

Wisdom, Liberation, and Non-attachment

Osho: [Enlightenment: The Only Revolution](#), Chapter 1

Janak asked: Oh lord, how does one attain to wisdom? How does liberation happen? And how is nonattachment attained? Please tell me this.

Ashtavakra replied: Oh beloved, if you want liberation then renounce the passions as poison, and take forgiveness, innocence, compassion, contentment and truth as nectar. You are neither earth, nor air, nor fire, nor water, nor ether. To attain liberation, know yourself as the witnessing consciousness of all these.

If you can separate yourself from the physical body and rest in consciousness, then this very moment you will be happy, at peace, and free of bondage.

You are not a brahmin or other caste, you are not in any of the four stages of life, you are not perceived by the eyes or other senses. Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy.

Oh expansive one, religion and atheism, happiness and misery -- all are of the mind, they are not for you. You are not the doer nor the enjoyer. You have always been liberated.

We are embarking on a rare journey. Man has many scriptures, but none are comparable to the Gita of Ashtavakra. Before it the *Vedas* pale, the *Upanishads* are a mere whisper. Even the *Bhagavadgita* does not have the majesty found in the *Ashtavakra Samhita* -- it is simply unparalleled.

The most important thing is that neither society, nor politics, nor any other institution of human life had any influence on the statements of Ashtavakra. There are no other statements anywhere that are so pure, transcendental, and beyond time and space. Perhaps that is why Ashtavakra's Gita, the *Ashtavakra Samhita*, has not had much impact.

Krishna's Bhagavadgita has been very influential. The first reason is that Krishna's Gita is a synthesis. He is more concerned with synthesis than with truth. The desire for synthesis is so strong, that if necessary Krishna doesn't mind sacrificing the truth a little.

Krishna's Gita is a hodgepodge containing everything; hence it appeals to everyone, because there is something in it for everyone. It is difficult to find any tradition whose voice is not found in the Gita. It is difficult to find anyone who does not take solace from the Gita. But for such people Ashtavakra's Gita will prove very difficult.

People love Krishna's Gita because it is very easy to extract one's own meaning from it. Krishna's Gita is poetic: in it two plus two can equal five, two plus two can also equal three. No such tricks are possible with Ashtavakra. With him two plus two are exactly four. Ashtavakra's statements are statements of pure mathematics. There isn't the least possibility for poetic license here. He says things as they are, without any sort of compromise.

Reading Krishna's Gita, a devotee extracts something of which he can make a belief,

because Krishna spoke on *bhakti*, devotion. The *karma yogi* extracts his belief because Krishna has spoken on karma yoga, the yoga of action. The believer in knowledge finds what he wants because Krishna has spoken on knowledge as well. Somewhere Krishna calls devotion the ultimate, somewhere else he calls knowledge the ultimate, again elsewhere he calls karma yoga the ultimate.

Krishna's statements are very political. He was a politician, a perfect politician. Just to say he was a politician is not right; he was a shrewd politician, a real diplomat. In his statements he considered and included many things. This is why the Gita suits everyone, why there are thousands of commentaries on the Gita.

No one is concerned with Ashtavakra, because to accept Ashtavakra you are going to have to drop yourself -- unconditionally.

You cannot bring yourself along. Only if you stay behind can you come near him. With Krishna you can bring yourself along. With Krishna there is no need to transform yourself. With Krishna you can fit just as you are.

Hence the founders of each tradition have written commentaries on Krishna's Gita -- Shankara, Ramanuja, Nimbaraka, Vallabha -- everyone. Each has extracted his own meaning. Krishna has said things in such a way as to allow multiple meanings; hence I call his Gita poetic. You can draw out any meaning you like from a poem.

Krishna's statements are like clouds surrounding you in the rainy season: you see in them whatever you want. Someone may see an elephant's trunk, someone sees the whole body of *Ganesha*, the elephant god. Someone may not see anything. He will say: "What nonsense! They are clouds, vapor -- how is it you see forms in them?"

In the West, psychoanalysts use the ink blot test: just pour some ink onto blotting paper and ask the person to say what he sees in it. The person looks carefully and sees something or other. There is nothing there, only an ink stain on blotting paper -- randomly thrown, not thrown with any design, just poured from the bottle. But the person looking at it finds something or other. What he finds is in his mind, he has projected it.

You must have seen lines made by rain falling on a wall. Some-times a man's face is seen, sometimes a horse's face is seen. You project onto it what you want to see. In the dark of night, clothes hanging on a line seem like ghosts.

Krishna's Gita is just like this -- you will be able to see whatever is in your mind. So Shankara sees knowledge, Ramanuja sees devotion, Tilak sees action -- and each returns home in a cheerful mood thinking that what Krishna says is the same as his belief.

Emerson has written that once a neighbor came and borrowed the works of Plato from him. Plato lived two thousand years ago and is one of the world's rare, unique thinkers. Weeks later Emerson reminded him: "If you've read the books please return them." When

the neighbor returned them Emerson asked: "How did you like them?"

The man said: "This man Plato's thoughts are in complete agreement with mine. I felt many times: how has this man come to know my thoughts?" Plato lived two thousand years earlier and this fellow suspects that Plato has stolen his thoughts!

This kind of suspicion often arises with Krishna too. Centuries have passed and commentaries on Krishna keep on coming. Each century finds its own meaning, each person finds his own meaning. Krishna's Gita is like an ink blot...it is the statement of the perfect politician.

You cannot extract any beliefs from Ashtavakra's Gita.

Only if you drop yourself as you move into it, will Ashtavakra's Gita become clear to you. Ashtavakra's message is crystal clear. You won't be able to add even a small bit of your own interpretation to it. Hence people have not written commentaries on Ashtavakra's Gita. There is no scope for writing a commentary; there is no way to distort or twist it. Your mind has no chance to add anything. Ashtavakra has given such an expression that no one has been able to add or take anything from it, even though centuries have passed. It is not easy to give such a perfect expression. Such skill with words is very difficult to come by.

This is why I say we are starting off on a rare journey.

Politicians have no interest in Ashtavakra. Not Tilak, not Aurobindo, not Gandhi, not Vinoba: none of them has any interest, because with Ashtavakra they cannot go on playing their own games. Tilak's interest was to inspire nationalism. He wanted the whole country to get involved in action -- and Krishna's Gita was helpful. Krishna is ready to lend a shoulder to anyone. Whosoever wants to steady themselves on his shoulder and shoot their bullets -- Krishna is ready. The shoulder is his, you can take the opportunity to hide behind it. And shooting from behind his shoulder makes even bullets appear significant.

Ashtavakra doesn't allow anyone to even rest their hand on his shoulder. So Gandhi is not interested, Tilak is not interested, Aurobindo, Vinoba have nothing to do with him, because they cannot impose anything. There is no room for politics -- Ashtavakra is not a political being.

