

Astavakra Samhita

An Interpretation of the Ashtavakra Gita

By Ananda Wood

Instruction on Self-Realization

Janaka said:

1. 1

Just how can knowledge be attained?
And how can freedom come about?
How is dispassion to be found?
Please tell me what you can of this.

1.2

Ashtavakra said:

If you want freedom, you will have
to turn away from outward things.
See objects as objectionable
scraps of waste: produced by
partiality of outward sight
perceiving an unwholesome world.

Thus you may join back into truth:
in patience and straightforwardness,
in sympathy and quiet joy.
Such virtues are your nourishment
to seek undying life within.

1.3

You are not made of 'earth',
nor 'water', nor of 'fire', nor 'air', nor space
and time, nor anything of world.

You are the witness of all these:
the self that shines as consciousness.
Know only this, and you are free.

1.4

If separating body out,
you stand at rest in consciousness,
then here and now you come to peace
and happiness, where you are free
from all restraining ties and bonds.

1.5

You don't belong to any class.
You're not born high, nor lower down.
Nor have you any stage of life
that changes what you were before.

Unseen by sense, untouched by form,
remaining always unattached,
you're just the witness of the world.

Be that ... and come to happiness.

1.6

All pain and pleasure, right and wrong,
pertain to mind. They do not in
the least pertain to you yourself:
who carry on unlimited,
continuing through everything.

You do not act or fail to act.
You don't enjoy or suffer what
results. Thus you remain completely free,
always and everywhere.

1.7

You are the one who sees, the only
see-er: who sees everything.

At heart, you're always free. Your
only bondage is then this: that you,
who are in truth the see-er, look
upon yourself as something else
(as just a doing instrument,
a petty doer who is seen).

1.8

When bitten by the great black snake
of ego's self-regard, you say
that 'I do this' or 'I do that.'

But only take conviction in,
that 'I am not this acting thing';
and come – beyond all passing on –
back home, to lasting happiness.

1.9

Convinced of truth, you realize:
'I am the one, pure consciousness:
just one, not made of many things.'

Thus, in the fire of this conviction,
may the dense entanglement
of ignorance be burned away:

to free you from all thought of grief
and bring you back to rest content,
at peace with what you really are.

1.10

Just as a seeming snake appears
upon a rope that's falsely seen,
so too this seeming universe –
extending through all space and time –
is just imagination, misperceived
on nothing else but consciousness
unaltered by imagining.

Just that unaltered, knowing light
is true enjoyment: always found
unlimited and ultimate,
no matter what seems to take place.
Live thus, as happiness itself.

1.11

Whoever's free has realized
that freedom as one's very own:
as what one always is, oneself.

Whoever's bound remains imprisoned
in the thought that one is bound,
by things that limit what one is.

Such is the truth of what is said,
that: 'As one thinks so one becomes.'
Of this, the changing world is made.

1.12

Self is the witness, manifested
everywhere; one simple,
perfect consciousness; completely free
and unattached, desireless,
untouched by any seeming act.

Thus unaffected and at peace,
delusion shows it as a flow
of life that passes through a world
of seeming change and passing acts.

1.13

Reflecting back into your self,
you stand above all seeming else.

Unmixed with body, sense and mind,
your individuality
is undivided consciousness,
with nothing else beside itself.

Thus, free yourself from the delusion
'I am this apparent person
who has somehow come to be –
perceived outside or felt within.'

1.14

You've long been caught up in the noose
of fancying that this imagined
body is your real self.

Cut off that fancy,
with the sword of knowing: 'I am consciousness.'
Thus come to rest in happiness,
at one with what you really are.

1.15

There, unattached and actionless,
you shine alone, by your own light,
quite unaffected by all ill.

Your only bondage is just this:
that you keep after altered states
where mind is shown absorbed in bliss.

1.16

Just you are present everywhere,
pervading through this universe
made up of your own thoughts and feelings.
Everything is made of you.

Your nature is pure consciousness.
That's what you really are. Don't go
from there to pettiness of mind.

1.17

Come back to that unfathomable
depth of pure intelligence
where you stay always unaffected –
cool beyond all expectation,
unencumbered, undisturbed.

Let all your tastes and inclinations
show their nature – as they are.
That is of consciousness alone.

1.18

Just realize that nothing with
some seeming form can be quite right.
That only what remains unformed,
beneath appearances, is found
unshakable and therefore real.

Where this is rightly taught and learned,
there's nothing more to be produced.
No more becoming there occurs;
no reborn life is born again.

1.19

Just as a mirror is implied
within the image it reflects,
but also stands beyond the show;
so too the highest principle
that rules the world is found within
the body, and beyond as well.

1.20

As one pervading principle
of space extends within a pot
and goes beyond outside as well,
through everywhere and everything;

so too, one full reality
is always present everywhere,
found unconfined within all things
and in all groups and kinds of things.

Joy of Self-Realization

2.1

In truth, I am pure consciousness:
at perfect peace, quite undisturbed
by all of nature's seeming acts.

So, all this time I've been deceived
by mere pretence, by just a show
that isn't really there at all.

2.2

This body here shines by my light:
it's shown by me alone. But then,
the same is true of everything
in the entire universe.

Thus, either everything is mine,
or otherwise, not anything.

2.3

With world and body left behind
by me completely, here and now,
through some most inward faculty,
the self I am is seen at last –
beyond all doubt and ignorance.

2.4

Waves, foam and bubbles are not
anything but water, in themselves.

So too all things, throughout the world,
are always rising from the self.
They're never present otherwise,
in anyone's experience.
It is of self that each is made.
They're nothing else but self alone.

2.5

Examined closely, cloth is found
to be just thread. So too, upon

dispassionate enquiry,
the world turns out to be just self.

2.6

As sugar crystallized from juice
becomes pervaded by its sweetness,
so do I pervade throughout
the universe produced in me.

2.7

It's only from mistaken knowledge
of oneself that world appears.
Where self is known for what it is,
no seeming world arises there.

It's like a rope seen as a snake.
The snake appears through wrongly
knowing what is seen. Immediately
the rope is known for what it is,
the seeming snake there disappears.

2.8

My very nature is just light.
That is what I innately am.
I never am apart from that.

Whenever anything appears,
it is just I that shine in it.
Through all appearances of world,
there's nothing there but I that shines.

2.9

All of the universe, conceived
from ignorance, appears in me:

like silver seems to shine in shell
of pearl; or like a seeming snake
seen in a piece of rope; or like
a false mirage of water shown
by trick of light from desert sun

2.10

At every moment that I know,
the world originates from me ...

and then, immediately, returns
to end dissolved in me alone:
just like a pot returns to earth,
like waves dissolve back into water,
ornaments melt into gold.

2.11

I am just that which recognizes
what I am, found always standing
unaffected, undestroyed;
while the entire universe,
right from the all-creating Lord
to every smallest tuft of grass,
keeps vanishing without a trace.

aho(Oh!) aham(I) namo(recognition, salutation) mahyam(to me) vinaso(destruction)
yasya(of whom) na(not) 'sti(there is) me(for me) . brahmadi(starting from the creator)-
stamba(to a tuft of grass)-paryantam(encompassing) jagan(universe)-nase(in the
destruction) 'pi(even) tisthatah(stays standing) ..

2.12

I am just that which recognizes
my own self. And even where
I seem embodied, I'm not complex.
I am just that simple one –
not going anywhere, not coming
here from anywhere – found always
present, underlying everything
throughout the universe.

2.13

I'm that alone which recognizes
what I am. Here in this world –
perceived by sense, conceived by mind –
there's nothing with my capability.

For I support all things,
yet do not touch them bodily.

2.14

I'm that alone which finally
has independent self-respect:
approached by seeing nothing
anywhere, of any kind, as 'mine';

or else, by seeing everything
experienced as taking place
in me alone, throughout the range
described outside by words and acts
or thought and felt within by mind.

2.15

Someone who knows, some way of
knowing things, an object that is known ...
No such division of three things –
no separated knower, knowing,
known – is ever really there,
in anyone's experience.

These three appear misleadingly,
as a confusing show produced
by a mistaken ignorance
made up from put-together parts.

I am the stainless truth of each:
uncompromised by ignorance,
untouched by partiality.

2.16

All misery is rooted in
duality, whereby some knower
seems at odds with what is known.
For this, there is no cure, except
to realize the simple truth:

that anything somehow perceived –
as known apart from that which knows –
is nothing but an empty show,
believed through blind stupidity.

I am untainted consciousness,
the one pure savour of experience,
found at one with everything.

2.17

I am pure consciousness: expressed
in limited appearances
that make me seem what I am not.

Through wrongly knowing what I am,
these limited expressions are
conceived made up of name
and form and quality – put on by me,
to make a show of seeming world.

