

**The Supreme Yoga**  
a new translation of  
**Yoga Vasistha**

5 . Upasama Prakaranam

Section dealing with Dissolution

Swami Venkatesananda



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(IN TWO VOLUMES)

**Swami Venkatesananda**

## 5 - Upasama Prakaranam

Section dealing with Dissolution

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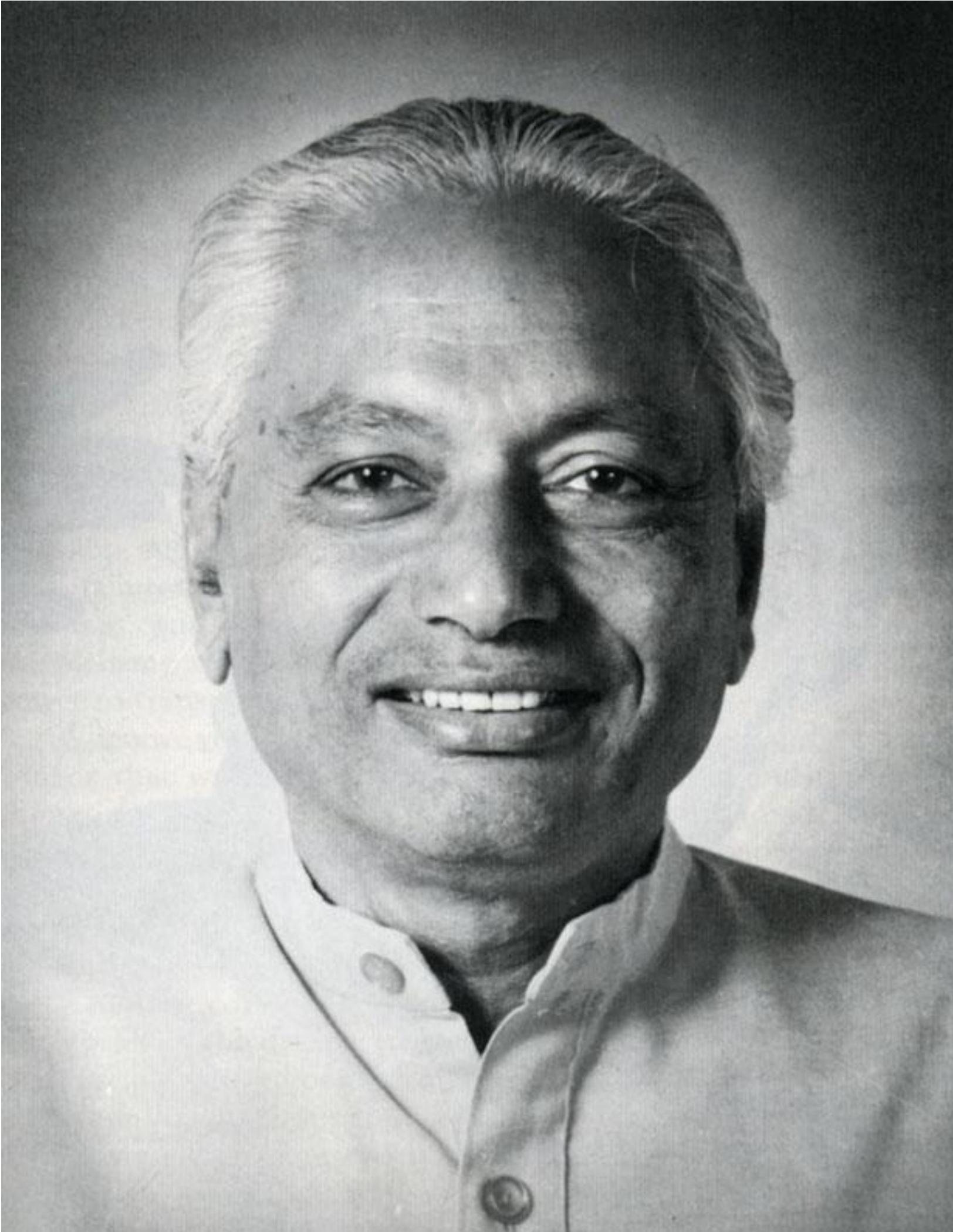
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This publication is dedicated to my Gurudev Swami Sivananda. His life was a symphony whose constant refrain was: "In all conditions I am Knowledge - Bliss Absolute." Sage Vasishtha incarnated as Swami Sivananda to embody the Supreme Yoga. In Gurudev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

Deekatsa

I. VAIRAGYA PRAKARANAM  
Section Dealing with Dispassion

II. MUMUKSU VYAVAHARA PRAKARANAM  
The Behavior of the Seeker

1. The Story of Suka
2. Self-effort

III. UTPATTI PRAKARANAM  
Section Dealing with Creation.

1. The Story of Lila
2. The Story of Karkati
3. The Story of the Sons of Indu (Ten Young Men)
4. The Story of Ahalya
5. The Story of the Great Forest
6. The Story of the Three Non-existent Princes
7. The Story of Lavana

IV. STHITI PRAKARANAM  
Section Dealing with Existence

1. The Story Of Sukra
2. The Story of Dama, Vyala and Kata
3. The Story of Bhima, Bhasa and Drdha
4. The Story of Dasura
5. Kaca's Song

**V. UPASAMA PRAKARANAM**  
**Section Dealing with Dissolution**

- 1. The Story of King Janaka**
- 2. The Story of Punya and Pavana**
- 3. The Story of Bali**
- 4. The Story of Prahlada**
- 5. The Story of Gadhi**
- 6. The Story of Uddalaka**
- 7. The Story of Suraghu**
- 8. The Story of Bhasa and Vilasa**
- 9. The Story of Vitahavya**

VI. NIRVANA PRAKARANAM  
Section Dealing with Liberation

1. Description of Brahman - Discourse on Brahman
2. The Story of Bhusunda
3. Description of the Lord
4. Deva-Puja (Worship of God)
5. The Story of the Wood-apple
6. The Story of the Rock (The Nature of Consciousness)
7. The Story of Arjuna
8. The Story of the Hundred Rudri
9. The Story of the Vampire
10. The Story of Bhagiratha
11. The Story of Sikhidhvaja and Cudala
12. The Story of the Philosopher's Stone
13. The Story of the Cintamani
14. The Story of the Foolish Elephant
15. The Story of Kaca
16. The Story of the Deluded Man
17. The Story of Bhrngisa
18. The Story of Iksvaku

19. The World Within the Rock (The Story of Kalaratri)
20. The Story of the Sage From Outer Space
21. The Story of Vipascit
22. The Story of the Hunter and the Deer
23. The Story of Kundadanta
24. The Seven Steps of Wisdom
25. The Seven States of Yoga

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 jnaptatmane 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 V - chapter 1 2

bhogas tyaktum na sakyante tat tyagena vina vayam prabhavamo na vipadam aho sankatam agatam (2/21)

Valmiki said:

The people (including the gods, demi-gods, and sages, and the members of the royal court) listened to sage Vasistha 's words of wisdom with total attention. The emperor Dasaratha and his ministers had for the time being abandoned their royal preoccupations and pleasures, intent on absorbing the teachings of the sage. At noon, the conches gave the timesignal, and the assembly rose for the midday interval. In the evening, the congregation was given leave to retire for the day. And, as the kings and the princes rose to leave the court, their dazzling ornaments illumined it. The court itself appeared to be a miniature universe.

When the assembly had thus dispersed, the king Dasaratha duly worshipped the sages and received their blessings. After this, Vasistha gave leave to the princes, Rama and his brothers, to retire for the day. They too, fell at the sage's feet, and received his blessings.

When night fell, all except Rama retired to bed. But, Rama could not sleep.

Rama contemplated the illuminating words of the sage Vasistha thus:

What is this world-appearance? Who are all these different kinds of people and other beings? How do they appear here, from where do they come, and where do they go? What is the nature of the mind and how does it attain quiescence? How did this Maya (cosmic illusion) arise in the first place, and how does it come to an end? Again, is such an end to this illusion desirable or undesirable? How has limitation entered into the infinite self ?

What exactly are the means that the sage Vasistha has prescribed for the conquest of the senses and the mind? They are surely the sources of sorrow. **It is impossible to abandon enjoyment of pleasure, and it is not possible to end sorrow without abandoning such enjoyment. This indeed is a problem.** But, since the mind is the crucial factor in all this, surely if the mind once tastes the supreme peace, freed of all world-illusion, it will not abandon that and run after sense-pleasure.

Oh, when will my mind be pure, and when will it rest in the supreme being? When will my mind rest in the infinite, even as a wave is reabsorbed in the ocean? When will I be free of all craving? When will I be blessed with equal vision? When will I be rid of this terrible fever of worldliness?

O mind, will you really remain firmly established in the wisdom revealed by the great sages? O my intellect, you are my friend. Contemplate the teachings of sage Vasistha in such a way that we shall both be saved from the miseries of this worldly existence.

## section V - chapter 3 4

yad yad raghava samyati mahajana saparyaya dinam tad iha salokam sesastv  
andha dinalayah (4/12)

Valmiki continued:

When the day dawned, Rama and the others got up, and performed their morning religious functions, and went over to the residence of the sage Vasistha. The sage himself had by then concluded his own dawn prayers, and was in deep meditation. When he rose, he and the others ascended a chariot, and drove to the palace of king Dasaratha. As they entered the royal court, the king walked three paces to receive them with due honour. Soon after this, all the other members of the assembly (the gods, the demi-gods, the sages, and others) entered the assembly, and took up their respective places.

Opening the day's proceedings, Dasaratha said:

O blessed Lord, I hope you have thoroughly recovered from the strain of yesterday's discourse. For our part, we feel highly elevated by the words of supreme wisdom that you uttered yesterday. Surely, the words of enlightened sages dispel the sorrows of all beings and bestow bliss upon them. They drive away the impurities caused in us by our own evil deeds. The evil tendencies like craving, greed, etc., are weakened by your wisdom. Our deluded belief in the reality of this world-appearance is also provided with a powerful challenge.

**O Rama, only that day on which such sages are worshipped can be regarded as fruitful. The other days are of darkness.** This is your best opportunity: enquire and learn from the sage that which is worth learning.

Vasistha said:

O Rama, have you deeply contemplated the teachings I have communicated to you? Did you reflect over them during the night and have you inscribed them on the tablet of your heart? Do you remember that I said to you that the mind is man? Do you remember what I said about the creation of this universe in all its details? For it is only by frequent remembrance of such teachings that they attain clarity.

Rama said:

Lord, I have indeed done just that. Giving up sleep, I have spent the whole night meditating upon your enlightening words, endeavouring to see the truth that the words pointed to. Thus have I enshrined that truth in my heart. Who will not bear your teachings on his head, knowing that they confer the highest bliss on him? At the same time, they are extremely sweet to hear, they promote every type of auspiciousness, and they bring us the incomparable experience.

Hence, O Lord, I pray: resume your most excellent discourse.

## section V - chapter 5

he jana aparijnata atma vo dukhasiddhaye parijnatastv anantaya  
sukhayopasamaya ca (23)

Vasistha said:

O Rama, kindly listen to this discourse on the dissolution of the universe and the attainment of supreme peace.

This seemingly unending world-appearance is sustained by impure (rajasa) and dull (tamasa) beings, even as a superstructure is sustained by pillars. But, it is playfully and easily abandoned by those who are of a pure nature, even as the slough is effortlessly abandoned by a snake. They who are of a pure (satva) nature, and they whose activities (rajas) are based on purity and light (satva), do not live their life mechanically, but enquire into the origin and the nature of this world-appearance. When such enquiry is conducted with the help of the right study of scriptures, and the company of holy ones, there arises a clear understanding within oneself, in which the truth is seen, as in the light of a lamp. Not until this truth is perceived, by oneself, for oneself, through such enquiry, is the truth seen truly. O Rama, you are indeed of a pure nature. Therefore, enquire into the nature of the truth and the falsehood, and be devoted to the truth. That which was not in the beginning, and which will cease to be after a time, how can that be regarded as truth? That alone can be regarded as the truth which has always been and which will always be.

Birth is of the mind, O Rama; and growth is mental, too. And, when the truth is clearly seen, it is mind that is liberated from its own ignorance. Hence, let the mind be led along the path of righteousness, by the prior study of the scriptures, company of the holy ones, and the cultivation of dispassion. Equipped with these, one should resort to the feet of a master (guru) whose wisdom is perfected. By faithfully adhering to the teachings of the master, one gradually attains to the plane of total purity.

Rama, behold the self by the self through pure enquiry, even as the cool moon perceives the entire space. One is tossed around over the waters of this illusory world-appearance like a piece of straw, only as long as one does not get into the secure boat of self-enquiry. Even as particles of sand floating in water settle down when the water is absolutely steady, the mind of the man who has gained the knowledge of the truth settles down in total peace. Once this knowledge of the truth is gained, it is not lost. Even if a piece of gold has lain in a heap of ashes, the goldsmith finds no problem in seeing it. When the truth has not been known, there may be confusion. But once it is known, there can be no confusion. **Ignorance of the self is the cause of your sorrow; knowledge of the self leads to delight and tranquility.**

## section V - chapter 5

yatha rajobhir gaganam yatha kamalam ambubhih na lipyate hi samslistair  
dehair atma tathaiva ca (31)

Vasistha continued:

Resolve the confusion between the body and the self, and you will be at peace at once. Even as a nugget of gold fallen into mud is never spoiled by the mud, the self is untainted by the body. I repeat, with uplifted arms I proclaim, "The self is one thing, and the body is another, even as the water and the lotus", but no one listens to me! As long as the inert and insentient mind pursues the path of pleasure, so long this darkness of world-illusion cannot be dispelled. But, the moment one awakens from this, and enquires into the nature of the self, this darkness is dispelled at once. Hence, one should constantly endeavour to awaken the mind, which dwells in the body, in order that one may go beyond the process of becoming - for such becoming is fraught with sorrow.

**Even as the sky is not affected by the dust-particles floating in it, the self is unaffected by the body.** Pleasure and pain are falsely imagine to be experienced by oneself, even as one falsely thinks that 'the sky is polluted by dust' . In fact, pleasure and pain are neither of the body nor of the self which transcends everything; they belong only to ignorance. Their loss is no loss. Neither pleasure nor pain belong to anyone. All indeed is the self, which is supreme peace and infinite. Realise this, O Rama.

The self and the world are neither identical nor are they different (dual). All this is but the reflection of the truth. Nothing but the one Brahman exists. 'I am different from this' is pure fancy; give it up, O Rama. The one self perceives itself within itself as the infinite consciousness. Therefore, there is no sorrow, no delusion, no birth (creation), nor creature; whatever is, is. Be free from distress, O Rama. Be free of duality; remain firmly established in the self, abandoning even concern for your own welfare. Be at peace within, with a steady mind. Let there be no sorrow in your mind. Rest in the inner silence. Remain alone, without selfwilled thoughts. Be brave, having conquered the mind and the senses. Be desireless, content with what comes to you unsought. Live effortlessly, without grabbing or giving up anything. Be free from all mental perversions and from the blinding taint of illusion. Rest content in your own self. Thus, be free from all distress. Remain in an expansive state in the self, like the full ocean. Rejoice in the self by the self, like the blissful rays of the full moon.

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## section V - chapter 6 7

kecittvakarmani rata virats api karmanah narakannarakam yanti duhkhad duhkham  
bhayadbhayam (6/3)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, he who knows that all the activities merely happen because of the mere existence of consciousness - even as a crystal reflects the objects around it without intending to do so - is liberated. They who, even after taking this human birth, are not interested in such non-volitional activity, go from heaven to hell, and from hell to heaven again.

Some there are who are devoted to inaction, having turned away from or suppressed all action. They go from hell to hell, from sorrow to sorrow, from fear to fear. Some are bound by their tendencies and intentions to the fruits of their own actions; and they take birth as worms and vermin, then as trees and plants, then as worms and vermin again. Others there are who know the self; blessed indeed are they. They have carefully enquired into the nature of the mind and overcome all cravings: they go to higher planes of consciousness.

He who has taken birth for the last time now, is endowed with a mixture of light (satva) and a little impurity (rajas). Right from birth he grows in holiness. The nobler type of knowledge enters into him with ease. All the noble qualities like friendliness, compassion, wisdom, goodness, and magnanimity, seek him, and take their abode in him. He performs all appropriate actions, but is not swayed if their results appear to be gain or loss, nor does he feel elated or depressed. His heart is clear. He is much sought after by the people.

Such a one, who is full of all the noble qualities, seeks and follows an enlightened master, who directs him along the path of self-knowledge. He then realises the self, which is the one cosmic being. Such a liberated one awakens the inner intelligence, which has been asleep so far. And, this awakened intelligence instantly knows itself to be the infinite consciousness. Becoming constantly aware of the inner light, such a blessed one instantly ascends into the utterly pure state.

Such is the normal course of evolution, O Rama. However, there are exceptions to this rule. In the case of those who have taken birth in this world, two possibilities exist for the attainment of liberation. The first is: treading the path indicated by the master, the seeker gradually reaches the goal of liberation. The second is: self-knowledge literally drops into one's lap, as it were, and there is instant enlightenment.

I shall narrate to you an ancient legend which illustrates the second type of enlightenment. Please listen.

## section V - chapter 8

upasamasukhamaharet pavitram sasamavatah samameti sadhucetah prasamitamanasah  
svake svarupe bhavati sukhe sthithiruttama ciraya (8/18)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, there is a great monarch whose vision is unlimited, who rules over the Videha territory; he is known as Janaka. To those who seek his aid, he is a cornucopia. In his very presence, the heart-lotuses of his friends blossom; he is like unto a sun for them. He is a great benefactor to all good people.

One day, he went to a pleasure-garden where he roamed freely. While he was thus roaming, he heard the inspiring words uttered by certain holy, perfected ones.

Thus did the perfected sages sing:

We contemplate that self which reveals itself as the pure experience of bliss when the seer (the experiences) comes into contact with the object (the experience), without a division or conceptualisation.

We contemplate the self in which the objects are reflected non-volitionally, once the divided experience (predicate) of subject-object and the intention or volition that created this division have all ceased.

We contemplate that light that illumines all that shines, the self that transcends the twin concepts of 'is' and 'is not', and which therefore 'is' 'in the middle' of the two sides, as it were.

We contemplate that reality in which everything exists, to which everything belongs, from which everything has emerged, which is the cause of everything, and which is everything.

We contemplate the self which is the very basis of all language and expression, being the alpha and the omega, which covers the entire field from 'a' to 'ha', and which is indicated by the word 'aham' ('I').

Alas, people run after other objects, foolishly giving up the Lord who dwells in the cave of one's own heart. He who, having known the worthlessness of the objects, still remains bound at heart to them, is not a human being!

One should strike down every craving with the rod of wisdom, whether that craving has arisen or is about to rise in the heart.

**One should enjoy the delight that flows from peace. The man whose mind is well-controlled, is firmly established in peace. When the heart is thus established in peace, there arise the pure bliss of the self without delay.**

## section V - chapter 9

arajjureva baddho ham apanko smi kalankitah patito smyuparistho pi ha  
mamatman hata sthitih (16)

Vasistha continued:

Having heard the words of the sages, king Janaka became terribly depressed. With the utmost expedition, he retraced his steps to the palace. Quickly dismissing all his attendants, he sought the seclusion of his own chamber.

In a mood of intense anguish, King Janaka said to himself:

Alas, alas, I am helplessly swinging like a stone in this world of misery. What is the duration of a life-span in eternity; yet, I have developed a love for it! Fie on the mind. What is sovereignty even during a whole life-time? Yet, like a fool, I think I cannot do without it! This lifespan of mine is but a trivial moment - eternity stretches before and after it. How shall I cherish it now?

Ah, who is that magician who has spread this illusion called the world, and thus deluded me? How is it that I am so deluded? Realising that what is near and what is far is all in my mind, I shall give up the apprehension of all external objects. Knowing that all the busyness in this world leads only to endless suffering, what hope shall I cherish for happiness? Day after day, month after month, year after year, moment after moment, I see happiness comes to me bearing sorrow, and sorrow comes to me again and again!

Whatever is seen or experienced here is subject to change and destruction. There is nothing whatsoever in this world which the wise would rely on. They who are exalted today are trodden under foot tomorrow. O foolish mind, what shall we trust in this world?

**Alas, I am bound without a cord; I am tainted without impurity; I am fallen, though remaining at the top. O my self, what a mystery!** Even as the ever-brunt sun suddenly faces a cloud floating in front of him, I find this strange delusion mysteriously floating towards me. Who are these friends and relatives, what are these pleasures? Even as a boy seeing a ghost is frightened, I am deluded by these fanciful relatives. Knowing all such relatives as cords that bind me to this old age, death, etc., I still cling to them. Let these relatives continue or perish; what is it to me? Great events and great men have come and gone, leaving just a memory behind; on what shall one place reliance even now? Even the gods and the trinity have come and gone a million times; what is permanent in this universe? It is vain hope that binds one to this nightmare known as worldappearance. Fie on this wretched condition.

## section V - chapter 9

kakataliyayogena sampannayam jagatsthitau dhurtena kalpita vyartham  
heyopadeyabhavana (49)

King Janaka continued:

I am like an ignorant fool, deluded by the goblin known as the ego-sense which creates the false feeling "I am so-and-so". Knowing full well that Time has trampled under foot countless gods and trinities, I still entertain love for life. Days and nights are spent in vain cravings, but not in the experience of the bliss of infinite consciousness. I have gone from sorrow to greater sorrow, but dispassion does not arise in me.

What shall I regard as excellent or desirable, seeing that whatever one cherished in this world has passed away, leaving one miserable. Day by day, people in this world grow in sin and violence, hence day by day they experience greater sorrow. Childhood is wasted in ignorance, youth is wasted in lusting after pleasures, and the rest of one's life is spent in family worries. What does a stupid person achieve in this life?

Even if one performs great religious rites, one may go to heaven - nothing more. What is heaven, is it on earth or in the netherworld, and is there a place which is untouched by affliction? Sorrow brings happiness, and happiness brings sorrow on its shoulders! The pores of the earth are filled by the dead bodies of beings; hence it looks solid!

There are beings in this universe whose winking is of the duration of an epoch. What is my life-span in comparison? Of course, there appear to be delightful and enduring objects in this world, but they bring with them endless worries and anxieties! Prosperity is truly adversity, and adversity may be desirable depending upon the effect upon the mind. Mind alone is the seed for this delusion of world-appearance. It is the mind that gives rise to the false sense of 'I' and 'mine'.

**In this world which appears to have been created, even as the fruit of cocoanut-palm might appear to have been dislodged by a crow which coincidentally happens to alight on the tree at that moment, sheer ignorance generates feelings like 'this I should have' and 'this I should reject'. It is better to spend one's time in seclusion or in hell, than to live in this world-appearance.**

Intention or motivation alone is the seed for this world-appearance. I shall dry up this motivation! I have enjoyed and suffered all kinds of experiences. Now I shall rest. I shall not grieve any more. I have been awakened. I shall slay this thief (the mind) who has stolen my wisdom. I have been well instructed by the sages. Now I shall seek self-knowledge.

## section V - chapter 10

sthite manasi niskame same vigataranjane kayavayavajau karyau spandaspandau  
phale samau (28)

Vasistha continued:

Seeing the king thus seated engrossed in deep contemplation, his bodyguard respectfully approached him and said: "Lord, it is time to consider your royal duties. Your Majesty's handmaiden awaits your pleasure, having prepared your perfumed bath. The holy priests await your arrival in the bath chamber, to commence the chanting of the appropriate hymns. Lord, arise, and let what has to be done be done. For, noble men are never unpunctual or negligent."

But the king ignored the bodyguard's words, and continued to muse:

What shall I do with this court and the royal duties, when I know that all these are ephemeral? They are useless to me. I shall renounce all activities and duties, and I shall remain immersed in the bliss of the self.

O mind, abandon your craving for sense-pleasures, so that you may be rid of the miseries of repeated old age and death. Whatever be the condition in which you hope to enjoy happiness, that very condition proves to be the source of unhappiness! Enough of this sinful, conditioned, pleasure-seeking life. Seek the delight that is natural and inherent in you.

Seeing that the king was silent, the bodyguard became silent, too.

The King once again said to himself:

What shall I seek to gain in this universe. On what eternal truth in this universe shall I rest with confidence? What difference does it make if I am engaged in ceaseless activity or if I remain idle? Nothing in this world is truly enduring in any case. Whether active or idle, this body is impermanent and ever-changing. When the intelligence is rooted in equanimity, what is lost and how?

I do not long for what I do not have, nor do I desire to abandon what has come to me unsought. I am firmly established in the self; let what is mine be mine! There is nothing that I should work for, nor is there any meaning in inaction. Whatever is gained by action or by inaction is false. **When the mind is thus established in desirelessness when it does not seek pleasure, when the body and its limbs perform their natural functions, action and inaction are of equal value or meaning.** Hence, let the body engage itself in its natural functions. Without such activity, the body will disintegrate. When the mind ceases to entertain the notions 'I do this' 'I enjoy this' in regard to the actions thus performed, action becomes non-action.

## section V - chapter 11

citta cancala samsara atmano na sukhaya te samamehi samac chantam sukham  
saram avapyate (5)

Vasistha continued:

Reflecting thus, king Janaka rose from his seat, as the sun rises in the horizon, and began to engage himself in the royal duties, without any attachment to them. Having abandoned all concepts of the desirable and the undesirable, freed from all psychological conditioning and intention, he engaged himself in spontaneous and appropriate action - as if in deep sleep, though wide awake. He performed the day's tasks, including the adoration of the holy ones; and, at the conclusion of the day, he retired to his own seclusion, to spend the night in deep meditation, which was easy and natural to him. His mind had naturally turned away from all confusion and delusion, and had become firmly established in equanimity. And, when he rose in the morning,

King Janaka thus reflected in his own mind:

**O unsteady mind! This worldly life is not conducive to your true happiness. Hence, reach the state of equanimity. It is in such equanimity that you will experience peace, bliss and the truth.** Whenever you create perverse thinking in yourself, out of your wantonness, it is then that this world illusion begins to expand and spread out. It is when you entertain desire for pleasure that this world-illusion sprouts countless branches. It is thought that gives rise to this network of world-appearance. Hence, abandon this whim and fancy, and attain to equanimity. Weigh in the balance of your wisdom, the sense pleasures on one side, and the bliss of peace on the other. Whatever you determine to be the truth, seek that. Give up all hopes and expectations, and freed from the wish to seek or to abandon, roam about freely. Let this world-appearance be real or unreal, let it arise or set. But, do not let its merits and demerits disturb your equanimity. For, at no time do you have a real relationship with this world-appearance. It is only because of your ignorance that such a relationship has appeared in you. O mind, you are false, and this world-appearance is also false. Hence, there is a mysterious relationship between you two - like the relationship between the barren woman and her son. If you think that you are real and that the world is unreal, how can a valid relationship exist between the two? On the other hand, if both are real, where then is the justification for exultation and sorrow? Hence, abandon sorrow, and resort to deep contemplation. There is naught here in this world which can lead you to the state of fullness. Hence, resolutely take refuge in courage and endurance, and overcome your own waywardness.

## section V - chapter 12

anamrstavikalpamsus cidatma vigatamayah udiyaya hrdakase tasya vyomniva  
bhaskarah (6)

Vasistha continued:

Having reached the understanding already described, Janaka functioned as the king, and did all that was necessary, without getting befuddled, and with a great strength of mind and spirit. His mind was not distracted by royal pleasures. In fact, he moved about as if he were continually in a state of deep sleep.

From then on, he was interested neither in accumulating nor in rejecting anything. Without any doubt or confusion, he lived in the present. His wisdom was uninterrupted, and his intelligence did not become clouded again by impurities. **The light of self-knowledge (cid-atma) arose in his heart, free from the least taint of impurity and sorrow, even as the sun rises on the horizon.** He beheld everything in the universe as existing in cosmic power (cid-sakti). Endowed with self-knowledge, he saw all things in the self, which is infinite. Knowing that all that happens, happens naturally, he neither experienced elation nor suffered depression, and remained in unbroken equanimity. Janaka had become a liberated one while still living (jivan-mukta).

Janaka continued to rule the kingdom, without his self-knowledge setting or rising again on account of the influence of the evil or the good prevalent around him. Remaining for ever in the consciousness of the infinite, he experienced the state of non-action, even though he appeared to others to be ever busy in diverse actions. All his tendencies and intentions had ceased to be. Hence, though he appeared to be active, he was really in a state of deep sleep all the time.

He did not brood over the past, nor did he worry over the future. He lived in the present moment, smiling happily all the time.

Janaka attained whatever he did by dint of his own enquiry. Similarly, one should pursue the enquiry into the nature of truth till one reaches the very limits of such enquiry. Self-knowledge or knowledge of truth is not had by resorting to a guru (preceptor), nor by the study of scripture, nor by good works. It is attained only by means of enquiry inspired by the company of wise and holy men. One's inner light alone is the means, naught else. When this inner light is kept alive, it is not affected by the darkness of inertia.

## section V - chapter 12

prajñayeha jagat sarvam samyageva n̄ga dr̄syate samyag darsanamayanti na pado  
na ca sampadah (38)

Vasistha continued:

Whatever sorrows there may be that seem to be difficult to overcome, are easily crossed over with the help of the boat of wisdom (the inner light). He who is devoid of this wisdom is bothered even by minor difficulties. But, he who has this wisdom, even if he is alone and helpless in this world, and even if he is unlearned in the scriptures, easily crosses the sea of sorrow. Even without the help of another, the man of wisdom accomplishes his work. He who is without wisdom does not - nay, even his capital is lost. Hence, one should constantly endeavour to gain this inner light or wisdom, even as one who aspires for fruits exerts constant effort in his garden. Wisdom is the root which, when thus constantly nourished, yields the good fruits of self-knowledge.

The effort and the energy that are directed by the people in worldly activities should first be directed to the gaining of this wisdom. One should first destroy the dullness of wit, which is the source of all sorrow and calamities, and which is the seed for this huge tree of world-appearance. And, whatever is gained in heaven or in the netherworld or by empires here, is gained by wisdom here and now. By wisdom is this ocean of worldappearance crossed over, not by charity, nor by pilgrimage, nor by austerities. Those men who are endowed with divine virtues here, gained them through wisdom. Even kings have gained their throne through wisdom. Wisdom is surely the path to heaven, as well as to supreme good or liberation.

It is by wisdom alone that a meek scholar wins in a contest against a powerful adversary. Wisdom or the inner light is like the legendary precious stone, O Rama, which bestows on its owner whatever he wishes to have. He who has this wisdom, reaches the other shore of this world-illusion easily. He who does not have this wisdom, drowns in world-illusion. When one's intelligence and understanding are properly guided by this inner light, one reaches the other shore; if not, one is overcome by obstacles.

Defects, desires, and evils, do not even approach that man of wisdom whose mind is undeluded. **Through wisdom (in the inner light), the entire world is clearly seen as it is. Neither good fortune, nor misfortune, even approach one who has such clear vision.** Even as the dense dark cloud that veils the sun is dispersed by wind, the darkness of ego-sense, which veils the self, is dispelled by wisdom (inner light). He who seeks to be established in the highest state of consciousness, should first purify his mind by the cultivation of wisdom, or by the kindling of the inner light, even as one who desires foodgrains tills the field.

## section V - chapter 13

ayameva hamityasmin sankoce vilayam gate anantabhuvanavyapi vistara upajayate  
(15)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, thus do enquire into the nature of the self, even as Janaka did. Then you will reach, without any obstacle whatsoever, that realm of the knowers of what is to be known. Again and again, one should overcome the enemies known as the senses; and then the self attains self-satisfaction by its own endeavour. When thus the infinite self is realised, sorrow comes to an end, even the seeds of delusion are destroyed, the shower of misfortunes ceases, and the perception of evil ends. Hence, O Rama, be like Janaka, and realise the self in the inner light. Be an excellent person.

If one engages oneself in constant self-enquiry, and sees the ever-changing nature of the world, in due time, one will attain self-knowledge like Janaka. Neither god, nor rites and rituals (or any action), nor wealth, nor relatives, are of any use in this. To those who are afraid of the world-illusion, self-effort as self-enquiry alone is capable of bringing about self-knowledge. Pray, do not follow the teachings of those deluded ones who depend upon gods, various rites, and routine actions, and such other perverse practices. This ocean of world-appearance can be crossed only when you are firmly established in supreme wisdom, when you see the self with the self alone, and when your intelligence is not diverted or coloured by sense-perceptions.

Thus have I narrated to you how king Janaka attained self-knowledge, as if by an act of grace which caused the knowledge to drop from heaven, as it were. One who cultivates the wisdom that Janaka had, will experience the inner light in his own heart, and the ignorant fancy of world-illusion will be instantly dispelled. **When the limited and conditioned feeling "I am so-and-so" ceases, there arises consciousness of the all-pervading infinite.** Hence, O Rama, like Janaka, you too abandon the false and fanciful notion of the ego-sense within your own heart. When this ego-sense is dispelled, the supreme light of self-knowledge will surely shine in your heart. This ego-sense alone is the densest form of darkness. When it is dispelled, the inner light shines by itself. He who knows 'I am not', 'Nor does the other exist', 'Nor is there non-existence', and whose mental activity has thus come to a standstill, is not engrossed in acquisitiveness. O Rama, there is no bondage here other than craving for acquisition, and the anxiety to avoid what one considers undesirable. Do not succumb to such anxiety, and do not let acquisition of what is considered desirable be your goal. Giving up both these attitudes, rest in what remains.

## section V - chapter 13

dhavamanam adhobhage cittam pratyahared balat pratyaharena patitam adho  
variva setuna (30)

Vasistha continued:

They in whom the twin-urges of acquisition and rejection have come to an end, do not desire anything, nor do they renounce anything. The mind does not reach the state of utter tranquillity till these two impulses (of acquisition and of rejection) have been eliminated. Even so, as long as one feels 'this is real' and 'this is unreal', the mind does not experience peace and equilibrium. How can equanimity, purity, or dispassion, arise in the mind of one who is swayed by thoughts of 'this is right', 'this is wrong' 'this is gain', 'this is loss'? When there is only one Brahman (which is forever one and the many), what can be said to be right and what wrong? As long as the mind is swayed by thoughts of the desirable and the undesirable, there cannot be equanimity.

