

# THE YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

## CHAPTER SIX

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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 SIX

### Section Dealing with Liberation

#### 1. DEALING WITH LIBERATION

##### *What has been taught*

---

Contemplate the truth taught thus far  
Again and again but not mechanically  
Reflect on it from beginning to end  
March along the path you then see

Different activities will not bind you  
If your intelligence saturates with truth  
Otherwise fall is most inevitable  
Elephants too fall from cliffs sometimes

If you conceptualize this teaching  
And do not let it act in your life  
Great will be the danger to yourself  
You will stumble and fall like a blind man

To attain perfection and liberation  
Live a life of utter non-attachment  
Doing what is best as it reaches you  
This is the most important factor of all

Remember well what has been taught  
It is capable of awakening inner intelligence  
Resort then to this unconditioned mind  
With it, you will be able to cross samsara

Cosmic consciousness is the existence  
Know this and be free of the ego-sense  
No mind, ignorance or individual soul exist  
All these are concepts that have arisen

##### *The arising of ignorance*

---

When the body is considered as the self  
The self relates to all that is seen  
Hope in the seen—will surely arise  
Giving rise to delusion concerning mind

The illusory notion of mind's existence  
Persists as long as truth is not realized  
Hence resort to the company of the wise

Till wickedness falls, as they are unattached

### *The arising of wisdom*

---

As long as world-experience still seems real  
Clear perception of truth has not dawned  
Blind dependence and craving will persist  
Wickedness and delusion the consequence

One who is not attracted by pleasure  
Has a cool heart because of its purity  
Desires, cravings and hopes are fire  
That burn and cause great heat within

When the body too is seen as an effect  
Of delusion arisen within somehow  
The mind does not seem to arise  
As it has lost its foothold and support

When incorrect perception comes to an end  
The sun of self-knowledge rises within  
The mind is reduced to naught and unseen  
Burnt completely—just as dry leaves

### *Liberated ones*

---

Those who are liberated while still living  
See both—truth and relative appearance  
Seen directly by the inner intelligence  
It is sattva, transparency—not the mind

Knowers of truth are in perfect equilibrium  
Living their life here playfully, as it were  
Though engaged in diverse actions  
They behold the inner light continually

Concepts of unity and duality do not arise  
There are no tendencies in the enlightened heart  
The seeds of ignorance have been burnt  
Delusion never rises in sattva's abode

### *You can reach this state too*

---

Reach this state of sattva or transparency  
Hold onto wisdom—'tis light on the path  
Infinite Brahman is Infinite Brahman  
The reality of world-appearance as well

Appearances are insentient and unreal  
Their substratum is pure consciousness  
Since the substratum is reality itself  
Appearances exist as appearances in it

Recollect your essential nature  
Abandon all notions of diversity  
You are the self-luminous being  
Salutations to the cosmic being

That which is known as Rama  
Is infinite consciousness in truth  
In it rise and fall numerous universes  
Remain in equanimity like infinite space

Fire is inseparable from heat  
Fragrance from the lotus flower  
Experiencing too is inseparable  
From infinite consciousness

Experiencing is inseparable from consciousness  
Ego-sense is inseparable from experiencing  
The individual is inseparable from ego-sense  
The mind is inseparable from the individual

The senses are inseparable from the mind  
The body is inseparable from the senses  
The world is inseparable from the body  
And, there is nothing but this world

These dependent categories have always been  
Not created or set into motion somehow  
The truth is that there is naught else  
But self-experiencing of the infinite

There is emptiness in the empty  
Brahman pervades Brahman  
Truth ever shines in truth  
And fullness fills fullness

Remain so with a heart pure as space  
Do what naturally needs to be done  
Remain unaffected by praise or censure  
Above likes and dislikes—witnessing all

Be free of egoistic volitional activity  
Utterly non-attached to people and things  
Free of all concepts and tendencies  
Free of conditioning like a lamp without oil

If you have listened most attentively  
Ignorance should have left you by now  
You should be well—resting in the self  
Free from all conditioning, and happy

### *Truth declared again*

---

Listen attentively while I declare again  
Truth which expands one's consciousness  
Even if you are not fully awakened yet  
Listening attentively will save you from sorrow

In ignorance one assumes body as self  
The senses then become one's worst enemies  
If one is endowed with self-knowledge  
The senses are then pleasant and contented

The self is never affected by the body  
Nor is body related to self in any way  
They are like light and darkness  
You must understand this very clearly

Understanding how both really are  
Gives insight into all of creation  
Not from its changing appearances  
But from the truth that stays unseen

When this truth is not understood  
Delusion arises and flourishes within  
Notions devoid of any substance  
Are taken as truth—one suffers greatly

In the absence of direct self-knowledge  
Notions carry one hither and thither  
The senses try to apprehend objects  
And imagine meaningful experience

Infinite consciousness does dwell in all  
But absence of direct self-knowledge  
Gives rise to limited finite appearances  
One mistakes these as something real

Life-force provides energy for living  
It is not meant for personal gain  
In the absence of direct self-knowledge  
One misuses it—and suffers dire consequences

Fools harness life-force for selfish ends  
Not knowing they are playing with fire  
Which will surely ricochet most fiery  
And extract the price of foolish indulgence

The company of such indulgent fools  
Is like sitting on a tree—soon to be felled  
Anything given to them is thrown into mud  
To converse with them is utterly meaningless

Ignorance of self is the seed of all trouble  
All sorrows and calamities stem from it  
Ignorance pervades and sustains creation  
Terrible sorrow repeatedly visits the ignorant

The tree of infatuation grows in the wicked heart  
The fire of hate rages in that forest too  
Jealousy and destructive criticism are the floods  
Flowers of envy are sought by the bees of worry

Death is meant only for such vicious fools  
Birth, childhood, youth and old age  
Ending again in the experience of death  
Repeatedly experienced by the ignorant

With small fleshy eyes one sees some earth  
He regards these as forests and cities  
He sees women who are dressed nicely  
And regards them as pleasure objects

He sees affluence, wealth and prosperity  
And regards them as joy and security  
Pain and pleasure are not in objects  
They are in misguided inner 'regarding'

It is utter ignorance to regard anything  
Anyone or anything as pleasurable or not  
As these are not parts of people and things  
These are one's self-subscribed delusions

Pursuing what one regards as pleasure  
And avoiding what is regarded as pain  
This is the business of ignorant fools  
The price for this is their suffering

Like a beginningless river is delusion  
It gets muddier as it flows along  
From useless actions and reactions  
Carrying great sorrow downstream

Unable to satisfy all one's desires  
Overworked one is under-cultured  
Outwardly rich—inwardly bankrupt  
Desires and expectations invite death

Dissatisfaction and unhappiness is poverty  
Affluence cannot mask inner emptiness  
See—all that is chased is insubstantial  
It only increases delusion and brings senility

Creation has no real substantiality  
It's only substance is utter delusion  
Appearances seem to invite life-force  
Which takes you along if not vigilant

The decadent concept of world-appearance  
Imprisoned in the senses, bound by conditioning  
Hopes and desires are the threads  
Of binding chords that are self-imposed

Like a delicate creeper is world-appearance  
Constantly trembling against prana's winds  
Which sheds all kinds of beings ruthlessly  
Abandoning them to their destruction

Many have risen above this quagmire  
World-appearance is indeed living hell  
Actions polluted by vain desires of fruit  
Swallowed by the obstinacy of action's end

Diverse scenes rise and cease daily  
Like ripples and waves in the ocean  
The ignorant are bound by their notions  
Blow after hard blow fails to awaken them

Creatures and insects silently endure  
All opposites nature afflicts them with  
Contemplating as it were through it all  
Of their own past evil actions until death

All prosperity and adversity in life's march  
From childhood to old age and into death  
Immersion in happiness and unhappiness  
All extensions of dense darkness of ignorance

Ignorance expands by means of ignorance  
Yielding a harvest of greater ignorance  
When it seeks wisdom, it gets cleansed  
Growing into wisdom like winter to spring

Ignorance's creeper twists and turns  
As it wraps itself around its ignorant host  
Somewhere, somehow wisdom is encountered  
Purified a little but it twists and turns again

Memory of past experiences sustains ignorance  
Sustained self-inquiry eats ignorance away  
The creeper manifests as all the world you see  
When transcended—self-knowledge is attained

### *Vasistha: On Ignorance*

---

Existence-consciousness-bliss absolute  
Truth concerning this is beyond thought  
Beyond understanding and imagination  
The faculty of conceptualization arises in it

This self-understanding is considered threefold  
Regarded as subtle, middling and gross  
Or sattva, rajas and tamas in Sanskrit  
These three combined constitute nature

Ignorance is nature and it is threefold  
Each have the same three subdivisions  
These nine qualities constitute the universe  
Beyond this is the source of all beings

Different beings are constituted differently  
Depending on their own inner evolution  
Anyone can reach the highest rung  
Of liberation while living and dispel ignorance

Self-knowledge is transformation itself  
Ignorance gets illumined when it dawns  
Like ripples dissolving in the calm ocean  
Ignorance dissolves in self-knowledge

These distinctions however are just verbal  
Real distinctions do not exist at all  
There is neither ignorance nor self-knowledge  
Infinite consciousness is the only existence

Cease to see knowledge and ignorance  
As different entities—what exists alone exists  
The reflection of knowledge within itself  
Is what is considered to be ignorance

Abandoning both notions—truth remains  
It may be something or nothing  
It is omnipotent, empty but not empty  
Because it is full of consciousness

Like space in a pot is everywhere too  
Indestructible—it is the reality in all things  
It's very presence causes cosmic motion  
Hence it is said it does nothing at all

In rocks, consciousness remains immobile  
Abandoning its thinking faculty, so to say  
It is like the state of deep sleep  
Far away from the state of liberation

Liberation is the state of supreme peace  
Intelligent inquiry is required to discover  
The nature of self which ignorance covers  
When brought out is called awakening

Investigation into the truth is requisite  
The teachings of scriptures are helpful  
As is the company of enlightened sages  
For realization of identity with pure being

As long as conditioning exists in the heart  
Even in its most subtle 'seed' state  
It should be regarded as deep-sleep state  
As it gives rise to rebirth and sorrow

Objects like rocks that appear insentient  
Are not free from self-limitation or vasana  
It is latent in them like flowers in seeds  
Which sprout and yield flowers in due time

Where the seed of self-limitation exists  
That state is like deep sleep—not perfection  
All self-limitation or vasana must be destroyed  
Even a trace will disallow experience of perfection

When all self-limitation is completely removed  
One is established in the state of pure being  
Whether such a one is alive or not  
He is never afflicted by sorrow again

Energy-consciousness exists in all  
But stays latent in immobile forms  
It is this that determines the nature of each  
The inner arrangement of molecules as well

This energy-consciousness or chit-shakti  
Is the energy of infinite consciousness  
Non-different from infinite consciousness  
This realized directly destroys all sorrow

Non-seeing of this truth is ignorance  
Cause of the world-appearance you see  
Just as the rising of a thought destroys sleep  
Inner intelligence awakening destroys ignorance

When approaching darkness with light in hand  
It vanishes—it is simply not found to exist  
So also when one begins to inquire within  
Ignorance too ceases—found not to exist

Self-inquiry is direct looking within  
To see the truth without any thought  
'What is I' in this body of constituents  
Composition of blood, flesh, bone and such

Instantly—ignorance ceases to be  
That with a beginning has end as well  
When all with beginning are ruled out  
Ignorance ceases—what remains is truth

That which is to be sought can be regarded  
Either as something or as no-thing  
It IS when ignorance has been dispelled  
Each has to realize that for himself

Ignorance is belief in anything as real  
As existing outside cosmic consciousness  
When realization dawns—all is Brahman  
Ignorance ceases—it cannot be found

### *Truth Declared, Still Again*

---

Let me repeat once again this truth  
For the sake of your spiritual awakening  
Realization of truth does not happen  
Without such repetition—spiritual practice

Ignorance has become dense by repetition  
In thousands of births and experiences  
Expressed, experienced and expressed again  
Within and outside of this body

Self-knowledge is beyond reach of the senses  
It arises when mind and senses cease  
Live firmly established in self-knowledge  
Having known what there is to be known

Many have attained to the supreme state  
You too can lead the enlightened life  
Beyond the reach of sorrow and grief  
Firmly established in self-knowledge

## **2. ON BRAHMAN**

All that appears as this world-jugglery  
Is absolute consciousness—Brahman only  
Anywhere, anytime, there is naught else  
This world, the elements, is Brahman only

I, yourself, enemies, friends and relatives  
All that seems to exist in periods of time  
Are rooted in Brahman, there is naught else  
As ripples are non-different from the ocean

On account of inherent infinite variety  
It seems to expand and appear diverse  
This too is possible by its own power

Which is non-different from itself only

Attraction, repulsion, likes and dislikes  
Are all imaginative modes of the mind  
The absence of thought is their destruction  
Bringing to end the expansive appearance

Brahman alone moves in all as itself  
Unfolding all and collapsing all within  
Just what do you call joy or sorrow  
When there is neither 'I' nor another

All you see including 'I' is Brahman  
Passion, dispassion, craving and aversion  
These are but imagined notions  
As birth, body and death too is Brahman

In Brahman things come together  
In Brahman do they move apart  
Never coming together or moving apart  
As Brahman is the absolute reality

What is the cause of sorrow and grief  
What is there to be rejoicing about  
Waves moving about on the ocean  
Always remains water—ever unchanged

The agitation we see is an appearance  
The mind imagines division in delusion  
Quickly classifying I as the individual  
And things as insentient matter foolishly

What you consider insentient matter  
Is a contrast with yourself as sentient  
Notions arisen your mind somehow  
The wise do not hold such erroneous views

The world is full of sorrow to the ignorant  
This same world is full of bliss to the wise  
Just as the world is dark to the blind  
Being full of light to one who has sight

Brahman alone exists, all exist in him  
Just as ripples exist in the ocean  
They are not born, they do not die

'This is' and 'is not' are deluded notions

These notions do not have a cause at all  
Nor do they have any motivation  
Just as crystal reflects different objects  
So too do notions arise as reflections

Self remains itself—notions or not  
Just as the ocean with or without ripples  
Independent entities just do not exist  
What is seen as the body is but a notion

Objects of perception that look so real  
People and all the forms of life too  
Thoughts, feelings and the inner world  
Are all Brahman only—there is naught else

Duality exists in the eyes of the ignorant  
Mind, intellect, ego-sense and elements  
Senses and all the diverse phenomena  
Are all Brahman only—there is naught else

Just as a single sound reechoes into diversity  
Brahman experiences multiplicity within itself  
As a dreamer dreams many diverse dreams  
All dream objects are within—and himself only

Gold is not recognized when mixed with earth  
Brahman is not recognized with impurity  
Ignorance is non-recognition of truth  
Get rid of it now—experience what seers see

Brahman being omnipotent appears as all  
Devoid of any transformation or change  
When this is known, ignorance is dispelled  
As one appearing as a stranger is recognized

You must know by direct experience  
That duality is an illusory appearance  
'This is not I'—this has to be realized  
From this arises unwavering dispassion

Notions of 'I' and 'you' are dispelled  
Realizing all you see is indeed Brahman  
From a blade of grass to the highest mountain

All and everything is non-dual Brahman

All things exist and flow from Brahman  
Omnipresent—the only self there is  
Pure consciousness—devoid of objectivity  
It is pure light—referred to variously

In its light do all and everything shine  
As if they had light of their very own  
I am that Brahman—pure consciousness  
Sparks of whom rise and reflect continually

Only appearing to be in contact in experience  
Because of the ego-sense of the conditioned  
Yet beyond their reach—untouched by them  
The source of all happiness and delight

Free of all notions like pleasure and pain  
I am eternal, ever pure consciousness  
In which there is true experiencing  
Pure intelligence without interference

That intelligent energy functioning as all  
That pure consciousness manifesting as all  
That imperishable light of all lights am I  
Peaceful and pure—supreme Brahman I am

I am that consciousness in between  
All objects that are seen in sunlight  
The very self of the seer and the seen  
Unbroken in all states and conditions

The taste of sugarcane juice is one  
Though it derives from many plants  
So also I am the consciousness  
Indwelling all beings and everything

I am that consciousness-energy  
Larger than the vast universe  
Yet subtler than a single atom  
Invisible—the nature of experiencing

Jewelry made of gold is gold only  
In the same way all is consciousness  
Pervading all without any change

Appearing different due to conditioning

Consciousness bestows fruits of all thoughts  
Light that alone shines—the supreme gain  
Pervading all, ever awake and alert  
Its energy gives appearances of diversity

Consciousness is the only reality  
Bestower of differing characteristics  
Making substances appear different  
While never losing its homogeneity

Continuous and uniform in all states  
Waking, dream, deep sleep and the fourth  
It shines resplendent when all thoughts cease  
When all agitating excitements have ceased as well

Devoid of desire and indivisible  
Indweller of all—still beyond diversity  
The cosmic net in which all are caught  
But ever unchanged though manifest

The nature of being and non-being  
Resting place of all that is good and divine  
It alone plays the roles of all beings  
Still forever united and liberated

The life of all living beings you see  
Uncreated—the ever existent reality  
Reflected variously in sense-experience  
Yet senses can never know or experience

In it do all beings rejoice at all times  
It itself is pure bliss and beyond all joy  
Like space but far beyond space it is  
Seemingly doing all though it does nothing

All this is 'I' and all this is 'mine'  
But I am not 'I' nor 'other than I'  
Realizing this I am free of distress  
Let the world-illusion be just what it is

Established in this, sages have lived  
Long lives in perfect peace and equanimity  
Free from psychological predisposition

Not rejecting either life or death

Unshaken in their direct experience  
Firm like a mountain they roamed about  
Engaging in activities that seemed natural  
Doing what felt best needed to be done

Their minds had fully entered sattva  
Free from delusion and egoistic notions  
Free from all desires and achievement  
Ever-balanced at the results of actions

Equal vision in praise and censure  
Balanced in defeat and success  
Therefore beyond grief and despair  
And able to function most naturally

Follow their example and be ever free  
Make the personality absolutely egoless  
Let appropriate actions proceed from you  
Resting in indivisible infinite consciousness

Infinite consciousness alone is the truth  
It is the reality in which appearances arise  
Diversity is neither real nor unreal  
Be unattached to anything and beyond grief

### 3. BHUSUNDA'S STORY - THE WAY OF YOGA

#### *The Two Paths*

---

Yoga is the way of mind's transcendence  
Crossing over the cycles of birth and death  
Two main approaches comprise the means  
Self-knowledge and restraint of life-force

Yoga has somehow come to be associated  
With restraint of life-force or prana  
The path of self-knowledge is difficult for some  
Similarly, yoga's path is difficult for others

My conviction is that inquiry is easy for all  
Because truth inquired into is ever-present  
Let me first shed light on the yoga path  
Restraint of life-force to transcend mind

#### *Bhusunda - The Long Lived*

---

In one corner of infinite consciousness  
A mirage-like world appears, so to say  
I once heard a great sage's discussion  
On an ancient story of long-lived beings

On a tree in a far away distant land  
Dwells a crow known as Bhusunda  
Free from attraction and aversion  
He has lived longer than any I know

Inspired at hearing Bhusunda's story  
I set out to meet him personally  
Knowing sages can assume any form  
Bhusunda had lived many world-cycles

It was tremendous to be in his presence  
He had perfect memory of ages gone by  
Free from 'I-ness', friend to all was he  
Remaining silent unless he needed to speak

### *Meeting Bhusunda*

---

I humbly approached this ancient one  
He recognized me instantly as sage Vasistha  
Explaining the purpose of my visit  
I asked for his wisdom to my questions