But where I stand, beneath the show,
appearances are not conceived.
No mind appears or disappears.

My stand is thus beneath the mind:
found always by reflecting back
from blind, unseeing disregard
to where there is no ignorance.

2.18

For me, there is no being bound
or getting freed. For all illusion
is unfounded, is at peace.

The world stands just in me. But there,
in me, there really is no world.

2.19

It's certain that there's no such thing
as this embodied universe.

In all experience, there is only
consciousness: just my own self.

And though this consciousness seems mixed
with objects compromising it,
in truth it's always clean and pure:
with never any trace found here
of foreign matter that the mind
conceives to have been added in.
So how can there be any base

on which conception could now stand?

2.20

This body, hell and heaven,
bondage, liberation, fear: all these
are just conceived appearances.
What have such things to do with me,
who am just knowing, in myself?

2.21

In my own sight, there's no duality:
not even in a multitude
of seeming 'you's and 'me's.

It is as if the world has turned
into a far-off wilderness.
What could there possibly be here
to captivate my interest?

2.22

I am no body, have no body.
I am not a made-up person,
leading a created life.
I'm nothing else but consciousness.

My bondage was an empty claim
of personal possessiveness,
desiring fancied bits of life.

2.23

I am that endless ocean where
the differentiated waves
of world are all at once produced,
blown in the wind of rising mind.

2.24

In that same ocean of myself,
the mind is stilled and comes to end.

Here, ego is a merchant trader
travelling in the ship of world,

thus liable to be destroyed
by tides of fortune turning ill.

2.25

I am the unconditioned water
in the many changing waves
of different personalities,
of different egos in the world.

They rise, clash one against another,
play a while, and are absorbed;
impelled by nature from within.

Test of Self-Realization

3.1

Ashtavakra said:

Now that you know your real self
as one and indestructible,
quite unaffected by all change;

if you're established in this knowledge,
how could you have any interest
in such work as earns your keep
and builds a store of useful wealth?

3.2

It's only from one first mistake –
from falsely knowing one's own self –
that fondness and affection rise
for objects seen, deludedly,
as physical or mental things.

It's like the greed of someone who
has misperceived plain shell of pearl,
confused by a mistaken dream
of costly silver fancied here.

3.3

Now you have realized: 'I'm that
in which all things appear and
disappear, throughout experience –
like waves in water, on the sea.'

Then why should you keep running after
things, as though you were in need?

3.4

Where self is known as pure awareness,
its surpassing beauty shines:
in all its perfect clarity,
unstained by any otherness.

When this is heard and understood,

how can one yet be passionate
to join in physical embrace
that's always somehow limited
and compromised, by body's
imperfections and impurities?

3.5

It's strange to see a sense of mineness –
treating certain things as 'mine' –
remaining in a sage who knows
one self called 'I' in everything
and everything in that one self.

3.6

It's strange that one who's come to rest
in final non-duality,
who is established in the truth
that makes one absolutely free,
should yet keep leading (in the world
of people and society)
a life affected by desire:
degraded by the artful games
that the infatuated play.

3.7

It's strange that someone, having reached
that truth where time has come to end,
should live on impotent in time:
awaiting fond desire to rise
and drive all our activities;

though having fully understood
desire's partiality,
as contrary to knowing right.

3.8

For one who is disinterested
in this world perceived by sense
and in the subtle realms beyond,
who knows the truth that lives unchanged
beneath all change of seeming things,
and who awaits deliverance

of body's final passing on ...

it's strange that till the time is right
this same deliverance may be
avoided, and occasion fear.

3.9

No matter whether praised or feasted,
nor tormented and condemned,
a sage – established in the truth
of self seen always absolute –
is not made pleased nor gets enraged.

3.10

To be great-hearted is to see
one's mind and body acting just
like other minds and other bodies
acting in the object world.

With every act found thus apart
from unaffected self within,
how then could any praise or blame
disturb the one who sees like this?

3.11

When all the seeming things of world
are seen as just illusory,
all interest in them is gone.

How then can one of deep conviction –
past all vacillating doubt –
be found to shake in fear and trembling,
even face to face with death?

3.12

For one whose greatness lies within,
there's no desire left in mind:
not even for desirelessness.

To whom or what can be compared
someone who's found that happiness
is only knowing one's own self?

3.13

When someone knows (from one's own nature), all that's seen (through mind and body) turns out to be no such thing.

The different objects that appear when seen through personality, are shown not to exist at all when known from what one really is.

With differing things found nonexistent, how can one of deep conviction – past all vacillating doubt – make out one thing fit to accept and something else fit to refuse?

3.14

With interest in object things renounced by falling back within, there one is found desireless, beyond all pairs of opposites.

For one who's there, disint'ested, enjoyment is spontaneous: quite unconcerned with seeking pleasure, or avoiding any pain.

Glory of Self-Realization

4.1

Janaka said:

Oh yes. But then, the one who is
established in the real self
acts only through the pure enjoyment
of a show which is mere play.

That's not the same as the confused
bewilderment of ego-laden
personalities: like beasts
of burden drawing carts which
overflow with worldly happenings.

4.2

It is that state which all our
faculties, all energies and powers –
themselves inherently inadequate –
keep striving to attain.

Once it is reached, even the yogi,
standing there, no longer needs
to press for heightened states of bliss.

4.3

Whoever knows it, is at heart
uncompromised by good or ill;

just as the space pervading sky
is not itself made bright or dull
by tricks of light on mist and cloud,
although our eyes show it to be.

4.4

To one whose greatness lies within,
all that's perceived, throughout the world,
is known as only one's own self.

In such a state, just who or what
is there that could at all prevent

one's living moved from one's own self
and acting of one's own accord?

4.5

Among the whole community
of beings that have come to be,
right from the all-creating Lord
down to the smallest tuft of grass,

it's only one who rightly knows
that has the fitness to stand free
of being pulled by what is liked
or pushed away by what repels.

4.6

It's very rare that self is known –
without a second – as the source
from which all power and guidance comes
to form the seeming world of change

Where one's own self is rightly known,
from there one does what one finds fit,
quite unafraid of anything.

Four Ways to Dissolution

5.1

Ashtavakra said:

For you, there's no attachment found
which mixes you with anything
that is apart from your own self.
What then can you, who are thus pure,
wish to renounce from what you are?

Accordingly, dissolve away
this complex mix of different things,
and thus get merged back in again
to your unmixed reality.

5.2

From you arises all the world,
like bubbles rising out from sea.

Accordingly, know all of them
as just one self; and thus get merged
there, in your own reality.

5.3

Although the world appears before
our faculties of sense, it is
produced from unreality.
It is not truly there in you,
who are its pure reality.

It's like the semblance of a snake
appearing quite confusingly
when just a rope has been perceived.
Take note of this; and thus get merged
back into what you really are.

5.4

You are that being which is perfect:
just the same in grief and joy,
the same in hope and in despair,
the same in living as in dying.

Only thus, as perfect being,
may you come to be dissolved.

The Higher Knowledge

6.1

Janaka said:

Like all-pervading space and time,
I carry on, unlimited.
It's only nature's acting forth
that seems to show itself confined –
in seeming parts of changing world,
each like the space within a pot.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.2

Just what I am is like an ocean
manifested as a wave
that is this seeming universe.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.3

I am like silver, wrongly thought
to be perceived in shell of pearl
which is this fancied universe.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

6.4

I am myself in every being;
and all beings are in me.

Where this is rightly understood,
as knowing truly, in itself,
there's nothing to be given up.
Nor is there anything that needs
to be perceived and taken in;
nor anything to be dissolved.

Nature of Self-Realization

7.1

Janaka said:

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the ship of world
gets tossed about – blown here and there
by my own wind of inner mind –
though all the while, just what I am
remains completely undisturbed.

7.2

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the wave of world
may rise or vanish of itself.
I do not gain or lose thereby.

7.3

In me, as in an ocean that
is limitless, the world is only
name, conceived by mind alone.

I am thus utterly at peace,
unmixed with any made-up form.
In this alone do I abide.

7.4

Just what self is cannot be found
in objects that have come to be.
Nor is there any object in
just that pure self which is unmarked
and utterly unlimited,
beyond all stain of compromise.
Thus unattached, desireless,
true self is found at perfect peace.
In this alone do I abide.

7.5

I am, in truth, pure consciousness.
The changing world is an entangled

web of show – effectively
made up by many tricky faculties
of seeming sense and mind.

So how and where can any thought
of ‘mine’ tell what is right from wrong?
What properly distinguishes,
for ‘me’, what to reject as wrong
from what I rightly may accept?

