

*Translations
& Writings
by Bart Marshall*



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

Translations and Writings by Bart Marshall

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# Ashtavakra Gita

## A New English Version by Bart Marshall

### 1. Instruction on Self-Realization

Janaka said:

1.1

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

Ashtavakra said:

1.2

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

1.3

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

1.4

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

1.5

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

1.6

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

1.7

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

1.8

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

1.9

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

1.10

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

1.11

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

1.12

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

1.13

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

1.14

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

1.15

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

1.16

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

1.17

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

1.18

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

1.19

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

1.20

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

## 2. Joy of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

2.1

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

2.2

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

2.3

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

2.4

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

2.5

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

2.6

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

2.7

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

2.8

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

2.9

The mirage of universe appears in me  
as silver appears in mother-of-pearl,  
as a snake appears in a rope,  
as water appears on a desert horizon.

2.10

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

2.11

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

2.12

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

2.13

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

2.14

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

2.15

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

2.16

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



2.17

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

2.18

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

2.19

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

2.20

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

2.21

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

2.22

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

2.23

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

2.24

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

2.25

And how wonderful it is!  
In the limitless ocean of Self,  
waves of beings arise, collide,  
play for a time, then disappear —  
as is their nature.

### 3. Test of Self-Realization

Ashtavakra said:

3.1

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

3.2

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

3.3

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

3.4

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

3.5

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

3.6

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

3.7

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

3.8

Strange that one who is unattached  
to the things of this world and the next,  
who can discriminate between the transient and the timeless,  
who yearns for freedom,  
should yet fear the dissolution of the body.

3.9

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

3.10

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

3.11

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

3.12

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

3.13

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

3.14

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

#### 4. Glorification of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

4.1

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

4.2

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

4.3

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

4.4

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

4.5

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

4.6

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

## 5. Four Ways to Dissolution

Ashtavakra said:

5.1

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

5.2

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

5.3

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

5.4

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

## **6. The Higher Knowledge**

Janaka said:

6.1

I am infinite space.

The universe is a jar.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.2

I am a shoreless ocean.

The universe makes waves.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.3

I am mother-of-pearl.

The universe is the illusion of silver.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

6.4

I am in all beings.

All beings are in me.

This I know.

No need to renounce, accept, or destroy.

## 7. Nature of Self-Realization

Janaka said:

7.1

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

7.2

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

7.3

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

7.4

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

7.5

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



## **8. Bondage and Liberation**

Ashtavakra said:

8.1

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

8.2

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

8.3

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

8.4

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

## 9. Detachment

Ashtavakra said:

9.1

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

9.2

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

9.3

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

9.4

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

9.5

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

9.6

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

9.7

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

9.8

Desire creates the world — renounce it.

Renounce desires and you renounce the world.

Now you may live as you are.

## 10. Quietude

Ashtavakra said:

10.1

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

10.2

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

10.3

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

10.4

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

10.5

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

10.6

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

10.7

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

10.8

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

## 11. Wisdom

Ashtavakra said:

11.1

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

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

11.2

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

11.3

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

11.4

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

11.5

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

11.6

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

11.7

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

11.8

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

## 12. Abiding in the Self

Janaka said:

12.1

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

12.2

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

12.3

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

12.4

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

12.5

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

12.6

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

12.7

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



12.8

Blessed is he who attains this by effort.

Blessed is he who is such by nature.

### 13. Happiness

Janaka said:

13.1

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

13.2

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

13.3

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

13.4

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

13.5

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

13.6

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

13.7

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

## 14. Tranquility

Janaka said:

14.1

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

14.2

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

14.3

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

14.4

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

## 15. Knowledge of the Self

Ashtavakra said:

15.1

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

15.2

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

15.3

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

15.4

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

15.5

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

15.6

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

15.7

You are That in which the universe appears  
like waves appearing in the ocean.  
You are consciousness itself.  
No need to worry.

15.8

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

15.9

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

15.10

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

15.11

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

15.12

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

15.13

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

15.14

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

15.15

Leave behind such distinctions as,  
“I am he,” and, “I am not this.”  
Consider everything Self.  
Be desireless and be happy.

15.16

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

15.17

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

15.18

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

15.19

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

15.20

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

## 16. Special Instruction

Ashtavakra said:

16.1

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

16.2

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

16.3

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

16.4

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

16.5

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

16.6

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

16.7

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

16.8

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

16.9

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

16.10

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

16.11

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



## 17. The True Knower

Ashtavakra said:

17.1

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

17.2

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

17.3

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

17.4

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

17.5

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

17.6

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

17.7

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

17.8

Knowing Self, mind empty and at peace,  
the sage lives happily,  
seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating.

17.9

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

17.10

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

17.11

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

17.12

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

17.13

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

17.14

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

17.15

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

17.16

In the sage there is neither violence nor mercy,  
arrogance nor humility, anxiety nor wonder.  
His worldly life is exhausted.  
He has transcended his role as a person.

17.17

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

17.18

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

17.19

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

17.20

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

## 18. Peace

Ashtavakra said:

18.1

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

18.2

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

18.3

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

18.4

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

18.5

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

18.6

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

18.7

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

18.8

Knowing himself as Absolute,  
knowing existence and non-existence  
to be imagination only,  
what is there for the desireless one  
to learn, say, or do?

18.9

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

18.10

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

18.11

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

18.12

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

18.13

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

18.14

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

18.15

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

18.16

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

18.17

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

18.18

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

18.19

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

18.20

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

18.21

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

18.22

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

18.23

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

18.24

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

18.25

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

18.26

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

18.27

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

18.28

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

18.29

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

18.30

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

18.31

The liberated one does not exert effort  
to meditate or act.  
Action and meditation just happen.

18.32

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

18.33

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

18.34

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

18.35

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

18.36

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

18.37

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



18.38

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

18.39

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

18.40

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

18.41

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

18.42

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

18.43

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

18.44

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

18.45

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

18.46

Sensory experiences are like elephants who,  
upon encountering a desireless man,  
see him as a lion.  
They immediately turn on their heels,  
or if unable to escape,  
stay on to flatter and serve him.

18.47

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

18.48

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

18.49

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

18.50

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

18.51

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

18.52

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

18.53

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

18.54

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

18.55

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

18.56

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

18.57

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

18.58

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

18.59

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

18.60

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

18.61

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

18.62

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

18.63

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

18.64

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

18.65

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

18.66

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

18.67

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

18.68

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

18.69

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

18.70

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

18.71

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

18.72

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

18.73

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

18.74

What is knowledge?

What is universe?

What are thoughts like, “I am the body,” or “The body is mine”?

The sage is imperishable and sorrowless.

He is Self alone.

18.75

When a weak man gives up meditation

he falls prey to whims and desires.

18.76

Even hearing Truth,

the man of dull intellect holds on to illusion.

Through effort and suppression

he may appear outwardly composed,

but inside he craves the world.

18.77

Though others may see him working,

the sage does nothing.

Knowledge has banished effort.

He finds no reason to do or say.

18.78

The sage is fearless, unassailable.

No darkness, no light, nothing to lose.

Nothing.

18.79

Patience, discrimination, even fearlessness —  
what use are these to the yogi?

His nature cannot be described.

He is not a person.

18.80

No heaven, no hell, no liberation for the living.

In short, consciousness is void.

What more can be said?

18.81

The sage neither yearns for fulfillment

nor frets over non-attainment.

His mind is cool and brimming with sweetness.

18.82

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

18.83

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

18.84

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

18.85

The sage wanders about as he pleases  
and lives on whatever may come.  
Contentment ever dwells in his heart.  
And when the sun sets,  
he rests where he is.

18.86

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

18.87

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

18.88

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

18.89

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

18.90

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

18.91

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

18.92

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

18.93

The inner experience of one  
who is free of desire and suffering,  
who is content and reposes in Self —  
how can it be described,  
and of whom?

18.94

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

18.95

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



18.96

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

18.97

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

18.98

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

18.99

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

18.100

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

## 19. Repose in the Self

Janaka said:

19.1

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

19.2

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

19.3

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

19.4

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

19.5

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

19.6

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

19.7

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

19.8

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

## **20. Liberation-in-Life**

Janaka said:

20.1

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

20.2

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

20.3

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

20.4

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

20.5

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

20.6

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

20.7

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

20.8

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

20.9

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

20.10

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

20.11

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

20.12

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

20.13

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

20.14

Where is existence or non-existence?

Where is Unity or duality?

No-thing emanates from me.

No more can be said.

# Srimad Bhagavad Gita

## The Definitive Translation by Bart Marshall

### Chapter 1: The Despair of Arjuna

1.1

**King Dhritarashtra said:**

*Tell me, O Sanjaya, what happened when the sons of my people and the sons of Pandu assembled on Kurukshetra, the holy field of righteousness, arrayed for battle?*

1.2

**Sanjaya the Poet said:**

*Upon looking out upon the army of the Pandavas in attack formation, Prince Duryodhana addressed his great spiritual teacher, Drona, and spoke these words:*

1.3

*“Behold, O Revered Teacher, this powerful army of the Pandavas, expertly arrayed for battle by your gifted disciple, the son of King Drupada.*

1.4

*Among them are great archers, equal in prowess to their leaders, Bhima and Arjuna, and great fighters like Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada.*

1.5

*In their army are famous heroes like Dhrishtaketu, Purujit, Kuntibhoj, Shaibya, and Chekitan, the gallant king of Kashi — all of them the best among men.*

1.6

*Among their ranks are the courageous Yuyudhamanyu, the gallant Uttamauja son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi — all great warrior chiefs, and expert charioteers.*

1.7

*Now hear also, O Noblest Among the Reborn, the names of the distinguished captains who lead my army, so that you may locate them during battle and remember them after the war.*

1.8

*First of all there is you, great teacher, then Bhishma, Karna, Kripa, Ashwaththama, Vikarna, and the son of Somadhatta — all of whom are ever victorious in battle.*

1.9

*And thousands of other heroic soldiers, equipped with many weapons and skilled in the art of war, who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake.*

1.10

*Yet our forces, commanded by Bhishma, seem the weaker, while their forces, commanded by Bhima, seem stronger.*

1.11

*Therefore, I call upon you, my captains, and all those you command, to defend and protect general Bhishma, even as you perform your other battle assignments.”*

1.12

*Hearing this, the valiant Bhishma, great grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, grandfather of the soldiers arrayed before him, roared like a lion to give joy and confidence to Prince Duryodhana, then blew his conch shell with great power.*

1.13

*Immediately thereafter, the army’s entire array of conchs, horns, bugles, and kettledrums erupted with tumultuous, deafening intensity.*

1.14

*Then from the other side, amidst the Pandava army, standing in a glorious chariot drawn by white stallions, Lord Krishna and Arjuna blew their conch shells, and their sound echoed with the transcendent timbre of the Divine.*

1.15

*Lord Krishna blew his conch shell called “Panchajanya.” Arjuna blew his conch shell called “Devadatta,” and Bhima, the voracious eater and performer of herculean deeds, blew his conch shell called “Paundra.”*

1.16

*King Yudhishthira, son of Kunte, blew his conch shell Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva blew their shells Sughosa and Manipuspaka.*

1.17 / 1.18

*And the king of Kashi, a great archer, and Shikhandi, a great soldier, and Dhrishtayumna, and Virata, and Satyaki the Invincible, and Drupad, and the five sons of Draupadi, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra, all blew their conch shells, O Ruler of the Earth.*

1.19

*And the thunderous sound of these powerful conchs echoed across the earth and sky and weakened the hearts of your sons, O Dhritarashtra.*

1.20

*Then, O Lord of the Earth, seeing Dhritarashtra’s army at the ready and the arrows about to fly, Arjuna, son of Pandu, whose chariot flew the flag of Hanuman the Monkey God, took up his bow and addressed his charioteer, Lord Krishna.*

1.21 / 1.22

*“O Infallible One, draw up our chariot between these two great armies so that I can see both those who fight with me, and those who fight against me in this great trial of combat.*

1.23

*Let me see those who have come to fight for the sinful son of Dhritarashtra so that they might please him.”*

1.24

**Sanjaya said:**

*Then, O Dhritarashtra, upon hearing Arjuna’s request, Lord Krishna drove their luminous chariot to the exact middle of the battlefield.*

1.25

*There he pointed to Bhishma, Drona and all the other kings and princes and said: “Behold, Arjuna, the Kuru dynasty has gathered.”*

1.26

*As Arjuna looked out upon the armies, he saw his father, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, cousins, sons, nephews, grand-nephews, father-in-law, and friends and well-wishers on both sides.*

1.27

*And seeing all his relatives arrayed for battle against each other, Arjuna was overwhelmed with sadness and compassion.*

1.28 / 1.29

*He turned to Lord Krishna in despair, saying, “O Lord, as I gaze upon all my kinsmen assembled here, so eager to do battle with each other, my limbs quiver and my mouth has dried up. My whole body trembles and the hairs on my neck stand on end.*

1.30

*Gandiva, my bow, slips from my hand, and my skin burns all over. My mind is reeling, and my knees will not hold me up.*

1.31

*I see only bad omens, O Krishna. What good can come of killing my kinsmen?*

1.32 / 1.33

*I do not desire victory, kingdom, nor any pleasures that may come with it. What good is kingdom, pleasure, or even life itself, when the very ones with whom we desire to experience these things stand against us ready to kill or be killed?*



1.34

*Teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, fathers-in-law, uncles, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and many other relatives are gathered for battle against us, prepared to lose their wealth and lives.*

1.35

*I do not want to kill them, even if it means I will be killed. I do not want to kill them even for the three worlds, let alone for any earthly powers or pleasures.*

1.36

*What pleasure can there be in killing the sons of Dhritarashtra? By slaying these desperate men we only create sin for ourselves.*

1.37

*Are we not more noble than to kill our kinsmen? How can killing our own bring happiness?*

1.38 / 1.39

*Even though the sons of Dhritarashtra, their minds poisoned with greed, see no sin in killing family, should not we who see the wrong in this refrain from taking part?*

1.40

*When a dynasty is vanquished, the traditions of its lineage, both ancestral and spiritual, are lost. The entire family descends into disorder and impiety.*

1.41

*When virtue is lost, the women of the family become unchaste, resulting in unwanted children and intermingling of casts.*

1.42

*An increase in unwanted children leads to a hellish life for the family, and for the destroyers of the family as well. The souls of the ancestors of these families also languish, being now deprived of ceremonial offerings of rice and water.*

1.43

*By the misdeeds of those who destroy families and cause the mixing of blood, the virtue of the family and the dharma of the entire community is devastated.*

1.44

*O Krishna, is it not said by the wise that those who destroy the spiritual traditions of families shall live in hell for an indefinite period of time?*

1.45

*Alas, how strange that, knowing all this, we are still prepared to commit such great sin. Driven by the desire for royal pleasures, we stand ready to slay our kinsmen.*

1.46

*Much better for my eternal welfare if I be killed, unarmed and unresisting, by the weapons of the sons of Dhritarashtra.”*

1.47

**Sanjaya said:**

*Having thus spoken these words in the middle of the battlefield, Arjuna dropped his bow and sank down on the seat of his chariot, his mind in despair.*

## Chapter 2: The Yoga of Action

2.1

**Sanjaya said:**

*Seeing Arjuna thus overwhelmed with grief, his eyes full of tears and his mind stricken with confusion, the Charioteer spoke to him.*

2.2

Lord Krishna said:

Dear Arjuna, from where do these impurities of mind arise at such a critical juncture? Such despondency is unworthy of an Aryan who claims to know the higher values of life. It does not lead to greater realms, but to infamy and disgrace.

2.3

Do not indulge in unmanly impotence. It does not befit you. Confront the cowardice in your heart and stand up! You are the terror of your enemies! Act as such!

2.4

*Arjuna said, "O Krishna, how can I shoot arrows into Bhishma and Drona, men who are worthy of my worship?"*

2.5

*Better to live in this world as a beggar than to enjoy royal life by killing these noble teachers. Though they yet lust after worldly things, they are my superiors. If I kill them, all future pleasures will be tainted with their blood.*

2.6

*I do not even know which outcome is better — to conquer them or be conquered by them. If I kill the sons of Dhritarashtra I would not wish to live, yet it is they who stand facing me, eager for battle.*

2.7

*My mind is conflicted about duty, and weakness has claimed my composure. In this miserable condition I beg you, O Lord, please tell me for certain what is best for my spirit. I am your disciple and I am surrendered to you. Please instruct me.*

2.8

*For even if I should attain an unrivaled kingdom on earth, or more so, become a sovereign divinity in heaven, it would not dispel the sorrow that now paralyzes my senses."*

2.9

**Sanjaya said:**

*Having spoke thus to Krishna, Lord of the Senses, Arjuna, conqueror of sleep and destroyer of foes, said, "I shall not fight," then fell silent.*

2.10

*O Dhritarashtra, it was then that Lord Krishna, with a gentle smile, spoke these words to the despondent Arjuna as they stood poised between two armies of kinsmen.*

2.11

*Lord Krishna said:*

You speak learned words, Arjuna, but you grieve for that which warrants no grief. The wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead.

2.12

There is no past in which I did not exist — nor you, nor any of these soldiers and kings — and there is no future in which we will cease to be.

2.13

Just as the Soul experiences infancy, youth, and old age in one body, so does it pass into another body when one dies. One who realizes he is the Soul, not the body, is undaunted by this.

2.14

Experiences of pain and happiness, hot and cold, are fleeting. They come and go like winter and summer. Accept them with courage, Son of Kunte, knowing they shall pass.

2.15

O Noblest of Men, that hero who remains steadfast and undisturbed by both joy and sorrow, he is one who can realize Liberation.

2.16

That which is unreal is ever changing and does not endure. That which is real neither changes nor ever is not. To those who perceive Truth, this is self-evident.

2.17

That which pervades All is indestructible. Nothing can destroy That Which Is.

2.18

It is the physical body only that perishes, not the eternal Soul that is You. Therefore, fight!

2.19

That which you truly are neither kills nor can it be killed. To believe otherwise is ignorance.

2.20

That which you truly are was never born, nor can it ever not be. You are eternal, immortal, primeval, everlasting. When the body dies, You are untouched, unmoved, unconcerned.

2.21

How can one who knows the Soul to be imperishable, eternal, immutable, unborn, believe that man has the power to kill or cause others to kill?

2.22

Just as a person discards old clothes and puts on new clothes, so does the Soul-Self leave spent bodies and enter fresh ones.

2.23

The Self cannot be pierced by weapons, burnt by fire, made wet by water, nor dried out by wind.

2.24

Self is unbreakable, incombustible, insoluble, all-pervading, timeless, ancient, immovable, eternal.

2.25

Self is unmanifest, unchanging, formless, imperishable. Knowing this about Self, why grieve for the body?

2.26

Even if you believe that Supreme Self is subject to birth and death, still there is no reason to grieve.

2.27

That which is born is certain to die, and that which has died will manifest as new life. Why lament the inevitable?

2.28

All beings arise from the unmanifested void, and for a short time they appear as manifested forms. Then they die and become again unmanifested. Where in this cycle is cause for grief?

2.29

Upon being instructed about Self, one person in three will be amazed, one will pretend to understand, and one will not even comprehend the teacher's words. Rare is the one who has realized Self in his body. He knows It cannot be known.

2.30

The Soul that indwells all bodies is eternally indestructible. There is no reason to grieve the death of any earthly creature.

2.31

Besides, you are a warrior. It is your dharma. There is no higher calling for warriors than to fight a righteous war. To waver in the face of duty is unworthy, Arjuna.

2.32

Blessed are the warriors who are given such an opportunity! It is an open invitation to heaven!

2.33

If you refuse to fight, if you disregard your dharma and abandon your duty, you will bring upon yourself dishonor and great sin. You will be called a traitor, you're your reputation as a warrior will dissolve into infamy.

2.34

Your people will tell stories to generations of children about the cowardice and disgrace of Arjuna. And to the once-honored, dishonor is worse than death.

2.35

The great generals who now hold you in such high esteem, will think you deserted the battle in fear, and will lose all respect and regard for you.

2.36

Your enemies will scorn your abilities, mock your cowardice, and in every way defame you. To a warrior, what could be worse than that?

2.37

If you are killed in this battle you will enter the kingdom of heaven. If you are victorious, you will enjoy a kingdom on earth. Arise and fight, Son of Kunte! You cannot lose!

2.38

Fight for the pure sake of fighting, without any regard for right or wrong, good or bad, loss or gain, victory or defeat. Do this and you will incur no sin!

2.39

Up until now I have been speaking to you with the yoga of knowledge. Listen then as I describe the yoga of action, through which you can break the bondage of action, and transcend karma.

2.40

On this path, effort is never wasted, lost or diminished, and adverse results are not possible. Even very little practice of this yoga releases the hold of fear and protects you from danger.

2.41

Those who walk this path are one-pointed in focus and resolute in purpose. The minds of the masses are irresolute, and stray onto many forking paths.

2.42

Men of small minds and superficial knowledge delight in using oratory to revere the scriptures, saying, "There is nothing higher than this!"

2.43

Guided by their own selfish desires, they glorify the portions of the scriptures that please them and construct their own heaven, then perform pompous rituals for attaining wealth, power, sensual pleasure, and elevation to heavenly realms. For such as these, rebirth is the only remedy.

2.44

With their minds ever bewildered by desire for pleasure and power, they have no capacity for the one-pointed determination necessary for Samadhi.

2.45

The Vedic scriptures deal mainly with the three forces of the material world. Go beyond these three gunas. Transcend the duality of opposites. Become free of fear, established in Truth and centered in Self.

2.46

A skilled theologian can twist any scripture to serve his narrow purpose. To one who has realized Brahman, the scriptures are like a pond in a flood.

2.47

You have the duty to work, Arjuna, but not the claim to any fruits that may result. Understand that your actions do not cause the results, but do not let this lead to inaction.

2.48

Perform your duties with grace and equanimity, without any attachment to success or aversion to failure. Such equipoise is the yoga of action.

2.49

Action performed with attachment is far inferior to action performed with equanimity of mind. Only petty misers work for reward.

2.50

One who routinely practices the yoga of work without attachment frees himself from karmic consequences in this life. Dedicate yourself to yoga, Arjuna. Yoga is the art of action!

2.51

Sages who engage in this practice, who release attachment to the fruits of action, become liberated from the cycle of birth and death, and transcend the bonds of illusion.

2.52

When consciousness becomes un-entangled from illusion, you become indifferent to all the philosophies you've heard, and un-curious about those you have not heard.

2.53

When consciousness, un-bewildered by scriptures, stands still in tune with the Infinite, this is Samadhi.

2.54

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, how do we recognize a sage in this state? How does he look? How does he act? How does he sit and walk?"*

2.55

*Lord Krishna said:*

When a man has surrendered all the desires of his heart and is established in Self alone, he is in the highest state.

2.56

One who is undisturbed by adversity, indifferent to happiness, unattached to outcomes, free of fear and anger — such a one is a sage of stable vision.



2.57

He who is not attached to any person or place, who is not delighted by good fortune nor dejected by tribulation, who does not praise good nor despise evil, he is surely immersed in the Infinite.

2.58

The sage who can withdraw his senses from the world of sense-objects as a tortoise withdraws his limbs into his shell, is surely deeply rooted in consciousness.

2.59

Sense-objects may fall away from the life of one who practices restraint and abstinence, but the taste for them remains until Truth is realized.

2.60

Indeed, Arjuna, the senses are so strong and impetuous they will forcibly carry away the mind of even the most dedicated practitioner of discrimination and restraint.

2.61

Yet one who is steadfast in practice, who takes control of his senses and meditates on Me, the Supreme — such a one shall come to realize the perfect state.

2.62

He who does not control his senses develops attachments to sense-objects. Attachment causes desire, and unfulfilled desire causes anger.

2.63

Anger distorts perception. False perception feeds delusion. Delusion causes loss of discernment and confusion of memory. When reason and intelligence flounder, one becomes lost again in the material quagmire, and falls inevitably into ruin.

2.64

But one who is self-controlled — who can move among sense-objects without attachment or aversion — is freed from anger and desire, and walks in divine tranquility.

2.65

For one who lives in divine consciousness, the threefold miseries of material existence no longer hold sway. In this happy state, true Intelligence is firmly established.

2.66

One who has not realized the divine Self has no connection to Intelligence. Peace and happiness are not possible.

2.67

For one whose thoughts follow in the wake of his senses, the mind is carried off like a rudderless boat in high wind.

2.68

Therefore, one whose senses have no attachment whatever to sense-objects, is surely a sage who sees clearly.

2.69

What others call the light, he sees to be dark ignorance. In the darkness others fear, he awakens to the Light.

2.70

Rivers flow endlessly into oceans, but the ocean, always full, barely notices. Desires, like rivers, flow endlessly into consciousness, but for one who pays them no mind, peace is undisturbed.

2.71

Truly, he who moves through the world without desire or ambition, who is free of pride and claims nothing as his own, he alone will find peace.

2.72

This is Self-Realization. One who realizes Truth never again falls into delusion. Even if Realization occurs at the last moment of life, that soul is taken into the arms of God.

### Chapter 3: The Act of Sacrifice

3.1

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, you say that wisdom and restraint are superior to blind action, yet you encourage me to engage in terrible acts of war."*

3.2

*I am confused by your conflicting statements. Please tell me clearly what is best for my spiritual welfare."*

3.3

*Lord Krishna said:*

O Innocent One, there are indeed two paths to enlightenment — the path of knowledge, for those inclined to solitude and meditation, and the path of action for those who move about in the world.

3.4

One does not become free of karma by refusing to act. Neither does renouncing activity alone lead to Samadhi.

3.5

Indeed, it is not possible for anyone to be truly inactive even for a moment. The three gunas, and the qualities of one's nature, compel a person helplessly to action whether he intends it or not.

3.6

One who remains motionless, refusing to act while still desiring sense-objects, is a hypocrite, a self-deluded pretender.

3.7

The earnest yogi, whose mind controls his senses, who dedicates his capacity for action to selfless service and sincere devotion, is far superior.

3.8

Perform your duty and excel at your prescribed work. Action is necessary, and superior to inaction. You cannot even maintain your physical body without work.

3.9

Yet know that work binds one to the material world unless performed as a sacrifice. Whatever work you do, do it for God, and you will not be bound to the world.

3.10

In the beginning, the Lord of Creation brought forth generations of men and demigods, and bestowed upon men the capacity for sacrifice. And he said to them, "Be thankful for your ability to make sacrifices. Through sacrifice you shall prosper and attain all that you desire.

3.11

“The demigods, being nourished by your sacrifices, will nourish you in return. When gods and men cooperate, prosperity reigns for all.”

3.12

Indeed, the gods of the natural world are the keepers of all luxuries and necessities of life. These they freely give to those who offer their works to them as sacrifice. Men who work only for themselves and accept the gifts of the gods without sacrifice are nothing but thieves.

3.13

The practitioner who consumes what food remains after offering it in sacrifice, gathers no karma. But he who prepares food for himself alone and consumes it for his own sense pleasure, eats only sin.

3.14

All beings need food to live. Food comes from rain. Rain comes through sacrifice. Sacrifice is the selfless performance of duty.

3.15

Know that all action arises from the God of Creation, who in turn arises from the Supreme Self. Therefore all acts of sacrifice are performed by God in service of Self, which are not two.

3.16

He who does not pass on what he is given through the revolving wheel of sacrifice — who gathers only unto himself the pleasures of the world — truly lives in vain.

3.17

Yet for one who has realized Self, who abides illumined in Self, who is content in Self alone, for him there are no duties or sacrifices.

3.18

One who has realized Self has nothing to gain or lose by doing or not-doing. He has no obligations or purpose, and depends on no one.

3.19

Therefore, do what needs to be done without regard for reward. Make offerings without expectation of blessings. The Supreme Self will make itself known.

3.20

King Janaka lived a life of action and duty, and he became enlightened. Many spiritual aspirants have profited by his example. Therefore, even if only for the benefit of others, do your duty and act!

3.21

For whatever a great man does, others will emulate. The path his actions prescribe, others will walk.

3.22

O Arjuna, in all the Universe there is nothing I want, nothing I have to gain by any action. There are no obligations before me, no greater purpose beckoning, no reason even to move. Still, I do my work.

3.23

For if did not, others would point to my example and feel justified in not doing their work.

3.24

If I did not, the three worlds would fall into chaos and disorder. The population would swell with unrighteous beings and societies would crumble. Peace would be destroyed.

3.25

The ignorant perform their actions with attachment to results and hope for personal reward. The sage acts selflessly, hoping only that others might somehow benefit. His example lights the path of righteousness.

3.26

The sage does not to disturb the sleeping minds of those attached to the rewards of their actions. Rather, he merely performs his own actions with unattached equanimity, and lets them draw what conclusions they will.

3.27

The sage knows that it is the forces of nature, the three gunas, that cause all action, and that it is only the bewildered mind of man that thinks, "I am doing this!"

3.28

The sage sees that these three forces both stimulate the senses and activate the sensory world, thus he avoids entanglement.

3.29

The sage sees that the ignorant masses are transfixed by the interplay of these forces, and compelled by desire for reward, but he does not interfere.

3.30

Fix your mind on the Supreme, Arjuna, and surrender your actions to Me. Without attachment or expectation, without ownership or self-interest, without desire or fear, fight!

3.31

Those who earnestly follow My teachings with faith and surrender, become liberated from the bondage of karma.

3.32

But those who hear these teachings I speak, yet ridicule and decry them and do not put them into practice — who choose instead delusion and bondage — such as these bring about their own ruin.

3.33

Everyone acts in accordance with his own nature, even a man of knowledge. There is no point trying to change this.

3.34

The senses dictate whether one is attracted to, or repulsed by, a sense object. Do not let this control you. The senses are an obstacle to Self-Realization.

3.35

It is far better to perform your own duties, though they seem modest, than to covet another's duties that seem grand. Better to die performing that which is given to you. It is dangerous to live another's life.

3.36

*Arjuna said, "O Krishna, what compels a man to sin against his own will, as if under the control of some unseen force?"*

3.37

*Lord Krishna said:*

That force is desire, Arjuna, which gives rise to aversion, envy, anger and lust. Desire is man's greatest enemy.

3.38

As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror is obscured by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the womb, so is the mind of man enshrouded by desire.

3.39

All of consciousness is infused with this enemy, which countermands reason and burns like fire.

3.40

Its seats of power are the senses, mind, and ego, through which it veils timeless wisdom, creates its own illusion, and bewilders the soul.

3.41

Therefore, before all else, control the senses and slay the enemy of desire — which destroys equanimity and prevents Self-Realization.

3.42

Superior to the body are senses. Superior to the senses is mind. Superior to mind is Intelligence. Superior to Intelligence is Self.

3.43

Knowing Oneself to be superior to intelligence, mind, body and senses, use your spiritual power to subdue this enemy called desire.



## Chapter 4: The Realization of Truth

4.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

I taught this science of yoga to the sun god Vivasvan, who then taught it to Manu, the father of mankind, who in turn taught it to King Ikshvaku.

4.2

Thus the divine science was handed down to successions of royal sages, who knew the truth of it, for it had become their tradition. But over the long passage of time, this tradition was lost to the world.

4.3

It is this same yoga that I impart to you today, Arjuna, because you have declared yourself to be my disciple as well as my friend, and I believe that you will understand this transcendental science — the supreme secret.

4.4

*Arjuna said, “You were born long after Vivasvan’s death. How could you have instructed him in this science?”*

4.5

*Lord Krishna said:*

I have lived many lives, Arjuna. So have you. I am aware of all of mine, but you remember none of yours.

4.6

I am the unborn Lord of All That Is, and That Which I Am never perishes. Yet I choose to appear mortal from time to time, and self-manifest into a world of my own creation.

4.7

Whenever and wherever spirituality decays and materialism reigns, I Will myself into form.

4.8

To protect the righteous, destroy the wicked, and reestablish the principles of divine science, I incarnate in every age.

4.9

Those who grasp the secret of my transcendental nature and manifest appearances, need never take another birth, but will become as Me.

4.10

Freeing themselves of desire, fear and anger, taking refuge in Me, being fully absorbed in Me, many souls have become as I Am.

4.11

In whatever way men seek me, I will meet them there. Any path they take in worship, is My path back to them. Whatever road they travel, leads to Me at last.

4.12

Those desiring worldly success through their actions do well to make sacrifices to the demigods and align with the forces of nature. In this way, material rewards manifest quickly.

4.13

In accordance with the three gunas of nature and the karma of birth, I have described the four categories of worldly activity — spiritual teacher, soldier, merchant, and servant. Though I am the author of these divisions, I myself do nothing and am eternally changeless.

4.14

My actions happen without doing and I am untouched by them. I desire nothing and am unattached to outcomes. One who divines the Truth of Me, does not become entangled in the web of action and reward.

4.15

In ancient times, seekers of salvation understood this, and following my example realized Liberation. Therefore, perform your actions with the same knowledge as the ancient sages.

4.16

What is action and what is non-action? Even the wise are unsure. But I will now explain it to you, and understanding the nature of action and non-action, you can free yourself from the evil of bondage.

4.17

Indeed, the law of action is mysterious. You must understand first that there are three kinds of action: right action, vain action, and the action of non-action. Though he engages in activities, he is not involved.

4.18

One who sees the action in non-action, and the not-doing of action, is among the wisest of men.

4.19

One whose every undertaking is free of the desire for reward, whose actions are purified by the fire of wisdom, is rightly called a sage.

4.20

Having relinquished desire for the fruits of action, the sage depends on nothing and is always content. Though he may be engaged in great activity, he does not do a thing.

4.21

Acting without desire or expectation, claiming no possessions, the sage enjoys the necessities of life without incurring sin.

4.22

Exerting no effort, the sage is content with whatever comes or does not come to him of its own. He does not covet what others have or envy their achievements. He is equally unmoved by success and failure, and in every way is free of the delusion of opposites. Though he performs actions, he claims no ownership of the results.

4.23

One who is unattached to outcomes moves freely about the world, his mind transcendent and at peace. Performing his work as an offering only, his actions leave no trace.

4.24

The act of sacrifice is God. The sacrificial offering is God. The sacrificial fire is God. The one who makes the sacrifice is God. He who sees everything is God, cannot miss Him.

4.25

Some yogis offer sacrifices to the demigods, seeking their blessings. Others, in perfect worship, offer themselves to the fire of Truth.

4.26

Some offer the enjoyment of sense-objects, such as music and sound, to the sacrificial fire of restraint. Others offer the senses themselves, such as hearing, to the fire.

4.27

Those who are interested in Self-Realization, offer not only the senses, but the mind and the breath of life to the fire.

4.28

Sacrifice for some means surrendering wealth and possessions. For others it means performing austerities or practicing the eightfold path of yoga. Others take strict vows and endlessly study scriptures.

4.29

There are even those who offer the movement of breath as a sacrifice, stopping between an outgoing breath and an incoming breath and remaining in a breathless trance. Still others curtail eating and offer the process of food becoming life-energy as a sacrifice.

4.30

All these practitioners, though different in approach, are acting in understanding of the principle of sacrifice, and are thus cleansing themselves of that which keeps them from God-ness.

4.31

Those who know the secret of sacrifice — and perform it — feast on the nectar of its remnants and realize the Eternal State. Those who refuse to make offerings are not fit even for this world, let alone the next.

4.32

All these various forms of sacrifice are described in the Vedas, and they all arise from different types of karma. Understanding the whole of this leads to Liberation.

4.33

Understand, Arjuna, that sacrifices made with full knowledge are far superior to mechanical sacrifices rooted only in belief. All actions become perfect when performed by the wise.

4.34

To realize Truth, find a spiritual master. Question him respectfully and render him service. A Self-Realized soul can guide you to Truth because he embodies Truth.

4.35

When Truth makes itself known, Arjuna, you will never again descend into ignorance. You will see for yourself that every living being — and the whole of creation — is but an illusion swirling in Yourself, in Me, in the Supreme.

4.36

Even the greatest of sinners can be carried across the ocean of ignorance on the divine ferryboat of Truth.

4.37

Just as fire turns wood into ashes, so does Truth turn sin into vapor.

4.38

Nothing in this universe purifies like Truth. One who has been purified by Truth sees that Truth is Himself.

4.39

A sincere aspirant who is in control of his senses, whose mind is fixed on the Divine, is ripe for a direct experience of Truth. The experience of Truth brings great peace.

4.40

But the ignorant and faithless, whose doubt prevents effort, shall not know God Consciousness. Those who ignore the whisperings of Truth find no happiness, in this world or beyond.

4.41

One who knows the fruits of effort are not his, whose doubts take him deeper into the yoga of knowledge, whose actions are born of meditation — such a one no longer creates karma.

4.42

Therefore, Arjuna, slash with the sword of knowledge the doubts in your heart engendered by your own ignorance. Armed with the yoga of knowledge and action, stand up and fight!

## Chapter 5: The Path to Liberation

5.1

*Arjuna said, “Lord Krishna, on the one hand you praise the renunciation of action, and on the other you commend the yoga of action. Please tell me definitely which of the two is better for my spiritual welfare.”*

5.2

*Lord Krishna said:*

Both the renunciation of action and the yoga of action can lead to Liberation, but of the two, the yoga of action is superior.

5.3

He who neither desires nor renounces the things of the world, who has truly transcended the pairs of opposites, easily breaks free of bondage.

5.4

It is wrong to think of the yoga of knowledge and the yoga of action as being different. Those who apply themselves earnestly to either path will discover the same Truth.

5.5

He who sees these two yogas as aspects of one yoga, sees things as they are.

5.6

Mere renunciation without engaging in devotional service brings only sorrow. He who earnestly practices both, attains the Absolute.

5.7

A yogi who is pure in heart, who is master of his mind and senses, sees the Soul of all souls in every living being. He is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him.

5.8

One who abides in divine consciousness — though engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, sleeping, breathing, and moving about — never thinks, “It is I who am doing this.”

5.9

Because even while speaking, holding, letting go, excreting, and opening or closing his eyes, he sees clearly that it is merely the senses moving about on their own among the sense-objects of the world.

5.10

He who performs his duty, whatever it may be, while offering the results to God, cannot be tainted by sin, just as the lotus leaf cannot be wetted by water.

5.11

Dedicated karma yogis perform all actions of the body, mind, senses and intellect without attachment, and for the sole purpose of self-purification.