Desirelessness (absence of all expectations), fearlessness, unchanging steadiness, equanimity, wisdom, non-attachment, non-action, goodness, total absence of perversion, courage, endurance, friendliness, intelligence, contentment, gentleness, pleasant speech - all these qualities are natural to one who is free from the instincts of acquisition and rejection; and even those qualities are non-intentional and spontaneous.

**One should restrain the mind from flowing downward, even as the flow of a river is blocked by the construction of a dam.** After having firmly abandoned all contact with external objects, turn the mind within, and reflect over everything within yourself, even while engaged in various activities. With the help of this sharp sword of wisdom, cut through this net-work of conditioning (which throws up cravings, intentions, motivations, acceptance and rejection), which alone is the cause of this stream of world-appearance.

Cut down the mind with the mind itself. Having reached the state of purity, remain established in it right now. Cut the mind down with the mind, and dismiss the thought of the mind which thus negates the mind; thus will you have finally destroyed the world-appearance. When thus the world appearance has been eliminated, delusion will not arise again, and the mind will not create the world-appearance again either. Though appearing to function in this world, be firmly rooted in the awareness of the unreality of all this, and thus give up all hopes and expectations. Rooted in equanimity, doing whatever happens to be the appropriate action in each given situation, and not even thinking about what has thus befallen you unsought, live a non-volitional life here. Even as the Lord may be said to be both the doer and the non-doer of all actions here, you, too, live non-volitionally - doing yet not doing what has to be done.

## section V - chapter 13

cetyena rahita yaisa cit tad brahma sanatanam cetyena sahita yaisa cit seyam  
kalanocyate (53)

Vasistha continued:

You are the knower of all, the self. You are the unborn being, you are the supreme Lord; you are non-different from the self which pervades everything. He who has abandoned the idea that there is an object of perception which is other than the self, is not subjected to the defects born of joy and grief. He is known as a yogi who is freed from attraction and aversion, to whom a clod of earth and a nugget of gold are of equal value and importance, and who has given up all the tendencies which confirm the world-appearance. Whatever he does, whatever he enjoys, whatever he gives and whatever he destroys, his consciousness is free and therefore equanimous in pain and pleasure. Doing whatever has to be done without the division into the desirable and the undesirable, he who engages himself in action does not drown in it.

He who is confirmed in his conviction that the infinite consciousness alone exists, is instantly freed from thoughts of pleasure and is therefore tranquil and self-controlled. The mind is by nature inert: it borrows intelligence from the consciousness which it pursues in order to gain the ability to experience. The mind thus comes into contact with whatever has been brought into being by the power or energy of consciousness (cit-sakti). Thus, the mind exists by the grace of consciousness, as it were; and it entertains various thoughts on account of its perception of this universe. The consciousness alone is its light: otherwise, how does the inert mind function intelligently?

They who are well versed in the scriptures declare that the fictitious movement of energy in consciousness is known as the mind. And, the expressions of the mind (like the hissing of the snake) are known as thoughts or ideas. **Consciousness minus conceptualisation is the eternal Brahman the absolute; consciousness plus conceptualisation is thought.** A small part of it, as it were, is seated in the heart as the reality. This is known as the finite intelligence or individualised consciousness. However, this limited consciousness soon 'forgot' its own essential conscious nature and continued to be, but inert. It then became the thinking faculty with reception and rejection as its inherent tendencies. In fact, it is the infinite consciousness alone that has become all this: but until it awakes to its infinite nature, it does not know itself in self-knowledge. Hence, the mind should be awakened by means of enquiry based on scriptures, dispassion and control of the senses. This intelligence when it is thus awakened shines as Brahman the absolute; or else it continues to experience this finite world.

## section V - chapter 13

yatha silamayi kanya codita pi na nrtyati tatheyam kalana dehe na kincid  
avabudhyate (65)

Vasistha continued:

When this inner intelligence is not awakened, it does not really know or understand anything: and what appears to be known through the thoughts is of course not the reality. These thoughts themselves derive their value from consciousness, even as a receptacle derives its scent from the incense kept in it. On account of this borrowed intelligence thought is able to know a minute fragmented fraction of this cosmic consciousness. The mind blossoms fully only when the light of the infinite shines upon it.

Otherwise, **though appearing to be intelligent thought is unable to comprehend anything really even as the granite figure of a dancer does not dance even when requested to do so.** Can a battle-scene painted on a canvas generate the roar of the fighting armies? Can a corpse get up and run? Does the figure of the sun carved on a rock dispel darkness? Similarly, what can the inert mind do? Even as the mirage appears to be flowing water only when the sun shines, the mind appears to be intelligent and active only because of the inner light of consciousness.

Ignorant people misconstrue the movement of life-force to be the mind: but in fact it is nothing more than the prana or life-force. But, in the case of those whose intelligence is not fragmented or conditioned by thoughts, it is surely the radiance of the supreme being or self. The intelligence that identifies itself with certain movements of life-force in the self (by entertaining notions of 'this am I', 'this is mine') is known as the jiva or the living soul. Intelligence, mind, jiva, etc., are names which are used even by wise men: such entities are not real, however, from the absolute point of view. In truth, there is no mind, no intelligence, no embodied being: the self alone exists at all times. The self alone is the world; the self alone is time and also the evolutionary process. Because it is extremely subtle it seems not to exist, though it exists. While appearing to be a reflection or appearance, it is also realised to be the truth: but the self is beyond all these descriptions and its truth can only be experienced directly in selfknowledge.

When the inner light begins to shine, the mind ceases to be - even as when there is light, darkness vanishes. On the other hand, when consciousness is objectified in an effort to experience the objects of the senses, the self is forgotten, as it were, and there arise thoughts concerning the creatures of the mind.

## section V - chapter 13

pranasaktau niruddhuyam mano ruma viliyate dravyacchaya nu tad dravyam  
pranarupam hi manasam (83)

Vasistha continued:

A thought arising in the supreme being is known as individual consciousness; when this consciousness is freed from thought and individuation, there is liberation. The seed or the sole cause for this world-appearance is but the arising of a thought in the infinite consciousness, which gave rise to the limited finite individual consciousness. When consciousness thus moved away from its utterly quiescent state and became tainted, as it were, from thought, the thinking faculty arose and, with it, the mind thought of the universe.

**O Rama, by the control of the life-force the mind is also restrained: even as the shadow ceases when the substance is removed the mind ceases when the life-force is restrained.** It is because of the movement of the life-force that one remembers the experiences one had elsewhere; it is known as mind because it thus experiences movements of life-force. The life-force is restrained by the following means: by dispassion, by the practice of pranayama (breath-control) or by the practice of enquiry into the cause of the movement of the life-force, by the ending of sorrow through intelligent means and by the direct knowledge or experience of the supreme truth.

It is possible for the mind to assume the existence of intelligence in a stone. But the mind does not possess the least intelligence. Movement belongs to the life-force which is inert: intelligence or the power of consciousness belongs to the self which is pure and eternally omnipresent. It is the mind that fancies a relationship between these two factors: but such fancy is false and hence all knowledge that arises from this false relationship is also false. This is known as ignorance, as Maya or cosmic illusion, which gives rise to the dreadful poison known as world-appearance.

This relationship between the life-force and consciousness is imaginary; if it is not so imagined, there can be no world-appearance! The life-force, by its association with consciousness becomes conscious and experiences the world as its object. But all this is as unreal as the experience of a ghost by a child: the movement within the infinite consciousness alone is the truth. Can this infinite consciousness be affected by any finite factor? In other words, can an inferior entity overwhelm a superior one? Hence, O Rama, in truth there is no mind or finite consciousness: when this truth is clearly understood, that which was falsely imagined as the mind comes to an end. It appeared to be because of imperfect understanding; when this misunderstanding ceases, the mind also ceases to be.

## section V - chapter 13

jadatvan nihsvaṛupatvat sarvadaiva mrtam manah mrtena maryate lokas citreyaṃ  
maurkhyacakrika (100)

Vasistha continued:

**This mind is inert and is not a real entity: hence it is for ever dead! Yet beings in this world are killed by his dead thing: how mysterious is this stupidity!** The mind has no self, no body, no support and no form; yet, by this mind is everything consumed in this world. This indeed is a great mystery. He who says that he is destroyed by the mind which has no substantiality at all, says in effect that his head was smashed by the lotus-petal. To say that one can be hurt by the mind which is inert, dumb and blind is like saying that one is roasted by the heat of the full moon. The hero who is able to destroy a real enemy standing in front of him is himself destroyed by this mind which does not even exist.

What is the power of that which has been put together by thought, whose very existence is false and which is found to be non-existent when its existence is enquired into?

Stupidity and ignorance alone are the sources of all sorrow in this world; this creation has been brought about only by ignorance and stupidity. In spite of knowing this, it is indeed strange that this unreal and false non-entity is sought to be strengthened by living beings.

This world-illusion can be compared to the imagination of the hero who thinks that he is bound by the invisible chains that issue from the eyes of his enemy and that he is harassed by the invisible army created by the mere thought of the enemy. This world thus conjured up by the non-existent mind is also destroyed by another equally non-existent mind. This illusory world-appearance is none other than the mind. He who is unable to understand the true nature of the mind is also unfit for being instructed in the truth expounded in the scripture. The mind of such a person is unable to grasp the subtle truth of the teaching expounded in this scripture: it seems to be satisfied with the illusory world-appearance. Such a mind is full of fear: it is afraid of the melodious sound of the veena and it is even afraid of a sleeping relative. It is frightened by hearing someone shout aloud and flees that spot. The ignorant man is completely overcome by his own deluded mind.

A man is burnt by his own mind which is in his heart, which is as virulent as poison though it is mixed with just a little happiness. He does not know the truth, for, he is foolishly deluded by the mind! This indeed is a great mystery.

## section V - chapter 14

na pasyatyvea yo thyartam tasya kah khalu durmatih vicitramanjaricitram  
samdardsayati kananam (3)

Vasistha continued:

My teachings are not meant for those, O Rama, whose intelligence has been silenced by a firm faith in the reality of this illusory world and the consequent striving for the pleasures of this world. **What foolish man will endeavour to show a colourful forest to one who refuses to see?** Who will strive to educate that man, whose nose has been eaten away by leprosy, in the delicate art of distinguishing different perfumes? Who will instruct the drunkard in the subtleties of metaphysics? Who will make enquiries concerning village affairs from a corpse lying in the crematorium: and if a fool does just this, who can dissuade him from such foolish attempt? Even so, who can instruct that ignorant person who finds it difficult to govern the mind which is dumb and blind?

In fact the mind does not exist: and hence, rest assured that it has all the time been conquered. He who finds it difficult to overcome the non-existent mind suffers from the effects of poison he has not taken. The wise man sees the self all the time; and he knows that all movement arises from the movement of the life-force; he knows, too, that the senses perform their respective functions. What then is known as the mind? All motion belongs to life-force and all consciousness belongs to the self, and the senses have each their own power: which is the one that binds them all together? All these are indeed aspects of the one infinite omnipotent consciousness: diversity is a word without substance. How does even the idea of diversity arise in you?

What indeed is the jiva (individual soul) but a word which has befuddled the intelligence of people? Even the finite or individualised consciousness is an unreal fancy: what can it do! Seeing the fate of the ignorant people who are suffering because the mind that they have fancied into existence veils the truth which alone exists, I am filled with pity.

In this world fools are born only to suffer and perish. Every day millions upon millions of animals are killed throughout the world; every day millions upon millions of mosquitoes are killed by the wind; every day in the oceans the big fish eat the small ones - what is there to grieve? The stronger animal kills and eats the weaker animal in this world; from the smallest ant to the greatest of divinities, all are subject to birth and death. Every moment countless beings die and countless others are born, totally regardless of whether people like it or not, whether they rejoice or grieve. Hence, it were wiser neither to grieve nor to rejoice over the inevitable!

## section V - chapter 14

atmano jagatasca ntar drastr drsya dasantare darsanakhye svam atmanam sarvada  
bhavayan bhava (50)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, he who comes forward to remove the sorrow of people of perverted intelligence is endeavouring to cover the sky with a small umbrella. They who behave like beasts cannot be instructed, for they are being led like animals by the rope of their own mind. Indeed, even stones shed tears looking at those ignorant people who sink in the mire of their own mind, whose actions spell their own doom. Hence, the wise man does not attempt to teach those who have not overcome their own mind and are therefore miserable in every way. On the other hand, the wise do endeavour to remove the sorrow of those who have conquered their mind and who are therefore ripe to undertake self-enquiry.

The mind is not, O Rama: do not unnecessarily imagine its existence. If you imagine its existence then it destroys you, like a ghost. As long as you have forgotten your self, so long does this imaginary mind exist. Now that you have realised that the mind waxes large by the continued affirmation of its existence, abandon such thinking.

When objectivity arises in your consciousness, the latter becomes conditioned and limited: that is bondage. When objectivity is abandoned, you become mind-less: that is liberation. Coming into contact with the qualities of nature is conducive to bondage; abandoning them is the road to liberation. Knowing this do whatever you please. Realising 'I am not' and 'this is not' remain firm and unmoved, like the infinite space. Abandon the impure thought which creates a duality of self-world. **In the middle between the self as the seer and the world as the seen, you are the seeing (sight): always remain in this realisation.** Between the experiencer and the experience you are the experiencing: knowing this remain in selfknowledge.

When, abandoning this self you think of an object, then you become the mind (subject) and thus become the subject of unhappiness. That intelligence which is other than self-knowledge is what constitutes the mind: that is the root of sorrow. When it is realised that 'All this is but the self' there is no mind, no subject, no object and no thinking. When you think 'I am the jiva' etc. the mind arises and with it sorrow. When you know 'I am the self, the jiva and such other things do not exist', the mind ceases to be and there is supreme bliss. In the light of the truth that 'All this universe is the self alone', the mind does not exist. Only so long as this serpent of mind is in the body is there fear; when it is removed by the practice of yoga, where is the cause for fear?

## section V - chapter 15

adrnyaiva tti mamsasthirudhiradi sarirakat manobilavilinaisa trsna vanasuni  
nrnam (8)

Vasistha continued:

When the self, self-forgetfully, identifies itself with the objects seen and experienced and is thus impurified, there arises the poison of craving. This craving intensifies delusion. Gods like Siva, etc., may be able to cope with the fires of cosmic dissolution; but it is impossible for anyone to deal with the consuming fire of craving. Whatever terrible suffering and calamities there are in the world are all the fruits of craving, O Rama. **Remaining unseen and subtle, this craving is yet able to consume the very flesh, bone and blood of the body.** In a moment it seems to subside, the next moment it is in an expanded state. Afflicted by it, man becomes pitiable, weak, lustreless, mean, deluded, miserable and fallen.

When this craving has ceased, one's life-force is pure and all divine qualities and virtues enter one's heart. The river of craving flows only in the heart of the unwise person. Even as an animal falls into a trap (a blind well) on account of its craving for food (the bait), a man following the trail of his craving falls into hell. Even the worst blindness of senility is mild in comparison to the blinding delusion which craving brings about in one's heart in the twinkling of an eye.

Craving makes one cringe and become 'small': even lord Visnu became a dwarf when he decided to beg. Hence, this craving which is the source of all sorrows and which destroys the lives of all beings should be renounced from a great distance.

Yet, it is on account of craving that the sun shines on earth, the wind blows, the mountains stand and the earth upholds living beings; all the three worlds exist only on account of craving. All the beings in the three worlds are bound by the rope of craving. It is possible to break even the strongest rope in this world, but the rope of craving is hard to break.

Therefore, O Rama, give up craving by giving up thinking or conceptualisation. The mind cannot exist without thinking or conceptualisation. First, let the images of 'I', 'you' and 'this' not arise in the mind, for it is because of these images that hopes and expectations come into being. If you can thus refrain from building these images, you will also be counted as a man of wisdom. Craving is non-different from the ego-sense. Ego-sense is the source of all sins. Cut at the very root of this ego-sense with the sword of wisdom of the non-ego. Be free from fear.

## section V - chapter 16

sarvatra vasanatya go rama rajivalocana dvividhah kathyate tajjnair jneyo  
dhyeyas ca manada (6)

Rama said:

Lord, you instruct me to abandon the ego-sense and the craving that it gives rise to. If I abandon the ego-sense, then surely I should also give up this body and all that is based on the ego-sense. For, the body and the life-force rest on the support of the ego-sense. When the root (the ego-sense) is cut, then the tree (the body, etc.) will fall. How is it possible for me to abandon the ego-sense and yet live?

Vasistha replied:

**Rama! The abandonment of all notions, conditioning and conceptualisation is said to be of two kinds: one is based on knowledge or direct realisation and the other is based on contemplation.** I shall describe them to you in detail.

One should become aware of one's deluded notion in which one thinks that 'I belong to these objects of the world and my life depends upon them. I cannot live without them and they cannot exist without me, either.' Then by profound enquiry, one contemplates 'I do not belong to these objects, nor do these objects belong to me'. Thus abandoning the ego-sense through intense contemplation, one should playfully engage oneself in the actions that happen naturally, but with the heart and mind ever cool and tranquil. Such an abandonment of the ego-sense and the conditioning is known as the contemplative egolessness.

When there is knowledge or direct experience of the non-dual truth, one abandons the ego-sense and conditioning, and entertains no feeling of 'This is mine' even with regard to the body - this is known as direct realisation of egolessness.

He is liberated even while living who playfully abandons the ego-sense through the contemplative method. He who uproots this ego-sense completely by the direct experience is established in equanimity: he is liberated. Janaka and others like him follow the contemplative method. Others who have the direct experience of egolessness are one with Brahman and have risen beyond body-consciousness. However, both of them are liberated and both have become one with Brahman.

He is considered a liberated sage who is not swayed by the desirable and the undesirable, who lives in this world and functions though inwardly totally untouched by the world, as if he is in deep sleep.

As the sage Vasistha said this, another day came to an end. The assembly dispersed.

## section V - chapter 17

bhavadvaitam upasritya sattadvaitamayatomakah karmadvaitamanadrtya  
dvaitadvaitamayo bhava (29)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, they who have gone above body-consciousness are beyond description, too: I shall therefore describe to you the nature of those who are liberated while living.

The desire that arises in the course of one's natural functions devoid of craving is that of a liberated sage. But that desire which is bound up with craving for external objects is conducive to bondage. However, when all ego-based notions have ceased in one's heart, the attention that is directed naturally is also the nature of the liberated sage. That which is afflicted by contact with external objects is the craving conducive to bondage; the non-volitional desire which is unaffected by any object is liberation. That desire which existed even before contact with the objects, exists even now and for ever: it is natural, therefore sorrowless and free from impurity. Such a desire is regarded by the wise as free from bondage.

'I want this to be mine'. When such a craving arises in one's heart, it gives rise to impurity. Such a craving should be abandoned by a wise person by all means at all times. Give up the desire that tends to bondage and the desire for liberation too. Remain still like the ocean. Knowing that the self is free from old age and death, let not these disturb your mind. When the whole universe is realised as illusory, craving loses its meaning.

The following four types of feelings arise in the heart of man: (1) I am the body born of my parents, (2) I am the subtle atomic principle, different from the body, (3) I am the eternal principle in all the diverse perishable objects in the world, and (4) the 'I' as also the 'world' are pure void like space. Of these the first is conducive to bondage and the others to freedom. The desires that are related to the first cause bondage; desires that are concomitant to the other three do not cause bondage.

Once the realisation that 'I am the self of all' has arisen, one does not again fall into error or sorrow. It is this self alone which is variously described as the void, nature, Maya, Brahman, consciousness, Siva, Purusa, etc. That alone is ever real; there is naught else.

**Resort to the understanding of non-duality, for the truth is non-dual; however, action involves duality and hence functions in apparent duality - thus, let your nature partake of both duality and non-duality.** The reality is neither duality (for it is the mind that creates division) nor unity (for the concept of unity arises from its antithesis of duality). When these concepts cease, the infinite consciousness alone is realised to be the sole reality.

## section V - chapter 18

vayam tu vaktum murkhanam ajitatmiyacetasam bhogakarddamagnanam na vidmo  
bhimatam matam (13)

Vasistha continued:

The liberated sage who is disinterested in the events of the past, present and future looks at the state of the world with amusement. Constantly engaged in appropriate action, established in the happy medium between two extreme and opposite points of view, he dwells unremittingly rejecting every form of conditioning or intention. He rests in the supreme state of plenitude; hence he is not agitated or excited by the events of this world. In all hostilities he is in the neutral position; yet endowed with compassion and consideration for all, he remains unaffected by the world-appearance. If he is spoken to, he answers simply and suitably; if not spoken to, he is silent; he seeks nothing and he hates nothing. Thus he is not afflicted by the world. He says what is good for all, and when questioned he explains his views convincingly. He knows what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. He is aware of the point of view of other people. He is firmly established in the supreme state; remaining calm and cool in his own heart, he looks at the state of the world amusedly. Such is the state of the sages who have reached liberation while yet living in this world.

**We are unable to expound the philosophy of the fools who have not controlled their own mind and who are immersed in the mire of sense-pleasure.** They are only interested in sexual pleasures and in the acquisition material wealth. We are also unable to expound the path of rituals and routines which bestow all kinds of rewards in the shape of pain and pleasure.

O Rama, live in this world with unlimited vision, having firmly rejected all limitation. Inwardly be free from all desires and hopes; but outwardly do what has to be done. Examine everything and seek only that which is not limited or finite: and, live in this world constantly contemplating the infinite. Without entertaining any hope in your heart, yet living as if you are full of hopes, live in this world with your heart calm and cool, behaving outwardly like everyone else. Inwardly give up all notions of 'I am the doer', yet engage yourself in all activities outwardly. Thus live in this world, O Rama, completely free from the least trace of the ego-sense.

There is no bondage and therefore there is no liberation, in truth. This world-appearance is essentially unreal and is of the nature of a juggler's trick. The omnipresent, infinite self can never be bound; so how is it to be liberated? All this confusion arises on account of the ignorance of the truth: when the truth is known this confusion vanishes, like the imaginary snake in the rope.

## section V - chapter 18

subandhuh kasyacit kah syad iha no kascidapyarih sada sarve ca sarvasya  
sarvam sarvesvarecchaya (49)

Vasistha continued:

You are a wise man, O Rama: be firmly established in egolessness and remain unpolluted like space. When the ego is non-existent, how can notions like 'These are my relatives' arise? The self is not involved in such notions, nor in notions of pleasure and pain, good and evil. Be free from fear and delusion caused by world-appearance. To one who is unborn there are no relatives, or sorrow caused by such relatives!

If you realise that you have been someone before, you are someone now and you will be someone later on, and if you realise that this is true even of all these relatives, you will be free from delusion. If you feel that you were before, you are now, but that you will not be hereafter - even then you need not grieve, for that is the end of this world-appearance. Hence, it is foolish to grieve here in this world; it is better to be happy at all times and to be ever engaged in appropriate actions. However, O Rama, yield neither to exultation nor to sorrow, but remain in a balanced state of mind. You are the eternal infinite light, pure and extremely subtle.

This world-appearance exists; later it will vanish and reappear: but this is only for the ignorant, not for the enlightened. This world-appearance has sorrow for its nature: ignorance expands and aggravates it. But you are wise, O Rama, therefore be happy. Illusory appearance is none other than illusion; dream is none other than a dream! All this is the power of the omnipotent and the appearance is just the appearance.

**Who is a relative here and to whom, and who is an enemy to whom: by the wish of the Lord of all beings, all are all to all at all times!** This river of relationship is flowing on constantly. What is on top proceeds towards the bottom, and what is below rises up, like the cartwheel. They who are in heaven later go to hell; and they who are in hell go to heaven. They go from one species to another, from one part of the universe to another. The brave become cowards and cowards become brave. There is nothing in this universe which is unchanging, O Rama. They who were relatives go away after a while. Friend, foe, relative, stranger, I, you - are words without corresponding substance. 'He is friend' and 'He is not a relative' - such thoughts arise in a mean person: in the magnanimous person such distinction does not arise. O Rama, all beings are your relatives, for in this universe there does not exist absolute unrelatedness. The wise know that 'There is nowhere where I am not' and 'That is not which is not mine': thus they overcome limitation or conditioning.

## section V - chapter 19

kim putra ghanatam sokam nayasyandhyaika karanam baspadhararam ghoram  
pravrtkala iva mbujam (26)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, in this connection there is an ancient legend which I shall narrate to you.

In the continent known as Jambudvipa there is a great mountain known as Mahendra. In the forests on the slopes of that mountain many holy men and sages lived. They had in fact brought down onto that mountain the river Vyoma Ganga (or Akasa Gang) for their bath, drinking, etc. On the bank of this river there lived a holy man named Dirghatapa who was, as his name implies, the very embodiment of ceaseless austerity.

This ascetic had two sons named Punya and Pavana. Of these Punya had reached full enlightenment, but Pavana, though he had overcome ignorance, had not yet reached full enlightenment and hence he had semi-wisdom.

With the inexorable passage of invisible and intangible time, the sage Dirghatapa (who had freed himself from every form of attachment and craving) had grown in age and, even as a bird flies away from its cage, abandoned the body and reached the state of utter purity. Using the yogic method she had learnt from him, his wife, too, followed him.

At this sudden departure of the parents Pavana was sunk in grief and he wailed aloud inconsolably. Punya, on the other hand, performed the funeral ceremonies but remained unmoved by the bereavement. He approached his grieving brother, Pavana.

Punya said:

**Brother, why do you bring this dreadful sorrow upon yourself? The blindness of ignorance alone is the cause of this torrential downpour of tears from your eyes.** Our father has departed from here along with our mother to that state of liberation or the highest state, which is natural to all beings and is the very being of those who have overcome the self. Why do you grieve when they have returned to their own nature? You have ignorantly bound yourself to the notions of 'father' and 'mother'; and yet you grieve for those who are liberated from such ignorance! He was not your father, nor was she your mother, nor were you their son. You have had countless fathers and mothers. They have had countless children. Countless have been your incarnations! And, if you wish to grieve over the death of parents, why do you not grieve for all those countless beings unceasingly?

Noble one, what you see as the world is only an illusory appearance. In truth there are neither friends nor relatives. Hence, there is neither death nor separation. All these wonderful signs of prosperity that you see around you are tricks, some of which last for three days and others for five days! With your keen intelligence enquire into the truth: abandon notions of 'I', 'you' etc., and of 'He is dead', 'He is gone'. All these are your own notions, not truth.

## section V - chapter 20

madhyasthadrstayah svastha yathapraprtartha darsinah tajjnastu presaka eva  
saksidharme vyavasthitah (40)

Punya continued:

These false notions of father, mother, friend, relative, etc., are swept aside by wisdom as dust is swept away by wind. These relatives are not based on truth, they are but words! If one is thought of as a friend, he is a friend; if he is thought of as the other, he is the other! When all this is seen as the one omnipresent being, where is the distinction between the friend and the other?

Brother, enquire within yourself - this body is inert and it is composed of blood, flesh, bones, etc.; what is the 'I' in it? If you thus enquire into the truth, you will realise that there is nothing which is you nor anything which is 'I': what is called Punya or Pavana is but a false notion.

However, if you still think 'I am', then in the incarnations past you have had very many relatives. Why do you not grieve for their death? You had many swan relatives when you were a swan, many tree relatives when you were a tree, many lion-relatives when you were a lion, many fish-relatives when you were a fish. Why do you not weep for them? You were a prince, you were a donkey, you were a peepul tree and then a banyan tree. You were a brahmana, you were a fly and also a mosquito, you were an ant. You were a scorpion for half a year, you were a bee, and now you are my brother. In these many other embodiments you have taken birth again and again countless times.

Even so, I have had very many embodiments. I see them all, and your embodiments too, through my subtle intelligence which is pure and clear-visioned. I was a bird, a crane, a frog, a tree, a camel, a king, a tiger - and now I am your elder brother. For ten years I was an eagle, for five months I was a crocodile and for a hundred years I was a lion: now I am your elder brother. I remember all these and many more embodiments I have passed through in a state of ignorance and delusion. In all these embodiments there were countless relatives. Whom shall I mourn? Considering this, I do not grieve.

All along this path of life relatives are strewn like dry leaves on a forest path. What can be the proper cause for grief or joy in this world, brother? Let us therefore abandon all these ignorant notions and remain in peace. Abandon the notion of the world which arises in your mind as the 'I'. And, be still, neither going up nor falling down! You have no unhappiness, no birth, no father, no mother: you are the self and naught else. **The sages perceive the middle path, they see what is at the moment, they are at peace, they are established in witness consciousness:** they shine like a lamp in darkness, in whose light events happen (without the lamp being involved).

## section V - chapter 21

tasmad asamanantanam trsnanam raghunandana upayastyaga evaiko na nama  
paripalanam (5)

Vasistha continued:

Thus instructed by his brother, Pavana was awakened. Both of them remained as enlightened beings, endowed with wisdom and direct realisation. They roamed the forest doing what they pleased but without blemish. In course of time they abandoned their embodiment and attained final liberation, as a lamp without fuel.

**Craving is the root of all sorrow, O Rama; and the only intelligent way is to renounce all cravings completely and not to indulge them.** Even as fire burns all the more fiercely when fed with fuel, thoughts multiply by thinking: thoughts cease only by the extinction of thinking. Hence, ascend the chariot of non-thinking and with a compassionate and limitless vision behold the worlds sunk in sorrow. Arise, O Rama.

This indeed is the Brahmic state - pure, free from craving and from illness. Attaining this even one who has been a fool is freed from delusion. He who roams the earth with wisdom as his friend and awareness as the female companion, does not become deluded.

There is nothing of value in the three worlds, nothing that one may wish to have which cannot be had by the mind free from craving. They who are cured of the fever of craving do not subject themselves to the successive rise and fall inherent in embodied existence. The mind attains fulfilment only by utter dispassion, not by filling it with desires and hopes. To those who are devoid of any attachment or craving, the three worlds are as wide as the footprint of a calf and a whole world-cycle is but a moment. The coolness of the ice-pack on top of the Himalayas is nothing compared to the coolness of the mind of the sage free from craving. The light of the full moon is not as bright nor is the ocean as full nor the face of the goddess of prosperity as radiant as the mind free from craving.

When all the desires and hopes which are like the branches of the tree of the mind are cut down, the mind resumes its own nature. If you resolutely deny refuge to these hopes and cravings in your mind, then there is no fear for you. When the mind is free from movements of thought (which are motivated by hopes or cravings) then it becomes no-mind: and that is liberation. The thinking that is brought about by hopes and cravings is known as 'vrtti' (movement of thought); when hopes and cravings are given up, there is no vrtti either. When the aggravating cause is removed, the effect ceases to be. Hence, for restoring peace to the mind, remove the disturbing cause, which is hope or craving.

## section V - chapter 22

tameva bhukttavirasam vyaparaughaim punah punah divase divase kurvan prajnah  
kasmanna lajjate (33)

Vasistha continued:

Or, O Rama, bring about a transmutation of the mind even as king Bali did. I shall narrate to you the story of Bali, listening to which you will gain knowledge of the eternal truth.

In another part of the world (jagat) there is what is known as Patala (the netherworld). In it are found extremely beautiful demonesses, strange reptiles with many heads, demons with enormous bodies, huge elephants, places which are heavily polluted and where a terrible 'kata-kata' noise constantly fills the air, caves or deep mines full of precious gems, places which have been hallowed or sanctified by the dust of the divine feet of the sage Kapila (California is regarded by some to be Kapila-aranya, the forest inhabited by Kapila!) and places sanctified by lord Hatakesvara who is adored by celestial damsels.

The demon-king Bali, son of Virocana, ruled over this region. The Lord of the universe, Sri Hari, himself was the protector of this king; hence, even the king of heaven, Indra, adored him. By the heat of the very radiance of this king Bali, the oceans got dried up, as it were. His eyes were so powerful that by a mere look he could move mountains. Bali ruled for a very long time over the netherworld.

In course of time, intense dispassion overcame king Bali and he began to enquire thus:

How long should I rule over this netherworld, how long shall I wander in the three worlds? What shall I gain by ruling over this kingdom? When all that is in the three worlds is subject to destruction, how can one hope to enjoy happiness through all this?

Again and again, **the same disgusting pleasures are experienced and the same acts are repeated day after day in this world: how is it that even a wise man is not ashamed of this?** The same day and the same night, again and again, life in this world revolves like a whirlpool.

Doing all this every day, how can one reach that state in which there is cessation of this repetitive existence? How long should we continue to revolve in this whirlpool and of what use is it?

While he was thus reflecting, he remembered: Ah, I remember what my father Virocana once told me. I had asked him: "Father, what is the destination of this world-appearance or repetitive existence? When will it come to an end? When will the delusion of the mind cease? Gaining what shall one attain total satisfaction, seeing what shall one seek naught else? I see that it is impossible to attain this by means of experience of the worldly pleasures or actions. For, they only aggravate the delusion! Pray, tell me the means by which I shall rest for ever in supreme peace."

## section V - chapter 23

eka eva sti sumahams tatra raja mahadyutih sarvakrt sarvagah saryah sa ca  
tusnim vyavasthitah (6)

Virocana said to Bali:

My son, there is a vast realm, wide enough to engulf the three worlds. In it there are no lakes, no oceans, no mountains, no forests, no rivers, no earth, no sky, no winds, no moon, no gods, no demons, no demi-gods, no vegetation, no heaven, no high and low, no words; not me, nor the gods like Visnu. **Only one is there and that is the supreme light. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, he is all - and he remains silent, as if inactive.** Prompted by him, the king, his minister does everything - what has not been he brings about and what is, he alters. This minister is incapable of enjoying anything, nor does he know anything: though ignorant and insentient he does everything for the sake of his master, the king. The king remains alone, established in peace.

Bali asked:

Father, what is that realm which is free from psychosomatic illnesses? Who is that minister and who is that king? The story is wonderful and unheard-of. Kindly explain all this to me in detail.

Virocana replied:

All the gods and demons put together and even a force many times their strength can not even challenge the minister. He is not Indra the king of the gods, nor the god of death, nor the god of wealth, nor a god nor a demon whom you can easily conquer. Though it is believed that the god Visnu killed the demons, it was indeed this minister who destroyed them. In fact, even the gods like Visnu were overpowered by him and made to take birth here. Cupid derives his power from this minister. Anger derives its power from him, too. It is because of his wish that there is unceasing conflict between good and evil here.