Bondage and Liberation

8.1

Ashtavakra said:

It is in bondage that some mind
feels want or grief for anything –

that mind rejects what it dislikes,
but likes some things and takes them in.

8.2

It is in freedom that no want
nor any grief is felt by mind.

For then mind does not feel constrained
by what it likes and must accept,
nor else by what it does not like
and must accordingly reject.

8.3

It is in bondage that some mind
is felt attached to any of
these many things that seem perceived.

It is in freedom that no mind
is felt attached to anything,
in all these things that seem perceived.

8.4

When there's no thought of 'I', attached
to anything that seems perceived,
then liberation is attained.
But when this thought of 'I' appears,
it's felt constrained by circumstance,
in bondage to an alien world.

Reflecting thus, you come at last
to just that spontaneity
where nothing need be taken in,
nor anything needs pushing out.

Detachment

9.1

Ashtavakra said:

To whom belongs what has been done
or has not been accomplished yet?
When are such oppositions all resolved?
Where are they put to rest?

By knowing thus, you may proceed
from your indifferent ignorance
to be intent upon renouncing
and thus getting disengaged.

9.2

It's only someone truly rich
whose wish for living, for enjoying
and for getting information
has been stilled – from an astute
discernment of the ways of world.

9.3

All this, that's found impermanent,
gets vitiated in three ways.
It lacks in substance; brings on blame;
it's what we need to put aside.

By getting to be sure of this,
one may attain to lasting peace.

9.4

Just at what time or age in life
are opposites no longer found
to trouble people in the world?

It's when these troubling opposites
are left behind that someone comes
to rest fulfilled, content with what
occurs of its own happening.

9.5

Great seers and saints and yogis teach
through many different beliefs.

When this is noticed, who of us
could reasonably not attain
to that detached indifference
where peace and harmony are found?

9.6

Where someone has achieved in full
right knowledge of pure consciousness,
what is that someone but a teacher –

taking, through impartial reason,
those who truly seek beyond
the cyclic process of rebirth.

9.7

Just see each transformed element
as that which all these elements
are always, in themselves alone.

Then, from that instant, you will stand –
completely free and unconstrained –
in that one truth of your own nature,
which is what you always are.

9.8

It's only inner inclinations
that make up a changing world
of happenings which seem outside.

Consider'ring this, it is just these
conditionings within your mind
from which you need to free yourself.

Renunciation of the world
can only come from giving up
mind's inclinations from within.

By that achievement, here and now,
you stand where you are always free,
no matter in what circumstance.

Quietude

10.1

Ashtavakra said:

Forsaking as an enemy
all wish and want for object things,
you must give up the narrowness
of petty, personal desire.

So also, you must give up wealth
whose store of wanted objects comes
inevitably mixed with loss.

And you will even have to go
beyond all valued principles
that cause our sense of gain or loss
and drive our personal desires.

It's in this way that you transcend
desire, wealth, morality.
Thus you attain to your own self,
disinterested everywhere.

10.2

See wealth and property and gifts
and even friends and family
and other such good fortune as
entanglements of fantasy,
within a show that's made by mind.

This made-up show can never last:
as mind keeps changing, all the time.

10.3

Wherever there may be desire,
there is also found a world,
made up of restless happenings
that change and pass in course of time.

You need to know this for yourself.
Attaining to mature dispassion,

may you find that you are free
from want for objects of desire
wished by thought in restless mind.

For, in that freedom, you have come
to lasting peace and happiness.

10.4

It's only of the mind's desire
that all our bondage has been made.
Thus 'freedom' is a word that's used
where wish and want are found destroyed.

It's only by detachment from
the world of change and happening
that anyone may come to joy
which somehow lasts, repeatedly,
through changing moments in our minds.

10.5

You are the one, pure consciousness –
found always indivisible.

The world that's seen is found inert.
It is dead matter – lacking life –
a show of blind unconsciousness
that is accordingly unreal.

This is not even ignorance.
But then, for you, what can there be
that you may somehow wish to know?

What meaning is there in this wish
that you would somehow like to know?
What's true and real in the world,
shown made of objects seen outside?

10.6

So many kingdoms, sons and wives,
and bodies, pleasures have been lost –
destroyed for you – although you were
attached to them, birth after birth.

10.7

Enough of riches or desires,
or even actions rightly done.

By these, mind does not come to peace,
here in the jungle of the world.

10.8

How many births have you not done,
with body and with mind and speech,
this laboured work that brings you grief.
It's these encumbered acts of work
that, here and now, you need to cease.

Wisdom

11.1

Ashtavakra said:

It is to nature that belongs
whatever happens, does not happen,
gets created or destroyed,
or altered in a changing world.

All this occurs quite naturally.
It happens of its own accord.

When that is surely understood,
whoever realizes it
finds comfort, leading back to peace
which no affliction can disturb.

11.2

For someone who's completely sure
that everything here in the world
is a creation of the Lord
and that there is no alien thing,
all hope or wish for outside things
becomes dissolved in peace within.

Then, how can there be anything
to which that someone is attached?

11.3

For someone who's completely sure
that fortunes and misfortunes come
in course of time from fate alone,
all faculties remain controlled
spontaneously: from self within.

That someone always rests content,
where neither want nor grief is found.

11.4

For someone who's completely sure
that joy and pain, like birth and death,

arise in time from fate alone,

it is not hopefully perceived
that everything which we expect
can somehow always be achieved.

That someone is thus liberated
from involvement with exertion.

Such a one is always free:
never found to be attached,
not even in the midst of doing
body's actions in the world.

11.5

All suffering here in this world
is just a fearful fantasy,
born only from mind's worrying.

Whoever is convinced of this
gets thereby freed and rests content –
with all desires given up –
no matter where, no matter when.

11.6

'No, I am not this body here.
And no, this body is not mine.'

Whoever is convinced of this
does not fall back on what's been done,
nor frets at what's been left undone.

Beyond all doing or non-doing,
freedom is found absolute.

11.7

'Just I alone am all of this:
right from the all-creating Lord
down to the smallest tuft of grass.'

Whoever knows that truth for sure
is freed from all conditioned thought.

That someone is thus pure, at peace –
remaining always turned away
from what may sometimes be attained
or may sometimes be unattained.

11.8

For someone who's completely sure
that this amazing, complex world
is not at all what it appears,
that certainty brings freedom
from all personal conditioning
of wish and want for partial things.

Thus freed from personality,
one comes at last to shining peace
whose very nature lights itself,
as if there's nothing in the world
that may exist or not exist.

Abiding in the Self

12.1

Janaka said:

At first repelled by body's acts,
next by long speech and then by thought ...
it's thus alone that I abide.

12.2

Not getting to be int'rested in sound
and other kinds of sense,
and by there being nothing seen
of self by our sense faculties,
I'm always free at heart: of both
distraction and one-pointedness.
It's thus alone that I abide.

12.3

It's only in distraction caused
by superimposition (and
such other things) that action need
be taken to become absorbed
in concentrated states of mind.

This being seen to be the rule,
it's thus alone that I abide.

12.4

Where all accepting and rejecting
have been left behind, there can
be no excitement or dejection
that produce a show of change.

Thus, here and now, a state is reached
in which no change at all appears.
No changing happening is shown
deceptively superimposed
upon unchanged reality.

Just that itself is all there is,
found where no happenings appear.

It's thus alone that I abide.

12.5

What way of life to lead or not,
or meditation, or rejecting habits
and beliefs that mind
has currently come to accept ...

discerning my mistaken fancies
and confusions by these means,
I come at last to clarity,
in which I thus alone abide.

12.6

Restraining or avoiding action
comes as much from ignorance
as action seeking to achieve
desired objects in the world.

Beyond what's done or is not done,
there is this principle of truth,
which must be fully recognized
by coming back to what it is.

It's there, alone, that I abide.

12.7

In thinking of what can't be thought
some form of thought must be involved.
So too that last-remaining mode
of thinking must be given up,
to stand in truth where I abide.

12.8

Whoever has accomplished that
has done what needed to be done,
has now arrived at what was sought.

Whoever lives there naturally
finds truth alone, spontaneously,
throughout all changes that appear.

Established thus, in truth alone,
all that was needed has been done.

Happiness

13.1

Janaka said:

In one who is completely free
of anything that's thought possessed,
there springs an unaffected peace.

But, even if it's just a loin-cloth
which gets taken to be 'mine',
this sense of owning something else
impairs that springing up of peace.

Accordingly, with all rejecting
and accepting given up,
I live content with what I am.

13.2

At some place or another,
it is body that becomes distressed.
Elsewhere, it may be speech or mind
that suffers trouble and wears out.

Renouncing these, I rest content:
established in that goal of life
from where all meaning is expressed,
for which all that we do is done.

