

THE YOGA VASISTHA IN POEM

CHAPTER THREE

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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 THREE

1. SECTION DEALING WITH CREATION

The Secret of Creation

Creation as it seems to exist
And the resulting bondage
Lasts as long as you invest
Perceived objects with reality

Once the notion is removed
The bondage goes away as well
Creation, decay and death are here
As is heaven, hell and liberation

During the cosmic dissolution
Creation is resolved in the Supreme
This same infinite Supreme Self
Conceives duality within Itself

As a wave arises in the ocean
The mind arises in the Supreme
Mind is not different in quality
Or independent from the Supreme

As a mirage appears to be real
So does creation appear too
If creation was absolutely real
Its cessation would not be possible

Immutable is the law of truth
Perfectly rational to understand
The unreal hath no real existence
The real never ceases to be

Till one clings on to this notion
Freedom from bondage cannot be
Merely denying it verbally
Only increases one's vanity

Austerity, meditation and practices
Cannot bring about enlightenment
As long as the heart sees creation
As something real and desirable

Samadhi too would not free one
As returning sorrows would arise
Thought's movement creating images
And notions based on its suggestions

As oil exists in sesame seeds
Essence exists in every thing
Objective perception exists in
The mind of the perceiver only

As a dreamer experience in dream
Myriads of objects and conditions
So potentiality does manifest
As the notion of creation arises

The Creator

Neither seer nor object of perception
Exist in the self-created Creator
As a painting in the mind of an artist
He shines in cosmic consciousness

No memory of past and no karma
He does not have a physical body
Unborn and of spiritual substance
The physical has no cause in Him

Not created, creator of all beings
As a gold bracelet is gold only
All this manifold creation
Is spiritual without materiality

Creation

A throbbing arose in the Creator
Spread out as the wide universe
Subtle bodies of all beings came to be
Appearing real but made of thought only

Imagining these appearances to be real
Produced realistic consequences
Just as the different experiences
One has while in the dream state

A dual nature has the Creator
Of consciousness and of thought
Consciousness which is ever pure

Thought subject to confusion

All forms are of pure intelligence
Thought creates self-forgetfulness
Intelligence freezes as physical forms
On account of the perceiver's delusion

The Creator is not subject to this
Of spiritual nature non-material is He
Causeless therefore is this creation
Essentially spiritual as the Creator

Materiality of things is an illusion
Like castles spun in the air
All projections of one's own mind
All delusion and imagination only

Pure intelligence is the Creator's body
Mind is that pure intelligence only
Thought is inherent in the mind
Object is inherent in the perceiver

No one has ever discovered
A distinction between these as real
All projections of one's own mind
All delusion and imagination only

2. THE MIND

What is the Mind?

Like space, mind is empty nothingness
It apprehends objects of perception
Thought is mind, mind is thought
No difference at all between these two

Self clothed in a body is known as mind
It brings about the material and physical
Including ignorance, samsara and bondage
It is experience and all that is perceived

Consciousness indwells in every atom
Non-different from the visible universe
Just as gold indwells all ornaments
Consciousness pervades all creation

Only when the objective notion

Is rejected and removed from the mind
There is realization of consciousness
Ignorance and evils cease in the heart

Overcoming the Mind

Others have overcome the mind
You too can overcome its limitations
All objectiveness is in name only
Reality is cosmic consciousness

Within this cosmic consciousness
The mind conjures diversity
Expressing and experiencing differently
Feeling bondage and need for liberation

After the cosmic dissolution
The Supreme Lord alone prevailed
Eternal, unborn and self-effulgent
Worlds appear and disappear in Him

Omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient
His every thought materializes instantly
From Him emerged countless divinities
Just as rays emanating from the sun

The Supreme Self can be realized
By direct experience in oneself
Holy company and self-study
Help dispel ignorance and illusion

When inner conviction arises within
Of divine omnipresence as truth
It is then only that it is possible
To transcend sorrow and attain liberation

Austerity, penance and practices
Self-inflicted pain and charity
Will not remove one's ignorance
As craving is not eliminated by these

Firm and decisive renunciation
For all and any sort of craving
Comes naturally when real wisdom
Dawns in the heart of the sincere

3. THE SUPREME LORD

Where does the Lord Dwell?

He who is described as the Lord
Is the supreme indwelling intelligence
Spread out as the universe is the Lord
Though the universe you see is not He

Sentient is the universe and the individual
Who create the knowable and get bound
It is only when the knowable ceases to be
That attention flows towards the unknowable

Intellectual understanding will not do
One will still be bound by samsara
The supreme Lord must be known
For sorrow to end permanently

Him in who the universe ceases to be
Is the supreme Lord, pure consciousness
Subject-object relationships do not exist
In him the universe appears to exist

Realizing the Lord

Only when one is firmly established
In the unreality of the universe
As the blueness of the sky appears
But one knows it is only an illusion

The supreme Lord can be realized
By direct experience in oneself
Only when all of this creation
Is found utterly non-existent

Reality of the world is a notion
Deep rooted on account of habit
Due to persistent wrong thinking
There is a remedy to overturn this

Resort to the company of holy men
Study sacred scriptures like this one
Or any other, of your own choice
Till wrong notions are loosened within

Exposure to the truth weakens notions

That have taken root in the heart
When all false notions are dispelled
One speaks of it and rejoices in it

4. LIBERATED ONES

Liberated While Living

Some liberated ones teach others
Leading an apparently normal life
Never affected by pleasure or pain
These are called jivanmuktas

Awake to the truth while still living
Never awake to the clatter of the world
Their wisdom is never clouded at all
As latent tendencies have been eliminated

They only appear to like and to dislike
But they're free from these in reality
Free from egotism and volition
Fearing none, none fear them at all

Their intelligence is always unattached
Whether in action or inaction
They attain to the state of videhamukta
When the body is shed in its due time

Liberated Without Body-Consciousness

The videhamuktas are fully liberated
Like the shining sun, living divinities
Pure cosmic consciousness in the flesh
The essence of all, all things is he

All that is past, present or future
Beyond these and all of eternity
Are those attaining the highest state
All reside in them, they are the all

5. REALITY AND APPEARANCE

Reality

Absolute itself is liberation
Absolute is the only existence
Perception only seems to exist
Being never becomes anything

Gold is the substance of ornaments
Water, the substance of waves
The substance of all of creation
Is Brahman, the changeless Absolute

Beginningless ignorance is mere perception
End this with inquiry into truth
What has come to be must end as well
What has always been will always be

Creation disappears during dissolution
The changeless infinite alone remains
Uncaused, uncreated, cause of all
The Eternal is indeed the heart of all

Creation appears in the infinite
It submerges in the infinite as well
The infinite always remains the same
With or without creation's appearance

Not realizing this is delusion
All anxieties vanish realizing this
The act of seeing—seer, sight, seen
Realize the Absolute as your Self

As all images exist in an uncarved block
So does creation exist in the infinite
Difficult to express how this is so
As illustrations have their limitations

Nothing emerges, nothing submerges
The Absolute alone exists unchanged
Our feelings of the void get in the way
Of understanding fullness in emptiness

Pure spirit, self-luminous, is the Absolute
Illuminator of all and every thing
'Tis not possible for one to realize
The Absolute can only realize itself

From the infinite, the infinite emerges
The infinite exists in it as infinity
Nothing has come to be or will cease
The changeless infinite is the reality

Eliminate objectivity from the mind
Erase the notion of the self as well
These are fuel for ideas in the mind
Which bring confusion and delusion

Neither asleep nor inert is the infinite
In it knowledge, knower and the known
Exist as one—pure intelligence
In the absence of the intellect

Appearance

A barren woman's son does not exist
Braceletness is an idea seen in gold
The world you see is inseparable
From Brahman—existence-absolute

No cause has this creation you see
No beginning has creation either
It does not exist now as reality
How can there be its destruction?

