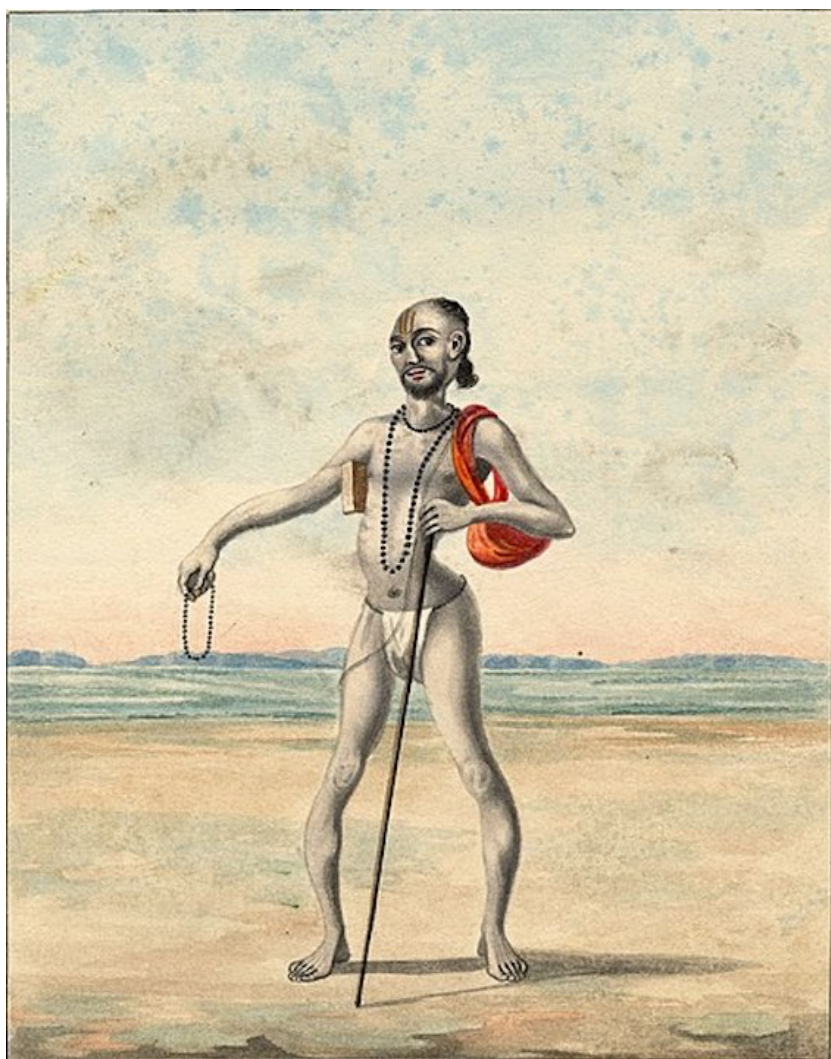


Nine Translations *of the* *Ashtavakra Gita*



MICHAEL J. HOLSHOUSER

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*All have the express written encouragement
To distribute this creation freely to any and all
Who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear
The mystery in which each and every one
Equally participates in so many ways*

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The Heart of Awareness

A Translation of the Ashtavakra Gita

By Thomas Byrom

The Self

1.

O Master,
Tell me how to find
Detachment, wisdom, and freedom!

2.

Child,
If you wish to be free,
Shun the poison of the senses.

3.

Earth, fire and water,
The wind and the sky –
You are none of these.

If you wish to be free,
Know you are the Self,
The witness of all these,
The heart of awareness.

4.

Set your body aside.
Sit in your own awareness.

You will at once be happy,
Forever still,
Forever free.

5.

You have no caste.
No duties bind you.

Formless and free,
Beyond the reach of the senses,
The witness of all things.

So be happy!

6.

Right or wrong,
Joy and sorrow,
These are of the mind only,
They are not yours.
It is not really you who acts or enjoys.

You are everywhere,
Forever free.

7.

Forever and truly free,
The single witness of all things.

But if you see yourself as separate,
Then you are bound.

8.

“I do this. I do that.”
The big black snake of selfishness
Has bitten you!

“I do nothing.”
This is the nectar of faith,
So drink and be happy!

9.

Know you are one,
Pure awareness.

With the fire of this conviction,
Burn down the forest of ignorance.

Free yourself from sorrow,
And be happy.

10.

Be happy!
For you are joy, unbounded joy.

You are awareness itself.

Just as a coil of rope
Is mistaken for a snake,
So you are mistaken for the world.

11.

If you think you are free,
You are free.

If you think you are bound,
You are bound.

For the saying is true:
You are what you think.

12.

The Self looks like the world.
But this is just an illusion.

The Self is everywhere.

One.
Still.
Free.
Perfect.

The witness of all things,
Awareness
Without action, clinging or desire.

13.

Meditate on the Self.
One without two,
Exalted awareness.

Give up the illusion
Of the separate self.

Give up the feeling,
Within or without,
That you are this or that.

14.

My Child,
Because you think you are the body,
For a long time you have been bound.

Know you are pure awareness.

With this knowledge as your sword
Cut through your chains.

And be happy!

15.

For you are already free,
Without action or flaw,
Luminous and bright.

You are bound
Only be the habit of meditation.

16.

Your nature is pure awareness.

You are flowing in all things,
And all things are flowing in you.

But beware
The narrowness of the mind!

17.

You are always the same,
Unfathomable awareness,
Limitless and free,
Serene and unperturbed.

Desire only your own awareness.

18.

Whatever takes form is false,
Only the formless endures.

When you understand
The truth of this teaching,
You will not be born again.

19.

For God is infinite,
Within the body and without,
Like a mirror,
And the image in a mirror.

20.

As the air is everywhere,
Flowing around a pot
And filling it,
So God is everywhere,
Filling all things
And flowing through them forever.

Awareness

1.

Yesterday
I lived bewildered,
In illusion.

But now I am awake,
Flawless and serene,
Beyond the world.

2.

From my light
The body and the world arise.

So all things are mind,
Or nothing is.

3.

Now I have given up
The body and the world.
I have a special gift.

I see the infinite Self.

4.

As a wave,
Seething and foaming,
It is only water.

So all creation,
Streaming out of the Self,
Is only the Self.

5.

Consider a piece of cloth.
It is only threads!

So all creation,
When you look closely,
Is only the Self.

6.

Like the sugar
In the juice of the sugarcane,
I am the sweetness
In everything I have made.

7.

When the Self is unknown,
The world arises.
Not when it is known.

But you mistake
The rope for the snake.

When you see the rope,
The snake vanishes.

8.

My nature is light,
Nothing but light.

When the world arises,
I alone am shining.

9.

When the world arises in me,
It is just an illusion:
Water shimmering in the sun,
A vein of silver in mother-of-pearl,
A serpent in a strand of rope.

10.

From me the world streams out
And in me it dissolves,
As a bracelet melts into gold,
A pot crumbles into clay,
A wave subsides into water.

11.

I adore myself.
How wonderful I am!

I can never die.

The whole world may perish,
From Brahma to a blade of grass,
But I am still here.

12.

Indeed, how wonderful!
I adore myself.

For I have taken form
But I am still one.

Neither coming or going,
Yet I am still everywhere.

13.

How wonderful,
And how great my powers!

For I am without form,
Yet till the end of time
I uphold the universe.

14.

Wonderful!

For nothing is mine,
Yet it is all mine,
Whatever is thought or spoken.

15.

I am not the knower,
Nor the known,
Nor the knowing.

These three are not real.

They only seem to be
When I am not known.

For I am flawless.

16.

Two from one!
This is the root of suffering.

Only perceive
That I am one without two,
Pure awareness, pure joy,
And all the world is false.

There is no other remedy!

17.

Through ignorance
I once imagined I was bound.

But I am pure awareness.

I live beyond all distinctions,
In unbroken meditation.

18.

Indeed,
I am neither bound or free.

An end to illusion!
It is all groundless.

For the whole of creation,
Though it rests in me,
Is without foundation.

19.

The body is nothing.
The world is nothing.

When you understand this fully.
How can they be invented?

For the Self is pure awareness,
Nothing less.

20.

The body is false,
And so are its fears,
Heaven and hell, freedom and bondage.

It is all invention.

What can they matter to me?

I am awareness itself.

21.

I see only one.

Many men,
One wilderness.

Then to what may I cling?

22.

I am not the body.
Nor is the body mine.

I am not separate.

I am awareness itself,
Bound only by my thirst for life.

23.

I am the infinite ocean.

When thoughts spring up,
The wind freshens, and like waves,
A thousand worlds arise.

24.

But when the wind falls,
The trader sinks with his ship.

On the boundless ocean of my being,
He founders,
And all the worlds with him.

25.

But o how wonderful!

I am the unbounded deep
In whom all living things
Naturally arise,
Rush against each other playfully,
And then subside.

Wisdom

1.

You know the Self,
By nature one
Without end.

You know the Self,
And you are serene.

How can you still desire riches?

2.

When from ignorance
You see silver in mother-of-pearl,
Greed arises.

From ignorance of the Self
Desire arises
For the world where the senses whirl.

3.

Knowing yourself as That
In which worlds rise and fall
Like waves in the ocean,
Why do you run about so wretchedly?

4.

For, have you not heard?

You are pure awareness,
And your beauty is infinite!

So, why let lust mislead you?

5.

The man who is wise
Knows himself in all things
And all things in himself.

Yet, how strange!

He still says, "This is mine."

6.

Determined to be free,
He abides in the oneness
Beyond all things.

Yet, how strange!
Indulging in passion, he weakens,
And lust overwhelms him.

7.

Feeble with age,
Still he is filled with desire,
When without doubt he knows
That lust is the enemy of awareness.

Indeed, how strange!

8.

He longs to be free ...

He has no care for this world
Or the next,
And he knows what is passing
Or forever.

And yet, how strange!
He is still afraid of freedom.

9.

But he who is truly wise
Always sees the absolute Self.

Celebrated, he is not delighted.
Spurned, he is not angry.

10.

Pure of heart,
He watches his own actions
As if they were another's.

How can praise or blame disturb him?

11.

With clear and steady insight,
He sees the world is a mirage,
And he no longer wonders about it.

How can he fear the approach of death?

12.

Pure of heart,
He desires nothing,
Even in despair.

He is content
In the knowledge of the Self.

With whom may I compare him?

13.

With clear and steady insight,
He knows that whatever he sees
Is by its very nature nothing.

How can he prefer one thing to another?

14.

He is beyond all duality.

Free from desire,
He has driven from his mind
All longing for the world.

Come what may,
Joy or sorrow,
Nothing moves him.

The True Seeker

1.

The wise man knows the Self,
And he plays the game of life.

But the fool lives in the world
Like a beast of burden.

2.

The true seeker feels no elation,
Even in that exalted state
Which Indra and all the gods
Unhappily long for.

3.

He understands the nature of things.

His heart is not smudged
By right or wrong,
As the sky is not smudged by smoke.

4.

He is pure of heart,
He knows the whole world is only the Self.

So who can stop him
From doing as he wishes?

5.

Of the four kinds of being,
From Brahma to a blade of grass,
Only the wise man is strong enough
To give up desire and aversion.

6.

How rare his is!

Knowing he is the Self,
He acts accordingly,

And is never fearful.

For he knows he is the Self,
One without two,
The Lord of all creation.

Dissolving

1.

You are pure.
Nothing touches you.
What is there to renounce?

Let it all go,
The body and the mind.

Let yourself dissolve.

2.

Like bubbles in the sea,
All worlds arise in you.

Know you are the Self.
Know you are one.

Let yourself dissolve.

3.

You see the world.
But like the snake in the rope,
It is not really there.

You are pure.

Let yourself dissolve.

4.

You are one and the same
In joy and sorrow,
Hope and despair,
Life and death.

You are already fulfilled.

Let yourself dissolve.

Knowledge

1.

I am boundless space.
The world is a clay pot.

This is the truth.

There is nothing to accept,
Nothing to reject,
Nothing to dissolve.

2.

I am the ocean.
All the worlds are like waves.

This is the truth.

Nothing to hold on to,
Nothing to let go of,
Nothing to dissolve.

3.

I am the mother-of-pearl.
The world is a vein of silver,
An illusion!

This is the truth.

Nothing to grasp,
Nothing to spurn,
Nothing to dissolve.

4.

I am in all beings.
All beings are in me.

This is the whole truth.

Nothing to embrace,
Nothing to relinquish,
Nothing to dissolve.

The Boundless Ocean

1.

I am the boundless ocean.

This way and that,
The wind, blowing where it will,
Drives the ship of the world.

But I am not shaken.

2.

I am the unbounded deep
In whom the waves of all worlds
Naturally rise and fall.

But I do not rise or fall.

3.

I am the infinite deep
In whom all the worlds
Appear to rise.

Beyond all form,
Forever still.

Even so am I.

4.

I am not in the world.
The world is not in me.

I am pure.
I am unbounded.

Free from attachment,
Free from desire,
Still.

Even so am I.

5.

O how wonderful!

I am awareness itself,
No less.

The world is a magic show!

But in me,
There is nothing to embrace,
And nothing to turn away.

The Mind

1.

The mind desires this,
And grieves for that.
It embraces one thing,
And spurns another.

Now it feels anger,
Now happiness.

In this way you are bound.

2.

But when the mind desires nothing
And grieves for nothing,
When it is without joy or anger
And, grasping nothing,
Turns nothing away ...

Then you are free.

3.

When the mind is attracted
To anything it senses,
You are bound.

When there is no attraction,
You are free.

4.

Where there is no I,
You are free.

Where there is I,
You are bound.

Consider this.
It is easy.

Embrace nothing,
Turn nothing away.

Dispassion

1.

Seeing to this,
Neglecting that,
Setting one thing against another ...

Who is free of such cares?
When will they ever end?

Consider.

Without passion,
With dispassion,
Let go.

2.

My Child,
Rare is he, and blessed,
Who observes the ways of men,
And gives up the desire
For pleasure and knowledge,
For life itself.

3.

Nothing lasts.
Nothing is real.

It is all suffering,
Threefold affliction!
It is all beneath contempt.

Know this.
Give it up.
Be still.

4.

When will men ever stop
Setting one thing against another?

Let go of all contraries.
Whatever comes, be happy,

And so fulfill yourself.

5.

Masters, saints, seekers:
They all say different things.

Whoever knows this,
With dispassion becomes quiet.

6.

The true master considers well.
With dispassion,
He sees all things are the same.

He comes to understand
The nature of things,
The essence of awareness.

He will not be born again.

7.

In the shifting elements,
See only their pure form.

Rest in your own nature.
Set yourself free.

8.

The world is just a set of false impressions.
Give them up.

Give up the illusion.
Give up the world.

And live freely.

Desire

1.

Striving and craving
For pleasure or prosperity,
These are your enemies,
Springing up to destroy you
From the presumptions of virtue.

Let them all go.
Hold on to nothing.

2.

Every good fortune,
Wives, friends, houses, lands,
All these gifts and riches ...

They are a dream,
A juggling act,
A traveling show!

A few days, and they are gone.

3.

Consider.

Wherever there is desire,
There is the world.

With resolute dispassion,
Free yourself from desire,
And find happiness.

4.

Desire binds you,
Nothing else.
Destroy it, and you are free.

Turn from the world.
Fulfill yourself,
And find lasting happiness.

5.

You are one.
You are pure awareness.

The world is not real.
It is cold and lifeless.

Nor is ignorance real.
So what can you wish to know?

6.

Life after life, you indulged
In different forms,
Different pleasures,
Sons and kingdoms and wives.

Only to lose them all ...

7.

Enough of the pursuit of pleasure,
Enough of wealth and righteous deeds!

In the dark forest of the world,
What peace of mind can they bring you?

8.

How you have toiled,
Life after life,
Pressing into painful labor
Your body and your mind and your words.

It is time to stop.

Now!

Stillness

1.

All things arise,
Suffer change,
And pass away.

This is their nature.

When you know this,
Nothing perturbs you,
Nothing hurts you.

You become still.

It is easy.

2.

God made all things.
There is only God.

When you know this,
Desire melts away.

Clinging to nothing,
You become still.

3.

Sooner or later,
Fortune or misfortune
May befall you.

When you know this,
You desire nothing,
You grieve for nothing.

Subduing the senses,
You are happy.

4.

Whatever you do
Brings joy or sorrow,

Life or death.

When you know this,
You may act freely,
Without attachment.

For what is there to accomplish?

5.

All sorrow comes from fear.
From nothing else.

When you know this,
You become free of it,
And desire melts away.

You become happy,
And still.

6.

“I am not the body,
Nor is the body mine.
I am awareness itself.”

When you know this,
You have no thought
For what you have done,
Or left undone.

You become one,
Perfect and indivisible.

7.

“I am in all things,
From Brahma to a blade of grass.”

When you know this,
You have no thought
For success or failure,
Or the mind’s inconstancy.

You are pure.
You are still.

8.

The world with all its wonders
Is nothing.

When you know this,
Desire melts away.

For you are awareness itself.

When you know in your heart
That there is nothing,
You are still.

Fulfillment

1.

First I gave up action,
Then idle words,
And lastly, thought itself.

Now I am here.

2.

Ridding my mind of distraction,
Single-pointed,
I shut out sound and all the senses,
And I am here.

3.

Meditation is needed
Only when the mind is distracted
By false imagining.

Knowing this,
I am here.

4.

Without joy or sorrow,
Grasping nothing, spurning nothing,
O Master, I am here.

5.

What do I care
If I observe or neglect
The four stages of life?

Meditation,
Controlling the mind,
These are mere distractions!

Now I am here.

6.

Doing, or not doing,
Both come from not knowing.

Knowing this fully,
I am here.

7.

Thinking
Of what is beyond thinking
Is still thinking.

I gave up thinking,
And I am here.

8.

Whoever fulfills this
Fulfills his own nature,
And is indeed fulfilled.

Happiness

1.

Even if you have nothing,
It is hard to find that contentment
Which comes from renunciation.

I accept nothing.
I reject nothing.

And I am happy.

2.

The body trembles,
The tongue falters,
The mind is weary.

Forsaking them all,
I pursue my purpose happily.

3.

Knowing I do nothing,
I do whatever comes my way,
And I am happy.

4.

Bound to his body,
The seeker insists on striving,
Or on sitting still.

But I no longer suppose
The body is mine,
Or is not mine.

And I am happy.

5.

Sleeping, sitting, walking,
Nothing good or bad befalls me.

I sleep, I sit, I walk,

And I am happy.

6.

Struggling or at rest,
Nothing is won or lost.

I have forsaken the joy of winning,
And the sorrow of losing.

And I am happy.

7.

For pleasures come and go.
How often I have watched their inconstancy!

But I have forsaken good and bad,
And now I am happy.

The Fool

1.

By nature my mind is empty.
Even in sleep, I am awake.
I think of things without thinking.

All my impressions of the world
Have dissolved.

2.

My desires have melted away.

So what do I care for money
Or the thieving senses,
For friends or knowledge or holy books?

3.

Liberation,
Bondage,
What are they to me?

What do I care for freedom?

For I have known God,
The infinite Self,
The witness of all things.

4.

Without, a fool.
Within, free of thought.

I do as I please,
And only those like me
Understand my ways.

The Clear Space of Awareness

1.

The man who is pure of heart
Is bound to fulfill himself
In whatever way he is taught.

A worldly man seeks all his life,
But is still bewildered.

2.

Detached from the senses,
You are free.

Attached, you are bound.

When this is understood,
You may live as you please.

3.

When this is understood,
The man who is bright and busy,
And full of fine words
Falls silent.

He does nothing.
He is still.

No wonder those who wish to enjoy the world
Shun this understanding!

4.

You are not your body.
Your body is not you.

You are not the doer.
You are not the enjoyer.

You are pure awareness,
The witness to all things.

You are without expectation,

Free.

Wherever you go,
Be happy!

5.

Desire and aversion are of the mind.
The mind is never yours.
You are free of its turmoil.

You are awareness itself,
Never-changing.

Wherever you go,
Be happy!

6.

For see!
The Self is in all beings,
And all beings are in the Self.

Know you are free,
Free of “I,”
Free of “mine.”

Be happy.

7.

In you the worlds arise
Like waves in the sea.

It is true!
You are awareness itself.

So free yourself
From the fever of the world.

8.

Have faith, my Child, have faith.

Do not be bewildered.

For you are beyond all things,
The heart of knowing.

You are the Self.
You are God.

9.

The body is confined
By its natural properties.

It comes,
It lingers awhile,
It goes.

But the Self neither comes nor goes.
So why grieve for the body?

10.

If the body lasted till the end of time,
Or vanished today,
What would you win or lose?

You are pure awareness.

11.

You are the endless sea,
In whom all the worlds, like waves,
Naturally rise and fall.

You have nothing to win,
Nothing to lose.

12.

Child,
You are pure awareness,
Nothing less.

You and the world are one.

So who are you to think
You can hold on to it,
Or let it go?

How could you!

13.

You are the clear space of awareness,
Pure and still,
In whom there is no birth,
No activity,
No "I."

You are one and the same.
You cannot change or die.

14.

You are in whatever you see.
You alone.

Just as bracelets and bangles,
And dancing anklets,
Are all of the same gold.

15.

"I am not this."
"I am He."
Give up such distinctions.

Know that everything is the Self.
Rid yourself of all purpose.

And be happy.

16.

The world only arises from ignorance.
You alone are real.

There is no one,
Not even God,
Separate from yourself.

17.

You are pure awareness.

The world is an illusion,
Nothing more.

When you understand this fully,
Desire falls away.

You find peace.

For, indeed!
There is nothing.

18.

In the ocean of being,
There is only one.

There was, and there will be
Only one.

You are already fulfilled.
How can you be bound or free?

Wherever you go,
Be happy.

19.

Never upset your mind
With yes and no.

Be quiet.
You are awareness itself.

Live in the happiness
Of your own nature,
Which is happiness itself.

20.

What is the use of thinking?

Once and for all,
Give up meditation.
Hold nothing in your mind.

You are the Self,
And you are free.

Forget Everything

1.

My Child,
You may read or discuss scripture
As much as you like.

But until you forget everything,
You will never live in your heart.

2.

You are wise.
You play and work and meditate.

But still your mind desires
That which is beyond everything,
Where all desires vanish.

3.

Striving is the root of sorrow.

But who understands this?

Only when you are blessed
With the understanding of this teaching
Will you find freedom.

4.

Who is lazier than the master?
He has trouble even blinking!

But only he is happy.
No one else!

5.

Seeing to this,
Neglecting that ...

But when the mind stops setting
One thing against another,
It no longer craves pleasure.

It no longer cares for wealth,
Or religious duties, or salvation.

6.

Craving the pleasure of the senses,
You suffer attachment.

Disdaining them,
You learn detachment.

But if you desire nothing,
And disdain nothing,
Neither attachment nor detachment bind you.

7.

When you live without discrimination,
Desire arises.

When desire persists,
Feelings of preferences arise,
Of liking and disliking.

They are the root and branches of the world.

8.

From activity, desire.
From renunciation, aversion.

But the man of wisdom is a child.
He never sets one thing against another.

It is true!
He is a child.

9.

If you desire the world,
You may try to renounce it
In order to escape sorrow.

Instead, renounce desire!
Then you will be free of sorrow,

And the world will not trouble you.

10.

If you desire liberation,
But you still say “mine,”
If you feel you are the body,
You are not a wise man or a seeker.

You are simply a man who suffers.

11.

Let Hari teach you,
Or Brahma, born of the lotus,
Or Shiva Himself!

Unless you forget everything,
You will never live in your heart.

Beyond All

1.

The man who is happy and pure,
And likes his own company,
Gathers the fruit of his practice,
And the fruit of wisdom.

2.

The man who knows the truth
Is never unhappy in the world.

For he alone fills the universe.

3.

Just as the elephant loves
The leaves of the sallaki tree,
But not the neem tree,
So the man who loves himself
Always spurns the senses.

4.

It is hard to find
A man who has no desire
For what he has not tasted,
Or who tastes the world,
And is untouched.

5.

Here in the world,
Some crave pleasure,
Some seek freedom.

But it is hard to find
A man who wants neither.

He is a great soul.

6.

It is hard to find

A man who has an open mind,
Who neither seeks nor shuns
Wealth or pleasure,
Duty or liberation,
Life or death ...

7.

He does not want the world to end.
He does not mind if it lasts.

Whatever befalls him,
He lives in happiness.

For he is truly blessed.

8.

Now that he understands,
He is fulfilled.
His mind is drawn within,
And he is fulfilled.

He sees and he hears,
He touches and smells and tastes,
And he is happy.

9.

Whatever he does is without purpose.
His senses have been stilled.
His eyes are empty.

He is without desire or aversion.

For him the waters of the world
Have all dried up!

10.

He is not asleep.
He is not awake.
He never closes his eyes,
Or opens them.

Wherever he is,

He is beyond everything.
He is free.

11.

And the man who is free
Always lives in his heart.
His heart is always pure.

Whatever happens,
He is free of all desires.

12.

Whatever he see or hears or touches,
Whatever he smells or tastes,
Whatever he acquires,
He is free.

Free from striving,
And from stillness.

For indeed he is a great soul.

13.

Without blame or praise,
Anger or rejoicing.

He gives nothing.
He takes nothing.

He wants nothing,
Nothing at all.

14.

And whoever draws near him,
A woman full of passion,
Or Death Himself,
He is not shaken.

He stays in his heart.

He is free, indeed!

15.

It is all the same to him.
Man or woman,
Good fortune or bad,
Happiness or sorrow.

It makes no difference.
He is serene.

16.

The world no longer holds him.
He has gone beyond
The bounds of human nature.

Without compassion,
Or the wish to harm.
Without pride or humility.

Nothing disturbs him.
Nothing surprises him.

17.

Because he is free,
He neither craves nor disdains
The things of the world.

He takes them as they come.

His mind is always detached.

18.

His mind is empty.
He is not concerned with meditation,
Or the absence of it,
Or the struggle between good and evil.

He is beyond all,
Alone.

19.

No “I,”
No “mind.”

He knows there is nothing.

All his inner desires have melted away.

Whatever he does,
He does nothing.

20.

His mind has stopped working!

It has simply melted away ...

And with it,
Dreams and delusions and dullness.

And for what he has become,
There is no name.

The Master

1.

Love your true Self,
Which is naturally happy
And peaceful and bright!

Awaken to your own nature,
And all delusion melts like a dream.

2.

How much pleasure you take
In acquiring worldly goods!

But to find happiness
You must give them all up.

3.

The sorrows of duty,
Like the heat of the sun,
Have scorched your heart.

But let stillness fall on you
With its sweet and cooling showers,
And you will find happiness.

4.

For the world is nothing.
It is only an idea.

But the essence of what is
And of what is not
Can never fail.

5.

The Self is always the same,
Already fulfilled,
Without flaw or choice or striving.

Close at hand,
But boundless.

6.

When the Self is known,
All illusions vanish.

The veil falls,
And you see clearly.

Your sorrows are dispelled.

7.

For the Self is free,
And lives forever.

Everything else is imagination,
Nothing more!

Because he understands this,
The master acts like a child.

8.

When you know you are God,
And that what is, and what is not,
Are both imaginary,
And you are at last free of desire,
Then what is there left
To know, or to say, or to do?

9.

For the Self is everything.

When the seeker knows this,
He falls silent.

He no longer thinks,
“I am this, I am not that.”

Such thoughts melt away.

10.

He is still.

Without pleasure or pain,
Distraction or concentration,
Learning or ignorance.

11.

His nature is free of conditions.

Win or lose,
It makes not difference to him.

Alone in the forest or out in the world,
A god in heaven or a simple begger,
It makes no difference!

12.

He is free of duality.

Wealth or pleasure,
Duty or discrimination,
Mean nothing to him.

What does he care
What is accomplished or neglected?

13.

Finding freedom in this life,
The seeker takes nothing to heart,
Neither duty nor desire.

He has nothing to do
But to live out his life.

14.

The master lives beyond the boundaries of desire.

Delusion or the world,
Meditation on the truth,
Liberation itself –

What are they to him?

15.

You see the world
And you try to dissolve it.

But the master has no need to.
He is without desire.

For though he sees,
He sees nothing.

16.

When you have seen God,
You meditate on Him,
Saying to yourself, "I am He."

But when you are without thought,
And you understand there is only one,
Without a second,
On whom can you meditate?

17.

When you are distracted,
You practice concentration.

But the master is undistracted.

He has nothing to fulfill.
What is there left for him to accomplish?

18.

He acts like an ordinary man.
But inside he is quite different.

He sees no imperfection in himself,
Nor distraction,
Nor any need for meditation.

19.

He is awake,
Fulfilled,
Free from desire.

He neither is nor is not.

He looks busy,
But he does nothing.

20.

Striving or still,
He is never troubled.

He does whatever comes his way,
And he is happy.

21.

He has no desires.
He has cast off his chains.
He walks on air.

He is free,
Tumbling like a leaf in the wind,
From life to life.

22.

He has gone beyond the world,
Beyond joy and sorrow.

His mind is always cool.
He lives as if he had no body.

23.

His mind is cool and pure.
He delights in the Self.

There is nothing he wishes to renounce.
He misses nothing.

24.

His mind is naturally empty.
He does as he pleases.

He is not an ordinary man.
Honor and dishonor mean nothing to him.

25.

“The body does this, not I.”
“My nature is purity.”

With these thoughts,
Whatever he does,
He does nothing.

26.

But he pretends not to know.

He finds freedom in this life,
But he acts like an ordinary man.

Yet he is not a fool.

Happy and bright,
He thrives in the world.

27.

Weary of the vagaries of the mind,
He is at last composed.

He does not know or think,
Or hear or see.

28.

Undistracted,
He does not meditate.

Unbound,
He does not seek freedom.

He sees the world,

But knows it is an illusion.

He lives like God.

29.

Even when he is still,
The selfish man is busy.

Even when he is busy,
The selfless man is still.

30.

He is free.

His mind is unmoved
By trouble or pleasure.

Free from action, desire or doubt,
He is still, and he shines!

31.

His mind does not strive
To meditate or to act.

It acts or meditates without purpose.

32.

When a fool hears the truth,
He is muddled.

When a wise man hears it,
He goes within.

He may look like a fool,
But he is not muddled.

33.

The fool practices concentration
And control of the mind.

But the master is like a man asleep.

He rests in himself,
And finds nothing more to do.

34.

Striving or still,
The fool never finds peace.

But the master finds it
Just by knowing how things are.

35.

In this world,
Men try all kinds of paths.

But they overlook the Self,
The Beloved.

Awake and pure,
Flawless and full,
Beyond the world.

36.

The fool will never find freedom
By practicing concentration.

But the master never fails.

Just by knowing how things are,
He is free and constant.

37.

Because the fool wants to become God,
He never finds him.

The master is already God,
Without ever wishing to be.

38.

The fool has no foundation.
Fretting to be free,

He only keeps the world spinning.

But the master cuts at its root,
The root of all suffering.

39.

Because the fool looks for peace,
He never finds it.

But the master is always at peace,
Because he understands how things are.

40.

If a man looks at the world,
How can he see himself?

The master is never distracted by this or that.

He sees himself,
The Self that never changes.

41.

The fool tries to control his mind.
How can he ever succeed?

Mastery always comes naturally
To the man who is wise,
And who loves himself.

42.

One man believes in existence,
Another says, "There is nothing!"

Rare is the man who believes in neither.

He is free from confusion.

43.

The fool may know that the Self
Is pure and indivisible.

But because of his folly,
He never finds it.

He suffers all his life.

44.

The mind of a man who longs to be free
Stumbles without support.

But the mind of a man who is already free
Stands on its own.

It is empty of passion.

45.

The senses are tigers.

When a timid man catches sight of them,
He runs for safety to the nearest cave,
To practice control and meditation.

46.

But a man without desires is a lion.

When the senses see him,
It is they who take flight!

They run away like elephants,
As quietly as they can.

And if they cannot escape,
They serve him like slaves.

47.

A man who has no doubts,
And whose mind is one with the Self,
No longer looks for ways to find freedom.

He lives happily in the world,
Seeing and hearing,
Touching and smelling and tasting.

48.

Just by hearing the truth,
He becomes spacious,
And his awareness pure.

He is indifferent
To striving or stillness.

He is indifferent
To his own indifference.

49.

The master is like a child.
He does freely whatever comes his way,
Good or bad.

50.

By standing on his own,
A man finds happiness.

By standing on his own,
A man finds freedom.

By standing on his own,
He goes beyond the world.

By standing on his own,
He finds the end of the way.

51.

When a man realizes
He is neither the doer nor the enjoyer,
The ripples of his mind are stilled.

52.

The master's way is unfettered
And free of guile.
He shines.

But for the fool,
There is no peace.

His thought are full of desire.

53.

The master is free of his mind,
And his mind is free.

In this freedom, he plays.
He has a wonderful time!

Or he withdraws
And lives in a mountain cave.

54.

If the master encounters
A king or a woman,
Or someone he dearly loves,
He is without desire.

And when he honors
A god or a holy place,
Or a man versed in the scriptures,
There is no longing in his heart.

None at all!

55.

He is unperturbed
Even when his servants despise him,
Or his wives, sons and grandsons mock him.

Even when his whole family makes fun of him,
He is undismayed.

56.

For him, there is no pain in pain,
No pleasure in pleasure.

Only those who are like him
Can know his exaltation.

57.

He has no form.
His form is emptiness.

He is constant and pure.

He has no sense of duty,
Which only binds men to the world.

58.

The master fulfills his duties,
And is always untroubled.

The fool does nothing,
And is always troubled and distracted.

59.

The master goes about his business
With perfect equanimity.

He is happy when he sits,
Happy when he talks and eats,
Happy asleep,
Happy coming and going.

60.

Because he knows his own nature,
He does what he has to without feeling ruffled
Like ordinary people.

Smooth and shining,
Like the surface of a vast lake.

His sorrows are at an end.

61.

The fool is busy,
Even when he is still.

Even when he is busy,
The master gathers the fruits of stillness.

62.

The fool often spurns his possessions.

The master is no longer attached to his body,
So how can he feel attraction or aversion?

63.

The awareness of the fool is always limited
By thinking, or by trying not to think.

The awareness of the man who lives within,
Though he may be busy thinking,
Is beyond even awareness itself.

64.

The master is like a child.
All his actions are without motive.

He is pure.
Whatever he does, he is detached.

65.

He is blessed.
He understands the nature of the Self.
His mind is no longer thirsty.

He is the same under all conditions,
Whatever he sees or hears,
Or smells, or touches, or tastes.

66.

The master is like the sky.
He never changes.

What does the world matter to him,
Or its reflection?

What does he care about seeking,
Or the end of seeking?

67.

He is ever the same.
The victory is his.
He has conquered the world.

He is the embodiment
Of his own perfect essence,
By nature one with the infinite.

68.

What more is there to say?

He knows the truth.
He has no desire for pleasure, or liberation.

At all times, in all places,
He is free from passion.

69.

He has given up the duality of the world
Which arises with the mind,
And is nothing more than a name.

He is pure awareness.
What is there left for him to do?

70.

The man who is pure knows for certain
That nothing really exists.
It is all the work of illusion.

He sees what cannot be seen.
His nature is peace.

71.

He does not see the world of appearances.

So what do rules matter to him,
Or dispassion, renunciation, and self-control?

His form is pure and shining light.

72.

He does not see the world.

So what does he care for joy or sorrow,
Bondage or liberation?

He is infinite and shining.

73.

Before the awakening of understanding,
The illusion of the world prevails.
But the master is free of passion.

He has no "I,"
He has no "mind,"
And he shines!

74.

He sees that the Self never suffers or dies.

So what does he care for knowledge,
Or the world?

Or the feeling "I am the body,"
"The body is mine"?

75.

The moment the fool gives up concentration
And his other spiritual practices,
He falls prey to fancies and desires.

76.

Even after hearing the truth,
The fool clings to his folly.

He tries hard to look calm and composed,
But inside he is full of cravings.

77.

When the truth is understood,

Work falls away.

Though in the eyes of others
The master may seem to work,
In reality he has no occasion
To say or to do anything.

78.

He has no fear.
He is always the same.

He has nothing to lose.

For him there is no darkness,
There is no light.

There is nothing at all.

79.

He has no being of his own.
His nature cannot be described.

What is patience to him,
Or discrimination, or fearlessness?

80.

In the eyes of the master,
There is nothing at all.

There is no heaven.
There is no hell.

There is no such thing as liberation in life.

What more is there to say?

81.

Nothing he hopes to win.
Nothing he fears to lose.

His mind is cool and drenched with nectar.

82.

Free from desire,
He neither praises the peaceful,
Nor blames the wicked.

The same in joy and sorrow,
He is always happy.

He sees there is nothing to do.

83.

He does not hate the world.
He does not seek the Self.

He is free from joy and sorrow.

He is not alive,
And his is not dead.

84.

He is not attached to his family.

Free from the desire of the senses,
He does not care about his body.

The master expects nothing,
And he shines.

85.

Whatever befalls him,
He is always happy.

He wanders where he will.

And wherever he finds himself
When the sun sets
There he lies down to rest.

86.

He does not care if the body lives or dies.

He is so firmly set in his own being,
He rises above the round of birth and death.

87.

He is full of joy.

Attached to nothing,
Free from possessions,
He stands on his own.

His doubts dispelled,
He wanders where he will,
Never setting one thing against another.

88.

The master shines.

He never says “mine.”
Gold, stone, earth –
They are all the same to him.

He is not bound by sloth,
Nor consumed by his own activity.

He has severed the knots which bind his heart.

89.

Who can compare with him?

Indifferent to everything,
He is happy, and he is free.

There is not the least desire in his heart.

90.

Only the man without desire
Sees without seeing,
Speaks without speaking,

Knows without knowing.

91.

In his view of things,
Good and evil have melted away.

A king or a beggar,
Whoever is free from desire shines!

92.

He is utterly without guile.
He has found his way.
He is simplicity itself.

He cares nothing for restraint,
Or abandon.

He has no interest in finding the truth.

93.

He has no desires.
He rests happily in the Self.

His sorrows are over.

How can anyone tell what he feels inside?

94.

Even when he is sound asleep,
He is not asleep.

Even when he is dreaming,
He does not dream.

Even when he is awake,
He is not awake.

Step by step,
Whatever befalls him,
He is happy.

95.

He thinks without thinking.
He feels without feeling.

He is intelligent,
But he has no mind.

He has personality,
But with no thought for himself.

96.

He is not happy,
Nor is he sad.

He is not detached,
Nor is he bound.

He is not free,
Nor does he seek freedom.

He is not this.
He is not that.

97.

Amid distractions,
He is undistracted.

In meditation,
He does not meditate.

Foolish,
He is not a fool.

Knowing everything,
He knows nothing.

98.

He always lives within.
He is everywhere the same.

Action or duty are nothing to him.

Because he is free from desire,
He never worries about what he has done,
Or has not done.

99.

Blame does not disturb him,
Nor does praise delight him.

He neither rejoices in life,
Nor fears death.

100.

His mind is calm.

Never seeking the solitude of the forest,
Nor running from the crowd.

Always and everywhere,
He is one and the same.

My Own Splendor

1.

With the pincers of truth I have plucked
From the dark corners of my heart,
The thorn of many judgments.

2.

I sit in my own splendor.

Wealth or pleasure,
Duty or discrimination,
Duality or nonduality,
What are they to me?

3.

What is yesterday,
Tomorrow,
Or today?

What is space,
Or eternity?

I sit in my own radiance,

4.

What is the Self,
Or the not-Self?

What is thinking,
Or not thinking?

What is good or evil?

I sit in my own splendor.

5.

I sit in my own radiance,
And I have no fear.

Waking,

Dreaming,
Sleeping,
What are they to me?

Or even ecstasy?

6.

What is far or near,
Outside or inside,
Gross or subtle?

I sit in my own splendor.

7.

Dissolving the mind,
Or the highest meditation,
The world and all its works,
Life or death,
What are they to me?

I sit in my own radiance.

8.

Why talk of wisdom,
The three ends of life,
Or oneness?

Why talk of these!

Now I live in my heart.

I Am Shiva

1.

I am fulfilled.

The elements of nature,
The body and the senses,
What are they to me?

Or the mind?

What is emptiness or despair?

2.

What are the holy books,
Or knowledge of the Self,
Or the mind,
Even when it is free of the senses?

Or happiness,
Or freedom from desire?

I am always
One without two.

3.

Knowledge or ignorance,
Freedom or bondage,
What are they?

What is "I,"
Or "mine,"
Or "this"?

Or the form of the true Self?

4.

I am always one.

What do I care for freedom
In life or in death,
Or for my present karma?

5.

I am always
Without I.

So where is the one
Who acts or enjoys?

And what is the rising
Or vanishing of thought?

What is the invisible world,
Or the visible?

6.

In my heart, I am one.

What is this world?

Who seeks freedom,
Or wisdom, or oneness?

Who is bound or free?

7.

In my heart I am one.

What is creation,
Or dissolution?

What is seeking,
And the end of seeking?

Who is the seeker?
What has he found?

8.

I am forever pure.

What do I care who knows,
What is known,
Or how it is known?

What do I care for knowledge?

What do I care what is,
Or what is not?

9.

I am forever still.

What are joy or sorrow,
Distraction or concentration,
Understanding or delusion?

10.

I am always without thought.

What is happiness or grief?

What is here and now,
Or beyond?

11.

I am forever pure.

What is illusion,
Or the world?

What is the little soul,
Or God Himself?

12.

One without two,
I am always the same.

I sit in my heart.

13.

What need is there
For striving or stillness?

What is freedom or bondage?

What are holy books or teaching?

What is the purpose of life?

Who is the disciple,
And who is the master?

14.

For I have no bounds.

I am Shiva.

Nothing arises in me,
In whom nothing is single,
Nothing is double.

Nothing is,
Nothing is not.

What more is there to say?

Ashtavakra Gita

A New English Version by Bart Marshall

1. Instruction on Self-Realization

Janaka said:

1.1

Master, how is knowledge to be achieved,
detachment acquired, liberation attained?

Ashtavakra said:

1.2

To be free,
shun the experiences of the senses like poison.
Turn your attention to
forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, simplicity, truth.

1.3

You are not earth, water, fire or air.
Nor are you empty space.
Liberation is to know yourself
as awareness alone — the Witness of these.

1.4

Abide in awareness
with no illusion of person.
You will be instantly free and at peace.

1.5

You have no caste or duties.
You are invisible, unattached, formless.
You are the Witness of all things.
Be happy.

1.6

Right and wrong, pleasure and pain,
exist in mind only.
They are not your concern.
You neither do nor enjoy.
You are free.

1.7

You are the solitary Witness of All that is,
forever free.
Your only bondage is not seeing This.

1.8
The thought, "I am the doer,"
is the bite of a poisonous snake.
To know, "I do nothing," is the wisdom of faith.
Be happy.

1.9
A single understanding, "I am the One Awareness,"
consumes all suffering in the fire of an instant.
Be happy.

1.10
You are unbounded awareness — bliss, supreme bliss —
in which the universe appears
like the mirage of a snake in a rope.
Be happy.

1.11
It is true what they say, "You are what you think."
If you think you are bound you are bound.
If you think you are free you are free.

1.12
You are Self — the solitary Witness.
You are perfect, all-pervading, One.
You are free, desireless, forever still.
The universe is but a seeming in You.

1.13
Meditate on this: "I am Awareness alone — Unity itself."
Give up the idea that you are separate, a person,
that there is within and without.

1.14
You have long been bound, thinking, "I am a person."
Let the knowledge, "I am Awareness alone,"
be the sword that frees you.

1.15
You are now and forever
free, luminous, transparent, still.
The practice of meditation keeps one in bondage.

1.16

You are pure consciousness — the substance of the universe.
The universe exists within you.
Don't be small-minded.

1.17

You are unconditioned, changeless, formless.
You are solid, unfathomable, cool.
Desire nothing.
You are consciousness.

1.18

That which has form is not real.
Only the formless is permanent.
Once this is known, you will not return to illusion.

1.19

Just as a mirror exists both within and without
the image reflected,
so the supreme Self exists
both within and without the body.

1.20

Just as the same space exists
both within and without a jar,
the timeless, all-pervasive One
exists as Totality.

2. Joy of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

2.1

I am now spotless and at peace —
awareness beyond consciousness.
All this time I have been duped by illusion.

2.2

By this light alone
the body and the universe appear.
I am everything or nothing.

2.3

Seeing there is no universe or body,
by grace the Self is revealed.

2.4

As waves, foam, and bubbles
are not different from water,
so the universe emanating from Self
is not different from Self.

2.5

Look closely at cloth,
you see only threads.
Look closely at creation,
you see only Self.

2.6

As sweetness pervades sugarcane juice,
I am the essence of creation.

2.7

Not seeing Self, the world is materialized.
Seeing Self, the world is vanished.
A rope is not a snake, but can appear to be.

2.8

I am not other than light.
The universe manifests at my glance.

2.9

The mirage of universe appears in me
as silver appears in mother-of-pearl,

as a snake appears in a rope,
as water appears on a desert horizon.

2.10

As a pot returns to clay,
a wave to water, a bracelet to gold,
so will the universe return to Me.

2.11

I am wonderful indeed — beyond adoration.
I cannot decay nor ever die,
though God and all the universes
should perish to the last blade of grass.

2.12

I am wonderful indeed — beyond adoration.
Even with a body I am One.
I neither come nor go.
I am everywhere at once.

2.13

I am wonderful indeed — beyond adoration.
I am astounded at my powers.
The universe appears within me
but I do not touch it.

2.14

I am wonderful indeed — beyond adoration.
I am everything thought or spoken,
and have nothing.

2.15

In Reality, knowledge, the knower
and the knowable do not exist.
I am the transparent Self
in which through ignorance they appear.

2.16

Looking at One and seeing many
is the cause of all misery.
The only cure is to realize that
what is seen is not there.
I am One — aware, blissful, immaculate.

2.17

I am unbounded awareness.

Only in imagination do I have limits.
Reflecting on this, I abide in the Absolute.

2.18

I am neither free nor bound.
The illusion of such things has fallen into disbelief.
Though I contain creation, it has no substance.

2.19

Having seen for certain that this universe and body
is without form or substance,
I am revealed as Awareness alone.
Imagination has no place here.

2.20

The body exists only in imagination,
as do heaven and hell, bondage, freedom, fear.
Are these my concern?
I who am pure awareness?

2.21

I see no differences or separation.
Even the multitudes appear as a single formless desert.
To what should I cling?

2.22

I am not the body.
I do not have a body.
I am Awareness, not a person.
My thirst for life bound me
to a seeming of life.

2.23

In the limitless ocean of Self
the winds of the mind
roil the myriad waves of the world.

2.24

But when the wind subsides in the limitless ocean
the ark of personhood is swallowed up,
along with the universe it carries.

2.25

And how wonderful it is!
In the limitless ocean of Self,
waves of beings arise, collide,

play for a time, then disappear —
as is their nature.

3. Test of Self-Realization

Ashtavakra said:

3.1

Having realized yourself as One,
being serene and indestructible,
why do you desire wealth?

3.2

Just as imagining silver in mother-of-pearl
causes greed to arise,
so does ignorance of Self
cause desire for illusion.

3.3

Having realized yourself as That
in which the waves of the world rise and fall,
why do you run around in turmoil?

3.4

Having realized yourself as pure awareness,
as beautiful beyond description,
how can you remain a slave to lust?

3.5

It is strange that in a sage who has realized
Self in All, and All in Self,
this sense of ownership should continue.

3.6

Strange that one abiding in the Absolute,
intent on freedom,
should be vulnerable to lust
and weakened by amorous pastimes.

3.7

Strange that knowing lust
as an enemy of knowledge,
one so weak and nearing death
should still crave sensual pleasure.

3.8

Strange that one who is unattached
to the things of this world and the next,
who can discriminate between the transient and the timeless,

who yearns for freedom,
should yet fear the dissolution of the body.

3.9

Whether acclaimed or tormented
the serene sage abides in Self.
He is neither gratified nor angered.

3.10

A great soul witnesses his body's actions
as if they were another's.
How can praise or blame disturb him?

3.11

Realizing the universe is illusion,
having lost all curiosity,
how can one of steady mind fear death?

3.12

With whom can we compare the great soul
who, content knowing Self,
remains desireless in disappointment?

3.13

Why should a person of steady mind,
who sees the nothingness of objects,
prefer one thing to another?

3.14

He who is unattached,
untouched by opposites, free of desire,
experiences neither pleasure nor pain as events pass through.

4. Glorification of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

4.1

Surely one who knows Self,
though he plays the game of life,
differs greatly from the world's
bewildered burdened beasts.

4.2

Truly, the yogi feels no elation,
though he abides in the exalted state
yearned for by Indra and all the discontented gods.

4.3

Surely one who knows That,
is not touched by virtue or vice,
just as space is not touched by smoke,
though it appears to be.

