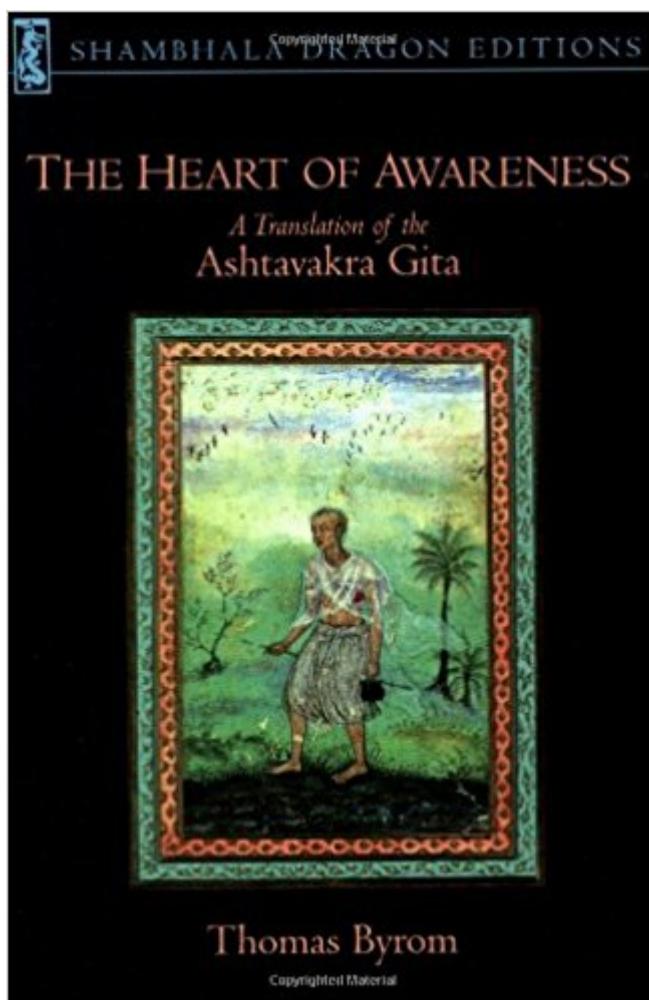


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# The Heart Of Awareness: A Translation Of The Ashtavakra Gita (Shambhala Dragon Editions)



## Synopsis

The Ashtavakra Gita conveys with beauty and simplicity the essential teachings of Advaita Vedanta, the most influential of the Hindu philosophical systems. Composed by an anonymous master of the school of the great sage Shankara, it is a book of practical advice for seekers of wisdom as well as an ecstatic expression of the experience of enlightenment. In this simple, aphoristic version, the translator conveys the clarity and lyricism of the Sanskrit original with fluency and precision.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an extraordinarily fine rendering of the Ashtavakra Gita, a book of unadorned compassion. As water wears away stone, so these profoundly simple truths wear away illusion." •Ram Dass "Byrom's exquisitely clean and untroubled rendering of this spiritual classic irresistibly invites us to listen for what cannot be heard and to search for what cannot be seen." •Jacob Needleman, author of *The Heart of Philosophy* and *Lost Christianity* "There have been English translations of the Ashtavakra Gita before, this is not only new and elegant but also the first to capture the spirit of the original in its freshness and directness. I warmly recommend it." •J. L. Brockington, Senior Lecturer in Sanskrit, Edinburgh University

Thomas Byrom, Ph.D., was educated at Oxford and Harvard universities and taught literature at St. Catherine's College and Exeter College.

The Ashtavakra Gita, as so gracefully translated by Thomas Byrom into "The Heart of Awareness", presents the un-divided vision-end of Advaita Vedanta via wonderfully ever fresh, even playful, flowing poetry. I have other translations of The Ashtravakra Gita, as well as a small library of other Vedanta works. "The Heart of Awareness" is my favorite by far -- and really points to The Heart of Awareness [Atman] in a fun and fine way. Via The Ashtavakra Gita [in general], the central metaphysical ideals of Advaita Vedanta ["un-divided vision-end"] are encountered in an easier-to-know way than deep classics such as The Bhagavad Gita [especially non-dualist translations], The Upanishads [in general] and the works of Swami Vivekananda [on Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga]. The Ashtavakra Gita seems in deep harmony with other non-dualist-favoring traditions -- such as Daoist, Buddhist, Platonic, Cabalistic, Sufian and Rosicrucian ones +++

Thomas Byrom as translator has produced a literary treasure in bringing us this new version of the timeless Indian classic. This is a book of deep and abiding wisdom. The origin of the book and its precise age are shrouded in mystery, but the depth and clarity of its message will live on many centuries more. A rare sense of total freedom graces this book from beginning to end. This is the Non-dual vision in all its utter clarity. This book gets as close to going beyond words as it is possible for words to get. This is by far my favorite translation of the several I have read. It is offered here as great poetry while it illuminates the subtle wisdom of Advaita Vedanta and the great Oneness insights available to anyone. This is a must-have volume for anyone interested in the ancient Eastern wisdom and the heart-felt insights of oneness which are always fresh and new when seen for oneself. Here are a few typical quotes from this spiritual masterpiece: "One man believes in existence, another says 'there is nothing!', rare is the man who believes in neither. He is free from confusion""I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am awareness itself." "Oh how wonderful! I am the unbounded deep in whom all living things naturally arise, rush against each other playfully, and then subside."

As the many reviews in this page testify, the translation of this Gita is superb. There are many translations of the Ashtavraka Gita. This translation excels in its utter simplicity, style, and grace. The translator, Thomas Byrom, understands this Gita to have the poignancy of verse and lays the stanzas in that manner. Other translations simply render the stanzas in prose, a big mistake. As poetry the content stands out and is easy to follow. This edition also stands out in an insightful introductory essay by J.L. Brockington. This essay gives this Gita a much needed context, both in

its date, author and philosophical leanings. The date of this Gita is not precisely known, but thought to be from the latter additions to the Mahabharata. Its author is unknown, but probably a contemporary of Adi Shankara. Its philosophical placement is much more interesting. Vedanta in reality is a very diverse philosophical movement. On one end of the spectrum, Vedanta believes that there is no reality other than Brahman, and that other than Brahman, all else is illusory. On the other end is Shankara himself, who affirmed the existence of the material world to the extent that it was a point of departure towards Brahman, the sole reality of all. In the middle lie the Yoga Vasistha and Suresvara. It is in this middle ground that the philosophical basis for the Ashtavakra lies. Even if you have other translations for the Ashtavakra Gita you will not go wrong by the purchase of this translation.

This translation of the Ashtavakra Gita is perhaps the clearest and most eloquent description of the state of pure awareness which is itself enlightenment. The author clearly was in the state of pure awareness he describes, and was clearly a Bodhisattva in that he attempted to pass on the teachings to the rest of us. This translation is beautifully done and transmits the light like few other books have ever done. I consider this one of my very favorite books on the subject of the highest state of awareness, or awakening. You will LOVE this book!!!

great

A must bedside companion for any being opening to deeper awareness.

I love it !

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