

The Supreme Yoga
a new translation of
Yoga Vasistha

6/1 . Nirvana Prakaranam
part 1

Section dealing with Liberation

Swami Venkatesananda



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A new translation of the Yoga Vasistha
(IN TWO VOLUMES)

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6.1 - Nirvana Prakaranam

Section dealing with Liberation

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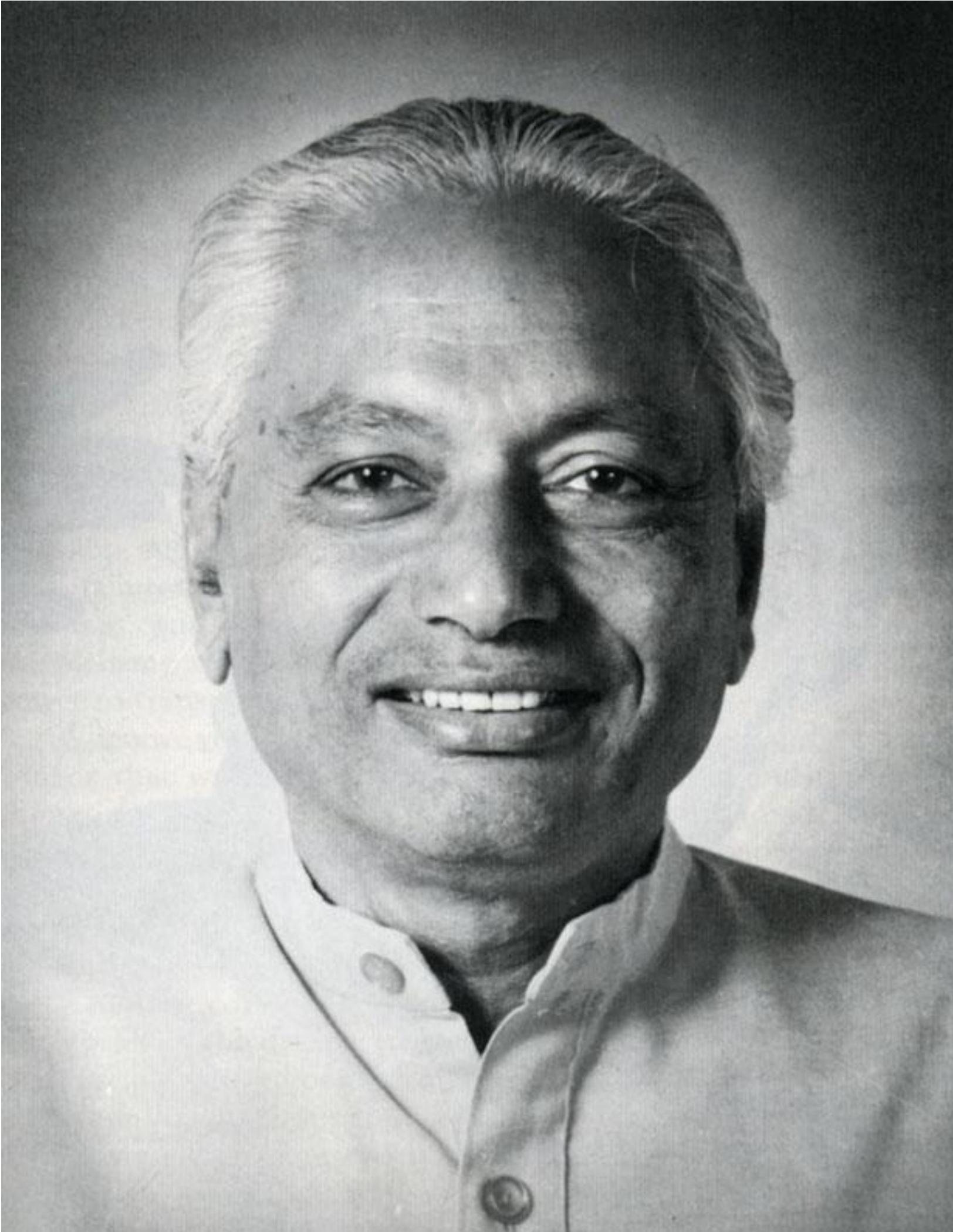
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This publication is dedicated to my Gurudev Swami Sivananda. His life was a symphony whose constant refrain was: "In all conditions I am Knowledge - Bliss Absolute." Sage Vasistha incarnated as Swami Sivananda to embody the Supreme Yoga. In Gurudev Yoga Vāsistha was alive.

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On top of each page you have:

Section of the Book (there are 6 sections) and the number of the Chapter(s) in that section

example: section I chapter 1

One verse from the relevant chapter is given in transliteration. This verse is 'freely' translated and is in **brown** in the body of the story on the same page.

On each page is given a faithful summary of the Chapter. Every effort has been made not to ignore any important teaching. Only non-essential repetition has been omitted.

Preface

The Yoga Vasishtha has always been considered as perhaps the most elaborate exposition of Philosophy and Religion ever written under the sun. The work, which is voluminous in its nature, has been abridged by several scholars subsequently to make the treatise accessible to people who would not have the time and patience to wade through this large literature.

Sri Swami Venkatesananda, a direct disciple of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, has, however, excelled the earlier precis writers on this subject in His brilliant two volume presentation of this Scripture under the title 'The Supreme Yoga'.

The first edition 1976 was published under the auspices of The Chiltern Yoga Trust, Cape Province, South Africa, in two excellently printed volumes.

Now, this second edition 1991 of this veritably standard work is being published by The Divine Life Society for the benefit of all seekers of Truth and the general readers of spiritual teachings.

We have a firm hope that this well-known, towering teaching will provide to everyone the requisite inspiration and solace.

The Divine Life Society

Introduction

Scholars speculate about the author of this monumental scripture and such other academic matters. May God bless them with success.

The Yoga-Vasistha is the greatest help to the spiritual awakening, and the direct experience of the Truth. This is certain. If this is what you want, you are welcome to Yoga-Vasistha.

The text abounds in repetitions which are, however, not repetitious. If you do not like (or need) repetition, then read just this one verse:

This world-appearance is a confusion: even as 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. (I.3.2)

This verse occurs several times in the scripture and it seems to be the very essence of the teaching.

If that is not quite clear to you now, read the scripture. The numerous ways in which this truth is revealed will help open your mind.

It is wise to read just one page a day. The teaching is revolutionary. The biased mind does not readily accept it. After the daily reading, meditate. Let the message soak through.

An oft-recurring expression in this scripture is 'kakataliya' - a crow alights on the cocoanut palm tree, and that very moment a ripe cocoanut falls. The two unrelated events thus seem to be related in time and space, though there is no causal relationship.

Such is life. Such is 'creation'. But the mind caught up in its own trap of logic questions 'why', invents a 'why', and a 'wherefore', to satisfy itself, conveniently ignoring the inconvenient questions that still haunt an intelligent mind.

Vasistha demands direct observation of the mind, its motion, its notions, its reasoning, the assumed cause and the projected result, and even the observed and the observation - and the realisation of their indivisible unity as the infinite consciousness.

That is the uniqueness of this scripture which hence declares itself to be supreme:

Except through this scripture, one cannot gain what is good, now or at any time. Therefore, for perfect realisation of the supreme truth, one should fervently investigate this scripture alone. (VI.2.103)

It is, however the teaching that is supreme, not a book or a sage. Hence, Vasistha is bold enough to say:

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. (VI.2.175)

Whichever be the scripture taught, by whomever, and whichever be the path you choose, stop not till the psychological conditioning ceases entirely. Hence, Vasistha exhorts the seeker:

One should study at least a small part of this scripture daily. 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. (VI.2.175)

Dust of Gurudev's Feet
Swami Venkatesananda

Prayer before the daily reading

OM TAT SAT
OM NAMAH SIVANANDAYA
OM NAMAH NARANAYANA
OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

yatah sarvani bhutani pratibhanti sthitani ca
yatrayo pasamam yanti tasmai satyatmane namah (1)
jnata jnanam tatha jneyam drasta darsana drsyabhuh
karta hetuh kriya yasmad tasmai jnaptyatmane namah (2)
sphuranti sikara yasmad anandasya mbare vanau
sarvesam jivanam tasmai brahmanandatmane namah (3)

Salutations to that reality in which all the elements, and all the animate and inanimate beings shine as if they have an independent existence, and in which they exist for a time and into which they merge.

Salutations to that consciousness which is the source of the apparently distinct threefold divisions of knower, knowledge and known, seer, sight and seen, doer, doing and deed.

Salutations to that bliss absolute (the ocean of bliss) which is the life of all beings whose happiness and unfoldment is derived from the shower of spray from that ocean of bliss.

OM TAT SAT
OM NAMAH SIVANANDAYA
OM NAMAH NARANAYANA
OM NAMAH SHIVAYA
OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

section VI.1 - chapter 1

anayaiva dhiya rama viharannaiva badhyase anyatha dhah patasyasu vindhyakhate
yatha gajah (26)

Valmiki said:

The sage Vasistha had concluded the teaching contained in the upasama prakaranam and he uttered the words: "O Rama, you have heard the upasama prakaranaam; now hear the section dealing with liberation." All the kings and the sages who were seated in the court were deeply absorbed in the great Vasistha's discourse; with their attention totally rivetted on his words and gestures, they appeared more like figures in a painting than actual living human beings. In fact, it seemed that even the sun, the air, the birds and the beasts - the entire nature was absorbed in intently listening to the sage's discourse with their souls absorbed in the sublime exposition of the nature of the innermost self.

As the sun was about to set, the palace suddenly resounded with drums and trumpets. For a few moments this sound drowned the voice of the sage Vasistha. When the sound of the drums, trumpets and conches died down, the sage asked Rama the following question.

Vasistha said:

I have thus provided you with a net woven with words which are indicative of the highest truth: tie down the bird of your mind with this net and let the mind then rest in your heart. Thus shall you attain self-knowledge. O Rama, have you absorbed this truth imparted by me, although it is mixed with varied expressions and illustrations, even as the proverbial swan is able to separate milk from water when these are mixed together and to drink the milk alone?

You should contemplate this truth again and again, from beginning to end, reflect upon it and you should march along this path now, O noble one. **Though engaged in diverse activities, you will not be bound if your intelligence is saturated with this truth; otherwise, you will fall, even as an elephant falls from the cliff.** Again, if you conceptualise this teaching for your intellectual entertainment and do not let it act in your life, you will stumble and fall like a blind man.

In order to reach the state of perfection or liberation taught by me, you should live a life of non-attachment, doing what is appropriate in every situation as it reaches you. Rest assured that this is the vital factor in the teachings of all scriptures.

Given leave to depart, all the kings and the sages of the assembly left for their abode. They contemplated Vasistha's teachings and discussed it among themselves, spending only a couple of hours in pleasant and deep sleep.

section VI.1 - chapter 2

dehe yavad ahambhavo drsye smin yavad atmata yavan mamedamityastha tava
cittadivibhramah (39)

Valmiki continued:

Very soon the darkness of the night began to recede even as mental conditioning recedes with the approach of the awakening of the inner intelligence. Shafts of light from the eastern horizon illumined the eastern and the western peaks.

Rama, Laksmana and all the others awoke at that auspicious hour and performed their morning religious duties. Then they proceeded swiftly to the hermitage of the sage Vasistha. They offered him appropriate worship, prostrated at his feet and followed him to the royal court. The audience packed the court; but there was pin-drop silence. The space in the court was again filled with celestial beings and sages who had attained perfection. All of them took their allotted seats as on the previous days. Rama devoutly gazed at the face of the sage Vasistha.

Vasistha said:

Rama, do you remember what I have so far said to you, the words which are capable of awakening a knowledge of truth or self-knowledge? I shall once again declare to you how perfection can be permanently established.

By resorting to dispassion (the unconditioned mind) and a clear understanding of the truth, this ocean of samsara (bondage to life and death) can be crossed: hence engage yourself in such endeavour. When the truth is clearly perceived and when its misunderstanding has been completely abandoned, upon the dissolution of all the latent tendencies or mental conditioning, the sorrowless state is reached.

The one infinite absolute existence or cosmic consciousness alone is, and it is not affected by the concepts of time and space, nor is it subject to polarity or division. The infinite alone exists and has somehow assumed duality. However, when in fact the infinite cannot thus be divided, how can such duality come into being? Knowing this, be free of the ego-sense and rejoice in the self.

There is no mind, no ignorance, no individual soul: these are all concepts that arose in the creator Brahma. Whatever objects there may be, whatever may be the mind and its desires - all that is indeed the one cosmic consciousness. That one alone shines in the nether world, on earth and in heaven as consciousness.

As long as the concepts born of ignorance persist, as long as there is perception of that which is not the infinite and as long as there is hope in the trap known as the world, so long one entertains notions of mind, etc. **As long as one considers the body as the 'I' and as long as the self is related to what is seen, as long as there is hope in objects with the feeling 'this is mine', so long will there be delusion concerning mind, etc.**

section VI.1 - chapter 2

jivanmukta mahatmano ye paravaradarsinah tesam ya cittapadavi sa sattvamiti
kathyate (42)

Vasistha continued:

The illusory notion of the existence of the mind, etc., persists only as long as the sublime realisation of the truth is not experienced through the company of the wise, who are totally unattached, and as long as wickedness has not been weakened. As long as the experience of this world as a reality has not been shaken by the energy derived from the clear perception of the truth, so long the existence of the mind etc., seems to be self-evident. Such a notion continues as long as there is blind dependence, on account of craving for objective experience, and as long as there are wickedness and delusion as a consequence.

But in the case of one who is not attracted by pleasure, whose heart is cool because of its purity and who has shattered the cage of desires, cravings and hopes, the deluded notion of the existence of the mind ceases to be. When he sees even his body as the deluded experience of a non-entity, how can a mind arise in him? He who has the vision of the infinite and into whose heart the world-appearance has merged, does not entertain the deluded notion of a jiva, etc.

When incorrect perception has come to an end and when the sun of self-knowledge arises in the heart, know that the mind is reduced to naught. It is not seen again, even as burnt dry leaves. **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.

O Rama, you have reached that state of satva and your mind has been burnt in the fire of wisdom. What is that wisdom? It is that the infinite Brahman is indeed the infinite Brahman, the world-appearance is but an appearance whose reality is Brahman. The appearance (for instance, your body as 'Rama') is insentient, is unreal; its reality is the reality of its substratum which is consciousness. Why then do you grieve? However, if you feel that all this is consciousness, there need not arise in you the notions of diversity in it. Recollect your essential nature as the infinite consciousness. Abandon the notions of diversity. You are what you are: nay, not even that as a concept, but beyond it you are the self-luminous being. Salutations to you, O cosmic being that is infinite consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 3

mahataranga gambhira bhasuratma cidarnavah ramabhidhormistamitah samah saumyo
si vyomavat (4)

Vasistha continued:

You are that ocean of consciousness in which there appear countless waves and ripples which are known as universes. You are indeed beyond the states of being and non-being, both of which are mere concepts of the mind. Rise beyond such conditioning and therefore beyond all duality. How can tendencies and limitations exist in you? All such concepts ('This is a latent tendency or limitation' and 'This is a jiva or the living soul') arise in consciousness: how then are they different from consciousness and if they are not, how can we say that they arise in consciousness?

That which is known as Rama is in truth the magnificent and infinite ocean of consciousness in which numerous universes appear and disappear like ripples and waves. Remain in a state of total equanimity. You are like the infinite space. Fire is inseparable from heat, fragrance from the lotus, blackness from collyrium, whiteness from snow, sweetness from sugar-cane and light from a luminary. Even so experiencing is inseparable from consciousness. Even as waves are inseparable from the ocean, even so the universes are inseparable from consciousness.

Experiencing is non-different from consciousness, the ego-sense is non-different from experiencing, the jiva is non-different from ego-sense and the mind is non-different from the jiva (non-different or inseparable). The senses are from the mind, the body is non-different from the senses, the world is non-different from the body and there is nothing but this world. This catalogue of dependent categories has existed for a very long time; yet this has neither been set in motion by anyone, nor can we say whether it has existed for a very long or very short time. The truth is, O Rama, all this is naught else but the self-experiencing of the infinite.

There is emptiness in the empty, Brahman pervades Brahman, the truth shines in the truth and fullness fills fullness. The wise man, though functioning in this world, does nothing, for he seeks nothing. Even so, O Rama, remain pure at heart like space, but outwardly engage yourself in appropriate action; in situations which could provoke exultation or depression, remain unaffected by them like a log of wood. He who is friendly even to one who is about to murder him, is a seer of truth. Adoration of one who has not thus risen above likes and dislikes (raga and dvesa) is futile effort. Only he who is free from egoistic or volitional activity and who is utterly non-attached to anything here is liberated; even if he should destroy the world, he does nothing.

He in whom all concepts and habitual tendencies have ceased, has overcome all mental conditioning and bondage. He is like a lamp which is not fed with oil.

section VI.1 - chapter 4 5

adya ham prakrtistho smi svastho smi mudito smi ca lokaramo smi ramo smi namo
mahyam namo stu te (5/7)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, the mind, the intellect and the ego-sense, as also the senses, are all devoid of independent intelligence: where then do the jiva and all the rest of it reside? Even as the moon is one and yet it appears to be two or more on account of defective vision or agitation in the reflecting medium, the self (inner intelligence or consciousness) is one, but appears to be many on account of the agitation caused by the thoughts.

Just as night comes to an end when darkness recedes, ignorance comes to an end when the poison of craving for pleasure ceases. This deadly virus of craving for pleasure is instantly cured by the magic formula of scriptural declarations. At the very instant when wickedness or foolishness comes to an end, the mind with all its retinue vanishes, even as pearls scatter when the connecting thread is broken. Hence, O Rama, they who abandon the scriptures have chosen to live as worms and vermin for their own self-destruction.

When wind subsides, the surface of the lake becomes calm once again: when agitation caused by ignorance ceases, the unsteadiness of the eyes caused by infatuation for wife and other objects of pleasure ceases. Obviously, O Rama, you have reached that steadiness. You have listened intently to my words: and on account of that the veil of ignorance has been lifted in you. Even ordinary human beings are profoundly influenced by the words of their family preceptor: how then can it be different in one who possesses an expanded vision, as you do?

Rama said:

Lord, by listening to your words of wisdom, the world which appears to be outside has lost its substantiality and my mind has ceased. I rest in supreme peace. I perceive the world as it is, as the infinite consciousness infinitely displayed before me. All my doubts have been dispelled. I am free from attraction and resistance. **I am established in nature, I am well (svasthah: I rest in the self) and I am happy. I am Rama in whom the worlds find their refuge. Salutations to me, salutations to you.** The mental conditioning has vanished. The mind has come to an end. I see the self as the all-in-all. When I think of the past, I smile at the foolish ideas of duality I used to entertain. All this, thanks to the effect of your nectarine words of spiritual counsel. While still living in this world, I am also in the world of light. Thanks to the rays of light that emanate from your illumined heart in the form of words of supreme wisdom, I am immersed in supreme bliss here and now.

section VI.1 - chapter 6

bhedamabhyupagamyā pi sruṇu buddhiḥ vivṛddhaye bhavedalpaprabuddhanam api no
duḥkhita yathā (2)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, you are dear to me: hence I declare the truth to you once again. **Listen attentively. Listen, though for doing so, you have to assume the existence of diversity. Your consciousness will expand. And, the truth that I shall expound will save from sorrow even they who are not fully awakened.**

When one is ignorant, one entertains the wrong notion that the body is the self; his own senses prove to be his worst enemies. On the other hand, he who is endowed with self-knowledge and knows the truth, enjoys the friendship of his senses which are pleased and contented; they do not destroy him. He who has nothing but disgust for the physical body and its functions does not surely indulge it and thus invite suffering.

The self is not affected by the body, nor is the body in any way related to the self. They are like light and darkness. The self, which transcends all modifications and perversions, neither comes into being nor does it vanish. Whatever happens, happens to this body which is inert, ignorant, insentient, finite, perishable and ungrateful: let it happen. But, how can this body ever comprehend (through the senses or the mind) the eternal consciousness? For, when either is seen as the reality, the other ceases to be. When thus their nature is totally different, how can their experience of pain and pleasure be the same? When they do not and cannot have any relationship whatsoever, how can they exist together? When either arises the other ceases, even as when the day dawns, the darkness of night ceases to be. Self-knowledge can never become self-ignorance; even as the shadow can never become hot.

Brahman, which is the reality, can never become unreal even when one is aware of diversity; nor can the body ever acquire the nature of the infinite consciousness. Though the self is omnipresent, it is unaffected by the body, even as the lotus is not affected by water. Hence, even as space is not affected by the movement of air within it, this infinite self is not affected by conditions known as old age, death, pleasure and pain, existence and non-existence which pertain to the body. Even though all these bodies are seen by deluded understanding, they are all in the infinite consciousness alone even as waves appear on the ocean. The diversity and the perversity of the appearances belong to the reflecting medium: the truth or the infinite self is not affected by all this, even as the sun is not affected by the diversity and the agitation that its reflection undergoes in several mirrors or other reflecting media.

When the truth concerning the self is thus seen, the notion of self-ignorance vanishes instantly.

section VI.1 - chapter 6

sarvesam eva caitesam sthitaivaisa cid avyaya kintvabodhavasat asyah param
krpanatam gata (26)

Vasistha continued:

Correct understanding of the body and the intelligence that dwells in the body enables one to understand the entire creation in its material and its spiritual aspects, as easily as one sees objects illumined by a lamp. It is only when there is not this right understanding that deluded and wrong notions rise and flourish within one's heart - notions which are utterly devoid of substance. Befuddled by these wrong notions which arise in the absence of the light of true knowledge, one is constantly and restlessly carried hither and thither like a blade of grass in wind.

In the absence of the 'taste' (direct knowledge) of the cosmic intelligence, the senses endeavour to apprehend their objects and vainly imagine that such contact gives rise to meaningful experience! **Surely, the infinite and inexhaustible intelligence (consciousness) dwells in all these: however on account of the absence of self-knowledge, it appears to be ignorant of itself and therefore limited and finite.**

The life-force and its retinue function here merely to provide energy for the movements inherent in living, not with any other motive. In the absence of self-knowledge, all the talking and roaring which people indulge in are like the sound produced by a gun! They inevitably proceed towards destruction and do not lead to salutary results. Fools enjoy the fruits of their labour, not knowing that they are resting and sleeping on a rock that is burning hot.

Keeping company with such fools is like sitting in a forest on a tree which is about to be felled. Whatever you do for the sake of such people is like beating the air with a rod. What is given to them is thrown into mud, and to converse with them is as meaningful as the dog barking at the sky.

Ignorance of the self is the source of all troubles and calamities. Tell me, O Rama, is there a single trouble that does not spring from ignorance of the self? This entire creation is pervaded by ignorance which sustains it. One who is ignorant is visited again and again by terrible sorrow and rarely by pleasure. Sources of sorrow like body, wealth and wife do not cease in the case of one who is ignorant of the self. For there is no end to the ignorance of one who firmly believes that the body is the self: how can true self-knowledge arise in him? As long as such ignorance rules, the fool falls again and again. His sorrow is unceasing. Even the cool rays of the moon are experienced as poisonous fumes by him. The portals of hell are wide open, eager to receive such a fool.

section VI.1 - chapter 6

janma balyam vrajatyeta yauvanam yuvata jaram jara maranamabhyeti
mudhasyaiva punah punah (45)

Vasistha continued:

It is only in the eyes of the fool that the poisonous creeper (woman) bears the blossoms of restless eyes and pearl-like smiling teeth. For only in the heart of the wicked grows the dreadful tree of infatuation providing an abode for countless birds (sinful tendencies). In the forest of his vicious heart rages the fire of hate. His mind is flooded with jealousy giving rise to the growth of the weeds of destructive criticism of others; the only lotus his heart knows is envy, which is sought by the bees of endless worry.

Death is meant only for such vicious fools. **Birth and childhood lead to youth, youth leads to old age, and old age ends in death - and all these are repeatedly experienced by the ignorant.** The ignorant man is like a pot tied to the rope known as the world, with which he is now lowered into the blind well of samsara and now lifted up. This very ocean of world-appearance is like the footprint of a calf to the wise and an unfathomable and endless sea of sorrow to the ignorant. Even as a caged bird is unable to find freedom, the ignorant man devoted to the fulfilment of his appetites is unable to find release from bondage. His mind, which is befuddled with apparently countless tendencies and conditioning, is unable to see clearly the revolving wheel of life and death.

In order to capture and to hold in bondage the ignorant person, his own infatuation spreads out throughout the world a whole network of illusory relationships. With a small piece of flesh (the eyes) the foolish man sees a little particle of earth which he regards as mountains, lakes, forests and cities. Ignorance is a mighty tree which has spread its branches in all directions, creating countless leaves of illusory objects. On that tree dwell numerous birds (like ever so many experiences of pleasure of the ignorant). Births are its leaves, actions are its buds, merit and demerit are the fruits, wealth and auspiciousness are its flowers.

This ignorance is like the moon which rises when the sun of wisdom has set; repeated births are the rays of the moon; and this ignorance is the lord of defects and imperfection. Tendencies and habits are the nectarine rays showered by this moon; the birds of hope and desire drink of this nectar. In the darkness of ignorance, the fool thinks he experiences pleasure or happiness in the objects of this world.

The external appearance of sweetness in the objects is caused by ignorance. For all these objects have a beginning and an end, they are limited, they are perishable.

section VI.1 - chapter 7

kalah kavalitanantajagatpakvaphalo pyayam ghasmaracarajatharah kalpair api na
trpyati (15)

Vasistha continued:

They whom you regard here as radiant women decked with pearls and other jewels are but the creation of your own delusion: they are the ripples that arise in the ocean of lust. It is this delusion that sees attractiveness and seductive qualities in what is but a modification of flesh, fat, skin, etc., and even makes them appear charming; and it is on account of such delusion that their breasts are described as golden pots and their lips as the source of nectar, etc.

It is on account of delusion that one seeks wealth and prosperity which are sweet in the beginning to the dull-witted, which are the cause of the pairs of opposites (happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and pain, success and failure) in the middle and which come to an end very soon. From the pursuit of prosperity arise countless branches of pleasure and numberless branches of unhappiness.

This delusion flows like a river from beginningless time and it is muddied and darkened by useless actions and their reactions. It gives rise to repeated births and it swells more and more on account of the bitter reactions or the consequences of actions calculated to bring pleasure or happiness.

Such actions are like an ill-wind that raises a cloud of dust whose particles are physical and mental illness, old age and the various relationships. **All these lead to death (or the passage of time) which has an insatiable and voracious appetite and which consumes all the worlds when they are ripe, as it were.**

Youth is haunted by the goblins of worries and anxieties which dance when the wisdom-moon does not shine; and youth proceeds towards denser darkness of delusion. One's tongue (the faculty of speech) is overworked in the service of the common and uncultured folk here and it grows debilitated.

In the meantime, poverty spreads its thousands of branches yielding the fruits of unhappiness and hard labour. Yet, greed which is empty and insubstantial and which is destructive of one's own spiritual elevation, continues to proclaim victory in the darkness of delusion.

Stealthily the cat of senility catches the mouse of youth.

This creation is essenceless; yet, it gains a false reality. It even grows the fruits of dharma (righteous living) and artha (pursuit of prosperity). This world enveloped by the sky and endowed with the eyes of the sun and the moon is upheld by the delusion of its substantiality. In the lake of this world-appearance, lilies known as bodies blossom and they are resorted to by the bees known as life-forces.

section VI.1 - chapter 7

varaki srstisaphari sphuranti bhavapalvale krtantavrddhagrhdhrena sathena
vinigrhyate (32)

Vasistha continued:

The decadent concept of the world-existence lies imprisoned in the senses, bound by self-limitation and conditioning and by the powerful thread of hopes and desires. This world-appearance is like a delicate creeper which constantly trembles in the wind of the movement of prana or life force and which constantly sheds all kinds of beings, abandoning them to their destruction.

There are many noble people who have risen above the quagmire of this hell known as world-existence and, devoid of all doubt, rejoice for a little while. There are the divine beings who dwell like lotuses in the blue expanse of the firmament.

In this creation, actions are like the lotus which is polluted by vain desire for the fruits of such actions, which is caught in the net of psychological conditioning and which is endowed with the perfume of dynamism. But, **this world-appearance is like a little fish which comes into being in this finite space and which is soon swallowed by the obstinate and invincible old vulture known as krtanta (the end or conclusion of action)**. Yet, diverse scenes arise and cease day after day, as ripples and waves appear and disappear on the surface of the ocean. The potter known as time keeps all these revolving like the potter's wheel. Innumerable forests known as creation have been reduced to ashes by the forest-fire known as time. Such is the state of this creation. But since the ignorant are bound fast to their own false notions, neither the transiency of the world nor the hard blow they suffer in their life is able to awaken them.

This psychological conditioning or self-limitation persists during the whole world-cycle, like the body of the chief of the gods, Indra. As if by accident, in the midst of all this, there occur divine manifestations in whom the purest nature is revealed.

Whereas the immobile creatures stand contemplating the mystery of time, as it were, the mobile creatures swayed by the twin-forces of attraction and repulsion, love and hate, and afflicted by the terrible illness known as pleasure and pain, old age and death, become debilitated and decadent. Among the latter, the worms and vermin silently and patiently endure the fruits of their own past evil actions, contemplating them, as it were, all the time. But the imperceptible time (or death) which is beyond even contemplation devours all and everything.

section VI.1 - chapter 7

yah sampado yaduta santatam apadas ca yadbalya yauvana jara maranopatapah yan majjanam ca sukhadukha paramparabhir ajinanativratimirasya vibhutayastah (47)

Vasistha continued:

The trees stand, the very picture of misery, having to endure cold, wind and heat, yet laden with flowers and yielding fruits. Caught in the lotus known as this world, beings like bees hum restlessly all the time.

This whole universe is, as it were, the begging-bowl of Kali (suggestive of the feminine of kala which means time and death!), the goddess whose nature is action, motion. This Kali constantly seeks to fill the bowl with all the creatures of this world and to offer them again and again to her lord.

This universe can be compared to an aged woman. The darkness of self-ignorance is her hair. The sun and the moon are her restless eyes. Her internal and external nature include the gods Brahma, Visnu, Indra, the earth, the mountains, etc. The truth concerning Brahman the absolute is the treasure-chest hidden in her chest. Her mother is the consciousness-energy (or, she is the mother known as consciousness-energy). She is extremely agitated and inconstant like a cloud. The stars are her teeth. Dawn and dusk are her lips. The lotus is her palm. The sky is her mouth. The seven oceans are her pearl-necklace. She is clad in the garment of the blue firmament. The pole is her navel. The forests are the hair on her body. This aged woman is born again and again: she dies again and again.

All this takes place in the light of consciousness. In this there are gods who are created within the twinkling of an eye by the creator Brahma; and there are beings who are destroyed by the very act of Brahma closing his eyes. In that supreme consciousness, there are Rudras who commence and conclude thousands of time-cycles within the twinkling of an eye. And there are other deities who within the twinkling of an eye create and destroy deities like Rudra! Surely, such manifestation is infinite. What is impossible for the infinite consciousness to bring about in infinite space? However, all these are but imagination which is a manifestation of ignorance. **All prosperity and all adversity, childhood, youth, old age and death, as also suffering, what is known as being immersed in happiness and unhappiness and all the rest of it: all these are the extensions of the dense darkness of ignorance.**

section VI.1 - chapter 8

ajnanad vrddhim ayati tadeva syat phalam sphutam jnanena yati samvittis
tameva nte prayacchati (6)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, I shall now narrate to you how this creeper known as ignorance creeps in all directions. This creeper flourishes in the forest known as world-appearance and it is rooted in the mountain of consciousness. The three worlds are its body; and the entire universe is its skin. Pleasure and pain, being and non-being, wisdom and ignorance are its roots and fruits. When that ignorance entertains the notion of pleasure, pleasure is experienced; when it entertains the notion of pain, pain is experienced. When the notion of being prevails, there is being; when the notion of non-being prevails, there is non-being. **That ignorance expands by means of ignorance, and yields greater ignorance; when it seeks wisdom, it feeds on wisdom and grows into wisdom in the end.**

This creeper of ignorance is made manifest in its various pastimes and psychological states or modes. Somewhere at some time it falls on (comes into contact with) wisdom and is purified; but it gets attached again. It is the source of all emotions and sense-experiences. Its sap is the memory of past experiences. Vicara or enquiry into the nature of the self is the termite that eats it away. The stars and the planets that shine in the firmament are the flowers of this creeper.

This creeper is shaken by the mind. It is resorted to by the birds of notions. The deadly snakes of the senses encircle it. The python of prohibited action dwells in it. It is illumined by the light of the heaven. It is filled with the livelihood of living beings. It contains other things, too: all those things that delude the foolish, all those things that promote wisdom, and an infinite variety of living beings. In it are they who are born, who are about to be born, who are dead and who are about to die. It is sometimes partially severed; it is elsewhere completely uncut (in the case of the totally immature persons); but it is impossible to destroy it altogether. The past, present and future are in it. It is a deadly creeper which makes one senseless; but it dies when it is resolutely examined.

This creeper itself is manifest as all these: the stars and the planets, the living beings, the plants, the elements, heaven and earth, the gods as well as the worms and vermin. Whatever there is in this universe is pervaded by this ignorance. When it is transcended, you will attain self-knowledge.

section VI.1 - chapter 9

udetyavidya vidyayah saliladiva budbudah vidyayam liyate vidya payasiva hi
budbudah (16)

Rama asked:

Lord, I am puzzled by your statement that even the gods like Visnu and Siva are part of this ignorance or avidya. Pray explain that statement further.

Vasistha replied:

The truth or existence-consciousness-bliss absolute is beyond thought and understanding, it is supreme peace and omnipresent, it transcends imagination and description. There arises naturally in it the faculty of conceptualisation. This self-understanding is considered to be threefold: subtle, middling and gross. The intellect that comprehends these three regards them as satva, rajas and tamas. The three together constitute what is known as prakrti or nature. Avidya or ignorance is prakrti or nature, and it is threefold. This is the source of all beings; beyond it is the supreme.

These three qualities of nature (satva, rajas and tamas) are subdivided again into three each, i.e. the subtle, middling and gross of each of these. Thus you have nine categories. These nine qualities constitute the entire universe.

The sages, the ascetics, the perfected ones, the dwellers of the netherworld, the celestials, the gods - these are the satvic part of ignorance. Among these the celestials and the dwellers of the netherworld form the gross (tamas), the sages form the middling (rajas) and the gods Visnu, Siva, etc. form the satvic part. They who come under the category of satva are not born again: hence they are considered liberated. They exist as long as this world lasts. The others (like the sages), who are liberated while living (jivanmukta) shed their body in course of time, reach the abode of the gods, dwell there during the period of the existence of the world and then they are liberated. Thus this part of avidya or ignorance has become vidya or self-knowledge! **Avidya arises in vidya just as ripples arise in the ocean; and avidya dissolves in vidya just as ripples dissolve in the water.**

The distinction between the ripples and the water is unreal and verbal. Even so, the distinction between ignorance and knowledge is unreal and verbal. There is neither ignorance here nor even knowledge! When you cease to see knowledge and ignorance as two distinct entities, what exists, alone exists. The reflection of vidya in itself is considered avidya. When these two notions are abandoned, what remains is the truth: it may be something or it may be nothing! It is omnipotent, it is more empty than space and yet it is not empty because it is full of consciousness. Like the space within a pot, it is indestructible and everywhere. It is the reality in all things. Just as a magnet makes iron filings move by its very presence, it causes cosmic motion, without intending to do so. Hence, it is said that it does nothing at all.

section VI.1 - chapter 10

parijnaya parityago vasananam ya uttamah sattasamanyarupatvam tat
kaivlyapadam viduh (14)

Vasistha continued:

Thus, all this world-appearance with all the mobile and immobile beings in it is naught whatsoever. Nothing has really become physical or material. If conceptualisation, which gives rise to notions of being and non-being, is eliminated, then it is realised that all these jivas (the individual souls), etc., are empty expressions. All the relationships that arise in one's heart on account of ignorance are seen to be non-existent. Even when the rope is mistaken for a snake, no one can be bitten by that snake!

It is absence of self-knowledge that is known as ignorance or delusion. When the self is known, one reaches the shores of limitless intelligence. When consciousness objectifies itself and regards itself as its own object of observation, there is avidya or ignorance. When this subject-object notion is transcended, all the veils that envelop the reality are removed. The individual is nothing more than the personalised mind. Individuality ceases when that mind ceases; it remains as long as the notion of a personality remains. So long as there is a pot, there is also the notion of a space enclosed within or confined to that pot; when it is broken, the infinite space alone is, even where the pot-space was imagined before.

Rama asked:

Lord, please tell me how this cosmic intelligence becomes things like insentient rocks.

Vasistha replied:

In these substances like rocks, consciousness remains immobile having abandoned the thinking faculty but not having been able to reach the state of no-mind. It is like the state of deep sleep, far away from the state of liberation.

Rama asked again:

But, if they exist as in a state of deep sleep without any concepts or percepts, I think they are close to liberation!

Vasistha replied:

Moksa, liberation or the realisation 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.

section VI.1 - chapter 10

yatra sti vasanabijam tat susuptam na siddhaye nirbija vasana yatra tatturyam
siddhidam smrtam (20)

Vasistha continued:

As long as psychological limitation and conditioning remain in the heart, even in their subtle 'seed' state, it should be regarded as the deep sleep state; it gives rise to rebirth, even if a state of tranquillity is experienced and even when the mind appears to be self-absorbed. It is an inert state and is the source of unhappiness. Such is the state of the insentient and immobile objects like rocks, etc. They are not free of self-limitation (vasana), but self-limitation is hidden and latent in them even as flowers are latent in seeds (which sprout, grow and yield flowers) and pots in clay. **Where the seed of vasana (self-limitation, conditioning or tendency) exists, that state is like deep sleep; it is not perfection; when all vasanas are destroyed and even the potentiality of the vasana does not exist, that state is known as the fourth (beyond waking, dream and deep sleep) and transcendental state. It brings about perfection.** Vasana, fire, debt, disease, enemy, friendship (or glue), hate and poison - all these are bothersome even if a little residue is left after their removal.

On the other hand, if all the vasanas have been completely removed, then one is established in the state of pure being; whether such a one is alive or not, he is not again afflicted by sorrow. The cit-sakti (energy-consciousness) lies in immobile creatures, etc., as latent vasana. It is this cit-sakti that determines the nature of each object; it is the fundamental characteristic of the very molecules of each object.

If this is not realised as atma-sakti (the energy of the self or infinite consciousness), it creates the delusion of world-appearance; if it is realised as the truth, which is infinite consciousness, that realisation destroys all sorrow. The non-seeing of this truth is known as avidya or ignorance; such ignorance is the cause of the world-appearance which is the source of all the other phenomena. Even as the arising of the first thought disturbs sleep and ends it, the slightest awakening of inner intelligence destroys ignorance. When one approaches darkness with light in hand, wishing to behold it, the darkness vanishes; when the light of enquiry is turned on ignorance, ignorance disappears. When one begins to enquire "What is 'I' in this body composed of blood, flesh, bone, etc.?" at once ignorance ceases to be. That which has a beginning has an end. When all things that have a beginning are ruled out, what remains is the truth which is the cessation of avidya or ignorance. You may regard it as something or as no-thing: that is to be sought which is when ignorance has been dispelled. The sweetness one tastes is not experienced by another: listening to someone's description of the cessation of avidya does not give rise to your enlightenment. Each one has to realise it. In short, avidya is the belief that 'There exists a reality which is not Brahman or cosmic consciousness'; when there is the certain knowledge that 'This is indeed Brahman', avidya ceases.

section VI.1 - chapter 11

punah punar idam rama prabodhartham mayocyate abhyasena vina sadho na
bhyudety atmabhavana (1)

Vasistha continued:

Again and again I repeat all this, O Rama, for the sake of your spiritual awakening; the realisation of the self does not happen without such repetition (or spiritual practice). This ignorance, known as avidya or ajnana, has become dense by having been expressed and experienced by the senses in thousands of incarnations, within and outside this body. But, self-knowledge is not within the reach of the senses. It arises when the senses and the mind, which is the sixth sense, cease.

O Rama, live in this world firmly established in self-knowledge, even as king Janaka lives having known what there is to be known. In his case the truth is realised all the time whether he is active or not, whether he is awake or not. Lord Visnu incarnates in this world and takes on embodiment fully established in this self-knowledge. Even so, lord Siva remains established in self-knowledge; and lord Brahma, too, is established in self-knowledge. Be established in self-knowledge, O Rama, as they are.

Rama asked:

Lord, pray tell me what is the nature of the self-knowledge in which all these great ones are established.

