

YOGA VASISTHA Vol. II

by Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda

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YOGA
VASISTHA
Vol. II



DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to Sri Swami Lalitananda, the Vice-president of the Yoga Research Foundation, who is the illustrious author of *Yoga In Life*, Editor of the *International Yoga Guide*, as well as the poet-composer of *Yogic Mystic Songs for Meditation* in four volumes.

It was the *Vairagya* — dispassion and intense aspiration of Sri Swami Lalitananda that resulted in my giving the complete series of lectures on *Yoga Vasistha* as well as the writing of this present book.

The vast work of promoting my teachings and works in the West has been carried on untiringly, with an unassuming zeal, and utter self-effacement, by this noble Sanyasin for over 15 years. The spiritual world will ever remain deeply indebted to her for the formation and existence of the mighty organization — the Yoga Research Foundation — which is a fountain source of light and wisdom for spiritual aspirants all over the world.

May God bless her abundantly!

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda
May 31, 1977

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Yoga Vasistha can bring a complete transformation in human personality; even like the beggar of old fairy tales who turned into a King when a charmed golden ring fell into his hand, just so, whosoever holds this book, turning the pages with an inquisitive mind and a heart searching for truth, will discover the infinite beauty of his inner Self. *Yoga Vasistha* nourishes the soul and awakens a yearning for freedom and an exquisite peace unknown before.

This unique book par excellence has been long awaited by advanced Vedantins and Yogis of India, because it is only available in rare editions of the last century. And it is what the enquiring mind of the West has been desperately needing since they heard the remarks of Schopenhauer, "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death." There are a few publications at present which are not sufficient to portray the total beauty and wisdom of *Yoga Vasistha*.

H.H. Sri Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, internationally known lecturer and writer of over fifty books on Yoga and Vedanta philosophy, has been interpreting and commenting on *Yoga Vasistha* for almost 25 years: first in India for 9 years at the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy, Sivananda Ashram, Himalayas; in Vedantic conferences in Amritsar, Ludhiana, and other parts of India, and also in Dehradun Women's College. Since coming to the West, Swamiji had been lecturing in Puerto Rico for six years, followed by his weekly lectures here in Miami. Available on cassette tapes, these lectures are an undying treasure.

Just as King Shah Jehan had the choice of only one type of food-grain while he was imprisoned for life, and he chose the chickpea (garbanso bean) because of its nourishment and adaptability to a variety of tasty dishes, so too, if I could have only one book for some extraordinary reason to read for the rest of my life, I would choose *Yoga Vasistha*. After a brief encounter with *Yoga Vasistha*, the reader will feel that all other books of philosophy have become like old crumbs on the table, while *Yoga Vasistha* stands like the sweet and vitalizing elixir of life.

Unfortunately, however, due to the lack of knowledge of *Yoga Vasistha*, the intelligentsia of the West have been unable to realize the vast treasure of profound knowledge that lies hidden in this great work. Because of this reason, the wisdom of Vedanta has not been deeply understood and assimilated by them.

Yoga Vasistha encompasses in its powerful literature the dramatic stories of the inner states of the mind, and like a brilliant advocate, presents its brief with a convincing voice and expert phrasing. *Yoga Vasistha* has a mystic strategy that convinces the mind to undermine its fancies and imaginations leading to the realization that the world lies within the mind. Nothing is more inspiring and soul-stirring

as when the mind lifts itself from the quagmire of false perceptions of the senses and sees the contents of waking, dream and deep sleep as the refraction of the Light of Consciousness filtering through the layers of egoistic illusions.

The awe-inspiring awakening of the knowledge that "You are not this body, not this mind, and not this intellect" is uplifting and produces a vital change in the overall perception of the world. It is for this reason Sages warn immature aspirants against the wrong interpretations of this grand philosophy; they emphasize the fact that the wisdom of the *Yoga Vasistha* must be received under the guidance of an illumined teacher. For those who are endowed with a mighty strength of intellect and intense dispassion, therefore, *Yoga Vasistha* brings for them the clouds of mystic understanding that bursts into the flood of unique bliss.

The greatest literatures of the world have always incorporated in their writings parables, illustrations and stories to bring about a striking impression, even like that of a flash of lightning upon the sleeping mind in order to awaken it sharply to the light of the truth. *Yoga Vasistha* abounds with these. *Yoga Vasistha* in its broad spectrum encompasses topics such as the mysteries of the soul, death and reincarnation, the subtle operations of the unconscious mind which bring about repeated embodiments, the psychic powers, the mystic energy known as *Kundalini*, and the techniques of spiritual enquiry and meditation. A studious reader, therefore, will meet for the first time a challenge to his intellect to discover the secret wealth of the Self, and to explore the mysteries of the mind.

It is to be noted that humor and wit permeate the writings and lectures of Sri Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, much like the green creeper adorning the tree of liberation. But behind this, Sri Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda gives to the world his most memorable writing which has been guarded as a secret mystic wealth by the Sages of India for a long time. This book, by Sri Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, presents you with the key to heavenly bliss and perfection, and every page of this book is filled with his blessings.

May the golden sun of your eternal Self rise from behind the horizon of distractions and mental limitations and encompass you in the greatest of beauty and sublime love which are the very essence of your real Self!

Swami Lalitananda

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* Drawings and Illustrations by Sushila



Author Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda

INTRODUCTION

In the “Bala-Kanda” section of the *Ramayana* it is stated that Sri Rama was given spiritual instructions by Sage Vasistha. *Yoga Vasistha*, a complete and separate work in itself, is that teaching. While the *Ramayana*, the epic poem more popularly known throughout India and the world, describes the life and adventures of Sri Rama, the *Yoga Vasistha* presents his inner realization in detail for those who wish to intensify their spiritual life and deepen their understanding. A vast work of approximately 32,000 verses, the *Yoga Vasistha* was written by the great poet-sage Valmiki, as was the *Ramayana*, about 500 B.C. or earlier.

The *Yoga Vasistha*, which is virtually unknown in the West due to the scarcity of its English translations, is also known by the names of *Maha-Ramayana*, *Uttar Ramayana*, *Arsha Ramayana*, *Jnana Vasistha*, *Vasistha Ramayana*, and *Vasistha*. But whatever you choose to call it, it is the earliest detailed work of Yoga-Vedanta and gives a magnificent exposition of the subtleties and insights of that philosophy with a majestic sweep that has never been equalled in any metaphysical work since.

Every kind of exposition is employed in its presentation — didactic instruction, answers to doubts, parables, and stories within stories. Here, for example, the interlocking system of stories

within stories enhances the vision of worlds within worlds, and of the infinitely complex world of the mind, itself arising from the Cosmic Mind. Many key points of this metaphysical instruction are touched upon over and over again with increasingly deeper meanings. Therefore the work appears to move in vast spirals, ultimately culminating in the Self-realization of Sri Rama.

In "Vairagya Prakarana" of Volume I it will be remembered that Sage Vasistha asked Sri Rama to express the reasons for his depressed state of mind. At this, Sri Rama elaborated upon the transiency and essencelessness of all objects of the world. All that he once thought to be of value and a source of happiness has, through the vision of his penetrative intellect, become nothing but a source of emptiness and misery.

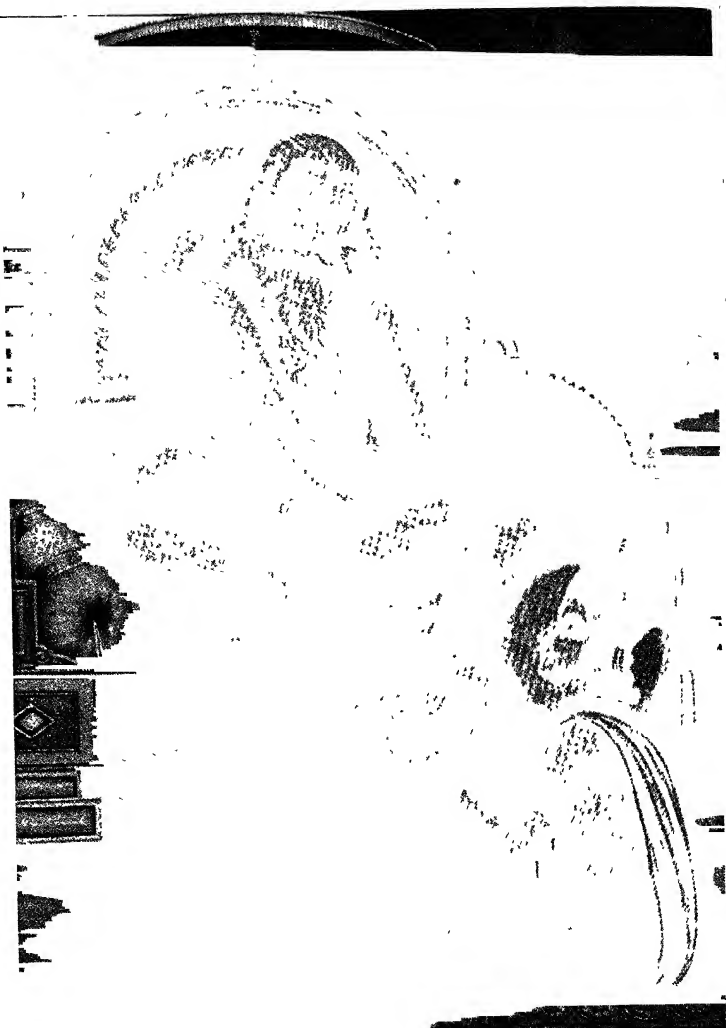
In the first section, therefore, Sri Rama has taken what is normally the most valued aspects of life and has shown how illusory they are. The purpose here is to promote dispassion (*Vairagya*) in the aspirant. Such *Vairagya* considers all pleasures of the world, from the lowest form of life to the highest — that of *Brahma* the Creator — as insignificant and illusory. This is the first and fundamental requirement on the path of wisdom that leads to Self-realization.

In the second section, "Mumukshu Prakarana," it has been shown that certain qualifications are necessary for an aspirant before he can effectively move on the path towards the state of Immortality or Self-realization. Sage Vasistha, therefore, elaborated on the four most important qualifications — those of Serenity, Contentment, Spiritual Enquiry and Good Association.

In addition, "Mumukshu Prakarana" elaborated on how the aspirant should not rely on destiny, rather on his own self-effort. The Self within is unlimited, and each person has that same potential within — all that is needed to unlock that infinite potential and creativity is repeated self-effort.

In "Utpatti Prakarana," Sage Vasistha has shown how the world has evolved from and is sustained by the Absolute through the limitations of the mind. And since the world is merely a projection of the mind conditioned by ignorance, when ignorance is overcome by intuitive wisdom, mind rediscovers its unity with the Cosmic Mind and the individual merges into the Absolute. At this point, the entire world-process is remembered to be nothing but a long dream of the mind from which one has awoken. It was in this section that the first volume ended and the present volume now continues.

After completing "Utpatti Prakarana," Sage Vasistha goes into "Sthiti Prakarana" which deals with the sustaining reality of the Self, and then on into "Upashama Prakarana," the topic dealing with the quiescence of the mind. Volume III will pick up here and will continue on into the last and final section, "Nirvana Prakarana," the topic dealing with the final stage of Sri Rama's instruction from Sage Vasistha, and his ultimate Enlightenment.



Sage Vasistha Imparts Spiritual Wisdom to Sri Rama

Courtesy Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

ब्रह्मानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं
द्वन्द्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षिभूतं
भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं श्रीवसिष्ठं नताः स्मः ॥

Adorations to Brahman, the giver of supreme bliss, the embodiment of pure consciousness, beyond the pairs of opposites, vast like the ether, knowable by meditation upon the great utterance "Thou Art That." Adorations to Sage Vasistha, who is indeed Brahman, one without a second, eternal, pure, immutable, the witnessing Self abiding in all beings, beyond the changes and modifications of nature.

Nirvana Prakarana Uttara Bhaga: 216-26

इच्छामात्रमविद्येह तन्नाशो मोक्ष उच्यते ।
स चाऽसङ्कल्पमात्रेण सिद्धो भवति राघव ॥ ७ ॥

Oh Rama, ignorance consists in desires for the external objects of the world, and liberation consists in desirelessness. If you stop thinking of the objects of the world, you will surely become desireless and enjoy the bliss of liberation.

Utpatti Prakarana: 114-7

मनागपि मनोव्योम्नि वासनारजनीक्षये ।
कालिमा तनुतामेति चिदादित्यमहोदयात् ॥ ८ ॥

When the knowledge of the Self shines like the sun in the ether of the heart, the night of ignorance disappears and the dark veil of ignorance is removed.

114-8

Section 66 – *The Mystic Art
of Destroying the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, from one lamp, numerous lamps are kindled. In the same way, from one Absolute, numerous souls come into existence. The multiplicity of souls is due to illusion alone.

When a person gives up the illusory concepts of duality in the depths of his heart, and reflects upon the nature of the Self devoid of name and form, he becomes the Self. Then he does not grieve anymore.

Jiva is nothing but *Chitta* (mind-stuff). The moment the mind is transcended, the world dissolves. There is no need to “cover the world with leather.” A Yogi puts on leather shoes. So for him, all paths are covered with leather. In other words, the moment a Yogi attains intuitive vision, he beholds *Brahman* everywhere.

Due to the wanderings of the *Chitta*, the illusory awareness of birth, growth, boyhood, youth, old age, death, heaven and hell arises. All of these are nothing but expressions of the wild dance of the *Chitta*.

Just as objects of the world seem to be dancing and the trees seem to be swaying before a person who is intoxicated with liquor, so too, the world-process seems to occur due to the intoxication of ignorance.

Impress your mind with the fact that there is nothing in this world other than Pure Consciousness. Thus impressed, your mind will attain a state of quiescence, like a fire that is no longer fed by fuel. When a person discovers his unity with the Supreme Self, he becomes quiescent, whether he engages himself in action, or sits quietly in deep meditation.

All that is perceived by the mind is essentially mental. The mind is essentially Pure Consciousness. The world-process is like a snake projected on the rope of Pure Consciousness.

Wisdom is the only potent remedy for curing the disease of the world-process. It is the illusion of the mind that gives rise to the world-process, and mental illusion cannot be destroyed by physical exertion. For spiritual realization, there is no need for mental tension or physical exertion. All that is needed is to realize that there is nothing to be desired in this world. When the subtle desires begin to melt in the light of wisdom, the true nature of the Self is revealed, like the sun appearing from behind the shifting clouds.

If a person were to renounce whatever the mind desires, then immediately through the force of knowledge, he would attain release. In this world, great men are ready to renounce even their lives, as if they considered their life nothing but straw in the face of their ideals. In Yoga, all you have to renounce is desire, which is illusory and empty anyway.

Whatever object you desire, renounce it in your mind. Having mentally renounced your attachments, continue to perform your duties, keeping the mind balanced in gain and loss. Remember that you are the eternal Self, and not this perishable body.

Section 67 — *The Nature of the Soul*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, how does the *Jiva* (individual soul identified with the mind) arise from the Divine Self? How is the *Jiva* related to the Absolute Self?

Sri Vasistha explained: *Brahman*, the Absolute, has infinite power. By the force of *Maya* (cosmic illusion), *Brahman* is capable of manifesting Itself through the numerous individual souls. So from the essential point of view, every soul is *Brahman*, and the world is but an illusory modification of the Absolute. When this identity is discovered through intuitional realization, the question of the relationship between the soul and the Divine Self has no basis.

Pressured by the *Samkalpas* (egoistic desires and thoughts) of the past, an individual soul continues to pass through numerous embodiments. It continues to experience birth, death, and the varied conditions of life from one birth to another.

Just as wind is nothing but air in motion, so the *Jiva* is nothing but Consciousness mingled with the illusion of vibration. It is Consciousness in the state of "motion" that brings about the existence of the *Jiva* and its related developments such as Karma (action), destiny (fate), and the world of cause-effect relationships.

Some souls (the vibratory states of Consciousness) are so involved in Karma, causation and destiny, that it will take a long time for them to attain release from the fetters of bondage. Some will

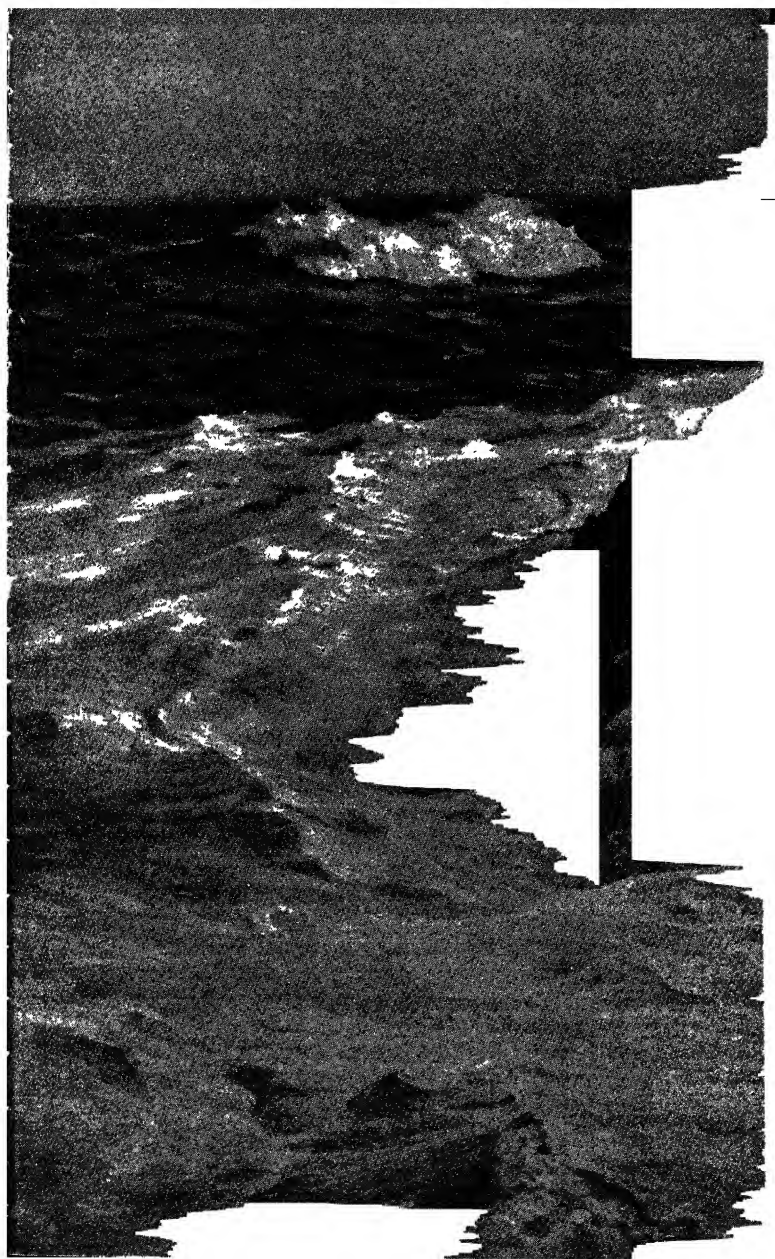
attain Enlightenment in a few births, some will take a thousand births, while some will attain illumination even in this very birth.

Consciousness becomes identified with both ignorance and the effects of ignorance. It becomes identified with the *Chitta* and is therefore called the incarnating soul. It is identified with the mind, and thus becomes the experiencer of pleasure and pain. It becomes identified with the *Pranas* (vital forces), and is called a living being. It is identified with the astral body, so It experiences heaven and hell. It becomes identified with the physical body, and is thus related to its parents and other relatives and friends. But from the absolute point of view, the soul is essentially *Brahman*, the Absolute, without mind, without the *Pranas*, without the body, and without all limitations.

The soul experiences this world-process as a result of the force of illusion operating through the limited mind. King *Lawana*, the ruler of *Mathura*, experienced the life of a *Chandala* (outcast) for what seemed to be a long time, while he was really in a state of trance that lasted only a few hours.

Just as waves arise in the ocean, so too do the experiences of the world, even the very concepts of time and space, arise from the mind. At times, tiny ripples are whipped into mighty waves by the wind. In the same way, the tiny vibrations of the mind can be whipped into gigantic proportions by the wind of illusion.

In the ocean of *Brahman*, the souls are like tiny whirlpools. These, in turn, give rise to the bubbles of numerous worlds. It is *Brahman* who assumes the role



of a *Jiva*. But when an individual acquires the Knowledge of *Brahman*, the *Brahman* in him tears the veil of illusion and merges in Its own real nature.

This Pure Consciousness (*Brahman*) manifests as a *Jiva* by reflecting in ignorance. It manifests as mind by becoming identified with thoughts and desires, as intellect by performing the function of reasoning and ascertaining, as *Chitta* by the act of retention and recollection, and as ego by developing the sense of "mineness." In fact, this Pure Consciousness is the ultimate analysis of all that goes to compose a human personality.

It is the Self that creates the illusion of the waking state by operating through the senses and contacting external objects. It is the Self that manifests the dream state by associating with the ego and its subtle desires, and moving in the region of the throat. Again, it is the same Self that withdraws the projections of the world and sustains the world-process in a seed state while enjoying deep sleep. When Enlightened, the spirit in man rises beyond the three states and discovers its true identity with the Absolute. This is figuratively described as *Turiya*, the fourth state.

All this arises in *Brahman*. All this is sustained by *Brahman*. And all this is dissolved in *Brahman*. In fact, this world does not exist. Therefore, there is no relationship between *Brahman* and the world. Just as garlands of pearl may seem to appear in the sky before the eyes of a person who has defective vision, so too, the world-process is experienced due to the ignorance that veils the vision of the Self.

One might say that the vast sky supports the growth of a tree since it does not offer any obstruction to the latter's expansion. In the same way, *Brahman* can be called the support of the world-process, since it is untouched by the world, while at the same time It allows the illusory tree of the world-process to grow and to expand.

A mighty tree exists in a seed, but when the seed is roasted, it can no longer bring forth the tree. In the same way, the world-tree exists in a subtle seed state in the *Chitta*, but when the light of wisdom "roasts" the seed of the world-process, the soul attains release: it can no longer enter into the illusion of the world-process.

Sri Rama said: Oh Divine Sage, it is a great wonder that this world, though nonexistent, appears to exist. Though petty and limited, it appears to be an expansive, concrete reality.

Sri Vasistha continued: The world asserts itself in the heart of the ignorant, much as a nonexistent ghost terrifies a child by assuming a terrible form before his eyes.

The individual soul is essentially pure and true. But due to ignorance, it seems to be different from *Brahman*. Led by the illusions of the mind, the soul is caught in the dreams of the world-process.

Burdened by the complexes of the mind, the soul is unable to discover its essential nature. But led by self-effort through numerous embodiments, it becomes inclined towards spiritual enquiry into "Who am I?" As a result, it "recalls" its essential nature as *Brahman*.

But in the absence of the intuitive knowledge of "I Am," the soul evolves the illusory awareness of the ego. In leaning upon this illusory ego, it desires to taste, and there arises the organ of taste. It desires to see, and there manifests the organ of sight. Similarly, the other senses are evolved out of this illusory ego sense. Gradually, it becomes identified with the body, and then seems to be completely dependent on the body.

In fact, the physical body and all its realities are projections of the astral body constituted of the mind. The revelation of the fact that, "I am the subtle body and not the physical body," is of immense importance. But it is still more wondrous to discover that even the subtle body is nothing but mist that must dissolve in the unbounded sky of *Brahman*.

Section 68 to 83 — *The Story of Karkati*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, listen to this delightful and enlightening story of Demoness *Karkati*. It abounds with insight into the mystic life that leads to Self-realization.

In the northern part of the Himalayas, there once lived a gigantic demoness named *Karkati*. She became well-known by two names: *Vishuchika* (the needle-shaped affliction), and *Anyayavadhika* (the remover of injustice). The former name refers to her unenlightened state, while the latter name developed when she attained enlightenment. Presently, I will tell you how it came about that the terrible demoness became an enlightened spirit.

Karkati, the terrible demoness, used to range the Himalayan mountains. She was the very embodiment of terror and ugliness. She decked her gigantic body with a garland of human skulls; and with sharp, piercing eyes, she continued to look for her prey. Her hunger was insatiable. Her greatest desire was to devour all living beings — only this could satisfy her hunger.

In order to acquire this power, she practised intense austerity in an inaccessible part of the Himalayas. She sat in a meditative pose, and stayed firm like a rock for a very long time. Days, weeks, fortnights, months and even years passed by.

After a long time, *Brahma*, the dispenser of the fruits of action for all living beings, presented Himself before *Karkati* in order to bestow on her the fruit of her austerities. He told her that she could receive any boon she wanted from Him.

Karkati then asked the boon of becoming as small as a needle, in order to elude the sight of people, and thus to enter into their vitals so to satisfy her hunger.

Brahma said, “May you become *Vishuchika* (an affliction that causes one to feel like he is being pierced by needles). Escaping the notice of people, you will be able to enter into their vitals, and you will enjoy their flesh and blood to your heart’s content.

“But you will be able to hurt only those beings who are lacking *Dharma* (righteous conduct). Those who are endowed with righteous conduct will nullify your influence and negate your presence by the recitation of the following *Mantra*:

*"Om Hrim Hram Rim Ram Vishnu-Shaktaye
Namah. Om Hara Hara Naya Naya Pacha
Pacha Matha Matha Utsadaya Dure Kuru
Swaha Himavantam Gachha Jiva Sah Sah Sah
Chandramandalosi Swaha.*

"(Adorations to the Cosmic Power of Lord *Vishnu*. Oh *Shakti*, you are the controller of all. This disease is a partial manifestation of your being. May you withdraw it into yourself. You are the very embodiment of *Om*. Just as rice is made soft, so too, render this disease soft and vulnerable. Churn it even like curd and transfer it to another place, or adopt any other method to drive it away.)"

Further, *Brahma* enjoined that, while the physician repeats this *Mantra*, the patient must strongly feel that the disease which has been afflicting him due to his past Karmas is now leaving his body. He must feel he is being nourished by the nectar that flows from the moon (at the crown of his head).

The patient should imagine that, struck by the hammer of this *Mantra*, the Demoness *Karkati* is leaving his body. She is running away to her abode in the Himalayas. Thus *Brahma*, although He created the disease, has now also formed a powerful antidote for it.

Since then, *Karkati* took the form of a simple needle. She entered into the bodies of others in the form of various diseases such as plague and cholera, and continued to feed on the flesh and blood of living beings. But soon she discovered her folly, for with her tiny body, she could not consume vast quantities of

food. Her idea to devour the whole world became an idle dream. She repented for having practised austerity only to bring about her own destruction.

Oh *Rama*, it is one's *Samkalpa* (mental will) that leads him to great heights of spiritual consciousness, or degrades him to the lowest depths of humiliation. Mean-minded people practise austerity for petty objects.

Karkati remembered her previous body, and she repented bitterly for having lost it due to her ignorance. She found herself drowned even in a small pit of mud, and fully satiated with only a small drop of blood. It was disgusting for her to enter into the vitals of numerous bodies only to dwell within their blood and flesh. She decided again to take recourse to austerity to correct her folly.

Karkati is Maya (cosmic illusion) in its aspect of Avidya (ignorance), and is characterized by its insatiable cravings. Ignorance assumes subtle forms of afflictions, and creates diverse diseases of the body and mind. It is ignorance that upsets the balance of the mind, which in turn causes agitation in the vital forces, resulting in the disbalance of the humors of the body. Thus, in course of time, diseases develop.

But by turning the mind to the Divine Self, one can overcome these diseases by the force of Divine Grace. Righteous conduct blended with devotion constitutes the antidote to the numerous expressions of ignorance.

Driven by the disease of ignorance, one endlessly continues to whirl in the cycle of birth and death. Overcome by ignorance, one is unable to aspire for

Self-realization; his desires become petty and degrading. He passes through numerous sufferings, pursuing his petty desires; and when he finally attains them, he realizes his folly. He becomes disillusioned, and discovers that he has been running after mirages.

*Karkati Is Transformed
into an Enlightened Spirit*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, *Karkati* began again to practise austerity in order to regain her previous form. Her austerities were severe. She fasted for a long time, feeding only on air. *Indra* and the other Gods tempted her in various ways, but she was invincible.

She was drowned in mud and water for a long time. Clouds thundered over her head, lightning flashed ceaselessly, snow fell and winds blew, but the needle-shaped *Karkati* maintained her practise of austerity; she could not be distracted.

At last, *Brahma* again presented Himself before *Karkati* to grant her a boon. But by now, *Karkati* did not ask for any boon. She thought within herself, "I have become full. All my doubts have been rent asunder. What am I going to do with a boon? I am peaceful. I have attained *Nirvana*. I have become Liberated. All my desires are fulfilled."

Seeing her quiet, *Brahma* said, "Oh Daughter, you are Enlightened; however, since you initially practised austerity with the desire of regaining your former body, you will attain it. You will become an enlightened demoness abiding in the Himalayas. You will enjoy the nectar of meditation and *Samadhi*. To

sustain your physical body, you will eat only those who are unenlightened. You will destroy those who are sunk in sinful deeds. Therefore, you will be known as *Anyayavadhika* – the remover of injustice.” Thus saying, *Brahma* disappeared.

Since then, *Karkati* enjoyed the bliss of *Samadhi*. And at times, she sported in the Himalayas, feeding on people who were dominated by sinful Karmas.

This transformed form of Karkati is symbolic of Maya in its aspect of Vidya (knowledge). While ignorance leads one to delusion and bondage, Vidya enables one to overcome delusions and to attain Enlightenment. The same divine energy that operated as the force of ignorance is now transformed into the sublimating force of knowledge. It does not create cravings for worldly pleasures. It does not lead to humiliating conditions of life. Rather, it enables one to enjoy the bliss of the Self, and feeds upon the forces of darkness that obstruct the path to spiritual enlightenment.

While Avidya creates various afflictions that eat into the vitals of one's being, thereby causing the soul to move from one embodiment to another, Vidya eradicates the impurities of the mind and promotes the attainment of Self-realization, and thus, puts an end to the cycle of birth and death.



King Vikrama and his Minister confront Karkati.

*Karkati's Questions to Test
the Wisdom of the King of the Kiratas*

Sri Vasistha continued: One dark night, *Karkati* was looking for ignorant souls to eat. She prowled through a dense forest where it so happened that King *Vikrama*, the King of the *Kiratas*, and his minister were wandering, looking for the hideouts of robbers and thieves.

Mistaking these two (the King and his minister) for ignorant souls, the terribly formed *Karkati* rushed towards them in order to devour them. Seeing them fearless, she wanted to test their knowledge, and determined to kill them if they proved to be lacking in spiritual wisdom.

The following are some of the questions asked by Karkati and their answers given by the King.

- Q: What is that subtle atom which contains millions of worlds like waves in the ocean?
- A: The Self, due to Its subtlety, is figuratively described as an atom. It contains millions of worlds like waves in the ocean. It is the Reality behind all that exists.
- Q: What is that which is void and at the same time full? What is that which is nonexistent in the eyes of the ignorant, but existent in the eyes of the Enlightened?
- A: This world is void and nonexistent from the point of view of the Enlightened, but existent and full of multiplicity from the point of view of the ignorant.

Q: Who am I? Who are you? What is that which moves and yet is immovable?

A: You are essentially *Brahman*. I am essentially the same non-dual Reality. The Self is neither "I" nor "you," but due to ignorance, It is identified with illusory names and forms. It is this very Self that moves, and at the same time, does not move. For it is the Self that sustains the realities of time and space. Those who are Enlightened realize It to be the immovable and the all-pervading Reality. It moves faster than the mind.

Q: What is That which is ever realized and yet has to be realized through numerous efforts? What is That which is not attained by the ignorant, while the wise attain It in Its fullness?

A: *Brahman* is the essential Reality in every person. But as long as the subtle desires of the mind are not dissipated by the light of knowledge, so long one is unable to discover one's essential nature. The Self, which is the ever present Reality, is conceived as a distant goal by the unenlightened. It is the outgoing mind that creates an illusory distance between the Self and the individual.

Q: What is that atom which contains the *Meru* Mountains within itself? What is that which converts the world into a dust particle? What is that which, though atomic, cannot be contained even by thousands of miles?

A: *Brahman* is that atom. It contains the entire universe within itself. The various world-systems are like dust particles scintillating in a single ray of the effulgent Self.

Q: What is that atom which is tasteless, and yet the very essence of sweetness?

A: The Self is beyond the senses, and therefore, tasteless. But It is the source of all joy, the very embodiment of Bliss, and therefore, (paradoxically) all sense perceptions are sustained by the Bliss of the Self. The Self is the essence of all perceptions, the essence of all sights, the essence of all tastes, the sweet essence behind all that exists.

Q: What is that which lasts a moment, but yet contains millions of ages within itself? What is that which is inactive, and yet is the basis of all activities?

A: The Self transcends time. Time and space are like drifting clouds before the vast sky of the Self. Or time and space are like dream experiences arising within the mind of a dreamer. Within a moment of Enlightenment, the long dream of the world-process is terminated. Time and space are rolled up within a moment of eternity.

Q: What is the sustainer of seer, seen and sight? What is that which contains the three worlds and sustains them even as a banyan seed sustains a mighty banyan tree?

A: The Self is the basis of the triad of seer, seen and sight. It is the indivisible, immutable Self that becomes a transient subject running after illusory objects, and thus, accumulates illusory impressions or Karmas. The three worlds which are experienced as a result of one's Karmas are

contained in the Self, even as dreams are contained in the mind of a dreamer, or a banyan tree is contained in a tiny seed.

Q: What is that rock-like Reality, before which even the *Meru* Mountains become as tender as a lotus stalk? What is that rock which contains millions of mountains within itself?

A: The Self is invulnerable and immutable. While mighty mountains eventually crumble into dust, the Self is unaffected by time and the changes caused by time.

Q: Whose strength enables you to perform your duties? By whose strength do you protect your subjects and punish the evil-doers?

A: The strength of the Self sustains all activities. The Self is the Reality behind the human ego. The Self is the true knower, seer, enjoyer and doer.

The King continued to expound the nature of the Self, since all of *Karkati's* questions were designed to test his understanding of the Self.

Oh *Karkati*, you have asked me about the nature of the Self. It is this Self which is the support of the three states of consciousness (waking, dream and deep sleep). It is attained when all the desires of the mind are removed. In fact, It is the consummation of all desires. The Self expresses Itself in the form of this entire creation, and It is the Self that withdraws this entire world into Itself during dissolution.

This Self is beyond the reach of the mind and senses, and therefore, It is nonexistent for the ignorant. But since It is the very source of the senses and the mind, It is directly perceived as the only reality by the Enlightened.

Just as numerous flowers are contained in honey, so all sensual enjoyments are essentially contained in the Self. As nectar from different flowers blends into one honey, so too, different experiences from the objects of the senses are transformed into the undifferentiated experience of Divine Bliss in the state of Self-realization.

Just as an elephant cannot hide itself in a field covered with tiny grasses, so the Glory of the Self cannot be hidden by the illusory names and forms. The world is unable to hide *Brahman*.

Just as a tree is contained in a seed, so the entire world is contained in *Brahman*. He who sees non-duality is a true seer. He is a Knower of the Self.

In fact, *Brahman* negates the very mind and all mental concepts. Therefore, *Brahman* is neither duality, nor non-duality. *Brahman* is not subtle, not gross, not born, not unborn, not gentle, not cruel, not the objects of the world, not this world, and not the subtle world. *Brahman* is neither existent nor non-existent. One who knows *Brahman*, ever abides in that Pure Consciousness wherein the world is negated.

Sri Vasistha continued: *Karkati* was immensely pleased to discover that both the King and his minister were enlightened Sages. Assuming the form

of a gentle lady, she agreed to live in his palace, enjoying the good association of the King. She also agreed to promote the laws of righteousness by feeding on those who were sentenced to death. Whenever the King caught some criminals, she took them into remote parts of the mountains, assumed her terrible form, and fed upon them.

As time passed, *Karkati* attained disembodied salvation. But even today, the descendents of King *Vikrama* have installed a statue of *Karkati* in order to receive divine protection from her blessed memory. *Karkati* is now adored as *Kandara Devi* (the Goddess who abides in caves), and *Mangala Devi* (the Goddess who gives auspiciousness).

The principle of duality is the demon that must be overcome in the state of Realization. As long as ignorance dominates one's consciousness, this demon exists in her terrible form, creating forces of darkness such as anger, hatred, pride, jealousy and passion. But when Vidya dominates one's consciousness, this demon becomes a Goddess feeding upon these dark forces and the other impurities of the mind. She promotes dispassion, discrimination, cosmic love, and the manifold expressions of divine goodness in human personality. The Goddess exists in one's own heart. She is, in fact, Pure Consciousness – the remover of evil and the giver of immortality.

Section 84 – Differences Exist Merely in Name

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, this *Chitta* (total mind) itself has expanded itself into this world-process. Just as oil cannot exist in sand, so this world does not exist in the Self.

The mind tinged with attachment, hatred and afflictions is called the world-process. When a person is freed from these afflictions, the world-process is said to have terminated for him.

It is the *Chitta* that is desired, sustained, adored, and reflected upon in this illusory world-process. In other words, all these differences are nothing but modifications of the mind which, in turn, is but a mirage in the vast expansion of the Self.

The *Chitta* has two aspects: conscious and unconscious. The conscious aspect is the reality which underlies all names and forms; but the unconscious aspect is the basis for all this material creation, and is in itself illusory and nonexistent.

In the beginning *Brahma*, the Creator, beheld the world as dreams arising in His mind, which is ever permeated by the light of the Self, even like a placid stream illumined by the sun.

The *Chitta* is like a child who imagines the ghost of the world-process in the darkness of ignorance. When the *Chitta* is led to Enlightenment, it discovers its unchanging identity as the Self.

Once the pure Self assumes the form of the *Chitta*, it becomes refracted through the latter into the form of the world-process. Oh *Rama*, I will tell you the story of the sons of *Indu* (*Aindavopakhyaṇa*) to illustrate this point.

The stories, illustrations, parables and poetic images that are used in the scriptures are like lustrous beams of moonlight, to dispell the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, listen to the following story —

Section 85 — *To His Amazement, Brahma Sees
Ten World Systems*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, once upon a time, I had asked Divine *Brahma*, the Creator Himself, about the mystery of creation. He told me the following story —

Brahma said: Just as whirlpools arise in the ocean, so worlds arise in the ocean of the mind. It so happened once that I had just awakened from the night of dissolution of the world, and was ready to create another world system. I directed my gaze into the vastness of infinity, and there was neither darkness nor light. Then with the help of my subtle mind, I began to project the world.

But to my amazement, I saw before me ten *Brahmas* (Creators) seated on swans, like reflections of myself in a mirror. Each *Brahma* had already created a world system. And in each world, there were stars that twinkled, oceans that surged, rivers that flowed, a sun that shone, and winds that blew. In each world system there were gods, humans, demons and other living beings.

Each world system was thickly populated by living beings, and each appeared like a pomegranate fruit containing numerous souls. And in each world system there were expressions of time and space, each having its moment, hour, day, month and year, as well as physical extensions of space. Seeing this, I was confounded.

I continued to gaze for a while, and then by my mental will, I drew the Sun God of a nearby world system to myself and said, “Oh Sun God, adorations



Brahma the Creator views ten other Creators
to His surprise.

Courtesy: Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

to you. Please explain your identity to me, and tell me about these worlds. How have they been created?"

The Sun God replied: Oh Creator, you already know the secret of creation. However, I will comply with your request. Listen to the story of the creation of these world systems —

Section 86 — *The Ten Sons of Indu*
Practise Meditation

The Sun God began: Oh God of Gods, in the last world you created, in the valleys of the *Kailasha* Mountains, there existed a province known as *Suvarnajata*. There lived a *Brahmin* known as *Indu*, who was best among the knowers of *Brahman*.

Indu Brahmana had a loving wife, but he had no children. Desirous of children, both *Indu* and his wife practised intense austerities in order to receive the blessing of Lord *Shiva*. In course of time, Lord *Shiva* blessed them with ten sons.

These children became well-versed in the *Vedas* when they were only seven years old. Their parents passed away at that time. Since they were Enlightened, they became free from the world-process. But these ten were grief-stricken. They conversed among themselves, "What is really desirable in this world? What is the goal that must be attained? Even the post of *Indrahood* is perishable and not worth desiring. What, then, should we work for?"

The eldest brother said in a convincing voice, "I think that the attainment of *Brahmahood* (Creatorship) is the ideal goal worth striving for. Oh

Brothers, let us practise meditation and assert deep within our consciousness, "I am the Divine Creator, *Brahma*. I am the originator as well as the destroyer of this world. I am the luminous Deity."

They all listened to the advice of the eldest brother, and began to practise intense meditation. Having seated themselves in meditative poses and keeping their bodies as steady as painted pictures, they meditated in the following manner, "I am *Brahma*, the Creator. I am the Deity who is worshipped by all living beings. I am accompanied by Goddess *Saraswati*, *Gayatri* and others. I am praised by Sages and Saints. This entire world exists within me. Like the rising and falling of waves, numerous living beings proceed from me and are drawn back into me. I am the God of Gods. I am the Creator."