13.3

In truth, there's nothing ever done.
There can be no accomplishment
claimed rightfully by anyone.

When this is fully realized,
what's there to do just comes about.

That being done, I live at peace
from which I cannot be disturbed.

13.4

Where yogis take themselves to stand

in body, they remain tied down
to states of acting or not acting
in a world where change takes place.

Abandoning all such involvement
and detachment, I am found
as that which always lives content:
at peace with what I always am.

13.5

No gain or loss gets to be mine.
I do not gain, nor do I lose
by standing up or lying down
or going off to somewhere else.

In standing still or travelling,
as in the depth of dreamless sleep,
I live content, in perfect peace,
exactly as I always am.

13.6

In sleep, my presence is not lost:
I live there undiminishing.
Nor in deep sleep is there found gain
which striving in the world achieves.

Abandoning both dark destruction
and bright gain, I live fulfilled,
with nothing further to attain.

13.7

Appearances of pleasure and
of other such emotions are
found limited and compromised,
by their occurrence in a world
of circumstantial happenings.

Observing this, time and again,
all judgment of what's beautiful
or ugly must be left behind.

Thus, I return to live content
where peace and happiness are found
beyond all thought of compromise.

Tranquillity

14.1

Consider someone who at heart
is free of calculating mind.

For someone thus devoid of mind,
there is no thought of objects gained.
All thought arises motiveless,
inspired by nature from within.

It is as though that someone finds
a consciousness that stays awake:
throughout all dreams which mind creates,
and in the depth of dreamless sleep.

Returning there, all personal
conditioning – inherited
by recollection from the past –
becomes exhausted, comes to end.

14.2

In what or where are riches found?
Where comrades, friends? Where fancied
objects, robbing mind of sober sense?

And where is learning, where is reason
telling right from what is wrong?
As my desire melts away,
just what of value can remain?

14.3

Where self is known as that transcendent
principle of unaffected
witnessing, from which all
capability and guidance comes,
there can be no desire left
to free myself of being bound.
No such desire can occur.

14.4

Where someone inwardly quite free

of worried thought acts outwardly –
inspired from pure happiness
of undeliberated self – those carefree acts
may seem insane, may seem improper and confused.

It's only someone else like that
who understands such carefree acts
and the extraordinary states
that their strange author passes through.

Knowledge of the Self

15.1

Ashtavakra said:

One who is pure of mind and heart
attains to what is sought, to truth
that's told exactly as it is.

But someone else may stay perplexed,
despite a wish for learning that
continues through the course of life.

15.2

Distaste for objects liberates,
and relishing these objects binds.

It's thus that knowledge is discerned.
Then, do exactly as you please.

15.3

This knowledge of plain truth may make
a person who is eloquent,
intelligent and active seem
to have turned dumb, turned stupid and
unwilling to do anything.

Such knowledge is not meant for those
who seek enjoyment in the world.

15.4

You are not body; body is
not yours. Nor are you any doer,
nor enjoyer anywhere.
Just what you are is consciousness:
appearing as that silent witness
which stays always unattached.

As that alone, you live content
through all that happens in the world.

15.5

Like and dislike depend on mind.
But no such mind is ever yours.

You are just consciousness itself,
quite independent of all thought.

As that alone you live content,
at peace with what you really are.

15.6

True self is found in every being,
and each being truly lives
in nothing else but self alone.

It is by realizing this
that anyone may live content,
quite free of ego claiming acts
and objects that it thinks are 'mine'.

15.7

Like waves arising in the sea,
this universe springs forth, into
its show of many changing things.

But this is only consciousness,
here seen embodied as a world.

Be that one consciousness,
untouched by feverish anxiety.

15.8

Be sure of it, be deeply sure
that you make no confusion here.

You are what knowledge truly is,
just that from which all guidance comes.

That is the self, just what you are,
beyond all nature's functioning.

15.9

This body is found wrapped around
by qualities. Accordingly,
it stays unmoved, it comes and goes.

But self is not affected thus.
It neither comes, nor does it go.
Why then feel sorry for its sake?

15.10

Let body last, until its cyclic
journey ends. Or let it go,
here and now, repeatedly.

What gain or loss pertains to you,
who are yourself just consciousness,
unmixed with anything besides?

15.11

In you, who are an ocean that
is limitless, let there arise
and let subside each wave of
that happens of its own accord.

This does not add to what you are.
Nor does it take from what is yours.

15.12

You are pure consciousness itself.
This changing world is nothing different
from what you are yourself.

Then how and where does thought arise
of what to take or to reject?
To whom can such a thought occur?

15.13

You are yourself that changeless peace:
one single, unmixed consciousness
continuing through everything.

In that, from where does birth arise?
Where action? And where ego's false
pretence, to be an acting 'I'?

15.14

In what you see, just you shine there,
all on your own. What else but gold
shines out in golden ornaments?

15.15

You must completely leave behind
dividing thoughts, like 'This is what
I am' or 'No, I am not this'.

Find out for sure that everything
is self alone. Thus you return
to what you are, to happiness
found free of mind's desiring.

15.16

The world arises only from
your ignorance. It's you alone
who are the one reality.

Apart from you, no one migrates
from life to life. It is none other
than your self that is found free
of transmigrating in this way.

15.17

This world is a bewilderment.
It is not truly anything
that it's perceived and thought to be.

Whoever finds this out for sure
becomes thereby disint'ested,
no longer driven by desire.

Thus, consciousness is found to shine
unmixed, as its own knowing light.

It's there at last that peace is found
as though no other thing exists.
It's found completely undisturbed,
illuminated from within.

15.18

Here, in the ocean of the world,
just one alone was in the past,
is now, and will in future be.

No bondage, freedom can be yours.
Thus live fulfilled, content, at peace.

15.19

You are just consciousness itself.
Do not disturb your mind with
wrangling arguments, for or against.

Stay calm, content in your own self.
For it is there, within your heart,
that happiness is truly found.

15.20

Give even contemplation up.
Hold nothing in your heart and mind.

It is as self that you are free.
What will you gain by any thought?

Special Instruction

16.1

Ashtavakra said:

Although you often may discuss
or listen to what many different
scriptures say, you won't by this
stand independent in your self.

That freedom cannot be attained
without forgetting everything
that memory has brought to mind.

16.2

As someone who has learned discernment,
you may find yourself engaged
in life's enjoyments, or in work
that may be usefully achieved,
or else in states of mind's absorption
back into the depth of heart.

But even so, your mind will long
to reach beyond the aims it seeks,
to where all wish and hope dissolve.

16.3

Each one of us is made unhappy
by exertion in pursuit
of objects that our minds desire.

But no one knows quite what it is
for which exertion may arise
or be returned to peace and rest.

Where someone fortunate receives
instruction from a living teacher,
there alone is freedom found.
It's only thus that anyone
is freed from the conditioning
of personality and world.

16.4

There is a central principle,
inactive utterly, within.
It does not even blink. That would
be much too troublesome for it.

And yet, all acts arise from it,
inspired for its sake alone.

To it alone and to none else,
all happiness in truth belongs.

16.5

When opposites – like ‘this is done’
or ‘that not done’ – are left behind,
mind gets to be indifferent.
It seeks no pleasure, riches, good,
nor even freedom from all these.

16.6

It is when objects don’t attract
that someone is dispassionate.
And it’s through greed for objects that
a person gets to be attached.

But one who neither takes nor gives
can’t be attached to anything.
There, no attachment can apply;
nor can detachment from the world.

16.7

It’s from this sense of give and take
that the world tree of happening
comes into sprout and branches forth.

It is by standing in desire
that fancied thought fails to be clear,
fails to distinguish different things.

So long as anyone stands here,
the sense of give and take remains.
From it appears a seeming world,
obscured by a confusing show

of insufficient clarity.

16.8

It is engaged in doing that
attraction comes about. And in
abstention that aversion shows.

A person who attains to wisdom
lives there freely, like a child
quite innocent of opposites.

16.9

It's only one who feels attached
that seeks escape from suffering
and wishes to renounce the world.

For some one who no longer feels
attached, no suffering remains,
not even in this changing world.

One who has thus attained detachment
stays untroubled everywhere,
throughout all change of happenings.

16.10

Whoever still has ego's pride
in liberation, or who feels
a sense of 'mine-ness' toward body,
cannot rightly be a sage
(who is established in plain truth)
nor yet a yogi (joining back
into unchanged reality).

Each person, claiming pride or 'mine-ness',
thus partakes in suffering
that makes true self seem compromised.

16.11

No matter what great 'Lord' or 'God'
may somehow be invoked to teach
you anything, you won't by this
stand independent in your self.

That freedom cannot be attained
without forgetting everything
that memory has brought to mind.