Vasistha replied:

Rama, you know this already. Yet, in order to make it abundantly clear, you are asking about it again.

Whatever there is and whatever appears to be the world-jugglery, is but the pure Brahman or the absolute consciousness and naught else. Consciousness is Brahman, the world is Brahman, all the elements are Brahman, I am Brahman, my enemy is Brahman, my friends and relatives are Brahman, Brahman is the three periods of time, for all these are rooted in Brahman. Even as the ocean appears to be expanded on account of the waves, Brahman seems to be expanded on account of the infinite variety of substances. Brahman apprehends Brahman, Brahman experiences or enjoys Brahman, Brahman is made manifest in Brahman by the power of Brahman himself. Brahman is the form of my enemy who displeases me who am Brahman: when such is the case, who does what to another?

The modes of the mind like attraction and repulsion, likes and dislikes have been conjured up in imagination. These have been destroyed by the absence of thoughts. How then can they be magnified? When Brahman alone moves in all which is Brahman and Brahman alone unfolds as Brahman in all, what is joy and what is sorrow? Brahman is satisfied with Brahman, Brahman is established in Brahman. There is neither 'I' nor another!

section VI.1 - chapter 11

mano buddhirahankaras tanmatranindriyani ca brahmaiva sarvam nanatma sukham
duhkham na vidyate (43)

Vasistha continued:

All the objects in this world are Brahman. 'I' am Brahman. Such being the case, both passion and dispassion, craving and aversion, are but notions. Body is Brahman, death is Brahman, too: when they come together, as the real rope and the unreal imaginary snake come together, where is the cause for sorrow? Similarly, body is Brahman and pleasure is Brahman; where is the cause of rejoicing when body experiences pleasure? When, on the surface of the calm ocean, waves appear to be agitated, the waves do not cease to be water! Even when Brahman appears to be agitated (in the world-appearance), its essence is unchanged and there is neither 'I'-ness nor 'you'-ness. When the whirlpool dies in the water, nothing is dead! When the death-Brahman overtakes the body-Brahman, nothing is lost.

Water is capable of being calm and of being agitated: even so Brahman can be quiescent and restless. Such is its nature. It is ignorance or delusion that divides the one into 'This is sentient jiva' and 'This is insentient matter': the wise ones do not hold such erroneous views. Hence, to the ignorant the world is full of sorrow; to the wise the same world is full of bliss, even as to the blind man the world is dark and to one who has good eyesight the world is full of light.

When the one Brahman alone pervades all, there is no death nor is there a living person. The ripples play on the surface of the ocean, they are neither born nor do they die! Even so do the elements in this creation. 'This is' and 'This is not' - such deluded notions arise in the self. These notions are not really caused nor do they have a motivation, even as a crystal reflects different-coloured objects without a motivation.

The self remains itself even when the energies of the world throw up endless diversities on the surface of the ocean of consciousness. There are no independent entities in this world known as 'body' etc. What is seen as the body and what are seen as notions, the objects of perception, the perishable and the imperishable, the thoughts and feelings and their meaning - all these are Brahman in Brahman the infinite consciousness. There is duality only in the eyes of the deluded and ignorant. **The mind, the intellect, the ego-sense, the cosmic root-elements, the senses and all such diverse phenomena are Brahman only: pleasure and pain are illusions** (they are words without substance). Even as a single sound produced amongst hills echoes and re-echoes into diversity, the one cosmic consciousness experiences multiplicity within itself, with the notions 'This is I' and 'This is mind' etc. The one cosmic consciousness sees diversity within itself even as a dreamer dreams of diverse objects within himself.

section VI.1 - chapter 11

svayam prabhur mahatmaiva brahma bramavido viduh aparijnatam ajnanam ajnanam
iti kathyate (47)

Vasistha continued:

When gold is not recognised as such, it gets mixed up with the earth; when Brahman is not thus recognised, the impurity of ignorance arises. **The knower of Brahman declares that such a great one is himself the Lord and Brahman; in the case of the ignorant the non-recognition of the truth is known as ignorance.** (Or, it is the opinion of the knowers of Brahman that the very same Lord or supreme being is regarded as ignorance in the ignorant.) When gold is recognised as such it 'becomes' gold instantly; when Brahman is recognised as such it 'becomes' Brahman instantly.

Being omnipotent, Brahman becomes whatever it considers itself to be without any motivation for doing so. The knowers of Brahman declare that Brahman is the Lord, the great being which is devoid of action, the doer and the instrument, devoid of causal motivation and of transformation or change.

When this truth is not realised, it arises as ignorance in the ignorant, but when it is realised, the ignorance is dispelled. When a relative is not recognised as such, he is known as a stranger; when the relative is recognised, the notion of stranger is instantly dispelled.

When one knows that duality is illusory appearance, there is realisation of Brahman the absolute. When one knows 'This is not I', the unreality of the ego-sense is realised. From this arises true dispassion. 'I am verily Brahman' - when this truth is realised, the awareness of the truth arises in one, and all things are then merged in that awareness. When such notions as 'I' and 'you' are dispelled, the realisation of the truth arises and one realises that all this, whatever there is, is indeed Brahman.

What is the truth? 'I have nothing to do with sorrow, with actions, with delusion or desire. I am at peace, free from sorrow. I am Brahman' - such is the truth. 'I am free from all defects, I am the all, I do not seek anything nor do I abandon anything, I am Brahman' - such is the truth. 'I am blood, I am flesh, I am bone, I am the body, I am consciousness, I am the mind also, I am Brahman' - such is the truth. 'I am the firmament, I am space, I am the sun and the entire space, I am all things here, I am Brahman' - such is the truth. 'I am a blade of grass, I am the earth, I am a tree-stump, I am the forest, I am the mountain and the oceans, I am the non-dual Brahman' - such is the truth. 'I am the consciousness in which all things are strung and through whose power all beings engage themselves in all their activities; I am the essence of all things' - such is the truth.

This is certain: all things exist in Brahman, all things flow from it, all things are Brahman; it is omnipresent, it is the one self, it is the truth.

section VI.1 - chapter 11

cid atma brahma sat satyam rtam jna iti namabhih procyate sarvagam tattvam
cinmatram cetyavarjitam (66)

Vasistha continued:

The truth which is omnipresent and which is pure consciousness devoid of objectivity, is referred to variously as consciousness, self, Brahman existence, truth, order and also as pure knowledge. It is pure and in its light all beings know their own self. I am the Brahman which is pure consciousness after its own appearance as the mind, the intellect, the senses and all other such notions have been negated. I am imperishable consciousness or Brahman in whose light alone all the elements and the entire universe shine. I am the consciousness or Brahman, sparks from whom arise continually radiating reflected consciousness throughout the universe. Even when seen by a pure mind, it is expressed in silence. Though it appears to be in contact with the ceaseless experiences of the ego-sense of countless beings who thus derive the delight that is of Brahman, yet it is beyond the reach of these and untouched by them. For, though it is truly the ultimate source of all happiness and delight, it is of the nature of deep sleep (devoid of diversity), peaceful and pure. In subject-object relationship and the consequent experience of pleasure the bliss of Brahman is infinitesimally experienced.

I am the eternal Brahman free from the wrong notions of pleasure and pain, etc., and therefore pure; I am the consciousness in which there is true and pure experiencing. I am that pure consciousness in which the pure intelligence functions without thought-interference. I am that Brahman which is the intelligent energy that functions in all the elements (earth, water, fire, etc.) I am the pure consciousness which manifests as the characteristic taste, etc., of the different fruits.

I am the changeless Brahman which is realised when both elation at having gained what one desires and depression at not having gained it are transcended. When the sun shines and the objects of the world are seen in that light, I am the pure consciousness that is in the middle between these two, and which is the very self of the light and of the illumined object. I am that pure consciousness or Brahman which exists unbroken in the waking, dream and deep sleep states and which is therefore the fourth or the transcendental truth.

Even as the taste of the juice of sugarcane cultivated in a hundred different fields is uniform and same, even so the consciousness indwelling all beings is the same - that consciousness I am. I am that conscious energy (cit-sakti) which is larger than the universe and yet subtler than the minutest atomic particle and therefore invisible. I am the consciousness that exists everywhere like butter in milk, and whose very nature is experiencing.

section VI.1 - chapter 11

akhilamidamaham mamaiva sarvam tvahamapi na hamathetaracca na ham iti
viditavato jagatkrtam me sthiramathava stu gatajvaro bhavami (112)

Vasistha continued:

Even as ornaments made of gold are only gold, I am the pure consciousness in the body. I am the self that pervades all things within and without. I am that consciousness which reflects all experiences without itself undergoing any change and which is untouched by impurity.

I salute that consciousness which is the bestower of the fruits of all thoughts, the light that shines in all luminaries, the supreme gain; that consciousness pervades all the limbs, ever awake and alert, vibrates constantly in all substances and is ever homogeneous and undisturbed as if it were in deep sleep though wide awake. That consciousness is the reality that bestows the individual characteristic on each and every substance in the universe and though within all and so nearest to all, is far on account of its inaccessibility to the mind and the senses. Continuous and homogeneous in waking, dreaming, deep sleep and in the fourth (transcendental) state of consciousness, it shines when all thoughts have ceased, when all excitements have ceased and when all hate has ceased. I salute that consciousness which is devoid of desire and ego-sense and cannot be divided into parts.

I have attained that consciousness which is the indweller of all; and yet though all, is beyond diversity. It is the cosmic net in which the infinite number of beings are caught like birds; in it all these worlds manifest, though in fact, nothing has ever happened. That consciousness is of the nature of being and non-being and the resting place of all that is good and divine. It plays the roles of all beings and it is the source of all affection and peace, though it is forever united and liberated. It is the life of all living beings, the untreated nectar that cannot be stolen by anyone, the ever existent reality. That consciousness which is reflected in sense-experiences is yet devoid of them and cannot be experienced by them. In it, all beings rejoice, though it itself is pure bliss beyond all joy; like the space but beyond space; glorious yet devoid of all expansions and glory. Though seemingly it does all, it does nothing.

All this is 'I' and all this is mine. But I am not and I am not 'other than I'. I have realised this. Let this world be an illusion or substantial. I am free from the fever of distress.

section VI.1 - chapter 12 13

samsarottarane yukttir yogasabdena kathyate tam viddhi dviprakaram tvam
cittopasamadharminim (13/3)

Vasistha continued:

Established in this realisation of the truth, the great sages lived for ever in peace and equanimity. They were free from psychological predisposition and hence they did not seek nor reject either life or death. They remained unshaken in their direct experience like another Meru-mountain. Yet, they roamed the forests, islands and cities, they travelled to the heavens as if they were angels or gods; they conquered their enemies and they ruled as emperors - they engaged themselves in diverse activities in accordance with scriptural injunctions as they realised that such was appropriate conduct. They enjoyed the pleasure of life; they visited pleasure gardens and were entertained by celestial damsels. They duly fulfilled the duties of the household life. They even engaged themselves in great wars. They retained their equanimity even in those disastrous situations where others would have lost their peace and balanced state of mind.

Their mind had fully entered the state of satva or divinity and was therefore utterly free from delusion, from egoistic notion ('I do this') and from the desire for achievement, though they did not reject such achievement or the rewards for their actions. They did not indulge in vain exultation when they defeated their enemies nor did they give way to despair and grief when they were defeated. They were engaged in natural activities, allowing all actions to proceed from them non-volitionally.

Follow their example, O Rama. Let your personality (ego-sense) be egoless and let appropriate actions spontaneously proceed from you. For the infinite indivisible consciousness alone is the truth; and it is that which has put on this appearance of diversity, which is neither real nor unreal. Hence live completely unattached to anything here. Why do you grieve as if you are an ignoramus?

Rama said: Lord, by your grace I am fully awakened to the reality. My delusion has vanished. I shall do as you bid me to do. Surely, I rest peacefully in the state of one who is liberated even while living. Pray, Lord, tell me how one reaches this state of liberation by the restraint of the life-force (prana) and by the annihilation of all self-limitations or psychological conditioning.

Vasistha continued: **They call it yoga which is the method by which this cycle of birth and death ceases. It is the utter transcendence of the mind and it is of two types.** Self-knowledge is one type; restraint of the life-force is another. However, yoga has come to mean only the latter. Yet, both the methods lead to the same result. To some self-knowledge through enquiry is difficult; to others yoga is difficult. But my conviction is that the path of enquiry is easy for all, because self-knowledge is the ever-present truth. I shall now describe to you the method of yoga.

section VI.1 - chapter 14 15

sa yatha jivati khagas tatheha yadi jivyate tadbhavej jivitam punyam dirgham
codayameva ca (14/11)

Vasistha continued:

In the infinite and indivisible consciousness there is a mirage-like world-appearance in one corner, as it were. The creator Brahma, who is the apparent cause for this world-appearance, dwells there. I am his mind-born son. Once when I was in the heaven of Indra, I heard from sages like Narada the stories of long-lived beings.

In the course of this discussion, the great sage Satatapa said:

"In one corner of the mount Meru there is a wish-fulfilling tree known as Cuta, whose leaves are made of gold and silver. On that tree there dwells a crow known as Bhusunda who is utterly free from all attraction and aversion. There is none on earth or in heaven who has lived longer than he has. He is not only long-lived but he is also an enlightened and peaceful person. **If any of you can live as he lives, that shall be regarded as a highly laudable and meritorious life.**"

I heard these words. I was greatly inspired. Soon I set out to meet this Bhusunda. Instantly I reached that peak of the mount Meru where Bhusunda lived. The mountain was radiant, comparable to the lustre of the yogi who through the practice of yoga has 'opened' the psychic portal at the crown of the head and at the upper end of the nadi known as the susumna (it is also known as Meru). The peak reached right up to heaven.

There I saw the tree known as Cuta whose flowers and leaves were radiant like jewels. It was a heaven-scraping tree. The celestials who dwelt on it filled the atmosphere with their songs. Perfected sages who could assume any form they liked also dwelt on it. It was an enormous tree of immeasurable dimensions.

I saw the different types of birds that dwelt on that tree. I saw the famous swan which is the vehicle for the creator Brahma. I saw the bird Suka which is the vehicle of the fire-god and which was learned in the scriptures. I saw the peacock which is the vehicle of the god Kartikeya. I also saw the bird known as Bharadvaja, as also other birds. And at a great distance on that tree I saw crows. Among them I saw the great Bhusunda who sat there in utter tranquillity and peace. He was beautiful, radiant and peaceful.

This was the famous Bhusunda, the long-lived. He had lived through several world-cycles. He remembered even those who lived aeons ago. He remained silent. He was free from I-ness and mine-ness. He was the friend and relation of all.

section VI.1 - chapter 16 17

aho bhagavata smakam prasado darsitas cirat darsanamrtasekena yat sikttah
saddruma vayam (16/10)

Vasistha continued:

I descended right in front of Bhusunda. He knew that I was Vasistha and welcomed me appropriately. By his mere thought-force he materialised flowers with which he worshipped me. He made me sit near him.

Bhusunda then said to me:

"I consider it a great blessing that after a long time you have given us your darshan (visit). Bathed in the nectar of your darshan (presence and company), we have been renewed like a good tree. You are the greatest among those who are worthy of adoration: and you have come here only as a result of my accumulated merit. Pray tell me the immediate reason for this visit. Surely, in your heart there shines the light of self-knowledge kindled by continuous and intense enquiry into the nature of this unreal world-appearance? What is the purpose of your visit? Ah, by the very sight of your blessed feet, I have divined your purpose. You have come here in pursuit of your enquiry into the secrets of extreme longevity. Yet, I would love to hear the purpose from your own lips."

I replied as follows:

"You are truly blessed in that you enjoy the supreme peace all around you, in that you are endowed with the highest wisdom (self-knowledge) and in that you are not caught in the net of illusion known as world-appearance. Pray enlighten me in regard to a few facts concerning yourself.

"In what clan were you born? How did you acquire the knowledge of that which alone deserves to be known? What is your age now? Do you remember anything concerning the past? Who is it that ordained that you shall be long-lived and that you shall live on this tree?"

Bhusunda replied:

Since you ask these questions concerning me, O sage, I shall duly answer them. Pray listen attentively. The story I am about to narrate is so inspiring that it will destroy the sins of those who relate it and those who listen to it.

Having said this, O Rama, Bhusunda began the following narration. His words were grave and polite. They had power for he had risen beyond all desires and the pursuit of pleasure. His heart was pure for it had reached its own fulfilment. He was fully aware of the birth and the extinction of the creations. His words were sweet. He had the dignity of the creator Brahma himself. His words were like nectar. And he commenced his discourse which follows.

section VI.1 - chapter 18

atheyamayayau tasam kathavasaratah katha asman umapatir devah kim pasyaty avahelaya (27)

Bhusunda said:

In this universe, there is a great divinity known as Hara who is the god of gods and who is adored by all the gods in heaven. His consort occupies one half of his body. The holy river Ganga flows from his matted locks. On his head also shines the radiant moon. A deadly cobra encircles his neck, apparently deprived of its poison by the nectar that flows from the moon. His sole adornment is the sacred ash which is smeared all over his body. He dwells in cemeteries or cremation grounds. He wears a garland of skulls. His amulets and bracelets are snakes.

By a mere glance, he destroys the demons. He is devoted to the welfare of the entire universe. Hills and mountains which seem to be forever immersed in meditation, are the symbols which represent him. His lieutenants are goblins that have heads and hands like razors and that have faces like a bear, a camel, a mouse etc. He is radiant with three eyes. These goblins bow down to him. And the female deities who feed on the beings in the fourteen worlds dance in front of him.

These female deities are also endowed with faces resembling various animals. They dwell on the peaks of mountains, in space, in different worlds, in crematoriums and in the bodies of embodied ones. Of these female deities, eight are principal ones: they are Jaya, Vijaya, Jayanti, Aparajita, Siddha, Raktta, Alambusa and Utpala. All the others follow these eight deities. Of these, the seventh Alambusa is the most famous. Her vehicle is the crow which is extremely powerful and which is blue in colour.

Once upon a time, all these female deities assembled in space. They duly worshipped the divinity known as Tumburu (which is one of the aspects of Rudra) and engaged themselves in left-handed ritual which reveals the supreme truth. They adored Tumburu and also the deity known as Bhairava and they began to perform various rites intoxicated, as they were, by wine. **Soon they began to discuss an important question: how is it that the Lord of Uma (Hara) treats us contemptuously?** They made up their mind thus: "We shall demonstrate our prowess in such a way that he does not do so hereafter." They overwhelmed Uma by their magic powers and separated her from her lord Hara. All the female deities sang and danced in ecstasy. Some drank, some sang, some laughed, some roared, some ran, some fell and some ate flesh. These intoxicated deities began to create disorder in the whole world.

section VI.1 - chapter 19

tata jnatamalam jneyam brahmya devyah prasadatah kintv ekantasthiteh sthanam
abhivanchama uttamam (25)

Bhusunda continued:

While the deities were thus besporting and celebrating, their vehicles, too, got themselves intoxicated and began to dance. All the female swans danced along with the crow (Canda) which was Alambusa's vehicle. While these female swans were thus dancing, there arose in them the desire to mate. One by one, all the swans mated with the crow, as they were all drunk. Soon they became pregnant.

When the celebrations were over, all the deities went over to the lord Hara (Siva): they offered him the body of Uma which they had converted into food by their magic power. The Lord knew the truth and was annoyed with the deities. And they re-created Uma as she was before and offered her to the Lord, who regained his consort. All the deities returned to their respective abodes. The swans which were the vehicles of Brahmi informed her of everything that happened.

The goddess Brahmi said to them:

"Since you are all big with child, you will not be able to perform your duties. Hence, for some time go where you please." Having said this, the goddess sat in deep contemplation.

The swans laid twenty-one eggs at the proper time and they were soon hatched. Thus twenty-one of us were born in the family of Canda the crow. Along with our mothers, we adored the goddess Brahma. By her grace, we attained self-knowledge and liberation. We then approached our father who fondly embraced us all. All of us then worshipped the goddess Alambusa.

Canda said:

"Children, have you gone beyond the dragnet known as the world-appearance after having cut the shackles of vasana or mental conditioning? Or else, come let us adore the goddess by whose grace you will attain the highest wisdom."

We replied: "Father, we have gained the knowledge that is worth gaining, by the grace of the goddess Brahmi. We seek a secluded and excellent place to dwell."

Canda said: "There is an excellent mountain in the world known as Meru which is the support for the fourteen worlds and for all the beings that dwell in them. All the gods and sages dwell on it. On it is the wishfulfilling tree. On one of its branches I once built a nest, while the goddess Alambusa was in deep meditation. It is beautiful and excellent in every way. Children, go to that nest and live in it. You will never encounter any hindrance."

In accordance with our father's instructions, all of us came here and took up our abode in that nest.

section VI.1 - chapter 20

tatastatasca paryastam luthitam na ca vrttisu na paramrsta tattvartham
asmakam bhagavan manah (35)

Bhusunda continued:

There was a world in days of yore which is not far beyond our memory, for we witnessed it ourselves.

Vasistha asked:

What happened to your brothers, for I see only you here?

Bhusunda continued:

A very long time has passed, O sage, and in course of time my brothers abandoned their physical existence and ascended to the heaven of lord Siva. Indeed, even long-lived persons who may be holy and saintly and strong are consumed in course of time by Time (or death).

Vasistha asked again:

How is it that you have remained unaffected by the heat and the cold and the wind and the fire?

Bhusunda continued:

Truly, to be embodied as a crow held in contempt by the people is not a happy state, though the Creator has amply provided for the survival of even the humble crow. But, we have remained immersed in the self, happy and contented: hence we have survived in spite of ever so many calamities. We have remained firmly established in the self, having abandoned vain activities that are but torment of the body and the mind. To this physical body there is misery neither in life nor in death; hence we remain as we are, not seeking anything other than what is.

We have seen the fate of the worlds. We have mentally abandoned identification with the body. Established in self-knowledge and remaining on this tree I see the passage of time. Through the practice of pranayama I have risen above the division of time. Hence, I am at peace within my heart and I am not affected by the events of the world. Let all beings vanish or let them come into existence; we have no fear at all. Let all these beings enter into the ocean known as Time (or death); but we are seated on the shores of that ocean and are therefore unaffected. We neither accept nor reject; we appear to be but we are not what appears to be. Thus do we remain on this tree.

Though we engage ourselves in diverse activities, we do not get drowned in mental modifications and we never lose contact with the reality.

Lord, that nectar for which the gods churned the ocean is inferior to the nectarine blessing that flows from the very presence of sages like you. I consider nothing more praiseworthy than the company of sages who are free from all cravings and desires. Holy one, even though I have already attained self-knowledge, I consider that my birth has been truly fulfilled, in that today I have seen you and I have enjoyed your company.

section VI.1 - chapter 21

brahmannyatiresa hi durlanghya paramesvari mayedrsena vai bhavyam bhavyam
anyais tu tadsaih (23)

Bhusunda continued:

This wish-fulfilling tree is not shaken by the various natural calamities nor by the cataclysms caused by living beings. There have been several of the latter when demons have tried to destroy or overwhelm the earth, as also when the Lord has intervened and rescued the earth from the grip of the demons. During all these, this tree has remained unaffected. Even the flood and the scorching heat of the sun attendant upon cosmic dissolution have not succeeded in shaking this tree. On account of this, we who dwell on this tree have also escaped harm: evil overtakes one who lives in an unholy place.

Vasistha asked:

But, at the end of the life of the cosmos, when everything is dissolved, how have you managed to survive?

Bhusunda replied:

During that period, O sage, I abandon this nest, even as an ungrateful man abandons his friend. Then I remain united with cosmic space, totally free from all thoughts and mental modifications. When the twelve cosmic suns pour unbearable heat upon this creation, I practise the varuni-dharana and remain unaffected. (Varuna is the lord of waters: varuni dharana is contemplation of Varuna.) When the wind blows with such force as to uproot even mountains, I practise the parvati-dharana and remain unaffected. (Parvata is mountain and parvati dharana is contemplation of the mountain.) When the whole universe is flooded with the waters of cosmic dissolution, I practise vayu-dharana and remain unaffected. (Vayu is wind and vayu dharana is contemplation of the wind.) Then I remain as if in deep sleep till the beginning of the next cosmic cycle. When the new Creator begins to create a new cosmos, I resume my abode in this nest.

Vasistha asked:

Why is it that others are not able to do what you have done?

Bhusunda replied:

O sage, the will of the supreme being cannot be transgressed: it is his will that I should be like this and that the others should be as they are. One cannot fathom nor measure what has to be. In accordance with the nature of each being, that which is to be, comes to be. Therefore, in accordance with my thought-force or conception, this tree is found in every world-cycle at this place in this manner.

section VI.1 - chapter 21

drstanekavidhanapa sargasangagamamah kim kim smarasi kalyana citramasmin
jagatkrame (27)

Vasistha asked:

You enjoy such longevity as would suggest that you have attained final liberation! And you are wise, brave and you are a great yogi. **Pray, tell me what extraordinary events you remember, relating to this and previous world-cycles.**

Bhusunda said:

I remember that once upon a time there was nothing on this earth, no trees and plants, not even mountains. For a period of eleven thousand years, the earth was covered by lava. In those days, there was neither day nor night below the polar region: for in the rest of the earth neither the sun nor the moon shone. Only one half of the polar region was illumined.

Then demons ruled the earth: they were deluded, powerful and prosperous. The earth was their playground.

Apart from the polar region, the rest of the earth was covered with water. And then for a very long time, the whole earth was covered with forests, except the polar region. Then there arose great mountains, but without any human inhabitants. For a period of ten thousand years, the earth was covered with the corpses of the demons.

At one time, the gods who used to roam the skies had vanished from sight on account of fear. And the earth had become more like a single mountain! I remember many such events: but let me narrate to you what is important.

During my life-time, I have seen the appearance and disappearance of countless Manus (the progenitor of the human race). At one time the world was devoid of the gods and the demons, but was one radiant cosmic egg. At another time, the earth was populated by brahmanas (members of the priest-class) who were addicted to alcohol, sudras (servant-class) who ridiculed the gods, and by polyandrous women. I also remember another epoch when the earth was covered with forests, when the ocean could not even be imagined and when human beings were spontaneously created. At another time, there was neither mountain nor earth; the gods and the sages dwelt in space. At another time, there were neither the gods nor the sages,.. etc.; darkness prevailed everywhere.

First there arose the notion of creation. Then light and the division of the universe arose. Then one after the other the diverse beings were created, as also the stars and the planets.

I saw that during one epoch it was lord Visnu (generally considered the protector) who created the universe, during another it was Brahma who created the universe and in another it was Siva who became the creator.

section VI.1 - chapter 22

arkader rksanancaran mervadisthanaka disah samsthanam anyatha tasmin sthite
yanti diso nyatha (46)

Bhusunda continued:

Of course I remember sages like you, goddesses like Gauri, demons like Hiranyaksa, kings like Sibi, of the recent past and of a bygone age. O sage, this is the eighth time you have taken birth as sage Vasistha, and this is the eighth time we meet each other. At one time, you were born of space, at another of water, at another of wind, at another of a mountain and then of fire.

Whatever is happening in the present creation has happened exactly in the same manner during three previous creations. But I remember the events of ten such creations. (Note: Then follows a list of major world-events all of which were not repeated all the time in every creation, accounting for the differences in the number of times Bhusunda witnessed them. A few of them are reproduced here to illustrate this. In every age, there have been sages who propounded the truth and revealed the Vedas. There have been Vyasas who wrote down the legends (or prehistoric tales). And, time and again, Valmiki composed the sacred Ramayana. In addition to that, a sacred book of wisdom which contains your instructions to Rama has also been recorded by a sage known as Valmiki: originally it was of one hundred thousand verses. In this age, too, it will again be recorded by Valmiki for the twelfth time. There was an equally great scripture known as 'Bharata' which has been forgotten.

In order to destroy the demons, lord Visnu takes birth again and again as Rama: he will be born in this age for the eleventh time. And lord Visnu will incarnate as Krsna for the sixteenth time.

However, all this is illusory appearance; the world as such is not a reality. It seems to be real to the deluded mind. It arises and it ceases in the twinkling of an eye like ripples on the ocean. The three worlds were similar during some epochs and in other epochs they were utterly dissimilar. On account of all these differences, in every age I have new friends, new relatives, new servants and new dwellings. Sometimes I dwell in the Himalayas, at other times in the Malaya mountains and at other times, on account of inherited tendencies, I take my abode here in this nest.

Even the directions change from age to age. Because I alone have survived even the night of the creator Brahma, I know the truth about these changes. **Depending upon the position of the poles and the movements of the stars, the sun and the moon, the directions (north, east, etc.) are determined. When these change, the directions change.** But I know that this world is neither real nor unreal. The only reality is the movement of energy within the cosmic consciousness. This, on account of deluded understanding, appears as this creation and disappears: such delusion also causes confusion of relationships and duties. In some ages, the son behaves like the father, friend like an enemy and man like woman. Sometimes in 'the dark age', people behave as if 'the golden age' prevails and vice versa.

section VI.1 - chapter 23

andhikrtahrdakasah kamakopavikarajah cinta na parihimsanti cittam yasya samahitam (16)

Vasistha asked:

O Bhusunda, how is it that your body has not been consumed by death?

Bhusunda replied:

O sage, you know everything, yet you ask this question in order to cultivate the eloquence of your servant. I shall answer your question; for obedience is the best form of worshipping saints.

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 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.

Neither in the company of the gods and demons, nor of the celestial artists nor heavenly damsels, is there to be found permanent joy. One cannot find what is eternally good either in heaven or on earth or even in the nether world - nowhere in this creation. All activities are beset with physical and mental illness and many forms of unhappiness: the eternal good is not found in them. Such eternal good is not to be found in any of the activities of any of the senses, for their experiences are tainted by a beginning and thus an end.

Neither the sovereignty of the whole world nor the attainment of the form of a god, neither the study of scriptures nor engaging oneself in the work of others, neither listening to nor reciting stories, neither longevity nor death, neither heaven nor hell is comparable to the state of the mind of a holy one.

section VI.1 - chapter 24

sarirapurapalasya manaso rathacakrayoh ahankaranrpasya sya
prasasyestaturangayoh (34)

Bhusunda continued:

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. It is easy for the like of you, it is rather difficult for the like of me.

But this contemplation of the self has comrades, as it were, that closely resemble such contemplation; among them is the contemplation of the life-force or prana, which enables one to overcome sorrow and to promote auspiciousness. I have adopted this contemplation.

It is that contemplation of prana that has bestowed longevity and also self-knowledge on me. I shall now describe it to you.

Lord, look at this enchanting body which is supported by three pillars (the three bodies or the three nadis?) and endowed with nine gates, and which is protected by the egosense which has eight consorts (the puryastaka) and several relatives (the root elements).

Enclosed right in the middle of this body are the subtle ida and pingala. There are three lotus-like wheels. These wheels are composed of bones and flesh. When the vital air wets the wheels, the petals or the radii of these lotus-like wheels begin to vibrate. The vital airs expand on account of their expansion. These nadis thereupon radiate above and below. Sages call these vital airs by different names - prana, apana, samana, etc., on account of their diverse functions. These functions derive their energy from the central psychic centre which is the heart-lotus.

That energy which thus vibrates in the heart-lotus is known as prana: it enables the eyes to see, the skin to feel, the mouth to speak, the food to be digested and it performs all the functions in the body. It has two different roles, one above and one below, and it is then known as prana and apana respectively. I am devoted to them, which are free from fatigue, which shine like the sun and the moon in the heart, **which are like the cart-wheels of the mind which is the guardian of the city known as the body, which are the favourite horses of the king know as egosense.** Being devoted to them, I live as if in deep sleep, for ever in homogeneous consciousness.

He who adores the prana and the apana thus is not reborn in this world again and he is freed from all bondage.

section VI.1 - chapter 25

yatkaroti yad asnati buddhyaiva lam anusmaran kumbhakadin narah svantas tatra
karta na kincana (22)

Bhusunda continued:

Prana is constantly in motion inside and outside the body: prana is that vital air which is established in the upper part. Apana is similarly and constantly in motion inside and outside the body, but it dwells in the lower part. Pray, listen to the practice of the extension or the control of this life-force, which is conducive to the welfare of one who is awake or asleep.

The efflux of the vital force centred in the heart-lotus, of its own accord and without effort, is known as recaka or exhalation. The contact with the source of the pranic force which is located downward to the length of twelve 'fingers', in the heart-lotus, is known as puraka or inhalation.

When the apana has ceased to move and when the prana does not arise and move out of the heart (and till these begin to happen), it is known as kumbhaka (retention as of a filled pot). There are said to be three points for the recaka, kumbhaka and puraka: (1) outside (the nose); (2) from below the place known as dvadasanta (above or in front of the forehead at a distance of twelve fingers); (3) the source of prana (heart-lotus).

Pray listen to the natural and effortless movement of the life-force at all times. The movement of the vital air up to the extent of twelve fingers from oneself constitutes recaka. That state in which the apana-force remains in the dvadasanta, like the unfashioned pot in the potter's clay, should be known as external-kumbhaka.

When the outgoing air moves up to the tip of the nose, it is known as recaka. When it moves up to the extent of the dvadasanta, it is known as external recaka. When the movement of prana has ceased outside itself and as long as the apana does not rise, they call it external-kumbhaka. When, however, the apana flows inwards, without the prana rising within, they call it internal-kumbhaka. When the apana rises in the dvadasanta and attains internal expansion, it is known as internal-puraka. He who knows these kumbhakas is not born again.

Whether one is going or standing, awake or asleep, these vital airs - which are naturally restless - are restrained by these practices. **Then whatever he does or eats, he who knows these kumbhakas is not the doer of those actions.** In a very few days, he attains the supreme state. He who practises these kumbhakas is not attracted by external objects. They who are endowed with this vision - whether they are stationary or moving (active or inactive) - are not bound: they have attained that which is worthy of being attained.

section VI.1 - chapter 25

bahye tamasi samksine lokalokah prajayate harde tu tamasi ksine svaloko
jayate mune (44)

Bhusunda continued:

When the impurity of one's heart and mind have been destroyed by thus being devoted to prana and apana, one is freed from delusion, attains inner awakening and rests in one's own self even while doing whatever has to be done.

Lord, prana arises in the lotus of the heart and terminates at a distance of twelve finger-breadths outside the body. Apana arises in the dvadasanta (twelve finger-breadths from the body) and terminates in the lotus of the heart. Thus apana arises where prana terminates. Prana is like a flame and it goes up and out; apana is like water and it goes down towards the heart-lotus.

Apana is the moon which protects the body from outside; prana is like the sun or the fire and promotes the body's internal welfare. Prana generates heat in the heart-space every moment, and after producing this heat, it generates heat in the space in front of the face. Apana, which is the moon, nourishes the space in front of the face and then it nourishes the space in the heart.

If one is able to reach that space where the apana unites with the prana, he does not grieve any more, nor is he born again.

In fact, it is only prana that undergoes a modification and appears as apana, after abandoning its burning heat. And then, the same prana, having abandoned the coolness of the moon, gains its nature as the purifying fire of the sun. The wise ones enquire into the nature of prana as long as it does not abandon its solar nature to become lunar. One who knows the truth concerning the rising and the setting of the sun and the moon in one's own heart, is not born again. He who sees the Lord, the sun, in one's heart, sees the truth.

In order to attain perfection one does not prevent nor protect external darkness, but one strives to destroy the darkness of ignorance in the heart. **When the external darkness goes, one is able to see the world, but when the darkness of ignorance in the heart is dispelled, there arises self-knowledge.** Hence one should strive to behold the prana and the apana, whose knowledge bestows liberation.

Apana terminates in the heart where prana arises. Where prana is born, there apana perishes; where apana takes birth, there prana ceases. When prana has ceased to move and when apana is about to rise, one experiences external-kumbhaka; rooted in this, one does not grieve any more. When apana has ceased to move and when prana has arisen just a little, one experiences internal-kumbhaka; rooted in this, one does not grieve any more.

section VI.1 - chapter 25

yatra prano hy apanena pranena pana eva ca nigirnau bahirantas ca desakalau
ca pasya tau (57)

Bhusunda continued:

If one practises kumbhaka (suspension of breath) after exhaling the prana to a distance farther from where the apana rises (the twelve fingerbreadth 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 the 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 which 'is' after the prana and the apana have ceased to be and which is in 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 egosense. I salute that consciousness in which all things abide, from which they emerge, which is all and everywhere and which is all in all and eternal; which is the purifier of all and whose vision is most 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.

section VI.1 - chapter 26

na bhutam na bhavisyam ca cintayami kadacana drstim alambya tisthami
vartamanamiha tmana (8)

Bhusunda continued:

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.

section VI.1 - chapter 27 28

prabuddhah smah prahrstah smah pravistah smah svamaspadam sthitah smo
jnatavijneya bhavanto hy apara iva (28/7)

Vasistha said:

Thereupon I said to Bhusunda: "Marvellous indeed is this, your autobiography, O Lord. Blessed indeed are they who can behold you. You are like a second creator. Rare indeed are people like you. I have earned great merit by seeing you. May you continue to be blessed. Give me leave to depart."

O Rama, on hearing this, Bhusunda worshipped me and, in spite of my remonstrances, accompanied me for some distance holding my hand tightly in a gesture of friendship. Then we parted: and parting of friends is indeed a difficult event. All this was in the previous (Krta) age and now it is Treta-age.

Such is the story of Bhusunda, O Rama: you too, practise the pranayama described by Bhusunda and endeavour to live like him.

Rama asked:

Lord, by the rays of light shed by you the gloom of darkness has vanished. **We are all spiritually awakened, we are delighted, we have entered into our own self, we are your own replica as it were, having known what there is to be known.** In that inspiring account of Bhusunda that you narrated, you made mention of a body which has three pillars, nine gates, etc. Pray tell me: how did it arise in the first place, how does it exist and who dwells in it?

Vasistha said:

O Rama, this house known as the body has not been made by anyone in fact! It is only an appearance, like the two moons seen by one suffering from diplopia. The moon is really only one, the duality is optical illusion. The body is experienced to exist only when the notion of a physical body prevails in the mind; it is unreal, but since it appears to be when the notion arises, it is considered both real and unreal. Dreams are real during the dream-state, though they are unreal at other times; ripples are real when they are seen to exist, not at other times. Even so the body is real when it is experienced as a real substance. It is only an illusory appearance, even though it appears to be real.

The notion of 'I am this body' arises in relation to what is truly a piece of flesh with bones etc., because of a mental predisposition; it is an illusion. Abandon this illusion. There are thousands of such bodies which have been brought into being by your thought-force. When you are asleep and dreaming, you experience a body in it: where does that body arise or exist? While day-dreaming, you imagine you are in heaven etc.: where is that body? When all these have ceased, you engage yourself in diverse activities, playing different roles: where is the body with which you do these? When you besport with your friends and enjoy their company in self-forgetful delight, where does that body abide? Thus, O Rama, the bodies are but the products of the mind. Hence they are regarded as real and unreal. Their conduct is determined by the mind, they are non-different from the mind.

section VI.1 - chapter 28

dirghasvapnam imam viddhi dirgham va cittavibhramam dirgham va pi manorajyam
samsaram raghunandana (28)

Vasistha continued:

'This is wealth', 'This is body' and 'This is a nation' - all these are notions, O Rama, which are the manifestation of the energy of the mind and which are otherwise illusory. **Know this to be a long dream, or a long-standing hallucination or day-dreaming or wishful thinking.** When, by the grace of god or the self, you attain awakening, you will then see all this clearly. The existence of a world independent of you or the mind is but the jugglery of the mind, it is nothing but the recognition of a notion as if it were a substance.

I remarked that I was born of the mind of the Creator: even so the world arises in the mind as a notion. In fact, even the Creator is but a notion in the cosmic mind; the world-appearance, too, is a notion in the mind. These notions gain strength in the mind by being invested repeatedly with the mantle of truth and, therefore, they arise again and again, creating the illusory world-appearance with them.

If a man resolutely seeks the source of the notions, he realises consciousness; otherwise he experiences the illusory world-appearance again and again. For by continually entertaining notions such as 'This is it', 'This is mine' and 'This is my world' such notions assume the appearance of substantiality. The permanency of the world is also an illusion: in the dream-state what is really a brief moment is experienced by the dreamer as a life-time. In a mirage only the illusory 'water' is seen and not the substratum: even so, in a state of ignorance one sees only the illusory world-appearance but not the substratum. However, when one has shed that ignorance, the illusory appearance vanishes. Even the man who is normally subject to fear is not afraid of an imaginary tiger; the wise man who knows that this world is naught but a notion or imagination is unafraid of anything. When one knows that the world is nothing but the appearance of one's self, of whom need he be afraid? When one's vision is purified by enquiry, one's deluded understanding concerning the world vanishes.

