gently and slowly
It must leave the body quite effortlessly
Then retain, just as bringing to a standstill
You will notice thought too is arrested

Or by closing the posterior nares by tongue's tip
And moving prana to the crown of the head
Or by holding consciousness just outside
Twelve inches away from the tip of the nose

Or directing prana into the forehead
Through the palate and the upper aperture
Fixing the prana at eyebrow's center
Eyes turned towards the middle—this arrests thought

Control prana by any of these practices
Gradually it will come under control
Prana controlled—the mind is controlled
It will become quiet and stable for meditation

Vasistha: The Wisdom Way

The movement of prana can be arrested
When hopes and desires come to an end
Through earnest practice of the teachings
From the scriptures, sages and masters

Dispassion arises when one is sincere
And sincerely practices wisdom-teachings
Insight gained by others' realization

Practice makes the experience their own

Dedication to truth is dispassion's dawn
Requisite for meditation and inquiry
The discipline throws light on the path
The way is seen as one treads vigilantly

By regular meditation one discovers
Cosmic energy or shakti's wonder
One sees all forms that do appear
Are but her play only within consciousness

Only when cosmic energy or shakti
Merges again with consciousness
That meditation can take one deeper within
And the fullness of Brahman be realized

Vasistha: The Heart-Center

Mental conditioning can completely cease
If the prana is held in the heart-center
For a long time with protracted practice
As this leads to pranic and mental arrest

The physical heart is just an organ
Its concern is with the physical body
The heart we are referring to in heart-center
Is of the nature of pure consciousness

This heart is not just in the body
It is inside, outside, neither in nor out
In it the entire universe is reflected
It is the treasure house of all wealth

Consciousness alone is the heart of all
It is the substratum, source and sustainer
With the mind free of conditioning
It gathers in the heart—prana is restrained

Vasistha: Using a Focus Point

Any focus point can be used as an aid
To restrain prana by centering attention
Eyebrow center, palate or crown of head
Or twelve inches from the tip of the nose

Concentration may appear to be distracting

It is helpful in going beyond distractions
An undistracted mind is free of sorrow
It becomes the source of joy and happiness

Restraining attention—restrains prana
Then seeking self-knowledge alone remains
World-appearance does not oppose liberation
Liberation is to be had while living here

Vasistha: Practice is Essential

The peace resulting from true yoga practice
Allows one the right vision of the truth
To see the supreme self as the self of all
To see the infinite self in all and as all

Our erroneous vision is the root of sorrow
It brings rebirth, more suffering and grief
We still cling to and nourish this deadly serpent
And cry for relief when it spews its venom

Subject-object relationships don't exist
Pure, undivided consciousness alone is
All relationships presuppose division
Melting in non-division is liberation

The sage is firmly established in the self
Desires and pleasures do not bind him
He sees all people, things and conditions
As his very self and rests in perfect equilibrium

One who engages in unrelenting self-inquiry
Is not tempted or swayed by distractions
Though his senses function quite normally
They are not wrongly wired to conditioning

Vasistha Closing Thoughts

O eyes, let all objects rise and fall
They are but changing appearances
Don't gaze long or linger on them
As this gives false value and brings grief

O mind, be the onlooker that you truly are
Countless scenes are seen by the eyes
Why do you get involved in them, O mind
The senses and objects have their own dance

Repeated thinking on imagined relationships
Has enlivened such imagination into reality
These clouds of ignorance must be destroyed
Through unbroken vigilance and self-inquiry

All suffering and grief experienced
Are products of the undisciplined mind
Slay this ghost that does not even exist
By realizing self as the only existence

Earlier I too was tormented by the mind
But have laid this ghost to final rest
I laugh now at my earlier foolishness
The mind is dead—all anxieties are dead as well

The ego-sense is dead beyond resurrection
Brought about through direct inquiry
I am free now and most happy too
You can also attain this very same state

The clouds of doubt and agitation have cleared
I am what I am without any craving at all
When the mind ceases—craving ceases too
You awaken to the grand state of wakefulness

You have to discover this for your own self
That one truth alone exists—not diversity
Only then will you know true happiness
There will be no further need for inquiry

I am the subtle eternal self—omnipresent
I have reached the state unreflected in anything
Beginningless, endless and utterly pure
The mind has merged into infinite consciousness