This minister can only be defeated by his own master, the king; by no one else. When in due course of time there arises such a wish in the heart of the king, this minister can be easily defeated. He is the most powerful in all the three worlds; and the three worlds are but his exhalation! If you have the ability to conquer him, then, indeed, you are a hero.

When the minister arises, the three worlds are manifested, even as the lotus blossoms when the sun rises. When he retires, the three worlds become dormant. If you can conquer him, with your mind utterly one-pointed and completely free of delusion and ignorance, then you are a hero. If he is conquered, then all the worlds and everything in them are conquered. If he is not conquered, then nothing is conquered, even if you think you have conquered this or that in this world.

Hence, my son, in order to attain absolute perfection and eternal bliss, strive with all your might and in every possible manner, whatever be the difficulties and obstacles, to conquer that minister.

## section V - chapter 24

visayan prati bhoh putra sarvaneva hi sarvatha anastha parama hyesa sa  
yukttir manaso jaye (17)

Bali asked:

Father, by what effective means can that powerful minister be conquered?

Virocana replied:

Though this minister is almost invincible, my son, I shall tell you how to conquer him. He is overcome in a moment if one grasps him by means of intelligent action; in the absence of such intelligent action, he burns everything, like a venomous snake. One who approaches him intelligently, plays with him as one plays with a child and playfully subdues him; such a one beholds the king and is established in the supreme state. For, once the king is seen, the minister comes completely under one's control; and when the minister is under one's control, the king is seen clearly. Until the king is seen, the minister is not really conquered; and until the minister is conquered, the king is not seen! When the king is not seen, the minister plays havoc and spreads sorrow; when the minister is not conquered, the king remains unseen. Therefore, one's intelligent practice has to be simultaneously twofold: to behold the king and to subdue the minister. By intense self-effort and by steady practice, you can gain both these and then you will enter that region and never again experience sorrow. That is the region inhabited by holy men who are forever established in peace.

My son, I shall now make all this explicit to you! The region I have referred to is the state of liberation, which is the end of all sorrow. The king there is the self who transcends all other realms and states of consciousness. The minister is the mind. It is the mind that has made all this world, like pot from clay. When the mind is conquered, everything is conquered. Remember that the mind is almost invincible, except through intelligent practice.

Bali asked:

Father, kindly tell me what intelligent practice will enable me to conquer the mind.

Virocana replied:

**The very best intelligent means by which the mind can be subdued is complete freedom from desire, hope or expectation in regard to all objects at all times.** It is by this means that this powerful elephant (the mind) can be subdued. This means is both very easy and extremely difficult, my son: it is very difficult for one who does not engage himself in serious practice, but very easy for one who is earnest in his effort. There is no harvest without sowing: the mind is not subdued without persistent practice. Hence, take up this practice of renunciation. Until one turns away from sense-pleasure here, one will continue to roam in this world of sorrow. Even a strong man will not reach his destination if he does not move towards it. No one can reach the state of total dispassion without persistent practice.

## section V - chapter 24

avasyam bhavitavyakhya sveha ya niyatikriya ucyate daivasabdena sa naraireva netaraih (27)

Virocana continued:

Only by right exertion can dispassion be attained; there is no other means. People talk of divine grace or fate; but in this world we perceive the body, not a god. **When people speak of god they imply what is inevitable, what is beyond their control and the events of natural order.** Even so, whatever brings about total equanimity and the cessation of joy and sorrow is also referred to as divine grace. Divine grace, natural order and right self-exertion, all of them refer to the same truth; the distinction is due to wrong perception or illusion.

Whatever the mind conceives of through right self-exertion comes to be in its fruition, and when the mind apprehends such fruition there is experience of joy etc. The mind is the doer, and whatever it conceives of the natural order (niyati) creates and manifests. The mind is also able to run counter to the natural order; hence it may even be said that mind is the prompter of the natural order.

Even as wind moves in space, the jiva (the individual) functions in this world, doing what has to be done within the natural order, though such action appears to be selfish or egotistic. Prompted by nature, he seems to move or stand still - both of which are mere expressions or false superimpositions, even as the movement of trees on a mountain-top makes it look as if the peak is swaying.

Hence, as long as there is mind there is neither god nor a natural order; when the mind has ceased to be, let there be whatever is!

Bali asked:

Lord, tell me, how can the cessation of craving for pleasure be firmly established in my heart?

Virocana said:

My son, self-knowledge is the creeper that yields the fruit of cessation of craving for pleasure. It is only when the self is seen that the highest form of dispassion becomes firmly rooted in the heart. Hence, one should simultaneously behold the self through intelligent enquiry, and thereby get rid of the craving for pleasure.

When the intelligence is still unawakened, one should fill two quarters of the mind with enjoyment of pleasure, one part with study of scriptures and the other with service of the guru. When it is partially awakened, two parts are given over to the service of the guru and the others get one part each. When it is fully awakened, two parts are devoted to service of the guru and the other two to the study of scriptures, with dispassion as the constant companion.

## section V - chapter 24

desakramena dhanarn alpavigarhanena tena nga sadhujanamarjaya manapurvam  
tatsangamottha visayadyavahelanena samyag vicaravibhavana tava tmalabhah (71)

Virocana continued:

Only when one is filled with goodness is one qualified to listen to the exposition of the highest wisdom. Hence, one should constantly endeavour to educate the mind with purifying knowledge, and nourish the mind with the inner transformation brought about by the study of scriptures. When the mind has thus been transformed, it is able to reflect the truth without distortion. Then without delay one should endeavour to see the self. These two - self-realisation and cessation of craving - should proceed hand in hand, simultaneously.

True dispassion does not arise in one by austerity, charity, pilgrimage, etc., but only by directly perceiving one's own nature. And, there is no means for direct self-realisation except right self-exertion. Hence, one should give up dependence upon a god or fate and by right self-exertion firmly reject the seeking of pleasure. When dispassion matures, the spirit of enquiry arises in oneself. The spirit of enquiry strengthens dispassion. The two are interdependent, even as the ocean and the clouds are. These two and also self-realisation are all intimate friends and always exist together.

Hence, first of all, one should abandon all dependence on extraneous factors (like god) and, grinding one's teeth and with intense right self-exertion, cultivate dispassion. One may, however, earn wealth without violating local traditions and customs and without defying one's relatives, etc. One should utilise this wealth to acquire the company of good and holy men endowed with noble qualities. Such company of holy men generates dispassion. Then there arises the spirit of enquiry, knowledge and the study of scriptures. By stages, one reaches the supreme truth.

When you turn completely away from the pursuit of pleasure, then you attain to the supreme state through the means of enquiry. When the self is completely purified, then you will be firmly established in the supreme peace. You will never again fall into the mire of conceptualisation which is the cause of sorrow. Though you continue to live, you will remain freed from all hopes and expectations. You are pure! Salutations to you, O embodiment of auspiciousness!

**In accordance with the prevailing social tradition, acquire a little wealth and with that acquire the company of saints and adore them. By their company you will gain contempt for the objects of pleasure. And by the right enquiry you will gain self-knowledge.**

## section V - chapter 25 26

bhavyo si cettadetasmāt sarvamāpnosi niscayat no cettad bahvāpi prokttam  
tvayī bhasmani huyate (26/12)

Bali said to himself:

Luckily, I remembered all that my father said to me. Now that craving for pleasure has ceased in me, I shall attain to the state of tranquillity which is like nectar. I am really and truly tired of repeatedly earning wealth, fulfilling my desires and enjoying sexual pleasures. Delightful is the state of peace; in utter inner tranquillity all pleasures and pains cease to be of value.

Life is one continuous round of repetitive experiences; nothing new is ever experienced. I shall give up everything and with my mind completely withdrawn from the pursuit of pleasure, I shall remain happily established in the self. This universe is but the creation of the mind: what is lost by abandoning it?

Enough of even this repentance! For, the important thing in a cure is the immediate treatment of the illness. 'Who am I?' 'What is all this?' I shall submit these questions to my guru Sukra.

Vasistha continued:

Having thus resolved, Bali contemplated the guru of the demons, Sukra. On account of the infinite consciousness he was established in, Sukra was omnipresent and knew that his disciple needed his presence. Instantly, he materialised his body in front of the king Bali.

In the immediate presence of the guru, Bali shone with a special radiance. He received the guru with due honours and worshipped the guru's feet with great devotion.

Then, Bali asked Sukra:

Lord, it is the reflection of your own divine radiance that prompts me to place this problem before you. I have no desire for pleasure; and I wish to learn the truth. Who am I? Who are you? What is this world? Please tell me all this!

Sukra replied:

I am on my way to another realm, O Bali: but I shall give you in a few words the very quintessence of wisdom. Consciousness alone exists, consciousness alone is all this, all this is filled with consciousness. I, you, and all this world, are but consciousness. **If you are humble and sincere you will gain everything from what I have said; if not, an attempt at further explanation will be like pouring oblations into a heap of ashes** (i.e. useless; the oblations are meaningful only when poured into the sacred fire). The objectivity (conceptualisation) of consciousness is known as bondage and the abandonment of such objectivity is liberation. Consciousness minus such objectivity is the reality of everything: this is the conviction of all philosophies. When you are established in this vision, you will also attain the infinite consciousness. I shall now depart to do the work of the gods; for as long as this body lasts, one shall not abandon appropriate action.

## section V - chapter 27

dhyatrdhyeyadhyahanahino nirmalah santavasanah babhuva vatadipabho balih  
praptamahapadah (33)

After Sukra left, Bali reflected thus:

What my preceptor said to me was indeed correct and appropriate. Surely, all that is is consciousness and there is naught else. It is when that infinite consciousness entertains the concept 'This is sun' that the sun is distinguished from darkness: it is consciousness that distinguishes light from darkness. It is consciousness that cognises earth as earth, the directions in space as such directions and the whole world as the world. If consciousness did not recognise a mountain, would it exist as a mountain?

Consciousness itself is all this: including the senses, the body, the desires that arise in the mind, whatever is within and whatever is outside, space and even changing phenomena. It is indeed on account of that consciousness that I am able to come into contact with the objects and experience them, not because of the body itself. Regardless of the body, I am consciousness, which is the self of the entire universe.

Since consciousness exists one without a second, who is my friend and who is my enemy? Even if the head of the body known as Bali is cut off, does the infinite consciousness lose its head? Even hate and other such qualities are but modifications of consciousness. Hence, again, there is neither hate nor attachment, neither mind nor its modifications - since the consciousness is infinite and absolutely pure, how can perversions arise in it? Consciousness is not its name, it is but a word! It has no name.

I am the eternal subject free from all object and predicate. I salute that omnipresent consciousness which is free from the tempting concept of objects, and hence eternally free. I salute myself which is the consciousness free of the subject-object division, which acts appropriately without division and which is the light which is reflected in all appearances. I am that consciousness in which the craving for experience has ceased. I am limitless like space; I am untouched by happiness, unhappiness and the like. Let them therefore do what they like to me, for I am non-different from them. Movement of energy in one substance is neither loss nor gain. When consciousness alone is everything, thoughts or its expansions do not make that consciousness expand or contract. Hence, I shall continue to be active till I reach absolute quiescence in the self.

Vasistha continued:

Having thus reflected, Bali, uttering the sacred word OM and contemplating its subtle significance, remained quiet. Freed from all doubts, from perception of objects and **without the division between thinker, thought and thinking (meditation, meditator and the object of meditation)**, with all intentions and concepts quietened, Bali remained firmly established in the supreme state with a mind in which all movement of thought had ceased, like a lamp in a windless place. Thus he lived for a considerable time.

## section V - chapter 28 29

na kincidapi kartavyam yadi nama maya dhuna tat kasmanna karomidam kincit  
praktakarma vai (29/19)

Vasistha continued:

All the demons (followers or subjects of the king Bali) rushed to the palace and surrounded the king who was seated in deep contemplation. Unable to understand the mystery, they thought of their preceptor, Sukra. They beheld Sukra in front of them. Sukra saw that Bali was in a superconscious state. He said to the demons, with a smile radiating joy:

"It is indeed wonderful, O demons, that this king Bali has attained such perfection by dint of his own resolute enquiry. Let him remain established in his own self. The mental activity that gives rise to the perception of the world has ceased in him: hence do not try to talk to him. When the dark night of ignorance comes to an end, the sun of self-knowledge arises: such is his state now. In course of time he himself will come out of that state, when the seed of world-perception begins to sprout in his consciousness. Hence, go about doing your work as before: he will return to world-consciousness in a thousand years from now."

Hearing this, the demons returned to their posts of duty and carried on the work of the realm. After a thousand celestial years of such contemplation, the king Bali was awakened by the music of the celestials and divinities. A supernatural light that radiated from him illumined the entire city.

Even before the demons could reach him again, Bali reflected thus:

It was indeed a wondrous state in which I remained for a brief moment. I shall continue to remain in that state: what have I to do with the affairs of the external world? Supreme peace and bliss reign in my own heart now.

In the meantime, the demons rushed to where he sat; after looking at them, Bali continued to reflect thus:

I am consciousness and in me there does not exist any perversion. What is there for me to acquire or to abandon? What fun: I long for liberation, but who has bound me, when and how! Why do I long for liberation then? There is no bondage and no liberation: what shall I gain by meditation or by not meditating? Freed from delusion of meditation and non-meditation, let be what has to be: there is neither gain nor loss to me. I do not desire either meditation or non-meditation, neither joy nor non-joy, I do not desire the supreme being or the world. I am neither alive nor dead; I am neither real nor unreal. Salutations to myself, the infinite being! Let this world be my kingdom, I shall be what I am: let this world be not my kingdom, I shall be what I am. What have I to do with meditation and what have I to do with the kingdom? Let be what has to be. I belong to none and none belongs to me. **There is absolutely nothing that has to be done by what is known as me; then why should I not do that action which is natural?**

Thus having reflected, the king Bali turned his radiant gaze towards the assembled demons, even as the sun gazes upon a lotus.

## section V - chapter 29

yesu yesu pradasesu mano majjati balavat tebhyas tebhyah samahrtya taddhi  
tattve niyojayet (54)

Vasistha continued:

King Bali thereafter ruled the kingdom, doing everything spontaneously without premeditation. He worshipped the brahmanas, gods and the holy ones. He treated his relatives with deference. He rewarded his servants amply and gave in charity more than what they who sought it had expected. He fondly sported with the womenfolk.

The wish to perform a sacred rite rose in his heart. Quickly he assembled the men and materials needed for it. He conducted the rite in the appropriate manner. It was during this rite that lord Visnu, wishing to snatch the rulership of the three worlds from Bali and bestow it upon Indra, took the form of a dwarf and cheated Bali into giving away the rulership of the world to Visnu in charity.

O Rama, this Bali will be the next Indra; hence he dwells in the netherworld (to which he had been sent by lord Visnu himself) as a liberated and enlightened sage, awaiting the time when he shall rule the heaven. He is totally unconcerned whether he is visited by prosperity or adversity. His consciousness does not experience elation or depression in happiness or unhappiness. He had ruled the three worlds for billions of years; but now his heart is at rest. Once again he will rule the three worlds as Indra for a very long time.

But, he is not excited at the prospect of becoming Indra; nor was he depressed when he lost his position and was hurled into the netherworld. He welcomes whatever comes to him unsought and is at peace within himself.

Thus have I told you the story of king Bali, O Rama. Gain such a vision as he had and enjoy supreme felicity. Abandon the desire for the essenceless and useless sense-pleasure in this world. The attractive objects that tempt you here do not deserve your admiration any more than rock-figures seen at a distance. Establish your mind, which flits from one thing to another, firmly in your heart.

You are the light of consciousness, O Rama; in you are the worlds rooted. Who is your friend and who is other? You are the infinite. In you are all the worlds strung like beads of a rosary. That being which thou art is neither born nor does he die. The self is real; birth and death are imaginary. Enquire into the nature of all the illnesses that beset life, and live without craving. You are the light and the Lord, Rama: and this world appears to be in that light. It has no real and independent existence.

Formerly, you had repeatedly entertained the wrong notions of the desirable and the undesirable: give up these too. Then you will enjoy equanimity: and the wheel of birth will come to a halt. **In whatever the mind tends to sink, retrieve it from it and direct it towards the truth.** Thus will the wild elephant of the mind be tamed. Do not be led astray by the long-winded empty statements of the wicked self-appointed teachers who have no direct experience: you will surely attain enlightenment by listening to my discourse.

## section V - chapter 30 31

manakcalati parne pi drstaribhayabhitayah yadhvastrasyanti vidhvasta mrgyo  
gramagata iva (31/12)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, I shall narrate to you another story which illustrates the path to enlightenment which is free from obstacles.

In the netherworld there was a mighty demon-king known as Hiranyakasipu. He had wrested the sovereignty of the three worlds from Indra (Hari?). He ruled the three worlds. He had many sons. Among them was the famous Prahlada who shone like a brilliant diamond among jewels.

The demon-king who thus enjoyed the lordship of the three worlds, the blessing of a mighty army and good children, became proud and arrogant. His aggressive ways and his rule of terror greatly worried the gods who prayed to the creator Brahma to find a way out of their predicament. In answer to their prayer, the lord Hari assumed the form of Narasimha and destroyed the demon-king. Narasimha's body was enormous and powerful. He had sharp and dreadful teeth and nails. His ear-rings were like fire-brands. His abdomen was mountainous. He had powerful arms which could shake the whole creation. His breath rocked mountains. The hairs on his body were like tongues of flames. His very limbs were terrible missiles. Unable to endure the fiery gaze of Narasimha, the demons fled in all directions. The inner apartments of the palace had been reduced to ashes.

Prahlada whose life had been spared performed the funeral rite of his fallen relations. He consoled the wounded ones. Stunned by the magnitude of the destruction, he and the others who remained alive stood immobile for a while.

Prahlada mused:

Who is there to help us now: the very seeds of the demon-families have been destroyed by Hari. Alas, our enemy has swiftly reached the peak of military victory. The gods who used to bow down humbly to the feet of my father have occupied our realm. My own relations have become lustreless, unemployed, without enthusiasm, destitute and miserable. The demons who were strong and powerful once, are weak and timid now like the gods: indeed, mysterious is the destiny. **A timid deer when it is taken into a strange village, takes fright at the sound of a falling leaf: even so the demonesses, who have seen the valour of the enemy, panic at anything.**

The gods have taken back the wish-fulfilling tree. Even as the demons delighted to look at the faces of the goddesses before, the gods delight to look at the demonesses now. The demi-goddesses and others who enjoyed life in the inner apartments of the demons have escaped and have gone away to the forests of the mount Meru and live like birds of the forest. My own mothers (the queens) are the very images of grief. Alas, my father's fan serves Indra now. By the grace of Hari, we have been subjected to incomparable and inexpressible adversity, the very thought of which makes us miserable and desperate.

## section V - chapter 31

avisnuh pujayan visnum na pujaphalabhagbhavet vlsnurbhutva yajed visnumayam  
visnuraham sthitah (40)

Prahlada continued to muse:

Even as the snowclad peaks of the Himalayas are never subjected to the scorching heat of the sun, the gods who live in the shade of the protection of Visnu are not subjected to oppression. Even as a little monkey seated on the branch of a tree annoys a powerful dog standing on the ground, these gods enjoying the security of the protection of Visnu harass the demons.

It is Visnu that protects the whole universe and upholds it. Even if Visnu abandons the use of weapons, no one can face him (Narasimha did not use conventional weapons). He alone is the refuge of all beings in this world, therefore by all means one should take refuge in him - there is no other way. No one is superior to him and he alone is the cause of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. From this very moment I shall also be devoted to Visnu and live as if filled with his presence. The holy mantra 'Namo Narayanaya' dedicated to him is capable of bestowing every blessing on the devotee: may it never leave my heart.

**However, one who is not Visnu does not derive any benefit by worshipping Visnu. One should worship Visnu by being Visnu. Hence I am Visnu.** He who is known as Prahlada is none other than Visnu: there is no duality. Visnu's vehicle Garuda now bears me. His insignia adorn my limbs. Laksmi, his consort, is standing next to me. All the divine splendour of Visnu has become mine.

The conch, the discus, the mace and sword which are the symbols that are invariably associated with Visnu are with me now. The lotus that bears on it the creator Brahma springs from my navel. The entire universe which repeatedly appears and disappears is in my abdomen.

My colour is now the colour of Visnu, which is blue. I am dressed in the yellow garment of Visnu. I am Visnu. Who can be my enemy and who can challenge me now? Since I am Visnu, he who is hostile to me has surely reached the end-of his life-span. These demons who stand in front of me find it difficult or impossible to endure the dazzling brilliance that radiates from me. And those gods are really singing my own praise, as I am Visnu.

I have transcended all sense of duality and therefore I have myself become Visnu. He in whose abdomen ever abides the three worlds, he who subdues all evil forces in the universe and he who dispels the anxieties and fears of all - he am I and I salute him.

## section V - chapter 32 33

gunavannirguno jata ityanarthakramam viduh nirguno gunavan jata ityahu  
siddhidam kramarn (33/4)

Vasistha continued:

Having thus transfigured himself into the very image of Visnu, Prahlada thought of worshipping Visnu. He thought: "Here stands another Visnu who is also seated on his vehicle Garuda, who is endowed with all the divine qualities and powers, who bears all the insignias relative to the status of Visnu. I shall now worship him according to the tradition relating to such worship, but mentally."

Having thus resolved, Prahlada mentally worshipped Visnu, with all the materials ordained by tradition and scriptural injunctions. After this he also worshipped Visnu with external rites and rituals. Upon completion of this worship, Prahlada rejoiced.

From that time, Prahlada worshipped Visnu in that manner every day. Seeing him and following his example, all the demons in the kingdom also became staunch devotees of Visnu. And, the rumour spread like wild fire in heaven that the demons who had till lately been enemies of Visnu, had suddenly become his devotees! The gods in heaven were bewildered: how could demons become devotees! They quickly approached Visnu and asked him.

The gods said:

Lord, what is this mystery? The demons are your traditional enemies. That they should turn into your devotees appears to be unreal and a trick. Where is the diabolical nature of the demons; and where is devotion to you which arises only during the last incarnation of a jiva? Good and divine qualities just do not go with these demons: it sounds so incongruous. Surely, the qualities of a being are always in accordance with the fundamental nature of that being. To hear that these demons have become your devotees overnight is almost painful. If it were said that they had gradually evolved into higher states of being, cultivated good qualities and then become your devotees, we could very well understand it. But that someone who has been of wicked disposition has all at once become your devotee, is incredible.

The Lord replied:

O gods, do not suffer doubt and despair. Prahlada has become my devotee. This is indeed his last birth and he deserves to be liberated now. The seeds of his ignorance have been burnt; he will not be born any more. **It is meaningless and painful to hear that a good man has become evil-minded. It is appropriate and good to hear that one who has had no good qualities has become good.** Prahlada's change is for your good.

Alternative meaning: it is improper to say that one who is limited and conditioned became unconditioned - but it is true to say that the unconditioned being without qualities appears to be conditioned.

## section V - chapter 33

tribhuvanabhavanabhiramakosam sakalalakankaharam param prakasam  
asanasaranam saranyamisam harimajamacyutamisvaram prapadye (19)

Vasistha continued:

After thus reassuring the gods, Visnu disappeared. And, the gods returned to their respective abodes. They became friendly towards Prahlada.

Every day Prahlada thus worshipped the lord Visnu by thought, word and deed. As the immediate fruit of such worship, all the noble qualities like wisdom and dispassion grew in him. He did not seek pleasure; even his mind did not contemplate pleasure. Having abandoned craving for pleasure, his mind was dangling without support. Lord Visnu came to know of the state of Prahlada. He travelled along the netherworld to where Prahlada was worshipping him. Seeing that lord Visnu himself had come in the palace, Prahlada rejoiced even more and worshipped Visnu again.

Prahlada prayed:

I take refuge in the Lord in whom the three worlds rejoice, who is the supreme light which destroys the darkness of every kind of ignorance and impurity, who is the refuge of the helpless destitute, who alone is the Lord whose refuge is worth seeking, the unborn, the surest security. You are radiant like the blue lotus or the blue jewel; your body is blue like the zenith of the clear winter sky; and you hold your divine insignia in your hands - I take refuge in you. I take refuge in him whose voice is the truth (the holy scriptures), whose navel-lotus is the seat of Brahma the creator and who dwells in the hearts of all beings. I take refuge in him the radiance of whose nails sparkles as the stars in the heaven, whose sweet smiling face is the moon, in whose heart there is a jewel from which rays emanate and flow as the holy river Ganga and who is clad in the pure autumnal sky. I take refuge in him in whom this extensive universe rests without diminution, who is ever unborn and unchanging, whose body is composed of all the auspicious qualities and who rests on a banyan leaf. I take refuge in him who has goddess Laksmi at his own side, the beauty of whose body is like the beauty of the setting sun. I take refuge in the Lord who is like the sun unto the lotus of the three worlds, who is like a lamp unto the darkness of ignorance, who is of the nature of infinite consciousness, and who destroys the suffering and distress of all beings in the universe.

## section V - chapter 34

sarvasambhramasamsantyai paramaya phalaya ca brahmavisrantiparyanto vicaro  
stu tava nagha (3)

The Lord said:

O Pahlada, you are an ocean of good qualities and you are indeed the jewel among the demons. Ask of me any boon of your choice which is conducive to the cessation of the sorrow of birth.

Pahlada said:

Lord, you are the indweller of all beings and you grant the fruition of all our wishes. Pray, grant me that boon which you consider to be limitless and infinite.

The Lord said:

**Pahlada, may you be endowed with the spirit of enquiry till you rest in the infinite Brahman so that all your delusions might come to an end and you may attain the highest fruit (blessing).**

Vasistha continued:

Having said thus, the Lord disappeared. Pahlada concluded his worship and after singing hymns in praise of the Lord, began to reflect in the following manner.

Pahlada contemplated:

The Lord had commanded "Be continually engaged in enquiry"; hence, I shall engage myself in enquiry into the self. What am I who speaks, walks, stands and functions on this elaborate stage known as the world - I should find this out to begin with.

Surely, I am not this world which is outside and which is inert, composed of trees, shrubs and mountains. Nor am I the body which was born on account of the movement of the life-breath, and which seems to live for a very brief moment. I am not sound (word or name or expression) which is apprehended by the inert substance known as the ear, which is but a momentary movement of air and which is devoid of form and devoid of existence. I am not the sense or experience of touch, which is also momentary and which is able to function only on account of the infinite consciousness. Nor am I the sense of taste based on the ever changing and restless tongue ever devoted to its objects. I am not the sense of sight (or form) which too is momentary and which is but a perversion of the understanding of the seer. Nor am I the sense of smell, which is an imaginary creation of the nose and which has an indeterminate form.

Hence, I am devoid of all these imaginary qualities. I have nothing whatsoever to do with the functions of these senses. I am pure consciousness. I am peace beyond thought.

## section V - chapter 34

a idanim smrtam satyam etattad akhilam maya nirvikalpacidabhasa esa atma smi sarvagah (19)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

I am the all-pervading reality which is devoid of objectivity and therefore percepts and concepts. I am pure consciousness. It is by this consciousness that all things, from a little pot to the mighty sun, are perceived. **Ah, I now recollect the truth that I am the self which is omnipresent, in which there is no conceptualisation.** It is by that self that all the senses and their experiences are made possible, for it is the inner light. It is because of that inner light that these objects acquire their apparent substantiality.

It is thanks to that inner light of consciousness, which is utterly free from all modifications, that the sun is hot, the moon is cool, the mountain is heavy and water is liquid. It is the cause of all the effects that manifest as this creation, but it is itself uncaused. It is on account of that inner light of consciousness that the characteristic nature of the diverse objects arises. Because it is formless and because it is the cause of all effects, this universe has arisen in it, with all its diversity. It alone is the cause of the manifestation of the trinity (Brahma the creator, Visnu the preserver and Siva the redeemer); but it is not itself caused.

I salute this self which is its own light, free from the duality of knower and known, subject and object. In it exist all things of this universe; and into it they enter. Whatever this inner self thinks of, that happens everywhere - apparently as an external reality. When thought of by this consciousness, these things seem to come into being; when thought of as nonexistent, they reach their end. Thus, all these infinite objects appear in the limitless space of consciousness. They appear to grow and they appear to diminish, even as a shadow seems to grow and to diminish in the light of the sun.

This self or inner light of consciousness is unknown and unseen: it is attained by those who have purified their heart. But by the holy ones it is seen in the supremely pure cosmic space (dimension) of consciousness.

This self exists in an undivided state in the three worlds - from Brahma the creator to the blade of grass, as the infinite and self-luminous consciousness. It is one, without beginning and end; it exists as the all, as the inner experiencing of all mobile and immobile beings.

## section V - chapter 34

ghrtam yatha ntah payaso rasasakttir yatha jale cicchakttih sarvabhavesu  
tatha ntarahamasthitah (56)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

The one self, which is the sole experiencing, is therefore the experiencer in all: hence the self is said to have a thousand hands and a thousand eyes. With this beautiful body of the sun, this self which is 'I' roams the space, as also in the body of air. It is the same with the self embodied as the deity holding the conch, discus, mace, etc., who is adored in this world. It was this self or 'I' that was born as the one who is ever seated in the lotus (the creator Brahma). It is the self again that shall dissolve this creation or withdraw it from manifestation at the end of the world-cycle.

The self referred to as the I embodied in Indra protects the world. I am woman, I am man, I am the youth, I am the senile old man; and on account of embodiment, I am apparently born here. I am the omnipresent. From the ground of the infinite consciousness I raise trees and plants, being present in them as their very essence. Even as clay in the hands of a playful child, this world-appearance is pervaded by me for my own delight. The world derives its reality from the self (me), it functions in and through me and when I abandon it or cease to comprehend it, it ceases to have any reality. For, this world exists in me, the self or infinite consciousness, even as a reflection seems to exist in a mirror.

I am the fragrance in flowers, I am the radiance in flowers and leaves, I am the light in the radiance and even in that light I am the experience. Whatever mobile and immobile beings exist in this universe, I am their supreme truth or consciousness free from conceptualisation. I am the very essence in all things in the universe. **Just as butter exists in milk and just as liquidity exists in water, even so as the energy of consciousness I exist in all that exists.** This world-appearance of the past, the present and the future exists in the infinite consciousness without the distinction of objectivity. This omnipresent, omnipotent cosmic being is the self which is indicated by the 'I'. This cosmic kingdom known as the universe has come to me unsought and is pervaded by me. As the self or the infinite consciousness I pervade the entire universe, even as the one cosmic ocean pervades the cosmos after the cosmic creation has been dissolved. Even as a lame (incapacitated) aquatic creature finds the cosmic ocean is without limits, I find no end to the extent of myself, which is infinite. This world-appearance is like a dust-particle in the infinite consciousness: it does not satisfy me, even as a tiny fruit does not appease an elephant's hunger. Hence, the form which began to expand in the house of the creator Brahma even now continues to expand.

## section V - chapter 34

sarvabhavantarasthaya cetyamukttacidatmane pratyakcetanarupaya mahyameva namo  
namah (69)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

Truly, it was but the infinite consciousness that existed: how has this finite, limited ego-sense arisen in it, without any justification and support? What has given rise to the delusion which expresses itself in statements like 'This is you' and 'This I am'? What is this body and what is bodilessness, who lives and who is it that dies? Surely, my ancestors were of little understanding in that they abandoned this infinite consciousness and roamed this little earth. What comparison is there between the vision of the infinite and this fearful vanity known as worldly glory, which is full of dreadful desires and cravings? This vision of the infinite consciousness is pure and is of the nature of supreme peace: and it is surely the very best among the visions that are possible in this universe.

**I salute my own self which is the indweller in all beings, which is the consciousness freed from objectivity or conceptualisation and which is the intelligence in all beings.** I am the unborn in whom the world-appearance has vanished. I have gained what is worth gaining. I have triumphed and I live triumphantly. I find no delight in reigning over a kingdom, abandoning this supreme felicity of cosmic consciousness. Fie upon those wicked demons who revel in the filth of this worldly life.

Alas, how foolish and ignorant of my father to have remained satisfied and pleased with this physical existence! What has he gained by living a long life and by reigning over this little mud-ball called the earth? The delights of even countless such worlds is nothing compared to the bliss of the self. He who has nothing but has this self-knowledge has everything. He who abandons this and seeks other things is not a man of wisdom. What comparison is there between this mortal physical existence (like the arid desert) and the bliss of enlightenment (like a delightful pleasure-garden)? The sovereignty of the world as also all things in the three worlds exist in consciousness: why do people not experience the truth that there is nothing outside of consciousness?

Everything, everywhere and at all times is easily obtained through consciousness which is omnipresent and undifferentiated. The light that shines in the sun and the moon, the energy that animates the gods, the intrinsic characteristic of the mind and the elements, the qualities and the faculties that exist in nature (like that in space which permits aircraft to move in it) and the infinite variety of the manifestations of energy and intelligence are all the expansions and the functions of the one cosmic consciousness, which in itself is undivided and unmodified. Even as the sun shines on all things without distinction, this cosmic consciousness illumines all things without distinction, instantly and spontaneously as the very self of all things in the universe.

## section V - chapter 34

bhavana bhavamasritya bhavastyajati dukkhatam preksya bhavamabhavena  
bhavastyajati dustatam (99)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

The infinite consciousness simultaneously pervades the three periods of time and experiences the infinite worlds. It envelops all, it sees all; and because it is undisturbed and unmodified, it alone remains at all times. This consciousness experiences simultaneously what is sweet and what is bitter; it is tranquil and at peace. Because this consciousness is in itself free from all modifications (concepts and percepts), and because it is subtle and experiences all things at the same time, it is ever at peace and homogeneous, even while apparently experiencing the diversity of diverse phenomena.

**When the apparently transformed becoming resorts to or rests on that being which has not undergone any modification, the former is freed from sorrow: and when what is seen by what is not (or by the mind in which there is no movement of thought) that which is abandons its wickedness.**

When consciousness abandons the perception of the three modes of time, when it is freed from the bondage of objectivity or conceptualisation, it rests in utter tranquillity. It is as if it were unreal, because it is beyond description: hence some people declare that the self does not exist. Whether there is the self (Brahman) or not, that which is not subject to dissolution is the supreme liberation.