It is by clear perception and understanding that one's nature is purified and then it does not become impure again. What is that right understanding? It is to realise that this world is nothing but the reflection (and therefore appearance) of pure consciousness and thus it is neither real nor unreal. Birth, death, heaven, knowledge and ignorance are all reflections of consciousness. I, you, the ten directions and all this, are consciousness: such is right understanding. When there is right understanding, the mind does not arise nor does it set, but it attains supreme peace. It does not indulge in praise and censure, in exultation and depression, but it is ever cool and rests in truth.

section VI.1 - chapter 28

yatkincid uditam loke yannabhaspatha va divi tat sarvam prapyate rama
ragadvesapariksyat (74)

Vasistha continued:

When one realises that death is inevitable to all, why will he grieve over the death of relatives or the approach of one's own end? When one realises that everyone is sometimes prosperous and otherwise at other times, why will he be elated or depressed? When one sees that living beings appear and disappear like ripples on the surface of consciousness, where is the cause for sorrow? What is true is always true (what exists always exists) and what is unreal is ever unreal; where is the cause for sorrow?

The 'I' is not, was not and will never be. The body has risen from a mysterious delusion and appears to exist. Where is the cause for sorrow? When there is right understanding of the truth that even if the body is real, 'I' is different from it and that 'I' is but the reflection of the infinite consciousness, there is no sorrow.

Hence, one should not pin one's faith, hope and aspiration on that which is unreal; for such hope is bondage. O Rama, do thou live in this world without entertaining any hope. What has to be done, has to be done and what is inappropriate, should be given up. Live happily and playfully in this world without considerations of desirable and undesirable.

The infinite consciousness alone exists everywhere at all times. What appears to be, is but an appearance. When the appearance is realised as appearance, that which 'is', is realised. Either realise 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. His conversations are 'I have been robbed by another' or 'I have abandoned wealth and pleasure'. Wealth, relatives and friends come and go; the wise one does not seek them nor abandon them. That which has a beginning and an end is not worthy of the attention of the wise. In this world, someone produces something (like a daughter) and someone else (like the bridegroom) enjoys it; who is deceived by this?

O Rama, for your spiritual awakening I declare again and again: this world-appearance is like a long dream. Wake up, wake up. Behold the self which shines like a sun. You are indeed awakened by this shower of nectarine words: you have nothing to do with birth, sorrow, sin and delusion. Abandon all these notions and rest in the self.

section VI.1 - chapter 29

param paurusamasthaya balam prajnam ca yukttitah nabhim samsaracakrasya
cittameva nirodhayet (7)

Vasistha, who suddenly became silent when he found that Rama was completely absorbed in the self, resumed his discourse after an interval and after Rama had returned to normal consciousness:

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.

This world-appearance commenced with the thought-force of the Creator. But it is false. In it these bodies born of the natural characteristics of various elements wander about. Hence, one should never again entertain the notion that the body exists and that pleasure and pain are factual states.

The ignorant man who thinks he is suffering and whose face is streaming constantly with tears, is worse than a painting or a statue, for the latter is free from experience of sorrow! Nor is the statue subject to illness or death. The statue is destroyed only when someone destroys it, but the human body is certainly doomed to die. If the statue is well protected and preserved, it lasts a long time in good condition: but even when well protected and preserved, the human body decays from day to day and does not remain in good condition. Hence the statue is better than the body created by thoughts and notions. Who will entertain any hopes based on such a human body?

The body is worse than even the body one dreams about. The dream-body is created by a short-lived notion (the dream) and hence it is not subjected to long-standing sorrow; but the wakeful body is the product of long-standing ideas and notions and hence it is tormented by long-standing sorrow for a long time. Whether you think that the body is real or unreal, it is certain that it is the product of thoughts and notions. Hence, there need be no sorrow in relation to it.

Even as when a statue is broken, no life is lost, when the body born of thoughts and notions is dead, nothing is lost. It is like the loss of the second moon when one is cured of diplopia. The self which is infinite consciousness does not die nor does it undergo any change whatsoever.

section VI.1 - chapter 29

niriho hi jado deho na tmano sya bhivanchitam karta na kascideva to drasta kevalamasya sah (35)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, a man riding the merry-go-round sees the world whirling in the opposite direction: even so, man whirling on the wheel of ignorance thinks that the world and the body are revolving. The spiritual hero, however, should reject this: this body is the product of thoughts and notions entertained by an ignorant mind. The creation of ignorance is false. Hence, even if the body seems to be active and doing all kinds of actions, it is still unreal, even as the imaginary snake in the rope is for ever unreal. What is done by an inert object is not done by it; though appearing to do, the body does nothing.

The inert body does not entertain any desire (to motivate its actions) and the self (which is the infinite consciousness) has no such desire either; hence there is in truth no doer of action but only the witnessing intelligence. Even as a lamp in a windless place shines spontaneously and naturally, being a lamp, thus should one remain the self in all conditions. Even as the sun, resting always in himself and in his own essential nature, constantly engages himself in the affairs of the day, you too, resting in your own self engage yourself in the affairs of the state.

Once the deluded notion that this false body is a reality has arisen, then like a ghost imagined by a little boy, there arises the goblin of egosense or the mind. This false mind or egosense then roars aloud in such a way that even great men, frightened by it, withdraw themselves in deep meditation. He who however lays the ghost known as the mind (or egosense) in the body, dwells without fear in the void known as the world.

It is strange that even now people live considering the self to be the body created by the illusory ghost known as the mind. They who die while they are yet in the grip of the ghost known as the mind, their intelligence is ignorance! He who trusts in the house haunted by the ghost known as mind and lives in it is a goblin and he is indeed deluded, for that house (the body) is impermanent and unstable. Hence, O Rama, give up this subservience to the ghost known as egosense and rest in the self without bestowing a second thought on the egosense.

They who are under the evil influence of the ghost known as egosense are deluded and in fact they have neither friends nor relatives. A deed done with the intelligence overpowered by the egosense is poisonous and it yields the fruit of death. The fool who is devoid of wisdom and courage and who is wedded to the egosense is already dead. He is like the firewood ready to be consigned into the fire known as hell.

Let this ghost known as egosense rest in or depart from the body. Do not let your mind even look at it, O Rama!

section VI.1 - chapter 29

cittayaksadrhakarantam na sastrani na bandhavah saknuvanti paritratum guravo
na ca manavam (68)

Vasistha continued:

When the egosense is stripped of its coverings, ignored and abandoned by the awakened intelligence, it is incapable of doing you any harm. The self is infinite consciousness. Even if the egosense dwells in this body, how is the self affected?

O Rama, it is impossible to catalogue the calamities that visit one who is under the influence of the mind. All this weeping and wailing 'Alas, I am dead', 'Alas, I am burning' that one hears in this world - all this is nothing more than the play of the egosense. However, even as the all-pervading space is not polluted by anything, the self which is omnipresent is not affected by the egosense.

Whatever a man does with the body is really done by the egosense with the help of the reins known as inhalation and exhalation. The self is indirectly regarded as the cause of all this, even as space is indirectly responsible for the growth of plants inasmuch as it (the space) does not prevent the plant from extending into space. Even as a lamp is considered responsible for the vision of an object, the self is regarded as responsible for the actions of the body, mind, etc., which function in the light of the self. Otherwise, there is no connection whatsoever between the inert body and the conscious self. It is only because of the energy of the self (prana), which is constantly vibrating, creating agitation everywhere, that the mind is confused with the self.

You are the self, O Rama, not the mind. What have you to do with the mind? Abandon this delusion. The goblin-mind residing in the body has nothing to do with the self, yet it quietly assumes 'I am the self'. This is the cause of birth and death. This assumption robs you of courage. Give up this ghost, O Rama, and remain firm. **Neither scriptures nor relatives nor even the gurus or preceptors can protect the man who is utterly overpowered by the ghost known as the mind.** On the other hand, if one has laid this ghost, the guru, the scriptures and relatives can easily aid him, even as one can easily rescue an animal from a mud-puddle. They who have laid this ghost are the good people who render some service to this world. Hence, one should uplift oneself from this ignorance, by laying this ghost known as egosense. O Rama, do not wander in this forest of worldly existence like an animal in human garb. Do not wallow in this mud known as family-relationship for the sake of this impermanent body. The body was born of someone, it is protected by the egosense and in it happiness and sorrow are experienced by someone else: this indeed is a great mystery.

Even as the essential nature of a pot and that of a piece of cloth are non-different, even so the essential nature of the mind and that of the infinite consciousness are non-different. In this connection I shall narrate to you the teaching that was imparted to me by lord Siva himself: the vision revealed in that teaching will destroy even the greatest delusion.

section VI.1 - chapter 29

te desas te janapadas ta digas te ca parvatah tvad anusmaranaikantadhiyo
yatra sthita janah (109)

Vasistha continued:

There is the abode of lord Siva known as Kailasa. I lived there for some time, worshipping lord Siva and practising austerities. I was surrounded by the perfected sages in whose company I used to discuss the truths of the scriptures.

One evening I was engaged in the worship of lord Siva. The entire atmosphere was filled with peace and silence. In that forest the darkness was so dense that it appeared to be solid enough to be cut with a sword.

At that time I saw a great light in the forest. With the external sight I saw that light and with my insight I enquired into its nature. I saw that it was lord Siva himself who was walking along holding his consort Parvati with one hand. In front of him walked his vehicle Nandi, making way for the Lord. I made the divine presence known to the disciples assembled around me and proceeded to where the lord was.

I saluted the Lord and offered him due worship. I remained for a considerable time feasting my eyes on the divine vision.

Lord Siva then said to me:

"Is your austerity proceeding satisfactorily, without any obstacles? Have you attained that which is worthy of attainment and have your internal fears ceased?"

In response, I said to the Lord: "Supreme Lord, they who are fortunate to be devoted to thee, find nothing difficult of attainment and they do not experience fear at all. Everyone in the world salutes and prostrates to those who are devoted to you and who constantly remember you. **Only they are countries, they are cities, they are directions and mountains, where people who are solely and wholeheartedly devoted to you dwell.** Your remembrance is the fruit of merits acquired in the past births and it is also the guarantee of still more blessedness in the future. Your constant remembrance, O Lord, is like the pot of nectar and is the ever-open door to liberation. Lord, wearing the precious and radiant jewel of your remembrance, I have trampled under foot all the calamities that might otherwise torment me in the future.

"Lord, though by your grace I have reached the state of self-fulfilment, 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?"

section VI.1 - chapter 29

akaradi paricchinne mite vastuni tatkutah akrtrimam anadyantam devanam
cicchivam viduh (122)

The Lord said:

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

If one is unable to worship this Siva, 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 Siva 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-akasa (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.

All these mountains, the whole world, the firmament, the self, the jiva or the individuality and all the elements of which this world is constituted - all these are naught but pure consciousness. Before the so-called creation when only this pure consciousness existed, where were all these (heaven etc.)? Space (akasa), supreme or infinite space (paramakasam), absolute space (brahmakasam), creation, consciousness - are mere words and they indicate the same truth even as synonyms do. 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.

section VI.1 - chapter 30

na sa dure sthito brahman na dusrapah sa kasyacit samsthitah sa sada dehe sarvatraiva ca khe tatha (21)

The Lord continued:

The worship of that Lord is true worship and by that worship one attains everything. He is undivided and indivisible, non-dual and not fashioned or created by activity; he is not attained by external efforts. His adoration is the fountain-source of joy.

The external worship of a form is prescribed only for those whose intelligence has not been awakened and who are immature like little boys. When one does not have self-control, etc., he uses flowers in worship; such worship is futile, even as adoring the self in an external form is futile. However, these immature devotees derive satisfaction by worshipping an object created by themselves; they may even earn worthless rewards from such worship.

I shall now describe to you the mode of worship appropriate to enlightened people like you. The Lord fit to be worshipped is indeed the one who upholds the entire creation, who is beyond thought and description, who is beyond the concepts of even the 'all' and the 'collective totality'. He alone is referred to as 'God' who is undivided and indivisible by space and time, whose light illumines all the objects, who is pure and absolute consciousness. He is that intelligence which is beyond all its parts, which is hidden in all that is, which is the being in all that is and which robs all that is of their being (i.e. which veils the truth). This Brahman is in the middle of being and non-being, it is God, and the truth that is indicated as 'Om'. It exists everywhere like the essence in a plant. That pure consciousness which is in you, in me and in all the gods and goddesses alone is God. Holy one, even the other gods endowed with form are indeed nothing but that pure consciousness. The entire universe is pure consciousness. That is God, that 'all' I am; everything is attained from and through him.

That God is not distant from anyone, O Holy one, nor is he difficult to attain: he is for ever seated in the body and he is everywhere like space. He does everything, he eats, he holds everything together, he goes, he breathes, he knows every limb of the body. He is the light in which all these limbs function and all the diverse activities take place. He dwells in the cave of one's own heart. He transcends the mind and the five senses of cognition; therefore he cannot be comprehended nor described by them - yet for the purpose of instruction, he is indicated as 'consciousness'. Hence, though it appears as though he does everything, he does nothing. That consciousness is pure and seemingly engages itself in the activities of the world to the same extent as the spring does in the flowering of trees.

section VI.1 - chapter 30

sarirapankajabhrantamanobhramarasambhrtam asvādayati sankalpamadhusattam
cidisvari (34)

The Lord continued:

Somewhere this consciousness functions as space, somewhere as a jiva, somewhere as action, somewhere as substance and so forth, but without intending to do so. Even as all the 'different' oceans are but one indivisible mass of water, this consciousness, though described in different ways, is but one cosmic mass of consciousness. **In the body, which is like a lotus, it is the same consciousness that imbibes the experience which is like honey gathered by the restless mind which is like the bee.** In this universe all these various beings (the gods, the emons, mountains, oceans and so forth) flow within this infinite consciousness even as eddies and whirlpools appear in the ocean. Even the wheel of ignorance, which causes the wheel of life and death to revolve, revolves within this cosmic consciousness whose energy is in constant motion.

It was consciousness, in the form of the four-armed Visnu, that destroyed the demons, even as a thunderstorm equipped with the rainbow quenches the heat that rises from the earth. It is consciousness alone which takes the form of Siva and Parvati, of Brahma the creator and the numerous other beings. This consciousness is like a mirror which holds a reflection within itself, as it were, without undergoing any modification thereby. Without undergoing any modification in itself, this consciousness appears as all these countless beings in this universe.

The infinite consciousness is like a creeper. It is sprinkled with the latent tendencies of countless jivas. Desires are the buds. Past creations are the filaments. The sentient and the insentient beings are parts of the creeper. The one appears as many, but it has not become many.

It is by this infinite consciousness that all this is thought of, expressed and done. It is the infinite consciousness alone which shines as the sun. It is the infinite consciousness which appears as the bodies which are in fact inert and which come into contact with one another and derive various experiences. This consciousness is like the typhoon which is unseen in itself, but in which sand-particles and dust rise and dance as if by themselves. This consciousness casts a shadow in itself, as it were, and that is regarded as tamas or inertia.

In this body, thoughts and notions generate action in the light of this very consciousness. Surely, but for this consciousness even an object which is immediately in front of oneself cannot be experienced. The body cannot function nor exist but for this consciousness. It grows, it falls, it eats. This consciousness creates and maintains all the movable and the immovable beings in the universe. The infinite consciousness alone exists, nought else exists. Consciousness alone has arisen in consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 30

cidasti hi sarire ha sarvabhutamayatmika calonmukhatmikaika tu nirvikalpa
para smrta (67)

Vasistha continued:

Thereupon I asked the Lord: "If this consciousness is omnipresent, how then does one become insentient and inert in this world? How is it possible that one who is endowed with consciousness loses consciousness?"

The Lord applauded the question and replied:

The omnipresent consciousness which is all in all exists in this body both as the changing and as the unchanging and unmodified one. Just as a woman dreams herself to be another with another as her husband in that dream, the same consciousness believes itself to be of another nature. Just as the same man when he is under the influence of uncontrollable rage behaves completely differently, even so consciousness assumes another aspect and functions differently. By stages, it becomes insentient and inert.

Consciousness thus becomes its own object, creating space and then air and their respective qualities. At the same time, it evolves within itself time and space, and becomes a jiva followed by individualised finite intellect and mind. From this arises the cyclic world-appearance and notions like 'I am an untouchable' etc. The infinite consciousness itself thus becomes apparently inert, just as water becomes crystal. Thereafter the mind becomes deluded, entertains cravings, falls a prey to lust and anger, experiences prosperity and adversity, suffers pain and pleasure, clings to hope, endures terrible suffering and is filled with likes and dislikes that perpetuate the delusion. Thoroughly deluded, it goes from error to error, from ignorance to greater ignorance.

In childhood, this deluded consciousness is totally dependent on others, in youth it runs after wealth and is fitted with worry, in old age it is sunk in sorrow and in death it is led by its own karma. In accordance with that karma, it is born in heaven or in hell, in the netherworld or on earth as human, subhuman or inanimate being. It is the same consciousness that appears as Visnu, Siva, Brahma and others. It is the same consciousness that functions as the sun, the moon, the wind, the factors that cause changes in seasons, day and night. It is the same consciousness that is the life force in seeds and the characteristics of all material substances. This consciousness which is conditioned by self-limitation is afraid of itself! Such is the truth concerning the jiva-consciousness. It is also known as karma-atma (the self that is caught in the wheel of action and reaction).

Behold the power of ignorance and inertia! Merely by the forgetfulness of one's own true state, the consciousness undergoes great troubles and sorrows and experiences pitiable downfall.

section VI.1 - chapter 31

amṛta 'pi mṛta 'smiti viparyastamatir vadhuḥ yatha roḍityanastaiva nasta
'smti tathaiva cit (2)

The Lord continued:

Consciousness thinks (feels or imagines) falsely 'I am unhappy', even as a demented woman might think she is miserable. **Just as one who is not dead wails aloud "Alas, I am dead", and when she is not lost she weeps, "Alas, I am lost ", on account of perverse understanding, even so the consciousness falsely imagines** it is miserable or limited. Such imagination is irrational and unfounded. Due to the false assumption of the ego-sense, the consciousness thinks that the world-appearance is indeed real. 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 mind other than pure consciousness. Thus, if it is realised that the perceiving mind itself is unreal, then it is clear that the perceived world is unreal too.

Even as there is no oil in a rock, in pure consciousness, the diversity of sight, seer, and scene, or of doer, act, and action, or of knower, knowledge, and known, does not exist. Similarly, the distinction between 'I' and 'you' is imaginary. The distinction between the one and the many is verbal. All these do not exist at all, even as darkness does not exist in the sun. Opposites like substantiality and unsubstantiality, void and non-void, are mere concepts. On enquiry, all these disappear, and only the unmodified pure consciousness remains.

Consciousness does not truly undergo any modification, nor does it become impure. The impurity itself is imaginary. Imagination is the impurity. When this is realised, the imagination is abandoned, and impurity ceases. However, even in those who have realised 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 unmodified and non-dual, can be realised by one in the single self-luminous inner light. It is pure and eternal, it is ever-present and devoid of mind, it is unmodified and untainted, it is all the objects. In fact, it is non-moving consciousness which exists as if witness to all, even as light shines, but shining is not its action. While pure, this consciousness appears to be tainted; in inert material it is non-inert energy. It is omnipresent without being divided by the particulars constituting the all.

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 the infinite consciousness - even as one who is asleep is also inwardly awake!

section VI.1 - chapter 31

yatra prano marudyati manas tatraiva tisthati yatra yatra 'nusarati rathas
tatraiva sarathih (47)

The Lord continued:

By identification with its own object, consciousness seems to reduce itself to the state of thinking or worrying - even as impure gold looks like copper until it is purified, when it shines like gold. By self-forgetfulness on the part of the infinite consciousness, the notion of the universe arises, but this unreality ceases when there is self-knowledge.

When consciousness becomes aware of itself, within itself, the ego-sense arises. With just a little movement though, this ego-sense (which in truth is nothing other than consciousness) falls down as a rock rolls down the mountainside. However, even then it is consciousness alone that is the reality in all forms and all experiences. The movement of the vital airs brings about vision within and an object which is apparently outside. But the experiencing of sight (the seeing itself) is the pure (supreme) consciousness! The apparently inert vital air, which is the tactile sensation, comes into contact with its object, and there is the sense of touch. But the awareness of the tactile sensation is again pure consciousness. In the same way, it is the vital air (prana) that enables the nose to smell the scents, which are modifications of the same energy, while the awareness of the smell is pure consciousness. If the mind is not associated with the sense of hearing, no hearing is possible. Again, it is pure consciousness that is the experience of hearing.

Action springs from thought, thought is the function of the mind, mind is conditioned consciousness, but consciousness is unconditioned! The universe is but a reflection in consciousness (like the scenery reflected in a crystal ball), but consciousness is not conditioned by such reflection. Jiva is the vehicle of consciousness, ego-sense is the vehicle of jiva, intelligence of ego-sense, mind of intelligence, prana of the mind, the senses of prana, the body of the senses, and motion is the vehicle of the body. Such motion is karma. Because prana is the vehicle for the mind, where the prana takes it, the mind goes. But when the mind is merged in the spiritual heart, prana does not move. And if the prana does not move, the mind attains a quiescent state. **Where the prana goes, the mind follows it - even as the rider goes where the vehicle goes.**

The reflection of consciousness within itself is known as puryastaka. Mind alone is puryastaka, though others have described it more elaborately (as composed of the five elements, the inner instrument - mind, buddhi, ego-sense and citta-prana, the organs of action, the senses, ignorance, desire, and karma or action). It is also known as the linga-sarira, the subtle body. Since all these arise in consciousness, exist in consciousness, and dissolve in consciousness, that consciousness alone is the reality.

section VI.1 - chapter 32

vasana vimala yesam hrdayan na 'pasarpati sthiraikarupajivas te jivanmuktas
cirayusah (35)

The Lord said:

But, for the mind and prana, the body is an inert mass. Just as a piece of iron moves in the presence of a magnet, even so the jiva moves in the very presence of consciousness, which is infinite and omnipresent. The body is inert and dependent. It is made to function by the consciousness which believes itself to be similar to the vital airs (prana). Thus, it is the karma-self or the active self (karmatma) that keeps the body in motion. It is, however, the supreme self itself that has ordained both the mind and the prana as the promoters of life in the body. It is the consciousness itself, assuming inertia, which rides the mind as the jiva.

Once this limitation is established, then other consequences follow. They are the physical and mental diseases! This is like waves, first arising on the surface of the ocean, and then creating ripples and so forth. The consciousness as jiva becomes dependent, having abandoned the self-knowledge as consciousness. Labouring under a thick veil of ignorance, it is foolishly unable to recognise the harm that it has brought upon itself, even as a drunkard wielding a sword cuts his own leg. However, even as the drunkard can soon become sober, this consciousness can soon regain self-knowledge.

When the mind is divested of its support, it remains alone in the self. When the puryastaka (the subtle body) is rid of all its supports, it attains a state of quiescence, and falls motionless. When consciousness, on account of objectification, becomes deluded, the latent psychological tendencies become active. Identifying with these, consciousness forgets its essential nature.

When the lotus of the heart unfolds, the puryastaka functions. When that lotus folds, the puryastaka ceases to function. As long as the puryastaka functions in the body, the body lives. When it ceases to function, the body dies. This cessation can be caused by some form of inner conflict between the impurities and inner awakening. **If only pure vasanas or tendencies fill one's heart, all conflicts cease, and there are harmony, liberation, and longevity.** Otherwise, when the puryastaka ceases to function, the body dies, and the subtle body chooses another suited to fulfil the hidden vasanas. Due to these vasanas, the puryastaka forges new links with the new subtle body, forgetting its nature as pure consciousness. However, since consciousness is infinite and omnipresent, the mind riding the puryastaka roams everywhere. Bodies are taken up and abandoned by the jiva, even as trees sprout new leaves and discard old ones. Wise men do not set any store by these changes.

section VI.1 - chapter 33

pustasankalpamatrena yadidam dukkhamagatam tadasankalpamitrena ksayi ka 'tra
kadarthana (34)

In response to Vasistha's questions:

(i) in the infinite consciousness, how did duality arise, and (ii) how does that duality which has been strengthened by aeons of confirmation, cease, the Lord continued:

Since that omnipresent infinite consciousness alone is present at all times, diversity (duality) is absurd and impossible. The concept of one arises when there is a concept of two and vice versa. When the diversity is realised as of consciousness, the diversity is also that! The cause and effect are one in their essence. This essence is indivisible.

Consciousness being its own object, is consciousness at all times. The modifications are but vain thinking. (To assert that there are waves upon the surface of the ocean is like saying, 'mountains made of water float upon the surface of the ocean'. Are the waves outside the ocean?) Consciousness alone is 'that', 'this', and 'in the middle' (the factor that perceives the modification). It is the one infinite consciousness that is variously known as Brahman, truth, God, Siva, void, one and supreme self.

That which is beyond all these forms and states of consciousness, that which is the supreme self, that which is indicated by the pure 'I' - that is not for words to describe. That which is perceived here is itself indivisible. When this consciousness invests itself with a secondary vision (upanayana also means the sacred thread of vedic learning!), then it perceives duality. It is bound by its own ignorant imagination. This imagination gives rise to substantiality, and the experience of objects gives rise to the confirmation of the reality of that object. The ego-sense gains credence thereafter, and is firmly established, assuming the role of the doer of actions and the experiencer of other experiences. Thus, what was accidental coincidence to begin with, soon becomes an established fact.

Belief in the existence of the goblin creates it. Belief in the duality (diversity) establishes it. When the non-dual-being is known, the duality vanishes instantly. Belief (or imagination) gave rise to diversity. When that belief is dropped, diversity goes. Thought, imagination, or belief, gives rise to sorrow. To abandon such thinking is not painful! **It is feeding these thoughts and beliefs that has brought about this sorrow. This comes to an end by not entertaining those thoughts and beliefs. Where is the difficult in this?** All thoughts and beliefs lead to sorrow, whereas no-thought and no-belief are pure bliss. Therefore, with the help of the fire of wisdom, vaporise the waters of your beliefs and become peaceful, supremely blissful. Behold the one infinite consciousness.

It is only as long as the king remains forgetful of the fact 'I am king' that he is miserable. Once he regains that knowledge, that sorrow vanishes. Even as after the rainy season, when the winter season has set in, the sky is unable to collect clouds to veil itself, once the infinite consciousness is realised, the clouds of ignorance are banished for ever.

section VI.1 - chapter 34

samastam susivam santam atitam vagvilasatah omityasya ca tanmatra turya sa
parama gatih (30)

The Lord said:

Thus does the universe exist as both real and unreal. The divine, being free of duality, unites them, transcends them, and is therefore both of them. Manifest consciousness is the universe, and the unmanifest universe is consciousness. By entertaining the notion 'I am this', consciousness is bound; by this very knowledge it is freed. Objectification (or conceptualisation) leads to self-forgetfulness. However, even in the state of diversity and activity, consciousness is truly undivided. For, it is only that supremely peaceful Brahman that is apparently manifest as the universe, through the instrumentality of the mind and its three modes (satva, rajas and tamas, or waking, dreaming, and sleeping).

When, however, the mind is destroyed by the mind, the veil is rent asunder, and the truth of the world-jugglery is seen, the notion of world-appearance and the existence of a jiva are destroyed. The mind is then clear, having given up repeatedly reviving the notions of objective perception. This state is known as 'pasyanti'. 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 states 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 for ever 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 Siva remained in silent and deep contemplation for some time.'

section VI.1 - chapter 35

na tasya 'hvanamantradi kincidevopayujyate nityahutah sa sarvastho labhyate
sarvatah svacit (24)

After thus remaining immersed in himself for some time, the Lord opened his eyes and continued:

O sage, abandon the habit of apprehending the objects with your mind. The knowers of that (self) have seen what is worth seeing. What more is there to be seen or not to be seen? Behold the self. Be a sword which sunders, what is regarded as peace, and what is regarded as restlessness. Or, resorting to just a little extroversion of attention, listen to what I am going to say to you. Nothing is gained by merely keeping quiet!

This body is kept alive and active by the life-force or prana. Without that life-force the body is inert. The energy that moves the body is prana. The intelligence that experiences through all this is consciousness. This consciousness is formless and purer than even the sky. When the relationship between the life-force and body ceases, only the life-force is separated from the body. Consciousness, which is purer than space, does not perish.

A pure mirror reflects what is in front of it, but the reflection is not seen if the mirror is covered with dirt. Even so, though the body is seen, when the prana has left the body the intelligence does not reflect the objects.

The consciousness though infinite and omnipresent is able to become aware of the movement of the mind and the body. When this defect of objectification (conceptualisation) is removed, that itself shines as the supreme being. It is itself the creator Brahma, Visnu, Siva, Indra, the sun, the moon, and the supreme Lord. Some of these divinities like Brahma, Visnu, and Siva, are not deceived by the cosmic illusion. They are indeed parts of the infinite consciousness sharing its true nature; like red-hot iron which shares the nature of fire. However, none of these has actually been created by the infinite consciousness and none of these exists apart from it. These are no more than notions - some notions being more dense than the others. It is impossible to describe the extent of such notions which have arisen in ignorance.

In a manner of speaking, the supreme being (the infinite consciousness) is the father of Brahma, Visnu, Siva, and others. That infinite consciousness alone is fit to be adored and worshipped. However, **there is no use inviting it for the worship. No mantras are of any use in its worship for it is immediate (closest, one's own self), and hence does not need to be invited. It is the omnipresent self of all.** The realisation of this infinite consciousness (which is totally effortless) is alone the best form of worship.

section VI.1 - chapter 36

tatas cidrupamevaikam sarvasattantarasthitam svanubhutimayam suddham devam
rudresvaram viduh (1)

The Lord said:

Thus, they say that Lord Rudra is the pure, spontaneous self-experience which is the one consciousness that dwells in all substances. It is the seed of all seeds, it is the essence of this world-appearance, it is the greatest of actions. It is the cause of all causes, and it is the essence in all beings, though in fact it does not cause anything, nor is it the concept of being, and therefore cannot be conceived. It is the awareness in all that is sentient, it knows itself as its own object, it is its own supreme object, and it is aware of infinite diversity within itself.

It is the consciousness in all experiences, but it is pure and unconditioned. It is absolute truth, and therefore not truth as a concept. It is not limited to the definitions of truth or falsehood. It is in fact the very end (terminus) of the supreme truth or the primordial reality. It is pure absolute consciousness, naught else.

Yet, it itself becomes coloured with desire or attraction for pleasure. It itself becomes the experiencer of pleasure, the pleasure-experience, and the impurity or taint caused by it. Though it is like the sky, unconditioned and undivided, soon it becomes limited and conditioned. In this infinite consciousness, there have been millions of mirages known as world-appearance, and there will also arise millions more mirages known as world-appearance. Yet, nothing really has come into being independent of the infinite consciousness. Light and heat seem to come out of fire, but they are not independent of fire.

This infinite consciousness can be compared to the ultimate subatomic particle, which yet hides within its heart the greatest of mountains. It encompasses the span of countless epochs, but it does not let go of a moment of time. It is subtler than the tip of a single strand of hair, yet it pervades the entire universe. No one has seen its limits or boundaries.

It does nothing, yet it has fashioned the universe. Sustaining the entire universe, it does nothing at all. All substances are non-different from it, yet it is not a substance. Though it is non-substantial it pervades all substances. The cosmos is its body, yet it has no body. It is the eternal 'now', yet it is the tomorrow (morning). Often apparently meaningless sounds become meaningful and are regarded as meaningful while communicating with one another: even so that infinite consciousness is and is not. It is even what it is not. All these statements about what is, and what is not, are based on logic, and the infinite consciousness goes beyond truth, beyond logic.

section VI.1 - chapter 37

ntyatir nityamudvegavarjita 'parimarjita esa nrtyati vai nrtyam
jagajjalakanatakam (23)

The Lord continued:

It is this infinite consciousness that makes the seed sprout with the help of earth, water, time, etc., and become food. It makes flowers blossom, and makes the nose smell their fragrance. In the same way, it is able to create and sustain the substances in the world and their corresponding sense-organs, with the help of suitable means. These means are also brought into being by the same consciousness. The energy of this consciousness is able to create the entire universe and then entertaining the notion 'This is not' reduces everything to a state of void.

This apparent creation is but a reflection of consciousness within itself, which has apparently acquired a body in course of time. The trinity is the manifestation of, and also is, that cosmic power or energy that determines 'So it shall be, and it shall not be otherwise.' Yet, consciousness does not create anything. Consciousness is like a lamp that illumines the room in which actions take place.

Vasistha asked:

Lord, what are the energies of this Siva (consciousness), and what are their powers and their activities?

The Lord replied:

The supreme being is formless, and yet the following five are its aspects - will, space, time, order (or destiny), and the cosmic unmanifest nature. It has countless powers or energies or potencies. Chief among them are knowledge, dynamics, action, and non-action.

All these are but pure consciousness. Because they are called the potencies of consciousness, they are apparently regarded as distinct from consciousness, though in fact they are not.

This entire creation is like a stage on which all these potencies of consciousness dance to the tune of time. The foremost among these is known as 'order' (the natural order of things and sequences). It is also known as action, desire, or will-to-do, time, etc. It is this potency that ordains that each thing should have a certain characteristic - from the blade of grass to the creator Brahma. **This natural order is free from excitement, but not purified of its limitation. That (the natural order) is what dances a dance-drama known as the world-appearance.** It portrays various moods (compassion, anger, etc.). It produces and removes various seasons and epochs. It is accompanied by the celestial music and the roaring of the oceans. Its stage is illumined by the sun and the moon and the stars. Its actors and actresses are the living beings in all the worlds - such is the dance of the natural order. The Lord who is the infinite consciousness is the silent but alert witness of this cosmic dance. He is non-different from the dancer (the cosmic natural order) and the dance (the happenings).

section VI.1 - chapter 38

etadeva param dhyanam pujaisaiva para smrta yadanaratamantahstha
suddhacinmatravedanam (25)

The Lord continued:

Such is the Lord who is fit to be worshipped constantly by holy ones. It is he indeed who is worshipped by wise men in various ways, and in various forms, such as Siva, Visnu, etc. 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 gatekeeper, 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 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 the 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-realisation alone. **This is the supreme meditation, this is the supreme worship - the continuous and unbroken awareness of the indwelling presence, of the inner light or consciousness.** While doing whatever one is doing - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, or talking - one should realise 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 realised 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 thousandfold. 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 practises this mode of worship is worshipped by the god, and the demons and all other beings. However, this is external worship.

section VI.1 - chapter 39

pavaham pavananam yad yatsarvatamasam ksayah tad idanim pravaksye 'ham antah
pujanam atmanah (1)

The Lord continued:

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. One should worship the 'bodha-lingam' (the manifest consciousness or self-awareness), which sleeps and wakes up, goes about or stands, touches what is to be touched, abandons what should be abandoned, enjoys and abandons pleasures, engages in varied external activities, lends value to all actions, and remains as peace in the vital organs in the body (deha-lingam in the text may also refer to the three 'lingams' associated with the psychic centres). This inner intelligence should be worshipped with whatever comes to one unsought. Remaining firmly seated in the stream of life and its experiences after having bathed in self-knowledge, one should worship this inner intelligence with the materials of self-realisation.

One should contemplate the Lord in the following manner: he is the light illumined by the solar force as well as the lunar force, he is the intelligence that eternally lies hidden in all material substances, he is the extrovert awareness that flows through the bodily avenues on to the external world, he is the prana that moves in one's face (nose), he transforms contacts of the senses into meaningful experiences, he rides the chariot composed of prana and apana, he dwells in secret in the cave of one's heart. He is the knower of the knowable and the doer of all actions, the experiencer of all experiences, the thinker of all thoughts. It is he who knows all parts or limbs thoroughly, who is recognised by being and non-being, and who illumines all experiences.

He is without parts, but he is the all, he dwells in the body, but he is omnipresent, he enjoys and does not enjoy, he is the intelligence in every limb. He is the thinking faculty in the mind. He rises in the middle of prana and apana. He dwells in the heart, in the throat, in the middle of the palate, the middle of the eyebrows, and at the tip of the nose. He is the reality in all the thirty-six elements (or metaphysical categories), he transcends the internal states, he is the one that produces the internal sounds, and he brings into being the bird known as mind. He is the reality in what is described as imagination and non-imagination. He dwells in all beings as oil dwells in the seed. He dwells in the heart-lotus, and again he dwells throughout the body. He shines as pure consciousness. He is immediately seen everywhere, for he is the pure experiencing in all experiences, who apparently polarises himself when apprehending the objects of such experiences.

section VI.1 - chapter 39

yathapraptakrmoththena sarvarthena samarcayet managapi na kartavyo yatno 'tra
'purvavastuni (31)

The Lord continued:

One should contemplate that the Lord is the intelligence in the body. The various functions and faculties in the body serve that intelligence, as consorts serve their lord. The mind is the messenger who brings and presents to the Lord the knowledge of the three worlds. The two fundamental energies, viz., the energy of wisdom (jnana sakti) and the energy of action (kriya sakti), are the consorts of the Lord. Diverse aspects of knowledge are his ornaments. The organs of action are the gates through which the Lord enters the outside world. 'I am that infinite self which is indivisible, I remain full and infinite,' thus the intelligence dwells in the body.

He who contemplates in this manner is equanimity itself; his behaviour is equanimous, guided by equal vision. He has reached the state of natural goodness and inner purity, and he is beautiful in every aspect of his being. He worships the Lord who is the intelligence that pervades his entire body.

This worship is performed day and night perpetually, with the objects that are effortlessly obtained, and are offered to the Lord with a mind firmly established in equanimity and in the right spirit (for the Lord is consciousness and cares only for the right spirit). **The Lord should be worshipped with everything that is obtained without effort. One should never make the least effort to attain that which one does not possess.** The Lord should be worshipped by means of all the enjoyments that the body enjoys -, through eating, drinking, being with one's consort, and such other pleasures. The Lord should be worshipped with the illnesses one experiences, and with every sort of unhappiness or suffering one experiences. The Lord should be worshipped with all of one's activities, including life and death, and all of one's dreams. The Lord should be worshipped with one's poverty and prosperity. The Lord should be worshipped even with fights and quarrels, as well as with sports and other pastimes, and with the manifestations of the emotions of attraction and aversion. The Lord should be adored with the noble qualities of a pious heart - friendship, compassion, joy, and indifference.

The Lord should be worshipped with all kinds of pleasures that are granted to one unsought, whether those pleasures are sanctioned by the scriptures, etc., or forbidden by them. The Lord should be worshipped with those which are regarded as desirable, and others which are regarded as undesirable, with those that are considered appropriate, and others that are considered inappropriate. For this worship, one should abandon what is lost, and one should accept and receive what has been obtained without effort.

section VI.1 - chapter 39

samatakasavadbhutva yattu syallinamanasam avikaramanayasam tadeva
'rcanamucyate (58)

The Lord continued:

One should engage oneself in this worship at all times, established in supreme equanimity in regard to all the percepts, whether they be pleasant or unpleasant. One should regard everything as good and auspicious (one should regard everything as a mixture of good and evil). Realising that everything is the one self, one should worship the self in this spirit. One should look with equal vision upon that which is pleasant and beautiful through and through, and that which is unendurably unpleasant. Thus should one worship the self.

One should abandon the divisive notions of 'This I am' and 'This I am not', and realise that 'All this is indeed Brahman', the one indivisible and infinite consciousness. In that spirit one should worship the self. At all times, in all forms and their modifications, one should worship the self in and through all that one obtains. One should worship the self after having abandoned the distinction between the desirable and the undesirable, or even while relying on such a distinction (but using them as the materials for the worship).

Without craving and without rejecting, that which is effortlessly and naturally obtained may be enjoyed. One should not get excited or depressed when faced with insignificant or significant objects, just as neither sky nor space is so affected by the diverse objects that exist and grow in it. One should worship the self, without psychological perversion, with every object that is obtained purely on account of the coincidence of the time, place, and activity - whether they are popularly known as good or as not-good.

In this procedure for the worship of the self, whatever article has been mentioned as being necessary for the worship is of the same nature as all others, though the expressions used are different. 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. Such is the nature of the worshipper of this intelligence. In his case, delusion, ignorance, and ego-sense, do not arise even in dream. Remain in this state, O sage, experiencing everything as a child does. Worship the Lord of this body (the intelligence that pervades it) with all that is brought to you by time, circumstance, and environment, and rest in supreme peace, devoid of desire.

section VI.1 - chapter 40 41

desakalaparicchinnō yesam syat paramesvarah asmakam upadesyas te na vipascid
vipascitam (40/12)

The Lord continued:

Whatever you do, and whenever you do it (or refrain from doing it) - all that is worship of the Lord who is pure consciousness. By regarding all that as the worship of the self who is the Lord - he is delighted.