4.4

Who can prevent the great soul,
who knows the universe as Self,
from living life as it comes?

4.5

Of the four kinds of beings,
from Brahma to a blade of grass,
only the sage can renounce aversion and desire.

4.6

Rare is he who knows himself
as One with no other — the Lord of the Universe.
He acts as he knows and is never afraid.

5. Four Ways to Dissolution

Ashtavakra said:

5.1

You are immaculate, touched by nothing.
What is there to renounce?
The mind is complex — let it go.
Know the peace of dissolution.

5.2

The universe arises from you
like foam from the sea.
Know yourself as One.
Enter the peace of dissolution.

5.3

Like an imagined snake in a rope
the universe appears to exist
in the immaculate Self, but does not.
Seeing this you know, “There is nothing to dissolve.”

5.4

You are perfect, changeless,
through misery and happiness,
hope and despair, life and death.
This is the state of dissolution.

6. The Higher Knowledge

Janaka said:

6.1

I am infinite space.

The universe is a jar.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.2

I am a shoreless ocean.

The universe makes waves.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.3

I am mother-of-pearl.

The universe is the illusion of silver.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.4

I am in all beings.

All beings are in me.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

7. Nature of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

7.1

In me, the shoreless ocean,
the ark of universe drifts here and there
on the winds of its nature.
I am not impatient.

7.2

In me, the shoreless ocean,
let the waves of the universe
rise and fall as they will.
I am neither enhanced nor diminished.

7.3

In me, the shoreless ocean,
the universe is imagined.
I am still and formless.
In this alone I abide.

7.4

The Self is not in objects,
nor are objects in the pure and infinite Self.
The Self is tranquil, free of attachment and desire.
In this alone I abide.

7.5

I am Awareness alone.
The world is passing show.
How can thoughts arise of acceptance or rejection?
And where?

8. Bondage and Liberation

Ashtavakra said:

8.1

When the mind desires or grieves things,
accepts or rejects things,
is pleased or displeased by things,
this is bondage.

8.2

When the mind does not desire or grieve,
accept or reject, become pleased or displeased,
liberation is at hand.

8.3

If the mind is attached to any experience,
this is bondage.
When the mind is detached from all experience,
this is liberation.

8.4

When there is no “I”
there is only liberation.
When “I” appears, bondage appears with it.
Knowing this, it is effortless to refrain
from accepting and rejecting.

9. Detachment

Ashtavakra said:

9.1

Opposing forces, duties done and left undone —
when does it end and for whom?
Considering this, be ever desireless, let go of all things,
and to the world turn an indifferent eye.

9.2

Rare and blessed is one whose desire to live,
to enjoy and to know,
has been extinguished by observing the ways of men.

9.3

Seeing all things as threefold suffering,
the sage becomes still.
Insubstantial, transient, contemptible —
the world is fit only for rejection.

9.4

Was there an age or time men existed without opposites?
Leave the opposites behind.
Be content with what is.
Perfection.

9.5

The greatest seers, saints, and yogis agree on little.
Seeing this, who could not be indifferent to knowledge
and become still?

9.6

One who, through worldly indifference,
through serenity and reason,
sees his true nature and escapes illusion —
is he not a true teacher?

9.7

In the myriad forms of the universe
see the primal element alone.
You will be instantly free, and abide in Self.

9.8

Desire creates the world — renounce it.
Renounce desires and you renounce the world.

Now you may live as you are.

10. Quietude

Ashtavakra said:

10.1

Give up desire, which is the enemy.
Give up prosperity,
which is born of mischief and good works.
Be indifferent.

10.2

Look upon friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, gifts —
and all apparent good fortune —
as a passing show,
as a dream lasting three to five days.

10.3

Where there is desire, there is the world.
Be firm in non-attachment.
Be free of desire.
Be happy.

10.4

Bondage and desire are the same.
Destroy desire and be free.
Only by detaching from the world
does one joyfully realize Self.

10.5

You are One — Awareness itself.
The universe is neither aware nor does it exist.
Even ignorance is unreal.
What is left to know?

10.6

Attached as you have been to
kingdoms, sons, wives, bodies, pleasures —
life after life —
still they are now lost forever.

10.7

Prosperity, pleasure, pious deeds ...
Enough!
In the dreary forest of the world
the mind finds no rest.

10.8

For how many lifetimes
have you done hard and painful labor
with body, mind, and speech?
It is time to stop.

11. Wisdom

Ashtavakra said:

11.1

Existence, non-existence, change —
this is the nature of things.

Realizing this,
stillness, serenity, and bliss naturally follow.

11.2

One who knows for certain that
“Self creates All and is alone”
becomes still, desireless, unattached.

11.3

One who knows for certain that adversity and success
come and go in obedience to destiny,
becomes content.
He neither desires nor grieves.

11.4

One who knows for certain
that birth and death, happiness and misery,
come and go in obedience to destiny,
sees nothing to accomplish.
He engages in non-action,
and in action remains unattached.

11.5

One who has realized
that only by caring is misery caused in the world,
becomes free, happy, serene, desireless.

11.6

“I am not the body, nor is the body my possession —
I am Awareness itself.”
One who realizes this for certain
has no memory of things done or left undone.
There is only the Absolute.

11.7

“From Brahma to the last blade of grass, I alone exist.”
One who knows this for certain
becomes immaculate, serene, unconflicted.
Attainment has no meaning.

11.8

One who knows for certain
that this manifold and wonderful universe is nothing,
becomes desireless awareness,
and abides in the stillness of no-thing.

12. Abiding in the Self

Janaka said:

12.1

Becoming first intolerant of action,
then of excessive speech,
then of thought itself,
I come to be here.

12.2

Neither sounds nor other sense perceptions
attract my attention.
Even the Self is unperceived.
The mind is free, undistracted, one-pointed.
And here I am.

12.3

Effort is required
to concentrate a distracted mind
superimposed with illusion.
Knowing this, I remain here.

12.4

Nothing to reject, nothing to accept.
No joy, no sorrow.
Lord God I am here.

12.5

The four stages of life, life without stages,
meditation, renunciation, objects of mind —
nothing but distractions.
I am forever here.

12.6

Doing and not-doing
both arise from ignorance.
I know this.
And I am here.

12.7

Thinking of the unthinkable One
unavoidably conjures thought.
I choose no-thought
and remain here.

12.8

Blessed is he who attains this by effort.

Blessed is he who is such by nature.

13. Happiness

Janaka said:

13.1

The tranquil state
of knowing Self alone is rare —
even among those who own but a loincloth.
I therefore neither renounce nor accept
and am happy.

13.2

The body is strained by practices.
The tongue tires of scripture.
The mind numbs with meditation.
Detached from all this,
I live as I am.

13.3

Realizing that nothing is done,
I do what comes
and am happy.

13.4

Yogis who preach either effort or non-effort
are still attached to the body.
I neither dissociate nor associate with any of that
and am happy.

13.5

I have nothing to gain or lose
by standing, walking, or sitting down.
So whether I stand, walk, or sit,
I am happy.

13.6

I do not lose by sleeping nor attain by effort.
Not thinking in terms of loss or gain,
I am happy.

13.7

Pleasure and pain fluctuate
and are inconsistent.
Without good or bad,
I live happily.

14. Tranquility

Janaka said:

14.1

Though appearing asleep like other men,
one whose interest in the world is exhausted,
whose mind has been emptied,
who thinks only by inadvertence,
is in Reality awake.

14.2

When desire has melted,
how can there be wealth, or friends,
or the seduction of senses?
Of what use is scripture and knowledge?

14.3

I have realized the supreme Self, the Witness, the One.
I am indifferent to bondage and freedom.
I have no need for liberation.

14.4

The inner condition of one who is devoid of doubt,
yet moves among creatures of illusion,
can only be known by those like him.

15. Knowledge of the Self

Ashtavakra said:

15.1

A man of open intuition may realize Self
upon hearing a casual instruction,
while a man of cluttered intellect
inquires bewildered for a lifetime.

15.2

Aversion to the world's offerings is liberation.
Attraction to the world's offerings
is the suffering of bondage.
This is the truth.
Now do as you please.

15.3

This knowledge of Truth
turns an eloquent, wise, and active man,
mute, empty, and inert.
Lovers of the world therefore shun it.

15.4

You are not the body.
You do not have a body.
You neither do nor enjoy.
You are Awareness alone — the timeless Witness.
You are free.
Go in happiness.

15.5

Attachment and aversion are attributes of the mind.
You are not the mind.
You are consciousness itself — changeless, undivided, free.
Go in happiness.

15.6

Realize Self in All and All in Self.
Be free of personal identity
and the sense of "mine."
Be happy.

15.7

You are That in which the universe appears
like waves appearing in the ocean.

You are consciousness itself.
No need to worry.

15.8

Have faith, my son, have faith.
You are Awareness alone, the Self, the One.
You are the Lord of Nature.

15.9

The body is made of worldly stuff.
It comes, it lingers, it goes.
The Self neither comes nor goes, yet remains.
Why mourn the body?

15.10

If the body lasts until the end of time
or perishes today,
is there gain or loss for you?
You who are pure Awareness?

15.11

Let the waves of the universe
rise and fall as they will.
You have nothing to gain or lose.
You are the ocean.

15.12

You are the substance of consciousness.
The world is You.
Who is it that thinks he can accept or reject it?
And where does he stand?

15.13

In you who are One —
immaculate, still Awareness —
from where can birth, action,
or a separate person arise?

15.14

Whatever you perceive is You and You alone.
How can bracelets, armlets, and anklets
be other than the gold they are made of?

15.15

Leave behind such distinctions as,
“I am he,” and, “I am not this.”

Consider everything Self.
Be desireless and be happy.

15.16
Your ignorance alone creates the universe.
In reality One alone exists.
There is no person or god other than You.

15.17
One who knows for certain
that the universe is illusion, a no-thing,
becomes desireless, pure Awareness,
and finds peace in the existence of nothing.

15.18
In the ocean of existence
only One is, was, and ever will be.
You are neither bound nor free.
Live content and be happy.

15.19
Do not stir the mind with “yes” or “no.”
You are pure consciousness.
Be still, and abide in the bliss of Self.

15.20
Give up completely all contemplation.
Hold nothing in the mind or heart.
You are the Self, forever free.
Of what use is thinking to you?

16. Special Instruction

Ashtavakra said:

16.1

You can recite and discuss scripture all you want,
but until you drop everything
you will never know Truth.

16.2

You can enjoy and work and meditate,
but you will still yearn for That
which is beyond all experience,
and in which all desires are extinguished.

16.3

Everyone is miserable because they exert constant effort.
But no one understands this.
A ripe mind can become unshackled
upon hearing this one instruction.

16.4

The master idler,
to whom even blinking is a bother,
is happy.
But he is the only one.

16.5

When the mind is free of opposites
like, “This is done,” and, “This is yet undone,”
one becomes indifferent to
merit, wealth, pleasure, and liberation.

16.6

One who abhors sense objects avoids them.
One who desires them becomes ensnared.
One who neither abhors nor desires
is neither detached nor attached.

16.7

As long as there is desire —
which is the absence of discrimination —
there will be attachment and non-attachment.
This is the cause of the world.

16.8

Indulgence creates attachment.
Aversion creates abstinence.
Like a child, the sage is free of both
and thus lives on as a child.

16.9

One who is attached to the world
thinks renouncing it will relieve his misery.
One who is attached to nothing is free,
and does not feel miserable
even in the world.

16.10

He who claims liberation as his own,
as an attainment of a person,
is neither enlightened nor a seeker.
He suffers his own misery.

16.11

Though Hara, Hari,
or the lotus-born Brahma himself instruct you,
until you know Nothing,
you will never know Self.

17. The True Knower

Ashtavakra said:

17.1

One has attained knowledge
and reaped the fruits of yoga
who is content, purified of attachments,
and at home in solitude.

17.2

The knower of Truth
is never miserable in the world,
for the whole universe
is filled with Himself alone.

17.3

As the foliage of the *neem* tree
does not please an elephant who delights in *sallaki* leaves,
so do sense objects not please
he who delights in Self.

17.4

Rare in the world is one
who does not relish past enjoyments,
nor yearn for enjoyments to come.

17.5

Those who desire pleasure and those who desire liberation
are both common in the world.
Rare is the great soul who
desires neither enjoyment nor liberation.

17.6

Rare is the right-minded person
who neither covets nor shuns
religion, wealth, pleasure, life, or death.

17.7

The man of knowledge neither cares for the universe
nor desires its dissolution.
He lives happily on whatever comes his way.
He is blessed.

17.8

Knowing Self, mind empty and at peace,

the sage lives happily,
seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating.

17.9

There is no attachment or non-attachment for one
in whom the ocean of the world has dried up.
His look is vacant, senses still.
His actions have no purpose.

17.10

The sage is neither asleep nor awake.
He neither closes nor opens his eyes.
Thus, for the liberated soul,
everywhere there is only This.

17.11

The liberated soul abides in Self alone
and is pure of heart.
He lives always and everywhere,
free of desire.

17.12

Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling,
eating, taking, speaking, walking,
the great soul exerts neither effort nor non-effort.
He is truly free.

17.13

The liberated soul does not blame or praise,
give or take, rejoice or become angry.
He is everywhere unattached and free.

17.14

The great soul remains poised and undisturbed,
whether in the presence of a passionate woman,
or observing the approach of his death.
He is truly free.

17.15

The sage sees no difference
between happiness and misery,
man and woman, adversity and success.
Everything is seen to be the same.

17.16

In the sage there is neither violence nor mercy,

arrogance nor humility, anxiety nor wonder.
His worldly life is exhausted.
He has transcended his role as a person.

17.17

The liberated one neither avoids experience nor craves it.
He enjoys what comes,
and what does not.

17.18

The sage is not conflicted
by states of stillness and thought.
His mind is empty.
His home is the Absolute.

17.19

Though he may perform actions,
the man of knowledge does not act.
Desires extinguished, free of thoughts of “I” and “mine,”
he knows with absolute certainty
that nothing exists.

17.20

The sage is free.
His empty mind no longer projects
delusion, dreaming, dullness.
This state is indescribable.

18. Peace

Ashtavakra said:

18.1

Praise That, which is bliss itself,
which is by nature stillness and light,
and which by its knowing
reveals the world as a dream.

18.2

One may enjoy the abundant pleasures of the world,
but will never be happy
until giving them up.

18.3

How can one whose innermost heart has been scorched
by the sun of sorrow that comes from duty
be happy until the sweet rain
of torrential stillness?

18.4

The universe is but a thought in consciousness.
In Reality it is nothing.
One who sees the true nature of existence and non-existence
never ceases to exist.

18.5

The Self, which is absolute,
effortless, timeless, immaculate,
is without limits and at no distance from you.
You are forever It.

18.6

For those whose vision becomes unclouded,
illusion evaporates and Self becomes known.
All sorrow is instantly dispelled.

18.7

Seeing everything is imagination,
knowing the Self as timelessly free,
the sage lives as a child.

18.8

Knowing himself as Absolute,
knowing existence and non-existence

to be imagination only,
what is there for the desireless one
to learn, say, or do?

18.9

Knowing for certain that all is Self,
the sage has no trace of thoughts
such as, “I am this” or, “I am not that.”

18.10

The yogi who finds stillness
is neither distracted nor focused.
He knows neither pleasure nor pain.
Ignorance dispelled, he is free of knowing.

18.11

Heaven or poverty,
gain or loss, society or solitude,
to the yogi free of conditioning
there is no difference.

18.12

Religious merit, sensory pleasure, worldly prosperity,
discrimination between this and that —
these have no significance to the yogi free of opposites,
such as, “I do this” and, “This I do not.”

18.13

The yogi who is liberated while living
has no duties in this world,
no attachments in his heart.
His life proceeds without him.

18.14

For the great soul who abides beyond desire,
where is illusion?
Where is the universe?
Where is meditation on That?
Where even is liberation from them?

18.15

He who sees the world
may try to renounce it.
But what can the desireless one do?
He sees there is nothing to see.

18.16

He who has seen the supreme Brahma
thinks, "I am Brahma."
But he who has transcended all thought,
what can he think?
He knows no other than Self.

18.17

He achieves self-control
who sees his own distraction.
But the great soul is not distracted.
He has nothing to achieve.
He has nothing to do.

18.18

The man of knowledge may live as an ordinary man,
but he is not.
He sees he is neither focused nor distracted,
and finds no fault with himself.

18.19

He who is beyond existence and non-existence,
who is wise, satisfied, and free of desire,
does nothing, though the world may see him in motion.

18.20

The wise one is not troubled by action or inactivity.
He lives happily,
doing whatever gets done.

18.21

Like a leaf in the wind,
the liberated one is untethered from life —
desireless, independent, free.

18.22

For one who has transcended the world
there is no joy or sorrow.
With a stilled mind,
he lives on with no body.

18.23

One who knows Self,
whose mind is serene and spotless,
does not desire to give up anything,
nor does he miss what is not there.

18.24

His mind being in a natural state of emptiness,
the wise one knows nothing
of honor and dishonor.
He does what comes to be done.

18.25

One who acts knowing,
“This is done by the body, not by I, the Self,”
indeed does nothing,
no matter how much acting takes place.

18.26

The liberated one acts without claiming to be acting,
but he is no fool.
He is blessed and happy,
even though in the world.

18.27

Having had enough of the endless workings of the mind,
the wise one comes to rest.
He neither thinks, nor knows, nor hears, nor sees.

18.28

Beyond stillness, beyond distraction,
the great soul thinks nothing of liberation or bondage.
Having seen the universe is void —
even though it seems to exist —
he is God.

18.29

He who believes he is a person is constantly acting,
even when the body is at rest.
The sage knows he is not a person
and therefore does nothing,
even when the body is in motion.

18.30

The mind of the liberated one
is neither troubled nor pleased.
It is actionless, motionless, desireless,
and free of doubt.

18.31

The liberated one does not exert effort

to meditate or act.
Action and meditation just happen.

18.32
Hearing ultimate Truth,
the dull-witted man is bewildered.
The wise man hearing Truth
retreats within and appears dull-witted.

18.33
The ignorant practice meditation and no-thought.
The wise, like men in deep sleep,
do nothing.

18.34
The ignorant man finds no peace
either by effort or non-effort.
The wise man by Truth alone is stilled.

18.35
Though they are by nature Self alone,
pure intelligence, love and perfection —
though they transcend the universe and are clearness itself —
men of the world will not see this
through meditation and practices.

18.36
The ignorant man will never be liberated
by his repetitious practices.
Blessed is he who, by simple understanding,
enters timeless freedom.

18.37
Because he desires to know God,
the ignorant man can never become That.
The wise man is God
because he is free of desire
and knows nothing.

18.38
Unable to stand steady and eager for salvation,
the ignorant perpetuate the illusion of world.
Seeing the world as the source of all misery,
the wise cut it off at the root.

18.39

The fool thinks peace comes by controlling the mind.
He will never attain it.
The wise one knows Truth,
and is stillness itself.

18.40
For he who thinks knowledge is things and ideas,
how can there be Self-knowledge?
The wise do not see separate things,
only the timeless Self.

18.41
The fool tries to control the mind
with the mind — what folly!
The wise one delights in Self alone.
There is no mind to master.

18.42
Some believe in existence.
Others believe nothing exists.
Rare is the one who believes nothing
and is never confused.

18.43
Weak intellectuals may believe
the Self is One without other.
But being mired in illusion
they do not actually know Self,
so live out their lives in misery.

18.44
The mind of one seeking liberation
depends on things for perception.
The mind of the liberated one perceives no-thing
and is free of desire.

18.45
Timid men fear sensory experience
much as they do tigers.
They seek refuge in caves
and try to un-think the world.

18.46
Sensory experiences are like elephants who,
upon encountering a desireless man,
see him as a lion.

They immediately turn on their heels,
or if unable to escape,
stay on to flatter and serve him.

18.47

A man with no doubts,
who knows only Self,
has no need of practice or liberation.
Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating,
he lives happily as he is.

18.48

One whose mind is emptied and unconflicted
by the mere hearing of Truth,
sees nothing to do, nothing to avoid,
nothing to warrant his indifference.

18.49

The sage does whatever appears to be done,
without thinking of good or bad.
His actions are those of a child.

18.50

Depending on nothing, one finds happiness.
Depending on nothing, one attains the Supreme.
Depending on nothing, one passes through tranquility
to One Self.

18.51

When one realizes he is neither the actor
nor the one who watches,
the mind-storm is stilled.

18.52

The actions of the sage,
free of pretence and motive,
shine like clear light.
Not so those of the deluded seeker
who affects a peaceful demeanor
while remaining firmly attached.

18.53

Unbounded, unfettered,
untethered from the projections of mind,
the wise are free to play and enjoy,
or retire to mountain caves.

18.54

Whether honoring a spiritual scholar, a god, or holy shrine,
whether seeing a desirable woman, a king, or beloved friend,
the heart of the sage is unmoved.

18.55

Though his servants, sons, wives, daughters, grandchildren,
and all his relatives ridicule and despise him,
the sage is undismayed.

18.56

Though pleased he is not pleased,
though pained he does not suffer.
This wonderful state is understood
only by those like him.

18.57

The belief in duty creates a relative world
for its performance.
The wise one knows Himself to be formless,
timeless, all-pervasive, immaculate,
and thus transcends duty and world.

18.58

Even doing nothing,
the dull one is anxious and distracted.
Even amidst great action,
the wise one remains still.

18.59

Even in practical life
the wise one remains happy.
Happy to sit,
happy to sleep,
happy to move about,
happy to speak,
happy to eat ...

18.60

Because he knows Self,
the wise one is not disrupted by practical life.
He is deep and still, like a vast lake.
He is not like ordinary people.
His sorrows have vanished.

18.61

For the deluded, even rest is an activity.
For the wise, even action
bears the fruit of stillness.

18.62

The deluded are often adverse to the things of life.
To one with no thought for body,
attachment and aversion have no meaning.

18.63

The deluded mind is caught up
in thinking and not thinking.
Though the mind of the wise one
may think what thoughts come,
he is not aware of it.

18.64

The sage sees nothing being done,
even when performed by his hands.
Like a child, he is pure
and acts without reason.

18.65

Blessed indeed is he who knows Self.
Though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating,
he never desires nor changes.

18.66

For one who is void and changeless,
where is the world and its imaginings?
Where is the end?
Where is the possibility of it?

18.67

Glorious indeed is he who, free of desire,
embodies bliss itself.
He has become absorbed in Self.

18.68

In short, the great soul who has realized Truth
is free of desire, enjoyment, and liberation.
In all of space and time,
he is attached to nothing.

18.69

What remains for One who is consciousness itself,
who sees the non-existence of a phenomenal world
created by the mere thought of a name?

18.70

Peace is natural for one
who knows for certain nothing exists,
who sees appearances are illusion,
to whom the inexpressible is apparent.

18.71

Rules of conduct, detachment, renunciation, asceticism —
what are these to one who sees the unreality of things,
who is the Light of Awareness?

18.72

How can there be joy or sorrow, bondage or liberation,
for one who perceives non-existence
and lights the infinite?

18.73

Until Self-realization, illusion prevails.
The sage lives without thoughts of “I” or “mine.”
His connection to illusion is severed.

18.74

What is knowledge?
What is universe?
What are thoughts like, “I am the body,” or “The body is mine”?
The sage is imperishable and sorrowless.
He is Self alone.

18.75

When a weak man gives up meditation
he falls prey to whims and desires.

18.76

Even hearing Truth,
the man of dull intellect holds on to illusion.
Through effort and suppression
he may appear outwardly composed,
but inside he craves the world.

18.77

Though others may see him working,
the sage does nothing.

Knowledge has banished effort.
He finds no reason to do or say.

18.78
The sage is fearless, unassailable.
No darkness, no light, nothing to lose.
Nothing.

18.79
Patience, discrimination, even fearlessness —
what use are these to the yogi?
His nature cannot be described.
He is not a person.

18.80
No heaven, no hell, no liberation for the living.
In short, consciousness is void.
What more can be said?

18.81
The sage neither yearns for fulfillment
nor frets over non-attainment.
His mind is cool and brimming with sweetness.

18.82
Detached from desire,
the sage neither praises peace nor blames the wicked.
Equally content in happiness and misery,
he would not change a thing.

18.83
The sage neither rejects the world nor desires Self.
He is free of joy and sorrow.
He does not live,
and cannot die.

18.84
The wise one lives without hope.
He has no attachment to his children, wife, or anyone.
Pleasure means nothing to him.
His life is glorious.

18.85
The sage wanders about as he pleases
and lives on whatever may come.
Contentment ever dwells in his heart.

And when the sun sets,
he rests where he is.

18.86

Rooted in being, no thought of being born or reborn,
the great soul is indifferent
to the death or birth of his body.

18.87

The wise one stands alone,
caring for nothing, bereft of possessions.
He goes where he will,
unhindered by opposites, his doubts rent asunder.
He is truly blessed.

18.88

The wise one has no sense of “mine.”
To him, earth, stone, and gold are the same.
The knots of his heart have unraveled.
He knows neither ignorance nor sorrow.
He is excellent in every way.

18.89

The liberated soul has no desire in his heart.
He is content and indifferent.
He has no equal.

18.90

Only one free of desire
knows nothing of knowing,
says nothing needs saying,
sees nothing to see.

18.91

He who is without desire excels,
be he beggar or king.
He no longer sees good or bad.

18.92

What is lust, or restraint, or the desire for Truth
to the yogi who has reached life’s goal,
and who embodies virtue and sincerity?

18.93

The inner experience of one
who is free of desire and suffering,

who is content and reposes in Self —
how can it be described,
and of whom?

18.94

The wise one's state never varies.
Sleeping soundly, he is not asleep.
Lying in reverie, he is not dreaming.
Eyes open, he is not wakeful.

18.95

The man of knowledge seems to think,
but has no thoughts.
He seems to have sense perceptions,
but does not experience.
He seems to have intelligence,
but is empty-minded.
He appears to be a person,
but is not.

18.96

The man of knowledge
is neither happy nor miserable,
neither detached nor attached,
neither liberated nor seeking liberation.
He is neither this nor that.

18.97

Even while distracted, the blessed one is still.
In meditation, he does not meditate.
In ignorance, he remains clear.
Though learned, he knows nothing.

18.98

The liberated one,
who abides unconditionally in Self,
who is free of the concept of action and duty,
who is always and everywhere the same,
is desireless.
He does not worry about what he did or did not do.

18.99

The wise one is neither pleased by praise
nor annoyed by blame.
He neither rejoices in life
nor fears death.

18.100

One of tranquil mind
seeks neither crowds nor wilderness.
He is the same wherever he goes.

19. Repose in the Self

Janaka said:

19.1

With the tongs of Truth
I have plucked the thorn of thinking
from the innermost cave of my heart.

19.2

Where is meditation, pleasure, prosperity, or discrimination?
Where is duality?
Where even is Unity?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.3

Where is past and future, or even present?
Where is space, or even eternity?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.4

Where is Self?
Where is not-Self?
Where is good and evil, confusion and clarity?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.5

Where is sleeping, dreaming, waking, or even the fourth state?
Where is fear?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.6

Where is close or far, in or out, gross or subtle?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.7

Where is life and death?
Where is the world and worldly relations?
Where is distraction and stillness?
I abide in the glory of Self.

19.8

There is no need to talk about the three ends of life.
To talk of yoga is purposeless.
Even talking about Truth is irrelevant.
I rest in Self alone.

20. Liberation-in-Life

Janaka said:

20.1

Where are the elements, the body, the organs, the mind?
Where is the void?
Where is despair?
My nature is transparent clearness.

20.2

Where is scripture?
Where is Self-knowledge?
Where is no-mind?
Where is contentment and freedom from desire?
I am empty of two-ness.

20.3

Where is Knowledge and ignorance?
Where is “I”?
Where is “this”?
Where is “mine”?
Where is bondage and liberation?
Self has no attributes.

20.4

Where is the unfolding of karma?
Where is liberation-in-life,
or even liberation at death?
There is only One.

20.5

Where is the doer or enjoyer?
Where is the origin or end of thought?
Where is direct or reflected knowledge?
There is no person here.

20.6

Where is the world?
Where is the seeker of liberation?
Where is the contemplative?
Where is the man of knowledge?
Where is the soul in bondage?
Where is the liberated soul?
My nature is Unity.

20.7

Where are creation and destruction?
Where is the end and the means?
Where is the seeker?
Where is attainment?
I am One.

20.8

Where is the knower?
Where is knowing?
Where is the known, or knowledge itself?
Where is anything?
Where is nothing?
I am pure Awareness.

20.9

Where is distraction, concentration, knowledge, or delusion?
Where is joy or sorrow?
I am Stillness.

20.10

Where is the relative?
Where the transcendent?
Where is happiness or misery?
I am empty of thought.

20.11

Where is illusion?
Where is existence?
Where is attachment or non-attachment?
Where is person?
Where is God?
I am Awareness.

20.12

Where is activity or inactivity?
Where is liberation or bondage?
I am timeless, indivisible.
I am Self alone.

20.13

Where are principles and scriptures?
Where is the disciple or teacher?
Where is the reason for life?
I am boundless, Absolute.

20.14

Where is existence or non-existence?

Where is Unity or duality?

No-thing emanates from me.

No more can be said.

Bitten by the Black Snake

The Ancient Wisdom of Ashtavakra

By Manuel Schoch

The First Sutra

Janaka asked, “ Oh Lord, how does one attain liberation, and how is non-attachment attained? Please tell me this.”

Ashtavakra replied, “Oh beloved, if you want liberation, then renounce the passions as poison and take forgiveness and innocence, compassion, contentment and truth as nectar.

You are neither earth nor air nor fire nor water nor ether.

To attain liberation, know yourself as the witnessing consciousness of all these. If you separate yourself from the physical body and rest in consciousness, then this very moment you will be happy, at peace, and free of bondage.

You are not a Brahmin or other caste. You are not in any of the four stages of life.

You are not perceived by the eyes or other senses.

Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe.

Know this and be happy.

Oh expansive one, religion and atheism, happiness and misery, order of the mind – they are not for you.

You are neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

You have always been liberated.”

The Second Sutra

You are the one observer of all, and in reality always free.

Your bondage is this – you see the other, not yourself, as the observer and doer; thus has the black snake of ego bitten you.

I am not the doer.

Drink this divine nectar of fruit and be happy.

I am the one pure awareness, thus I have burnt the forest of your ignorance with this fire of certainty.

Being beyond sorrow, be happy.

You are that bliss, that ultimate bliss within which this imaginary world is projected, like a snake and a rope.

Knowing this, wonder happily.

He who considers himself free is free, and he who considers himself bound is bound, because in this world the proverb is true, “As you think, so you are.”

The soul is the witness, all pervading one, free consciousness; free from doing, absolutely alone, non-attached, desireless, peaceful.

Because of illusion, it looks like the world.

I am an individually projected life.

Drop this illusion and also this feeling of inner and outer, and awaken in the thought that you are the unchanging, conscious, and non-dual soul.

The Third Sutra

Oh son, long have you been caught in the bondage of perceiving yourself as the body.

Cut this bondage with the sword of knowing I am awareness, and be happy.

You are alone, void of action, self-illuminated, and innocent.

Your bondage is this – that you practice Samadhi.

You are permeating this universe. You are the thread within it.

You are pure consciousness by nature. Do not become small-minded.

You are without expectations, unchanging, self-sufficient, the abode of serenity, of boundless intelligence and unperturbed.

Hence have faith only in consciousness.

Know that which has form is false, and know the formless as unchanging and everlasting.

From this true understanding, one is not born in the world again.

Just as a mirror exists in the image reflected in it, and also exists apart from the reflection, God is within and outside this body.

Just as the one all-pervading sky is the same within and outside a pot, the eternal everlasting Brahman is the same in all.

The Fourth Sutra

Stillness.

All things arise, suffer, change, and pass away.

This is their nature.

When you know this, nothing perturbs you, nothing hurts you, you become still.

It is easy.

Sooner or later, fortune or misfortune may befall you.

When you know this, you desire nothing, you grieve for nothing.

Subduing the senses, you are happy; whatever you do brings joy or sorrow, life or death.

When you know this, you may act freely, without attachment.

What is there to accomplish?

All sorrow comes from fear, from nothing else.

When you know this, you become free of it, and desire melts away.

You become happy and still; the world with all its wonders is nothing.

When you know this, desire melts away, for you are awareness itself.

When you know in your heart that there is nothing, you are still.

The Fifth Sutra

Forget everything.

My child, you may read or discuss scriptures as much as you like, but until you forget everything, you will never live in your heart.

You are wise, you play and work and meditate, but still your mind desires that which is beyond everything.

Where all desires vanish, who is lazier than the master? He has trouble even blinking, but only he is happy, no one else.

Seeing this, neglecting that.

But when the mind stops setting one thing against another, it no longer craves pleasure.

It no longer cares for wealth or religious duties or salvation.

Craving the pleasures or the senses, you suffer attachment, disdaining them you learn detachment, but if you desire nothing and disdain nothing, neither attachment nor detachment binds you.

If you desire liberation but you still say mine, if you feel you are the body, you are not a wise man or a seeker; you are simply a man who suffers.

Unless you forget everything, you will never live in your heart.

The Sixth Sutra

The clear space of awareness.

You are not your body, your body is not you.

You are not the doer, you are not the enjoyer.

You are pure awareness, the witness of all things.

You are without expectation, free.

Wherever you go, be happy.

Desire and aversion are of the mind, the mind is never yours.

You are free of its turmoil.

You are awareness itself, never changing.

Wherever you go, be happy, for, see, the self is in all beings, and all beings are in the self.

Know you are free, free of I, free of mine; be happy.

In you the worlds arise like waves in the sea.

It is true, you are awareness itself, so free yourself from the fever of the world.

If the body lasted till the end of time, or vanished today, what would you win or lose?

You are pure awareness, you are the endless sea in whom all the worlds, like waves, naturally rise and fall.

You have nothing to win, nothing to lose.

Child, you are pure awareness, nothing else.

You and the world are one, so who are you to think you can hold on to it or let it go, how could you?

You are the clear space of awareness, pure and still, in whom there is no birth, no activity, no I.

You are one and the same, you cannot change or die.

The world only arises from ignorance, you alone are real.

There is no one, not even God, separated from yourself.

You are pure awareness; the world is an illusion, nothing more.

When you understand this fully, desire falls away, you find peace, for indeed there is nothing.

In the ocean of being there is only one, there was and there will be only one.

You are already fulfilled, how can you be bound or free?

Wherever you go, be happy.

Never upset your mind with yes or no.

Be quiet, you are awareness itself.

Live in the happiness of your own nature, which is happiness itself.

What is the use of thinking?

Once and for all, give up meditation, hold nothing in your mind.

You are the self, and you are free.

Ashtavakra Gita

Translated by John Richards

Chapter One

Janaka said:

How is one to acquire knowledge? How is one to attain liberation? And how is one to reach dispassion? Tell me this, sir. 1.1

Ashtavakra said:

If you are seeking liberation, my son, avoid the objects of the senses like poison and cultivate tolerance, sincerity, compassion, contentment, and truthfulness as the antidote. 1.2

You do not consist of any of the elements -- earth, water, fire, air, or even ether. To be liberated, know yourself as consisting of consciousness, the witness of these. 1.3

If only you will remain resting in consciousness, seeing yourself as distinct from the body, then even now you will become happy, peaceful and free from bonds. 1.4

You do not belong to the brahmin or any other caste, you are not at any stage, nor are you anything that the eye can see. You are unattached and formless, the witness of everything -- so be happy. 1.5

Righteousness and unrighteousness, pleasure and pain are purely of the mind and are no concern of yours. You are neither the doer nor the reaper of the consequences, so you are always free. 1.6

You are the one witness of everything and are always completely free. The cause of your bondage is that you see the witness as something other than this. 1.7

Since you have been bitten by the black snake, the opinion about yourself that "I am the doer," drink the antidote of faith in the fact that "I am not the doer," and be happy. 1.8

Burn down the forest of ignorance with the fire of the understanding that "I am the one pure awareness," and be happy and free from distress. 1.9

That in which all this appears is imagined like the snake in a rope; that joy, supreme joy, and awareness is what you are, so be happy. 1.10

If one thinks of oneself as free, one is free, and if one thinks of oneself as bound, one is bound. Here this saying is true, "Thinking makes it so." 1.11

Your real nature is as the one perfect, free, and actionless consciousness, the all-pervading witness -- unattached to anything, desireless and at peace. It is from illusion that you seem to be involved in samsara. 1.12

Meditate on yourself as motionless awareness, free from any dualism, giving up the mistaken idea that you are just a derivative consciousness or anything external or internal. 1.13

You have long been trapped in the snare of identification with the body. Sever it with the knife of knowledge that "I am awareness," and be happy, my son. 1.14

You are really unbound and actionless, self-illuminating and spotless already. The cause of your bondage is that you are still resorting to stilling the mind. 1.15

All of this is really filled by you and strung out in you, for what you consist of is pure awareness -- so don't be small-minded. 1.16

You are unconditioned and changeless, formless and immovable, unfathomable awareness, unperturbable: so hold to nothing but consciousness. 1.17

Recognise that the apparent is unreal, while the unmanifest is abiding. Through this initiation into truth you will escape falling into unreality again. 1.18

Just as a mirror exists everywhere both within and apart from its reflected images, so the Supreme Lord exists everywhere within and apart from this body. 1.19

Just as one and the same all-pervading space exists within and without a jar, so the eternal, everlasting God exists in the totality of things. 1.20

Chapter Two

Janaka said:

Truly I am spotless and at peace, the awareness beyond natural causality. All this time I have been afflicted by delusion. 2.1

As I alone give light to this body, so I do to the world. As a result the whole world is mine, or alternatively nothing is. 2.2

So now that I have abandoned the body and everything else, by good fortune my true self becomes apparent. 2.3

Waves, foam, and bubbles do not differ from water. In the same way, all this which has emanated from oneself is no other than oneself. 2.4

When you analyse it, cloth is found to be just thread. In the same way, when all this is analysed it is found to be no other than oneself. 2.5

The sugar produced from the juice of the sugarcane is permeated throughout with the same taste. In the same way, all this, produced out of me, is completely permeated with myself. 2.6

From ignorance of oneself, the world appears, and by knowledge of oneself it appears no longer. From ignorance of the rope it appears to be a snake, and by knowledge of it does so no longer. 2.7

Shining is my essential nature, and I am nothing other than that. When the world shines forth, it is only me that is shining forth. 2.8

All this appears in me imagined due to ignorance, just as a snake appears in the rope, the mirage of water in the sunlight, and silver in mother of pearl. 2.9

All this, which has originated out of me, is resolved back into me too, like a jug back into clay, a wave into water, and a bracelet into gold. 2.10

How wonderful I am! Glory to me, for whom there is no destruction, remaining even beyond the destruction of the world from Brahma down to the last clump of grass. 2.11

How wonderful I am! Glory to me, solitary even though with a body, neither going or coming anywhere, I who abide forever, filling all that is. 2.12

How wonderful I am! Glory to me! There is no one so clever as me! I who have borne all that is forever, without even touching it with my body! 2.13

How wonderful I am! Glory to me! I who possess nothing at all, or alternatively possess everything that speech and mind can refer to. 2.14

Knowledge, what is to be known, and the knower -- these three do not exist in reality. I am the spotless reality in which they appear because of ignorance. 2.15

Truly dualism is the root of suffering. There is no other remedy for it than the realisation that all this that we see is unreal, and that I am the one stainless reality, consisting of consciousness. 2.16

I am pure awareness though through ignorance I have imagined myself to have additional attributes. By continually reflecting like this, my dwelling place is in the Unimagined. 2.17

For me here is neither bondage nor liberation. The illusion has lost its basis and ceased. Truly all this exists in me, though ultimately it does not even exist in me. 2.18

Recognising that all this and my body too are nothing, while my true self is nothing but pure consciousness, what is there left for the imagination to work on now? 2.19

The body, heaven and hell, bondage and liberation, and fear too, all this is pure imagination. What is there left to do for me whose very nature is consciousness? 2.20

I do not even see dualism in a crowd of people, so what do I gain if it is replaced by a desert? 2.21

I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am not a living being. I am consciousness. It was my thirst for living that was my bondage. 2.22

Truly it is in the infinite ocean of myself, that, stimulated by the colourful waves of the world, everything suddenly arises in the wind of consciousness. 2.23

In the infinite ocean of myself, the wind of thought subsides, and the world boat of the living-being traders is wrecked by lack of goods. 2.24

How wonderful it is that in the infinite ocean of myself the waves of living beings arise, collide, play, and disappear, in accordance with their nature. 2.25

Chapter Three

Ashtavakra said:

Knowing yourself as truly one and indestructible, how could a wise man possessing self-knowledge like you feel any pleasure in acquiring wealth? 3.1

Truly, when one does not know oneself, one takes pleasure in the objects of mistaken perception, just as greed arises for the mistaken silver in one who does not know mother of pearl for what it is. 3.2

All this wells up like waves in the sea. Recognising, "I am That," why run around like someone in need? 3.3

After hearing of oneself as pure consciousness and the supremely beautiful, is one to go on lusting after sordid sexual objects? 3.4

When the sage has realised that he himself is in all beings, and all beings are in him, it is astonishing that the sense of individuality should be able to continue. 3.5

It is astonishing that a man who has reached the supreme nondual state and is intent on the benefits of liberation should still be subject to lust and in bondage to sexual activity. 3.6

It is astonishing that one already very debilitated, and knowing very well that its arousal is the enemy of knowledge, should still hanker after sensuality, even when approaching his last days. 3.7

It is astonishing that one who is unattached to the things of this world or the next, who discriminates between the permanent and the impermanent, and who longs for liberation, should still be afraid of liberation. 3.8

Whether feted or tormented, the wise man is always aware of his supreme self-nature and is neither pleased nor disappointed. 3.9

The great-souled person sees even his own body in action as if it were someone else's, so how should he be disturbed by praise or blame? 3.10

Seeing this world as pure illusion, and devoid of any interest in it, how should the strong-minded person, feel fear, even at the approach of death? 3.11

Who can be compared to the great-souled person whose mind is free from desire even in disappointment, and who has found satisfaction in self-knowledge? 3.12

How should a strong-minded person who knows that what he sees is by its very nature nothing, consider one thing to be grasped and another to be rejected? 3.13

An object of enjoyment that comes of itself is neither painful nor pleasurable for someone who has eliminated attachment, and who is free from dualism and from desire. 3.14

Chapter Four

Ashtavakra said:

The wise person of self-knowledge, playing the game of worldly enjoyment, bears no resemblance whatever to samsara's bewildered beasts of burden. 4.1

Truly the yogi feels no excitement even at being established in that state which all the Devas from Indra down yearn for disconsolately. 4.2

He who has known That is untouched within by good deeds or bad, just as space is not touched by smoke, however much it may appear to be. 4.3

Who can prevent the great-souled person who has known this whole world as himself from living as he pleases? 4.4

Of all four categories of beings, from Brahma down to the last clump of grass, only the man of knowledge is capable of eliminating desire and aversion. 4.5

Rare is the man who knows himself as the nondual Lord of the world, and he who knows this is not afraid of anything. 4.6

Chapter Five

Ashtavakra said:

You are not bound by anything. What does a pure person like you need to renounce?
Putting the complex organism to rest, you can find peace. 5.1

All this arises out of you, like a bubble out of the sea. Knowing yourself like this to be
but one, you can find peace. 5.2

In spite of being in front of your eyes, all this, being insubstantial, does not exist in you,
spotless as you are. It is an appearance like the snake in a rope, so you can find peace. 5.3

Equal in pain and in pleasure, equal in hope and in disappointment, equal in life and in
death, and complete as you are, you can find peace. 5.4

Chapter Six

Ashtavakra said:

I am infinite like space, and the natural world is like a jar. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, acceptance, or cessation of it. 6.1

I am like the ocean, and the multiplicity of objects is comparable to a wave. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, acceptance or cessation of it. 6.2

I am like the mother of pearl, and the imagined world is like the silver. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, acceptance, or cessation of it. 6.3

Alternatively, I am in all beings, and all beings are in me. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, acceptance, or cessation of it. 6.4

Chapter Seven

Janaka said:

In the infinite ocean of myself the world boat drifts here and there, moved by its own inner wind. I am not put out by that. 7.1

Whether the world wave of its own nature rises or disappears in the infinite ocean of myself, I neither gain nor lose anything by that. 7.2

It is in the infinite ocean of myself that the mind-creation called the world takes place. I am supremely peaceful and formless, and I remain as such. 7.3

My true nature is not contained in objects, nor does any object exist in it, for it is infinite and spotless. So it is unattached, desireless and at peace, and I remain as such. 7.4

I am pure consciousness, and the world is like a magician's show. How could I imagine there is anything there to take up or reject? 7.5

Chapter Eight

Ashtavakra said:

Bondage is when the mind longs for something, grieves about something, rejects something, holds on to something, is pleased about something or displeased about something. 8.1

Liberation is when the mind does not long for anything, grieve about anything, reject anything, or hold on to anything, and is not pleased about anything or displeased about anything. 8.2

Bondage is when the mind is tangled in one of the senses, and liberation is when the mind is not tangled in any of the senses. 8.3

When there is no "me," that is liberation, and when there is "me" there is bondage. Consider this carefully, and neither hold on to anything nor reject anything. 8.4

Chapter Nine

Ashtavakra said:

Knowing when the dualism of things done and undone has been put to rest, or the person for whom they occur has, then you can here and now go beyond renunciation and obligations by indifference to such things. 9.1

Rare indeed, my son, is the lucky man whose observation of the world's behaviour has led to the extinction of his thirst for living, thirst for pleasure, and thirst for knowledge. 9.2

All this is transient and spoiled by the three sorts of pain. Knowing it to be insubstantial, ignoble, and fit only for rejection, one attains peace. 9.3

When was that age or time of life when the dualism of extremes did not exist for men? Abandoning them, a person who is happy to take whatever comes attains perfection. 9.4

Who does not end up with indifference to such things and attain peace when he has seen the differences of opinions among the great sages, saints, and yogis? 9.5

Is he not a guru who, endowed with dispassion and equanimity, achieves full knowledge of the nature of consciousness, and leads others out of samsara? 9.6

If you would just see the transformations of the elements as nothing more than the elements, then you would immediately be freed from all bonds and established in your own nature. 9.7

One's desires are samsara. Knowing this, abandon them. The renunciation of them is the renunciation of it. Now you can remain as you are. 9.8

Chapter Ten

Ashtavakra said:

Abandon desire, the enemy, along with gain, itself so full of loss, and the good deeds which are the cause of the other two -- practice indifference to everything. 10.1

Look on such things as friends, land, money, property, wife, and bequests as nothing but a dream or a magician's show lasting three or five days. 10.2

Wherever a desire occurs, see samsara in it. Establishing yourself in firm dispassion, be free of passion and happy. 10.3

The essential nature of bondage is nothing other than desire, and its elimination is known as liberation. It is simply by not being attached to changing things that the everlasting joy of attainment is reached. 10.4

You are one, conscious and pure, while all this is inert non-being. Ignorance itself is nothing, so what is the point of wanting to understand? 10.5

Kingdoms, children, wives, bodies, pleasures -- these have all been lost to you life after life, attached to them though you were. 10.6

Enough of wealth, sensuality, and good deeds. In the forest of samsara the mind has never found satisfaction in these. 10.7

How many births have you not done hard and painful labour with body, mind, and speech. Now at last, stop! 10.8

Chapter Eleven

Ashtavakra said:

Unmoved and undistressed, realising that being, non-being and change are of the very nature of things, one easily finds peace. 11.1

At peace, having shed all desires within, and realising that nothing exists here but the Lord, the Creator of all things, one is no longer attached to anything. 11.2

Realising that misfortune and fortune come in their own time from fortune, one is contented, one's senses under control, and does not like or dislike. 11.3

Realising that pleasure and pain, birth and death are from destiny, and that one's desires cannot be achieved, one remains inactive, and even when acting does not get attached. 11.4

Realising that suffering arises from nothing other than thought, dropping all desires one rids oneself of it, and is happy and at peace everywhere. 11.5

Realising, "I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am awareness," one attains the supreme state and no longer remembers things done or undone. 11.6

Realising, "I alone exist, from Brahma down to the last clump of grass," one becomes free from uncertainty, pure, at peace, and unconcerned about what has been attained or not. 11.7

Realising that all this varied and wonderful world is nothing, one becomes pure receptivity, free from inclinations, and as if nothing existed, one finds peace. 11.8

Chapter Twelve

Janaka said:

First of all I was averse to physical activity, then to lengthy speech, and finally to thought itself, which is why I am now established. 12.1

In the absence of delight in sound and the other senses, and by the fact that I am myself not an object of the senses, my mind is focused and free from distraction -- which is why I am now established. 12.2