Creation is an appearance in Brahman
Thus reality as Brahman is real
But it has not existence of its own
For Brahman is the only reality

'Tis like a dream in ignorance
One appears in itself as many
Staying unchanged as one only
One alone exists, 'tis the reality

6. CREATION

Parable Illustrating Creation

Infinite consciousness is the universe
It generates the knowable within itself
As an idea concerning its form or space
And an inquiry concerning itself as well

The idea of space starts to be real
The cosmic being arises within it
The infinite abandons, as it were
The supreme state for individuals

This appearance, however real it seems

Does not in any way alter Brahman
As Brahman is the only reality
Changes appear in the unchanged

In space, sound comes to be
Then egotism and the time factor
All this by the creative-thought
Inherent in the cosmic being

By similar thought does air come to be
And all other elements as well
All planes of existence in creation
All by thought in pure consciousness

Elements act and react on each other
The entire creation comes to be
Interwoven, mixed-up, indistinguishable
Ever changing but still the same reality

Since all of creation is vitally linked
To reality they appear to be real
Consciousness appears as the universe
Without undergoing any change at all

As is the seed, so is the fruit
The seed is Brahman the Absolute
So must be the fruit of creation
Pure Brahman the Absolute alone

Individual Souls

Thinking small, the soul became small
Wishing to experience, organs emerged
Thus the body gradually took shape
But all this in its imagination only

Since all this happens in reality
It appears so real and confusing
Brahman, the only eternal truth
Reality and illusion of world-appearance

Neither one nor many souls
Nor exists there a conglomeration
Jivas—souls, are but names
Brahman is the only reality

One reality appearing manifold
Appearing real due to ignorance
Which light of inquiry does dispel
All this is Brahman, the sole reality

All this is imagination or thought
Nothing has really been created
When true wisdom arises within
Unreality vanishes and truth is beheld

Becoming Creation

Apprehending the perceived in itself
Consciousness itself becomes the perceived
All this appears so when false notions remain
For there is none other, save Brahman

This mysterious power of consciousness
Producing diversity while within itself
Is what is known as egotism
In it does infinite diversity arise

Give up false notions of 'I' and 'you'
Renounce notions of the self and its cause
Realize the truth when all these fall
Of that which is between real and unreal

Knowing Consciousness

When consciousness wishes to be known
It is known as the universe
Mind, intellect, egotism and elements
Are all pure consciousness only

One cannot distinguish between
A person, his life and his work
So also with Brahman and creation
Infinite diversity in unchanging unity

Removing the notion of externality
Gives rise to knowledge of the Self
Know the supreme truth directly
In your heart and be ever free

As is heat to fire, coolness to ice
As liquidity to water, flow to river
As sweetness to honey, fragrance to flowers

The universe is to pure consciousness

The world is because consciousness is
It can be said to be real and unreal
As consciousness is world's reality
It has no independent reality

Do not get caught in these words
Expressions have their limitations
See what the teachings point to
Realize this within your heart

Objects appearing in a dream
Are not found in the waking state
Though they appeared real in dream
So too with the world when truth is known

Our knowledge is based on ignorance
Notions, definitions expressed in word
Truth is beyond the grasp of all these
It has to be experienced directly by one

This world is like a dream city
All within pure consciousness
World and cosmic consciousness are one
Now hear a story to illustrate this

7. THE STORY OF LILA

Background

Once lived a perfect king and queen
Both had deep spiritual aspirations too
They lived a most ideal life
Dutiful and happy in every way

One day a thought overcame queen Lila
"What if the king passes away before me?"
Life would be dull and quite dreary
I should pray to goddess Sarasvati for this

Lila propitiated goddess Sarasvati
Who appeared to her and offered boons
Lila asked the goddess for two boons
And they were granted instantly

First was that her husband should remain

In the palace even after death
Second was that goddess Sarasvati
May appear to her when remembered

After some time the king passed away
Sad with grief, she heard a voice
Cover the king's body with flowers
It will not decay or leave the palace

'Twas the voice of goddess Sarasvati
Lila beseeched her: please appear
And asked where her husband was
Now that he had died and passed away

Goddess Sarasvati Replies

O Lila hear me very attentively
There are three types of space
Psychological space, physical space
And infinite space of consciousness

To see your husband right here
Meditate intensely on the infinite space
When the finite mind travels between places
This is what exists in the middle unseen

Give up all thoughts for this realm
Realize the universe's utter non-existence
As oneness with all must be realized
To experience the realm of infinity

You will not be able to do so at present
But you can enter this realm by my grace
Meditate O Lila with all of your being
Enter the state free of all distractions

Lila's First Experience

Lila meditated deeply with all of her heart
Only by the grace of goddess Sarasvati
Entered the infinite space of consciousness
Where she beheld her husband once again

She saw him seated on the throne as king
Surrounded by ministers and other kings
She was not seen but beheld all this
Wondering as the king had passed away

Lila awoke right back in her palace
And summoned a meeting of the court
Finding the same ministers present there
Whom she had seen in her husband's court

The ministers cannot be in two places
At the same time as just experienced
Which is real and which is a reflection
As a mountain is reflected in a mirror

She sought help from goddess Sarasvati
"This world exists within the undivided
And outside here as solid matter too
Which is real and which a reflection?"

Sarasvati asked a question in return
"What do you consider real and unreal?"
Lila replied, "You are here, this to me is real
Where my husband is now seems unreal"

Sarasvati then said to Lila
"How can the unreal be an effect of the real
The effect is the cause, there's no difference
Just as a pot that holds water is clay only."

Material effects are by material causes
Your husband's birth is without
An immediate material cause
Besides the past which is memory

Memory like space is but emptiness
All creation is an effect of that too
Your husband's birth is of memory
An illusion and effect of imagination

The story I am about to narrate
Illustrates creation's dream-like nature
Listen carefully with rapt attention
And see what the story points out to

Story in a Story

In the infinite pure consciousness,
In a corner of the creator's mind
Was an old dilapidated shrine
Covered with a blue dome

Fourteen worlds for rooms
Divisions of space for windows
Sun the light, cities like anthills
Earth for mountains, water for oceans

This is creation— 'tis the universe
In a small corner lived a holy one
Dutiful with wife and children
In good health and free from fear

Witnessing a royal procession one day
A wish arose in the holy one's heart
T'would be nice to experience this
All the splendor of royalty for once

Death overtook the holy man and wife
She too had prayed to me just like you
That her husband's spirit would not leave the room
A boon which I granted to her as well as to you

The holy man had lived righteously
His merits earned his wish to experience
A life as a mighty ruler and king
This same man is your husband and king

On account of ignorance and delusion
It seems this takes place in consciousness
The kingdom appears to exist only
In the hut of the holy man on the hill

Memory of the past is well hidden
You both have risen again from a wish
All in the space of the holy one's hut
Worlds within worlds in each atom

Space and time have no fixed span
Both are appearances, both imagination
All this happens in the wink of an eye
Death, forgetfulness and reappearance

Unrelated 'tho feeling related somehow
A habit of ignorance repeating itself
Memory formed, mistaken for the real
Though path-crossing is merely coincidence

Liberation is the direct recognition
Of the utter non-existence of the world
Intellectual or mere lip denial won't do
Your heart has to grasp this as real

One infinite consciousness alone is
'Tis all thought-forms or experiences
No cause and effect relationship exist
Infinite conscious is forever in itself

Lila thanked goddess Sarasvati
For the enlightening words and instruction
Expressing a wish to see directly
The original house of the holy man

Sarasvati's Deeper Instruction

"Give up this form, attain one of light
Only Brahman can realize Brahman
My body is made of pure light—consciousness
You cannot journey deeper in your form

Body of light you must attain
To enter subtle fields to the subtlest
Attaining which you will at once see
The holy man's house on the hill

Affirm to yourself with all of your being
I shall leave this body, take one of light
With a light body, like the scent of incense
You will unite with the field of consciousness

By persistent practice of such meditation
Your body will become pure consciousness
I see my body and world as consciousness
You see body and world as made of matter

By relentless self-inquiry comes wisdom
This alone can dispel one's ignorance
Ignorance in fact does not really exist
Nor bondage or liberation—only consciousness

Dream body appears real within a dream
But vanishes completely upon awakening
Even so will the hold of the physical body
Dissolve when one's tendencies cease to be

At dream's end the physical body is seen
When tendencies stop, the ethereal one is seen
Deep sleep ensues when dream does end
When seeds of thought end there is liberation

Seeds of thought do not exist in liberation
Though the sage appears to live and think
He does not really do anything at all
He is a portal of pure consciousness

Unrelenting Practice

Persistent practice quietens egotism
This is known as abhyasa
Thus you will rest in pure consciousness
Materiality of things will indeed vanish

Thinking of that alone in thinking
Speaking of that alone in speaking
Conversing of that alone in conversing
Utter dedication to that, the wise call abhyasa

The intellect must fill with beauty and bliss
For broadest vision where all passions cease
The world's non-existence is then realized
The wise call this dedicated practice or abhyasa

'This is world', 'This I am', and such
These thoughts don't arise in the mind
Thus do attraction and repulsion cease
Not by force but by wisdom's dawning"

Inner Journey 1

Sarasvati and Lila sat in deep meditation
Giving up all notions of the world
They rose above body consciousness
And roamed freely in their wisdom bodies

It seemed they traveled very far
They were still in the very same room
But on another plane of consciousness
Lila beheld what Sarasvati's mind revealed

They saw oceans, mountains and celestials
Kingdom of the gods, sky and earth's bowel

Lila beheld her very own house too
Then entered the house of the holy man

His family was deeply in mourning
The atmosphere was sad and gloomy
By yoga practice Lila's thoughts materialized
She and Sarasvati appeared as normal women

They could not hide their radiance
Which brightly illumined the room
Lila asked the eldest son the cause
Of sorrow that seemed to afflict all there

The son replied "'twas was parents' death
Both lived exemplary righteous lives
Both died and departed at the same time"
Lila relieved his sorrow by her blessing

Lila asked Sarasvati how it could be
They were seen here by this family
Not her husband the king earlier
Ruling a kingdom when they visited

Sarasvati replied to Lila's question
"Earlier you held on to the notion
'I am Lila'—this you have now let go
And overcome body consciousness

Till consciousness of all duality
Is dispelled from the heart completely
You cannot act in infinite consciousness
You cannot even understand it a little