5.12

One who offers the results of his actions to God, lives unencumbered in freedom and peace. One who acts only to enjoy the fruits of his work, becomes hopelessly entangled in the world.

5.13

When a man takes control of his nature and renounces claim to his actions, he resides happily in his body — the city of nine gates — neither doing nor causing anything to be done.

5.14

The Lord of Creation does not prescribe actions, nor does He induce people to act, nor does He manifest the fruits of action. All this is the domain of the forces of nature, the three gunas.

5.15

The Lord of Creation does not take note of the actions of anyone, be they good or bad. The mass of men think otherwise because their innate knowledge is enveloped in darkness by ignorance.

5.16

But for those whose ignorance is destroyed by the realization of Self, everything is revealed, just as the sun lights up the world in daytime.

5.17

One who has realized Self, whose faith is in Self, whose mind and intellect have taken refuge in Self, is poised for Liberation with no desire to return.

5.18

The enlightened sage gazes with equal eye upon a king, a cow, a priest, an elephant, and an untouchable eating a dog.

5.19

Even while in this world, the enlightened sage moves beyond birth and death. He is flawless, like God. He is God.

5.20

Established in God, freed from illusion, he neither delights in the pleasant nor complains about the unpleasant.

5.21

He has no interest in the pleasures of the senses, for he is focused on the Supreme within, and has found unending contentment.

5.22

The pleasures that arise from the contact of senses with sense-objects are transient, having a beginning and end, and therefore are equally sources of pain. The wise do not seek them out or rejoice in them.

5.23

He who succeeds in controlling the rushing forces of desire and anger before transcending the body, is a saint and a happy man.

5.24

One whose happiness comes from within, who is illumined from within, who delights in God within, such a one will be taken up by the Lord and liberated from birth and death.

5.25

He whose sins are burned out, whose mind is uncorrupted by dualities, whose doubts have disappeared in light, who has relinquished self-interest for the welfare of all — he shall be liberated into the Supreme.

5.26

Those who have released themselves from anger and material desires, who are self-governed, self-disciplined, and constantly seeking perfection — these are practitioners well-positioned for Liberation.

5.27 / 5.28

Shutting out all external distractions, fixing his gaze on the point between his eyebrows, equalizing the incoming and outgoing breaths moving within his nostrils — thus controlling the mind, senses and intellect — the sage is released from desire, fear, and anger, and lives in freedom until Liberation.

5.29

Coming to know Me, the receiver of all offerings and austerities, the supreme Lord of all worlds and gods, the benefactor and selfless friend of all living things, the sage attains eternal Peace.



## Chapter 6: The Practice of Meditation

6.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

The true renunciant in the world is he who performs his given duties without self-interest or desire for the fruits. He is one deserving to be called a mystic, not one who does nothing and has no fire.

6.2

True renunciation is the same as yoga. One cannot be called a yogi who has not renounced self-interest and desire.

6.3

When one begins the eightfold path of yoga, work and effort is the way. When one becomes firmly established in yoga, not-doing is the way.

6.4

A practitioner becomes established in yoga when his actions are no longer performed for self-interest or sense gratification, and he stakes no claim to the fruits of his actions.

6.5

A man must lift himself up by himself. In no way weaken or degrade the mind that must do the lifting. Though that mind is your enemy, it is also your only friend.

6.6

The mind becomes your servant when it is conquered. When allowed to run wild, it leads you astray.

6.7

To one who has conquered the mind, opposites like heat and cold, joy and sorrow, honor and dishonor, are not different. He lives in tranquility.

6.8

The true mystic is master of his senses and lord of his mind. His heart brims with wisdom. He has realized Self. To him, dirt, pebbles and gold are equally precious.

6.9

He looks upon friends, enemies, relatives, strangers, sinners, saints, kings, and outcasts with equal impartiality.

6.10

A yogi should live alone in seclusion. He should have few possessions and desire nothing more. He should spend his days in meditation and communion with Self.

6.11

To practice meditation, go to a quiet, peaceful place. Arrange a bed of long grass on the ground and cover it with deerskin and a soft blanket. The seat should neither be too high nor too low.

6.12

Sit straight and solid on that seat. Observe the workings of the mind and bring it gently into one-pointed focus on the breath, or a simple thought-sound. Thus disengaged, the mind will purify itself.

6.13

Hold your body, head and neck erect and still. Let your gaze come to rest in front of your nose. Do not look around.

6.14

With a serene and fearless heart, rejecting sexual reverie and ignoring useless thoughts, allow the mind to relax into communion with Self, with God.

6.15

With practice, the mind becomes absorbed in Self, and you will live in the Peace of God that leads to Liberation.

6.16

Do not eat too much or too little. Do not indulge in excessive sleep or deprive yourself of needed rest. Extremes are not conducive to meditation.

6.17

One who lives with moderation, who is balanced in the activities of eating, sleeping, working and playing, will find meditation to be the destroyer of all discontent.

6.18

When a practitioner, through meditation, transcends cravings and mental distractions, he is said to be established in yoga.

6.19

The mind of a yogi in meditation, like a flame sheltered from wind, does not move or flicker.

6.20

Thus stilled, the mind is positioned to see Self as Itself, and rejoice beyond all imagining.

6.21

When Self is realized, the yogi experiences the highest bliss accessible to consciousness. Truth becomes his only reality.

6.22

He cannot conceive of anything greater than This, and he becomes unshakable, even in the face of the heaviest sorrows.

6.23

To be thus rescued from the delusions and sufferings of life is the aim of yoga. It must be practiced with perseverance and unwavering conviction.

6.24

Through meditation, relinquish all desires and bring thoughts and senses under control.

6.25

With patient determination, let the mind gradually become more and more fixed upon God, until at last it can think of nothing else.

6.26

When the mind flits and wanders, as is its nature, gently bring it back to one-pointed stillness, where God resides.

6.27

The lot of the sage is contentment. Mind stilled, passions calmed, he abides in Self and acts without error.

6.28

Abiding in Self, he is untouched by good and evil, and walks in the light of the Absolute.

6.29

He sees Self in all beings, and all beings in Self.

6.30

Everywhere he looks he sees Me. He is never lost or separated from Me, nor am I ever separate from Him.

6.31

He lives in Me, and I live in Him. We are One.

6.32

He is a perfect saint. He has discovered his divinity as Self, and simultaneously seen all else to be Self. He regards the joys and sorrows of all beings as his own.

6.33

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, I do not understand how this yoga you teach could work for me. I find no firm ground in myself and my mind is constantly restless."*

6.34

*My mind is fickle, obstinate, chaotic — as difficult to control as high wind."*

6.35

*Lord Krishna said:*

The restless mind is indeed difficult to control, but with meditation and sincere practice it can be done.

6.36

An undisciplined mind is incapable of the determination and focus necessary for yoga, but for one who succeeds in taming the mind, success is assured.

6.37

*Arjuna said, "Lord Krishna, what is the fate of the unrealized soul who has not been able to control his mind and fails to achieve success in yoga?"*

6.38

*Does he perish like a riven cloud, bereft of both earthly and spiritual reward?*

6.39

*Please dispel these doubts of mine, O Lord. None but you can do this."*

6.40

*Lord Krishna said:*

Dear friend, no one who has strived for goodness in himself ever comes to harm, in this world or the next. There is no punishment after death for failure, nor in this life will he fall back into grief and sinful ways.

6.41

After death, the yogi who falls short of the goal lives for an age in the realm of pure souls. Then he is born again on earth into a pure and prosperous family.

6.42

In rare instances, he may be born into a family endowed with divine wisdom, but such a birth is difficult to come by.

6.43

The experience of his former life will silently inform his new life, and without knowing why, he will be compelled to pursue a spiritual path, picking up more or less where he left off. No effort in the direction of righteousness is ever wasted.

6.44

The momentum of his previous life will inevitably draw him to the principles of yoga, even though he may not be seeking them, for his transcendental nature leapfrogs scriptural patterns.

6.45

Once he steps foot on the path, the earnest yogi is assured of realizing Self, though it take one or many lifetimes.

6.46

A yogi is superior to an ascetic, superior to a Vedic scholar, superior to performers of religious rituals. Therefore, Arjuna, become a yogi!

6.47

There are many types of yogis, but one whose thoughts are of Me, who renders loving service to Me, who is intimately united with Me — he is the most likely to succeed. That is my opinion.

## Chapter 7: The Nature of Creation

7.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

Listen, Arjuna, and I will tell you how practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, and taking refuge in Me, you can come to know Me completely, without any doubts.

7.2

I shall now reveal to you fully, knowledge of the world as it is, as opposed to the world as it appears. Once you realize this knowledge in yourself, nothing further needs to be known.

7.3

Perhaps one in ten thousand strive for perfection in yoga, and of those who do strive, few come to know Me.

7.4

My manifested aspect consists of eight material energies: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego.

7.5

That is my lower nature. My higher nature is the life force that infuses all things and sustains the Universe.

7.6

My two-fold nature is the womb of all beings and things. I am the source of all Creation, and into me it dissolves.

7.7

There is nothing higher than Me. All That Is hangs upon Me like pearls threaded on string.

7.8

I am the fluidity in water, the light of the sun, the reflection of the moon. I am the mystic sound of AUM and the emptiness of space, I am the virility of men and the fertility of women.

7.9

I am the heat in fire and the clean scent of earth. I am the austerity of ascetics and the life of all beings.

7.10

I am the intelligence of the intellect, the power of the powerful, the brilliance of the resplendent. I am the primal seed of eternal existence.

7.11

I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and attachment. I am the ecstasy of lovers in harmony with dharma.

7.12

The gunas, the three aspects of My creative energy — goodness, passion and ignorance — originate from Me alone. They are in Me, but I am not subject to them.

7.13

People have become hypnotized by the illusory world woven by My gunas, and do not know Me — That which is beyond Maya, yet contains it.

7.14

Indeed, it is difficult to see through the complex illusion created by My gunas. But those who shift their focus from the world to Me — however dimly perceived at first — will come at last to know Me in full.

7.15

Those who do evil, however, and those who through laziness live mean and lowly lives, and those who delight in the trinkets of Maya, and those who partake of the darkness of demons — these will never sacrifice their ignorance for the Truth of Me.

7.16

Those who implore Me fall into four categories: Those in great distress, those who seek wealth, those who seek knowledge, and those who are innately wise.

7.17

Of these, the man of wisdom is especially dear to Me. He asks for nothing but my love and regards Me above all else. I am dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

7.18

All who implore me are noble souls, but the man of wisdom I regard as Myself. He seeks only to serve Me, and shall come to know that he and I are One.

7.19

After many lives of devotion to Me, the man of wisdom surrenders to the Truth that All is Self, and becomes Me. Such great souls are very rare.

7.20

Those whose limited minds are entranced by the material world worship lesser gods, and in accordance with their own nature, perform religious rites to attract the objects of their desires.

7.21

These seekers, too, I support, for I am the Soul in everyone's heart. If one worships a demigod in faith. I am there to strengthen his devotion.

7.22

Indeed, the fruit men desire through the worship of demigods will come to them — not from the demigods, but from Me.

7.23

But the fruit they thus gain is finite and fleeting, and over time their taste for it wanes. Those who worship a demigod are consigned to the planes of the demigods. Those who surrender to Me, attain the realm of the Supreme.

7.24

The foolish regard My manifest form as that which I am. Ignorance clouds their vision. Did it not, they would know Me as the unmanifested Source of All That Is.

7.25

The Truth of Me is never revealed to the foolish and small-minded. They perceive only the veil of My Creation, woven by the gunas. Behind that veil, and containing it, is My True Nature — the Absolute.

7.26

I contain the past, present and future — Here, Now. I know all beings who have ever lived or ever will live, yet none but the rarest of rare know Me.

7.27

Delusion is the nature of birth. Man lives in a fairytale world of opposites, arising out of the dual powers of aversion and desire.

7.28

But in any age and time, any man or woman who turns away from aversion and desire, who serves Me in righteousness, can come to know Me as Self.

7.29

He who takes refuge in Me and truly seeks liberation from birth and death, will discover True Nature, and know with self-evident certainty the workings of the Universe.

7.30

He who comes to know Me as the Source of all manifestations, the God of all demigods and the receiver of all sacrifices, shall remain steadfast in his knowing throughout his life, and pass through death in the arms of Grace.



## Chapter 8: The Cycle of Birth and Death

8.1

*Arjuna said*, “O Lord, what is Brahman? What is Self? What is karma? What is this material manifestation? What are the demigods?”

8.2

Who is the Lord of Sacrifice and how does he live in a body? How can those engaged in spiritual practice know you at the time of death? Please explain these things to me.”

8.3

*Lord Krishna said*:

The immutable emptiness of the Absolute is called Brahman. The arising of Brahman as life is called Self. The momentum of Creation is called karma.

8.4

Creation is the manifestation of seemingly material appearances, which in actuality have no substance and are forever changing. I am the Universal God and contain all the demigods, like those of the sun and moon. I dwell in the heart of every living being, and thus am Lord of their sacrifices.

8.5

Whoever thinks of Me at the time of death will come to Me when he leaves the body. Of this there is no doubt.

8.6

For whatever a man thinketh of at the moment of death, that he will become after passing.

8.7

Therefore, think of Me — God in the form of Krishna — as you carry out your given duty, which for you, Arjuna, is to fight. Surrender your mind to Me. Dedicate your actions to Me. In this way you will surely come to Me.

8.8

Practice the yoga of meditating on Me. With one-pointed resolve, focus your thoughts on God. When the mind wanders, bring it back. Do this without ceasing and God Consciousness will happen.

8.9

Meditate on God as the Source of Creation. Timelessly ancient, smaller than the nucleus of an atom — He is the sustainer of all beings and forms. Self-luminous like the sun — He is beyond both darkness and light.

8.10

One who, at the time of death, with a stilled mind gained from the practice of yoga, fixes his attention on the point between his eyebrows, and in full devotion remembers the Divine Lord, certainly shall be gathered in by Him.

8.11

There are those who dedicate themselves wholly to renunciation and the study of the Vedas, and who live celibate lives free of passion in order to attain Brahman.

8.12

Closing the lower gates of the body moves one's mind and thoughts from the body to the heart, and allows one's life energy to flow upwards to the top of the head. This accelerates one's yoga practice.

8.13

One who leaves his body while meditating on God and intoning the sacred AUM — whether in sound or thought — will instantly attain the Supreme.

8.14

O Arjuna, to the faithful practitioner who remembers Me without ceasing, I am easily realized.

8.15

Great souls who realize God are no longer subject to the worldly miseries of life and death. They live in perfection.

8.16

From the lowest levels of the material world to the highest celestial planes, all are realms of birth, tribulation and death. But once God Consciousness is realized, one need never again be born on any material plane.

8.17

One day of God is equal to a thousand eons of human time. Similarly, his nights are one thousand eons. One who knows this in himself, knows the truth of night and day.

8.18

At the dawning of God's day, all beings emanate from the unmanifested Source. At the fall of God's night, all beings dissolve into the unmanifested Void.

8.19

Over and over this same multitude of beings is manifested at the dawn of God's day, and again and again helplessly dissolved into nothingness at the fall of God's night.

8.20

Yet beyond this endless cycle of manifesting and un-manifesting of Creation in time, is the timeless, unchanging solidity of the Eternal Unmanifest. When the Universe of comings and goings is destroyed, the Eternal Unmanifest is untouched.

8.21

The Eternal Unmanifest is my Home. Those who come to Me there, never return to the realm of manifestation.

8.22

This Consciousness of the Most High is only attainable by one-pointed devotion to Me, to Him for whom This is Home.

*[The following six verses were probably not part of the original text. They are out of tune with the rest of the Gita, and it is speculated they were added at the end of this chapter by someone with an ulterior purpose. Indeed, this chapter ends more naturally after verse 8.22.]*

8.23

O Arjuna, I will now explain to you the times when a mystic departs never to return, and when he again returns to earth.

8.24

Those who pass into death in fire, light, daytime, during the waxing of the moon, or during the six months when the sun travels in the north, attain the Absolute right away.

8.25

Those who pass into death in smoke, darkness, nighttime, during the waning of the moon, or during the six months when the sun travels in the south, attain lunar light and will be reborn.

8.26

According to the Vedas, there are two ways of passing from this world, one in light and one in darkness. When one passes in light, he does not come back. When one passes in darkness, he returns.

8.27

The yogi who knows these two paths is not deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, be steadfast in yoga.

8.28

The yogi who knows this gains merit beyond that received for the study of the Vedas, austerities, charitable works, and performances of sacrifices, and he reaches the Supreme Abode.

## Chapter 9: The Way of Worship

9.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

Dear Arjuna, because you do not carp and cavil at what I teach, I shall now impart to you the secret wisdom that, when realized in yourself, will free you from the miseries of material existence.

9.2

This wisdom is the king of sciences, the most sovereign of mysteries. It brings about direct realization of the Self, and thus is the perfection of all religion. It is easy to practice, and everlasting in effect.

9.3

Those who do not practice faithfully, however, will not realize Self, and will remain lashed to the wheel of birth and death.

9.4

The entire Universe of Creation consists of nothing but Me in My unmanifested nature. All beings consist entirely of Me, but I do not dwell in them.

9.5

Nor can it be said that beings dwell in Me. Though I am the unmanifest substance of all Creation, that is not where you will find Me.

9.6

As the wind moves everywhere yet always exists in the sky, so do all beings and things exist in Me.

9.7

At the end of every cosmic cycle, all beings return to Me. In every new beginning, I send them forth again.

9.8

In My aspect as Nature I pour forth, again and again, the whole multitude of beings solely by My Will. They have no say in this. And when I will it, they are gathered back.

9.9

I have no attachment whatever to these works. I am disinterested, indifferent.

9.10

My Will powers Nature to manifest all things, moving and unmoving, and to destroy and create them again and again.

9.11

When I assume human form, the foolish deride and disregard Me. They cannot perceive Me as Lord God of All.

9.12

The bewildered are attracted by godless and demonic views. In such a deluded state, there is no hope for Liberation. Their actions are all in vain and their knowledge is worthless.

9.13

Those who are not deluded, the great sages, know Me as I am — the Source of Creation. They seek only to serve Me, and are protected by Divine Nature.

9.14

Some sing My praises and bow down to Me in worship. Some simply worship Me with love.

9.15

Others see Me as undifferentiated Oneness, not different from themselves. Others worship Me as a separate Being. Still others worship Me in the infinite variations of my cosmic form.

9.16

I am the rituals and ceremonies in all of this, I am the offerings and I am the sacrifice, I am the food, the herbs, the butter. I am the act of surrendering, and I am the fire.

9.17

I am the Father and Mother of the Universe, I am the Grandsire and sole Sustainer of All That Is. I am the Purifier, the sacred AUM, the holy scriptures and the only true Knowing.

9.18

I am the Lord, the witness, the refuge and the abode. I am the goal, the map, and the dear companion, I am the origin, the destruction, the place of rest, and the imperishable seed.

9.19

I am the sun and its heat. I withhold and send forth rain. I am immortality and death, being and non-being, reality and the unreal.

9.20

Those who seek heaven by studying the Vedas, performing rituals and drinking soma, worship me indirectly. Purified of sins, they earn birth in the realm of the demigods, and feast on celestial pleasures.

9.21

They enjoy the glories of Paradise until their store of merit is exhausted. Then they are born again into the world of mortals. They have followed the letter of the scriptures, but because they desire only the joys of heaven, they come and go again and again.

9.22

But for those who think of Me always, for no other reason but love and devotion, I take it upon myself to provide all that they need, and to preserve what they already have.

9.23

Those who worship other gods sincerely and faithfully, they, too, are worshipping Me, though with veiled understanding.

9.24

I am the enjoyer of all sacrifices, no matter who they are intended for. But those who do not come to know Me as such, fall again and again into mortal births.

9.25

Those who worship demigods, take birth among the demigods. Those who worship ancestors, join them when they die. Those who worship spirits, take birth among such beings. Those who worship Me, will come to live as God.

9.26

Whatever small thing you offer Me in devotion — a leaf, a flower, a fruit, some water — I will accept in love.

9.27

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you give away, whatever austerities you perform — do it as an offering to Me.

9.28

In this way you will be released from the karma of action — which brings both good and bad results. By surrendering your actions to Me, you shall come to Me in Liberation.

9.29

I am equal towards all beings. I favor none and despise none. But whoever is devoted to Me in service, I am a friend to him. He is in Me and I am in him, in love.

9.30

Even the vilest sinner, if he worships Me wholeheartedly in devotion, shall be counted as virtuous because he has resolved to tread the right path.

9.31

Such a one soon becomes a righteous soul and finds lasting peace. Know thou for certain, Arjuna, he who loves Me shall never perish.

9.32

Anyone who takes refuge in Me, whatever their birth, race, sex or caste — even those called untouchables — can attain the Supreme.

9.33

How much easier then for the sages and saints of meritorious deeds and fortunate birth who, having found themselves born into this transient, joyless world, devote themselves to Me.

9.34

Fill your mind with thoughts of Me. Become devoted to Me. Make offerings to Me. Bow to Me in humility. Repeat My name over and again in your heart and become absorbed in Me. In this way you will become One with Me, and discover I am your very Self.



## **Chapter 10: The Divine Manifestations**

10.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

Arjuna, My dear friend, listen to Me. I am imparting to you these divine teachings because I want the best for you.

10.2

Even the demigods and saints do not know My origin. I am the Source of their very existence, but they do not know My Original Cause.

10.3

Know Me as the Unborn, the One Without Beginning, the Supreme Progenitor of All That Is, and you will be a man free of delusion. Your actions will cause no karma.

10.4 / 10.5

From Me arises wisdom, intelligence, forgiveness, calmness, happiness, joy, sorrow, pleasure, truth, delusion, non-delusion, restraint, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, violence, non-violence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame, infamy — and all other attributes of the life of beings. These are created by Me alone.

10.6

The four Manus — the progenitors of mankind — were born of My Mind, as were the seven Saints who followed the Manus. And from them all the creatures of the world descend.

10.7

Those who realize the truth of My divine power become One with Me. This is for certain.

10.8

I am the Father of all spiritual and material worlds. From Me, All That Is manifests. Those who know this in themselves, worship Me with all their heart.

10.9

With their minds established in Me, with their lives surrendered to Me, they delight in talking about Me and enlightening each other about Me. They are content and happy in their lives.

10.10

To those who worship Me with love and devotion, I give the key to the door that leads to Me.

10.11

I live in their hearts and grant them special mercies. I destroy their ignorance with the radiance of Truth.

10.12

*Arjuna said, “O Lord, you are indeed unborn and omnipresent, the Supreme Brahmin, the Great Purifier, the Divine Self, the Eternal Home.*

10.13

*The great sages Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa have declared you thus, and now you Yourself are declaring it to me!*

10.14

*I completely accept all that you have told me. Neither demigods nor demons know the Essence of your divine manifestation.*

10.15

*Indeed, you alone, by your own powers, know Yourself— the Supreme Personality, the God of gods, the Source and Lord of all beings, the Master of the Universe.*

10.16

*Please tell me in detail about the divine manifestations with which you pervade all the Universe.*

10.17

*O Supreme Lord, how shall I think of you? In what forms in creation can I recognize you? In meditation, how should I imagine you?*

10.18

*Please tell me again of your divine glories and appearances. Your words are like nectar to me.”*

10.19

*Lord Krishna said:*

Of course, I will now speak about my forms and manifestations, but only the most obvious, for my divine glories are endless.

10.20

I am the Self in the heart of all creatures. I am the birth, the life, and the death of all beings.

10.21

Of the powers of creation, I am Vishnu. Among the luminous, I am the Sun. Of the winds I am the Whirlwind. Among the spheres, I am the Moon.

10.22

Of the Vedas, I am the Hymns. Of the demigods I am Indra. Of the senses, I am Mind. Of the attributes of beings, I am Consciousness.

10.23

Among the forces of life I am Shiva. Among spirits and demons I am Wealth. Of the elements of nature I am Fire. Of the mountains I am Meru.

10.24

Among priests I am Chief. Among warriors I am Commander. Of waters, I am Ocean.

10.25

Of sages I am Bhṛigu. Of sounds I am AUM. Of offerings, I am Prayer. Of things unmovable, I am the Himalayas.

10.26

Of trees, I am the Sacred Fig. Among saints, I am Nārada. Among divine singers, I am the Leader. Among perfected beings, I am Kapila.

10.27

Among horses, I am the Celestial Stallion that arose from the churning of nectar. Among elephants, I am the Elephant of Clouds. Among men, I am Ruler and King.

10.28

Of weapons, I am the Thunderbolt of Indra. Among serpents, I am Viśuki on the neck of Shiva. Of cows, I am Surabhi, giver of abundant milk. Among causes of procreation, I am the God of Love.

10.29

Among the cobra gods, I am Ananta. Among the water gods, I am Varuna. Among departed ancestors, I am Aryama. Among dispensers of the law, I am the Lord of Death.

10.30

Of demons, I am Prahlaḍa. Of reckonings, I am Time. Of animals, I am the Lion. Of birds, I am Garuḍa.

10.31

Of purifiers, I am the Wind. Of warriors, I am Rama. Of fish, I am the Shark. Of rivers, I am the Ganges.

10.32

I am the beginning and end of all creations, and also the middle. Of the sciences, I am the science of Self. Among debaters of logic, I am conclusive Truth.

10.33

Of the alphabet, I am the letter “A.” I am the copulative in compound words. I am the infinity in time. I am Brahma, the Creator.

10.34

I am all-devouring death and the progenitor of that which has yet to be. Of the qualities of the feminine, I am fame, prosperity, beauty, inspiration, memory, intelligence, eloquence, wit, courage, forbearance and forgiveness.

10.35

Of hymns, I am the Brihatsama. Of mantras, I am the Gayatri. Of months, I am November. Of seasons, I am Spring.

10.36

I am the gamble of the gambler, the radiance of the radiant, the power of the powerful. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolve of the resolute, the virtue of the virtuous.

10.37

Among the Vrishni clan, I am Krishna. Among the Pandeva clan, I am Arjuna. Among sages, I am Vyasa. Among poets, I am Ushana.

10.38

I am punishment for the lawless, and statesmanship for those who seek power. I am the silence in mystery, and the wisdom of the wise.

10.39

I am the seed of All That Is. No being or thing, moving or unmoving, can exist without Me.

10.40

O Arjuna, the list of my divine manifestations is limitless. I have told you but a few by way of illustration.

10.41

Everything beautiful, glorious, and mighty, is but a trifling spark of my splendor.

10.42

But what use are all these details, Arjuna? Simply know that with the most infinitesimal spec of Myself, I pervade and sustain the whole Universe.

## Chapter 11: The Faces of God

11.1

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, having heard the secret knowledge You have given me out of compassion, my delusion is now dispelled.*

11.2

*You have spoken to me in detail about the origin and dissolution of beings, and about Your inexhaustible glories.*

11.3

*I have no doubt that You are as you declare Yourself to be, but I greatly desire to see You for myself in Your Divine Nature.*

11.4

*If you think I am strong enough to behold You, O Lord, please reveal Yourself."*

11.5

*Lord Krishna said:*

*Behold, Arjuna, My celestial forms of all colors and shapes by the hundreds of thousands!*

11.6

*Behold the sun gods, the gods of nature, the god of storms, the twin gods of healing and the gods of roaring winds — wonders never before seen, Arjuna!*

11.7

*Behold the entire Universe, that which moves and that which does not, revealed within Me. Whatever else you desire to see, it is here for you to see!*

11.8

*But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. I give you, therefore, divine sight. Now, behold My opulent majesty!*

11.9

**Sanjaya said:**

*Having said this, O King, the Supreme Lord Krishna infused Arjuna with His Divine Being.*

11.10

*Arjuna then saw within himself, countless eyes and mouths, and numberless mystic forms adorned with celestial ornaments and brandishing divine weapons.*

11.11

*Incredible were the many forms of God, arrayed in garments and garlands, anointed with unguents and perfumes, resplendent, boundless, with infinite faces on all sides.*

11.12

*If a thousand suns blazed forth all at once, their radiance would be but a faint glimmer of the effulgence of the Supreme Lord.*

11.13

*There in the body of God, Arjuna witnessed the Totality of the Universe as One manifesting as many.*

11.14

*Then, awestruck and astonished, his hair standing on end, Arjuna bowed his head and spoke with folded hands.*

11.15

*He said, "O Lord, I see within You all the demigods and all the earthly beings. I see Brahma the Creator on the lotus flower. I see Lord Shiva, the celestial sages, and the divine serpents.*

11.16

*In Your infinity I see countless arms, bellies, mouths and eyes. In You I see no end, no beginning, no between.*

11.17

*Your form, ablaze with radiance like the immeasurable fire of the sun, is difficult to gaze upon directly, but I perceive Your diadem, discus and scepter.*

11.18

*You are the supreme objective of all knowing, yet You are beyond my thinking. You are the imperishable foundation of the universe, the primordial progenitor of dharma, the guardian of eternal life.*

11.19

*You are One without other, the timeless Origin, without beginning, middle or end. You have arms and hands without number and the suns and moons of the universe are Your eyes. Your mouth is sacrificial fire, and Your effulgence floods all creation with heat and light.*

11.20

*You alone pervade heaven and earth and all space between, in every direction, forever. Seeing Your wondrous and terrifying form, the three worlds tremble and shake.*

11.21

*I see all the demigods and celestial beings surrendering unto You with bowed heads and hands folded in prayer. Some are afraid, and extol You with profusive chants and prayers, saying, "Peace, O Lord," and "May all be well."*

11.22

*The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Vishvadevas, Ashwinis, Kumars, Maruts, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, Siddhas, and the entire pantheon of demons, ancestors, and perfected souls, stand gazing upon You in wonder. And they are astonished.*

11.23

*O Lord, seeing your unimaginable might, Your many faces, eyes, arms, bellies, legs and feet, and staring into the teeth of Your terrifying jaws, all the beings of all the worlds tremble in fear, and so do I.*

11.24

*I can no longer hold my balance, O Lord. Seeing the infinite colors of Your effulgence reach beyond the heavens, looking transfixed into Your gaping mouths and enormous blazing eyes, my body shakes, my heart loses courage, and peace deserts my mind.*

11.25

*The terrifying flames of Your face, with its sharp tusks and hideous teeth, is like the fire of death standing before me, and I can find no place to hide. In every way I am lost, fearful, and bewildered. O Lord of lords, please have mercy on me.*

11.26 / 11.27

*I see all the sons of Dhritarashtra, with their allied kings, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, and also the generals from our side, rushing headlong into Your fearsome mouths, where their heads are crushed to dust by Your dreadful teeth.*

11.28

*As great rivers torrent towards the sea to be swallowed up, so do these great warriors race to oblivion in the inferno of Your flaming mouths.*

11.29

*I see beings from everywhere fly into You like moths, full speed into the flame of Your destruction.*

11.30

*I see you, Vishnu, lapping up beings from all quarters with Your fiery tongues, licking Your lips and feeding Your effulgence.*

11.31

*O Supreme God, Your present form is terrifying to me. I bow to You in quaking reverence. Please tell me who You are in such fierce adornment. I want to know You and Your origin, but I fear You, and do not know Your purpose."*

11.32

*Lord Krishna said:*

I reveal Myself to you as Time, the destroyer of beings and worlds. No matter what your intentions, Arjuna, none of the warriors on either side of this battle shall escape death today. Only you, the Pandavas, will continue to live.

11.33

Therefore stand up. Fight for honor and glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy an unrivalled kingdom. These men have already been doomed by Me. You are just the outer appearance of them being slain by your hand.

11.34

Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna, and the other great warriors assembled here have already been slain by Me. You do not kill. I kill. Forget your concerns. Simply fight and your enemies will be vanquished.

11.35

**Sanjaya said:**

*Upon hearing these words of Lord Krishna, Arjuna bowed before him, and with trembling folded hands, addressed him in a voice choked with fear.*

11.36

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, it is fitting and proper that the world rejoices at the sound of Your name, and that all beings react to Your greatness. The saints and sages bow down to You in homage, and the demons scatter fearfully in all directions.*

11.37

*How could they do otherwise? You are the primal Source of all Creation, superior even to Brahma. You are the infinite God of all gods, the boundless abode of all worlds, the imperishable Reality beyond being and non-being.*

11.38

*You are the timeless Ancient One, the sole refuge of all that exists. You are the knower, the known, and the unknowable. You pervade the whole Universe, which consists solely of your limitless forms.*

11.39

*You are Brahma, the Creator. You are Vayu, god of Wind, Yama, god of Death, Agni, god of Fire, and Varun, god of Water. You are the Grandsire of all the gods and all things that live. I revere You and submit to You, O Lord. I praise You, I praise You, A thousand times I praise You!*

11.40

*I offer my obeisance before You, and salute You from all sides. You are all power, and You encompass All — for You are All!*



11.41

*In the past, without knowing Your true greatness, I have presumptuously addressed You as “Krishna,” “Yadava,” or “My Friend,” out of affection and thoughtless familiarity.*

11.42

*Many times I have shown you disrespect, either in jest or inadvertence while playing, resting, walking and eating, both when we’re alone and with other friends. For this, I humbly beg your forgiveness, O Great Lord.*

11.43

*You are the Father of the Universe, of all that moves and all that does not. You are the ultimate object of worship, the sole spiritual master, the supreme personality of God. You have no equal in the three worlds and beyond. What could possibly be greater than You and Your glorious power?*

11.44

*You are the Lord Supreme, to be worshipped by every living being. I prostrate myself before you in loving adoration and beseech your blessing. As a father forgives his wayward son, as a friend forgives his stumbling friend, as a lover forgives the frailties of his lover, please forgive me my many offenses.*

11.45

*Never before have I beheld Your fierce glory, and now having seen it, I am overjoyed. Yet at the same time my mind and body tremble in fear. Please have mercy and reveal Yourself as the Supreme Personality of God, as Lord and Home of the Universe.*

11.46

*I long to see You again in Your four-armed form, with diadem and scepter and discus, holding a lotus flower in your palm.”*

11.47

*Lord Krishna said:*

*I am well-pleased with you, Arjuna, and through Union I revealed to you, in all its resplendence, my supreme form in the material world. No one but you has ever seen this.*

11.48

*For neither by the study of scriptures, nor the performance of sacrifices, nor by rituals, charities or austerities, can my form be seen by men. I have granted it only to you, O Great Warrior.*

11.49

*Now that you have seen Me in fierce form, you need not fear Me again. But enough. Behold, my friend, I am again your charioteer. Be cheerful and release your anxiety.*

11.50

**Sanjaya said:**

*Having thus spoken, Lord Krishna passed first Through his mighty four-armed form then gradually assumed his human form and gently encouraged his frightened friend.*

11.51

*Arjuna said, “Seeing you again in your gracious human form has calmed me, O Lord. I have regained my composure and my mind is restored.”*

11.52

*Lord Krishna said:*

The form in which you have seen Me is extremely difficult to behold. Even the demigods ever long to behold it.

11.53

The form in which you have beheld Me with the transcendental eyes of Union, cannot be seen by studying the Vedas, or by performing austerities, charities or sacrifices. It is not that easy.

11.54

But through intense one-pointed devotion, it is possible to not only see My True Nature, but to come into It. In Love I can be Known.

11.55

Truly, one who is free of attachment to the world, who is a friend to all creatures, who works only for Me, who is devoted only to Me, who has Me as his only goal — such a one will indeed become Me.

## Chapter 12: The Life of Devotion

### 12.1

*Arjuna said, “Which devotees practice the more perfect yoga, those who worship you as a personal God, or those who seek to know your unmanifested nature?”*

### 12.2

*Lord Krishna said:*

Those whose mind is fixed on My Divine Form, who worship Me always with sincerity and faith, are more successful in yoga.

### 12.3 / 12.4

But those who earnestly seek to know the Unmanifested that lies beyond the senses, the imperishable, indefinable, all-pervading, unthinkable, unchanging, immovable Absolute Truth, by restraining the senses, by viewing all things with an equal eye, and by finding joy in the happiness of others — these too will find Me.

### 12.5

However, for those whose minds are fixed on the unmanifested, impersonal aspect of the Supreme, the path to Self-Realization is more troublesome. It is difficult for embodied souls to envision and devote themselves to that which has no image.

### 12.6 / 12.7

But for those who worship Me, who surrender all actions to Me, who are devoted to Me without wavering, who meditate upon Me with one-pointed focus, who regard Me as the supreme goal — these souls I shall swiftly rescue from the turbulent ocean of mortal life and death.

### 12.8

Fix your mind upon Me alone. Surrender your thoughts to Me, and there is no doubt you will come to live in Me.

### 12.9

If you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then faithfully practice bhakti yoga — the yoga of devotion. In this way you will develop the desire to come to Me.

### 12.10

If you are unable to follow the practices of bhakti yoga, then dedicate all your actions to Me. Let this be your devotional method and you shall attain spiritual perfection.

### 12.11

If you are not capable of working for Me in devotion, then at least try to be self-controlled and give up the fruits of your actions.

12.12

With renunciation of the fruits of action comes peace of mind. If your practice is only mechanical, however, it is better to seek knowledge. Better yet, focus on meditation.

12.13 / 12.14

Indeed, one who is a friend to all beings, who hates no one, who claims nothing as his, who is free of false ego, who is forgiving, who remains equally poised in both pleasure and pain, who is resolute, content, self-controlled, steady in meditation, and whose mind and intellect are fixed firmly on Me — such a one is a devotee, and is dear to Me.

12.15

He who neither disturbs the world nor is disturbed by it — who is free of envy, fear, anxiety and elation — he is dear to Me.

12.16

He who is self-sufficient, who expects nothing, who is pure, skillful, indifferent, untroubled, and free of self-interest in all undertakings — he is dear to Me.

12.17

He who neither rejoices nor grieves, nor despairs nor desires, who is equally unmoved by both auspicious and inauspicious fortunes, is dear to Me.

12.18 / 12.19

One who is compassionate to friend and foe, who is equally poised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, who is unattached to the things of the world, who enjoys silence, who when being praised or censured remains the same, who is content with anything or nothing, who is at home wherever he is, who has a steady mind filled with devotion — such a one is very dear to Me.