On account of the modification (thought), this consciousness is apparently veiled and is not realised. They who are sunk in the mire of attraction and repulsion are unable to reach this realisation. They are caught in the net of thoughts. Such have been my ancestors. On account of their desire and hate and the deluded perception of duality, they lead the life of vermin.

He in whom the ghosts of cravings and hostility have been laid and the mirage of ignorant thinking and psychological perversion has been dispelled by the cloud of true inner awakening, he alone lives. For, how can there arise concepts and percepts in the infinite consciousness which alone is?

I salute the self! Salutations to myself - the undivided consciousness, the jewel of all the seen and the unseen worlds! You have indeed been reached very soon! You have been touched, you have been gained, you have been realised, you have been raised above all kinds of perversions: you are what you are. Salutations to you. Salutations to you - my self, Siva, the Lord of lords, the supreme self.

I salute the self which rejoices in its own body, being established in itself, in full control of itself, utterly freed from the veil of self-imposed ignorance (thoughts and concepts).

## section V - chapter 35

vicaratyesa lokesu jiva eva jagatsthitau vilasatyeva bhogesu praspshuratyeva vastusu (21)

Vasistha continued to contemplate:

Om is the one non-dual consciousness devoid of all perversion. Whatever there is in the universe is the one self. Even within this body composed of flesh and blood, etc., it is the intelligence that shines as it does in and through light-sources such as the sun etc. It makes the fire hot and it tastes the nectarine sweetness; it experiences all sense-experiences, as it were. Standing, it is not stationary; going, it does not move; at rest it is ever busy; dynamic, it is unaffected. In the past, present and in the future, here, there and everywhere, it is ever the same in all apparent modifications. Utterly fearless and uninhibited, it is this consciousness that brings into manifestation and sustains the infinite variety of beings, from Brahma the creator to the blade of grass. It is ever dynamic and active; yet it is more inactive than a rock and it is more unaffected by such activity than even the space.

It is this self or consciousness that activates the mind even as wind rustles the leaves; it makes the senses function as the rider guides the horse. Though the self is the lord of this body, it is ever engaged in diverse actions as if it were a slave.

The self alone is to be sought, adored and meditated upon. It is by resorting to it that one crosses this world-appearance with its cycle of birth and death and delusion. It is very easily accessible, it can be easily won over like a good friend, for it dwells in the heart-lotus of every one. It is attained in one's own body, without even the need to call upon it: it manifests itself and reveals itself even if it is contemplated for an instant. Though it is the Lord of all and is endowed with all excellences, one who adores it is free from arrogance and pride.

This self dwells in all bodies even as fragrance resides in flowers. It is not realised by all because no one enquires into the truth concerning the self. If it is realised through self-enquiry, there is instant experience of supreme bliss and one gets an undying vision of truth: all fetters drop away, all enemies are quelled and cravings do not agitate the mind. When it is seen, everything is seen; when it is heard, everything is heard; when it is touched, everything is touched - for the world is because it is. It is awake even when one sleeps, it goads the unwise into wakefulness, it removes the distress of the suffering and bestows all desired objects. **In this creation, it exists as if it is a jiva (living entity); it appears to enjoy the pleasures; and it seems to expand in the objects of this world.**

Yet, in all bodies, it exists as the self, experiencing itself in utter tranquillity. It is the one sole and cosmic reality in the whole universe.

## section V - chapter 35

sambandhah ko stu nah kamair bhavabhavairathendriyaih kena sambadhyate vyoma  
kena sambadhyate manah (32)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

This self is the emptiness in space. It is the motion in all things moving. It is the light in all things luminous. In all liquids it is taste. It is solidity in earth. It is heat in fire. It is coolness in the moon. It is the very existence of the worlds. Even as all these characteristic qualities exist in the corresponding substances, even so it exists as Lord in the body. Just as existence exists everywhere and just as time exists at all times, this self exists in all bodies, with all the physical and psychological faculties.

This self is the eternal existence. It enlightens even the gods. I, the self, alone am: in me there is no percept or concept. Even as space is unaffected by the dust-particles floating in it, even as a lotus is untainted by water, even so I am not affected by anything. Let the body be subjected to happiness or unhappiness: how is the self affected by it? Just as the flame of a lamp (though the wick itself is made of threads) cannot be bound by a piece of thread, the self which exceeds or transcends all material existence is not bound by such materiality. **What relationship can exist between us (the self) and the cravings which spring from notions of existence and non-existence and from the senses? Who or what binds the space and by whom is the mind bound?**

Even if the body is cut into a hundred pieces, the self is not injured; even if the pot is pulverised, the space within it is not destroyed. Even if this goblin mind which exists only as a word and not as a reality, ceases to be, what do we lose? Formerly, there was a mind which consisted of notions of happiness and unhappiness: but now that all such notions have ceased to be, where is my mind? Which fool would entertain such notions as 'One enjoys another', 'One grasps another', 'One sees another', 'One suffers a calamity'? Nature alone enjoys, the mind grasps or comprehends, suffering belongs to the body, the wicked person is a fool: but in one who has attained liberation there is none of these. I neither entertain craving for pleasure, nor do I wish to get rid of it. Whatever comes, let it come; whatever goes, let it go. Let notions of diverse experiences either arise or set in the body: I am neither in them nor they in me.

For so long I have been enslaved by the dreaded enemy known as ignorance who robbed me of my wealth of wisdom. But now, by the grace of lord Visnu and through my own excellent self-effort, I have attained that wisdom. By the magic-spell of self-knowledge this goblin ego-sense has been expelled. Rid of the destitution of delusion, I remain as the supreme Lord. All that is worth knowing is already known, all that is worth seeing has been seen; I have now attained that beyond which there is naught to be attained.

## section V - chapter 35

stutya pranatya vijnaptya samena niyamena ca labdho yam bhagavan atma  
drstasca dhigatah sphutam (49)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

Luckily for me, the deadly serpent of craving for sense-pleasure has been left far behind and all delusions and hopes have been quietened. I have attained the plane of supreme truth. **The Lord who is the self, has been seen by me by means of singing hymns, salutations, prayer, peace of mind and disciplined living.** By the grace of lord Visnu the realisation of the supreme being is firmly established in my heart.

Till now I was harassed by ignorant limitations and delusions. The forest of ignorance has numerous anthills inhabited by deadly snakes in the form of sense-cravings, many blind-holes known as death and many forest-fires of sorrow; in it roam the thieves of violence and greed, as also the most deadly ennemy of ego-sense. Now I am free of that by the grace of lord Visnu as also by my own self-effort; and my intelligence has been fully awakened. In the light of that awakened intelligence I do not perceive an entity which can be called ego-sense, even as one does not see darkness when the sun has arisen. Now that the goblin of ego-sense has been laid, I remain at peace within myself.

When the truth is seen and the ego-sense has been dispelled, where is room for delusion, sorrows, hopes, desires and mental distress? Heaven and hell, as also delusions concerning liberation, exist only as long as the ego-sense exists: pictures are painted on canvas, not on empty sky! When the intelligence is freed from the cloud of ego-sense and from the thunderstorm of cravings, it shines with the light of self-knowledge, even as the city shines during the autumnal full-moon night.

O self free from the mire of ego-sense, salutations to you. O self in whom the fearsome senses and all-consuming mind have attained quiescence, salutations to you. O self in whom the lotus of bliss has fully blossomed, salutations to you. O self whose two wings are consciousness and its reflection, and who dwells in the lotus of the heart, salutations to you. O self, the sun that dispels the darkness of ignorance in the heart, salutations to you. O self, the promoter of supreme love and the sustainer of all things in the universe, salutations to you.

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

## section V - chapter 36

vacyavacakadrstyaiva bhedo yo yamiha vayoh asatya kalpanaivesa  
vicivicyambhasoriva (8)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

At last, the self which is beyond all states or modes of consciousness has been realised. O self, fortunately you have been realised; salutations to you. I salute you, I embrace you: who but you is my friend and relative in the three worlds? You alone destroy, you alone protect, you give, you praise and you move: now, O self, you have been seen and attained - what will you do now and where will you go? By your reality are all the worlds pervaded, you alone are seen everywhere, O self: where will you run away now?

Between us stood the great wall of ignorance from beginningless time. Now that that wall has collapsed you are seen to be not distant at all. Salutations to the self, who has fully accomplished what needs to be accomplished, the real doer of all actions, the Lord, the eternal and the everpure being. Salutations to Visnu, to Siva, and to Brahma the creator. **O self, the distinction between you (the self) and me is verbal, like the distinction between the word and the substance it refers to; the distinction is unreal and imaginary, like the verbal distinction between the wave and the water in the wave.** In truth, you alone are spread out as the infinite variety of created objects that appear to be in this world. Salutations to the seer, the experiencer. Salutations to the one that creates, to the one that unfolds and expands as all things.

Salutations to that which is the inner reality of all. Salutations to the omnipresent. Alas, on account of your identification with the embodiment, you, O self, had, as it were, forgotten your own nature. Hence, you had to undergo endless suffering in repeated births, experiencing external perceptions without self-knowledge. This external world is nothing more than earth, wood and rock: O self, there is no reality in all this other than you. Attaining self-knowledge, one does not long for aught else.

Now, Lord, you have been seen and reached. Hereafter you will not be deluded again: salutations to you. Lord, how is it that the self which is the very light of the eyes and which fills the whole body as the innate intelligence, is not seen or experienced? How is it that that intelligence which functioning as the sense of touch and experiencing all other objects is itself not realised? How can that intelligence be distant from oneself - which as the intelligence in the sense of hearing, hears and produces goose-pimples? How is it that one does not taste the sweetness of that intelligence which experiences the sweetness or otherwise of the objects placed before it? How is it that one does not directly experience the presence of that intelligence which enjoys the sense of smell? How is it that the self whose glory is sung by the scriptures and who is knowledge or wisdom itself forgets itself? O self, now that you have been realised, the sense-pleasures that I revelled in before are no longer worthy of my attention!

## section V - chapter 36

hamsi pasi dadasi tvam avasphurjasi valgasi anahamkrtirupo pi citreyam tava  
mayita (36)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

O self, it is your own light of purity that shines in the sun; your nectarine coolness that radiates through the moon. The heaviness of the mountains is derived from you, as also the speed of the wind. Because of you the earth is firm and space is empty. Luckily, you have been realised by me: luckily, I have become yours. Luckily, O Lord, there is no distinction between you (the self) and me - you are I, I am you. Whatever is referred to as you (the self) or as I, whichever be the root and whichever be the branch, to that I offer my salutations again and again. Salutations to my self which is infinite and egoless: salutations to the formless self.

You (self) dwell in 'me' in a state of equilibrium, as pure witness consciousness, without form and without the divisions of space and time. The mind gets agitated, the senses begin to stir and the energy begins to expand, setting in motion the twin-forces of prana and apana (two modifications of the life-force). Drawn by the power of desires, the driver (mind) carries away the body made up of flesh and blood, bone and skin. However, I am pure consciousness, not dependent upon the body or anything else: let this body rise or fall, in accordance with the desires that move it.

In course of time, the ego-sense arises and in course of time the ego-sense ceases to be, even as the universe dissolves at the end of the cosmic cycle. But, after a long time of such cyclic (birth and death) existence in this creation, I have attained the state of peace and rest, even as the whole cosmos comes to rest at the end of its own cyclic existence. Salutations to you, myself, who is transcendental and who is all: salutations to all of them that speak of us!

The supreme self being the witness-consciousness is utterly unaffected by the faults of the experiences related to it. The self is all in all everywhere and exists in everything, even as fragrance exists in flowers and oil in sesame seeds. **O self, you destroy, you protect, you give, you roar and you function here although you are completely free from ego-sense: indeed this is a great wonder.** Being the light of the self, I open my eyes, as it were, and the universe comes into being; and I close my eyes and the universe ceases to be. You, O self, are the supreme atom in which the entire universe exists already, even as the great banyan tree exists potentially in the tiny banyan seed. Even as cloud formations in the sky often resemble horses, elephants and other animals, you yourself, O self, appear in the cosmic space as the infinite variety of objects. Free from being and non-being, the self exists as being and non-being and also the diverse beings, one distinct and separate from the other, as it were.

## section V - chapter 36

bhavanayamayam ca ham tvam sabdairevamadibhih svayamevatmana tmanam lilartham  
stausi vaksi ca (56)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

Abandon vanity, anger, impurity and violence: for great souls are not overcome by such base qualities. Remember past sorrow again and again; and with a cheerful attitude of mind enquire 'Who am I?', 'How could all this happen?' and be free from all that. All that is past is past and all the sorrows and anxieties that burnt you have ceased to be. Today, you are the sovereign of this city known as the body; and even as one cannot get hold of the sky with his fist, sorrow is not able to lay its hand upon you. Now you are the master of your senses and your mind; and you enjoy the greatest delight.

Lord, O self, you are ever asleep, as it were: you are apparently awakened by your own energy for the purpose of becoming aware of the experiences being undergone. It is in fact that energy that comes into contact with the objects of such experiences: but on account of such awareness, you assume such experiences to yourself. They who have, through the exercise of the life-forces, reached 'the aperture of Brahma' at the crown of the head, perceive every moment what is past and what will be in the future in the city of Brahma the creator.

O self, you are the fragrance in the flower known as the body; you are the nectar in the moon known as the body; you are the essence in the herb known as the body; you are the coolness in the ice known as the body. Just as there is butter in milk, there is friendship or attachment in the body. You dwell in this body even as fire dwells in wood. You are the light in all luminous objects; you are the inner light that makes knowledge of objects possible. You are the strength of the elephant known as mind. You are both the light and the heat of the fire of self-knowledge.

Speech terminates in you, O self! It reappears somewhere else. Even as different ornaments are fashioned out of gold, all the countless objects of creation have been fashioned out of you: the distinction is verbal. **'This is you', 'This is I' - such expressions are used when you yourself adore yourself or describe yourself for your own delight.** Even as a huge forest-fire might momentarily assume various forms though it is but a single flame, even so your non-dual being appears to be all these diverse objects in this universe. You are the string on which all these worlds are strung. You are the ground of truth in which all these worlds abide. The worlds are for ever potentially present in you: and by you they are made manifest, as the flavour of foodstuff is made manifest by cooking. However, though these worlds seem to exist, they will cease to be if you are not! You are their reality. Even this body will fall down lifeless like a log of wood. Happiness and sorrow collapse when they approach you, even as darkness disappears when it approaches light. However, the experience of happiness etc., is made possible only because of the light of awareness derived from you.

## section V - chapter 36

tvadalokeksanodbhuta tvadalokeksanaksaya mrteva jata jateva mrta  
kenopalaksyate (71)

Prahlada continued to contemplate:

Pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness owe their existence to you, O self: they are born of you and they lose their identity when their non-existence independent of you is realised. Even as an optical illusion comes into being and vanishes in the twinkling of an eye, the illusory experiences of pain and pleasure appear and disappear in the twinkling of an eye. **They appear in the light of awareness and they disappear when they are perceived as non-different from at awareness: they are born the moment they die and they die the moment they are born - who is the perceiver of all this mystery?**

Everything is thus ever-changing all the time: how then can such momentary causes produce tangible and stable results? Waves may look like flowers, but can one string them into a garland? If it is credible to think that one can expect stable effects to accrue from such an unstable cause as the fleeting phenomena, then it should be possible to string lightnings into a luminous garland and wear it as an ornament! O self, you enjoy pleasure and pain as if they were real, while you perceive and receive them through the consciousness of a wise person, without ever abandoning the state of utter equanimity. But, what your experiences are when the same thing happens in the heart of an unwise or unawakened person, it is impossible for me to describe! O self, you are in truth non-attached, free from all desires and hopes, you are one and homogeneous without any parts, you are devoid of ego-sense: and you assume the doership of actions and you appear to experience the diversity, whether this is really true and factual or unreal and fictitious.

Hail, hail to you, O self, who has manifested as this limitless universe. Hail to the self which is supreme peace. Hail to you, O self, who is beyond the reach of the scriptures. Hail to you, O self, who is the basis and the goal of all scriptures. Hail to you, O self, who is born and who dwells in all creatures. Hail to you, O self, who is unborn. Hail to you, O self, who undergoes change and destruction. Hail to you, O self, that is unchanging and indestructible. Hail to you, O self, that is existence: hail to you, O self, that is non-existence. Hail to you, O self, that is conquerable, that can be attained. Hail to you, O self, that is invincible and beyond reach.

I am delighted. I am in a state of utter equilibrium and of supreme peace. I stand unmoving. I have reached self-knowledge. I am the victor. I live to conquer. Salutations to myself; salutations to you. As long as you, O my self, exist as the pure untainted reality, where is bondage, where is misfortune, where is good fortune, where is birth or death? I shall rest for ever in supreme peace.

## section V - chapter 37 38

daityodyogena vibudhastato yajnatapahkriyah tena samsarasamsthanam na  
samsarakramo nyatha (38/16)

Vasistha continued:

After thus contemplating, Prahlada entered into the state in which there is no mental modification at all, but where there is supreme bliss, undisturbed by the movement of thought. He sat where he was, like a statue.

A very long time passed in this manner. The demons tried their best to disturb him: they could not. A thousand years went by. The demons concluded that he was dead.

Anarchy prevailed in the netherworld. Hiranyakasipu was dead; and his son remained dead to the world. No one else ascended the throne. The demons roamed the country freely, guided solely by their whims and fancies. There was utter disorder and the strong overpowered the weak, even as in the ocean the big fish swallow the small ones.

In the meantime, the protector of the universe lord Visnu who was reclining on his serpent-couch in the ocean of milk contemplated the state of the universe. In his own mind he saw the heaven and the earth and satisfied himself that everything was in order in those regions. Then, he saw the state of the netherworld. He perceived that Prahlada was deeply immersed in the transcendental state of consciousness. Freed from harassment by the demons, the gods in heaven enjoyed a run-away prosperity.

Seeing this, Lord Visnu thought:

Since Prahlada is immersed in the transcendental state of consciousness, the leaderless demons have lost their power. In the absence of a threat from the demons, the gods in heaven have nothing to fear and hence nothing to hate. If they have nothing to fear or hate, they will soon rise to the transcendental state of consciousness, beyond the pairs of opposites, and attain liberation! Then, the earthlings will find religious rites to be meaningless, since there are no gods to propitiate. This universe, which ought to exist till the natural cosmic dissolution, will thus abruptly cease to be. I do not see any good in this: hence, I think that the demons should continue to live as demons. **If the demons function as the enemies of the gods, religious and righteous actions shall prevail in this creation: and thus will this creation continue to exist and flourish, not otherwise.**

Hence, I shall presently go to the netherworld and re-establish it as it should be. If Prahlada shows no interest in ruling that realm, I shall appoint someone else in his place. Surely, this is the last incarnation of Prahlada and he shall live in this embodiment till the end of this worldcycle. Such is the world-order. Hence, I shall go to the netherworld and roar to awaken Prahlada. I shall persuade him to rule the realm whilst enjoying the consciousness of liberation. Thus shall I be able to sustain this creation till its natural dissolution.

## section V - chapter 39

stlhatavyamiha dehena kalpam yavadanena te vayam hi niyatim vidmo  
yathabhutamaninditam (24)

Vasistha continued:

Thus resolved, lord Visnu quickly reached the netherworld. In his radiance the demons gained new strength and vitality; but dazzled by his divine light they ran away. Visnu approached where Prahlada was seated, and roared aloud: "Noble one, wake up!" and at the same time blew his conch. Hearing this the demons fell down and the gods rejoiced.

The life-force began to vibrate in the crown of Prahlada's head. The life-force then spread throughout his body. The senses gained energy and they began to apprehend their respective objects. The mind began to function. The nadis (nerves?) began to vibrate. The mind began to become aware of its physical encasing, the body. Prahlada was fully awake to his surroundings and gazed upon the Lord.

Lord Visnu said to Prahlada:

Remember, O Prahlada, your identity as such, and as the ruler of the netherworld. You have nothing whatsoever either to acquire or to reject: arise. **You have to remain in this body till the end of this world-cycle: I know this as inevitable, as I know the law of this world-order.** Hence, you have to rule this realm here and now as a sage liberated from all delusion.

The time for cosmic dissolution is not yet: why do you vainly wish to abandon this body? The signs, symptoms and events that naturally precede such natural cosmic dissolution are not yet seen: why do you vainly wish to abandon this body? I exist. All this world and the creatures in it exist. Hence, do not think of abandoning your body yet.

He is fit to die who is sunk in ignorance and sorrow. He who grieves, thinking "I am weak, miserable, stupid" etc., is fit to die. He who is swayed by countless desires and hopes and he whose mind is restless, is fit to die. He who is subject to the pairs of opposites like happiness and unhappiness, who is attached to this body, who is distressed physically and mentally, whose heart has dried up through the fires of lust and anger, is fit to experience death. People regard that as death when one abandons the body!

Living is appropriate to one whose mind is well controlled by his self-knowledge, and who is aware of the truth. He should live who does not entertain notions of egoism and who is unattached to anything, who is free from likes and dislikes and has a calm mind, whose mind has reached the state of no-mind. It is proper that he should live who is established in the perception of the truth and who functions here as if playfully, who is inwardly neither elated nor depressed by external events, who is free from the desire to acquire or to reject. He, hearing of whom or listening to whom, people experience great joy - life alone is appropriate to him, and not death.

## section V - chapter 40

dehasamstho pyadehatvad adeho si videhadrk vyomasamstho pyasakttatvad  
avyomeva hi marutah (4)

The Lord continued:

The functioning or the existence of the body is known as the state of living, according to the people; and the abandonment of the body in order to get another body is known as death. You are free from these two notions, O Prahlada: to you what is death and what is life! I was only using the popular notions to explain myself to you: in truth, you neither live nor die. **Even though you are in the body, since you do not have the body, you are bodiless. You are the observer which is immaterial intelligence: just as, though air exists in space it is not attached to space, and hence it is free from spatial limitation.** Yet, in a manner of speaking you are the body since you experience sensations through the body, even as, in a manner of speaking, space is responsible for the growth of a plant in as much as space does not arrest such growth.

You are enlightened. What is a body or embodiment to you? It is only in the eyes of the ignorant that even your form exists. At all times you are the all, you are the supreme inner light of consciousness: what is body or bodilessness to you and what can you hold or abandon? Whether it is springtime or the day of cosmic dissolution, they are nothing to one who has transcended the notions of being and non-being. For, in all conditions, he is firmly established in self-knowledge. Whether all the beings in the universe live or perish, or they prosper, he remains firmly established in self-knowledge.

The supreme Lord dwells in the body, undying when the body dies and unchanging when the body changes. When you have given up the false notions 'I belong to the body' or 'The body belongs to me', then there is no meaning in expressions like 'I shall give it up' or 'I shall not give it up', 'I have done this' and 'I shall do this now'.

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

To such an enlightened person what is there to acquire or to renounce? For it is only when the notions of subject and object have ceased that there is liberation. Such enlightened persons (as you are) live in this world as if they are for ever in a state of deep sleep. Likewise, O Prahlada, perceive this world as if you are half asleep! Enlightened beings do not exult in pleasure nor grieve in pain; they function non-volitionally even as a crystal reflects the objects placed near it without intending to do so. They are fully awake in self-knowledge, but they are asleep, as it were, in relation to the world; they function in this world like children, without ego-sense and all the rest of its retinue. O Prahlada, you have reached the plane of Visnu; rule the netherworld for a world-cycle, which is equal to a day in the life of the creator Brahma.

## section V - chapter 41

idam sukhamidam duhkhamidam na stidamasti me iti dolayitam ceto mudhameva na  
panditam (12)

Prahlada said:

Lord, I was really overcome by fatigue and I took rest for a brief moment. By your grace, I have attained to the realisation in which there is no distinction between contemplation and non-contemplation. You were seen by me for a long time within myself: luckily, you are now seen in front of me. I have experienced the truth of the infinite consciousness within myself, in which there is no sorrow, no delusion, no concern with dispassion, no desire to abandon the body and no fear of this world-appearance. When the one single reality is known, where is sorrow, where is destruction, what is body, what is world-appearance, what is fear or its absence? I was in that state of consciousness which spontaneously arose in me.

'Oh, I am disgusted with this world and I shall abandon it,' such thoughts arise only in the ignorant. Only the ignorant think that there is sorrow when there is body and that there is no sorrow once the body is abandoned. 'This is pleasure', 'this is pain', 'this is', 'this is not' - only the mind of the ignorant swings like this, not of the wise. Notions of 'I' and the 'other' exist only in the minds of the ignorant who have left wisdom far behind. 'This is to be acquired' and 'This is to be abandoned', such thoughts arise only in the minds of the ignorant. When everything is pervaded by you, where is 'another' which can be acquired or abandoned? The entire universe is pervaded by consciousness: what is to be acquired and what abandoned?

I was naturally enquiring of myself in myself, and rested just for a moment without any notions of being or non-being, of acquisition or rejection. I have attained self-knowledge now: and I shall do whatever pleases you. Pray, accept my worshipful adoration.

After receiving Prahlada's worship, Lord Visnu said to him:

Arise, O Prahlada: I shall presently anoint you king of the netherworld while the gods and the sages who are here sing your glories. (After thus crowning him king of the netherworld, he continued:) Be thou ruler of the netherworld as long as the sun and the moon shine. Protect this realm without being swayed by desire, fear or hate and looking upon all with equal vision. Enjoy the royal pleasures and may all prosperity attend you: but act in such a way that neither the gods in heaven nor the humans on earth are unduly agitated or worried. Engage yourself in appropriate action, without being swayed by thoughts and motives. Thus will you not be bound by actions. O Prahlada, you know everything already; what need have you to be instructed? From now the gods and the demons will live in friendship; the goddesses and the demonesses will live in harmony. O king, keep ignorance at a great distance from you and live an enlightened life, ruling this world for a very long time to come.

## section V - chapter 42

atmavalokanena su madhavah paridrsyate madhavaradhanena su svayamatma  
valokyate (21)

Vasistha continued:

Having said thus, lord Visnu left the realm of the demons. By the grace and with the blessings of the Lord, the gods in heaven, the demons in the netherworld and the humans on earth lived happily, without distress.

Thus I have narrated to you, O Rama, the auspicious story of Prahlada, which is capable of destroying all the impurities of one's heart. They who contemplate this narrative will soon attain a higher state of consciousness, even if they have been very wicked and sinful. Even a simple investigation of this narrative will destroy all sins; but if the investigation is of a yogic nature, surely it will lead to supreme realisation. Sin is only ignorance and it is destroyed by enquiry; hence one should never abandon enquiry.

Rama asked:

How was it, O Lord, that Prahlada who was in the highest state of non-dual consciousness was awakened by the conch-sound?

Vasistha replied:

O Rama, liberation is of two kinds 'with body' and 'without body'. That state of liberation in which the mind is totally unattached to anything (neither to actions involving acquisition nor to renunciation) and in which there is no craving at all, is known as 'liberation with body'. That itself is known as 'liberation without body' when the body drops.

In the case of the 'liberation with body', all the tendencies and mental conditioning are like fried seeds incapable of giving rise to future embodiment: but there still remains the conditioning of such purity, expansiveness and self-knowledge, though even this conditioning is unintentional and non-volitional (as in a sleeping person). As long as this trace remains, the sage who is 'liberated with body' can be awakened to world-consciousness even after a hundred years of inward contemplation. Such was the state of Prahlada and hence he 'awoke' to the sound of the conch.

Moreover, lord Visnu is the self of all and whatever notion arises in him materialises immediately. His manifestation is uncaused, but it has the sole purpose of creating the infinite creatures in this universe. **By the attainment of self-knowledge, lord Visnu is realised; and by the adoration of lord Visnu, self-realisation is attained.**

O Rama, reach the vision which Prahlada had and engage yourself in ceaseless enquiry: you will reach the supreme state. This world deludes one only as long as the sun of self-enquiry does not arise in one's heart. When one obtains the grace of the self and of lord Visnu, he is not troubled by the ghost of this illusory world-appearance.

## section V - chapter 43

aradhaya tmana tmanamatmana tmanamarcaya atmana tmanamalokya samtisthasva  
tmana tmani (19)

Rama asked:

Holy sir, you said that Prahlada attained enlightenment by the grace of lord Visnu. If everything is achieved by self-effort, why was he not able to attain enlightenment without Visnu's grace?

Vasistha replied:

Surely, whatever Prahlada attained was through self-effort, O Rama, not otherwise. Visnu is the self and the self is Visnu: the distinction is verbal. It was the self of Prahlada that generated in itself devotion to Visnu. Prahlada obtained from Visnu, who was his own self, the boon of self-enquiry; and through such enquiry attained self-knowledge. At times one attains self-knowledge through self-enquiry undertaken through self-effort; at times this self-effort manifests as devotion to Visnu who is also the self, and thus one attains enlightenment.

Even if one worships Visnu for a long time with great devotion, he does not bestow enlightenment on one who is not wise with self-knowledge. Thus, the foremost means for self-knowledge is self-enquiry; grace and such other factors are secondary means. Hence, attain mastery over the senses and by whole-souled spiritual practice lead the mind along the path of self-enquiry. Resort to self-effort and cross this ocean of world-appearance and reach the other shore.

If you think that lord Visnu can be seen without self-effort, why do the birds and beasts not get uplifted by him? If it is true that the guru can spiritually uplift one without the need for self-effort, then why does a guru not so uplift a camel or a bull? No, nothing whatsoever is gained with the help of god or guru or wealth or other means, but only by self-effort at a complete mastery of the mind. What cannot be attained by the resolute practice of self-mastery coupled with uncolouredness (freedom from every form of mental conditioning) cannot be attained by any other means in the three worlds.

**Hence, adore the self by the self, worship the self by the self, behold the self by the self, and be firmly established by the self in the self.** The cult of devotion to Visnu has been founded with the intention of possibly inducing those people who have turned away from the study of scriptures, from self-effort and from self-enquiry, to do something good. Determined and persistent self-effort is considered the best: in its absence, other forms of worship are prescribed. If there is complete mastery of the senses, of what use is worship; and if there is no mastery of the senses, of what use is worship? Without self-enquiry and the consequent inner tranquillity, neither devotion to lord Visnu nor self-knowledge is possible. Hence, resort to self-enquiry and the practice of cessation of distraction and thus adore the self: if you are successful in this, you have attained perfection; if not, you are no more than a wild donkey.

## section V - chapter 43

etadapyatmanaiva tma phalamapnoti bhasitam haripujakramakhyena nimittena  
risudana (33)

Vasistha continued:

Just as you perform worship of lord Visnu and others, why do you not worship your own self? Lord Visnu in fact dwells as the innermost being of all: they are surely the worst among men who, abandoning the indweller, seek Visnu outside. The Lord's primary dwelling is the heartcave of all beings: that is his eternal body. The form that is seen with the conch, discus, mace etc., is the secondary form of the self. He who abandons the primary truth and runs after the secondary aspects is like one who throws away a proven remedy and struggles in vain to effect a cure by other means. He who is unable to contemplate with one-pointed attention the indwelling self and who is therefore unable to attain wisdom of the self, might engage himself in the worship of the external form of lord Visnu. By the very effort involved in such practice the mind will gradually become purified and uncoloured. In the course of time when this practice is continued with intelligence and wisdom, there arises joy and peace in the heart and one attains maturity and ripeness for self-knowledge. In fact, **this fruition that I have mentioned is derived from the self: the worship of lord Visnu (as it is called) is but an excuse for it.**

Whatever boons or blessings are obtained from lord Visnu are in fact obtained from the self alone by one who practises enquiry into the nature of the self. All these different practices and all the blessings that seem to accrue from them are all based on the understanding and the mastery of one's own mind, even as the earth is the basis for all the diverse foodstuff. In fact, even for ploughing the soil or turning a rock there is no way but the mastery of one's own mind!

One may revolve on the wheel of birth and death for a thousand lifetimes: this will not cease till one has fully mastered the mind and till that mind has come to a state of supreme peace and equanimity. No one in the three worlds, not even the gods or the members of the trinity, can save a man from the torments of a wayward mind.

Hence, O Rama, abandon all the illusory appearances of objective phenomena, whether they appear to be within you or outside you. Contemplate the sole reality of consciousness for the cessation of repeated birth. Taste the pure consciousness (which is, in truth, the very essence of all that exists) by resolutely renouncing objectivity of consciousness (all the concepts and percepts) and contemplating the changeless consciousness which is infinite. You will surely cross this river of world-appearance and rebirth.

## section V - chapter 44

rama paryavasaneyam maya samsrtinamika atmacittajayenaiva ksayamayati na  
nyatha (1)

Vasistha continued:

**O Rama, this cycle of birth and death is an interminable one; this Maya ceases only by the mastery of one's own heart (mind), not otherwise.** To illustrate this, there is a legend which I shall presently narrate to you.

In this world there is a region known as Kosala. In it there was a brahmana known as Gadhi. He was very learned and the very embodiment of dharma. Right from his very childhood he was filled with the spirit of renunciation and dispassion. Once this brahmana went away to the forest in order to practise austerity. Desiring to behold Visnu, he entered the water of a river and there began to recite various mantras, which soon completely purified his being.

After a period of eight months, lord Visnu appeared there and said to him: "Ask of me the boon of your choice."

The brahmana said:

"Lord, I wish to behold your own illusory power (Maya) which deludes all beings and keeps them in ignorance."

Lord Visnu said:

"You will behold my Maya and then you will at once abandon the illusory perception of objects."

After lord Visnu disappeared, Gadhi rose from the water. He was highly pleased. For several days thereafter, Gadhi engaged himself in various holy activities, constantly immersed in the bliss which had resulted from his vision of lord Visnu.

One day, he went to the river for his bath, still meditating upon the words of lord Visnu. While he immersed himself in the water, he beheld himself dead and mourned by all. His body had fallen and his face had become pale and lifeless.

He saw himself surrounded by very many relatives who were all weeping and wailing aloud; they were inconsolably grief-stricken. His wife was shedding tears as if a dam had been breached, and she had caught hold of his feet. His mother, beside herself with grief, had caught hold of his face and was weeping bitter tears and crying aloud. He was surrounded by a number of grief-stricken relatives.