This is the first thing you need to keep in mind...such crystal clarity, an expression like an open sky with no cloud in sight, you cannot see any forms. Only when you drop all forms, become disidentified with all forms and get connected with the formless, will you be able to comprehend Ashtavakra.

If you really want to understand Ashtavakra you will have to descend into the depths of meditation.

No commentary, no interpretation will be of any help.

And for meditation Ashtavakra does not ask us to sit and chant: "Ram, Ram." He says that anything you do will not be meditation. How can there be meditation when there is a doer? As long as there is doing, there is illusion. As long as the doer is present, the ego is present. Ashtavakra says becoming a witness is meditation. Then the doer disappears; you remain only as watcher, nothing but the observer. When you are nothing but the observer then only is there *darshan*, seeing; then only is there meditation, then only is there wisdom.

Before we enter the sutras, it is necessary to understand a few things about Ashtavakra. Not much is known as he was neither a social nor political man, so no historical record exists. Only a few incidents are known -- and they are just wondrous, hardly believable. But if you understand them deeply the significance will be revealed.

The first incident happened before Ashtavakra was born. Nothing is known of what came afterwards, but this is an incident while he was still in the womb. His father, who was a great scholar, would recite the Vedas every day while Ashtavakra listened from the womb. One day a voice came from the womb saying: "Stop it! This is all nonsense. There is no wisdom whatsoever in this. Mere words -- just a collection of words. Is wisdom found in scriptures? Wisdom is within oneself. Is truth found in words? Truth is within oneself."

Naturally his father was enraged. First of all he was a father and on top of that a scholar. And his son hidden in the womb was saying such things! Not even born yet! He exploded in anger, became engulfed in fire: the father's ego had been hit. And a scholar's ego...he was a great pundit, a great debater, knowledgeable in scriptures.

In anger he uttered a curse: when born, the boy would be deformed; his limbs would be bent in eight parts. Hence his name: Ashtavakra means one whose body has eight bends. He was born crippled in eight places; eight places, hunchbacked like a camel. In a rage his father deformed his son's body.

There are other stories like this....

It is said that Buddha was born standing up. His mother was standing under a tree; she gave birth standing and he was born standing up. He didn't fall to the ground but started walking! He took seven paces and on the eighth he stopped and proclaimed the four noble truths -- that life is suffering...! He took just seven steps on earth and proclaimed that life is suffering, that it is possible to be free from suffering, that there is a way to become free of suffering, that there is a state free of suffering -- the state of *nirvana*.

About Lao Tzu the story is that he was born old, that he was born eighty years old, that he remained in the womb eighty years. Since he had no desire to do anything, he had no desire to leave the womb. Since he had no wants, he didn't want to come into the world

either. When he was born he had white hair, an old man of eighty years!

Zarathustra's story is that he burst out laughing as soon as he was born.

But Ashtavakra has defeated them all. These are all events after birth; Ashtavakra made his full statement before he was even born.

These stories are significant. These stories contain the essence, the essential treasure of the life of these masters.

Buddha's story contains the essence of what he taught his whole life.... Buddha taught the eightfold path, so he took seven steps and stopped on the eighth. There are eight parts in all; the last step is that of right *samadhi*, and only in that state of *samadhi* is the whole truth of life known. So he proclaimed the four noble truths.

Lao Tzu was born old. People live eighty years, still they don't have the understanding Lao Tzu had at birth. Do you see people becoming intelligent just by getting old? Getting old and becoming intelligent are not synonymous. At a ripe old age hair may only be white because it has been bleached by sun.

Lao Tzu's story simply says that if there is urgency, intensity in one's life, then what might take eighty years can happen in one moment.

If one's understanding is intense it can happen in one moment, and without pure intelligence it does not happen even in eighty years.

Zarathustra laughed right at birth. Zarathustra's religion is the only religion in the world that can be called a laughing religion...very earthy, a religion of the earth. That is why people of other religions don't see Parsees as being religious. They see them dancing, singing, happy -- Zarathustra's religion is a laughing religion, a life-affirming religion, not life-negative. There is no place for renunciation in it. Have you ever seen a Parsi *sadhu* stark naked, having renounced all, standing in the hot sun, sitting facing a fire like a Hindu sannyasin? No, the Parsi religion has no interest in torturing and causing trouble to the body. Zarathustra's whole message is this: if you can realize godliness through laughing, then why realize it crying? When you can reach to the temple dancing, why unnecessarily sow thorns on your path? When you can go with flowers, then why follow ways of pain and misery? It is right, the legend is right, that at birth Zarathustra was laughing.

Don't look for historical facts in these stories. It is not that they happened this way -- but there is a very profound meaning in these stories.

You have a seed: when you look at the seed you can find no indication of the flowers that will grow from it. There is not even a clue of what it can be. Will it be a lotus -- blossoming in the water but remaining untouched by it, dancing in the rays of the sun? And the sun too may become jealous of its beauty, of its tenderness, of its incomparable

glory and grace. Its perfume will fly into the sky. Looking at the seed this cannot be known. Looking at the seed one cannot even imagine, cannot even guess. But one day it happens.

So we can think in two ways. Either we can hold tight to the seed and say: "What is not visible in the seed cannot happen in the lotus either. It is an illusion, it is a trick, it is a lie." This is the standpoint of those we call rational, skeptics. They say what is not visible in the seed cannot be present in the flower -- something is wrong. Hence a skeptical person cannot believe a Buddha, cannot accept a Mahavira, cannot embrace a Jesus, because he says he already knows them.

When Jesus came to his village he was very surprised -- the people of the village didn't bother about him at all. Jesus has said a prophet is never respected in his own country. What is the reason? Why won't the village respect its prophet? The village people have seen him as the son of the carpenter Joseph; saw him carrying wood, saw him planing wood, saw him sawing wood, saw him bathed in sweat, saw him playing and fighting in the streets. The people of the village have known him since childhood, have seen him there as a seed. How is it possible that he suddenly becomes the son of God! No, those who saw the seed cannot accept the flower. They say there must be some fraud, some cheating; this man is a hypocrite.

Buddha returned to his village. And the father...what the whole world could see, the father could not see. The world was experiencing an illumination, the news was spreading far and wide, people began coming from distant countries. But when Buddha came back to his home after twelve years, his father said: "I can still forgive you. Though what you did was wrong, you tormented us, you have certainly done a crime, I have a father's heart -- I will forgive you. The doors are open for you. Throw away this begging bowl, remove these monk's clothes. None of this will do here. Come back -- this kingdom is yours. I have become old; who is going to look after it? Enough of this childishness, now stop all this playing!"

Buddha said: "Please look at me. The one who left has not returned. Someone else has come, the one who was born in your house has not come back. Someone else is here, the seed has returned as a flower. Look deeply."