12.20

Truly, those who follow righteously the immortal dharma of devotion, who are imbued with earnestness and faith, who focus with one-pointed intent on Me as the supreme goal, such as these are very, very dear to Me.

## Chapter 13: The Knower of the Field

13.1

*Arjuna said, “O Lord, I wish to know about the creative energy of nature and the pure consciousness of the soul. I wish to know about the divine field, and the knower of the divine field.”*

13.2

*Lord Krishna said:*

This body of matter and energy is called the field. The Knower of the field is pure consciousness.

13.3

I am the Knower of all fields, and I am the fields. This creates knowledge.

13.4

Listen now and I will explain to you in brief the nature and properties of the field, how change takes place within it, and from whence it came. I will also tell you who the Knower of the field is, and what His powers are.

13.5

This knowledge has been described in many songs and writings, and is revealed with especially sound logic and evidence in the Brahma Sutra.

13.6

The field of activities is composed of the five great elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether — and also the ego, the mind, the unmanifested, and the ten sense organs — ears, eyes, nose, tongue, skin, mouth, feet, hands, rectum and genitals.

13.7

Desire, aversion, happiness, sorrow, life signs, vitality, sympathy, will, fortitude, and the persistent clinging to life, are also encompassed by the field.

13.8 / 13.9 / 13.10 / 13.11 / 13.12

Humility, sincerity, unpretentiousness, nonviolence, forbearance, tolerance, simplicity, devotion to a true spiritual teacher, purity, steadiness, self-control, non-attachment to sense-objects, indifference, absence of egoism, constant awareness of the problem of birth, disease, old age and death, non-identification with wife, family, and home, equipoise in both desired and undesired conditions, unswerving devotion to Me alone, a preference for solitude, philosophical pursuit of Absolute Truth, an aversion to mundane society, consistent longing for Self-Realization — these I call wisdom and knowledge. All else is ignorance.

13.13

I will now tell you what it is that must be known, and by its knowing, brings immortality: It is Brahman. He is without beginning. He is neither being nor non-being. He neither exists nor does not exist. He is beyond all that, and He is subject to Me.

13.14

His arms and legs, hands and feet are everywhere. Everywhere are his heads, with mouths that speak, and eyes that see, and ears that hear everything. He pervades and commands All.

13.15

He is the source of all senses but possesses none. He sustains all life but is attached to nothing. He is master of the gunas, yet transcends nature.

13.16

He is the inside and outside of all beings and things, moving and non-moving. He is subtle, incomprehensible, infinitely vast yet intimately close.

13.17

Although He appears as the multitude of separate forms, he is ever undivided, forever One. He is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of all beings.

13.18

He is the source of light in all that is luminous. He is the darkness beyond darkness. He is knowledge. He is the goal of knowledge. He lives in the heart of everyone.

13.19

I have just described to you the nature of the field, the definition of knowledge, and the goal of knowledge. One who realizes this in himself, becomes as I Am.

13.20

Know that neither creative energy nor pure consciousness ever began. Know also that everything that changes is the product of the forces of nature.

13.21

Nature is responsible for cause and effect in the world. The soul is responsible for its sufferings and enjoyments.

13.22

The individual soul, embodied in energy-matter, lives a life created by the three gunas — the forces of nature. The degree of the soul's attachment to them dictates the quality of its next birth.

13.23

Yet there is another enjoying life through the body. It is called Witness, Lord, Observer, Supersoul, Supreme, Self.

13.24

He who comes to realize in himself the One living through him, will not take birth again, regardless of his position in life.

13.25

Some realize Self through meditation, others through the yoga of knowledge, others by indifference to the fruits of their actions.

13.26

Others, not knowing the ways of spiritual practice, begin to worship the Supreme Lord upon hearing about Him from saints, and believing deeply in their authority. By such devotion to the words of great teachers, these souls also can gradually transcend the ocean of birth and death.

13.27

Whatever takes birth, moving or non-moving — even the most minute particle — is the union of energy-matter and consciousness.

13.28

He who sees Self in all beings — the deathless in the dying — knows that both the soul and the Supersoul are imperishable.

13.29

He who sees the Supersoul equally in all beings, does not allow his mind to degrade the vision. Thus he approaches the transcendental state.

13.30

He who sees that all actions of the body are performed by the forces of nature, and that the Self does nothing, truly sees.

13.31

He who no longer sees separate identities in material bodies, but perceives all beings as One, becomes Brahman.

13.32

The Supreme Soul has no origin. It never began and has no end. Though working through the body, it does not act or becomes entangled.

13.33

Just as space, due to its subtle nature, is not affected by objects, so the Self is not touched by the attributes of the body.

13.34

Just as the sun illuminates the earth with light, so does the Self illuminate the body with consciousness.

13.35

Those who perceive with the eyes of knowledge the difference between the body and the knower of the body, can also perceive the process of liberation from the bonds of material nature. In this way they shall attain the Supreme.



## Chapter 14: The Forces of Nature

14.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

I shall again reveal to you the wisdom that is beyond knowledge. With this wisdom, the great saints have realized Perfection.

14.2

By living this wisdom, one can transcend the material world and become One with Me. He will not be born into the next cycle of Creation, nor will he be around to perish in its dissolution.

14.3

The womb of Creation is Brahman. In Brahman I sow my seed. From Brahman are born all beings and things.

14.4

Understand that for all species of life, no matter what earthly womb they emerge from, their Mother is Brahman, and I am their Father.

14.5

Beings are born into the material energy of nature, the three gunas — goodness, passion and ignorance. These forces bind the immortal soul to a perishable body.

14.6

Of these forces, goodness is the most pure. It illuminates one's life and gathers no evil. It binds the immortal soul through attachment to happiness and knowledge.

14.7

The force of passion activates an insatiable desire for the pleasures and rewards of earthly life. It binds the immortal soul through attachment to activity.

14.8

The force of ignorance fosters darkness and delusion in the lives of beings. It binds the immortal soul to recklessness, indolence, and walking sleep.

14.9

The force of goodness binds one to happiness and contentment. The force of passion binds one to desire and activity. The force of ignorance obscures knowledge, and binds one to illusion.

14.10

Sometimes the force of goodness is predominant, suppressing for a time passion and ignorance. Sometimes the force of passion overpowers goodness and suspends ignorance. Sometimes ignorance pervades, obscuring goodness and passion.

14.11

When the light of knowledge shines forth from every sense-gate of the body, goodness is in control.

14.12

When greed, unrest, longing, and a flurry of activity are present, passion is predominant.

14.13

When darkness, dullness, inertia, negligence and delusion pervade, it is ignorance that rules.

14.14

If goodness is predominant at the moment of death, the soul passes on to realms of higher knowledge.

14.15

If passion prevails when the soul passes, it takes birth among those who are driven by work. If ignorance pervades at death, the soul is reborn as an animal, or as the lowest of persons.

14.16

Actions born of goodness produce pure and joyous fruit. Acting out of passion brings sorrow and disappointment. The fruit of ignorance is to wander in darkness.

14.17

Goodness garners wisdom. Passion fosters greed. Ignorance leads to confusion, madness, and slavery to an imaginary world.

14.18

Those who abide in goodness take life on higher planes. Those who embody passion remain in the realm of earth. Those who live in ignorance, descend to the lower worlds.

14.19

When a man perceives that he is not the doer of actions, as he previously thought, but that all actions are the movement of the gunas alone, he will also see that the Supreme is beyond all that, and he will come to Me.

14.20

When a man transcends the influence of the gunas, he pulls free of birth, pain, decay and death, and he attains immortality. He can also truly enjoy the nectar of his remaining life!

14.21

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, how can one recognize a person who has gone beyond the reach of the gunas? How does he act? How has he freed himself from these forces?"*

14.22

*Lord Krishna said:*

Arjuna, such a person does not object to the presence of goodness, passion, or even ignorance in his own mind, nor does he miss them when they are not there.

14.23

He sits as one unconcerned, indifferent to the activities of nature, aloof from the movement of gunas. He is ever centered in Self.

14.24

He is unmoved by both pleasure and pain. He views a stone, a piece of clay and an ornament of gold with equal eye. He is steady in the face of the desirable and the unwanted, and unruffled by blame or praise.

14.25

He receives honor and dishonor with equanimity. He is compassionate to friend and foe alike. He exerts no effort for the purpose of reward. Such a person has transcended the gunas.

14.26

He who serves Me alone with unswerving devotion shall rise above the forces of nature and become Brahman.

14.27

For I am the immutable Home of immortal Brahman, the eternal dharma, the ultimate bliss, the divine Absolute.

## Chapter 15: The Embodied Soul

15.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

The ancients speak of the immortal Asvattha tree, whose roots reach up to the sky and whose branches reach down to earth. Its leaves are the songs of the scriptures. He who grasps the significance of this tree, knows the Vedas.

15.2

Its downward-extending branches also curve upward, nourished by the gunas. Sense-objects are the tender buds of twigs. The upward-reaching roots cascade downwards, driving man to act for his own benefit.

15.3

The form of this tree cannot be found in this world. No one knows when it arose, where it can be found, or even if it exists. But one must determine to find this tree, and cut it down with the sword of detachment.

15.4

From then on he must search in earnest for that place from which, having entered, one never returns, and there surrender to the Supreme Being, from whom all things eternally arise.

15.5

One who is free of pride and delusion, who has conquered the evil of attachment, who abides always in Self, who has had enough of desires and sense-objects, who is not subject to the tyranny of opposites, like pleasure and pain — such a liberated person will attain the Eternal Kingdom.

15.6

In this Place the sun does not shine, nor does the moon glow, Neither is this Place illumined by fire. One who attains it, does not again return to the material world. This Place is My Home.

15.7

The embodied souls of the world are fragments of Me, bound by nature, struggling with the senses and the mind.

15.8

When a soul leaves a body and enters a new one, the mind and senses go with it, just as air carries the fragrance of flowers.

15.9

The soul then continues to enjoy a certain type of hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, experienced through those senses and perceived through that mind.

15.10

The ignorant cannot feel the soul as it rests in the body, nor as it moves under the spell of the gunas, nor when it departs the body. But those with the eyes of wisdom behold it all.

15.11

The practicing yogi who is established in self-knowledge sees all this clearly. But the ignorant man with clouded mind cannot see what's going on, no matter how hard he may try.

15.12

The brilliance of the sun that illumines the world, and the light of the moon, and the light from fire — that light is Me.

15.13

I permeate the earth and sustain all beings with my vitality. As the moon, I nourish all plants with the nectar of life.

15.14

I am the fire of digestion in all bodies. I am the incoming and outgoing breath. With fire and air I digest the four foods.

15.15

I abide in the heart of everyone. From Me comes knowledge, memory, and forgetfulness. I am That which the Vedas seek to make known. I am the author of Vedanta. I am the Knower of the meaning of the Vedas.

15.16

There are two kinds of life in Me — the perishable and the imperishable. All beings are perishable. Self is imperishable.

15.17

I am above it all. I am the Supreme Lord of All That Is And Is Not. I pervade the three worlds and sustain them.

15.18

I am beyond the concept of perishable and imperishable. I am the primal Source and Cause celebrated in the Vedas.

15.19

He who knows Me without doubt as the Lord Absolute, wisely engages himself in full devotional service to Me.

15.20

Thus, Arjuna, I have revealed to you the most secret science. Knowing this, one achieves wisdom, and his actions are perfect.

## Chapter 16: The Demons of Earth

16.1

*Lord Krishna said:*

O Arjuna, listen as I relate to you the virtues of one endowed with divine nature. He is compassionate, fearless, vigorous, forgiving, bold, straightforward, resolute. He is gentle, modest, truthful, generous, honest and intelligent. He is free of anger, violence, vanity, malice, cruelty, greed, hatred and pride. He does not covet or envy. He does not criticize or judge.

16.2

He spends his time in spiritual effort — practicing yoga, studying scriptures, pursuing knowledge and wisdom. He is in control of his senses, is unattached to the fruits of his actions, and lives in a spirit of sacrifice. He is self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-possessed. He is a man of his word.

16.3

He values simplicity, austerity, charity, renunciation. He lives a clean life, and is pure in heart and mind. He is ever content and enjoys a life of tranquility.

16.4

Those who are possessed of a demonic nature display the following characteristics: pomposity, pride, anger, rudeness, arrogance, conceit, harshness, ostentation, hypocrisy, dishonesty, haughtiness, irascibility, coarseness, insolence, self-importance, cruelty, and above all, ignorance.

16.5

The divine virtues lead one to Liberation. The demonic qualities condemn one to a destiny of bondage. Do not worry, Arjuna, you were born with divine virtues.

16.6

These then are the two types of beings in the world, the divine and the demonic. I have explained to you at great length about divine nature. Now let me tell you about the demonic.

16.7

Persons of demonic nature do not know what should be done, or what should not be done. They live unclean lives of falseness, and no truth can be found in them.

16.8

They say the universe is an accident with no divine foundation or higher power in control. They believe that beings come to be through sex alone, and they glorify desire and lust.

16.9

Holding fast to this belief, these lost souls of small minds and cruel intentions, become enemies of the world, and by their deeds threaten to destroy it.

16.10

Driven by insatiable desire and lust, filled with arrogance and conceit, possessed of insane purpose, puffed with pride and false prestige, reeking of lies and hypocrisy, they worship the impermanent and are compelled to unclean works.

16.11

They believe that sense gratification and the accumulation of wealth are the highest purposes of life. There is no end to their anxiety, and it plagues them unto death.

16.12

Caught in a web of a thousand desires, slaves to anger and lust, they strive for wealth by any means necessary, and hoard it for sensual pleasure.

16.13

The demonic person thinks, “I have gained much wealth today, and tomorrow my schemes will gain me more. It is all mine and it will stay all mine in the future — as I gain even more! All my desires shall be fulfilled!

16.14

“I have killed one enemy today and I will kill the others, too. I am like a god. I am powerful, successful, triumphant!

16.15

“I am wealthy beyond measure. I have relatives in high places. Where is my equal? Today I shall perform a few sacrifices, and perhaps give a small amount to charity. I will rejoice and be exalted!” Thinking like this, the demonic mire themselves ever deeper into darkness and delusion.

16.16

Possessed by these thoughts, ensnared in a network of illusions, they become addicted to lust and fall into a foul hell.

16.17

Conceited, haughty, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform token sacrifices without regard to ritual or the spirit of the scriptures.

16.18

Bloated by ego, drunk on power, prisoners of pride, anger and lust, they denigrate Me in their bodies, and in their treatment of the bodies of others.

16.19

These cruel and hateful demons, these vilest of men, I cast again and again into inauspicious lower wombs.



16.20

After repeated births into demonic lives, men such as these fall below My reach and can never approach Me. They sink lower and lower into unimaginable abomination.

16.21

There are three gates to Hell, named Lust, Anger and Greed. A sane man banishes these qualities from his life. They lead to damnation of the soul.

16.22

O Son of Kunte, the man who frees himself from these three gates to darkness is moving in the direction of Self-Realization, and with persistence, he will attain it.

16.23

But the man who disregards spiritual wisdom and lives a life of impulse and desire, will obtain neither perfection nor happiness in life, and he will not reach the Supreme.

16.24

Therefore let timeless wisdom be your authority when deciding what to do and what not to do. First understand the ancient spiritual teachings, then let your actions proceed from there.

## Chapter 17: The Performing of Austerities

17.1

*Arjuna said, “O Krishna, what about one who does not follow the precepts of the scriptures, but faithfully follows a spiritual path according to his own vision? Is he driven by the energy of goodness, passion or ignorance?”*

17.2

*Lord Krishna said:*

Each embodied soul has an inherent faith in one of the gunas — goodness, passion, or ignorance. I will now speak about this.

17.3

All living beings have faith. An individual’s faith corresponds to his essence. Whatever he has faith in, that is what he is.

17.4

Those upheld by goodness worship God and demigods. Those enthralled by passion worship demons. The ignorant worship ghosts and spirits of nature.

17.5

Those who perform severe austerities and penances not prescribed by the scriptures do it out of pride, conceit, egoism, and attachment. This certainly arises from the demonic.

17.6

By subjecting the body to senseless torture, they torture also the elements within, including Me, who indwells all bodies.

17.7

Even the food each person prefers is determined by the guna he associates with, as are the kinds of sacrifices, austerities and charities he is inclined to.

17.8

People who have faith in goodness prefer food that is pure, healthy, vital, and soothing. Such foods are juicy, succulent, nourishing, and full of natural flavor. These foods promote longevity, strength, and happiness.

17.9

Those in whom passion is dominant are inclined to foods that are too bitter, salty, sour, hot, pungent, dry, or spicy. These foods cause distress, misery, and disease.

17.10

The ignorant devour food that is overcooked, old, rancid, unclean, stale, putrid, and left over from others.

17.11

Sacrifice performed in accordance with the scriptures, without expectation of reward, and with a firm faith in duty, is of the nature of goodness.

17.12

But sacrifice performed ostentatiously, or for material return, is hypocritical, and is of the nature of passion.

17.13

Any sacrifice that contradicts spiritual scripture, that gives no food to the hungry, in which no prayers are chanted, in which no gifts are offered, is a sacrifice born of ignorance.

17.14

Austerity of the body consists of worshipping the Supreme Lord, a spiritual master, or one's superiors, like mother and father. Cleanliness, simplicity, celibacy, and non-violence are also austerities of the body.

17.15

Austerity of speech consists of speaking words that are truthful, agreeable, and for the benefit of others. Also, reciting the Vedas.

17.16

Austerity of mind consists of silence, simplicity, kindness, self-control, and purity of thought.

17.17

This three-fold austerity, performed in faith without thought of reward, is of the nature of goodness.

17.18

Ostentatious austerities performed in pride for the sake of honor and respect are hypocritical, and of the nature of passion. They are unstable and transitory.

17.19

Austerities performed out of foolish notions, like harming others and self-torture, are certainly born of ignorance.

17.20

A gift given to a worthy person, at the proper time and place, with no thought of reward or reciprocity, is a charity performed out of goodness.

17.21

Charities performed with reluctance, or with expectation of return, are charities with roots in passion.

17.22

A gift given to an unworthy person, with disrespect or disregard, at the wrong time, in the wrong place, is a gift of ignorance.

17.23

From the time of the ancients, the three sounds AUM TAT SAT, have pointed to Absolute Truth. They harken to the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of That which is True Reality. These sounds are chanted and intoned during sacrifices.

17.24

Followers of Brahman always begin their austerities, offerings, and sacrifices by uttering AUM, in accordance with the scriptures.

17.25

When those seeking Liberation offer sacrifices and acts of self-restraint, they are performed while intoning TAT.

17.26

SAT indicates Truth, as well as a follower of Truth, and also work in pursuit of Truth. Truth is the objective of all sacrifice.

17.27

Being established in sacrifice, austerity, and charity is also described as SAT, as is auspicious and righteous action.

17.28

But whatever sacrifice or austerity is performed without faith, is called ASAT. It is false, worthless and for naught, here and hereafter.

## Chapter 18: The Road of Renunciation

18.1

*Arjuna said, "O Lord, I wish to understand the renunciation of action and the renunciation of the fruits of action. How are these different?"*

18.2

*Lord Krishna said:*

Renunciation of action is the way of the renunciant. Renunciation of the fruits of action is sacrifice.

18.3

Some philosophers declare that all action is evil and must be relinquished. Others maintain that acts of charity, sacrifice, and penance should never be abandoned.

18.4

Listen, Arjuna, as I now relate to you the whole truth about renunciation. First, know that there are three kinds.

18.5

Acts of sacrifice, charity, and penance should not be given up, but should be performed in faith. Indeed, these acts purify even the great souls.

18.6

These acts should be performed with detachment, and without thought of return or reward.

18.7

One's prescribed duties should not be renounced. If one abandons his prescribed duties due to delusion, it is an act of ignorance.

18.8

If one abandons his prescribed duties because they are troublesome or painful, it is a renunciation of passion. Such acts are never beneficial or elevating.

18.9

But if one performs his duty only because it must be done, and renounces all claim to the fruits of his actions, this is renunciation arising from goodness.

18.10

The renunciant who neither shuns unpleasant work nor seeks pleasant work, abides in goodness.

18.11

It is impossible for an embodied being to give up all activity. He who renounces the fruits of his actions is the true renunciant.



18.12

There are three kinds of fruits that result from actions — desirable, undesirable, and mixed. For those attached to the fruits of action, these results carry over after death. For those who renounce the fruits of action, there are no such results, here or hereafter.

18.13

Hear now, Arjuna, the five factors involved in the successful performance of all actions.

18.14

They are the physical body, the indwelling performer, the senses, the endeavor undertaken, and ultimately, the Self.

18.15

Whatever right or wrong action a man performs by body, mind or speech, is controlled and determined by these five factors.

18.16

Therefore, one who believes himself to be the sole doer of an action, without acknowledging these five factors, is neither thinking nor seeing clearly.

18.17

But one who has abandoned such ego-centric thinking, whose intellect is not entangled in concepts of good and evil, though he may kill beings in the world, he is not the killer, and his actions do not bind him.

18.18

The three factors that cause action are perception, the object perceived, and the perceiver. These constitute knowledge. The three components of action are the impulse to act, the act itself, and the performer of the action.

18.19

In accordance with the gunas, there are also three types of knowledge, three types of action, and three types of performer. I will tell you about these now.

18.20

Knowledge that perceives all living things to be composed of one eternally insubstantial substance, undivided though seeming separate, is knowledge in the mode of goodness, and can be said to be Pure Knowledge.

18.21

Knowledge that perceives each living thing to be a wholly separate entity, distinct and unconnected from all other entities, is knowledge of untruth, and is in the mode of passion.

18.22

Knowledge that is confined to one narrow belief, one kind of work, one meager fragment of life — and treats it like the whole — is knowledge as darkness, and is in the mode of ignorance.

18.23

An ordained action, performed without love or malice, with no regard for the fruits, is action in the mode of goodness.

18.24

But willful action performed with stressful effort by one seeking only to satisfy his desires, is action based in egoistic pride, and is in the mode of passion.

18.25

Action performed in delusion, with no regard for spiritual consequences, material loss, injury to others, or the limits of one's ability, is action in the mode of ignorance.

18.26

The performer who acts out his given duties with resolve and enthusiasm, without ego or any thought concerning failure or success, is performing in the mode of goodness.

18.27

The performer who acts to enjoy the fruits, who is greedy, envious, impure, and easily moved to joy and sorrow, is performing in the mode of passion.

18.28

The performer whose acts are crude, inappropriate, deceitful, arrogant, or malicious, who is lazy, morose and always procrastinating, is performing in the mode of ignorance.

18.29

Listen now, Arjuna, as I describe the three kinds of intellect and the three kinds of determination, in accordance with the gunas.

18.30

The intellect that discerns between proper action and improper action, between duty and whim, between what should be feared and what need not be feared, between what is liberating and what is binding — that intellect is functioning in the mode of goodness.

18.31

The intellect that cannot distinguish between a righteous and an unrighteous action, that is confused about the difference between right and wrong, is functioning in the mode of passion.

18.32

The intellect that thinks right is wrong and wrong is right, that thinks goodness is for the weak and prefers evil, is imbued with darkness, and functions in the mode of ignorance.



18.33

The determination that is unshakable, that has been developed through yoga to regulate the mind, control the senses and maintain vitality, is determination in the mode of goodness.

18.34

The determination that develops out of an intense desire for sense pleasures and wealth, that seeks to profit from every undertaking, is determination in the mode of passion.

18.35

The determination that cannot move beyond dreaming, that cannot overcome conceit, lamentation, despondency, and fearfulness, is the determination of ignorance.

18.36

Now hear from Me, Arjuna, about the three kinds of happiness the embodied soul can learn to embrace, and by which, it might bring about the end of suffering.

18.37

That happiness which seems like poison at first but in the end becomes nectar and leads one ultimately to Self-Realization, is happiness in the mode of goodness.

18.38

That happiness which seems like nectar at first but turns to poison in the end, leaving one in misery and regret, is happiness attached to sense-objects, and is in the mode of passion.

18.39

That happiness which is oblivious to self-knowledge, which is darkened by illusion from end-to-end, which arises from attachment to indolence, lethargy, and sleep, is happiness in the mode of ignorance.

18.40

No being or entity on earth, nor on the celestial planes of the demigods, is free of the influence of these forces of nature.

18.41

The respective duties of spiritual teachers, soldiers, merchants, and servants are determined by the gunas — by the dominant force in their nature.

18.42

Equanimity, austerity, purity, forgiveness, honesty, wisdom, self-knowledge, tolerance, clarity, serenity, forbearance, uprightness, restraint, integrity, simplicity, compassion, and Self-Realization are the duties of a spiritual teacher.

18.43

The duties of a soldier are courage, vigor, firmness, generosity, resourcefulness, leadership, determination, heroism, boldness, fortitude, dexterity, grace under fire, strength, grandeur, agility, skill in weaponry, not retreating from the battlefield, and ability to rule as a sovereign.

18.44

Cultivating crops, raising cattle, and commerce are the duties of a merchant. The duty of a servant is to serve his employer. This is in accordance with his nature.

18.45

Anyone can reach the highest perfection by diligent performance of his ordained duty. Listen, while I tell you how this is done.

18.46

It is done by performing one's duties as a means of worship and sacrifice to the Lord, the Supreme Source from whom all beings and things arise.

18.47

Performing one's own prescribed duties, though imperfectly, is better than performing another's duties with perfection. Performing the duties ordained to you, you will incur no sin.

18.48

O Arjuna, never turn your back on the duties you were born to, even if you perceive some wrong in them. All endeavors are tainted by some degree of evil, just as flame is veiled by smoke.

18.49

He whose intellect is disinterested, self-controlled, unattached to material pleasures, can obtain the highest state of freedom through the practice of renunciation.

18.50

Learn from Me now, Arjuna, as I briefly explain how one who has attained this state of perfection, can become Brahman.

18.51

One can become Brahman by living a life that purifies intelligence, increases determination, and self-control, casts aside attraction and aversion, and relinquishes sense gratification.

18.52

Such a person cherishes solitude, eats lightly, engages in meditation and contemplation, restrains himself in speech, action, and thought, and is possessed of dispassion.

18.53

Free of egotism, violence, arrogance, desire, possessiveness, envy, selfishness, pride, anger, greed, and lust, he lives in tranquility, unfettered by material trappings, and is imbued with peace.

18.54

On becoming Brahman, he never thinks nor desires nor laments. He lives in a state of bliss and contentment, and is equally disposed to all beings. Attaining this state is the supreme service to Me.

18.55

Through such devotion and service he merges with Me. He knows Me in Truth. He and I are One.

18.56

Though he still performs his duties in the world, by My Grace he enters Eternal Life.

18.57

Therefore, renounce your actions and dedicate them to Me. Focus all your thoughts on Me. Accept Me as Yourself. Come under My protection.

18.58

Fix your mind on Me and follow My Word. By My Grace you shall overcome all obstacles to Liberation. If however, due to pride and false ego, you do not focus on Me and do not heed My Word, you will perish in the realm of the lost.

18.59

If you do not follow my urging, and say again, “I shall not fight,” your resolve will be in vain anyway. Your ordained nature as a soldier will compel you to fight regardless of your intention!

18.60

You are helpless, Son of Kunte! The forces of nature bind you to your duties. That which, out of illusion, you resolve not to do, is the very thing you shall witness yourself doing!

18.61

The Supreme Lord lives in everyone’s heart. By the power of His Will and the workings of Maya, He moves all beings as if they were mounted on machines.

18.62

Surrender to him utterly, Arjuna, and by His Grace you shall be overcome by Peace, and welcomed into your Eternal Home.

18.63

Thus I have revealed to you the secret Truth, Arjuna, the Mystery of mysteries. Consider it very carefully, then do what you will.

18.64

Only listen once more to these most profound of teachings — My highest and innermost Word. You are dear to me, Arjuna, and I want all good things for you.

18.65

Fix your mind on Me and become my devotee. Worship Me and pay homage to Me. Do this and you shall certainly come to Me. This is My pledge to you, for you are very dear to Me.

18.66

Abandon all forms of religion and just surrender to Me alone. Have no fear. I will deliver you from all sin.

18.67

This confidential knowledge is not be revealed to those who are not sincere, not devoted to spiritual practice, who do not want to serve God — and especially not to those who are jealous of Me.

18.68

But he who, out of devotion to Me, teaches this supreme doctrine to those who are worthy of it, performs the greatest act of love for Me, and without doubt, he will come to Me.

18.69

No one on earth does Me greater service, and no one on earth is more dear to Me.

18.70

Anyone who faithfully studies this sacred conversation of ours, worships Me with his intelligence.

18.71

Even those who only listen to this knowledge, with faith and without doubt, will be liberated from sin and attain the realm of the righteous.

18.72

Have you heard My words with your innermost mind? Has your ignorance been dispelled? Has your delusion been seen through?

18.73

*Arjuna said, "O Great Lord, by Your Grace my illusion is destroyed and I have remembered Truth! My mind is stilled and my doubts have fled. O Infallible One, I shall act according to your instructions!"*

18.74

**Sanjaya said:**

*Thus was the great dialogue I heard between Lord Krishna and the noble soul, Arjuna.  
So exhilarating is the message that my hair stood on end!*

18.75

*By the grace of the sage, Vyasa, I heard this sacred yoga from Lord Krishna himself,  
Lord of Yoga, as he spoke it to Arjuna.*

18.76

*O King, as I remember over and over this thrilling conversation, I rejoice again and  
again!*

18.77

*And as I recall in my mind the glorious form of Lord Krishna, I am overwhelmed with  
unspeakable joy!*

18.78

*Wherever there is Krishna, Lord of Yoga, Master of Mystics, and wherever there is  
Arjuna, noble master of the bow, there will also be victory, opulence, morality, and  
extraordinary power. That is my firm conviction.*

# Song of the Ever-Free

## *Avadhuta Gita: The Sayings of Dattatreya*

A New English Version by Bart Marshall

### Introduction

The *Avadhuta Gita* is a Hindu text expounding on the non-dual philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. Authorship is attributed to Dattatreya, who some say was the teacher of Patanjali, but no historical data exists about when or where he was born or how long he lived.

The word *Avadhuta* means a liberated soul, one who has "shaken off" all worldly attachments and cares, and has attained a state of God-realization. An Avadhuta feels no need of observing any rules, either secular or religious. He seeks nothing, avoids nothing, and claims neither knowledge nor ignorance. The Avadhuta has done away with worldly concerns and standard social etiquette, at least in his or her heart. As such, they are said to be "free to roam the earth as a child."

According to Dattatreya, the free man, the Avadhuta, need not have any particular appearance, lifestyle, religion or social role. He may walk about naked or be dressed as a prince. He may appear pious or blasphemous, ascetic or hedonistic.

Swami Vivekananda, a great Advaita teacher, often quoted from the *Avadhuta Gita*. He once said, "Men like the one who wrote this Song have deeply realized. They care for nothing, feel nothing done to the body, care not for heat, cold, danger, or anything. They sit still, enjoying the bliss of Atman, and though red-hot coals burn the body, they feel them not."

## Chapter One – Self

### 1.1

By the grace of God the Absolute,  
the desire to realize one's natural state of Unity  
arises the wisest of men,  
and provides them refuge from all fear.

### 1.2

All that appears in the realm of forms is Self  
and Self alone – the One Being,  
the never-dying Source of Bliss.  
How can I worship that which is formless,  
limitless, and incapable of separation?

### 1.3

This universe composed of the five elements –  
space, air, fire, water and earth –  
is only the shimmering of a mirage within me,  
the immaculate One. To whom shall I bow?

### 1.4

All is Self.  
There is neither separation nor wholeness.  
How can I say, "This exists,"  
or "That does not exist"?  
I am awestruck by this Great Mystery!

### 1.5

The essence and totality of Vedanta is this:  
I am the formless, all-pervading Self –  
the Absolute.  
Realization of This is Intelligence.

### 1.6

I am God, the Self of All.  
Of this there is no doubt.  
My nature is boundless, changeless,  
indivisible like sky –  
purity itself, untouched by illusion.  
Truly, truly, I am That.

1.7

Indeed, my nature is pure Intelligence.  
I am infinite, immutable, deathless.  
I experience neither joy or sorrow,  
nor do I know to whom  
these might appear to exist.

1.8

In me there is no act of mind, good or bad.  
In me there is no act of body, good or bad.  
In me there is no act of speech, good or bad.  
I am pure transcendent Consciousness,  
beyond the senses.

1.9

The mind is like space.  
It seems to face in all directions.  
It seems to imply a past.  
It seems to encompass all.  
But in Reality, it has no substance  
and cannot be said to exist.

1.10

I am Self, the One and only,  
untouched by space and time.  
How can it be said that Self is or is not?  
I am existence itself,  
both manifest and unmanifest.  
I am both visible and hidden.

1.11

Do you not yet understand  
that it is you who are Self?  
You are the eternal, self-reflecting Lord  
of all that is and is not,  
the ever-shining, ever-exalted Atman.  
How can you continue to grieve day and night?

1.12

I abide as Self Alone, the Absolute,  
the all-pervasive One.  
I am both perceiver and that which is perceived.  
The indivisible cannot be divided.



1.13

You were never born, nor can you ever die.  
At no time have you ever had a body.  
The scriptures teach this well-known truth  
in many different ways: “All is Brahman.”

1.14

You are That for which inside and outside  
have no meaning. You are the Absolute,  
existing everywhere at once and forever.  
Why do you run here and there  
like a hungry ghost?

1.15

Separateness and Oneness  
do not exist for “you” and “me.”  
There is no you. There is no me.  
There is no universe.  
All is Self and Self alone.

1.16

The world and body depicted by the senses  
is not you. Nor do the world and body  
belong to you to you, nor do you belong  
to the body and world. You are the Supreme Self  
in which bodies and worlds arise.  
Why do you grieve in the body?  
Why do you suffer in the world?

1.17

For you there is no birth or death.  
For you there is no mind or memory,  
no good or bad.  
For you there is no bondage or liberation.  
O dear child why the tears?  
You and I have no form.  
You and I have no name.

1.18

Dear child, why do you roam the world  
like a ghost? Behold! You are Self –  
that which cannot be divided.  
Do not crave the world. Be happy!

1.19

You are Truth.  
You do not move. You do not change.  
You are the ever-free, the unshakable One.  
In you there is neither attachment nor aversion.  
Why do you seek objects of desire  
and cause yourself to suffer?

1.20

The scriptures all say that Self  
is without attributes or qualities,  
that Self is clear, deathless, and without a body,  
that Self exists everywhere at once, and nowhere.  
Know that I am That.  
Know that you are That. Never doubt it!

1.21

That which has form is not real.  
That in which forms arise is eternal.  
Realizing this, you are no longer  
subject to birth and death.

1.22

Sages sometimes call Self the “ever-same.”  
Let go of attachments,  
and the ever-many mind will forget itself.

1.23

If your nature is not-Self,  
how can there be Self-Realization?  
If your nature is Self,  
how can there be Self-Realization?  
If your nature is both Self and not-Self,  
how can there be Self-Realization?  
If Self alone is, what is there to realize?

1.24

You are the pure, unchanging essence  
of existence, free of form and death.  
How can you know or not know God?

1.25

It is of Self, the Absolute, that scriptures say,  
“I am Brahman,” and “Thou art That.”  
Of the ego and the phenomenal world,  
the scriptures say, “Not this, not this ... ”

1.26

Self contains universe. Self contains mind.  
Self contains “you.” There is no one  
to stand apart and contemplate Self.  
There is no mechanism for contemplation.  
There is nothing to contemplate.  
Why do you so shamelessly think otherwise?

1.27

The Absolute cannot be known.  
How can I speak of the Absolute?  
God cannot be known. How can I worship God?  
I am one with no other,  
the only Truth, the single essence.  
I am eternal, formless, solitary, endless.  
Who is there to speak about and worship This?

1.28

The ego-sense is not the Truth.  
I am not bound  
by the twenty-four cosmic principles.  
I am neither the perceiver  
nor that which is perceived.  
I am the singular Reality beyond all that,  
beyond the furthest reaches of imagination.  
How then could I know my own nature?  
Can the eye see itself?

1.29

That which appears to have form and substance  
cannot by its very nature be infinite or immortal,  
nor can it even be said to be “real” while it lasts.  
Self alone is Reality.  
It does not kill, nor can it be killed.

1.30

You are the pure, formless, ever-same Reality.  
You have no beginning or end.  
How can you be confused about Self?  
How can you hold on to delusions  
about True Nature?

1.31

When a jar is broken, the jar-space it defined  
is not different from infinite boundless space.  
Like this, when the ego-mind lets go,  
that which you are is not different  
from the immaculate Self.

1.32

In Reality, there is no jar nor interior jar-space.  
Neither is there an individual self  
nor an individual soul.  
Realize that in Brahman, the Absolute,  
there is no knower, no knowledge,  
no capacity to know.  
In Brahman there is nothing to be known.

1.33

Realize this:  
“I am That which is always and everywhere.  
I am Void and that which appears in Void.  
I am eternal unchanging All.”  
Do not doubt this.

1.34

There are no scriptures, no worlds, no people,  
no religions, no gods, no sacrificial rites.  
There are no castes, no races, no births,  
no deaths, no lineages or stages of life.  
There is neither the path of smoke  
nor the path of light.  
Only the ever-same Brahman, the highest Truth,  
the Supreme Reality exists.

1.35

You are One without other,  
free of both the pervaded and the pervade.  
Do you believe you are perceptible  
by the senses? Do you believe you are beyond  
the range of senses?

1.36

Some seek Unity. Most seek duality.  
Neither realize Truth.  
Truth is the same at all times everywhere.  
Truth knows nothing of one-ness or two-ness.

1.37

Truth cannot be described.  
Truth is beyond mind and words.  
Truth is void of colors and is not white.  
Truth is void of sound and all other attributes.  
Truth is inaccessible to thought and speech.

1.38

When you realize that the body, the world,  
and all the other appearances are unreal  
and empty like sky, then you become Brahman.  
The paradigm of duality no longer applies to you.

1.39

Personal self and Supreme Self  
are not different to me.  
All is emptiness, like space.  
How can there be an observer of this?

1.40

What I do, what I eat, what I give,  
what I give up – none of this is mine in any way.  
I am clear and untouchable,  
forever unborn and deathless.