Thus, these sons of *Indu* passed into a state of profound *Samadhi* which lasted for a long, long time.

Section 87 – *The Sons of Indu
Become Creators of World Systems*

The Sun God continued: Oh Adorable *Brahma*, the sons of *Indu Brahmana* remained immersed in *Samadhi* until their bodies, due to the ravages caused by the sun and wind, perished. Finally, their bodies were eaten up by the birds and beasts of the wilderness.

Despite the loss of their bodies, the *Aindavas* (the sons of *Indu*) continued to maintain their mental awareness. Each of them felt that he was *Brahma* the Creator. Even during the dissolution of the world to which they belonged, they were busy with the creation of their mentally projected worlds.

That is the reason, Oh Creator, why you found these world systems even before you could commence your own work of creation. I happen to be a Sun God in one of these systems. This is the mystery behind these ten worlds and their Creators.

You know the mystery of creation. You have honored me by asking me to explain this phenomenon to you. Indeed, all these worlds exist as illusions in the vast expansion of the *Chitta*.

Section 88 — *Brahma Creates the World
in the Spirit of Detachment*

Lord *Brahma* said: Oh Sage *Vasistha*, thus did I hear his explanation of the ten worlds. Then I asked, "Since these worlds have already been created, what need have I to resume my work of creation?"

To this the Sun God responded: Oh Lord, you are free of all desires. You create worlds in the spirit of sport. The creation proceeds from you as spontaneously as rays proceed from the sun. Oh Great Lord, You have nothing to gain by your act of creation, and you have nothing to lose by not performing your duty.

However, wise men continue to perform their duties. Their minds are like placid mirrors and are never affected by the reflections cast in them. In the same way, even the most dynamic work of creation will not tinge the placidity of your mind.

The worlds created by the sons of *Indu* exist in their minds. These worlds will not contradict the world that you are going to create. The minds of

human beings evolve their illusory worlds on the basis of deep convictions. If one has evolved a world within his mind, he alone will be able to dissolve it. The misconceptions that exist in the mind of a person must be removed by that same person. If that were not so, the enlightenment of one person would have caused enlightenment in all.

The works performed by the senses are perishable. But the works created by deep-rooted mental convictions cannot be destroyed until the very same mind wills their destruction.

Whatever has been sustained in the mind for a long time becomes one's reality. It cannot be destroyed even when cursed by ascetics with immense spiritual power. Physical bodies will perish, but the world projected by the mind will continue to exist.

A person is the product of the long-sustained concepts of his mind. Unless he changes his erroneous concepts, all efforts to bring about Enlightenment would be as vain as nourishing rocks with water.

Section 89 – *The Story of Indra and Ahalya*

The Sun God continued: Oh Lord, it is the mind that creates this world. It is the mind which is *Hiranyagarbha* – the cosmic source of creation. Actions performed by the mind are real actions while actions performed by the body are of little value.

If the mind sustains the notion, "I am a miserable person," then one continues to wander through repeated cycles of birth and death. But if the mind were to assert, "I am the Self – not this petty body," then one would attain Liberation.

Now listen to the story of *Indra* and *Ahalya* to illustrate this point. Once upon a time, there lived a king, *Indradyumna*. His wife, *Ahalya*, was the very personification of beauty and loveliness.

In the same royal city, there lived a young *Brahmin* named *Indra*. Queen *Ahalya* had read the ancient story of *Indra* and *Ahalya* in the scriptures: how *Ahalya*, the wife of Sage *Gautama*, had become enamored with *Indra*, the Lord of the Gods. This story had colored her mind, and therefore, she developed amorous feelings towards the young *Brahmin Indra*, who reciprocated the Queen with his tender sentiments.

Soon *Indra* (the *Brahmin* youth) and *Ahalya* (the Queen) became infatuated with each other. The Queen's mind delighted in thinking of *Indra*, while *Indra*, in turn, kept his mind immersed in the thought of *Ahalya*. This passionate love became so intense that the Queen became oblivious of her external restraints.

King *Indradyumna* came to know of this affair, and consequently, threw them both in icy waters. But seeing each other, thinking of each other, they did not even perceive the harshness of the water. The King gave similar punishments, but, because their minds were so immersed in love for each other, they remained unaffected. They had no awareness of their physical bodies. They were thrown into a blazing pit of fire, but they emerged unharmed. They were whipped and trampled under the feet of elephants, but they did not perish.

When the King asked the *Brahmin* youth what sustained him, the youth replied, "Oh King, my mind has assumed the form of *Ahalya*, while *Ahalya's* has

assumed my form. Our minds are so deeply detached from our bodies, that we cannot be destroyed. Physical bodies are just extensions of the mind.

“Oh King, I see my beloved in all directions. Therefore, my mind is ever immersed in joy. In the same way, the mind of Queen *Ahalya* perceives me in all directions, and is ever oblivious of her body. Therefore, Oh King, you will not be able to destroy us by any physical means.”

Section 90 — *Sage Bharata Destroys their Bodies
by Pronouncing a Curse*

The Sun God continued: Then the King, feeling that the evil-doers should not go unpunished, requested Sage *Bharata* to destroy them. At this, Sage *Bharata* pronounced a terrible curse saying, “You dull-witted ones, may you be destroyed!”

Then *Indra* and *Ahalya* both said, “Oh Sage, you as well as the King are both dull-witted. You have lost the merit of your austerities by pronouncing this curse. It is true that now our bodies will be destroyed, but we are not bodies. We will continue to love each other through our minds.”

Then, Oh Creator, their bodies fell down like falling trees; but they continued to wander with their astral (mental) bodies. As a result of their infatuation, they became a deer couple in the forest. After revelling in the pleasures of that deer embodiment, they became birds. They continued to wander through numerous embodiments, until they became a *Brahmin* couple devoted to austerities. But they have not yet attained enlightenment; they continue to incarnate in different embodiments, and in each embodiment they are united with each other.



Section 91 – *The Universe as a Creation of Mind*

The Sun God continued: Oh Creator, even the terrible curse of Sage *Bharata* was not able to restrain the minds of *Indra* and *Ahalya*. This is why you would be unable to withdraw the world systems created by the powerful minds of the sons of *Indu Brahmana*.

Indeed, mind is the creator of all worlds. Whatever mind determines cannot be altered by punishment, medicines, drugs, or by any external measure. Therefore, Oh Creator, resume your duty of creation. Let the creations of the *Aindavas* exist side by side. They are like reflections in their minds and cannot contradict your creation.

Lord *Brahma* replied: Oh Sun God, you have spoken what is appropriate to reason. The mind is as vast as boundless space. Knowing this, I will commence my work of creation. May I request your effulgent self to assume the role of *Manu* (the progenitor of all human beings) in my creation.

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Oh *Rama*, this story was told to me by *Brahma*, the Creator. Mind is but a vibratory state of Consciousness. The illusory objectivity that arises in Consciousness is called the mind. The entire universe exists sustained by the magic of the mind. But when the mind is negated, the universe ceases to exist.

Just as one might see one's own death in a dream, so the Self perceives the world-process within Itself as a mere illusion. The ego is the root cause of the illusory objectivity that arises in Consciousness. If this is dissolved by knowledge, the world is seen as *Brahman*.

Mind is like gold ore. When subjected to purification through Vedantic enquiry, it is converted into the shining gold of Pure Consciousness.

When the Truth blends with illusion, the process of purification is needed to negate the illusion and reveal the Truth. However, this process cannot be adopted with reference to imagined trees in the vastness of space, for example, which are entirely illusory.

Section 92 – *The Power of the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, after listening to the story of *Indra* and *Ahalya* and to the teachings that are contained therein, I asked the Creator, “Oh *Brahma*, how can the boon or curse pronounced by Sages be rendered void? If mind and body are inseparable, the curse would have its effect on the mind as well. Yet you have explained that the mind is unaffected even by the boons or curses pronounced by Sages. Please explain this point.”

Lord *Brahma* explained: Oh *Vasistha*, every embodied being has two bodies: one consisting of mind, another consisting of flesh and blood. The physical body is seen by all, and is affected by weapons, poison, and by various other external agents. But the mental body is not affected by physical objects of the world. This mental body can be influenced only by self-effort.

The efforts of the body are ineffectual, but the efforts of the mind are real efforts. If the mind were to think pure thoughts for a long time, it would become invulnerable even to the power of curses pronounced by ascetics.

Whatever the mind fondly thinks of, that becomes its reality. The physical body may be thrown into marshy land, or burnt in fire, but the mental body continues to exist and to pursue its objective.

The results of self-effort are given through the mind. In fact, only the mind can bless or curse itself. It is the mind that undertakes self-effort in order to enlighten itself. It is also the mind that drowns itself in the darkness of confusion.

Though born as human beings, the sons of *Indu* rose to *Brahmahood*. Even I (the Creator) am unable to negate their *Brahmahood*. It is all due to the power of the mind.

Sage *Mandavya*, though seated on a sharp spear (subject to physical punishment due to a past Karma), was unaffected by pain. His mind, even in that miserable predicament, enjoyed serenity.

Sage *Dirghatapa*, though he had accidentally fallen into a well, was still able to perform a mental sacrifice which pleased *Indra*. As a result of this, he was brought out of the dark well.

Therefore, advanced aspirants and Yogis do not abandon their mental movement towards the Divine Self even during adverse circumstances. Just as arrows cannot pierce impervious rocks, so worldly miseries cannot affect a mind that has attained one-pointed concentration.

If one is vigilant, and has discriminative wisdom, then he is never affected by the taints of the world-process, neither in waking state nor in dream.

Whatever the mind perceives as reality, becomes one's reality. Like waves that rise from the ocean, thoughts arise from the ocean of mind; and one's realities are sustained by the waves of the mind.

The mind is capable of creating different thought-forms. Just as a potter molds different shapes and sizes out of clay, so the mind can create different thought-forms, thereby changing the pattern of its realities.

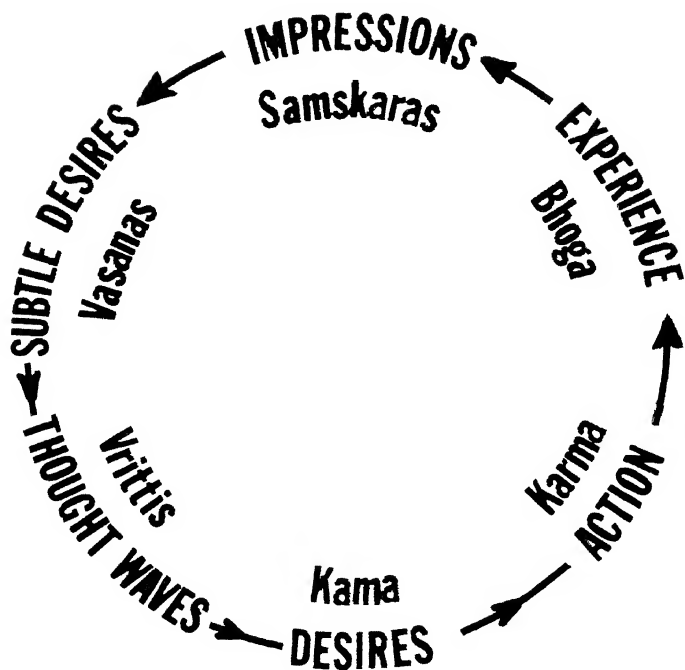
The deep-rooted *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the past can be altered by intensive mental concentration in the present. Negative *Vasanas* can be negated by positive, pure *Vasanas*.

Led by negative *Samskaras* (impressions), the mind perceives fires emanating from the moon, and is afflicted thereby. It perceives a dense forest in the vastness of the sky, and tries to clear the forest.

Led by its own impressions, it converts even poison into nectar. Behold how camels enjoy thorny bushes, because their minds have converted thorns into delicacies.

Brahma concluded saying: Oh *Vasistha*, may you perceive the world as a magic show created by the mind. When you thus transcend the illusory names and forms, may you abide in your essential nature.

CYCLE OF THE MIND



Section 93 – *The Illusoriness of Creation*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, these were the teachings that I heard from the Creator. Though devoid of names and forms, *Brahman* assumes the role of mind through a process of illusory modification. Identified with the Cosmic Mind, *Brahman* becomes *Brahma* – the Creator.

Since He is Cosmic Mind itself, *Brahma* sees his creation as a mental process. *Avidya* (ignorance) arose out of the imagination of *Brahma's* mind, and became the cause for the existence of numerous *Jivas* (individual souls).

Then *Brahma* created mountains, trees, rivers, lands and oceans, and inhabited them with different types of beings. These beings are overcome by ignorance. Therefore, they are identified with their bodies. They pass through the process of numerous embodiments until, guided by increasing *Sattwa* (purity), they attain Enlightenment. When the veil of ignorance is removed by knowledge, the soul discovers its identity with the Absolute. Then the world-process ceases to exist.

These individual souls continue to roam in the worlds of their *Vasanas*. Driven by the storm of Karma, some are led to be born in mountain caves, some in ocean depths, some fly in the air, some become human beings, while some are born among the celestial beings.

This creation is transient, like the rising and falling of the waves in the ocean. Envenomed by subtle desires, it inflicts the souls with the fever of misery. It promotes inauspicious actions that continue to keep the souls in a state of bondage.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, this creeper of the world-process which is sustained by the distractions of the mind should be cut down with the axe of knowledge. This alone leads to liberation from the cycles of birth and death, and allows one to regain his essential nature as *Brahman*.

Section 94 — *Fourteen Classes of Jivas*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, caught in the illusion of the world-process consisting of the three *Gunas*, these *Jivas* (individual souls) can be broadly divided into fourteen classes —

1. *Idamprathamta*: Those souls who have entered into human embodiment for the last time. Because they have attained purity of mind and have unfolded that intuitional reason that reveals the nature of the Self, they are called by this name. They will not be born after their death.
2. *Guna Pivari*: Those who lack dispassion, and therefore, can not follow the path of *Nivritti* (renunciation of the ego). Instead of attaining Liberation, they are led to heavenly worlds to enjoy the fruits of their meritorious deeds. They will attain Liberation in ten or fifteen births. They have many good qualities such as serenity, self control and others in varying degrees.
3. *Sasattwa*: Those who continue to discover increasing *Sattwa* through experiences of pleasure and pain. They will attain Liberation in a hundred births. These souls are on the way to progressive evolution. They are not as advanced as those of the first type who are established in renunciation, nor are they as advanced as those of the second

type who are devoted to the performance of good actions and devout meditation. However, they are gradually spiraling their way to Liberation.

4. *Adham Sattwa* (*Sattwa* in the lowest stage): Those whose minds are colored by numerous complexes and desires and continue to perform various evil deeds. The potential for *Sattwa* in them continues to be hidden under the load of numerous Karmas and desires.
5. *Atyanta Tamas* (*Sattwa* overpowered by extreme *Tamas*): When *Sattwa* seems to be completely overpowered by evil impressions of *Tamas* generated by the mind, the *Jivas* continue to wander in the world-process through countless embodiments.
6. *Rajasi* (filled with *Rajas*): Those who have ascended from subhuman levels to the human level. They will continue to evolve, performing good and evil deeds. After death, they go to heaven or hell; they continue to wander without attaining Liberation.
7. *Rajas Sattwiki* (*Rajas* blended with *Sattwa*): Those who have developed dispassion towards the pleasures of the world, and will attain Liberation after death. The *Rajas* in them is completely dominated by *Sattwa*.
8. *Rajas Rajasi* (*Rajas* blended with *Rajas*): Those who lack dispassion. They are led to be born as *Yakshas* or *Gandharvas* (different types of celestial beings), and through a gradual process of evolution, become fit for Liberation.

9. *Rajas Tamasi* (*Rajas* tending to *Tamas*): Those in whom *Rajas* is overpowered by *Tamas*. They perform actions, sacrifices or other modes of worship that are *Tamasic*. As a result of their works and worships, they continue to place themselves in a *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* atmosphere. Therefore, they can attain Liberation only in thousands of births.
10. *Rajas Atyant Tamas* (*Rajas* deeply involved in *Tamas*): It is doubtful whether these can attain Liberation even in many thousands of births.
11. *Tamasi*: The souls enveloped in *Tamas*, who will not attain Liberation in the present *Kalpa* (age) are known as *Tamasi Jivas*.
12. *Tamas Sattwa* (*Tamas* tending to *Sattwa*): Those who are born in *Tamasic* classes, such as demons, *Rakshasas* and *Pishachas*. Some develop *Sattwa* (for example, *Prahlada* and *Karkati*). Therefore, they attain Liberation even in their demoniac bodies.
13. *Tamo Rajas Rupini*: When *Tamas* tends to *Rajas*, the souls continue to attain progressive evolution until they eventually become endowed with *Sattwa*, and thus, hasten to Liberation.
14. *Tamas Tamasi* (*Tamas* overpowered by *Tamas*): Those who are deeply involved in the realm of *Tamas*. They continue to incarnate through millions of years. It is doubtful whether they will attain Liberation in the next million years or not.

So, Oh *Rama*, just as waves proceed from the ocean, sparks from blazing fire, or rays from the moon, in the same way, the *Jivas* proceed from *Brahman*. These living beings continue to wander through numerous worlds, passing through numerous embodiments, driven by the will of *Brahma*, the Creator.

Section 95 – *The Unity of Chitta and Action*

Sri Vasistha continued: A flower and its fragrance both arise from a tree at the same time. In the same way, in the beginning of creation, *Karma* (action) and *Karta* (the performer of action) arose simultaneously from *Brahman*. Just as the flower and its fragrance are coexistent realities, so too are action and the performer of action coexistent. This coexistence is maintained by *Maya* (cosmic illusion). When the veil of illusion is removed, there is neither action nor the performer of action.

For a Sage who is established in intuitional vision, nothing has arisen from *Brahman*. The world of names and forms does not exist. *Brahman* alone is in the three periods of time.

For those who are caught in illusion, *Brahman* becomes the basis for the rising of innumerable souls. Just as new shoots arise on a tree in the spring, so these souls continue to arise from *Brahman*. Having arisen, they dissolve in *Brahman*.

The souls continue to wander in various embodiments on the basis of *Vasanas* (subtle desires). It is ignorance that gives rise to *Vasanas*, and thus causes the wanderings of the souls through the world-process.

Forgetfulness of one's own essential nature weaves the illusion of the repeated cycles of birth and death. And the recollection (revelation) of one's essential nature puts an end to this world-process.

Sri Rama asked: The *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and other works written by Sages, such as the *Puranas* and *Smritis* are called the scriptures. Those who have an abundance of *Sattwa* (purity) and are established in Self-realization are called the Sages. On the basis of the scriptures as well as the teachings of the Sages, it is clear that action and actor depend upon each other. Just as a seed gives rise to a tree, and the tree gives rise to the seed, so action maintains the actor, and without the actor, there could be no action. If this is so, then why should we not consider Karma as the cause of all embodiments? And if Karma is the cause, and not *Brahman*, then how can the births of souls be considered illusory?

Sage *Vasistha* said: Your question is indeed praiseworthy. It is the expansion of the mind that has brought about the illusion of Karmas. No action can bring about fruits without being associated with the mind. In the beginning, the mind arose from *Brahman*. Then from the mind there ensued Karmas. In fact, actions are nothing but vibrations in the mind.

The body, which appears to be the basis of every action, is in itself a materialized form of the mind. Since the body is mental in nature, all actions depending upon the body are also mental.

Actions performed by the mind must give rise to their results. One cannot escape the fruits of Karma no matter where he may go. There is not a place, a

mountain, a portion of the vast sky, a depth of the ocean, or a distant world where Karma does not bring about its fruits.

Since this is the case, an aspirant's efforts to attain Self-realization can never be fruitless. When he attains Enlightenment, his mind is destroyed; then follows the cessation of all Karmas.

For those who are not enlightened, mind and action continue to exist and to depend upon each other. The cessation of either of these two brings about the cessation of both.

Section 96 — *The Many Names of the Mind*

Sri Rama continued: Oh Sage, the mind is material, yet it has assumed consciousness. Please enlighten me regarding the nature of this mind which expresses itself through numerous thoughts and imaginations.

Sri Vasistha replied: Oh *Rama*, the mind has arisen out of the cosmic energy of the Omnipotent Divine Self. It is basically composed of *Samkalpas* (thoughts and desires). Because of mind, a person who is essentially Pure Consciousness believes that he is ignorant of the Self; and though being devoid of all activity, he believes that he performs actions.

Once the mind has woven the illusion of *Samkalpas* and *Karmas*, it next brings about the illusory existence of this world-process. The numerous objects of the world are nothing but projections of the subtle desires of the mind.

It is these subtle desires or *Vasanas* that sow the seeds of Karma, thereby bringing about the illusory fruits of pleasure and pain. The entire Karmic tree is basically mental. Whatever the mind seeks becomes the objective for the organs of action. Therefore, the mind itself is called Karma.

In fact, these terms are synonymous from a broad point of view: mind, intellect, ego, *Chitta*, Karma, imagination, memory, *Vasanas*, *Avidya*, effort, world-process, *Prakriti*, *Indriya*, *Maya* and *Kriya*. It is the Pure Self that has assumed the function of mind, and exists in the form of the individual soul. Mind, intellect, and *Chitta* are the Self in their ultimate analysis.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, please explain the implications of these different names of the mind.

Sri Vasistha replied: Oh *Rama*, the Self tinged by ignorance slips into a state wherein it swings between two views: "This is so, or this may not be so." Then it is known as *Manas* (conscious mind). The phenomenon of swinging between these two views is called *Samkalpa* (thought and desire blended), and mind is nothing but a bundle of *Samkalpas*.

When the Self comes to decide upon one of the two views, it is referred to as *Buddhi* (intellect). It is with the help of *Buddhi* that one allows the mind to settle on one decision, instead of constantly swinging between two contradictory views. Intellect reasons, ascertains, analyzes and evaluates.

When the Self develops identification with the limited body, it assumes the form of *Ahamkara* (egoism), which expresses in this manner: "I am this body. I am this mortal individual." This egoism is the true root of all evil.

When the Self wanders like a child among the memories of the objects, drifting from one object to another, it is called *Chitta* — the unconscious. In this state, there is neither the fluctuating movement of the mind nor the decisive function of the intellect.

When the Self is associated with a form of vibratory motion, it considers itself the doer, and performs actions, which are nothing but vibrations in Consciousness. Overpowered by ignorance, it seeks the result of action. Thus, it assumes the role of *Karta* (the doer) as well as Karma (action).

When the Self forgets Itself, ignores Its innate fullness, and imagines limitation within itself, it assumes the role of *Kalpana* (imagination).

When the Self desires objects irregardless of whether the objects have been experienced before or not, and continues to wander through repeated embodiments, it is called *Samsriti* (the world-process).

When the Self is associated with subtle desires wherein the conscious desires and their objects have subsided, leaving behind their subtle potencies, it is termed *Vasana*.

It is the Self that has become the world-process through *Avidya* (ignorance). When it regains its awareness of itself as different from the world-process, it is called *Vidya* (knowledge).

When the Self creates obstacles to the revelation of its own essential nature, it is *Mala* (impurity). When it becomes oblivious of its essential nature, it is called *Vismriti* (lack of memory), and as a result of this

forgetfulness, it enters into the world of mental distractions (*Vikshepa*). *Mala* is characterized by obscuration (the power of veiling), while *Vismriti* is characterized by *Vikshepa* (mental projection).

When identified with the mind, the Self assumes the role of limitation and tries to delight the soul with the function of the senses. It is then called *Jiva* (the individual soul).

When the Self expresses itself as the material cause of creation, it is called *Prakriti*. When it hides the real, and makes the unreal appear real, it is called *Maya* (cosmic illusion).

Having become the root of the world-process, the Self next becomes identified with the functions of the senses. This is called *Kriya* (activity).

Thus, Oh *Rama*, the Self, which is basically Pure Consciousness, becomes, as it were, associated with the taint of ignorance. Having fallen from its essential glory, it becomes the *Jiva* (individual soul), *Chitta* (the unconscious mind), *Buddhi* (the intellect), and is known by various other names.

Oh *Rama*, the mind is neither *Jada* (inert) nor *Chetan* (conscious). It is the Self tinged by impurity (ignorance) which assumes the role of mind and appears as a blend of the conscious principle and inert matter.

Similarly, the mind cannot be placed in the category of *Sat* (the Real) or *Asat* (the unreal). In fact, this entire creation is neither *Sat* nor *Asat*. Therefore, it is called *Maya* or illusion.

Oh *Rama*, the Self is one, but identified with the mind, it assumes different roles such as ego, mind, intellect and others. In different philosophical systems, the same is imagined in different ways. Just as travelers seek different roads to reach the same destination, so these philosophical systems have the same goal in view.

Unable to understand the nature of the Self, many aspirants become deluded by their limited intellects. They involve themselves in vain reasonings and discussions, and form different concepts about reality on the basis of their imaginations.

This is a simple fact: without association with the *Chitta*, there can be no perception of the world. It is in association with the mind that a person sees, tastes, touches, hears, and smells, and on the basis of these, experiences pleasure and pain. Just as it is the light that reveals different forms, so it is the mind that reveals the world of names and forms.

When one's mind is entangled with objects, he is said to be in a state of bondage. But when his mind becomes free from the entanglements of desires and objects, he attains Liberation.

Then the mind becomes one with *Brahman* — the Absolute Self. Consequently, this world, which is a projection of the mind, disappears. It is impossible for the world to exist without the function of the mind.

"Time," though one, expresses itself through the various seasons. In the same way, the mind expresses itself through different names according to different functions. Just as a spider weaves its cobwebs, so the Self weaves the webs of the world-process.

Section 97 — *The World as a Creation
of the Limited Mind*

Sri Rama said: Oh Sage, by your teachings I have come to realize that this world is a creation of the mind. It is one's mental illusion that has expressed itself in the form of the world-process. Please continue to enlighten me, Oh Blessed Preceptor!

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, just as the scorching rays of the sun give rise to the illusion of a mirage in a desert, so the mind has permitted the illusion of the world-process in the shining expansion of the Self.

It is the mind that exists as a human being, a god, a demon, or any other living being. It is the mind that exists in the form of the laws of conduct, as well as villages, cities, forests, the vastness of space, and all that this creation contains.

This being so, it is into the nature of the mind that one must enquire. There is no need to enquire about the body or any other object which are but straws in the surging ocean of mind.

The entire world of the not-self exists within the mind. When the mind is negated, the Self is realized. It is the Light of the Self that continues to sustain all the functions of the mind.

By repeated enquiry into the nature of the Self, the mind begins to dissolve. The dissolution of the mind leads to the increasing blessedness of the soul. And when the illusory Karmas created by the mind are destroyed, the *Jiva* is said to have attained Liberation.



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Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, there are three types of *Jivas* arising from the three *Gunas* that have proceeded from the mind. This mind is indeed the painter of the world-process on the canvas of Pure Consciousness. But how did this mind arise?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, in order to understand this, you must know that there are three types of spaces or ethers (*Akasha*): *Chidakasha* (ether of consciousness), *Chittakasha* (ether of mind) and *Bhutakasha* (ether of physical elements). Each is boundless and limitless in expansion. However, the ether of mind permeates the ether of the physical elements, while both are permeated by the ether of pure consciousness.

Chidakasha interpenetrates all that exists, and is not affected by creation. It is the Reality behind the mind and its projections.

Chittakasha projects the world of time and space, and this projected world is *Bhutakasha*. These two — *Chittakasha* and *Bhutakasha* — arise out of *Chidakasha*, and are of the nature of the latter.

With profound insight, one can discover *Bhutakasha* as the projection of *Chittakasha* — the world as an appearance sustained by the vibrations of the mind. And yet, even the mind is nothing but vibrations of Pure Consciousness.

When consciousness swings between those two views: “I am inert matter,” and “I am not inert, but conscious,” then it assumes the illusory role of mind, and becomes the basis for the ether of the mind as well as the ether of the elements.

In fact, *Chidakasha* alone exists. The mind and the material world are only appearances sustained by ignorance. For those who are afflicted with ignorance, there are three types of ether; but for those who are enlightened, there is nothing but the Self.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, the mind is an effect of ignorance. It is the unenlightened soul that imagines the Self to be in a state of bondage. When ignorance is removed, the Self is discovered as being eternally free.

Section 98 — *The Story of Chitta as a Strange Spirit*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, no matter what might be the cause of the origination of the mind, a wise person should try to direct it to the Self and attain Liberation. When the mind is concentrated on the Divine Self, it becomes free from *Vasanas*, and merges in the Self. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, bondage and Liberation depend upon the mind.

Now listen to an interesting story. There exists a vast stretch of land devoid of birds and beasts, arid and desolate, wherein even thousands of miles seem like a short distance. In that land, once upon a time, I encountered a strange spirit. This spirit had many arms, many heads, many eyes and many feet. He was beating himself with maces and clubs that he held in his many hands. Weeping and wailing, he ran in circles for hundreds of miles.

As he continued to run, tired and exhausted, he fell into a dark well, and lingered there for a long time. After a while, he managed to scramble out, and again began to run about, beating himself again with his many hands. Being totally confused and beside himself, he became entangled in a dense forest of thorny thickets.



He experienced intense sufferings as he was pierced by the thorns of the Karanja bushes. Somehow, he managed to get out of the thorny forest, but only to resume his confused wanderings. By his good luck, he happened to enter a forest of plantains, where he enjoyed cooling shade like the refreshing rays of the moon. But hardly had he enjoyed any rest and comfort, when he ran out of this forest, again raced nowhere and began again to beat himself.

Again and again he entered into the dark well, again and again he found some rest in the plantain forests, and again and again he suffered tortuous pain in the thorny forest of the Karanja bushes. I watched him with patience, and finding an opportune moment, I caught him by the power of Yoga and asked him, "Who are you? What do you want? Why are you wandering in vain?"

Oh *Rama*, when I asked him this, he was incensed and shouted, "I am nobody. I am doing nothing. Why have you come to destroy me? You are my enemy. Behold, I am melting away before your shining gaze, for better or for worse."

Then he looked at his limbs, shrieked loudly, and began to lament in a pitiable manner. Then he would stop crying for a moment, then would laugh, still looking at his limbs. Right before my gaze that strange spirit began to lose his limbs. First his heads began to fall off. Then his arms began to melt away. The stomach, the chest, the legs — all the parts of his body began to dissolve in front of my very eyes. He became formless.

Then to my amazement, I saw another spirit with many heads, many arms and legs. This one also continued to do the same things — running while beating himself with maces and clubs held in his many hands, entering into the forest of Karanja bushes, and then relaxing a while in the forest of plantains. He was about to fall in the well again when I caught him and asked him the same questions.

He too was incensed by my intervention, and dissolved. I saw many similar spirits in that vast desert land. Oh *Rama*, they continue to wander even today. Some have entered into the Karanja forests suffering extreme tortures, some have fallen into the dark well, some are relaxing in the plantain groves, some are continuing to beat themselves, some are laughing and some are crying. Oh *Rama*, you too have observed these strange beings.

Section 99 — *The Mystic Meaning of the Story
of the Strange Spirit*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, what is that vast desert? When and how did I see those strange beings? Why do they act in such strange ways?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, that great desert is not far; it is, in fact, this world-process. Those strange spirits are the minds of human beings. The human mind is like that strange spirit with many arms, many faces, many eyes, many legs and many stomachs.

Samkalpas (thoughts and desires) constitute the heads of this mind-spirit. Doubts and distractions form the hands and arms. Clinging to objects is the chest, while craving is the stomach of the mind-spirit. Various functions of the mind are its many limbs. The

dark wells are the hells, while the plantain groves are the heavens. The forest of thorny bushes is this world consisting of love and hate.

I (Sage *Vasistha*) am the personification of *Vichara* (spiritual enquiry). In the beginning, the mind rebels against spiritual enquiry. But when held by the force of Yogic discipline, it begins to see the disappearance of its limbs; it loses its doubts, desires, thoughts, cravings, and attachments.

The mind grieves at the loss of its limbs at first, but later begins to rejoice as it becomes filled with divine bliss.

It is this very mind that I have described through the illustration of the strange spirit. It is ever inflicting injury on itself with the help of its thousands of arms in the form of doubts and distractions.

It is the mind that creates misery due to its own ignorance. It is the author of its own destiny. Just as a silkworm becomes entangled in its own cocoon, so too the mind becomes entangled by its own erroneous mentations.

Led by the mind, one brings numerous sufferings upon himself. Just as a dull person might cut the very branch on which he is seated, so one brings ruin on oneself due to mental illusions.

A well-known folk tale tells of a monkey who wanted to amuse himself in the workshop of a carpenter. In the course of his frolics, he removed a peg, which resulted in two sections of wood snapping upon his tail, inflicting severe pain and injury to him. In the same way, the mind brings ruin on itself through its faulty movements.

But when the mind is disciplined by Yoga and allowed to meditate upon the Self for a period of time, then it is negated by the revelation of the Self. This gives rise to the cessation of grief.

Overcome by procrastination, when a person does not restrain his mind, miseries begin to grow into mountainous proportions. But when discriminative reason is exercised through constant vigilance, the mountains of pain begin to dissolve even like glaciers before the rays of the summer sun.

Oh *Rama*, let your mind be permeated by the light of knowledge arising out of the study of scriptures. Then you will develop *Shubha Samskaras* (pure impressions), and your spirit will delight in restraining the mind from the thoughts of objects. By doing this constantly, you will attain Liberation even in this life. Then even the heaviest of sorrows will fail to cause agitation in you.

Section 100 – *The Omnipotence of Brahman*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, just as waves arise out of the ocean, in the same way, this *Chitta* (mind) has arisen out of *Brahman* (the Absolute). In fact, mind is only an illusory modification of *Brahman*.

Undiscovered *Brahman* is the basis of the entire world-process. When *Brahman* is revealed or discovered, this world-process disappears from one's view.

Associated with the mind, *Brahman* causes all objects and living beings to manifest in this world. The Absolute is all-powerful, His powers manifesting through the mind and enveloping this entire creation.

It is *Brahman* who is the power of vibration in air, the power of inertia in objects, the power of fluidity in water, the power of luminosity in fire, the power of vacuity in the ether, and the power of existence in all that exists.

Oh *Rama*, the soul that expresses itself in the awareness of "I am" is essentially *Brahman*, because there is nothing other than *Brahman* — the all-pervading reality.

The reincarnating soul (*Jiva*) and the mental process (*Chitta*) are mere appearances in *Brahman*. Even this world that abounds with the powers of *Brahman* is essentially *Brahman*, because, there is no difference between *Brahman* and His powers.

Karma (action), *Karta* (actor), birth, death, existence, and all other expressions of the world-process are nothing but *Brahman*.

When ignorance is removed, the taintless nature of *Brahman* is realized. In *Brahman* there is neither greed nor infatuation, neither craving nor attachment. When *Brahman* alone exists, how can mentations founded on duality exist?

Just as a friend when not accepted by the mind as a friend becomes a stranger, even so, the Supreme Self enveloped by ignorance has assumed the forms of *Jiva* and *Chitta*.

The Self knows no bondage. The erroneous notion that "I am bound," is nothing but mere imagination. Since bondage is imaginary, release is also imaginary and fictitious. Bondage and release are both sustained by the illusions of the mind.

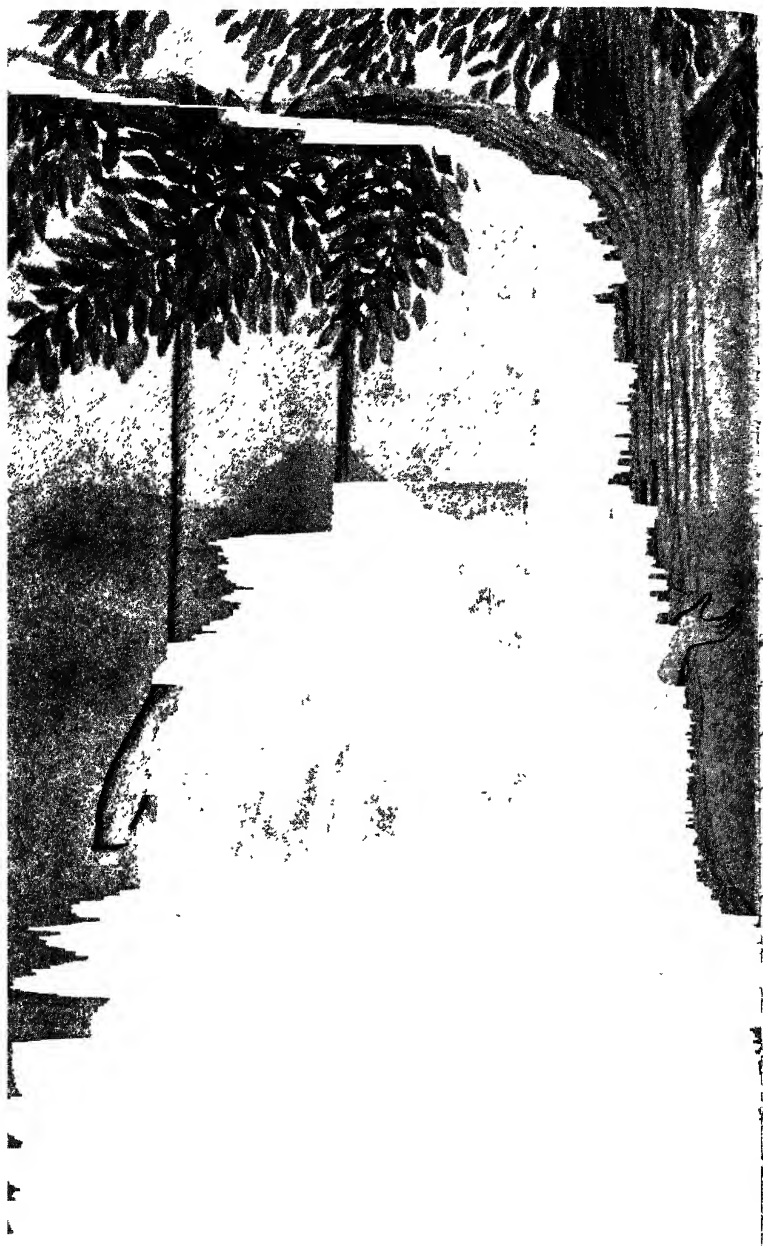
Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, you have explained that mind renders everything real by its convictions, but then, how is it that bondage, which is sustained by the mind, is illusory?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, the realities of dream become illusory from the standpoint of the waking state; so too, the realities created by mental convictions are perceived as illusions when the mind turns to the wakeful state of Liberation. Even the aspiration for Liberation is illusory. However, it has a greater degree of reality than the desires for the objects of the world. When higher forms of imagination remove the lower forms of imagination — when aspiration overpowers the distracted desires of the mind — one wakes up to discover the non-duality of the Self.

Oh *Rama*, for the wise who possess intuitive intellect, this world as well as the concepts of bondage and release are as illusory as the phenomenon of “snake-in-rope.”* It is the mind afflicted by ignorance that pursues the relative realities of the world, and sees its desires fulfilled; and since the mind is backed up by the infinite powers of *Brahman*, one can accomplish whatever one desires by the one-pointed devotion of his mind. However, the achievements in this world are illusory compared to the perspective of attaining Self-realization, wherein the mind ceases to exist as a separate reality.

From *Brahman*, first there arose the mind, and then the visions of bondage and release. This was followed by the creation of the world-process which expresses itself in the form of numerous worlds. This entire creation is like the tale told by a nurse to a child for mere amusement.

* See “Vedanta In Brief” by Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda



Section 101 — *The World as a Tale Told to a Child*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, I would like to listen to the tale told to a child, and how this world is similar to that tale.

Sri Vasistha said: Once upon a time, a nurse told this beautiful tale to a child for his amusement.

“There once lived three princes who were very handsome. They were virtuous, valiant and thoughtful, and lived in the city of Void. Two of them were never conceived, and the third was not even born.

“In the course of time, they lost their relatives due to a severe famine that befell their country, and so, they set out in search of another country. They left the city of Void and moved onwards. Because their bodies were as tender as *Shirisha* flowers, due to the intense heat of the sun they became fatigued. Their feet were burnt by the burning sands.

“In the course of their weary journey, they found three trees full of leaves, blossoms, and fruits. Of them, two were not yet sprouted, and the third was not even planted. They were tired, so they rested under those shady trees. They rested even as *Indra*, *Yama*, and *Vayu* would rest under the *Parijata* tree in Heaven. Then they ate the nectarine fruits of the trees and again set out on their journey.

“When noon came, they saw three rivers surging with waves of transparent water. One of these rivers was completely dry, and the other two were devoid of water. They took a bath in the first river and felt very refreshed.

“When the evening hours came, they saw a city high up in the mountains. It was filled with lakes containing placid waters and lilies of diverse colors. They saw three palaces in the city, which were studded with gems and precious stones. Two of these palaces were not even constructed, and the third had no foundation.