The father said: "You are going to teach me? I have known you since the day you were born. Go and deceive others; go and lecture other people and delude them -- you cannot deceive me. I repeat again, I know you perfectly well -- don't try to teach me. I am willing to forgive you."

Buddha said: "You say you know me? I didn't even know myself before. Only recently have the rays of light descended and I have come to know myself. Excuse me, but I have to say that the one you saw is not me. Whatever you saw is not me. You saw the outer shell, but did you look inside me? I was born out of you but you did not create me. I came via you as a traveler comes via a certain route, but what do the traveler and the road have to do with each other? Suppose that tomorrow the road says: 'I know you, your being has

come from me' -- just as you are saying.

"I existed before you. I have been on this journey for many lives. I certainly passed through you, as I have passed through others. Others too have been my father, others too have been my mother. But my being is completely separate."

It is very difficult, extremely difficult: if you saw the seed you cannot believe the flower is in front of you.

One way of looking is that of the distrustful, the rational, the skeptical. They say: "We know the seed so this flower is not possible. We know the mud -- how can a lotus come from it? It is all false -- a dream, an illusion. He must have fallen into a kind of hypnosis. Someone deceived him; some magic, some spell..."

This is one way. The other is the way of trust -- of the lover, the devotee, of the heart filled with empathy. He sees the flower and from the flower begins traveling backwards. He says: "When the flower has become so fragrant, when such radiance appears in the flower, when there is such beauty in the flower, when such fresh innocence is seen in the flower, then certainly it must also have been present in the seed -- because it is not possible that what is present in the flower was not already in the seed."

It is not that these stories actually happened. Those who saw flowers bloom in Ashtavakra concluded that what has happened today must have also been present yesterday -- it was hidden, screened, behind a veil. What is here in the end must have been present at the beginning also. What is seen at the moment of death must also have been present at the moment of birth; otherwise how could it arise?

So one way is to look backwards from the flower, and the other way is to look forward from the seed. If you look carefully their essence is the same, their foundation is the same, but what a difference -- like between earth and sky! The one who knows the seed says: "How can what is not in the seed be in the flower?" This is his argument. The one who knows the flower says the same thing. He says: "What is in the flower should be in the seed too." They have the same argument. But each has a different way of looking.

It is a great hindrance. I have been asked: "In your childhood many people studied with you -- in school, in college -- but they are not to be seen here." How can they be? It is a great hindrance for them. They cannot believe what they see, it is tremendously difficult for them. Just yesterday somebody sent me a newspaper from Raipur. Shri Harishankar Parsai has written an article against me. He knows me, he knows me from my college days. He is the leading Hindi satirical writer. I always respect his writing. In the article he writes: "There must be something wrong with the atmosphere of Jabalpur. Here only swindlers and charlatans are born -- like Osho, Mahesh Yogi and Munindra."

He listed three names. I must thank him that at least I am number one on his list! He considers me this worthy. He didn't completely push me out of his mind. It is not that he has completely forgotten me. But his difficulty is natural, clear and simple. I can

understand his point. It is impossible -- he saw the seed; how can he trust the flower? And those who have seen the flower have difficulty trusting in the seed.

So the life story of all great men can be written from two angles.

Those who are against him begin the journey from his childhood, and those who are for him begin the journey from the end and go backwards to childhood. Both are right in a way. But those who start with childhood and move towards the end will miss the truth. Their right approach is suicidal. Those who travel from the end and move backwards are blessed. They will get much with no effort...much that those thinking the first, the skeptics way, will not get.

Now not only am I wrong, but because of me the very air of Jabalpur is wrong! There must be something wrong in the environment. But I want to tell him that Jabalpur has no power over me, whether the environment is good or bad. I don't have much connection with Jabalpur; I was only there for a few years. Mahesh Yogi was also there a few years; he also has no connection.

Both of us are connected with another place. The people of that place are so sleepy that even now they don't know anything about us. Mahesh Yogi's and my places of birth are very near to each other; both of us were born near Gadawara. He was born in Chichli, I was born in Kuchwada. If the environment is bad, it must be there. Gadawara should be suffering for it -- or receiving the blessing. Jabalpur should not be dragged into this.

But what arguments the mind creates!

Whoever hears Ashtavakra's story will immediately cry "False, impossible!" Of course those who wrote this story know that no one ever speaks from the womb. They are only saying that what finally appears must have been present in the womb. The voice that later blossomed must have been present in some deep place in the womb; otherwise from where did it blossom, from where did it come? Do things just come out of the void?

There is a reason behind everything. We may not be able to see it but it must have been present. All these stories indicate this.

The second incident known about Ashtavakra happened when he was twelve years old.

Only these two incidents are known. The third is his Ashtavakra Gita, or as some call it, the Ashtavakra Samhita. When Ashtavakra was twelve years old, Janak hosted a huge debating conference. Janak was a king, and he invited the pundits of the whole country to debate on the scriptures. He had one thousand cows placed at the palace gate and had the horns of the cows plated with gold and decorated with jewels. He proclaimed: "Whoever is victorious, shall take possession of these cows."

It was a great debate. Ashtavakra's father also participated. As dusk was falling, the

message came to Ashtavakra that his father was losing. He had already defeated all the others, but he was about to be defeated by a pundit named Vandin. Receiving this message Ashtavakra went to the palace.

The assembly was already underway; the debate was in its final stage and the decisive moment was fast approaching. His father's defeat was a complete, foregone conclusion -- he was on the very edge of defeat.

The pundits saw Ashtavakra as he entered the royal court. They were all learned scholars. His body was bent and deformed in eight places: he had just to move and anyone would start laughing. His very movement was a laughing matter.

The whole meeting broke into laughter. Ashtavakra also roared with laughter. Janak asked: "Everyone else is laughing. I can understand why they laugh, but why did you laugh, my son?"

Ashtavakra said: "I am laughing because truth is being decided in this conference of *chamars*, cobblers" -- the man must have been extraordinary. "What are all these chamars doing here?"

A deep silence fell over the meeting. Chamars? Shoemakers?

The king asked: "What do you mean?"

Ashtavakra said: "It is simple and straightforward. They only see skin, they don't see me. It is difficult to find a man more pure and simple than me, but they don't see this; they see a bent and deformed body. They are leather-workers, they judge by the skin. Your Majesty, in the curve of a temple is the sky curved? When a pot is smashed, is the sky smashed? The sky is beyond change. My body is twisted, but I am not. Look at the one within. You can't find anything more straight and pure."

It was a very startling declaration. There must have been pindrop silence. Janak was impressed, astounded: Absolutely right, why had he gathered a crowd of chamars there? He became repentant, he felt guilty that he too had laughed.

That day the king couldn't manage to say anything, but the following day, when he was out on his morning ride, he saw Ashtavakra on the way. Janak dismounted from his horse and fell at his feet. The day before, in front of everyone, he couldn't find the courage. Then he had said: "Why do you laugh, my son?" Ashtavakra was a boy of twelve years, and Janak had considered his age. This day he didn't notice the age. This day he got down from his horse and fell at Ashtavakra's feet, spread-eagled in prostration.