1.41

Realize these truths:  
The universe is formless and without substance.  
The universe never changes.  
The universe is existence itself,  
pure and undifferentiated.  
The nature of the universe is the Absolute.

1.42

Truly, you are Self, the Absolute.  
There is no doubt about this.  
What more do I know?  
Self is imperceptible to itself,  
but it is not imperceptible.  
If you do not see every being and all things  
as Self, you are still ignorant.

1.43

Dear child, how can there be illusion  
or absence of illusion?  
How can there be shadow and lack of shadow?  
All is one Truth.  
All is unstained emptiness, like space.

1.44

I am forever free and boundless,  
no beginning, no middle, no end.  
My nature is pure and spotless.  
This is my sure knowledge.

1.45

This whole grand universe,  
beginning with the idea of cosmic intelligence,  
appears as nothing to me. Truly, all is Brahman.  
How can there be an identity or stages of life?

1.46

There is only one indivisible Reality,  
and I am That. I know This in every way.  
The void, the universe and the five elements –  
space, air, energy, water and earth –  
do not exist in Reality.

1.47

Self is neither eunuch, man nor woman.  
Self is not ignorance, knowledge or imagination.  
Why do you ponder  
whether Self is bliss or absence of bliss?

1.48

Self is not realized through the practice of yoga.  
Self is not realized by destroying the mind.  
Self is not realized by instructions from teachers.  
There is nothing for Self to realize.  
It is Truth itself.  
It is itself the Illuminated One.

1.49

There is no body created by the five elements,  
nor is there a state of disembodiment.  
All is Self and Self alone.  
How can the three states of waking, dreaming  
and deep sleep be ascribed to Self?  
If the three states are false,  
how can there be a fourth state?

1.50

I am eternal, free, unbound.  
From what could I be liberated?  
I am not separate from Brahman.  
I am neither the doer nor the experiencer.  
I see no different between the pervader  
and the pervaded.

1.51

Just as water poured into water  
becomes water without distinction,  
so the universe and True Nature are One to me.

1.52

Self is never bound nor liberated.  
Do you think Self must either be constrained  
or free from constraint?

1.53

Your True Nature is empty  
and all-pervasive, like sky.  
Your body and all visible things  
are like water in a mirage.

1.54

I have no teacher. I have no teachings.  
I have no disciples or duties,  
no attributes or actions. My Nature is pure,  
incorporeal and clear, like space.

1.55

You have no body. You have no mind.  
You are purity itself.  
Do not be afraid to say, "I am God."

1.56

O mind, why do you grieve?  
Truly, you are Self. Never doubt This.  
Drink, my child, the nectar  
of the ocean of Oneness.

1.57

There is neither knowledge nor ignorance,  
nor is there some combination  
of knowledge and ignorance.  
One who realizes This becomes pure intelligence,  
and is forever Home.

1.58

I have no need for knowledge and reasoning,  
no need for concepts like time and space,  
no need for instruction from teachers,  
no need for attaining Samadhi.  
I am Truth itself, the one Reality.  
My nature is clear and empty, like sky.

1.59

I was not born and I will never die.  
I perform no actions, good or bad.  
I am pure Brahman,  
without qualities or attributes.  
Bondage and liberation have no meaning.

1.60

God is unchanging, complete, undivided.  
God pervades All.  
How can you be inside or outside of God?

1.61

This whole grand Universe  
of the Absolute shines forth,  
undivided, unbounded, unchanging.  
The concept of illusion is also illusion.  
Duality and non-duality  
exist only in imagination.



1.62

To both the manifest world and unmanifest  
potential say, “Not this, not this ... ”

The Absolute alone exists,  
free of separation and oneness.

1.63

You have no mother, no father, no spouse,  
no children, no kinsmen, no acquaintances,  
no friends. You are neither attached to,  
nor unattached from, anything.

O mind, why do you suffer so?

1.64

O mind, there is no day or night,  
no rising and setting of suns.

O wise one, why do you imagine forms  
in formlessness?

1.65

Self is neither whole nor divided.

Self experiences neither joy nor grief.

Self is and is not everything and nothing.

1.66

I am neither the performer nor the witness.

I have no works, no actions, no karma –  
now or formerly.

I have no body, nor am I disembodied.

How can anything be “mine” or “not mine”?

1.67

I have no faults, like passion and attachment.

There is no pain of a body –  
or pain anywhere for me.

I know only This:

I am the One Self, vast and stainless as sky.

1.68

O mind, what use is your vain talk?

Everything you see is only conjecture.

I have made known to you the essence of Reality.

You are Truth itself,  
boundless and clear as space.

1.69

In whatever place or manner,  
or in whatever state a yogi dies,  
he is absorbed into the Absolute,  
just as the jar-space of a broken jar  
is absorbed into limitless space.

1.70

Whether he quits the body in a holy shrine  
or in the house of an untouchable,  
the realized yogi – even if the body is in a coma –  
becomes the Absolute, Brahman.

1.71

The realized yogi knows everything in life –  
duty, wealth, family, enjoyment, freedom, desire,  
and all the stationary and movable things  
of the world, like trees and men – to be without  
substance, and as unreal as water in a mirage.

1.72

I perform no actions, nor do I witness activity.  
There is no past in which I performed actions  
or witnessed activity. There is no future in which  
I will perform actions or witness activity.  
I know this without a shadow of a doubt.

1.73

The Advadhuta abides alone in a quiet place,  
Absorbed in the perfection of Brahman.  
Having transcended ego and pride, he roams  
about naked, breathing in the mystery of All as Self.

1.74

Where there exists neither the three states  
of consciousness, nor a fourth state  
of transcendence – there one becomes Atman.  
Where there is neither freedom nor bondage,  
neither good nor bad, how can desire exist?

1.75

One does not become Brahman  
by receiving scriptures, repeating mantras,  
or practicing tantric rites.

This is the true and faithful utterance  
of the Avadhuta, purified by no-thought  
and absorbed in the Oneness of Being.

1.76

All is both void and full, everything and nothing.  
In Brahman neither truths nor untruths exist.  
The Avadhuta sings this Gita spontaneously,  
from his personal experience  
and his knowledge of the scriptures.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1

When looking for a true teacher,  
do not be concerned if he is young  
and addicted to sensual pleasure.  
Do not be concerned if he is illiterate, a servant,  
or a householder. None of these things matter.  
Would you cast aside a diamond  
because of dust?

### 2.2

Do not consider scholarship to be the test  
of a teacher. It matters little whether or not  
a guru can recite scriptures.  
The wise ones feel his essence.  
A boat does not need beauty or vermillion paint  
to ferry you across.

### 2.3

Without effort, the Supreme One encompasses  
both the unmovable and the unchanging,  
the manifest and the unmanifest.  
It is Awareness itself, still and transparent as sky.

### 2.4

Without effort, the Supreme One appears  
as living and inert, animate and inanimate.  
How can you talk about it being this or that?  
It is all things at all times all at once.

### 2.5

I am more subtle than primordial substance,  
more primal than elements,  
essences and compounds.  
I am prior to notions of birth and death.  
I am still, undivided, indifferent.

### 2.6

It is said my all-pervading formlessness  
is worshipped by the gods  
in undivided emptiness,  
there is no difference between gods,  
nor between gods and non-gods.

2.7

Illusory life does not make me doubt.  
Movements of mind do not touch me.  
Thoughts and volitions arise in me  
like bubbles in a river,  
then vanish into the pool of Unknowing.

2.8

As the qualities of softness and hardness,  
sweetness and bitterness, are inseparable  
from their respective objects, so do I pervade  
all existence and non-existence.

2.9

As the softness, coldness or sweetness of water  
is not separate from the water,  
so are worldly existence and the Absolute  
inseparable to me.

2.10

The Lord of the Universe is unnamable.  
His subtlety is more subtle than the subtlest.  
He is spotless, beyond the senses,  
beyond mind and intellect.  
He is Supreme.

2.11

Knowing the nature of Being to be indivisible  
and unchanging, how can you believe  
there is an "I"? How can there be  
a "you" or "me"? How can there be a world?

2.12

True Nature is like space – truly like space.  
Infinite, clear, empty, blameless, full.

2.13

Brahman walks not the earth.  
It is neither carried by wind  
nor submerged in water.  
It does not dwell in fire.

2.14

Brahman pervades all Space.  
Nothing pervades Brahman.  
Brahman exists both inside and outside itself.  
Brahman is complete, undivided, uninterrupted.

2.15

Brahman is subtle, invisible, without qualities.  
Realization of Brahman  
does not come on first hearing.  
Realization comes with practice.

2.16

Realization comes through faithful practice  
of yoga. When consciousness abides  
with no object, dissolution happens.  
The realized yogi becomes the Absolute.  
His faults and merits are absorbed into All.

2.17

There is only one antidote  
to the poison of worldly illusion –  
the sweetness of True Nature.

2.18

Forms are visible to the eye. The formless  
is imagined in mind. Brahman is neither.  
It is beyond existence and non-existence.  
Sometimes it is called Inner Self.

2.19

*Maya* and *prakriti* create and experience  
the illusory universe. The offerings of experience  
can be compared to a coconut.  
The outer layer is the husk. Within the husk  
is the pith, within the pith, the shell,  
within the shell, the kernel of dense white flesh.  
See to know that which is inside  
the kernel of flesh. Drink the milk of Brahma.

2.20

Knowledge of appearances is false knowledge,  
pertaining only to an ephemeral illusion.  
Knowledge of inner truths and explanations  
is a step away from ignorance,  
but knowing Brahma is the only wisdom.  
Brahma is the milk of the coconut.

2.21

On a full-moon night,  
you see one clear and brilliant moon.  
See Self like this, transparent, luminous, singular.  
There is only one moon, only one Self.  
Duality is an error of vision.

2.22

All perceived distinctions are defects  
of your own seeing, not valid attributes  
of the all-pervading One. One who realizes Truth  
becomes Brahman. One who teaches Truth,  
is worthy of the highest praise.

2.23

Whether he is illiterate or learned,  
whoever comes to full awareness of Truth  
by the grace of the Guru within,  
is no longer fooled by the mirage of the world.

2.24

He who is free from animosity and attachment,  
whose commitment and effort never waver,  
who works for the welfare of all beings –  
such a one shall realize God.

2.25

As when a jar breaks, the jar-space it defines  
becomes one with infinite Space,  
so when a yogi quits his body,  
the ego-self it formed becomes infinite Self –  
the One Awareness.

2.26

It has been said that one's final deathbed desire  
determines one's next birth. This applies only  
to those who live lives of worldly action.  
It does not apply to realized yogis.

2.27

The destiny of those who live lives of worldly action  
can be expressed in speech.

The destiny of yogis transcends expression.

2.28

Yogis follow no particular path.

They surrender self and attainment happens.

2.29

No matter where a yogi dies – whether in  
a holy place or the house of an untouchable –  
he becomes Supreme Self alone,  
and never again enters a womb.

2.30

One who realizes Supreme Self,  
which is innate, inconceivable and unborn,  
is not tainted by the fulfillment of desires,  
nor defiled by any evil.  
He performs no actions  
and is not bound by karma.  
He is forever free and benevolent to all.  
He lives as he likes and accumulates no stains.

2.31

One who realizes Supreme Self,  
which is formless and eternal,  
is beyond the realm of opposites.  
He lives on with no body, no desire, no fear,  
no hope, no support. Not bound by illusion,  
his power is without limit or end.

2.32

One who realizes Supreme Self  
finds no scriptures, no teachers, no students,  
no initiations, no shaved heads,  
no postures, no meditation or anything else.

2.33

One who realizes Supreme Self  
finds no *sumbhavi*, *sakti*, or *anavi* initiations,  
He finds no sphere of flesh, no images  
or symbols, no hands, no feet, no jars or any  
other thing without beginning, middle and end.



2.34

One who realizes Supreme Self becomes  
that from which the universe emerges,  
that by which the universe is maintained,  
and that into which the universe is dissolved.  
Into the still water of Self, bubbles of universe  
arise, linger and disappear.

2.35

One who realizes Supreme Self  
has no use for yoga postures, fixed gazing,  
control of breath, or exercises of the nerve-current.  
Attainment and non-attainment  
are meaningless to him.

2.36

One who realizes Supreme Self  
is devoid of all relative notions,  
like one and many, great and small,  
full and empty, all and nothing,  
same and different. He is devoid of notions  
about knowledge, knower and knowableness,  
of ideas about capacity and measurement,  
of concepts like equality and disparity.

2.37

One who realizes Supreme Self  
does so regardless of being disciplined  
or undisciplined, wealthy or impoverished,  
active or withdrawn, sensual or restrained.

2.38

One who realizes Supreme Self  
knows beyond a shadow of doubt  
that he is not the body, not the mind,  
not the senses, not the ego, not intelligence –  
that he is neither the subtle elements  
nor the gross elements, nor is his nature  
that of space.

2.39

One who realizes Supreme Self  
transcends the injunctions of scriptures.  
He claims neither duty or absence of duty.  
Notions of separateness and oneness  
do not apply to him.  
Even that which the scriptures prohibit  
for others, for him is permissible.

2.40

How can the guru teach that which cannot  
be grasped by mind or expressed in speech?  
Through the teacher who is ever-one with  
Brahma, the light of Truth shines without words.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1

How can one worship Shiva the Absolute,  
which is neither personal or impersonal,  
which is both omni-formed and formless,  
which is beyond love and hate,  
merit and fault, passion and dispassion,  
attachment and non-attachment?  
Shiva has no attributes to worship.  
Nor are there attributes it lacks.

### 3.2

Shiva the Absolute is devoid of colors  
and is not white. It recognizes no diversity  
and harbors no doubt.  
It is not bound by cause and effect,  
nor is it subject to imagination.  
O dear friend, I am Shiva the Absolute!  
Who is there to bow to solitary Self?

### 3.3

I am not the origin, nor am I the originator.  
I am the ever-shining sun,  
that which never is not.  
I am not clouded nor clear,  
bright nor dark, rooted nor rootless.  
I am the ever-shining sun,  
that which never is not.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

### 3.4

How can I say the indifferent One has desires?  
How can I say the ever-free Self has attachments?  
How can I say the void Absolute has substance?  
How can I say the perceivable All  
does or does not have reality?  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

### 3.5

How can I describe That which is beyond duality  
and non-duality? What is there to talk about?  
How can I say That which is beyond existence and non-existence is or is not eternal?  
All is Unknowing. All is Mystery.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.6

Atman is neither gross nor subtle.  
It has no highs or lows.  
Atman neither appears nor disappears.  
It has no beginning, no middle, no end.  
This is the Absolute Truth of Reality.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.7

Realize that sense-objects  
are without substance, like space.  
So are the sense organs that perceive them.  
Realize that the Atman is beyond the bondage  
of appearances, beyond even liberation from it.  
Never doubt this. I am Love-Truth-Awareness,  
boundless as sky.

3.8

Dear one, I am not hidden or difficult to comprehend.  
I am not inscrutable or inaccessible.  
I am Here, available for Seeing!  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.9

I have no karma.  
I am the fire in which all karma is consumed.  
I have no sorrow.  
I am the fire in which all sorrow is consumed.  
I have no body.  
I am the fire in which all bodies –  
gross, subtle and causal – are consumed.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.10

I have no sin.  
I am the fire that burns the sins of the sinless.  
I have no attributes.  
I am the fire in which attributes disappear.  
I have no limitations. I am the fire  
in which bondage and freedom evaporate.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.11

Dear one, mind is not absent from me,  
nor can I be said to have them.  
I am not devoid of thoughts and feelings,  
nor can I be said to have them.  
I am not separate from existence,  
nor can I be said to exist.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.12

I am beyond illusion.  
I cannot even imagine a state of delusion.  
I am beyond joy and sorrow.  
I do not know them at all.  
I have no desire or greed.  
There is nothing I lack or want.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.13

The creeper vine of worldly life  
does not entangle me.  
The vast array of pleasures and contentments  
do not tempt me.  
The bondage of ignorance does not ensnare me.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.14

The entire expanse of worldly passions  
causes no ripple in Me.  
The entire expanse of worldly sorrows  
causes no ripple in Me.  
The entire expanse of worldly goodness  
causes no ripple in Me.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.15

I am not the source of actions  
resulting in misery and regret,  
nor am I the ego-mind  
that suffers misery and regret.  
Even that which causes the ego-mind to arise  
is not me.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.16

I am the death of movement  
in the unmoving One.  
I neither think nor decide, nor am I indecisive.  
I am the death of sleep and wakefulness.  
I am neither good nor evil, moving nor still,  
substantial nor ephemeral.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.17

I cannot be known, nor can I know.  
I am not the way of knowing.  
I am invisible to the mind,  
imperceptible to the senses,  
unapproachable through words.  
How can I transmit This to you?  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.18

I am the Supreme Reality,  
forever whole and undivided.  
I have no inside or outside,  
nor any other imaginings of duality.  
Before anything was, I Am. I never am not.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.19

I am the Supreme Reality, devoid of passion,  
jealousy, hatred, and all the other trappings of body,  
mind and gods. Though I contain the miseries  
and sufferings of the imaginary world,  
I am not touched by them.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.20

I am the Supreme Reality.  
In a realm where the three states  
of consciousness do not apply,  
how can there be a fourth state of transcendence?  
In a realm with no center or edges,  
how can there be up or down,  
north or south, east or west?  
In a realm without beginning, middle or end,  
how can there be past, present or future?  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.21

In Self, there are no divisions or separate objects,  
neither massive or minute.

There is no difference between long and short,  
wide and narrow, angular or round.

I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.22

I have no father, no mother, no children,  
no kinsmen. I was never born and cannot die.

I never had a mind.

I am forever tranquil and untroubled.

3.23

My nature is clear and infinite,  
beyond ideas of purity and stain.

I am indefinable, unattached, unknowable.

I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.24

If I am the undivided One – and I am –  
how can there be Brahma and all the many gods?

How can there be residents of heaven and earth?

How can there be heaven and earth?

I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.25

I am Supreme Reality.

How can I say I am “this,” or “not this,”  
or neither or both. I am beyond all that.

How can I say I am time-bound or eternal?

How can I say I have a body  
or do not have a body? I am beyond all that.

I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.26

I perform no actions, yet my activity is endless.

I have no attachments, yet I love all things.

I have no body, yet I enjoy endless pleasure.

I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.27

The phenomenal stage-play of Maya  
does not disturb me.  
Deceit and arrogance do not disturb me.  
Tyranny and evil do not affect me.  
Truth and untruth are the same to me.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.28

Divisions of time like morning and twilight  
do not exist in me.  
I am ever-present,  
and not contained by time.  
I have no knowledge to impart,  
but I am not deaf or mute.  
I am free of ignorance,  
but know the ways of thought.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.29

I am not a master, nor do I have a master.  
I am unperplexed. I am beyond mind  
and no-mind, forever undisturbed.  
I am beyond all dualities – truly unshakable.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.30

How can I say, “This is a forest,”  
or “This is a temple”?  
How can I say something is proven or doubtful?  
I am motionless, all-pervading, indifferent.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.31

I am not alive, nor am I lifeless.  
Not bound by such dualities, I light eternity.  
I have no origin, nor does anything originate from me.  
Not bound by such dualities, I light eternity.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.32

Not bound by birth and death, I light eternity.  
Not trapped in worldly existence, I light eternity.  
No subject to creation and destruction,  
I light eternity.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.



3.33

You are Self. You have no name or form,  
nor even an allusion to them.  
You are no-thing,  
and have no substance whatsoever.  
O shameless mind,  
how can you continuously complain?  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.34

Dear heart, why do you weep?  
In you there is no old age and death.  
In you there is no birth and misery.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
In you, Changeless One,  
nothing is never not perfect.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.35

Dear heart, why do you weep?  
For in you there is no form or emptiness.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
For you there is no deformity or beauty,  
no aging, no passing of time.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.36

Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no age.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no mind.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no senses.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.37

Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no lust.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no greed.  
Dear heart, why do you weep?  
You have no illusion.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.38

Why do you desire wealth?  
You have no property to secure.  
Why do you desire wealth?  
You have no wife to support.  
Why do you desire wealth?  
You have no capacity to possess.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.39

The created world of illusion  
is not my doing nor yours.  
It belongs to the shameless mind.  
There are no different things  
in That which you truly are

3.40

In Self there is not one iota of attachment  
or non-attachment, not one iota of passion  
or dispassion, not one iota of desire.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.41

In Self there is no observer or observing,  
nor are there objects of observation.  
In Self there is no inside or out,  
no space, no matter, no time.  
In Self there is no Samadhi.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.42

I have conveyed to you the essence of Truth.  
There is no you. There is no me.  
There is no great being, guru or disciple.  
Supreme Reality is astoundingly simple,  
and absolutely spontaneous.  
I am Love-Truth-Awareness, boundless as sky.

3.43

If the Supreme One alone exists,  
clear and empty like sky,  
how can there be a higher supreme one?  
If it is Ultimate Truth itself  
that is all-pervading like space,  
how can there be a superior ultimate truth?  
How can you hope to find it  
through knowledge and intuition?

3.44

Realize undifferentiated Awareness,  
which is void of fire, which has no air,  
earth or water.  
Realize undifferentiated Awareness,  
which is stiller than still, which is vast  
and endless as space.

3.45

I am not formless, nor do I lack form.  
I am neither beautiful nor ugly, pure nor impure.  
My Nature is mine alone.

3.46

Renounce the world! Renounce renunciation!  
Renounce non-renunciation!  
Surrender the poison of ego-ideas  
about shunning or accepting Maya.  
You are Self – immaculate, immutable, immortal.

## Chapter 4

### 4.1

Brahman cannot be invoked or banished.  
Brahman is formless, without source or seed.  
What is this offering of flowers and leaves?  
What is this meditation and chanting of mantras?  
Are you enticing that which is beyond duality  
and non-duality?

### 4.2

Brahman is not only free of ideas  
about bondage and liberation, free of ideas  
about immaculateness and stain,  
free of ideas about unity and separateness –  
Brahman is Ever-Free.

### 4.3

Some say the world is real.  
Others say it is not reality.  
I have no doubts or cares about either.  
I am before and beyond such notions.  
My nature is Absolute Freedom.

### 4.4

Stained or unstained, divided or whole,  
different or same ...  
I am before and beyond such notions.  
My nature is Absolute Freedom.

### 4.5

Concepts like ignorance and intelligence  
do not occur to me. I am never conscious  
of knowing Self. How can I say, “I am Awake,”  
or “I am not Awake”?  
I am before and beyond such notions.  
My nature is Absolute Freedom.

### 4.6

Self is not virtuous or sinful, not bound or free.  
Self is not unity or separateness.  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.7

I have no friends or enemies. I have no ideas  
about superior and inferior, nor about neutrality.  
How can I say, “This is good,” or “This is evil”?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.8

I am not the object of worship,  
nor am I the devotee.  
I have no teachings or practices to offer.  
What can be said about No-Thing?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.9

There is not Here that pervades  
or is pervaded. There is nothing Here  
that is homeless or has home.  
How can I say I am fullness or emptiness?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.10

Self has no cause, and causes no effect.  
It does not understand  
and cannot be understood.  
How can I speak of it as being  
perceptible or imperceptible?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.11

Self knows nothing and is not knowable.  
Self does not divide or destroy,  
nor can Self be divided or destroyed.  
Dear child, how can I speak of Self  
as having past or future?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.12

I have no senses, no mind,  
no intellect, no knowledge.  
I am neither with or without a body.  
How can I speak about desire and dispassion?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.13

Self is not separate or superior.  
It is forever whole and equal to itself.  
How can I speak about difference  
and sameness in Brahman?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.14

Discipline and self-restraint never occur to me,  
nor do religious austerities and practices.  
I have no senses to control or conquer.  
How can I speak about triumph and defeat?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.15

I have no form, nor am I formless.  
I have no beginning, no duration, no end.  
Dear friend, how can I say I am strong or weak?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.16

Death and deathlessness,  
poison and nectar, good and evil –  
dear child, these do not arise in me.  
How can I say I am pure or impure?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.17

I have never dreamed or awakened.  
I do not meditate, practice devotions,  
or do yoga postures.  
For me there is no day or night, misery or bliss.  
How can I speak about deep sleep  
and transcendence?

4.18

Know that I am All and I am free of All.  
Know that Maya is not of me,  
nor is the absence of Maya.  
How can I speak about  
prescribed religious disciplines?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom ...  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.19

Know that I am forever Brahman.  
Know that I am forever unbound by concepts  
like attainment and failure.  
How can I speak about unity and ignorance?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.20

I am neither learned nor illiterate,  
neither inarticulate nor eloquent.  
I am free of silence and the absence of silence.  
How can I speak about reason and doubt?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.21

I have no mother, no father, no family, no caste.  
I know nothing of birth and death.  
How can I speak about affection and loss?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.22

I am the ever-rising sun. Never am I not.  
My effulgence is neither light nor dark,  
nor the absence of light or darkness.  
How can religious devotions apply to me?  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.23

Realize for certain that I am without origin.  
Realize for certain that I am without division.  
Realize for certain that I am  
without the stain of Maya.  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.24

The wise ones give up on devotions and practices.  
They give up all activity, bad and good,  
and drink only the nectar of renunciation.  
I am before and beyond such notions –  
my nature is Absolute Freedom.

4.25

Where knowing cannot go,  
how can there be knowledge?  
Supremely pure and free,  
absorbed in infinite bliss,  
the Avadhuta spontaneously sings the song  
of the Absolute Reality.



## Chapter 5

### 5.1

The utterance “OM” is pure and all-pervasive  
like sky, free of concepts and connotations.  
It carries no ideas of high and low,  
absolute and relative.  
Some say it is the sound of Brahman.  
When Brahman is realized as Self,  
the manifested universe and the unmanifested  
void are seen as the same.  
What use then is the utterance “OM.”

### 5.2

The scriptures have declared, “Thou art That”  
and revealed your true nature is Brahman.  
You are devoid of all attributes and obstructions.  
You are the same as Everything.  
You are the only One.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

### 5.3

You have no height or breadth or depth.  
You have no inside or out. You are without number but are not the multitudes.  
To say you are the One is one too many.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

### 5.4

Brahman cannot be realized  
by following prescribed rules.  
Brahman cannot be realized  
by performing religious rituals.  
Brahman cannot be realized  
by reasoning or examination.  
Brahman cannot be realized  
by chanting euphoric sounds.  
There is no cause and effect  
between action and Realization.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.5

Samadhi is not the confluence  
of ego-self and emptiness.  
Samadhi is not the union  
of consciousness and space.  
Samadhi is not the meeting point  
of time and absence of time.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.6

In Brahman there is no jar,  
nor is there space inside the jar.  
There is no body, nor is there a soul  
indwelling the body.  
There is no such thing as cause and effect.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.7

In the endless freedom of all-pervasive Brahman,  
there are no concepts like short and long,  
round and angular. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.8

Brahman is neither manifest nor void,  
neither pure nor impure,  
neither clear nor the nature of smoke.  
Brahman is not everything, not nothing,  
not either, not both. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.9

In Brahman there is no difference  
between same and different.  
There is no distinction  
between outside and inside,  
nor is there a meeting ground of opposites.  
Brahman has no enemies or friends,  
and is equal to All. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.10

In Brahman there are no names  
like teacher and disciple, animate or inanimate,  
living and dead. There is only unending freedom  
in the infinite vastness of Self.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.11

Brahman has no form or body, nor is it formless.  
Brahman exists without evolution.  
It never begins or ends.  
In Brahman there is no possibility  
of separateness, nor of unity.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.12

In Brahman, concepts like good and evil  
do not exist, nor do concepts like birth,  
living and dying.  
There is only immaculate pure Being,  
empty and infinite, like space.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.13

Being has no thoughts, no feelings,  
no knowledge, no knowing.  
It desires nothing and wants for nothing.  
It both does and does not exist.  
It is spontaneous potentiality –  
the ever-pure, ever-free source and seed.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.14

Being is Truth, Truth is Being.  
It is not sullied by ideas about reality  
and unreality, unity and separateness.  
It both is and is not One.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.15

Being is Supreme.  
Its home is infinity, its family is all things.  
Ideas about bondage and liberation,  
ignorance and wisdom, do not occur Here.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.16

This universe of ever-changing phenomena  
is illusory, unreal. That which is forever  
changeless is Reality. This world of names  
and definitions is illusory, untrue.  
That which is forever nameless  
and undefinable is Truth. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.17

There is only one Soul.  
It pervades everywhere forever.  
There is only one Life.  
It lives all beings and things.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.18

To see difference  
in That which is undifferentiated is ignorance.  
To imagine changes  
in That which never moves is senseless.  
Here, there is only the infinite stillness  
of pure awareness. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.19

In Brahman there are no states –  
no state of bondage, no state of liberation,  
no state of virtue, no state of sin,  
no state of wholeness, no state of emptiness.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.20

Being is not subject to notions  
like cause and effect, color and no-color,  
caste and no-caste, unity and separateness.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.21

Self is omnipresent. Self indwells all beings  
and things, though they are all without reality  
and do not indwell Self. Self is limitless  
pure awareness, ever-free, ever-still.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.22

Brahman is Everything everywhere forever.  
Brahman is No-Thing nowhere now.  
It is pervasive and absent, immutable  
and ephemeral, pure and manifest.  
There is no day or night. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.23

Bondage and liberation, unity and separation,  
reasoning and intuition –  
the concept of opposites does not hold sway  
in Brahman. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.24

Time and its divisions, like morning  
and evening, are denied.  
Atoms and sub-particles are denied.  
The primordial elements of earth, air,  
space, water and fire, are denied.  
Ultimate reality cannot be denied.  
It is Truth pure and simple.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.25

Self has no body or form,  
nor does it lack a body or form.  
Self has no different states,  
like waking, dreaming and sleeping.  
Self is forever nameless and observes no rules.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.26

Self is clear and vast like space.  
Self pervades and transcends universe.  
Self is always and everywhere the same.  
Self is beyond reality, non-reality,  
and everything that changes.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.27

Self is indifferent to virtue and vice,  
wealth and poverty, desire and aversion,  
substance and insubstantiality.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.28

Self knows nothing of grief and joy,  
pleasure and pain. Self does not distinguish  
between teacher and disciple.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.29

Self never moves but is not immovable.  
Self does not give birth to reality and illusion.  
Self is not strong or weak,  
homogenous or diverse. Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.30

Self is the quintessence  
of all elemental principles.  
Activities in the phenomenal world are not real.  
There is no division in Self.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.31

As the scriptures have said,  
the unmanifested world of earth, people,  
universe and so on, is like water in a mirage.  
Truly, Brahman alone exists,  
all-pervasive and never-ending.  
Knowing Self to be All,  
why does your mind choose to suffer?

5.32

Where knowing cannot go,  
how can there be knowledge?  
Supremely pure and free,  
absorbed in infinite bliss,  
the Avadhuta spontaneously sings  
the song of Absolute Reality.

## Chapter 6

### 6.1

As the scriptures have said in many ways,  
the manifested world of earth, people,  
universe and so on, is like water in a mirage.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
To what can it be compared? And by whom?

### 6.2

In Self there is neither division nor unity,  
neither action nor stillness.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
Who is there to perform  
austerities and offer sacrifices?

### 6.3

Self is eternal and omnipresent,  
undivided, all-pervasive,  
and without any dimension whatsoever.  
Self is One. Self is Absolute.  
Thoughts and words cannot touch it.

### 6.4

In Self there is no night or day,  
no rising or setting of suns.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be sun and moon  
and fire to illuminate it?

### 6.5

In Self there are no concepts  
like action and inaction, thought and no-thought,  
desire and no-desire. Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be notions of with and without?



6.6

Self has no essence, nor does it lack essence.  
It is neither full nor empty, void nor manifested.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be such as  
*first and last*, or *is* and *is not*?

6.7

In Self there are no differences,  
nor is there non-difference. There is no knower,  
no knowing, no thing to be known.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be a third state of consciousness?  
Or a fourth?

6.8

All teachings are false.  
All that is not taught is false.  
What seems to be known is false.  
Self alone exists! Limitless, eternal,  
all-encompassing. How can there be senses,  
intellect, mind and objects?

6.9

Space and air are not real.  
Earth and fire are not real.  
Clouds and water are not real.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be sky and oceans?

6.10

In Self there are no worlds or hells or heavens,  
no imaginary gods. Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be notions of good and evil?

6.11

In Self there is no death or immortality,  
no action or inaction. Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How could there be a *coming from* or *going to*?

6.12

There is no difference  
between matter and consciousness.  
There is no such thing as *cause and effect*.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can you speak of Self and not-Self?

6.13

There are no *gunas*, no stages of life.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be infancy, youth or old age?

6.14

In Self there are no castes or stages,  
no such thing as *agent and change*.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be the perishable  
and the imperishable?

6.15

The destroyed and the undestroyed  
are both unreal. The devourer and the devoured  
are false. The creator and the created are One.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be ideas of destruction  
or permanence?

6.16

In Self there is no man or beast,  
no woman or eunuch, no husband, wife or child.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be vessels of pleasure and pain?

6.17

Self is absent of grief or sorrow,  
absent of delusion or doubt.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be notions of *I* and *mine*?

6.18

Self is absent of ideas about vice and virtue,  
or ideas about freedom and bondage.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be sorrow or unhappiness?

6.19

There is no difference between  
the sacrificial rite and the performer of the rite.  
There is no difference between  
the objects of the rite and the sacrificial fire.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be actions and results of actions?

6.20

In Self there is no sorrow or joy,  
no pride or humility. Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be passion or dispassion?

6.21

In Self there is neither illusion nor absence  
of illusion. There is no greed or generosity.  
Self alone exists!  
Limitless, eternal, all-encompassing.  
How can there be discrimination  
or non-discrimination?

6.22

There is no *you* nor I.  
Stories about caste and family and race are lies.  
I am the Absolute, the One Reality.  
To what should I offer my devotion?

6.23

Concepts of teacher and disciple are absent.  
There is no difference between  
instruction and reflection.  
I am the Absolute, the One Reality.  
To what should I offer my devotion?

6.24

There is no imagining of separate bodies,  
nor illusory worlds.  
Uncertainty and certainty are both unreal.  
I am the Absolute, the One Reality.  
To what should I offer my devotion?

6.25

Passion and dispassion are absent.  
I am spotless, immovable, immaculate.  
I am the Absolute, the One Reality.  
To what should I offer my devotion?

6.26

There is no difference between  
body and no-body.  
The apparent actions of life are not happening.  
I am the Absolute, the One Reality.  
To what should I offer my devotion?

6.27

Where knowing cannot go,  
how can there be knowledge?  
Supremely pure and free,  
absorbed in infinite bliss,  
the Avadhuta spontaneously sings  
the song of Absolute Reality.

## Chapter 7

### 7.1

The Avadhuta wears castoff garments  
made of rags. His path is free of virtue and vice.  
He lives alone in a deserted place,  
absorbed in the Oneness of being.

### 7.2

The mark of the Avadhuta may or may not  
be visible. Beyond right and wrong,  
he is nevertheless always honest.  
His nature is pure Reality, immaculate Truth.  
How can such a one engage in arguments  
and discussions?

### 7.3

The Advadhuta is free of the snares of hope  
and desire. He has no need of purifying acts,  
and is not harnessed by rules  
about acceptable behavior.  
He is gloriously bereft of all things.  
He has become That Which Is.

### 7.4

Having realized True Nature, how can the  
Avadhuta say whether or not he has a body?  
Whether or not he has passion or attachment?  
He is Reality itself, clear and endless.  
He is unbounded Truth.

### 7.5

In the immaculate unchanging Absolute,  
is there a preference between form and formless?  
Between knowledge and no-knowledge?  
My form is clear and empty like the sky.  
How is perception of objects possible.

### 7.6

Self is indivisible and boundless, like space.  
Its nature is ever-pure and forever changeless.  
How can there be division and separation?  
How can there be bondage and liberation?  
How can there be any changes whatever?

7.7

Everywhere there is one Absolute Truth,  
one timeless Reality.  
How can there be separation and union?  
The One is the All, unceasing.  
How can there be notions of loss and gain,  
weakness and strength, void and substance?

7.8

Everywhere there is one Absolute Truth,  
pure, empty, infinite as Space.  
How can it be together or apart?  
Have color or no-color? Be happy or unhappy?  
Have enemies or friends?

7.9

The Avadhuta may observe the precepts of yoga  
or he may not. Even so, he is called a yogi.  
He may have experiences and possessions  
or he may not. Even so he enjoys.  
He is free of enjoyment and non-enjoyment,  
therefore he enjoys. He moves about serenely,  
his mind at rest in contentment.

7.10

If a practitioner of yoga believes in knowledge  
and ignorance, duality and non-duality,  
how can he realize Truth? How can he  
be dispassionate in life? How can he enjoy  
the immensity of immaculate Oneness?

7.11

Self is infinite and boundless as sky.  
It is uncreated and cannot be destroyed.  
It is devoid of concepts like *whole* and *divided*,  
like *hold on* and *let go*.  
How can there be talk of true or false,  
expansion or contraction, substance or void?  
Self is the eternal auspicious moment.

7.12

Unattached to life and the world,  
the Avadhuta abides in Self.  
He has transcended all things  
and is free of birth and death.  
What does it matter if he meditates or not?

7.13

The world is made by magic.  
It is nothing but illusion, a mirage in the desert.  
Only the Absolute Self exists.

7.14

Avadhutas do not seek wealth and enjoyment,  
nor do they seek righteousness or liberation.  
We are indifferent to everything!  
Only seekers are concerned with ideas  
about passion and dispassion,  
attachment and non-attachment.

7.15

Where knowing cannot go,  
how can there be knowledge?  
Supremely pure and free,  
absorbed in infinite bliss,  
the Avadhuta spontaneously sings  
the songs of Absolute Reality.

## Chapter 8

8.1

Oh Brahman, by seeing you,  
I have denied your omnipresence.  
By contemplating you,  
I have denied your formless mystery.  
By praising you,  
I have implied you are accessible to thought.  
Forgive me for these three offences.

8.2

One who is not agitated by desires,  
whose senses are controlled,  
who is free of possessions,  
who eats in moderation and covets nothing  
in the world, who is gentle, pure,  
serene and steadfast, who has taken refuge  
in Absolute Self – such a one can be called a sage.

