

THE MEANS TO LIBERATION

SELECTED VERSES FROM

Valmiki's Yoga Vasishtha



From a Translation by Swami Venkateshananda
Edited by Dennis B. Hill

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to THIS;
beyond which there isn't, without which we aren't,
and within which the self-luminous Absolute
appears as the diversity.

This work is dedicated to the Guru,
who teaches us
through silence, service, grace and reverence
that our very being is the supracausal divine presence.
This work is dedicated to true love, serenity and delight,
that spontaneously emerges
when one is steady in the inner contentment.

Yoga Vashishtha – an Introduction

Yoga Vashishtha, written by Sage Valmiki, is the spiritual teaching imparted by Sage Vashishtha to Sri Rama. In Balakand of Ramayana there is also a reference that Rama received spiritual instructions and guidance from his guru Vashishtha. While the Ramayana relates Sri Rama's adventures and the meaning of the different stages of his life, Yoga Vashishtha relates the teachings which he received and describes the different chapters in his spiritual evolution. Yoga Vashishtha is also known as the Maha Ramayana, the Uttar Ramayana and the Vashishtha Ramayana. We can also call it the 'Behind the scenes Ramayana', because it describes how Rama's knowledge, wisdom and understanding evolved and progressed throughout the different stages of his life.

Yoga Vashishtha is an elaborate work, consisting of 32,000 verses and 64,000 lines. It has been divided into six main chapters, which are the different stages of spiritual evolution in the life of Sri Rama. The chapters are called prakaranas. The first chapter is Vairagya Prakarana, in which Sri Rama experiences a very deep and intense dispassion and distaste for all worldly objects and pleasures. Although in Sri Rama's case the desire for worldly objects was never described as being very intense, still it is the first stage of Sri Rama's spiritual evolution and the first requirement in spiritual life. The second chapter is the Mumukshu Prakarana, which describes the intense desire for Self-realization that Sri Rama experiences. After achieving vairagya, after attaining the state of being different from the world, of not being involved but being more of an observer, then the next stage is changing the quality of the desires from worldly to spiritual. That is the second stage of Sri Rama's evolution.

The third chapter is the Utpatti Prakarana in which Sri Rama learns from his guru the origins of the world. It is deepening the understanding of why we get caught up and involved with worldly objects and pleasures, and how those outside objects are identified in the mind.

The fourth chapter is the Sthiti Ramayana in which, after having attained that firm understanding of the origin of the world process, Sri Rama sustains himself in the Self, in Brahman. That is the time of spiritual enlightenment. The fifth chapter is the Upasama Prakarana, which describes the deep peace that emerged from having attained that spiritual enlightenment. The sixth chapter is the Nirvana Prakarana, which is the final liberation.

Waking up from the dream

The main theme of Yoga Vashishtha is that the soul is undergoing a dream from which it must awake. This dream represents our association and identification with the world. The fact that it is described as being a dream means that whatever is in it has to be false. Nothing in a dream can be true. Waking up from that dream is the ultimate goal, Self-realization.

Yoga Vashishtha has been written, not as straight dialogue between Sage Vashishtha and Sri Rama, but in the form of a story within a story within a story. It is not a standard scriptural textbook. Our lives are also rather like a story within a story within a story. For example, a desire arises for a particular object. Then there is a pursuit to obtain that object. If the object is attained, there is an elation, a happiness, that doesn't last very long, as we know. Then there is a further desire for what we consider to be a better object. Again there is another pursuit after that object. But if the object is not obtained, there is frustration, anger, loss of mental balance, and then, all of a sudden, out of nowhere guilt arises - "Why was I pursuing this object in the first place?" But the desire for that object still remains along with the guilt. The mind that is feeling guilty for pursuing that object is the same mind that wants to obtain that object. So there is mental conflict, confusion and no clarity.

The first chapter has been called Vairagya Prakarana because until one cuts that identification with and desire for worldly objects, that foggyiness will remain. Not until the foggyiness disappears will mental clarity prevail and will one be able to evaluate, analyze and reflect on what the true aspiration is. While we are involved in that desire, we cannot see what the real aspirations are and what we really want to obtain, and there will be no real transformation in the quality of that desire. That is why Vairagya Prakarana has been described as the first chapter in Sri Rama's spiritual evolution, and of course it applies to all aspirants. Once there is clarity, then comes the second chapter, Mumukshu Prakarana, which is changing the quality of that desire to a higher nature, which is Self-realization.

Sri Rama describes this in a very beautiful and simple way. If you pour water into a basket made out of straw, what will happen? The water will not remain in the basket. All the water will permeate through and the basket will remain empty. The basket symbolizes the drive to indulge and involve oneself in worldly objects and pleasures because there is a need for happiness and peace, the desire to obtain something, to achieve something, and to be stable in that happiness and inner peace. The pouring of water into the basket represents the effort, the purushartha, that one makes in one's life to obtain that something. But what happens? The fact that the water permeates through the basket and leaves it empty means that no matter how much water you pour in, no matter how deep you go in that dream, the basket will always remain empty. That is the transitory, short term and temporary nature of the happiness and contentment derived from worldly objects.

Imagine you are having a nightmare in which people are chasing you and you are running away. Suddenly the road splits into two. On one side people are still chasing you, so you say, "I'd better not go in that direction and I cannot go back." So what do you do? You either turn to the right and continue running in the same circle, or you simply wake up and put an end to the dream. This waking up from the dream, which is described in Yoga Vashishtha, is the opening of the third eye. The third eye

is a symbol which represents discrimination, wisdom. It is that discrimination and wisdom which ultimately leads one to the experience of vairagya, of dispassion. Discrimination means knowing what is right and what is wrong, being able to differentiate and to guide one's life and efforts towards something everlasting, not something temporary which will disappear the moment you touch it. Applying that discrimination then becomes dispassion. Dispassion is not something that can be applied as an intellectual concept, rather it is a gradual process of transformation of the mind and of the nature of the mind, transformation of the desires and the quality of these desires. So, Yoga Vashishtha describes the spiritual aim as being the waking up from that dream that we are going through.

Sutikshna and Agastya

The first story in the Vairagya Prakarana does not begin with Sage Vashishtha speaking to Sri Rama, but with a very humble and modest Brahmin named Sutikshna who has gone to his guru, Sage Agastya, for spiritual guidance. When Agastya, knowing his disciple very well, asked him the cause of his confusion and grief, Sutikshna said, "Tell me, is it the performance of one's duty that will lead one to liberation, to nirvana, to moksha, or is it the renunciation of everything, going to the Himalayas and forgetting everybody and everything?"

Sage Agastya replied, "Just as a bird flies on two wings, in the same way the aspirant flies up to the goal of self-realization, to liberation, on the two wings of karma and wisdom. So it is neither one nor the other but the blending of the two. That is the art which one has to learn to evolve in spiritual life." Seeing that Sutikshna was still confused, Agastya said, "I will tell you another story to help you understand better."

Agnivesya and Karunya

The second story is about Karunya and his father Agnivesya. Once upon a time there was a boy named Karunya who went to the gurukul at an early age and mastered the Vedas and the Puranas and became a very knowledgeable person. After finishing his training, he returned to his father's home. Suddenly, one day he too became depressed and fell into a state of grief. Agnivesya went to him and said, "Tell me the cause of your grief." Karunya replied, "I have been studying all this time, but still I have one question. It is mentioned in the scriptures that one will attain liberation, that one will free oneself from the cycle of births and deaths, through the performance of one's duties. But at the same time it says that only through renunciation will one attain this freedom. So what should one do?" Agnivesya replied, "I will tell you a story which will help you to understand this point perfectly."

Suruchi and Devadutta

So here is the third story, and the dialogue between Sage Vashishtha and Sri Rama has still not yet begun. Agnivesya began, “Once upon a time a beautiful damsel named Suruchi was sitting on a mountain peak in the Himalayas, reflecting on life. All of a sudden she saw a messenger of Lord Indra’s flying by, so she called him and asked, “Where are you going?” He replied, “That is a very good question, let me tell you a story.”

Devadutta and Arishtanemi

Once upon a time there was a king named Arishtanemi. After having performed his kingly duties and having ruled the kingdom with authority, according to the scriptures, he had retired and passed on his kingdom to his son. For hundreds and hundreds of years he had practised severe austerities and meditations in the forest. Lord Indra was so impressed that he sent his messenger Devadutta to invite Arishtanemi to the heavens. So Devadutta went off in a chariot full of the most beautiful damsels and the most learned scholars to invite King Arishtanemi on a first class flight to the heavens.

Devadutta arrived in the forest where Arishtanemi was practising his meditation, and passed on Lord Indra’s invitation. Arishtanemi understood that he was being offered a reward for his good deeds, the fruits of his karmas. He said, “Tell me what kind of fruits I will enjoy from these karmas in the heavens?” Devadatta replied, “According to the karmas one has performed in one’s life, the quality of the fruit will vary. Due to this variety, there is jealousy amongst the enjoyers of the fruits. Therefore, once the bonus is consumed, you have to go back and pass through another stage of birth.”

King Arishtanemi said very firmly, “No, I am not going with you. I am performing these austerities to experience everlasting happiness and peace within, and to know that source, not to go through the same thing. Therefore, I’m not going with you.”

Arishtanemi and Valmiki

So Devadutta returned in an empty flight, first class, and told Lord Indra what Arishtanemi had said. Lord Indra said, “Go back and take him to Sage Valmiki. Tell Sage Valmiki to instruct Arishtanemi in spiritual knowledge, to guide him and lead him towards liberation, which is the reason why he is here.”

Devadutta took King Arishtanemi to Sage Valmiki and when Arishtanemi saw Valmiki, he understood that he had come to the right place. He said, “I wish you to instruct and guide me, so that I can become free from these sorrows and miseries which I am unable to separate myself from alone.” At this point, Sage Valmiki begins to tell King Arishtanemi the story of Yoga Vashishtha, the dialogue between Sage Vashishtha and Sri Rama.

From intellect to intuition

So the introduction to Vairagya Prakarana contains many stories within stories. These stories have a twofold meaning. There is always a superficial meaning and at another level a more spiritual and deeper understanding.

In the first story Sutikshna approaches Agastya for spiritual guidance. Sutikshna means subtle, sharp, and Agastya means the effulgent sun. The movement of Sutikshna towards Sage Agastya represents the move of the intellect towards intuition. An aspirant with the ability to move from intellect to intuition is considered to be the highest type of aspirant. The scriptures say that intellect is considered to be a barrier in spiritual life, but this has to be understood properly. As the absence of intellect is not the key to overcoming this barrier, the key has to be something associated with intellect.

Intellect begins with the letter 'I'. The purpose of intellect is also to serve 'I', so if intellect is not the barrier directly, it is this 'I-ness' associated with the intellect which becomes the barrier. Intellect and ego, 'I-ness', have a very intimate relationship, even more intimate than the relationship between a husband and wife. The way to transcend this barrier is therefore not to create an absence of intellect, but to change the purpose and application of intellect. Instead of applying the intellect for ourselves, we apply the intellect for others.

The guru-disciple relationship is described as the way to transcend this barrier. In all these stories there is a guru and a disciple. In the guru-disciple relationship there is acceptance, faith and surrender: one is undergoing training, one is 'intuition'. This ability to move from intellect to intuition is considered to be a quality of the highest type of aspirant, because while letting go of family and possessions is not considered so difficult, letting go of that 'I-ness' is considered to be one of the toughest and rarest abilities.

Purification of the mind

The second story is between Karunya and Agnivesya. Karunya means one who is full of grief, confusion, and Agnivesya means an embodiment of fire. The movement of Agnivesya towards Karunya represents the need of the chitta to be purified by the superconsciousness, the need of the mind to be purified through raja yoga. Karunya is considered to be the second best type of aspirant on the spiritual path. In the first story Sutikshna approached Agastya for spiritual guidance, but here Agnivesya had to approach Karunya in order to relieve him of his grief and confusion.

Spiritual inclination

The third story is between Suruchi, a damsel, and Devadutta, Lord Indra's divine messenger. Suruchi means good taste. Her calling out to Devadatta is a sign of spiritual inclination, because even though it may have been a mental diversion

initially, it becomes the source of her being led to spiritual heights, as Devadutta then tells the story which eventually leads to the dialogue between Sage Vashishtha and Sri Rama. Suruchi also represents the integration of sentiments required in an aspirant on the path of bhakti. She is considered to be the third best type of aspirant on the spiritual path.

From rajas to sattwa

In the next story, Arishtanemi approaches Sage Valmiki, not directly, but after having refused a first class invitation to the heavens. The movement of Arishtanemi towards Valmiki therefore symbolizes the movement of rajas towards sattwa, Arishtanemi representing rajas, the destroyer of evil, and Valmiki representing divine purity, sattwa.

Sri Rama and Sage Vashishtha

In the next story revealed by Sage Valmiki to Arishtanemi, Sri Rama represents the embodied divine Self and Sage Vashishtha represents the Self in the highest state of liberation. This depicts the movement of the soul towards Self-realization. It is the waking up of the soul from the world, which is the theme of Yoga Vashishtha. Sri Rama is the ideal disciple, the best that one can find.

In this teaching, Sage Valmiki expands on each and every aspect of spiritual evolution. These stories, therefore, are not only stepping stones leading into Yoga Vashishtha, but also describe the different types of aspirants on the spiritual path and the internal processes and movements they undergo as the personality is transformed. They also emphasize the need for a guru-disciple relationship.

Before beginning the story between Sri Rama and Sage Vashishtha, Valmiki explains that he had composed the Poorva Ramayana. Yoga Vashishtha is known as the Uttar Ramayana and the Ramacharitamanas is considered to be the Poorva Ramayana. Valmiki says that he offered the Poorva Ramayana to his disciple Bharadvaja, who became so enlightened and so happy from reading it that he revealed the story to Brahma, the creator. Brahma also became so happy after hearing it that he offered Bharadvaja any boon he wanted. Bharadvaja asked for a way by which everyone could escape from and transcend the miseries of the world, and become liberated. Brahma then sent him to ask Sage Valmiki to write the Uttar Ramayana, which would be in the form of a dialogue between Sri Rama and his guru Sage Vashishtha. As a result, everyone who comes into contact with that spiritual teaching and who studies it with devotion will become liberated. It is from this point that the dialogue between Sri Rama and Sage Vashishtha begins.

~Swami Suryaprakash Saraswati

Editor's Preface

Perhaps it is because we live now in Kali Yuga, when spiritual darkness is most prevalent, that the light of wisdom has come to the west with such luminosity from the east. It has been only in this century that English translations of the great scriptural texts have been available to the hungry seekers after liberation. There are now numerous translations of the notable Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. English translation of the complete thirty thousand Sanskrit verses of the Yoga Vasistha runs to seven volumes, a daunting task even for the serious student.

Swami Venkateshananda has written a brilliant and readable two volume abridged translation that embodies the full substance of the original work. Because Swamiji's abridgment is not commonly available in the United States, I have selected a few verses that point most directly to Valmiki's stated purpose: to provide a means to liberation. These selections are reproduced here through the kind permission of the publisher.

To excerpt only occasional passages leaves out many beautiful and instructive stories as well as profoundly insightful perspectives on the true nature of all that is. Therefore the only purpose of this brief retelling is to whet the appetite to a fuller examination of Valmiki's towering scripture.

Because of the antiquity of the Yoga Vasistha little is known (and much is debated) about the circumstances of its origin and authorship. Let us focus instead upon the wisdom of the scripture as it leads us, as Rama is lead by the sage Vasistha, to liberation.

The setting of the work is a curious weaving of worlds within worlds and stories within stories into which the author has inserted himself as a character. As an example, consider the compelling story from Section III:81 where King Vikram is speaking to the redeemed demoness Karkati: a story told to Indra by Narada, in the teaching from Vasistha to Rama, a dialog narrated by Valmiki (teaching Bharadvaja), within a story told by the sage Agnivesya to his son Karunya, within a story told by Agastya to Sutikshna. For the most part, however, one need only keep track of the principal setting where King Dasaratha has convened an audience of kings, sages, brahmanas, siddhas, and at least two celestials to look on as the sage Vasistha instructs Prince Rama in the means to liberation.