He saw himself lying silent, as if asleep or in deep meditation; he was taking a long rest, as it were. He listened to all the weeping and wailing of the relatives and wondered "What does all this mean?"; he was curious about the nature of friendship and relationship.

Soon the relatives carried his body away to the crematorium. After the performance of the funeral rites, they placed the body on the funeral pyre. They set the pyre alight and soon the body of Gadhi was consumed by the fire.

## section V - chapter 45

evam sa svapaco rajyam prapa kirapurantare aranyam harinam pustamapranamiva  
vayasah (44)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, Gadhi, who still remained immersed in the river, then saw that he was in the region known as Bhutamandalam as a foetus in the womb of a tribal woman. He was surrounded by filth and flesh in the body of that woman. In course of time, he was born as her son. For a time he wallowed in his own excreta. He was dark in colour like his parents. He was well-beloved in the family.

Soon he grew up into a robust young man. He was a good hunter. He got married to a tribeswoman. He roamed the forest freely. He led a nomadic life, sometimes sleeping under a tree, sometimes hiding himself in a bush and sometimes making a cave his abode. And, he became a father. His children were as violent and wicked as he was.

He had a large family. He had numerous relations and friends. He grew old. He did not die, but one by one he lost all his friends and relatives to death. Disgusted, he left his native realm and wandered away to foreign lands. Aimlessly he wandered in many countries.

One day, while thus wandering from one place to another, he entered a kingdom which was obviously very rich and prosperous. He was walking along the main road of the capital city of this kingdom. He saw in front of him a huge royal elephant which had been richly caparisoned.

This royal elephant had a mission. The king who ruled over that kingdom had just died without an heir. In accordance with the custom, the royal elephant had been commissioned to find a suitable successor. It was looking for a suitable person, even as a jeweller might look for a precious gem.

The hunter looked at the elephant for some time with a mixture of curiosity and wonder. The elephant picked him up with its trunk and quickly placed him on its own back. At that very moment there arose in that city a tumultuous sound of drums and bugles. The people everywhere exclaimed in great joy "Long live the king". The elephant had chosen the king.

Very soon, the hunter was surrounded by the members of the royal court. The beautiful women of the court surrounded him and began to dress him and adorn him with princely garments and jewels. They garlanded him; they applied various unguents and perfumes. The hunter shone as a radiant king. And they crowned him while he was seated on a throne on the back of that very elephant. **Thus a tribesman and hunter became the king of Kirapura!** Thereafter he enjoyed all the royal pleasures and privileges.

By and by, the very nature of his position taught him the art of ruling the kingdom: he became a well-known king named Gavala.

## section V - chapter 46

kim me jivitaduhkhena maranam me mahotsavah lokanindyasya durjantor  
jivitanmaranam varam (43)

Vasistha continued:

Gavala, the king, devoutly served by the maids of the palace and by his ministers, had totally forgotten his humble origin. Thus eight years passed. And, he ruled the kingdom justly and wisely, with compassion and purity.

One day he roamed out of his inner apartments alone, and unadorned with regal dress and royal insignia: people who are conscious of their excellence ignore external adornments. Outside the palace he saw a group of tribesmen who were singing familiar songs. Quietly he joined them and also began to sing with them.

An aged tribesman recognised him and rising from the crowd addressed him: "O Katanja! Does the king of this place bestow good gifts and presents upon you in recognition of your musical accomplishments? Ah, I am delighted to see you: who will not rejoice to meet an old friend again?" Gavala ignored this: but the ladies of the royal household and the members of the court, who were watching from a distance, were shocked. The king quickly returned to the palace.

But, the royal servants and the members of the court had not recovered from the shock of the realisation that their king was an unworthy tribesman, whom they would not even knowingly touch. They began to avoid him; they treated him as if he were a putrid corpse.

Thus neglected by his ministers, servants and the ladies-in-waiting who used to adorn him, Gavala began to appear in his real form - as a dark and ugly tribesman, hideous to look at, like a crematorium. Even the citizens avoided him and ran away at his very sight. He felt utterly lonely though he was living in the palace, surrounded by the people; he felt like a destitute person though he was king. Even if he tried to talk to them, the people would not respond or answer him!

The leaders of the community held counsel among themselves and began to talk: "Alas, we have been polluted by the touch of this tribesman who lives on the flesh of dogs. There is no expiation for this pollution, other than death. Let us raise a huge pyre and throw our sullied bodies into it and thus purify our souls." Having decided thus, they gathered firewood with which they built a huge funeral pyre. One by one they threw themselves into it. With all the elders thus having ended their lives, there was disorder and anarchy in the city.

The king Gavala reflected:

"Alas, all this was brought about by me! **Why should I continue to live: death is preferable to life. For one who is dishonoured by the people death is better than life.**" Thus resolved, the king Gavala calmly offered his body, too, into the fire. As fire began to consume the limbs of Gavala, Gadhi, who was reciting prayers immersed in the water of the river, regained his consciousness.

At this stage, evening set in. Another day came to an end.

## section V - chapter 47

manorajyamapi prajna labhante vyavasayinah gadhina svapnasamdrstam gatva  
labdhamakhanditam (37)

Vasistha continued:

Thereafter, Gadhi had become freed from the illusory vision he had. Once again he regained his consciousness that 'I am Gadhi'. He completed his religious rite and got out of the river. He continued to wonder, 'Who am I? What did I see? And how?' He concluded that because he was fatigued his mind had obviously played some tricks on him. Even as he walked away from the place, he was still contemplating the vision and enquiring into the nature of the parents, the friends and the people he had seen in that vision. He thought, "Surely, all that was illusory, for I do not perceive anything now!"

After some days, another brahmana visited him; and Gadhi duly entertained the honoured guest. During the course of their conversation, Gadhi asked the guest: "Sir, why do you look so tired and worn-out?" The guest answered: "Holy one, I shall tell you the truth! There is a kingdom in the north known as Kira. I spent a month there, being lavishly entertained by the citizens. I heard an extraordinary story from them. They said: "A tribesman ruled this kingdom for eight years. After that his identity became known. On account of him very many brahmanas of this place perished." When I heard that, I too felt polluted and hence I went to the holy place known as Prayaga and engaged myself in severe austerity and prolonged fasting. I am breaking this prolonged fast only today." The guest spent the night with Gadhi and left the following day.

Gadhi contemplated further:

"That which I saw in a hallucination, my guest saw as a factual event! Ah, I should verify the story for myself." Having thus resolved, Gadhi quickly proceeded first to the place known as Bhutamandala. **Men of highly evolved consciousness can, by appropriate self-effort, attain even what they mentally visualise: Gadhi thus saw, after reaching the destination, whatever he had seen in his vision.**

There he saw a village which had been deeply impressed in his consciousness. He saw the very house of the tribesman (himself) and he saw the very objects which were used by him. The house was in a very bad shape. He saw there skeletons of animals whose flesh had been eaten by the family: for some time he saw that dreadful place which looked truly like a cemetery. From there he went to the nearby village and asked the villagers: "Do you know anything about that tribesman who lived in yonder house?"

The villagers replied:

"Holy sir, of course we know. There was a dreadful-looking and fierce tribesman in that house who lived up to a ripe old age. When he had lost all his kinsmen he went away and became a king of Kira and ruled for eight years. He was found out and as a result many people died and he too killed himself. Pray, why do you ask about him? Was he related to you or do you think you are somehow related to him?" Hearing this, Gadhi was greatly puzzled.

## section V - chapter 48

gadhe svadhividhutasya svarupasyaitadatmakam cetaso drstatattvasya  
yatpasyatyuruvibhramam (48)

Vasistha continued:

Gadhi recognised several objects and places connected with his 'life' in that village - where he lay intoxicated, where he slept, where he ate, the dress he wore, etc. From there Gadhi travelled to the Kira kingdom. He went to the capital city and there he enquired of the citizens: "Was this country ruled by a tribesman some time ago?" They replied enthusiastically: "Oh, yes: and he ruled for eight years, having been chosen by the royal elephant! When his identity was discovered, he committed suicide. It was twelve years ago."

Just then he beheld the king come out of the palace with his retinue: and the king was disguised lord Visnu! Seeing all this, he wondered: this indeed is the kingdom of Kira which I ruled not so long ago, which I see now as if it happened in a past birth! He asked himself, "It was like a dream: yet, it appears in front of me in the wakeful state! Alas, I am surely caught in the net of some sort of hallucination. I remember now that lord Visnu had granted me the boon that I would see his Maya. Surely, this is it." He left the city at once and went to a mountain-cave nearby and there performed intense austerity.

Soon, lord Visnu appeared before him and asked him to choose any boon he liked. Gadhi asked the Lord: "The hallucination that I had as in a dream, how is it also seen in the wakeful state?"

The Lord said:

**O Gadhi! That which you see now is an illusion: it is truly naught but the self, but perceived by the mind which has not been purified and which has not realised the truth.** There is nothing outside the self: just as the tree is in the seed, all this is already in the mind and the mind sees it as if it is outside. It is the mind alone that perceives all this now, visualises all this as if in the future and remembers all this as if in the past. It is the mind alone that is experienced as dream, illusion, illness, etc. In the mind are countless 'events' like flowers on a tree in full bloom. And, just as an uprooted tree bears no flowers, the mind freed of percepts and concepts is freed from rebirth etc.

Is it any wonder that the mind which contains countless thought-forms should be able to manifest the idea "I am a tribesman"? Even so, the same mind manifests other ideas like "I have a brahmana-guest who told me the story, etc." and "I am going to Bhutamandalam" and "I am in Kira kingdom now". All this was but hallucination! Thus, O Holy one, you have seen both forms of illusion: the one which you yourself thought was illusion and the other which you think is reality - both of which are hallucination in truth. You entertained no guest, and you did not go anywhere! All this, too, was but hallucination. You have really not been to Bhutamandalam or the Kira kingdom - all these were also illusions. Arise, O sage, engage yourself in whatever action is appropriate here: for without such activity, one does not attain what is worthy in this life!

## section V - chapter 49

tathahi bahavah svapnamekam pasyanti manavah svapabhramada maireyamada  
manthara cittavat (11)

Vasistha continued:

In order to reassure himself, Gadhi once again went over to Bhutamandalam etc. Once again he heard the same stories from the people over there. Once again, he adored lord Visnu, who once again appeared before him. Gadhi asked the Lord: "Lord, I roamed for six months in the two realms and heard the same stories which the people there narrate as true. Pray, clear this confusion."

The Lord said:

O Gadhi, these incidents are reflected in your mind, though they took place unrelated to you, even as there appears to be a coincidental connection between the crow alighting upon a cocoanut tree and a cocoanut falling to the ground. Hence, they narrate the same story which you believe to be yours! Such coincidence is not uncommon: sometimes the same illusion is perceived by many. **Sometimes many people have the same dream: several people experience the same hallucination and many drunkards may all of them simultaneously experience that the world is revolving around them.** Several children play at the same game.

Such confusion may arise in the minds of people in regard to time, too. Time is a concept of the mind. Time is related to certain phenomena in a mutual causal relationship. Lord Visnu disappeared, and Gadhi contemplated for a long time. Once again he prayed and the Lord appeared before him.

Gadhi prayed to him:

"Lord, I am utterly confused by your Maya. Pray remove this confusion by appropriate means."

And the Lord said:

Whatever you saw in the Bhutamandalam and Kira were possibly true. The tribesman known as Katanja was indeed born some time ago. He lost his kinsmen and became king of Kira. All this was reflected in your consciousness. Even as the mind sometimes forgets what it actually experienced, it also thinks it has experienced what it has never seen. Just as one sees dreams and visions, one experiences hallucinations even during the wakeful state. Though Katanja lived several years ago, it appeared to be in the present in your consciousness.

'This I am' - such a concept does not arise in the person who has self-knowledge but only in the mind of an ignorant person. 'I am the all' - knowing thus the knower of truth does not drown in sorrow; he does not grasp finite objects productive of sorrow. Hence, he is not swayed by joy and sorrow.

Because you are not fully enlightened your mind clings to the illusion of objective perception, of concepts. This Maya is spread out in all directions: he who remains established in the centre is free from delusion. Get up and meditate intensely for ten years.

Gadhi engaged himself in intense meditation thereafter and attained self-realisation. After that, he lived as a liberated sage, free from fear and sorrow.

## section V - chapter 50

vartamanamanayasam bhajad bahyadhiya ksanam bhutam bhavisyadabhajad yati  
cittamacittatam (16)

Vasistha continued:

This cosmic illusion (Maya) creates great delusion and is of the nature of disequilibrium. It is extremely difficult to understand it. What comparison is there between a hallucination which lasts for the brief duration of an hour's dream, and a whole life-time as a tribesman with all the varied experiences? Again, how can we relate what is seen in that hallucination and what is seen 'in front of our eyes'? Or, what is truly unreal and what has really undergone a factual transformation? Hence, I tell you, O Rama, this cosmic illusion leads the unwary mind into endless difficulties.

Rama asked:

But, O holy sir, how can one restrain this wheel of cosmic illusion which revolves with such tremendous force?

Vasistha replied:

O Rama, the mind is the hub around which this vicious cycle revolves, creating delusion in the minds of the deluded. It is by firmly restraining that hub through intense self-effort and keen intelligence, that the whole wheel is brought to a standstill. When the hub's motion is stopped, the wheel does not revolve: when the mind is stilled, illusion ceases. One who does not know this trick and does not practise it, undergoes endless sorrow; the moment the truth is seen, behold! the sorrow comes to an end.

The disease of the perception of this world-illusion is not cured except through the mastery of the mind which is its only remedy. Hence, O Rama, abandon all other activities like pilgrimage, gifts and austerities, and bring the mind under your control for your ultimate good. This world-appearance abides in the mind, even as there is space within the pot; if the pot is broken, the illusory division of space vanishes; and if the mind ceases to be, the concept of a world within the mind also ceases to be. Even as an insect trapped within the pot attains freedom of movement when the pot is broken, you will also enjoy freedom when the mind ceases to be, along with the world-illusion contained in it.

**Live in the present, with your consciousness externalised momentarily but without any effort: when the mind stops linking itself to the past and to the future, it becomes no-mind.** If from moment to moment your mind dwells on what is and drops it effortlessly at once, the mind becomes no-mind, full of purity. It is only as long as the mind continues to be agitated that it experiences the diversity of its own projection or expansion, even as rain falls only as long as there are clouds. And, it is only as long as the infinite consciousness limits itself into the finite mind, that such agitation and expansion take place. If consciousness ceases to be the finite mind, then know that the very roots of cyclic world-illusion (of birth and death) are burnt and there is perfection.

## section V - chapter 50

cetanam cittarikttam hi pratyakcetanamucyate nirmanaskasvabhavam tanna tatra  
kalanamalah (21)

Vasistha continued:

**Consciousness free from the limitations of the mind is known as the inner intelligence: it is the essential nature of no-mind, and therefore it is not tainted by the impurities of concepts and percepts.** That is the reality, that is supreme auspiciousness, that is the state known as the supreme self, that is omniscience - and that vision is not had when the wicked mind functions. Where there is mind, there flourish hopes and desires, and there arise the experiences of pain and pleasure. The consciousness which has been awakened to the truth does not fall into concepts and percepts: therefore, even though it seems to undergo various psychological experiences, it does not give rise to the world-illusion and the cycle of world-appearance.

In the case of those who have been awakened through the study of scriptures, company of holy men and unceasing and vigilant practice of truth, their consciousness has reached the pure state of non-objectiveness. Hence, one should forcefully uplift one's mind from the state of ignorance and vacillation and apply it to the study of scriptures and to the company of holy sages.

The self alone is the sole aid for the realisation of the supreme self or the infinite consciousness. It is one's own self that strives to abandon one's own sorrow; and for this the realisation of one's own self by oneself is the only course.

Hence, O Rama, while yet remaining active in this world (talking, taking and leaving etc.) be without the mind and realise that you are pure consciousness. Abandon notions such as 'This is mine', 'That is he', 'This I am' and be established in the consciousness of undivided oneness. As long as the body lasts, consider the present and the future with an equanimous consciousness. Be for ever established in the consciousness of the self in all states - youth, manhood and old age, pleasure and pain, in the waking, dream and sleep states. Abandon the impurity of objective perception, hopes and desires: remain established in self-knowledge. Give up notions of auspicious and inauspicious happenings, give up visions of the desirable and undesirable: know that you are the essence of consciousness. Realise that subject, object and actions do not touch you: remain as pure consciousness without any disturbance in it. Know 'I am the all' and live in the waking state as if in deep sleep. Be freed from conditions known as duality and non-duality: and remain in a state of equilibrium which is a state of pure consciousness and freedom. Realise that this cosmic consciousness is indivisible into 'I' and 'the other'; thus remain firm and unshakable.

## section V - chapter 50

bhogabhogatiraskaraih karsyam neyam sanairmanah rasapaharais tajjnena kalena  
jirnarnavat (56)

Vasistha continued:

Cut off all the fetters of desire and hope solely with the intelligence that is unlimited and which is endowed with patience and perseverance, and go beyond dharma and adharma. When one is firmly rooted in self-knowledge, even the worst of poisons turns into immortalising nectar. It is only when this self-knowledge is overpowered by ignorance that the delusion of world-appearance arises in the mind; but when one is firmly established in self-knowledge - which is infinite, unlimited and unconditioned - then the delusion or ignorance that gave rise to world-appearance comes to an end. Then, the light of your wisdom will radiate in the four directions, throughout the world.

To one who thus drinks the nectar of immortality in the shape of self-knowledge, the delights of sense-pleasures become painful. We resort to the company of only those who have attained self-knowledge; the others are donkeys in human garb. Even as elephants move with long strides, the sages who have reached the higher states of consciousness rise to the highest states of consciousness. They have no external help at all and no sun illumines their path: self-knowledge alone is their light. In fact, the sun and the worlds become non-objects of perception to them who have gone beyond the realm of objective perception and knowledge, even as lamps lose their luminosity while the midday sun shines.

The sage of self-knowledge (the knower of truth) is supreme amongst those who are radiant, glorious, strong, great and endowed with other characteristics which are considered marks of excellence. These sages shine in this world like the sun, the fire, the moon, and the stars all put together. On the other hand, they who have not attained self-knowledge are worse than worms and insects.

The ghost of delusion afflicts one only as long as self-knowledge does not arise in him. The ignorant man is for ever sorrowful, though he roams everywhere to get rid of it. He is truly a walking corpse. Only the sage of self-knowledge is a living sentient being. Even as when dense clouds form in the sky the sun's light is veiled, when the mind becomes gross with impurities and ignorance, the light of self-knowledge is veiled. **Therefore, one should abandon craving for pleasures (those that have been experienced in the past and others that have not yet been experienced but for which one craves) and thus gradually weaken the mind by the abandonment of a taste for them.** By the cultivation of a false relationship with what is not self (the body and those related to it such as wife, son, family etc.), the mind becomes gross. The notions of 'I' and 'mine' make the mind dense and ignorant. This is further aggravated by old age, sorrow, ambitions, psychological distress, efforts to acquire and to abandon, attachments, greed, lust for wealth and sex and by the enjoyment of sense-pleasures, all of which are based on ignorance and delusion.

## section V - chapter 50

citena cetah samamasu nitva suddhena ghorastramiva strayukttya ciraya sadho  
tyaja cancalatvam vimarkato vrksa iva ksatasrih (84)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, this mind is like a tree which is firmly rooted in the vicious field known as the body. Worries and anxieties are its blossoms; it is laden with the fruits of old age and disease; it is adorned with the flowers of desires and sense-enjoyments; hopes and longings are its branches; and perversities are its leaves. Cut down this deadly poisonous tree, which looks as unshakable as the mountain, with the sharp axe known as enquiry.

O Rama, this mind is like an elephant which roams the forest known as the body. Its vision is clouded by delusion; it has entered into the one (conditioned and ignorant) side; it is incapable of resting in its own self-bliss; it is violent; though it wishes to perceive the truth which it hears from wise men, it is caught up in the perception of diversity and it is conditioned by its own concepts of pleasure and pain; it is endowed with the fierce tusks of lust, etc. O Rama, you are a lion among princes! Tear this elephant to pieces by your sharp intelligence.

O Rama, this mind is like a crow which dwells in the nest of this body. It revels in filth; it waxes strong by consuming flesh; it pierces the hearts of others; it knows only its own point of view which it considers as the truth; it is dark on account of its ever-growing stupidity; it is full of evil tendencies; and it indulges in violent expressions. It is a burden on earth, O Rama: drive it far, far away from yourself.

O Rama, this mind is like a ghost. It is served by the female goblin known as craving; it rests in the forest of ignorance; it roams in countless bodies out of delusion. How can one attain self-knowledge if one does not lay this ghost with the help of wisdom and dispassion, the grace of the guru, self-effort, chanting of mantras, etc. ?

O Rama, this mind is like a venomous serpent which has killed countless beings; destroy this with the help of the eagle of the appropriate contemplative formula or instruction.

O Rama, this mind is like a monkey. It roams from one place to another, seeking fruits (rewards, pleasures, etc.); bound to this world-cycle it dances and entertains people. Restrain it from all sides if you wish to attain perfection.

O Rama, this mind is like a cloud of ignorance: dispel it by the repeated renunciation of all concepts and percepts.

Even as a terrible weapon is encountered and destroyed by a more powerful weapon, tranquillise the mind with the help of the mind itself. For ever abandon every form of mental agitation. Remain at peace within yourself like a tree freed from the disturbance caused by monkeys.

## section V - chapter 51

kadopasantamanano dharnidharakandare samesyami silasamyam nirvikalpasamadhina  
(33)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, do not take your stand on concepts and percepts of the mind, which are subtle and sharp; the mind has been put together by time and it has gained great strength in course of time. Bring it under control by wisdom, before time fells this creeper known as the body. By devoutly contemplating my words you will attain supreme bliss.

I shall narrate to you, O Rama, how the sage Uddalaka of yore attained the supreme vision of truth.

In a corner of the earth, there is a great mountain known as Gandhamadana. On one of its peaks there was a great tree. In that region there lived the sage Uddalaka. Even while he was a young boy he aspired to attain supreme wisdom through his own effort. Of course, then he was of little understanding and he had a restless mind, though he had a pure heart. He engaged himself in austerities, in the study of scriptures and so on, and there arose wisdom in him.

While sitting alone one day, the sage Uddalaka reflected thus:

What is liberation, which is said to be the foremost among the objects to be attained, upon attaining which one does not experience sorrow and is not born again? When shall I rest permanently in that state? When will the mental agitations caused by desires and cravings cease? When will I be freed from thoughts like 'This I have done' and 'This I should do'? When will my mind cease to undergo perversities though living in relationship here, even as the lotus though lying on water is not tainted by it? When will I, with the help of the boat of supreme wisdom, cross to the other shore of liberation? When will I be able to look upon the diverse activities of people with the playfulness of a child? When will the mind attain utter quiescence? When will the illusory division between the subjective and the objective experiences cease through the experience of the infinite consciousness? When will I be able to behold this concept, known as time, without being involved in it? **When will I, living in a cave with a mind in utter tranquillity, remain like a rock in a state in which there is no movement of thought at all?**

Thus reflecting, Uddalaka continued his practice of meditation. But his mind continued to be agitated. Some days, however, his mind abandoned external objects and remained in a state of purity. At other times it was greatly disturbed. Greatly distressed by such changing moods, he roamed the forest. One day he reached a lonely spot in the forest which had not been visited by anyone else. There he saw a cave which appeared to be most conducive to the attainment of the state of utter tranquillity and peace. It was delightful in every way with beautiful creepers and flowers around it, with a moderate climate, and it shone as if it had been carved out of an emerald.

## section V - chapter 52

kurangalipatangebhaminastvekaikaso hatah sarvair yukttair anarthais tu  
vyaptasya jna kutah stokham (21)

Vasistha continued:

Uddalaka entered that delightful cave and sat in a meditative posture. Intent on attaining the state of mind without the least movement of thought, he concentrated his attention on the latent tendencies in the mind, and

Uddalaka reflected thus within himself:

O mind, what have you to do with this world-appearance? Wise men do not come into contact with what is called pleasure which turns into pain later on. He who abandons the supreme peace that lies within and goes in search of sense-pleasure, abandons a delightful garden and goes into a bush of poison-herbs. You may go where you like; you will never taste supreme peace except through perfect quiescence. Hence, abandon all hopes and desires. For, all these seemingly wondrous objects of the nature either of being or of non-being, are not meant for your happiness.

Do not perish like the deer which is trapped by the sound of music and bells, nor like the male elephant which is trapped with the help of the female elephant, nor like the fish whose sense of taste leads it to its death in the hook, nor like the moth which is attracted by the sight of a flame and perishes in it, nor like the bee whose sense of smell leads it to the flower, trapped in which it is destroyed when the flower folds up for the night.

**O foolish mind, all these perish being subjected to just one sense-craving (the deer by the sense of hearing, the bee by the sense of smell, the moth by the sense of sight, the elephant by the sense of touch, and the fish by the sense of taste): but you are a victim to all the five temptations; how can you have happiness?** Just as the silk-worm spins its cocoon and gets caught in it, you have woven the web of your own concepts and are caught in it. If you can get rid of all that, attain purity, overcome even the fear of life and death and thus attain to total equanimity, you have achieved the greatest victory. On the other hand, if you cling to this ever-changing phenomenon called the world, you will surely perish in sorrow.

Why do I instruct you thus, O mind: for, if one investigates the truth he discovers that there is no such thing called mind! Mind is but a product of ignorance; when ignorance wears out, then the mind wears out, too. Hence, you are in the process of being worn out. It is unwise and foolish to instruct one who is in the process of disintegrating! Since, day by day you are becoming weaker and weaker, I renounce you; wise men do not teach one who is to be abandoned.

O mind, I am the egoless infinite and homogeneous consciousness; I have nothing to do with you who are the cause of the ego.

## section V - chapter 52

padangusta chiro yavat kanasah pravicaritam na labdho savaham nama kah syad  
ahamiti sthitah (36)

Uddalaka continued to contemplate thus:

The infinite self cannot possibly be squeezed into the mind, any more than an elephant can be squeezed into a wood-apple fruit. The consciousness that, through the process of self-limitation, is confined to finitude (and therefore to concepts and percepts) is known as the mind: this is the result of ignorance and hence I do not accept this. The ego-sense is only a child's ignorant concept and it is believed in by one who does not investigate the truth.

**I have carefully investigated, I have observed everything from the tips of me toes to the top of my head: and I have not found anything of which I could say 'This I am', Who is 'I'?** I am the all-pervading consciousness which is itself not an object of knowledge or knowing and is free from selfhood. I am that which is indivisible, which has no name or change, which is beyond all concepts of unity and diversity, which is beyond measure (small and big) and other than which naught else is. Hence, O mind, I abandon you who are the source of sorrow.

In this body in which there is flesh, blood, bone, etc., who says 'This I am'? Motion is the nature of energy, thinking is inherent in consciousness, old age and death are natural to the body - who says 'This I am'? This is the tongue, these are ears, this is nose, this is motion and these are eyes - who says 'This I am'? I am none of these, nor am I you, O mind, nor these concepts: I am but the infinite consciousness, pure and independent. 'I am all this' - both are expressions of the same truth; naught else is truth.

Alas, for so long I have been victimised by ignorance: but, luckily, I have discovered that which robbed me of self-knowledge! I shall nevermore be the victim of ignorance. Even as the cloud sitting on top of a hill does not belong to the hill, though I seem to be associated with sorrow I am independent of it. In the absence of self-knowledge, there arose ego-sense: but now, I am free of ego-sense. Let the body, the senses and so on be, or perish - I have nothing to do with them. The senses (the eyes, etc.) exist in order to come into contact with their own objects for their own sake: who is the I that is deluded into thinking 'This is I', or 'I see' etc.? These eyes etc. see or experience their objects naturally, without being impelled to do so by previous conditioning. Hence, if actions are performed spontaneously without mental conditioning, their experience will be pure and free from memories of past happiness or unhappiness. Hence, O senses, perform your functions without being hampered by memory. This memory or mental conditioning is not a fact, in truth: it is non-different from and not independent of the infinite consciousness. It can therefore be easily dispelled, merely by not reviving it in consciousness. Hence, O mind, abandon this perception of diversity and realise the unreality of your own independence from the infinite consciousness: that is liberation.

## section V - chapter 53

tena ham nama neha sti bhavabhavopapattiman anahankararupasya sambandhah kena me katham (15)

Uddalaka continued to reflect thus:

In reality, consciousness cannot be conditioned: it is unlimited and is subtler than the subtlest atom, hence beyond the influence of mental conditioning. The mind rests in the ego-sense and the reflected consciousness in the senses; and from this there arises the illusion of self-limitation of consciousness. When this is experienced and thought of again and again, the ego-sense and the illusion of self-limitation acquire a false validity. But, I am consciousness which is untouched by any of these.

Let the body continue to live in a world brought into being by its ignorant activities, or let it abandon it: I am consciousness unaffected by any of these. Consciousness, being infinite and all-pervading, has no birth, no death, nor is it possessed by anyone. It has nothing to gain by 'living' as a separate entity, since it is all-pervading. Birth and death are mental concepts: they have nothing to do with the self. Only that which entertains notions of the ego-sense can be grasped and bound: the self is free from the ego-sense and is therefore beyond being and non-being.

The ego-sense is vain delusion, the mind is like a mirage and the objects of the world are inert substances: who is it that says 'I am'? The body is an aggregate of flesh, blood, etc., the mind vanishes on enquiry into its nature, self-limitation of consciousness and such other concepts are insentient (non-sense) - what is the ego? The senses exist and are engaged in self-satisfying activity all the time; the substances of the world are the substances of the world - where is the ego? Nature is nature and its qualities interact on one another (like the sight and light, hearing and sound, etc.); and what rests in itself - where is the ego?

The self, which is consciousness, exists as the supreme self of all, everywhere in all bodies at all times. Who am I, what am I made of, what is my form, made by whom: and what shall I acquire and what shall I reject? **There is thus nothing which can be called 'I' and which undergoes being and non-being: when there is no ego-sense in truth, how can that ego-sense be related, and to whom?** When thus it is realised that there is no relationship at all, then the false notion of duality vanishes. Thus, whatever there is, is the one cosmic being (Brahman or the self); I am that reality, why do I suffer in delusion? When one alone exists as the pure omnipresent being, how can there even arise something known as the ego-sense? There is no substantiality in any substance in truth, the self alone exists: or, even if one assumes the substantiality to be real, there is no relationship between that and the self. The senses function as senses, the mind exists as mind, the consciousness is untouched by these - what is relationship and how does it come into being? Just because they exist side by side, it is not right to assume a relationship: a stone and an iron rod may lie side by side, totally unrelated to each other.

## section V - chapter 53

ahankarabhramasya sya jatasyakavarnavat apunah smarunam manye nunam  
vismaranam varam (25)

Uddalaka continued to reflect:

It is only when this false ego-sense has arisen that the perverse notions 'This is mine' and 'That is his' arise. And, when it is seen that all these are tricks of the false ego-sense, these unreal notions cease to be. There is in truth naught else but the self; hence I realise that all this is the one cosmic being or Brahman. **The delusion known as ego-sense is like the blueness of the sky: it is better not to entertain that notion once again, but to abandon it.** After having abandoned the very root of the ego-sense, I rest in the self which is of the nature of peace.

The ego-sense is the source of endless sorrow, suffering and evil action. Life ends in death and death leads to birth and what is, is disrupted by its end - such notions entertained by the ego-sense lead to great sorrow. The anxiety caused by thoughts like 'I have got this now', 'I shall get that too' burns the ignorant. 'This is' and 'That is not' - such notions cause restlessness in the egotist. But if the ego-sense ceases to be then the illusory world-appearance does not germinate again and all cravings come to an end.

This universe has surely come into being without any valid cause for its creation: how can one accept the truth of a creation which had no cause or purpose? From time immemorial, all these bodies have been inherent in the cosmic being, even as pots are for ever inherent in clay. Even as ocean exists in the past, present and future as ocean and the same water temporarily assumes the form of a wave, all this is for ever the cosmic being at all times. It is only a fool that entertains a feeling 'This I am' in relation to that temporary appearance known as the body etc.

In the same way, the mind was consciousness in the beginning and it will be consciousness again in the end (after its nature and function as mind have ceased), why is it then called differently in the middle (now)?

All these phenomena seem to have a transient reality, like dream-experiences, visions in a state of delirium, hallucinations of a drunkard, optical illusions, psychosomatic illness, emotional disturbances and psychotic states. But, O mind, you have conferred a permanent reality upon them, even as a lover suffers from the very imagination of his beloved's separation. But, of course, this is not your fault; it is my fault that I still cling to the notion that you, my mind, is a real entity. When I realise that all these phenomena are illusory appearances, then you will become no-mind and all the memories of sense-experiences, etc., will come to an end. When consciousness realises itself and abandons its self-limiting mental conditioning, the mind is freed from its colouring and rests in its essential nature, which is consciousness. When the mind, gathering to itself all its limbs, offers itself into the fire of pure consciousness, it is purified and attains immortality.

## section V - chapter 53

ksiyate manasi ksine dehah praksinavasanah mano na ksiyate ksine dehe tat  
ksapayen manah (66)

Uddalaka continued to contemplate:

When the mind perceives the body as distinct from it, abandons its own conditioning (the concepts) and recognises its own transient nature, it is victorious. Mind and body are each other's foes: hence supreme happiness follows their destruction. For, when they come together there is a host of suffering on account of their mutual conflict.

The mind gives birth to the body through its own thought-force: and throughout the body's life-time the mind feeds it with its (the mind's own) sorrow. Thus tortured by sorrow the body wishes to destroy the mind, its own parent! There is no friend nor enemy in this world: that which gives us pleasure is considered our friend and that which causes pain is our enemy!

When thus the mind and the body are constantly engaged in mutual destruction, how can one have happiness? It is by the destruction of the mind that there can be happiness; hence the body tries every day (in deep sleep) to destroy the mind. However, until self-knowledge is attained, one unwittingly promotes the strength of the other and they seem to function together for a common purpose - even as water and fire, though opposed to each other, work together for a common cause (e.g., cooking).