He said: "Please visit the palace, and satisfy my eagerness for the truth. Oh lord, be so gracious as to come to my home. I have understood. I couldn't sleep the whole night. You spoke truly: what depth of understanding have those who recognize only the body? They are debating the being, but attraction and repulsion for the body still arise; hate and

attraction still arise. They are looking at death while talking of the deathless. I'm blessed that you came and disturbed me, that you broke my sleep. Please come to the palace."

Janak had the palace decorated magnificently. He welcomed Ashtavakra and seated him on a golden throne -- this twelve-year-old Ashtavakra. Then he put his questions to him. The first sutra is Janak's inquiry. Janak asked and Ashtavakra explained. Beyond this, nothing is known about Ashtavakra. And there is no need to know more, it is more than enough.

Diamonds are not many; only pebbles and rocks are so common.

A single diamond is enough.

These are two small incidents. One before birth: a voice from the womb with the proclamation: "What madness have you fallen into? Confused by scriptures...by words? Wake up! This is not wisdom, this is all borrowed. It is all snares of the mind, not experience. There isn't the slightest bit of reality in it. How long are you going to delude yourself?"

And the second incident: the pundits in the palace laughing and Ashtavakra's saying that in life there are two ways of seeing: one is to see being and the other is to see skin.

Chamars see skin, the wise see being.

Have you noticed? A shoemaker doesn't look at your face, he sees only your shoes. Actually a shoemaker can know everything about you just by looking at your shoes: how your economic situation is, if you are successful or a failure; how your luck is.... The condition of the shoes tells him. Your autobiography is written on your shoes -- the shoemaker can read it. If the shoes are shiny, if the shoes are clean and new, the shoemaker is happy to meet you. For him your shoes are the proof of your being. A tailor looks at clothes. Seeing how you dress he understands your situation. All have their own narrow vision. Only one full of his own being sees being. He has no fixed vision. He has only seeing, *darshan*.

One more small incident -- it is not about Ashtavakra but about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, but Ashtavakra is involved in it.... After this we will enter the sutras.

When Vivekananda came to Ramakrishna his name was still Narendranath -- later on Ramakrishna named him Vivekananda. When he came to Ramakrishna he was extremely argumentative, an atheist, a rationalist. He wanted proof for everything.

There are some things that have no proof -- it cannot be helped. There is no proof for godliness: it is, and yet there is no proof. There is no proof for love. It is, and yet there is no proof. There is no proof for beauty. It is, and yet there is no proof.

If I say: "Look how beautiful these ironwood trees are," and you say: "I don't see any

beauty -- trees are just trees. Prove it!" It will be difficult. How can one prove they are beautiful? To see beauty you need a sense of beauty -- there is no other way. You need eyes -- there is no other way.

It is reported that Majnu said: "To know Laila you will need the eyes of Majnu." It is true; to see Laila there is no other way.

The king of his area called Majnu and said. "You are mad! I know your Laila -- an ordinary girl, jet-black -- nothing special. I feel sorry for you, so here are twelve girls from my palace -- they are the most beautiful women of the country. You can chose any one you like. Seeing you cry, my heart also cries."

Majnu looked at them and said: "There is no Laila among them. They cannot even be compared to Laila, they are not even worth the dust of her feet."

The king said: "Majnu, you are mad...!"

Majnu said: "That may be so, but I must tell you one thing: to see Laila you will need the eyes of Majnu."

Majnu is right. To see the beauty of trees you need an eye for art -- there is no proof. If one wants to know love, one will need the heart of a lover -- there is no proof. And godliness is the collective name of all the beauty, all the love and all the truth of this universe. For it an unwavering consciousness is needed, a witnessing is needed...where no word remains, no thought remains, no wave arises...where no mental dust remains and the mirror of consciousness is perfectly pure. What proof?

Vivekananda told Ramakrishna: "I want proof. If God exists then prove it."

Ramakrishna looked at Vivekananda. This youth had great promise, great potential; much was ready to happen within him. There was a great treasure with which Vivekananda was unacquainted. Ramakrishna looked into, peered into, the past lives of this youth. Vivekananda had come carrying a great treasure, a great treasure of integrity, but it was suppressed under his logic. Seeing this, a cry of anguish and compassion must have risen from Ramakrishna's heart. He said: "Forget all this. We'll talk about proof and such things later on. I have become a little old, I have difficulty reading; you are young, your eyes are still strong -- read from the book lying there." It was the Ashtavakra Gita. "Read a little out loud to me."

It is said that Vivekananda saw nothing wrong in this, this fellow was not requesting anything special. He read three or four sutras and every cell began trembling. He started to panic and he said: "I cannot read on."

Ramakrishna insisted: "Go ahead and read. What harm can there be in it? How can this book hurt you? You are young, your eyes are still fresh, and I am old, it is hard for me to

read. I must hear this book -- read it out to me."

It is said that Vivekananda kept on reading aloud from the book, and disappeared in meditation. Ramakrishna had seen great potential in this youth, Vivekananda, a very promising potential, like that of a *bodhisattva* who one day or other is destined to become a buddha. Sooner or later, no matter how much he wanders, he is approaching buddhahood.

Why did Ramakrishna ask that he read the Ashtavakra Gita out loud to him? Because there is no purer statement of truth.

If these words penetrate you, they will start awakening your sleeping soul.

These words will thrill you. These words will fill you with ecstasy. These words will shock you.

With these words the revolution can take place.

I have not chosen the Ashtavakra Gita just like that. Nor could I have chosen it earlier -- I have chosen it after a long wait, after much consideration. There was a time when I talked on Krishna's Gita because there was a crowd around me. For a crowd the Ashtavakra Gita has no meaning. With great effort I have got rid of the crowd.

Now there are a few Vivekanandas here.

Now I want to talk to those who have great potential.

I will work with those few on whom work can bring results. Now I will cut diamonds. This chisel is not to be destroyed on pebbles and stones. This is why I have chosen the Ashtavakra Gita: I have chosen it because you are ready.

The first sutra.

Janak asked: Oh lord, how does one attain to wisdom? And how does liberation happen? And how is nonattachment attained? Please tell me this.

"Tell me, Oh lord. Please explain it to me." To a boy of twelve King Janak says: "Oh lord, *Bhagwan*. Please explain. Give some understanding to an unknowing person like me. Awaken an ignorant person like me."

Three questions are asked....

How does one attain to wisdom? Naturally, we might wonder, why does he need to ask? There are books filled with these things. Janak also knew this.

What books are filled with is not wisdom. It is simply the dust wisdom leaves behind --

ash. When the flame of wisdom burns, ash is left behind. Ash goes on accumulating, and it becomes scripture. The Vedas are ashes; once they were burning coals. Vedic sages burned them in their souls and ash was left behind. Then the ashes were collected, compiled and systematically organized.