Knowing by direct experience that I am the all
There is supreme peace beyond comprehension
Let the senses function with objects naturally
I remain unmoved in utter equanimity

I remained in foolishness for a long time
Then inquired for a long time and realized
I am the unconditioned being—through inquiry
Now inquiry is useless—inner silence reigns

I remain in the self—in this inner silence
Unending abode of eternal peace
You too can attain this very state
If only you are sincere and make every effort

11. THE STORY OF VEETAHAVYA

Background

In sage Veetahavya arose burning dispassion
He became disenchanted with worldliness
He saw perverse notions as illusion's seeds
And the suffering that resulted from delusion

Immediately he sat in deep meditation
Firm like a mountain peak—immovable
Withdrawing his senses into their source
Turning the mind on itself in inquiry

Veetahavya's Contemplation

Most unsteady and fickle is this mind
Agitated even when it is introverted
Bouncing back to the senses again and again
Like an unintelligent ball—most shamelessly

Nourished by the senses—it is loyal to them
It continues to grasp what brings great pain
Repelling all attempts to see simple truths
It vehemently opposes change in any way

The very things that cause suffering
Seem delightful to it again and again
Like a monkey does this mind jump
From branch to branch of sorrow's tree

Veetahavya's Inquiry

These five senses are the mind's channels
I see how easily they get totally distracted
Blindly and in vain passionate excitement
They pursue pleasures though they deliver pain

Though inert and insentient are sense channels
The mind rushes through them for experience
I see very clearly that you are inert, O senses
I am consciousness, the real doer—not the mind

The mind functions in consciousness's light
Even as you, O senses, do your functions
Do not entertain false notions of independence
You are neither intelligent nor self-existent

There is nothing at all but consciousness
Just what are you, O most wicked mind
How do you assume doership and experiencing
You are not only deluded but delusion itself

You are neither doer nor experiencer
You are unrelated to anything in any way
Even the notion you feel—'I am alive'
Is totally false as you just don't exist

I am pure consciousness—you are the self
How then does sorrow arise in you
Realize that you are indeed the unlimited
You are pure unconditioned consciousness

Let me gently bring home this point again
Your intelligence is dependent on consciousness
Don't vainly assume doership or experiencing
Live in the realization—consciousness alone is

During harvesting the sickle seems to be doer
But the energy and intelligence is the farmer's
So also with the sword that seems to cut
But the swordsman's energy and intelligence does

O mind, you too are inert in the same way
Energy and intelligence is not yours at all
All is derived from infinite consciousness
It is the doer and experiencer—self of all

Despite many attempts to enlighten you
That the self is the only existence there is
You insist on considering yourself separate
And suffer unnecessarily in your smallness

Realize the truth and be free at once
From the journey of suffering you endure
You not only suffer greatly your own self
But exert to make others suffer as well

O fool—you are infinite consciousness
Why do wallow in self-created filth
Realize the omnipresent is the only reality
Your existence is only an appearance in it

When you realize consciousness is the all
You become the all—immediately
Forget this delusion of identification
With the body-appearance and personality

If you are the self—self exists, not you
If you are inert—you have no existence
So abandon your self-imposed delusion
And realize that infinite self alone exists

You are neither the doer nor the experiencer
You've been used as a channel in instruction
The channel is not at all the reality
Like the sickle and sword earlier mentioned

Why do you grieve and suffer unnecessarily
The self is all-pervading and omnipotent
Self needs not your grief, care or worry
Self alone is—just what's to be feared at all

Just as fragrance is related to the flower
So also your relationship to the self
There is no relationship in any way
As relationship can only exist between two

You are ever agitated—self is ever at peace
There can thus never be any relationship at all
However, if you enter the state of equanimity
You'll be established in infinite consciousness

O senses, I feel your darkness has dispelled
By the light of all my admonitions
O mind, do you see the error of your ways
Or do you wish to continue loitering shamelessly

Why don't you see how desires and greed
Have reduced you to a state of beggary
All good qualities have been eroded
By your lust and appetite—death now awaits

O mind when you cease to be—goodness blossoms
There's no more doubt—peace and purity reign
Doubt, error, worry, fear and anxiety too
Are all abandoned when you cease to be

Light shines brightly when darkness is dispelled
Oceans are calm when winds stop agitating
Self-knowledge reveals itself without you
Infinite consciousness experiences itself only