The True Knower

17.1

Ashtavakra said:

The fruit of knowledge and of
meditative practice is attained
by one who comes to rest content,
with faculties thus purified.

That one stays present all alone
enjoying perfect happiness.

17.2

Indeed, the one who knows plain truth
is never found to suffer want.

For the entire sphere of all
this multiplicity is filled
completely by that one alone.

17.3

No objects ever please one who
delights in self, just as neem leaves
aren't relished by an elephant
who does not like their bitterness.

17.4

It is quite rare to find a person
whose enjoyments are found free
of any tainted residue
that limits future character.
And rare to find a person truly
free of hankering for things
which are still left to be enjoyed.

17.5

Someone may wish for life's enjoyments.
Someone else wants to be free.
Each of these kinds of person is
found in the world. But it is far

less common that someone should lose
all wish for world's enjoyments and
all wanting to be free of them.

That someone is thus great at heart.

17.6

For someone truly broad of mind,
there is no sense of give or take:
attached to virtue, riches, pleasure,
liberation found in life;
nor even passing on at death.

17.7

In such a one, there is no
hankering for world; there's no dislike
for it remaining as it is.

Someone who is thus fortunate
lives happy with what comes about.

17.8

Fulfilled by knowledge thus attained –
with mind dissolved and aim achieved –
one who knows truly lives content
through sensual acts: of seeing sights
and hearing sounds, of smelling odours,
touching objects, eating food.

17.9

In one for whom the ebb and flow
of universal happening
has been exhausted and dried up,
there's no desire left, from which
there's any need to be detached.

For such a one, all sight is vacant,
action is quite purposeless,
and senses are dysfunctional.

All of these faculties mislead.
They do not work as they pretend.

17.10

No one is there awake. Nor,
rightly is there anyone asleep.

No eyes are there seen opening.
No eyes are there found to have closed.
That is a state beyond all states.

Whoever may be truly free
lives always in that final state.

For one who's free, that state must be
experienced always, everywhere –
no matter where some person's body
is perceived, nor where this person's
sense and mind are thought to be.

17.11

Seen standing everywhere in self,
with all intention pure within –
unmixed with any inclination
driven blindly from outside –
one who lives free is always found
presiding at the depth of heart,
beyond all taint of compromise.

17.12

No matter whether seeing sights,
or hearing sounds or touching objects,
smelling odours, eating food,
or speaking, walking, travelling ...

one who is great at heart within
stays always free, throughout all trying
to achieve and all mistakes
that get shown up by failed attempts.

17.13

One who has reached that freedom does
not flatter nor blame anyone,
is not made pleased, can't be provoked;

does not get caught in give or take,
and never anywhere expects
some profit gained by bargaining.

17.14

A woman seen aroused to passion,
death approaching near at hand ...
these don't disturb the quiet peace
where one who's great at heart must stand.

A perfect equilibrium
is found thus standing in that self
which is one's own, uncompromised.

17.15

In joy or grief, in man or woman,
in things working or not working ...
no true difference can be found
by one who stands unwavering
in true and clear intelligence.

For one who is thus grounded there,
the same is seen in everything.

17.16

No violence nor kind compassion,
no unbridled arrogance
nor chastening humility,
nor sense of wonder stilling mind
nor any troubled agitation,
can in fact be permanent.

All such conditioning must pass.
No such conditioning remains
in one for whom the ebb and flow
of happening has been exhausted,
has at last come back to end.

17.17

One who is truly free cannot
be driven by attraction felt
for anything perceived, nor by

revulsion towards something else.

For such a one, whatever comes
to be attained is found enjoyed,
with mind forever unattached.

17.18

Absorbed within or not absorbed,
what works out well or what does not ...
these are distinctions made by thought.

For one whose mind is void of thought,
no such distinction can be known.

That someone lives thus in a state
where self is found all on its own,
unmixed with anything besides.

It's in this sense that knowing self
may be described as 'absolute'.

17.19

By getting to be free of ego's
grasping sense of 'me' and 'mine',
a person may find out for sure
that nothing actually exists
as ego claims to have perceived.

That truth is found by one for whom
all wishing, hoping and expecting
are dissolved in self within.

Whoever knows thus properly
is not engaged in any act,
not even when the act takes place.

17.20

What mind displays is always mixed.
It is part clear and part obscure.
This mixture makes what mind dreams up
confusing and delusory.

All such confusion has, somehow,

to be transcended, left behind.

An indescribable condition
is attained, by one for whom
all last remaining trace of subtle
mind is finally dissolved.

Peace

18.1

Ashtavakra said:

In the arising of whose knowing,
does delusion come about,
so much made up as in some dream
created by imagining?

It's that which shines as happiness,
at peace with its own clarity.
To that alone is due respect.

18.2

Acquiring all kinds of things
brings much experience, many joys.

But happiness cannot be found
except by giving up all objects
sought by mind to be possessed.

18.3

The thought of duty to be done
burns painfully into the heart,
devouring tenderness within.

How then can there be happiness,
without a welling up inside
of undisturbed tranquility
that keeps refreshing heart inside?

18.4

This world of things that come to be
is all imagined in our minds.
It's nothing but imagining.

In ultimate reality,
this world that seems to be imagined
is not anything at all.

There is no ceasing of these beings

that are here thought self-conceived,
these that discriminate between
what has occurred or not occurred.

We think of these as persons who
inhabit bodies in the world.

18.5

Where does one stand in one's own self?
That stand is not found far away,
by looking out extensively
across the universe at large.

Nor can it be attained from something
limited or small in size;
within some body, sense or mind.

It has to be found effortless,
unchanged by all activity,
unmixed with any differences
that may appear to compromise
its unaffected purity.

It is forever thus attained.

18.6

The moment that illusion ends,
from that same instant when the truth
of self is realized, they who
seemed to be bound now find true self
presiding always free at heart.
There, seeing is found clarified,
dissatisfaction is dispelled.

18.7

All of this put-together world
is made of mind's imagining.
The self that knows is always free,
beyond all thought of passing time.

Why then should one who knows correctly
be in need of practices
that help achieve desired traits

of cultured personality,
as in the training of a child?

18.8

True self, within each mind and heart,
is all that's real everywhere,
throughout all space and time in world.

Whatever happenings occur
or don't occur, are nothing else
but supposition shown created
by the mind's imagining.

But, through its wishful fantasies,
this mind is driven, stupefied
by wanting objects of desire.

Who knows this comes to certainty
where knowing is at last found free
of mind that's driven by desire.

But what then may be known
or said or done, by someone who is thus
found free of all desires in mind?

18.9

A yogi who turns silent thus
comes to exhaust all differentiating
thoughts, like 'This is what
I am' or 'No, I am not this'.

But just what this exhaustion means
is understood by finding out
that 'Everything is self alone',
beyond the slightest trace of doubt.

18.10

A yogi who has come to peace
finds no distraction, concentration;
no excess of cleverness,
no blind unthinking foolishness;
no pleasure, nor unpleasantness.

18.11

In self-supported sustenance,
in dire need; in gain, in loss;
at home in friendly company,
or in withdrawal far away
into a lonely wilderness ...

these cannot make much difference
to one whom yoga has released,
from habit-driven tendencies
induced by past conditioning.

18.12

Then, where is virtue, where enjoyment,
where are riches, where discernment,
for the yogi who is freed
from dual thought: like this that's 'done',
opposed to that which is 'not done'.

18.13

There is no duty to be done,
nor any compromising taint at heart;
not for that yogi who is liberated inwardly,
though seen to live conditioned
outwardly in an external world.

This kind of yogi takes to any
way of life spontaneously,
in consonance with happenings
that take place of their own accord.

18.14

Where is delusion? Where is world?
Where contemplation upon that?
And where is liberation, for
that someone who is great at heart?

Who, at the limit of conception,
comes to rest in peace itself,
where all conceiving is dissolved?

18.15

One who perceives this world may well
make out that it does not exist.

But what is there to do for one
who has no inclination left?

That one, though seeing, does not see
what is imagined to be seen.

There's only seeing in itself
unmixed with anything thought seen.

18.16

By one who's seen the ultimate
reality of everything,
it may be thought: 'That's what I am,
that one complete reality.'

But what of one who sees no second,
nothing but one self alone?

That someone is then free of thought
which goes from self to something else.
Thus freed from mind's duality,
how does that someone think at all?

18.17

It is from seeing self distracted
that one practices control.

One who is noble does not get
distracted. Having nothing to
achieve, what does that someone do?

18.18

A sage, who stands established in
true knowing, is thus different
from most of us who take ourselves
to stand in an uncertain world.

Just like the rest of us, a sage
appears to stand on shifting ground:

as circumstances in the world
get changed, with such uncertainty.