Valmiki, one of India's greatest poets, in his thirty thousand verses of the Yoga Vasistha, gives much repetition of his essential teachings; and for a very good reason. He tells us, "The truth does not become clear in you until it is heard again and again and meditated upon again and again." (VI.2:185) Surely, we all know this to be true. Swami Venkateshananda encourages us to take this light of wisdom a little at a time as we make our way in self-inquiry.

Valmiki's full text is in six sections with the sixth part in two divisions:

- I Vairagya Prakaranam (Dispassion)
- II Mumukshu Vyavahara Prakaranam (Behavior of the seeker)
- III Utpatti Prakaranam (Creation)
- IV Sthiti Prakaranam (Existence)
- V Upasama Prakaranam (Dissolution)
- VI.1 Nirvana Prakaranam (Liberation)
- VI.2 Nirvana Prakaranam (Liberation)

Each selection in the body of this book is followed by a reference so that the reader can find the thread in a complete edition of this great work.

These selections are completely true to Swami Venkateshananda's translation. Remarks in parentheses are the translator's. Text in brackets are mine, generally for the purpose of identifying the speaker if it is not clear in preceding context. Any text not otherwise identified is spoken by Vasistha.

If there is a single line that characterizes much of the teaching, it is this remark of Vasistha to Rama: "Liberation is when knowledge ceases to be an object of knowing."

But, we may ask, what should we do about the knowledge (world-appearance) that becomes an object of knowing? Valmiki, lightly but not whimsically, tells us: "I think it is better not to let the mind dwell on it, but to ignore it."

The Universal Absolute, dimensionless and eternal, has within itself the power of creativity. Its nature is to alternate between epochs of quiescence and creative manifestation. To enter a phase of Self-expression, the Absolute creates within itself universes of dimension and duration that will again, at the end of the cycle, return to eternal Unity. This creation of space, time and form is a contraction of Universal Consciousness and is limited in power, knowledge and location. Sentiency in this limited universe possesses self-luminous conscious intelligence but because of its contractedness, does not know its creator.

This individual self-consciousness is, in fact, incomplete in its self-knowledge, power, and extent of awareness. As such, the experient feels a sense of incompleteness until the time of reawakening of the power of the Supra-causal to know itself. Haven't we all asked ourselves, "Is this all there is?" Don't we all want something or someone to fulfill us and give meaning to our lives? What is it that is really missing? What is it that will truly fulfill our longing?

What is lost is the full experience of unlimited consciousness and bliss absolute. But it is not really lost, it is only waiting to be awakened within. We might think of this transient ignorance as part of a cosmic game of hide-and-seek where the

Yoga Vasistha

Lord hides His Self-knowledge in order to take form in this projection of time and space.

To illustrate, let's take the example of dreaming. When we dream, things appear solid and people appear real. What happens in the dream seems real; apparent pleasure and pain bring us joy or grief. When we awaken, we see that we have created an imaginary drama within our own consciousness and not any of it was truly real. In exactly the same way we shall awaken from the long-dream of this incarnation and realize that the vivid play upon the screen was merely a play of consciousness; whimsy of divine sport. The object of the game is to wake up before we die or our fascination with the mirage will bring us back to the dream to pick up where we left off.

The question now is how do we shake off this burden of limitation to reveal the splendor of our true being. The sage Vasishtha teaches Rama: "When the mind is at peace and the heart leaps to the supreme truth, when all the disturbing thought-waves in the mind-stuff have subsided and there is unbroken flow of peace and the heart is filled with the bliss of the absolute, when thus the truth has been seen in the heart, then this very world becomes an abode of bliss." (II:33)

What Vasishtha teaches Rama is what saints and sages of all cultures teach seekers after truth and liberation: attain unbroken flow of peace. Why this practice? What is so special about stilling the thought-waves in the mind?

Mastery of this state mimics the serene bliss of the consciousness indweller that has returned to its creator. When the body falls away the mind dissipates. What emerges from the cocoon of form, limitation and ignorance is full consciousness of the Universal Absolute. As we mimic our ultimate transcendence "...then this very world becomes an abode of bliss." We become liberated while still in the body, never to return to the dream world of pleasure and pain.

Even though the heart has attained the Truth, nothing has changed. As a wise one observed:

Before enlightenment

I cut wood and carried water.

After enlightenment

I cut wood and carried water.

Life in the world goes on but our concerns over loss and gain have melted into profound gratitude for living in the light of boundless eternal joy.

~Dennis Hill

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My appreciation goes to Swami Venkateshananda for his clarity of translation and years of dedicated service in producing his abridgement of Valmiki's Sanskrit original.

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Deep personal gratitude and admiration of her talent goes to Kathy Rottier for the cover art.

Yoga Vasishtha

[Valmiki:]

This World-appearance is a confusion, even the blueness of the sky is an optical illusion. I think it is better not to let the mind dwell on it, but to ignore it. (1:3)



[Vasistha:]

There are four gate-keepers at the entrance to the Realm of Freedom. They are self-control, spirit of inquiry, contentment and good company. The wise seeker should diligently cultivate the friendship of these, or at least one of them.

When the mind is at peace, pure, tranquil, free from delusion or hallucination, untangled and free from cravings, it does not long for anything nor does it reject anything. This is self-control or conquest of mind.

All that is good and auspicious flows from self-control. All evil is dispelled by self-control. No gain, no pleasure in this world or in heaven is comparable to the delight of self-control. The delight one experiences in the presence of the self-controlled is incomparable. Everyone spontaneously trusts him. None (not even demons and goblins) hates him.

Self-control, O Rama, is the best remedy for all physical and mental ills. When there is self-control, even the food you eat tastes better, else it tastes bitter. He who wears the armour of self-control is not harmed by sorrow.

He who even while hearing, touching, seeing, smelling and tasting what is regarded as pleasant and unpleasant, is neither elated nor depressed — he is self-controlled. He who looks upon all beings with equal vision, having brought under control the sensations of pleasure and pain, is self-controlled. He who though living amongst all is unaffected by them, neither feels elated nor hates, even as one is during sleep — he is self-controlled.

Inquiry (the second gate-keeper to liberation) should be undertaken by an intelligence that has been purified by a close study of the scripture, and this inquiry should be unbroken. By such inquiry the intelligence becomes keen and is able to realize the supreme; hence inquiry alone is the best remedy for the long-lasting illness known as samsara.

The wise man regards strength, intellect, efficiency and timely action as the fruits of inquiry. Indeed kingdom, prosperity, enjoyment, as well as final liberation, are all the fruits of inquiry. The spirit of inquiry protects one from the calamities that befall the unthinking fool. When the mind has been rendered dull by the absence of inquiry, even the cool rays of the moon turn into deadly weapons, and the childish imagination throws up a goblin in every dark spot. Hence, the non-inquiring fool is really a storehouse of sorrow. It is the absence of inquiry that gives rise to actions that are harmful to oneself and to others, and to numerous psychosomatic illnesses. Therefore, one should avoid the company of such unthinking people.

They in whom the spirit of inquiry is ever awake illumine the world, enlighten all who come into contact with them, dispel the ghosts created by an ignorant mind, and realize the falsity of sense-pleasures and their objects. O Rama, in the light of inquiry there is realization of the eternal and unchanging reality; this is the supreme. With it one does not long for any other gain nor does one spurn anything. He is free from delusion, attachment; he is not inactive nor does he get drowned in action; he lives and functions in this world and at the end of a natural life-span he reaches the blissful state of total freedom.

The eye of spiritual inquiry does not lose its sight even in the midst of all activities; he who does not have this eye is indeed to be pitied. It is better to be born as a frog in the mud, a worm in dung, a snake in a hole, but not be one without this eye. What is inquiry? To inquire thus: "Who am I? How has this evil of samsara (repetitive history) come into being?" is true inquiry. Knowledge of truth arises from such inquiry; from such knowledge there follows tranquillity in oneself; and then there arises the supreme peace that passeth understanding and the ending of all sorrow.

(Vicara or inquiry is not reasoning nor analysis: it is directly looking into oneself.)

Contentment is another gate-keeper to liberation. He who has quaffed the nectar of contentment does not relish craving for sense-pleasures; no delight in this world is as sweet as contentment which destroys all sins.

What is contentment? To renounce all craving for what is not obtained unsought and to be satisfied with what comes unsought, without being elated or depressed even by them — this is contentment. As long as one is not satisfied in the self, he will be subjected to sorrow. With the rise of contentment the purity of one's heart blooms. The contented man who possesses nothing owns the world.

Satsanga (company of wise, holy and enlightened persons) is yet another gate-keeper to liberation. Satsanga enlarges one's intelligence, destroys one's ignorance and one's psychological distress. Whatever be the cost, however difficult it may be, whatever obstacles may stand in its way, satsanga should never be neglected. For, satsanga alone is one's light on the path of life. Satsanga is indeed superior to all other forms of religious practices like charity, austerity, pilgrimages and the performance of religious rites.

Yoga Vasistha

One should by every means in one's power adore and serve the holy men who have realized the truth and in whose heart the darkness of ignorance has been dispelled. They who, on the other hand, treat such holy men disrespectfully, surely invite great suffering.

These four — contentment, satsanga, the spirit of inquiry, and self-control — are the four surest means by which they who are drowning in this ocean of samsara can be saved. Contentment is the supreme gain. Satsanga is the best companion to the destination. The spirit of inquiry itself is the greatest wisdom. And, self-control is supreme happiness. If you are unable to resort to all these four, then practice one: by the diligent practice of one of these, the others will also be found in you. The highest wisdom will seek you of its own accord. Until you tame the wild elephant of your mind with the help of these noble qualities, you cannot have progress towards the supreme, even if you become a god, demi-god or a tree. Therefore, O Rama, strive by all means to cultivate these noble qualities.

He who is endowed with the qualities that I have enumerated thus far is qualified to listen to what I am about to reveal. (II:11)



When the mind is at peace and the heart leaps to the supreme truth, when all the disturbing thought-waves in the mind-stuff have subsided and there is unbroken flow of peace and the heart is filled with the bliss of the absolute, when thus the truth has been seen in the heart, then this very world becomes an abode of bliss. (II:12)



When the notion of (empirical) self is destroyed by the withdrawal of the fuel of ideas from the mind, that which is, is the infinite. (III:10)



The world exists because consciousness is: and the world is the body of consciousness. There is no division, no difference, no distinction. Hence the universe can be said to be both real and unreal: real because of the reality of consciousness which is its own reality, and unreal because the universe does not exist as universe, independent of consciousness. (III:14)



Death is but waking from a dream. (III:19)



Direct inquiry into the movements of thought in one's own consciousness is the supreme guru, the greatest teacher. (III:75)



Eternal Brahman, pure existence, is known when the three-fold modifications known as waking, dreaming and deep sleep cease and when the mind-stuff is rid of all movement of thought. It is expressed in silence when the known comes to an end.

This Self can be attained by a hundred ways and means; yet when it is attained, nothing has been attained! It is the supreme Self; yet it is nothing [no-thing]. One roams in this forest of samsara, or repetitive history, till there is the dawn of that wisdom which is able to dispel the root-ignorance in which the world appears to be real. But the truth is that it is the infinite consciousness that perceives the universe within itself, through its own power known as Maya. That which is seen within also appears outside.

The seer is the sight only, and when latent psychic impressions have ceased, the seer regains its pure being; when the external object is imagined, a seer has been created. If there is no subject, there is no object either. Because the subject (seer) is pure consciousness, he is able to conjure up the object. This cannot be the other way round; the object does not give birth to the subject. Therefore the seer alone is real, the object being only name and form. As long as the notions of the object persists, the division between the seer and the seen also persists. When self-knowledge arises and the name and form of objects ceases to be, the seer (subject) is realized as the sole reality. (III:81)



When the truth is known, all descriptions cease, and silence alone remains. (III:84)



Only when one severs the very root of the mind with the weapon of non-conceptualization, can one reach the Absolute Brahman which is omnipresent, supreme peace.

First destroy the mental conditioning by renouncing cravings; and then remove from your mind even the concept of bondage and liberation. Be totally free of conditioning.

Ideas and thoughts are bondage; and their coming to an end is liberation. Therefore, be free of them and do whatever has to be done spontaneously. (III:111)



That mind is pure in which all cravings are in a state of quiescence. Whatever that pure mind wishes, that materializes.

The mind is purified by persistent contemplation of truth. Only when the mind is totally purified of all conditioning does it regain its utter purity; that pure mind experiences liberation. (IV:17)



Bondage is none other than the notion of an object. The notions of *I* and *the world* are but shadows, not truth. Such notions alone create *objects*; these objects are neither true nor false. Therefore abandon the notions of *I* and *this* and remain established in the truth. (IV:21)



It is only when the mind has become devoid of all attachment, when it is not swayed by the pairs of opposites, when it is not attracted by objects and when it is totally independent of all supports, that it is freed from the cage of delusion. (IV:22)



Wealth is the mother of evil. Sense-pleasure is the source of pain. Misfortune is the best fortune. Rejection by all is victory. Life, honor and noble qualities blossom and attain fruition in one whose conduct and behavior are good and pleasant, who is devoted to seclusion and who does not crave for the pleasures of the world, which lead to suffering. (IV:32)



O Rama, I shall declare to you the quintessence of all wisdom: listen and let it perfume your whole life. Bondage is the craving for pleasure; and its abandonment is liberation. (IV:35)



O Rama, the mind itself is the jiva; the mind experiences what it itself has projected out of itself. By that it is bound. It is the state of the mind that determines the nature of the reincarnation of the jiva.

When in a pure mind there arise concepts and notions, the world appearance comes into being. But, when the mind gives up the subject-object relationship it has with the world, it is instantly absorbed in the infinite.

When you are free from all concerns about the objects of the world, you will be established in non-dual consciousness, and that is final liberation. Live without being swayed by likes and dislikes, attraction and aversion, without any desires or cravings. Constantly seek to discover the supreme peace.

Rama, you are already a liberated being: live like one. (IV:62)



One should enjoy the delight that flows from peace. The man whose mind is well-controlled is firmly established in peace. When the heart is thus established in peace, there arises the pure bliss of the Self without delay. (V:8)



Yoga Vasistha

[King Janaka:]

O unsteady mind! This worldly life is not conducive to your true happiness. Hence, reach the state of equanimity. It is in such equanimity that you will experience peace, bliss and the truth. (V:11)



Rooted in equanimity, doing whatever happens to be the appropriate action in each given situation and not ever thinking about what has thus befallen you unsought, live non-volitionally — doing yet not doing what has to be done. Consciousness minus conceptualization is the eternal Brahman. (V:13)



The very best intelligent means by which the mind can be subdued is complete freedom from desire, hope or expectation in regard to all objects at all times. (V:24)



[Prahlada to Lord Vishnu:]

Whatever comes, let it come; whatever goes, let it go. Let notions of diverse experiences either arise or set in the body: I am neither in them nor they in me.

Even as steel cuts the steel-beam which has been heated, I have subdued the mind with its own purified state. I have cut asunder cravings, ignorance and foolishness by their opposites. Egolessly, my body functions with its inherent energy. The past tendencies, mental conditioning and limitations have been completely destroyed. I begin to wonder: how was it that for such a long time I was caught up in the trap of ego-sense! Freed from dependency, from habits of thought, from desire and cravings, from deluded belief in the existence of the ego, from the coloring of pleasure-seeking tendency and from revelry — my mind has reached a state of utter quiescence. With this all sorrow has come to an end and the light of supreme bliss has dawned! (V:35)



[Vishnu to Prahlada:]

Even though you are in the body, since you do not have the body, you are bodiless. You are the observer which is immaterial intelligence: just as, though air exists in space it is not attached to space, and hence it is free from spatial limitation.