I asked to know a little more about him  
How long he had lived and its secret  
Important things about ages past  
And what was ordained about his life

### *Bhusunda's Reply*

---

Listen attentively to the story I narrate  
It will destroy the sins of all who listen  
Very long ago a female deity existed  
Who had for her vehicle a powerful crow

The crow mated and had many offspring  
I was born as one of the little crows  
We approached our wise father one day  
For his sagacious council and guidance

The female deity had already instructed us  
On self-knowledge and the way to liberation  
We practiced and attained both of them

And wished to know where best to dwell

In accordance with our father's instructions  
We came here, making this our abode to dwell  
Ages have passed, my brothers have left  
All ascending to the heavenly realm

### *Bhusunda's Timeless Wisdom*

---

Through ages of time I continue to dwell here  
Though life as a crow is held in contempt by most  
The creator provides for even this lone crow  
Allowing survival through time and calamities

I remain established and immersed in the self  
Ever content with whatever comes naturally  
Cheerful under all conditions or calamities  
Having abandoned vain self-centered activity

Useless activities drain body and mind  
Anxiety is a great drain—abandon it  
You can do this if you avoid seeking  
Anything but that which comes naturally

Mentally abandon body identification  
Establish yourself in self-knowledge  
Remain where you are, rise above time  
Through the practice of pranayama

Great peace you will know in the heart  
Events in the world will not affect you  
Things and people will come and go  
To and fro into the ocean of time

Standing on the shore you are ever dry  
The shore is the changeless, steady state  
You remain calm—ever unaffected  
Untouched by the splashing waves of change

Engage yourself in diverse activities  
In doing the needful there can be no harm  
Avoid drowning in mental modifications  
And never lose contact with reality

When one is firmly rooted in truth  
Time and tide lose their strength

Changes come and changes go  
You continue to exist as truth

During the great cosmic dissolution  
I meditated on firmness as a mountain  
When creation resumed in a new age  
I meditated on water and flowed with it

Thus meditating differently in midst of change  
I was perfectly adapted to all change  
One cannot survive winds of change  
If one adamantly resists the new winds

During the dawn of new creation  
I meditated as wind and gently flowed  
When nature gradually matured to shape  
I resumed my abode in this very nest

The supreme being cannot be transgressed  
One must align himself with his will  
It is his will that things should be one way  
Discover how to be one with everything

### *Bhusunda: Memories of Ages*

---

I remember earth without much at all  
No trees, plants or even mountains  
Covered in lava, only partly illumined  
Inhabited by all sorts of strange beings

Waters covered vast areas of earth  
Then emerged forests and great mountains  
Humans appeared after quite some time  
What is now has appeared in many cycles

### *Bhusunda: On Pranayama*

---

Death does not wish to kill those souls  
Who are free from attraction and aversion  
False notions, mental habits and perversions  
Desires, hopes, greed, lust and hate

If you are established in pure awareness  
Undistracted by the mind and at peace  
Untouched by the evils of lust and hate  
You are inseparable with the natural order

Meditation on the infinite consciousness  
Eliminates sorrow and ignorance its cause  
Purifying and restoring the heart of one  
Who experiences self directly in meditation

One can also meditate on the life-force  
This is the secret of longevity—my way  
This too bestows self-knowledge and freedom  
And overcomes all delusion permanently

This body is supported by three pillars  
The three sheaths or the three nadis  
It is endowed with nine gates or openings  
Protected vehemently by the ego-sense

Body is an assemblage of the elements  
The inner instrument or antahkarna  
In the middle are subtle ida and pingala  
Left and right subtle energy channels

There are three lotus-like wheels  
Vital airs can cause them to vibrate  
Two vital airs are especially important  
Prana is above and apana below

I'm completely dedicated to these two  
They are free from fatigue and tiredness  
In the heart they shine like sun and moon  
They are like the cartwheels of the mind

Prana is established in the upper part  
Apana dwells in the lower portion  
Both constantly move in and out  
With practice they can be controlled

When the apana has ceased to move  
And prana arises not from the heart  
Both these must begin to happen  
It is called retention or kumbhaka

Three points are there for the three  
Inhalation, retention and exhalation  
In front of the forehead; outside the nose;  
And in the heart-lotus—prana's source

By devoted practice gradually restrain  
The vital airs which are restless naturally  
Restraint or kumbhaka brings about  
Rest in the mind's ceaseless activity

When the heart's impurities are cleansed  
By sincere devotion to prana and apana  
One is freed from the grip of delusion  
Attaining awakening and inner peace

If you are able to reach that space  
Where apana and prana do unite  
You will soar high beyond all grief  
Transcending samsara—never born again

Prana modifies itself to apana  
After abandoning its burning heat  
Then abandons its coolness  
Rising upward as prana again

One must know the truth directly  
About energies inner movements  
The same energy animates everything  
Including thoughts that agitate the mind

Control of the inner vital airs  
Destroys darkness of ignorance  
As ignorance loses its fuel source  
And cannot operate as delusion

While inner darkness continues  
One sees things under its influence  
When the heart is thoroughly purified  
Self-knowledge is experienced

### *Bhusunda: Observing Energy*

---

If one keenly observes the exact spot  
Where prana is consumed by apana  
Where in turn apana consumes prana  
The mind becomes peaceful, free of grief

Behold within yourself directly  
Where inhalation turns to exhalation  
Where exhalation turns to inhalation  
The precise location and moment of change

The wise regard this place and time  
Of energy's change as most important  
Right there between that change  
Is pure infinite consciousness

Infinite consciousness indwells  
Prana and apana as with all else  
It not only animates prana and apana  
It is the substratum of both and all

All things abide in that consciousness  
All things and beings does it animate  
All power and energy is consciousness  
Infinite consciousness is the only reality

### *Bhusunda Concludes*

---

I salute both prana and apana  
Appearing as energy movement  
Animated and indwelt by consciousness  
I take refuge in infinite consciousness

By regular and systematic practice  
Of pranayama described by me  
You too can reach total equanimity  
And attain happiness and immortality

Contemplation on the movement  
Of the union of prana and apana  
Confers the highest good on one  
Total freedom from all conditioning

You'll be free of the body's clutches  
And the mind's relentless tyranny  
You'll rejoice with the great one's  
Who have crossed samsara's shores

I rejoice in the state of pure bliss  
Friend of all—belonging to none  
None belong to me as I now know  
I am the world and its inner intelligence

### *Vasistha Concludes*

---

I lauded the great Bhusunda  
Who humbly praised me in return  
Thanking me for the great blessing

Of visiting him after so very long

Such is the nature of great ones  
For all their great accomplishments  
They feel it is nothing special really  
As all can and should attain to it

Practice pranayama with devotion  
If you want to bring peace in the mind  
It is a simple way to end the delusion  
That has caused much suffering and grief

#### 4. THE WAY OF WISDOM AND MEDITATION

##### *Appearance and Reality*

---

If one seriously seeks the sources  
Of notions—sources of world-appearance  
Its insubstantiability will be known  
Like discovering a mirage's illusion

When one knows this world seemingly so real  
Is an appearance of one's own self  
By relentless inquiry of mind made pure  
Fear and delusion vanish permanently

Realizing death is inevitable to all  
Why grieve over the death of kith and kin  
Or even one's own approaching death  
Beings appear and disappear continually

What is true is always true  
What is unreal is always unreal  
What exists always exists  
Where is cause for sorrow in this

Do not put hope or faith in the unreal  
It is willing subscription to bondage  
Live in this world free of all hope  
Doing what needs to be done naturally

Avoid what seems to be inappropriate  
Be free of the desirable and undesirable  
These chords bind you and bring sorrow  
You can live happily without these notions

Infinite consciousness alone exists

What appears is but an appearance  
Know that either experiences are not yours  
Or that you are the all and and be free

Attraction and aversion are the chords  
Twin forces with which one ties oneself  
Whatever is attained in any realm  
Is attained by abandoning both of them

Ignorant fools live prompted by these forces  
They think it is choice but it is not so  
Being learned does not mean much at all  
The strength to abandon these is what counts

Again and again I declare the truth  
World-appearance is but a long dream  
Wake up, wake up now, dear one  
Behold the self and shine like the sun

Awaken thoroughly by self-knowledge  
Live in this world fully enlightened  
Without getting trapped in world-appearance  
Without being subjected to suffering

The ignorant suffer unnecessarily in life  
Always subject to the effects of change  
Breaking up as things in their life break up  
Being shattered as things shatter naturally

In changing appearance there is no loss  
Changeless is what animates all change  
That changelessness is the substance of all  
Everything exists in and from changelessness

Infinite consciousness cannot be destroyed  
It does not undergo any change at all  
Illusion is like the experience in a Ferris Wheel  
Feeling things are moving in the opposite way

The spiritual hero boldly rejects appearance  
Knowing it to be a product of thought  
Ignorant notions that exist in the mind  
Eternally vigilant he avoids ignorance's grasp

The inert body does not entertain desires

It does not have any motivation to act  
Self is all, what motivation can it have  
It is the inner witnessing intelligence

The mind is itself ignorance and delusion  
It is all bark, it has not bite at all  
Fools are frightened by it unnecessarily  
They run this way and that way for help

Gird up your loins for the real task on hand  
Withdraw the senses and gather the rays  
Plunge yourself now in deep meditation  
Slay this ghost—the noise-making machine

Strip the ego-sense of all coverings  
It hides behind what does not belong to it  
Strip it bare and ruthlessly and abandon it  
Make it incapable of doing any further harm

Whatever is done through the body usually  
Is done by the ego-sense with energy's help  
Rein in energy by pranayama and inquiry  
An oilless lamp must give up its flame

It is the self that acts indirectly in all  
Allowing experience for one's evolution  
The price tag for heedlessness is yourself  
Hence avoid all impulsive experiments

What have you to do with the mind  
You are the self, not the fickle mind  
It has foolishly assumed itself as self  
Riding the waves of silence's consent

This foolishness is the cause of all  
Birth, suffering and death its effects  
Ruthlessly abandon this inner imposter  
None can protect one who does not do this

Neither scriptures, guru or relatives  
Can help one enslaved by the mind  
Aid does come to one taking up the task  
Of slaying the mind beyond resurrection

They are 'good people' who exert hard

To slay the mind... to have succeeded  
Freely, they render real service to all  
By remaining free and guiding others

Uplift yourself by the real self  
All have access to immeasurable help  
People wallow and wail waiting for help  
While all help that can be resides in them

Do not wander in samsara aimlessly  
Caught up in family, friends and career  
These will be soon wiped out completely  
It does not matter what you feel about it

Impermanence must go by its very nature  
Why do you foolishly feel it should stay  
People enter the world stage at one point  
And leave the stage without any approval

As long as ego-sense protects the body  
It will invite a host of pain and suffering  
It is ignorant—what else can it do  
Arise now and complete your real task

### *Asking Lord Siva*

---

Once while living in the abode of Lord Siva  
I asked him the best way of worshipping  
How by worship does one destroy all sins  
And thereby promote auspiciousness

### *Lord Siva's Reply*

---

God is not all these deities people worship  
Nor the sun, moon or so-called holy people  
God is formless, indivisible and eternal  
This infinite consciousness is called Siva

That is the all—fit to be worshipped  
However all are not able to do so  
Feeling the necessity for a concrete form  
Which naturally bestow finite results

Ignoring the infinite for the sake of the finite  
One discards a garden for a bush  
Sages do worship forms sometimes  
But just for the sheer joy of worship

Wisdom, self-control and recognition  
Of the divine omnipresence or God  
Flowers of wisdom and dedication  
These are the articles for worship

Infinite consciousness alone exists  
Even now, utterly devoid of objectivity  
The mountains and everything you see  
All are naught but pure consciousness

The words and terms we use to discuss  
Theories about creation and dissolution  
Are only to show the interconnectedness of all  
Through the limitations of verbal expression

The duality we seem to experience in life  
Is like the experience of the dream state  
Subject, object and witness seem distinct  
But all happen in the field of the mind

Waking and dream state are similar  
Both are similar in characteristics  
Consciousness is the substance of both  
Nothing really happens in either of them

Pure consciousness is the only substance  
That is the Lord—the supreme truth  
That I am, that you are—that is the all  
There is naught else—realize this directly

Worship of that Lord is true worship  
In it all desires come to an end  
He is undivided, indivisible and non-dual  
His adoration is the fountain-source of joy

Some find external worship necessary  
Finding unbroken inner worship difficult  
As it requires tremendous self-control  
And inner purity to be fixed in non-duality

But those seeking release from samsara  
The vicious circle of birth and death  
Worship the divine omnipresence  
Undivided, indivisible—He alone is God

Hidden in all beings—the indweller  
He veils the truth though omnipresent  
In the middle between being and non-being  
Is God—the supreme truth indicated by OM

Existing everywhere—the essence of life  
In plants, in you, me and everything  
Existing in gods and goddesses too  
All forms indicate its presence only

This entire universe is pervaded by Him  
Holy One—not distant from anyone  
Not difficult to attain if one is sincere  
As he indwells all bodies including yours

He does everything, knows everything  
He is the light by which all things function  
Diverse activities take place in him only  
The omnipresent indweller—the only God

Transcending the intellect, mind and senses  
He cannot be known by these finite means  
Seemingly doing everything—he does nothing  
As spring does in the flowering of trees

Functioning differently he appears different  
Like different oceans of one water's mass  
The experiencer in the lotus-like body  
Gathering honey with the bee of the mind

Everything flows from infinite consciousness  
As rivers and rivulets from the ocean  
The wheel of ignorance sustains life  
Through the energy inherent in consciousness

Like a mirror reflecting within itself  
Without undergoing any change at all  
Appearing as different beings and things  
All and everything is infinite consciousness

Like a creeper it grows within itself  
Sprinkled with latent tendencies  
Desiring its buds, all beings its parts  
Appearing as many while remaining one

Consciousness alone shines like the sun  
By this is all thought of, expressed and done  
Appearing as many, remaining one  
Casting shadows in itself as it were

Actions generated by thoughts and notions  
Are possible because of its omnipresence  
The body can do nothing without its light  
Consciousness alone arises in itself

Unseen in itself, it makes all appear  
Immovable, it moves great distances  
Indivisible, it appears as this world  
Consciousness alone exists—naught else

Any distinctions that seem to appear  
Are verbal, just for communication  
Quickly disappearing when inquired into  
Consciousness alone steadily remains

It cannot be modified or made impure  
Eternal, ever-present and devoid of mind  
The reality in all forms and experiences  
All rise, appear and subside in it only

Mind is conditioned consciousness  
But consciousness remains unconditioned  
The individual is a vehicle of consciousness  
Consciousness's inherent energy sustains it

Life-force or prana is mind's vehicle  
When the mind merges into the spiritual heart  
Prana does not move, it stands ever still  
The mind attains a quiescent state

All things appear in consciousness  
As multiple reflections within itself  
Ignorance sustains apparent individuality  
Quelling ignorance quiescence is regained

As long as mind's conditioning functions  
One continues revolving in samsara's cycle  
Impure tendencies are itself conditioning  
Obstructing peace, happiness and liberation

When the heart fills with pure tendencies  
Based on indivisibility as the truth of things  
All conflicts cease and there is harmony  
Improved health, longevity and liberation

If one continues to nourish division within  
One writes his own order for experience  
Necessitating rebirth one or more rounds  
In situations over which one has no sway

Belief in diversity must be abandoned  
It is in one's own very best interests  
It brings supreme blessedness and peace  
Beyond all experiences imaginable

Invocations to worship the supreme being  
Are unnecessary as it is omnipresent  
Closer than one's breath or heartbeat  
Realization of its omnipresence is its worship

Subtler than sub-atomic particles  
Yet pervading the universe and beyond  
Time and space are contained in it  
Yet it is beyond eternity and infinity

It does nothing, remaining ever unchanged  
Yet the universe has been fashioned by it  
Staying the same non-dual substance  
Yet all this diversity appears so very real

### *Formless but with Five Aspects*

---

Though formless, five are its aspects  
Will, space, time, order and manifest nature  
Countless powers and potencies too  
Like knowledge, action and non-action

But these are pure consciousness only  
They're called potencies for communication's sake  
All of creation is consciousness's stage  
In which these potencies manifest creation

Natural order of things is foremost of all  
It ordains that all should have a characteristic  
From a blade of grass to the creator Brahma  
Each has their inherent unique characteristic

Free from excitement but not limitation  
As impurities are what really limit one  
It is this that keeps up the world-appearance  
The drama of life in this grand creation

It is this that produces and removes  
Rearranging all on the world stage  
The sun, moon, stars and galaxies too  
Are all controlled by its sheer presence

Infinite consciousness is the only God  
Ever alert—the eternal silent witness  
Non-different from the dance is the dancer  
The happenings and the cosmic order

### *Meditation (with attributes)*

---

Such is the Lord—worthy of adoration  
Constantly worshipped by holy ones  
The same lord is approached in different ways  
Hear now some ways for his worship

First you must abandon the body-idea  
The notion that you are 'this body'  
Meditation alone is the truest worship  
Hence meditate constantly without break

He is pure intelligence, most radiant  
More effulgent than a thousand suns  
The light that illumines all lights  
The inner light of all and everything

Limitless space is his throat  
Firmament his feet, directions his arms  
The worlds his weapons held in his hands  
The entire universe is hidden in his heart

The gods and deities are his body hairs  
Cosmic potencies are his energy  
Time stands watch as his gatekeeper  
Thousands of heads and limbs has he

Eyes and ears everywhere he has  
Touching, tasting and hearing all  
Thinker of all thoughts he is  
Bestower of all thoughts is he

He dwells in all as the indweller  
The unseen innermost self of all is he  
All beings and things—he is the all  
Thus meditate ceaselessly and realize

External materials are not required  
Worship Him by your own consciousness  
Thus he is attained by the least effort  
Worship by self-realization alone

This is supreme meditation and worship  
Continuous unbroken awareness  
Of the indwelling presence, consciousness  
Realize oneness and attain liberation

Meditation is the highest offering  
You yourself are water, flower and fruit  
The self is not realized by other means  
Meditation is the pathway to liberation

Even a few seconds of real meditation  
Bestows more than rites or rituals  
'Tis the supreme yoga—highest action  
Meditation unfolds divinity from within

### *Meditation (without attributes)*

---

Internal worship of the self  
Is the greatest of all purifiers  
It destroys darkness immediately  
It is perpetual unbroken meditation

Whether walking, standing or asleep  
Through all actions, thoughts and speech  
Contemplate without break in activity  
The indwelling divine omnipresence

First discover and establish in inner self  
The manifest consciousness or self-awareness  
This is what comes, goes through the body  
Engaging in diverse external activities

This inner intelligence is a divine ray  
Light illumined by pure intelligence  
Eternally hidden in all substances  
As extroverted awareness it stays unseen

As prana he moves the vital airs  
Sense contact is rendered to experience  
Dwelling within as the innermost self  
He alone is knower and experiencer

Though without parts he is the all  
Dwelling within he is omnipresent  
He is the intelligence in every limb  
The thinking faculty of the mind is he

Between inhalation and exhalation  
Between the eye-brows is he as well  
In the throat, palate and in the heart  
The prompter of all thoughts is he

He is the reality in the imagined  
And in the unimagined as well  
Dwelling in all as oil in the seed  
He indwells throughout the body

He alone shines as pure consciousness  
Immediately everywhere is his presence  
Pure experiencing in all experiences  
He alone appears as every object

Indweller of the body as pure intelligence  
Thus should one contemplate the Lord  
The body's functions and faculties  
Serve that intelligence as his companions