As long as there are even roots of desires
There cannot be peace, happiness or calm
These roots sprout and suck all nourishment
For their own survival—most selfishly

Desires seek appeasement for themselves
They care not one bit for anyone or anything
Appeasement is fuel for more appeasement
Desires are vicious winds fanning delusion's fires

He who finds inner strength to resist this trap
Finds more strength as he sincerely persists
Soon he is disentangled from mind's tyranny
And experiences the bliss of self-realization

You are support for desires and hopes, O mind
When either ceases—the other perishes too
You can now choose to be one with reality
Or cease to be an independent entity

In choosing to be one with reality
You act in wisdom—choosing happiness
Or you will perish slowly by malnutrition
And realize you are indeed a non-entity

If you pick wisely that you are consciousness
Who will wish for your non-existence
But if you pick foolishly that you exist, O mind
Your delusion will wear you out painfully

You came into being in ignorance and delusion
By inquiry into your nature you now cease to be
You exist as long as one does not inquire
Into the truth of your non-existence

When the spirit of inquiry is aflame within
Wisdom rises and you, O mind, cease to be
Hence, I salute wisdom—goodbye, O mind
You have now lost all false limitation

You exist now as infinite consciousness
Now that you've lost all your conditioning
In spite of yourself—inquiry arose in you
This is itself the attainment of bliss

There is indeed no mind, O mind
Self alone exists—there is naught else
I am that self—infinite consciousness
My kinetic state appears as the universe

Vasistha's Insight

Veetahavya remained in total quiescence
For three hundred years as if but a day
The body which was reflected in consciousness
Was perfected, protected by it as well

He became one with infinite consciousness
He experienced the experiences of all
Liberated sages exist in all purity and peace
As perfection—Brahman the infinite

Vasistha: Transcend the Unreal

Veetajavya's creations and this, here now
Are both pure infinite consciousness
Appearances are mind's delusions
Mind is itself a trick in consciousness

Realizing the infinite consciousness
The sage knew the play of appearances
He saw all rise and fall in his own self
His body and all other forms as well

He entered into his subtle body
And then into the sun's orbit
Descending then to his physical body
Reviving it though it had earlier withered

Again the sage sat in deep meditation
And negated all imagination from the mind
All notions were discarded and abandoned

He was fully established in total equanimity

His mind was most blissful and balanced
He addressed his mind and offered it praise
Encouraging it to remain just like that
All the time and in all conditions

To the senses he said with firm resolve
"The self does not belong to you at all
Nor do you belong to the self in any way
May you all perish—your cravings have ceased

The error of your existence arose in the self
In the light of wisdom they've ceased to be
Error remains error till knowledge dawns
Then reality alone shines ever radiantly

Established in wisdom he lived a long time
Free of ignorance and resulting errors
His heart free of attraction and aversion
Through all experiences that came unsought

To ensure embodiment would be again
He entered deep meditation once more
And sequentially separated all from self
As he intoned the sacred mantra Om

All mind's earlier desires were utterly still
Well-grounded in non-dual consciousness
Continuing to intone the sacred mantra Om
He pierced through the darkness of ignorance

He renounced all visions and experiences
Had along the way in inner journey
Transcending both darkness and light too
And remained in pure infinite consciousness

He then abandoned objectivity of consciousness
Then even the slightest movements within
Negating all by—'not-this, not-this'
He became that—beyond description

Becoming one with infinite consciousness
His body decomposed back to the elements
This story just narrated of sage Veetahavya

Was born of direct perception and experience

Meditate on what has been said ceaselessly
And attain to liberation by your own effort
Liberation is attained by self-knowledge alone
Only then will you go beyond all sorrow

What has been described as Veetahavya
Is notion in the mind—just like you or me
The senses and world too are but the mind
Just what else can the world be, O Rama

Vasistha: Real Sages

Sages are established in self-knowledge
They don't perform tricks or conjure things
Only those devoid of self-knowledge
Feel the need to deceive by impressing

The sage is utterly content in himself
He does not pursue or showcase powers
He does not lead a lavish, extravagant life
Those who do such are full of ignorance

Anyone can attain by some practices
Power to manifest things as if magic
These are gained by those full of desires
The sage of self-knowledge avoids them