“However, they entered the third palace, and found three vessels of gold. Two were broken to pieces, and the third was crumbled to dust. In the third vessel, those princes of excellent wisdom cooked rice. They had ninety-nine plus one minus a hundred grains.

“When the rice was cooked, they invited three *Brahmins* (priests) to join the feast. Two of the *Brahmins* were devoid of bodies, and the third had no mouth. The latter one ate a hundred grains of rice. The remaining was feasted upon by the three princes.

“Then they went out to hunt. And, Oh Child, they still exist in that strange city, and their life is full of delight. If you have heard this story, then do reflect upon it, and you will become wise.”

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, much like this story, this world exists only for the thoughtless. But to the wise, the world is a mere manifestation of the thoughts of the mind. With the effacement of the mind, all becomes false, and *Brahman* is discovered as the only Reality. Just as the ocean manifests in waves, so does *Brahman* manifest in the multiple forms of the world.

Oh *Rama*, renounce the thoughts of the mind by meditating upon the Self, and rest in your essential nature which is supremely peaceful.

The three princes are the products of Maya (cosmic illusion): Ishwara (cosmic creator), Jiva (individual soul) and Manas (the mind). The world is the city of Void. The three rivers are the three Gunas of Nature: Sattwa (purity), Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inertia). The three trees are the three purposes of worldly existence: Dharma (ethical value), Artha (material value) and Kama (vital value). The three palaces are the three states of consciousness. sleep, dream and waking. The three vessels are the three bodies: physical, astral and causal. The enjoyments of the world are devoid of substance like the illusory grains of rice. The three Brahmin guests are the three stages of life: childhood, youth and old age. Thus, although this world-process is woven by the fabric of illusion, yet the mind, being overpowered by Maya, continues to be entertained by the empty promises of this world, just like the child who was amused by listening to the story told by a nurse.

Section 102 – *The Immutability of the Self*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, just as a child imagines a ghost in the stump of a tree, in the same way ignorant men imagine a perishable ego-self in the Supreme Self and remain caught in the mire of illusion.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, what is this perishable ego-self which experiences the sufferings of the world? Whence has it come? Whose imagination has given rise to this fictitious entity? How can the eternal Self give rise to the imagination of a fictitious not-self?

Sri Vasistha replied: Oh *Rama*, the Self seen through the veil of ignorance, tinged by the impressions of individuality or *Jivahood*, falsely imagines the existence of the illusory not-self. All living beings are the one Self caught in the “imagination” of the mind.

When one understands that one Self alone exists, then the egoistic vision disappears, for ego cannot exist in the Non-dual Self. Its appearance is much like a mirage in a desert, or a ghost imagined by a child. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, renounce the erroneous vision that is tinged by the ghost of the ego-self, and adopt the true vision that discovers *Brahman* as the Reality behind all that exists.

Taking recourse to spiritual enquiry, you will be able to save your intellect from the dashing waves of illusion. When your intellect is then purified, it will not sustain the thoughts of the world. This is how you will attain freedom from the ghost of the ego-self.

In reality, you are never bound. You are essentially the Self; how can the Self be brought into a state of bondage, and by whom? Knowing this, why do you grieve in vain, Oh *Rama*?

As long as the Self is not realized, so long one must continue to experience the sufferings of the body and mind. Even if the body is pierced, cut down, slain, disfigured, or destroyed, he who has attained Self-realization does not suffer from pain.

Just as when the billows of a blacksmith are stopped, the all-pervasive air is not affected, so too, when the body is destroyed, the Self remains unaffected. Whether the flowers wither or perish, how can their all-pervasive fragrance be affected?

Let the lotus of the body be affected by the frost of pleasure and pain, but how can the black bee of the spirit that soars in the sky be afflicted thereby? Let this body fall or stand — your essential nature is ever untouched thereby.

Oh *Rama*, this world is of the nature of mind, and mind is caused by the beginningless illusory power of *Maya*. The Self, which is the substratum and controller of *Maya*, is even greater than the mind. And since the mind is not destroyed by the destruction of the body, then how can the Self be destroyed?

The mental body of a person continues to project the world of time and space, and enters into it wearing different bodies, changing its bodily garbs through the process of repeated deaths. Let this mental body be destroyed by spiritual knowledge.

Oh *Rama*, death is nothing but a change in the pattern of time and space. One is separated from a particular time-space order, and is led to another time-space projection. He is separated from a set of realities that depended upon a particular ego-center, and is united with another set of realities through an altered ego-center.

Through death a person becomes detached from his family, friends, near and dear relatives and the realities of his life, and becomes attached to another family, discovers different relationships, and enters into a different set of realities. Death is merely a change in scene in the drama of life. The Self is never destroyed.

Just as a bird after hatching out of an egg flies into the sky, in the same way, Oh *Rama*, break the egg-shell of illusion, remove the confines of the egoistic vision, and once you discover the wings of wisdom and bliss, soar into the infinite sky of freedom.

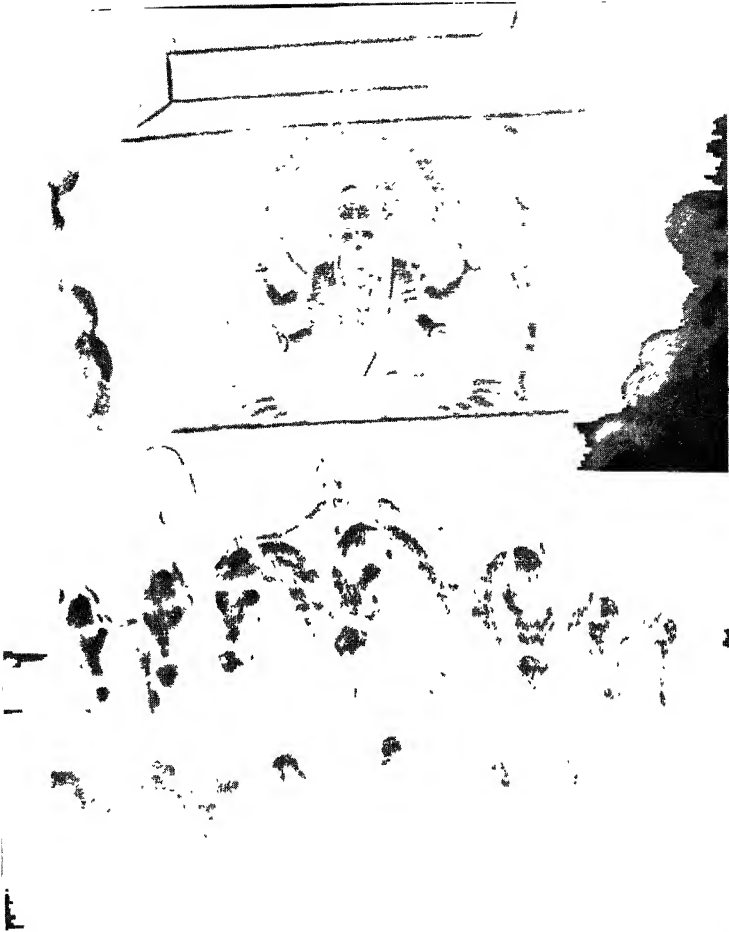
When seen through a veil of mist, the vast sky is imagined to be cloudy and tainted. Much in the same way, this boundless and glorious *Atman*, when seen through the mist of mental *Vasanas* (subtle desires), is interpreted as a wandering soul dependent upon perishable objects of the world.

Just as morning lets the fierce rays of the sun dissolve its mist, so too, let the luminous wisdom of the Self dissolve the mist of *Vasanas*. By the shining rays of *Vichar* (spiritual enquiry) allow the icy rocks of illusion to melt away from your view.

Colored by spiritual impressions, your mind will delight in playing the dramatic act of its own destruction, because when the mind turns to the Self, it has chosen the path of its self-destruction.

You should not look for methods of destroying the mind. Your very mind that is overpowered by the light of discriminative knowledge will automatically develop the *Samkalpa* (strong resolve) for its own destruction. Just as through the ignorant mind you are led to numerous illusions of the world, so too, through your own illumined mind you will be led to the lofty states of spiritual attainment, allowing the mind to be negated by the transcendental vision of the Self.

Oh *Rama*, destruction of the mind is the highest goal of self-effort, leading to the cessation of all miseries. In this dark forest of the world-process, the mind that is devoid of *Viveka* (discriminative insight) abounds with the thorny bushes of pleasure and pain and is entwined by the poisonous snakes of perishability and death. Through it your spirit is led to untold sufferings.



**Like the Sun-god destroyng the darkness
of night, the effulgent light of wisdom,
riding on the chariot of purified intellect
and driven by the luminous rays of intuition,
destroys the darkness of ignorance.**

Courtesy: Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

All beings are afflicted by miseries arising from their unenlightened minds. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, overcome the world by dissolving the mist of the mind through the radiant rays of spiritual enquiry.

Section 103 — *The Evils Created by the Unenlightened Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Like a mighty wave arising from the ocean, the *Chitta* (mental-process) has arisen from *Brahman*, the Absolute, and having thus come into existence, this *Chitta* has extended itself into this vast, illusory world-process.

Mind is capable of converting a small object into a gigantic one, or a gigantic object into a small one. And such is the power of the mind that even problems of mountainous proportions are rendered insignificant, and problems that are totally insignificant are converted into gigantic forms.

Sustained by the infinite power of the Self, this mind can create the entire world as well as many other such world-systems in the twinkling of an eye, and likewise it can withdraw all its creations. (Individual mind freed of its complexes and egoistic illusions communes with the Cosmic Mind which in turn is capable of projecting the entire universe within the twinkling of an eye.)

The senses of perception as well as the organs of action are projected out of the mind as its instruments. Then having projected them for the fulfillment of its restless desires, the mind operates through them, thereby sustaining the illusions of the world-process.

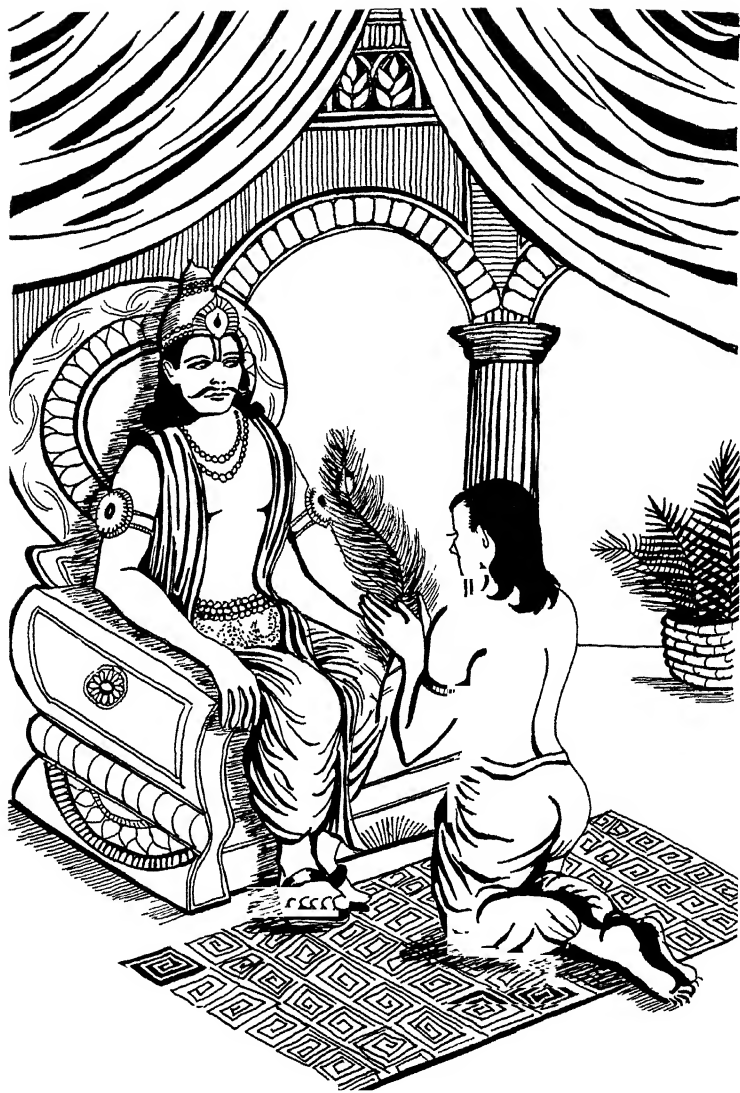
Even as a child plays with toys or builds castles of sand by the seashore, in the same way the mind creates the various worlds for its amusement. Then how can the body, which is nothing but a doll created by the mind, be the Self?

The powers of the mind are seen in dreams as well as in fanciful visions. One experiences a long duration of time during a dream of a few minutes. The mind is capable of extending a moment into a *Kalpa* (a long duration of time consisting of thousands of years), and a *Kalpa* into a moment. Likewise, mind is capable of converting a vast stretch of space into a small space equal to a pit made by a cow's hoof, or it can convert such a very small space into a vast distance extending over thousands of miles.

Due to the increase of *Rajas* and *Tamas*, the mind loses the awareness of its boundless powers and resigns itself to a world of dependence and bondage. Just as leaves, flowers and fruit arise from a tree, in the same way, the unenlightened mind gives rise to illusions, infatuation, time, space, repeated embodiments, and manifold experiences of pleasure and pain.

It is the *Chitta* that manifests itself in the triads of actor, action and instruments of action, and seer, seen and sight. It is *Chitta* again that appears in the triple role of enjoyer, objects of enjoyment and enjoyment.

Those who are endowed with spiritual insight behold this world as an extension of the mind. Just as numerous ornaments of gold are nothing but gold, so too the numerous realities of this world are nothing but illusory forms projected by the mind. Since the reality behind the mind is the Self, a Sage perceives the Non-dual Self as the only Reality.



King Lavana and the Magician.

Sections 104 and 105 — *King Lavana and the Magician*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, this illusion of the world-process exists in the *Chitta* (mental-process). In order to enlighten you on this point, listen to the story of King *Lavana*.

There is a country known as *Uttarpandava* and was very prosperous under the rule of King *Lavana*. This righteous King was a descendent of the famous King *Harishchandra* of ancient times. He was endowed with generosity, humility, heroism, valor, and all the noble qualities that adorn an ideal king. His subjects were happy and contented, and even today the people of that country sing the praises of that great King.

One day when the King was attending to his daily duties in his royal court, a magician entered and approached the King. Bowing his head low in respect to the King, the magician said, "Oh King, allow me to show you the powers of my magic. May you enjoy this show while seated on your throne."

Thus saying, the magician waved his magic wand of peacock feathers. At this very moment, a beautiful horse was permitted in the royal court as a gift from a neighboring king. The messenger who brought the horse spoke highly of the qualities of the horse, and requested the King to ride it. Lifting his head, the King gazed at the horse, and for a while remained still like a painted picture. His eyes closed and he passed into a state of trance that lasted for over two hours. The ministers and other officers did not dare to awaken the King, but waited with deep concern.

Then the body of the King shook, even like a mountain summit trembles from a mighty earthquake. The King regained consciousness like the blooming of a lotus, and with a gentle whisper, asked, "What country is this? Whose court is this?"

The ministers spoke words steeped in humility to comfort the agitated King, and asked, "Oh King, we are deeply worried about your condition. Your mind is endowed with excellent qualities, and it is impossible for such a healthy mind to be disturbed by the magical influence of an ordinary magician. Please tell us your experiences during your state of trance."

The King spoke, "Oh Ministers and Royal Officers, even the mind of a wise man can be overcome by dream at times, like illusions created by *Maya*. Listen to my experiences induced by this magician."

Section 106 – *King Lavana Tells of His Experiences during the State of Trance*

The King said: Oh Officers of the Court, you saw how this magician, desirous of showing me his magical power, waved his wand of peacock feathers. You also saw how I was presented with a white horse. As I saw the horse, it seemed to me that I mounted and rode him out of the court. Though my eyes were closed, I experienced all of this within myself.

This swift footed horse carried me very far away, and no one followed me. I was lead to a vast desert-like land that was devoid of trees or water. This wasteland stretched before me like an unbounded ocean. With a sorrowful heart I continued to ride the horse, and only with great difficulty managed to cross that vast desert.

Then I found myself in a forest abounding with Jamun and Kadamba trees. There were small fields of paddy cultivated by forest tribes. The horse would not stop, and in order to get off of him, I clung to a tree branch and let the horse race on.

I was so exhausted that I withdrew myself into a hollow of the tree and passed a cold, sleepless night. Because of fear, that miserable night seemed like a very long period of time.

Eventually the sun gradually rose from the east as if it were drunk with red wine. I got up from my strange bed and looked around at the area around me. I was suffering from pangs of hunger. As the sun ascended in the sky and the glistening dew drops began to dry up, I saw a maiden carrying a plate full of food on her head. To me she seemed like Goddess *Lakshmi* Herself carrying a vessel of nectar.

Coming down from the tree, I approached that forest-dwelling girl and said, "O lady, I have fallen into a miserable situation. Hunger burns in me like a poisonous cobra. Please give me some food to satisfy my hunger."

But the maiden would not give me any food. When I continued to pursue her, even like a shadow at some distance, she said, "Oh handsome man adorned with golden ornaments, know me to be a low born Chandala (outcaste) who feeds on the meat of horses and elephants. You may receive food from me only on the condition that you marry me, because people who are born of a low class like me do not give any favor to anyone else without receiving something in return. This food I am carrying for my father who is working in the yonder field. See how he is ploughing the field with the help of oxen."

Having listened to her demands, I consented to marry her. During adversity, who cares for the rules of caste or the moral laws upheld by society?

When I convinced the lady of my sincerity, she gave me half of the food consisting of cooked rice and wine from Jamun fruits. I ate, drank and rested for a while. Then that lady of black complexion led me to her father, who was the ghastliest person I had ever beheld.

Overjoyed with the prospect of marrying me, she whispered some honeyed words to her father, and then asked permission from her father to marry me. Her father then stopped ploughing, and tying up the oxen, led us to his home. We three entered into a habitation of Bhils (forest tribe) where limbs of monkeys, chickens and crows, all swarming with flies, were scattered everywhere. The atmosphere was a living hell.

There I was led into a hut and made to sit on a plantain leaf. My would-be cross-eyed mother-in-law stared at me and approved of me being her son-in-law. Then, just as one is forced to enjoy one's sinful Karmas, so I was driven by my strange destiny to eat the disgusting dishes given to me.

In the midst of sweet words, which were in fact like seeds of misery, I was married to the Chandala girl. The Chandalas drank and danced, and the marriage ceremony was concluded in the midst of great jubilation.

Sections 107 to 109 – *King Lavana Continues
to Relate the Story of His Life as a Chandala*

The King continued: After my marriage to the Chandala, I became a full fledged Chandala. In the course of time, my wife gave birth to a female child even as adversity gives rise to evil actions, and the child rapidly grew up, just as worries grow in an unenlightened mind. Three years later, she had a son, and as time passed, we had another girl and another boy.

Just as an old turtle passes his time confined in a small lake, so I passed many years confined to the Chandala world. Although I grew old, my mind continued to be intent on maintaining my family and serving my children.

Meat of hogs, monkeys and other wild animals constituted my food, while the scars on my face grew because of the mounting disharmony with the Chandala neighbors and the constant bitterness of my wife. Once I had a terrible fight with my family because of the disgusting meat of a goat.

As I continued to perform my terrible duties day by day, I suffered from the extremes of cold and heat. Buffeted by winds, burnt by the blazing sun, drenched in rains, and chilled by the wintry weather, I advanced in age; and yet, I continued to carry heavy burdens of wood on my head. Roasted by the fires of misery, my body turned black and I became a true relative of the Chandalas.

No longer endowed with royal dignity, no longer possessing the virtue of compassion, I became the very personification of hellish cruelty. I passed many



years like this, eating impure food, using gross and uncultured words, suffering from endless adversity, and living with groups of Chandalas in the filthiest conditions possible.

As time passed, the Chandala habitation was plagued by a terrible famine. Not raining for a long time, green grass and luscious creepers were scorched by the fierce rays of the sun, water was not to be found anywhere, and wild beasts roamed the forests searching only for blood of their prey.

Compelled by the circumstances, leaving behind my aged and debilitated father-in-law and other relatives, I, along with my wife and children, attempted to move out of that famine-stricken area. After traveling for a while under the blazing sun, we took rest under a palm tree. While my Chandala wife slept with two of her children, my eldest son Prichhala asked with tears in his eyes, "Father, please give me meat for food and blood for drink. I am dying of hunger." He repeated this again and again, though I continued to say, "My son, there is neither meat nor blood."

Seeing my son writhing in the pains of hunger, I said, "Oh son, will you eat the roasted meat of my body?" To this he immediately replied, "Yes, I will eat anything."

Desirous of putting an end to my hellish existence, I collected some pieces of wood from the forest, and setting them on fire, I threw myself into its hungry flames. At that very moment, I began to hear the royal drums of the court, and I became aware of being awakened by you people who are my royal officers.

Sri Vasistha continued: After the King had completed his story, the ministers with eyes of anger turned towards the magician, but he had disappeared. Then realizing what had happened, they said to the King, "Surely this could not have been an ordinary magician, for he did not wait for a reward. It seems that the Divine *Maya* has appeared in the form of this magician."

Oh *Rama*, I was the royal priest of that great King, and all this happened before my very eyes. Oh Great Soul, the mind has veiled the nature of the Self and has extended itself in the form of the gigantic tree of the world-process with its numerous branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. By taking recourse to wisdom, allow this mind to be rid of its *Vasanas* (subtle desires) for the objects of the world. Then the purified mind will be enlightened by wisdom, and will not hide the Self. With the veil of illusion removed, you will discover your essential nature.

Section 110 – *The Amazing Powers of the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Mind consists of *Vasanas* or subtle desires, and through their annihilation, mind is destroyed. This destruction of mind gives rise to Liberation from the cycles of birth and death.

Oh *Rama*, it is by ignorance that Pure Consciousness assumes the role of externalization and becomes tinged by subtle desires. Having forgotten its essential freedom, it follows the course of identification with the effects of ignorance. This is the root cause of all sufferings in life. When the *Vasanas* are destroyed by wisdom, all forms of pain are removed, even as darkness is dispelled by the rising sun.

What is near is rendered far by the magic of the mind. Where there is no fear, the mind projects fear. That which is static seems moving and that which moves seems static by the illusions of the mind. Enemies are recognized as friends, and friends enemies by the power of the mind.

When the mind is agitated, even the lustrous moon seems to send forth darts of misery. Even nectar, when interpreted by the mind as poison, produces poisonous effects on the body.

A human being is like a deer caught in the net of *Vasanas* in the vast forest of the world-process, and spiritual enquiry removes these *Vasanas* of the mind like the rising sun that melts away the mist of ignorance.

First assert, "I am not this body. I am nothing but the mind." Do not consider yourself as a physical body, for the body is inert. Then know the mind to be neither inert nor of the nature of pure consciousness. Gradually even the idea, "I am the mind" will be removed by discovering your identity with the Absolute.

Whatever the mind does becomes the Karma of the person, for acts of the body without the assistance of the mind are rendered void. Mind has expressed itself in this entire world — it is the mind that manifests as the sky, as the earth, as the wind, and as the sun that illumines all objects of the world.

When the mind is deluded, one is called dull-witted. No one is recognized as dull-witted because of dullness of his body. When the mind intends to see, it

becomes the sense of vision; when inclined to hear, it becomes the sense of hearing; therefore, Oh *Rama*, know it to be the mind that becomes the senses.

A trifling matter is made into a mountainous problem by the delusions of the mind, and likewise, a matter of great sorrow is reduced into a trifle by an enlightened mind.

Mind is the thread that sustains the beads of the senses. When this thread is burnt up by the fire of wisdom, the senses are easily conquered. Sustained by the light of the Self, this mind exercises its unobstructed authority over this entire universe.

It is common experience that when the mind is elsewhere, even a delicious meal, though well-chewed within one's mouth, remains tasteless. Therefore, it is the mind that tastes, smells, hears, touches and sees. In fact, it is the mind that projects the senses.

Though seated in a room, one can experience the joy of being on the summit of a mountain beholding the beauty of drifting clouds. The experiences of a person depend upon his mind alone, and not his body. See how, though lying comfortably on a bed, a person can experience mountains, cities, rivers, and numerous conditions of pleasure and pain during his dreams.

Just as a tree expresses itself through its leaves, branches, flowers and fruits, in the same way, it is the mind that expresses itself through waking, dream, deep sleep, and all their ramifications which go to constitute the tree of the universe.

Whatever thought is sustained by the one-pointed mind, that becomes one's reality. Therefore, having understood the powers of the mind, Oh *Rama*, do as you wish.

Led by its own deep-rooted thoughts (*Samkalpas*), mind creates the illusions of birth and death. Though limitless and formless, the mind has developed the illusion of *Jivahood* — of the individual soul that continues to whirl through the cycles of repeated incarnations.

Just as oil is hidden in seeds, so too, experiences of pleasure and pain are hidden in the mind. These experiences are elaborated through time and space, and are further projections of the mind.

When the mind is contented, the body feels delighted. It is the mind that goes, comes, rejoices, sings and enjoys. The body is a mere illusion before the powers of the mind. When the mind is restrained from its running after objects, it is brought under one's control even as a mighty elephant is controlled by an elephant tamer.

When the mind is directed towards the Truth, it becomes free from all distractions. He who has thus brought his mind under his control is truly the best of persons, but those who have not done so are like worms in the form of human beings.

The desires for the objects constitute the seeds of the poison tree of the world-process. When the mind is directed to the Self, these desires dissolve and the turbulent ocean of the world-process disappears from one's view.

Section 111 — *The Secrets of Controlling the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, now I will relate to you the infallible remedy for treating the disease of the mind. If you were to renounce the objects to which your mind is attached, you will overcome the mind, even as a strong tusked elephant overpowers a weak elephant with broken tusks.

Just as a child is led away from his toys, even so the *Chitta* (mental-process) is gradually persuaded to renounce attachment and consequent distractions, and is led on to *Brahman* (the Absolute).

Oh *Rama*, the unenlightened mind is like a sheet of iron that is melted in the fires of meditation and good association, and then tempered and cut down by the instruments of pure reason.

When a child has been disciplined by adopting tenderness along with firmness, he obeys the commands of his guardian. In the same way, when the mind is trained by the practice of Yogic disciplines and by the cultivation of serenity, contentment and other virtues, it becomes an obedient servant to the soul. Then there is no difficulty in conquering the mind.

He who is unable to conquer the mind by adopting the art of *Vairagya* (dispassion) towards the objects of the world is like a worm among human beings. And yielding to the temptations of objects is a process of continued degradation for the soul.

When the purified intellect of a Yogi recognizes objects as expressions of *Brahman*, then just as a powerful wrestler overthrows a child, so too the mind is overthrown by the spirit in man.

Fie on those who do not endeavor to conquer their minds, which is the sole purpose of their existence, and which could be easily accomplished by adopting the art of spiritual wisdom. They are indeed like jackals that continue to howl at the nectarine moon.

Control of mind is the goal of all spiritual disciplines such as service of Guru, study of scriptures, repetition of *Mantra*, and others. Without keeping this goal in view, these disciplines become meaningless.

Oh *Rama*, renounce the *Samkalpas* (thoughts of objects) and the mind will be annihilated. Then you will abide in your essential nature — the Self. Think of the Self, promote awareness of the Self, and let your mind flow on to the Self. Thus practise *Atma-samvedana* (constant awareness of the Self). By doing so, you will be able to free the mind of its thoughts and imaginations, and will be led on to Self-realization.

By exercising your subtle intellect, first grasp the fact that *Brahman* is the Reality behind all names and forms. Then through constant vigilance allow your mind to flow on to *Brahman*. Let your *Chitta* be overpowered by *Chit* (Consciousness), and thus, you will abide in the Self.

Do not let mental agitation interrupt your spiritual movement. It is the absence of agitation that enables one to acquire lofty attainments. If you overcome your mind, even victory over the three worlds will be as insignificant as a straw.

While attainments of earthly glory depend upon physical effort and painful labor, the attainment of mastery over the mind is brought about by the blissful process of understanding and enlightenment.

Do not resign to the concept of destiny. The notions, "I am this person. I am dying. I am born. I am alive, etc.." are expressions of the erroneous vision of the mind. The Self is neither born nor subject to death. Birth and death are imagined by the mind, and erroneously superimposed upon the Self.

People continue to grieve for their brothers, friends and dear relatives, but all in vain. The Self is ever unaffected by union or separation, birth or death, meeting or parting. There is no room for grief when the Self is realized, and you will not be affected by the worries and sorrows of the mind.

If you have cultivated the understanding that objects that seem so pleasant to the senses are in reality insignificant, and if your mind does not flow towards wife, children and other dear relatives, but towards *Brahman*, then you have definitely severed the limbs of the mind.

The idea, "This is mine," constitutes the body of the mind. But when you sustain the idea, "This is not mine. I am not this body," then this body of the mind is slain by the sword of wisdom. When you do not entertain the erroneous thoughts of "I-ness" and "mine-ness," the mind is scattered like clouds by the wind of wisdom.

It is the unconquered mind that leads to great fear, and it is the conquered mind that leads to the abode of fearlessness. The terrible afflictions of the world arise like mirages in desert sands by the mind that has not been conquered.

Even if the winds of destruction were to blow, the oceans were to overflow, and twelve suns were to blaze forth in the sky, for him who has vanquished the mind there is absolutely no loss.

As burning embers are reduced to dust, one joyously sees the gradual disappearance of the scorching fire; in the same way, as the mind is destroyed by the practice of wisdom, a Yogi experiences ever increasing joy.

Section 112 — *The Technique of Renouncing
the Vasanas of the Mind*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, greater the intensity of desire, greater is the attraction felt by the mind towards the objects of the world. Desires arise in the mind like bubbles in the ocean. However, they are easily restrained by adopting the path of wisdom. Since these desires have no real basis, they can easily be dissolved by the attainment of intuitional enlightenment.

Just as heat is the natural property of fire, so too, restlessness and fickleness are the natural properties of the mind. The magical potency of *Maya* (cosmic illusion) which abides in Consciousness has assumed the form of mind, and the mind in turn has created the illusion of the world-process.

When the mind becomes free from distractions, it is dead. This indeed is the goal of all austerities and study of scriptures. It is through the destruction of mind that one attains release and becomes free from all sorrows. Oh *Rama*, destroy this mind and experience the limitless bliss of Liberation.

Mind is ever driven by its *Vasanas* (subtle desires). When it stops running after the objects of the world, the *Vasanas* melt into nothingness, and one experiences limitless joy.

Mind is a knot of Consciousness and unconscious matter, and it swings between the two. The material aspect of the mind is illusory, while the spiritual aspect is the reality. Therefore, when the mind is freed of its illusions, it is converted into Pure Consciousness.

By relentless effort, the mind can be directed to the glorious heights of Yoga. The mind that is sinking in the world-process through its own deluded efforts can be led to its well-being by its own positive efforts. The mind alone has brought degradation in itself, and it is the mind alone that can save itself from sinking in the world of matter.

If you develop the knowledge that the *Vasanas* arising from the heart are illusory, you will be able to destroy them, and thereby control the mind. When the *Vasanas* are destroyed, the mind along with its source, ignorance (*Avidya*), is annihilated.

Oh *Rama*, first renounce the *Vasanas* of sense-enjoyment, and then renounce the *Vasanas* based upon the vision of separateness — the vision that “I am different from the Self.” Rising above the mind and its mentations, discover your essential identity as the Self and be free.

The destruction of *Vasanas* is brought about by not thinking of the objects. When the objects are discovered as illusory modifications of the Self, one develops a vision that negates their reality. In this way the *Vasanas* of the mind are dissolved.

The knowledge in which all sense-perceptions are absolutely negated is *Nirvana* — the state of Liberation characterized by supreme bliss. But as long as consciousness is mingled with the perceptions of the senses, there is pain and sorrow.

Oh *Rama*, whatever objects the mind desires, and whatever method it adopts to attain them, if you know them to be illusory, you will be able to renounce the *Vasanas* that keep the mind agitated and distracted. Consequently, you will destroy ignorance, and having attained the revelation of the Self, you will become free from all sorrow and elation.

Section 113 — *The Knowledge of Brahman
that Annihilates Vasanas*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, since the *Vasanas* are essentially untrue, they must be negated in order to attain the realization of the Self. Do not take recourse to ignorance, but rather to wisdom. Just as there is nothing but water in the ocean, so too there is nothing but *Brahman* in this world.

Oh *Rama*, since you are not the doer, then why do you become attached to actions? Since *Brahman* alone exists, how can anyone perform any action, and by what means? Even the idea, “I am the non-doer” should not be entertained, for when you realize that even actions themselves do not exist, then there is no meaning in asserting, “I am not the doer.”

Vasanas alone have deluded the mind and have produced the magic show of the world-process. Do not be duped by the witchcraft of the *Vasanas*. Hollow like the stalk of bamboo, invulnerable to swords like the waves of a river, intangible like mist,

yet like an incessant waterfall, *Vasanas* come rolling in cascading waters of illusion, breaking down rocks and molding patterns of the world-process.

When the *Vasanas* are completely negated and thrown into the abyss of oblivion, one attains infinite bliss. But when a person is driven to pursue his *Vasanas* by his dream-like imaginations, then he continues to create miseries for himself.

Oh *Rama*, it was because of the magic of *Vasanas* that King *Lavana* experienced a life of many years during a short time, and King *Harishchandra* experienced a life of 12 years during a single night.

Led by pleasant *Vasanas*, a person lives through a long time as if it were a few minutes, but driven by unpleasant *Vasanas*, suffering from anguish and pain, one feels as if he has lived through a long long time in a short duration.

Behold the magical powers of the *Vasana* — She is like a dust cloud in her appearance, encompassing the Absolute Self and compelling Him to appear like struggling souls. Continuing to perform her endless dances everywhere in this world, when wisdom is lacking, she appears like the forces of darkness parading the earth during sunset. But when viewed with the sight of wisdom, she disappears even like a flame that has been extinguished. When captured, nothing remains of her. Such is the mystery of *Vasana*.

Riding on the chariot of externalized thought-waves of the mind, this *Vasana*, which is actually nothing but *Avidya* (ignorance), spreads her net and,

even as a fowler captures birds, she traps the individual souls and compels them to wander through the long dreams of the world-process. It is this *Avidya* that assumes the form of a mother or a wife, and fills one's life with the sweetness of affection and love. But though sweet in appearance, it envenoms one's life with the poison of boundless misery.

It is *Avidya* that hides the reality of a rope and forces one to see a hissing snake instead. Although she has no substance of her own and is the worst of paupers, yet she has spread the illusions of the world-process. There is nothing in this world that she cannot accomplish or create.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, although this *Avidya* does not exist, yet she has blinded the vision of all beings. Though she is devoid of any name or form, yet she has created the illusion of the world-process even like a mirage in a desert.

It is highly regrettable that this essenceless *Avidya* has filled the lives of all beings with darkness. It is indeed a great wonder that the dull-witted world has given refuge to this inauspicious woman, and in turn has been blinded by her wiles.

Abiding in the cave of the unenlightened mind, creating the cobwebs of subtle desires, this *Avidya* continues to drive every soul through repeated experiences of birth and death and numerous afflictions. What should one do to overcome this vile disease of ignorance?

Section 114 — *The Destruction of Avidya
through the Knowledge of the Self*

Sage *Vasistha* replied: Just as the light of the sun dispells mist, in the same way, the light of knowledge removes the mist of ignorance. And Oh *Rama*, just as the shadow that desires sunshine allows itself to be effaced, in the same way, the soul that aspires for Self-realization brings about the destruction of ignorance, and along with it, its own relative existence.

Ignorance reveals itself through desires for objects of the world, and when these desires are removed or dissolved, one attains Liberation. When the sun of wisdom dawns, the night of desire ends, and the veil of ignorance is destroyed.

With the rising of the sun, darkness flees, and no one knows where to. In the same way, with the dawning of wisdom, ignorance is dispelled into nothingness.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, this world that consists of objects is nothing but an expression of ignorance, and ignorance is destroyed by the thought-process that flows to the Self. Please tell me then, in what manner is the Self to be thought of?

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, the Self is devoid of objects, untainted by ignorance, free of mental projections, and therefore, cannot be described by words. Oh Virtuous *Rama*, from *Brahma* down to the tiny blade of grass, this entire universe is in fact nothing but the Self. *Avidya* (ignorance) does not really exist. Since *Brahman*, the eternal, indivisible and immutable Self, alone is, there is no existence for this illusory mind.

It is this Self or Pure Consciousness which assumes the role of mind through its imagination. Having ignored Its intrinsic freedom, immortality, and bliss, It moves into a world of bondage, mortality and pain. Like waves arising in the ocean, so do the many-aspected objects arise out of the mind.

The mind has arisen out of the *Samkalpa* (willing) of the Self, and it is in turn destroyed by one's own *Samkalpa*. It is just as fire that is aroused by wind is also extinguished by it. While ignorance-bound *Samkalpa* continues to arouse the fires of the world-process, the knowledge-bound *Samkalpa* extinguishes the fires and paves the way to Self-realization.

By the intensification of the *Vasana*, "I am not *Brahman*," the mind enters into bondage, while by the intensification of the *Vasana*, "All is *Brahman*," the mind moves toward the state of release. While the thoughts, "I am this emaciated body; I am miserable and fettered by Karmas; I possess hands and feet," leads one to bondage, thoughts such as, "I am not this body of flesh and bones, nor am I afflicted by pain; I am the bodiless, immortal *Atman*," leads one to Liberation through the destruction of *Avidya*.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, what is the reason for the world appearing in *Brahman* like blueness appearing in the sky?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, since the power of vision in the individual is incapable of penetrating the boundless vastness of space, the veil of darkness arising out of the absence of objects is interpreted as the blueness in the sky. In the same

manner, the limited intellect of an individual being unable to penetrate the veil of ignorance, perceives the appearance of the world-process instead of the Absolute.

This world has arisen like the blueness in the sky. But when the perception of multiplicity is drowned in mystic oblivion, the vision of the Absolute dawns in one's heart.

It is the *Samkalpa* (combination of thought, will and imagination) of the mind that forces one to experience a painful condition in dream, making him feel, for example, that he is about to be destroyed. Likewise, it is another form of mental *Samkalpa* that causes awakening in the individual, resulting in his perception of waking up and realizing that he is no longer affected by the illusions of the dream.

In the same manner, by directing one's *Samkalpa* to the objects of the world, one intensifies the dream of the world-process, but by uplifting one's *Samkalpa* to the Absolute Self, one wakes up into the state of Self-realization.

The moment the *Samkalpa*, "I am ignorant" develops, the very same moment the world of time and space becomes crystalized in the consciousness. But the moment the *Samkalpa*, "I am Brahman" arises, the world of time and space is drowned in oblivion, like the experiences of a dream upon awakening.

When the mind is controlled the senses become incapable of creating *Vasanas* or subtle desires. The senses are like servants for the royal mind — if the mind is not involved in objects, the senses are incapable of creating *Vasanas*, or intensifying ignorance.

There is nothing but *Brahman* as the Reality behind all appearances. There is nothing to be thought of other than *Brahman*, because *Brahman* alone exists. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, adopt the highest form of self-effort — root out the tree of desires with the help of pure intellect and abide in *Brahman*.

The ignorance about the nature of the Self is the basis for the network of *Vasanas* that have in turn evolved the world of numerous objects. By entertaining the thoughts, “These are my sons; this is my wealth; this is my house; these are my possessions,” one allows oneself to be overpowered by the magic of one’s own *Vasanas*. But, Oh *Rama*, when you negate the thoughts of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ by asserting that *Brahman* alone exists, then, the *Vasanas* along with their magical powers are destroyed forever.

Therefore, take recourse to the association of those who are enlightened and learn the art of spiritual enquiry. By the practice of enquiry and reflection, bring about the cessation of all *Vasanas*. Discover the fact that you are free from the delusion of birth, death, and the varying conditions of life. You are verily *Brahman* whose glory surpasses even the glory of the great Deities such as *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*.

Section 115 — *Sri Rama’s Wonder
about the Cause of King Lavana’s Misery*

With a countenance lit up with a smile, *Sri Rama* asked: Oh Sage, it is a great wonder that this non-existent ignorance has materialized itself in the form of the three worlds (physical, astral and causal). Please explain to me the art of crossing this stream of illusion.

Also, please explain the reason why King *Lavana* had to go through so many painful experiences under the influence of the strange magician. Who was that magician in reality, and why did he disappear?

And also, in this blend of the body and soul, which of the two suffers the misery of the world, and which of the two is the enjoyer of the fruits of Karmas?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, the distinction of body and soul is imagined by the *Chitta* of the mind. In fact, the body does not exist as a reality in itself. Therefore, it is not the body but the soul that experiences the fruits of Karmas. But then, even this soul is nothing but a reflection of the Self in the *Chitta*, and as long as the *Chitta* is unenlightened, the luminous Self appearing as the individual soul experiences pleasure and pain as the result of Karmas.