8.3

The sage is intelligent and insightful.  
He honors others. He is farsighted,  
courageous, capable and resolute.  
He has triumphed over mind and senses,  
but takes no credit. He is courteous,  
compassionate, and a good friend to have.

8.4

The sage is non-violent and kind-hearted.  
He is innocent, gracious, merciful, forbearing.  
He sees everyone as God, and is good to all.  
His soul has been released.  
He is established in Truth.

8.5

The qualities of an Avadhuta, and the meaning  
and essence of the syllables AH-VA-DHU-TA,  
are known to teachers of Vendanta and the Vedas.

8.6

The quality of the sound “A” signifies  
one who is free from the bondage of hope,  
who is released from the idea of beginning,  
middle and end, and who abides  
in perpetual contentment.



8.7

The quality of the sound “VA” indicates  
one who has uprooted all desires,  
whose speech is uplifting,  
and who lives always in the present moment.

8.8

The quality of the sound “DHU” signifies  
one whose body is covered with dust,  
whose mind is uncluttered by negative thoughts,  
and who is beyond the need for meditation.

8.9

The quality of the sound “TA” indicates  
one who is steadfast in Truth,  
who does not suffer worries and desires,  
and who is free of ignorance and egoism.

8.10

This song of the Avadhuta  
has been composed in joy by Dattatreya.  
Whoever realizes Self upon reading  
or hearing this wisdom is freed from the cycle  
of birth and death.

**Om Tat Sat**

# **Dhammapada**

## ***The Sayings of Buddha***

### **Translated by Bart Marshall**

#### **1. Opposite Ways**

1.1

The experience of life is created by mind.  
Thought precedes experience.  
If one speaks and acts with a clouded mind,  
suffering follows,  
as the wheel of the ox-cart follows the ox.

1.2

The experience of life is created by mind.  
Thought precedes experience.  
If one speaks and acts with a clear mind,  
contentment follows like a faithful shadow.

1.3

“He insulted me! He attacked me!  
He cheated me! He robbed me!”  
One who holds these thoughts  
will never be free of hate.

1.4

“He insulted me! He attacked me!  
He cheated me! He robbed me!”  
One who is free of these thoughts will be free of hate.

1.5

Hatred in this world is not ended by hating.  
Hatred is ended by not hating.  
This truth has no exceptions.

1.6

Most people forget they will soon be dead.  
Those who remember  
put an end to their quarrels.

1.7

One who lives for pleasure, senses unchecked,  
who eats too much, works too little,  
and lacks vital energy,  
is bent to the intent of Mara the Beguiler,  
just as a weak tree is bent by the wind.

1.8

One who is unmoved by pleasure, senses restrained,  
who eats in moderation, works diligently,  
and retains vital energy, is not beguiled by Mara,  
just as a rock is not ruffled by wind.

1.9

One who would wear the saffron robe  
who is clouded, lacking virtue, and ignorant of truth,  
is not worthy of the saffron robe.

1.10

One who would wear the saffron robe  
who is clear, well established in virtue and truth,  
is worthy of the saffron robe.

1.11

One who takes the unreal to be real  
will never see the Real,  
being beguiled by the unreal.

1.12

One who knows the unreal is not real  
will come to see the Real,  
being no longer beguiled by the unreal.

1.13

Desire permeates a clouded mind  
as rain permeates a badly thatched house.

1.14

Desire does not permeate a clear mind,  
as rain does not permeate a well-thatched house.

1.15

Selfish action brings grief.  
Grief now, grief hereafter, grief in both.  
Seeing the selfishness of one's actions,  
one forever grieves.

1.16

Selfless action brings joy.  
Joy now, joy hereafter, joy in both.  
Seeing the selflessness of one's actions,  
one is free of grief.

1.17

He who does evil suffers.  
Suffers now, suffers hereafter.  
In both he knows, "I have done evil."  
He burns in torment at the thought of his evil,  
and is born into a realm of suffering.

1.18

He who does good is content.  
Content now, content hereafter.  
In both he knows, "I have done good."  
He rejoices in the thought of his goodness,  
and exists in a state of contentment.

1.19

One who recites many religious teachings,  
but is careless about putting them into practice,  
is like a cowherd counting cows that are not his.  
He cannot taste the milk of spiritual life.

1.20

One who recites few religious teachings,  
but is faithful to Dhamma,  
who has overcome desire, hatred, and delusion,  
whose mind is clear,  
who clings to nothing now or hereafter,  
indeed lives the life of spirit.

## 2. Awareness

### 2.1

Awareness is the domain of no-death.

Delusion is the domain of death.

One who abides in Awareness cannot die.

One who abides in delusion remains dead.

### 2.2

The wise, knowing Awareness,

rejoicing in Awareness,

abide with delight in the domain of the great.

### 2.3

The wise – earnest in meditation,

Self-remembered, absorbed in Awareness –

realize boundless Nirvana,

and secure the peace of freedom.

### 2.4

Glory grows from one who is energetic, self-remembered,

considerate, restrained, selfless, mindful,

and who lives Dhamma.

### 2.5

The wise, through energy and mindfulness,

earnestness and restraint,

become an island no flood can submerge.

### 2.6

The foolish abandon themselves to delusion.

The wise treasure only Awareness.

### 2.7

Do not succumb to delusion.

Do not devote your energy to desire.

Aware and self-remembered,

the wise are content and fulfilled.

### 2.8

The sage, his ignorance dissolved in Awareness,

abides sorrowless at the summit of insight,

and looks upon the deluded, sorrowing masses,

as one gazing from a mountaintop

on the valley below.

2.9

Aware among the deluded,  
awake among the sleeping,  
the sage moves effortlessly to the fore,  
like a racehorse running with nags.

2.10

With Awareness, Indra became supreme among gods.  
Awareness is ever revered.  
Delusion is ever rejected.

2.11

The seeker who reveres Awareness and rejects delusion  
becomes like a fire,  
burning through the fetters of bondage.

2.12

The seeker who reveres Awareness and rejects delusion  
cannot fail.  
Nirvana is ever near.

### 3. Mind

#### 3.1

Mind is erratic, restless,  
difficult to observe, difficult to control.  
The sage sets it straight,  
as the fletcher sets straight an arrow.

#### 3.2

Like a fish taken from water and thrown on the ground,  
the mind twists and struggles  
in Mara's domain of death.

#### 3.3

Mind is capricious,  
flitting where it pleases, difficult to tame.  
It is good to tame the mind.  
The tamed mind becomes content.

#### 3.4

Mind is ephemeral,  
appearing where it pleases, difficult to observe.  
It is good to observe the mind.  
The observed mind becomes still.

#### 3.5

Mind is intangible.  
Alone, wandering far, it haunts the cave of the heart.  
One who masters the mind  
breaks the bonds of Mara.

#### 3.6

One whose mind is unruly,  
who does not know Dhamma,  
who waivers in faith,  
will not be fulfilled.

#### 3.7

He has no fear whose mind is still,  
who is free of desire,  
who sees through the illusion of good and evil.  
He is Awake.

3.8

Seeing the body is fragile as a vase,  
fortify the citadel of the mind.  
Engage Mara with Awareness.  
Guard what you gather without being attached.

3.9

Alas, soon enough,  
this body will lie on the ground.  
Cast off, lifeless, devoid of consciousness,  
useless as a piece of rotten wood.

3.10

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy,  
or one man of hate do to another,  
far greater harm is done to oneself  
by the ignorance of one's own mind.

3.11

Whatever a father or mother  
or any other relative can give to a child,  
far greater good is bestowed on oneself  
by the clarity of one's own mind.



## 4. Flowers

### 4.1

Who shall master the earth and gods,  
and conquer the death-realm of Yama?  
Who chooses Dhamma,  
as an expert chooses a flower?

### 4.2

The earnest seeker shall master the earth and gods,  
and conquer the death-realm of Yama.  
The earnest seeker chooses Dhamma,  
as an expert chooses a flower.

### 4.3

Knowing the body to be as insubstantial as foam,  
seeing it has no more substance than a mirage,  
one breaks the flower-tipped arrows of Mara  
and becomes invisible to the Lord of Death.

### 4.4

One absorbed in plucking the sense-flowers of Mara  
is surprised by death and swept suddenly away,  
like a sleeping village in the path of a great flood.

### 4.5

One obsessed with plucking the sense-flowers of Mara  
is never satisfied,  
and all too soon drowns in death.

### 4.6

The sage wanders through life  
as the bee wanders from flower to flower.  
Nectar is taken, but the beauty and fragrance  
of the blossom is untouched.

### 4.7

Do not concerned yourself with the faults of others,  
with what they have done or not done.  
Think only of what you have done,  
and have yet to do.

### 4.8

Elegant words, spoken but not lived,  
are beautiful flowers with no fragrance  
or promise of fruit.

4.9

Elegant words, lived as they are spoken,  
are beautiful, fragrant flowers  
destined to bear fruit.

4.10

Just as many garlands  
can be fashioned from a heap of flowers,  
so a man can fashion many good things from his life.

4.11

The fragrance of flowers  
does not travel against the wind.  
Nor does the perfume of sandalwood,  
rosebay, or jasmine.  
Yet the scent of a virtuous life  
does travel against the wind.  
It imbues the far reaches of everywhere.

4.12

The perfumes of sandalwood,  
crepe jasmine, blue lotus, flowering jasmine –  
none surpass the fragrance of virtue.

4.13

The fragrances of sandalwood and jasmine  
are barely detectable compared to the perfume  
of a virtuous life.  
It permeates even the realm of the gods.

4.14

Those who abound in virtue,  
who live in Awareness, who realize the Real,  
are invisible to Mara the Beguiler.

4.15

Just as a beautiful, fragrant lotus blooms  
in a pile of garbage beside the road,

4.16

so does a follower of the Way of Buddha,  
blossom in a world of blind ignorance.

## 5. The Deluded

### 5.1

One night is long to the wakeful.  
Seven miles is far for the weary.  
To the deluded one who do not know Dhamma,  
the cycle of birth and death is endless.

### 5.2

If while walking the path  
you fail to meet your equal or better,  
steadfastly make your way alone.  
The deluded are not fit companions.

### 5.3

The deluded one worries, thinking,  
“I have sons. I have wealth.”  
He has not even himself,  
much less sons or wealth.

### 5.4

The deluded one who knows he is deluded  
is to that extent clear.  
The deluded one who thinks he sees clearly  
is truly deluded.

### 5.5

A deluded man may associate  
With an Awakened One his whole life,  
yet remain unaware of Dhamma.  
Much as the spoon cannot taste soup.

### 5.6

A mindful man, however,  
may only briefly encounter an Awakened One,  
yet instantly know Dhamma.  
Much as the tongue immediately tastes soup.

### 5.7

The deluded one, unaware of his delusion,  
is an enemy unto himself.  
Committing ignorant deeds,  
he reaps bitter fruit.

5.8

Deeds done in ignorance bring regret.  
Suffering and repentance are extracted.  
Weeping covers the face with tears.

5.9

Deeds done in Awareness bring no regret.  
Joy and happiness well up  
and are gladly received.

5.10

The deluded one thinks evil tastes sweet  
until the consequences ripen.  
When the consequences ripen,  
there is only misery.

5.11

A deluded ascetic may month after month  
measure his food with the tip of a blade of grass.  
Yet he is not worth a sixteenth part  
of one who knows Dhamma.

5.12

Like fresh milk,  
an evil deed does not immediately sour.  
It follows the deluded one,  
smoldering like coals covered with ashes,  
until it is ready to burn.

5.13

For the deluded one,  
even spiritual knowledge is harmful.  
It goes to his head and causes imbalance.

5.14

The deluded aspirant desires unwarranted honors,  
preeminence among his fellows,  
authority in the monastery,  
homage from surrounding households.

5.15

“Let both householder and monk believe that I,  
my personal self, have achieved great wisdom.  
Let them come to me for guidance in all things.”  
This is the intention of the deluded aspirant –  
to feed desire and pride.

5.16

One road leads to earthly delights,  
another leads to Nirvana.  
Let the observer of the Way of Buddha  
delight not in honors but in solitude.

## 6. The Sage

### 6.1

Look upon the man who tells you your faults  
as a revealer of hidden treasure.  
Associate with the sage who sees clearly  
and speaks reprovably.  
Only good can come of this.

### 6.2

The sage counsels, corrects,  
deters one from base behavior.  
Seeing good, he is pleasant.  
Seeing bad, he is unpleasant.

### 6.3

Do not choose vulgar companions.  
Do not associate with low people.  
Associate with noble companions and worthy friends.

### 6.4

One who drinks deeply of Dhamma  
Rests at ease with a clear mind.  
The sage delights always in Dhamma –  
the great noble Truth.

### 6.5

Irrigators straighten water.  
Fletcher's straighten arrows.  
Carpenters straighten lumber.  
The sage straightens himself.

### 6.6

Like a boulder in the wind,  
the sage is not stirred by praise or blame.

### 6.7

Like a deep, still lake,  
the sage is clear in the presence of Dhamma.

### 6.8

The realized man is attached to nothing.  
The wise do not make small talk for enjoyment.  
Sometimes visited by pleasure,  
sometimes visited by pain,  
the sage is neither elated nor depressed.

6.9

Do not for your own or for another's sake  
crave children, wealth, or empire.  
Do not pursue prosperity at all costs.  
Be virtuous, noble, wise.

6.10

Few in this world cross to the far shore.  
The multitudes scurry back and forth on the near bank.

6.11

Only those who live Dhamma cross to the far shore.  
It is difficult to break free of death.

6.12

The sage turns his back on darkness  
and walks in light.  
Moving from the familiar to no place at all,  
he lives a solitude few can enjoy.

6.13

And there he finds bliss.  
Free of possessions, free of desire,  
free of all that clouds the mind.

6.14

One whose mind has been stilled by Awareness,  
who enjoys with indifference freedom from bondage,  
who is pure and radiant in this realm of dark passion –  
such a one, even in mortal life,  
has realized Nirvana.

## 7. The Realized

### 7.1

For one whose search has ended,  
who is free of sorrow, who is free in every way,  
who is liberated from all bonds,  
the fever of life as broken.

### 7.2

The Awakened One moves on  
and delights in no place.  
Like a swan migrating from lake to lake,  
he abandons every home.

### 7.3

One who know the source of food  
has no desire to hoard it.  
Realizing emptiness, he is free and unconditioned.  
Like a bird in flight,  
his movements leave no trace.

### 7.4

One whose desires are extinguished  
cares nothing even for food.  
Realizing emptiness, he is free and unconditioned.  
Like a bird in flight,  
his movements leave no trace.

### 7.5

To one who controls his senses  
as a charioteer controls his horses,  
who is free of pride and obsessions,  
even the gods pay homage.

### 7.6

Accepting as the ground of earth,  
anchored as the gatepost of a city,  
tranquil as a pond free of silt – for such a one,  
wandering through birth and death is finished.

### 7.7

His thoughts are stilled.  
His words are stilled.  
His work has come to an end.  
He has realized perfection.



7.8

One who has realized the uncreated Void  
has no need of faith and belief.  
He has severed all bonds, broken all links,  
and completely let go.  
He is indeed supreme among men.

7.9

Whether village or forest, valley or mountain,  
the Awakened One delights in where he is.

7.10

He delights in forests other people shun.  
Free of preferences and passion,  
he delights in everything.

## 8. Thousands

8.1

Better than a thousand discourses  
full of meaningless words  
is the single word of truth that brings peace.

8.2

Better than a thousand verses  
full of meaningless words  
is the single line of truth that brings peace.

8.3

Though one recites a hundred scriptures  
full of meaningless words,  
better is the single utterance of Dhamma  
that brings peace.

8.4

Though a great warrior may conquer  
a thousand-thousand men in battle,  
greater still is he who conquers himself alone.

8.5

Better by far to conquer oneself rather than others.  
One who triumphs in self-mastery,  
one who reaches Self-realization,

8.6

neither gods nor the instruments of the gods –  
not even Mara and Brahma together –  
can vanquish the victory or such a one.

8.7

If month after month for a hundred years  
one offered a thousand sacrifices,  
and if for a single moment  
another recognized a Self-realized man,  
that single moment would be worth far more  
than the sacrifice of a hundred years.

8.8

If for a hundred years  
one tended a ritual fire in the forest,  
and if for a single moment  
another honored a Self-realized man,  
that single moment would be worth far more  
than the rituals of a hundred years.

8.9

Whatever amount of sacrifices and offerings  
one determined to gain merit  
might manage in an entire year,  
would not be worth a fraction of a single moment's  
reverence for one who embodies Truth.

8.10

In one with the capacity for reverence  
four qualities increase: strength, beauty, happiness,  
and span of life.

8.11

Better than a hundred years lived  
in obedience to desire,  
is one day lived in virtue and stillness.

8.12

Better than a hundred years lived  
clouded with ignorance,  
is one day lived in clarity and insight.

8.13

Better than a hundred years lived  
in lethargy and sloth,  
is one day lived with vitality and purpose.

8.14

Better than a hundred years lived not witnessing  
the arising and passing away of Creation,  
is one day lived in witnessing  
the arising and passing away.

8.15

Better than a hundred years lived  
not knowing the deathless state,  
is one day lived in deathlessness.

8.16

Better than a hundred years lived  
unaware of ultimate Truth,  
is one day lived in Awareness.

## 9. Evil

### 9.1

Being quick to do what is right  
restrains the mind from evil.  
Being slow to do what is right  
invites evil into the mind.

### 9.2

One who commits wrong  
should not repeat it again and again.  
Let him not find pleasure in it.  
The habit of evil accumulates suffering.

### 9.3

One who does what is right  
should repeat it over and over.  
Let it be the call of his heart.  
The habit of right action accumulates blessings.

### 9.4

One who commits wrong may enjoy good fortune  
as the consequence of his evil takes shape.  
But when it has ripened, suffering will befall.

### 9.5

One who does what is right may suffer ill fortune  
as the consequence of his goodness takes form.  
But when they are ready, blessings will flow.

### 9.6

Do not overlook small wrongdoings, thinking,  
"This does not make me evil."  
Every drop of falling water helps fill the jar.  
Little by little, the deluded store up evil.

### 9.7

Do not discount small acts of goodness, thinking,  
"This does not make me good."  
Every drop of falling water helps fill the jar.  
Little by little, the wise store up goodness.

### 9.8

As a merchant's caravan avoids a treacherous road,  
as one who loves life avoids drinking poison.  
So should you avoid the dangers of evil.

9.9

A hand without wounds can safely carry poison.  
A man not open to evil  
cannot be harmed by evil.

9.10

Whoever wrongs an innocent one –  
one who is pure and free of fault –  
will have his act turn back upon him  
like dust thrown into the wind.

9.11

After death, some find themselves in a mother's womb.  
Those who do evil are bound to a state of suffering.  
Those who do good arise to a state of heaven.  
Those unstained by either realize Nirvana.

9.12

Nowhere in this world –  
not in the sky, under the sea, or in a mountain cave –  
can a man escape the consequences of evil action.

9.13

Nowhere in this world –  
not in the sky, under the sea, or in a mountain cave –  
can a man hide from death.

## 10. Violence

### 10.1

Everyone fears pain.  
Everyone fears death.  
Knowing others to be the same as yourself,  
do not kill or cause another to kill.

### 10.2

Everyone fears pain.  
Everyone holds life dear.  
Knowing others to be the same as yourself,  
do not kill or cause another to kill.

### 10.3

One who hurts other beings desiring happiness  
will in his own search for happiness  
find it neither in life nor after death.

### 10.4

One who does not hurt  
other beings desiring happiness  
will in his own search for happiness  
find it both in life and after death.

### 10.5

Do not speak harshly.  
What you say will come back to you.  
Angry words are painful and invite retaliation.

### 10.6

When you are still and silent as a shattered gong,  
you will know Nirvana.  
Anger is not possible.

### 10.7

As the rod of the cowherd drives cattle,  
so do old age and death  
drive the life of beings.

### 10.8

The deluded are oblivious to their evil.  
The ignorant, by their actions,  
ignite fires that will consume them.

10.9

He who inflicts pain on the innocent,  
quickly suffers one of ten misfortunes:

10.10

severe pain, great loss, broken bones,  
grave illness, mental derangement,

10.11

trouble with the government, cruel slander,  
loss of family, destruction of possessions,

10.12

or fire that consumes his house.  
And when his body dies,  
he is born into hell.

10.13

Not nakedness, not matted hair,  
not fasting, not sleeping on bare ground,  
not smearing the body with dust and ash,  
not squatting for days on the balls of the feet –  
nothing can purify the man without faith.

10.14

Yet even though one is well adorned,  
if he lives in peace and with self-restraint,  
if he is pure and resolute,  
if he harms no living thing,  
then he is a brahmin, a mendicant, a monk.

10.15

In all the world is there a man of self-shame?  
Who needs no reproof,  
as a good horse needs no whip?

10.16

Like a good horse aware of the whip,  
be earnest and determined.  
With faith, virtue, and energy,  
with meditation and insight,  
with wisdom, right action, and mindfulness,  
leave behind this realm of sorrow.



10.17

Irrigators guide water.

Fletchers true arrows.

Carpenters shape wood.

The wise master themselves.

## 11. Old Age

### 11.1

How can you laugh and enjoy while everything burns  
with suffering, impermanence, and insubstantiality?  
Enshrouded in darkness,  
should you not seek a lamp?

### 11.2

Look at your beautiful body – a painted mind-puppet!  
A mass of sores held up by bones.  
Wretched, full of cravings,  
insubstantial, impermanent.

### 11.3

The body wears out.  
It is fragile, a nesting place for disease.  
Soon it will putrefy and dissolve.  
Life ends in death.

### 11.4

And when the ash-grey bones of your body  
lie scattered on the ground  
like gourds discarded in autumn,  
who will then take pleasure gazing upon it?

### 11.5

Your body is a city of bones  
plastered with flesh and blood.  
And in this city dwells pride, pretense, old age,  
death, and decay.

### 11.6

Even the finest royal chariots must wear out,  
just as the body must decay.  
But awareness of Dhamma does not perish.  
Those who are Aware, instruct noble listeners.

### 11.7

The uninstructed man grows old like an ox.  
His bulk increases but his insight does not.

### 11.8

For how many lives have I searched in vain  
for the builder of this house?  
To be born again and again is misery.

11.9

Builder of this house – you are seen!  
You shall not build this house again!  
The rafters are broken, the ridgepole is destroyed.  
The mind is empty of illusion.  
Desire is extinguished.

11.10

Those who do not seek Truth while young,  
who do not gain the true treasure of life,  
later ruminate with regret  
like old herons on a pond with no fish.

11.11

Those who do not seek Truth while young,  
who do not gain the true treasure of life,  
lie like spent arrows that missed the mark,  
brooding over what went wrong.

## 12. Self

### 12.1

One who holds self dear must guard it well.  
Of the three night watches,  
one should be spent wide awake.

### 12.2

Become established in virtue yourself  
before preaching to others.  
In this way, the sage avoids error.

### 12.3

Whatever you preach to others  
do accordingly yourself.  
Self-mastery is not easy.

### 12.4

Only the self can save the self.  
What other savior could there be?  
When self and savior are one,  
self-mastery is accomplished.

### 12.5

The evil you do is yours alone.  
It is born of you, enacted by you.  
Evil grinds the ignorant  
like a diamond grinds a weaker stone.

### 12.6

The evil you do spreads over you,  
like a parasitic vine choking a tree.  
The ignorant bring upon themselves  
what only their worst enemies might wish for them.

### 12.7

Doing what is wrong and harmful to oneself  
comes naturally.  
Doing what is right and beneficial takes effort.

### 12.8

The ignorant man, who clings to delusion  
and mocks the teaching of Dhamma,  
is destroyed by the outcome of his ignorance,  
like a reed that dies when its fruit ripens.

12.9

It is you who commits evil,  
and you who are defiled by it.  
It is you who abstains from evil and are purified.  
Purity and defilement are in your hands.  
No one can purify another.

12.10

Do not abandon self-purpose  
for the purpose of another  
no matter how great it seems.  
When you perceive self-purpose,  
devote yourself wholly to it.

### 13. The World

13.1

Do not live a base life.  
Do not live a careless life.  
Do not live a false life.  
Do not inflate the world.

13.2

Arise! Wake up! Live the virtue of Dhamma.  
One who lives Dhamma dwells in contentment,  
both in this world and beyond.

13.3

Live the virtue of Dhamma.  
Do not fail to practice.  
One who lives Dhamma dwells in contentment,  
both in this world and beyond.

13.4

One who sees the world is a bubble, a mirage,  
cannot be seen by the Lord of Death.

13.5

See the world as it is!  
A gaudy chariot that captivates the foolish!  
The wise have no interest.

13.6

Whoever overcomes delusion and becomes Aware,  
illuminates the world  
like the moon coming free of a cloud.

13.7

Whoever overcomes ignorance  
and performs right action,  
illuminates the world  
like the moon coming free of a cloud.

13.8

People are blind. Few come to see clearly.  
People are like birds caught in a net.  
Few escape to freedom.

13.9

Swans follow the path of the sun,  
moving through space by virtue of unseen powers.  
The wise drift free of the world,  
no longer bound by the illusions of Mara.

13.10

Truth is the first principle.  
One who speaks what he knows is not true,  
giving no thought to the world beyond,  
is capable of all other evil.

13.11

The ignorant are not inclined to generosity.  
The selfish do not go to heaven.  
The wise are fulfilled by giving  
and find joy in heaven.

13.12

Better than reigning supreme on earth,  
better than going to heaven,  
better than ruling the universe,  
is entering the stream of Nirvana.

## 14. The Awakened

### 14.1

The Awakened One's state cannot be overturned.  
None can assail it.  
Down what path can you lead one  
who abides in the pathless infinite?

### 14.2

The Awakened One is not ensnared, entangled,  
or full of cravings.  
He cannot be threatened or enticed.  
Down what path can you lead one  
who abides in the pathless infinite?

### 14.3

One who is awake and mindful,  
who abides in stillness,  
who delights in the freedom of non-attachment –  
even the gods envy such a one.

### 14.4

It is a rare event to be born human.  
Mortal life is difficult.  
It is a rare opportunity to hear Dhamma.  
Buddhas do not often appear.

### 14.5

To do no evil, to perform right action,  
to purify the mind –  
this is what the Buddhas teach.

### 14.6

Patience is the highest virtue.  
Nirvana is the highest goal.  
So say the Awakened Ones.  
One who harms others has not even started.  
One who inflicts injury has not begun to practice.



14.7

Speak no evil.

Do no harm.

Practice self-mastery.

Eat in moderation.

Dwell in solitude.

Abide in higher states.

This is what the Buddhas teach.

14.8

Even a shower of gold

could not satisfy your cravings and desires,

could not free you from pleasure and pain.

14.9

The sage does not desire even divine pleasures.

One who delights in the absence of desire

has realized the teaching of the Buddhas.

14.10

In their fear, many flee to mountains and forests,

seeking sanctuary in groves and trees.

14.11

This is not a secure sanctuary.

This is not an adequate refuge.

It offers no release from suffering.

14.12

Whoever seeks refuge

in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha

realizes these four noble truths:

14.13

Life is suffering.

Suffering has a cause.

There is a way to end suffering.

The noble eightfold path is the way.

14.14

This is the secure refuge.

This is the ultimate sanctuary.

One who takes refuge here

is released from all suffering.

14.15

The appearance of an Awakened One is rare.  
One does not turn up just anywhere.  
Those who live in the same place and time  
are fortunate.

14.16

Blessed is the Way of Buddha.  
Blessed is the Truth of Dhamma.  
Blessed is the Life of Sangha.  
Blessed are the efforts of earnest disciples.

14.17

The fortunate virtue of one  
who recognizes the worthy,  
whether Buddhas or wise disciples,  
who recognizes those who are free of evil and delusion,  
who recognizes those who are not bound by suffering –

14.18

the fortunate virtue of such a one  
as this cannot be understood  
by saying it is this much or that much.

## 15. Contentment

### 15.1

Truly, we dwell in contentment.  
Surrounded by hatred, we feel no hate.  
Living among those who hate,  
we do not abide in hatred.

### 15.2

Truly, we dwell in contentment.  
Surrounded by sickness, we are not sick.  
Living among the sick,  
we are free of sickness.

### 15.3

Truly, we dwell in contentment.  
Surrounded by restlessness, we are not restless.  
Living among the restless,  
we abide in stillness.

### 15.4

Truly, we dwell in contentment.  
We have nothing.  
We are nourished by bliss like the radiant gods.

### 15.5

Victory causes hatred.  
The defeated dream of revenge.  
One who has given up victory and defeat  
can sleep in peace.

### 15.6

Nothing burns like desire.  
There is no greater evil than hate.  
Nothing is so painful as existing in a body.  
There is no greater joy than Nirvana.

### 15.7

Craving is the worst disease.  
Material existence is the worst suffering.  
Knowing this is the way it is,  
one realizes the bliss of Nirvana.

15.8

Health is the greatest attribute.  
Contentment is the greatest treasure.  
Trust is the greatest kinsman.  
Nirvana is the highest bliss.

15.9

Having embraced solitude and stillness,  
having been released from fear and delusion,  
one realizes the rapture of Dhamma.

15.10

It is good to associate with the wise.  
To be in their presence is always a delight.  
To never suffer the presence of fools  
is also a delight.

15.11

One who associates with fools  
walks a long road of sorrow.  
Being with a fool is like being with an enemy.  
Being with a sage  
is like being with a beloved kinsman.

15.12

So if you meet someone who is aware, insightful, wise,  
someone of enduring virtue, devotion, and nobility,  
someone clear and real –  
follow such a one as the moon follows the earth.

## 16. Pleasure

### 16.1

One who does what is wrong  
and fails to do what is right,  
who pursues sense pleasures  
and ignores the path of truth,  
will one day meet a man who pursues Truth  
and be filled with envy.

### 16.2

Do not attach your thoughts  
to the desirable or the undesirable.  
To not have what you think is desirable  
causes suffering.  
To have what you think is undesirable  
causes suffering.

### 16.3

Therefore, do not bind yourself to pleasure.  
Separation from the desirable is experienced as pain.  
One who sees nothing as desirable or undesirable  
is bound to nothing.

### 16.4

Desire causes suffering and fear.  
One who is free of desire is free of suffering.  
Where is the cause of fear?

### 16.5

Caring causes suffering and fear.  
One who is free of caring is free of suffering.  
Where is the cause of fear?

### 16.6

Pleasure causes suffering and fear.  
One who is free of pleasure is free of suffering.  
Where is the cause of fear?

### 16.7

Passion causes suffering and fear.  
One who is free of passion is free of suffering.  
Where is the cause of fear?

16.8

Craving causes suffering and fear.  
One who is free of craving is free of suffering.  
Where is the cause of fear?

16.9

One who is established in clarity and virtue,  
one who lives Dhamma and speaks the truth,  
one who does what is his alone to do –  
such a one is beloved in the world.

16.10

One who aspires to the Unknowable,  
whose mind is clear and determined,  
whose heart is not bound to sense pleasures,  
is called "one who goes upstream."

16.11

When one returns home after a long journey  
he is greeted with joy by relatives,  
friends, and well-wishers.

16.12

In the same way, when one travels from this world  
to the next, he is welcomed by his good deeds  
like a loved one returning to kinsmen.

## 17. Anger

17.1

Give up anger.  
Surrender pride.  
Cut all ties and bindings.  
Misery cannot befall one who is bereft of possessions,  
who is unattached to name and form.

17.2

One who can hold back arisen anger  
as if controlling a runaway chariot, I call a charioteer.  
Others merely clutch the reins.

17.3

Overcome anger with no-anger.  
Overcome evil with goodness.  
Overcome selfishness with generosity.  
Overcome falseness with truth.

17.4

Speak the truth. Refrain from anger.  
Give when asked, even if you have little.  
By these three traits one knows the presence  
of the radiant gods.

17.5

The wise ones, who do no harm,  
who restrain the body, mind and senses,  
enter the immutable abode, and having entered,  
grieve no more.

17.6

Those who are ever-wakeful,  
who observe the Way day and night,  
who are wholly intent on Nirvana,  
cease to be intoxicated by illusion.

17.7

It is an old saying, Atula, nothing new:  
"They criticize one who sits in silence.  
They criticize one who talks too much.  
They criticize one who talks in moderation."  
No one in this world escapes being criticized.

17.8

There never was and never will be –  
nor is there existing now –  
a person wholly criticized or wholly praised.

17.9

But who dares criticize one  
who day after day is observed to live impeccably,  
who is intelligent, wise, and established in virtue?

17.10

He is as pure as a coin of Jambunada gold.  
The wise praise him.  
The radiant gods praise him.  
By Brahma himself he is praised.

17.11

Guard against anger in the body.  
Be patient and refrain from harmful deeds.  
Practice right action.

17.12

Guard against anger in speech.  
Be patient and refrain from harmful words.  
Practice right speaking.

17.13

Guard against anger in the mind.  
Be patient and refrain from harmful thoughts.  
Practice right thinking.

17.14

The wise ones, who are self-controlled  
in body, speech, and mind,  
are indeed masters of themselves.



## 18. Impurity

18.1

Your life is now a withered yellow leaf.  
Mara's minions of death approach.  
You stand on the brink of departure,  
yet have made no preparations for the journey.

18.2

Become a lamp unto yourself.  
Begin now.  
Work in earnest.  
Become clear and aware.  
Cleansed of impurities, returned to innocence,  
you will enter the realm of the great.

18.3

Your life is at an end.  
Death stands before you.  
There is no reprieve.  
Yet you have made no preparations for the journey.

18.4

Become a lamp unto yourself.  
Begin now.  
Work in earnest.  
Become clear and aware.  
Cleansed of impurities, returned to innocence,  
you will not suffer birth and old age again.

18.5

The wise remove their own impurities carefully,  
little by little, moment by moment,  
like a silversmith removing impurities from silver.

18.6

Just as rust corrodes the iron that produced it,  
so do impure actions bring one to a miserable state.

18.7

Scriptures corrode when not recited.  
Houses corrode when not repaired.  
Sloth corrodes physical beauty.  
Negligence corrodes the watchful.

18.8

Transgression corrodes a woman's femininity.  
Stinginess corrodes a man's generosity.  
Impure actions are corrosive,  
both in this world and beyond.

18.9

The greatest of all impurities is ignorance –  
the supreme impurity.  
Remove the impurity of ignorance  
and become immaculate,  
you who practice Dhamma.

18.10

It is easy to live a shameless life.  
Impudent as a crow, aggressive, arrogant,  
selfish, disparaging, corrupt.

18.11

It is hard to live a mindful life.  
Sensitive to shame, striving for purity,  
selfless, discerning, sincere.

18.12

Whoever in this world destroys life, tells lies,  
who takes what is not given,  
who goes to the wife of another,

18.13

who gives himself up to intoxicants –  
that man chops at the very source of himself.

18.14

Know this, my friend:  
Impure actions carry forward.  
Do not let greed and ignorance  
sentence you to long-term suffering.

18.15

People give alms  
according to their beliefs and pleasure.  
One who becomes upset about the food and drink  
he does or does not receive  
will never attain stillness, be it day or night.

18.16

But one in whom judgment and self-interest  
have been cut out, destroyed at the root,  
will attain stillness, be it day or night.

18.17

No fire burns like lust.  
No chains imprison like hate.  
No net ensnares like delusion.  
No river torrents like desire.

18.18

It is easy to see the faults of others,  
difficult to see one's own.  
You expose the faults of others  
as one winnowing chaff,  
yet conceal your own like a dishonest gambler  
concealing a bad throw of the dice.

18.19

One who constantly judges the faults of others,  
always taking offense,  
suffers an increase in his own impurities,  
and grows ever further away  
from the end of ignorance.

18.20

There is no path through emptiness.  
There is no refuge outside Dhamma.  
Ordinary men delight in complex illusions.  
The Awakened are free of illusion.

18.21

There is no path through emptiness.  
There is no refuge outside Dhamma.  
The created world is not eternal.  
The Awakened are not impatient.

## 19. Established in Virtue

19.1

One who forces an issue for his own benefit  
is not established in virtue.  
But the wise one,  
who considers an issue from all sides,

19.2

who guides others without force,  
who follows eternal principles,  
is said to be established in virtue.

19.3

A man is not wise because he talks a lot.  
One who is self-secure, who is without enmity or fear,  
is said to be wise.

19.4

A man is not a bearer of the teaching  
because he makes learned speeches.  
One who learns but little,  
yet realizes Dhamma in the body of self  
and lives true to it,  
is indeed a bearer of the teaching.

19.5

A man is not a venerable elder  
because his hair turns grey.  
One who has ripened in years only  
is said to have "grown old in vain."

19.6

One who embodies truth, virtue,  
harmlessness, restraint, and self-mastery,  
who is free of impurities and rich in wisdom,  
is called a venerable elder.

19.7

Not by mere talk nor physical beauty  
can an envious, greedy, deceitful man  
become a man of virtue.

19.8

One in whom these impurities are cut off,  
dispelled, destroyed at the root,  
who is wise and free of enmity,  
is called a man of virtue.

19.9

Not by merely shaving his head  
can a dishonest, undisciplined man  
become a renunciant.  
How can one full of cravings and greed  
be a renunciant?

19.10

But one who stills all evils in himself,  
coarse or subtle, in every way,  
can be called a renunciant.

19.11

Not merely by begging from others  
does one become a simple mendicant.  
Nor does one become a mendicant  
by living a grosser life.

19.12

But one who lives a life of virtue,  
who gives no thought to good and evil,  
who moves about the world with indifference,  
is indeed a mendicant.

19.13

Not merely by observing silence  
does a confused and ignorant man become a sage.  
But the wise one who, as if holding up a set of scales,  
selects what is true

19.14

and rejects what is false,  
is called a sage.  
This is the reason he is a sage.  
He knows both worlds, and so is called a sage.

19.15

One who harms living beings is not noble.  
One who is harmless to living beings is called noble.

19.16

Not with rules or rituals,  
not with learning or higher states,  
not with sleeping alone, or thinking:  
"I enjoy the peace of renunciation unknown  
by ordinary men," should the seeker be content –  
until self-will is extinguished.

## **20. The Way**

### **20.1**

The best way is the eightfold path.  
The best sayings are the four noble truths.  
The best quality is detachment.  
The best being on two legs is one who sees clearly.