Now that you've abandoned duality
You'll be able to deal with your husband
As you did before but without slipping
Into the snare of worldly thinking

There is no distance in the spiritual plane
Everything is right here all the time
But in the physical plane it is not so
Millions of miles separate the planes

In the majestic infinite consciousness
Universes come and go in each atom

Like specks of dust in beams of light
Shining through a hole in the roof"

Lila Recollects

O Divinity! All glory be to thee
I remember now all 800 births
As insects, animals, male and female
Some rich, poor, evil and others good

Vasistha's Comments

Infinite consciousness has no barriers
No universe exists nor any galaxies
Sarasvati and Lila remained within
The space in Lila's inner apartment

It was there that the holy man
Became king and ruled his realm
All happened in pure space itself
No universe, no distance and no barriers

On account of intense yogic practice
Lila acquired knowledge of threefold time
She expressed her recollection to Sarasvati
In the same space of her inner apartment

Lila's Observations

Here, in the space the size of a thumb
We imagined my husband's kingdom afar
Though we are both pure consciousness
My husband and kingdom seem distant

Truly marvelous this mysterious power
Maya, a force that deludes the wise too
I would like to enter the capital
Where my husband now does rule

Inner Journey 2

Both rose into space, seeing all creation
Beyond which was pure consciousness
Essential nature of being consciousness
Thus all forms arise and return in it

Countless universes exist in creation
Very different they are in every way

Different divinities preside over them
Different too are their inhabitants

Since consciousness exists everywhere
Creation and dissolution are perpetual
All held together by a mysterious power
One consciousness alone exists, in it all is

Lila then saw her palace's inner apartment
Where the dead king lay buried under flowers
Intensely wishing to see him once again
She soared through this realm to where he was

A mighty king from a nearby kingdom
Was laying siege to her husband's realm
A fierce battle ensued as they approached
And beheld her husband with his war council

Vasistha's Comments

It is impossible for one rooted in the idea
'I am the body' to pass into subtlety
This innermost conviction is the obstruction
When this is absent, all limitations are too

As water remains water and flows down
Fire remains fire and always rises up
So also consciousness always remains
Pure consciousness always unchanged

As is the understanding so is the mind
Understanding is what is called mind
However its direction can be changed
With great and unrelenting effort

Everyone's consciousness is similar
In nature and power as consciousness
Idea of the world and people does differ
This is called understanding or the mind

All wake up in their understanding
To a very different mental creation
Though creation is the same for everyone
The inner world is what all are looking at

Inner Journey 2 (continues)

Both entered the king's apartment
Goddess Sarasvati blessed the king
Inspired he recollected previous lives
And asked Sarasvati about the mystery

"It has been one day since I last died
How come I've lived in this new body
A very full life for seventy years
Pray goddess, kindly enlighten me"

Sarasvati smiled and replied to the king
"All that you are seeing right here
Manifested where you last did die
In the hut of the holy man on the hill

That is his world and in that world
Is the world of king Padma too
Where you find yourself living in
Thinking and relating in one way

These are my relatives, kith and kin
These are my friends and enemies
I am ruling and governing this realm
Now seeing and receiving instruction

All this took no time to happen
Just as things appear in a dream
Unborn and imperishable you are
Your notions are your bondage

The wise see only pure consciousness
The ignorant see and experience differences
A long dream is this entire universe
'Tis the ego that fancies dream as real

O king you shall die in this war
Then regain your previous kingdom
Returning to your previous status
Family, ministers and surroundings

We shall go now as we came
All must follow their own course
For the nature of motion does differ
In a horse, an elephant and a camel

A courtier appeared at that very time
Bringing the news of impending destruction
The king bowed and excused himself
Leaving his wife to attend to both

The king's wife looked exactly like Lila
Younger as she looked in her youth
The ministers in the court right there
Were exactly the same as in her realm

"What is the secret of all of this
How come they are in both places
If they be reflections of our fancy
Are they sentient or conscious beings?"

Sarasvati replied to dispel Lila's doubts
"The vision arising within oneself
Is what is immediately experienced
Both vision and experience are consciousness

'Tis because of all being consciousness
Everything takes place so instantly
A mere thought causes worlds to arise
Time, space and objectivity do not hinder

What is reflected in one's consciousness
Is what is seen outside as well
This objective world being experienced
Is really no more than that in a dream

In both states of waking and dream
There is no reality to the experienced
Both are reflections within oneself
Both worlds exist in oneself too

In life, death does not exist
In death, life does not exist either
That which holds together either experience
Is absent in the other, making it thus

Whether ether is real or not real
One cannot say with surety
The substratum from which all emerge
Is the only sure eternal reality

In Brahman does the universe exist
As an idea, just as a snake in a rope
Neither real nor unreal is it
Just as the individual's existence

Each experience their own desires
Some old and some new wishes too
Experiences are sometimes similar
But sometimes they are dissimilar too

All experiences appear to be real
As these ministers and the queen
All exist as reflections in consciousness
You, me and others—know and rest in peace

The queen's wife too was named Lila
Let's call her the second Lila here
She expressed her doubts to Sarasvati
Hoping for clarification to the mystery

"O divinity, I used to worship Sarasvati
You look like her, I presume you are her
Please grant that when my husband dies
I may accompany him wherever he goes"

Sarasvati then spoke to the second Lila
"You have indeed worshiped me devoutly
Therefore I grant this boon you seek
To accompany your husband after his death"

The first Lila asked goddess Sarasvati
"Your words always do come true
Why did you not allow me to travel
Between planes with the same body?"

Sarasvati replied to the first Lila
"I do not really do anything at all
Each earn their state by their deeds
I preside over the intelligence of all beings

I am the power in consciousness
Its life-force too I am as well
Forms taken by each one's energy
Does fructify in due course of time

You longed for liberation—attained it
You may consider this as either
Fruit of austerity or your worship
Bestowed by Pure Consciousness

All bestowal is by consciousness
Just as fruit that falls from above
It only seems to fall from the sky
It is the tree that really bestows it"

The battle grew fierce as they talked
Watching the war from the palace
The king joined the ranks and the fight
Missiles and weapons clouded the air

The second Lila then asked Sarasvati
"How is it that though blessed by you
The king is unable to win this war
And death is his fate certainly?"

Sarasvati replied to the second Lila
"The king was indeed blessed by me
His prayer was not for victory in battle
I grant the deepest prayers of all

I am the indwelling consciousness
Whatever a person asks of me
That fruit I do bestow on him
Just as fire gives heat quite naturally

The attacking king prayed for victory
Victory he will attain in this battle
Your husband will be slain in this war
Rejoin you and soon attain liberation"

Just then the king was slain in battle
The second Lila fell unconscious at this
The first Lila said to goddess Sarasvati
"My husband is about to give up the ghost"

Sarasvati replied to the first Lila
"There's neither a kingdom nor the earth
The terrible war is as real as a dream
All this is only in your own palace

There is the world of king Padma
There is all of your own world too
The entire universe is there as well
In the house of the holy man on the hill

Uncreated, indestructible is Reality
That is the only Reality there is
That infinite consciousness is perceived
As the universe by the ignorant

As a city exists within the dreamer
Worlds exist in a small atom
There are atoms in these worlds
These atoms have worlds in them too

The second Lila who fell unconscious
Has already reached king Padma's body
Which lies covered in flowers, as you left him
You are both dream-objects of the king

We have created each other in our fancy
All in the undivided pure consciousness
One who knows this does renounce
Objects of perception very naturally

The youthful Lila was indeed yourself
To be with the king was her prayer
Hence she left before the king did die
And is with him again as was her prayer

You are individualized consciousness
Cosmic consciousness am I my dear
I make all these things happen
All in undivided pure consciousness"

Vasistha's Comments

The second Lila rose into the sky
Met her daughter and proceeded
Across the oceans into consciousness
To where her husband the king was

Countless universes in consciousness
Unknowing of each other's existence
The second Lila felt most fortunate
Blessed to reunite with her husband

Inner Journey 2 (continues)

Sarasvati spoke to the first Lila
"The king, courtiers and all the rest
Are in infinite consciousness only
Reflected as this fanciful creation

When wisdom about ethereal bodies
Arises within one does not recognize
The physical body as true body
And one can enter subtler realms

The second Lila does not possess
Such wisdom of direct experience
Her experience of reaching her husband
Takes place all within her own fancy"

The enlightened Lila asked Sarasvati
"How do objects acquire characteristics
Like heat in fire, coolness in ice
And like the solidity of the earth?"

Sarasvati told the enlightened Lila
"After dissolution creation disappears
Only the infinite Brahman remains
And fancies the existence of creation

What the Infinite fancied earlier
During the first creation still remains
Along with all their characteristics
Into what else could they dissolve?

Something cannot become nothing
Just as gold appearing as a bracelet
Cannot become entirely formless
Such is the universe's order eternally

According to the first creation's order
Characteristics fell into place for all
Changes in subsequent creations
Result from existing purity or impurity

One who adheres to the injunctions
Of scriptures and the teachings of sages
Enjoys a long healthy lifespan
Reaching the end quite normally"

The enlightened Lila asked Sarasvati
"Kindly do thou enlighten me further
Is death pleasant or unpleasant
What happens after death finally?"