It is like people collecting the ashes and bones when a man's body has been burned. They call these "flowers". People are very strange. They never called the man a flower when he was alive, but after burning him they collect his bones saying that they have collected the flowers. Then they preserve them, keep them in a casket. While the man was living they never respected him as a flower; while he was living they never even looked at him as a flower. When he dies...man is insane! -- they call his bones, his ashes, flowers.

In the same way, when a Buddha is alive you do not listen. When a Mahavira walks among you, you get angry. It seems that this man is destroying your dreams or is interfering with your sleep: "Is this any time to be woken up? Just as my dreams have started coming true, just as success is entering my life, just as my chances are getting better, as the arrow is hitting the target -- now this fellow comes and says everything is meaningless! Just as I win the elections and the way is open to get into power, this great man comes along, and says it is all a dream, it has no meaning, that death will come and take everything. Don't talk like this! When death comes we will see, but don't even bring up such things now."

But when Mahavira dies or Buddha dies we collect all their ashes. We create the Dhammapada, we create the Vedas out of them, and then we offer flowers of worship.

Janak also knew that the scriptures are filled just with information. But he asked: "*How does one attain to wisdom?*" Because no matter how much you know, wisdom is not attained. You can go on gathering more and more knowledge, learn the scriptures by heart, become parrots, memorize each and every sutra, let the complete Vedas be imprinted in your memory -- but still there will be no wisdom. "*How does one attain to wisdom? How does liberation happen?*" He asks because what you call wisdom, knowledge, binds you instead -- how can this be liberation? Wisdom is that which liberates you. Jesus has said: "The truth shall make you free."

Wisdom is that which liberates you -- this is the criterion of truth.

Pundits don't appear to be liberated, they look enslaved. They talk about liberation but they don't look free. They seem to be bound with a thousand fetters.

Have you ever observed: your so-called religious people seem to be more enslaved than you. You may have a little freedom, but your saints are more stuck than you. They are just blind followers of tradition. They cannot move freely, they cannot sit freely, they cannot live freely.

A few days ago a message came to me from some Jaina *sadhvis*, Jaina nuns, saying they want to meet me, but their disciples do not allow them to come. This is a very strange

situation! A sadhvi means one who no longer bothers about society, one who has started a journey into the unknown wilderness, one who has said: "Now I have no need of either your respect or your honor." But the nuns and monks say: "The disciples do not allow us to come." They say: "Don't even think of going there. If you go there we will close our doors on you." What kind of seekers are they? This is just dependency, slavery. This is completely backwards. It means that instead of the sadhvi transforming the disciple, the disciple is transforming the sadhvi.

A friend came and told me that a Jaina sadhvi reads my books, but only in secret. She also tries to listen to my tapes, but again secretly. And if by chance anyone mentions my name in her presence, she sits there pretending she has never heard of me. Is this liberation?

Janak asked: "How does liberation happen? What is liberation? Explain to me the wisdom which liberates."

Freedom is man's most important longing. Achieve everything, but if you are still not free, it hurts. Attain everything, but if freedom is not attained, you have not attained anything.

Man wants the open sky, unbounded. This is man's innermost longing, most secret longing -- for a space where there are no limits, no barriers. You may call it the longing to become divine or call it the longing for *moksha*, liberation. In Sanskrit we have chosen the right word, *moksha*. Such a lovely word does not exist in any other language. There are words like heaven, paradise, but those words don't have the melody of *moksha*. *Moksha* has a unique music. It simply means a freedom so ultimate that it has no barrier; a freedom so pure it is unlimited.

Janak asked: "*How does liberation happen? And how is nonattachment attained? Oh lord, please tell me this.*"

Ashtavakra must have looked carefully at Janak -- because this is the first thing a master does when someone inquires. He observes attentively: from what source is this inquiry arising? Why has the questioner asked something? The master's answer can be significant only if he understands clearly why the question is asked.

Remember, a person who has attained truth -- a master -- does not answer your question. He answers you.

He doesn't bother much about what you ask, he is more concerned with why you have asked, what is behind the question, the complex hidden in the unconscious -- what desire is actually hiding behind the screen of your question.

There are four types of people in the world: the wise, the seeker, the ignorant, the idiot. And there are four types of inquiry. The first inquiry is wordless -- the inquiry of the wise, the *gyani*, the one who knows. Actually the inquiry of the wise is not an inquiry at all. He knows -- nothing is left to be known. He has reached; the mind has become clear, become

calm. He has come home, he has come to a state of relaxation.

So a gyani's inquiry is not an inquiry at all. This does not mean that a gyani is not ready to learn. A gyani becomes simple, like a small child -- he is always ready to learn. The more you learn, the more readiness to learn increases. The more you become simple and innocent, the more you open to learning. Winds come and find your doors open. The sun comes and doesn't need to knock on your door. Existence comes and finds you always available.

A gyani does not collect knowledge, he simply has the capacity to know. Understand this well, because it will be useful for you. "Gyani" simply means one who is open totally to learning, who has no prejudice, who has no buffers against learning, who has no pre-planned system or structure for knowing. A gyani means a *dhyani*, one who is meditative.

Ashtavakra must have observed carefully, looked into Janak and seen this person is not a gyani, he has not attained meditation; otherwise his inquiry would be silent, there would be no words in it.

There is an incident in Buddha's life.... A fakir came to meet him; a lone ascetic came to see him, a wanderer. He came and said to Buddha: "I have no words capable of asking, I have no skill to bring what I want to ask into words. You know it already. Understand and say whatever is right for me." This is the inquiry of one who knows.

Buddha was sitting silently. He didn't say a thing. After a short time it seemed as if something happened! The man had been looking at Buddha, and now his eyes started overflowing with tears. He bowed at Buddha's feet and said: "Thank you! I am really fortunate -- you gave me what I came here for." He got up and left. His face was radiating an aura of unique splendor. He went dancing.

Buddha's disciples were confused. Ananda asked: "*Bhante*, Bhagwan. It is a mystery. First this man says: 'I don't know how to ask, I don't know in which words to ask, I don't even know what I have come to ask. But you know everything. Look at me, say whatever is needed for me.' First, this man is a mystery. Is this any way to inquire? If you don't know what to ask, then why ask at all? How can you ask? Incredible!

"But the matter doesn't end here. You were sitting silently, and you went on sitting silently. We have never seen you sit so mute. If someone asks, you answer. Sometimes it happens that someone doesn't ask and still you answer. Your compassion is always flowing. What happened that suddenly you were silent and your eyes closed? And then what alchemy happened that the man began being transformed? We saw him changing. We saw him undergoing a complete mutation. We saw ecstasy coming over him. He has gone dancing, flowing with tears, overwhelmed, ecstatic. He bowed at your feet. His fragrance has touched us too. What has happened? You didn't utter a word; how did he hear? And we are with you for so many days, for years. Is your compassion less towards us? Why don't we receive the grace you gave him?"