Likes and dislikes, attraction and aversion, are not found in the self independent of its essential nature; they are mere words. Even the concepts indicated by words like 'sovereignty', 'poverty', 'pleasure', 'pain', 'one's own' and 'others', are in fact worship of the self, for the conceiving intelligence is the self. Knowledge of the cosmic being alone is the proper worship of the cosmic being.

It is that self or cosmic consciousness alone which is indicated by expressions like 'this world'. Oh, what a mysterious wonder it is that the self, which is pure consciousness or intelligence, somehow seems to forget its own nature and comes to regard itself as the jiva (the individual). In fact, in that cosmic being which is the reality in everything, there is not even the division into worshipper, worship, and the worshipped. It is impossible to describe that cosmic being which supports the entire universe without division. It is impossible to teach another concerning it. And, **we do not consider them worthy of being taught by us, who consider that god is limited by time and space.** Hence, abandoning all such limited concepts, abandoning even the division between the worshipper and the worshipped (Lord), worship the self by the self. Be at peace, pure, free from cravings. Consider that all your experiences and expressions are the worship of the self.

In reply to Vasistha's request for a fuller explanation of Siva, Brahman, self, why they are so called and how such differences arose,

the Lord continued:

The reality is beginningless and endless, and it is not even reflected in anything: that is the reality. However, since it is not possible to experience it through the mind and the senses, it is even regarded as if it were non-being.

In reply to Vasistha's question. "If it is beyond the mind, how is it realised?"

the Lord replied:

In the case of the seeker who is eager to attain freedom from ignorance, and who is therefore equipped with what is termed 'satvic avidya' (subtle ignorance), this satvic avidya, with the help of what are known as scriptures, removes the ignorance, just as a washerman removes dirt with the help of another form of dirt (soap). By this catalytic action, the ignorance is removed, the self realises the self, and the self sees the self on account of its own self-luminous nature.

section VI.1 - chapter 41

akarananyapi prapta bhram karanatam dvija krama gurupadesadya atmajnanasya
siddhaye (13)

The Lord continued:

When a child is playing with charcoal, his hands become black. If he washes his hands, but immediately plays again with charcoal, his hands become black again. However, if he does not handle charcoal again after washing, his hands can remain clean. Even so, if one enquires into the nature of the self, and at the same time refrains from those actions that promote avidya or ignorance, the darkness of ignorance vanishes. However, it is only the self that becomes aware of the self.

Do not look upon this diversity as the self. Do not entertain the feeling that self-knowledge is the result of the teaching of a preceptor. The guru or the preceptor is endowed with the mind and the senses. The self or Brahman is beyond the mind and the senses. That which is attained only after the other ceases, is not attained with its help while it still exists. However, **though the instructions of a preceptor, and all the rest of it, are not really the means for the attainment of self-knowledge, they have come to be regarded as the means for it.**

The self is not revealed either by the scriptures or by the instructions of a preceptor, and the self is not revealed without the instructions of a preceptor and without the help of the scripture. It is revealed only when all these come together. It is only when the scriptural knowledge, instructions of a preceptor, and true discipleship, come together, that self-knowledge is attained.

That which 'is' after all the senses have ceased to function and all notions of pleasure and pain have vanished, is the self or Siva, which is also indicated by expressions like 'that', 'truth', or 'reality'. However, that which is, when all these cease to be, exists even when all these are present, like the limitless space. Out of their compassion for the ignorant deluded ones, in an effort to awaken them spiritually and to awaken in them a thirst for liberation, the redeemers of the universe (known as Brahma, Indra, Rudra, and others), have composed scriptures like the vedas and the puranas (the legends). In these scriptures, they have used words like 'consciousness', 'Brahman', 'Siva', 'self', 'Lord', 'supreme self', etc. These words may imply a diversity, but in truth there is no such diversity.

The truth indicated by the words like 'Brahman', etc., is indeed pure consciousness. In relation to it, even the limitless space is as gross and substantial as a great mountain. That pure consciousness appears to be the knowable object, and gives rise to the concept of intelligence or consciousness, though, being the innermost self, it is not an object of knowledge. On account of a momentary conceptualisation, this pure consciousness gives rise to the ego-sense ('I know').

section VI.1 - chapter 41

vasanavasato duhkham vidyamane ca sa bhavet avidyamanam ca jagan
mrgatrsnambubhangavat (52)

The Lord continued:

This ego-sense then gives rise to the notions of time and space. Endowed with the energy of the vital air, it then becomes jiva, or the individual. The individual thenceforward follows the dictates of the notions, and slips into dense ignorance. Thus is the mind born, in conjunction with the ego-sense and the different forms of psychological energy. All these together are known as the 'ativahika' body, the subtle body which moves from one plane to another.

After this, the substances (the objects of the world) corresponding to the subtle energies of the ativahika body were conceived of, and thus were the various senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smelling), their corresponding objects, and their connecting experiences, brought into being. These together are known as the puryastaka, and in their subtle state they are also known as the ativahika body.

Thus were all these substances created; but nothing was created in fact. All these are but apparent modifications in the one infinite consciousness. Even as dream-objects are within oneself, all these are non-different from the infinite consciousness. Even as when one dreams those objects, they seem to become the objects of one's perception, all these, too, appear to be objective realities.

When the truth concerning them is realised, all these shine as the Lord. However, even that is untrue, for all these have never become material substances or objects. On account of one's own notions of their being substances which one experiences, they appear to have a substantiality. Thus, conjuring up a substantiality, the consciousness sees the substantiality.

Conditioned by such notions, it seems to suffer. **Conditioning is sorrow. But conditioning is based on thoughts and notions (or sensual and psychological experiences). However, the truth is beyond such experience, and the world is an appearance, like a mirage!** In that case, what is psychological conditioning, who conditions what, and who is conditioned by such conditioning? Who drinks the water of the mirage? Thus, when all these are rejected, the reality alone remains, in which there is no conditioning, naught conditioned. It may be styled the being or the non-being, but it alone is. Mental conditioning is illusory non-being, like a ghost; when it is laid, the illusion of creation also vanishes. He who takes this ego-sense and this mirage known as creation to be real, he is unfit to be instructed. Preceptors instruct only a man endowed with wisdom, not foolish men. The latter pin their faith and hope on the world-appearance, like the ignorant man who bestows his daughter in marriage to the man seen only in his dream!

section VI.1 - chapter 42

sampadyate yatha yo 'sau purusah sarvakarakah anenaiva kramenaha kitah
sampadyate ksanat (19)

The Lord continued:

The jiva perceives all these elements as constituting its body in the void, even as the dreaming person perceives diverse objects within the inner void. This is true even today; the cosmic consciousness or the cosmic being perceives the universe of diversity within itself, even as the dreamer perceives diversity within himself.

The jiva thinks of itself as Brahms, Visnu, etc., but all this is nothing more than thought-form. However, this thought-form conceives and perceives other thought-forms, and experiences them. The sole reality in all these percepts is the primary concept known as the ego-sense, which arises the very instant consciousness conceives of an object within itself, and thinks it perceives it (obviously as its object). That instant itself is the epoch, and all the multiples and divisions of epochs. In every atom of existence, this drama of self-veiling and self-knowledge is enacted all the time, all of which is nothing more than thought-form created by cosmic consciousness. Yet, nothing is created by or in cosmic consciousness, for it remains unchanged and unmodified.

The mountain seen in a dream only appears to exist in time and space. It does not occupy any space nor does it take time to appear and disappear. Even so is the case with the world. **In whatever manner the omnipotent deity comes into being, in exactly the same manner a worm also comes into being within the twinkling of an eye.** From the lord Rudra down to the blade of grass, all the beings one sees in the universe, have come into being in the same manner, whether they are micro-organisms or colossal personalities.

If one thus enquires into the nature of this samsara (world-appearance), the perception of diversity disappears simultaneously with the dawn of self-knowledge or god-realisation. If the real nature of the infinite consciousness is allowed to slip even for one-half of a hundredth part of a second, then all these unfortunate illusory creations take place. By the expression 'Brahman' the wise sages indicate that state in which one remains forever firmly established in the infinite consciousness. When this is disturbed, one entertains the notion of the world as real, and this gives rise to an endless sequence of diversity - gods, demons, humans and subhumans, plants and worms. However, if one does not slip from that state of cosmic consciousness, one realises that the truth is ever-present everywhere.

Vasistha said:

O Rama, having said thus, lord Siva received my adoration, and after blessing me, departed with his consort, Parvati. Having imbibed his teaching, I abandoned my previous mode of worship, and commenced the worship of the omnipresent non-dual self.

section VI.1 - chapter 43

grahyagrahakasambandhe samanye sarvadehinam yoginah savadhanatvam
yattadarcanam atmanah (8)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, the unreal jiva perceives the unreal world on account of the unreal influence of the unreality. In all this, what can be considered as real and what as unreal? An imaginary object is imaginatively described by someone. And one understands in one's own imagination, and imagines that he understands it. Just as liquidity is in liquids, motion is in wind, emptiness is in space, even so is omnipresence in the self.

From the time the Lord instructed me, I have been performing the worship of the infinite self. By the grace of such worship, though I am constantly engaged in various activities, I am free from sorrow. I perform the worship of the self who is undivided though apparently divided, with the flowers of whatever comes to me naturally, and whatever actions are natural to me.

To come into relationship (to possess, and to be possessed) is common to all embodied beings. But the yogis are forever vigilant, and such vigilance is the worship of the self. Adopting this inner attitude and with a mind utterly devoid of any attachment, I roam in this dreadful forest of samsara (world-appearance). If you do so, you will not suffer.

When great sorrow (like the loss of wealth and relations) befalls you, enquire into the nature of truth, in the manner described. You will not be affected by joy or sorrow. You now know how all these things arise, and how they cease, and you also know the fate of the man who is deluded by them, who does not enquire into their real nature. They do not belong to you, you do not belong to them. Such is the unreal nature of the world. Do not grieve.

Dear Rama, you are pure consciousness, which is not affected by the illusory perception of the diversity of creation. If you see this, how will notions of the desirable and the undesirable arise in you? Realising thus, O Rama, remain established in the turiya (transcendental) state of consciousness.

Rama said:

Lord, I am free from the dirt of duality. I have realised that all this is indeed Brahman. My intelligence has been purified, rid of doubts and desires, and even questions. I do not desire heaven, nor do I dread hell. I remain established in the self. By your grace, O Lord, I have crossed this ocean of samsara (world-appearance). I have realised the fullness of direct self-knowledge.

section VI.1 - chapter 44

yadi tatpadamapto 'si kadacit kalaparyayat tadahambhavanarupe na manktavyam
tvaya punah (5)

Vasistha continued:

That is not considered action, O Rama, which you perform merely with the organs of action, with an unattached mind. The delight derived from sensual experience is fleeting. A repetition of that experience does not afford a repetition of the same delight. Who but a fool will entertain desire for such a momentary joy? Moreover, an object gives you pleasure only when it is desired. So the pleasure belongs to the desire - hence give up desire or craving.

If in the course of time you attain to the experience of that (the self), do not store it in your mind as a memory or ego-sense, to be revived as desire once again. For, when you rest on the pinnacle of self-knowledge, it is unwise to fall into the pit of ego-sense again. Let hopes cease, and let notions vanish, let the mind reach the state of no-mind while you live unattached. You are bound only when you are ignorant. You will not be bound if you have self-knowledge. Hence, strive by every means to remain vigilant in self-knowledge.

When you do not engage yourself in sense-experiences, and also when you experience whatever comes to you unsought, you are in a state of equanimity and purity, free from latent tendencies or memories. In such a state, like the sky, you will not be tainted even by a thousand distractions. When knower, known, and knowledge merge in the one self, the pure experiencer does not once again generate a division within.

With the slightest movement in the mind (when the mind blinks), the samsara (world-appearance) arises and ceases. Make the mind unwinking (free from movement of thought), by the restraint of the prana and also the latent tendencies (vasana). By the movement (blinking) of prana, the samsara arises and ceases. By diligent practice, make the prana free from such movement. By the rise and cessation of foolishness (ignorance), self-binding action arises and ceases. Restrain it by means of self-discipline, by the instructions of the preceptor, and by the scriptures.

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, that 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).

section VI.1 - chapter 45

esaikikaiva vividheva vibhavyamana naikatmika na vividha nanu saiva saiva
satyasthita sakalasantisamaikarupa sarvatmika 'timahati citirupasaktih (36)

Vasistha continued:

In this connection, O Rama, there is an instructive parable which I shall presently narrate to you.

There is a wood-apple fruit which is immeasurably large, and which does not decay nor perish, though it has existed for countless aeons. It is the source and support of the nectar of immortality and indestructibility. It is the abode of sweetness. Though it is most ancient, it is ever new, like the new moon. It is the very centre or heart of the universe, it is unmoving and it is not shaken even by the forces of cosmic dissolution. This woodapple fruit, which is immeasurably large, is the original source of this - creation.

Even when it is fully ripe, it does not fall from its place. It is for ever fully ripe, but it does not become overripe. Even the creator Brahma, Visnu, Rudra, and the other gods, do not know the origin of this wood-apple fruit. No one has seen the seed nor the tree on which this fruit grows. The only thing that can be said about it, is that this fruit exists, without beginning, without middle, and without end, without change and without modification. Even within this fruit there is no diversity. It is completely full without emptiness. It is the fountain-source of all joys and delights, from the delight of an ordinary man, to that of the highest of divinities. Thus, this fruit is none other than the manifestation of the energy of infinite consciousness.

This energy of the infinite consciousness, without even for a moment abandoning its own true nature, has manifested this creation, as it were, by merely willing it in its own intelligence. In fact, even this (i.e., that it willed so) is not really true! The ego-sense that is implied in such willing is itself unreal. But, out of this, have proceeded all the elements and their corresponding subjective senses. In truth, that energy of the infinite consciousness itself is space, time, natural order, expansion of thought, attraction and repulsion, I-ness, you-ness and it-ness, above, below, the other directions, the mountains, the firmament and the stars, knowledge and ignorance - all, whatever is, was, and will ever be. All that is nothing but the energy of the infinite consciousness.

Though it is one, it is conceived of as diverse beings. It is neither one nor many. It is not even it! It is established in reality. It is of the nature of supreme, all-inclusive peace. It is the one immeasurably great cosmic being or self. It is (cosmic) energy of the nature of (cosmic) consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 46

bijam puspaphalantastham bijantar na 'nyadatmakam yadrasi bijasatta sa
bhavanti yatyathottaram (30)

Vasistha continued:

There is yet another parable, O Rama, to illustrate this further. I shall now narrate that to you.

There is a great rock, which is full of tenderness and affection, which is obvious and ever clearly perceived, which is soft, which is omnipresent and eternal. Within it, countless lotuses blossom. Their petals sometimes touch one another, sometimes not, sometimes they are exposed, and sometimes they are hidden from view. Some face downwards, some face upwards, and some have their roots intertwined. Some have no roots at all. All things exist within it, though they do not.

O Rama, this rock is indeed the cosmic consciousness; it is rocklike in its homogeneity. Yet within it, all these diverse creatures of this universe appear to be. Just as one conceives or imagines different forms within the rock, this universe is also ignorantly imagined to exist in this consciousness. Even if a sculptor 'creates' different forms in the rock, it is still rock. Even so in the case of this cosmic consciousness which is a homogeneous mass of consciousness. Even as the solid rock contains potentially diverse figures which can be carved out of it, the diverse names and forms of the creatures of this universe exist potentially in cosmic consciousness. Even as rock remains rock, carved or uncarved, consciousness remains consciousness, whether the world appears or not. The world-appearance is but an empty expression; its substance is naught but consciousness.

In fact, even these manifestations and modifications are but Brahman, the cosmic consciousness - though not in the sense of manifestation or modification. Even this distinction - modification in the sense of modification, or any other sense - is meaningless in Brahman. When such expressions are used in relation to Brahman, the meaning is quite different, like water in the mirage. **Since the seed does not contain anything other than the seed, even the flowers and the fruits are of the same nature as the seed; the substance of the seed is the substance of subsequent effects, too.** Even so, the homogeneous mass of cosmic consciousness does not give rise to anything other than what it is in essence. When this truth is realised, duality ceases. Consciousness never becomes un-consciousness. If there is modification, that too is consciousness. Hence, whatever there may be, wherever and in whatever form - all this is Brahman. All these exist forever in their potential state in the mass of homogeneous consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 47

sa nanato 'pyananato yatha 'ndarasabarhinah advaitadvaitasattatma tatha
brahmajagadbhramah (31)

Vasistha continued:

Time, space, and other factors in this so-called creation (which is in truth another aspect of the same consciousness), are none other than consciousness. When it is realised that all these are but thoughts and notions, and that the self is one and indivisible, how then are these regarded as unreal? In the seed there is nothing but the seed - no diversity. At the same time, there is the notion of potential diversity (of flowers, fruits) supposedly present in the seed. Even so, cosmic consciousness is one, devoid of diversity. Yet the universe of diversity is said to exist only in notion.

The stone is single; the notion of numerous lotuses arises only in relation to that single stone. Even so, the notion of diversity arises in consciousness without causing diversity. But, just as water in mirage is, and is not simultaneously, even so is diversity in relation to the infinite consciousness. All this is indeed Brahman, the infinite consciousness. Even as the notion of the existence of lotuses in the stone does not destroy the stone, Brahman is unaffected by world-appearance which exists as the very nature of Brahman in Brahman. There is no essential difference in truth between Brahman and the world; they are synonyms. When the reality is thus seen, Brahman alone is seen.

Even as all that is seen as water, in the world is naught but hydrogen and oxygen gases, even so the world-appearance is but Brahman alone. The one consciousness appears as the mind, the mountains, etc., even as the multicoloured feathers and the wings of the peacock are present in the egg of the peacock. This power or faculty is potentially present in the infinite consciousness. Whatever is now seen as the diverse objects of the universe, if it is seen with the eye of wisdom (the eye that is wisdom), then only Brahman or the infinite consciousness will be seen. **For, that is non-dual, though apparently diverse, just like the notion of diversity in the fluid in the peacock's egg. The notion of Brahman and the world is therefore both dual and non-dual.** That which is the substratum for all these notions of unity and diversity - that is the supreme state.

The infinite consciousness pervades the entire universe, and the universe exists in the infinite consciousness. The relationship is one of diversity and non-diversity - just as the numerous parts of the peacock are in the one egg-substance. Where is the diversity in all this?

section VI.1 - chapter 48

na drsyam nopadesarham na 'tyasannam na duragam kevalanubhavaprapyam cidrupam
suddbamahnanah (10)

Vasistha continued:

All these - the ego-sense and the space, etc. - have acquired the nature of real substances, though they have not been created at all. Where nothing has arisen (been created) there everything is seen. Even so, the sages, gods, and the perfected ones, remain in their transcendental consciousness, tasting the bliss of their own nature. They have abandoned the illusion of duality of the observer and the object, and the consequent movement of thought. Their gaze is fixed and unwinking.

Though these sages are active here, they do not entertain the least notion of illusory existence. They are firmly rooted in the abandonment of the relationship between the knower and the known (subject and object). Their life-force is not agitated. It is as if they were painted pictures; their mind does not move, even as the mind of painted figures does not move. For, they have abandoned the conceptualising tendency of the consciousness.

They engage themselves in appropriate activity by a little movement of thought in consciousness (even as the Lord does). However, such movement of thought, and the experiencing of the contact of the observer with the object, also produce great joy in them. Their consciousness is absolutely pure, purified of all images (concepts and notions).

Such a state of purity of the self, the true nature of the infinite consciousness is not a vision (an experience of the mind and the senses). It is incapable of being taught. It is not very easy, nor is it far distant or impossible. It is attained by direct experience alone.

That alone exists, naught else - neither the body nor the senses and life-force, neither the mind nor the storehouse of memory or latent tendencies, neither the jiva, nor even a movement in consciousness, neither consciousness nor the world. It is neither real nor unreal, nor something in-between, neither void nor non-void, neither time nor space nor substantiality. Free from all these, and free from a hundred veils in the heart, one should experience the self in all that is seen.

It is neither the beginning nor the end. Because it is ever present everywhere, it is taken for something else. Thousands are born and thousands die; but the self which is everywhere, inside and outside, is not affected. It remains in all these bodies, etc., as if it were just a little different from the infinite.

Though radiantly engaged in diverse activities, remain free from the sense of I-ness and mine-ness. For, whatever is seen in this world is Brahman, free from characteristics and qualities. It is eternal, peaceful, pure and utterly quiescent.

section VI.1 - chapter 49

samasya 'dyantayor yeyam drsyate vikrtih ksanat samvidah sambhramam viddhi na
'vikare 'sti vikrlya (5)

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-disappearance. **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.

Rama asked again: But at the end of the previous section, you exhorted me to enquire into the nature of this ignorance!

Vasistha replied: Yes, at that time you were still not fully awakened. Such expressions as 'ignorance', 'jiva', etc., have been invented as aids to instructing the unawakened. One should use commonsense and suitable aids (yukti also commonly means 'trick') to awaken the seeker before imparting the knowledge of the truth. If one declares, "All this is Brahman" to an unawakened person, it is like a man petitioning a tree for relief from his suffering. It is by suitable aids that the unawakened is awakened. The awakened is enlightened by the truth. Thus, now that you are awakened, I declare the truth to you.

You are Brahman, I am Brahman, the whole universe is Brahman. Whatever you are doing, realise this truth at all times. This Brahman or the self alone is the reality in all beings, even as clay is the real substance in thousands of pots. Even as wind and its movement are non-different, consciousness and its internal movement (energy), which causes all these manifestations, are non-different. It is the seed of notion falling on the soil of consciousness that gives rise to apparent diversity. If it does not so fall, mind does not sprout.

section VI.1 - chapter 50

purnat purnamidam purnam purnat purnam prasuyate purnena 'puritam purnam
sthita purne ca purnata (2)

Rama said:

What is to be known is known, what is to be seen is seen. We are all filled with the supreme truth, thanks indeed to the nectarine wisdom of Brahman, imparted by you. **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 experienced 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 ego-sense (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 and falls, until it attains a pure birth, and is spiritually awakened. Then, by being devoted to the truth, it attains self-knowledge.

I shall now tell you how it perceives the objects. I said that, on account of the notion of 'I am', consciousness abides as jiva in the body. When its senses descend upon similar bodies outside itself, there is contact between the two, and there is desire to know (to become one with) them. When there is this contact, the object is reflected within oneself, and the jiva perceives this reflection, though it believes that the reflection is outside! The jiva knows only this reflection, which means it knows itself. This contact is the cause of the perception of external objects. Hence, it is possible only in the case of the ignorant one whose mind is deluded, and not in the case of the liberated sage. Of course, since the jiva (which is but a 'notion') and all the rest of it are inert and insentient, the reflection thus seen and experienced is in fact an optical illusion or intellectual perversion. The self is all-in-all all the time.

section VI.1 - chapter 51

brahmapuryastakasya 'davarthasamvidyathodita puryastakasya sarvasya
tathaivodeti sarvada (2)

Vasistha continued:

Just as the cosmic body (composed of the intelligence-energy and the cosmic elements) or the first puryastaka (cosmic subtle body) arose in the infinite consciousness as a notion, all the other bodies (puryastaka) also arise in the same manner. Whatever the jiva (which is the puryastaka or the subtle body) conceives of while still in the womb, that it sees as existent. Just as in the macrocosm the cosmic elements evolve, even so in the microcosm the senses corresponding to those elements evolve. Of course, they are not actually created. These expressions and descriptions are used merely for the sake of instruction. These ideas which are used in instruction are dispelled by the enquiry which they initially promote and prompt.

Even when you observe this ignorance very carefully and keenly, you do not see it; it vanishes. The unreal is rooted in unreality. We only talk of water in the mirage. The water in the mirage, being unreal, has never been water at all. In the light of truth, the reality of all things is revealed, and delusion or illusory perception vanishes.

The self is real. Jiva, puryastaka (the subtle body), and all the rest of it, are unreal, and the enquiry into their nature is no doubt enquiry into their unreality! It is in order to instruct one in the real nature of the unreality that such expressions as 'jiva', etc., are used.

This infinite consciousness has, as it were, assumed the nature of the jiva, and oblivious of its true nature it experiences whatever it thinks of as being. Even as to the child the unreal ghost it visualises at night is truly real, the jiva conceives of the five elements which it sees as existing. These are nothing but notions of the jiva; however, the jiva sees them as if they are outside it. It thinks that some are within, and others are outside of it. And so, it experiences them.

Knowledge is inherent in consciousness, even as void is in space. However, consciousness now believes knowledge to be its own object. The diverse objects are limited by time and space, which are themselves but the notional division in consciousness brought about by this division (of consciousness and knowledge as subject and object) within itself. Such division does not exist in the self, which transcends time and space.

However, the infinite consciousness, with the knowledge inherent in it, conceives of diverse creatures. Such is its power, which no one can challenge. The inert space is unable to reflect itself within itself. But, because its nature is infinite consciousness, Brahman reflects itself within itself, and conceives of itself as a duality, though it is bodiless.

section VI.1 - chapter 51

hematvakatakatve dve satyasatyasvarupini hemni bhandagate yadvaccittvacittve
tatha 'tmani (36)

Vasistha continued:

Whatever this consciousness thinks of, that it sees as existing; its concepts and notions are never barren. **In a golden bracelet, there are these two - gold and bracelet, one being the reality (gold), and the other being the appearance (of bracelet). Even so, in the self there are both consciousness and the notion of material (inert) substantiality.** Since consciousness is omnipresent, it is ever present in the mind in which the notion arises.

The dreamer dreams of a village which occupies his mind, and in which he lives for the time being; a little later he dreams of another situation, and he thinks he lives there. Even so, the jiva goes from one body to another; the body is but the reflection of the notion entertained by the jiva. The unreal (body) alone dies, and it is the unreal that is born again apparently in another body. Just as in the dream one experiences, things seen and unseen, even so in the dream of the jiva it experiences the world, and even sees what is to come in the future.

Even as an error of yesterday can be rectified and turned into a good action by self-effort today, the habits of the past can be overcome by appropriate self-effort. However, the notion of jiva-hood and of the existence, and functioning of the eyes, etc., cannot be abolished except by the attainment of liberation. Till then, they become alternately latent and patent.

A notion entertained by consciousness appears as the body. It has a corresponding subtle body (ativahika, which is also known as puryastaka), composed of mind, intellect, ego-sense, and the five elements. The self is formless, but the puryastaka roams in this creation in sentient and insentient bodies, until it purifies itself, lives as if in deep sleep, and attains liberation. The subtle body exists all the time, during dreams and during sleep. It continues to exist in insentient 'bodies' (like inanimate objects) as if it were in deep sleep. All these are also experienced in this (human) body. Its deep sleep state is inert and insentient, its dream-state is the experience of this creation, its waking state is truly the transcendental (turiya) consciousness; and the realisation of the truth is liberation. The state of liberation-while-living is itself the turya consciousness. Beyond that is Brahman, which is turya-atita (beyond turya). In every atom of existence there is naught else than the supreme being. Wherever the world is seen, that is but an illusory world-appearance. This illusion, and therefore bondage, is sustained by psychological conditioning. Such conditioning is bondage, and its abandonment is freedom. Dense and heavy conditioning is existence as inert objects, middling conditioning is existence as animals, and thin conditioning is existence as humans. But enough of perception of division. The whole universe is but the manifestation of the energy of infinite consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 52

na pumsa iva jivasya svapnah samphavti kvacit tenaite jagrato bhava
jagratsvapnakrto 'tra hi (2)

Vasistha continued:

What is known as this samsara (world-appearance) is but the original dream of the jiva (the first person). **The dream of the jiva is not like the dream of a person; the former's dream is experienced as the wakeful state. Hence, it is that the wakeful state is considered a dream.** The jiva's long dream is instantly materialised, though it is unreal and unsubstantial. The jiva goes from one dream to another within that dream; and as this misconception of the dream as the reality becomes denser, it is experienced as if it were real, and the real is ignored as unreal. Be wise and live like Arjuna, who will become enlightened through the Lord's instruction.

The entire universe appears in the one ocean of cosmic consciousness. In that universe dwell fourteen types of beings. This universe has already had Yama, Candra, Surya, and others as its presiding deities. They have established the tenets of right conduct. However, when the people become predominantly sinful, Yama the god of death sometimes engages himself in meditation for some years, during which the population increases and explodes.

The gods, frightened by this population explosion, resort to various devices to reduce it. All this has happened again and again countless times. The present ruler (Yama) is Vaivasvata. He, too, will have to perform meditation for some time. When, on account of that, the population of the earth will multiply very fast, all the gods will appeal to lord Visnu to come to their aid. He will incarnate as lord Krsna, along with his alter ego named Arjuna.

His elder brother will be Yudhisthira or the son of Dharma, who will be the embodiment of righteousness. His cousin, Duryodhana, will fight a duel with Bhima, Arjuna's brother. In this baffle between cousins, 18 divisions of armed forces will be killed; and thus will Visnu dispose of the burden on the earth.

Krsna and Arjuna will play the roles of simple human beings. When Arjuna sees that the armies on both sides are composed of his own kinsmen, he will become despondent, and will refuse to fight. At that time, lord Krsna will instruct him in the highest wisdom, and bring about a spiritual awakening in him. He will tell Arjuna: "This (self) is neither born nor does it die; it is eternal, and is not killed when this body is killed. He who thinks that it kills or that it is killed, he is ignorant. How, why, and by whom, is this infinite being, which is one without a second, and which is subtler than space, destroyed? Arjuna, behold the self which is infinite, unmanifest, eternal, and which is of the nature of pure consciousness and untainted. You are unborn and eternal!"

section VI.1 - chapter 53

api kutsitam apyanyadapyadharmamayakramam srestham te svam yatha karma
tatheha mrtavan bhava (14)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

Arjuna, you are not the killer; give up this vain egotistic notion. You are the self which is devoid of old age and death. He who is free from ego-sense, and whose intelligence is not attached to anything, he does not kill, nor is he bound even if he destroys the whole world. Hence abandon the wrong notions of 'This I am' and 'This is mine'. It is only because of these wrong notions that you think 'I am destroyed,' and suffer. It is only the egotistic and ignorant person who thinks 'I do this', whereas all this is done by the different aspects of the one self or infinite consciousness.

Let the eyes see, let the ears hear, let the skin feel, let the tongue taste. Where is the 'I' in all this? Even when the mind continues to entertain various notions, there is naught which can be identified as 'I'. Whereas all these factors are involved in an action, the 'I' assumes doership, and then suffers. The yogis perform action merely by their mind and senses, for self-purification. He who is polluted by the ego-sense, whether he is a learned scholar or one superior even to that, he indeed is a wicked man. On the other hand, he who is free from the ego-sense and from the sense of possession, and who is equanimous in pleasure and pain, he is not bound, whether he does what is approved or what is forbidden.

Hence, O Arjuna, your duty now as a warrior, though it involves violence, is proper and noble. **The performance of action appropriate to you, even if it is despicable and unrighteous - is the best. By its due performance, become immortal here.** Even a fool's natural action is noble in his case. How much more is this valid in the case of a good man! Engage yourself in action, established in the spirit of yoga, and unattached to the action; thus you shall not be bound.

Be at peace, even as Brahman is peace. And make your action of the nature of Brahman. Thus doing everything as an offering unto Brahman, you will instantly become Brahman. The Lord dwells in all. By performing all your actions as an offering unto him, shine as the Lord adored by all. Become a true sanyasi (renunciate) by firmly abandoning all thoughts and notions; thus you shall liberate your consciousness.

The cessation of all thoughts and notions or mental images, and the cessation of heavy psychological conditioning, are the supreme self or Brahman. Striving towards this end is known both as yoga and as wisdom (jnana). The conviction that Brahman alone is all, including the world and the 'I', is known as 'offering everything to Brahman' (Brahmarpanam).

section VI.1 - chapter 53

samanyam paramam caiva dve rupe viddhi me 'naḡha panyadiyukttam samanyam
sankacakragadadharam (36)

The Lord 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.

I am hope, I am the world, I am action, I am time, I am the one and I am also the many. Hence, saturate your mind with me, be devoted to me, serve me, salute me. Thus constantly united with me, and with me as your supreme goal, you will reach me.

I have two forms, O Arjuna - the ordinary and the supreme. The ordinary form is that which is endowed with hands, etc., and with the conch, the discus, the mace, etc. The supreme form is without beginning and without end, one without a second. It is known variously as Brahman, self, supreme self, etc. As long as one is not fully awakened spiritually, one should worship the common form. By such worship, one is spiritually awakened, and one will know the supreme form, knowing which he will not be born again.

I consider that you have been awakened by my instructions. Behold the self in all and all in the self, remaining for ever firmly established in yoga. He who is thus established, is not born again, though he may continue to perform his natural actions here. The concept of unity is used to cancel the concept of the many. The concept of self (infinite consciousness) is used to cancel the conceptualisation of unity. The self can neither be conceived of as existence or non-existence - it is what it is.

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.

section VI.1 - chapter 53

tad isat sphurita karam brahma brahmaiva tisthati ahantadi jagattadi kramena
bhramakarina (54)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

The pure experience of taste that exists in all substances in the world is the self. The faculty of experiencing that exists in all creatures, that is the omnipresent self. It exists in all, even as butter exists in milk.

Even as in a collection of a thousand pots, there is space within and outside of all the pots, undivided and indivisible, even so the self exists pervading all beings in the three worlds. Even as in a necklace of pearls the connecting thread may remain invisible, even so this self connects all and keeps all together, itself remaining invisible. That truth or reality is known as the self which pervades all things, right from Brahma the creator to the blade of grass.

In that Brahman there is a little manifestation which is also Brahman; and that is known here as the I-am-ness and the world on account of ignorance and delusion. When all this is but the one self, O Arjuna, what is the meaning of expressions like 'This is killed' and 'He kills', as also 'good', 'not good', 'unhappiness', etc.? He who knows that the self is the witness of all these changes, and that the self is unchanged and unaffected by these changes, he knows the truth.

Though I use expressions suggestive of diversity, the reality is nondual. All these comings and goings, creation and dissolution, are non-different from the self. The self is the very nature of the totality of existence, even as hardness is the characteristic of a rock and liquid the nature of waves.

He who sees the self in all, and all in the self, and he who sees that the self is non-doer (being non-dual), he sees the truth. Just as gold is the reality in all the ornaments made of gold, whatever be their shape and size, just as water is the reality in all the waves and ripples on the ocean, whatever be their shape or size, even so the supreme self or the infinite consciousness alone is the reality in what appears to be a world of diverse creatures.

Why then do you vainly grieve? What is there in all these changing phenomena that your heart should be devoted to? Thus questioning themselves, the liberated ones roam this world in total freedom and in perfect equilibrium. Their desires having turned back on themselves (desires), their delusion having been shed, unattached to anything but firmly established in self-knowledge, freed from all sense of duality known as happiness and unhappiness, the sages reach the supreme state.

section VI.1 - chapter 54

na kincideva dehadi na ca dukkhadi vidyate atmano yat prthagbhutam kim kena
'to 'nubhuyate (12)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

Hear again what I am going to tell you. I say this to you for your own good, because you are dear to me.

Endure whatever pleasure and pain, heat and cold you are subjected to; they come and go. They do not pertain to the self, which is beginningless and endless, and which is free from parts. Sense-experience is born of the delusion of contact with the illusory elements. He who knows this and is undisturbed, is earmarked for liberation. When the self alone exists, where is room for pleasure and pain to arise? As the supreme self alone is omnipresent, pleasure and pain do not exist. The unreal has no existence, and the real does not cease to be.

The self does not rejoice in pleasure, nor does it grieve in pain! It is the inert mind that, dwelling in the body, experiences pain. If the body decays, the self is not affected. **There is no such thing as body, etc., nor is there an entity known as pain, etc., independent of the self. Then, what is experienced by whom?** Hence, one who is fully awakened is free from such delusion. Even as the delusion of a snake in the rope vanishes upon right understanding, even so the delusion of body, etc., and sorrow, etc., vanishes upon spiritual awakening. Right understanding or spiritual awakening is that the universal Brahman is neither born nor does it die.

Destroy the forces of delusion, like pride, sorrow, fear, desire, as also pain and pleasure. Such pairs of opposites are illusory. Be established in oneness. You are the single ocean of consciousness. Pain and pleasure, gain and loss, victory and defeat, are born of ignorance. Hence remain unaffected by them. Whatever you do, eat, offer in worship, and give - all that is the self. Whatever your inner being is, that you shall certainly attain. Hence, in order to attain the realisation of Brahman, fill your entire being with Brahman.

He who sees action in inaction, and inaction in action, he is wise, and he accomplishes all. Be not attached to the fruits of action nor to inaction. Attachment is real 'doership', it is also 'non-doership' (one may egotistically think 'I do' or 'I do not do') . Both these are aspects of foolishness; hence, abandon foolishness. Abandon the concept of diversity, even while being engaged in diverse actions. You are not the doer of actions. He is regarded as a wise man whose actions are burnt in the fire of self-knowledge, and are therefore free from desire. He who restrains the physical organs, but indulges in mental experience of pleasure, is a hypocrite. But he who, restraining the senses by the mind, works with his physical body, free from attachment, he is a superior person. He in whose heart the desires that arise are turned upon themselves as rivers flow into the ocean, he is at peace, not the man of desire.

section VI.1 - chapter 55

sa jivah pranamurtih khe yatra yatra 'vatisthate tam tam svavasanabhyasat
pasyatyakaramatam (27)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

Without renouncing aught, and without the egotistic feeling 'I enjoy' or 'I suffer', one should remain in an equanimous state in all natural situations. Do not entertain the feeling of 'This is self or consciousness' towards what is not-self (non-consciousness). When the body perishes, nothing is lost. The self is never lost! The self is by definition the indestructible and infinite consciousness. Never let even the thought 'The self is perishable' enter your mind. What perishes, what changes is naught other than the notions 'This is lost' and 'This has been gained'. The Self which is eternal and infinite does not cease to be the reality, and the unreal has no existence whatsoever. The Self that pervades all everywhere is imperishable. The bodies have an end, but the Self (the infinite consciousness) is eternal. The Self or the infinite consciousness is one and non-dual. What remains when all sense of duality has been abandoned, that is the Self, that is the Supreme Truth.

Arjuna asks: Then, O Lord, what is known as death, and what are known as heaven and hell?

The Lord replies: The jiva, or the living soul, or personality, lives in the net woven by the elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space), and also by the mind and the intellect. And that jiva is dragged by the latent tendencies (past impressions, memory, etc.), imprisoned as it is in the cage known as the body. In course of time, the body gets old. The jiva gets out of that body, even as juice from a leaf when pressed. Taking with it the senses and the mind, it leaves the body and goes forth, even as scent leaves its source and goes. The jiva's body is none other than the vasana or the residual impressions gained in the body. When the jiva has left the body, it becomes inert; it is then known as 'dead'.

Wherever it roams in space, the jiva, which is of the nature of prana or life-force, sees whatever forms are conjured up by its previous vasanas or impressions. These previous impressions are destroyed only by intense self-effort. Even if the mountains were pulverised and the worlds dissolved, one should not give up self-effort. Even heaven and hell are but the projection of these impressions or vasanas.

This vasana arose in ignorance and foolishness, and it ceases only on the dawn of self-knowledge. What is jiva except vasana or mental conditioning, which again is vain imagination or thought-form? He who is able to abandon this vasana, while yet living in the body in this world, is said to be liberated. He who has not abandoned vasana is in bondage, even if he is a great scholar.

section VI.1 - chapter 56

ksanam kalpikarotyetat tacca lpam kurute bahu asat satkurute ksipram itiyam
bhrantirutthita (23)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

Thus abandoning mental conditioning, be a liberated soul. Be calm and cool within, and give up sorrow caused by relationship. Abandon even the least doubt concerning old age and death. Have a vision as expansive as the sky. Be free from attraction, and hence from aversion, too. Whatever action is natural to you, do that. Nothing perishes here. This is the nature of a liberated sage. It is only the fool who thinks, 'I shall do this now' and 'I shall abandon this now'.

The senses of a liberated sage are naturally and firmly established in his own heart. It is the mind (heart) that paints the picture known as the three worlds on the canvas of the omnipresent being. The mind creates fragmentation and division. In fact, there is no such fragmentation, but the fragmentation that is observed in this creation is but the mind's own painting. Space is absolute emptiness. However, in the mind, the world-appearance rises and falls in the twinkling of an eye! Since the self (on which the world is painted by the mind) pervades the whole creation, creation appears to be real. But, on right enquiry, it dissolves in the self.

Neither do 'they' exist, nor do you exist. Why then do you grieve? In pure space, there is no action or motion, for such motion or action is itself void. Hence, pure space is untainted by such concepts as time, action, etc. All this is only in the mind whose idea is spread as these images. The pure space is empty. That space cannot be divided at any time.