Sarasvati replied concerning death
"Human beings are of three types
Fools, the wise who meditate
And also the yogi or intelligent one

The fool lives carelessly and suffers
The wise and yogi practice meditation
Abandoning living for the body
They may depart at their own will

When there is cessation of life-breath
One ceases to live, death comes to him
But all this is however imaginary
Infinite consciousness can never cease to be

Eternal and infinite is pure consciousness
Never rising, it can never cease to be
In it does all life appears to rise and to fall
Consciousness remains pure and unchanged

What is called jiva or the individual
Is the atomic particle that's stored
With memories and latent tendencies
It stays in the space of the dead on death

This they call the departed soul
This jiva abandons the earlier seen
And perceives other things once again
Just as in dreaming or day-dreaming

After a lapse of consciousness
This jiva begins to fancy another body
Another world and life-span too
What the jiva sees, it experiences

In the infinite space of consciousness
Time and action do not exist at all
The jiva fancies death, heaven and hell
And experiences whatever it fancies

This cycle of experience does repeat
The jiva decides and thus experiences
This cycle ends when the jiva
Is enlightened by self-knowledge

Consciousness masquerades as all
Sentient and seemingly insentient
There is no distinction between the two
Due to the substratum of consciousness

'Tis the same infinite consciousness
Known by all these different names
Appearing in all these different forms
Appearing individual and independent

The king who died here now wishes
To enter the body of king Padma
Fancying entry into another world
Let us proceed there on our own paths"

Vasistha Commented

When the first Lila became enlightened
She abandoned the link with the physical form
As it was ignorance making it appear
As if she was that physical body

The unreal manifests in the deluded mind
Creating havoc till it is dispelled
All nothing but fanciful conviction
Of the unreal rooted by repetition

One can move to other ethereal bodies
Just as from one dream to another
Without abandoning or destroying
The previous one that was inhabited

Though the yogi's body appears to be
It is really invisible being pure light
He appears to live and to die
Non-different from pure consciousness

The ethereal body is the only body
Appearing linked to the physical
The yogi attains this while living
Due to his inner enlightenment

Inner Journey 2 (conclusion)

Sarasvati restrained the king's entry
Into the body of dead king Padma
The enlightened Lila then asked her
"How much time has lapsed in meditation?"

Sarasvati replied to enlightened Lila
One month has passed in meditation
You abandoned your body in fifteen days
It was cremated by your ministers

In you now are no memories of past
Nor are there any latent tendencies
Intelligence is established in its true nature
Today is the thirty-first day you are here"

They revealed themselves to the other Lila
Who worshiped them spontaneously
Sarasvati asked her how exactly
She recollected having gotten there

The second Lila replied to Sarasvati
"I fainted seeing the fierce battle
My subtle body rose into the sky
And was brought here by the king

Seeing that he was quite fatigued
From the battle, I fanned him
Not wishing to disturb his rest
You appeared at this very moment"

Sarasvati then allowed the entry
Of the king into Padma's body
Instantly awoke king Padma
As if from deep slumber

The king inquired about both
Sarasvati and the enlightened Lila
Who proceeded to tell him who
She and goddess Sarasvati were

The king at once rose to his feet
Respectfully saluting goddess Sarasvati
Who blessed him with long life and health
And the blessing of attaining enlightenment

Vasistha Concludes

O Rama, deeply do contemplate
The story of Lila narrated to you
It will remove faith in the reality
Your mind has with what is perceived

8. THE MYSTERY OF TIME

A Limitation in Thought

Thought is real expression
'Tis also what is experienced
Suffering seems to linger on
Joy seems to flee speedily

Indweller of all is intelligence
The world you see, its appearance
Infinite consciousness alone exists
Creation is a word implying just this

Within itself the infinite sees
Infinity as it were, its own self
The unreal divisions that are seen
Are notions, the seeds of space

Because the substratum is real
Space too appears very real
Giving illusions of separateness
Between elements within itself

Time too arose as a notion
The smallest unit that could be
To epochs extending into infinity
All within infinite consciousness

This creation so very real you see
Is itself infinite consciousness
Spread out as space and as time
All limbs as it were in eternity

Creation exists as a reflection
Within pure infinite consciousness
Brahman is the only reality
This world's but a notion within itself

Nothing created, nothing ends

One alone appears as many
Brahman is all, all is verily He
Worlds arise and fall in Him

The notions that we cling to
Rooted in 'I am this'—the ring leader
Resolutely turning away from this
Is movement towards liberation

Direct realization must be had
For end of suffering in samsara
Infinite consciousness the substratum
Omnipresent, the only reality

World Appearance

All epochs of time are penetrated
By the infinite consciousness
Time is threaded and animated
By the power of infinite consciousness

Indivisible consciousness and its power
Existence and consciousness absolute
Supreme animator of all you see
Distinctions are only in communication

Awareness of infinite consciousness
Of its own infinite power as itself
Absolute power determining all
'Tis also known as divine dispensation

Absolute power cannot be set aside
Even by gods let alone humans
Self-effort must never be given up
'Tis what blossoms as fruition

Remaining idle and waiting for fruit
Has never resulted in anything at all
Superconscious state or liberation
Is attained by tremendous effort only

Infinite consciousness appears as all
Indivisible form it's absolute power
All differences live in ignorant minds
Never in sages or men of wisdom

In the mirror of infinite consciousness
World appearances are reflections
These are the world and individuals
Countless reflections in consciousness

Little ripples in the vast ocean
Rising and falling in the infinite
Or as a very slight agitation
Of a candle flame in a windless room

The slightest agitation or movement
Bursts into universes and galaxies
When fed by latent impressions
As flames' contact with the flammable

Egotism and notions quickly arise
As do the natural elements
Condensing quickly and taking form
All vibrations in pure consciousness

The world exists within the mind
It seems real due to confusion
'Tis a dream in infinite consciousness
Creating the illusion of duality

The one has not become many
Diversity is an appearance in it
The individual sees diversity as real
Due to limitations in consciousness

The duality the mind perceives
Is in the perceiving mind alone
When the mind drops this perception
There is neither duality nor unity

When you become firmly established
In oneness of infinite consciousness
Lead then an active or quiet life
You will be at peace within yourself

All objects that one perceives
Are agitations within the mind
Consciousness appears as objects
Delusion based on ignorance

Direct realization of the Self
Alone can break the delusion
Of world-appearance as reality
It is the only way beyond samsara

When self-knowledge arises in one
Craving for anything cannot arise
How can one crave anything
When all things are one's self alone

Till self-knowledge does arise
Refuse to fulfill all craving
Let craving rise and let it fall
What is the difficulty in this

The agitation created by the mind
When it entertains notions of objects
Gives rise instantly to appearances
Which solidify and are experienced

When thought does not see truth
It entertains notions of separateness
Feeling 'I am' and 'this is mine'
Facing the darkness of its ignorance

Beyond waking, dreaming and sleep
Is a fourth state of uncontradicted truth
Absolute purity of consciousness
Establish here and go beyond sorrow

Brahman is the causeless cause
Discover this by self-inquiry
Know directly that world-appearance
Is nothing but Brahman—the Absolute

The Reality of Appearance

Entertaining notions of elements
The mind transforms into them
It then acquires sense organs
Transformations of the mind alone

There are no causal connections
Between the mind and senses
They come about by coincidence
Just thought and manifestation

First cosmic being thus manifests
And creates the various objects
Uttering the sacred sound 'Om'
All by an act of pure willing

Creations appear ever so real
But nothing has really been created
All distinctions are only illusions
Reflections in pure consciousness

Hear now an ancient legend
In connection with this thought
Story of the demoness Karkati
And ponder the message within

9. STORY OF KARKATI

The First Austerity

There once lived in the Himalayas
A huge demoness called Karkati
She was unable to get enough to eat
Due to her size and immense appetite

She thought about her situation
Feeling if only she could consume
All people in the country at once
Her appetite may be appeased

She felt need for rigorous penance
Most arduous and unimaginable
As most difficult was the attainment
Equally hard must be the effort made

High on the snow peaks she commenced
Penance in which time too stood still
Thousand years passed unknowingly
Till Brahma the creator appeared to her

The creator offered her any boon
Karkati expressed her wish respectfully
She was granted a small subtle status
To inflict those who lived wrongly

From her huge size and stature
She shrunk to the size of a pin

So small, she could hardly be seen
Her mentality had not changed at all

She continued her work, inflicting those
Who lived wrongly and unjustly
Thus dependent on the lives of others
She pondered all this within herself

"A huge demoness I once was
Never dependent on anyone
Now I roam in dirt and filth
Eating a diet most unhealthy"

Deluded ones have no foresight
Selfish efforts lead to poor results
Trying to put oneself ahead of all
Results in being last every time

Disillusioned with her condition
And her self-inflicted misfortune
She realized it was her delusion
That reduced her to this sad state

The mind that is headed to calamity
First creates delusion and wickedness
These states themselves expand into
Conditions and resulting experiences

The Second Austerity

At once Karkati firmly resolved
To correct her ways and her self
Abandoning her physical appetite
Returned to the Himalayas for penance

Mistakes are the best teachers
But learning must be self-correction
It must result in action and change
Treading immediately the new course

Karkati resolved to rid delusion
And not stop till completely purified
And attain the highest wisdom
Beyond the reach of all suffering

The energy of her hard penance

Set the Himalayan peaks on fire
Gods too trembled with great fear
At her unprecedented austerity

The wind-god was commissioned
To end her austerity somehow
Trying to enter her mouth as breath
He was thrown out again and again

Karkati had withdrawn her life-force
To the crown of her head in perfection
Becoming totally pure by her penance
Gaining direct knowledge of Reality

Direct inquiry into all movements
Of thought in one's own consciousness
Is the very best guru or preceptor
No one else can quite compare

Brahma the creator appeared again
Granting Karkati boons of choice
She pondered on the use of boons
As she already had attained perfection

Brahma the creator explained to her
"The world-order cannot be set aside
Regain your previous huge body
And appease hunger with wicked ones

This has already been decreed
There is no harm or loss at all
Do what needs to be done as duty
And lead thou an enlightened life"

Karkati regained her previous form
Taking up residence in a dense forest
One day she saw two men appear
And felt to know if they be wise or fools

She appeared to them in her huge form
Posing to each some questions
If answered, they'd be considered wise
If not, they'd be food for her appetite

Both disclosed their identity

As minister and king of the region
Patrolling to insure local security
As dacoits often terrorized the people

Karkati's Questions

"What is that one, yet is many
In which millions of universes merge
Is pure space but appearing not
Which is in me, in you and everyone

What appears to move but never moves
Appears a rock though is fully conscious
What plays amazing tricks in empty space
Shining eternally but is not sun or moon

What seems to be far but is very near
Nature of consciousness but unknowable
What is the all but none of these
Self of all but veiled by ignorance

What is regained by many lifetimes
Of intense and persistent effort
Atomic in nature though immense
The atom in which the universe rests

Due to what does the universe function
Though it does nothing at all
Of what are seer, sight and seen made
Veiling and revealing threefold divisions

What is it that comes into being
Into what does all finally vanish
Answer each of you these questions
So I may know if you are wise or fools

The Minister Replies

The Self it is that is subtler than space
Pure consciousness, all dwells in it
Existence is the experience of all
Being the self of all—It alone exists

Appearing empty, not nothingness
The Self of all, beyond mind and senses
The Self it is reflecting as many
As appearances though the sole reality

Self is not void or nothing at all
Self is the self of everything
Even of those who disbelieve
Self is their very self as well

It cannot be experienced indirectly
It alone is the consciousness of all
The substance of this world-appearance
It has to be known by each directly

Due to indivisibility of consciousness
I am you and you are me as well
Indivisible consciousness stays unchanged
Becoming neither—it alone is everything

Self is infinite though not moving
It is everywhere without movement
Indivisible, all forms appear in it
Doing nothing to bring this about

Reality in fire, it does not burn
Nor can it be burnt at all
The eternal light, it shines in all
Everything shines by its light alone

Nothing exists independent of Self
Time and space are reflections in it
Appearing as moments and eternity
There is nothing apart from the Self

As long as the appearance is felt real
The reality is never ever seen
When this assumption is discarded
Pure consciousness is experienced

Self is all of what appears to be
Its power creates terrific illusions
Of subject and object as different
All within indivisible consciousness

This diversity from creator to insect
Is a long-standing illusion like a dream
As a single seed contains the huge tree
Self contains diversity in indivisibility

The King Replies

Your questions pertain to Brahman
Eternal, pure existence-absolute
Known directly when the mind-stuff
Is rid of all movement of thought

It is expressed in silence
When the known comes to an end
For unknowable and inexpressible
Is Brahman the absolute

It is the extremely subtle
In the middle of two extremes
That middle too has two sides
As diversity also seems divided

When this Brahman wishes
Elements and nature appear
It is all and it is nothing
All appears by its omnipotence

Many are ways to attain the Self
Still nothing is really attained
Upon the supreme attainment
As it is the self of one and all

One roams in the forest of samsara
Till wisdom dawns within one's self
Which is able to dispel root-ignorance
About the reality of world-appearance

This infinite pure consciousness
Perceives the universe within itself
Extremely subtle, pure consciousness
It pervades the entire universe

This omnipresent existence inspires
The world-appearance to dance
To its tune, music and wish
All due to its omnipresence

The sole illuminator of all
All shines by its light alone
Its illumines the effects of ignorance
Without removing darkness from ignorance

Just as a drop of honey contains
The essence of all flowers
So too in it are ever present
All possible experiences

Experiences rise and fall in it
It is the sole experiencer
It alone is all of this you see
Though extremely subtle it is

Ages pass within itself
In the twinkling of an eye
Objects appear and disappear
All within pure consciousness

Doer and experiencer of all
There is nothing apart from it
As doership and the experiencer
Are inherent in infinite consciousness

Words like inner and outer
Are used for instruction only
The seer remaining unseen
Sees himself—pure sight only

The seer is the sight only
Realized when impressions end
Pure being is again realized
When external objects cease

The subject becomes the object
Objects must have a subject
What we call subject then
Is a word used in relationship

Subject is pure consciousness
This seer alone is the reality
Objects are hallucinations
Notions that create division

Because of consciousness
In a bracelet made of gold
Gold realizes its goldness
Object realizes subjectivity

The subject and object
Reflections of the other
Real duality does not exist
Realize this by direct inquiry

Division does not contradict
The existing unity at all
Both words used for instruction
The supreme self alone exists

Vasistha's Concludes

Hearing the minister and king
Karkati became tranquil
Her demoniacal nature left her
She praised both for their wisdom

One who is blessed to experience
The company of enlightened ones
Does not suffer in this world at all
As one holding a candle in the dark

I have told you this story of Karkati
Because I remembered her questions
And the wise answers of both
The minister and the noble king

Just as a leaf, flower and fruit
All extend from one seed
In which there cannot be diversity
Universe extends from consciousness

By listening to my words O Rama
You will attain enlightenment
The universe has arisen from Brahman
The universe is Brahman alone

Words have their limitations
They are used in instruction
They are not what they indicate
As all division is illusory

I once asked Brahma to teach me
How this universe was created
His reply I will narrate to you
Listen attentively to this story

10. THE STORY OF INDU'S SONS

Universes Within the Mind

After my morning prayers one day
I beheld within the infinite void
Seemingly independent universes
In each my counterpart—creators

Puzzled at seeing this in my mind
I asked the sun in one universe
About what was beheld in my mind
Universes each with their own creator

The Sun Replied

Salutations to you, O creator
The mind alone appears as all this
Ceaseless creation is its activity
Nescience makes it appear as real

In your creation once existed
A holy man named Indu and his wife
Who by the grace of Lord Siva
Was blessed with ten dutiful sons

Indu and his wife died of old age
Distressed, their sons did ponder
What to do, what is most desirable
What can get rid of our unhappiness

They saw creatorship as a solution
To suffering and anguish experienced
For it goes on as does creation
Free from suffering as it was their creation

All ten of them commenced deep meditation
On themselves as creators of their creation
After long immersion in intense meditation
They became creators of their creations

The ten creators beheld in your mind
Each with their own created universe
Are the ten sons of the holy man
And I—one sun in their creation

Brahma Asks the Sun

Ten creators have ten creations
What am I to do now, what is left
As others are doing the needful
In these acts of creating universes

The Sun Replies

No personal wishes or motives
Or desires do you have my lord
Creating is as natural to you as light is to sun
What will you gain by abandoning duty

The wise desire nothing
Nor abandon action either
They do what is felt to be natural duty
Firmly established in the eternal truth

Mind alone creates all this
Mind alone is the supreme person
What the mind does is real action
Not what seems to be done physically

When one feels 'I am the body'
He feels he is mortal and thus bound
The wise do not entertain these ideas
Eternal vigilance is avoidance of pain

11. THE STORY OF AHALYA

Mind is the Doer

Once there lived a king and his queen
Named Indrayuma and Ahalya
Also a young man named Indra
Handsome but with loose morals

Queen Ahalya and Indra began an affair
Meeting and seeing each other often
Their relationship became public knowledge
The king was infuriated on hearing this

The king tried to punish them in many ways
Immersing them in cold and boiling water
Subjecting them to wild animals and whipping
Indra simply laughed and told the king

"O king, punishing the body is useless

As we have united in the mind
Both being mind alone, not bodies
How can your rage punish our mind?

If the mind is saturated with something
What happens to the body does not affect it
'Tis the mind that creates the body
Not the body that gives rise to the mind"

The infuriated king still persisted
Exhausting all methods to punish them
Even asking some to curse and punish
But nothing could affect the couple's minds

The Sun's Advice

The creations of the ten sons of Indu
Cannot be interfered with similarly
Besides, what do you lose to let it be
As their creations exist in their minds only

In your own consciousness create freely
Creation as you would wish it to be
As individual and infinite consciousness
Is made of the very same substance

Let the creations of these young men
Exist as it does within their minds
What harm is there at all in this
Create freely all the worlds you please

12. BRAHMA AND VASISTHA'S DIALOGUE

Brahma to Vasistha

After hearing the sun's good advice
I began creating as was natural to me
The sun helped in my work on request
Playing a dual role most efficiently

Whatever appears in one's consciousness
That seems to come into being
It soon gets established and bears fruits
Such is the power of the mind

Creatorship too is a result of the mind
Mind alone manifests everything

Bringing about bodily appearances too
Naught else is aware of the body

Individualized consciousness is the mind
Also known as the individual or jiva
Appearing as physical or material bodies
Non-different from infinite consciousness

The intention of the ten young men
Made them feel they were creators
Even so do I feel and experience
And manifest—all based on intention

All this takes place in pure consciousness
Which thinks of itself as an individual
As the mind and as body too
But all these are based on consciousness

The mind is sentient and inert
As its basis is pure consciousness
It takes on the role of objects—unaware
As the substance is pure consciousness

Apprehension requires similarity
Like alone does contact like
Subject and object must be similar
The deluded mind is unaware of this

The individual mind somehow believes
Itself to be subject as the sentient
All objects to be inert and insentient
And is bound by delusion of duality

When this illusion is seen as reality
False egotism arises instantly
But on unrelenting self-inquiry
The division disappears—one attains bliss

Vasistha asks Brahma

Regarding the earlier story of Ahalya
How did their bodies suffer—not their minds
If the body is non-different from the mind
The punishments should have affected both

Brahma's Reply to Vasistha

From Brahma down to a little hill
All embodied have twofold bodies
Mind which is restless and acts quickly
A body of flesh which does nothing

The body is what is overpowered
By punishments as it is dependent
The mind only seems dependent
Though it is really independent

When the mind exerts in self-effort
It is beyond the reach of sorrow
The mind alone experiences
Fruit of self-effort not the body

Dwelling constantly on what is pure
The mind attains to purity
Immune to onslaught of every kind
Experiencing what it contemplates

The ten youth attained creatorship
By mental effort none could prevent
A mind devoted to the Self
Cannot be touched by any calamity

With the mind—make the mind
Take to the path of purity
With the self—make the self
Tread on the highway of purity

What the mind does contemplate
Materializes and is experienced
By intense contemplation bring about
Total change free of all delusion

13. VASISTHA'S INSTRUCTION CONTINUES

The Appearance of Diversity

All that you see emerges from Brahman
Just as waves manifest in the ocean
Existing in the mind of Brahma
The creator and the cosmic mind

Diversity is but an appearance
Events happen quite accidentally

Just as when a crow sits on a tree
And a coconut drops at the same time

Expression leads to experience
Thus cause and effect do come about
By desire—the cause of all this
Bringing rise and fall in evolution

Such is this forest as world appearance
Cut its very root completely, O Rama
With the axe of inquiry, persistently
Till total freedom is attained

Some arrive at the understanding sooner
Some longer—depends on one alone
Inner quality is most important
Now hear of this a little further

Different Types of Being

The foremost of all are naturally good
Devoted to being good in every way
Full of purity and light called sattva
They reach liberation in a few lifetimes

The middling are full of dynamism
Desires or rajas and some sattva
Exhausting rajas and increasing sattva
They move slowly towards liberation

The third are sunk in darkness or tamas
Rising and falling in the cycle of samsara
Thousand births do not much change
They take very long towards liberation

Individual Action and Cosmic Action

Diverse beings arose with the cosmic mind
Rising from and within the cosmic mind
Which arose in pure consciousness
But beings somehow feel separateness

Since action is movement of energy
Energy is movement in consciousness
Action must inevitably bears its fruit
As action is movement in consciousness

When action motivated by separateness
Comes to end—so does the mind
As cosmic action does not require
The individual mind of separateness

Same Thing Acting Different

Mind is the only perception
Perception is movement in consciousness
Therefore what the mind doth think
Materializes instantly as experience

What is called illusion or maya
Is a word without any substance
Infinite consciousness is the only reality
In which all concepts are conceived to exist

By accidental coincidence did concepts arise
So too diversity arose quite the same way
Veiled by nescience diversity appears real
This is what is known as the mind

That which has firm conviction
Of certain perception is called intelligence
Which when it imagines separateness
Becomes what is known as egotism

When egotism abandons consistent inquiry
It allows itself to get entangled by many thoughts
That come and go like the winds in space
And is known as individualized consciousness

Action without an independent doer
Is pure action—movement in consciousness
But when fruition is pursued
It is called karma—one is then bound

Memory of past enjoyments
Become triggers for action
As latent tendencies that await
Conditions for their enactment

Recalling memory constantly
Breathes life into them powerfully
Once opportunity for action is seen
They burst forth in ignorance

When the same mind turns round
Looking within to inquire
As to this seeming inner division
It is what is known as knowledge

When it moves the wrong way
Getting involved deeply in false fancies
Greater is the self-forgetfulness
It is what is known as impurity

When it entertains with sensations
It is known as senses or indriyas
When unmanifest in consciousness
It is what is known as nature

When it creates confusion
Between what appears to be
And what is the only reality
It is known as illusion or maya

When it dissolves in the infinite
There is freedom—liberation
When it thinks 'I am bound'
There is what is called bondage

Threefold Space

Threefold is space, O Rama
Infinite space of consciousness
Finite divided space of the individual
And physical space of the material world

Undivided consciousness is infinite space
'Tis that which exists in all and everything
Inside, outside—'tis the pure witness
Of the real and all that appears to be

The finite space of individual consciousness
Is what creates the divisions in time
It pervades all beings and is interested
In the welfare of all beings as well

The physical space does contain
All elements like air and such
All exist in infinite space
Without existence of their own

Whatever be the mind's origin
Free it from all latent tendencies
Direct it towards liberation instead
And self-knowledge through self-effort

Pure mind is free from latent tendencies
It can therefore attain self-knowledge
Since the universe is within the mind
Bondage and liberation are within it too

Listen carefully to an ancient legend
In this connection—most insightful
I heard this from the creator himself
'Tis called 'Story of the Great Forest'

14. THE STORY OF THE GREAT FOREST

There was a great forest—millions of miles
Just like the space within a single atom
In it lived one person with thousands of limbs
Forever restless was his nature

He beat himself with his own mace
And ran away in panic immediately
Afraid of the beating he gave himself
And jumped into a blind well in fear

He repeated this act again and again
Now beating himself with his own mace
Then running into a banana grove
Weeping and crying aloud in fear

Witnessing this I restrained him
With the power of my own will
Asking him about his identity
Sorely distressed was he in return

Calling me enemy he wept aloud
After crying he then laughed
Next he did the strangest thing
He abandoned his body limb by limb

Immediately I saw another like him
Doing the same thing in the forest
On inquiry I was abused by some
Others held me in great contempt

Some refused to talk to me at all
Some refused to come out of the well
Others went deeper into the forest
Few listened and were enlightened

This great forest is not far away
Nor is the strange man we talked about
The world itself is the great forest
Seen as a void in the light of inquiry

The light of inquiry in the story
Is the 'I' who attempted to reason
Those accepting attain enlightenment
Those rejecting continue to suffer

The thousand-limbed person is the mind
With all its countless manifestations
Punishing its own self constantly
By its very own latent tendencies

In the world it wanders restlessly
The blind well is the hell it endures
The banana grove is the heaven
The dense forest is its worldly life

Mind's attachments are its thorns
Which hurt him all the time
Still it wanders experiencing
Hell and heaven within itself

When wisdom somehow shines on him
He rejects it considering it enemy
While still wailing and weeping for help
Drifting without proper understanding

Sometimes he does experience
An improper awakening of sorts
He renounces without understanding
Increasing the sorrow he already endures

Renunciation must be based on
Wisdom born of inquiry
And fullness of understanding
So it will lead to supreme bliss

The limbs he seemed to abandon
Were tendencies attempted to abandon
Which when there is no real understanding
Ever remain—never really getting abandoned

Great is the hurt in ignorance's play
Great panic darting from shore to sea
When wisdom dawns based on inquiry
Understanding calms the mind's passion

The absolute Brahman is omnipresent
His energy pervades and sustains all
Instruments of action, doer and deed
Birth, death, existence—all is Brahman

Duality and its resulting offspring
Such as delusion, craving and attachment
All these have no real existence
All notions the mind experiences

Listen attentively to this legend
It illustrates this point best
Don't get wrapped up in the story
Look at what it points to

15. THE STORY OF THE THREE NON-EXISTENT PRINCES

The Story

A nanny once narrated this story
To a young boy who listened attentively
Of a city of yore which did not exist
In which there were three brave princes

Of three princes two were unborn
The third had not been conceived
Since all their relatives died somehow
They left the city to go elsewhere

The heat of the sun was unbearable
Hot sands burnt their feet severely
They hastened to the shade of three trees
Two did not exist, the third was unplanted

In the cool shade they rested awhile
Eating the fruits they felt refreshed

Then proceeded to the bank of three rivers
Two were dry, third had no water

The princes had a most refreshing bath
Quenched their thirst and continued on
Towards a huge city yet to be built
Entering, they beheld three palaces

Two palaces has not been built
No walls did the third one have
They found all three most beautiful
And joyfully entered them

Gold plates they found in the palaces
Two broken, the third had been pulverized
Using the third pulverized plate
They cooked 99 minus 100 grains of rice

Three holy men they invited to dine
Two were bodiless, the third had no mouth
After they ate, the princes ate the rest
Greatly pleased by the experience

They lived there for a long time
In peace and joy in the palaces
Two of which had not been built
The third was without any walls

"Remember this well and you will be wise"
Said the nanny to the little boy
Who was thrilled to hear such story
Really creation is no more than this

Vasistha's Insight

The world we see is a notion too
Not different at all from the story
In consciousness once did it arise
An idea of creation—this is what it is

This world is nothing but an idea
All that you see are ideas too
Reject the errors—dirt in the mind
Be free of ideas—abide in truth peacefully

The Fire of Self-Inquiry

The wise are not deluded by ideas
Fools succumb to ideas—get deluded
Egotism is an idea based on association
Of the self with bodies and physical elements

When infinite consciousness alone exists
Egotism is just like water in a mirage
Abandon your baseless imperfect vision
Rest in perfect vision grounded in truth

Inquire directly into the nature of truth
Abandon falsehood knowing for yourself
You are free just now—why for do you grieve
Who can bind the infinite and just how?

Brahman is divisionless existence
What is bondage or liberation?
Confusion of appearance with reality
Sorrow and pain is based on this ignorance

Let the body fall, rise or go somewhere
How are you affected by any of this?
Know the relationship of self and body
To be like that of the wind and clouds

Wind is one with space when clouds disperse
Self is not destroyed when the body falls
Mind too remains until it is burnt
In the fire of self-knowledge by realization

Death is a veiling by time and space
Of the ever present deathless self
Abandon all your latent tendencies
And come out of this cage and be free

Hard to destroy latent tendencies
Though they give endless sorrow and grief
Though born of deep-rooted ignorance
The fire of self-inquiry can bring their end

All effort at self-inquiry does purify
The mind's dirt born of ignorance
Seek the Self in order to dissolve the self
'Tis the supreme goal—strive for this

The Mind Spread Out

Manifesting in infinite consciousness
Mind by its nature has spread itself out
It distorts all that appears to be
And lies claim to everything too

Mind creates and destroys the world
All in the blink of an eye
Playing the part of one and all
As an actor playing different roles

It makes the unreal appear as real
Causing confusion, joy and suffering
Asserting its claim on all it sees
And suffering when this is untenable

Just as time with its changing seasons
Is able to bring about change in nature
So also the mind by its power of thought
Makes things appear different though they are not

Time, space and all things the mind controls
Regardless of whether it is big or small
The intensity or dullness of the influenced
'Tis not incapable of doing anything at all

O Rama listen most attentively
To another ancient legend I will narrate
To illustrate further this very point
Listen carefully to the Story of Lavana

16. THE STORY OF LAVANA

The Juggler

Long ago lived a king called Lavana
Who ruled a small kingdom righteously
One day during a session of open court
A juggler appeared and spoke to the king

"Homage to you, O righteous king
May I show you something wonderful?"
Waving some feathers a horse appeared
Which he offered to the king as a gift

"Take a ride on this fine horse, O king

Roam freely to your heart's desire"
The king closed his eyes—sat quietly
All in the court sat silently too

The King Awakens

After some time the king awakened
Trembling in fear and confusion
The ministers tried to calm the king
Who seemed to have had a bad dream

After regaining his composure
The king narrated to his ministers
The experience he just underwent
What he felt the juggler had caused

The King Recounts

"As soon as the juggler waved his feathers
I jumped on the horse as suggested
And rode far beyond the desert
Into a place which was very cold

When I sat to rest my weary self
The horse ran away—leaving me alone
The night was spent in fear and hunger
It seemed a very long journey was undergone

Starving I begged for some food to eat
From a dark girl dressed in black who had some
After much begging she replied
"Only if you promise to marry me"

What to do, survival was at stake
I agreed—and was given food to eat
She then took me to her village
And introduced me to all as her husband

Hideous were all of the tribesmen
Barely appearing human at all
But they welcomed me with respect
Being the husband of one of them

We were married in a hideous ceremony
A member of the primitive tribe I became
My wife gave birth to four children
Each more dreadful than the other one

Years were spent in great agony
I forgot the past and lost my way
Hunting for food and cutting wood
To feed my family each and every day

Things got difficult as time rolled on
I traded in meat to try and survive
Often fighting with others for a share
My body too became black as coal

The mind had also become sinful
The heart had lost all compassion
With nets and traps I caught my prey
Causing untold hardship to animals

Eating rotten food, living in filth
Anger and abusiveness became natural
I felt bound by my own evil tendencies
And wept at my bondage and agony

Thus I lived for a very long time
Things got so difficult for all
People ate anything they could find
Corpses—decaying flesh and dirt as well

I took my family away from there
In hopes that we may find better
Sitting one evening after much travel
My youngest son cried in hunger

Helpless to give him anything at all
I offered him my own flesh to eat
Innocently he consented—asking for some
My world had tumbled within itself

I thought it best to end this suffering
And to end this life itself
Making a fire I entered the flames
I shuddered—found myself here again

The Ministers Speak

O king, the juggler was not a thief
He asked for no money, nothing he took
He must have come to teach a lesson
About this delusive world-appearance

World-appearance is mind's jugglery
Mind itself is a play of consciousness
It deludes the wisest of persons too
There is nothing this mind cannot do

Vasistha's Insight

I know firsthand—I was there in that court
How the mind veils the nature of self
Creating its web of illusory appearances
For peace—the illusion must be destroyed

The impure mind sees a ghost
Where there is nothing but a post
All relationships exist in the mind
Havoc and distress are mind's play too

A mind laden with tendencies
Is called an impure mind
Tendencies are springs for wrong action
Increasing delusion—strengthening tendencies

Mind is the whole world, O Rama
Atmosphere, sky, earth and wind
Mind is great and powerful too
It decided the time of the king's experience

Greatest mystery of all is this, Rama
How the omnipresent is veiled by the mind
Making one confuse it with reality
And be seen as reality—unquestionable

There's no experience—if mind is elsewhere
Food eaten too is not experienced
Though the most tasty food be eaten as well
Senses are born of the mind—not the other way

Fools think body and mind differ
Body is non-different from mind
In truth it is mind externalized
Salutations to sages who've realized this

Those who've realized this great truth
Are never perturbed by physical conditions
For the switch to convert pleasant to unpleasant
He has discovered—lies within his mind

Just as an actor plays different roles
Mind creates different states in consciousness
Like the waking and dreaming states
Just as the experiences of king Lavana

Conquest of Mind

Mind experiences what it constructs
Mind is a bundle of thoughts only
Know this by your direct inquiry
Be free of its clutches—then do as you please

He who does not let mind roam about
In objects of pleasure attains mastery
Just as something is tied to a post
The mind too can be tied to reality

With a quiet mind one can meditate
Constantly and without any break
Meditate ceaselessly—'tis your duty
And attain to the supreme being

Victory over the goblin mind
Is had by sincere self-effort
Knowledge is attained by self-inquiry
And abandonment of all desires

If there is sincere proper attitude
This can be attained without struggle
Like a child's attention can be easily diverted
If there be real interest in something new

Abandoning cravings is the sole means
To break the grip of the mind's torment
Woe unto him—unable and unwilling
To do what is for his own highest good

By intense effort **is it possible**
To gain victory over the mind
When individuality is broken through
There is absorption in infinite consciousness

Abandon reliance on fate or gods
All mental creations of the dull-witted
With self-effort and self-knowledge
Make the mind the no-mind

Let infinite consciousness swallow the mind
Soar high—beyond all and everything
With intelligence united with the supreme
Hold onto the self—which is imperishable

Unagitated is the conquered mind
The world's treasures cannot compare
Self-knowledge by direct self-inquiry
Is what is needed—why is this difficult?

How do you live in daily turmoil
Afraid of death and separation
The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' will dissolve
Only when the mind ceases to be

If you do not attain fearlessness
The mind's cravings will create havoc
Like rapids they will carry you forth
In their restlessness with great intensity

Deprive the mind of its restlessness
It will become 'dead mind' so to say
This is highest penance or tapas
Verification of scriptures and liberation

Like a pendulum the mind oscillates
Between reality and appearance
After it thinks of inert objects repeatedly
It assumes their characteristics—becomes them

The same mind devoted to self-inquiry
Becomes wise—shakes off conditioning
Returns once again to its original nature
Pure indivisible infinite consciousness

Mental conditioning has no reality
Still it arises somehow in the mind
Ignorance is the cause—abandon it
Be wise—renounce mental conditioning

You are not the doer of any action here
Why then do you assume doership?
One alone exists and ever will
What then is this doership and agency?

Inactivity is the other extreme
It does not accomplish a thing
What has to be done—has to be done
Act without doership—abide in the self

Do the actions that are natural to you
Unattached—you will become non-doer
But doing nothing—attached to doing nothing
You become the doer of that nothing

This world is like a jugglery show
Nothing to be gained or given up
Ignorance of self's nature is the seed
Abandon this grief-giver ruthlessly

It creates delusion, hides self-knowledge
Like it did for the king Lavana
In less than an hour he experienced
Several years of sorrow and much grief

Ignorance lacks any real continuity
Like a river—it flows in rapid succession
Veiling reality again and again
And giving the appearance of reality

When you try to grasp it—nothing is held
Because it has no real substance at all
It acquires strength and firmness
From your constant blind dwelling on it

A rope made of strands gains strength
Blueness of the sky is never challenged
Dream objects seem real in a dream
All due to ignorance or mental conditioning

Ignorance creates great confusion
Between appearance and reality
By becoming aware of its unreality
It is mastered—the mind ceases to be

As darkness disappears with the light
Ignorance disappears with self-knowledge
Without natural urge for self-knowledge
Ignorance will subject you to its tyranny

Natural must be your inner quest
You have to want to know above all
What is reality and what is appearance
How to go beyond this bondage

Mind is self-veiled consciousness
Presenting subject-object in indivisibility
The veil is an idea—an intention too
The mind is a thought born of that

The firm conviction of self-limitation
Blinds the mind and binds it too
Reverse this by unwavering conviction
That everything is the absolute Brahman

Ideas and thoughts are bondage themselves
Their abandonment and absence is liberation
Be free of them—do what is natural to you
Let appearances be—what does it matter?

What was in the beginning—exists now still
The absolute is still the absolute
Contemplate on this deep in your heart
And shake off this ignorance completely

Uproot hopes and all expectations
Using inner strength and intelligence
Hopes, expectations and attachments
Bind you slavishly to mental conditioning

People forget the truth—a great wonder
How do they live in such utter ignorance
Their lives are an invitation to suffering
The hell they weep about is self-created

Give up all mental conditioning, O Rama
Which alone is responsible for sorrow
This ignorance is duality perception's seed
Abandoned—you will attain supreme peace

Rama Speaks After Contemplation

Holy Sage—'tis incredible that non-existence
Creates such havoc—appearing so very real
Pray—kindly explain how this is possible
Why did king Lavana undergo such suffering

Vasistha's Reply

That consciousness is related to the body
Is not really true at all in any way
As in dream—body is the fancy of consciousness
Its own energy gives it the appearance of reality

Consciousness limits itself as it were
The limitation considers itself limited
This is the individual—the jiva
Restless amidst the world appearance

This embodied being, egotism or jiva
Enjoys and suffers the fruits as well
The body or enlightened ones never suffer
The mind alone experiences all suffering

Ignorance, heedlessness and unwisdom
All are nescience—it only does suffer
It is the mind that does everything
It is the mind that suffers all agony

Let me answer your question of king Lavana
And why he underwent such suffering
He was a descendant of Harischandra
He too aspired to be great like him

Lavana's Aspiration

His grandfather did great religious rites
Lavana too aspired to do so in some way
Gathering all that was needed for one
He performed the rite mentally in his garden

Though the rite was done mentally
He was entitled to its fullest fruit
The same mind thinks and also does
The same mind experiences pain and joy

Therefore guide your mind to salvation
Mind alone is the doer of all actions
I was witness in king Lavana's court
And saw the real effects he underwent

I saw through the eye of intuition
The juggler was a messenger of the gods
Out to test the mettle of king Lavana

As he had undertaken a particular rite

Lavana too was performing a rite mentally
The hallucinations he had were the result
Both the rite and the hallucinations
Were experienced by the very same mind

When the same mind is thoroughly purified
All duality will be disposed of completely
Diversity will vanish along with it
As will false notions of 'I' and 'mine'

Equipped with wisdom to ascend
The seven steps to inner perfection
Attain liberation from all bondage
Listen carefully to more on these states

17. STEPS OF IGNORANCE AND STATES OF WISDOM

Seven Descending Steps of Ignorance

Abidance in self-knowledge is liberation
In self-knowledge there is no agitation
Self-knowledge disturbed raises egotism
Distraction, dullness, bondage and suffering

The delusion that veils is sevenfold
First is when mind and jiva exist in name only
Second, when notion of 'I' and 'this' appear as real
Third, when strengthened, they are experienced

Fourth is when the mind is filled with desires
Fifth is when the unreal appears as real
Sixth is living in the past as though the present
Seventh is when one is trapped in dullness

Seven Ascending States of Wisdom

Hear now the seven states of wisdom
First is when pure wish or intention arise
Second is the spirit of inquiry into truth
Third is when the mind becomes subtle

Fourth is the mind established in truth
Fifth is total freedom from bondage
Sixth is cessation from objectivity
Seventh is beyond these—liberation

First is when one begins self-inquiry
"Why do I continue to live unwisely?"
One seeks holy men and teaching
Having cultivated dispassion and wisdom

Second is when direct observation begins
To see the mixture of the real with unreal
Looking within oneself thins the unreal
One discovers abidance in the substratum

Third is when non-attachment arises
Based on one's own direct observation
Of what is unreal and what is real
The mind becomes subtle and transparent

Fourth comes about on practicing these three
The seeker turns from pursuit of sense-pleasure
This happens naturally—without suppression
As one has seen pursuit of pleasure to be pain

Fifth is when non-attachment arises
As does conviction in the nature of truth
One rejoices in one's own self
One's direct experience is light on the path

Sixth is when there is rootedness
In experience of unity as the truth
Ideas of objectivity that lingered earlier
Have been abandoned completely

Seventh is when self-knowledge
Is spontaneous and unbroken
One is liberated while living here
This is the transcendental state

There is another state beyond these
The abandonment of body-consciousness
Rare indeed is this most high state
Holy are all who ascend these seven

Those attaining to the states of wisdom
Go beyond the grip of sorrow
They may lead an active or passive life
Rejoicing in the self—fully satisfied

All can attain to these states, O Rama
Unlearned people and animals too
For it involves the rise of wisdom
Great are they who have attained to them

In ignorance does the self imagine
Separate existence as the ego
But gold remains gold in a bracelet too
So too the self can never be non-self

The Rise of Ignorance in the Self

Best to ask questions about reality
Not unreality as it hath no existence
As gold remains gold—regardless of form
So infinite consciousness remains unchanged

Existence of unreality arises in consciousness
And vanishes when inquired into
As long as the truth is not directly seen
One suffers in bondage of ignorance

This world appearance is a delusion
Based on egotism's utter ignorance
Egotism has no existence in the self
The infinite self is the only existence

Whatever is seen, all that is known
All is that supreme pure consciousness
No beginning, no middle and no end
Divisionless, self-luminous—Brahman only

Space and diversity are notions in the mind
Just as distance between objects in a mirror
The king visited the places he dreamt earlier
Saw them to exist and the people too

I explained the mystery to the king
Delusion created by power of nescience
Confusion between the real and unreal
Based on ignorance and resulting notions

When a notion arises in the mind
Delusion will very soon follow
As notions are not based on reality
Experience of the notion comes quickly

If one thinks repeatedly in some way
Division is made firm in the mind
The thinker and what is thought of
What was thought is soon experienced

If you see a crow alight on a coconut tree
And see a coconut fall at the same time
You feel and affirm these events are linked
You experience one event—not two separate ones

Just this way by pure coincidence
Ignorance arose and was affirmed
A feeling about it gave it reality
This reality of ignorance is bondage

The king experienced within himself
What was reflected in his consciousness
Though events happened in earlier births
The energy invested led to experience again

Nescience is unreal—unconnected with self
Like connects with like—a common fact
Is how everything becomes knowable finally
Since everything exists in infinite consciousness

Since consciousness alone is all this
Everything appears ever so real
Not only the link between all things
But the substance of things as well

Different things just do not exist
Or it would be impossible to know anything
If they were not vitally connected somehow
Then how can you call them different?

Relationship is realization of existing unity
Called relationship in ignorance
Based upon false notions and delusion
Of division between subject and object

In between the seer and the seen
Is the relationship known as the seer
When the division between these three
Is abolished—that alone is supreme

Be that pure undivided consciousness
Do not let imagination create a future
Do not get tangled in moods of the mind
Stay established in truth peacefully

I have investigated the truth concerning
The mind—does it exist or does it not?
Have found only pure consciousness exists
Be established in this realization, O Rama

When all mental conditioning is overcome
The mind is made perfectly tranquil
Delusion and ignorance come to an end
The illusion or maya is clearly understood

As long as the illusion is not understood
By one's direct observation
Most inevitable is great delusion
The source of endless sorrow and grief

Do not get wrapped up in the words
Theory or descriptions used to instruct
One alone is—all pure consciousness
Know this by your direct experience

The self is ever untouched by sorrow
Self is the self of all—therefore desireless
My precepts have dispelled your ignorance
Your consciousness is pure now, O Rama

End of Chapter III