The mind is the Lord's messenger  
Energy of knowing and action his consorts  
Diverse aspects of knowledge his ornaments  
The organs of action are his gateways of travel

Feel that you are the indivisible self  
Unchanging, ever full and infinite  
The indwelling intelligence in the body  
Thus contemplate and reach goodness

Thus you will thoroughly purify self  
Of all conditioning and limitation  
Hence worship the Lord indwelling all  
As intelligence pervading the entire body

This worship is performed perpetually  
Without special materials to be obtained  
Offer all that is obtained without effort  
Offer all that is attained quite naturally

Your every action should be worship  
Eating, drinking and every experience  
Including life, death, joys and sorrows  
Poverty, prosperity and noble qualities

Everything that comes to you naturally  
Are articles for worship and adoration  
Never think about what is lost or has gone  
Worship the Lord with all that has come

Worship is unbroken abidance in truth  
Being established in supreme equanimity  
Regarding everything as good and auspicious  
Realizing everything is the one self only

To pleasant and unpleasant be equal-minded  
Recognizing the same beauty animates both  
Abandon notions of 'this I am' and 'this I am not'  
All is one indivisible pure consciousness

In all forms and their modifications  
The same self indwells and animates  
Inner distinctions are walls that separate  
Worship the self in all appearing forms

Without clinging and without rejecting  
Enjoy what comes naturally to you  
When things change, do not interfere  
Enjoy the change as—'this has now come'

Soar beyond mind's insistence on division  
See that all walls are in the mind only  
See that they do not exist in what is seen  
Act in accordance with the unity of things

Whatever comes naturally—unsought  
Are the best articles for worship  
The goodness in you is the best of sweets  
It is the very best offering in worship

Worship is not just in the prayer area  
Just like breathing—it stays unbroken  
The mind must thus always be balanced  
Quiescent, in equal vision—free of division

Established in this inner equanimity  
Sincerely seek the inner intelligence  
This inner intelligence is the master key  
Flowing from and into infinite consciousness

Those who worship the inner intelligence  
Are free from perversion and conceit  
As the same inner intelligence is in all  
Verily masquerading in different forms

Those who worship the inner intelligence  
Are free from desires, craving and rejecting  
How can you desire or reject anything  
When the same self is known as the self of all

All that you do from morning 'til night  
Offer all as worship unto the Lord  
Pure consciousness, indwelling presence  
Second to Him—none can exist

Likes, dislikes, pleasure and pain  
All these are seen as concepts only  
When worshiping the indwelling light  
The best worship of the cosmic being

This cosmic consciousness is what is seen  
As the world outside of people and things  
What a wonder it is—such forgetfulness  
Appearances masking the unchanging reality

Words cannot describe the grand mystery  
It is not possible to teach another of it  
Those who consider God to be someplace  
Worship a creation of thought only

Beginningless and endless is the supreme Lord  
Only existence and indwelling presence  
The mind and senses can never experience  
Rise beyond all limitations and faculties

The sincere seeker striving to attain  
Freedom from bondage of ignorance  
Is equipped with subtle ignorance  
With this as soap he cleanses the rest

Soap too is an composite of substances  
But it can wash the dirt as it washes out  
So too with this catalytic subtle ignorance  
It washes the coarse and itself out too

The goodness within must make all good  
Rise above conditioning by aspiration and effort  
You must raise the self by the self alone  
And discover your true self-luminous nature

Handling charcoal turns the hands black  
Washing the hands renders them clean  
But playing again will blacken them again  
So best not to play with charcoal at all

The world appears diverse in perception  
Our ignorant reactions confirm it as real  
The flame of self-inquiry says it is not  
So best to live a life of unbroken inquiry

Reject appearance and inner conditioning  
Life is an opportunity for unbroken inquiry  
The self is roused by the self this way  
Gradually the self becomes aware of itself

Self-knowledge is not the result of anything  
Not the guru, not even the instruction  
It is attained when you abandon ignorance  
By the fire of self-effort based on guidance

The guru, teaching and sacred scriptures  
Are all means to realize the self  
But you have to do what has to be done  
And realize the truth for your own self

The self is not revealed by guru or scriptures  
But without them, realization cannot be had  
You must exert for yourself to really know  
These factors melt together into realization

That which IS after senses cease functioning  
After like, dislike and such notions vanish  
That is the Self—indicated by truth and reality  
Existing even when ignorance is center stage

Gods, sages, saints and enlightened ones  
Have appeared to awaken the ignorant  
Scriptures are written out of compassion  
So teachings and words may be of help

But these gods, sages and enlightened ones  
Different scriptures and different religions  
Are not different—there is no diversity  
Though it appears so even in this somehow

There is no difference in true religion  
The journey to be traveled is the same  
Words and languages are what differs  
But these are not the truth they point to

Pure consciousness alone appears as all  
It is this we call Brahman the absolute  
Appearing as this subject-object tangle  
Giving rise to delusion though not deluded

The knower, the known and knowing  
All occur within pure consciousness  
The innermost self stays unknown  
As it can never be an object of knowledge

Time and space are self creations  
Put together by the ego-sense only  
Vital energy assembles the individual  
To experience what is felt to be experienced

The individual follows the inner urges  
Responding as he does and results follow  
Giving in to ignorance he feels delusion  
Facing the light he realizes the self

If ignorance remains at the time of death  
One reincarnates again to work it out  
And realize the truth for one's own self  
For this one comes, for this one lives

The elements and substances seem so real  
They are modifications of pure consciousness  
Just as people and things appear in dream  
Does all of this appear as solid reality

The dream is real to the dreamer  
This world is real to the ignorant  
He will continue from dream to dream  
Till he awakens and realizes the self

The Lord alone shines as all you see  
There is naught else, never has been  
'Tis your notions that suggest otherwise  
Abandon these ruthlessly and be free

Why do you defend these vile notions  
They bring untold suffering and pain  
Conditioning itself is great sorrow  
It is based on ignorance—abandon it!

The mind goes where the heart wishes  
The heart is wedded to habit and hope  
Both are like waters in a desert mirage  
Both bring suffering and never cool water

Conditioning itself does not really exist  
But it still continues to wreak great havoc  
Like a ghost it dances on the mind's stage  
Slay this by the sword of self-inquiry

Without conditioning the illusion vanishes  
One beholds the self everywhere as all  
Preceptors instruct only the awakened  
'Tis foolish to teach those who wish to sleep

Those wishing to sleep must be left alone  
Life will teach them lessons quite sternly  
They will be made to abandon foolishness  
And will have to exert as others have done

Mountains seen in a dream appear to exist  
Without really occupying any space at all  
Even so this world only appears to exist  
Thought-forms perceiving each other

The unreal perceives the unreal  
The unreal experiences the unreal  
Due to the unreal influence of unreality  
Mere imagination imagining within itself

As liquidity exists in liquids  
As motion exists in the wind  
As emptiness exists in space  
So does omnipresence exist in the self

Early on when I was first instructed  
By the Lord himself—on these truths  
I have constantly engaged myself in this worship  
Of the undivided self with natural means

Common it is to all embodied beings  
To come into and stay in relationship  
But the yogi is eternally vigilant  
This vigilance is itself worship of self

Adopt the yogic inner attitude  
Be devoid of any and all attachment  
Roam free in this forest of samsara  
You will not suffer in the least bit

When any great sorrow befalls you  
Such as death of relatives or loss of wealth  
Inquire as described into the nature of truth  
You will never be affected by joy or sorrow

Circumstances change and change they must  
People and things come and go  
They do not belong to you at all  
And you do not belong to them either

You are pure unaffected consciousness  
Illusory perception cannot touch you  
Find out how these notions exist within  
Abandon them and realize the true self

Unattached mentally do what needs be done  
The organs of action will act naturally  
Delight from sensual pleasure is deceptive  
A fleeting promise which leads one to great peril

Abandon desires, hopes and expectations  
These are the seeds of great sorrow  
They blossom into thorny entanglements  
Destroying peace and joy that come naturally

In time you will attain experience of self  
Do not store it in the mind as a memory  
Avoid making it an object of desire  
Live in the light of self's omnipresence

Do not make self an object of hope  
Do not make it an expectation of sorts  
Strive instead to be eternally vigilant  
Inquiring relentlessly into the self

When you stop pursuing sensual pleasures  
Experiencing only what comes unsought  
You are in a state of perfect equanimity  
Free from latent tendencies and memory

Like the sky you will remain untainted  
Let clouds come and go as they may  
Knower, known and knowledge merge  
In the one self—the divisionless experiencer

With the slightest movement in the mind  
This world-appearance is roused into action  
Make the mind unwinking by prana's restraint  
Destroy latent tendencies by inquiry's flame

Be diligent in pranayama practice  
Observe the mind without remission  
Relentlessly inquire into the self  
Ignorance and delusion will cease to be

Ignorance and its effects are self-binding  
Be self-disciplined—do not cooperate  
Follow the instruction of the preceptor  
And the teachings contained in scriptures

Movement of thought in the mind  
Is the root cause of world-illusion  
Without the cause there is no effect  
Still the mind—realize pure consciousness

The mind has to be made 'no-mind'  
It has to be drained of all its energy  
Pranayama is vitally important in this  
Inquiry restores the natural state

Reach that state of supreme bliss  
Indescribable—the heavens do not compare  
You have wandered and suffered for so long  
Come now and lay claim to your heritage

## 5. THE STORY OF THE WOOD-APPLE

### *The Wood-Apple*

---

There is a wood-apple, immeasurably large  
Existing for eons, it does not perish or decay  
It is the source and support of immortality  
Most ancient, ever new—just like the moon

The center and heart of the universe  
Immovable and indestructible it is  
Even cosmic dissolution cannot shake it  
Immeasurably large—source of all creation

Even when ripe, it does not fall  
Forever ripe, it never over-ripens  
Even gods know not its origin  
None have seen the tree—its source

Beginningless, without middle or end  
All that can be said is—it does exist  
Changeless and without modification  
Without any diversity within itself

Completely full without emptiness  
Fountain-source of joy and delight  
It is none other than the manifestation  
Of energy in infinite consciousness

### *It is Energy of Infinite Consciousness*

---

This energy of infinite consciousness  
Manifests as this vast creation you see  
Without ever abandoning its true nature  
Merely by willing in its own intelligence

Even 'willing' is not really the truth at all

As willing implies existing ego-sense  
From it has come all the elements  
Subjective senses and the objects

It itself is space, time and natural order  
Expansion of thought and 'I'-ness too  
Attraction and repulsion, above and below  
The firmament and stars it alone is

Knowledge, ignorance—all, whatever is  
All that was and all that will ever be  
All and everything is energy only  
Energy of infinite consciousness

Though it is conceived of as being diverse  
It is neither one nor many, this 'it'  
It is nature of supreme all-inclusive peace  
It is the one immeasurable infinite self

## 6. THE STORY OF THE ROCK

(Nature of Consciousness)

### *The Great Rock*

---

There is a great rock though most tender  
Affectionate, omnipresent and eternal  
Within it countless lotuses blossom  
With countless petals seen and unseen

Sometimes the petals touch each other  
Sometimes they face each other as well  
Sometimes facing upwards or downwards  
Some with roots entwined, some rootless

All things exist in it though they do not  
This rock is indeed cosmic consciousness  
It appears rock-like in its homogeneity  
Harboring within universes of diversity

As one conceives different forms in a rock  
So do galaxies and universes exist in it  
Sculpting does not change the rock's substance  
World-appearance does not change consciousness

The rock has infinite form potential  
A sculptor sees all these in a rock

So does all appear in consciousness  
Infinite expressions within consciousness

Carved or uncarved—rock remains rock  
So also consciousness remains itself  
World-appearance is an empty expression  
The substance is pure consciousness only

All manifestations are Brahman only  
Cosmic consciousness appears as all  
Appearing modified though unmodified  
How can it change when it alone is

The seed contains the seed only  
Flowers are seed's blossoming  
The seed expressing itself as flower  
The cause expressing itself as effect

So with pure infinite consciousness  
It gives rise to itself within itself  
Duality ceases when this is realized  
Consciousness always remains itself

What appears as a form—modification  
Is consciousness itself, naught other  
All this is Brahman the absolute  
Second to Brahman none exists

Time, space and other such factors  
These too are pure consciousness  
Self is indivisible, infinite existence  
Unity expressing diversity within itself

Numerous lotuses exist in one stone  
But all in relation to the stone only  
Many forms appear in mirages  
But all in relation to water only

Brahman and world are synonyms  
There is no essential difference  
See all with the eye that is wisdom  
Behold consciousness as all these forms

As water seen is hydrogen and oxygen  
Even so the world is Brahman only

The apparently diverse is non-dual  
The substratum of all is unity

Infinite consciousness pervades all  
All exists in infinite consciousness  
Diversity appears in non-duality  
Without modifying existing unity

Appearance appears as reality  
Though uncreated it appears real  
When duality's illusion is abandoned  
All this is seen as consciousness only

*Must be Attained by Direct Experience*

---

Sages are active but they are not fooled  
They are firmly rooted in the unchanging  
They work with minds that do not move  
Having abandoned conceptualizing completely

By little movement of thought they function  
Their consciousness is purified of all concepts  
Existing here as pure consciousness only  
This must be attained by direct experience

That alone exists, naught else  
No body, senses, life-force or mind  
Freed from all these—experience it  
As the self in all that is ever seen

Without beginning, without end  
Unaffected and free from change  
It is mistaken for something else  
Because it alone is everywhere

This self is everywhere, inside and out  
In all and as all bodies it alone exists  
Unaffected while individuals act different  
Though the infinite stays ever the same

Be actively engaged in natural activities  
Free from the sense of I-ness and 'mine'  
Whatever is seen is Brahman only  
Eternal, peaceful and utterly quiescent

*Unmodified, Appearing Modified*

---

True modification is real transformation  
The substance itself must have changed  
Such is not the case with Brahman  
Which stays unchanged through dissolution

Before and after creation's appearance  
It was and continues to be pure consciousness  
The momentary disturbance seen in the middle  
Is not modification as nothing really changes

### *The Difficulty in Instruction*

---

What is said to be momentary disturbance  
Is not really disturbance—just mere words  
There is no other way to give instruction  
Try to see what is intended through these

Earlier I urged you to make inquiry  
Into the nature of this ignorance  
Earlier, you were not fully awakened  
That was necessary to bring awakening

If one declared 'All this is Brahman'  
To one who has not awakened as yet  
It is like asking a tree for relief  
From suffering he is creating himself

Now that you are awakened I do declare  
You, I and the universe is Brahman only  
Whatever you do try to realize this  
The truth is Brahman's omnipresence

Self alone is the reality in all beings  
As clay is the reality in all pots seen  
Inner movement of energy gives rise to  
Apparent diversity in consciousness

What is to be known, what is to be seen  
Brahman alone fills all and everything  
Fullness is filled with fullness—its own self  
This fullness is established in fullness only

Sense organs are present in all beings  
But the dead do not experience sensations  
While alive the same senses experience  
What is not possible when death arrives

### *All is Infinite Consciousness Only*

---

Birth, death, senses and the mind  
We use these terms to communicate  
All is infinite consciousness only  
Appearing and functioning differently

The nature and senses in a person  
The inner instrument and subtle body  
The inner reflections of objects seen  
All these are pure consciousness only

Though free from all modifications  
The notion 'I am' arises in it  
Localized it is known as the individual  
Ego-sense, thoughts and mind arise

Intellect, senses and the body  
All appear as the notion strengthens  
By persistent pondering on these notions  
Of 'I am' localized as an individual

This 'I am' sees other formations  
They too feel the same 'I am'  
Localized formations in consciousness  
Thus 'you are' and 'they are' do arise

All forms asserting in delusion  
Separateness based on initial errors  
Of feeling 'I am' as a separate form  
From other forms though notions only

Similar bodies and substance are all  
Still because the 'I am' feels localized  
They feel differences and separation  
From each other though they are all one

Experience requires contact in some way  
Contact requires separation similarly  
Localized forms of the same substance  
Separate and contact—called experience

But the individual or localized form  
Is but a notion in its own mind  
Persistent feelings of separateness  
Make notions appear as reality

Whatever the individual conceives of  
He strengthens by persistently pondering it  
Nothing is actually created as such  
One experiences one's own persistence

When you observe something very keenly  
You will see that these notions try to interfere  
Keep observing without being distracted  
And see how these notions soon disappear

Seeing continues without notions  
Only then you can try to discover  
What it is that appears to be seen  
Without interference of memory

Infinite consciousness alone assumes  
All forms including the individual  
But all these are notions within itself  
Nothing is really created or assumed

Knowledge is inherent in consciousness  
Consciousness mistakes its own knowledge  
For an object limited by space and time  
And experiences division in the indivisible

### *A Great Power*

---

Great is the power of infinite consciousness  
It cannot be challenged by anyone at all  
When the individual surrenders individuality  
Consciousness realizes itself as consciousness

As long as the individual feels separate  
Distinct from others—protecting his own  
He will continue to experience separation  
And reap the harvest of his own sowing

All through this delusional experience  
Consciousness stays unchanged, ever pure  
Just as gold remains gold in any form  
Be it a bracelet or ring—gold ever stays gold

Just as one dreams he has traveled far  
And seen different sights in his own mind  
So also does one travel in different births  
To different conditions all within himself

### *It Can Be Overcome*

---

But an error yesterday can be corrected  
If we resolve rightly today, this moment  
So also the habit of separative existence  
Can be abolished by attaining liberation

'I am this body' is a notion in consciousness  
This has taken seed deep within by repetition  
Constantly dwelling and taking deep interest  
In it and all associations that result therefrom

Confusion is the interference of conditioning  
What appears with how you would like it to be  
Delusion is feeling you are an individual  
Separate from all that is seen and experienced

The same self has assumed all forms  
The forms feel separate in delusion  
They then act and strengthen ignorance  
Experience adds confusion to delusion

All throughout this truth remains unchanged  
Brahman alone exists—there is naught else  
The bondage of illusion can be overcome  
By abandoning conditioning—attaining freedom

All forms differ in levels of conditioning  
But enough of perception of division  
The whole universe is a manifestation  
Of the energy of infinite consciousness

## 7. THE STORY OF ARJUNA

### *Background*

---

This world appearance or samsara  
Is the original dream of the first jiva  
Different from the normal dream  
It is experienced as the wakeful state

Hence the wakeful state is seen  
As a long dream in which we journey  
From dream to dream within the dream  
Till we leave the dream for our true nature

In each dream are gods and goddesses

Incarnations appear to restore order  
In each dream Vishnu incarnates as Krishna  
Arjuna also appears as his alter ego

Krishna and Arjuna appear as human beings  
Arjuna's despondency is our inner condition  
Krishna's instruction is the immortal song  
Echoing the truth of soul's indestructibility

### *The Song Eternal*

---

This self is unborn and indestructible  
It is eternal and cannot be killed  
'Tis ignorance to feel it can perish  
It is infinite, immortal—that thou art

Subtler than space, it is infinite being  
Just how and by whom can it be killed  
None exists but the one supreme self  
Self of all beings, things—existence itself

### *Arjuna and Us*

---

Arjuna listened attentively to this song  
His delusion gave way to inner wisdom  
We have to tread the same path ourselves  
Awaken from ignorance and be rid of delusion

Krishna was not just an incarnation  
Appearing in time and a particular setting  
Krishna is ever here, now and within  
Hear ye in silence 'The Song Eternal'

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Equip yourself with the attitude of Arjuna  
Remaining unattached inwardly amidst all  
Offer all experiences unto the omnipresent Lord  
You will realize the truth that ends all doubts

That is the supreme state, guru of all gurus  
The self—light that illumines from within  
Reality of all substances and forms  
False notions arise when there's no inquiry