But, inwardly, a sage lives free,
where nothing seen is thought possessed.

There, no absorption, no distraction,
no conditioned act is seen.
No act of ego covers self
with any taint of compromise.

18.19

One who is wise remains content,
not driven by desiring
for what may or may not occur.

By such a one, there's nothing done;
not even when observed as acting,
from the sight of those in world.

18.20

Remaining steadfast in true knowledge,
whether doing or not doing,
such a one takes nothing ill.

As what needs doing comes about,
it is then done; while that same self
from which the doing issues forth
is found completely undisturbed,
in its unchanging happiness.

18.21

One who breaks free from inclinations
gets to be thus independent,
motivated from within
and free from bondage to the world.

Thus, in such moving from within,
someone who's liberated may
be found to act spontaneously.

Each act is a dried leaf that's blown
by wind inspired from pure self.

Each leaf shows self alone,
through an inherited conditioning.

18.22

For one who's free of changing world,
there's nowhere any joy or grief.
Cool-minded always, such a one
presides in body unaffected,
as though disembodied here.

18.23

There's nowhere any sense of loss
nor wish to give up anything,
for one who stands established where
untroubled self is realized,
enjoying its own happiness.

18.24

For one whose natural state of mind
is free of calculating thought,
what's done comes up spontaneously:
from standing back in truth of self.

There, standing back in self alone,
no sense of pride or shame is found
like that affecting what is done
by most of us – who take our stand
in troubled bodies, senses, minds.

This is the stand of ego-mind:
inevitably compromised,
as mind confuses knowing self
with acting personality.

18.25

'This work is done by me as body,
not by me in my true nature
as pure self.' One who adheres
to thinking thus, attains that self
which seems to act but does not act.

It, even in the midst of action,

stays completely actionless.

It is that knowing light from which
all actions are inspired to rise.
It's that alone which truly knows,
beneath all acts that come from it.

18.26

One who is free in living body
may well seem to act as though
maintaining quite the opposite.
But such a one is not a fool.

Seen even as a person here
engaged in world, that person who
is free within shines truly bless'd,
finds happiness unqualified
by what may or may not occur.

18.27

Grown tired of conflicting thoughts
that reason in such different ways,
someone steady in true knowing
has at last returned to rest.

Found there established, such a one
does not see any sight, nor hears
a sound, nor thinks a thought, nor knows
an object other than what knows.

18.28

One who is truly great at heart
stays unaffected by distractions
or by states of concentration
drawing outward thoughts back in.

Thus, such a one does not aspire
to liberation from the world;
nor seeks out objects fancied here
by partial personality.

One great at heart has come to know,
beyond the shadow of a doubt,

that all this world is nothing more
than fictional imagining.

Attaining to that certainty,
one lives oneself identified
as all of the reality
that anyone experiences.

Throughout all seeing of a world
made up of mind's imagining,
one lives at heart unlimited
and utterly unchanged.

18.29

It's only one possessed of ego
who may act or may not act.
By one who knows unwavering,
unmixed with ego's falsity,
there's nothing done or left undone.

18.30

One who is free must be released
from agitation in the mind.
Thus, no one free can be a doer:
getting driven into trouble,
or made somehow gratified.

In someone who is liberated,
mind must shine desireless,
with its uncertainties resolved.

18.31

In one thus free, there is no mind
that sets out to reflect within,
or to engage in outward acts.

And yet – inspired from within,
unmotivated from outside –
mind sometimes may be found reflecting,
sometimes acting in the world.

18.32

On hearing truth directly told,
some unreceptive person thus
becomes bewildered and confused.

But someone more intelligent
may get withdrawn back into mind.

Through this withdrawal, thoughts are
silenced, showing mind as if perplexed.

18.33

It's only them who are confused
that keep repeating practices
of concentration and control.

They who discern what knowing is
do not see anything to do.
Each stands, as though in depth of sleep,
in just that state which is one's own,
where one's own self alone abides.

18.34

For one who's blindly ignorant,
no idleness nor effort can
result in happiness found free
of our conflicting differences.

It's only by determining
what's true and right that one who knows
finds peace, and is there satisfied.

18.35

True self is pure intelligence.
It's what we love, found always
perfect, unaffected by all ill,
completely free of any world
made up from seeming differences.

There in the world, as people take
to a variety of different practices,
they do not know that self.

18.36

One who stays blindly ignorant
does not attain to liberation
through repeated practices.

But one who's bless'd – by nothing more
than knowing truly – stands thus free,
devoid of all activities.

18.37

A person who is ignorant
does not attain to all the world's
reality. For that is what
this person wishes to become.

But one who knows most definitely
realizes its true nature,
even without wishing so.

18.38

Those who don't know are found in want
of true support for their beliefs.
They seek to grasp at what they can,
and thus perpetuate this show
of passing fiction in our minds.

Those who know better get to cut
the root of this absurdity
that mind believes to be a world
made up of change and happening.

18.39

One who stays ignorant does not
find peace. For it is then desired
as though it has to be obtained.

But one who knows has ascertained
a truth that doubt can never change.
Such certainty establishes
a peace that's present at all times,
can't ever disappear from mind.

18.40

Just where is seeing rightly known
to come from self, for any person
who depends on objects seen
through changing personality?

Those who know clearly don't see things
as 'this' or 'that'. They see no more
or less than self, which does not change.

18.41

Where is restraint or mind control,
for one who obstinately strives,
while still remaining ignorant
of where it's from that guidance comes,
and where control originates?

For one established in true knowing,
mind is guided and controlled
from happiness of self within.

That guidance is no changing act
of any artificial mind.
It is completely natural:
inspired of its own accord.

Thus, at all times, a timely guidance
is found present: timelessly
inspired from that inmost self
which shines unchanged as knowing light.

18.42

Some think about a universe
that is made up of happenings.

Some others think these happenings
(which are thus taken to occur)
may not, in stricter truth, exist.

One who does not think either way
gets thereby calm and unconfused.
That's all the more remarkable.

18.43

Conceiving of subjective self
as 'pure' or 'one without a second',
it appears objectified,
by those of sorry intellect.

But they don't rightly know that self,
from this confusion in their minds.
So long as the confusion lasts,
their lives are troubled, ill at ease.

18.44

The mind of one who longs for freedom
cannot function independent
of what's thought to be outside.

But, for one who stands in freedom,
mind is always independent:
functioning desireless,
inspired only for the sake
of unaffected self within.

18.45

On seeing objects seemingly
like fearsome tigers, those afraid
seek hurried refuge in a cave:
where concentration and control
may, hopefully, be found attained
through solitude and exercise.

18.46

On seeing personality
from where it is desireless,
it's like a lion reigning free
out in some forest wilderness.

The objects of our senses then
turn out to be like elephants.

They lumber off contentedly;
or if they can't, they gather round
performing courtly services
that make a show of flattery.

18.47

One who is free from any doubt,
whose mind is found at one with self,
does not have need of treatises
that say how freedom should be found.

In seeing, hearing, smelling odours,
touching objects, eating food ...

whatever life may bring about
accords with that same happiness
for which all happenings take place.

18.48

By the mere hearing of what's true,
someone whose intellect is pure
gets thereby clear, and comes to peace
that shines completely undisturbed.

There, nothing proper nor improper
may be seen, nor even plain
indifference to the both of them.

18.49

One who is open and straightforward
does what's present here to do.
That person's actions are like those
done by a child: not calculating
what looks good, or what looks ill.

18.50

From freedom of self-governance,
a person comes to happiness.

Through freedom, someone may transcend
beyond this personality.

Through freedom, clarity of peace
that shines from self, uncompromised.

Through freedom, one's own stand in self,

which is described as 'ultimate'.

From there, there's nothing else to find.

18.51

When someone comes to recognize
that one is not oneself a doer,
nor a personal enjoyer;
then all changing states of mind
get tired out and are destroyed.

This thought – that one is neither doer
nor enjoyer – thus destroys
all other thoughts. It then must turn
back on itself and get destroyed;

so that none else but self remains,
just as it is, unmodified.

18.52

One who knows rightly, leads a life
that is by nature unrestrained.

And yet that life is found to shine
with light that guides it, from within,
to function of its own accord,
unforced by anything outside.

Not so the made-up show of calm
that's artificially produced
by those who are still ignorant –
whose minds are driven by desire.

18.53

Those who know surely may appear
sometimes in great enjoyments; or,
it may be that at other times
they find retreat in mountain caves.

But they are always free in mind,
unfettered at the depth of heart.
There, no imagining remains.
It has completely been removed

from what is rightly understood.

18.54

From seeing or performing worship –
whether to a scholar or a god,
a holy place, a woman
or a king or someone loved –

no driven inclination can
at all remain, there in the heart
of one who stands in truth unchanged
by mixing it with falsity.