**If the mind ceases to be then the body ceases to be, too, on account of the cessation of thought-force and mental conditioning: but the mind does not cease to be when the body dies. Hence, one should strive to kill the mind.** Mind is like a forest with thought-forms for its trees and cravings for its creepers: by destroying these, I attain bliss. When the mind is dead, whether the body (composed of flesh, blood, etc.,) exists or not does not matter to me. That I am not the body is obvious: for the corpse does not function!

Where there is self knowledge, there is neither mind nor the senses, nor the tendencies and habits (the concepts and percepts). I have attained that supreme state. I have emerged victorious. I have attained liberation (nirvana). I have risen above all relationships with the mind, body and the senses, even as the oil pressed out of the seeds has no relation with the seeds. To me now the mind, body and the senses are playthings. Purity, total fulfilment of all desires (hence, their absence), friendliness to all, truthfulness, wisdom, tranquillity and blissfulness, sweetness of speech, supreme magnanimity, lustrousness, one-pointedness, realisation of cosmic unity, fearlessness, absence of divided-consciousness, non-perversity - these are my constant companions. Since at all times everything everywhere happens in every manner, in me there is no desire or aversion towards anything, whether pleasant or unpleasant. Since all delusion has come to an end, since the mind has ceased to be and all evil thoughts have vanished, I rest peacefully in my own self.

## section V - chapter 54

antah kundalinim pranah purayamasuradrta cakranuvartaprasrtam payamsiva saridvaram (26)

Vasistha continued:

The sage Uddalaka then sat down in the lotus posture, with his eyes half-closed, in meditation. He uttered the holy word OM which bestows the highest state. He intoned OM in such a way that its vibrations filled his whole being right up to the crown of his head. As the first part of his practice, he exhaled his breath completely. It was as if his life-force had abandoned the body and was roaming in the space (dimension) of pure consciousness. The fire that arose from his heart burnt the whole of his body. (All this, Uddalaka practised without the violence involved in Hatha Yoga: for Hatha Yoga gives rise to pain.)

With the second utterance of the holy word OM, he reached the state of equilibrium and there happened in him a spontaneous retention of the breath (life-force) without agitation or vibration. The life-force stood still, as it were, neither outside, nor inside, neither below nor above. After reducing the body to ashes, the fire burnt itself out and vanished; only the pure ashes were visible. It was as if the very bones had turned into camphor which was being burnt in adoration. The ashes were blown by a powerful wind and dispersed in space. (All this happened without the violence of Hatha Yoga: for Hatha Yoga gives rise to pain.)

In the third stage, when the holy word OM reached its culmination or tranquillity, there arose the inhalation of breath (the drawing in of the life-force). During this stage the life-forces, which were in the very centre of the nectar of consciousness, spread out in space as a cool breeze. These forces reached the region of the moon. There they spread out as auspicious rays which thereupon rained on the ashes that remained of the body.

Instantly, there arose from the ashes a radiant being with four arms like lord Visnu. Uddalaka shone like a divinity, his whole being transmuted into a divinity. **The life-force filled the inner kundalini which was spread out like a spiral.** Uddalaka's body had thus been completely purified. Then he, who was already seated in the lotus posture, made the posture firm, 'tied up' his senses and proceeded to make his consciousness absolutely free from the least movement of thought. With all his strength he restrained his mind from distraction. His half-closed eyes were still and motionless. With his mind established in inner silence, he equalised the movement of the twin life-forces, prana and apana. He withdrew his inner senses from contact with their objects, even as oil is separated from the weed. Thereupon he became directly aware of the mental conditioning created by past experiences, and unconditioned the awareness and made it pure. Then, he firmly closed his rectum and the other outlets to the body (the eyes, etc.). With his life-force and awareness thus prevented from externalisation by perfect discipline, he held his mind in his heart.

## section V - chapter 54

anande parinamitvadanandapadam gatah na nande na niranande tatastatsamvida  
babhau (68)

Vasistha continued:

Uddalaka's mind had attained absolute tranquillity and no distraction could afflict it. Directly he beheld in his heart the darkness of ignorance that veiled the light of self-knowledge. With the light of knowledge that arose in him, he dispelled even that darkness. He then beheld the light within. However, when that light dimmed, the sage experienced sleep. But, the sage dispelled the dullness of sleep, too. Once the drowsiness of sleep had been dispelled, the mind of the sage threw up diverse brilliant forms. The sage cleared his consciousness of these visions. Then he was overcome by a great inertia, like one intoxicated. He got over that inertia, too. After this, his mind rested in another state which was different from all these so far described. After resting for a while in this state, however, his mind awoke to the experience of the totality of existence. Immediately after this, he experienced pure awareness. This awareness, which till then had been associated with other factors, had now regained its purity and independence: even as when the muddy water in an earthen pot has completely evaporated, the mud becomes an integral part of the pot made of the same substance. Even as the wave merges in the ocean and becomes one and non-different from it, the consciousness abandoned its objectivity and regained its absolute purity. Uddalaka was enlightened. He enjoyed the supreme bliss that gods like Brahma enjoy. His state was beyond description. He was one with the ocean of bliss.

Soon, Uddalaka beheld great sages in that infinite consciousness. He ignored them. He continued with the experience of supreme bliss. He attained the state of 'one liberated while living'. He beheld the gods and the sages, and he even beheld the members of the trinity. He went beyond even that state. **He was completely transmuted into bliss itself and hence he had gone beyond the realm of bliss. He experienced neither bliss nor non-bliss.** He became pure consciousness. He who experiences this even for a moment is disinterested even in the delights of heaven. This is the supreme state, this is the goal, this is the eternal abode. He who rests in this is not again deluded and is no longer caught in the subject-object relationship. He is fully awakened and never again entertains the notion of objectivity or conceptualisation. Of course this is not an 'attainment'.

Uddalaka remained for six months in this state, vigilantly avoiding the temptation of psychic powers. Even sages and gods adored him. He was invited to ascend to heaven: he declined the invitation. Totally freed from all desires, Uddalaka roamed as a sage liberated while living. Often he would spend days and months in meditation in the caves of mountains. Though at other times he engaged himself in the ordinary activities of living, he had reached the state of perfect equilibrium. He looked upon all with equal vision. His inner light shone at all times, never rising and never setting. With all notions of duality totally at rest, he lived devoid of body-consciousness, established in pure being.

## section V - chapter 55

upasasama sanair divasairasau katipayaih svapade vimalatmani tarurasah  
saradanta iva male ravikaraujasi janmadasatigah (23)

In answer to Rama's question concerning pure being, Vasistha said:

When the mind has ceased to be because of the total absence of the notion of material existence, consciousness exists in its own nature as consciousness: and that is known as pure being. When consciousness devoid of notions of objectivity merges in itself losing its separate identity, as it were, it is pure being. When all external (material) and internal (notional) object merge in consciousness, there is pure being of consciousness. This is the supreme vision which happens to all liberated ones, whether they seem to have a body or they are without one. This vision is available to one who has been 'awakened', to one who is in a state of deep contemplation and to a man of self-knowledge; it is not experienced by the ignorant person. Sages and the members of the trinity are established in this consciousness, O Rama. Having reached this state of consciousness, Uddalaka lived for some time.

In course of time, in his mind there arose the wish "Let me drop this embodiment". He went to a mountain-cave and seated himself in the lotus posture, with his eyes half-closed. He closed off the nine apertures of the body, by pressing his heel against the rectum, etc. He withdrew the senses into his heart. He restrained his life-force (prana). He held his body in a state of perfect equilibrium. He pressed the tip of his tongue against the root of his palate, his jaws were slightly parted from each other. His inner vision was directed neither inward nor outward, neither above nor below, neither in substantiality nor void. He was established in pure consciousness and he experienced pure bliss within himself. He had reached the consciousness of pure being, beyond the state of bliss. His whole being had become absolutely pure.

Uddalaka remained in this totally pure state for some time, like a painted picture.

**Gradually, day by day, he attained perfect quiescence; he remained in his own pure being. He had risen above the cycle of birth and death.** All his doubts were set at rest; perverse thoughts had ceased; all impurities of the heart had been washed away; he had attained that state of bliss which is beyond description, in which one regards even the joy of the king of heaven as worthless. Thus, his body remained for a period of six months.

After that, one day several goddesses led by Parvati arrived at that spot in response to the prayers of a devotee. That goddess, worshipped by the gods themselves, saw the body of Uddalaka which had been dried by the scorching rays of the sun and quickly placed it on the crown of her head.

Such is the glorious story of the sage Uddalaka, O Rama, which awakens the highest wisdom in the heart of one who takes shelter in its shade.

## section V - chapter 56

prasantajagadastho ntarvitasokabhayaisanah svastho bhavati yena tma sa  
samadhiriti smrtah (20)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, living like this, constantly enquiring into the nature of the self, attain peace. This state of consciousness can be attained by the cultivation of dispassion, the study of scriptures, the instructions of a guru and by the persistent practice of enquiry. But, if the awakened intelligence is keen and sharp, you will attain it even without the other aids.

Rama asked:

Holy sir, some there are who rest in self-knowledge, who are enlightened and yet engage themselves in activities; and there are others who isolate themselves and practise contemplation (samadhi). Of these who is the better?

Vasistha replied:

Rama, that is samadhi (contemplation or meditation) in which one realises the objects of the senses as not-self, and thus one enjoys inner calmness and tranquillity at all times. Having realised that the objects are related only to the mind and therefore constantly resting in inner peace, some are engaged in activity while others live in isolation. Both of them enjoy the bliss of contemplation. If the mind of one who appears to be in samadhi is distracted, he is a mad man: on the other hand, if the mind of one who appears to be a mad man is free from all notions and distraction, he is enlightened and he is in unbroken samadhi. Whether he is engaged in activity or he lives in isolation in a forest, in enlightenment there is no distinction. The mind which is free from conditioning is not tainted even while it is engaged in activity. The non-action of the mind is known as quiescence (samadhana); it is total freedom, it is blessedness.

The difference between contemplation and its absence is indicated by whether or not there is movement of thought in the mind: hence make the mind unconditioned. The unconditioned mind is firm, and that in itself is meditation, freedom and peace eternal. The conditioned mind is the source of sorrow; and the unconditioned mind is a non-actor and attains to the supreme state of enlightenment. Hence one should work to remove all mental conditioning. **That is known as contemplation or samadhi in which all the desires and hopes concerning the world have ceased and which is free from sorrow, fear and desire, and by which the self rests in itself.**

Mentally renounce all false identification of the self with objects here: and then live where you like, either at home or in a mountain-cave. To that householder whose mind has attained utter quiescence his house itself is the forest. If the mind is at peace and if there is no ego-sense, even cities are as void. On the other hand, forests are like cities to him whose heart is full of desires and other evils. The distractions of the mind subside in deep sleep; enlightenment attains enlightenment - do as you please.

## section V - chapter 56

dyauh ksama vayurakasam parvatah sarito disah antahkaranatattvasya bhaga  
bahririva sthitah (35)

Vasistha continued:

He who sees the self as the transcendent being or as the immanent being (as the self of all) is established in equanimity. He in whom likes and dislikes have ceased, to whom all beings are the same and who perceives the world in the wakeful state as if he perceives objects in a dream, he is established in equanimity and lives in a forest even while living in a village. He who moves about with his consciousness turned in upon itself views a city or a village as a forest.

He who has attained inner tranquillity and peace, finds peace and tranquillity everywhere in the world. He whose mind is agitated and restless, finds the world full of restlessness. For, what one experiences within, that alone he experiences outside. In fact, **the sky, the earth, the air and the space are all parts of the inner instrument (mind); they only appear to be outside.** All these exist like the tree in the seed and they are externalised like the scent of a flower. Truly, there is nothing either inside or outside: whatever the consciousness conceives of, in whatever manner, appears so. Thus the self alone is all this, within and without.

He who is filled with inner delight, who is not swayed by exultation or sorrow and who performs actions merely with his physical body, he is established in equanimity. He is pure as the sky, he is free from desires, his actions are appropriate and spontaneous; and in relation to exultation and sorrow, he behaves as if he is made of wood or clay. He is at peace, he sees all as his own self, he considers others' possessions as dirt - naturally and not through fear: he alone sees the truth.

The ignorant man does not realise the unreality of the objects (big or small), because he has not realised the reality.

He who has attained the state of pure being is never sullied, whether he lives or dies, at home or elsewhere, in luxury or mendicancy, whether he enjoys and dances, or he renounces everything and isolates himself on a mountain, whether he wears expensive creams and scents or he wears matted locks or falls into the fire, whether he commits sins or performs virtuous deeds, whether he dies or lives till the end of the world-cycle. For he does nothing. It is only the conditioned mind that is tainted, because of its ego-sense and the notions attached to it. When all notions have ceased and wisdom has arisen, the impurities of the mind are removed, naturally.

The enlightened sage stands to gain nothing by either doing anything or by not doing anything. Even as a tree does not spring from a stone, desires do not appear in the life of a sage. Should they arise at times, they instantly vanish like writings on water. The sage and the entire universe are non-different from each other.

## section V - chapter 57

paramatmamanescittvad yad antah kacam svayam cetanatmapade ca ntar  
ahamityadi vettyasau (15)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, the infinite consciousness becomes aware of the pungency of the chilli: and this gives rise to the ego-sense, with all its differentiation in time and space. The infinite consciousness becomes aware of the savour in salt; and that gives rise to the ego-sense with all the differentiation which seems to exist in time and space. The infinite consciousness becomes aware of the sweetness in sugarcane; and thereby arises the awareness of its particular characteristic. Similarly, the infinite consciousness, being the indwelling omnipresence, becomes aware of the nature of a rock, a mountain, a tree, of water, of space and thus self-consciousness or individuality arises.

Thus the natural combination of atomic particles and molecules (which is indwelt by consciousness) apparently acts as a dividing wall, thus giving rise to the divisions of 'I', 'you' etc., and these then appear to be outside of consciousness as its object. In fact, all these are but reflections in the consciousness which, becoming aware of them within itself, bestows upon them their apparent individuality. Consciousness tastes itself, the awareness being non-different from consciousness: and that appears to give rise to the ego-sense, etc., naught else. **The crystal of this infinite consciousness reflects its own light of consciousness which is present in all these combinations of atomic particles: and they then gain an apparent self-consciousness and think 'I am' etc.**

In reality, because the inner awareness in all these combinations is non-different from the infinite consciousness, there is no subject-object relationship between them: hence one does not experience the other, gain the other, or change or modify the other. O Rama, all that I have said above is but a play of words to help your comprehension: there is no such thing as 'I' or 'the world' (the combination of atomic particles, etc.). There is neither mind nor an object of knowledge nor the world-illusion. Just as water acquires the appearance of a whirlpool with a personality of its own, consciousness seems to give the appearance of 'I' etc., within itself. But consciousness is consciousness only, whether it thinks of itself as lord Siva or as a little jiva!

All this diversity of 'I', 'you' etc., and of the material substances, arises for the satisfaction of the ignorant: whatever the ignorant person imagines in the infinite consciousness that alone he sees. In the light of awareness, life is seen as consciousness; when it is regarded as life, life appears to be no more than life! There is in reality no essential distinction between life and consciousness. In the same way there is no real and essential distinction between the individual (jiva] and the cosmic being (Siva). Know all this to be undivided and indivisible infinite consciousness.

## section V - chapter 58

yavatsarvam na samtyakttam tavadatma na labhyate sarvavasthaparityage sesa  
atmeti kathyate (44)

Vasistha continued:

In this connection, O Rama, pray listen to an interesting legend.

In the Himalaya mountain-range there is a mountain known as Kailasa. At the foot of that mountain there lived a hill-tribe known as Hemajata (yellow-haired). Suraghu was their king. He was strong, powerful and wise; he was endowed with self-knowledge and he was highly accomplished in poesy and literary art. Fatigue was unknown to him. He was just in his rule, blessing and punishing those who deserved to be thus blessed and punished. In all this activity, however, his spiritual vision became obscured.

Suraghu began to reflect within himself: "People undergo a lot of suffering on my account. Their suffering is truly my suffering. I should bestow riches upon them: they will rejoice, even as I would rejoice if I became wealthy. Their joy is my joy. Alas, by alternately blessing and punishing the people, I am myself alternately enjoying and suffering." Thinking thus, the king was greatly distressed.

One day, the sage Mandavya came to visit the king. Suraghu welcomed the sage, bowed to him, worshipped him and asked: "Lord, I am tormented by the anxieties that the blessing and the punishment that I inflict upon my subjects will return to me. Please help me gain equal vision and save me from prejudice and partiality."

Mandavya said:

All mental weaknesses come to an end by self-effort based on the wisdom which arises in one who is firmly rooted in self-knowledge. The distress of the mind is got rid of by enquiry into the nature of the self. One should enquire in one's own mind "What are these moods and modes and foolings that arise within me?" By such enquiry, your mind expands. When you realise your true nature by such enquiry, you are not disturbed by exultation and depression. The mind abandons the past and the future, and thus its fragmented functioning. Then you experience supreme peace. When you are in that state of tranquillity, you take pity on all those who revel in great wealth and secular power. When you have gained self-knowledge amid when your consciousness has infinitely expanded, your mind no longer falls into the cesspool of this world, even as an elephant does not enter a puddle. It is only the little mind that seeks little pleasure and power.

The mind abandons everything when the vision of the supreme is gained. Hence, one should resolutely renounce everything till the supreme vision is gained. **Not till one renounces everything, is self-knowledge gained: when all points of view are abandoned, what remains is the self.** This is true even of life in this world: one does not get what one desires unless the obstacle to it is removed. It is even more so in self-knowledge.

## section V - chapter 59

sesastu cetano jivah sa ceccetyena cetati anyena bodhyamano sau na  
tmatattvavapur bhavet (16 )

When the sage Mandavya had departed after saying this, Suraghu contemplated thus:

What is it that is known as 'I'? I am not the Meru, the Meru is not mine. I am not the hill-tribe, nor the hill-tribe mine. This is merely called my kingdom: I abandon that notion. Now, the capital city is left. I am not this city nor is it mine. That notion, too, is abandoned. Even so I abandon the notions of family relationship - wife, sons, etc.

Let me enquire into this body. I am not the inert substances like flesh and bones - nor am I the blood, nor the organs of action. All these are inert substances, but I am sentient. I am not the enjoyments, nor do they belong to me; this intellect and the sense-organs are not me, nor are they mine - they are inert and I am sentient. I am not the mind which is the root-cause of this ignorant cycle of birth and death. I am not the faculty of discrimination nor am I the ego-sense, these being notions that arise in the mind.

Now, what is left? **What remains is the sentient jiva. But, it is involved in subject-object relationship. That which is the object of knowledge or comprehension is not the self.** Thus do I abandon that which is knowable - or the object. What now remains is the pure consciousness which is free from the shadow of doubt. I am the infinite self, for there is no limit to this self. Even the gods like Brahma the creator, Indra the king of gods, Yama the god of death, Vayu the god of wind and all the countless beings are strung on this infinite consciousness.

This cit-sakti (omnipotent consciousness) is free from the defect of objectivity. It is beyond being and non-being, though it is the reality in all being. It pervades all beings in the universe. It is the beauty in all, it is the light of all. It is the essence of all forms and all modifications: yet it is beyond all these. At all times it is all in all. It is itself spread out as these fourteen planes of existence: even the notion concerning this universe is nothing but this omnipotent consciousness.

False are the fragmented notions of pain and pleasure, for this omnipotent consciousness is omnipresent and infinite. That is the self, when I am awakened; when I am deluded that itself becomes the king. It is by its grace that the body, the mind etc. function. It is by its power that everything in the whole universe dances to its tunes. How foolish of me to have experienced distress at having to bless and punish! I have been awakened, I have seen all that there is to be seen, I have attained all that is worth attainment. What are all these: pain and pleasure, happiness and sorrow, blessing and punishment? All this is pervaded by Brahman. Where is the justification for grief and delusion; who does what? It is but the infinite consciousness that exists. Salutations to you, O beautiful god, salutations to the infinite self!

## section V - chapter 60 61

na nirghrno dayavan no na dvandvi na tha matsari na sudhir na sudhir na rthi  
na narthi sa babhuva ha (60/6)

Vasistha continued:

By such enquiry, Suraghu attained to the supreme state of consciousness. Never, again did he grieve; but from that time onwards he performed his work ever remaining in a balanced state of mind. **Compassionate, yet not uncontentious; not avoiding the pairs of opposites and not jealous; neither intelligent nor non-intelligent; neither motivated nor non-motivated - he lived** with equal vision and inner calmness. He had realised that 'All this is but the diverse manifestation of consciousness': he was therefore peaceful in both pain and pleasure, having attained to the fullness of understanding.

Thus he ruled in this world for a considerable time, and then of his own accord discarded his body. He attained oneness with the infinite consciousness. O Rama, live and rule the world thus with an enlightened mind.

Rama asked:

But, O Lord, the mind is so unsteady. How can one reach the state of perfect equanimity?

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, a dialogue which is relevant to this problem took place between that very king Suraghu and the sage Parigha. Listen to it.

There was a king in Persia named Parigha who was a close friend of the king Suraghu. Once, there was a great famine in the kingdom of Parigha. Sore distressed at heart at the very sight of his people's suffering and seeing that all his attempts at bringing relief to them proved fruitless, Parigha went away to the forest, unbeknown to his people, to perform austerities. He lived on dried leaves and earned the name Parnada. After a thousand years of penance and contemplation, he attained self-knowledge. Thereafter he roamed the three worlds freely.

One day, he met the king Suraghu whom he had known before. The two enlightened kings duly worshipped each other. After that, Parigha asked Suraghu: "Even as you attained self-knowledge through the instructions of the sage Mandavya, I reached it through the grace of the Lord earned by penance. Pray tell me: is your mind at perfect rest now? Are your subjects living in peace and prosperity? Are you firmly established in dispassion?"

Suraghu replied:

Who can truly understand the course of the divine will? You and I had been separated by a great distance so far; but now we have been brought together. What is impossible for the divine? We have been truly blessed by your holy visit. By your very presence in our midst, we have all been rid of all sins and defects and I feel that all prosperity stands in front of us in your form. Company of good and holy men is indeed equal to the supreme state of liberation.

## section V - chapter 62 63

tattvabodho bhagavan sarvasatrnavaakah prokttah samadhisabdena na tu  
tushnimavasthitih (62/8)

Parigha said:

O king, all actions that are performed by one who is firmly established in equanimity are productive of joy, not those done by others. Are you established in that state of supreme peace in which no thoughts or notions arise in your mind, and which is known as samadhi?

Suraghu said:

Holy sir, please tell me this: why is only that state of mind which is free from thoughts and notions called samadhi? If one is a knower of truth, whether he be engaged in constant action or in contemplation, does his mind ever lose the state of samadhi? No. The enlightened ones are for ever in samadhi, even though they engage themselves in the affairs of the world. On the other hand, one whose mind is not at peace does not enjoy samadhi by merely sitting in the lotus posture.

**Knowledge of truth, Lord, is the fire that burns up all hopes and desires as if they are dried blades of grass: and that is known by the word samadhi - not simply remaining silent!** That is own as he state of samadhi in which there is eternal satisfaction, clear perception of what is, egolessness, not being subject to the pairs of opposites, freedom from anxiety and from the wish to acquire or to reject. From the very moment of the dawn of self-knowledge, the state of samadhi becomes permanent in the sage: he does not lose it, neither is it interrupted, even for a moment. Even as time does not forget to move on, the man of self-knowledge does not forget the self. Even as a material object is forever material, the sage of selfknowledge is for ever a sage of self-knowledge.

Hence, I am always awakened, pure, at peace within myself and in a state of samadhi. How can it be otherwise? How can there be anything other than the self? When at all times and in all ways the self alone is all in all, how can there be a state other than samadhi? And what can be termed samadhi?

Parigha said:

Surely, O king, you have attained total enlightenment. You shine, radiant with bliss, with peace, with sweetness and with purity. In you there is no ego-sense, desire or aversion.

Suraghu continued:

O sage, there is indeed nothing which is worth desiring or renouncing. For as long as these things are seen as objects, they are nothing but concepts, percepts and notions. When nothing is worth acquiring, it follows that nothing is worth renouncing. Good and evil, great and small, worthy or unworthy are all based on the notion of desirability. When desirability has no meaning, the others do not arise at all. There is truly no essence in all that is seen in this world - the mountains, the oceans, the forests, the men and women and all the objects. Hence there is no desire for them. When there is no desire, there is supreme peace at heart.

## section V - chapter 64

tani mitrani sastrani tani tani dinani ca viragollasavan yebhya  
atmacittodayah sphutam (19)

Vasistha continued:

After thus considering the illusory nature of the world-appearance and after mutually worshipping each other, Suraghu and Parigha continued to engage themselves in their respective duties. Be firmly established in this wisdom and discard the impure notion of ego-sense from your heart. When the pure heart contemplates the infinite space (dimension) of consciousness which is the source of all bliss and which is within easy reach of all, it rests in the supreme self. The mind that is thus devoted to the infinite consciousness, which is introverted and which is filled with self-knowledge, is not affected by sorrow.

Even if you engage yourself in the activities relating to your daily life and even if likes and dislikes arise in you, your inner being will never become impure. Even as light alone can remove darkness, the knowledge that this world is the creation of ignorance is the only remedy for its ills. Once this knowledge has arisen, the ignorant perception of the world as something real ceases once and for all. Thereafter, even if you engage yourself in activity, you are unattached to it and therefore not tainted by it, even as the eyes of fish are not affected by sea-water. You will never again experience delusion.

Only on those days on which the light of self-knowledge shines brightly in one's heart, does one live truly. All one's actions are full of bliss on those days. **They alone are friends, scriptures and days that generate in one's heart true dispassion and also self-knowledge.** O Rama, rescue your jiva from the dreadful mire of world-appearance. Once you have realised the truth concerning it, you will never again return to this mire.

O Rama, the company of holy sages will provide you with the knowledge of the means to attain self-knowledge. Hence, one should not live in such places where such company is not available. In the company of sages, the mind of the seeker becomes quiescent at once. One should uplift oneself and not revel in the mire of ignorance. The wise man should constantly enquire into the nature of the world, the self, etc. In this neither wealth nor friends, nor relations, nor scriptures are of any help; only the pure mind which is constantly engaged in self-enquiry and which is endowed with dispassion enables one to cross this ocean of ignorance.

The very moment one looks upon the body as an inert substance, one attains self-knowledge. When the darkness of ignorance or ego-sense is dispelled, the light of self-knowledge shines. That state of self-knowledge or perfect enlightenment is beyond description. Just as the sweetness of sugar is known only by direct experience, the nature of enlightenment is known only by direct experience. When the mind and the ego-sense cease, then self-knowledge arises. It is reached by the practice of yoga, it is comparable in some respects to deep sleep: but it is truly incomparable, indescribable.

## section V - chapter 65 66

asa yavadasesena na lunas cittasambhavah virudho datrakeneva tavannah kusalam  
kutah (66/11)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, so long as one does not subdue the mind with the mind, one cannot attain self-knowledge; and as long as one entertains the false notions of 'I' and 'mine', so long sorrow does not come to an end, even as the sun in a painting never sets. There is a legend that illustrates this truth. I shall now narrate it to you.

There is a great mountain which is as high as the three worlds put together. On its peaks dwell the gods, in the middle dwell human beings and at its base dwell the beings of the nether world. It is known as Sahya. It contains everything, as it were. On it there is the hermitage of the sage Atri. In it there dwelt two sages known as Brhaspati and Sukra, each of whom had a son, known as Vilasa and Bhasa respectively. The two boys grew up into young men. They were very greatly attached to each other and were inseparable.

In course of time, the two elder sages, Brhaspati and Sukra, left this world. Grief-stricken, the two young men performed the appropriate funeral rites. On account of the loss of their fathers they felt disinterested in property, wealth, etc., and both of them thereupon went away to the forest, each in a different direction, to lead a nomadic life. After a considerable time, once again they met each other.

Vilasa said to his friend Bhasa:

What a delight to meet you again, O my dearest friend. Tell me what you have been doing since we parted. Did your austerities bear fruit? Has your mind rid itself of the burning fever of worldliness? Have you attained self-knowledge? Tell me: are you well and happy?

Bhasa replied:

I consider myself extremely fortunate to see you again, my very dear friend and brother. However, how can we who are wandering in this world-appearance ever be well and happy unless and until we attain the highest wisdom, until the psychological perversions cease? Until we cross this ocean of world-cycle, how can we be well and happy? **Until the hopes and desires born of the mind have been completely destroyed, how can we be well and happy?**

Until we attain self-knowledge, we shall return again to this plane of birth and death to undergo childhood, youth, manhood, old age and death again and again, we shall engage ourselves in the same senseless actions and experiences. Cravings destroy wisdom. Lost in satisfying sensual appetites, life ebbs away fast. The mind falls into the blind well of sense-pleasure. It is a wonder how and why this body, which is an excellent vehicle to take us to the other shore of self-knowledge, falls into the mire of worldliness! In the twinkling of an eye, this little ripple known as the mind assumes terrible proportions. Man foolishly ascribes to the self the sorrow and the sufferings that do not touch it in the least, and becomes miserable.

## section V - chapter 67

antahsaktam mano baddham mukttam saktivivarjitam antahsamsaktirevaikam  
karanam bandhamoksayah (34)

Vasistha continued:

Thus conversing with each other and enquiring into the nature of the world, they soon attained the supreme wisdom. Hence, O Rama, I tell you that there is no way other than self-knowledge for the cutting asunder of bondage and for crossing this ocean of illusion. To the enlightened person this ocean of sorrow is like a little puddle. He views the body as a spectator looks at a distant crowd. Hence he is not affected by the pains that the body is subjected to. The existence of the body does not diminish the omnipresence of the self anymore than waves diminish the fullness of the ocean.

What is the relationship of a swan, a rock or a piece of wood to the water which surrounds them? Even so, the supreme self has no relationship with this world-appearance. A falling tree seems to raise waves on the water: similar is the experience by the self of the pleasure and pain that appear on the body. Even as by its proximity to water, wood is reflected in the water, the body is reflected in the self. But even as a rock falling in the water does not injure the water nor is injured by it, even so when the body comes into contact with other material substances (such as wife, children, or material objects) there is no injury or pain to anyone.

The reflection of an object in the mirror can be said to be neither real nor unreal, it is indescribable: even so the body which is reflected in the self is neither real nor unreal, but is indescribable. The ignorant person accepts as real whatever he sees in this world; not so the wise one. Even as a piece of wood and the water in which it is reflected have no real relationship, the body and the self have no real relationship. Moreover, there is in fact no duality where such relationship could exist. One infinite consciousness alone exists without subject-object division. In this, diversity is imagined and that which is untouched by sorrow believes itself to be miserable, even as one who thinks he sees a ghost sees a ghost! On account of the power of thought, this imaginary relationship assumes the force of reality. The self is ever untouched by pain and pleasure; but thinking itself to be the body, it undergoes the experiences of the body. The abandonment of this ignorant belief is liberation.

They who are not thus overcome by false identification or attachment are freed at once from sorrow. It is this conditioning that is the seed of old age, death and delusion; when it ceases, one goes beyond the ocean of delusion. The conditioned mind creates bondage even in ascetics; the unconditioned mind is pure even in a house-holder. **The mind that is thus conditioned is bondage; liberation is freedom from conditioning (inner contact, attachment or identification). This inner contact (which presupposes fictitious division) alone is the cause for bondage and liberation.** Actions performed by the unconditioned are non-action; the conditioned mind acts even while outwardly refraining from it. Action or non-action is in the mind; the body does nothing. Hence, one should resolutely abandon this false inner division.

## section V - chapter 68

samsakttir dvividha prokta vandya vandhya ca raghava vandhya sarvatra  
mudhanam vandya tattvavidam nija (21)

Rama asked:

What is conditioning, O Lord, and how does it cause bondage; and what is liberation and how is it attained?

Vasistha continued:

Conviction in the reality of the body in one who has abandoned the distinction between the body and the self, is known as conditioning. He who believes that the infinite self is limited and therefore seeks pleasure, thus gets bound. He who enquires 'All this is indeed the self, what do I desire and what should I renounce?' is established in the unconditioned state of liberation. He who knows 'I am not, nor is there another' or 'Let these be or not be' and does not seek pleasure, is liberated. He is not addicted to inaction nor does he get lost in the results of action; he is not given to exultation or to depression. He renounces the fruits of actions by his mind (not by action!). It is by the rejection of the conditioning that bondage is got rid of and the highest good gained. Conditioning is the cause of all sorrow.

Conditioning can be illustrated by the following examples: (1) the donkey is led by the master's rope and, afraid, it carries a heavy burden; (2) the tree rooted to the ground bears heat, cold, wind and rain; (3) the worm lies in a hole in earth, biding its time; (4) the hungry bird rests on the branch of a tree, fearful of predators; (5) the tame deer peacefully goes about grazing and falls a prey to the hunter's shot; (6) numerous people are born again and again as worms and insects; (7) the countless creatures arise and fall in this creation like waves on the surface of the ocean; (8) the weak human beings who, unable even to move about, die again and again; (9) those shrubs and creepers which derive their nourishment from the earth and grow on earth; and (10) this very world-illusion which is like a river that carries in its stream the countless sorrows and sufferings. All these are the expansions of conditioning.

**Conditioning (or inner contact, attachment or self-limitation) is of two kinds: the adorable and the sterile or barren. The sterile or barren conditioning is seen everywhere in fools: the adorable conditioning is seen among those who know the truth.** That conditioning which exists in the minds of those who are ignorant of self-knowledge, which arises from things like the body and which is conducive to repeated birth and death, that is barren and sterile. The other form of conditioning, which is found in adorable beings who have self-knowledge, arises from the realisation of true wisdom; this enables one to avoid birth and death.

(The adorable conditioning recognises 'natural' limitations, e.g., the eyes and the ears, etc. are limited in their perception. The fool's is selfimposed conditioning and he regards the infinite self to be identical with the physical body. The word used in the text, viz. samsakti is usually translated 'attachment'. However, attachment implies division and duality which is limitation of the infinite and conditioning of the unconditioned.)

## section V - chapter 68

antah samsangamanganam angaram viddhi raghava anantah sangamanganam viddhi  
rama rasayanam (50)

Vasistha continued:

The god who holds in his hands the conch, the discus, etc., protects the three worlds, on account of the 'adorable conditioning'. It is thanks to the same type of conditioning that the sun shines and the cosmic body of the Creator continues to direct this vast creation. And lord Siva, too, shines as a divinity on account of this type of conditioning. The gods that sustain this world and function in various ways are endowed with their faculties by this adorable conditioning or self-limitation.

