

# 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.