'I am' was there before the world was  
Just how do notions arise and bind

Discover and abide in the non-dual spirit  
Be actively engaged in life but ever free

What appears is the play of consciousness  
There is no unity, nor is there duality  
My instructions, you yourself and all of this  
All the play of energy in infinite consciousness

In the silent peace of one's inner being  
Consciousness vibrates and the world arises  
If consciousness does not vibrate at all  
There will be no world vision—only peace

Mind is movement in consciousness  
Non-realization of this is world-vision  
Thought aggravates this inner confusion  
A vicious self-feeding cycle arises within

When the inner intelligence is awakened  
Craving and pursuit of pleasure ceases  
The outrush of energy returns to consciousness  
Wisdom and self-knowledge arise within

Desire for liberation must be abandoned  
It too interferes with fullness of self  
Constant awareness is the best way  
Observation itself prevents involvement

When the ego-sense is constantly observed  
Awareness itself ends any movement  
Movement ceases for it has no support  
Who then is bound or liberated by whom

Dwelling in the utter stillness of pure being  
Fully aware but without movement of mind  
Experience the illimitable infinite consciousness  
Go beyond afflictions while actively engaged

### *Vasistha on Pure Being*

---

When the mind, intellect and ego-sense  
Cease to function—there is stillness  
The omnipresent, undifferentiated being  
Exists as pure existence or the reality

As space in space, sound in sound

Touch in touch, taste in taste  
Sight in sight, form in form  
Rising as mind in the mind

Intelligence in intelligence  
Immovable in the immovable  
Mobility in all moving beings  
Divinity in gods, humanity in humans

Bestial nature in animals it is seen  
Essence of time and the seasons  
Dynamism in action, order in order  
Childhood, youth, old age and death

Undivided and indivisible it is  
The very essence of all and everything  
Diversity is an appearance to the senses  
Realize 'all this is pervaded by me'

Realize that 'I am omnipresent'  
Not intellectually but by experience  
Devoid of body and any limitation  
Dwell in peace and supreme happiness

## 8. THE STORY OF THE HUNDRED RUDRA

Creation appears in infinite consciousness  
Momentarily as an illusory notion  
Though it seems long and very real  
This legend will illustrate this point

### *The Legend*

---

There once lived a mendicant in days of yore  
Totally dedicated to meditation  
Thoroughly purified his mind became  
Unsought powers came to him naturally

Once with the feeling to do something  
He fancied a birth in a simple setting  
Instantly as a tribesman he incarnated  
In him arose the feeling 'I am this'

He roamed in a city of dream objects  
And dreamt he was many different beings  
Very learned in scriptures and sacred lore  
Next, an emperor of unequalled glory

A beautiful damsel and even a deer  
A creeper and other animals as well  
Since the mind can recall any sight or sound  
All can be experienced within the heart

The inner intelligence makes it possible  
To experience all these without objects  
Thus he continued to see different lives  
All within himself—in his own heart

After many incarnations within himself  
He experienced life as a beautiful swan  
Then beholding lord Rudra he instantly felt  
He was lord Rudra and dwelt in his abode

If you can overcome distractions and remain  
Concentrated, saturated with single focus  
You too can see all these within yourself  
All experiences are had in the heart only

Every subsequent action is more powerful  
Than the previous action due to momentum  
So each new thought form that is envisioned  
Overwhelms the one that seems to exist

Thus he felt that he had been lord Rudra  
For a hundred cycles of world creation  
Roaming in the world-appearance freely  
Even though it was but mental jugglery

A dream is felt real while it does last  
The dreamer does not feel it is a dream  
To him—experience is real experience  
Though all of it takes place as imagination

Eons passed since he slipped and fell  
So to say from the infinite consciousness  
Due to Rudra's grace when beheld  
He was purified—impurities slipped away

When the individual comes in contact  
With enlightened ones—change can happen  
Impurities can be instantly turned away from  
If the individual is sincere and earnest

Sincerity and earnestness grows in one  
When one constantly applies oneself  
To the task of removing impurities  
By correct living and diligent practice

Real inner change can bring about  
Outer help such as enlightened ones  
If you wish for better conditions outside  
Change now the inner existing condition

The inner conviction—'this body is self'  
Is the root that grows into a mighty tree  
Though when enquired, it is not seen  
Realize this directly and be free of it all

Let the world-appearance be as it is  
It can do no harm if you abide in unity  
This unity underlies and animates all  
Diversity is a dance on unity's stage

To help the individual who dreamt long  
Rudra took him to where the mendicant lay  
Awakening and inspiring him as well  
He recollected all that had happened instantly

He also realized all this was pure consciousness  
All diverse forms exist in the infinite only  
One appears as many—as it were  
The hundred Rudra was indeed omnipresence

Because the individual feels surrounded  
By the world on all sides as something other  
He fails to understand self and the world  
And slips into ignorance and its effects

Waves too are surrounded by one ocean  
They too have forms and appearances  
They are made of the same substance  
Waves are ocean—there is no difference

The individual has to realize this by himself  
For himself and know by direct experience  
The world so real is but an appearance  
Truth is self—infinite consciousness

Differentiated consciousness is bondage  
Absence of differentiation is liberation  
Whatever pleases you—affirm that  
Be firm in that till you realize the truth

Awareness exists in both conditions  
The liberated state and even ignorance  
It is regained so to say by 'being still'  
Though calling it a gain is misleading

All incarnations of the mendicant  
Attained awakening by direct realization  
Seeing through differences in appearance  
They returned to their respective realms

### *Dream and Reality*

---

Imagination is not something real  
Abandon this notion completely  
When all notions have been eliminated  
What exists is infinite consciousness

What is seen in dream appears real  
But only in the heart which beholds it  
In the heart of infinite consciousness  
Everything exists—in it one sees all

The dream-like nature of thought-form  
Is realized by intense practice of yoga  
What appears in front of you also appears  
Within and it is this the mind apprehends

This misapprehension is without substance  
Existing in the mind, its content is thought  
People feel they are devoted to objects  
But in reality they are devoted to thought

Thought sees thought, never what really is  
This will continue till thought is abandoned  
The awakening of the inner intelligence  
Is the empowering of direct perception

If the inner being is wholly devoted  
To what is actually in front of it  
You will see 'what really is' clearly  
Without any interference of thought

If there is not one-pointed devotion  
The object is destroyed—thought is seen  
You live in an inner world of imagination  
It does not matter what actually appears

One-pointedness is absolutely essential  
To see clearly 'what actually is'  
Concentration and meditation are the key  
To understand the mind and go beyond

The infinite is the true self of all  
It is omnipotent—all power it is  
The individual limits endless power  
By its notions and thus feels limited

Each limits himself by his own choice  
None and nothing can ever limit you  
Each has to unshackle his own self  
None and nothing can bring freedom

What you really seek is what you get  
Blaming it on karma is irresponsible  
You make and mar your own destiny  
All that comes to you is by your choice

### *Death and Beyond*

---

Birth and death occur within the infinite  
Diversity and world-appearance as well  
The way you live life will determine  
The conditions that you will experience

At the time of death one imagines  
Within themselves another condition  
A state of existence within oneself  
But it seems to exist outside somehow

Until the truth is directly realized  
One undergoes unfathomable sorrow  
Forgetting his inseparability from the supreme  
He wanders in imagination within himself

Going from one dream to another  
Clinging and rejecting dream objects  
Tormenting himself unnecessarily  
Until he abandons all false notions

'I am the body' is the root notion  
It is the seed for ignorance's eruption  
Most destructive it is—abandon it now  
This life is an opportunity for just this

Or you will continue to drift and wander  
Within yourself—in imagination's lands  
Feeling helplessly bound and miserable  
While being your own jailer and liberator

### *Somewhere or Not*

---

I searched for this mendicant within myself  
In deep meditation, wishing to see him  
But could not find him anywhere, anyplace  
One's own imagination makes the unreal real

I then proceeded to a very distant land  
Where exists an old shrine and cottage  
There I found a mendicant deep in meditation  
Today would be the last of twenty-one days

From one point of view it was twenty-one days  
But many ages had passed within his mind  
He had lived in different ages and still today  
He lives elsewhere as the second mendicant

With all the faculties I could command  
I entered the heart of this creation  
Searching for the third mendicant  
And found him but not in this universe

There are and have been other universes  
Countless beings inhabit all realms  
Sages, saints, kings and mendicants  
Some resemble others and some do not

In one realm a period of twenty-one days  
Is a lifetime experienced in another realm  
Delusion makes something appear here  
And disappear or appear elsewhere as well

All this is the play of the mind only  
Most frightening till the truth is seen  
Worlds unfolding in worlds ad infinitum  
All taking place in infinite consciousness

Impurity taints the mind creating havoc  
Fragmentations starts with one fragment  
All appearances are only relatively real  
All manifest in the all—the cause is in the cause

The mendicant has now attained liberation  
Forever transcending this world-appearance  
His attendants discovered his abandoned body  
He has merged in infinite consciousness

### *Wrong Perception*

---

This maya, world-appearance or delusion  
Is of limiting nature with limiting attributes  
It cannot be crossed over by ignorance  
You have to enter pure knowledge directly

Wrong perception sees a bracelet in gold  
Appearance becomes the cause of error  
Mistaking a form for truth—its substance  
And continuing to relate to a form once seen

Whatever notion that one entertains  
The self alone becomes that notion  
This universe spread out in front of you  
Is a fabric of notions entertained by many

The notion of the object becomes the mind  
Thus slipping from infinite consciousness  
Though the mind is not an independent entity  
It sees notions as reflections in consciousness

All these movements happen in consciousness  
Experiences, the mind, individual and creation  
And even though all this appears so real  
Infinite consciousness remains infinite consciousness

Diversity is a compelling appearance  
It vanishes at once when inquired into  
The inquirer exists but no longer in doubt  
That peace is indeed the supreme state

This world you see is really that Peace  
Ignorance is unreal or it can never cease  
Divisions of seer, seen and sight  
Appear in the mind as its defect

Remain firmly established in that state  
Utter freedom from movement of thought  
Do what needs to be done in that freedom  
Resting in the silence of deep sleep

### *The Silence of Deep Sleep*

---

There are two types of sages there are  
The rigid ascetic and the liberated sage  
The ascetic restrains his senses forcibly  
The sage knows what is real and unreal

The ascetic engages in dry practices  
The sage behaves ordinarily but knows  
What is regarded as silence or mouna  
Is based on the nature of these two types

Four types of silence have been described  
First silence of speech; second silence of senses  
Third is silence by violent restraint  
Fourth is the silence of deep sleep

What is known as silence of deep sleep  
Is also known as silence of the mind  
The first three involve rigid practice  
The fourth is conducive to liberation

Even if it costs the displeasure of some  
Strive to know the silence of the mind  
Most conducive it is to liberation  
It requires neither force nor rigidity

In it the prana is not restrained or promoted  
The senses are neither fed nor starved  
Perception of diversity is not altered  
It is not expressed nor is it suppressed

The mind is neither mind nor non-mind  
No division exists—what to abolish  
In this silence there is knowledge of what 'IS'  
And complete freedom from all doubt

Utter emptiness it is—supportless as well  
The nature of supreme unalloyed peace  
No 'I' or 'another' or 'mental projection'  
In it one knows these are all but notions

It is pure existence—'I' an idea in it  
This is known clearly in this great silence  
Strive towards realization of this  
Silence of deep sleep beyond description

### *Silence of the Disembodied*

---

There is yet another form of silence  
Called the silence of the disembodied  
It is wise not to elaborate on it further  
As you are still embodied so it has no use

Still some words about this great state  
Is attained by prolonged samadhi  
Extensive practice of prana's restraint  
And other yogic disciplines are necessary

It aims to know directly the source of bondage  
World-appearance is bondage's other name  
This too leads to cessation of the mind  
The mind has no support with prana restrained

### *Restraint of Prana*

---

When prana is about to leave at death  
It makes contact with those elements  
With which the new body will be fashioned  
Where carried conditioning will soon crystallize

Carried conditioning include all vasanas  
Impressions, desires and subtle longings  
Till all vasana have been totally destroyed  
There is no freedom as the mind continues

These vasanas are destroyed by self-knowledge  
Which arises by direct experience, not study  
The mind and prana move not without vasanas  
This indeed is the state of supreme peace

When one enters into self-knowledge  
All vasanas are fried—burnt in toto  
The link between the mind and prana  
Is severed completely and one is free

Mind is a collection of these vasanas  
You are bound by the habits you nurture  
Knowledge is direct experience of reality

Inquiry its basis and itself self-knowledge

### *Three Important Things*

---

Total dedication to one thing is required  
Restraint of prana drains mind's energy  
Let there be unbroken direct inquiry  
With these attain the supreme state

Prana or life-force and the mind  
Have very close relations to each other  
If the movement of one ceases  
The other comes to a standstill as well

If the total mind is one-pointed  
Devoted to a single truth without exception  
Movement of mind stops completely  
And movement of prana stills as well

### *The Best Method*

---

Direct inquiry into the nature of self  
Is the best method to melt into the infinite  
Your mind will be completely absorbed  
Both mind and inquiry will completely cease

What remains after the mind ceases movement  
Is supreme peace—remain established in it  
This peace passeth all understanding  
It is the supreme state and can be attained

When the mind does not crave for pleasure  
It is absorbed into the self with life-force  
Mind masquerades as reality to the deluded  
Free yourself of this grip you yourself sustain

If even for a brief period the mind is absorbed  
Tasting the supreme state of inner silence  
A complete transformation is brought about  
The mind will not abandon this for samsara

The very seeds of samsara will be fried  
The endless cycle of birth and death broken  
Ignorance will be dispelled, vasanas burnt  
And one beholds the inner light attaining peace

## 9. THE STORY OF THE VAMPIRE

### *Background*

---

When ignorance ceases through self-inquiry  
The individual becomes non-individual  
The mind ceases—becomes no-mind  
This is known as moksha or liberation

Deep in the forest there lived a vampire  
It appeased its hunger with the deluded  
Once unable to find such in the forest  
It ventured to the city and met the king

### *The Vampire' Questions*

---

O king kindly answer the questions asked  
What sun's rays form this universe  
In what mighty wind does space manifest  
What is the self that stays always unchanged

What is the essence of the world-appearance  
In which atom are the universes contained  
What formless rock has all worlds within  
Kindly answer these questions or be my meal

### *The King's Reply*

---

The sun of consciousness illumines all  
In that light universes are atomic particles  
All things appear real because of that light  
Dust particles called creation appear in it

All shines in that Supreme Self only  
As dust particles in a beam of light  
Time, space, motion and intelligence  
All is clothed in pure consciousness

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

The vampire became silent hearing the king  
Deeply contemplating the message conveyed  
You too can achieve what seems impossible  
If you remain immovable in truth and live wisely

Right action is doing what needs to be done  
It is effortless though effort is involved  
It is free of struggle as response is always clear  
Once one feels all this is indeed consciousness

Obstruction is a clash of unreal with real  
The unreal being only notions in the mind  
Ignore all notions—they will starve to death  
Act as part of each situation, not separate from it

## 10. THE STORY OF BHAGIRATH

### *Background*

---

There once lived a king called Bhagirath  
Devoted to righteousness in every way  
He worked hard to eradicate poverty  
Himself living a simple and holy life

He relished the company of holy ones  
In their company he was steeped in devotion  
Undergoing great difficulty he propitiated  
Brahma, Siva and the sage Janhu

Discrimination and dispassion arose in him  
At an early age, and thus he reflected  
The meaning of this life and all action  
Possible gains and hidden consequences

He concluded that if anything is to be gained  
It must be the attainment of the beyond  
All else was time passing vain repetition  
A cycle of habit most follow in ignorance

### *Bhagirath's First Questions*

---

Humbly he approached his guru  
And placed before him his observation  
"How does one put an end to samsara  
How to eradicate ignorance and bondage"

### *The Guru Replies*

---

Sorrow ceases and bondage ends  
When every doubt has been dispelled  
When established in perfect equanimity  
And the divisionless state for a long time

When perception of division ceases to be  
There is direct experience of fullness  
The omnipresent self—pure consciousness  
One enters into infinity and eternity

### *Bhagirath's Second Questions*

---

I know that the self alone is real  
The body and such are but appearances  
How to experience this directly  
How to go beyond intellectual understanding

### *The Guru Replies*

---

Intellectual knowledge is not knowledge  
Attachments keep knowledge intellectual  
Be unattached to wife, son, house and wealth  
Equal minded in both pleasure and pain

Love of solitude is very important  
To be established in self-knowledge  
Cultivate vigilance of mind's every movement  
See self as distinct from thought's rise and fall

This must continue after meditation too  
The mind must be continually observed  
The ego-sense that gives rise to thought  
Will thin and give way to self-knowledge

### *Bhagirath's Third Questions*

---

This ego-sense seems well established  
One with the body and sense of self  
Pray, kindly instruct me in the way  
To uproot this tree that is rooted deeply

### *The Guru Replies*

---

Self-effort is absolutely essential  
Resolutely stop 'pursuit' of sense-pleasures  
By seeing the full cost of indulgence  
And understanding—joy comes from within

If you abandon pursuing sense pleasures  
Adopt a simple life with less concern  
You will have abundant time and energy  
To realize the self directly here and now

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Hearing the guru's succinct instructions  
Bhagirath renounced all without delay  
Clad in simple clothes with bare necessities  
Making the forest his home—unknown to any

Very soon he attained supreme peace  
Content to live on what came naturally  
One day he entered a city for alms  
And approached a crowd that had gathered

The old king had died without any heir  
The royal elephant selected Bhagirath  
As king in accordance with the tradition  
He accepted, as this turn came naturally

His old kingdom was adjacent to this  
The citizens heard of Bhagirath's return  
They implored him to rule there as well  
As a king like him was not to be found

Bhagirath accepted this duty as well  
And ruled both kingdoms as one land  
Treating all people fairly and equally  
And once again working for their welfare

Even though he was now an emperor  
Ruling a vast kingdom with a large army  
He was ever at peace within himself  
His mind was free of desires completely

He engaged himself with what needed doing  
Shining as an exemplar of righteousness  
One day there arose in him an inner urge  
To do something for his departed ancestors

Once again he repaired to the forest  
And engaged himself in austerities  
Propitiating gods and sages too  
For the task of bringing Ganga to earth

His firm resolve and relentless effort  
Bore fruit in time and Ganga descended  
The earth and all beings were purified  
By the holy waters of the sacred Ganga

Libations were performed for the ancestors  
Of the king and other departed souls  
Since then Ganga continues to purify  
All who come unto her for regaining purity

You too can do all that Bhagirath did  
What one can do, others can do  
Renounce all and attain all is the rule  
Live naturally doing what needs to be done

In this connection there is another story  
Pray, listen with full attention and being  
To the story of Sikhidhvaja and Chudala  
Reborn again due to their divine love

## 11. THE STORY OF SIKHIDHVAJA AND CHUDALA

(This story includes three smaller stories woven into it to highlight certain important points: Story of the Precious Stone, Story of the Philosophers' Stone and Story of the Wild Elephant.)