Enlightened men, though they be constantly engaged in activity, do nothing: it is not by means of inaction that they reach the state of non-action! This very fact of non-action frees you from experiences: for there is no harvest where there is no sowing. When thus both notions of *I do* and *I experience* have ceased, there remains only peace; when that peace is firmly grounded, there is liberation. (V:40)



Without self-inquiry and the consequent inner tranquillity, neither devotion to Lord Vishnu nor self-knowledge is possible. Hence resort to self-inquiry and the practice of the cessation of distraction and thus adore the Self: if you are successful in this, you have attained perfection; if not, you are no more than a wild donkey.

Lord Vishnu in fact dwells as the innermost being of all; they are surely the worst among men who, abandoning the indweller, seek Vishnu outside. (V:43)



Time is a concept of the mind. (V:49)



Consciousness free from the limitations of the mind is known as the inner intelligence: it is the essential nature of no-mind. That is the reality, that is supreme consciousness, that is the state known as the supreme self, that is omniscience. (V:50)



O mind, abandon this perception of diversity and realize the unreality of your own independence from the infinite consciousness: this is liberation. (V:52)



[Uddalaka:]

Purity, total fulfillment of all desires (hence, their absence), friendliness to all, truthfulness, wisdom, tranquillity and blissfulness, sweetness of speech, supreme magnanimity, lustrousness, one-pointedness, realization of cosmic unity, fearlessness, absence of divided-consciousness, non perversity — these are my constant companions. Since at all times everything everywhere happens in every manner, in me there is no desire or aversion towards anything, whether pleasant or unpleasant. Since all delusion has come to an end, since the mind has ceased to be and all evil thoughts have vanished, I rest peacefully in my own self. (V:53)



He is a sage liberated while living who has abandoned all motivated actions, who is free from conditioning and who has given up all desires and hopes. O Rama, abandon all desires and remain at peace within yourself. No delight in the world is comparable to the delight that will fill your heart when you completely abandon all desires and hopes. Not in kingship, nor in heaven, nor in the company of the beloved one does one experience such delight as when one is free from hope.

When you perceive the truth that the self alone is all this and that diversity is just a word without substance, you will become totally free from desire or hope.

Free from the least attachment he enjoys whatever comes to him unsought, even as the eyes perceive their objects without desire or aversion. (V:74)



He whose mind is firmly established in peace through the practice of yoga has the right vision of the truth. To see that the supreme self is without beginning or end, and that these countless objects are in fact the self and no other, is the right vision. Erroneous vision leads to rebirth; right vision ends rebirth. In it there is no subject-object (knower-knowable) relationship; for the self (consciousness) is the knower, knowledge and the knowable, too, and the division is ignorance. When this is directly seen there is neither bondage nor liberation. When the sage rests in his own self, with his intelligence firmly established in the inner self, what pleasures can bind him in this world? (V:79)



Rama asked: How is it that worms and vermin did not destroy Vitahavya's body when it lay abandoned in the cave?

Vasistha replied: O Rama, the ignorant man's body is composed and decomposed on account of the state of his mental conditioning, in the case of one who has no such conditioning, there is no momentum for decomposition.

Since Vitahavya's consciousness did not undergo any change, no change happened to his body. Since there was no movement of prana in it, even decomposition could not take place. The sage is independent and free to live or to abandon the body. In truth he is beyond karma, beyond fate, and devoid of mental conditioning. (V:89)



When, obstinately clinging to a fancy, and therefore abandoning a thorough inquiry into the nature of truth, one apprehends an object with that fancy — such apprehension is described as conditioning or limitation, when such a fancy is persistently and intensely indulged in, this world-appearance arises in consciousness. Caught up in his own conditioning, whatever the person sees he thinks that to be real and gets deluded. And on account of the intensity of the conditioning and the fancy, he discards his own nature and perceives only the world-illusion. All this happens only to the unwise person. That, whose perception is thus perverted, is known as the mind. When this mind is confirmed in its perverted perception, it becomes the seed for repeated birth, old age and death.

When the notions of desirable and undesirable do not arise, then the mind does not arise and there is supreme peace.

These alone constitute the form of the mind — conception, imagination, thought and memory. When these are absent, how does the mind exist? When one, established in non becoming, contemplates that which has not changed into becoming and when one thus perceives what is as it is, then the mind becomes no-mind. When the psychological conditioning has become transparent, one becomes a liberated sage who apparently lives and functions by past momentum (even as a potter's wheel rotates after the initial impulse has been withdrawn), but the seed has been fried, as it were, and will not germinate into world-illusion. When the body falls, he is absorbed into the infinite. (V:91)



If you rise beyond joy and sorrow and therefore treat them alike, and if you are free from attraction, aversion and fear, you are unattached. If you do not grieve in sorrow, if you do not exult in happiness and if you are independent of your own desires and hopes, you are unattached. Even while carrying on your activities here, if you do not abandon your awareness of the homogeneity of the truth, you are unattached. If you have gained self-knowledge and if, endowed with equal vision, you engage yourself in spontaneous and appropriate action in the here and now, you are unattached.

By effortlessly remaining established in non-attachment, live here as a liberated sage without being attracted by anything. The liberated sage lives in the inner silence, without pride or vanity, without jealousy and with his senses fully under his control. Even when all the objects of the world are spread out in front of him, the liberated sage, who is free from cravings, is not tempted by them, but engages himself in mere natural actions. Whatever is inevitable and appropriate, he does; his joy and delight, however, he derives from within: thus he is freed from this world-appearance. Even as milk does not abandon its colour when it is boiled, he does not abandon his wisdom even when it is severely tested by terrible calamities. Whether he is subjected to great pain or he is appointed the ruler of heaven, he remains in a balanced state of mind.

Hence, O Rama, engage yourself constantly in self-inquiry and rest firmly established in self-knowledge. You will never again be subjected to birth and bondage. (V:93)

(Vicara in the preceding pages has been translated *inquiry* or *self-inquiry*. That is the popular translation. However, the word really means efficient movement of one's inner intelligence — *car* in Sanskrit is *to move*. It should not be confused with intellectual analysis. It is direct observation or *looking within*.)



The state of mind of the liberated ones who are still living and who see both the supreme truth and the relative appearance, is known as satva (transparency). It is improper to call it the mind: it is really satva. These knowers of truth are mindless and are in a state of perfect equilibrium: they live their life here playfully. They behold the inner light all the time, even though they seem to be engaged in diverse actions. Concepts of duality, unity or such others do not arise in them, for there are no tendencies in their heart. The very seed of ignorance is burnt in the state of satva and it does not again give rise to delusion. (VI.1:2)



Moksha, liberation or the realization of the infinite is not existence as an immobile creature! Liberation is attained when one arrives at the state of supreme peace after intelligent inquiry into the nature of the self and after this has brought about an inner awakening. Kaivalya or total freedom is the attainment of pure being after all mental conditioning is transcended consciously and after a thorough investigation. The wise ones say that one is established in pure being or Brahman only after one has investigated the nature of the truth as expounded in the scriptures, in the company and with the help of enlightened sages. (VI.1:10)



[Bhushunda:]

Death does not wish to kill one who does not have raga-dvesa (attraction and aversion) nor false notions and mental habits. Death does not wish to kill one who does not suffer from mental illness, who does not entertain desires and hopes which give rise to anxieties and worry, who is not poisoned by greed, whose body and mind are not burnt by the fire of anger and hate, who is not churned and ground by the mill of lust, who is firmly established in the pure awareness of Brahman and the absolute and whose mind is not distracted like a monkey.

O sage, these evils do not even approach one whose heart has found the state of utter quiescence and tranquillity. Nor do illnesses of the body and the mind affect him. His awareness neither rises nor sets either in deep sleep or in the waking state. He whose mind and heart are established in supreme peace is not touched by the blinding evils born of lust and hate. He neither seeks nor does he spurn, neither gives up nor gathers, though he is constantly engaged in appropriate action. None of the evil forces afflict him. All joy and happiness and all auspicious qualities flow towards him.

Hence, O sage, one should remain firmly established in the imperishable and eternal self which is free from nescience and from all seeking. One should slay the ghost of duality or division and fix the heart on the one truth, which alone is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and in the end.

The best of all states, O sage, is indeed the vision of the one infinite consciousness. Even the contemplation of the self which is infinite consciousness banishes sorrow, terminates the long-dream vision of the world-appearance, purifies the mind and

the heart, and dispels worries and misfortunes. That contemplation of the self is devoid of mentation. (VI.1:23)



[Bhushunda:]

If one practices kumbhaka (suspension of breath) after exhaling the prana to a distance farther from where the apana rises (the twelve finger-breadth distance), he is not subject to sorrow any more. Or, if one is able to see the space within oneself where the inhaled breath turns into the impulse for exhalation, he is not born again. By seeing where the prana and apana terminate their motions and by holding fast to that state of peace, one is not subject to sorrow again.

If one keenly observes the place and the exact moment at which the prana is consumed by the apana, he does not grieve. Or, if one keenly observes the place and the exact moment at which the apana is consumed by prana, his mind does not arise again. Therefore, behold that place and that moment at which prana is consumed by apana and apana is consumed by prana inside and outside the body. For that precise moment at which the prana has ceased to move and the apana has not begun to move, there arises a kumbhaka which is effortless: the wise regard that as an important state. When there is effortless suspension of breath, it is the supreme state. This is the self, it is pure infinite consciousness. He who reaches this does not grieve.

I contemplate that infinite consciousness which is the indwelling presence in the prana but which is neither with prana nor other than prana. I contemplate that infinite consciousness which is the indwelling presence in the apana but which is neither with apana nor other than apana. That is the middle between prana and apana — I contemplate that infinite consciousness. I contemplate that consciousness which is the prana of prana, which is the life of life, which alone is responsible for the preservation of the body; which is the mind of the mind, the intelligence in the intellect, the reality in the ego-sense. I salute that consciousness in which all things abide, from which they emerge, which is all and everywhere and which is meritorious. I salute that consciousness in which prana ceases to move but apana does not arise and which dwells in the space in front (or, at the root) of the nose. I salute the consciousness which is the source for both prana and apana, which is the energy in both prana and apana and which enables the senses to function. I salute that consciousness which is in fact the essence of the internal and the external kumbhakas, which is the only goal of the contemplation of prana, which enables the prana to function and which is the cause of all causes. I take refuge in that supreme being.

By the regular and systematic practice of pranayama as described by me, I have

gained the state of purity and I am not disturbed even when the mount Meru (or the north pole) is shaken. This state of samadhi or total equanimity is not lost whether I am walking or standing, whether I am awake, asleep or dreaming. With my vision turned upon the self, I rest in the self, with the self in all conditions of life, whatever changes may take place in the world or in the environment. Thus have I lived right from the time of the previous cosmic dissolution.

I do not contemplate either the past or the future: my attention is constantly directed to the present. I do what has to be done in the present, without thinking of the results. Without considerations of being or non-being, desirable and undesirable, I remain in the self: hence I am happy, healthy and free from illness.

My state is the fruit of contemplation of the moment of union of the prana and the apana (when the self is revealed); I do not entertain vain notions like, *I have obtained this and I shall gain that, too*. I do not praise nor do I censure anyone (neither myself nor others) or anything at any time; my mind does not exult on gaining what is considered good nor does it become depressed on obtaining what is considered evil; hence my state of happiness and health. I embrace the supreme renunciation, having renounced even the desire to live; thus my mind does not entertain cravings but is peaceful and balanced. I behold the one common substratum in all things (a piece of wood, a beautiful woman, a mountain, a blade of grass, ice and fire and space) and I am not worried by thoughts like *What shall I do now?* or *What shall I get tomorrow morning?* I am not bothered by thoughts of old age and death, or by longing for happiness, nor do I regard some as *mine* and others as *not-mine*. I know that everything at all times, everywhere, is but the one cosmic consciousness. These are the secrets of my state of happiness and health. I do not think *I am the body*, even while engaged in physical activity as I know this world-appearance to be illusory and live in it as if fast asleep. I am disturbed neither by prosperity nor by adversity when they are granted to me, as I regard them with equal vision (even as I look upon both my arms as arms). Whatever I do is untainted by desire or the mud of ego-sense; thus I do not lose my head when I am powerful or go begging when I am poor; I do not let hopes and expectations touch me and even when a thing is old and worn out I look upon it with fresh eyes as if it were new. I rejoice with the happy ones and share the grief of the grief-stricken, for I am the friend of all, knowing I belong to none and none belongs to me. I know that I am the world, all the activities in it and its intelligence. This is the secret of my longevity. (VI.1:25)



The infinite consciousness alone exists everywhere at all times. What appears to be is but an appearance. When the appearance is realized as appearance, that which IS, is realized. Either realize that *I am not and these experiences are not mine* or know that *I am everything*: you will be free from the lure of world-appearance. Both these attitudes are good: adopt the one that suits you. You will be freed from attraction and aversion (raga-dvesa).

Whatever there is in the world, in the firmament and in heaven is attained by one who has destroyed the twin forces of attraction and aversion. Whatever the ignorant man does prompted by these forces leads him to instant sorrow. One who has not overcome these forces, even if he is learned in the scriptures, is indeed pitiable and despicable. (VI.1:28)



O Rama, you are thoroughly awakened and you have gained self-knowledge. Remain forever in this exalted state; do not get involved in this world-appearance. This wheel of world-appearance (the wheel of birth and death of all things) has ideas, thoughts or notions for its hub. When these are arrested the world-appearance ceases, too. If one uses his will-force to arrest the wheel, it continues to revolve if the distractions caused by thoughts do not cease. Hence, one should restrain the hub (the thoughts and notions) having resort to supreme self-effort, strength, wisdom and commonsense. What is not achieved by such concerted action is not achieved by any other means. Hence, one should abandon the false dependence on divine intervention which is in fact the creation of the immature childish mind and, with one's intense self-effort, one should gain mastery over the mind.

[Vasistha to Lord Shiva:]

Lord, though by your grace I have reached the state of self-fulfillment, I am eager to know more about one thing. Pray enlighten me. What is the method of worshipping the Lord which destroys all sins and promotes all auspiciousness?

The Lord said:

Do you know who *god* is? God is not Vishnu, Shiva or Brahma; not the wind, the sun or the moon; not the brahmana or the king; nor I nor you; not Lakshmi nor the mind (intellect). God is without form and undivided; that splendour (devanam) which is not made and which has neither beginning nor end is known as god (deva) or Lord Shiva which is pure consciousness. That alone is fit to be worshipped; and that alone is all.

If one is unable to worship this Shiva then he is encouraged to worship the form. The latter yields finite results but the former bestows infinite bliss. He who ignores

the infinite and is devoted to the finite abandons a pleasure-garden and seeks the thorny bush. However, sages sometimes worship a form playfully.

Now for the articles used in the worship: wisdom, self-control and the perception of the self in all beings are the foremost among those articles. The self alone is Lord Shiva who is fit to be worshipped at all times with the flowers of wisdom.

(I asked the Lord: *Pray tell me how this world is transmuted into pure consciousness and also how that pure consciousness appears as the jiva and other things.* The Lord continued:)

Indeed only that cid-akasha (the infinite consciousness), which alone exists even after the cosmic dissolution, exists even now, utterly devoid of objectivity. The concepts and notions that are illumined by the consciousness within itself shine as this creation, on account of the movement of energy within consciousness, precisely as dreams arise during sleep. Otherwise, it is totally impossible for an object of perception to exist outside of the omnipresent infinite consciousness.

Even as the duality experienced in dream is illusory, the duality implied in the creation of the world is illusory. Even as the objects seem to exist and function in the inner world of consciousness in a dream, objects seem to exist and function in the outer world of consciousness during the wakeful state. Nothing really happens in both these states. Even as consciousness alone is the reality in the dream state, consciousness alone is the substance in the wakeful state too. That is the Lord, that is the supreme truth, that you are, that I am and that is all. (VI.1:29)



[Lord Shiva:]

It is the mind alone that is the root-cause of experiencing the world as if it were real; but it cannot be truly considered such a cause since there can be no mind other than pure consciousness. Thus, if it is realized that the perceiving mind itself is unreal, then it is clear that the perceived world is unreal too.