But remember, you get as much as you are able to receive.

Buddha said: "Listen. Horses..." He talks to Ananda about horses, because Ananda was a warrior. He was a cousin of Buddha, and from an early age was very fond of horses. He was a rider. He was a famous rider, a great competitor.

"Listen, Ananda," Buddha said, "there are four types of horses. One type will not budge an inch even if you whip it -- the most worthless of all horses. The more you whip them the more they stubbornly resist. They stand still -- as stubborn as a *hatha yogi*. If you whip them, you only provoke resistance.

"Then there is a second type of horse. If you whip them they move. If you don't whip them they won't move. At least they are better than the first.

"And there is a third type of horse. Just crack the whip -- to strike them is not necessary. Just crack the whip, the sound is enough. They are more aristocratic -- and better than the second kind.

"Then, Ananda, you must know those horses which run just by seeing the shadow of the whip. You don't even need to crack it. That man was that kind of horse: the shadow was enough."

Ashtavakra must have looked carefully.

When you come to ask me something, you yourself are a question, more important than what you ask. Sometimes you may also feel that I have answered a question you didn't ask. And perhaps you may even feel I have avoided your question, side-stepped it and answered something else. But for me your inner need is always more important, what you ask is not important -- because you yourself don't really know what you are asking, why you are asking. The answer is being given only for your need; nothing of the answer is decided by your question.

Ashtavakra must have seen that Janak is not a gyani. Is he ignorant then? No, he is not ignorant either...because the ignorant person is arrogant, he stands proudly erect. He doesn't even know how to bow down -- and this man has bowed at his feet, stretched himself full length at the feet of a twelve-year-old boy. This is impossible for the ignorant. The ignorant thinks he already knows -- who is going to explain anything to him? If an ignorant person does ask, he asks just to prove you wrong, because the ignorant presumes he already knows and wants to see whether you know or not. The ignorant person asks to test you.

Ashtavakra must have thought: "No, Janak's eyes are very clear. Even though he's a king he asked me, an unknown, unfamiliar boy of twelve years: 'Oh lord. Please explain to me....' No, he is humble, he is not ignorant. Is he an idiot then? Idiots never ask. Idiots don't have any idea that there are any problems in life."

There is a similarity between idiots and enlightened ones.

For the enlightened ones no problem remains; for idiots no problem has yet arisen. Enlightened ones have gone beyond problems; the idiots have not yet entered them. Idiots are so unconscious, how can they ask questions? Will an idiot ask: "What is wisdom?" Will an idiot ask: "What is liberation?" Will an idiot ask: "What is nonattachment?" Impossible!

And if an idiot does ask, he will ask how to fulfill his passions. If an idiot asks, he will ask how to live here a few more days. Liberation? No, an idiot asks how to make his chains golden, how to inlay his chains with diamonds. If an idiot asks, he will ask such things. Wisdom? An idiot does not imagine that wisdom can exist. He cannot accept even the possibility. He will say: "What is wisdom?" An idiot lives like a beast.

No, Janak is not an idiot either. He is a *mumukshu*, a seeker of truth. The word "mumukshu" needs to be understood. Mumukshu is the desire for liberation, the desire for moksha.

Still he has not reached liberation: he is not a gyani. He is not standing with his back towards liberation: he is not an idiot. He is not sitting stuck to any traditional ideas about liberation: he is not ignorant either. He is a mumukshu. Mumukshu means that his inquiry is simple and straightforward. It is neither corrupted by idiocy nor twisted by ignorant preconceptions. His inquiry is pure -- he asks with an innocent mind.

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

...if you want liberation then renounce the passions as poison. The word *vishaya*, passion, is very meaningful. It is derived from *visha*, poison. The meaning of *visha* is a substance which, if one eats it, one will die. The meaning of *vishaya* is that which, if we consume it, we die again and again. With passions we die again and again. With food we die again and again; with ambitions, anger, hatred, burning jealousy -- consuming these, we go on dying again and again. We have died again and again because of these.

Up until now, we haven't really known life through living, we have known only death. Our life until now...where is the flaming torch of life? There is only the smoke of death. From birth to death we are gradually dying. Are we living? We die every single day. What we call life is a continual process of dying.

We don't know life yet, how can we live? The body goes on weakening every day, strength goes on decreasing every day. Enjoyment and passion go on sucking our energy every day, go on aging us. Passions and desires are like holes, and our energy, our being, goes on flowing out through them. In the end our pail is empty -- this is what we call death.

Have you ever seen? If you throw a bucket full of holes into a well, as long as it is

submerged in water it seems to be full. Pull on the rope and lift it out of the water and already it has started emptying. It creates a great commotion. Is this what you call life? Falling streams of water -- is this what you call life? And as the bucket draws closer to your hands, it becomes more and more empty. When it reaches your hands it is empty...not a single drop of water. This is how our life is.

When a child is not born yet, he seems to be full. Just born, he starts emptying. The first day of birth is the first day of his dying. He starts emptying: one day dead, two days dead, three days dead. What you call your birthday would be better called your deathday -- it would be nearer the truth. You have been dying for one year and you say a birthday has come. You have been dying for fifty years and you say you have lived for fifty years: "Let's celebrate my golden anniversary." But you died for fifty years. Death is drawing nearer and life is receding further and further: the bucket is emptying. Do you base your thinking about life on what is receding or do you base it on what is drawing nearer? What kind of inverted arithmetic is this? We are dying every day, death keeps creeping closer.

Ashtavakra says passions are poisonous, because by indulging them we simply die. We never get any life from them.

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

Nectar means that which gives life, that which gives immortality, ambrosia -- when one has found it, one will never die again.

Then forgiveness. Anger is poison -- forgiveness is ambrosia.

Innocence. Deviousness is poison -- simplicity, innocence is nectar.

Compassion. Hardheartedness, cruelty, is poison -- kindness, compassion is nectar.

Contentment. The worm of discontent goes on eating up everything. The worm of discontent sits in the heart like a cancer. It goes on penetrating into it, it goes on spreading poison.

Contentment. Satisfaction with what is, no desire for what is not. What is, is more than enough. That it is, is more than enough. Open your eyes a little and see.

No one need impose contentment upon life. If you look attentively you will find that what you get is always more than what you need. You go on receiving what you want, you have always got what you want. If you wanted unhappiness you got unhappiness. If you wanted happiness you got happiness. If you wanted something wrong you got something wrong. Your desires have shaped your life.

Desire is the seed, and life is its harvest.

For life after life you have been getting what you desire.