### PART I: SIKHDHVAJA AND CHUDALA

---

Some things appear in abundance  
Sometimes they are not seen for a while  
Disappearing and reappearing again  
In the same or in different forms

There once lived king Sikhidhvaja and queen Chudala  
Both were noble, virtuous and dutiful  
They shared interests of the spiritual way  
Helping each other evolve in life's journey

One day the queen pondered life's meaning  
She started direct inquiry into the truth  
Reflecting and seeing within herself  
Examining previously unconsidered notions

#### *Queen Chudala's Direct Inquiry*

---

Who am I and what is this ignorance  
Just how did delusion arise within  
The body and sense organs are not self  
Both are dependent on the mind

This mind too I consider to be inert  
For it is directed by the ego-sense  
It thinks and entertains notions  
Prompted by the intellect or buddhi

This intellect too is inert as well  
It too is directed by the ego-sense  
This ego-sense is inert as well

It is dependent on that which exists

That which exists is pure consciousness  
Entangled somehow with these faculties  
Though this is not possible as it is infinite  
It is ignorance masquerading as reality

I am that self which is pure consciousness  
Dwelling as the individual in this body  
I am aware of all these faculties  
They cannot be me—I am pure awareness

Yet somehow I've forgotten my essential nature  
As pure consciousness—the only existence  
Such is the power of the self—consciousness  
It becomes whatever it conceives itself to be

It seems to abandon its own nature  
Somehow taking on unreal limitations  
Seeing itself as only objects in confusion  
Experiencing itself as something else

#### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Thus contemplating within herself  
Queen Chudala became enlightened  
Attaining what was to be known  
Feeling great joy and peace within

She directly saw reality within herself  
Supreme consciousness as the only truth  
Untainted by any impurity or limitation  
Consciousness became self-aware in her

Consciousness alone manifests as all  
Body, mind, intellect and the senses  
Apart from consciousness nothing is  
World appearance is consciousness alone

All that is known by different names  
All is consciousness—there is naught else  
In it there is no division of subject-object  
This arises in one's mind as delusion only

#### *Chudala Continues Contemplation*

---

I am pure consciousness, free of ego-sense

Birth and death do not exist in me  
I have realized self—indestructible am I  
I see now all forms are manmade only

What is seen and the seer are really one  
All happens in the self or consciousness  
I have attained to perfect quiescence  
There is no this, no 'I', no you or other

### *Vasistha Continues*

---

Chudala grew introverted day by day  
Rejoicing more in the bliss within  
Free from all craving and attachment  
Neither rejecting nor running after things

In a short time she realized the truth  
This world is only an appearance  
She shone in the radiance of inner light  
Abiding as the self—most effulgent

Seeing her in such a peaceful state  
Her husband, king Sikhidhvaja, then inquired  
What was it that made this difference  
As he clearly felt she had some attainment

### *Chudala Answers Sikhidhvaja*

---

I have abandoned the form assumed  
It is an appearance, not the truth at all  
I am radiant because I've attained truth  
The joy of reality ever shines in the heart

I am the true ruler of the universe  
Not the finite being earlier mistaken  
All limitations have been abandoned  
I seek nothing, want nothing—I am the all

I'm happy with whatever comes naturally  
I see the self as truth—in all and everywhere  
That which is myself is the only existence  
There is naught else—self alone exists

### *Vasistha Continues*

---

Unable and unwilling to understand  
The king dismissed her words as delusion

Calling her experiences childish fancies  
Though still conversing with her affectionately

The queen realized the king's mindset  
Unwilling and thus unable to understand  
She continued her role and her duties  
Inwardly steady and abiding in self

Three ways one sees all things  
First is pursuing what is desirable  
Feeling that it will promote happiness  
But realizing it is quite the opposite

Second is what is considered detestable  
One feels avoiding it is happiness  
Not realizing the avoidance itself  
Is the greatest sorrow self-inflicted

Third is what one is indifferent to  
This brings neither of the opposites  
Indifference is not callous cold disregard  
But one knows objects are appearances

### *Vasistha: On Gaining Psychic Powers*

---

Psychic powers are also called siddhis  
The deluded pursue these attainments  
The sage of self-knowledge avoids them  
As self-knowledge is the supreme attainment

All achievements depend on four factors  
Time, place, action and means utilized  
Action or effort is the supreme factor  
Attainments are not possible without it

Immature people have faith in technique  
They feel some act or trick to be most important  
They exert, but from behind this limitation  
And fail because being, not trick, must exert

The whole being must rise and exert  
Doing what needs to be done as duty  
When this inner need itself exerts  
Things come with hard work but no struggle

### *Vasistha: On Awakening Kundalini*

---

Abandon unrelated and opposing habits  
Learn how to close the body's apertures  
Master a good posture that can endure  
Have pure diet and cleanliness

Contemplate the meaning of teachings  
Found in the scriptures and holy ones  
Good company is absolutely essential  
As is right conduct in all aspects of life

Inwardly renounce things and attachments  
Not as an act but in truth—you must feel this  
Sit comfortably and practice pranayama  
Without allowing rising thoughts to interfere

Thoughts and feelings will rise and fall  
No need to interfere and suppress them  
Gradually bring the life-force under control  
This life-force sustains and animates all

Deep within there is a nerve passage or nadi  
It is known as antravestika—source of other nadi  
Existing in all beings, resting coiled at its source  
It is in contact with all avenues of the body

Within the body dwells the supreme power  
Known as kundalini—the prime power  
When prana or life-force from the heart  
Reaches kundalini awakening happens

Kundalini begins to move within oneself  
Giving rise to awareness in many ways  
It is the seed of consciousness and understanding  
All other energies unleash when it flows

Kundalini's functions appear as diversity  
It is the body, elements and life-force  
It is mind, intellect, ego-sense as well  
It is inhalation and exhalation sustaining life

### *Vasishta: On Physical and Mental Illnesses*

---

If the downward or the upward pull  
Of this inner energy is excessive  
And is not arrested in some way  
Death comes about as an effect

If the movement of energy is balanced  
So it neither goes up nor comes down  
There is unceasing harmony and balance  
All diseases and ills are quickly overcome

Physical and mental ills are sources of pain  
Appearing sometimes together, sometimes not  
Both are rooted in ignorance and wickedness  
Both end when self-knowledge is attained

Ignorance gives rise to likes and dislikes  
Disrupting the inner balance and harmony  
Causing the inner energy to move erratically  
Leading to physical and mental ills as effects

Ignorance weakens will and mental restraint  
Opening the door to poor, unhealthy habits  
Useless company, indulgence and wicked thoughts  
All weaken the pathways of energy's flow

Environments must be healthy in every way  
Surroundings, clothes and one's company  
Be ever vigilant as earlier impressions surge  
Unhealthy ones can try to subvert aspiration

Minor physical ills are best corrected  
By a healthy, proper mental attitude  
Moderate physical ills are overcome  
By treatment, prayers and right action

Serious physical ills come to end  
Only when self-knowledge is attained  
Mental ills are all rooted in ignorance  
They cease on attaining self-knowledge

Physical ills often arise from mental ills  
In confusion, the path is not clearly seen  
Life-forces are agitated in confusion  
Clogs result in nadis or energy pathways

By right understanding and right action  
The mind becomes whole, pure and healthy  
Life-forces then flow unobstructed  
Diseases cease as the body heals itself

### *Vasistha: Consciousness as All This*

---

Though infinite consciousness alone exists  
It manifests differently as all that we see  
Without undergoing any change at all  
Ever unchanged while appearing to change

Just as space is space alone everywhere  
A room and walls does not alter space  
Consciousness ever stays consciousness  
Light that animates and sustains all in itself

Slight movement of thought generates all  
Elements, bodies and this world you see  
Appearing one way here, another there  
It alone is the substance of all these forms

Distinctions and divisions do not exist  
They are all creations of the perceiver  
Good, bad, latent, patent and such  
All are notions only, not the reality

All forms that feel themselves separate  
Distinct and not part of the one that exists  
Feel so because of their conditioning  
The individual is alone responsible for it

Thought is the seed of appearing diversity  
From thought the trunk and branches come  
Diversifying as leaves, flowers and fruit  
All of it is the seed appearing diverse

### *Returning to the Main Story*

---

Many psychic powers came unsought  
To queen Chudala—the enlightened  
She felt best to continue ordinary existence  
Never exhibiting or talking of attainments

Her husband the king remained ignorant  
Though she made attempts to awaken him  
Even enlightened beings with powers  
Cannot awaken those choosing ignorance

The instruction of preceptor to disciple  
Is but a tradition, words do not liberate  
Enlightenment requires purity of mind

The disciple has to purify his consciousness

### *Story of the Precious Stone*

---

A wealthy villager was walking home once  
He had lost a copper so began to search  
Being a miser he searched in bushes too  
Thinking and calculating the copper's value

For three days he searched the dense forest  
Searching areas he'd never even walked  
Unmindful of the taunt of spectators  
Suddenly finding a most precious stone

The cause of finding the precious treasure  
Was his miserliness and search for the coin  
No instruction received, the taunting endured  
Even so is the case in preceptor's teachings

The preceptor teaches without teaching  
Words can never take one to truth's discovery  
The disciple foolishly looks for appeasement  
From words and techniques which increase vanity

Sometimes the preceptor uses teachings  
To make a point of something beyond them  
The disciple must be alert to understand  
The medium used and what is indicated

It is not that instruction is unnecessary  
But it does not bring about enlightenment  
The sun of enlightenment is ever here  
People face their own clouds of ignorance

### *Back to the Main Story*

---

Sikhidhvaja the king dwelt in delusion  
Devoid of self-knowledge he floundered  
Sunk in grief by many errors and mistakes  
One day he contemplated the need for solitude

He resolved to repair to the forest  
As yogis had done to have self-knowledge  
He announced his intention to queen Chudala  
And asked her not to obstruct his intention

Chudala tried to help Sikhidhvaja see

That it was not the time for this change  
The heart and mind must change first  
Before one tries to change the environment

The king felt she was being possessive  
And resolved to leave quietly at night  
Then at midnight on some pretense  
He rode away to a remote dense forest

#### PART II: SIKHIDHVAJA IN THE FOREST

---

Far, far away from all habitation  
He found a place deep in the forest  
There he built a cottage for himself  
And equipped it with all that was needed

Things he felt an ascetic should have  
Plates of wood and utensils of bamboo  
Earthen drinking cups, pots for flowers  
Deer skins for the cooler months

He quickly drew up a plan for the day  
First part was for meditation and japa  
Second part he gathered flowers and food  
Bathing and worship upon reaching the cottage

In the third part he ate a frugal meal  
Consisting of gathered roots and fruits  
Rest of the time was spent in japa  
He spent most of his time in that cottage

#### *Queen Chudala's Reaction*

---

Chudala realized just what had happened  
Seeing all directly within through meditation  
She saw that her husband was caught up  
In a routine and time was passing by

She ruled the kingdom respected by all  
Spending her quiet hours in meditation  
Eighteen years passed in this way  
While her husband still followed his routine

She became aware of her husband's state  
He had still not attained enlightenment  
Though he had forgotten her and the kingdom

He lived as an ascetic but was still deluded

Merely living an ascetic life in the forest  
Is not going to bring about an inward change  
The ego that takes you there continues to thrive  
In the newly created atmosphere

### *Chudala Thought*

---

My husband is the same person inwardly  
Though clad in skin and bark in the forest  
Matted locks too, but so lonely within  
Time hardened the skin and his heart

Those close to you can never be taught  
They insist on preexisting relationships  
My husband will spurn any help that I offer  
As he will feel I am but an ignorant girl

I must disguise myself and try to help him  
As his delusion increases day by day  
Thus thinking she transformed herself  
To appear as a young and radiant ascetic

### PART III: CHUDALA AND SIKHIDHVAJA

---

Instantly she appeared in her radiant form  
Sikhidhvaja felt a celestial had come  
Instantly he adored the radiant ascetic  
Chudala as an ascetic accepted his worship

She praised Sikhidhvaja's rugged austere life  
Praising all he had renounced for the forest  
Giving up his kingdom for a cottage  
It was indeed like treading the razor's edge

Sikhidhvaja praised the young ascetic  
Thanking him for the blessing of a visit  
He spoke of wife and kingdom  
Noting there was some resemblance

He felt most blessed by the holy visit  
And asked to know more about the ascetic  
To what did he owe such grace and blessing  
To be enlightened by insight into the truth

### *The Ascetic's (Chudala) Reply*

---

A holy sage was once meditating  
In a cave on the banks of a river  
Upon ending his meditation and rising  
He heard sounds of women nearby

Looking closer, he saw them bathing  
The noise was from their playfulness  
In their beauty he was overcome with lust  
His mind momentarily lost its balance

Though he was a sage of great learning  
A liberated one—free from desires  
His limitless consciousness was shaken  
In that moment lust invaded his mind

### *The Ascetic: On the Dual Forces*

---

The body of all beings is subject to sway  
By the dual forces of like and dislike  
As long as one is embodied—ignorant or wise  
The dual forces can dance and create havoc

Satisfying pleasure does not appease appetite  
Pleasure's appeasement is an experience of pain  
As when the self—reality—is forgotten  
The object of experience attains expansion

If there is unbroken awareness or vigilance  
There is light within—so this does not happen  
Dual forces may rise, they fall the same way  
One abides as awareness—free of its sway

Events and conditions may come and go  
Impressions are not created in the mind  
Older impressions cannot act out at all  
As awareness is also pure subjectivity

Ideas of pleasure and pain may arise  
They are just like winds rustling about  
But if awareness is lost for even a moment  
Passing winds will assume a sense of reality

Bondage is subjection to pleasure and pain  
Without subjection there is enlightenment  
Unbroken awareness is itself equilibrium  
One realizes pleasure and pain do not exist

Pleasure and pain are one's reactions  
They do not exist in things or the world  
When ignorance gets no fuel for delusion  
It is enlightened—reabsorbed in consciousness

---

*The Ascetic: On Pleasure and Energy Loss*

---

The individual agitates the life-force  
Life-force extracts vital energy from the body  
This energy descends as seminal energy  
And discharged naturally during pleasure

---

*The Ascetic: On Nature*

---

Brahman alone existed as Brahman  
Somehow some ripples appeared within  
All accidental coincidence in Brahman  
Different forms and nature—all called nature

From such nature of self the universe was born  
Sustained by self-limitation due to conditioning  
Alternating between order and disorder  
Giving rise to periods of conflict and peace

---

*The Ascetic: Back to the Sage*

---

The sage quickly regained self-control  
And gathered the seed which had been spilt  
This he put in a pot to nurture in time  
This seed grew into an enlightened one—myself

I have said a little about things and myself  
Now, kindly tell me why you are here  
Please speak truthfully—just as things are  
Truth is the cornerstone of ascetic life

---

*Sikhidhvaja Replied*

---

O radiant and enlightened one  
You know all but still ask of me  
I shall speak truthfully just as asked  
My story begins as king Sikhidhvaja

Dreading samsara I have abandoned  
Kingdom, wife and all royal pleasures  
Wandering and performing austerities  
I have yet to find peace and tranquility

My mind has not known rest at all  
Though I do not indulge in vain activity  
Living unattached and alone in this forest  
Still I am dry and devoid of fulfillment

I have practiced yogic methods ceaselessly  
But go from sorrow to greater sorrow  
Even simple joys that come naturally  
Torment the soul and seem poison to me

### *The Ascetic Instructs Sikhidhvaja*

---

Direct inquiry leads to self-knowledge  
The way beyond all sorrow and suffering  
Devoid of self-knowledge, ever are we bound  
Our suffering is the effect of our ignorance

Actions themselves do not bind  
Conditioning is limitation and bondage  
Just as seeing a ghost instead of a post  
Fills one with fright and great sorrow

Neither conditioning nor limitation  
Has any reality or substance really  
Still they create such great havoc  
Giving rise to foolishness of all kinds

Conditioning is the seed of mind  
When it ceases the mind ceases too  
One who has attained self-knowledge  
Has crossed samsara—is never born again

Sages crossing this dire samsara  
Declare self-knowledge to be supreme  
Why then do you continue in ignorance  
By clinging still to foolish notions

Thinking that you are now an ascetic  
Living here in this forest in austerity  
Feeling: 'this is my pot, stick and cottage'  
Why not inquire directly into the self

Why not strive directly for enlightenment  
Inquiring into the nature of bondage  
Why are you wasting your life here alone  
Instead of seeking enlightened company

### *Sikhidhvaja Remarks*

---

O sage, everything you say is true  
I am freed of foolishness, O guru  
I have taken refuge in you—enlighten me  
To the way beyond grief and suffering

### *The Ascetic Continues Instruction*

---

If you are receptive and eager to learn  
You will benefit from my instruction  
It is your responsibility to see beyond words  
Words are used to indicate lies beyond them

If one is not serious, disciplined and attentive  
Teaching is fruitless—a useless exercise  
You must intend to receive that which is conveyed  
With the whole of your being in attentiveness

### *Story of the Philosophers' Stone*

---

There once lived one who was wealthy and wise  
Most successful though unaware of self  
He engaged in austerities for the sole purpose  
Of acquiring the gem—philosophers' stone

Since his effort was most intense  
The jewel appeared to him very soon  
Uncertain he was that this was the gem  
For how could such be achieved so soon

His mind was still striving and suffering  
Still doubting that this was the stone  
Thinking his austerity to be too ordinary  
For this achievement in such a short time

With this doubt and inner confusion  
He did not take the jewel that appeared  
Not destined to get it even though there  
What is ignored disappears quite soon

When one is sincere in spiritual practice  
Psychic powers called siddhis arise  
If one foolishly pursues these powers  
Insight that also comes vanishes—ignored

This man reengaged himself in austerity

Still for the purpose of the precious stone  
Then once seeing a shiny glass piece  
He mistook it for the precious gem sought

Greedy and deluded he picked it up  
Thinking this would fulfill all his dear wishes  
Renouncing family, friends, wealth and all  
He went to a forest to harvest the glass piece

Nothing but great calamities came  
There he suffered for his foolishness  
Foolishness is the greatest disaster  
It adorns the head of all suffering and calamity

### *Story of the Wild Elephant*

---

This story resembles yours in many ways  
Listen attentively to its deeper import  
The story of a very strong elephant  
Equipped with the most powerful tusks

Its rider had imprisoned him in a cage  
Making him work hard, inflicting him with pain  
The elephant struggled to free itself  
Whenever the rider was away from him

Once after three days of struggle  
The elephant freed itself finally  
The rider found out and tracked him down  
Alighting on the elephant to his surprise

The rider slipped, falling to the ground  
The elephant saw his enemy before him  
Overcome with pity, he simply went away  
Compassion is seen even in wild beasts

Those bent on evil don't change their ways  
The rider gathered his friends for the task  
A vicious ambush for the elephant was set  
A huge pit—making it impossible for him to escape

They cleverly lured the elephant to trap  
And lo, he fell in and was again bound  
Made to undergo tremendous suffering  
The sad fate of those missing opportunity

If one ignores opportunities offered  
To break away from existing bondage  
They will return strengthened in force  
And subject you to a fresh charge of pain

Ignore the false satisfactions of freedom  
Thinking you are free invites sorrow  
Foolishness is bondage, O holy one  
'Tis foolish for the bound to imagine they're free

Though the self alone exists in truth  
The foolish are snared by ignorance  
Those firmly established in foolishness  
All that *is*—is but an expansion of foolishness

### *Lessons: Story of the Philosophers' Stone*

---

The one searching for the gem is you  
With knowledge of scriptures and learning  
Still peace eludes you at every step  
You are not at rest within yourself

The precious stone is real renunciation  
This alone puts an end to all sorrow  
Total renunciation is total gain  
You've renounced much for the ascetic life

The ego-sense still needs to be renounced  
The heart must fully abandon the mind  
When one abandons movement of thought  
There is realization of the Absolute

You are overcome with renunciation's thought  
An impression created by your renunciation  
Real bliss arises within naturally  
When there is total renunciation

One who has real total renunciation  
Is not agitated by anything at all  
Though winds come with all of their might  
The oak stands still and unperturbed

Worries are but movements of thought  
These movements are known as mind  
If thoughts still operate you must know  
The mind still has much it has not renounced