18.55

A yogi is not in the least
affected – even when reproached
and made to look ridiculous
by servants, children, wives, grandchildren
and by other relatives.

18.56

Though pleased, a sage is not found pleased.
Though pained, a sage is not distressed.

It's only someone else like that –
some other sage – who understands
this quite extraordinary state.

18.57

The sense of duty makes it seem
that something needs to be achieved.
This sense of needed doing is
what makes the changing world appear.
The world is made of this alone.

But those who have attained to wisdom
do not see this world made up
from thought of what needs to be done.

They see that any thought of need
shows mind in want, and thus admits
this thinking to be compromised.

No world made up of needy thought
is seen by those who know it right.

Such knowers see their seeming selves
as empty personalities
appearing formed from nothingness.

Accordingly, they realize
that self which has itself no form.
It's that which cannot be transformed,
stays unaffected by all ill.

18.58

One who stays ignorant in mind
is worried and distracted always:
never free from restlessness,
not even when there's nothing done.

But one who's truly capable
stays unconfused and unexcited,
through all duties that get done.

18.59

One who finds peace in depth of mind
thereby returns from changing acts,
to stand in peace which does not change
throughout all actions that take place.

Established there, a person may
thus keep on living undisturbed
through all activities in world.

No matter if that person sits,
lies down, or comes or goes away,
or speaks or eats. None of these acts
can undermine that happiness
which always stays uncompromised.

18.60

One who knows truth is self-possessed,
acts for the sake of self within.

But most of us act from a sense
of wanting what we don't possess.
This sense of want makes us distressed.

No such distress is felt by one
who rightly knows, not even when
shown acting in the world outside.

Seen even in the midst of action,
one who knows retains the calm
of waters infinitely deep.

All troubles are thus found dissolved
in peace that shines uncompromised.

18.61

The very inactivity
of one who's ignorant gives rise
again to action in the world.

And even the activity
of one who knows partakes of fruits
that come from what is actionless.

18.62

One who is ignorant may show
aversion towards things possessed.

For one in whom all bodily ...
attachment has dissolved away,
where is desire, where disgust?

18.63

For one who does not rightly know,
what's taken to be 'seeing' is
found always caught in thinking or
unthinking what's been thought about.

But, for that someone who would stand
in self, it is by thinking what
ought to be thought that self appears.

It paradoxically appears,

shown formed as blank 'unconsciousness':
which knows no objects seen by body,
sense or mind in seeming world.

18.64

A sage is one who, like a child,
is moved to act spontaneously:
quite innocent of calculation
tied to objects of desire.

For such a one, who's motivation
is thus pure, no taint is left
by anything that may be done.

18.65

Bless'd is the one who knows true self.
That knower always is the same,
no matter in what circumstance.

No matter whether seeing, hearing,
touching objects, smelling odours ...
one who knows is found the same:
untouched by personal desire,
disinterested in wanting mind.

18.66

Where is there any world that changes?
Where some show of changing things?
Where is achievement to be found?
Where any striving to achieve?

How can such questions rise at all,
for one whose knowing carries on
unchanged throughout all space and time,
beyond all thought of difference?

18.67

Whoever truly wins success
is freed from all objective aims.

A person who thus finds release
may then be recognized as an

embodiment of perfect peace
and unaffected happiness.

Just that is savoured as the essence
of one's own true nature: not
as seen through personality
from some imagined world outside,
but realized returned within
to one's own true identity.

For someone standing back in self,
absorption in plain truth is only
natural and spontaneous.

No further effort is requir'd.
There is no need to interfere,
as living functions carry on
completely of their own accord.

18.68

What need is there to say much here?
One great at heart – who's come to
realize plain truth – is thereby freed
from fancied want for life's enjoyments
and for freedom from such want.

But, one thus free is utterly
disinterested everywhere.

In such a one, no interested
expectation can be found.
No act is ever driven by
some fantasy of wish and hope
for any personal reward.

All acts that may seem personal
must none the less in truth turn out
to be impersonally done.

18.69

All of this dualistic world
– seen here extended forth into
the vast expanse of space and time –
is a description made from words

that need to be interpreted.

This play of words and what they mean
must finally be left behind,
by one who realizes self
as nothing else but consciousness.

But, when all words are thus transcended,
what can there be left to do,
by one who is pure consciousness?

18.70

In fact, this world does not exist.
It's all a product of confusion,
wrongly showing what appears.

By coming to be sure of this,
the inexpressible becomes
expressed to someone rightly pure,
who thus comes naturally to peace.

18.71

For one whose nature is pure shining –
never found perceiving objects
that mind thinks are 'to be seen' –

just where are any rules of conduct,
where dispassion, where renouncing,
where withdrawal of the senses
or of mind from seeming world?

18.72

For one who shines unlimited –
not caught in seeing nature's realm
of actions leading to more actions –

where indeed can there be bondage,
where can there be liberation,
where excitement or despair?

18.73

Up to the limits of the mind,

a world of change is manifest.
But it is shown mistakenly,
through a deceptive functioning.

Beyond this tricky show in mind
no world nor any change appears.

One who is wise lives free of any
sense of 'mine-ness'; free of ego's
falsely claimed identity
to be at once a changing doer
and a changeless, knowing 'I'.

The changing doer is a person
felt attached to fond desire.
The 'I' that knows can't be attached.

It's thus that one who rightly knows
shines free of all desiring,
lives utterly impersonal
in changing personality.

18.74

For one who sees correctly that
true self cannot be tired out,
can't suffer any pain or grief ...

just where is knowledge? Where a world?
And where can there be any feelings:
'I am body', 'This is mine'?

18.75

If someone unintelligent
stops practicing restraint of mind
and other forms of artificial
exercise, it takes no time
for mind to get caught up again
in unexamined foolishness
of fancies driven by desire.

18.76

A person who is lazy-minded –
unprepared to ask sharp questions –

will not give up ignorance,
not even when what's plainly true
is heard with due formality.

Through efforts made in world outside,
such a person may achieve
a state where mind seems to be free
of all its fond imagining.

But, deep within such 'no mind' states,
blind cravings stubbornly persist
for objects fondly fantasized.

18.77

For one who comes to know plain truth,
all need to act is thereby found
dissolved away. And yet that someone
may still seem engaged in acts
performing various kinds of work,
as seen by people in the world.

But even while thus seen engaged,
someone who realizes truth –
as seen from where that someone stands –
can find no opportunity
to do or to say anything.

18.78

For one who knows, unaltering,
beyond all trace of doubt or fear,
where is there dark? Where light? Where
giving up? Where anything at all?

18.79

Where is there steadfast clarity?
Where is discernment, fearlessness?

What are these, to a yogi whose
own character can't be described
and who is thus 'impersonal'?

18.80

There is no heaven, nor hell. Nor
even liberation, here in life.

In short, there's nothing that exists
as seen in yogic consciousness.

18.81

Someone who's steadfast in plain truth
does not seek gain, nor gets upset
by failure to achieve success.

The mind of such a one stays cool.
It gets refreshed perpetually,
by that clear light which does not die.

18.82

Someone desireless does not
heap praise on those who've come to peace,
nor look to blame those doing wrong.

For such a one remains content –
the same in grieving as in joy –
finds always nothing to be done.

18.83

Someone who knows does not dislike
the ebb and flow of changing world,
nor wishes to perceive the self.

Free thus from all excited joy
or driven anger, such a one
is neither dead to that which lives,
nor is alive to outward things
that make a dying show of life.

18.84

Not bound by family affection,
nor by objects of desire,

not caring even for this body
that is thought to be 'one's own',

no expectations bind a sage
who shines as nothing else but light
that lives in every one of us.

18.85

Someone established in true knowing
finds contentment everywhere;
and lives at peace with what occurs,
no matter how things may turn out.

All movements are thus found inspired
spontaneously, from self alone.
Such movements go from place to place,
inspired of their own accord.

And when it's time, a sage may rest
wherever energy runs out
and gets returned back home to self:
in which all movements are dissolved.

18.86

Not caring whether body falls
back into death or rises into
life again, one great at heart
has utterly forgotten all
the ebb and flow of death and birth ...

and now rests only on the ground
of one's own being, as it is.

18.87

Possessing nothing, moving freely
from the depth of heart within,
a sage is always found untouched
by conflict of opposing things.

By standing free of conflict thus,
all troubled doubts get torn away.
No shadow of a doubt remains.
What's true is found uncompromised.

One thus, who has attained to wisdom,
is completely unattached

to anything that may occur.

That one finds perfect happiness
in self alone: found absolute,
unmixed with any other thing.