Now that fancied creation has been dissolved, O Arjuna. It came into being by momentary delusion. It is unreal; yet, the mind is capable of creating this phantasy in a moment. **It (the mind) makes a moment appear like an epoch, it makes a little look like very much, it makes the unreal appear real instantly; thus has this delusion arisen.** It is that momentary delusion that seems to have remained as the illusion known as the world, which in the eyes of the ignorant is an undeniable and solid reality. However, since this world-appearance is based on the reality of the infinite consciousness, arguments concerning its real or unreal nature are of little consequence. It is indeed a great wonder that this world of diversity appears in the indivisible infinite consciousness. Yet, it is no more than the painting of a dancer, with all the phenomena as the different parts, and the gods and the demons and other beings as her limbs. All these are indeed nothing but their substratum which has never undergone any change. It is the infinite, indivisible consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 57 58

pratibimbam yatha 'darse tathedam brahmani svayam agamyam
chedabhedaderadharananyatavasat (57/6)

The Lord continues to instruct Arjuna:

This indeed is a great wonder: first there appears the picture, and then there arises fragmentation. The picture exists only in the mind. Whatever is done, is done by emptiness in emptiness (space); emptiness dissolves in emptiness; emptiness enjoys emptiness; emptiness pervades emptiness. Whatever appears to be, is pervaded by vasanas (psychological conditioning or mental image). The world-appearance is illusory. **It exists in Brahman as an image exists in a mirror - intangible and without holes (breaks) and divisions - being non-different from Brahman.** Even what is known as vasana is essentially based on the infinite consciousness and non-different from it.

He who is not free from the bonds of vasana, is firmly bound to its illusion. Even if one is left with just a trace of this vasana or mental conditioning, it will soon grow into a mighty forest of samsara (world-appearance or cycle of birth and death). But, if through constant endeavour this seed of vasana is burnt by the fire of correct understanding and self-knowledge, then that burnt seed will not give rise to further bondage. One whose vasanas are thus burnt, does not get lost in pain and pleasure; he lives in this world as a lotus leaf in water.

Arjuna says: Lord, my delusion is gone. I have attained an awakening of intelligence through your Grace. I am free from all doubts. I shall do thy bidding.

The Lord concludes His teaching:

If the mental modifications are pacified, then the mind is at peace; satva arises. Then the consciousness is freed from the object. There is pure inner consciousness. It is all, and it is omnipresent. It is pure and free from movement of thought. It is transcendental. It is not attained unless all the vasanas have been purified. Even as heat melts snow, this pure consciousness dissolves ignorance and dispels it. That which is everything in the universe, that which is devoid of everything in the universe, that which is inexpressible, that which is the supreme truth - by what name can it be called?

Vasistha continued:

When the Lord will thus instruct Arjuna, the latter will remain silent for a few moments, and then will say: "Lord, in the light of the sun of your admonitions, the lotus of the intelligence in my heart has fully unfolded." Having said this, Arjuna will instantly pick up his weapons, and engage himself in the conduct of the war, as if in a play.

section VI.1 - chapter 59

ciccamatkr̥t̥ireveyam jagadityavabhasate neha 'styaikyam na ca dvitvam mamadeso
'pi tanmayah (19) vacyavacakasyehaguruvakyais camatkr̥taih (20)

Vasistha continued:

Equip yourself with such an attitude, O Rama, and remain unattached, endowed with the spirit of renunciation, and with the realisation that whatever you do or you experience, is an offering to the omnipresent being, Brahman. Then you will realise the truth, and that is the end of all doubts.

That is the supreme state, it is the guru of all gurus, it is the self, it is the light that illumines the world from within. It is the reality in all substances, that which endows the substances with their essential characteristic. The notion of 'world' arises only when the spirit of enquiry is absent. But, 'I' am before the world was. How then do the notions of world, etc., bind me? He who has thus realised the truth is free from all beginnings and all ends. He who is thus equipped with the spirit of non-duality (as if he is in deep sleep, though awake) is not disturbed, though actively engaged in life. Such a person is liberated here and now.

What appears to be the world here is truly the magic (the work) of the infinite consciousness. There is no unity here, nor is there duality. My instructions too, are of the same nature! The words, their meaning, the disciple, the wish (or the effort of the disciple), and the guru's ability in the use of the words - all these are also the play of the energy of the infinite consciousness! In the peace of one's own inner being, consciousness vibrates, and the world-vision arises. If that consciousness does not vibrate, there will be no world-vision.

The mind is but the movement in consciousness. The non-realisation of this truth is world-vision! Non-realisation of this truth intensifies and aggravates the movement of thought in consciousness. Thus a cycle is formed. Ignorance and mental activity are perpetuated by each other.

When the inner intelligence is awakened, the craving for pleasure ceases; this is the nature of the wise. In him this cessation of craving for pleasure is therefore natural and effortless. He knows that it is the energy of the self that experiences the experiences. He who, in order to please the public, refuses to experience what is to be experienced, he indeed beats the air with a stick! One attains self-knowledge by sometimes using appropriate means.

Desire for liberation interferes with the fullness of the self; absence of such desire promotes bondage! Hence, constant awareness is to be preferred. The sole cause for bondage and liberation is the movement in consciousness. Awareness of this ends this movement. The ego-sense ceases the very moment one observes it, for it has no support any longer. Then who is bound by whom, or who is liberated by whom?

section VI.1 - chapter 60

tat sarvagatam adyantarahitam sthitamurjitam sattasamanyamakhilam
vastutattvamihocyate (8)

Vasistha continued:

Such is the nature of the supreme being, which is the infinite consciousness. They who are endowed with macrocosmic forms, like Brahma the creator, Visnu, and Siva, are established in that supreme being; and they function here as the lords or kings of the world. Established in it, the perfected sages roam the heavens. Having attained it, one does not die nor does one grieve. 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.

Rama asked:

When the mind, the intellect, and the ego-sense, have all ceased to function, how does that pure being or infinite consciousness appear here?

Vasistha continued:

Brahman, which dwells in all bodies and experiences experiences - eats, drinks, speaks, gathers, and destroys, but is free from the division of consciousness and its awareness.

That which is omnipresent, and which is without beginning and end, and which is pure, unmodified, undifferentiated being - that is known as existence (vastu-tattvam) or reality.

That exists as space in space, as sound in sound, as touch in touch, as skin in skin, in taste as taste, in form as form, in the eyes as sight, in smell as smell, in scent as scent, in the body as strength, in earth as the earth, in milk as milk, in wind as wind, in fire as fire, in intelligence as intelligence, in mind as mind, in the ego-sense as ego-sense. It rises as citta or mind in the mind. It is tree in the tree. It is immobility in the immovable, and mobility in the moving beings. It is insentience in the insentient, and intelligence in the sentient. It is the divinity of gods, and humanity in human beings. In animals it is bestial nature, and in worms it is wormhood. It is the very essence of time and the seasons. It is dynamism in action, and order in order. It is existence in the existent, and death in the perishable. It is childhood, youth, and age, and also death.

It is undivided and indivisible, for it is the very essence of all things. Diversity is unreal, though it is real in the above sense (that the diversity is conceived of and pervaded by the infinite consciousness). Realise: "All this is pervaded by me for I am omnipresent and devoid of body and such other limitation", and dwell in peace and supreme happiness.

Valmiki said:

As the sage Vasistha said this, the day came to an end, and the assembly dispersed for their evening prayers.

section VI.1 - chapter 61

bhavatyatmani sargadi drdhapratyayameva tat nimesamatrah pauro 'yam
sargasvapnah purah sthitah tasminnimesa eva smin kalpata parikalpyate (11)

Rama asked:

O sage, even as the cities etc. that we see during our dream are unreal, the world which is the dream of Brahma, the creator, is in fact unreal and illusory. But how is it that it has acquired solid firmness in our vision?

Vasistha replied:

The very first creation of Brahma is observed by us even today as if it were real! Because consciousness is infinite, the creation of jiva also takes place everywhere. This creation is no doubt born of ignorance, and the belief in creation destroys true perception. Though this creation is unreal, yet on account of the emergence of the ego-sense, it appears to be solidly real. The dreamer does not realise the evanescence of the objects seen in the dream; even so, it is in the case of this cosmic dream of the Creator. The dream partakes of the characteristic of the dreamer. That which is born of the unreal must be unreal, too. Hence, though this world appears to be real, as it is born of the unreal concept (the dream of the Creator), it should be firmly rejected.

In the self, which is the infinite consciousness, this creation appears but momentarily. During that moment itself, the illusory notion that it is of a very long duration arises. The creation then appears to be solidly real. Even as this universe exists as a dream in the consciousness of the Creator, it is experienced as a long period in the consciousness (dream) of all the beings who are the dream-objects of the Creator.

Whatever is seen in whatever form in that dream, that it becomes. Surely, when the mind is in a demented or confused state, there is nothing in this world which that mind cannot experience. For, even in this world, so many extraordinary phenomena are seen: fire burns in the middle of water, water remains suspended in the sky, living beings are found in the heart of a rock, insentient machines function in different ways. One can also see what is obviously unreal, even as it is possible for one to dream one's own death.

There is naught which is real, nor is there aught which is unreal. All is made possible everywhere in this dream known as creation! Just as one who is immersed in the dream sees the dream as utterly real, one who is immersed in this creation thinks that it is utterly real. Just as one goes from one dream to another, one goes from one delusion to another delusion, and thus experiences this world as utterly real.

section VI.1 - chapter 62

tiryanco 'pi prapasyanti svapne cittasvabhavatah drstanam ca srutanam ca
cetah smaranamaksatam (18)

Vasistha continued:

In this connection I shall narrate a legend to you, O Rama, to which please lend your ear.

There once lived a mendicant who was devoted to meditation. His mind, having been purified by such meditation, came to possess the power to materialise its thoughts.

One day, being tired of continuous meditation, yet having his mind fully concentrated, he thought of doing something. He fancied birth as one who was illiterate, and of a non-brahmana family. Instantly, he had become, as it were, a tribesman; there arose in him the feeling 'I am Jivata'. This dream-being roamed for some time in the city, also built of dream-objects. One day, he got drunk and slept. He dreamt that he was a brahmana endowed with knowledge of the scriptures. While he was living a righteous life, one day this brahmana dreamt that he was a powerful king. He dreamt that he was a mighty emperor of unequalled glory. One day, he indulged in royal pleasures, and after that slept and dreamt of a celestial nymph.

Similarly, this nymph one day dreamt that she was a deer. And this deer dreamt that it was a creeper. Surely, **even animals behold dreams, for such is the nature of the mind which can recollect what has been seen and what has been heard.** The deer became a creeper. The inner intelligence in the creeper saw in its own heart a bee. It became a bee - and the bee began to drink the nectar in the flowers on the creeper. It became attached to the nectar in one of those flowers, surely for its own destruction!

At night, an elephant approached this creeper and plucked it, along with the bee, and crushed it in its mouth. However, the bee, having seen the elephant, contemplated the elephant and became an elephant. The elephant was captured by a king. One day, it saw a hive of bees and, on account of the memory of its own past birth, it became a bee. It began to drink the nectar of the flowers in wild creepers. It became a creeper. The creeper was destroyed by an elephant, but because the creeper had seen swans in the nearby lake, it became a swan.

One day, this swan was roaming in the company of many other swans. While the mendicant was meditating upon this swan, he was overcome by death. His consciousness therefore became embodied in the swan.

section VI.1 - chapter 63

yadrcchaya sthito jivo bhutatanmatranjitah kasminscidabhavat sarge
bhiksuraksubhito 'bhitah (9)

Vasistha continued:

That swan once beheld lord Rudra, and in its heart there arose the conviction 'I am Rudra'. Instantly it abandoned its body as swan and became Rudra. And that Rudra dwelt in the abode of Rudra. However, since Rudra was endowed with true knowledge, he remembered all that had taken place!

Rudra recollected thus:

Behold! How mysterious is this Maya which deludes all the worlds. Though it is unreal, it appears to be real. First of all, in that infinite consciousness which was myself, there arose the mind with objective consciousness, though yet cosmic and omniscient. **Then accidentally I happened to be the jiva, which felt attracted to, and charmed by the finest part of the cosmic elements. Therefore, during a certain creation-cycle, I became the mendicant who remained totally unagitated.** He was able to overcome all distractions, and remain immersed in the practice of contemplation.

However, every subsequent action is more powerful than a previous act. The mendicant considered himself Jivata, and so did he become. After that, he bethought he was a brahmana. Surely, the more powerful thought-form overwhelms the weaker one. Then, in course of time, and on account of persistent contemplation, he became a king. Surely, water imbibed by the plant becomes its fruit! Associated with royal pleasures are nymphs; contemplating them, the king became a nymph. Purely on account of infatuation, this nymph became a deer. The deer became a creeper which was obsessed with the idea that it would be pierced and a hole would be made. Contemplating the bee, it became a bee which then pierced a hole in the creeper. The bee became an elephant.

I am Rudra who has been a Rudra during the past one hundred creation cycles, and I roam this world-appearance which is nothing more than a psychological delusion. In one creation-cycle, I was Jivata, in another I was the brahmana, in another I was the king, and in yet another I was the swan. Thus have I been revolving in this wheel known as the mind and the body.

It is aeons since I slipped from that supreme self or infinite consciousness. Soon after that fall, I was that mendicant who was still endowed with knowledge of the truth. Then, after passing through very many incarnations, through the grace of Rudra whom I happened to behold, I have become Rudra. When the jiva by coincidence comes into contact with an enlightened person, then its impure vasanas (tendencies) turn away. This happens to that person who constantly longs for such contact with an enlightened person. Such constant longing (or abhyasa) itself materialises and becomes an accomplished fact.

section VI.1 - chapter 63

yo yo 'bhitah sa jivasya samsarah samudeti hi tatra 'prabuddha jivaughah
pasyanti na parasparam (60)

Rudra continued to recollect thus:

Surely it is because of one's inner conviction 'This body is my self' that this unreal perception expands. If one were to enquire into its true nature, one would find that nothing remained! Enough of even such enquiry, which leads to nothing. This world is an optical illusion, like the blueness of the sky. It is ignorance. Enough of even this effort to purify that ignorance! If this world-appearance, which is unreal, continues to appear, let it. It can do no harm. I shall retrace the chain of imaginary transformations, and restore their underlying unity.

Vasistha continued:

Thus having resolved, Rudra went to where the body of the mendicant lay. He awakened it, and inspired it, to remember all that had taken place. The mendicant saw Rudra as his own self, and also recollected all that had happened.

Then, both of them went to where Jivata lived in the same infinite consciousness. They revived his body. The three were indeed one. These three, who were wonderstruck at this mystery, then proceeded to the place of the brahmana who was asleep, embraced by his wife. They awakened his consciousness. Then they went to where the king was asleep in his royal bedchamber, surrounded by nymphs. They awakened his intelligence, too. He too was amazed at the realisation of the truth. Thus they went to where the swan lived, the swan that became Rudra.

They roamed the world of the one hundred Rudras of the past. They realised that it was all one infinite consciousness, in which all these diverse illusory events had apparently taken place. The one form had become many, as it were. These one hundred Rudras pervaded the entire universe, and were omnipresent.

On account of the fact that the jiva is surrounded on all sides by the world that arises from it, the awakened jivas realise their oneness, and thus understand one another. Just as all waves are of the same substance, and are therefore one, the unawakened jivas do not see one another, do not understand one another. Each jiva has its own illusory world-appearance. However, even as one finds empty space wherever one digs the ground, when this world-appearance of the jivas is enquired into, it invariably leads to the same infinite consciousness.

Differentiated consciousness is bondage; liberation is its absence. Whatever pleases you, affirm that, and be firm in that. There is no difference between the two, for awareness is the same in both. Who will bemoan the loss of what exists only in ignorance? That which is gained by 'being still', that exists already, and has therefore already been 'gained'!

section VI.1 - chapter 64

iha vidydhara 'yam syamaham syamiha panditah (23)

ityekadhyanasaphalyam drstanto 'syam kriyasthitau ekatvam ca bahutvam ca
maurkhyam pandityameva va (24)

Vasistha continued:

All of them attained awakening of their spiritual consciousness along with lord Rudra. Realising that they were part of Rudra, they were happy. Rudra saw the play of Maya as it arose, and he inspired the others to play their roles in it once again, commanding them to return to him after such seemingly independent existence, and assuring them that at the end of the world-cycle they would reach the supreme state. Rudra then vanished from sight, and Jivata and the others returned to their own respective abodes.

Rama asked:

Were Jivata and the others not mere dream-objects (imaginary entities) of the mendicant? How could they become real entities?

Vasistha replied:

Abandon the notion that imagination is something real! When thus the illusoriness of illusion is abandoned, what exists, exists in the infinite consciousness. What is seen in dream, and what is imagined to be real, they appear as such at all times, even as to a traveller the temporal and spatial experiences are real relative to the different places. In the heart of that infinite consciousness, everything exists, and one experiences what one sees in it.

The dream-like nature of thought-form is realised only by the intense practice of yoga, not otherwise. It is by such practice that lord Siva and others perceive everything everywhere. That which is in front of you, and at the same time apprehended by your mind, is not realised if there is misapprehension in such perception or in such existence. Only when such misapprehension does not exist can that object be known and realised. Whatever one wishes, is obtained only when one's inner being is wholly and solely devoted to it. He who is thus totally devoted to what is in front of him, knows it perfectly. He who is totally devoted to an imaginary object, knows it perfectly. If such one-pointed devotion is not there, then he destroys that object (is not aware of it). It was thus (by such one-pointed devotion) that the mendicant became Rudra and all the rest of it. Each of them had his own world. Hence, until the Rudra-consciousness was awakened in them, they were unaware of one another. It was in fact by the will of Rudra that they were thus veiled, that they became of different forms and nature.

It is by one-pointed contemplation of 'May I become a celestial' or 'May I become a learned man', and as the fruit of such contemplation, that one is enabled to come one or many, or an ignoramus or a man of knowledge. It is possible by concentration and meditation to become a divinity or a human being, and function accordingly.

section VI.1 - chapter 64 65

sarvasakttyah svarupatvajjivasya 'stye kabakttita anantasca 'ntaprkttasca
svabhavo 'sya svabhavatah (64/26)

Vasistha continued:

The infinite consciousness, which is the true self of all, is endowed with omnipotence, but the jiva (which is essentially non-different from the self) is endowed with one faculty (appropriate to its notion). Hence, depending upon the nature of the jiva it enjoys endless powers or limited powers. The infinite consciousness is free from expansion and contraction. It is the jiva that gets what it seeks. The yogis who have acquired various faculties, exist and manifest such faculties here and also elsewhere. However, since they are enjoyed here and there and in different places, such experiences appear to be many and varied, even as the famous Kartavirya generated fear in the hearts of many, though he remained at home!

Similarly, lord Visnu, without leaving his abode, incarnates as a human being on earth. Similarly, Indra (who presides over sacred rites), without leaving his heavenly abode, is present in a thousand places where such rites are performed. In response to the call of the devotees, lord Visnu who is one, becomes thousands and appears before the devotees. Even so, Jivata and the others who were but the creatures of the mendicant's imagination or wish, and who were animated by Rudra-consciousness, went to their various abodes and functioned as if independently. They played their different roles for some time, and then returned to the abode of Rudra.

All this was nothing but a momentary delusion which arose in the consciousness of the mendicant, though it was seen as if it were independent of the mendicant. Even so, the birth and death of countless beings takes place in the one infinite consciousness, as it were. They imagine diversity in this world-appearance, and then they seek unity in the self. At the time of their death, they imagine another state of existence within themselves which appears to them as if outside! Until the realisation of liberation, the embodied being undergoes unfathomable sorrow. I told you the story to illustrate this truth. This is the fate, not only of the mendicant, but of all beings. That being who forgets his inseparability from the supreme self, imagines his own notions to be independent and utterly real and substantial. From one such dream he goes on to another dream, until he abandons the false notion 'I am the body'.

Rama asked:

O what a wonderful story! Lord, you said that all things that are conceived to be real, are real, and experienced as real. Pray, tell me, does this mendicant also exist somewhere?

Vasistha replied:

I shall contemplate this question and reply later.

The assembly rose for their noon prayers, at this stage.

section VI.1 - chapter 66

pratyekamevamuditah pratibhasakhandah khandantaresvapi ca tasya
vicitrakhandah sarve svayam nanu ca te 'pi mitho na mithya sarvatmani sphurati
karanakarane 'smin (28)

Vasistha continued:

O king, O Rama! With the help of my eye of wisdom, I searched for the mendicant. I entered into deep meditation, wishing to see that mendicant. I searched for him in this universe, but I could not find him. How does one's imagination appear outside also as if real?

Then I proceeded north to the land of the Jinas. On top of an anthill, there exists a vihara (shrine? or Bihar) inhabited by people. There, in his own cottage, was a mendicant (bhiksu) known as Dirghadrsa, whose head was yellow in colour. He was in deep meditation. Even his attendants did not enter his cottage, afraid to disturb his meditation. It was the twenty-first day of such meditation. It was destined to be his last day.

Though from one point of view, he had been in meditation for only twenty one days, from another point of view, thousands of years had passed. For, such was the notion that arose in his mind. I knew that such a mendicant had lived in another epoch; and even in this epoch he is the second such mendicant. However, other than these two, I could not see a third mendicant. With all the wits at my disposal, and all the faculties I could command, I entered into the very heart of this creation, looking for the third mendicant.

At last I found him, but he was not in this universe. He was in another universe which, however, was almost exactly like this universe, though created by another Brahma. Even so have there been (and there will be in the future) countless beings. In this very assembly, there are sages and holy brahmanas who will thus entertain notions of other beings who will thereupon appear to be. Such is the nature of Maya.

Some of these beings will be of natures similar to the one that imagines them. Others will be quite dissimilar. Yet others will partly resemble them. Thus is the great Maya which baffles even great men. But it does not exist nor does it function here - for it is only delusion that causes all these to appear and disappear! Else, where is a short period of twenty-one days, and where is a whole epoch? It is frightening even to think of the play of the mind.

All this is but appearance which unfolds like the lotus in the morning and reveals diversity like a full-blown lotus. All this arises in the infinite consciousness which is pure. Yet the appearance appears to be tainted by impurity. **Each thing appears as if fragmented, and at the end of that fragmented existence, it undergoes other strange fragmentation. All this is relatively real, not totally unreal. All of them manifest in the All - the cause is in the cause!**

section VI.1 - chapter 67

esa gunamayi maya durbodhena duratyaya nityam satyavabodhena sukhenaiivi
'tivahyate (7)

Dasaratha said:

O sage, tell me where that mendicant (bhiksu) is meditating, and I shall at once despatch my soldiers to wake him up from his meditation and bring him here.

Vasistha replied:

O king, that mendicant's body has already become lifeless, and it cannot be revived. His jiva has attained enlightenment and liberation. It cannot be subjected to the experience of this world-appearance any more. His own attendants stand outside his cottage, waiting to open the door at the end of one month, as instructed by him. They will find that by that time he has abandoned his body, and will then install someone else in his place.

This Maya (or world-appearance or delusion) is of the nature of limited and limiting qualities and attributes. It is said to be impossible to cross it by ignorance, but by the knowledge of truth, it is easily crossed over.

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 off 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 realised, 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 Brahma has come to be experienced by the jiva as a solid reality. But when one attains the purity of consciousness similar to that of Brahma, one sees all this as a long dream.

It is the notion of the object that becomes the mind, and thus slips from infinite consciousness. It then undergoes varied experiences. But is this mind independent of the supreme self, is not the supreme self the mind, too? The jiva, the body, and all the rest of it, are but reflections or appearances of the supreme self! All these movements, etc., happen in the one infinite consciousness which is for ever infinite and consciousness, naught else: movements, etc, are imaginary expressions. There is neither motion nor non-motion, neither one nor many - what is is as it is. Diversity arises in the unawakened state, and it vanishes when one commences one's enquiry. The enquirer exists but without any doubt, which indeed is the supreme state. Peace is known as the world, peace alone is as this world- appearance. Ignorance is unreal: there is neither the seer, the seen, nor the sight! The mind imagines a defect in the moon; it is not there as defect. The infinite consciousness has consciousness alone as its 'body' or manifestation or appearance.

section VI.1 - chapter 68

ahamasmi jaga tyasmin svasti sabdarthamatrakam sattasmmanyameveti sausuptam
maunamucyate (26)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, remain for ever firmly established in that state of utter freedom from movement of thought, resorting to the silence of deep sleep.

Rama said:

Sir, I have heard of silence of speech, silence of the eyes and other senses, and I have also heard of the rigid silence of extreme asceticism. But what is this silence of deep sleep?

Vasistha replied:

Rama, there are two types of muni (a sage who observes mouna or silence). One is the rigid ascetic, and the other the liberated sage. The former forcibly restrains his senses, and engages himself in dry (devoid of wisdom) kriyas (activities) with fanaticism. The liberated sage, on the other hand, knows what is what (the truth as truth, and the unreal as unreal). He is endowed with self-knowledge, and yet he behaves as any ordinary person here. What is regarded as silence or mouna, is based on the nature and the behaviour of these munis.

Four types of silence have been described: (1) silence of speech, (2) silence of the senses (eyes, etc.), (3) violent restraint, as also (4) the silence of deep sleep. There is another known as silence of the mind. However, that is possible only in one who is dead, or one who practises the rigid mouna (katha mouna) or the silence of deep sleep (susupti mouna). Of these, the first three involve elements of the rigid mouna. It is the fourth that is really conducive to liberation. Hence, even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of those who resort to the first three types of mouna, I say that there is nothing in those three which is desirable.

The silence of deep sleep is conducive to liberation. In it, the prana or life-force is neither restrained nor promoted, the senses are neither fed nor starved, the perception of diversity is neither expressed nor suppressed, the mind is neither mind nor non-mind. There is no division, and hence no effort at abolishing it. It is called the silence of deep sleep, and one who is established in it, may or may not meditate. There is knowledge of what is as it is, and there is freedom from doubt. It is utter emptiness. It is supportless. It is of the nature of supreme peace, of which it can neither be said that it is real, nor that it is unreal. That state in which one knows "There is no 'I', nor another, no mind, nor anything derived from the mind", in which one knows "**'I' is but an idea in this universe, and it is really pure existence**" - that is known as the silence of deep sleep. In that pure existence which is infinite consciousness, where is 'I' or 'another'?

section VI.1 - chapter 69

ajnastu ditacittatvat kriyaniyamanam vina gacchannyayena matsyena param
duhkham prayati hi (9)

Rama asked:

How did the one hundred Rudras come into being, O sage?

Vasistha replied:

The mendicant (bhiksu) dreamt all the one hundred Rudras. Whatever they whose minds are pure and unobscured by impurities, imagine or will-into-being, that alone they experience as being real. Whatever thoughtform thus arises in the one infinite consciousness appears to be so.

Rama asked again:

Why is it, O sage, that lord Siva chose to appear as one unclad, inhabiting the cremation ground, garlanded with human skulls, smeared with ashes, and as one who is easily overcome by lust?

Vasistha replied:

The conduct of the gods, the perfected beings, and the liberated sages, is not determined by rules and codes of conduct - these are invented by ignorant people. Yet, **since the mind of the ignorant is heavily conditioned, if they are not governed by such rules of conduct, there will then arise disorder in which the big fish will eat the small fish.** The man of wisdom, on the other hand, does not drown himself in what is desirable and what is undesirable, because he has his senses naturally in control, and because he is awake and alert. He lives and works without intending to do so, without reacting to events on a causal basis, his actions being pure and spontaneous (as the coconut falling without any causal relation with the alighting of the crow on it); or he may not do anything at all!

Thus have even the members of the trinity (Brahma, Visnu, and Siva) engaged themselves in incarnation. In the case of the enlightened ones, their actions are beyond praise and reproach, beyond acceptance and rejection, for they have no notion of 'This is mine' and 'This is other'. Their actions are pure like the heat of fire.

I did not wish to elaborate on the other form of mouna, known as the silence of the disembodied, for you are still embodied. However, I shall briefly describe it now. They who are fully awakened, and who are constantly engaged in samadhi, and who are thoroughly enlightened, are known as sankhya-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.

section VI.1 - chapter 69

ceto hi vasanamatram tadabhava param padam tattvam sampadyate jganam
jganamahur vicaranam (38)

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 crystallisation 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 realised. 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 enquiry 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 enquiring into the nature of the self which is infinite. Your mind will be completely absorbed. Then both the mind and the enquiry 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 realisation 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.

section VI.1 - chapter 70 71

jivo 'jivo bhavatyasu yati cittamacittatam vicaradityavidyanto moksa
ityabhidhiyate (1)

Vasistha continued:

That is known as moksa or liberation when ignorance ceases through self-enquiry, when the jiva becomes no-jiva instantly, and when the mind becomes no-mind. Since the ego-sense etc., are but like water in the mirage, they cease when the light of enquiry is directed to them. In this connection, O Rama, listen to the following inspiring and enlightening questions asked by a vampire.

There lives a vampire in the Vindhya forests. Once it entered a certain territory, desirous of appeasing its hunger. However, it would not kill anyone, even when it was hungry, unless the victim deserved such treatment. Finding no such person in the forest, it entered a city and met the king.

The Vampire said to the king:

O king, I shall not kill you and eat you unless you deserve it. You are the ruler and you fulfil the wishes of the needy. Pray, fulfil my desire. I shall ask you a few questions. Give me the correct answers to them.

What is that sun the particles of whose rays are these universes? In what mighty wind does this mighty space manifest? One goes from one dream to another dream ad infinitum, yet one does not abandon the self, though constantly abandoning the dream-reality. What is the self? The stem of a banana tree, when it is opened, reveals layer after layer, until you reach the pith. What is that subtle essence when this world-appearance is similarly enquired into? Of which atom are the universes themselves minuter atoms? In what formless 'rock' are the three worlds hidden (like an unsculpted figure in a rock)? Answer these questions. If you do not, you certainly deserve to be eaten by me!

The King answered:

O vampire! This universe was once enveloped by a series of coverings, even as a fruit is enveloped by its skin. There was a branch on which there were thousands of such fruits. There was a tree with thousands of such branches, a forest with thousands of such trees, a hill with thousands of such forests, a country with thousands of such hills, a continent with thousands of such countries, a sphere with thousands of such continents, an ocean with thousands of such spheres, a being with thousands of such oceans within him, and a supreme person who wears thousands of such beings as a garland. There is a sun in whose rays thousands of such supreme persons are found: that sun illumines all. That sun is the sun of consciousness, O vampire! In that light of that sun, these universes are but minutest atomic particles. It is because of the light of that sun that all these other things enumerated appear to be real.

section VI.1 - chapter 72 73

kalasatta nabhahsatta spandasatta ca cinmayi suddhacetanasatta ca
sarvamityadi pavanam paramatmamahavayau rajah sphurati cancalam (72/1)

The King said:

In the supreme self shine, as dust-particles, substances (concepts or relative realities) known as time, space, and motion which are conscious (movement in and of consciousness) and pure intelligence.

The self or Brahman, though appearing to migrate from one dream-world to another, does not in fact abandon its own essential nature, nor is it ever ignorant of itself.

Even as when the stem of a banana is peeled, every layer, as it is peeled off, reveals another similar layer, when this world-appearance is enquired into, it is seen as none other than Brahman. This Brahman is referred to positively as the truth, Brahman, etc., and since it is beyond description, it is also negatively indicated as emptiness and indescribable etc. Whatever is experienced as real is the reality. Though its particular form is put together by the experience, it is naught but pure consciousness - even as the banana stem is nothing but banana stem, and every layer of it is of identical nature.

The self is considered to be of atomic nature, because it is extremely subtle and intangible. Yet, since the self alone is, it is the infinite, and it is the very root of the entire existence. It is formless, though it appears in all forms.

This world-appearance is but the flesh in which the truth, which is pure consciousness, is clothed.

Vasistha continued:

Having heard this answer from the lips of the king, the vampire became silent and deeply contemplative. It forgot its great hunger, and entered into profound meditation.

Thus have I told you, O Rama, the tale of the vampire which illustrates the truth concerning the subtle infinite consciousness. The universe is but an envelope or a veil of this consciousness; and it is rent asunder by a diligent enquiry into its real nature. It is in fact as real as the 'body' of the vampire!

Rama, expand the mind with the mind. Remain at peace within yourself, 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 characterised by effortless experiencing of the natural course of events.

section VI.1 - chapter 74

yena praptena loke 'smin na prapyam avasisyate tatkrta sukrtam manye sesam
karma visucika (17)

At Rama's request, Vasistha narrated the following story:

Once upon a time, there was a king named Bhagiratha who was devoted to dharma. He gave liberal gifts to the pious and holy ones, and he was terror to the evil-doers. He worked tirelessly to eradicate the very causes of poverty. When he was in the company of the holy ones, his heart melted in devotion.

Bhagiratha brought the holy river Ganga from the heavens down to the earth. In this he had to encounter great , and propitiate the gods Brahma and Siva, and also the sage Jahnu. In all this he suffered frequent frustrations and disappointments.

He, too, was endowed with discrimination and dispassion, even at an early age, O Rama. One day, while remaining alone, he reflected thus: "This worldly life is really essenceless and stupid. Day and night chase each other. People repeat the same meaningless actions again and again. **I regard only that as proper action which leads to the attainment beyond which there is nothing to be attained. The rest is repeated foul excretion (as in cholera).**" He 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 ego-sense is thinned out, does this self-knowledge arise.

Bhagiratha asked:

Since this ego-sense 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 ego-sense will vanish, and you will realise that you are the supreme being!

section VI.1 - chapter 75 76

samah santamana mauni vitarago vimatsarah praptakaryaikakaranah sa tirohitavismayah (76/10)

Vasistha continued:

Having heard the precepts of the preceptor, Bhagiratha decided to perform a religious rite as a prelude to total renunciation of the world. In three days, he had given away everything to the priests and to his own relatives, whether they were endowed with good nature or not. His own kingdom he handed over to his enemies living across the borders. Clad in a small piece of loin-cloth, he left the kingdom, and roamed in countries and forests where he was totally unknown.

Very soon, he had attained the state of supreme peace within himself. Accidentally and unknowingly, Bhagiratha entered his own previous kingdom, and solicited alms from the citizens there. They recognised him, worshipped him, and prayed that he should be their king. But he accepted from them nothing but food. They bewailed, "This is king Bhagiratha, what a sad plight, what an unfortunate turn of events!" After a few days, he left the kingdom again.

Bhagiratha once again met his preceptor, and the two of them roamed the country all the time engaged in spiritual dialogue: "Why do we still carry the burden of this physical body? On the other hand, why should it be discarded? Let it be as long as it will be!" They were devoid of sorrow and of rejoicing, nor could they be said to adhere to the middle path. Even if the gods and sages offered them wealth and psychic powers, they spurned them as blades of dry grass.

In a certain kingdom, the king had died without an heir, and the ministers were in search of a suitable ruler. Bhagiratha, clad in a loin-cloth, happened to be in that kingdom. The ministers decided that he was the person fit to ascend the throne, and surrounded him. Bhagiratha mounted the royal elephant. Soon he was crowned king. While he was ruling that kingdom, the people of his previous kingdom approached him once again, and prayed that he should rule that kingdom also. Bhagiratha accepted. Thus he became the emperor of the whole world. **Remaining at peace within himself, with his mind silenced, free from desires and jealousy, he engaged himself in doing appropriate action, in circumstances as they arose.**

Once he heard that the only way to propitiate the souls of his departed ancestors was to offer libation with the waters of the Ganga. In order to bring the heavenly Ganga down to earth, he repaired to the forest to perform austerities, having entrusted the empire to his ministers. There he propitiated the gods and the sages, and achieved the most difficult task of bringing the Ganga down to earth, so that all the people for all time to come might offer libations to their ancestors with the waters of the holy Ganga. It is only from that time that this sacred Ganga, which adorned the crown of lord Siva's head, began to flow on the earth.

section VI.1 - chapter 77

yadanyadbahuso bhutva punarbhavati bhurisah abhutvaiva bhavatyanyah punasca
na bhavatyalam anyatprakhsamnivesadhyam sadrsyena vivalgati (7)

Vasistha continued:

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

Rama asked:

O sage, how is it possible that the couple who lived together as husband and wife in one age, is born again to be husband and wife in a later age?

Vasistha replied:

Such is the subtle nature of the world order, O Rama. **Some things appear in abundance, and once again they manifest in abundance. Others are born now, having never been before; and having been now, they are not born again. Others which have been before, reappear in the same form now.** It is like the waves on the ocean: there are similar ones, and there are dissimilar ones.

In the Malva kingdom, there was a king named Sikhidhvaja. He was endowed with every kind of royal excellence. He was righteous and noble, courageous and courteous. He lost his father very early in life. Though young, he was able to assert his sovereignty, and he ruled the kingdom assisted by his able ministers.

The spring season set in. There was romance in the air. The young king began to dream of a partner. Day and night, his heart longed for the beloved. The clever and wise ministers divined the state of their king's heart. They went to the Saurashtra kingdom, and sought the hand of a princess for their king. Soon, the king Sikhidhvaja married Cudala.

Sikhidhvaja and Cudala were so greatly devoted to each other that they were one jiva in two bodies. They shared many common interests, and they played together in the pleasure-gardens. Even as the sun sends down his rays to make the lotus unfold, the king showered his beloved with his love, and tried to please her in every way.

They shared their knowledge and their wisdom with each other, so that both of them became highly learned in all branches of knowledge. Each dwelt in all radiance in the other's heart. In fact, it appeared as if the lord Visnu and his consort had come down on earth, in order to accomplish a special mission!

section VI.1 - chapter 78

asatyajadacetyamsacayanac cidvapurjadam mahajalagato hyagniriva rapam
svamujjati (26)

Vasistha continued:

Thus Sikhidhvaja and Cudala enjoyed themselves for a number of years without a dull moment. No one can arrest the passage of time. Life appears and disappears like a juggler's trick. Pleasure, when pursued, flies beyond reach, even as an arrow which has left the bow. Sorrow preys upon the mind, even as vultures prey upon a carcass. "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.

Having thus constantly contemplated the means of self-knowledge, the queen began to reflect thus:

"Now I see myself and enquire 'Who am I?' How could ignorance of self, and delusion arise? The physical body is surely inert and it is certainly not the self. It is experienced only on account of the movement of thought in the mind. The organs of action are but parts of the body and hence they too are inert, being parts of the body, which is inert. The sense-organs are inert, too, for they depend upon the mind for their functioning. I consider even the mind to be inert. The mind thinks and entertains notions, but it is prompted to do so by the intellect, which is the determining agent. Even this intellect (buddhi) is surely inert, for it is directed by the ego-sense. Even this ego-sense is inert, for it is conjured up by the jiva, just as a ghost is conjured up by the ignorant child. The jiva is but pure consciousness clothed, as it were, by the life-force, and it dwells in the heart."

"Lo and behold! I have realised 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, Cudala became enlightened.

section VI.1 - chapter 78

na tasya janmamarane na tasya sadasadgati na nasah sambhavatyasya
cinmatranabhasah kvacit (43)

Vasistha continued:

Delighted by this self-discovery, the queen exclaimed: "At last I have attained that which is to be attained (known). Now there is no loss. Even the mind and the senses are but the reflections of consciousness, though they are unreal independently of consciousness. This supreme consciousness alone exists. It is the supreme truth, untainted by any impurity, for ever in a state of perfect equilibrium, and devoid of ego-sense. Once this truth is realised, it shines constantly without setting.

"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 realised 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 pure consciousness, devoid of ego-sense and all-pervading. **There is neither birth nor death for this consciousness. It is not subject to destruction, for it is like space.** It cannot be cut or burnt. It is pure light of consciousness, without defect."

"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 'There 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 realised 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 realised, Cudala rested in supreme peace.

section VI.1 - chapter 79

idam ca 'hamidam na 'ham satya ca 'ham na capyaham sarvamasmi na kincicca
tena 'ham srimati sthita (28)

Vasistha continued:

Day by day, the queen grew more and more introverted, rejoicing more and more in the bliss of the self. She was utterly free from craving and from attachment. Without abandoning anything and without seeking anything, she was natural in her behaviour and spontaneous in her actions. All her doubts were at rest. She had crossed the ocean of becoming. She rested in an incomparable state of peace.

Thus, within a very short time, she had reached the realisation that this world-appearance will also disappear in the same way in which it came into being! She shone radiant in the light of self-knowledge.

Seeing her thus radiant and peaceful, Sikhidhvaja asked her: "You appear to have regained your youthfulness and you shine with an extraordinary radiance, my beloved. You are not distracted by anything at all, and you have no craving. Yet, you are full of bliss. Tell me: is it that you have quaffed the nectar of the gods? Surely, you have attained something which is extremely difficult to attain?"