Consciousness does not truly undergo any modification nor does it become impure. The impurity itself is imaginary; imagination is the impurity. When this is realized, the imagination is abandoned and impurity ceases. However, even in those who have realized this, the impurity arises unless the imagination is firmly rejected. By self-effort this imagination can be easily rejected: if one can drop a piece of straw, one can with equal ease also drop the three worlds! What is it that cannot be achieved by one's self-effort?

This infinite consciousness, which is devoid of concepts and extremely subtle, knows itself. In self-forgetfulness this consciousness entertains thoughts and experiences perception, though all this is possible because of the very nature of infinite consciousness: even as one who is asleep is also inwardly awake! (VI.1:31)



[Lord Shiva:]

Then the mind which is pure abandons conjuring up images of objects. It attains a state like deep sleep or the consciousness of homogeneity, thus going beyond the possibility of birth again. It rests in supreme peace. This is the first state.

Now listen to the second state. Consciousness devoid of mind is all-light, free from darkness and beautiful like space. The infinite consciousness frees itself totally from all modification or duality and remains as if in deep sleep or as a figure in uncut marble. It abandons even the factors of time and space and transcends both inertness and motion; it remains as pure being beyond expression. It transcends the three state of consciousness and remains as the fourth or the state of undivided infinite consciousness.

Now comes the third state. This is beyond even what is termed *Brahman, the self*, etc. It is sometimes referred to as *turiya-atita* (beyond the fourth or *turiya* state). It is supreme and ultimate. It defies description, for it is beyond the practices which are described by those who undertake them.

O sage, remain forever in that third state. That is the real worship of the Lord. Then you will be established in that which is beyond what is and what is not. Nothing has been created and there is nothing to vanish. It is beyond the one and the two. It is the eternal, beyond the eternal and the transient; it is pure mass of consciousness. In it there is no question of diversity. It is all, it is supreme blessedness and peace, it is beyond expression. It is purest OM. It is transcendent. It is supreme.

(Valmiki said: *Having said this, the Lord Shiva remained in silent and deep contemplation for some time.*) (VI.1:34)



[Lord Shiva:]

Now listen to the ways in which he is to be worshipped.

First of all, one should abandon the body-idea (the notion that *I am this body*). Meditation alone is true worship. Hence one should constantly worship the Lord of the three worlds by means of meditation. How should one contemplate him? He is pure intelligence, he is as radiant as a hundred thousand suns risen together, he is the light that illumines all lights, he is the inner light, the limitless space is his throat, the firmament is his feet, the directions are his arms, the worlds are the weapons he bears in his hands, the entire universe is hidden in his heart, the gods are hairs on his body, the cosmic potencies are the energies in his body, time is his gate-keeper,

and he has thousands of heads, eyes, ears and arms. He touches all, he tastes all, he hears all, he thinks through all though he is beyond all thinking. He does everything at all times, he bestows whatever one thinks of or desires, he dwells in all, he is the all, he alone is to be sought by all. Thus should one contemplate him.

This Lord is not to be worshipped by material substances but by one's own consciousness. Not by waving of lamps nor lighting incense, nor by offering flowers nor even by offering food or sandalpaste. He is attained without the least effort; he is worshipped by self-realization alone. This is the supreme meditation, this is the supreme worship: the continuous and unbroken awareness of the indwelling presence, inner light or consciousness. While doing whatever one is doing — seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing or talking — one should realize one's essential nature as pure consciousness. Thus does one attain liberation.

Meditation is the offering, meditation is the water offered to the deity to wash his hands and feet, self-knowledge gained through meditation is the flower — indeed all these are directed towards meditation. The self is not realized by any means other than meditation. If one is able to meditate even for thirteen seconds, even if one is ignorant, one attains the merit of giving away a cow in charity. If one does so for one hundred and one seconds, the merit is that of performing a sacred rite. If the duration is twelve minutes, the merit is a thousand fold. If the duration is of a day, one dwells in the highest realm. This is the supreme yoga, this is the supreme kriya (action or service). One who practices this mode of worship is worshipped by the gods and the demons and all other beings. However, this is external worship.

I shall now declare to you the internal worship of the self which is the greatest among all purifiers and which destroys all darkness completely. This is of the nature of perpetual meditation — whether one is walking or standing, whether one is awake or asleep, in and through all of one's actions. One should contemplate this supreme Lord who is seated in the heart and who brings about, as it were, all the modifications within oneself. (VI.1:38)



Equanimity is sweetness itself and this sweetness is beyond the senses and the mind. Whatever is touched by that equanimity instantly becomes sweet, whatever its description or definition may be. That alone is regarded as worship which is performed when one is in a state of equanimity like that of space, when the mind has become utterly quiescent without the least movement of thought, when there is effortless absence of perversity. Established in this state of equanimity, the wise man

should experience infinite expansion within himself while carrying out his natural actions externally without craving or rejection. (VI.1:39)



[Vasistha:]

This world-illusion has arisen because of the movement of thought in the mind; when that ceases the illusion will cease, too, and the mind becomes no-mind. This can also be achieved by the restraint of prana. That is the supreme state. The bliss that is experienced in a state of no-mind, the bliss which is uncaused, is not found even in the highest heaven. In fact, that bliss is inexpressible and indescribable and should not even be called happiness! The mind of the knower of the truth is no-mind: it is pure satva. After living with such no-mind for some time, there arises the state known as turiya-atita (the state beyond the transcendental, or the turiya state). (VI.1:44)



Rama asked: If Brahman does not undergo any modification at all, how does this world-appearance, which is and is not real, arise in it?

Vasistha replied:

True modification, O Rama, is a transformation of a substance into another; like the curdling of milk, in which case the curd cannot once again return to its milk-state. Such is not the case with Brahman which was unmodified before the world-appearance and which regains its unmodified state after the world-appearance. Both in the beginning and in the end, it is unmodified homogeneous consciousness. The momentary and apparent modification in this is but a mild disturbance of consciousness, not a modification at all. In that Brahman there is neither a subject nor an object of consciousness. Whatever a thing is in the beginning and in the end, that alone it is. If it appears to be something else in the middle, that appearance is regarded as unreal. Hence, the self is the self in the beginning and in the end and therefore in the middle, too! It never undergoes any transformation or modification.

Rama asked again: In that self which is pure consciousness, how does this mild disturbance arise?

Vasistha replied:

I am convinced, O Rama, that that infinite consciousness alone is real and that

there is no disturbance at all in its nature. We use words like *Brahman* just for the sake of communication or instruction, not to raise notions of one and two. You, I and all these things are pure Brahman: there is no ignorance at all. (VI.1:49)



Rama said:

This fullness is filled with fullness. Fullness is born from fullness. Fullness fills fullness. In fullness fullness is ever established. However, for the further expansion of awareness, I ask again: pray bear with me. The sense-organs are obviously present in all: yet how is it that the dead person does not experience sensations, though while living he experiences their objects through those organs?

Vasistha continued:

Apart from the pure consciousness there are neither the senses, nor the mind, nor even their objects. It is that consciousness alone which appears as the objects in nature and as the senses in the person. When that consciousness has apparently become the subtle body (puryastaka), it reflects the external objects.

The eternal and infinite consciousness is indeed free of all modifications; but when there arises the notion of *I am* in it, that notion is known as the jiva.

It is that jiva that lives and moves in this body. When the notion of *I* arises (ahambhavana), it is known as egosense (ahamkara). When there are thoughts (manana), it is known as mind (manas). When there is awareness (bodha), it is intelligence (buddhi). When seen (drs) by the individual soul (indra) it is known as the sense (indriya). When the notion of body prevails it appears to be body; when the notion of object prevails it appears to be the diverse objects. However, through the persistence of these notions, the subtle personality condenses into material substantiality. The same consciousness thereafter thinks *I am the body, I am the tree*, etc. Thus self-deluded it rises, until it attains a pure birth and is spiritually awakened. Then by being devoted to the truth, it attains self-knowledge. (VI.1:50)



The Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna:

Brahman is empty within and empty without (undifferentiated and homogeneous). It is not an object of observation, nor is it different from the observer. The world-appearance arises in it as an infinitesimal part of it. Because the *world* is in fact only

an appearance, it is in reality emptiness, void and unreal. Mysteriously, there arises in all this a feeling *I* which is infinitesimal compared even to the world-appearance! The infinite is undivided by any of this, yet it appears to be divided on account of this *I*-feeling. Even as the *I* is non-different from the infinite consciousness, even so material objects like a pot and living beings like a monkey are non-different from one another. Who would like to hang on to this *I*? Why not cling to the infinite consciousness, which alone appears as all this by its own mysterious energy? Such an understanding, and the consequent absence of craving for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's natural activities, is known as *renunciation* (*sanyasa*). Renunciation is renunciation of hopes and aspirations. When one feels the presence of the Lord in all appearances and modifications and when one abandons all delusion of duality, that is regarded as surrender to the Lord, or offering of self and all to the Lord.

The inner light that shines as pure experiencing in all beings, that alone is the self which is indicated by the word *I*: this is for certain. (VI.1:53)



[Vasistha:]

The sage who dwells even for the twinkling of an eye in that pure being, which is of the nature of the illimitable and infinite consciousness and which is also known as the supreme self, is not again afflicted even though he continues to engage himself in the activities of this world. (VI.1:60)



It is wrong perception that sees a bracelet in gold. The mere appearance becomes the cause for such wrong perception. This *Maya* (unreal appearance) is but a figure of speech, the appearance has the same relation to the supreme self that a wave has to the ocean. When one sees this truth, the appearance ceases to be a delusion. It is on account of ignorance that this long-dream world-appearance appears to be real: thus does the *jiva* come into being. But when the truth is realized, it is seen that all this is the self.

Whatever be the notion that one entertains, it is the self alone that appears as that notion. This universe is the result of the notions thus entertained by countless such individuals. The original notion entertained by one attains the purity of consciousness similar to that of *Brahma*, one sees all this as a long dream. (VI.1:67)



They who are fully awakened and who are constantly engaged in samadhi and who are thoroughly enlightened are known as samkhya-yogis. They who have reached the state of bodiless consciousness through pranayama, etc., are known as yoga-yogis. Indeed, the two are essentially the same. The cause of this world-appearance and bondage is indeed the mind. Both these paths lead to the cessation of the mind. Hence, by the devoted and dedicated practice of either the cessation of the movement of prana or the cessation of thought, liberation is attained. This is the essence of all scriptures dealing with liberation.

Rama asked:

O sage, if the cessation of the movement of prana is liberation, then death is liberation! And all people attain liberation at death!

Vasistha replied:

O Rama, when prana is about to leave the body it already makes contact with those elements with which the next one is to be fashioned. These elements are indeed the crystallization of the vasanas (psychological conditioning, memory-store, past impressions and predisposition) of the jiva, the reason why the jiva clings to those elements. When the prana leaves the body it takes with it all the vasanas of the jiva.

Not indeed until these vasanas have been destroyed will the mind become no-mind. The mind does not abandon the life-force till self-knowledge arises. By self-knowledge the vasanas are destroyed and thus the mind, too; it is then that the prana does not move. That indeed is the supreme peace. It is by self-knowledge that the unreality of the concepts concerning worldly objects is realized. This puts an end to vasanas and to the link between the mind and the life-force. Vasanas constitute mind. Mind is the aggregate of the vasanas and naught else; if the latter cease, that itself is the supreme state. Knowledge is the knowledge of the reality. Vicara or inquiry itself is knowledge.

Total dedication to one thing, restraint of prana and the cessation of the mind — if one of these three is perfected, one attains the supreme state. The life-force and the mind are closely related like a flower and its fragrance, or sesame seed and oil. Hence, if the movement of thought in the mind ceases, the movement of prana ceases, too. If the total mind is one-pointedly devoted to a single truth, the movement of mind and therefore of life-force ceases. The best method is by inquiring into the nature of the self which is infinite. Your mind will be completely absorbed. Then both the mind and the inquiry will cease. Remain firmly established in what remains after that.

When the mind does not crave for pleasure it is absorbed into the self, along with the life-force. Ignorance is non-existence: self-knowledge is the supreme state! Mind

alone is ignorance when it appears to be a reality; the realization of its non-existence is the supreme state. If the mind remains absorbed even for a quarter of an hour it undergoes a complete change, for it tastes the supreme state of self-knowledge and will not abandon it. Nay, even if the mind has tasted it for a second, it does not return to this-worldly state. The very seeds of samsara (world-appearance or cycle of birth and death) are fried. With them, ignorance is dispelled and the vasanas are utterly pacified; one who has reached this is rooted in satva (truth). He beholds the inner light and rests in supreme peace. (VI.1:69)



Rama, expand the mind with the mind. Remain at peace within your self, seeing the one infinite being in all. Like the king Bhagiratha you will achieve the impossible if you are able to remain firm in your knowledge of the truth and if you engage yourself in appropriate action in a life characterized by effortless experiencing of the natural course of events. (VI.1:73)



He (King Bhagiratha) approached his guru Tritala and prayed, *Lord, how can one put an end to this sorrow and to old age, death and delusion which contribute to repeated birth here?*

Tritala said:

Sorrow ceases, all the bondages are rent asunder and doubts are dispelled when one is fully established in the equanimity of the self for a long time, when the perception of division has ceased and when there is the experience of fullness through the knowledge of that which is to be known. What is to be known? It is the self which is pure and which is of the nature of pure consciousness which is omnipresent and eternal.

Bhagiratha asked:

I know that the self alone is real and the body, etc., are not real. But how is it that it is not perfectly clear to me?

Tritala said:

Such intellectual knowledge is not knowledge! Unattachment to wife, son and house, equanimity in pleasure and pain, love of solitude, being firmly established in self-knowledge — this is knowledge, all else is ignorance! Only when the egosense is thinned out does this self-knowledge arise.

Bhagiratha asked:

Since this egosense is firmly established in this body, how can it be uprooted?

Tritala replied:

By self-effort and by resolutely turning away from the pursuit of pleasure. And by the resolute breaking down of the prison-house of shame (false dignity), etc. If you abandon all this and remain firm, the egosense will vanish and you will realize that you are the supreme being. (VI.1:74)



Even so, Rama, remain in a state of equanimity like king Bhagiratha. And, like Shikhidhvaja, having renounced everything, remain unmoved. I shall narrate to you the story of Shikhidhvaja. Pray, listen. Once there were two lovers who were re-born in a later age on account of their divine love for each other.

They shared their knowledge and their wisdom with each other so that both of them became highly learned in all branches of knowledge. *What is there in this world having attained which the mind is never again subjected to sorrow?* Reflecting thus, the royal couple turned their attention to the study of spiritual texts.

They came to the conclusion that self-knowledge alone can enable one to overcome sorrow. They devoted themselves to self-knowledge with their heart and soul. They resorted to the company of sages of self-knowledge and adored them. They engaged themselves constantly in discussing self-knowledge and in promoting self-knowledge in each other.

Lo and behold! I have realized that it is the self which is pure consciousness that dwells as the jiva because the consciousness becomes aware of itself as its own object. This object is insentient and unreal; and because the self identifies itself with this object it apparently clothes itself with insentience, having apparently (but not in truth) abandoned its essential nature as consciousness. For, such is the nature of consciousness: whatever it conceives itself to be, whether real or imaginary, that it becomes, apparently having abandoned its own nature. Thus, though the self is pure consciousness, it imagines itself to be insentient and unreal on account of its perception of objects.

Contemplating thus for a considerable time, Chudala became enlightened.