As long as the mind is overpowered by ignorance, so long one continues to dream of various conditions in the night of the world-process. But when the mind is illumined by knowledge, it brings awakening for the soul, and the enlightened soul in turn discovers its identity with the Absolute; the soul then realizes that It is ever free from all Karmas and their fructifications.

Just as the owner of a house performs various deeds while the house itself does nothing, in the same way, the soul performs all Karmas while the body remains like an inert possession. Know the soul that is identified with the mind to be the creator of all its Karmas and the enjoyer of their fructifications.

Now, Oh *Rama*, I will explain the cause of King *Lavana's* misery during that magic spell: One day in ancient times, King *Lavana*, a descendant from the family of King *Harischandra*, sat in seclusion and reflected within himself, "My grandfather had performed great *Rajasuya Yajnas*. Let me also perform a similar *Yajna* mentally."

The King then began the mental performance of that great *Yajna*. He collected the necessary materials in his mind, invited priests to perform the sacrifice, worshipped the Sages, and then kindled fire to invoke the presence of the Gods. In his mental world, the King continued to perform this sacrifice for a year, but in the physical world, he actually spent only a day in the royal gardens.

Section 116 — *The Fruit of Mental Sacrifice
Performed by King Lavana*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, it is said that a performer of *Rajasuya Yajna* incurs displeasure of the jealous god *Indra*, the Lord of the celestial worlds. Because of this, any performer of this *Yajna* may suffer adversity extending up to 12 years. *Indra* became himself the magician to inflict King *Lavana* with this misery, and once his mission was completed, the magician vanished, going back to his abode in the subtle plane.

The jealousy of Indra is a figurative expression denoting the need of removing subtle impurities from the mind towards the promotion of virtue. Through sufferings, which are, as it were, planned by jealous gods, an aspirant sees the suppressed defects of his unconscious brought before his conscious mind, and learns the art of removing them.

In conclusion, it is a fact that mental Karma must bring forth its fruits. The mental Karma of King *Lavana* brought forth the merit of performing the *Rajasuya Yajna* as well as the necessary adversity planned by *Indra* in order to remove the impurities of the mind. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, grind the jewel of the mind by the practice of *Hatha Yoga* (*Asanas, Pranayamas, Yamas* and *Niyamas*), and then purify it with the waters of concentration, meditation and *Samadhi* as enjoined in *Raja Yoga*. Let the purified jewel of mind be dissolved in the fire of wisdom arising out of the practice of *Jnana Yoga* consisting of listening, reflection and meditation. This is the path leading to Supreme Blessedness.

Thus the mental performance of a *Yajna* becomes effective. Whatever is done by the mind is indeed vital and effective. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, do not let your mind entertain the degrading feeling, "I am the body," but rather allow your mind to sustain the elevating thought, "I am *Brahman*"; you will attain enlightenment.

When the purity of the *Chitta* shines like the sun, there is nothing in this world unaccomplished, nothing unconquered or unattained. With a pure mind, all desires are satisfied, all to be negated is negated, and the highest Bliss of Liberation is experienced.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, it is true that when the mind is destroyed, all miseries terminate. But since the mind is so fickle, how can it be destroyed?

Sri Vasistha explained: This mind that consists of the three *Gunas* — *Sattwa, Rajas* and *Tamas* — arises out of *Brahman* and dissolves in *Brahman*.

Brahma, the Creator, is of the nature of Mind, and creates the world-process as a projection of the Mind. It is this Mind of *Brahma* that dreams of many minds through which many souls continue to experience dreams of diverse worlds. This world then, is like a dream within a dream.

Since the world is of the nature of creation and dissolution, the mind too is projected and dissolved in *Brahman*. This mind is not an unchanging reality, but a continuous fluctuation of illusion.

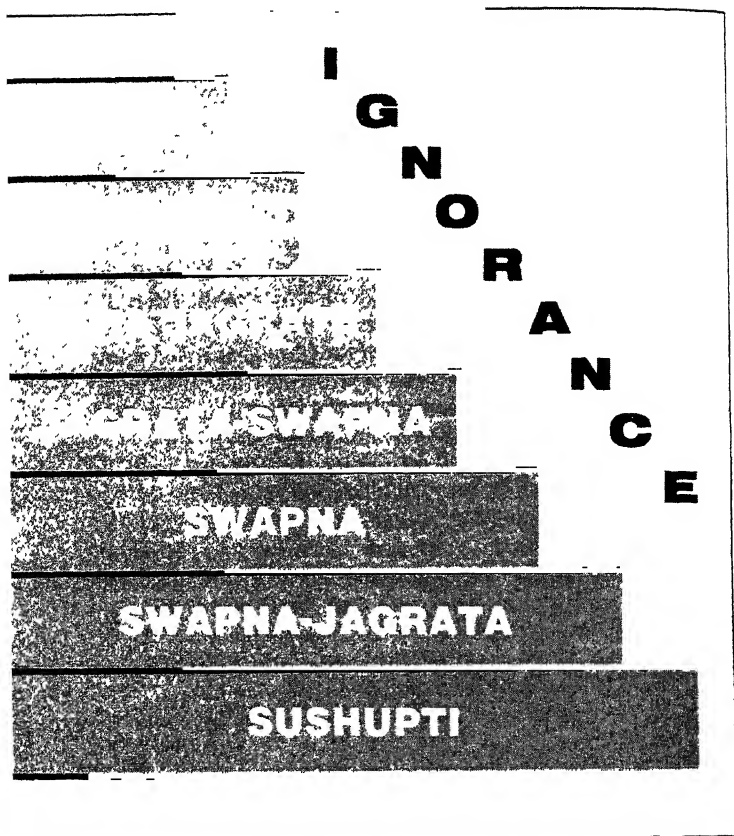
The mind of an individual continues to intensify itself through desires, Karmic impressions, *Vasanas* (subtle desires), and *Samkalpas* (thoughts based upon an egoistic vision of life). By the practice of enquiry and meditation, this mind is brought under control and is effaced from one's consciousness.

From one's very childhood, one must study the *Vedas* under the guidance of a spiritual preceptor. Then, even as in your case, Oh *Rama*, one develops discrimination, dispassion and spiritual aspiration for Self-realization. This gives rise to enquiry into the nature of the Self. As a Yogi ascends the ladder of wisdom, he passes through seven stages which are called the *Jnana Bhumikas*. Contrary to these, there are seven *Ajnana Bhumikas* — the seven stages of Ignorance.

Section 117 — *The Seven Stages of Ignorance*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, there are seven stages of Ignorance and seven stages of Knowledge, and each have numerous subdivisions. While increasing involvement in the world of matter and ever-growing impressions of attachment to the enjoy-

THE SEVEN STAGES OF IGNORANCE



These descending steps are characterized by increasing ignorance and decreasing knowledge (or diminishing consciousness) in a gradual succession; the soul that enters into the lowest step becomes practically bereft of consciousness and is drowned in ignorance.

ment of sense-objects constitute the basis for the movement in ignorance, listening to scriptural teachings, reflecting upon the Self and the enquiry of "Who am I?" constitute the movement in knowledge.

One must turn away from the states of ignorance, and direct his steps to the ascending heights of knowledge. Listen to the seven stages of Ignorance which must be avoided in order to ascend the seven stages of Knowledge or Wisdom.

Liberation consists of abiding in the Self. But, with the rising of the ego-sense, one, as it were, falls away from his true, essential nature, and forgets the Self. This is known as bondage.

These are the seven stages of Ignorance: 1. *Bija Jagrata* (root-waking), 2. *Jagrata* (waking), 3. *Maha Jagrata* (great-waking), 4. *Jagrata-Swapna* (waking-dream), 5. *Swapna* (dream), 6. *Swapna-Jagrata* (dream-waking), and 7. *Sushupti* (sleep).

When the Self due to the thin veil of ignorance joins with the *Chitta* (mind-stuff) in the causal plane, it is in the stage of "root-waking," because, the *Chitta* tinged with ignorance is the root of the world-process. This is the initial stage of ignorance.

Then, as the Self gradually begins to develop identification with the subtle body consisting of the mind and senses, It begins to experience Itself as an embodied person in a world of time and space. It begins to identify itself with the physical body and begins to gather impressions of like and dislike from the world of objects. This stage of ignorance is called *Jagrata* or waking, and in this stage, the impressions of the world are not intense.

As the impressions of like and dislike continue to intensify under the influence of ignorance, the Self becomes so involved with the world of objects that It cannot conceive of a reality beyond the visible perceptions of the world. Here It is in the stage of *Maha Jagrata* (great-waking). This stage is so named because the spirit in man is so awake to the world that any possibility of perceiving the spiritual world is drowned from its view; It is asleep to the inner realities of its essential nature as the Self.

Then, unable to cope with the realities of daily life, people begin to live in the dreams of their minds — they learn to live in the island of their idealistic world. This is called *Jagrata-Swapna* (waking-dream).

As ignorance is still more intensified, a person moves from the stage of waking-dream to that of dream. Here the normal realities of the waking state are completely lost due to increasing confusion of the mind. This is the fifth stage of ignorance.

As ignorance continues to grow, a normal person belonging to *Jagrata* state enters into *Maha Jagrata*. He gradually turns away from the realities of the spirit and begins to abide in the world of illusion. This state merges into dream, and with the further intensification of ignorance, the dream-world becomes the reality. Sinking still further into ignorance, *Swapna-Jagrata* (dream-waking) dominates, during which one becomes so awake to the imaginations and fancies of his mind that he considers them to be the only realities in life. The idea that there is a world of reality other than his ego-conceived world is totally beyond his understanding.

In the beginning stages of abnormality there is a perception of being abnormal, and there is an eagerness to come back to normality. But in the advanced state of abnormality, the loss of one's normal identity is rather cherished and perpetuated. One begins to live with a false identity of oneself, and what used to be a short-lived dream now becomes a perpetual waking state. This is known as *Swapna-Jagrata* (dream-waking).

As the process of losing hold of reality continues, the reasoning faculty becomes so feeble that it cannot even sustain a world of fancy and imagination. The mind has dissipated its energy to such an extent that it is like a shattered mirror, and is unable to reflect the Reality of the Self, even to a minute degree. The opacity of the mind veils all perceptions of the world from one's view, and such a person is deeply sunk in his dark unconscious. This is the *Sushupti* or sleep stage of ignorance, and is the climax of the movement in ignorance.

Each of these seven stages is further subdivided into hundreds of branches, for the life of an individual is like a dream within a dream. The spirit continues to drift from one whirlpool to another, as it were, caught in the rapids of the world-process.

An aspirant must endeavor to avoid these seven stages of Ignorance in order to ascend the seven glorious and sublime stages of Wisdom.

Section 118 — *The Seven Stages of Knowledge*

Sri Vasistha continued: Now listen to the seven stages of Knowledge. Their practice will lead you out of the mire of ignorance and will give rise to the glorious state of Liberation.

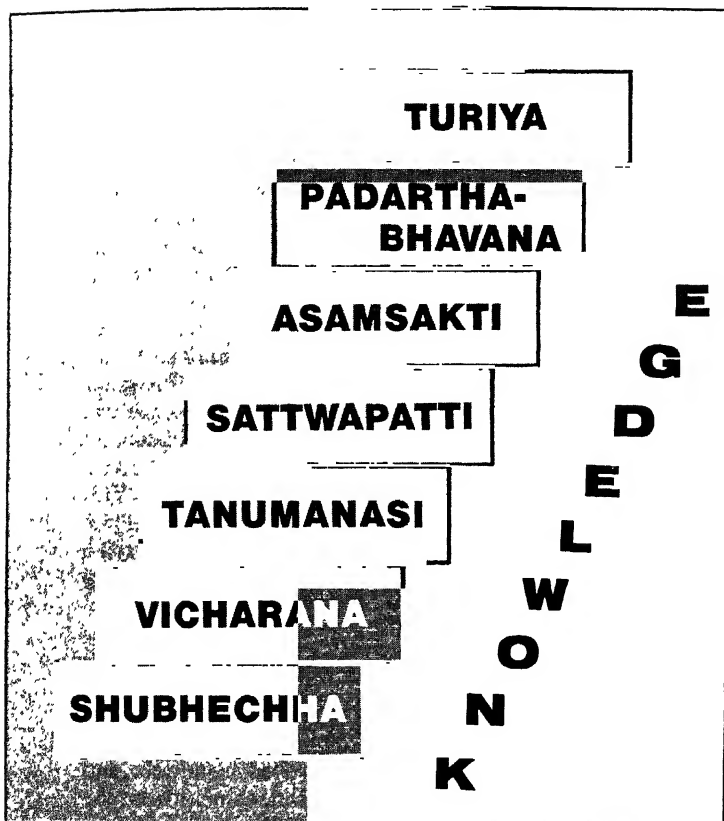
Brahman reflecting in the purified mind becomes the remover of ignorance and is known as knowledge or wisdom. This knowledge unfolds through seven stages, known as the *Jnana Bhumikas* (stages of knowledge).

The seven stages of knowledge are: 1. *Shubhechha* or Aspiration, 2. *Vicharana* or Reflection, 3. *Tanumanasi* or Attenuation of the Mind, 4. *Sattwappatti* or Purification, 5. *Asamsakti* or Detachment from the world-process, 6. *Padarthabhavana* or Absence of the world-process, and 7. *Turiya* (or *Turyaga*) or the Transcendental Realization of the Absolute.

“Why do I abide in a dull state? Let me understand the nature of the Self by taking recourse to the guidance of a spiritual preceptor and by studying the scriptures.” Having thus resolved, an aspirant equips himself with the fourfold qualifications* for Liberation. He begins to practise *Shravana* or listening to the teachings of the scriptures. This constitutes the first stage and is known as *Shubhechha* or Aspiration.

* The fourfold qualifications for Liberation are *Viveka* (discrimination), *Vairagya* (dispassion), *Sat Shampat* (the six virtues of serenity, control of the senses, renunciation of selfish actions and desires, endurance, faith, and tranquility of mind), and *Mumukshutva* (burning aspiration for Self-realization). These qualifications are discussed in more depth in *Vedanta in Brief* by Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF KNOWLEDGE



These ascending steps are characterized by increasing knowledge (expanding consciousness) and decreasing ignorance in a gradual succession; the soul that enters into the highest step becomes fully enlightened — ignorance is reduced to nothing and he becomes one with the Light of Pure Consciousness.

By the repeated practice of the study of scriptures, good association, and increasing *Vairagya* or dispassion, an aspirant enters into the second stage known as *Vicharana* or Reflection. In this state he becomes adept in the practice of reflection and meditation on the Divine Self.

As a result of the practice of these first two stages, the impurities of the mind are gradually dissolved. The subtle impressions of attachment and hatred that distract the mind are brought into an attenuated state. Therefore, the third stage is known as *Tanumanasi* or Attenuation of the Mind.

When the above three stages are practised with repeated effort, a Yogi acquires intuitional vision of the mind. Then the fourth stage, known as *Sattwa-patti* or Purification, unfolds, and the Yogi becomes Self-realized. He knows *Brahman*, and therefore, he is called a *Brahmavit* — a Knower of *Brahman*. This vision continues to unfold through the last three stages, as the *Prarabdha* (fructifying Karma) of the Sage continues to be exhausted, until the Self is absolutely released from the world-process.

In the fifth stage, the vision of wisdom arising out of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness), becomes so intensified that a Sage becomes free from all Karmas and their involvements. He becomes detached from the world, even as butter is detached from milk, and this stage is called *Asamsakti* or Detachment from the world-process. The world becomes like a dream, and a Sage in this stage is called a *Brahmavidvara* or a Greater Knower of *Brahman*.

As this stage is further intensified, it ripens into the sixth stage or *Padarthabhavana* — the Absence of

the world-process. In *Padarthabhavana*, a Sage experiences the state of sleep at all times, and the world is experienced as an ocean of silence. As the world is constantly negated by intuitional vision, the Self continues to become the constant identity of the Sage. A Sage established in this state is called a *Brahmavidvariyan* — a Still Greater Knower of *Brahman*.

Finally, a Sage transcends the three states of consciousness — waking, dream and deep sleep — and abides constantly in his essential nature — the Self. He becomes free from ignorance and its effects. All his Karmas are burnt up, and even the body which was sustained by *Prarabdha Karma* comes to its termination. A Sage in this stage of knowledge, or *Turiya*, is called a *Brahmavidvarishtha* — the Greatest Knower of *Brahman*.

Liberation during the fourth, fifth and sixth stages is called *Jivanmukti* or Liberation in life, while Liberation in the seventh stage is called *Videhamukti* or Disembodied Liberation. During *Jivanmukti*, a Sage, though inwardly free from the world-process, continues to be apparently involved due to his *Prarabdha Karma*. However, even this apparent involvement diminishes through the last three stages, until in the seventh stage, he has no trace of even apparent individuality. The last three stages, therefore, are movements towards *Videhamukti*.

There are some who abide in the first state only. Others rise to the second, third and fourth states. There are still others that pass through all the seven states during their lifetime. Each of these seven states can be further subdivided into many branches. Some

Yogis attain only a portion of a particular state and are not fully established in it. One may possess a degree of aspiration, or a degree of reflection, or a degree of any of the other stages of knowledge.

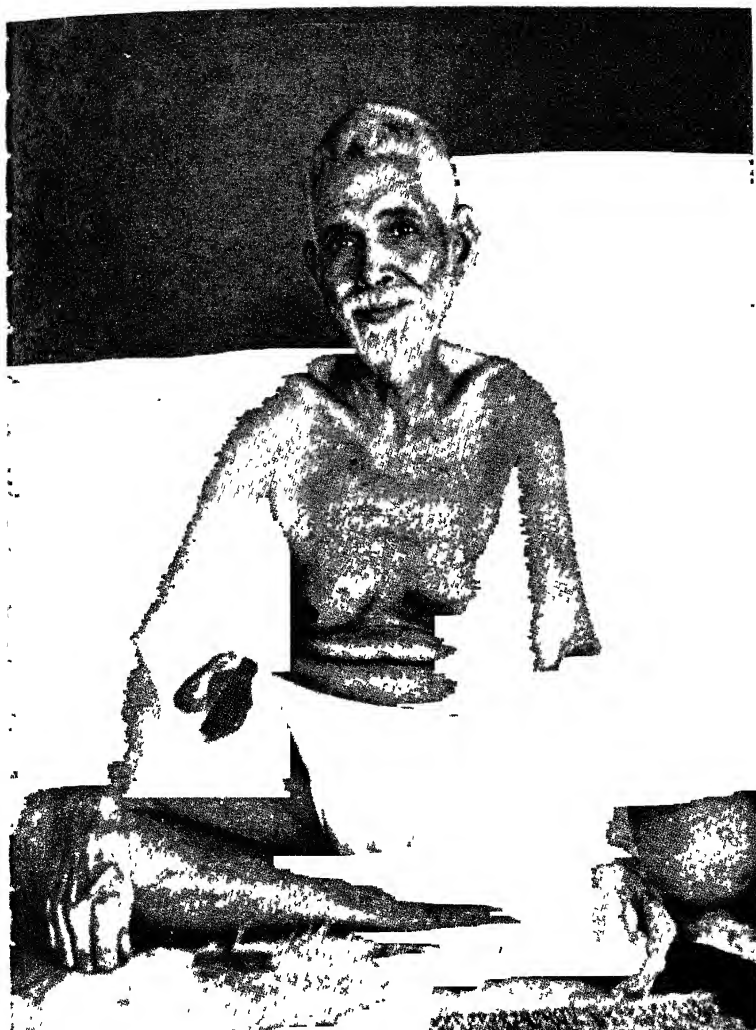
He who has conquered these seven stages is indeed the greatest of all. He has accomplished the purpose of his existence. The experience of bliss that arises in him is boundless and beyond all concept of the mind. Being established in *Brahman*, a Sage considers the entire universe, nay, even the world of *Hiranyagarbha* or the Cosmic Mind, as insignificant as straw.

Section 119 – *The Method of Attaining the States of Wisdom*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, suppose a golden ring were to forget about its own essence as gold and begin to weep thinking itself to be made up of a baser metal. Such would be the illustration of every person who, essentially *Brahman*, has developed the erroneous notion of being a limited individual due to ignorance.

Just as a golden ring is nothing but gold, only the apparent difference being caused by the illusion of name and form, in the same way, the essence within every person is the same as *Brahman*, but due to the limited mind, he has become identified with an illusory process of individuality.

Though the world does not exist in reality, yet the realities of daily life are sustained by the erroneous impressions of the mind. If you were to develop the strong impression that “this is nectar,” even a poisonous substance would prove to be nectar for you. Ignorance is at the basis of this.



Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950).
Saint of Arunachala, Tiruvannamalai, South
India. Lived the embodiment of Divine Con-
sciousness.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, rid your mind of illusion by taking recourse to enquiry. The ego-sense that has arisen in you is as illusory as the concept the golden ring developed of its "baser" individuality by ignoring its essential golden nature.

The Self is beyond time and beyond this world-process. There is neither the creator nor creation; there is neither heaven nor hell. The three periods of time, the worlds, the diverse forms of beings, the differentiations of "mine" and "yours," the concepts of existence and non-existence, along with the numerous mental afflictions do not exist in reality.

Brahman is the Supreme Reality underlying the illusion of the world-process. That *Brahman* is beyond the senses, devoid of defects and modifications, indestructible, and supportless.

Oh *Rama*, since your knowledge has not blossomed into the mature fruit of wisdom, in spite of your intellectual grasp of the illusoriness of the world-process, you are still perceiving the realities of the world. However, with patient practice of enquiry and reflection, you are bound to realize the Self.

This world is nothing but the jugglery of *Maya* and can be negated by the attainment of wisdom. Therefore, take recourse to enquiry, and as the subtle desires are evaporated by the fire of wisdom, you will recover your essential nature. The creeper of *Maya* devoid of its nourishment in the form of *Vasanas* cannot exist to create the thorny forest of the world-process.

Section 120 —*King Lavana Visits
the Lands in the Vindhya*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, listen to the continued experience of King *Lavana*; it will lead you on towards the understanding of the illusoriness of the world and the Reality of *Brahman*.

After the experiences of King *Lavana* with the magician, the King entered into the *Vindhya* forests out of a curiosity to discover the places of his dream-like vision. And although he believed that what he saw in his vision was false, yet he continued to wander through the forests. One day he happened to see a forest that was seen during his vision, and with increasing curiosity and amazement, discovered all the familiar places, and even familiar faces of the people he lived with as a *Chandala*.

He discovered the same house and recognized the same close relatives he had lived with during his dream, and he saw the very trees that had dried up in the recent famine, and observed his friends and relatives and sons who were still grieving over his death. His mother-in-law was grieving at the loss of both her daughter and her royal son-in-law. She was enumerating his qualities and describing the good fortune of her daughter for marrying him.

The King heard her lamentations, "Alas, Oh Royal Prince, you chose my daughter over all the beautiful ladies of the palace. And even this *Chandala* life you adopted did not prove to be enduring. What a cursed destiny! Oh Friends, I have lost my husband, and recently I lost my daughter and son-in-law. I have become the very embodiment of misery. Even a lifeless stone is better than me."

The King himself approached the weeping *Chandala* woman and asked questions regarding her daughter and son-in-law. The King was astonished to discover that all the details of his dream-like vision had actually happened.

Section 121 – *The Illusoriness of the World-process*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, amazed by the accounts given by the old *Chandala* woman, the King repeatedly asked about the events of the past. The ministers of the King also heard these accounts and were astonished.

Moved by compassion, King *Lavana* spent some time with the *Chandalas*, gave them many gifts, and after having allayed their sufferings, started out with his ministers and attendants to return to the palace.

After spending the night in reflection, the King met with his preceptor early in the morning. Remember, *Rama*, I was the King's preceptor and explained to him the mystery of creation, and just as clouds are driven away by strong wind, so too the King's doubts were dispelled by wisdom.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, please relate to me the teachings that you gave to King *Lavana*. How was it that his dream-like vision turned out to be real?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, ignorance is capable of performing all types of miracles. Review the miraculous experiences of dream. A very long time may seem to be very short in a dream, one may see one's own death, or fly in the air, or see things that do not even exist. All this becomes possible in dream.

In the same way, this waking state is also a refraction of consciousness caused by *Vasanas* or subtle desires in the mind. Led by intense thinking and feeling, whatever idea or concept that settles within one's heart, that becomes one's reality. It is the magic of the mind that can convert a moment into an age, or an age into a moment. The events in this world are not realities in themselves, but only miraculous operations of ignorance.

The mind fabricates an illusory form of causation. For example, suppose a stranger happens to be under a palm tree. He watches a crow land on the tree and instantly a fruit falls and injures him. The fruit being ripe would have fallen anyway, and further, the bird did not land anywhere near the fruit. But the stranger still blames the bird thinking that it was the crow that was responsible for the falling fruit. Much in the same way, overpowered by ignorance the human mind enters into an illusory process of causation.

In this world of relativity, there had been someone who was married to the *Chandala* lady and who lived in that forest. The experiences of that person became reflected in the mind of King *Lavana* and became responsible for his identification with the person who lived and moved with the *Chandala*. In turn the *Chandalas* of the *Vindhya* forest also reflected the dream of the King, and this gave rise to the illusion that a King lived with them as their dear relative. In fact, this world is actually sustained by such illusory reflections in the mind. For just as many poets happen to compose similar poems, and many thinkers happen to think similar thoughts, so too, the *Chandalas* and the King just happened to enter into similar illusions.

In truth, ignorance is non-existent: it does not and cannot affect the Self. Therefore, it is possible to remove the veil of ignorance by the force of spiritual enquiry. How can the Self be associated with the body, mind and senses which are material in nature? How can the sun be related to darkness? Oh *Rama*, this world is essentially the Self, but overpowered by ignorance, illusions are mutually sustained by different minds and give rise to the apparent reality of the world-process.

Your essential nature, Oh *Rama*, is beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Rising beyond the waves of the mind, try to abide in your innermost Self, for this Self, the true identity of your being, is never affected by the illusions of this world.

From the point of view of the Self, nothing has been created, and nothing is subject to destruction. Nothing exists other than the Self, and therefore, there is no room for hatred, anger, fear or any other negative mentation. Perceive the illusoriness of mental thoughts and their projections, and become absolutely detached from the world of time and space.

Oh *Rama*, keep this *Chandala* in the form of mind far away from your essential Self. In this way you become free of all fear and sorrow. But those who continue to depend upon this fictitious mind and its projections, they are like ridiculous people trying to beat the sky with sticks.

For a long time have I meditated upon the Truth, and I have never perceived even a trace of this impure mind in the radiance of the Self. This mind does not exist, and there is hardly any effort in negating it. Realize this and abide in the Self.

Section 122 — *The Practice of
the Seven States of Wisdom*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, good Karmas performed in many lives have their results in a pure heart. Then led by the purity of heart, one begins to practise *Satsanga* (good association).

This ocean of the world-process is fed by the turbulent waters of ignorance and cannot be crossed without the aid of the scriptures and association with the wise. Good association gives rise to discriminative intellect and allows one to differentiate between what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected. This leads to the attainment of the first step — *Shubhechha* or Aspiration.

As *Viveka* or discriminative knowledge continues to blossom, one attains the second step known as *Vicharana* or Reflection. By taking recourse to right knowledge, one continues to annihilate the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the unconscious that are sustained by ignorance and promotes the development of *Shubha Vasanas* or subtle inclinations of the mind formed on the basis of increasing insight into the nature of the Self. This state of reduction of the *Vasanas* is the third step, called *Tanumanasi* or Attenuation of the Mind.

When the *Vasanas* are thinned out, the vision of a *Yogi* becomes internalized. He continues to gather the *Samskaras* (subtle impressions) of the feeling, "I am *Brahman*," and as a result of this, the realities of this world are gradually lost from his view. This practice of reducing the *Vasanas* must continue until one is established in the knowledge of the Self, and



Author Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda

when this knowledge is attained, a Sage, though apparently active in this world, is internally inactive, and though apparently delighting in objects, in reality delights in the Self alone.

The state of *Tanumanasi* matures into the state of *Sattwapatti* or Purification. A Sage views the world with a vision that negates the realities of names and forms, and discovers the underlying Self behind all that exists. This leads to the fifth state, *Asamsakti* or detachment from the world-process. Then with increasing detachment from the world-process a Sage passes on into the sixth state known as *Padartha-bhavana* or Absence of the world-process. A Yogi acts like a child or one who is intoxicated — he is, as it were, in deep sleep, with only partial awakening now and then.

With increasing annihilation of the *Vasanas*, a Sage is not aware even of the daily needs of life such as eating, bathing, and performing similar actions. He is led to do these essentials by the help of others. He has attained the *Turiya* or the transcendental realization of the Absolute.

A Sage becomes a *Jivanmukta* when he enters the fourth state or *Sattwapatti* and continues to experience increasing expansion of the Self as his Karmas and *Vasanas* are gradually destroyed. Through the sixth and seventh states, he passes on into the state of *Videhamukti* or Liberation without a tinge of physical awareness, also called disembodied or bodiless Liberation.

A Liberated Sage does not delight in objects that have been gained, nor does he grieve for objects that have been lost. He is contented with whatever Nature presents to him in daily life. He is ever free from fear, attachment and anger.

Oh *Rama*, how can there be an occasion for pleasure or pain for one who is essentially the Supreme Self, devoid of impurities, self-effulgent and indestructible? You have no friend or relative; you are not related to anyone. You are the Supreme Self and you cannot experience grief at the loss of relatives. Only as long as relatives and dear ones are considered bodies will they need to be grieved for, but when they are seen as the Self, for what is there to grieve? The Self is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

You are the indestructible *Atman*. Why then should you entertain the thought, "I am the mortal personality"? Why do you give room to sorrow and grief? Death cannot exist in the Self much as darkness cannot exist in the sun; then why should you sustain the thought of death?

When a pot is broken, the pot-ether is unaffected. When the body dies, the Self is unaffected. When an illusory mirage is destroyed, the sun which sustained it is ever unaffected. Discover the illusoriness of desire. Since *Atman* alone is, how can there be desires for the objects of the world?

All objects of the senses, whether it be smelt, seen, touched, tasted or heard, are in reality the Self. The powers of the mind and senses are not different from the Self who is the repository of all powers.

Oh *Rama*, the three worlds have arisen due to *Maya* (cosmic illusion) consisting of the three *Gunas* of *Sattwa* (purity), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (inertia). When the *Vasanas* are annihilated, one becomes free of *Maya* and discovers the Self to be the Non-dual reality.



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But as long as an insight into *Maya* is not gained, so long it will continue to create great illusions. But when such insight is developed, all is converted into *Brahman* and all is seen as waves of Divine Bliss.

The innermost Self is the Absolute. There is no knower in the three worlds other than the Self. There is no experiencer or enjoyer in the three worlds other than the Self. Even though he comes in contact with objects that are pleasant or painful, a Sage adopts the vision of negation (*Badha Drishti*) and perceives only the underlying Self. It is this vision that blooms into *Brahman*. But the self experienced by the dull-witted is only a mortal, perishable and apparently real entity that is subject to repeated cycles of birth and death.

Even in the case of the ignorant, when the body is destroyed the *Jiva* (individual soul which is *Brahman* reflected in the mind-stuff) is not destroyed. But in the case of the wise, his very mind-stuff becomes illumined, and therefore, the illusion of individuality is negated; consequently, he becomes established in the Self.

All misery in this world is related to the body. How can it affect the Self which is beyond the reach of the mind and senses? Oh *Rama*, you are no longer the reflected self or the *Jiva*. You are *Brahman*. Even as an ignorant *Jiva*, you would not be destroyed when the body is destroyed. Now with the awareness of the knowledge of Self, how can you entertain the thought of destruction?

UTPATTI PRAKARANA

With the destruction of desires for objects, the subtle inclinations of the mind are thinned out or reduced. This leads to the gradual annihilation of the mind, and consequently the frost of the world-process is destroyed. When the *Chitta* is melted away the Self alone shines forth in its intrinsic glory.

*Thus concludes Utpatti Prakarana
(the chapter dealing with the Origination
of Intuitive Vision) in Yoga Vasistha.*

One may rule the worlds, or may attain the position of Indra the ruler of gods, or Varuna the ruler of the waters, but until the Self is realized, he cannot experience supreme peace.

Sthiti Prakarana: 57-35.

य महामतयः सन्तः शूराश्चेन्द्रियशत्रुषु ।
जन्मज्वरविनाशाय त उपास्या महाधियः ॥ ३५ ॥

A wise Sage who conducts himself on the basis of enlightened reason crosses this ocean of the world-process as if it were a pit made by the footprint of a cow; but an ignorant person who lacks reason finds it impossible to cross this world-process which to him surges like the ocean during the time of universal dissolution.

57-37

युक्त्या वै चरतो ज्ञस्य संसारो गोष्पदाकृतिः ।
दूरसंत्यक्तयुक्तेस्तु महामत्तार्णवोपमः ॥ ३७

STHITI PRAKARANA

(The Chapter Dealing with the
Establishment of Intuitive Vision)

Section 1 — *The World as a Mysterious Painting*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Oh *Rama*, as the knowledge of Self that is born by listening to *Utpatti Prakarana* (the topic of Origination of Intuitive Vision) is sustained, it leads to maturity through the present topic known as *Sthiti Prakarana* (the topic of Establishment of Intuitive Vision).

This world-process is like a mysterious painting. An artist with paints, brushes and canvas creates a normal painting. But this mysterious painting of the world-process exists without any basis: without any paint, without brushes, and even without a painter. It has all arisen in the vacuity of the sky.

During the winter season, monkeys sit around *Gunja* fruits which, being fire-red, give rise to the illusion of fire; they derive warmth from it on the basis of their imagination. In the same way, this world is as illusory as the fire of the *Gunja* fruits, and individual souls driven by their monkey-minds continue to seek happiness from it.

As fallacious as a mirage, as empty as castles in the air, and illusory like the cities in the clouds, this world-process has no reality of its own. *Brahman* alone is the Reality behind this world-process.

Like a plantain stem, this world consists of layers of illusion that can be dispelled by the force of spiritual enquiry. It is the water of illusion that continues to sustain this world-process, but the process of enquiry is much like the fierce rays of the sun that dry up these illusory waters.

This world-process is an expansion of misty illusion. The *Samkhya* philosophers have imagined it to be inert. Vedantins describe it as effects of ignorance. There are others who hold it to be a mere void, or atomic, or momentary. Different views have been imagined by different philosophers.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, if this world does not exist in reality, then why have the Sages maintained that it exists in seed form during the time of Universal Dissolution (*Mahapralaya*)? If the world exists as a seed, and then is projected as a tree, then how can it be considered unreal?

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, this view is maintained to help the ignorant. When one is able to grasp the fact that the world does not exist, the question of its seed state does not arise. How can an illusory tree arise out of an illusory seed?

Just as a shadow cannot exist in sunshine, or frost in fire, in the same way, this world-process, even in the seed-state, cannot exist in *Brahman*. The very concept of causation is illusory. Therefore, when the illusion is negated by knowledge, the Self alone remains as the Supreme Reality.

Section 2 — *The Non-duality of the Self
or the Absolute Bliss*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, even if you consider this world to exist as a seed in the Absolute Self during *Mahapralaya* (Universal Dissolution), there must exist another element that could awaken the seed from its dormant state and lead it to its germination and growth. How can there exist another element and from where could it come?

By exercising reason, it is easy to understand that *Brahman*, the Self, the Supreme Cause, has Itself manifested into this world-process. Or from the point of view of the truth, the world-process has never been created; it is only the ignorance-ridden mind that has sustained the illusion of the world-process.

Oh *Rama*, this world has never existed, does not exist now, and will never exist in the future. The Ether of Pure Consciousness alone Is, and it is on this Truth that the sacred *Upanishads* have declared, "All this is *Brahman*."

When ignorance and its effects in the form of desires, subtle cravings, and Karmic impressions, are destroyed, this world is absolutely annihilated. But as long as the *Chitta* or the mental process continues to sustain them, this world will continue to assert its reality.

Just as objects in a painting are nothing but paint on a canvas, in the same way, everything in this world is nothing but mind superimposed over *Brahman*. The mountains, rivers and oceans, the very flow of time consisting of minutes, hours, days, months, years and ages; all the numerous world-systems of the universe inhabited by numerous living beings, all are nothing but *Brahman* — the Absolute Self.

While the ignorant who sleep in their beds of false knowledge continue to experience the world-process like the experiences of dream, the Enlightened shake off the sleep of illusion, negate the dream of the world-process, and eternally abide in the Self.

Section 3 — *The Endless World-process of the Ignorant*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, isn't it possible for the Creator, *Brahma*, to create this world by the use of his memory alone, without the need of external elements?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, indeed, *Brahma* creates the world by the function of his memory alone. In fact, this world is a mental creation without any substance. It is *Brahma's* mentation alone that has assumed the form of the world-process.

However, the statement that *Brahma* created the world-process out of his memory simply implies that the world-process is mental, and therefore, illusory in nature. The scriptures hold that during *Mahapralaya* (Universal Dissolution), *Brahma* becomes merged in the Absolute. Therefore it is impossible for the next *Brahma* to have memories of having created the world in the past.

This world, in fact, is illusory, being sustained only by the reality of *Brahman*. For those who are enlightened, there is nothing but the boundless expansion of the Self, while for the ignorant, there is the endless extension of the world-process.

Just as it is possible to see reflection within reflection (as in parallel mirrors), in the same way, there are worlds within worlds in an infinite series. Take, for example, the countless atomic particles that constitute a mountain. Now suppose each particle were to sustain a world-system — that would be the nature of the countless worlds that arise out of *Brahman*, the Absolute.

When this world is viewed as real, it drives one into the infinite worlds of darkness, but when viewed as *Brahman*, it leads one to the state of supreme blessedness. The essence of one's soul as well as the essence behind the universe are both the same *Brahman*. By adopting this transcendental vision, one becomes liberated, but as long as one sees differences and multiplicities in this world, so long will he continue to wander from death to death.

Section 4 — *The Disappearance of the World-process through the Annihilation of the Mind and Senses*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, mastery over the mind and senses is the bridge that allows one to easily cross over the ocean of the world-process. *Viveka* or discriminative reason is the best means of mastering the senses and is developed by the repeated study of scriptures and good association.

Mind indeed is the root of the tree of Karma, and when the mind is destroyed, this world-process, which is only an extension of the Karmic tree, is eradicated. This entire world is nothing but the mind, and when the mind is negated, the disease of the world-process is automatically remedied.

The realities of daily life are nothing but mentations of the mind. Even the body is just a mere projection of mind. How can a person be aware of his body without the mind? Without the mind, the body cannot be perceived for even a single second.

When the world is negated by taking recourse to wisdom, this evil spirit of mind ceases to exist. But if the world is not negated and if the apparent reality of the world is not removed, one cannot witness the cessation of mind even in thousands of ages.

Absolute negation of the illusory world-process is the best medicine for curing the disease of mind. The general concept that the mind is within while the objects are outside is founded on illusion, because it is the mind that conceives of the difference between externality and internality, and allows itself to wander through its self-created dreams,

It is the mind that dies. It is the mind that is born. It is the mind that enters into bondage by sustaining the erroneous concept of the world as real. And likewise, it is the mind that attains Liberation by melting the mist of the world-process by the shining rays of intuitional vision.

Just as fragrance abides in and emanates from flowers, in the same way, the world abides in and arises out of the mind. Just as oil is hidden in sesame seeds, qualities of an object hidden in an object, and effects in the cause, in the same way, the world is hidden in the mind. Just as rays abide in the sun, heat in fire, coolness in ice, vacuity in space, and motion in wind, so too, this world abides in the mind.

Mind indeed is this world, and the world is nothing but the mind. When the mind is negated, the world ceases to exist. Even if the world were to physically be destroyed, the mind would continue to exist. However, not until the reality of the world is negated through the mind does the mind withdraw its projections and then allow itself to merge in the Absolute.

**Section 5 to 8 — *Begin the Story of Shukracharya
Illustrating the World within the Mind***

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, you are the knower of the secrets of *Dharma* (righteousness). You are the knower of the Supreme Reality. Please explain to me how it is possible for this vast universe to exist within the mind.

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, listen to the story of *Shukracharya*, the son of Sage *Bhrigu*. Long ago there once lived a Sage and his son, *Shukracharya*. When *Shukracharya* was still a boy, he used to roam through the beautiful valley of the *Mandarachala* Mountains, enjoying the beautiful flowers, sparkling streams and all the wonderful aspects of nature.

As time passed, *Shukracharya* became a young man. He had practised meditation and some austerity, but he had not yet freed his mind of *Raga* (subtle attachments). His state was like that of a pendulum, swinging between the world of desires and the spiritual goal of desirelessness.