Cudala replied:

I have abandoned this emptiness which has assumed some sort of a form. I remain rooted in that which is truth, not in the appearance. I have abandoned all these, and I have resorted to something other than these, which is both real and unreal. That is something and that is also not-something. I know that as it is. I delight in the non-enjoyment of pleasures, as if I have enjoyed them. I give way neither to joy nor to anger. I experience the greatest joy in remaining established in the reality that shines in my heart. I am not distracted by the royal pleasures. Even when I am in the pleasure-gardens, I remain firmly established in the self, neither in the enjoyment of pleasure nor in shyness, etc.

I am the ruler of the universe. I am not the finite being. I delight in the self. Hence I am radiant. **This I am, I am not, in truth I am, nor am I. I am the all, I am naught. Hence I am radiant.** I seek not pleasure nor wealth nor poverty, nor any other form of existence. I am happy with whatever is obtained without effort. I sport with attenuated states of attraction and repulsion, with the insights gained through the scriptures. Hence I am radiant. Whatever I see with these eyes and experience with these senses, whatever I behold through my mind - I see nothing but the one truth which is seen clearly by me within myself.

section VI.1 - chapter 80

jnasyopeksatmakam nama mudhasya 'deyatam gatam heyam spharaviragasya srnu
siddhikramah katham (24)

Unable to understand the queen's words, Sikhidvaja laughed at them and said:

You are childish and ignorant, my dear, and surely you are prattling! Having abandoned something for nothing, having abandoned real substances, and attained the state of nothingness - how does one shine resplendent? Even as an angry man rejects a bed, if one abandons pleasures boasting, "I delight in unenjoyed pleasures", it is not conducive to delight! When one abandons everything (pleasures, etc.) and thinks he delights in emptiness, that does not make any sense. Nor does it make any sense if one thinks he is happy after having renounced clothes, food, bed, etc. 'I am not the body', 'Nor am I anything else', 'Nothing is everything' - what else are these statements but sheer prattle? 'I do not see what I see' and 'I see something else' - these too are nothing but prattle.

Never mind: enjoy the pleasures that are afforded to you. I shall continue to sport with you; enjoy yourself.

Vasistha continued:

Having said this, the king went away from the inner apartments. Cudala thought, "It is a pity that the king is unable to understand", and she continued to go about her work. Thus they continued to live for a considerable time. Though Cudala had no desires, a wish arose in her to move about in space. In order to acquire this power, she sought solitude, and there exercised the vital air which has an upward tendency.

There are three types of attainable goals in this world, O Rama: desirable, detestable, and ignorable. What is desirable is sought with great effort; what is detestable is abandoned; between these two is that towards which one is indifferent. Normally, one regards that as desirable which promotes happiness, its opposite is considered undesirable, and one is indifferent to those which bring neither happiness nor unhappiness. However, in the case of the enlightened ones, these categories do not exist. For, they look upon everything as a mere play, and hence they are utterly indifferent to everything seen or unseen.

I shall now describe to you the method of gaining what is attainable (siddhi or powers), towards which the sage of self-knowledge is indifferent, which the deluded person considers desirable, and which one who is intent on the cultivation of self-knowledge is keen to avoid.

section VI.1 - chapter 80

sa coktta kundalinamna kundalakaravahini praninam parama sakttih
sarvasakttijavaprada (42)

Vasistha continued:

All achievements are dependent upon four factors: time, place, action, and means. Among these, action or effort holds the key because, surely, all endeavours towards the achievement are based on action or effort.

Some perverse practices also prevail, and they are said to make achievements possible. Especially in the hands of immature practicants, they are conducive to great harm. To this category belong the magic pill or unguent or wand, as also the use of gems, drugs, self-mortification, and magic formulae. The belief that the mere dwelling in holy places like Sri-saila or Meru enables one to attain spiritual perfection is also defective.

Hence, in the context of the story of Sikhidhvaja, I shall describe the technique of pranayama or the exercise of the life-force, and the achievements it brings about. Kindly listen.

In preparation, one should abandon all habits and tendencies that are unrelated to what one wishes to achieve. One should learn to close the apertures in the body, and also learn the practice of the different postures. The diet should be pure. One should contemplate the meaning of holy scriptures. Right conduct and the company of holy ones are essential. Having renounced everything, one should sit comfortably. If then one practises pranayama for some time without allowing anger, greed, etc., to rise within oneself, the life-force comes under one's perfect control.

Right from sovereignty over the earth to total liberation - everything is dependent upon the movement of the life-force. Hence, all such achievements are possible through the practice of pranayama.

Deep within the body, there is a nadi known as the antravestika. It rests in the vitals, and it is the source of a hundred other nadis. It exists in all beings - gods, demons and humans, animals and birds, worms and fish. It is coiled at its source. It is in contact with all the avenues in the body, from the waist right up to the crown of the head.

Within this nadi dwells the supreme power. **It is known as kundalini, because it is coiled in appearance. It is the supreme power in all beings, and it is the prime mover of all power.** When the prana or life-force which is in the heart reaches the abode of the kundalini, there arises within oneself an awareness of the elements of nature. It is when the kundalini unfolds and begins to move that there is awareness within oneself.

All the other nadis (radiating flow of energy) are tied to the kundalini, as it were. Hence the kundalini is the very seed of consciousness and understanding or knowledge.

section VI.1 - chapter 80

tatpancadha gatam dvitvam laksase tvam svasamvidam antarbhutavikaradi
dippadipasatam yatha (56)

Rama asked:

Is not the infinite consciousness forever indivisible? If so, how does this kundalini arise and manifest itself, thus revealing this consciousness?

Vasistha continued:

Indeed, there is the infinite consciousness alone, everywhere, at all times. However, it manifests as the elements here and there. The sun shines on everything, but it is reflected in a special way when its rays fall on a mirror. Similarly, the same infinite consciousness appears to be 'lost' in some, clearly manifest in some, at the height of its glory in yet others.

Even as space is (empty) space everywhere, consciousness is consciousness and naught else, whatever the appearance maybe. It does not undergo any change. This consciousness itself is the five root-elements. **You behold with your consciousness the same consciousness which is the live root-elements, as if you were seeing another within yourself, even as with one lamp you see a hundred lamps.**

On account of a slight movement of thought, the same reality which is consciousness seems to become the fivefold elements, and thence the body. In the same way, the same consciousness becomes worms and other creatures, metals and minerals, earth and what is on it, water and other elements. Thus the whole world is nothing but the movement of energy in consciousness which appears as the fivefold elements. Somewhere this energy is sentient, and elsewhere it appears as insentient, even as water when exposed to cool wind hardens and becomes solid. Thus is nature formed, and all things conform to nature.

However, all this is but a play of words, a figure of speech. What else is heat and cold, ice and fire? Again, these distinctions arise on account of conditioning and thought-patterns. The wise man, therefore, enquires into the nature of such conditioning, whether it is latent or patent, good or evil. Such is fruitful quest; vain argumentation is like boxing with space.

Latent conditioning produces insentient beings; patent conditioning gives rise to gods, humans, etc. In some there is dense conditioning, conducive to ignorance; in others there is attenuated conditioning, conducive to liberation. Conditioning alone is responsible for the diversity in creatures.

For this cosmic tree known as creation, the first thought-form is the seed, with the various spheres for various parts of the tree and the past, present, and future as the fruits. The fivefold elements of which the tree is formed, arise of their own accord, and cease of their own accord. Of their own accord, they diversify, and in due course they become unified and tranquil.

section VI.1 - chapter 81

dehaduhkam vidur vyadhimadhyakhyam vasanamayam maurkhiyamule hi te
vidyattattvajnane pariksayah (14)

Vasistha continued:

Kundalini functions in the body composed of the fivefold elements, in the form of the life-force. It is this same kundalini which is known variously as conditioning or limitation, as the mind, jiva, movement of thought, intellect (or the determining faculty) and ego-sense, for it is the supreme life-force in the body. As the apana it constantly flows downward, as samana it dwells in the solar plexus, and as udana the same life-force rises up. On account of these forces, there is balance in the system. If, however, the downward pull is excessive and the downward force is not arrested by appropriate effort, death ensues. Similarly, if the upward pull is excessive and it is not arrested by appropriate effort, death ensues. If the movement of the life-force is governed in such a way that it neither goes up nor down, there is an unceasing state of equilibrium, and all diseases are overcome. Otherwise, if there is malfunction of ordinary (secondary) nadis one, is subject to minor ailments, and if the principal nadis are involved, there is serious ailment.

Rama asked:

What are vyadhis (illnesses), and what are adhis (psychic disorders), and what are the degenerative conditions of the body? Pray, enlighten me on these.

Vasistha continued:

Adhi and vyadhi are sources of sorrow. Their avoidance is happiness; their cessation is liberation. Sometimes they arise together, sometimes they cause each other, and sometimes they follow each other. **Physical malady is known as vyadhi, and psychic disturbance caused by psychological conditioning (neuroses) is known as adhi. Both these are rooted in ignorance and wickedness. They end when self-knowledge or knowledge of truth is attained.**

Ignorance gives rise to absence of self-control, and one is constantly assailed by likes and dislikes, and by thoughts like 'I have gained this, I have yet to gain that'. All this intensifies delusion; all these give rise to psychic disturbances.

Physical ailments are caused by ignorance, and its concomitant, total absence of mental restraint, which leads to improper eating and living habits. Other causes are untimely and irregular activities, unhealthy habits, evil company, wicked thoughts. They are also caused by the weakening of the nadis, or by their being cluttered or clogged up, thus preventing the free flow of life-force. Lastly, they are caused by unhealthy environment. All these are of course ultimately determined by the fruits of past actions, performed either in the near or in the distant past.

section VI.1 - chapter 81

atmajnanam vina saro na 'dhirnasyati raghava bhuyo rajjvavabodhena rajjusarpo
hi nasyati (25)

Vasistha continued:

All these psychic disturbances and physical ailments arise from the fivefold elements. I shall now tell you how they cease. Physical ailments are twofold: ordinary and serious. The former arise from day-to-day causes, and the latter are congenital. The former are corrected by day-to-day remedial measures, and by adopting the proper mental attitude. **But the latter (serious) ailments, as also the psychic disturbances, do not cease until self-knowledge is attained. The snake seen in the rope dies only when the rope is again seen as rope.** Self-knowledge ends all physical and psychic disturbances. However, physical ailments that are not psychosomatic may be dealt with by medication, prayers, and by right action, as also by baths. All these have been described in medical treatises.

Rama asked:

Pray, tell me how does physical ailment arise from psychic disturbance, and how can it be dealt with by means other than medical.

Vasistha continued:

When there is mental confusion, one does not perceive one's path clearly. Unable to see the path in front of oneself, one takes a wrong path. The life-forces are agitated by this confusion and they flow haphazardly along the nadis. As a result, some nadis are depleted of energy and others are dogged.

Then there arises disturbance in the metabolism, indigestion, excessive appetite, as also improper functioning of the digestive system. Food eaten turns into poison. The natural movement of food in and through the body is arrested. This gives rise to various physical ailments.

Thus psychic disturbance leads to physical ailments. Just as myrobalan is capable of making the bowels move, even so certain mantras like ya, ra, la, va, can also remedy these psychosomatic disorders. Other measures are pure and auspicious actions, service of holy men, etc. By these, the mind becomes pure, and there is great joy in the heart. The life-forces flow along the nadis as they should. Digestion becomes normal, diseases cease.

By the practice of paraka or inhalation, if the kundalini at the base of the spine is 'filled' and made to rest in a state of equilibrium, the body remains firm. When, through the retention of the breath, all the nadis are warmed up, the kundalini rises up like a stick and its energies flood all the nadis of the body. On account of this, the nadis are purified and made light. Then the yogi is able to travel in space. When the kundalini arises through the brahma-nadi, and reaches the spot known as dvadasanta (twelve fingerbreadths from the crown of the head) during the recaka or exhalation, if the kundalini can be held there for an hour, the yogi sees the gods and perfected beings who travel in space.

section VI.1 - chapter 81

yadaccham sitalatvam ca tadasya 'tmendurucyate itindorutthitah so
'gniragnisomau hi dehakah (75)

Rama asked:

How is it possible for these mortal eyes to behold the celestials?

Vasistha said:

Indeed, no mortal can behold the celestials with these mortal eyes. But, through the eyes of pure intelligence, the celestials are seen, as in a dream. The celestials are able to fulfil one's desires. Vision of celestials is non-different from dream, in fact, the only difference being that the effect of the vision is lasting. Again, if one is able to hold the life-force in the dvadasanta (twelve finger-breadths from the body) for a considerable time after exhalation, the life-force is able to enter other bodies. This power is inherent in the life-force; though by nature unsteady it can be steadied. Since the ignorance which envelops everything is insubstantial, such exceptions are often seen in the movement of energy in this world. Surely, all this is indeed Brahman, the diversity and diverse functions are mere figures of speech.

Rama asked:

In order to enter into minute spaces (nadis) and then, in order to fill the inner space with the life-force, one's body has to be made both atomic and solid at the same time! How is this made?

Vasistha said:

When wood and the saw come together, wood is split. But when two pieces of wood come together, there is fire! All this is part of nature.

In this physical body, two forces come together in the abdomen. Together they form a hollow stick. In it rests the kundalini. This kundalini stands midway between heaven and earth, and is ever vibrant with life-force. Dwelling in the heart, it experiences all. It keeps all the psychic centres in a state of constant vibration or motion. It digests or devours everything. It makes the psychic centres tremble by the movement of prana. It sustains the fire in the body till all the essences have been exhausted.

By nature it is cool; but because of it, the body becomes warm. It is spread throughout the body, though it dwells in the heart, where it is contemplated by the yogi. It is of the nature of jnana (knowledge), and in its light a distant object is seen as if near. **Whatever is cool is the moon, the self. From this moon arises fire. The body is made of this moon and this fire.** In fact, the entire world is made of these two: the cool moon and the warm fire. Or, you may consider that this world is the creation of knowledge and ignorance, the real and the unreal. In which case, consciousness, light, and knowledge, are considered the sun or the fire, and inertness, darkness, and ignorance, are considered as the moon.

section VI.1 - chapter 81

pitva mrtopamam sitam pranah somamukhagame abhragamatpurayati sariram pinatam
gatah (94)

Vasistha continued:

Fire and the moon exist in a mutual causal relationship (in the body). In a way, theirs is the relationship of seed and tree, one giving birth to the other. In a way, it is like light and darkness, in which one destroys the other. One who questions all this, saying "Since there is no desire-motivation, such causality and such activity are illogical", should be quickly dismissed. For, such activity is obvious and is the experience of all.

The (fire) prana drinks the nectarine coolness at the mouth of the cool moon, filling the entire space within the body. Fire dies and becomes the moon, even as day ends and night arrives.

At the junction of the fire and the moon, at the junction of light and darkness, of night and day, there is the revelation of the truth, which eludes the understanding of even wise men.

Even as a day consists of day and night, the jiva is characterised by consciousness and inertia. Fire and the sun symbolise consciousness and the moon symbolises darkness or inertia. Even as when the sun is seen in the sky, darkness vanishes on earth, when the light of consciousness is seen, the darkness of ignorance and the cycle of becoming come to an end. And, if the moon (the darkness of ignorance or inertia) is seen for what it is, consciousness is realised as the only truth. It is the light of consciousness that reveals the inert body. Consciousness, being non-moving and non-dual, is not grasped. However, it can be realised through its own reflection, the body.

Consciousness, when it becomes aware of itself, gains the world. When such objectification is abandoned, there is liberation. Prana is heat (fire), apana is the cool moon, and the two exist like light and shade in the same body. The light of consciousness and the moon of description together bring about experience. The phenomena called the sun and the moon, which had existed from the beginning of world-creation, also exist in the body.

O Rama, remain in that state where the sun has absorbed the moon into itself. Remain in that state in which the moon has merged with the sun in the heart. Remain in that state where there is the realisation that the moon is but the reflection of the sun. Know the junction of the sun and the moon within yourself. The external phenomena are utterly useless.

section VI.1 - chapter 82

satyabhavanadrsto 'yam deho deho bhavatyalam drstastvasatyabhavena vyomatam
yati dehakah (27)

Vasistha continued:

Now I shall describe to you how the yogis make their bodies atomic, as also enormous.

There is a spark of fire that burns just above the heart-lotus. This fire is quickly augmented. But, since it is of the nature of consciousness, it arises as the light of knowledge. When it thus grows in magnitude in a moment, it is able to dissolve the entire body. Even the water-element in the body is evaporated by its heat. Then, having abandoned the two bodies (the physical and the subtle), it is able to go where it likes. The kundalini-power rises up, like smoke from fire, and is merged in the space, as it were. Holding fast the mind, buddhi and the ego-sense, this kundalini shines radiantly as a particle of dust. This spark or this particle is then able to enter into anything whatsoever. Then this kundalini releases the water, and the earth elements that had previously been absorbed into itself and the body, resumes its original shape. Thus, the jiva is able to become as small as an atom, and as big as a mountain.

I have thus described to you the yogic method, and shall now deal with the wisdom-approach.

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.

Another method is the practice of exhalation, whereby the jiva is raised from the abode of the kundalini and made to abandon this body, which then becomes inert like a log of wood. Then the jiva can enter into any other body, moving or non-moving, and undergo the desired experience. After thus having acquired the experience, it can re-enter the previous body or any other body at its will and pleasure. Or, it may remain as the all-pervading consciousness without entering into any particular body.

section VI.1 - chapter 83

upadebakramo rama vyavasthamatrapalanam jnaptestu karanam suddha
sisyaprajnaiva raghava (13)

Vasistha continued:

Thus, the queen Cudala came to be endowed with all the psychic powers (like the ability to make oneself atomic and enormous). She traversed the sky, and entered into the deepest oceans and roamed the earth, without ever leaving the company of her husband. She entered into every type of substance - wood, rock, mountain, grass, sky and water, without any hindrance. She moved with the celestials and with the liberated sages, and conversed with them.

Though she made every endeavour to enlighten her husband also, he was not only unresponsive, but he laughed at her foolishness. He remained ignorant. She felt it unwise to exhibit her psychic powers before him.

Rama asked:

If even such a great siddha-yogini as Cudala could not bring about the spiritual awakening and the enlightenment of king Sikhidhvaja, 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. Not by hearing, nor by righteous acts, is self-knowledge attained. Only the self knows the self, only the snake knows its feet! Yet, ...

There was a wealthy villager in the Vindhya hills. Once, when he was walking in the forest, he lost a copper-coin (one cent). He was a miser, and so he began to search for it in the thick bush. All the time he was calculating, "With that one cent I shall do some business, it will become four cents, and then eight cents, and so on". For three days he searched, unmindful of the taunts of spectators. At the end of those three days, he suddenly found a precious stone! (It was a philosopher's stone.) Taking it with him, he returned home and lived happily.

What was the cause of this miser's finding the philosopher's stone? Surely, his miserliness and his searching the bush for the lost cent! Even so, in the case of the preceptor's instructions, the disciple looks for something, but obtains something else! Brahman is beyond the mind and the senses; it cannot be known through someone else's instruction. Yet, without the instruction of the preceptor it is not known either! The miser would not have found the precious stone if he had not searched the bush for his one cent! Hence, the instruction of the preceptor is considered the cause of self-knowledge, and yet it is not the cause! Look at this mystery of Maya, O Rama: one seeks something and obtains something else!

section VI.1 - chapter 84

praptakalam krtam karyam rajate natha netarat vasante rajate puspam phalam
'saradi rajate (22)

Vasistha continued:

Devoid of self-knowledge, the king Sikhidhvaja became blinded by delusion. He was sunk in grief which nothing in the world could assuage. Soon he began to seek solitude, like you, O Rama, doing just those royal duties which his ministers made him do. He gave plenty in charity. He performed various austerities. But there was no change in the delusion and in the sorrow. After considerable deliberation, one day,

Sikhidhvaja said to the queen:

My dear, I have enjoyed sovereignty for a long time, and I have enjoyed all the royal pleasures. Neither pleasure nor pain, neither prosperity nor adversity, is able to disturb the mind of the ascetic. Hence, I wish to go to the forest and become an ascetic. The beloved forest which resembles you in every respect (here he gives a romantic description of the forest, comparing it to the limbs of the queen) will delight my heart even as you do. So, give me leave to go, for a good housewife does not obstruct her husband's wishes.

Cudala replied:

Lord, that action alone shines as appropriate which is done at the appropriate time. Flowers are appropriate to spring, and fruits to the winter. Forest-life is appropriate to old age, not for people of your age. At your age, the household life is appropriate. When we grow old, both of us shall leave this household life and go to the forest! Moreover, your subjects will grieve over your untimely departure from the kingdom.

Sikhidhvaja said:

My dear, do not place obstacles on my path. Know that I have already left for the forest! You are but a child, and it is not proper that you should go to the forest, too, and lead the hard ascetic life. Hence, remain here and rule the kingdom.

Vasistha continued:

That night, while the queen was still asleep, the king left the palace on the pretext of patrolling the city. He rode a whole day and reached a dense forest in the Mandara mountain. It was far, far from habitation, and there were signs that the place had been inhabited previously by holy brahmanas. There he built a cottage for himself and equipped it with whatever he considered necessary for the ascetic life - like a stick made of bamboo, eating utensil (plate), water-vessel, a tray for flowers, a kamandalu, a rosary, a garment to protect him from the cold, a deer-skin. There he commenced his ascetic life. The first part of the day, he spent in meditation and japa (repetition of the holy mantra). The second part of the day he spent in gathering flowers, and this was followed by bath and worship of the deity. Thereafter, he took a frugal meal consisting of fruits and roots. The rest of the time he spent in japa or the repetition of the mantra. Thus he spent a long time in that cottage without ever thinking of his kingdom, etc.

section VI.1 - chapter 85

uvaca ca 'tmanaiva 'ho yavajjivam saririnam na svabhavah samam yati mama
'pyutkanthitam manah (29)

Vasistha continued:

Cudala awoke with a fright when she discovered that her husband had left the palace. She felt unhappy, and decided that her place was by her husband's side. Quickly she also got out of the palace through a small window, and flew in the sky, looking for her husband. Soon she found him wandering in the forest. But, before alighting near him, she considered future events through her psychic vision. She saw everything as it was destined to happen, to the smallest detail. Bowing to the inevitable, she returned to the palace by the same aerial route she had taken.

Cudala announced that the king had left the palace on an important mission. From then on, she herself conducted the affairs of the state. For eighteen years, she dwelt in the palace and he in the forest, without their seeing each other. He had begun to show signs of old age.

At that time, Cudala 'saw' that her husband's mind had ripened considerably, and that it was time for her to help him attain enlightenment. Having thus determined, she left the palace at night, and flew to where he was. She beheld the celestials and the perfected sages in the heavens. She flew through clouds, inhaling the heavenly perfume and looking forward with great eagerness to her reunion with her husband. She was excited and her mind was agitated. Becoming aware of this mental state, **she said to herself: "Ah, surely as long as there is life in the body, one's nature does not cease to be active. Even my mind is agitated so much!** Or, perhaps, O mind, you are seeking your own consort. On the other hand my husband has surely forgotten all about his kingdom and me, after all these years of asceticism. In that case it is futile on your part, O mind, to get excited at the prospect of meeting him once again I shall restore equilibrium to the heart of my husband in such a way that he will return to the kingdom, where we shall dwell together happily for a long time. That delight which is had in a state of utter equilibrium is superior to all other happiness."

Thinking thus, Cudala reached the Mandara mountain. Still remaining in the sky, she saw her husband as if he were another person, for the king who was always clothed in royal robes now appeared as an emaciated ascetic. Cudala was depressed at this heart-breaking sight of her husband clad in coarse garment, with matted locks, quiet and lonely, with his colour darkened considerably as if he had had a bath in a river of ink. For a moment she thought: "Alas, the fruit of foolishness! For only the foolish reach such a condition as the king has reached. Surely, it is on account of his own delusion that he has thus secluded himself in this hermitage. Here and now, I shall enable him to attain enlightenment. I shall approach him in a disguise."

section VI.1 - chapter 85

jivitam yati saphalyam svamabhyagatapujaya devadapyadhikam pujyah
satamabhyagato janah (82)

Vasistha continued:

Afraid that Sikhidhvaja might once again spurn her teaching, considering that she was an ignorant girl, Cudala transformed herself into a young brahmaaa ascetic, and descended right in front of her husband. Sikhidhvaja saw the young ascetic and was delighted. The two vied with each other in spiritual radiance. The young ascetic was in fact incomparably radiant, so that Sikhidhvaja took him to be a celestial. He worshipped the ascetic appropriately. Cudala appreciatively accepted the worship and remarked: "I have travelled around the world, but never have I been worshipped with such devotion! I admire your tranquillity and your austerity. You have chosen to tread the razor's edge in as much as you have abandoned your kingdom and resorted to the forest-life."

Sikhidhvaja replied:

"Surely, you know everything, O son of the gods! By your very look you are showering nectar upon me. I have a lovely wife who is just now ruling my kingdom; you resemble her in some ways. And the flowers I have offered you in worship - may they be blessed. **One's life attains its fruition by the worship of the guest who arrives unsolicited. The worship of such a guest is superior even to the worship of the gods.** Pray, tell me who you are, and to what I owe this blessing of your visit to me?"

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

There is a holy sage in this universe known as Narada. Once he was engaged in meditation in a cave on the bank of the holy river Ganga. At the end of his meditation, he heard the sound of bracelets apparently belonging to some people engaged in water-sports. Out of curiosity, he looked in that direction, and saw a few of the foremost celestial nymphs sporting in water, naked. They were indescribably beautiful. His heart experienced pleasure, and his mind momentarily lost its equilibrium, overcome by lust.

Sikhidhvaja asked:

Holy one, though he was a sage of great learning and a liberated one at that, though he was free from desire and from attachment, and though his consciousness was as limitless as the sky, how was it that he was overcome by lust?

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

O royal sage, all beings in the three worlds, including the gods in heaven, have a body that is subject to the dual forces. Whether one is ignorant or one is wise, as long as one is embodied, the body is subject to happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and pain. By enjoying satisfying objects, one experiences pleasure, and by deprivation (hunger etc.) one experiences pain. Such is nature.

section VI.1 - chapter 85

svarupe nirmale satye nimisamapi vismrte drsyamullasamapnoti pravrsiva
payodharah (111)

The Brahmana (Cudala) continued:

If the self, which is the reality, and which is pure, is forgotten even for a moment, the object of experience attains expansion. If there is unbroken awareness, this does not happen. Even as darkness and light have come to be firmly associated with night and day, the experience of pleasure and pain has confirmed the existence of the body in the case of the ignorant. In the wise, however, even if such an experience is reflected in consciousness, it does not produce an impression. As in the case of a crystal, the wise man is influenced only by the object when it is actually and physically present nearby. But the ignorant person is so heavily influenced that he broods on the object even in its absence. Such are their characteristics: thinned out vulnerability is liberation, whereas dense colouring of the mind is bondage.

In response to Sikhidhvaja's question, "How do pleasure and pain arise even in the absence of the concerned object?", the brahmana said,

The cause is the impression received by the heart through the body, the eyes, etc. Later, this expands by itself. When the heart is agitated, the memory agitates the jiva in its kundalini-abode. The nadis, which branch out throughout the body, are affected. Pleasure-experiences and pain-experiences affect the nadis differently. The nadis expand and blossom, as it were, in pleasure, not in pain.

When the jiva does not thus enter into the agitated nadis, it is liberated. Bondage is none other than subjection of the jiva to pleasure and pain. When such subjection does not exist, there is liberation. The jiva gets agitated at the very 'sight' of pleasure and pain. However, if through self-knowledge it realises that pain and pleasure do not exist in truth, then it regains its equilibrium. Or, if it realises that these do not exist in itself nor does it (the jiva) exist in them, it realises total freedom. If it realises that all this is nothing but the one infinite consciousness, then again it attains equilibrium. Like a lamp without fuel, it does not get agitated again, for the jiva itself is then realised as a non-entity, and it is reabsorbed in the consciousness of which it is but the first thought-emanation.

Asked by Sikhidhvaja to elaborate on how the pleasure-experience leads to the loss of energy, the brahmana said:

As I said, the jiva agitates the life-force. The movement of the life-force extracts the vital energy from the entire body. This energy then descends as the seminal energy which is discharged naturally.

Asked what is nature, the brahmana said:

Originally, Brahman alone existed as Brahman. In it, innumerable substances appeared like ripples on the surface of the ocean. This is known as nature. It is not causally related to Brahman, but it happened like a coconut accidentally falling when a crow happened to alight on it. In that nature are found diverse creatures endowed with diverse characteristics.

section VI.1 - chapter 86 87

imamakhanditam samyak kriyan sampadayannapi duhkhad gacchami
duhkhaughamamrtam me visam sthitam (87/14)

The Brahmana (Cudala) continued:

It is by such nature of the self that this universe is born. It is sustained by self-limitation or conditioning, on account of alternating order and disorder. When such self-limitation and such conflict between order and disorder cease, the beings will not be born again.

Continuing the story of Narada, the brahmana said:

Soon, Narada regained his self-control. He gathered the seed which had been spilt, in a pot made of crystal. He then filled the pot with milk produced by his thoughtforce. In due course, that pot gave birth to an infant which was perfect in every respect. Narada christened the baby, and in course of time, imparted the highest wisdom to it. The young boy was a peer to his father.

Later, Narada took the boy to Brahma the creator, the father of Narada. Brahma conferred upon the boy (whose name was Kumbha) the blessing of the highest wisdom. It is that boy, that Kumbha, that grandson of Brahma, who is standing before you. I roam the world playfully, for I have nothing to gain from anyone. When I come into this world, my feet do not touch the earth.

As Vasistha said this, the seventeenth day came to an end.

Sikhidhvaja said:

It is truly by the fruition of the good deeds done in many past incarnations that I have obtained your company today and am able to drink the nectar of your wisdom! Nothing in the world gives that peace which the company of the holy ones bestows on man.

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

I have told you my life-story. Pray, now tell me who you are, and what you are doing here. How long have you been here? Tell me everything truthfully, for recluses do not speak anything but the truth.

Sikhidhvaja replied:

O son of the gods, you know everything as it is. What else shall I tell you? I dwell in this forest on account of my fear of this samsara (worldcycle or the cycle of birth and death). Though you know all this, I shall briefly relate my story to you. I am king Sikhidhvaja. I have abandoned my kingdom. I dread this samsara in which one repeatedly and alternately experiences pleasure and pain, birth and death. However, though I have wandered everywhere, and though I perform intense austerities, I have not found peace and tranquillity. My mind is not at rest. I do not indulge in activities, nor do I seek to gain anything. I am alone here and unattached to anything; yet I am dry and devoid of fulfilment. **I have practised all the kriyas (yogic methods) uninterruptedly. But I only progress from sorrow to greater sorrow; and even nectar turns into poison for me.**

section VI.1 - chapter 87

anupadeyavakyasya vaktuh prstasya lilaya vrajantyaphalataam vacastamasiva
'ksesamvidah (42)

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

I once asked my grandfather: "Which is superior, kriya (action, the practice of a technique) or jnana (self-knowledge)?"

And, he said to me:

"Indeed, jnana is supreme, for through jnana one realises the one which alone is. On the other hand, kriya has been described in colourful terms, as a pastime. If one does not have jnana, then one clings to kriya - if one does not have good clothes to wear, he clings to the sack.

"The ignorant are trapped by the fruits of their actions on account of their conditioning (vasana). When the latter is given up, action becomes no-action, whether it is conventionally regarded as good or evil. In the absence of self-limitation or volition, actions do not bear fruit. Actions by themselves do not generate reaction or 'fruit'; it is the vasana or the volition that makes action bear fruit. Just as the frightened boy thinks of a ghost and sees a ghost, the ignorant man entertains the notion of sorrow and suffers sorrow.

"Neither the vasana (self-limitation or conditioning) nor the ego-sense is a real entity! They arise because of foolishness. When this foolishness is abandoned, there is the realisation that all this is Brahman, and there is no self limitation. When there is vasana, there is mind; when the vasana ceases in the mind, there is self-knowledge. One who has attained self-knowledge is not born."

Thus, even the gods, Brahma and others, have declared that self-knowledge alone is supreme. Why then do you remain ignorant? Why do you think, "This is the kamandalu" and "This is a stick", and remain immersed in ignorance? Why do you not enquire "Who am I?", "How has this world arisen?", and "How does all this cease?"? Why do you not reach the state of the enlightened by enquiring into the nature of bondage and liberation? Why are you wasting your life in these futile austerities and other kriyas? It is by resorting to the company of holy ones, by serving them and enquiring of them, that you will attain self-knowledge.

Sikhidhvaja said:

Aha, I have truly been awakened by you, O sage. I am freed of foolishness. You are my guru; I am your disciple. Pray, instruct me in what you know, knowing which one does not grieve.

The Brahmana (Cudala) replied:

O royal sage, I shall instruct you if you are in a receptive mood and cherish my words. **If one playfully instructs another merely in answer to a query, when the latter does not intend to receive, cherish, and assimilate the teaching, it becomes fruitless.** After receiving such an assurance from Sikhidhvaja, Cudala said: Listen attentively: I shall narrate to you a story which resembles yours.

section VI.1 - chapter 88

dunkhani maurkhyavibhavena bhavanti yani naiva 'pado na ca jaramaranena tani sarvapadam sirasi tisthati maurkhyamekam krsnam janasya vapusamiva kesajalam (27)

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

There was a man in whom there was the almost impossible combination of wealth and wisdom. He was endowed with all excellences, he was clever in his dealings, he achieved all his ambitions, but he was unaware of the self. He began to engage himself in austerities with the desire of acquiring the celestial jewel known as cintamani (the philosopher's stone which is supposed to be capable of fulfilling all the desires of its possessor). His effort was intense. So, within a very short period of time, this jewel appeared before him. Indeed, what is impossible for one who strives his utmost! One who applies himself to the task he has undertaken, unmindful of the effort and the difficulties, reaches the desired end, even if he is poor.

This man saw the jewel in front of him, within his easy reach. But he was unable to reach any certainty concerning it. He began to muse with a mind confused by prolonged striving and suffering: "Is this the cintamani? Or is it not? Shall I touch it or not? Perhaps, it will disappear if I touch it? Surely, it cannot be obtained within so short a period of time! The scriptures say that it can only be obtained after a whole lifetime of striving. Surely, because I am a poverty-stricken, greedy man, I am merely hallucinating the existence of this jewel before me. How could I be so lucky as to get it so soon? There may be some great ones who might obtain this jewel within a short time, but I am an ordinary person with just a little austerity to my credit. How is it possible for me to get this so soon?"

Thus confused in his mind, he did not make any effort to take the jewel. He was not destined to get it. One gets only what he deserves, when he deserves it. Even if the celestial jewel stands in front of him, the fool ignores it! The jewel, thus ignored, disappeared. Psychic attainments (siddhis) bestow everything on one whom they seek: after having destroyed his wisdom they go away. And the man engaged himself further in austerities for the attainment of the cintamani. The industrious do not abandon their undertaking. After some time, he saw a glass-piece thrown playfully in front of him by the celestials. He thought it was the cintamani. Thus deluded, he greedily picked it up. Confident that he could get whatever he sought with its help, he gave up all his wealth, family, etc., and went away to a forest. On account of his foolishness, he suffered there. **Great calamities, old age, and death, are nothing in comparison to the suffering caused by foolishness. In fact, foolishness adorns the head of all sufferings and calamities!**

section VI.1 - chapter 89

maurkhyam hi bandhanamavehi param mahatman baddho na baddha iti cetasi
tadvimuktyai atmodayam trijagadatmamayam samastam maurkhye sthitasya sahasa nanu
sarvabhumi (31)

The Brahmana (Cudala) continued:

Listen, O king, to another story which also resembles yours. In the Vindhya forests there was an elephant which was extremely strong and equipped with strong and powerful tusks. The rider of this elephant had, however, imprisoned it in a cage. By this and the repeated use by the rider of weapons like the goad, the elephant was subjected to great pain.

While the rider was away, the elephant struggled to free itself from the cage. This effort went on for three whole days. Eventually it shattered the cage. Just at this time, the rider saw what the elephant had done. While the elephant was making good its escape, the rider climbed up a tree from which he planned to throw himself on its back, and thus subdue it once again. However, he missed the elephant's head as he fell and landed right in front of it. The elephant saw its enemy (the rider) fallen in front of it; yet it was overcome by pity and therefore did not harm him. Such compassion is seen even in beasts. The elephant went away.

The rider got up, not seriously injured. The evil-doer's body does not break down easily! Their evil deeds seem to strengthen their body. The rider, however, was unhappy at the loss of the elephant. He continued to search the forest for the lost elephant. After a very long time, he saw the elephant standing in a thick forest. He gathered other elephant tamers and, with their help, dug a huge pit and covered it with foliage, eager to recapture that elephant.

Within the next few days, that mighty elephant fell into that pit. Thus recaptured and bound by the wicked rider, the elephant still stands there!

The elephant had neglected to kill its enemy though he had fallen right in front of it, and hence it had to undergo fresh suffering. One who does not, on account of his foolishness, act appropriately when the opportunity offers itself and thus remove all the obstacles, invites sorrow. By the false satisfaction 'I am free', the elephant fell into bondage again. Foolishness invites sorrow. **Foolishness is bondage, O holy one! One who is bound thinks he is free in his foolishness. Though all that exists in all the three worlds is but the self, to one who is firmly established in foolishness, all that is but the expansion of foolishness.**

section VI.1 - chapter 90

tyagita syat kutastasya cintamapyavrnoti yah pavanaspandayukttasya
nihspandatvam kutastaroh (14)

Sikhidhvaja said:

Holy one, explain the significance of these stories!

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

The wealthy learned man who went in search of the celestial jewel is you, O king! You have knowledge of the scriptures, yet you are not at rest within yourself as a stone rests in water. Cintamani is the total renunciation of everything, which puts an end to all sorrow. By pure total renunciation, everything is gained. What is the celestial jewel in comparison? In as much as you were able to abandon the empire, etc., you have experienced such total renunciation.

After renouncing everything, you have come to this hermitage. However, one thing still remains to be renounced - your ego-sense. If the heart abandons the mind (the movement of thought), there is realisation of the absolute; but you are overcome by the thought of the renunciation which your renunciation has created in you. Hence, this is not the bliss that arises from total renunciation. **One who has abandoned everything is not agitated by worry; if wind can sway the branches of a tree, it cannot be called immovable.**

Such worries (or movements of thought) alone are known as mind. Thought (notion, concept) is another name for the same thing. If thoughts still operate, how can the mind be considered to have been renounced? When the mind is agitated by thoughts (worries, etc.), the three worlds appear to it instantly. As long as thoughts are still there, how can there be pure and total renunciation? Hence, when such thoughts arise in your heart, your renunciation leaves your heart (like the cintamani leaving the man). Because you did not recognise the spirit of renunciation and cherish it, it left you - taking with it freedom from thoughts and worries.

When thus you were abandoned by the jewel (spirit of total renunciation), you picked up the glass-piece (austerities and all the rest of it). You began to cherish it on account of your delusion. You have replaced the unconditioned and unattached infinite consciousness with the futile performance of austerities which has a beginning and an end, alas, for your own sorrow. One who abandons infinite joy which is easily attained, and engages himself in the acquisition of the impossible, is surely a pig-headed fool and suicidal. You fell into the trap of this forest-life and did not strive to sustain the spirit of total renunciation. You abandoned the bondage to kingdom and all the rest of it, but you have become bound again by what is known as the ascetic life. Now you are even more worried than before by cold, heat, wind, etc., and hence more firmly bound. Foolishly thinking, "I have obtained the cintamani", you have really gained not even a piece of crystal!

It is the meaning of the first parable.

section VI.1 - chapter 91

yada vanam prayatastvam tada 'jnanam ksatam tvaya patitam sanna nihitam
manastyagamahasina (14)

The Brahmana (Cudala) continued:

Now listen to the significance of the second parable.

What was described as the elephant in the Vindhya hills, that you are on this earth. The two powerful tusks are viveka (discrimination, wisdom) and vairagya (dispassion) which you possess. The rider who inflicted pain on the elephant is ignorance which caused you sorrow. Though powerful, the elephant was overcome by the rider; though excellent in every way, you are overcome by this ignorance or foolishness.

The elephant's cage is the cage of desires in which you are imprisoned. The only difference is that the iron cage decays in course of time, but the cage of desire grows stronger with time. Even as the elephant broke out of its cage, you abandoned your kingdom and came here. However, psychological abandonment is not as easy as breaking out of a material cage.

Even as the rider was alerted by the escape, the ignorance and the foolishness in you tremble when the spirit of renunciation manifests in you. When the wise man abandons the pursuit of pleasure, ignorance flees from him. **When you went to the forest, you had seriously wounded this ignorance, but you had failed to destroy it by the abandonment of the mind or movement of energy in consciousness,** even as the elephant failed to kill the rider. Therefore, this ignorance has arisen once again and, remembering the way in which you overpowered the previous desires, it has trapped you in the pit known as asceticism.