### **20.2**

There is one Way, no other.  
It leads to the vision of Truth.  
Enter the Way.  
Mara the Beguiler will lose sight of you.

### **20.3**

The Way puts an end to suffering.  
I proclaim the Way, having known myself  
the extrication of the arrows.

### **20.4**

All effort must be made by you alone.  
Buddhas only point the path.  
Enter the Way.  
Become absorbed in Awareness.  
Break free of the bonds of Mara.

### **20.5**

"All of Creation is transient."  
When one sees clearly this truth,  
he is done with suffering.  
This is the path to pure Awareness.

### **20.6**

"All of Creation is sorrow."  
When one sees clearly this truth,  
he is done with suffering.  
This is the path to pure Awareness.

### **20.7**

"All of Creation is not Self."  
When one sees clearly this truth,  
he is done with suffering.  
This is the path to pure Awareness.

20.8

One who is indolent when it is time for effort –  
who, though young and strong,  
is lazy, weak-willed, and lacking in determination –  
will never find the Way.

20.9

Guard your speech.  
Observe your mind.  
Do no harm with your body.  
Practice these three and you walk the path of the masters.

20.10

Clarity increases through spiritual practice.  
Clarity weakens with lack of practice.  
Knowing this two-way path of gain and loss,  
walk in the direction of clarity.

20.11

Cut down the jungle of desire, not just a tree.  
From the jungle of desire comes fear.  
Cut down the jungle of desire, you practitioners,  
and cut out the underbrush of lust.  
Be free of the jungle.

20.12

For if the least bit of underbrush remains  
of the desire between man and woman,  
you are bound to delusion  
like a suckling calf to its mother.

20.13

Root out your love of self  
as you would pull up a faded autumn lotus.  
Cherish only the path of peace that leads to Nirvana.  
Be guided by One Who Is Gone.

20.14

"I will live here in monsoon season,  
and there during the hot and cold months."  
Lost in such thoughts,  
the unaware ignore what awaits.



20.15

Infatuated with children and cattle,  
the unaware man is swept away by death,  
as a flood carries off a sleeping village.

20.16

Children are no refuge.  
Fathers and mothers and families are no refuge.  
When death takes hold,  
kinsmen cannot protect you.

20.17

Understanding the import of this,  
the wise act in accordance with virtue,  
and quickly clear the way to Nirvana.

## 21. Miscellany

### 21.1

If by giving up a lesser happiness  
one would enjoy a greater happiness,  
the wise would surely give up the lesser  
and enjoy the greater.

### 21.2

One who seeks his own pleasure  
while inflicting misery on others,  
is entangled in hostility  
and not freed from hate.

### 21.3

By not doing what needs to be done,  
and doing what should not be done,  
the proud and insolent man  
increases his burden of defilements.

### 21.4

But defilement comes to an end  
for one who is mindful of the nature of the body,  
who does not do what should not be done,  
and who does what needs to be done.

### 21.5

Having slain mother, father, and two warrior kings,  
having ravaged a kingdom and slain its people,  
the brahmin, untouched, moves on.

### 21.6

Having slain mother, father, two wise kings,  
and a tiger as the fifth,  
the brahmin, untouched, moves on.

### 21.7

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night they are mindful of Buddha.

### 21.8

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night they are mindful of Dhamma.

21.9

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night they are mindful of Sangha.

21.10

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night they are mindful of the senses.

21.11

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night the mind delights in harmlessness.

21.12

Wide awake, the disciples of Gotama  
arise at every watch.  
Day and night the mind delights in meditation.

21.13

It is painful to go forth into homelessness,  
difficult to find joy in it.  
It is painful to live in a household,  
difficult to be alone among many.  
The traveler of life and death is trapped in misery.  
Cease traveling.  
Escape misery.

21.14

A man of faith, established in virtue,  
who is possessed of wealth and fame –  
such a man is honored wherever he goes.

21.15

Like the snow-capped Himalayas,  
good people shine from afar.  
Like arrows shot into the night,  
the evil ones are swallowed by darkness.

21.16

Sitting alone, sleeping alone,  
walking alone without tiring.  
One who has tamed himself, alone,  
delights in the solitude of the forest.

## 22. Hell

### 22.1

He who speaks what is not true goes to hell.  
He who denies what he has done also goes to hell.  
Both sin against Truth,  
and pass through death into an equally woeful state.

### 22.2

Many even who wear the saffron robe  
are evil-minded and unrestrained.  
These evil ones, by their evil deeds,  
pass through death into a woeful state.

### 22.3

Better to swallow a red-hot ball of iron  
than to be an evil, undisciplined monk  
feeding on the alms of the devout.

### 22.4

The heedless man who pursues another's wife  
suffers four misfortunes:  
acquisition of demerit, disturbed sleep,  
disgrace is the third,  
the fourth is birth into hell.

### 22.5

Acquisition of demerit and a wretched future  
in exchange for the brief delight  
of the frightened lying in the arms of the frightened.  
The king also imposes harsh penalties.  
Therefore, do not pursue the wife of another.

### 22.6

Just as kusa grass held wrongly  
can cut the hand, so a practitioner's life lived badly  
can drag him into hell.

### 22.7

Acts done absently, practices not observed,  
dubious spiritual vows – these bear little fruit.

### 22.8

With any undertaking, give yourself to it wholly.  
The half-hearted practitioner succeeds only  
in stirring up more dust.

22.9

A bad deed is best left undone.  
Bad deeds torment one later.  
A good deed brings no regret  
and so should be performed.

22.10

Like a frontier town, fortified inside and out,  
fortify yourself.  
Do not let the moment pass.  
Those who let their moment pass grieve in hell.

22.11

Ashamed of what is not shameful,  
unashamed of what is shameful,  
those who are unaware of Truth  
fall into a state of misery.

22.12

Fearing what is not fearful,  
unafraid of what should be feared,  
those who are unaware of Truth  
fall into a state of misery.

22.13

Finding fault with what is right,  
finding no fault with what is wrong,  
those who are unaware of Truth  
fall into a state of misery.

22.14

Seeing what is right is right,  
seeing what is wrong is wrong,  
those aware of Truth  
find the fortunate state.

## 23. The Elephant

23.1

I endure in silence the harsh words of others  
as a battle elephant endures arrows from the bow.  
Many people are ill-behaved.

23.2

Only trained elephants are ridden in battle.  
Only trained elephants are ridden by kings.  
The best of men have trained themselves  
to endure harsh words in silence.

23.3

Tamed mules are excellent.  
So are the thoroughbred horses of Sindh  
and the tusked battle elephants.  
Best of all is the self-tamed man.

23.4

For it is not by these animals  
that one goes to the Place Not Gone To,  
but by the self-tamed, well-trained, disciplined self.

23.5

The elephant called "Guardian of the Treasure"  
is hard to control when in rut.  
Tied up, the tusker won't eat a morsel,  
yearning for the grove of elephants.

23.6

The sluggard who eats too much and sleeps too much,  
who rolls about like an overfed hog,  
is reborn again and again in ignorance.

23.7

This mind once wandered where it pleased,  
as it pleased, according to whim.  
Now I control its movements,  
as the holder of the hooked staff  
controls the rutting elephant.

23.8

Delight in Awareness.  
Observe the mind.  
Pull yourself out of misery  
like an elephant climbing from mud.

23.9

If one should meet a mature friend,  
a fellow traveler, a wise companion,  
go with that one, overcoming all obstacles,  
mindful and happy.

23.10

If one does not meet a mature friend,  
a fellow traveler, a wise companion,  
go the way alone,  
like a king leaving a conquered land,  
like an elephant in the Matanga forest.

23.11

Better a life of solitude.  
The deluded are not fit companions.  
Travel the way alone, at ease, doing no harm,  
like an elephant in the Matanga forest.

23.12

Having friends when you need them is a blessing.  
Being content with what is, is a blessing.  
A good deed as your last act is a blessing.  
The surrendering of all sorrow is a blessing.

23.13

Reverence for the mother is a blessing in the world.  
Reverence for the father is also a blessing.  
Reverence for the practitioner  
is a blessing in the world.  
Reverence for the brahmin is also a blessing.

23.14

Lifelong virtue is a blessing.  
Faith is a blessing.  
Wisdom is a blessing.  
Refraining from harm is a blessing.

## 24. Craving

24.1

The cravings of the careless man  
grow like a clinging vine.  
He jumps from experience to experience  
like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest.

24.2

When a man is overcome  
by miserable, clinging cravings,  
his sorrows grow like rain-soaked grass.

24.3

When a man overcomes  
his miserable, clinging cravings,  
sorrows fall away like raindrops from a lotus.

24.4

I tell you this – and you who are gathered  
have the good fortune to hear it:  
Dig up desire by the root, as you would birana grass.  
Do not let Mara break you again and again,  
as a river breaks reeds in a flood.

24.5

Cut down a tree and it will grow back  
if the root is undamaged and strong.  
So too will suffering arise again and again  
if the root of craving is not destroyed.

24.6

One in whom the thirty-six streams of experience  
flow mightily towards pleasure  
cannot see rightly,  
and is swept away by currents of lustful intent.

24.7

The streams flow everywhere.  
Clinging vines sprout everywhere.  
Seeing the vine sprout up,  
sever its root with the blade of insight.



24.8

Beings experience pleasing sensations.  
Craving pleasure, one is bound to pleasure.  
Being bound to pleasure,  
one is bound to birth and death.

24.9

Driven by desire, the mass of men  
scurry about like a hunted hare.  
Bound by their clingings and attachments,  
they suffer and suffer for a very long time.

24.10

Driven by desire, the mass of men  
scurry about like a hunted hare.  
Therefore, let the practitioner drive out desire  
and seek the freedom of dispassion.

24.11

One who is free of the jungle of desire  
yet still attached to desire,  
will, though free, return to the jungle  
and re-enter bondage.

24.12

Bindings of iron, wood, or rope  
are not called strong by the wise.  
Attraction to jewels and finery,  
affection for wives and children,

24.13

these are strong bindings, say the wise.  
Though supple, they drag one down  
and are hard to loosen.  
Some men simply cut them,  
renounce the world of sensory delights,  
and follow the Way without a backward glance.

24.14

Those who are attached to desire  
return to the stream of experience,  
as a spider returns to the center of its web.  
The wise sever all attachments,  
and free from craving, leave suffering behind.

24.15

Hold no thought of future.  
Hold no thought of past.  
Hold no thought of a moment between.  
Transcend experience and cross over.  
You are finished with birth and death.

24.16

For one gripped by restless thoughts,  
whose cravings are acute, who seeks only pleasure,  
desire grows all the more  
as he draws his fetters tighter.

24.17

But one who delights in stilling thought,  
who is ever mindful,  
who meditates on the sorrows of experience –  
that one will surely break the bonds of Mara.

24.18

For one who has reached the goal,  
who is fearless, desireless, unclouded,  
who has plucked out the arrows of experience,  
this is the final body.

24.19

Free of desire and attachment,  
well-versed in language and expression,  
skilled in the teaching of meaning within meaning,  
one is called "wise" and "great" and  
a "bearer of the final body."

24.20

All-conquering, all-knowing, I Am.  
Touched by nothing, released of everything,  
absent of desire, I am free.  
Having realized I alone Am,  
to whom should I attribute this?

24.21

The gift of Dhamma surpasses all gifts.  
The taste of Dhamma surpasses all flavors.  
The joy of Dhamma surpasses all joys.  
The dissolution of desire removes all sorrows.

24.22

Wealth destroys the ignorant,  
but not those seeking beyond.  
Craving wealth, the ignorant man  
destroys himself and those around him.

24.23

Weeds make fields unsuitable for seeding.  
Greed makes people unsuitable to receive.  
Hence, what is given to those free of greed  
bears the most abundant fruit.

24.24

Weeds make fields unsuitable for seeding.  
Hatred makes people unsuitable to receive.  
Hence, what is given to those free of hate  
bears the most abundant fruit.

24.25

Weeds make fields unsuitable for seeding.  
Delusion makes people unsuitable to receive.  
Hence, what is given to those free of delusion  
bears the most abundant fruit.

24.26

Weeds make fields unsuitable for seeding.  
Desire makes people unsuitable to receive.  
Hence, what is given to those free of desire  
bears the most abundant fruit.

## 25. The Practitioner

### 25.1

Restraining the eye is good.  
It is good to restrain the ear.  
Restraining the nose is good.  
It is good to restrain the tongue.

### 25.2

Restraint of the body is good.  
It is good to restrain one's speech.  
Restraint of the mind is good.  
It is good to be restrained in all things.  
Being restrained in all things,  
the practitioner is released from suffering.

### 25.3

One with hands restrained,  
feet restrained, speech restrained,  
one who exercises the utmost restraint,  
one who delights in introspection,  
who is composed, solitary, and content –  
such a one is known as a practitioner.

### 25.4

The practitioner who controls his speech,  
who talks in moderation without arrogance or conceit,  
who illuminates the goal and spirit of Dhamma –  
sweet indeed are his words.

### 25.5

Abiding in Dhamma, delighting in Dhamma,  
reflecting on Dhamma, remembering Dhamma,  
the practitioner will not fall away from Dhamma.

### 25.6

Do not be discontent with what you are given,  
nor envy the lot of others.  
The practitioner who harbors envy  
will never come to Awareness.

### 25.7

The practitioner who is given little yet is content,  
who lives a pure and vigorous life,  
is praised even by the gods.

25.8

One who observes mind and form  
with no sense of "mine,"  
and who does not yearn for what is not,  
is a true practitioner.

25.9

The practitioner who lives in love and kindness,  
who walks the Way of Buddha,  
will find stillness, subdue the phantoms of Creation,  
and attain bliss.

25.10

Practitioner, empty your boat!  
Lightened, it will sail more quickly.  
Cast off hatred and desire,  
and you will realize Nirvana.

25.11

Cut the five bindings.  
Release the five attachments.  
Cultivate the five qualities.  
Transcend the five evils.  
You will be called "one who has crossed the torrent."

25.12

Become absorbed in meditation, practitioner!  
Do not be negligent!  
Do not surrender your mind  
to the swirl of sense pleasures.  
Do not carelessly swallow a molten ball of iron  
then cry out in torment when it burns.

25.13

One cannot become absorbed  
in meditation without clarity.  
One cannot realize clarity without meditation.  
One who meditates in clarity realizes Nirvana.

25.14

When in stillness the practitioner  
discovers his house is empty,  
the Truth of Dhamma is clear.  
The joy of this is indescribable.

25.15

Witnessing the arising and passing  
of the manifest world,  
one delights in the joy of Awareness  
and realizes the deathless.

25.16

The wise practitioner in this world  
begins by guarding the senses,  
learning contentment, practicing spiritual disciplines,  
and associating with worthy friends  
who live pure and vigorous lives.

25.17

Form the habit of friendship.  
Conduct yourself with skill.  
In fulfillment find the joy without sorrow.

25.18

As the jasmine sheds withered flowers,  
so should the practitioner shed desire and aversion.

25.19

The practitioner whose body is tranquil,  
whose speech is calm, whose mind is stilled,  
who refuses the bait of worldliness,  
is said to be "at peace."

25.20

You alone can motivate yourself.  
You alone can examine yourself.  
The practitioner who is self-observed and aware,  
abides in contentment.

25.21

You are your own master.  
You are your own refuge.  
Train yourself as a horseman trains a fine horse.

25.22

The practitioner who is filled with delight  
as he walks the Way of Buddha,  
will find stillness, subdue the phantoms of Creation,  
and attain bliss.

25.23

Truly, even a novice practitioner who walks the Way  
of Buddha, lights up the world  
like the moon coming free of a cloud.

## 26. The Brahmin

26.1

Exert strong effort, brahmin.  
Cut entirely the stream.  
Abandon all sense desires.  
Witnessing the dissolution of Creation,  
perceive the uncreated.

26.2

When the brahmin has crossed over  
with both tranquility and insight,  
then, for that one, all bonds are broken.

26.3

One for whom there is neither here nor beyond  
nor both, who is free of distress, untethered,  
I call a "brahmin."

26.4

One who is aware, mindful, untouched by desire,  
one whose work is ended, who is free of impurities,  
who has realized the supreme state –  
such a one is a brahmin.

26.5

The sun shines by day.  
The moon lights the night.  
The warrior is bright in armor.  
The brahmin glows in meditation.  
Day and night, the Awakened One  
is ablaze in splendor.

26.6

One in whom ignorance has been dispelled  
is a brahmin.  
One who lives in simple peace is an ascetic.  
One who has left behind impure habits  
is said to have "gone forth."

26.7

One should never strike a brahmin,  
nor should a brahmin, if struck, return anger.  
Shame on one who strikes a brahmin.  
Greater shame on one who returns anger.



26.8

The brahmin likes nothing better  
than restraining the mind from the pleasant.  
When harmful thoughts are abandoned,  
suffering ends.

26.9

One who does no harm  
with body, speech, or mind,  
and who in all three areas is restrained,  
I call a brahmin.

26.10

As the brahmin pays homage to the sacred fire,  
so should homage be paid to one who teaches  
the Dhamma of the Awakened One.

26.11

Not by matted hair, or ancestry, or fortunate birth  
does one come to be a brahmin.  
One who realizes the Truth of Dhamma  
is the pure one. He is a brahmin.

26.12

You fool! What does it matter if your hair is matted?  
What does it matter if you wear antelope robes?  
The jungle of defilements is within you,  
yet you tend the outside!

26.13

I call him brahmin who,  
clothed in rags, lean in body,  
sits alone in the forest, absorbed in Awareness,  
veins showing.

26.14

I do not call one a brahmin  
because he was born to a brahmin family,  
sprung from a brahmin womb.  
He may be just a proud fool with possessions.  
I call him a brahmin  
who is bereft of possessions and attached to nothing.

26.15

I call him a brahmin  
who has cut himself free from bondage  
and does not tremble,  
who has unburdened himself of attachments.

26.16

I call him a brahmin  
who has cut the strap of hate and thong of greed,  
who has severed the cord of delusion  
and bridle of bias, who has lifted the bar of ignorance  
and realized Truth.

26.17

I call him a brahmin  
who endures without anger,  
abuse, torture, imprisonment,  
whose forbearance is as strong as an army.

26.18

I call him a brahmin  
who is without anger and devoted to practice,  
who is virtuous, restrained, free of craving,  
who is a bearer of the final body.

26.19

I call him a brahmin  
who, like a raindrop on a lotus leaf,  
like a mustard seed on the point of an awl,  
does not cling to sensual pleasure.

26.20

I call him a brahmin  
who even in this life has ceased to suffer,  
who has laid down the burden,  
who is freed from bondage.

26.21

I call him a brahmin  
who is possessed of wisdom and clarity,  
who sees the Way and the not-Way,  
who has realized the supreme state.

26.22

I call him a brahmin  
who associates with neither householders  
nor renunciants, who lives without shelter,  
indifferent, desiring nothing.

26.23

I call him a brahmin  
who has laid down his rod and renounced violence,  
who is harmless to beings, both animal and rooted,  
who neither kills nor causes others to kill.

26.24

I call him a brahmin  
who is harmonious among the hostile,  
serene among the violent,  
detached among the clinging.

26.25

I call him a brahmin  
from whom desire, hatred, pride, and hypocrisy  
have fallen away,  
like a mustard seed from the point of an awl.

26.26

I call him a brahmin  
who speaks only what is instructive, useful, and true,  
who offers offense to no one.

26.27

I call him a brahmin  
who in this world takes nothing that is not given,  
whether long or short, small or great,  
pleasant or unpleasant.

26.28

I call him a brahmin  
who has no yearnings for this world or another,  
who is untethered, aloof, indifferent.

26.29

I call him a brahmin  
who is attached to nothing,  
whose clarity has dispelled all doubt,  
who has realized deathlessness.

26.30

I call him a brahmin  
who is beyond good and evil,  
who is free of sorrow,  
immaculate, pure.

26.31

I call him a brahmin  
who is clear and pure as the moon, serene, tranquil,  
who is no longer delighted by existence.

26.32

I call him a brahmin  
who has passed through this quagmire of existence  
and gone beyond the swirl of illusion,  
who abides in Awareness, free of craving and doubt,  
who has crossed the torrential river  
and rests on the far shore.

26.33

I call him a brahmin  
who wanders homeless,  
sense desires extinguished,  
whose desire for sensory existence is exhausted.

26.34

I call him a brahmin  
who wanders homeless,  
feverish cravings extinguished,  
whose craving for conditioned existence is extinct.

26.35

I call him a brahmin  
who is free of all bondage,  
who has abandoned the bondage of birth  
and transcended the bondage of heaven.

26.36

I call him a brahmin  
who is free of preferences and aversions,  
who is cool and indifferent to Creation –  
a hero who conquers every world.

26.37

I call him a brahmin  
who sees clearly the arising and passing away,  
who is unattached, well-gone, Awakened.

26.38

I call him a brahmin  
whose destiny is unknown to mortals,  
guardians, or gods,  
who is pure and immaculate – an arahant.

26.39

I call him a brahmin  
for whom there is no future, no past,  
no moment in between,  
who has nothing, wants nothing.

26.40

I call him a brahmin  
who is a powerful bull – splendid, heroic –  
who is a great sage, a victorious conqueror,  
who is desireless, washed clean, Awake.

26.41

I call him a brahmin  
who knows other lives,  
who knows heaven and the realms of woe,  
who has reached the end of birth and death,  
who has realized the supreme state,  
who is in all ways, perfect.

# Yoga Sutras

## *Patanjali*

### A New English Version by Bart Marshall

#### 1. Unity

1.1

OM. What follows are instructions on Unity

1.2

Unity obtains when the activities of the mind have ceased.

1.3

The witness then abides in its true nature

1.4

Otherwise, the witness is identified with the activities of mind and is just another thought-form itself.

1.5

There are five types of mind activity, both painful and pleasurable.

1.6

These are correct perception, misperception, imagination, dreamless sleep, and memory.

1.7

Correct perception may derive from direct observation, valid reasoning, or accurate testimony of enlightened teachers.

1.8

Misperception is knowledge based on the illusion of forms, rather than on the true nature of reality.

1.9

Imagination is mental images derived from words and concepts rather than objective observation and sensory perceptions.

1.10

Dreamless sleep is the state of mind when thought is absent and sensory perception is in abeyance.

1.11

Memory is the retention of thoughts and images generated by sensory perception and imagination.

1.12

Cessation of mind activity is achieved through the practice of *yoga* and the habit of dispassionate non-attachment.

1.13

*Yoga* practice is the willful effort to restrain the five activities of mind and abide in a state of stillness.

1.14

To be firmly grounded, this practice must be performed with earnestness and devotion over a long period of time, all the while holding the goal in clear and constant view.

1.15

Dispassionate non-attachment is the absence of desire for experiences of the senses – seen and unseen, here and hereafter.

1.16

Supreme dispassion is indifference to the three *gunas* of creation – light, inertia, and vibration – owing to a direct knowledge of Self.

1.17

Meditation for direct-knowing of the objective world is fourfold in nature: exterior observation, inner perception, alert stillness, and the sense “I am.”

1.18

The other state of meditation is when awareness perceives no thought or object – only the seeds of unmanifested possibilities.

1.19

This is the natural state of formless beings and those absorbed in True Nature.

1.20

Others can attain it through faith, earnestness, self-inquiry, clarity, and insight.

1.21

Those who proceed with unshakable intent can attain this state quickly.

1.22

Those who practice with varying degrees of effort – mild, moderate, intense – will progress in accordance with their efforts.

1.23

The other way to attain the natural state is through surrender to God.

1.24

God is the Supreme Being, formless, unbounded, limitless, untouched by action and desire.

1.25

The omniscience of God is infinite. Man is but a germ of awareness.

1.26

God is timeless, the ever-present master of the ancient masters.

1.27

He is called by OM.

1.28

Silently repeat this word as a mantra while meditating upon its significance.

1.29

From this comes the disappearance of obstacles to the realization of Self.

1.30

The obstacles to Self-realization are disease, inertia, doubt, carelessness, procrastination, laziness, sense cravings, false perception, inability to concentrate, and inability to stabilize higher states when attained.

1.31

Encountering these obstacles one experiences grief, despair, physical agitation, and anxious breathing.

1.32

To overcome these obstacles the constant practice of a single truth is required.

1.33

The mind can be stilled by the earnest practice of openness, compassion, virtue, and indifference.

1.34

Or by breathing in and out, intentionally.

1.35

Intentional focus on any sense experience will enhance perception and still the mind.

1.36

Concentration upon the inner light beyond sorrow stills the mind.



1.37

Meditation upon a transcendent being stills the mind.

1.38

Inquiring into the experience of dreams and dreamless sleep stills the mind.

1.39

Fixing attention on that which is nearest the heart, also stills the mind.

1.40

The stilled mind of a *yoga* master realizes everything, from the infinitely small to the infinitely great.

1.41

As pure crystal takes on the adjacent colors, so does the mind free of thought become indistinguishable from that which it contemplates. The perceiver, the experience of perceiving, and the object perceived are one.

1.42

When the mind projects names and concepts on what is seen through direct perception, confusion and delusion result.

1.43

When the mind is clear, empty of memories and knowledge, things are seen exactly as they are.

1.44

These same two conditions – projection and clarity – also apply to the perception of subtle, unmanifest realms.

1.45

The observation of progressively more subtle realms leads to the primal source.

1.46

These meditations have separate perceptions as the seed.

1.47

When there is no perception of separateness, the supreme Self reigns.

1.48

And absolute Truth is revealed as self-evident.

1.49

The direct experience of Truth is nothing like intellectual knowledge gained from scriptures and teachings.

1.50

The direct experience of Truth supersedes and destroys all previous impressions.

1.51

When the impression of a direct experience of Truth is also wiped out, there remains only Awareness without seed.

## **2. Practice**

### **2.1**

Purification, self-inquiry, and surrender to God are the practices that lead to Unity.

### **2.2**

These practices cultivate awareness and remove the afflictions that obstruct realization of Truth.

### **2.3**

The obstructing afflictions are ignorance, false sense of self, desire, aversion, and a tenacious clinging to life.

### **2.4**

Ignorance is the origin of all other afflictions – the pre-emergent and the vestigial, the nearly-overcome and the fully operational.

### **2.5**

Ignorance regards the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the bad as good, the ego self as True Self.

### **2.6**

The false ego self is born when the instrument of seeing is mis-identified as being separate from the One that sees.

### **2.7**

Desire is attachment to pleasure.

### **2.8**

Aversion is attachment to the absence of suffering.

### **2.9**

Tenacious clinging to life is inherent in all beings, from the most ignorant to the most wise. Life after life, it is sustained by its own momentum.

### **2.10**

When these five afflictions have become subtle, vestigial, they can be destroyed by abiding in their opposites.

### **2.11**

When they are full operational, they must be overcome through meditation.

### **2.12**

Mental and physical actions rooted in these afflictions bear fruit as experiences in this and future lifetimes.

2.13

For so long as the roots exist, they bear fruit as fortune of birth, length of life, and the experience of pleasure and suffering.

2.14

The pleasure or suffering you experience is the fruit of your good or bad actions.

2.15

One who is spiritually aware sees that all experience is suffering, due to constant change, anxiety, forces of nature, and imprints of subliminal processes.

2.16

Suffering yet to come can be avoided.

2.17

Suffering is caused by the illusion that there is an experiencer to whom an experience is happening.

2.18

Everything perceived is composed of the three *gunas* of creation – light, inertia, and vibration. These form the elements as well as the senses, which interact to create experience and the path to liberation from it.

2.19

The three *gunas* flow in four states – gross, subtle, primal, and unmanifest.

2.20

The witness is Self – pure Awareness – which, though boundless and unchanging, appears to perceive the world through the construct of the mind.

2.21

The existence of all that is, serves Self-Awareness alone.

2.22

One who attains Unity sees the world is not real, yet the world persists because it is taken by others as real.

2.23

The identification of pure Awareness with the mind and the creations of the mind causes the apprehension of both an objective world and a perceiver of it.

2.24

This identification is ignorance. It must be overcome.

2.25

When this identification is broken, ignorance vanishes, liberation is attained, and Self realizes its true nature.

2.26

Liberation is attained through unwavering intent and discernment.

2.27

The way of Self-realization progresses through seven stages.

2.28

Steady practice of the means of *yoga* dissolves impurities and invites illumination of the Real.

2.29

The eight means of *yoga* are self-restraint, faithful observance, right posture, intentional breathing, sense withdrawal, concentration, meditation, and awareness.

2.30

The five pillars of self-restraint are non-violence, truthfulness, honesty, celibacy, and non-attachment.

2.31

These great practices are valid for all – irrespective of social class, location, time, or circumstance – and thus constitute the universal Way.

2.32

The five observances are purification, contentment, aspiration, study, and surrender to God.

2.33

To be free of thoughts contrary to *yoga*, opposite thoughts must be cultivated.

2.34

Contrary thoughts leading to acts of violence, dishonesty, and lust – whether personally done, caused to be done, or merely approved of – arise from greed, anger, and ignorance. And whether mild, moderate, or intense, they perpetuate suffering and delusion. This is why their opposites must be cultivated.

2.35

In the presence of one who is grounded in non-violence, enmity is not possible.

2.36

When one is obedient to Truth, what he says and does becomes what is true.

2.37

When one is established in non-stealing, wealth flows to him.

2.38

One who is steadfast in celibacy acquires spiritual energy, strength, and courage.

2.39

One who is unattached and free of cravings gains insight into all of life – past, present, and yet to come.

2.40

Physical and mental purification produces indifference to one's own body, and ends one's infatuation with the bodies of others.

2.41

One who is pure of heart obtains serenity of spirit, power of concentration, control of the senses, and the capacity to directly realize Self.

2.42

Through contentment one attains bliss.

2.43

The fire of aspiration burns through impurities and heightens the powers of the body and senses.

2.44

Through self inquiry and spiritual study one attains communion with the object of study.

2.45

Through surrender to God one realizes clear Awareness.

2.46

Right posture is to be seated in a manner both solid and relaxed.

2.47

Effortless stillness is achieved by focusing the mind on the boundless realm.

2.48

Here, the opposites hold no sway.

2.49

When right posture is attained, the practice of intentional breathing then follows.

2.50

Intentional breathing controls the three phases of breath – exhalation, inhalation, and hiatus. Breathing can be regulated by controlling the spacing, depth, number, and duration of breaths.

2.51

There is a fourth level of breath so subtle it transcends the realm of internal and external sense objects.

2.52

Through these practices the veil that obscures the inner light is lifted.

2.53

And the mind becomes capable of concentrating attention.

2.54

When the mind withdraws attention from sense experiences, the senses receive no impressions from sense objects and awareness rests in its essential nature.

2.55

In this way, complete mastery of the senses is achieved.

### 3. Powers

3.1

Concentration is the unwavering focus of attention on a single object in consciousness.

3.2

Meditation is the effortless flow of sustained concentration.

3.3

Reflection is when objects in consciousness are directly experienced as they are, free of mind, with no degree of separation.

3.4

Concentration, meditation, reflection. These three constitute *samyama* – detached awareness.

3.5

Through mastery of *samyama*, the essence of wisdom is illuminated.

3.6

It is applied in stages.

3.7

The three aspects of *samyama*, are more intimate and internal than are the five self-restraints previously described.

3.8

But even these are external to the seedless absorption of *samadhi*.

3.9

Thoughts arise from no-thought, play out, then vanish. In the emptiness between thoughts, the mind is capable of self-reflection.

3.10

When thought is absent, the flow of mind is stilled.

3.11

When mental distractions disappear, what remains is one-pointed awareness.

3.12

One-pointedness is when the arising thought and the vanishing thought are the same – with no gap between.

3.13

In this state, the mind passes beyond the realm of forms and sense organs – beyond observation of attributes, ideas of purpose, and perception of apparent change.



3.14

The three properties of specific forms are: potential characteristics, manifest characteristics, and the unmanifest source common to all forms.

3.15

The interplay of these three properties creates the appearance of evolutionary change.

3.16

The practice of *samyama* on the triple-nature of specific forms leads to an understanding of past and future manifestations.

3.17

The sound of a word, the object it denotes, and the thought conjured up by the word are confused by the ordinary mind as being the same. By practicing *samyama* on the distinction between these, the *yogi* comes to understand the meaning of sounds made by all living things.

3.18

By practicing *samyama* on the flow of thought-images, knowledge of previous existence arises.

3.19

By practicing *samyama* on others, knowledge of their thoughts arises.

3.20

However, the object of another's thoughts – being distinct from thought itself – cannot be known by the practice of *samyama*.

3.21

By practicing *samyama* on the essential nature of his own form, the *yogi* gains control over the emanations that make his body visible to others.

3.22

In this way also, he gains control of the emanations of sound, smell, and substance of his body, and can thus vanish completely from the senses of others.

3.23

Some actions in life bear fruit quickly, others ripen late. By practicing *samyama* on the *karma* of his life, a *yogi* comes to know the exact time it will end. This can also be known through signs and omens.

3.24

By practicing *samyama* on empathy, compassion, and non-attachment, one gains union with others.

3.25

By practicing *samyama* on any attribute of an element or animal – such as the strength of an elephant – that attribute will be attained.

3.26

By practicing *samyama* on the inner light, one perceives the subtle, the hidden, the mysterious and minute.

3.27

By practicing *samyama* on the sun, one gains knowledge of the planetary worlds.

3.28

By practicing *samyama* on the moon, one gains knowledge of the positions of stars.

3.29

By practicing *samyama* on the pole star, one gains knowledge of the movement of stars.

3.30

By practicing *samyama* on the center point of the body, one gains knowledge of the systems of the body.

3.31

By practicing *samyama* on the throat center, one gains control over thoughts of hunger and thirst.

3.32

By practicing *samyama* on the “tortoise” nerve duct in the chest, one becomes immovable.

3.33

By practicing *samyama* on the radiant center of the head, one attains visions of perfected beings.

3.34

Also, all these things can be known without *samyama* – on the spontaneous clear light of Realization.

3.35

By practicing *samyama* on the heart, the working of one’s mind – and the minds of others – can be known.

3.36

The bondage of experience results from a failure to discriminate between the highest aspects of personal identity and the true Self – which are completely different. The spiritual aspect of personal identity is merely an agent of Self – which is totally independent and exists for its own sake. Practicing *samyama* on personal identity as separate from Self leads to Self-knowledge.

3.37

Through *samyama* there arises a spontaneous realization, and the powers of hearing, touch, vision, taste, and smell reach beyond the sense organs to the realm of extra-sensory intuition.

3.38

They are powers in worldly experience, but obstacles to *samadhi*.

3.39

When the bonds of sense experience are loosened and the mode of transference understood, the consciousness of a *yogi* can enter another body.

3.40

By mastering the vital force that governs the upper chest, the *yogi* can rise above water, swamps, thorny paths and the like, and ascend at will.

3.41

By mastering the vital force that moves the abdomen, the *yogi* can emit a blazing radiance.

3.42

Through *samyama* on the relationship of the ear to the Void comes divine hearing.

3.43

Through *samyama* on the relationship of the body to the Void, comes the lightness of cotton and the ability to move through space.

3.44

Through *samyama* on awareness without the body – the great incorporeal Awareness – the veil that obscures the light dissolves.

3.45

Through *samyama* on the five aspects of forms – gross manifestation, elemental nature, subtle characteristics, interplay of the three *gunas*, and significance to the observer – the *yogi* obtains mastery over forms.

3.46

Thus he can become the microcosm and attain all other powers, as well as perfect the body – which is no longer subject to the laws of form.

3.47

Perfection of the body includes beauty, grace, strength, and the crystal hardness of a diamond.

3.48

Mastery of the senses comes through *samyama* on the mechanism of perception, on the essential nature of the sense organs, on the sense of personal identity, on the interplay of the three *gunas*, and on the experience being created.

3.49

Thus the *yogi* can move at the speed of thought, perceive without senses, and transmute matter from one form to another.

3.50

Through *samyama* on the distinction between the spiritual component of personal identity and the true Self, one becomes all-knowing and attains mastery over all things.

3.51

Through indifference to all these powers, the seeds of bondage and sorrow are destroyed and unity is attained.

3.52

When divine beings appear to flatter and invite the *yogi* to join them, attachment and pride must be avoided, otherwise he will fall once more into ignorance.

3.53

Through *samyama* on the smallest movement of time and on the succession of moments, one attains the capacity of discernment.

3.54

Thus one can distinguish between identical objects that cannot be distinguished by species, characteristics, or position in space.

3.55

Wisdom born of discernment delivers one from ignorance. It comprehends all things at once – what has been and what will be – in an eternal moment without succession.

3.56

When the mind is as clear and empty as Self, liberation occurs and Unity obtains.

## 4. Liberation

### 4.1

Spiritual powers can be obtained by birth, or through drugs, incantations, austerities, or meditation.

### 4.2

The transformation of one form or level of existence to another is the nature of the creative force.

### 4.3

Deeds and practices are not the direct cause of transformation, but they can clear away obstacles, just as the irrigator clears earth from the watercourse so that water may flow according to its nature.

### 4.4

It is the sense “I am” that produces the many minds.

### 4.5

Though the activities of the many minds are varied, the one Original Mind controls all.

### 4.6

Of the many minds, only the mind purified by meditation is freed from experiencing latent *karma*.

### 4.7

The *karma* of the *yogi* is neither white nor black. The *karma* of others is white, black, or both.

### 4.8

Of the tendencies inherent in one’s *karma*, only those for which environmental conditions are favorable with manifest and ripen.

### 4.9

Because the imprint of unmanifested tendencies transcends birth and death, the chain of cause and effect is unbroken by changes in form, time, and place.

### 4.10

Because the desire to exist is eternal, the succession of identity images produced by these tendencies is without beginning.

### 4.11

These tendencies and identity images are held together by cause and effect grounded in desire, and stimulated by sense experience. When these factors are removed, the succession of identity images comes to an end.

4.12

The form and expression called “past” and the form expression called “future” exist in the eternal Now of objects as properties of their essential nature.

4.13

These properties are either manifest, subtle, or latent according to the interplay of the three *gunas*.

4.14

Because the three *gunas* comprise every form and expression of objects, in reality there is only Unity.

4.15

Though the essential nature of an object is always the same, its material existence is perceived differently by individual minds according to the observer’s state of being.