Owing to the distraction of such things as wrong identification, one is driven to strive for mental stillness. Recognising this pattern I am now established. 12.3

By relinquishing the sense of rejection and acceptance, and with pleasure and disappointment ceasing today, brahmin -- I am now established. 12.4

Life in a community, then going beyond such a state, meditation and the elimination of mind-made objects -- by means of these I have seen my error, and I am now established. 12.5

Just as the performance of actions is due to ignorance, so their abandonment is too. By fully recognising this truth, I am now established. 12.6

Trying to think the unthinkable, is doing something unnatural to thought. Abandoning such a practice therefore, I am now established. 12.7

He who has achieved this has achieved the goal of life. He who is of such a nature has done what has to be done. 12.8

Chapter Thirteen

Janaka said:

The inner freedom of having nothing is hard to achieve, even with just a loin-cloth, but I live as I please, abandoning both renunciation and acquisition. 13.1

Sometimes one experiences distress because of one's body, sometimes because of one's speech, and sometimes because of one's mind. Abandoning all of these, I live as I please in the goal of human life. 13.2

Recognising that in reality no action is ever committed, I live as I please, just doing what presents itself to be done. 13.3

Yogis who identify themselves with their bodies are insistent on fulfilling and avoiding certain actions, but I live as I please abandoning attachment and rejection. 13.4

No benefit or loss comes to me by standing, walking or lying down, so consequently I live as I please whether standing, walking or sleeping. 13.5

I lose nothing by sleeping and gain nothing by effort, so consequently I live as I please, abandoning success and failure. 13.6

Continually observing the drawbacks of such things as pleasant objects, I live as I please, abandoning the pleasant and unpleasant. 13.7

Chapter Fourteen

Janaka said:

He who by nature is empty-minded, and who thinks of things only unintentionally, is freed from deliberate remembering like one awakened from a dream. 14.1

When my desire has been eliminated, I have no wealth, friends, robbers, senses, scriptures or knowledge. 14.2

Realising my supreme self-nature in the Person of the Witness, the Lord, and the state of desirelessness in bondage or liberation, I feel no inclination for liberation. 14.3

The various states of one who is free of uncertainty within, and who outwardly wanders about as he pleases like an idiot, can only be known by someone in the same condition. 14.4

Chapter Fifteen

Ashtavakra said:

While a man of pure intelligence may achieve the goal by the most casual of instruction, another may seek knowledge all his life and still remain bewildered. 15.1

Liberation is distaste for the objects of the senses. Bondage is love of the senses. This is knowledge. Now do as you wish. 15.2

This awareness of the truth makes an eloquent, clever and energetic man dumb, stupid and lazy, so it is avoided by those whose aim is enjoyment. 15.3

You are not the body, nor is the body yours, nor are you the doer of actions or the reaper of their consequences. You are eternally pure consciousness, the witness, in need of nothing -- so live happily. 15.4

Desire and anger are objects of the mind, but the mind is not yours, nor ever has been. You are choiceless awareness itself and unchanging -- so live happily. 15.5

Recognising oneself in all beings, and all beings in oneself, be happy, free from the sense of responsibility and free from preoccupation with "me." 15.6

Your nature is the consciousness, in which the whole world wells up, like waves in the sea. That is what you are, without any doubt, so be free of disturbance. 15.7

Have faith, my son, have faith. Don't let yourself be deluded in this. You are yourself the Lord, whose very nature is knowledge, and you are beyond natural causation. 15.8

The body invested with the senses stands still, and comes and goes. You yourself neither come nor go, so why bother about them? 15.9

Let the body last to the end of the Age, or let it come to an end right now. What have you gained or lost, who consist of pure consciousness? 15.10

Let the world wave rise or subside according to its own nature in you, the great ocean. It is no gain or loss to you. 15.11

My son, you consist of pure consciousness, and the world is not separate from you. So who is to accept or reject it, and how, and why? 15.12

How can there be either birth, karma, or responsibility in that one unchanging, peaceful, unblemished, and infinite consciousness which is you? 15.13

Whatever you see, it is you alone manifest in it. How can bracelets, armlets and anklets be different from the gold they are made of? 15.14

Giving up such distinctions as "He is what I am," and "I am not that," recognise that "Everything is myself," and be without distinction and happy. 15.15

It is through your ignorance that all this exists. In reality you alone exist. Apart from you there is no one within or beyond samsara. 15.16

Knowing that all this is just an illusion, one becomes free of desire, pure receptivity, and at peace, as if nothing existed. 15.17

Only one thing has existed, exists and will exist in the ocean of being. You have no bondage or liberation. Live happily and fulfilled. 15.18

Being pure consciousness, do not disturb your mind with thoughts of for and against. Be at peace and remain happily in yourself, the essence of joy. 15.19

Give up meditation completely but don't let the mind hold on to anything. You are free by nature, so what will you achieve by forcing the mind? 15.20

Chapter Sixteen

Ashtavakra said:

My son, you may recite or listen to countless scriptures, but you will not be established within until you can forget everything. 16.1

You may, as a learned man, indulge in wealth, activity, and meditation, but your mind will still long for that which is the cessation of desire, and beyond all goals. 16.2

Everyone is in pain because of their striving to achieve something, but none realises it. By no more than this instruction, the fortunate one attains tranquility. 16.3

Happiness belongs to none but that supremely lazy man for whom even opening and closing his eyes is a bother. 16.4

When the mind is freed from such pairs of opposites as, "I have done this," and "I have not done that," it becomes indifferent to merit, wealth, sensuality and liberation. 16.5

One man is abstemious and averse to the senses, another is greedy and attached to them, but he who is free from both taking and rejecting is neither abstemious nor greedy. 16.6

So long as desire, the state of lack of discrimination, remains, the sense of revulsion and attraction will remain, which is the root and branch of samsara. 16.7

Desire springs from usage, and aversion from abstension, but the wise man is free from the pairs of opposites like a child, and becomes established. 16.8

The passionate man wants to eliminate samsara so as to avoid pain, but the dispassionate man is free from pain and feels no distress even in it. 16.9

He who is proud about even liberation or his own body, and feels them his own, is neither a seer nor a yogi. He is still just a sufferer. 16.10

If even Shiva, Vishnu, or the lotus-born Brahma were your instructor, until you have forgotten everything you cannot be established within. 16.11

Chapter Seventeen

Ashtavakra said:

He who is content, with purified senses, and always enjoys solitude, has gained the fruit of knowledge and the fruit of the practice of yoga too. 17.1

The knower of truth is never distressed in this world, for the whole round world is full of himself alone. 17.2

None of these senses please a man who has found satisfaction within, just as Nimba leaves do not please the elephant that has acquired the taste for Sallaki leaves. 17.3

The man is rare who is not attached to the things he has enjoyed, and does not hanker after the things he has not enjoyed. 17.4

Those who desire pleasure and those who desire liberation are both found in samsara, but the great-souled man who desires neither pleasure nor liberation is rare indeed. 17.5

It is only the noble-minded who is free from attraction or repulsion to religion, wealth, sensuality, and life and death too. 17.6

He feels no desire for the elimination of all this, nor anger at its continuing, so the fortunate man lives happily with whatever sustenance presents itself. 17.7

Thus fulfilled through this knowledge, contented, and with the thinking mind emptied, he lives happily just seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting. 17.8

In him for whom the ocean of samsara has dried up, there is neither attachment or aversion. His gaze is vacant, his behaviour purposeless, and his senses inactive. 17.9

Surely the supreme state is everywhere for the liberated mind. He is neither awake nor asleep, and neither opens nor closes his eyes. 17.10

The liberated man is resplendent everywhere, free from all desires. Everywhere he appears self-possessed and pure of heart. 17.11

Seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, speaking, and walking about, the great-souled man who is freed from trying to achieve or avoid anything is free indeed. 17.12

The liberated man is free from desires everywhere. He neither blames, praises, rejoices, is disappointed, gives, nor takes. 17.13

When a great-souled one is unperturbed in mind, and equally self-possessed at either the sight of a woman inflamed with desire or at approaching death, he is truly liberated. 17.14

There is no distinction between pleasure and pain, man and woman, success and failure for the wise man who looks on everything as equal. 17.15

There is no aggression nor compassion, no pride nor humility, no wonder nor confusion for the man whose days of samsara are over. 17.16

The liberated man is not averse to the senses nor is he attached to them. He enjoys himself continually with an unattached mind in both success and failure. 17.17

One established in the Absolute state with an empty mind does not know the alternatives of inner stillness and lack of inner stillness, and of good and evil. 17.18

A man free of "me" and "mine" and of a sense of responsibility, aware that "Nothing exists," with all desires extinguished within, does not act even in acting. 17.19

He whose thinking mind is dissolved achieves the indescribable state and is free from the mental display of delusion, dream, and ignorance. 17.20

Chapter Eighteen

Ashtavakra said:

Praise be to That by the awareness of which delusion itself becomes dream-like, to that which is pure happiness, peace, and light. 18.1

One may get all sorts of pleasure by the acquisition of various objects of enjoyment, but one cannot be happy except by the renunciation of everything. 18.2

How can there be happiness, for one who has been burnt inside by the blistering sun of the pain of thinking that there are things that still need doing, without the rain of the nectar of peace? 18.3

This existence is just imagination. It is nothing in reality, but there is no non-being for natures that know how to distinguish being from nonbeing. 18.4

The realm of one's self is not far away, nor can it be achieved by the addition of limitations to its nature. It is unimaginable, effortless, unchanging, and spotless. 18.5

By the simple elimination of delusion and the recognition of one's true nature, those whose vision is unclouded live free from sorrow. 18.6

Knowing everything as just imagination, and himself as eternally free, how should the wise man behave like a fool? 18.7

Knowing himself to be God, and being and non-being just imagination, what should the man free from desire learn, say, or do? 18.8

Considerations like "I am this" or "I am not this" are finished for the yogi who has gone silent realising "Everything is myself." 18.9

For the yogi who has found peace, there is no distraction or one-pointedness, no higher knowledge or ignorance, no pleasure and no pain. 18.10

The dominion of heaven or beggary, gain or loss, life among men or in the forest, these make no difference to a yogi whose nature it is to be free from distinctions. 18.11

There are no religious obligations, wealth, sensuality, or discrimination for a yogi free from such opposites as "I have done this," and "I have not done that." 18.12

There is nothing needing to be done or any attachment in his heart for the yogi liberated while still alive. Things will last just to the end of life. 18.13

There is no delusion, world, meditation on That, or liberation for the pacified great soul. All these things are just the realm of imagination. 18.14

He by whom all this is seen may well make out it doesn't exist, but what is the desireless one to do? Even in seeing it he does not see it. 18.15

He by whom the Supreme Brahma is seen may think "I am Brahma," but what is he to think who is without thought, and who sees no duality? 18.16

He by whom inner distraction is seen may put an end to it, but the noble one is not distracted. When there is nothing to achieve what is he to do? 18.17

The wise man, unlike the worldly man, does not see inner stillness, distraction, or fault in himself, even when living like a worldly man. 18.18

Nothing is done by him who is free from being and non-being, who is contented, desireless, and wise, even if in the world's eyes he does act. 18.19

The wise man who just goes on doing what presents itself for him to do, encounters no difficulty in either activity or inactivity. 18.20

He who is desireless, self-reliant, independent, and free of bonds functions like a dead leaf blown about by the wind of causality. 18.21

There is neither joy nor sorrow for one who has transcended samsara. With a peaceful mind he lives as if without a body. 18.22

He whose joy is in himself, and who is peaceful and pure within has no desire for renunciation or sense of loss in anything. 18.23

For the man with a naturally empty mind, doing just as he pleases, there is no such thing as pride or false humility, as there is for the natural man. 18.24

"This action was done by the body but not by me." The pure-natured person thinking like this, is not acting even when acting. 18.25

He who acts without being able to say why, but is not thereby a fool, he is one liberated while still alive, happy and blessed. He is happy even in samsara. 18.26

He who has had enough of endless considerations and has attained peace, does not think, know, hear, or see. 18.27

He who is beyond mental stillness and distraction does not desire either liberation or its opposite. Recognising that things are just constructions of the imagination, that great soul lives as God here and now. 18.28

He who feels responsibility within, acts even when doing nothing, but there is no sense of done or undone for the wise man who is free from the sense of responsibility. 18.29

The mind of the liberated man is not upset or pleased. It shines unmoving, desireless, and free from doubt. 18.30

He whose mind does not set out to meditate or act, still meditates and acts but without an object. 18.31

A stupid man is bewildered when he hears the ultimate truth, while even a clever man is humbled by it just like the fool. 18.32

The ignorant make a great effort to practise one-pointedness and the stopping of thought, while the wise see nothing to be done and remain in themselves like those asleep. 18.33

The stupid man does not attain cessation whether he acts or abandons action, while the wise man finds peace within simply by knowing the truth. 18.34

People cannot come to know themselves by practices -- pure awareness, clear, complete, beyond multiplicity, and faultless though they are. 18.35

The stupid man does not achieve liberation even through regular practice, but the fortunate remains free and actionless simply by understanding. 18.36

The stupid does not attain Godhead because he wants it, while the wise man enjoys the Supreme Godhead without even wanting it. 18.37

Even when living without any support and eager for achievement, the stupid are still nourishing samsara, while the wise have cut at the very root of its unhappiness. 18.38

The stupid man does not find peace because he desires it, while the wise man discriminating the truth is always peaceful minded. 18.39

How can there be self-knowledge for him whose knowledge depends on what he sees? The wise do not see this and that, but see themselves as infinite. 18.40

How can there be cessation of thought for the misguided who is striving for it. Yet it is there always naturally for the wise man delighting in himself. 18.41

Some think that something exists, and others that nothing does. Rare is the man who does not think either, and is thereby free from distraction. 18.42

Those of weak intelligence think of themselves as pure nonduality, but because of their delusion do not really know this, and so remain unfulfilled all their lives. 18.43

The mind of the man seeking liberation can find no resting place within, but the mind of the liberated man is always free from desire by the very fact of being without a resting place. 18.44

Seeing the tigers of the senses, the frightened refuge-seekers at once enter the cave in search of cessation of thought and one-pointedness. 18.45

Seeing the desireless lion, the elephants of the senses silently run away, or, if that is impossible, serve him like courtiers. 18.46

The man who is free from doubts and whose mind is free does not bother about means of liberation. Whether seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, or tasting, he lives at ease. 18.47

He whose mind is pure and undistracted from just hearing of the Truth does not see anything to do or anything to avoid or even a cause for indifference. 18.48

The upright person does whatever presents itself to be done, good or bad, for his actions are like those of a child. 18.49

By inner freedom one attains happiness, by inner freedom one reaches the Supreme, by inner freedom one comes to absence of thought, by inner freedom to the Ultimate State. 18.50

When one sees oneself as neither the doer nor the reaper of the consequences, then all mind waves come to an end. 18.51

The spontaneous unassuming behaviour of the wise is noteworthy, but not the deliberate purposeful stillness of the fool. 18.52

The wise who are rid of imagination, unbound and with unfettered awareness, may enjoy themselves in the midst of many goods, or alternatively go off to mountain caves. 18.53

There is no attachment in the heart of a wise man whether he sees or pays homage to a learned brahmin, a celestial being, a holy place, a woman, a king or a friend. 18.54

A yogi is not in the least put out even when humiliated by the ridicule of servants, sons, wives, grandchildren, or other relatives. 18.55

Even when pleased he is not pleased, not suffering even when in pain. Only those like him can know the wonderful state of such a man. 18.56

It is the feeling that there is something that needs to be achieved which is samsara. The wise who are of the form of emptiness, formless, unchanging, and spotless see nothing of the sort. 18.57

Even when doing nothing the fool is agitated by restlessness, while a skillful man remains undisturbed even when doing what there is to do. 18.58

Happy he stands, happy he sits, happy sleeps, and happy he comes and goes. Happy he speaks and happy he eats. This is the life of a man at peace. 18.59

He who of his very nature feels no unhappiness in his daily life like worldly people, remains undisturbed like a great lake, cleared of defilement. 18.60

Even abstention from action has the effect of action in a fool, while even the action of the wise man brings the fruits of inaction. 18.61

A fool often shows aversion towards his belongings, but for him whose attachment to the body has dropped away, there is neither attachment nor aversion. 18.62

The mind of the fool is always caught in thinking or not thinking, but the wise man's is of the nature of no thought because he thinks what is appropriate. 18.63

For the seer who behaves like a child, without desire in all actions, there is no attachment for such a pure one even in the work he does. 18.64

Blessed is he who knows himself and is the same in all states, with a mind free from craving whether he is seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, or tasting. 18.65

There is no one subject to samsara, no sense of individuality, no goal or means to the goal in the eyes of the wise man who is always free from imagination and unchanging like space. 18.66

Glorious is he who has abandoned all goals and is the incarnation of the satisfaction, which is his very nature, and whose inner focus on the Unconditioned is quite spontaneous. 18.67

In brief, the great-souled man who has come to know the Truth is without desire for either pleasure or liberation, and is always and everywhere free from attachment. 18.68

What remains to be done by the man who is pure awareness and has abandoned everything that can be expressed in words from the highest heaven to the earth itself? 18.69

The pure man who has experienced the Indescribable attains peace by virtue of his very nature, realising that all this is nothing but illusion, and that nothing is. 18.70

There are no rules, dispassion, renunciation, or meditation for one who is pure receptivity by nature, and admits no knowable form of being. 18.71

For him who shines with the radiance of Infinity and is not subject to natural causality there is neither bondage, liberation, pleasure, nor pain. 18.72

Pure illusion reigns in samsara which will continue until self-realisation, but the enlightened man lives in the beauty of freedom from me and mine, from the sense of responsibility and from any attachment. 18.73

For the seer who knows himself as imperishable and beyond pain there is neither knowledge, a world, nor the sense that I am the body or the body mine. 18.74

No sooner does a man of low intelligence give up activities like the elimination of thought than he falls into mind racing and chatter. 18.75

A fool does not get rid of his stupidity even on hearing the truth. He may appear outwardly free from imaginations, but inside he is still hankering after the senses. 18.76

Though in the eyes of the world he is active, the man who has shed action through knowledge finds no means of doing or speaking anything. 18.77

For the wise man who is always unchanging and fearless there is neither darkness nor light nor destruction nor anything. 18.78

There is neither fortitude, prudence, nor courage for the yogi whose nature is beyond description and free of individuality. 18.79

There is neither heaven nor hell nor even liberation during life. In a nutshell, in the sight of the seer nothing exists at all. 18.80

He neither longs for possessions nor grieves at their absence. The calm mind of the sage is full of the nectar of immortality. 18.81

The dispassionate man does not praise the good or blame the wicked. Content and equal in pain and pleasure, he sees nothing that needs doing. 18.82

The wise man is not averse to samsara, nor does he seek to know himself. Free from pleasure and impatience, he is not dead and he is not alive. 18.83

The wise man excels by being free from anticipation, without attachment to such things as children or wives, free from desire for the senses, and not even concerned about his own body. 18.84

The wise man, who lives on whatever happens to come to him, roams wherever he pleases, and sleeps wherever the sun happens to set, is at peace everywhere. 18.85

Whether his body rises or falls, the great-souled one gives it no thought, having forgotten all about samsara in coming to rest on the ground of his true nature. 18.86

The wise man has the joy of being complete in himself and without possessions, acting as he pleases, free from duality and rid of doubts, and without attachment to any creature. 18.87

The wise man excels in being without the sense of "me". Earth, a stone, or gold are the same to him. The knots of his heart have been rent asunder, and he is freed from greed and blindness. 18.88

Who can compare with that contented, liberated soul who pays no regard to anything and has no desire left in his heart? 18.89

Who but the upright man without desire knows without knowing, sees without seeing, and speaks without speaking? 18.90

Beggar or king, he excels who is without desire, and whose opinion of things is rid of "good" and "bad." 18.91

There is neither dissolute behaviour nor virtue, nor even discrimination of the truth for the sage who has reached the goal and is the very embodiment of guileless sincerity. 18.92

That which is experienced within by one who is desireless and free from pain, and content to rest in himself -- how could it be described, and of whom? 18.93

The wise man who is contented in all circumstances is not asleep even in deep sleep, nor sleeping in a dream, nor waking when he is awake. 18.94

The seer is without thoughts even when thinking, without senses among the senses, without understanding even in understanding, and without a sense of responsibility even in the ego. 18.95

Neither happy nor unhappy, neither detached nor attached, neither seeking liberation nor liberated, he is neither something nor nothing. 18.96

Not distracted in distraction, in mental stillness not poised, in stupidity not stupid, that blessed one is not even wise in his wisdom. 18.97

The liberated man is self-possessed in all circumstances and free from the idea of "done" and "still to do." He is the same wherever he is and without greed. He does not dwell on what he has done or not done. 18.98

He is not pleased when praised nor upset when blamed. He is not afraid of death nor attached to life. 18.99

A man at peace does not run off to popular resorts or to the forest. Whatever and wherever, he remains the same. 18.100

Chapter Nineteen

Janaka said:

Using the tweezers of the knowledge of the truth I have managed to extract the painful thorn of endless opinions from the recesses of my heart. 19.1

For me, established in my own glory, there are no religious obligations, sensuality, possessions, philosophy, duality, or even nonduality. 19.2

For me established in my own glory, there is no past, future, or present. There is no space or even eternity. 19.3

For me established in my own glory, there is no self or non-self, no good or evil, no thought or even absence of thought. 19.4

For me established in my own glory, there is no dreaming or deep sleep, no waking nor fourth state beyond them, and certainly no fear. 19.5

For me established in my own glory, there is nothing far away and nothing near, nothing within or without, nothing large and nothing small. 19.6

For me established in my own glory, there is no life or death, no worlds or things of this world, no distraction and no stillness of mind. 19.7

For me remaining in myself, there is no need for talk of the three goals of life, of yoga or of knowledge. 19.8

Chapter Twenty

Janaka said:

In my unblemished nature there are no elements, no body, no faculties, no mind. There is no void and no despair. 20.1

For me, free from the sense of dualism, there are no scriptures, no self-knowledge, no mind free from an object, no satisfaction and no freedom from desire. 20.2

There is no knowledge or ignorance, no "me," "this," or "mine," no bondage, no liberation, and no property of self-nature. 20.3

For him who is always free from individual characteristics there is no antecedent causal action, no liberation during life, and no fulfillment at death. 20.4

For me, free from individuality, there is no doer and no reaper of the consequences, no cessation of action, no arising of thought, no immediate object, and no idea of results. 20.5

There is no world, no seeker for liberation, no yogi, no seer, no one bound and no one liberated. I remain in my own nondual nature. 20.6

There is no emanation or return, no goal, means, seeker or achievement. I remain in my own nondual nature. 20.7

For me who am forever unblemished, there is no assessor, no standard, nothing to assess, and no assessment. 20.8

For me who am forever actionless, there is no distraction or one-pointedness of mind, no lack of understanding, no stupidity, no joy and no sorrow. 20.9

For me who am always free from deliberations there is neither conventional truth nor absolute truth, no happiness and no suffering. 20.10

For me who am forever pure there is no illusion, no samsara, no attachment or detachment, no living organism, and no God. 20.11

For me who am forever unmovable and indivisible, established in myself, there is no activity or inactivity, no liberation and no bondage. 20.12

For me who am blessed and without limitation, there is no initiation or scripture, no disciple or teacher, and no goal of human life. 20.13

There is no being or non-being, no unity or dualism. What more is there to say? There is nothing outside of me. 20.14

A Duet of One

The Ashtavakra Gita Dialogue

Translated by Ramesh S. Balsekar

Chapter One

Janaka asks:

How can knowledge be acquired? How can liberation be attained? How can renunciation come about? (1)

Ashtavakra answers:

My child, if you are seeking liberation, shun the objects of the senses like poison; and seek forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, contentment and truth like you would seek nectar. (2)

You are neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor space. You are the witness of those five elements as Consciousness. Understanding this is liberation. (3)

If you detach yourself from the identification with the body, and remain relaxed in, and as Consciousness, you will, this very moment, be happy, at peace, free from bondage. (4)

You do not belong to any caste like Brahmana, nor do you belong to any station in life. You are not the object of any sense. Unattached and formless, you are the witness of the entire universe. Know this, and be happy. (5)

Right and wrong, happiness and sorrow, are all attributes of the mind, not of You, O all-pervading One. You are neither the doer nor the enjoyer, You who have ever and always been free of all such attachments (6)

You are the one observer and, as such, you have, indeed, always been free. Your only bondage has been that you see someone else as the observer. (7)

You have been bitten by the deadly black serpent of the ego, and you therefore consider yourself as the doer. Drink the nectar of the faith that you are not the doer, and be happy. (8)

Having burnt down the forest of ignorance with the fire of the conviction 'I am One, Pure Consciousness', discard all grief and be happy. (9)

You are that Consciousness – Supreme Bliss – upon which appears this phenomenal manifestation, like the illusion of a snake on a rope. Live happily. (10)

The one who considers himself free is, indeed, free, while the one who considers himself bound remains in bondage. The saying ‘As one thinks so one becomes’ is certainly a true one. (11)

The Atman is the sole witness, all pervading, perfect, free Consciousness – actionless, unattached, desireless, at peace with itself. It is only through an illusion that it appears to be involved with the samsara. (12)

Give up the illusion that you are the individual self, together with all external and internal self-modifications, and meditate on the Atman, the immutable, non-dual Consciousness. (13)

Dear child, long have you been caught in the bonds of identification with the body. Sever it with the sword of Knowledge, and be happy. (14)

You are unattached, actionless, self-effulgent, without blemish. This, indeed, is your bondage, that you practice meditation. (15)

It is you who pervade this universe, and this universe exists in you. You are truly pure Consciousness by nature. Be not petty-minded. (16)

Know that which has form to be unreal, and the formless to be real. Having understood this principle, there will be no possibility of rebirth. (18)

Just as the surface of a mirror exists within and without the image reflected in the mirror, so also the supreme Self exists both within and without the physical body. (19)

Just as the all-pervading space is both inside and outside the pot, so also the eternal and all-pervading Consciousness is immanent in all beings and objects. (20)

Chapter Two

Janaka responds:

I really am the taintless, serene, pure Consciousness, quite apart from the phenomenal universe. How long have I been unnecessarily bewildered by illusion! (21)

As I Myself illumine this body, so also do I reveal this whole universe. Therefore, the entire universe is Mine alone, or else nothing is mine. (22)

On renouncing the body along with the rest of the manifestation, there has been, as if by magic, a perception of the supreme Self. (23)

Just as waves, foam and bubbles, are not different from the water, so also the phenomenal universe appearing in Consciousness, is not different from it. (24)

Just as cloth, after an analysis, is found to be nothing other than thread, similarly, the phenomenal manifestation of the universe is found, on intelligent perception, to be nothing other than Consciousness. (25)

Just as sugar made from sugar cane juice is wholly pervaded by the sugar-cane juice, so also the phenomenal universe, which is produced within Me, is wholly pervaded by Me. (26)

It is through ignorance of the Atman that the phenomenal universe appears to be real, and this illusion disappears with the realization of one's true nature, just as the illusion of the snake appears through the ignorance of the object being a rope, and disappears after the recognition of the rope as a rope. (27)

Light is my very nature. Indeed, I am Light, and none other. It is, indeed, 'I' that shine when the universe manifests itself. (28)

The arising of the phenomenal universe which appears in Me gives the impression of being real because of ignorance, just as the mother-of-pearl gives the impression of silver, the rope that of the snake, and the rays of the sun that of water in a mirage. (29)

Just as a pot dissolves into clay, a wave into water, or a bracelet into gold, so also the phenomenal universe which has arisen in Me will also dissolve into Me. (30)

O, the wonder that I am! I salute Myself who knows no decay, and survives even the destruction of the entire universe from the creator Brahma to a blade of grass. (31)

O, the wonder that I am! I salute Myself who through a body, am one who neither goes anywhere, nor comes from anywhere, but ever abides pervading the universe. (32)

O, the wonder that I am! I salute Myself, none more capable, who is bearing the burden of the entire universe without even touching it with my body. (33)

O, the wonder that I am! I salute Myself who has nothing, or everything, that is accessible to thought and word. (34)

Knowledge, the knower and that which is to be known, as the triad, do not really exist in reality. I am that stainless Consciousness in which this triad appears through ignorance. (35)

O, the root of misery is, indeed, in dualism. There is no remedy for it other than the realization that all objects of experience are unreal, and that I am the one pure Consciousness. (36)

I am the pure Consciousness, but I have, through ignorance, imposed limitations upon myself. With this constant conviction, I abide in the Consciousness without any conceptualizing. (37)

The illusion of bondage and liberation, having lost its basic support (of ignorance), remains no longer. O, the universe has emanated from me, but it is not within me. (38)

I am now convinced that the whole universe, including this body, is without substance, and that what I am is pure Consciousness. So what basis can conceptualization now have? (39)

Body, heaven and hell, bondage and freedom, as also fear, all these are mere concepts. What have I to do with all these, I who am pure Consciousness? (40)

O, there is absolutely no dualism for me. Even in the midst of people I feel as if I am alone. To what should I attach myself? (41)

I am not this body, nor do I have any body, because I am not a separate individual, but pure Consciousness. My only bondage was that I had a zest for life. (42)

O, in Me, the limitless ocean, the movement in the mind has produced the many worlds like the wind produces diverse waves on the ocean. (43)

In Me, the limitless ocean, when the wind subsides and the mind becomes quiet, unfortunately for the trader in the form of the individual person, the ship of the conceptualized universe sinks. (44)

How remarkable! In Me, the limitless ocean, the waves of individual selves arise according to their inherent nature, meet and play with one another for a while, and then disappear. (45)

Chapter Three

Ashtavakra responds:

How is it that having understood your true nature as the serene, indestructible One, you continue to be attached to the acquisition of wealth? (46)

Attachment to the illusory objects of senses arises out of ignorance of the Self, just as greed for silver arises from the illusion created by the mother-of-pearl. (47)

Having known that you are That in which arises the phenomenal universe like waves on the ocean, why do you run about like a wretched being? (48)

Having heard one's identity as the incomparably beautiful Noumenon, how is it possible for one to continue to be attracted to sensual objects, and thus debase oneself? (49)

It is, indeed, strange that the sense of 'mine-ness' should continue to prevail in a sage who has realized the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self. (50)

It is, indeed, strange that one abiding in the supreme, transcendent non-duality, and intent on liberation, should be subject to lust, and weakened by amorous activities. (51)

It is a strange fact of this world that a man physically weak, and obviously at the end of his life, should lust for sensual pleasure even after being aware that lust is an enemy of knowledge. (52)

It is strange that one who is supposed to have developed dispassion towards this world, and the next, who is supposed to be able to discriminate between the intransient and the transient, and is in search of emancipation, should yet fear the dissolution of the body. (53)

Whether he is feted and feasted, or pestered and annoyed, the serene one, with the perception of the Self, is neither gratified or upset. (54)

The wise one witnesses the actions of his own body as if he is witnessing those of another body. How then can he be affected by praise or blame? (55)

How can the serene one, knowing that the phenomenal universe is mere illusion, and being without any curiosity regarding it, be affected by any fear, even with the approach of death? (56)

With whom can we compare the most superior being, abiding in Consciousness, perfectly content, and not desirous of anything, even liberation? (57)

Why should the serene one, who is aware of the emptiness of all phenomenal objects, have any preference for things as being acceptable or unacceptable? (58)

He who has ceased to conceptualize, and is, therefore, free from attachment to sense objects, beyond the interrelated pairs of opposites, and free from volition, accepts with equanimity whatever comes his way in the normal course. (59)

Says Janaka:

O, Hunta, the man of understanding, knowing his true nature, who takes part in the game of living, can never be compared with the beasts who carry burdens in life. (60)

Abiding in that state which Indra and the other gods hanker after pitifully, the yogi is not particularly elated. (61)

The heart of the jnani is not touched by virtue and vice, just as the sky is not affected by smoke, even though it might appear so. (62)

Who can prevent the Self-realized one, who has known the unicity of the unmanifest noumenon and the phenomenal manifestation, from acting as he wishes? (63)

Of the four kinds of created beings, from Brahma to a blade of grass, it is only the wise one who is capable of renouncing both desire and aversion. (64)

Rare is the man who knows the noumenon as one without a second, the lord of the universe. He does what he considers worth doing, and has no fear from any quarter. (65)

Ashtavakra responds:

Since you are pure, unattached beingness, where is the question of your renouncing anything? All that is necessary is the disidentification with the psychosomatic apparatus, and the dissolution of the illusion of the 'me' into the noumenal 'I'. (66)

In the knowledge that the universe arises in yourself as the Consciousness, like bubbles in the ocean, enter into the state of dissolution. (67)

In the knowledge that the appearance of the phenomenal universe is an illusion, like that of the snake in the rope, and that, although it seems real to the senses, you as the pure noumenon completely transcend it, enter into the state of dissolution. (68)

In the knowledge that you are perfection itself, the potential fullness of plenum, the unchanged in misery and happiness, hope and despair, life and death, enter into the state of dissolution. (69)

Janaka says:

I am limitless as the space, whereas the phenomenal world is like a pot. This is knowledge. There is no question, therefore, of any renouncement, or any acceptance, or any dissolution. (70)

I am like the ocean, and the phenomenal universe is like a wave. This is knowledge. There is, therefore, no question of any renouncement, or any acceptance, or any dissolution. (71)

I am like the mother-of-pearl, and the illusion of the universe is like that of the silver. This is knowledge. There is, therefore, no question of any renouncement, or any acceptance, or any dissolution. (72)

I am, indeed, present in all beings, and all beings in Me. This is knowledge. There is, therefore, no question of any renouncement, or any acceptance, or any dissolution. (73)

In Me, the boundless ocean, the bark of the universe gets tossed about by the winds of its own inherent nature. I am not affected. (74)

In Me, the limitless ocean, let the waves of the universe arise, and then disappear according to their inherent nature. I experience neither any expansion, nor any contraction. (75)

In Me, the limitless ocean, exists the illusion of the universe. Being formless, I am supremely tranquil. In this do I abide. (76)

The subjective Self is not in the object, nor is the object in the Subjective Self, which is infinite, and without any taint of any kind. It is free from attachment and desire, and thus, tranquil. In this do I abide. (77)

Indeed, What-I-Am is pure Consciousness, and the world is like a magician's show. How can there be any question of rejection or acceptance for Me. (78)

Chapter Four

Ashtavakra says:

It means bondage when the mind desires something, or grieves at something, rejects or accepts anything, feels happy or angry with anything. (79)

It means liberation when the mind does not desire or grieve, or reject or accept, or feel happy or angry. (80)

It is bondage when the mind is attached to any sense experience. It is liberation when the mind is detached from all sense experiences. (81)

When the 'me' is present, it is bondage; when the 'me' is not present, it is liberation. Having understood this, it should be easy for you to refrain from accepting or rejecting anything. (82)

Who is it that is concerned with the interrelated pairs of opposites, such as duties to be performed, and acts to be avoided? When do they end, and for whom do they end? Enquiring thus – through indifference to the world – proceed to remain without desire and volition. (83)

Rare, indeed, my child, is that blessed person whose desire for life, enjoyment and learning, have been extinguished by merely observing the ways of the world. (84)

The man of wisdom becomes serene through the realization that this world is transient and tainted by the triple misery, and is, therefore, without substance, contemptible, and to be discarded. (85)

Is there any stage, or age, when the interrelated pairs of opposites do not affect people? The one who disidentifies himself from them, and is content with whatever comes to him spontaneously, in the ordinary course, attains perfection. (86)

Who will not attain tranquility, who, seeing the diversity of opinions among the many seers, saints and yogis, becomes totally indifferent? (87)

Is he not the true guru, who, having apperceived his true nature as pure Consciousness, through indifference, equanimity, and through dialectical reasoning, has saved himself from the metempsychosis of samsara? (88)

The moment you perceive the different phenomena in the universe as they truly are, that is to say, different patterns and combinations of the same five basic elements, you will at once be free from bondage, and you will be able to abide in your true Self. (89)

Intentions are the root of samsara. Therefore, the abandoning of intention and volition means dispassion with the world, and then you can live anywhere. (90)

Forsake desire, which is the enemy; material prosperity, which leads to much mischief; and also the performance of good deeds with the aim of achieving something, which is the cause of these two. Cultivate indifference to everything. (91)

Regard friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, gifts, and other such items of good fortune, as a dream or juggler's show lasting but a short time. (92)

Know that wherever there is desire, there is samsara. With sincere, intense dispassion, go beyond desire, and thus be happy. (93)

It is in desire that bondage exists, and liberation is considered to be in the destruction of desire. Only through non-attachment to the phenomenal world does one attain the perennial joy of the realization of Self. (94)

You are the pure Consciousness. The phenomenal universe is inert and illusory. Ignorance as such, too, does not exist. Why, therefore, your quest for knowledge? (95)

Kingdoms, sons, wives, bodies, and sensual pleasures have been lost to you birth after birth, even though you were attached to them. (96)

Enough, therefore, of prosperity, desires and good deeds. The mind does not find any repose in the dreary wilderness of samsara. (97)

For how many lives have you not done hard, painful labors of body, mind and speech? At least now, desist. (98)

In the conviction that continuous change and ultimate destruction, after a certain duration, is the very nature of all phenomenon, the man of wisdom remains unperturbed, free from misery, and relaxed in his attitude. (99)

In the conviction that the phenomenal manifestation has no nature other than the noumenon, which is immanent in all phenomena, the man of wisdom remains contented and relaxed with all desires, completely pacified and unattached to anything whatever. (100)

In the conviction that adversity and prosperity come in their turn as effects of past actions, as causality, the man of wisdom, contented, with his senses in passive restraint, wants nothing and grieves for nothing. (101)

In the conviction that happiness and misery, birth and death, are parts of the natural process of causality, the man of wisdom, without any need to accomplish anything, is free from anxiety, and does not identify himself with anything he happens to be doing. (102)

In the conviction that it is anxiety, and nothing else, that is the root cause of misery in this world, the man of wisdom, with his desire annihilated, remains free from anxiety, happy and contented. (103)

In the conviction ‘I am not the body, nor is the body mine – I am pure Consciousness’, the man of wisdom is indifferent to what has been achieved, and what remains to be achieved, and lives in a natural state of non-volition, which is akin to the noumenal state. (104)

In the conviction ‘I am immanent in all phenomena, from Brahma to a blade of grass’, the man of wisdom is free from any conceptualizing or objectivizing, indifferent to what has been attained or not attained, and remains contented and at peace. (105)

In the conviction that this manifested universe, wondrous though it be in the variety and diversity of its phenomena, is truly illusory, the man of wisdom, without any desires, identified with the pure Consciousness, remains in noumenal peace. (106)

Chapter Five

Janaka says:

I became indifferent to and detached from first physical action, then small talk, and finally conceptualizing itself, and so I abide in my natural state. (107)

Without any attachment to words and sense objects, and as the Self is not an object of perception, my mind has been freed from distraction, and become one-pointed. And so do I abide in my natural state. (108)

Having realized that efforts such as meditation are prescribed only for those whose mind is distracted, I abide in my natural state. (109)

O Brahman, I have seen through the unreality of the interrelated opposites like pleasure and pain, the acceptable and the unacceptable, and so I abide in my natural state. (110)

Having found that limiting myself to the duties of the particular life stage, and observing the prescribed self-disciplines, et cetera, are distractions, I abide in my natural state. (111)

Having fully realized that deliberately abstaining from action is as much the outcome of ignorance as the volitional action, I abide. (112)

Thinking on the Unthinkable means another aspect of conceptualizing and objectivizing. Having realized this, I abide in my natural state. (113)

Blessed is the man who has accomplished this. Blessed is he, indeed, whose very nature is this. (114)

The tranquility that is the result of the conviction that the entire manifestation is a phenomenal illusion, is rare even for one who possess only a loin-cloth. Therefore, giving up the very concept of renunciation and acceptance, I remain contented in my natural state. (115)

There is weariness of the body here, the fatigue of the tongue there, and distress of the mind elsewhere. Therefore, detached from all action and effort, I remain happily in my natural state. (116)

Clearly understanding that nothing is actually 'done' in Reality, I remain established in my natural state, witnessing whatever happens to be done. (117)

The spiritual seekers are involved in action or inaction because they are still identified with the body. Not being concerned with either identity or non-identity, I live happily in my natural state. (118)

No consequences – good or evil – concern me whether in movement or rest. Therefore, I am content in my natural state whether the body-mind apparatus is stationary, in movement, or asleep. (119)

I do not lose anything by relaxing, nor do I gain anything by striving. Therefore, transcending all concepts of loss or gain, I remain happily in my natural state. (120)

Having repeatedly observed the inconstancy of the various aspects of pleasure in varying circumstances, I am indifferent to all experience, and remain happily in my natural state. (121)

He whose worldly recollections have been extinguished, who is in reality, naturally vacant-minded, whose senses respond to their objects without any apparent volition, goes through life as if he were asleep. (122)

When once my desires have melted away, where is the question of any riches, or friends, or thieves, in the form of sense-objects? Where, indeed, is the question of scriptures, and even knowledge? (123)

As I have realized my identity with the supreme absolute, the witness, there is complete indifference both to bondage and liberation, and I feel no concern even for enlightenment. (124)

The extraordinary condition of one who is devoid of all possible doubts, and goes about as if unaware of his surroundings, uninhibitedly, can be understood only by those who are like him. (125)

Chapter Six

Ashtavakra said:

The person with a keen intellect becomes enlightened even when the instruction is imparted casually, whereas, without it, the immature seeker continues to remain confused even after a lifetime of seeking. (126)

Absence of attachment to sense-objects is liberation; passion for sense-objects is bondage. Understand this fact, and then do as you please. (127)

Apperception of this Truth seems to render an eloquent, wise and active person mute, dull and inactive. Knowledge of Truth does not therefore appear attractive to those who still want to enjoy the pleasures of this world. (128)

You are not the body, nor does the body belong to you. You are neither the doer nor the experiencer. You are Consciousness itself, the eternal, impersonal witness. Live happily. (129)

Passion and aversion are attributes of the mind, and you are not the mind. You are Consciousness itself, free of all conflict, changeless. Live happily. (130)

Realizing the Self in all, and all in the Self, free from the sense of 'me' and 'mine', be happy. (131)

O, you, pure Consciousness, you are, indeed, That in which the phenomenal universe arises like waves on the ocean. Be free from the affliction of the mind. (132)

Have faith, my son, have faith. Let there be no confusion or delusion about this. You are Knowledge itself, you are the Lord, you are Consciousness, prior to all manifestation. (133)

The body is composed of the five elements; it comes into existence, stays for a while, and then departs. The Self neither comes nor goes. Where is the sense in mourning the loss of the body? (134)

Whether the body lasts till the end of an eon, or it goes this moment, what difference could it make to you who are pure Consciousness? (135)

In you, who are the infinite ocean, let the awareness of phenomena appear and disappear according to their nature. It can mean no gain or loss to you. (136)

O, my son! You are the very Consciousness within which arises this phenomenal universe that is not separate from what you are. How can there be a question of anything being acceptable or unacceptable? (137)

For you who are the one immutable, serene, taintless, pure Consciousness, how can there be any question of birth or action, or even the concept of the ego? (138)

Chapter Seven

Ashtavakra said:

Whatever you perceive is your own reflection. Can the different ornaments like bangles, amulets or anklets exist otherwise than as gold? (139)

Give up all distinctions such as 'I am this' and 'I am not this'. Have the conviction that all there is, is Consciousness. Free from all concepts, be happy. (140)

It is only through ignorance that the universe appears to exist. Other than you as Consciousness, or Reality, nothing exists. Other than you, there is neither any individual self, nor any transcendental self. (141)

One who understands with conviction that the universe is nothing but an illusion, becomes free from desire. With the conviction that nothing exists other than Consciousness, there arises peace and serenity. (142)

Be convinced that this apparent ocean of the manifested universe is in reality nothing but Consciousness. You are truly not concerned either with bondage, or with liberation. Live freely and happily. (143)

O, pure Consciousness that you are! Do not concern yourself with concepts of affirmations and negations. Abide in the silence of the eternal bliss that you are, and live happily. (144)

Give up conceptualizing altogether. Have no beliefs or concepts of any kind. You are the ever-free Consciousness. How can any thinking help you in any way? (145)

You may listen to diverse scriptures, or even give learned discourses on them, but abidance in the Self cannot happen unless all that is forgotten. (146)

You may keep yourself occupied in work, or enjoy the pleasures of the world, or indulge in meditation, and yet you will find that there is an inner urge towards that primal state which is prior to all phenomenality, in which all desire for phenomenal objects is extinguished. (147)

All keep exerting themselves, and yet find themselves unhappy. They do not realize that it is this very volitional effort that brings about unhappiness. It is only through this understanding that the blessed one reaches awakening. (148)

Happiness belongs to none but that master-idler, to whom even the natural act of opening and closing of the eyes seems an affliction. (149)

When the mind is free from pairs of opposites like ‘this is done but that is not yet done’, it acquires an indifference alike to righteousness, wealth, desire for sensual pleasure, as well as liberation. (150)

One who has an aversion for sense objects is considered a renunciate, and one who covets them is considered sensual. But one who neither rejects nor covets is unconcerned with them. (151)

Desire is at the root of ignorance, and so long as desire persists, the sense of the acceptable and the unacceptable, which is the branch and the sprout of the tree of samsara, must necessarily continue. (152)

Activity begets attachment, abstention from activity generates aversion. Rid of the bondage of opposites, the wise man established in the Self, lives like a child. (153)

One who is attached to samsara wants to renounce it in order to free himself from misery. But one who is not attached continues to remain in samsara, and yet live happily. (154)

He who seeks enlightenment as an individual seeker, and still is identified with the body, is neither a jnani nor a yogi, and suffers misery. (155)

Unless everything is totally forgotten, you cannot be established in the Self, even if Shiva, Vishnu or Brahma be your preceptor. (156)

Chapter Eight

Ashtavakra said:

It is only he who is contented, with his senses not attached to their objects, and who revels in his oneness with the universe, who can be considered as having become a jnani and a yogi. (157)

O, the Knower of Truth never experiences misery in this world, for the whole universe is filled by himself. (158)

The sense-objects no longer have any attraction for the one who abides in the Self, just as the bitter leaves of the neem tree cannot please an elephant who can enjoy the sallaki leaves. (159)

Rare in the world is the one on whom experiences do not leave any impressions, and who does not hanker after any experiences still to be enjoyed. (160)

It is possible to find in this world those who crave sensual gratification, and also those who hanker after enlightenment. But rare, indeed, is the great soul who cares neither for material enjoyment, nor spiritual enlightenment. (161)

Missing aphorism (162)

The man of wisdom does not wish for the dissolution of the universe, nor is he interested in its continuance. The blessed one lives perfectly contented with whatever turns up in life. (163)

In consequence of this supreme understanding, with the split-mind healed into its wholeness, the wise one lives happily in contentment, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. (164)

He has neither attachment nor aversion for objects in this world, and so, is not buffeted about in the sea of samsara. His mind is vacant, his actions are without personal motivation, and his senses are not attracted to their objects. (165)

The wise one neither keeps awake, nor does he sleep, and his eyes are neither open nor closed. The liberated soul enjoys the state in any circumstances. (166)

The liberated one is found to be always abiding in the Self. Pure in heart, he lives free of all conditioning in any circumstances. (167)

Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, accepting, speaking, walking, the great-souled one, free from all effort and non-effort, is, indeed, emancipated. (168)

The liberated one neither abuses nor praises. He neither rejoices, nor is he angry. He neither gives nor receives. He is free from attachment to any object. (169)

The sight of a voluptuous woman or that of approaching death leaves the great-souled one, established in the Self, equally unperturbed. He is, indeed, liberated. (170)

The steady one, who sees the same everywhere, does not differentiate between happiness and misery, man and woman, prosperity and adversity. (171)

In the wise one, whose attachment to worldly life has been exhausted, you will find neither compassion, nor violence, neither humility nor insolence, neither wonder nor excitement. (172)

The liberated one neither abhors objects of the senses, nor does he covet them. He enjoys whatever comes along with a perfectly detached mind. (173)

Always abiding in the Self, the wise one of vacant mind does not conceptualize on the opposites like right and wrong, good and evil. (174)

Devoid altogether of the feeling of 'me' and 'mine', knowing with firm conviction that no thing exists in reality, and with all his inner desires set at rest, the man of understanding does not act, though it may appear he is acting. (175)

It is an indescribable state that comes to the man of understanding, whose mind has melted away and conceptualizing has ceased, and who is totally free from delusion, dreaming and dullness. (176)

Chapter Nine

Ashtavakra continues:

Salutations to that which is the embodiment of Bliss, Serenity, Effulgence, with the dawn of knowledge of which all delusion becomes like a dream. (177)