If you had destroyed this ignorance once and for all when you renounced your kingdom, you would not have been trapped by this asceticism.

You are the king of the elephants, endowed with the powerful tusk of viveka or wisdom. However, alas, in this dense forest you have been trapped by the rider known as ignorance, and you lie imprisoned in the blind well, known as asceticism.

O king, why did you not listen to the wise words of your wife, Cudala, who is indeed a knower of the truth? She is the foremost among the knowers of the self, and there is no contradiction between her words and her deeds. Whatever she says is true and is worth putting into practice. However, even if you did not in the past listen to her words and assimilate them, why did you not abandon everything in total renunciation?

section VI.1 - chapter 91

yada vanam prayatastvam tada 'jnanam ksatam tvaya patitam sanna nihitam
manastyagamahasina (14)

The Brahmana (Cudala) continued:

Now listen to the significance of the second parable.

What was described as the elephant in the Vindhya hills, that you are on this earth. The two powerful tusks are viveka (discrimination, wisdom) and vairagya (dispassion) which you possess. The rider who inflicted pain on the elephant is ignorance which caused you sorrow. Though powerful, the elephant was overcome by the rider; though excellent in every way, you are overcome by this ignorance or foolishness.

The elephant's cage is the cage of desires in which you are imprisoned. The only difference is that the iron cage decays in course of time, but the cage of desire grows stronger with time. Even as the elephant broke out of its cage, you abandoned your kingdom and came here. However, psychological abandonment is not as easy as breaking out of a material cage.

Even as the rider was alerted by the escape, the ignorance and the foolishness in you tremble when the spirit of renunciation manifests in you. When the wise man abandons the pursuit of pleasure, ignorance flees from him. **When you went to the forest, you had seriously wounded this ignorance, but you had failed to destroy it by the abandonment of the mind or movement of energy in consciousness,** even as the elephant failed to kill the rider. Therefore, this ignorance has arisen once again and, remembering the way in which you overpowered the previous desires, it has trapped you in the pit known as asceticism.

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section VI.1 - chapter 92

dhanam dara grham rajyam bhumischatram ca bandhavah iti sarvam na te rajan sarvatyago hi kastava (5)

Sikhidhvaja said:

I have renounced the kingdom, the palace, the country and my wife, too. How is it then that you think that I have not renounced everything?

The Brahmana (Cudala) replied:

Wealth, wife, palace, kingdom, the earth, and the royal umbrella, and your relatives are not yours, O king. Renouncing them does not constitute total renunciation! There is something else which seems to be yours, and which you have not renounced, and that is the best part of renunciation. Renounce that totally and without any residue and attain freedom from sorrow.

Sikhidhvaja said:

If the kingdom and all that was in it are not mine, then I abandon this forest and all that is in it. So saying, Sikhidhvaja mentally renounced the forest, etc.

On being told by the brahmana, "All these things are not yours, hence there is no meaning in renouncing them", Sikhidhvaja said:

Surely, this hermitage is everything for me right now, it is mine. I shall abandon that, too. Thus resolved, Sikhidhvaja cleansed his heart of the very idea that the hermitage was his: Surely, now I have completely renounced everything!

The Brahmana (Cudala) repeated:

Surely, all these too are not yours. How then do you renounce them? There is something which you have not renounced and that is the best part of it. By renouncing that, attain freedom from sorrow.

Sikhidhvaja said:

If these, too, are not mine, then I shall abandon my staff, the deer-skin, etc., and my cottage, too.

Vasistha said:

So saying, he sprang up from his seat. While the brahmana was passively looking on, Sikhidhvaja collected whatever there was in the cottage and made a bonfire of it. He threw away his rosary: "I am freed from the delusion that the repetition of a mantra is holy, and so I have no need for you". He reduced the deer-skin to ashes. He gave away his water-pot (kamandalu) to a brahmana (or threw it into the fire).

He said to himself, "Whatever is to be renounced must be renounced all at once and for ever, otherwise it expands once again and is gathered once again. Hence, I shall once for all burn everything up."

Thus having resolved, Sikhidhvaja, who had decided to give up all activities sacred and secular, collected all those articles that he had used till then, and burnt them all up.

section VI.1 - chapter 93

tava 'styeva 'parityakttah sarvasmad bhaga uttamah yam parityajya nihsesam
paramayasyasokataṁ (13)

Vasistha continued:

Then, Sikhidhvaja set fire to the cottage which he had built unnecessarily, guided by his own previous (false) notions. After that, systematically he burnt whatever there was and whatever was left. He burnt or threw away everything, including his own clothes. Frightened by this bonfire, even the animals ran away from that place.

Sikhidhvaja then said to the Brahmana:

Awakened by you, O son of the gods, I have abandoned all the notions I had entertained for such a long time. I am now established in pure and blissful knowledge. From whatever proves to be the cause of bondage, the mind turns away and rests in equilibrium. I have renounced everything. I am free from all bondage. I am at peace. I am blissful. I am victorious. The space is my dress; space is my abode, and I am like space. Is there anything beyond this supreme renunciation, O son of the gods?

The Brahmana (Cudala) replied:

You have not renounced everything, O king. Hence, do not act as if you are enjoying the bliss of supreme renunciation! **You have something, as it were, which you have not renounced that is the best part of renunciation. When that is also utterly abandoned without leaving a residue, then you will attain the supreme state, free from sorrow.**

After some thought, Sikhidhvaja said:

There is only one more thing left, O son of the gods: and that is this body which is the abode of the deadly snakes known as the senses, and which is composed of blood, flesh, etc. I shall now abandon that too and destroy it, and thus achieve total renunciation.

As he was about to execute his resolve, The Brahmana said:

O king, why do you vainly endeavour to destroy this innocent body? Abandon this anger which is characteristic of the bull that sets out to destroy a calf! This ascetic body is inert and dumb. You have nothing to do with it. Therefore, do not attempt to destroy it. The body remains what it is, inert and dumb. It is motivated and made to function by some other power or energy. The body is not responsible for the experience of pleasure and pain. Further, destroying the body does not mean total renunciation. On the other hand, you are throwing away something which is an aid to such renunciation ! If you are able to renounce that which functions through this body and which agitates this body, then you have truly abandoned all sin and evil and then you will have become a supreme renounces. If that is renounced, everything (including the body) is renounced. Otherwise, the sin and evil, even if they remain submerged temporarily, will arise again.

section VI.1 - chapter 93

sthitam sarvam parityajya yah sete 'snehadipavat sa rajate prakasatma samah
sasnehadipavat (52)

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

That alone is total renunciation which is the renunciation of that which is all, which is the sole cause of all these and in which all these abide.

Sikhidhvaja prayed:

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

The Brahmana (Cudala) said:

O noble one! It is the mind (which also goes by the names 'jiva', 'prana', etc.) or the citta, which is neither inert nor non-inert, and is in a state of confusion which is the 'all'. It is this citta (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 citta, 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, ego-sense, 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.

On the other hand, by renouncing what you consider not-yours, you are creating a division within yourself. If one renounces everything, then everything exists within the void of the one infinite consciousness. **When one rests in that state of total renunciation, like the lamp without fuel, he shines with supreme brilliance, like a lamp with fuel.** Even after renouncing the kingdom, etc., you exist. Similarly, even after the mind has been renounced, that infinite consciousness will exist. Even when all these have been burnt, you have not undergone any change. Even when you have totally abandoned the mind, there will be no change. One who has totally renounced everything is not afflicted by fear of old age, death, and such other events in life. That alone is supreme bliss. All else is terrible sorrow. Om! Thus assimilate this truth, and do what you wish to do. In that total renunciation does the highest wisdom or self-knowledge exist. The utter emptiness of a pot is where precious jewels are stored. It is by such total renunciation that the Sakya Muni (Buddha) reached that state beyond doubt, in which he was firmly established. Hence, O king, having abandoned everything, remain in that form and in that state in which you find yourself. Abandon even the notion of "I have renounced all", and remain in a state of supreme peace.

section VI.1 - chapter 94

tyagastasya 'tisukarah susadhyah spandanadapi rajyadapyadhikanandah
kusumadapi sundarah (6)

Sikhidhvaja said:

Pray, tell me the exact nature of this citta (mind), and also how to abandon it, so that it does not arise again and again.

Kumbha (The Brahmana - Cudala) replied:

Vasana (memory, subtle impressions of the past, conditioning) is the nature of this citta (mind). In fact they are synonyms. **Its abandonment or renunciation is easy, easily accomplished, more delightful than even the sovereignty over a kingdom, and more beautiful than a flower.** It is certainly very difficult for a foolish person to renounce the mind, even as it is difficult for a simpleton to rule the kingdom.

The utter destruction or extinction of the mind is the extinction of samsara (the creation-cycle). It is also known as the abandonment of the mind. Therefore, uproot this tree whose seed is the 'I' - idea, with all its branches, fruits and leaves, and rest in the space in the heart.

What is known as 'I' arises in the absence of the knowledge of the mind (self-knowledge). This 'I' is the seed of the tree known as mind. It grows in the field of the supreme self which is also pervaded by the illusory power known as Maya. Thus, a division is created in that field and experience arises. With this, the determining faculty known as the buddhi arises. Of course it has no distinct form, as it is but the expanded form of the seed. Its nature is conceptualisation or notional; and it is also known as the mind, jiva, and void.

The trunk of this tree is the body. The movement of energy within it that results in its growth is the effect of psychological conditioning. Its branches are long, and they reach out to great distances. They are the finite sense-experiences which are characterised by being and non-being. Its fruits are good and evil (pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness).

This is a vicious tree. Endeavour every moment to cut down its branches and to uproot it. Its branches, too, are of the nature of conditioning, of concepts and of percepts. They (the branches) are endowed with the fruits of all these. If you remain unattached to them, unconcerned about them, and without identifying yourself with them, through the strength of your intelligence (consciousness), these vasanas are greatly weakened. You will then be able to uproot the tree altogether. The destruction of the branches is secondary; the primary thing is to uproot it.

How is the tree to be uprooted? By engaging oneself in the enquiry into the nature of the self - "Who am I?" This enquiry is the fire in which the very seed and the very roots of the tree known as citta (mind) are burnt completely.

section VI.1 - chapter 94

karanam yasya karyasya bhūmipala na vidyate vidyate neha tatkaryam
tatsamvittistu vibhramah (54)

Sikhidhvaja said: I know that I am pure consciousness. How this impurity (ignorance) arose in it, I do not know. I am distressed because I am unable to get rid of this impurity which is not-self and unreal.

Kumbha asked: Tell me if that impurity (ignorance), on account of which you are an ignorant man, bound to this samsara, is real or unreal?

Sikhidhvaja replied: That impurity is also the ego-sense and the seed for this big tree known as citta (mind). I do not know how to get rid of it. It returns to me even when it is renounced by me!

Kumbha said: The effect arising from a real cause is self-evident at all times everywhere. Where the cause is not real, the effect is surely as unreal as the second moon seen in diplopia. The sprout of samsara has arisen from the seed of ego-sense. Enquire into its cause and tell me now.

Sikhidhvaja replied: O sage, I see that experience is the cause of ego-sense. But, tell me how to get rid of it.

Kumbha asked again: Ah, you are able to find the causes of effects! Tell me then the cause of such experience. I shall then tell you how to get rid of the cause. When consciousness is both the experiencing and the experience, and when there was no cause for the experience as the object to arise, how did the effect (experience) arise?

Sikhidhvaja replied: Surely on account of the objective reality, such as the body? I am unable to see how such objective reality is seen as false.

Kumbha said: If experience rests on the reality of objects like the body, then if the body etc., are proved to be unreal, on what will experience rest? **When the cause is absent or unreal, the effect is non-existent, and the experience of such an effect is delusion.** What, then, is the cause of objects like the body?

Sikhidhvaja asked: The second moon is surely not unreal because it has a cause which is eye-disease. The barren woman's son is never seen - and that is unreal. Why is not the father the cause for the existence of the body?

Kumbha replied: But, then, that father is unreal: that which is born of unreality is unreal, too. If one says that the first Creator is the original cause of all subsequent bodies, in fact even that is not true! The Creator himself is non-different from the reality. Hence his appearance as other than the reality (this creation, etc.) is delusion. The realisation of this truth enables one to get rid of the ignorance and ego-sense.

section VI.1 - chapter 95

evam jagadbhramasya 'sya bhavanam tavadatatam silibhutasya sitena salilasyeva
ruksata (2)

Sikhidhvaja asked: If all this - from the Creator to the pillar - is unreal, how has this real sorrow come into being?

Kumbha replied: **This delusion of the world-existence attains expansion by its repeated affirmation. When water is frozen into a block, it serves as a seat!** Only when ignorance is dispelled does one realise the truth; only then does the original state manifest itself. When the perception of diversity is attenuated, then this samsara ceases to be experienced, and you shine in your own original glory.

Thus, you are the supreme primordial being. This body, this form, etc., have come into being on account of ignorance and misunderstanding. All these notions of a creator and of a creation of diverse beings have not been proved to be real. When the cause is unproven, how can one take the effect to be real?

All these diverse creatures are but appearances, like water in the mirage. Such a deceptive appearance ceases on being enquired into.

Sikhidhvaja asked: Why can it not be said that the supreme self or the infinite consciousness (Brahman) is the cause whose effect is the Creator?

Kumbha replied: Brahman or the supreme self is one without a second, without a cause and without an effect, for it has no reason (motivation or need) to do anything, to create anything. It is therefore not the doer, neither is there any action, instrument, nor seed for such activity. Hence, it is not the cause for this creation or the Creator.

Hence, there is no such thing as creation. You are therefore neither the doer of actions, nor the enjoyer of experiences. You are the all, ever at peace, unborn and perfect. Since there is no cause (reason for creation), there is no effect known as the world; the world-appearance is but delusion.

When thus the objectivity of the world is seen to be unreal, what is experience and of what? When there is no experience, there is no experiences (the ego-sense). Thus, you are pure and liberated. Bondage and liberation are mere words.

Sikhidhvaja said: Lord, by the wise and well-reasoned words which you have uttered, I have been fully awakened. I realise that, since there is no cause, Brahman is not the doer of anything nor the creator of anything. Hence, there is no mind nor an ego-sense. Such being the case, I am pure, I am awakened. I salute my self, there is naught which is the object of my consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 96

tatsaramekameveha vidyate bhupate tatam ekamekantacitkantam
naikamapyadvitavasat (24)

Vasistha continued:

Thus awakened spiritually, Sikhidhvaja entered into deep meditation, from which he was playfully awakened by Kumbha, who said: "O king, you have been duly awakened and enlightened. What has to be done now has to be done, regardless of whether this world-vision ceases or does not cease. Once the light of the self has been seen, you are instantly freed from the undesirable and from mental modifications, and you remain as one liberated while still living."

Sikhidhvaja, who was now radiant with self-knowledge, asked the brahmana Kumbha 'for further understanding': "When the reality is one indivisible, infinite consciousness, how could this apparent division of the seer, the seen and sight arise in it?"

Kumbha replied:

Well asked, O king. This is all that remains for you to know. Whatever there is in this universe will cease to be at the end of this world-cycle, leaving only the essence, which is neither light nor darkness. That is pure consciousness which is supreme peace and infinite. It is beyond logic and intellectual comprehension. It is known as Brahman or nirvana. It is smaller than the smallest, larger than the biggest, and the best among the excellent. In relation to it, what now appears to be is but an atomic particle!

That which shines as the I-consciousness, and which is the universal self, is what exists as this universe. There is indeed no real distinction between that universal self and the universe, as there is no distinction between air and its movement. One may say that between the waves and the ocean there is a causal relationship in terms of time and space; but in the universal self or infinite consciousness there is no such relationship, and hence the universe is without a cause. In that infinite consciousness, this universe floats as a particle of dust. In it the word 'world' comes to be endowed with substantiality or reality.

That (infinite consciousness) alone is the essence here. It pervades all. It is one. It is consciousness. It holds everything together. Yet, one cannot say it is one, because of the total absence of divisibility or duality. Hence, it is sufficient to know that the self alone is the truth, and not let the notion of duality arise. That alone is everywhere at all times in all the diverse forms. It is not seen (not experienced through the senses and the mind), nor is it an object to be attained. Hence, it is neither the cause nor the effect. It is extremely subtle. It is pure experiencing (neither the experiencer nor the experience). Though it is thus described, it is beyond description. Hence, one cannot say it is nor that it is not. How then can it be the cause of this creation?

section VI.1 - chapter 96

kevalam paramevettham paramam bhasate sivam ato jagadahantadi prasna evatra
nocitah (41)

Kumbha said: That which has no seed (cause) and which is indescribable is therefore not the cause of another - naught is born of that. Hence, the self is neither the doer nor the action, nor the instrument. It is the truth. It is the eternal absolute consciousness. It is self-knowledge. There is no creation in the supreme Brahman. One may theoretically establish the arising and the existence of a wave in the ocean on the basis of time (of its arising) and space (in which it seems to exist as a wave). But, who has tried to establish even such a relationship between Brahman and the creation? For, in Brahman, time and space do not exist. Thus, the world has no basis at all.

Sikhidhvaja said: Surely, one can rationalise the existence of waves in the ocean. But I do not understand how it is that the world and the ego-sense are uncaused.

Kumbha said: Now you have correctly understood the truth, O king! That is because there is in fact no reality which corresponds to the words 'world' and 'ego-sense'. Just as emptiness (or the notion of distance) exists, non-different from space, even so this world-appearance exists in the supreme being or infinite consciousness - whether in the same form or with another form.

When thus the reality of this world is well understood, then it is realised as the supreme self (Siva). When rightly understood, even poison turns into nectar. When it is not thus rightly understood, it becomes evil (agivam), the world of sorrow. For, whatever this consciousness realises itself to be, that it becomes. It is because of a confusion in the self that this consciousness sees itself as embodied and as the world.

It is that supreme self alone that shines here as the supreme being (Sivam). Hence, the very questions concerning the world and the ego-sense are inappropriate. Surely, questions are appropriate only concerning those substances that are real, not with regard to those whose existence is unproved. The world and the ego-sense have no existence independent of the supreme self. Since there is no reason for their existence, the truth is that it is the supreme self alone that exists. It is the energy of Brahman (Maya) that has created this illusion by the combination of the five elements. But consciousness remains consciousness, and is realised by consciousness; diversity is perceived by the notion of diversity. The infinite raises infinity within itself, the infinite creates infinity, infinite is born of infinity, and infinity remains infinite. Consciousness shines as consciousness.

section VI.1 - chapter 97

upalambhastu yasca 'yamesa cittacamatkrtih cittatvamatra satta 'sti
dvitvamaikyam ca nastyalam (15)

Kumbha said: In the case of gold, it may be said that, at a certain time, and at a certain place, it gave rise to an ornament. But from the self (which is absolute peace), nothing is created, and nothing ever returns to it. Brahman rests in itself. Hence, it is neither the seed nor the cause for the creation of the world which is a matter of mere experience. Apart from this experience nothing exists which could be referred to as the world or the ego-sense. Therefore, the infinite consciousness alone exists.

Sikhidhvaja said: I realise, O sage, that in the Lord there is no world nor the ego-sense. But how do the world and the ego-sense shine as if they exist?

Kumbha replied: Indeed, it is the infinite which, beginningless and endless, exists as pure experiencing consciousness. That alone is this expanded universe which is its body, as it were. There is no other substance known as the intellect, nor is there an outside nor void. The essence of existence is pure experiencing, which is therefore the essence of consciousness. Just as liquidity exists inseparable from water, consciousness and unconsciousness exist together. There is no rationale for such existence, for what is is as it is.

Since there is neither a contradiction nor a division in consciousness, it is self-evident.

If the infinite consciousness is the cause of something else, then how can it be regarded as indescribable and incomparable? Hence, Brahman is not a cause or a seed. What then shall we regard as the effect? It is therefore inappropriate to associate the creation with Brahman, and to associate the inert with the infinite consciousness. If there appears to be a world or ego-sense, these are but empty words meant to entertain.

Consciousness is not destroyed. However, if such destruction can be comprehended, the consciousness that comprehends it, is free from destruction and creation. **If such destruction can be comprehended, it is surely the trick of consciousness. Hence, consciousness alone exists, neither one nor many!** Enough of this discussion.

When thus there is no material existence, thinking does not exist either. There is neither a world nor the ego-sense. Remain well established in peace and tranquillity, free from mental conditioning, whether you are embodied or disembodied. When the reality of Brahman is realised, there is no room for worry and anxiety.

section VI.1 - chapter 98

yatkincitparamakasa isatkacakacayate cidadarsena jatatvanna cittam no
jagatkriya (15)

Sikhidhvaja said:

Holy one, pray instruct me in such a way that it will be perfectly clear to me that the mind is non-existent.

Kumbha said:

O king, indeed there is not, and there has never been, an entity known as the mind. That which shines here and is known as the mind is indeed the infinite Brahman (consciousness). It is ignorance of its true nature that gives rise to the notion of a mind and the world and all the rest of it. When even these are insubstantial notions, how can 'I', 'you', etc. be considered real? Thus, there is no such thing as the 'world', and whatever appears to be, is uncreated. All this is indeed Brahman. How can that be known and by whom?

Even in the beginning of the present world-cycle this world was not created. It was described as creation by me only for your comprehension. In the total absence of any causative factors, all these could not have been created at all. Therefore, whatever there is, is Brahman, and naught else. It is not even logical to say that the Lord, who is nameless and formless, created this world! It is not true. When thus the creation of this world is seen to be false, then surely the mind that entertains the notion of such a creation is false, too.

Mind is but a bundle of such notions which limit the truth. But, then, division implies divisibility. When the infinite consciousness is incapable of division, there is no divisibility, and hence there is no division. How can mind, the divider, be real? Whatever appears to be here is perceived in Brahman, by Brahman, and such perception is, by courtesy, known as the mind! It is the infinite consciousness alone that is spread out as the universe. Why then call it the universe? **In this plane or dimension of infinite consciousness, whatever slight appearance there seems to be, is but the reflection of consciousness in itself. Hence, there is neither a mind nor the world.** Only in ignorance is all this seen as 'the world'. Hence the mind is unreal.

Only creation is negated by this, not what is. The reality that is seen as this world is beginningless and uncreated. Hence, the scriptural declarations and one's own experiences concerning the appearance and the disappearance of substances here cannot be considered invalid, except by an ignoramus. One who denies the validity of such declarations and experiences is fit to be shunned. The transcendental reality is eternal; the world is not unreal (only the limiting adjunct, the mind, is false). Therefore, all this is the indivisible, illimitable, nameless and formless infinite consciousness. It is the self-reflection of Brahman which is of infinite forms that appears to be the universe with its creation-dissolution cycle. It is this Brahman itself which knows itself for a moment as this universe, and appears to be such. There is no mind.

section VI.1 - chapter 99

ahamityeva sankalpo bandhaya 'tivilasine na 'hamityeva sankalpo moksaya
vimalatmane (11)

Sikhidhvaja said:

My delusion is gone. Wisdom has been gained by your grace. I remain free from all doubts. I know what there is to be known. The ocean of illusion has been crossed. I am at peace, without the notion of 'I', but as pure knowledge.

Kumbha said:

When the world does not exist as such, where is 'I' or 'you' ? Hence, remaining at peace within yourself, engage yourself in non-volitional actions as are appropriate from moment to moment. All this is but Brahman which is peace. 'I' and 'the world' are words without substance. When the insubstantiality of such expressions is realised, then what was seen as the world is realised as Brahman.

The creator Brahma is but an idea or notion. Even so is 'self' or 'I'. In their right or wrong comprehension lies liberation or bondage! **The notion 'I am' gives rise to bondage and self-destruction. The realisation 'I am (is) not' leads to freedom and purity.** Bondage and liberation are but notions. That which is aware of these notions is the infinite consciousness, which alone is. The notion 'I am' is the source of all distress. The absence of such a feeling is perfection. Realise 'I am not that ego-sense', and rest in pure awareness.

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 ego-sense. When the ego-sense 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 exists as carvings in uncarved stone. He who thus sees 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.

Even as the ocean alone exists when the word 'wave' is deprived of its meaning, Brahman alone exists when the word 'creation' is seen as meaningless. This creation is Brahman. Brahman alone is aware of this creation. When the word-meaning of 'creation' is dropped, the true meaning of 'creation' is seen as the eternal Brahman. When one enquires into the word 'Brahman', the All is comprehended. When one similarly enquires into the word 'creation', Brahman is comprehended. However, that consciousness which is the basis and the substratum for all such notions and their awareness, is known by the word 'Brahman'. When this truth is clearly realised, and when the duality of knowledge and known is discarded, what remains is supreme peace, which is indescribable and inexpressible.

section VI.1 - chapter 101

vasanatmasu yatesu malesu vimalam sakhe yadvaktti gururantastadvisatisur
yatha bise (14)

Kumbha (Cudala) said:

I hope that you have been inwardly awakened spiritually, and that you know what there is to be known, and see what there is to be seen.

Sikhidhvaja replied:

Indeed, Lord, by your grace I have seen the supreme state. How was it that it eluded my understanding so far?

Kumbha said:

Only when the mind is utterly quiet, when one has completely abandoned all desire for pleasure, and when the senses have also been rid of their colouring or covering, are the words of the preceptor rightly comprehended. (The previous efforts were not wasted, for) The various efforts made so far have attained fruition today, and the impurities in the bodies have dropped away. **When thus one is freed from psychological conditioning, and the impurities have been removed or purified, the words of the guru enter direct into the innermost core of one's being, just as an arrow enters the stalk the lotus.** You have attained that state of purity, and therefore you have been enlightened by my discourse, and your ignorance has been dispelled.

By our satsanga (holy company) your karmas (actions and their residual impressions) have been destroyed. Till this very forenoon you were filled with the false notions of 'I' and 'mine' on account of ignorance. Now that on account of the light of my words the mind has been abandoned from your heart, you have been awakened fully, for ignorance lasts only so long as the mind functions in your heart. Now you are enlightened, liberated. Remain established in the infinite consciousness, freed from sorrow, from striving and from all attachment.

Sikhidhvaja said:

Lord, is there a mind even for the liberated person? How does he live and function here without a mind?

Kumbha replied:

Truly, there is no mind in the liberated ones. What is the mind? The psychological conditioning or limitation which is dense, and which leads to rebirth, is known as mind; this is absent in the liberated sages. The liberated sages live with the help of the mind which is free from conditioning, and which does not cause rebirth. It is not mind at all, but pure light (satva). The liberated ones live and function here established in this satva, not in the mind. The ignorant and inert mind is mind; the enlightened mind is known as satva. The ignorant live in their mind, the enlightened ones live in satva.

section VI.1 - chapter 101 102

brahmacinmatramamalam sattvamityadi namakam yadgitam tadidam mudhah
pagyantya jaggattaya (101/55)

Kumbha continued:

You have attained to the state of satva (the unconditioned mind) on account of your supreme renunciation. The conditioned mind has been totally renounced, of this I am convinced. Your mind has become like pure infinite space. You have reached the state of complete equilibrium, which is the state of perfection. This is the total renunciation in which everything is abandoned without residue.

What sort of happiness (destruction of sorrow) does one gain through austerities? Supreme and unending happiness is attained only through utter equanimity. What sort of happiness is that which is gained in heaven? He who has not attained self-knowledge, tries to snatch a little pleasure through the performance of some rituals. One who does not have gold clings to copper!

O royal sage, you could easily have become wise with the help of Cudala. Why did you have to indulge in this useless and meaningless austerity? It has a beginning and an end, and in the middle there is an appearance of happiness. However, your austerity has in a way led to this spiritual awakening. Now remain rooted in wisdom.

It is in the infinite consciousness that all these realities and even the unreal notions arise, and into it they dissolve. Even ideas like 'This is to be done' and 'This is not to be done' are droplets of this infinite consciousness. Abandon even these, and rest in the unconditioned. All these (austerity, etc.) are indirect methods. Why should one not adopt the direct method of self-knowledge?

That which has been described as satva should be renounced by the satva itself - that is, by total freedom from it, or by non-attachment to it. Whatever sorrow arises in the three worlds, O king, arises only from mental craving. If you are established in that state of equanimity which treats of both movement and non-movement of thought as non-different, you will rest in the eternal.

There is only one infinite consciousness. **That Brahman which is pure consciousness is itself known as satva. The ignorant see it as the world.** Movement (agitation) as also non-movement in that infinite consciousness are only notions in the mind of the spectator. The totality of the infinite consciousness is all these, but devoid of such notions. Its reality is beyond words !

Vasistha continued:

Having said this, Kumbha vanished from sight even while the king was about to offer flowers in adoration. Reflecting over the words of Kumbha, Sikhidhvaja entered into deep meditation, completely free from all desires and cravings, and firmly established in the unconditioned state.

section VI.1 - chapter 103

prabodhakaranam yasya durlakshyanuvapurhrdi vidyate sattvasesontarbiye
puspaphalam yatha (24)

Vasistha continued:

While Sikhidhvaja was thus engaged in deep meditation, utterly free from the least mental modification or movement in consciousness, Cudala abandoned her disguise, returned to the palace, and in her own female form conducted the affairs of the state. She returned to where Sikhidhvaja was after three days, and was delighted to see that he was still absorbed in meditation. She thought, "I should make him return to world-consciousness; why should he abandon the body now? Let him rule the kingdom for some time and then both of us can simultaneously abandon the body. Surely, the instructions I have given him will not be lost. I shall keep him alert and awake through the practice of yoga."

She roared like a lion again and again. Still he did not open his eyes. She pushed the body down. Yet he remained immersed in the self. She thought, "Alas, he is completely absorbed in the self. How shall I bring him back to body-consciousness? On the other hand, 'why should I do so?' Let him reach the disembodied state, and I shall also abandon this body now!"

While she was getting ready to abandon her body, she again thought, "Before I abandon my body, let me see if there is the seed of mind (vasana) somewhere in his body. If there is, he can be awakened, and then both of us can live as liberated beings. If there is not, and if he has attained final liberation, I shall also abandon this body." She examined his body and found that the seed of individuality was still present in him.

Rama asked:

Lord, when the body of the sage lies like a log of wood, how can one know that there is still a trace of satva (purified mind) in him?

Vasistha said:

In his heart, unseen and subtle, there is the trace of satva, which is the cause or the revival of body-consciousness. It is like the flower and the fruit which are potentially present in the seed. In the case of the sage whose mind is totally free from the movement of thought, who is devoid of the least notion of duality or unity, whose consciousness is utterly firm and steady like a mountain - his body is in a state of perfect equilibrium, and does not show signs of pain or pleasure; it does not rise or fall (live or die) but remains in perfect harmony with nature. It is only as long as there are notions of duality or unity that the body undergoes changes as the mind does. It is the movement of thought that appears as this world. Because of that, the mind experiences pleasure, anger, and delusion, which thus remain irrepressible. But when the mind is firmly established in equanimity, such disturbances do not arise in one. He is like pure space.

section VI.1 - chapter 103

dehe yasminstu no cittam na 'pi sattvam ca vidyate sa tape himavadrama
pancatvena viliiyate (33)

Vasistha continued:

When the satva is in a state of total equilibrium, then no physical or psychological defects are experienced. It is not possible to abandon satva, it reaches its end in course of time. **When there is neither the mind nor even the satva in the body, then, like snow melting in the heat, the body dissolves in the elements.** Sikhidhvaja's body was free from the mind (movement of thought), but was endowed with a trace of satva. Therefore it did not thus dissolve into the the elements.

Noticing this, Cudala decided, "I shall enter into the pure intelligence which is omnipresent and endeavour to awaken body-consciousness in him. If I do not do so, he will surely awaken after some time. But, why should I remain alone till then?"

Cudala thereupon left her body and entered into the pure mind (satva) of Sikhidhvaja. She agitated that pure mind and quickly re-entered her own body, which she instantly transformed into that of the young ascetic Kumbha. Kumbha began to sing the Sama Vedic hymns gently. Listening to this, the king returned to body-consciousness. He saw Kumbha once again in front of him. He was happy. He said to Kumbha: "Luckily, we have once again arisen in your consciousness, O Lord! And you have come here again merely to shower your blessings on me!

Kumbha said:

Since the time I left you and went away, my mind (heart) has been here with you. There is no desire to go to heaven, but only to be near you. I do not have a relative, friend, trustworthy person, or disciple like you in this world."

Sikhidhvaja replied:

I consider myself supremely blessed that, though you are perfectly enlightened and unattached, you wish to be with me. Pray, do stay with me here in this forest!

Kumbha asked:

Tell me: did you rest in the supreme state for a while? Have you abandoned notions like 'This is different', 'This is unhappiness' etc.? Has your craving for pleasure ceased?

Sikhidhvaja replied:

By your grace, I have reached the other shore of this samsara (world appearance). I have gained what there is to be gained. There is naught but the self - neither the known nor what is yet to be known (unknown), neither attainment nor what is renounced and what should be renounced, neither an entity nor the other nor even satva (a pure mind). Like the limitless space, I remain in the unconditioned state.

section VI.1 - chapter 104

yavattilam yatha tailam yavaddeham tatha dasa ye na dehadasameti
sacchinatyasina 'mbaram (42)

Vasistha continued:

After spending an hour at that place, the king and Kumbha went into the forest, where they roamed freely for eight days. Kumbha suggested that they should go to another forest, and the king consented. They observed the normal rules of life, and performed appropriate religious rites to propitiate ancestors and the gods. False notions like 'This is our home' and 'This is not' did not arise in their hearts. Sometimes they were clad in gorgeous robes, at others in rags. Sometimes they were anointed with sandal-paste, at others with ashes. After a few days, the king also shone with the same radiance as Kumbha.

Seeing the radiance of the king, Kumbha (Cudala) began to think:

"Here is my husband who is noble and strong. The forest is delightful. We are in a state in which fatigue is unknown. How then does desire for pleasure not arise in the heart? The liberated sage welcomes and experiences whatever comes to him unsought. If he is caught up in conformity (rigidity), it gives rise to foolishness (ignorance). She whose passions are not aroused in the proximity of her noble and strong husband when they dwell surrounded by a garden of flowers, is as good as dead! What does the knower of the truth or the sage of self-knowledge gain by abandoning what is obtained without effort? I should make it possible for my husband to enjoy conjugal pleasures with me." Having thus decided, Kumbha said to Sikhidhvaja: "Today is an auspicious day when I should be in heaven to see my father. Give me leave to go, and I shall return this evening."

The two friends exchanged towers. Kumbha left. Soon Cudala abandoned the disguise, went to the palace, and discharged the royal duties. She returned to where Sikhidhvaja was, again in the disguise of Kumbha. Noticing a change in Kumbha's facial expression, the king asked: "O son of the gods, why do you look so unhappy? Holy ones do not allow any external influence to disturb their equilibrium."

Kumbha said:

They who, though remaining established in equilibrium, do not let their organs function naturally as long as the body is alive, are obstinate and stubborn people. **As long as there is sesame, there is oil, as long as there is the body, there are the different moods also. He who rebels against the states that the body is naturally subject to, cuts space to pieces with a sword.** The equilibrium of yoga is for the mind, not for the organs of action and their states. As long as the body lasts, one should let the organs of action perform their proper function, though the intellect and the senses remain in a state of equanimity. Such is the law of nature to which even the gods are subject.

section VI.1 - chapter 105

suhrdyaveditam dukham paramayati tanavam ghanam jadam krsnamapi
mukttavrstiriva 'mbudah (3)

Kumbha continued:

Now, O king, please listen to what misfortune has befallen me. For, **if one confides his unhappiness to a friend, it is greatly ameliorated, even as the heavy and dark cloud becomes light by shedding rain.** The mind also becomes clear and peaceful when a friend listens to one's fate, even as water becomes clear when a piece of alum is dropped into it.

After I left you, I went to heaven and performed my duties there. As evening approached, I left heaven to return to you. In space en route I saw the sage Durvasa flying in haste to be in time for his evening prayers. He was clad, as it were, in the dark clouds, and adorned with lightning. This made him look like a woman rushing to meet her lover. I saluted him and said so, in fun. Enraged at my impudence, he cursed me: "For this insolence, you will become a woman every night." I am grieved at the very thought that every night I shall become a woman. It is indeed a tragedy that the sons of god who are easily overcome by lust, thus suffer the consequences of insulting holy sages. However, why should I grieve, for this does not affect my self.

Sikhidhvaja said:

What is the use of grief, O son of the gods? Let come what may, for the self is not affected by the fate of the body. Whatever be the joy or sorrow that is allotted to one, affects the body, not the indweller. If even you yield to grief, what about the ignorant people! Or, perhaps, while narrating an unfortunate incident you are merely using appropriate words and expressions!

Vasistha continued:

Thus they consoled each other, for they were inseparable friends now. The sun had set, and the darkness of the night was creeping on earth. They performed their evening prayers.

Soon, Kumbha's body began to show a creeping change. Fighting back his tears, and in a choked voice, he said to Sikhidhvaja:

"Alas, see, I feel as if my body is melting away, and that it is pouring down on earth. My chest is sprouting breasts. My skeletal structure undergoes changes appropriate to a woman. Look, dress and ornaments appropriate to a woman spring from the body itself. O, what shall I do, how shall I hide my shame, for I have truly become a woman!"

Sikhidhvaja replied:

"Holy one, you know what there is to be known. Do not grieve over the inevitable. One's fate affects only the body, not the embodied one." Kumbha also agreed: "You are right. I do not now feel any sorrow. Who can defy the world order or nature?"

Thus conversing, they went to bed (slept in the same bed). Thus Cudala lived with her husband, as a young male ascetic during the day, and as a woman at night.

section VI.1 - chapter 106

krtena 'nena karyena na subham na 'subham sakhe pasyami tanmahabuddhe
yathecchasi tatha kuru (8)

Vasistha continued:

After a few days of such companionship, Kumbha (Cudala in disguise) said to Sikhidhvaja:

"O king, listen to my submission. For some time now I have been a woman by night. I wish to fulfil the role of a woman at night. I feel that I should live as the wife of a worthy husband. In the three worlds there is none who is as dear to me as you are. Hence, I wish to marry you and enjoy conjugal pleasures with you. This is natural, pleasant and possible. What fault is there in it? We have given up both desire and rejection, and we have total equal vision. Hence, let us do what is natural, without desire and aversion."

Sikhidhvaja replied: "O friend, I do not see either good or evil in doing this. Therefore, O wise one, do what you wish to do. Because the mind rests in perfect equilibrium, I see only the self everywhere. Hence, do what you wish to do."

Kumbha replied:

"If that is how you feel, O king, then today itself is the most auspicious day. The celestial bodies shall witness our wedding."

Both of them then gathered all the articles necessary for the wedding rite. They bathed each other with holy water in preparation for the sacred rite. They offered worship to the ancestors and gods.

By this time, the night-time had arrived. Kumbha became transformed into a lovely woman. 'He' said to the king: "O dear friend, now I am a woman. My name is Madanika. I salute you. I am your wife." Sikhidhvaja then adorned Madanika with garlands, flowers and jewels. Admiring her beauty, the king said: "O Madanika, you are radiant like goddess Laksmi. May we be blessed to live together like the sun and the shadow, Laksmi and Narayana, Siva and Parvati. May we be blessed with all auspiciousness."

The couple themselves tended the sacred fire and performed the nuptial rite, in strict accord with the injunctions of the scriptures. The altar had been decorated with flowery creepers and with precious and semi-precious stones. Its four corners were decorated with cocoanuts, and there were also pots full of holy water of the Ganga. In the centre was the sacred fire. They went round this fire and offered the prescribed oblations into it with the appropriate sacred hymns. Even while doing so, the king frequently held Madanika's hand, thus revealing his fondness for her and his joy on that occasion. They then circumambulated the sacred fire thrice, performing what is known as the Laja Homa. Then they retired to the nuptial chamber (a cave specially prepared for the occasion). The moon was showering cool rays. The nuptial bed was made of fragrant flowers. They ascended this bed, and consummated their wedding.

section VI.1 - chapter 107

niyatam kincidekatra sthitam svargakamidrsam sakra gantum na janami
tvadasjnam na karemyaham (28)

Vasistha continued:

As the sun rose, Madanika became Kumbha. Thus, this pair lived as friends during the day, and as husband and wife during the night. While Sikhidhvaja was asleep one night, Kumbha (Cudala in disguise) slipped away to the palace, and discharged the royal duties there, and quickly returned to the king's bedside.

For a month, they lived in the caves of the Mahendra mountain. They then roamed in different forests, and migrated from one mountainside to another. For some time, they lived in the garden of the gods known as the Parijata forest on the southern slopes of the Mainaka mountain. They also roamed the Kuru territory and the Kosala territory.