When the mind is agitated, world appears  
It stays as long as thoughts dwell within  
As long as thoughts continue to operate  
There is no total renunciation

Hence when thoughts arise in your heart  
Renunciation leaves you like the gem  
Taking along freedom from thoughts and worry  
For you failed to recognize its true spirit

Abandoned by the jewel of renunciation  
You clung to the glass of austerities  
This has increased your sorrow manifold  
You've abandoned joy for this sorry state

You fell into a self-created foolish trap  
Mistaking austerity for real renunciation  
Abandoning kingdom, wealth and wife  
Attaching to this pathetic ascetic life

You're more worried now than ever before  
About meals, animals and the weather  
Firmly bound by thoughts and their offshoots  
Only imagining you have some real gain

### *Lessons: Story of the Wild Elephant*

---

You are the wild elephant in the forest  
With tusks of wisdom and dispassion  
Ignorance is the rider inflicting sorrow  
Ignorance overcomes blind strength always

The cage is a cage of your desires  
They get stronger in time, unlike iron  
As the elephant broke out of the cage  
You renounced all and came to this forest

Psychological abandonment is another thing  
Not as easy as leaving things physically  
As the rider was alerted to the elephant's escape  
Ignorance trembles during renunciation

When pursuit of pleasure is abandoned  
Ignorance flees from you instantly  
Coming here you wounded this ignorance  
But you failed to abandon it psychologically

Therefore ignorance has risen in you  
It remembers well its earlier wound  
So it has trapped you now in asceticism  
You should have abandoned it mentally too

You are strong and endowed with wisdom  
But the rider of ignorance has trapped you  
You're now imprisoned in asceticism's well  
And all the while you think you're free

Why didn't you listen to your wife's words  
She is indeed a true knower of truth  
But even if you felt that you were right  
Why didn't you abandon all psychologically

### *Sikhidhvaja to the Ascetic*

---

I've renounced kingdom, palace and wife  
What else could I have renounced  
Why do you say it is not renunciation—  
That I have not renounced everything

### *The Ascetic Replies*

---

Kingdom, palace, wealth and wife  
These are not yours to begin with  
The best part you have held back  
Renounce that totally without residue

### *Sikhidhvaha Responds*

---

If all those things are not really mine  
I then renounce this forest and hermitage  
Surely this now constitutes renunciation  
Have I completely renounced everything

### *The Ascetic Replies*

---

The forest and hermitage are not yours  
How do you feel you renounce them  
The best part you have held back  
Renounce that totally without residue

### *Sikhidhvaja Responds*

---

You say these are not mine either  
I then abandon staff, skin and cottage  
Saying this he sprang up and gathered  
All his possessions, however small

Instantly he created a large bonfire  
And burnt all things to ashes and dust  
Proclaiming he'd renounced all activities  
All that was sacred and secular too

Thank you for awakening me, O sage  
I've now abandoned delusion, carried long  
Victorious, I've now renounced everything  
Do you feel there is anything I have left out

### *The Ascetic Replies*

---

You have not renounced everything  
Do not pretend as if you really have  
The best part you have held back  
Renounce that totally without residue

### *Sikhidhvaja Responds*

---

There is only one thing left to renounce  
This filthy body of leather and bones  
I shall now renounce this wretched thing  
And surely achieve total renunciation

### *The Ascetic Replies*

---

Why destroy this innocent body  
Abandon anger which blinds you now  
You have nothing to do with this body  
It is enlivened, sustained and made to act

Real renunciation is beyond this notion  
Renounce that which agitates this body  
Sin and evil will then come to an end  
Or they will rise again in a new body

That alone is total renunciation  
That will make you a supreme renouncer  
Renounce the sole cause of all mischief  
That which makes one revolve in foolishness

### *Sikhidhvaja Responds*

---

O, radiant sage, I hear your words  
But I'm not able to know what to renounce  
Pray, instruct me on the sole cause of all  
So I may see clearly what renunciation is

### *The Ascetic Replies*

---

The mind should be renounced, O noble one  
Call it the individual, jiva or even prana  
It is what created tremendous confusion  
The seed of all sorrow, suffering and grief

Abandoning the mind is renunciation  
The mind causes great distress in the heart  
Its agitation affects one and others too  
'Tis great joy in one who is mind-less

Diverse experiences and stages in life  
The firmness of holy ones as well too  
Are all modifications of the mind only  
Mind's abandonment is true renunciation

Once you renounce this unstable mind  
Truth will be experienced at once  
All notions and diversity will come to an end  
You will know peace that passeth understanding

By trying to renounce what is not yours  
You create division within yourself  
You cannot renounce everything as such  
All exists in the one infinite consciousness

Rest in the stage of total renunciation  
'Tis like a quiet lamp without any fuel  
But in the quiet stillness you'll still shine  
With the supreme brilliance of your nature

Just as you'll still exist after renouncing  
Consciousness ever exists after mind's gone  
Nothing will change but changing within  
You'll transcend all sorrow completely

You'll go beyond birth, old age and death  
Entering into eternity and infinity  
All else is a sheer waste of time  
Self-created delusion and bondage

In renunciation exists highest knowledge  
Utter emptiness overflows within itself  
Abandon the mind and notion of renunciation  
Then remain where you are—what is the harm

### *Sikhidhvaja Asks*

---

Holy sage, kindly do instruct me  
As I have taken refuge in you  
What is the nature of this mind  
How to abandon it once and for all

### *The Ascetic: On the Mind*

---

For the wise, renunciation is easier  
Than renouncing rule over a kingdom  
For fools, renouncing is as difficult  
As it is for simpletons to be king

Subtle impressions are conditioning  
These form the nature of the mind  
The utter destruction of the mind  
Is the extinction of all conditioning

The 'I-idea' is the mind-tree's seed  
It arises in the absence of self-knowledge  
Uproot this tree—root and branch  
And rest in the space of the heart

'I' is the seed of the mind-tree  
It grows in the field of ignorance  
Creating division where none exists  
A trick, an illusion—it is called maya

Only after the 'I-idea' takes root  
Does intellect or buddhi arise within  
From then it expands most vigorously  
Notions and concepts are its substance

The trunk of this tree is the body  
More conditioning the food that sustains  
Its branches reach great distances  
Its fruits are joys and sorrows

This is a vicious mean-spirited tree  
Endeavor to uproot and fell it  
Beware of its branches and fruit at all times  
By the spirit of detachment and renunciation

The spirit of detachment and renunciation  
Stops nourishment and weakens the tree  
You must then uproot this tree completely

This is the primary task before you

Uproot the tree by relentless self-inquiry  
Directly discover the nature of self  
The fire of inquiry will fry the seed  
Ongoing inquiry will set the tree afire

Ignorance arises in pure consciousness  
As an effect of the non-existent ego-sense  
It is most shameless, vile and persistent  
It keeps returning even when thrown out

It returns only because we deal with effects  
Go after the cause and see what happens  
Every experience is the effect of some cause  
Destroy the cause of returning experience

Experience does not rest on objective reality  
As objects come and go as effects you see  
Pursue the cause and you may discover  
There is none—the effect vanishes too

If the parent is unreal the child is unreal  
The creator too is non-different from truth  
All that seems to have proceeded from him  
Has truth as its substance, form as appearance

The creator is non-different from reality  
Hence, creation is non-different from reality  
This has to be realized directly for oneself  
To get rid of ignorance and the ego-sense

The delusion of the world-appearance  
Has attained expansion by reaffirmation  
When water freezes into a block of ice  
It serves as a seat or something similar

Only when ignorance is finally dispelled  
Does the original state manifest itself  
All notions have to be seen to be unreal  
The deception ceases when inquired into

Brahman is one without a second  
Without cause, effect or purpose  
Being the all—what purpose can there be

World-appearance is but a delusion

The objectivity we feel of this world  
Has to be seen and known as unreal  
The experiencer of ego-sense does not exist  
Realize this and recognize you are the all

### *Sikhidhvaja's Realization*

---

Lord, eternally grateful I am to thee  
For this awakening and realization  
Neither mind nor ego-sense exists  
I am pure, awakened—there is naught else

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Sikhidhvaja entered deep meditation  
Having awoken—fully enlightened  
You are instantly free from modifications  
Once the light of self is directly seen

Coming out of meditation he then inquired  
For further understanding of the truth  
"When reality is indeed indivisible  
How does any division arise in it"

### *The Ascetic: On Appearance and Reality*

---

Well asked, O enlightened one  
This is all that remains to be known  
All this will cease at world-cycle's end  
Remaining only as a trace essence

That itself is pure consciousness  
Also known as Brahman or nirvana  
Most minute, yet infinitely large  
Creation is sub-atomic in its expanse

The universal self exists as this universe  
As the ocean with waves appearing in it  
World-appearance is a but a mere ripple  
In the infinite ocean of pure consciousness

Infinite consciousness pervades all  
Holding all together from within  
A total absence of division or duality  
Everywhere, at all times, in all forms

Extremely subtle is this—pure experiencing  
Neither experiencer nor experience  
One cannot say anything about it at all  
Words necessarily omit some things

Causeless and hence the cause of none  
Neither doer, action nor instrument  
Eternal, absolute consciousness it is  
Pure self-knowledge—supreme existence

'World' and 'ego-sense' are words only  
They have no corresponding reality  
Empty notions, non-different from space  
This has to be realized as the supreme self

Whatever consciousness realizes itself to be  
That it becomes instantly—here and now  
Due to confusion consciousness sees itself  
As embodied and as the world outside

The supreme self alone shines here as all  
'World' and 'ego-sense' are only notions  
Having no existence independent of self  
Consciousness shines as consciousness

Neither seed nor cause for this world  
All you see is an experience only  
Apart from experience nothing exists  
What exists is infinite consciousness

The infinite exists as pure experiencing  
That alone is this universe expanded  
There is no substance or outsideness  
Pure experiencing is consciousness

Indestructible—it cannot be modified  
The changes you see are experiences  
A trick of consciousness within itself  
Consciousness alone exists—naught else

Matter and thought have no existence  
There is neither world nor ego-sense  
Remain in peace free of conditioning  
All questions cease on self-realization

The mind does not have any existence  
That which shines is infinite consciousness  
Giving rise to notions like mind and world  
All are reflections within infinite consciousness

The absolute is formless pure consciousness  
Forms cannot come from the formless  
A notion about something felt to be real  
The mind is a bundle of such limiting notions

Just how can the mind be real at all  
Can a divider exist in the indivisible  
Appearances are reflections in consciousness  
The mind and world are but notions

The reality that is seen as the world  
Is beginningless, uncreated, indivisible  
Illimitable, formless and unchanging  
Reflections of Brahman within itself

If there is no world, where is 'you' and 'I'  
Know these directly to be but notions  
Giving rise to bondage and self-destruction  
Realization of I's non-existence is freedom

Bondage and liberation are notions too  
Consciousness is aware of both of them  
You must realize you are not the ego-sense  
To be free and rest in pure awareness

When pure awareness rises, notions subside  
Perfection ensues without agitation  
This universe exists as carvings exist  
Within an uncarved block of granite

To see the universe without conditioning  
Without intervention of the mind  
Without notions and perversions  
This is called nirvana or perfection

When this truth is clearly realized  
When duality is completely discarded  
Peace that passeth understanding remains  
Your indescribable and true nature

Without cause, there can be no effect  
Without seed, trees cannot come forth  
How then from the formless Brahman  
Comes this universe as something real

Brahman comprehended by ignorance  
Is called universe—real and compelling  
When consciousness knows itself to be  
Something other—it takes on ignorance

This ignorance or veiling is self-destructive  
Be it momentary or through birth cycles  
Such delusion can only be rent asunder  
When self-knowledge is directly experienced

The unreal appearing as the real  
Is called ignorance and confusion  
Non-comprehension of the truth  
Is comprehension of untruth—ignorance

When the mind's non-existence is realized  
One sees that ego-sense does not exist  
What exists is infinite consciousness  
All notions based on ignorance cease

There is neither unity nor diversity  
Neither confusion nor delusion  
Nothing comes and nothing goes  
Everything is consciousness—that you are

When all desires have been abandoned  
The mind becomes utterly quiet  
Earlier existing coloring washes away  
These teachings are then comprehended

Earlier efforts are not wasted though  
Effort in conditioning takes you so far  
All conditioning must be abandoned  
For clarity to find its way home

When one is freed from all conditioning  
When all impurities have been removed  
The teacher's words enter the heart  
And resonate, awakening the self

Earlier you dwelt in ignorance  
Varied notions of 'I' and 'mine'  
Now on abandoning them completely  
The truth is directly seen in your heart

As long as the heart sees the mind  
Ignorance lasts and creates havoc  
When the heart sees itself or light  
You are enlightened and liberated

Mind and conditioning are synonymous  
As long as these are felt near and dear  
One must suffer ignorance's consequence  
This is by choice and never an imposition

There is no mind in liberated ones  
Consciousness functions unobstructed  
They live in pure light of consciousness  
While the ignorant function in the mind

When there is destruction of the mind  
There is also destruction of all sorrow  
One attains unending happiness and joy  
One abides in utter equanimity

All joys of this world and even heaven  
Are worth nothing more than a copper  
One who clings to its fleeting pleasures  
Himself forsakes his highest welfare

The direct method of self-knowledge  
Is the best and safest way back home  
Indirect methods are full of dead-ends  
Where one only thinks there is attainment

Whatever sorrow there is anywhere  
Know it to be a result of mental craving  
If you establish yourself in equanimity  
You'll rest in the non-different eternal

There is only infinite consciousness  
Brahman is the only existence  
All else is in the mind of spectators  
Mental limitation experiencing itself

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Sikhidhvaja engaged in deep meditation  
Free from all modifications in consciousness  
Chudala abandoned her ascetic disguise  
And returned to her palace to resume her duties

After some time she felt to visit him  
To see if he was still inwardly awake  
Sikhidhvaja was still in deep meditation  
And did not hear her calling to him

Using her psychic powers she deduced  
A trace of individuality still existed in him  
She fanned that spark till it grew into a flame  
Sikhidhvaja awakened from his meditation

The most latent desires are disguised as sattva  
They are still seeds, no matter the guise  
Like sparks, they can be fanned into flame  
So one has to be alert and eternally vigilant

These latent desires in sattvic guise  
Are so because of an inner imbalance  
When sattva is in total equilibrium  
Agitation in body or mind do not happen

Sikhidhvaja opened his eyes to find  
The ascetic just there, looking at him  
He prostrated, expressing his gratitude  
For the instructions and guidance received

He expressed his experiences in detail  
Most thankful for the showering of grace  
He now understood total renunciation  
As renunciation of all mental modification

After spending some time in the forest  
Discussing many things of interest  
Chudala felt that he was now ready  
To know the truth of her identity

She also felt that he should return  
To the palace and resume his duties  
There was no point in continuing to dwell  
In the forest now that clarity was achieved

As long as there is oil in the lamp  
It continues to burn ever bright  
So also when there is conditioning  
Ignorance's darkness keeps one bound

The lamp of Sikhidhvaja was now dry  
The oil of ignorance had been purged  
His whole being was in utter equanimity  
She felt he should do his natural functions

She explained the truth of her identity  
Why she had to assume the disguise  
We cannot learn from those closest to us  
As the mind insists on how it relates

Learning takes a disciple's heart  
One who is awake and stays alert  
One who has the requisite discipline  
To find out the truth for himself now

Till an awakening has happened within  
Anything said will not be of much use  
As the cup of one's inner receptivity  
Is turned upside down and will not hold

It is pointless to instruct the unawakened  
They are sleeping—best to let them lie  
Awakening—they will themselves seek  
Ways to end the tyranny of the mind

This story has many subtle teachings  
Contemplate them carefully—gain wisdom  
Know what it is that really binds  
And what must be done to overcome it

## 12. THE STORY OF KACA

### *Background*

---

Kaca's story has a similar import  
What is renunciation and liberation  
Kaca was the son of Brihaspati  
Who was preceptor to the gods

When still young Kaca inquired  
Of Brihaspati, his father the wise sage

"How does one obtain freedom  
From this cage called samsara"

Brihaspati's reply was quite curt  
"Liberation from this prison house  
Is possible by total renunciation  
There is no other way out of this"

### *Kaca's First Attempt*

---

Kaca renounced everything he had  
And retired to the forest that moment  
His father the sage was unaffected  
The wise are unaffected by such changes

After eight years of seclusion and austerity  
Kaca happened to meet his father again  
"I've performed austerities for long years  
But have still to attain supreme peace"

### *The Sage's Reply*

---

His father the sage repeated again  
His earlier commandment to Kaca  
"Renounce everything" and went away  
Leaving his son to do the needful

### *Kaca's Second Attempt*

---

Considering what was left to renounce  
Kaca discarded the clothes on his body  
Continuing austerity for three more years  
He again sought his father's counsel

"I've renounced all my personal things  
Practiced austerity for three more years  
But I've still to attain supreme peace  
I've yet to gain self-knowledge"

### *The Sage's Reply*

---

"By 'total' I mean only the mind  
For it is the mind that is the all  
Renunciation of the mind is requisite"  
Saying this the sage instantly vanished

### *Kaca's Third Attempt*

---

Kaca looked within to find the mind

In order that it too could be renounced  
But he could not find the elusive mind  
All his efforts were fruitless and in vain

He realized that punishing the body  
Was the height of folly—it was innocent  
And decided to return to the sage again  
This time to learn what the mind is

### *Kaca to the Sage*

---

"Please instruct me on the mind  
I do not understand what the mind is  
How does one renounce something  
Of which he has no real knowledge"

### *The Sage and Kaca's Dialogue*

---

The sage replied to the seeker his son  
They who know, say 'I' is the mind  
The ego-sense that arises within you  
That is the mind—it is naught else

Kaca said it was difficult to impossible  
The sage responded that it was possible  
Easier than crushing a flower in the hand  
Far easier than closing one's own eyes

That which appears to be is ignorance  
It perishes on the dawn of knowledge  
Know there is no ego-sense in truth  
It appears due to ignorance and delusion

Just where is this thing called ego-sense  
How did it arise and what is it really  
Consciousness alone is all things  
There is naught else but consciousness

Ego- sense is just a word that's inflated  
Give it up and give up all self-limitation  
It is also giving up all mental conditioning  
In order to realize you're unconditionally free

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Thus instructed in the highest wisdom  
Kaca became enlightened and free

You too can attain the very same state  
Of supreme peace and inner quiescence

The ego-sense is unreal—do not trust it  
Do not abandon it either—as it is unreal  
The unreal cannot be grasped in hand  
It cannot be abandoned as something either

You must feel in every cell of your being  
The utter unreality of the ego-sense  
All conditioning must be abandoned  
Mental conditioning is self-limitation

Then what is birth and what is death  
You realize you're subtle consciousness  
Indivisible and free from ideation  
Encompassing all beings and everything

It is only in the state of ignorance  
The world around appears so very real  
The enlightened see all as Brahman  
Having abandoned all concepts and notions

Do not behave like the foolish and suffer  
What one has attained—you can too  
There is no loss in forsaking the unreal  
It is natural if real wisdom has dawned within

### 13. THE STORY OF THE DELUDED MAN

#### *Background*

---

There is a man fashioned by delusion  
Born and brought up in a desert  
In him arose a deluded notion  
"I'm born of space, this space is mine"

#### *What Followed the Deluded Notion*

---

Instantly he felt a need to protect space  
And built a house for this very purpose  
Seeing space safely enclosed within  
He felt happy and most contented

In course of time, the house tumbled  
And weeping aloud, feeling all was lost  
He then dug a well for the same purpose—