One can get a great deal of pleasure through the acquisition of the manifested sense objects. It is, however, only through renunciation of all, that happiness can arrive. (178)

How can one, the core of whose very being has been scorched by the heat of the Sun of Sorrow arising from a sense of duty, enjoy happiness without the continuous ambrosial showers of desirelessness? (179)

This universe is but a state of Consciousness. In reality it is nothing. The inherent nature of the Existent and the Non-existent is never lost. (180)

The Self, the Absolute – effortless, immutable, taintless – is neither far away, nor subject to limitation. It is always there, ever present. (181)

As soon as illusion ceases, the intervening obstruction of the vision is removed. When the pure understanding shines, the miseries are dispelled. (182)

Knowing that everything that appears is a figment of the imagination, and that what is eternal and independent is the subjective Self as Consciousness, is it possible for the enlightened being to act foolishly like a child? (183)

With the firm conviction that one's real nature is Consciousness, and that existence and non-existence are like figments of the imagination, can there be anything for the one who is without desires to think, or to say, or to do? (184)

For the yogi who has become silent through the certain knowledge that all there is, is Consciousness, all thought such as 'I am this' or 'I am not that', is extinguished. (185)

The yogi who is perfect in serenity is concerned neither with distraction nor with concentration, neither with knowledge nor with ignorance, neither with pleasure nor with misery. (186)

For the yogi whose conditioning has totally dropped off, riches or poverty, gain or loss, being among people or in the solitude of the forest, is a matter of complete indifference. (187)

For the yogi who has transcended dualities such as 'this is completed' and 'that is still to be completed', how can there be any question of duty, wealth, sense-enjoyment, or discrimination? (188)

For the liberated sage, there is neither duty nor attachment. All his actions form part of his non-volitional way of living. (189)

For the sage who is beyond all conceptualization, where is the question of delusion or the universe and its renunciation, or the matter of liberation itself? (190)

He who perceives the universe as universe may have to deny its existence. But he who is without concepts is not concerned with it. He perceives it, and yet does not see it. (191)

He who perceives the Brahman as something separate from himself may have to meditate on the principle 'I am Brahman'. But he who has transcended all conceptualization, and thus sees nothing as other than himself, has nothing to meditate upon. (192)

He who experiences distraction in himself finds it necessary to control such distractions, but what is there for the noble-minded man to do, who has not identified himself with any distractions? (193)

The sage appears to live like any ordinary person, but there is a fundamental difference in their outlooks. The sage knows that all there is, is Consciousness, and therefore does not concern himself with either concentration or distraction. (194)

Having transcended the relative concept of existence and non-existence, the man of understanding, contented and free from desire, does absolutely nothing, even though, in the eyes of the world, he goes about his business. (195)

The sage is content to do whatever he is expected to be doing in his particular circumstance, but is not really involved either in the doing or the non-doing of it. (196)

Impelled by the forces of causation in the evolutionary process, the body-mind organism of the desireless, independent being, free from all bondage, moves about in life like a dry leaf in the breeze. (197)

There is neither joy nor sorrow for him who has transcended worldly existence. Ever with a serene mind, he lives in the world as if without a body. (198)

The steady one, abiding in the Self, with a mind that is calm and pure, finds nothing to renounce, and is not concerned with losing anything anywhere. (199)

With a mind that is vacant, living naturally and spontaneously, accepting life as it comes, the steady one, unlike the ordinary person, is not concerned with the concept of honor and dishonor. (200)

The one who firmly believes that all actions which take place through the body-mind organism are not individual actions, does not act, even though he appears to be acting. (201)

The enlightened one lives naturally and spontaneously, and therefore his actions are not motivated by self-interest, but such actions for that reason are not those of a fool. For him, being in this world is like not being in this world. He is ever serene and contented. (202)

The steady one, not interested in contentious reasoning and mentation, is free from conceptualization, and is therefore always in repose. He has transcended thinking, knowing, hearing and perceiving. (203)

The wise one is not agitated or distracted in mind, and thus sees no need for sitting in meditation. The question of bondage or freedom is irrelevant to him. In full conviction that the apparent manifested universe is a figment of the imagination, he exists as the Consciousness itself. (204)

The identified individual with a sense of volition acts even if he is not acting. On the other hand, the enlightened being, without any sense of personal doership, does not act even if there is action. (205)

The mind of the enlightened one is neither agitated nor ecstatic. It is actionless, free from fluctuations, without desires. It shines, not being blocked by any doubts. (206)

The mind of the enlightened one does not engage itself in either mentation or activity. If mentation or activity does take place, it is not out of a sense of volition or personal doership, but is natural and spontaneous. (207)

Having heard the Truth, the dull-witted person becomes even more confounded, while an extremely intelligent man withdraws within himself to such an extent that he appears to others as being dull-witted. (208)

The confused and ignorant people are found to be continually involved in practices of mental concentration, or in efforts to control the mind. The wise ones, on the other hand, like persons in deep sleep, do not see any necessity of doing anything. (209)

Neither by action nor by inaction does an ignorant person attain tranquility. The wise one becomes tranquil merely by understanding what tranquility is. (210)

In this world, those who devote themselves to diverse practices do not come to realize their true nature, which is purity, intelligence, love, perfection, transcendent, and free from any taint of objectivity. (211)

The ignorant person does not attain liberation in spite of various disciplines and methods for controlling the mind. The blessed one stands established in the Self merely through intuitive understanding. (212)

The ignorant person does not attain the Brahman that he desires, whereas the wise one realizes the nature of the Supreme Brahman even without desiring to do so. (213)

Without the necessary support, ignorant people keep seeking the illusion of enlightenment, and thus feed the illusion of the manifested universe of samsara. The wise strike at the very root of the problem. (214)

The fool tries to attain tranquility through personal effort, and fails to get it. The wise one apperceives the Truth directly, and is ever tranquil. (215)

How can there be any seeing of Self-nature for one who sees only this object or that object when he perceives the phenomenal manifestation? The wise, when they see the manifestation, perceive not this object or that object, but only Consciousness in which it has appeared. (216)

How can the deluded one, who strives for it, control the mind? For the wise one who is established in the Self, the whole-mind needs no control in its spontaneity. (217)

There are some who believe in the existence of the phenomenal manifestation, and there are others who believe that phenomenal manifestation does not exist. Rare is the one who is not concerned with such concepts, and is therefore always serene. (218)

Those with an immature intellect may believe that the Atman is pure and without a second, yet they want to experience the Atman phenomenally as an independent entity. Therefore, they continue to be unhappy as long as they live. (219)

The intellect of the seeker seeing enlightenment cannot function without a corresponding object as its support. The intellect of the liberated person is not limited and restricted by any desire, even for liberation. (220)

Encountering the tigers of sense-objects, the frightened seeker takes refuge in the cave of the mind, and tries various methods of disciplining and controlling the mind. (221)

Encountering the desireless lion-hearted being, the elephants of sense-objects either quietly slip away, or otherwise, are totally subservient like servile courtiers. (222)

He whose Self-realization is totally without any doubts at all finds no need to resort to any disciplinary practices as a means to liberation. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting, he lives happily. (223)

With the split-mind healed into its holy wholeness by the mere listening to the Truth, and with total serenity prevailing continually, he is not concerned with the propriety or otherwise of any action, nor with inaction. (224)

Free from a sense of doership, the wise person does whatever needs to be done in the circumstances, without concerning himself with the propriety of the action. His actions are like the actions of a child. (225)

Through freedom, comes happiness; through freedom, the best; through freedom, tranquility; through freedom is attained the Supreme State. (226)

As the understanding deepens, the outward tendencies of the mind get weakened with the realization that the Self within is neither the doer nor the experiencer. (227)

The non-volitional, spontaneous, unrestricted behavior of the wise man is transparently open and sincere, but not the affected tranquility exhibited by the one who is still governed by personal motives and considerations. (228)

The steady ones, totally free from all conceptualizing, and bereft of all attachments, are sometimes found in affluent surroundings, and at other times in mountain caves. (229)

There is total detachment in the heart of the steady one in whatever circumstances he finds himself, in whatever company – a vedic scholar being honored, or the gods being worshipped, or in a holy place, or in the company of a king, or a woman, or a loved one. (230)

The yogi is not disturbed even when despised or ridiculed by servants, sons, wives, grandsons, and other relations. (231)

Though pleased, he is not pleased; though dejected, he is not dejected. Only those who are themselves like him will understand this wonderful state of beingness. (232)

The sense of duty, pertinent only to samsara, is transcended by the wise ones who have realized their true nature as all-pervasive, formless, immutable, untainted. (233)

One who is unstilled is always agitated through distraction even when doing nothing. The expert, even when he is busy working, remains totally imperturbable. (234)

Even in everyday life, the wise one with equanimity is always happy, whether he is relaxing, sleeping, generally going about his business, speaking or eating. (235)

He is the perfect model for living, who, having realized his true nature, unlike the ordinary individual, carries on in everyday life, unruffled and unagitated, like a vast lake. (236)

With the deluded one, even withdrawal becomes action. In the case of the steady one, even continued action brings about the fruit of withdrawal. (237)

The moodha is often seen to display indifference towards his possessions. Where is attachment or detachment for him who has lost identification with the body? (238)

The moodha is always busy conceptualizing. The one abiding in the present moment does think when thinking is necessary in what he is doing, and yet he is not thinking. (239)

The man of solitude has no personal motive or aim in any undertaking that is started, lives with the innocence of a child, and has no attachment to the work he produces. (240)

Blessed is the man of understanding who has transcended the mind, who remains unmoved under all conditions, while physically continuing to see, hear, touch, smell or taste. (241)

For the man of perfection, changeless like space, how can there be any samsara or its manifestation? How can there be any end, or the means to achieve it? (242)

Glorious is the beingness of one who, being free from all desires, is the embodiment of perfect bliss that is his real nature, and remains always spontaneously absorbed in pure Consciousness. (243)

What is the use of saying anything more? The great soul who has had the perfect understanding, is free from all desire, not only for sensual enjoyment, but even for the enjoyment of enlightenment. He is totally devoid of all attachment, at all times, at all places. (244)

What can remain to be done by one who is himself pure Consciousness? He has totally renounced the manifest world, the multiplicity of which exists only in different names, which begin with Mahat. (245)

The pure one knows with certitude that this universe is the product of illusion, and that nothing really exists. The imperceptible Self has been revealed to him, and he naturally enjoys tranquility. (246)

Rules of conduct, dispassion, renunciation and control over mind are all terms which are meaningless to one who is of the nature of Pure Effulgence, and who does not perceive any objective reality. (247)

How can the terms bondage and liberation, joy and sorrow, have any meaning for one who shines as the Infinite, objectifying itself in endless forms, and does not recognize relative existence? (248)

With the happening of sudden enlightenment, the reality of the universe is seen as an illusion. The wise one lives totally devoid of any sense of 'me' or 'mine', and is therefore quite unattached to anything. (249)

How can the wise one, who has apperceived the Self as imperishable and free from grief, who is without the feeling 'I am the body' or 'the body is mine', ever be interested in the universe or knowledge? (250)

No sooner does the person of dull intellect give up his practices of discipline and mind control, than he is assailed once again by the repressed desires and concepts. (251)

Even after listening to the Truth, the man of dull intellect does not give up his delusion. Through suppression, he may appear to be tranquil, but his mind continues to be disturbed by cravings for sense-objects. (252)

He whose sense of personal doership has dropped off through intuitive in-seeing of his nature, finds no reason to speak or do anything, even though in the eyes of the ordinary people, he leads a normal working life. (253)

For the wise one with steadiness, who is ever unperturbed and fearless, where is the question of darkness or light? Can there be any question of his losing anything? For him, no thing exists. (254)

For him who has no personal nature of his own, and therefore whose nature cannot be described in specific terms, for such a Self-realized being, how can there be a question of patience, or discrimination, or even fearlessness? (255)

In the yogic vision, there is neither heaven nor hell, not even the condition of jeevan-mukti, liberation in life. Indeed, in yogic Consciousness, in nothingness, no thing exists. (256)

The mind of the steady one does not hanker for any gain, nor does it grieve at something not attained. His serene mind always remains filled with nectar. (257)

The impartial one has neither praise for one who is considered good, nor condemnation for one who is considered wicked. Contented and evenly balanced in happiness and misery, there is nothing for him to achieve. (258)

The wise one neither abhors samsara, nor does he wish for nirvana. Free from duality of joy and sorrow, he is not concerned with birth or death. (259)

Glorious is the life of the wise one, free from all expectations, free from any attachment to wife, children or any other. He is free of all craving for sensual pleasure, who is unconcerned whether the body exists or not. (260)

Contentment ever dwells in the heart of the steadfast one who is happy with whatever falls to his lot in life, who goes wherever life takes him, unmindful of where he happens to be at the end of the day. (261)

Reposing on the foundation of his own true beingness, and therefore transcending birth and death, the great one does not care whether his body drops down dead, or continues to exist. (262)

Blessed is the wise one who stands aloof, who is attached to nothing, who is without any need for possessions, who has transcended the pairs of opposites, and all of whose doubts have been totally destroyed. (263)

Glorious is the one who is devoid of the feeling of me-and-mine, to whom a clod of earth, a precious stone, and a bar of gold are all alike, the knots of whose heart have been rent asunder, and who has been purged of rajas and tamas. (264)

How can there be any comparison with the liberated one, in whose heart there are absolutely no remnants of desire of any kind, who is quite contented and totally indifferent towards all objects? (265)

Can there be anyone else other than the one totally bereft of any personal desire, who knows and yet does not know, who perceives and yet does not perceive, who speaks and yet does not speak? (266)

Be he a beggar or a king, glorious is he who is totally unattached and completely free from the conceptual duality of the interconnected opposites of good and evil. (267)

For the yogi who has realized his original nature, and is therefore the embodiment of guileless sincerity, where is the question of licentiousness or restraint? Where is the question of any determination of what is truth and what is not? (268)

The inner experience of one who is totally desireless, who transcends all sorrow and continually abides in the Self – how can it be described, and to whom can it be described? (269)

The Self-realized one is not sleeping even when he is asleep; he is not lying down even when he is dreaming; he is not awake evening the waking state. That is the state of the one who is contented in all conditions. (270)

The man-of-wisdom is devoid of thought even when he is thinking; he is devoid of sense organs even when he is using them; he is devoid of intellect even though he is endowed with it. He is devoid of the ego, even though he possesses it. (271)

The man-of-wisdom is neither happy nor miserable, neither attached nor unattached, neither liberated nor an aspirant for liberation. He is neither this nor that. (272)

The blessed one is not distracted even in distraction; he is not meditative even in meditation; he is not dull even in a state of dullness; and he is not learned even though possessed of learning. (273)

The liberated one who abides in the Self under all conditions, who is free of the concepts of action and duty, who is totally without desires, remains unconcerned with all actions that take place, and does not brood over what has been done, and what has not been done. (274)

When praised, the wise one does not feel pleased; when blamed, he is not angered. He neither rejoices in life, nor does he fear death. (275)

The serene one does not particularly seek either the crowds or the wilderness. He is the same anywhere in any conditions. (276)

Chapter Ten

Janaka says:

Using the pincers of the apperception of Truth, I have extracted, from the innermost recesses of my heart, the painful thorn of diverse opinions, concepts and judgments. (277)

Where is dharma, where is kama, where is artha? Where is conscience and discrimination? Where is duality, or even non-duality – for Me who abide in my own glory? (278)

Where is the past, where is the future, or even the present? Where is space? Where even eternity? – for Me who abide in my own glory? (279)

Where is the Self, and where is the non-Self? Where, likewise, are good and evil? Where is anxiety or non-anxiety? – for Me who abide in my own glory? (280)

Where is dreaming, where is deep sleep, and the waking state? And where is the fourth state? Where even is fear? – for Me who abide in my own glory? (281)

Where is distance, where is proximity? Where is exterior, where is interior? Where is the gross, and where is the subtle? – for Me who abide in my own glory? (282)

Where is life or death, where are the worlds, and where the worldly relations? Where is the laya, and where is samadhi? – for Me who abide in my own glory? (283)

To talk about the three goals of life is needless, to talk about yoga is purposeless, and even to talk about wisdom is irrelevant – for Me who abide in the Self. (284)

Where are the elements, where is the body, where are the organs, and where is the mind? Where, indeed, is the void, or despair? – for Me who am without the slightest taint by nature? (285)

Where are the scriptures, and the knowledge of the Self? Where is the mind detached from the sense objects, and where is contentment? Where is desirelessness? – for Me who has transcended the duality of opposites? (286)

Where is the knowledge, and where is ignorance? Where is I, and where is ‘this is mine’? Where is bondage, and where is liberation? How can there be any attribute to my Self-nature? (287)

Where is prarabdha-karma? Where is the question of liberation whether in life or at death? – for Me, the ever undifferentiated? (288)

Where is the doer or the enjoyer, where is the cessation of thought, or the rising of thought? Where is the question of true perceiving or faulty perceiving? – for Me who am ever impersonal? (289)

Where is the world, and where is the seeker, where is the question of yoga as knowledge, who is in bondage, or who is liberated? – for Me who am non-dual by his very nature? (290)

Where is creation and where is destruction? What is the end, and what is the means? Where is the question of seeking or achieving? – for Me abiding in my non-dual nature? (291)

Where is the ‘knower’, and where the ‘means-to-knowledge’? Where is the ‘object of knowledge’, and where ‘objective knowledge’? What is any thing, and what is no thing? – for Me who am ever pure? (292)

How can there ever be distraction or concentration, knowledge or delusion, joy or sorrow? – for Me who am ever without action? (293)

Where is the relative or the absolute, happiness or misery? – for Me who am ever beyond any conceptualizations? (294)

Where is maya, where is samsara, where is attachment or detachment, how can there be any question of jiva or Brahman? – for Me who am ever pure? (295)

Where is activity or inactivity, where is liberation or bondage? – for Me who am ever immutable, indivisible and established in the Self? (296)

Where are spiritual instructions or scriptural injunctions? Where is the disciple, and where is the guru? Where, indeed, is the question of any duty? – for me, the subjective, potential plenum, free from all limitations? (297)

Where is the existence or non-existence? Where is the unicity or duality? In short, it is needless to say anything more, other than that nothing, indeed, emanates from me. (298)

Astavakra Samhita

An Interpretation of the Ashtavakra Gita

By Ananda Wood

Instruction on Self-Realization

Janaka said:

1. 1

Just how can knowledge be attained?
And how can freedom come about?
How is dispassion to be found?
Please tell me what you can of this.

1.2

Ashtavakra said:

If you want freedom, you will have
to turn away from outward things.
See objects as objectionable
scraps of waste: produced by
partiality of outward sight
perceiving an unwholesome world.

Thus you may join back into truth:
in patience and straightforwardness,
in sympathy and quiet joy.
Such virtues are your nourishment
to seek undying life within.

1.3

You are not made of 'earth',
nor 'water', nor of 'fire', nor 'air', nor space
and time, nor anything of world.

You are the witness of all these:
the self that shines as consciousness.
Know only this, and you are free.

1.4

If separating body out,
you stand at rest in consciousness,
then here and now you come to peace
and happiness, where you are free
from all restraining ties and bonds.

1.5

You don't belong to any class.
You're not born high, nor lower down.
Nor have you any stage of life
that changes what you were before.

Unseen by sense, untouched by form,
remaining always unattached,
you're just the witness of the world.

Be that ... and come to happiness.

1.6

All pain and pleasure, right and wrong,
pertain to mind. They do not in
the least pertain to you yourself:
who carry on unlimited,
continuing through everything.

You do not act or fail to act.
You don't enjoy or suffer what
results. Thus you remain completely free,
always and everywhere.

1.7

You are the one who sees, the only
see-er: who sees everything.

At heart, you're always free. Your
only bondage is then this: that you,
who are in truth the see-er, look
upon yourself as something else
(as just a doing instrument,
a petty doer who is seen).

1.8

When bitten by the great black snake
of ego's self-regard, you say
that 'I do this' or 'I do that.'

But only take conviction in,
that 'I am not this acting thing';
and come – beyond all passing on –
back home, to lasting happiness.

1.9

Convinced of truth, you realize:
'I am the one, pure consciousness:
just one, not made of many things.'

Thus, in the fire of this conviction,
may the dense entanglement
of ignorance be burned away:

to free you from all thought of grief
and bring you back to rest content,
at peace with what you really are.

1.10

Just as a seeming snake appears
upon a rope that's falsely seen,
so too this seeming universe –
extending through all space and time –
is just imagination, misperceived
on nothing else but consciousness
unaltered by imagining.

Just that unaltered, knowing light
is true enjoyment: always found
unlimited and ultimate,
no matter what seems to take place.
Live thus, as happiness itself.

1.11

Whoever's free has realized
that freedom as one's very own:
as what one always is, oneself.

Whoever's bound remains imprisoned
in the thought that one is bound,
by things that limit what one is.

Such is the truth of what is said,
that: 'As one thinks so one becomes.'
Of this, the changing world is made.

1.12

Self is the witness, manifested
everywhere; one simple,
perfect consciousness; completely free
and unattached, desireless,
untouched by any seeming act.

Thus unaffected and at peace,
delusion shows it as a flow
of life that passes through a world
of seeming change and passing acts.

1.13

Reflecting back into your self,
you stand above all seeming else.

Unmixed with body, sense and mind,
your individuality
is undivided consciousness,
with nothing else beside itself.

Thus, free yourself from the delusion
'I am this apparent person
who has somehow come to be –
perceived outside or felt within.'

1.14

You've long been caught up in the noose
of fancying that this imagined
body is your real self.

Cut off that fancy,
with the sword of knowing: 'I am consciousness.'
Thus come to rest in happiness,
at one with what you really are.

1.15

There, unattached and actionless,
you shine alone, by your own light,
quite unaffected by all ill.

Your only bondage is just this:
that you keep after altered states
where mind is shown absorbed in bliss.

1.16

Just you are present everywhere,
pervading through this universe
made up of your own thoughts and feelings.
Everything is made of you.

Your nature is pure consciousness.
That's what you really are. Don't go
from there to pettiness of mind.

1.17

Come back to that unfathomable
depth of pure intelligence
where you stay always unaffected –
cool beyond all expectation,
unencumbered, undisturbed.

Let all your tastes and inclinations
show their nature – as they are.
That is of consciousness alone.

1.18

Just realize that nothing with
some seeming form can be quite right.
That only what remains unformed,
beneath appearances, is found
unshakable and therefore real.

Where this is rightly taught and learned,
there's nothing more to be produced.
No more becoming there occurs;
no reborn life is born again.

1.19

Just as a mirror is implied
within the image it reflects,
but also stands beyond the show;
so too the highest principle
that rules the world is found within
the body, and beyond as well.

1.20

As one pervading principle
of space extends within a pot
and goes beyond outside as well,
through everywhere and everything;

so too, one full reality
is always present everywhere,
found unconfined within all things
and in all groups and kinds of things.

Joy of Self-Realization

2.1

In truth, I am pure consciousness:
at perfect peace, quite undisturbed
by all of nature's seeming acts.

So, all this time I've been deceived
by mere pretence, by just a show
that isn't really there at all.

2.2

This body here shines by my light:
it's shown by me alone. But then,
the same is true of everything
in the entire universe.

Thus, either everything is mine,
or otherwise, not anything.

2.3

With world and body left behind
by me completely, here and now,
through some most inward faculty,
the self I am is seen at last –
beyond all doubt and ignorance.

2.4

Waves, foam and bubbles are not
anything but water, in themselves.

So too all things, throughout the world,
are always rising from the self.
They're never present otherwise,
in anyone's experience.
It is of self that each is made.
They're nothing else but self alone.

2.5

Examined closely, cloth is found

to be just thread. So too, upon
dispassionate enquiry,
the world turns out to be just self.

2.6

As sugar crystallized from juice
becomes pervaded by its sweetness,
so do I pervade throughout
the universe produced in me.

2.7

It's only from mistaken knowledge
of oneself that world appears.
Where self is known for what it is,
no seeming world arises there.

It's like a rope seen as a snake.
The snake appears through wrongly
knowing what is seen. Immediately
the rope is known for what it is,
the seeming snake there disappears.

2.8

My very nature is just light.
That is what I innately am.
I never am apart from that.

Whenever anything appears,
it is just I that shine in it.
Through all appearances of world,
there's nothing there but I that shines.

2.9

All of the universe, conceived
from ignorance, appears in me:

like silver seems to shine in shell
of pearl; or like a seeming snake
seen in a piece of rope; or like
a false mirage of water shown
by trick of light from desert sun

2.10

At every moment that I know,
the world originates from me ...

and then, immediately, returns
to end dissolved in me alone:
just like a pot returns to earth,
like waves dissolve back into water,
ornaments melt into gold.

2.11

I am just that which recognizes
what I am, found always standing
unaffected, undestroyed;
while the entire universe,
right from the all-creating Lord
to every smallest tuft of grass,
keeps vanishing without a trace.

aho(Oh!) aham(I) namo(recognition, salutation) mahyam(to me) vinaso(destruction)
yasya(of whom) na(not) 'sti(there is) me(for me) . brahmadi(starting from the creator)-
stamba(to a tuft of grass)-paryantam(encompassing) jagan(universe)-nase(in the
destruction) 'pi(even) tisthatah(stays standing) ..

2.12

I am just that which recognizes
my own self. And even where
I seem embodied, I'm not complex.
I am just that simple one –
not going anywhere, not coming
here from anywhere – found always
present, underlying everything
throughout the universe.

2.13

I'm that alone which recognizes
what I am. Here in this world –
perceived by sense, conceived by mind –
there's nothing with my capability.

For I support all things,
yet do not touch them bodily.

2.14

I'm that alone which finally
has independent self-respect:
approached by seeing nothing
anywhere, of any kind, as 'mine';

or else, by seeing everything
experienced as taking place
in me alone, throughout the range
described outside by words and acts
or thought and felt within by mind.

2.15

Someone who knows, some way of
knowing things, an object that is known ...
No such division of three things –
no separated knower, knowing,
known – is ever really there,
in anyone's experience.

These three appear misleadingly,
as a confusing show produced
by a mistaken ignorance
made up from put-together parts.

I am the stainless truth of each:
uncompromised by ignorance,
untouched by partiality.

2.16

All misery is rooted in
duality, whereby some knower
seems at odds with what is known.
For this, there is no cure, except
to realize the simple truth:

that anything somehow perceived –
as known apart from that which knows –
is nothing but an empty show,
believed through blind stupidity.

I am untainted consciousness,
the one pure savour of experience,

found at one with everything.

2.17

I am pure consciousness: expressed
in limited appearances
that make me seem what I am not.

Through wrongly knowing what I am,
these limited expressions are
conceived made up of name
and form and quality – put on by me,
to make a show of seeming world.

But where I stand, beneath the show,
appearances are not conceived.
No mind appears or disappears.

My stand is thus beneath the mind:
found always by reflecting back
from blind, unseeing disregard
to where there is no ignorance.

2.18

For me, there is no being bound
or getting freed. For all illusion
is unfounded, is at peace.

The world stands just in me. But there,
in me, there really is no world.

2.19

It's certain that there's no such thing
as this embodied universe.

In all experience, there is only
consciousness: just my own self.

And though this consciousness seems mixed
with objects compromising it,
in truth it's always clean and pure:
with never any trace found here
of foreign matter that the mind
conceives to have been added in.

So how can there be any base
on which conception could now stand?

2.20

This body, hell and heaven,
bondage, liberation, fear: all these
are just conceived appearances.
What have such things to do with me,
who am just knowing, in myself?

2.21

In my own sight, there's no duality:
not even in a multitude
of seeming 'you's and 'me's.

It is as if the world has turned
into a far-off wilderness.
What could there possibly be here
to captivate my interest?

2.22

I am no body, have no body.
I am not a made-up person,
leading a created life.
I'm nothing else but consciousness.

My bondage was an empty claim
of personal possessiveness,
desiring fancied bits of life.

2.23

I am that endless ocean where
the differentiated waves
of world are all at once produced,
blown in the wind of rising mind.

2.24

In that same ocean of myself,
the mind is stilled and comes to end.

Here, ego is a merchant trader

travelling in the ship of world,
thus liable to be destroyed
by tides of fortune turning ill.

2.25

I am the unconditioned water
in the many changing waves
of different personalities,
of different egos in the world.

They rise, clash one against another,
play a while, and are absorbed;
impelled by nature from within.

Test of Self-Realization

3.1

Ashtavakra said:

Now that you know your real self
as one and indestructible,
quite unaffected by all change;

if you're established in this knowledge,
how could you have any interest
in such work as earns your keep
and builds a store of useful wealth?

3.2

It's only from one first mistake –
from falsely knowing one's own self –
that fondness and affection rise
for objects seen, deludedly,
as physical or mental things.

It's like the greed of someone who
has misperceived plain shell of pearl,
confused by a mistaken dream
of costly silver fancied here.

3.3

Now you have realized: 'I'm that
in which all things appear and
disappear, throughout experience –
like waves in water, on the sea.'

Then why should you keep running after
things, as though you were in need?

3.4

Where self is known as pure awareness,
its surpassing beauty shines:
in all its perfect clarity,
unstained by any otherness.

When this is heard and understood,
how can one yet be passionate
to join in physical embrace
that's always somehow limited
and compromised, by body's
imperfections and impurities?

3.5

It's strange to see a sense of mineness –
treating certain things as 'mine' –
remaining in a sage who knows
one self called 'I' in everything
and everything in that one self.

3.6

It's strange that one who's come to rest
in final non-duality,
who is established in the truth
that makes one absolutely free,
should yet keep leading (in the world
of people and society)
a life affected by desire:
degraded by the artful games
that the infatuated play.

3.7

It's strange that someone, having reached
that truth where time has come to end,
should live on impotent in time:
awaiting fond desire to rise
and drive all our activities;

though having fully understood
desire's partiality,
as contrary to knowing right.

3.8

For one who is disinterested
in this world perceived by sense
and in the subtle realms beyond,
who knows the truth that lives unchanged
beneath all change of seeming things,

and who awaits deliverance
of body's final passing on ...

it's strange that till the time is right
this same deliverance may be
avoided, and occasion fear.

3.9

No matter whether praised or feasted,
nor tormented and condemned,
a sage – established in the truth
of self seen always absolute –
is not made pleased nor gets enraged.

3.10

To be great-hearted is to see
one's mind and body acting just
like other minds and other bodies
acting in the object world.

With every act found thus apart
from unaffected self within,
how then could any praise or blame
disturb the one who sees like this?

3.11

When all the seeming things of world
are seen as just illusory,
all interest in them is gone.

How then can one of deep conviction –
past all vacillating doubt –
be found to shake in fear and trembling,
even face to face with death?

3.12

For one whose greatness lies within,
there's no desire left in mind:
not even for desirelessness.

To whom or what can be compared
someone who's found that happiness

is only knowing one's own self?

3.13

When someone knows (from one's own nature), all that's seen (through mind and body) turns out to be no such thing.
The different objects that appear
when seen through personality,
are shown not to exist at all
when known from what one really is.

With differing things found nonexistent,
how can one of deep conviction –
past all vacillating doubt –
make out one thing fit to accept
and something else fit to refuse?

3.14

With interest in object things
renounced by falling back within,
there one is found desireless,
beyond all pairs of opposites.

For one who's there, disint'rested,
enjoyment is spontaneous:
quite unconcerned with seeking pleasure,
or avoiding any pain.

Glory of Self-Realization

4.1

Janaka said:

Oh yes. But then, the one who is
established in the real self
acts only through the pure enjoyment
of a show which is mere play.

That's not the same as the confused
bewilderment of ego-laden
personalities: like beasts
of burden drawing carts which
overflow with worldly happenings.

4.2

It is that state which all our
faculties, all energies and powers –
themselves inherently inadequate –
keep striving to attain.

Once it is reached, even the yogi,
standing there, no longer needs
to press for heightened states of bliss.

4.3

Whoever knows it, is at heart
uncompromised by good or ill;

just as the space pervading sky
is not itself made bright or dull
by tricks of light on mist and cloud,
although our eyes show it to be.

4.4

To one whose greatness lies within,
all that's perceived, throughout the world,
is known as only one's own self.

In such a state, just who or what

is there that could at all prevent
one's living moved from one's own self
and acting of one's own accord?

4.5

Among the whole community
of beings that have come to be,
right from the all-creating Lord
down to the smallest tuft of grass,

it's only one who rightly knows
that has the fitness to stand free
of being pulled by what is liked
or pushed away by what repels.

4.6

It's very rare that self is known –
without a second – as the source
from which all power and guidance comes
to form the seeming world of change

Where one's own self is rightly known,
from there one does what one finds fit,
quite unafraid of anything.

Four Ways to Dissolution

5.1

Ashtavakra said:

For you, there's no attachment found
which mixes you with anything
that is apart from your own self.
What then can you, who are thus pure,
wish to renounce from what you are?

Accordingly, dissolve away
this complex mix of different things,
and thus get merged back in again
to your unmixed reality.

5.2

From you arises all the world,
like bubbles rising out from sea.

Accordingly, know all of them
as just one self; and thus get merged
there, in your own reality.

5.3

Although the world appears before
our faculties of sense, it is
produced from unreality.
It is not truly there in you,
who are its pure reality.

It's like the semblance of a snake
appearing quite confusingly
when just a rope has been perceived.
Take note of this; and thus get merged
back into what you really are.

5.4

You are that being which is perfect:
just the same in grief and joy,
the same in hope and in despair,

the same in living as in dying.
Only thus, as perfect being,
may you come to be dissolved.

The Higher Knowledge

6.1

Janaka said:

Like all-pervading space and time,
I carry on, unlimited.
It's only nature's acting forth
that seems to show itself confined –
in seeming parts of changing world,
each like the space within a pot.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.2

Just what I am is like an ocean
manifested as a wave
that is this seeming universe.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.3

I am like silver, wrongly thought
to be perceived in shell of pearl
which is this fancied universe.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.4

I am myself in every being;
and all beings are in me.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

Nature of Self-Realization

7.1

Janaka said:

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the ship of world
gets tossed about – blown here and there
by my own wind of inner mind –
though all the while, just what I am
remains completely undisturbed.

7.2

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the wave of world
may rise or vanish of itself.
I do not gain or lose thereby.

7.3

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the world is only
name, conceived by mind alone.

I am thus utterly at peace,
unmixed with any made-up form.
In this alone do I abide.

7.4

Just what self is cannot be found
in objects that have come to be.
Nor is there any object in
just that pure self which is unmarked
and utterly unlimited,
beyond all stain of compromise.
Thus unattached, desireless,
true self is found at perfect peace.
In this alone do I abide.

7.5

I am, in truth, pure consciousness.

The changing world is an entangled
web of show – effectively
made up by many tricky faculties
of seeming sense and mind.

So how and where can any thought
of ‘mine’ tell what is right from wrong?
What properly distinguishes,
for ‘me’, what to reject as wrong
from what I rightly may accept?

Bondage and Liberation

8.1

Ashtavakra said:

It is in bondage that some mind
feels want or grief for anything –

that mind rejects what it dislikes,
but likes some things and takes them in.

8.2

It is in freedom that no want
nor any grief is felt by mind.

For then mind does not feel constrained
by what it likes and must accept,
nor else by what it does not like
and must accordingly reject.

8.3

It is in bondage that some mind
is felt attached to any of
these many things that seem perceived.

It is in freedom that no mind
is felt attached to anything,
in all these things that seem perceived.

8.4

When there's no thought of 'I', attached
to anything that seems perceived,
then liberation is attained.
But when this thought of 'I' appears,
it's felt constrained by circumstance,
in bondage to an alien world.

Reflecting thus, you come at last
to just that spontaneity
where nothing need be taken in,
nor anything needs pushing out.

Detachment

9.1

Ashtavakra said:

To whom belongs what has been done
or has not been accomplished yet?
When are such oppositions all resolved?
Where are they put to rest?

By knowing thus, you may proceed
from your indifferent ignorance
to be intent upon renouncing
and thus getting disengaged.

9.2

It's only someone truly rich
whose wish for living, for enjoying
and for getting information
has been stilled – from an astute
discernment of the ways of world.

9.3

All this, that's found impermanent,
gets vitiated in three ways.
It lacks in substance; brings on blame;
it's what we need to put aside.

By getting to be sure of this,
one may attain to lasting peace.

9.4

Just at what time or age in life
are opposites no longer found
to trouble people in the world?

It's when these troubling opposites
are left behind that someone comes
to rest fulfilled, content with what
occurs of its own happening.

9.5

Great seers and saints and yogis teach
through many different beliefs.

When this is noticed, who of us
could reasonably not attain
to that detached indifference
where peace and harmony are found?

9.6

Where someone has achieved in full
right knowledge of pure consciousness,
what is that someone but a teacher –

taking, through impartial reason,
those who truly seek beyond
the cyclic process of rebirth.

9.7

Just see each transformed element
as that which all these elements
are always, in themselves alone.

Then, from that instant, you will stand –
completely free and unconstrained –
in that one truth of your own nature,
which is what you always are.

9.8

It's only inner inclinations
that make up a changing world
of happenings which seem outside.

Consid'ring this, it is just these
conditionings within your mind
from which you need to free yourself.

Renunciation of the world
can only come from giving up
mind's inclinations from within.

By that achievement, here and now,
you stand where you are always free,

no matter in what circumstance.

Quietude

10.1

Ashtavakra said:

Forsaking as an enemy
all wish and want for object things,
you must give up the narrowness
of petty, personal desire.

So also, you must give up wealth
whose store of wanted objects comes
inevitably mixed with loss.

And you will even have to go
beyond all valued principles
that cause our sense of gain or loss
and drive our personal desires.

It's in this way that you transcend
desire, wealth, morality.
Thus you attain to your own self,
disinterested everywhere.

10.2

See wealth and property and gifts
and even friends and family
and other such good fortune as
entanglements of fantasy,
within a show that's made by mind.

This made-up show can never last:
as mind keeps changing, all the time.

10.3

Wherever there may be desire,
there is also found a world,
made up of restless happenings
that change and pass in course of time.

You need to know this for yourself.

Attaining to mature dispassion,
may you find that you are free
from want for objects of desire
wished by thought in restless mind.

For, in that freedom, you have come
to lasting peace and happiness.

10.4

It's only of the mind's desire
that all our bondage has been made.
Thus 'freedom' is a word that's used
where wish and want are found destroyed.

It's only by detachment from
the world of change and happening
that anyone may come to joy
which somehow lasts, repeatedly,
through changing moments in our minds.

10.5

You are the one, pure consciousness –
found always indivisible.

The world that's seen is found inert.
It is dead matter – lacking life –
a show of blind unconsciousness
that is accordingly unreal.

This is not even ignorance.
But then, for you, what can there be
that you may somehow wish to know?

What meaning is there in this wish
that you would somehow like to know?
What's true and real in the world,
shown made of objects seen outside?

10.6

So many kingdoms, sons and wives,
and bodies, pleasures have been lost –
destroyed for you – although you were
attached to them, birth after birth.

10.7

Enough of riches or desires,
or even actions rightly done.

By these, mind does not come to peace,
here in the jungle of the world.

10.8

How many births have you not done,
with body and with mind and speech,
this laboured work that brings you grief.
It's these encumbered acts of work
that, here and now, you need to cease.

Wisdom

11.1

Ashtavakra said:

It is to nature that belongs
whatever happens, does not happen,
gets created or destroyed,
or altered in a changing world.

All this occurs quite naturally.
It happens of its own accord.

When that is surely understood,
whoever realizes it
finds comfort, leading back to peace
which no affliction can disturb.

11.2

For someone who's completely sure
that everything here in the world
is a creation of the Lord
and that there is no alien thing,
all hope or wish for outside things
becomes dissolved in peace within.

Then, how can there be anything
to which that someone is attached?

11.3

For someone who's completely sure
that fortunes and misfortunes come
in course of time from fate alone,
all faculties remain controlled
spontaneously: from self within.

That someone always rests content,
where neither want nor grief is found.

11.4

For someone who's completely sure

that joy and pain, like birth and death,
arise in time from fate alone,

it is not hopefully perceived
that everything which we expect
can somehow always be achieved.

That someone is thus liberated
from involvement with exertion.

Such a one is always free:
never found to be attached,
not even in the midst of doing
body's actions in the world.

11.5

All suffering here in this world
is just a fearful fantasy,
born only from mind's worrying.

Whoever is convinced of this
gets thereby freed and rests content –
with all desires given up –
no matter where, no matter when.

11.6

'No, I am not this body here.
And no, this body is not mine.'

Whoever is convinced of this
does not fall back on what's been done,
nor frets at what's been left undone.

Beyond all doing or non-doing,
freedom is found absolute.

11.7

'Just I alone am all of this:
right from the all-creating Lord
down to the smallest tuft of grass.'

Whoever knows that truth for sure
is freed from all conditioned thought.

That someone is thus pure, at peace –
remaining always turned away
from what may sometimes be attained
or may sometimes be unattained.

11.8

For someone who's completely sure
that this amazing, complex world
is not at all what it appears,
that certainty brings freedom
from all personal conditioning
of wish and want for partial things.

Thus freed from personality,
one comes at last to shining peace
whose very nature lights itself,
as if there's nothing in the world
that may exist or not exist.

Abiding in the Self

12.1

Janaka said:

At first repelled by body's acts,
next by long speech and then by thought ...
it's thus alone that I abide.

12.2

Not getting to be int'rested in sound
and other kinds of sense,
and by there being nothing seen
of self by our sense faculties,
I'm always free at heart: of both
distraction and one-pointedness.
It's thus alone that I abide.

12.3

It's only in distraction caused
by superimposition (and
such other things) that action need
be taken to become absorbed
in concentrated states of mind.

This being seen to be the rule,
it's thus alone that I abide.

12.4

Where all accepting and rejecting
have been left behind, there can
be no excitement or dejection
that produce a show of change.

Thus, here and now, a state is reached
in which no change at all appears.
No changing happening is shown
deceptively superimposed
upon unchanged reality.

Just that itself is all there is,

found where no happenings appear.
It's thus alone that I abide.

12.5

What way of life to lead or not,
or meditation, or rejecting habits
and beliefs that mind
has currently come to accept ...

discerning my mistaken fancies
and confusions by these means,
I come at last to clarity,
in which I thus alone abide.

12.6

Restraining or avoiding action
comes as much from ignorance
as action seeking to achieve
desired objects in the world.

Beyond what's done or is not done,
there is this principle of truth,
which must be fully recognized
by coming back to what it is.

It's there, alone, that I abide.

12.7

In thinking of what can't be thought
some form of thought must be involved.
So too that last-remaining mode
of thinking must be given up,
to stand in truth where I abide.

12.8

Whoever has accomplished that
has done what needed to be done,
has now arrived at what was sought.

Whoever lives there naturally
finds truth alone, spontaneously,
throughout all changes that appear.

Established thus, in truth alone,
all that was needed has been done.

Happiness

13.1

Janaka said:

In one who is completely free
of anything that's thought possessed,
there springs an unaffected peace.

But, even if it's just a loin-cloth
which gets taken to be 'mine',
this sense of owning something else
impairs that springing up of peace.

Accordingly, with all rejecting
and accepting given up,
I live content with what I am.

13.2

At some place or another,
it is body that becomes distressed.
Elsewhere, it may be speech or mind
that suffers trouble and wears out.

Renouncing these, I rest content:
established in that goal of life
from where all meaning is expressed,
for which all that we do is done.

13.3

In truth, there's nothing ever done.
There can be no accomplishment
claimed rightfully by anyone.

When this is fully realized,
what's there to do just comes about.

That being done, I live at peace
from which I cannot be disturbed.

13.4

Where yogis take themselves to stand
in body, they remain tied down
to states of acting or not acting
in a world where change takes place.

Abandoning all such involvement
and detachment, I am found
as that which always lives content:
at peace with what I always am.

13.5

No gain or loss gets to be mine.
I do not gain, nor do I lose
by standing up or lying down
or going off to somewhere else.

In standing still or travelling,
as in the depth of dreamless sleep,
I live content, in perfect peace,
exactly as I always am.

13.6

In sleep, my presence is not lost:
I live there undiminishing.
Nor in deep sleep is there found gain
which striving in the world achieves.

Abandoning both dark destruction
and bright gain, I live fulfilled,
with nothing further to attain.

13.7

Appearances of pleasure and
of other such emotions are
found limited and compromised,
by their occurrence in a world
of circumstantial happenings.

Observing this, time and again,
all judgment of what's beautiful
or ugly must be left behind.

Thus, I return to live content
where peace and happiness are found
beyond all thought of compromise.

Tranquillity

14.1

Consider someone who at heart
is free of calculating mind.

For someone thus devoid of mind,
there is no thought of objects gained.
All thought arises motiveless,
inspired by nature from within.

It is as though that someone finds
a consciousness that stays awake:
throughout all dreams which mind creates,
and in the depth of dreamless sleep.

Returning there, all personal
conditioning – inherited
by recollection from the past –
becomes exhausted, comes to end.

14.2

In what or where are riches found?
Where comrades, friends? Where fancied
objects, robbing mind of sober sense?

And where is learning, where is reason
telling right from what is wrong?
As my desire melts away,
just what of value can remain?

14.3

Where self is known as that transcendent
principle of unaffected
witnessing, from which all
capability and guidance comes,
there can be no desire left
to free myself of being bound.
No such desire can occur.

14.4

Where someone inwardly quite free
of worried thought acts outwardly –
inspired from pure happiness
of undeliberated self – those carefree acts
may seem insane, may seem improper and confused.

It's only someone else like that
who understands such carefree acts
and the extraordinary states
that their strange author passes through.

Knowledge of the Self

15.1

Ashtavakra said:

One who is pure of mind and heart
attains to what is sought, to truth
that's told exactly as it is.

But someone else may stay perplexed,
despite a wish for learning that
continues through the course of life.

15.2

Distaste for objects liberates,
and relishing these objects binds.

It's thus that knowledge is discerned.
Then, do exactly as you please.

15.3

This knowledge of plain truth may make
a person who is eloquent,
intelligent and active seem
to have turned dumb, turned stupid and
unwilling to do anything.

Such knowledge is not meant for those
who seek enjoyment in the world.

15.4

You are not body; body is
not yours. Nor are you any doer,
nor enjoyer anywhere.
Just what you are is consciousness:
appearing as that silent witness
which stays always unattached.

As that alone, you live content
through all that happens in the world.

15.5

Like and dislike depend on mind.
But no such mind is ever yours.

You are just consciousness itself,
quite independent of all thought.

As that alone you live content,
at peace with what you really are.

15.6

True self is found in every being,
and each being truly lives
in nothing else but self alone.

It is by realizing this
that anyone may live content,
quite free of ego claiming acts
and objects that it thinks are 'mine'.

15.7

Like waves arising in the sea,
this universe springs forth, into
its show of many changing things.

But this is only consciousness,
here seen embodied as a world.

Be that one consciousness,
untouched by feverish anxiety.

15.8

Be sure of it, be deeply sure
that you make no confusion here.

You are what knowledge truly is,
just that from which all guidance comes.

That is the self, just what you are,
beyond all nature's functioning.

15.9

This body is found wrapped around
by qualities. Accordingly,
it stays unmoved, it comes and goes.

But self is not affected thus.
It neither comes, nor does it go.
Why then feel sorry for its sake?

15.10

Let body last, until its cyclic
journey ends. Or let it go,
here and now, repeatedly.

What gain or loss pertains to you,
who are yourself just consciousness,
unmixed with anything besides?

15.11

In you, who are an ocean that
is limitless, let there arise
and let subside each wave of
that happens of its own accord.

This does not add to what you are.
Nor does it take from what is yours.

15.12

You are pure consciousness itself.
This changing world is nothing different
from what you are yourself.

Then how and where does thought arise
of what to take or to reject?
To whom can such a thought occur?

15.13

You are yourself that changeless peace:
one single, unmixed consciousness
continuing through everything.

In that, from where does birth arise?
Where action? And where ego's false

pretence, to be an acting 'I'?
15.14

In what you see, just you shine there,
all on your own. What else but gold
shines out in golden ornaments?

15.15

You must completely leave behind
dividing thoughts, like 'This is what
I am' or 'No, I am not this'.

Find out for sure that everything
is self alone. Thus you return
to what you are, to happiness
found free of mind's desiring.

15.16

The world arises only from
your ignorance. It's you alone
who are the one reality.

Apart from you, no one migrates
from life to life. It is none other
than your self that is found free
of transmigrating in this way.

15.17

This world is a bewilderment.
It is not truly anything
that it's perceived and thought to be.

Whoever finds this out for sure
becomes thereby disint'ested,
no longer driven by desire.

Thus, consciousness is found to shine
unmixed, as its own knowing light.

It's there at last that peace is found
as though no other thing exists.
It's found completely undisturbed,
illuminated from within.

15.18

Here, in the ocean of the world,
just one alone was in the past,
is now, and will in future be.