On the other hand, under the influence of the sterile or barren conditioning, the mind falls a prey to the desire for pleasure in the deluded belief that such experience is delightful.

Even the functioning of the cosmic elements is due to conditioning. And it is because of it that the gods in heaven, the humans on earth and the demons in the netherworld arise and fall, like waves on the ocean. Even as in the ocean the big fish eat the small ones, all these countless beings feed upon one another and are helplessly blown around in space on account of their conditioning. And, the stars in space move in their own orbits because of conditioning. Now rising, now setting, now bright, now dark (and said to have several spots or defects), the moon continues to revolve around the earth and is not abandoned because of conditioning.

O Rama, behold this mysterious creation brought into being by who-knows-who in response to the mental concepts of beings. This universe has been conjured up in empty space merely by mental conditioning: it is not a reality. And in this universe, craving for pleasure gnaws at the very vitals of all beings who are attached to the world, the body etc. No one can count their number any more than the number of particles of sand along the ocean beaches. The Creator of this universe has brought this universe into being, as it were, only in response to the mental conditioning of these countless beings. These beings are indeed excellent dry fuel for the flaming fire of hell here. Whatever suffering is found in this world, know that it is meant only for these beings. Even as rivers flow rapidly towards the ocean, suffering flows towards those who are mentally conditioned. This whole creation is thus pervaded by ignorance. However, if one cuts asunder this craving for pleasure, the limitation of mental conditioning yields to a great expansion. **Mental conditioning (or attachment to the finite and the perishable) is burning pain to the limbs, O Rama: but infinite expansion (or devotion to the infinite) is the magic cure for the burning pain.** That mind which is unattached to anything, which is established in the peace of infinite expansion, is conducive to delight. He who stands rooted in self-knowledge is liberated here and now.

(In this chapter the real significance of 'conditioning' is brought out, though the word used again is samsangam which may also be translated as 'contact' or 'attachment'. It is 'identification' or 'conditioning' that is really implied.)

## section V - chapter 69 70

esaiva rama sausupti sthitir abhyasayogatah praudha sati turyamiti kathita  
tattvakovidaih (70/26)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, doing what is appropriate, at all times, the mind should not be attached to the action, the thoughts or the object. Neither should it be attached to the heavens above, nor what is below nor in the other directions. It should not be bound to external relations, to the natural movement of the inner senses, nor to the life-force. The mind should not rest in the head, inside the palate, between the eyebrows, at the tip of the nose or in the mouth or eyes. It should not repose either in the darkness or in the light or even in the cave of the heart. The states of wakefulness, dream and sleep should not hold it and even the wide, pure space should not be its home. Unattached to the spectrum of colours, to movement and steadiness, to the beginning, the middle, the end and elsewhere, the mind should not rest either at a distance or nearby, in front, in objects or in the self. Sense experiences, the deluded state of happiness, concepts and percepts should have no hold over the mind.

The mind should rest in pure consciousness as pure consciousness, with just a little externalised movement of thought, as if aware of the utter vanity of the objects of this world. When thus all attachments have been snapped, the jiva becomes no-jiva: whatever happens thereafter happens - whether activity or inactivity. In such a state of non-attachment the jiva is not bound to the fruits of action. Or, abandoning even that state of a little comprehension of the objects, let the jiva rest in supreme peace.

Such a liberated person, whether he appears to others to be engaged in activity or not, is for ever free from sorrow and fear. All the people love and adore him. Even if in the eyes of others he appears to be agitated, within himself he is firmly rooted in wisdom. His consciousness is ever uncoloured by happiness and unhappiness. He is not distracted by the glamour of the world. Having attained self-knowledge, he lives in constant contemplation as it were; and therefore he is unattached to anything in the universe. Having risen above the pairs of opposites, he appears to be as if in deep sleep even in the wakeful state.

That state in which the mind is freed from its characteristic movement of thought and in which there is only the experience of peace, is known as 'deep sleep in wakefulness'. He who is in it lives a non-volitional life, freed from every type of mental distraction or distress, unconcerned with a short or a long life. **When this same state of 'deep sleep in wakefulness' matures, it is known as turiya or the fourth state.** Firmly established in that, the sage perceives the universe as if it is a cosmic playground and life in it is a cosmic dance. Utterly freed from sorrow and fear and from delusion of world-appearance, he who is established in the turiya does not fall into error once again. He is forever immersed in bliss. He goes even beyond this to the great, inexpressible state of supreme bliss. That is considered the state beyond even turiya - incomprehensible and indescribable.

## section V - chapter 71

cidatma nirmalo nityah svavabhaso niramayah dehastvanityo malavamstena  
sambandhyate katham (24)

Vasistha continued:

It may be possible to put into words the state of one who is liberated while yet living, which is the state known as turiya or 'deep sleep in wakefulness', or the state of total freedom. The state beyond that (which is the state of those who have transcended body-consciousness) is not for words to describe. This is the 'state beyond the turiya'. O Rama, strive to reach that.

But first be established in the state of 'deep sleep in wakefulness'. Remain unconcerned about the existence or otherwise of the body, knowing that the body is but a product of illusion. You are a man of wisdom, O Rama; and you have reached inner awakening. The mind of the man of self-knowledge does not take the downward path. Only the pure consciousness exists here: hence, let not the notions of 'I am so-and-so', 'This is mine' arise in you. Even the word 'self' is used only in order to communicate; the truth is beyond all these descriptions. There is no duality, there are no bodies and therefore there are no relationships among them; there are no shadows in the sun! Though I am speaking to you while assuming the apparent duality, in truth there is no such division.

Even as there is no relationship between light and darkness, there can be no relationship between the body and the embodied. When the truth is known, the erroneous perception vanishes. **The self is consciousness - pure eternal self-luminous and free from change; the body is impermanent and impure. How can there exist a relation between the two?** The body is enlivened by the life-force or by the other elements; this body can have no relationship whatsoever with the self. Thus, even if the two (self and body) are regarded as two distinct realities, there can be no relationship between them: but, if this duality is unreal, then such thinking itself becomes irrelevant. Let this truth be firmly established in you; there is no bondage nor liberation at any time for anyone anywhere.

It is clear that all this is but the one infinite self or consciousness. If you lend ear to concepts like 'I am happy or unhappy' or 'I am ignorant', then they will bring you endless sorrow. The body came into being because of wind (life-breath), it exists because of it, its speech is caused by it and all the senses function because of it: the intelligence in it is but the indivisible consciousness. That infinite consciousness alone is spread out everywhere as space, etc., and the latter are reflected in the consciousness, and this reflection has come to be known as the mind. When the mind abandons its body-cage and flies away, it experiences the self which is consciousness. Where there is fragrance there is flower; where there is mind there is consciousness. But, the mind alone is the cause for the appearance of the world: since the consciousness is omnipresent and infinite, though it is the ultimate cause, it is not the cause of the world-appearance. Hence, truly, the cause for this world-appearance is non-investigation into the nature of reality - ignorance. Even as a lamp instantly removes darkness, the light of self-knowledge dispels the darkness of ignorance instantly. Hence one should enquire into what is known as jiva or mind or the inner psychological factor.

## section V - chapter 71

jadajadadrsmadhyam yattattvam paramatmikam tadetadeva nanatvam  
nanasamjnabhiratatam (56)

Rama asked:

Holy sir, how have these concepts and categories come to be firmly accepted? Pray enlighten me.

Vasistha continued:

All this is indeed the self. However, even as waves rise in the ocean, the diversity known as the universe arises in the mind. Here and there, the self appears to be kinetic self. Elsewhere, the self remains in a static state. The static are inert substances like rock, and the kinetic substances are humans etc. In all these, the omnipotent self entertains the notion of ignorance and therefore remains as if ignorant. The infinite thus clothed in ignorance, is known as the Jiva - who is like the trapped elephant in this world-appearance.

Because it lives, it is known as jiva. Because of its egoistic notion, it is known as the ego. Because it discriminates and determines, it is known as the buddhi or the discriminating faculty. Because of its ability to form concepts and percepts, it is known as the mind. Being natural, it is called nature. It itself is known as the body, because it changes. It is known as consciousness, because its nature is consciousness.

**The supreme self which alone is the truth is right in the middle between the inert and the intelligent: that alone creates diversity and is known by all these diverse names.** But, all these categories have been invented by men of perverse intellect for the pleasure of polemics and for the confusion of ignorant men.

Thus, O Rama, it is this jiva alone which is the cause of this world-appearance: what can this deaf and dumb body do? If the body perishes the self does not perish, even as if a leaf falls the tree does not perish. Only the deluded person thinks otherwise.

On the other hand, if the mind perishes, everything perishes, and there is final liberation. The man who wails "I am dying, I perish", is foolishly clinging to a false concept. He goes on experiencing the world-illusion in some other place or time. The jiva that dwells in mental conditioning abandons one body and goes looking for another, even as a monkey abandons one tree in a forest and jumps on to another. Thereafter, in a moment, it abandons that too, and seeks yet another, in another part of space and in another period of time. Just as a nanny takes the baby from one place to another in order to distract it, this mental conditioning (or the psychological habit or tendency) takes the jiva here and there. Thus tied to the rope of mental conditioning, the jiva goes through repeated birth in various species, enduring interminable suffering.

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

## section V - chapter 72

drsyadarsanasambandha vistaraistad vijrmbhate drsyadarsanasambandhe yatsukham  
paramatmikam anubhutimayam tasmāt saram brahmeti kathyate (33)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, you are not born when the body is born, nor do you die when it dies. To think that the space within the jar came into being when it was made and the space perishes with the jar is sheer foolishness. Moreover, the indwelling consciousness is free from notions of the desirable and the undesirable in relation to the body, mind and senses. The indwelling consciousness seems to come into contact with these even as travellers meet in an inn or logs of wood meet and part in a stream: meeting and parting do not cause happiness or unhappiness to the consciousness. Why then do people exult or grieve in these circumstances?

The self on account of its ignorant self-limitation as the mind becomes as if tainted by the objects of the world; but, the same self when it is awakened to its true nature abandons its ignorant delusion and regains its self-knowledge. Then, the mind sees the body as if from a great height. Recognising the body as an aggregate of the elements, it transcends body-consciousness and becomes enlightened.

Such an enlightened person is untainted by worldliness or ignorance even while acting in this world. He is neither attracted nor repelled by anything in the world. He knows "What is known as 'I' and what is known as 'the world' in the three periods of time are but the expansion of the conjunction between pure experiencing and the experience itself." Whether the object of experiencing be real or unreal, it is entirely dependent upon the experiencing: how then do joy and sorrow arise? The false is false, the truth is the truth; a mixture of these two is of course false! Be not deluded. Abandon false perception and behold the truth; you will never again be deluded.

**All that is, is but the expansion of the relationship between pure experiencing and its experience. That experience is truly the delight of self-bliss. It is pure experiencing itself. Hence it is known as Brahman the absolute.** That delight which arises in the contact of this pure experiencing with experience is the highest: to the ignorant, it is worldliness, and to the wise it is liberation. This pure experiencing is itself the infinite self: when it is bent towards objects, it is bondage, but when it is free, it is liberation. When such experiencing is free from decay or curiosity, it is liberation. When such experiencing is freed from even this contact (the subject-object relationship), then the world-appearance ceases entirely. Then arises the turiya consciousness or 'deep sleep in wakefulness'.

The self is neither this nor that; it transcends whatever is the object of experiencing here. In the unlimited and unconditioned vision of the knower of truth, all this is but the one self, the infinite consciousness, and there is nothing which can be regarded as the not-self. The substantiality of all substances is none other than the self or the infinite consciousness.

## section V - chapter 73

paro nuh sakalatitarupo ham cetyahankrtih prathama sarvameva hamityanyoktta  
raghudvaha (10)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, there is another attitude by which you will also gain divine insight and remain firmly established in self-knowledge. And that is as follows:

'I am the space. I am the sun. I am the directions, above and below. I am the gods. I am the demons. I am all beings. I am darkness. I am the earth, the oceans, etc. I am the dust, the wind, the fire and all this world. I am omnipresent. How can there be anything other than me?'

By adopting this attitude you will rise beyond joy and sorrow.

**Both these attitudes are conducive to liberation: one is 'I am the extremely subtle and transcendent self' and the other is 'I am all and everything'.** There is another attitude with regard to the 'I', and that is 'I am this body': this attitude is the source of endless sorrow. Abandon all these three attitudes, O Rama, and remain as pure consciousness. For, though the self is transcendental and though it is omnipresent, the self alone is the light in all things in the world, though they are in fact false.

This self-knowledge is not gained by explanations and descriptions, nor by the instructions of others. At all times, everything is known only by direct experience. Whatever is experienced and known here in this world, all that is the self, the consciousness devoid of the duality of the experiencing and the experience. It is the self alone that exists everywhere at all times, but because of its extreme subtlety, it is not experienced. In all beings, it is the jiva. All activities take place in the light of the sun, but if the activities cease, the sun does not suffer loss: even so, it is on account of the self that the body, etc., function, but if the body, etc., perish, the self does not suffer loss. The self is not born, nor does it die; it does not acquire, nor does it desire; it is not bound, nor is it liberated - the self is the self of all at all times.

That (self) is unconditioned by time, space, etc.; how does it become bound? When there is no bondage, what is liberation? Such is the glory of the self. But on account of ignorance of the nature of the self, people weep and wail here. Abandon these two false concepts, viz., that of bondage and that of liberation, and live an enlightened life here. There is no liberation in the sky or on earth or in the nether world; liberation is but a synonym for pure mind, correct self-knowledge and a truly awakened state. The complete absence of all desires and hopes is liberation. Until one reaches this true inner awakening or self-knowledge, one considers oneself bound and strives for liberation. Abandon these wrong notions of bondage and liberation and become 'a man of supreme renunciation', O Rama. Then live a very long life and rule the whole world.

## section V - chapter 74

avidya samparijnata na cainam parikarsati mrgatrsna pariijnata tarsulam na vakarsati (20)

Vasistha continued:

The self playfully seeing a body entertains the notion that it has become the body. All these that constitute the world-illusion come into being like a mirage in the desert. This illusion spreads out like waves in the ocean, assuming various names like mind, the faculty of discrimination, the ego-sense, the latent tendencies and the senses. The mind and the ego-sense are not in fact two but one and the same: the distinction is verbal. The mind is the ego-sense and what is known as the ego-sense is the mind. Only ignorant people think that one is born of the other, even as ignorant people might say that whiteness is born of snow.

Thus of the mind and the ego-sense - if one ceases the other ceases to be. Hence, instead of entertaining the notion of bondage and that of liberation, abandon all cravings and through wisdom and dispassion, bring about the cessation of the mind. If even the wish "May I be liberated" arises within you, the mind is revived; and the mind entertaining other motions creates a body. Then there arise other concepts like 'I do this', 'I enjoy this' and 'I know this'. All these concepts are unreal like a mirage in the desert. However, since their unreality is not realised, the illusion attracts the mind even as the mirage deludes and attracts an animal. **But, if it is realised as an illusion it does not attract the mind, even as a mirage does not delude one who knows it to be a mirage.** Just as a lamp utterly dispels darkness, the knowledge of truth completely uproots concepts and conditioning.

When one sincerely questions 'This body is but inert substance, why should one seek pleasure for its sake?', all cravings drop away. When thus the cravings drop away, one experiences great bliss and supreme peace within oneself. The sage of self-knowledge attains courage and stability and shines in his own glory. He enjoys supreme satisfaction in himself. He is enlightened and this inner light shines brightly within him. He beholds the self as self of all, omnipresent, the Lord of all and formless, yet pervading all forms.

Remembering the past when he was swayed by lust, he laughs at his own past ignorance. He is far from evil company, freed from mental distress, but firmly established in self-knowledge. He is glorified by all, he is sought by all, he is applauded by all, but he remains indifferent. He neither gives nor does he take, he does not insult or praise anyone, he does not rejoice or grieve. He is a sage liberated while living, who has abandoned all motivated actions, who is free from conditioning and who has given up all desires and hopes. O Rama, abandon all desires and remain at peace within yourself. No delight in the world is comparable to the delight that will fill your heart when you completely abandon all desires and hopes. Not in kingship, nor in heaven, nor in the company of the beloved one does one experience such delight as when one is free from hope.

## section V - chapter 74

gospadam prthivi meruh sthanurasah samudgikah trnamn tribhuvanam rama  
nairasyalankrtakrteh (47)

Vasistha continued:

He who is endowed with desirelessness (hope-lessness) treats the whole world as if it were the footprint of a calf, the highest mountain as the stump of a felled tree, space as a small box and the three worlds as a blade of grass. He laughs at the activities of the worldly-minded persons. How can we compare such a person, and to what? How can anyone disturb his equanimity when he is totally free from thoughts like "I wish this had happened to me"? O Rama, it is desire or hope that makes one revolve, bound to the wheel of world-illusion.

When you perceive the truth that the self alone is all this and that diversity is just a word without substance, you will become totally free from desire or hope. Such a hero who is endowed with supreme dispassion drives away the goblin of illusion by his very presence. He is not pleased by pleasure, he is not troubled by troubles. Attractions do not distract him any more than wind can uproot a mountain. The twin-forces of attraction and aversion do not even touch him. He looks upon all with equal vision.

Free from the least attachment he enjoys whatever comes to him unsought, even as the eyes perceive their objects without desire or hate. Such experiences do not therefore produce either joy or sorrow in him. Even though he appears to be engaged in the performance of appropriate actions in this world, his consciousness is not distracted in the least. Whatever may befall him in accordance with the laws of time, space and causation, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, he remains inwardly undisturbed.

Even as a rope which had been mistaken for a snake does not frighten one who has seen that it is a rope and not a snake, illusion once dispelled does not return and self-knowledge once attained is never lost. Can one restore to the tree the fruit that has fallen from it?

The knower of truth regards even the most beautiful woman as a painted image; that is the truth, for both of them are made of the same substance (earth, water, etc.) When thus the truth is seen, desire to possess does not arise in the heart. Even as a woman who has a lover goes about doing her housework with her heart absorbed in contemplation of that lover, the enlightened sage functions in this world while his consciousness is firmly established in the truth. In both these cases it is impossible for anyone to prevent such behaviour, i.e., make the woman forget her lover or make the sage forget the truth.

The enlightened sage knows that his self is not cut when the body is cut, does not weep when the eyes shed tears, is not burnt when the body is burnt, and is not lost when everything is lost. Whatever may befall him, whether he is destitute or affluent, whether he lives in a palace or in a forest - he is inwardly undisturbed.

## section V - chapter 75

tiryagyonisvapi sada vidyante krtabuddhayah devayonisvapi prajna vidyante  
murkhabuddhayah (32)  
sarvam sarvena sarvatra sarvatha sarvadaiva hi sambhavatyeva  
sarvatmanyatmanyatatarupini (33)

Vasistha continued:

Very many such liberated beings exist in the universe, O Rama. I shall give you a few instances. Janaka the emperor, your own ancestor the emperor Dilipa, the first ruler of the world Manu, emperor Mandhata who engaged himself in wars, the demon-kings Bali, Namuci, Vrtra (who even fought with the king of gods Indra), Prahlada and Sambara, the preceptors of the gods and demons, as also the trinity (who are involved in the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe), sages like Visvamitra and Narada, as well as the deities presiding over natural elements like fire and air.

There are thousands of others, O Rama, who exist in the universe and who are liberated. Some of them are sages, others are kings, others shine its stars and planets, others are divinities and others are demons. **O Rama, there are liberated beings even among worms and insects; and there are stupid fools among the gods. The self is in all - it exists as the all everywhere at all times and in all ways.** The self alone is the Lord and all the divinities. There is void (space) in substances and substantiality in the void or space. What is inappropriate appears to be appropriate on enquiry. People are righteous because they are afraid of the consequences of sin. Even what is not leads to what is! - the contemplation of the space or void leads to the attainment of the supreme truth! What is not comes into being, guided by time and space. On the other hand, what appears to be strong and powerful reaches its own destruction. Thus perceiving the truth, O Rama, abandon joy and sorrow, grief and attachment. The unreal appears to be real and the real appears to be unreal: hence give up hope and hopelessness and attain equanimity.

In this world, O Rama, liberation is at hand at all times everywhere. By their own self-effort millions of beings have attained liberation. Liberation is either easy or difficult depending upon one's wisdom or unwisdom; hence, O Rama, kindle the lamp of wisdom in yourself. By the vision of the self is sorrow beheaded.

There have been countless beings in this world who have attained self-knowledge and liberation while yet living: like the emperor Janaka. Therefore, do thou become liberated here and now. The attainment of inner peace by utter non-attachment to anything here is known as liberation; this is possible whether the body exists or not. He who is freed from all attachment is liberated. One should wisely and intelligently exert oneself to attain this liberation; one who does not exert cannot even jump over the footprint of a rule. Hence, O Rama, resort to spiritual heroism, to right exertion, and by the right self-enquiry strive to reach the perfection of self-knowledge. For one who thus strives, the entire universe is like the footprint of a calf.

## section V - chapter 76 77

cidatmana ima ittham praspshurantiha sakttayah ityasya scaryajalesu na  
bhyudeti kutuhalam (30)

Vasistha continued:

All these worlds, O Rama, appear in Brahman the absolute; but they are apprehended as an independent substantial reality on account of ignorance or non-wisdom. Such an erroneous notion ceases on the arising of wisdom. Erroneous perception makes all this appear as 'the world': right perception brings about the cessation of this error. Rama, this error is not dispelled except by right exertion with the right attitude and wisdom. Fie on that person, O Rama, who though such possibility of overcoming this error exists, remains sunk in the mire of world-illusion. Blessed are you, Rama, that the right spirit of enquiry has already manifested in your heart. When the truth is realised through such enquiry, strength, intelligence and radiance increase.

The sage who has realised the truth and who is liberated from error here and now beholds this world as he would in deep sleep, without the least craving. He does not apprehend with his inner intelligence even those objects and experiences which seek him unsought: for his own heart is withdrawn into itself. He has no hopes for the future and he does not recall the past, nor does he even live in the present; and yet he does all. Asleep, he is awake; awake, he sleeps. He does all, yet he does nothing. Inwardly having renounced everything though outwardly he appears to be busy, he is ever in a state of equilibrium. His actions are entirely non-volitional.

The sage is unattached to anything or anybody. Hence, his behaviour appears to be devout to the devout and harsh to the harsh. He is a child among children, old man among old men, hero among heroes, youth among youth and sorrowing among the sorrowful. His soft and sweet words are full of wisdom. He has nothing to gain from noble deeds, yet he is noble; he has no longing for pleasure and hence is not tempted by it. He is not attracted to bondage or even to liberation. The net of ignorance and error having been burnt by the fire of wisdom, the bird of his consciousness flies away to liberation.

He is not elated when his efforts bear fruit; nor is he worried if they do not. He appears to take and to abandon with the playfulness of a child. He is not surprised if the moon shines hot or the sun shines cool. Knowing that **the self, which is the infinite consciousness, can bring all these about, he is not surprised even by such wondrous phenomena.** He is not timid and he is not given to outbursts of anger.

Knowing that beings are constantly born and that they die constantly, he does not give way to joy or grief. He knows that the world arises in his own vision, even as the dream-objects arise when one dreams, and hence all these objects are of momentary existence. Therefore, he does not feel any justification for either pity or joy. When all such concepts like pleasure and pain, desirable and undesirable cease, all notions in the mind cease. Error does not arise again, even as oil is not obtained from burnt seed.

## section V - chapter 78

pranasbandaccitah spandas tatsbandadeva samvidah cakravartavidhayinyo  
jalasbandadivormayah (14)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, just as when a firebrand is swung around, an illusory circle of fire is formed, there is an illusory appearance of the world due to the vibration that arises in consciousness. Vibration and consciousness are inseparably one like the whiteness of snow, the oil in the sesame seed, the fragrance of the flower and the heat of fire. Their description as distinct categories is an error. Mind and movement of thought are inseparable; and the cessation of one is the cessation of both.

O Rama, there are two ways in which this cessation can be achieved: one is the way of yoga which involves the restraint of the movement of thought, and the other is the way of knowledge which involves the right knowledge of truth.

In this body, that energy (lit. air) which circulates in the energy-channels (nadi lit. means 'channel of motion', not necessarily a nerve though for convenience it may be called so) is known as prana. In accordance with its diverse functions in the body, it is also known by the names apana, etc. This prana is indistinguishably united with the mind. In fact, the consciousness that tends towards thinking, on account of the movement of prana, is known as the mind. **Movement of thought in the mind arises from the movement of prana; and movement of prana arises because of the movement of thought in consciousness. They thus form a cycle of mutual dependence, like waves and movement of currents in water.**

The wise ones declare that the mind is caused by the movement of prana; and hence by the restraint of the prana, the mind becomes quiescent. When the mind abandons the movement of thought, the appearance of the world-illusion ceases. The movement of prana is arrested at the moment when all hopes and desires come to an end in one's heart through the earnest practice of the precepts of the scriptures and sages, and by the cultivation of dispassion in previous life-spans or through endeavouring to practise contemplation or meditation and reaching a stage of devotion to a single truth in a single-minded way.

The movement of prana is also arrested by the effortless practice of inhalation, etc., without strain, in seclusion, or the repetition of the sacred OM with the experience of its meaning, when the consciousness reaches the deep sleep state. The practice of exhalation, when the prana roams in space without touching the limbs of the body, of inhalation, leading to the peaceful movement of prana, and of retention, bringing it to a standstill for a long time, all lead to the arrest of the movement of prana. Likewise the closure of the posterior nares by the tip of the tongue as the prana moves towards the crown of the head, the practice of meditation where there is no movement of thought, the holding of the consciousness steadily at the point twelve inches from the tip of the nose, the entering of the prana into the forehead through the palate and upper aperture, the fixing of the prana at the eyebrow centre, the sudden cessation of the movement of thought, or cessation of all mental conditioning through meditation on the space in the heart-centre over a long period of time, all these lead to this arrest of the movement of prana.

## section V - chapter 78 79

samvinmatram tu hridayamupadeyam sthitam smrtam tadantare ca bahye ca na ca bahye na ca ntare (35)

Rama asked:

Lord, what is the heart that is spoken of by you?

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, two aspects of the 'heart' are spoken of here: one is acceptable and the other is to be ignored. The heart that is part of this physical body and is located in one part of the body may be ignored! **The heart which is acceptable is of the nature of pure consciousness. It is both inside and outside and it is neither inside nor outside.** That is the principal heart and in it is reflected everything which is in universe, and it is the treasure-house of all wealth. Consciousness alone is the heart of all beings, not the piece of flesh which people call the heart! Hence, if the mind, freed of all conditioning, is gathered into pure consciousness, the movement of prana is restrained.

By anyone of these methods, propounded by the various teachers, the movement of prana can be restrained. These yogic methods bring about the desired results if they are practised without violence or force. When one is firmly established in such practice with simultaneous growth in dispassion and when the mental conditioning comes under perfect restraint, there is fruition of the restraint of the movement of prana.

During the practice one may use the eye-brow centre, the palate, the tip of the nose, or the top of the head (twelve inches from the nose); thus the prana will be restrained. Again, if by steady and persistent practice the tip of the tongue can touch the uvula, the movement of prana will be restricted. Surely, all these practices appear to be distractions; but by their steady practice, one reaches the absence of distractions. It is only by such steady practice that one is freed from sorrow and experiences the bliss of the self. Hence, practise yoga. When through practice the movement of prana is restrained, then nirvana or liberation alone remains. In it is all; from it is all; it is all; it is everywhere: in it this world-appearance is not, nor is this from it, nor is the world-appearance like it! He who is firmly established in it, is liberated while living.

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

## section V - chapter 80

mrtam mano mrta cinta mrto hankararakasah vicaramantrena samah  
svasthastisthami kevalam (80/38)

Vasistha continued:

One who engages himself in enquiry is not tempted by distractions. The eyes but see: the notions pleasant, unpleasant, etc. arise not in the eyes, but elsewhere - it is even so with the other senses. Hence, the sense-functions are not evil. If egoistic thought is linked to these sense-functions (which arise and cease in a moment), there is mental agitation.

O eyes! The objects of your experience arise and fall, and they are but appearances. Do not let your gaze linger on them, lest the eternal indwelling consciousness suffer mortality. Be an onlooker that you truly are. O mind! Countless scenes are seen by the eyes in accordance with their natural function; why do you get involved in them? Even if these scenes are reflected in the mind and recognised by it, why do you respond to these as the ego-sense? There is, without doubt, an intimate relationship between the eyes and their objects; but why do you offer yourself as their support and then endeavour to apprehend them? Truly, scene, sight and mind are unrelated, like the face, mirror and reflection: yet, somehow the illusory notion arises that 'I see this'. Ignorance is the wax in which these are sealed to one another; but self-knowledge is the fire in whose heat this wax melts away!

Indeed, it is through repeated thinking, that this ignorant relationship is strengthened; but I shall now destroy it through right enquiry. When ignorance is destroyed, such illusory relationship between scene, sight and mind will never again arise. The mind alone provides the senses with their intelligence; hence this mind should be destroyed. O mind, why do you vainly get agitated through the five senses? Only he who thinks 'It is my mind' is deluded by you. You do not exist, O mind. I do not care whether you stay or you go from me. You are unreal, inert, illusory. Only a fool is harassed by you, not a wise man. This understanding puts an end to the darkness of ignorance. Get out of this body, O ghost, along with your cravings and your emotions like anger. O mind, I have slain you today because I have realised that you never did exist in truth.

For a very long time, this ghost of a mind generated countless evil notions like lust, anger, etc. Now that that ghost has been laid, I laugh at my own past foolishness. **The mind is dead; all my worries and anxieties are dead: the demon known as ego-sense is dead, too: all this has been brought about through the mantra of enquiry. I am free and happy now.** All my hopes and desires have gone. Salutations to my own self! There is no delusion, no sorrow, no I, no other! I am not the self, nor am I someone else, I am the all in all: salutations to my own self! I am the beginning. I am the consciousness. I am all the universes. There are no divisions in me. Salutations to my own self alone! That which is omnipresent equally in all, to that subtle indwelling omnipresence, that self, salutations!

## section V - chapter 81

vicarakarako maurkhyadahamasam mitasthitih vicarena mitakarah kva nama ham vicarakah (14)

Vasistha continued:

O Rama, thus having reflected, the wise man should proceed further in the following manner:

"When the self (consciousness) alone is all this and when the mind has been cleansed with this understanding, what is mind - mind is surely non-existent. Whether it is unseen, or it is not-mind, or it is an illusory appearance, this much is certain- either it does not exist or it is mere illusion. Now that both wickedness and delusion have ceased, I do not see what the mind is."

"All my doubts have ceased. I am without the fever of agitation. Whatever I am, I am but without craving. When the mind ceases to be, the craving ceases to be too. When the mind is dead and the craving is dead, delusion has vanished and egolessness is born. Hence I am awakened in this state of wakefulness. When there is only one truth and diversity has no reality at all, what shall I investigate?"

"I am the eternal self that is omnipresent and subtle. I have reached that state of reality which is unreflected in anything, which is beginningless and endless and which is utterly pure. Whatever is and whatever is not, the mind and the inner reality are all the one infinite consciousness, which is supreme peace beyond comprehension and by which all this is pervaded. Let the mind continue to be or let it die. What is the sense in enquiring into all this, when the self is established in utter equanimity ? **I remained in a conditioned state as long as I was foolishly engaged in this enquiry. Now that through his enquiry I have reached the unconditioned being, who is the enquirer?"**

"Such thoughts are utterly useless, now that the mind is dead; they may revive this ghost known as the mind. Hence I abandon all these thoughts and notions; contemplating the OM, I shall remain in the self, in total inner silence."

Thus should a wise man investigate the nature of the truth at all times, whatever he may be doing. On account of such investigation, the mind remains established in itself, freed of all agitation, but performing its natural functions.

The Holy ones with unconditioned consciousness live and function here, freed from pride and delusion, with their heart ever rejoicing, their countenance shining with a divine radiance and performing their natural actions.

The above line of enquiry was adopted by the sage Samvarta who himself described it to me once upon a time.

## section V - chapter 82

tyajadeva nugrhnati vrttirindriyavardhitah yasmannivaryate tasminpronmatta  
iva dhavati (14)

Vasistha continued:

There is another mode of enquiry which was adopted by the sage Vitahavya. This sage used to roam the forests in the mountain ranges known as Vindhya. At one stage, he became totally disenchanted with the affairs of the world which create delusion: and through the contemplation which is free from all perverse notions and thoughts, he abandoned the world as a worn-out illusion. He entered his hermitage, seated himself in the lotus posture and remained firm like a mountain-peak. Having withdrawn the senses and having turned the attention of the mind upon itself, he began to contemplate as follows:

How fickle is my mind! Even if it is introverted, it does not remain steady, but gets agitated in a moment like the surface of the ocean. Tied to the senses (like the sight) ,it bounces again and again like a ball. **Having been nourished by the senses, the mind grasps the very objects it has given up; and like a demented person, it runs after the very things from which it has been restrained.** It jumps from one object to the other like a monkey.

I shall now consider the character of the five senses through which the mind thus gets distracted. O senses, has the time not yet arrived for you all to attain self-knowledge? Do you not remember the sorrow that followed your pursuit of pleasure? Then, give up this vain excitement. Truly, you are inert and insentient: you are the avenue through which the mind flows out to reach objective experience. I am your Lord, I am consciousness and I alone do all these as the pure intelligence. You, O senses, are false. There is no connection whatsoever between you and the consciousness which is the self. In the very light of the consciousness which is non-volitional, you function, even as people perform various actions in the light of the sun. But do not entertain the false notion, O senses, that 'I am intelligent', for you are not. Even the notion 'I am alive' that you entertain falsely is conducive only to sorrow.

There is nothing but consciousness which is beginningless and endless. O wicked mind, what then are you? The notions that arise in you, viz., 'I am the doer' and 'I am the enjoyer' which appear to be great rejuvenators, are in fact deadly poisons. Do not be so deluded, O mind; you are neither the doer of anything nor are you the experiencer in truth. You are inert and your intelligence is derived from some other source. How are pleasures related to you? You yourself do not exist; how do you have relations? If you realise that 'I am but pure consciousness', then you are indeed the self. Then how does sorrow arise in you when you are the unlimited and unconditioned consciousness?