Many times you think you desire one thing but receive something else. Then the error is not in what you desire, you have only chosen a wrong word for what you desire. For example, you want success and get failure. You say you failed because what you wanted was success. But he who desired success has already accepted failure. Within, he has become afraid of failure. Because of failure he desires success. And whenever he wishes for success, the idea of failure comes; the idea of failure goes on becoming stronger. Sometimes he succeeds, but he is certain to spend his journey through life in failure after failure. The mood of failure goes on deepening. It deepens so much that one day it manifests. Then you complain that you wanted success. But in wanting success, you have wished for failure.

Lao Tzu has said: "Wish for success and you will fail. If you really want success, never wish for it. Then no one can make you a failure."

You say you wanted respect, but you are getting insults. A person who wants respect has no respect for himself, yet he wants respect from others. He who has no respect for himself wants others to cover it, to hide his lack of respect. This desire for respect is the sign that you feel disrespect for yourself within. You have the feeling that you are nothing. Others should make you into something, should put you on a throne, should raise banners for you, should hoist flags in your name -- others should do something! You are a beggar. You have already insulted yourself when you wanted respect. And this insult goes on deepening.

Lao Tzu says: "No one can insult me because I don't want respect." This is attaining true respect.

Lao Tzu says: "No one can defeat me because I have dropped the very idea of winning. How can you defeat me? You can only defeat one who wants to win." It is a strange fact.

In this world those who do not desire respect receive it. Those who do not want success get it, because those who do not want success already accept that they are successful: what more success do you want? You are already honored by the being within you: what more do you want? Existence has already given you respect by giving birth to you: who else's respect do you want? Existence has given you enough glory. It gave you life. It has blessed you with eyes -- open them and see these green trees, the flowers, the birds. It has given you ears -- listen to music, to the splashing of a waterfall. It has given awareness so you can become a buddha: what more do you want? You have already been honored. Existence has certified you; who are you asking, like a beggar, for a certificate? Those who beg a certificate from you?

It is a very hilarious situation, two beggars face to face begging from each other. How can you get anything? Both are beggars. From whom are you asking respect? Who are you standing in front of? You are insulting yourself this way. And the insult will deepen.

Contentment means: Look at what you have! Open your eyes a little and see what you've already got.

This is an extremely valuable key Ashtavakra is giving. It will slowly become clear to you. Ashtavakra's view is very revolutionary, very unique. His revolution is from the very root.

Take...contentment and truth as nectar -- because one who lives in falsehood will go on becoming more false. One who tells lies, lives in lies, will naturally be surrounded by lies. His connection to life will be shattered, his roots will be cut.

Do you want roots in existence? Those roots are possible only through truth. You can be linked to existence only through authenticity and truth. Do you want to be cut off from existence? Then create a smoke screen of lies, make great clouds of lies around you. The more you become false the farther away you will be from existence.

You are neither earth, nor air, nor fire, nor water, nor ether. To attain liberation, know yourself as the witnessing consciousness of all these.

These statements are so immediate; not even an introduction. Ashtavakra has hardly uttered two sentences and meditation comes in; he begins to talk about *samadhi*, about deep meditation. One who knows has nothing except *samadhi* to share. He said two sentences first because if he had immediately started talking about *samadhi*, perhaps you would have been too startled to understand. But two sentences -- and immediately he is talking about *samadhi*.

Ashtavakra does not even take seven steps. Buddha took seven steps and on the eighth step, *samadhi*. Ashtavakra brings up *samadhi* on the very first step.

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

Let yourself relax into this truth....

To attain liberation, know yourself as the witnessing consciousness of all these.

The witness is the key. There is no more valuable key than this.

Be the observer. Whatever happens, let it happen. There is no need to interfere with it. The body is composed of earth, air, fire, water and ether. You are the lamp within by which all these -- earth, air fire, water, ether -- are illuminated. You are the observer. Go deeply into this.

...know yourself as the witnessing consciousness...

This is the most important sutra in existence. Be a witness. Wisdom will happen through it. Nonattachment will happen through it. Liberation will happen through it. The questions

were three but the answer is one.

If you can separate yourself from the physical body and rest in consciousness, then this very moment you will be happy, at peace, and free of bondage.

...*this very moment...*! This is why I say it is a revolution from the very roots. Patanjali is not so courageous as to say: "This very moment." Patanjali says: "Practice discipline within and without. Practice control of breathing, turning inwards and yoga postures. Purify. This will take innumerable lives -- then enlightenment...."

Mahavira says: "Practice the five great vows. And when innumerable lives have passed, deconditioning will happen, purification will happen. Then one will cut the bonds of karma."

Listen to Ashtavakra:

If you can separate yourself from the physical body and rest in consciousness, then this very moment you will be happy, at peace, and free of bondage.

Right here, right now, this very moment, *if you can separate yourself from the physical body, and rest in consciousness....* If you begin to see the fact: "I am not the body, I am not the doer and enjoyer: I am that one hidden within me who sees all.... When childhood came it saw childhood, when youth came it saw youth, when old age came it saw old age. Childhood did not stay, so I cannot be childhood. It came and passed, still I am. Youth did not stay, so I cannot be youth. It came and passed, still I am. Old age came, and it is also going, so I cannot be old age. How can I be that which comes and goes? I am always. The one to whom childhood comes, to whom youth comes, to whom old age comes...to whom thousands of things have come and gone. I am that one eternal, everlasting."

Like railway stations they go on changing: childhood, youth, old age, birth. The traveler keeps moving. You never think you have become one with train stations. Coming to Pune station you do not think you are Pune. When you reach Manmad you don't think you are Manmad. You know that Pune has come and gone, Manmad has come and gone. You are a traveler. You are the observer that saw Pune -- Pune came and went; who saw Manmad -- Manmad came and went. You are the one who sees.

The first thing: separate what is happening from the observer.

...separate yourself from the physical body and rest in consciousness...

There is nothing else worth doing.

Just as Lao Tzu's key sutra is surrender, Ashtavakra's key sutra is rest, relaxation. There is nothing to do.

People come to me and ask how to do meditation. The very question they ask is wrong.

They ask a wrong question, so I tell them just to do it. What should I do? I tell them: "Do -- something or other has to be done." You are itching to do something; that itch needs to be satisfied. If it itches, what to do? It can't be left unscratched. But gradually, just keeping them busy doing, I tire them out. Then they say: "Relieve us of this. How long are we to go on doing this?" I say: "I was ready from the beginning, but you needed time to understand. Now relax!"

The ultimate meaning of meditation is rest.

...rest in consciousness.... He who lets his consciousness stop in relaxation, he who rests only in being.... There is nothing to do because you already have what you are seeking, because you have never lost what you are seeking. It is not possible to lose it -- it is your very nature. You are the divine. *Ana'l haq* -- you are truth. What place are you seeking, where are you running to? In search of yourself, where are you running? Stop. Relax. Godliness is not attained by running, because it is hidden inside the runner. Godliness is not attained by doing anything, because it is hidden in the doer. To experience godliness nothing needs to be done -- you are it.