After they had enjoyed themselves in this manner for a number of months, Cudala (disguised as Kumbha) thought: "I should test the maturity of the king by placing before him the pleasures and the delights of heaven. If he is unaffected by them, surely he will never again seek pleasure."

Having thus decided, Cudala created by her magic powers the illusion in which Sikhidhvaja saw the chief of the gods (Indra), accompanied by the celestials standing right in front of him. Unruffled by their sudden appearance, the king offered them due worship. Then he asked Indra: "Pray, tell me: what have I done to deserve this, that you have taken all this trouble to come here today?"

Indra replied:

"Holy one, we have all come here drawn irresistibly to your presence. We have heard your glories sung in heaven. Come, come to heaven; having heard of your greatness, the celestials long to see you. Pray, accept these celestial insignia which will enable you to traverse the space even as the perfected sages do. Surely, O sage, liberated beings like you do not spurn happiness that seeks them unsought. May your visit purify the heaven."

Sikhidhvaja said:

"I know the conditions that prevail in heaven, O Indra! But to me, heaven is everywhere and also nowhere. I am happy wherever I am, because I desire nothing. However, **I am unable to go to the kind of heaven which you describe, and which is limited to one place! Hence, I am unable to fulfil your command.**" "But," said Indra, "I think it is proper that liberated sages should suffer to experience the pleasures allotted to them." Sikhidhvaja remained silent. Indra was getting ready to leave.

Sikhidhvaja said, "I shall not come now, for now is not the time."

Having blessed the king and Kumbha, Indra and all his retinue disappeared.

section VI.1 - chapter 108

ahametena ca 'rthena nodvegam yami manini yadyadistatamam loke tattadevam
vijanata (22)

Vasistha continued:

After withdrawing that magical display, Cudala said to herself: "Luckily, the king is not attracted by temptations of pleasure. Even when Indra visited him and invited him to heaven, the king remained unaffected and pure like space. I shall now subject him to another test, to see if he is swayed by the twin forces of attraction and repulsion."

That very night, Cudala created by her magic powers a delightful pleasure garden and an extraordinarily beautiful bed in it. She created a young man, physically more attractive than even Sikhidhvaja. There, on that bed, she appeared to be seated with her lover in close embrace.

Sikhidhvaja had concluded his evening prayers, and he looked for his wife Madanika. After some search, he discovered the secret hiding place of this couple. He saw them completely immersed in their love-play. Her hair encircled him. With her hands she held his face. Their mouths were joined to each other in a fervent kiss. They were obviously very excited with passionate love for each other. With every movement of their limbs, they expressed their extreme love for each other. On their faces danced the delight of their hearts. The chest of one was beating against the chest of the other. They were utterly oblivious of their surroundings.

Sikhidhvaja saw all this, but was unmoved. He did not wish to disturb them, and so turned to go. But his presence had been noticed by the couple. He said to them, "Pray, let me not disturb your happiness."

After a time, Madanika came out of the garden and met Sikhidhvaja, feeling ashamed of her own conduct. But the king said: "My dear, why did you come away so soon? Surely, all beings live in order to enjoy happiness. And it is difficult to find in this world a couple who are in such harmony. **I am not agitated on this account, for I know very well what people like very much in this world.** Kumbha and I are great friends, Madanika is but the fruit of Durvasa's curse!"

Madanika pleaded:

"Such is the nature of women, O lord! They are wavering in their loyalty. They are eight times as passionate as men. They are weak, and so cannot resist lust in the presence of a desirable person. Hence, please forgive me and do not be angry." Sikhidhvaja replied: "I am not at all angry with you, my dear. But it is appropriate that I should henceforth treat you as a good friend and not as my wife." Cudala was delighted with the king's attitude, which conclusively proved that he had gone beyond lust and anger. She instantly shed her previous form as Madanika, and resumed her original form as Cudala.

section VI.1 - chapter 109

sakhu bhrata suhrdbhrtyo gurur mitram dhanam sukham histramayatanam dasah
sarvam bhartuh kulanganah (27)

Sikhidhvaja said:

Who are you, O lovely lady, and how did you come here? How long have you been here?
You look very much like my wife!

Cudala replied:

Indeed, I am Cudala. I myself assumed the form of Kumbha and others, in order to awaken your spirit. I myself also assumed the form of this small illusory world with all this garden, etc., which you saw just now. From the very day you unwisely abandoned your kingdom and came here to perform austerities, I have been endeavouring to bring about your spiritual awakening. It is I, assuming the form of Kumbha, who instructed you. The forms you perceived, of Kumbha and others, were not real. And now you have been fully awakened, and you know all that there is to know.

Vasistha continued:

Sikhidhvaja entered into deep meditation, and inwardly saw all that had happened from the time he left the palace. He was delighted, and his affection for his wife increased greatly. Coming back to body-consciousness, he embraced Cudala with such fervour that is impossible to describe. Their hearts overflowing with love for each other, they remained for some time as if in a superconscious state.

Sikhidhvaja then said to Cudala:

Oh, how sweet is the affection of a dear wife, which is sweeter than nectar! To what discomfort and pain you have subjected yourself for my sake! The way in which you have redeemed me from this dreadful ocean of ignorance has no comparison whatsoever. Tradition has given us several great women, who have been exemplary wives, but they are nothing compared to you. You excel them all in all the virtues and noble qualities. You have struggled hard, and brought about my enlightenment. How shall I recompense you for this? Indeed, loving wives thus strive to liberate their husbands from this ocean of sainsara. In this they achieve what even the scriptures, guru and mantra are unable to achieve, on account of their love for their husbands. **The wife is everything to her husband - friend, brother, well-wisher, servant, guru, companion, wealth, happiness, scripture, abode (vessel), slave.** Hence, such a wife should at all times and in all ways be adored and worshipped.

My dear Cudala, you are indeed the supreme among women in this world. Come, embrace me again.

Vasistha said:

Having said so, Sikhidhvaja again fondly and fervently embraced Cudala.

section VI.1 - chapter 109

na rajan mama bhogesu vancha na 'pi vibhutisu svabhavasya vasadeva
yathapraptena me sthitih (68)

Cudala said: Lord, when I saw that you were performing meaningless austerities, my heart was greatly pained. I relieved myself of that pain by coming here and striving to awaken you. It was indeed for my own joy and delight. I do not deserve any praise for that!

Sikhidhvaja replied: From now on, may all the wives fulfil their own selfish ends by awakening their husbands' spirit, as you have done!

Cudala said: I do not see in you now the petty cravings, thoughts and feelings that tormented you years ago. Pray, tell me, what are you now, in what are you established, and what do you see.

Sikhidhvaja replied: My dear, I rest in that which you, within me, bring about. I have no attachment. I am like the infinite, indivisible space. I am peace. I have attained that state which is difficult even for the gods like Visnu and Siva to reach. I am free from confusion and delusion. I experience no sorrow nor joy. I cannot say, "This is" nor "The other is". I am freed of all coverings, and I enjoy a state of inner well-being. What I am, that I am - it is difficult to put into words! You are my guru, my dear; I salute you. By your grace, my beloved, I have crossed this ocean of samsara. I shall not once again fall into error.

Cudala asked: In that case, what do you wish to do now?

Sikhidhvaja answered: I know no prohibitions nor injunctions. Whatever you do, that I shall know as appropriate. Do what you think appropriate and I shall follow you.

Cudala said: Lord, we are now established in the state of liberated ones. To us, both desire and its opposite are the same. Of what use is the discipline of prana or the practice of infinite consciousness? Hence, we should be what we are in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, and abandon the one thing that remains after this. We are the king and the queen in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. The one thing to be abandoned is delusion! Hence, let us return to the kingdom, and provide it with a wise ruler.

Sikhidhvaja asked: Then why should we not accept Indra's invitation to heaven?

Cudala replied: **O king, I do not desire pleasure nor the glamour of a kingdom. I remain in whatever condition I am placed by my very nature.** When the thought 'This is pleasure' is confronted by the thought 'This is not', they both perish. I remain in that peace that survives this.

The two liberated ones then spent the night in conjugal delight.

section VI.1 - chapter 110 111

bhuktva bhogananekan bhuvi sakalamahipalacudamanitve sthitva vai dirghakalam
paramamrtapadam praptavan sattvasesah evam rama 'gatam tvam prakrtamanusaran
karyajatam visokas tisthottistha svayam va prasabhamanubhavan
bhogamoksadilaksmih (110/30)

Vasistha continued:

At daybreak, the couple arose and performed their morning duties. Cudala materialised by her thought-power a golden vessel containing the sacred waters of the seven oceans. With these waters, she bathed the king and crowned him emperor. She said: "May you be endowed with the lustre of the eight divine protectors of the universe."

In his turn, the king re-established Cudala as his queen. He suggested to her that she should create an army by her thought-power. She did so.

Headed by the royal couple mounted on the most stately elephant, the entire army marched towards their kingdom. On the way, Sikhidhvaja pointed out to Cudala the various places associated with his ascetic life. They soon reached the outskirts of their city, where they were given a rousing welcome by the citizens.

Assisted by Cudala, Sikhidhvaja ruled the kingdom for a period of ten thousand years, after which he attained nirvana (liberation, like a lamp without oil) from which there is no rebirth. **After enjoying the pleasures of the world, because he was the foremost among kings, after having lived for a very long time, he attained the supreme state, because in him there was but a little residue of satva. Even so, O Rama, engage yourself in spontaneous and natural activity, without grief. Arise. Enjoy the pleasures of the world, and also final liberation.**

Thus have I told you, O Rama, the story of Sikhidhvaja. Pursuing this path, you will never grieve. Rule as Sikhidhvaja ruled. You will enjoy the pleasures of this world and attain final liberation, too. Even so did Kaca, who was the son of Brhaspati, the preceptor of the gods.

Rama asked:

Lord, please tell me how Kaca, the son of Brhaspati, attained enlightenment.

Vasistha said:

Like Sikhidhvaja, Kaca also attained enlightenment. One day, while he was still young, he was eager to attain liberation from samsara.

He went to his father Brhaspati, and asked:

"Lord, you know everything. Please tell me how can one free oneself from this cage known as samsara."

section VI.1 - chapter 111

cittam nijamahankaram viduscittavido janah antaryo 'yamahambhavo
jantostaccittamucyate (28)

Brhaspati said:

Liberation from this prison-house known as samsara is possible only by total renunciation, my son!

Vasistha continued:

Hearing this, Kaca went away to the forest, having renounced everything. Brhaspati was unaffected by this turn of events. Wise ones remain unaffected by union and separation. After eight years of seclusion and austerity, Kaca happened to meet his father once again and asked him: "Father, I have performed austerities for eight years after renouncing everything. How is it I have not attained the state of supreme peace?"

Brhaspati merely repeated his previous commandment, "Renounce everything," and went away. Taking it as a hint, Kaca discarded even the bark with which he covered his body. Thus he continued his austerities for three years. Again he sought the presence of his father and after worshipping him, asked: "Father, I have renounced even the stick and clothes, etc. I have still not gained self-knowledge!"

Brhaspati thereupon said:

"By 'total' is meant only the mind, for mind is the all. Renunciation of the mind is total renunciation." Having said so, Brhaspati vanished from sight. Kaca looked within, in an effort to find the mind, in order that it might be renounced. However much he searched, he could not find what could be called the mind! Unable to find the mind, he began to think: "The physical substances, like the body, cannot be regarded as mind. Why, then, do I vainly punish the innocent body? I shall go back to my father, and shall enquire into the whereabouts of the terrible enemy known as the mind. Knowing it, I shall renounce it."

Having thus resolved, Kaca sought his father's presence and asked, "Please tell me what the mind is, so that I may renounce it."

Brhaspati replied: "They who know the mind say that the mind is the 'I'. The ego-sense that arises within you is the mind." "But, that is difficult, if not impossible," said Kaca.

Brhaspati responded: "On the other hand, it is easier than crushing a flower which is in your hand, easier than closing your eyes! For that which appears to be because of ignorance, perishes at the dawn of knowledge. In truth there is no ego-sense. It seems to exist on account of ignorance and delusion. Where is this ego-sense, how did it arise, what is it? In all beings, at all times, there is but the one pure consciousness! Hence, this ego-sense is but a word. Give it up, my son, and give up self-limitation or psychological conditioning. You are the unconditioned, never conditioned by time, space, etc."

section VI.1 - chapter 112 113

ahankaramasadviddhi mainamasraya ma tyaja asatah sasasrngasya kila
tyagagrahau kutah (112/3)

Vasistha continued:

Thus instructed in the highest wisdom, Kaca became enlightened. He remained free from ego-sense and possessiveness. Live like him, O Rama. **The ego-sense is unreal. Do not trust it, and do not abandon it. How can the unreal be grasped or renounced?** When the ego-sense is itself unreal, what are birth and death? You are that subtle and pure consciousness, which is indivisible, free from ideation, but which encompasses all beings. It is only in the state of ignorance that the world is seen as an illusory appearance. In the vision of the enlightened, all this is seen as Brahman. Abandon the concepts of unity and diversity, and remain blissful. Do not behave like the deluded man, and suffer!

Rama said:

I derive supreme bliss from your nectarine words. I am now established in the transcendental state. Yet, there is no satiety. Though I am satisfied, again I ask you, for no one will be satiated with nectar. Who is the deluded man you referred to?

Vasistha said:

Listen to this humorous story of the deluded man, O Rama. There is a man who was fashioned by the machinery of delusion. He was born in a desert and grew up in the desert. There arose a deluded notion in him: "I am born of space, I am space, the space is mine. I should therefore protect that space." Having thus decided, he built a house to protect space. Seeing the space safely enclosed in the house, he was happy. But in course of time, the house crumbled. He wept aloud, "O my space! Where have you gone? Alas it is lost."

Then he dug a well and felt that the space in it was protected. It, too, was lost in time. One after the other, he built a pot, a pit, and also a small grove with four sal trees. Each of them perished after a short time, leaving the deluded man unhappy.

Listen to the meaning of this story, O Rama. The man fashioned by delusion is the ego-sense. It arises as motion arises in wind. Its reality is Brahman. Not knowing this, the ego-sense looks upon space around it as itself and its possession. Thus it identifies itself with the body, etc., which it desires to protect. The body, etc., exist and perish after some time. On account of this delusion, the ego-sense grieves repeatedly, thinking that the self is dead and lost. When the pot, etc., are lost, the space remains unaffected. Even so, when the bodies are lost, the self remains unaffected. The self is pure consciousness, subtler than even space, O Rama. It is never destroyed. It is unborn. It does not perish. And it is the infinite Brahman alone that shines as this world-appearance. Knowing this, be happy for ever.

section VI.1 - chapter 114

jantoryatha manorajyam vividharambhabhasuram brahman tathedam vitatam
manorajyam virajate (21)

Vasistha continued:

From the Supreme Brahman, the mind first arose, with its faculty of thinking and imagination. And this mind remains as such in that Brahman, even as fragrance in a flower, as waves in the ocean, and as rays of light in the sun. Brahman, which is extremely subtle and invisible, was forgotten, as it were, and thus arose the wrong notion of the real existence of the world-appearance.

If one thinks that the light rays are different and distinct from the sun, to him the light rays have a distinct reality. If one thinks that a bracelet made of gold is a bracelet, to him it is indeed a bracelet, and not gold.

But if one realises that the light rays are non-different from the sun, his understanding is said to be unmodified (nirvikalpa). If one realises that the waves are non-different from the ocean, his understanding is said to be unmodified (nirvikalpa). If one realises that the bracelet is non-different from gold, his understanding is said to be unmodified (nirvikalpa).

He who sees the display of sparks, does not realise that it is but fire. His mind experiences joy and sorrow, as these sparks fly up and scatter on the ground. If he sees that the sparks are but fire and non-different from it, he sees only fire, and his understanding is said to be unmodified (nirvikalpa).

He who is thus established in the nirvikalpa is indeed a great one. His understanding does not diminish. He has attained whatever is worth attaining. His heart does not get enmeshed in the objects. Hence, O Rama, abandon this perception of diversity or objectification, and remain established in consciousness.

Whatever the self contemplates, is materialised on account of the inherent power in the consciousness. That materialised thought then shines as if independent! Thus, whatever the mind (which is endowed with the faculty of thought) contemplates, materialises instantly. This is the origin of diversity. Hence, this world-appearance is neither real nor unreal. **Even as sentient beings create and experience diverse objects in their own day-dreams, this world-appearance is the day-dream of Brahman.** When it is realised as Brahman, then the world-appearance is dissolved. For, from the absolute point of view, this world is non-existent. Brahman remains as Brahman, and it does not create something which was not already in existence!

O Rama, whatever you do, know that it is nothing but pure consciousness. Brahman alone is manifest here as all this, for naught else exists. There is no scope for 'this' and the 'other'. Therefore, abandon even the concepts of liberation and bondage. Remain in the pure, egoless state, engaging yourself in natural activity.

section VI.1 - chapter 115

sarvah sankah parityajya dhairyamalambya sasvatam mahabhoktta mahakarta
mahatyagi bhava 'nagha (9)

Vasistha continued:

Give up all your doubts. Resort to moral courage. Be a supreme doer of actions, supreme enjoyer of delight, and supreme renouncer of all! Such a triple discipline was taught in days of yore by lord Siva to Bhrngisa, by which the latter attained total freedom. Bhrngisa was a man of ordinary or traditional self-knowledge. He approached lord Siva 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 Siva 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 (great doer of actions) who is freed of doubts, and performs appropriate actions in natural situations, whether they be regarded as dharma (right) or adharma (wrong), without being swayed by likes and dislikes, by success and failure, without ego-sense 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 of all things).

He is a mahabhoktta (great enjoyer) 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 (great renouncer) 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 realised '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 Siva instruct Bhrngisa, who then became enlightened. Adopt this attitude, O Rama, and transcend sorrow.

section VI.1 - chapter 116 117

bhavabhavaviruddho 'pi vicitro 'pi mahanapi na 'nandaya na khedaya satam
samsrtivibhramah (116/10)

Rama asked:

Lord, you know all the truths. When the ego-sense is dissolved in the mind, by what signs does one recognise 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 ego-sense 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 enquiry into the nature of the self (Who am I?) and of the world (What is this world?) and of the truth (What is truth?).

Your own ancestor, Ikshvaku, even while he was ruling his kingdom, reflected within himself one day:

"What may be the origin of this world which is full of diverse sufferings - old age, death, pain and pleasure and delusion?"

He could not arrive at an answer. So, after having duly worshipped his father Manu, the son of Brahma, he asked him:

"Lord, your own will prompts me to place a problem before you. What is the origin of this world? How can I be free from this samsara?"

Manu replied:

"What you see here does not exist, my son, none of it! Nor is there anything which is unseen, and which is beyond the mind and the senses. There is but the self which is eternal, and infinite. What is seen as the universe is but a reflection in that self. On account of the energy inherent in the cosmic consciousness, that reflection is seen here as the cosmos, and elsewhere as living beings. That is what you call the world. There is neither bondage nor liberation. The one infinite consciousness alone exists, neither one nor many! Abandon all thought of bondage and liberation, and rest in peace."

section VI.1 - chapter 118-120

samsthapya sankalpapakalankamukttam cittam tvmatmanyupasantakalpah spande
'pyasamspondamiveha tistha svasthah sukhi rajyamidam prasadhi (118/18)

Manu continued:

It is when pure consciousness gives rise to concepts and notions within itself that it assumes an individuality (jiva). Such individuals wander in this samsara (world-appearance). In an eclipse what was unseen earlier is seen; even so it is possible to perceive through the individual's experiences the pure experiencing which is the infinite consciousness. But this self-knowledge is not gained by study of scriptures, or with the help of a guru. It can only be gained by the self for itself.

Regard your body and senses as instruments for experiencing, not as self. The notion 'I am the body' is bondage; the seeker should avoid it. 'I am no-thing but pure consciousness' - such understanding, when it is sustained, is conducive to liberation. It is only when one does not realise the self which is free from old age, death, etc., that one wails aloud, "Alas, I am dead or I am helpless". It is by such thoughts that ignorance is fortified. **Free your mind from such impure thoughts and notions. Rest in the self, free from such notions. Though engaged in diverse activities, remain established in a state of perfect equilibrium, and rule this kingdom in peace and joy.**

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 realise 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 enquiry 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 which is known as turiya (the transcendental) is itself liberation; in it there is perfect equanimity and purity. Beyond this (still the seventh state) is the turiyatita, which is beyond description. The first three states are 'waking' states. The fourth is the dream state. The fifth is the deep sleep state because it is full of bliss. The sixth is the turiya or the non-dual consciousness. The seventh is indescribable. One who has reached this is established in pure being devoid of subject-object division. He is not eager to die nor to live. He is one with all. He is free from individuation.

section VI.1 - chapter 120-122

varnadharmasramacarasastrayantranayonjhitah nirgacchati jagajjalatpanjaradiva
kesari (122/2)

Manu continued:

The liberated sage may be one who has formally renounced the world, or he may live a householder's life. But, knowing 'I do nothing', he grieves not. Knowing that 'I am untouched and my mind is uncoloured and freed from all conditioning, I am pure and infinite consciousness', he grieves not. Freed from notions of 'I' and 'the other', the enlightened one does not grieve. Wherever he is and in whatever society, he knows that all that is, is as it is, and does not grieve. He knows that all the directions are filled with the radiance of the self, which is eternal. It is indeed on account of ignorant self-limitation that one experiences joy and sorrow in alternating circumstances. When such ignorant self-limitation is either weakened or destroyed, there is neither excitement nor grief. That action which proceeds from such weakened vasana or conditioning is non-action, whose seeds do not germinate! He performs his actions merely with the limbs of the body, but with his mind and heart at rest in supreme peace.

All other faculties that one acquires perish when not repeatedly used. But this self-knowledge, once acquired, grows day by day.

Individuality (jivahood) exists only as long as desire for pleasure lasts. Even this desire is born of ignorance! When self-knowledge arises, desire drops away, and with it the self abandons the notion of individuality and realises its infinite nature. They who entertain such notions as 'This is mine' and 'I am this', fall into the pit of ignorance. They who have abandoned such notions with their heart and mind, ascend higher and higher. Behold the self-luminous self which pervades everything. The very moment that this omnipresence of consciousness is realised, one crosses the ocean of samsara.

Know that whatever is done by Brahma, Visnu, etc., is done by you. Whatever is seen at any time, all that is the self or the infinite consciousness. You are that infinite consciousness. With what can that be compared? You are neither the void nor non-void, neither consciousness nor unconsciousness, neither the self nor another! Rest in this knowledge. There is neither a place called liberation nor another! When the ego-sense dies, ignorance perishes, and that is known as liberation.

He who has attained this self-knowledge **goes beyond the caste system and the regulations concerning the orders of life, and the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions, even as the lion breaks out of its cage.** His actions are not motivated and are non-volitional. Hence, he is not tainted by their merit. He is beyond praise and censure. He does not worship nor receive worship. He is not agitated by others; he does not agitate others. He alone is fit to be worshipped, glorified and saluted. Not by rites and rituals, but by the worship of such sages alone does one attain wisdom.

section VI.1 - chapter 123 124

etavadeva khalu lingamalingamurteh samsantasamsrticirabhramanirvrtasya
tajjnasya yanmadanakopavisadamoha lobhapadamanudinam nipunam tanutvam (123/6)

Vasistha continued:

Thus instructed by Manu, Ikshvaku attained enlightenment. Adopt such an attitude, O Rama.

Rama asked:

If such be the nature of the enlightened person, what is so extraordinary and wonderful in it?

Vasistha continued:

On the other hand, what is so extraordinary and wonderful about the attainment of psychic powers, like the ability to fly in the air? The nature of the ignorant is the absence of equanimity. The characteristic of the enlightened one is purity of mind and absence of craving. **The enlightened one is not characterised by characteristics. He is devoid of confusion and delusion. Samsara has come to an end. And lust, anger, grief, delusion, greed, and such disastrous qualities are greatly weakened in him.**

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.

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.

All these notions exist in the mind. Subdue the mind, by the mind. Purify the mind, by the mind. Destroy the mind, by the mind. Expert washermen wash dirt with dirt. A thorn is removed by another thorn. Poison antidotes poison. The jiva has three forms, the dense, the subtle, and the supreme. The physical body is the dense form. The mind, with its notions and limitations, is the subtle body. Abandon these two, and resort to the supreme which is the reality-pure, unmodified consciousness. This is the cosmic being. Remain established in it, having firmly rejected the former two.

section VI.1 - chapter 124 125

nirvanavannirmanah ksinacittah prasantadhih atmanyeva 'ssva santatma
mukandhavadiropamah (125/4)

Rama asked:

Pray, describe the state of turiya which runs through the waking, dream, and deep sleep states, without being recognised.

Vasistha continued:

That pure and equanimous state which is devoid of ego-sense and non-ego-sense, of the real and the unreal, and which is free, is known as turiya (the fourth state). It is the state of the liberated sage. It is the unbroken witness consciousness. It is different from the waking and the dreaming states which are characterised by movement of thought. It is different from the deep sleep state, which is characterised by inertia and ignorance. When the ego-sense is abandoned, there arises the state of perfect equilibrium, in which the turiya manifests itself.

I shall narrate a parable, hearing which you will become enlightened, even if you are already enlightened! In a certain forest, there was a great sage.

Seeing this extraordinary sage, a hunter approached him and asked him: "O sage, a deer which had been wounded by my arrow came this way. Tell me which way it went." The sage replied: "We are holy men who dwell in the forest, and our nature is peace. We are devoid of ego-sense. The egosense and the mind which make the activities of the senses possible have come to a rest. I do not know what are known as waking, dream, and deep sleep. I remain established in the turiya. In it there is no object to be seen!" The hunter could not grasp the meaning of the sage's words. He went his way.

Hence, I tell you, O Rama, there is naught but the turiya. The turiya is unmodified consciousness, and that alone exists. Waking, dream, and sleep are states of the mind. When they cease, the mind dies. Satva alone remains - which the yogis aspire to reach.

This is the conclusion of all scriptures: there is no avidya (ignorance) and no maya (illusion) in reality Brahman alone exists. Some call it the void, others pure consciousness, others the Lord; and they argue among themselves. Abandon all these notions. **Rest in nirvana without movement of thought, with the mind greatly 'weakened', and the intelligence at peace. Rest in the self, as you are deaf, dumb and blind.** Inwardly abandon everything; externally engage yourself in appropriate action. The existence of the mind alone is happiness, the existence of the mind alone is unhappiness. By remaining unaware of the mind, let all these cease. Remain unaffected by what is attractive and what is unattractive. By just this much of self-effort, this samsara is overcome! By remaining unaware of pleasure and pain, and of even that which lies between the two, you rise above sorrow. Just by this little self-effort, you attain the infinite.

section VI.1 - chapter 126

yatah kutascidaniya jnasastranyaveksate evam vicaravanyah syat
samsarottaranam prati (13)

Rama asked:

How does one tread the seven states of yoga, and what are the characteristics of these seven states?

Vasistha continued:

Man is either world-accepting (pravrtta) or world-negating (nivrtta). The former questions, "What is all this liberation? For me this samsara and life in it are better", and engages himself in the performance of his worldly duties. After very many births, he gains wisdom. He realises that the activities of the world are a meaningless repetition, and does not wish to waste his life in them. He thinks, "What is the meaning of all this? Let me retire from them." He is considered nivrtta.

"How shall I cultivate dispassion and thus cross this ocean of samsara?", thus he enquires constantly. Day by day, this thought itself generates dispassion in him, and there arise peace and joy in his heart. He is disinterested in the activities of the marketplace, but engages himself in meritorious activities. He is afraid to sin. His speech is appropriate to the occasion, soft, truthful, and sweet. He has set his foot on the first yoga-bhumika (state of yoga). He is devoted to the service of holy ones. **He gathers scriptures whenever and wherever he finds them and studies them. His constant quest is the crossing of the ocean of samsara.** He alone is a seeker. Others are selfish.

He then enters the second state of yoga known as vicara - enquiry. He eagerly resorts to the company of holy ones who are well versed in the scriptures, and in spiritual practices. He knows what is to be done, and what is not to be done. He abandons evils like vanity, jealousy, delusion, and greed. From the preceptors, he learns all the secrets of yoga.

Easily thereafter he graduates to the third state of yoga known as asamsanga, non-attachment, or freedom. He roams the forests in seclusion, and strives to quieten the mind. Adherence to the scriptures and to virtuous conduct bestows upon him the faculty of seeing the truth. This non-attachment or freedom is of two types, the ordinary and the superior. One who practises the first type of freedom feels, "I am neither the doer, nor the enjoyer, neither do I afflict others, nor am I afflicted by others. All this happens on account of past karma, under the aegis of god. I do nothing, whether there is pain or pleasure, good fortune or calamity. All these, as also meeting and parting, psychic distress and physical illness, are brought about by time alone." Thus thinking, he investigates the truth. He is practising ordinary non-attachment or freedom.

section VI.1 - chapter 126

samsarambunidheh pare sare paramakarane naham kartesvarah karta karma va prakrtam mama (32)

Vasistha continued:

By the diligent practice of this yogic method, by resorting to the company of the holy ones, and the avoidance of evil company, the truth is clearly revealed. **When thus one realises the supreme, which is the only essence or truth beyond this ocean of samsara, he realises "I am not the doer, but God alone is the doer, not even in the past did I do anything."** He abandons vain and meaningless words and remains inwardly and mentally silent. This is superior non-attachment or freedom. He has abandoned all dependency, above and below, within and without, tangible and intangible, sentient and insentient. He shines like supportless and limitless space itself. This is superior freedom. In it, he enjoys peace and contentment, virtue and purity, wisdom and self-enquiry.

The first stage of yoga presents itself to one by accidental coincidence, as it were, after one has led a pure life full of virtuous deeds. One who sets his foot on it, should cherish it, and protect it with great zeal, diligence, and effort. Thus he should proceed to the next state, enquiry. By diligently practising enquiry, he should ascend to the third state, freedom.

Rama asked:

How is it possible for an ignorant person, born in a wicked family, and who does not enjoy the company of holy ones, to cross this ocean of samsara? Also, if one dies while yet in the first or the second or the third state of yoga, what happens to him?

Vasistha said:

After very many lives, the ignorant man is awakened by accidental coincidence. Till then he experiences this samsara. When dispassion arises in his heart, then samsara recedes. Even an imperfect practice of this yoga destroys the effects of past sins. If one leaves the body during the practice, he ascends to heaven, and is then born in circumstances favourable to the pursuit of his practice. Very soon he ascends the ladder of yoga again.

These three states are known as 'waking state', because in them there is division in consciousness. However, the practitioner becomes an adorable person (arya). Seeing him, the ignorant are inspired. He who engages himself in righteous actions, and avoids evil, is adorable (arya). This adorable holiness is in a seed state in the first state of yoga, it sprouts in the second, and attains fruition in the third. One who dies after thus having gained the status of an adorable one (arya), and who has obviously cultivated noble thoughts, enjoys the delights of heaven for a long time, and then he is born as a yogi. By the diligent practice of the first three states of yoga, ignorance is destroyed, and the light of wisdom arises in one's heart.

section VI.1 - chapter 126

etavaneva samsara idamastviti yanmanah asya tupasamo moksa ityevam
jnanasangraha (85)

Vasistha continued:

In the fourth state of yoga, the yogis behold the one in all, with a mind that is free from division. Division has ceased, and unity is steady, and therefore they behold the world as if it were a dream.

In the fifth state, only the undivided reality remains. Hence, it is likened to deep sleep. He who has reached this state, though he is engaged in diverse external activities, rests in himself.

After thus proceeding from one state to another, he reaches the sixth, which is the turiya. In this, he realises, "I am neither real nor unreal, nor even egoless. I am beyond duality and unity. All doubts are at rest." He remains like a painting of a lamp (hence, though he has not reached nirvana - lamp without fuel - he is like a lamp without fuel as the lamp is only a painted figure). He is void within, void without, void like an empty vessel. At the same time he is full within and full without, like a full vessel immersed in the sea.

They who reach the seventh state are known as "the disembodied liberated beings". Their state is not for words to describe. Yet, they have been described variously.

They who practise these seven states, do not come to grief. But there is a terrible elephant roaming in a forest, working havoc. If that elephant is killed, then man attains success in all these seven states, not otherwise. Desire is that elephant. It roams in the forest known as the body. It is maddened by sensuousness. It is restless with conditioning and tendencies (vasana). This elephant destroys everybody in this world. It is known by different names - desire, vasana (tendency or mental conditioning), mind, thought, feeling, attachment, etc. It should be slain by the weapon known as courage or determination born of the realisation of oneness.

Only as long as one believes in objective existence does desire arise! **This alone is samsara: the feeling 'This is'. Its cessation is liberation (moksa). 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.

section VI.1 - chapter 127

balanprati vivarto 'yam brahmanah sakalam jagat avivartitamanandamasthitah
krtinah sada (28)

Valmiki said to Bharadvaja:

Having heard this quintessence of the highest wisdom, and having been overwhelmed by sakti-pata, Rama remained immersed in the ocean of bliss for a while. He had ceased to ask questions, request answers, and endeavour 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.

There is no division in consciousness which can be called the world. Rid yourself of the notion of division by the practice of the secrets revealed to you. Both waking and sleep states are parts of this creation. Enlightenment is characterised by the pure inner light. This creation emerges from nothing, it dissolves in nothing, its very nature is void, it does not exist. On account of beginningless and false self-limitation, this creation appears to exist, creating countless confusions. You are deluded because you do not recollect repeatedly and frequently the truth concerning the infinite consciousness, but you partake of the poison of self-limitation, and the consequent psychological conditioning.

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 for ever in the truth which does not even appear to be different.**

section VI.1 - chapter 127

devadvijaguru sraddhabhara bandhuracetasm sadagamapramananam mahesanugraho
bhavet (58)

Valmiki continued:

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.

However, on account of various reasons, confusion arises. In order to overcome this, worship the Lord who is the preceptor of the whole universe. Your evil karmas have not fallen away from you; but they have become the noose with which you are bound. Till your mind becomes no-mind (satva), adopt the adoration of name and form. After that you will be established in the contemplation of the absolute. Then behold, even for an instant, the inner self with the self, in the inner light.

The supreme is attained by one who, through self-effort and right actions, has earned the grace of the Lord. Past habits and tendencies are very strong. Hence, mere self-effort is inadequate. Even the gods are unable to defy the inevitable (fate). Everyone is subject to this world order (niyati) which is beyond thought and expression.

But the spiritual hero should firmly believe that even after several incarnations, enlightenment is certain. By evil actions, one is bound to this samsara, and by right actions, one is liberated! By the present right action the effects of past evil actions are weakened. If you surrender all your actions to Brahman, you will never again whirl on this wheel of samsara.

Behold, ignorant people in this world are made to play different roles in this world by the director, Time! Time creates, preserves, and destroys. Why do you become agitated by the loss of wealth, etc., and why do you yourself begin to dance? 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.**

Bharadvaja said: Lord, I have known all that there is to be known. I know that there is no greater friend than dispassion (vairagya), and no greater enemy than samsara. I wish to hear from you the very essence of the teachings of the holy sage Vasistha.

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

section VI.1 - chapter 128

namarupavinirmukttam yasmin samtisthate jagat tamahuh prakrtim kecinmiyameke
pare tvanun (21)

Valmiki continued:

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 (viral). After this, rest in the unmanifest, and then in the supreme cause of all.

This is how all these factors return to their source. The physical body (the flesh, etc.) is earthy, so returns to the earth. Blood, etc., are liquid, and they return to water-element. The fire (heat) and the light in the body belong to the fire-element, they return to it. The air is offered to the cosmic air. Space merges in space.

Similarly, the senses return to their source: the sense of hearing to space, the sense of touch to air, the sense of sight to the sun, the sense of taste to water. The life-breath is returned to air, the power of speech to fire, the hands to Indra, the power of locomotion to Visnu, the reproductive organ to Kasyapa, the excretory organ to Mitra, the mind to the moon, and the buddhi to Brahman - for these are the deities presiding over the respective organs which were not created by oneself (the 'I'). Thus having returned them all to their source, see yourself as the cosmic being (virat). The Lord who, as hermaphrodite (consciousness-energy), dwells in the heart of the universe, is its support.

In this universe earth, water, fire, air, and space, are each of them twice the magnitude of the preceding one. Dissolve the earth in water, water in fire, fire in air, and air in space. Space should be merged in the cosmic space, which is the cause for all. Remaining there for an instant in his subtle body, the yogi should feel that 'I am the self of all', having abandoned all self-limitation. **That in which this universe rests, and which is devoid of name and form, is known as prakrti (nature) by some, as Maya (illusion) by others, and as sub-atom by others.** It is also known as avidya (ignorance). All of them are confused by polemics. In this, all things exist in their unmanifest state, without any relationship among them. They arise from it and exist as such during the world-cycle. Ether, air, fire, water, and earth - this is the order of creation. Dissolution takes place in the reverse order. By the abandonment of the three states (waking, dream and sleep), the turiya is attained. In meditation, even the subtle body is merged in the supreme.

section VI.1 - chapter 128

yatha trnadikam ksiptam rumayam lavanam bhavet acetanam jagannyastam caitanye
cetanibhavet (30)

Bharadvaja said:

Lord, I am now free from the subtle body, and I am swimming in the ocean of bliss. I am the indivisible self, which is the supreme self, and which itself possesses the two powers of consciousness and unconsciousness. Just as fire thrown into fire becomes indistinguishably fire, **just as straw etc., which are thrown into the sea become salt, this insentient world, when it is offered into the infinite consciousness, becomes one with it.** Just as a salt doll thrown into the sea abandons its name and form and becomes one with the ocean, just as water mixes with water and ghee mixes with ghee, even so have I entered into this infinite consciousness.

'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 materialise, 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:

Dear friend, if you wish that this delusion known as samsara should come to an end, then give up all actions, and become a lover of Brahman.

Bharadvaja said:

O guru, your enlightening discourse has completely awakened me, my intelligence is pure, and the world-appearance does not stretch out in front of me. I wish to know what the men of self-knowledge do. Do they have any duties or none at all?

Valmiki said:

They who desire liberation should engage themselves only in such actions which are free from defects, and desist from selfish and sinful actions. When the qualities of the mind are abandoned, it takes on the qualities of the infinite. The jiva is liberated when one contemplates, 'I am that which is beyond the body, mind and senses', when one is free from notions of 'I am the doer' and 'I am the enjoyer', as also from notions of pain and pleasure, when one realises that all beings are in the self and the self is in all beings, when one abandons the waking, dream, and deep sleep states, and remains in the transcendental consciousness. That is the state of bliss which is infinite consciousness. Immerse yourself in that ocean of nectar which is full of peace; do not drown in diversity.

Thus have I narrated to you the discourse of the sage Vasistha. Steady your mind by practice. Tread the path of wisdom and of yoga. You will realise everything.

section VI.1 - chapter 128

darsanatsparsanacchabdatkrpaya sisyadehake janayedyah samavesam sambhavam sa
hi desikah (61)

Valmiki continued:

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 sakti-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.** However, the intelligence of the disciple is awakened when the disciple has rid himself of threefold impurities, and thereby acquired a keen intellect. But, O sage, please bring Rama back to body-consciousness, for he has still many things to do for the welfare of the three worlds and of myself."

All the assembled sages and others bowed to Rama.

Then Vasistha said to Visvamitra:

"Pray, tell them who Rama is in truth."

Visvamitra said to them:

"Rama is the supreme personality of godhead. He is the creator, protector and redeemer. He is the Lord and the friend of all. He is manifest variously, sometimes as a fully enlightened being, sometimes as if ignorant. In truth, he is the god of gods, and all the gods are but his part-manifestations. Blessed is this king Dasaratha, whose son is lord Rama himself. Blessed is Ravana, whose head will fall at the hands of Rama. O sage Vasistha, kindly bring him back to body-consciousness."

Vasistha said to Rama:

"O Rama, this is not the time to rest! Get up and bring joy to the world. When people are still in bondage, it is not proper for the yogi to merge in the self." Rama remained oblivious of these words. Vasistha thereupon entered the heart of Rama through the latter's susumna-nadi. There was movement of prana in Rama, and the mind began to function. The jiva, which is of the form of inner light, shed its lustre on all the nadis of the body. Rama slightly opened his eyes, and beheld Vasistha in front of him. Rama said to Vasistha: "There is nothing I should do or should not do. However, your words should always be honoured." Saying so, Rama placed his head at the sage's feet and then proclaimed: "Listen all of you! There is nothing superior to self-knowledge, nothing superior to the guru."

All the assembled sages and celestials showered flowers on Rama and blessed him. They departed from the assembly.

Thus have I told you the story of Rama, O Bharadvaja. By the practice of this yoga, attain supreme bliss. He who constantly listens to this dialogue between Rama and Vasistha, is liberated, whatever be the circumstances of his life, and attains knowledge of Brahman.