4.16

So if an object perceived by a single mind is no longer cognized by that mind, can it be said to exist?

4.17

An object’s existence or non-existence depends on whether or not it is reflected in mind.

4.18

The Self, Lord of the Mind, is the immutable, unchanging witness of the mind’s fluctuations.

4.19

The mind is not self-knowing since it can be observed as an object.

4.20

Neither can the mind be both the perceiver and perceived simultaneously.

4.21

To postulate an anterior mind perceiving the first, one would have to postulate an infinite series of minds, each perceiving the one before it, thus causing an endless confusion of percepts and memories.

4.22

The Self is immaculate, unchangeable. When Self is reflected in mind, the mind abides in Self-awareness.

4.23

Self-awareness, reflecting both the knower and the knowable, is omniscient.

4.24

Though the mind has numerous identity imprints and desires, it is merely an agent of Self and cannot act independently for its own sake.

4.25

One who clearly sees this distinction no longer confuses the mind with Self.

4.26

The mind then bends to discriminating Awareness and is borne onwards to liberation.

4.27

Until liberation, however, distractions due to imprints and habitual thinking may still arise when discrimination waivers.

4.28

These distractions are similar to the obstacles of Self-realization already mentioned, and can be overcome in the same way.

4.29

One who remains undistracted even by attainment of the highest illumination becomes – as a result of this perfect discrimination – what is called the “Cloud of Virtue.”

4.30

Thus comes the end of illusion and freedom from *karma*.

4.31

All obstructions and impurities vanish, and in the presence of infinite Awareness, the whole of the sensory universe appears as nothing.

4.32

The interplay of the three *gunas* – light, inertia, vibration – then ceases, having fulfilled its transformative purpose.

4.33

The sequence of changing moments in time begins and ends in the eternal Now.

4.39

When the three *gunas* are devoid of purpose, liberation is complete. Self is revealed as Unity, and nothing remains to be done.

# Tao Te Ching

A New English Version by Bart Marshall

## One

That which can be perceived is not the timeless That.  
That which can be named is not the nameless One.

The source of heaven and earth is without form or substance.  
Naming creates the ten thousand things.

When desire is absent, Mystery is obvious.  
When desire occurs, Creation unfolds.

Mystery and Creation arise from the same source.  
The source is emptiness.  
Void within Void.  
The realm of Tao.



## Two

Judging beauty creates ugliness.  
Defining good creates evil.  
All and Void arise together.

Hard and soft,  
long and short,  
high and low,  
sound and silence,  
now and then.  
Opposites exist because of each other.

Therefore, the sage acts by not-doing, and teaches no-thought.  
The ten thousand things arise and vanish without him.

He works without motive, indifferent to outcome.  
Because there is no doer, his actions are timeless.

### Three

Bestowing honor breeds ambition.  
Hoarding treasure invites thieves.  
Displaying objects of desire  
sows the seeds of discontent.

Therefore, the sage governs  
by emptying minds and filling bellies,  
by weakening wills and strengthening bones.

He extols the virtues of desireless unknowing,  
and keeps intellects off balance.

When not-doing is accomplished,  
nothing remains undone.

## **Four**

Tao is hollow emptiness.

The substance of All,  
it is absent of substance.  
Dimensionless Void,  
it is the source of the ten thousand things.

It blunts sharpness,  
unravels entanglements,  
diffuses brightness,  
merges with dust.

Dark, invisible, it only seems to be.  
It is the child of No-thing  
and the father of God.

## Five

The realm of heaven and earth is indifferent  
to the myriad creatures.  
They appear as straw dogs.

The sage is indifferent to the multitudes of men.  
They appear as straw dogs.

The realm of heaven and earth is like a bellows,  
both empty and full.  
Moving, it brings forth, endlessly.

More words, less understanding.  
Hold fast to the core.

## **Six**

The urge of creation is ceaseless.  
It is called the Dark Mother.

The womb of the Dark Mother  
is the ground of heaven and earth.

Timeless, imperceptible, it continues ever-present.  
Endless use does not touch it.

## Seven

The realm of heaven and earth is everlasting.

Why is it everlasting?  
Because it is not conscious of itself.  
Having no thought of being,  
it never is not.

Like this, the sage forgets himself,  
so he is always present.

Without self-concern, the self is eternal.  
When self-interest subsides, fulfillment happens.

## **Eight**

Supreme virtue is like water.  
It nourishes the ten thousand things without effort,  
and flows in places men shun.  
It is like Tao.

Stand on solid ground.  
Go deep into the heart.  
Speak only what is true.

In friendship, be kind.  
In governing, be just.  
In enterprise, be able.  
In action, watch the timing.

Do not contend with nature, and nothing will go wrong.

## Nine

An over-filled cup is difficult to carry.  
An over-sharp point is easily broken.

Fill your house with gold and jade,  
and it cannot be protected.  
Become puffed with pride,  
and disaster will follow.

Do only what needs doing, then forget it.  
This is the way of heaven.



## Ten

While maintaining a body,  
can you become one?  
While breathing the force of life,  
can you be innocent as a babe?

While polishing the dark mirror,  
can you be without dust?  
While loving and ruling the people,  
can you refrain from action?

While coming and going from heaven,  
can you be passive as a woman?  
Understanding all things,  
can you abide in unknowing?

Give birth and nurture.  
Create without claim.  
Lead without taking command.  
This is supreme virtue.

## Eleven

Thirty spokes of a wheel converge  
to define a hole.

Clay is molded into pots  
to shape the emptiness.

Walls are hammered into rooms  
to enclose space.

Windows are cut into walls  
to frame absence.

Though things may have value,  
without no-thing they are useless.

## Twelve

The five colors confuse the eye.  
The five tones deaden the ear.  
The five flavors dull the palette.

Racing and hunting madden the mind.  
Valuable goods hinder movement.

Therefore, the sage is guided by his gut, not his senses.  
He attends to one and ignores the other.

### **Thirteen**

Receive honor with dismay.  
Accept misfortune gratefully.

Why receive honor with dismay?  
Honor and dishonor cause the same disturbance.  
With honor comes the fear of disgrace.  
With disgrace comes anxiety and dread.

Why accept misfortune gratefully?  
Misfortune weakens the bond to body and self.  
Without a separate self, what misfortune is possible?

See misfortune as a condition of separation,  
and you will become whole.  
See the world as your body,  
and All will be delivered unto you.

## Fourteen

Searching, we cannot see it.  
We call it ephemeral.  
Straining, we cannot hear it.  
We call it ethereal.  
Reaching, we cannot grasp it.  
We call it intangible.

These three are often confused  
because they are the same.

The One is not bright above and dark below.  
Transparent, it moves in and out of nothing.

Its form has no shape.  
Its image has no substance.  
It is indistinct, elusive.

Nothing to face, nothing to follow.

Hold to the timeless Tao.  
Abide in the present.  
Now is the ancient beginning.

## **Fifteen**

The old masters were deep, unfathomable,  
profound beyond understanding.  
Because they were unfathomable,  
we can only describe their demeanor.

Cautious, as if crossing an icy stream.  
Alert, as if sensing danger.  
Respectful, like visiting guests.  
Yielding, like melting ice.  
Simple, like uncarved wood.  
Open, like beckoning valleys.  
Mysterious, like opaque pools.

Still the mind, and the mud settles.  
Do nothing, and action comes of itself.

One who embraces the Tao has no desire for fulfillment.  
Not desiring fulfillment,  
he is finished with birth and death.

## Sixteen

Be completely empty.  
Be completely still.

Witness the ten thousand things  
appear and vanish in one motion.  
Watch as they arise, linger,  
and return to the source – stillness.

This is the way it is.  
It is called everlasting life.  
To witness the everlasting is to be awake.

Not seeing the everlasting, one engages in blind action.  
Blind action leads to misfortune.

Seeing the everlasting, one encompasses it all.  
Encompassing all, one is impartial.  
Being impartial, one acts nobly.  
Acting nobly, one enters heaven.

Entering heaven is to be one with Tao.  
Being one with Tao is to be everlasting.

Though the body dies, nothing is disturbed.

## Seventeen

When a sage governs, people barely notice.

Lesser rulers are praised and loved.  
Lesser still are feared and obeyed.  
The least are ridiculed and despised.

Trust is earned by trusting.

The sage uses words sparingly.  
His work is done without fanfare.  
People say: "It happened by itself."



## **Eighteen**

When Tao is forgotten,  
charity and righteousness are born.

When intelligence and knowledge are valued,  
duplicity and pretense soon follow.

When the family is discordant,  
love and duty are preached.

When the country is in chaos, loyal patriots appear.

## **Nineteen**

Abandon holiness, renounce wisdom.  
It will be a hundred times better for everyone.

Eliminate morality and benevolence.  
Love and empathy will naturally return.

Give up cleverness and profit.  
Thieves and bandits will disappear.

But these are outward lessons, not the core.  
Be simple.  
Be true.  
Cast off selfhood and desire.

## Twenty

Between yes and no, is there really much difference?  
Good and bad, are they so far apart?  
Must I think as others think?  
Alas, there would be no end to fear.

The multitudes are busy with feasts and celebrations.  
In spring they climb towers and enjoy the view.  
I alone am unmoved, like an infant too young to smile.

Others have more than enough.  
I alone have nothing.  
My mind is that of a fool – empty.

Others are clear and bright.  
I alone am nebulous and dim.  
Others are alert and clever.  
I alone am withdrawn, adrift in the ocean,  
directionless as swirling wind.

Everyone else has purpose.  
I alone am stubborn and untamed.  
I am different.  
I am nourished by the Dark Mother.

## **Twenty-One**

Supreme virtue is to abide in Tao alone.

Tao is elusive and empty –  
oh yes, utterly empty and elusive –  
yet within it, dreamlike images arise.

Oh yes, it is indistinct and nebulous,  
but within it, shadows take form.

Oh yes, it is mysterious and dark,  
but within it, appearances originate.

The origin of Creation is the Real.  
Its manifestations are unceasing.  
This can be witnessed.

How do I witness the origin of Creation?  
By looking!

## Twenty-Two

Surrender, and become whole.  
Bend low, and be straightened.  
Become empty, and be filled.  
Burn out, and be renewed.

Having nothing, beauty is revealed.  
Having much, the way is hidden.  
The sage abides in One,  
and thus is master of heaven and earth.

Not being self-absorbed, his vision is clear.  
Not asserting himself, his light shines forth.  
Not showing off, his merit is obvious.  
Not praising himself, praise is showered upon him.  
Not contending, nothing under heaven stands in his way.

This ancient saying, "Surrender and become whole,"  
is it empty words?

Being whole means all things have returned to you.

## Twenty-Three

To last a short time is the way of nature.  
High winds blow out before morning.  
Hard rain subsides in a day.

What issues these?  
The realm of heaven and earth.  
If the realm of heaven and earth cannot maintain duration,  
what chance has man?  
This is why one aligns with Tao.

One who aligns with Tao is embraced by Tao.  
One who lives a virtuous life attains Virtue.  
One who loses his way feels lost.

He who is embraced by Tao becomes one with Tao.  
He who attains Virtue finds heaven.  
He who feels lost is never far from home.

Faith comes to the faithful.

## **Twenty-Four**

One who stands on tiptoe is unsteady.  
One who strides too hard cannot go far.

He who shines a light on himself is not enlightened.  
He who asserts himself is not distinguished.  
He who praises himself has no merit.  
He who brags of his success will not last long.

Observers of Tao see these as spoiled food,  
and pointless action – shunned even by the myriad creatures.

One who knows Tao does not abide them.

## Twenty-Five

Formless no-thing.  
Precedent of heaven and earth.  
Timeless, unchanging, solitary, silent.  
It is the mother of the ten thousand things.

I do not know its name.  
I call it Tao.  
If forced to describe it,  
I call it great.

Great implies vast reaches.  
Vast reaches implies far away.  
Far away implies return.

Tao is great.  
Heaven is great.  
Earth is great.  
Man, too, is great.  
In the realm there are four greats,  
and a noble man is one.

Man follows the way of earth.  
Earth follows the way of heaven.  
Heaven follows the way of Tao.

Tao is the great Way.



## Twenty-Six

Gravity is the ground of lightness.  
Stillness is the master of unrest.

The sage can travel all day,  
yet never wander far from the baggage wagon.  
Though splendor and spectacle may beckon,  
he remains unmoved, indifferent.

Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots act lightly?  
One who acts lightly is not grounded.  
One who is restless is not his own master.

## Twenty-Seven

A good walker leaves no tracks.  
A good speaker does not slip up.  
A good accountant needs no counter.

A good doorsmith uses no bolts or locks,  
yet none can open what he closes.  
A good binder uses no knots,  
yet what he binds cannot be unraveled.

The sage is good at saving souls and rejects no one.  
He takes care of all things, and abandons nothing.  
This is called “the way of awareness.”

The good man is the ignorant man’s teacher.  
The ignorant man is the good man’s lesson.  
To not honor the teacher and value the lesson –  
no matter how much wisdom one acquires –  
is to miss the mark.

This is an essential secret.

## Twenty-Eight

Know the strength of the male,  
but keep to the role of the female.  
Be the river of the world.

Being the river of the world, supreme virtue flows without end.  
Flowing without end, you are the timeless infant.

Know the purity of the light, but maintain darkness.  
Be the model of the world.  
Being the model of the world, supreme virtue is constant.  
Maintaining constant virtue, you are the boundless realm.

Be worthy of high honors, but keep to the role of the lowly.  
Be the valley of the world.  
Being the valley of the world, supreme virtue is fulfilled.  
Being fulfilled, you are the uncarved block.

The uncarved block appears as separate things.  
The sage sees things as they are, and rules the world.

Great power does not divide.

## Twenty-Nine

There are those who want to control the realm,  
and make it more to their liking.  
They will never succeed.  
The realm of heaven and earth is perfect, a sacred vessel.  
It cannot be improved.  
He who tries to change it, destroys it for himself.  
He who tries to hold it, loses all contact.

It is natural for beings to sometimes lead, sometimes follow,  
sometimes breathe hot, sometimes blow cold,  
sometimes expand, sometimes decay,  
sometimes overcome, sometimes collapse.

The sage, therefore, abandons pleasure, judgment, and pride.

## Thirty

When counseling rulers, observers of Tao do not advise force.  
This is certain to bring consequences.  
Where great armies have passed, thorn bushes thrive.  
Famine follows in the wake of war.  
A good ruler does only what is necessary to achieve results.  
He does not abuse position.

Achieve results, but do not glory in them.  
Achieve results, but do not boast.  
Achieve results, but be not proud.

Achieve results, because there is no choice.  
Achieve results, but do not overpower.  
Doing more than necessary brings exhaustion.  
This is not in harmony with Tao.

What is not in harmony with Tao soon perishes.

### **Thirty-One**

Even the finest weapons are instruments of ill omen,  
hated and feared by all creatures.  
Observers of Tao have no use for them.

At home, a man of virtue gives precedence to the left.  
At war, he gives precedence to the right.

Weapons are not the tools of a man of virtue.  
Weapons are instruments of fear,  
to be employed as a last resort.  
Do not relish their use, or admire their excellence.

To see weapons as excellent is to relish killing.  
If you relish killing, you will never find the Way.

On joyful occasions, precedence is give to the left.  
On sad occasions, precedence is given to the right.

When an army is arrayed, the general is placed on the left.  
The commander-in-chief is placed on the right.  
Thus, war is conducted as a funeral right.

When multitudes are being killed,  
hold in your heart only sorrow.  
When victory is achieved,  
mark it with mourning.

## Thirty-Two

Tao is the uncarved block.  
Timeless, undefined, infinitesimally subtle.  
None is its master.

If lords and princes observed it,  
the ten thousand things would arrive as guests to the table.  
Heaven and earth would rejoice,  
and sweet nectar would fall,  
though none under heaven had decreed it.

When the whole is divided, the parts are named.  
There are already too many names.  
It is time to stop.  
Knowing when to stop avoids exhaustion.

Tao in the world is like  
stream flowing to river flowing to sea.

### **Thirty-Three**

One who knows others is wise.  
One who knows self is enlightened.  
One who masters others is strong.  
One who masters self is powerful.

Knowing you have enough is fulfillment.  
Exerting strong effort brings exhaustion.

He who abides where he is, lasts long.  
He who dies without ceasing,  
is timelessly present.



### **Thirty-Four**

Great Tao flows everywhere,  
left and right, all directions.

The ten thousand things depend on it,  
and it does not turn away.  
Its purpose is fulfilled, but it lays no claim.

It clothes and nourishes the ten thousand things,  
but is not their lord.  
It desires nothing.  
It is smaller than small.

The ten thousand things return to it,  
but it is not their master.  
It is indeed great.  
Because it knows nothing of greatness,  
it is greater than great.

### **Thirty-Five**

Extol the great illusion, and the men of the world will gather.

Talk of success, security, happiness,  
and the multitudes will flock.

Offer music and tasty food,  
and travelers will stop in.

Talk of Tao has no flavor.

Look for it – there is nothing to see.

Listen for it – there is nothing to hear.

Merge with it – there is no boundary or end.

### **Thirty-Six**

If you want it to contract, let it expand.  
If you want it to weaken, let it gain strength.  
To bring a thing down, let it be raised high.  
To bring a thing to you, let go.

This is called “perceiving the subtle workings.”

Soft and weak overcome hard and strong.  
A fish should not leave deep water.  
A country should not show off its power.

### **Thirty-Seven**

Tao does nothing, yet nothing remains undone.

When a noble man observes this,  
the ten thousand things are transformed.  
When the desire to act re-emerges,  
it is stilled by the nameless no-thing.

Without things, there is no desire.  
Without desire, there is stillness.  
In stillness, the realm of heaven and earth is perfect.

## Thirty-Eight

The man of high virtue is not aware of himself,  
and thus attains supreme virtue.

The man of low virtue self-consciously strives,  
and thus is without virtue.

The wise man does nothing,  
yet leaves nothing undone.  
The ignorant man is consumed by doing,  
yet little is accomplished.

The compassionate man acts without motive.  
The righteous man acts to gain merit.  
The moral man acts to impose order.  
If no one responds,  
he bares his arms and becomes an enforcer.

When Tao is lost, there is virtue.  
When virtue is lost, there is goodness.  
When goodness is lost, there is morality.  
When morality is lost, rules of conduct are imposed.

Rules are the remnants of trust,  
and the beginning of chaos.  
Knowledge is an ornamental blossom of Tao,  
and the beginning of misunderstanding.

The sage dwells in the depths, not the surface,  
in the root, not the flower.  
He abides in one, and lets go of the other.

## Thirty-Nine

Before time, these ancestors arise from One:

Heaven arises from One, and becomes clear.  
Earth arises from One, and becomes firm.  
Spirit arises from One, and becomes divine.

Emptiness arises from One, and becomes Creation.  
The ten thousand things arise from One, and become manifest.  
Kings and princes arise from One, and become exalted.

One is the source of All.

Separated from the Source:  
the clearness of heaven would vanish,  
the firmament of earth would dissolve,  
the divinity of spirit would dissipate,  
and Creation would become desolation.  
The ten thousand things would perish,  
and kingdoms would disappear.

Humility is the root of honor.  
Lowliness is the foundation of esteem.  
Thus, a noble man considers himself orphaned,  
bereft, unworthy.

This is knowing the humble source, is it not?

To seek praise is not praiseworthy.  
Do not jangle like jewelry.  
Be still as stone.

## **Forty**

Tao moves by returning, and acts by yielding.  
Thus, the ten thousand things arise into being.

Being arises from non-being.  
Things arise from no-thing.

## **Forty-One**

When the wise student hears of Tao,  
he practices diligently.  
When the average student hears of Tao,  
he practices off and on.  
When the foolish student hears of Tao,  
he laughs out loud.  
If the foolish do not laugh, it is not Tao.

Thus it is said:  
The path of light is through darkness.  
The road ahead leads back.  
The easy way is most difficult.  
The highest fulfillment is emptiness.

True purity seems sullied.  
True abundance seems bereft.  
True power seems weak.  
True substance seems hollow.

The greatest region has no boundaries.  
The best tools are fashioned slowly.  
The highest sounds are hard to hear.  
The perfect form has no shape.

Tao is unseen, undefined.  
Yet Tao alone nourishes,  
and brings all things to fulfillment.



## **Forty-Two**

From Tao, One arises.  
From One, two.  
From two, three.  
Three becomes the ten thousand things.

The ten thousand things carry yin on their backs,  
and hold yang in their arms.  
Existence depends on the two.

Men hate to be orphaned, bereft, unworthy,  
yet this is how the noble man describes himself.  
Loss is gain, gain is loss.

I teach what has always been taught:  
“A fervent man is surprised by death.”  
I see this as the foundation of my teaching.

### **Forty-Three**

Under heaven, the soft and yielding  
overcomes the hard and strong.  
That without substance  
permeates the impenetrable.

Thus, I embrace non-action,  
teach without words,  
work without doing.

Few under heaven understand this.

## **Forty-Four**

Name or body, which is more precious?  
Person or possessions, which is more dear?  
Gain or loss, which is more harmful?

Excessive desire incurs great expense.  
One who hoards treasure suffers loss.

One who knows enough is enough,  
will always have enough.  
One who knows when to stop, avoids exhaustion.  
Thus, he will endure.

## **Forty-Five**

Perfection appears imperfect,  
but has no flaw.  
Fulfillment appears as emptiness,  
but has no limit.

Great truth is a paradox.  
Great wisdom is self-evident.  
Great eloquence is impractical.

Movement overcomes cold.  
Tranquility overcomes heat.  
Stillness and simplicity  
put all things right under heaven.

## **Forty-Six**

When Tao is embraced in the realm,  
race horses haul their own manure.  
When Tao is unknown in the realm,  
war horse are bread at the borders.

There is no greater curse than desire,  
no greater misfortune than greed.

He who knows enough is enough,  
will always have enough.

## **Forty-Seven**

Without leaving home, you can know the whole world.  
By not looking without, you can know heaven.

Seeking afar does not find what is near.

Thus, the sage knows without learning,  
sees without seeking,  
acts without doing.

## **Forty-Eight**

For students of knowledge,  
every day something is acquired.  
For observers of the Tao,  
every day something falls away.

Less and less is done,  
until not-doing is achieved.  
When there is no doer,  
nothing remains to be done.

The realm of heaven and earth  
is ruled by timeless principles.  
He who tries to interfere is not ready to receive it.

## **Forty-Nine**

The sage has no heart or mind of his own.  
Thus, he knows the heart and mind of all.

I am good to the good,  
and good to the not-so-good.  
This is the goodness of Virtue.

I trust the trustworthy,  
and have faith in those who should not be trusted.  
This is the faith of Virtue.

The sage is in harmony with the realm of heaven and earth.  
His mind is merged with the world.  
People turn to him and listen.  
He treats them as his children.



## **Fifty**

In the passage from womb to grave,  
one in three are disciples of living.  
One in three are disciples of death.  
One in three are just passing though.

All believe they have life.

He who know the truth of existence  
does not fear wild bulls or tigers.  
He wears no armor in battle.

Bulls have no place to thrust their horns.  
Tiger have no place to sink their claws.  
Weapons have no place to enter.

Why is this?  
Because death is for the living.

## **Fifty-One**

Tao gives them life.  
Virtue gives them nourishment.  
The manifest world gives them form.  
The tendencies of each make them what they are.

Therefore, the ten thousand things honor Tao and esteem Virtue.  
This honor and esteem are not commanded.  
It is just the nature of things.

And so, all things arise from Tao.  
By Virtue they are nourished, developed, clothed,  
sheltered, soothed, aged, and buried.

To create without possessing,  
to act without making claims,  
to lead without taking command –  
this is timeless virtue.

## **Fifty-Two**

Where the realm of heaven and earth begins  
could be called the mother of creation.

Knowing the mother, become the child.  
Being the child, stay close to the mother.  
Death will not bother you.

Stay quiet, keep inside,  
and you will never want for anything.  
Open your mouth, meddle in affairs,  
and you are beyond rescue.

Perceiving the subtle is insight.  
To yield requires strength.  
Use the light of Creation to become illuminated  
and thus be saved.

The is called “entering the Absolute.”

### **Fifty-Three**

If I have the least bit of knowledge,  
I will follow the great Way alone,  
and fear nothing but being sidetracked.  
The great Way is simple,  
but people delight in complexity.

The government is corrupt.  
The fields are overgrown.  
The granaries are empty.  
Yet some wear fine clothes, carry sharp swords,  
gorge on food and drink, and are surrounded by luxury.  
They are thieves.

This is certainly not the great Way.

## **Fifty-Four**

What is deeply rooted will not topple.  
What is firmly grasped will not slip away.  
It will be honored through generations of ancestors.

Cultivated in the self, Virtue is manifest.  
Cultivated in the family, Virtue grows.  
Cultivated in the village, Virtue flourishes.  
Cultivated in the nation, Virtue abounds.  
Cultivated in the universe, Virtue is everything.

As the self, observe the self.  
As the family, observe the family.  
As the village, observe the village.  
As the nation, observe the nation.  
As the universe, observe the universe.

How do I know the universe?  
Like this.

## **Fifty-Five**

A man of Virtue can be compared to a newborn child.

Snakes and scorpions do not strike him.

Fierce beasts do not prey upon him.

Birds of prey do not attack him.

Though his bones are soft, and his muscles weak,  
his grip is firm.

Without knowing the union of man and woman,  
his organ stands erect.

His vital force is strong.

He can scream all day without becoming hoarse.

His harmony is perfect.

To know harmony is to know the everlasting.

To know the everlasting is enlightenment.

To interfere with life is ill-fated.

To control breath causes strain.

If you exert yourself, you will become exhausted.

This is not in harmony with Tao.

What is not in harmony with Tao does not long endure.

## **Fifty-Six**

One who knows does not talk about it.  
One who talks about it does not know.

Stay quiet.  
Keep inside.  
Blunt sharpness.  
Unravel entanglements.  
Diffuse brightness.  
Merge with dust.

This is called “discovering original nature.”

One who knows original nature is  
indifferent to intimacy and estrangement,  
unconcerned with benefit and harm,  
immune to honor and disgrace.

He is embraced by heaven.

## **Fifty-Seven**

Rule the country with sincerity.  
Wage war with cunning.  
Master the universe with indifference.

How do I know this is the way it is?

Because of this:  
The more taboos, the poorer the people's spirit.  
The sharper men's weapons, the more trouble in the land.  
The greater the ingenuity, the more clutter in the world.  
The more abundant the laws, the more abundant the thieves.

Therefore, the sage says:  
I take no action, and the people naturally reform.  
I remain at peace, and the people become content.  
I do not meddle, and the people become prosperous.  
I desire nothing, and the people return to original nature.



## **Fifty-Eight**

When government does not interfere, the people are genuine.  
When government intrudes, the people are cunning.

Happiness is founded on misery.  
Misery lurks within happiness.  
Is there an end to it?  
Nothing stays the same.

Honesty moves with deceit, good flows with evil,  
but people's delusion persists.

Thus, the sage is sharp, but not divisive,  
straightforward, but not hurtful,  
principled, but not severe,  
illumined but not blinding.

## **Fifty-Nine**

In leading people and serving heaven,  
nothing surpasses humility.  
Humility is having no preferences.  
Humility accumulates virtue.

Where virtue accumulates, nothing is impossible.  
When nothing is impossible, there are no limits.  
A man without limits is fit to rule the realm.  
The mother of the realm is everlasting.

This is called being deeply rooted.  
Timeless awareness of Tao.

## Sixty

Governing a country is like cooking a delicate fish.

Rule in observance of Tao,  
and the forces of adversity become harmless.  
They do not lose their power,  
only their power to harm.

The sage, too, does no harm,  
and so he is not harmed.  
Virtue flows unimpeded.

## Sixty-One

A country becomes great by lying low,  
like the delta of a great river.  
The confluence of the realm.  
The mother of the world.

The female conquers the male by stillness.  
Being still, she takes the lower position.

A great country conquers a small country  
by taking the lower position.  
A small country conquers a great country  
by merging with it.

Thus, the great country conquers by yielding,  
the small country conquers by being absorbed.

The great country needs more people.  
The small country needs greater purpose.  
Each gets what it needs.

It is proper for greatness to yield.

## Sixty-Two

Tao is the ground of the ten thousand things.  
It is the refuge of the good man,  
and the guardian of the bad.

Fine speech can buy high rank.  
Good deeds can earn respect.  
Should one without them be abandoned?

Therefore, on the day the son is crowned,  
and the three ministers named,  
do not send gifts of jade and teams of horses.  
Remain still, and offer Tao.

Why has Tao been honored since ancient times?  
“Seek and you shall find, transgress and you will be forgiven.”  
Is this not the reason?

Above all else, observe Tao.

### **Sixty-Three**

Perform not-doing.  
Work without motive.  
Savor what has no flavor.

Regard the small as great, the few as many.  
Repay injury with compassion.

See simplicity in the complex.  
See greatness in small gestures.  
Confront the difficult while easy.  
Do great things in small increments.

The sage does nothing great,  
but great things are accomplished.

Easy promises are easily broken.  
Things taken lightly become difficult.  
The sage regards nothing lightly,  
therefore, nothing is difficult.

## Sixty-Four

That which is still is easy to contain.  
What has not yet begun is easy to prevent.  
The fragile is easily broken.  
The minute is easily dispelled.

See things before they emerge.  
Attend to them before they grow out of control.

A tree trunk that fills a man's arms  
begins as a tiny shoot.  
A terrace nine stories high  
begins with a basket of dirt.  
A journey of a thousand miles  
begins underfoot.

Those who strive meet defeat.  
Those who grasp lose their grip.  
The sage does nothing, and never fails.  
He has nothing, and never loses.

Failure often comes on the verge of success.  
Be as careful in the end as the beginning,  
and there will be no failure.

The sage desires no-desire.  
He does not value wealth.  
He learns by not thinking.  
He restores to others what has been lost.

He helps the ten thousand things return to original nature,  
but does not interfere.

## Sixty-Five

The ancient observers of Tao did not teach it to others.  
They let them remain simple and unknowing.  
People are difficult to deal with when they think they know.

Leaders who think they know are a curse to those they lead.  
Leaders with a simple heart are a blessing to all.

Both are manifestations of the Source.  
Knowing the Source is a Virtue.  
Virtue is mysterious, profound, far reaching.  
Reaching far, it returns to itself, and is complete.



## Sixty-Six

Rivers rule valleys, and seas rule rivers  
because they take the lower position.

The sage is elevated by placing himself below others.  
He leads by leaving himself behind.

When he assumes high position,  
the people do not feel his weight.  
When he rules, they do not feel threatened.  
The realm rejoices, and never tires of his presence.

Because he does not contend,  
nothing stands against him.

## Sixty-Seven

Everyone agrees the Tao I teach is great,  
yet unlike everything else.  
Indeed, if it were not singular, it would not endure.

I hold three treasures close:  
The first is unconditional regard for all.  
The second is being content with little.  
The third is not placing myself before others.

From compassion comes courage.  
From contentment comes an open heart.  
From humility comes the capacity to lead.

Daring without mercy,  
charity without generosity,  
ruling without modesty –  
this is the way of death.

Attacking with compassion,  
you are victorious.  
Defending with compassion,  
you are impregnable.

What heaven favors, it infuses with compassion.

## **Sixty-Eight**

A good general is not aggressive.

A good warrior is not wrathful.

A skillful conqueror does not instigate battle.

A skillful employer serves those under him.

This is the virtue of not contending.

This is mastering the strength of others.

This is being in accord with the principles of heaven.

## Sixty-Nine

Skillful warriors have a saying:  
“Do not move first, play the guest.  
Do not move forward an inch, retreat a foot.”

This is called advancing without moving.  
Reaching without showing one's arms.  
Capturing without attacking.  
Doing battle without weapons.

There is not greater mistake than underestimating the enemy.  
Underestimating the enemy,  
I risk losing everything of value.

Thus, when equal opponents are matched,  
the one aware of sorrow will prevail.

## Seventy

What I teach is easy to understand and practice,  
yet no one understands it or puts it to practice.

My words are from the Source.  
My actions are those of the ancestor.  
People do not understand this.  
Therefore, they do not understand me.

Those who see me as I am are rare.  
Those who seek to follow my teachings are few.

The sage wears coarse clothing,  
but carries jade in his pockets.

## **Seventy-One**

To know that you do not know is clarity.  
To think that you know is sickness.

Being sick of sickness, one attains clarity.  
The sage is sick of sickness.  
Therefore, he is clear.

## **Seventy-Two**

When people do not respect power,  
disaster is on the horizon.

Do not limit their space.  
Do not disrupt their lives.  
Do not oppress them,  
and they will not tire of you.

The sage knows himself, but does not claim knowledge.  
He loves himself, but does not feel important.  
He lets go of that, and chooses this.

### Seventy-Three

A courageous and reckless man will kill or be killed.  
A courageous and careful man will preserve life.  
Of the two, which is beneficial, and which brings harm?  
Who knows what heaven favors.  
Even the sage is unsure.

The way of heaven does not contend, yet overcomes.  
Does not speak, yet converses.  
Without being summoned, it comes of its own,  
unhurried, and according to plan.

The net of heaven is vast.  
Though the mesh is wide, nothing slips through.



## **Seventy-Four**

If people are not afraid of death,  
why threaten them with death?

If people are in constant fear of death,  
and if being unruly means you will be killed,  
who would dare be unruly?  
Who would dare kill him?

There is always a Lord of Death.  
Trying to do his job is like taking the place of an artisan.  
He who tries to carve like a master carpenter  
rarely avoids being cut.

## **Seventy-Five**

Why are the people starving?  
The government takes their grain for taxes.  
Therefore, they are starving.

Why are the people rebellious?  
The government interferes in their lives.  
Therefore, they are rebellious.

Why do the people ignore the gravity of death?  
They are consumed by the intensity of life.  
Therefore, they ignore the gravity of death.

One who is not consumed by life  
is better off than one who values it.

## Seventy-Six

A man is born supple and soft.  
At death, he is rigid and hard.  
The ten thousand things, the grass, the trees,  
while living are tender and pliant.  
In death, they are dry and withered.

The hard and unbending are companions of death.  
The soft and yielding are companions of life.

Thus, an inflexible army is easily defeated.  
An unbending tree is easily broken.

The hard and strong are laid low.  
The soft and yielding are raised up.

## Seventy-Seven

The way of heaven, is it not like the stringing of a bow?  
The high end is lowered, the low is raised up.  
If the string is too long, it is shortened.  
If the string is too short, it is lengthened.

The way of heaven takes from the excessive,  
and gives to the insufficient.  
The way of man is different.  
Those with too much take from those who have too little.

Who keeps just enough, and gives the rest to the world?  
Only observers of Tao.

The sage works without expectations,  
achieves without taking credit.  
He does not desire to seem worthy.

## Seventy-Eight

In all the world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.  
Yet, for overcoming the hard and strong, it is unequaled.

The pliant overcomes the unbending.  
The submissive overcomes the unyielding.  
Everyone knows this, but no one puts it into practice.

Therefore, the sage says:  
He who takes on the suffering of the world is fit to rule it.  
One who accepts the evils of the world as his own  
is a king under heaven.

Truth is often paradox.

## **Seventy-Nine**

When bitter quarrels are settled, enmity is sure to remain.  
What can be done?

A man of virtue pays his debts, but does not exact his due.  
He fulfills his obligations, but makes no demands.

The Tao of heaven plays no favorites.  
It flows with Virtue.

## **Eighty**

Let the state be small.  
Let the people be few.  
Though they have equipment to arm ten battalions,  
they do not do it.  
They take death seriously, and do not venture far.

They have ships and carts,  
but there is no place they want to go.  
They have armor and weapons,  
but they are not displayed.

Men return to knotting rope.  
They enjoy their meals, and are comfortable in their clothes.  
They are content in their homes, and happy with their lives.

Though the neighboring state is so close,  
you can hear the cocks and dogs,  
they leave each other in peace as they grow old and die.

## **Eighty-One**

Truth is not eloquent.  
Eloquence is not truth.  
Wise men do not try to persuade.  
Whoever tries to persuade is not wise.

One who knows, claims unknowing.  
One who claims knowledge, does not know.

The sage does not acquire.  
He bestows what he has on others,  
and always has more.  
The more he gives, the greater his abundance.

The way of heaven is to give without harm.  
The way of the sage is to serve without striving.



# **The Book of Ecclesiastes**

**A Translation by Bart Marshall**

## **Chapter One**

1:1

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem:

1:2

“Vanity of vanities,” saith the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.”

1:3

What profit has a man for all his labors under the sun?

1:4

One generation passes away and another generation comes,  
but the earth abides forever.

1:5

The sun also rises and the sun goes down,  
and hastens to the place from whence it arose.

1:6

The wind goes toward the south and turns about to the north.  
It whirls continually, and returns again according to its circuits.

1:7

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full.  
Unto the place from whence rivers come, there they again return.

1:8

Everything is wearisome beyond description.

The eye cannot be satisfied by seeing.

The ear cannot be filled with hearing.

1:9

That which has been, is that which shall be.

That which is done, is that which shall be done.

There is nothing new under the sun.

1:10

Is there anything of which it can be said, “See, this is new”?

Anything that has not already been in the ages before us?

1:11

There is no remembrance of things past.

Neither shall there be any remembrance of things today  
by those who live after us.

1:12

I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

1:13

With all my heart and wisdom, I applied myself  
to searching out the truth of all things that are done under heaven.  
God has given this sore travail to the sons of man to keep them occupied.

1:14

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun,  
and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

1:15

That which is crooked cannot be made straight.  
That which is not there cannot be numbered.

1:16

I communed with my heart, saying, "Lo, I have come to great estate,  
and have gained more wisdom than all who ruled before me in Jerusalem.  
Yea, my heart has absorbed great wisdom and knowledge."

1:17

I gave over my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly.  
And I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

1:18

For in much wisdom is much grief,  
and he who increases his knowledge, increases his sorrow.

## Chapter Two

2:1

I said in my heart, “Very well, I will seek pleasure and enjoy myself.”  
But this also proved to be meaningless.

2:2

I said of mirth, “It is madness,” and of pleasure, “What is gained by it?”

2:3

I gave myself over to wine – with wisdom yet guiding me –  
and even tried living foolishly.  
I wanted to know how man might best spend his short life on earth.