Hence Ashtavakra says: "*...rest in consciousness....*" Relax, let yourself unwind. Let go of this tension. Where are you going? There is nowhere to go, there is nowhere to reach to. *...and rest in consciousness....* Then right now *...this very moment you will be happy, at peace, and free of bondage.* The statement is unique. No other scripture is comparable to it.

You are not a brahmin or other caste, you are not in any of the four stages of life, you are not perceived by the eyes or other senses. Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy.

How can a brahmin write a commentary on this? *You are not a brahmin or other caste....* How can a Hindu take this scripture to heart? His whole religion is based on caste and stages of life. And from the very beginning Ashtavakra is cutting the roots of these beliefs. He says you are not a brahmin, not a low caste *sudra*, not a *kshatriya*, a warrior -- this is all nonsense. These are all projections. This is all the play of politics and society. You are simply *brahman*, the divine -- not a brahmin, not a *kshatriya*, not a *sudra*.

You are not a brahmin or other caste, you are not in any of the four stages of life...

And you are not a *brahmacharya* student, or a householder, or at the stage before *sannyas* -- you are not in any of the four stages of life. You are the observer, the witness who is inside passing through all these situations.

The Hindus cannot claim the Ashtavakra Gita as theirs, the Ashtavakra Gita is everyone's. If there were Mohammedans, Hindus and Christians in Ashtavakra's time, he would have said: "You are not a Hindu, not a Christian, not a Mohammedan." Who will build a temple for Ashtavakra? Who will champion his scripture? Who will claim him? Because he is

denying everyone. It is a direct declaration of truth.

Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy.

Ashtavakra does not say that after you have known this you will become happy. Listen to the statement carefully. Ashtavakra says: *Know this and be happy.*

You are not a brahmin or other caste, you are not in any of the four stages of life, you are not perceived by the eyes or other senses. Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy.

Be happy. Be happy right now. Janak asks: "How can one be happy? How can liberation happen? How can wisdom happen?"

Ashtavakra says it can happen right now. There is no need to delay even a single moment. There is no reason to leave it for tomorrow, no need to postpone it. This happening does not occur in the future, it happens now or never. When it happens it happens right now, because there is no time except now. Where is the future? When it comes, it comes as now.

So those who have become enlightened, have become enlightened in the now. Do not leave it for some other time -- that is the cunning of the mind. The mind argues: "How can it happen so fast? You have to get ready first."

People come to meet me and they say: "We will take sannyas. We'll take it someday." Someday! They will never take it. If it is put off, it is put off forever. "Someday" never comes. If you are going to take it, take it now. There is no other time than now. Life is now, liberation is now. Ignorance is now, knowing is now. Sleep is now, awakening can happen now. Why someday?

It is difficult for the mind; the mind says, you will have to make preparations. The mind argues: "How can anything happen without preparations? When a person wants a certificate from the university, it takes years. For a doctorate it takes twenty to twenty-five years, working year after year, and finally one attains a doctorate. How can it happen right now?"

Ashtavakra knows this. If you want to have a store, you can't open it right now. You will have to collect everything, arrange things, bring the goods, construct the store, attract customers, send out advertising -- it will take years. In this world nothing happens right now. It happens in orderly steps, and this is good. Ashtavakra knows this, I know it too.

But there is one phenomenon in this world which takes place right now. It is godliness. Godliness is not your shop, nor your examination hall, not your university. Godliness does not happen in steps, it has already happened. It is merely a question of opening your eyes. The sun has already emerged. The sun is not waiting for your eyes, saying that until your

eyes open he won't come out. The sun is already out. Light is spread all over. His music is resounding day and night. The sound of *Aum* is vibrating in all directions. The unstruck music is echoing everywhere. Open your ears! Open your eyes!

How much time does it take to open your eyes? It takes even less time to attain godliness. It takes a moment for the eyelid to blink. The Hindi word for "moment" means the time it takes to blink an eye. But it does not take even that much time to attain godliness.

...you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy. Be happy right now.

Ashtavakra's religion is not by installments. It is cash in hand, hard cash.

Oh expansive one, religion and atheism, happiness and misery -- all are of the mind, they are not for you. You are not the doer nor the enjoyer. You have always been liberated.

Enlightenment is our inherent nature. Wisdom is our inner nature. Godliness is our way of being. It is our center. It is the fragrance of our life, our being.

Ashtavakra says: *Oh expansive one... oh bringer of joy, oh luxurious magnificence, ...religion and atheism, happiness and misery -- all are of the mind....* These are all waves of thought. You have done evil or good, committed sin or done good deeds, built a temple or given alms -- all this is of the mind.

You are not the doer nor the enjoyer. You have always been liberated.

You are eternally free, you have always been free.

Liberation is not a happening which we need to strive for.

Liberation has already happened in our being.

The whole existence is made of freedom. Every particle of it, every pore of it is made of liberation. Freedom is the material from which the whole existence is produced. Freedom is its very nature.

This declaration -- just understand it and the transformation takes place. There is nothing to do except understand it. If it descends into you, if you listen with your whole mind, it is enough.

I would like to say "Enough for today."

Make a total effort to understand Ashtavakra. In Ashtavakra there is no place for doing. So don't think some method which you can do is going to emerge. Ashtavakra does not

suggest anything to do. Listen in repose. Nothing is going to happen by doing.

So don't bring a scratch pad or book to take notes in when a sutra comes. Don't write it down to do later. Doing doesn't work here. Listen with no concern for the future. Just listen. Just sit quietly with me and listen. Listen to me in relaxation. Just listening...listening, you can become enlightened.

This is why Mahavira said that a *shravaka* is a seeker who can be enlightened just by listening! A *shravaka* means one who becomes liberated just by listening. A *sadhu* means one who cannot become liberated by listening. He is a little less intelligent -- he has to practice something. The shadow of the whip is not enough for him. This horse belongs to a slightly lower class: the whip cracks, then it moves a little. Or beat it and it moves a little.

The shadow is enough.

Listen -- the shadow of the whip will become apparent.

With Ashtavakra one thing has to be remembered: there is nothing to do. You can listen joyfully. You don't have to extract anything from it to try out later. Whatever happens will happen from listening. Right listening is the key.

...this very moment you will be happy, at peace and free of bondage.

Be liberated right now. Be enlightened this very moment. Nobody is stopping you, nothing is preventing you. There is no need to budge an inch. Be enlightened right where you are, because you are free already. Awaken and be enlightened.

Unattached and without form, you are the witness of the whole universe. Know this and be happy.

Be happy. There is no need to wait a single moment. It is a leap, a quantum leap. With Ashtavakra there are no steps. It is not a gradual evolution but sudden. It can happen this very moment.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Osho: [Enlightenment: The Only Revolution](#), Chapter 1