Of protecting space which he thought was his

The well too was lost in course of time  
Again he was consumed by sorrow  
He kept fashioning different containers  
But each perished after a short time

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

The man who was fashioned by delusion  
Is the ego-sense—a notion in the mind  
Brahman in reality, but not knowing this  
It foolishly wanders trying to possess things

Identification with the body starts delusion  
Other bodies are then seen as distinct  
The urge to possess surges within  
The mind works furiously to protect it

All things change and perish in time  
Nothing is yours to be possessed  
What will you protect and just how  
When you yourself are journeying here

But even though bodies perish in time  
The self that animates them doesn't  
You are that imperishable consciousness  
Indestructible and even finer than space

Brahman alone is all this you see  
Be happy knowing this deeply within  
The whole universe is pure consciousness  
Objects are appearances within itself

Everything, everyone including you and I  
Though seeming alive is not really alive  
Abandon faith in appearance as reality  
Do what needs to be done appropriately

## 14. THE STORY OF VIPASCHIT

### *Background*

---

There once lived a king called Vipaschit  
Four ministers guarded his kingdom  
A wise man visited him one day  
After saluting, he spoke to the king

### *The Wise Man Said to the King*

---

All four ministers have been killed  
The city is surrounded by the enemy  
Only you can fend off this assault  
Only you can destroy this enemy

### *The King Acts*

---

The king offered prayers and worship  
He then summoned four powerful forces  
Offering his head in return as sacrifice  
Four powerful forces emerged right then

Most radiant were the king's four forms  
They were blessed with seeing everything  
They immediately proceeded to do battle  
And vanquished the enemy's four forces

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Though consciousness is one and non-dual  
It seems to become diverse like in dream  
Thus it is non-diverse—still appearing diverse  
As the diverse forms are its own reflections

Similarly the yogi too acts everywhere  
Experiencing all things in all of time  
Though apparently remaining in one place  
As he has overcome all self-limitation

### *Returning to the Story*

---

The four radiant forms the king assumed  
Were neither enlightened nor ignorant  
All things are possible for those in such state  
Of both awakening and non-awakening

In the case of partial awakening  
Psychic powers come naturally to one  
Yogis who practice just to attain powers  
May get them but they are still ignorant

Liberated sages are quite different  
They've attained insight into truth  
Though they engage in normal activity  
They are liberated from bondage's chains

They may weep, laugh and get angry  
Within they are never elated or depressed  
They are established firmly in the truth  
Though they may seem to be quite ordinary

The king's four forms had different outcomes  
One attained salvation by the Lord's grace  
Another reached the realm of the moon  
The third continued to rule his kingdom

The fourth attained to heaven's abode  
As he was utterly free from any desires  
Still not having attained enlightenment  
He continued investigation into the truth

Though each had the same vasana initially  
They were drawn in different directions  
Repetitions of vasana impact its effects  
Time, place and activity are other factors

Vipaschit the fourth form roamed very far  
He realized the truth—then ignorance ceased  
Ignorance too is infinite as is truth  
All seen within infinite consciousness

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

When truth is not realized ignorance is  
When truth is realized ignorance is not seen  
The same consciousness is ignorance  
The same consciousness is Brahman

Redemption is the original cause's reversal  
That which gave rise to the initial fall  
No other path is adequate or fruitful  
Self effort and grace meet in redemption

Vipaschit had gone through many births  
Gradually freeing himself of ignorance  
Each step was a step into the light  
Leaving behind some clouds of ignorance

Each moment is a precious opportunity  
Towards the light or the fall into darkness  
You must chose which path to tread  
Resulting experiences are beyond your choice

## 15. THE STORY OF THE HUNTER AND THE SAGE

### *Background*

---

Vipaschit from the earlier story  
Took birth once again as Bhasa  
Must luminous and radiant was his form  
He had a boon to experience everything

For eons he took birth in different forms  
Remembering knowledge and experiences  
Seeing worlds most distant and different  
Endless were experiences like flowing streams

In a certain universe lived a fierce demon  
Who had destroyed the abode of a sage  
He was cursed to be born as a mosquito  
Somehow suddenly he had self-awareness

He became a mosquito with self-awareness  
That of Brahma down to a blade of grass  
All beings are subject to two forms of birth  
Those of Brahma's and illusory creation also

### *Meeting the Ascetic*

---

In time he took birth as a hunter  
One day meeting a ascetic who asked  
"Why do you live this cruel life  
Why not seek liberation instead?"

The hunter took these words to heart  
And entered the wisdom of scriptures  
Just as the flower's deep fragrance  
Enters one's body when it is inhaled

One day the hunter asked the ascetic  
Just how is it that though this dream  
Takes place within oneself only  
It appears to be outside as real

### *The Ascetic Replied*

---

To find the answer to this question  
I once practiced long contemplation  
Exhaling prana and mind outside  
The prana entered another being

I followed it into that being  
And into his heart I did enter  
Beholding the principle of light  
There I saw the entire universe

It was just like seeing with my eyes  
I saw the sun, mountains and oceans  
Different human beings and gods too  
And realized the truth about consciousness

### *On the Play of Consciousness*

---

Whatever consciousness manifests in itself  
That is what is known as the world  
This world is indeed the dream object  
The perception of infinite consciousness

The expansion of this perception  
Is what is known as the waking state  
Dream is dream in relation to  
The waking state preceding it

Dream is a waking state in itself  
The waking state having two aspects  
When one wishes to rest in himself  
And when one attains perfect illumination

Resting in himself the illusion continues  
One responds to the world in the mind  
But when one attains perfect illumination  
The world-appearance ceases completely

I ventured further into the being  
Entering his individual consciousness  
I experienced his world of confusion  
His vital energy was heavily congested

Years of poor habits, fatigue and drink  
Made his vital energy dense and inefficient  
The self is its own object, you see  
Congestion within is experienced without

Mind is creator of the world  
It fancies prana to be its movement  
Thus mind brings prana into being  
And on prana mind becomes dependent

Prana busied in its own movement  
Is unable to exert in self-knowledge  
When prana and mind are in harmony  
One engages himself in various activities

When prana and mind have disharmony  
Both resting—is called the sleep state  
Clogs in the nadis due to unhealthy habits  
Is experienced as fatigue and need for sleep

All this I saw within that being  
Into whose consciousness I entered  
I saw a world within his consciousness  
And realized it was all consciousness' play

### *On the Power of Assertion*

---

After this I asserted that I was sixteen  
I experienced that I was sixteen years old  
Living in a hermitage in a small village  
All this instantly became real to me

Previous experiences began to fade  
The body seemed to be my only hope  
Social customs and wealth became important  
It felt wisdom had completely abandoned me

One day a guest came by to visit  
He described the truth of this universe  
One infinite consciousness alone is  
I awakened fully on hearing his words

I recollected I was in another's body  
One with his prana but in samadhi  
I exited his body and came to know  
Just one hour had passed in samadhi

Curiously I entered another's heart  
In it, cosmic dissolution had just concluded  
Where is the body, creation and death  
There is only pure consciousness

In the presence of this consciousness  
The tiniest particle appears macrocosmic  
When world-appearance's notion is rooted  
The karma notion takes root—creation seems real

The cycle of life, experience and death  
Continues till one attains liberation  
Creation is in the heart of consciousness  
Just as dream is in the dreamer's heart

Virtue, vice, tendency and personality  
All are but notions, words with no reality  
One infinite consciousness alone is  
In which diversity appears as a dream

Creation is an appearance in consciousness  
'Tis very much like dream-experience  
Just as cloud formations appear in the sky  
Seeming quite stable but ever changing

Countless worlds appear in consciousness  
Some in the same space, some seem separate  
Appearances exist in consciousness only  
There is not else—this must be known directly

Impressions created in the waking state  
Appear in the dream state as well  
Strengthened again in the waking state  
But the waking state too is an appearance

Just as movement is natural in air  
Notions arise in consciousness  
Impressions are not needed to create them  
They appear and dissolve on their own

Consciousness's faculty to hold onto something  
Is what is known as impression or samskara  
When it is realized it is a reflection within  
Impressions are not seen or experienced

Creation is non-different from consciousness  
Consciousness alone shines as all this  
The cause was there before the effect  
This cause continues to shine unchanged

Things appear to exist independently  
All because the substratum is reality  
Just as dream objects appear so very real  
Because of the dreamer dreaming them

Simultaneous multiple reflections  
Appear as this grand creation we see  
All of it rises and exists in consciousness  
Infinite consciousness is the only reality

Diversity appears to be just as in dream  
Creation exists in infinite consciousness  
As dream is non-different from the dreamer  
Creation is non-different from consciousness

Everywhere I look, I see myself only  
As I am a particle in consciousness  
The part cannot be divided from the whole  
This truth has to be realized by you directly

### *On Creation*

---

In the beginning there was no creation  
Infinite consciousness alone was  
Creation took place as a coincidence  
As a coconut falls from the tree when a bird alights

The individual experiences creation  
As the world outside due to the senses  
When attention is externalized and scattered  
There is confusion and lack of inner clarity

When the senses don't rush out to objects  
The rays of the mind return to fullness  
Once again there is great clarity within  
No contradiction between appearance and reality

Senses extroverted is world-appearance  
As if it were outside infinite consciousness  
The individual is an aggregate of the senses  
Consciousness endowed with life force

This individual exists as everything everywhere  
Or he could never experience anything at all  
The nature of the individual has impact  
On the experiences and pull to respond

As one's natural tendencies surge within  
One feels a certain way towards things  
This does not mean that he must respond  
In the way the feeling within urges

### *Back to the Story*

---

When I asserted I was sixteen years old  
I momentarily forgot that a notion had gripped  
I lived with others for sixteen years  
Until one day an ascetic re-awakened me

All are in the heart of the infinite being  
We somehow regard others as so and so  
The infinite is the cause for all experiences  
All opposites and diversity are in him alone

When the energy in the infinite is agitated  
The effect is experienced by us in his heart  
We experience things as natural calamities  
And calm is restored on energy's balance

The infinite being is creations' reality  
Everything happens because of its will  
We attribute things to some local cause  
It is mere coincidence for this to so appear

Instructed by the ascetic—I was enlightened  
And felt not to leave him just yet  
I lived with him for a number of years  
That very ascetic is sitting right next to you

I wanted to see within myself as well  
Just as I saw in the body I was in  
But I could not return to my body  
And sought help from the ascetic

### *The Ascetic's Instructions*

---

You can know all and everything  
If you see it with your inner vision  
You are not this little personality  
You are the infinite being himself

You desired to enter another's heart  
To have a certain experience  
You've now entered this creation  
Your old body and his have decayed

You've continued to vibrate as consciousness  
Not finding exit as both bodies are gone  
Your experience has materialized as dream

All of us now here are our own dream objects

All of this happens in pure consciousness  
It exists everywhere, in every moment  
Knowers of truth know no sorrow  
They teach and enlighten others as well

### *How to Rest in the Self?*

---

Embarking on self-knowledge's quest  
Must be a whole-hearted effort  
First, find a foothold in sound wisdom  
Stay steady in practice till the goal is reached

Every moment of time and every thing  
Has the potential to raise inner clarity  
All that you seek is here and now  
Face the truth in all things without break

Experiences will come naturally on their own  
No need to run after anything at all  
The inevitable cannot be averted by any  
It cannot be altered by any effort

Let come what comes—what is the problem  
Be concerned with facing the truth  
Ceaselessly watch the mind's movement  
Unbroken must be the meditative mood

The world-appearance is a grand illusion  
It gives rise to delusion in the mind  
Opposites and contradictions appear  
But the substratum of them is unchanging

Every inch of space if filled with creations  
Countless worlds exist though unseen  
All existing together though most varied  
Without any contradiction or conflict

This universe appears in Brahman only  
In Brahman the universe does dissolve  
Brahman is the only reality there is  
Appearances are its creative play

From Brahman did the mind arise  
Faculties of thinking and imagination

All that you see exists in that mind  
Fondness of notions are illusion's chains

Light rays are non-different from the sun  
Bracelet is non-different from gold  
Waves are non-different from the ocean  
Sparks are non-different from flame

When the truth behind appearance is seen  
Direct understanding breaks illusion's chains  
One attains what is worth attaining  
And never gets enmeshed in objects again

Abandon your notions and conditioning  
Ideas of diversity that invite preference  
Refute objectification and externality  
Remain steadily establishes in consciousness

Whatever the self contemplates  
Materializes instantly, here and now  
This materialization shines as if independent  
Know this directly to be the origin of diversity

World-appearance is neither real nor unreal  
All appearances have reality as their substratum  
When this truth is realized by you directly  
You will know absolute reality as the self

From one point of view things appear real  
From an absolute view they are appearances  
Brahman remains Brahman—ever unchanged  
Though this world appears to exist as well

Abide in truth no matter what you do  
All this is nothing but pure consciousness  
Brahman alone is the absolute reality  
This, that or the other just do not exist

Abandon all concepts—even of bondage  
Liberation too is a notion only  
Remain pure, egoless and indivisible  
Engage yourself in natural activity

Light in darkness and darkness in light  
Good in evil and evil in good as well

All opposites synthesize in the absolute  
Renounce all limitation and realize freedom

I left the heart I had entered into  
Realizing Brahman as the only reality  
Everything exists everywhere all the time  
All this is pure undivided consciousness

In the infinite play of the infinite being  
Worlds and universes rise and fall  
Each full with different forms and beings  
Some are enlightened, others are not

The world exists in the mind only  
World-appearance is indeed beginningless  
Endless too is consciousness's infinite play  
All this is pure consciousness—naught else

## 16. THE WORLD WITHIN THE ROCK

### *Background*

---

A woman celestial once said to me  
When questioned about her identity  
"You live in a corner of the universe  
Beyond which are many diverse universes

On the slopes of a far-off mountain range  
Is a solid rock within which I dwell  
The world there is much like yours  
Different inhabitants and the rest

One desire remains for me now  
To be instructed by you in the truth  
And to attain self-knowledge  
Pray, do visit the world I dwell in"

### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

At her request I did visit  
Her world within the rock  
I saw the rock but not her world  
She insisted it was within her only

Then by repeated affirmation  
Her world I began to experience  
And realized that for salvation too

One has to be totally devoted

Instruction in right effort is necessary  
As the path and means are not known  
Then one has to exert by one's self  
Engaging in right action continually

### *Back to the story*

---

What appeared to be a rock  
Shone as pure consciousness  
On account of the power of illusion  
The unreal becomes obvious somehow

The subtle body is the first obvious truth  
The gross body follows as do all forms  
But what seems obvious is most unreal  
While reality stays hidden and unobvious

As the world within the rock was unseen  
Within and of consciousness only  
So also all this is pure consciousness  
Ignorant people cling to this as reality

I followed the celestial into her world  
And met her husband, a holy man  
He was the creator of that world  
I inquired about this world of theirs

### *The Creator in the Rock*

---

I'm but a vibration in consciousness  
Uncreated, I do not see any other  
You, I and all of which is seen  
Are all mere vibrations or notions

This lady you see here as my wife  
Is also an uncreated vibration  
Now I wish to merge in consciousness  
Rising dispassion signals dissolution

This lady, my wife, feels the same  
All notions have ceased in us both  
At the very same time that notions' end  
There is yearning for the unconditioned

Time, space, matter and motion

Are all parts of consciousness only  
Consciousness exists as this immobile rock  
All worlds exist in consciousness only

### *Dissolution and Creation*

---

The creator entered into deep meditation  
So did the lady—his wife—and myself  
Withdrawing consciousness from notions  
The earth in his world started to disintegrate

Water then deluged all that existed  
Flames arose high in the skies  
The creator withdrew his life-force  
Unrighteousness precedes natural calamities

Nothing lives without life-force  
Stars, heavens and gods cannot survive  
All these began to disintegrate as well  
All being notions of the creator only

What survives is only the eternal  
Beyond description, most minute  
A particle compared to mountains here  
From that everything seems to exist

Though of the nature of pure space  
Matter within it appears solid  
Consciousness alone appears as all  
Gods and worms too are all in that particle

All worlds are contained in the minute  
Pure consciousness is the only reality  
The substance stays unchanged throughout  
The world appears, so to say, as its body

All actions taking place originate in him  
On account of him all appears so real  
He exists as the cosmic body of creation  
Just as you exist in your heart in meditation

As we continued to meditate deeply  
I saw suns rising in each direction  
Three looked like the eyes of Rudra  
Their light destroyed the universe

Only two objects remained unaffected  
Space because it was all-pervading  
And gold because it was absolutely pure  
Total darkness blanketed all directions

After the colossal destruction  
Devoid of the veil of creation  
Fullness that seemed hidden during creation  
Was experienced as the only existence

This fullness has been there all the time  
Veiled only by one's own conditioning  
When conditioning is fully abandoned  
Fullness alone overflows in all directions

Limitless consciousness being everywhere  
I saw the creator in meditation  
Not as material solid forms  
But as empty dream-objects in a void

Instantly all vanished from view  
A fearful and radiant form appeared  
Rudra, the cosmic ego-sense it was  
The one who disturbs the equilibrium

Pure space or void is his form  
The five senses are his faces  
Organs of actions and their fields  
Are the great Rudra's ten arms

Though grand and colossal in size is Rudra  
He's but a small particle in consciousness  
Existing as movement in consciousness  
As air, space and life-force that sustains all

In time, all his movements cease  
He attains supreme equilibrium  
For he is attended by goodness for all  
He is known as Siva or auspiciousness

Attaining the state of supreme peace  
He comes to be known as Krishna  
He then starts creation's cycle  
And attains to supreme peace again

Rudra began to dance in space  
Casting a shadow without a sun  
That danced with him emitting fire  
The worlds reflected in her body

Like mirrors in one's body were worlds  
Seen in Rudra's shadow which appeared  
Coming into view and disappearing  
From moment to moment as she danced

There was neither male, female nor any dance  
Siva alone existed—pure consciousness  
His own dynamic energy appeared variously  
Non-different and inseparable from him

Just as gold cannot be without some form  
Consciousness has all forms inherent within  
Never without some movement within  
Birth, death and the rest are but consciousness

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

The enlightened see not diversity  
I myself saw that space of supreme peace  
Experiencing the forms described earlier  
As motion in that pure consciousness

All that appears and whatever there is  
Is real to the self—you must realize this  
Multiple reflections in consciousness  
Appearing real because of the substratum

Rudra then became atomic and invisible  
Becoming one with Brahman the absolute  
I saw all this in the rock I entered into  
With the divine eye or awakened intelligence

This cannot be seen with physical eyes  
You'll just see a rock somewhere outside  
But when you behold all with inner vision  
Every particle of sand is pure consciousness

I saw universes past, present and future  
Realizing that all this was within myself  
Just as the tree exists within the seed  
I myself was experiencing all these forms

I had become sub-atomic, a ray of light  
Then gross with potential for sense experience  
When consciousness opens its eyes, as it were  
It becomes aware of its own potentialities

Pure elements and senses come into being  
Though arising from and within consciousness  
Seeming substantial but still most illusory  
Known individually as I-ness or ego-sense

Experiencing space, I understood earth  
Experiencing earth all universes were known  
I myself became all that I experienced  
Apart from mind, nothing is experienced

What is seen as the world does not exist  
You have to observe this very carefully  
With the inner eye of awakened intelligence  
To know just how it seems to come into being

Pure consciousness appears as all this  
False notions we hold insist otherwise  
Direct self-realization must be had  
To know that you are indeed the all

I experience all as Brahman only  
Even elemental experiences are all him  
Non-different and inseparable from him  
This you have to know by direct experience

## 17. THE SAGE FROM OUTER SPACE

### *Background*

---

After all this I entered my cottage in space  
And looked around for my physical body  
Only an old sage could be seen  
Absorbed in the deepest meditation