It is this consciousness that is known by various names — Brahman, supreme self, etc. In it there is no division into subject-object and their relation (knowledge). Consciousness becomes conscious of its own consciousness; it cannot be realized otherwise (as an object of consciousness). It is this consciousness alone that is manifest as the mind, intellect and the senses. This world-appearance, too, is but consciousness

apart from which nothing is. Consciousness does not undergo any change: the only apparent change is the illusory appearance, which is illusory and therefore not real! In an imaginary ocean, imaginary waves arise. The mind-stuff itself is the ocean and the waves are of the mind-stuff, too. Even so the world-appearance arises in consciousness and is therefore non-different from it.

I am free from all delusion. I am at peace. All these gods, demons and numerous beings are essentially unmade, for they are non-different from the consciousness. The appearance is illusory, even as soldiers made of clay are clay, not soldiers.

The seer (subject) and the seen (object) are in reality the one pure consciousness. How has this delusion which gives rise to concepts like “This is oneness” and “This is duality” come into being? In whom does that delusion exist? Whose is it? I rest in nirvana (liberation or enlightenment), without the least mental agitation, having realized that all that is (whether sentient or insentient) is pure consciousness. There is no “this” nor “I” nor “the other”; there is no being nor non-being. All this is peace. Having thus realized, Chudala rested in supreme peace. (VI.1:77)



[Vasistha:]

There is but one consciousness which is pure, invisible, the subtlest of the subtle, tranquil, which is neither the world nor its activities. It is aware of itself: hence this jiva-hood arises. This jiva perceives this unreal body as real. But when the jiva perceives it in the light of self-knowledge, this delusion vanishes, and the body also becomes utterly tranquil. Then the jiva does not perceive the body. The confusion of the body with the self is the greatest delusion, which the light of the sun cannot dispel.

When the body is considered real, it becomes a real body. When it is perceived with the knowledge that it is unreal, it is merged in space. Whatever notion is firmly held concerning the body, that it becomes.

Rama asked:

If even such a great siddha-yogini as Chudala could not bring about the spiritual awakening and the enlightenment of king Shikhidhvaja, how does one attain enlightenment at all?

Vasistha said:

The instruction of a disciple by a preceptor is but a tradition: the cause of enlightenment is but the purity of the disciple's consciousness. (VI.1:82)



Shikhidhvaja prayed:

Holy sir, please tell me what that is which should be renounced.

The Brahmana (Queen Chudala) said:

O noble one! It is the mind (which also goes by the names *jiva*, *prana*, etc.) or the chitta, which is neither inert nor non-inert and is in a state of confusion which is the *all*. It is this chitta (mind) which is confusion, it is the human being, it is the world, it is all. It is the seed for the kingdom, for the body, wife and all the rest of it. When this seed is abandoned there is total renunciation of all that is in the present and even in the future!

All these — good and evil, kingdom and forest — cause distress in the heart of one who is endowed with the chitta, and great joy in one who is mindless. Just as the tree is agitated by the wind, this body is agitated by the mind. The diverse experiences of beings (old age, death, birth and so on) and also the firmness of the holy sages — all these are verily the modifications of the mind. It is this mind alone which is referred to variously as buddhi, the cosmos, egosense, prana, etc. Hence, its abandonment alone is total renunciation. Once it is abandoned, the truth is experienced at once. All notions of unity and diversity come to an end, there is peace. (VI.1:93)

Kumbha (Queen Chudala) said:

When such pure awareness arises, all notions subside. There is perfection. In the pure awareness, perfection or the Lord, there is neither causality nor the resultant creation or objects. In the absence of objects, there is no experience nor its concomitant egosense. When the egosense is non-existent, where is samsara (the cycle of birth and death)? When thus samsara does not exist, the supreme being alone remains. In it the universe, without the intervention of the mind and therefore without the notion of a universe, he alone sees the truth. Such a vision is known as nirvana. When this truth is clearly realized and when the duality of knowledge and known is discarded, what remains is supreme peace which is indescribable and inexpressible. (VI.1:99)



Vasistha to Rama:

Bhrngisa was a man of ordinary or traditional self-knowledge. He approached Lord Shiva and asked: “Lord, I am deluded by this world-appearance. Pray, tell me the attitude equipped with which I shall be freed from this delusion.”

Lord Shiva replied:

Give up all your doubts. Resort to moral courage. Be a mahabhoktta (great enjoyer of delight), mahakarta (great doer of actions) and mahatyagi (perfect renouncer).

He is a mahakarta who is freed of doubts and performs appropriate actions in natural situations whether they be regarded as dharma or adharma, without being swayed by likes and dislikes, by success and failure, without egosense or jealousy, remaining with his mind in a state of silence and purity. He is unattached to anything but remains as a witness of everything, without selfish desires or motives, without excitement or exultation but with a mind at peace, without sorrow or grief, indifferent to action and inaction, whose very nature is peace and equilibrium or equanimity which is sustained in all situations (in the birth, existence or annihilation or all things).

He is a mahabhoktta who does not hate anything nor long for anything but enjoys all natural experiences, who does not cling to nor renounce anything even while engaged in actions, who does not experience though experiencing, who witnesses the world-play unaffected by it. His heart is not affected by pleasure and pain that arise in the course of life and the changes that cause confusion, and he regards with delight old age and death, sovereignty and poverty and even great calamities and fortunes. His very nature is non-violent and virtuous, and he enjoys what is sweet and what is bitter with equal relish, without making an arbitrary distinction *This is enjoyable* and *This is not*.

He is a mahatyagi who has banished from his mind concepts like dharma and adharma, pain and pleasure, birth and death, all desires, all doubts, all convictions, who sees the falsity in the experience of pain by his body, mind, etc., who has realized *I have no body, no birth, no right and no wrong*, who has completely abandoned from his heart the notion of world-appearance.

Vasistha continued:

Thus did lord Shiva instruct Bhrngisa who then became enlightened. Adopt this attitude, O Rama, and transcend sorrow.

Rama asked:

Lord, you know all the truths. When the egosense is dissolved in the mind, by what signs does one recognize the nature of satva?

Vasistha said:

Such a mind, O Rama, is untouched by sins like greed and delusion even under the worst of provocation. Virtues like delight (in the prosperity of others) do not leave the person whose egosense has been dissolved. The knots of mental conditioning and tendencies are cut asunder. Anger is greatly attenuated and delusion becomes ineffective. Desire becomes powerless. Greed flees. The senses function on an even keel, neither getting excited nor depressed. Even if pleasure and pain are reflected on his face, they do not agitate the mind which regards them all as insignificant. The heart rests in equanimity.

The enlightened man who is endowed with all these virtues effortlessly and naturally wears the body. Being and non-being (like prosperity and adversity) when they follow each other creating diverse and even great contradictions, do not generate joy and sorrow in the holy ones.

Woe unto him who does not tread this path to self-knowledge which is within reach if he directs his intelligence properly. The means for crossing this ocean of samsara (world-appearance or the cycle of birth and death) and for the attainment of supreme peace are inquiry into the nature of the self (Who am I?) and of the world (what is the world?) and of the truth (What is truth?). (VI.1:115)



The Lord sports in this world-appearance and then withdraws it into himself. The power or energy that creates and brings about bondage is also the power or the energy that dissolves creation and liberates. Just as the tree pervades all its parts and leaves, this infinite consciousness pervades the entire universe. Alas, the ignorant person does not realize it though it is in every cell of his being. He who sees that the self alone is all enjoys bliss.

One should gain this understanding through study of scriptures and company of holy ones. This is the first step. Reflection or inquiry is the second. Non-attachment or psychological freedom is the third. The fourth is snapping of the bonds of vasanas (conditioning and tendencies). The bliss that is derived from pure awareness is the fifth; in it the liberated sage lives as if in half-sleep. Self-knowledge is the sixth in which the sage is immersed in a mass of bliss and lives as if in deep sleep. The seventh state is perfect equanimity and purity. Beyond this (still the seventh state) is the turiyatita which is beyond description. (VI.1:119)



The Lord assumes individuality (jiva). The elements arise in the cosmos without any reason whatsoever. The individual which emanated from the Lord experiences the elements (objects) as if they were created by him. Thus do all jivas arise and function for no obvious reason. But from then on, their own individual actions become the causes for their subsequent experience of pleasure and pain. The limitation of one's own understanding is the cause for the individual's actions.

Yoga Vasistha

One's limited understanding and one's own notions are the cause of bondage, and liberation is their absence. Hence abandon all notions (sankalpa). If you are attracted by anything here, you are bound; if you are not attracted at all you are free. Whatever you do and whatever you enjoy, you do not really do, nor do you enjoy. Know this and be free. (VI.1:123)



Only as long as one believes in objective existence does desire arise! This alone is samsara: the feeling *This is*. Its cessation is liberation (moksha). This is the essence of jnana or wisdom. Recognition of *objects* gives rise to desire. Non-recognition of objects ends desire. When desire ends, the jiva drops its self-limitation. The great man therefore abandons all thoughts concerning what has been experienced and what has not been experienced. I declare with uplifted arms that the thought-free, notion-less state is the best. It is infinitely superior to the sovereignty of the world. Non-thinking is known as yoga. Remaining in that state, perform appropriate actions or do nothing! As long as thoughts of *I* and *mine* persist, sorrow does not cease. When such thoughts cease, sorrow ceases. Knowing this, do as you please.

Valmiki said to Bharadvaja:

Having heard this quintessence of the highest wisdom and having been overwhelmed by shakti-pata, Rama remained immersed in the ocean of bliss for a while. He had ceased to ask questions, request answers and endeavor to understand them. He had become established in the highest state of self-knowledge.

Bharadvaja asked:

O preceptor! It is indeed a delight to hear that thus Rama attained the supreme state. But how is it possible for us who are foolish and ignorant and who are of sinful disposition to attain that state which is difficult even for gods like Brahma to reach?

Valmiki said:

I have narrated to you in full the dialogue between Rama and Vasistha. Consider it well. For that is also my instruction to you.

This delusion continues till you reach the feet of the enlightened sages and gain the right knowledge from them. Dear one, that which did not exist in the beginning and will not exist in the end does not exist even now. This world-appearance is like a dream. The sole reality in which it appears and disappears is the infinite consciousness. In the ocean of samsara or ignorance there arises the notion of *I*, on account of the beginningless potential of self-limitation. Thereupon, the movement of thought generates other notions like *mine-ness*, *attraction* and *repulsion*, etc. Once these notions strike root in one's consciousness, one inevitably falls a prey to endless calamities and sorrow.

Dive deep into the inner peace, not in the sea of diversity. Who lives, who is dead, who has come — why do you get lost in such false notions? When the one self alone is the reality, where is room for *another*? The theory that Brahman appears as the world (just as rope appears as snake) is meant only for the entertainment of the childish and ignorant. The enlightened ones rest forever in the truth which does not even appear to be different.

Ignorant people who dislike seclusion are sunk in sorrow and occasionally they may smile. The knowers of the truth on the other hand are happy and smiling at all times. The truth or the self is subtle and hence it appears to be veiled by ignorance. But even if you believe in the atomic substantiality of the world, the self does not go away. Why then do you grieve? The unreal (ignorance, etc.) does not come into being at any time, nor does the reality or the self ever cease to be.

Be still and witness this cosmic dance! They who are devoted to the gods, to the holy brahmanas and to the guru, and who adhere to the tenets of the scriptures, earn the grace of the supreme Lord.

O Bharadvaja, listen to what I am going to say. By merely listening to it you will never again drown in this samsara.

One should be at peace within with the mind under control, having abandoned forbidden and selfish actions and also pleasures which arise from sense-contacts. One should endow oneself with faith. He should then sit on a soft seat in a comfortable posture conducive to equilibrium. He should then restrain the activities of the mind and the senses. He should then repeat OM till the mind gains perfect peace.

Then do pranayama for the purification of the mind, etc. Gently and gradually withdraw the senses from their contact with the external objects. Investigate that method by which you know the source of the body, the senses, the mind, and the buddhi (intelligence) and let them return to their source. First rest in the cosmic manifest being (virat). After this rest in the unmanifest and then in the supreme cause of all. (VI.1:126)



Bharadvaja said:

I am that supreme Brahman which is eternal, omnipresent, pure, peaceful, indivisible and free from motion, which is devoid of gathering and scattering but whose thoughts materialize, which is free from merit and demerit, which is the source of this universe, and which is the supreme light, one without a second. Thus should one contemplate. Thus does the mind cease to be agitated. When the movement of the mind has ceased the self shines by its own light. In that light all sorrow comes to an end and

there is the bliss which the self experiences in itself. There is direct awareness of the truth, *There is none but the self*.

Valmiki said:

Seeing that Rama had become totally absorbed in the self, Visvamitra said to the sage Vasistha: O son of the Creator, O holy one, you are indeed great. You have proved that you are the guru by this shaki-pata (direct transmission of spiritual energy). He is a guru who is able to give rise to god-consciousness in the disciple by a look, by a touch, by verbal communication or by grace. (VI.1:128)



Rama asked:

O sage, kindly tell me the form, the nature, the location of the jiva and its relation to the supreme self.

Vasistha replied:

O Rama, it is the infinite consciousness that is known as the jiva when it becomes aware of itself as the object on account of the notion it entertains of itself. It is also known as chit or pure consciousness. This jiva is neither a subatomic particle, nor is it gross and physical, nor void nor anything else. The omnipresent pure consciousness is known as jiva when it experiences its own being. It is more minute than an atom and larger than the largest. It is all and it is pure consciousness. That is known as the jiva by the wise. Whatever object is experienced here is but its own reflection that it experiences then and there. Such experiencing is the very nature of the jiva, even as motion is the nature of wind. When such experiencing ceases, the jiva becomes Brahman.

On account of its nature as consciousness, when the jiva entertains the notion of egosense, it builds time, space, motion and substance and function in and through the body. It then perceives all these unrealities within itself as if they were real, even as a person dreams of his own death. Forgetting its true nature, it then identifies itself with its own false notions. It assumes an accidental relationship with the five senses and experiences their function as if such experience were its own. It shines as the purusha (indwelling presence) and virat (cosmic person), endowed with these five faculties. This is still the subtle and mental being and this is the first emanation from the supreme being. (VI.2:19)



Rama said:

I wish to hear from you once again the truth concerning karma or what is known as the divine will (fate).

Vasistha replied:

Divine will and karma are but concepts; the truth is that they are movements in consciousness. When there is such movement, the world-appearance arises; when the movement ceases, the world-appearance also ceases. There is not the least distinction between the movement and consciousness. There is not the least distinction between a person and his karma (action). A creature is known by its characteristic action and such action reveals the character of the creature: they are inseparable. Hence, the words or concepts *divine*, *action* and *person* are but expression which denote movement in consciousness.

This movement in consciousness, along with the self-limitation in consciousness, serves as the seed for everything, but there is no cause or seed for the movement in consciousness. There is no distinction between the seed and the sprout: therefore all this (body, etc.) is but movement in consciousness. This movement is obviously omnipotent and hence is able to manifest the gods and the demons and other creatures, mobile and immobile, sentient and insentient. They who assert that a person and his actions (karma) are different and distinct are animals in human semblance: salutations to them. (VI.2:27)



The body is the result of the permutation and combination of the five elements and is inert. Even the mind, the intellect and the egosense are also of the same elements. When one is able to abandon the inert materiality of the mind, the intellect and the egosense, one attains the pure unconditioned being. This is liberation.

The *object* arises in the *subject* but has no independent existence. Hence, even the *conditioned state or being* is but a notion: it is not real. Therefore, it vanishes when inquired into. It is best to reject the notion and stop it from arising again by never thinking of it again. There is neither the subject (seer) nor an experiencer, neither the real nor the unreal. There is the supreme peace alone. One who is established in this peace is free from likes and dislikes though engaged in activity. Or he may not engage himself in activity. When the mind is freed of all notions that limit the unconditioned consciousness, how does the sage act in a dualistic way? Free from love, hate and fear, he exists as the immutable self firmly established in the supreme peace.