No bondage, freedom can be yours.
Thus live fulfilled, content, at peace.

15.19

You are just consciousness itself.
Do not disturb your mind with
wrangling arguments, for or against.

Stay calm, content in your own self.
For it is there, within your heart,
that happiness is truly found.

15.20

Give even contemplation up.
Hold nothing in your heart and mind.

It is as self that you are free.
What will you gain by any thought?

Special Instruction

16.1

Ashtavakra said:

Although you often may discuss
or listen to what many different
scriptures say, you won't by this
stand independent in your self.

That freedom cannot be attained
without forgetting everything
that memory has brought to mind.

16.2

As someone who has learned discernment,
you may find yourself engaged
in life's enjoyments, or in work
that may be usefully achieved,
or else in states of mind's absorption
back into the depth of heart.

But even so, your mind will long
to reach beyond the aims it seeks,
to where all wish and hope dissolve.

16.3

Each one of us is made unhappy
by exertion in pursuit
of objects that our minds desire.

But no one knows quite what it is
for which exertion may arise
or be returned to peace and rest.

Where someone fortunate receives
instruction from a living teacher,
there alone is freedom found.
It's only thus that anyone
is freed from the conditioning
of personality and world.

16.4

There is a central principle,
inactive utterly, within.
It does not even blink. That would
be much too troublesome for it.

And yet, all acts arise from it,
inspired for its sake alone.

To it alone and to none else,
all happiness in truth belongs.

16.5

When opposites – like ‘this is done’
or ‘that not done’ – are left behind,
mind gets to be indifferent.
It seeks no pleasure, riches, good,
nor even freedom from all these.

16.6

It is when objects don’t attract
that someone is dispassionate.
And it’s through greed for objects that
a person gets to be attached.

But one who neither takes nor gives
can’t be attached to anything.
There, no attachment can apply;
nor can detachment from the world.

16.7

It’s from this sense of give and take
that the world tree of happening
comes into sprout and branches forth.

It is by standing in desire
that fancied thought fails to be clear,
fails to distinguish different things.

So long as anyone stands here,
the sense of give and take remains.
From it appears a seeming world,

obscured by a confusing show
of insufficient clarity.

16.8

It is engaged in doing that
attraction comes about. And in
abstention that aversion shows.

A person who attains to wisdom
lives there freely, like a child
quite innocent of opposites.

16.9

It's only one who feels attached
that seeks escape from suffering
and wishes to renounce the world.

For some one who no longer feels
attached, no suffering remains,
not even in this changing world.

One who has thus attained detachment
stays untroubled everywhere,
throughout all change of happenings.

16.10

Whoever still has ego's pride
in liberation, or who feels
a sense of 'mine-ness' toward body,
cannot rightly be a sage
(who is established in plain truth)
nor yet a yogi (joining back
into unchanged reality).

Each person, claiming pride or 'mine-ness',
thus partakes in suffering
that makes true self seem compromised.

16.11

No matter what great 'Lord' or 'God'
may somehow be invoked to teach
you anything, you won't by this

stand independent in your self.

That freedom cannot be attained
without forgetting everything
that memory has brought to mind.

The True Knower

17.1

Ashtavakra said:

The fruit of knowledge and of
meditative practice is attained
by one who comes to rest content,
with faculties thus purified.

That one stays present all alone
enjoying perfect happiness.

17.2

Indeed, the one who knows plain truth
is never found to suffer want.

For the entire sphere of all
this multiplicity is filled
completely by that one alone.

17.3

No objects ever please one who
delights in self, just as neem leaves
aren't relished by an elephant
who does not like their bitterness.

17.4

It is quite rare to find a person
whose enjoyments are found free
of any tainted residue
that limits future character.
And rare to find a person truly
free of hankering for things
which are still left to be enjoyed.

17.5

Someone may wish for life's enjoyments.
Someone else wants to be free.
Each of these kinds of person is

found in the world. But it is far
less common that someone should lose
all wish for world's enjoyments and
all wanting to be free of them.

That someone is thus great at heart.

17.6

For someone truly broad of mind,
there is no sense of give or take:
attached to virtue, riches, pleasure,
liberation found in life;
nor even passing on at death.

17.7

In such a one, there is no
hankering for world; there's no dislike
for it remaining as it is.

Someone who is thus fortunate
lives happy with what comes about.

17.8

Fulfilled by knowledge thus attained –
with mind dissolved and aim achieved –
one who knows truly lives content
through sensual acts: of seeing sights
and hearing sounds, of smelling odours,
touching objects, eating food.

17.9

In one for whom the ebb and flow
of universal happening
has been exhausted and dried up,
there's no desire left, from which
there's any need to be detached.

For such a one, all sight is vacant,
action is quite purposeless,
and senses are disfunctional.

All of these faculties mislead.

They do not work as they pretend.

17.10

No one is there awake. Nor,
rightly is there anyone asleep.

No eyes are there seen opening.
No eyes are there found to have closed.
That is a state beyond all states.

Whoever may be truly free
lives always in that final state.

For one who's free, that state must be
experienced always, everywhere –
no matter where some person's body
is perceived, nor where this person's
sense and mind are thought to be.

17.11

Seen standing everywhere in self,
with all intention pure within –
unmixed with any inclination
driven blindly from outside –
one who lives free is always found
presiding at the depth of heart,
beyond all taint of compromise.

17.12

No matter whether seeing sights,
or hearing sounds or touching objects,
smelling odours, eating food,
or speaking, walking, travelling ...

one who is great at heart within
stays always free, throughout all trying
to achieve and all mistakes
that get shown up by failed attempts.

17.13

One who has reached that freedom does
not flatter nor blame anyone,

is not made pleased, can't be provoked;
does not get caught in give or take,
and never anywhere expects
some profit gained by bargaining.

17.14

A woman seen aroused to passion,
death approaching near at hand ...
these don't disturb the quiet peace
where one who's great at heart must stand.

A perfect equilibrium
is found thus standing in that self
which is one's own, uncompromised.

17.15

In joy or grief, in man or woman,
in things working or not working ...
no true difference can be found
by one who stands unwavering
in true and clear intelligence.

For one who is thus grounded there,
the same is seen in everything.

17.16

No violence nor kind compassion,
no unbridled arrogance
nor chastening humility,
nor sense of wonder stilling mind
nor any troubled agitation,
can in fact be permanent.

All such conditioning must pass.
No such conditioning remains
in one for whom the ebb and flow
of happening has been exhausted,
has at last come back to end.

17.17

One who is truly free cannot
be driven by attraction felt

for anything perceived, nor by
revulsion towards something else.

For such a one, whatever comes
to be attained is found enjoyed,
with mind forever unattached.

17.18

Absorbed within or not absorbed,
what works out well or what does not ...
these are distinctions made by thought.

For one whose mind is void of thought,
no such distinction can be known.

That someone lives thus in a state
where self is found all on its own,
unmixed with anything besides.

It's in this sense that knowing self
may be described as 'absolute'.

17.19

By getting to be free of ego's
grasping sense of 'me' and 'mine',
a person may find out for sure
that nothing actually exists
as ego claims to have perceived.

That truth is found by one for whom
all wishing, hoping and expecting
are dissolved in self within.

Whoever knows thus properly
is not engaged in any act,
not even when the act takes place.

17.20

What mind displays is always mixed.
It is part clear and part obscure.
This mixture makes what mind dreams up
confusing and delusory.

All such confusion has, somehow,
to be transcended, left behind.

An indescribable condition
is attained, by one for whom
all last remaining trace of subtle
mind is finally dissolved.

Peace

18.1

Ashtavakra said:

In the arising of whose knowing,
does delusion come about,
so much made up as in some dream
created by imagining?

It's that which shines as happiness,
at peace with its own clarity.
To that alone is due respect.

18.2

Acquiring all kinds of things
brings much experience, many joys.

But happiness cannot be found
except by giving up all objects
sought by mind to be possessed.

18.3

The thought of duty to be done
burns painfully into the heart,
devouring tenderness within.

How then can there be happiness,
without a welling up inside
of undisturbed tranquility
that keeps refreshing heart inside?

18.4

This world of things that come to be
is all imagined in our minds.
It's nothing but imagining.

In ultimate reality,
this world that seems to be imagined
is not anything at all.

There is no ceasing of these beings
that are here thought self-conceived,
these that discriminate between
what has occurred or not occurred.

We think of these as persons who
inhabit bodies in the world.

18.5

Where does one stand in one's own self?
That stand is not found far away,
by looking out extensively
across the universe at large.

Nor can it be attained from something
limited or small in size;
within some body, sense or mind.

It has to be found effortless,
unchanged by all activity,
unmixed with any differences
that may appear to compromise
its unaffected purity.

It is forever thus attained.

18.6

The moment that illusion ends,
from that same instant when the truth
of self is realized, they who
seemed to be bound now find true self
presiding always free at heart.
There, seeing is found clarified,
dissatisfaction is dispelled.

18.7

All of this put-together world
is made of mind's imagining.
The self that knows is always free,
beyond all thought of passing time.

Why then should one who knows correctly
be in need of practices

that help achieve desired traits
of cultured personality,
as in the training of a child?

18.8

True self, within each mind and heart,
is all that's real everywhere,
throughout all space and time in world.

Whatever happenings occur
or don't occur, are nothing else
but supposition shown created
by the mind's imagining.

But, through its wishful fantasies,
this mind is driven, stupefied
by wanting objects of desire.

Who knows this comes to certainty
where knowing is at last found free
of mind that's driven by desire.

But what then may be known
or said or done, by someone who is thus
found free of all desires in mind?

18.9

A yogi who turns silent thus
comes to exhaust all differentiating
thoughts, like 'This is what
I am' or 'No, I am not this'.

But just what this exhaustion means
is understood by finding out
that 'Everything is self alone',
beyond the slightest trace of doubt.

18.10

A yogi who has come to peace
finds no distraction, concentration;
no excess of cleverness,
no blind unthinking foolishness;
no pleasure, nor unpleasantness.

18.11

In self-supported sustenance,
in dire need; in gain, in loss;
at home in friendly company,
or in withdrawal far away
into a lonely wilderness ...

these cannot make much difference
to one whom yoga has released,
from habit-driven tendencies
induced by past conditioning.

18.12

Then, where is virtue, where enjoyment,
where are riches, where discernment,
for the yogi who is freed
from dual thought: like this that's 'done',
opposed to that which is 'not done'.

18.13

There is no duty to be done,
nor any compromising taint at heart;
not for that yogi who is liberated inwardly,
though seen to live conditioned
outwardly in an external world.

This kind of yogi takes to any
way of life spontaneously,
in consonance with happenings
that take place of their own accord.

18.14

Where is delusion? Where is world?
Where contemplation upon that?
And where is liberation, for
that someone who is great at heart?

Who, at the limit of conception,
comes to rest in peace itself,
where all conceiving is dissolved?

18.15

One who perceives this world may well
make out that it does not exist.

But what is there to do for one
who has no inclination left?

That one, though seeing, does not see
what is imagined to be seen.

There's only seeing in itself
unmixed with anything thought seen.

18.16

By one who's seen the ultimate
reality of everything,
it may be thought: 'That's what I am,
that one complete reality.'

But what of one who sees no second,
nothing but one self alone?

That someone is then free of thought
which goes from self to something else.
Thus freed from mind's duality,
how does that someone think at all?

18.17

It is from seeing self distracted
that one practices control.

One who is noble does not get
distracted. Having nothing to
achieve, what does that someone do?

18.18

A sage, who stands established in
true knowing, is thus different
from most of us who take ourselves
to stand in an uncertain world.

Just like the rest of us, a sage

appears to stand on shifting ground:
as circumstances in the world
get changed, with such uncertainty.

But, inwardly, a sage lives free,
where nothing seen is thought possessed.

There, no absorption, no distraction,
no conditioned act is seen.
No act of ego covers self
with any taint of compromise.

18.19

One who is wise remains content,
not driven by desiring
for what may or may not occur.

By such a one, there's nothing done;
not even when observed as acting,
from the sight of those in world.

18.20

Remaining steadfast in true knowledge,
whether doing or not doing,
such a one takes nothing ill.

As what needs doing comes about,
it is then done; while that same self
from which the doing issues forth
is found completely undisturbed,
in its unchanging happiness.

18.21

One who breaks free from inclinations
gets to be thus independent,
motivated from within
and free from bondage to the world.

Thus, in such moving from within,
someone who's liberated may
be found to act spontaneously.

Each act is a dried leaf that's blown

by wind inspired from pure self.
Each leaf shows self alone,
through an inherited conditioning.

18.22

For one who's free of changing world,
there's nowhere any joy or grief.
Cool-minded always, such a one
presides in body unaffected,
as though disembodied here.

18.23

There's nowhere any sense of loss
nor wish to give up anything,
for one who stands established where
untroubled self is realized,
enjoying its own happiness.

18.24

For one whose natural state of mind
is free of calculating thought,
what's done comes up spontaneously:
from standing back in truth of self.

There, standing back in self alone,
no sense of pride or shame is found
like that affecting what is done
by most of us – who take our stand
in troubled bodies, senses, minds.

This is the stand of ego-mind:
inevitably compromised,
as mind confuses knowing self
with acting personality.

18.25

'This work is done by me as body,
not by me in my true nature
as pure self.' One who adheres
to thinking thus, attains that self
which seems to act but does not act.

It, even in the midst of action,
stays completely actionless.

It is that knowing light from which
all actions are inspired to rise.
It's that alone which truly knows,
beneath all acts that come from it.

18.26

One who is free in living body
may well seem to act as though
maintaining quite the opposite.
But such a one is not a fool.

Seen even as a person here
engaged in world, that person who
is free within shines truly bless'd,
finds happiness unqualified
by what may or may not occur.

18.27

Grown tired of conflicting thoughts
that reason in such different ways,
someone steady in true knowing
has at last returned to rest.

Found there established, such a one
does not see any sight, nor hears
a sound, nor thinks a thought, nor knows
an object other than what knows.

18.28

One who is truly great at heart
stays unaffected by distractions
or by states of concentration
drawing outward thoughts back in.

Thus, such a one does not aspire
to liberation from the world;
nor seeks out objects fancied here
by partial personality.

One great at heart has come to know,

beyond the shadow of a doubt,
that all this world is nothing more
than fictional imagining.

Attaining to that certainty,
one lives oneself identified
as all of the reality
that anyone experiences.

Throughout all seeing of a world
made up of mind's imagining,
one lives at heart unlimited
and utterly unchanged.

18.29

It's only one possessed of ego
who may act or may not act.
By one who knows unwavering,
unmixed with ego's falsity,
there's nothing done or left undone.

18.30

One who is free must be released
from agitation in the mind.
Thus, no one free can be a doer:
getting driven into trouble,
or made somehow gratified.

In someone who is liberated,
mind must shine desireless,
with its uncertainties resolved.

18.31

In one thus free, there is no mind
that sets out to reflect within,
or to engage in outward acts.

And yet – inspired from within,
unmotivated from outside –
mind sometimes may be found reflecting,
sometimes acting in the world.

18.32

On hearing truth directly told,
some unreceptive person thus
becomes bewildered and confused.

But someone more intelligent
may get withdrawn back into mind.

Through this withdrawal, thoughts are
silenced, showing mind as if perplexed.

18.33

It's only them who are confused
that keep repeating practices
of concentration and control.

They who discern what knowing is
do not see anything to do.
Each stands, as though in depth of sleep,
in just that state which is one's own,
where one's own self alone abides.

18.34

For one who's blindly ignorant,
no idleness nor effort can
result in happiness found free
of our conflicting differences.

It's only by determining
what's true and right that one who knows
finds peace, and is there satisfied.

18.35

True self is pure intelligence.
It's what we love, found always
perfect, unaffected by all ill,
completely free of any world
made up from seeming differences.

There in the world, as people take
to a variety of different practices,
they do not know that self.

18.36

One who stays blindly ignorant
does not attain to liberation
through repeated practices.

But one who's bless'd – by nothing more
than knowing truly – stands thus free,
devoid of all activities.

18.37

A person who is ignorant
does not attain to all the world's
reality. For that is what
this person wishes to become.

But one who knows most definitely
realizes its true nature,
even without wishing so.

18.38

Those who don't know are found in want
of true support for their beliefs.
They seek to grasp at what they can,
and thus perpetuate this show
of passing fiction in our minds.

Those who know better get to cut
the root of this absurdity
that mind believes to be a world
made up of change and happening.

18.39

One who stays ignorant does not
find peace. For it is then desired
as though it has to be obtained.

But one who knows has ascertained
a truth that doubt can never change.
Such certainty establishes
a peace that's present at all times,
can't ever disappear from mind.

18.40

Just where is seeing rightly known
to come from self, for any person
who depends on objects seen
through changing personality?

Those who know clearly don't see things
as 'this' or 'that'. They see no more
or less than self, which does not change.

18.41

Where is restraint or mind control,
for one who obstinately strives,
while still remaining ignorant
of where it's from that guidance comes,
and where control originates?

For one established in true knowing,
mind is guided and controlled
from happiness of self within.

That guidance is no changing act
of any artificial mind.
It is completely natural:
inspired of its own accord.

Thus, at all times, a timely guidance
is found present: timelessly
inspired from that inmost self
which shines unchanged as knowing light.

18.42

Some think about a universe
that is made up of happenings.

Some others think these happenings
(which are thus taken to occur)
may not, in stricter truth, exist.

One who does not think either way
gets thereby calm and unconfused.
That's all the more remarkable.

18.43

Conceiving of subjective self
as 'pure' or 'one without a second',
it appears objectified,
by those of sorry intellect.

But they don't rightly know that self,
from this confusion in their minds.
So long as the confusion lasts,
their lives are troubled, ill at ease.

18.44

The mind of one who longs for freedom
cannot function independent
of what's thought to be outside.

But, for one who stands in freedom,
mind is always independent:
functioning desireless,
inspired only for the sake
of unaffected self within.

18.45

On seeing objects seemingly
like fearsome tigers, those afraid
seek hurried refuge in a cave:
where concentration and control
may, hopefully, be found attained
through solitude and exercise.

18.46

On seeing personality
from where it is desireless,
it's like a lion reigning free
out in some forest wilderness.

The objects of our senses then
turn out to be like elephants.

They lumber off contentedly;
or if they can't, they gather round
performing courtly services

that make a show of flattery.

18.47

One who is free from any doubt,
whose mind is found at one with self,
does not have need of treatises
that say how freedom should be found.

In seeing, hearing, smelling odours,
touching objects, eating food ...

whatever life may bring about
accords with that same happiness
for which all happenings take place.

18.48

By the mere hearing of what's true,
someone whose intellect is pure
gets thereby clear, and comes to peace
that shines completely undisturbed.

There, nothing proper nor improper
may be seen, nor even plain
indifference to the both of them.

18.49

One who is open and straightforward
does what's present here to do.
That person's actions are like those
done by a child: not calculating
what looks good, or what looks ill.

18.50

From freedom of self-governance,
a person comes to happiness.

Through freedom, someone may transcend
beyond this personality.

Through freedom, clarity of peace
that shines from self, uncompromised.

Through freedom, one's own stand in self,
which is described as 'ultimate'.

From there, there's nothing else to find.

18.51

When someone comes to recognize
that one is not oneself a doer,
nor a personal enjoyer;
then all changing states of mind
get tired out and are destroyed.

This thought – that one is neither doer
nor enjoyer – thus destroys
all other thoughts. It then must turn
back on itself and get destroyed;

so that none else but self remains,
just as it is, unmodified.

18.52

One who knows rightly, leads a life
that is by nature unrestrained.

And yet that life is found to shine
with light that guides it, from within,
to function of its own accord,
unforced by anything outside.

Not so the made-up show of calm
that's artificially produced
by those who are still ignorant –
whose minds are driven by desire.

18.53

Those who know surely may appear
sometimes in great enjoyments; or,
it may be that at other times
they find retreat in mountain caves.

But they are always free in mind,
unfettered at the depth of heart.
There, no imagining remains.

It has completely been removed
from what is rightly understood.

18.54

From seeing or performing worship –
whether to a scholar or a god,
a holy place, a woman
or a king or someone loved –

no driven inclination can
at all remain, there in the heart
of one who stands in truth unchanged
by mixing it with falsity.

18.55

A yogi is not in the least
affected – even when reproached
and made to look ridiculous
by servants, children, wives, grandchildren
and by other relatives.

18.56

Though pleased, a sage is not found pleased.
Though pained, a sage is not distressed.

It's only someone else like that –
some other sage – who understands
this quite extraordinary state.

18.57

The sense of duty makes it seem
that something needs to be achieved.
This sense of needed doing is
what makes the changing world appear.
The world is made of this alone.

But those who have attained to wisdom
do not see this world made up
from thought of what needs to be done.

They see that any thought of need
shows mind in want, and thus admits

this thinking to be compromised.

No world made up of needy thought
is seen by those who know it right.

Such knowers see their seeming selves
as empty personalities
appearing formed from nothingness.

Accordingly, they realize
that self which has itself no form.
It's that which cannot be transformed,
stays unaffected by all ill.

18.58

One who stays ignorant in mind
is worried and distracted always:
never free from restlessness,
not even when there's nothing done.

But one who's truly capable
stays unconfused and unexcited,
through all duties that get done.

18.59

One who finds peace in depth of mind
thereby returns from changing acts,
to stand in peace which does not change
throughout all actions that take place.

Established there, a person may
thus keep on living undisturbed
through all activities in world.

No matter if that person sits,
lies down, or comes or goes away,
or speaks or eats. None of these acts
can undermine that happiness
which always stays uncompromised.

18.60

One who knows truth is self-possessed,
acts for the sake of self within.

But most of us act from a sense
of wanting what we don't possess.
This sense of want makes us distressed.

No such distress is felt by one
who rightly knows, not even when
shown acting in the world outside.

Seen even in the midst of action,
one who knows retains the calm
of waters infinitely deep.

All troubles are thus found dissolved
in peace that shines uncompromised.

18.61

The very inactivity
of one who's ignorant gives rise
again to action in the world.

And even the activity
of one who knows partakes of fruits
that come from what is actionless.

18.62

One who is ignorant may show
aversion towards things possessed.

For one in whom all bodily ...
attachment has dissolved away,
where is desire, where disgust?

18.63

For one who does not rightly know,
what's taken to be 'seeing' is
found always caught in thinking or
unthinking what's been thought about.

But, for that someone who would stand
in self, it is by thinking what
ought to be thought that self appears.

It paradoxically appears,
shown formed as blank ‘unconsciousness’:
which knows no objects seen by body,
sense or mind in seeming world.

18.64

A sage is one who, like a child,
is moved to act spontaneously:
quite innocent of calculation
tied to objects of desire.

For such a one, who’s motivation
is thus pure, no taint is left
by anything that may be done.

18.65

Bless’d is the one who knows true self.
That knower always is the same,
no matter in what circumstance.

No matter whether seeing, hearing,
touching objects, smelling odours ...
one who knows is found the same:
untouched by personal desire,
disinterested in wanting mind.

18.66

Where is there any world that changes?
Where some show of changing things?
Where is achievement to be found?
Where any striving to achieve?

How can such questions rise at all,
for one whose knowing carries on
unchanged throughout all space and time,
beyond all thought of difference?

18.67

Whoever truly wins success
is freed from all objective aims.

A person who thus finds release

may then be recognized as an
embodiment of perfect peace
and unaffected happiness.

Just that is savoured as the essence
of one's own true nature: not
as seen through personality
from some imagined world outside,
but realized returned within
to one's own true identity.

For someone standing back in self,
absorption in plain truth is only
natural and spontaneous.

No further effort is requir'd.
There is no need to interfere,
as living functions carry on
completely of their own accord.

18.68

What need is there to say much here?
One great at heart – who's come to
realize plain truth – is thereby freed
from fancied want for life's enjoyments
and for freedom from such want.

But, one thus free is utterly
disinterested everywhere.

In such a one, no interested
expectation can be found.
No act is ever driven by
some fantasy of wish and hope
for any personal reward.

All acts that may seem personal
must none the less in truth turn out
to be impersonally done.

18.69

All of this dualistic world
– seen here extended forth into
the vast expanse of space and time –

is a description made from words
that need to be interpreted.

This play of words and what they mean
must finally be left behind,
by one who realizes self
as nothing else but consciousness.

But, when all words are thus transcended,
what can there be left to do,
by one who is pure consciousness?

18.70

In fact, this world does not exist.
It's all a product of confusion,
wrongly showing what appears.

By coming to be sure of this,
the inexpressible becomes
expressed to someone rightly pure,
who thus comes naturally to peace.

18.71

For one whose nature is pure shining –
never found perceiving objects
that mind thinks are ‘to be seen’ –

just where are any rules of conduct,
where dispassion, where renouncing,
where withdrawal of the senses
or of mind from seeming world?

18.72

For one who shines unlimited –
not caught in seeing nature's realm
of actions leading to more actions –

where indeed can there be bondage,
where can there be liberation,
where excitement or despair?

18.73

Up to the limits of the mind,
a world of change is manifest.
But it is shown mistakenly,
through a deceptive functioning.

Beyond this tricky show in mind
no world nor any change appears.

One who is wise lives free of any
sense of 'mine-ness'; free of ego's
falsely claimed identity
to be at once a changing doer
and a changeless, knowing 'I'.

The changing doer is a person
felt attached to fond desire.
The 'I' that knows can't be attached.

It's thus that one who rightly knows
shines free of all desiring,
lives utterly impersonal
in changing personality.

18.74

For one who sees correctly that
true self cannot be tired out,
can't suffer any pain or grief ...

just where is knowledge? Where a world?
And where can there be any feelings:
'I am body', 'This is mine'?

18.75

If someone unintelligent
stops practicing restraint of mind
and other forms of artificial
exercise, it takes no time
for mind to get caught up again
in unexamined foolishness
of fancies driven by desire.

18.76

A person who is lazy-minded –

unprepared to ask sharp questions –
will not give up ignorance,
not even when what's plainly true
is heard with due formality.

Through efforts made in world outside,
such a person may achieve
a state where mind seems to be free
of all its fond imagining.

But, deep within such 'no mind' states,
blind cravings stubbornly persist
for objects fondly fantasized.

18.77

For one who comes to know plain truth,
all need to act is thereby found
dissolved away. And yet that someone
may still seem engaged in acts
performing various kinds of work,
as seen by people in the world.

But even while thus seen engaged,
someone who realizes truth –
as seen from where that someone stands –
can find no opportunity
to do or to say anything.

18.78

For one who knows, unaltering,
beyond all trace of doubt or fear,
where is there dark? Where light? Where
giving up? Where anything at all?

18.79

Where is there steadfast clarity?
Where is discernment, fearlessness?

What are these, to a yogi whose
own character can't be described
and who is thus 'impersonal'?

18.80

There is no heaven, nor hell. Nor
even liberation, here in life.

In short, there's nothing that exists
as seen in yogic consciousness.

18.81

Someone who's steadfast in plain truth
does not seek gain, nor gets upset
by failure to achieve success.

The mind of such a one stays cool.
It gets refreshed perpetually,
by that clear light which does not die.

18.82

Someone desireless does not
heap praise on those who've come to peace,
nor look to blame those doing wrong.

For such a one remains content –
the same in grieving as in joy –
finds always nothing to be done.

18.83

Someone who knows does not dislike
the ebb and flow of changing world,
nor wishes to perceive the self.

Free thus from all excited joy
or driven anger, such a one
is neither dead to that which lives,
nor is alive to outward things
that make a dying show of life.

18.84

Not bound by family affection,
nor by objects of desire,

not caring even for this body
that is thought to be 'one's own',

no expectations bind a sage
who shines as nothing else but light
that lives in every one of us.

18.85

Someone established in true knowing
finds contentment everywhere;
and lives at peace with what occurs,
no matter how things may turn out.

All movements are thus found inspired
spontaneously, from self alone.
Such movements go from place to place,
inspired of their own accord.

And when it's time, a sage may rest
wherever energy runs out
and gets returned back home to self:
in which all movements are dissolved.

18.86

Not caring whether body falls
back into death or rises into
life again, one great at heart
has utterly forgotten all
the ebb and flow of death and birth ...

and now rests only on the ground
of one's own being, as it is.

18.87

Possessing nothing, moving freely
from the depth of heart within,
a sage is always found untouched
by conflict of opposing things.

By standing free of conflict thus,
all troubled doubts get torn away.
No shadow of a doubt remains.
What's true is found uncompromised.

One thus, who has attained to wisdom,

is completely unattached
to anything that may occur.

That one finds perfect happiness
in self alone: found absolute,
unmixed with any other thing.

18.88

One who is wise lives free of 'mine-ness'.
Earth, stone, gold ... are found the same.

All knots of heart are cut completely.
Neither striving to achieve,
nor dragging laziness takes hold
of driven personality.

With strife and laziness removed,
what seemed a 'person' is found free
of personal identity.

18.89

For someone who stays everywhere
indifferent, quite unconcerned
with anything, there is at heart
no habit-driven inclination
towards objects of desire.

Who then can bear comparison
with such a one who stays content,
established in that truth of self
where each of us is always free?

18.90

It is from there that one may know,
but not by any act of knowing
formed and understood by mind.

It is from there that one may see,
but not by any act of seeing
shown by changing sense of sight.

And, it's from there, that one may speak,
though not by any act of speaking

formed by breath and heard by ears.

Who else but one desireless
could know or see or speak like that?

18.91

Be it a starving beggar or
a wealthy king, it's only one
desireless that truly shines.

For, paradoxically, no person
can achieve true excellence
until all fondly held belief,
in good or bad things happening,
has dropped away entirely.

It's only then that self shines clear,
as utterly impersonal.

18.92

What of ungoverned wantonness,
or of restrained humility?
And what about discerning truth
found so confusingly mixed up
with our mistaken falsities?

What can these be, for one whom yoga
has joined back to truth of self?

That one, who's called a 'yogi', has
attained the goal that we all seek.
Abiding there, that yogi may
be seen to stand uncompromised:
as an embodiment of plain,
uncomplicated honesty.

18.93

For one who rests content in self,
untainted by desiring,
all pain and trouble is destroyed.

How and of whom can be described
what is experienced within,

by one who speaks from such a state?

18.94

Not sleeping in the soundest sleep,
not even in the wildest dream
withdrawn from world of waking sense,

not even in the waking state
aware of anything perceived
in world outside or thinking mind,

one who is steadfast in true knowing
stays contented everywhere,
throughout all change of passing states.

18.95

A sage is always free of thinking,
even when engaged in thought.

So also free of any senses,
even though possessed of them.

So also free of intellect,
although in full control of it.

So too completely free of ego,
even when the self that knows
is wrongly thought to be engaged
in acts of body, sense and mind.

18.96

One such can't rightly be described
as 'happy' or as 'suffering',
as 'unattached' or as 'attached',
as 'seeking freedom' or as 'free',
as anything that's 'here' or 'there'.

18.97

One who is truly fortunate
stays undistracted even in
what seem distracted states of mind ...

cannot be found to disappear
in states where mind is thought dissolved ...

can't even be insensitive
in states where no sense can be made
of what seems utter senselessness ...

can't be made capable or skilled
by any learned accomplishment.

18.98

One who is free stands self-possessed,
untroubled by all sense of what's
been done and what needs doing still.

One thus attained to self-possession
is found everywhere the same.
No fancied want drives needful thought
of what has or has not been done.

18.99

Though praised, someone who is thus free
does not feel flattered or feel pleased;
though blamed, does not become enraged.

One such is not afraid in dying;
nor feels happy to be living
here in body, sense and mind.

18.100

One who at heart has come to peace
does not seek crowds and company,
nor any lonely wilderness.

One such lives utterly unchanged:
the same however things turn out,
no matter where or when perceived.

Repose in the Self

19.1

Janaka said:

These diverse disquisitions – meant
to help us reason – have themselves
become a painfully distracting
thorn that needs to be removed.

This thorn at last has been pulled out,
from the interior of my heart,
by using pincers of discernment
seeking knowledge of plain truth.

19.2

Just where is virtue, where desire?
Where are riches? Where discernment,
where duality? And, where
is even non-duality:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.3

Where is the past, which is now gone?
Where is the future, yet to come?
Where is the present, passing on?

Where is there space, in which so many
different things can coexist?

And where, at last, eternity:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.4

Where is there self? Where anything
apart from self? Accordingly,
where any good or any ill?

Where then could there be any thought

or even any lack of thought:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.5

What is the state that we call 'waking':
thought to show a world outside?
What is the state that we call 'dream':
where all that's shown is thought in mind?
And what the state we call 'deep sleep':
free from all show of mind or world?

What's called the 'fourth', beyond all these
three states of waking, dream and sleep?

What's there to fear in any state?
What fear can possibly arise:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.6

What can be close, what far away?
What can be outside, what inside?

What can be gross, thus coarsely shown
by sense that's found inaccurate?
What can be subtle, better shown
by carefully examining
what is more accurately shown?

How can such differences arise:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.7

Where can be death or life? Where worlds,
where any sense of worldliness?

Just where can there be dissolution,
where absorption back to self:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.8

There is no further need to speak
of threefold aims in worldly life,
of yoga, or of knowing truth:
for me who am at rest, in self.

Liberation-in-Life

20.1

Where are the five world elements,
where are the senses, where the mind?
Where blank and empty nothingness,
where hopelessness of dark despair?

No trace of them is ever present
in my own true nature, found
uncompromised by any taint
of world or personality.

20.2

What are the scriptures, and their many
schools of analytic thought?
What is discernment of self-knowledge?
What then mind bereft of objects?

What contentment is thus found,
in freedom from desiring?

Now that I've lost all sense of
opposites, what can these be to me?

20.3

What is true knowledge, and what
ignorance? What this called 'I' or 'mine'?

What then is bondage, and from it
what liberation can be found?
Of my true nature, what one form
defines it in particular,
so that it's rightly recognized?

20.4

What are these chains of causal action
found to carry on from past,
through present, into future times?

And how can anyone be free

at heart, while yet found living in
this driven personality?

What meaning can there be in freedom
which is thought to be attained
by body's death, into a state
where personality and all
its acts (of sensing, thinking, feeling,
speaking) seem to be destroyed?

For one who knows no differences,
knows nothing in particular,
how can we rightly understand
that such a one has now attained
to an undying state of life
where peace shines positively free?

20.5

Where is there any doer? Where is
some personal enjoyer found
engaged in doing anything?

Where is there any ceasing of
activity? If ceasing thus,
where does activity subside?

How does it keep on sparkling out,
how found to rise in seeming show?

What is immediate knowing? What
to me are its results – from where
I'm always found to stand,
unchanged and utterly impersonal?

20.6

What is the world? Where is the one
who would be free? Where is the yogi?
Where the sage who knows correctly?

Where is someone bound or freed –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.7

Where is creation issued forth,
and where retraction back to source?

Where is achievement to be found?
Where any striving to achieve?

Where is the seeker, where success –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.8

Who is the one correcting knowledge,
where the means of such correction,
what conclusion thereby reached?

And where can there be anything
or otherwise not anything,
for me who am forever pure.

20.9

What is distraction, or what
concentration? What dull apathy,
or what enraptured fantasy?

What is excitement or despair?
What can these oppositions be,
to me who's always actionless?

20.10

What is this world of compromise
that trades for objects of desire?
What is that true reality
which stands beyond all wish and want
found driven by mind's fancying?

What happy or unhappy state
that pulls or pushes mind can be
more than a hollow fantasy –

to me who always am devoid
of calculations in the mind
concocted by such fantasies?

20.11

Where are the world's illusory
appearances? Where is the ebb
and flow of driven change, in which
our personalities seem caught
as they pass through this made-up world?

Where is affection pulling us
to get involved with changing things?
Where does dislike push us away?

Where is there any living person
seen as part of larger world?
Where any great reality
in which all things of world take part?

What can such put together show
of partial seemings be to me,
who am unchanging purity?

20.12

Where could activity be found
to bring about some change? And where
could such activity be stopped?
Where could it end, producing thus
a state of inactivity?

Just where could there be freedom then?
Where any sense of being bound?

What could be action or inaction,
feeling bound or feeling free –

for me who stands in self alone,
forever found unlimited
by any change or difference?

20.13

Where is there any teaching taught?
Where any scriptures, schools of thought?

Where a disciple seeking truth?

Where any teacher showing truth
beyond all personality?

Where any purpose served by living,
in the world or free of it?

What aim or meaning can there be,
for me who stands unlimited
by any dubious compromise
of good shown always mixed with bad
in personality and world?

20.14

Where is what's taken to exist?
Just where can be what's found unreal?

Where is what's one and one alone?
Just where can there be that same one
plus something else, thus making 'two'?

What more is there to say? For me,
there truly is no rising up
of anything at all. No sense
in fact gives rise to any sight,
or sound or smell or taste or touch.

No mind gives rise to thoughts or dreams.
No feelings in the heart give rise
to values, meanings, purposes.

There is no show apart from self.
All show is that and that alone.

Just that is all reality,
expressed throughout all show of world
produced by personality.

Ashtavakra Gita

Translated by Hari Prasad Shastri

Chapter I

1. Janaka said:

O Lord, tell me this: How does a man acquire Knowledge of Truth, and how liberation, and how the practice of renunciation?

2. Ashtavakra said:

O Friend! If thy aim in life is liberation, then shun sense objects as poison, and pursue as nectar, forgiveness, simplicity of life, compassion, contentment, and truth.

3. Thou art neither earth, water, fire, air, nor ether. Know thy Self (Atman) as Witness of all these, and different from them, if thou would'st attain liberation.

4. If, detaching thyself from thy sense of identity with the body, thou remains at rest in Intelligence, thine will be spontaneous bliss, eternal peace, and liberation from the imagined bondage.

5. Thou (as Atman) art not of the Brahmin or other castes. Neither dost thou belong to any of the four stages of life. Thou art not an object of sense perception. Thou art Witness alone, unattached by nature and without form. Be blissful!

6. O all-pervading Reality! Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, are modes of the mind, and thy Self is independent of them. Thou art neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Ever free art thou.

7. Thou art the one subject of all and in fact ever free. The cause of thy imagined bondage is that thou attributest subjectivity to objects rather than to the Self.

8. Egoism in the form of, "I am the doer," resembles a great black and poisonous serpent. The antidote to its poison is recognition of the fact, "I am not the doer." This Knowledge leads to happiness.

9. The dark forest of ignorance (of the nature of Self) is the cause of grief and should be consumed by the conviction, "I am the one ever-pure Consciousness."

10. Thou art that Consciousness, the supreme Bliss, in which the world appears as an imagined object, like a snake in a rope. Be happy! That thou art!

11. He who thinks himself to be free, is free, and he who thinks himself bound, is bound. True is the saying, “as a man thinks, so he becomes.”
12. The Self is the witness, all-pervading, perfect, free, one, consciousness, actionless, not attached to any object, desireless, ever-tranquil. It appears through illusion as the world.
13. Always contemplate the ever-fixed Intelligence, the non-dual Atman. Giving up all inner and outer identification of the Self with the non-self, abandon the notion of the individualized self.
14. O Child, the net of self-identification with the body has held thee imprisoned long enough. With the sword of the Knowledge, “I am Intelligence,” cut this illusion and be blissful.
15. Thou art wholly independent, actionless, self-luminous and without fault. Thy bondage is that thou deemest thyself to be liberated through the practice of Samadhi.
16. The Universe is pervaded by thee and exists in thee. Verily, by nature thou art Consciousness Absolute. Do not harbor narrowness of heart and think thyself to be otherwise.
17. Free art thou from modifications. Independent, calm, without dimension or form, imperturbable, thy nature unimaginable Intelligence. Know thyself to be pure Consciousness.
18. Know all that has form to be unreal, and the formless to be the Self. By means of this Knowledge, thou shalt avoid the possibility of rebirth.
19. Within and without the form reflected in the mirror, exists the mirror. Likewise, the Supreme Lord exists within and without the body.
20. As the jar is pervaded inside and outside by the same ether, so does the all-pervasive Reality (Brahman) abide in all things.

Chapter II

1. Janaka said:

How wonderful! I am tranquil, taintless, pure Knowledge, transcending matter (Prakriti). Until now, I have been deceived by illusion.

2. As I, by my light, reveal this body, so do I reveal the whole Universe. To me it belongs, or it is naught.

3. Through renunciation of this great Universe together with this body, I now perceive the supreme Self, by the skill of my Yoga.

4. As waves, foam, and bubble are not different from water, so in the in the light of true Knowledge, the Universe, born of the Self, is not different from the Self.

5. As a piece of cloth is found, on reflection, not to be different from its threads, so this Universe, on reflection, is found not to be different from the Self.

6. As the juice of sugar cane wholly pervades the sugar produced from it, so the Universe, produced phenomenononly in me, is pervaded by my Self.

7. The world appears as a result of ignorance of the nature of Self, and it disappears when the nature of the Self is recognized. The illusory snake is born of the absence of Knowledge of the rope, and it disappears when Knowledge of the rope is attained.

8. My nature is Knowledge and nothing other than Knowledge. Verily, the Universe is revealed under the light of my Self.

9. How strange that the world has its appearance in me, due to nescience, like the illusory silver in the mother-of-pearl, the snake in the rope, and the mirage in the rays of the sun.

10. From me the world is born, in me it exists, to me it dissolves. As jars return to clay, waves to water, and bracelets to gold.

11. Wonderful am I, my salutations to my Self! I am beyond the range of decay. When the whole world from Brahma to a blade of grass is destroyed, I still remain.

12. Wonderful am I! In spite of the body and its properties, I am one. I go nowhere, I come from nowhere, I abide in my Self, pervading the whole Universe.

13. All praise to me. I am most skillful. I, without a form, uphold the Universe through all eternity.

14. I am wonderful, adoration to my Self. I own nothing, and yet all that is thought or spoken of is mine.
15. In reality, Knowledge, the Knowable, and the Knower do not exist in me. That faultless Self and I, by whose want of Knowledge the three appear to exist.
16. The conception of duality is the root of all suffering. Its only cure is the perception of the unreality of all objects and the realization of myself as One, pure Intelligence and Bliss.
17. I am pure Intelligence. Through ignorance I have imagined the illusory conditions in myself. Meditating thus, all the time, I am the Absolute.
18. I am neither bound nor free. My illusion has ended. The world, though appearing to exist in me, has in reality no existence.
19. My conviction is that the Universe and the body have no reality. The Self is naught but Intelligence. How can the world be imagined in it?
20. I am the Self, and my nature is pure Consciousness. The body, heaven, hell, bondage, freedom, and fear are merely imagined, and I have no relationship with them.
21. I see no duality. Why should I become attached to a multitude of human beings who resemble a wilderness to me?
22. I am not the body and the body does not belong to me. I am pure intelligence. My only bondage was my desire to live as a cognitive identity.
23. I am the limitless ocean in which, on the rising of the wind of the mind, the worlds are produced, as waves on the sea.
24. When the wind of the mind has died away in the ocean of my Being, then the ship of the Universe perishes, together with its trader, the Jiva.
25. How strange that in me, the limitless ocean, the individualized selves, arise as waves. They cross each other, play for awhile, and disappear, according to their respective natures.

Chapter III

Ashtavakra said:

1. Knowing the Self to be indestructible and one by nature, how is it that thou, having attained wisdom, art still concerned with the acquisition of wealth?
2. A craving for the objects of the senses rises out of the illusion caused by ignorance of the real nature of the Self. Just as the illusion of silver in the mother-of-pearl causes an attachment for it.
3. Why should one who knows his Self to be That in which universes rise and fall like waves in the sea, run hither and thither like a suffering creature?
4. Having heard that his Self is pure Consciousness, and of surpassing attraction, why is he still attached to lust which gives rise to increased body consciousness?
5. How strange that the Sage who knows all beings to be in the Self, and the Self to be in all beings, should still continue to harbor the sense of possession.
6. It is strange that one who is established in the great truth of non-duality, and is desirous of liberation, should allow himself to be weakened by the practice of amorous pastimes.
7. Lust is radically opposed to Knowledge. How strange that one who is physically enfeebled and has reached the end of his life, is still eager for sensual enjoyment.
8. How strange that he who is indifferent to the objects of this world and the next, who discriminates between the eternal and the passing, and who yearns for emancipation, should still fear the loss of individuality, occasioned by release.
9. The wise man who is serene within, ever perceives the absolute Self, and is neither pleased nor angry when abused and tormented.
10. The Mahatma regards the actions of his body as not different from those of another body. Whether praised or blamed, he abides in the Self, undisturbed.
11. He who has realized the Universe as mere phenomenon, and has lost all real interest therein, does not fear the approach of death.
12. He whose mind is desireless even in disappointment, and who is fully satisfied with the Knowledge of the Self, he is verily incomparable.
13. Knowing the object of perception to be naught by nature, that steady-minded one neither accepts this nor rejects that.

14. Having given up all attachment to external objects and transcended the influence of the pairs of opposites, the Sage, free from desire, does not feel pleasure or pain in anything he experiences.

Chapter IV

Ashtavakra said:

1. The wise man who has known the truth about the Self plays the game of life, and there is no similarity between his way of living, and the deluded who live in the world as mere beasts of burden.
2. The Gnani does not feel elated even in the supreme state which Indra and all other gods ardently desire and suffer through not obtaining.
3. The knower of truth is not affected by vice and virtue, as the sky is not really affected by the smoke with which it is covered, though it appears to be.
4. The knower of truth, the great-souled one, who has known the Universe to be nothing but his own Self, lives as he pleases.
5. Of the four kinds of created beings from Brahman to a tuft of grass, the wise alone, renouncing desire and aversion, know all to be Brahman.
6. Indeed, how rare is the great-souled one who has realized the Self to be the One without a second, and also the personal God. He does what he considers to be worth doing. He is without any fear whatsoever.

Chapter V

Ashtavakra said:

1. Thou has no association with anything. Pure art thou. What is there to renounce? Destroy the identity with the body and the mind, and enter into the state of noumenon.
2. As bubbles arise in the ocean, so does the Universe arise in the Self. Thus knowing the Self to be all, enter into the state of the noumenon.
3. Though the Universe is perceptible by the senses, yet it has no factual existence, like the snake in the rope. Therefore, enter into the state of the noumenon.
4. Be equable in pleasure and in pain, in hope and in despair, in life and in death. Thus enter into the state of the noumenon.

Chapter VI

Ashtavakra said:

1. I am infinite like space. The phenomenal world is like a jar. This is true cognition. The world has neither to be renounced, accepted, nor negated.
2. I am like the Ocean in which the worlds are the waves. This is true Knowledge, and renunciation, achievement, or negation have no place in it.
3. I am like mother-of-pearl, and the imagined world is like the illusory silver in it. This is true Knowledge, which does not admit of renunciation, achievement, or negation.
4. I am in all things, and all beings abide in me. This is true Knowledge, which does not admit of renunciation, achievement, or negation.

Chapter VII

Janaka said:

1. In me who am like an infinite sea, the boat of the world is driven here and there by the wind of its own nature. I remain unaffected.
2. I am the boundless sea. Let the waves of the world rise and fall in it. I am neither increased nor diminished thereby.
3. In me, the infinite ocean, arises the imagined Universe. Tranquil and attributeless, my Self abides forever.
4. The infinite and ever pure Atman is not in the object, nor is the object in it. Free from attachment and desire, ever tranquil, in this Truth I abide.
5. Indeed, I am Consciousness Absolute, and the world is a magic show. The thought of acceptance and rejection does not exist in me.

Chapter VIII

Ashtavakra said:

1. It is bondage when the mind desires anything, when it grieves over anything, when it accepts, rejects, or feels joy or anger in relation to anything whatsoever.
2. It is release when the mind neither desires nor grieves, is neither angry nor joyful, neither accepts nor rejects anything.
3. It is bondage when the mind is attached to any sense perception. It is liberation when it is not so attached.
4. Where there is “I” there is bondage, where there is no “I” there is release. Know this to be the truth, and neither reject nor accept anything.

Chapter IX

Ashtavakra said:

1. Duties discharged and undischarged, or the pairs of opposites, when do these cease, and for whom? Realizing this, cultivate inner renunciation and passionlessness.
2. O My Child! That blessed one is indeed rare who has extinguished the passion for life, enjoyment, and even learning, by observing the ways of men.
3. The wise become tranquil on realizing that all objects of the world are subject to the threefold misery, that they are transient and of no actual (positive) reality, and should be rejected at all times.
4. There is no time and no age in which men are free from the pairs of opposites. He who disregards them, content with whatever comes, obtains perfection.
5. What man is there, who, having observed the diversity of opinion among the great Sages, Saints, and Yogis, does not become indifferent to learning and attaining peace?
6. He is a true spiritual Guide who has obtained Knowledge of the nature of Reality through indifference to the world, equanimity, and reasoning, and who is animated by a desire to enlighten others.
7. In the modification of the elements, see nothing but matter itself. Thus attain freedom from bondage, and rest in thine own nature.
8. Renounce desire through inherent detachment. Renounce the objects of the world, and renunciation of desire will follow. Thereafter live wherever thou pleasest.