Once while his father was absorbed in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* that lasted for a long time, *Shukracharya* was occupying himself by watching the beautiful



sights of nature when he witnessed an *Apsara* (heavenly nymph) flying through the sky. She was decked with a garland of *Mandara* flowers and her garmets were swaying in the gentle breeze. To the young mind of *Shukracharya*, she seemed like the very embodiment of beauty, and in turn, the *Apsara* too, seeing the youthful face of *Shukracharya*, immediately fell in love with him.

Afflicted with desire, as though wounded by the arrows of *Kama Deva* (the Cupid God), *Shukracharya* lost all awareness of his body and mentally became one with the *Apsara*. With his eyes closed, he mentally began to travel along with the *Apsara* to *Indraloka*, where he saw the gods of the heaven decked with celestial ornaments. He heard celestial music; watched the celestial stream *Mandakini*; met the great Gods of *Yama*, *Chandra*, *Indra*, *Surya*, *Agni* and others; admired the *Airawata* Elephant, the vehicle of *Indra*; and further diverted himself by watching the various scenes and sights of the heavenly world.

Following this experience, which occurred through his mind alone, *Shukracharya* then perceived himself to go to the royal court of *Indra*. After saluting *Indra*, *Indra* got up from his throne and welcomed the son of Sage *Bhrigu*. Upon *Indra's* request, *Shukracharya* stayed in the company of *Indra* for a short time and then went to see the groups of *Apsaras*. He was delighted to find the *Apsara* who had enchanted his mind, and in turn, she too was delighted to see him in the heavenly world. The sentiments of love swept over their bodily frames, and they became deeply infatuated by each other.

Shukracharya then led the *Apsara* to a heavenly mansion, and with a mutual exchange of loving words, embraced each other. From that time on, both revelled in the pleasures of heaven, wandered by the banks of the *Mandakini*, sported in the midst of celestial groves, and passed their time in a state of intoxication.

After a long period of time, *Shukracharya* and the *Apsara* exhausted their meritorious Karmas and fell from the heavenly world. Divested of their heavenly garments and ornaments, deserted by the Gods, deprived of their celestial chariot and other possessions, they fell earthwards, even like wounded warriors.

They continued to wander with their subtle bodies until, in the course of time, *Shukracharya* was born as the son of a *Brahmana* couple. Then, led by the impressions of his past spiritual disciplines, he practised intense austerity for a long time in a dense forest. Yet backed up by his past Karmic involvement, he again met the *Apsara*, who was also in her next embodiment, and they begot a male child.

Shukracharya became so attached to his son that he soon forgot all about his practice of meditation and other spiritual disciplines. As time passed, his mind became increasingly involved in his son, while his body aged. Eventually death devoured his body, even as a snake devours empty air. Since his last thoughts were directed towards worldly objects, he was born as the son of a King in the country of *Madra*. He ascended the throne, and after ruling the kingdom for a long time, he died and was reborn as the son of an ascetic. After practising intense auster-

ity by the banks of the *Samanga* River, he overcame his impressions of *Raga* and other mental afflictions, and mentally became as stable as a tree unshaken by the winds.

Section 9 and 10 — *The State
of the Body of Shukracharya*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, while the mind of *Shukracharya* continued to experience the celestial pleasures followed by its numerous embodiments, his physical body in the *Mandarachala* Mountains became emaciated and dehydrated by the action of the sun and wind. It fell down like a tree cut at its roots. It was only because of the spiritual power of Sage *Bhrigu* that the animals of the forest had given up their natural instinct of violence, and did not devour the remains of *Shukracharya*.

Soon the body was reduced to a skeleton. The wind, blowing through the holes of the skull, created strange sounds. The grinning teeth seemed to ridicule the vanity of worldly pleasures. Scorched by the raging sun, tossed by the fierce winds, and drenched in torrential rains, the poor body of *Shukracharya* became the very embodiment of ugliness and inauspiciousness.

After a long state of *Samadhi*, *Sri Bhrigu* came back to normal consciousness. He looked for his dear son *Shukracharya*, and finding him absent, wandered through the Ashram forests until he found the dead body. It was dried up like a stick, and little birds had nestled in the crevices of the skeleton. The rib cage appeared like a cave, and where once shown the beautiful eyes, worms began to abide. While frogs rested under the body, spiders wove cobwebs around it.



Overcome by sorrow at the untimely death of his son, Sage *Bhrigu* prepared to curse the Spirit of Time by the force of his anger. Seeing this, *Kala* (the Time-spirit) appeared before him in person. The Spirit of Time was endowed with a strange mystic beauty — he had six arms on each side (twelve arms corresponding to the twelve months), six faces (corresponding to the six seasons of India), and he was decked with ornaments and armor, and held celestial weapons. Fires emanated from the trident that he held, and all directions were illumined by his presence.

Having approached Sage *Bhrigu*, the Time-spirit said in a voice as deep as the sea, “Oh Sage, great men are not overcome by delusion, even when others have committed a wrong towards them. You are giving vent to your anger without investigating into the truth of the matter.

“Oh Sage, I follow the laws of the universe. I am not afraid of your curse. By pronouncing your curse on me you will be destroying the merit that you have earned through your austerities. Oh Sage, you cannot affect me. I, who have swallowed endless series of creations, have even devoured many *Brahmas*, *Shivas* and *Vishnus*. How can I be afraid of you?

“Every living being has two types of bodies — the physical and the mental. The physical body is subject to death and destruction, but the mental body continues to exist until the attainment of Liberation. Oh Sage, why do you afflict your mental body?

“While you were absorbed in *Samadhi*, your son left behind his physical body in order to follow the course of his mind. Just as a bird leaves behind its nest and flies into the sky, in the same way, your son followed an *Apsara* with his mental body, and having enjoyed celestial pleasures, continued to wander through many embodiments.

“Led by his own *Vasanas* (subtle desires) and having passed through numerous experiences of pleasure and pain, he has now incarnated as *Vasu-deva*, the son of an ascetic, and is now practising austerity on the banks of the *Samanga* River.”

Section 11 and 12 — *The World as a Mental Sport*

The Time-spirit continued, “Oh Sage, by the banks of the *Samanga* River where the murmuring sound of the waves continue to resound in the forest, your son is practising austerity. He has developed matted locks and has *Rudraksha Malas* for bracelets on his wrists. Do exercise your spiritual vision to see how the mental illusions of your son have led him to his present situation.”

Sage *Bhrigu* said, “Oh Divine Being, you are the knower of the past, present and future. You know the illusory powers of the mind. It was my conviction that my son was not going to die for one *Mahakalpa* (the day of *Brahma* consisting of a thousand cycles of *Yugas*), but seeing him dead at an early age, I was overcome by anger. Indeed it was a great error on my part.

“Through my Yogic vision, I have witnessed the bodies my son adopted by the force of his mental desires. I have also discovered my son by the banks of

the *Samanga* River. It is now clear that the mind in every individual is his greater reality; it is the mind that conceives of and projects the physical body. The world-process is experienced only as reflections in the mind."

The Time-spirit said, "Oh Sage, your statement that the mind itself manifests as the body is indeed true, for just as a potter molds a pot, the mind molds the physical body. Yet although the physical body has no reality in itself, when the mind is dominated by gross vision, it believes the body to be real.

"Yogis see this world as a mental projection. All objects of the world are as real as the thoughts of the mind. The *Vasanas* or subtle desires of the mind that arise from *Avidya* or ignorance sustain the vision of difference and duality. The world-process is nothing but an extension of these mental *Vasanas*.

"Just as every wave in the ocean is nothing but the ocean itself, in the same way, every individual is essentially *Brahman* or the Absolute. Suppose a wave were to develop its own identity separate from the ocean and see itself rising to a state of prosperity in one moment, and falling to a state of humiliation and destruction in the next. Suppose it were to be jealous of other waves that seem to flourish and succeed. In the same way, though every individual is essentially the Ocean of Perfect Unity, yet it has developed the illusory notion of its separated existence, and consequently, its relationships and attitudes towards other similar waves of individual personalities.

"Like a spider that weaves a cobweb and becomes entangled in it, so every individual is intrinsically the weaver of the cobweb of illusions in

the form of repeated experiences of birth and death. Just as a silk worm creates a cocoon and encloses itself in it, in the same way, every individual creates his own bondage by the erroneous functions of his mind and then becomes entangled in it. But then, just as an elephant is able to break its fetters by the sheer force of its strength, so too, the soul by the force of wisdom is able to break the fetters created by the mind, and thereby frees itself from the world-process.

“The Self is infinitely free, and led by the mind, whatever it imagines, that it becomes. Just as in the rainy season the expansive sky becomes covered with dense clouds within a short time, in the same way, this Self is able to project a world-process within the twinkling of an eye.

“We speak of liberation with reference to the individual soul only. However, the Supreme Self is ever liberated. Bondage and liberation belong to the individual alone, for when the illusions of the mind are overcome by the vision of the Self, the individual discovers the fact that his very sense of individuality was but a mere dream, an illusory phenomenon.

“Just as numerous waves rise in the ocean, each reflecting the sun in a particular way, so too, numerous souls have arisen from the Absolute, each experiencing the world in a particular manner. Some waves have become the Deities of the heavenly worlds, such as *Yama*, *Indra*, *Agni* and the rest, while others have become celestial beings such as the *Gandharvas*, the *Vidyadharas*, and other gods. Some waves arising from the Ocean of *Brahman* have become human beings, while others have become birds, beasts, worms, insects, and other living creatures.

“It is ignorance operating through the mind that leads the soul through the manifold illusions of the world-process. But when ignorance is removed, the wave of the individual soul discovers its identity with the Ocean of the Absolute. This is called Liberation.

“Overpowered by ignorance, every individual creates a conditioning process of Karma. Some have placed themselves in prosperous conditions, some in miserable conditions. Some are pure souls and exist in the form of Lord *Vishnu*, Lord *Shiva*, Lord *Brahma* and others. Some, still afflicted with a tinge of mental illusion, are highly advanced and can attain Self-realization through the slightest effort. Some are being driven away from their essential nature by the winds of desire and craving. Some are ascending to great heights, some are descending to degrading depths. Thus the spirit in those who have forgotten their essential nature continues to wander through the ocean of the world-process.

“Just as the Elephant-king in the *Puranic* story continued to fight with the crocodile for a long long time, so too, the soul continues to fight with the crocodile of illusion through numerous embodiments. But just as this Elephant-king, when he focused his mind on Lord *Vishnu*, became free from the jaws of the crocodile, in the same way, one becomes free from the world-process by directing his mind to *Brahman*.”

Section 13 — *The Time-spirit Explains
the Powers of the Mind*

The Time-spirit continued, "All souls arise like waves from the Ocean of *Brahman*. Of them, some destroy the veil of ignorance and master its illusory forces; they roam like gods on earth until the termination of their *Prarabdha* (fructifying) Karmas. But others, being dull and insensitive like logs of wood, continue to whirl through the cycles of birth and death. There are still others in whom *Moha* or illusion exists in an attenuated form, and they are bound to attain Liberation.

"When evil Karmas of the past lose their hold over a person, his mind gradually becomes free of the impurities of pride, passion, anger and greed. Although still in bondage, he develops aspiration for attaining Self-realization, and this indeed makes him a qualified aspirant to study the wisdom of the scriptures.

"Just as vanishing mist gives rise to the revelation of the sky, in the same way, a mind in the process of attenuation and dissolution gives rise to the revelation of the Self. It is only when the mind swells with erroneous thoughts and negative sentiments that it sustains the illusory projection of the world-process. For, just as children are afraid of ghosts in the darkness of night, which are mere projections of their own fears, in the same way, the ignorant project the world-process that arises out of their own distracted minds.

“Every *Jiva* or individual soul follows the course of the mind and its desires. Led by the mind it experiences numerous births and deaths, ascends to the heights of heavenly enjoyments and descends to hellish misery.

“Let us not delay any more, and proceed to where you son is engaged in austerity by the *Samanga* River.”

Section 14 — *Shukracharya Is Awakened from Samadhi*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, having conversed on the powers of the mind, the Time-spirit and Sage *Bhrigu* both descended from the *Mandarachala* Mountains and proceeded towards the banks of the *Samanga* River. After passing through the most enchanting spectacles of nature, they finally reached the banks of the River. There they saw *Shukracharya* in a different personality and absorbed in *Samadhi*. His senses were withdrawn, and his mind calm and steady. Like a weary traveler, he had traveled through many embodiments, but now he was resting in his spiritual nature.

The Time-spirit awakened the *Brahmin Vasudeva*. He gradually opened his eyes and beheld before him two spiritual beings shining like the sun and moon. Rising from his meditative pose, he bowed at the feet of the two divine personalities and expressed his immense joy at their presence.

Sage *Bhrigu* urged the *Brahmin* to remember his past and to recall how he was *Shukracharya*, his son, who has wandered through many embodiments, and has presently adopted the personality of the *Brahmin*

Vasudeva. The young ascetic then directed his intuitive vision towards the mystery of his identity and was amazed to discover the fact that, led by the desires of the mind, he had passed through numerous embodiments. He remembered having enjoyed not only royal pleasures and wonderful conditions of life, but also great misery as well. But now he realized that he had developed spiritual insight into the illusoriness of the world-process.

Section 15 — *The Brahmin Sees His Previous Body as Shukracharya*

Sri Vasistha continued: The three of them then proceeded to where the remains of *Shukracharya* were in the *Mandarachala* Mountains. Adopting their Yogic powers, they flew through the sky and emerged through the clouds at the exact spot where the body was. The *Brahmin* saw his skeleton covered with green leaves.

Shukracharya (in the *Brahmin* embodiment) said, "Oh Father, this is my dried up and inert body which you had nourished and sustained by providing food, comfort and enjoyment. This is the body that received so much affection; this is the body that was loved by the celestial *Apsara*, but now it lies bereft of all its charms. This, the very body that once roamed through groves of Sandalwood trees, now lies as an ugly skeleton crawling with worms.

"Oh my beloved body, you are now called 'dead.' At one time you bloomed with youthfulness, but now you strike fear in my heart. Behold how you were once adorned with a golden necklace that shown like the stars, but now ants infest your neck and chest.

“You are now free from the evil-spirit of *Chitta* (mind-stuff). You are no longer shaken or driven by the monkey mind. You no longer suffer from the fever of desires. You are no longer interested in seeing the sights around you. No longer do you want to hear the roaring of the lions, the trumpeting of the elephants, or to see the curious events of the forest life.”

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, under the Divine Plan, *Shukracharya* had to exist in a body as the son of Sage *Bhrigu*. But because his mind had led him astray from his normal course of life, *Shukracharya* was amazed to see how things had come to pass.

The ignorant as well as the wise must both live through the body as determined by their *Prarabdha* Karma (fructifying actions of the past). While illumined Sages living in their bodies remain detached from the world, thereby not creating Karmas for future embodiments, ignorant souls continue to create new Karmas, and therefore, bind themselves down to future embodiments.

When the mind of the Sage has given up its longings for objects of the world, then neither can the actions of the body nor the functions of the senses create further bondage for him. Thus, though outwardly acting in this world, a Sage is inwardly detached and free.

Thus knowing, Oh *Rama*, do not fall into the pit of the world-process that abounds with physical and mental afflictions. You are not contained in this illusory body, nor does this body abide in you. You are essentially the Supreme Self. This entire universe is in reality the Supreme Self.

Having torn the veil of illusion, abide in your essential nature which is unbounded, greater than the greatest, and adored even by the greatest of gods.

Section 16 – *Shukracharya Enters His Original Body and Lives as a Liberated Sage*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, interrupting the lamentations of *Shukracharya*, the Time-spirit said, “Oh Son of *Bhrigu*, discard this body of yours that you have been using to practise austerity by the *Samanga* River, and enter into your previous body, even as a king enters his royal city. The Cosmic Will has ordained you to be the *Guru* (preceptor) of the demons. May you take up this magnanimous role and guide the demoniac race. At the end of the *Mahakalpa* (the day of *Brahma*), you may renounce this body like a withering flower and attain *Videhamukti* (Liberation without the body).

“May Good betide you and your Father, Sage *Bhrigu*. I must now hasten to the performance of my duties.” Thus saying, the Time-spirit disappeared.

Having understood the nature of his Karmic process, *Shukracharya* then renounced the body of *Brahmin Vasudeva* and entered his original body as the son of Sage *Bhrigu*. Immediately the body of *Vasudeva* trembled and fell, like a creeper cut at its roots. Then Sage *Bhrigu*, along with the chanting of *Mantras*, sprinkled water on the skeleton to facilitate the reentry of his son’s spirit into the original body. Soon the skeleton began to change — veins appeared and the *Pranas* began to flow. Like a withering plant that comes back to life through the aid of the life-giving rain, in the same way, the body passed through many changes and came back to life.

Soon the body became well-formed, and consciousness returned to it. Having regained his previous body, *Shukracharya* stood up and adored his father with a voice as deep as a rumbling cloud. Sage *Bhrigu* felt a new surge of affection as he embraced his son, though by his inward vision he saw the illusoriness of the realities of the world.

In the course of time, *Shukracharya* accepted the role of becoming the preceptor of the demon race, and even now he continues to perform that role. And though performing this duty, *Sri Shukracharya* ever abides in the Self and is ever detached from the world-process.

Section 17 — *The Glory of Pure Mind*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, how is it that *Shukracharya* attained the object of his desire while there are many who are unable to fulfill their desires?

Sri Vasistha explained: There are two causes for the fulfillment of a desire — 1. *Chitta Shuddhi* — a relative purity of the *Chitta* that enables a person to pursue one's object of desire with a one-pointed attention, and 2. the force of fructifying Karma that leads one to a certain form of enjoyment. In the case of *Shukracharya*, he was able to follow the course of his desires because of his *Chitta Shuddhi* that he had acquired through his austerities. However, his mental purity was not absolute, and therefore, he was led through many embodiments.

As the mind increases in purity, it develops the ability of becoming modified into any object it thinks of with keen attention. Just as the surface of a lake is

modified into waves through the action of wind, in the same way, the mind of a Yogi assumes the form of any object through the force of its desires. It is in this way that every soul experiences a world of its own according to the structure of the mind through which it operates. But as the mind attains increasing degrees of purity, the soul experiences the spontaneity of fulfillment of its desires. And when the mind is absolutely purified, the soul emerges from the illusion of desires, frees itself from the world-process and discovers its essential nature as *Brahman*.

Just as a tree arises out of a tiny seed, so too, out of the seed of ignorance the world-tree arises in various forms. Yet in truth, this world-tree is illusory and through this realization the very seed in the form of ignorance is destroyed. The *Chitta* or the mind-stuff becomes the world, and the world is nothing but the *Chitta*. When the *Chitta* is reduced to *Chit* or pure consciousness through the process of purification, the world-process ceases to exist.

When a jewel is cleaned and polished, it shines. In the same way, when the mind is purified through concentration, meditation and spiritual discipline, it recovers its latent spiritual luminosity. Then whatever desire arises in this relatively pure mind, that becomes its reality in a very short time. The will of a Yogi becomes invincible by the force of purity of mind.

Oh *Rama*, an impure mind is unable to commune with a pure mind. But just as melted iron blends with melted iron, in the same way, a pure mind blends with a pure mind. Just as gods enter into the dreams of people and confer blessings on them, in the same way, a *Guru* is able to enter into the world of his disciple and lead him to the state of Liberation.



The World-tree has its roots above, in Brahman.
It spreads its branches below in the realm of
Maya (Cosmic Illusion).

Courtesy: Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

While increasing purity of mind endows one with the revelation of limitless powers of the soul, the supreme purity of mind enables one to be free of the world-process. He who attains supreme purity becomes the Self in all. He realizes his essential nature as *Brahman*.

Section 18 — *Pure and Impure Minds*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Though the worlds experienced by numerous souls are different from each other, yet it is the One Absolute that sustains them all. And although every soul is involved in its own distinct world-process, since they are all only reflections of the One Reality, it is possible for a soul to rise beyond its illusory world and to commune with the underlying Reality, with *Brahman*.

The differences in the *Jivas* or individual souls are dependent upon the mind and its variations. Just as the sun reflected in numerous reservoirs of water gives rise to numerous images of itself, in the same way, *Brahman* reflecting in numerous minds gives rise to numerous *Jivas*. And each *Jiva* in turn finds itself caught in a world-process.

Since the individual mind is limited and impure, it cannot mingle with an unlimited or pure mind. An impure mind is able to mingle with another impure mind to a certain extent, and it is for this reason that people can communicate with each other. Similarly, when the mind of an individual becomes increasingly purified, it is then able to mingle with the minds of the Enlightened Sages, and through their help, is able to discover the Non-dual Reality behind the illusion of names and forms. Furthermore, a pure mind can gain access into an impure mind, and it is in this way an advanced Yogi understands the problems of others.

Every soul experiences the three states of Waking, Dream and Deep Sleep. But when these three states are transcended, the soul discovers its essential nature as *Brahman*, the Absolute, and becomes free from the world-process.

During deep sleep everyone experiences the absence of duality, but the veil of ignorance is not removed. However, through the negation of the world-process by the experience of *Samadhi*, the positive counterpart of deep sleep, a Sage tears the veil of ignorance and enters the fourth state of consciousness, or *Turiya*, thereby transcending the illusory first three states.

Brahman, Who is also called *Turiya*, is the essence behind all the experiences of the *Jiva* and must be sought and realized. Nothing is gained by diverting one's attention over the non-essential and illusory objects of the world.

Just as the eyes are unable to look at themselves, in the same way, the seeing Self, due to its externalization, is unable to discover its own essential glory. Though *Brahman* continues to shine like the vast blue sky, yet It is not seen because of the externalized vision of the mind.

The "Seer" is the only reality behind all that is "seen." It is like the supreme ruler of the illusory names and forms. It can assume any limited form and become identified with it. Just as one can identify the ocean with any of its numerous waves, in the same way, *Brahman* is identified with any of the numerous names and forms of this illusory world.

When the mind is purified, it rises beyond the barriers of the ego-sense and is able to see numerous worlds sustained by the Self. There are worlds in the mind, in the vast ether, in the rocks and blazing fires, and also in the surging waters. This world is permeated by worlds, and each world is in turn permeated by numerous other worlds. Such a penetrating vision is possible only through the purified mind of a Yogi.

The majority of countless souls continue to wander from one dream-world to another. Yet in spite of this, some rare souls perceive the world as the illusions of dream, and therefore discover their essential nature. They wander no more.

When the intellect turns toward the Self, the internal and external aspects of the world-process vanish from one's view. For just as through the awareness of the gold as essence, the differences in ornaments of gold become illusory, in the same way, with the realization of *Brahman* as the Non-dual Reality, this world along with countless other worlds that form the fabric of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion are seen to be unreal.

The disease of *Jivahood* ("I am the individual soul") is cured by taking recourse to the medicine of spiritual enquiry ("Who am I? What is the nature of this world?"). But as long as this enquiry does not gain a firm hold over one's mind, so long will one continue to suffer from this chronic disease.

As a result of spiritual enquiry, a person experiences increasing dispassion towards the objects of the world. When *Raga* or attachment wanes, then

consider it as an unmistakable sign of success on the spiritual path. But when *Raga* dominates, the mind cannot be internalized and the senses cannot be controlled. Therefore, the practice of controlling the senses becomes effective only when joined with the enquiry of "Who am I?".

Many are able to gain verbal knowledge of *Brahman*, that is, they are able to speak of the identity of the soul with *Brahman*, but they are far from realizing this truth. Such verbal knowledge is like the painting of a fire — it cannot give heat or warmth.

As one advances in the practice of *Viveka* or discrimination between the Self and the not-self, the aspirant develops increasing *Vairagya* or dispassion. As *Raga* decreases, he becomes free from the sense of hatred or animosity towards any person or thing in this world. He becomes endowed with a healthy reason that distinguishes right from wrong, and finally this luminous reason blooms into the intuitional realization of *Brahman*.

Section 19 — *The Essence that Transcends the Three States of Consciousness*

Sri Vasistha continued: Just as a seed gives rise to a mighty tree, even so, *Brahman* has given rise to the world-process; however, in the case of the seed, as the tree emerges it ceases to exist, while in the case of *Brahman*, He remains unaffected. *Brahman* is the substratum for the illusory projection of the world-process.

Just as in a plantain stem there is layer after layer of leaves, in the same way, this world-process is constituted of layers of illusions. And enclosed in these layers, numerous souls abide like tiny worms and insects.

Though being essentially *Brahman*, on the basis of Karma (action) and *Upasana* (one-pointed longing or worship) every individual soul has the possibility of rising to the heights of gods or falling into the lesser planes of animals and worms. Those who worship the gods attain godhood while those who worship *Yakshas* (spirits presiding over treasures) become *Yakshas*. Others who worship *Hiranyagarbha* (the Cosmic Mind) rise to *Hiranyagarbha*, and those who worship the Supreme *Brahman* rise to Supreme *Brahman*. It was in this way that *Shukracharya*, by worshipping the *Apsara* or the heavenly damsel, was able to follow her through many embodiments. But later, having attained purity of heart, he became free from the bondage of the world-process.

By repeatedly running after the objects of the world, the consciousness in a person becomes deeply involved in the world-process, but when the involvement is curbed or restrained, it is capable of modifying itself to anything by the mere act of will. In the case of *Shukracharya*, his consciousness was not deeply involved in the world-process, and therefore he was able to follow the course of his desire uninterruptedly. In the case of the majority of people, however, their consciousness is deeply colored by the world-process, and they must therefore labor under the burden of desires and longings to attain what they want. But in the case of Enlightened Sages, their consciousness is free of even the subtlest forms of afflictions (ignorance, egoism, attachment and hate), and having no desire for transient attainments, abide solely in *Brahman*.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, what brings about the intensification of worldliness in one's consciousness, and what keeps it in a simple childlike state?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, when there is an awareness of stability in one's perception of the world, it is called Waking State, but when there is an awareness of its instability, it is called the Dream State. If the very same dream were perceived as a stable phenomenon, it would be experienced as a waking state, and similarly, if the waking state were to lose its stability in one's consciousness, it would be perceived as dream.

Under the pressure of illusion, consciousness spreads itself through the *Nadis* or mystic channels radiating from the heart-center, mystically the center of one's personality. This mystic center is the Self, and the spirit in man never goes beyond it. The entire world-process is experienced in the "heart" (the Self), but due to the limitation of mind, an illusory system of time and space is experienced through the states of dream and waking.

With increasing *Tamas* or inertia, the mind is unable to project either the waking or dream states, and the spirit becomes identified with the causal body which consists of a mass of ignorance. In this state it is said to be in the Sleep State. The Reality of the Self is realized by transcending these three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

When the *Nadis* or vital channels of the person in sleep are influenced by the three humors (bile, phlegm and air, which are effects of the *Gunās*) his dreams are affected accordingly. For example, if they

are influenced by bile, he dreams of fire and heat. When influenced by phlegm, he dreams of rivers and wading through water. So as the *Nadis* are pressured in particular ways, there arise different experiences in one's dream. And similarly, just as the dream world is nothing but a magic show manipulated by the *Pranic* currents of the *Nadis*, so too, waking world is nothing but the same dream made stable through the formation of deep-rooted impressions in the mind.

Both the experiences of dream and of the waking world are modifications of consciousness through the subtle desires of the *Chitta* or mind. Whatever desire is sustained by the *Jiva* or individual soul, that it acquires, and in this way weaves the illusion of apparent reality.

Therefore, having understood the illusoriness of the waking and dream states, one should renounce attachment to all that is transient and illusory. It is solely the deluded vision that the world is real that causes the soul to experience numerous births and deaths.

Section 20 — *The World-process as a Projection of the Chitta*

Sri Vasistha continued: Just as an iron ball becomes red-hot due to its constant placement in fire, in the same way, whatever the *Chitta* of man constantly thinks of, that it becomes. Presence, absence, accepting, relinquishing, and all the perceptions of the world are imagined in consciousness. They are neither real nor unreal. They are nothing but a magic show sustained by the distractions of the mind.



Sri Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). Dynamic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and promoter of Integral Yoga. One of the first to bring Yoga to the West.

The mind has two aspects: the individual and the Cosmic. While the Cosmic Mind projects the world, the individual mind weaves the web of illusion projected by it. When the mind of an individual is led through the path of blessedness, it develops both the ability of acquiring the powers of the Cosmic Mind and the ability of attaining Self-realization. Mind indeed is the essence of an individual, and led through the path of blessedness, it can confer upon the soul all the glories of the world.

Body and mind are seemingly interdependent. But of the two, the body is of a lesser plane of reality. The physical body is merely a tool for the mind, and whatever the mind intensively wills, that it acquires and that it becomes, but without the function of mind, all bodily actions become meaningless. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, be intent upon controlling the mind and senses. Direct your mind towards that which is the Reality behind the illusory world-process, and surely you will attain That.

Section 21 — *An Impure Mind Sustains Conflicting Views*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, how did mentation arise in *Brahman* Who is beyond time, space and causation; Who is eternal, infinite, and immutable? How could ignorance give rise to the mental process when *Brahman* alone is the Reality, and there is nothing other than *Brahman*?

Sage *Vasistha* said: Oh *Rama*, your intellect has become interested in the transcendental reality of *Brahman*. Your question reveals your inward spiritual progress. You will soon attain the very same state which has been acquired by great Divinities and Sages.

The existence of impurity that gives rise to the mental process is seen by the ignorant only. Qualified by the mental process, it is the Self that sees through the eyes, hears through the ears, thinks through the mind, and performs actions through the organs of action.

Led by different mentations, the mind in a human being gives rise to Karmas and embodiments. Whatever the mind longs for, that it acquires. Whatever it ascertains as the highest good, that becomes its reality.

Led by the convictions of the mind, one endeavors to acquire the four purposes of life: *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (material objects), *Kama* (fulfillment of desires through human relationships), and *Moksha* (the attainment of Liberation).

It is the impure mind that gives rise to different views about the world and about the ultimate goal to be realized through life. But when the mind is rendered pure, it reveals the one truth that *Brahman* or the Absolute alone exists.

Objects in themselves are deprived of the qualities that are seen through the instrumentality of human senses. Sugarcane is sweet and chilli is hot only from the point of view of the human taste. They are not so in themselves.

Led by repeated thoughts pertaining to the fictitious values of objects, even petty objects become important; by repeatedly presenting before the mind only the charming aspects of an object, a person will begin to long for it, and will then try to acquire it.

The impure mind abounds with desires and longings based upon ignorance about the true value of objects, and it is such a mind that sustains the world-process. The ignorant mind clings to the world in the same way as a child clings to a lifeless doll considering it to be alive.

Oh *Rama*, aspire for attaining that which is not petty, free from afflictions and devoid of all illusions. Indeed, you must aspire for the Realization of the Self. Just as the world-process is intensified by the repeated thoughts of objects, in the same way, by taking recourse to the repeated thoughts of *Brahman*, the world is reduced, transcended and renounced. Nothing else is to be craved for in this illusory world.

There isn't any object, however illusory it may be, that does not become real for an unilluminated mind. Similarly, there isn't any object, no matter how real it may seem to be, that does not become unreal for an illumined mind. The mind can imagine itself to be an elephant in the imaginary forest existing in the vastness of the sky, and then he can passionately pursue a she-elephant in the same sky where nothing really exists.

Oh *Rama*, it is impossible for a crystal to negate reflections in it made by surrounding objects, because it is inert, but it is possible for your consciousness to negate the reflections of the world that arise in it. Let your mind be like a crystal that reflects the moods and objects of the world, but maintain the awareness of your essential nature, and remain detached from these reflections.

The Self within is the same as *Brahman*. You are essentially that Supreme Reality. Therefore, untainted by the objects of the world you must abide in your essential nature; and while performing your daily duties as determined by *Prarabdha* (the fructifying Karmas of the past), you must maintain the vision of negating the world-process. In this way you will never be tainted by the world.

Section 22 — *The Qualities
that Characterize Self-realization*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: He who is endowed with *Viveka* (discriminative knowledge), whose *Chitta* (mind-stuff) is illumined by increasing knowledge, he who is renouncing the *Vrittis* (thought-waves) pertaining to the objects of the world, who is rising above the internal and external differentiations of consciousness by the intense practice of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness), he alone truly experiences increasing joy.

He who is abandoning the various states of ignorance and is ascending the heights of wisdom, who has gained the intuitional knowledge that "All this is *Brahman* or the Supreme Self," he alone is truly awake, while others still slumber in the night of ignorance. He who has renounced all enjoyments, ranging from the plane of *Hiranyagarbha* (Cosmic Mind) to the plane of tiny insects, who has torn the veil of ignorance and has attained communion with the Supreme Self, he alone experiences infinite bliss.

His mind becomes calm like an ocean without waves. His spirit being free from all *Vasanas* (subtle desires) soars in the realms of transcendence, much like a bird being freed from a fowler's net.

Freed from the black clouds of doubts and distractions, his mind shines like the full moon in the clear blue sky, or stretches like the vast ocean in a mirror-like stillness. Endowed with such an illumined mind, a Sage develops equal vision, seeing the Self as the only reality behind all illusory names and forms.

Nourished by the service of preceptor, spurred by the sunshine and shower in the form of reflection and meditation, decked by the shining leaves of spiritual virtues, the lotus of virtue grows in the lake of the aspirant's mind and blooms into Self-realization.

Spiritual wisdom shines in the heart of a Sage like the full moon radiating gentle rays of goodwill for the entirety of creation. In brief, the knower of the Self becomes like the vast sky shining with freedom and joy, and so much so that even great Gods covet the attainment of the Sage.

Though the form of the mind continues to persist in appearance to a Sage, it is in actuality negated by his inward vision. Just as one who knows the illusoriness of a mirage is not tempted by it, in the same way, though working through the mind, a Sage is never deluded by it.

The "ether in a vessel" is never born, nor does it ever die. It is the vessel alone that is subject to birth and death. In the same way, the body is subject to birth and death, but the Self on which the body and the world are superimposed is ever free.



Lord Buddha — the Enlightened.

As long as the enquiry of "Who am I?" is not practised, so long the dark night of the world-process continues to create its ghastly illusions. But when this enquiry is pursued, and the illusory *Vasanas* are dissolved, one then develops that mystic vision which negates the appearances of body, mind and objects.

A Sage is established in the vision that the three forms of misery caused by the body, by external objects, or by uncontrolled agencies (floods, earthquakes) do not touch the Self. A seeker on the path must assert, "These miseries do not belong to me."

The following affirmations must be practised in order to attain Self-realization:

"I am in the sky, in the directions, as well as in the flow of time. I am the reality behind all names and forms.

"If the point made by a hair is to be divided into a millionth part, that would be very subtle indeed. But, I am even subtler than that. I am both the subtlest essence and the all-pervading reality.

"I am not this body subject to diseases and mental afflictions. I am not this body which is subject to birth, growth, old age and death.

"Just as the beads in a *mala* are sustained by a thread, in the same way all objects, in fact all the world-systems, are threaded by Me — the Self.

"There is neither I — in the form of the ego-sense — nor others, but the Self alone exists. I am that Self. Whatever exists in the three worlds is like a wave in the Ocean of the Self.

“This world-process that expresses itself in the three planes (causal, astral and physical) is like my younger sister — ever sustained by Me. The moment I withdraw My support, this world-process ceases to exist — so tender it is indeed!”

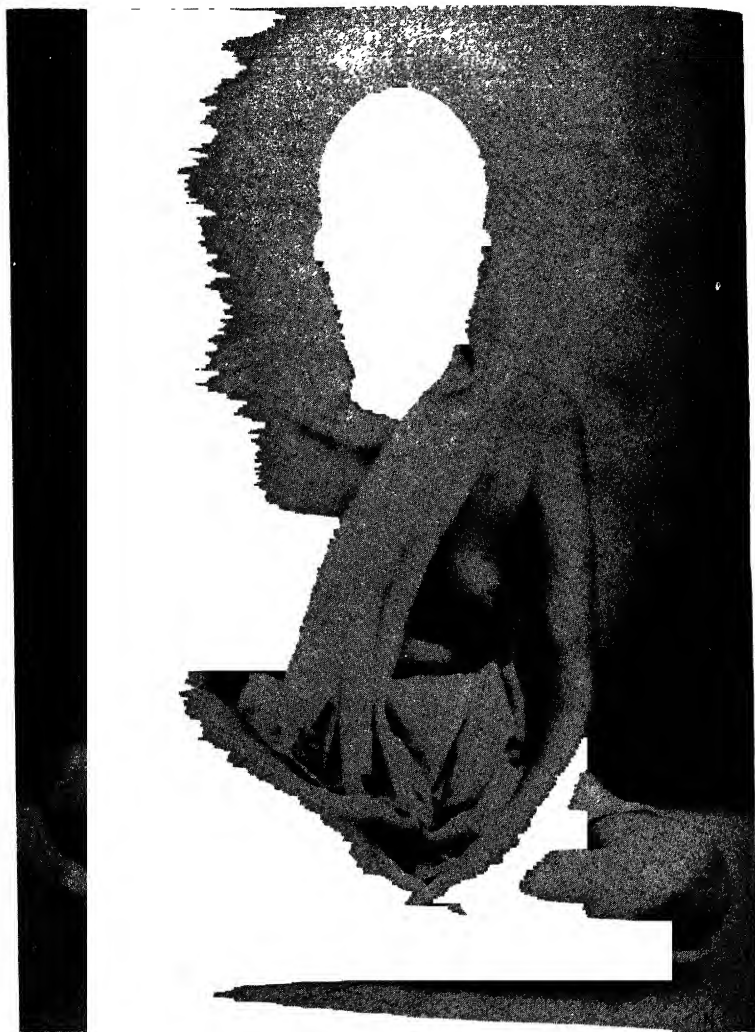
When the vision is freed of the illusions of “I-ness” and “mine-ness,” a Sage beholds the Absolute, Non-dual and Eternal Reality.

For a Sage there is nothing to be accepted or rejected in this illusory creation. Transcending the three states of consciousness (waking, dream and deep sleep), a Sage becomes the innermost Self of Death itself; therefore he is in reality the Beloved of Death.

He to whom this whole world is nothing but *Brahman*, he is indeed liberated. He is Lord *Shiva* Himself. Adorations to Him!

Section 23 — *The Sovereignty of a Sage*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, when a potter has finished revolving his wheel, it continues to revolve because it still has momentum to exhaust. In the same way, when all the Karmas of a Sage have been destroyed by spiritual Realization, led by the fructifying Karmas of the past (*Prarabdha*), he continues to exist in the body until that Karma is exhausted. Yet while doing so, he is always aware of his intrinsic freedom — he is like an Emperor of emperors, free of all forms of bondage created by Karmas.



Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886).
Famous saint of Bengal. Promoter of Bhakti
and Vedanta.

The very same body that is a prison house for the ignorant becomes a royal city for a Sage. The eyes are as the windows and the senses are the lamps illumining the city. The arms are like royal roads, the hairs its gardens, and the legs and thighs like pillars of this city. The *Pranas* are the citizens that continue to move in and out of this nine-gated city of the body.

Or the senses are like monkeys tied by the rope of intellect. Smiles are the blossoms that adorn the gardens of the face. The body of a Sage is the very abode of all that is auspicious and festive. It is meant for promoting happiness and harmony in all. So while the bodies of the ignorant are as caves of misery, the bodies of illumined Sages are boundless treasures of bliss.

Oh *Rama*, it is insignificant to a Sage whether his body is destroyed or not, but as long as the body exists, the Sage continues to abide in it like an Emperor of emperors. It is like a chariot that provides him with *Bhoga* (joyous experiences of life) and *Moksha* (infinite bliss of Liberation).

Abiding in the city of the body, a Sage is well-established in the Self. He is no longer subject to birth or death, and He is no longer driven by desires or tortured by grief.

The horse of his mind no longer moves along the roads that lead to hell — the roads of passion, greed or anger. He no longer allows his daughter of intuitive intellect to be sold to the family of delusion, infatuation or ignorance.

The foreign rulers in the form of ignorance and darkness cannot penetrate this well-protected city of the Sage. While the ignorant are constantly driven by the waves of externalized mind allow themselves to be thrown into the stream of the world-process, thereby being overcome by the terrible aquatic creatures of desire, greed and infatuation, the enlightened Sage enters into the inner hall of meditation and perpetually enjoys supreme bliss. And though apparently performing external actions, from the point of view of a Sage's innermost awareness of the Self, he is actionless.

The Sage is an Emperor who rejoices in the palace of the body. *Maitri* or Cosmic Love is his beloved queen, and Truth and Unity are his blessed daughters.

Like the luminous sun that looks down upon the earth with detachment, a Sage beholds the miseries of the world with a spirit of absolute detachment. His heart overflows with bliss. For just as virulent poison does not affect the throat of Lord *Shiva*, so the flaws of the world do not affect the Sage.

When a person interacts with a thief with the recognition of his deceptive nature, he is not frustrated by him. So too, a Sage enjoys the objects of the world with the full recognition of the fact that they are illusory and that the reality behind them is the Self alone. Therefore, the miseries of the world do not affect his inward vision.