2:4

I created great works. I built great houses. I planted great vineyards.

2:5

I planted gardens and orchards, with all kinds of trees and fruits.

2:6

I made collection pools for water, to water the flourishing groves.

2:7

I acquired servants and maidens, and servants were born into my house.

2:8

I possessed numerous flocks and herds,  
greater than all who ruled in Jerusalem before me.  
I gathered for myself silver and gold, and the treasure  
of many kings and provinces. I had men singers and women singers,  
and musicians of all kinds, and many beautiful concubines.  
I had all the delights of men.

2:9

I became great, far greater than all who ruled in Jerusalem before me.  
Even so, my wisdom remained with me.

2:10

Whatever my eyes desired, I did not deny them.  
I withheld from myself no pleasure,  
for my heart rejoiced in all my labors, and this was my reward.

2:11

Then I looked upon the works my hands had wrought,  
and on the labor I had struggled to perform, and behold,  
all was vanity and vexation of spirit – a chasing after wind –  
and there was nothing under the sun to be gained by it.

2:12

So, I decided to look directly at wisdom, and madness, and folly.  
Else, what further can a man do after he's become king,  
other than more of that he has done before.

2:13

I saw that wisdom excels folly, by as far as light excels darkness.

2:14

I saw that the wise have eyes in their heads, while fools walk blind.  
Yet I also perceived that the same fate awaits them all.

2:15

And I asked myself, "If what befalls a fool is the same as what befalls me,  
how then was I more wise?" And my heart answered, "This also is vanity.

2:16

There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool,  
for that which now is, shall all be forgotten in the days to come.  
How does the wise man die? The same as the fool."

2:17

And so I came to hate life. Everything under the sun was grievous to me –  
nothing but vanity, and vexation of spirit, and chasing after wind.

2:18

Yea, and I hated all the works I had labored at,  
for I must leave them to him who comes after me.

2:19

Who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?  
Yet he shall have rule over all the work I have done in my wisdom.  
This also is vanity.

2:20

And my heart began to despair of all the labors I performed under the sun.

2:21

For here is a man who labored with wisdom, knowledge, and equity,  
yet one who has done nothing for it, will have the fruits as his heritage.  
This also is vanity. And a great evil.

2:22

What profits a man for all his toil and vexation of heart, with which he labors under the  
sun?

2:23

For all his days are sorrows, and his travail, grief.  
Even at night his heart cannot rest. This also is vanity.

2:24

There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink,  
and find enjoyment in his labors. I saw that these pleasures were of God.

2:25

For who can eat his food or enjoy his pleasures more than I?

2:26

God gives wisdom, and knowledge, and joy to those who please him.  
To the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth,  
so that he can take it from him, and give to those who are good in his eyes.  
This also is vanity, and vexation of spirit, and chasing after wind.

## Chapter Three

3:1

To everything there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under heaven.

3:2

A time to be born, and a time to die.  
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

3:3

A time to kill, and a time to heal.  
A time to break down, and a time to build up.

3:4

A time to weep, and a time to laugh.  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

3:5

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together.  
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.

3:6

A time to get, and a time to lose.  
A time to keep, and a time to cast away.

3:7

A time to rend, and a time to sew.  
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

3:8

A time to love, and a time to hate.  
A time of war, and a time of peace.

3:9

What profits a man from all his struggles?

3:10

I have seen the work God has given to the sons of men to occupy them.

3:11

He has made everything perfect in its season,  
but he has not given man knowledge of his purpose,  
nor of his plan from beginning to end.

3:12

I know now that there is nothing better for a man  
than to rejoice and do good in his life.

3:13

Every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the fruits of all his labor.  
It is the gift of God.

3:14

I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever.  
Nothing can be added to it or taken from it.  
God does this so that men shall come to revere him and his ways.

3:15

That which has been, is now. That which is yet to be, has already been.  
To God, what is, what was, and what will be are not different.

3:16

Moreover, I saw that in the places where there should be justice,  
there is wickedness, and in places where there should be righteousness,  
there is wickedness there as well.

3.17

I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,  
for there is a time for every purpose, and for every work.

3.18

I saw that things are as they are so that God might test the hearts of men,  
and reveal to them that they are but beasts.

3.19

For that which befalls the beasts, befalls the sons of men.  
The death of one is the same as the death of the other.  
They all have one spirit. Man has no preeminence over the beasts.  
This also is vanity.

3.20

All go to one place. All come from dust, and to dust they all shall return.

3.21

How can anyone say that the spirit of man goes upward,  
and the spirit of beasts goes downward to the earth?

3.22

Therefore, I perceived that there is nothing better for a man  
than to rejoice in his own works each day. That is his portion.  
For who can say what might come after this?

## Chapter Four

4:1

Again, I looked at all the injustices done under the sun.  
I beheld the tears of those who were oppressed,  
and they had no comforter. On the side of their oppressors  
there was power, but they, too, had no comforter.

4:2

Therefore, I deemed the dead, who have already died,  
more fortunate than the living, who are yet alive.

4:3

But more fortunate than either is one who has never existed,  
who has not seen the evil works done under the sun.

4:4

Again, I saw that all man's labor and achievement stems from his desire  
to be envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

4:5

But the fool who merely folds his hands together, consumes his own flesh.

4:6

Better is a handful of quietness,  
than two fists full of travail and vexation of spirit.

4:7

Then I saw another vanity under the sun.

4:8

This is the man alone, with no companion, no children, no brethren,  
yet there is no end to all his labor for he is never satisfied with his wealth.  
He never thinks, "For whom do I labor, and deprive my soul of good now?"  
This also is vanity, and a sore travail.

4:9

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor.

4:10

And if one falls, the other will lift up him up.  
But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help.

4:11

If two lie together, then they have heat. But how can one be warm alone?

4:12

A man alone can be overpowered by another, but two can withstand him.  
Three is even better. A three-cord braided rope is not easily broken.



4:13

Better a poor and wise youth,  
than an old and foolish king who will no longer listen to counsel.

4:14

The poor and wise youth may come to reign though he has been in prison,  
while he who was born to reign may become poor.

4:15

I considered all the living who walk under the sun,  
and saw them stand with the young king in the old king's stead.

4:16

There is no end to all the people he rules,  
but those who come later do not delight in him.  
Surely this also is vanity, and vexation of spirit, and chasing after wind.

## Chapter Five

5:1

Guard your steps when you enter the house of God.  
Be more ready to hear than to offer a fool's sacrifice,  
for fools know not that they do evil.

5:2

Do not be rash with your mouth, nor hasty in your heart  
to utter things before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth,  
therefore, let your words be few.

5:3

Dreams come from the multitude of thoughts.  
A fool's speech is known by its multitude of words.

5:4

When you make a vow unto God, defer not to pay it,  
for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay that which you have vowed.

5:5

It is better to not vow, than to vow and not pay.

5:6

Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin,  
so that you have to tell the angel it was an error.  
Why cause God to be angered by your words  
and destroy the works of your hands?

5:7

The multitude of dreams and many words arise in emptiness.  
Fear God.

5:8

When you see oppression of the poor, and corrupt perversion of justice  
in a local province, understand that the higher officials know,  
and also the higher officials over them.

5:9

The bounty of the earth profits all.  
The king himself is served by the fields.

5:10

He who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver,  
neither shall he who loves wealth be satisfied with increase.  
This also is vanity.

5:11

When goods increase, so do the numbers of those who consume them.  
What benefit is there to the owner except to behold them with his eyes?

5:12

The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much.  
But the over-abundance of the rich will not let him rest.

5:13

For there is a sore ill I have seen under the sun,  
namely, hoarding riches harms the owner.

5:14

Moreover, those riches can perish by misfortune,  
and if he has fathered a son, there is nothing left for him.

5:15

As he came forth from his mother's womb, so shall he leave,  
naked as he came. Nothing of all his labors shall he take with him.

5:16

And this also is a sore ill, that in all ways as he came, so shall he go.

5:17

What profits a man for all his chasing after wind,  
if all his life he eats in darkness, fear, sorrow and wrath?

5:18

Behold, I have seen that it is good and comely for one to eat and drink,  
and to enjoy the good of all his labors on earth  
for whatever days of his life God gives him. This is his reward.

5:19

If God gives a man riches and wealth, and the power to enjoy them –  
to take his reward and rejoice in his labor – this is a gift from God.

5:20

And he shall not much consider the number of his days,  
because God has given him joy in his heart.

## Chapter Six

6:1

There is an evil I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

6:2

God gives a man riches, wealth and honor, so that he wants for nothing and has all he desires, yet God does not give him the power to enjoy it, but rather a stranger gets to enjoy it. This is vanity, and a grievous ill.

6:3

Even if a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, if his soul is not filled with goodness, and no one mourns at his funeral, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.

6:4

For the stillborn comes in vain and departs in darkness, and his name shall ever remain in darkness.

6:5

Moreover, he has never seen the sun, nor ever known anything. Therefore, he has greater rest than the living,

6:6

who, though he live two thousand years, does not enjoy goodness. Do not all go to the same place?

6:7

All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet his appetite is not satisfied.

6:8

What has the wise man more than the fool?

What does the poor man gain by knowing how to conduct himself in life?

6:9

Better to enjoy what you have than always wanting more. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit, like chasing wind.

6.10

Everything that happens was already determined, and what a man is, was already known. He has no power over the mighty One.

6.11

Since more words and more things only increase the vanity of life, what is best for man?

6.12

Who knows what is good for man in all the days of his vain life, through which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what comes after him under the sun?

## Chapter Seven

7:1

A good name is better than precious ointment.  
The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

7:2

It is better to visit the house of mourning than the house of feasting,  
for that is the end of all men, and the living should take it to heart.

7:3

Sorrow is better than merriment.  
It may sadden your face, but your heart is made stronger.

7:4

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning.  
The heart of the fool is in the house of mirth.

7:5

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than the song of fools.

7:6

The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns in a cooking fire.  
This also is vanity.

7:7

Extortion makes a wise man foolish.  
A bribe corrupts the heart.

7:8

The end of a matter is better than the beginning.  
Better to be patient in spirit than proud.

7:9

Do not be quick to anger. Anger lodges in the bosom of fools.

7:10

Do not ask, "Why were former days better than these?"  
Such a question does not come from wisdom.

7:11

It is good to be wise with your inheritance.  
By it there is profit to those who see the sun.

7:12

Wisdom provides protection, and money provides protection.  
The advantage of wisdom is that it gives life to those who have it.

7:13

Consider the work of God.

Who can make straight what he has made crooked?

7:14

In the day of prosperity be joyful. In the day of adversity,  
remember that God sends one as well as the other.

No man can know what comes next for him.

7:15

I have seen all things in this vain life. A just man may perish  
in his righteousness, while an evil man lives long in his wickedness.

7:16

Do not be overly righteous, or overly wise. Why destroy yourself?

7:17

Neither be overly wicked or foolish. Why die before your time?

7:18

It is good that you take hold of the one without letting go of the other.  
He who fears God shall escape it all.

7:19

Wisdom strengthens a wise man  
more than ten mighty men strengthen a city.

7:20

There is no man on earth so righteous  
that he does only good and never sins.

7:21

Do not listen to the conversations of others,  
lest you hear your servant curse you.

7:22

For you know in your heart that you have likewise cursed others.

7:23

All these have I proven by wisdom.  
I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me.

7:24

That which is far from us, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

7:25

I applied my heart to know, to seek out wisdom and the reason of things,  
to know that wickedness is folly, and folly is madness.

7:26

More bitter than death is the woman who is a trap,  
whose heart is a snare, whose hands are like chains.  
A man who pleases God shall escape her, but the sinner shall be captured.

7:27

“This is what I have found,” saith the Preacher,  
“after looking for meaning in everything.

7:28

My soul continually searches but finds not.  
I have found only one true man in every thousand,  
and in all the thousands I have not found one true woman.

7:29

This alone I have found: God made man upright,  
but he is the victim of his own inventions.”

## Chapter Eight

8:1

Who is as the wise man? Who knows the meaning of things?  
Wisdom makes a man's face shine, and changes its harsh features.

8:2

Keep the king's commandment as you would an oath to God.

8:3

Do not hasten to leave his presence, and do not stand for an evil cause,  
for a king does whatever he pleases.

8:4

The word of a king has power and authority.  
Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

8:5

Obey his commands and you shall meet no harm.

8:6

A wise man's heart discerns the right time and the right way,  
for to every purpose there is right timing and right action.

8:7

Man's ignorance of this brings him great misery,  
for he knows not what shall be, or when it shall come.

8:8

No one has the power to hold onto the spirit of life.  
No one has power over his day of death. There is no discharge from that war,  
and your evil shall certainly not save you.

8:9

This I have seen as I applied my heart to every work under the sun:  
When one man rules over another with evil intent, he hurts himself.

8:10

I have seen wicked men buried after being carried from a holy place,  
while those who lived righteously were forgotten in their city.  
This also is vanity.

8:11

Men do evil because punishment for evil is not executed quickly.

8:12

Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, his days may be prolonged.  
Yet I know that it shall be well in the end for those who fear God,

8:13

and that it shall not be well for the wicked because they do not fear God.  
Though their days may be prolonged, they shall be lived in shadow.



8:14

There are just men who are punished as if they be wicked,  
and wicked men who are rewarded as if they be righteous.  
This also is vanity.

8:15

So, I commend mirth, because a man has no better thing on earth,  
than to eat, drink, and be merry.  
That shall sustain him for all the days God gives him under the sun.

8:16

When I earnestly applied my heart to find wisdom, and to know  
that which is done on the earth – even going without sleep for days –

8:17

I beheld that the works of God can never be understood by man.  
No matter how diligently a man seeks this knowledge, he shall not find it.  
Yea, even if a wise man thinks he knows, he does not.

## Chapter Nine

9:1

I have considered all this in my heart,  
and concluded that the righteous and the wise,  
and all their works are in the hands of God alone.  
No man knows whether love or hatred awaits him.

9:2

All things come alike to all. The same fate awaits the righteous  
and the wicked, the clean and unclean, the one who sacrifices  
and the one who sacrifices not. As is the good man, so is the sinner.  
As is he who swears an oath, so is he who shuns oaths.

9:3

This is an evil under the sun, that there is one fate for all.  
But then, the hearts of men are also full of evil.  
Yea, while they live their hearts are occupied with madness.  
Then they die.

9:4

But for all who are alive there is hope.  
As they say, "A living dog is better than a dead lion."

9:5

For the living know they shall die, but the dead know nothing.  
Neither have they anymore reward. Even the memory of them is lost.

9:6

Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy has perished.  
They shall no more have a portion in anything under the sun, forever.

9:7

Go your way. Eat your bread with joy. Drink your wine with a glad heart.  
For God has already accepted your works.

9:8

Let your garments always be white. Let your head lack no ointment.

9:9

Live joyfully with the wife you love for all the days of your vain life,  
which God has given you under the sun – for all the days of your vanity.  
That is your portion in this life, and your labor under the sun.

9:10

Whatever you lay your hand to, do it with all your might.  
For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge,  
nor wisdom in the grave to which you are headed.

9:11

And again, I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift,  
nor the battle to the strong. Neither is bread given to the wise,  
nor riches to men of intelligence, nor favor to men of skill.  
Time and chance happens to them all.

9:12

Man knows not his time. As fish are taken in a net,  
as birds are caught in a snare, so is a man caught in an evil moment,  
when disaster suddenly befalls him.

9:13

This lesson I have also learned under the sun, and it seemed great to me:

9:14

There was a small city with few men in it. And a great king came against it,  
and besieged it, and built great bulwarks around it.

9:15

Now, a poor wise man lived in this city, and by his wisdom alone  
he saved the city, yet no one remembered this poor man.

9:16

I have said, "Wisdom is better than strength." Yet, because of his poverty  
a poor man's works are forgotten, and his wisdom despised.

9:17

The words of a wise man heard in quiet  
are greater than the shouts of a ruler among fools.

9:18

Wisdom is better than weapons of war,  
but one sinner destroys much good.

## Chapter Ten

10:1

A few dead flies cause the oil of the perfumer to send forth a stinking odor.  
So does a little folly in him with a reputation for wisdom and honor.

10:2

A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left.

10:3

Even when a fool walks about, he has no sense of himself.  
His foolishness is on display for all to see.

10:4

If the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, do not quit your post.  
Quiet composure pacifies great offences.

10:5

There is an evil I have seen under the sun,  
an error that proceeds from the ruler:

10:6

Fools are set in great dignity, while the rich are set in low places.

10:7

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants.

10:8

He who digs a pit shall fall into it.  
He who cuts through a hedge shall be bitten by a serpent.

10:9

He who quarries stones shall be hurt by them.  
He who chops wood shall be endangered by it.

10:10

If the iron is blunt and you do not sharpen the edge,  
you must use more strength. Wisdom is a profitable guide to success.

10:11

If the serpent bites before enchantment, what use is the charmer?

10:12

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious.  
The mouth of a fool will swallow him up.

10:13

He begins by talking nonsense, and by the end is speaking madness.

10:14

A fool is full of many words.

A man cannot know what shall be, or what shall come after him.

But who can tell that to a fool?

10:15

The labor of fools wears them out.

They cannot even find their way back to town.

10:16

Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child

and your princes feast until morning!

10:17

Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles,

and your princes eat in due season – for strength not for drunkenness!

10:18

By much slothfulness the building decays.

Through idleness of the hands the roof collapses.

10:19

A feast is made for laughter, wine makes one merry,

and money is the answer to all things.

10:20

Curse not the king, not even in thought, and curse not the rich in your bed.

For a bird of the air may carry your voice, and the matter be told on wings.

## Chapter Eleven

11:1

Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days it shall return.

11:2

Store your wealth in seven, even eight places,  
for you know not what evil shall come upon the earth.

11:3

If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.

If a tree falls toward the south or toward the north,

in the place where it falls, there it shall be.

11:4

He who observes the wind will never sow.

He who regards the clouds will never reap.

11:5

Just as you know not the way of the wind,

nor how the bones of a child grow in a mother's womb,

so you know not the works of God, who creates all.

11:6

In the morning sow your seeds, and in the evening do not rest your hands.

For you know not which field shall prosper,

or whether they both shall be equally good.

11:7

Truly, light is sweet. It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.

11:8

However many years you live, rejoice in them all, knowing also

there will be many days of darkness. Everything that comes is vanity.

11:9

Rejoice, O young man, and let your heart delight in the days of your youth.

Follow the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

But know, too, that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

11:10

Remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh.

Childhood and youth are vanity.

## Chapter Twelve

12:1

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,  
before the days of affliction come upon you, and the years draw nigh  
of which you say, "There is no more pleasure in life."

12:2

Rejoice while the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars  
are not darkened, and the clouds do not return after rain.

12:3

Remember him also in the day when the keepers of the house tremble  
and strong men bow themselves, when the grinders cease because  
they are so few, when those who look out of windows see only darkness,

12:4

when the doors are shut in the streets, when the sound of grinding  
is a whisper, when you listen for the voice of birds,  
but these daughters of song have been brought low.

12:5

You shall be afraid of heights, and fear shall mark your all ways.  
The almond tree shall flower white upon your head, your grasshopper  
shall drag its feet, and even the caper berry cannot arouse its desire.  
For you are going to your long home, and mourners shall walk the streets.

12:6

Yea, remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed,  
before the golden bowl is broken, before the pitcher  
is shattered at the fountain, before the pulley is broken at the well.

12:7

For then your dust shall return to the earth from which it came,  
and your spirit shall return unto God.

12:8

"Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher. "All is vanity."

12:9

Because the Preacher was wise, he continually gave people knowledge.  
He taught with wisdom and integrity, and composed many proverbs.

12:10

The Preacher sought diligently to find the right words to teach  
uprightness and truth.

12:11

The words of the wise are like sharp goads guiding sheep.  
Their sayings are as secure as nails driven home by master craftsmen.  
And they all come from the One Shepherd.

12:12

Beware, my son, of anything beyond this wisdom.  
There is no end of books, and much study wearies the flesh.

12:13

Let us hear then the conclusion of the whole matter:  
“Revere God and keep his commandments. This is the whole duty of man.”

12:14

For God shall bring your every work into judgment – every secret thing –  
whether it be good, or whether it be evil.



# Verses Regarding True Nature

by Bart Marshall

## One

Life goes nowhere and leaves no trace.  
It does not begin.  
It does not end.  
All arises new in the Moment.

Forms and sensations arise in the Moment.  
Hopes and plans arise in the Moment.  
Memories and artifacts arise in the Moment.

All there is, could be, or could have been  
arises in the Moment.  
There is only the Moment.

Sit quietly and stop talking to yourself.

## Two

The realm of heaven and earth  
is created by Awareness.  
Universe unfolds in the direction of looking.

Thought creates objects of thought.  
Desire creates objects of desire.  
Mind creates objects of mind.

Telescopes create galaxies.  
Microscopes create atoms.  
Travel creates distant lands.

All arise in Awareness.

Awareness is the Source.  
Awareness is the Realm.  
Awareness is the Witness.

The multitudes appear to be aware,  
but then, so do actors on a screen.  
What can be said for sure?  
Awareness is always and only Here.

Nothing exists without You.  
Admit what you see!

### **Three**

When the body dies,  
The world dies with it.  
Awareness remains ever-present.

The world arises new in the Moment, as always.  
Nothing is disturbed.

### **Four**

Stories begin and end.

Cling to your story  
and you will go down with the ship.

Take one step back  
and the story cannot touch you.  
You are done with beginnings and endings.

Though the ship goes down,  
there is no one aboard.

### **Five**

In the Moment, can there be duration?  
In the Moment, is movement possible?

The Moment is still, eternal.  
Time and motion cause no ripple.  
It encompasses the far reaches  
and holds them close.  
It is the sole realm of Awareness.

There is no escaping it.

## **Six**

The Moment is singular, indivisible, complete.

Images swirl, but the Moment is unmoved.  
Time passes, but the Moment goes nowhere.  
Forms arise and vanish,  
but the Moment is unchanged.

The Moment is eternally still,  
yet it cannot be held.  
It is all there is or will be.

It does not lead to other moments.

## **Seven**

Absolute, Tao, God, One ...  
The Source of All has many names.  
Names are meaningless.  
It is the realm of no-name.

Here, Universe emanates ...  
Here, Awareness alone exists ...  
Here, Everything and No-thing are the same ...

Here.

## **Eight**

The sage is not different from other men.

Cold wind feels cold.  
Things fall apart.  
Life grants him no special mercies.

This is fine with him.

## Nine

Looking out, Universe is displayed  
What creates Universe?  
Looking.

Looking in, Source is perceived.  
What creates Source?  
Looking creates Source creates Looking.

## Ten

To know God is impossible.  
Nothing stands apart to behold It.  
Can you step outside Totality  
and take its measure?

To be God is easy.

Stop ignoring the obvious.  
Stop pretending to be something else.

## Eleven

The sage does not seek students.  
Neither does he avoid them.  
One who seeks students  
needs something from them.  
One who avoids them ignores their need.

When students appear,  
the sage is happy to teach.  
When students are absent,  
the sage is happy to be.  
The sage is available but not insistent.  
He serves but does not strive.

If the student does not seek the teacher,  
he must think he already knows.  
One who thinks he already knows  
is a hopeless case.

## **Twelve**

There is no reason to be busy.  
The sage needs little.

Those who want much work hard.  
Nothing is ever enough.  
Though achievement and wealth  
may fill their lives,  
their minds are never at rest.

The sage goes about doing nothing.  
His glance creates the world.  
What more is there to do?

## **Thirteen**

The world of appearances is substantial.  
Senses tell you it is real.  
It is easy to be fooled.

The world of appearances is seductive.  
Desire pulls you deep.  
It is easy to get lost.

The world of appearances is prison.  
Its offerings are shackles.  
Freedom seems impossible.

Look close ...  
It is woven of emptiness!

## **Fourteen**

The Absolute does not punish ignorance  
or reward enlightenment.  
Ignorance is its own punishment.  
Enlightenment leaves no one to reward.

The ignorant grab all they can  
and are never satisfied.  
They hold tight to their lives,  
and cannot rest for fear of dying.

The sage sees nothing worth grabbing.  
Life is nothing special.  
Death takes nothing from him.

## **Fifteen**

What is the path to the Absolute?  
To a wave, which way is the ocean?

In stillness the wave subsides.  
What more can be said?

Mind makes waves, as is its nature.  
When mind stops, questions end.  
There is no need for answers.

The wise student avoids thinking.  
He retreats to the close realm  
and waits in silence.

## **Sixteen**

To seek knowledge is the nature of the mind.  
This is the cause of ignorance.  
Without the idea of knowledge,  
where is ignorance?

In the world of appearances,  
knowledge is useful.  
It is useful to know how to cook and knot rope.  
Ignorance of practical matters  
is overcome by practice.

In the realm of the Absolute,  
knowledge is unknown.  
Nothing to know, no one to know it.  
Ignorance of the Absolute  
is overcome by surrender.

## Seventeen

There is a saying: “Out of sight, out of mind.”  
This is common experience.

“Out of mind, out of existence” is also true,  
but few understand this.

The sage is like an infant.  
He sees the world as Himself  
and does not deny it.

## Eighteen

In the world of appearances,  
the ten thousand things arise and vanish.  
Death is the price of birth.

The sage is not immune.  
He finds himself in the world  
and does not mind.

Joy and contentment fill his days.  
Beauty and perfection unfold with every step.  
His life is one of good fortune.

In the end, it will not be missed.

## Nineteen

This name that claims you, to what does it refer?  
Thoughts, sensations, reflections in mirrors ...  
Nothing much to stand on.

Without thoughts, what are you?  
Without senses, what are you?  
With no reflections cast, what are you?

Stop seeking to glorify your name.  
Stop seeking to be seen as worthy.  
Stop seeking to be known as the knower.

The things you know are not worth knowing.  
Worms will eat the thing that knows them.

## **Twenty**

The multitudes fear death  
and try not to think about it.  
When it approaches, panic ensues.

The sage sees death as the companion of life.  
He holds it in high regard,  
and treats it like a childhood friend.

Death inhabits his thoughts.  
Death informs his actions.  
Death walks at his side.

When deciding what's worth doing,  
he asks the advice of death.

## **Twenty One**

The sage moves in and out of life.

Assuming name and story,  
he rides the wind of loss and gain,  
blame and praise,  
contentment and discontent.

Name and story released, he rests in stillness.

The multitudes know only name and story.  
They are at the mercy of the wind,  
and know nothing of stillness.

The one with a name is an imposter.  
The One with no name is Here.



## Twenty Two

There is a saying:  
“No matter how far you’ve gone  
in the wrong direction, turn back.”  
The sage does not teach this.

In a realm of no dimension,  
can there be a wrong direction?  
In a realm of no dimension,  
is movement possible?

There is nowhere you came from,  
nowhere you can go.  
You are where you are,  
no matter how much you travel.

Don’t waste time repenting.  
Make no effort to be worthy.  
Give no thought to absolution.

Drop everything and make good your escape.

## Twenty Three

Shadows merge, colors fade.  
Darkness has its day but will not last.  
Not will the absence of darkness that follows.

Listen, without straining to hear.  
Look, without asking to see.  
Seek, without hoping to find.  
Illusion can’t hold up to scrutiny.

To scrutinize, let go.  
Let go of everything.

## **Twenty Four**

When the body dies, where is the world?  
When you awaken, where is the dream?

Without ears, what is there to hear?  
Without eyes, what is there to see?

Look deep.  
Listen close.  
Without You there is no Creation.

Examine the Moment – there is no time.  
Examine the Moment – there is no breath.

## **Twenty Five**

Without leaves and eaves, what sound is wind?

Stillness holds the possibility of movement.  
No-thing holds the seed of heaven and earth.

Void becomes Source.  
Source becomes Awareness.  
Awareness becomes the ten thousand things.  
All happens Now, for the first time, forever.

How is this possible?  
It's not.  
And yet – here it is!

But why care how Universe emanates?  
This knowledge is not good for anything.  
The sage abides in unknowing  
and is unconcerned.

## **Twenty Six**

The world of appearances  
is complex, bewildering.  
It defies explanation.  
Theories and myths are offered,  
but there is no agreement.

The multitudes are not bothered by this.  
They choose something to believe  
and talk endlessly as if they know.

The Source of appearances  
is simple, self-evident.  
Explanation is not needed or possible.  
Though obvious, it is eternal mystery.

The sage is struck dumb by this.  
Unknowing is all that he claims.  
He is reluctant to break silence.

Belief and ignorance go hand in hand.  
The more you think you know,  
the farther you are from Truth.

## **Twenty Seven**

The formula for enlightenment is simple.

Inquire within.  
Pray for Truth.  
Wait in silence.

Inquiry, prayer, no-thought.

Practice with unbending intent  
and indifference to outcome.  
Heaven will roll at your feet.

Don't say you haven't been told.

## **Twenty Eight**

What do you know for sure?

If one is honest, only this: "Awareness is."  
Maybe not even that.

The world within Awareness is elusive.  
Some say it's real and vast.  
Some say it's a dream in a moment.

The witness of Awareness is in doubt.  
Some say it's a person who lives.  
Some say it's the deathless One.

The source of Awareness is a mystery.  
Some say it arises at birth.  
Some say no one's been born.

Nothing is as it seems.  
That much is certain.

## **Twenty Nine**

Why is there something rather than nothing?  
Awareness.

Presence, Light, Aliveness, God ...  
It had many names.  
Timeless, ever-new –  
it can be called Eternal Life.  
There is no reason or explanation.  
It just is.

It is not ancient – it arises only Now.  
It is not distant – it is nearer  
than you are to yourself.

It is the substance of Void  
and Everything is made of it.

## **Thirty**

The sage knows nothing, yet is always certain.

Certain of what?  
The sage does not know.

Unknowable mystery infuses his being,  
but nothing is in doubt.

He is free of knowing, therefore he is certain.

## **Thirty One**

The world of appearance is ruthless.

The more you pursue it,  
the more enticement it offers  
The more you renounce it,  
the more insistent it becomes.

Indifference is the only refuge.

## **Thirty Two**

A fearful man is defeated by fear.  
A courageous man acts in spite of it.  
Without fear, courage cannot arise.  
What use is courage to the fearless?

The cause of fear is the unknown.  
Unknown outcomes, unknown realms ...  
Death is the great unknown.  
The Truth is also unknown, therefore it is feared.

To seek Truth in earnest takes courage.  
The way will pass through death.  
The one who seeks it will not survive.  
On this, the great masters are unanimous.

# One Hundred Two Haiku

by Bart Marshall

1

Motionless heron  
in still morning shallow.  
Death comes with no warning.

2

Startled awake, utterly still.  
I am the trees,  
roiling without wind.

3

Baiting the hook I draw  
my own blood.  
I catch a fish and let him go.

4

The dream of my self,  
no longer believed,  
continues unattended.

5

The locust tree that breaks my ax  
is where the eagle  
lights at sunset.

6

Hidden cove, old trees.  
A rotted pier, a sunken boat.  
Brown hawks circle.

7

Slack tide at noon.  
No wind, clear water.  
It is my own self holding still.

8

Always running to  
or running from,  
arriving is not possible.

9

Dark endless ocean,  
swallowing God.  
My boat is small and built by hand.

10

Tire swing, still, on the  
grandfather tree. My dead  
child's dog startles my hand.

11

Being dead, I am  
as I've been since birth.  
Life is not possible here.

12

Solitude and silence  
call me like a mother.  
Where is my answer?

13

When not sitting quietly  
doing nothing,  
I hurry to return.

14

In silence, my own voice  
begs me to listen.  
Where is it calling from?

15

Not knowing who I am,  
I live life as if.  
Death is not fooled by this.

16

Straining to hear emptiness,  
I am impatient  
with interruptions.

17

Snow trees, morning stove.  
Deep in old firewood  
burrowed insects burn awake.

18

Something inside strains  
to speak and be heard.  
What is it I have to say?

19

The pen, the hand, exist  
within me. The thoughts,  
the words, come of their own.

20

Against all odds,  
it seems, I am.  
No reason for it, yet here it is.

21

Quietly being with  
nothing to do.  
What could be better than this?



22

The silent witness,  
not doing, not caring,  
is whom the world obeys.

23

That face looking out  
of the mirror I hold –  
who does he think he is?

24

Fresh sheets,  
the sound of spring rain.  
For a moment I forget I'm dying.

25

Advance into fear.  
Fight for surrender.  
Defeat is your victory.

26

Always, the relentless insistence  
of the Obvious  
to be known.

27

Sudden calm.  
There is no reason to believe  
I will live out the day.

28

Every moment the world  
is created from scratch.  
This is not a metaphor.

29

There was never a time  
before this.  
I have never lived except ... Now!

30

Experiences are so brief.  
Does it really matter  
what they hold?

31

Abandon all words.  
Without words, what would  
there be to understand?

32

A book falls from the  
shelf and opens. It does not  
say I am chosen.

33

No memories or time.  
I hurtle through place  
on the stillpoint of Now.

34

The wonder is I am at all.  
How can I complain  
about details?

35

Good man, bad man –  
does it matter? I hope bot.  
I am the worst man I know.

36

I cross with care  
the ice-fringed stream.  
Falling is unwise so far from home.

37

After a hard-fought defeat,  
an all-day rain.  
Forgiveness brings light.

38

Old dying friend,  
arms thin as fingers,  
asks how my children are doing.

39

Hidden gestures of  
secret kindness  
dissolve worlds and create anew.

40

Forgive your enemy,  
but do not let on.  
Victory will court you.

41

Just now, alone,  
cloistered by rain,  
on a porch overlooking water ...

42

Old cove of childhood, here again.  
At the moment of looking,  
fish jump.

43

To fight or bow  
is seldom clear. I ask,  
“Which will strengthen my heart?”

44

Swirling trees with no wind.  
Agreement  
after long misunderstanding.

45

A good man deflects credit,  
shoulders blame.  
Why do so few embrace this?

46

The thrill of existence  
is unknown  
to the Creator of all things.

47

Dark morning house,  
quiet open windows.  
Coffee, and the scent of Truth.

48

Pancakes and eggs  
in an all-night diner.  
The waitress touches my hand.

49

How strange he is,  
this one who thinks he's me.  
Where does he go when I sleep?

50

When it is time to  
write and no poetry comes,  
you must change your life.

51

Spring days in January.  
Daffodils and spirits  
are fooled to life.

52

In stillness, songs  
of the ten-thousand things  
sung by a lone mockingbird.

53

Night wind at the window,  
an old lover's voice.  
I make my confession.

54

Cold sun, thin winter sky.  
Shards of razor-edged light  
assemble the world.

55

Night winter rain,  
my daughter hours late.  
The sudden phone stops my heart.

56

Long black night of unstoppable  
thought. Sleep never comes.  
Dawn grays the sky.

57

Bare woods, sharp shadows.  
The lines of the world  
intermingle as branches.

58

Thinking and doing,  
I live out my scarce days.  
Ceasing, I erase death.

59

Churning out dreams,  
unearthing desires,  
the flywheel holds momentum.

60

At dawn I rise to the day.  
Night comes, it seems,  
but a few thoughts later.

61

I am, therefore thought happens.  
From Nothing, a thought,  
therefore I am.

62

For a moment of glory,  
years of work.  
Better to glory in work.

63

Fearful and worried, I am old.  
Lost in laughter,  
I am yet unborn.

64

Distilled thought, frozen glimpse,  
plain statement of truth –  
Haiku are not hidden.

65

Good friends no longer young.  
How grateful we've become  
for the privilege.

66

When I die,  
the world dies with me.  
In consciousness alone it exists.

67

Unending fear, lust,  
toil and devouring.  
Hell is not elsewhere.

68

After death we are remembered,  
vaguely,  
by others who soon perish.

69

Thinking of the battle conjures fear.  
When fighting the battle,  
there is neither fear nor thinking.

70

The aching beauty  
of this poignant world  
is felt only by contrast.

71

Life dissipates  
and is forgotten.  
How can it be of consequence.

72

True gratitude of heart  
does not bargain,  
or ask for further mercies.

73

The dam has burst.  
I no longer look outside myself  
for anything.

74

The world is not viewed  
through the one with eyes.  
To see clearly, what a thing!

75

Knowledge breeds with  
knowledge and multiplies.  
Truth awaits your emptiness.

76

Sitting quietly, doing nothing.  
Thoughts come or don't come  
as they please.

77

Without technique, only sit.  
Meditation  
teaches meditation.



78

Choose carefully your words.  
Even great poems and sutras  
pollute silence.

79

Masters say, "Look within."  
But where is within  
when there is no without.

80

It is not two,  
the stark Absolute,  
the softness of oblivion.

81

As everything I am and know  
perishes,  
who is the witness?

82

Religions feed ignorance  
in God's name.  
The Truth is best sought elsewhere.

83

Dark morning window,  
lighted room. Looking out  
I see only within.

84

Sudden emptiness of mind.  
He has vanished,  
the one who is not God.

85

Simplify desires.  
Fulfillment comes from  
recognizing you are full.

86

The pain I endure,  
and enjoy,  
is all in the service of vanity.

87

Warm winter wind, so unexpected.  
I forget my complaints,  
and breathe.

88

Child of my child,  
so perfect and true, what brings  
you to these arms and heart?

89

Do without expecting.  
Receive without claiming.  
Everything comes.

90

Empty mind,  
gazing between, not at,  
sees Nothing with great clarity.

91

Advancing age means little.  
I am growing old,  
but becoming young.

92

To stop completely  
and only be  
flings wide the doors of perception.

93

The one who stands behind  
and merely watches  
has taken center stage.

94

Father, forgive me.  
I am but a sick and whining child  
in your house.

95

Quiet days are best.  
There is a tyranny to  
special occasions.

96

Too busy for haiku,  
I write one anyway.  
It looks much like this.

97

No history or future.  
All there ever was or will be  
is Here.

98

Open window,  
trees faint-tipped red.  
Just this, and winter is forgotten.

99

So many lists  
of things to fix and do,  
so few moments of clear life.

100

If the world is not real,  
which it is not,  
why bother to improve it?

101

Once awake,  
does it really matter whether  
the dream was good or bad?

102

Grey morning, wet spring trees.  
The seeking of Truth  
is what keeps it hidden.