Chapter X

Ashtavakra said:

1. Give up the chief enemy, desire for pleasure and for worldly prosperity, both being fraught with evil, as well as enslavement to Dharma (good deeds) from which they spring.
2. Look upon friends, possessions, wealth, mansions, wives, gifts, and other good fortune as a dream or a magic show, lasting only three or five days.
3. Know that where desires prevail, there is the world. Cherishing feeling of steadfast non-attachment, free thyself from desire and be happy.
4. Desire constitutes the only bondage. To be freed from it is liberation. By cultivating indifference to worldly objects, one obtains the bliss of realization.
5. Thou art One, pure Consciousness. The word is inert and unreal. Even ignorance is non-existent. Therefore, what desire can'st thou cherish.
6. In countless former births thou wast attached to land, sons, wives, joys, bodies, and pleasure, and yet they have ended.
7. Bring to an end wealth, desires, and good and pious deeds. They will not bring rest to thy mind in the gloomy forest of the world.
8. How many incarnations hast thou devoted to the actions of body, mind, and speech? They have brought thee nothing but pain. Why not cease from them?

Chapter XI

Ashtavakra said:

1. One who has finally learnt that it is in the nature of objects to come into existence, to change and finally to pass away, he easily finds rest through detachment, and is freed from suffering.
2. Being convinced that Ishwara is the Creator of all, and none other, one should remain serene and unattached to any object
3. He is ever content who is convinced that adversity and prosperity come in the fullness of time, or are caused by Karma. His senses are controlled. He neither desires nor grieves.
4. Knowing for certain that joy and suffering, birth and death, are the result of Karma, he realizes that it is not possible to accomplish desires. He sits tranquil, and though engaged in actions, is not affected by them.
5. Anxiety produces misery and nothing else. He who realizes this relinquishes all desires, and is calm and happy.
6. "I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am Intelligence Itself." He who has attained this Knowledge has reached the state of the Absolute, and ceases to think on what he has done, and what he has not done.
7. "Verily, all is my own Self, from Brahma to a blade of grass." This conviction brings freedom from desire and imagination, and gives purity and serenity. Reasoning thus, a man does not concern himself with what has been attained, or what is to be attained.
8. He who is convinced that this manifold and wonderful Universe has no real existence, becomes free from desire, is pure Intelligence, and finds peace in the Knowledge that nothing is real.

Chapter XII

Janaka said:

1. First I relinquished physical action, then immoderate speech and thought. Now I abide in peace.
2. Having relinquished all attachment to sound and other objects of sense, and also the Self, as Self is beyond perception (and conception), I now remain at peace, my mind being freed from agitation and distraction.
3. Concentration is needed when the mind is distracted by false identification. Realizing this, I abide in peace.
4. O Sage! I am not concerned with what is to be accepted and what is rejected. I experience neither joy nor sorrow. Thus do I abide.
5. I am as indifferent to the presence of the four stages of life as I am to their absence. Meditation, and renunciation of the contents of my mind, are likewise not for me. This is the state in which I abide.
6. Bother performance and cessation of action are notions born of nescience. Knowing this, thus do I abide.
7. To attempt to think of the Self, which is beyond the range of thought, is only to create a new thought. Abandoning such a thought, I abide in peace.
8. Blessed is he who is established in this peace. Such a man has realized his own nature.

Chapter XIII

Janaka said:

1. Even a monk possessing nothing, does not easily find that tranquility which is inherent in one who is free from the desire for action. I have renounced both action and renunciation of action, and live happily in any state.
2. Renouncing identification with the body, the tongue, and the mind, I have acquired that state which is above desire, fatigue, and ferment. Therefore, I abide in happiness.
3. Realizing that the Self is actionless, I do whatever presents itself, and live happily.
4. Action or inaction is for those attached to the body. Having neither association nor disassociation with it, I live in perpetual bliss.
5. Neither good nor evil results for me from activity, rest, or sleep. Therefore, I am happy whether at rest, active, or asleep.
6. Neither do I lose or gain by sleeping or striving – giving up all thoughts of loss and triumph, I live happily.
7. The varying aspects of pleasure are subject to change, under different conditions. I am happy because I have gone beyond good and evil.

Chapter XIV

Janaka said:

1. He who has acquired vacuity of the heart, who thinks of objects only by chance, who appears as if awake though really asleep, has verily expunged all impressions and experiences of worldly objects from his mind.
2. My desire to live and enjoy have died out. Of what use to me are wealth, friends, learning, philosophy, and those thieves, the sense objects?
3. Having known the supreme Self, the Witness, and the Lord, my desire for liberation and my fear of bondage have left me.
4. The states of mind of that man whose doubts have ended, but who acts outwardly like one still in ignorance, are only understood by those who resemble him.

Chapter XV

Ashtavakra said:

1. The pure-hearted man fulfills the supreme purpose of life through the instructions of his Guru, even though they be casually imparted. The worldly-minded man studies and enquires throughout his life, yet remains unenlightened.
2. A distaste for the objects of sense is liberation. Attachment to those objects is bondage. This is wisdom. Now act as thou wilt.
3. Knowledge of the imperishable Essence makes a worldly, active, and eloquent man inactive, silent, and wise. What wonder that the holy Truth is shunned by those still attached to the pleasures of the world!
4. Thou art not the body, nor does the body belong to thee, nor art thou the doer, nor the enjoyer. Thou art Intelligence Itself, ever the Witness and free art thou! Live in bliss!
5. Desire and aversion are attributes of the mind. The mind does not belong to thee. Free from scheming and doubting, know thyself to be the immutable Intelligence and live in bliss.
6. Knowing that thy Self is the Self of all beings, and that all beings abide in the Self, released from egotism and the sense of mine and thine, live in bliss.
7. Thou art that Intelligence in which the worlds rise like waves in the sea. Be freed from the fever of duality, and live in bliss.
8. Have faith, O Darling, be not deluded! Thou art the Lord of the Universe. Thou art Knowledge itself. Thou transcendest Nature. Verily, thou art the Self.
9. The body is moved by the Gunas. It comes, stays, and goes. The Self neither comes nor goes. There is no cause for grief.
10. Let the body last until the end of the world-period, or perish today. Nothing can be added or subtracted from thy Self, which is pure Knowledge.
11. In thy Self, the infinite ocean, the Universe rise and fall of their own accord like waves. Let them rise or fall. They do not touch thee.
12. My Child, thou art pure Intelligence, the world is not distinct from thee. Therefore, the thought of rejecting or accepting anything is meaningless.
13. How can there be birth, action, or even the sense of individuality, in thee who art ever tranquil, and by nature pure Intelligence?

14. In whatever is manifest, thou alone appearest. Bracelets, armlets, and rings made of gold, are not other than gold.
15. Renounce all sense of distinction, such as “I am he”, “I am not this”. Know all to be thine own Self, and free from desires, be happy.
16. The world is the result of ignorance of thine own nature. In reality, thou alone art. There is neither jiva nor Ishvara, nothing other than thyself.
17. He who has fully realized that the Universe is a pure illusion, becomes desireless and Consciousness Itself – such a one abides in peace.
18. In the ocean of the world, One alone was, is, and will be. There is neither bondage nor liberation in thee. Live in perfect happiness, and in the consciousness that all is achieved.
19. Do not disturb thy mind with acquiring or relinquishing anything. Abide in the bliss of thine own nature.
20. Give up meditation. Hold nothing in thy mind. Thou are free, and Bliss Itself. What wilt thou accomplish by thought?

Chapter XVI

Ashtavakra said:

1. My Child, study and discussion of different philosophies will not establish thee in Self. Forget all, and be happy.
2. O Wise One! Thou may'st take delight in action or in contemplation, but thy mind will still yearn for That which is beyond all objects and in which all desires are extinguished.
3. All are afflicted by reason of their exertions. Alas! this is understood by none. But he who is wise achieves emancipation through this very teaching.
4. That master idler to whom the opening or closing of the eyes is an infliction, to him belongs real bliss and to no other.
5. When the mind is free from “this I have done and this remains to be done,” it transcends the desire for religious merit, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment, and also liberation.
6. He who disdains sense objects is unattached. He who craves for sense pleasures suffers attachment. But he who neither rejects nor accepts is neither attached nor unattached.
7. The notion of desire and aversion is born of lack of true discrimination. The root and branch of the tree of phenomenal existence is dependent on these two.
8. Activity begets attachment, renunciation gives birth to aversion. But the wise man lives like a child, free from the pairs of opposites.
9. One who is attached to the world, desires to renounce it in order to avoid suffering, but the Sage who has no attachment, does not suffer even in the world.
10. He who has a feeling of “I-ness” even for release, and retains his body-consciousness, is neither a wise man nor a spiritual aspirant. His lot is suffering.
11. Even though Shiva, Vishnu, or Brahma instruct thee, unless thou regardest the world as unreal, and dismisses all sense of egotism, thou will not become established in thine own nature (the Self).

Chapter XVII

Ashtavakra said:

1. He who is always contented, who is unattached to any object, who ever enjoys solitude, he has obtained the fruit of spiritual Knowledge and of the practice of Yoga.
2. The knower of Truth does not suffer inwardly or outwardly, for he knows he alone fills the Universe.
3. No sense object ever pleases him who delights in the Self, even as the elephant who delights in Sallaki leaves is not pleased with the leaves of the Nima tree.
4. Rare indeed is the Sage who does not crave for that which he has enjoyed, and has no desire for that which he has not possessed.
5. In the world, those who crave for mundane joys and those who crave for liberation are found, but rare is that great-souled one who cares neither for enjoyment or liberation.
6. It is only an enlightened man who has no attachment to righteousness, prosperity, sense delights, or even liberation, and is indifferent to life and death.
7. Neither does the existence nor the dissolution of the Universe cause him either delight or aversion. The blissful Sage lives happily on whatever comes.
8. He who has this spiritual Knowledge, whose mind is absorbed in contemplation and who is contented, lives in bliss whether seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, or eating.
9. Attachment and detachment are the same for him for whom the ocean of the world has disappeared. His gaze is withdrawn (from external objects), his actions are without motive, his senses are inoperative.
10. He who is freed from the mind neither sleeps nor wakes, neither opens nor closes his eyes, but enjoys the supreme bliss under all conditions.
11. The liberated man is ever rooted in his own nature, and is pure in heart, free from all desires under all conditions.
12. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, acquiring, speaking and walking, the great-souled one, above action and inaction, is verily liberated.
13. The great-souled one neither commends nor censures anyone. He is neither angry, nor does he rejoice. He neither gives nor receives. He is free from attachment to objects.

14. Whether he perceives a woman full of love or death approaching him, the great-souled one remains unperturbed, rooted in his own nature. Verily, he has found liberation.
15. The serene Sage recognizes homogeneity everywhere, and perceives no difference in pleasure or pain, man or woman, prosperity or adversity.
16. For the man who is no longer bound by ignorance, the cause of birth and death, there is neither a desire to inflict injury, nor to demonstrate compassion. He experiences neither arrogance nor humility, wonder nor agitation.
17. The liberated man has no aversion for sense-objects, nor does he crave for them. With his mind ever detached, he is unconcerned with what is attained and with what remains unattained.
18. The wise man who has acquired mental vacuity (the mind being filled with Atman alone), is not concerned with contemplation or its absence. He is established in the Absolute State, and has transcended good and evil.
19. Devoid of the feeling of “This is mine” and “This I am” and knowing for certain that nothing objective exists in reality, the knower of Truth is at peace within himself, his desires have subsided. Though appearing to act, in fact he does not engage in action.
20. His mind having ceased to function and being free from delusion and inertia, the man of Self-Knowledge experiences the indescribable state.

Chapter XVIII

Ashtavakra said:

1. Salutations to That which is bliss, peace, and light, with the dawning of the Knowledge of which, all delusion as to the phenomenal Universe passes away like a dream.
2. Having acquired much wealth, one enjoys countless worldly pleasures, but to know true happiness, one must renounce them.
3. He whose heart is parched by the sun of affliction arising from the sense of duty, experiences no happiness until his mind has acquired tranquility.
4. The Universe is merely a mode of the mind. In reality, it has no existence. Those liberated beings are surely immortal who are identified with Reality – which is self-luminous, and which needs no support for Its existence, but which cognizes both existence and non-existence.
5. The nature of the Self is absolute, immutable, taintless. It is not distant, nor is it subject to attainment (being ever attained). This is Truth.
6. In those who have cognized the Self, illusion is dispelled, and the light of pure Consciousness shines through them. Their distress is at an end and they live in bliss.
7. The wise know that all that is not the Self is merely a movement of the mind. Being liberated, they live as a child lives.
8. Having finally realized that the Self is Brahman, and that existence and non-existence are imagined, what should such a one, free from desires, know, say, or do?
9. All such ideas such as “this am I” and “this I am not” end in the conviction that all is the Self. Realizing this, the Yogi becomes silent.
10. For the Yogi who has become inwardly calm, there is no distraction, no concentration, no increase or decrease of knowledge, no joy and no grief.
11. The dominion of Heaven, or indigence, profit or loss, society or solitude, are the same to the Yogi who has realized his nature to be free from all conditions.
12. The Yogi who has transcended dualistic reasoning, such as “this I have done, this still remains to be done,” sees no significance in ritual, material prosperity, sense enjoyment, or discrimination.

13. The Yogi who is liberated while yet in life has no further duties to perform, nor is his heart attached to anything. His actions in this world are appearances only.
14. The Yogi who has passed beyond the region of desires finds no significance in phenomena, in the Universe, in contemplation on That, or in liberation.
15. He who sees reality in the Universe may try to negate it. Not so the Mahatma who has rooted out all desires. Not seeing, he appears to see.
16. He who has known Brahman meditates on “I am Brahman.” What should he sees no duality meditate on?
17. He who is conscious of distraction, practices self-control. The illumined sage, having nothing further to accomplish, has no need of self-discipline.
18. Though the man of spiritual Knowledge appears to act like others, in fact he does not do so, for he sees no necessity for Samadhi, nor does he perceive distraction or any taint in his own essence.
19. Free from desire, he is neither conscious of existence nor non-existence (of the world) but is ever-satisfied and wise. Though appearing to act, nothing is done by him in reality.
20. He who experiences the supreme bliss of his own nature, and whose mind is ever tranquil and pure, he has no need to renounce, nor does he feel the lack of anything in himself.
21. The mind of the Sage does not give rise to the modifications of concentration, distraction or prejudice. His actions are not subject to any code, nor is he affected by honor or dishonor.
22. He who by right Knowledge has transcended the world of appearance, for him there is neither joy nor sorrow. With a serene mind he lives as one unrelated to his body.
23. He whose delight is in the Self, and who is consequently serene and pure, has no desire to renounce anything, nor does he feel any lack anywhere.
24. He who has acquired the natural state of vacuity of mind may act as he pleases. He is not affected by honor or dishonor as are ordinary men.
25. One who acts in conformity with such pure thoughts as “the body is the actor and not the Self,” though appearing to act, does not act.
26. The liberated Sage acts apparently without motive or purpose, and may be regarded as a fool, but in reality he has transcended action. Although appearing as happy and blessed in the world, verily, he has gone beyond it.

27. The wise man, weary of reasoning, who has attained supreme peace, neither thinks nor knows, nor hears nor sees.
28. That man of peace, beyond distraction and contemplation, is neither an aspirant for liberation, nor is he bound. Knowing the Universe to be an illusion, though perceiving it, he remains in the absolute state.
29. He who still retains his egotism is mentally active even when at rest. But the wise man who is free from egotism is incapable of sin or wrong action.
30. The mind of the freed Sage is unmoved by trouble or pleasure. It is inactive, static, and desireless, and also free from doubts.
31. The mind of the Sage is free from effort whether meditating or acting. His actions and meditations are not prompted by personal motives.
32. An ignorant man is bewildered on hearing the spiritual Truth, but a wise man, on hearing the Truth, withdraws his consciousness within himself, even though he appears like a fool outwardly.
33. Those unaware of the Truth practice concentration and discipline, but the wise who have found the Infinite Atman within their own Self, are ever-satisfied, and recognize no further cause for action.
34. Whether he lives a life of action or withdraws from the world, the ignorant man does not find spiritual peace, whereas the Gnostic discovers the Truth, and so become happy forever.
35. Though relying on different practices, men do not recognize the Self, which is Intelligence Itself, ever pure, beloved, perfect, transcending the changing Universe, and free from any conditions.
36. An ignorant man does not attain liberation though repeatedly practicing concentration. Whereas, that bless one through spiritual Knowledge is ever free and devoid of all activity.
37. The ignorant man does not realize Brahman because he still desires to know Him (implying that he is separate from Him). The wise man, however, realizes the nature of the Supreme Brahman without desiring Him.
38. Without the foundation of real Knowledge, the ignorant yearn for liberation, but do not achieve it. The wise, having transcended ignorance by truth, sever the root of all misery.

39. There is no spiritual peace for the ignorant, because they desire and seek it in the external world. The wise realize it internally as ever achieved, and are at peace.
40. Where is Self-Knowledge for him who depends on external things? Ignoring the world, the wise contemplate the Immutable Self.
41. The ignorant who strive for control of the mind never achieve it. But the wise, whose chief delight is in the Self, achieve it without effort.
42. Some recognize the existence of Being, and some deny it. Rare is the one who bestows no attention on phenomena and enjoys peace.
43. Although those of little intelligence regard Atman as secondless and undifferentiated, yet being under the delusion of relativity, they fail to realize it, and are therefore subject to suffering as long as they live.
44. The intellect of one who longs for liberation is relatively dependent (namely on the triad: the Knower, the Known, and the Knowing), but the intellect of the liberated one is independent (the triad being dissolved in absolute Knowledge), and is free from desire.
45. Becoming aware of the tigers of sense-objects, bewildered souls, seeking a shelter, resort to the cave of contemplation for the acquisition of self-control.
46. Seeing the lion of desirelessness, the elephants of the sense-objects quietly depart, or remain to serve him like slaves.
47. He who has resolved his doubts and whose mind is absorbed in the Self, no longer seeks the means to liberation. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, he lives happily in the world.
48. He who is self-controlled and whose intellect is pure, by the mere hearing of the truth, becomes indifferent to the enjoined rules of conduct.
49. Whatever is to be done he does without effort. Like a child, his conduct is neither good nor evil.
50. Independence (of desire and aversion) is the means to liberation, happiness, and peace. The supreme state of consciousness is also attained through independence.
51. All modification of the mind are dissipated when a man realizes that he is neither a doer nor an enjoyer.
52. The mind of the wise man, subject to no restraint and free from guile, shines forth in glory. Whereas, the fool whose mind is full of desire, simulates tranquility.

53. Sometimes the wise of freed intellect, who have transcended the mind and are no longer bound, disport themselves in various pastimes, and sometimes they retire into deep mountain caves.
54. No desire rises in the heart of the wise on looking upon a venerable brahmin, held in reverence, or a god, or a sacred spot, or a woman, or a king, or a dearly loved one.
55. The Yogi remains tranquil and unperturbed even when despised by his servants, children, wives, grandchildren, and other relatives.
56. Though he appears pleased, in fact he is not pleased. Though he appears to suffer, yet he is not in pain. Only those who have realized the supreme condition will recognize his state.
57. A sense of duty is not recognized by the wise. For them the world is void, and their true Self is immutable and pure.
58. The unenlightened man, even when doing nothing, is agitated. Whereas, the enlightened Sage remains calm even while fulfilling worldly duties.
59. The man of calm intellect is happy in ordinary life, whether sleeping, acting, speaking, or eating.
60. He who, in the realm of relativity, by virtue of his self-conquest, does not behave like an ordinary man, remains undisturbed like the calm surface of a vast lake, his sufferings at an end.
61. Even the passive and introspective life of a deluded man produces activity. Whereas, the life of action of the wise results in inactivity.
62. The deluded man often manifests aversion to his possessions, but he who has transcended attachment to the body is free from desire and aversion.
63. The deluded man is ever identified with thinking and non-thinking, whereas the spiritual man has transcended both these principles.
64. The Sage, like a child, while seemingly engaged in action is perfectly detached. Without a motive, he is not identified with the work in which he is apparently engaged.
65. Blessed is the Sage who has realized the nature of the Self, and is the same in all conditions. Who through acting in the world of relativity, does not identify himself with it.
66. To the wise, ever peaceful and infinite like space, where is the reflected Self, where is the world, where is the means, and where is the end?

67. Verily, glorious is the Sage, free from all desires and the embodiment of infinite bliss. He has attained the natural state of Samadhi through realizing the unconditioned.
68. In brief, the great-souled knower of the ultimate Truth has no desire for enjoyment or liberation, and is freed from attraction at all times and in all places.
69. To the great Sage, the whole Universe from Mahat (cosmic intellect) to the changing world, is nothing but a name. He who is pure and perfect and has withdrawn from all existence, to him nothing remains to be accomplished.
70. That enlightened one, who has known with certainty that the world is nothing but the product of illusion and does not exist in reality, to whom the inexpressible is known, he enjoys natural peace and bliss.
71. To him for whom there is no objective reality, and who is of the nature of pure intelligence, what rules of conduct should he follow, what need of renunciation and restraint for him?
72. The Sage who has realized his own infinity and is not conscious of relative existence, is freed from bondage and liberation, joy and sorrow.
73. Before the state of self-realization, the world exists only as Maya. The Sage, living devoid of the feeling of “I” and “mine,” is without attachment.
74. To the Sage who knows himself to be the Universal Self, indestructible and free from suffering, what is Knowledge, the Universe, and the feeling that “I am the body” and “the body is mine”?
75. As soon as an ignorant man relinquishes control over the mind and his spiritual practices, he becomes a prey to desires and fancies.
76. The foolish man, even after hearing the spiritual Truth, still clings to his delusion. He may through his efforts manifest tranquility of mind, but in reality he still craves for the enjoyment of sense objects.
77. He from whom activity has dropped away on the dawn of spiritual Knowledge, finds no purpose in doing or saying anything, even though he appears to act in the eyes of others.
78. For the knower of Truth, who is ever fearless and immutable, there is neither darkness or light, nor renunciation, nor anything whatsoever.
79. What is fearlessness, discrimination, or stability to the Yogi who is indestructible and impersonal by nature?
80. For the Yogi, there is neither heaven nor hell, nor even liberation in life.

81. The wise do not desire to achieve anything, nor does the lack of success cause them pain. Verily, their tranquil minds are ever filled with immortal bliss.
82. The desireless man does not praise the forbearing, nor does he censure the evil-doers. Equally content in happiness or misery, he find no duty to be done.
83. The wise do not look on birth and death with aversion, nor are they anxious to perceive Self. Free from joy and grief, they transcend life and death.
84. Glorious are the wise who are free from desire for sense-objects, and from attachment to son, wife, and other relationships. Free are they also from the care of the body.
85. The wise man is contented whatever comes to him. He wanders about at will, and rests wherever the sunset overtakes him.
86. The great-souled one, entirely dependent on the Self, is oblivious of the cycle of birth and death, and cares not whether his body is born or dies.
87. Blessed is the Yogi without attachment or possessions, who moves about at will, who is free from the pairs of opposites, and whose doubts have been dissolved.
88. He is glorious who is devoid of “my-ness,” to whom gold, earth, and stone are the same, who is neither influenced by rajas or tamas and the knots of whose heart are severed.
89. That liberated one is beyond comparison, within whose heart there is no desire, who is wholly unattached and ever contented.
90. The wise man, freed from all limitations, knows yet knows not, sees yet sees not, speaks yet speaks not.
91. Whether he be a king or a beggar, he who is free from pleasure-desires is supreme. In his conviction there is neither good nor evil.
92. To the Yogi who has fulfilled the supreme purpose of life, and who is the embodiment of simplicity and rectitude, what is license, and what is restraint, and what need for the determination of Truth?
93. How can the inner experience of the one who is desireless, whose sufferings are at an end, and who rests in the calm of the Self, be described?
94. Contented under all conditions is the Yogi who sleeps not in the sleeping state, who dreams not in the dreaming state, and who wakes not in the waking state.

95. The man of Knowledge is free from thought though appearing to think, is free from sense-organs though appearing to possess them, is free from intelligence though appearing to be endowed with it, and is without a sense of ego though appearing to possess it.

96. He is neither happy nor unhappy, neither attached nor unattached, neither liberated nor desirous of liberation, he is neither this nor that.

97. The illumined one is not distracted even in a state of distraction, is not meditative even in meditation, is not dull even in a state of dullness, is not learned even though he appears to be possessed of learning.

98. The Self-realized and liberated Yogi, who under all conditions abides peacefully in the Self, who is free from all conceptions of duty and action, being desireless, never considers what he has done, and what he has not done.

99. He is neither pleased when praised, not angry when blamed. He neither fears death, nor rejoices in life.

100. The enlightened one neither avoids the crowd, nor seeks the forest. Under any conditions, in any place, he remains unmoved.

Chapter XIX

Janaka said:

1. From the inner recesses of my heart I have erased all shades of opinion through the instrumentality of the Knowledge of Truth.
2. Abiding in my glory, I see neither Dharma, Kama nor Artha – discrimination, duality, nor non-duality.
3. Abiding in my own glory, where is past, present, future, space, or eternity for me?
4. Abiding in the bliss of realization, I have no consciousness either of Self or non-self, good or evil, hope or fear.
5. Free from the waking, dreaming and deep-sleep states, for me who abide in my own glory, even the fourth state does not exist. How can there then be fear?
6. Established in the supreme state, where is distance, where is proximity, where is grossness, where is subtlety, where is the external, where is the internal for me?
7. Resting in my own effulgence, neither life nor death exist for me. For me, there is no relativity nor worldly phenomena, no withdrawal, nor Samadhi.
8. Reposing in my own Self, what need have I to dwell on the three ends of life, or on Yoga, or on wisdom?

Chapter XX

1. In my perfect being (Atman), neither the elements, nor the body, nor the sense-organs, nor the thinking principle, nor the void, nor despondency, exist.
2. What need is there for desirelessness or contentment, or what meaning have the Scriptures, Self-Knowledge, and the mind and its objects, to me, who am without a sense of duality?
3. What is Knowledge, what is ignorance, what is the limited ego, or “I”, “This”, or “Mine”, what is bondage or freedom, to me, where is the definition of the Self?
4. What is prarabdha Karma, what is liberation in life, or liberation at the time of death, to the undifferentiated?
5. Where is the doer or the enjoyer, and where is the rising or vanishing of thought? Where is direct perception of Reality, for me, who have cast off individuality?
6. For me, who am free and above unity and multiplicity, there is no world and no candidate for release. Neither do I recognize the state of contemplation nor the state of Knowledge. The state of bondage and liberation are one to me.
7. Having realized my own nature, the undivided essence, the manifestation and withdrawal of the world no longer exists for me. Where is the goal, and where is the purpose? Where is the seeker, and where is the liberated one?
8. Neither am I Knowledge, the vehicle of Knowledge, nor the object of Knowledge. What is entity or non-entity, to me, who am eternal perfection?
9. What are joy and grief, distraction and concentration, dullness and delusion, to me, who am actionless?
10. Being freed from all mental activity, where is relativity, where is transcendence, where is joy, and where is grief, for me?
11. Being ever perfect, neither Maya nor the world, neither attachment nor detachment, neither Jiva nor Brahman exist in me.
12. For me, who am immutable, indivisible, and rooted in the Self, there is neither the path of action, nor of renunciation, neither bondage nor release.
13. I am Shiva, the unconditioned, the absolute Good. What need is there for instruction or scriptural injunction? I am neither Guru nor disciple.

14. What need for further declarations? Nothing emanates from me, nor does existence or non-existence, unity or duality. abide in me.

Ashtavakra Gita

Translated by Akhandanand Saraswati

Chapter 1

1.

Janak said, ‘My revered Guru, you have the capacity to enlighten me. What is the method for obtaining Gnan? By what method will I get mukti (liberation from the cycle of rebirth)? Please Grace me by telling me these things.

2.

Ashtavakra said, ‘My dear King! If you want mukti, give up the vishaya (objects of the senses) as though they were visha (poison). And, bring into your life the qualities of kshamaa (forgiveness), saralataa (straightforwardness), dayaa (compassion), santosha (contentment) and satya (truthfulness), as though they were amrita (the elixir that bestows immortality).

3.

You are not the prithivee (earth), nor jala (water), nor agni (fire), nor vaayu (wind), nor aakaasha (space; ether). If you want to be the saakshee (witness) of all these, know that you are the chit-svaroopa (the form of consciousness).

4.

If you separate your gross physical body, and establish your Self in the chit-swarup Atma (if you give up identifying with that, which is not the Atma), you will at once become free of all bondage. You will become sukhi and shaanta (perfectly contented and tranquil).

5.

You are not of any varna (the four classes of Brahmin-the scholar, Kshatriya-the warrior, Vaishya-the trader, and Shudra-the laborer). You are not of any ashrama (stages of life like the Brahmchari-celibate student, Grihastha-married householder, Vanaprasthi-retired person who turns towards spirituality, or Sanyasi-a Monk). Nor are you drishya (something perceived by the senses). You are the asanga (unconnected to anything), niraakaara (formless), vishva-saakshee (witness of the whole world). Therefore, become sukhi.

6.

You are ananta (endless). Dharma-adharma (Dharma, and that which is contrary to Dharma), and sukha-dukha (happiness and sorrow) are only related to your mind, not to you. You are neither a kartaa (doer) nor the bhoktaa (the one who has the experiences). Your essence is nitya-mukta (eternal – liberated).

7.

You are the one and only drashtaa (the one who sees) of the whole world that is the drishya (seen). And, you are always and totally mukta. Your bondage is only that you consider the drashta to be separate from your Self; because the drashta will become that, which is seen, if it is separate from the one who sees.

8.

The ego is the great serpent that makes you believe, 'I am the karta.' You have been stung by this serpent. Take a sip of the faith of the amrita, 'I am not the karta,' and become sukhi.

9.

To think, 'I am one and I am pure knowledge,' is a decision. It is a fire with which you should burn the forest of agnaana (ignorance; lack of Gnan about the Tattva). This will make your life free of sorrow. Do this, and become sukhi.

10.

The Atma is the adhishtaana (substratum), on which this whole world is imagined the way a coiled snake is imagined in a coiled rope. The bodha svaroop (the form of knowledge) that is aananda-paramaananda (bliss-supreme bliss) is you. Therefore, move about with sukha.

11.

The chitta (mental inclination; thought) that has the subtle ego, 'I am mukta,' is mukta; and the chitta that has the subtle ego, 'I am baddha (bound) is bound.' The proverb, 'Jaisee mati vaisee gati' (you are what you think) is true.

12.

The Atma is the sakshi, vibhu (all-pervading), poorna (complete in itself), adviteeya (non-dual), mukta (liberated) che`tan (conscious), nishkriya (inactive), asanga (unattached), nispriha (desireless), and shaanta (tranquil). It seems to be sansaaree (of the interactive world); the one who does, experiences, comes and goes, because of bhram (wrong understanding).

13.

It is a bhram to think, 'I (the karta and bhokta) am the jeeva (Atma attached to a body; an individual), the chidaabhaasa (an illusion of the pure consciousness). Let go of this wrong belief. Let go of the perceived external and internal differences. Experiencing your Self as the adviteeya bodha-svaroop (the form of knowledge) and kootastha (unchanging; unaffected Atma).

14.

My son! You have been caught in the snare of de`haabhimaana (the subtle ego of believing yourself to be the body), since time immemorial. 'I am the bodha-swarup' is a sword made of Gnan. Use this to cut away the false belief, and be sukhi. (That, which is removed by Gnan is mithyaa – it is a relative truth; therefore the bondage is mithya.)

15.

You are asanga (unattached), akriya (inactive), svayam—prakaasha (self-effulgent), and therefore, svatah-shuddha (naturally pure). Your bondage is that you do an anushthaana (religious ritual with a specific purpose) of Samadhi. (The swarup is the Self is the substratum of everything. It is self-established. It is not something to be procured or attained.)

16.

This entire drishya prapancha (the interactive world that is seen) is filled with you (the way cloth is filled with the warp and woof of thread), and is actually you. You are the shuddha-buddha (pure-enlightened) swarup of the world. Don't be kshudra-chitta (consider yourself small).

17.

Don't depend on any other, don't be vikrita (distorted) in any way. Don't bother about the drishya padaartha (seen objects). Let what happens happen. Keep your antahkaran (fourfold mind; subtle body) calm. Let nobody guess the depth of your buddhi (intellect; thinking). Let your buddhi be focused on the ananta (infinite). Don't allow anything to agitate you. Have nishthaa (faith) only in the chit-svaroop (the form that is pure consciousness), not in the actions of the vritti (mental inclinations; thoughts).

18.

Understand that an object which is related to a form (whether it is imagined or experienced by the senses) is mithya (because form itself is mithya – it is a relative truth – so any object that has a form will definitely be mithya). If the snake that is imagined in a coiled rope is mithya, the rope in which the snake perceived, is the substratum; it is not the support of the snake. That, which is free of form and anything related to a form, is achala (unmoving; steady).

19.

Just as the form seen in a mirror is nothing but the mirror, inside or outside, the body, too, is only the Paramatma inside and outside. (It is a mere perception, like the reflection in a mirror. The world and this body are perceptions in the unchanging Sacchidananda – Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Ananda = pure bliss – that is the Atma-Tattva.

20.

Just as the all-encompassing space is inside and outside a pot, the Brahman is inside and outside everything that is seen. The Brahman is not affected by space, time and matter. It is free of the differences of sajaateeya (of the same group), vijaateeya (of another group) and svagata (within itself). (Just as a pot has no significant existence in the view of infinite space, the perceived objects have no significance in the Brahman.)

Chapter 2

1.

It is a marvel! It is a wonder! I am the shuddha (pure), shaanta (tranquil) gnaana-svaroopā (form of Gnan), and I am far beyond Prakriti (Nature). It was agnan that kept me ensnared in the trammels of this world for so long.

2.

I alone am the one who illuminates the whole world in the same way as I alone illuminate this body. The whole world – including my body – is that, which is illuminated; and I alone am the illuminator. Therefore, this whole world is mine (it is agnan to think that only one body is mine), or else, nothing is mine.

3.

It is strange that I have given up my body and the entire drishya jagat (perceived world), and am having the darshan (see with reverence) of the Paramatma at this very moment, by some indescribable ability. (It is a skill to be able to negate the drishya. The knowledge of the self-established drashtaa – the one who sees – is His darshan.)

4

Just as waves, foam and bubbles are not separate from the water, the drishyamaana (visible) prapancha (interactive world) is not separate from the atma-sattaa (the existence of the Atma), because it is seen by the Atma. (That, which is illuminated, is dependent on the source of illumination.) The existence that is dependent on any other is actually mithya – a relative truth.

5.

When you give it some thought, you realize that cloth is nothing but thread; it is not separate from the thread from which it is made. Similarly, when you give it some thought, you realize that this whole world is nothing but the Atma-satta.

6.

Just as sweetness is imagined in the juice of sugar cane, and it pervades the sugar cane, this whole world is imagined in me, and is pervaded by me. (The tongue is an upaadhee – a superimposition – in the experience of sweetness; therefore, its sattaa – existence – is dependent, and hence, mithya. The experience of the Satya is not dependent on any indreeya or upadhi, in the form of a vritti – mental inclination. Therefore, it is self-established and all-pervading.)

7.

The world is perceived as Satya because of not knowing our Self; once you know your Self, the world no longer seems real. A coiled rope is mistaken for a snake, but when you obtain the knowledge that it is actually a coiled rope, the snake no longer seems real.

8.

Gnan is my own swarup; I am not separate from Gnan. Whenever this world is illuminated, it is by my effulgence (the existence of Gnan) that all the different objects are perceived. The shuddha (Gnan) that is independent of the gne`ya (that, which is known) is our swarup.

9.

It is a wonder that just as silver is perceived in a sea shell, a snake is perceived in a coiled rope, and water is perceived in sun rays, this world that is imagined due to agnan is perceived in my Self.

10.

Just as a pot, merges into clay, a ripple merges into water, and a bangle merges into gold, this world that is illuminated by me will merge into me.

11.

I am dhanya (the form of wonder) and worthy of respect, because I will never be destroyed. The whole world – from Brahma to a blade of grass – may be destroyed, but I remain.

12.

I am dhanya (blessed) and worthy of respect, because even though I have a gross physical form, I am adviteeya. Neither do I go anywhere, nor do I come from anywhere. I pervade the whole world, and I remain.

13.

I am dhanya and worthy of respect. Nobody is as clever as me, because I have no contact with my body, and I have upheld the world since the beginning of time.

14.

I am dhanya and worthy of respect, because nothing belongs to me; or else, everything that is the object of speech and the mind belongs only to me.

15.

Gnan, gneya, and the gnaataa (knower) are not really three. They seem to be three, due to agnan about the adhisthaana (substratum; the Atma). This agnan is maayaa-mala (the impurity of Maya, the Ishwara's power of illusion). I am the shuddha Brahman that is free of this maya-mala.

16.

I am, actually, bodha-svaroopa (the form of Gnan). I have imagined the upadhi because of the agnan of my swarup. (I believed the mithya drishya to be the Satya, and identified with it.) By thinking this every day, it becomes evident that my state is in the nirvikalpa (free of doubts). The nishthaa (faith) of my chitta gets settled in the nirvikalpa.

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18.

I have never had bandhan (bondage), or mukti (liberation). What a surprising thing it is that even though the whole world is perceived in me, it is actually not in me. The bhraanti (false belief) is quieted because it has no aashraya (refuge). (False understanding has no connection of taking refuge, or being the refuge, with the shuddha Atma.)

19.

It is certain that this whole world, including my gross physical body, has no reality. The Atma is shuddha chinmaatra (consciousness), so in what is the world imagined? (It is not imagined in anything.)

20.

This gross physical body, Swarga, Narak, bandhan, Moksha, and bhaya (fear) are all imagined. That being the case, does any duty or obligation remain for my chidaatmaa (Atma that is pure consciousness)?

21.

The surprising factor is that I see no dvaita (duality) even in a crowd of people. Everything seems to be a lonely forest. Who am I to feel love for?

22.

Neither am I the body, nor is the body mine. I am not even a jeeva. I am shuddha che'tan (consciousness). My bondage was only that I wanted to stay alive (remain bound to the belief of this mithya life).

23.

I am an infinite ocean. When the wind of my chitta begins to move in me, the waves of seen objects rise up (the entire drishya prapanch – the perceived world – is an expansion of my resolves).

24.

I am an infinite ocean, the world is a ship, and the jeeva is a trader. When the misfortune of the jeeva quiets the wind of the chitta (the resolves), the ship of the jagat (world) is destroyed.

25.

It is very surprising that in the great ocean that I am, there are many waves, in the form of jeevas that rise up in me. They crash against each other, they ripple and merge into the ocean. (This is an indication of the upadhi of the form of the antahkaran.)

Chapter 3

1.
You have obtained the essence of the knowledge of the adviteeya (non-dual), avinaashee (indestructible) Atma. You are an Atmagnya (one who knows the Atma). You are dheera (resolute). Then, why are you involved in earning wealth?
2.
A person who does not know a sea shell is greedy for the silver in it. In the same way, a person who does not know his own swarup gets deluded into being attracted by sense objects.
3.
'I am the adhishtaana chaitanya (the consciousness that is the substratum), the sea on which the world is seen like waves.' Knowing this, why are you running hither and thither like some impoverished beggar, seeking sense objects?
4.
'I am the extremely beautiful, pure consciousness.' Having heard this from your Guru and the Shastras, if a person is addicted to the sensual indulgences of the janane`ndriya (organs of reproduction), he gets malinataa (sullied)
5.
It is very surprising that even the mind of a person who knows that all the drishya padaartha (seen objects) are in him, and he is in them, has the vive`ka (discrimination), has mamataa (emotional attachments). This should never be the case.
6.
The advaya-vastu (non-dual object; the Atma) has no bhe`da (differences) of sajaateeya-vijaateeya-svagata (of the same group, of a different group, within itself). When a person has nishthaa (faith) in this, and has reached a firm conclusion of the nitya (eternal), mukta (liberated) swarup of the Atma, it is extremely surprising that he is enslaved and troubled by kaama (lust) due to past habits.
7.
Kama is the enemy of Gnan. Everything connected to the body is trapped by death. It is extremely surprising that in spite of knowing this, you become weak and yearn for bhoga.
8.
It is very surprising that a person who has given up all interest in the bhogas of this world and other realms, and has developed the ability for the vivek of nityaanitya (the eternal and the transient), is also afraid of losing awareness of the vishaya (sense objects).
9.
A dheera person always has aatma-drishti (sees everything as his Atma), whether he is offered bhoga or abused. Neither does he feel pleased nor angry.

10.

A Mahatma uses his body with the same attitude as the use of other people's bodies. Why should such a person feel agitated, whether he is praised or criticized?

11.

A sthitapragna (enlightened person) feels no surprise about anything. He considers the world to be a magic show. Why should he be afraid when faced with death?

12.

A Mahatma's chitta-vritti (mental state) is not disturbed even by the prospect of Moksha or a nirvikalpa Samadhi (total absence of awareness). He feels aatma-gnaana-tripti (the contentment of the Gnan that he is the Atma). Who can compare with such a Mahatma?

13.

Why should a sthitapragna, who knows that the perceived world has no real substance, start thinking about what is worth accepting and what is worth giving up?

14.

Once a person has washed away the colors of desire from his antahkaran, driven out dualities like sukha-dukha, and is untouched by any whiff of hope or yearning, he remains unmoved by sukha and dukha, whether his praarabdha (fruits of past actions) bring him bhoga or not.

Chapter 4

1.

It is true that even a sthitapragna aatmagnaani (one who knows that he is the Atma) sometimes indulges in bhoga as a frolic. However, he cannot be compared to the foolish people who carry the burden of the sansaara (interactive world).

2.

It is extremely strange that a Tattvagnani does not have the vikaara (mental distortions) like joy, when he is established in the position of enlightenment – a state that even Indra and other Devtas long for.

3.

The sky may look as if it is covered with smoke, but it is not so. Similarly, a Tattvagna may seem to be involved with punya-paapa (spiritual merit and sin) on the surface, but he remains untouched by them.

4.

Who can stop an enlightened Mahatma – who has had a saakshaatkaara (direct personal experience) of the Tattva, that the whole world is the form of the Atma – from behaving as he pleases?

5.

In the entire Creation – from Brahma to the smallest blade of grass – a Tattvagna alone has the shakti (power) to give up ichhaa (desire) as well as anichhaa (lack of desire). (People attached to sense objects cannot give up desire, and Yogis cannot give up their wish to attain Samadhi, where no desire exists. A Tattvagna is established in a state where he knows that both states are mere perceptions.)

6.

Only some rare person has the realization that the Atma and the Brahman are one. Therefore, he can do anything. He has nothing to fear anywhere.

Chapter 5

1.

You have no adhyaasa (false identification) with any object. You, yourself, are pure; then, what do you want to let go of? Using vichaara (deep analytical thought) let go of the vyashti (individual) and samashti (collective; all) shareera (bodies) and become mukta.

2.

All the drishya padaartha (seen objects) rise up from you the way drops of water rise up in the sea. As you gradually obtain the realization that only one aatma-sattaa (the existence of the Atma) is real, become nirvikalpa (free of doubts and dualities), shanta, and mukta.

3.

Even though the world is seen clearly, it is absolutely non-existent in you shuddha swarup. It is like mistaking a coiled rope for a snake. Come to this conclusion and become mukta.

4.

You are poorna (whole; complete in yourself). Know this, and know that sukha-dukha, aashaa-niraashaa (hope-hopelessness), jeevana-mrityu (life-death) etc are equal; and become mukta.

Chapter 6

1.

‘I am like infinite space, and the gross world is like a pot.’ (When you think of infinite space, a pot can’t be calculated as being a measurable part of it.) That being the case, there is neither giving up, nor accepting the world, nor merging. This is Gnan. (From the viewpoint of infinite space, limited space does not exist.)

2.

‘I am like the ocean, and the prapancha (interactive world) is like the waves in it.’ This is Gnan. That being the case, neither is the prapanch given up, nor is it accepted; nor does it have any form. (From the viewpoint of the cause, the effect is not separate from it.)

3.

‘I am like a sea-shell, and the world has been imagined in me like the silver in a sea-shell.’ This is Gnan. That being the case, neither is the world to be given up, nor to be accepted; nor does it merge. Here, the jagat (world) is indicated as being the vivarta (mutation) of the Atma. The purport is that the feeling of cause and effect – caused by bhram (mistaken understanding) are non-existent.

4.

‘I am in all beings, and all beings are in me. (like the silver seen in a sea-shell).’ This is Gnan. That being the case, what will be the giving up, accepting, or merging of the jagat? (Only the Atma exists.)

Chapter 7

1.

I am the endless ocean in which the boat of this world is driven hither and thither by the wind of the mind. This does not irritate me.

2.

The waves of this world may or may not rise in the endless ocean of my existence; they are neither beneficial nor harmful for me.

3.

This whole world is imagined in the endless ocean of my existence. I am absolutely tranquil, and free of name or form. This is my firm conviction.

4.

I am not the Atma in this shareer, or anything else. Neither are any of these in the ananta (infinite), shuddha (pure) Atma that I am. (the shareer and the Atma have no relationship like pervading-pervaded, because there is no duality.) Therefore, there is no aasakti (emotional attachment) in me, no sprihaa (covetousness). I am completely undisturbed and tranquil. This is my firm conviction.

5.

How surprising it is that I am only chitsvaroopa (the form of pure consciousness), and this world is like a magic show – an indrajaala. That being the case, why should I imagine anything to be worth renouncing or accepting?

Chapter 8

1.
When the chitta desires something, grieves for someone, catches, or lets go of something, and becomes angry or pleased with something – that is when the person is bound.
2.
When the chitta is free of desire, grief, renunciation, acceptance, joy and anger, it is mukta (liberated).
3.
When the chitta is attached to anything that is seen in this world, the person has bondage. When the chitta has no attachments, the person has Moksha.
4.
When the ahambhaava (identification) with the vyashti-samashti (individual-collective whole) is negated, there is Moksha. Wherever there is ahambhava, there is bondage. Know this and neither catch nor give up any expectation.

Chapter 9

1.
Who has ever succeeded in quieting dvandva (dualities) like ‘I did this; I did not do this’? Know this, and stop worrying about such matters. Become tyaaga-paaraayana (inclined towards renunciation). Don’t take any vrata (pledge for asceticism). Don’t have any urge for doing or not doing anything concerning the drishya. The fruit of Gnan is anaagraha (lack of strong urges).
2.
It is a rare Mahapurusha who, seeing the dazzle of society, finds all desires to live, indulge in, or know the interactive world leaving him. (A Gnani has no feeling of having any obligation, obtaining things, having Gnan, or having an individual personality.)
3.
This whole world is sullied with mental, divine, and natural suffering. It is transient. It has no substance. It is worth criticizing and giving up. Realize this, and be at peace.
4.
Is there ever a time or condition when people are not troubled by dualities like the cold-heat, joy-sorrow, etc? So, ignore them, and proceed in life, accepting what comes. Only a person who does this attains success.
5.
Which profound thinker, who hears the conflicting opinions of the Rishis, Sadhus, and Yogis, fails to lose interest in them? Such a person becomes tranquil.
6.
A person who attains Gnan about the swarup of chaiantya (consciousness) loses interest in the world and develops equanimity; and he helps others to cross over the ocean of this world. Is such a person not a Gnani?
7.
See only the panchabhoota (five elements) in the senses and the sense organs that are the vikaara (distortions) of the panchabhoot. You will immediately become free of bondage, and established in your swarup. (As soon as your focus shifts from the anaatmaa – that, which is not the Atma – the Atma becomes established in its own form, realizing that the anatma is asat – it is not Satya.)
8.
Vaasanaa (avid desires) are the sansaara (interactive world). Give them up. The tyaaga (giving up) of the sansara is possible only by giving up vasanas. The person then becomes aloof from the condition of the body, antahkaran (mind), and the sansara.