When there is movement in the infinite consciousness, the notions of *I* and *the world* arise. These in themselves are harmless if one realizes that in fact they are non-different from the self or the infinite consciousness. But, when they are considered

real in themselves and the world is perceived as real then there is great misfortune. (VI.2:31)



The total abandonment of all notions or ideas is liberation and such an abandonment is possible when the pursuit of pleasure is abandoned. Notions and ideas gradually cease to arise and to expand in one who resolutely refrains from associating words with meanings, in his own mind — whether these words are uttered by others or they arise in one's own mind.

The abandonment of egosense is the cessation of ignorance; this and nothing else is liberation. The fullness of perfection (nirvana) begins with the effectiveness of self-discipline or the abandonment of the pursuit of pleasure. The life stream of the knower of truth flows in harmony, while the life stream of the ignorant is full of whirlpools. (VI.2:33)



That is known as the supreme state in which no desire arises. The sage who is free from desire functions here as if he were made of wood. He experiences pure void within and pure void without; to him the world is like an empty reed. He who is not enamored of this world and whose heart delights in the cosmic being alone, is at peace and he has overcome this ocean of samsara. Having overcome desire and abandoned latent tendencies or mental conditioning, speak what is to be spoken, touch what is to be touched, taste diverse flavors, see diverse scenes, and smell diverse scents.

It is only by thus understanding the essencelessness of the objects of experience that one becomes free from the disease of desire. The arising of desire is sorrow and the cessation of desire is supreme joy; there is no sorrow and no joy comparable to them even in hell and in heaven. The mind is desire and the cessation of desire is moksha (liberation): this is the essence of all scriptures. If this desire cannot be overcome by self-effort, then surely it is powerful and no other remedy is of any use! If you cannot overcome desire completely, then deal with it step by step. The wayfarer does not despair at the sight of the long road ahead but takes one step at a time. Desire alone is samsara or the world-appearance which is an extension or projection of one's desire; its non-cognition is liberation. Hence, one should diligently strive to overcome desire; all else is vain. Why does one vainly study the scriptures and

hear the instructions of the preceptors? There is no samadhi without the cessation of desire! If one finds that it is impossible to overcome desire by his own wisdom, then of what use is the study of scriptures or the instruction of the preceptor? Once this restlessness caused by desire is restrained, then very little effort is needed to attain self-knowledge. Hence, let everyone strive by every means to overcome desire which is the seed for birth, old age and death. With the arising of desire, bondage arises; and with the cessation of desire, bondage ceases. Let, therefore, the seed of desire be burnt in one's own heart by the fire of peace, equanimity and self-control. (VI.2:36)



Consciousness sees in itself its own self as if it were its own object. Though creation is regarded as twofold — the creation by Brahma and the creation by one's mind — they are essentially the same because both of them spring from the self or infinite consciousness. It is the awareness inherent in consciousness that makes this notion of creation appear to be outside of consciousness. Hence, we see no difference between subjective idealism and absolute idealism. (VI.2:38)



He in whom the veil of ignorance has been rent asunder and in whom there is no desire shines with the light of pure intelligence. All his doubts are at rest and he illumines all around him. He who comes into contact with him who is free from doubt and who is independent (free from all dependence), is also purified and illuminated.

Real peace is attained when one does not apprehend egosense and all the rest of its retinue, including sorrow. In deep sleep there are no dreams; and the state of deep sleep is not experienced during dreams. Even so, the apprehension of egosense, sorrow (born of the notion of world-appearance) and peace (born of nirvana) do not exist at the same time. All these are but notions: in truth, there is neither creation nor nirvana, neither sleep nor dreams. When all these are rejected there is real peace.

Confusion or delusion is unreal and the unreal does not exist. That which is not found on investigation does not exist. What is realized on investigation is one's true nature which alone exists and there is no diversity in it. When one moves away from one's real nature there is great sorrow; when one rests in the self there is great peace and self-control. (VI.2:39)



When one is spiritually awakened and when one lives with his wakeful state resembling deep sleep (free from psychological distress), the state in which he is, is known as svabhava (self-nature) and this state leads one to liberation. One who is established in Brahman and who does not see a distinction between Brahman and the *world* lives in this world, too, without creating a division between subject, object and predicate and therefore without a sense of doership. In his eyes everything appears as it is and there is neither unity nor diversity.

An imaginary city is imagination, not a city. This world-appearance is appearance, not the world. The reality is infinite consciousness or Brahman. (VI.2:41)



The self which is the Lord immediately confers moksha or final liberation when worshipped with inquiry into the nature of the self, with self-control and satsanga (company of the wise).

When the unreality of the objects is understood and it is realized that consciousness is not the object of knowledge, then there is enlightenment which is beyond description. (VI.2:42)



I shall now describe the tree known as samadhana (equanimity) which grows in the forest known as the heart of the wise.

Its seed is a turning away from *the world*, whether this is caused naturally or otherwise by the experience of sorrow. Mind is a field. It is ploughed by right action, it is watered day and night by right feeling, it is nourished by the practice of pranayama. On this field known as the mind the seed known as samadhi (turning away from the world) falls of its own accord when one is alone in the forest known as wisdom. The wise man should endeavor constantly to keep this seed of meditation watered and nourished by intelligent methods.

One should seek the company of the wise who are one's own real well-wishers and who are pure and friendly. Then one should water the seed of samadhi or meditation by means of hearing, reflecting on and contemplating the scriptures which bring

about total inner emptiness and which are full of wisdom, pure and cool like nectar. Being aware of the precious seed of meditation or samadhi that has fallen in the field of one's mind, the wise man should carefully cherish and nourish it by means of austerities, charity, etc.

When this seed begins to sprout, it should be further protected by peace and contentment. At the same time, one should guard it against the birds of desire, attachment to family, pride, greed, etc., with the help of contentment. With the broom of right and loving action the dirt of rajasic restlessness must be swept away, whereas the darkness of tamasic ignorance must be driven away by the light of right understanding.

The lightning known as pride of wealth and the thunderstorm known as pursuit of pleasure strike the field and devastate it. These should be prevented with the trident of magnanimity, compassion, japa, austerity, self-control and contemplation of the significance of the pranava (OM).

If it is thus protected, this seed grows into wisdom. With it the entire field of the mind shines beautifully. The sprout grows two leaves. One is known as study of scriptures and the other is satsanga (company of the men of wisdom). Soon it will grow the bark known as contentment with the sap known as dispassion or uncoloredness of mind. Fed by the rain of scriptural wisdom, it will soon grow into a tree. Then it is not easily swayed even if it is shaken by the monkeys known as raga-dvesha (attraction and aversion). Then there arise in it the branches known as pure knowledge which reach out far and wide. Clarity of vision, truthfulness, courage, unclouded understanding, equanimity, peace, friendliness, compassion, fame, etc., are its other branches that arise when one is fully established in dhyana or meditation. (VI.2:44)



The ignorant person cannot meditate: nor is it desirable for him to do so. The enlightened person is already established in the self! He is an enlightened person who is totally disinterested in the objects of perception, but this is not possible for an ignorant person. When the awareness of the object is seen as the pure consciousness which is eternal, it is known as samadhana, the state of equanimity. When the subject and the object merge, the mind is said to be in the state of samadhana. Resting in the self implies the disinterestedness of the self in the objects. On the other hand, ignorance is the movement of the self towards the objects. Surely such movement takes place only in the ignorant: no one who has tasted nectar is interested in bitter things. Hence, in the case of the wise, meditation becomes natural and effortless.

When there is no craving, the self is never abandoned. Or, when the mind expands to include the entire universe, again, the self is not abandoned. This much is certain: until one attains self-knowledge, there is need to strive for samadhi. He who is established in samadhi is Brahman in human form. Salutations to him.

When there is disinterestedness in the objects, not even the gods can disturb one's meditation. Hence, one should cultivate firm meditation (vajra-dhyanam). The means to this are (1) scriptures, (2) company of holy ones and (3) meditation. Ignorance is not dispelled by half-knowledge, even as there is no relief from cold when one sits near a painting of fire. The ignorant sees the world as a physical reality, the wise as consciousness. To the wise there is neither egosense nor the world. His vision of the world is indescribably wonderful. To the ignorant the world is one of dry wood and stone. One who is enlightened sees the world as one self; the ignorant does not see it as the one self. The ignorant engages himself in endless arguments. The enlightened is friendly with all. Turiya or samadhi is the natural state which is what exists in and through the wakeful, dream and sleep states. Conditioning alone is the mind, which ceases when inquired into. (VI.2:45)



He who is not swayed by craving for pleasure is known as perfectly enlightened (sambuddha). Such perfect enlightenment arises from complete turning away from the pursuit of pleasure. He who rests in the self does not experience craving at all. Desire for pleasure-experiences only arises when there is movement away from the self. At the conclusion of the study of scripture, japa, etc., one enters into samadhi; after the practice of samadhi, one should study, do japa etc. O Rama, rest in the state of nirvana at all times. (VI.2:46)



Wealth is the source of endless misfortune, prosperity is perpetual adversity, enjoyment of pleasure is enduring disease. All these are misunderstood by the perverse intellect. In this world contentment alone is the best medicine, the best tonic and the greatest good fortune. The contented heart is ready for enlightenment. First turn away from worldliness, then resort to satsanga, inquire into the truth of the scriptures and cultivate disinterestedness in pleasure and you will attain the supreme truth. (VI.2:47)



When the mind is established in dispassion and in holy company, and when through the study of the scriptures there is disinterestedness in the pursuit of pleasure, one does not long for wealth and treats even the wealth that one has as dry dung. He treats his relatives and friends as co-pilgrims and serves them appropriately at the proper times. He is not attached to seclusion, gardens, holy places or his own home, to fun and frolic with friends or scriptural discussions, and he does not spend too much time in any of these.

He rests in the supreme state. The supreme state is that which is. Division in it is created by ignorance and this ignorance is false and non-existent! He who is firmly established in the self and who is undisturbed like a sculpted figure, is not swayed by sense-objects. *I* and *the world* time and space, knowledge or void — these, though they may continue to be, are not experienced by the knower of truth. One should salute that sun in human form whose personality is devoid of rajas (restless action or impurity), who has transcended even satva or purity and in whom the darkness of ignorance has no place at all. The state of one who has transcended all division and whose mind has become no-mind is beyond description. Adored by him day and night, the Lord bestows upon him the supreme state of nirvana.

The Lord is neither far nor inaccessible. One's own illuminated self is the Lord. (VI.2:48)



The world is not material; the void is not seen. The mind has come to naught. What remains is the truth, indescribable not non-being. The intellect is baffled by conflicting statements, but when the truth is investigated by proper methods, it is realized. He whose intelligence is awakened is known as the knower of truth. He is established in non-dual consciousness and he does not perceive the world as *the world*.

The world-appearance arises only when the infinite consciousness sees itself as an object: it were better that this did not happen. But once this has arisen, it is externalized and materialized. The awareness of the matter is the mind and the mind binds itself to the body. But all these are but notions and verbal descriptions and these distinctions are notional and imaginary. The self which is consciousness does not ever become an object or material. When one is established in self-knowledge even *consciousness* and *unconsciousness* become meaningless words. (VI.2:49)



Rama asked:

Consciousness is pure and the cosmic person is but a notion. How does this cosmic person or Brahma come to acquire limbs like earth, heaven and the netherworld?

Vasistha continued:

In the beginning, O Rama, there was but pure consciousness which could not be said to be either existence or non-existence. Within itself it became aware of itself as its object of awareness. Without abandoning its position as the subject it seems also to become the object. That is the jiva from which the mind, etc., arises. However, all these are non-different from pure consciousness.

When the mind which is also pure consciousness thinks *I am space*, it experiences space, though such space is non-existent. The self or pure consciousness is void and immaterial. as long as there is the notion of the physical universe, consciousness experiences it as if it were real; when it so wills it, it winds up this creation which then comes to an end.

Vasana or psychological conditioning, which gives rise to notions and to experiences of all kinds, ceases to be when the vision of the truth or the understanding of the reality arises. There is egolessness and therefore oneness: liberation or moksha alone remains after that.

This is the nature of Brahma. This is how the world exists as the body of Brahma, the cosmic person. The notion that arises in that cosmic person appears to be this universe. It is pure void; in fact, there is no such thing as the world nor what can be regarded as *you* or *I*. In pure and indivisible consciousness what is the world, how and by whom is it created and with what materials or co-operating causes? It appears but it is no more than an illusory appearance. It is neither one with the infinite consciousness nor different from it. There is neither unity nor diversity. Infinite, indivisible consciousness alone is the reality. Hence, live free from all conditioning, acting spontaneously and appropriately in each situation. (VI.2:72)



Rama asked:

Who is this Rudra and what are his five faces, ten hands, etc.?

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, he is known as Rudra and he is the egosense. He is devoted to the disturbance of the equilibrium. His form is pure space or void. He is of the form of space and therefore his color is like that of space. Since he is pure, indivisible (like

space) consciousness, he is known as the space-self (akasha-atma). Since he is the self of all and is omnipresent, he is known as the great self or the supreme self. The five senses (of knowledge) are his faces. The five organs of action and their five fields are his ten arms.

Only when the infinite consciousness becomes aware of itself does this form become manifest. Again, this form as the Rudra is but a small particle, as it were, of the infinite consciousness and hence does not exist as such in reality. The form is but an illusory perception.

He exists as the unfoldment or movement in chidakasha (infinite consciousness) and as air in both the space in creation and in living beings (as the life-breath). In course of time, when all his movements come to an end, he attains supreme equilibrium. The three gunas (satva, rajas and tamas), the three periods of time (past, present and future), the three inner instruments (chitta, buddhi and ahamkara), the three aspects of AUM and the three vedas are the three eyes of Rudra. The trident implies that he holds the three worlds in his hands. Since he is attained by satva or goodness and his very existence is for the good of all, he is known as Shiva. He then attains to the state of supreme peace and is therefore known as Krishna. He himself creates (as kalpana, imagination) the whole universe, and he drinks the one ocean of cosmic being and attains to that supreme peace. (VI.2:80)



The plane (space) of consciousness itself is known as Bhairava or Shiva. Inseparable and non-different from him is his dynamic energy which is of the nature of the mind. Air is seen (experienced) in its motion; fire is known by its heat; the pure consciousness is pure and tranquil and it is known as Shiva. This Shiva is beyond description. It is the dynamic energy of the Lord which executes all his wishes, as it were, and makes the wishes appear as visions. This energy or power or Maya is consciousness. *She* is a living force and therefore she is called the jiva. Since this creation-manifestation is natural to the infinite consciousness, she is known as prakriti or nature. Since she is the cause of all things being seen and experienced, she is known as kriya or action.

Since she manifests great anger towards evil she is known as utpala. She is known as jaya because she is always victorious. She is known as siddha because perfection rests in her. Jaya is also known as jayanti, and also vijaya, all of which signify victory. Since she is unconquerable she is known as parajita. She is known as durga since her form or real nature is beyond our grasp. She is known as uma because she is the very

essence of the sacred monosyllable OM. She is called gayatri because her names are sung by all and also savitri because she is the creatrix of all. She is the expansion of one's vision of all things and hence she is known as sarasvati. Since she is of white (yellow or red) color she is known as gauri. Since she exists as a ray of light in one who sleeps, and in one who has been awakened by the contemplation of the subtle inner vibrations produced by the sound of OM, she is known as indukala (ray of the moon).

Since she and Shiva have space as their real form, their bodies have a blue color. Space is their flesh, bones, everything. They exist in space as space. Her dance with different gestures, etc., symbolized the creation, decay and death of all beings. She is conceived of as having limbs because she creates the worlds by the movement of her energy. This kali invests all things with their characteristics by the power inherent in her own limbs, as it were. But one cannot by any means apprehend her limbs nor can her real nature be described. Just as a motion within space is experienced by us as air, even so the dynamic energy of consciousness is experienced by the action or motion that takes place in that consciousness. However, motion or action cannot be regarded as the quality of consciousness because it has no qualities nor characteristics: consciousness is pure and utterly tranquil, beyond all description. The notion of motion in consciousness is ignorance.