A person viewing a broad landscape from the summit of a hill can see trees being cut and bushes being consumed by fire, but he is unaffected by these changes. In the same way, although a Sage perceives the changes of the world, he is unaffected by them.

With the veil of ignorance removed, a Sage possesses a luminous mind free of all doubts; he no longer has any interest to experience the pleasures of the objects. Just as a sane person is not tempted by the mad outbursts of those who are drunk, so a Sage is not tempted by the pleasures that delight the ignorant. He is infinitely free.

Oh *Rama*, just as an elephant is disciplined and guided to the right path with the help of a sharp spear, so the mind must be brought under one's control with the help of enquiry and reflection.

When the mind is disciplined by austerity and meditation, it is easily satiated even with the simplest pleasures of the world. See how the paddy in the field having survived the scorching heat in summer delights with a brief shower! In other words, a Sage does not run after the objects of the world with a mind afflicted with insatiable craving, but rather with a mind that is ever contented and illumined.

A king who has just been released from prison delights in even the smallest morsel of food, but he who has been perpetually reveling in luxury continues to crave for more and more. In the same way, a well disciplined mind enables a person to be fully satisfied with any object of the world. In other words, a Sage delighting in the Self within has very little need to depend upon the objects outside.

If you are desirous of attaining the sovereignty of the spiritual kingdom, you must conquer the enemies of the senses, and in this valiant project, exercise your self-effort to your utmost. Pressing your hand with the hand, clenching the teeth against

the teeth, twisting and turning the limbs against the limbs, do not leave any stone unturned. You must accomplish this victory over the senses. Nothing should deter you from this glorious task.

What is the use of conquering kingdoms, when the enemies of the senses are not conquered within one's own heart? When the senses are conquered, a Sage becomes the eternal ruler of all that is. He who has vanquished the venomous serpent of mind that lies coiled up in the heart, he is truly an adorable Sage.

Section 24 – *The Importance of Attaining Victory over the Senses*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, enemies in the form of the senses are very difficult to conquer. They are the rulers over terrible hells and are endowed with the hellish armaments. They are ruthless ingrates that after abiding in the body and collecting the treasure of worldly impressions, leave it to die. Endowed with the wings of good and evil Karmas, they are like vultures abiding in the nest of the body, ever pursuing the rotting pleasures of the flesh.

Endowed with the wealth of *Viveka* (discriminative knowledge), he who has enslaved the senses and mastered the mind, his intellect blooms like spring flowers. He who has become detached even from the *Chitta* (mind-stuff) joyously watches the subtle desires dissolve even like mist before the rising sun.

For a person who is endowed with wisdom, his mind becomes like an obedient slave, like a trusted councilor, or like a valiant general over the army of the senses. To a wise Sage, the purified mind is his beloved consort, his affectionate father, or his trustworthy friend.

This world-process abounds with numerous evils. It is enveloped in the mist of delusion and is the source of limitless afflictions. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, do not relax your vigilance while sojourning through this world. Do not remain deprived of discriminative knowledge, lest you fall into the predicament of the ignorant masses.

Acquire discriminative knowledge. Discover the truth with the help of pure intellect and attain victory over the senses. You will cross the ocean of the world-process.

Give up the erroneous notion, "I am the body, and this world is real." Assert and discover the truth that all this is *Brahman*, the Absolute Self, and That I am. Endowed with this wisdom, perform your daily duties. You will be ever established in the Self. Though eating, drinking, going and coming, you will remain untouched by the miseries of the world.

Section 25 to 31 – *The Story of
Dama, Vyala and Kata*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, you should not follow the conduct of *Dama*, *Vyala* or *Kata*, but rather that of *Bhima*, *Bhasa* and *Dridha*. I will tell you their stories, and after having heard them, decide for yourself what is best.

In the *Patala Loka* (the netherworld), there ruled a valiant Demon King known as *Shambara*, who was endowed with great magical powers. He had created gardens in the sky, built magic houses for the demons, and had even provided his world with an artificial sun and moon. He had collected the best of treasures from the three worlds, and had placed them in his capital city.

He had a powerful army of terrible demons who had defeated the gods many times. But whenever he had to go away to some distant land, or whenever he slept deeply, the gods would devastate his army. And although he appointed the best of generals to manage and lead his army, during these times even they were destroyed by the gods.

Desirous of having perpetual supremacy over the gods, *Shambara* devised a wise plan. By the force of his *Maya* (his magical power), he created three terrible demons: *Dama* (destroyer of all enemies), *Vyala* (venomous like a snake), and *Kata* (destroyer of the weapons of the opposing army).

Being magically projected, these three demons were without prior *Vasanas* or subtle desires, and solely followed the dictates of their King *Shambara*. They were unaffected by victory or defeat, and pursued their enemy without fear of death or mental confusion.

The gods waged a terrible war against these three demons, but failed. The demons pursued the gods, but they hid themselves in obscure places. Then, supremely victorious, these three great generals returned to King *Shambara* and reported the total defeat of the gods.

In the meantime, the gods sought the assistance of *Brahma*, the Creator, to destroy these three demons. Having thought over the situation for awhile, *Brahma* gave the following advice, "The Demon King *Shambara* is destined to be destroyed by Lord *Vishnu* alone. Until that time, you must devise plans of destroying the three demon generals. However, you cannot destroy them unless you engender in them an intense sense of egoism.

"Created by *Shambara's* *Maya*, these three are without *Vasanas*, and are therefore unconquerable in the three worlds. It is this mental *Vasana* alone that brings defeat on a person, and if he were free of *Vasanas*, he would be unaffected, undefeated, and unshakable by all the negative forces of the world.

"Those who are devoid of *Vasanas* are balanced in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and failure, victory and defeat. They cannot be conquered. But even valiant men, if they are dominated by the simplest of *Vasanas*, they can be conquered by mere children.

" 'This is my body. To me belongs victory or defeat. This is my life.' — Such thoughts attract all the miseries of the world. Such identification with the body causes great humiliation.

"If there were any object other than the Self, one would be justified to sustain a desire for it, but since nothing exists other than the Self, the desires of the mind are backed up by ignorance alone.

"Therefore, Oh *Indra*, King of all Gods, devise methods of creating a body-idea in these three demons. Then when *Vasanas* develop in their minds, they will be easily defeated in battle."

Thus counseled by *Brahma*, Oh *Rama*, the gods planned to infuse egoism in the minds of the three demons. They valiantly fought against them for a long time, at times praising the demons for their valor, and at times ridiculing them for their lack of skill. At times they humiliated themselves before the demons, and at times they ran away from them in the battlefield.

Since these three demons were unenlightened, they gradually developed a sense of egoism, and gradually became identified with their bodies. They became concerned with their life and their possessions, and began to crave for the perishable enjoyments of the world. Then seeing them under the power of their own mental illusions, the gods put up a fierce battle and devastated their army.

The three demon generals had to flee in order to save their lives. Because of their fear of King *Shambara*, they sought refuge in the world of *Yama*, the God of Death. They remained there for a long time and finally came to their humiliating end.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, do not follow the example of the three demons of *Dama*, *Vyala* and *Kata*, who, by the intensification of their *Vasanas*, were brought to their ruin. If you are able to destroy the *Vasanas* of the mind by wisdom, you will attain the unvanquishable state of Liberation.

Section 32 and 33 — *The Righteous Conduct
That Leads to Liberation*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, the spirits of these three demons are still wandering through the process of repeated embodiments. However, they will eventually attain Liberation, for every spirit must return to its essential nature — *Brahman*.

One must follow the path revealed by the scriptures. For, by following the path of vice, the intellect remains tinged with the erroneous notions of “This is mine.” and “This must become mine.” which in turn not only deprives an individual of the effectiveness of his self-effort, but also deprives him of any sense of inner freedom. This in turn ultimately leads him to believe himself to be a mere slave to the blind forces of the world.

On the other hand, by pursuing the path of virtue, an aspirant becomes increasingly aware of the freedom to apply his self-effort, thereby leading him to that magnanimous vision of the Self before which even the entire universe becomes like a straw. Then his spirit is released of all adversities, even as a snake is freed of its old skin.

Even while facing bitter conditions of adversity, one must not tread the path of unrighteousness, because such a movement is bound to lead one into increasing darkness of delusion. Take recourse to the path that is illumined by the sun of spiritual wisdom through the shining examples and teachings of Sages and Saints.

Those who are never contented with the cultivation of divine virtues in their personality, who are ever devoted to the scriptures and increasingly attached to the Truth, they are indeed true human beings. Others are mere animals.

Let an aspirant reflect upon the emptiness of the sense-enjoyments: "I have enjoyed all types of worldly pleasures through numerous embodiments. I have seen numerous sights. Why should I crave for more and more? Such craving will lead me through countless embodiments in the future. Let me therefore shun cravings for sense enjoyments. Let me aspire for liberation even in this very life."

He who treads the path of virtue, his fame spreads even like the aroma of a flower; it reaches the heavenly worlds. But those who are deluded by worldly enjoyment, being devoid of fame, perish like mushrooms.

By adopting right effort, endowed with perseverance and righteous conduct, who will not attain Self-realization even in this very life? When you tread the path of virtue, you should not be impatient regarding the attainment of the goal. A fruit that ripens in its normal course becomes sweet and juicy. So too, the spiritual movement that matures through patience and perseverance cannot help but to yield the sweet fruit of Liberation.

Oh *Rama*, do not take recourse to those petty thoughts pertaining to wealth, possessions, and objects of the world, because they continue to intensify the slumber of ignorance. Take recourse to wisdom, and wake up to realize your essential nature.

Do not abide in the world like an old turtle, slumbering in the ocean of grief. Endeavor to destroy the very root of the world-tree, and bring about the cessation of birth and death.

Worldly prosperity is the mother of all evils. Do not be attached to it. But when adversity is properly confronted, it is the source of all good fortunes. True victory lies in negating all the objects of the world.

He whose conduct is illumined by righteousness, whose intellect is lit up with the light of knowledge, who has renounced craving for worldly enjoyments (being the source of all hellish misery), such a person is blessed with increasing fame, the unfoldment of divine qualities, long life, and in fact, he becomes the very abode of Goddess *Lakshmi* Herself.

By taking recourse to righteous self-effort, *Nandi* practised intense meditation on Lord *Shiva* and attained victory over death. Sage *Vishwamitra* rose to *Brahmanhood* by the force of his austerities. The poor boy *Upamanyu*, who craved for milk but could not get it, by his self-effort attained the milky ocean of divine Realization. [These stories occur in the *Puranas*.]

There are countless illustrations of great men and women who performed impossible deeds by taking recourse to self-effort. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, direct your effort towards the attainment of Self-realization.

Devout service to Sages is the most effective method of treading the path of righteousness. Even severe austerity, visiting pilgrimage centers and study of scriptures are not as effective in promoting knowledge as the service of the Sages and Saints.

They are the righteous men — the Sages and Saints — whose association enables one to be rid of greed, infatuation and anger. Good association enables a person to be led down the path to Self-realization.

The ego-sense exists as an effect of ignorance. It is a taint in consciousness that is removed by the waters of good association. When the true nature of “I am” is not known, the impurity of ignorance becomes intensified, but when one’s true nature is discovered, ignorance is completely removed.

If this ego-sense is not uprooted by the force of knowledge, it gives rise to the tree of the world-process and drives the soul through repeated embodiments. The truth is that the Self is ever free of the ego-sense, but just as the sky becomes overcast with dark clouds, so this Self becomes obscured by the ego-sense that in turn creates the blinding rains of illusions.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, what methods should a person adopt to thwart the growth of the ego-sense in himself? I am indeed frightened by the evil spirit of the world-process.

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, by constantly remembering the true nature of the Self, the illusory ego-sense is not allowed to grow into the mighty tree of the world-process. There are three types of egoism (*Ahamkara*), of which two are in accordance with the scriptures, and one is contrary to the scriptures and should be renounced.

“I am all this. I am the imperishable *Brahman*. I am the Non-dual Reality behind all illusory names and forms.” — These truths are asserted through a pure and auspicious ego-sense. It belongs to enlightened Sages and must be promoted.

A Yogi ascending the ladder of wisdom adopts the attitudes: “I am subtler than the hundredth part of the tip of a hair. I am detached from all objects of the world. I am the indivisible *Atman*.” These assertions lead the Yogi to progress on the path until the Self is realized. This form of egoism is also auspicious and adorable.

But the last type of ego-sense, that which maintains the illusions of: “I am nothing but this body. I am nothing but this mortal personality.” is inauspicious and the very source of all that is painful and detestable. This false ego-sense must be destroyed ruthlessly.

By taking recourse to the two auspicious forms of the ego-sense, an aspirant must overcome and uproot the third. And when he becomes established in the awareness: “I am not this body,” he attains the highest Goal.

As the ego-sense dissolves, all that is good, auspicious and beautiful begin to manifest through the personality; but when the ego-sense is intensified, all good qualities in one's nature are obscured. There develops all that is negative, impure, inauspicious and humiliating. This is how *Dama*, *Vyala* and *Kata* brought upon themselves endless misery.

Oh *Rama*, whoever has removed this inauspicious ego-sense recognizes the enjoyments of the world as essenceless. Just as a person is not attracted to a delicious food that is poisoned, so too a wise aspirant is not attracted to the pleasures of the world, because he knows them to be blended with the poison of mortality and ignorance.

Do not receive delight from the objects of the world, because it is this sense of delight that nourishes the false ego-sense. Rather, disciplining yourself to keep away from the objects causes the false ego-sense to be starved to death. Then, do not even recall to think of it, but instead, take recourse to the teachings of Guru and the scriptures. Adopt patience in pursuing the path that leads to the cessation of the false ego-sense, and you will attain supreme blessedness.

A wise man adopts the attitude: "I am all this. All this belongs to me." With increasing sublimity of his thoughts he brings about the negation of the body through the attitudes: "This body is not mine. All that is related to the body is not mine. Nothing belongs to me." As a result of this all obstacles are removed and the knowledge of the Self begins to shine in his heart. He ascends the seven steps of wisdom and becomes established in the Self.

Section 34 — *The Story of Bhima, Bhasa and Dridha*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, now listen to the story of *Bhima*, *Bhasa* and *Dridha*. It gives insight into the glorious path that leads to Liberation. One should not follow the example of *Dama*, *Vyala* and *Kata* — the demons who became gradually involved in their *Vasanas* (subtle desires), thereby bringing upon themselves endless misery and pain. Rather, one must follow the example of *Bhima*, *Bhasa* and *Dridha*.

After the three demon generals failed to defeat the gods, the Demon King *Shambara* reflected within himself, “The three beings I created have fallen because of their ignorance. But now let me create another three beings who will be endowed with the ability of inward reflection leading to the transcendence of the ego-sense. In this way, they will not be overcome by egoistic illusions, and the gods will not be able to defeat them.”

The Demon King, who was endowed with the immense power of creating illusions, then projected three beings who were the knowers of their essential nature. They were dispassionate and devoid of any ego-sense, and therefore, considered the wealth of the three worlds as mere straw.

They began to fight against the gods, and fought for many years. The gods tried to induce egoism in them, but unsuccessfully. Each time such a thought-wave as “This is mine” arose, they were able to negate it by their inward vision of the Self. Therefore, they fought with balanced and fearless minds.

Devoid of egoism, unconcerned with life or death, giving complete attention to the duty at the present moment, ever perseverant, without mental *Vasanas* and ever devoted to their creator King *Shambara*, these three fought the gods with undaunted valor. Soon the army of the gods took to flight and was scattered much in the same way as clouds are scattered by a mighty wind. Defeated and beaten, the gods took refuge in Lord *Vishnu*, Who inspired courage in their hearts by saying that He would Himself fight with the Demon King *Shambara* and destroy him along with his valiant generals.

At the proper time, Lord *Vishnu* waged a fierce battle against this Demon King *Shambara*, and in the end, the King as well as his three creations — *Bhima*, *Bhasa* and *Dridha* — were withdrawn into His Divine Being. (In other words, they attained liberation.)

Oh *Rama*, it is the *Vasana* that forces one to whirl in the cycles of birth and death. When the *Vasana* becomes extinct, one attains Liberation, and the removal of *Vasana* depends upon the negation of the ego-sense. The illustration of *Bhima*, *Bhasa* and *Dridha* has been given to show how the removal of the ego-sense is the secret behind all forms of success, prosperity and victory. (*Bhima* means strong determination, *Bhasa* denotes effulgence of wisdom, and *Dridha* is suggestive of firmness or steadiness in spiritual vision. These lead to success and Self-realization.)



Lord Vishnu

Section 35 — *The Methods of Attaining
Mental Peace*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, those are indeed most heroic and adorable who have turned their mind away from the objects of the world. Those who have controlled their minds, they alone have cured the disease of the world-process.

First listen to the essence of wisdom, and then reflect upon it in your heart. The desire for the enjoyments of objects is bondage while renunciation is liberation. There is no need to look for more and more scriptural teachings; the essence of all teachings lies in renouncing all objects that are pleasing to the ego. Consider all pleasurable objects as the fires of poison.

The sudden abandonment of objects without spiritual enquiry is painful. But when guided by Guru and scriptures, a person adopts the path of renunciation, which, although painful in the beginning, proves to be most joyous in the end.

Take recourse to spiritual enquiry. Again and again develop insight into the illusoriness of the pleasures of the senses. Once this is done, then backed up by the power of mental reflection, you can renounce objects without difficulty.

Do not allow the desires for objects to linger in your mind. They are like the seeds of thorny bushes of misery, and as soon as an opportune moment presents itself, they will sprout and give rise to numerous mental defects such as attachment, hatred and mental vanity.

The understanding that dissolves *Vasanas* (mental desires) promotes quiescence of the mind. Such an auspicious understanding gives rise to all spiritual qualities like serenity, control of the senses and the practice of spiritual enquiry. The seeds of pure impressions gathered in the fertile soil of the mind grow into auspicious trees of divine virtues and bear the fruit of immortality.

When pure thoughts arise, mind becomes joyous; the clouds of illusion begin to dissolve, and the moon of goodness waxes more and more. Then there arises the luminous sun of spiritual understanding, which in turn promotes the control of the mind and senses. Consequently, the heart becomes like a mystic garden during spring, overflowing with nectar and filled with the honey of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness). The soul thus attains the realization of its essential nature and becomes *Brahman*. Devoid of duality and free of desire, the soul becomes supremely Blissful.

When the Self is realized, all evils are removed, all doubts dissolved, and all forms of sorrow are banished. A Sage who is established in wisdom becomes free of desire, expectation, worry and misery that arise out of ignorance and attachment.

A wise aspirant is concerned with finding the answers to these questions: "What is the Self? What is It's nature? How can It be attained? What is the spiritual means that leads one to Self-realization?" He does not allow himself to be overpowered by numerous theories advanced by worldly-minded philosophers, who are in themselves invaded by doubts and ruled by cravings.

First the mind of a Yogi renounces the *Vikalpas* — imaginations pertaining to objects as well as all human relationships. He has neither friends nor enemies, neither close nor distant relatives. He rises above all limitations of the world by renouncing the egoistic thoughts. Then, even as one would discard a blade of grass, he renounces the thought of the body and becomes the bodiless Self.

True prosperity depends upon the destruction of the mind along with its egoistic imaginations and concepts. Similarly, severe adversity arises when the mind begins to swell with its imaginations and concepts.

This world is nothing but the projection of the mind. It is the mind that has become the infinite sky, the towering mountains. Mind has become the shining deities that abide in the heavens, the dear friends and the bitter enemies. As long as the waves of thoughts rise again and again, so long the world must be experienced again and again by every soul.

When numerous thought-waves cloud the Pure Consciousness, the soul appears to adopt the form of the mind. *Chit* (Pure Consciousness) blended with illusion becomes *Chitta* (the mind-stuff), and it is this *Chitta* that causes forgetfulness of one's essential nature. Therefore, the *Vikalpas* or mental imaginations must be ruthlessly destroyed in order to discover one's essential nature — the Self.

The objects of the world have as it were entered into the mind in the form of *Vasanas*, and Pure Consciousness apparently tinged with these subtle desires takes upon itself the role of an incarnating soul. Then having fallen into the objects through the

illusion of *Vasanas* and having intensified the body-idea, this Pure Consciousness becomes an incarnating soul subject to the wanderings of its uncontrolled mind.

The Self is neither the *Jiva* (the incarnating soul) nor the body, nor the blood and flesh of which the body is composed. The Self, in fact, is the underlying reality behind all names and forms — much in the same way as the vast sky is the underlying support behind the drifting clouds.

It is the mind that creates the illusory projection of *Jivahood* on the screen of Pure Consciousness. It is this projection that is called the human personality which passes through the story of human embodiment — its birth, growth, achievements, age and death. Just as a silk-worm becomes imprisoned in its self-created cocoon, in the same way, this *Jiva* becomes involved in the body, mind, senses, and the numerous Karmas that abide in the *Chitta*.

When the *Jiva* discards the illusion of the present body, led by its *Vasanas* it enters into the illusion of another body. This body is basically constituted of *Vasanas*, and whatever becomes the ruling *Bhavana* (intense desire) of the mind, that determines its future embodiment. Just as the dream of a person depends upon the nature of the mind when going to sleep, in the same way, the future embodiment depends upon the ruling thought that occupies the mind at the time of death.

If you were to nourish the seed of sour tamarind with honey, it would give rise to a tree bearing sweet fruits, and if you were to nourish the seed of a

nectarine tree with poison, it would give rise to fruits that are poisonous. In the same way, nourished by nectarine *Vasanas*, the soul tastes the fruit of liberation, while through impure and venomous *Vasanas*, it continues to suffer from the miseries of embodiments.

By entertaining good thoughts and developing divine *Vasanas*, the *Chitta* attains great heights of glory, but by entertaining petty thoughts and desires, the *Chitta* stoops to the lowest levels of existence. Just as any form of impurity cannot find a place in a placid and pure lake, and purity cannot find a place in an agitated and impure lake, in the same way the pure mind of a Sage does not entertain impure thoughts and the impure mind of an ignorant person cannot find a place for pure thoughts.

Just as the moon, though reduced to a state of nothingness during the dark half of the month, endeavors to regain its intrinsic glory through its persistent effort, in the same way men who are endowed with Self-effort, although driven to miserable states of existence, continue to persevere until all obstacles are removed and the Self is realized. A wise aspirant should never give up his effort towards mastering his mind in order to attain the knowledge of the Self.

From the absolute point of view there is neither bondage nor liberation, nor any cause of bondage. All has been projected by the illusory power of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). But when the veil of illusion is broken, an enlightened Sage realizes that all this is *Brahman*.

Petty thoughts such as, "I am this limited body subject to birth and death. I am dependent upon objects for my happiness." must be checked by entertaining such luminous thoughts as, "I am the Self — limitless and eternal. I am the all-powerful *Brahman*. I am the Non-dual Reality."

With increasing purity, the mind begins to bring about its own destruction and the spirit within glimpses its essential nature. One attains Self-realization. By the practice of *Samadhi*, higher impressions are formed that allow the mind to be purified. Such a purified mind then accepts the *Brahmic* vision much in the same way as white cloth accepts any color. As long as the mind is united with the objects of the world, so long it cannot blend with the Self. But when the objects of the world are renounced by the understanding of their illusoriness, the mind becomes unified with the Self.

As long as the world is not seen as the Self, so long will it continue to be a source of misery. But when it is seen as the Self, it becomes the glorious giver of enjoyment and release.

Just as the perception of waves being different from the ocean is erroneous and needs to be corrected, in the same way the vision of objects being multiple realities is to be corrected by the vision that all this is *Brahman*.

It is only through the presence of the impressions of *Raga* and *Dwesh* (attachment and hatred) that a person is affected when an object of desire is lost or when an adverse circumstance develops. But when these impressions are renounced, all objects are viewed in the serene light of dispassion.

When a person has lost his affection for a friend or relative, he sees him with a dispassionate mind. So too, a Sage who has attained the state of renunciation sees all objects of the world with a mind that is ever serene and unagitated.

If you have no attachment or affection for a friend or relative, you may meet him and part from him without allowing your mind to be affected in any way. In the same way, when your mind is freed of the impressions of *Raga* and *Dwesha*, you are not affected by the gain or loss of any object. In that Divine Vision of the Self, the illusions of "seer" and "seen" dwindle and the very mind itself dissolves like a dust cloud dispersed by a strong wind.

When the rainy season of *Vasana* (subtle desire) terminates, the mind regains its healthy state: the shivering cold of ignorance is dispelled, the ditches filled with the water of craving dry up, the thorny bushes of attachment and hatred begin to diminish, the *Kadamba* tree of the senses no longer bear the fruits of Karmic impressions, the clouds of illusion vanish and the mist of delusion is dispelled.

With the rising of the sun of wisdom, the forces of darkness take to flight: the streams of fear dry up and the thoughts and desires for objects, like rejoicing peacocks in rain, dance no more. The mental vision becomes like a wide landscape revealing itself after the cessation of the rainy season of *Vasana*.

Just as during autumn the sky is always clear allowing the moon to shine bright, in the same way the heart of a Sage becomes free from the clouds of illusion and allows the moon of Bliss to shine therein,

showering down the nectar of immortality. The tree of discriminative vision grows, assimilating all the joys of the world and bearing the fruit of Self-realization wherein Bliss is boundless.

With the cessation of the rains, the mountains and forests are adorned with the light of the sun during the day and the light of the moon during the night. In the same way, when the *Vasanas* are destroyed, the mind and heart of a Sage are adorned with the light of wisdom and bliss at all times.

The cankerous black bee of *Ahamkara* or ego-sense does not hover over the lotus of the heart any more. With the cessation of *Vasanas*, the mind-stuff itself melts, the vision of the Self dawns much like the rising sun, and the joys of this world and heavenly worlds become insipid before the Bliss of Self-realization. A Sage dwells in the city of the body which is illumined by the lamp of intuition — he dwells as the Emperor of emperors.

Section 36 to 40 — *From the State of Bondage
To the State of Liberation*

Sri Vasistha continued: Just as ocean waves that have not yet arisen are nothing but the ocean, in the same way, all future developments in this world are of the nature of the Self alone. From the point of view of the Self, nothing ever happens.

The purity, subtlety and expansion of Pure Consciousness far surpasses the taintless expansion of the sky. It is this Pure Self that gives rise to the illusion of names and forms. Just as the ocean manifests itself in the waves, in the same way *Brahman* manifests Himself in the process of creation.

It is the Self that becomes the essence of experience in every living being. It becomes the luminous sun and moon. It is the Reality behind the objects of the senses. This Self neither rises nor sets, neither comes nor goes, is neither here nor there. It is the ever-present Reality.

The Self as it were becomes identified with Its own reflection in *Avidya* (ignorance) and becomes deviated from the awareness of Its boundless freedom. Consequently, with the intensification of the ego-sense, this Self enters into the illusory role of an incarnating soul (*Jiva*), and it is this *Jiva* or individual soul that is ever driven by the erroneous thoughts, "This is desirable. That is not desirable. I must attain this, and negate that."

It is the Self that becomes the sky (*Akasha* or space) and allows the seed of Karma to germinate. Again it is the Self that becomes the water that nourishes the sprout as it grows into the tree of the world-process. It is the Self that sustains its roots by becoming the earth, becomes the shining form of the sun through the fire element, and in this way gives various expression to the world-tree composed of the five elements.

It is the Self that unfolds Itself in the blossoms of spring, and also the Self that assumes the role of the fierce summer sun, causing blossoms to wither. The Self becomes the life-giving rain as well as the all-destroying hailstorm.

If there were anything other than the Self, there could have been the possibility of desire in the Self. But since the Self alone exists, how can there have

been any desire for creation? Without desire the Self could not have had the inclination to create the world. In fact, this world is illusory, and the notion that the world has been created by the Self is based upon ignorance.

Even if you were to race in any direction with the greatest possible speed, you would not be able to discover the means to attain Supreme Bliss, because it exists within your very heart. Thus knowing, you should not externalize your mind, rather, you should renounce the ego-sense and the erroneous notion, "I am the performer of action." You are that Supreme Self.

Whatever the mind does, that becomes the Karma for the individual. Whatever is not performed by the mind, that cannot bind the individual.

The sense of "I am the actor. I am the enjoyer." is rooted in the *Vasanas* of the mind, and once these *Vasanas* are removed by knowledge, one becomes free from Karmas. Then whether he engages himself in action or remains inactive, he is ever liberated. But as long as the *Vasanas* linger in the unconscious and a person is dominated by them, then whether he performs action or remains inactive, he will continue to intensify his Karmas and his bondage. The *Vasanas* of the mind alone hold the key to bondage and release for the individual soul.

Just as a mighty elephant cannot drown himself in a pitful of water, in the same way a Sage cannot be drowned in the waters of illusion created by the *Vasanas* of the mind. The mind of the enlightened is neither attached to the pleasures of the objects nor

devoid of happiness; it is neither fickle nor static, neither real nor unreal (from a relative point of view); it cannot be described even as the blend of real and unreal, moving and unmoving, joy and joylessness.

The mind of the ignorant is ever involved in misery. A person may not be suffering from real troubles, yet while sleeping comfortably in his bed may experience through dream the misery of being thrown into a pit, or endlessly wandering in a state of desolation. All human miseries are therefore only mere acts of the mind.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, whatever you do — action or inaction — do not allow your mind to be attached to it. There is nothing other than the Self, and there is no such thing as attachment to action and its fruits.

Having understood the nature of the Self, assert within yourself, “I am the subtlest essence, even subtler than the thousandth part of the tip of a hair. And because of this subtlety, I am also the all-pervading reality. I am indeed all that exists. I am unaffected by pleasure and pain.”

Even in the midst of adversity, the mind of an enlightened Sage is ever blissful. It illumines the world even like the light of the full moon. Overflowing with the nectarine moonlight of bliss, a Sage is free from all Karmas.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, the mind is the seed of all Karmas, all restless efforts, all objects and all the worlds. And when the mind is negated, all misery ceases, and all virtuous and vicious Karmas disappear. The enlightened Sage is no longer affected by any action, whether physical or mental.

A child creates a castle of sand by the ocean, and shows expressions of joy and sorrow as his sand castle is built and destroyed. He even creates a world of his own in his mind and becomes happy or sad depending upon the events that take place in his world. But all the time he knows that he is experiencing pleasure and pain only out of sport. It is in this same way that a Sage expresses joy and sorrow as he lives his daily life, but inwardly he is ever unaffected and ever rooted in the awareness that the world is nothing but a sport.

When the mind is immersed in the Self, there is neither bondage nor liberation. It is ignorance that gives rise to pain and sorrow, but when the ignorance is removed by knowledge, all forms of pain and sorrow cease to exist.

Oh *Rama*, this world is nothing but an illusory modification (*Vivarta*) of *Brahman*. Just as all waves come from the ocean, so all *Jivas*, all objects, and all conditioned realities of this illusory world continue to proceed from *Brahman* alone.

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, since *Brahman* is devoid of misery and all the pairs of opposites, how is it that the world that arises from *Brahman* is full of misery?

Sri Vasistha explained: When the desire for the objects of the world becomes extinct, an enlightened Sage is unable to perceive the existence of the world separated from *Brahman*. He beholds the Reality in Its absolute form.

Oh *Rama*, as you listen to my teachings, you will be led to develop the maturity of wisdom wherein all the subtle desires of the mind will dissolve, and consequently, you will perceive the absence of the world. Then your question will have no meaning.

Brahman is the all-powerful, all-pervading and interpenetrating essence. You must assert within, "I am *Brahman*." This world is the projection of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion. Just as a magician creates non-existent objects, in the same way, *Brahman* has created the magic show of the world through *Maya*. Whoever has overpowered *Maya* by wisdom, for him this world does not exist. *Brahman* is the only reality.

When *Brahman* alone exists, there is no room for elation, anger, or wonder — the sentiments that continue to agitate the mind. Therefore, a Sage is endowed with *Samata* — equanimity of the mind. And armored with this vision of *Samata*, a Sage is not affected by pride, elation, anger, hate or infatuation.

That which is not the Self cannot be said to exist; because the Self is of the nature of Pure Existence. The objects that seem to exist must be discovered as the Self through intuitive vision. If they do not reduce themselves to the Self they are nonexistent. Further, when they are recognized as the Self, there is no room for desire: for how can the Self desire itself?

This world-tree is decked with the flowers of expectations, and burdened with the numerous fruits of pleasure and pain. It is adored with the leaves of painful Karmas, and is entwined with the creeper of craving, and it brings forth the flowers of age and death.

Oh *Rama*, you should cut down this tree with the help of the sword of discriminative knowledge (*Viveka*), and then roam in the world even as a mighty elephant roams in the forest — with freedom.

Section 41 — *Maya or Cosmic Illusion*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, just as the radiant sun appears from between clouds and then disappears during the rainy season, in the same way, the light of wisdom dawns in my mind only for a short duration. Therefore, please explain more of the nature of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion.

As a result of good Karmas performed in many embodiments, *Avidya* or ignorance itself becomes modified into pure intellect and desires to be transformed into Knowledge or *Vidya*. Then the light of knowledge destroys the veil of darkness, thereby revealing the transcendental reality of the Self.

Just as a weapon is rendered void by another weapon, poison is counteracted by another poison, and impurity in a cloth removed by another form of impurity (soap), in the same way, the illusion of ignorance is removed by the illusion of knowledge. (Ignorance and Knowledge are both expressions of *Maya*. Knowledge, having destroyed ignorance, ceases to exist, even as fire, having consumed its fuel, is extinguished. Then with the cessation of Knowledge and Ignorance, *Maya* is dispelled.)

It is ignorance that veils the light of knowledge and gives rise to the world-process, and yet, it is never seen and remains unknown. Oh *Rama*, behold the miraculous projection of this world-process. Though

in itself false, this *Maya* (or *Avidya*) has rendered the world real and has brought about manifold misery in the spirit of man. But just as a person finds his own necktie around his own neck when his faulty memory is cured, so too, with the help of the teachings of the spiritual preceptor, the study of scriptures and reflection of their subtle teachings, and by inward enquiry and meditation, you will discover the Self within your very own self.

Whoever has developed the conviction that *Brahman* or the Absolute alone is real, he alone is fit to attain Liberation. But whatever the mind creates without this mystic conviction, it turns into a net of bondage that keeps the souls involved in the cycles of birth and death.

He suffers from endless miseries who believes that he is nothing but the personality consisting of mind, intellect, senses and body. For a person whose vision is blinded by ignorance, there is nothing but all-pervading ignorance manifesting in the form of the world-process. But for him whose vision is cleansed of the impurity of ignorance, there is no reality other than the Absolute.

This terrible river of ignorance continues to drive the soul from one whirlpool to another. Without attaining the Supreme Divinity (the Self), this river cannot be crossed. Oh *Rama*, do not vex your mind by asking where this river came from. Rather, your efforts should simply be directed towards its crossing. And when the veil of ignorance begins to dissolve through the force of knowledge, you will begin to develop increasing insight not only into the nature of ignorance, but also as to where it has come from, why it came, and how it is being led to its destruction.

In fact, ignorance has no existence of its own. It is an illusory appearance resulting from the absence of enquiry and inward reflection. When the mind is lit up with the light of spiritual enquiry, it vanishes.

Just as a disease needs to be cured and eradicated, in the same way, Oh *Rama*, exercise your self-effort in order to destroy the disease of ignorance. By leading the soul through numerous embodiments, this ignorance is the giver of fear, sorrow, and mental torments. Therefore, endeavor to destroy this dreadful disease by unfolding the spiritual vision that beholds the Self as the only reality.

Section 42 — *All-powerful Brahman Assumes the Role of Powerless Souls*

Sri Vasistha continued: Now listen to the remedy of the disease of ignorance. But first, you must gain a deep insight into the manner in which the Pure Self has become the incarnating soul by the force of ignorance.

Brahman is all-pervading, faultless, beginningless, infinite and immortal. Just as a wave rising from the ocean seems to form its distinct individuality, in the same way a wave from the ocean of *Brahman* assumes the role of the individual soul that wanders through the world-process.

Just as a piece of gold gives rise to ornaments of different names and forms, in the same way, *Brahman* or Pure Consciousness gives rise to the role of *Kshetrajna* — the knower of the field or the body. It is in this way *Brahman* permeates and controls the body.

With increasing desires, this *Kshetrajna* then evolves an ego-center and becomes identified with it. Then there arises an impure intellect which in turn assumes the form of mind that surges with numerous desires. Driven by desires, the mind projects the senses, and the senses in turn weave the illusion of the physical body.

Oh *Rama*, it is the *Jiva* or individual soul that becomes the *Ahamkara* or ego, and the ego turns into the intellect or *Buddhi*. As the force of ignorance continues to operate, the *Buddhi* turns into the mind of thoughts and desires, and the mind in turn becomes the senses and the body.

Just as so many cows madly run after a bull, and so many rivers flow into the ocean, in the same way desires and erroneous notions follow the *Chitta* or the mind. Just as a silk worm is encased in a cocoon that it created by its own efforts, in the same way the soul becomes encased in its illusory creations of body, mind, senses and ego.

It is the mind that is called by various names. Associated with thoughts and desires, it is called *Manas*; associated with reasoning and ascertaining, it is called *Buddhi* or intellect. When asserting the sense of "mineness," it is called *Ahamkara* or ego. When it leaves the body at the time of death, it is called *Puryashtaka* or the subtle body. It is known as ignorance or cosmic illusion because it obscures the nature of the Self. It liberates the soul by assuming the role of knowledge, and binds the soul by creating bondage.

It is this mind which is in bondage and not the Spirit in man. It is this mind that gives rise to the tree of the world-process with its ramifying branches in the form of birth, death, old age, and numerous Karmic fructifications.

Overpowered by the mind, the soul experiences endless misery. Through the mind, the soul is scorched in the furnace of grief, bitten by the angry cobra of anger, swept by the currents of passionate desires, and consumed in the fires of sense-enjoyments. The soul caught in the world of illusion is like a mighty elephant sinking in a marsh, or a gigantic mountain sinking into the depths of the ocean.

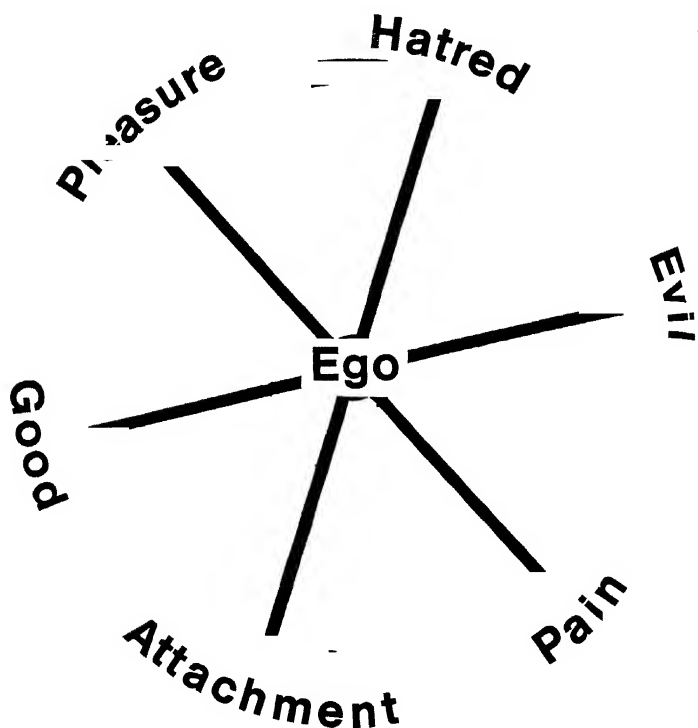
Though experiencing birth and death and repeated misery of life, yet those who do not find the world like a burning pit of fire are like demons in the guise of human beings.

If an ox has fallen into a pit, he exercises his self-effort until he is free, so too, the soul that has fallen into the pit of its self-created illusions (the world-process) can secure its freedom only by the virtue of its self-effort.

Section 43 — *The Souls Caught in the Wheel of the World-process*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, millions upon millions of countless souls proceed from the Self through the magical power of ignorance. They proceeded from the Self in the past, they are doing so in the present, and they will continue to do so in the future.

THE WHEEL OF THE WORLD-PROCESS



With the Ego in the center, the Wheel of the World-process continues to whirl with its Six Spokes of Good and Evil, Pleasure and Pain, Attachment and Hatred.

Like the spray of water in a waterfall, or like bubbles in the surging ocean, the *Jivas* or individual souls arise in every direction, in every place, and in water as well as on land. And once they appear, they continue to whirl through the cycles of birth and death. Some have taken birth only once in this *Kalpa*, the present time-cycle consisting of the four great *Yugas*. Some have been born a hundred times. Some have had countless births. Some will be born only three more times, and some will continue to pass through countless births.

Some have attained Liberation and will not be born anymore. Some continue to be born in the same class or species, while others continue to wander from class to class, from species to species.

Some experience severe sufferings in their lives and have very little happiness, while others experience immense joy. Some arise from the sun, while others proceed from the moon. Some exist as celestial beings, while others are as denizens of hell. Some are born as *Brahmanas*, others as *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* or *Shudras*.

Some have taken their embodiment in the form of snakes, worms, ants and spiders, while others in the embodiments of lions, buffaloes, goats, deer, cows and rabbits. Yet others have been born as cranes, cuckoos, nightingales, swans, and other birds, while still others exist as lotuses, roses, jasmines and other flowering plants.

Some souls abide in the stars, some have their residence in drifting winds. Some abide in the rays of the sun and some in the rays of the moon, while others roam in the vastness of the sky. Some exist in

the form of mighty gods, while others have manifested as the spirits of rivers. Some have become women with charming eyes, while there are still others that are neither male nor female.

Some are endowed with sharp and subtle intellects, while there are others who are dull in mind. Some are engaged in teaching the path of wisdom, while others have taken recourse to profound *Samadhi*.

Whipped by death, these souls continue to rise and fall through numerous embodiments. They are like birds caught in the net of *Vasanas* or subtle desires, and continue to wander from one body to another.

But some souls, being endowed with subtle intellects, ascend the ladder of wisdom — they negate the world of illusion and bring about the dissolution of *Vasanas*. And having attained Self-realization, they terminate the process of birth and death.

Like the rays of the sun, or sparks proceeding from a red-hot iron, or fragrance from flowers, or raindrops from the clouds, or like waves in the ocean, all *Jivas* continue to proceed from *Brahman*, and having experienced countless embodiments, return to *Brahman*.

Section 44 — *The Uniqueness of Liberation*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, please explain how this *Jiva* that is endowed with a mental process can rise to the sublime state of *Brahma* or the Creator?

Sri Vasistha explained: Oh *Rama*, the mind that is bent upon externalization first projects the element of ether, and then tainted by the notion of spaciousness, gives rise to the element of air. In this way the elements as well as the senses, which are only specialized forms of the elements, proceed from the mind.

Riding on the waves of externalization, the individual soul becomes endowed with a subtle body, and with the intensification of the body-idea, sees itself abiding in a physical body. Having experienced a sleep-like state in the womb of a mother, the soul discovers itself in the form of a body consisting of well-defined limbs, hands, feet, chest, neck, eyes, ears, nostrils, fingers, toes, teeth, and all the details of the body.

So the mind brings about the projection of the body through the intensification of its *Vasanas*. This body is like a nest for the bird of the *Chitta* or the mind, or like a dwelling place for the snake of passion, or like a cave for the lion of the spirit, or like a stable for the elephant of egoism.

But it is this same mind that enables the soul to become identified with the cosmic subtle body — *Brahma* or the Creator. By ascending the heights of glory, the mind becomes *Brahma* who is the very repository of all divine qualities such as intelligence, purity, power, bliss, wisdom and glory.

Led by ignorance, the very same mind which is capable of rising to the glory of *Brahmahood* descends into the states of miserable souls wandering through the dark night of ignorance. These countless

souls are in deep sleep as it were, and are driven from one dream to another, until they wake up as enlightened personalities.

It is *Brahman* who entered into the state of *Jivahood* and experienced numerous embodiments, and it is with the help of scriptural vision the Same discovers his identity as the Absolute Self, and becomes free from the cycles of birth and death.

Section 45 – *The Illusory, Mental Nature
of the World-process*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, though apparently real, this world is illusory. Just as objects reflected in a mirror do not exist in reality, in the same way this world, being of the nature of reflection, has no real existence.

The body, the numerous worlds, and the expansion of time and space are all projections of the mind. They are experienced through the mind, and without the mind have no reality.

There is no object that has not been created or projected by the mind. There is no object in the world that the mind cannot acquire and realize. There is nothing impossible for the mind to achieve, because all objects are nothing but projections of the mind.

Mind, being all-powerful, has projected the body, but due to ignorance, now considers itself dependent upon the body. And led by mental will, the spirit has assumed the form of gods, demons and human beings. And again, led by mental will, the spirit brings about the cessation of all desires and

attains Liberation. So it is through the mind alone that the process of embodiment has been created, and will become extinct, much like the blowing out of a candle flame.

If the Real Self were nonexistent, it would have been reasonable to pursue the unreal in various ways. But since the Real Self does exist, one must not run after unreal objects. He who turns away from the Real and pursues the unreal has fallen from the course of his *Purushartha* or self-effort.

This world-process arises through the desires of the mind, and is destroyed when the desires cease to exist. But when this world is destroyed, in reality nothing is destroyed, because this world is like an illusory mirage in the scintillating sands of a desert.

Just as the destruction of a city that has been created by mental imagination is not a real destruction, so too, the appearance and disappearance of the world-process is unreal with respect to the Self. Oh *Rama*, nothing is gained through worldly prosperity, and nothing is lost through the loss of worldly gains.

If an illusory object proves itself to be illusory, there is no need to be affected by it. Knowing that the objects of the world are illusory, therefore, one should not allow his mind to be agitated by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, praise and insult. That which is real cannot be destroyed, but that which is unreal has no existence, and any destruction of it is only an illusory development.

With the help of a spiritual preceptor, study of scriptures and inward reflection, one must ascertain

the fact that the world is unreal. Then having discovered the unreality of the world, he should not allow himself to be agitated by the loss of wealth, or even by the death of dear relatives. And having discovered the Self, he ends all forms of grief.

This ocean of the world-process surges with the waters of *Vasanas* (subtle desires arising out of ignorance). While many continue to drown in this ocean, those who enter into the boat of *Prajna* (intuitive vision) cross it and attain the immortal abode of the Self.

Sharpen your intellect by the practice of *Viveka* (discriminative vision) and *Vairagya* (dispassion). Render it firm by the practice of *Titiksha* (endurance towards the pairs of opposites, i.e., heat and cold, gain and loss, praise and censure). Then endowed with such an intellect, practise enquiry into the nature of the Self. You will be able to pierce the veils of illusion and discover your spiritual identity as the Self.

Do not follow the conduct of the ignorant, but follow the exemplary conduct of Sages. While the ignorant drown in the ocean of the world-process due to their increasing attachment to the objects of the world, Sages rise beyond the world-process by being ever contented, ever serene and ever established in the Self. By following the ignorant, one continues to drift from one illusion to another, but by following the wise, one will attain Liberation.

People in this world become proud of their learning, austerity, valor, skill, birth in a respectable family, fame, prosperity and virtuous qualities. But a

Sage, seeing the illusoriness of all this, neither covets them nor becomes proud because of them.

The majestic sun swimming through the sky illumines the earth with a spirit of absolute detachment, and even if the earth were destroyed, the sun would continue to shine unconcerned and unaffected. Such is the vision of illumined Sages — they are neither attached to heavenly gardens nor affected by the destruction of objects of the world, and they follow the course of their *Prarabdha* (fructifying Karma) in the spirit of absolute detachment.

Riding in the chariot of the body, with the horses of the senses well-restrained by the purified mind, and driven by intuition, a Sage roams like an emperor in this world of illusion.

Therefore, Oh Sinless *Rama*, adopt this spiritual vision that is devoid of pride and jealousy, and renounce the desires for perishable objects. Then roam in this world with increasing awareness of the stream of peace flowing deep within your heart.

Section 46 — *The Qualities of a Sage*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, there is no occasion for grief when a magic show is over. So too, the loss of wealth or a dear relative in this world is nothing but the magic show of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion, and therefore, does not bring a state of grief to an enlightened Sage.

When wealth and progeny multiply, there is no need to be elated. When they are lost, then also there is no need to be distressed, because these external developments are only the works of *Maya*. The Self is ever the same — infinite, immutable, eternal and imperishable.

In fact, all prosperity of the world is nothing but a form of disease for the soul. Does a person rejoice when he becomes diseased? Much in the same way, there is no reason to rejoice over the growing disease of the world-process.

While worldly prosperity induces *Raga* or attachment in the mind of the ignorant, it creates dispassion in the mind of a Sage. How can a healthy mind rejoice over perishable objects of the world?

Oh *Rama*, do not linger over objects that have perished, but continue to sustain yourself with the objects that happen to come your way through fructifying Karma of the past. But there again, even while accepting those objects of daily necessity, yet you must maintain the vision that such objects are illusory.

Being desireless towards the objects that have not been attained and detached from the objects that have been attained, a Sage roams in the boundless expansion of the Self. His intellect is never trapped in the marshy lands of illusion.

When the erroneous notion of the reality of the objects is negated through the light of wisdom, although you may continue to experience them through your senses, yet you will not be bound by desire for them.

Oh *Rama*, do not allow your mind to be drowned in the objects by developing the erroneous notion, "This is mine." By rising beyond the objects, whether you perform any action or not, you will be ever free.

When the objects of the senses are rendered tasteless by increasing spiritual vision, when they do not delight the mind anymore, one becomes ready to cross the illusion of the world-process.

If you do not find delight in the objects of this world or in the objects of the heavenly worlds, you are bound to attain Liberation. And in this case it would not matter whether you had removed body-identification through *Samadhi* or not.

Section 47 — *Numerous World-systems
Projected by Maya*

Sri Rama asked: Oh Sage, the burden of my head has been lifted by your enlightening words of wisdom. Yet my heart is ever desirous of drinking more and more of the nectar of divine teachings. Please explain to me more about the numerous world-systems that are created by *Maya*.

Sri Vasistha answered: Oh *Rama*, there are countless world-systems. Millions of *Brahmas*, *Shankaras* (*Shivas*), *Vishnus*, and *Indras* have come and gone.

Some world-systems are created by *Brahma*, others by *Vishnu*, and yet others by *Shiva*. Some creations are presided by the Sun-god, while others are ruled by *Indra*.

Some worlds are filled with trees and vegetables, and have no human habitation. Others have human beings. And yet there are others though abounding with mountains and valleys lie desolate.

Some worlds are full of stones and pebbles, some abound with gold, copper, or other metals. Every world-system is unique in its own way and contains many wonders. Some worlds are illumined by the sun; some abide in darkness.

You may be able to count the scintillating dust particles in a beam of light entering into a dark room, but you cannot count the world-systems that scintillate in the light of the Self.

Numerous world-systems continue to rise, and then, even like waves of the ocean, subside in the ocean of *Brahman*. Just as swarms of mosquitoes flourish and die during the rainy season, in the same way countless world-systems appear and disappear in the Ocean of the Self.

Again and again creation and destruction, again and again experiences of pleasure and pain, again and again the cycles of birth and death — such is the world-process that continues to manifest in its various forms for the souls that are overpowered by ignorance.

The four ages continue to revolve endlessly. Even great ages and *Kalpas* continue to flow on ceaselessly. Like the rains proceeding from dark clouds, or like the rays proceeding from the moon, these world-systems continue to appear and disappear in the Ether of the Self.

Oh *Rama*, he who possesses intuitive wisdom, for him *Brahman* alone is the reality. The countless world-systems are as nonexistent to him as the countless waves of a mirage that continues to rise and fall in the scintillating sands of a desert.

Sections 48 to 51 — *The Story of Sage Dashura*

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, just as a snake after giving up its outer skin moves on, in the same way a Sage, having renounced all internal and external forms of attachment, experiences the Bliss of Liberation while still in the body. Just as cooked seeds cannot germinate, in the same way, the impressions of Karmas in a Sage cannot give rise to further embodiments.

To illustrate the subtle art of realizing the Self, listen closely to the elevating story of Sage *Dashura*. Once in the country of *Magadha*, in a forest amidst green trees, fragrant blossoms, warbling birds, and the many charming spectacles of nature, there lived Sage *Sharloma* with his son, *Dashura*. In time, Sage *Sharloma* discarded his physical body and ascended to the glorious heavens, while his young son wept bitterly at the loss of his dear father.

The Deity of the Forest consoled *Dashura* saying, "Oh Wise Sage, why do you grieve like those who are ignorant of the spiritual truth? Don't you know that this world is perishable in nature? Whatever is born must die. Even great divinities such as *Brahma*, the Creator, are subject to death. For just as the rising sun must set in the evening, so too, all who are born must die. Therefore, Oh *Dashura*, do not grieve over the loss of your father."



Thus being consoled, *Dashura* performed the rites for the departed spirit of his father. Then urged by spiritual aspiration, he engaged himself in the performance of austerities. As time passed he acquired theoretical knowledge of the scriptures, but due to internal impediments, was unable to attain Self-realization.

He developed the notion that if he were to practise meditation in a place that is absolutely free from all distractions, he would attain the goal of life in a very short time. Reflecting as to where such an ideal place would be, he came to the conclusion that it existed only on the top of a mighty tree.

Endowed with psychic powers, *Dashura* projected a residence for himself way up on the top of a beautiful tree whose manifold branches reached out in all directions. Elephants enjoyed the cool shade under the tree while birds of different types continuously sang among the branches. The tree provided for the Sage a perfect location for his intensive practice of spiritual disciplines.

Sage *Dashura* practised deep meditation and mentally performed various sacrifices and Vedic rituals. As time passed he became free from the taints of attachment and hatred, and just as the sun reveals itself with the dispersal of the clouds, the knowledge of the Self was revealed to him.

One day the enlightened *Dashura* saw a forest goddess offering prayers to him. He asked what she wanted, and she explained that she felt so badly not having a child, while all her friends were proud of their children. She told him how, during the spring

festival which was celebrated in the heavenly gardens of *Nandana Bana*, many forest goddesses came with their children, but she, having none, felt so mentally distressed that she was even willing to give up her life.

Sage *Dashura* gave a beautiful flower to the forest goddess saying, "Just as the creeper becomes decked with a lovely flower, so you will be blessed with a beautiful son. However, your son will become an enlightened Sage, and will not be attached to the pleasures of the senses." Having received this boon, the forest goddess left and went to her abode, while Sage *Dashura* continued to live alone in his tree-top dwelling.

In course of time, the forest goddess was blessed with a beautiful son. When he grew up into a handsome young boy of twelve years, the goddess took him to Sage *Dashura* saying, "Oh Sage, this is the son as a result of your blessings. I have educated him in all the celestial arts. But now, you must endow him with spiritual knowledge."

Sage *Dashura* replied, "Oh Goddess, let your son stay with me, and because he is an ideal disciple, I will impart spiritual wisdom to him until he is enlightened." The Sage then gave spiritual teachings to the son of the forest goddess for a very long time. He narrated the stories and parables of the scriptures, and elaborated upon their meanings, and he discoursed upon the subtle secrets of the mind and spirit.

Sections 52 and 53 — *The Parable of King Khottha*
(*One Born of the Sky*)

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, once while travelling through the sky in an invisible form, I happened to stop and listen to some of the teachings given by Sage *Dashura* to his young disciple. I will relate to you one of his interesting parables —

Sage *Dashura* said: Oh Son, there is a powerful King named *Khottha* who is famous in the three worlds. Even great divinities obey his command. And just as the sky cannot be fought with, in the same way no one in the three worlds can harm this King.

His glorious deeds are as numerous as the waves of the ocean. He has adopted numerous bodies consisting of the three *Gunas*, and the entire universe consisting of fourteen planes is his chariot. All directions are permeated by him. He has created numerous human bodies for his dwelling place, and he has also created numerous ego-centers to rule these bodies, but which are ever frightened by the light of spiritual wisdom.

At times when in association with a distracted mind the King desires to roam in the worlds of dream, while at other times he wishes to enter into deep sleep. At times he grieves and considers himself a miserable, wretched person, while at other times he enjoys success, victory and prosperity.

Having listened to this story, the young disciple asked: “Oh Sage, please explain the mystic implications of the parable. Who is this King known as *Khottha*?”

Sage *Dashura* replied: Oh Child, the *Samkalpa* (mentation) born of Supreme Ether is called *Khottha*. Led by its desires for externalization, it intensifies its own existence, while by adopting the will to negate all desires, it brings about its own dissolution. So too, this entire universe is a miracle produced by *Samkalpa*. The three worlds with their numerous contents have been projected by *Samkalpa*, and when *Samkalpa* is destroyed, this world ceases to exist.

It is the mentation of the Cosmic Mind that operates through every individual, and expresses in the form of Will or Samkalpa. An aspirant gains insight into the fact that his personality is ever controlled and ruled by his own will operating from a deeper level of his being. Therefore by renouncing egoistic desires, he discovers the miracle of the Will operating through him, and through this vision wills for his spiritual enlightenment and attains it.

The ego-sense is formed by one's own *Samkalpa*, and once formed, it becomes the cause of one's own misery. Just as a monkey, due to its frivolous nature, removed a peg from a bifurcated piece of wood and had his own tail snapped, so too, a person causes his own pain or pleasure according to his own will.

Therefore, O Child, withdraw your mind from all objects of the world and enter into deep *Samadhi*. Become free of all desires and *Samkalpas*, and endeavor to abide in *Brahman*.

Samkalpas of the mind are of three types according to the three *Gunas*. *Tamasic Samkalpa* leads one to lower embodiments such as worms, insects and flies. *Rajasic Samkalpa* leads one to

human embodiments where one becomes attached to various objects of the world. *Sattwic Samkalpa* leads one to the attainment of virtue and wisdom, and guides one to Self-realization.

Even if you were to practise austerity for thousands of years, or enter into fire, or allow your body to be smashed, or jump into deep wells, or run through sharp swords, or seek a *Guru* in *Vishnu* or *Shiva*, yet it is not until the *Samkalpas* are destroyed that you can attain Liberation.

Oh Child, you have been led by your *Samkalpa* to assume various embodiments and have encountered various conditions of life. But having understood the illusoriness of the world, do not direct your *Samkalpa* towards any objective attainment. Do not think of the pleasures of the senses.

Let your mind become free of *Samkalpa*, and become as peaceful as the awareness of deep sleep. Only then will you be enlightened by spiritual knowledge. With such a foundation, you will be able to root out the entire world-tree arising out of ignorance. May you, Oh Child, endeavor to attain Supreme Bliss.

Section 54 and 55 — *The Nature of Samkalpa
and the Method of Eradicating It*

Sage *Dashura* continued: "Oh Child, the Self is of the nature of pure existence and infinity. It is devoid of the differentiations of "inside" and "outside." That is, there is nothing internal or external with reference to the Self. But led by *Maya* or cosmic illusion, there emerges a subtle tendency to externalize, and this is the seed of the tree of *Samkalpa* (thoughts that cause bondage for the soul).

Just as water vapor condenses into dark clouds, even so, when this subtle tendency of externalization assumes the form of the dark clouds of *Samkalpa*, the firmament of the mind becomes overcast with those clouds. The spirit in man develops the erroneous notion that the objects of the world are different from itself and leads to the further intensification of *Samkalpa*. *Samkalpa* gives rise to *Samkalpa*. Thus, the sapling of the world-process grows into a gigantic tree bearing the fruits of pain and sorrow.

The growth and intensification of *Samkalpa* give rise to increasing pain and misery, while the attenuation and destruction of *Samkalpa* gives rise to increasing joy and inner peace. Oh Child, do not dwell on the thoughts of objects. Do not entertain *Samkalpa* of the mind. Do not live in the memories of the past. Do not engage your mind in accepting the pleasant and rejecting the unpleasant, but maintain a balanced mind at all times.

If one were to free his mind of past memories of joy and sorrow, he would not be involved in *Samkalpa* and would not be deluded by the expectations of the future. Bereft of the thoughts of the past and future, *Samkalpa* dies away automatically.

There is no special effort needed in destroying this powerful enemy. There is some effort involved in crushing the tender petals of a flower between one's fingers, but there is absolutely no effort involved in destroying the *Samkalpa* of the mind. All that is needed is mental detachment from the past and future.

Oh Child, destroy the mind with the help of the mind. Destroy the *Samkalpa* with the help of *Samkalpa*. Instead of entertaining thoughts of the world, let your mind entertain the thought of *Brahman*. Instead of desiring the pleasures of the world, develop the fiery aspiration for Self-realization.

It is *Samkalpa* of the mind that gives rise to the erroneous notion that the world is real. It is the *Samkalpa* that has assumed all the names and forms that abound in the world. Devoid of *Samkalpa*, all this is *Brahman*.

Therefore, take recourse to the repeated practice of the negation of the world. Let your mind reflect over the illusoriness of the world, and let your intellect understand that there is nothing but the Self as the Reality behind all names and forms. In this way you will not entertain thoughts of objects. The *Samkalpas* of the mind will gradually fade into nonexistence. Consequently you will not be subject to pleasure and pain, elation and depression, birth and death.

Just as when a spark is fed with straw, it grows into a blazing fire, in the same way, when the *Samkalpa* of the mind is fed with the petty enjoyments of the world, it grows into the blazing fire of pain and sorrow. And just as if the spark were to be

crushed in its initial stage there would be no need to fight the angry flames, so too, if one were to withdraw his attention from the tiny sparks of desire that float into the conscious plane of the mind, the growth of *Samkalpa* would be arrested and eradicated.

If the impurities of the world were as real as black soot, who would have succeeded in washing them away? But since these impurities are like husks of illusion, they can be easily washed away by the water of wisdom.

Oh Child, neither are you related to this world, nor is it related to you. In fact, no one is your relative nor are you anybody else's relative. Knowing this, perceive the illusoriness of objects. Do not entertain *Samkalpa* for external developments in the world, but rather adopt the transformed *Samkalpa* for Self-realization. This is the mystic art of discovering the infinite bliss of the Self.

Sri Vasistha said: Oh *Rama*, thus did I listen to the wonderous teachings of Sage *Dashura*, and then I, even like a cloud descending on a hill top, descended on the summit of the *Kadamba* tree to meet the glorious Sage.

Sage *Dashura* welcomed me with devotional offerings of flowers, fruits and water. Then we both conversed on the nature of *Brahman*. After enjoying the beauty of the *Kadamba* tree, I proceeded to the heavenly regions.

**Section 56 — *Negation of Identification
with the World-process***

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, having ascertained the fact that this world does not exist, you should negate the sense of “I-ness” and “Mine-ness” with reference to the objects of the world. In other words, neither should you be identified with the shifting ego-center sustained by the erroneous thoughts of the mind, nor should you be identified with the objects of the world considering them as your possessions.

This visible world is neither existent nor non-existent, nor a blend of both. The Self alone is the reality. Therefore, do not be identified with this world, and having negated its reality, abide in the Self.

What is the duration of human life compared to the boundless expansion of eternity? Knowing yourself to be the eternal Self, do not become identified with the apparent personality that lasts only for a few years.

Just as the sun that sustains all the activities upon this earth remains detached from it, in the same way the Self, while sustaining the entire world-process, remains absolutely detached from it. Just as a person who knows the illusoriness of a mirage, although afflicted with intense thirst does not run after it, in the same way, having understood the illusoriness of the world, you will not seek happiness through its perishable objects.

Assert within yourself, "I am the Self that abides in all. I am the non-doer, non-enjoyer *Atman*." If you maintain the stream of this spiritual attitude within your heart, you will not be tainted by virtue or vice. Then when the *Chitta* (mental-process) is free of subtle desires, you attain *Vairagya* or dispassion.

He who has the deep-rooted awareness that he is not the doer of any action, for him there is nothing to be accepted or rejected (renounced). Or he who maintains the attitude that he is the performer of all actions through all living beings, as well as the sustainer of all that happens in this world, then again there is nothing to be accepted or renounced.

The attitudes: "I am this personality." "I am performing this action." "This particular action I will not perform." arise out of a deluded vision, and as long as one is overcome by such a vision, he cannot find contentment. This vision is the path leading to the worst of all hells. It is the source of misery and sorrow.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, may you endeavor to renounce the body-idea and become detached from the body. Just as it is disgusting for a *Brahmin* to touch the meat of a dog, in the same way, let this body-idea be rejected by you.

Section 57 — *The Method of Destroying Vasanas*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, bondage and Liberation of the soul consists of the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the mind. Therefore, take steps to renounce the *Vasanas* and realize the Self wherein even the desire for Self-realization becomes extinct.

In the beginning renounce those *Vasanas* which are founded on *Rajas* and *Tamas* (externalization and inertia of the mind). In their place develop *Sattwic* (pure) *Vasanas* which sustain such attitudes as friendliness with all (*Maitri*), compassion towards those who are afflicted (*Karuna*), cheerfulness towards those who are successful and prosperous (*Mudita*), and indifference towards those who are sinful and perverted (*Upeksha*). Having replaced impure *Vasanas* with pure ones, you will then experience the shining wisdom of the Self which leads you beyond all the *Vasanas* of the mind.

He who has renounced the sense of egoism from his heart is ever Liberated. It does not matter whether he engages himself in action or remains inactive; he who has rendered his mind free of *Vasanas* no longer depends upon spiritual practices such as *Japa* (repetition of *Mantra*) and *Samadhi*.

I have studied scriptures and reflected upon them for a long, long time, and I have thus determined the essence of all teachings. Indeed the essence is that an aspirant must continue to acquire increasing wisdom with the help of listening, reflection and meditation on the Self, until all the subtle desires of the mind are rendered extinct.

The majority of people pursue the objects of the world, which are only products of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). They are led by the impressions of attachment and hatred. But rare are the aspirants who rise beyond attachment and hatred, and endeavor to attain the Self.

Whether one were to rule the whole world, or become the ruler of the heavenly worlds, unless he attains the knowledge of the Self resulting from the extinction of *Vasanas*, he will not experience supreme peace.

The wise Sages are the most valiant of heroes in destroying the enemies of the mind and senses. In order to cure the disease of birth and death, one must learn to adore those mighty Sages.

Wherever you go, there are only five elements. Therefore, why should a wise man be interested in going anywhere here on earth or anywhere in the subtle worlds? When the objects of the senses are recognized for what they are, as illusory appearances, a wise man no longer develops attachment towards them.

For a wise man who conducts himself in the light of the wisdom that the world is unreal and the Self is the only reality, crossing the world-process becomes as easy as crossing a water-filled pit made by a cow's hoof.

With the extinction of *Vasanas*, the heart of a Sage becomes expansive. For him even the entire universe becomes like a little fruit in the palm of his hand. Therefore, how can he be attached to the objects of the world? What is there for him to give or to receive.

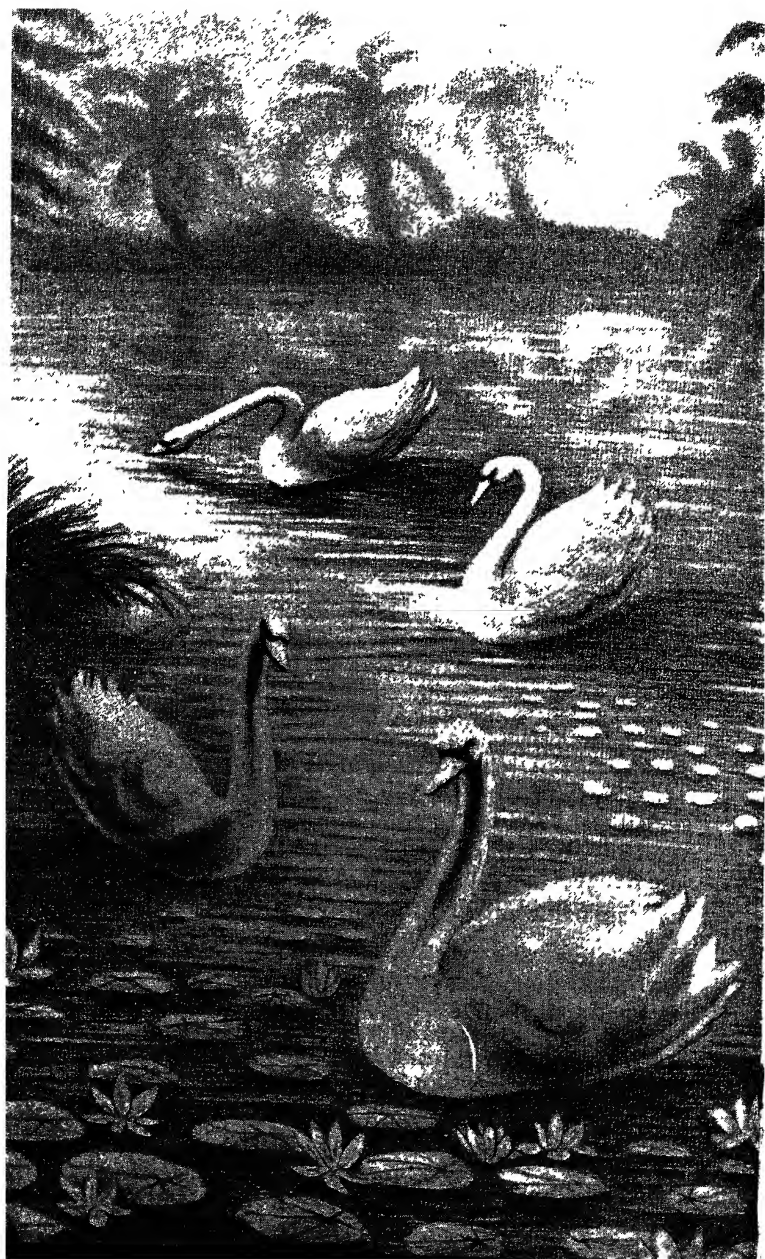
Oh *Rama*, ignorant people wage war and die by the millions for the sake of political power or for the delight of ruling a kingdom. I consider that delight worthless and despicable. When even the life of a Creator that exists for thousands of *Yugas* ultimately comes to an end, then what delight can there be in the perishable attainments of a human being? Knowing this, an aspirant must endeavor to attain Self-realization.

Just as the sun does not become attached to a mirage that it happens to create by its own luminous rays scintillating upon desert sands, in the same way a Sage does not become attached to the objects of the world which are only appearances in the Self.

Even mighty mountains are nothing but the radiance of the Self. The rivers and oceans are nothing but transitory mirages sustained by the rays of the Divine Light. Oh *Rama*, a wise Sage abides in the expansion of the Self wherein even the sun and moon have no access.

How can Lord *Shiva* Who delights in the dance of Goddess *Parvati* be entertained by the dance of a monkey? Much in the same way, how can a Sage who delights in the bliss of the Self be attracted by the pleasures of the senses?

While a crane seated by a muddy pool of water revels in feeding on decaying objects, a swan seeks its delight in soaring through the blue sky and drinking from the sacred lakes of the Himalayas. So too, while the ignorant delight in the polluted pleasures of the senses, a Sage experiences eternal bliss through Self-realization.



Section 58 — *The Enlightenment of Kacha*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, listen to the utterances of *Kacha*, the son of Divine *Brihaspati*. Once upon a time, *Kacha* ascended the heights of spiritual wisdom. As a result of his repeated practice of listening, reflection and meditation, he came to the conclusion that the Self alone is real, and that the world is a mere illusion. Thrilled with joy he spoke the following:

“The Self alone fills this universe, even as water is seen everywhere during deluge. Therefore, where am I to go? What have I to do? What is there for me to accept or to reject?

“This world continues to provide conditions of pleasure and pain for the ignorant, but when observed with the penetrating vision of wisdom, is seen as the Self alone. I am the Self, and therefore what is there for me to accept or to reject?

“I am the surging Ocean of Bliss. I am the all-pervading Reality. I am the very Essence of all that exists.”

Thus did *Kacha* sing the glory of the Self while meditating in the forests of Mount *Meru*. He practised meditation on *Om*, and having dissolved the physical consciousness into mental consciousness, and the latter into Cosmic Consciousness, he rose beyond the three states and became one with the Absolute. He became like the sky from which the clouds of delusion have been scattered by the mighty wind of wisdom.

Section 59 — *The Emptiness of Sense-enjoyments*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, this world cannot yield anything more than the enjoyments of the five senses. Thus knowing, a wise aspirant renounces his desire for objects.

Those who are contented with perishable objects are no better than birds and animals. Those who consider the objects of the world real and seek pleasure from them are like donkeys in their dullness. What is there in the body of a woman except some blood, flesh, fat and hair? Those who therefore seek happiness in passionate indulgence are subhuman beings.

All pottery is nothing but clay, all trees are nothing but wood, all bodies are nothing but composite flesh, blood and bones. This world is constituted of nothing but the five sense-perceptions. Though real to the ignorant, this world is unreal to the wise.

The mere thought of worldly enjoyments creates delusion in the mind, what to speak of actual indulgence in the pleasures of the senses. Therefore, a wise aspirant should shun all thoughts of objects and direct his mind to *Brahman*.

Oh *Rama*, listen to the manner in which *Brahma* created this world. After the night of great deluge, when the soul that had risen to creatorship as a result of past deeds found himself in a lotus-bed, he first spoke out the name of *Brahman*. This is the reason He is called *Brahma*, and having come to exist as *Brahma*, the Creator, He engaged Himself in the act of creation.

He created the elements by His will alone. Then having blended these elements in different proportions, He created the various objects of the world, as well as the bodies of different beings.

Oh *Rama*, know *Brahma* to be the mind alone, and therefore, see this world to be nothing but a mental projection. This world, consisting of mountains and oceans, abounding with numerous living beings, and subject to pleasure and pain, birth and death, disease and age, is to be renounced by the wise.

Brahma the Creator, having reflected upon the misery of the world-process caused by ignorance, attachment and hatred, then created the scriptures to Liberate the souls from the bondage of the world.

There are three types of beings: 1. Mental sons proceeding from *Brahma's* mind called *Vidhyanik*. They are endowed with great psychic powers and their enjoyments are in the plane of the mind. 2. The celestial beings called *Devanik*. They abound in *Sattwa Guna* (purity of Nature) and therefore, attain Enlightenment by listening to scriptures in a very short time. 3. The human beings known as *Naranik*. Being dominated by impure *Sattwa* (*Sattwa* mixed with *Rajas* and *Tamas*), they have to listen to the scriptural teachings again and again for a long time in order to attain Liberation.

Oh *Rama*, by associating with men who are attached to the pleasures of the world one develops desires for objects and becomes deluded. But by associating with men of wisdom, one develops knowledge and dispassion, and is led to Self-realization.

Sections 60 and 61 — *Rajas-Satwic Souls*

Sri Vasistha continued: While *Tamasic* souls continue to whirl through cycles of birth and death, those who are endowed with *Vairagya* (dispassion) continue to evolve spiritually. Eventually they acquire divine births wherein they attain Enlightenment and become liberated from birth and death.

Those who are *Satwicas* (souls dominated by *Sattwa Guna*) have practised spiritual disciplines such as listening, reflection and meditation in their previous life. They are endowed with the intuitional vision of the Self even from their early age.

As *Tamas* is abandoned and *Rajas* is transmuted into *Sattwa*, the individual soul gradually becomes endowed with the qualifications needed to attain Liberation. Discrimination, dispassion, serenity of mind, control of the senses, burning aspiration for Self-realization and all other related qualities are those that develop in such an aspirant. Ever reflecting upon the transitory nature of objects and having gained insight into the vanity of all enjoyments of both this world and of the heavenly worlds, a *Rajas-Satwica* (one devoid of *Tamas* but not yet totally *Sattwic*) holds Self-realization as the only goal of his life.

Just as the sky is not affected by clouds, so these Yogis are not affected by the afflictions of the mind. Just as a tree delights in its blossoms and fruit, so too a Yogi delights in the unfoldment of divine qualities within himself. Just as the moon does not abandon its cooling rays, even so he who is qualified for Self-realization does not give up the qualities of compassion, friendliness and equal vision.



One must reflect upon the fact that all objects of joy are perishable. Just as a peacock is delighted to behold clouds of rain, in the same way, he should be delighted to pursue the Sages and Saints.

A Yogi crosses the three-fold ocean: the ocean of ego, the ocean of body, and the ocean of physical relatives and friends. It is with the help of the boat of spiritual enquiry that a Yogi is able to cross these oceans in order to attain Self-realization.

The Self that shines as the sun is also the sustainer of an ant that abides in a hole of the earth. Therefore, develop the spiritual vision that beholds the Self as the reality behind all apparant names and forms.

Section 62 — *The Qualities that Adorn an Aspirant*

Sri Vasistha continued: Having developed the ability of controlling the senses, enduring the internal and external pairs of opposites, and being endowed with a pure intellect, an aspirant should approach a spiritual preceptor to acquire the knowledge of *Brahman*.

Oh *Rama*, you are the very source of divine virtues. Being endowed with all the excellent qualities that adorn a spiritual aspirant, you withstand the adversities of life with a balanced mind. Your heart being free of impurities, you are like the autumn sky devoid of clouds. Your intellect is subtle and discriminative. You are indeed at the very threshold of Liberation. Whoever possesses such qualities are spiritual aspirants fit for attaining Liberation.

As long as the body exists you must externally continue to perform your duties in accordance with the scriptures and internally continue to remove the impressions of attachment and hatred. Follow the lofty examples of those who attained Self-realization. But those who pretend to be spiritual aspirants, being more interested in selfish rather than spiritual attainments, are like jackals of the forest. They fill the atmosphere with their empty howlings.

Oh *Rama*, take recourse to self-effort in order to free the intellect of the impurities of the mind. Just as a cow that is sinking in a marsh is saved with effort and diligence, in the same way this intellect must be saved from the illusions of the mind through effort.

When the mind is purified it develops the ability of reflecting any object in itself and becoming one with it. When you attain this state of purification by your self-effort, there will be nothing in this world nor in the heavens that you cannot acquire or accomplish.

Whoever is endowed with *Brahmacharya*, patience, valor and dispassion, for him nothing is impossible of attainment. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, since you are already endowed with these excellent qualities, you should continue to enhance *Sattwa* until you are fully established in the Self. Then having attained Liberation in life, may you enjoy infinite bliss and be ever untouched by the misery of the world-process.

*Thus concludes Sthiti Prakarana
(the chapter dealing with the Establishment
of Intuitive Vision) in Yoga Vasistha.*

अन्ये ऊचुः

द्वयोर्मध्यगतं नित्यमस्ति नास्तीति पक्षयोः ।

प्रकाशनं प्रकाश्यानामात्मानं समुपास्महे ॥ ११ ॥

We adore that Self, which is the Light of all lights, which transcends the concepts of 'is' and 'is not,' and which is neutral towards existence and non-existence.

Upashama Prakarana: 8-11

अन्ये ऊचुः

यस्मिन् सर्वं यस्य सर्वं यतः सर्वं यस्मादिदम् ।

येन सर्वं यद्वि सर्वं तत्सत्यं समुपास्महे ॥ १२ ॥

We adore that Supreme Truth, in which everything is, of which everything is, from which everything is, to which everything must return, by which everything is sustained, and which is all that is.

8-12

UPASHAMA PRAKARANA

(The Chapter Dealing with the
Quiescence of the Mind)

Sections 1 and 2 — *Reflections of Sri Rama*

The royal court of King *Dasharatha* was so crowded with Gods, Sages, Saints, Kings, royal officers, and spiritual seekers that it appeared like the sky filled with shining stars. All listened to the illuminating teachings of Sage *Vasistha* as he continued to enlighten *Rama*.

Such was the mysterious power of the words of the Sage that all were spellbound as they listened. Even those who were *Rajasic* (passionate and distracted by nature) became like adept *Sanyasins* (recluses) as they sat still like painted pictures. As the atmosphere was filled with a profound stillness, even the birds stopped their warbling.

The sun began to decline in the west. Soon the conches blew indicating the time for evening ablutions. Sage *Vasistha* stopped his teachings for the day and permitted the audience to depart. First the Sage stood up, then the King and others prepared themselves to retire. The assembly hall all of a sudden appeared like an agitated lake.

Sage *Vishwamitra* passed the night at the home of Sage *Vasistha*, while the others retired to their homes. The Gods and astral spirits too went to their abodes. Finally Sage *Vasistha*, King *Dasharatha*, and all the others performed their evening prayers and rituals and went to sleep.

But *Sri Rama*, instead of passing the night in sleep, continued to reflect upon the teachings of Sage *Vasistha*. Just as a baby elephant continues to think of its mother, so too was *Sri Rama's* mind focused on the words of the Sage.



Sage Vasistha gives his teachings in the Royal Court of King Dasharatha while Gods shower flowers.

Courtesy: Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

Sri Rama reflected thus: What is the nature of this world-process. Who are these people? Where do the elements come from and where do they go? What is the nature of the mind? How can the mind be controlled? Whence is this *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion and how can I transcend it?

What did Sage *Vasistha* teach in order to control the mind? What methods did he enjoin to master the senses? What is the fruit of Self-Realization? It is the Self that appears as the world-process. Existence in this world is a deep-rooted disease and must be cured by the nectar of wisdom.

The intellect must soar like a swan beyond the illusions of the world. But it is difficult to renounce the objects of the world. Yet without renunciation it is impossible to attain Self-realization. Alas! What a confounding problem!

When will I abide in the Self and sport in the world as a Liberated Sage? When will my mind subside in the Self like a ripple in a lake? When will I be able to cross the ocean of the world-process abounding with the sharks of desires and the undercurrents of cravings?

When will this apparent wave of my individuality, which is whipped by the storm of cravings and which abounds with the whales and sharks of desires and expectations, merge into the ocean of the Divine Self? When will I abide in that sorrowless state which is the goal of all aspirants and spiritual seekers? When will I be endowed with wisdom and equal vision?

When will I experience that state of enlightenment which is even like the full moon flooding the heart with its cooling rays of bliss and peace? This fever of the world-process is consuming every limb of my body. It is destroying my vitality and strength. When will I be rid of this awful malady?

When will my intellect shine like a serene lamp placed in a windless spot? When will my senses turn away from the objects of the world, thus enabling me to cross the ocean of the world-process even like the *Garuda* Bird? When will I become free of the body-idea which is sustained by the impressions of previous *Karmas*? When will I destroy the stream of *Karmas* and become one with my essential Self?

When will I attain that glorious state of Self-realization, compared to which even the pleasures of the *Nandana* gardens of the Heavenly world become as insignificant as a blade of grass?

Oh Mind, tell me when you will be able to install the pure vision of the Sages within yourself? Do not let me become a prey to the python of the world-process.

Oh Intellect, I am even like your brother. Extend your sisterly affection to me, and by listening to the teachings of Sage *Vasistha*, may you free yourself as well as myself from the world-process. Oh Intellect, a teaching that has been thought of a thousand times but has not been accepted by you will disperse like the wintery clouds in the sky. But the teachings that have been accepted by you will continue to shine brighter and brighter like the rising sun.

Thus *Sri Rama* continued to reflect upon the teachings that he had heard from Sage *Vasistha*, and again and again he sought to persuade his mind, intellect and senses to promote the mystic movement leading to Self-realization.

Sections 3 and 4 — *Sri Vasistha Receives Praises
from King Dasharatha and Rama*

With the advent of the next day, even during the soft hours of the dawn, *Sri Rama* rose early and performed his morning rituals. Then accompanied by his brothers and friends he proceeded to the residence of Sage *Vasistha*, where they saw him seated in meditation. From a distance they offered their adorations to him, and then went to his courtyard to await the proper time to go to the Royal Palace where the teachings were held.

Soon the King, royal officers and princes, and the Sages and *Brahmins* also collected at the residence of Sage *Vasistha*. As darkness dwindled, Sage *Vasistha* got up from *Samadhi* and offered his blessings to those who had gathered. Then Sage *Vasistha*, accompanied by Sage *Vishwamitra*, entered into a chariot and went to the palace. They were followed by all the others who had gathered in the courtyard.

Having entered the Royal Court of King *Dasharatha*, they took their respective seats and waited with patience for Sage *Vasistha* to begin his teachings. A soft breeze began to blow, and the atmosphere was most inspiring.

King *Dasharatha* broke the silence by saying: Oh Sage, just as rays proceeding from the moon are cooling and refreshing, in the same way your words of wisdom have removed the feverish misery from our hearts and have filled us with peace. Your teachings confer on the listener the highest form of bliss. They are removers of mental illusions and destroyers of all negative *Karmas*. They are the mystic ungent with the application of which one begins to behold the glory of the Self.

Oh Sage, the teachings of Sages like yourself bring delight to our hearts. Even a wreath of heavenly flowers placed upon a person does not cause as much delight as do the teachings that proceed from enlightened Sages.

Turning to *Sri Rama*, King *Dasharatha* continued: Oh best among the race of *Raghu*, a day spent in adoring the Sages is indeed lit up with brightness, while all other days without such divine association are enveloped in darkness. Therefore, Oh *Rama*, continue to ask Sage *Vasistha* about the imperishable Self.

Sage *Vasistha* commenced: Oh *Rama*, do you recall the teachings of the previous day when I explained how this world is a product of *Maya* or Cosmic Illusion, and that *Brahman* has assumed the form of the world through His *Maya*? Numerous worlds arise out of *Maya*, and all are experienced through ignorance abiding in every individual. *Chitta* or the mind is the essence in a human being, and when it is purified, one becomes Enlightened. But when the mind remains impure and filled with illusions, one remains in a state of bondage.

When such teachings proceeding from the Sages are reflected upon again and again, and are accepted deep within the heart, they give rise to the state of Liberation. But when such teachings are not listened to with attention and reverence, Liberation is not attained.

Sri Rama said: Oh Sage, I have passed the night reflecting upon your nectarine teachings. Your words of wisdom are delightful to hear, but are yet more delightful when reflected upon. Indeed they are the giver of the highest form of joy.

May the *Kalpaka* (wish-yielding) tree of your teachings continue to deck our lives with the fruits of spiritual wisdom. Oh Sage, please allow the stream of purifying wisdom to flow on from your sacred lips.

Section 5 — *The Mystic Art
of Eradicating the World-process*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, just as a palace is sustained by its pillars, so too is the world-process sustained by the *Jivas* (souls) that are dominated by *Rajas* (the principle of passion and activity) and *Tamas* (that of inertia and infatuation). But those in whom *Sattwa* (purity) abounds, they are able to renounce this world just as a snake sloughs off its outer skin.

Rajas-Satwicās (souls which are gradually able to sublimate *Rajas* into *Sattwa*) as well as pure *Satwicās* are inclined to the practice of spiritual reflection. In addition to the performance of good actions, they

practise good association, study of scriptures and listening to spiritual teachings under the guidance of a *Guru*. Gradually, the impurities of their unconscious minds are reduced and the intellect begins to shine like a lamp. This continues until they are enlightened.

Unless one practises spiritual reflection by oneself and comes to understand the nature of the Self, he cannot attain Self-realization. When the Self is discovered by the force of spiritual enquiry, the intellect becomes steady. Just as still water allows agitated sand to settle, in the same way the calm water of wisdom overpowers all the agitated worries of the mind. Just as a goldsmith continues to work with apparently worthless gold-ore until the gold is isolated, in the same way an aspirant continues to practise reflection until the Self is realized.

Oh Aspirants, listen to the essence of all teachings. When the Self is not known by you, it creates misery and affliction. But when It is known and discovered, it gives rise to infinite bliss.

Just as gold that has fallen into mud remains uncontaminated by the mud and can be removed from it, in the same way the Self that has fallen into the muddy illusion of the five sheaths and the three bodies must be wiped clean of all its impurities by the practice of discrimination.

With uplifted arms I am declaring at the top of my voice that it is this sinful mind which has brought about the erroneous predicament of bondage for the Self which in truth is ever free. Therefore, endeavor to destroy this mind.

Yet although I repeatedly declare this truth, there are only a few who will actually heed to my teaching. The mind that lies buried like a turtle in the mud of egoistic desires cannot be benefited by the light of the sun; nay, even if twelve suns were to blaze forth, still the turtle would remain enveloped in darkness. In the same way, the mind of worldly persons remains enveloped in the darkness of ignorance in spite of the luminous teachings of the Sages.

It is in the night of ignorance that the spirit slumbers on the bed of body-identification. Awaken your spirit with the help of spiritual enquiry and bring about the cessation of this body-idea. You will then be ushered into the glorious day of divine Realization.

Just as clouds of dust do not taint the sky, in the same way the illusions of the world do not spoil the Self. Pleasure and pain do not belong to the body, nor do they belong to the Self — they are products of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed there is neither pleasure nor pain.

Oh *Rama*, behold the miraculous potency of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). This world is merely an illusory modification (*Vivarta*) of the Self. Therefore, it is neither real nor unreal. Just as dew drops do not abide in fire, in the same way this world-process does not abide in the Self. When ignorance is removed, the Self alone is seen as the only reality.

This Self is beyond grief, delusion, birth and death. Devoid of the distractions of the mind, discover the Self that is unaffected by the three *Gunas* and their modifications. Thus knowing, Oh *Rama*, become free from grief.

You are the all-pervading Self. You are the homogeneous essence abiding in all names and forms. Having removed the veil of ignorance, having brought about the termination of desires, having mastered the mind and senses, and having transcended the cares of the world, possess an intellect that is steady and become free from grief.

Oh *Rama*, your body (the Self) is higher than the Himalayas, vaster than the universe. Without the tension of accepting or rejecting, living a life of utter self-effacement, Oh *Rama*, enjoy the fulfillment of desires in the Self in the same way as the ocean enjoys its own surging waves. Therefore, develop the steady intellect that is unaffected by the storms of illusion and be free from grief.

Since this entire world is illusory, there is nothing to be desired. Oh *Rama*, you have attained Enlightenment. Your desires are fulfilled. Assert the true and taintless nature of the Self and be free from grief.

Oh *Rama*, perform your duty as a would-be King, and when you acquire the throne, rule your kingdom for a long long time with the spirit of righteousness. Though performing actions, you will not be entangled in the world-process.

Section 6 — *Gradual Ascent Towards Liberation*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Oh *Rama*, those who perform action in accordance with the ethical conduct enjoined in the scriptures and without any egoistic sense of actorship are liberated in life. But those who, having attained human birth, do not perform actions with the spirit of detachment continue to rise and fall intermittently: they rise to heavenly worlds as a result of their good *Karmas*, and they fall to hellish conditions as a result of their evil *Karmas*.

Following the course of *Karmas* actuated by selfish desire, they are born again and again in different classes of beings. But rare are the souls who, having attained purity of mind and having broken the chain of craving by the force of wisdom, attain Liberation.

Those who have attained the qualifications for Liberation are *Rajas-Satwica* in nature. They have passed through a process of mental purification through their efforts in many past embodiments. However, it is during the present birth that the tree of their good *Karma* has become decked with the blooms of spiritual qualities. Their minds have become receptive to spiritual wisdom.

Much as beautiful nymphs adorn the heavenly gardens, all great qualities such as friendliness, gentleness, graciousness, serenity of mind, and magnanimity of the soul adorn his heart who is fit to attain Liberation. Though performing actions in daily life, he is balanced in mind during pleasant

and painful developments. Just as darkness vanishes with sunrise, so do the illusions in the form of experiences of pleasure and pain vanish from his mind.

Just as swans pursue a silvery cloud, in the same way all great qualities pursue those who are fit to attain Liberation. Being endowed with these qualities, they approach a spiritual preceptor for guidance and spiritual instructions. Then having taken recourse to listening, reflection and meditation, they attain spiritual enlightenment.

The deer of the mind that has been sleeping in the forest of the world-process is gently awakened by the practice of spiritual enquiry, and once awakened, the mind becomes free from the tiger of death.

Oh *Rama*, most aspirants follow this gradual ascent: birth in a righteous family, spiritual aspiration, cultivation of good qualities, performance of good *Karmas*, approaching a preceptor, receiving instructions, purification of the *Chitta*, intensive enquiry into the nature of the Self, and the attainment of Liberation. There are, however, some fortunate souls who, due to their previous spiritual advancement, do not follow the usual course of *Sadhana* (spiritual discipline). They attain Liberation even like the sudden falling of a ripe fruit from a tree. But in the case of these rare souls, one should not forget that they were born with a highly elevated consciousness as a result of their effort in many past lives.

Sections 7 and 8 — *Song of the Siddhas*

Sri Vasistha continued: In ancient times, King *Janaka*, the ruler of *Videha* country, in a unique way attained enlightenment. For your spiritual upliftment, Oh *Rama*, I will relate this story to you.

King *Janaka* ruled his kingdom with righteousness, and under his guidance the country prospered, the subjects were happy and contented, and all enemies were vanquished. The King also enjoyed all the blessings of this mortal world to their fullest degree. One day while roaming in the royal gardens he began to divert himself with the beauty of the flowers. Keeping his attendants at a distance, he enjoyed the soft and fragrant breeze and the enchanting creepers laden with flowers. Being thus rapt in observing the beauties of nature, he soon became aware that the *Siddhas* (perfected astral beings) were whispering words of wisdom, which were like songs that awaken aspiration for Self-realization.

The *Siddhas* said: We resort to that witnessing Self Who is the embodiment of wisdom and bliss. It is He Who manifests as the experiences of pleasure and pain reflecting in the outgoing modes of the mind. We take refuge in the changeless Self Who is the Reality behind the triad* of 'seer', 'seen' and 'sight.' Having renounced this illusory triad, we take refuge in the underlying Self.

* Due to ignorance, each individual experiences the triad of seer, seen and sight. The 'seer' refers to the ego-sense or the illusory sense of individuality, the 'seen' refers to the objects of the senses or the world-process created by illusion, and the 'sight' refers to the illusory interaction created between the two — the interaction between the ego-sense and the objects of the world.



King Janaka listening to the spiritual instructions given by the Siddhas — the Astral Beings.

Courtesy Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

We adore the Self that transcends the waking, dream and deep sleep states of consciousness. We abide in the Self that is *Turiya* — the fourth state, the transcendental Absolute. We meditate upon the Self which is the Light of all lights, which cannot be defined as 'Is' or 'Is not,' and which is neutral to the concepts of existence and nonexistence. We take recourse to the Self, the Absolute Truth, in which all these abide, to which all these belong, by which all these are sustained, for which all these exist, and which is all these.

We adore the Self which is the all-encompassing Reality, which includes the entire range of verbal expressions beginning with 'A' and ending with 'Ha', and which are joined together by the nasal 'M'. (The Self asserts itself in every being by the verbal expression of '*Aham*' or 'I'. The true basis of the 'I' is the Absolute or *Brahman*.)

Those who abandon the Divinity abiding in the cave of the heart and run after the objects of the world in search of happiness are like the dull-witted who abandon the already acquired *Kaustubha* gem (fulfiller of all desires) for the sake of worthless stones. The dull-witted who, in spite of knowing that there is nothing tangible in the pleasures of the senses, still run after them, are unfit to be called human beings. They are donkeys meant to carry loads of *Karmas* through the endless roads of repeated embodiments.

Just as in ancient times *Indra* hurled a thunderbolt against the rising summits of the mountains, in the same way an aspirant should strike the hissing snakes of the senses again and again with the rod of

discrimination until they are subdued. Attain the sacred delight of mental quiescence. When the mind is invaded by peace and tranquility, one enjoys the highest Bliss of Self-realization.

Section 9 — *King Janaka Meditates upon the Significance of the Songs of the Siddhas*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Having listened to these heavenly songs sung by the *Siddhas*, King *Janaka* became reflective. Just as a coward becomes frightened at the shouts of a battle, so too the King became frightened by the clamor of the world. Like a river rushing to the ocean, he rushed into his palace.

Ascending the stairs to the uppermost story of his palace, he confined himself to a solitary room and reflected upon the significance of the words of the *Siddhas* thus: It is indeed regrettable that I am being driven through repeated experiences of birth and death. It is indeed sorrowful that, like senseless stones rolling among stones, I am being led through birth, growth, disease, old age and death.

Oh how expansive is time, and in its vast flow the duration of my life is just a drop, most insignificant. Yet I am so interested in this transient life. Fie on me. Why am I so proud of this kingdom which is just a particle of dust in the vastness of the universe? Why do I not direct my mind towards the removal of pain that has not yet come?

I am endless in the beginning as well as in the end. This limited existence that appears in the middle is so transient. Why am I so attached to it? Why do I intensify my faith in the objects of the world that only give rise to the repeated experiences of birth and death? What is there for me whether the objects of the world exist or perish, whether relatives and other forms of prosperity come or go? Like bubbles appearing and disappearing in the ocean, so are the objects of this world.

There were great kings and emperors endowed with immense power, glory, fame and prosperity. But today they exist only in the form of memories. Since those great personalities have all passed away, then what makes me expect the perpetuation of my physical existence? What has happened to the treasures acquired by the kings and emperors of the past? What has become of their glorious achievements? All have passed away. Why do I place my trust on these transient possessions and attainments?

By the sweeping currents of boundless time, millions of *Brahmas* (Creators) have been destroyed, millions of world-systems have come and gone, and greatest of all men have been reduced to dust. Why then am I to place my trust in this transient life?

Objects that are near to one's body are considered direct, objects that are far away from the body are considered indirect or remote, and the body itself is considered to be the Self. These are the three types of error in one's thought. Possessed by the evil spirit of egoism, I have been wandering in darkness for a long time.

Like bubbles that appear and disappear in the ocean, so do millions of Creators, *Indras* and world-systems appear and disappear in the ocean of *Brahman*. Even that mighty *Rudra*, for whom *Brahma* and *Vishnu* are nothing but toys, even He is bent low by the terrible time. Knowing this, why do I sustain this vain desire for a long life?

Days and months continue to come and go, but never have I seen a day that could produce the Bliss of *Brahman*. Why am I expecting to find that which is eternal, imperishable, Non-dual and blissful in the realms of time and space?

Just as swans sport in a lake, so do desires for sense-enjoyments sport in the lake of the heart. I have been led from misery to misery, from pain to pain, from sorrow to sorrow, and as yet I have not developed dispassion. How can the Self be realized?

Fie on greed and attachment that render the heart insensitive to the fact of transience in life. Whatever object I cherished in my heart, I have witnessed the destruction of with a sorrowful mind. Wherever I pinned my faith, therein I encountered disillusionment. What is there in this world worth desiring?

Some objects are charming at the present and some become charming later on. In fact, all objects glitter with an illusory charm due to lack of spiritual enquiry. How can anything in this world be charming when it is afflicted by the impurity of perishability?

Whatever a person seeks with joy, that becomes for him the source of pain and sorrow. Objects of today will become a prey to destruction in the course of time. Objects that are charming will lose their charm and turn into ugly forms. Pleasures of today are tainted by the shadows cast by the sorrows of tomorrow. Is there anything substantial to which I should take recourse?

Devoid of the knowledge of the Self, one suffers from dull-wittedness during childhood, from blind passion during youth, and from numerous worries arising out of family entanglements during old age. When does he endeavor to liberate himself from the bondage of the world-process?

There are physical as well as mental diseases that infest the lake of the world-process. How am I to find their cure when they abide in the hollows of the *Chitta* (mind)? This world is filled with ignorant souls who are born only to die, and who die only to be born. Rare are the illumined souls who are born to put an end to the cycles of birth and death, and who, having discarded their bodies, do not return to the world-process.

Who am I in comparison with those mighty personalities such as *Brahma* the Creator? There exists *Vishnu* for whom the cycle of creation and dissolution is like the closing and opening of his eyes. But even he perishes, for millions of *Brahmas* and *Vishnus* and other divinities continue to rise and fall like bubbles in the ocean of existence. (With relation to *Brahman* or the Absolute, all human concepts of the Divinity are in the realms of transience, and therefore, even the greatest of Gods must perish in time.)

Objects of pleasure are acquired by feverish effort, and once acquired, must be protected with great care and vigilance. Yet in spite of all effort, one must continue to fear their loss. Seeing this, even prosperity is nothing but adversity for me. It is better to roll in the fires of hell than to be subjected to the alternating experiences of pleasure and pain in this world. Having entered into this world-process which is thus only an abode of endless sorrow, how can a person expect any happiness?

Those who have been condemned to be decapitated are delighted when instead they are only whipped. So too, people in this world experience joy only because it creates an illusion of turning away from a greater pain to a lesser pain. There is no substantial happiness in the objects of the world.

This monkey mind has been deluding my soul for a long long time. But now I no longer delight in the fickle display of its fiendish dances. For a long time I have been tied by the ropes of desires and thrown up and down by the fickle thought-waves of the mind. But now I intend to attain Supreme Rest in the Self. I consider *Samkalpa* (thought sustained by egoistic vision) to be the mind. I will endeavor to destroy the mind by the removal of *Samkalpa*. By doing so the tree of the world-process will naturally dry up.

Oh how long have I suffered! Again and again through numerous embodiments I have imagined my doom, dreaded my death, and grieved over the loss of my dear relatives and possessions. But now I have attained the termination of all sorrows. I am Enlightened. I have caught the thieving mind which

has been stealing my imperishable wealth of Divine Identity. This mind has been not only a thief but a powerful enemy as well, and I had been under its influence for a long time.

Just as fog and mist are dispersed by the shining rays of the sun, in the same way the mind is dissolved by the light of discrimination. Let me meditate upon the teachings of the *Siddhas*, who have revealed to me the Treasure of all treasures — the Self that abides deep within my heart. Let me discover that Treasure in silence.

Having discovered the treasure of the Self, I have attained the fulfillment of all desires. Just as during winter the clouds stop drifting and quietly adorn the mighty peaks of the Himalayas, so have my restless desires stopped their wanderings. They now brood over the mighty peaks of Divine Consciousness. They exist only in appearance.

Adorations to the light of wisdom. The illusions that “This body is mine” or “I am the body” or “The objects of the world are mine” have all been dispelled. I have destroyed the enemy mind by the force of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness). Now I abide in the highest state of wisdom, ever free from the sorrow and misery of the world.

Section 10 — *King Janaka Practises Silent Reflection*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Oh *Rama*, though the royal attendants and gatekeepers continued to urge the King to resume his daily duties, he remained immersed in his inward reflection.

The King reflected thus: This Kingdom of mine is of no worth. It is a perishable possession. Therefore, having renounced these illusory objects of the world I will abide in the Self even like the waves abide in the ocean.

Oh *Chitta* (mind), give up your sly craving for the traces of joy that seem to proceed from the objects of the world. Do not be immersed in the marshy lands of birth, old age and death. Oh *Chitta*, from whatever source you desire to find happiness, that very source will become the cause of your sorrow. Therefore, do not seek happiness from the objects outside; seek happiness from the Self within.

Oh Sinful *Chitta*, thinking of the objects of the world is the seed of evil. Therefore, try to discover the spontaneous love of the Self by renouncing your attachments to the objects of the world. What is desirable in this world that you must endeavor to realize? What is that imperishable attainment to which you must pin your faith? What are you to accomplish through my actions or my inaction? There is nothing in this world which is not afflicted by birth and death, beginning and end. All that is born must perish.

Let this illusory body continue to perform actions; I, who am the Self, have nothing to gain or to lose. I do not desire to acquire those objects that have not been attained, nor do I renounce those objects that have been attained. Abiding in my essential Self, I will allow my apparent personality to follow the process of its *Prarabdha Karma* (fructifying action).

Though performing actions in this world, I no longer expect any result in the form of illusory conditions and developments. When the mind is desireless and without attachments to the objects of the world, it views the activity and inactivity of the body with equal vision. Therefore, although I will let this body of mine continue to perform actions, yet I will be beyond good and evil Karmas.

The notion "I am the doer; I am the enjoyer" is sustained by the mind. But when the mind attains the state of quiescence, this erroneous notion is removed. Then whether a person engages himself in action or not, he is ever free from the world-process.

Section 11 — *The King Continues to Enlighten His Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, having reflected thus within himself, the King engaged himself in the performance of his daily duties. But though engaged in external activity, he maintained an inward serenity based upon the vision of the Self. From his inner point of view he enjoyed the silence of deep sleep even during his waking state.

Then having retired from his daily duties, he spent the night reflecting upon the bliss of the Self. Again and again he conversed with his own mind in order to further enlighten it: Oh fickle *Chitta*, this world does not exist for your delight. Therefore, endeavor to attain quiescence where you will perpetually enjoy the bliss of the Self.

Oh Mind, the more you continue to think of objects, all the more will the world-process extend. But when you renounce the thoughts of objects, the world dissolves into the Self. Just as a tree manifests ramifying branches, so too, nourished by the water of desire, you, Oh Wicked Mind, continue to manifest in thousands of ways.

Oh Gentle One, place the passing joys of the world on one side of the scale and the bliss of inner stillness on the other, and observe how the bliss of the Self outweighs all the pleasures of the world. Do not give value to the objects of the world. Neither consider them desirable nor undesirable.

If you consider objects desirable, you will develop the impressions of attachment, and if you consider them undesirable, you will generate impressions of hatred. In both cases you will continue to weave illusions of the world-process. On the other hand, having renounced both, discover the fullness of the Self wherein all the desires of the heart are fulfilled.

Neither should you be elated due to prosperity nor depressed due to adversity, because, Oh Saintly One, the Self is beyond rising and falling, while the world is like a restless wave in the ocean. Oh Child, you have no relationship with the objects of the world. These objects have no reality of their own. How can the reality within you be related to the unreal objects of the world?

Oh Mind, you are yourself an illusory existence. The world that is projected by you is also illusory. The relationship between you and the world is indeed illusory. If you were to say that the world is unreal but that you are real, then how can the real be related to the unreal, how can the living be related to the dead? If you were to assert that you as well as the world are both real, then you would have experienced supreme felicity, because there would be no occasion for conflict, confusion and despair in the mind.

Therefore, knowing that you as well as the world are both illusory modifications of the Self, renounce your grief. By the practice of *Samadhi* (superconscious meditation), inspire the spirit within to wake up to its essential nature — the Self. Oh Mind, take recourse to repeated effort and dispassion in order to attain the Highest.

Section 12 — *King Janaka Abides in the State of Liberation*

Sri Vasistha continued: Oh *Rama*, as the result of spiritual enquiry, King *Janaka* became Enlightened. Although he continued to perform his duties as a king, he was ever detached from the sense of egoistic 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'. Even while engaged in actions, he enjoyed the inner tranquility of the Self. He was, as it were, at all times experiencing the peace of sound sleep.

Just as dust clouds are unable to taint the sky, so too were the taints of egoism and the sense of possession unable to affect his consciousness. Not having anything to accept or to reject, whether in

adversity or prosperity, he was ever balanced. No longer tormented by the sentiments of elation and grief, he experienced unceasing felicity. He did not dream of the future, nor did he indulge in the memories of the past. Transcending the illusion of names and forms, he continued to perform his duties of the present.

Oh *Rama*, it is due to the subtle desires of the mind that a person turns to the past, expects a future, or is driven to indulge in the present. But when the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the mind are annihilated by the intuitional knowledge of the Self, a Sage becomes free from the three periods of past, present and future. So as long as intuition has not been realized, one must continue to practise spiritual enquiry until the consummation of all thought-processes is attained in the form of Self-realization.

This ocean of the world abounds with the waves of misery. But by taking recourse to the boat of intuitive wisdom (*Prajna*), a Sage is able to cross them. Intuitive wisdom is the only way to the cessation of all misery.

Just as a worthless straw is agitated by the most gentle breeze, so too are those who are devoid of intuitive wisdom afflicted by the pettiest of adversities. But those who are enlightened are like mountains in the mighty winds of adversity — totally unshaken and unaffected. When intuitive wisdom unfolds in the purified heart of an aspirant, he no longer depends upon externality in order to attain Liberation, and when the Self is attained, not only are the scriptures transcended, but also the spiritual preceptor as well.

Therefore, an aspirant must cultivate the tree of knowledge in the depths of his heart, which is tended to, watered and nourished by the study of the scriptures and good association. If the tenacity and interest with which people run after the perishable objects of the world were directed towards the attainment of the treasure of *Prajna* (intuitive wisdom), they would be enlightened in a very short time. Nothing more needs to be done in order to attain Liberation.

The dull-wittedness of the mind is the source of all misery and adversity. It is the seed of the world-process, and therefore, must be ruthlessly destroyed by the practice of *Prajna*. Whatever happiness is experienced by being an emperor of a vast kingdom or by ascending the subtle worlds in the heavenly plane, all that and more is experienced by the possession of the treasure of *Prajna*.

Through *Prajna*, even those who were like crows now soar like swans, and those who were like frightened jackals are now able to overpower even the most ferocious of lions. Endowed with the armor of *Prajna*, the Sages are not affected by the arrows of greed, hate, pride or grief that abound in the battlefield of the world-process.

There is nothing in this world nor in the heavens that is not accessible to one who is endowed with *Prajna*. And just as a dark cloud that obscures the sun is easily dispersed by the mighty force of the winds, in the same way, the cloud of egoism that obscures the vision of the Self is dispersed by the mighty winds of intuitive knowledge.

Section 13 — *The Methods of Mastering the Mind*

Sage *Vasistha* continued: Oh *Rama*, by following the example of King *Janaka*, you too will become enlightened even in this very life, and then you will be able to perform your daily duties with inward detachment.

Those who are *Rajas-Satwicas* (those in whom *Rajas*, the principle of distraction, is dominated by *Sattwa*, the principle of harmony) attain Self-realization in their present life. For them the present embodiment is their last.

Therefore, one should direct one's self-effort towards the practice of *Vichara* — Spiritual Enquiry. Those who are terrified by the miseries of the world-process cannot find refuge in destiny, or in Karma, or in wealth, or in relatives. For them the only refuge worth taking recourse to is Spiritual Enquiry aided by one's own self-effort.

Those who seek refuge in destiny continue to be dominated by desire, anger, greed and craving. They tread the path that leads to endless misery. But those who take recourse to self-effort attain spiritual knowledge, which dawns as spontaneously as if a fruit has fallen from the clear blue sky.

The erroneous notion, "I am the body" is like a dark night which is dispelled when the sun in the form of spiritual knowledge rises in the firmament of one's heart. Spiritual enquiry dispels the mist of egoistic vision and the sky is revealed in all its grandeur and glory.

The ego-sense is the root cause that sustains and intensifies the darkness of ignorance. But when it is annihilated or transcended, this darkness vanishes and the Self shines forth even like the sky at sunrise.

The mind is ever distracted by its concepts of what is desirable and what is undesirable. It develops impressions of attachment towards the desirable objects and creates impressions of hatred and dislike towards the undesirable ones. If these two forms of concepts are overcome, then bondage in this world-process ends.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, when undesirable objects or conditions present themselves, you should not allow yourself to be afflicted. Maintain a balanced mind and know that for the Self there is nothing undesirable or hateful. And similarly, when desirable objects or lovable conditions arise, you should not be elated, because for the Self there is nothing desirable.

The mind in the masses is ever tossed by the ideas, "This is good and I must strive to attain it," and "This is evil and I must fight to reject it." Agitated by the currents of attachment and hatred, the human mind is like the many blossoms of a tree that is ever agitated by every breeze that blows.

Oh *Rama*, these are the qualities of a *Jivan Mukta* (Liberated Sage): freedom from desire, fearlessness, an inward sense of eternity, balance of mind in all conditions, intuitive knowledge, establishment in the actionless Self, gentleness, freedom from mental distractions, patience, friendliness towards all, con-

tentment, sweetness, sweet speech and reflectiveness. These qualities must be cultivated by an aspirant in order to move on the path of Liberation.

Oh *Rama*, strive to destroy all the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the unconscious. When they are all destroyed through spiritual enquiry, the mind is automatically mastered and becomes incapable of creating the world-process.

Whether sitting, walking, standing, sleeping or engaged in any action, continue to maintain an unceasing flow of spiritual enquiry deep within. The wise say that those who do not practise spiritual enquiry are as if dead even though physically alive.

At all times maintain the attitude that the world is false, that nothing exists and that nothing belongs to you. Keep your mind balanced in all conditions. Perform your daily duties as they present themselves without worrying about works that are to come in the future.

The mind is inert and non-existent, but its apparent reality is sustained by the light of consciousness. Just as a wild cat depends upon the might of the lion for its sustenance (feeding on the remains of what the lion kills), so too the mind is ever dependent upon the might of pure consciousness for its existence.

Without the Self, the mind is dead. The light of the Self reflecting in the mind renders the latter active and vibrant. The mind, thus, becomes like a hissing snake ever ready to project its venom in the

form of misery in the world. But when an aspirant asserts within himself, "I am Pure Consciousness. I am not the mind," he is led to supreme mastery over the mind.

Brahman, Who is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss), apparently allows a ripple to arise in Himself. This ripple becomes interested in externalization and soon assumes the role of *Chitta* or the mind. With increasing ignorance and externalization, the *Chitta* becomes unaware of *Chit* (Consciousness) and, guided by the thoughts of the past and expectations for the future, begins to flow in the realms of illusion. In this way the mind becomes the basis for the world-process.

The serene awareness of the Self, as if it were drunk with the alcoholic drinks of *Raga* (attachment), has fallen into the pits of the sense-objects. It has become unconscious of itself. This serene awareness must be reawakened in order for it to rediscover its divine nature. So by the practice of spiritual enquiry, dispassion and mastery over the senses, the disease of externalization is remedied in one's consciousness.

Oh *Rama*, the Light of *Atman* reflecting in the thought-waves of the mind projects as well as illumines the objects of the world. This world, therefore, is nothing but the refracted light of the Self through the mind.

When an aspirant is able to negate the thought-wave along with the reflection of the Self in it, he realizes the truth, "I am *Atman*, the Self." When consciousness operating through the mind is freed

of its dependence upon objects, it discovers its identity as *Brahman*.

The Self is the basis for illuminating the realities of the individual soul as it journeys through the world-process. Like the sun, the Divine Self is the Illuminer of all. The Light of the Self permeates all the minds of numerous souls. Nothing can be experienced without the Light of the Self.

However, just as the sun reflecting in a mirror is able to illumine the objects in the room in which it is placed but not the objects in other rooms, in the same way, the reflected consciousness in the mind illumines the realities of the individual but does not illumine the realities of other individuals. The Self is the Illuminer of all, yet limited by ignorance operating through the various minds, Its illumination seems to be confined to the limited spheres of each individual soul, thus not allowing the contents of one mind to be known by another mind.

Mind is nothing but Pure Consciousness in a conditioned state. When a Yogi attains discrimination between the Self and the not-self, he is able to separate the illusory material principle from the mind, resulting in the perception of pure *Brahman*, the Absolute.

The limited mind further operates through the fluctuations of the vital forces (*Prana Spanda*), but due to ignorance one is unable to see his essential Self as totally different from the mind, senses, *Pranas* and body. However, when ignorance is destroyed, the intuitive mind negates these illusory projections of the not-self, and the Self is revealed by its own light.

The state of *Jivahood* is only the result of the mind's inability to separate the Self from the not-self. In fact, from the absolute point of view, mind, senses, intellect, ego, *Pranas* and all the objects of the world-process do not exist; they are like mirages appearing in the expansion of the Self. The Self is this world, the Self is this time and space. But being purer than the sky, the Self is not realized through ignorance.

Just as darkness dissolves before the rising sun, so too, when the Self is revealed, the mind is transcended and destroyed. As an aspirant practises spiritual enquiry, he promotes the development of an intuitive mind, through which the Light of the Self removes the veil of ignorance. This negates and dissolves the mind which was only an effect of ignorance. But led by ignorance, one forgets one's essential nature as *Atman*, and following the course of his mental desires and cravings, enters into the illusory world of objects where all is perceived as reality.

Oh *Rama*, mind and *Prana* are interdependent. When the *Pranas* are controlled, the mind is unable to fluctuate and thus is unable to bring about the projection of the world. The mind is associated with the process of knowing (*Vedan*) as well as the process of vibration or fluctuation (*Spandana*). When any of these two are controlled, the mind is controlled and the Self is realized.

Prana is controlled by *Vairagya* (dispassion), by the practice of *Pranayama* as outlined in Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga, and by the practice of *Samadhi* (intense meditation leading to superconsciousness).

Through the light of intuitive knowledge one sees the illusoriness of the mind. The mind, being a blend of *Chit-shakti* (the power of awareness) and *Spand-shakti* (the power of vibration), is, in fact, non-existent, because such a blend (like the blend of light and darkness) is an impossibility. When this is understood, the mind is said to be negated.

Oh *Rama*, do not sustain any desire within yourself. When desires are sustained, the fictitious mind comes into existence, but when all desires are ignored, negated and transcended, the mind becomes non-existent and the spirit discovers its identity with the Self — the mass of pure consciousness.

It is ignorance that leads people to be tormented by the mind as well as to fight with it in order to destroy it. But being inert and of the nature of not-self, the mind is already “dead.” Just as it is ridiculous to say that the head of a person has been smashed by the soft petals of a lotus or that one must fight a severe battle to kill one who is already dead, it is even more ridiculous to believe that a person has been afflicted by a non-existent mind.

It is the lack of spiritual enquiry that has given rise to the state of bondage. Misunderstanding is remedied by understanding alone, and so too, ignorance is remedied only by knowledge born of enquiry. It is a great wonder how people are being driven to misery by their illusory minds. For a spiritual aspirant who has gained insight into the illusoriness of the mind, however, the task of mastering it becomes effortless and simple.

Oh *Rama*, behold the marvels of the mind. Although non-existent, yet it has projected the world in which it finds itself entangled and bound. It conceives of fear even in the melodious music arising from the strings of a Veena. It is frightened at the sight of a person in deep sleep. Then devoid of inward patience and dominated by the frightened mind, an ignorant person continues to experience fear and misery at every step of his life.

Therefore, Oh *Rama*, do not be deluded by the mind that is in reality non-existent. Discover its illusoriness, regain your essential nature as the Self, and become free from the bondage of the world-process.



Sages Descend into the Royal Court of King Dasharatha to Listen to the Teachings of Sage Vasistha.

Courtesy: Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India

SWAMI JYOTIR MAYA NANDA THE GENIUS OF YOGA

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda was born on February 3, 1931, in a pious family in Dumari Buzurg, District Saran, Bihar, India, a northern province sanctified by the great Lord Buddha. From his very childhood he showed various marks of future saintliness: he was calm and reflective, brilliant in his work at school and college, and loved by all. A constant source of inspiration to those who came in contact with him, he never faltered in his high ethical ideals. Side by side with his studies and practical duties, he reflected upon life's deeper purpose.

An overwhelming feeling to serve humanity through a spiritual life led him to embrace the ancient order of Sanyasa on February 3, 1953, at the age of 22. Tirelessly he practised intense austerities, living in the Himalayan retreats by the sacred river Ganges. For over nine years he was a religious professor at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy. In addition to giving lectures on the *Upanishads*, *Raja Yoga* and all the important scriptures of India, he was the editor of the *Yoga Vedanta Journal*.

To his Guru, Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj, Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda was a gem, and on one occasion he told a group of his devotees that Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda is a self-made Yogi, and that he is a dynamic exemplar of his teachings. Ever able to assist foreign students in their understanding of Yoga and Vedanta, his intuitive perception of their problems endeared him to all.

With an unusual dimension in his range and richness of wisdom, Swamiiji never contradicts the great scriptures of the world, but rather through his unique explanations, adds to them. His exemplary life, great command of spiritual knowledge, love towards all beings, and impressive, dynamic expositions on Yoga and Vedanta philosophy attracted enormous interest all over India. He frequently lectured by invitation at the "All India Vedanta Conferences" in Delhi, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and other parts of India.

"Behind his vast erudition lies a sincere and feeling heart, yearning for the upliftment of seekers after Truth," wrote M. L. Bazaz, secretary-advisor to the late Prime Minister Nehru of India.

In 1962, after many requests, Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda came to the West to spread the knowledge of India. Crossing Europe, he lectured in various countries. In 1964, he toured North and South America, inspiring and elevating thousands of Yoga students.

In Puerto Rico (from 1962 to 1969), as founder of *Sanatan Dharma Mandir*, he had rendered unique service to humanity through his regular classes, weekly radio lectures in English and in Spanish, and numerous TV appearances. In March 1969, he moved his center to Miami, where he also appeared on many TV and radio programs, and spoke at outstanding philosophical centers. Presently, Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda conducts daily classes in *Raja Yoga*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Yoga Vasistha*, Hatha Yoga and meditation at his Ashram — the Yoga Research Foundation.

Through his dynamic magazine, the *International Yoga Guide*, his radiant guidance and ever effulgent literature, Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda stands forth as the glowing morning sun awakening sleeping hearts to a new dawn of bliss.

Today Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda occupies a place of the highest order among the international men of wisdom. Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda — The Genius of Yoga.

YOGA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Aims and Objects

1. To spread the laws of spiritual life.
2. To promote understanding of the unity of life among all people, regardless of race, sect, creed and sex, and also to promote harmony among all religions by emphasizing the fundamental unity of all prophets, saints, sages and teachers.
3. To help suffering humanity by teaching the higher moral standards, prayers and meditation.
4. To give regular classes in the teachings of Yoga, Vedanta and Indian Philosophy.
5. To promote Universal Peace and Universal Love.
6. To promote the cultural growth of humanity on the basis of everlasting spiritual values of life.
7. To guide students and devotees all over the world.
8. To print and publish spiritual literature.
9. Anyone devoted to the ideals of truth, non-violence and purity can be a member of this Foundation.

A penetrating mind, lucid instruction, good natured, with inborn charm and an ever-present twinkle of humor in his eye, this is Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, a truly living exponent of Yoga.

— Yoga Teacher, Japan

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda has been the only source of information on Yoga Vasistha teachings in the Sivananda Ashrama, and his understanding and kindness, patience with Western people like myself, brings not only happy memories but also makes the relationship valuable.

— Swami R, Canada

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda is a jewel of a person in many ways, with rare gifts of sharp intellect and deep learning, duly tempered with humility. He is dignified but very devoted to the well-being and upliftment of those who come in contact with him. His winning manners and very scientific approach to religious problems will disarm anyone of his or her hostility, if any, towards the Vedic culture

— Former Secretary to the late Prime Minister,
Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru of India.

Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda's vast erudition, striking simplicity, exemplary life, great command of spiritual knowledge, and last but not least, his highly impressive and dynamic exposition of Yoga and Vedanta philosophy have raised him high in the esteem of all concerned. He exerts tremendous influence on all his devotees, has been their excellent guide, and is a source of profound inspiration to them

— Lawyer, Chapra, India