18.88

One who is wise lives free of 'mine-ness'.
Earth, stone, gold ... are found the same.

All knots of heart are cut completely.
Neither striving to achieve,
nor dragging laziness takes hold
of driven personality.

With strife and laziness removed,
what seemed a 'person' is found free
of personal identity.

18.89

For someone who stays everywhere
indifferent, quite unconcerned
with anything, there is at heart
no habit-driven inclination
towards objects of desire.

Who then can bear comparison
with such a one who stays content,
established in that truth of self
where each of us is always free?

18.90

It is from there that one may know,
but not by any act of knowing
formed and understood by mind.

It is from there that one may see,
but not by any act of seeing
shown by changing sense of sight.

And, it's from there, that one may speak,
though not by any act of speaking
formed by breath and heard by ears.

Who else but one desireless
could know or see or speak like that?

18.91

Be it a starving beggar or
a wealthy king, it's only one
desireless that truly shines.

For, paradoxically, no person
can achieve true excellence
until all fondly held belief,
in good or bad things happening,
has dropped away entirely.

It's only then that self shines clear,
as utterly impersonal.

18.92

What of ungoverned wantonness,
or of restrained humility?
And what about discerning truth
found so confusingly mixed up
with our mistaken falsities?

What can these be, for one whom yoga
has joined back to truth of self?

That one, who's called a 'yogi', has
attained the goal that we all seek.
Abiding there, that yogi may
be seen to stand uncompromised:
as an embodiment of plain,
uncomplicated honesty.

18.93

For one who rests content in self,
untainted by desiring,
all pain and trouble is destroyed.

How and of whom can be described
what is experienced within,
by one who speaks from such a state?

18.94

Not sleeping in the soundest sleep,
not even in the wildest dream
withdrawn from world of waking sense,

not even in the waking state
aware of anything perceived
in world outside or thinking mind,

one who is steadfast in true knowing
stays contented everywhere,
throughout all change of passing states.

18.95

A sage is always free of thinking,
even when engaged in thought.

So also free of any senses,
even though possessed of them.

So also free of intellect,
although in full control of it.

So too completely free of ego,
even when the self that knows
is wrongly thought to be engaged
in acts of body, sense and mind.

18.96

One such can't rightly be described
as 'happy' or as 'suffering',
as 'unattached' or as 'attached',
as 'seeking freedom' or as 'free',
as anything that's 'here' or 'there'.

18.97

One who is truly fortunate
stays undistracted even in
what seem distracted states of mind ...

cannot be found to disappear

in states where mind is thought dissolved ...

can't even be insensitive
in states where no sense can be made
of what seems utter senselessness ...

can't be made capable or skilled
by any learned accomplishment.

18.98

One who is free stands self-possessed,
untroubled by all sense of what's
been done and what needs doing still.

One thus attained to self-possession
is found everywhere the same.
No fancied want drives needful thought
of what has or has not been done.

18.99

Though praised, someone who is thus free
does not feel flattered or feel pleased;
though blamed, does not become enraged.

One such is not afraid in dying;
nor feels happy to be living
here in body, sense and mind.

18.100

One who at heart has come to peace
does not seek crowds and company,
nor any lonely wilderness.

One such lives utterly unchanged:
the same however things turn out,
no matter where or when perceived.

Repose in the Self

19.1

Janaka said:

These diverse disquisitions – meant
to help us reason – have themselves
become a painfully distracting
thorn that needs to be removed.

This thorn at last has been pulled out,
from the interior of my heart,
by using pincers of discernment
seeking knowledge of plain truth.

19.2

Just where is virtue, where desire?
Where are riches? Where discernment,
where duality? And, where
is even non-duality:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.3

Where is the past, which is now gone?
Where is the future, yet to come?
Where is the present, passing on?

Where is there space, in which so many
different things can coexist?

And where, at last, eternity:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.4

Where is there self? Where anything
apart from self? Accordingly,
where any good or any ill?

Where then could there be any thought
or even any lack of thought:

for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.5

What is the state that we call 'waking':
thought to show a world outside?
What is the state that we call 'dream':
where all that's shown is thought in mind?
And what the state we call 'deep sleep':
free from all show of mind or world?

What's called the 'fourth', beyond all these
three states of waking, dream and sleep?

What's there to fear in any state?
What fear can possibly arise:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.6

What can be close, what far away?
What can be outside, what inside?

What can be gross, thus coarsely shown
by sense that's found inaccurate?
What can be subtle, better shown
by carefully examining
what is more accurately shown?

How can such differences arise:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.7

Where can be death or life? Where worlds,
where any sense of worldliness?

Just where can there be dissolution,
where absorption back to self:
for me that shines by my own light,
as my own true identity?

19.8

There is no further need to speak
of threefold aims in worldly life,
of yoga, or of knowing truth:
for me who am at rest, in self.

Liberation-in-Life

20.1

Where are the five world elements,
where are the senses, where the mind?
Where blank and empty nothingness,
where hopelessness of dark despair?

No trace of them is ever present
in my own true nature, found
uncompromised by any taint
of world or personality.

20.2

What are the scriptures, and their many
schools of analytic thought?
What is discernment of self-knowledge?
What then mind bereft of objects?

What contentment is thus found,
in freedom from desiring?

Now that I've lost all sense of
opposites, what can these be to me?

20.3

What is true knowledge, and what
ignorance? What this called 'I' or 'mine'?

What then is bondage, and from it
what liberation can be found?
Of my true nature, what one form
defines it in particular,
so that it's rightly recognized?

20.4

What are these chains of causal action
found to carry on from past,
through present, into future times?

And how can anyone be free
at heart, while yet found living in

this driven personality?

What meaning can there be in freedom
which is thought to be attained
by body's death, into a state
where personality and all
its acts (of sensing, thinking, feeling,
speaking) seem to be destroyed?

For one who knows no differences,
knows nothing in particular,
how can we rightly understand
that such a one has now attained
to an undying state of life
where peace shines positively free?

20.5

Where is there any doer? Where is
some personal enjoyer found
engaged in doing anything?

Where is there any ceasing of
activity? If ceasing thus,
where does activity subside?

How does it keep on sparkling out,
how found to rise in seeming show?

What is immediate knowing? What
to me are its results – from where
I'm always found to stand,
unchanged and utterly impersonal?

20.6

What is the world? Where is the one
who would be free? Where is the yogi?
Where the sage who knows correctly?

Where is someone bound or freed –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.7

Where is creation issued forth,
and where retraction back to source?

Where is achievement to be found?
Where any striving to achieve?

Where is the seeker, where success –
to me, who in my own true nature
am beyond duality?

20.8

Who is the one correcting knowledge,
where the means of such correction,
what conclusion thereby reached?

And where can there be anything
or otherwise not anything,
for me who am forever pure.

20.9

What is distraction, or what
concentration? What dull apathy,
or what enraptured fantasy?

What is excitement or despair?
What can these oppositions be,
to me who's always actionless?

20.10

What is this world of compromise
that trades for objects of desire?
What is that true reality
which stands beyond all wish and want
found driven by mind's fancying?

What happy or unhappy state
that pulls or pushes mind can be
more than a hollow fantasy –

to me who always am devoid
of calculations in the mind
concocted by such fantasies?

20.11

Where are the world's illusory
appearances? Where is the ebb
and flow of driven change, in which
our personalities seem caught
as they pass through this made-up world?

Where is affection pulling us
to get involved with changing things?
Where does dislike push us away?

Where is there any living person
seen as part of larger world?
Where any great reality
in which all things of world take part?

What can such put together show
of partial seemings be to me,
who am unchanging purity?

20.12

Where could activity be found
to bring about some change? And where
could such activity be stopped?
Where could it end, producing thus
a state of inactivity?

Just where could there be freedom then?
Where any sense of being bound?

What could be action or inaction,
feeling bound or feeling free –

for me who stands in self alone,
forever found unlimited
by any change or difference?

20.13

Where is there any teaching taught?
Where any scriptures, schools of thought?

Where a disciple seeking truth?
Where any teacher showing truth

beyond all personality?

Where any purpose served by living,
in the world or free of it?

What aim or meaning can there be,
for me who stands unlimited
by any dubious compromise
of good shown always mixed with bad
in personality and world?

20.14

Where is what's taken to exist?
Just where can be what's found unreal?

Where is what's one and one alone?
Just where can there be that same one
plus something else, thus making 'two'?

What more is there to say? For me,
there truly is no rising up
of anything at all. No sense
in fact gives rise to any sight,
or sound or smell or taste or touch.

No mind gives rise to thoughts or dreams.
No feelings in the heart give rise
to values, meanings, purposes.

There is no show apart from self.
All show is that and that alone.

Just that is all reality,
expressed throughout all show of world
produced by personality.