When this dynamic energy of consciousness rests at each place as it is (without becoming something else) that itself is known as Shiva the Lord. That is, the thing in itself is the Lord. The following are the limbs of this dynamic energy of consciousness which have been created as notions in her: all these created worlds, the earth with all the continents and oceans, the forests and the mountains, the scriptures, the different forms of sacred rites, wars in which various forms of weapons are used and all the fourteen worlds. (VI.2:84)



One should not associate with another who derides and belittles this scripture either through ignorance or through delusion. I know what I am and I know who you all are. I am but your own consciousness, seated here in order to instruct you: I am neither human, nor celestial nor divine. I am here as the fruit of your merit. In fact, I am neither this nor the other.

One should find here in this world the appropriate remedy for the illness known as samsara (world-illusion). Unless one cultivates a disinterest in the objective and material existence of this world, the belief or the notion of its existence cannot be weakened. There is no other means to rid the self of its impurity of self-limitation.

The only way is to weaken the vasana (self-limitation or conditioning or the notion that the world exists). If the object does exist then such a notion of its existence is natural: but it does not, though it seems to be, in the absence of the light of inquiry.

The apparent world-existence has no real cause; how can the effect of an unreality be other than unreal? How can a non-material (spiritual) cause bring about a material effect? How can matter arise in pure consciousness any more than a shadow exists in the sun? It is not correct to say that the world is a pure and accidental combination of atoms: they are inert substances. The world-creation is not the action of ignorance but, on the other hand, if it is the action of intelligence, why will an intelligent being indulge in such futile action, like a madman? Hence, it is clear that the world is an appearance, and not existence. We appear to exist in pure void, like objects in a dream. The world is but pure consciousness and there is no difference between the two; the one is expressed in two ways like *air* and *motion in space*. The infinite consciousness plus the appearance is known as the world; the world minus its form (appearance) is the infinite consciousness (appearance is illusory and illusion does not exist). Just as consciousness creates dreams in a dreamer, it creates the world in the waking state; the two are constituted of the same substance. Where then is the reality of the body even of Brahma the creator? It arose as the first dream-object in consciousness. (VI.2:103)

All the moving and unmoving things are but pure consciousness. When an illusory notion of division arises in it, consciousness comes to be known as the world. A pot is but clay; in the absence of clay there is no pot. All objects are pure consciousness and if consciousness is not, nothing is seen. Water is liquid; minus its liquidity it is not water (what is dehydrated water?). Even so is consciousness. Everything here is pure consciousness; minus pure consciousness nothing is.

The same thing has been given two names for the sake of convenience: the two (waking and dreaming) are the same, like two cups of water. That which is common to them, which is their common substratum, is pure consciousness. (VI.2:105)



The hunter asked:

Lord, who are affected by past karma and who are not?

The sage said:

Water itself takes on the appearance of a whirlpool: Brahman itself takes on the appearance of this creation. This creation is manifest Brahman; it is neither a dream nor a waking state reality. In that case, what is karma, to whom is it and of how many types is it? In truth, there is no karma, no ignorance, no creation: all these notions

arise only because of one's own experience.

Brahman alone shines as creation, individual selves, karma, birth and such other notions. Because it is the Lord, it experiences these notions as if they were true. In the beginning of creation, the jiva is not subject to any karma; after this, however, it gets involved in karma, on account of the notions it entertains. What is the body or personality of a whirlpool and what is its karma? It is water, and even so is everything Brahman.

The persons seen in a dream have no past karma. Even so, the jivas that arose in the beginning of creation have no karma because they are pure consciousness. It is only when one becomes firmly rooted in the notions of this world-appearance as the reality, that the notion of karma arises. Then the jivas roam here bound by their karma. If it is realized that this creation itself is no-creation and that Brahman alone exists, then where is karma, whose is karma and who belongs to that karma? Karma exists only in ignorance; the moment right knowledge arises, karma ceases to bind. (VI.2:142)



However carefully we look and investigate, we do not see anything other than the reality. What the ignorant and the foolish see, we do not know. In the enlightened vision of the sage all this is pure, indivisible consciousness; that itself appears to be countless separate objects (both sentient and insentient) in the eyes of the ignorant. The one pure consciousness appears as the diverse dream-objects in a dream. All these millions of objects which appear in the dream become one again in deep sleep. Similarly, when this dream-world appears in the infinite consciousness that itself is called creation; when this itself enters into the equivalent of the deep sleep state, it is known as the cosmic dissolution. This is pure commonsense. (VI.2:143)



No one dies here nor is anyone born: these two notions arise in consciousness and it appears as though death and birth are real. If there is death as the final end in fact and in truth, then it is indeed a most welcome and happy event! But, if one who dies is capable of being seen again, then surely he was alive all the time. Thus, there is no death, and by the same token there is no birth either. The two events appear to be real because of the movement in consciousness; they are otherwise unreal. If

they are thought of as real, they are real; if they are known to be unreal, they are unreal. This means thought alone is real. Tell me if there is any life at all devoid of consciousness. In that pure consciousness there is no sorrow nor death: then, who experiences sorrow and who dies? What a whirlpool is to water, the body is to the supreme truth. The appearance is pervaded by the reality, and the appearance is but an appearance, without a substantiality of its own. There is no division, distinction or contradiction between the two. Yet, the infinite consciousness appears to be this creation full of contradictions — this indeed is a great wonder.

Realize that this world-appearance with all its contradictions is nothing more than appearance which is non-existent. That infinite and indivisible consciousness alone exists as one thing here and as another thing there; therefore, there is neither diversity nor even unity. There is no contradiction nor is there a non-contradiction. They who know the truth realize that it is neither real nor unreal: hence, they realize the truth as utter silence. What is seen here as the objective universe is in truth the supreme Brahman. That Brahman alone entertains various notions which are manifest here as these diverse objects; but in that which entertains these notions there is no division and therefore such division is not real. (VI.2:159)



Realize, *I am at peace, I am like the infinite space*; abandon the notion that you are the jiva. If one cannot thus redeem oneself, there are no other means: for one is one's own friend and one is one's own enemy. Strive to liberate yourself while you are yet young with the help of pure and right understanding, or buddhi. Do it now. What will you do when you are old and senile? Old age itself is a burden; you cannot carry anything more. Both childhood and old age are useless; youth alone is the right time, if you are a wise one, to live wisely. Having come into this samsara where life is so impermanent, one should, through association with holy scriptures and holy men, endeavor to uplift oneself.

Be firmly rooted in the contented state in which you know only that to be yours which is obtained in the course of the due performance of your own appropriate action. He is a man of self-conquest who rests in peace and contentment performing whatever has to be performed and avoiding what should be avoided. His mind is at rest who enjoys observing or watching himself and is disinterested in external events and observations. When one's awareness is thus firmly held within oneself, the mind abandons its usual restlessness and flows towards wisdom. The wise man attains victory over the senses and does not drown in the waves of vasanas or mental conditioning. He sees the world as it is. Then the illusion of samsara or world-appearance ceases and with it all sorrow comes to an end. (VI.2:162)



Rama said:

Just as memory is at the root of the perception in both the waking and the dream states, it is memory alone that gives rise to the feeling that the external objects are real.

Vasistha continued:

The appearances of diverse objects in the universe arises in the infinite consciousness when it becomes aware of itself — coincidentally (like a ripe coconut falling when a crow alights on it.). Whenever and wherever this consciousness contemplates itself in whatever manner, then and there it appears so, without any cause. The notions *This is waking*, *This is dream*, *This is sleep* and *This is turiya* arise in consciousness because they are consciousness. In fact there is neither dream nor waking state nor sleep nor turiya nor something beyond: everything is pure tranquillity and silence. Or, one may say that all this is waking at all times, or dream or deep sleep or turiya. Or we do not know what it is, for everything is experienced to be what it is thought of.

Its manifestation and unmanifestation — knowledge or ignorance — are two inherent states — like the movement or non-movement of air. Therefore, there is no distinction in the states of waking, etc., nor is there anything known as memory or desire. All these are limited vision. When it is only inner experience that shines as external object, where is objectivity or memory? Memory can arise only from experience and experience is possible only if the object is real. The notional appearance of the infinite consciousness becomes later known as the earth, etc. Let this consciousness shine as it will: it is neither real nor unreal, neither something nor nothing. That itself dwells in the heart as the notion of an object which is conceived to be outside. What is *inside* or *outside*? Consider it OM and rest in peace. (VI.2:167)



Without cause this world-appearance arises in consciousness. It is experienced by the consciousness within itself. It is consciousness which considers itself the world and experiences the world. There is therefore no memory, or dream or time, etc. involved in this. That which is a mass of consciousness within appears to be the world outside; however, there is neither an outside nor an inside, nothing whatsoever except the supreme reality. Therefore, just as the infinite Brahman is real, in the same way this observed objective universe is also real. (VI.2:168)



He to whom joy is no joy and sorrow is no sorrow, is a liberated one. He whose heart is not agitated even while being engaged in pleasure is a liberated one. He is a liberated one who rejoices in pure consciousness itself. As well as in the objective world.

Having roamed this samsara and experienced all kinds of pleasure and pain, the jiva has the good fortune to come into contact with a holy man and cross this ocean of samsara. He sleeps in great peace and even without a bed. Though he is engaged in intense activity here, he enjoys the peace of deep sleep. This is a great wonder. This *sleep* cannot be disturbed by anything. He is truly intoxicated who does not see the world even though his eyes are wide open. He enjoys the bliss of deep sleep. He has dispelled the notions of the world from his heart and he has reached fullness. He has quaffed the nectar and he is at peace. His delight is independent of pleasure. He has turned away from greed. He knows that in every atom there is a universe. He is engaged in diverse and intense activity, though he does nothing. He is aware that this world-appearance has the same reality as a dream, thus he has entered into the peace and the bliss of deep sleep. His consciousness is more expansive than even space. By a supreme self-effort, he has realized self-knowledge and he lives as if he were seeing a long dream in pure space. He is fully awake and enlightened, though he appears to be asleep; he enjoys the greatest delight, though he appears to be asleep. He has reached the highest state. (VI.2:169)



The practice of contemplation in which the mind is restrained from undergoing any modification is as good as supreme inertia; on the other hand, when such modifications exist in the mind, it is the seat of diversity or samsara. By such contemplation a state of equanimity is not attained. If it is claimed that liberation is attained when the mind is forcibly restrained from all modifications, then why is it not attained in sleep? Therefore, only when it is realized that there is no creation at all, does real self-knowledge arise which leads to liberation. Such liberation is unending, infinite and unconditioned — truly nirvikalpa samadhana (samadhi). In it one remains firmly rooted in self-knowledge, without the least agitation. It is also known as eternal sleep, turiya, nirvana and moksha.

Dhyana or contemplation or meditation is perfect awakening or enlightenment.

The realization that the objective universe does not exist is perfect awakening. It does not resemble a state of inertia, nor deep sleep, nor nirvikalpa samadhi nor savikalpa samadhi, nor is it an unreal imaginary state. In it the universe exists as it is but it is dissolved at the same time. In it there is supreme peace.

That perfect awakening is attained by a careful investigation of this scripture constantly, day and night, not by pilgrimage nor by charity, not by acquiring knowledge nor by the practice of meditation or yoga, not by austerity (penance) nor by religious rites. By none of these methods does illusion come to an end. They only lead to heaven and such other rewards, not to liberation. Delusion ends only when self-knowledge arises in one who has carefully studied and investigated this scripture.

It is by self-knowledge or enlightenment that these three (the mind, the objects of perception and the body) will reach a quiescent state of equanimity, not otherwise. For these three arise from ignorance. By a mere study of this scripture that ignorance is dispelled. The beauty in this scripture is that its student is not abandoned to his despair; if something is not clear in the first instance, a further study of the scripture makes it clear. This scripture dispells delusion and enables you to realize that the ordinary life itself is the supreme state.

Therefore, one should study at least a small part of this scripture daily. If, however, one thinks it is not authoritative because it is of human origin, one can resort to the study of any other scripture dealing with self-knowledge and final liberation. But one should not waste one's lifetime. (VI.2:174)



Kundadanta said:

Once again I went to that sage at the foot of the Kadamba tree. I waited upon him. After three months he opened his eyes. In answer to my prayer, he said to me: *The truth does not become clear in you until it is heard again and again and meditated upon again and again. I shall therefore tell you what to do. Go to Ayodhya. There is a king there known as Dasaratha. His son is Rama. His guru Vasistha is discoursing upon the means to liberation. Listen to this. By that means you will attain supreme peace.* Having said this, he once again entered into samadhi. I then came to this place to be with you.

Rama said:

That Kundadanta is sitting next to me and has devoutly heard this discourse on the means to liberation. Today he is free from all doubts.

Vasistha asked Kundadanta:

Tell us what you have learnt during the course of this discourse.

Kundadanta replied:

Conquest of the mind alone is the destruction of all doubts. I have knowledge in which there is no contradiction. All my doubts are at rest. I am firmly established in the supreme state. I have learnt this from you: the infinite self or consciousness alone exists in the infinite space as this world. Everything exists in everything as everything everywhere forever. It is Brahman or the infinite consciousness alone that appears as all this and is experienced as all this. (VI.2:185)



Vasistha continued: When knowledge becomes the object of knowing, it is known as bondage. Liberation is when knowledge ceases to be such an object of knowing.

Rama asked: How does the firm conviction that knowledge is the object of knowing come to an end?

Vasistha said: When there is full awakening, the dullness of intelligence comes to an end. Then liberation which is formless, peaceful and real comes into being.

Rama said: What is that perfect awakening which is perfect knowledge and by which a living being here is freed from bondage?

Vasistha said: Knowledge does not have an object to know. Knowledge is independent and eternal; it is beyond description and definition. When this truth is directly realized there is perfect knowledge.

Rama said: What is the division that arises between knowledge and the object of knowing? In what sense do we use the word *knowledge*?

Vasistha said: Full awakening or enlightenment is jnana or knowledge. Its contemplation is the means to such awakening. There is in reality no division between knowledge and the object of knowing.

Rama said: If that is so, how has this deluded vision of knowledge and the object of knowing arisen in the first place and become firmly rooted?

Vasistha said: It is on account of the deluded belief that there is something other than knowledge, something outside of itself, that the division has arisen. In fact, there is nothing either inside or outside.

Rama said: All this that seems to be obvious — I, you, etc., and all these elements and the diverse beings that we surely experience — how can it be accepted that they do not exist?

Vasistha said: The cosmic person or virat and the cosmos, etc., did not in fact come into being at the very beginning of creation. Hence, there has never been an *object of seeing* at any time whatsoever.

Rama asked: This world was, is and will be, and it is experienced every day. How

can it be said that it was never created?

Vasistha replied: This world-appearance is unreal even as the following are unreal, though they appear to be real: the dream-objects, water in the mirage, the second moon when one is suffering from diplopia and castles in the air.

Rama asked: What is the mind, how does one inquire into its nature and what is the fruit of such inquiry?

Vasistha replied: Consciousness becoming aware of itself as an object is known as chittam (mind). Inquiry is what you are doing now. By this, mental conditioning comes to an end.

Rama asked: How is it possible for this chittam to be unconditioned so that nirvana may be attained?

Vasistha replied: Surely an object or mental conditioning is not a reality. Hence, the chittam too is not a real entity.

Rama said: But we do experience its existence!

Vasistha replied: The world is not what it appears in the eyes of the ignorant: what is real in the eyes of the enlightened is indescribable.

Rama said: What is the vision of the ignorant? And why is it indescribable in the eyes of the enlightened?

Vasistha replied: The ignorant perceive the world as having a beginning and an end. The enlightened do not see it at all for it has not been created at all and hence does not exist. (VI.2:190)



Rama said:

I am nirvana. I am free from doubt. I am free. I am blissful. I am as I am as the infinite. I am the all at all times or I am nothing and at peace. I am the one reality and I am not. Wonderful is this supreme peace. What is to be gained has to be gained. The perception of the objects has been abandoned. True enlightenment has dawned and it shall never set again.