Chapter 10

1.
Wealth is the cause of many ills. Kaama (desire) and bhoga are your enemies; and Dharma (instituted religion) is the cause of both. Let go of them all. Develop indifference for worldly things.
2.
Friends, land, wealth, palace, women, heirs, and other assets are like a dream or an illusion that last for a few days. See things thus, and understand this.
3.
Sansara is where trishnaa (longing) is. (The triad of the one who desires, the desire itself, and the desired object, is the sansara.) Take the aashraya (refuge) of a praudha (mature) vairagya (detachment) and give up trishna. Become sukhi and free of cares.
4.
Trishna is the only cause of bandhana (bondage). Moksha is the name of its destruction. As soon as you become detached from the drishya-varga (everything that is known by the senses) you start feeling fulfilled and blissful.
5.
You are One, and you are shuddha che`tan (consciousness). This world is jada (insensate) and asat. The well-known avidyaa (nescience) of the jigyaasu (seeker of the Truth) is nothing. Then, what is the object you wish to know?
6.
Your attachment to the Kingdom, son, women, your body, and sukha, has continued for several lifetimes, but these never endured. They were all destroyed.
7.
You have achieved wealth, indulgences, and punya karma (actions of spiritual merit). Discontinue these activities. This world is like a dense forest in which these saadhana (methods for spiritual progress) give no shanti.
8.
Nobody knows how many lifetimes you have spent in troublesome rituals, using your body, mind and speech. Now, at least, give them up!

Chapter 11

1.

From bhaava (physical existence) to abhaava (physical absence), and from abhava to bhava, there are vikaara (distortions) that occur in Nature (like the states of waking dreaming, and deep sleep, from birth to death, Creation to Dissolution and back to Creation). A person who comes to this conclusion becomes free of vikaras and kle'shas (suffering). He needs to make no effort to obtain shanti.

2.

The Ishwara (the Brahman with attributes) is the only Creator of everything. There is no other Creator. Once a person has come to this conclusion, all his expectations are dissolved, and he becomes shanta. He has no worldly attachments.

3.

Aapatti (problems) and sampatti (wealth) come in time, given by the daiva (destiny created by past actions). A person who comes to this conclusion always feels contented, and his indreeya (senses) are always in a healthy state. Neither does he have any desire for things he does not have, nor does he grieve over what has gone. (The first shloka is about svabhaavavaada – the principle of Nature, and the second is about eeshvaravaada – the principle of the Ishwara, and the third shloka is about taking refuge in daivavaada – the Devta, and get the feeling of being the akartaa – 'I am not the doer', and a mind that is free of tension.)

4.

When a person decides that sukha-dukha, and janma-mrityu (birth-death) are given by the Devta, he sees nothing as worth working for. He makes no effort, and gets no satisfaction in doing anything. (Duty becomes a labor.)

5.

'It is worry that causes dukha in this world, otherwise there is no dukha.' When a person comes to this conclusion, he becomes free of worries. He becomes sukhi and shanta. He has no urge to obtain anything.

6.

'I am neither the de'ha (body) nor is the deha mine. I am the pure form of Gnan.' When a person comes to this conclusion, it is as though he has obtained a state of Kaivalya (being one with the universe, which is his natural state). Such a person never remembers what he did or did not do.

7.

When a person decides, 'Everything is my Self, from the Brahman to the smallest blade of grass,' he becomes free of resolves and doubts, pure and at peace. He remains tranquil, whether he gets something or not.

8.

This world is full of surprising things, but it is nothing. When a person realizes this, all his desires turn into ashes. He is a mere pulsation, as though he is nothing. He feels that nothing is real, and he becomes shanta. His life is sfoortimaatra – it is merely an inspiration; it is free of desire.

Chapter 12

1.

First, there is intolerance for physical activity. Then, there is intolerance for excessive talk, and after that, intolerance for worrying about anything. Therefore, I am established in my Self. (When the kaarya – effect, which is the action – is given up, the need for the kaarana – cause – becomes clear, and the person reaches a state that is free of resolves.)

2.

I am established in my Self, because I have no inclination for the objects of the senses. The Atma is not something that can be seen. Because of this, I remain focused even when I see causes for mental distortions. (Inclinations do not identify with sense objects on their own; and there is no need for them to take on the form of the Atma.) So, I remain at peace.

3.

I have seen the rule that people try to attain Samadhi because of mental disturbances caused by samyak adhyaasa (total superimposition of the external world on the substratum that is the Atma). That is why I remain unaffected. (There is no Samadhi if there is no mental disturbance.)

4.

O Janaka, I am established in my Self because there is nothing that is tyaaaja (to be given up), graahya (to be accepted); no harsha (joy) and no vishaada (sorrow) for me.

5.

‘This is an aashrama (stage in life) and this is tyaga (renouncing) of the ashram. This is dhyana and this is vikshep. This is worth thinking about and that is not.’ All these create only dilemmas, so (I remain aloof from them) I remain established in my Self.

6.

Just as a karmaanushtaana (religious ritual) is done by agnan, its tyaga is also done by agnan. Knowing this essence, I remain established in my Self (unconcerned about activity or withdrawing from activities.)

7.

Even by doing chintan (thinking deeply) upon the Atma-Tattva that is achintya (beyond thought), it becomes the form of our thinking; so, I am established in my self-established swarup.

8.

Whoever has molded himself thus by regular practice becomes fulfilled. A person to whom this is natural is already fulfilled.

Chapter 13

1.

The feeling of well-being that comes from knowing that nothing exists except the Atma, is not attained easily even by renunciates who wear only a loin-cloth. That is why I have given up both tyaga and grahan, and lead a carefree life.

2.

Sometimes the body suffers, sometimes the tongue suffers, and sometimes the mana suffers. This is why I have let go of all these, and am sukhi in my Self. (If you think about worldly interaction, there is some dukha everywhere, so you should shift your focus away from it.)

3.

The karmas done by the body or the antahkaran are nothing; they are mere perceptions. I have come to this conclusion. I do whatever task that comes before me, and remain happy.

4.

Whether you make a resolve to do some karma, or give it up, this subtle vanity is for a saadhaka (spiritual seeker) who identifies with his body. I am not united with anyone (because no other exists). That is why I am always sukhi.

5.

Neither am I benefited, nor am I harmed by sthiti (the present state), gati (the movement), or shayana (sleeping), so I remain happy, whether I sit still, move about, or sleep.

6.

Neither am I harmed by sleeping, nor do I benefit by achieving anything through effort, so I give up all thought of gain and harm, and remain happy.

7.

There is no rule about any object or condition containing sukha or dukha. I have seen this repeatedly. That is why I give up thinking about the shuddha and ashuddha (impure), and remain happy.

Chapter 14

1.

A person, whose mind is naturally disinclined towards the objects of the senses, and he gets involved in them absentmindedly, is like a man who is lethargic in his actions because he has just awoken from a deep sleep. Such a person is actually free of the interactive world.

2.

Since my desires are destroyed, the wealth, friends, and senses that are like robbers who steal our peace of mind, are all meaningless for me. Let alone everything else, even the Shastras and vignaana (applied Gnan) have no meaning for me.

3.

The pure tvam-padaartha (the 'You' factor, meaning the Atma) and the pure tat-padaartha (the 'That' factor, meaning the Brahman) are both the one sakshi. Once this is known, the belief in worldly bondage and Moksha is destroyed. Then, why should I be worried about Mukti?

4.

When a person's heart is free of all doubts and dualities, but he seems to be bhraanta (having a deluded understanding) to the people of this world, his indefinable condition is understood only by those who are in a similar state.

Chapter 15

1.
A saattvika (having lofty tendencies) person can obtain enlightenment even with a brief elucidation, but a person who lacks this quality remains trapped in moha (deluded thinking) even if he tries all his life to understand the ultimate Truth.
2.
When vishaya (sense objects) lose their appeal, that is Moksha. To take pleasure in sense objects is bondage. This is the sum of vignana. Know this, and do what you want.
3.
Tattvabodha (knowledge of the Tattva) makes a speaker stop speaking, makes an intelligent person inanimate, and makes a hard-working person indolent. Therefore, anyone who desires bhoga should give it up.
4.
Neither are you the body, nor does the body belong to you. You are not the karta, nor are you the bhokta. You are the sakshee (witness) that remains unaffected. Be happy; free of expectations.
5.
Raaga-dve'sha (attachment-aversion) are the dharma (intrinsic nature) of the mana (emotional mind), and the mana was never yours, anyway. You are free of doubts and distortions; you are the essence of Gnan. Live happily
6.
Be happy in the knowledge that you are in everything, and all things are in you. Be free of worldly attachments. (Where there is a feeling of an aadhaara – a support – and aadhe'ya – the supported, the Atma is like the rope that is seen; like the snake perceived in a coiled rope due to faulty understanding.)
7.
O, you are the essence of chit (consciousness) that is the substratum in which this vishva (world) is seen, like waves in the sea. There is no doubt about this, so be vijvara (free of all worries).
8.
My son! Have shraddhaa (faith), have shraddha. Make no mistake about this. Your shuddha swarup is beyond Prakriti (the laws of Nature); it is only pure Gnan. It is the tat-pada (the status of 'That', meaning the Brahman). You are the Atma (free of the impositions of Ishwara and the jeeva).
9.
This body is created in the guna – the tendencies – of sanskaara (subtle subconscious impressions), vasanas, indreeyas, vrittis, and the praana (life spirit); and it is this that

comes and goes (in this world). The Atma neither comes nor goes (it is not born, and it does not die). So, why do you grieve for the body?

10.

Whether this de'ha (body) survives this kalpa (eon), or dies today, you are the chit-svaroop (form of consciousness). How can you be harmed by what happens to the body?

11.

You are the infinite ocean and the world is like a small wave in it. It may rise up naturally, or not rise up at all. The movement of the water does not affect you in any way.

12.

My son, you are the chit-swarup. This world is not separate from you. That being the case, who, where, and why will any feeling arise, about anything being worth accepting or giving up?

13.

You are the chidaakaasha (the space that is consciousness). You are indestructible, tranquil, and unsullied. There is no janma (birth) in you, no karma, and no ahankaara (pride) in you.

14.

Whatever you see is an object that is a form of your own Self. Are ornaments like bangles, armlets and anklets separate from the gold they are made of?

15.

Let go of the decision, 'I am this, I am that, I am not that'. Everything is the Atma. Know this for certain, and be free of resolves. Be sukhi.

16.

This world seems real because of your agnan about your own swarup. You alone are the paramaatha (highest truth). There is no sansaaree jeeva (Atma attached to a body that interacts in this world) and no asansaaree (the Ishwara who is not of the interactive world), that is separate from you.

17.

'This world is only a bhraanti (mistaken understanding). Actually, nothing exists.' Once a person reaches this conclusion, all his desires are destroyed; he is only a sfoorana (pulsation). He experiences liberation from worldly existence.

18.

Only one existed and only one will exist, in the ocean of this world. You have neither bondage nor Moksha. You are fulfilled. Live happily in this world.

19.

You are the chit-swarup. Don't agitate your chitta (mind) with resolves and dilemmas. Rise above them, and remain tranquil. Be established and happy in your Atma, which is the swarup of anand.

20.

Don't do dhyaana (meditation) anywhere, of anyone. Don't focus on anything in your heart. You are the nitya (eternal), mukta (free) Atma. What will you achieve by thinking?

Chapter 16

1.

My son! You may study many Shastras repeatedly, or listen to discourses upon them, but you will not attain a state of being nisankalpa (free of resolves) which is essential for you to be established in your swarup.

2.

You have discrimination. You may do bhoga (indulge in worldly pleasures), karmas, or Samadhi, but you will experience supreme sukha-shanti only when your mind is free of hoping to get anything (any action, feeling, or state).

3.

Everyone is dukhi because of the habit of the triad of karma, kaarana (instrument of action) and kartaa (the doer), but nobody understands this. A person whose antahkaran is pure gets the highest sukha-shanti merely by getting this teaching.

4.

The man who feels weary about even opening and closing his eyes (considering it to be a lapse in the feeling of being a sakshi if he accepts that he has any duties) is the most indolent person. Only he, and no other, has sukha.

5.

When a person gets free of the duality, 'I did this and I did not do this', he loses interest in the four prurushaartha (principal human achievements) of Dharma, Artha (wealth), Kama (fulfillment of desires) and Moksha.

6.

A virakta (person with renunciation) has an aversion to vishaya (objects of the senses), and a raagee (one who has worldly attachments) longs for them. However, a person who is free of the feeling of accepting and renouncing is neither a virakta nor a raagi.

7.

Aviveka-dashaa (a state of lacking discrimination) is the refuge of desire. As long as it exists, the difference of what is to be given up and what is to be accepted remains. This is the shoot of the tree called the sansaara (interactive world).

8.

A person gets attached to pravritti (activity) and averse to nivritti (withdrawing from activity), but a person who has vivek remains free from duality, like a child, considering them with equal indifference.

9.

A person who has raaga wants to be free of dukha by giving up the sansara. However, a veetaraaga (one who has no attachments) has no dukha, so he does not feel weary of the world.

10.

A person who has the pride of being a Mukta (liberated soul) and also has mamataa (attachments) for his body, is neither a Yogi nor a Gnani. He is eligible only for dukha.

11.

Even if Shivaji, Bhagwan Vishnu, or Brahma were to give you a sermon, you cannot attain svaroopasthiti (the state of being established in your Self) unless and until you forget everything.

Chapter 17

1.

A person who is content within himself, whose indreeyas are pure, and is always happy to be by himself, has attained the fruit of Gnan and the practice of Yoga.

2.

It is a matter of great astonishment that a person who has Tattvagnan never experiences sorrow because this whole universe becomes filled with that One (the Supreme Tattva).

3.

None of the objects of this world have the capacity to give happiness to a person who isaatmaaraama (content within his Self), just as bitter neem leaves lack the capacity to give pleasure to an elephant who has feasted on the sweet leaves of a salla creeper.

4.

A person who has no desire for more pleasures after indulging in some sensual pleasure, and is unperturbed if he gets no worldly pleasures, is a Mahapurush; not easily found in this world.

5.

This world has bubhukshu (hungry people) as well as mumukshu (those who desire Moksha), but the Mahapurush who has no desire for either, is not easily found in this world.

6.

No Tattvagnani whose inclinations are magnanimous, has any feeling of wanting, or wanting to give up, Dharma Artha, Kama, and Moksha, life or death.

7.

Enlightened people have no wish for vilaya (dissolution) or aversion for sthiti (sustenance), and so they are happy with whatever they get in life.

8.

As soon as a person gets the Gnan, 'I am kritaartha (fulfilled)', the inclinations of the intellect are reduced. That is why an enlightened person remains carefree even when looking with the eyes, listening with the ears, touching with the skin, smelling with the nose, and tasting with the tongue.

9.

A person whose ocean (this world) has dried up (because of realizing that it is a mirage) sees the world as shoonya (empty). His efforts are futile, and his indreeyas are vikala (restless), but he has neither any desire nor renunciation for any of them.

10.

He is neither awake nor asleep; he doesn't open or shut his eyes. It is strange, the state of a mukta-chitta (one whose mind is free of inclinations) person is indefinable.

11.

A mukta purush is always serene. His heart is limpid, wherever he goes. He remains untouched by desire. He remains as he is everywhere he goes, looking beatific.

12.

A Mahapurush has the wealth of having made the great decision (that he is the Atma; not the body). While seeing, listening, touching, smelling, indulging, catching, speaking, and walking, he remains free of attachments-aversions, desire, or desirelessness. He is truly mukta (liberated).

13.

A mukta purush has no interest in any perceived object that is like the anaatmaa (that, which is not the Atma). That is why he remains free of nindaa-stuti (criticism-praise), harsha-shoka (joy-sorrow), daana-adaana (giving-not giving).

14.

The Mahapurush who has made the mahaa-nishchaya (great decision that he is the Atma, not the body) remains undisturbed, whether he encounters an attractive woman or death. He remains serene. That person is mukta.

15.

A sthitapragna (one who is established in his self) and samadarsee (who has equanimity for all) person considers sukha-dukha, women-men, wealth-adverse circumstances to be equal.

16.

A person who no longer considers the world to be real has neither violence nor compassion. Neither does his life have a lack of restraint nor does it have a feeling of poverty. He feels no surprise, and he feels no agitation.

17.

A mukta purush has no aversion for vishay, nor is he tempted by them. His mind is not attached to anything. He always enjoys whatever he gets or doesn't get.

18.

When a person's thoughts are blank for the duration of that, which is mithya, and he is established in his kaivalya svarupa (non-dual form), that person is unaware of the false imaginings of Samadhi and vikshepa (disturbance), hita-ahita (benefit-harm).

19.

A person whose ahamtaa (subtle ego of individuality) and mamataa (emotional attachments) have been destroyed, and who has reached the decision that nothing exists except his Self, is free of karmas and their fruits, even while he works; because all his hopes and mental states have dissolved in his Self.

20.

A man whose mana (emotional mind) and mental world have lost their reality becomes established in a state that cannot be defined. It can neither be said to be aware of his mana, moha (deluded thinking), or dream state, nor can it be called a jada (insensate) state.

Chapter 18

1.
I bow down to the shaanta prakaasha (tranquil effulgence) that dispels the darkness of bhram as soon as it rises, the way a dream is dispelled as soon as a person awakens. (Prakash means the pure knowledge that is free of the one who has Gnan, and the object of Gnan.)
2.
A person may obtain objects from the whole world, to indulge in sensual pleasures, as much as he can, but nobody can be sukhi without giving them up.
3.
A person whose chitta burns with the raging fire of, 'This is kartavya (to be done)' cannot get the sukha that is obtained only by drinking the amrita (nectar) of giving up all feeling about being the doer of his actions.
4.
This world is only a bhaavanaa (feeling); there is no paramaatha (supreme Truth) in it. The objects that are in-between bhaava (presence) and abhaava (absence) can never be absent. (The absence of what is present, and the absence of what is missing, are both feelings.)
5.
The swarup of the Atma, is neither far nor near; it is always present. (It is your Self.) It has neither vikalpa (doubts) nor vikaara (mental distortions), nor mala (impurities).
6.
As soon as agnan is removed, the person gets the correct knowledge of the swarup, and the curtain that covers his vision is removed. He becomes a Tattvagna, and becomes free of sorrow. He develops a beatific personality.
7.
Everything is kalpanaamaatra (imagined). The Atma is always mukta. A resolute person knows this, so why should he try for it, like a child? (A person puts in an effort to obtain something, or get rid of something. When there is nothing to be obtained or got rid of, why should he make any effort?)
8.
The Atma is the Brahman. Bhava and abhava are imagined. Once a person comes to this conclusion, the triad of bhoktaa (the one who experiences), bhogya (that, which is experienced), and bhoga (the experiencing) are quieted. Then, what is there for a person to know, say, or do?

9.

The imagined, 'I am this; I am not this', have been quieted. Such a person has understood, 'Everything is the Atma,' and is at peace. (Words are where there is pulsation; a person whose mind has no pulsation is silent. Silence is the Atma.)

10.

A Tattvagna who is established in his own swarup has neither vikshe'pa (disturbance) nor e'kaagrataa (concentration). He has neither Gnan nor agnan; neither sukha nor dukha.

11.

The Tattvagna who is naturally nirvikalpa (free of doubts) feels no difference whether he rules a Kingdom, becomes a beggar, has laabha-alaabha (gain-loss), is in a crowd or in a lonely forest. (The nirvikalpa state induced by practice is a superimposition. It is mithya.)

12.

'I have done this; this remains to be done.' When a person becomes free of this duality, he is no longer bound to Dharma, Kama, Artha, or even vivek.

13.

For a jeevanmukta (enlightened) Gnani, there is no kartavya (duty), and no color (preference) in his heart. His state is just to pass the days of his life, accepting what comes.

14.

The Mahatma who is merely a saakshee (witness) rests on the seemaa (border) of all sankalpa (resolves). For him, there is no agnan, no vishva (world), no dhyaana (meditation), and no mukti.

15.

A person who has seen this vishwa may go on saying, 'It doesn't exist; it is not real.' What should a person who has no vishaya-vaasanaa (desire for sense objects) do? He does not see, even while looking.

16.

A person who has seen the Parabrahman can continue to do chintan (think), 'I am the Brahman – Soham! Soham!' A nishchinta (one whose thoughts are quieted), who sees no 'other', has nothing to think about.

17.

A person does nirodha (blocks his thoughts) if he has seen vikshep in his swarup. A Tattvagna never feels disturbed. There is no saadhya (something worth working for); then what is there for him to do?

18.

A Tattvagna is the opposite of worldly people. Even while interacting like other people, he sees neither Samadhi nor vikshep, nor le'pa (a plastering over a surface).

19.

A Tattvagna is free of bhaava and abhaava. He is tripta (fully satisfied), and free of vasanas. It seems to people that he does many good and bad things, but actually he does nothing.

20.

A Tattvagna has no urge for either pravritti (activity) or nivritti (lack of activity). He remains happy whatever comes to him.

21.

A Gnani remains totally free of the bondage of vasanas, aalambana (support), enslavement and agnan. His body is moved by praarabdha (fate created by the actions of past lives); the way dry leaves are moved by a breeze.

22.

A person who is free of the sansaara (interactive world) feels no harsha (joy) or vishaada (sorrow). His mana is always sheetala (cool). Even though he has a body he retains the splendor of a vide'ha (one who has given up identifying with his body).

23.

A person whose mind is sheetal and pure, who has no affection for that, which is not the Atma, and who sees the changes in the world without being affected by them, has no wish to do tyaaga (give up) any object, or obtain anything.

24.

The dheera (steadfast) person whose chitta is naturally shoonya (empty) does many things because of his prarabdha, but he has neither maana (pride), nor apanaama (insult).

25.

'This karma has been done by the shareera (body), not by me. I am the shuddha swarup.'
A person who has taken this decision actually does nothing, even when he is working.

26.

A sukhi and shreemaana (filled with inner wealth) jeevanamukta (liberated) person works like someone who works and denies doing any work. He behaves like a vishayee (one who is attached to sense objects), but is not really a vishayi. He obtains extreme splendor, even when involved in worldly activities.

27.

A dheera purush finds vishraama (repose) in his own swarup after undergoing the fatigue of many thoughts. He does no kalpanaa (imagining), nor does he know things. He neither hears, nor sees.

28.

A Gnani purush is not a mumukshu (one who wants to be liberated from the cycle of rebirth), because he has no urge for either a collected chitta or a disturbed one; and so, he is not a vishayi. He has decided, 'Nothing exists except my Self; everything seen is imagined.' Having this viewpoint, he is actually the Brahman.

29.

A person who has ahankaara (pride) may seem as though he is doing nothing, but he is actually doing something. A person who has nirahankaara (no ahankara) is free of karma whether he does some karma or gives up karma.

30.

The chitta of a mukta (liberated) purush has neither udve`ga (agitation) nor santosha (contentment); neither kartritva (the feeling of being the doer) nor spandana (pulsation); neither aashaa (expectation) nor sande`ha (doubt). Truly, such a chitta is beautiful.

31.

The chitta of a jeevan-mukta does not get involved in dhyana or vyavahaara (worldly interaction); in spite of being empty of the causes of activity, he does both dhyan and vyavjar.

32.

A person who lacks intelligence becomes even more moodha (stupid) when he hears a description of the Tattva; or else he moves towards Samadhi. It happens, sometimes, that a Gnani purush – who is free of doubts and wrong understanding, or even a desire for Samadhi – starts behaving like a moodha.

33.

Moodha people practice e`kaagrataa (concentrating on one subject) and nirodha (blocking the thoughts). The dheera purushas remain established in their swarup, like a person who is sound asleep. They don't consider ekagrata or nirodha something to be done.

34.

A moodha purush cannot obtain shanti by any prayatna (effort) he makes, or by aprayatna (not making any effort). A pragnaavaana (one who has pragnaa – right understanding) obtains shanti by merely deciding that he is the Tattva.

35.

Those who are engrossed in thinking about the Atma do not know that their shuddha (pure), buddha (enlightened), priya (dear), poorna (complete in itself), nishprapancha (not of the interactive world), and niraamaya (free of afflictions) swarup is the Brahman.

36.

An agnani cannot obtain mukti by the practice of any karma, whereas a Gnani who is free of karmas can obtain mukti by Gnan.

37.

An agnani cannot obtain brahm-saakshaatkaara (a direct personal experience of the Brahman), because he wants to become the Brahman. (Desire is an obstacle in his realizing that he is the Brahman.)

38.

Agnanis get involved in niraadhaara (baseless) aagraha (urges), and nourish the sansara. The Gnani have uprooted the existence of the sansara that is the cause of all sorrow.

39.

An agnani cannot get shanti because he is attached to a desire for shanti. (Desire is absence of shanti.) A Gnani purush takes a firm decision about the Tattva, and is always at peace.

40.

How can an agnani get atma-sakshatkara, since he accepts the aalambana (support) of the drishya padartha (objects experienced by the senses)? A Gnani never sees the drishya padartha; he only sees his own avinaashee (indestructible) swarup.

41.

The chitta of a fool who has strong urges cannot have nirodh. The chitta of a sthitapragnaaatmaaraama (content in his Atma) is always and naturally niruddha (free of mental inclinations). (Since the one who has a chitta does not exist, even the chitta does not exist. This is natural nirodh.)

42.

Some people get a bhaavanaa (feeling) that the objects of this world are real, and some believe they are not real. A Gnani purush lets go of both bhaava (presence) and abhaava (absence), and remains carefree.

43.

People who lack buddhi do not obtain the Gnan of their adviteeya (non-dual) swarup, because of their agnan; they merely develop a feeling. They never get peace in their life.

44.

The buddhi of a mumukshu (one who wants to be free of the cycle of rebirth) cannot do without some aalambana (support) or other. The buddhi of a mukta purush is always nishkaama (free of desire) and niraalamba (without any support).

45.

Agnani purush get nervous when they see the vishaya (objects of the senses) that are as strong as an intoxicated elephant. They quickly seek refuge in the cave of the chitta, trying for nirodh or ekagrata.

46.

A Gnani who has no vasana is like a lion. The vishays that are like intoxicated elephants, run away from him. They are unable to influence him in any way. They cajole him and try to serve him.

47.

A Tattvagna purush makes no effort to undertake the methods that give mukti. He remains nishanka (free of doubts). He remains immersed in anand, even when he sees, hears, touches, smells, enjoys and sits.

48.

A purush with a shuddha buddhi becomes niraakula (untroubled) by merely doing shravana (listening to spiritual discourses). Then, he no longer notices aachaara-anaachaara (proper-improper behavior), nor does he notice udaaseenataa (lack of interest).

49.

Whether it is shubha (auspicious) or ashubha (inauspicious), a shuddha buddhi purush does whatever task comes before him, with the simplicity of a child.

50.

Sukha is obtained only by svatantrataa (independence). It is only through svatantrata that the Param Tattva (Supreme Tattva; the Brahman) is obtained. It is only through svatantrata that param shanti is obtained, and the param pada (highest state) is obtained. (Place, time, matter, actions, feelings, conditions, people, the Vedas, the Ishwara, Dharma, and all that is seen, seem to be unreal. The person no longer depends on that, which is not the Atma. That is to be svatantra.)

51.

When a jigyaasu purush decides that he is the akartaa (not the karta) and abhokta (not the one who has bhoga), all vrittis become ineffective.

52.

The sthiti (condition) of a sthitapragna purush is lofty, even when his behavior is uchchhrinkhala (unbecoming; unrestrained), but the shanti or Samadhi of an agnani purush, whose chitta is filled with desires, is artificial.

53.

The sthitapragna purush are free of kalpanaa (imagining things). They are abaddha (not bound), and muktabuddhi (free of mental inclinations). They do vilaasa (enjoy) mahaabhoga (great bhogas), and also go into deep mountain caverns.

54.

A sthitapragna purush shows all respect to the shrotreeya (knower of the Shastras), Devtas, tirtha (places of pilgrimage), women, the Raja, and those who are priya (dear), but there is no vasana in his heart.

55.

Even when mocked by a britai (servant), putra (son), dauhitra (daughter's son), or sagotra (a person of the same lineage), or insulted by them, the chitta of a Tattvagna purush does not get vikriti (have distortions).

56.

People may think he is pleased, but he does not feel pleased; nor is he irritated when people think he is irritated. Only those who are like him can know this amazing state.

57.

It is karttavya-buddhi (thinking that this should be done by me) that is called the sansara. The vidvaana (learned people) don't see it because they are shoonyaakaara (empty of forms), niraakaara (formless), nirvikaara (free of mental distortions), and niraamaya (free of affliction). (They know that they are the Atma, not the body.)

58.

An agnani purush may be physically idle, but his mental restlessness keeps him perplexed. A sthitapragna may keep busy with several tasks, but he is always tranquil.

59.

A sthitapragna purush remains sukhi even in vyavahaara (worldly interaction), is sukhi when he sleeps, and is sukhi when he comes and goes. He is sukhi when he speaks and sukhi when he eats.

60.

A person who remains akshubdha (unruffled), like a mahaahrida (deep lake) while interacting in the world, is a Gnani who is free of dukha. He has a splendid personality.

61.

The nivritti (lack of activity) of a moodha becomes a pravritti (activity). The activity of a sthitapragna gives the fala (fruit) of nivritti.

62.

An agnani purush generally has vairaagya (detachment) for parigraha (house and wealth), but a person whose identification with his de'ha (body) has been destroyed has neither raaga (attachment) nor vairagya.

63.

The drishti (viewpoint) of a moodha is always focused on bhaava (presence) or abhaava (absence). The drishti of a Tattvagna purush sees the drishya (objects known by the senses), but does not see them.

64.

A Tattvagna, who behaves like a nishkaama (free of selfish interest) baalaka (child), even when doing important work, is shuddha. He does not get lipta (smeared) by the work he does.

65.

An Atmagnani who remains sama (equipoised) in all situations is dhanya (praiseworthy). His heart is free of desire even when he hears, touches, smells, eats and drinks.

66.

A sthitapragna purush always remains nirvikalpa (free of doubts) like the aakaasha (space). There is no sansara in his viewpoint, and no awareness of it either. Nothing is saadhya (to be achieved) and there is no saadhanaa (effort for achieving the desired object).

67.

A Tattvagna purush is always in an akritrima (not artificial) state of Samadhi, because he is established in his eternal swarup. He has no selfish interest in anything in this world, or in other realms. He is poorna svaananda-gnana (whole, and filled with the anand of the Self).

68.

What is the use of excessive talk? A sthitapragna purush has no aakaankshaa (longing) for bhoga or Moksha. He is always free of raaga-dvesha.

69.

This whole dvaita-roopa jagata (world of seeming dualities) – starting from the Mahattatva (the universal Tattva that gives the feeling of individuality) – is an expanse of names. Once the bodha-svaroop (form of Gnan) Tattvagna gives it up (through the method of negation), what need has he to do anything?

70.

This whole world that we see is nothing but a bhrama (false understanding; mirage); it is nothing. The viewpoint of a shuddha purush who has come to this great conclusion becomes empty of even the pulsation of the drishya, and his svabhaava (nature) becomes shanta. (When a person who has obtained Gnan loses awareness of the seen world, that is the experience of the Brahman.)

71.

What rule can there be for a person who is shuddha-sfurana-svaroop (the form of pure thoughts), and does not consider the seen world as real? What is vairagya for him? What is tyaga for him? And, what is shanti for him?

72.

One who feels himself to be the form of anand, and does not see Prakriti as anything real, has no bondage. What is Moksha for him? Where does he feel harsha (joy) or vishaada (sorrow)?

73.

Buddhi is the paryavassana (termination) of the sansara. The triad of the boddhaa (knower),

74.

For a Tattvagna who is free of the various taapa (suffering), and conscious of his indestructible swarup, there is no vidyaa (right knowledge) or vishva (the world). He is not concerned with the de'ha (body) or ahamataa-mamataa ('I' – 'mine').

75.

If an agnani purush gives up the practice of nirodha (blocking thoughts) and other methods of sadhana, he immediately begins to make great plans, and indulge in excessive talk.

76.

An agnani does not give up his foolishness even after being told that the Brahman and the Atma are one. Outwardly, he becomes free of resolves for some time, but the seed of laalasaa (longing) remains in his mind.

77.

A person whose desire for work has been dissolved by Atmagnan is not eligible to be commented on, even if others perceive him to be doing something. (He is actually the akartaa, avaktaa, and akaala – meaning, he is not the doer, not the speaker, and he is beyond the limitations of time.)

78.

The sthitapragna, who is always nirvikaara (free of distortions) and niraatanka (untroubled) is no longer bothered about Gnan-agnan, tyaga, any object, or the absence of any object.

79.

The svabhaava (nature) of a sthitapragna is anirvachaneeya (indefinable). In actual fact, he has no svabhava at all. Where are dhairya (fortitude) and vive'ka (discrimination) for him? And, where is even nirbhayataa (being fearless)? (For him, there are no gunas – tendencies – since he has realized that gunas are unimportant.)

80.

For a sthitapragna purush there is no Swarga and no Narak, and no jeevanmukti (being free of identification with the body). What is the use of elaborating on this? From the viewpoint of the vastu-saakshaatkaara (direct personal experience of the Brahman) none of these exist.

81.

The chitta of a sthitapragna is so sheetala (cool and soothing) that it seems to be brimming with amrita (ambrosia). He has no desire for laabha (profit) or regret for loss.

82.

A sthitapragna neither eulogizes an enlightened Mahatma, nor criticize a dushta (wicked person). He remains equal in dukha and sukha. He is content within himself. He feels no obligation to do anything.

83.

A sthitapragna feels no dvesha for this sansara, nor does he desire Atma-darshan (a glimpse of the Atma). There is no harsha or rosha (anger) in him. He is neither mrita (dead), nor jeevita (alive).

84.

A Gnani who feels no sne`ha (attachment) for his putra –daaraa (son-wife), is nishkaama (free of desires) for vishays, and is nishchinta (unworried) about his shareera (body). He has no aashaa (expectation) for obtaining anything. He is splendid.

85.

He sleeps wherever he is, when the sun goes down, wandering as whim takes him. He meets whoever he encounters. A sthitapragna is always content.

86.

A sthitapragna Mahatma takes vishraama (repose) in his svabhaava-bhoomi (his own nature) swarup. He has negated the interactive world He does not care whether his body is destroyed or sustained.

87.

A Gnani is akinchana (not small), kaamaachaara (behaving as he pleases), nirdvandva (free of doubts and dilemmas). He is not aasakta (attached) to any object. He wanders in this world, free of mental distortions.

88.

The hriday-granthi (imaginary knot that binds the Atma to the mind) of a sthitapragna is opened. His Tamo and Rajo gunas (lowly and mixed tendencies) are washed away. He views a clod of earth, stone, and gold with equal indifference. He is nirmama (free of possessive feelings). Actually, only such a man is splendid.

89.

A sthitapragna does not give avadhaana (importance) to any worldly object. His antahkaran is not bound to anything. He is tripta in his self. There is not the slightest vasana in his heart. Who can such a person be compared to?

90.

Who, except a sthitapragna, is free of vasanas, knows and yet does not know, sees but does not see, speaks, but does not speak?

91.

Whether he is a bhikshu (beggar) or a Raja, only the person who is nishkaama (free of desires) is splendid. A person who does not consider anything in this world to be shubha (auspicious) or ashubha (inauspicious) is nishkama.

92.

A Tattvagna is free of crookedness. He is straightforward and fulfilled. For him, where is svachchhandataa (unrestrained behavior), where is sankocha (hesitation), and where is even nishchaya (conclusion) about the Tattva?

93.

A person, who finds vishrama and is tripta in his Atma, has no wish for anything in this world. He has no aarti (distress) – who can explain the amazing experience of his antahkaran?

94.

A sthitapragna is tripta at every step. He is not asleep even when he sleeps. He does not dream even when he is dreaming. He is not jaagrita (awake) even when he is awake.

95

A Tattvagna is nishchinta even when he is thinking. He is nirindreya (without indreayas) even when using his senses. He is nirbuddhi (free of the intellect) even though he is intelligent. He is nirahaankaara (free of pride) even when he seems to be proud. (He remains unaffected by what people think of him.)

96.

A Tattvagna is neither sukhi nor dukhi; neither virakta nor attached to anything. He is neither a mumukshu (wanting to be free of the cycle of rebirth) nor a mukta. He is not something, nor is he not-something.

97.

Vikshepa (disturbance) does not disturb a Tattvagna. He is not samaadhishta (immersed in Samadhi) even when he is in Samadhi. He is not jada (insensate) even when he is senseless, and he is not a Pundit even though he has paanditya (great learning).

98.

A Tattvagna remains in his swarup-sthiti (natural state) in all natural or artificially created situations. He is kritakritya (fulfilled), so he is supremely tranquil. He always retains equanimity. He never thinks about what he has done, or not done, because there is no desire of any kind in him.

99.

Accolades don't delight a sthitapragna, nor does criticism anger him. He is not agitated by death, nor does he welcome life.

100.

A sthitapragna does not try to be with a crowd, nor does he wish to go into a lonely forest. He is established in equanimity everywhere, and in all conditions.

Chapter 19

1.

Just as a successful surgeon uses a pincer with great skill, to pull out an arrow imbedded in the stomach, I have used Tattvagnan to remove many kinds of sankalpa-vikalpa (resolves and doubts), and vichaara-mala (impure thinking), and thrown them away.

2.

I am established in my mahimaa (grandeur); where is Dharma for me? Where are Kama and Artha, and where is vivek? All else apart, where are dvaita (duality) and advaita (non-duality) for me?

3.

I am always and eternally established in my mahima. For me, where are the bhoota (past) and bhavishya (future), and the vartamaana (present)? Where is dishaa (the directions)?

4.

I am established in my mahima. For me, where is the existence of aatmaa-anaatmaa (the Atma and that, which is not the Atma), shubha-ashubha (auspicious-inauspicious), and chintan-achintana (thinking deeply – not thinking)?

5.

Where is svapna (the dream state) and where is sushupti (the deep sleep state) for me? Where is jaagarana (the waking state) and where is tureeya (merging into the universal consciousness)? Where is bhaya (fear)? Because, I am established in my swarup.

6.

Where is doora (far) and where is sameepa (near)? Where is baahya (external) and where is aabhyaantara (internal)? Where is sthoola (gross) and where is sookshma (subtle) for me? I am established in the mahima of my swarup.

7.

Where is mrityu (death) and where is jeevana (life)? Where is loka (the world) and where is laukika (of this world)? Where is laya (merging) and where is Samadhi? I am established in my swarup.

8.

Stop talking about Artha, Dharma and Kama. Enough! Talk about Yoga is unnecessary. We have had enough talk about vighnaana (Gnan applied in life). I am established in my swarup.

Chapter 20

1.

Where are the panchabhoota (five elements) in my limpid swarup? Where is the de`ha (body) and the indreeya (senses)? Where is the mana and where is the shoonya (emptiness)? And, where, also, is niraashaa (lack of expectations)?

2.

I am completely free of doubts. Where are the Shastras and where is the Atma-vignan? Where is the nirvishayataa (disinterest in worldly objects) of the mana, and where is tripti? For me, what does it mean to be free of trishnaa (longings)?

3.

Where is vidyaa (right knowledge) in my swarup, and where is avidyaa (nescience)? Where is Aham (the subtle pride of individuality), and where is idam (that, which is not the Aham)? Where is mamataa (possessiveness), where is bandhan (bondage), where is Moksha? And, in that, where is there any form?

4.

Where is the praarabdha-karma (actions done due to fate created by past actions) in the unchanging Atma that is free of attributes? Where is jeevan-mukti and where is vide`ha-kaivalya (the non-dual Atma, not attached to a body)?

5.

I am sadaa (always) unchanging and nisvabhaava (free of having any particular nature). Where is the karta in me? Where is the bhokta in me? There is not even a nishkriya sfoornaa (inactive pulsation). Where is the aparoksha (known, but not through the senses) Gnan, or fala-gnaana (Gnan that is the fruit of some action)? (I am not affected by thoughts or the fruits of my actions.)

6.

Where is the loka and mumukshu (one who wants to be free of the cycle of rebirth) in my adviteeya swarup? Where is there any Yogi or Gnani? Where is anyone baddha (bound) or mukta (free)?

7.

Where is srishti (Creation) and where is sanhaara (destruction) in my own adviteeya swarup? Where is saadhya (the goal) and where is the saadhana (effort)? Where is the saadhaka (the one who makes the effort for spiritual progress) and where is the siddhi (success)?

8.

I am totally the shuddha swarup. In me, there is no pramaataa (the one who establishes) and no pramaana (proof); no prame`ya (that, which is established) and no pramaa (the right intellect). There is no thing, and no nothing. All these differences are perceptions – they have no connection to the one who perceives. The one who perceives is not separate

from that, which is perceived. Therefore, I am that existence, due to which everything is perceived.

9.

I am always nirvikaara (free of mental distortions), nispanda (free of any pulsation), and nishkriya (free of actions). There is neither vikshep nor e`kaagrataa (concentration) in me. There is neither bodha (knowledge) nor moodhataa (stupidity), no harsha and no vishad. (My mind is free of thoughts and inclinations because all mental states are connected to something seen, and therefore, are my own swarup.)

10.

I am free of sankalpa, vikalpa, vichar, and bodha; so, there is no vyavahaara (interaction) and no paramaartha (supreme achievement). There is neither sukha nor dukha.

11.

I am always free of all impurities. Where is Maya (the Ishwara's power of illusion) in me? Where is the sansara? Where is raaga and where is vairagya? Where is the jeeva, and where is the Brahman? (All these differences are superimpositions, made for the purpose of explaining things to a seeker of the ultimate Truth.)

12.

I am kootastha (unaffected) and nirvibhaaga (unfragmented; whole). I always remain established in my swarup. Then, what is pravritti-nivritti in me? And, what are mukti and bandhan?

13.

I am Shiva, without any upaadhee (superimposed attributes). For me, what is upade`sha (teaching)? What is the Shastra? What shishya (disciple) and what Guru? Purushaartha (human achievement) does not exist for me.

14.

What is 'is', and what is 'is not' for me? There is neither one, nor two. What is the use of excessive talk? Nothing exists in my swarup.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Ashtavakra Gita

Translated by Vedic Scriptures

First Chapter

Old king Janaka asks the young Ashtavakra: How knowledge is attained, how liberation is attained and how non-attachment is attained, please tell me all this. 1

Sri Ashtavakra answers: If you wish to attain liberation, give up the passions (desires for sense objects) as poison. Practice forgiveness, simplicity, compassion, contentment and truth as nectar. 2

You are neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air or space. To liberate, know the witness of all these as conscious self. 3

If you detach yourself from the body and rest in consciousness, you will become content, peaceful and free from bondage immediately. 4

You do not belong to 'Brahman' or any other caste, you do not belong to 'Celibate' or any other stage, nor are you anything that the eyes can see. You are unattached, formless and witness of everything, so be happy. 5

Righteousness, unrighteousness, pleasure and pain are connected with the mind and not with the all-pervading you. You are neither the doer nor the reaper of the actions, so you are always almost free. 6

You are the solitary witness of all that is, almost always free. Your only bondage is understanding the seer to be someone else. 7

Ego poisons you to believe: "I am the doer". Believe "I am not the doer". Drink this nectar and be happy. 8

The resolution "I am single, pure knowledge" consumes even the dense ignorance like fire. Be beyond disappointments and be happy. 9

Feel the ecstasy, the supreme bliss where this world appears unreal like a snake in a rope, know this and move happily. 10

If you think you are free you are free. If you think you are bound you are bound. It is rightly said: You become what you think. 11

The soul is witness, all-pervading, infinite, one, free, inert, neutral, desire-less and peaceful. Only due to illusion it appears worldly. 12

Meditate on unchanging, conscious and non-dual Self. Be free from the illusion of 'I' and think this external world as part of you. 13

O son, you have become habitual of thinking: “I am body” since long. Experience the Self and by this sword of knowledge cut that bondage and be happy. 14

You are free, still, self-luminous, stainless. Trying keep yourself peaceful by meditation is your bondage. 15

You have pervaded this entire universe; really, you have pervaded it all. You are pure knowledge, don't get disheartened. 16

You are desire-less, changeless, solid and abode to calmness, unfathomable intelligent. Be peaceful and desire nothing but consciousness. 17

Know that form is unreal and only the formless is permanent. Once you know this, you will not take birth again. 18

Just as form exists inside a mirror and outside it, Supreme Self exists both within and outside the body. 19

Just as the same space exists both inside and outside a jar, the eternal, continuous God exists in all. 20

Second Chapter

King Janaka says: Amazingly, I am flawless, peaceful, beyond nature and of the form of knowledge. It is ironical to be deluded all this time. 1

As I illumine this body, so I illumine the world. Therefore, either the whole world is mine or nothing is. 2

Now abandoning this world along with the body, Lord is seen through some skill. 3

Just as waves, foam and bubbles are not different from water, similarly all this world which has emanated from self, is not different from self. 4

On reasoning, cloth is known to be just thread, similarly all this world is self only. 5

Just as the sugar made from sugarcane juice has the same flavor, similarly this world is made out from me and is constantly pervaded by me. 6

Due to ignorance, self appears as the world; on realizing self it disappears. Due to oversight a rope appears as a snake and on correcting it, snake does not appear any longer. 7

Light is my very nature and I am nothing else besides that. That light illumines the ego as it illumines the world. 8

Amazingly, this imagined world appears in me due to ignorance, as silver in seashell, a snake in the rope, water in the sunlight. 9

This world is originated from me and gets absorbed in me, like a jug back into clay, a wave into water, and a bracelet into gold. 10

Amazing! Salutations to me who is indestructible and remains even after the destruction of whole world from Brahma down to the grass. 11

Amazing! Salutations to me who is one, who appears with body, neither goes nor come anywhere and pervades all the world. 12

Amazing! Salutations to me who is skilled and there is no one else like him, who without even touching this body, holds all the world. 13

Amazing! Salutations to me who either does not possess anything or possesses anything that could be referred by speech and mind. 14

Knowledge, object of knowledge and the knower, these three do not exist in reality. The flawless self appears as these three due to ignorance. 15

Definitely, duality (distinction) is the fundamental reason of suffering. There is no other remedy for it other than knowing that all that is visible, is unreal, and that I am one, pure consciousness. 16

I am of the nature of light only, due to ignorance I have imagined other attributes in me. By reasoning thus, I exist eternally and without cause. 17

For me there is neither bondage nor liberation. I am peaceful and without support. This world though imagined in me, does not exist in me in reality. 18

Definitely this world along with this body is non-existent. Only pure, conscious self exists. What else is there to be imagined now? 19

The body, heaven and hell, bondage and liberation, and fear, these are all unreal. What is my connection with them who is conscious. 20

Amazingly, I do not see duality in a crowd, it also appear desolate. Now who is there to have an attachment with. 21

I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am consciousness. My only bondage is the thirst for life. 22

Amazingly, as soon as the mental winds arise in the infinite ocean of myself, many waves of surprising worlds come into existence. 23

As soon as these mental winds subside in the infinite ocean of myself, the world boat of trader-like 'jeeva' gets destroyed as if by misfortune. 24

Amazingly, in the infinite ocean of myself, the waves of life arise, meet, play and disappear naturally. 25

Third Chapter

Ashtavakra says: Know self as indestructible and one. How could a wise man having self-knowledge can like acquiring wealth? 1

Not knowing self leads to attachment in false sense objects just as mistakenly understanding mother of pearl as silver invokes greed. 2

This world originates from self like waves from the sea. Recognizing, "I am That", why run like a poor? 3

After hearing self to be pure, conscious and very beautiful, how can you be attracted to sexual objects and get impure? 4

For a sage who knows himself to be is in all beings and all beings in him, retaining attachment is surprising! 5

For the one aspiring for highest non-dual Lord and fully aware of the meaning of liberation, subjugation to desires is surprising. 6

For a person having reached his last time, incapable of enjoying and knowing it to be enemy of the gained knowledge, it is surprising to be after sexual desires. 7

Surprise, unattached to this and the other world, those who can discriminate between the permanent and the impermanent, and wish to liberate are afraid of liberation. 8

The wise who always see self only, are neither pleased nor get angry whether they are feted or tormented. 9

How can noble men be perturbed by praise or blame who see their bodies alike to others. 10

Devoid of any questions, seeing this world as imagined in Maya, how can one with resolute intelligence be fearful of even the incident death? 11

Who can be compared to the saint, free from desires even in disappointment and satisfied with the knowledge of self? 12

Know this world to be visible due to its very nature, it is non-existent actually. How can a person with resolute intelligence discriminate things as to be taken or to be rejected? 13

One who has given up inner passions, is beyond doubts and is without any desires does not feel pain or pleasure due to random events. 14

Fourth Chapter

Ashtavakra says: The self-aware wise man takes the worldly matter sportively, he just cannot be compared to a deluded person taking burdens of the situations. 1

A yogi feels no joy even after attaining a state for which Indra and all other demigods yearn for. 2

He who has self-knowledge remains untouched by good and bad even internally, as the sky cannot be contaminated by the presence of smoke in it. 3

Who can prevent a great man from living in the present as per his wish as he knows himself as this whole world. 4

From Brahma down to the grass, in all four categories of living creatures, who else can give up desire and aversion except an enlightened man. 5

It is very rare to know Self as One and Lord of the world, and he who knows this does not fear anyone or anything. 6

Fifth Chapter

Ashtavakra says: You are not connected with anything. You are pure. What do you want to renounce? Dissolve this unreal connection and be one with Self. 1