12. DEATH OF THE MIND

Two Types of Mind Death

There are two types of death of the mind
When the mind's form remains and ceases to be
While living when the mind's form still remains
On disembodiment even the mind's form perishes

Existence of the mind causes great misery
Its cessation brings great joy and delight
The mind that is caught in its conditioning
Brings repeated births and unhappiness

That which regards beginningless qualities its own
Is without self-knowledge—the unhappy individual
When the mind perishes, world-appearance does too
The mind is indeed the seed for all misery

When both happiness and unhappiness
Do not divert one from his equanimity
All notions having ceased—his mind is dead
He is liberated while still living

The very nature of the mind is stupidity
When the mind dies—purity and virtue reign
Some call mind's death—the pure or big mind
This state of utter purity of a liberated sage

Natural goodness exists in the liberated sage
Noble qualities abound in him naturally
This is also known as purity or sattva
Also called death of mind with form

Death of the mind without form
Pertains to the disembodied sage
Not even a trace of the mind remains
It cannot be described in a positive way

Neither light nor darkness, no conditioning
Neither existence nor non-existence, no notions
A state of supreme quiescence and equilibrium
Beyond mind and intelligence—supreme peace

The seed of world-appearance is within
All notions and concepts of good and evil
This seed of notions and concepts is the mind
Which constantly moves and brings sorrow

The mind is the repository of notions of being
World-appearance arises in the mind only
The dream-state illustrates this clearly
Whatever is seen is mind's expansion only

Two Seeds & Two Ways

The two seeds are there of the mind
Notions and ideas carry on with these
Movement of life-force or prana
And obstinately clinging to a fancy

When prana moves in consciousness
Mind arises—world-appearance is seen
When pranic movement is made to be still
The world-appearance subsides as well

Pranic movement agitates consciousness
It apprehends ideas and objects as real
Great sorrow is experienced in this confusion
Sleep puts this to rest—is why we enjoy sleep

In sleep we experience the dead mind
But are not conscious and return the same
So one of the two seeds of mind's mischief
Must be the way to put the mind to rest

First is restraint of life-force or prana
Practiced by yogis as pranayama
Meditation and other practices too
But pranayama brings quiescence best

Second is practices in the wisdom path
Tackling obstinate clinging and fancies directly
This is what disallows inquiry of truth
And is described as conditioning or limitation

When such fancies are indulged in repeatedly
World-appearance arises in consciousness
When conditioning is thinned to transparency
One becomes a liberated sage while still living

Past momentum sustains the sage's life
He will never incur rebirth again
The seed has been fried beyond germination
He'll be absorbed in the infinite when the body falls

Adopt One Way

Adopt one way—one seed of the two
Arresting prana or quelling obstinate fancy
When one is dried up the other dries too
Both are completely interdependent

Pranic movement is due to obstinacy
Obstinacy causes the prana to move
A vicious cycle is thus completed
Feeding on each other—forcing action

Motion is natural to life-force or prana
When it moves in consciousness—mind arises
Conditioning quickly takes over prana's movement
If one is arrested—both will surely fall

The notion of an object is the seed for both
Be it object of knowledge or that of experience
Instantly prana moves and obstinacy rises
A tempest for experience is felt in the heart

When such desire for experience is abandoned
Movement of prana and obstinacy instantly cease
But indwelling consciousness is desire's seed
Neither desire nor experience are otherwise possible

Consciousness has no object outside or inside
As consciousness alone exists—naught else
This truth has to be realized by direct experience
For the illusion, suffering and bondage to cease

Strive to eradicate desire for experience
Get rid of idleness and lethargy
Free yourself from all experiences
Rest contented as infinite consciousness

Both Reconciled

One without desire or hopes for anything
Does not exist as an individual jiva
He is neither inactive or lethargic
Nor does he seek to experience

Though engaged in ceaseless activity
He does not act nor is he inactive
Though he seems to experience all
He does not experience anything

Objectivity has been removed from his heart
He is a liberated sage—here and now
So objective experiences do not touch him
He continues to act though inactive

Destroying the Seeds of Sorrow

If you can cut at one stroke all conditioning
You will by that great effort be free instantly
Resting in pure existence that very moment
In time you will be well established in it

This of course requires gigantic will
Like crossing the ocean in a single breath
There are other incremental ways