The awakening or the enlightenment happens by itself, just like the sun's brilliance at noon. All cravings and desires come to an end in the awakened person; therefore nirvana arises in him without his desiring it. He is forever engaged in meditation, he is always established in his own real nature: therefore he does not seek anything or reject anything. Like a lamp in whose light all actions take place and in which the lamp itself is not interested, he lives and acts but is free from volition.

This samsara is full of sorrow; nirvana is absolute coolness. The latter alone is the reality; the former is not. Like the uncarved figures that exist in a piece of wood, this samsara exists in the infinite consciousness — which is indivisible but experienced

diversely by diverse beings, each of whom carves out of it, as it were, what he desires — whether it is pleasure or liberation. However, all these are in essence the reality itself, even as the carved figures are in essence non-different from the wood. The life or death of relatives seen in a dream has no effect on oneself after awakening from sleep; even so the enlightened ones are unaffected by the world-appearance.

When all this is seen as the one infinite consciousness, there is no room for delusion. There is cessation of craving. Cessation of craving intensifies awakening or enlightenment; and the latter intensifies the cessation of craving. The hall-mark of enlightenment is this cessation of craving. When the latter is absent, there is no enlightenment but scholasticity which is in fact ignorance or viciousness. If these two do not promote each other, then they are obviously unreal and absent. The perfect cessation of craving born of the perfect enlightenment, itself is known as liberation. When this is attained, one does not grieve even though continuing to live.

For one who rests in his own self and rejoices in the self, in whom cravings have ceased and egosense is absent, life becomes non-volitional and there is perfect purity. One in millions, however, is able to reach this unconditioned state of pure being. (VI.2:194)



Vasistha said:

Bravo, O Rama, you have attained enlightenment. Your words have the power of enlightenment. The unreality which seems to exist here disappears when it is not conceived or thought of. This supreme peace is nirvana and this is the supreme truth. That state in which the enlightened one exists as if he lives in the very center of a rock, whether he is alone and at rest or engaged in diverse activities — that is the state of purity and that is liberation. We live in that state, O Rama, though we are constantly engaged in diverse activity. You, too, rest in that state and carry on your work.

Now O Rama, please tell me how you realize that this world, though it seems to be so real, is non-existent.

Rama replied:

This world has not been created even at the very beginning. How then can it be considered to exist now? It has no cause: how can an effect be without a cause? Change implies the cessation of one state and the arising of the subsequent state. This is impossible in the changeless reality. If this world is an illusory appearance that is imagined to exist in Brahman, then it is only an illusion. In a dream a moment is experienced as a lifetime: even so, in this world-appearance time is experienced along with the sun and the moon on which time is based.

In the infinite consciousness, there is this notion of creation with all its corollaries — time, space, etc. This non-entity appears to function and that, too, is false. The accidental arising of this notion appears to persist and become deep-rooted.

Or, it has to be considered real. How can the false ever even appear to exist? Or perhaps there is no such thing as the real and nothing as unreal. Whatever is, is. That which is is clear as the sky, full as the center of a rock, silent and peaceful as the stone, and infinite. Such is the creation. For this creation exists in the pure, infinite consciousness which is the reality of all thoughts and concepts which together form the subtle body, as it were, of the infinite consciousness. The pure experiencing of awareness that arises in that *body* is known as this creation. Thus this creation itself is Brahman.

In the supreme being itself does the *other* (creation) exist; the latter belongs to the former and is non-different from it. It is therefore supreme peace itself. There is neither a creation nor movement nor activity. When dream is realized as dream, the false notion vanishes. Awareness drops its object (the world) and rests in the infinite consciousness.

Vasistha asked:

Why should we not assume that just as the seed is the cause for the sprout, Brahman is the cause for the creation?

Rama replied:

The sprout in the seed is not seen as sprout, but only as seed. Hence it is only seed. In the same way, if this world exists in Brahman, it is only Brahman and not the world; and Brahman undergoes no change. since Brahman is unchanging and formless, it is impossible to accept that it gives rise to the world which is changing and which is endowed with form. To say that this creation exists in the indivisible Brahman just as a gem lies in the box, is meaningless prattle. The theory that the supreme Brahman is the support for the universe which has a form is also unacceptable: for that which has a form must perish. The concept that this world is but the dream-object that has thus materialized is unacceptable, for the dream-objects are those which have been experienced by oneself. However, the waking and the dream realities belong to two different planes: for the person whose death was dreamed of is seen on waking up from dream. Thus the world has not been created even as a dream-object; but just as the dream-object is only consciousness, even so all that is seen as the world is only the infinite consciousness.

This supreme truth is established only in total silence, not by logic, discussion and argumentation. (VI.2:195)



Rama said:

Thus, O sage, it is clear that self-knowledge is beyond the reach of the jugglery of words. How is it attained by the conflicting statements of scriptures? If it is not so attained what is the use of these scriptures? Pray tell me whether self-knowledge follows the instruction of the preceptor and the study of scriptures.

Vasistha said:

It is true, O Rama, that the study of the scriptures is not the cause for the attainment of self-knowledge. Scriptures are composed of diverse expressions; the supreme being is indescribable. However, I shall explain to you how the study of scriptures has come to be associated with self-knowledge.

Not by the study of the scriptures, nor by hearing the instructions of a preceptor, nor by charity nor even by the worship of god is the direct realization of the supreme truth attained. Because that is beyond all these. However, I shall tell you how these, though not the actual means, have come to be regarded as the means to self-realization. By the practice of the precepts of the scriptures, the mind becomes pure and transparent; then without even wishing for it one sees the supreme truth. The scripture promotes the satvika part of ignorance, which is purity of mind. This purity destroys the tamasic (dull) part of ignorance.

By its very appearance in the sky the sun is reflected in the ocean, without either of them desiring this. Even so by the simple coming together of the scripture and the seeker, the truth is reflected in the latter. Even so the scripture purifies the mind and the clean mind reflects the truth.

There is light everywhere in the sky, but it is only when light meets with an obstruction that it is able to illumine: even so when the scripture (or the guru) meets the seeker there is illumination. Hence, the supreme truth is realized when one contemplates the real meaning of the scriptures with the aid of the words of the preceptor, satsanga, self-discipline and control of the mind. (VI.2:197)



Once again I shall tell you something, O Rama, to which please lend your ear. By repeatedly listening to the truth even an ignorant person is awakened.

To begin with I expounded the sthiti prakaranam in which the truth concerning the creation of this universe was revealed. after that I expounded in the upashanti prakaranam the means by which this world-illusion might be dispelled. After thus getting rid of this world-illusion, one should live here free from all mental agitation and distress.

One should live in the world fully established in the state of equanimity which confers all blessings and which bestows the highest consolation, which is the greatest wealth and which enhances one's good fortune. Equanimity enables purity to grow. All other noble virtues follow this one. None of the blessings and wealth in the world is comparable to equanimity. It puts an end to all sorrow. Rare are those souls who are established in equanimity, to whom all are friends.

To one who is established in equanimity, sorrow is happiness and death is new life. Who can measure the greatness of one who is free from exultation and depression, who does what has to be done when and how it is to be done, and who sees what is to be seen, as it is. Friends and relations, enemies and kings have the greatest trust in one who thus lives a natural life. In the course of such natural living, even if he should become angry, it does not hurt anyone. The people applaud whatever he does and whatever he eats, even if he overpowers another or reprimands another — for he is established in equanimity. They applaud whatever he does now or whatever he did long ago, whether good or not so good.

They who are established in equanimity do not experience despair, whether they are subjected to happiness or to great unhappiness. Hence one should attain equanimity in all conditions of life, pleasant and unpleasant, in honor and dishonor.

(VI.2:198)



In this world there are the fully enlightened ones, unenlightened ones and semi-enlightened ones who abandon right actions, too, and are thus neither here nor there. The forest-life is not essential for liberation, nor living in one's own country nor an ascetic life, nor the abandonment of activity. Liberation is attained by one whose very nature is totally free and unattached. He whose mind is free and unattached does not get involved once again in this samsara. O Rama, you are the supreme state. Remain what you are, free from likes and dislikes, established in the supreme truth. In that Brahman there are no impurities, changes, veils, cravings or aversions. There is nothing more to say. (VI.2:199)



Valmiki said:

Having concluded his discourse on nirvana, the sage Vasistha remained silent. All the members of the assembly were deeply immersed in the highest (nirvikalpa) samadhi or contemplation. The very heavens resounded with the cheers of the assembled sages and perfected ones. The celestials sounded their drums and other instruments. There was a shower of flowers.

The Siddhas (perfected ones) said:

From the beginning of this epoch we have given and heard numerous discourses on the means to liberation, but none like this. Even animals and children will attain enlightenment by listening to the sage's words.

Thus all of them worshipped and glorified the sage Vasistha again and again. (VI.2:200)



Then, Vasistha asked Rama:

O Rama, what else do you want to hear from me? How do you perceive the world-appearance now? What is your inner experience?

Rama replied:

By your grace, I have attained supreme purity; all the impurities have cleared away. All my misunderstands and delusions have been dispelled. My bondage has been cut. My intelligence is pure like a crystal. My mind does not crave for more instruction.

I have nothing to do with anything — neither instructions nor any objects, neither relatives nor scriptures, nor even renunciation. I behold the world as the pure, infinite, indivisible consciousness. The world is otherwise a void which disappears the moment the illusion vanishes.

I shall do whatever you wish that I should do and I shall live doing whatever I have to do or wish to do, without exultation or depression, for my delusion has been dispelled. Whether this creation becomes something else or whether the winds of cosmic dissolution blow or whether this country be prosperous, I am established in self-knowledge. I am at peace. My vision is clear. It is difficult for my real state to be seen and understood. I am free from hopes and desires. I shall live and rule like the other kings, whether they are enlightened or ignorant, but without mental agitation and endowed with equal vision. As long as this body lasts I shall rule this kingdom, endowed with a pure vision and freed from all doubts concerning the nature of this samsara, just as a child engages itself in play.

Yoga Vasistha

Vasistha said:

Bravo, O Rama, you have truly reached the supreme state, beyond joy and sorrow, and you have transcended all that is found in this world and in the next. You will now fulfill the wishes of the sage Visvamisra and rule the kingdom.

After the assembly once again cheered, Rama said:

Lord, just as fire purifies gold, you have purified our hearts. They who consider their body as the all now see the entire universe as the self.

I have attained the plenum of existence. I am free from all doubts. I am full of bliss which is eternal and undiluted. I rejoice in my own heart which has been purified by the nectarine words of supreme wisdom. By your grace I have attained the state in which the whole world itself appears to be the eternal, immortal and infinite reality. (VI.2:201)



Valmiki said:

When the sage Vasistha thus concluded his teaching there was celestial music in the sky. There was a rain of flowers. Everyone in the assembly worshipped the sage with flowers.

Then king Dasaratha said: we have gained perfect knowledge. We rest in the supreme state. Our minds and our hearts have been utterly purified of all delusions and illusions, notions and perversions, by the illuminating teachings of the sage.

Rama said: By your grace, O lord among sages, my delusion has gone and I have attained the supreme state. I am now fully accomplished with my intelligence perfectly clear. I am freed of doubts, I rest in my own natural state as Brahman or in the knowledge of nirvana. I shall do as you have said. There is nothing for me to gain by doing or by not doing anything. I have no friends or enemy. How can one realize all this except through your grace; how can a little boy cross the ocean without the help of a bridge or boat?

Lakshmana said: By the merit acquired by past births, we have heard the sage and are now rid of all doubts.

Visvamisra said: It is as if we had bathed in a thousand sacred Gangas (rivers).

Narada said: We have heard what we have not heard either in heaven or on earth. Hence, we have been completely purified.

Satrughna said: I have gained supreme peace and bliss.

After they had all spoken, the sage Vasistha said to the king: *At the conclusion of the recitation of a scripture, the holy ones should be worshipped. Hence, fulfill all the wishes of the brahmanas. You will attain the fruits of this sacred undertaking.* Then

the king invited ten thousand brahmanas from all over the country. He worshipped them. He fed them. He lavished gifts on them. Later, he adored the citizens, the servants, the poor and the crippled ones.

After that there was a great celebration in the capital, which included music concerts and dance performances, recitations of the vedas and other scriptures. Then all these artists were entertained with food and drinks, and lavish gifts of clothes and jewels were bestowed upon them.

The enlightened king Dasaratha celebrated the successful completion of sage Vasistha's teaching for a whole week with a variety of entertainments and religious rites. (VI.2:214)



Valmiki said:

O Bharadvaja, thus did Rama and others attain supreme knowledge and the state beyond sorrow. Even so, acquire this attitude and live as a liberated sage, free from doubt. Truly, by listening to this scripture you are already liberated; you are a jivanmukta. Even a young boy listening to this attains self-knowledge. Even the ignorant ones, in whose hearts the bondage caused by cravings is strong and persistent, rise beyond the state of division by a study of this scripture that deals with liberation, even as young boys become mature men. They will never again be involved in samsara.

Even they who recite this scripture without understanding the meaning, they who write this in a book, they who make someone read it or comment upon it, they attain great merit and enjoy life in heaven, and in the third birth attain liberation.

Valmiki said to king Aristanemi: Thus have I told you what Vasistha taught Rama. By this path you will attain the truth. The king said: Lord, by your grace I have crossed this samsara. (To the messenger of the gods, the king said:) You have been a true friend to me. You may now go. I shall contemplate the truth that I have thus heard.

The messenger said to the celestial: I was supremely thrilled to hear all this. I shall now go to the abode of Indra.

The Celestial said: I am truly blessed to hear all this from you, O messenger of the gods. Now you can go to Indra.

Agnivesya said to Karunya: Thus did the celestial remain immersed in contemplation. Have you heard all this well? Karunya replied: Surely. My delusion is gone. I shall now live a life of spontaneous non-volitional activity.

Agastya said to Sutikshna: Thus did Agnivesya instruct his son Karunya. Do not

Yoga Vasistha

doubt this teaching, for he who doubts this perishes. Sutikshna said: My ignorance has been dispelled and the lamp of knowledge has been kindled. I realize that all these objects of the world exist in the infinite consciousness like waves in the ocean. Hence, I shall live a life of spontaneous non-volitional activity. I am truly blessed. I salute you. For a disciple should adore and serve his guru by thought, word and deed. Lord, by your grace I have crossed this ocean of samsara. I salute the supreme being, contemplating whom one realizes that all this is indeed Brahman, the infinite consciousness. Salutations to the divine preceptor Vasistha. (VI.2:215)

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Note About Type

The body of this work is set in twelve point Adobe Minion™, a PostScript® Type 1 font. Minion regular was created as a book face inspired by Renaissance type styles. Even though Minion has its roots in the 16th century, it is a thoroughly modern typeface, having been recently designed for modern digital typography by Robert Slimbach at Adobe.

Minion was chosen for its elegance and unobtrusiveness. The crispness of the serifs leads the eye easily across the lines of text. The strength of the vertical elements and fineness of horizontal elements creates typeface character that is full of presence, yet is transparent to content. The “color” of Minion on a page of text is even and balanced allowing the eye to seek out meaning without distraction from the medium. Minion italic is alive with classical cursiveness while maintaining rhythmic readability through long passages. Even in occasional usage, the italic is a structurally harmonious sibling of the Minion roman face.

Cover text, section heads and running heads are set in Friz Quadrata™ providing character contrast to Minion in letter width, weight and openness while adding the playfulness of chiseled serifs. This font was created in 1978 by the Swiss designer, Ernst Friz for display type. Ornaments are from the Minion Expert Collection.

Book design, layout and typesetting by:
Dennis Hill.





[Vasistha to Rama:]

*When the mind is at peace
and the heart leaps to the
supreme truth, when all the
disturbing thought-waves in
the mind-stuff have subsided
and there is unbroken flow of
peace and the heart is filled
with the bliss of the absolute,
when thus the truth has been
seen in the heart, then this
very world becomes an abode
of bliss. (II:12)*