## section V - chapter 82

kriyate yattu yacchakttya tannaiva krtam bhavet lunati datram pumsakttya  
lavakah procyate puman (39)

Vitahavya continued to contemplate:

O mind, I shall gently bring home to you the truth that you are indeed neither the doer nor the experiencer. You are indeed inert; how can a statue made of stone dance? If your intelligence is entirely dependent upon the infinite consciousness, then may you live long in that realisation. However, **what is done with the intelligence or the energy of another, is considered to be done by the latter. The sickle harvests with the energy of the farmer; and hence the farmer is said to be the harvester.** Similarly, though it is the sword that cuts, the man who wields the sword is the killer. You are inert, O mind; your intelligence is derived from the infinite consciousness. That self or the infinite consciousness knows itself by itself, experiences itself in itself by itself. The Lord endeavours to enlighten you continuously, for the wise should thus instruct the ignorant in a hundred ways. The light of the self alone exists as consciousness or intelligence; that itself has come to be known as the mind. If you realise this truth, you will instantly be dissolved.

O fool, when you are in truth the infinite consciousness, why do you grieve? That is omnipresent, that is the all: when you realise it, you become the all. You are not, the body is not: the one infinite consciousness alone exists and in that homogeneous being the diverse concepts of 'I' and 'you' appear to exist. If you are the self, then the self alone exists, not you! If you are inert, but different from the self, then you do not exist either! For the self or the infinite consciousness alone is all; there is naught else. There is no possibility for the existence of a third thing, apart from the consciousness and the inert substance.

Hence, O mind, you are neither the doer nor the experiencer. You have been used as a channel of instruction by the wise ones in their communication with the ignorant. But, in fact, that channel is unreal and inert; the self alone is the reality. If the farmer does not use the sickle, can it harvest? The sword has no power to kill either. O mind, you are neither the doer nor the experiencer: hence grieve not. The Lord (consciousness) is not like you; hence do not grieve for him! He does not gain anything by either doing or not-doing. He alone pervades all; there is naught else. Then, what shall he do and what shall he desire?

You have no relationship to the self, except as the fragrance to a flower. Relationship exists only between two independent beings of similar nature when they strive to become one. You, O mind, are ever agitated; and the self is ever at peace. There can thus be no relationship between you two. If, however, you enter into the state of samadhi or utter equanimity, you will remain firmly established in consciousness, without the distraction of diversity, without the notions of either many or one, and realise that there is but one self, the infinite consciousness which shines as these countless beings.

## section V - chapter 83

svatmabhavastava sukham manye manavatam vara tameva bhavaya bhavam sukhatyago  
hi mudhata (28)

Vitahavya continued to contemplate:

O senses, I feel that you have all been dispelled by the light of my admonitions, for you are born of the darkness of ignorance. O mind, surely your emergence as an appearance is for your own grief! See how when you exist, countless beings get deluded and they enter into this ocean of sorrow with all its prosperity and adversity, illness, old age and death; how greed gnaws at all the good qualities and destroys them; how lust or desire distracts and dissipates their energy.

O mind, when you cease to be, all the good and noble qualities blossom. There is peace and purity of heart. People do not fall into doubt and error. There is friendship which promotes the happiness of all. Worries and anxieties dry up. When the darkness of ignorance is dispelled, the inner light shines brightly. Mental distraction and distress cease, just as when the wind ceases to agitate its surface, the ocean becomes calm. There arises self-knowledge within and the realisation of truth puts an end to the perception of the world-illusion: infinite consciousness alone shines. There is an experience of bliss not granted to the ignorant who are full of desires. Even as new shoots may arise from burnt leaves, a new life may emerge from this. However, he who would avoid entanglement in delusion once again, rests in self-knowledge constantly. Such are the fruits of your absence, O mind, and there are countless others. O mind, you are the support of all our hopes and desires; when you cease to be, all these hopes and desires cease. You can now choose either to be one with the reality or to cease to be an independent entity.

**Your existence as identical with the self and non-different from it, is conducive to happiness, O mind. Hence be firmly rooted in the realisation of your non-existence. Surely, it is foolish to neglect happiness.** If you exist as the inner being or consciousness, who will wish for your non-existence? But, you are not a real entity; hence your happiness is delusion. You were not real, you came into being through ignorance and delusion, but now through enquiry into your nature and that of the senses and self, you have once again ceased to be. You exist as long as one does not undertake this enquiry. When the spirit of enquiry arises, there is total equanimity or homogeneity. You were born of the ignorance which is the absence of wisdom and discrimination. When this wisdom arises, you cease to be. Hence, I salute wisdom! O mind, you were awakened by many means. Now that you have lost the false characteristic of a mind, you exist as the supreme being or the infinite consciousness, freed from all limitation and conditioning. That which arose in ignorance perishes in wisdom. In spite of yourself, O good mind, this enquiry has arisen in you; this is surely for the attainment of bliss. There is indeed no mind, no mind: the self alone exists, it alone is, there is naught else. I am that self; hence there is naught other than me in the universe. I am the infinite consciousness whose kinetic state alone appears as the universe.

## section V - chapter 84

yathasthitamidam visvam santamakasanirmalam brahmaiva jfvanmuktanam  
bandhamoksadrsah kutah (30)

Vasistha continued:

After this enquiry, the sage Vitahavya remained in a state of total quiescence (samadhi) and even his prana did not move. His consciousness was neither fixed within nor did it perceive objects outside. His eyes were softly focussed around the nose. With his body held erect, he appeared to be a living statue. He lived thus for three hundred years, without abandoning his body. His samadhi was undisturbed by the countless natural disturbances or by those caused by human and subhuman beings. Thus he spent three hundred years as if it were an hour. The body which was reflected in the consciousness was protected by it.

After this period, his mind began to move in his heart and there arose in it notions of a creation. Then he spent a hundred years as a sage in mount Kailasa. For a hundred years he was a demi-god. Then he ruled as Indra, the king of heaven, for a period of five world-cycles.

Rama asked: How was it possible to interfere with the time-table of gods like Indra, O Holy one?

Vasistha replied: The energy of the infinite consciousness is omnipresent; and it manifests as whatever it likes wherever it likes. Whatever, wherever and however this consciousness conceives the order, so does it become. Thus he saw all this in his own heart, which was free from all conditioning. On account of his attainment of the infinite consciousness, therefore, these notions apparently arose in it non-volitionally. After this, he served as an attendant of lord Siva for a whole epoch. All this the liberated sage Vitahavya experienced.

Rama asked: If such is the experience of Vitahavya, a liberated sage, then it seems as if bondage and liberation exist even for a sage!

Vasistha replied: O Rama, **for the liberated sages this world exists in all its purity, peace and perfection as Brahman, the infinite: how can there be bondage and liberation for them?** Since Vitahavya had become one with the infinite consciousness, he experienced the experiences of all, and he does so even now!

Rama asked: If the creation of the sage was fictitious and imaginary, how were the embodied beings in it conscious and sentient?

Vasistha replied: If the creation of Vitahavya was fictitious, O Rama, so is this! That and this are both pure infinite consciousness, their appearance being the result of the delusion of the mind. In truth, neither that creation existed nor does this exist. Brahman alone exists in the three periods of time. Only till this truth is realised, does the world appear to be a solid reality.

## section V - chapter 85

upadeyo hi dehasya na me tyago na samsrayah yadrso dehasamtyagas tadrso  
dehasamsrayah (12)

Rama asked:

Lord, please tell me how Vitahavya revived his body in the cave.

Vasistha continued:

The sage had realised the infinite consciousness; and he knew that the mind, called Vitahavya, was but a trick of the infinite consciousness. While he was a servant of lord Siva, he once thought of seeing that body of Vitahavya. When he thought thus, in his own consciousness he saw all the other embodiments that he had had - some of them had come to an end and others were still functioning. And, he saw the body known as Vitahavya sunk like a worm in mud.

Seeing it thus, he reflected: "Surely, this body of mine is devoid of life-force and is therefore unable to function. I shall now enter the solar orbit and with the help of the solar power known as pingala, I shall enter that body. Or, shall I abandon it; for, what have I to do with the body of Vitahavya? On the other hand, **this body is neither worth reviving nor worth abandoning. It is the same to me, whether the body is abandoned or it is revived.** Seeing that this body has not decomposed and returned to the elements, I shall enter into it and function for a while."

The sage's subtle body then entered into the orbit of the sun. Reflecting on the purpose of the sage's entry into his orbit and the appropriate action concerning that purpose, the sun ordained his own energy to execute the task. The subtle body of the sage thereupon saluted the sun.

The energy of the sun led the way and, as ordained by the sun, it entered the region of the Vindhya after descending from the solar orbit. It descended right where the body of the sage was lying, covered in mud, in order to raise it. Following it, the subtle body of Vitahavya also entered that body. That body was instantly revived. Vitahavya thereupon bowed to the solar energy, pingala, who returned the salutation.

Pingala returned to the solar orbit and the sage proceeded towards the lake for his bath and ablution. Having had his bath and having worshipped the sun, the sage resumed his life as before. He lived an enlightened life, with friendliness, balanced mind, peace, compassion and joy.

## section V - chapter 86

vismrtir vismrta duram smrtih sphutamanusmrta satsajjatam asacca sat ksatam  
ksinam sthitamn sthitam (22)

Vasistha continued:

In the evening, the sage once again entered the forest with which he was familiar, for the practice of intense meditation. He thought: "I have already realised the falsity of the senses; any further enquiry concerning them will be a contradiction." Having abandoned all vain imagination ('This is' and 'This is not'), he sat in the lotus posture again and in him arose the knowledge 'I am established in the consciousness of total equanimity. Awake, I remain as if in sleep. Established in the transcendental state of consciousness, I shall continue to be, till the body drops away.'

Thus resolved, he meditated for six days, which passed as if in a moment. After that he lived a long time as a liberated sage. He was free from exultation and sorrow. At times, he would address his mind thus: "O mind, look how blissful you are, now that you are in a balanced state! Remain like that all the time."

He would address his senses as follows: "O senses! The self does not belong to you, nor do you belong to the self. May you all perish! Your cravings have ceased. You will no longer be able to rule me. The error of your existence arose from ignorance of the self, even as the non-perception of the rope gives rise to the erroneous perception of a snake. All these errors exist in the darkness of non-wisdom and in the light of wisdom they vanish.

"O senses! You are different from the self, the doer of actions is different from all these, the experiencer of experiences is again different, and the infinite consciousness is again different from all these - what is whose error and how does it arise? It is like this: trees grow in the forest, ropes are made of other fibres with which the timber is bound together, the blacksmith fashions axe, etc. With all these, the carpenter builds a house for his own livelihood, not because he wants to build a house! Thus in this world, all things happen independently of one another and their coincidence is accidental - like the ripe cocoanut falling coincidentally when a crow alights on it, making ignorant people feel that the crow dislodged the cocoanut. Who is to blame for all these? When this truth is known, **error remains error, knowledge becomes clear knowledge, the real is real, the unreal is unreal, what has been destroyed is destroyed and what remains remains.**"

Thus reflecting and established in this knowledge, the sage lived in this world for a very long time. He was established in that state which is totally free from ignorance and error, and which ensures that he would not be born again. Whenever there was contact with the objects of the senses, he resorted to the peace of contemplation and enjoyed the bliss of the self. His heart was free from attraction and aversion, even when all manner of experiences came to him unsought.

## section V - chapter 86

mitrakaya maya yattvam tyajyase cirabandhavah tvayaiva trnanyupanita  
satmajnavasat ksatih (36)

Vasistha continued:

Once, the sage Vitahavya felt inclined to abandon his body and to ensure that he would never again return to embodiment. He resorted to a cave on the Sahya mountain, sat in the lotus posture and

Vitahavya said this within himself:

O attraction, abandon your force of attraction. O hate, abandon hatred. You have played long enough with me. O pleasures, salutations to you; you have indeed sustained me all these years and even made me forget the self. O sorrow, salutations to you; you spurred me on my quest for self-knowledge and it is by your grace that I have attained this self-knowledge; hence you are indeed the bestower of delight.

O body, my friend, permit me to go to my eternal abode of self-knowledge. Such indeed is the course of nature; everyone has to abandon the body at some time or the other. **O body, my friend, you have been my relation for a long time. I abandon you now. You yourself have brought on this separation by nobly leading me to the realisation of the self.** How wonderful! In order to enable me to attain self-knowledge, you have destroyed yourself.

O mother craving! Give me leave to go; you are now left alone to wither away, because I have reached the state of supreme peace. O lust! In order to conquer you, I befriended your enemy dispassion; forgive me. I proceed to freedom; bless me. O merit! Salutations to you, for you rescued me from hell and led me to heaven. Salutations to demerit, the source of pain and punishment. Salutations to delusion under which I laboured for a long time and which is not seen by me even now.

O cave, the companion of samadhi (meditation), salutation to you. You have given me shelter when I was tormented by the pains of worldly existence. O staff, you have been my friend too, protecting me from snakes, etc., and you have saved me from falling into a pit, etc. Salutations to you.

O body, return to the elements of which you are composed. Salutations to activities like bathing; salutations to all the activities in this world. Salutations to the life-forces (prana) that have been my companions. Whatever I did in this world, was done only with you, through you and because of your energy. Pray, return to your own source, for now I shall merge in the infinite consciousness (Brahman). All things that come together in this world have to part one day or the other. O senses, return to your own sources, the cosmic elements.

I shall now enter into the self by the self indicated by the culmination of the OM-sound - as a lamp without fuel. I am free from all the activities of this world and from all notions of perceptions and experiences. My heart is established in the peace indicated by the resonance of the OM. Gone are delusion and error.

## section V - chapter 87 88

acinmayam cinmayam ca neti neti yaducyate tatastat sambabhava sau  
yadgiramapyagocarah (87/16)

Vasistha continued:

With all the desires in the mind utterly silenced and having well grounded himself in the plane of non-dual consciousness, sage Vitahavya uttered the holy word Om. Contemplating the esoteric significance of the Om, he perceived the error of confusing the reality with the appearance. By the total abandonment of all concepts and percepts, he renounced the three worlds. He became utterly quiescent, as when the potter's wheel comes to rest. By the utterance of the Om, he dispelled the webs of sense-organs and their objects, even as wind disperses scent. After this, he pierced the darkness of ignorance. He beheld the inner light for just a split second, but renounced that too immediately. He transcended both light and darkness. There remained just a trace of thought-form; this, too, the sage cut asunder in the twinkling of an eye, through the mind. Now the sage remained in the pure infinite consciousness, not modified in the least; it was like the state of consciousness of the just-born infant. He abandoned all objectivity of consciousness and even the slightest movement of consciousness. He crossed the state known as 'pasyanti' and reached the deep sleep consciousness. He continued beyond that, too, and reached the transcendental or turiya consciousness. It is a state of bliss that is not its description, which is both the 'is' and the 'is not', both something and not-something, light and darkness. **It is full of non-consciousness and (objectless) consciousness, it can only be indicated by negation (not this, not this). He became that which is beyond description.**

That state is the void Brahman, consciousness, the Purusa of the Shankhya, Isvara of the yogi, Siva, time, Atman or self, non-self, the middle, etc. of the mystics holding different views. It is that state which is established as the truth by all these scriptural viewpoints, that which is all - in that the sage remained firmly established.

When the sage had thus become one with the infinite consciousness, the body decomposed and the elements returned to their respective source.

Thus have I told you, O Rama, the auspicious story of the sage Vitahavya. Reflect over it. Whatever I have said to you and whatever I shall say to you now is born of direct perception, direct experience and deep contemplation.

Meditate upon this, O Rama, and attain wisdom. Liberation is attained only by wisdom or self-knowledge. Only through such wisdom does one go beyond sorrow, destroy ignorance and attain perfection.

What has been described as Vitahavya is only a notion in our mind; so am I and so are you. All these senses and the whole world are nothing but the mind. What else can the world be, O Rama?

## section V - chapter 89

avidyamapi ye yukttya sadhayanti sukhatmikam te hyavidyaimaya eva na  
tvatmajnastathakramah (15)

Rama asked:

Lord, why do we not see many of these liberated sages traversing the sky now?

Vasistha replied:

Flying in the sky and other powers are natural to some beings, O Rama. The extraordinary qualities and faculties which are observed in this world are natural to those beings - not to the sages of self-knowledge. Supernatural faculties (like flying in the air) are developed by even those who are devoid of self-knowledge or liberation, by the utilisation of certain substances or by certain practices. All this does not interest the man of self-knowledge who is utterly content in himself. **They who, in pursuit of pleasures, acquire these powers tainted by ignorance, are surely full of ignorance; the sages of self-knowledge do not adopt such a course.**

Whether one is a knower of truth or ignorant of it, powers like flying in the air accrue to one who engages himself in some practices. But the sage of self-knowledge has no desire to acquire these. These practices bestow their fruit on anyone, for such is their nature. Poison kills all, wine intoxicates all, even so these practices bring about the ability to fly, etc., but they who have attained the supreme self-knowledge are not interested in these, O Rama. They are gained only by those who are full of desires; but the sage is free from the least desire for anything. Self-knowledge is the greatest gain; how does the sage of self-knowledge entertain any desire for anything else? In the case of Vitahavya, however, he did not desire these powers; they sought him unsought.

Rama asked:

How is it that worms and vermin did not destroy Vitahavya's body when it lay abandoned in the cave? And, how was it that Vitahavya did not attain disembodied liberation in the first place?

Vasistha replied:

O Rama, the ignorant man's body is composed and decomposed on account of the states of his mental conditioning; in the case of one who has no such conditioning, there is no momentum for decomposition. Again, the mind of all beings responds to the qualities of the object with which it comes into contact. When a violent creature comes into contact with one who has reached utter equanimity, it also becomes temporarily equanimous and tranquil, though it may return to its violence when this contact is lost. Hence, too, Vitahavya's body remained unharmed. This applies even to material substances like earth, wood, etc., for consciousness pervades all. Since Vitahavya's consciousness did not undergo any change, no change happened to his body. Since there was no movement of prana in it, even decomposition could not take place. The sage is independent and free to live or to abandon the body. That he did not abandon the body at one time and did so later is purely coincidental; it may be related to his karma, etc., but in truth he is beyond karma, beyond fate, and devoid of mental conditioning. Again, it is like the crow dislodging the ripe cocoon - purely coincidental.

## section V - chapter 90

manastam mudhatam viddhi yada nasyati sa naqha cittanasabhidhanam hi tada  
sattvamudetyalam (16)

Vasistha continued:

When the mind of Vitahavya had become unattached and totally free through the practice of enquiry, there arose in him noble qualities like friendliness, etc.

Rama asked:

When the mind has been dissolved in Brahman the absolute, in whom do qualities like friendliness arise?

Vasistha answered:

O Rama, there are two types of 'death of the mind'. One is where the form of the mind remains and the other is where even the form ceases to be. The former happens when the sage is still alive; and the latter happens when he is disembodied. The existence of the mind causes misery; and its cessation brings joy. The mind that is heavily conditioned and caught in its own conditioning brings about repeated births. Such a mind brings unhappiness. That which regards as 'my own' the qualities that are beginningless is the jiva. It arises in the mind which has no self-knowledge and which is therefore unhappy.

As long there is mind, there is no cessation of sorrow. When the mind ceases, the world-appearance also ceases to be. The mind is the seed for misery.

I shall now describe how the mind ceases to be. When both happiness and unhappiness do not divert a man from his utter equanimity, then know that his mind is dead. He in whom the notions 'This I am' and 'This I am not' do not arise thus limiting his consciousness - his mind is dead. He in whom the very notions of calamity, poverty, elation, pride, dullness and excitement do not arise - his mind is dead and he is liberated while living.

**The very nature of the mind is stupidity. Hence, when it dies purity and noble qualities arise.** Some wise men refer to 'the pure mind' as that state of utter purity that prevails in a liberated sage in whom the mind is dead. Such a mind of the liberated sage is, therefore, full of noble qualities like friendliness, etc. The existence (satta) of such natural goodness in a liberated sage is known as satva, purity, etc. Hence, this is also called 'death of the mind where form remains'.

The death of the mind where even the form vanishes pertains to the disembodied sage. In the case of such a mind, no trace is left. It is impossible to describe it in a positive way: in it there are neither qualities nor their absence, neither virtues nor their absence, neither light nor darkness, no notions at all, no conditioning, neither existence nor non-existence. It is a state of supreme quiescence and equilibrium. They who have risen beyond the mind and the intelligence, they reach that supreme state of peace.

## section V - chapter 91

dve bije cittavrksasya vrttivratatidharinah ekam pranaparispando dvitiyam  
drdhabhavana (14)

Rama asked:

Lord, what is the seed of this fearful tree known as the mind and what is the seed of that seed and so on?

Vasistha replied:

Rama, the seed for this world-appearance is the body within, with all its notions and concepts of good and evil. That body has a seed, too, and that is the mind which flows constantly in the direction of hopes and desires, and which is also the repository of notions of being and non-being and the consequent sorrow. The world-appearance arises only in the mind, and this is illustrated by the dream state. Whatever is seen here as the world is but the expansion of the mind, even as pots are transformations of clay.

**There are two seeds for the tree known as the mind which carries within it innumerable notions and ideas: first, movement of prana (lifeforce) and second obstinate fancy.** When there is movement of prana in the appropriate channels, then there is movement in consciousness and mind arises. Again, it is the movement of prana alone, when it is seen or apprehended by the mind, that is seen as this world-appearance which is as real as the blueness of the sky. The cessation of the movement of prana is the cessation of the world-appearance too. The omnipresent consciousness is 'awakened', as it were, by the movement of prana. If this does not happen, then there is supreme good.

When consciousness is 'awakened' thus, it begins to apprehend objects, ideas arise and thence sorrow. On the other hand, if this consciousness rests in itself, as if fast asleep, then one attains what is most desirable and that is the supreme state. Therefore, you will realise the unborn state of consciousness if you either restrain the movement of prana in your own psychological ground (of concepts and notions), or refrain from disturbing the homogeneity in consciousness. It is when this homogeneity is disturbed and the consciousness experiences diversity that the mind arises, and the countless psychological conditions spring up into activity.

In order to bring about quiescence of the mind, the yogi practises pranayama (restraint of the movement of the life-force), meditation and such other proper and appropriate methods. Great yogis regard this pranayama itself as the most appropriate method for the achievement of tranquillity of the mind, peace, etc.

I shall now describe to you the other viewpoint, that of the men of wisdom, born of their direct experience: they declare that the mind is born of one's obstinate clinging to a fancy or deluded imagination.

## section V - chapter 91

drdhabhavanaya tyakttapurvapavaravicaranam yadadanam padarthasya vasana sa prakirtita (29)

Vasistha continued:

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

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

Of the two seeds for this world-illusion (viz., movement of prana and clinging to fancy), if one is got rid of, the other also goes away; for the two are interdependent. The mind creates the world-illusion and the mind is created by the movement of prana in one's own conditioning. Again, this movement of prana also takes place because of the mental conditioning or fancy. Thus this vicious circle is completed; one feeds the other, one spurs the other into action. Motion is natural to prana and when it moves in consciousness, mind arises; then the conditioning keeps the prana in motion. When one is arrested, both fall.

The psychological conditioning or limitation alone is the source of untold pain and sorrow and it is the root of ignorance: but when it comes to an end, the mind falls with it instantly. Even so, by the restraint of the movement of prana (life-force) the mind comes to a standstill, without perceiving the world that dwells within it.

## section V - chapter 91

hrdi samvedyamapyayva pranasando tha vasana udeti tasmad samvedyam kathitam  
bijametayoh (64)

Vasistha continued:

**Rama, the notion of an object (of knowledge, of experience) is the seed for both movement of prana and for the clinging to a fancy, for it is only when such desire for experience arises in the heart that such movement of prana and mental conditioning take place.** When such desire for experience is abandoned, both these cease instantly.

Of course, the indwelling consciousness is the seed for this desire for experiencing: for without that consciousness the desire for such experience will not arise at all. However, it has no object of experience either outside or inside; for it is the consciousness itself that, on account of a movement of thought within itself, desires to experience itself as an object. Just as a man dreams of his own death or of his travel abroad, even so this consciousness, by its own cleverness, experiences itself as an object. When such experience takes place, this world-appearance results, O Rama. When this truth is realised, the illusion ceases to be.

What is the truth? That all this is nothing but the one infinite consciousness and that there is naught else besides. Whatever is seen and whatever is unseen, all that is the infinite consciousness - thus should the wise one realise, so purifying his vision. Unpurified vision perceives the world; purified vision perceives the infinite consciousness and that itself is liberation. Hence, O Rama, strive to eradicate the desire for experience. Get rid of idleness. Free yourself from all experiences.

Rama asked:

Lord, how can these two be reconciled? Can I seek freedom from all experiences and freedom from inactivity at the same time?

Vasistha replied:

He who has no desire or hope for anything here, nor entertains a wish to rest in inactivity, such a one does not exist as a jiva; he is neither inactive nor does he seek to experience. He who does not lean towards experience or perception of objects, though he is engaged in ceaseless activity, he is neither inactive nor does he do anything or experience anything. The objective experiences do not touch the heart at all: hence, he whose consciousness is not inactive is a liberated sage here and now.

Freed from all conditioning, fully established in the state of unmodified consciousness, the yogi remains like a child or a dumb person: in him there is bliss, like the blueness of the sky. This bliss is not an experience, but the very nature of consciousness. Hence, it does not act as a disturbance, but remains integrated in the consciousness. There is freedom from all experiences. At the same time, the yogi is constantly engaged in action: hence, there is freedom from inactivity.

## section V - chapter 91

badhva tmanam ruditva ca kosakararmiryatha cirat kevalatameti svayam  
samvitsvabhavatah (93)

Vasistha continued:

However difficult it may be to reach this state, Rama, strive for it and cross this ocean of sorrow.

This desire for experience arises as a thought in consciousness; and by the repetition of this thought, it gains strength. Thus having brought about the illusory creation within itself, consciousness leads itself to its own liberation. Whatever it conceives of, that materialises. **Thus having bound itself, having subjected itself to sorrow (like the silkworm with the cocoon), in due course of time it attains to liberation, because its nature is infinite consciousness.** What is seen as the universe is nothing but pure consciousness, O Rama.

Pure existence alone is the seed for this infinite consciousness. They are inseparable like the sun and his rays. However, this pure existence has two aspects: one, diversity, and second, unity. That which is described as 'this' and 'that', 'I' and 'you' is known as diversity. When this diversity is abandoned and there is pure existence, it is regarded as unity. When diversity is abandoned and unity prevails, there is also non-experience: and hence unity is not a 'thing' nor an object of experience. This unity is therefore eternal and imperishable.

Hence, O Rama, abandon all forms of division - division in terms of time or of parts or of substance - and rest in pure existence. These divisions are conducive to the arising of concepts. They are non-different from the pure consciousness; what is more, they are not facts as such. Contemplation of division does not lead to purity of vision.

Pure existence alone without any division in it, is the seed for all these that we have discussed thus far: and there is no seed for this pure existence. It is the cause of everything and it is itself uncaused. In it are all these reflected. All the diverse experiences are experienced in this pure existence, even as diverse tastes are tasted by the one tongue. An infinite number of universes are born, exist and dissolve in it; and they come into mutual relationship in it.

That pure existence is heaviness in all heavy things; that is lightness in all that is light. That is grossness and that alone is subtlety. It is first among the first, last among the last. It is the light of the luminous and the darkness of the dark. It is substantiality of all substances and it is the space, too. It is nothing and it is everything; it is and it is not. It is seen and it is unseen. That I am and that I am not.

O Rama, therefore, by every means in your power, strive to get established in that supreme state and then do what is appropriate. They who reach that state, which is pure and undecaying and which is the truth of one's own self, attain to supreme peace. By reaching it, you will forever be freed from the fear of this worldly existence.

## section V - chapter 92

adhyatmavidyadhigamah sadhusangama eva ca vasanasamparityagah  
pranaspandanirodhanam (35)

Rama asked:

Holy sir, kindly tell me, how may one quickly destroy all these seeds of distraction and reach the supreme state?

Vasistha said:

These seeds of sorrow, O Rama, can be destroyed, each by the destruction of the previous one. But, if you can at one stroke cut off all mental conditioning and by great self-effort rest in the state of pure existence (if you rest in that state even for a second), in no time you will be established in it. If however you wish merely to find your foothold in pure existence, you can achieve it, by even greater effort. Similarly, by contemplating the infinite consciousness, too, you can rest in the supreme state: but that demands greater effort.

Meditation is not possible on objects of experience: for they exist only in consciousness or the self. But if you strive to destroy the conditioning (the concepts, notions, habits, etc.), then in a moment all your errors and illnesses will vanish. However, this is more difficult than the ones described earlier. For, until the mind is free from the movement of thought, cessation of conditioning is difficult, and vice versa; and unless the truth is realised, the mind does not cease to function, and vice versa. Yet, again, until the conditioning ceases, the unconditioned truth is not realised, and vice versa. Since realisation of truth, cessation of the mind and the ending of conditioning are interwoven, it is extremely difficult to deal with them individually and separately.

Hence, O Rama, by every means in your power, renounce the pursuit of pleasure and resort to all the three simultaneously. If all these are simultaneously practised for a considerable time, then they become fruitful, not otherwise. O Rama, this world-appearance has been experienced as truth for a very long time: and it needs persistent practice of all these three simultaneously to overcome it.

Wise ones declare that the abandonment of conditioning and the restraint of prana are of equal effect: hence, one should practise them simultaneously. Prana is restrained by the practice of pranayama and the yoga asana, as taught by the guru, or by other means. When desires, aversions and cravings do not arise in the mind even though their objects are seen in front, then it is to be inferred that mental conditioning has weakened; thence wisdom arises, further weakening the conditioning. Then the mind ceases.

It is not possible to 'kill the mind' without proper methods. **Knowledge of the self, company of holy men, the abandonment of conditioning and the restraint of prana** - these are the means to overcome the mind. Ignoring these and resorting to violent practices like Hatha Yoga, austerities, pilgrimage, rites and rituals are a waste of time. Self-knowledge alone bestows delight on you. A man of self-knowledge alone lives. Hence, gain self-knowledge, O Rama.

## section V - chapter 93

kincitpraudhavicaram tu naram vairagyapurvakam samsrayanti gunah suddhah  
sarah purnamiva ndayah (3)

Vasistha continued:

If one has achieved even a little bit of control over the mind by self-enquiry, such a person has attained the fruit of his life. For that self-enquiry will expand in his heart. **When such enquiry is preceded by dispassion and has attained stability by practice, all the noble qualities resort to it naturally.** Ignorance and its retinue do not bother one who is fully established in self-enquiry and who sees what is, without distortion. When he has found his foothold in the spiritual ground, he is not overcome by the robbers known as sense-pleasures.

But, sense-pleasures do overcome one who is not so established. He who is not constantly engaged in self-enquiry and is not thus constantly conscious of the self, he alone is considered a dead man. Hence, O Rama, carry on this enquiry constantly. This enquiry reveals the truth by dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Knowledge of the truth in its turn drives away all sorrow. Along with knowledge arises the experience of it. But when the inner light, kindled by a proper study of the scriptures and enquiry into their truth, illumines both knowledge and the experience of it, their total identity is realised. This inner light itself is regarded as self-knowledge by the holy ones: and the experience of it is an integral part of self-knowledge and non-different from it. He who has self-knowledge is for ever immersed in the experience of it. He is liberated while living and lives like an emperor of the world.

Such a sage is not distracted by the diverse experiences he may apparently be subject to, whether they are regarded by others as pleasant or unpleasant. He is not bound or overcome by pleasure nor is there a craving for pleasure in him. He is completely satisfied in his own self. He is not attached to anything or anybody; and he has no enmity or hatred in his heart. Nor is he frightened by the roar of an enemy or the roar of a lion in the forest. He does not rejoice when he visits a garden nor is he distressed if he happens to travel in a desert. Inwardly ever free, yet he engages in doing constantly whatever actions maybe appropriate for the moment. His attitude towards both a murderer and a philanthropist is the same. In his cosmic vision, all things great and small appear to be the same, for he knows that the entire universe is nothing but pure consciousness.

He who acts without attachment, merely with the organs of action, is not affected by anything, neither by joy nor by sorrow. His actions are non-volitional. He sees not, though eyes see; he hears not, though ears hear; he touches not, though the body touches. Surely, attachment (contact, association) is the cause for this world-illusion; it alone creates objects. Attachment causes bondage and endless sorrow. Therefore, holy ones declare that the abandonment of attachment is itself liberation. Abandon attachment, O Rama, and be a liberated sage.

## section V - chapter 93

bhavabave padarthanam harsamarsavikarada malina vasana yaisa sa sanga iti  
kathyate (84)

Rama asked:

Lord, kindly tell me what is this attachment?

Vasistha replied:

Attachment is that, O Rama, which makes the conditioning of the mind more and more dense, by repeatedly causing the experiences of pleasure and pain in relation to the existence and the non-existence of the objects of pleasure, thus confirming such association as inevitable and thus bringing about intense attachment to the objects of pleasure. In the case of the liberated sage, however, this conditioning is freed from the experiences of joy and sorrow: hence it is purified, i.e., the conditioning is weakened if not destroyed. Even if it exists in an extremely weakened state till the death of the body, the actions that spring from such a weakened and so pure conditioning do not result in rebirth.

On the other hand, the dense conditioning which exists in the unwise is itself known as attachment. If you abandon this attachment which causes perverse notions in you, the actions that you may spontaneously perform here will not affect you. If you rise beyond joy and sorrow and therefore treat them alike, and if you are free from attraction, aversion and fear, you are unattached. If you do not grieve in sorrow, if you do not exult in happiness and if you are independent of your own desires and hopes, you are unattached. Even while carrying on your activities here, if you do not abandon your awareness of the homogeneity of the truth, you are unattached. If you have gained self-knowledge and if, endowed with equal vision, you engage yourself in spontaneous and appropriate action in the here and now, you are unattached.

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

Hence, O Rama, engage yourself constantly in self-enquiry and rest firmly established in self-knowledge. You will never again be subjected to birth and bondage.

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