I thought he must have felt like me  
Wanting absorption in deep meditation  
He may have discarded my old body  
And occupied the cottage he found empty

When my desire for that cottage ceased  
It disappeared, simply vanished from view

The cottage fell as did the sage meditating  
We both descended to the earth plane

The sage landed in the same posture  
Undisturbed, still deep in meditation  
In thunderstorm's form I roused him  
And greeted him as he came out of meditation

### *The Sage's Story*

---

I've wandered in heaven's realm  
In an effort to end samsara's wheel  
All this is pure consciousness only  
Just what is it that one calls pleasure

Pleasure is dreadful pain only  
Prosperity is adversity disguised  
Sensual enjoyment invites disease  
Pursuit of pleasure is most demeaning

Why even with advancing age  
Does craving not diminish in people  
Faculties diminish, weakness ensues  
But craving soars like unquenchable flames

After a long time I've attained egolessness  
Uninterested in heavenly pleasures too  
Like you, O sage, seeking seclusion  
I found this cottage and occupied it

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

I asked that he continue to dwell  
In the cottage he had occupied  
I wandered high into heaven's realms  
Soon I gained another material body

To me there was no difference at all  
Between subtle and material bodies  
Knowing all is pure consciousness alone  
Free of any notion or conditioning

Even when engaged in diverse activities  
The realization of Brahman is unbroken  
I am seated here instructing you  
Because of your need for instruction

In truth, all this you see is pure void  
All notions in the mind of the creator  
When truth is realized by direct experience  
The true nature behind appearance is known

Liberation alone confers supreme peace  
Bondage promotes psychological distress  
Yet people don't strive for liberation  
And suffer in vain—how foolish they are

## 18. THE STORY OF BHRINGISA

### *Background*

---

Bhringisa once approached Lord Siva  
For a way out of delusion and bondage  
Siva gave this advice to Bhringisa  
By which he attained total freedom

Give up doubts, resort to moral courage  
Be a supreme doer of actions  
A supreme enjoyer of delight  
And, a supreme renouncer of all

### *Be a Great Doer*

---

Be free of all doubt and confusion  
Do what is appropriate in each situation  
Natural action does not depend upon  
Whether others consider it right or wrong

Do not be swayed by likes and dislikes  
Success, failure, gain, ambition or greed  
Remain steady in silence and purity  
Unattached, without any selfish motive

Be a witness to all and everything  
Do what needs to be done with full heart  
Indifferent to how things may turn out  
Do the best without any attachment

Act with a mind completely at peace  
Steady, without excitement or exultation  
Do the best in each situation afresh  
In perfect equilibrium all the while you act

### *Be a Great Enjoyer*

---

Free from hate or any longing  
Enjoy what comes along naturally  
Without clinging or rejecting  
Even while engaged in action

Without experience though experiencing  
Witness of world-play though unaffected  
With mind balanced in pleasure and pain  
These come naturally in the course of life

Free from natural changes that occur  
Reactions to change cause confusion  
Find joy in misfortune, poverty and calamity  
In old age and death too—all natural changes

Be non-violent and an abode of virtue  
Enjoy sweet and bitter with equal relish  
Avoid completely all arbitrary distinctions  
Enjoy each moment as it comes naturally

#### *Be a Great Renouncer*

---

Banish from your mind all concepts  
Ideas of what is right and wrong too  
What is considered pain and pleasure  
Desires, doubts and all convictions too

See falsity in the experience of pain  
By realizing that you are not the body  
Abandon completely from the heart  
The idea of world-appearance as reality

#### *Vasistha's Comments*

---

Thus did Siva instruct Bhringisa  
Who then became enlightened  
Adopt this very attitude yourself  
And transcend sorrow completely

### 19. THE STORY OF IKSVAKU

#### *When the Ego-Sense Dissolves*

---

When the ego-sense dissolves in the mind  
Such a mind is free of greed and delusion  
No provocation can shake the virtue  
Of he who delights in the true welfare of all

Conditioning and tendencies are undone  
Anger does not surge uncontrollably  
Desires just do not reside within  
The senses function in perfect balance

Pleasure and pain come and go  
Without disturbing the inner storefront  
The heart regards these as insignificant  
And rests in peace and equanimity

All these virtues reside naturally in him  
Effortlessly he glides through all action  
Responding to situations best as they come  
Without personal agenda, confusion or pain

He who ignores self-knowledge's path  
Which is within reach of all, in every condition  
Abandons his highest good and supreme peace  
Choosing to continue in samsara's wheel

### *Iksvaku, your Ancestor*

---

Your own ancestor, the king Iksvaku  
Pondered deeply while ruling as king  
The way out of suffering once and for all  
And sought instruction from his father

### *Manu's Instructions*

---

His wise father, having attained the supreme  
Instructed him thus: listen attentively  
"What you see here does not exist  
Beyond the senses, nothing is seen

The eternal and infinite self alone exists  
The universe you see reflects within it  
Because energy is inherent in consciousness  
Everything appears alive and most real

There is neither bondage nor liberation  
One infinite consciousness alone exists  
Abandon notions of bondage and liberation  
Abide in the self and rest in peace

The actions of one of self-knowledge  
Are non-volitional, never motivated  
Hence he is free of their merit

Beyond praise and censure is he

He is not agitated by others at all  
He himself does not agitate anyone  
The self isn't attained by rites or rituals  
Only by worship of sages who've attained

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

Thus instructed Iksvaku was enlightened  
You too should adopt such an attitude  
The ignorant are dazzled by cheap tricks  
Cheap shows put on by two-bit imposters

Psychic ability is not holiness's sign  
Only purity of mind and craving's absence  
Absence of confusion and delusion  
These are real characteristics of the holy

When samsara has come to an end in one  
He is free from confusion and delusion  
Lust, anger, grief, greed and attachment  
These are totally absent in the enlightened

The Lord assumes individuality as jivas  
Creation arises in Him spontaneously  
Individuals too arise without reason  
Individual actions bring bondage, not other

Pleasure and pain come by our choices  
Limitations are they in one's understanding  
Resulting in actions that are solely individual  
Inviting consequences of wrong understanding

Existing notions are the cause of bondage  
Absence of all notions is itself liberation  
Why do you harbor such painful seeds  
Abandon all notions for your own welfare

The ropes of attraction bind the careless  
You are free if attraction does not attract  
You can still enjoy natural pleasures as they come  
Without attraction which craves and binds

Do what has to be done, as it comes  
With full heart, mind and energy

Avoid all personal interests—poisons all  
Bringing untold suffering and increased delusion

All notions exist in the mind  
Conquer the mind by the mind  
Purify the mind by the mind  
Destroy the mind by the mind

A washerman washes dirt with dirt  
A thorn is removed by another thorn  
Poison is the antidote for poison  
Resort to the all—letting go of the small

Resort to pure unmodified consciousness  
The supreme reality, the cosmic being  
Remain ever firmly established in it  
Resolutely and firmly rejecting all else

## 20. THE HUNTER AND THE DEER

### *The State of Turiya*

---

That pure and equanimous state  
Devoid of ego and non-ego too  
Beyond real and unreal as well  
Is a free fourth state called turiya

'Tis the state of liberated sages  
Unbroken witness consciousness  
Different from waking and dream  
Both characterized by thought movement

'Tis different from deep sleep too  
Characterized by inertia and ignorance  
When the ego-sense is fully abandoned  
Turiya manifests in that equilibrium

Hear now a story in this regard  
It will bring out subtle points very well  
If you hear it with rapt attention  
You will certainly become enlightened

### *The Hunter and the Deer*

---

In a certain forest there lived a sage  
He shone with extraordinary radiance  
A hunter once approached to ask

If he had seen a wounded deer recently

The sage replied to the hunter thus:  
"Only holy men dwell in this forest  
Our nature is peace, free from ego-sense  
Ego-sense being the cause of restlessness

This ego-sense and its activating mind  
Have come to a rest in us forest sages  
We do not know what you're alluding to  
In us, objects as such just do not exist"

### *Vasistha's Insight*

---

The hunter could not understand at all  
What the radiant sage was referring to  
He went his way nodding his head  
The sage was firmly established in turiya

There is naught but this glorious state  
Turiya, unmodified consciousness alone exists  
Waking, dream and sleep are in the mind  
When they cease—the mind too ceases to be

The pure state that is—continues to be  
This glorious state the yogis try to reach  
This is the conclusion of all scriptures  
Brahman alone exists—there is naught else

Some call it void, some consciousness  
Others still call it the supreme Lord  
Arguing foolishly among themselves  
Abandon all these notions completely

Rest in nirvana without thought movement  
With mind greatly weakened and at peace  
The inner intelligence now fully awakened  
Abide in the self, the eternal and infinite

Inwardly abandon, relinquish everything  
Externally engage yourself in right action  
The mind is happiness and unhappiness  
Not objects, people or any conditions

Remain eternally aware of the mind  
Unaffected by attraction and repulsion

By just this much self-effort you'll achieve  
Freedom from samsara's grip completely

Be unaware of pleasure and pain too  
And even that which lies in between  
You'll rise beyond sorrow and limitation  
This self-effort will take you to the infinite

## 21. THE SEVEN STATES OF YOGA

### *Background*

---

Some accept world-appearance as reality  
They bind themselves by attraction  
Others who question world-appearance  
Strive to know the truth by direct experience

The latter are seekers, they seek the truth  
Not answers, explanations or vain theories  
Dispassion naturally arises in seekers  
As they seek truth, not passing pleasures

Truth is enduring, never at the mercy of change  
But passing pleasures ever are  
The seeker finds strength in the changeless  
Those after pleasure must stay in pursuit

### *The First State of Yoga*

---

When one is disinterested in passing pleasures  
Seeing the defects in pursuing the sought  
One faces the unchanging with all being  
The seed of inner change flowers into dispassion

One is afraid to sin or cause anyone hurt  
Knowing truth deep in heart—'one alone is'  
He has set foot on the first state of yoga  
And is devoted to the service of holy ones

With scriptures he engages in self-study  
One thought fills his mind at all times  
"Just how to cross samsara's ocean"  
He alone is a seeker, others are still selfish

### *The Second State of Yoga*

---

Inquiry's beginning heralds the second state  
He now resorts to the company of holy ones

He seeks to understand the way, the path  
The means of yoga for the other shore

He knows well what is to be done  
And also knows what is not to be done  
The blossoming of this inner clarity  
Leaves no doubt about any decision

If there is still faltering in decision  
Understand wisdom has not as yet dawned  
Intellectual understanding is but ignorance  
Concepts are impotent to empower change

He earnestly learns the yoga way  
To discover the underlying unity  
Sincere, humble, with unwavering dedication—  
Inner flowering has begun

### *The Third State of Yoga*

---

Non-attachment heralds the third state  
Freedom comes with non-attachment  
One simply leaves the past without effort  
Like taking off a coat as it gets warmer

He resorts to seclusion and solitude  
Inwardly and perhaps outwardly as well  
Striving to understand the mind's chaos  
Attention's flame restores inward order

Virtuous conduct becomes natural to him  
The old ways are not even a choice at all  
Virtue's gift is inner strength to face the light  
With nary a glance in the rearview mirror

One feels he is neither doer nor enjoyer  
Does not afflict others and is unafflicted  
All past momentum towards facing the light  
Joins present effort as helping hands

He rises free above all mental distress  
Physical illnesses too are taken in stride  
He sees change brought about by time only  
Practicing non-attachment, freedom is gained

Diligence in treading the yoga path

Resorting to good and holy company  
Avoiding those who prefer worldliness  
Steady on the path without compromise

Steady on the path and ever vigilant  
One realizes the supreme in the heart  
Essence of truth, beyond samsara  
Doership and its limitation fall away

He abandons vain and meaningless words  
Abiding in unbroken inner quietude  
This is beyond mere absence of speech  
Inner quietude is mental silence

Superior to non-attachment and freedom  
Dependency has been long abandoned  
He shines like supportless, limitless space  
Enjoying peace, contentment and self-inquiry

#### *Focus on the First to the Third States*

---

The first state of yoga just presents itself  
You can call it accidental coincidence  
If one has lived a pure and virtuous life  
The first state comes upon one suddenly

Like a runner's second wind is the first  
One has to be prepared for at every moment  
Seizing the opportunity—great momentum itself  
A tremendous loss if unready or unwilling

If one does not seize the first's momentum  
The steps beyond will not be seen  
Seizing and nurturing the first precious gift  
Will gain one entry to the second—self-inquiry

Inquiry must be practiced diligently  
Not something you do when convenient  
An inner revolution must be brought about  
Every thought is scrutinized with impartiality

Freedom's gates are not for the careless  
The faint at heart need not apply at all  
Fearlessness tempered with genuine humility  
Perseverance to the end—regardless the path

After many lives comes the first state  
Suddenly, seeming quite accidental  
Till then one revolves in samsara's wheel  
Dispassion's sudden rising points a way out

Fan the spark of dispassion to flame  
Or it will extinguish and great be the loss  
You'll return back to samsara's spokes  
Grinding and being ground all over again

Perfect practice is not important at first  
Detailed orientation destroys the spirit  
Even imperfect practice if sincere  
Will perfect itself in sincerity's flames

Steady in sincere practice if one departs  
It is said one will return to continue again  
In more favorable conditions than before  
Till gradually one ascends the highest rung

The first three are known as waking states  
In them, there's no division in consciousness  
As sattva, purity or holiness grow within  
One moves from the first to the third state

Diligent practice on and off the mat  
Your life must be aspiration's testimony  
For ignorance to be destroyed in the heart  
The flames of wisdom must ever burn

#### *The Fourth State of Yoga*

---

Mind's divisionlessness heralds the fourth  
The mind is now free from all division  
Unity is unceasing, unbroken and steady  
One sees this world just as a dream

#### *The Fifth State of Yoga*

---

Established in non-division heralds the fifth  
Hence it is likened to the deep-sleep state  
Though engaged in diverse activities  
The yogi rests in himself unmoved

#### *The Sixth State of Yoga*

---

Moving through states, turiya is reached

This is the sixth, a glorious state  
One transcends real, unreal and ego  
Ignorance's fuel has run completely dry

Like a lamp without fuel is the yogi  
Empty and yet full within  
All doubts have been laid to rest  
The yogi rests in himself as himself

### *The Seventh State of Yoga*

---

Words cannot describe this seventh state  
Though many attempts have been made  
All words fall short so best to just say  
They are known as disembodied and liberated

### *Vasistha's Instructions*

---

Those who practice this supreme yoga  
Ascending the seven steps diligently  
Come to no harm or grief or incur loss  
Putting the mad elephant mind to rest

This elephant is intoxicated by desires  
Completely maddened by sensuousness  
Restless, driven by its own conditioning  
This elephant destroys everything everywhere

The mad elephant mind has to be slain  
With the weapon of courage and determination  
Born of the realization of existing oneness  
Or it will subject you to repeated suffering

This mad elephant mind is samsara  
The feeling, 'this is...' about everything  
Its death is moksha or liberation  
This is the essence of jnana or wisdom

Abandon all thoughts concerning the past  
Abandon hopes about the future too  
These ropes will bind you to suffering  
Samsara is not outside but self-sustained

I declare with uplifted arms again and again  
The thought-free, notionless state is best  
Infinitely superior to world sovereignty  
A mind free of thought is the best yoga

Remain established in this yoga state  
Do actions that feel appropriate to you  
Or, you can chose to do nothing at all  
For when thoughts cease—sorrow ceases

Knowing all about this supreme yoga  
Do as you please, it is your choice  
The thought-free, notionless state is best  
A mind free of thought is the best yoga

### *Valmiki to Bharadvaja*

---

Having heard the quintessence of wisdom  
Rama remained absorbed in meditation  
All questions ceased, realization blossomed  
He became established in the highest state

Thus I've narrated to you in full  
The dialogue between Rama and Vasistha  
Consider it well and do as you will  
For it is also my instruction to you

There's no division in consciousness  
Just how can the world seem separate  
Waking and dream are creation's parts  
Enlightenment is characterized by pure light

Beginningless false self-limitation  
Makes the unreal appear very real  
This generates tremendous confusion  
Only because you have not inquired

Who tells you to go along with the flow  
You have inner intelligence—awaken it  
Empower it—the way out will be seen  
Exert, make self-effort and go beyond

Delusion is an accepted weakness  
Taking the path of least resistance  
Why swallow the poison of self-limitation  
And endure the results of conditioning

This delusion continues till you reach  
The feet of those who have overcome  
Seek right knowledge from these sages  
And exert relentlessly in yoga's path

What did not exist in the beginning  
Cannot exist now, think about this  
Something cannot come from nothing  
The absolute is the only reality

All appears and disappears in the infinite  
The ocean of samsara is ignorance  
The notion of 'I' is self-limitation  
Generating mineness, attraction and repulsion

When these notions take root within  
One falls prey to endless calamities and grief  
Dive deep into the existing inner peace  
Never into turbulent waters of diversity

Self alone is the only reality  
Why get lost in false notions  
Truth is simple, it is just One  
Why complicate by standing apart

Reject all theories about creation  
They are stories for the childish only  
Meant to entertain the foolish and ignorant  
The enlightened abide in the unchanging

### *Bharadvaja to Valmiki*

---

Lord, I'm free now from the subtle body  
Swimming in the ocean of bliss  
I am the indivisible supreme self  
Possessing consciousness and unconsciousness

As fire thrown into fire becomes fire  
The insentient when offered to consciousness  
Becomes indistinguishably one with it  
Abandoning any hint or trace of separateness

I have entered into infinite consciousness  
I am that supreme Brahman—eternal  
Omnipresent, pure, peaceful and indivisible  
Devoid of any form of scattering at all

The source of this vast universe am I  
Light of lights, one without a second  
Thus should one vehemently assert  
It will alleviate mind's pointless agitation

When the mind's movement ceases  
The self shines brightly by its own light  
In that light sorrow comes to end  
The self experiences its bliss—that's all

There is direct awareness of the self  
None other but the self exists  
O master, your instruction has awakened me  
World-appearance does not seem real at all

Just what do men of self-knowledge do  
Do they have any duties or none at all  
Pray, please instruct me further  
Kindly accept my respectful obeisance

### *Valmiki to Bharadvaja*

---

Those desiring freedom from samsara  
Should engage themselves in right action  
Free from defects of selfishness and sin  
Till the mind is free of all its qualities

It then takes on qualities of the infinite  
The individual no longer is an individual  
One realizes he is beyond individuality  
All beings and things are the self only

Through all states including the highest  
One ever abides in infinite consciousness  
Immersed in the nectar of pure bliss  
Never again wet at diversity's shores

I have narrated to you in full  
The supreme yoga of sage Vasistha  
Steady your mind by diligent practice  
You will in time realize everything

### *Valmiki's Closing Comments*

---

Seeing Rama ever absorbed in the self  
Sage Vishvamitra requested of sage Vasistha  
To bring Rama back to normal consciousness  
As there was important work to be done by him

After telling the assembly gathered  
That Rama was godhead incarnate  
He was here for the welfare of all beings

And brought him out of deep meditation

*Vasistha to Rama*

---

O Rama, this is not the time to rest  
Get up and bring joy to the world  
People are still in bondage here  
It is not proper to continue absorbed

*Rama to Vasistha*

---

Rama awoke from deep meditation  
Placing his head at Vasistha's feet  
"There is nothing I should or should not do  
But, thy word will be always honored"

*Valmiki Closes*

---

Thus I have told you Rama's story  
By this practice attain supreme bliss  
He who studies this most diligently  
Will attain Brahman and be liberated

End of Chapter VI