To get a foothold and gradually cross

The incremental way takes greater effort
As ground is lost with each little gain
Old impressions tighten their hold
With each time you get involved in them

Still, some gain is better than no gain at all
And if you are sincere—momentum will gain
So strive to destroy all conditioning
Consisting of concepts, notions, habits and such

Of this one must be most careful and firm
Or success will elude and there may be fall
You cannot afford to add any conditioning
When traveling the incremental path beyond

The mind has to be made free of all movement
Thought has to cease its wayward activity
Cessation of conditioning is indeed difficult
Truth has to be realized with each careful step

Each step has to be walked *as if* the final step
Heedlessness is invitation to great disaster
Relentless vigilance is your only guide
The path is seen as you carefully tread

Realization of truth and cessation of mind
And ending of conditioning are interwoven
Truth has to be seen in these simultaneously
It is difficult to deal with these individually

Renounce pursuit of pleasure with all your power
Resort to these three simultaneously
If these are practiced simultaneously for long
They become fruitful—never otherwise

You must be persistent in your practice
Of these three together at the same time
World-appearance has been seen as truth
For a very long time—now overcome it

The wise declare abandonment of conditioning
And restraint of prana to have equal effect
Hence practice both of them simultaneously

Right practice of yoga asanas will aid greatly too

When desires and aversions do not arise
Though objects of desire appear as well
Infer mental conditioning has weakened
Wisdom has started dawning within

You are most vulnerable in these little gains
As it is easy to feel you are free of pull
Never relax vigilance and simple living
Till the mind has completely ceased to be

Killing the Mind

Means to overcome and kill the mind include
Knowledge of self and company of holy men
Abandonment of conditioning and prana restraint
These are the most effective means and the way

Peace can only be had on the mind's demise
From the mind's ashes rises self-knowledge
Other practices do not aim to destroy the mind
Which is the cause of all suffering

All actions must be without attachment
The organs act—one is ever unaffected
Joy, grief and sorrow don't touch one
Whose actions are free—non-volitional

Eyes see, ears hear and body touches
One is not involved in any of these
This is real contact-disassociation
It burns attachment and world-appearance

Contact-association fuels attachment
It results in bondage and endless sorrow
Abandonment of attachment is liberation
The wise abandon attachment and are free

Attachment is that which increases conditioning
By repetition of experiences of pleasure and pain
In relation to what exists or is imagined
To the objects of pleasure in any way

New associations are wired in the mind
Old ones are reinforced and strengthened

This confirmation brings intense attachment
To objects of pleasure—invitations to pain

First free conditioning from experiences
Such as joy, grief, sorrow and such
This greatly weakens existing conditioning
Refused any nourishment thus it is starved

Weaker conditioning is easy to see
And bypass like a stone on the road
Soon conditioning becomes mere memory
The snake's venom sacs have been removed

Fools continue to fatten conditioning
Whatever be the guise and social acceptance
In heedlessness—silence is consent
Bondage is always increased willfully

Conditioning is the seed of perverse notions
Actions that result from it increase bondage
Actions free of conditioning will not bind you
As they are spontaneous—thus non-actions

Rise beyond joy and sorrow—seeing them alike
Unattachment will free you from attraction
Aversion, fear and grief will leave you
When you're unattached—-independent of desires

Carry on your activities right here in the world
Truth does not escape from the inconvenient
It does not require outer cosmetic change
Its pillars rise from inner transformation

Awareness of the homogeneity of truth
Snaps the careless habits of attachment
Self-knowledge rises when you let go
Of pettiness resulting from heedless living

When polarized vision is abandoned
Equal vision is found instantly in its place
Remain established in non-attachment
Live liberated without attraction's pull

The sage lives in inner silence
Without pride, vanity or jealousy

With senses fully under control
Free of craving—beyond temptation

His actions are not based on conditioning
Nor hopes, desires or outcome in any way
He does what needs to be done—letting go
Actions never continue in him psychologically

Whatever is inevitable and appropriate
The sage does joyfully and with delight
But in him delight rises from within
And not from hopes or any results

Thus he lives free from world-appearance
Just as milk stays white even when boiled
He never abandons his wisdom
Even when tested by calamities

Whether he be subjected to pain or ridicule
Whether accolades are poured on him
Or heaven's rulership be offered to him
The sage remains in a balanced state of mind