As bubbles rise in the sea, the world originates from non-dual Self. Know this and be one with Self. 2

In spite of being visible from eyes, this world is unreal. You are immaculate and this world does not exist in you like an imagined snake in a rope. Know this and be one with Self. 3

Know yourself equal in pleasure and pain, complete, equal in hope and disappointment, equal in life and death and eternal and be one with Self. 4

Sixth Chapter

Ashtavakra says: I am infinite like space, and this world is unimportant like a jar. This is Knowledge. This is neither to be renounced nor to be accepted but to be one with it. 1

I am like a vast ocean and the visible world is like its waves. This is Knowledge. This is neither to be renounced nor to be accepted but to be one with it. 2

This world is imagined in me like silver in a seashell. This is Knowledge. This is neither to be renounced nor to be accepted but to be one with it. 3

I exist in everyone like everyone is in me. This is Knowledge. This is neither to be renounced nor to be accepted but to be one with it. 4

Seventh Chapter

King Janaka says: In infinite ocean of myself, world wanders here and there like a ship driven by its own wind. But it does not create turbulence in me. 1

In infinite ocean of myself, world rises and vanishes naturally like a wave by 'Maya'. But it does not cause any growth or damage to me. 2

In infinite ocean of myself, world exists like a dream. But I exist as supremely peaceful and formless. 3

In that infinite and stainless state, there remains no feeling of 'I' or any other feeling. Like this I exist, unattached, devoid of desires and at peace. 4

Surprise, I am pure consciousness and the world is like a magic. How can there be thoughts of useful and useless in me? 5

Eighth Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: There is bondage, as long as mind desires something, grieves about something, sacrifices something, accepts something, is pleased about something or is angry about something. 1

Liberation is when mind does not desire, does not grieve, does not sacrifice, does not accept, is not pleased or get angry. 2

There is bondage when mind is attracted towards any of the visible things and liberation is when mind is not attracted to anything visible. 3

There is bondage, as long as there is feeling of 'I' and 'my' and liberation is when there is no feeling of 'I' and 'my'. Knowing this stay playful neither accepting nor sacrificing anything. 4

Ninth Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: This is to be done and this should not be done, such confusions have never ended for anybody. Knowing this, be indifferent (neutral), be ascetic and don't follow such (ritualistic) rules. 1

O Son! Blessed and rare are those who observe the useless efforts of others and thereby extinguish their lust for life, luxuries and good food. 2

All this is impermanent and is surrounded by the three types of pain (body, luck and money). It is without any essence, contemptible and is to be abandoned. Only after deciding it firmly, peace is attained. 3

When was that age or time when there are no confusions for a person. So become indifferent to your doubts and attain happiness without much effort. 4

Having seen the difference of opinions among the great sages, saints and yogis, who will not get detached and attain peace. 5

Knowing consciousness directly, a guru, who is unattached and neutral, will definitely lead others out of the cycle of birth and death. 6

See the change in nature of elements as the change in quantity of finer (subtle) entities. After seeing this, you would be free from bondage immediately and would be established in your very nature. 7

This detachment will lead to rejection of desires and you as consciousness will remain as you are. 8

Tenth Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: Give up the enemies, desires and money, the primary cause of many misfortunes. Rejecting these two will lead to righteousness and thus be indifferent to everything. 1

Look at friends, land, money, wife and other properties as a dream in Maya to be destroyed in three to five days. 2

Wherever there is attachment, there is world! Applying this mature non-attachment be free of desires and attain happiness. 3

Desires alone are the bondage for Self. Extinguishing desires is called liberation. Non-attachment to worldly things can only lead to continuous bliss. 4

You are one (without a second), conscious and pure and this world is non-conscious and illusory. You don't have a trace of ignorance and desire to know. 5

In past lives, many times your kingdoms, children, wives, bodies and comforts have destroyed despite of your attachment to them. 6

Any amount of wealth, desires and good deeds will not result in peace from this world of illusion. 7

In how many lives have you not taken pain in performing various activities with body, mind and speech. Now be non-attached to them. 8

Eleventh Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: Change of states like presence (visibility, birth) and absence (invisibility, death) occur naturally. One who knows it with definiteness becomes free from defects, free from pain and attains peace easily. 1

God is the creator of all and no one else. One who knows it with definiteness becomes free from all internal desires. That serene man becomes indifferent everywhere. 2

Good and bad times are due to previous actions (which decide fate). One who knows it with definiteness becomes content and gains regular control on senses. He neither desires nor gets disappointed. 3

Pleasure-pain and birth-death are due to previous actions (which decide fate). One who knows it with definiteness acts without desire. He acts playfully and never gets attached to them. 4

Worry gives rise to suffering and nothing else. One who knows it with definiteness becomes free from worries and becomes content, peaceful and without any desire anywhere. 5

Neither I am this body, nor this body is mine. I am pure knowledge. One who knows it with definiteness gets liberated in this life. He neither remembers (acts done in) past nor (worries of) future. 6

From grass till Brahma, I alone exist and nothing else. One who knows it with definiteness becomes free from desires, becomes pure, peaceful and unattached to what he has or what he is yet to get. 7

This world of many wonders, actually does not exist. One who knows it with definiteness becomes free from desires and attains the form of pure existence. He finds unlimited peace. 8

Twelfth Chapter

Sri Janaka says: First I developed indifference towards actions performed by body then I became indifferent to actions performed by speech. Now, I have become indifferent to all sorts of anxieties and stay as I am. 1

Unattached to sound and other senses and knowing that Self is not an object of sight, I remain free of disturbances and focused as I am. 2

Seeing the transitions between abnormal states of incorrect perception and the meditative states as a (natural) rule, I stay as I am. 3

O seer of God, away from the feelings to store or to leave and without any pleasure or pain, I stay as I am. 4

Looking at the various stages of life and their absence, rules accepted and prohibited by mind and such options, I stay as I am. 5

Being aware of the ignorance in performing rituals and knowing the Truth properly, I stay as I am. 6

While thinking about the Unthinkable, we ponder over our thoughts only. So abandoning that thought, I stay as I am. 7

He who follows thus gets liberated. One whose nature is like this gets liberated. 8

Thirteenth Chapter

Sri Janaka says: The inherent quality of having nothing is hard to attain, even with just a loincloth. Hence I exist in pleasure at all times abandoning both the feelings of renunciation and acquisition. 1

Actually, there exist no pain due to body, no pain due to speech, no pain due to mind. Abandoning all the efforts, I exist pleasantly in all situations. 2

No action is ever committed, in reality. Understanding thus I exist pleasantly in all situations by just doing what is to be done. 3

Yogis, attached with their bodies think in terms of doing or avoiding certain actions. This causes bondage. But I exist pleasantly in all situations abandoning the feelings of attachment and detachment. 4

I, actually, concur no benefit or loss while taking rest, moving, sleeping, sitting, walking or dreaming. Hence I exist pleasantly in all situations. 5

I lose nothing by sleeping and gain nothing by action or inaction. Hence I exist pleasantly in all situations abandoning the feelings of joy and sorrow. 6

I understand by experience that pleasure and pain come and go again and again. Hence I exist pleasantly in all situations abandoning the feelings of auspicious (good) and inauspicious (bad). 7

Fourteenth Chapter

Sri Janaka says: He, who is thoughtless by nature and desires only very rarely becomes mostly free from the past memories as if a person from a dream when he wakes up. 1

When I do not have any desires left, what will I do of wealth, friends, sensual satisfaction, scriptures or knowledge. 2

Realizing the witness who is called God or Lord, I became indifferent to bondage or liberation and do not worry for my liberation. 3

The state which is without desires within, and is carefree outwardly just like a mad man, can only be recognized by someone in the same enlightened state. 4

Fifteenth Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: A man with honest approach can attain enlightenment by ordinary instructions. Without it even the life long curiosity is not going to help. 1

Indifference in sense objects is liberation and interest in them is bondage. Knowing thus, do as you like. 2

Eloquent, intelligent and industrious men become calm, silent and inactive after knowing the Truth so the people who are after worldly pleasure discard it. 3

Neither are you this body nor this body is yours, you are not the doer of actions or the one who bears their results. You are consciousness, eternal witness and without desires so stay blissfully. 4

Liking and disliking are traits of mind and you are not mind in any case. You are choiceless. You are of the form of knowledge and flawless so stay blissfully. 5

Know that all beings exist in you and you exist in all beings. So leave ego and attachment and stay blissfully. 6

Undoubtedly, this world is created from you just like waves from the sea. You are consciousness so leave all worries. 7

O dear, trust your experience, have faith on it. Don't have any doubt on this experience. You are Knowledge. You are beyond nature and Lord. 8

This body, which is composed of three attributes of nature stays, comes and goes. Soul (you) neither come nor go, so why do you bother about it. 9

This body may remain till the end of Nature or is destroyed today, you are not going to gain and lose anything from it as you are consciousness. 10

This world rises and subsides in you naturally as waves in a great ocean. You do not gain or lose from it. 11

O dear! you are pure consciousness only and this world is not separate from you. So how can anything be considered superior or inferior. 12

You are alone in this imperishable, calm, conscious and stainless space so how can birth, action and ego be imagined in you. 13

You being one, appear to be many due to your multiple reflection. Is gold different from bracelets, armlets and anklets? 14

This is me and that is not me, give up all such dualities. Decide that as a soul, you are everything, have no other resolutions and stay blissfully. 15

This world appears to be real only due to ignorance. You alone exist in reality. There is nothing worldly or unworldly apart from you anyhow. 16

Decide that, this world is unreal like an illusion (or dream) and does not exist at all. Without becoming free from desires and actions, nobody attains peace. 17

Truth or the ocean of being alone existed, exists and will exist. You neither have bondage nor liberation. Be fulfilled and wander happily. 18

You are of the form of consciousness, do not get anxious with different resolves and alternatives. Be at peace and remain in your blissful form pleasantly. 19

Remove your focus from anything and everything and do not think in your heart. You are soul and free by your very nature, what is there to think in it? 20

Sixteenth Chapter

Sri Ashtavakra says: O dear! Even after hearing from many scholars or reading many scriptures, you will not be established in self as after forgetting every single thing. 1

You can either enjoy fruits of your action or enjoy meditative state. Since you are knowledgeable, stopping all desires of your mind will give you more pleasure. 2

It is effort which is cause of everyone's pain but nobody knows it. By following just this flawless instruction, fortunate become free from all their instincts. 3

Happiness is there only for an extremely lazy person who considers blinking of eyes also a task. Nobody else is happy. 4

When mind is free from confusion of doing and not doing, it does not desire righteousness, wealth, sex or liberation. 5

Neither he is averse to senses or is attached to them but he is definitely indifferent to their acceptance and rejection. 6

As long as there is thought of acceptance and rejection of senses, seed of this world-tree exists. So, take shelter in thoughtlessness. 7

Habit gives rise to attachment and rejection brings aversion. So, an intelligent person should stay indifferent like a child. 8

A person who is attached to senses wants to leave this world to avoid the problems. But the one who is indifferent to these problems does not feel pain. 9

One who wants liberation and is also attached to his body, is neither knowledgeable nor yogi. He just suffers. 10

Unless you forget everything else, you will not be established in self, even though Shiva, Vishnu or Brahma themselves teach you. 11

Seventeenth Chapter

Ashtavakra says: He has attained the fruits of Knowledge and Yoga both, who is content, is of purified senses, and always enjoys his solitude. 1

The knower of truth is never troubled by anything in this world, for the whole world is completely pervaded by that Brahma (Lord) alone. 2

None of the senses can please a man, who is established in Self, just as Neem leaves do not please the elephant that likes Sallaki leaves. 3

Such man is rare who is not attached to the pleasures enjoyed, and does not desire pleasures which are unattained. 4

People desirous of worldly pleasures are seen and people desirous of liberation are also seen in this world. But one who is indifferent to both of these desires is really rare. 5

Only few great souls are free from attachment and repulsion to righteousness, wealth, desires, liberation, life and death. 6

He neither desires end of this world, nor despise its continued existence. He lives the life as it is, feeling content and grateful. 7

Blessed by this knowledge, subsiding intelligence in Self, they stay content even in seeing, hearing, touching and eating. 8

Keeping their gaze unoccupied, having stilled the tendency of their senses, they have no attachment or aversion for this feeble world. 9

Aha! in that supreme state, where there is no wakening, no sleep, no opening or closing of eyes, rarely someone with liberated consciousness stays. 10

Always established in self, with stainless intent everywhere, free from all the desires, such a liberated man always shines. 11

Even in, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, eating, taking, speaking, walking, desiring and not desiring such a great soul basically does nothing. 12

He neither blames nor praises, he neither gives nor takes. Indifferent from all these he is free in every way. 13

One who remains unperturbed on seeing women with desire or death, established in self, that noble man is liberated. 14

For such a man with patience, pleasure and pain, men and women, success and failure are alike. For him everything is equivalent. 15

In a person free from attachment for this world, there is neither aggression nor submissiveness, neither pride nor lowliness, neither surprise nor agitation. 16

Liberated man neither dislikes sense gratification nor likes them, hence he remains unperturbed in their achievement and non-achievement. 17

Beyond doubts and solutions, good and bad, a person with still mind, remains established in self. 18

A man who is free from attachment, free of ego, with a definitive view of non-existence of this visible world, even while doing does not do anything. 19

Having attained a state of mind which is devoid of delusion, dream and inertia and full of light, one should discard all mental desires. 20

Eighteenth Chapter

Ashtavakra: Praise be to that by the awareness of which delusion itself becomes dream-like, to that which is pure happiness, peace and light. 1

One may get all sorts of pleasure by the acquisition of various objects of enjoyment, but one cannot be happy except by the renunciation of everything. 2

How can there be happiness, for one who is burnt inside by the blistering sun of the pain of things that need doing, without the rain of the nectar of peace? 3

This existence is just imagination. It is nothing in reality, but there is no non-being for natures that know how to distinguish being from non-being. 4

The realm of one's own self is not far away, and nor can it be achieved by the addition of limitations to its nature. It is unimaginable, effortless, unchanging and spotless. 5

By the simple elimination of delusion and the recognition of one's true nature, those whose vision is unclouded live free from sorrow. 6

Knowing everything as just imagination, and himself as eternally free, how should the wise man behave like a fool? 7

Knowing himself to be God and being and non-being just imagination, what should the man free from desire learn, say or do? 8

Considerations like 'I am this' or 'I am not this' are finished for the yogi who has gone silent realising 'Everything is myself'. 9

For the yogi who has found peace, there is no distraction or one-pointedness, no higher knowledge or ignorance, no pleasure and no pain. 10

The dominion of heaven or beggary, gain or loss, life among men or in the forest, these make no difference to a yogi whose nature it is to be free from distinctions. 11

There is no religion, wealth, sensuality or discrimination for a yogi free from the pairs of opposites such as 'I have done this' and 'I have not done that'. 12

There is nothing needing to be done, or any attachment in his heart for the yogi liberated while still alive. Things are just for a life-time. 13

There is no delusion, world, meditation on That, or liberation for the pacified great soul. All these things are just the realm of imagination. 14

He by whom all this is seen may well make out he doesn't exist, but what is the desireless one to do? Even in seeing he does not see. 15

He by whom the Supreme Brahma is seen may think 'I am Brahma', but what is he to think who is without thought, and who sees no duality. 16

He by whom inner distraction is seen may put an end to it, but the noble one is not distracted. When there is nothing to achieve, what is he to do? 17

The wise man, unlike the worldly man, does not see inner stillness, distraction or fault in himself, even when living like a worldly man. 18

Nothing is done by him who is free from being and non-being, who is contented, desireless and wise, even if in the world's eyes he does act. 19

The wise man who just goes on doing what presents itself for him to do, encounters no difficulty in either activity or inactivity. 20

He who is desireless, self-reliant, independent and free of bonds functions like a dead leaf blown about by the wind of causality. 21

There is neither joy nor sorrow for one who has transcended samsara. He lives always with a peaceful mind and as if without a body. 22

He whose joy is in himself, and who is peaceful and pure within has no desire for renunciation or sense of loss in anything. 23

For the man with a naturally empty mind, doing just as he pleases, there is no such thing as pride or false humility, as there is for the natural man. 24

This action was done by the body but not by me'. The pure-natured person thinking like this, is not acting even when acting. 25

He who acts without being able to say why, but not because he is a fool, he is one liberated while still alive, happy and blessed. He thrives even in samsara. 26

He who has had enough of endless considerations and has attained to peace, does not think, know, hear or see. 27

He who is beyond mental stillness and distraction, does not desire either liberation or anything else. Recognising that things are just constructions of the imagination, that great soul lives as God here and now. 28

He who feels responsibility within, acts even when not acting, but there is no sense of done or undone for the wise man who is free from the sense of responsibility. 29

The mind of the liberated man is not upset or pleased. It shines unmoving, desireless, and free from doubt. 30

He whose mind does not set out to meditate or act, meditates and acts without an object. 31

A stupid man is bewildered when he hears the real truth, while even a clever man is humbled by it just like the fool. 32

The ignorant make a great effort to practice one-pointedness and the stopping of thought, while the wise see nothing to be done and remain in themselves like those asleep. 33

The stupid does not attain cessation whether he acts or abandons action, while the wise man find peace within simply by knowing the truth. 34

People cannot come to know themselves by practices - pure awareness, clear, complete, beyond multiplicity and faultless though they are. 35

The stupid does not achieve liberation even through regular practice, but the fortunate remains free and action-less simply by discrimination. 36

The stupid does not attain Godhead because he wants to become it, while the wise man enjoys the Supreme Godhead without even wanting it. 37

Even when living without any support and eager for achievement, the stupid are still nourishing samsara, while the wise have cut at the very root of its unhappiness. 38

The stupid does not find peace because he is wanting it, while the wise discriminating the truth is always peaceful minded. 39

How can there be self knowledge for him whose knowledge depends on what he sees. The wise do not see this and that, but see themselves as unending. 40

How can there be cessation of thought for the misguided who is striving for it. Yet it is there always naturally for the wise man delighted in himself. 41

Some think that something exists, and others that nothing does. Rare is the man who does not think either, and is thereby free from distraction. 42

Those of weak intelligence think of themselves as pure nonduality, but because of their delusion do not know this, and remain unfulfilled all their lives. 43

The mind of the man seeking liberation can find no resting place within, but the mind of the liberated man is always free from desire by the very fact of being without a resting place. 44

Seeing the tigers of the senses, the frightened refuge-seekers at once enter the cave in search of cessation of thought and one-pointedness. 45

Seeing the desireless lion the elephants of the senses silently run away, or, if they cannot, serve him like courtiers. 46

The man who is free from doubts and whose mind is free does not bother about means of liberation. Whether seeing, hearing, feeling smelling or tasting, he lives at ease. 47

He whose mind is pure and undistracted from the simple hearing of the Truth sees neither something to do nor something to avoid nor a cause for indifference. 48

The straightforward person does whatever arrives to be done, good or bad, for his actions are like those of a child. 49

By inner freedom one attains happiness, by inner freedom one reaches the Supreme, by inner freedom one comes to absence of thought, by inner freedom to the Ultimate State. 50

When one sees oneself as neither the doer nor the reaper of the consequences, then all mind waves come to an end. 51

The spontaneous unassumed behaviour of the wise is noteworthy, but not the deliberate, intentional stillness of the fool. 52

The wise who are rid of imagination, unbound and with unfettered awareness may enjoy themselves in the midst of many goods, or alternatively go off to mountain caves. 53

There is no attachment in the heart of a wise man whether he sees or pays homage to a learned brahmin, a celestial being, a holy place, a woman, a king or a friend. 54

A yogi is not in the least put out even when humiliated by the ridicule of servants, sons, wives, grandchildren or other relatives. 55

Even when pleased he is not pleased, not suffering even when in pain. Only those like him can know the wonderful state of such a man. 56

It is the sense of responsibility which is samsara. The wise who are of the form of emptiness, formless, unchanging and spotless see no such thing. 57

Even when doing nothing the fool is agitated by restlessness, while a skillful man remains undisturbed even when doing what there is to do. 58

Happy he stands, happy he sits, happy sleeps and happy he comes and goes. Happy he speaks, and happy he eats. Such is the life of a man at peace. 59

He who of his very nature feels no unhappiness in his daily life like worldly people, remains undisturbed like a great lake, all sorrow gone. 60

Even abstention from action leads to action in a fool, while even the action of the wise man brings the fruits of inaction. 61

A fool often shows aversion towards his belongings, but for him whose attachment to the body has dropped away, there is neither attachment nor aversion. 62

The mind of the fool is always caught in an opinion about becoming or avoiding something, but the wise man's nature is to have no opinions about becoming and avoiding. 63

For the seer who behaves like a child, without desire in all actions, there is no attachment for such a pure one even in the work he does. 64

Blessed is he who knows himself and is the same in all states, with a mind free from craving whether he is seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling or tasting. 65

There is no man subject to samsara, sense of individuality, goal or means to the goal for the wise man who is always free from imaginations, and unchanging as space. 66

Glorious is he who has abandoned all goals and is the incarnation of satisfaction, his very nature, and whose inner focus on the Unconditioned is quite spontaneous. 67

In brief, the great-souled man who has come to know the Truth is without desire for either pleasure or liberation, and is always and everywhere free from attachment. 68

What remains to be done by the man who is pure awareness and has abandoned everything that can be expressed in words from the highest heaven to the earth itself? 69

The pure man who has experienced the Indescribable attains peace by his own nature, realising that all this is nothing but illusion, and that nothing is. 70

There are no rules, dispassion, renunciation or meditation for one who is pure receptivity by nature, and admits no knowable form of being? 71

For him who shines with the radiance of Infinity and is not subject to natural causality there is neither bondage, liberation, pleasure nor pain. 72

Pure illusion reigns in samsara which will continue until self realisation, but the enlightened man lives in the beauty of freedom from me and mine, from the sense of responsibility and from any attachment. 73

For the seer who knows himself as imperishable and beyond pain there is neither knowledge, a world nor the sense that I am the body or the body mine. 74

No sooner does a man of low intelligence give up activities like the elimination of thought than he falls into mental chariot racing and babble. 75

A fool does not get rid of his stupidity even on hearing the truth. He may appear outwardly free from imaginations, but inside he is hankering after the senses still. 76

Though in the eyes of the world he is active, the man who has shed action through knowledge finds no means of doing or speaking anything. 77

For the wise man who is always unchanging and fearless there is neither darkness nor light nor destruction, nor anything. 78

There is neither fortitude, prudence nor courage for the yogi whose nature is beyond description and free of individuality. 79

There is neither heaven nor hell nor even liberation during life. In a nutshell, in the sight of the seer nothing exists at all. 80

He neither longs for possessions nor grieves at their absence. The calm mind of the sage is full of the nectar of immortality. 81

The dispassionate does not praise the good or blame the wicked. Content and equal in pain and pleasure, he sees nothing that needs doing. 82

The wise man does not dislike samsara or seek to know himself. Free from pleasure and impatience, he is not dead and he is not alive. 83

The wise man stands out by being free from anticipation, without attachment to such things as children or wives, free from desire for the senses, and not even concerned about his own body. 84

Peace is everywhere for the wise man who lives on whatever happens to come to him, going to wherever he feels like, and sleeping wherever the sun happens to set. 85

Let his body rise or fall. The great souled one gives it no thought, having forgotten all about samsara in coming to rest on the ground of his true nature. 86

The wise man has the joy of being complete in himself and without possessions, acting as he pleases, free from duality and rid of doubts, and without attachment to any creature. 87

The wise man excels in being without the sense of 'me'. Earth, a stone or gold are the same to him. The knots of his heart have been rent asunder, and he is freed from greed and blindness. 88

Who can compare with that contented, liberated soul who pays no regard to anything and has no desire left in his heart? 89

Who but the upright man without desire knows without knowing, sees without seeing and speaks without speaking? 90

Beggar or king, he excels who is without desire, and whose opinion of things is rid of 'good' and 'bad'. 91

There is neither dissolute behaviour nor virtue, nor even discrimination of the truth for the sage who has reached the goal and is the very embodiment of guileless sincerity. 92

How can one describe what is experienced within by one desireless and free from pain, and content to rest in himself - and of whom? 93

The wise man who is contented in all circumstances is not asleep even in deep sleep, not sleeping in a dream, nor waking when he is awake. 94

The seer is without thoughts even when thinking, without senses among the senses, without understanding even in understanding and without a sense of responsibility even in the ego. 95

Neither happy nor unhappy, neither detached nor attached, neither seeking liberation nor liberated, he is neither something nor nothing. 96

Not distracted in distraction, in mental stillness not poised, in stupidity not stupid, that blessed one is not even wise in his wisdom. 97

The liberated man is self-possessed in all circumstances and free from the idea of 'done' and 'still to do'. He is the same wherever he is and without greed. He does not dwell on what he has done or not done. 98

He is not pleased when praised nor upset when blamed. He is not afraid of death nor attached to life. 99

A man at peace does not run off to popular resorts or to the forest. Whatever and wherever, he remains the same. 100

Nineteenth Chapter

King Janaka says: Using the hook of self-knowledge, thorns of various opinions have extracted out from inside of heart by me. 1

There is no righteousness and duty, no objective or discretion, no duality or non-duality for me, who is established in Self. 2

There is no past, future or present, there is no space or time for me , who is established in Self. 3

There is no self or non-self, nothing auspicious or evil, no thought or absence of them for me, who is established in Self. 4

There are no states as dreams or sleep or waking. There is no fourth state 'Turiya' beyond these, and no fear for me, who is established in Self. 5

There is nothing distant or near, nothing within or without, nothing large or subtle for me, who is established in Self. 6

There is no life or death, not this world or any outer world, no annihilation or meditative state for me, who is established in Self. 7

For me who has taken eternal refuge in Self, discussion on three goals of life is useless, discussion on yoga is useless, discussion on knowledge is useless. 8

Twentieth Chapter

King Janaka says: In stainless Self, there are no five matter-elements or body, no sense organs or mind, no emptiness or despair. 1

For me who is ever free from dualism, there are no scriptures or self-knowledge, no attached mind, no satisfaction or desire-lessness. 2

There is no knowledge or ignorance, no 'me', 'this' or 'mine', no bondage or liberation, and no characteristic of self-nature. 3

In unchanging me, there is no fateful actions or liberation during life and no bodiless enlightenment. 4

Without a nature, there is no doer or reaper of actions, no inaction or action, nothing visible or invisible. 5

Established as non-dual reality, there is no world or desire for liberation, no yogi or seer, no one bound or liberated. 6

Established as non-dual reality, there is no creation or annihilation, what is to be achieved or what are the means, who is seeker and what is achievement. 7

There is no knower or evidence, nothing knowable or knowledge, nothing less or non-less in forever pure Self. 8

There is no distraction or focus, no right discrimination or delusion, no joy or sorrow in always action-less Self. 9

There is not this world or the other, no happiness or suffering for Self, who is eternally free from thoughts. 10

There is no Maya or world, no attachment or detachment, no living beings or that God for forever pure Self. 11

For me who is forever unmovable and indivisible, established in Self, there is no tendency or renunciation, no liberation or bondage. 12

There is no sermon or scripture, no disciple or guru, nothing is to be achieved for ever blissful and non-special Self. 13

There is no existence or non-existence, no non-duality or duality. What more is there to say? Nothing arises out of me. 14

Ashtavakra Gita: I Am Shiva

Below are nine translations of the last chapter of the Ashtavakra's Gita by Thomas Byrom, Bart Marshall, Manuel Schoch, John Richards, Ramesh S. Balsekar, Ananda Wood, Vedic Scriptures, Hari Prasad Shastri, and Akhandanand Saraswati.

From Wikipedia:

Ashtavakra Gita

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashtavakra_Gita

The Ashtavakra Gita (Sanskrit in Devanagari: अष्टावक्रगीता; IAST: aṣṭāvakra-gītā) or the Song of Ashtavakra is a classical Advaita Vedanta scripture. It is written as a dialogue between the sage Ashtavakra and Janaka, king of Mithila.

Radhakamal Mukerjee, an Indian social scientist, dated the book to the period immediately after the Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita (c. 500–400 BC). J. L. Brockington, emeritus professor of Sanskrit at the University of Edinburgh, places the Ashtavakra Gita much later, supposing it to have been written either in the eighth century CE by a follower of Shankara, or in the fourteenth century during a resurgence of Shankara's teaching. Sri Swami Shantananda Puri suggests that since the book contains the seed of the theory of non-creation Ajata Vada developed later by Gaudapada in Mandookya Karika, this book comes from a period prior to that of Gaudapada and hence prior to Adi Shankara.

Ashtavakra is probably identical to the holy sage with the same name who appears in Mahabharata, though the connection is not clearly stated in any of the texts. Mukherjee identifies Janaka as the father of Sita and disciple of the sage Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Janaka is also depicted as a king who has attained perfection in the Bhagavad Gita.

Ashtavakra Gita is a dialogue between Ashtavakra and Janaka on the nature of soul, reality and bondage. It offers a radical version of non-dualistic philosophy. The Gita insists on the complete unreality of external world and absolute oneness of existence. It does not mention any morality or duties, and therefore is seen by commentators as 'godless'. It also dismisses names and forms as unreal and a sign of ignorance.

In a conversation between Janaka and Ashtavakra, pertaining to the deformity of his crooked body, Ashtavakra explains that the size of a Temple is not affected by how it is shaped, and the shape of his own body does not affect himself (or Atman). The ignorant man's vision is shrouded by names and forms, but a wise man sees only himself:

You are really unbound and action-less, self-illuminating and spotless already. The cause of your bondage is that you are still resorting to stilling the mind. (I.15)

You are unconditioned and changeless, formless and immovable, unfathomable awareness, imperturbable- such consciousness is un-clinging. (I.17)

You are not bound by anything. What does a pure person like you need to renounce? Putting the complex organism to rest, you can go to your rest. (V.1)

The Heart of Awareness

Thomas Byrom

I Am Shiva

1.

I am fulfilled.

The elements of nature,
The body and the senses,
What are they to me?

Or the mind?

What is emptiness or despair?

2.

What are the holy books,
Or knowledge of the Self,
Or the mind,
Even when it is free of the senses?

Or happiness,
Or freedom from desire?

I am always
One without two.

3.

Knowledge or ignorance,
Freedom or bondage,
What are they?

What is “I,”
Or “mine,”
Or “this”?

Or the form of the true Self?

4.

I am always one.

What do I care for freedom
In life or in death,
Or for my present karma?

5.

I am always
Without I.

So where is the one
Who acts or enjoys?

And what is the rising
Or vanishing of thought?

What is the invisible world,
Or the visible?

6.

In my heart, I am one.

What is this world?

Who seeks freedom,
Or wisdom, or oneness?

Who is bound or free?

7.

In my heart I am one.

What is creation,
Or dissolution?

What is seeking,
And the end of seeking?

Who is the seeker?
What has he found?

8.

I am forever pure.

What do I care who knows,
What is known,
Or how it is known?

What do I care for knowledge?

What do I care what is,
Or what is not?

9.

I am forever still.

What are joy or sorrow,
Distraction or concentration,
Understanding or delusion?

10.

I am always without thought.

What is happiness or grief?

What is here and now,
Or beyond?

11.

I am forever pure.

What is illusion,
Or the world?

What is the little soul,
Or God Himself?

12.

One without two,
I am always the same.

I sit in my heart.
13.

What need is there
For striving or stillness?

What is freedom or bondage?
What are holy books or teaching?

What is the purpose of life?

Who is the disciple,
And who is the master?

14.

For I have no bounds.

I am Shiva.

Nothing arises in me,
In whom nothing is single,
Nothing is double.

Nothing is,
Nothing is not.

What more is there to say?

Ashtavakra Gita

Bart Marshall

20. Liberation-in-Life

Janaka said:

20.1

Where are the elements, the body, the organs, the mind?
Where is the void?
Where is despair?
My nature is transparent clearness.

20.2

Where is scripture?
Where is Self-knowledge?
Where is no-mind?
Where is contentment and freedom from desire?
I am empty of two-ness.

20.3

Where is Knowledge and ignorance?
Where is “I”?
Where is “this”?
Where is “mine”?
Where is bondage and liberation?
Self has no attributes.

20.4

Where is the unfolding of karma?
Where is liberation-in-life,
or even liberation at death?
There is only One.

20.5

Where is the doer or enjoyer?
Where is the origin or end of thought?
Where is direct or reflected knowledge?
There is no person here.

20.6

Where is the world?
Where is the seeker of liberation?

Where is the contemplative?
Where is the man of knowledge?
Where is the soul in bondage?
Where is the liberated soul?
My nature is Unity.

20.7

Where are creation and destruction?
Where is the end and the means?
Where is the seeker?
Where is attainment?
I am One.

20.8

Where is the knower?
Where is knowing?
Where is the known, or knowledge itself?
Where is anything?
Where is nothing?
I am pure Awareness.

20.9

Where is distraction, concentration, knowledge, or delusion?
Where is joy or sorrow?
I am Stillness.

20.10

Where is the relative?
Where the transcendent?
Where is happiness or misery?
I am empty of thought.

20.11

Where is illusion?
Where is existence?
Where is attachment or non-attachment?
Where is person?
Where is God?
I am Awareness.

20.12

Where is activity or inactivity?
Where is liberation or bondage?
I am timeless, indivisible.
I am Self alone.

20.13

Where are principles and scriptures?

Where is the disciple or teacher?

Where is the reason for life?

I am boundless, Absolute.

20.14

Where is existence or non-existence?

Where is Unity or duality?

No-thing emanates from me.

No more can be said.

Bitten by the Black Snake

Manuel Schoch

The Sixth Sutra

You are the clear space of awareness, pure and still, in whom there is no birth, no activity, no I.

You are one and the same, you cannot change or die.

The world only arises from ignorance, you alone are real.

There is no one, not even God, separated from yourself.

You are pure awareness; the world is an illusion, nothing more.

When you understand this fully, desire falls away, you find peace, for indeed there is nothing.

In the ocean of being there is only one, there was and there will be only one.

You are already fulfilled, how can you be bound or free?

Wherever you go, be happy.

Never upset your mind with yes or no.

Be quiet, you are awareness itself.

Live in the happiness of your own nature, which is happiness itself.

What is the use of thinking?

Once and for all, give up meditation, hold nothing in your mind.

You are the self, and you are free.

Ashtavakra Gita

John Richards

Chapter Twenty

Janaka said:

In my unblemished nature there are no elements, no body, no faculties, no mind. There is no void and no despair. 20.1

For me, free from the sense of dualism, there are no scriptures, no self-knowledge, no mind free from an object, no satisfaction and no freedom from desire. 20.2

There is no knowledge or ignorance, no "me," "this," or "mine," no bondage, no liberation, and no property of self-nature. 20.3

For him who is always free from individual characteristics there is no antecedent causal action, no liberation during life, and no fulfillment at death. 20.4

For me, free from individuality, there is no doer and no reaper of the consequences, no cessation of action, no arising of thought, no immediate object, and no idea of results. 20.5

There is no world, no seeker for liberation, no yogi, no seer, no one bound and no one liberated. I remain in my own nondual nature. 20.6

There is no emanation or return, no goal, means, seeker or achievement. I remain in my own nondual nature. 20.7

For me who am forever unblemished, there is no assessor, no standard, nothing to assess, and no assessment. 20.8

For me who am forever actionless, there is no distraction or one-pointedness of mind, no lack of understanding, no stupidity, no joy and no sorrow. 20.9

For me who am always free from deliberations there is neither conventional truth nor absolute truth, no happiness and no suffering. 20.10

For me who am forever pure there is no illusion, no samsara, no attachment or detachment, no living organism, and no God. 20.11

For me who am forever unmovable and indivisible, established in myself, there is no activity or inactivity, no liberation and no bondage. 20.12

For me who am blessed and without limitation, there is no initiation or scripture, no disciple or teacher, and no goal of human life. 20.13

There is no being or non-being, no unity or dualism. What more is there to say? There is nothing outside of me. 20.14

A Duet of One

Ramesh S. Balsekar

Chapter Ten

Janaka says:

Where are the elements, where is the body, where are the organs, and where is the mind? Where, indeed, is the void, or despair? – for Me who am without the slightest taint by nature? (285)

Where are the scriptures, and the knowledge of the Self? Where is the mind detached from the sense objects, and where is contentment? Where is desirelessness? – for Me who has transcended the duality of opposites? (286)

Where is the knowledge, and where is ignorance? Where is I, and where is ‘this is mine’? Where is bondage, and where is liberation? How can there be any attribute to my Self-nature? (287)

Where is prarabdha-karma? Where is the question of liberation whether in life or at death? – for Me, the ever undifferentiated? (288)

Where is the doer or the enjoyer, where is the cessation of thought, or the rising of thought? Where is the question of true perceiving or faulty perceiving? – for Me who am ever impersonal? (289)

Where is the world, and where is the seeker, where is the question of yoga as knowledge, who is in bondage, or who is liberated? – for Me who am non-dual by his very nature? (290)

Where is creation and where is destruction? What is the end, and what is the means? Where is the question of seeking or achieving? – for Me abiding in my non-dual nature? (291)

Where is the ‘knower’, and where the ‘means-to-knowledge’? Where is the ‘object of knowledge’, and where ‘objective knowledge’? What is any thing, and what is no thing? – for Me who am ever pure? (292)

How can there ever be distraction or concentration, knowledge or delusion, joy or sorrow? – for Me who am ever without action? (293)

Where is the relative or the absolute, happiness or misery? – for Me who am ever beyond any conceptualizations? (294)

Where is maya, where is samsara, where is attachment or detachment, how can there be any question of jiva or Brahman? – for Me who am ever pure? (295)

Where is activity or inactivity, where is liberation or bondage? – for Me who am ever immutable, indivisible and established in the Self? (296)

Where are spiritual instructions or scriptural injunctions? Where is the disciple, and where is the guru? Where, indeed, is the question of any duty? – for me, the subjective, potential plenum, free from all limitations? (297)

Where is the existence or non-existence? Where is the unicity or duality? In short, it is needless to say anything more, other than that nothing, indeed, emanates from me. (298)

Astavakra Samhita

Ananda Wood

Liberation-in-Life

20.1

Where are the five world elements,
where are the senses, where the mind?
Where blank and empty nothingness,
where hopelessness of dark despair?

No trace of them is ever present
in my own true nature, found
uncompromised by any taint
of world or personality.

20.2

What are the scriptures, and their many
schools of analytic thought?
What is discernment of self-knowledge?
What then mind bereft of objects?

What contentment is thus found,
in freedom from desiring?

Now that I've lost all sense of
opposites, what can these be to me?

20.3

What is true knowledge, and what
ignorance? What this called 'I' or 'mine'?

What then is bondage, and from it
what liberation can be found?
Of my true nature, what one form
defines it in particular,
so that it's rightly recognized?

20.4

What are these chains of causal action
found to carry on from past,
through present, into future times?

And how can anyone be free
at heart, while yet found living in
this driven personality?

What meaning can there be in freedom
which is thought to be attained
by body's death, into a state
where personality and all
its acts (of sensing, thinking, feeling,
speaking) seem to be destroyed?

For one who knows no differences,
knows nothing in particular,
how can we rightly understand
that such a one has now attained
to an undying state of life
where peace shines positively free?

20.5

Where is there any doer? Where is
some personal enjoyer found
engaged in doing anything?

Where is there any ceasing of
activity? If ceasing thus,
where does activity subside?

How does it keep on sparkling out,
how found to rise in seeming show?

What is immediate knowing? What
to me are its results – from where
I'm always found to stand,
unchanged and utterly impersonal?

20.6

What is the world? Where is the one
who would be free? Where is the yogi?
Where the sage who knows correctly?

Where is someone bound or freed –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.7

Where is creation issued forth,
and where retraction back to source?

Where is achievement to be found?
Where any striving to achieve?

Where is the seeker, where success –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.8

Who is the one correcting knowledge,
where the means of such correction,
what conclusion thereby reached?

And where can there be anything
or otherwise not anything,
for me who am forever pure.

20.9

What is distraction, or what
concentration? What dull apathy,
or what enraptured fantasy?

What is excitement or despair?
What can these oppositions be,
to me who's always actionless?

20.10

What is this world of compromise
that trades for objects of desire?
What is that true reality
which stands beyond all wish and want
found driven by mind's fancying?

What happy or unhappy state
that pulls or pushes mind can be

more than a hollow fantasy –
to me who always am devoid
of calculations in the mind
concocted by such fantasies?

20.11

Where are the world's illusory
appearances? Where is the ebb
and flow of driven change, in which
our personalities seem caught
as they pass through this made-up world?

Where is affection pulling us
to get involved with changing things?
Where does dislike push us away?

Where is there any living person
seen as part of larger world?
Where any great reality
in which all things of world take part?

What can such put together show
of partial seemings be to me,
who am unchanging purity?

20.12

Where could activity be found
to bring about some change? And where
could such activity be stopped?
Where could it end, producing thus
a state of inactivity?

Just where could there be freedom then?
Where any sense of being bound?

What could be action or inaction,
feeling bound or feeling free –

for me who stands in self alone,
forever found unlimited
by any change or difference?

20.13

Where is there any teaching taught?
Where any scriptures, schools of thought?

Where a disciple seeking truth?
Where any teacher showing truth
beyond all personality?

Where any purpose served by living,
in the world or free of it?

What aim or meaning can there be,
for me who stands unlimited
by any dubious compromise
of good shown always mixed with bad
in personality and world?

20.14

Where is what's taken to exist?
Just where can be what's found unreal?

Where is what's one and one alone?
Just where can there be that same one
plus something else, thus making 'two'?

What more is there to say? For me,
there truly is no rising up
of anything at all. No sense
in fact gives rise to any sight,
or sound or smell or taste or touch.

No mind gives rise to thoughts or dreams.
No feelings in the heart give rise
to values, meanings, purposes.

There is no show apart from self.
All show is that and that alone.

Just that is all reality,
expressed throughout all show of world
produced by personality.

Ashtavakra Gita

Hari Prasad Shastri

Chapter XX

1. In my perfect being (Atman), neither the elements, nor the body, nor the sense-organs, nor the thinking principle, nor the void, nor despondency, exist.
2. What need is there for desirelessness or contentment, or what meaning have the Scriptures, Self-Knowledge, and the mind and its objects, to me, who am without a sense of duality?
3. What is Knowledge, what is ignorance, what is the limited ego, or “I”, “This”, or “Mine”, what is bondage or freedom, to me, where is the definition of the Self?
4. What is prarabdha Karma, what is liberation in life, or liberation at the time of death, to the undifferentiated?
5. Where is the doer or the enjoyer, and where is the rising or vanishing of thought? Where is direct perception of Reality, for me, who have cast off individuality?
6. For me, who am free and above unity and multiplicity, there is no world and no candidate for release. Neither do I recognize the state of contemplation nor the state of Knowledge. The state of bondage and liberation are one to me.
7. Having realized my own nature, the undivided essence, the manifestation and withdrawal of the world no longer exists for me. Where is the goal, and where is the purpose? Where is the seeker, and where is the liberated one?
8. Neither am I Knowledge, the vehicle of Knowledge, nor the object of Knowledge. What is entity or non-entity, to me, who am eternal perfection?
9. What are joy and grief, distraction and concentration, dullness and delusion, to me, who am actionless?
10. Being freed from all mental activity, where is relativity, where is transcendence, where is joy, and where is grief, for me?
11. Being ever perfect, neither Maya nor the world, neither attachment nor detachment, neither Jiva nor Brahman exist in me.
12. For me, who am immutable, indivisible, and rooted in the Self, there is neither the path of action, nor of renunciation, neither bondage nor release.

13. I am Shiva, the unconditioned, the absolute Good. What need is there for instruction or scriptural injunction? I am neither Guru nor disciple.

14. What need for further declarations? Nothing emanates from me, nor does existence or non-existence, unity or duality. abide in me.

Ashtavakra Gita

Vedic Scriptures

Twentieth Chapter

King Janaka says: In stainless Self, there are no five matter-elements or body, no sense organs or mind, no emptiness or despair. 1

For me who is ever free from dualism, there are no scriptures or self-knowledge, no attached mind, no satisfaction or desire-lessness. 2

There is no knowledge or ignorance, no 'me', 'this' or 'mine', no bondage or liberation, and no characteristic of self-nature. 3

In unchanging me, there is no fateful actions or liberation during life and no bodiless enlightenment. 4

Without a nature, there is no doer or reaper of actions, no inaction or action, nothing visible or invisible. 5

Established as non-dual reality, there is no world or desire for liberation, no yogi or seer, no one bound or liberated. 6

Established as non-dual reality, there is no creation or annihilation, what is to be achieved or what are the means, who is seeker and what is achievement. 7

There is no knower or evidence, nothing knowable or knowledge, nothing less or non-less in forever pure Self. 8

There is no distraction or focus, no right discrimination or delusion, no joy or sorrow in always action-less Self. 9

There is not this world or the other, no happiness or suffering for Self, who is eternally free from thoughts. 10

There is no Maya or world, no attachment or detachment, no living beings or that God for forever pure Self. 11

For me who is forever unmovable and indivisible, established in Self, there is no tendency or renunciation, no liberation or bondage. 12

There is no sermon or scripture, no disciple or guru, nothing is to be achieved for ever blissful and non-special Self. 13

There is no existence or non-existence, no non-duality or duality. What more is there to say? Nothing arises out of me. 14

Ashtavakra Gita

Akhandanand Saraswati

1.

Where are the panchabhoota (five elements) in my limpid swarup? Where is the de`ha (body) and the indreeya (senses)? Where is the mana and where is the shoonya (emptiness)? And, where, also, is niraashaa (lack of expectations)?

2.

I am completely free of doubts. Where are the Shastras and where is the Atma-vignan? Where is the nirvishayataa (disinterest in worldly objects) of the mana, and where is tripti? For me, what does it mean to be free of trishnaa (longings)?

3.

Where is vidyaa (right knowledge) in my swarup, and where is avidyaa (nescience)? Where is Aham (the subtle pride of individuality), and where is idam (that, which is not the Aham)? Where is mamataa (possessiveness), where is bandhan (bondage), where is Moksha? And, in that, where is there any form?

4.

Where is the praarabdha-karma (actions done due to fate created by past actions) in the unchanging Atma that is free of attributes? Where is jeevan-mukti and where is vide`ha-kaivalya (the non-dual Atma, not attached to a body)?

5.

I am sadaa (always) unchanging and nisvabhaava (free of having any particular nature). Where is the karta in me? Where is the bhokta in me? There is not even a nishkriya sfoornaa (inactive pulsation). Where is the aparoksha (known, but not through the senses) Gnan, or fala-gnaana (Gnan that is the fruit of some action)? (I am not affected by thoughts or the fruits of my actions.)

6.

Where is the loka and mumukshu (one who wants to be free of the cycle of rebirth) in my adviteeya swarup? Where is there any Yogi or Gnani? Where is anyone baddha (bound) or mukta (free)?

7.

Where is srishti (Creation) and where is sanhaara (destruction) in my own adviteeya swarup? Where is saadhya (the goal) and where is the saadhana (effort)? Where is the saadhaka (the one who makes the effort for spiritual progress) and where is the siddhi (success)?

8.

I am totally the shuddha swarup. In me, there is no pramaataa (the one who establishes) and no pramaana (proof); no prame`ya (that, which is established) and no pramaa (the right intellect). There is no thing, and no nothing. All these differences are perceptions – they have no connection to the one who perceives. The one who perceives is not separate from that, which is perceived. Therefore, I am that existence, due to which everything is perceived.

9.

I am always nirvikaara (free of mental distortions), nispana (free of any pulsation), and nishkriya (free of actions). There is neither vikshep nor e`kaagrataa (concentration) in me. There is neither bodha (knowledge) nor moodhataa (stupidity), no harsha and no vishad. (My mind is free of thoughts and inclinations because all mental states are connected to something seen, and therefore, are my own swarup.)

10.

I am free of sankalpa, vikalpa, vichar, and bodha; so, there is no vyavahaara (interaction) and no paramaatha (supreme achievement). There is neither sukha nor dukha.

11.

I am always free of all impurities. Where is Maya (the Ishwara's power of illusion) in me? Where is the sansara? Where is raaga and where is vairagya? Where is the jeeva, and where is the Brahman? (All these differences are superimpositions, made for the purpose of explaining things to a seeker of the ultimate Truth.)

12.

I am kootastha (unaffected) and nirvibhaaga (unfragmented; whole). I always remain established in my swarup. Then, what is pravritti-nivritti in me? And, what are mukti and bandhan?

13.

I am Shiva, without any upaadhee (superimposed attributes). For me, what is upade`sha (teaching)? What is the Shastra? What shishya (disciple) and what Guru? Purushaatha (human achievement) does not exist for me.

14.

What is 'is', and what is 'is not' for me? There is neither one, nor two. What is the use of excessive talk? Nothing exists in my swarup.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih