The Almighty, Gods and We, the Human beings

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Foreword

There are many religions and Dars’anas in the world. Though on the first sight, the object of all of them looks to be the same, differences do exist.

The various practices are formulated according to the objectives to be achieved. The practices of different religions are different only due to this reason.

Practicing a particular religion but looking for the objective of another religion is like growing a coconut tree with the desire of obtaining mangoes.

The intelligence of those following all the religions is similar to the intelligence of those, who grow and tend the trees considering that the fruits from all the trees will be mangoes only.

The stupidity of those who hate the other religions and Dars’anas is similar to the stupidity of those, who consider all the other trees to be of lesser importance because he likes mango.

The wisdom of a person, who looks out in other religions for the characteristics that are not to his liking, is like the wisdom of the person, who goes on talking about the bad qualities in the other fruits only to confirm the greatness of the mango fruit, that is liked most by him.

With this background behind, the religions and Dars’anas which come into contact with us in our day to day life the are being introduced in this book.

This is only a compendium and not an independent writing.

The details of different religions and Dars’anas collected from different books are provided in this book. However, the metaphysics or Tattva S’astra being an ocean there may be many more details. Not only that, there may be some deficiencies as well. They stand to be corrected if the enlightened readers can provide us the necessary authenticities.

The readers are earnestly requested to provide a feedback on how far we had succeeded in our efforts in bringing to light the different aspects of the religions and Dars’anas through fictional characters and story telling techniques.

The basic characteristics of the religions and the Dars’anas were brought through the talks of some of the characters in the form of a novel and the opinions of the persons belonging to other religions and Dars’anas were made known through the other characters. Depending on the type of the characters voicing these opinions and statements, the narratives have been prepared with rhetoric, seriousness, innocence, humour or other types of expressions. The readers are requested to note this and not to get misled in believing this either as a praise or criticism of those religions and Dars’anas.

This is philosophy. It is a very tough subject. It is natural that in spite of the best of efforts in making it simple to understand, it may still appear to be difficult to understand. It is our earnest opinion that if this book is studied two or three times, it will be quite useful.

- The Editors.
An appeal

Some argue that the philosophical or spiritual thinking has become more now compared to previous times and say that the increase in number of the temples and the increased number of people yearning for visiting the Almighty are indications of this phenomenon.

Some others discount this line of thinking saying that these changes are due to the increase in population and it need not be construed that the percentage of people with philosophical thinking has gone up.

Still some others are of the view that these people are simply those doing these acts with specific objective of enriching themselves with the resultant materialistic benefits only and this need not be taken as spiritual thinking.

But some do confirm that this is definitely an indication of the increased spiritual thinking and activity by giving the strong illustrations of increased number of new Ashrams in every village and town and the manifold increase in the number of Matajis and Swamijis.

Whatever it may be, it has been accepted in the past and has to be accepted presently also that there exists in an invisible form (beyond the capability to be picked up by the sense organs) something which is much more powerful than us, and the number of persons who think that they should receive the blessings from that invisible super power. The opinions and views of different persons who have been analysing, thinking and searching ‘what that immortal power could be’ at different times have become the different religions and different Dars’anas.

Though the academics agree in common that the religion is the one which is practiced mainly on faith and the one Dars’ana to be that is accepted being highly logical, the logicality and bound by reasoning added to the religions in the subsequent times, and the increased faith in the Dars’anakaara of his followers have made these two words viz., religion and Dars’ana to be used as synonyms in the common usage. It is seen subsequently the word ‘religion’ only being used mostly in all the occasions to indicate both religion and the Dars’ana.

The number of persons, who consider that all the religions are the same, is also quite substantial in the population of spiritual thinking. They, who say so, keeping the highly principled view that they should not offend others and should be tolerant of the other religions, need to be respected. Those having views of “Any religion will preach universal welfare (of all the beings in the universe) through the basic directives like ‘talk only the truth, conduct yourself according to the prescribed code of conduct’ etc. Hence, all the religions are same” are more respectable.

But it must be said that the thinking of those, who consider all the religions to be same because the end result is same in all the cases irrespective of the religion being practiced, is faulty and brings misfortune for themselves as well as their followers.

**Though the objective of all religions appears to be the same in a broader sense, the angles at which the objective is viewed by different schools of religions are different. If it were not so, there would be no necessity of so many religions!** The different political parties that announce their objective to be the development of the country only, have different views on the development. It will be the industrialization for one party while it will be
improved agriculture for another. The plans for the development – the objective, are made keeping such views of the development only.

Hence, it is imperative on the part of everybody that one should correct oneself after analysing different aspects and eliciting answers for different questions like, ‘what is our objective?’, ‘which religion makes it known to us?’, ‘what is the practice according to that?’, ‘is it proper?’, ‘is it practicable for me?’, ‘is the practice being followed by me till now not different than this?’, ‘the objective of this religion does not seem to match that which I was having it in my mind!’, ‘should I change my thinking?’, ‘should my practice change?’, ‘the goal and the practice I follow are matching till now, what should I do next?’ etc. Then only achieving the goal is possible.

Due to the changes incorporated in the educational systems, many have lost while they are still young, the opportunity to know about the religions and their practices. Some more neglect was there in the case of those seeking the materialistic benefits through the education because of absence of the physical benefits from the teachings about the religions etc. In addition to this, due to a combination of social and political reasons, the clarity of ‘which practice is of which religion’ also vanished gradually in the majority of the spiritual seekers.

Time of 1,2 months and some effort will go waste for a farmer, who did the sincere farming after sowing defective seeds thinking that they are genuine. A period of some years and some effort go waste for a head of a family, who does not know the difference between a male and female offspring of the cow and tends to a male calf with the desire of having milk from that animal. A traveler, without defining his destination, will not reap any benefit even if he travels for decades, except that he will be tired of the travel. But a whole life time is wasted for a spiritual seeker, who does not know what he wants; for a spiritual seeker, who is unable to distinguish the difference between the practice that takes him through to the goal he is looking for and the practice that runs opposite that goal’s achievement; for the spiritual seeker, who sincerely tries to reach his goal unaware that he had been misled in the knowledge of the practice that will lead him to his goal. Hence, everybody must be having at least the minimum knowledge of the well-known religions in his surroundings and their practices.

When it is becoming increasingly difficult to know even the full picture of a particular religion or Dars’ana, it is indeed very difficult for the ordinary seeker, to correct oneself after examining the whole lot of literature of religions and the Dars’anas and coming to a conclusion. S’ri Maadhava Vidyaranya, the head pontiff of the S’ringeri Math of 14th century, had authored a treatise in concise of the main features of all the religions that were in vogue during his time so that the spiritual seekers can have an easy information through one single book. Since then, many learned scholars had attempted the same even till today. A number of persons including me had intentions since long to take part in that great exercise, it has become possible now, out of Almighty’s grace, in this subject to have favourable circumstances. As a result, this small book-let called “Almighty, Gods and We, the Human Beings” is finding its place in the august hands of the seekers.

Except for one or two situations in which the descriptions that do not belong to any particular religion, except for the contexts in which subjects of all the religions have been described, and for the creation of the various characters during the process of narration in the book, this book is not an independent writing. Own views do not find place in this. This book has taken its shape in a question-answer form with fictitious characters, and as a fiction purely out of the desire to have good readability. This book is a compendium of the subjects
specially picked up from the views expressed by well-known persons, from the various workshops of discussion on spiritual subjects, from the critical appraisals of the original works of the prophets and Dars’anakaraas and finally from the various commentaries of these books.

No effort has been made to highlight the good qualities or deficiencies of any particular religion or Dars’ana, in this book and they have been presented without any bias. The people of the present day society has been broadly divided in to 5, 6 categories and each character has been created to represent each of these categories. All the topics that are worthy of being told were narrated through these characters. Readers are requested not to attribute any bias to us from the style of their talking. Sincere regrets are being expressed to all those readers who may feel offended or get angry because of the mention of deficiencies that are not expected or can not be accepted by them in the religion which is most beloved to them. The authors and editors can be unbiased but they cannot take the responsibility for ensuring unbiased thinking of the readers!

It was initially thought that the mention of some religions or schools having highly reproachable practices be eliminated or make that beyond the scope of this book. But keeping in view that the readers should not be deceived in the subject of information and knowledge, they have been added. These despicable religions or schools with highly reproachable practices have also been covered with this further thought that the spiritual seeker should be made aware of the likely onslaught of some seemingly good looking but intrinsically dangerous religions among the various mushrooming new cults of today.

The famous Dars’anas and religions with highly elaborate, difficult to understand, and tough doctrines and tenets, have been extensively dealt with and the others were deliberated in varying degrees of extensiveness according to the varying toughness in them. The ones, which were explained earlier already, were ended very briefly within one or two sentences. Since the book is compiled, mainly to be used as a primer by the seekers, no special efforts are made to discuss any particular religion or Dars’ana in depth. The primary objective of this work is to give only the minimum understanding on the subject to the reader and hence the reader has to go through the literature on the religion of his interest separately further.

Considering the majority of the readers of today, who are and were educated in English medium and thus are severely impaired of reading in Telugu language, considering the difficulty experienced by them when the technical words are not eliminated and also for the benefit of the average readers, the difficult topics are explained again and again. To ensure the reader does not loose interest to read the book, usual story narrating techniques are used. For ensuring the natural conversational style, the colloquial, idiomatic and simple language, has been used. Because of these, the scholars well versed in the Dars’anas may find the book to be devoid of the necessary texture for the philosophical treatises. Though one had not got the traditional education in the Dars’anas, being highly qualified, academics may also find the book to be having repetitions and the same topic being dealt with at more than one place also. Not only that. In the effort to eliminate the usage of technical terms, certain usages are made and though it is known that this might have resulted in the distortion of the original meaning of the particular term, keeping the larger interests, this has been done and this may be pardoned.

The philosophy seeker having a strong desire to know the subject, will acquire the necessary literary skills and the skill to understand the technical words, on his own before proceeding on the study of the philosophical works. But for a person who does not do so and for those who are unable to do so, the grandeur of the best books need not be sacrificed
according to some. Our appeal to them is that we also can think on the same lines, should the Almighty consider that there is no necessity for Him to descend to earth in the form of His incarnations in the holy places like Srirangam etc and in our homes to accept our worships, with the thinking that when the highly mobilized Jeeva – the soul, desirous of serving Him, shall acquire the necessary qualifications himself and then only approach Him since it is below His greatness to descend Himself in the form of incarnations on to this earth that is polluted by the Rajas and Tamo-Gunas.

Propounder every of religion, and every Dars’anakaara, belong to the class of an exclusive intelligentsia. They are endowed with limitless knowledge. Every Dars’ana also is an ocean of knowledge. Even the highly qualified academics agree that it is highly an impossible task to talk about the exact central concept of the Dars’anakaara or the propounder of the religion in spite of his thorough study of the Dars’an or the religion. Under such circumstances, attempting to provide the entire philosophical science that is the comprehensive science encompassing all the Dars’anas, though briefly, is fraught with extreme courage. We will be grateful to the learned scholars if they could excuse this highly dangerous attempt and point out the defects arising out of Bhrama – the misconception and Pramaada – by accident, without any hesitation. Such mistakes will be corrected in the next print.

As every parent knows that the child has to chew and gulp the balls of food that is prepared ready to chew and gulp with all the side dishes like curries, chutneys, and other required materials, so also, all the writers and publishers know that in spite of all the efforts in bringing out in an easy to understand method, to suit the average reader, their effort is successful only when the reader fulfils his responsibility of reading the book once or twice or more with the necessary dedication and interest.

It is our earnest desire that this book will serve as a tool for retrospection for those who are already through with the philosophical studies, will be a guiding aid for those who have started the studies, one that gives an overview with a comprehensive understanding for those who intend to study the philosophy, and finally create an interest in those who have not shown any interest so far. We feel that a doubt may arise if this book is an experiment in the philosophical literature. It is not well known if a book like this is available in the philosophical literature in the form of fiction.

So, it is our appeal to all our readers to recognize our natural urge for their valuable response/feedback on this book which will give us an indication on the extent of success that we have achieved in our attempt.

- The publishers.
Chapter - 1

“Rama Rama Raghrurama Paratpara....”

Suddenly the song blared on the loudspeaker. Startled by the loud voice, Justice Raghuramaiah had turned aimlessly in his sofa with a big yawn. He wondered how long this puja (the prayers), would continue, with a sort of disdain towards his wife. It was going to be 10 O’clock in the morning. One could hear the mantras being chanted by the pundits.

“Instead of dozing on the sofa in the hall, you could as well come and have your dars’an of the Lord in the puja” suggested his wife Sakuntalamma on a glance at him while doing her puja.

“Enough of puja for you. I need not be dragged into that habit, without knowing what is the Aatma – the soul. That is more important than this manifestation of external exhibition of puja.” Raghuramaiah grumbled, for the thousandth time in their married life.

“Hh! Inscrutable” with scornful glance murmured Sakuntalamma, picking up his empty teacup and went inside again.

It was almost a year since Justice Raghuramaiah had retired from the judicial service. A man grossly engaged in his profession was practically left with no social contacts. It was only after he became free from the judicial work as a Justice; he had been conversing with one or two persons. Prior to that he was rarely talking to the outsiders – even with his wife and children.

The Justice has never been in favour of puja and its paraphernalia. He says that one’s conscience should be clean. How can God, the Almighty be having legs, hands etc, wife, children, chariots et al. This is all nonsense says he. What can God do for us if He also has to be fed naivedyam – the food offering to God, like all of us, who cannot be without daily meal?

If at all there is God, He should be different from all of us. That is why Justice has an inclination to accept God as one without any attributes- say a specific figure, name etc. “That is a correct and rational thinking” says he. However he has not studied any philosophy. In fact he has never delved deep into that subject earlier. Only recently after his retirement, he has developed some acquaintance with Purushottam. Of late, after he has got acquaintance of Purushottam, he started getting into those discussions.

Today also he invited Purushottam. For some unknown reasons he has not yet come. Meanwhile, this buzz of Sakuntalamma’s puja. Uh! It is irritating him. In his opinion these pundits have influenced the womenfolk in the homes so that they can earn a few chips easily from them.

These women are fools. One can’t understand why these ladies waste their time and money on these rituals – puja. Why at all do they donate to Swamijis and As’rams? And above all they shove extravagant dakshina to the pundits too, wonders the Justice.

Not only the womenfolk but some men folk also do the same. Why can’t they do some socially useful work instead? Is it not enough? What a terrible fraud they play in the name of God in Photos, Stones and metallic idols! The Justice became visibly restless.
“There comes my friend Purushottam” – he saw him as he heard the sound of main gate being opened.

“Welcome! Welcome” Justice was getting up from his sofa to welcome him. Purushottam has that attraction. He has an aura about him. Is it all the knowledge transformed into the aura? Before getting up fully, the Justice remembered his status. It came to his senses that the entire court room attendance stands when he enters, but not that he has ever to stand up to anybody. So he has settled in his sofa again. Unmindful of this status symbol was Purushottam. The old adage “Knowledge maketh a man humble” is personified as Purushottam. He greeted the Justice and settled in the sofa opposite to him. He listened to the chanting of *mantras* from inside and enquired whether it was *Satyanarayana Puja*.

“What else could it be from my wife?” was the disdainful remark of Raghuramaiah.

“What else could it be from my wife?” was the disdainful remark of Raghuramaiah.

“Any special occasion?”

“Not necessarily. My wife strongly believes, any minor event, say the pet cat giving birth to kitten, is only due to graciousness of God.”

“Perhaps you think otherwise.” With his interaction in the last one-year, Purushottam knows how to involve the Justice into serious thinking.

“Birds of same feather! Seeth no reason for your orations”. So vented out the Justice the anger on his wife.

As Purushottam, a highly composed personality, started to reply, came the voice of Sakuntalamma- “O! Anna garu (brother)! When did you come?” “Why did you not tell me?” demanded she from her husband. She brought a glass of buttermilk without waiting for the answer from the Justice, saying “Please don’t mind. The pundit was late in coming for the *puja*. It will take another hour the *puja* to come to close. Soon after that the lunch will be served.” She went back to the *puja* room.

“Hh one more hour! Why can’t she use this *puja* time for gardening? How useful it would have been!” mumbled Justice Raghuramaiah.

Purushottam settled comfortably in the sofa.

“Honourable Justice! I have been observing you since I have come. Do you consider all these *pujas* are a waste?

“What else can it be? What is the use of these *pujas*? How do they benefit the society or herself to that matter?”

“These *pujas* have been coming down generations in our country. Do you think that the previous generations had been doing useless rituals and they are all worthless people to do so?”

“So this country called India had become an underdeveloped country and backward nation. Our people wasted their valuable time in such meaningless rituals. Look at U.K., and U.S.A. How developed and top ranking countries they have become.”
“Aha! Do you think people in Britain and United States don’t perform the rituals? Or will they not be spending their time in such prayers?”

Justice Raghuramaiah had glanced with veiled anger at Purushottam, who was smiling like a defense lawyer taking advantage of the loose arguments of the Public Prosecutor.

“They also have churches and prayers. But here in India, the Brahmins, making it as their profession are wasting the time of householders.”

“What is it that the Pastors and Bishops and Imams do different from these Brahmin Purohits in India?”

The Justice was caught in his own arguments. How is it that a senior Justice could be a victim of such reasoning put to him? Wondered Justice Raghuramaiah. He said, “The procedures are different. Our practices are superstitions. Of course they also have such superstitions but not to this extent. If we go into the details, the discussion has no end.” So he wanted to change the track or the subject of discussion.

“Let it go”, said Purushottam and threw one more gauntlet. “Do you consider that there is no God, who is being propitiated in the prayers of Sakuntalamma? Or is it that this is not the way to worship God, or is it that God is not in this form? Or is it that God does not need all these? In what way she is wasting the time?”

He admires questions, which are like legal cross-examination. They should be intriguing. “You should have been a member of the bar association. Well questioned. I would like to ask you. Please tell me. What is the necessity of God? Can we not lead our lives without involving Him? We acquire an acre or two and have a coconut farm or mango orchard and spend the rest of life with the income from that. Why at all bother about God?”

“What do you get from coconut farm?”

“Coconuts. Have them for your consumption as much as you like and rest can be converted into income.”

“What do you get from a mango orchard?”

This type of questioning, used only while questioning young children, irritated him. But being used to the ways of defense lawyers, he finally answered.

“What do you get from coconut farm?”

“Mangoes. Have as much for yourself as you like and rest sell in the market.”

“Whether it is mangoes or coconuts, or any other item, do we get satiated with this?”

Justice thought – ‘satiation!’ For the sake of telling we may say so, but where is that satiation? There is no end to it. Everybody likes to have more and more assets. Everybody is eager to buy some more land and some more farms. That is what he expressed to Purushottam. “We buy as much land as possible and convert it into a farm or orchard. If not satiated, we acquire lands and hills with mines and mineral deposits and enjoy. Are we satisfied at that?

‘What does he intend to tell?’ Raghuramaiah wanted to know. Yes there is no satiation to the man.
“Suppose he gets all these assets. With that does he live happily, peacefully for ever?”

“No. Something is amiss. What is that?”

“Coffee is in this flask. Both of you can have it at your convenience” said Vinita, his grand daughter, at the behest of Sakuntalamma. She placed two cups and saucers and the flask of coffee, and went inside.

Pouring the coffee in the cups, Raghuramaiah said. “It is not enough to have farms, land etc. He must have cows, buffalos and other farm animals for the dairy.”

“O.K. Suppose he had these dairy animals as well. Why only dairy animals, he had horses, oxen etc. also which can be used for pleasure, driving the ploughs etc. also, whatever type of animals he wanted. With all that will he be satisfied and be happy?”

The pet parrot in the cage, which is hanging nearby, seems to have got enamoured in this discussion. It made sounds indicating its presence there. Raghuramaiah lifted his head and looked at it and as he was going to say something, Purushottam started.

“Yes, Yes. Some birds are also included in the property of this man. That means, not only the lands, minerals, hills etc., but the dumb animals and birds also are in your hands only. Does it make you a completely satisfied man?”

“What is that completeness?” glanced Justice meaningfully at him.

“Completeness is that feeling that makes a man say ‘I have no more wants. With all these things, my satisfaction, happiness and pleasure will go on increasing manifold. Further I have no needs. My world is with these things only.”

“What about the wife and children?” laughingly added the Justice.

“Is that all? Is there no need for brothers, sisters, parents et al?” said seriously Purushottam.

Justice thought. “Yes, are needed.” Said he thoughtfully. “To be happy, people are needed. Friends, neighbours…”

“Yah! Lawyers, the court room, plaintiffs, and respondents also are needed.”

Justice smiled.

“That means, along with the inanimate and animate subjects, man needs co-fellow beings also for the completeness. Isn’t it so?”

“True. Though all these are in front of us, I never thought about them.”

“Not only that. You must notice one more. As much a man requires the animate and inanimate, that much these objects also require human beings.”

“Yes! All these three categories depend on each other for their life. They make the life full.”
“What a complete analysis! Why don’t you pen a book on this subject?” suggested Justice.

“The subject is not a great subject. As a Judge, having dedicated your entire life to the jurisprudence, your intellect has not been directed towards this subject. The subject is not a difficult one to understand. Everybody knows it. Any person who has an inclination to understand philosophy will understand this much.”

“Philosophy! I hate that subject. It irritates me. ‘Leave the society and people. Don’t have any attachment with anybody’ is all that it tells. Right from my student life, I hated this. It is, at the nearest, at a bargepole’s distance to me. I tell you a secret. If any case of religious nature falls in my jurisdiction I always tried to manage to transfer that case to either another judge or to another court but never delved into that subject.”

“It is surprising that you had such a misunderstanding of the subject, that too having been such an esteemed Justice for a long time. I see two mistakes in your thinking. First - Philosophy is not the one, which teaches asceticism. In short, it brings out the truth. It is termed as “Tattva Sastram” in Telugu. In English, also word ‘metaphysics’ is used to be more precise with the subject. Then the second mistake is considering metaphysics and religion to be one and the same. In fact, metaphysics and religion are two entirely different entities. Religion is primarily subject of beliefs. A man who thinks intermingling these has his life style as very confusing.”

Justice Raghuramaiah did not feel hurt with this insinuation. He never delved deep in the matter of either religion or metaphysics. In his student life he was known as a bookworm. After he finished his graduation in Arts, law, he obtained Master’s degree in both Arts and Law, in first class grade. Subsequently he joined the judiciary. Being a Judge, he kept himself aloof from the social sphere. He stopped even reading newspapers lest his pronouncements be biased by these contacts and news reports. By studying all the aspects of the Indian Constitution and Law a number of times he mastered the subject. Thus he went up the professional ladder regularly. Where is the time for him to go into other subjects? Above all he neither had interest nor the time to study the religion or God. How would he ever know these matters!

“Tell me a little more in detail what philosophy is.” Becoming inquisitive the Justice leaned forward.

“When accosted by any subject, questioning it with ‘why, how, when, who etc.’ and deducing the logical answers is the primary objective of Tattva Sastram. For example, we have now deduced of, the man, inanimate and animate objects in this prakriti - the primordial matter (nature) as to their existence and why and how they are there and what they are doing. This is how Tattva Sastram deals the subject.”

“If it is so...” before he completed the sentence, came the purohit – the priest with akshatas – sacred rice grains, saying “Sir, the puja is completed. Please have the akshatas.” Then chanted the hymns of benediction “Satamaanam bhavati ...” etc. Purushottam had bowed in reverence to them. Justice was nodding his head while taking note of the offerings of fruits, presents and the bundle of currency in the hands of the purohit. Habituated to such glances from the Justice the Purohit said good-bye and left.

“A hailstorm cleared. What a big relief!” Said Justice. “Sir! Purushottam garu! I think “philosophy” is used to indicate the metaphysics, in the sense that it says that all this world is
a myth. It is all our mystic viewing of the worldly objects. As studied in our schooldays, this is what is propounded by our preceptors, may be either S'ankaraachaarya or Ramanujacharya. I remember that there is even a quotation from the speeches or works of Vivekananda also. But now your explanation of philosophy does not fit into that. What do you say?”

“You are a learned Judge. You don’t take what your plaintiffs and respondents say at its face value. What is defined in the statute is the one, which needs to be taken for reference. You may refer to the dictionary for the correct meaning of the word ‘philosophy’ and assert what it means.”

Immediately the Justice picked up the Oxford Dictionary and looked for the meaning of word. It reads ‘the use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge of reality, especially of the causes and nature of things and of the principles governing existence, the material universe, perception of physical phenomena and human behaviour’.

‘That means the questions and answers on the human behavior as to why, what – is philosophy’ said the Justice to himself in a low murmur. He thought for a while.

“Purushottam, if that is so, how does ‘philosophy’ get commonly used to mean indifferent attitude to life? What does this Vedanta or metaphysics mean?”

“It is the in depth study of the secrets of the nature and human behaviour. This has spread in different parts of the world in different modes. In our country, Vedantins are one of the many like C’aarvaakas, Buddhists, Jains, Yogins, and Saankhyaavaadins etc. S’ankaraachaarya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvaachaarya and etc. belong to the class of Vedantins only. Compared to the other truth seekers, Vedantins have become prominent in our country and hence the word philosophy has come to mean Vedanta in our country. There is no other reason for such meaning.”

“I see. If so, can you elaborate how this in-depth study of the nature of human behaviour does take place…”? When Justice Raghuramaiah, was saying Sakuntalamma entered from the kitchen. “Let us get ready for the lunch. It is already late. Please don’t mind for the delay Purushottam garu.”

“Yes, but where is the prasadam of Satyanarayana Puja?” asked Justice. “You don’t have faith in God but like to have His prasadam!” smiled Purushottam. “Ask him that question,” said Sakuntalamma. “He loves to have that prasadam – the offering to God that is blessed by Him, as it goes well with him and he will have lots of it”, she said with Purushottam. “Since it is already late, it can be had along with lunch itself. So I did not give it separately,” said she looking at Justice.

“Look, We are in a serious discussion. All of you may have the lunch. Meanwhile you may send the prasadam for us. We’ll have it while we are continuing our discussion”

“We also have to take part in the discussions. How can we miss such a well versed learned person like Purushottam garu?” Sakuntalamma said.

Noticing that Justice has not made any attempt to come to the dining table, she said “Today we have your special Vada in Mustard and Curd in the Lunch Menu. Don’t delay”
He got up at once. “Let us move Purushottam garu,” said he.

They heard Purohit, Nageswara Sastry garu opening the gate and coming inside. Justice Raghuramaiah has gone inside without noticing and Purushottam garu greeted him with a salutation “Namaskaram”. Sakuntalamma invited him “Welcome Sastry garu” with reverence.

I came to check up whether my boys had come for performing the Satyanarayana Puja,” said Nageswara Sastry. He is chief Purohit in the town. Anytime for performing any religious activities, you have to ask him and he is there, deputing his boys suitable for performing the Puja. These boys are his disciples learning under his tutelage.

“They have come and after the Puja is completed left this place”, said Sakuntalamma. You have come in time. Please have your lunch.”

“I have just finished my lunch and come here.”

“You may have some light refreshment if not lunch,” said she, “I shall have a glass of cool lusssy” He came into the living room. He glanced at Purushottam with a greeting. Heard that he is well read and learned person but neither had neither acquaintance nor intimacy.

Everybody sat at the dining table and Sakuntalamma as host is serving. Sastry garu sat a little away. Sound of the T.V. can be heard from the next room. Possibly it is live telecast of the ongoing cricket match.

“Where is Vinny?” asked Raghuramaiah about his grand daughter. “What else does she require when cricket match is being telecast? She is glued to the T.V. right from the morning. She gave the milk to you today morning with a lot of disgruntle, said Sakuntalamma. She served Raghuramaiah a couple of Vadas noticing his gesture for them. He did not pay any attention either for the rice and curry, his liking being for only the Vadas and the Kesaribath, the prasadam of Satyanarayana Puja. That is all. After having some more of them he said “enough.”

“Why so less? Have some more” and she served more Vadas.

“Only one” said Raghuramaiah.

Having his lunch quietly, Purushottam observed Raghuramaiah’s eating behaviour. He asked Justice “It is your favourite dish I suppose. Why are you taking only few Vadas in Mustard and Curd?”

“Ya! But how many can one eat?” still eating the Vada Justice asked.

“What will happen if you eat more?”

Justice Raghuramaiah has understood – it is going to lead into some discussion. “What will happen? You develop a dislike for the item.”

“What is it like when you have eaten for the first time? What is it like when you are eating now?”

“It was a happy feeling when it was eaten first. Now it is becoming unhappy.”
“It is the same Vada and you are the same person without any change. How did the happiness which was there in the beginning turn into unhappiness?”

“Yes. How did it happen?” Raghuramaiah was wondering and started thinking.

“You take some more Kesaribath prasadam,” said Purushottam garu.

He ate. “Now you eat Vada again,” said Purushottam. He ate Vada. ‘Now it is not that bad!’ He tried to eat Vada again but could not. “No. It is not possible”, said Justice looking helpless.

‘Why did it happen like this? Both the items are my favourite dishes. I must have felt happy to eat more and more. But am unable to eat any more. If I try to eat more I am sure I shall vomit’. He licked a little pickle and started eating curd rice. Surprisingly it could be eaten without any rejection. ‘It means that there is space in the stomach but only the Vada and Kesaribath have become unwanted dishes’

Not knowing the full discussions between them, Sakuntalamma and Sastry were looking lost not knowing what the problem was.

Suddenly the cine music was in the air permeating from the next room. “Vinny, I think cricket game is over. Come, have your lunch.” called Sakuntalamma.

“No not yet. I got bored with cricket so I changed the channel” saying entered Vinita.

“How is that? You are a cricket fan I suppose. How could you get bored with cricket?” asked Purushottam.

“How long one can watch the same even if it is favourite game? A little channel surfing will do good,” said Vinita.

‘Look at what she is saying’ – meant the glance Purushottam had towards Justice.

‘Ya! I start understanding’ is the replying nod of head.

“Is this feeling universal?” asked Justice.

“Yes. Whatever we do, the resultant happiness lasts only for some time. Then it transforms into unhappiness. But since we can’t bear unhappiness, we start doing something different, which again gives happiness. When that also turns into unhappiness we again do another different thing.”

“I see”, said Justice Raghuramaiah while thinking. Continuing with his thought process, he thought ‘so we do get up from sleep – that means lying down is unhappiness and so we wake up. Remaining awake becomes unhappiness. Then we go to sleep. Brushing teeth, having food, reading, all are like that only’. Being an intellect, he started thinking fast and said, “Purushottam garu, as you said earlier, acquiring the fields, farms, forest areas, etc, rearing the pet animals, birds etc, making friendship with persons around us - all these we do to be happy. We leave those, which bring us unhappiness. Is that all?”

“Yes, Yes. Dear Raghuramaiah garu, if you have grasped this truth, it is the first step in understanding philosophy. We keep changing only, all these inanimate and animate
things, persons, and other things, just like the juggler in a circus keeps on juggling with the balls – only for happiness and to live our life with happiness.”

“This is true in your case and so also in my case. Isn’t it so?”

“It is true not only in yours and my case but in all animals, plants, birds etc. also”

‘Is it so’ he thought for a while and saying, “yes true”, Justice nodded his head in agreement.

“It is not an interruption. I am sure I’m not very intelligent. I don’t believe that we do everything only to be happy. Today morning there was no electricity. But I had already soaked the Dal. I had to prepare the Vadas. So I had to grind them in the grinding stone with the pestle. Believe me it was terribly tiring. How can I agree that I did that for happiness?” said Sakuntalamma.

“Madam, It is not that there is no happiness in that. Your preparation of Vadas is to make Raghuramaiah happy. If he eats them and is happy, that brings happiness to you. That happiness is qualitatively worthier than your physical strain. So you ground the Dal. Finally the grinding has given you happiness.”

“True, Granny! Would you have ground the Dal to feed the servant maid and servant boys?” asked Vinita. Raghuramaiah was surprised to note that this young girl got interested in the topic.

“Then, how do persons committing suicide get happiness?” asked Sastry.

“By committing suicide, if some other’s mind or body is pained, the pain caused to those persons brings happiness to them.” Said Purushottam.

“It is true. In general, all those committing suicide, have sadistic personality in varying degrees- so said one medical expert, I remember in a statement to the court”.

“Grandpa, what is sadistic mentality?”

“It is the mentality of enjoyment of cruelty to others. A person with such mentality, derives pleasure by witnessing the suffering of another person inflicted with injury either to the body or to the mind”, explained the justice to his grand daughter.

“It is time to get up from the dining table”, said Sakuntalamma.

All were seated in the sofas chewing the pan.

All were immersed in debating whether anybody does any thing, which gives unhappiness.

At last Justice Raghuramaiah said, “It is clear Purushottam garu! All of us, nay, all beings do things trying to be happy. They will at all the times strive to improve that happiness. I suppose it is a natural process. That is to say that it does not stop even if we don’t want it to proceed further.”
“Yes Raghuramaiah garu, the moment we realize that it is a natural process our thinking process gets further fine tuned.”

“Even if we want to be happy, God’s will is needed Sir. If blessed with His grace, we will be always happy”, said Sakuntalamma.

“You! Why do you every time bring this God into our lives?” scoffed Raghuramaiah at his wife. “Why that talk of God now? Our topic for the discussion is all including us, animals, birds, trees, hills, mounds etc to live together happily. That’s all.”

“So said the C’aarvaaka philosophers. Their tenet is that there is no need to think about God. The humans, inanimate and animate objects can be happy together.”

“I don’t understand that serious English terminology,” intervened Sastry. “If man is always thinking of ways to increase his happiness, how is it made possible in the C’aarvaaka philosophy?”

“The tenets saying this field belongs to him, this animal is my property, this woman is for me are the obstructions for the happiness. Once these restrictions are removed, rest will be, only total happiness. This in essence what the C’aarvaaka system stands for.”

“The law enforcement system will punish those who appropriate another’s property” was the immediate response from the Justice.

“Suppose we stop enacting the laws” asked Purushottam.

“Will he not go to hell? God does not keep quiet without punishing them”, said Sakuntalamma. Raghuramaiah kept quiet thoughtfully for her comment. ‘ It is true. If such laws are not enacted it will be limitless happiness alone for all the mighty. Will it be law of the jungle? Oh! How can it be possible?’ thought he.

“Madam, The C’aarvaaka followers do not believe in God or the Hell. So they are not afraid of any of these. All the talk of Hell, etc. are the creations of the Brahmin community to garner money from gullible people, as per their opinion,” said Purushottam with a side-glance towards Raghuramaiah.

Sastry moved with unease. “I am leaving since I have some work elsewhere”, said he getting up. Sakuntalamma asked him to wait, as it was still very hot outside. She told Purushottam, “Let us say that there is God for the sake of argument. But that fear of God is helping the Purohit Brahmin community to keep the people away from the bad influence of these so called C’aarvaaka followers. Isn’t it so Purushottam garu?”

‘What is the benefit to the people from these Brahmins’ was the thought provoked once in a while in the mind of Raghuramaiah. Now with such a talk from Sakuntalamma and Purushottam he felt that there is an answer to that question. ‘Yes it is true. Whether there is God or not, it is helping the society from becoming an anarchy. These Brahmins only are able keep these people with scant regard for the law also are afraid of God at least to some extent’ He looked at Sastry with respect for the first time in his life.

However, he said with gravity “So what, if it is anarchy? Mighty people will enjoy the life. We have been seeing that the strong community survives and the weak community faces extinction. It is a natural process. This does not need God.”
“Yes! This world should get transformed into jungle raj and all should live the way lions, tigers etc live” sarcastically said Purushottam.

Raghuramaiah was startled but soon regained his composure and quickly changed the topic. “That was not my intention. Any way, you said that followers of C’aarvaaka system also are one set of the philosophers among so many systems. What are the tenets of other philosophical systems to obtain unlimited happiness?”

“So come to the line”, said Sakuntalamma to her husband. “Sir, please elaborate distinctly so that less educated persons like me, also can understand.”

“Sir, Don’t forget this orthodox man without knowledge of English”, said Sastry with a smile.

“You are aware of the philosopher Gautama Buddha” initiated Purushottam.

“Who? Is it the person, who was born in Lumbini Forest and who abandoned his wife and son? I know, our teacher has told”, said Vinita.

“Yes it is he only” with a smile said Purushottam. “Do you know what he said? When this visible universe will become void, then what we will be having is only eternal bliss or unlimited happiness only.”

“That means?” Raghuramaiah did not understand.

“No two objects are same. That is why they attract us on their own. It must be remembered that objects mean all the living humans, animate and inanimate bodies such as humans, animals and plants, trees etc. We make attempts to get them because of that attraction only. So misery is the result of not getting the desired object. If there is no object, there is no attraction, no misery. All is only happiness,” explained Purushottam.

“This argument is good. Since we experience the universe, there is desire to possess and enjoy. Unhappiness or misery is because of not possessing and enjoying the desired object. Hence if there is no matter or universe, all there is only happiness. Very good. Salutations to Buddha. But how is it possible not to observe the Universe?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“How are you observing the objects during day time?” asked Purushottam.

“By sunlight.”

“What about in the nights?”

“Either because of the moonlight or lights.”

“With what do you see?”

“Through the eyes.”

“Who knows what the eye is seeing?”

“Mind”
“How do you know that the mind is knowing?”

Raghuramaiah could not proceed further.

After a while, Purushottam said, “that is known as Aatma. That is bestowed with Jnana or the knowledge. This Jnana is traversing from the mind through the eyes and showing the universe.”

“If that Aatma becomes non existent does it mean there is no universe?” pat came the retort from Raghuramaiah.

“So says Buddhism. The Aatma becoming extinct will result in removal of unhappiness”

“Does it mean that in such case, nobody will have the universe?”

“No, No. Consider that there is a mad man.”

“I saw a madman today” said Vinita in a loud voice. “Today morning, while I was going to the school, a madman was walking on the road speaking and feeding some thing to an imaginary person. He was behaving as if someone was there in front of him. All of us were making fun.”

“Yes, my dear girl, you haven’t seen any body but that madman sees someone in front of him. So he speaks to them”, Purushottam said to Vinita. Continuing with Raghuramaiah he said, “Persons who have achieved siddhi, will not visualise this universe. All non-achievers are like that madman. If the Aatma becomes blank, then it is achievement. Then he does not have the objects, which cause misery. Everything is only happiness.”

“If Aatma has to become blank, how much time does it take?”

“It may take any number of janmas – the births”

“Is there anybody who has achieved like this?”

“It might have happened to Gautama Buddha”

“Did he postulate his siddhanta – the school, before or after he had achieved?”

“I don’t understand all these court-room arguments. Will you elaborate them?” Sakuntalamma asked her husband.

Raghuramaiah started with a smile on his lips. “Look, I am asking if Gautama Buddha had postulated his siddhanta after he did not visualise the universe any more, i.e., has achieved siddhi, I mean, after his Aatma became a blank.”

“You silly, not visualizing the universe, whom will he preach his siddhanta? If the universe is blank, where is the preacher, and who will be preached?” said Sakuntalamma.

“She is the wife of a Justice.” With an appreciation nodded Sastry.

Sakuntalamma blushed. Raghuramaiah became a little proud. “Tell it more clearly. If he preached before attaining siddhi we need not believe him since he did not experience the
Bliss. After he attained *siddhi* we will not be visible to him because the universe is not visible to him. Enough of it. Purushottam garu, please tell about another philosopher”.

“*Mahaveera*, the *Jaina* philosopher had introduced the tenet that *Aatma* will never be extinct. It is eternal, that means it will always be there”, elaborated Purushottam.

“Uh! Why that theory? Please tell how one attains eternal Bliss or endless happiness”.

“This *Aatma* enters into *nara* – human, *tiryak* – the animate and *sthaavara* – the inanimate bodies, that means, it changes into the human, animal and greens forms. It becomes as big or as small as the body it enters or changes into”.

“So grandpa! It becomes as small as an ant and stretches as big as an elephant. Isn’t it so?” asked Vinita.

“Yes my dear, by continuously changing over some ages, and on observing some regulations, that soul or *Aatma* rises up and up.” Said Purushottam.

“Is it so?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Yes”

“How high does it rise?”

“It is not known”

“This rising up and up - is it the happiness or eternal bliss?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“I don’t know that but remaining low is misery,” answered Purushottam.

“Will such a rise happens to the soul with the body or does the soul or *Aatma* leave the body and travel up” wanted Justice the elaboration.

“How do you ask like thus? When we say that the soul will be as big as the body, can it leave the body and travel up? If it does so, to what size does it transform and travel up?” asked Sakuntalamma.

Looking admiringly at her, said Raghuramaiah, “If it goes along with the body, the miseries of the body cannot be left out. If it leaves the body, the soul cannot have a size. Mr. Purushottam, is this rising up called the eternal and endless happiness or the eternal bliss? Is it called the *moksha*?”

“Yes. Some said that the removal of misery is *moksha* and some said this eternal and endless happiness is *moksha*”.  

“You were telling me it is not the arguments but that every statement of philosophy should be supported by authenticity – the *pramana*” Raghuramaiah asked tauntingly Purushottam.

Purushottam replied with a smile, “*Muktir moksho mahaanandah*” says the dictionary.”

“What is *mahaanandah*?” asked Sastry.
“A happiness unadulterated with misery”, elaborated Purushottam.

“Since it is the meaning given by the dictionary, tell about all those philosophers who have postulated accordingly,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Then don’t you want to know about philosophers like naiyayika, vais’eshika, saankhya etc.”?

“Did they define moksha differently?”

“They defined it in many different terms such as ‘extinction of misery’, ‘being totally unresponsive like a stone to the happiness and misery’, etc.”

“Let us not bother about them. Are there no more philosophers?”

“Why not? There is one class of philosophers called Poorva Meemaamsakas.”

“How do they define?”

“As per these Poorva Meemaamsakas apart from the human beings, inanimate beings and the objects what we see, there is also another group. But that group cannot be seen with our sensory organs.”

“What is that race?”

“They are the sura or the Deva class. Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, Varuna, Agni etc. belong to this class.”

“They are same Gods, whom we propitiate. What do they do and where are they?”

“Like this world, there are many worlds like Swarga – the heaven. They are not visible to these eyes nor can be felt with our sense organs. They live in such worlds. Whatever activities these human beings, animals, inanimate things etc do, they also do similar activities.”

“If we cannot know their existence with our organs, how do we know their existence? And how do we know that these Gods live there?”

“Before Columbus explored the America, West Indies etc. how do we know that there is America or West Indies? How do we know that there may be humans there? Whether Columbus explored these countries or not, they are there and there is no denial of this.”

“It was known only after Columbus had visited them and wrote about it.”

“Even if you have read it, how did you know? You have not seen these countries?”

“I don’t have to see these countries. It was not written by Columbus to deceive me or anybody.”

“Do you believe in all that is written if it is written without intention of deceiving anybody?”
“Why not? I read news in ‘The Hindu’ news paper, and see news in T.V. how can I say that I do not believe them?”

“Similarly there is a compendium which is written without the intention of deceiving anybody. That compendium is called the Veda. In the first part of that, it is written that there are Gods in worlds like Swarga.”

“You are trying to make me agree to the existence of Gods with your smart arguments. How can it be said that that the Veda or its authors do not have the intention to deceive?”

“The same way you believe that ‘The Hindu’ you read and T.V. that you see, do not deceive and you believe in the reports in them.”

“I understand the line of your arguments. You opine that there is no end if you start not believing. It is true. Let me believe that there exist Gods as you say, for the sake of it. Then..”

Immediately, getting up from her seat, Sakuntalamma went inside and brought handful of sugar and handed them down to Purushottam saying happily, “At last he said this at least for the sake of it. That is good enough for me.”

Raghuramaiah with uneasiness accused Sakuntalamma, “Did you ever say so clearly and nicely?” He asked Purushottam “What do these Gods or Devas do?”

“Grandpa, Grandpa, What about the demons, spirits etc. Which class they belong to? Is it not that they also cannot be seen by us.” asked Vinita.

“All these demons, evil spirits etc. do not belong to the human race or animals and plants, my dear Vinita. Since the only class left over is sura, all these classes, described by the Vedas, which elaborated the things that cannot be felt by sense organs, I suppose, may have to be put together with the class of sura only. There is no other way.”

“You have not told what all these Gods do”, asked Raghuramaiah.

“Every God is responsible for their scheduled duty For example, Brahma is responsible for creation, Vishnu for the protection and Rudra for destruction, Indra for creation of rains, Varuna for the protection of water, Kubera for the treasury, Agni for the courier service etc”, answered Purushottam.

“Do they also have duties like the tree is to give fruits and cow is to give milk?” exclaimed Raghuramaiah.

“Yes. They have specific duties. They cannot work as they like”.

“Then, why do we offer puja to them?”

“Why do we water the plants and trees? Why do we feed the cow?”

“It is because they give us fruits and milk. So do these Gods also are to be offered puja for bestowing some benefits to us”, said Raghuramaiah thoughtfully.
“No grandpa! The trees give us fruits even if we do not water them. So also must be Gods. Do the Gods give us all even if we don’t offer them puja?” enquired Vinita inquisitively.

“Yes my dear. It is so. Every God does certain specific duties whether we ask for those or not. By offering them puja, they do their duty with a little more affection towards us”.

“When we water the trees it will be beneficial for them and we get more fruits from them. But what benefit the puja gives the Gods?”

“Gods do not have bodies similar to our bodies. Their bodies are full of mantras – hymns. It is the mantras that are their bodies.”

“Ha! Ha! How do they look like? Grandpa!”

“Vinita! Stop your irrelevant questioning. Then, Sir! When we recite mantras, and when we do homam with mantras does it give strength to the Gods?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Yes madam. The Gods become happy with our pujas, japa and paarayanam – the recitals of holy texts, and fulfill our wishes.”

“Do they fulfill any wish?” asked Sastry. This explanation is interesting him.

“Do we get any fruit from any tree? Whichever tree has to give that fruit, it will give that only. By giving more water and fertilizer, the fruits given by the tree do not get changed.”

“Then, we have to propitiate different Gods according to the wish we want to be fulfilled. A lot of people do offer prayers to all Gods for every thing!”

“They are ignorant. But, for getting specific fruit, we need specific tree. But, if we want shade or green leaves or the wood, all trees practically give us these. Like-wise all Gods can bestow some common benefits.”

Raghuramaiah, deeply engrossed in analysing till then, intervened, “From the discussions so far we had I conclude as follows- ‘In this creation, there are four divisions called sura, nara, tiryak, sthaavara i.e., Gods, humans, animate and inanimate respectively. All of them are trying to obtain happiness by cooperating with each other.’ Is it not?”

“Yes! Yes!” relieved was Purushottam, being ascertained that he had been able to explain mostly so that everybody understood the subject matter.

“Sir, we have in our prayer room an arrangement called panchayatanam consisting of Vishnu, Rudra, Ganes’a, Ambika and Surya, and we have been offering prayers to this panchayatanam. Do we belong to the category of philosophers or tattvavettins called Poorva Meemaamsakas?” asked Sastry to clear his doubt that had been bothering him from within.

Purushottam elaborated “Probably so. So many branches and sub branches have come up. I cannot tell very clearly, but many of your families don’t know this. Neither they are particular about it. You do not have inequalities in Gods. Inequalities mean importance wise
as in the case of trees. You offer prayers more for that God who fulfills your particular wish. You offer daily-prayers to all the Gods.”

“Then, what is moksha in the tenets of these Meemaamsins? How does one achieve the eternal bliss or eternal happiness?”

“By performing yajna and yaaga the Gods are made to be satisfied and with their blessing, reach their worlds, enjoy all that is there. After that enjoyment is completed while coming back to this world…” “What is coming back?” interrupted Vinita.

“We have already spoken that there is something called Aaatma or the soul. That soul begets the different bodies depending upon the meritorious deeds or evil deeds. These bodies may belong to either the sura – the celestials, or nara – the human beings, or tiryak – the animates, or sthaavara – the inanimates. In other words, the Aaatma or soul travels through and from the bodies of celestials or human beings or the animate or the inanimates. This is called the samsaara or cycle of births and deaths. Coming out of this cycle is called moksha – the salvation!”

“It means moksha or salvation is not having a rebirth. Is it not so, Purushottam garu?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Yes madam, the Poorva Meemaamsakas have stated that the Aaatma does not have rebirth when we perform the pujas, parayana, homa, japa etc without any aspirations or desires, resulting in realization of self or aaatmajnaana. Their performance or rituals propel in that way. But most of them do not know this and are swept away.”

“If having no rebirth is the characteristic of the salvation or moksha svaroopa, where is the eternal or endless bliss here?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“I do not know” curtly said Purushottam.

Raghuramaiah observed that he is keeping away some secret. He changed the topic intending to ask for the secret of the subject to be revealed at an opportune moment later. “That is OK. There has to be somebody to control these four categories of sura, nara, tiryak and sthaavara. He should be observing if everybody is doing his duty or not and reward or punish them respectively for approximately performing or abdicating their duties. There has to be a person who, in your language, is the person to bestow the fruits of the meritorious or punya deeds or the heinous or bad or papa deeds.”

“That was what the Vedantins, another class of philosophers had to say”, said Purushottam.

“Who are these great persons? Sir!” asked Raghuramaiah. “Sage Vyaasa Bhagavan himself said this” elaborated Purushottam, “ in his Brahma Sutras a great treatise from him on the basis of the second part of the Vedas i.e., the Upanishads. It is mentioned in that that there is one entity, which is qualitatively different than any of these four categories and further, elaborated that, that entity can be called as Para Brahma or Paramaaaatma or Bhagavan – Supreme Godhead. He defined moksha or salvation as unlimited happiness or eternal bliss. It was made clear by him that there is only one unique person or entity of this Paramaaaatma or Para Brahma.”

“What are his characteristics?” asked Sastry.
“That is the problem. Everybody has interpreted Sage Vyasa’s writing according to their intelligence and liking. Some said Narayana is that Paramaaatma and his incarnation is Vishnu in the category of celestials, Rama in human beings. Some others said that Paramaaatma is Pas ‘upati, and his image is Rudra in Devas. Whatever dispute was there by that time became more proclaimed starting with the question of whether Vishnu is greater or Siva is greater than the other, became more severe and the difference of Siva and Kes ‘ava had become more prominent.”

“I am understanding it better now”, said Sastry. “Without knowing the difference between Paramaaatma and Gods or celestials, the characteristics of Paramaaatma and Gods or celestials, were interchanged and instead of saying Paramaaatma is one and unique, it is said that God or celestial is one. Is it not so?”

“Yes. This confusion still exists even today in most of us. This philosophy can be well understood only by those who are clear that Paramaaatma or Para-Brahma or Bhagavan is qualitatively different from the Gods.”

“Then, how is the dispute of Siva and Kes’ava resolved?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Is it resolved?” smiled Purushottam. “Like what we say that the dispute of one tribe is resolved by an entirely different clan, another intelligent man came and deflated saying that there is neither Siva nor Kes’ava, everything is a myth, and Paramaaatma or Bhagavan is sans attributes.”

“Is it not Monism or advaita?” confirmed Raghuramaiah.

“Yes. The rest of them are primarily either qualified monists – Vis’ishtadvaitins or dualists – the Dvaitins. Along with Advaitins, all of them make the category of Vedantins.”

“Let me summarise what has been said so far. In case there is any misinterpretation please correct me,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Yes please” Purushottam said preparing himself.

“Bhagavan is the one who controls the sura, nara, tiryak and sthaavara. He may be called as Paramaaatma. Gods mean Suras. They are many. Calling Paramaaatma as God has become practice, which is not proper. Mentioning Gods as Paramaaatma or Bhagavan is much more foolishness.

We must approach the different Gods according to the different wishes, as we approach the different species of trees, persons etc for different requirements. A person without any desires can take refuge in Paramaaatma directly. He is the only one capable of stopping the cycle of the births and deaths.

Even if we have some worldly desires, Paramaaatma can bestow them. It is just like approaching the owner of a number of orchards, who is ready to give any variety of fruits, as we require, instead of going to the individual tree for that individual fruit variety. Similarly, once the characteristics of Paramaaatma are known, there is no further need to approach these individual Gods.

The owner of the orchards and gardens will be offended when we damage the trees and plants even when the owner is our own person. Similarly, thinking that
Paramaaatma is in our fold, our duty is conducting ourselves properly giving due respect to every type of the categories like sura, nara, tiryak and sthaavara, without misbehaving towards any body. It is like damaging the various trees in the gardens and orchards considering that the owner is our own man.” Concluded Raghuramaiah.

Clapping loudly, Vinita said with a laugh. “Ah! Grandpa has read out the judgement.”

“I do not know what is bestowed by God Satyanarayana Swami on us. What is his duty amongst Gods?” said Sakuntalamma

“Ask Sastry” evaded Purushottam.

“What is there? It will be known by checking the list of Gods in the first part of the Vedas”, said Raghuramaiah.

‘I am not sure whether this Satyanarayana Swami is there in that list.’ Mumbled Sastry.

“What did you say? It is not audible,” said Sakuntalamma.

“That only, madam! Where can we get that list of the Gods, after going through these four the Vedas? I am asking Purushottam garu to find a way out,” said Sastry.

Purushottam was laughing to himself. “ You may refer to the book ‘Aarsha Vijnana Sarvasvam’ published by TTD. It is detailed there which Gods are spelt out in which of the Vedas” diplomatically said Purushottam getting up.

“Sir! Before closing the discussion and getting up, please answer my question. After all do you say that there are Gods and Bhagavan?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“I shall answer that question” Sakuntalamma came forward to answer the question. “Neither he nor you have seen whether they are there or not. He says they are there. You say they are not there. He doesn’t loose any thing if really they are not there, nor you loose any thing. In case they are there he is saved. But you will have trouble from those Gods or Bhagavan”

Purushottam got up laughing at her answer. Raghuramaiah was hurt for that answer. Coming out of hurt, he said, “Tell me if that Bhagavan has a figure and name if at all.”

I shall answer that,” said Sastry. “Let us say that there exists neither. No problem for either those who say aye or nay. But if they exist, for the people saying nay, Oh my God! Good Heavens! ” Saying so he along with Purushottam walked out slowly.

Retired Justice Raghuramaiah, his wife Sakuntalamma and Vinita saw them off.
Chapter - 2

It was nearing 7 O’clock in the morning. Raghuramaiah dressed up after taking a shower and came out of his room. He saw the same sight as usual at that time.

Sakuntalamma was performing puja in the prayer room. He, in his usual way, should have twisted his lips, taken the newspaper and waited in the lounge looking forward for the breakfast to be served by Sakuntalamma soon after her puja. Instead he stood there for a minute observing those pictures of Gods. Quadriheaded one, another lying on a coiled serpent, another three eyed one, another leading four dogs, one more with an elephant face, another sitting on the heels, yet another Goddess riding a tiger, the other goddess raining gold coins… what sort of forms these Gods and Goddesses have?

‘Who said that they look like these? Are there really so many details in the Veda as mentioned by Purushottam? After all, do these Gods really exist?’ immediately a feeling of some fear lurked somewhere in the mind of Raghuramaiah. Never earlier it happened like this. Some thing is amiss in the mind. If they are really there, the idea that they may trouble those, who said that they do not exist, bothered him mildly. He stayed there motionless.

Vinita, who came out just then, saw her grandfather, standing motionless. She took it that he wants something and called her granny Sakuntalamma, disturbing her single-minded devotion, performing puja ritual. Saying “No, No, Nothing” Raghuramaiah moved away from there. Even then Sakuntalamma came out and looked at him passionately and asked, “Shall I serve you the breakfast?”

“No. Let your puja be over. I am not in a hurry,” said Raghuramaiah. She warmly touched him and asked, “Are you alright?” Raghuramaiah’s eyes became moist. Not knowing why, he was feeling uneasy. ‘What is happening to me’ he thought.

She did not leave even though he said he was all right. “Shall I call the doctor?” she asked. Saying no to her, he vented out his thoughts.

“Ever since Purushottam gave that lecture yesterday, I had been asking my self whether there was any thing wrong in my thought process. Some thing void in my mind had been bothering me.”

Sakuntalamma understood. “Look! This is what is called blessing of God. Once you start believing in God, it is so carefree, you know!”

He regained normalcy from his fluid mental status. “How carefree is it?” asked he with a little sarcasm.

“Consider that carefree state which you had when you were traveling with your father or uncle in your childhood. You were so carefree with the thought of assurance that every thing will be taken care of by them. That much carefree you will be” said she.

“What would have happened if that reassuring father or uncle was not there really?”

“Why should I argue with you, interrupting my puja? After all, it isn’t new to me. Wait a little while. There is no hurry. Let me finish the puja fully and then I shall serve the breakfast.” saying with some disgust, left Sakuntalamma.
He started looking for the answer in his own thoughts. “What difference does it make even if He, considering Him being there, does not exist? It does not make any difference in traveling to reach the destination whether that father or uncle is there or not there, but the tension of traveling alone, will not be there when it is considered that He exists.” So ran his thoughts.

Vinita came with some books while he was engrossed in his thoughts. There was one photo frame along with the books. Showing it she asked “Grandpa! What is the meaning of this?”

“Wherefrom did you get this?” saying so he looked at the picture in the frame and read the details written there. He was amazed at that. He read it again and again. He was feeling somehow. He went back into the fluid state of mind.

“My friend gave it to me about ten days back” answered Vinita. He was looking at Vinita with sharp looks. ‘Why she should bring it now, when she got it ten days back? Did this little girl know my thoughts? Or was she inspired by somebody, who knew about it? Who else is there besides Sakuntalamma? She is busy with her puja. Is it some invisible force?’ He was shaken by this idea. He was becoming uneasy again.

“Tell Grandpa!” insisted Vinita. He became composed and started. “Once upon a time there was a devout person. He had lot of faith and belief in God. He was feeling that God was moving along with him and speaking to him all the time. All his friends were making fun of him calling him a madman…“ Saying so he was staring into the photo. The picture in that was very beautiful. Large sea was the background. Sand dunes were there as long as one can see. One human being looking very calm was walking away on the sand dunes. Looking big in the beginning and as he was going away they looked smaller and smaller were his footmarks. After he had gone very far he was looking back and was saying something. This is the picture in that photo frame, extremely beautiful indeed.

“Grandpa…” nudged Vinita. “Yes, yes, listen. One day that devout was walking along with Bhagavan on the seashore. He was going along talking with Bhagavan. It was dawn. Nobody else was there except these two. After going a long distance, the devout turned back for some thing. He saw his footprints looking very beautiful and clear. ‘Aha! I am walking along with Bhagavan. But why only my footprints are seen here? Where are the footprints of Bhagavan?’ he was looking for His footprints, but could not find them.

He became very sad. He cried loud. “Oh Lord! I was care free thinking you are with me and coming along with me. Were you not coming really? Were you not with me? If you were coming with me, why could I find only one set of footprints? Lord! Am I under an illusion that you are there? Is it true, what all my friends make fun of me? Am I a mad man? Alas! Are you really not with me?” So saying, he was loudly crying” Raghuramaiah halted for a breath. “Then? What happened?” Vinita was not able to sustain suspense. Raghuramaiah was looking into the picture again for details. “Having read it, tell quickly, I have lot of work to do,” said Sakuntalamma from behind.

‘When did she come and where from?’ asking himself Raghuramaiah continued. “Meanwhile that devout heard from the skies. ‘O my devotee! Have you seen only one set of footprints? You are crying thinking that they are your footprints. But they are mine! Because
I am carrying you on my shoulders, you will find only one set of footprints. You should know that.’

“Look! What a real word!” said Sakuntalamma with tears in her eyes? She became responsive.

“All those activities which we say ‘we are walking, we are doing’ etc. are all being got done by Him. But we consider that we are doing all that ourselves. That’s all” She composed herself and saying, “Come, have breakfast,” she walked to the dining table.

The air becoming serious, Vinita followed her without a word. Raghuramaiah while taking the breakfast, wanted to make the scene lighter and asked, “Why did you tell Purushottam yesterday that you did not study much?”

“After all, what is my education!” said Sakuntalamma with some humility. She was awarded Gold Medal in M.A Economics long time back. But she does not show off.

“We get that much respect as much humility we show. More over, I didn’t do any study in the subject of God. What can I boast in front of Purushottam who is considered to be a well-read person in that subject? I remember to have read a quote somewhere. It says that all those studies which cannot beget you nearness to God are as worthless as the art of stitching the shoes.”

Raghuramaiah looked admiringly at Sakuntalamma. ‘There is a lot to learn from here” he thought. “One more idly” Sakuntalamma was dropping one in the plate of Vinita when she shouted smiling” unhappiness has arrived” and negated it with her hand itself.

Both grandparents were taken back in the beginning, but understood immediately and started laughing heartily. “She had well taken it to heart, whatever Purushottam garu explained. Her manner is like the sparrow small in size but big in her voice. Though she is only seven year old, she understands like a girl of fifteen. She understands well and manages well.”

“Have you noticed that she was asking her tutor ten days ago about the graphs in the news paper showing the market prices, population etc. She will not heed when asked why do you need all that now”, Sakuntalamma complained affectionately.

“Did he explain to you? Have you understood?”

“Ya! Very well. Should I explain?” she started to explain.

“Stop. Stop. I have enough work. First both of you get up from here.” She hastened both of them.

Sitting in the sofa Raghuramaiah asked Vinita taking newspaper into the hands, “Vinita, at what time will your tutor be here?”

“In another half-an-hour” She came nearer to him. “Grandpa, won’t you explain a little more about the happiness, unhappiness which were explained to you yesterday by Purushottam garu,” asked she.

Looking at her affectionately, he asked her,”Bring pen and paper.”
“You said that you know about graphs. Listen carefully”, he started to explain with all his intelligence all, that which was explained by Purushottam to him.

“We get happiness when we eat some snacks which we like. Suppose that happiness can be measured, if it can be measured as five measures of happiness or ten measures. Do you know how the graph looks like? Let us put the number of snacks on the x-axis. Let the snacks be laddus.”

“No let them be Vadas in mustard and curd.” said Vinita. “OK. Let them be so. Vadas on X-axis and measure of happiness on y-axis. Then the graph will be like this” He drew the graph and showed her.

“This shows that as you go on increasing the number of Vadas eaten, the happiness becomes nil and it even goes into the negative y-axis or it turns out to be unhappiness”

“Grandpa! Sir Purushottam told that it applies not only to Vadas but in observing cricket match on T.V., listening to Music, smelling perfumes, feeling the air under fan, and in fact it will be like this in every activity.”

“Yes my dear, any work is like that only. It increases happiness only to some extent. After that it turns out to be all unhappiness. That is why we change the works we do”

“Grandpa! This applies to my tuition also, Na?” asked Vinita with her lips hiding the smile.
“This is her trick. Look, how she is planning to bunk the tuition, when that poor Avadhani garu comes all the way from such a long distance,” Sakuntalamma hooted Vinita out from there asking her to pick up her books.

Sitting by the side of Raghuramaiah, she said, “Look, it is said that what we require are four categories, said to be dharma, artha, kaama and moksha. Will they also have the same characteristics like this graph?”

“May not be like this,” thoughtfully he said, “Their graphical representation may be like this if we follow what he has talked yesterday,” and showed her the graph No. 2.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhappiness</th>
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<td>Kama (Wish)</td>
<td>Artha (Wealth)</td>
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“Kaama means wish. We can say it as personal and physical wish. This belongs to the person only. So, it also transforms into unhappiness soon after some enjoyment just like eating Vadas and laddus.

Artha means wealth. The person and his family members together enjoy it. So it gives happiness, which may last a little longer than the happiness obtained from kaama, but soon this also transforms into unhappiness.

To talk of Dharma, This has mostly to do with society. Feeding the poor or building water tanks etc, as long as they are helpful to the people around us, give us happiness. But this also leads ultimately to unhappiness“, said Raghuramaiah.

Sakuntalamma intervened, “Yes. Those who perform Dharma deeds beget the good worlds. So happiness may be more. But after the effect of Dharma deed is exhausted, they come back to the nether worlds and so unhappiness is inevitable.”

“If there is anything which gives inexhaustible happiness, it may be said that enjoying that is moksha,” said Raghuramaiah.
“Why do you say that ‘if’? Did not Purushottam garu say that the thing which is called Bhagavan is the same?”

“Yes. But,” he shrugged his shoulders and slid into thoughts. She leaned back in the sofa. Yesterday was ekaadasi – the eleventh day in the lunar fortnight. She was on fast. Day before that was busy time with Satyanarayana Puja. Before that, she suffered from fever and head ache. With all this she was very weak.

Raghuramaiah was immersed in his thoughts. ‘Kaama, artha, dharma and moksha – this is the normal sequence in life. How did the usage ‘dharma, artha, kaama and moksha’ become popular? May be Purushottam has an answer!’

Not only that. Another point strikes mind. It is not only happiness turning into unhappiness while enjoying some thing. The happiness may become unhappiness depending upon the time and place also.

That means, if at all there is Bhagavan, how should he have been? By enjoyment with Him, wherever or whenever it may be, the happiness must be only increasing but never decreasing. Is it not?”

“…..”. He did not listen to the answer. Saying, “Sakuntala! Why are you not speaking?” looked to the side. He saw a tired and weak Sakuntalamma and became worried. “Hey, Vinita! Ring up the Doctor Noone and ask him to come immediately,” said he.

Vinita rang up and Dr. Noone came. He checked her up and put her on saline drip. It all happened very fast.

Dr. Noone’s full name is Noone Subrahmanyeswara Rao. He is from Sakuntalamma’s place and is her close relative. He is very close to her and she calls him by his first name. He is a peculiar type of person. He says that all the talk of the Veda and Brahmins is all bunkum and all such things are there only to cheat the public. He hates the Babas and Swamijis. He considers them to be parasites feeding on the society. He wanted all to call him as Dr. N .S. Rao since he hated the name Subrahmanyam.

As time passed, he got his name changed to Dr. S. R. Noone by a gazette notification. He likes to use only things that are natural and useful to the humanity. He says that things, like sandal, flowers etc. are waste. When somebody tries to make fun of his surname, which incidentally means oil in Telugu, he starts giving a lecture on uses of oil. He is the family doctor of Raghuramaiah. An expert Doctor he is. Raghuramaiah does not take liberty with him but Sakuntalamma, being a close relative, gives him a bit of her mind once in a while.

Dr. Noone started his usual advice. “Aunty, why do you observe this fasting etc and damage the body? Do you know how foolish it is to starve the body like this for some happiness in some Heavens, at some time in a very distant future? Who said that there is Heaven, God etc? I take pity on you, for believing some body that wrote something for the sake earning a few bucks. It makes me angry with you also.”

“Stop your usual blabber,” said Sakuntalamma with disgust, “neither you stop your chatter nor I stop what I do.”

Raghuramaiah remembered the previous day’s talk by Purushottam. He felt that he could learn more.
“Then, Subrahmanyam! All this what you talk, is it from some philosophical system or your own conclusions?” asked Raghuramaiah.

Dr. is angry with him considering that he doesn’t recognize his name change. But restrains himself giving regard to his age and position. He is asking about his system of philosophy today! He started to talk about it with lot of enthusiasm.

“Our system is called ‘Lokayatam’ and its followers are called ‘lokayats’. The word ‘locum’ is derived from the word ‘Lukas’ in Latin and ‘loucus’ in Lithuanian language. It is said that the word means, cutting down the forests, vacant land, fields etc. These lokayats were cutting down the forests and laboured to make them into cultivated fields. One can get all that is due, by working hard in this world. There is nothing more than this. This is the tenet of our system.”

Avadhani came while he was elaborating the philosophy. Avadhani is tutor for Vinita. He is a little less than middle aged, and an intelligent person. He studied both English and Sanskrit extensively. He does not need to work for an earning. He is rich from paternal wealth. One day, Raghuramaiah, saw a boy injured and lying on road unattended and saved his life by picking up and admitting him in a hospital. That boy happened to be Avadhani’s son. The family was a worried one for two days not knowing what happened to the boy. When they came to know of Raghuramaiah’s deed, they were extremely grateful to him. Avadhani wanted to pay him something in return but Raghuramaiah declined such an offer. On insistence from Avadhani it was agreed that he should tutor Vinita, though it was not needed. Vinita was intelligent. Her intelligence became more polished after Avadhani’s tutoring. He explains vividly a lot more information in addition to the school subjects.

Vinita had gone into verandah to receive him and told him about her grand mother’s weakness and the doctor’s visit. He came directly inside and enquired about the welfare and sat down.

“Ha! Proceed,” Raghuramaiah inspired Dr. Noone to continue.

“This Lokayatam, our system, is promoted by Brihaspati or Jupiter. It is a very old system. Kautilya in his Arthas’astra mentions it also. In your Mahabharata, it is mentioned that King Drupada got it specially narrated to him. It is said that as per Aranya Parva of Mahabharata, that Draupadi and her brothers had learnt about it at that time.”

“It may be so. I am not interested in its greatness. Please tell about the subject,” said Raghuramaiah.

Avadhani was also listening with interest.

“You people say that there is something called aatma. Our system does not accept such proposition. If you insist, then the body itself is aatma. Or the being alive is aatma. Further if you insist, mind itself is aatma. That is all”, said the doctor with a smile mixed with a little fun.

“If there is no life in the body, isn’t it that the body will not move?”

Doctor intervened in the middle of Raghuramaiah’s talking.
“Wait, Wait. Listen further about our system. This body is made up of earth, water, air and heat. The birth is, when all the four combine and when they are separated, it is death. There is nothing after the death. There is neither heaven nor hell. There is nothing, called moksha or salvation. There is no question of rebirth at all. So as long as we are alive ...”

Raghuramaiah stopped him at this point.

“Wait. There is no life or thinking power to any one of these elements – earth, air, water and heat. You say that the body is a combination of all the four. How did life and animism come to the body?”

“Oh! Is this your doubt?” laughed off Dr. Noone as though it is an insignificant one. “Betel leaf is green. Lime is white. Areca nut is black. All three put together in pan along with saliva in one’s mouth, reddens the tongue. How does it happen? In the same way when different things with different properties combine, a new characteristic might be produced.”

“How do you say that there is no aatma or soul and rebirth?”

“How can you tell they are there?” continued the doctor with a counter. “They are not there since you can not see them. If there is soul or aatma, it should be recognized by any one of the eye, ear, nose, skin or tongue. Then only it can be believed.”

“You will believe only when it is seen physically. Isn’t it?”

“Yes. We do not believe even in inferences or others’ statements. That is why we do not like the talk ‘Heaven and hell are there since they were told so by the Vedas. You must perform rites as per S’astras – the scriptures.’ We are in fact against such talk.”

“What is inference?”

“Seeing smoke on the hill and inferring that there is fire on the hill.”

“Don’t you believe that also? Strange!”

“What do you think of us? We are so strict,” said Dr. Noone proudly. “We must see to believe in it.”

“Will you not believe when your own man says also?”

“No. Do not believe means do not believe. We must see to believe some thing even if our own man says so. Otherwise we have to believe that man to be speaking only truth. That again is an inference only. That person may be speaking, only truth, but we are not sure, whether he tells knowing it or not. It is impossible that there is a person who knows every thing. So for us the Veda is not authentic. There is neither Supreme God head – Bhagavan or Gods – the Devas. There is neither ‘heaven nor hell’ nor there are punya or papa Karmas – the deeds.

If you think little carefully, you will know. ‘The dead man is in the world of pitr, one should perform s’raaddha every year’ say the Brahmins and they come and eat stomach-full on that day. If you feed here and there above somebody will be fed, one at the ground level
can eat so that the person upstairs will have his stomach full. If that is the case, half of starvation in the country will be eradicated.”

“It is said that by sacrificing an animal in yajna, that animal will be earning Swarga or heaven. If that is so why one does not sacrifice his father in yajna? All this mesmerism, talisman, obtaining vibhuti from nothing, reciting mantra etc. is all humbug, cheating.” Filled with lot of emotion, Dr. Noone completed his statement.

Raghuramaiah might have approved this type of talk earlier, but now he became a little uneasy. The reason is not known. He does not know how to say ‘No’ to this. Avadhani also listened without a word.

Happy that the audience could not contradict his statements, Dr. Noone continued with veiled smiles. “It is unethical to suppress the desires in the name of controlling the senses. Since there is nothing called papa or punya deeds and there is no heaven or hell, people must enjoy in the world. God is none other than the rulers now. If punishment has to be meted out, they should punish. No body else can do that. Similar is with rewards. This controlling the senses, abstention from sexual intercourse, Oordhva re'taska etc. is all bunkum and is a waste. When the bladder is full, the urine will get discharged. Similar is the case with semen. If urine discharge is controlled, there will be problem. Similar is with control of semen discharge. Is it understood?”

Everybody was listening like statues. Vinita, who is there, felt that every thing is understood, but this word semen, she could not understand.

“Uncle! What is this se…” she was going to ask Poor girl! That is it. “Shut up your mouth” Sakuntalamma shouted at her. “ Go. Go to your room and study your books. What have you to do with elders here?”

Vinita was dumbfounded and left for other room. “What is this blabber, without noticing the presence of child?” she became angry with Dr. Noone.

“That is the deficiency in our society. What is there for young or old? It is a nature’s secret. Today, our society is being held to ransom by diseases like AIDS, because we hide like this. Why this should not be talked? All should know everything. Sex education is very important. This silence should be broken. It is injurious to the society to hide natural events. Suppressing the desires is the cause of misery.” Like this Dr. Noone is on a rage.

Sakuntalamma became ferocious with all that weakness. “ What is that you are blabbering? Do we have to bare all the nature’s secrets? Should it be told? You fellow! Why should we all cover our bodies with clothes? We could also wander bare like animals! Are you not ashamed of telling like this? You say that there is nothing like good deeds or bad deeds. Is there no need to control the sensory organs? When we see a lady traveling in bus or train and she is beautiful, we can behave with her, as we like, if authorities do not control. What a system? Is there no necessity for moral values if there is no punishment? Hey! It is essential for a human to behave. Can your rulers be everywhere and control all the time? They cannot and will not. So, will everybody behave as he wishes? He, who can control anywhere any time, is the real ruler. He is called Paramaatma.”

The number of wishes he is delivering does not measure one’s greatness, but how successfully he is helping the society with his good behaviour. The laws have been enacted keeping in view such good and decent behaviour, to punish the misbehaviour of
the people. The guiding principle, for such laws, is our constitution. Similarly, there is
the necessity to control the conduct of people in all the countries of all times. The
statutes teach such behaviour, and that is Saastra. The basic source for such Saastra is
our sacred Veda.

How can you say that the study of the Vedas is wicked and fraud just because it is being
misused by a few? Are there no persons misusing the provisions of our constitution? Is it the
mistake of the constitution or the persons misusing it? How can we say that we will not
accept constitution just because a few miscreants are misusing the constitution?

Are there not fake doctors who boast that they have studied M.B.B.S.? Are they not
playing with lives of gullible patients? Just because there are such fake doctors, shall we
say that the course study of M.B.B.S. is bad? In the same way, just because of some
fake Vedic scholars, who do not know the Vedas but pose as if they are masters in the
Vedic studies and cheat the public, the fault does not lie with the Vedas but with the
selfishness of the public, which is growing exponentially.

Is the doctor who properly studied M.B.B.S. honest? When a patient visits him, is he
not extracting money from patient in the name of so many tests, whether they are really
required or not? Is it not that a patient who comes with indigestion being operated for
appendicitis? Are they not performing caesarean section, just for the sake of earning lot
more bucks, even when it should have been a normal child delivery? Which profession
is, not afflicted by cheating syndrome? Just because of such conditions, can we say the
profession is wrong?

Is inference not acceptable to you? Will you not believe anybody’s statements? How
have you come to know system of Lokayatam to be very old? Have you seen or do you
believe somebody telling so? Why do you labour with unnecessary arguments?”

Why go to that extent? Have you not come here, believing Vinita’s calling you saying
that I am not well? You would not have come had you not believed her. Do not tell such time
wasting talk any more. Go away. First of all, go out.”

Raghuramaiah, with surprise, watched her fiercely lambasting. He noticed, personally, for
the first time, her sense of logic and discerning capabilities.

Dr. Noone, with his face red, rashly left the place. He did not even greet Purushottam,
who met him face to face at the main gate.

Purushottam, surprised, came in and asked. “What is the matter? Why is the doctor
leaving in angry mood? He didn’t even reciprocate the greeting offered by me. He is our
family doctor also.”

“Welcome.” All greeted him. Raghuramaiah straightened the things out by saying, “His
aunt has told him something. That’s all.”

“Sir, have water,” said Sakuntalamma with customary welcome enquiries.

“Avadhani garu, in fact, what is the meaning of ‘Lokayatam’?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Lokeshu aayatah lokaayatah – the view, which is prevailing in the public- people. ‘Let
us be happy as long as we live. Desires and wealth are the only purushaarthas, or goals
of all aspirations and endeavours. That is all that is needed by us. This worldly view is ‘Lokaayatam’. The philosophy, dars’ana, or system of religion, which bases its ideology on this worldly things, is Lokaayatam”, elaborated Avadhani garu.

“Why did that topic come now?” Purushottam asked with surprise.”

“It is this topic with which that Subrahmanyam landed in trouble”, said Raghuramaiah.

Purushottam understood the matter since he knew what Dr. Noone is. “This ‘Lokaayatam’ is also called ‘C’aarvaaka dars’ana.”

“It is said that this name is derived from ‘C’aarvaaka’, the name of a Brahmin, who founded one category of philosophy. He blamed Dharmaraja for killing all his relatives and teachers after the Mahabharata war was over, as told in S’aantiparva of Mahabharata. All the rest of Brahmins killed him subsequently. Some say that he may be the founder of this category of philosophy.”

“That founder and this C’aarvaaka might not be the same”, said Avadhani. “Traces of this ‘c’aarvaaka’ philosophy are noticed right from the Rig-Veda period. Probably it is derived from words ‘c’aar’ and ‘vaak’. ‘C’aar’ means beautiful and ‘vaak’ means speech. If somebody said, “eat and drink as you like, no body will interfere,” who will not like it?”

“Yes, it might be so also. The Dhaatu or verb-root ‘charv’ means ‘to eat’. It means to enjoy. Everybody would like unrestricted enjoyment,” said Purushottam.

“I doubt if really someone propounded such a system of religion. The supporter of this much of unrestricted freedom cannot be there during any period. Even if it were there, such system wouldn’t have come into so much prominence. I feel that there is some exaggeration in this”, Raghuramaiah expressed his doubt.

“We can’t say. Presently, books on this ‘Lokaayatam’ or ‘C’aarvaaka system of philosophy are not available. A Buddhist scholar named ‘Chandrakeerthi’ had mentioned in his writings that there is a book named ‘Sutras of Brihaspati’. It is mentioned in the books on Jainism that ‘Purandara was one of the authors of c’aarvaaka philosophy’. Some books were published in 1921 and 1940 as books on c’aarvaaka system. But nobody had taken them as authentic. Pundit Nehru had opined that the c’aarvaaka system could have been destroyed by its opponents.”

“Then how did the details about c’aarvaaka system come to light?”

“The basis to know about that system is the writings by the Buddhist, Jainas and other Vedantins who attempted to oppose it. There is no other possibility.”

“There must have been exaggerations in such a case. The person wanting to oppose, would show them obscenely and oppose. So it is not dependable”, concluded Raghuramaiah.

Avadhani picked up the thread and continued. “S’ankaraachaarya has written in his ‘Brahmasutra Bhaashya’ almost similar tenets as basics of ‘Lokaayata Siddhaanta’. If his writings are considered to be exaggerations, then the rest of the book written by him is also to be considered as questionable.”
“That is not my view”, slipped out Raghuramaiah. “How is it, that it is said sage Brihaspati is the author of this? Is he not the preceptor of the Devas – the celestials? How could he write that the Vedas are not authentic? If he writes like that will it not put his own existence as questionable?”

“To save Indra, Brihaspati had taken the form of S’ukraachaarya, the preceptor of Asuras – the demons, and preached that ‘one should believe only that which is seen by oneself and nobody needs to believe what others say.’ Thus he had destroyed the Asuras. This was what was narrated in ‘Maitraayani Upanishat.’ Based on that, one religion, in the name of Brihaspati as founder, has come into prominence which precepts that what is seen is the only authenticity,” explained further Avadhani.

“Not only that. It is mentioned in ‘Vishnu Puraana’ that the Asuras were deceived by the magic of Vishnu Maya to follow this dars’ana and were eliminated”, added Purushottam.

“Who are these Asuras, by the by?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Asatyamapraitishtham te’ jagadaahu ranees‘varam, aparaspara sambhootam kimanyat kaamahaitukam.” This is 8th verse in 16th chapter of Bhagavad-Gita. It defines the Asuras, as follows: They maintain: that the universe is without truth, without any foundation and without a Lord or Is‘vara. Everything can exist only with mutual causation. It has lust or kaama for its cause.’ In other words, Asuras are those persons who maintain that there is nobody who is controlling us and the universe, and the evolution happened and continues to happen only by us.” Avadhani looked at all of them to check whether he could make them understand.

“There is a story in ‘Chaandogya Upanishat’. Virochana, the king of Asuras, and Indra – the king of Devas did penance for 32 years. They requested Brahma to teach them the Aatmajnaana or the knowledge of soul and Dars’anas. He has told them that they should see themselves in the pot filled with water, to understand what soul means.

Both of them saw themselves without clothes first and then wearing the clothes and ornaments. They saw themselves as they were. Immediately Virochana decided ‘Aatma is this body only. We must serve this body only and we should protect this. There is nothing more than this’. He went to his people and taught them accordingly and all of them were made to follow him. From that time it has come into usage that Asuras and Lokaayatas are the same. Indra was not satisfied with that explanation and went back to Brahma, pursued and received the Jnaana,” vividly explained Purushottam.

“But, our fellow, this Dr. Noone, says differently. He says that he will not believe in inference or deduction. How does he say that he will not believe in anything told by anybody? He says, he will believe only in what is seen by him,” asked Raghuramaiah.

“It appears that the C’aarvaaka of old times and present-day C’aarvaaka are different. C’aarvaaka system of old-times, which allowed conducting oneself without any controls, might have died down long ago. There is no chance of the old system’s remnants being there in the Doctor. But he takes the name of Brihaspati. Since you have asked for the details, let me tell. Listen carefully. We obtain knowledge in three ways. The first is through the sensory organs. This is called prat�aksha Jnaana. The inferred knowledge based on the prat�aksha is called anumaana Jnaana. Doctor must have used the word imagination due to his not knowing the proper technical word anumaana for that. In addition to the above, the word of well-wisher is called s’abda Jnaana.”
“Since anumaana is doubt, he said he would not believe imagination. It suits,” said Raghuramaiah.

“No, No. Anumaana does not mean doubt. Inference is the correct word for that,” said Purushottam.

“Please elaborate,” asked Raghuramaiah.

“You see the fire on the hill. So we have pratyaksha Jnaana, which tells us that there is fire on the hill. No problem with this. Suppose you see only smoke on the hill. Then we come to conclusion that there is fire on the hill. How did we conclude? We are seeing day in day out in our kitchens etc. the relationship that exists between fire and smoke. So we applied that knowledge to the smoke on the hill and concluded that there is fire on the hill, by connecting the smoke, which is visible, with the fire, which is known to be associated with smoke, from our experience. This is anumaana Jnaana.”

“Yes. This suits. What is the reason for not accepting such clear knowledge of inference by the C’aarvaakas?”

The knowledge of inference or anumaana Jnaana is based on knowledge of directly visible material or pratyaksha Jnaana. That means by the direct observation of the relation between smoke and fire daily in the kitchens, we are establishing relation between smoke and fire on the hill. Is it not?

But, by the relation of fire and smoke in the kitchen, one should apply this reasoning and establish the relation of another fire and smoke in another kitchen only and it cannot be applied to relation of fire and smoke on the hill. There can be many types of smoke and fire. You can infer that there is fire on the hill from seeing the smoke and applying the analogy of smoke’s connection with fire in kitchen, only when you know all types of smokes and fires which are there in this universe. C’aarvaakas say: ‘since it is impossible to know all smokes and fires in this universe, such knowledge of inference or anumaana Jnaana can not be a valid knowledge and hence it cannot be believed.’”

“How can many varieties of smoke and fire be there?”

“Here the smoke and fire are only examples. They are not particular about such worldly knowledge of inference. They are not accepting it as a valid knowledge so that in future, they do not have to accept such quid pro quos in respect of subject matter which is beyond the worldly sensory perceptions.”

“Aha! Understood. Applying the logic of validity of directly visible material to the invisible materials and deducing the invisible materials, is not possible, as per these people. Isn’t it so?”

“OK. But is it universally accepted that the anumaana pramana is not a valid one?”

“No. Why will it be accepted? There is a hitch here. Listen carefully. It is not, the relation of fire and smoke that we have to observe. The effect of cause and result is the one to be taken note of. ‘Which material will not be existing, when a particular material is not there’?”

“Not understood.”
“They need not say that they will accept the relation of smoke and fire on the hill, only when relation of all the fires and smokes in the universe is known. The theory of pratyaksha pramaana does not state that smoke and fire exist together. ‘If there is no fire, there will not be smoke’, is the pratyaksha pramaana here. In the universe, wherever it may be, smoke will not be there if there is no fire. Based on this factual statement, the anumaana pramaana has to be accepted.”

“Oh! God! Please stop your fires and smokes. I am becoming mad,” saying so Sakuntalamma got up. Everybody, smiling, got up.

“Today’s tuition will be unhappy”, said Vinita coming from inside.

“Justice sir! Once we go little further, deeper into the subject, these things will become clearer. I shall try to explain them. Don’t rack up your brains now. It is enough if you understand that C’aarvaakas do not accept Anumaana pramaana and S’abda pramaana, but others do accept. We can know them later, why and how they do not accept,” said Purushottam.

Raghuramaiah agreed happily with satisfaction. Everybody became busy with his or her own chores.

It was around 9 o’clock in the night. The phone bell rang. Vinita lifted the receiver and told Sakuntalamma that Dr. Noone wanted to talk to her. Sakuntalamma took the receiver, feeling pity for Dr. Noone - her nephew, whom she thought was a good fellow but for his adamancy that shows up once in while.

“My dear Subrahmanyam!” affectionately she called.

“Aunty! Are you really very angry with me?” he asked in a voice choked with tears.

“No, Aunty! I am sure you have not understood my friends and me. We are not indulging in breaking the social regulations and we definitely are not drinkers freely enjoying the life.”

She felt pity. “It is not like that my dear! I never considered that all of you are like that. Don’t I know about you? But your talks give one that impression. They give an indication that they misguide others. We may not be able to tell definitely as to which good purpose is intended to be served and when, by this system of Lokaayatam. But, reconsider what you say once again. All those talks definitely propel the people with less thinking prowess towards sensual enjoyment and uncontrolled freedom to do what they like. Consider the benefit the society will get by the discipline which is a must from the thought of God, rather than doubting if there is God or not. The way you speak will change once you notice that the debate on God’s existence or non-existence is only for public good.

Dr. Noone said after thinking for a while, “It might be so Aunty! Whatever it might be, I regret to have hurt you yesterday. Please pardon me.”
“Why that talks of pardon between us? People will laugh at us. Any way, come around breakfast time tomorrow. Since it is Sunday, we can spend some time relaxed”, she hung up the phone.

“Is it Subrahmanyam?” asked Raghuramaiah. She answered in affirmative and told him about the invitation extended to him. “It is good. We will invite Purushottam also. Avadhani will be there in the morning as per his routine. The discussion on this subject is very interesting to me.”

Sakuntalamma felt greatly relieved to hear this from her husband. Truly, Raghuramaiah is finding creativity and something to be deeply thought in this discussion. He is vexed with useless talks on the newspaper reports. He is interested to go for serious and in depth discussion. There is some unknown satisfaction for him in this discussion.

The family went to sleep thinking on the subject.
Chapter - 3

It was after the breakfast on Sunday morning. Raghuramaiah and Dr. Noone were seated in one sofa, while Avadhani and Purushottam shared the other sofa and Sakuntalamma and Vinita sat down in another sofa. They were all engaged in discussions.

“Purushottam garu! How is moksha or salvation defined?” asked Avadhani.

If you see the genesis of the word, it’s meaning is release. But in Sanskrit Dictionaries it is mentioned: ‘Muktir moksho mahaanandah’ adding word mahaanandah also to this word.”

“Does it mean moksha will be of many types?” Raghuramaiah had his doubt.

“How did this thought of moksha evolve?” Sakuntalamma thought loudly.

“Starting from Brahma down to the ant, it is a natural desire to be happy. That is characteristic of the beings. However, it is also natural that happiness is together with some amount of unhappiness also” Purushottam explained.

“How is it? How can happiness be together with unhappiness? Can light be together with darkness?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“That example does not suit here. I explain how happiness can be with unhappiness. For example taking meal is happiness. That happiness is obtained along with the trouble of cooking that meal. Isn’t that trouble of cooking unhappiness? We need rice. It gives happiness. But it is with unhappiness in the name of bran and husk. We need fish for happiness. But fish is with the bones, which is unhappiness. We need to grow pulses, but the wild boars and animals do rummage through the fields and damage the crops. That is unhappiness.”

The talk was going on. Everybody was listening attentively and asking questions. Purushottam garu was answering everybody.

“We may say now that unhappiness is that which doesn’t allow us to enjoy happiness completely.”

“Yes. Relief from such bondage causing hindrance is salvation as per some.”

“You say ‘some’. Are there differences of opinion in that?”

“Yes. This soul is self-luminous. Just like a lamp or diamond. If the dirt covering the diamond is washed away, it shines. Similarly, if the covering around the light is removed, the light of the lamp will fall everywhere. In the same way, if the restrictions to the soul or Aatma are removed, some others say that that is salvation or moksha.”

“You are saying some others. Are there still some more categories?”

“There are many. We can talk only about some of them. Even though the calf has the opportunity to drink the milk from her mother cow, it is hankering since it is tied down. The moment it is released, it runs to the mother and enjoys drinking mother’s milk. In a similar
fashion, the moment this jeeva or soul is released from the bondage of karma or the deeds, it joins Paramaatma and enjoys the eternal bliss, and as per some more others, this is moksha.”

“Whatever it may be, we have two actions i.e., release from the bondage and enjoying the eternal bliss. Untying the bondage can be told as removal of the unhappiness or misery. Can we say so?”

“But how do we know what is happiness and what is unhappiness? Happiness for some may be unhappiness for others. What is termed as unhappiness can become happiness at a later period.”

“Yes. It is true. Today sunshine gives happiness. Tomorrow the same sunshine can become unhappiness. Then, how do we know the general givers of happiness and unhappiness?”

The discussion is going on seriously. It is boring to Vinita, and she is looking aimlessly, moving her limbs and making meaningless poses. Dr. Noone noticing this suggested that she might be asked to go and relax.

“Not necessary. Let her remain here. As long as you do not speak meaningless things, it is OK. Her reading of the class-books is over. In fact, children must listen to these religious discussions and discourses, then the development of mind will be correct and their behaviour will be in the right track. Let her understand as much as possible”, said Sakuntalamma.

“What can that kid understand?” said Raghuramaiah giving a feeling that her presence is unnecessary.

Sakuntalamma did not agree to this. “The children of the present generation are having much higher IQ than those of our generation. We should not underestimate them.”

“Yes, I agree. What we have learnt in our degree classes is being taught to them by the time they come to the tenth standard.” Avadhani supported. “But when will she use this knowledge?” he expressed his doubt.

“Once the buddhi or intellect is set for a proper behaviour, the usage may develop any time. Then she will be able to put it to proper use”, said Sakuntalamma.

“Yes it is true. The mind or buddhi is behind all our actions. If the buddhi or intellect is trained in proper direction, what else is needed?” said Purushottam garu.

Again the questions and answer session started.

“What is the meaning of buddhi or intellect?”

“What is there? Are we not using ‘he does mindless things’? It can be said that the capacity to decide what should be done and what should not be, is mind. If we see the dictionary, the meaning is given as seat of consciousness, intellect, sanity, etc.”

“If capably decided, happiness will be the resultant of correct decision and unhappiness otherwise.”
“That is to say, the buddhi or intellect is primary one to decide which is happiness and which is unhappiness.”

“Wait, Wait”, said Raghuramaiah in this chain of discussion. “Let me understand. We said first that moksha is obtaining happiness and elimination of unhappiness. Now, unless we know, what is happiness or otherwise, it is not possible to eliminate or achieve them. To know them, buddhi or intellect is necessary.”

“Yes, Yes”, saying so Purushottam, continued. “This buddhi or intellect is influenced by two. One is ‘memory’ and the other is ‘experience’.”

“Memory is faculty by which things are recalled to or kept in mind. What is experience?”

“The thing being experienced then, or things which are under personal contact or observation at that time.”

“How does this recalling past events happen? For example, let us say that my finger got burnt when I had put my finger in the flame of candle. When will this experience be remembered again?”

“As soon as an experience is felt by us, an impression called Samskaara – the sacrament is made in our mind or buddhi. An event gets recorded in the mind somewhere in a file that finger gets burnt if put in the flame, just like opening of a file in the collector’s office, as soon as some one applies for establishing an industry. In this way, all experiences become Samskaara – the sacraments or files in the buddhi. That means a number of files are opened in the mind or buddhi.”

“A lot of files get misplaced in the offices”, said Avadhani laughing.

“Yes. Files, which are not cared for get misplaced. The rest of them are safe. Whenever, the Collector wants a safely kept file, it comes on his table readily. Similarly, the Samskaaras – the sacraments, which are imprinted in buddhi will get obliterated themselves, if not cared for. Otherwise they are ready for recall.”

“What is caring for?”

“Arising out of necessity. My friends’ names, when I was in the first standard in the school, are all Samskaaras – the sacraments only. But today except for one or two names, the rest cannot be recalled. The reason? There never came the necessity to recall their names often. That’s all.”

“How does this recalling or remembering happen?”

“There are three causes. One is, coming across a thing or incident similar to the event recorded in buddhi. Thinking about a particular one is second one and third is called adrishtam or the invisible one.”

“What is adrishtam or the invisible one?”

“Adrishtam can be explained as remembering suddenly, without any known reason or cause. This is considered by some to be God’s deed.”
“Yes. It is true. We suddenly remember some matters without any cause.”

“In this way, experience is also a jnaana or knowledge. Remembrance is also a jnaana. However, the beauty is that jnaana may be reality or it may not be.”

“How come? How can something which is not reality be jnaana?”

“Suppose you saw a rope and said snake. You got knowledge of snake. However, this jnaana or knowledge is called as bhrama.”

“If it gives knowledge of rope after seeing the rope, what is that knowledge called?”

“That knowledge is called pramaa.” Purushottam’s elaboration is well understood by everybody. But Vinita had the basic doubt.

“Grandpa! What is jnaana or knowledge?”

Purushottam had a little difficulty. It is not because he does not know, but was not sure how to explain it to this kid so that she understands well. Everybody was watching as to what the answer would be.

“Jnaana… Jnaana means knowledge, my dear!”

“What is knowledge?”

“What are those silly questions without any regard or respect to the elders?” Sakuntalamma admonished her grand daughter.

“Let her ask. Questioning forms the first step and root cause for acquiring knowledge”, said Purushottam and turned towards Vinita.

“What are you looking now?”

“I am seeing all of you.”

“That means a knowledge is generated in you that all of us are here. Similarly, suppose you had smelt a fruit. It means you had developed knowledge of sweet smell. Understood?”

Smart girl, that is Vinita. She would not surrender so easily. She had no hesitation at all.

“Recently, our teacher has asked what ‘vegetables’ mean. She did not agree with all those who answered ‘brinjals’, ‘carrots’. She repeatedly asked what exactly the word vegetable means. Similarly, Sir, you are also answering the question ‘what jnaana or knowledge is?’ in different ways as ‘knowledge of seeing’, ‘knowledge of smell’ etc.”

‘My god!’ thought Purushottam. ‘How to explain this girl?’ Suddenly the phone rang and Vinita ran to the phone.

“Let us not bother about her, after all she is a kid. In reality, how is this jnaana developing in us?” asked Dr. Noone.
“It is a big question as to say how many ways are there to gain knowledge. This is the first step towards understanding the tattva s'aastra or philosophy.

The first jnaana or the knowledge to be counted is sensory…” Vinita came back, saying it was a wrong number, while Purushottam was continuing.

“Vinita! Tell me how many sensory organs do we have?” Purushottam asked Vinita.

“Hands, legs, eyes, nose, … further fingers, elbows, feet, and…” all laughed when she answered.

“We can put fingers, hands and elbows together and call them as hands. In all total, we have ten sensory organs. Five of them are the knowledge givers and others act being activated by the knowledge.”

“Purushottam garu! Keep on telling. I shall note down,” said Raghuramaiah taking the pen and a notebook into his hands.

“Do you want this to be noted down? OK As you please” saying, Purushottam continued. “Five senses give us the knowledge of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch based on eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin.”

“What? Are eyes, ears, tongue etc not the five sensory organs? You are mentioning them as media.”

“The eyes, ears etc, we see are only parts of the body only. Corresponding to these parts of the body, there are, sight, sound, smell, taste and touch senses with the manas – the mind, which is inside.”

“Then, Sir, do we have one eye inside and one eye outside?” asked Vinita.

“No my dear girl If there is a camera, can you take a photo or not?”

“I can if there is film inside.”

“Yes. The eyes, with which we see, are just like the camera. The sense of sight, which is inside, is like the film in the camera. Camera will give result only when there is a film inside. Otherwise it is only a body. Similarly, because of the sense of sight is there with the mind or manas, the eye is able to see.”

“Suppose you pierce the eye…” was Vinita’s doubt.

If the camera box is broken, the film has to be loaded in another camera box. Then only we can take a photograph. Similarly, the sense of sight will not work in this body any more. Is there any use even when the film is there, if the camera box is broken?”

“Is it the same case with the ears, tongue etc.”

“Yes, my dear. All of them give us different Jnaanas, or knowledges of sense. Depending upon these Jnaanas, another five working organs, then work as per our will to give us the desired result. Let us take an example. I had seen the banana fruit. I felt the desire to have it. Then the hand picks it up. The nose smells bad smell. Then the legs take you away. In that
way, the senses of knowledge make the senses of work to do their duty. These senses of work are also five in number.”

“Tell. I am listing them.” Raghuramaiah became a school student.

“Write down. They are, *vaak*, the speech, *paani*, the hands, *paada*, the feet, *paayu* and *upastha*.”

Immediate response was in question from them.

“What is meant by *paayu* and *upastha*?”

“One is the organ for discharge and other is organ for pleasure”, doubtfully, in a low voice, mumbled Avadhani looking at Sakuntalamma. Had Vinita been attentive, she would have come up with another question.

Raghuramaiah asked for clarification, “are these senses of work also inside the *manas* – the mind as the senses of knowledge?”

The lecture and discussion are continuing like a chain. Purushottam garu was clearing the doubts and objections as and when anybody puts forth.

“Yes. They are also inside in the same way. Apart from the two categories of sensory organs, we have one more. That is called *manas*. That can do the work of both categories of sensory organs.”

“Is it so? How?”

“Everybody has experience of that. Are we not seeing, walking etc, in mind? So, the mental ability or *manas* is considered as another sensory, common to both the categories of senses of knowledge and work.”

“Do we have both the *manas*, which was mentioned by you now and the buddhi, which was mentioned earlier, inside us?”

Look, Sir Raghuramaiah, Isn’t it that, you are a Judge in the courtroom, Raghuramaiah in the house and grandfather to Vinita? Then, are you one person or many?” questioned Purushottam garu.

“Oh! What is inside is one only. That itself does all these functions.”

“Yes. When it does think, it is called *manas*. When it does record and file the past events, it is called *c’ittam*. When it takes decisions, it is called *buddhi*. But it is the only one capable of doing all the above functions.”

“OK. Fine. Then, Who is this ‘I’? Is it also a part of the *manas*?”

“Some say that this ‘me’ or ‘I’ is different from ‘*manas*’ and is known as ‘*Aatma*’. Some others do not agree with this. They say that ‘I’ is same as this ‘*manas*’ and ‘body’.”

“Oh! Now you have come to our *Lokaayata* philosophy”, said Dr. Noone enthusiastically.
“Yes. Lokaayats or C’aarvaakas say that ‘manas and body are same.’

“Which one is correct- what they say, or what these others say, as you have mentioned, that the manas and aatma are not one and same but they are two distinctly different entities. How do we know?”

“We need to have some saadhanams or instruments to know that. In fact, ’obtaining knowledge’, is knowing a matter. To obtain that knowledge, there are certain instruments or saadhanams.”

“Not understood. Please explain a little more.”

“For example, what is the instrument to acquire the knowledge to know that the temperature in this room is more?”

“What is there? It is our own skin which tells so.”

“What is the instrument to know that it is very hot in the next room or that there is fire in the room?

“Somebody has to come and tell so or some thing like smoke should be visible.”

“Hh. Now you, on your own, have come to the correct point. The knowledge we acquire through our skin, eyes, tongue, nose, ears or mind is called ‘pratyaksha jnaana’ or ‘direct knowledge’. The five sensory organs and the mind or manas” do give us the knowledge directly. They do not need another media to give the knowledge.”

“It is understandable to say that we get direct knowledge through the eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin. We know about the sight, smell, sound, taste and touch. But how do we have the direct knowledge from the mind?”

“It is raining. Rain is falling directly from the sky. While it is raining, there is sunlight through the clouds. Then there is a beautiful rainbow.”

“Ah! That sight! Will it not be beautiful?”

“Where is the beauty? What you have seen is only the rain, sun, and colourful semi circular arch in the sky. Who saw the beauty?”

“Now I understood. Yes, Truly. In between the things, which are seen through the eyes, some thing called beauty, which cannot be seen is felt by the mind. That can be direct knowledge.”

“I do not agree. Only some may feel that, as beauty. For the rest, it may be felt as a natural occurring. So, for them, such thing as ‘beauty’ does not exist there. How, can the knowledge about some thing which is not there, be direct knowledge?”

“You are seeing me through your eyes and knowing that I am there. Do you agree that it is direct knowledge? Now, a blind man is sitting there. He says that he cannot see me. What does this mean, whether I am there or not? The knowledge, which you had obtained, is it direct knowledge or not? Who is correct whether the blind man or you?”
“Your argument is good. It is not impossible to have mental direct knowledge. A lover sees beauty in his woman. But a person, who has no interest in her, sees in her, only eyes, nose, ears, hair etc. but not the beauty in them, which is felt by her lover. Is it not?”

“This argument is very nice. Now, if we have to have knowledge of a thing, the first among the instruments of knowledge is direct knowledge. This is of six categories. We have learnt that much. Please tell us the next.”

“These instruments of knowledge are called pramaanäs. The lokayats or C’aarvaakas accept only the direct knowledge authenticity or ‘pratyaksha pramaana’. That means, it is their view that these six modes are the only instruments to gain knowledge or to know about any thing, and there does not exist any more.”

“Aha! That is the reason, why they do not accept the existence of soul, Godhead, Gods, heaven, hell etc. The mana, or mind, also is not seen. Then, how do they accept that?”

“Since it does think, it is considered to be instrument of direct knowledge. They state: the one which does think is called as mind or manas.”

“Why should they say that the body itself is soul, or mind itself is soul?”

“There is no soul or aatma in their concept. But, those who believe in its existence say that it has characteristics like, life, movements, remembrance etc. Since all of such characteristics are seen either in the body or in the mind, you may consider the mind to be soul, and there is no soul separately.”

“OK. Tell us the next instruments of knowledge.”

“What is there for me to tell? Have you not already said that to know that there is fire in the next room, something like smoke should be visible? That is the second instrument of knowledge. This is called anumaana.”

“Was it not the same which you stated that day as ‘inference’ and not doubt? How does it start?”

“This ‘knowledge of inference’ is obtained from the imagination based on the experiences of things known by the direct knowledge. Smoke is seen on the hills. Before that we had seen many times either in the kitchen or in the backyard that smoke comes only when there is fire and smoke stops coming when there is no fire. Therefore, we know that there is fire on the hill. That means we have obtained ‘the knowledge that there is fire on the hill’.”

“The relationship between two objects, should have been experienced, or seen directly, a number of times. Only then, it should be applied as an inference knowledge.”

“Yes. This is not accepted by lokayats or C’aarvaakas. The reason they quote is, that it is not correct to say that the smoke is associated with fire.”

“Why? Have we not seen that many times?”

“We have seen many times but not all the times. That is to say: It should be accepted that the smoke and fire are together, only when we have observed that wherever and whenever the smoke is seen, invariably, the fire was present then and there. But we have not seen or
observed all the smokes of past and future, and it is not possible also. So there is nothing wrong in considering that there is one smoke, which is not seen by us. They ask: Why should fire be the only cause for that smoke.”

“Oh! Impossible guys! It is fine for the sake of argument, but there is something amiss.”

“I tried to explain the same on that day. That day, when you did not understand clearly and it was confusing, I started all things from the beginning!”

“If so, what is the counter for their argument?”

“When knowledge of inference is used, what they say is correct based on the decision that two objects are always together. It is incorrect because, we do not see all such occasions, nor it is possible to see also. Is it not incorrect to decide that there is a second one since the first one is there, based on the observation that these two were seen together earlier. We had seen earlier many times Mr. Rama Rao and Mr. Krishna Rao to be going around together. Does it mean that there is rule that if Rama Rao is seen, Krishna Rao also must be there?”

“Yes, yes. If one of them dies, it is not possible to have them together.”

“But anumaana pramaana or knowledge of inference does not come into consideration because two objects are always together. This comes into consideration by virtue of kaarya-kaarana sambandha or ‘cause and effect relationship’.”

“What does it mean?”

“Since pot is made of mud, here, mud is called kaarana or cause, and pot is called kaarya or effect. Similarly, fire is cause or kaarana and smoke is kaarya or effect. Therefore, when two objects are seen a number of times, if a ‘cause and effect relationship’ can be established, or if it can be established that one is derived from other, then only anumaana pramaana or knowledge of inference becomes correct and that becomes jnaana saadhanam or an instrument of knowledge.”

“It is very clear. What we had seen between Mr. Rama Rao and Mr. Krishna Rao is only togetherness. It is same togetherness between smoke and fire. But there is more to the relationship between smoke and fire, that is, cause and effect relationship or ‘kaarya kaarana sambandha’. There can be fire without smoke but no smoke without fire. What do the C’aarvaakas have to say in this argument?”

“They ask: Why can’t there be more kaaranas or causes for one kaarya or effect? If light is the effect or kaarya, either moon or sun can be cause or kaarana. It can be lamp also. They question as to which of them can be decided as cause or kaarana.”

“But, for smoke, fire alone can be cause. In such cases only let us use the anumaana pramaana. Why should there be any objection to that?”

Is it not proven that there is more than one cause for one effect? That is, for an effect called ‘light’, is it not proven that there are many causes like ‘sun, moon etc.? Why should it not be proven in other places also in either future or in the past? There may be smoke without fire in future. Therefore, the knowledge of inference cannot be accepted as authentic, according to the C’aarvaakas.”
“Let us stop their argument of negation. Let us go to another authenticity or pramaana.”

“Grandpa! What is argument of negation?” Vinita got a chance to ask question.

“If two people are arguing, that argument will be of three types. The argument carried on to know the truth and establish the same, is the first type and is called vaada or argument. The argument carried on as a counter to the others’ argument, in order to sustain one’s own proposition being established, is called jalpa or counter argument and is the second type. The third type of argument is carried on just to negate the others’ argument, without anything of its own to establish and is called vitanda vaada or argument of negation.”

“Oh! I also have no knowledge of these. Vinita is asking good questions. It doesn’t strike any of us to ask such questions.”

“In that case the Philosophical system of Dr. Noone uncle should be called as argument of negation or vitanda vaada.” This girl had not even an iota of hesitation to speak. She remembered well that the whole discussion is on Dr. Noone.

“The scholars or pundits like Buddhaghosha and Jayanta had mentioned the Lokaayats as vitanda vaadins or arguers of negation only, in their works. They had clearly mentioned ‘vaitandikaah kadhaiva asau’ (they are called as vitanda vaadins)”

“Uncle! Uncle!” Vinita got up laughing and clapped.

“Please shut your mouth, my dear!” said Dr. Noone. “Then, Purushottam garu! I have not understood one thing. What is the gain to these people by not accepting the knowledge of inference as authenticity?”

‘What is the gain to these people?’- Purushottam was amused at the way Dr. Noone talked distancing himself involuntarily from the Lokaayats. But he did not show it because of the etiquette.

“If the ‘authenticity of knowledge of inference’ or anumaana pramaana is accepted, a definite ‘cause and effect relationship’ or kaarya kaarana sambandha has to be accepted. In such circumstances, is this universe not an effect? Then the question arises as to what is the cause for this. Even if some thing is given as an answer, again the same question of cause for that thing also will come up. Their apprehension was that this chain of questions would ultimately lead to acceptance of existence of God, which would make their postulation untenable. Truly speaking, it is not that they have not accepted the authenticity of knowledge of inference. They had been accepting this. Only when they apprehended, that such acceptance would make their postulation untenable, they raised objections on its authority.”

“Enough on this ‘authenticity of knowledge of inference’. Please tell about another.”

From the changed style of Raghuramaiah’s talking, Purushottam felt the loosening of faith on the postulation of C’aurvaakas. Sakuntalamma felt almost similar observation also. ‘The cracks are developing in the monolith of religious opinions of Raghuramaiah?’ she started feeling. She wondered about the continued presence of Subrahmanym also.
Purushottam garu continued. “To know about something or as instrument of knowledge, the next important one is called ‘s’abda’ or ‘word of trustworthy’. If the trusted and our well-wishers speak aapta-vaakya or verbal testimony, we will receive knowledge.”

“Grandpa! Who are these aaptas or trustworthy?” was the question of Vinita.

“Aaptas are those persons who had seen and spoken as what they had seen.”

“I have not understood.”

“You had phoned Mr. Subrahmanyam yesterday, about my ill health. He heard it and believed, that you will tell exactly as it is. Therefore, you are an aapta or trustworthy to him. From your words, he had received the knowledge ‘Sakuntalamma is not well’. Have you now understood?” elaborated Sakuntalamma.

“But there is one thing to be noted. Plain words or plain s’abdas do not give knowledge. Only those words, which give meaning, should be taken. A word or pada is one or a combination of two, three, four or more letters which gives a meaning.” Purushottam elucidated.

“How can one letter be a word?”

“Word is one which should give a meaning, e.g., ‘a’ means one. So it is a one letter word.”

“Will every word have a meaning?”

“Definitely. If it doesn’t have, it is not a word at all. Some give the knowledge directly and some others give not so directly.”

“Please tell more vividly about this direct and indirect ways of giving the knowledge,” asked Raghuramaiah.

“For example, let us take ‘river Ganga’. Doesn’t it immediately strike you that it makes for knowledge about a river flowing in a particular country?”

“Instead of saying like that, suppose it is said: these fruits are produced in Godavari, does this group of words really mean that these fruits are produced in River Godavari? No. Instead, it means they are harvested in the delta fields of Godavari. So this group of words is giving the knowledge meant by us though not directly.”

“There is another type. Suppose Vinita does not know how to sweep the floor. But she started to sweep. After some sweeping, Sakuntalamma garu taunted ‘Aha! What a nice sweeping!’ What does this group of words mean? If you take direct meaning of these words, it should give the meaning that Vinita has swept the floor very nicely. But the implied meaning conveyed by this group of words from Sakuntalamma garu is: ‘sweeping is not at all good, she does not know sweeping.”

“So, in this way, the group of words or sentences will give meaning in three ways. They are called ‘abhida’, ‘lakshan’a and ‘vyanjana’. There are more types still, but we need not go into that now.” Purushottam garu elaborated extensively.
“We speak, but have never thought of analysing this way. Do we have to analyse like this if we have to know philosophy?”

“Not necessary if you stick to one particular school of philosophy. But if someone wants to study the various schools of thought, to know how these systems have come into existence, and want to decide which system suits him best, then, he has to go through it like this for many details, much more than this.”

“Hh! Let us try. A little while ago, you said the Aaptas are those persons who had seen and spoken as what they had seen, and gives us knowledge. Suppose that person mistook and told, then how do we get knowledge?”

“That danger is always there. In pratyaksha or perception also, is it not happening that the rope is being seen as snake? That knowledge is also unreality. That knowledge is termed as ‘bhrama knowledge’ a short while ago. Instead, if the rope is perceived as rope only, that knowledge is termed as ‘pramaa - the knowledge’. In the same way, here also, I am telling only that, we get a knowledge the moment the trustworthy tells us as he sees, but I have not said whether it is ‘bhrama or pramaa knowledge’.”

“Suppose he tells after modifying what is seen?”

“Then it is not a word of trustworthy or ‘aapta vaakya’. Because, how can a person who intends to cheat you, become trustworthy? So his word does not become authentic or instrument of knowledge – ‘pramaana’. That does not constitute a pramaana if he tells something, because of bhrama, or due to mistaken identity, or on account of his inability to perceive properly.”

“Mistaken identity and ‘bhrama’: are they not one and same?”

“We use them in the same sense but they are not same. If rope is conceived as snake, it is ‘bhrama’. If a poisonous cobra snake is perceived as non-poisonous water snake, it is mistaken identity. Inability to see or perceive a snake at all is called as ‘as’akti’ or incapability.”

“Let me summarise on the subject of proper instrument of knowledge. A statement for knowledge should be clear on four characteristics if it has to be an authenticity or instrument of knowledge. Number one: It should not be conceived wrongly or it should not be bhrama. Number two: It should not be result of mistaken identity. Number three: It should not be with an intention of cheating. Number four: It should not be affected by incapability to perceive correctly. Can there be such a statement from the trustworthy, at all?” wondered Raghuramaiah.

“Can our newspapers be trustworthy?”

“Cannot be said. Sometimes mistakes do happen.”

“If not, let us take the radio and televisions.”

“That is also doubtful.”

“May be the books written by some.”
“What is the guarantee that the book does not suffer from these four defects?”

“What about the ‘puraanas’?”

“After all they are also authored by somebody only!”

“Then, What is the way?”

“If at all there is one which is devoid of all the above four defects, it will give us correct instrument of knowledge. Is it not so? Our elders call such work as the ‘Veda’. They have named an entity, which is free from the misconception, will not have mistaken identity, does not require cheating anyone, and is omnipotent, as ‘Bhagavan’. In a loose sense, he can be called as God also. This Bhagavan has given us the Veda. If a person has authored books, any one of the above four deficiencies, if not more, cannot be excluded in such works.”

“You have come all this way to make us agree some how. But who will believe in this 21st century, with so much of civilization, that God has written the ‘Veda’ and not human beings? It is all trash. Tell it to the grannies in the old village corner but not to us the foreign returned educated intellectuals.” Saying so, Dr. Noone rashly got up.

Avadhani became extremely angry with this. “What does it mean by your foreign returned and educated intellectuals? You ask the highly educated intellectuals of that foreign land, where you have been educated, as to who the author of Bible is and who Jesus Christ is. They will tell definitely that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and Bible is the Book given by God.

Otherwise, you ask: ‘who is Mohammed? Who is the author of Koran?’ They will tell: ‘Mohammed is the spokesperson sent by Allah; Koran is the most authentic book for us. That book is devoid of errors.’

You ask the unfortunate most modern person here in our land: ‘who is ‘Rama’? Who is the author of the ‘Veda’?’ His answer will be denigratory: the Veda is writing of the uncivilized people saying that every stone on the roadside or tree or any anthill is God, since their minds had not developed at all. Rama is a human being, having some good qualities slightly more than us. This is our civilization”

Why are we not able to imbibe in us, the firm belief on God, strong commitment to the religion and authenticity of the scriptures, of people of those countries, from which, we import our education and civilization?

We have become slaves to the sensory organs and are goaded by them into slavery of enjoyment of directionless worldly pleasures. The religion, faith in the school of philosophy, the practices, the scriptures, the Veda and Godhead are considered to be hindrances to such unfettered enjoyment. Selfish motives of allowing the enjoyment of worldly pleasures unfettered, are trying to brush these scriptures, religion etc away from our lives. It is definitely, nothing more than this.

Do you want us to tell only to the grannies in the old village corner? In those civilized countries, where you have learnt, are the famous scientists and others the grannies of the old corners? Is there no intelligentsia at all?

All the people of those countries, where you considered to have learnt your modern education, are declaring from their house tops that ‘Bible, believed as God-given by all
the Christian countries, Holy Koran by all the Islamic countries, Shu-ching and I-ching by the Chinese, are given either by God or the eminent personalities blessed by Him only, and their scriptures are free from all those four errors.’

Fortunately, you are also blessed with similar scriptures, which are honoured for generations by people here – the Vedas. What was the necessity for you to denigrate them? Does it ask you to become thieves or dacoits? What is wrong in that? It has instructions for happy and peaceful living. Social well being has been enumerated in it.

Just because some unscrupulous greedy people have misused them, do you want to denigrate and insult the authenticity of the Vedas? Which other reason has prompted you for not accepting the Vedas?

It contains all systems and procedures required by all the classes of society, applicable for all times, according to their mental abilities and development. Why do you reject it?

Has it not been shown yesterday by your aunt, how the misuse of medical education is happening? Is the medical degree becoming worthless just because of such misuse? What are you professing? Have a look not through your coloured glasses but from the view of the social good. You will understand what a magnificent work the Veda is”.

Raghuramaiah was astonished by the emotion filled and all stops pulled out lecture of Avadhani. He also never thought of the Vedas in this way. Had he ever read the Vedas at all to know what the Vedas told!

Dr. Noone’ s face became pale, but regained and wanted to retort. Raghuramaiah forcibly stopped him from saying anything. He said, “Don’t get emotional. Let us know the subject thoroughly.”

Sakuntalamma had offered glass of water to all. After a while, Raghuramaiah had slowly restarted the discussion.

“But, in the children’s text books say that the Vedas were written by Aryans around 1500 B.C. Further it is written that these Aryans were not that intelligent and civilized.”

“That is our bad luck. Can you find in the school textbooks of western countries similar writings on Bible and Koran? Although a number of research papers by Indian Scholars on the subject are available, one Mr. William Jones, a western scholar of 19th century had estimated so about the period in which the Vedas were written and authored a book. The so-called intellectuals of our country, being habituated to be ruled by English, lost their power to think independently and meekly accepted that version thinking to be true, instead of contesting the same after going through our scriptures and the research done by our scholars.”

“See, how the period was estimated. They started with the assumption that the Vedas must have been completed by the time Buddha’s period. That is because; Buddha has opposed Vedas and postulated his philosophy. This was the first basis for William Jones. Buddha was of 600 B.C. So by that time the writing of the Vedas should have been completed. The important portions of the Vedas are Samhitas, braahmanams and Upanishads. Each must have taken around 200 years for writing and not more. So all together the period of authoring of Vedas should be 600 years. Accounting another 200 years for the lost portion of the Vedas, it will be around 800 years for the completion of authorship of
the Vedas. So going back by about 800 years to Buddha’s period i.e., around 1500 B.C. the authorship of the Vedas must have commenced. This is their calculation for arriving at the age of Vedas! Our so-called intelligentsia is there to simply nod the head, since they had lost capability of independent working due to slavery.

Eminent Indian scholars like Bal Gangadhar Tilak; Avinash Chandra Das etc. have checked it based on the astronomy, geography and have proved that William Jones was miles off the correct figure. But who is there to bother about such corrections, when all our so called intelligentsia is amoured by their love for anything which is western, and are not allowing that correction to appear in the school text books. They don’t even allow it to be mentioned that this is only a view of the western scholars and that there are people who believe it to be ageless and there is a separate time scale for it.

The words of the foreigners, who came for business and propagation of Christianity in our country, are trustworthy for our people. The writings of our intelligent sages, who loved our public without any conditions and cause, and who have desired the well being of people, have become unacceptable. This is our bad luck.”

“OK, Avadhani Garu! Let me accept that the foreigners are not intelligent. There are schools of philosophy, which have not accepted the Vedas, as authority. Isn’t it? If so, the postulators of these systems – are they not our intelligentsia?” Dr. Noone again asked.

“Why don’t you think about the schools of philosophy, which have accepted the authority of the Vedas? Those postulators are also intelligent scholars only. What about them? I am not elaborating as to who have accepted the authority of Vedas and who have not. I am talking about the foreign returned and educated intellectuals, mentioned by you. It is a matter of regret that these people, the so-called civilized lot, just because they are foreign returned, are ashamed of accepting the authority of the Vedas and existence of God. They hesitate that such acceptance will make them uncivilized, unintelligent old grannies of the corners. I say that this is despicable and worthy of the maximum contempt it deserves”, said Avadhani again, still with a bit of emotion.

Raghuramaiah picked up the thread immediately. “I too agree with that, Avadhani garu!” said compromisingly. “The education and etiquette may influence the faith and beliefs, but, considering all people with faith and beliefs to be uncivilized and uneducated, is grossly wrong.”

“OK. But listen then.” Saying so, Purushottam garu continued with the original subject of discussion. “Such works which are devoid of the four lapses viz. bhrama, pramaadam, vipralambham and as’akti are called as ‘apaurushe’yam’. Primarily, C’aarvaakas, Buddhists, Vais’eshikas etc. are the important categories of philosophy which have rejected the tenet of ‘s’abda’ or the verbal testimony as an Instrument of knowledge….”

“Raghuramaiah asked, “On what basis did the C’aarvaakas reject the verbal testimony as an instrument of knowledge?”

“They say: ‘the word of trustworthy or Aapta vaakya become reality only when we perceive them through direct vision. Since the matter, which is perceived through direct vision only, is authoritative, the word of trustworthy becomes direct perception or pratyaksha pramaana. Otherwise, it is to be believed that the deliverer of the Aapta vaakya or the word of trustworthy is speaker of truth only. Then this becomes an instrument of knowledge by inference. That has been rejected long back since it impossible to have somebody who is
omniscient. Hence, except direct perception or pratyaksha pramaana alone, no other authority can be instrument of knowledge. This is their argument for rejecting the verbal testimony.”

“Hmm! Their argument suits them only.”

So saying, Raghuramaiah got up. Everybody got up as it was already delayed for lunch.
Chapter - 4

“Then, Purushottam garu, did C’aarvaakas reject the ‘word of trustworthy’ as an instrument of knowledge or did they reject the Vedas as authority?” asked Raghuramaiah initiated the discussion after a gap of four days when all of them assembled in their house.

“You are starting with C’aarvaakas again. Is your intention to further rub Subrahmanyam?” asked Sakuntalamma smiling.

“A person who gets drubbing is not always a bad man, Aunty! We come to know good and bad of the subject when we discuss the subject more and more”, said Dr. Noone. In fact, Dr. Noone is a knowledge seeker only but neither an egoist nor an adamant person. Had he been one, he would have stopped attending this discussion long back.

“I am not trying to show the fault of the school of philosophy of C’aarvaakas. My attempt is to know the tenets of every school of philosophy and how true is the practice of these tenets in the present times. That is all”, said Purushottam.

“What! Is it that all the tenets are not being practiced as they are supposed to be?” Raghuramaiah asked, inquisitively.

“It should be told in the affirmative only. A ‘Daars’anika’ presents the tenets and professes to his followers. Till that point, it is fine. But as it is spread further, it goes on getting deformed. At times, the receiver at the last stage receives the tenet totally in a different meaning from what the original tenet was. There is absolutely no connection to the present day’s practice and the original tenet.”

“Who is ‘Daars’anika’?”

“Daars’anika is one who introduced Dars’ana.”

“What is Dars’ana?”

“A postulation presented, that determines the essence (reality of the matter – tattva) as per a particular system, is the school of philosophy, arrived at by an analysis obtained by questioning the matter of discussion as to the aspects of why, what, when, which and how, is called Dars’ana. It is called also philosophy.”

“I wanted to ask last time itself but forgot. While we were discussing on the first day, you said that people get confused with the words philosophy and religion, and are using both as synonyms, though both of them are different and not same. Will you please tell the difference?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Dars’ana is called philosophy also. Isn’t it? That stands questioning. It has appropriate answers to questions like ‘Why should this be done like this? Why is it like this?’”

“But religion is not like that. It is based on faith. Neither there is any thing for questioning nor questioning is permitted. It has to be only practiced as such.”

“Is ‘Dars’ana’ called Philosophy?” said Raghuramaiah as if he was asking himself.
“In true sense, all the Dars’anas together constitute the philosophical science. The so-called C’aarvaaka Dars’ana, Bouddha Dars’ana, Vedaanta Dars’ana etc are all different schools of philosophy.”

“Is there no relationship between Dars’ana and religion?”

“May or may not be. There is no rule that there should be or should not be. But generally, the chances are more for a religion to be based on a particular school of philosophy or Dars’ana.”

“What exactly is a religion?”

“Religion or matam in Sanskrit means the opinion and like. The historians say that once upon a time, desirous to know who the creator of this visible universe is, and who produced the lightning and thunder etc. wise men came to conclusion that, one unseen super power is the root for all these natural wonders.

That Super Power was given the names, characteristics etc. and prayers etc., in the methods that were appealing to them, were offered to that super power, to protect them. The historians were of the view that was the beginning. They further try to establish that as per individual likings, opinions and also according to different ways they have determined the forms and figures etc. so many religions have come up”, explained Purushottam.

“Is there no basis for such old timers’ thinking and views? Are these present day religions only the decisions taken by them with uncivilized and narrow minds?” asked Raghuramaiah.

We could understand one thing after in depth study of the subject. If the religions were postulated by people, who thought aimlessly and madly, these religions would not have survived this long. There were definitely, many attempts to establish their intuitions logically. The blind faiths without any reasoning could not and did not survive also.”

“Is it possible that religion may be the stage of evolution before the Dars’ana had evolved?”

“It is not just a possibility. It is certainly yes. The seers who had obtained super powers by churning their thinking, had a vision of the reality or tattva, and postulated the school or religion. They started strengthening it with the logical reasoning acceptable to the public. That way, in some cases, the religion got established later as Dars’ana.

In some other cases, the Dars’ana got transformed into religion when one intelligent scholar started churning the subject with questions like why, what etc. and established the system or Dars’ana and tried to bring it into practice.”

“Now I understand clearly. That is why, our people are confused in the usage of the two words ‘Dars’ana’ and religion, and are using them as synonyms.”

“Yes. Generally, a religion is associated with soul and God. But, even for the ‘C’aarvaaka and Bouddha schools of philosophy, the word religion has become applicable, though neither of them support the theory of soul and God.”

“Are there no Dars’ananas which did not transform into religion and vice versa?”
“All weak postulations are like that. To put it more succinctly, Dars’ana is like root system of a tree and religion is like the fruit of that tree.”

“A good comparison. Anybody would like to eat the fruit but not chew and suck the roots. But if the root structure is not strong, the fruits will not be juicy and tasty.”

“Correctly said. A religion based on Dars’ana with proper logic, will be suitable for practice and will be fruitful. But as a tree which cannot give fruits is useless, so is the Dars’ana which cannot give good experience, satisfaction and happiness or without giving the desired result, a waste.”

“I have not understood this sentence. Can you please explain it?” asked Dr. Noone.

“You are a doctor. You have thorough knowledge of medicine and human anatomy. You can tell why when and how something happens in the body with proper reasons. A patient comes to you with common cold for relief. You have conducted all types of examinations to find out the cause for the disease, and concluded and asked the patient to get admitted in the hospital. The treatment is given absolutely with the correct reasoning. But the patient died. You can prove the causes of death, the reasons, as to why the medicines have not given relief, in an international medical conference.

Suppose there is another doctor, a simple mediocre M.B.B.S. degree holder, who has started medical practice. He does not refer to the medical journals etc. but is known to be a good hand. He gives any one type of tablets among the 10-15 varieties he has on his table to a patient who comes to him for treatment. All take the medicine with lots of faith in its curative capabilities. Even the most serious patient also is given medicine from the same lot of tablets. Invariably the persons are cured of the diseases. Neither the doctor nor anybody else can prove how the medicine has functioned and the cure is ensured. But the patient is cured. Now you tell me whether patients prefer to go to you, the doctor who works on logical treatment or to the doctor whose hand is considered to be good?

Similarly, the postulator is bothered about by the questions why, where, how etc. till the last, in spite of his thorough and careful postulation of the Dars’ana. At some place, inevitably it has to give way to faith. Not only that, these questions will always be a hindrance to the enjoyment of that eternal bliss, i.e., the ultimate objective of the Dars’ana. In a religion, due to blind following of the practice, the problem of facing questions is much less and the chances of enjoyment of the bliss are more. You name any name of the Supreme Godhead, in order to experience it, the heart has to be wet or melted with pity. If you go on reasoning for every step, the experience becomes nil. You should be able to see the beauty, but not the petals, in a rose flower. You should be able to see the God but not the stone statue. That is the experiencing of happiness. If somebody says the rose is beautiful, the man searching the beauty in the rose, trying to find out how the beauty is, and why the beauty is there, can never enjoy the beauty and happiness from that. Similar is the case with God also.”

Dr. Noone remained dumbfounded and was wondering at Purushottam’s lengthy exposition of the subject. At other times he would have made fun of the ‘good hand of the doctor’ and the gullible foolish people, but today, he found something new in today’s exposition.

‘He could never see the beauty in any woman or man, for some unknown reason. People say: ‘Ah! These roses are so beautiful’. He always saw only the petals. Dr. Noone felt the mystery unraveling. ‘The questions like why, what, where, how etc. have become more and made the heart blunt. The heart is no more responding. The enjoyment stopped. As he said,
he could see only the stone statue but not God in that. Even the living wife does not evoke love! What to talk of the stone statue moving his heart? Strange! ‘He was getting swept away in his thoughts. Suddenly with the calling from Sakuntalamma he came back to his senses.

“What are you thinking? You are not responding even after calling you twice. Purushottam garu is asking whether you have ever seen or heard the Vedas.”

Quickly he regained his composure. ‘The discussion has turned to the Vedas’ he thought and said, “No, No, Sir.”

“The entire Veda was one work in the beginning. As time passed by, they have been divided by sage Krishna Dvaiapaayana to make it easy for the human beings to remember them.” Avadhani was explaining the subject. He is an authority on subject of the Vedas.

“Sir, but you told me in lesson that sage Vyasa divided the Vedas?” asked Vinita.

“Vyasa means ‘the person who divided’. How does everybody call your grandfather? They call him as Justice. That is to say, that he dispenses justice. Justice is not his name. Similarly, Krishna Dvaiapaayana is his name. His work is division. Since he divided, he is called as Vyasa.”

“What is meant by dividing?” Raghuramaiah is getting more and more interested in the subject of the Vedas for some inexplicable reason.

“Mantras – the hymns, explanations to these mantras, worldly matters, matters relating to salvation or moksha, all these were mixed in Veda in the beginning. They were all separated.”

“Is it not said that the entire Veda had originated from Bhagavan or superior God-head? Why did the mix-up result?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“God-head had taught Vedas to Brahma. He in turn taught it to his progeny, the sages. In this process, the mix up should have happened. Mix-up did not mean like the oil-water or sugar and milk mix up. It was like the pulses and paddy mix up. Those people were having extremely good capability of remembering and recalling any portion depending on its requirement. Hence, for them it was not a mix up at all. It will be a mix-up for those people who lacked such capabilities.”

“On what basis was the division done?”

“It was done in two ways. The first was on a broad base or on a Macro level. They were separated into three portions called Rik, Yajus, and Saama.”

“What do they mean?”

“Rik means mantra. They are mostly in the form of S’lokas or poetry. All that combined became Rig-Veda. Yajus means, the S’lokas plus sentences describing the yajnas and yaagas or the sacred offerings and the rituals. All these put together became Yajur-Veda. Saamas are mantras in the form of music. The portion, which had elaborated the methodology as how to recite the important mantras of Rig-Veda has come to be known as Saama-Veda.”

“What about Adharvana Veda?” asked Sakuntalamma?
It appears that for a long time, Adharvana Veda was not considered to be part of the Vedas. At many places it was mentioned that the Vedas are only three in number.”

“How did it come then?”

“Many reasons are told. In fact, there is a lot of difference between the subject in the rest of three Vedas and that in Adharvana Veda. One comes across sorcery, enticement formulae, homam to be performed for obtaining lowly unethical pleasures etc. in this Veda. But on the whole, the salutations or mantras for obtaining peace and abundance are aplenty in this Veda.

Some say that since it is a compendium of the mantras from the other Vedas, the mantras which are propitiated for the peace and abundance, it is not considered as a separate Veda.”

“If so, are the mantras which appear in this Veda appearing in the other three Vedas also?”

“Some are appearing and some are not. They put forth their view that the non-appearance is because those portions are lost over the times.”

“Are portions of the Vedas lost over a period of time?”

“Yes. Many. What we get today are only 5%.”

“Alas! Why?”

“That is the pity. Probably due to surfacing of some Dars’ananas, which blame and go against the Vedas, there should have been reduction in the people who learnt these Vedas and those branches are no more available. E.g., there are 21 branches in Rig-Veda, but today only aitareya branch alone is available. There are supposed to be 101 branches for Yajur-Veda but today only five branches viz. Taittireeya, Maitraayaneeya, Katha, Kaanva, Maadhyandina are available. There are supposed to be a thousand branches in Saama-Veda. But only Koudhuma, Jaimini and Raanaayaneeya branches are available now. Out of 9 branches of Adharvana-Veda, only Paippalaada and S’aunaka branches are available.”

“How are these Vedas used in the yajna or holy sacrifices?”

“If a yajna – the sacrifice has to be performed, four persons are required. They are Hota, Adhvaryu, Udgaata and Brahma. Hota is one who has learnt Rig-Veda. Adhvaryu has learnt Yajur-Veda and Udgaata has learnt Saama-Veda. The person who has studied Adharvana-Veda becomes Brahma. Then only the yajna gets completed.”

“If the Adharvana Veda was not accepted as Veda, there are only three performers for the yajna. How will it be performed?”

“There were only three in those times. As was told a little while ago, the salutations or mantras were mostly for achieving the worldly pleasures and hence it was not accepted as one of the Vedas. But over a period, their necessity was understood. The salutations like the one required to get relief from snakebite or scorpion bite etc. had become necessary and it became imperative to accept Adharvana-Veda also as one of the Vedas. Even then, a regulation had been enforced that only such person who studied the other three Vedas would be eligible to study this Veda. With that regulation in force, this person who studied all the Vedas, becomes Brahma, who was in a position to correct the mistakes of the other three, by
“Avadhani garu! Do you say that all these Yajnas – the sacrifices are being performed now?” asked Raghuramaiah garu.

“It should be said that mostly they have become very much less. I cannot say about north India but in south-India, a stage has come when it will be almost nil.”

“How is it Sir? How can you say that they are almost nil when there are so many Swamijis and Matajis who are going around the country performing the Chandi-yaaga, Naaraayana-yaaga, Rudra-yaaga etc?” Sakuntalamma had doubt. Poor lady! She had recently given a donation for some such yaaga.

“Madam! I am talking about Vedic Yaagas. I am saying that they have come down”

“Are these yajnas of Swamijis not belonging to the Vedic tradition?”

“No, No. There are scriptures or ‘Saastras’ called ‘Aagamas’. They follow the Vedas. The rules are not as rigorous and strict as for the Vedic yaagas. The importance to these sciences or ‘Saastras’ has increased during the last periods of the Buddhism in India or so to say, the period of S’ankaraachaarya. After that, mostly these yaagas following Aagama schools only are being performed. The temples grew in number during this period only. All of them do follow the Aagamas only. Today, primarily, if yaagas are being performed either by S’aivas, Vaishnavites or S’aakteyas, they are according to these Aagamas only.

Since they follow the Vedas only, the reciting of the Vedas will be there in these yaagas. More over, almost all the mantras or salutations are taken from the Vedas only.”

“Then, what do those Vedic yajnas mean?”

“The yajnas like As’wamedha, Vaajasaneyam etc. which have been described in the first part of the Vedas.”

“How much time does it take one to study one of the Vedas?

“Depending upon the student and teacher, it may take around 10 to 12 years.”

“Does learning of the Vedas include learning the meaning also?”

“There is no condition that a Veda Pundit should be knowing the meanings also.”

“Is it that entire Veda has to be read at a stretch? These persons…”

“Wait, I am not Purushottam garu to stand your throwing so many questions at a time”, smiled Avadhani garu and continued. “I have told only about the broad division of the Vedas but not further sub divisions. Krishna Dvaipaayana has further divided each of these Vedas into four portions.

The first sub division is called ‘Samhita’ and it contains only the salutations, which are mostly in S’lokas or in poetry.
The second is called ‘Braahmanam’ and it is mostly the commentary on these salutations and mostly in the form of sentences.

The third tells how to recite these salutations in the forests, so is called ‘Aaranyakam’.

The fourth tells about the ‘Supreme Godhead’ – the Bhagavan, the soul – the Aatma, their characteristics etc and is called ‘Upanishad’.

“O! Upanishads mean the last part of the Vedas.”

“Yes. The contents in Upanishads are entirely different from the contents of the other three portions of the Vedas. Those three portions tell how to propitiate the Gods and how to obtain the worldly pleasures, how to go to Heaven etc. whereas the Upanishad tells how one can get salvation or moksha.”

“I think Purushottam garu has told the same on the first day. Didn’t he?” Sakuntalamma asked her husband for confirmation.

“Yes. He has said that there are two parts of the Vedas and the first part contains the matter about Gods and the second is about the ‘Paramaatma’ who controls both us and the Gods. Isn’t it so, Purushottam garu?”

“Yes. Then only Nageswara Sastry garu had got the doubt whether Satyanarayana Swami is mentioned in Vedas.” On saying so, everybody burst into laughter.

“Ah! We talk about him and there he comes. Long live Sastry garu! Welcome!” welcomed Sakuntalamma.

“Since tomorrow is an auspicious day, I have come only to check up with you if there is any requirement of Purohit. You are saying something about me. What is the matter?” enquired Sastry.

“No. Nothing special. We were talking about Gods and then we remembered you. That’s all. Come and sit.” Raghuramaiah called welcoming him. Seeing this Sakuntalamma was wondering at the sea change, which had come in Raghuramaiah in his attitude towards Sastry. He never even bothered to say hello to this poor chap. Today, he started welcoming him!

Avadhani continued without taking note of these. “So the first part of the Vedas is called Karmakaanda since the method of Karma – the action or rituals is mentioned there. The second is called Brahmakaanda since it contains about Brahma. Some call this portion as Jnaanakaanda also”

“Isn’t it about Him, that we have talked about last time as That being, above the Gods, humans, the animals and stationary beings (sura, nara, tiryak and sthaavara)?” asked Raghuramaiah to clear his doubt.

“Yes”

“You have not answered the recent question, Sir! Do the persons who have studied the Vedas, I mean, the four portions of Samhita, Braahmanam, Aaranyakam and Upanishad, recite them non-stop?” Sakuntalamma garu repeated her question.
“There are many views of Pundits as to the extent of how much one should learn, in the Veda. Some hold the view that unless one learns both Samhita and Braahmanam, it is not complete. Some others say if Samhita is learnt, that is sufficient, for being conferred as a Veda Pundit, since the Braahmanam is only a commentary on Samhita.”

Nageswara Sastry had a doubt. “Sir, If one learns Samhita, will he know all those what are called ‘Krama, Jata, Ghana etc.?”

“There are different versions of recitation for Samhita only but not for Braahmanam. But in Krishna Yajur-Veda it can be seen that this applies to both of them since they are combined in it.”

“You are talking about Krishna Yajur-Veda. You haven’t mentioned about this earlier!” Sakuntalamma.

“Yes. But you aren’t allowing me to complete. Yajur-Veda is in two parts called Krishna Yajur-Veda and S’ukla Yajur-Veda. The first is the one in which both Mantra and Braahmanam are mixed. In the second, they are separate.”

“Is the matter same?”

“No. There is a difference. Sage Yaajnavalkya had learnt Yajur-Veda from one Vais’ampaayana. There arose a dispute between the two. The teacher asked his Veda back. The pupil had vomited out the entire Veda immediately and went away. That vomited Veda is called Krishna Yajur-Veda.

This pupil has again propitiated Surya by doing penance for a long period and has obtained the Veda again. This is called S’ukla Yajur-Veda.”

“My God! How many varieties! But, don’t the Veda-Pundits learn Aaranyakam and Upanishads?”

“The Aaranyakams and Upanishads are almost the last chapters of the Braahmanams. So, those who studied the Samhita and Braahmanam will be almost thorough with these also. However for those that studied only Samhita will not be able to master these.”

“So, we can study Upanishads in the last pages of the book on Braahmanams.”

“No. Not at all! It is neither good to study on your own in that way, nor it is possible. More over, the division of Upanishads from the rest of the portions of Vedas is not based on the chapters and pages but is based on the subject matter.”

“What does it mean?”

“If the matter which is covered in the portion is on the Superior Godhead and soul, that portion is definitely Upanishad only. It may be in either Braahmanam or Samhita or even in Aaranyakam.”

“So if you hold a book of the Veda in your hands, you cannot tell which portion of the Veda is where in that.”
“No. Do you know that before study of the Veda, one should study six more subjects viz. S’iksha, Vyaakaranam, Chandas, Kalpa, Jyotisha and Nirukta.”?

“My God! Is it possible?”

“Yes. If reciting with the hyper stress, reciting the syllables with stress in hypo, stretching the syllables while reciting etc are not learnt correctly, the meaning itself changes.”

“Surprising! Tell how it is so!”

The syllable, which is to be spelt with a hyper stress, with stress in hypo and with stretching, are identified by symbols like a line as superscript or two lines as superscript or an underscore etc. The meaning changes if these syllables are not spelt accordingly..


“So, if the meaning changes by improper recitation, the particular salutation, which is recited for a particular desired benefit, may not give that result. Hence, it is said that everybody should not start reciting the Veda salutations.”

“Can’t it be learnt by everybody?”

“Can a person who is unable to sing the musical notes properly, sing the songs in a concert? Neither any teacher will teach him the music. Will it belittle him?”

“IT is OK Avadhani garu! At my young age I have learnt some Vedic salutations sufficient for the common and usual ritual performances. But I do not know the details. There is no problem up to salutations of benevolence. But will you please explain once the lessons of Pada, Krama, Jata and Ghana?”

“Telling about them at this moment is not necessary for all these persons. But since you have asked for, let me tell briefly. Listen carefully.

Suppose there is one salutation viz. ‘Agnimeel’ey purohitam yajnasya devamritvijam hotaaram ratnadhaatamam’. One learns this by heart first. Then it is called that Samhita lesson is learnt. Then each word is separated and learnt by heart, like ‘Agnim, eel’ey, purohitam, yajnasya, …’. Let these separated words be say 1,2,3,4 … Now, in the lesson Krama, they will be made to learn by heart like 1,2; 2,3; 3,4; …. This will be like reciting ‘Agnim eel’ey, eel’ey purohitam, purohitam yajnasya… Now, in the lesson Jata, they will be made to learn by heart like 1,2; 2,1; 1,2; 2,3; 3,2; 2,3; 3,2; 2,3; … This will be like reciting Agnim, eel’ey; eel’ey agnim; agnimeel’ey; eel’ey purohitam; purohitam eel’ey; eel’ey purohitam; …. Further, the next lesson Ghana will be tougher and will be going backwards and forwards. There are many more varieties of lessons in that.”

“Oh, My God! It means that only those, who have learnt in this way, are Ghanapaathis.” Said Sakuntalamma.

“Sir! Please tell about these Gods. It is bothering me since that day.” Nageswara Sastry asked Purushottam garu.
“That also will be explained by Avadhani…” Purushottam garu encouraged Avadhani to continue.

Listening to something new, Dr. Noone is feeling as though he has understood only in portions. As a matter of fact, there appears nothing difficult to understand, but these are not remembered at all. It is quite confusing to the doctor.

Vinita is bored. She has no questions to be asked! Everybody has come to attention once the topic of Gods has come up again.

“Tell me first. Why Paramaatma and God are not one and same?” Sastry asked in all frankness.

“It can be said that ‘the being having super human powers’ is God. Similarly, an entity having soul, which is superior to other souls should be called as Paramaatma. So, since Paramaatma possesses the divine powers or super human powers, he can be called as God. Those who agree that God is greatest of all, call Him only as Paramaatma. There is no objection from anybody for Paramaatma becoming God. He can be called so. But calling God as Paramaatma needs courage to say so, since some may not accept.”

“Then what is the meaning of the salutation Rik ‘Ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti’.” Asked Sastry point blank.

Avadhani tried to compromise by saying “that also may be correct.” Purushottam had to intervene. “Sastry garu! That is one argument and this is another argument. You are getting confused with both of them.”

“Purushottam garu! I am not understanding at all any thing what you two are talking”, said Raghuramaiah.

“Let me explain in detail. Listen with attention”, began Purushottam garu, looking at each of them for their individual responses.

“It is said generally that Rig-Veda is the first among the Vedas, the reason being the salutations which are found in that, are found in the other Vedas also.”

“We have learnt that, according to some, the Vedas mean only that portion, which contains the salutations. Who is that about whom all these salutations are made?”

They are about those Gods who control prakriti - the primordial matter. A group of these salutations are called a ‘Sooktam’. For each of these Sooktas there is one Rishi as a Drashta or the person who has seen. It means that that sage or Rishi has seen through his divine sight, by the powers of his penance, these salutations, which on propitiation make that particular God pleased with.

For Example, The Drashta for the first Sooktam in Rig-Veda is called Madhucchandasa. The Devata or God propitiated by that Sooktam is Agni. All the salutations in praise of Agni are in that Sooktam. In this way, there may be many Sooktas in praise of one God.

Let me tell the names of Gods about whom the different Sooktas are there in the Aitareya branch of Rig-Veda, which is the one presently available. Indra, Agni, Soma, Aswini Gods,
Maruts, Varuna, Surya, Vishnu, Rudra, Yama etc. are definitely in that. I do not remember if any other Gods are also in that.

Amongst them, the maximum numbers of Sooktas are about Indra and Agni. To-day’s popular Gods Vishnu has only 5 or 6 Sooktas in his praise and only 3 Sooktas in praise of Rudra. That is all.”

Sakuntalamma intervened “How come that such important Gods such as Vishnu and S’iva have only so few salutations?”

“Yes. They are seen as only few. Not only that. The usage of word S’iva is not there in practically any part of the Vedic salutations. Everywhere it is mentioned as Rudra only. He is described as very dangerous God in some Vedas, since he is in-charge of dangerous people. It is very rare to see the word Naaraayana. Everywhere it will be only as Vishnu. Similarly, the Sooktas praising the most commonly worshipped Ganes’a, also are very few. We have to almost search for the Sooktas on Ambika or Durgaadevi. Again it is different in Braahmanams. I am talking about only Samhitas. Isn’t it the primary?”

“In your opinion, why did it happen like this?”

“The reason as per some scholars: During Vedic period, the prominence was only for Gods like Indra, Agni etc. but not for Vishnu, Rudra etc. In later period, by the time Itihaasas and Puraanaas had arrived, Indra was being shown as powerless and Vishnu and Rudra were being shown as powerful Gods. The scholars say that this indicates the change in the perception of the race.

But this may not be correct. Itihaasas and Puraanaas are based on the Vedas only and are not independent. Under such circumstances, according to some scholars, the mention of these Gods, who were prominent in the Itihaasas and Puraanaas, could and should be in that remaining 95% of the Vedas, which is not available now.”

“OK, OK. Now you don’t intervene and derail the discussions”, Raghuramaiah reprimanded Sakuntalamma.

“In this way, each of the Gods is considered to be in charge of each of the primordial powers. E.g., Indra is rain-God, etc. When there are so many Gods, a doubt arises as to the possibility of conflict amongst them. Not only that. Question arises as to which of these powers of the primordial matter we should propitiate?

‘Kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema?’ meaning ‘which god should be propitiated by us?’ This is one of the thought that appears in one of the salutations.

In another Sooktam ‘Indram mitram varunam agnim aahuh, adho divyah suparno garutmaan, Ekam sat vipraah bahudhhaa vadanti, agnim yamam maatariss’vaanam aahuh’ is one salutation. Meaning of this salutation is: Though there are many names viz. Indra, Mitra, Agni, Varuna, Garutman, Yama, Vaayu etc, He is only one. It appears as ‘Ekam sat’. Nageswara Sastry garu has talked about this salutation only and asked if the meaning is: There is ‘One only’. The scholars tell it in many ways’.

So according to this Vedic salutation: ‘The God is only one’. He controls through many manifestations, the different primordial powers. He manifests in many forms like Indra etc. and gives us comforts just like the electric power manifests in forms of light at one place and
fan at another place to give us comfort.” Sastry garu is expressing his view that this is the meaning.

Some others interpret the meaning of this differently. ‘Ekam sat’ does not mean that there is only one God. There is only one material. They say it is like manufactured ornaments like ring, girdle, chain etc. though different, are all made from one gold only.’

In this, the people who says that there is only one God, have differed in their opinion, if that God is whether Vishnu, or S’akti or Rudra.

These are the seeds of religions of S’aiva, Vaishnava and S’aakteya. This sentence Ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti has become the basis for the Vedic religion. Since it is the form of One God, in many manifestations, those, wanting the main important images of powers, main forms called S’iva, Vishnu, Ambika, Surya and Ganes’a are picked up for offering prayers or puja on a regular basis to these five important powers calling it as Panchaayatanam.

For them, no one form is superior or inferior to the other four in the Panchaayatanam. All forms are of same God. On special occasions, they offer more prayers to that form. That is all. Nageswara Sastry garu! Have you understood? You all may belong to this Vedic religion. I told you this only the other day.”

“But we consider us to be S’aivas and Advaitins!” Sastry’s doubt is not cleared.

This may be one confusion. If you were only S’aivas, you would have had only S’iva in your Aaraadhana or ensemble for offering the daily worship. If you were Advaitins, you would not need any Aaraadhana at all. But, one more point needs to be noticed. Advaita is a Dars’ana or religion related to Upanishads. Whatever I have explained till now is keeping only the first part of the Vedas in view. Both S’aivism and Vaishnavism also have their beginning in the first part of the Vedas only.”

“Purushottam garu! All the earlier part is understood but for this last topic.”

“Listen. I shall explain. There are four categories viz., sura, Nara, tiryak and sthaavara, amongst those who worship the Gods mentioned in the Vedas. All the Suras or the deities are different manifestations of one Sura or God only. They do not have any thing beyond these four categories. If the Naras or human beings propitiate Suras with a desire, that desire gets fulfilled. If they propitiate without any desire, they get salvation. This is one school. Is it clearly understood? Now listen to another.

Krishna Dvaipaayana or Sage Vyaasa observed that taking only the first part of the Vedas as base and worshipping Gods is not proper. He has made the importance of the second part of the Vedas known, i.e., the importance of the Upanishads is made known and enunciated Brahma Sutras. According to them, the school of philosophy is: All these categories mentioned in the Vedas are controlled by one superior Godhead, called Paramaatma or Para Brahma. That Paramaatma controls these Gods also. This Paramaatma is having superior powers. So he can be called as God also. God means a being having super human powers only but God cannot be called as Paramaatma as per this second school of philosophy. That is because Paramaatma is above God. Is it understood, Sastry garu?”

Sastry agreed immediately and said, “I shall repeat. Please tell me whether I have understood correctly.”
Purushottam agreed.

“There are two schools. One is based on the Vedas and the second is based on Upanishads. According to the school based on Vedas, all the Gods are different manifestations of form or power of only one God. Selection of the name of that God depends on the liking of the individual person.

According to the school based on Upanishads, there is one super power called Paramaatma who controls these Gods also. Selection of the name of that Paramaatma depends again on the liking of the individual person.

Advaitins said that that Paramaatma has no name and form.

Vaishnavas said: the name of Paramaatma is Naaraayana

S’aivas said: the name of Paramaatma is Pas’upati.

Have I told correctly? Even as per the school following the Vedas, that God, whose forms are the other Gods, is called as Vishnu by Vaishnavas, S’iva by S’aivas. Isn’t it so?” asked Sastry garu. He had added one more question also. “Aren’t these Poorva Meemaamsakas part of the Vedic School only?”

“Your grasp is very correct. Now you tell, whether you belong to the Vedic school or S’aivas or Advaitins?” asked Purushottam garu.

“I don’t know! I should ask our elders. I don’t know what damage will be there if I say something. It is said that S’ankaraachaarya is our Guru. We often visit S’iva temples. It is said that S’ankaraachaarya ordains Panchaayatana Puja. That is why; we have Panchaayatanam in the house. We have no hatred towards any God or any temple. We bow even to the village Goddess placed under a tree. I have absolutely no idea as to which school we belong to, and who we are!” Sastry was wondering.

Purushottam, with a smile said, “Why don’t you also join us in these discussions? Once we complete the discussion of all the schools, we can understand to which school we belong. If that is not to our liking, we can change over to the school of our liking and be role models to our children at least.”

“Gladly I will, if Raghuramaiah garu permits”

“Oh! Don’t say so! You are always welcome”, said Raghuramaiah. “Then, Purushottam garu! Which is the oldest religion amongst all the religions?”

“According to the historians, Vedic school, Bhaagavata School and S’aiva school are old schools of religions which have started one after the other in quick succession. It is not that easy to decide which one is first and last amongst them. The Bhaagavata school is also called Saatvata School of religion It started with the concept that Vaasudeva is Bhagavaan. That Vaasudeva only is called by other names – Krishna, Vishnu and Naaraayana. Though S’aiva School has also been very prominent during that period, some obnoxious items in practice, has put that school into problems. Over a period of time, that school also has gained polished version.”

“When did the Puraanaas arrive?”
“Since it is very difficult to grasp the matter from Vedas, Smritis have been written to
detail the procedures of rites in the Vedas. They are known as Dharma S’astras also. These
have been written by sages like Paraas’ara, Manu, and Gautama etc.

Iitihaasas and Puraanas have started to detail the portion of Knowledge – Jnaanakaanda,
the second part of the Vedas.

Amongst them, Iitihaasas are two: Raamaayana and Mahaabhaarata. Sages Vaalmiki and
Vyaasa had written them respectively.

The main important Puraanas are 18 in number. Out of them, sage Vyaasa wrote 17 and
sage Paraas’ara wrote one.

The elders decided that the meaning of Vedas should be explained according to these
Smritis, Iitihaasas and Puraanas only.”

“Does it mean that these Smritis, Iitihaasas and Puraanas become words of trustworthy or
S’abda pramaanas?” asked Dr. Noone.

“Veda is the only word of trustworthy or S’abda Pramaana. The Smritis, Iitihaasas and
Puraanas, which go against the Vedas, are not pramaanas. So all Smritis, Iitihaasas and
Puraanas, which do not contradict the Vedas are Pramaanas for us.”

“What about the Gods, not finding a place in Vedas but are seen in Iitihaasas and
Puraanas? What do we do about them? Since they are not in Vedas, should we stop
worshiping them?”

Those Gods that are seen in Iitihaasas and Puraanas, as manifestations of Gods mentioned
in the Vedas, are acceptable. Rest need not be considered.”

“Then…” Sakuntalamma stopped Raghuramaiah to ask further. “Does your stomach get
filled up with these discussions? Let us get up for lunch. We shall hear the remaining after
lunch.”
Chapter - 5

Sakuntalamma is on the periodical housekeeping job. She got the cobwebs removed yesterday in half of the house and today it is for the rest of the house. All the workmen are trusted hands and they complete their job even in her absence. She is cleaning the Puja Room herself. All the picture frames are being removed from the walls and placed back on the walls after they are cleaned and wiped. Vinita is also doing her bit causing minor inconvenience.

She heard voices from the living room. Vinita said, “I think uncle Noone has come.”

“Let us finish this work fast. If everybody comes, we will not be able to participate in the discussions.” She hastened her granddaughter.

They are able to listen clearly the voices from the living room though at times is disturbed by the sound of cleaning and wiping of the pictures.

“Uncle, Do you think the Rishis or sages of old times had seen as the Gods told by Avadhani yesterday?”

“No idea. Had I seen that or what? As he said, they might have seen. He says that they can see with the power from their penance.”

“What is penance?”

“Are you not seeing in the cinemas, the penance in the olden days being shown as the sages meditating by keeping their eyes closed, eating only the greens etc and with the resultant rundown of their bodies?”

“Do you say that the meaning of penance had changed in the present?”

“I don’t know if it has changed but in present times, I don’t think there is anybody still doing penance. But we can see many who say they are meditating. In T.V. also there are lessons on meditation. Don’t you know?”

“Why not? Meditation classes are a fad now. Even Government is imparting exercises in meditation to all the Govt. servants right from the I.A.S cadre.”

“What do they teach there?”

“They make them sit without moving the body, close the eyes, and concentrate only on one matter to think about, leaving other matters not to cluster the thinking.”

“What for?”

“This is what they have to say on the subject: As the capability to concentrate the thinking on only one matter increases, their development of mental ability grows and they will be able to work more efficiently.”

“You are quoting somebody. Is it not accepted by you doctors?”
“In other countries, specifically in UK and USA, lot of research is going on the efficacy of meditation. Of course, it is very less in our country. Lot of information is available on the Internet. So did I quote.”

“One has to exercise to work more efficiently. If one sits at one place, will he not develop his stomach?”

“It is not that work Uncle! Don’t crack jokes. Efficient working means making new planning with revolutionary concepts. On those developing skills of meditation, it is said that they will be able to think better and find solutions for the nagging problems.”

“How long one has to sit closing his eyes?”

“As long as he can. Those, who are experienced, it is said, do meditate for hours together.”

“Do you say, in the olden times also, the Rishis did sit and meditate like this? But they were sitting without food, developing their beards. These fellows sit after a sumptuous meal with clean-shaven beards.”

“In those days there may not be barbers. It was all forest also. These fellows also are not allowed to eat stomach full. With the stomachs full they will feel sleepy,”

“…”

“Not like that. Let us think in another angle. Why could they see Gods? They might not have done penance to get Gods present before them. If every thing is available and is fine, none would do the penance and meditations. They must have encountered some problem in their living. I am of the opinion that they must have done penance or meditation to find out the relief from that problem or they needed some new object which was not there with them.”

“If that be so, the appearance of Gods in front of them may be the relief from their problems. They had seen Gods as well as Mantras or Hymns!”

“It could be. When it is established by research that with today’s meditation the person meditating is able to think fresh and is able to find new solutions, why could it not be so in those times?”

“It is not impossible. Newton could find out that there is gravity to earth only when he sat down thinking that way only! With that, lots of problems were solved. New facilities had arrived. It is same with Archimedes also. Is it not the case with almost all our scientists? After all, only when they sat down and thought deeply, the solutions they had come across, flashed in their mind.”

“But my boy! Isn’t that these fellows are able to show and prove such solutions? What, do you say is the proof that the Gods do exist?”

“May be that is also true. But one thing you remember. To prove what Newton or Archimedes had postulated, some items, instruments and circumstances are needed. Without any thing, can these be proved? Same way, these people also may say, that you are to follow certain conditions, if the Salutations are to give benefits or the Gods are to be seen!”
“Yes, Yes. Shall we believe these matters, that are seen by these Rishis under benefit of doubt?” laughed away Raghuramaiah.

“Why is it that all these people have not come so far?” Dr. Noone was saying these words when there was a sound of breakage of glass from inside.

Immediately both ran inside to see Vinita standing with a photo, which slipped from her hands. They were stacking all the photos in the storeroom. There were no injuries to Vinita.

“Why do you do such works? Will not grandmother do?” reprimanded her, he glanced at the Puja Room. Astonished was he. There should have been a number of photos on the walls. All were removed. Only one photo of Krishna as a crawling baby is hung on the walls. Rest of the photos were covered with cloth, and sent to the store.

“Why have you kept only one photo? Can you remain without saluting the thirty million Gods?” surprised was Raghuramaiah.

“I shall bring back that photo of that God when I require it. It is disgusting to have so many photos here without sufficient space”, said Sakuntalamma.

“Ah! A lot of change in you! But what is that desire you have for keeping only that one photo of Little Boy Krishna?” Raghuramaiah asked with a satirical tone.

“You don’t have to ridicule me. The change in me is not greater than that, which had come in the atheists to accept that after all, the Rishis might have seen the Gods.” Retorted Sakuntalamma.

Startled was he to note that she had overheard all that they had discussed. But without showing off that, he said, “Ah! You know how to reply word by word. What is the use of any change when there is no change in retort!” Saying so he left.

Dr. Noone, who had already left that place, did not notice the change in Raghuramaiah’s moods after the exchange of words between him and Sakuntalamma.

“It may be so uncle! How long can they hide the perfidy, if they do tell general public that they had seen Gods and continue cheating the public? If this school of philosophy has been accepted through generations, it cannot be false to that extent. But, for pecuniary benefit of gaining supremacy over others, the Vedic philosophy might have been misused by some.”

Raghuramaiah being a judge and having been accustomed to get adjusted to the circumstances, had come back to his normal mental state, and heard carefully, what Dr. Noone said.

“All the Brahmins might not have misused. Some might have done it and it could have been generalized. If really everybody has cheated so, that study of the Vedas should have been lost by this time.”

“Some ordinary police constables do indulge in some petty corruption. So it has come to be generally accepted that the IPS officers above them also must have had a share in that booty. Similarly, it could be that because of these few misusing Brahmins, all of them must have been taken as misusing Brahmins only.”
But how do you think such Importance has come to them? After all neither they have the money nor political clout. Most of them manage with the meager offerings given by us only. Their physical strength also is not there except that they have got potbellies. How did they earn their greatness?”

“Either because of the greatness which has been thrust on them by all who are other than Brahmins, or by the power of those Vedic salutations”

“If the first case is correct, it is wrong on the part of people other than Brahmins to say that they are being rode over by Brahmins after crowing ‘you are the great, you are the saviour’. It is not the fault of Brahmins. In the second case, it is a mistake on our part to blame them if the greatness bestowed on them was from the greatness of the Vedic hymns or the salutations. What do you say?”

“Your argument seems to be reasonable. But there must have been some more social conditions in favour of them.” While he was telling so, Avadhani, Sastry and Purushottam entered together. Sakuntalamma and Vinita also came from inside after finishing their work. After having some snacks, everybody was thinking of settling down for some discussions, Pattabhiramaiah came like a whiff.

Pattabhiramaiah and Raghuramaiah were classmates from their childhood. They were close friends of the same town and lane. Both studied together up to Law degree. Both were very competitive in their studies. The only difference in them was that Raghuramaiah was a bookworm while Pattabhiramaiah was excellent in understanding in practicality. It is enough if one is able to see whether an incident occurred within legal framework to become a judge. But to be a lawyer has to have the ability to put that incident in the legal framework. That is how Raghuramaiah is able to shine as Judge and Pattabhiramaiah as a well-known criminal and civil advocate. He is presently a practicing advocate of the Supreme Court. For some unknown reason, he has reduced the practice as an advocate and had been going around the country. He met Raghuramaiah rarely while the latter was in service, since he knew his rules. After the justice had retired, he had been seen more often. Both of them had been very close and address each other on the first name. He is quite a man in hurry.

“Sakuntalamma! Are your coffee and snacks ready?” saying so, without waiting for a reply and not noticing who was there on the way, led into the kitchen. Sakuntalamma followed him to kitchen and gave him what he wanted there itself and brought him back to the hall.

“Hey! Raghu! I am also retiring from active working. I have handed over almost all the cases to my colleagues and juniors. Only one case is still in my hands and that judgement will be delivered in the next month. Soon after, I shall leave for some As’ram and lead a life of ascetics.”

“Why have you become so disinterested? What will you do with your wife and children?”

“They will be on their own. No problem for living. I am getting disinterested in everything for some time. I get a feeling of emptiness in everything.”

“Which As’ram you will be going to?”
“I am thinking of going to some Aas'ram like Raamakrishna Aas'ram. Nowadays, it is Advaita of S’ankaraachaarya ruling the roost. I would like to study this thoroughly and behold that Divine Light.”

Avadhani could not resist asking. “Sir, I do not know you, but you will excuse me for asking. If you have decided in favour of Advaita because it has become world famous, there are more famous schools of philosophy like Christianity and Islam which are followed by much more number than the Advaita.”

Pattabhiramaiah looked at Raghuramaiah as if asking who this is.

“He is the tutor of Vinita. He is Purushottam garu, a scholar. He is Sastry garu. He is our Dr. Subrahmanyam, you know him already.” Raghuramaiah introduced everybody there to him.

“Master! Are you Dvaitins? Your reaction is so volatile the moment you have heard name Advaita”, asked Pattabhiramaiah.

Avadhani did not reply. He was in a state in which he was not able to know who he is. Right from his great grandfather, everybody had interest in S’aivite systems. On wife’s side, they have more Lalitadevi’s prayers etc. He did not like that also; neither the S’aivite system is appealing to him. He was unable to say why it was not appealing. His mind was in a peculiar state. He did not speak because of this state of mind.

Pattabhiramaiah must have thought it unnecessary to give reasons for his selection as a reply to a tutor. “OK I shall proceed. I shall come in the night and we can talk leisurely then. I have just now returned from my camp and I want to hand over the gift to my darling Vinita. Of course my main intention is to have some snacks from Sakuntalamma!” looking at Sakuntalamma, he had given away the gift packet in the hands of Vinita and caressed her with affection. He had left as quickly as he had come.

“Uh! A typhoon has passed away!” said Dr. Noone

“Some people are like that”, said Purushottam garu.

“Purushottam garu! As I keep thinking, I get a doubt. Why is it that Christianity and Islam have got so deep roots in the society today? Are they not very few who follow our Vedic Gods? Even though our C’arvaaka school of philosophy is atheistic it has got representation all over the world! In your opinion, why is this difference?” Dr. Noone initiated the discussion.

“You are saying atheistic school of philosophy. What do you mean by that?”

“Those who say the God is there are theists and those who do not believe in existence of God are atheists. Is it not so?”

“Let us accept that. As you say, Christians as well as Islamic school also accept God’s existence. So they are also theists only. Combining them and our country’s theists, how much will be percentage of your atheists?”

“If you say so, I agree that we are less in number. But when I defined theists and atheists, why have you said ‘let us accept that’?”
In fact, the definition of theism and atheism is not that. Those who accept the authority of the Vedas, are theists and those who do not believe in the Vedas are atheists.

“Is it so?” said Raghuramaiah.

“Sir! Do you say it as belief in the Vedas or belief in word of trustworthy or s’abda pramaana?”

“It is only belief in the Vedas that matters. The word of trustworthy or s’abda pramaana is there with Christianity as well as Islam. Are not Bible, Koran etc words of trustworthy or s’abda pramaanas only?”

“Phew! I think we only do not have any word of trustworthy, to propagate our school.” Said Dr. Noone. Again saying “after all we do not accept the word of trustworthy! Even if it is there, such a book will not work”, he corrected his own requirement of the word of trustworthy.

“That means the C’aarvaakas say that you do not accept the word of trustworthy only for the sake of telling and do not really mean that. Don’t you accept the medical books? Are you not accepting somebody telling you ‘these are the rules in your system’? So do not say so emphatically!”

“Let it be so! It is said that Sage Brihaspati had postulated our school of philosophy. I also say the same, but I somehow don’t like it. Do you say that there is nobody else who postulated our school of philosophy? At least are there not any famous persons who practiced our school of philosophy?”

“Since you said ‘Lokaayatana or C’aarvaaka’ we are talking about sage Brihaspati. Otherwise, similar schools are many. All those who follow such schools are called materialists.”

“What does that word mean?”

“Materialistic school means, that school, whose followers say that only those materials which are seen by the eye are existing; nothing exists, which is not visible to the eye; our happiness and misery are only in these.”

“Aha! I suppose, the school of imagination should be opposite of this, which says: Some thing beyond what we see is there; we can achieve that either in the mind or in the soul. Isn’t it that all these other schools do come under this school?” Avadhani picked up the thread.

“Yes. This materialism had been there in our country right from the times before Buddhists and Jaina. But this has not really come into prominence. There were some called Teerthankaras. Is there a creator of this universe? What happens after the death? Such questions were dwelt upon widely with all the logics and ultimately, settled for the materialism were Poorna Kaas’yapa, Gos’aala, Kes’akambala, Kaatyaayana etc. some of their followers were managing subsequently such school of thought.”

“Were they also not having faith in Vedas?”

“They were almost not having faith but some of them were continuing to perform the Vedic rituals. So there was no specific school of philosophy or Dars’ana with these people.
Some said: all in this world is full of misery; whatever is done it is all misery only. Some others said: This life is misery. So saying they became S’ramanakas. They had some moral values as ideals and lived for them. They never went for arguments and avoided discussions. They were with clean-shaven heads and they lived life on alms.”

“Is there authentic work to know about their materialism?”

“It is almost non-existent. Even if it is there, it is not available even to those Buddhists and Jains of those yester times.”

“Are there any who refuted this materialism?”

“There were many who repudiated this materialistic school of philosophy in the later times.” Vinita by this time could open the gift pack given by Pattabhiramaiah with great difficulty and was looking at the idol that came out of the gift pack adoringly. She took the same to grandfather and said “Grandpa! Is it not Buddha! Look how beautiful it is!”

“He came just in time,” said Purushottam garu with a smile. “There he is! Buddha happens to be the first among those who repudiated your school, especially your authenticity through inference or Anumaana pramaana.”

“Buddha!” exclaimed Dr. Noone with disbelief. He had lot of respect for Buddha. He likes him for his denouncement of all the facilities that were readily made available to him, left the family and had led a very severe living under the pipal tree in search of the wisdom. He stopped the animal sacrifice in the yajnas and preached non-violence. That Buddha did not accept his school of philosophy! Some how, this did not go well with Dr. Noone.

“Sir! Is this Buddha in the list of Gods that are in the first part of the Veda?” asked Vinita.

“No, my dear! He did not have belief in the Vedas. Neither did he accept the existence of God.”

“How can it be? Buddha not in the Vedas! Is he not an incarnation of Lord Vishnu?” asked Sakuntalamma with surprise at his not being in the Vedas.

“Who said Buddha to be one among the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu? Popularly it is being told as one among the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. But in my opinion it is incorrect. Somebody has committed an error. It is continuing over the time. Buddha is a historical personality only. His story does not appear in the puraanas as the legends of Rama, Krishna and Nrisimhaswami do appear. He was born about 3500 years ago. He was an atheist, which means he did not have belief in the Vedas. He did not believe in existence of God. He did not believe in the soul also. He said that also as non-existent. But his followers made him God after his death. It is really one of the tragedies in Buddhist school of philosophy that worship to the idol of Buddha is taking place in Buddhist temples, when Buddha himself negated idol worship in Buddhism.”

“I cannot believe that Buddha is not one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, Sir!” said Sakuntalamma.

“Madam! You know by heart the Venkates’a Suprabhaatam! Please recite S’loka ‘Meenaakrite’!”
“I know it, Sir, I know it. Let me recite Grandma! You don’t recite please!” saying so Vinita recited the S’loka in lovely sweet tone.


She is looking pale. She does not know that the S’loka which she recites everyday covers all the ten incarnations. How will she know of the contents in those S’lokas!

“This is exactly the age-old tradition that we have. The moment a famous personality comes up he is called God and is inserted into the incarnations of Him immediately. Since Buddha has become a prominent personality, it has started with saying that he is God, and suddenly one day it is one of the incarnations of God. That is all.

“Do you say that Lord Vishnu has never incarnated as Buddha, or you say that this Buddha is not His incarnation?” Avadhani, amongst all, had doubt.

“One or two millions of years before itself, the demonic races or Asuras, were harassing the universe of Vedic regulations, as a remedial measure, Lord Vishnu in the form of Vedic regulator came on to the scene and slowly weaned them away from the Vedic path of life. This incarnation was called Mahaa Mohaavataaram. Since this Buddha also had weaned away the people from the Vedic life style, in the confusion he was also included in the incarnations. But he was different that that incarnation. As soon as the demonic race got weaned away from Vedic life style, that incarnation had exited. This Buddha has postulated a school of philosophy, which ensured Vedic life style to be permanently out of practice. That is the difference. However, this theory has not been accepted universally. Some argue that this Buddha himself is one of the twenty-six incarnations mentioned in Bhaagavata. They further say that Balaaraama is never an incarnation.”

“Balaaraama and Krishna, similarly Paras’uraama and Das’aratha Raama, were of the same period. How can all of them be incarnations?” Sakuntalamma had a doubt.

There are varieties of incarnations like direct-incarnations and emotional-incarnations. So, there can be more than one incarnation at any time. There is nothing wrong in that.”

“Please explain in detail what it means”, Sakuntalamma was saying. Dr. Noone interjected meanwhile saying, “Wait aunty! That could be discussed at a later stage. Purushottam garu! Please tell how Buddha had accepted the Anumaana pramaana which was not accepted by our school of philosophy.”

“What is Great there! It is so simple. He accepted for the same reason with which you have rejected it.”

“What”

“Don’t you say that there is no rule of law that there has to be definite cause and effect relationship between two materials? Refresh your memory.”
“Is it not that you say: Since there is no rule that there has to be fire wherever you see smoke, it cannot be accepted to say that since there is smoke, fire exists there. They say that it cannot be so. If there is an effect, there has to be a cause for that. This is what they say. They prove that hence, Anumaana pramaana also is an instrument of knowledge.”

“This is what has been told by you already. What is new in this?” said Dr. Noone.

“I shall speak about another supporting argument put forward by them. Listen carefully and think deeply. OK?”

“You say that authenticity through inference – Anumaana Pramaana- is not an authority or Pramaana. Why not? Please tell the reason for your statement. If you say that you need not provide the reason, why should we accept? Is it any King’s order? Or is it any law? Or will you give the reason? If so, let us have it. What will you tell?”

“You will say: Authenticity through inference – Anumaana is not an instrument of knowledge, because, it does not have power to generate knowledge. Does it?”

“But this also has become an inference only. It is similar to the statement ‘There is no smoke on the hill because fire is not there.’ You do not accept this. You argue, “What is the proof that there will be no smoke without fire.” Don’t you?”

“Similarly, what is that you are saying in this case as well? ‘Since inference or Anumaana has no power to generate knowledge, it is not an instrument of knowledge.’ This is what you say. That means, in your opinion, an instrument of knowledge should have the power to generate knowledge when you ask, ‘why should not there be smoke without fire? Supposing you are questioned ‘why can’t there be an instrument of knowledge which does not generate knowledge?’ can you answer? Will you not fail to find an answer? So Buddha advised you to stop issuing silly statements like ‘my mother is infertile’.”

Thus Purushottam garu explained in detail.

Justice liked this argument very much. After all was he not accustomed to the arguments in the courts?

“It is well taken Purushottam garu! Now, please explain Buddhism in detail.” Saying so, he called Vinita and made her sit in his lap.

“The original name of Buddha is Siddhartha, and is known to everybody, I suppose. The social situation at that time was such that though the Vedic school of philosophy was well established, the general public was showing some aversion to the way some of its followers were conducting themselves.”

“How were they conducting themselves?”

“General public was not able to understand what was ordained in the scriptures and some selfish persons were troubling them. Since the Vedas or scriptures were available only in Sanskrit, and were known only to scholars and well-educated persons, rituals like Yajnas and Yaagas were being performed extensively and hence animal sacrifices were also used to be violently prevalent. Doubts arose in the minds of people that these rites were being performed only for the pleasures of those performers.”
"Is animal sacrifice an essential part of a Yajna or Yaaga?"

"There are many opinions on this. Though majority assumed that animal sacrifice is unavoidable, many believed during later period, that not the live animal but its idol made of flour, is the one, to be sacrificed in the Yajna or Yaaga."

"How was the decision in this matter taken?"

"There was a mythological story on this subject. There was a procedural difference of opinion in a matter between the sages and the gods: ‘What was prescribed in the Vedas as to whether the Yajna or Yaaga should be performed with the animal sacrifice or with Vreehi - the pulses and grains’. The sages were of the opinion that Vedas prescribe use of Vreehi - grains and pulses, while the gods expressed the opposite."

"How is that? Doesn’t Veda mean the salutations or hymns seen by the sages and the gods only? If it is so, then why is there a dispute between both of them?" Dr. Noone had the appropriate doubt.

"Traditionally nobody would accept that Vedas had been told by the sages only. It said that the Supreme Godhead himself brought out the Vedas through the sages, who were instruments. Moreover, it does not mean the sages, who had the vision of the salutations or Hymns, had the doubts. In the later times when the sages were performing those specific yajnas, either by the power of their superhuman capabilities or by the power that was bestowed by their penance, the Devas or gods had come to receive the sacrificial offerings due to them and then they got their doubts and dispute could have arisen."

Raghuramaiah said, “According to this, it is construed that as per the sages, the Supreme Godhead is the controlling authority of all these gods and these gods are not the different forms or the powers of the Supreme Godhead.”

"Yes.” Purushottam was happy to note that Raghuramaiah was using his judicial knowledge and coming forward with proper points. He continued “If these gods were different forms of the Supreme Godhead, they would not have had the doubts since they would have been the propagators of Vedas. There is only one Rik or hymn viz., ‘Ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti’ to support this argument that all these gods are different forms of the Supreme Godhead.”

"Are you saying that by that time itself the Upanishadic school of religion, saying that there is the Supreme Godhead above all these gods, has been in practice?"

"That is always there. The opinion that the Vedas and Upanishads are of different periods is the present generation’s narrow view only. That ‘the Vedas and Upanishads have come into light by the Supreme Godhead’ is the view of the traditionalists.”

"Then what could be the meaning of the Rik ‘Ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti’?"

"According to the Upanishadic school itself it means: ‘The Supreme God head is one only. All these gods or Devas are the bodies with Supreme Godhead in them as soul. So the Brahmins describe the Supreme Godhead in different ways.’"

"Is there any difference between this and the previous meaning?"
“Why not? The word ‘bahudhaa’ makes it all. The concept of the body and soul or S’areera and S’areeri is obvious from this word itself.”

“I have not at all understood.”

“Look. I will give you an example. Suppose we have opened an office. Only one person manages the office working for some time as an Officer, then for some time as an assistant and depending on the need, working as a messenger also. Imagine that person has supernatural powers and assumes the form of an officer, assistant and messenger at the same time, and after the work is over, resumes his original form. This is one of the explanations. In another possibility, the officer has appointed clerks, peons etc. and has them under his total control and is getting the work done. His control is so total that he knows even the thoughts, which are coming into their minds. This is another explanation. Is there any difference between the two or not?”

“Is it in your opinion, the first one is Vedic school of philosophy and the second is the Upanishadic school of philosophy?”

“Yes. Instead of saying it as Vedic School of philosophy, let us say that as the school of philosophy, which does not regard the Upanishads highly. I have said Vedic school just for your easy remembrance, but amongst them also there are many differences. The first school is of those, who interpret the Rik ‘Ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanti’ without considering the Superior Godhead of Upanishads. The other school interprets the same Rik keeping the Upanishads in view.”

“Sastry had the doubt. “This Rik belongs to first part of Vedas and not Upanishads. How can the interpretation be keeping Upanishads in view?”

“You will recall that we have earlier discussed as to how to differentiate the Vedas and Upanishads. In the entire Vedas, the part of the Vedas describing the rituals is called as the Vedas and the part, which describes the characteristics of Para Brahma, or Superior Godhead is called as Vedanta or Upanishad. Isn’t it? In fact, you all must be aware how important is the Isaavaasyopanishad, which has been compiled from Samhita or the first part of the Vedas describing rituals! So there is nothing wrong in interpreting the Rik in the light of the Upanishads.”

“Raghuramaiah tried to conclude by saying, “You mean to say that it is the same form of Soul that is in different forms according to the first school whereas in the second school it is considered that gods are forms of a number of souls having the Soul Supreme as the controller inside them. Is it not?”

“Well that’s it. We can go forward quickly in this discussion of the science of Reality or the tattva s’aastra, if the correct point can be grasped in this way.” Purushottam garu complimented unintentionally.

“Since it is such an intriguing difference, the common man can not understand and is getting confused in identifying the school of philosophy to which they belong”, said Sastry garu. He has today understood more clearly.

“Let us go back. So, the sages and the Devas had doubt as to whether, in the yajna the live animal be sacrificed or the animal idol made out of the grain.” Dr. Noone wanted to know this matter quickly. All said and done, was it not his topic?
“Meanwhile, a king named Uparicharavasu was taking a stroll in the skies. He was well versed in the entire Vedas and he knew the essence of the Vedas. So the sages and Devas agreed to approach him for clearing their doubt.”

“Who is he, that great personality, who is agreeable to both sages and Devas?”

“Oh! He was very great. He knew thoroughly, not only the duties of his own category of warriors or Kshatriyas, but also the entire Vedic knowledge and the knowledge of the Aagamas. He was very devoted to Godhead. He performed such a penance, which gave him the power to fly in the upper reaches of the skies, not only himself but with entire entourage of his people.”

Vinita was not able to bear suspense. “So, what next?” She was getting annoyed also at their extraneous discussions leaving the main topic in the middle.

“But being influenced by the natural effect of Rajoguna, Uparicharavasu had glanced at both the sages and Devas, without telling his judgement, he asked both of them to tell as to who said what.

“As soon as he heard that the Rishis were of the opinion that the sacrifice should be performed using the icon of the animal made with the grains and lentils, and that of the Devas was that it should be done with the live animal, he gave a verdict in favour of Devas. Probably he must have thought that there would be no personal gain to him in authorizing the opinion of the Rishis.”

“It looks it is inevitable even in such great personalities these evil designs do come up!” commented Avadhani.

“It is not their fault. After all the three Gunas – Sattva, Rajas and Taamasa, have their effect on the primordial matter”, supported Sastry.

Immediately the Rishis or sages were angered. They looked at him, who had given a biased judgement, and vowed, ‘If what you said is correct, then we may go down to the nether worlds. On the other hand, if what you said is unjust, you shall loose all your power of flying in the skies and fall down into the nether world of Paataala’. At the same moment, the King Uparicharavasu had fallen down into the nether world of Paataala.BILLI

“So from that day the animal sacrifices must have stopped!” doubted Dr. Noone.

“Yes. It should have stopped, but some selfish and lusty persons continued the animal sacrifice saying that what Uparicharavasu had told is correct. In their opinion, the sages had cursed Uparicharavasu because they were angry with him for not giving judgement in their favour. Some others were conducting sacrifices using the grains etc. They opined that these Rishis would have been wiped out without any trace, had their curse been unjustified to Uparicharavasu, who had great powers from penance.”

Avadhani cross-examined. “During the yajna, while sacrificing the animal, they are to recite the Hymn which tells the animal that it is not a death for it but that attainment of upper world.’ Is it not? But this would have been necessary to say so only when they do the sacrifice using the live animal. Will not this hymn itself become unnecessary when they use the icon of the animal?”
“It is very difficult to decide the meaning of a word or Hymn of the Vedas. It is said that Veda trembles at the thought of somebody trying to produce commentary on it without the help of Itihaasas and Puraanas. Not only that. We decide the character of a man by taking note of the majority of the total qualities in him. In the same way, to decide what was directed by the Vedas, the majority of the Vedic Hymns and Vedic sentences have to be taken into account and not just one or two sentences and Hymn somewhere in an obscure part of the Vedas.”

Avadhani did not leave at that. ‘Is it not said that if we consider the Itihaasas and Puraanas, a number of animal sacrifices – in fact human sacrifices also did happen?”

When Avadhani is going so deep into the subject, Purushottam could not help going into details to explain.

“I am not saying no to that. I am saying that in the opinion of some, such sacrifices are not proper; while some others’ opinion is, that it is quite right to do so. We come to know from the Smritis or rulebooks of Vedic Law that even the great sages while understanding the S'ruti – the Vedas, have given different opinions according to different interpretations. In view of that I say that there is possibility of doubt. For example, a word ‘pas’vaalambhanam’ is used in Veda. There are two meanings to the word ‘Aalambhanam’ – cruelty and touch. One interpretation is: touch the animal and start the yajna. The other view is killing the animal and start yajna.

Not only that. The words ‘go, aja, as’va, nara’ do not carry the commonly known meanings of cow, goat, horse and man but are the names of some medicines as per the view of some. Swami Dayananda Saraswati is one of the prominent modern age persons who support this interpretation.

Another important point is to be noted: It is said that in that age, invariably the guests are used to be entertained with beef, but in the later period it has been prohibited. Similarly different things have become prohibited in different ages. This incident of Uparicharavasu might belong to the age in which animal sacrifice was prohibited. Another view is that it is of the age very near to the Kaliyuga.

A doubt arises right in the first prapaathaka of the first canto of Yajur-Veda. The Adhvaryu – the executor of the yajna, takes pity on the Kus’a grass, when he goes to cut it for conducting the yajna. He …”

“What is Kus’a grass?” asked Vinita.

“It is a variety of grass, which is used in the Vedic rituals such as Yajna and Yaagas. It grows in the forests. It is called as Kus’a and Darbha.” Explained Purushottam and continued. “He, who goes to collect the grass by cutting, cuts it thinking: Oh! By cutting this grass I hurt this plant. He cuts the grass telling the plant: I am doing this in the course of the prayer ritual there being no alternative. It is unbelievable that the Vedas exhibiting such tender feelings even to the plants, will specify that an animal crying heartrendingly, must be sacrificed.”

“Even then since there are persons who still do so and since it is not easy to decide the meaning of the Vedas, Ramanujacharya had done a great service to the humans and the animals by canceling the Vedic rituals. Madhvaachaarya also had given instructions to use the icon of the animal only, in case it is inevitable.”
I am telling all these so that you will understand that the dissatisfaction was running so high on the Vedic School that it became a factor in favour of Buddha’s attraction to the people”, said Purushottam in his long explanation in detail.

“That was a period when the animal sacrifices were very common and large in number. Next … Continue”, said Raghuramaiah.

Wait. You are not giving any respite to Purushottam garu. Let him have a short break. Will you have a glass of water, Sir?” Sakuntalamma intervened.

“It is OK with me madam!” continued Purushottam garu. “So, during this period the common people were beginning to be put to hardships. Over and above, the public started looking through the Jaina Teerthankaras slowly. At that time was born Siddhartha. His story is well known to everybody and so we need not repeat it here.”

“Grandpa! I do not know. Will you not tell the story of Buddha, please?” asked Vinita.

“I will tell you during the evening tutorial class. It will become late now”, Avadhani told Vinita.

“Siddhartha left his beautiful young wife and charming baby child when everybody was asleep. Being unable to bear the pangs of affection he touched the baby just once. It is said that he thought of kissing the baby, but controlled his desire to do so. Coolly he came out.” Though he narrated the scene in a nutshell, it moved everybody there. How difficult was it! What a sad happening! Leaving the wife and children was much more difficult to Siddhartha than the difficulty experienced by Yas’odhara and Raahul for being abandoned by Siddhartha. There was no dearth of any thing for that wife and baby except that they would be away from her husband and his father. But Siddhartha had to remain without any facilities for the rest of his life. Nobody would leave his own baby for fun or challenge becoming a fool, nor would he be able to do. Only a person truly disinterested could leave the wife and child like that!

Who can abandon the happy life, a life without any problems, a nice and good wife, and affectionate child? It is not possible, rather highly impossible, thought everyone there again and again. This is possible only for Siddhartha. To expect that such a highly disinterested person to be born again and again, is only a wishful thinking, they thought.

“Siddhartha who came out so, donned saffron clothes, cut his hair, tried for a suitable teacher. He learnt Saankhya Yoga from one called Aalaarkaalaama and attained samaadhi - last stage of meditation. After that, he attained further higher samaadhi under another yogi, called Rudraka Raamaputra. But he was not satisfied.”

“Satisfaction in what?”

“We must remember his goal for which he proceeded so. I did not tell the full story since you all knew it already. While he was visiting the different parts of the town, he saw an old man, a dead body and a sick person. Then he understood that the life would be full of misery and sorrow only. He proceeded to know the answers for the questions: Is there happiness in the universe? Why is the misery seen so abundantly? Is there a way for the release from the misery? Should it be practiced? He could not get the answers from either of the two philosophy teachers whom he had served.”
“By that time itself, as the Vedic school of philosophy was widely followed wherein the happiness and eternal happiness were described in details, how come Siddhartha did not read them? Did he not have faith in them? Did he not accept the Vedas being unhappy with the animal sacrifices?” asked Dr. Noone.

“It is not very easy to answer these questions. It would be highly impossible to imagine that he, a member of the royal family, did not learn the Vedas and did not know them, when the Vedic School has the abundant royal approval. It was said that when he saw the old man, sick person and the dead body, he was 29 year old. When he was young, the astrologers had predicted that he would be either totally materialistic personality or will totally renounce all the worldly pleasures and become a Sanyasin. On hearing this prediction King S’uddhodana confined him to the Royal Palace only with the entertainments of music, dance etc. So it might not be proper to assume of him, to have seen the animal sacrifices, started a new school of philosophy in defiance to the Vedas that too of a person who had not even seen an old man. So to get an answer to your question is very difficult.”

“Tell Grandpa! He was not satisfied with both the philosophy teachers. What happened then?”

“After that he started doing penance along with five more yogis, starving his body in many ways. There was no achievement except that he became unconscious. Then he continued the penance taking food. With that the other yogis denounced him for taking food and deserted him.

He sat down under a pipal tree, and decided not to get up from the penance until he achieved his objective of obtaining the wisdom. One demon called ‘Maara’ tried along with his army of the demonic forces tried to deviate or digress him from the penance, but vanished into thin air when Siddhartha did not oblige him.”

Dr. Noone, listening to Purushottam with rapt attention, asked thoughtfully, “That is to say that in the Buddha’s school of philosophy, the divine powers, extra sensory powers and existence of divine personalities etc, had been accepted.”

“Oh! Graciously. In his religion, there are more than 500 divine personalities. There are many worlds like Swarga etc. There is enjoyment in such worlds. There is rebirth. Further …”

“Then what is the necessity of rejecting the Vedic School of Philosophy? Except for a minor difference his religion is also more or less the same.”

“I have already told you. We do not find anywhere in the history that he had rejected the Vedas after learning and not liking them. He has done the penance because of his dislike for the Vedas and with a view to establish a new school. He has witnessed misery and has taken up tutelage under a Guru- a teacher of philosophy, to find the solution for that. It could not be found. He has embarked on his own in search of it being aware of his full knowledge, firm resolve and capability to control his senses. On achievement of the Wisdom, he has contradicted the Vedic school which is contrary to his Wisdom and rejected it.”

“Grandpa! The story please!” Vinita grumbled.

“Yes! Yes. I am narrating, my little girl! It is coming to an end, after all.”
“Siddhartha, who did such severe penance, saw the Light of Wisdom on one full-moon day of the month of Vaisaakha under a pipal tree. ‘Sambodhi’ had occurred. On that night, in the first quadrant, he had the knowledge of his previous births. The ignorance and the impurities got wiped out in the second and third quadrants and as soon as the darkness of ignorance was lost, immediately, the light of Wisdom was lit. Siddhartha became Buddha.”

“What is the difference between what the sages had seen with their divine sight and this happening?” was the doubt of Dr. Noone.

“It is same considering that both of them tell the same: ‘We have seen, it is visible to the mind’. But today, it has become fashionable, for all those considering themselves to be modern and civilized; to believe that what Buddha had seen is reality. Believing that the sages had seen, is considered by them to be blind faith and uncivilized. Both had done the penance. But in our faith, what Buddha said became a word of trustworthy and the word of the sages became cheating.” When Purushottam said so accusing, it had hurt Dr. Noone where it had to hurt. But since he, being a man of reason became aware of his mistake and considered it to be reality.

Avadhani picked up the thread. “Surprise is that among the westerners also, those who believe that Buddha has seen mentally are many. Such of them who value the vision of sages through their divine sight, are very few. No westerner has ever seen either of them. The same disease has contracted us also.”

The same westerners, out of liking for Vivekananda, would believe that his mentor Ramakrishna Paramahansa had indeed talked to Kaaliakaadevi twist their lips in disagreement, when they hear that Lord Venkates’a or Lord Ranganatha had conversed with Ramanujacharya some few hundred years ago, or that S’ankaraachaarya had a vision of Lord Narasimha some centuries back. Surprising thing is that among westerners also, there are many who believed that Buddha had a true direct mental perception. However, there are very few who valued the direct perception of our Rishis. After all, no westerner had seen either Buddha or the Rishis. We had also inculcated the same disease. When they are asked to value the prayers and Hymns and prove their worth, they are not capable of undergoing the hardship. Instead, they conclude that these prayers and Hymns will not beget the fruits.” Purushottam had clarified further on the mindset of our people.

These words made Raghuramaiah to sit up and think. He thought: ‘it is unfair to consider favourably the actions of the persons liked by us and unfavorably for those who are disliked. But it is our mentality’.

“Buddha, who attained Sambodhi thus, had found out four postulations: 1. The universe is full of misery. 2. In the universe, there is nothing that is not misery. 3. Even if there is happiness, if it is not available, it leads to misery only. 4. On completion of happiness it is misery again. Hence the happiness also should be called as misery only.”

“This seems to be an extremist’s view. Don’t you think it is a pessimistic view?”

“Some say that this is a talk of despair and one-sided view of the life. There is a general opinion that because of such a view on the life, the entire race has lost its vigour and became staid, filled with despair and became totally despondent. There is an allegation on Buddha and S’ankaraachaarya that the root cause of all the ills of Indian race is the combination of Buddha’s theory of misery and S’ankara’s ‘Maayavaada’ – the theory of illusion. It is firm belief of some historians as well.
But Buddhists do not accept that their viewpoint is pessimistic. Although they preach that the life is full of misery, they say, yet the path for the elimination of misery is shown by them”, said Avadhani.

“Yes. Since S’ankara’s theory of illusion or Maayavaada talks about importance of knowing that everything is an illusion, it is immaterial who the king is or who the servant is and only because of the dual concept it is seen like this and ultimately there is only One, the Supreme Brahman. Some of the learned Pundits have strongly commented that such thoughts of despair will definitely weaken the race”, said Purushottam.

“No you think that S’ankara’s theory of illusion makes the race so desperate? They may be blaming unnecessarily out of dislike towards his theory”, doubted Sastry.

“It is possible. There are all sorts of people in the public”, said Purushottam.

Raghuramaiah reminded. “Come on! Tell. The universe is full of misery. This is the first thing Buddha has observed in his mental vision. Next!”

“Then, he has observed the reason for the misery. That is desire. The unstoppable desire to have things.”

“It is known. What next?”

“Then he found out in his vision that it would be possible to end the misery.”

“Hmm! What next?”

“He could visualise how to stop the misery.”

“Does he say that one can have happiness by stopping the misery?”

“Those who try the way to end the misery are called ‘Bodhisattvas’. In that way, they become ‘Sambodhi’ – meaning that they will attain wisdom and become ‘Buddhas’. They attain Nirvana in Buddhism. Nirvana has two meanings, 1. Extinction 2. Death. Then everything is void only. That is removal of misery or stopping the misery. In our language it is salvation.”

“You mean that everybody can become Buddha?”

“Ha! That is the essence of their school. On practicing continuously the postulations of Buddha, one becomes Buddha and attains a stage called Nirvana when he does not have any more births and deaths. Till that time-till he becomes Buddha, he will have a number of rebirths. Since a man following Buddha’s teachings is called Bodhisattva, all those births are called Bodhisattva births. That birth can be as any animal or bird or worm. Those are the lives, whatever birth it may be, practicing the teachings of Buddha and helping others. The tales on these lives are called Jaataka Tales.”

“I have a comics book of Jaataka tales of Buddha”, said Vinita.

“Yes, My dear! All those who become Buddhas have many such births.”

“Oh! So, this is the essence of Buddhism!” thoughtfully said Raghuramaiah.
“In the Hinayana school of Buddhism, all on their own follow the teachings of Buddha, and quickly become Bodhisattvas and help the society by preaching some of the postulations and finally attain Nirvana. On the other hand, in Mahayana school of Buddhism, each Buddha postpones his becoming Buddha, by continuing to help others till each being in the universe becomes Buddha.”

“Is this the difference between the two schools of Buddhism?” wondered Avadhani. “If so, did Gautama Buddha also have so many rebirths like this?”

“Yes. Buddha had seen those Bodhisattva rebirths only during the first part of his Sambodhi.”

“Why did he hasten attaining Nirvana?”

“That is the way to attain Nirvana in the Hinayana school. It is correct. But as per Mahayana school, Buddha seen by all of us is not real one. Real Buddha is all pervading with the actual body.”

“Are there many more Buddhas before this Buddha we know of?”

“Oh Yes! According to some, there are 24 more Buddhas before this Gautama Buddha. Some more tell this number either in increasing or decreasing order.”

“Why did all of them not preach like Gautama Buddha? Why did Buddhism start only with Gautama Buddha?”

“According to Mahayana School, Buddhas are of three categories. The first category is of those who had undergone indoctrination under a mentor and achieved the vision of truth. The second category is of those who had the vision of truth all by themselves and are not communicative. The third category Buddhists is samyak Sambaddhas. They not only have the vision of truth all by themselves but also they preached it all over the world. Our Gautama Buddha belongs to this category. So he landed with the propagation and we have Buddhism.”

“Then what is that path of Bodhisattva propagated by him?” While Raghuramaiah was asking, Sakuntalamma questioned, “What is the path of Bodhisattva basically?”

“I have told already that those who follow the teachings of Buddha are called Bodhisattvas. They must know that the life is full of misery. Next they should resolve that they should renounce all desires and not indulge in cruelty to anybody. Next they should not speak falsehood and should not heckle anybody. Their profession should not give rise to any unfaithful activity. They should not trade in the armaments and liquor. They should not allow thoughts of evil to come up. They should keep their mind calm and should desist their desire towards the worldly pleasures. They should concentrate their thinking on some good deed and be happy with the resultant bliss. Then they will gradually have the emergence of Wisdom and turn into Buddhas.”

“All this is not different from what has already been preached by the Vedas and Upanishads. It seems that on hearing that a new preacher has come on the scene, people seem to have followed him out of infatuation, leaving behind the Vedic school of philosophy”, said Avadhani.
“We need not say so. Though these tenets are same in all schools of philosophy, principles and Dars’anas, we are all in fact C’aarvaakas only when we come to practicing them. We all pretend that we follow the tenets of Dars’anas: ‘control the physical pleasures, one will get eternal bliss’, but most of us slip into the C’aarvaaka school continuing to give importance to the physical pleasures.”

“The call for desisting in cruelty etc might have been preached in the Vedic school or Upanishadic school, but animal sacrifices were being done! In the same way, many principles prescribed in the path of eight tenets, preached by Buddha, might not be in practice by those who call themselves to belong to the Vedic school. Because of that these principles became important and Buddhism flourished.”

“I can’t believe that such excellent principles were not there in people following the Vedic school”

“I do not mean that they were not there even in small measures. Otherwise, neither Vedic religion nor the Upanishadic religion would have continued their existence today. So we have to consider ‘how much percentage could it be?’ In addition, it must be said that Buddha’s personality had a lot of influence. His renunciation after sacrificing the Royal pleasures, his steadfastness, all these had given lot of power. The people had worshipped him as the hero of Buddhism. During that time, lack of great sages in Vedic religion, who did severe penance and had vision of the Para Brahma, had helped Buddhism to consolidate and prosper and whichever pundits were there at that time were merely following the earlier practices and were not intellectuals who could additionally postulate new tenets. There was no looking back for Buddhism with the active support of Royals and Kings, since Gautama Buddha was a prince.”

“There could be another factor also in its favour. Since Buddha had rejected the caste system of Vedic society, it could have found favour with the oppressed castes also.”

“Rightly conjectured. Either Vedas or the study of Vedas being concentrated in only a few categories of people, and Vedas being in Sanskrit language, except those few who could perform the Vedic duties the rest being unable to do, worked against the Vedic Religion. In this backdrop, consider what Buddha had preached. He said that all are equal. He preached in the language that common people understand, He said that there is no necessity of either Yaagas or Yajnas. There is no effort required. No expenses are involved in this meditation, which is being taught by him. He says that everybody can do it. All these have worked in his favour. By that time already the Jainism is becoming highly popular. That also deprecates the Vedas. In this way, during this period, Vedas have to face the onslaught from all sides at the same time.”

Everybody is interested the way Purushottam is telling completely in details. Nobody is getting bored with the exposition. Everybody seemed to have forgotten his or her hunger, rest and sleep. All are listening very attentively, and they have even reduced their attention to the other physical matters.

“Raghuuramaiah had asked, “What will happen if this eight fold path is followed?”

“In this eight fold path, everything is qualified. Drishti – Vision becomes ‘Samyak Drishti’ - Proper Vision. ‘Sankalpa’ or intention is qualified as ‘Samyak Sankalpa’ - Proper Intention. ‘Samyak’ means proper. His intention was: The physical pleasures are not to be totally abandoned, but at the same time one should not become slave to them.
The nescience or Avidya will vanish, on practicing this eight fold path over a very long period – very long period means it may be many births. We already know them as Bodhisattva Lives. Along with the Avidya, the Samskaaras or sacraments will also vanish. The feeling of “I” and activity are generated only because of the Samskaaras. As soon as this “I” and activity vanishes, this world with the names and forms will not be seen. As soon as the world with the name and form is no more seen, the support for the eyes, ears, nose, skin and mind will not be there. Then the ‘Trishna’ - lust or the desire to enjoy the materialistic and physical comforts will cease. ‘Trishna’ means infinite desire. As soon as that is lost, the infatuation will be lost. Along with the loss of infatuation, the rebirths will cease and along with them the question of birth and death will not be there. That’s it. The misery is no more there! This is the path for elimination of the misery preached by Buddha.”

“That is to say that misery will end with the death. Isn’t it?”

“The misery will not end with simple death. If one dies like that the rebirth is not eliminated. Is it not also a misery? So one has to eliminate Avidya or Nescience and die. Then there is no rebirth.”

“Does it mean that the misery is inseparable from the soul and one has to experience that over many rebirths.”

“This is the peculiarity of Buddha’s school. This point became the Achilles heel of Buddhism and S’ankara and others could instantly contradict this school. Buddhism does not accept existence of eternal soul.”

“What is that ‘not accepting eternal soul’? Is there a soul which ceases to exist?”

“They say that it appears as if there is something called soul or Aatma because of nescience only but actually there is nothing called Aatma or soul. As soon as the nescience vanishes, the soul also will vanish, and hence there is nothing called eternal soul.”

“If there is no soul, who gets rebirth? This body will become extinct here itself. Is it not so?”

“For this question, Buddhism could not give any satisfactory answer.”

“If there is no eternal soul, is it not that somebody else might have to reap the effects of the deeds of some other?”

“It will be so. For this also they did not give any proper answer. Because of this weakness only, the Jains have contradicted immediately, without the necessity of waiting for the Vedic philosophers to contradict the Buddhists theory on the soul.”

“If nescience, latent impressions in the mind or vaasanas, outer universe, senses, mind, soul body all become extinct, what will remain ultimately?”

“Emptiness. That is their school of philosophy. Hence they are called ‘S’oonyavaadins’ or proposers of emptiness.”

“That is to say ‘There is aatma but its becoming extinct is Moksha or Salvation’, is their objective”
“It is not wrong to say so since their ultimate philosophy is extinction of the soul which is being felt.”

“When does one get happiness in salvation?”

“When is happiness when everything is misery! So ultimate objective is to remove misery.”

“When do this universe, the senses, bodies, soul etc become extinct? How will they become extinct?”

“According to their philosophy, they are always becoming extinct.”

“How come? If they are becoming extinct always, how are they seen?”

“They are becoming extinct and again born.”

“Not understood. Again it is very confusing.”

“According to their philosophy, the entire matter is momentary only. It means that any thing will exist only for a moment and the next moment it becomes extinct. As soon as it becomes extinct, a new one is born. It picks up all the latent impressions of the previous birth and is born along with all of them. Again in the next moment it dies and another will be born. When there is no more repetition of the births like this, there is no more universe. When there is no universe, there is no more desire etc. and hence there is no more misery!”

“Uh! No use. It is not getting into the head. If all the things are becoming extinct every moment, they must be seen so. But they are not looking so.”

“The extinction and rebirth happen so fast that the naked eye does not notice at all. So you are not able to observe.”

“All mean the soul also?”

“Aatma or soul means the knowledge. Isn’t it? Hence if all the external things will be said to exist only momentarily, it means Aatma or soul also is included. When the birth of external things ceases, it means the universe is no more visible. It means – there is no soul or the knowledge does not radiate any more – meaning that it is no more existing. That is void and that itself is salvation or moksha.”

“Oh! Detail it once more please!” asked Dr. Noone.

“Look! You have flower vase in front of you. This existed only for a moment and become extinct. A new flower vase is born. Extinction and rebirth happened so fast that your eyes could not observe them. How do you see the flower vase? The soul inside you or the Aatma has traversed through the eyes and took the shape of the vase and then you see the flower vase. The object is only of momentary existence. It became extinct and is reborn. You are unable to notice this gap and are considering that the flower vase is there since long. That is your ignorance. For Example: Take the case of pictures in a cinema. They are all still photos only. But in the cinema theatre, they all are moving. The projector projects each one of them so fast in sequence, that your eye cannot notice the gap between sequential pictures. Is it not because of your ignorance you say that the pictures are moving? Same thing happens in case
of the flower vase also. You, unable to notice the extinction and rebirth, are in ignorance by considering that the flower vase exists permanently. The moment that ignorance is removed, the flower vase will not be born again. That means the knowledge flowing out of you also becomes extinct. Since knowledge means soul, it means that the soul is also extinct. On happening so, in case of every thing, there is neither Jneya - external objects to be known, nor the knowledge to know the existence. Everything is void. That is salvation – elimination of misery.”

“How did he know that all objects are of momentary existence and extinction of soul or Aatma itself is salvation? Where is it defined so? How could he propagate that everything will become extinct negating their visible permanency? Who told him?”

“Who will tell him? They do not accept the word of trustworthy. According to them, statement by somebody is not an instrument of knowledge. They say: word of trustworthy is not an instrument of knowledge.”

“How come? Why do they say that a word by somebody is not an instrument of knowledge?”

“We have already known the meaning of S’abda as a word or sentence which gives complete meaning. Is it not so?”

“Yes”

“Now I shall tell some words. Listen and tell the meaning.”

“Yes! Tell!”

“This is a cow.”

“I understand that this is a figure having the genetic or racial characteristics of an object called cow.”

“You have not seen the cow till this moment. Now I have shown it and said that this is a cow. You have the knowledge of the object called cow. From now on, whenever you see such an object, you will know that that is a cow.”

“Yes.”

“Why”

“What is that silly question? Since the race of cow exists all times. Once you know what the characteristics of the object are, from then onwards, whenever an object with those characteristics is observed, you know automatically that that is a cow.”

“But for Buddhists, aren’t all objects of momentary existence only? So the genetic or racial characteristics also cannot be permanent since that becomes extinct immediately. According to their postulates, it is not possible to say that it is cow when you see again an object of same characteristics. Again somebody has to tell you. That means, the S’abda or word, which identified the object, for the first time, as a cow, did not generate the knowledge. Hence they prove that the S’abda is not an instrument of knowledge.”
“It is a bunkum! How did they, after all, know about this momentary existence? With that, they had written off the word of trustworthy as an instrument of knowledge. But, OK, they say, they did not come to know that by someone else’s saying or from the books. Neither it was direct perception, since nothing is momentary in the perception. What exactly do they mean by this momentary existence? Does it mean ‘for a second’?”

“No, No. Momentary is used them in the sense of minutely smallness. After all when they do not accept the word of trustworthy as an instrument of knowledge, and the universe is not momentary in direct perception, you question as how did they knew that the universe is of momentary existence only. Isn’t it? They say: ‘have you ever seen a cloud? How long does it exist?’

“How long will it be there? It will exist till it completely rains.”

“So! You see! As soon as its objective is served, is it not becoming extinct? In the same way, the entire universe becomes extinct as soon as its objective is over. Hence they concluded by knowledge of inference that everything is momentary – exists only for a minutely small period.”

“How can everything be like a cloud? Assume this body of mine is here. Tell, how this body has rebirth every moment, has the objective achievement and extinction in the next moment?”

“Every moment there is life activity in your body. Either some life cells die or are born or cell division happens. Every moment there is a change in the red blood cell count as well as white blood cell count. So, your body during the last moment is different from that of the present moment. Is it accepted or not?”

“What an argument! Yes. OK Then?”

“When do the change of the blood cells and death of the cells occur?”

“As soon as their utility is over.”

“You said it already! What is there for me to tell! So, they proved that every object is momentary by the authority of knowledge through inference – Anumaana Pramaana. They say: ‘Sarvam kshanikam- sattvaat – meghavat’ - Everything is momentary, - characteristic of objectivity - like a cloud. This is just like the saying: Fire on the hill – because there is smoke – like in the kitchen. Isn’t it?”

“Yes it looks like that. But, this characteristic of objectivity – is it the meaning of the word ‘sattvaat’?”

“They say that every object has an objective. If it is so, it is called ‘Sat’. That means everything with characteristic of objectivity has a purpose to be fulfilled.”

“But they say that everything is momentary. Does it mean that in their opinion, the eternal objects do not have any objective or purpose to be fulfilled?”

“Let it be as you say. Let us consider that the eternal objects have a purpose behind their existence. That means fulfilling an objective is the characteristic of the eternal object. Nobody can stop it from performing as per its characteristics. That means it should keep on
fulfilling its objective. We had not said that it would become extinct while it is fulfilling its objective. Not only that when it is fulfilling its objective in the present, it should have given in the past also and shall fulfill in the future also because it is its characteristic. Is it happening? No. How can one object have the objective at the same time for the present, future and past? Hence, the eternal object cannot have any objective. Since there is no object without any objective, all objects are not eternal. That means all objects are momentary only.”

“It appears that it is understandable, but I am not understanding. One has kept aside grain as seed. Germination is the purpose and it is natural characteristic of the grain also. When it is along with the soil and water, it means when the farmer had sown the seeds and watered it the purpose of the grain is fulfilled and grain becomes extinct. Should we not say that grain stored as seed is permanent? When I wanted to know how my body is not eternal, it was told through the life cells. What about the stored grain?”

“If germination is the natural characteristic of the grain, nobody can stop it. Whether there is soil and water or not, it should germinate. If it had not germinated, it means that it is not its natural characteristic. If it has to be said that germination is its characteristic, then it should not be separate from the soil and water always because it is its characteristic. Hence, the objective of stored grain is not the germination but remain stored and it is its purpose too. The characteristic of the grain which is wet and is in association with soil and water, is germination, As soon as the purpose is fulfilled, the grain becomes extinct. In conclusion, the synopsis of the whole talk is that there is no purpose for any eternal material and there does not exist any material without any purpose. Hence all materials are non-eternal or have momentary existence only.”

“Oh! Oh! Agreed, Sir! Everything is of momentary existence only.” Dr. Noone had raised both his hands in salutation and requested him to continue his talk.

Everybody laughed at his action of salutation.

“So are the arguments,” Purushottam continued. “Everything is momentary only’. This is the first tenet of Buddhism. Next, the second tenet is: ‘Everything is misery, misery.’ Meaning everything causes misery and misery alone.”

“How is it known that everything is misery only? What is the proof?”

“Which proof should I show? All things are momentary. By the time you want to see them, they are becoming extinct!” Purushottam said with fun.

“There is one folk song in Telugu. It runs like this: ‘Oh God! I do not find a thing to offer you, which is not yet already tasted. I do not find water suitable to be offered to you, which is pure and not offered yet to any body since it is already taken by the fishes, the flowers are already once used by the butterflies, the milk is that which is already suckled by the calves. What should I offer You, Oh my beloved God!’ What you are telling is in similar tone. Everything is misery. To show an example, it is not possible since it does not exist anymore!” Saying so laughed away Sakuntalamma.

Purushottam also joined her in laughing away and continued his talk. “Their third tenet is: ‘Every thing is swalakshanam.’ Swalakshanam does not mean its usual meaning – its own characteristic. If it is in conformity, it will not support the argument of momentary nature. Here the meaning of swalakshanam is the property of its visibility. That means a momentary
object is perceptible only for a moment. Since most of the objects cannot be noticeable in a moment, it is impossible to tell one object to be like another.’ That is the meaning of this tenet.”

“OK! Is there another tenet or is it the last one?” It appears that the audience is getting weary.

“Yes! Are you getting bored? Let us continue it after a break.”

“No, No. Let it continue now itself. We must know all about Buddhism today itself, even if it goes beyond midnight.”

“The fourth tenet is: ‘everything is void, void’ it means everything is blank or empty.”

“How is it proved? It is OK to tell what you had seen in the dream as void or mirage in the physical vision. But what you see when you are wide-awake is still the same even after you wake up having some sleep. How can it be called as a illusory or void?”

“Suppose you say that you are seeing silver. In your view, it is truth and is not either illusory or void. Let it be so. This becomes then Sat or the truth, one that exists. That means it is becoming truth. That means it should have characteristic of having a purpose as motive of its existence. Which should have this characteristic? It is silver, which should have characteristic of purpose behind its existence. Is it not? What did you say? You said ‘I am seeing this silver.’ How many parts are there in your sentence! Adjective ‘this’ is there, ‘silver’ is there. The verb ‘am seeing’ seeing the silver is there. All these have a relationship. All these have to be truths, if what you say is accepted. That is to say that all these should have characteristic of fulfilling purpose. But except silver, none of the other has such characteristic. When there are so many parts, how can only one part viz. silver have purpose and the rest be left over? Can there be youth in one half of a woman’s body and old-age in the other half? Can a body of hen be divided in two, say, one half is for food, and the other is for bearing the eggs? One cannot have one half in one-way and the other the other way! The purpose is only for ‘silver’ but not for ‘this’ or ‘am seeing’. Isn’t it? So, it should be accepted that none of these parts have the truth. That is to say, that none of these have a purpose. Finally that means ‘I am seeing this silver’, is not really existing. It is only void. Whether it is in the dream or when wide-awake it is same. “

“What you are telling is understood to some extent. But Please tell me one thing. Any thing should be either existing or non-existent. If not, it should be ‘once existed but now non-existent’, or existing as non-existing. How can it be ‘void’ instead?”

“You are asking about the characteristic of an object or thing. The characteristic should be either ‘existence’ or ‘non-existence’. ‘Existent for some time and then becoming non-existent’ should be characteristic. How can it be ‘void’? This is your question. Is not it?”

“Exactly! How do the Buddhists answer this question?”

“Suppose existence is the characteristic of any object. Then, the pots, clothes etc. should be always existent. If it is so, what is the necessity of the potter or weaver? Why are they working? Therefore, ‘existence’ is not the characteristic of any object or thing.
“Suppose non-existence is the characteristic of any object. Then the work of potter or weaver etc. is waste! The pots etc will never get made. Hence, ‘non-existence’ is not the characteristic of any object or thing.

It is not at all possible to be ‘Existent for some time and then becoming non-existent’. For example, the sky is ‘sat’ – that exists. Can there be any time when ‘sky’ is non-existent? Hence, ‘existent but non-existent’ cannot be the characteristic of any object or thing. Offspring of an infertile woman is an, ‘asat’ – that is non-existent. So, what remains is ‘void’ only.

Hence, ‘void’ only is the characteristic of all this.

‘Buddha’ is the one who understood this ‘void’ from the above four tenets. He only is ‘released’. That is the path of relief from misery.” Concluded Purushottam.

“When he sat down under the pipal tree thinking that everything is void, wisdom suddenly did dawn on him. Wonder! People believed him when he preached them so? This is still unbelievable! It is unimaginable when one says that all this universe which is visible, is momentary and void,” said Raghuramaiah with rhetoric.

“Don’t take it so lightly. There are some who believe Buddha, at least to some extent, since he preached that it is better to lead a life with moral values than spending the life in wasteful discussions on the subject of existence of any other worlds to be visited by this soul after the death of this body. He would have been rejected outright long time back, had he simply preached only the theory of void. Majority of us look at only what practice was preached by, and not at the total gamut of the philosophical tenets or principles.

Is not practice after all based on only the tenets preached? Not knowing what we get by following a certain practice – that means: The blind practice without knowing what the philosophy or tenets mean, - is blind faith only. Is it not?” Dr. Noone had questioned quite analytically.

“There is no doubt in that. Non-analytical practice is definitely a blind faith only. But, there is no religion without faith. There is neither practice nor living. Even though the faith is basic requirement for any school, it should not be blind faith. It should never be against the perceptive and direct vision.”

“What does it mean?”

“We decide to fly in a particular flight. We do undertake the flight with the belief that the engines and crew of that particular plane would take us safely to our destination. We cannot do anything if it happens otherwise. Neither can we stop flying thinking that it will become a disastrous and unsafe flight. But knowing that a bomb is planted in that plane for that flight and knowing that it would explode during the flight, and knowing that the pilot is not capable of stopping the explosion, it will not be acceptable to say that we emplaned with the faith of a safe journey, knowing very well all the above snags. That is blind faith and against the direct perceptive vision.

Faith, is not believing something disregarding the authenticities or pramaanas, but living irrespective of the result. It is unacceptable to say that I have faith in a particular Swamiji, because he created something. Since it is impossible to create something, the faith in that is called blind faith. This becomes faith disregarding the authenticity or pramaana. I believe that
the tenets preached by that Swamiji are proper and hence I practice those tenets. Saying: ‘I will follow the tenets whatever the result be’, is the true faith – This is what is known as ‘living irrespective of the fruit’. The belief in things, which are against direct perceptive vision, is blind belief only. There only, we should tread cautiously.”

“Very well analysed, Purushottam garu!”

“But the statements: ‘this universe is momentary, it is void’, these two appear contradictory. Momentary indicates that it did exist for a moment. Void should mean that it never existed. How did this difference occur?”

“After attaining Sambodhi, it is said that, Buddha was ascertaining as to whom should he impart the wisdom that dawned on him and whether he at all should impart it to somebody…” Purushottam was saying. Sastry picked up the thread as he was saying.

“After knowing that everything is void, whom will he preach?”

“He knew it is void but it did not become void as yet! The universe will become void in Nirvana. It is not possible to tell others after knowing that everything is illusory, but after knowing that it is void, there is no problem. He held back some tenets for the suitable persons and remaining were taught to the general public. Those held-back tenets are supposed to be in the book ‘Buddha Vachanam’. Based on these only the ‘Mahayana’ school of Buddhism came up. On the whole, what Buddha wanted to tell was that everything is only void. But since everybody will not have the qualifications to grasp that, he said first that everything is momentary- momentary – ‘Sarvam kshanikam kshanikam’. At last, he taught: it is void – ‘s’oonyam s’oonyam’. His opinion was that the first one would ultimately lead to the latter only. Thus was the difference in doctrines, due to the differing qualifications of the disciples, but there was no difference between momentary and void.”

“If preaching is different, will it not mean different tenets?”

“In their opinion it is not different. Their question is “Are there not many routes for a particular destination?” There were in total four disciples to Buddha. One of them said: ‘Once you say it is momentary and another time it is void, your language is contradictory’ so that disciple and his followers are called as ‘vaibhaashikas’. They give importance to the commentary of the tenets. So they are called as Vaibhaashikas.”

“How do their views appear?”

“The total objects are of two categories. One category is of the physical objects and the second is of internal metaphysical objects – meaning the soul, or knowledge. All of them do exist - that means they are perceptibly visible but are of momentary existence. Considering them to be eternal, not knowing that they are momentary, leads to misery. Once it is known that they are momentary, the path of salvation, or the stopping of misery will be unfolding.”

“Good. What about the second disciple?”

“Buddha stopped after teaching three tenets to the second disciple. Immediately the disciple asked about the last tenet. Hence this disciple and his followers are called ‘Sautraantikas’-“

“What is their school of philosophy?”
Vaibhaashikas say: ‘Knowledge or Soul plus outer objects - All of them are visible to the direct perceptible vision.’ These Soutraantikas say: ‘only the soul is visible to the direct perceptible vision and all other objects are imaginary only and are not visible to the direct perceptible vision’!

There is no difference between the knowledge and object since the knowledge only radiates outside and gets a form. There does not exist any object at all. In such a case, how can one imagine an object? Since it leaves its impression. Suppose you are healthy, it means that you must have eaten well. Though the food items are not visible then, they should have been eaten earlier and they can be imagined in the mind. Similarly, the outer objects are to be imagined according to these Sautraantikas.”

“How is the moksha or salvation in their case?”

“It is similar to the Vaibhaashikas’ case. There is not much of difference between these two schools in this aspect. Now the third category people say that there are no external objects at all and everything external is only void. To the question of how it is known, their answer is that by Yoga or meditation, it is known. They are called as ‘Yogaac’aaras’.”

“Uh! What about the fourth category?”

“Not only the external objects but internal soul or knowledge also is non-existent as per them. This is the category, which says that everything is void only. They are called ‘Maadhyamikas’.”

“How was that name arrived at?”

“It is said: The preacher or guru had taught them that everything is void only. The disciple heard it and believed it without questioning. Consequently, he became the best disciple. Since he did not question why and how did it get explained, he became the worst disciple. How can the same disciple become best and worst at the same time? So he was called as middle ranker or ‘maadhyamika’.”

“Is it truth or a story?”

“I don’t know. Another reason also gets quoted. Since he showed a via media between the lust of the senses and severe conditions of practice, he is called as ‘maadhyamika’. Our state Andhra Pradesh is the primary region for this category of Buddhists. Have you heard the name of Naagarjuna Hill? It is the same person. ‘Naagarjuna’ is the prominent personality for this school of void. S’ankaraachaarya is greatly influenced by this school. There are lot of similarities between S’ankaraachaarya’s school of illusion and this school of void.”

“Please explain briefly the school of void once more. It is difficult to get into the head,” said Sakuntalamma.

“I will begin with the concept of being there and not being there once more. Listen carefully. ‘Sat’ means to be or to exist. ‘Asat’ is just opposite to it. Ordinarily an object should be either ‘Sat’ or ‘Asat’ – existent or non-existent. Or it should be ‘Sadasat’ – existent as non-existent, or it should be different than ‘Sadasat’. If it does not belong to any of these four categories, then it is called as void. Is it understood?”

“Yes. Continue. Please tell the meanings of these words.”
“‘Sat’ means the one with the property of existence. ‘Asat’ means the one which becomes extinct and is born. ‘Sadasat’ is the one, which has the property of both ‘Sat’ and ‘Asat’. The one different than ‘Sadasat’ is the one, which does not have the property of both ‘Sat’ and ‘Asat’.”

“Hmm.”

“If we say that the characteristic of objects is ‘Sat’, then their property is existence only. Hence there should not be manufacture of pots, clothes etc. But since they are being manufactured, ‘Sat’ is not their characteristic. Or, if we say then that their characteristic is ‘Asat’, there is no purpose served by the one, which is born as ‘Asat’. If we would like it to be called as ‘Sadasat’, it cannot be because of its contradictory nature. To tell that it is ‘different than Sadasat’ it is like the horn of a hare (one that does not exist) and of no purpose. So, left out is the ‘void’ only. This is the basic principle of this school. It is very difficult to understand. You need touch of the science of Logic or ‘Tarka Sastra’.”

“It is OK. But are there only these four categories in Buddhism? Do all of them belong to ‘Mahayana’ school?”

“Almost all of them belong to ‘Mahayana’ school only. There is some doubt about some following the ‘Vaibhaashika’ school. Talk about the various branches! – Oh! There are so many of them. Talk of the Branches, sub-branches, gods, gurus – spiritual teachers, procedures, ‘Buddhist Aaraamas’, ‘sanghas’ etc., their count in Buddhism is no less than that of the Vedic school.”

If someone wants to stop the misery through the path of Buddha, and attain the status as Buddha, then one must take to asceticism – sanyaasa. They should shave off the head, join the sangha, and lead the life by receiving alms. They must obtain the six powers viz., charity, character, patience, valour, meditation, and intelligence through hard work. These powers are called ‘Paaramitas’. Once he obtains these six powers, the remaining qualities of skill, determination, strength, and knowledge will be automatically acquired. In the initial stages, there was no entry to women in the Bouddha Aaraamas – Buddhist Hostels. These women were supposed to practice the ‘Ashtaangayoga’ in the residences only. But Aananda, Buddha’s brother, strongly pleaded for a place for women also in Sanghas or Aaraamas. It is said that then itself Buddha said: the decline of the Buddhism starts now.”

“How much is the present Buddhist population in our country?”

“Compared with the total population it should be said as almost nil. At one time Buddhism had ruled our country displacing the Vedic school, but today it is practically wiped out of our country. But in other countries- in China, Japan, Burma, and Srilanka, it is quite prominent. Presently Buddhists constitute approximately 0.70% of our total population- only seven per thousand are followers of Buddhism.”

“Why did it decline so steeply?”

“Though there are a number of reasons for the sake of telling, main cause is our common public’s underlying deep attachment to the Vedic religion, idol worship etc. Though they initially were jubilant that they need not perform any specific rites, later they were not satisfied. Over and above, to achieve the six ‘Paaramitas’, some of them started resorting to the mantras - sacred chants and tantras – the elaborate rituals.”
“I think that Buddha never took to these sacred chants and rituals.”

“He did not. Some of the later period followers had actively supported the same practices that were rejected and discarded by Buddha. The branch of Buddhism followed by such of them is called ‘mantrayana’ or ‘tantrayana’ or ‘vajrayana’.”

“How did it start?”

“They have to achieve the ten powers after they join the Bouddha Sangha. Isn’t it? Intelligence is one of those ten powers. Skill or resourcefulness is another. Some had proposed that ‘prajna’ –intelligence should stand for woman, and ‘upaaya’ –resource should stand for man. When both of them copulate –“ he stopped at this juncture and asked, “Vinita, grandmother said that she kept my pen, which I left the other-day here, somewhere in the cupboard. Please go, search for it, and bring.” Sakuntalamma understood why he was sending Vinita inside and did not say anything.

Purushottam continued. “… On copulating so, nirvana – or moksha is achieved. That means that the ten Paaramitas are obtained only when the man and woman copulate. This is the school of this branch of Buddhism”

“Chi, Chi…” Sakuntalamma showed her aversion.

“Not only that! It was decided that unless the body becomes strong like a diamond, one cannot achieve the nirvana, and to make it so strong, the five ‘Ma –kaarars’ – words starting with the letter ‘ma’ are to be experienced essentially. The five ‘ma – kaaras’ stand for ‘madya, maamsa, matsya, mudra and maithuna’ which mean wine, meat, fish, viagra and copulation respectively. Further, they started using the codes for these five – like saying ‘did prajna come?’ meaning ‘did the woman come?’ ‘Is the resource inside?’ meaning ‘is the man inside?’ ‘Where is the nectar?’ meaning ‘where is the booze?’ and began cheating themselves as well as others in the Bouddha Aaraamas.”

“What do the words ‘mudra’ and ‘maithuna’ mean?” Dr. Noone is not satisfied unless he has the full and complete knowledge of any thing!”

“Do they need so much elaboration?” stretched Sakuntalamma but Purushottam had detailed for the sake of the doctor.

“Mudra has a meaning of eating puffed rice. It is their belief that eating puffed rice increases virility and improve sexual activity. ‘Midhuna’ means the couple and ‘maithuna’ is the act which they do together.”

“So much degeneration had set in Buddhists in the later period!”

“In our opinion it is degeneration. But they do not consider it so. But it is not the Buddhists in entirety. Only the branch of ‘Vajrayana’ Buddhists have proposed these and to expedite the achievement of siddhi they proposed to eat the human faeces, to offer human sacrifices, and did perform them secretly during nights in isolated places. With such practices, some of the Bouddha Aaraamas became the centers of sexual play and boozing. With such credibility, not only the attraction diminished but also aversion occurred to the public. The hatred towards Buddhism was there now. What one branch did had its effect on all other branches as well. Gradually the people distanced themselves from Buddhism and the attraction to Buddhism diminished considerably. The Vedic school was becoming prominent
once more. But that did not mean all Buddhists had become like that. Still there are many
who follow good tenets of Mahayana school. I was only narrating the various reasons for the
decline of Buddhism in our country.”

“The one that came in between got lost in between! But surprising is that it flourishes in
foreign lands. Probably the ‘Vajrayana’ school did not spread to these lands.”

“No idea! We must say that it did not spread. Even if it did, it might be acceptable there!
The concern towards sexual relations and liquor drinking is not that strong as in our country!”

“It may be right also! Our fidelity of the wife, monogamy is viewed as uncivilized
patriarchal or matriarchal society. We view them as an uncontrolled society with no moral
values. They consider it as sexual equality,” said Avadhani.

“Do you say that these Buddhists, at all, are our people?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Why do you say so? They are our people. Suppose Vinita does not like bitter gourd and
Raghuramaiah garu likes it very much, does it make Vinita alien and Raghuramaiah native
for us? We should never think on those lines!

We are all one family having individual tastes. However, when the topic of something not
liked by one of us comes up with him, he will speak more about the unacceptable qualities. If
the same topic comes up with one, who likes it, he will tell four good qualities about it. It is
but natural to behave so in both cases. That does not make both of them to be aliens. Neither
there is anything wrong in arguing whether it is good or bad nor by that, they will become
born enemies.

There is no rule that even if one did not like it, one has to accept it. That is called
secularism.”

On hearing the talk of Purushottam, Dr. Noone joined both hands together and raised
them in salutation. He said, “Though you are so well knowledgeable and thorough with the
subject, you are really broadminded and you did not exhibit any constricted mindset as some
do and you deserve wholehearted salutations Sir! I salute you with all reverence. One must
learn about such matters from people like you only. Only then everything will be known
without any bias; it will be known what secularism means.”

“I am not that great personality as you make it. But most misinterpret the word
secularism. ‘We visit the church, also visit the mosque and visit the temple as well. We
consider it to be same whether it is S’iva or Vishnu. All religions are equal to us since we
believe in secularism’ is the usual lecture one hears from such misinterpretation.”

“But secularism does not mean either practicing all the religions or not following any
religion. One should be able to conduct himself respecting the other religions irrespective of
which religion he belongs to. We need not follow their religion abandoning our religious
faith, just because our friends or neighbours belong to a religion different from ours.”

“We need not practice our friend’s habit of smoking even if he were very close friend.
Secularism is similar to this. Keeping this in view, one has to follow his religion. Leading the
life, taking note of the good of other religions, is justified. In this process only, let us learn in
detail about other schools of religions also.” Vinita came back while he was saying these
words and said that she could not find the pen.
“Leave it, I might have left it in my house only. I shall go and look for it.” Saying so he rose.
Chapter - 6

“Purushottam garu! In our ‘Sankalpa’ – intent for the rituals, we start with the phrase ‘Adya brahmanah Dviteeya paraarthe…’. What is the meaning of this?” asked Sakuntalamma on that day, once everybody sat down for the session on the philosophy.

“Madam! According to our Vedic School, one Brahma rules this mega sphere of Universe. His age is one hundred years. After that rule, another Brahma will be ruling,” Purushottam started.

“Where does this old Brahma go after his ruling period is over?” asked Vinita.

“As we do good deeds (punya karmas) and bad deeds (papa karmas), similarly this Brahma also during his ruling period would be doing some deeds. According to the quality of the deeds we did, the fruits of these deeds, some of them good and some of them bad, in the form of rebirths in that order are to be experienced. In the same way, Brahma also has to experience some rebirth as the fruit of those deeds.”

“That is to say there is no much difference between Brahma and us in this respect! To become a Brahma, what are the qualifications one should have?” That was Dr. Noone’s doubt.

“One who has the most virtue – punya, among all the sentient beings or jeevas becomes Brahma.”

“It is said that Aanjaneyaswami is the next Brahma. Is it true? “ Sakuntalamma questioned.

Purushottam skipped answer to that smiling and saying: ‘I didn’t enquire that madam!’

“After this Brahma’s tenure is over, will there be a destruction or pralaya before the tenure of next Brahma begins?”

“No, it is not like that. Brahma will be awake during his day performing the activity of creation and sleeps during his night. Therefore, his entire night is destruction or pralaya for us. As soon as he gets up, that Brahma does creation again.”

“My God! We have one pralaya for every one full day of Brahma! We are all living now, that means it is daytime for Brahma! When will be the pralaya, Sir?” asked Vinita.

“It is not a matter for that much worry. I tell you the count. Listen carefully. This is the period of Kali Yuga, Isn’t it? This period lasts for 432000 years.”

“My God! How many years have already passed?”

“After all how much! Around 5100 years only have passed away. That is to say that we are still in the first quarter only. The period of Dvaapara Yuga is double of Kali Yuga. Three times is Treta Yuga and four times is Krita Yuga. In addition, there are some interlude periods in between two Yugas called Yugasandhis. In total all the four Yugas put together have a time period of 43,20,000 years. This total period is called C’aturyuga. One daytime of Brahma’s day consists of one thousand C’aturyugas, meaning 432,00,00,000 years. That is
also called Kalpa. Another 432,00,00,000 years make up for the night. That is, one full day of Brahma takes our 864,00,00,000 years.”

“Ah!” all were listening awestruck by this count.

Vinita asked inquisitively, “Sir! How many days of Brahma have passed by now?”

“That is what we tell in the intention or Sankalpa. ‘Dviteeya Paraarthe’ means the second half of his age of one hundred years. This means presently it is first year in his second fifty years of age. It is further mentioned in the Panchaanga about month, date, hour, minute and even the second of the year currently progressing for him.”

“But what is the meaning of ‘Sweta Varaha Kalpe’ asked Sakuntalamma.

“You will recall that one thousand C’aturyugas make either one daytime or one night for Brahma. That day or night is called as Kalpa.”

“What is the meaning of ‘Vaivaswata Manvantare’?”

“On the order of Brahma, 14 Manus divide the daytime of Brahma and look after the Universe. Presently it is the rule of Vaivaswata Manu in the ongoing daytime of Brahma”

“What is the number of this Manu from the beginning?”

“The first Manu is called Svaayambhuva Manu. No. 2 is Svaaroc’isha Manu, No. 3 is Uttama Manu. No. 4- Taamasa Manu, No. 5 Ryvata Manu, No. 6 – C’aksha Manu. Present Manu - Vaivaswata Manu is seventh. Since it is his ruling period, we call it ‘Vaivaswata Manvantare’. Since we belong to the Manu, we are called Maanavas’”

“How much more period will this Manu rule us?”

“What is there? Calculate. Divide Brahma’s daytime by 14 and then multiply by 6 to arrive at the period already over. After that next calculation will give further.”

“In the Sankalpa it is further narrated: ‘Jamboodveepe, Bharatakhande, Bharatvarshe. Why do we say so? Should we not say Hindudes’e though India is the new name?”

“Your name is Sakuntalamma. When your husband works in other states, those who do not know your name properly mention you as ‘that Andhra lady’ after the state to which you belong. Though for them it is OK to call you as Andhra Lady, is it not improper to you? In similar way, we belong to the land called Bhaaratades’a. Outsiders do not know this word. All of them had come from lands beyond River Sindhu. We stay on this side of River Sindhu. So when they talk among themselves, they call us as ‘those from the other side of Sindhu. This became in Parsi language ‘ those from the other side of Hindu’ which further became Hindudesh and subsequently Hindustan. The Greeks could not spell it properly, it became Indu, and Ind and subsequently it became India. Over a period of years, you are called as ‘Andhra Lady’, you got used to it and after some years if you are asked about your name, suppose you said ‘Andhra Lady’ instead of ‘Sakuntalamma. How do you like it? Similar will it be when you use the word Hindu or Indians in the Sankalpa?”
Vinita burst into laughter at this. She made fun by repeatedly calling her grandmother ‘Andhra Lady’. Sakuntalamma rebuked her lightly and said, “Then how did the name ‘Bhaaratades’a’ came into usage?”

This world consists of seven continents. Our continent in them is called ‘Jambudveepa’. In that ‘Jambudveepa’ our land surrounded on the north by the Himalayas and by sea on the other three sides was ruled by one “Bharata’. The names ‘Bharatavarsha’, Bharatakhandha’ are derived from him.”

“This “Bharata’ is same as Rama’s brother Bharata of Epic Ramayana. Is it not?”

“No, not at all. This man is of comparatively recent origin. Bharata is the son of Rishabha. The first ruler, who ruled us, is ‘Svaayambhuva Manu’. His great grandson is Rishabha. He was the chief of this ‘Jambudveepa’. He had one hundred sons. ‘Bharata’ one of them became the king of our land, a part of the ‘Jambudveepa’.

“What is that name? Is it ‘Vrishabha’?”

“It is ‘Rishabha’ and not ‘Vrishabha’. Some say that this man is the founder of Jaina school of philosophy.”

“But Jaina school did not accept Vedas as authority! Did this Rishabha also reject the Vedas?” Sastry questioned.

“That subject needs some explanation. Basically, there is a problem with humans. They try to connect somehow or other, a person liked by them with great men of past generations and by that connection, attempt to upgrade the standing of this person. Though we cannot decide its veracity, they look very strange indeed.”

“After Buddha became famous, he was categorized along with epic personalities such as ‘Vyrochana, Maitreya, etc. Similar was the case of Vardhamaana of Jainism. He was also placed alongside of the famous Teerthankaras. Links were established that he is the 24th of them, the 22nd teerthankara Arishtanemi was in fact the person who preached the philosophy to Krishna, and this Rishabha was placed as the first teerthankara. So, Rishabha is considered by some to be a Jaina and against Vedas. It is hard to believe that Rishabha, grandson of Svaayambhuva Manu and father of Bharata, did go abusing the Vedas, say those who do not accept this type of linking. Same is with the story of linking Arishtaneminatha with Krishna.”

“How could such linking happen so easily? Surely there is lot of difference in the tenets of both the systems. Krishna is not one to defy the Vedas so that he could be taught to do so.”

“Some small similarity is sufficient for our fellows to forge links. Vardhamaana Mahaveera, who campaigned for the Jainism, after wisdom dawned on him, became an ascetic, and was moving around naked. Rishabha also after crowning Bharata, got totally disinterested in the worldly matters and was conducting himself with meditation. In that state, he was unaware whether he was having clothes on him at all. Later he got siddhi. With this minor similarity, both were linked. Since all people of such category should have a name, they have been called ‘Teerthankaras’. It is same with Arishtaneminatha also. Only Paars’vanaatha the 23rd teerthankara is a historical figure.”

“Are all the Teerthankaras not the preachers of Jainism? I was so far under the impression that all of them are preachers of Jainism.” Avadhani asked with surprise.
“That is what some say. But, the Jainism name itself came only from Vardhamaana only. On the shores of the river Rijupaalika, in Jrimbhika village, under a Paala tree Mahaveera did very strenuous penance for twelve long years and obtained the wisdom of the self and soul and did gain control of everything. So, he was called ‘Jina’ meaning the conqueror. The school of religion postulated by him is called ‘Jainism’.”

“We see in the list of festivals shown in the calendar one festival Mahaveera Jayanti. Whose jayanti is it?” Dr. Noone had the doubt.

“It is of this Mahaveera only. Since he had conquered passions, he had the title ‘Mahaveera and that became his name.”

“Is it that before him the Jainism did not exist?”

“It is neither in that name nor so perfectly codified. You will recall our talking about Poorna Kaas’yapa, Gos’aala, Kaatyaayana and other materialistic proponents, All of them are remembered when we talk about Teerthankaras. The faiths of the people of that period and the present Jaina faith do differ to some extent.”

“Are the Jains of later period than Buddhists?”

“No. This Mahaveera existed at the same time as Buddha. The history says that both of them had propagated their religions at the same time. But Jainism had not spread as fast as Buddhism.”

“He also opposed the Vedas as Buddha did. The knowledge base for Mahaveera also was the wisdom dawned as a result of the penance he did as in case of Buddha. In spite of that, why did Jainism not become as popular as Buddhism?”

“It is not that easy to tell the reasons. But considering the regulations and morals, it appears, right from the beginning, Jainism had shown some rigidity. Though there were strict rules in Buddhism, over a period of time, the strictness got diluted and except in some foreign lands, strictness was lost in our country. Jainism is not like that. Though it did not spread to other countries, in our country, it is still an actively kicking religion. But numerically, their number is much less than Buddhists. They constitute around 0.50% of our population. That is to say, that five in thousand may be followers of Jainism! That is all!”

“Only that much! Is their proponent also a King?”

“Yes. He also was a prince. He led a family life till the age of 30 and then renounced. Buddha had renounced at the age of 29 years. That is the only difference. There is no difference in their actions like penance, achieving wisdom etc. Neither there was any in obtaining the support from the rulers or in postulating and founding the religion. Both have not accepted the word of the trustworthy – S’abda pramaana as an instrument of knowledge.”

“I am asking since I do not know. It does not appear to be appropriate not to accept the word of trustworthy. Leaving aside both the founders, everybody in both Buddhism and Jainism would not have been their followers had they not accepted the word of trustworthy at all. Does not look like hypocrisy?” Avadhani said.

“Yes, the philosophers do say the same. ‘You say that you do not accept the word of trustworthy to be an instrument of knowledge for the sake of saying only. You have in fact
Aagamas and their authors. How do you not believe them?’ is the question they are often asked, and their answer for that is: ‘though our religious founder has given us the tenets and practices, these were to be tested before acceptance. That is why we do not accept blindly any tenet or practice taking it as a word of trustworthy, and say that it to be free from the four unacceptable characteristics of illusion, accidental mistake, Vipralambham and incapability to convey truth.’”

“It is obvious how silly this reasoning is. Someone said that there are mangoes of good quality on the yonder side of the river. Another, on hearing this, intends to go to the other side of the river to procure the mangoes. How can he not accept that man as trustworthy, if he intends to go to other side of the river for procuring quality mangoes? Hence, this contradiction exists in Buddhism and Jainism. In fact it is same with C’aarvaakas also.”

“OK, Let it be so. What are the practices of followers of Jainism?”

“Their practices are some what strange and impossible to be followed by the commoner. Jainism started as Digambara Jainism. That means the followers of Jainism abstain from wearing clothes. They say ‘when there is skin, why clothes again? How well these nine openings of the human body may be cleaned, the secretions do continue oozing out of them. It is waste to clean.’ And hence they abstain from taking bath.”

“Oh! It is atrocious.” Unbearable with that thought, Vinita was on the verge of vomiting. Everybody else was also uncomfortable at the thought.

“They are not to cut their hair, but at the same time they should not have hair. So, they try to pull out the hair from the roots with their nails. Water pot is essentially to be with them. The alms should be consumed at giver's house itself. Non-violence is very important for them. They go on cleaning their path as they go walking, so that the small insects and worms etc do not fall under their feet. They should not travel by any vehicle. They should go any distance by walk only. Meat eating is prohibited. They accept fruits given by others but do not pluck them from the trees because they should not hurt the tree. They walk slowly lest they hurt the earth. When they speak, they should cover their mouth with a cloth lest the small organism die.”

“My God! So many rules and restrictions! So it could not gain wide acceptance by the people.” Dr. Noone commented.

“All these are the regulations for the ascetics. Apart from them, many of these regulations do apply to the family persons also. The agriculture is not possible without tilling the land and since this is considered to be violence, the agriculture is prohibited to the Jainism followers. They are mostly in the commerce and trade only. This is one of the reason for the Jainism not to be prominent in our country where farming is more predominant over the other vocations.”

“Are there Jains who practice all these? Do all Jains know that they should follow these rules? One of my friend is a Jain but it does not seem to me that he follows all these!”

“There are many people of Vedic religion, but do not know fully the tenets and practices that are prescribed to them and go on following some practices. Similarly, in all the religions, there is no shortage of people who do not know fully the tenets and practices that are prescribed by their religion.” Purushottam laughed away.
“Are all Jains naked? What about women?” Most of the doubts of Dr. Noone are from the same angle.

“Since it is not possible for the women to be naked, it is said there is no salvation for women as per Jainism.”

“Are the men of Jainism nowadays seen naked?”

“It is rare but not nil. After a very long gap from Mahaveera, there was one religious preceptor called Bhadrabaahu for the Jains. In those days, there was famine in Magadh region, and he migrated along with his followers to south and was staying in S’ravanabelegola in Karnataka for preaching and propagating Jainism. By the time, he returned to Magadh, the leadership was taken over by one Sthoolabhadra and he started propagating that nakedness is not permitted and everyone should wear white dress. Further, bathing was permitted. With that, there was dispute amongst Jains and it split into two schools. These white dressed Jains are called ‘S’wetaambara Jains. They say that the women also do have the salvation. But the Digambara Jains, who practice nakedness, say that unless they obtain the birth as a male, there is no salvation.”

“Do they also have rebirths?”

“Yes, definitely. Their time scale is peculiar. The names are Sushama and Dushama. One period is called sushama sushama. The second is sushama, the third, sushama dushama. The fourth one is dushama sushama. The fifth being dushama, the sixth is dushama dushama.”

“Ha! Ha! Funny names!” cried Vinita.

“The practice of Dharma – the right behavior, becomes less and less as the time passes from Krita Yuga to Kali Yuga. Similarly, for the Jains, Sushama Sushama is the best period and the worst is Dushama Dushama. Present period is Dushama.”

“Ha! Their belief is strangely very nice.”

“They have questioned the Buddhists as to why do the Buddhists not accept an eternal soul. They did not accept at all, the talk that the soul and the world are only momentary. They say that once the purpose of the pot is over, it will become extinct. These people say that the talk of momentary existence cannot stand since the material will exist in some form or other. It may be the broken pieces of the pot if the pot is broken or on further disintegration it will exist in the form of mud.”

“Do they have an eternal soul?”

“Yes. We know immediately whether it is pain in the head or on the legs. Hence they say that the soul is spread throughout the body.”

“Wait! Wait!” said Raghuramaiah. “C’aarvaakas say that there is no soul at all. Buddhists say that though the soul appears to exist, it is only void. These are saying that the soul exists and it is as big as the body. Is it not? As per them, there is rebirth. Suppose in the next rebirth, I take the birth as a dog, will this soul of six footed height, become shorter?”
“Yes. It will become short. Suppose you keep a lamp in a pot. Then the light will be pot-full. If it is kept in a room, it will be room-full. Similarly, the soul which these people quote will be as small as an ant when it is in it and as big as an elephant when it is in an elephant.”

“As per the Vedic school, how big is the soul?” Sakuntalamma asked.

“The soul as per our system is atomic. There is nothing, which is smaller than it. That is atom. Only the Supreme Godhead can get into it. That means he can be smaller than an atom. Since he occupies the whole universe, He can be extremely big also.”

“There is no problem with the monists – Advaitins since the soul and Supreme Godhead are one and same,” said Avadhani.

“The whole universe is full with sentient beings as per the Jainism. The mud, rocks, minerals, everything is full with sentient. The sentient beings are of three categories viz., Buddhas, Yogasiddhas, and Muktas. There is no God, the creator. Their Jina or Mahaveera is their God – Arhata.”

“What is the meaning of Arhata?”

“It means the one who is suited to be worshipped. To be able to get salvation from this cycle of births and death, one has to have Samyak Dars’ana, Samyak Jnaana, and Samyak C’aaritra. “

“Samyak Dars’ana means, belief and faith in the preachers of Mahaveera. Samyak Jnaana is of five types. First is that which we are getting from our sensory organs and mind. Second is that obtained from the sacred scriptures of Jainas. The third is that obtained from the religious training. The fourth is that through the extra sensory perception, divine-sight, distance-hearing etc. The fifth is that knowledge of the thoughts in others’ minds – ‘the only knowledge’. That is the salvation giver.”

“All these are to be practiced by Jains? Are they doing really?”

“Sir! How many, in our religion, are doing as told by our religion to practice Bhaktiyoga, Karma yoga and Jnaanayoga? Actually how many have understood what is meant by salvation? Similar is with them also. Those who want routine life of births and sensual enjoyment do not need all this. Only the seekers of salvation are interested in these.”

“The one which is wanted at last is samyak C’aaritra – or good behavior. Don’t steal, practice celibacy, don’t hold the alms you receive, don’t practice violence, don’t lie… like this, the rules are to be practiced.”

“What all religions preach in general and those which are not practiced by followers of any religion!” said Dr. Noone. Everybody smiled away.

“Suppose the water and mud are mixed, that is the status of the baddha sentient beings.”

“Consider the clarifier salt is added to this muddy water, all the mud will settle down and clear water is at the top. This is the status of the Saadhana – That is of the yogis and ascetics.

Consider the clear water in crystal ware, and that is the status of salvation.”
“Will the soul not go somewhere, in the state of salvation? It is said that in Buddhism, the soul will become extinct. But here, their soul does exist!”

“Yes, it will go. There are two types of skies called Lokaakaas’a and Alokaakaas’a. The sentient being in the baddha status, will be roaming in the Lokaakaas’a having rebirths. The Mukta or the soul in salvation will fly up and up like a bird.”

“How high will he fly?”

“Not known. There seems to be no limits either above or below. How deep will be baddha sentient being? The answer is that he will be extremely deep. How high will the Mukta soul fly? The answer is very high. Some others say that the Mukta souls reach a particular place in the skies.”

How many branches are there in their religion?”

“There are only two branches – Swetaambara and Digambara, and not more. There is no further branching out. This religion is based on very strong and hard regulations, without any possibility of slide down.”

“What is this slide down?”

“The one, which cannot be contradicted by anybody.”

“What is that Sir? Is it so strong a religion?”

“Their argument is like that. They go on saying ‘might be’ for everything.”

“What does it mean?”

“I shall elaborate it. Listen” said Purushottam with a light smile on his lips.

“Saankhyas say one thing as ‘Sat’. Naiyaayikas call the same as ‘Asat’. Naiyaayikas call one as ‘Anitya’. Meemaamsakas call the same ‘Nitya’. What Buddhists call momentary, it is contradicted by some others. Why are others contradicting it? It is because they all tell a thing as a definitive one. That means, The Saankhyas said conclusively that the work is one that exists. Naiyaayikas said conclusively that the word is of momentary existence only. Therefore the others had to contradict these statements and they are able to contradict also.”

“Why the poor Jains will not say so?”

“They do not say so. They mumble – it may be or may not be,” said Purushottam laughing at that.

“What is that? Please explain clearly.”

“Their argument is called ‘argument of ‘syaaat’. Non-violence is their most important tenet. They do not even walk on the green grass. They do not stamp hard on the earth. When they practice non-violence so strictly, the contradicting opponents argument should not cause hurt to them! So, they mumble ‘may be or may not be’ for everything,” said Purushottam laughing more openly.”
Everybody felt that Jainism probably does not finalize anything and the same is being told in rhetoric. All of them asked enthusiastically, “How do the Jains argue?”

“The Buddhists have tagged the momentary existence to every thing. Similarly, these have tagged all characteristics to every object. That is to state that every object can have all characteristics, those, who look at the object from that angle, only will see those characteristics, and they will see no other characteristics. Only the Omniscient will see all the characteristics. Such personality is Jina Deva only.”

“Is it like theory of relativity?” Dr. Noone asked.

“It appears to be so only to some extent. Nothing will be visible immediately to those, who enter a dark room from brightly lit outside. But everything is visible for those who are already inside for some time and are habituated for the darkness. With that, it can be conclude that both the qualities of visibility and invisibility are there in the same body. Some are experiencing visibility and others are experiencing invisibility. That is the difference.”

“Hence they tell behaviour to be of seven types called ‘Saptabhangeenayam’. On asking anything, their answers will be like the following:

“Syaadasti – may exist. By the time you understand, they will further say:

Syaannaasti – may not exist. They will not stop at that. They further say

Syaadastinaastic’a – may exist or not exist. Is it OK? No.

Syaat Avaktavyam – cannot say that it is such and such.

Further, Syaadasti Avaktavyam – it might exist but cannot be said so. Is it final?

No, not yet, Syaannaasti Avaktavyam – It might not be existing but can not be said as existing….”

Listening to this, while every one was laughing, Avadhani stood up saying, “Purushottam garu, can we go?”

“We may go or not go or going but not going… “ Dr. Noone was stretching the words. Vinita was clapping her hands and jumping for the stretching.

Raghuramaiah and Sakuntalamma gave send off to everybody.
Chapter - 7

"Why is it that Purushottam garu and others have not yet come?" Saying so Sakuntalamma entered the living room and saw her husband Raghuramaiah making notes while studying something seriously. Then she asked, "What is that you are writing something while studying so seriously? Have you been asked again by your Pattabhi to study another case"

"No, not at all. I have told Pattabhi very clearly not to bring the topic of cases any more, he was little unhappy though. He took it that I had asked him so because he had decided to join some Aas’ram. Poor fellow!"

"Then, what is that you are studying so seriously?"

"Purushottam telephoned and said: ‘we discussed Jainism and Buddhism only that much what is generally essential since we are not going to become one of them. But in case you are interested for more information, I am sending this book and you can go through.’ That is the book I am studying.”

"Are many more details left over?"

"Not many in Buddhism but yes in Jainism some are still left over. But we do not need either of them. After all we are not going to be converted into either of them!”

"I think Purushottam had not returned back to town.”

"Yes. Four days have passed. He might have returned yesterday night or this morning. He said that he would come definitely today. It is possible that the train arrived late. Before he went out he said: ‘I shall come along with all after telephoning them, after we are all ready’.

"It is very boring to stay in the house after Vinita left for the school” she was telling to herself. She asked Raghuramaiah, “Let me listen to those differences. Please tell them!”

"OK Listen. Jains are not propagators of Void. They are materialists. That is to say, that they do not say that there exists nothing. They say that objects exist.

In Jain school of philosophy, there are two categories called Jeeva and Ajeeva. Both of them are interdependent for existence. When the Jeeva leaves Ajeeva permanently, then it is salvation for the Ajeeva.”

"It is the same in our Vedic school also! It is salvation, when the soul or Aatma leaves the body for ever!"

"I do not know much of our school of philosophy. You are better off. You go and listen to these half-a-dozen lectures. Listen further. According to Jainism, these jeevas are of two categories called trasa jeevas and sthaavara jeevas meaning the jeevas with movement and without movement. This category of sthaavara jeevas is further divided into five categories. The pridhvi jeevas are the likes of the mud and stones or rocks. The watery jeevas are the likes of water, ice etc. The tejo jeevas are the likes of fire, stars etc. The Vaayu jeevas are likes of the air. And finally the vriksha Jeevas the likes of the trees and bushes etc.”
The ones, which are capable of movement, are of four categories. All the above told are having only one organ of sense that is sense of touch. What we are going to talk about are the jeevas, which consist 1. Two-sense organs, 2 four-sense organs, 3. Five-sense organs and finally 4. Six-sense organs.”

The jeevas that are with two sense organs are earth worms, leeches etc. Those with four sense organs are those with sight and smelling also and are like ants, bugs etc. The jeevas with five sense organs are those having hearing in addition to the four already mentioned. And they are like tiger, cow etc. The jeevas with six sense organs are those having mind in addition to the five mentioned above. These are the humans, and those who are in hell etc.”

“No now that jeeva means …” while Raghuramaiah was stretching his sentence, Sakuntalamma was yawning loudly.

“Is it boring?” Raghuramaiah asked.

“No! No! Continue to tell. Yesterday night I did not have good sleep and that is the reason for the yawning.”

Raghuramaiah continued. “The ‘Ajeevas as we talked, are of five categories. Amongst them the four –Dharma, Adharma, the sky and the time, they cannot be seen. The Dharma and Adharma are not the same as we know them from our scriptures but the one making one to move is dharma and the one making one to stay without movement is Adharma. In addition to these four, the fifth one is all the matter, which can be seen or heard by us. This is called pudgalam. To tell it approximately, it is the matter that is like the outer cover for all the souls. In other words, it can be said that all the souls are embodied in this matter. Consider our bodies to be pudgalam! The word ‘our bodies’ covers not only the humans but also all other things like ants, mosquitoes, wardrobes, tables, fire etc. Pudgalam is the outer shell for all of them and the one which is inside is jeeva.”

“Is it pudgalam or pulagam? Are you seeing and telling correctly?” laughed Sakuntalamma.

He also laughed and said, “It is pudgalam only and not pulagam.” He further explained.

“The word pudgalam stands for poorayanti, galanti c’a. That means it is completing as well as separating also. It is made up of atoms joined together to facilitate the entry of jeeva inside, and at the same time that can become disjointed also. That is why it is said ‘poorayanti c’a, galanti c’a and hence pudgalam.”

Sakuntalamma was trying to ask about and Raghuramaiah intervened and said, “Don’t spoil my mood. Listen without interrupting me. You can ask questions later.” Without waiting for her response, he continued. “The way the dust etc blown by wind settle on a wet cloth, this jeeva also gets wet by the anger, self-aggrandizement, cheating, frugality and starts doing the karma. That karma is of two categories viz.: punya and papa. Having faith in what Jina Deva had preached obtaining the knowledge without illusions, practicing non-violence, celibacy etc. is called punya karma.

If you smear profusely the black cotton mud over a dried up watermelon and leave it in water, it will sink. In a similar fashion, this jeeva is sunk in the bondage because of the papa karmas. Gradually the mud will be loosened and released from the watermelon and watermelon comes up floating in the water. In a similar way, this jeeva also will float by the
punya karmas being done by this jeeva. As soon as it reaches climax, the jeeva gets released from this body like the castor seeds flying away from the dried up castor fruit. On release from this body, the jeeva flies like a bird into the luminous Alokaakaas’a. That is salvation.”

“Enough of Jainism. Tell what is left over in Buddhism,” asked Sakuntalamma.

Raghuramaiah started. “You know that there is no soul in Buddhism. That means it is void. But, if that were so, how are we getting the feeling of a void soul? That is the question,” he stretched his last few words as though he was discovering something.

Continuing, “the objects made from the four elements - earth, fire, water and air, the human body, the sense organs, the experiences of the senses, the resultant feelings, the deeds done by us, the consciousness which goes on popping up the feeling of ‘I’ always, all combined, give a feeling as if there is soul. This is in total five conglomerations. Either jeeva or the soul made up by the combination of these five conglomerations, is not eternal, since all these five conglomerations also are not eternal.”

“If so, how is the feeling of eternal Aatma or soul coming?” Raghuramaiah waited for a moment for the breath.

“I am also having the same doubt,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Suppose you rotated the lighted sparkler speedily, a ring of light would be seen by a person from a distance. That looks to be stationary. But in fact, it is not a ring of light! You will feel that water is stationary but it always is flowing and going away. Similarly these non-eternal combinations, and soul create an impression that they are eternal.”

Sakuntalamma asked again. “Did Buddha put all these in any book?”

“Such quotes are available in a book called ‘Sutta Pitaka’. The rules and regulations of Buddhism are in the book named ‘Vinaya Pitaka’. Further details are available in ‘Abhidamma Pitaka’. All these three are very sacred for the Buddhists.”

“It was explained how the soul which is void is felt as eternal but how was it said that this visible universe is void?” Sakuntalamma questioned.

“This is simply visible like that. It is an illusion. Means appearance. Do you ask why? Listen. Suppose a pot is there. How did it come? It needs mud, potter, potter's wheel, and wooden pole. It can be made only when all these are available! In this way, it will not exist unless so many are there. Hence, its natural characteristic is nonexistence. The existence appeared only when the rest of them had appeared on the scene. So is the characteristic of every object. That is to say, that void is the characteristic of every object. But it appears they are there.”

“Is it like seeing in a mirror?”

“Yes! Yes! It is a good illustration. The image we see in the mirror is, virtual only. The image will be there only when the mirror, an object in front of it, sufficient light, and the viewer are there. Otherwise, it is not there. Isn’t it?”

“Therefore that is also not there. For any object, there is no ‘characteristic’ of ‘independent existence on its own’. Void is the characteristic of all objects.”
“If for everything the void is the characteristic, is Buddhism, you are speaking about, also void only?”

“Void! Void! Tellers and listeners, the subject – when so many are there only, Buddhism has come. So, this is also void. In this way whatever may be said, it will be void only”

“If every thing is void only, the bad guys can do the robberies and thefts!”

“Not Possible! It is all there in the view of the common practices. Unless you reach the pinnacle of the philosophical learning everything is there. You do not stop applying make up by using the mirror saying that the image is an illusion. But definitely, you will not believe that the image is donning the make up. Is it understood?”

“Very well understood! The logic is superb. But if everything is void, why should the universe being seen by one, be seen by others also in the same way? As the image of the person seeing himself in the mirror is his own face, why is the universe not visible according to each person’s perception differently?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“What?” Raghuramaiah did not understand the question.

The universe is illusory only. In fact, it is void only. Only appearance is visible. If I see my face in the mirror, only my face will be visible but not yours. If you look into the mirror, you will see your face only and not mine. In the same way, this universe also should be visible to you as per your imagination and to me as per my imagination. If there is an animal there, if I perceive it as a dog, it should appear as a dog to me and if you perceive it as a cow, it should appear as a cow to you, if we go by what you have said so far. But it is not so in the universe! But it appears to everybody as a cow or as a dog, in the same way and not differently! Why should the perception of so many people be same? What is the reason for that?”

“In anticipation of your question only they have introduced some thing called ‘store house of consciousness’. It means ‘all the knowledge is pooled at one place.’ And that is called ‘temple of knowledge’. It is not possible to define it as to its shape or size or its nature. It is there but indefinable.”

“Is it like the illusory of the monism?”

“I do not know since I am yet to know what is monism. All the minds of the humans are the parts of this temple of knowledge. That is: if knowledge of everybody is pooled together, it is the ‘temple of knowledge’. Since minds of everybody are part of it ‘temple of knowledge, the universe is seen by all of them in the same way only. Only everybody will see a cow as a cow, and a dog as dog only. It will not be seen as cow by one and as a dog by another.”

(Somehow I did not like this explanation.”

“OK, I shall send a FAX message to Buddha saying: ‘your explanations are not appealing to my wife, so please come once again and explain to her convincingly.’ Wait for some time, if any reply comes through e-mail at least.” So, he was retorting her, when all including Purushottam entered together.

The husband and wife welcomed all the guests.
“Welcome Sir! How was your journey? Was it comfortable?”

“Subrahmanyam! At least you could have come once in these four days!”

“Avadhani garu! How are the kids?”

“Sastry garu! How is your health?”

Everybody was enquiring from everybody else. After all the courtesies were over, everyone settled in the seats.

“One half audience is missing” said Purushottam.

“What is that One half audience?” asked Dr. Noone.

“It is about Vinita!” said Sakuntalamma smiling. Meanwhile came Vinita shouting ‘Grandma!’ Sakuntalamma asked her, “Why did you come back from school so early?”

“It was a strike I was told. All were asked to go back home,” said Vinita joining her grandmother’s lap, even without removing her shoes and school bag. “What is this? Chi, Chi! Get up! Remove your shoes and keep that school bag inside. Change your dress and come. You can have your lunch,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Oh! No. Not now. I shall change after some time” saying so she rolled over lazily, half in her grandmother’s lap and another half in the sofa.

“You were not in the school that much time as usual! Are you tired? Do not roll like this! Get up!” she pushed her lightly. She was checking her body temperature to find whether she was OK. It was normal.

“Please, Grandma! Please, the shoes will be removed a little later!” saying so while lying in her lap she was seeing everybody.

“This is the effect of the ‘Tamoguna’,” said Purushottam garu. “Laziness, not hurrying in completing a job supposed to be done, lack of sincerity in execution of the job i.e., lack of attention, all these are the effects of the ‘Tamoguna’. This quality comes up once in a while, due to the effect of the nature or prakriti - the primordial matter. “

“Once in a while comes up’. Which guna will be there in the absence of this Tamoguna?” Raghuramaiah asked.

“Indecision while doing a work, and in finalizing how it should be done etc. and along with the indecisiveness, a little anger, desire etc may also crop up at times. This effect is due to Rajoguna.”

“When the mind starts doing a good deed, and continues steadily, or if the matter being read or being listened to is clearly understood, it is due to the effect of Sattva guna.”

“All these three come in turns and bind the soul. This is the tenet of Kapila Maharshi. This is called Saankhya also.”
“You say that these are called Gunas. The statements illustrate the Gunas: ‘this man is good’, ‘this man is a bad man’, ‘milk is white’, ‘milk is sweet etc.’ How can such attributes bind a soul? Does it mean that these Gunas create temptations and bind through temptations?” Sastry asked.

“No! No! Gunas in Saankhya School are not like these qualities. Gunas mean ropes also in Sanskrit. In the view of Kapila Maharshi, these Gunas bind the person meaning soul, with ropes."

“Did this Kapila Maharshi also established this tenet from the perception through dawned wisdom after performing strenuous and vigorous penance like that Buddha and Mahaveera?” was the question Dr. Noone asked showing some disapproval of the philosophy.

“What is this direct perception or Saakshaatkaara? How does one get this, Purushottam garu?”

“It will take a little longer for explaining this. Listen attentively. You know what is meant by knowledge through perception! When one gets the spiritual matters in direct experience, it is usually termed as Saakshaatkaara.”

“What is meant by spiritual matters?”

“It can be matter pertaining to the soul, that is different from the physical matter and which has got the name as consciousness. Some others call it as matter pertaining to the Supreme Godhead or Paramaatma. It can also be called so and there is nothing wrong in saying it.”

“Does it mean: It became direct perception to Buddha that the matter pertaining to the soul as well as the physical matter are both void only, whereas for Mahaveera it was clearly perceptible as to how the soul is bound by the physical matters.”

“It is almost so. The knowledge of direct perception beyond the capabilities of the sense organs may be called Saakshaatkaara. However some opine that the mental direct perception itself is Saakshaatkaara, while some others say that this direct perception could be obtained only when the connection with the mind is also detached.”

“Why anybody will have the desire to have this sort of direct perceptive knowledge?”

“There are two reasons for that. The first reason on account of the doubt on the existence of that mysterious super power which is considered to be behind this visible universe or it is the strong desire to know that which is called as Bhagavan or Supreme Godhead by elders.”

“The second reason is the strong resentment caused with the experience of the misery in this life in the world or society and the very strong desire to get relief from that misery. Any other reason fished out, has to fall into one of these two reasons only.”

“It is said that the yogis obtain some mysterious powers by doing penance. Is it also obtained through this direct perceptive Saakshaatkaara only?”

“It is not considered as Saakshaatkaara, when it is the case of mysterious magical powers due to which the power, comforts and knowledge are tremendously improved to the Saadhaka. But they do not grow beyond specified perimeter. In other words, these powers do
not go beyond this visual universe. Such persons can create only physical matter such as watches, idols, sacred ash etc. At the most, they may be able to know what is happening anywhere in this world at any corner. That is all. In any case their limit of influence is this physical world only. That cannot be termed as Saakshaatkaara. The benefits from such powers are also limited these physical comforts only. Hence, that is to be rejected. That means it should be pushed away. Not only that. From the persons exhibiting such powers, the universe is not benefited at all.”

“What about the rains caused by propitiating the Yaagas and Yajnas?”

They are also part of this only. However, they are useful to the people in the world by being instruments of Maanavakalyaana. That is all.”

“What is meant by Kalyaana? In the recent past, so many are performing programmes repeatedly telling that they are for the sake of Lokakalyaana.”

“That means, the programmes meant to benefit the people to live comfortably. But it must be noted that these benefits also do not cross the physical perimeters, and these are the gains obtained by the benevolence of an extraordinary power only. It must be noted that they are not spiritual powers.”

“For a person who garnered these unusual powers, should it not be construed that he had achieved direct perception or Saakshaatkaara?”

“Not necessarily. Can we say that we know everything about electricity just because we had used electricity for the cooking?”

“OK. These persons are definitely superior to the common people! Can they achieve gradually the direct vision of philosophy?”

“There is a small problem here. These people with some extraordinary powers are definitely greater than the ordinary people. But, in which respect? They are great only in obtaining physical gains. But this is like an addiction. This greatness does not leave these people easily. So, it becomes an impediment to achieve the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy. Take the case of two persons, one habituated to the smell of the fish, and the other, who is not exposed to any smell of the fish. Which of them will find difficulty to get adjusted to a new environment or e.g. for the scent of the jasmine flowers? (Obviously the man of the fish environment will find it more difficult to adjust to the change of the environment i.e., scent of the jasmine flowers.) So it will be easier to achieve the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy for those people who do not obtain these extraordinary magical powers than those who have those and can create physical objects, can tell what is there in one’s mind, heal the diseases etc. by these magical powers.”

“Don’t these people who have achieved the spiritual perception give the physical benefits any more?”

“They do not intentionally try to give them. But association with such person itself is sufficient for all good gains. So all these gains are definitely obtained automatically without any effort. All benefits mean both physical and spiritual benefits. Since he knows the menial nature of these physical benefits, a man who obtained the direct perception of spiritual philosophy, will not seek to bestow these benefits. But that man who achieved some mysterious magical powers different from the direct perception of spiritual philosophy, will
go for exhibiting the physical benefits only and in turn becomes an impediment for the others around him to achieve the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy.”

“What is the meaning of auspices – the S’ubhams?”

“The ultimate auspice for anybody is achieving the direct perception of spiritual philosophy only. Those physical benefits, which do not become impediment to achieve such direct perception of spiritual philosophy are the ones indicated by the word auspices. All these auspices will definitely become available in the presence of the person achieving the direct perception of spiritual philosophy. There is another specialty here. He does not dissuade those who come to him for the physical benefits. He will ask them to recite those hymns or mantras, which are not impediments to the ultimate spiritual philosophical direct perception. That is all. Rest is left for the God’s wish.”

“That is to say that there is no limitation to the direct perception of spiritual philosophy. In my opinion, the limitations such as: ‘they can give only the physical comforts, they can give only the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy, etc.’ any thing is possible!”

“Yes. It is limitless. The Saadhaka gets the fullness in this. The moral values reach zenith. For achieving this direct perception of the spiritual philosophy, only the strong desire is not sufficient. An artist’s capacity to enjoy the beauty, or in other words - the aesthetic sense, nervous capability and mental make up are required.”

“How does one get these qualities?”

“According to the Upanishadic school it needs God’s grace. Spiritual teacher’s imparting should be there. His behaviour has to be good. He must be practicing meditation and yoga. He should be doing the analysis of the soul. It is said that any one of the above or more enable the seeker to have the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy.”

“Yes, that process – I am asking -What is that process?” asked Dr. Noone inquisitively.

“It is not possible to say so precisely, but I shall try to tell.

“According to one theory, sudden perception will be there if incitement is created in the mind which has been pushed into a narrow path and kept under pressure.”

“According to another theory, it can happen on the action or touch or word of the spiritual teacher.”

“Is it like what Ramakrishna Paramahansa created in Vivekananda?”

“You can take it that way if you like. I shall explain all these stages – direct perception stages, in two ways. Note them.”

“In the first stage, there will be spontaneous increase of vigour. It appears as if one is in the open, out of the jail. The bondage, which is there until then, is broken. It will be felt extremely comforting happiness. This is one stage. This stage can be said to be more or less ‘awakened matter of soul’.”

“Does it mean that it was asleep till then?”
No. It has come to that state, where awareness of one’s self has been achieved without the connection with the awakened mind and after jettisoning helpless state of inability to grasp external matters except through the mind. To put it more clearly, in this stage, one will experience clearly that this is I and this is my mind. It is like experiencing in fully awakened condition the happiness and calmness, which can be experienced in the deep sleep.

“Will there be no mind in deep sleep?”

“It will be there, but it will not be working. So, it is as good as not being there. In the awakened condition, the senses and mind will both be working. In the dream state, the senses do not work but the mind will be working. In the state of deep-sleep, that also will not be working. Ability to experience the happiness of deep sleep in wide awakened condition means that mind has come under control. The mind will obey just like a pet dog.”

“What is the next stage, after that awakened stage?”

“This stage is a dangerous stage. Here one will be able to listen to sounds that are not audible to others, seeing the objects that cannot be seen by others, writing without own effort, matter, not known earlier, as if somebody is holding the hand with pen and making the hand write without any thinking and effort from the person. Such powers will start appearing. Why was it said as a dangerous stage? It is because, all the mentally deranged patients do undergo through all such experiences. Is it a mental derangement or a step forward in the spiritual progress? The person should have the capabilities to check himself from these two angles. On knowing that it is not mental disorder, if one tries to assert one self, and get advantage by exhibiting these prowess, then it is over. There ends the chapter.”

“Will these powers get lost?”

“No. The process does not progress further. Asserting self does not mean becoming proud. Giving assurances like ‘I shall be able to cure you or I shall be able to get you certain jobs done etc.’ also becomes asserting self.”

“One should be so careful!”

“Yes! Further step in this process is more complete and is experiencing internally the sight of the Supreme Godhead through the direct perception as though He is being seen physically with the eyes. You may ask about those who are atheists or who do not believe God’s existence. From the accounts of Buddha and Mahaveera, we come to know that such direct perceptions of some divine figures do occur. Is it not famous that they had visited heavenly worlds before they had attained the Sambodhi or absolute attainment of Knowledge?”

“What about the next stage?”

The meditation stops. The sights, sounds, these powers, all of them will not be there. That Supreme Godhead also will vanish. His own lowly stature and meanness become noticeable to him. He gets despair saying ‘Can persons like me ever have the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy? It will not happen!’ It appears as though all the wrong deeds are going to entirely takeover him. In fact, this is a stage of cleansing. Gradually as the stage becomes mature, the strong desire for the ultimate becomes more profound. Whatever little experience of happiness and the nearness to Supreme Godhead earlier he had, he would desire to have it again and again. As the desire reaches its pinnacle, it reaches the last stage. That is called the
spiritual marriage. Our elders say the same symbolically that every festival should be completed with the Lord’s Kalyana.”

“It is wonderful! Please explain it a little more. Would like to hear more,” said Dr. Noone.

“I shall tell. But you have to enjoy the joy of the experience, whatever I might tell. Then only it would have served its purpose. However, listen. There is lot of happiness in listening also. The Saadhaka, whose mental status is prepared fully for the ultimate direct perception of the spiritual philosophy, feels that somebody unknown is whispering something frequently.

“He visualizes what is going to happen in future, but he never recalls after these events happened, that these events were known to him already. When he visualizes these happenings, beforehand he will feel awkward but he will not know at that time that these are the future events.

He feels that some unknown force is holding his hand and making him write. After the writing is over, he will be wondering whether these writings are from him only. Some of the examples are the experiences of famous Telugu poet Potana.

He will be chanting one hymn and concentrate the mind on that only pushing all others into oblivion. In that stage, that hymn occupies a portion of the mind. This hymn will not leave the mind even though other portions are engaged in any other thoughts. Gradually the portion occupied by this hymn increases, making the portion occupied by other thoughts smaller and smaller. That is one unknown dream stage.

During such stage, all the senses will be resting like they do in dream. But it is sleep and not dream. The senses are resting while in fully awaken condition. This is a stage like a bridge between the visible experience of the worldly matters and the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy. Though the mind had come under control once, the senses and the mind go on reveling frequently based on the previous sacraments. In this stage, the senses do come well under control without the help of sacraments.

After sometime, the thinking capability appears to start diminishing. That means, the inevitable relationship of the mind and soul with the outer world is clearing. It is unspecified clarity everywhere, like the clear glass chimney around a lamp, which had been cleaned off the soot that got deposited earlier. There will be a freedom from worry and peace in this stage.

In One way, this is the stage when the Saadhakas will part ways – one category, which wants to offload the misery – those who have that as the goal, will have a stage –i.e., the feeling of getting rid of void. It is like the relief one gets on the offloading of the heavy load from the head. The second category of the Saadhakas has more happiness in having comforts and achieving extraordinary power to control this physical world. Hence, they would have happy experiences and comforts. It will be as if he had come to know how and where to search the place of his beloved for which he had been looking for ages. He will start experiencing the sweet devotion, the motherly devotion etcetera. We had been talking already that only these two categories of Saadhakas would be trying for the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy.”
Everybody was listening spellbound! From the clarity of the narration, everybody there was having a doubt whether Purushottam is talking of his own experiences in the garb of general experiences.

In the next stage, as soon as he sits for meditation, all the powers of comprehension, which were running in different directions earlier, start concurring in one direction. The mind, the devotion to Godhead, the desire to be with him, the agony for achieving that, reaching him, etc. becomes clear initially, and gradually everything becomes hazy. A stage will come when nothing else is there except he and only the Godhead are present, and there is no other activity apart from enjoying Him. This stage will be there for those who wanted the happiness. The category in which the Saadhaka desires the mitigation of misery only, he alone will be left over. He will not know his whereabouts also.

In this stage, Saadhaka of one category will be gasping for the breath in an overwhelming and undefined happiness; while of the other category will be gasping in unknown void. Both these are for a short while only. The outer world makes a comeback reminding its existence.”

“Does one understand the philosophy in this state of direct perception only?”

“No. This is only the stage of experience. To understand the philosophy it takes some more time. One gets awed after seeing a beautiful sculpture. Next, he closely studies it and acquires knowledge sufficient to tell others. All the details will not be known at the first sight itself – for anybody.”

“That means there is another stage.”

“Yes! In this higher stage, the Saadhaka looses this external sense completely.”

“What is the difference? Already he is in that stage!”

“In the previous stages, the Saadhaka would not like to participate in the external matters. In this stage, he looses that capability.”

“He had already enjoyed the happiness! In this stage, what extra things is he going to experience?”

“A person likes laddus. He is very anxious. For a long time, he is looking for them but cannot get them. Today suddenly, they are available to him in plenty. Suddenly he takes one and puts it in the mouth. With the joy, he becomes exuberant. He comes to know that all the laddus are for him only. So there will be no more hurry that has been there in the beginning. He will be leisurely devouring them and enjoy eating them. Eating laddus will not be interesting after sometime. But this direct perception stage does not lead to any disinterest at any time. It will continue eternally.”

“Purushottam garu! Please tell the truth. Have you not experienced all these already? If not, you cannot tell these experiences so clearly. Please do not hide from us,” asked Raghuramaiah choked with the reverence and warmth.

Purushottam had grinned a little. He did not establish any eye-to-eye contact with anybody. He continued. “Books are there. Elders’ experiences are there. OK! Listen. Saadhakas of the first category, who, with the yearning for removal of misery only, had, in
the final stages, the direct perceptive of spiritual philosophy, visualise the soul and its attributes, while experiencing that direct perception.

Saadhakas of the second category, who, with the yearning for enjoying the eternal bliss, had, in the final stages, the direct perceptive of spiritual philosophy, visualise His attributes, connection between Him and them i.e., the relationship between Him and the soul, while enjoying the eternal bliss. Our Maharshis, those responsible for releasing the Upanishads by grace of the Supreme Godhead, belong to this second category! Today, leave aside the direct perception these great people had, we are unable to grasp properly even the correct meaning of these scriptures and are misinterpreting them. Being incapable of understanding the direct perception, our people are even questioning the direct perception of these great seers and Maharshis itself!”

“Did Buddha, Mahaveera et al belong to the first category? If so, why were the attributes of the soul seen differently by each of them instead of being seen by everybody alike? Why did both of them tell differently?”

“I do not know at what stage of attaining the direct perception of spiritual philosophy, both Buddha and Mahaveera have started preaching. Some illusions of direct perception do occur at in between stages. The Saadhaka may have the illusion of having the direct perception. What he had is real direct perception or not is known, only when he compares and checks his experiences with those who were known to had already experienced earlier.”

“Does it mean, in your opinion, if these Saadhakas also have similar experiences as those who are already known to have had similar experiences and narrated them, then only their perception is real and otherwise illusion?”

“Yes! The Saadhaka should be able to make their perception known to everybody in a logical way following the scriptures. Scriptures mean here the essence of the previous experiences of the perceptions. When explaining logically, that explanation should not be illogical. It should not be a blabber. It should be according to the scriptures. Then only, his direct perception and the elders’ perceptions become same since the scripture is built upon the experiences of the elders. Not only that, even if the details, they narrate are at odds, then also, their perception is illusion only!!”

Avadhani picked up. “Buddhists talk about rebirth, and at the same time say that the soul is of momentary existence. Jains appear to have accepted that the soul is ‘Saavaayavi’ – possessing the limbs, since they say that the soul will be as small as the ant or as big as an elephant depending upon in which body it is. It is a universal truth that the body of organs perishes. But, they say that the soul is eternal. Are they not contradictory?”

“In your opinion, one’s perception is real only when it is as per the scriptures and otherwise an illusion. Isn’t it? Why cannot one say: the scripture itself is illusion, this perception is the only real one.’ Why can’t one say that the elders’ perception is illusion and his own perception is the only real one?’ asked Dr. Noone.

“By all means! Since there are many who thought so, we should know about so many schools of philosophy and religions. We are discussing about postulators of the different philosophies, who are considered to be strong believers that they have experienced the direct perception that is better and more correct than that narrated before by others, and it has the strength of reasoning.”
“How do we know the correct one among them?”

“As a first step, have the knowledge of all of them. Then we can think of the next step.”

Meanwhile seeing Vinita engrossed in play, said, “See! The girl, under the influence of Tamoguna, was lazy earlier, is now playing under the influence of the Rajoguna. In this way, all the three Gunas go on changing, and bind the jeeva according to Kapila Maharshi.”

“What binding is there in this?”

“This jeeva starts doing his deeds under the influence of the three Gunas viz. Tamoguna, Rajoguna and Sattva guna. He has got to enjoy the fruits of those deeds! While he is enjoying the effects of those deeds, there will be again the fresh effect of the three Gunas. He again performs deeds. With this cycle, there is only bondage and no release.”

“Does release mean salvation?”

“Yes. According to Kapila Maharshi, the release from the natural bondage is salvation.”

“Is it not attaining the presence of Supreme Godhead? Is this Kapila Maharshi same as the one who is mentioned in Mahabhadagavatham? It is said in this epic that, Kardama Prajaapati is the father and Devahooti is the mother of Sage Kapila and there is the mention of the verbal duel of Kapila and Devahooti.” Sastry asked with background of his knowledge of Puraanas.

“Yes. He is the same, who is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The Saankhya School of philosophy is based on Godlessness. That means it does not accept existence of God. The word of trustworthy or S’abda Pramaana is accepted in that. The Vedas are accepted in this school.”

“Then…” Sastry looking doubtfully said.

“It is like that only,” said Purushottam smiling.

“The school of philosophy propagated by Buddha is Buddhism. The school of philosophy propagated by Jina is Jainism. How did the name of Saankhya come to be known for this school of philosophy propagated by Kapila?” Raghuramaiah asked.

“Though the name ‘Kaapilam’ also exists, the name ‘Saankhya’ has come into more prominence. The reason: The characteristic of the soul or Aatma tattva has been defined with the numbers. It is said ‘25th personality is soul or Aatma. The personalities of nature or Prakriti - the primordial matter tattvas are identified from 1st to 24th. Since it is based primarily on sankhya or number, it has the name ‘Saankhya’. Not only that, ‘Sankhya’ means knowledge also. If the soul or Purusha obtains the ‘Sankhyaa’ – knowledge or wisdom that he is different than the nature, that itself is salvation according to this school. So, that is one of the reasons for the name ‘Saankhya Dars’ana’ to be given for this school of philosophy.”

“Is this ‘Saankhya’ a Dars’ana – school of philosophy or a religion?” he asked again.

“Uncle! When Dars’ana is transforming into religion, what difference does it make?”

“It is not like that, Subrahmanyam! Have we ever heard the religion of Saankhya like Buddhism or Jainism? That is the reason for my question.”
“What you say is true.” Purushottam said. Though started as schools of philosophy, Buddhism and Jainism got established as religions. Vaishnavism etc. started as religions but got transformed as schools of philosophy. It must be stated that ‘Saankhya’, ‘Yoga’, ‘Nyaaya’, ‘Vais’eshika’ et al. have not got transformed into religions, to a considerable extent!

“I do not understand the difference between these two – Dars’ana and Religion,” said Sastry.

“This was already discussed. Ah! I think you were not there at that time! Dars’ana can be said to be the thoughts of spirituality or philosophy. In that it is possible to obtain answers to the questions of why, where, when and how and decide whether to accept or not on arguments. In religion it is not so. It runs based on a belief and faith. In that, most of matters are unquestionable.

There is another difference. In the Dars’anas, there is more importance for the logic, knowledge and preaching of the tenets. In the religion, rites and practice occupy the importance. Hence, I said that Buddhism and Jainism though started as Dars’anas, came into prominence more as religions only. Vaishnavism though began as a religion, picked up all the essentialities required for a Dars’ana. So, it can stand as a Dars’ana as well as a religion also. Saankhya et al. give more importance to the knowledge and logical arguments, though they began as religion – by practice, and remained mostly as Dars’anas only.”

“You say that Vaishnavism began as a religion and attained the status of a Dars’ana. What about S’aivism and S’aakteya? Why haven’t you said anything on them?” asked Sastry.

“It does not appear to have been accepted anywhere that S’aakteya has attained the status of a Dars’ana. It is a religion only. It is a practice with unquestionable faiths. However, if accepted as a part of S’aim, it may, to some extent, attain the status of a Dars’ana. When you talk about S’aim, some effort was made to bring it to the status as a Dars’ana. It is called ‘Paas’upata Dars’ana’. But it transformed from the status of a Dars’ana to the status of a religion. It ultimately ended in branches like ‘Kaapaalika’, ‘Kaalaamukha’ etc with obscene practices, that earned the disgust from the civilized people. By 14th century, it was almost out of circulation and was corrected to some extent by S’rika and others for public acceptance and attempts were made by them to bring back to the status of Dars’ana. By that time already the S’iva-Vis’ishtaadvaita, Kaas’mira S’aiva Dars’anas appeared and gave strength to the S’aim. But it does not appear to have earned any prominence as a Dars’ana like Vaishnavism earning the name as Raamaanuja Dars’ana. There may be many reasons. Some say that since S’aim depend mostly on Tantra S’astra, it remained as a religion only. Though there is mention of Aagamas in Raamaanuja Dars’ana, without any connection with them, it obtained a full-integrated status of a Dars’ana. Though, S’aim is a separate religion and Dars’ana, most of S’aites are ignorant of this and consider them to be the followers of the religion and Dars’ana of S’anka. S’anka Dars’ana is Advaita Dars’ana. Ninety percent of the present S’aites do not know that it is different from S’aim. Because of this also, S’aim could not get prominence as a Dars’ana. As a matter of fact, the trio of Advaita, Vis’ishtaadvaita, and Dvaita should be mentioned as Vedanta Dars’anas only. The Vaishnavism and S’aim are important subsidiary branches of that Vis’ishtaadvaita and Advaita only. Hence, it is not that S’aim did not have the status of a Dars’ana, but it did not come into prominence. Vaishnavism had the prominence as a Dars’ana, with the name of Raamaanuja. As a religion also, it has the fame that is no less than other religions. That means, the compendium of practical faiths and binding to logic, both are of equal standing.
Another reason could be that the S’iva commentaries on Brahma sutras are comparatively much fewer than the Vaishnava commentaries.”

“Alas! We could never know in this much details earlier,” said Sastry. “Now, is it said that the status of the Dars’ana is greater than that of the religion?”

“I will not say so and cannot say also. Who can decide the limits and directions of the logical (binding) reasoning?”

“What does it mean?”

“Doesn’t ‘logical binding’ mean ability to answer the questioning against that? It should be possible to answer convincingly for the questions put with why and what. Saankhya, Yoga, Nyaaya, Vais’eshika, Poorva Meemaamsa, and Uttara Meemaamsa, which are famous as Dars’anahas, have all postulated the respective tenets based on the Vedas, though to differing degrees. Hence, all of them have the answers at some stage or other based on the Vedic texts only. That shows the basis is faith and belief only. Isn’t it? Does it not indicate their nearness to the characteristics of the religion? If we consider the Buddhism and Jainism, which do not have faith in the Vedas, they say about believing in the perception, which they experienced during their meditation. In their own schools, the contradictions are being seen! So, it is impossible to decide whether Dars’ana is great or religion is great. I think that I had explained when you were not there in the discussions. There are two doctors – one, an ordinary doctor, who cures the diseases but cannot explain why the disease could be cured, and the other, a foreign returned doctor, who can explain with reasoning why the disease could not be cured but cannot cure the patient. What can be the answer for the question: which of them is great? If it is considered to be proper that the doctor, more appreciated by the people, is the greater, then the status of the religion is higher. If the status of a Dars’ana could be brought for that, it is adding flavor to glittering gold only.”

“Are there bare Dars’anahas which did not got transformed into religions at all?” was Raghuramaiah’s question.

“There a number of the religions which did not transform into Dars’anahas but the number of Dars’anahas that could not be transformed into religions are very few. It is not totally nil. The modern Dars’anahas are examples of such.”

“What are the modern Dars’anahas?”

It will be more appropriate to say that a new Dars’ana is brought out from the existing Dars’anahas after a thorough study of them. Because of that, the people, unable to discern the subtle differences between the new and old Dars’anahas, actively support the new ones under the supposition that they are following the old religions or Dars’anahas. They give due regard to these new founders considering them to be great personalities.”

“That is it. Who are they?”

It is not proper to name them but in my view, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, M. N. Roy, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan etc. though have brought out new Dars’anahas, they have only invigorated the contemporaries only. They could not come up to the stature of the Dars’anahas established by Daars’anikas like Buddha, Mahaveera, Patanjali, S’ankara, Raamaanuja etc. and neither could they come to the stature of the religions by making large groups follow these tenets like the Dars’anahas of these great personalities like S’ankara, Raamaanuja etc.
These new Dars’anas confined to the status of references in the books of contemporary scholars on Dars’anas.

“To study the philosophy, it requires such an exhaustive and broad outlook!”

“Should it not be? Since they are there like that only, the tenets of the age-old Daars’anikas are rock steady. Nothing has been lost even though a number of scholars had their onslaugths on them. If today also we talk about these Dars’anas, it is because of their foundations being very solid. ‘Saankhya’ also is as great as, nay! It can be said to be greater. Reason! It is so well intermingled with the Vedic school, that there is no possibility at all for today’s average philosophy seeker to distinguish the Saankhya from the Vedic philosophy. It can be said that it is fused to confuse.” Saying so, he laughed away.

“How come? Is there no difference between Saankhya and Vedic school of philosophy?”

“Lot of differences. But the average Saadhaka cannot distinguish. Only those who had done deep study of the Dars’ana can know this. The phenomenon of the 25 Tattvas is accepted by the Vedic Dars’anas like Advaita and Vis’ishtadvaita. All the three Gunas viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, are common in both the schools. It appears that Saankhya which defines salvation as that identification by the Purusha or the jeeva that he is different from the Prakriti - the primordial matter, to be almost similar to the Advaita School, which defines salvation as the escape of the Purusha from Maaya or illusion. The average Saadhaka, who cares for only practice and does not go near the tenets or principles of the various schools, will not be in a position to distinguish himself, so easily, to be either Advaitin or Vis’ishtadvaitin or Saankhya follower.”

“That appears to be better. Is it not easier that one follows any one of these schools suiting to him, instead of tearing one’s hairs with the knowledge of so many schools of religions? Why bother about all these?” said Sakuntalamma putting the grand-daughter to sleep.

“I do not think it to be a proper opinion. Each of the propagators of the religions preaches a particular practice for that religious postulate. Results are obtained only when that practice is followed. How can you decide any one school or religion? To decide so, one has to know the tenets and principles. Is it not required to know whether the particular school is near to the goal and view of the follower? If the goal is to reach Delhi, how can one think of deciding to board any one of the trains? Our practice should not take a wrong route by getting mixed up with others. If it did so, it cannot be said which goal will be achieved. Or it may be that no goal at all is reached. Can it be identified? So, necessarily, we must know all the principles and tenets of all the schools of philosophy, at least of those around us should be known” Raghuramaiah explained with reasoning to his wife, why one should have the knowledge of the Dars’anas.

“It is not that. Is there no common practice for all these religions?” Sakuntalamma asked again.

“The general guide lines like: ‘do not hurt others, do not tell lies, do good’ are there in every religion. But, Madam! Tell me, who does not know these? How many of these are being practiced? The regulations more specific than these general ones do differ according to the school. Those regulations and that practice lead to the basic practices. So, it is essential to know those more specific regulations and practice them. It is inevitable,” said Purushottam.
“Sir, I did not understand what you had said”

“Madam! Nobody says that the general common regulations need not be practiced. Though the intention is not to hurt others, to speak always truth only, to do good to others etc. these people are unable to put them in to practice.”

“Yes! Yes! Purushottam garu! You have come to the right point” Dr. Noone picked up. “Though we intend to put these common directives in to practice, we are unable to do so. Why so- is not known.”

“Therefore we need that Dars’ana or religion, which by its specific religious practices, should ensure, even forcibly, the practice of these common directives like ‘talk always truth’ etc.”

“Exactly! Exactly! It should be like that. It should be possible that such power is generated us. We should know such practices and philosophy and adapt them.” Dr. Noone said enthusiastically. All others nodded their heads in acceptance. Purushottam continued his treatise of Saankhya.

“According to Kapila Maharshi there are only two Tattvas. One is Prakriti - the primordial matter and second is Purusha. That is all.”

“What about the Supreme Godhead? Is there no God for them?”

“No. They say no need for God.”

“But they do believe the Vedas!”

“Yes. This is also a part of Vedic Dars’anas. But it should be said that they are lukewarm in their response to the Vedas. It does not appear that they have accepted Vedas in full. It looks like they have only accepted what is required for them and their principles.”

“Aha! What is meant by Prakriti - the primordial matter?”

“We see all these objects in this world. Have you seen? Wherefrom did all of them come? It cannot be said that they are there right from the beginning, because we are seeing how an earthen pot is being made. Pot was not there in the beginning. Only mud was there. The pot was made afterwards. So all these objects we are seeing, should have been made from something or other. That means: for everything there must be root cause. How should that be? It should have the characteristics of that which generates this object.”

“What does it mean?”

“Consider that an earthen pot is made. Wherefrom did it come? From the mud. Is the pot in the mud earlier or not? If not, how could the pot come from it? So, it must have been there in it. But if it is there, why is it not seen? Is it available in a miniature form invisible to us? No. The pot is in the mud, but not in that shape. Since all the characteristics required for the generation of pot are available in the mud, the pot is made from the mud. This is their resolution.”

“Come on! Come on! Explain once more!” Sastry asked.
“Consider a banyan seed is there. How did the banyan tree come out of it? Do we say that banyan tree is already there in the seed? Otherwise, how did the banyan tree come out of it? Does it mean that banyan tree of a miniature proportion is there in the seed? No. It does not mean so. It means that all the essential characteristics for generation of the banyan tree are there in the seed. This phenomenon is called ‘Satkaaryavaada’. The kaarya -result is there in the kaarana -cause.”

“What is the meaning of kaarya?”

“The pot is kaarya. Mud is kaarana. The seed is kaarana. The tree is kaarya. It is explained in this way.”

“So ultimately, what did we come to know?”

“This universe is kaarya. All these visible objects are kaarya. So there must be a cause or kaarana. In that, all the suitable characteristics for the generation of this universe in this form must be there. It is resolved in this way.”

“If that is the cause for this, what should be the cause for that? In this process of seeking causes, we go backwards.”

“Yes. That shows that we should go on seeking the cause for every object and on going backwards, the first one for all these is called ‘praak’ - the earliest. The one related to praak becomes prakriti - the primordial matter. That means the prakriti - the primordial matter is the kaarana – the cause for this entire universe.”

“Grandfather! Is it the same known as prakriti and vikriti?” asked Vinita, who woke up from the sleep some time back.

Purushottam was stunned. “How do you know what the words prakriti and vikriti mean?”

“It is taught by our tutor. Agni is prakriti - and Aggi is vikriti. Padyam is prakriti and paddiyam is vikriti.”

Purushottam congratulated her saying, “Very good. Very good.” And asked Avadhani in praising tone, “Are all these taught by you?”

“This girl is the first ranker in the school, and so I need not repeat the teaching of the school. I started some of these things because these English medium students are totally blank in Telugu. That is all,” said Avadhani.

“Good. You did a good job! My dear Vinita! ‘Vikriti’ means that which is deformed or changed. ‘Prakriti” means that which existed previously. The original form of ‘Aggi’ is ‘Agni’. Since ‘aggi’ is derived from ‘Agni’, ‘Agni’ became ‘prakriti’ and ‘Aggi’ became ‘vikriti’. In the same way, this universe, these objects, these bodies etc. have all derived from that one called ‘prakriti - the primordial matter’!”

“It means that this universe etc are all ‘vikritis’ only.” Vinita got it confirmed. All felt that Vinita’s conclusions are apt, though what and how much she understood, is not known.
“Sage Kapila concluded that if we analyse all those we see, hear, touch etc. in this world, only five things—shape, sound, touch, taste and smell, are noticeable. So he coined these five as ‘tattvas’.”

“You said earlier that they are 25, but why are you saying now five only?” asked Dr. Noone.

“Wait! Let me tell. How are we able to sense these—shape, sound, touch, taste, and smell? Through the ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose we are able to experience them. So these are five more tattvas.”

“I think these were told earlier.”

“Yes. I told in general. I am telling now in this school of philosophy. After sensing the shape, sound, touch taste and smell, through these eyes, ears, skin, tongue and nose, we try either to accept or reject these experiences with the help of hands, legs, speech, organs of excretion and genitals. So there are five more tattvas called vaak, the speech, paani, the hands, paada, the feet, paayu, and upastha. What is the total number now?”

“Five plus five is ten, and five more make it fifteen.”

“Now if all these visual objects are closely examined, it is observed that they are all made up of five elements viz. soil, water, fire, air and space. So these five more are added to the tattvas. That makes the total number twenty.”

“Since the mind is the one to sense all these twenty, it is the 21st tattva. On questioning further as to where from these 21 are arrived at, it is concluded that to be from the egoism or ahamkaara.”

“Egoism or Ahamkaara means the feeling of ‘I’. Is it not? Does it mean that since ‘I’ am there, am able to know?”

“Almost though not exactly. This Ahamkaara is derived from one called Mahat and this Mahat is derived from Prakriti - the primordial matter. For this prakriti - the primordial matter, there is no basic material since it is Anaadi – ‘without beginning’.”

“Listen! I shall read what I noted down. Please check if it is correct. Prakriti - the primordial matter, Mahat, Ahamkaara, mind, ten organs of sense, earth etc – five, taste etc – five. Is it OK? Total is 24” said Raghuramaiah.

“It matches. Five sense organs of knowledge, five sense organs of work, five elements – Bhutas, five Tanmaatras, Prakriti - the primordial matter, Mahat, Ahamkaara, mind – total 24.”

“What are Tanmaatras?”

“It is said that five elements viz. soil, water, fire, air and space, are derived from shape, sound, touch, taste and smell. So these five are the miniature forms of the five elements – Bhutas. These miniature forms are called Tanmaatras.”

“Subrahmanyam! Have you noticed a peculiar phenomenon here?” asked Raghuramaiah. “For the space, there is only one attribute, sound. For the air, sound and touch are the
attributes. For the fire, sound, touch and form or shape, are the attributes. For Ap – water, the sound, touch, form and taste are attributes. For the earth, all the five are the attributes. Isn’t it Purushottam garu? Am I right?”

“You are right! Since each of them is derived from one another, these attributes also are available in that order cumulatively.” Purushottam had given the reason for this noticeable phenomenon.

“ ‘Aakaas’aat Vaayuh, Vaayoragnih, Agneraapah, Adbhyyah Pridhivi’ according to our scriptures’ said Avadhani quoting the authenticity.

“However, according to their school of philosophy, a noticeable feature is: none of the 24 tattvas have ability to decide. All of them are insentient only. So they cannot act on themselves.”

“If so, how do they transform?”

“They are transformed because of the Purusha. Here Purusha means soul or Aatma and not man. The soul in any of the bodies of the women or birds or trees or any thing is called Purusha. Because of the presence of this Purusha only, the prakriti - the primordial matter transforms or gets a change in its form.”

“Is this soul unique?”

“We see some are dying and some still living, some enjoying and some others suffering. So we cannot say that the soul is one or unique. The souls or Purushas are many. Peculiarity is the Purusha does not get transformed. He remains as he is.”

“Saying that prakriti - the primordial matter is existing has a sense of meaning. Since the universe that is visible exists, there has to be causation for this and that is called prakriti - the primordial matter. It is fine. But how do we know the existence of the Purusha – the soul?”

“Consider it to be non existent. For whose sake does this prakriti - the primordial matter, transform or change? Why should it change?”

“Do you mean to say that it becomes waste?”

Yes! Yes! The Purusha is needed to be there to ensure that all these objects, this universe are consumed – enjoyed. They should not go waste.”

“If Purusha enjoys or consumes the prakriti - the primordial matter, he will experience happiness and misery. When he experiences happiness or sorrow, there are changes in him. Does it not mean that there is transformation or vikriti in him? But was it not told earlier that Purusha does not get transformed?”

Purushottam was happy to note the gradual maturity in his audience. They are able to put up right questions after they hear some topic. It means that they are able to understand and analyse the Dars’ana subject. He felt that his efforts are bearing fruits.

“Prakriti - the primordial matter does not change on its own. Purusha remains as he is, or does not act. Then how does this change happen? The link for these two is called ‘buddhi’ – the discerning factor. You will recall that we talked about Mahat in the subject of tattvas.
This ‘buddhi’ comes from that Mahat. When a magnet is brought near iron bar, there is a movement in it, which was absent earlier. Similarly, the Prakriti - the primordial matter gets transformation or movement or change, whatever we may call it, by the mere presence of the Purusha.”

“What exactly does happen?”

“Do you remember? In the beginning, we talked that there are three Gunas namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.”

“Gunas mean not only the qualities but also strings. Prakriti - the primordial matter gets transformation or movement or change, whatever we may call it, by the mere presence of the Purusha.”

“That means?”

“What is cloth? It is a weave of the warp and weft, threads in the length and breadth respectively. Is there any cloth, which is beyond that? No. If you separate out the warp and weft, there is no cloth anymore. Similarly, what is plait of hair? The hair is made into three bunches and woven into one and it is called plait. If all three parts are separated, where is the plait? In the same fashion, all the three Gunas are intertwined and that is Prakriti - the primordial matter. There is nothing more than these three. In Prakriti - the primordial matter, they are in equal proportions. Hence, it does not transform. There is no change.”

“How is it known that these three Gunas are existing?”

“Suppose there is one person named Chaitra. His wife comforts him. She gives grief for his other wives. She infatuates the other man who desires her. How could the same woman perform three functions? Suppose one finds a gold ornament. It gives happiness to the person who gets it. It causes sadness to him, who has not got it. It creates temptation in him who does not need it.

This shows that in this Prakriti - the primordial matter anywhere and anytime it is observed, one of these three – causing happiness or sadness or temptation – is happening. Observing these differences, those that are causing these happiness, sadness, and temptation, are given names of Sattva guna, Rajo guna, and Tamo guna. They have been named as Gunas because they bind like strings. As soon as the happiness or sadness or temptation takes place, the connected deeds are done: then the rebirth to reap the outcome of these deeds. Thus, these three bind the jeeva, the being and hence they are called as Gunas. We had already discussed this earlier.”

“Since these three Gunas are being noticed in this universe, it is deduced that the Prakriti - the primordial matter must have been made up of these three Gunas, similar to the way we make the resolution that the characteristics of the banyan tree should be there in the banyan seed. Isn’t it?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Yes, exactly. However, they will be in equal proportion in the Prakriti - the primordial matter. As we had observed in the case of magnet an iron bar, the Prakriti – the primordial matter undergoes transformation or change in the presence of Purusha – the soul.”

“Prakriti means the combination of the three Gunas! Does the transformation of the Prakriti mean that the proportion of these three Gunas change from equal to unbalanced?”
“Yes! Consequent to the change, Mahat is born from Prakriti. This is a phenomenon of Buddh. As soon as Buddh is present, the Purusha looks at his image through this Buddh.”

“What is this seeing the image? Is it any mirror in which one sees?”

“Similar to that. We know that our own image seen in the mirror is not real. If we are in front of the mirror, it is seen. If we are not there, the image also is not there. A maniac does not think so. What does he think? He thinks that another man is standing in the mirror. He will beat the image. He will abuse it. But all these are repeated by the image also! When it is being done so, he will shout ‘O man! This man is doing something to me!’ He imagines the presence of virtual person with virtual attributes. Similarly, as soon as the Mahat – the phenomenon of Buddh surfaces, the soul – Purusha, reflects in the Buddh, forgetting his own characteristic of remaining unchanged, thinks that this whole Prakriti – the primordial matter is there for his enjoyment. As he thinks in that fashion, the Ahamkaara – the egoism is born. Again the Purusha sees his image in that and starts sensing ‘I’. As soon as the thought ‘I am there’ arises, from that Ahamkaara, the mind, the senses, Tanmaatras etc all start coming out and the world is made up. He becomes a part of it, considers this body made up of the five Bhutas – the elements to be ‘I’, starts experiencing the happiness and misery, performs the deeds and enjoys the fruits of the deeds, takes rebirth and is engrossed in the misery. This is the Tattva: said Kapila Maharshi.”

“Ah! How well narrated! Though there are traces of Buddhism at places, the theme is different. For them everything is void, where as for these people, both Prakriti and Purusha are real. Let it be. What type of misery the Purusha experiences?”

“There are diseases for the body. Mind is experiencing agony. These two are one type of misery. Another type of misery is from the snakes, tigers, thieves, killers etc. Another is from the fires, droughts, storms and tornadoes etc.”

“What is there? If the medication is done, the diseases are cured. We can mitigate the misery from the snakes etc from suitable protecting armory. The water harvesting by building dams, canal systems etc, mitigate the misery caused by the drought, floods etc.”

“It is true. These are all the ways and means to mitigate the misery of the soul, misery of the nature and misery from the celestials, the inhabitants of upper world. But these are all temporary means only. There must be a permanent means.”

“What sort of means is that?”

“Why did misery occur at all?”

“If one thinks deeply, it is because he saw his image in Buddh. Had he not done so, there would not have been misery at all!”

“Exactly! It is all because of forgetting that ‘I’ and the primordial matter are different. The Purusha is experiencing the Prakriti – the primordial matter, in the same way, as a person seeing the crystal with the color of hibiscus if a hibiscus flower is placed in front of the crystal, and thus bringing misery to himself. If he considers that he is different from the Prakriti – the primordial matter, then there is no misery at all and hence that is the salvation or Moksha.”

“At that time doesn’t the Prakriti go against?”
“First of all, recall how the universe was created jointly by Prakriti and Purusha. It is like how the combination of a lame and a blind functions. The lame rode over the shoulders of the blind directing the way to the blind to walk. It was possible to have movement for the combination. In the same way, all these changes are associates of the combination of the steady and the static. If one leaves the combination, the other cannot exist at all.”

“Is it that simple?”

“It is not possible for a woman to influence a man, howsoever strongly attached to her, any more, once he comes to know of her meanness, unfaithfulness and prostitution. Similar is the situation here. That is the recourse for salvation.”

“They have faith in the Vedas. Haven’t they? The words ‘Supreme Godhead’ and ‘Super Overlord’ do appear in the Vedas! Is He not required for the salvation?”

“Why? What is His role?”

“If so, how did Prakriti and Purusha come into being?”

“They have no origin. If you say that they have come from the Superior Godhead, we have to ask His origin. You say that he has no origin. Purusha also is of similar origin! That is what we also say: The Prakriti and Purusha have also no origin or beginning.”

“The Purusha you speak of is one who falls prey to the bondage of the Prakriti! Is not the Superior Godhead, beyond the Prakriti and controlling it?”

“No. There is no possibility of such a Purusha’s existence. Suppose he exists. What will He do? You say that He creates this Prakriti etc. What for? Which objective is expected? After all nobody does anything without any gain! If there is a gain, the happiness and misery are there. That means the triad of Gunas had permeated. That is to say: the Prakriti binds him also. Hence it cannot be said that there is one who is beyond the control of Prakriti.”

“What about the Superior Godhead, mentioned in the Vedas? All these are His playful moves!”

“They are the descriptions of a great personality, who could come out of the effects of the Prakriti by remembering that He is different from the Prakriti, as we had already said earlier. That is all. We should read and hear them and get inspired by these descriptions to come out of the effects of the Prakriti and thus ward off the misery. That is all to it.”

“Doesn’t the transformation of Prakriti require the will of Superior Godhead?”

“Where is the rule that if you don’t add the buttermilk to the milk, curd will not set? Even without adding buttermilk, milk does get set as curd. In the same way, Godhead is not necessary for the transformation of Prakriti. Existence of Prakriti is enough. On the other hand, let us say that Superior Godhead exists. Why does He create one with comforts and another with misery? It is partiality. Why that partiality? It is because of the triad of the Gunas. Hence, He is one of the members of Prakriti. There is no Superior Godhead or Super controller after all. His necessity is not there. Our Pradhaanam is enough.”

“What is Pradhaanam?”
“Since it is primary cause for all changes, Prakriti itself is called Pradhaanam.”

“Don’t they accept the Supreme God head of the Upanishads also?”

“Whether it is the Vedas or the Upanishads, they speak only about the released soul or the process of propitiation of the Siddhapurushas but do not say that the Supreme Godhead is the cause of all that. All of them tell the cause as Pradhaanam only.”


“Who said it to be the resolve of Supreme Godhead? That sentence is about Pradhaanam only.”

“Pradhaanam is insentient! Can it resolve like that?”

“It is in the S’rutis that Pradhaanam resolved so. I said: ‘The canal bank is going to fall’ Does it mean that the canal bank is going to fall down, with the full knowledge? In the same way, Pradhaanam is also becoming manifold. That is all its meaning there.”

“If so, then…” Raghuramaiah was going to say something and Purushottam butted in and said, “ There is no if and but. If you talk further, there is no bondage, no rebirth, nothing. Neither there is anybody who is to get salvation. By nature, if they are pure and by default if they consider themselves to be impure, for whom is salvation?”

“There is a blot on the mirror. The viewer does not know that and considering that the blot is on his body only, tries to remove it by applying ointment or cream or something on his body. It is like that only. The solution for the removal is the awareness that removal of the blot is done simply moving away from the mirror. Similarly, moving away of the Purusha from Prakriti, is salvation or moksha. Is the illustration apt, Sir?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“After all, since she is a lady, the example of the dressing table coming to her mind is quite logical,” said Raghuramaiah without even glancing at her. To this everybody had a hearty laugh.

“That illustration is nearly right, Madam!” saying so with Sakuntalamma, Purushottam, made all of them to disperse.
Chapter - 8

“Grandma! What is that you are drawing on the floor? Is it Kolam?” asked Vinita, leaning over Sakuntalamma’s shoulders from the back

“Ah! Wait! Do not disturb me. It will become wrong or out of design”, said Sakuntalamma as if admonishing.

“Tell me Grandma!” again she pleaded moving the scale and pencil there.

“Did I not ask you not to disturb them?” saying so explained Sakuntalamma. “Our Sir Purushottam is telling us everyday, as you know. I am making graphs so that all those matters can be understood at a glance. On seeing these graphs, the philosophy will be understood immediately without referring to the entire study. At the same time it can be used to teach others.”

“Will you show them to Sir Purushottam and others?”

“Why? I am plotting them for me. I do not exhibit every picture to all and show my greatness like you.”

“I also do not have any superiority feeling! I have never shown any of my pictures to anybody, to show how great I am,” saying so she moved away from her grandmother to show her annoyance and she announced immediately her retaliation measure. “Wait! I shall show all your pictures to grandfather, uncle, teacher and all others!”

“Will I make them available to you at all? I shall hide them somewhere. Will I tell you? That is it.” Sakuntalamma said playfully.

“Somehow I shall hold on to them. Don’t ever think that I do not know which item is located where in this house!” as Vinita was saying, Sakuntalamma said, “Look! Leave aside all these talks. I think grandfather is still sleeping. Wake him up! It is time for all of them to come. It does not look nice if he is sleeping still by the time all of them come.”

“Gran... nd...pa! ... Pl... ease . .. Get ...up!” shouting, Vinita went. By the time Sakuntalamma completed the graphs and was satisfied with the quality of graphs and cleaned-up, entered all the members of the group. While every body was having snacks, suddenly dumped a bunch of graphs on the tea table saying “Sir! Here are the graphs prepared by grandmother.” Clapping, she looked defying at her grandmother as if she was challenging her by this act.

“Hey! What are you doing? Beware! What I am going to do! Give me those papers.” Sakuntalamma picked them up from the tea table and hid them before Purushottam could lay his hands on them.

“What is that? What are those papers?” Raghuramaiah asked both of them.

“Nothing. Her pranks are increasing, while she being a child is spared the rod,” said Sakuntalamma looking at Vinita with anger.
“Shall I tell grandpa? Grandma had put all that talk of Sir Purushottam into graphs! She said that she will hide them away from me, but look, I found them!” Vinita said.

“Is it so Madam? Let me have a look,” said Purushottam.

“This young child is needlessly blabbering. There is nothing special in these things.” Sakuntalamma was feeling shy over the matter. She did not make any attempt to give the graphs. Instead, she tries to shove them into the drawer of the almirah.

“Look, when the elderly person is asking you should not deny.” Admonished Raghuramaiah.

Unwillingly she handed over the packet of the sheets. “Sir, there may be mistakes. Please tell them so that I can correct them.”

“Let me see” After seeing them, he said, “Aha! How well are these made! They are so clear in depicting the theme. I did not know that you have such a good grasp and capability to express it again. All of you see!” He gave the graphs to all of them to see.

Sakuntalamma is extremely embarrassed. It is an inevitable situation!

“Up to which level did you study, Madam?” asked Purushottam

“Very insignificant” She skipped over the matter. She cautioned Raghuramaiah with her glances against revealing actual status and alternately pleading with hand signals also.

Dr. Noone was not noticing all these. Had he heard all this, he could not have waited without spilling the reality. He is seriously looking at the graphs. Everybody’s attention is on them only.
EXPLANATION: As the worldly comforts increase the spiritual comfort comes down thus leading to the increase of sorrow. This is the Traditional opinion of the Indians.
EXPLANATION: As the worldly comforts are experienced, they give happiness only up to some extent and later they also lead to sorrow only ex. Eating sweets, hearing music etc.
EXPLANATION: The sorrow of a person increases as the worldly experiences/ enjoyment increase. So, the elimination of sorrow is possible by the reduction of the worldly experiences. The negative side of the graph for Y axis (the elimination of sorrow) is sorrow itself. The negative X axis (worldly experiences) is detachment from the experiences.
EXPLANATION: C’arvakas opine that the worldly enjoyment/experience is the final goal and it does give comfort continuously. Although the Moksha is considered as getting rid of the physical body, since there is no true comfort other than physical pleasure, we can understand that only worldly pleasure is the pleasure of Moksha.
EXPLANATION: Following strict principles and avoiding the worldly pleasures/enjoyment is the negative side of the enjoyment. The negative side of elimination of sorrow is sorrow itself. The middle path by which partial enjoyment and partial control are observed is the path to achieve Moksha. The pinnacle of removal of the sorrow is Moksha.
EXPLANATION: Internal things mean accepting the existence of soul etc. It is the positive side of the y axis. Not accepting the same is -ve side. External things mean the world etc. Accepting the existence of these things is +ve side of x axis. Not accepting is –ve side. Origin (0,0) point is the state of emptiness where both external and internal things are non existent.

1. Those who reach (0,0) point with the view that both external and internal things are non existent are Madhyamikas.
2. Those who do not accept the existence of external things but do accept the existence of internal things to arrive at (0,0) point are Yogac’aras.
3. Vais’eshikas are those who reach (0,0) point through the view that both external and internal things do exist.
4. Sout’rantikas reach (0,0) point saying that internal things exist whereas the external things are virtual.
5. C’arvakas are those who accept the existence of external things but do not accept the existence of internal things. These are shown by dotted line in the 4th quadrant.
SCHOOL OF JAINS

EXPLANATION: Good deeds are good behaviour etc. Sins are opposite of good deeds. Lokakasa is the cycle of births etc. Alokakasa is the bright eternal path for the eternal bliss. As the sinners keep sinking deep into the worldly affairs, the good doers will go upwards like a bird towards eternal bliss.

SANKHYA’S SCHOOL
EXPLANATION: Elimination of sorrow means realization that the soul and nature are different. The negative side of this is when the self is fully immersed in the worldly affairs. As the self realization improves the sorrow is eliminated and the Moksha (the eternal bliss) is achieved. As one gets more and more immersed in the worldly affairs the amount of sorrow keeps increasing. We see discontinuity graph above because, the state of realization that soul and the nature are identical and so also both happiness and sorrow becoming zero is only imaginary and not a real state.

‘Ever since the Dars’anas have appeared, nobody has ever presented these matters in such graphs as far as I know. Madam Sakuntalamma is great’ deeply impressed, Purushottam was telling in low tone to Avadhani. All appreciated on hearing this.

“Vinita, while they are looking at the graphs, come! Have milk.” called Sakuntalamma.

My stomach is full. But why milk now? This is not my usual time for milk!” Vinita did not understand.

“No, Not that. You said that you are being taught yoga asanas in the school. Don’t you need strength? Come my darling, or you feel very weak” Sakuntalamma called her again.

“I am not weak now. I don’t want milk now” Vinita grumbled.

“Madam Sakuntalamma!” while looking at the graphs Purushottam overheard their conversation and called.

“Yes Sir!” answered she.

“Practicing yoga asanas does not make one weak! Extra food is not required for that” said he. While he is continuing…

“Excellent aunty! Congratulations. Very well prepared graphs! After all, are you not gold medallist in economics?” Dr. Noone spilled the secret out.

“You fool!” as though she did not notice his words, she continued, “Sir, I did not understand what you are talking about the yoga asanas” She spoke before others attention is drawn to Dr. Noone’s words.

“There is difference between physical exercise and yoga asanas. Both of them make the body strong and put it under control. But physical exercise means energy expenditure and yoga asanas mean energy conservation. That is the only difference,” said Purushottam.

“You must remember that there is one fellow here, who does not understand English” Sastry said folding both his hands jokingly.

“Sastry garu! Please do not mind. By habit English was spoken. I am cautious about using English in our discussions. In spite of that, somehow the mistake did occur.” He explained the subject again.

“By physical exercise, the energy is spent and muscles are developed where they are necessary by utilizing the fat from unwanted areas. Hence, exercise is spending the energy. The exerciser needs sufficient supply of energy. That means he should eat well.”
“By doing yogaasanas, the body becomes flexible and supple and learns to be maintained with the least amount of energy expenditure. Muscles are not grown. Yogaasanas ensure that the body performs normal functioning with minimum food intake.”

“So spoke our elders – once a day eater is a yogi, twice a day eater is Bhogi – the person who enjoys, thrice a day eater is a rogi – patient,” said Sastry.

“Come on! Repeat it once more! Once a day eaten – a Yogi, twice a day eaten – a Bhogi, thrice a day eaten – a Rogi! “ Noted down Raghuramaiah.

“Who established these Yogaasanas and why did they find them? Now-a-days there is lot of publicity for these yogaasanas” asked Dr. Noone.

“These yogaasanas are the oldest in our country. It is not known who founded them but all the Rishis had learnt the yogaasanas. But systematically that is as per a well organized plan this yoga has been formulated as a science – to say exactly as a Dars’ana – by sage Patanjali.”

“Why was it necessary for him to formulate it so?”

“While we were talking about ‘Saankhya’ you would recall that it was said in the last chapter that knowing that Purusha is different from Prakriti, is the salvation and elimination of the misery. But it is not that easy. It is not sufficient to say so. The experience of riding a giant wheel may be narrated in the best way for the person to feel the experience but unless he actually rides the giant wheel, he will not feel the thrill. Similarly, It is very difficult to know that he is different from the prakriti. To practice that only, this theory of Yoga of Patanjali had come into being.”

“Is this Yoga a twin along with ‘Saankhya’ like the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad?”

“It is said so. Not only Yoga and Saankhya but also, Nyaaya and Vys’eshika are termed as twin Dars’anas. Yoga started where Saankhya stopped. Hence for both the Dars’anas, it is same till the subject of 25 tattvas.”

“When it is said that it is same till 25 tattvas, are there tattvas beyond the 25?”

“No more for Saankhya, but for the Yoga Dars’ana, Yes, the 26th tattva is Is’vara.”

“Is this Is’vara same as Rudra?”

“No, No! While learning philosophy, we must remember certain rules. The controller of the entire universe is called Is’vara. If that personality with the snakes around his neck etc. is to be told, he will be told as Rudra or S’iva. Similarly, when the word ‘Brahman’ is used, it indicates the Supreme Godhead only and not anybody else. To tell the four headed personality, he will be mentioned as ‘C’aturmukha Brahma’ or ‘Hiranyakagha’.”

“Who is this Hiranyakagha?

“Though there are differences of opinion, we can take it that he and ‘C’aturmukha Brahma’ are same for the time being.”
“So, the Yogis have settled that 24 are the tattvas of Prakriti, 25th tattva is Purusha and the 26th is Is’vara. What next?”

“Though it was settled that 26th Tattva is Is’vara, it was not accepted that he has the powers of creation, sustenance and destruction. Neither he has the power to grant salvation, nor he is independent.”

“Then what is the purpose of this figurehead?”

“He is without any bondages. That is, he is devoid of all the miseries that bind us. He is omniscient. He is the postulator of all the systems. If Kapila Maharshi is able to pass on this Saankhya School, it is because of the preaching of this Is’vara only.”

“These followers of Patanjali also have rejected the Is’vara like the Saankhya followers who have also rejected Him. But it appears that they had assigned some importance to Him like our President of Indian Union has been assigned.”

“Yes. Our President, though he is not independent for any thing, he is above all in our hierarchy. Well compared. Since Yoga followers have accepted an Is’vara, they are called ‘Ses’vara Saankhyas’. Saankhyas did not accept this and so they are called ‘Nirees’vara Saankhyas’ or ‘Nirees’vara vaadins.”

“Did any body contradict this Saankhya?

“Patanjali Maharshi had contradicted this theory of non-acceptance of Is’vara the all-powerful. His question to all these people was: ‘When all the Vedas are announcing that there is Is’vara, how can it be said that Is’vara is not there, and still accept the authority of the Vedas?’ There is zenith for all the objects, which are brought out in the Ams’as – the portions. Knowledge is also one of the Ams’as. For that also there must be a Zenith. That Zenith is Is’vara as per Patanjali.”

“I did not understand this second argument. What is this bringing out in the Ams’as?”

“There is one that is the most superior, in every living race in this universe. We say that such and such tree is the most superior among the trees, such and such an animal is the most superior among the animal race etc. Isn’t it? In the same way, as we identify one with the best qualities, one who is the most philanthropic etc. Similarly, there must be one who is the most knowledgeable! He said that the most knowledgeable is called ‘Is’vara’.”

“It is fine. It appears to be the Authenticity of inference or ‘Anumaana Pramaana’. Isn’t it?”

“Patanjali had said one thing more. Purushas or the souls are many. The fruits of the deeds performed by each of them belong to that soul only. Though each of them is under the control of Prakriti only, all of them do not behave in the same fashion. The behaviour of each of them depends on the different levels of the illusion each of them experience. If each of them has to enjoy the fruits of his own deeds, somebody has to maintain the individual accounts of each of the souls. It is said Is’vara is with that responsibility.”

“Pity! Is’vara is made an employee under Prakriti! But, the rest of them are all still the same in both Saankhya and Yoga! Is there nobody, who contradicted both of them?”
“Your thinking is going towards counterarguments only! It is very easy to counter their postulations, since they have accepted the Vedas as pramaanas. Hence, if you point out the subjects contradicting what they tell, they will not be in a position to counter them. It is difficult only with Buddhists etc, who do not accept the Vedas as authority or Pramaanas. The contradictory tenets are to be picked up from their postulations and with them only countering them can be done. Since they do not accept the Vedas, picking up points from Vedas and countering them on that basis is not possible!”

“Did they (Saankhyavadins and Yogavaadins) not know that in the Vedas there are statements which run contra to points of their respective philosophies? Knowingly, why do they start postulations, which are contra?”

“One point must be noted here. Most of the Dars'anakaaras i.e., 90% of them, have specified the characteristics of the Supreme Godhead according to their wisdom and power of logical conclusions and imposed their interpretation of Supreme Godhead on the people. We say that Buddha with his good words and Mahaveera with the wisdom earned through the penance, showed the path of elimination of the misery, but if we have to mention the fact, without any hesitation, they had imposed what they thought from their wisdom."

“Though it sounds harsh, this is the correct word, Purushottam garu!” Avadhani supported. All the listeners had nodded their heads in approval. Purushottam continued.

“99% of those who came after them also followed the same path. The only difference is Buddha and Mahaveera had not accepted the Vedas as authenticity and so they did not broach into the subject. The rest of them, having accepted the Vedas as authentic, tried to confirm their description of the Supreme Godhead with the relevant quotes from the Vedas and the Upanishads.

The Vedas and the Upanishads are indicators of the direct perception of the spiritual philosophy experienced by the Rishis. Do the Vedas and the Upanishads support the conclusions of these peoples’ wisdom? So, none of these people could find a perfect support from the Vedas and the Upanishads for their conclusions of the Supreme Godhead. So, they tried to somehow cook up the support by picking up some part from here and some part from there totally unconnected. So, all most all of them became vulnerable to the philosophers latter periods.”

“Is S’ankaraachaarya also like that only? His Dars’ana is considered to be one of the great ones!”

“S’ankaraachaarya is one of the extremely intelligent wise born in this land. Who can say that his Dars’ana is not great? It is really very great. Is not Dars’ana of Buddha great? Similarly, this is also great. It mirrors the wisdom and their logical thought process. His Advaita is the mirror of his wisdom and his logical intelligence. But his critics say that trying to match the Upanishadic references to his postulates of Advaita is an utter failure. Those, who consider themselves to be Vaidikas – the followers of the Vedas, say that they can accept Advaita as a Dars’ana very well just like Buddhism but to accept what he had postulated as the school of Upanishads or Vedic school of philosophy, his postulations should have match well with either as though they are the aphorisms lifted from either the Upanishads or the Vedas.”

“Do they say that they do not match well?”
No. They say that he managed the suitability. He categorized the aphorisms of the Upanishads and the Vedas into two classes. He called all those, that match with his postulations as Paaramaarthika Vaakyas – the aphorisms of spirituality. All the aphorisms that are contradictions to his postulations are classified as Vyaavahaarika Vaakyas – the common usage aphorisms. Where is the contradiction now? Whichever Vedic sentence is not matching to his postulation is called as Vyaavahaarika Vaakya and all those aphorisms matching his postulations are said to be Paaramaarthika Vaakyas. The critics do not accept such categorization to match the postulations with the Vedas and the Upanishads.

“Is it not mentioned even as an indication in the Vedas or the Upanishads that there are two categories of aphorisms?”

“No. Nowhere. No where in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the mythologies, Puraanas, it was said that they are giving two categories of aphorisms and one should divide them as per their requirements.”

“If there is no classification in that way, Classifying and saying that this set is one category and this second set is of the second category is not appropriate on anybody’s part. But I am not able to digest and believe that the Dars’ana of S’ankaraachaarya could not explain completely either the Vedas or the Upanishads, and that there are differences between the Dars’ana of S’ankaraachaarya and the Vedas and the Upanishads. I do not know about the critics, but for me, it is very difficult to accept this statement. “

The critics of S’ankaraachaarya say that they give an example and it should be heard. What is the relationship between the Universe and the Supreme Godhead in their school? It is the relationship between the rope and the snake. Isn’t it?”

“I do not know even a bit of Advaitic Philosophy till date. Either Sastry or Avadhani should tell”, said Raghuramaiah.

“Aachaarya S’ankara says that the entire universe is a myth and only the Supreme Godhead is real. As an example, don’t we find the rope as a snake in the hazy darkness? The snake is an illusion here and the rope the reality. In the same way, though Supreme Godhead is in front of us, we see the entire universe because of our ignorance. The rope means Supreme Godhead and snake is universe. The hazy darkness is our ignorance. Then, how do we know the reality? When the illusion is removed. How do we remove the illusion? As we remove the hazy darkness. How do we do that? By bringing a lamp. The moment we bring the light, the snake is gone and only rope, the reality remains. In a similar way, we do not see the universe any more on obtaining the wisdom and only the supreme Godhead is seen. This is in short the Advaitic School of philosophy.”

“Aha! Is it so! It is almost like Buddhism. Of course, there is a difference. Some similarities are there.”

“Now tell! What is the relationship of the universe and the supreme Godhead?”

“What is there? Nothing. Is there any relationship between the snake and rope?”

“OK. Let me put the question in another way. According to their school, who creates the universe?
“We have created out of our own ignorance. It is our illusion in the hazy darkness. That is all.”

“Very good! But, this illustration of the snake and rope is not there in the Upanishads, when the relationship between the Supreme Godhead with the Universe is being told!”

“Let it not be there. What is wrong? By giving us an illustration, where is the rule that the illustration should be the same as in Upanishads? They must have given this illustration to make us understand better.”

“If it was only that, the voice of critics would have been silenced. But in the Upanishads, another illustration that does not match the illustration of the snake and rope was given when the relationship of the supreme Godhead with the universe was being discussed.”

“Is it so? What is that?”

“It is the illustration of the spider and the web. The way the spider weaves the web with the liquid from its mouth, moves around it and pulls up everything of the web into it again, the Supreme Godhead also creates this universe, plays with it and pulls out everything and puts inside him.”

“Oh, my God! There is lot of difference between this illustration and that of the rope and snake. Here the spider, web etc are all real. It is not an illusion. How did S’ankara support this?”

“It is very difficult to match the illustration of spider and web with the rope and snake. He said that the illustration of the spider and web is given to make the common man understand it from the angle of the Vyaavahaarika Para Brahman. It is for those, who cannot understand the Paaramaarthika Bhraanti – the illusion of spiritual parlance.”

“Is it accepted by his critics?”

“No. We discussed about it some time back! It was asked: ‘how can some one categorise as the Paaramaarthika aphorisms and the Vyaavahaarika aphorisms? What are the guide lines?’”

“Sir! I have a doubt. The critics are saying that there is no mention of the snake and rope illustration. Have they gone through all the Upanishads critically? It was told that a large number of them were not available to the later generations! It might have been in one of those Upanishads!” said Sastry.

“It is said that it is not there any where in those ten Upanishads, that were accepted as authentic by him. He accepted only these ten Upanishads as authentic in his commentary on Brahma sutras. Because of this only, his critics say that his school is not Upanishadic school,” explained Purushottam.

“You said Upanishadic school. We do not know what is Upanishadic school so far,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Upanishadic School of philosophy means, that school of philosophy, which supports all the aphorisms of the Upanishads. Instead of postulating what is the Supreme Godhead with own wisdom and trying out to support that with the aphorisms of the Upanishads, studying
critically what has been written in all the Upanishadic aphorisms and prepare the definition of the Supreme Godhead as per those aphorisms, will become the Upanishadic school of philosophy.”

“When one proclaims that they have faith in the Vedas and the Upanishads, it is imperative that all the aphorisms in them are accepted as authentic and they become pramaanas for them. There cannot be more or less in that. That which can explain all the aphorisms only can be called as Vedic Dars'ana or Upanishadic Dars’ana. Any way, our topic has been side tracked. In most of the Vedic Schools, it has become very easy for countering one’s arguments by the other, because the tenets postulated by these people could not be supported efficiently by all the Vedic aphorisms. In this method only, later generations could desiccate the Saankhya and Yoga philosophies.”

“You have told the meaning of Saankhya. What is the meaning of ‘Yoga’?”

“There are many meanings to the word ‘Yoga’. ‘That fellow is blessed with this yoga’, ‘Benefitting yoga is not there for me’ sentences like this, use the word yoga for the good luck or bad luck. If you see the dictionary, it gives the meanings of shield- the four strategies of Saama, Daana, Bheda and Danda, meditation, grouping, joining. Bhagavad-Gita is called the science of Yoga. There the word yoga is used to indicate, the strategic plan. It means that it is a treatise, which tells how to go about to achieve the salvation.”

“Yes, Yes! During recitation of Bhagavad-Gita, at the end of each chapter, it is mentioned – ‘yoga S’aastrea’. Aha! Yoga here means, the science that tells the various plans. Is it because of that, the chapters are called ‘Saankhya yoga’, ‘Karma Yoga’ etc.?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Mostly it is so, Madam! But in Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna had given many definitions for the word ‘Yoga’. At one place he says: ‘Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhootva, samatvam yoga ucyate.’ – After performing a work or deed, if one can remain without either happiness or misery irrespective of the result, it is called yoga. “

‘As one has to pay the lawyer’s fees irrespective of whether the case is won or lost”, said Raghuramaiah.

“Your Advocate’s illustrations wont go with here, Uncle!” said Dr. Noone and asked, “Please tell further definitions’

“It was told that being unrelated with the misery is Yoga according to the aphorism: ‘Tam vidyaat Duhkhasamyogaviyogam yoga samjanitam’. It was further stated by the aphorism; ‘Yo ayam yo Agastayah proktam’ that souls knowing that they among them are equal and are equal with the Supreme Godhead as well”

“But what is meant by Yoga?”

“That is what is being told! Each one had used that word differently. Not only that, they have used differently at different places. In the sixth chapter of Bhagavad-Gita it is used with the meaning of keeping the mind steady. Further, there are two generics viz., ‘yujur – yoge’ and ‘yuj – samaadhe’. One means the combining and the other state of steadiness.”

“Oh! My God! Let us not go further with the meanings but tell what Patanjali said. That is enough. Is it not our subject also?”
“He said: ‘Yogah c’ittavritti nirodhah’”

“Means?”

C’ittam means Buddhi. Its behaviour – means its activities to be controlled. That is the meaning of the above aphorism.”

“I remember that somewhere earlier, it was said that c’ittam means store house of thoughts!”

“The words c’ittam, Buddhi, mind all of them were being used as alternatives by habit. We further discussed that the same person becomes father, grandfather, husband, brother etc. according to the functions he has to perform and similar is the case with the words c’ittam, Buddhi and mind.”

“Yes! We remember. These ‘functions of the mind’ being controlled is called ‘Yoga’. What are the ‘cittavrittis’?”

“Vritti means behaviour- means the deeds that are being done. They are of five varieties. 1. Being totally immersed in earthly matters. 2. Stabilizing in only one earthly matter. 3. Indulging in sleeping. 4. Concentrating on one subject. 5. Leaving all other matters and having the penchant for that matter only. In Yoga, one must stop all these five activities being performed by the mind.”

“All these are not there in deep sleep! Do they? Is that also Yoga only?”

“No. Three of the above five are because of the Rajoguna and Tamoguna. The next two are because of Sattva guna. Since the last two are the ones that are required to be supported, that stage is called ‘Yoga’. The three are in controlled state during the deep sleep but then the last two are not under control.”

“I am not understanding the subject. What is control? Is it not stopping only?”

“That meaning can be taken but in this context it is not the proper meaning. The stage at which the ‘Kles’a, Karma and Vipaaka’ goals are not allowed to take roots is called ‘Nirodhah’ – control. That is ‘Yoga’.”

“Oh! My God! What are all these? You are making confusion more and more.”

“It is very simple. Listen. Four of them bind the Purusha- the soul in the prakriti- the primordial matter!”

“Why should they bind in that fashion?”

“This c’ittam has weakness of wavering.”

“Why should there be wavering?”

“Uh! Why don’t you allow me to complete before throwing an array of questions?” smiling he continued, “Listen. Being an instrument for acquiring knowledge, being under the illusion of taking one object to be a different one, day dreaming, remembering the past happenings – All these are the reasons for the mind to waver.”
It is said that one should be able to control or regulate this wavering of mind. In that control it is to be ensured that the ‘Kles’a, Karma etc are not allowed to be generated. If they are generated, it will lead to bondage. The wavering is because of the bondage. Is it not? Have I understood properly?"

“It is OK. You have understood to some extent.”

“You say OK! After all the efforts to put in my words! All right! Tell us what exactly is ‘Nirodhah’ – the control or regulation?”

“Have you ever heard the word ‘Samaadhi’?”

“All the yogis are said to be in ‘Samaadhi’ – profound meditation, the last stage of Yoga. It is further said that during the stage of Samaadhi, they are totally unaware of what is happening around them.”

“When the C’ittam attains the stage of Samaadhi, that stage is called ‘Nirodhah’.”

“Aha! All the activities of the c’ittam should attain the stage of ‘Samaadhi’. Activities mean working. So, C’ittam should be in the state of Samaadhi. That state should be such that Kles’a – the distress, - the generators of bondages etc., are not allowed even to be born. Is it OK?”

“Yes! It matches.”

“When you say Samaadhi state should be such that Kles’a – the distress, - the generators of bondages, etc. are not allowed even to be born, is there a state of Samaadhi which allows the bondages to be generated also?”

“State of Samaadhi which allows the bondage to be generated does not exist. But there are stages in Samaadhi – lower and higher. In the lower stage, the bondages are not eliminated. Only in the higher stage, they are eliminated. That stage is required for Yoga. That means…”

“Why somebody should struggle for that Yoga or Samaadhi?”

“Only at that stage, the soul or Purusha realizes that he is different from the primordial matter or Prakriti and attains the salvation. This struggle cannot be avoided if Salvation – relief from the misery is needed.”

“Yes, Yes! They started from where the Saankhyas have left. Isn’t it? There it was told ‘this is salvation’. Here its practice is being told: ‘How the misery can be avoided’. Is the question here ‘how to wipe out the misery which is already there or how to ensure that the intending future misery is stonewalled’? What is this meditation for?”

“We have already experienced the misery of the past. Forget about it. The present misery has already arrived. It cannot be avoided. All the exercise is for the future misery only. It does not make much difference whether you call it as the one that causes the misery or the causative of bondage.”

“You said the ‘Kles’a’ etc are four. Can you tell again what they are?”
“First is ‘Kles’a’ – pain, difficulty. This should be removed. Second is the ‘Karma’ – the deeds- Performance of the rituals, stealing, killing etc. These must be stopped. The third is ‘Vipaaka’ – the resultant rebirths etc which are due to the performing the deeds. These have to go. The fourth is ‘Aas’aya’ – the goal – the ‘Vaasanas’ – the latent impressions, the resultants of performing the deeds. These also must be eliminated.”

“What are Vaasanas?”

“They are the ‘Samskaaras.”

“What does that mean?”

“Aha! I did not tell about them earlier in detail! Listen carefully. I shall explain in detail. Consider that you have stored asafetida in a tin and emptied after some days or stored another material in that tin. But the smell of asafetida still comes from the tin even after emptying. Doesn’t it? Similarly, after we had completed a deed, its Vaasana – the latent impression will still be with the mind. In the previous birth, we had satiated our hunger some time by placing our mouth at the breast of our mother. The Vaasana of that deed is attached with our mind or soul. In this birth, after we were born, because of that Vaasana, we started drinking milk at our mother, without anybody telling. In this way, the Vaasanas of old deeds are there, prompting us to perform new deeds. As long as these Vaasanas are there, the rebirths and performing the deeds are inevitable. So it is said that they must be eliminated.”

“Understood. Kles’a – means the difficulty, it is said that ‘that must be removed’. What does it mean?

“Considering the objects that cause misery, to be those that give us happiness, considering that the body is soul though the soul and body are different, considering that he is experiencing forgetting that the mind is experiencing what all are to be experienced, trying to be comfortable and attempting to do harm to others, any resolve to avoid any disliking experience, considering them as death-like due to distressing experience of the death in previous births, - all these are ‘Kles’as.”

“All are true but it does not appear that even one of them can be remembered. Please tell how to control the activities of the mind. It will be sufficient and then it can be said that Yoga Dars’ana is completed,” asked Dr. Noone.

“Is it so simple?” he laughed and continued. “They had accepted the existence of Is’vara. Didn’t they? He has to be approached with total surrender. If you talk of Saadhana, you will recall that we talked about the Samaadhi stage for attaining Yoga, when all the Vaasanas – lasting impressions, are erased in this highest stage. To achieve that Samaadhi, there are eight Angas – parts. That is called Ashtaangayoga.”

“What are these Angas?”

“Suppose we say: ‘for taking food, we must wash our hands’, and ‘for performing the prayer, we must take bath.’ In these two, ‘washing the hands’ and ‘taking bath’ are ‘Angas’ and ‘taking food’ and ‘performing puja’ are the main deeds. Performing the Angas – parts, is not completing the deeds but without performing these, the main deed becomes faulty.”

“That means the Ashtaangas – the eight parts, are necessarily to be performed if one has to achieve the last stage of Samaadhi and Yoga is required. But merely by performing these
Angas, there is no guarantee that he will achieve the last stage of Samaadhi – the yoga. By not performing the Angas, definitely one will not achieve the samaadhi. Is that all?”

“Yes”

“Sir, What is ‘Raajayoga’?” was Sastry’s question.

“As I have mentioned earlier, there are many Yogas e.g., Hatha Yoga, Kriyaa Yoga, Laya Yoga, Naadee Yoga, etc. This Ashtaanga Yoga told by Patanjali is the best among them like a King among the people. So that has earned the name ‘Raaja Yoga’”

“What is Hatha Yoga?” Dr. Noone asked.

“Wait. Let the Ashtaanga Yoga be completed. Then you can ask,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Basically, the requirements for this Ashtaanga Yoga are ‘Abhyaasa and Vairaagya. Abhyaasa means practice. It is bringing back the mind to the right track, which is getting distracted towards the worldly objects again and again. A mother brings back a child who tries to crawl out of the main door, till such time that the child stops going out realising that the mother will bring him back if he crosses the main door, or till such time that child grows to such an age when the mother becomes confident that he does not require mother’s protection anymore and is capable of protecting himself.”

“Similarly, the mind should be pulled back into the track so that it does not sway into the other objects. Once the practitioner achieves the state of Samaadhi, the mind remains steady on its own and does not sway towards any other object.”

“What are other objects?”

We are talking about the release of the Purusha from Prakriti, the primordial matter. The Purusha must concentrate on his Svaroopa – his nature. He should never think of the objects pertaining to Prakriti - the primordial matter. They are the other objects.”

“What is Vairaagya?”

“It is feeling of the practitioner that these earthly comforts or heavenly comforts or the name and fame are not required by him, his own Svaroopa - nature is enough. All these are under his control and he is not under their control.”

“The Raaja Yoga is to be started with the Abhyaasa and Vairaagya!”

“Yes. The first two stages in that are Yama and Niyama.”

“In the Ashtaanga Yoga, these two are the first two of the eight. Isn’t it? OK, Please continue.”

“Yama means non-violence, speaking truth, not stealing, practicing celibacy, not accepting alms. ‘Niyama’ means being clean, being happy with what is available, slimming as per the texts, studying the books like Bhagavad-Gita, chanting either mantra or naama, surrendering to the Supreme Godhead. By performing all these, the two parts will be completed.”
“What is next?”

The next two are the ‘Aasana’ and ‘Praanaayaama’.

“Are these same as those being taught in the schools and on T.V.?”

“Yes! These are the ones being taught on the T.V and schools. To ensure the mind is steady, to attain contentment, to conserve the energy, to feel healthy, there are many like Padmaasana, Vajraasana etc.”

“Should I show? I know these Aasanas,” asked Vinita.

“Not now. I shall see later.” Saying so, he continued.

“Praanaayaama is controlled breathing exercise. Inhalation of air is ‘Pooraka’, exhalation is ‘Rec’aka’, and holding the inhaled air inside is ‘Kumbhaka’. As long as the air is moving in and out, the mind will be wavering. In other words, it sways towards objects of earthly significance. Once the air is restrained, that wavering stops and it becomes steady.”

“Isn’t it very dangerous?”

“It is dangerous for those without practice. It should be made into habit by regular practice. Generally, a normal healthy human breathes in and out 21600 times in a day between two sunrises. This number is reduced in direct proportion to the increase in mind’s stability.”

21600 in 24 hours, that is 21600 divided by 24 or 10800 divided by 12 i.e., 900 per hour or 15 times in a minute. If one breathes in and out 15 times in a minute, he is normal. If it increases, the wavering of the mind increases and if it is reduced from 15 per minute, the mind will become steadier and the swaying thoughts are becoming less and less. Sir, to which level can this number comedown?” asked Avadhani doing the calculations swiftly.

“Up to 10 cycles per minute it is acceptable. To come to a level of 5 or 6, it needs intense practice. Only then the mind starts getting steadied on any matter or object.”

“Will anybody come to the level of 1,2 or 3?”

“Why not? The chances of mind maturing and coming to the stage of having direct perception increase.”

“Unless one comes to this stage, cannot the Angas of the next step be started?”

“It is not like that. By the time, the remaining Angas reach the last stage the Praanaayaama also comes nearer to the frequency of 0 to 1. It is not the other way. If this can be steadied below level of 10, then little bit of ‘Pratyaahaara’ can be slowly started.”

“What is ‘Pratyaahaara’?”

“Listen carefully. We are going in a sequence. By practicing ‘Yama and Niyama’, we have regulated the contact with the external world. By practicing ‘Aasanas’, we had regulated the body. In ‘Praanaayaama’, the breathing has been brought under control. Now the senses need to be brought under the control. That is called ‘Pratyaahaara’.”
“How should it be done?”

“We must retract our senses – eyes, ears, nose etc inside like a tortoise which pulls its limbs into the shell when it senses any danger.”

“What does that mean?”

“Telling the tongue that it is not possible to allow it to fulfill its wish of eating some thing tasty. If the wish still persists then it should be told and every time that it is not possible till it stops asking. If ‘Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranaayaama’ are practiced perfectly, the senses by this time come under control in quick succession. All the organs of work did come under almost full control by performing the ‘Asanas’. Didn’t they? Now lefts over are those of knowledge. Till this time, it is the exercise connected with external world. Now starts the exercise connected with internal world.”

“How?”

“The next stage after ‘Pratyahaara’ is ‘Dhaarana’. Imagine a wheel at the navel or a lotus flower in the heart and place the mind or ‘C’ittam’ on that or on the tip of the nose or on the most liked form of God, firmly”

“How long?”

“Till such time that the mind stays there firm without any wavering.”

“What is meant by without wavering?”

“Except seeing or thinking of that place, nothing else should be either seen or thought throughout the practicing session. Once this becomes possible, next stage of ‘Dhyaana’ should be practiced.”

“What will happen in that stage?”

“Concentrating the mind, that is habituated to go after the external objects, on the soul, the internal object. That is ‘Dhyaana’.”

“What is next?”

“If it is possible to go into the stage of ‘Dhyaana’, it leads into the stage of ‘Samaadhi’ on its own. There is nothing that is to be done now.”

“You said there are stages in that stage of ‘Samaadhi’. Isn’t it?”

“The first stage is ‘Samprajnaata Samaadhi’. In this stage, the mind will know that it is concentrating its attention on the soul only. Before attaining this stage, there are four more stages. Please note that some of these stages are common to the ‘Dhaarana’ stage also. I am telling in general. In the first stage the practitioner will be having the knowledge of the objects both post and pre. That means the thoughts will be having the knowledge about what precedes and succeeds the present activity of the object. But all these thoughts are of one object only. The next stage is ‘Savic’aara Samaadhi’. In this stage, the miniature stages of the object will be subjects of thoughts, ultimately they become nil, and except thoughts of the time and places, nothing else will be a subject of the thoughts. The next stage is ‘Saananda
Samaadhi’. The mind will be pretty comfortable in this stage. The feeling ‘How well comfortable is my mind!’ only will be there in this stage. The next stage is ‘Saasmita Samaadhi’. In this, the mind slips slowly and the soul comes out and will be aware that the concentration is steady and is on itself. Here the ‘c’ittam’ will not be extinct. Till this state, it is ‘Samprajnaata Samaadhi’.

“Oh! There is a long process!”

“Yes. What else did you think! After that, since all the activities of the mind are lost already, the stage in which only their impressions are left over is called ‘Asamprajnaata Samaadhi’. After entering this stage, gradually the lasting impressions of the past deeds will be vanishing. Vanishing of the impressions mean vanishing of the ‘C’ittam’ only. Once that is lost, the connection with the Prakriti – the primordial matter, certainly vanishes. He goes farther than the stage of ‘Mahat’ mentioned in the Saankhya. That means prakriti and he become separated and enters the ‘Nirbeeja Samaadhi’. That is ‘Kaivalya’ or salvation.”

“All this is likely to take considerable time! Are there no shortcuts?”

“Evolution of Hatha Yoga’ was in that direction only. ‘Hatha’ means stubbornness.”

“Does it mean that the body is forced into the stages of ‘Dhaarana, and Dhyaana’?”

“Yes. They concentrate more on the ‘Praanaayaama’. Their concentration and importance is more on ‘Aasan and Praanaayaama than on the ‘Yama and Niyama’. They torture the body very much. They perform something called ‘Naadee S’uddhi. The make the activities of ‘Vasti and Dhauti’ more stringent.”

“What are ‘Vasti and Dhauti’?”

“They are one type of purifying activities. The external body is cleaned by bathing. Similarly, if the inner body also is subjected to such cleaning, the blood circulation is expected to be without any obstructions in their opinion.”

“Swallowing a 15 inch long piece of cloth is fully and pulling out is one process. Chewing the black pepper, swallowing it with hot water and vomiting out after a little while is another one. Swallowing the cotton string of its full length and pulling out is still another one. Sitting on feet with the knees bent and performing ‘Praanaayaama’ is another. Like this, there are many more. It is said that the throat and the intestines are cleaned and become free of diseases. Drinking water through a six inch long tube of the width of small finger and pulling out that water after the stomach wash is another like this.”

“All these are difficult. Aren’t they?”

“The practitioners of ‘Raaja Yoga’ also do such exercises some times but mostly these are performed by the ‘Hatha Yoga’ practitioners only. They perform peculiar acts of stretching their tongue and reaching their nose and subsequently the forehead with it. The activities with the names of ‘Mahaa Bandham, Khec’ari, Mahaa mudra, Jaalandharam, Uddeeyaanam’ etc. are there.”

“Is it all a separate School or is it part of Patanjali’s Yoga S’astra?”
“There are many activities beyond Patanjali’s Yoga S’aastra. As many more Aasanas than what Patanjali prescribed have been created, and also the number of the procedures of Praanaayama beyond those prescribed by Patanjali in his Yoga S’aastra are created and are being practiced. In addition to these variations, there is another section which believes that there are six planes or ‘C’akras’ in the human body and the energy of Kundalini is in a dormant condition below the first plane called ‘Moolaadhaara C’akra, and this energy is activated by the Praanaayama etc. and it travels through all the planes and its crossing the sixth and last plane is the salvation.”

“What is that? Please tell again!”

In our body, the Moolaadhaara C’akra is at the anus plane. The second the Svaadhishthaana C’akra is at the plane of genitals. The third, the Manipooraka C’akra is at the navel plane and the fourth, the Anaahata C’akra is at the heart plane. The fifth, the Vis’uddha C’akra is at the neck plane and the sixth, the Aajnaa C’akra is in the middle of the eyebrows. Some others are of the opinion that the Sahasraara C’akra is at the medulla oblongata plane or at the Brahmaandhra. A nerve called Sushamna Naadi connects all these planes or C’akras. This Naadi is considered to be a path.”

It is said that under this first C’akra the energy – Kundalini is available, coiled in three and a half coils like a coiled snake. By the effect of the Saadhana of Praanaayama etc., this energy is kindled and gradually moves up through each of these planes or C’akras. When it comes to the last plane or C’akra, it is the salvation or Moksha. There are many books on this process, opinions, subjects and so many innumerable are there on this.”

“Are there any other Yogas apart from this Hathayoga?”

“There is one called ‘Mantra Yoga’. Chanting the mantra or hymn built in the letters ‘A’ to ‘Ksha’ and considered to be the form of ‘S’ri Devi S’aakti’. There is another called ‘Laya Yoga’. This yoga is concentrating the mind on ‘Is’vara’ for all the time. Like this, there are many Yogas preached by specific persons, some of which are ‘Kriyaa Yoga’, ‘Naadi Yoga’, ‘Tantra Yoga’.”

“It appears that our people have lot of infatuation for these Yogas!”

“Why not? Forgetting that all these Yogas have been arrived at for obtaining salvation or Moksha, there are millions and millions of people in our land right from Vedic-times, who have attempted and are attempting to obtain the resultant extra sensory powers, in the garb of attempting salvation or Moksha.”

“Even till today?”

“Yes! Today also, there are thousands in various Aas’rams practicing these Yogas in search of obtaining those paranormal powers.”

“Are these Aas’rams not for the practicing the yoga in search of the salvation?”

“It is for the salvation only but the behaviour of those, who are unable to abandon the temptation of the earthly objects and comforts will be like that. They join the Aas’ram professing that they are for salvation but they continue their efforts for these powers.”

“What are these paranormal powers?”
“Becoming minutely small when desired is ‘Anima’. Becoming extremely weightless is ‘Laghima’. Achieving extremely large body is ‘Garima’. Obtaining the desired object is ‘Praapti’. Executing any desire is ‘praakaamyam’. Controlling the desired object is ‘Vas’itvam’. Creating objects is ‘Is’atvam’. Apart from the above, ‘Kaamaroopa’ – attaining the desired form, ‘Kaamagamanam’- ability to go wherever desired and as fast as desired, vanishing in air, getting the desired woman, getting control on the desired woman, tele-hearing, tele-sight, divine vision, knowledge about rebirths, knowledge about previous births, walking on water, jumping into fire and staying unaffected by fire, like this many attainments are there in this path of Yoga. The postulators have been telling that there cannot be salvation for those who have such desires. But those who chose this path in search of such paranormal powers are more than the genuine salvation seekers.

“Since there is lot of publicity on the achievements of such Yoga practices in our country. A number of foreigners are attracted at one time. Some of the Buddhists have lost their prestigious conduct in attempting such ‘Saadhanas’. These Yogic practices are responsible for the degeneration of the ‘S’aakteya and S’aiva schools. It has become common to enjoy the physical comforts in the name of Yogic practices and in the name of God.”

“What is your opinion on ‘Osho’ among the modern philosophical schools?”

“Rajneesh is called by the name Osho. Their theory may be all right but there are a number of controversies in the practice. One criticism is that the importance for the bodily comforts is more behind the philosophical meditation and Yogic practices. However, the Osho followers refute this saying that such criticism is from those who have no proper understanding of the philosophy. Whatever it may be, it is also having the strains of monism – Advaita philosophy.”

“Maharshi Mahesh Yogi is also a world famous philosopher!”

“Yes. But such criticisms like on Osho are rare on his philosophy. His transcendental meditation has become very popular throughout the world. It is observed that his principles also are more or less similar to the Advaitic School of philosophy. There is lot of support for the Vedas and the authority of the Vedas in this school. He stays mostly overseas. The branches of its Vedic schools and Institutes of Yoga are widely available in our country. None of the modern schools of philosophy can be said to belong specifically to any one of the age old Shaddars’anas – the six Dars’anas.”

All got up concluding the session with the resolve to meet again and appreciating the multifaceted knowledge of Purushottam after his lengthy treatise on the subject.
Chapter - 9

“Sir! You told that there are planes in the body, and the Power of Kundalini is awakened and it will be raised up to the plane of head. Is all this a part of Patanjali’s Yogas’aastra?” Sakuntalamma asked this question bothering her, after seeing off Vinita to the school by the school bus.

“No Madam! While talking about the Patanjali’s Yoga, I told all this by contextual reference to mention that there are many such schools of Yoga. All this talk of power of Kundalini etc. is seen mostly in the S’aakteya tantras. In that, also there are two practices namely ‘Samaac’aaram’ and ‘Kaulaac’aaram’. They mostly follow this school.”

“What are ‘Samaac’aaram’ and ‘Kaulaac’aaram’?”

“Have you heard of ‘S’reevidyopaasaka and S’ri C’akra Arc’ana’?”

“Yes! Heard of it! They are all in the worship of ‘Lalitadevi’.”

“She with the names of ‘Lalita, Haimavati, Kumaari, Kaapaali, Durga, Kaali, Gauri, S’aambhavhi, Bhavaani, S’ivaani, Rudraani, S’arvaani, Paarvati, C’aamundi, Karaali, Kaatyaayini, Tripura Sundari, etc. is the consort of S’iva.”

“That S’iva has some powers like ‘Sankalpa S’akti, Kriyaa S’akti’. With those powers only, he is controlling this universe. A school of thought arose from one side that if that S’akti or power is not there, he could not do anything. “

“On the other side, there is another school which says that both S’iva and Paarvati are so closely together that the name ‘Artha Naareesvara’ – the lord who is half woman, has come into vogue and this school considers that without her he is nonexistent.”

“Both the above two combined and a new thought had emerged as though Paarvati alone is the power and without her there is not even life for S’iva also. Hence worshipping only that S’akti and giving many forms for that S’akti had happened. Those names are told above. This religion became famous as S’aakteya religion. Though it started as a branch of S’aiyam it metamorphosed into a separate school of religion during the later periods.”

“Is this practice according to the Vedas only?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Many do not concur that the S’aakteya is Vedic, instead it is mentioned as ‘Taantric’ only.”

“What is meant by ‘Taantric’?”

“You must have heard three words – ‘Mantra, Tantra and Yantra.’

“Though heard, there is no full understanding. Please tell.”

“Mantra is a combination of either some letters or some words. If it is chanted repeatedly, according to the common faith, some specific powers or gains from Supreme Godhead will be bestowed. Tantra tells the procedure of using the Mantra and other connected matters. Mantra is also a sound only. Yantra describes how it will be if that sound is given a shape.”
"We see some advertisements in the traditional Vedic calendars and other newspapers mentioning that the wealth attracting Yantra will be sent on sending Rs. 176 by M.O., Send Rs. 700, we will be sending you the Vaastu Yantra, etc. Are they the same Yantras?"

"Yes, Yes! If there is a Mantra to obtain wealth, by doing that ‘Japa’ – meditation accompanied by inaudible chanting of the Mantra- the prayer formula, one can obtain that power of attracting wealth. But those, who do not have such an opportunity but are desirous of the benefit or those who are desirous of obtaining that benefit fast, may worship that Yantra."

"Are these all as per scriptures?"

"Yes! There are many such as Mantra S’aastra, Tantra S’aastra, Yantra S’aastra etc. The Tantra S’aastra is also called ‘Aagama S’aastra’.

"How did all of them evolve?"

"It is said that in the beginning only the Jaina Aagamas were popular. They had scripted in them all the necessities for salvation for the benefit of their followers of later period. Some say that Aagamas detailing the rituals to be performed for attaining the zeniths described in the Vedas are evolved for us also subsequently. But some others say they are from times immemorial.”

"However, though in general many of these Tantra S’aastras have been accepted as Vedic related, there are very few accepting the S’aakteya Tantras to be Vedic related.”

"Are these Aagamas available in every Yuga?"

"Might be! It is said that as per one of the dictates, that in Krita Yuga Vedaac’aara, in Tretaay Yuga Smaartaac’aara, in Dvaapara Yuga Puraanaac’aara and in Kali Yuga Aagamaac’aara is to be followed!"

"What are there in these Aagamas primarily?"

"It is the nature of the Deities, the Mantras or the hymns on these deities, procedure of meditation, Japa – repeated chanting of the Mantra, Saadhana, ritual of worship etc. which are detailed in these Aagamas. Since these scriptures detail both Tattva – the nature/reality of the philosophy and Mantra, the name Tantra has come into vogue. These are of three categories, viz., Deva Tantras, Bouddha Tantras and Jaina Tantras."

"Are there Tantras for the Buddhists also? We did not talk about these when we discussed Buddhism!"

"We talked about these indicatively when we talked about Vajrayana. I did not stretch at that time assuming that it will be not interesting at that time.”

"We may talk about it after we complete the present one. Please tell about the Deva Tantras.”

"These Deva tantras are again of three categories namely, Vaishnava, S’aiva and S’aakteya.”
“Vaishnava deals how to worship Vishnu, S’äiva deals with the worship of S’iva, and S’aakteya deals with worship of S’akti. Isn’t it?”

“In this also there are categories viz., Dvaita, Advaita and Dvaitadvaita.”

“Dvaita means existence as two. Advaita means not existing as two.”

“Is it from the phenomenon of becoming one or not becoming one?”

“Yes. All the Vaishnava Tantras tell either Dvaita or Vis’ishtaadvaita. All the S’aakta Tantras tell about Advaita only. All the three are there in S’aiva Tantras.”

“What is that ‘all the three’?”

“According to the individual faiths, the S’aivas can be classified into many categories viz., the Paas’upatas, S’äivas, Kaalaamukhas, Kaapaalikas etc. Depending upon their faith, they will be falling under Dvaita, Advaita, and Vis’ishtaadvaita. Some are S’iva Tantras, some are Bhairava Tantras, and some are Rudra Tantras.”

“Sir! Are all these for salvation only?”

“We can find in S’aivam the effort for salvation at least to some extent but, Madam! in S’aakteya it is rarely found. “Majority follows the S’aakteya Tantra with the intention of fulfilling their desires. Most of those performing the worship of S’ri C’akra in their houses do it for the happiness of their families only. Some others follow them for obtaining paranormal powers. They start doing these Taantric worship with the intention of obtaining such paranormal powers such as becoming invisible etc as we discussed yesterday. Very few people start performing these with the sole intention of attaining salvation. But everybody says that they do not have any desires and it is for attaining salvation only.”

“But all these names are creating some unsavory feeling, vexation and aversion towards these. Names like ‘Bhairava Tantra’ create uneasiness even on hearing it. Why not we skip this? There is no harm in doing so. Please tell something else. No more of this stuff.”

“No, No, aunty! We must know about a subject even if we do not like it. After all a subject is a subject. You might feel hesitation and aversion because of your psychology! That is all. It will not create any problem. Please go ahead Sir!” said Dr. Noone.

“Yes! I am also not interested in hearing this subject,” said Avadhani.

But Raghuramaiah and Sastry said “No harm. Please go ahead. We are interested only in knowing the subject. We shall know about the general practices.”

Purushottam asked Sakuntalamma, “What shall I do, Madam?” She unwillingly said, “As you wish.” and gave the signal to go ahead.

Purushottam started again. “The procedure of worship according to ‘S’aakta Tantra’ is all secret. It will not be made known to others except those who embrace that school. They have not allowed most of their procedures also to be printed. They used to call the Raajasa S’aasstras and Taamasa S’aasstras ‘Yaamalam’ and ‘Daamaram’.”

“Did Aachaarya S’ankara accept these S’aakta Tantras?”
“Oh! Historians tell that he had strong liking to the ‘S’aakta Tantra’. It is said that he had installed ‘Yantras also very widely. His followers and appreciators mention that he had installed the ‘Dhanaakarshana Yantra in Tirumala temple and because of that only the Temple at Tirumala has a large income. Similarly they quote that because of the Janaakarshana Yantra installed by him in Srirangam temple, it attracts the people to that temple.”

“Though S’ankaraachaarya’s school is Advaita, his inclination towards S’aiavam and liking to S’aaktaagamam, he should have installed that wonderful Yantra in some temple of S’iva or in the temple of Devi. Why should he install in Vaishnava Temple and bring Vaishnavism and Dvaita into prominence?” asked Avadhani.

Purushottam laughed at that and said, “That is what every Srivaishnava asks on hearing this. Are they not peeved at increased importance for a mere Yantra of Sankaracharya over the importance of Lord?”

“Will Durgaadevi be in S’ankaraachaarya’s Aaraadhana? Is she in his peethas even today?”

“I have told many names of S’akti some time back, do you all remember? Among them, Kaali, C’andi, C’aamundi, Durga are the fierce forms. Lalita, Tripura Sundari etc are sober forms. It is said that the worship of these sober forms was pleasing S’ankaracharya. But it is said that the way he did the worship and the way those, desirous of paranormal powers and physical comforts, conduct their worship differ widely.”

“Can these worships of S’akti be done by all those desirous of attaining the paranormal powers?”

“According to the Tantra S’aastra, only some are qualified to perform the S’akti Worship. They do not allow everybody to come. This is kept as highly secret. The qualified people have to take the vow before their spiritual mentor. These are called ‘S’aambhava Deeksha, S’aakta Deeksha and ‘Anava Deeksha’.”

“Do they meditate the Devi after the Deeksha?”

“In S’aakteya School, the thought of S’iva will be insignificant without S’akti. The Devi dancing on a dead body considering the dead body to be S’iva is the deity for worship for many who took to this Deeksha in search of the paranormal powers for them.”

“But Is S’iva not the consort of Durga?”

May be. But they believe that the Supreme Godhead is in that form.”

“Which are the centers to bestow this deeksha”

“I do not know in detail. Even though I may know, my telling will be embarrassing. But, Kanchi, Kashmir and Kaamakhya are important for the ‘Sreevidyopaasana’.”

“Will that sort of imagining the form of S’akti Goddess not be there in the ‘Sreevidyopaasana’?”
“Most of them meditate only the sober form of the S’akti Goddess. It is said that there are no procedures that cause aversion in this worship. Some say that it is not rare to find people desirous of salvation in this. But there are persons who are opposite to that also.”

“All said and done, what will happen in Sreevidyopaasana?” Is it same as S’ri C’akra Arc’ana?”

“It can be said that both of them are same till the procedure of the Saadhana. We learnt that there are some planes from the anus to the middle of the eyebrows in our body. Further, we discussed that above these planes there is one more plane called ‘Sahasraara C’akra.’ In this Sahasraara C’akra, according to their theory, it is said that S’iva resides. Now listen further.”

“Where is S’akti? It is spread throughout the universe. It is the symbol of the Devi. For pleasing Her and by Her benevolence getting our desires fulfilled or attaining salvation, our body is the appropriate place for that because it is the short form of the universe. In this body, S’akti is placed in the form of Kundalini. It is in deep sleep below the Moolaadhaara C’akra in the shape of a snake coiled in three and a half coils.”

“In our body there are 72000 nerves. A nerve means it is the medium for flow of the S’akti. These cannot be seen by naked eye. Three of them namely Ida, Pingala, and Sushamna are the three most important among them. Sushamna starts at the spine and extends up to the Brahma Randhra, which can be identified with medulla oblongata. Ida and Pingala are situated on both sides of it. On awakening by Praanaayama, Hatha Yoga etc., this Kundalini S’akti will slowly ascend and scale each of these C’akras. As it scales each C’akra, the practitioner is bestowed with one paranormal power.”

“If Yogi, the practitioner, is holding all these powers within himself, gradually this Kundalini S’akti reaches the head and combines with its Lord S’iva. That joining is Advaita. That means, the combination where two do not exist. It is combine of S’akti. In that combination, the nectar flows. Sipping that nectar, enjoying the eternal bliss is salvation.”

All were listening silently, as though they held their breath. It was Dr. Noone, who recovered from that trance first and asked, “What paranormal powers will be available?”

“Why do you need all of them” snubbed Sakuntalamma.

“They are like Anima, Garima, Mahima etc. which were talked of Yesterday. We do not need more details about them. But the Practitioners of Yoga only for attaining those paranormal powers, are many more than those who practice for attaining salvation,” said Purushottam.

“For achieving these paranormal powers, what exactly they do?” Dr. Noone asked again.

“I told that as Hatha Yoga. In addition, there two classes of people following the paths of ‘Kaula Path’ and ‘Samaya Path’. The Kaulikas are those who perform physically and the Samaya Margis perform mentally. In this, Kaulikas also there are two further divisions, viz., Poorva Kaulikas and Uttara Kaulikas. Followers of one of the subdivisions perform mentally like the Samaya Maargis, while those of the second practice physically the five ‘Ma -Kaaras’. These five ‘Ma -kaaras were discussed while we discussed the ‘Vajrayana’ of Buddhism. They are ‘madya, maamsa, matsya, mudra and maithuna’ which mean wine, meat, fish, viagra, and copulation respectively. This Kaulaac’aaram is called ‘Divya Bhaama’, which
means the thought of surrendering oneself to the deity being worshipped. It is considered by them that in such a person the thought of monism – the Advaita is complete and is in full strength. The preceding stages of this Kaulika thought are said to be ‘Vaamaac’aara’ etc.” While these are being performed, the practitioner is to be in the cemeteries, offer the tongue cut from a living boy as food offering to the Goddess, should move around naked, have sexual relationship with wives of others. He should be eating meat and drink spirits and worship a woman with the menstrual blood of a girl in the menses periods – this menstrual blood is called ‘Kha Pushpam’, …”

“Uh! Enough cannot hear further. Please stop” Sakuntalamma shouted loudly.

Everybody was feeling very awkward on hearing all this accounts. ‘What an atrocious practice!’ was the feeling in everybody’s mind. Dr. Noone asked on recovery from the feeling, “Do all the S’aakteyas and worshippers of S’ri C’akra perform like this?”

“No! No! All do not do so. Only those followers of Vaamaac’aara and Kaulaac’aaram with the desire for some demeaning desires perform these. In their opinion, these are the only best ways. That too the follower of the Vaamaac’aara should satisfy the deity with the spirits and meats. But they say and treat all these as ways to attain salvation only. Some historians also express the doubt that it might be indicated in the ‘Tantra S’astras also.’”

“How could such a wretched path for salvation evolve?” asked Sastry with contempt.

“In their opinion this is not wretched. Spirits are standing for the S’akti. Meat stands for S’iva. Chanting the mantra, if one takes the spirits and meat; he attains immortality, which is representing the unison of S’iva and S’akti. Enjoying eating the fish, represents the tuning the senses towards the soul. Mudra represents the unison of the soul with the Supreme Godhead. Maithuna represents the unison of S’iva and S’akti. Eating meat represents the cutting away the deeds called Paapa and Punya with the knife of Knowledge and finishing by eating.”

“What a nice garb for the real thing! Is this S’aakta?”

“This only is not S’aakta. This is one aspect of S’aakta. It is not known to us whether these five ‘Ma –Kaaras’ initially were symbolic and subsequently turned out into practice or they were brought out as facades for the practices”

“What is the symbolism in this?”

“Telling that ‘Madya’ is symbolic of the ‘S’akti’, ‘Maamsa’ is symbolic of ‘S’iva’.”

“Did the ‘Vajrayana’ school of Buddhism evolve according to the ‘S’aakta’ path?” Dr. Noone asked.

“My dear! Is it not enough of what you had so far heard? Do you want the details of that also?” Sakuntalamma looked at him disapprovingly, got up from her chair, and went away.

Purushottam looked at Raghuramaiah inquiring ‘what should I do?’ He indicated for continuing and picked up his note sheets and pen.

“The mentor in ‘Vajrayana’ is not an ordinary person. He should be considered first as ‘Buddha’ himself. He is omniscient. He knew all the secrets of Yoga. The whole world should practice what he preached.”
“While in the normal parlance Vajra has the meanings thunderbolt, and a weapon, the Tantras of Buddhism gave the meanings of divine power, knowledge and the male genital.”

“Salvation according to Buddhism is becoming Buddha ultimately! So, it was proposed that all those who wanted them to become Buddhas, should bring out their dormant ‘Vajra S’akti’. They started finding out the ways for that saying that it is possible with the Mantras and Tantras. You can imagine what it means to bring out their ‘Vajra S’akti’ from the meanings they had given for the word ‘Vajra’. There are two classes namely ‘Dakshinahasta Taantric S’aakha’ and ‘Vaamahasta Taantric S’aakha. While the former had adopted the Advaita, the later had adopted the ‘S’aakta and S’aiivism.”

“You will recall from our earlier discussions that according to the faith of ‘Mahayana’ there are three forms of body for Buddha. One that is visible to us and which perishes. Second is that enjoying in the Heavens. The third is that pervading everywhere. The followers of ‘Vajrayana’ have given him one more form – called ‘Vajra Sattva’. The supreme Godhead is absorbing the form of S’aakta’ with this body itself.”

“Who is the Supreme Godhead here?”

“Bhagavan Buddha is the Supreme Godhead. He is Tathaagata. His power is the female form and is called ‘Taara’ also. He unites this ‘Taara’ with his fourth body. What is the meaning of it? The ‘Saadhaka’ – the practitioner, to attain his true form of divine power, that is, ‘Vajra Sattva’, his fourth body, should unite with a woman, preferably another practitioner. This is called ‘Stree puja’. This is indicative of the completeness of a person desirous of becoming Buddha. Bodhisattva becomes Buddha! He should show his valour in the last lives as Bodhisattva. Valour means not getting afraid of any thing. He should not bother about Paapa and Punya. He should not suppress desire for enjoyment. All pleasures including sexual pleasure should be enjoyed without any fear. Then only it is considered that he is nearing the Salvation or becoming Buddha. Hence, those who believe that this life is their last one before becoming Buddha and those who consider that this life is the Bodhisattva life must have the valour and show their valour. Otherwise they are as ordinary as anybody else.”

“For them also, these five ‘Ma – kaaras’ only?”

“Yes undoubtedly. Because of such practices only, the culture got degenerated.”

Everybody felt it to be true.

“Why did this topic arise?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“That question about the C’akras and worship of the S’ri C’akra raised by aunt has brought us this far. It is not possible to apply logic for all these practices. They are indicative of plain religious faith and foolishness. Isn’t it so Mr. Purushottam?” asked Dr. Noone.

“How can you say that logic cannot be applied to? They have their own logic,” said Sastry.

“You can not decide that it right or wrong as per some logic,” said Purushottam.

“Are there rules for logic also?” asked Raghuramaiah.
“Not only rules but it is a big science. It is a Dars’ana. It is called ‘Nyaaya’.”

“Look Sakuntala! Are you listening? We have come again into Dars’anas. Come!” Looking inside, Raghuramaiah called Sakuntalamma. She came all right but she was not enthusiastic.

“Nyaaya means Justice. Isn’t it?”

“That is one meaning. But in this context it is the study of the authenticities or ‘Pramaana Vidya.’”

“What about the ‘Markata Kis’ora Nyaaya’ and ‘Maarjaala Kis’ora Nyaaya’? What is the meaning in context of these phrases?”

“There the word ‘Nyaaya’ means maxim. There are many meanings for this word. In the present context, it is sufficient to mention the meaning to be the study of authenticities.”

“Who introduced this?”

“An ascetic called ‘Gautama Maharshi’. He is known by the names ‘Gotama’ and ‘Akshapaada’ also.”

“Is he against the Vedas?”

“No! He had indeed accepted the Vedas as authority.”

“Why did he bring out this Dars’ana?”

“He started analysing the causes of the misery. He felt that it is because of the likes and dislikes. Why are they arising? Is there soul or not? What is good and bad? What a human should do ultimately? What happens to him after death? He concluded first that because of lack of understanding on all these questions, these likes and dislikes are arising and subsequently the misery is resulting.”

“Raghuramaiah repeated ‘the basic cause of the misery is lack of proper knowledge’ writing the same in his notebook.

“The man speaks lies, does stealing etc. because of having wrong ideas like ‘There is no God’, and ‘There is no soul’. Because of these acts, the likes and dislikes develop. And from them arise the misery. Hence he concluded that a human being should have proper knowledge of the reality or philosophy.”

“The philosophical knowledge should be there. OK. Well. But how does he know whether that knowledge is the correct one?”

that different meaning given in spite of the clear and explicit meaning being available? 15. How does one, take precautions not to contradict what was told by him earlier? 16. What are requirements to defeat the opponent? He propounded that the knowledge of reasoning should be obtained according to the above methodology of questioning.”

“Oh! Oh! All of them look like highly intelligent people. My God! How many subjects! Do we get philosophical knowledge only when we follow the above methodology? If it was so, why did we not discuss this in the beginning itself?” Dr. Noone questioned Purushottam.

“What do I do? Though I wanted to tell, there is one Doctor of C’aarvaaka who is becoming impediment,” said Purushottam wittily.

“Yes, Yes! It all started with my philosophy only,” agreed Dr. Noone.

“It was good! Otherwise, we would not have never thought of so many points,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Ya! Now please tell the philosophy of Nyaaya! 16 Subjects. Then, what next?”

“In addition to the sixteen subjects along with their names, four Authenticities – ‘Pramaanas’; twelve ‘Prameyas’ – Matters of Knowledge of reality state (‘yathaaarththa jnaana Vishaya’); three doubts – Sams’ayas; two benefits; two illustrations; four theories-siddhaantas; five parts – avayavas; eleven Logics; four decisions; one each of argument-vaada; counter argument – jalpa; argument of negation – vitanda vaada; ‘Katha’ – narration; five ‘Hetvaabhaassa’ – causes and illusory views; three ‘Chhalams’- ; twenty four races – ‘Jaatis’; twenty two restraints – ‘nigrahas’; all these are to be learnt.”

“One more birth is required!” said Dr. Noone jocularly.

“Wonder! How does Purushottam garu remember all these along with their numbers!” Sastry said.

“I remember these just like a scientist of chemistry remembers the periodic table and a retail shop owner remembers locations and availability of stocks of all the items in his shop.”

“Sir! For heaven’s sake, please do not start elaborating each matter of this big list. My head will start reeling!”

“You start explaining the five ‘Ma – kaaras’, his mind will be super active then,” Sakuntalamma retorted angrily.

“Oh! Madam! I salute thee! I did mistake! Is it OK? I shall never in my life ask again.” Saying so, Dr. Noone stood up and comically folded his hands saluting Sakuntalamma, and settled down in the sofa and said, “Yes, Go ahead!” bowing his head to all of them. All laughed away.

“Not all the details. Let us know what Gautama Maharshi said about the souls and Supreme Godhead,” said Purushottam.

“Ahn! God is on my side!” said Dr. Noone again comically.
“Mr. Subrahmanyam! You are a ‘C’aarvaaka.’ There is no God for you. Have you forgotten!” said Raghuramaiah with an apparent ridicule.

“Uncle! When I said ‘God is on my side’, it is not the God on whom I have faith. It is auntie’s God. He is on my side.” Dr. Noone cracked a joke. Again, all had a hearty laugh.

“In the universe, for all the materials like a pot has a definite potter, a creator is there. Similarly, there must be somebody, who created this universe. That somebody is ‘Is’vara’. He is know–all and all powerful since he created these many varieties of materials. He alone is making all these organisms – Jeevas experience the results of their deeds. Since these Jeevas become tired experiencing the fruits of their deeds, he is bringing deluge for the relief. Afterwards he once again creates them for experiencing the remaining fruits of their deeds. Like this, there happened many deluges and many creations so far and continue in the future also.”

“Arre! This theory of logic is near to ours!” said Sakuntalamma wondering.

“Who is this 'we'? Is it cleared, who we are?” asked Purushottam with a laugh. Without waiting for any reply, he continued, “‘We’ in your view mean the opinions that are general in nature for the universe. All these general opinions belong to the Vis’ishtaadvaita Dars’ana only. These Naiyaayikas – the followers of Nyaaya School, are very close to Vis’ishtadvaitins in some matters like Buddhists being close to Advaitins.”

“What does it mean by the phrase ‘in some matters’?”

“Here! I talked about them now. In matters like them. It is totally different in the case of salvation. The salvation of Naiyaayikas is like a stone. There will be neither bliss nor misery and it will be totally static like a stone.”

“I shall tell some more details about the Nyaaya – the science of logic. This life is full of misery. Even if there is bliss, it will look for more of bliss. Hence, that is also a misery only. Having no more rebirths is salvation. It is like deep sleep. In that there is no bliss or misery.”

“Once he is devoid of the mythical knowledge, the lust will vanish. Along with it, the rebirths will vanish. There is neither body nor soul. Like this, there are some aphorisms that were already discussed by us. Some more are the ones they have evolved.”

“What is their main principle?”

“Telling the existence of Is’vara or Supreme Godhead on the strength of anumaana pramaana or authenticity of inference, this has not been accepted by Vedantins. Their argument is that it is possible only on the basis of the Veda, the ‘aapta vaakya’, the word of trustworthy or S’abda Pramaana only; and not by the ‘anumaana pramaana’.

“What else?”

“This universe is created with the atoms and the creator is ‘Paramaatma’ – the Supreme Godhead.”

“Like a potter making pots.”
“Yes. Another wonder. These people say that the atoms do not have parts or they are ‘niravayavis’. Only the matter, which is created with them, becomes ‘avayavi’. They do not accept the ‘Satkaaryavaada’. That means they do not accept the argument of the Saankhyas that all characteristics of the banyan tree are there in the banyan seed. Their argument is that they are not available beforehand and are generated just before the germination of the seed. This is ‘Asatkaaryavaada’!”

“What is the difference in this? In this type of argument?”

“Oh! Lot of difference. Though it appears that there is nothing serious by the mention of Banyan tree and seed, when we come to say that this is the cause of this universe, lot of difference crops up. When we say that there is no difference to the ‘kaarya’ – the result and ‘kaarana’ – the cause, it should be stated that there is no difference to the creator and created. If it is said that there is a difference between the ‘kaarya’ – the result and ‘kaarana’ – the cause, it has to be said that there is difference between the creator and the created. Hence understanding this is very important.”

“If so, please tell again what is ‘Satkaaryavaada’?”

“Pot is created out of mud. This mud is called ‘kaarana’. The pot is called ‘kaarya’. When a tree is born out of the seed, the seed is ‘kaarana’ and the tree becomes ‘kaarya’. Have you understood up to this point?”

“Yes”

“How could pot come out of the mud? It must have been there undefined and without form earlier in the mud, unidentifiable by us! Otherwise, how could it come out of mud? In the same way, the tree also must be there in the seed formless and undefined earlier. If not, how could it come? Let us consider that it is not there so. Then what could happen? Any thing can come out of any thing. Or the pot can come out from the seed and the tree from mud! But it does not happen like that! Hence, the ‘kaarya’ – the result always exists in ‘kaarana’. That means there is unison for the cause and result. This is ‘Satkaaryavaada’. This has been accepted by the ‘Saankhyas and Yogis’.

“What did they tell about the evolution of the universe?”

“Forget so quickly? We discussed this earlier. For them the universe has come from the primordial matter – ‘Prakriti’, which does not have beginning. In this universe, bliss, misery, and lust are with every object. This is the ‘kaarya’ – the result. The same characteristics must be in the ‘kaarana’ – the cause. Hence, in the primordial matter – ‘Prakriti’, which is cause, the three qualities – ‘Sattva, Rajas and Tamas’ exist. This is theory or proposition. Without accepting the ‘Satkaaryavaada’, they cannot prove the existence of the three qualities – ‘Sattva, Rajas and Tamas’ in the ‘Prakriti’ – the primordial matter, since nobody had ever seen the ‘Prakriti’ – the primordial matter. – the cause. When they cannot prove the three qualities viz., ‘Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas’, it cannot be established that it will change in the presence of ‘Purusha’ – the soul. Subsequently the whole theory will fall into pieces and hence the whole theory is based on the ‘Satkaaryavaada’ only.”

“Well understood how important is this matter. Then, why do the Naiyaayikas - the followers of ‘Nyaaya Dars’ana’ say that the result – ‘Kaarya’ is not in the cause – ‘Kaarana’?”
“They accept that for every result there must be a cause but not that the result is already pre-existing in the cause. The pot is the result - the ‘Kaarya’ and the mud is the cause – ‘Kaarana’. The characteristics and uses of the pot are different from those of the mud. How can it be said that this is already pre-existing in that? It does not stand test by telling that whatever undefined and formless state it may be, it is, in the cause. Suppose, characteristics of the result are there in the cause, there must be the uses also in it to some extent or other. That means, when it is accepted that the characteristics of the pot are available in the mud either defined or undefined, its uses also must be available in mud, but are they available? No! Hence, when the result is evolving from the cause, a new set of characteristics is evolved but not the old characteristics are getting uncovered.”

“If there is no result in the cause, how could they counter the statement of Saankhyas that every object can evolve from every object?”

“There do not have effective counter to this argument. They state that every object is evolved from the atoms. That is to say, if one atom combines with another atom, it is ‘Dvyanuka’ and if another one joins it, it becomes ‘Tryanuka’. Like this by continuing this joining of atoms, as per them, evolution of the objects takes place.

“But how does the pot evolve from the atoms of mud?”

“One thing must be noted here. They have defined that the atoms are so small that they are not visible to the eye. When that joins with another and so on, the objects visible to the eye are evolving.”

“That means the atoms are ‘Avayavas’ or the parts/ limbs and the objects are ‘Avayavis’- that consisting of limbs or parts. If the parts or limbs are joined together, it becomes an object. Isn’t it?”

“Yes. By saying that if all the ‘Avayavas’ – the limbs or parts are put together, the – ‘Avayavi’ – object is evolved, Avayavas – the limbs or parts and Avayavi – object are not the same.”

“Yes! How could it be same? When warp and weft are combined it becomes cloth. The warp and weft are ‘Avayavas’. The cloth is ‘Avayavi’. Both of them are not the same. Isn’t it?” said Sastry.

“Well accepted! Are your ancestors Naiyaayikas?” asking the question Purushottam smiled. Depending upon the number of atoms that have joined together, the differences in objects will be there. That is how we are able to differentiate between a needle and haystack. There are no ‘Avayavas’ for the atoms.”

“If there are no specific characteristics for the ‘Avayavas’ – the limbs or parts, how to differentiate one object from the other of same size?”

“That is the problem with their School. That was removed by Vais’eshikas.”

“OK, Let us see that afterwards. If all the atoms are alike, how is the hay getting converted into milk when the cow eats hay and gives milk? Should not there be separate atoms of hay and milk? Similarly how does the fruit ripen from unripe fruit?”
“It is said that there will be change in the form at the same time, both in Avayavi and avayavas due to the ‘Karma’ – deed. So the raw fruit becomes ripened and the hay gets converted into milk.”

“OK! This is the matter of the universe. What about the soul? How do they recognize the soul?”

“The desire to have an object, the enmity for not requiring it, the joy on getting the desired one, sorrow in not getting that, the effort to get it or not to get, the knowledge about all of them – all these qualities have to be attached with some object. They cannot exist separately. Since all these qualities are available in us, they said, the one which is the refuge for all these qualities and which is inside our body, is called as soul – Aatma.”

“Is the soul one or many?”

“They are many. They are ‘Vibhus’ - large in size also. In their theory, rebirths also are there.”

“What is ‘Vibhu’?”

“I think we discussed this earlier. ‘Anu’ is atomic. ‘Vibhu’ is antonym for that. It is like the sky i.e., it is very big.”

“They deduced that the Is’vara is there by inference. Isn’t it?” Seeing his notes, Raghuramaiah asked. “You said that for them there are four authenticities – Pramaanas. We know only three – Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda.”

“So far, we learnt of three only. They accepted another instrument of knowledge. That is called ‘Upamaana’. Consider that an urbanite asked a person from the forests: ‘it is said that there is an animal called ‘Gavyava’ in the forests. What is it looking like?’ That person from the forests should tell him so that the urbanite understands. So he answers: ‘It looks like a cow.’ After sometime, if this urbanite goes to the forests and there he sees an animal, which is like a cow, he immediately infers that this must be that animal ‘Gavyavi’. That means that the knowledge is generated. From this they concluded that ‘Upamaana’ – simile, also becomes an authenticity – Pramaana.”

“Why? It can be construed as ‘S’abda Pramaana’ or it can be construed as ‘Anumaana Pramaana’. What is the difference?”

“Some Dars’anakaaras say the same thing. But these people say that unless this is accepted it does not work.”

“Let it be! It is their wish. But, is this ‘Nyaaya’ a well-known Dars’ana?”

“Yes! Very much. It is not only to make some one have faith, but for all the studies, this is the entry point subject. It is like a lamp. All the other Dars’ananas should follow this method of argument. In the older days, unless one is proficient in ‘Nyaaya’ he was not considered to be a scholar – ‘Pundit’. These Dars’anana S’astras were not taught to those who did not possess the proficiency in ‘Nyaaya’. All those who studied the ‘Nyaaya’ and were proficient in that were given the title of ‘‘Nyaaya Vedanta Vidvaan’.”

“Is it that this Dars’anana in its entirety should be studied?”
“The importance here is for the regulations and the thinking process set by Sage Gautama rather than for the Dars’ana. Hence this study is essential.”

“If so is there nobody to counter this?”

“Why not? The Dars’ana that was evolved along with this – the Vais’eshika Dars’ana itself is there for countering.”

“Who introduced that Dars’ana?”

“His name is Sage ‘Kanaada’.”

“What is the specialty of his Dars’ana?”

“Being Extraordinary is the extraordinary feature of this Dars’ana,” said wittily Purushottam.

“Didn’t understand.”

His philosophy and the philosophy of Naiyaayikas are almost same but he had accepted an extra material namely ‘Vis’esha’ in his school. That is the specialty of this school.”

“Aha! What does this ‘Vis’esha’ do?”

“Consider that an object is divided into two halves and these halves had been further divided and continue this division till such time that the left over is no more divisible. That particle is called atom – ‘Paramaanu’. Since it does not have parts, it is ‘Niravayavi’, that means it does not have ‘Avayavas. This universe is made up of such atoms only.”

“Yes, it was talked about in ‘Nyaaya Dars’ana’ itself.”

“The difference here is that each of this atom has a specialty called ‘Vis’esha’. If it were not there, there would not be difference between the earth-atoms and water-atoms. Hence, when these join together as objects, there should not be any difference between them also, i.e., between the earth and water also there should not be any difference. This is his argument.”

“Yes! It suits. He had explained in his school that point, which could not be clarified in the Naiyayika School. In his opinion, each object could be separately seen because the ‘Vis’esha’ of the atom of each object is different for different objects. Isn’t it?”

“His School also is based on the Asatkaaryavaada only.”

“These arguments of Asatkaaryavaada and Satkaaryavaada are quite creating problems. Please explain them once again. Please do not mind my asking so many times!”

“Oh! No problem! I shall repeat it once again. We call a combination of warp and weft as cloth. Isn’t it? The question is: If not so, are the threads transformed into the cloth? Or is there cloth separate from the threads?”
“Tell again! The question is whether the threads have transformed into cloth or is the cloth evolved from the threads? Uh! Tough to answer! Are the limbs the body? Or is the body evolved from the limbs? It is a big jumble!”

“If it is said that the threads have transformed into cloth, then it is Satkaaryavaada. If it is said the cloth is evolved from the threads, it is Asatkaaryavaada. More or less this is in short the essence of these two arguments.”

“Understood so far. But how do we use this in the philosophy?”

“It can be decided whether the universe exists or not!”

“What! From this it is decided whether the universe is there or not? How?”

“Threads are cause – Kaarana and cloth is result – Kaarya. One said that both of them are same. The other said that both of them are different. Isn’t it?”

“Those who said that one has transformed into the other or both of them are same are Satkaaryavaadins. Those who said that both of them are different or one has evolved from the second are Asatkaaryavaadins. Yes. Now understood. Please go ahead.”

“I shall repeat what I told a little while ago. Those who say ‘cause and result or Kaarana and Kaarya are same’ are Satkaaryavaadins. Those who say ‘cause and result or Kaarana and Kaarya are different’ are Asatkaaryavaadins. Is it OK?”

“Yes. Understood up to this point also.”

“The universe which is seen by us is result or Kaarya. The creator of this universe is the cause or Kaarana. Isn’t it?”

“Yes”

“If both the cause and result are one and the same, there is no difference between the Universe and its creator. If they are not one, the universe is different from its creator.”

“Aha! You have stretched it quite far! If it is said that there is no difference between the Universe and its creator, it can be argued that either Universe does not exist but the creator only is available, or the creator does not exist and only the universe is available. With that, one of the two should be an illusion or Midhya. If it is said that the Universe is an illusion or Mithya, it is Advaita. On the other hand, if it is said that creator is not there, it is C’aarvaaka. Yes, Yes. Now we know the Satkaaryavaada and Asatkaaryavaada very well! In the Asatkaaryavaada, since the universe is different from its creator, it can be said that the universe is not a myth but reality”, said Raghuramaiah. Purushottam was happy that Raghuramaiah’s intelligence is being put to use.

“That’s it! Now we must clarify, when the threads and cloth are considered to be same, either thread should be seen or cloth be seen. We are seeing the cloth only, but we know that it is made of threads. Our well-wisher has told that. But instead of the threads being visible, only cloth is visible. So, we can say that the cloth is a myth. But if cloth and threads are not the same, there is no problem at all. There are threads and cloth is made out of them. So both are reality.”
“We find that the second only to be appropriate. If cause has transformed into result, how could the characteristics of result be not there in cause? The threads do not cover the body. They get broken and are very slender. Cloth is not like that. It is useful in many ways. These qualities are not there in the threads. How did they come in cloth? Hence, Asatkaarayaavaada is the best option. OK! How does one object gets transformed into another? That is, how is the cause – Kaarana becoming result – Kaarya? How is the raw fruit becoming ripe fruit? How does the hay become milk? Did the Vais’eeshikas also say like the Naiyaayikas?”

“In this matter, we had already discussed what the Naiyaayikas would say! They are called ‘Pitharapaakavaaadins’. The word ‘Pithara’ means vessel or pot. Their argument is: ‘in the object and the related atom also, the changes due to the karma – deeds occur at the same time.”

“Vais’eeshikas do not agree with this. They are called ‘Peelupaakavaadins. The word ‘Peelu’ means atom – Paramaanu. They say that the change occurs in the atoms and gradually the object also undergoes a change.”

“Do they accept God?”

“Yes. They do. Like Naiyaayikas, for them also, He is available through the ‘Anumaana Pramaana’ only.”

“How many are ‘Pramaanas’ for them?”

“They have only two. One is direct perception – Pratyaksha, and the other is inference – Anumaana pramaana. The rest like ‘S’abda pramaana etc will, according to them, fall into either of these two and hence they need not be considered as separate authenticities.”

“What type of salvation is theirs?”

“All the miseries of the soul should be removed. They should be totally without attributes. The salvation according to them is that the soul should become extinct like the fire in the wood subsides.”

“For them it is deep sleep without either happiness and misery. For these people, it is like the fire in the wood in which the fire was doused. Both of them are to stay still absolutely like a rock.”

“Yes. If the vision like direct perception of the Supreme Godhead occurs through ‘S’ravana, Manana and Nididhyaasa, - hearing, thinking and uninterrupted meditation (respectively), that is the tool for salvation. There are differences of opinion as to their acceptance of Vedas since they had accepted God through the inference – Anumaana Pramaana.”

“So this is Vais’eeshika. By this time, we had learnt of Buddhists, C’aarvaakas, Jainas, Saankhyas, Yogis, Naiyaayikas, and Vais’eeshikas. In them, C’aarvaakas do not accept the soul at all. Buddhists say that it is void, though it appears to exist. Jainas say that it is as large as the body it occupies. Saankhyas and Yogis say that the knowledge is the soul. Naiyaayikas and Vais’eeshikas say that one that possesses the knowledge is the soul. Isn’t it so Purushottam garu?”
“Have you noticed the difference between saying that soul is the knowledge and the soul is that which possesses knowledge?”

“To some extent. I understand that it is the difference between the two questions: ‘is lamp the light? Or is it that possesses light?’

“Almost so. It is regarding the questions like: ‘are you a person, who is with the attribute of goodness? Or are you the goodness personified? Are you knowledgeable or are you the knowledge itself?”

“In these categories, discussed so far, the C’aarvaakas, Buddhists, Jains, are of the non-Vedic Dars’anas only. Can we say that among the remaining four, these two are Vedic?”

“Our elders do not accept so. They are called Udaaseena –indifferent or passive Dars’anas. That is to say that they neither accepted Vedas fully nor rejected them outright. Swami Chinmayaananda in his forward to Bhagavad-Gita calls them as Naastika-Aastikas and Aastika-Naastikas.”

“I think in the sense that Aastikas are followers of Vedas and Naastikas do not follow the Vedas.”

“Yes. They quote from the Vedas but they do not accept all of the Vedas as they are.”

“That means, they had picked up what all are required for their school and logic and rejected the rest. OK. Are there any more such disinterested Dars’anas or only these?”

“If you say yes, it is yes! And no if it is no!”

“What is that?”

“There is one Dars’ana namely ‘Paas’upata’. They are also as disinterested in Vedas as the Saankhyas and Yogis are. So, it can be said as an Udaaseena Dars’ana. But since the practices are aversive, the people had mostly turned away from this. So, this was no more noticeable by 14th century. In the subsequent period, attempts were made to remove all the aversive practices from this school and put up a respectable S’aiva Dars’ana and the result is what we see today as S’aivism. Some call this itself as ‘Paas’upata Dars’ana’. Attempts were made to found its principles based on the Brahma Sutras and hence it can be called as Vedic Dars’ana according to some. Some say that since originally, it was Paas’upata and some minor changes were incorporated and transformed it into S’aiva Dars’ana it should be only an Udaaseena Dars’ana. Some who are cut up with them kept it aside considering it to be a Non-Vedic Dars’ana only. So it is in this state of multitude.”

“Let us do like this. We shall discuss the Udaaseena Paas’upata Dars’ana now and shall discuss that later when we discuss along with the Vedic Dars’anas. We have already come into these Udaaseena Dars’anas already.”

“Yes, We shall do so. The Para Brahma or the Supreme Godhead in the Paas’upata Dars’ana is S’iva only. The deity referred in Vedas as Rudra only is this S’iva. He is called as S’iva, Is’a, Mahes’vara, Bhava, S’ankara, S’ambhu, Hara, Mahadeva, and Pas’upati. The name Paas’upata Dars’ana has been derived from this name Pas’upati only.”

“Is it an independent Dars’ana?”
“Yes and no also. The Saankhya and Yoga Dars’anas had influenced this immensely. You remember Saankhya, don’t you? There are only two tattvas namely Prakriti and Purusha. Salvation is knowing that Purusha exists separately from Prakriti and Yoga Dars’ana says how to know this aspect.”

“Yes, We remember. How does that find a place here?”

“In Paas’upata Dars’ana, S’iva is all-independent Tattva. Prakriti and Purusha depend upon him. The liberated Purusha becomes unified with Siva.”

“I shall elaborate what I had understood. Please correct me if there are mistakes. In Saankhya, there is multitude of Purushas. They are different from Prakriti. In Yoga, there exists an Is’vara. He is also a Purusha only. Saankhyas did not accept existence of God. Even if He existed, He is also a Purusha only. But this Purusha knew by himself that he is different from the Prakriti. The Purusha of Yoga Dars’ana also is more or less of similar characteristics. Such a Purusha is called S’iva in Paas’upata Dars’ana. The rest are as usual. All the Purushas knowing that they are different from Prakriti, on attaining salvation, will become unified with S’iva, according to Paas’upata Dars’ana. It is not so in Saankhya and Yoga Dars’anas. Am I right?”

“To some extent. Listen. Once you listen completely, the difference will be known to you by itself.”

“So far, it is accepted that one called Is’vara or Para Brahma exists according to Yoga, Nyaaya and Vais’eshika, but He is not given a specific name and form. That starts here with Paas’upata Dars’ana. So please tell me in details here. Who is this S’iva? What is there about him in Vedas? What type of character is He?”

“He was well-known as Rudra, and this Rudra was not a deity of Aryans but a deity of the native people of this land before the advent of Aryans, they worshipped him in the form of a Lingam – semi-cylinder, it was inevitable that the customs and their religious faith merged with that of Aryans after arrival of the Aryans and their win over the natives, according to some historians. I had already told you all this earlier. But the number who counter this theory had been much more than those who concur with this theory.”

“We need not bother about these arguments and theories. You have told about His names in Vedas, but what is his form?”

“We should look not only in Vedas alone but also in the Itihaasas and Puraanas in totality. In Rig Veda, he has been mentioned quite often as ‘Jataadhaari’ and he is the fiercest among all the celestials. He is the father of the races of Rudras, Rudreeyas, and Maruts. He is especially described as the force of destruction. While Krishna Yajur Veda Samhita describes him as the protector of the animals, the S’ukla Yajur Veda Samhita describes him along with Ambika as fierce. Whatever it may be, Rudra and Vishnu also are discussed more in the Braahmanams and other parts of Vedas, rather than in Samhitas. Again, they have the highest seat in Itihaasas and Puraanas.

“He has always the skull in his hand. He wears clothes made out of animal skins. He hold trident. His carrier is the bull Nandi. He is always surrounded by the Pramadhaganas. All the evil spirits, spirits of the dead and wicked spirits are under his control. His consort is Paarvati. His ornaments are all snakes only. Goddess Ganga resides on his head. His neck is
blue. One half moon is on his locks of hair. He dances everyday in the evenings along with his consort.

“His abode is the burial grounds on the outskirts of human settlements. He anoints the ashes all over his body. This is Rudra’s form described by all these Puraanas overall”, concluded Purushottam.

“In the olden days, all the S’iva temples were generally on the outskirts of towns and villages probably because of his abode being the burial ground,” said Avadhani.

“These temples, though were situated on the outskirts, now appear to be in the middle of the towns probably because the towns have spread widely” said Purushottam.

“The view of our elders probably had been: “since S’iva’s abode is burial ground, the temple of Siva also is equal to the burial grounds!” I remember, my grandfather, though being a priest in the S’iva temple, used to take bath before entering the house after coming from the S’iva temple,” said Sastry.

“I also heard this. Even today, the orthodox do not eat the offering to S’iva. In the olden days, the offering of the temple was never distributed to the people. Gradually the modern civilization had introduced the offering of cooked rice preparations for sale like in other temples,” said Avadhani.

“Why offerings? Even the flowers given by the temple priest are left placed on the Nandi itself before coming out of the temple!” said Sakuntalamma.

“That custom is existing even today in most of the S’iva temples” said Purushottam.

“I heard my wife saying that in some houses, they do not worship Lingam inside but some where outside the house like the outer verandah or so!” said Dr. Noone.

“Uh! OK. There are many faiths and procedures. We need not go into them. Please tell us about his School – Paas’upata!” said Raghuramaiah.

“If we see the books, it appears as though there are two religions with the name of Paas’upata. According to one of them, the reason for Pas’upati to create the universe is not the deeds of the Jeevas. Hence, he gets saddled with two bad attributes, viz., the partiality and ruthlessness!”

“Why?”

“Why that question? We are seeing one being high and other being low, one enjoying while the other is through the miseries. We accept it saying that it is due to the past deeds. If the creation is not according to the past deeds of the jeevas, it can be said obviously that the creator has partiality and ruthlessness!”

“Yes, true.”

Therefore, it is said that, besides this Paas’upata, another Paas’upata Dars’ana was introduced. That Dars’ana is called S’aiva Dars’ana also.”

“I think ‘Nakulees’a’ is the Paas’upata Dars’anakaara – the postulator of the Dars’ana.”
“The names Nakulees’a and Lakulees’a are being heard. Some say it is Nakulees’a and the others Lakulees’a. Srikantha, the famous S’aiva Dars’anakaara is widely considered to be follower of Paas’upata School only. Whatever it may be, he is considered to be human incarnation of S’iva and it is also said that he descended only to bring out this Dars’ana.”

“What is salvation for them?”

“Attaining the divine form like S’iva, obtaining the divine powers, and be omnipotent.”

“It is not becoming S’iva!”

“No. It is becoming like S’iva.”

What is the path for that?”

“Observance of the Yama, Niyama etc. according to the Yoga. In the next stage, dance naked, thrice a day like S’iva dancing during the dusk and dawn periods. During that the ash should be applied all over the body.”

“Uh! All these started again!” Sakuntalamma said with a frown on her face.

“What to do Madam! Truth is always harsh. The foundations of today’s polished and cultured S’aivism are to sum extent aversive ones only. Knowing only is important while studying the true picture of History and religious Dars’ana. No other thought should emerge,” saying so Purushottam pacified her.

Sakuntalamma did not speak out.

“If the dancing is the first stage, he should move around like a mad man in the second stage. He should be doing all activities, which are disliked by all. Later, he should break away from all and move in the burial grounds.”

“Are all these procedures stipulated in the Vedas?” asked Dr. Noone.

“The historians’ view is that right from the beginning, the characteristics of the S’aivism is seen to be only rejecting the Vedic worship. They did not accept worshiping the powers of nature as deities. They liked only the worship of the Supreme Godhead as Omnipresent. The fundamental principles of these worship procedures do appear in the Vedas though they are very short. In the Adharva S’aakhopanishad, it is specified that the Is’vara should be meditated by chanting ‘OM’ with ashes applied all over the body.”

“There are no more details. Are there any?”

“No. They had used the words ‘Pati, Pas’u, Paas’am, Pas’u Paas’a Vimokshanam’ only in that. For them, Pati is S’iva, Pas’u is Jeeva, Paas’am is Karma and Pas’u Paas’a Vimokshanam’ is salvation.”

“Well, the rest are probably same as Saankhya only!”

“To some extent. But, two more branches of S’aiva School, namely Kaapaalikas and Kaalaamukhas are there. Some say that they are annexes of this Paas’upata only. Some others do not agree with this view and say there is a separate school named Mahes’vara Dars’ana.”
“What is their school of philosophy? The names do appear to be frightening.”

“Since they hold the Kapaala – the skull, they are Kaapaalikas – those, who hold skulls. Similarly, it is said since they put a black round dot on their forehead, they are Kaalaamukhas – those, who have black faces. All these names are derived from practices rather than principles of school.”

“Do you say they have no specific school?”

“Why not? One Somasiddhanta is considered as the proponent of both the above two schools. In his view, Rudra is Vibhu - all pervasive. That is to say, he is Omnipresent. This universe is not different from Him. This is Paricchinna – one that exists for some time and does not exist for some time. According to their school, the universe and Supreme Godhead are same but not one.”

“What is that same but not one?”

“Since He changes himself into the Universe, it is same. Since Universe is not eternal, is not one. Their school is called Bheda – Abheda Siddhaanta.”

“Probably it is because both Bheda – diversity and Abheda – oneness – not having diversity, are there. Do they also worship Rudra only?”

“Though in totality all the followers of S’aivism worship Rudra only, they do it under different names. These Kaapaalikas worship ‘Bhairaves’vara and his consort C’andika in their fierce forms. They offer human sacrifices to these deities. They spread all the fiercely dangerous items around them. They wear the chain of skulls in their neck.”

“Oh! What a horrible sight it is to see!”

“We say it is horrible, but for them all those horrible in general are non-horrible. Hence these Kaapaalikas and Kaalaamukhas are called as ‘Aghorapanthins’ and their religion is called Aghoramatha – the religion of Aghoras!”

“Probably from this the usage ‘Aghorinc’eru’ – going through suffering, was coined in Telugu,” said Sastry.

“They are called ‘Aghorees’ also,” said Purushottam.

Next, Sakuntalamma hesitatingly asked, “Sir, how are their conduct, customs and practices?” It gave an impression that she wished that the discussion about these people be over at the quickest

“Rudra has the name ‘Aadi Bhikshu’ – the first alms seeker. His alms-sack is the skull. He eats in the skull only, and that too in the burial ground itself. The salvation for them is becoming equal to Rudra and hence, in the stage of intense Saadhana, they move around in that form only.”

“That is … Chh, Chh! “ Sakuntalamma showed her aversion.

“Inevitable, listen! Wearing a garland of the skulls of human infants and moving around, taking the food in a human skull, drinking spirits, having unrestricted sex, cannibalism,
picking the ashes from the funeral pyres and smearing all over their bodies, taking out the female dead body and meditating keeping the eyes on the soul in the vaginal opening, behaving indecently towards the women whenever they visit the villages, performing human sacrifices are the important activities of their practices. Their faith is that by doing all these acts, S’iva will be pleased and blesses them.”

“Is it believable that all this was either happening or is happening?” Sastry had a doubt.

“Not all S’aivism is like this. The S’aiva practices based on the Taantric procedures are primarily four viz., Paas’upata, S’aiva, Kaalagamana or Kaalaamukha and Kaapaalika. Presently we are talking about the followers of Kaapaalika and Kaalaamukha. Paas’upata is just concluded. Still we are yet to discuss the schools that have grown under the names – viz., S’aivam, Veeras’aivam and Kaas’mira S’aiva. Though they also are developed based on the S’aiva Tantras, they may not appear to be that aversive.”

“It is becoming impossible to believe the existence of such horrible practices still.” Sastry again said.

“You have heard the name of the Chinese tourist Huen Tsang, who came to India! He described all these in his book after seeing all these with his own eyes. These were the persons who tried to kill S’ankaraachaarya also. Their description can be seen in the book ‘S’ankara Vijayam’. In the poetry works ‘Kalaa Poornodayam, Maalatee Maadhavam and Prabodha C’androdayam, descriptions are there about them.”

“If Huen Tsang has written, it can be believed but if it is written in the poetical works, how far can it be believed?” Sastry did not leave at that.

“It is all right. This can be well observed in the modern books – i.e., the books of sixties and nineties of last century, written by the well-known historians and authors and impartial Government publications. After all, it is a religion – it means faith. We are talking about its practice only and nothing more.”

“Is this in practice throughout India or only in some pockets?”

“The missionaries of the Kaapaalikas were primarily found mostly in Mount Abu, Girnar, Bodh Gaya and Banaras, but by now they had comedown. It is said that in Bihar they still exist. Similarly, in our Andhra Pradesh, it is said that Sris’ailam used to be their main centre. It is heard that they, even today, are moving but slightly away from the places of population.”

“Does the Government keep quiet while all such things are happening?”

“Knowingly, it will not keep quiet. But today also, one can see the people like Kaapaalikas, moving around naked with tridents in their hands. The general public respects them as S’iva’s direct forms and S’aitvites. Are we not seeing the reports in the newspapers about the human sacrifices and naked worships? The human sacrifices are as notoriously common as the starvation deaths in the backward districts of some states. It is peculiarly strange that all these belong to the S’aivite and S’aakeya customs only.”

“Are there no such branches in Vaishnavite customs?”
“It does not appear to have been mentioned anywhere either by the historians or Dars’anakaaras – the prophets of Dars’anas on existence of such practices in any branches of Vaishnavism.”

“But these human sacrifices, unrestricted sex, naked wanderings, culture of the burial grounds, all these are embarrassing the others also!”

“Here we are not criticizing which religion is great and which is not great. Our sole intention of this discussion is only to know what are the practices of these religions, what are they talking about their religion and what the others are talking about these religions.”

Yes, I understand. We are discussing only about what they are talking. But it is strange that some say that Aachaarya S’ankara’s Advaita is non-Vedic because the illustrations given by him are not found in the Vedas. Some say that BhagavadRaamaanuja’s Vis’ishtaadvaita is non-Vedic because what they recite mostly is Dravidian Veda. Some say that the S’aiivism and S’aakteya is non-Vedic because they follow mostly the Taantric S’aastras. But all of these people together land upon Buddhism and say that it is non-Vedic. How strange it is! How strange!”

There was a smile on everybody’s lips on this comment made by Sastry. Avadhani said, “Dharmaraaja said we are 105 for fight against outsiders. But amongst us, we are five and they are 100.”

Everybody had a laugh on hearing these words.

“What did Aachaarya S’ankara say about these Paas’upata and Kaapaalika religions? He is considered to be an incarnation of lord S’iva himself,” asked Sastry.

“He had ruthlessly countered these religions and their practices in his commentary on Brahma Sutras. Is it possible for S’ankaraachaarya, a preceptor, considered to be an incarnation to reestablish the Vedic Religion to support such obnoxious practices? He has discarded everything including Mudraashatka Dhaarana as inappropriate.”

“What is Mudraashatka?”

“There is a regulation for them to wear two ornaments namely kanthika and ruc’ikam, ear rings like Kundalams, one ornament of the tuft on the head, sacred thread and to anoint ashes. These six are called Mudraashatka. You will recall our discussion of Mudra in the five Maa – kaaras, when we said that Mudra has a meaning of eating puffed rice. Some say that Mudra does not mean eating puffed rice but the mudra is wearing the Mudraashatka itself. Not only that, wearing the rosary of Rudraaksha beads as an ornament for the forearm, and winding the pleat of entire hair around the head also are their practices.”

“Why do they require these practices of holding of the skull, eating in it, cadaver eating, smearing of the ashes of funeral pyres etc?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“These are considered to be symbols of detachment. He, who can treat the garland of flowers and garland of skulls as same, only is a real yogi. Why should there be difference as to which is beautiful and which is atrociously frightening? All are the objects of the creation of the Supreme Pleasant! The argument given in this connection by them is that a real detached treats eating either in a gold plate or skull, eating rice or cadaver eating, anointing
sandal paste or the funeral ashes, moving around in gardens or in the funeral places, all the same."

"Why eating cadaver meat? Instead any meat can be eaten!"

"Which is not cadaver meat? The meat of the chicken, pork, or lamb-meat is eaten only after they are killed! Isn’t it? ‘Are they not cadavers?’ is the question they ask."

"Uh! You cannot argue with them! Then, what is the benefit of free sex?"

"As you get fed up with laddus by unrestricted eating of laddus, so also, one may get bored and disinterested with sex on practicing free sex. Not only that, if eating laddu is the inspiration of the tongue, this is the inspiration of the upastha. One should be able to satisfy this sense organ of enjoyment also similar to the sense organ of taste. Why should there be discrimination?"

"My God! My God! Enough of this religion. But tell us one thing. Is the ash smeared over the forehead or placed as a dot on the forehead, the ash from the funeral pyre?"

"No Sir! Not at all! Only some sects of S’aiivism collect the ashes from funeral pyres and use it. The rest of them rub the ‘ball of sacred ashes’ and use it for either smearing or placing on the forehead. Usage of the ashes from the sacred fires – from the Homakundas is also in vogue."

"Do you say that the same S’aiivism in a different form has been given to us over the ages?"

"It cannot be said either way! But one thing is sure. Today’s S’aiivism enables its followers to say courageously that they are S’aiivites."

"Whatever it might be, it appears that the S’aiivites are a majority whether in that times or today, when you compare it with the other religions,” said Sastry.

"May be. He is Aas’utosha – meaning that he can be easily satisfied. He can be made favourable easily. Have you not heard his name “Bhola S’ankara” meaning innocent S’ankara? It is natural for anybody to approach him for obtaining the material gains quickly and easily”, said Purushottam.

"Due to such a hurry only he ran into the troubles for himself with Bhasmaasura and others,” said Avadhani. All had a laugh. He said further, “Sir Purushottam! In almost all the Puranic stories, when the demons did the penance, they did it to please either Brahma or Rudra only. Why didn’t they choose to please Vishnu? Almost all the demons did the same. Brahma or Rudra bestowed Benefits on them and on strength of these benefits, the demons would start troubling the celestial beings and the other worlds, who run to somebody for rescue. Why all this? Should we say that the sages who authored the puraanas also happened to be partial? Could we think that these are the characteristics of Brahma and Rudra? This doubt had been nudging me for a long time. Please tell me a little in details about these happenings.”

"Before Purushottam could answer after having a long laugh on hearing this, Vinita came running and shouting: “Granny! Look what a good photo my friend gave me!” holding a card-sized photo.
Grandmother did not see the photo and over and above, lightly admonished her saying, “Where is your school bag? Why are you running? Don’t you see elders here? When will you learn good manners? Have you saluted them?”

Vinita was hurt. She said the school bag is at the gate.

Purushottam was moved by the plight of the girl. He encouraged her saying, “Vinita! Where is the photo, Can you bring it here?” That was enough to bring back cheer in Vinita. “Granny! Will you please bring the school bag from the gate!” pleaded she with her grandmother and joined Purushottam even without removing her shoes. “Sir! You see! My friend had gone to Delhi. It seems that this temple is there in Delhi. Her father took a snap of this beautiful building and gave her. We both are friends you know! So, she gave it to me. Look how beautiful it is!”

By this time, grandmother had come and with a nudge made her remove her shoes and wash her hands and feet before she came back and joined them. All the men were engaged in small time discussion to bide away their time till Sakuntalamma joined them again.

“Where is the photo? How beautiful it is! Which temple is this, Dear?” Raghuramaiah asked Vinita.

“It is Baha’i, I was told Grandpa! Baha’i”

“Purushottam garu! Which temple is this Baha’i temple? Which God is in that temple?” asked Sastry.

“You have heard about the two sects of Mohammedans viz., the Shiites and Sunnis! Under the guidance of the Shiites, this religion Baha’i has evolved. Probably it was in 1844, one Babuddin in Persia had initiated this religion and subsequently propagated by one ‘Baha Ulaha’. This had spread throughout the world. Its influence is more in North America. There is one very big and beautiful temple in our Delhi also. You are seeing it in the photo!

Every religion has some truth in it. Hence, every religion is unified with one and only one God and the unity of all religions is essential. This is the message of this religion. No idols are in this temple. Some benches are laid in that. Every person can come, have his prayers, and go back”

Oh! Is this Baha’i! It started with Mohammedans! It is new to me!” said Avadhani. He asked further, “What is the difference between the sects of Shiites and Sunnis?”

“Sunnis say that the head of the Moslem society should be by election. The Shiites view is that it should go to the descendents of the Mohammed, the founder of the religion. Shiites mean ‘the separated’. They do not accept the scriptures of the Sunnis. In their opinion, it is not necessary that somebody should pray openly. Representatives can do it for them by accepting money. Sunnis do not accept this. Koran is the principal scripture for both.”

“What is the meaning of Koran?”

“Arabic word ‘khara’ had been transformed as Khur + aan – Khuraan or Koran. ‘Kharaa’ means reading.”
“Grandpa! We hear everyday over the loudspeakers the words ‘Allah ho…’ What is that?”

“They must pray in the mosque saying ‘Allah ho Akbar’ five times a day, morning, noon, evening, after the sunset and in the night. During such times, a person called ‘muezzin’ calls loudly all the devotees to come for prayer. The meaning of what he shouts at that time calling everybody is: ‘Allah is greatest of all. There is no other God except Allah. Mohammad is the one who came to propound on behalf of God. Come for praying! Come under His protection. I am telling you again and again. Allah is greatest of all. There is no other God except Allah.’”

“Since it is in either Arabic or Urdu, our people do not know its meaning. Will they agree to shout if they know the meaning?” Sakuntalam had the doubt.

“Purushottam smiled and said, “They do know! ‘We are broadminded who say ‘Is’vara Allah tere naam.’ So, What objection is there for us!”

“Grandpa! Which God is there in the mosque?” asked Vinita.

“There are no idols of any deity in the mosque my dear girl! They do not have idol worship. They do not accept it. A small water tank smaller in size compared to lakes and tanks that we normally talk about will be there in the mosque. One should purify oneself by doing something like taking bath in that tank. It is like our orthodox people purifying themselves by taking the head bath and wearing clothes that are washed earlier in that purified state etc. After that one should wear a small cloth piece over the head, sit a little bent over the knees and recite the first chapter of Koran. He should sit facing Mecca.”

“How does one know which side Mecca is?”

“The side in which alcove is situated in the mosque, is the direction of Mecca.”

“Is it a must for everybody to visit the mosque?”

“Wherever they are stationed because of work, there they can do the prayers. But they must visit the mosque on every Friday.”

“What will they do by going to Mecca? Is this the travel called ‘Hajj’ for which a lot of subsidy is given by our central government?”

“Yes. This travel to Mecca is called hajj. Every believer must visit Mecca at least once in his lifetime. There is a special dress for that. He must wear them during this travel and stay there. There is one black stone called ‘Kaaba’ there. He should go round that seven times. He should kiss the stone. There are two mountaintops. One should run between them seven times, reading the prayers. On the tenth day, he should throw stones on three stone pillars situated there symbolizing hitting the Saitan – the evil force. After that he should shave off his head and visit the tomb of Mohammad.”

“What is ‘Kaaba stone’?”

I also do not know clearly but it is a very sacred place for them. According to one view, it was a temple of one deity. After conquering Mecca, it is said that Mohammad destroyed all the temples there and banned the idol worship thereafter. But it had become a habit to go
round that temple seven times since very long time, and it is said that they are continuing that practice. But most of the Moslems do not accept this statement. They say that that stone has something to do with Allah. But they do not accept idol worship! So, we must ask somebody from that religion to give details about this whole thing. Though I had enquired earlier, because of the differences of versions, I could not get clarity.”

“How old is this Mohammad?”

“Not long ago! It may be 1500 years ago.”

“Is Islam only that old? It is later than Christianity!”

“Yes. Mohammad had contacts with the Christians who were already there. There was worship of multiple deities where Mohammad was living. He stopped the worshipping of many deities and established worship of one and only deity. That unique deity is Allah. Mohammad is the representative of Allah. He is called prophet also.

“What is the meaning of ‘Allah’?”

“It means God.”

“How did Mohammad become prophet?”

“His original name was Abdul Kaasim. He joined as a driver of the camels for a wealthy widow and over a period married that lady who was considerably older than him. Subsequently he had many more marriages. He had nine wives by the time he was 60 years old. While he was seriously searching for the knowledge of Supreme Godhead, there was the onset of Ramadan month. When he was in a cave on a mountain observing fasting, he had a divine vision of a celestial. The celestial had given him one silk cloth and asked him to read the writing on the cloth. When Kaasim said that he does not know reading, he was ordained to read again. Lo! He was endowed with the divine halo and divine preaching. He became a prophet.”

“Is it just like Buddha and Mahaveera?”

“Almost for all the religions of the world, the basic foundations are divine vision, divine voice and appearance of God in front. However, the believers of Abdul Kasim’s words were very few in those days. He was having secret meetings. Mohammad means the person who was praised. Over the time, he was conferred the title.

When opposition to him increased, he left Mecca and reached Medina. He spread his religion and army and came back to Mecca to win it over the battle. He proved himself to be an able administrator and preacher. This is the history of Mohammad. His followers are called Mohammedans.”

“Who are Moslems and what is Islam?”

“A Moslem means the one who is subservient to God. Islam means following a righteous path.”

“What are the important doctrines of this religion?”
“You should approach the one and only God. Stealing is not to be done. Should not have sex with other women. Infanticide is prohibited. False allegations should not be done. One should not go beyond what Mohammed had preached. Travel – meaning Hajj travel should be done. One must desist from alcohol and speculation. Almsgiving, prayers, and fasting are paramount. Pork and idolatry are prohibited. One without capability to support should not marry more women. Even if married he should divorce. Once divorced, the same lady should not be married again to the same person. But that lady can marry the same person again after she marries another and divorces him.

There is one more doctrine, which is very important and offending to the others. That is called ‘jihad’ – every Mohammedan should do jihad – Holy War. That is asking the person who comes across to become Mohammedan or pay royalty to the Mohammedan kingdom otherwise, kill him. That is how all the Moslem rulers had waged war against countries like India and converted as many as possible into Islam. The rest were made to pay royalty to the Moslem rulers. Those, who did not agree for either were simply killed. Governor of Iraq waged a war on India in the year 711 with 6000 soldiers and 6000 camels. It is said that he had Koran in one hand and sword in the second. He, it is said, asked every Indian whether he accepts Koran to be killed.”

“Uh! Very difficult. Is it not for this jihad only the terrorists are crossing into India from Pakistan? Is there any mention in Koran about jihad?”

“Jihad is a special decree for all the Moslems. If one dies while carrying on jihad, it is said he will straight get into the heaven. While some say it is mentioned in Koran others differ from this.”

“What about heaven and hell?”

“Yes! Yes! Soul is eternal. Death is considered to be the sleeping of the soul. Munker and Nakar are two deities. They are the intermediaries between God and us. After a person dies, in the first night these two deities conduct an interview while the soul is still in the body. If they are convinced from the interview that the dead does not have faith in Islam, they send him to hell and the faithful will be left with this body. That soul will be sleeping.

By this time, the last day arrives. The sun will rise on the west as an indication of the arrival of the last day for the universe. Anti-Jesus and Jesus will be born and Jesus will kill the Anti-Jesus. Then the celestials will be beating huge drums. That is signaling the arrival of the last day for the Universe. On hearing this drum beat, all the souls that are in deep sleep will wake up and be ready for the final day. They are to cross a bridge that is as sharp as a knife-edge and as thin as a hair, holding the account books of the virtues with right hand and the books of sins with left hand. On crossing, they will have eternal heaven. Permanent hell results on failure to cross. That heaven has all the pleasures like beautiful women, wine etc. That is salvation. This is their Islam.”

All were in a trance like state, as though they were listening story. Avadhani, the first to come out of that state, asked, “Is there a sect called Ahmediyas or did I read wrongly the word Mohammedan as Ahmedan?”

“Ahmediyas are there as well as Mohammedans. One Ahmed started telling in 1908 that he was Krishna initially, became Jesus, and took birth as Mohammed the prophet. The believers of this version of his are very few. They are Ahmediyas. In his opinion, jihad is not done with the swords and artillery but with preaching. These Ahmediyas are there as
preachers of peace both in Britain and U.S. It is said that in Pakistan also they are there. But they are considered to be minority community there. In all other aspects they are just like Mohammedans only.”

“Why did they think that Jesus will embrace Islam before the final day? Is it the anger against Jesus or is there any other reason?”

“It is not anger against Jesus. It is said that he got inspiration from Jesus in the monotheism. But he did not like the concept of the trinity the doctrine of Christian theology. Probably he opined that it preaches God’s existence more or less in three forms. Hence, he brought out the concept of one and only one God. According to some historians, he expected the same acceptance from the Christians also and spoke that Jesus will embrace Islam.”

“What is the name of Christian’s God? Is it Jehovah?”

“In fact, it is said that in Hebrew it is written as ‘JHVH’. How to pronounce it? Some how they pronounce it as Yahweh. By the time of Moses, it has become Jahvah and subsequently Jehovah.”

“Who is this Moses?”

“The people of Hebrew race were working as slaves in Egypt. When these people got released from slavery and were roaming as gypsies, one Moses as a leader brought them all together. He told them: ‘God Jehovah is having audience on the mount Sinai. He will fulfill all our desires’. He was the main person who prompted all of them towards the spirituality.

“How is Jehovah worshipped?”

“Food and animals were offered to Him. Some people left all the items on the Mount itself for Jehovah, while some others took half of it as His blessings.”

“Was Jehovah being seen?”

“He was invisible. All the offerings were being done with the faith of His existence.”

“What next?”

“After Hebrews had conquered and occupied Cannon country, they started worshipping their God ‘Ball’ also. The first child, first pet animal, and first fruit were offered to Him.”

“That is seen in some churches today also.”

“Over the period, because of the political and social reasons, they vacillated between Jehovah and Ball and finally concluded that Jehovah is the Supreme Godhead. This monotheism had developed from old Hebrew religion in Jews and from there it entered into Christians and Mohammedans.”

“Do the Christians say that the three Gods – the Trinity, are in Jehovah only?”

“It is not like that. They did not say three Gods. In the same God, three personalities are intertwined. They are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Mohammed questioned the
doctrine of having three personalities in one God and saying that this will lead to three Gods, rejected this doctrine.”

“How did Christians say that three exist in one God?”

“It is said that the persons – the personal distinctions within one Godhead – are transitory modes of a single divine reality. Beyond that, the extraordinary powers of Godhead could not be explained. One aspect should be kept in the mind here. The Christianity and its doctrines depend on the faith, devotion, affection, and humility to one personality called Jesus. Instead of examining and counter-arguing whether the doctrines are logical or not, we must understand Christianity from this angle.”

“That is to say that the faith of the religion has transformed into a Dars’ana. OK. What else is told about this God? Does He have a form?”

“No. Nowhere it was told that He had a form. Everything was a void at one time. He created just by intention, the Universe from that void in order to exhibit His exalted powers. He created humans, animals, trees etc. The creation was done from the first paternal personality. He intended to create the human race superior to others. For that he gave mental ability to humans. He intended to make the human His heir for this heaven – the universe.

“But, Adam and Eve, the first creation of God, man and woman, not knowing even the difference between them, had followed Satan’s advice and ate the forbidden fruit. With that they became aware of the differences and they met with their natural characteristics of man and woman. That is sufficient to open the floodgates of the evil and they sinned thus changing the beautiful dream of God.

“They are the forbears for the human race! All the humans are the creation from them and are carrying the sin of Adam and Eve only. As the man who can kill does not know how to give back life, so also, the person who commits the mistake does not know how to correct it.

Then God - Jehovah by His benevolence descended on the earth with his personality of Son. He preached that the best way of living is by serving others. As the exchange of the Sins of all the humans, he suffered on crucifix and blessed the mankind.

He preached that those, who followed his preaching, would be blessed with the heavens and they will be His heirs. As long as He was alive, He had preached in person to everybody. After his death, he descended in the form of His third Personality of Holy Ghost and blessed 12 of his disciples called Apostles with knowledge. This blessing of the knowledge to the 12 Apostles is called Pentecost”

“Oho! Are these the Pentecost congregations?” asked Avadhani.

“But you have said about Satan or something. Is not Satan the creation of Jehovah?”

“I do not know that. After blessing the 12 apostles with the knowledge, Jesus had ordained the Apostles to go and preach all the races. They became a society and started prayers and preaching. This congregation is called Catholic Church. He appointed Peter as His heir to that church. His descendants are the papal authorities. They are called Popes. The Papal seat is situated in Rome in Italy.
After some period, some have ceased to accept the authority of the Pope. They are called ‘Protestants’. There are many minor differences and sects in Christianity. Primarily we can see two sects Catholics and Protestants. This is in short the Christianity Dars’ana.”

“The Mohammedans do the spreading of their religion because of ‘Jihad’. Similarly, the Christians do spread their religion by the order of Jesus. Don’t they?”

“Yes. One of the 12 apostles, St. Thomas had arrived in India in his 57th year. But nobody from our country had accepted his religious propaganda at that time. For them the propaganda about their religion among the other religions and converting as many as possible are important doctrines. Such matters are not at all important for us in our religion. Our principle is that every body can have his own religious faith.”

“If these Mohammedans and Christians are converting people from other religions into their religions, what will happen to the other religions?”

“That is exactly what they have been doing for the last 2000 years. As per the estimates 40 years ago, the Christian population was 81 crores and Mohammedan population was 23 crores in the world. You can imagine what would be the increase in their population in these 40 years.”

“What about our country?”

“According to one estimate, for every 1000 population, Mohammedans are 115 and Christians are 25.”

“Oh! My God! If it is so, will not all the countries in the world become either Christian or Mohammedan countries gradually over a period of time?”

“Patriotism and religious faith are two separate entities. Both of them should not be mixed. There is lot of difference between the thoughts ‘I should not bow my head in front of any body’ and ‘my country should have people of my religion only’. Similarly, the thought that my faith in my religion should be rock-steady and the thought that people of my religion should keep growing are entirely different thoughts. This must be understood by all of us.”

“Do you think that our country will become either a Moslem country or Christian nation over a period of time?” asked Sastry with fear.

“No! Never! We need not have that fear. The Vedas and Vedic literature are not that weak. Our Vedic religion is in existence from some thousands of years before Christianity has evolved. It had gone through lot of rough weather. The Buddhism, which had taken over as a tornado at one time had itself been seeking places out of the country. It ruled the roost for some centuries. But ultimately it is the Vedic religion only, which stood taller. The Moslem Nawaabs who ruled this country for 600 years could achieve conversion in our country of not more than 25% in those days. The Christians who ruled this country for 200 years could not achieve more than 5% conversions to Christianity. Our Vedic religion is that strong. Even the Egyptian civilization, Sumerian civilization, and even the Indus valley civilization are left with only the mention in the books and have become extinct. The Vedic culture and civilization had been coming for ages even before all these cultures and religions had taken shape. That is our faith. Even if you consider the so-called Historians, they have given the age of Vedic culture to be 5000 years. Though ten to fifteen races had fought wars over India before the Greeks, the Sandhyaavandanam of the 5000 years age old is still continuing even
today. There is no extinction for this culture. The Vedas are the inhalations and exhalations of Supreme Godhead. So there need not be any fear that the Vedic religion will be wiped out. However, it is natural to have fears about such happenings. But ultimately, it is the Vedic religion that wins. There is no doubt.”

“But on seeing their promotion drive for conversions the fear is there. Once in a while I wonder why our Vedic Religion followers are becoming so weak,” said Sastry again.

“There can be many reasons. Many had changed their religion or praised the Islam and Christianity during the British rule and Moslem rule for their living. If you closely examine the behaviour of our people, it will be seen as very strange. Ramakrishna Paramahansa had the direct vision of Krishna, Allah, and Christ also and had come to the conclusion that all of them are same. A lot of publicity is given to this right from the time of Vivekananda and is still continuing. In this background, if the Christians or Moslems come and promote their religion, why will the common man hesitate to get himself converted?”

Those promoting monism or Advaita philosophy, say that by practicing the idol worship over a period, one will have the vision of the attribute-less Supreme Godhead and that is the best knowledge. Those who cannot achieve that knowledge have to contend with the idol worship and continue to worship the Supreme Godhead with attributes. Once the person has that supreme knowledge, he need not go for idol worship. The propaganda that the idol worship is because of foolishness only, and the ban on the idolatry by these of the Moslem and Christian religions, it is natural for a common man to feel that there is no difference between the religions.

While this is so, the well known religious bodies have incorporated in their logos the cross of Christians, logo of Islam and our Om. With this, where is the need for the common man to follow the Vedic religion?

“Therefore if somebody intends that our Vedic religion should not be weakened, the first treatment has to be done for our people only.”

“Some people are telling that they are indulging in forcible conversions.”

“The reason for the Christians and Muslims to do the vigorous religious propaganda is their faith in their religions and a strong feeling that their religion is superior to the other religions. The reason for our people to fall prey to that propaganda is the greed, selfishness, and desire. Over and above, our people opine that our religion is the same as the other religions but not greater than them. If it is natural for them to coerce us for conversion, it should be natural for us not to yield to these temptations.”

“Your analysis is appropriate. The fruit vendor does not have a rule to sell all good fruits only. The buyer has to be careful. This is also like that. What they want is the propaganda of their religion. Some how they will do it. These people from our religion should be careful.”

“Yes! Yes!” saying so, all have stood up to disperse. Raghuramaiah accompanied them to the gate to see them off. Sakuntalamma stayed back to attend the phone call.

“After attending the phone, she went out in search of Raghuramaiah who was yet to come back into the living room. She went to Raghuramaiah anxiously, who was still standing after all the guests have left and he was staring blank. She did not disturb him. Asked coolly “Why are you standing still?”
“I was thinking whether I wasted my life time.”

“Why do you say so?” asked she with anxiousness and surprise as well.

“When every religion of any corner in this Universe is saying that there is one super power and is firmly believing that we should worship that, why did I not make an attempt in that line? Is it that I am egoistic thinking that I alone am more intelligent than any of them and I only can reasonably think? Or is it really that all of them are behaving as a flock of sheep? I am unable to decide.”

Sakuntalamma was happy to note at least the beginning of the thinking process in him, leave alone the practicing.

Raghuramaiah became normal and asked about the phone call.

“It is the daughter from U.S. The same old talk of calling both of us to come there. She is asking to come at least for her birthday which falls by month end,” said Sakuntalamma.

“What about Vinita’s studies?” Though he knew the answer, Raghuramaiah asked again.

“Her grandfather grandmother and uncles are there in this city itself and she wants that Vinita should live with them. Vinita does not want to go there. Whom do we convince?”

“Let us see,” saying so, he went near Vinita, who was playing.
Chapter - 10

“Is it clearly spelt out in the Vedas that God should be worshipped in the form of Idol only?” Raghuramaiah asked right in the beginning of the group discussion of that day.

“Did you get this doubt after it was told yesterday that the Christians and Moslems rejected the idolatry?” Sakuntalamma asked smiling.

“Idol is a representation, i.e., a symbol. If they opine that it is foolishness to believe in God’s existence in the idol, many opine that they also are doing that worshipping the representative in some form or other. According to many critics, what they do viz., praying turning towards Mecca, wearing a cross in the neck, is also more or less the worship of the symbolic representation only”, said Avadhani.

“Where is the necessity of talking Christians and Mohammedans, when our Buddha and others have also rejected the idol worship?” said Dr. Noone.

“Here we must understand what is meant by rejection of the idol worship. Are they totally rejecting the idolatry or are they asking not to be foolish enough of firmly believing that the Idol is God and He is nowhere else?” said Raghuramaiah.

“One can express the feelings of love, regard etc. considering that supreme Godhead is present in an idol. Are we not getting a kind of satisfaction on seeing the photograph of our children staying in U.S.! Though I know that photo and you is different, still I view the photo with all the affection I give you! But as you said, it is foolishness to offer food to the photo of a person disregarding his physical presence in front and not offering the food to him”, said Sakuntalamma.

“We do accept that God is Omnipresent! Is it not foolishness in offering the food to the idol instead of offering to a beggar in whom the God is present?” asked Dr. Noone.

If we say God is Omnipresent, why should God not be present in idol? True! God is there in the beggar. But if we understand the meaning of word ‘Omnipresent’, the body of the beggar is also like the idol only. So, you should put your question in a different way! When we believe that God is present both in sentient and insentient, after all the sentient being is definitely at a higher status than the insentient! Is it not natural to give more attention to the sentient since the presence of God will be more explicit in the sentient? This is the way you should have asked the question,” said Sakuntalamma.

All were taken by surprise at her sharp intellect and the logic.

“Answer also may please be given by you only, Auntie! Yes, I should have asked in that way only!” said Dr. Noone.

“When Sir is there, my answering is not proper,” said Sakuntalamma with her natural humility.

“Appropriate question, Madam! When the thought of Omnipresence is important factor, no object should be neglected in this universe! Where is the question of the idolatry? But, in the practical situations when we cannot sit all the time worshipping only, if we decide to worship only some, should they be sentient beings or insentient objects? The question in front
of us is how that preference would be!” Purushottam encouraged Sakuntalamma by supporting her.

“Now I have understood the question well,” said Raghuramaiah. “First of all, do we accept that God is Omnipresent? Is he present in everything? If we have not accepted this and when we say that He is present in only some places, the question can be there as to whether He is present in the idol and the idolatry can be practiced if it is confirmed that He is present in the Idol. Otherwise, idolatry can be banned. But, when it is accepted that He is Omnipresent, there is no question of not accepting the idolatry! It will be proper to the worship something else if it is felt more clearly that He is in something other than Idol.”

“This matter is much more clear after Raghuramaiah clarified it” said Avadhani.

“Since we accepted that God is Omnipresent, our opinion is that there is no necessity to ban the idolatry. Now the question is which is that place where God is felt better than the idol,” said Sastry.

“Why not? He is felt in every being that is sentient viz., the humans, animals, worms, flies etc. Is it not better to worship — meaning to serve them?” asked Dr. Noone.

“What do you say? Which is felt in these sentient beings?”

“What is that question? He, whom we call as Supreme Godhead is being felt in these beings.” That was Dr. Noone’s answer.

“Not that my dear boy! If you carefully think, God is not felt in full in any object definitely or clearly. Our assumptions about Him are different. The humans, animals, worms, and flies etc are different. So He is not being felt. Only one of His qualities is being felt in them. I am asking which is that quality?” asked Sakuntalamma.

Yes. It is true. In our thinking, He is the abode of all the good qualities! If all the good qualities are put together then it should be God! Love towards others, kindness, affection etc. are His qualities. Though we accept that He is present in tiger, lion, snake, fox, parrot, dove etc, do we visualise those qualities in them?” Avadhani asked.

“We do observe some of these qualities in the case of some objects and that too in some circumstances only. It is true. But what I say is He is the essence of knowledge of life etc. He is the greatest of the sentient. Isn’t it? His knowledge is activity felt in all the organisms. So is it not proper to say that he is felt in that angle everywhere?” That was Dr. Noone’s counter-question.

“May be my dear! His Activity is being felt in all the life organisms and is not being felt in the idol and so; it is better to worship the living organisms rather than worshipping the idol. This is what you say. Isn’t it?” asked Sakuntalamma to clarify whether she understood the Doctor’s question properly.

“Exactly so Aunty! That is my view.” Said Dr. Noone.

“You are saying worship or service. What is worship and what is service?” asked Raghuramaiah.

Purushottam said laughing, “Totee.”
“Everybody asked him, “What is that?”

The Greek philosopher Socrates used to ask everybody ‘Totee’ – ‘means what’, ‘means what’, and after they gave their definitions, compared them with his opinions and used to come to a conclusion. If somebody said that he is a lawyer, immediately he was said to ask the question ‘what is law?’ ‘What is arguing?’ It is said that when somebody says: ‘how beautiful the sky is!’ he used to ask ‘what is meant by sky?’ ‘What is beauty?’ So I felt That Raghuramaiah is saying ‘Totee’ and it brought me laughter,” said Purushottam.

Raghuramaiah was feeling a little shy. “Since I do not know anything, I keep asking. Am I troubling?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“No, Not at all! No trouble, in fact it is a very happy situation. Instead of being disinterested in a subject matter and keeping aloof from that thinking that the matter is not for me and why should I bother etc., it is very good of your enquiry. I congratulate you on this” said Purushottam.

“But, what is meant by ‘worship’, Sir?” asked Sakuntalamma.

The Sanskrit word for worship, - ‘Aaraadhana’ is derived from the root (Dhaatu) ‘Raath’. It means satisfying, making happy, making ecstatic, creating love and affection, etc. like this many meanings can be given for this word. The word ‘Viraatha’ means one who is dissatisfied. The word ‘Raatha’ gives meaning of the love personified, one that brings happiness. Though academicians give much more details, for us it is sufficient to know this much.”

“Then, how is service defined?”

“It is very difficult. It is used in many senses. To separate it from Aaraadhana is difficult. It may be generalized in one way! To help in the other’s works, if unable to eat, feeding him, if unable to earn, giving him something, giving medicine to the patients, like helping those who cannot do their jobs or those who cannot fulfill their desires etc may be called as service in today’s parlance.” Said Purushottam.

“If we follow your definition, the service to God, service to the devotees, service to the husband and service to the parents may not be possible at all Sir! Because they are not the people who are unable to do their jobs! We do them service for our satisfaction but not because they are incapable of performing those jobs”, said Avadhani.

“That is why I said that it is not possible to separate the service from worship – Aaraadhana. Both these words are being used as synonyms generally. Since the person who is taking the service is happy, that also is worship only. The person being worshipped is getting help and hence that also is service only,” said Purushottam.

“In general, can it be said as worship if it is directed to elders and service to those who are either equals or at a lower level?” asked Dr. Noone.

“It does not suit all the occasions but is mostly acceptable,” said Purushottam.

“But the original question has gone into background. Is the idolatry better or serving the God present in the living beings?” Sastry reminded.
“Why this worship or service to God should be done? What is wrong if it is not done?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“What is this? You have again come back to the beginning! On the first day, has it not been told by Purushottam garu that the man or any living being tries continuously for the happiness, that it is inevitable, and that among such happy situations, the best and eternal happiness is salvation? Some say that such a salvation or eternal bliss has to be given by Supreme Godhead only. Some others say that there is no such being as Supreme Godhead that we can obtain. As we are talking about the various religions, the topic of idolatry has come up. Have you forgotten that?” Sakuntalamma said as though she had given a synopsis of all that was discussed so far.

“I did not forget Madam! We had learnt about Omnipresence of Supreme Godhead, we had learnt about worship and service. Should we to decide whether to worship the Supreme Godhead present in the idol or in the living organisms, it could be known only when we remember why at all we should worship. Isn’t it?” said Raghuramaiah.

“Yes! It is true. Should it not be clear whether the supreme godhead is craving for our worship?” Said Dr. Noone.

“Here also there are many schools of thought. If according to one, worshipping Him itself is salvation; the others say that by worship one attains salvation. In this way, there are many views,” said Purushottam.

“What ever it may be He should be satisfied! If we satisfy Him with full devotion, total commitment, and service to Him in full (Trikarana S’uddhi), then only any thing can be obtained. If done with superficial devotion, can any thing be achieved?” Sakuntalamma asked.

“What is that question? Anybody will give only one answer to that, that it has to be done with 100% commitment, full devotion and full attention on service to Him only,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Can somebody desirous of serving God through a living being do it with the mind, speech and body put together? Think! To what extent does the mind co-operate in serving the human being in whom except the life that is in Supreme Godhead none of His other good qualities can be seen? How can we worship the humans seeing the bad qualities in them? Don’t we get love or aversion in the mind even without knowing, when we see the different faces of humans? In such case, is it possible to suppress the mind and serve using the speech and body and satisfy Supreme Godhead?” demanded Sakuntalamma.

“Why are you saying so Aunty? Is not that greatness lies in looking at the beauty and ugliness, bad and good, virtues and vices, and all changes in human beings with same approach?”

“Don’t talk rubbish. We are not talking here for giving lectures on the stages. Except for great sages and mad fellows, it is not possible to take such a view. Neither we are mad caps nor we are great sages. We are discussing now: how do we, placed in between, conduct ourselves?” Sakuntalamma clarified.

Raghuramaiah nodded his head in agreement. But Dr. Noone could not clear his doubt. He asked, “can we not conduct ourselves that much impartial?”
“It is definitely not possible to be like that. Can you view the tiger and cow the same way? Do you see the butterfly and caterpillar the same way? Do you hear the voices of the crow and cuckoo the same way? Do you behave with your mother and stepmother the same way? Are you behaving in the same way towards your wife and other women? Why go that extent? Have you considered the toilet room and kitchen the same? Are you using your left hand and right hand in the same way? We use each of them for the specified purposes only. We do not eat with our left hand because it is our own body. We do not do the job of left hand with the right hand. We do not eat in any room without any partiality in our house just because it is our own house. Neither we behave with every woman like we do with the wife. We do not behave with everyone the same saying that after all they are all living beings. It is natural. This is practical life. We should not generalize what is specific for one or two in a million. Please look for something useful to all” Sakuntalamma said in more clear terms.

“Yes, It is true Madam! We do not wear a ring with the figure of Yama instead of that of Lord Venkates’waru because it is after all a ring only. The change in behaviour is inevitable according to the thoughts in the mind.” Said Sastry.

“What do you say then? Do you say that idolatry is better than serving the living beings, that is the fellow humans, in whom the Supreme Godhead is spread out?” asked Dr. Noone.

“I do not say that. Though the Supreme Godhead seen as an idol, with all the good attributes present in Him is being worshipped, since the idol is seen as lifeless, the full commitment of mind, body and speech is difficult”, said Sakuntalamma.

“Do you say then that both the processes are defective?” asked Raghuramaiah with surprise. He wondered thinking if she had so many logical thoughts, which is so passionate for the worship.

“I am neither saying that. My intention is not to prove both the procedures to be deficient. In my opinion, one must go attaining perfection in both the procedures at the same time and not just reject any one procedure”, Sakuntalamma said.

“That’s it. That is right point, Madam! You told what I liked,” congratulating her, Sastry said. “One must try for the feeling in idolatry that what is in front of him, is not an idol but the Supreme Godhead only. It must be kept in the mind that the bad qualities we see in the living beings are not found anywhere near the Supreme Godhead, while serving the humans or the society. Except these thoughts, nothing should be left out.”

Raghuramaiah considered in the mind this to be very appropriate, but outwardly asked Purushottam, “But you did not narrate the procedure the Šastras prescribed for worshipping the Supreme Godhead.”

“According to the scriptures, the worship should be performed in four categories, namely, Bimbam, Kumbham, Mandalam and Kundam. In addition, the meditating Him as universality and omnipresent. Bimbam means idolatry. Kumbham means induction of the Supreme Godhead in the auspicious vessel and worshipping. Mandalam means inducting deities onto specified places on a platform made of grains mostly paddy. Now Kundam means induction of Supreme Godhead into the sacrificial fire being made in the specified sacred fireplace and offering the sacrificial offerings of ghee etc. to Him into the sacrificial fire. All the above five procedures are acceptable as per the scriptures”, said Purushottam.
“It appears that we give lot of importance to the fire in the entire procedures. I do not know if any other religion of the world gives so much of importance to the sacrificial fire,” said Sastry.

“Why not! What about the Parsi? Almost all the subject matter in our Vedas and the deities of the Vedas are there in Parsi,” said Purushottam.

“After all, Parsi is religion of our country! I am asking about the religions of other countries, Sastry Garu!” said Dr. Noone.

“Though most of the followers of Parsi are in our country, originally this religion was founded in Iran. Since they had come to this country, centuries had passed away, no doubt they are Indians now, but the roots had been from that country only.”

“What is their religion and how did they come into our land?”

“One Zoroastre founded this religion in Iran. That is called Zoroastrianism. According to estimates, there were total 125000 Zoroastrians in the world and out of them 15000 were Iranians and the rest Indians.”

“Is it such a weak religion?”

“Not at all. It is one of the religions with high ideals. It was very prominent till 7th century. That means about 14-15 hundred years ago it was highly followed one. But it could not sustain the repeated attacks by the Arabic Moslems on Iran. Unable to bear the atrocities being committed by these Moslems, some of these Zoroastrians took courage to leave the country by sea and settled in the region of Mumbai (Bombay.)”

“Look! How a great religion could not stand the inroads made by the Moslems and Christians. God only can save our Vedic religion,” said Sastry.

Since it was a topic that was already discussed none had further picked up that topic. Purushottam continued.

“Some say that it was Zoroastre who rejected the polytheism and actively supported monotheism.”

“This worship of multitude of Gods has been rejected and the worship of one and only one God was established in many countries. Isn’t it? Didn’t such reform come in our India? That is very good system. Isn’t it?” That was Raghuramaiah’s question.

“It did come in our country also! It was told that except Lord Vishnu, no other deity should be worshipped. Subsequently, as a competition it was told that except S’iva, no other deity should be worshipped. Then there was another, which prompted that it is better to worship S’akti alone. Another system came suggesting that one should worship that attribute-less Supreme Godhead.”

“If that was so, why in our country the worship of one and only one deity is not getting sustained?”

“The nick names we gave to those people, that rejected polytheism and supported monotheism were called as ‘the people who couldn’t bear the existence of other religions’.
The problem with our country is that we have a very many large number of people with such biased views.”

‘Raghuramaiah felt that there is a point in the monotheism rather than the polytheism. He said, “Please tell the preaching of Zoroastro”

“Name of their God is ‘Aahooramajhda. Fire God reveals His power and purity. He said that killing a cow is a Sin. Supreme Godhead only created this universe. Mind alone can make the heaven as hell and hell as heaven. The universe is not an illusion. This is available to the man as a boon. This is not for redeeming pleasures. This is like a battlefield for testing the moral strength. One must do good to the society. The wealth should be utilized for the common-good. If one must achieve unison with the Supreme Godhead, he also must inculcate all the good qualities of Him like motherly affection.”

The most important in their religion is ‘Afa’—meaning moral conduct. Only those with good moral conduct can have the capability of sacrificing themselves to Supreme Godhead. One can observe the promises of future good conduct and repentance for the bad deeds done so far by them.”

“Their religion is very good. Did you say that this Parsi religion is mostly around Mumbai (Bombay)! How did this name Parsi come for this religion?” Raghuramaiah asked.

“Since they came from Persia, the name Parsi is there for their religion.”

“I think everybody in this universe belongs to some religion or other. Probably nobody is disinterested towards the religion!” Sakuntalamma looked at Raghuramaiah with side-glances.

Purushottam did not observe this side snipe at her husband. He said, “There is one school which is disinterested in any religion!” Raghuramaiah saw her as though challenging her. Before she could say anything, Purushottam said, “But as per tradition the disinterest is not towards religion. It tells to be disinterested towards the universe. The forbearer for this school is said to be sage Sanatkumaara. Penance is primary requirement in this school. A number of followers are there in Punjab, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh states. Their doctrines are almost same as that of Advaita.”

“Who is the propagandist for this?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“The founder and propagandist also of this school is said to be ‘Chandra Deva’ a son of Guru Nanak.

“Guru Nanak, - the religious leader of Sikhs. Is it so?”

“I think so. I am not aware if they’re two Guru Nanaks.”

“These Sikhs are Indians. Aren’t they? Do they have belief in the Vedas and deities?”

“Where is it said that because they are Indians they should be believers of Vedas and deities? Did Buddhists and Jains believe them? The religion of Sikhs started in the tradition of the school of the disciples (S’ishya = disciple. S’ishya became Sikh.) The first congregation of the disciples of Guru Nanak began around end of 15th century. There are nine famous Gurus after Nanak. The last among them is Guru Gobind Singh. It is said that He
showed the book in which the teachings of all the ten Gurus are there and said that after him, their leader will be that book only. That is considered to be the most revered by all the Sikhs. In their temples, it is the one which is worshipped.”

“Why did Guru Nanak found this school of religion?”

“One day, when Nanak was taking bath in the river Raavi, he heard a divine message saying, ‘I am with you. You propagate the divine power of my name all over the world. You concentrate your sights on my name only.’ With that, he started to propagate that school of religion explaining the value of the name of Supreme Godhead. It can be assumed that his school is more or less the school of Kabir though there are minor differences. The faith of these schools is that monotheism is the best and the caste and creed differences are not accepted. The ensemble of his disciples is called the Sikh religion. All the teachings of Nanak are compiled in one book and that book is very sacred for them and this book itself is their supreme Godhead also.”

“Aha! Is the book itself Supreme Godhead according to them?”

That book is given the same value as of Supreme Godhead. Guru Arjun Singh, the fifth Guru in the lineage, I suppose, built the Golden Temple at Amritsar.”

“They asked to discard the idolatry and asked that bad things and deeds should not be done. According to their faith, every one must wear arms. With an aim of having a separate state for the Sikhs they had established a school called ‘Khalsa’.”

“What is in their book?”

“The details of their preachers’ teachings like ‘speak truth, be patient with others, meditate etc.’. The famous and good aphorisms of both Hindu and Moslem schools are in that. It is mentioned how one can attain salvation. It contains that God is Omnipresent.”

“Which deity is in the Golden Temple at Amritsar?”

“Since their deity is Omnipresent and idolatry is prohibited for them, the temple does not house any God. The Sacred Book – Guru Granth Sahib only will be available. They respect that book with the same reverence that is given to Supreme Godhead. They do not accept the bathing in the sacred rivers but they describe all the Gurudwars as sacred places.”

“It is said that Guru Nanak followed the footsteps of Kabir. What is Kabir’s school of philosophy?”

“It is one type of Monistic vision for Kabir also. But some historians say that he might have practiced ‘Hatha Yoga’.”

“But Kabir was said to be a devotee of Rama!”

“So what! Even if somebody is engrossed in Rama, it is Monism only, isn’t it? The historians only doubted whether he practiced ‘Hatha Yoga’ for that unison with Rama.”

“Does Kabir mean Mohammedan?”
“There is no evidence of the lineage of his parents. It is said that Mohammedan couple brought up Kabir. It is said that he was born in Kaas’i (Banares) and he accepted Swami Raamaananda Teertha as his spiritual mentor.”

“Who is this Swami Raamaananda Teertha?”

“He was the third in the lineage of the disciples of Devaac’aarya, one of the Raamaanuja’s disciples. Once he went on a pilgrimage around the country. After he came back, his friends and relatives had refused to dine with him. He was frustrated with that and left for Kaas’i. There itself he lived in Panc’aghaat and propagated the school of Vaishnavism. There are many of his disciples. Kabir was one amongst them. He had authored commentary for the Brahma Sutras also. Though he had confirmed the Vis’ishtaadvaita School of philosophy only, he had been known to the public as monotheist only.”

“But you said Kabir is the disciple of Raamaananda!”

“Disciple means that he had been initiated into the Raama Mantra by Raamaananda. That is all. Though he used to chant all the names, he was fond of the name ‘Raama’. Though the Mohammedan couple brought him up, he was kept away since he was showing inclination to the Vedic religion. But he did not see any difference between Allah and Raama.”

“Was he practicing ‘Hatha Yoga’ very much?”

“It appears that he had accepted the theory of Hatha Yoga School but it was not known whether he practiced it. He also said that there are six wheels (planes) in the body and only after those are overcome the Supreme Godhead can be visualized in the ‘Sahasraara’ wheel or plane. But he did not talk of the unison of S’iva and S’akti there. His supreme Godhead is beyond the names and forms. In his view, the Aasanas and Praanaayaamas are not necessary for having a vision of this supreme Godhead. According to his doctrine, if one controls his senses with the blessings of his mentor and discard the latent impressions, the knowledge of the worldly sights will vanish. With that itself he will get the profound meditation and achieve the last stage of the meditation.”

“Does the vision of the Supreme Godhead get presented?”

“Yes. There should be a passionate desire in us for having him in our vision. When he gets into a stage where he cannot sustain being away from the vision of Supreme Godhead, then the attribute less and formless Supreme Godhead will bestow himself in the vision for the practitioner. It is said that this is a word from Kabir from his own experience.”

“All such esteemed personalities are no more. Probably that is the reason for the apathy of the present generation towards the spiritual outlook, and disregard towards that and the present day atheism. How nice it would have been if such great personalities are there now and lead us in the spiritual thinking!” said Sakuntalamma.

“Nobody says that Kabir and Raamaananda swami are still living. But the theosophical society believes that all such great seers are helping us directing in the spiritual thinking in invisible form moving throughout the world.” Said Purushottam.

“Is the Theosophical society called as ‘Divya jnaana Samaajam’ also? Though they have some public lectures, they have some secret programme also. For that they allow only their members.” Said Dr. Noone.
“That secret programme is only having connection with the invisible Yogis and other seers who are moving throughout the world helping people to move ahead in the spiritual path. The practices and doctrines of the theosophical society are quite distinct from the other religions and Dars’anas. It is as interesting as the Buddhist arguments.”

“If so, shall we discuss that in more details?” asked enthusiastically Dr. Noone.

“We may not go into intricacies but shall discuss some details.”

“Tell us first whether they accept the existence of Supreme Godhead and soul. Do they believe the Vedas?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“I have already told you that it is a distinct philosophy. We do not get the direct answers for them. But, the founders of this society, though in the initial stages were all foreigners only, believed fully the Vedic religion and established the organization in that light only.”

“Is there a meaning for the words ‘Theosophical society’?”

“Theos in Greek means God. Sophia means knowledge. When you join both these words, it is Theosophical society. That is the society which facilitates attaining the knowledge of the subject pertaining to God.”

“That is to say they believe in God.”

“Though we have the meaning of the word Theos as God, another meaning – that knowledge about the divine life, is also in vogue.”

“Then they do believe in soul also!”

“You understand from what I tell you, whether they believe or not. The universe what we call is not only one, but there are many universes. In every universe, there are many solar systems. For every solar system, there will be one God. His form is the solar system. He only created that. It becomes one with him in the end. The controller of our solar system is called ‘Sanatkumara.’

“That is to say that though there are many Gods, as far as we are concerned, there is only one God.”

“Yes! That God is the divine life. Every human being is a part of Him only. Hence every human is form of God only to a lesser or greater extent. All are equal. Though they may not be knowing, since they are a part of this all can join this society which helps in achieving this divine knowledge.”

“Does it mean that a person from any religion can join this society?”

“If it is so, it becomes conversion of the religion. They tell it more distinctly. A person need not change his faith and practices in his religion and still join this society and take this extra benefit.”

“This is very good. To leave the practicing religion, it will be difficult but it is definitely something special if we can join the society without discarding present religion and practices.”
“Every human is a part of this divine life! Though he is separated from that, rejoining that life is the aim of the life or the salvation. However, since that aim is not achievable in one lifetime, many rebirths have to be taken. In this body, there is soul. For that, there is a causal body – body with a purpose. That never becomes extinct. With that, only he will have rebirths again and again. With the experience of the previous birth, he will get better knowledge and with that he will get a better rebirth again.”

“Does it mean there are no more rebirths of lower orders like taking birth as an animal or as a duffer etc?

“No. Not any more. He will take rebirth in human body only but having better knowledge than the knowledge he gained in this human body.”

“For this what has he to do?”

“He should gain control on the passion, hate, love, greed, pride, anger etc, which are called ‘arishadvargaah’. He should discard selfishness. He should have fraternity. There should be a desire to improve the dormant powers in him. These are sufficient for the theosophical society to help from those great souls who are remaining invisible and who achieved perfection in their search. Though they had reached the last step in search of the salvation, they will be roaming around the world only to help those who are in the initial steps!”

“Is it like Bodhisattva in Buddhism, who waited to become Buddha till all others also become Buddhas?”

“Almost like that. Not only that. They descend to earth with human bodies if necessary so that we can see them physically. Zoroastre, Manu, Buddha, Jesus etc. are all great leaders who descended to the earth like that only.”

“Are they continuing with bodies that cannot be seen after they have left their physical bodies?”

“Some, continuing with their physical bodies, also are there. They are in the caves in Himalayas in places, which cannot be seen by us. Some more are those who discarded their physical bodies and donned the spiritual bodies. They move around the whole world. Wherever they are there, they can establish contact with those, who want them. With the inspiration from two of them viz., Master Maurya, Master Kooth Humi, a lady named Madame Blavitsky, established this theosophical society. These two inspirers are known as Master M and Master KH.”

“What is meant by Master?”

“It means more or less the spiritual teacher or pathfinder.”

“Now-a-days we hear names like Master C.V.V., Master E.K., etc. Do all of them belong to this Theosophical Society? A book – ‘The Autobiography of a Yogi’ was published from Ranchi sometime back. My friend sent it to me recently. In that also, there are some names in initials with the word Master. Are they same as these Masters?” asked Dr. Noone.

“It does not appear that they have any direct relationship with Theosophical Society. But the belief that these masters, moving around invisible, develop contacts with the minds of
those who approach the Masters and help these persons in the pursuit of spiritualism. The persons of Master E.K. ’s group give importance to the service. Their objective is Service to Humanity + Spiritual thinking.”

“Is it not possible to see these masters according to the doctrines of Theosophical Society?”

“Why not? As we attain higher stages in our meditation or Saadhana, we can see them. As a first step, the atoms, the electrical waves, the spirits are seen during the meditation. Once the planes or invisible C’akras in the body start functioning, the rest can be said to fall in line.”

“What are these planes or C’akras in the body? Are they not in the school of the Hathayoga?”

“In this school also there are planes or C’akras. However, they have six + one, the ‘Sahasraara C’akra’ on the head. For these people, in addition to these seven, three more are there making total as ten in number.”

“Where are these 8th, 9th and 10th situated?”

“It is said that they are below the ‘Moolaadhaara C’akra’. As soon as the meditation is started, these extraterrestrial powers start getting acquired.”

“How?”

“It is said that ‘Ether Double’ surrounds our body. By its strength only, it is said that our body remains strong.”

“Where from does it get strength?”

“As soon as the extraterrestrial powers start working, it picks up the strength. Or it picks up with the help of Masters. Or, it picks up strength from the good deeds done by this practitioner, meditation done to discard anger, desire etc. All this will be known in details from the secret procedures taught by the leaders of the society.”

“Aha! If the Ether Double gets strength, then what?”

“Whatever quantity this physical body requires, all that power – strength is given to this body and the rest is radiated outside. With that, the next persons also get health and noble thoughts.”

“The spiritual waves – Spiritual Vibrations. What happens then?”

“In fact, our bodies are seven. The worlds are seven. What we see is the physical body and the physical world among them.”

“Where are the remaining six?”

“Here itself, in us. They are there around us invisible.”

“How is that?”
“Are ultra-violet rays, infrared rays, X-rays, cosmic rays visible? Similar are these also.”

“Well, even though they are invisible, science proves their existence. It will be known that these are there, if tested with some instruments.”

“We will also prove! You practice the secret practice being taught by us without fail!”

“How to prove?”

“That is your choice. Whoever wants to believe, he believes. Others do not. Madame Blavatsky said that she had seen these invisible persons. Other prominent personalities like Led Beater etc belonging to the Theosophical Society said that they had received the special knowledge. Anne Besant supported many times their existence. The believers believed and others did not.”

“Is Anne Besant the same British lady who took part in the struggle for Indian Independence?”

“Yes, It is she only! Though she was British, she fought against them for our Independence. Of course, she did not ask for full independence. She was satisfied with the Home Rule. That is a different subject altogether. She worked as President of Indian National Congress also. Because of her, Jawaharlal Nehru and Motilal Nehru were members of the Theosophical Society for some time. It was said that while Gandhi was a student still, he read Bhagavad-Gita for the first time under the influence of Theosophical Society only!”

“That great is this Society!”

“Till the 1930s, it is said that it was quite prominent in our country. All the important people had the fascination on this in those days. However, it is said that its influence has comedown considerably now – a – days. But the programmes are continuing in their different branches even today.”

“Are there humans in these invisible worlds?”

“Oh, Yes! Why shouldn’t they be? As we attain higher and higher knowledge, we are bestowed with higher order births. Isn’t it? These higher order births mean beyond the physical body, we will be changing into the remaining six types of invisible bodies. Then we will be moving around in those invisible worlds.”

“Hi! With these entire here, those people are moving around us! They may be going through us also!” said Dr. Noone enthusiastically.

“May be! According to the Members of Theosophical Society, it is so only. For those, who achieved the divine powers, if their knowledge is not completed in that life, they again have the similar human birth. After some time during which they behave normal, these divine powers become prominent and they will be listening to the voices of the invisible great people, seeing them, talking to them and taking guiding principles from them etc.”

“Yes. I read similar things in the book ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’ It is the belief of the members of the Theosophical Society that the great people take physical bodies again and again. Is there no such rebirth in recent times for anybody?”
“One of their Masters had said that one great personality will take birth with physical body in the last few years of the 19th century. It is said that he had also predicted that that person would become world teacher. All in the society were looking for such births right from the middle of the 19th century.”

“Was he not born?” asked Dr. Noone with anxiousness.

“The prominent member of the Theosophical Society Mr. Led Beater, who proclaimed that he had the divine powers and he can identify the world teacher saw Jiddu Krishnamurthy, who was born in 1895, while he was playing on the beach in his 14th year and announced that this boy was that great personality, who would be the future world teacher.”

“Ah!” Dr. Noone exclaimed with his mouth wide open in disbelief.

“No stops any more! They picked him up, educated him through all the courses, and announced all over the world about him. He, being a pleasing, well educated, and intelligent personality, attracted the audience all over the world. He obtained unmatched name and fame along with wealth. But …”

“But … What happened then?” Dr. Noone could not bear the suspense.

“But in his 34th year, J. Krishnamurthy announced that he is not the world teacher and without the assistance of the Theosophical Society, he went on giving good spiritual lectures all over the world for 50 to 60 years. He is a great intellect. Superb orator. Had a sharp vision. J. Krishnamurthy should be counted as one among the great personalities.”

“After all, is he not the great man the theosophical Society thought to be?” asked Dr. Noone, his voice drained out.

“He told that he is not. But the prominent social figure Dr. Anne Besant still believed that he is. It is a different matter whether he is that great man they thought or not. But the tenor of his lectures took him into the class of great people only.”

“Was he lecturing the doctrines of the Theosophical Society only?”

“He asked not to follow any doctrines or any religious faith or approach any spiritual teacher. According to him, what we need to find out is truth and the person seeking it only must find it. If others are approached, that truth becomes contracted.”

“Doesn’t Salvation mean the eternal bliss or mitigation of misery? You are under an illusion that the key for that house called salvation is with some teacher or somewhere else. In fact, that key is with you only. You will get that through your good conduct. This was his teaching.”

“What did he tell about the soul, God, Heaven, Hell, Vedas etc.?”

“What is there to tell about? In these – that is in this soul, God etc, it is not for somebody to tell what is truth and what is not. It is for oneself to seek it from inner sight. You find out how your mind functions. You will know the rest. All these Religions, scriptures, worships, group worships, recitations etc are all waste. You will not know any thing from them. You know yourself or the truth. Do not believe somebody else’s words and take it as truth. This is what he used to tell.”
“If one follows his teachings, his teaching not to believe somebody else is gone. If his teachings are not believed, his teaching is waste!” Raghuramaiah brought out a legal point.

“There are two fellows. One had a bet with the other saying that he will pay him ten thousand Rupees if the second man can tell a lie which cannot be believed by the first. The second said ‘You owe me ten thousand bucks.’ Now the first is in a fix. If he believes that to be a lie, he has to pay the bet. If he does not then he has to pay back the loan of ten thousand bucks. In both the ways, he is loser. It is the same situation here also,” said Dr. Noone.

Everybody laughed at the snippet. Purushottam said, “Krishnamurthy’s teaching is ‘Do not believe blindly what I say. The final decision is yours only’. Now it is your wish Doctor!”

“Beyond this did he not have any philosophical search?”

“No that, he did not have any. He gave some guidelines. He accepted the existence of Supreme Reality. But he did not name it as God or soul etc. Mostly he used to call it with the names ‘truth’ and ‘the basic truth’. He said that though that supreme reality and we are the same but because of the mind, we consider that we are separate from the supreme reality.”

“This is more or less same doctrine of Monism.”

“You cannot say that it is fully monism, because the words of illusion, mirage etc are not there in his Dars’ana. The cause of misery is the mind. It thinks about the past happenings or the remembrances and increases the desires. Desire means dissatisfaction. From the efforts to fulfill the desires, it gives more misery only and there is no end to desires. Hence if the remembrances, desire, thinking, effort, all of these stop, that becomes the permanent stoppage of misery. The method for this is examining the mind always. Krishnamurthy said that coming out of those conducts of the mind is the method.”

“In totality, his teachings are different than the teachings of the Theosophical Society.”

“Yes. They do appear slightly different. It is not contradiction but it does not appear to be teaching the same doctrines. Even if it is practiced as per Krishnamurthy’s direction, one feels that there is no obstruction for following the Theosophical Society’s practices. Since he did not directly contradict them, these also tell him as one of the prominent persons of their society only.”

“I had read something similar to the doctrine of change of the theosophical Society somewhere. Some other doctrine also says ‘after having the birth as a human being, there is no looking back and it is going forward only and no rebirth in a lower order any more.’ Is there some thing like ‘divine life’ or ‘life divine’?” asked Avadhani.

“Similar doctrine of ‘change’ is there in a different form that belongs to famous Aurobindo, for whom there is an Aas’ram in Pondicherry. He had written a book with the title ‘Life Divine’ and this was translated into Telugu with the title ‘Divya Jeevanam’. Again the ‘Divine Life Society’ established by Swami S’ivaananda is being run as world famous center in Hrishikesh. His school can be said to be fully monism only. There may be some slight differences because of the changed times but mostly it can be said to be S’ankara’s Advaita only. Which of these two is being referred by you?” asked Purushottam.
“Yes, Yes! It is a special school of Aurobindo only. He had contradicted S’ankara’s Maayavaada - theory of illusion. I am remembering only that. It is not Swami S’ivaananda ’s Divine Life Society. I know that it is monism.”

“Aurobindo Ghosh was an extremist in the Independence struggle and later he became a philosophical thinker. Is he being referred to?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Yes. He is the person. His also is a very distinct Dars’ana only. As said by Avadhani, he did not accept the theory of S’ankara nor of the illusion. If Aac’aarya S’ankara said that we are able to see this world, it is because of the Maaya – the illusion only, Aurobindo said that it is visible due to the pleasure of The Supreme Godhead. When S’ankara said that this universe is like the waves in the sea, but waves are not the sea! Knowing that, knowledge of the Supreme Godhead who is like a sea without waves, is the Moksha. Aurobindo said that it cannot be so since the waves will be definitely there as long as the sea exists.”

“Did he accept the Vedas?”

“Though it is not that he does not accept them, he said in his books itself that he practiced Yoga based on the Tantra S’astra. The view of the critics is that he is influenced by the S’aakteya Tantras. He being a Bengali, that possibility does exist.”

“Why at all did he come out of the struggle for independence?”

“Once while he was in jail, it is said that he had the experience of direct vision and the inner voice had prompted him to devote his life for seeking the self. Then he came to Pondicherry and settled there in the practice of Yoga.”

“What is his doctrine?”

“It is very distinct from others. It appears that it is based on the famous Darwin’s theory of evolution of life. In the creation, there was only matter like dust and specks only. From that due to the pressures etc, the mono-cell organism had evolved. That means Amoeba. Over the time, the evolution started and the waterborne organisms, amphibians, land based animals without vertebrae, mammals, monkeys, then humans this chain is the Darwin’s theory of evolution. Isn’t it? But it does not stop with the human! What is next? For this his answer is that there is no more change or evolution.”

“Humans have mind which is not the case with other organisms. Hence in the next change or evolution, it is not in the body but in the mind according to him.”

“How will the mind change?”

“Presently the mind everybody has is thinking mind. The next evolution will be higher mind. In that stage, every thing will be clearly known. The next will be the illumined mind. In this stage, there will be luminescence. The next will be intuitive mind. In this stage, there will be no groping or confusion. The next will be over-mind. In this stage, the universal knowledge will be there. The last is Super-mind. In this stage, he will be having total knowledge. He will make the world around him to attain that stage of total knowledge.”

“You said it as change or evolution. If so, will not all the minds change into super minds gradually?”
“Even though the evolution of life has been from amoeba to humans, still we have the amoeba, fish, toads, monkeys and humans, all of them. Similarly, even though someone will get the Super-mind, still the lower order minded people will be also there. This being who has the Super-mind before the others, will bring up the others also.”

“Life evolution is not caused by somebody but it is on its own!”

“Though it is on its own, it is over a very long period. Hence the human can expedite that and achieve the Super-mind quickly because that only will remove the existing miseries.”

“Oh! How is it expedited?”

“By practicing Yoga.”

“What Yoga? By now, Hatha Yoga and Raaja Yoga – Patanjali’s Ashtaanga Maarga have been talked about. Which of the two is to be practiced?”

“There are three more Yogas which were not yet touched by us. They are ‘Karma Yoga’, ‘Jnaana Yoga’, and finally ‘the Bhakti Yoga’. These three along with the present two make the important Yogas as five in number. In addition, there are many more secondary Yogas like Kriyaa Yoga, Laya Yoga, Dhyaana Yoga etc. But what he taught is an integral Yoga – means Poorna Yoga or complete Yoga.”

“What is this and what is to be done in this?”

“This is a synthesis of these five Yogas. In this, most important one is surrender of the self. He should surrender his personality in full to Supreme Godhead. The rest are as usual.”

“What is his opinion on this creation?”

“The supreme Godhead transformed into the matter at first. From that life had evolved. In that life the feeling of the soul had come. That transformed into the mind. This is what had transpired till now. Now this mind should become Super Mind. Then the Bliss will happen. That transforms into the power of the Supreme Godhead. That becomes the Supreme Godhead.”

The Supreme Godhead is becoming Supreme Godhead! This is monism or Advaita only!”

“Yes! In this view it is monism – Advaita only!”

“Are there rebirths?”

“Very much. As with the Theosophical Society, there is no going back in this school also. That means there are no more rebirths in the lower order any more. But in this birth, if the demeaning conduct is more, he only will have a rebirth as an animal and after he discards that conduct he will be reborn as a human again.”

“Are there the other worlds and celestials?”

“It is said that there are other worlds or planes. There is no clear mention of the celestials. But it is said that those who had obtained divine powers by meditation can choose to be born in those worlds according to their wish.”
“Where are these worlds placed?”

“They are in us here itself, more or less like it is in the theory of the Theosophical Society.”

“Sir, in my younger days, I used to hear about ‘Brahma Samaj’. I hope this Theosophical Society and that Brahma Samaj are not the same!”

“They are not at all same. Theosophical Society was founded in America in 1875 and has found its way into India in 1879. Brahma Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy around 1829 in Kolkata.”

“Is this Brahma Samaj for the Brahmans?” asked innocently Dr. Noone as if he is not aware.

“No Doctor Sir, You say that you are from the C’aarvaaka School. You do not have an idea of Brahma Samaj! Brahma means the Supreme Brahman or Supreme Godhead. Society pertaining to them is Brahma Samaj.”

“Does this Brahma Samaj accept the Vedas?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Some say it has accepted both the Vedas and the Upanishads in full. Some say it has rejected the authenticity of the Vedas. But, some say that it has rejected some of the blind faiths prevailing in those days as non-Vedic. This Brahma Samaj opposed mainly the child marriages, polygamy, practice of ‘Sati’ etc. Raja Ram Mohan Roy said that the idolatry is against Vedic doctrines. He rejected the multi-deity-worship and proposed worship of one and only one God. He further said that that Supreme Godhead is without attributes.”

“That’s it! Since he had crusaded against practices of that time, Brahma Samaj might be branded as non-Vedic” said Sastry.

“He had respected both Christianity and Islam to some extent. He picked up this worshipping of one and only one God and some other points from them only and incorporated them in the doctrines of Brahma Samaj. That is one reason for the Vedic followers to reject the Brahma Samaj!”

“May be! Is it today also prominent?”

“It has been reduced to a great extent. After all, except the idolatry rest of the practices have come down considerably in the society! Probably because of that, its influence has weakened. In fact, after the demise of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, it split into three viz., ‘Aadi Brahma Samaj’, ‘Brahma Samaj of India’ and ‘Saadhaarana Brahma Samaj’.”

“In our Andhra Pradesh, ‘Kandukoori Veeres’alingam Pantulu, Gurajaada Appaaroa, Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu etc. are probably the Brahma Samaj followers.”

“There are many more. Almost with similar ideals, ‘Arya Samaj’ was started around 1875. But the difference is Brahma Samaj is for the ideals of Islam and Christianity to some extent, where as Arya Samaj is dead against both of them.”

“Probably Dayananda Saraswati is the founder of Arya Samaj” said Raghuramaiah.
“The specialty in him is while the Christians and Moslems are converting Hindus into their religions, he used to bring them back from those religions and arranged purification programmes for them to be brought back into the Hindu-fold.”

“By that time itself the conversions into Christianity and Islam had assumed serious proportions.”

“From the time of Moslem invasions the conversions into Islam and from the time the British have landed conversions into Christianity have been going on in full swing!”

“I think Dayananda Saraswati also opposed the idolatry.”

“Definitely. Not only that, he said that the Veda means only Samhita only. He said that it is Apaurushe’yam i.e., humans did not author it, and it is ‘Parama Pramaana’ – or the most authentic. He kept aside the Upanishads. He did not accept the monism of S’ankara. He said that in the Vedas there are nowhere untouchables. He did not bother about the Puranic tales and celestials. He opposed worshipping multitude of Gods and he proposed worship of one and only one God. He said that there are no other works that are above the Vedas and everybody can read the Vedas. He had accepted the classification of people – the so-called caste system but said that classification or caste is not acquired by birth.”

“Aunty! So many intelligent people are rejecting the idolatry, is your opinion changed?” asked Dr. Noone.

“Why should there be a change? Are S’ankaraachaarya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhvaachaarya not intelligentsia? Anybody’s opinion is his own. But instead of telling that God is present only in idol, it is more logical to think as to why God should not be present in idol also”, said Sakuntalamma.

“Sir! We are talking about so many people. Did Gandhiji tell anything new?”

“Mahatma Gandhi has never announced that he is founding a new religion or new Dars’ana. His armory was consisting only two items, viz., truth and nonviolence.”

“What is the meaning of ‘Satyaagraha’?”

“Some misinterpret it as getting angry for the sake of truth and some others as true anger. It is said that in his view the actual meaning is holding tight the truth.”

“Everybody knows that Gandhiji had admitted the existence of Supreme Godhead. What is his opinion about Him?”

“He believed that He can exist in whatever form you think. Gandhiji said ‘any logic will not hold to find out His existence or about Him. The only answer for that is faith in Him. The true definition he gave to Supreme Godhead is ‘truth’. Truth only is God. If we are steady there, it can be considered that we reached Supreme Godhead. The tools for achieving Him are non-violence, selflessness etc.”

“I think he is one of the prominent who believed that all the religions are same.”

“He used to argue clearly that every religion tell only one thing and that is about truth.”
“More or less like Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave was also practicing truth and non-violence. Both of them had conducted their lives like the old sages only. Selfless people. Hence their views also should be known to the spiritual thinkers.”

“I think we can add Rabindranath Tagore also to this list!” said Avadhani.

“Definitely. His Dars’ana also is an exquisite one! His Dars’ana is such that it can be compared to some extent with the Vaishnava school of philosophy. Elders say that it is difficult to understand his poetic writings without knowing the original bases.”

“Is it not that Tagore also rejected the Advaita of S’ankara, illusion, myth etc.?”

“Not only he rejected the illusion, myth etc, but hated the intolerance that makes the life unbearably miserable. But ultimately what he told was monism only. That is unison with Supreme Godhead is salvation according to him. The specialty in this is that in unison with Supreme Godhead, the egoism is not lost in his opinion. The knowledge of enjoying the bliss with father or the boss or the beloved will be there.”

“I think he also is against idolatry and a follower of worship to one and only one God. Was he not the member of Brahma Samaj?”

“Yes! More or less, he also was in the same path!”

“By discussing all these matters, we entered the present times. Are there no more old Dars’anas?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“Why not? There are many!”

“Is the ‘S’aakteya’ completed?” asked Sakuntalamma suspiciously.

“We talked about the peculiar practices of the S’aakteya, but actually did not complete it.” Suddenly Purushottam looked at Sakuntalamma and read her feelings. Said he, “No more embarrassing topics in S’aakteya to be narrated now, Madam.”

“What is left over in S’aakteya to be discussed by us?”

“Though coming from the S’aakteya and S’aiva schools only, mysteriously it has association with Vaishnavism also. We see S’akti as Uma in Upanishads. She appears in Bhaagavata Puraana as Yogamaaya or Mahaa Maaya, the sister of Srikrishna.”

“Did the Vaishnavites respected her because of that?”

“It is a question pertaining to the religious tolerance. But, Vishnu’s blessing that she will become world famous as Durga, Kaali and C’andika is acceptable to the Puraanas. Andal, the famous Vaishnavite mystic had described her as her fiancé’s sister.”

“How is she her fiancé’s sister?”

“She loved Srikrishna. In her dreams, Srikrishna comes accompanied by 1000 elephants. Then this Durgaadevi prepares Andal as bride with the bridal make-up etc.”
“That means, the Vaishnavites accepted Durga considering Srikrishna as the Supreme Godhead and she to be related to Him only and not as the Supreme Goddess. But is S’aakteya school, Durga only is the Supreme Goddess!”

“This again is questionable. In fact, the unison of S’iva and S’akti appears to be the ultimate in S’aakteya, but in the works like Devi-Bhaagavata etc., she is projected as the Supreme Goddess. When it is the unison of S’iva and S’akti, it is as good as considering Durga to be connected to S’iva only!”

“Oh! Do you say that Vaishnavism and S’aiivism have accepted her existence with that comparison? It may be! But Vaishnavism does not come under the S’aakteya Tantras!”

“Yes, it does not come, but S’aakteya gives an impression to the common-man that She belongs to the Vaishnava cult only by giving names like ‘Naaraayani, Vaishnavi to the same S’akti Goddess. But on an overall basis, the worship is done according to the Taantric procedures only.”

“Please tell some more details of these Tantras.”

“In S’aakteya School there are three sects. Special mention should be talked about the animal ideology, valour ideology, and divinity ideology. For the followers of animal ideology, it is all the dualism only. The monism does not come into the experience at all. The man will be bound to the cycle of the world like an animal. The ideology of the valour is for those who after enjoying a little bit of the bliss of monism, do try for having more and more of it. The ideology of the man who offers himself to the deity is the ideology of divinity. This is the classification in the S’aakteya School.”

“What next?”

“The customs of the animal ideology belong to the S’aiivism. The ideology of valour belongs to the ‘Vaamaac’aara’ and the ideology of Divinity is full with Kaulaac’aaram.”

“Do all of them worship one type of S’akti only?”

“Other than these people, followers of ‘Samayaac’aara’ consider S’akti as mother and worship her and this is widespread. The worship of Lalita, Tripura Sundari etc are all like this only.”

“What about Maridamma, Poleramma, Gangaanamma, Paiditallamma, Kunchamma, Mookaambika etc?”

“All these are considered to be the village deities. Though it is not as specific as the S’aakteya Tantras, their worship can be observed to be done according to the S’aiwa School only. These are all the customs that are built up to remember all those who died after doing some good deeds. Over the time, they have been graduated to the incarnations of Paarvati and Durga.”

“Is it possible to know what all are the incarnations of Goddess Paarvati?”

“It is not impossible but it is not easy to separate out from the village deities. It is much more difficult when there are many devotees of these village deities. Further problem is there in installing the idols with newly created names.”
“Are there no guidelines?”

“After the sacrifice of Daksha was destroyed, it is said that S’iva with the body of Paarvati, was filled with grief and was going around. At that time, to bring him to normal composure, the celestials had cut her body into pieces. These pieces have fallen at 51 places and these 51 places have been named as ‘Sati Peethas’. Some say that the S’akti temples among them only are important. They are considered to be incarnations of Paarvati by some. There are differences of opinion again in identifying these 51 places. Some more do not accept the number of 51 because, in the book called ‘Tantra Saara’ only four viz., Jalandhar, Ujjain, Poornagiri, and Kaamrup are considered to be important. Apart from these, it is said that there are 26 more ‘Upa Peethas’. The most disturbing thing is said to be S’iva not giving permission to Paarvati to go to sacrificial ceremony being performed by Daksha. At that time, it is said that Paarvati showed, ten of her forms like Kaali, Taara, Bhuveneswari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Bagala, Maatangi, and Kamala etc. and made him awestruck. Some consider only those ten forms to be the incarnations of S’akti. Whatever it may be there is no purpose of this discussion. After all, we did not sit to discuss any particular school in totality! Our primary objective was to know what is what. After listening to all, whichever school or subject becomes interesting, further details can be obtained from the learned scholars of those schools or from those Chairs (Peethas) and can be practiced” said Purushottam.

“Yes! Yes! It is sufficient to know superficially. If we know the doctrines and practices briefly, we can understand where we are going and which practice is needed for the school in which we believe. After that we can go further into details,” said Sakuntalamma.

The participants dispersed for the day saying it had become quite late by that time.
Chapter - 11

Vinita was doing her homework in her room glancing frequently at the dining table thinking that she could do her homework till her grandmother would finish her worship.

Raghuramaiah took bath, adorned the dhoti and angavastram, and entered the Puja room. Sakuntalamma was engrossed in worship and did not turn her head and saw for a considerable time. When she turned around her head in search of some thing, she noticed her husband with folded hands eyes closed.

She became spell bound. She never saw him in this way in the last four decades. She was under total confusion. She never realized that it made her happy to see him there with folded hands praying. She slowly stood up and came near him. She did not know how to call him and whether she should disturb him by calling. She had an unknown shake in her legs.

Life of Raghuramaiah had been a dignified one. He performed his duty with very high moral values and unblemished conduct and retired with the same dignity. He never had to bow his head to anybody. Nobody had ever disobeyed his word. It is very rare that he had ever saluted anybody. He had never objected her to do the worship. Had he objected, she would have stopped long time back. God was never more than him for her. But she never had even imagined that one-day he would come with folded hands into the Puja room and pray with eyes closed. So, it was some unknown feeling in her at this.

Raghuramaiah opened his eyes and saw Sakuntalamma who is in jitters. With eyes, only he had asked her the reason for her standing. “What is this? … Why “ beyond that she did not know what to say. Her throat is choked with emotion. Her voice became gurgled.

“Didn’t you say yesterday that idolatry need not be stopped? I could know clearly that it is also a worship of the Supreme Godhead only. In fact, if one wants to see God in everything, he should first become qualified if he can see the Supreme Godhead in the idol first. But Sakuntala! I have neither done worship so far nor saw somebody worshipping. You will have to initiate me into the worship!” She had noticed neither any ridicule nor fun but clearly the sincerity in those words. She could not bear that any more. She only knew her dignified husband, respected in the external world, having fun in conversation with her but not this serious talk of the desire to get initiated into the worshipping by his wife – could never be imagined by her. Over and above, his asking her without any hesitation in asking his wife could never be imagined by her. Tears flowed down her eyes without her knowing it.

“Am I to teach you worship!” She could not speak further and stood leaning on him wiping her tears.

Vinita was wondering why her grandmother did not call announce the breakfast and she came there to find the scene a little strange. She came to the conclusion that grandfather is the cause for the tears in her grandmother’s eyes. She put her both hands on her sides of the trunk and looked challenging into the eyes of her grandfather and asked him, “Why did you rebuke grandmother? Do you know how good is grandmother? You…you…” She could not complete the sentence and broke into weep.

Suddenly Sakuntalamma realized what she had done and took Vinita into her arms and consoled her. Raghuramaiah did not understand why she had tears in this way. But he felt that
the situation should turn normal to be good at the earliest. He went back into his room put on a shirt and sat down in the drawing room.

In a short while breakfast was announced, everybody had the breakfast silently and as usual, Vinita went back to her homework.

He stared at her once and again delved into the newspaper. Probably he is feeling shy for this change in him and so he avoided looking directly at her. He said, “I have not decided about the deity so far. I felt a few days ago that nothing is lost in accepting the existence of Super Power above all of us. I do not know whether there is any gain in accepting so or not but could not see any immediate loss in accepting Him, neither I could see any gain as well. There is no difference in accepting or not accepting! The majority of the world intelligentsia believes that there is one above all of us. I had spent my life so far without that belief. I felt why I should not believe like them. From that moment I am finding some satisfaction and freedom from worry began in me. I am not sure whether it is a psychological satisfaction”

“In my childhood, once I went to the market with my father. He made me sit in one of the shops and said that he will comeback soon after purchasing some items from the shop in the next street. I sat there. From the time father became out of sight, some uneasiness started in me. The owner of the shop in which I was sitting is known well to me. I knew where father had gone. I knew further he is going to comeback soon and I also knew, I need not worry. In spite of that, I was looking in the direction father had to come and feeling that he had not yet come. This became more as the time passed by. After I saw father half an hour later, I was feeling greatly relieved with an unknown feeling of reassurance. I did not forget this incident even after so much time.”

“The satisfaction and freedom from worry I had that day, was there again the night I started believing that there is the Super Power above all of us. That satisfaction is becoming stronger and stronger. But in all these days before this, I did not feel worried, disturbed, or unhappy. I did not feel guilty also even when I rejected the thought of God saying that it is madness.”

But after the satisfaction that there is Supreme Godhead has come in me, I felt that I said all that earlier about God unnecessarily. By the time I decided that God is omnipresent, the discussion on idolatry had come yesterday without any preplanning. I liked your views. By doing worship to the idol, some time will be spent and no other loss is there. As far as gain is considered, will He, the Omnipresent, not be there in an Idol? If he is there, he will become happy and with his benevolence, show us where else He is present in this Universe. Suppose He is not there in the idol, we cannot any more decide where He is available! It is illogical to say that He is there everywhere else except in the idol. So I decided to worship.”

“Now, the talk of which God! I do not know! I cannot tell yet. In my mind, there is only the feeling of the Supreme Godhead only but not any specific form of Him. Neither I am getting any of His names. One thing I am sure. I shall not worship multitude of deities. I shall worship Him who is either controller of all these deities or all these deities represented Him. That much I am sure. The rest are not decided.”

Sakuntalamma, with some unknown awe, observed him detailing all his feelings one after other in that lengthy narration. Before she said anything, Vinita loudly announced, “Oil Uncle had come!” from her study table itself.
“Hey! Did I not tell you not to call me like that? Why do you call me again like that?” Dr. Noone admonished her with a smiling face. (Noone in Telugu means Oil.)

“I will call like that only. Oil… un… cle…, Oil … un… cle…. You promised to give Ice cream but did not get me one Why? So I shall call you like that only!” said Vinita with more prank.

“You… You… let me take care of you,” Dr. Noone went to Vinita and she ran away from him. And he ran after her for some time. Then he came and sat down in the chair.

“Arre! I heard you had changed your name. Did you get it painted as Dr. N. Subrahmanyeswara Rao? Is it true?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Yes Aunty, That name Noone is boring. Does it not sound like oil?” said Dr. Subrahmanyam.

“As Long as I suggested, you didn’t care. Now you are telling the same. There is a saying in Telugu, which says that the one in which you take a bath is Ganga the most sacred! At least now you had realized!” said Sakuntalamma.

Raghuramaiah looked at Subrahmanyam and felt that there must be much stronger reason for the changing. But he resisted asking him. He will tell when he felt like telling.

“Uncle! What do you say about the difference between materialism, spiritualism?” asked Subrahmanyam.

“Am I not new to this field? How do I know? Probably materialism is that feeling that this world is there, What ever is being seen exists. Spiritualism may mean that there is something beyond what we see physically. I think that they are both quite opposite.”

“I think that we can add another in between, Idealism – those having heart.”

“What do you mean? It is not clear!”

“I think there can be three categories of people. The first of those people who say that there is only the world, the second who say that there is mind also to enjoy the world and the third saying that there is something called soul beyond the mind.”

“Not needed, Aunty! Whether the external world is to be enjoyed or internal world of spiritualism is to be enjoyed the mind is essential and so materialism and the spiritualism, two are sufficient.”

“My dear boy, it is not sufficient. What about those, who say that this world is seen only because of the mind?”

“Apart from this, there are two more classifications – one who say that God is existing, the other who do not accept this.”

“The theists and atheists!”

“Did not Purushottam garu tell that those words are not apt words? The definition of atheist – ‘Naastika’ is the one who does not believe the Vedas!”
“Yes! After believing the Vedas, is there any body who does not accept existence of Supreme Godhead?”

“Yes, he is there,” said Purushottam who entered just then after hearing that last sentence.

“What! Are there people accepting the Vedas’ authority but not accepting the existence of God?” asked Raghuramaiah after every body sat down.

“They are called ‘Meemaamsakas’. To say exactly they are called ‘Poorva Meemaamsakas.’ Sage Jaimini introduced this school.”

“The Vedas are telling that God is existing. Believing Vedas, what is this saying that God is non-existent?”

“Here it should be understood a little more clearly. All of you are using the word ‘God’ in the meaning of Supreme Godhead only. Isn’t it?”

“Yes! Yes! In our view, He is the creator of celestials like Indra etc.”

“The Vedas did not say that He is there. It is the Upanishads which said so.”

“Is there difference between the Vedas and the Upanishads?”

“How did you come back to the basics? Did we not learn this earlier? There are four divisions in the Veda viz., Samhita, Braahmanam, Aranyakam, and Upanishad. The first three constitute Karma Kaanda – the portion dealing with rituals and the fourth is ‘Brahma Kaanda’ or ‘Jnaana Kaanda’. In the first three divisions the procedures of performing the rituals is dealt with and the fourth deals with the characteristics of Supreme Godhead or the super soul – the ‘Paramaatma’ etc.”

“Yes! Yes! Now we remember. It is also told that in the opinion of some, the Veda is ‘Samhita’ only.”

“By the words ‘it is told in the Vedas’ it means generally for the common man, including the Upanishads. But the Daars'anikas or academicians, while quoting the sentences of the Veda and the Upanishads, mention their origin separately. “

“Since we are discussing the Dars’anas or Philosophy, from now onwards, it must be remembered that the Veda means the portion dealing with the rituals – the ‘Karma Kaanda’, the first portion and the Upanishad means the portion dealing with the characteristics of Brahman – ‘Brahma Kaanda’. Is it not so Sir?”

“Yes Madam! Now we will discuss about ‘Meemaamsakas’.”

“What does the word ‘Meemaamsa’ mean?

“Analysing is the meaning of ‘Meemaamsa’.”

“Why did this name come for that which was propounded by sage Jaimini?”

“He discussed the entire procedures of Sacrifices told in the Vedas. While discussing, he had questioned every point, answered himself what the general public says about it,
countered it, and found out proper answer for that. That is the reason for its name being ‘Meemaamsa’.”

“Not understood. Please tell us again!”

“For example, the first question could be ‘whether the science of ‘Meemaamsa’ should be studied’ For the answer ‘no’, the reasons are sought, and many references supporting that argument are sought. They will be showing the common reasons given by the public supporting that this science need not be studied. Then all those arguments are countered, the references showing why it should be studied are shown, and finally they will come to a decision. This is the process in this science of ‘Meemaamsa’.”

“Ah! Understood. If the topic of idolatry is there for the discussion, the question whether worship of the idol should be done or not will be put, show some references for not doing and counter them with some other references which show that it should be performed and finally come to a decision. Good. It is the same process for Upanishads also?”

Yes! That is why the Meemaamsa pertaining to the Vedas is called ‘Poorva Meemaamsa’ and that which pertains to the Upanishads is called ‘Uttara Meemaamsa’.”

“Ah! Will there be discussion in the Uttara Meemaamsa whether the Supreme Godhead has a form or not, whether this universe is an illusion or not?”

“Yes! That is the main discussion in that.”

“Shall we study that first?”

“The logically correct one is to study first the ‘Poorva Meemaamsa’ and then go to ‘Uttara Meemaamsa’. We should go step by step and not jump the steps.”

“OK. Let it be so. Tell us why did these Poorva Meemaamsakas say that the creator is not there!”

“Simple! Since it is not there in the Vedas.”

“But it is there in the Upanishads!”

“It is said that there is no use of the Upanishads.”

“Why?”

“Since there are no useful words in the Upanishads.”

“What is meant by the word useful as per them?”

“There is use of those words only which tell something to be either done or not. ‘What is the use of the rest of the words?’ is their question.”

“What does it mean?”
“Suppose I said ‘Vinita! Bring that book.’ There is a purpose for these words and Vinita will bring the book. Suppose I said ‘Do not be naughty’. A purpose is served, i.e., Vinita not becoming naughty. Suppose I say ‘Vinita there is the sky.’ What use has this sentence?”

“Understood. They consider only those sentences, which prompt for action. If so, are there no sentences in the Upanishads, which prompt for action? Similarly are there no sentences in the Vedas which do not prompt action?”

“They say that only. That is why they say that only the Vedas are authentic and the Upanishads are not. Why all this trouble? It is all because we have said that there is no creator! Isn’t it? Suppose He is there. If He is there, He needs instruments for the creation! Where from they have come before the creation? Suppose somehow they have come. Why at all should He create? Do you say it is out of compassion? If there is nobody before the creation, on whom is this compassion? Therefore there is neither creation nor deluge according to these people.”

“Then how did the Universe come into being?”

“The universe is without any beginning. It is there from time immemorial, and it will be there for ever.”

“Are the Vedas not given by Supreme Godhead?”

“When there is no Supreme Godhead at all where is that question?”

“If not, are they authored by the sages? The Veda says that there are Rishis – the ascetics, for all the Hymns!”

“Not at all. Rishis are only those who had seen the Hymns and they are not the authors for them.”

“How did they come? These Vedas?”

“They are immemorial and they will be eternal.”

“How is it possible to tell that they are immemorial? The names of Rishis are there; names of the places are there. As it is the historians are saying that they belong to some specific periods!”

“Nonsense! They thought those names are true and as soon as they hear some similar names, they connected those persons with these names. Your name is Raghuramaiah. Some how your name finds a place in some nameplate stone. After a million years, suppose that the later period people find that nameplate stone. It is as illogical and atrocious as their considering that you are the same person as Rama of Ayodhya and writing their history books accordingly. Similar is the case with the names of the sages and kings in Vedas being misinterpreted by these historians. But they are all the symbolic indications of the powers of the nature only and not even the names. Or they may be the names of the designations of the positions. For example, Sage Vas’ishtha is associated with so many kings so many times. He is mentor of Rama. At the same time, he is one among the seven sages in the constellation of the ‘Saptarshi Mandalam.’ Is Vas’ishtha’s period that of Rama or is it prior to him? It must be understood that they are the names of the positions. In those positions one by one the jeevas come in different periods.”
“It is said that the prime minister had laid the foundation stone for this building in 1947. It means the person occupying the seat of the prime minister had laid the foundation. Does it mean that the present prime minister, Mr. Vajpayee had laid the foundation stone? Vyaasa means the person who categorized. Suppose there is one Vyaasa in the present times, how logical is it to say that the Vedas have been categorized in the year 2001?”

“Consider the word Vis’waamitra. It means a Rishi, the friend of the universe. Hence, it is beyond the capabilities of the historians to fix the time of the Vedas. They say the Vedas are immemorial.

“But the Vedas mean only words and letters only! There were times when these words and letters were not there! Even with that, it can not be said that the Vedas are immemorial!”

“The words are immemorial only. They might not have been revealed for some time but there was no time when they were not there.”

“How is it?”


“You said ‘Ga’ ten times or so.”

“Did I not say ten ‘Ga’s?’”

“Why will there be ten ‘Ga’s? The same ‘Ga’ was repeated ten times.”

“It is like identifying Purushottam garu today as Purushottam garu whom we had seen yesterday!”

“It is almost like that only”

“That means Purushottam garu is not created today”

“Yes”

“Similarly, ‘Ga’ is not created. It is revealed on speaking. Were it be created, when I said ‘Ga’ Ga’ Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga’ you would have said ‘you had said ten ‘Ga’s. But since you could recognize the first ‘Ga’ next time, you said that I repeated ‘Ga’ ten times.”

“Argument is good. Your answer for the argument ‘We did not have the language and words in the initial stages of evolution of mankind, then how could you say the words were there from immemorial times’ is good. The words are always there. The tribe of the first man might not have spoken. Just because you have not spoken a particular letter or word, it does not mean that the letter or word is non-existent! Speech does not create the word or syllable. The one, which already exists, is being revealed. Therefore, the words are immemorial. Since it is made up of words, the Vedas are also immemorial. This is their view. Isn’t it?”

“Yes. They say that all the celestials are revealed by the words only.”

“The celestials names are in the words only! What specialty is there in that?”
“Oh! A lot is there. According to the Vedas, performance of yajna – the holy sacrifice is important. Isn’t it? Performance of yajna means, offering some object for a particular celestial in the sacrificial fire. As an example, when the Yajna in respect of Indra is performed, ‘Dadhi’ – the curd is to be offered in the sacrificial fire as ‘Havis’ – the sacrificial offering. That does not mean that we must conjure up that Indra is manifested with such and such form, he will have a crown and will be shining with luster, he will come here and eat this curd etc.”

“Why? That is what we have been thinking so far!”

“If that is reality, in Yajna, some times, the offerings are given to the snakes, herbs, virtue, and new moon. Are they coming and receiving the offerings? Let us consider that Indra had come invisible and picked up his offering. The snakes, tigers etc are not coming and taking! Keep them aside since they are living beings. What about the herbs, the new moon etc., which are non-living objects? How do they come and accept the ‘Havis’?”

“So?”

“So, their decision is that all these celestials, mentioned in the Vedas are the forms of the words only, that is, they are all forms of the Hymns only. They do not have specific forms with limbs etc. They have gone to the extent of telling that there is no creator at all!”

“Well! In one way, it is reasonable, but there appears that some undefined miss is in this argument. Who propounded this line of thinking? You said it is ‘Jaimini’!”

“For the aphorisms of ‘Jaimini’, two commentators viz., ‘Kumaarila Bhatt’ and ‘Prabhaakara Bhatt’ had authored interpretations. There are minor differences between both of them”

“Didn’t you say that theirs is “Karma Kaanda’ – the portion dealing with the rituals? What is meant by rituals?”

“They are of three categories. Some are ‘Nitya Karma’s. They must be performed everyday – like ‘Sandhyaavandanam’ etc.”

“What is the benefit or gain from this?”

“Nothing, but non-performance is considered as dereliction of duty. This results in the violation of ordinance and sin. The second category is called ‘Naimittika Karma’s. They are to be performed according to the circumstances. When the house is burnt, a karma called ‘Kshemavathy Ishti’ has to be performed. ‘Tarpana’ is to be performed on every new moon day and ‘Sankramana’ – the entry of Sun into a new Zodiac. Like this.”

“These are also like ‘Nitya Karma’s only but need not be performed daily.”

“Yes. In addition to these, there are ‘Kaamyka Karma’s the third category. Consider the need is the wealth. For that a particular Yajna is to be performed. For obtaining the heavens, another yajna is to be performed. Like this, all these are three categories.”

“It is said that there is no Supreme Godhead, no celestials etc. I mean they are not with forms or bodies. If so, who will bestow the rewards for these yajnas?”
“Nobody has to reward. As soon as a Yajna is performed by the person, an ‘Apoorva’ is created in that person. Whichever Karma or ritual is performed, the concerned ‘Apoorva’ is created and it makes him experience the reward of that particular Karma at an appropriate time and place. As soon as he enjoys that reward, that ‘Apoorva’ becomes extinct!”

“Is it that hey continue to perform the rituals and enjoy the rewards of them only? Do they not have salvation?”

“Why not! It is there. One must continue performing the regular and circumstantial rituals (Nitya and Naimittika Karmas) and abstain from performing the desire based rituals – the ‘Kaamya Karma’s. All these rituals are to be performed without any expectation of reward or gain. On performing so, an ‘Apoorva’ called ‘Nitya Apoorva’ is generated. This will make him experience the fruits of the rituals done by him and in addition be with him throughout and disconnect the bonds with this worldly cycle. Then he will have the knowledge of the self. That is salvation. The characteristic of salvation is the loss of the present human body and not getting into further rebirths etc.”

“Please do not consider this to be an interruption! It is said that as per the Poorva Meemaamsakas, the celestials do not have bodies and they take the form of the Hymns! But how did we, worshipping regularly ‘Panchaayatana’ – combination of Vishnu, Rudra, Ambika, Surya and Ganes’a, become ‘Poorva Meemaamsakas”? Sastry asked.

“I did not say that you are a definite ‘Poorva Meemaamsaka’, I said probably you belong to them, because, there was no possibility for you to be from either of S’aiva, Vaishnava, Advaita and S’aakteya schools. There is no question of you being from Vis’ishtaadvaita or Dvaita schools since you do not allow them anywhere near you. Your practice does not come anywhere near the C’arvaaka, Buddhism, Jainism, Saankhya, Yoga, Naiyayika, Vais’esha schools. Left over is only the school of Poorva Meemaamsakas. So, I said in that way. But I said another word also! Nobody remained in their original religious practices and mixed some of the practices from the nearby religions also. In that way, it might have got mixed up also!”

“But, whatever might be said, many of the practices of the Poorva Meemaamsakas are not known to us! How can we belong to that school?”

Purushottam had a smile on his lips. “Do the people of each religion know clearly their religion like the religion of S’aivism by the S’aivas, Religion of Vaishnavism by the Vaishnavas, Christianity for the Christians etc.? Therefore, it is not possible to tell that you do not belong to a particular school simply because of your not knowing.”

“Even if we consider that we do not know, how can we do the worship of the idols saying that the celestials are all forms of Hymns only?”

“To say so is definitely slightly difficult. It is not proved whether the idolatry is from times immemorial in our country. According to Ramayana, it can be seen that many ages ago, during the period of Rama itself, the idolatry was in practice. Puraanaas reveal that in the beginning of the creation itself, Vishnu has given to Brahma his idol for worship. But some historians say that the idolatry was started in our country only after Buddha.”

“When Puraanaas reveal so, why should they say so?”
“They do not accept Puraanas as history. It is considered as stories only and that is what we had learnt from the westerners.”

“Then, do you say that originally there was no idol worship in our houses and in the subsequent period these Panchaayatanas had come into being?”

“I will not and cannot say that. I will say that it is very difficult to come to a conclusion. As it is, I say that it is difficult to confirm that you belong to the school of Poorva Meemaamsakas! I only am thinking that those similarities are quite a few. That is all. Number of branches and sub branches, have come up in every school. It has become common for mixing from the nearby schools. Earlier I had told once that many get confused with the doctrines of Saankhyas to be those of Vedantins. It will not be surprising even if, over a period, characteristics of one school get added to the other. Now that is the status of S’aivism and Advaita. In almost all the Advaita Aas’rams, the temples of S’iva are there. The followers of some branches of S’aivism are defining salvation as unison with S’iva alone. These are the reasons for this confusion. In reality, Advaita is different from S’aivism. Those who can distinguish this difference are very few.”

“Since you are making repeated inquiries, I will quote another well known argument also. S’ankaraachaarya had accepted some schools as the Vedic, and hence he asked his followers to have five of the related deities in their worship. Then you will be Advaitin with the knowledge of dualism or Dvaita. Over a time, you can get converted also from Advaita into Dvaita. You can consider so also. Whatever it may be, after deciding your goal, you should get into related practicing.”

“There is one argument that the idolatry is the practice of the tribesmen!” said Avadhani.

“Do you mean to say that tribesmen mean uncivilized?”

“Yes.”

“So said the Christians. In fact, for the prehistoric tribesmen, the lofty religions without idolatry were there but over the ages, it had deteriorated and uncivilized tribes had started idol worship. But the academicians had proved that idol worship was in practice even in highly civilized races also.”

“Whatever any body may say, nobody can deny that stone or wood sculptured into the form of deity, or painting of the deity inspires the man much more than an ordinary stone or wood or paper. Not only that. Even in the classroom, the lesson will be understood better if taught with the help of a picture than simply left to imagination. Another point. – It is said that compared to the philosophical thought process in abstract without the help of an idol, the one with the help of the idol gives more social and moral benefits, according to a modern research.”

“Do you say that it is not there anymore in the Christians who have banned idol worship?”

“It should be said that it had not become zero. In the orthodox churches i.e., in the eastern churches, worshipping Mother Mary, the mother of Jesus, can be seen even now. Some of the branches might have stopped prominently but all the branches did not stop. There are umpteen number of people, who turn towards the picture of Jesus hung on the walls in their
houses and pray saluting Him either during the prayer times or during critical times! That also comes under idolatry only.”

“What about the Mohammedans?”

“They had banned idolatry very seriously and damaged all the idols in India. But strangely, they had not stopped worship of the black stone in Kaaba. That is a paradox.”

“Did S’ankaraachaarya really accepted worship of Idol?”

“He rejected idolatry in case of those with the spiritual mind set up. However, he compromised saying that idolatry is an easy method for those who do not have that philosophical mindset up. Is it not quite famous that he installed Yantras in many temples? It would not have been possible had he not accepted idol worship. So, as answer for your question it can only be said that he did not reject it outright.”

“Look! Our discussion is on the sidetracks. Please tell about Poorva Meemaamsa,” reminded Raghuramaiah.

“Sir, One more question only. Please let it be answered!” interrupted Sastry. “Why are we called ‘Smaarthas’?”

“There is definition that those who follow and make others follow the Smritis giving importance to them are called ‘Smaarthas.”

“Are there those not following the Smritis?”

“Not that there are non-followers. Some ritual procedures, characteristics of the rituals, procedures of practices etc are detailed in the Vedas, Smritis, and Aagamas also. It is general opinion that those who give importance to the Smritis are called as ‘Smaarthas. Not only that, all those who get the sixteen functions like marriage etc. done, are called ‘Smaarthas and those related to them are called as ‘Smaarthas’. According to another definition those who conduct the functions and the duties related to the house or the married-man, are ‘Smaarthas’.”

“If one finds difference between the Veda and Smritis, which should be followed?”

“The Poorva Meemaamsakas say that prominence should be given to the Veda only. If it is not clear in the Vedas and is not contradictory to Vedas, then only Smriti is accepted.”

“Is the ‘Panchaayatana’ worship from S’ruti or from Smriti?”

“I do not know clearly but since your elders had been following it, it is authentic for you also.”

“For the Poorva Meemaamsakas, the conventional practices also are authentic. However, ‘Kantharavena’ either in the S’ruti or Smriti should not be banned.”

“As an example, in one particular sacrifice, ‘Audambari’ a type of wooden rod is to be used. Smriti says that the rod should be covered with cloth. But the Veda prescribes that one should sing touching that wooden rod. It will not be possible to touch it if that is covered
fully. So, keeping aside the instruction of Smriti, the wooden rod will be covered only partially.”

“Similarly, if one topic is seen in Smriti and that is not seen in S’ruti now and neither the banning is seen. Then, we must consider that whatever is not there in S’ruti will not be there in Smriti and so, it should be taken that this particular topic could have been lost in the S’ruti or might have been damaged, and thus Smriti should be followed.

Now, the practice being followed by the elders conventionally must be followed because the elders would not be practicing without referring to the S’ruti and Smriti. Hence, that particular topic, even if it is not there in presently available, should be understood to have been lost or damaged. Poorva Meemaamsakas confirmed that the elders custom must be followed.”

“If it is told in the Vedas, it need not be verified in another works!”

“No. Not necessary. That is why; the Vedas are considered to be authenticities by themselves. Suppose one sees two moons in the sky. It is a direct knowledge authenticity or Pratyaksha Pramaana. Even then, if the trustworthy comes and tells that there is only one moon in the sky, then it will be known that the eyes are with some disease. That means the knowledge generated by the direct vision is being cross checked by another instrument of knowledge – the word of trustworthy, the S’abda Pramaana. Vedas do not require such cross check. All those in Vedas are themselves authenticities. This has been finally concluded by the Poorva Meemaamsakas.”

“Have they accepted this – The Vedas as ‘Apaurushe’yam’?”

“It is agreed that they are Apaurushe’yam. But for this word two meanings are in the circulation – one: the ones which are not authored by human beings, second: The ones which have been told by the Supreme Godhead. They do not accept the second meaning.”

“Is everybody authorized to perform the yajnas prescribed in the Vedas?”

“In totality, there are four categories of citizens viz., the Brahmins, Kshatriyas etc. Isn’t it? In this, the Brahmins were given the authority of doing and getting done these sacrifices. The next two categories were not given the authority of getting them done. The last category was not given the authority for doing also.”

“What about the women?”

“‘Swargakaamo yajeta’ – that man desirous of the heaven should perform yajna. Since the masculine gender had been used here, the woman does not have authority according to some. Some others say that it is not like that, though the woman may not be having authority all by herself, she has it when joined by her husband. The decision that couple has the authority is prominent.”

“Doesn’t S’ruti make it clear?”

“No. In this matter, Smriti alone is reference.”

“How many are the Pramaanas for them at all? Pratyaksha, Anumaana, S’abda -Is that all or they have picked up Upamaana also like Naiyaayikas?”
“We discussed earlier that for the aphorisms of Poorva Meemaamsa, there are two commentaries written and there are slight differences between them. Amongst them, Prabhaakara had accepted another Pramaana called ‘Arthaapatti’.

“Did they consider that for the knowledge generation, the already available Pramaanams viz., Pratyaksha, Anumaana, S’abda and Upamaana are not sufficient?”

“Yes. They said that they are insufficient and ‘Arthaapatti’ is also needed.”

“How does this instrument of knowledge generate knowledge?”

“Devadatta is there. He does not eat during the daytime. We know that. But he is well built. If he does not take food, he cannot be well built up. So, since it is already proven that he does not take food during daytime, we conclude the knowledge that he must be taking the food during nighttime! This is ‘Arthaapatti’.”

“Does it not fall under the ‘anumaana pramaana’ or knowledge of inference?”

“That is what the Vis’ishtadvaitins say, but the Praabhaakaras do not accept it.”

“It is their wish! Let it be. We need not go into that argument but are there only these five or anybody else had said about some more?”

“Yes it was said that there are five more. One more – ‘Anupalabdhi’ is accepted by Kumaarila Bhatt, who is the author of the second commentary of this science of Meemaamsa.”

“What is that?”

“Is there a pot on the tea table here?”

“No.”

“How is it known?”

“It is not there and so it is known.”

“Upalabdhi – getting is not there, so it is known! This is called ‘Anupalabdhi’.”

“Why this Pramaana? Since it is not there physically, it can be said as Pratyaksha Pramaana as well!”

“The Vis’ishtadvaitins say that it can be said so. But, Kumaarila Bhatt ‘s argument is that Pratyaksha is the knowledge obtained from the relationship established between the senses and objects. The pot is not there! Hence, the absence of the pot is known without any relationship established and so it cannot be said as Pratyaksha.”

“The argument is fine. Vis’ishtadvaitin or somebody must have countered this. What is that counter?”

“What a fellow! If you are seeing the pot, there the earth is also seen. Isn’t it? Will that pot become an attribute for the earth or not? This will be their question.”
“Meaning is not understood.”

“I am fair. In this ‘fair’ is attribute for ‘I’. I am seen and the fairness is seen to your eye! Hence, for the earth, your eye sees the attribute of pot’s availability. Do you accept it as ‘Pratyaksha’?”

“It is Pratyaksha only because unison occurred for the sense and the object.”

“What is the object here? Is it earth or pot?”

“Both”

“No. The pot cannot exist without the earth. Or, without the tea table, the pot does not exist! Hence, the object seen by you here is only the earth or the tea table, which have the adjective of pot’s availability, but not the pot. Isn’t it?”

“Accepted. What is wrong?”

“Suppose the pot is not there. What is seen there now?”

“What will be seen? Nothing… wait a bit! Understood. Earth without pot will be seen. The earth with the adjective of not having pot will be seen. Since the unison for the eye and object did happen, it is Pratyaksha only. Their argument is good. Well, tell about another Pramaana.”

“The next Pramaana is ‘Sambhavam’. Suppose we say that there are bucketful of grain. It gives the knowledge that there is half a bucket of grain, quarter bucket of grain etc. Isn’t it? This is ‘Sambhavam’.”

“Eh! This is a part of the Anumaana Pramaana only!”

“There is another Pramaana called ‘Aitihya’. ‘The elders said so!’ ‘There is a spirit on that tree’. Such sentences also generate the knowledge and so ‘Aitihya’ also is an instrument of knowledge – ‘Pramaana’ according to some.”

“What for? It is pure waste! If the narrator is trustworthy, it is knowledge from the trustworthy – ‘S’abda Pramaana’. If not, it is not an instrument of knowledge at all.”

“There is another Pramaana – instrument of knowledge, namely ‘C’eshtha. Consider that instead of verbal communication, it is a body communication. Then also, the knowledge will be generated. Isn’t it?”

“This also can be taken as part of the ‘S’abda Pramaana’ only. No necessity of separate name.”

“The last is ‘Paris’esham’. When there are more than one meaning for a word, the one which remains suitable to the situation after the others being eliminated as not being suitable for that particular context, if taken as the meaning without explicitly proving that that is the meaning for that word, the knowledge generated is considered as ‘Paris’esham’.”

“This also comes under the ‘Knowledge of inference – ‘Anumaana Pramaana’ only and hence there is no substance in this. Out of the instruments of knowledge, which you had
mentioned now, four of them viz., ‘Sambhavam, Aitihya, C’eshtha, and Paris’esham’ are not worthy to be considered as instruments of knowledge – Pramaanas. The rest three viz., Upamaana, Arthaapatti and Anupalabdhi can be considered to be parts of the ‘Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda’ pramaanas. I believe then it becomes easier. So there are only three instruments of knowledge – Pramaanas viz., ‘Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda’. That’s all.”

“Vis’ishtadvaitins and Dvaitins accepted thus only these three. However the Advaitins insisted that six should be there.”

“Six mean – the three viz., Upamaana, Arthaapatti and Anupalabdhi plus the earlier ‘Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda’ only. Is that all?”

“Yes.”

“You have mentioned about the instruments of knowledge, but you have not told about that instrument which causes the ‘Ajnaana’ – the ‘lack of knowledge’.”

“What is to be told about ‘Ajnaana’? When knowledge is not generated it is ‘Ajnaana’ – lack of knowledge.”

“No, not like that. I mean to say that state when the rope is seen as snake. Isn’t it incorrect? Didn’t the wrong knowledge of the rope as snake - ‘Ajnaana’ got generated?”

Purushottam had a smile. “Seeing the snake here is not called ‘Ajnaana’. ‘Ajnaana’ means not knowing any thing i.e., neither rope nor snake being seen. All such incidences are called as ‘Anyathaajnaa’ or ‘Vipareetajnaana’.”

“Some thing or other, I do not know those technical words, but why do we have such wrong knowledge?”

“Why do you require all this?”

“Isn’t it from these we come to know whether this universe exists, whether Supreme Godhead exists?”

“How? Are the instruments of knowledge viz., ‘Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda’ not sufficient for knowing the answers for your reasoning?”

“Not that they are insufficient. Knowing the cause of the disease is as important as knowing the medicine that cures the disease. Non-existent snake is seen in the rope. We were afraid! Similarly, we may be afraid of the non-existent Supreme Godhead! Should it not be confirmed? Not only that, the rope that existed was not seen. Hence, we could not use it. Similarly, the Supreme Godhead that exists if not seen, His use is lost! Hence, one must know the causes for making one see something, which is non-existent and not see that which exists. Then only one can conclude. Is it not mentioned in the books? Do you think that elders did not think about this?”

“Very good Raghuramaiah garu! With people who can think like you, it will be very much encouraging for the speakers of the Dars’anas.” Saying so, he started with lots of josh.
“The subject talked about by you is called ‘Midhya’ – meaning falsehood or illusion – ‘Bhraanti’. Taking an object as something different from what actually it is has been described and causes are mentioned by different academics in different ways.”

“My intention was to discuss only that. I did not know the word ‘Bhraanti’ to be used!”

“Generally while we elaborate these incidences, two illustrations viz., the rope and snake or the pearl-shell and silver, are used.”

“The illustration of the rope and snake is known. What is that illustration of the pearl shell and silver?”

“The pearl shell will be shining brightly. Seeing that as silver is the illustration. That is all.”

“OK. Let us go ahead”

“First let us consider the Buddhists.”

“Who? Those who say that everything is void only? Are those who say all external objects all void only?”

“You remembered the subject very well! Very good! Let us take the first set of people. It is all void for them. Isn’t it? So according to them, there is nothing like seeing a snake in place of the rope. When some thing is being seen, which is void, how does it matter whether it is rope or snake?”

“Let us not bother about them. If everything is void, why should the rope be seen at one time and at the other snake should be seen? For everything, they have only one answer. Let us keep them aside. We shall take up the Buddhists, who say that only soul is there and the rest are not there.”

“Their argument is that you are getting illusion of seeing the silver on the pearl shell but that is not so.”

“Then what is that? The sensory organ – the eyes, saw the pearl-shell but visualized it as silver. The senses and the pearl-shell had the contact but surprisingly, silver is observed without the contact between the senses and silver.”

“That exactly is what they say! Since it is seen without the connection to the senses, it is the inner knowledge only, but looks as though it is outside.”

“Is it like the Idlis becoming visible on the table in front the moment I think I am eating Idlis?”

“Almost. Soul means a flow of the knowledge. If that flows out and takes the shape of the objects, we see those objects. Here the knowledge of silver did not flow out since the silver is not there in reality outside. It is thought that the knowledge of silver that is inside, is available outside. Hence theirs is known as ‘Aaatma Khyaati’.”

“What is meant by ‘Khyaati’?”
“This is the knowledge of ‘Bhraanti’ that is being discussed. That of the ‘S’oonyavaadins’ is ‘Asat Khyaati’. Sat means existence, Asat means nonexistence. Asat Khyaati means being visible without any thing existing. The Yogaachaaras have Aatma Khyaati. That means, the ‘nonexistent silver’ or the ‘snake’, they say are the forms of knowledge only.”

“In both of these cases, how do we know which is real and which is illusion? Is it silver or pearl shell? Why these differences should come up?”

“Is it necessary when their final aim is to tell that everything is void only?”

“I agree. We need not go deeper into this Asat Khyaati and Aatma Khyaati.”

“The Saankhyas say: ‘you have seen the pearl shell. You said it is silver. When you said ‘it’ what the eye observed is correct only, but incorrect when you said ‘silver’. The remembrance of silver seen long back is reminiscent now. That remembrance has come out.”

“Do they say that it is direct vision when said ‘it’, and remembrance when said ‘silver’ and both have become one?”

“Yes! You could not differentiate which is directly visible and which is recollection of the remembrance, and hence you had illusion.”

“This is some what reasonable. On seeing the rope, the snake was remembered. Got confused between what was actually seen and what was remembered and considered the remembered object to be the object seen. This statement is good, but if the rope is seen, I may remember snake, my wife may remember something else! But it is not happening like that! Everybody sees only snake when rope is seen! Why should everybody have the same remembrance?”

“This could not be explained by their school. This phenomenon is called ‘Akhyaati’. That means that there is no illusion at all and both the Jnaanas are reality, only you could not differentiate.”

“If both the knowledges are reality, in experience it is not snake at all!”

“That is another deficiency in their doctrine. So, the Naiyaayikas termed it as ‘Anyathaa Khyaati’.”

“What does this mean?”

“If we saw really the snake, what do we say? We say ‘this is snake’. only. Isn’t it? If I am fair, fairness is the attribute to me. Similarly, if it is said ‘it is snake’, then ‘snake’ is an attribute to ‘it’. This is the relationship. Is it OK?”

“Oh!”

“Now, instead of rope if the snake is seen, we only say this is snake. But for ‘this’ snake is not proper attribute. ‘Rope’ only is the proper attribute. Isn’t it?”

“Yes”
“What occurred by this is a relationship between two objects is shown, though in reality the relationship does not exist. Hence it becomes ‘Anyathaa Khyaati’.”

“Aha! When Saankhyas state that they can not differentiate between two objects, Naiyaayikas say that they can not find the relationship between two objects!”

“No that they can not know, a relationship which does not exist has been created. That means, a particular object is seen as a different object. We must say that ‘Rope became a snake’ or in other words, ‘the rope has taken over the characteristics of a snake’.”

“It is understood well now. It is not that snake is seen over the rope, but rope has become snake. This is ‘Anyathaa Khyaati’. If it is so, the snake should bite also!”

“Yes, that deficiency is there in this. Now, S’aankaraachaarya said that this is ‘Anirvac’aneeya Khyaati’.”

“Does this mean ‘cannot be defined’?”

“Snake is seen. Hence, it cannot be said that it is not there. Since in reality it is not there, it cannot be said that it exists! It is neither ‘Sat’ nor ‘Asat’. So it is called ‘Sadasat Anirvac’aneeyam’.”

“This is like a fence sitter. If you say it is there, it is there. If you say it is not there, it is not there. We are asking why this illusion does occur and not whether it exists or not. Is it not said whether it is an illusion?”

“Here one must carefully examine. Snake is seen on a rope. Suppose it has to be said, that snake is the truth. What should be said then? The snake is seen without the rope being there. That means it is not illusion. If it has to become an illusion, then the rope must be there. That is called ‘Adhisthaanam’. If ‘Adhisthaanam’ is real, then illusion occurs that it is snake! Look at the strangeness! Rope is real, and snake is unreal. But unless the rope is there, snake is not visible. What does this mean? Illusion can be seen only with the support of a real object. That is their doctrine.”

“If that is so, for this illusion, will the real object be support always? Or is it only occasional? That means, will the snake be superimposed over the rope always or only occasionally?”

“Why are you asking so?”

“My question is whether the rope can getaway from the snake at all. It is not seen as a snake for all the time! How do we know that it is not rope but snake?”

“I do not know. I have not understood what you are asking. Let me go to the next subject –‘Sat Khyaati’.”

“Wait a bit Sir! Let me understand this ‘Anirvac’aneeya Khyaati’ clearly. This looks somewhat strange and half understood.”

“Ask if so! I shall clarify to the extent possible.”
“It is said that the illusion takes the support of a real or true object. The illusory object is unreal. That is, the snake is unreal. The object, support for the unreal object, is real i.e., the rope is real. Thus, both the real and unreal are together and hence, it cannot be said whether it is ‘Sat’ or ‘Asat’. Have I understood up to this correct?”

“Yes”

“Which is that real or true object?”

“Since this is the school of S’ankaraachaarya, and so I shall give the definition as per his view.”

“Is there no definition for ‘real’ or ‘true’ that is universally accepted?”

“No. Bhagavad-Ramanuja counters very logically S’ankaraachaarya’s definition.”

“Counter is afterwards. First of all tell the definition as per S’ankara.”

“Truth is that which is unaffected by all times. This is his definition for true or real.”

“What is its meaning?”

“Present, past and future is all times. Whichever object exists in all the three times, that is real or true. It is unreal if it does not exist in any one of these three times.”

“Understood what is true or real. His doctrine is that an illusory object takes the support of a real object. Isn’t it? How do we know whether the object that is visible to us is illusory or the object supporting the illusory object?”

“Means?”

“Let us leave the illustration of the rope and snake since we have understood that. Let us take the chair in front of us. Is that chair real or illusion? How do I know that?”

“Your doubt is whether the chair is seen supported by another object like the snake on the rope or like the rope is seen as rope only, is the chair seen as chair only? Is it so only?”

“Yes! Yes!”

“Is the chair real or unreal?”

“According to your definition… since it did not exist some time back – that is before it is made. That is since in the past it did not exist, it is unreal.”

“So it is illusory only.”

“Aha! Like the snake, the chair is illusion only. Similarly, these walls, houses, persons whatever we see should be illusion only! If so, which object supports this universe, like the rope supporting the snake?”

“An object that is real or true.”
“What is that? What is its name?”

“What suppose we say that it has a name. Somebody should have given that name to it! That is to say that the object did not exist before that naming. Hence, it is unreal or untrue. Hence, if there is a name, it is unreal only. A true object is that is all.”

“What a problem! How do we say without the name? How do we know something like that exists?”

“Did we not discuss that illusion or unreal object is supported by a true or real object? Since this entire universe is unreal, there must be a real object supporting this unreal universe. Hence it is there.”

“How do we know that this universe is unreal or illusion?”

“It is very simple! Because it is unreal! Truth is that which existed yesterday, it exists today and it will exist tomorrow.”

“Are you proving the real taking unreal as the base? Or are they proving unreal based on the real object? Is it logical to conclude existence of the rope because the snake is visible? I am not understanding!”

“I too, do not understand. Only because of this, it is not known whether it is ‘Sat or ‘Asat’ said S’ankara.”

“When will the unreal vanish and real will be seen?”

“What is that vanishing of the unreal?”

“Will it not vanish?”

“Vanishing is only when it is there! You yourself are saying it is unreal!”

“You are confusing.”

“No. Not at all! I am only telling the doctrine of S’ankaraachaarya.”

“I shall again ask. Please tell. Snake is seen on the rope. It is not real. When does the snake vanish and I see the rope clearly?”

“Snake should vanish when it is real, but where is the real snake! So what should vanish?”

“But it is seen!”

“Hence it is called ‘Sat’.”

“But it is not real!”

“Hence it is called ‘Asat’.”
Everybody is listening enthusiastically with interest the arguments and counters between Justice Raghuramaiah and logician Purushottam. It is like a courtroom scene.

“There is something missing in this school, Purushottam garu! Though it looks fine for the sake of argument, we are missing some point. The argument does not end when we talk about which is the beginning the seed or the tree. It is like that now. Is the snake seen since the rope is there? Or is it that it should be concluded that the rope is there since the snake is seen? Is it truth from untruth or untruth from truth? This argument is unending. Arguments like the darkness is removed by light or the light has been there because the darkness has vanished are for the sake of arguments only and for the satisfaction of the academics only and not for the practical applications. The arguments in our courtrooms also are like this while arguing on constitutional points and the laws. They do not benefit either the petitioner or the respondent. It will be a head ache to find out whether the relevant point is there in this argument for the petitioner or respondent. This ‘Anirvac’aneeya Khyaati’ also is like that only!”

“Bhagavad-Ramanuja also said the same. That is how he had introduced the word ‘Sat Khyaati’.”

“Yes, tell!”

“His theory is that every object has the qualities of other objects to some extent.”

“How?”

“According to the theory of ‘Pancheekarana’ of Upanishads.”

“If S’ankaraachaarya based his arguments on logic and intelligence, he has taken the Upanishads as the base!”

“That is the school of Bhagavad-Ramanuja. We should not use the Upanishads to support our logic. Logic should be put to use for explaining the Upanishads.”

“If we have faith on the Upanishads, we should do only as you said. It is proper that the logic should be used only when you are not clear about their importance. What did Ramanuja say about the contents of the Upanishads?”

“This universe is made up of the five elements viz., the earth, water, fire, air and sky. All these five did not join each other, while the universe is created, like the grains and millets but they mixed like the flour of the grains and floor of the millets.”

“Is it your view that if we take the mix in our hand and try to see each ingredient separately, it cannot be done and all of them got mixed up so that everything is in everything?”

“”In this mix also, all did not mix up without any proportions. You divide earth in two parts and keep aside one portion. Divide the other half in four parts. Divide the water, fire, air and sky in the same way.”

“Wait! Wait! Let me note down. Let the earth be B, water be N, fire be F, air be A and Sky be S. What should be done? Earth should be divided in two. That is 1/2B and 1/2B. One
half should be kept aside and the second be divided further in four parts. That means 1/8B, 1/8B, 1/8B, and 1/8B. Yes. They are ready.”
“Now divide the rest four also similarly.”

“Yes I have done. Now tell.”

“The 1/8B s in B should be added to all the 1/2N, 1/2F, 1/2A and 1/2S.”

“Yes, done.”

“Similarly you add the four 1/8Ns to the other four halves i.e., 1/2E, 1/2F, 1/2A and 1/2S.”

“Yes!”

“Now similar addition may be done for the other three viz., the fire, air and sky also.”

“Wait. Let me write down.

Yes. Noted down. Now, what happens?”

“In the element earth, if there is only one half of earth and in the rest of the half small amounts of water, fire, air and sky elements are there. Similar is the case with the other elements also.”

“Do you know what is a mirage?”

“Yes! While going in a desert one sees as though there is water at a distance.”
“The reason for that is this type of distribution only according to the Upanishat and the School of Ramanuja Dars’ana which had explained that theory.”

“Did not understand.”

[The pictorial representation of the process of combining of the different divisions to be inserted here]

“There is a portion of water in the earth also. Isn’t it?”

“Yes! It is there in small amounts.”

“That small amount only is seen as water in the mirage under some special circumstances. Because of that only, that water is not suitable for quenching the thirst. Water is visible also in certain circumstances only.”

“Well! It is quite scientific, but for that it may not need that much of trouble! In the olden times, the theory was that the entire universe is made up of the five elements viz., earth, water, fire, air and sky and so it was said so. Similar theory is there in modern times also. All the elements in the whole universe have been divided into 92 elements and a periodic table has been prepared. In that the gaseous elements, aqueous elements and solid elements – all are there. All have electrons, protons, and likes only. The difference is some have more of them while some of them have less. That is the only difference.”

“For example, take hydrogen. It is gaseous element. It has only one proton and one electron. In that table, as we go up from the gaseous to liquid and solid forms, the number of protons and electrons goes on increasing. On creation of some circumstances, one element can be converted into another element for a short period. They are called isotopes. Therefore, modern science had proved that in all elements the qualities of other elements are available in varying degrees and they are visible only in certain conditions only.”

“This is basic thought of Bhagavad-Ramanuja. In both the rope and snake, the characteristics of both are available in both the objects but the characteristics of snake are very few in the rope. The characteristics of the rope are very few in the snake. Being thin, long and twisted structure, are common characteristics for both. If the rope has the characteristic of being static, the snake has the characteristic of biting. Hence, if the snake is seen in the rope, it is reality. However it will not bite.”

“How can it be reality? That snake cannot bite!”

“The wind is flowing now. What does it mean when it is said that: ‘it is a fact – it is reality?’”

“What is there in the meaning of this? ‘The sweat of the body had dried up and it is comfortable’ is the meaning.”

“What does it mean when it is said: ‘flow of the wind is untrue’?”

“’The sultriness is as it is. It is sweating very badly and is uncomfortable.’ This is the meaning.”
“In the same way, the meaning of saying that snake is seen on the rope, is whether it had bitten? Were we afraid or not? Did you tremble or not? Did you ask for the rod or not? The way we had said that air flow is reality when purpose of air flow is fulfilled and the sweat had dried up and it is comfortable, it is reality in saying that the snake is seen on the rope because the purpose of the snake being seen is fulfilled.”

“But as soon as we focused the light on that seen in the dim light, there was no more snake!”

“It is not there. Then the characteristics of the rope only are seen. The removal of fear, stoppage of the trembling, which are the purposes of the rope had happened and so the rope is truth!”

“That means the rope and snake becoming reality or unreality are not happening at the same time. Both are truths only, but have become truth one after the other.”

If so, how do we know which is reality and which is unreality?”

“The touchstone is whether it had fulfilled its purpose. If it had fulfilled, it is true. This is called ‘Pramaa’. If it did not, it is called ‘Bhrama’!”

“Though its visibility is reality, if it had not fulfilled its function, it is Bhrama only!”

“Here the fulfillment of the purpose is of two types. The snake is visible for some time and it made you tremble. The purpose of that snake is fulfilled. So, it is reality for that particular period. But the moment that Bhrama is over, that purpose is no more fulfilled. The rope only is visible. That is Pramaa. The purpose of rope is fulfilled.”

“The water is seen in the mirage and by running for it, its purpose is fulfilled. Hence, it is reality until running for it was over. But as soon as it was reached, it was useless for drinking. Hence it is untrue or Bhrama. Is it OK?”

“Yes! In this way, a minor manifestation of an object being considered as the total manifestation is called ‘Bhraanti’ according to Ramanuja.”

“It is quite scientific! Very nice, but there is difference between the definition of reality for S’ankara and Ramanuja!”

“I told you in the beginning that difference does exist. For him, the reality means, it should exist in the past, present and future. For Ramanuja, it should be able fulfill its objective for which it is there.”

“Aac’aarya S’ankara defined ‘Bhrama’ as untrue and ‘Pramaa’ as reality. Ramanuja had said ‘Bhrama’ also could be reality. Isn’t it?”

“Yes! Let us take the definition of Aac’aarya S’ankara for reality as that existing in the present, past and future and see what problems will come up.”

“I told Madam Sakuntala that I was hungry. She gave me two laddus. I ate. My hunger is satiated. Now, are the laddus reality or untrue? Is my eating reality or untrue?”
“According to S’ankara, since the laddus are no more existing, it should be untrue. But since the hunger is satiated by eating, it cannot be said to be untrue, can we?”

“Hence by taking the definition of fulfilment of the objective for the reality, independent of the present existence of laddus since the purpose of satiating the hunger is fulfilled, they become reality.”

“True! If we counter it like this by some adjustments, is it proper? What do they say as answer for this point?”

“The hunger, eating, and satiation of hunger – all are untrue since hunger and eating are not there in all the times. Hence, I who ate, the laddus which were eaten, the giver Madam Sakuntala and the satiated hunger – none is reality according to Aac’aarya S’ankara.”

Raghuramaiah laughed loudly and said, “A story comes to my remembrance. Once upon a time, there was a city. All the residents of that city were all very intelligent people. They have very good concentration on any subject of discussion or working. Hence, they could visualize clearly the things being thought and they could teach any subject in a practical way. One day two of the residents had gone to the riverside of that town. There was a bridge on the river and both of them sat on the bridge they fell into deep thoughts. One imagined that he became a very rich man and had thought he had bought the bridge and was walking on the bridge with authority. The second imagined that he is a very big farmer and imagined that he was driving some hundreds of cattle animals into the town and came to the bridge. With that imagination, he said to the other man who was taking stroll over the bridge, ‘Hey! Get out of the way! My cattle animals are coming.’ The first man said that without paying the toll, he would not allow the cattle to pass the bridge. Both of them quarreled and started fighting. Meanwhile another man coming from nearby town carrying the groceries in big bags saw them fighting and wanted to sort out. He has to do it in a practical way! So, he stood on the bridge, opened the bags, and dropped all the contents of the bags into the river. They were washed away. He showed them the empty bags and asked them ‘what is in these bags?’ The answer from both of them at the same time was ‘it is empty, nothing is there.’ That gentleman said ‘that is all’ and with the empty bag on the shoulder went away to the town. Both these people were appreciating at his intelligence and became friends stopping the fight.”

Everybody had a hearty laugh at the story. Vinita did not understand why they had been laughing and what was making them laugh so loudly. She asked “Grandfather! Poor fellow! All the groceries for the entire month’s consumption have been lost! Is it not waste? How do they live without groceries?”

“When did you come?” wondered everybody at her question. She said, “Just now. As soon as the narration of the story started, I stopped the home work and came here.”

Sakuntalamma took her into her arms and asked her to sit by her side.

“During the days Aac’aarya S’ankara was propagating the Advaita School in the initial stages, the Brahmin community especially the S’aivas were very angry with him. The S’aivas vowed to make S’ankara confess that his school of ‘Maayavaada’ is wrong,” Purushottam was telling.

“How is that? Didn’t S’aivas respect S’ankara?”
“Nowadays after the advent of S’íva advaita, they are rubbing shoulders but before that, Advaitins were cross with both S’aivas and Vaishnavas.”

“You mention about S’íva-advaita. Is there something called S’íva- Vis’ishtaadvaita also?”

“Yes, why not? One S’ríkanthac’aarya introduced S’íva-advaita, one Aac’aarya S’ri Pati introduced S’íva-Vis’ishtaadvaita, and they strongly supported respective schools.”

“Are there similarly the Advaita and Vis’ishtaadvaita in Vaishnavism also?”

“Though it is not exactly S’ankara’s Advaita, there are some doctrines of Vaishnava School having strains of Advaita.”

“Grandfather, please complete the story narration. I have to finish my homework. A lot of it is there and so only I did not come here today,” said Vinita.

“Yes my dear! Listen.” Purushottam continued. “In that way the community was against S’ankara and one day they had instigated an elephant to go after S’ankara. S’ankara saw the elephant charging and running towards him, and ran in search of safety from the charging elephant. Seeing him running the community ridiculed him and said ‘Hey! You say everything to be illusory, why are you running away from the elephant which should be illusion?’”

“S’ankara was not cowed down by this. He told them that his running away was also an illusion only”

All had again a hearty laugh at the wit of S’ankara. Dr. Subrahmanyam enquired whether this is reality incident.

“How do we know? Many such incidents go into the life stories of great men. How far such incidents are reality cannot be confirmed!”


“The story is over. Here we go home!” He kissed on her cheeks and said, “Let us call it a day, it is already quite late!”

“Purushottam garu! Can there not be any correlation for the definitions of reality by S’ankara and Ramanuja?”

“Yes they can be. Both of them should come down and accept!” he laughed. “S’ankara said the object which existed in the past, presently exists and will exist in the future is reality. Instead of saying past, present, and future, it can be substituted by the word ‘eternal’ it can be correlated. It should be said that all the objects are non-eternal. It does not go through if it is said that the objects are untrue. When said non-eternal, the Ramanuja’s definition for the reality and S’ankara’s definition for the eternality, will match without any doubt for anybody.”

“Yes. It is true. Destructible becomes non-eternal only but not untrue! This classification suits. Didn’t anybody counter Ramanuja’s ‘Sat Khyaaati’?”
“Yes, it was countered. A professor, Dr. Brij Gopal Tiwari is questioning its veracity. The doctrine is that ‘in every object, the attributes of other objects are seen to a minor degree and so under certain conditions, this object is seen as the other object’ Hence, it is Sat Khyaati that means, seeing that object which is existing only as per Ramanuja’s theory. Now the professor questions this saying “ How can viewing a portion of the object that has the attributes of the other object be applied to the entire object and called as ‘Sat Khyaati’? Is it not untrue?”

“Repeat it once more!”

‘The attributes of the snake are very meager in the rope. Seeing them, rope was seen as a snake. The whole rope was seen as a snake and not a portion of the rope! That means, the meager element is considered to be whole! This is not reality!’ This is the argument of the professor. His question is how does this be called as ‘Sat Khyaati?”

“No. This is an invalid argument. How can anybody argue in China according to the Indian Constitution? His objection is based on the S’ankara’s definition of reality. The definition of reality is fulfillment of the purpose. Isn’t it? As long as one considers the meager attribute as the whole, the purpose gets fulfilled. That means, by seeing the minor attributes of the snake on the whole of rope, the purpose of fear generation is fulfilled. Hence, it is reality only. How can somebody take S’ankara’s definition saying that reality is not affected by all the times, and counter Ramanuja? The doctrines should be viewed in the perspective of the related definitions only!”

Purushottam appreciatively looked at Raghuramaiah. He is using his sharpness in discerning the arguments here in this philosophy! This deserves appreciation! He said, “Well supported!”

Raghuramaiah said, “ It appears that the whole confusion is from the six words viz., Bhrama, Pramaa, Satyam– the reality, Asatyam – the unreality, Nitya – the eternal and Anitya – the non-eternal. If they are clearly understood, then there will be no problem at all.” Saying so, he saw them all off.
Chapter - 12

“Yes Sir, I am sitting on this chair. Usefulness for sitting – the purpose of the chair is fulfilled. That means it is reality. But suppose the chair is broken, it is no more useful for sitting. Should it not be called untrue then?” Sakuntalamma asked Raghuramaiah remembering the discussion on the previous day.

“Why don’t you ask all of them, as they are going to come in a short time?” said Raghuramaiah without lifting his head from the notebook in which he was writing something. Suddenly he lifted his head and saw her hurt and taking pity on her, again said, “It is not like that. Do we call it a chair once it is broken? Don’t you call those pieces of wood?”

She understood. “Yes. Then the chair becomes pieces of wood since they fulfill the purpose of the wooden pieces. They are reality and the chair is non-eternal. If the wooden pieces are burnt, they become non-eternal and the ashes become reality since it fulfills the purpose of the ashes!” She was arguing and counter-arguing with herself.

Raghuramaiah was busy with his notes. She asked her husband again, “In which Upanishad it is there that the qualities of every element are in every object in varying degrees?”

“Yes?” he lifted head from the notes and saw her for some time, and said “I don’t remember in which Upanishad it is there.” He again delved back into the notes.

“Hh! There is no use of asking him any more,” she said to herself and as she was getting up to go, she saw all the group members coming. She moved forward to invite all of them and ushered all inside.

“My wife had the doubt regarding the mention of this statement of all the elements being in every object. She wanted to know, in which Upanishad this has been mentioned. Even I do not know how many Upanishads are there, how can I answer her question?” said Raghuramaiah starting the discussion.

“Many believe that the total number of Upanishads to be 108. ‘Nirnaya Sagar Printing Press published 112. The theosophical Society had published another 70 Upanishads from their Madras – Adyar branch.”

“How many are there really?”

“Can I decide what is true number?” Purushottam laughed away. “There is one ‘Muktikopanishat’. In that the 108 names are mentioned and hence many may be believing that!”

“They are from the immortal Vedas! How is it that the total number is not definite” Is it that they are being repeatedly written?”

“If you see the goings on, it appears so. It might be that to support their religions many had authored such Upanishads! We cannot decide. Even an ‘Allah Upanishad’ has come out! Islam would have been described in that and it might be asking everybody to follow that religion saying that it is the best religion!”
“Atrocious! Is it written to bring two warring religions together in a compromise or to boast that our religion is large-hearted and your religion is also talked about in our sacred scriptures? Or is it to ridicule them saying that your religion is already in our religion itself, it was written? It would be damned difficult!”

“That is the reason all the elders identified thirteen Upanishads that are considered to be the oldest and another four also are selected to be authenticities – Pramaanas. Total are 17. In this also there are differences of opinion – some say only 10 and others say 14.”

“Are the ten agreed by everybody?”

“Yes. These ten Upanishads are – Is’a, Kena, Katha, Pras’na, Mundaka, Maandookya, Taattireeya, Aitareya, Chaandogya, and Brihadaaranyaka. Some others have agreed that – Kausheetaki, S’vetaas’vetara, and Maitree Upanishads also to be very old. Some others have agreed the Upanishads – Subaala, Maitrayayani, Mahaa Naaraayana and Nrisimhataapana – as authentic – Praamaanika Upanishads.”

“What about the rest?”

“The rest are categorized as Vaishnava, S’aiva, S’aakteya, Yoga, and Saamaanya Upanishads. In them only the religious practices are seen and nothing more.”

“What do you say about the age of these Upanishads? Are they prior to the Vedas or after the Vedas have come into open?”

“Without any second opinion, it can be said that they were evolved along with the Vedas but definitely not earlier to the Vedas. It is said so because their main purpose appears to be to bring out clearly the implied meanings of the Vedic Hymns. The Historians treat the total Science of Philosophy as a gradual evolution. The Veda was evolved for the common man, who performs the rituals and over a period, to bring out inner meanings the Upanishads were evolved. This is their view.”

“In one way, both the Karma Kaanda and the Jnaana Kaanda pertain to one school only. Their objective could be to obtain the secret knowledge by performing the rituals continuously over long periods.”

“But the Advaita did not accept the theory of single school. They did not accept the benefit from the Jnaana Kaanda without the relinquishing the Karmas. That is why, the Advaitins do not give importance to the Jnaana Kanda.”

“I suppose that with Meemaamsakas also it is the same. They do not give importance to the Jnaana Kaanda. Isn’t it?”

“They do not. That is the reason for C’aarvaakas to blame them. ‘All of you are theists only, why do some of you say that the first part of the Vedas is not required and some others say that the second part of the Vedas is not required? If all of you are respectable is it that we, who say that both parts of the Vedas are not required, alone are not respectable?’ This is what they ask.”

“Hear! Hear!” clapped Dr. Subrahmanyam. “Whoever did say so, he did pay nice compliments!”
“I do not remember who said so but it is a fact. If the theists become two factions, one rejects one portion of the Vedas, and the other rejects the other portion, does it not mean the entire Vedas are useless? So Bhagavad-Ramanuja clarified that both the portions are essential.”

“Sir! Once again please tell who said what and why?”

“Meemaamsakas did not accept the creator and so they did not require the portion of the Vedas that proposes the creator – The Upanishads. Advaitins said that by performing rituals, the duality thinking will increase and hence they do not require the portion of the Vedas that describes the rituals – The Karma Kaanda. The present day Advaita-Sanyaasins do not consider the Yajnas, Yaagas and other ritualistic worships to be dignified. Bhagavad-Ramanuja however, said that both the portions of the Vedas are essential since the second part of the Vedas – The Upanishads, describing the Supreme Godhead, and the first part of the Vedas – the Karma Kaanda prescribes the procedures of the worship of that Supreme Godhead. According to him, both the parts are important and both of them are authenticities – Pramaanas only.”

“Aha! That is why these Vaishnava Sanyaasins – the Jeeyars ensure performances of the Yajnas, Yaagas, worships and Vratas!”

“Yes, They say that that is the essence of the Vedas.”

“What is the meaning of this word Upanishad?”

“Sad is the Dhaatu. Vis’arana, Gati and Avasaadana are its meanings. From this, it can be said that Upanishat means that which destroys the Avidya – the ignorance, that makes one reach the Supreme Godhead and that which destroys the misery. Another meaning is for the teachings the mentor gives the disciple, by making the disciple sit near him. On an overall basis, consider the Upanishads to be the study of the Supreme Godhead only!”

“Please tell clearly what is discussed in the Upanishads.”

“Why, how and where from this universe is created? Why do the humans experience happiness and misery? Is it possible to have a permanent removal of the misery? What gives eternal Bliss? What remains in the human after death? Will nothing remain? Is there any relation between the object that is the basic for this universe and the reality in the humans? If it is there, what is that? Can the human remain as immortal? If so, how does he obtain the immortality? What is the benefit from the physical comforts, which are of temporary nature? Should they be enjoyed or not? If should be enjoyed, how should they be enjoyed? These are the questions primarily discussed in Upanishads!”

“In totality, the central point is how the human gets the peace, bliss and independence.”

“Yes”

“If so, how was it concluded and as what?”

“The problem with the Upanishads is that they do not appear to be coming from one individual Rishi or person. So while going through the Upanishads, it gives an impression as though there are contradictions in one to the other.”
“Then, which one should be believed?”

“Sage Vyaasa says that there are no such contradictions at all. As a proof that all the Upanishad aphorisms can be brought under single thought process, he has delivered the ‘Brahma Sutras.”

“Is this the theme of Brahma Sutras?”

“Yes! The aphorisms brought out by sage Vyaasa, correlating all the Upanishadic aphorisms are called ‘Brahma Sutras’. They are called as Vedaanta Sutras and Uttara Meemaamsaa-Sastra also.”

“Before him, did none correlate like this?”

Yes, it was done! Audulomi, Kaas’akritsna, As’marathya, Baadari, Kaarshnaajini, Jairini, Kaas’yapa, and other sages had correlated, each according to his own views. But it is sage Vyaasa, who alone did the correlation in a well organized fashion and that too in Brahma Sutras only!”

“What is meant by Sutras?”

“Arranging the elaborate meaning in short words or phrases is called sutra or aphorism.“

“Will the entire meaning be known later from that aphorism?”

“Logically, it should. However depending on the individual’s intelligence it comes out.”

“OK! Leave alone the other sutras. What I am asking is whether the later period intelligentsia could bring out the entire meaning and concept in full!”

“It is very difficult to say that it could be brought out properly. Whoever has produced the commentary on the Brahma Sutras, had confidently stated that he only could bring out the real meaning. Not only that, he tried to prove to his best of his ability that the meaning brought out by others is incorrect.”

“How is that! Will the sutra be so unclear?”

“I cannot say about the clarity or confusion. I shall give an example and you note. ‘Athaato Brahma Jijnaasaa’ is the first aphorism. The words are Atha, Atah, and Brahma-jijnaasaa. Atha has the meanings next, hereafter and subsequent. Atah has the meanings because of that, due to that reason. So, for the word Atha one has given the meaning of ‘after the disenchantment happened’ while the other has brought out that it means ‘after the examination of the rituals’. In the same way, for the word Atah, one has brought out the meaning that because of the leaving out the rituals since there is no use from them, the other has given the meaning that because of the desire for the salvation that gives eternal bliss. Like this, many have given many commentaries. All of them are called as Vedanta Dars’anas or Prasthaanas by all their followers.”

“Since Vyaasa had authored the Brahma Sutras based on the Upanishads, is it not possible to understand the view of Sage Vyaasa if we refer to the Upanishads?”
“It is not that easy a task. Every aphorism was written keeping one aphorism of Upanishad as the basis. It should be possible to identify that particular Upanishadic aphorism. Is it that easy to conclude from the different opinions as to which is that Upanishadic aphorism?”

“Is there no other clue?”

“Bhagavad-Gita is there but there also are similar differences of opinion.”

“On an over-all basis there are three references viz., the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad-Gita.”

“Yes! These are called ‘Prasthaana traya’, in general.”

“In your opinion, why are there so many differences about the content of the Brahma Sutras?”

In my opinion, some have prepared themselves for the commentary by delving at the beginning as to what is reality, and after coming to a conclusion, selecting the aphorisms from the Upanishads first and then proceed for commenting on the Brahma Sutras. Some others have concluded their thinking process and prepared for commenting on the Brahma Sutras. A few more had studied the Puraanas, Aagamas and Taantric sciences first and then concluded in a particular way and considering that that conclusion will be there in the Upanishads and accordingly started for commenting the Brahma Sutras. There are some who have kept in the mind only the Brahma Sutras, examined in totality and concluded that such and such is like this and this, but they are a rare commodity.”

“This is very interesting. Tell who all have written commentaries on the Brahma Sutras and what they had concluded?”

“Oh! It is a very big list! Commenting on the Brahma Sutras, Aachaarya S’ankara said that Vyasa’s views are Advaita. Bhagavad-Ramanuja said that they are Vis’ishtaadvaita and Madhvaachaarya said they are Dvaita. The Dars’anas of these three are important for us. The depth, which is available in these three, is rare in the others. Over and above, these are the only three who had based on the Prasthaana-traya. The rest have taken different scriptures and writings as references as per their liking while preparing their commentaries!”

“Is it enough if we take only these three?”

“Amongst these three also, the Vis’ishtaadvaita and Dvaita are not very much different from each other. There are some similarities. But there are lots of differences with Advaita of Aachaarya S’ankara for both of them.”

“If so, will it be sufficient if we study primarily Advaita of S’ankara and Vis’ishtaadvaita of Ramanuja?”

“Yes! It can be considered that those, who had studied these two in depth, had 99% understanding of the philosophy! The rest of the commentaries can be understood with the help of these two.”

“Sir, Purushottam garu! There is one desire for me. You must fulfill. There is no way,” Raghuramaiah asked.
“Please tell. If it is within my capabilities, I shall definitely do,” said Purushottam.

Before Raghuramaiah could tell something, came in Pattabhiramaiah shouting loudly. “Hey! Raghu! All is over. No more ‘lawyer Pattabhi the great’. All is discarded. Here I started in the car for the Aas’ram. Henceforth you will see only ‘St. Pattabhi the great’. Ha! Ha! Ha!” Saying loudly, he sat down.

After the enquiries of his welfare and he had some snacks, he started to go and said, “It may be three to four years when we all meet again.” He thanked everybody of Raghuramaiah’s family in person and thanked all the other guests together. He left in the same hurry as he came in.

After he left, they had talked about him for a while. Purushottam reminded then, “Raghuramaiah garu, you said you have a desire!”

“Nothing special, I am having a strong desire to study these Brahma Sutras in detail. Though I have not heard the subject in them so far, I feel that the Dars’ana in these Brahma Sutras only will be goal of my life instead of that in those other Dars’anas. So, you must teach me in full. Not in the way, we glance through the books but in totality. You must explain every aphorism in detail. Each and every word should be explained. I do not know Sanskrit. I have not studied either Bhagavad-Gita or Upanishads. Please do not post pone saying that I must study them first before you start teaching me. You have the capability to teach persons like me. You should not say no to this. You must tell me this everyday, even if it takes a year or two.” Raghuramaiah pleaded very gently with full humility.

Sakuntalamma stood spellbound. Before she could regain composure, Avadhani stood up and said with folded hands, “I also am strongly desiring the same. You should not say no to this.”

Sastry also stood up and said ‘Sir I am also saying ‘Mama’ (me too) and joining the chorus!’ wittily. While reciting the hymns of the marriage function, the purohit asks the bridegroom to say ‘Mama’ – meaning ‘my’, so that it could be considered the bridegroom himself uttered the hymn and the Purohit is only assisting him to perform the ritual. Since Avadhani is also a purohit by profession, so he knows it well. He said so to emphasize that the request applies to him as well.

Dr. Subrahmanyam stood up and said, “Don’t leave me saying that I am a C’aarvaaka. As I hear your lectures, I get the feeling of getting converted into a Vaidiki.”

Sakuntalamma stood up and asked, “Sir, being a woman, do I have the qualification to learn the Brahma Sutras and Upanishads?”

Seeing all standing up and joining the chorus, Raghuramaiah felt shy. He also stood up and with folded hands said, “I do not even know that the request should be done by standing with folded hands. Purushottam garu, please do not mind my indifference. I shall learn all these gradually.”

“How all these formalities for us? I am also happy that I shall get an opportunity to revise the Brahma Sutras once more. We shall definitely study together. It is not that I teach and you will learn. I am not a great academician for that. We shall all study together. But it is a very tough subject. It is a subject that needs study in depth. It needs a lot more concentration.”
However, it is not now. Let us complete one round of understanding what each had said and then we go for a special study of Brahma Sutras. Is it OK?"

“As you wish. What ever you say it will be accordingly done” This is what everyone had expressed by his or her body language.

“At first, we shall find out who all have written commentaries on the Brahma Sutras in addition to Ramanuja, S’ankara and Madhvaachaarya. But as we have said a while ago, we cannot tell all of them. We will talk about the details of some of them,” said Purushottam.

“Let me write down a bit – Aachaarya S’ankara – Advaita; Bhagavad-Ramanuja – Vis’ishtaadvaita and Madhvaachaarya – Dvaita. Yes! Now continue,” said Raghuramaiah.

Purushottam started. “Srikantha proposed S’iva advaita as the view of Sage Vyasa. He belonged to the Paas’upata branch school.”

“Oh! My god! Are all the obnoxious practices of Paas’upata from Brahma Sutras only?” asked Sakuntalamma.

“Not at all madam! The Paas’upata, practices of which were detailed earlier, had almost become extinct by the end of 14th century. That Paas’upata S’aiva had been modified as present S’iva advaita, acceptable to all. Afterwards, One S’ri-Pati had attempted to show by his commentary named S’rikara Bhaashya that Veeras’aivam is the view of Sage Vyasa. This is called as Vis’esha advaita or Dvaitaadvaita also.”

“Does Veeras’aivam mean that who says he will not worship any body other than S’iva?”

“No. If ‘Vi’ and ‘Ra’ are joined, it becomes ‘Veera’. Vi means ‘vikalpa’ and Ra means ‘rahita’. Veeras’aiva means that which tells ‘Vikalpa Rahita S’iva’”

“What does that mean?”

“We shall explain that later. Before that we shall see the others also.” Saying so, Purushottam continued, “Now Yaadava Prakaas’a and Bhaaskaraac’aarya said that Vyasa’s view is the school of Bheda Abheda only. Not only these two, but Vijnana Bhikshu also said the same. But there are minor differences among them also.”

“Similarly, though Nimbaarka also preached only Bheda Abheda only, his school is Vaishnavism. Though it is Vaishnavism only, the philosophy of Vallabhaac’aarya is pure monism only. Ablative’s school is ‘Ac’intya Bhedaabhedha’ Those of Raamaananda and Muktaananda are Vis’ishtaadvaita only with minor differences. One S’uka had written the commentary with Bheda vaada.”

“From what you are telling, we can categorize all those who accepted the opinion of Vyasa into three categories. One is Vaishnavism – which accepts Vishnu only as the Paratattva – the supreme reality. The second is S’aivism –which accepts S’iva as the Paratattva – the supreme reality. The third, that says that the Paratattva – the supreme reality is without name and form. Are there no commentaries on Brahma Sutras in S’aakteya School?”
“No to the best of my knowledge. Even if they are there they must be quite unknown. There is practically none who considered S’akti as Paratattva based on Brahma Sutras. For them, the S'aakteya Tantras only are the authenticities – Pramaanas.”

“You said six – Advaita, Vis’ishtaadvaita, Dvaita, Bhedaabheda, S’uddha Advaita, Ac’intya Bhedaabheda. On the whole, who are majority in deciding Paratattva – the Supreme Reality in a specific opinion? That is, are those who said that He has the name and form or those who did not accept any form or name for Paratattva – the Supreme Reality?”

“The majority said that the Paratattva has the name and form.”

“Among them, whether those accepting Vishnu are majority or those accepting S’iva are majority?”

“The schools which accepted Vishnu as Paratattva are more.”

“Is there nobody who examined as to what Sage Vyaasa’s views were without any bias towards Vaishnavism or S’aivism or something else?”

“I did say earlier that everyone said he only had understood correctly!”

“Not that sir, not in those olden times. There may be some differences in those days. In the recent past, are there not persons who studied the Brahma Sutras thoroughly and brought out the views of Sage Vyaasa independently without any bias to the existing commentaries?”

“Yes. It is said that Mr. Teebo, a British professor is the first among such. It appears that he translated both the commentaries of S’ankara and Ramanuja. Not only that, he did a comparative study of both of them and concluded that the commentary of Ramanuja is logically more supportive of the Brahma Sutras.”

“Are there no Indians who did such an exercise?”

“Yes, There are. The well-known philosopher Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan did. The opinion of today’s Indian intelligentsia is that apart from the trio S’ankara, Ramanuja and Madhvaachaarya; greater philosopher was not born so far from the time of creation of the universe. He has independently produced commentary on Brahma Sutras.”

“What is his opinion? Which of the commentaries – of S’ankara and of Ramanuja, is closer to the views of Sage Vyaasa?”

“He did not specifically say whether S’ankara’s commentary is closer or Ramanuja’s commentary is closer, but he rejected the thought that the universe is myth and illusory. According to him, this universe is reality. In addition to that, in his view, telling that there is difference between the Jeeva and Para Brahma is Sage Vyasa’s view. Dr. Ghate, another scholar also said something like that only.”

“Is there no Indian who said clearly?”

“Raahul Saankrityayan, an Indian scholar did a comparative study and opined that Ramanuja’s commentary is the view of the Sage Vyaasa.”
“You didn’t say even a single name of the scholar who accepted S’ankara’s commentary to be great!”

“There are umpteen number who accepted S’ankara’s Advaita Dars’ana to be great. How many names can I tell? Can it by counted on fingers? Some thousands are there. But all of them were only saying that his Dars’ana is great, it is one showpiece of his intelligence. We have to search for that scholar who said that his commentary on Brahma Sutras is the view of Sage Vyaasa. Most of them opined that S’ankara tried to extract forcibly his Maayavaada from Brahma Sutras.”

“Does it mean that S’ankara’s Advaita is not worthy of belief and practice?”

“Sh! Did I say so? Those who like the Buddhism follow Buddhist Dars’ana. Similar is the case of Jaina, Saankhya, Yoga, Naiyaayika, Vais’eshika, and Meemaamsa Dars’anas. They follow what they liked. Whoever likes S’ankara’s Dars’ana, will follow that. What is being said here is that the views of S’ankara and Vyaasa are not convergent according to scholars. It is not being told whether that Dars’ana is great or not.”

“Understood. Nobody including Ramanuja has objection to Advaita if it is as per the Dars’ana of S’ankara. But if it is said that is the view of Brahma Sutras, everybody will pounce upon them. Is it not?”

“Yes! Yes! But today, it is so famous that it is said Advaita of S’ankara and Vedanta are synonyms. It is not only here but also, in different countries. Everybody’s knowledge is that Indian Philosophy means S’ankara’s Advaita.”

“It is natural. After S’ankara, for hundreds of years, there has been nobody who countered that school of philosophy. Once Ramanuja started to counter that, hordes have started to do so”, said Avadhani.

“Whatever it may be, if so much support and acceptability are there, there must be something extra ordinary in that!” Raghuramaiah said.

“The support and acceptability for what? Is it for the school or for the practice?”

“What is the difference?”

“In India, the number of people who say that they are professing the school of S’ankara’s Advaita and practice the same is very few. It must be said that except for the chiefs of the missions established by S’ankara like Kanchi Kamakoti and a few more, others’ practices are quite opposite to the doctrines of Advaita.”

“Why so? Is such not the case with Ramanuja Dars’ana?”

“I do not say that in the School of Ramanuja also, all are practicing according to Ramanuja’s preaching. But there is difference between the two.”

“What is that?”

“It is very difficult to understand the Advaita Dars’ana, that too the one which was propounded by S’ankara. The Vis’ishtaadvaita can be easily understood. Today’s people have simplified practicing S’ankara’s School by taking two words that every thing is myth and
illusory. In Ramanuja’s School, the scriptural control is very important and hence it is a tight rope walking.”

“The philosophy is difficult but practice is easy for Advaitins. The philosophy is easy but practice is very difficult for the Vis’ishtadvaitins. Is it so?”

“It is almost so. If we keep aside the greatness of S’ankara’s philosophy, practicing has become easy for all those, who manage with the two key words of myth and illusion. All the pseudo-Sanyasins – the Bairaagis, make light of taking Ganja and Hashish saying that the world is myth and so it does not matter what you do. They have made it easy for practicing saying ‘it is sufficient if one knows in his mind that all this is untrue and Brahma alone is reality’ and by going to the residences of the families and moving freely visiting all the rooms including their kitchens, though they are Sanyasins”

“If such Sanyasins are propagating Advaita, the feeling in the common man that whatever may be done, it is considered as myth only, is natural. But such is not the practice in the S’ankara Peethas!”

“Not at all! Their conduct is highly respectable. In Advaita, ordaining into Sanyaasa is an easy path for salvation. In the same way, it appears that it became a symbol for happy life also. It is not that there are no people following strictly the regulations but majority are discarding scriptural disciplined life in the name of Maya – the illusion. We see many Swamijjis in every town and village, propagating the Advaita philosophy and at the same time having habits starting from the intoxicating pan-eating, which are not necessary!”

“If the common man should lead a disciplined life, the preaching role models also should be disciplined! Isn’t it?”

“That is what I say! Though S’ankara’s Advaita is great as a Dars’ana, those who mislead the common man are increasing in number!”

“You please tell the proper meaning of the words Advaita, Vis’ishtadvaita and Dvaita. Though I am able to place these words alright superficially, I am unable to understand fully.”

“Dve’ means two. Related to that is Dvaita. The one that is not Dvaita is Advaita. That means, the one which is not two is Advaita.”

“Why should it be said that way? It could be said as ‘one’ instead of saying ‘that, which is not two’. Isn’t it?”

“If this has to be explained, it needs going deep into the subject. S’ankara says that all the philosophy which is preached by him is totally according to the Vedas and Upanishads. Do you remember what we discussed earlier as the content of Vedas?”

“The subjects, which are beyond the reach of the Pramaanas like Pratyaksha, Anumaana etc.”

“Now are we seeing the universe? Is it not directly visible? Don’t we feel that there are many objects in this universe? After all, this is reality only! Then why do Vedas tell the same thing again? Hence, ‘the one which tells that the universe is non existent, that everything in this universe is non existent and that objects in the universe are unreal’ only becomes the Veda according to S’ankara.”
“Aha! We see the Bheda – the difference in the Pratyaksha – the direct vision. But why will S’ruti tell the same thing again? No, it will not tell. Hence it is decided that Abheda – ‘non-difference’ only is the view of the S’ruti!”

“But in S’ruti there are sentences speaking the difference also! Since they speak about those objects that are directly visible, they are weak S’ruti Vaakyas and they do not have that much authenticity. It has been decided that those S’ruti Vaakyas that are telling about ‘non-difference’ which oppose the direct vision speak about the extrasensory subjects and hence they are powerful and authentic as well.”

“That is to say that the Veda or Upanishad has been broken into two pieces – one that is authentic and the other unauthentic. Is that not so?”

“It was not said unauthentic. It was said that not so much authentic.”

“What is the difference?”

“Unauthentic are not useful at all. They did not say so. It was said they are useful in the state of undeveloped knowledge only but in the matters of the other world are not at all useful.”

“That is to say that in the normal conduct of the day to day affairs, they are useful.”

“Yes. Another point to note. Universe is directly visible as reality but the Vedas do not translate the directly visible object. Hence, it was concluded that universe must be an illusion!”

“Just like the snake on the rope is an illusion, is the entire universe said to be an illusion? An illusory object must have another object to support it! Snake is seen only when there is a rope! If so, on which object is this illusory Universe supported?”

“We discussed this already earlier in the subject of Anirvac’aneeya Khyaati. That theory belongs to these people only. They said that the illusionary universe is seen on a reality object.”

“What is the name of that true object?”

“Have you forgotten all again? We discussed earlier this point. There is no name for that true object.”

“It appears that we discussed, but tell it again.”

“Name is untrue because reality is that which exists in all the times! Before naming, that name as good as non-existent! So, how can you apply an untrue name for reality object?”

“Understood. Then, the rope has a shape. Similarly has this reality object a shape?”

“No! It does not have shape. Shape means a combination of some constituents or limbs. There is a regulation that the limbs or constituents cease to exist. Since this object is reality, it does not cease to exist. Hence, it does not have limbs or constituents. Hence no shape.”

“This entire universe is felt as an illusion supported on a nameless and shapeless reality object. Is this their doctrine? Then, how is that reality object defined and known?”
“What is meant by defined?”

“It must be known that his is such and such! We are to point out a chair that it will be like this and this. If there is no name and shape like that, how is it defined?”

“Consider that you do not know how is the light but you know how is the darkness. Then how do you define light?”

“There is no other way than to describe it as that which is not darkness.”

“In the same way, you do not know the reality object, but you know this untrue universe. So where is the difficulty in defining the reality object?”

“As we go on saying it is not chair, it is not town, it is not hill and so on, and will the leftover be the reality object?”

“What else could it be? They say that this process is described as ‘Neti, Neti’ in the Upanishads. When you were sitting in a group of some hundred, somebody told a particular name and praised him. For you, that name is new and the man also is new. How do you know who that man with that name is? You go on eliminating the persons whose names are already known to you and thus he, whoever will be left out, will be that praised man. In the same way, as you go on eliminating all those which are seen by you either through the word or by deed or by thought, the left out will be the reality.”

“Will that leftover come into the thoughts of the mind?”

“If it comes in the thoughts of mind, then it is untrue. All that which can be thought is untrue.”

“My God! If so will that not be perceived by the mind?”

“The Upanishad says so! It says – ‘Yato vaac’o nivartante apraapya manasaa saha’. That means, neither speech nor mind can reach it.”

“One should go to the stage beyond the mind!”

“Yes! Mind also is untrue!”

“Even an estimate of what that reality is beyond the reach. What could be that reality matter?”

“OK, I shall give a simple clue. Are you there?”

“Yes, I am.”

“How did you know that?”

“How! I exist, that is all. Can I say I do not exist? Can I say even that I do not exist, unless I exist? Will even a mad man say that he does not exist? Can the question ‘who is your mother?’ elicit the answer ‘my mother is infertile?’ from anybody? In the same way, ‘I’ means I only, I exist. That is all.”
“Aha! That is the ‘reality’!”

“What! Is that so simple? Reality should not be affected by all the times! But before I was born, I did not exist. Neither will I after the death! How can it be ‘reality’?”

“What is being born and being dead?”

“It is that, Sir! This body being seen and being destroyed.”

“Is that you exist only when the body exists and as soon as the body is destroyed, you stop existing?”

“Hmm! It should be thought of!”

“Are you not seeing the body? Is it not a part of the universe? So, the body is untrue!”

“Does it mean that you and body are the same? Are you the body? Is there nothing else?”

“I am unable to either yes or no.”

“Let us not go deep. I shall ask a simple question. Whose house is this? Whose furniture is this?”

“This is my house and this furniture belongs to me.”

“When you say ‘this house is my house, are you and the house same? If the furniture is yours, will the furniture and you be same?”

“No. How can it be? I am separate and house is separate. So, I said that the house is mine.”

“Suppose the house collapsed and is not yet reconstructed. Do you say, ‘I collapsed and I am not yet reconstructed?”

“Why do I say so? I say that my house collapsed and my house is not reconstructed.”

“That means, you are accepting that irrespective of house existing or not, you exist! Now you tell. Are you saying this is my hand, my leg, my eye etc. or not?”

“Oh! I understand your argument! Since we say ‘my hand, my mind, my leg’ like saying ‘my chair, my house’, ‘I and house are not the same, ‘I and hand are not the same’, ‘I and the leg are not the same’, ‘I and mind are also not the same’. I am different and my mind is different. I am none of these. Is that Correct?”

“Yes, Yes! That means, is there any relationship for the body being born or not born, with your existence?”

“Hmm … How? I agreed that the body is not I. That means, the body comes and goes. Where? To me? That means, ‘I’ exists always. This body only is coming and going. Right. ‘I’ is reality. This body is untrue. Well! Understood. ‘I’ alone is reality. Nobody else exists. Every thing is illusion. – Ah! S’ankaraachaary! How logically proved!” Raghuramaiah saluted invisible S’ankara with both hands joined together.
He again said, “However strong the building may be, will it not crumble if the foundations are damaged?”

“How? Please tell.”

“Let us complete S’ankara’s. Then we shall talk about it.”

“No. Please tell this first. It is very interesting and we are anxious to listen to it.”

“Which is the foundation of S’ankara’s school of philosophy?”

“I shall tell, Wait! Vedas, Vedic sentences – Yes, listen! It appears that there are two categories of Vedic sentences. In some sentences, it appears that it is preaching: ‘there are differences among all the objects in this universe, the Supreme Godhead is different, universe is different, the jeeva – the sentient being is different, and this jeeva should reach that Supreme Godhead, jeeva should relinquish this universe.’ In some other sentences, it appears to be preaching: ‘All this is myth, there is only one that is reality and the rest everything is untrue.’ Am I telling correctly?”

“You are telling very well. You have thought about what I have told and retelling it in much more detail. Proceed.”

“Among those two categories of sentences, the S’ruti Vaakyas, which speak that the universe is different than the Supreme Godhead and the jeeva etc. are not so authentic since these expressions are all felt directly. That is so because; the Veda speaks only of the extrasensory subjects. In the second category of the sentences, they started speaking that the universe is an illusion, and since for illusion to occur, there should be a real object and that is reality. Finally they speak that except I, the rest is all illusion only and untrue!”

“Very good. By that, what is the foundation? Since the Vedas do not speak about the objects that are directly visible, all the sentences that speak of difference are not authentic. This is the foundation. Isn’t it?”

“You fought with me when I said about un-authenticity and now you are saying that!”

“Oh, it is a mistake. The foundation for S’ankara’s school, is that they are not that much authentic! Ramanuja picked up this point. He said: ‘S’ruti does not say that pot, tree, or hill etc. does not exist. It speaks about the relationship between the sentient being and the Supreme Godhead. In addition, it speaks about the relationship between the primordial matter and the Supreme Godhead. None of these are known through direct vision. Hence, the S’ruti details about these extrasensory subjects that are not known through direct vision. It does not speak much about the difference, which is the result of the direct vision. Hence it cannot be said that out of the two categories of the sentences, that category of sentences which speak about the difference are to be discarded and only the second category sentences can be relied up on.’ This is the line of argument by the followers of Ramanuja School of philosophy.”

“A very strong counter! That too right into the foundation! That is right! When it is said that there are no two categories, giving importance to one category and discarding the rest is no more possible! With that, both ‘reality’ and ‘untrue’ have to be accepted! It is not possible to accept both the thoughts of Rope and Snake. The basis for snake to be Bhraanti and rope to be reality are the two categories. When that is questionable, either, both rope and snake should be reality or both should be Bhraanti. With this argument, the argument saying that
universe is illusion and Bhraanti is blown off to the winds. Oh! Well said! But did the very intelligent followers of S’ankara accept this argument so easily?”

“Their faces bled white. But they did not succumb. They asked Ramanujeeyas: ‘Sirs! Let us agree to your argument of not having two categories of sentences for the sake of it. Then there should be relevance between these sentences! But it does not appear to be so! For example, the same S’rutI says at one place that Supreme Godhead is Satyakaama and Satyasankalpa and at other places, it says He is devoid of attributes and is devoid of any activity. How is it possible? It cannot happen at the same time both to have attributes and not having attributes also! So, it should be that one set of sentences is said for sake of saying and the other is reality. I shall further illustrate: Suppose Vinita was told – ‘go to school’ and ‘don’t go to school’. Only one can be reality but not both! Hence, it is unavoidable to have the two categories. Hence the universe is illusion only’ said the followers of S’ankara.”

“It looks to be alright but not that forceful. For us there is a general rule that a murderer should be punished with hanging or life imprisonment. But that rule does not hold good if the murder is done in self-defense. He is acquitted of the crime. Hence, a murderer should be acquitted according to one rule and at the same time according to another rule, he should be punished with either life imprisonment or by hanging. The decision that since both the rules are contradicting each other, one is said to be false and the other is reality, we shall hand down the hanging only all the times, does not go well.”

“Right. You said correctly. If Vinita was told to go to school and not to go to school, it should be understood that she should go to school everyday but on a rainy day; she should not go to school. One is a Saamaanya Vaakya – the ordinary sentence and the other Vis’esha Niyama – the special rule. The Ramanujeeyas had explained in this way and correlated all the sentences which are said to be contradictory sentences by S’ankara.”

“What is the answer for this explanation?”

“It is not understood by the half developed brained, what ever be the explanation. You are thinking that this universe to be reality just like a fellow who is happy to find the water in the mirage, does not get convinced even if he is told the reality of mirage not having the water. You will realize the truth only when your knowledge is fully developed. This was said by the followers of S’ankara.”

“OK, This is an abuse. These people have abused them as ‘Avaidiki’ and they had abused these as underdeveloped persons. Let us go back to S’aankara advaita! They have told that the universe is illusory and the reality object is the Supreme Godhead. How can one be rid of this Bhraanti? How does one get rid of the misery of the cycle of births and deaths? In other words, how do we know the reality object?”

“You were sleeping. You had a dream. One tiger is running after you. You are running and shouting for help by saving you from the tiger. You became exhausted and fell down. The tiger pounced upon you. It is going to wrench your neck. How will you escape from that?”

“This is all dream only. If you are awake, then there is neither tiger nor any other thing.”

“Similarly, all this illusion of the universe is happening like in a dream. It is sufficient if are awaken from the sleep.”
“It is not sleeping! How to be awake?”

“Like somebody coming and waking up the person sleeping, your spiritual mentor came and told you that all this is illusion only. That is all, then there is no more illusion of universe!”

“Is it that simple?”

“Yes! That Guru – the spiritual mentor comes and says ‘tattvam asi’- that reality object is you only. You will feel ‘Aha!’ The mentor will say ‘Neha naanaasti kinc’ana’ – Here is nothing more. You will be wondering and asking ‘what else is here?’ Mentor will say ‘Sarvam khalvidam Brahma’ – all this is supreme Godhead only. You will be looking strange. He will clarify by saying ‘Idam Sarvam yadayamaatmaa’ – all this which exists, that is the Aatma. That is all. It is over. From then onwards, even though you are still living, you are a liberated soul.”

“You may be talking all strange for fun! Is it only this the path for salvation in S’ankara’s philosophy? “

“No fun intended! I am telling factual. For the snake seen on the rope to vanish, your friend only needs to come and say that it is only rope and not snake! What else is required? Before he tells even if you beat it with a rod, the snake will not after all vanish! Even if you sit meditating on Garuda – the kite, the traditional enemy of the snakes, it will not go away!”

“Without performing any rituals, any meditations, only by the mentor telling, will it be known that all this is illusion and only I exist?”

“Suppose, ten of you are sitting here and I come and give the numbers to each of you. I come to you and say ‘Das’amastvam’ – ‘you are the tenth.’ You heard it. After some time for my question ‘Come on! All of you please tell who is of which number?’ Will you not tell ‘Das’amo ham ‘ – ‘I am tenth’?”

“I will say. Why should I not! You said ‘Das’amastvam’ – ‘you are the tenth.’ I have understood the sentence! Since then, I shall be muttering ‘I am the tenth, I am the tenth’. After all I had known that I am the tenth!”

“Similarly, the mentor said ‘Tattvam Asi’ – ‘that reality are you!’ Further he said ‘you are the one devoid of all attributes and devoid of all actions – the Supreme Godhead!’ Soon you understood what it meant! Is the knowledge not generated? Like you have understood that you are the tenth, as soon as you heard ‘Das’amastvam’, the knowledge of ‘So ham’ should get generated in you as soon as you heard ‘Tattvam Asi’.”

“What is the meaning of ‘So ham’?”

“It means – ‘I am that, I am that reality object’. Should you not get that knowledge ‘I am that Supreme Godhead, that is devoid of the attributes and devoid of all action’?”

“If it is insisted it may be generated, but there is some thing that is lacking, Purushottam guru! I am unable to believe that it is so simple.”

The reason for you not to be convinced is your deep-rooted knowledge of the dualism – the Dvaita. There are two types of people in this world. Those, who are thoroughly influenced
by the concept of dualism and others. For these people with the dualism, the monism will not be able to influence easily. Hence, for them the S’ruti has given the second type of sentences. It asked them to perform the rites, worships, and penances. It asked them to follow the rules. It said they are not to go beyond the scriptures. After doing all these, it will be known that this universe is of temporary nature. A doubt will arise whether there at all is an eternal object. Both these together constitute the first stage. After some time, there will be disinterest for the pleasures of this world and heavens. This is the second stage. With the experiencing of the difficulties by performing the rites, he will be able to control the senses with ease. After some more labour, the salvation becomes the cherished goal. That is the fourth stage. With that, the knowledge of the dualism will be erased. After that, you come; I shall preach ‘Tattvam Asi’. Immediately, you will get up saying ‘So ham’. That means, ‘the right knowledge is generated- salvation is achieved’ saying these, they will go away. I bet this will happen.”

“Understood Purushottam garu! In this school of thought, the weak point is ten times as weak as the strength of the system’s strong point. On asking ‘have you understood that the world is illusory?’ and if the answer was ‘No’, ask him to go and follow the rules more vigorously. Otherwise, if he says ‘yes, it is known so’, nothing needs to be done since the world is illusion!”

“Now I understand why you said that the practice is easy for the Sanyaasins of Advaita. All the people who cannot perform rituals, worship and follow the rules and regulations, the lazy fellows, cheats etc. can say ‘I have understood that I am the Supreme Godhead and this universe is all illusion’ and conduct themselves without any responsibility or care.”

“But I am getting another doubt. Whom are they, who know that the universe is illusion, going to uplift? When there is no body for the man in front, for whom does he lecture? For whose sake the Aas’rams are to be built? Why are they doing all this if the universe is truly an illusion?”

“All the persons countering S’ankara’s Advaita put the same question! They ask it in a more funny way. Did S’ankara preach after knowing the universe to be illusion? Or is it done before knowing?”

“Yes! If he preached before knowing, then it need not be taken seriously. If he did it after knowing, who is really there to listen? What is the answer for these questions?”

“The S’ruti itself has spoken that the universe is illusion! It says that except the Supreme Godhead, the rest all is untrue only! It is being preached based on that authority only. Questions like whether S’ankara had got the Jnaana or not are all diversionary tactics and are in bad taste. Such arguments are called as ‘Kuvimars’a’.”

“I am getting another doubt. Every thing other from the Supreme Godhead is untrue! Are the Vedas true?”

“Vedas are also untrue since it is seen as different than Supreme Godhead! In fact, this is told by the Vedas itself! The meaning of the phrase ‘Vedaah avedaah’ of Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad is that only they say!”

“Are they proving that the universe is untrue and the Supreme Godhead is reality based on the untrue Vedas? How is it possible?”
“For a man in dim light, the snake is visible initially and later on it gets cleared as a rope. Is not the reality proved by the untrue here? Hence, the untrue Veda can prove the reality Supreme Godhead. If a thorn is there in the foot, are we not removing with another thorn and throwing out both the thorns? Similarly, we come to know from the untrue Vedas that the universe is untrue and discard both the untrue objects. This is their line of argument.”

“My God! How daringly they are telling that they will discard the Vedas and scriptures and they are illusions only! Are they being accepted as Vaidiki knowing fully well that they are speaking so?”

“Who had accepted? 99% of the Brahma Sutra commentators loudly announced that this school of philosophy is contra to the Vedas! That is the reason for me to tell in the beginning itself that the scholars accepted theirs only as a Dars’ana, but not as a Vedic Dars’ana or Upanishadics Dars’ana or as a commentary on Brahma Sutras or as a Vedaanta Dars’ana. This is the view of all the famous philosophers. Even the S’aivas, presently rubbing shoulders with them, did not accept the argument of illusion in their philosophy!”

“Once if one comes to the stage of accepting that the Vedas also are illusion, one will be indifferent knowing that whatever happens to be untrue and whether it is as per the regulations, whether it is good or what is good or bad in that becomes immaterial for him.”

“Some contend that because of this only, disinterest is wide spread.”

“Please tell it clearly once more. Their philosophy is that the knowledge is generated from the Vedaantic sentences. Isn’t it? He will know about himself as ‘So aham’, either from the mentor’s teaching of ‘tattvam asi’ or by referring to the Vedas. But, … I saw the snake on the rope I am thinking that it is snake only. Meanwhile a person had come and said ‘why are you afraid, it is only a rope and not a snake.’ I was going to be relieved and in the mean time, another person came and said that the first person is a mad man. Will I see the snake on the rope or not?”

“Definitely you will see. You will not be relieved of the fear. While considering the universe to be illusion since the Vedas said so, the mentor comes and says that Vedas also are illusion, which should be believed and which is not to be believed? Is the universe illusion or not? All those countering S’ankara throw this line of argument.”

“Do they not have answer for this? Tell me another point. Will he, who knows that he alone is reality and the rest all to be untrue, see the world or not?”

“According to their philosophy, it will be seen. This Bhrama is of two types. One pertains to the individual. The other is general, i.e. is common to all. If I think that this universe exists, it is my illusion. Even if that illusion is removed in me, the universe still exists. It will exist for all others and I also will be seeing it. This is general illusion. If this stage is passed through, in that stage everything vanishes. That stage is obtained only on discarding this body.”

“So this was adjusted like this! The one who considers the universe exists, is a ‘Baddha Jeeva’. The one, who knows that the universe does not exist, is ‘Jeevanmukta’. The one, who dies after knowing the universe to be non-existent, is ‘Mukta Jeeva’. Isn’t it?”

“Correct. There are three categories for them viz., ‘Baddha Jeeva’, ‘Jeevanmukta,’ and ‘Mukta Jeeva’. Among these, the second one is the person who attains salvation while still
being in the body. The one who attains salvation after he leaves the body, i.e., after his death, is the third. For the ‘Baddha Jeeva’, the one who considers that the universe exists will have many rebirths.”

“It was said that I alone am reality and the rest is all illusion. Was it not? What about the Supreme Godhead?”

“When there are two i.e., I and Supreme Godhead, will it not become dualism? Hence, ‘I’ is Supreme Godhead. That is meant by ‘So (a) ham’. They said that ‘Tattvam Asi’ means you, who is full of attributes, full of action and full of doubt, are the Supreme Godhead, devoid of attributes, devoid of actions, devoid of the dispute.”

“These qualities – devoid of attributes and full of attributes, devoid of actions and full of activity, devoid of doubts and full of doubts, are all contradictory. How can it be possible to say that ‘tat’ with some and ‘tvam’ with some other attributes are the same?”

“Consider you said: ‘He is this Devadatta’. What does that mean?”

“That Devadatta, who was seen somewhere at sometime is this Devadatta, seen here at this time. This is the meaning.”

“How will it be? How can that Devadatta seen at that place then and this Devadatta being seen now here become the same? If it is to become so, then the attributes ‘then, there’ and ‘here, now’ should be dropped. If so dropped, then it will be Devadatta and Devadatta and hence it becomes same.”

“It looks like same but there is some difference in this dropping! Ok, let us keep it aside. According to this, they have left the phrases ‘devoid of attributes’, ‘devoid of the actions’ and ‘devoid of doubt’ with the Supreme Godhead and the phrases ‘full of the attributes’, full of action and ‘full of doubt’ with the Jeeva and are saying ‘Tat – Tvam – Asi’ – ‘you are that’. Is it not?”

“That is the one which remained according to the followers of S’ankara,” said Purushottam garu and laughed. “Are you understanding the monism fully?”

“In our younger days if somebody talked something strange and contradictory, we used to say – ‘his talks are all Advaita –monism’ now I understand why we used to say so!” said Sastry with a smile.

Every body had a hearty laugh.

Raghuramaiah asked, “‘I am that Supreme Godhead, there is no second one. Only one is there.’ OK, I accept this talk. If all of us – you, Sakuntala, Sastry, Subrahmanyam, Avadhani – talk about ourselves in this way, then there will be so many Supreme Godheads!”

“Here, we have water in many pots. Look into them. Are you seeing many skies or not? Does that mean that there are many skies?”

“Because of the many pots, many skies are seen. Similarly, because of this body, it appears as though there are many Supreme Godheads or Souls or ‘I’s. If you take a rod and break all the pots, then there is only one sky! Similarly, if all the bodies are removed, there is
only one Supreme Godhead or soul. There are no more two. But how do we remove the bodies? We could break the pots but we cannot kill all!"

“Where is that removal of body? Is there any thing like body at all? Is it not untrue?”

“Yes, Yes! We already said it earlier. The question – ‘How can the snake over the rope vanish?’ crops up only if it is there! Because of the dim light, one sees the snake over the rope. Had there been sufficiently bright light, he would have seen only the rope! Then, how so many bodies, and universe are seen over the Supreme Godhead? We have sufficiently bright light!”

“The light which does not allow things to be seen clearly is called dim light. Similarly, the one, which makes us to feel that the universe exists, is called ‘Avidya’. You can take Avidya to mean ignorance – spiritual ignorance.”

“It is said that which makes one consider material world as a reality, is Avidya. It is OK. But it is their doctrine that there is only Supreme Godhead and nothing else exists! If so, what makes that Supreme Godhead invisible? Is it also Avidya only?”

“That is called by them as ‘Maaya’ – the unreality. Everywhere it is dimness only, which makes the rope invisible and in its place makes the snake visible. Similarly, that which covers the Supreme Godhead and makes the universe visible is only one, but given two names only for understanding. The Maaya covers the Supreme Godhead. Hence, He will not be visible. The Avidya makes the universe visible over Him. Both Avidya and Maaya are same but with two names!”

“That means, because of Maaya, the rope will not be visible. Because of Avidya, the snake becomes visible. Well, understood. It is said that Maaya covered Supreme Godhead. When did it cover? Before He was covered, how was his form? Who saw Him?”

“You cannot ask when did Maaya cover Him. It is without beginning. It is as without beginning as Supreme Godhead.”

“If so there are two – the Supreme Godhead and Maaya. How is it monism then?”

“Where are the two? It is Supreme Godhead alone existing!”

“But you said that Maaya covered Him, and hence the Universe is visible.”

“Is the universe real or unreal?”

“It is unreal only!”

“How can ‘unreal’ exist? And for that how can Maaya be cause?”

“Oh! This knotty problem is understood. If Maaya is real, the universe becomes visible. But since the universe is unreal, Maaya is non-existent. Maaya exists for that man, who says Universe exists. For him, who knew the reality, it does not exist. Hence Maaya can be said to exist as well as non-existing.”

“Very good. This was discussed as ‘Sat Asat Anirvac’aneeya’ earlier.”
“OK. It is agreed that Maaya covered the Supreme Godhead. It is agreed that the Avidya makes the non-existent Universe seen as existing. It is agreed that Avidya means innocence – the dim light. It is agreed that Supreme Godhead means ‘I’. It is agreed that ‘I’ means Jnaana – the knowledge. But how can Ajnaana cover Jnaana? Can the darkness cover the light?”

“It is incorrect, I agree, but look at the example: Are fire and water, two objects with opposing characteristics, or not?”

“Yes, they are.”

“When a vessel with water is placed on fire, though the fire does not enter the water directly, its characteristic ‘heat’ is entering the water. Isn’t it? With that is the water boiling or not? When the water, by nature without any change, changes due to the fire, which cannot enter it directly, why the Maaya a form of ignorance, cannot cover the Supreme Godhead, manifestation of the knowledge, and show the unreal universe?”

“Then it looks that the Maaya is much more powerful than the Supreme Godhead! It is entering the Supreme Godhead! Probably it is more appropriate that we should worship that Maaya only”

“Yes, It can be done, but where is Maaya? It does not exist!”

“Oh you are getting away scot-free! Neither the philosophy could be understood nor the fault is located! Very intelligent is S’ankara!”

“What else did you think he is? Today, in the whole world, Indian philosophy means S’ankara’s philosophy! So famous it is!”

“But mind you! There are deficiencies. I am unable to pinpoint them right now. To tell them, it needs a detailed study.”

“Which Dars’ana will not have one or two omissions? It is not a great thing.”

“Not one or two omissions. They are quite serious in nature. Ok, let us keep it aside. Do they say that there is no creation at all? Is the Supreme Godhead seen as universe because of the effect of Maaya?”

“It is correct that Supreme Godhead is seen as universe, but S’ankara did not say in those words. He said strangely that Supreme Godhead in association with Maaya created this universe and His name is Hiranyagarbha.”

“How can there be a name? The Supreme Godhead is devoid of the name and form!”

“The Supreme Godhead is devoid of name and form when He is not with Maaya. He will have both name and form, if He is associated with Maaya.”

“Oh! Yes, it is so! Thence did He create this entire Universe?”

“Yes! So, those, who cannot realize that this universe is unreal, and those thinking of dualism, should approach the Creator. There are many celestials, worlds, heavens and hells under His control.”
“Do celestials mean Vishnu, S’iva, Brahma, Indra etc.?”

“Yes, They are the ones! You can worship all of them for getting your wishes fulfilled. According to the acts of virtue or vice you do, you will be getting those highest worlds or those worlds of these celestials and losing them.”

“Is it all delusion – Bhrama only?”

“For a man who is already in delusion, is it not reality only? We are talking about him only now!”

“Yes, Yes! All these are not for those who are not having the Bhrama, for those who got Bhrama relieved and for the man who considers to have got rid of the Bhrama. These are applicable only for those who do not like the Bhrama; do not understand the Bhrama, and who cannot get rid of the Bhrama. So, they need to perform these worships, Vratas – the vowed observances, recitations of sacred texts etc.”

“Yes. All these are as real as the subjects in the dreams while being in the state of dream!”

“Is there any regulation as to which gods he should propitiate, or they can go to any temple?”

“He can go to any temple as he wishes. He can worship that God. What is wrong in that? If you require a coconut, are you not going to a coconut tree? When you require groceries, you go to a grocer’s shop, and similarly for any notebook etc. one goes to the stationer’s shop. So also is going to a temple!”

“What should that man, who got rid of the Bhrama and attained salvation, do? Can he worship all these Gods? Is there any specific God who can relieve the Bhrama?”

“If the existence of the Gods itself is a Bhrama, will there be a god to relieve Bhrama? Since all the Gods are Bhrama only, it is immaterial which God is propitiated.”

“How is it possible? Saluting that God and offering Him the flowers, how can one get the feeling to say ‘Oh God, You are not existing, saying that you exist is a Bhrama only’? Are they not contradictory?”

“That is like that only! Performance of worship by believers of advaita is such an act only. There is no use of questioning that!”

“OK, What will happen to them after they die?”

“If they perform it with all the sincerity and unfailing faith, there will be benefit. If they perform it with a desire, that desire will get fulfilled. If they desire proximity of that particular God, they will go to that God’s world. As soon as the effect of virtue is spent, they come back for a rebirth. If they perform without any desire, they attain either that God’s world or they attain the world of Hiranyagarbha, the creator and stay there permanently. When the deluge happens, they join the attribute-less Supreme Godhead. When the Supreme Godhead with attributes recreates the universe, they do not come out.”
“So, for those devoid of Bhrama, it is direct joining the attribute-less Supreme Godhead! For the man in the Bhrama, it is life in the different worlds as long as the creation is there and on the deluge, joining the Attribute-less Supreme Godhead. Right. Understood. Please tell again what exactly attribute-less Supreme Godhead means.”

“I need not tell what it means by the Supreme Godhead with attributes because, one can imagine clearly as the name and form are there for Him. The Supreme Godhead without attributes is called ‘Nirvis’esha C’inmaatra’.”

“Oh! Please do not use the technical jargon. It is not at all understood!”

“OK, I will explain with normal illustration. Imagine you and a tree by your side. Is there any difference or not?”

“Yes it is there.”

“What type of difference is it?”

“Genus difference. My lineage and the lineage of the tree are different. Will there not be difference?”

“That means the ‘Vijaateeya Bheda’ – the inter-generic difference. That will not be there in the Supreme Godhead without attributes – the Nirguna Para Brahma.”

“Aha! Now I understand that there is no generic matter other than the Supreme Godhead that is no other matter other than Supreme Godhead exists. What next?”

“What type is that generic difference that exists between one tree and other?”

“That is called ‘Sajaateeya Bheda’ – the intra-generic difference.”

“Yes! In that way, there is no matter which is similar to Supreme Godhead.”

“Neither there is matter which is different than Supreme Godhead nor similar to Supreme Godhead! OK, What next?”

“Are there not the leaves, branches, flowers, raw fruits in the tree or not? That type of difference is called ‘Svagata Bheda’ – internal difference. The Supreme Godhead will not be like that.”

“That means there are no divisions in Supreme Godhead. What did you call this? Something like ‘Nirvis’esha …’ was said by you.”

“Vis’esha means difference. Nirvis’esha means without any differences. C’inmaatra means Jnaana Svaroopa – the true constitution of knowledge. ’Nirvis’esha C’inmaatra’.”

“What is meant by ‘Jnaana Svaroopa’?”

“There are types viz., Roopa and Svaroopa. I may not be able to explain easily now but broadly, I shall explain now. Roopa means the visible form and consider for the time being that Svaroopa means the invisible form. You will come to know gradually in full over a period of time.”
“It is no problem. Please tell now. I shall try to understand.”

“Take Sugar. How does it look?”

“It is sweet. It is in form like small white crystals.”

“Being in small white crystals is its ‘Roopa’ and being sweet is its ‘Svaroopa’ Have you understood?”

“Yes, able to understand!”

“Suppose we have separated the entire sweetness from that white crystals of sugar and made that sweetness into something like a dough, what do we call that dough? That sweetness is called the ‘svaroopa’ of sugar. Are you able to visualise?”

Yes, I am able but it looks absurd. Is it not impossible?”

“In your opinion it is impossible but not in the view of the Advaitins.”

“OK, Please tell. Then how will ‘Jnaana Svaroopa’ be?”

“Have you really understood what Jnaana means? You have understood sweetness. Is not it? In a similar fashion, can you explain what is Jnaana?”

“Jnaana means … Jnaana … it means … I am seeing you – This is one type of Jnaana. I am listening. – This is another type of Jnaana. Breeze is cool – this is another Jnaana. Taste is bitter –this is another jnaana. Smell is good – this is another Jnaana. All these are Jnaanas only.”

“Not only these. You are imagining some thing in the mind! That is another Jnaana. Isn’t it?”

“Yes. All these are Jnaanas only.”

“Sweetness is in the crystals of sugar. Isn’t it?”

“Yes”

“Like that where are all these Jnaanas?”

“They are attached to the objects around us, the world etc. Further they are with the sense organs and mind.”

“Like we have bundled the sweetness in the sugar separately, take the jnaana in all these objects, in the world, in the sense organs, in the mind etc and bundle it together. That bundle is called ‘jnaana svaroopa.’”

“This is much more absurd. Is this the meaning of ‘Nirvis’esha C’inmaatra’? Can it be experienced at all? Impossible.”

“Do not downgrade the Advaitins like that. You are talking because of your entrenched dualism concept. You remove it out and it will be known on its own.”
“It is nonsense. What is the use of running around searching the horn of a rabbit? Will it at all be available?”

Oh, No! You are experiencing the ‘Nirvis’esha C’inmaatra’ day in and day out. Only you are not knowing that.”

“If it is being experienced every day, how is it not known?”

“Do you know the real scent of a perfume if you are affected with cold and nose blocked? Similarly, you, with the thoughts of dualism in you, are not knowing the daily experience.”

“Tell me in detail.”

“Suppose you are sleeping, what will happen in the first stage? You will close your eyes and you will not see anymore the world. Slowly you will get into sleep. And you will not hear the world any more. The smell of the world will not be felt. The touch of the world will not be felt. The taste of the world will not be known. Will it?”

“Yes”

“That means, all the objects of the world are gone, and the knowledge of those is no more there. That is to say that the Jnaana from all the objects of the world is pulled out like the sweetness from the sugar crystals. Isn’t it?”

“I shall tell later whether it is so or not, but this looks peculiarly strange argument. Please continue!”

“What is happening to you in the next stage? You are dreaming. That means, as the sense organs stopped giving the information from outside, mind from the imaginations, Buddhi from its decisions, C’ittam from its remembrances, ego from the nature of feeling ‘I’, are supplying the information to you. Is it OK?”

“Yes!”

“You went into the stage of deep sleep. What will happen then?”

“No more dreams.”

“What is happening then? Mind, Buddhi, C’ittam, and egoism also are not working. That means the Jnaana – the knowledge, is pulled out from them also. What is left out then? After pulling out the Jnaana from the world, objects, mind, Buddhi, C’ittam, egoism, sense organs, from all none of them exist. What is left out in that deep sleep is only the Jnaana. Is that not C’inmaatra! Is it not Nirvis’esha C’inmaatra?”

“May be! It may be possible to say so, but how will it be known that even Jnaana exists there?”

“The rule is that the jnaana gives always the happiness and bliss. Do you not feel after the deep sleep, “Ah”! How happy it is!” It means, that you had experienced the only Jnaana. That is the indication that you have only Jnaana in the deep sleep.”
“If experience of possessing such Jnaana alone happens when the man is fully awake, is that the salvation? Is he called a Jeevanmukta?”

“Right. That is the point. The point must be caught like that only. That stage when the man has Jnaana alone not only in the deep sleep but in fully awaken stage also.”

“That is to say that there should not exist any object to be known by the Jnaana. ‘I’ who knows that should not exist. Jnaana alone must exist. Is it possible?”

“Why do you say is it possible? So many are shouting from their house tops that it became possible in their cases! The one, which is known by the Jnaana, is called Jneya, and you the knower are called Jnaata. The unification of these three i.e., Jnaana, Jnaata and Jneya is the stage of Samaadhi – the supreme spirit or the state of salvation. Existing separately – meaning existing with the thought that I am grasping that particular object, is mundane existence. This is Advaita!”

“In Advaita, is it that Gods, evil spirits, virtue, vice etc. do not exist any more?”

“They are all for those who are fully in Bhrama, i.e. for those who are in dualism only. This creation is only for them.”

“Are the devotion, worship, rituals etc. no more required?”

“All of them are only for those who have dualism in their minds. But they may gradually lead them towards the thoughts of monism.”

“Thoughts of monism mean having the Jnaana only. Isn’t so? That Jnaana suffices! In their view, the Jnaana can get generated even without the devotion, rituals, worship also!”

“In this way, they cite two ways in their school of philosophy. One is Pipeelikaa Maarga, and the other is Vihanga Maarga. Pipeelikaa means, ant. Vihanga means bird. To come from branch of one tree to branch of another tree, the ant has to climb down all the way from the first tree and climb again all the way up the second tree. Similarly, the person with undeveloped Jnaana has to bring down his dualism thinking by devotion, rituals, worship etc. and from the Jnaana he has to climb on to the thoughts of monism. It is very difficult and time consuming also. Suppose it is the bird. It simply flies from this branch to the other branch of another tree. That is Jnaana Maarga.”

“They shouldn’t have the Praarabdha Karma – already commenced consequences of acts (done in former life), when they do not perform the rituals and action! Then, why should there be delay in attaining the salvation from the body for the Jeevanmukta? What I mean is – when one knows already that except himself nothing else exists and every thing is unreal, how is it possible still to be with body?”

“While the fan is running, you switch off the fan. Will it stop instantaneously? It will rotate for some more time before it comes to absolute stand still position. Similarly, however Aatma Jnaana he might have achieved, he has to live in the body as long as the Praarabdha Karma is not exhausted.”

“It was said that the Praarabdha Karma is unreal! Why is it said again ‘till it is not exhausted”? What I am referring to is a stage that is attained only after fully knowing that this rituals, actions, body etc. are all unreal.”
“If you are asking like this, it indicates that the dualism is still with you. Unless that vanishes from you, you will not understand.”

“Suppose I say that because the dualism knowledge is still existing in you, it became inevitable for you to found the Advaita Siddhaanta – the school of monism!” said Raghuramaiah with slight fun involved.

“We are telling that thinking along those lines is the characteristic of the persons with Dualistic knowledge,” said Purushottam with more fun intended. All had a hearty laugh.

“OK, Enough of this Advaita…” Raghuramaiah was trying to say, and Purushottam interrupted, “Subject of Advaita is not yet completed!” Raghuramaiah said, “We have come to know the basic points. Further is not necessary.” He asked again, “Is this Advaita existing before S’ankara or is it the work of S’ankara’s intelligence?”

“S’ankara said that he had learnt it from ‘Gaudapaada’. Though Gaudapaada was Vedantins, it is said that Buddhism had lots of influence on him. By the time of Gaudapaada, the Buddhism was expanding substantially. “

“The closeness of S’ankara’s Advaita to Buddhism is quite obvious and clear. S’ankara said that all this is unreal. Buddha said that it is all void. The only difference is Buddha said that everything is void without any distinction between the world, soul, or Brahma. It is not so for S’ankara. The universe is illusion. Soul and Brahma are one and the same but it is devoid of name and form. Even though they are available, they are of no use. That man said that he does not believe the Vedas. I learnt from my penance that nothing exists. This man said that he believes the Vedas and he came to know from them that nothing exists. That is all there!”

“Ah! You got the central Idea! Now, while telling about Advaita, I had told not only what S’ankara told but in some small amounts, what his disciples had told, to gain time. Please keep this in your mind.”

“Are there any differences of opinion between S’ankara and his disciples?”

“Though it cannot be said that there are differences, his different followers have adopted different ways and means to propagate his doctrines. “

“But the matter is all the same!’ laughed Raghuramaiah.

“Lots of differences had cropped up in matters like ‘what is Maaya? what is the difference between Maaya and Avidya? Is Jeeva Svaroopa same as Brahma Svaroopa? How can one ride over the other to give the Bhraanti?’ etc. but not in the principal doctrines. In some stages, some revolutionary concepts like ‘the one to create the thoughts of monism – the Advaita is not Jnaana but devotion –the Bhakti’ had also cropped up!”

“Are there any famous persons among his followers?”

“Yes and no also. But it is very rare to find persons who followed S’ankara in Toto. For example, Bhaarati Teertha Swami, one of the heads of the S’ringeri seat, said that both, Jeeva and Is’vara are creators. He has propounded that while Is’vara carries on the external creation Jeeva does the internal creation. The rest is as usual.”
“Does Is’vara mean Brahma with attributes?”

“Yes. Brahma with attributes only is called Is’vara. Though many had propagated S’ankara’s philosophy, it could only suppress Buddhism and no more spread could take place for a very long time. In the modern times, after the advent of Swami Vivekananda only, S’ankara’s Advaita had had a sudden pick up. Undoubtedly, for today’s increase of this Advaita philosophy, Vivekananda should be given the credit.”

“Did Vivekananda alter any thing new in S’ankara’s philosophy?”

“He did not alter any thing but the propagation is on a different method. He is the first among those who made S’ankara’s philosophy known world over! Swami Rama Teertha also had done that much attempt as Vivekananda did!”

“Is not Swami Vivekananda, a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa? Did he elaborate anything?”

“Though there are many things told by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, he made a revolutionary announcement in Advaita Philosophy. He had announced that he had achieved pinnacle in his Yogasaadhana and he had the direct vision of not only the Hindu Gods Rama, Krishna etc. but Christ and Allah also and he could know that there are not so many and only one is there.”

“He says that the Supreme Godhead proposed by S’ankara, the believer of Vedas, and the Supreme Godhead of Christians and the Moslems who do not believe Vedas, is one and the same! Did he show any proof of this?”

“He did not show anything like the Logic or S’astra but he simply said that he had the vision. That is all.”

“It might be! But I read somewhere that his having the direct vision of Kaali Maa is because of a psychological disorder like the split personality.”

“Such comments will be heard. We cannot decide whether it is true or not.”

“Yes. You were telling about Vivekananda. Please continue.”

“There is one special feature in his teachings – the unstinted support to the idolatry. S’ankara had prescribed this only for the people with the thoughts of dualism. He did not make clear any thing like that. Neither he contradicted S’ankara. He says that this entire creation is the plaything for the Supreme Godhead.”

“Did he also have the practice of worshipping Kaali Maa like Ramakrishna Paramahansa?”

“Yes! He also used to do that S’aakteya Aaraadhana. His belief is that She is the mother of the Universe. His teaching is that Kaali Maa is the Supreme Godhead only masked by Maaya suggested by S’ankara.”

“Aha! He is of the view that Kaali Maa is Is’vara only!”
“Do you remember that we talked about two things? We talked about the trinity in Christianity – Father, Son, and The Holy Ghost. Similarly, we talked about Jnaana, Jneya, and Jnaata in Advaita. In the same way for the sake of saying, we are saying Nature, soul and Supreme Godhead. Vivekananda is of the firm view that all the three sets are same.”

“Does it mean that all the three religions are talking same?”

“Yes. Apart from that, there is nothing special in Vivekananda from the aspect of Dars’ana. However, he gave a wake up call for the people to discard the helplessness of thinking that the universe is illusion and prepare themselves for the service to the society, humanity, and the country. That is one specialty in him."

“If everything is illusion, who will be the doer? And who will be the taker of service?”

“He said people not to get guided by such words parroted. Though it is known in the Yogasaadhana that everything is illusion, nothing is going to happen to this world and people must come forward to serve the humanity and help the poor. Who wants these teachings of the monism when people are suffering from the hunger, he asked with a little rebuke also. He is totally aversive to the talk of helplessness.”

“Well! You said about Raamaananda Teertha – what about him?”

“It is quite well known that he was always in ecstasy. It seems that he was called ‘Ram Badusha”. It is said that he used to give more importance for the experience but not for the teachings. It is not that he was not teaching! All respect him as a person who had attained the ultimate in monism.”

“People like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Raamaananda Teertha etc. have all preached and propagated S’ankara’s Advaita! Are there no persons who propagated Ramanuja’s Vis’ishtaadvaita, that much in the countries of the world?”

“Great people like ‘Pillai Lokaac’aarya, Manavaala Mahaamuni, Vedaanta Des’ika etc. are all intelligent no doubt but they limited themselves to our country. After them worth naming is the present Chinna Jeeyar Swami only. He is spreading wide extensively the Ramanuja School in the foreign countries. Though for the present it is influencing only the people of Indian origin in foreign countries, it is bound to influence those from other faiths also in those countries sooner than later. He is considered as an incarnated personality by the entire Vaishnava society.”

“What is the full name of the Chinna Jeeyar Swami?”

“Srimannaaaraayana Ramanuja Chinna Jeeyar Swami. His station is Seethanagaram near Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh.”

“Sir, it has become quite late. Please excuse me, I must proceed” saying so Sastry got up looking at his watch.”

“Oh, No! We also are coming, wait a bit, we also have other engagements.” Saying so, all have got up stopping the discussion there.
Chapter - 13

“Sir, I believe it cannot be avoided any more. My daughter has sent the open ticket also from United States,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Really! Oh, No! We are passing time very well in discussing the philosophical matters with Raghuramaiah garu. I shall not be getting that opportunity any more as it looks,” said Purushottam.

“Really! See how the time flies! Already, it has been four months since we have started discussing the subject,” said Sastry.

“Vinita! So are you going to give me vacation?’ asked Avadhani. Though he asked for fun, there was a little sadness in his voice. He wants to teach many things to an intelligent girl like Vinita. She is already much more intelligent than all children of her age.”

“I am not going Sir, only grandparents are going. I shall be studying here it-self. I will not abandon your tuition. I shall be staying with another of my uncles. You may come there and teach,” said Vinita like an elderly person.

“No! You should not say so. He is coming because of his regard towards the grandfather to give you tuition, but why will he come to everybody’s house?” Sakuntalamma admonished her granddaughter.

“Oh! It does not matter, she is a small girl” Avadhani tried to make things light.

“If that is so, I shall go to house of Sir and study but I will not stop going to the tuition’, said Vinita with a bit of stubbornness.

“Who will escort you there everyday? Do not be stubborn. It is not convenient for any of your uncles there. Your grandfather is weak. You shall go to the school only by bus. That is all. After we come back, you can again start,” said Sakuntalamma.

“If so I shall also come to U.S. It will be boring for me here.” Said Vinita, with disgust.

“You have started your old song again! Let us see later,” Sakuntalamma postponed.

“Otherwise, Subrahmanyam! Will it be possible for you to drop her in Avadhani’s house daily and bring her back after the tuition?” asked Raghuramaiah showing a via media solution.

“Oh, Yes! Definitely, I have a scooter. I shall take her comfortably on that. Is it OK Vinita!” said Dr. Subrahmanyam.

“How will it be possible for you? What about your hospital? You may be having operations etc.” Sakuntalamma asked doubtfully.

“They may be there, but how does it matter, there are assistants. If it becomes inevitable, I shall send our pharmacist to take care of Vinita. Don’t worry about that,” he assured Sakuntalamma and asked Vinita, “Is it Ok my dear Vinita?”
“Oh, Yes!” she agreed gladly.

Avadhani was also pleased. Sakuntalamma felt greatly relieved at this solution.

“Sir, Purushottam garu! By your grace, I have learnt many topics. Since the day of our departure will be nearing, let us sit more often! Whatever could be covered gets completed. Will it be taxing you?”

“There is no problem at all! I am coming very happily. The philosophical science is a vast subject. Whatever amount we may cover, still it remains incomplete. However, we shall be discussing more briefly henceforth. You might have to do lot of packing etc.!”

“Yes, a lot of work is there. But we would not like to abandon this discussion halfway. It does not mean that the matter should be condensed too much!”

“Some are such that you cannot condense them even if we want to. Some others do not need elaboration. So there is no problem. Now, we have to start the Dars’anas of those who did not accept that the universe is illusory. Primarily we have Vis’ishtaadvaita and Dvaita to be discussed in more detail.”

“Only that many!”

“After them, the contextual differences in them, Dars’anas that have cropped up in S’aiivism that are common to Advaita and Vis’ishtaadvaita also are to be studied and then we can close for the present.”

“Sir! You have to tell me something about the mantra and mantropades’a also,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Yes madam, if time permits I shall do that definitely. But you all wanted to know about Brahma Sutras in detail. When can we do that?”

“Now it can be only on our return.”

“When are you likely to return?”

“Our intention is to come back as soon as possible.”

“Grandpa said that he will return within a week,” shouted Vinita as though she is making public, an information that is secret Purushottam started saying ‘how can they come back within a week?’ but refrained from saying thinking that it must have been told to keep Vinita happy. Again, he said to Raghuramaiah, “You might forget all these by the time you come back!”

“I do not forget so easily Sir! Here, I am carrying this note book with me. Over and above, I shall purchase and read other books on philosophy as well,” said Raghuramaiah.

“Sastry looked at Avadhani and said, “We should take care not to forget.”

“Sir, Purushottam, I had noted some points. Please tell some thing about them,” said Raghuramaiah.
Purushottam looked at him enquiringly.

“Who is this Dalai Lama? It is said that he is spiritual leader! What is his religion?”

“One meaning of Lama is the spiritual master. The Buddhism from our country, which has spread out to other countries, is ‘Lama’ religion in Tibet. You will recall our study that Bodhisattva becomes Buddha. The first Dalai Lama is such an incarnation of Bodhisattva only. Dalai Lama means ‘ocean of knowledge’.

“You are saying first Dalai Lama. Are there many of these Dalai Lamas?”

“In Tibet, religion did not remain as religion only. It entered the political scene. The religious leader Lama has public authority also. So, this society became a cadre development as well. Hence These Dalai Lamas take over the leadership of that society one after the other.”

“Who gets converted as Dalai Lama?”

“Dalai Lama is religious leader for the entire state. However, there is another called ‘Taashi Lama’. His authority is over one province. It is the belief of the Tibetans that Dalai Lama is the incarnation of Buddha and Taashi Lama is the incarnation of Amitabh!”

“Who is this Amitabh?”

“After Buddha’s incarnation, many started meditating and became Bodhisattvas. This Amitabh is one among them. A branch of Buddhism named ‘Amida’ named after him is the model for millions of Japanese.”

“Aha! Dalai Lama and Taashi Lama are incarnations of two important personalities in Buddhism!”

“Whenver either of them dies, the child born at that moment in that country, becomes the Lama again.”

“If more than one child is born at that moment, how do they decide?”

“The child will be selected according to the decision of the living Lama. You may please note that ‘Lama’ means almost our Sanyaasin – ascetic. It is said that one child from each house is offered to the Buddhist ascetic houses for becoming ‘Lama’ in Sikkim even in the recent times also. They learn Buddhism from their childhood and teach others after they become older.”

“Understood. Lama is such an important person there! Yes! Please clear one more doubt – what is ‘Tao’ religion?”

“This is not from our country. This is from China. In China, there are primarily three important religions. They are ‘Tao’ religion, Confucianism and Buddhism. Let us talk about the religions of our country only for the present. It is big ocean if we take religions all over the world. And time will not be sufficient for us.”

“OK! What is the religion of ‘C’araka?’”
“C’araka is an Ayurvedic Doctor of our country. His book ‘C’araka Samhita’ is a very famous treatise of Ayurveda. It is not known that he founded any new religion, but some of his opinions are very interesting.”

“Let us hear them a little.”

“It does not appear if C’araka told anything about Gods or evil spirits. His doctrine is that the creation happens from Vaayu – the air and all the parts of body are working because of air only. According to him that is driving the mind also.”

“Is this not a new doctrine?”

“Yes, it gives such an impression. It is said that if those materials with which the human body is made, are taken as food, and then only it is health and longevity. The three ingredients of our body are said to be Vaata, Pitta, and Kapha. These three will be alternating in our body like the summer, rainy season, and winter occurs cyclically. If all the three are in equal proportions, it is complete health for the body. Whenever it gets imbalanced, it brings ill health. The goal of a doctor is to balance these three, irrespective of whichever medicine is prescribed.”

“That is all old story! Why that old medicine story? Did he not say anything on the spiritual side?” asked Dr. Subrahmanyam.

“Listen then! We are coming to that only! As the body is made up of the Vaata, Pitta and Kapha, similarly the mind is made up of the three attributes – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.”

“We had already talked about these three attributes earlier!”

“Yes, we talked about them. We learnt that the Sattva is for development of knowledge, Rajas is for the instability, and Tamas is for the stupidity. If all these three are balanced then only it is considered that the mind is in healthy condition. The doctor’s duty is not only to simply balance the three that belong to the body - the Vaata, Pitta and Kapha, but he should balance these three attributes also”

“Did he not say anything about the soul?”

“He said! Soul is eternal. While the foetus grows in the mother’s womb, at some stage, it will develop relationship with the soul. According to the deeds performed in the previous births, the intelligence etc is developed in them. The soul will be there with three desires – one is desire to live in this life, second is desire to earn wealth and the third is desire to have another rebirth. If all the three desires are balanced, it is considered that the soul is healthy.”

“All are sets of three!”

“Yes! We talked about three now – the soul, body and mind. These three are the three legs of a tripod. The life is on these three legs. If these three are unequal, the life will not be happy. It will be miserable. If that misery is to be removed, all the three should be equal. This is his doctrine.”

“That is to say that for the elimination of the man’s misery while the doctor controls two legs, the previous births are controlling the third leg! Is this the bliss or salvation?”
“Probably, it should be said yes. Beyond that I do not know.”

“If it is not known, it will not be there! OK, OK. Please tell about Ramana Maharshi.”

“He is a famous south Indian ascetic. His is totally the school of monism. Who ever had gone to him and asked about any spiritual doubt, he used to ask him who he was and preach him that he should know first about himself and with that analysis about the soul, it is said to be the salvation. Apart from that, there is nothing new from the angle of the doctrine and the school.”

“Oh! There is nothing special! He may be a great ascetic! But not a Dars’anakaara! OK. Did Rabindranath Tagore tell any thing?”

“I remember that we talked about him already! OK, let us see once more. He is famous, basically as a poet and a singer. As Daars’anika, also he is to some extent known. His Dars’ana looks somewhat similar to Vaishnava School. Though he did not negate the idea that the Supreme Godhead is devoid of name and form, he preached for the meditation of Para Brahma as the ‘Pururshottama’ the highest among the Purushas.”

“In the forms of Vishnu etc?”

“But not so many forms, only any one form. There may be many forms, but all of them are of one only. Jeeva’s surrender to the Supreme Godhead – the Paramaatma is considered to be salvation by him. He did not agree for saying the universe to be illusion. He did not agree with S’ankara in saying that in salvation, that ‘Aham’ also will vanish.”

“What is ‘Aham’?”

“Aham means I. Do you remember we talked that during deep sleep this ‘I’ also vanishes and that is the stage of salvation. He did not accept that concept. He considers the love and devotion as primary instruments for attaining salvation.”

“Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is considered to be a great philosopher! Did he introduce any new concepts or are they the same old concepts only?”

“I remember we had discussed about him also! He is so famous that after S’ankara, Ramanuja, and Madhvaachaarya, he is the greatest. He had written commentary on Brahma Sutras on his own without referring to any other commentator and expressed his views. However it does not appear to have got into prominence and developed into a separate school.”

“Does it mean that though he had introduced a separate concept, it did not achieve the special status as that of the other three – S’ankara, Ramanuja and Madhvaachaarya.”?

“It might have had that in the circles of intelligentsia! But it is not even known to the common philosophy student!”

“What did he tell new?”

“He said clearly in no uncertain words that he had not accepted the teachings of any spiritual mentor and with the knowledge gained from his own experiences, he is introducing his own Dars’ana.”
“Almost it can be said that it is like Jiddu Krishnamurthy!”

“His school can be considered to be pure doctrine only. That means that it is doctrine about soul only. He did not accept the view that the universe is either a mirage or delusion. It appears that he accepted the Vedanta in all other topics but his effort at inter-connecting the different religions is visible. He is of the view that any religion is relevant for that period and it may not suit subsequent times. There is no special school in prominence that follows him and hence we may not require his Dars’ana beyond this.”

“OK! I have noted further points for discussion that I have noted down are as follows: Is’variya Brahma Kumari’s society i.e., Om S’aanti people, Shirdi Saibaaba, Satya Saibaba, Vipasana society, Kalki Bhagavan, Ayyappa, S.S.Y…”

Purushottam interrupted his reading out the list.

He said, “Look, if we understand the three schools viz., Advaita, Vis’ishtaadvaita and Dvaita, we can understand, most of the different branches and schools that have come up by a mix of the different religions and different schools. In most of the present day emerging religions, one can easily identify the strains of Christianity and Islamic doctrines being mixed with Advaita, Vis’ishtaadvaita, and Dvaita schools of philosophy. Almost all the religions ask people to embrace their religion saying that all the religions are same and hence they can join them. For the ‘Om S’aanti’ cult people, the practice of Raajayoga is more prominent. The devotees of Shirdi Saibaba believe that he is Krishna, he is Allah and he is Jesus.”

“Like the devotees of Ramakrishna Paramahansa believe that he had the direct vision of The Three as one only, the devotees of Shirdi Saibaba believe that he is all of them! Well. Can we say that it is one variety of Advaita only?”

“The devotees of Satya Saibaba say that he is the incarnation of Shirdi Saibaba. Some of the Shirdi Saibaba’s devotees do not accept this. That is a dispute – differing views. Satya Saibaba also follows Advaita only. He says that all religions are one and the same. But he gives importance to the service to humanity. The strong belief of his devotees is that he has magical powers and exhibits them.”

“There is no importance to it as a separate Dars’ana or religion!”

“No. In the doctrinal practice of the Kalki Bhagavan also, it appears as though there is a combination of the principles of all the religions as I have told a while ago. Ayyappa is a celestial of Puranaas. He is a personality of the Kerala – the land of Malayalam. All these four five, which we have discussed now are religious faiths only and could not come up to a level of Dars’anas. S.S.Y appears more as an organization giving more importance to matters of health than a religious organization. It does not appear that Vipasana Dhyaana belongs to any separate religion. It is said that the practice of Buddhism is more in this. These centers are quite large in number in the country.”

“Some more religions are importing the topics of foreign religions and Dars’anas and are putting them in practice. Saying that it is immaterial whatever religion is followed because all of them are same, still they couch that their religion is the only one that is great. It is natural to say so! But before going into details of all these, we have not studied the basic Vis’ishtaadvaita and Dvaita philosophies. After them we shall see the others in your list.”
“Please remember one point. While some of the religions or Dars’anas have become prominent from the intrinsic values in them, some others had become famous from the greatness of their founders. There are many persons who pick up one main school and introduce alterations, either in the doctrine or in practice with the help of his intelligence, and introduce it as a new school. So, we must be careful if we want to enter this spiritual scenario seriously. The ladders and snakes are not even as in the snakes and ladders game. But the snakes are more!”

“From what you have said, it looks like that only. There are great people who had made the symbols of their school from the symbols of both the religions, which were argued and counter argued against each other. It stood more as a symbol of their thinking religious tolerance rather than giving a general impression of lack of understanding in their mental set up. It does not mean that there are no fights in between two or more religions. It is advantageous for them to respect each other and still follow their practices. If you ask them, they will say that for going to a particular place, there are many roads! They will never think that it is not possible to walk in all the ways!” Avadhani said.

“Yes. It would be nice if this aspect were known to all much more clearly. It is foolish to say that all religions are equal for one and one shall practice all of them. The intelligent say that all the religions are equal for them and hence whichever religion they may follow, the other religions are given their due respect.”

“Each religion has its own purpose. Practicing another religion does not fulfill that purpose. For example, the ear is for hearing; eye is for seeing, nose is for smelling and tongue is for tasting. Saying that all these organs are the same and hence I smell with the eye and see with the nose, is an speaking of an impossible task! Hence, it does not mean that because we are seeing with the eye, we have a bias against the ear or we are intolerant of the ear. If objective is to see, use the eye and for the objective of hearing, use the ear.

In the same way, one should select the religion depending on the objective or aim and practice the same. It does not mean intolerance towards the other religions,” said Purushottam.

“Do you say that the aim of all the religions is not the same?” Raghuramaiah asked.

“Though broadly the aim is same, view point is different. Hence the ways are different.”

“Please tell it more openly.”

“The aim of all the political parties is the same that the country should achieve development. But in the view of one political party, industrialization of the country is development, in the other party’s view; it is the healthy agricultural sector. In another’s view, somehow becoming wealthier is development. If increase in exports is development in the eyes of one, increase in imports according to some is not obstruction for development. If following other countries in civilization and culture is development, it is ability to make other countries copy our civilization and culture is development. In this, who is right and who is wrong? All of them are for development only! It is impossible to move forward with all of them together as they are contradictory to each other. Whichever party is given authority by people, that party concentrates on that type of development, which it views as proper development and it proceeds in that direction. If one stamps on all the parties symbols in the ballot paper saying that any party will work for the development of the nation only, the formation of the government itself cannot happen at all! If the voter goes on changing the
party every time, the development in all the fields will be so negligibly small since the aims of all the parties are different and each will not stop undoing what the other party has done towards development.”

“Each of the political party believes in a particular policy. Some may say monarchy, the other may say dictatorship, while the other may say it should be democracy. Another may say something else. Some others may say an alliance of all these. Will it give result if one says that I shall vote all of them as whoever it may be, it is the same?”

Similarly, the aim of all the religions is the salvation from this mundane misery. There is no doubt in that. But it is there in their angles of view. When some said it is the relief from the misery some said that it is attainment of eternal bliss. While some said that in salvation both are included, some others said that both of them are not there. Some considered both to be present, the others said that both of them are non-existent. Some said that considering them as existing is an illusion while others said that it is illusion to consider that they are non-existent. If it is said that instead of having faith in one of them, all should be believed and practiced, where will this student of philosophy be led?

“As we say that you may select any party for your liking, do not dishonour others, one must proceed forward after electing a particular path, without abusing the other paths. However, it will not be possible to proceed forward unless he is firm that his path is the best, he should be reminding himself that his path is better than the other paths. Only he should go that extent and not beyond that limit.

“I remember that we discussed earlier about school uniforms. Even then, once more we can talk about it. A particular school uniform is suitable only for that school. The school management will not allow if a student goes wearing any uniform other than that school uniform saying that since the student appears for the same Xth class, it should not matter whichever uniform is worn by the student.”

“No college will accept if a B.Sc. student sits in the B.Com class, saying that it should not matter in whichever class he sits since he will be appearing for the Degree exam only. A bank employee canvassing for the deposits, will not be appreciated by his bank if he canvasses for another bank saying that after all the other one is also a bank only and it should not matter if the depositor deposits in any bank. Hence, one should select his religion according to what he is aiming at, and practice it according to the prescribed practices of that religion. He should not deviate from that set path. Then only he will reach the goal.” Purushottam had lectured extensively.

“Are there any now, who do not interfere in another religion other than that which they selected to practice? Or is it that everybody interferes in every other religion?”

“Except Christianity and Islam, the number of other religions which direct that those who join their religion should not practice another religion, is extremely small in our country at present. At one time, all most all the religions were directing their followers like that only. Majority of the followers of Christianity and Islam are not practicing any other religious practices except those of their own religion. However, it is quite a different thing not to practice other religious practices from the abuse or dishonouring another religion other than their own. While the first option should be appreciated, the other one of dishonouring others’ religions is to be strongly deprecated. “
“Yes, it should be. Those of Christianity and Islam do never come to our temples and do not accept the offerings that are blessed by the Gods. But our Hindus mingle with their practices like participating in the Iftar parties etc. As far as I know, the older generation of Vaishnavites does not interfere in the other religious practices. We do deride them for that but as long as they do not abuse the other religions, their conduct is acceptable only!” said Avadhani.

“After the concept that the universe is an illusion, started circulating, I think the thinking that it is immaterial whichever religion is followed, has become stronger in our country” said Sastry.

“After S’ankara had propounded that the universe is illusory, many had countered it. Even eminent personalities like Yaadava Prakaas’a, Bhaaskara, also had opposed that doctrine. We love to imitate mainly the westerners and like to get their approval. We had followed them as long we had been under the British Rule. Before that, the Muslims had ruled us. And we had followed the Muslims and their religion. S’ankara’s Mithya vaada has become well known to the world during the Vivekananda’s tour of western countries. Since the westerners had respected it and appreciated it, we started respecting it.”

“Why is S’ankara’s school of Advaita accepted by the westerners, who did not accept our Vedas and Upanishads?”

“The specialty in Advaita Dars’ana is that it can attract the opposer with the power of logic though it is without any support from the Upanishads. With Vis’ishtaadvaita and Dvaita, the taste of them is not appreciated unless the taster has full faith in the Upanishads. One may say it is trash, the moment it is said that ‘Naaraayana is the only God’. Advaita can support either argument of the existence of universe or otherwise just like the ‘Syaat’ argument of the Jains, which says indecisively that may exist or may not exist. If you come to the point of the practice, without any sudden change of the dress, or the habits and practices, and without any adverse effect to his modern civilized society’s paraphernalia, he can still say that he is an Advaitin. Announcing that he is a Vis’ishtadvaitin or Dvaitin does not happen that easily. In these schools, it has to be practiced some how. Control of senses is a must in them. Roughly these are the reasons for the change in the society.”

“OK! OK! The discussion is again getting side tracked. As it is the time for us is very short. Please tell, who are these ‘Yaadava Prakaas’a and Bhaaskara, you mentioned earlier?”

“Please note one point in general. Then it will be easier for identifying which is what among all. The commentaries of Brahma Sutras are mainly of 6 categories. One is Advaita – which says that there are no two and it is only one. The second is Dvaita – which says that there are two. The third is Vis’ishtaadvaita – which is correlation of the above two. The fourth is Bhedaabheda – which says that difference is there and at the same time, there is no difference also. The fifth is ‘S’uddha Advaita” – which says except Brahma nothing else is there like Maaya, the deceptive appearance. The sixth is ‘Ac’intya Bhedaabheda’ which says that it is not possible to examine whether it is Bheda – the difference or Abheda – lack of difference. In this way, in totality there are mainly six categories. The rest fall easily into one of these six. The Vaishnava and S’aiva schools also fall in these six only.”

“This is not so well understood. Among these how many fall in Vaishnava philosophy and how many fall in the S’aiva philosophy?”
“The last five are generally called as Vaishnava philosophies. S’aiva philosophy is visible mainly in the first and in others it is seen as secondary.”

“This Yaadava Prakaas’a and Bhaskara who are mentioned now, belong to which category among these six?”

“Both of them are proponents of the school of ‘Bhedaabheda’ only. There are very minor differences.”

“Please tell in a little more detail.”

“Another point must be kept in the mind. The commentaries on Brahma Sutras can be mainly categorised in another way also. One is the line of thinking that the Supreme Godhead alone is felt as universe and souls. The other line of thinking is that the Supreme Godhead is transforming itself as the universe and souls.”

“This classification is better understood than the previous categorization. One is to say that the pencil is seen as a pen and the other is that pencil is transforming itself as pen. Isn’t it so? In Advaita of S’ankara, that we discussed, it is said that pencil is only seen as pen. Is it not so?”

“Yes, but in the school of Bhaskara, both the universe and the souls are the transformations of the Supreme Godhead only i.e., they have come from Brahma only. But then the question is whether they and Brahma are the same or not.”

“Are they one and same?”

“Are the sea and waves the same? They are same and not the same also. Similarly, the universe and the waves that have emerged from the Supreme Godhead only have the differences with the supreme Godhead and do not have any difference with Him also.”

“Yes, understood.”

“Just like the waves that are emerging out of the sea, the universe had emerged from the Supreme Godhead. When that Supreme Godhead takes the body or upaadhi, he became the soul. This is their doctrine.”

“That is to say that saying Supreme Godhead is the Universe is one point and the second point is that the universe is emerging from the Supreme Godhead. The third point is that the Supreme Godhead only is the soul or Jeeva Aatma. The fourth point will be if the Supreme Godhead takes the body, then it is the soul –the Jeeva Aatma. That may be the reason they say that there is difference and at the same time there is no difference. Also.”

“But, Yaadava Prakaas’a did not accept this theory. His argument is that the universe, soul and the Is’vara – the controller are created out of the Supreme Godhead.”

“Aha! Is’vara means the creator. He is created out of the Supreme Godhead only! Bhaskara did not say so. He said the Supreme Godhead Himself would transform into the Universe and Soul, where as this man says that the Universe, Soul, and the Is’vara are created from the Supreme Godhead only. Right!”
“Considering these three to be different in mundane worldly life and knowing the reality is the salvation as per Yaadava Prakaas’a. The rest of the things are as usual.”

“That means he is also a propounder of the school of Bhedaabheda only! He also says that there is difference between the Supreme Godhead and Universe and at the same time, it is not there also. Bhaskara has introduced a new word – Upaadhi and he has not said that. That is the only difference.”

“While this is the status, emerges the school of Vis’ishtaadvaita.”

“Sir! The meaning of this word is not understood at all! Since the phrase Advaita is there at the end portion of this word, is it closer to the school of S’ankara?”

“Please know first the meaning of the word, madam! Do you remember the wording of the Vrata Sankalpa – the intent of the vowed observance? Yes please tell – hmm – Dviteeya paraarthe… hmm.” As he was prompting her, she started telling – Sastry is helping her in telling “… asyaam S’ubha tithau … S’ubha Nakshatre … S’ubhavaasare … aevam guna vis’eshana vis’ishtaayaam… gothrah…” … ‘Wait, Wait! You tell, it like this: aevam guna vis’eshana vis’ishtaayaam, what is the meaning of this?”

“This day, qualified with such and such attributes. This is what Sastry garu has told.”

“What are those attributes? Please tell!”

“With the attributes viz., this particular day of the fortnight, this particular star, this particular day of the week – it means so I believe.”

“Correct! Now suppose, you remove these attributes…”

“Remove from what?”

“From that day?”

“How? It is not possible! If that particular day has to be told it has to be qualified with attributes!”

“Does it mean that these attributes and the day are the same?”

“No the day of the fortnight changes, the star changes, the day of the week changes but the day without these attributes has no meaning! If a specific day has to be mentioned it has to be mentioned with these attributes only!”

“If so, can you tell the number in the fortnight, the star etc without the day?”

“No! They do not have an independent entity without the day!”

“I shall give you another illustration. Suppose there is a fruit. It has a flavour, taste, and colour! Can we separately show the flavour, taste and the colour?”

“Not possible. They are with the fruit only. They are inseparable from it.”

“If so, are the fruit, colour, taste and flavour are one and the same?”
“How can it be? The taste and colour can be changing for the fruit!”

“OK! I will give you another illustration. I am there. Consider that Vinita does not know my name. If it has to be told about me, some identification marks are to be told! I am holding this book. Then, you saw me from the kitchen and will say ‘Vinita! Give this glass of milk to that man holding the book.’ Then Vinita comes and gives the glass of milk to me. Is it not?”

“Yes”

“Suppose I am fair. Then you can say, ‘Vinita! Give this glass of milk to that fair gentleman.’ Is it not?”

“Yes”

“Is there any difference between these two statements or not?”

“Yes! …Yes! You can keep the book aside but you cannot keep the fairness in you aside.”

“Yes. Understood.”

“Remember these points. These are basics for Vis’ishtaadvaita. According to Ramanuja’s School, the universe and soul are attributes for the Supreme Godhead like the colour and taste for a fruit. They are like the titi and nakshatra for the day. Please note that it is somewhat similar to the fairness to my body. As we proceed, you will understand better.”

“Will the universe and soul be like the body for the Paramaatma – the Supreme Godhead? What is meant by being body?”

“I will put it in other words. Then you will understand better. The Supreme Godhead is inside the Universe and the soul. Is it understood now?”

“Yes! To some extent. You mean that if one is inside another, then the other one (the second) will be the body for the first. Isn’t it? It is good. If so, will the Supreme Godhead have two bodies?”

“No. The soul is the body for Supreme Godhead. The universe is the body for the soul. That means, the soul is inside the universe and Supreme Godhead is in the soul. The Vis’ishtaadvaitins call the universe as ‘Ac’it’. Similarly, they call the soul as ‘C’it’ and the Supreme Godhead as ‘Is’vara’. In other words, “C’it’ is the body for ‘Is’vara’ and ‘Ac’it’ is the body for ‘C’it’.”

“This C’it and Ac’it are quite confusing!”

“Let us know them in an easy way. You are there! Your body is ‘Ac’it’. The soul, which is in you, is ‘C’it’. The Supreme Godhead who is inside that ‘C’it’ is ‘Is’vara’.”

“It looks similar to the set of containers in which one container contains another and so on!”

“Yes! It is also like the bladder in a football.”
“What exactly does it mean by these words ‘C’it and Ac’it’?”

“C’it’ means soul and knowledge. ‘Ac’it’ means that which is not ‘C’it’.

“Is this book ‘C’it’ or ‘Ac’it’? How does one know whether an object is ‘C’it’ or ‘Ac’it’?”

“I will tell you a thumb rule for this which you can remember. The one, which is seen by the eye, is ‘Ac’it’ only. ‘C’it’ – the soul is never visible to the eye. Hence this book, this chair, these houses etc. are all ‘Ac’it’ only.”

“You said that the body is ‘Ac’it’, but I have the knowledge! I am not like the chair or table!”

“As long as the ‘C’it’ is in the body, you consider yourself to be with knowledge. If the soul departs from the body, then that body is as good as this chair or table only!”

“Yes! Now understood. There are two types with life and without life. All the objects without life are ‘Ac’it’ only! Even among the objects, which are living, what is visible to the eye also is ‘Ac’it’ only. What is invisible is ‘C’it’. That is the knowledge or the soul. Is it not? By this count, the greenery, the worms etc are all ‘Ac’it’ with ‘C’it’ inside.”

“Yes! All of them are like that only. The celestials are also like that only. ‘Ac’it’ is their outside body having ‘C’it’ inside.”

“Will ‘Is’vara’ be inside this ‘C’it’ again? Is this Is’vara the same Supreme Godhead with attributes mentioned by S’ankara?”

“In this school, there is nothing like Supreme Godhead with attributes and that without attributes. Supreme Godhead is always with attributes only. This ‘without attributes’ is like the horn of a rabbit (which does not exist at all!)”

“If so, why are they using this name ‘Is’vara’ if there is no confusion?”

“Will there not be a name just because it will create confusion? The real meaning of the word ‘Is’vara’ is the one who controls. The one who regulates or controls both ‘C’it’ and Ac’it’.”

“How will He control?”

“By remaining inside. By being ‘Antaryaami’, he controls.”

“Will He be there always?”

“If he is not there, they have no ‘Satta’ – the existence. We said that without the ‘tithi, Nakshatra etc, the day is not there. Similarly, if there is fruit then only the colour and taste will be there! So, He is there in every thing.”

“Suppose, this body falls. Then?”
“Depending up on the past deeds, another body will be coming! Along with the Aaatma, He moves into that body. Then the body remains as ‘Ac’it’. He will be in that ‘Ac’it’ permeated like he permeates any other ‘Ac’it’. Now that body becomes the body.”

“As the ‘Karma’ of the Jeeva – the individual self or the sentient being changes, He will also change the bodies!”

“Yes! In the first four days we talked about the sura, nara, tiryak, sthaavara i.e., celestials, humans, animate and inanimate respectively. Do you remember? In that way, this jeeva – the individual self or the sentient being enters different bodies according to the ‘Karma – both Punya and Paapa’ the deeds both virtue and vice, from the previous births. The Supreme Godhead will be present in that Jeeva controlling Jeeva’s deeds!”

“If the Supreme Godhead goes into Jeeva’s worthless bodies, will he not be stuck with all those blemishes or sins?”

“No. They will not stick to Him. He is beyond all these sins or blemishes. Will the dirt of your body stick to the soul? It will not. But it will make you feel ‘Oh, No! This dirt!’ You would like to wash it off. Similarly, though the blemishes done by the jeeva are not there for the inner Supreme Godhead, He would like to wash of the dirt and clean him. He will clean through the control of deeds.”

“What is this His control of Jeeva’s deeds? Does it mean that he gets them done or he corrects the deeds that are being done?”

“This jeeva cannot do anything without His permission. He is capable of correcting also, if He intends to!”

“Why does this Jeeva perform the sinful deeds, in such a case? When He is the controller, Jeeva can go on performing all virtuous deeds only! Or in other words, He can get all virtuous deeds done by the Jeeva!”

“He has not specifically told jeeva to do either the virtuous deeds or the sinful deeds. In fact, He has told not to do sinful deeds and perform the virtuous deeds. But, because of the Jeeva’s foolishness, the sinful deeds are being done.”

“Where did He tell? How does one know that He had told? Can His word be heard?”

“We in the temptation of this outside world, do not hear the inner calling like, Vinita, busy in watching the cricket match on the T.V., not caring for the call of her grandmother asking her to drink milk. That is the reason; he had given the ‘Dos and Don’ts’. That is called ‘S’astra’ – the scripture. We must be good (being endowed with intellect and performing virtuous deeds) – be with Buddhi, by learning that.”

“That is what I am asking. Is it that His control is not there on this Buddhi?”

“It is there but He does not apply except in some special circumstances. He allows the performance according to the Jeeva’s intention or wish.”

“In that case, what does He control being present inside?”
“There are two sons for a father. He told both of them that by leading life in a particular way, they will be happy and by doing in another way, it is not good. And he gave a lakh of rupees to each of them. One has misused the money and becomes addicted to vices. The other fellow grows by utilizing properly. For the transformation of both of them, one as a bad fellow and another as a good fellow, is the father responsible or not?”

“At the first instance, it appears that he is not responsible. He told them about the proper way of life and gave them money. So, for the difference of following his instructions or not following them, the sons themselves are responsible. But on second thoughts, this situation would not have come had the father not given that lakh of rupees. So, by giving the lakh of rupees, the father is the first agent.”

“That is to say, that though the father is generally responsible for their conduct, he is not responsible for their individual positions. Those positions are the results of their individual decisions. Is it not?”

“Yes”

“Now you tell whether the father’s control is there on the sons or not.”

“Since he exercised in giving the lakh of Rupees originally, it is considered to be there, but is absent subsequently.”

“Now since one has used judiciously and the other has misused, is it not proper to reward the person using properly and punish the other misusing?”

“Yes, That is logical. In any way both of them will not be treated at par!”

“Hence those who are punished, will correct themselves and those who had been rewarded will further do more good deeds. Is it not His control? Both of them are subjects of that reward or punishment!”

“Understood. But it was said that the father told the sons the proper way to lead the life! What did He do here and what did He tell the sentient beings – the Jeevas?”

“Like the father giving a lakh of rupees each, the Supreme Godhead had given the intellect and knowledge to the sentient beings. Like the father telling the proper way to lead the life for a happy living, He had handed over the scripture and asked them to learn it. That is what I have told a little while ago.”

“What is meant by ‘S’aatra’ – the scripture?”

“S’aatra – the scripture is the one which tells – ‘Idam Kuru’, Idam maa Kaarsheeh’ – ‘Do this’, ‘do not do this’. Reward for those who follow these instructions and punishment for those who do not follow!”

“Can He not make that everybody gets reward?”

“You bought a mixer. Along with that, the instruction manual is provided to tell you how to use it properly and get good service from the mixer. Will the seller replace it if it had been damaged because it has not been used according to the manual?”
“That is not my question. Can He not make him to think for doing good deeds only and perform good deeds only?”

“The punishment is an effort in that direction only! If punished, he will try to correct himself and gradually become a changed person.”

“But he has to undergo the punishment for some time! Can father remain seeing his son suffer?”

“The son is affected with an ailment. The doctor recommended surgery for relief from the ailment. Will the father say no because, in the surgery, his son will undergo pain?”

The Supreme Godhead is all-powerful! He can make both of them follow virtuous path only and reward both of them! Why should He correct one by punishment?”

“Suppose the winning team as well as the losing team in the Ranji Trophy match are given trophies. Will the losing team make efforts to improve the skill and the winning team make efforts to retain the skills? Will the teams not be indifferent because whether the team wins or not, the trophy will be given to them?”

“When the circumstances and opportunities are equal, what you say is correct, but …”

“The circumstances and opportunities were created equally in the beginning. Some have damaged them by their own deeds and some others have made good use of them to prosper.”

“When is that ‘in the beginning’? Since how long these deeds are carried like this?”

“Not known! The doctrine is that the Karma – the deeds or actions, is from eternity. Both the soul and Supreme Godhead are from eternity. This is continuing from the time of their existence.”

“How long this has to continue? Is there no end to their undergoing of the Karma? Is there no rest?”

“We said that the present four-headed Brahma is in his 51st year. His life will come to an end at the end of another 50 years. Then there will be the great deluge of the primordial egg of universe – the Brahmaanda pralaya. Then this entire universe disintegrates into the five elements, the earth, water, fire, air, and sky. Then only these five will exist. The attributes of these five, viz., the smell, taste, vision, touch, and sound will also be separated out from the elements. By that time, all the bodies of the Jeevas also will fall down. From them the minds, sense organs and the knowledge organs will get separated. All these are minute forms. When all these 24 basic tattvas join together to become small dough, the souls come and join this. This dough of both joins the Supreme Godhead – the Is’vara. It is rest then for the jeevas – the sentient beings!”

“Joining Is’vara in this way – is it not salvation?”

“No. Salvation is not only the relief from the misery. The eternal Bliss should be experienced. Where is that experience for the souls, which in the miniature forms have joined Is’vara? So, this is not salvation. It is rest only. Not only that, the experiencing the consequences of the deeds, is not yet completed!”
“Oh! Yes! It is only completion of 100 years for the Brahma but not the completion of the Karma. You said that this dough joins Is’vara. Does this go back into the heart of Is’vara?”

“When we say that the water from the river Ganga and river Yamuna are joining the sea, where are they in the sea?”

“Somewhere, it is becoming a part of the sea. But it can not be identified as a separate entity.”

“In the same way, when the universe and souls become miniature and join Him, i.e., when the ‘C’it and Ac’it’ become miniature and join Him, they get mixed up in such a way, that it is not possible to see them separately.”

“That is to say then that the Is’vara is along with the miniature C’it and Ac’it – the sentient and the insentient.”

“Yes.”

“How long will this last?”

“Till such time when Is’vara considers that the rest is sufficient and takes pity on them that there is a large amount of Karma still left over for them to finish by experiencing the consequences and unless they complete the Karma, they cannot qualify for the salvation. Then He takes out all of the dough from inside of Him – just like the spider takes out the string from its mouth when it intends – and brings out the ‘C’it and Ac’it’ – the sentient and the insentient. Then the insentient transforms into the 24 basic tattvas – i.e., the earth, water etc., and the organs of sense etc. form quickly and quickly the universe comes into action.”

“What about this Brahma?”

“He is also a sentient being only! He, Indra, Rudra, Varuna, Durga etc. are all sentient beings only. Their bodies also are insentient only! So, when the great deluge occurs, everything separates into sentient and insentient and joins Him. As soon as the creation starts, they come out of Him.”

“Will the same Brahma, Rudra Indra etc. comes back?”

“There is no such rule. He knows which sentient being had done what Karma, before joining Him in the deluge! He appoints the most virtuous among these sentient beings as Brahma. The rest of creation work is handed over to him.”

“Then the Brahma picks of the most virtuous among the rest and appoints them as Rudra, the next most virtuous as Indra etc. It must be some thing like the postings of IAS candidates according to their rank.”

“Yes. But since both the sentient and insentient cannot exist without Him, and since He has to control them, He does Anupraves’a – enters into them as soon as the C’it enters Ac’it.

“What is meant by ‘Anupraves’a’?”

“Consider it means – entry into without any problem, for the present. Or it can be – without effecting any change by his entry. We will elaborate later.”
“If Brahma does something against the regulations when he was Brahma, he may take the birth as an ant also!”

“Very well. The Almighty will be overseeing by being an Antaryaami in all of them!”

“Then, in both the creation and in deluge, there are only three – ‘C’it, Ac’it and Is’vara. But during the Pralaya – the deluge, both ‘C’it and Ac’it’ are in Him in an inseparable condition. In the creation, ‘Is’vara’ will be present in both ‘C’it and Ac’it’ as Antaryaami being invisible. Have I understood correctly?”

“Excellently. Hence, the Is’vara before the creation and Is’vara after the creation is the same. This is Advaita in Ramanuja’s school.”

“Oh! S’ankara’s school is also Advaita and that of Ramanuja also is Advaita! That means, he also said there are no two. However, the difference is in ‘which two are not there.’ Understood.”

“Yes! S’ankaraachaarya’s two are 1. ‘Universe and the Supreme Godhead’; 2. ‘The soul and Supreme Godhead’ and ‘soul and the universe’. That is his Advaita. For Bhagavad Ramanuja, Advaita means Is’vara or Supreme Godhead is only one before and after the creation.”

“Then what is that ‘Vis’ishta’ in Vis’ishtaadvaita?”

“What did we say the meaning of Vis’ishta in the beginning of this topic?”

“It means ‘associated with’! When we define a particular day in the intent, we said that such and such a tithi and nakshatra which are associated with the day cannot be separated from the day.”

“Similarly, the Is’vara is always associated with the ‘C’it and Ac’it’, that is to say He is Vis’ishta with ‘C’it and Ac’it’. We cannot separate them from Him either in the deluge or in the creation. The only difference is in the form whether the form is miniature or large.”

“Can it be said that in Vis’ishtaadvaita, the Is’vara associated with the miniature ‘C’it and Ac’it’ and the Is’vara associated with large ‘C’it and Ac’it’ are one and same?”

“That is the correct way. That is how it should be said.”

“OK. It is fine. It is said that He controls by being in everything. Further it is said that those following the scriptures are rewarded and those violating them are punished. But these jeevas –the sentient beings must understand the scripture!”

Veda is the scripture. He introduced Smritis to be studied if the Vedas cannot be understood. If that also cannot be understood, there are Itihaasas – the Raamaayana and Mahaabhaarata. If these also cannot be understood, there are Puraanaas. In this way, he got them introduced by different sages. He descended as Rama and Krishna and showed the proper way to conduct oneself by conducting Himself according to the S’astra.”

“Good. Now it is becoming clear! A complete picture is emerging showing which is what. He is there in two forms – one as Antaryaami and the second as Incarnations. Isn’t it?”
“What about the Supreme Godhead in the great deluge?”

“How should He be addressed”?

“All these forms are named as Vaasudevas. One is Antaryami Vaasudeva, second is Avataara Vaasudeva and the third is Para Vaasudeva.”

“There are three!”

“For the time being!”

“Let us keep it aside. I have not understood about these Karmas properly. To experience, creation is done. For the resting, the Deluge. Again for fulfilling the Karma, the creation, again for rest, the deluge. Is there no end for this?”

“The creation and deluges do continue to happen. Jeeva while experiencing the consequences of Karma, which is already performed, does again Karma. So to experience its consequences again he has to take birth as another jeeva. So, it is inevitable. It has to continue like this!”

“He has to take a rebirth for experiencing the consequences of one Karma! Oh! My God!”

“There is no rule like that. The consequences, which are not contra to each other, can be undergone simultaneously. Becoming wealthy is one consequential experience. Similarly, becoming poor, becoming well-read, becoming sick etc. Though one cannot become wealthy as well as poor at the same time, he can still be others like wealthy but well-read and sick etc.!”

“All these are experienced because of ‘Apoorva’ as told by Poorva Meemaamsakas?”

“No. Ramanuja did not accept the theory of ‘Apoorva’. He ensures all these Karmas are experienced.”

“He alone can ensure that so many jeevas experience their Karmas.

“He is omnipotent and everything is in His knowledge! Where is the problem for Him?”

“Is there any possibility of knowing which consequence will be experienced when by the jeeva?”

“To some extent. The supreme Godhead appoints some as His assistants while ensuring that these Karmas are experienced. They are also Jeevas only like Brahma. These are the nine planets. You must have heard the names like S’ani –the Saturn, Raahu, and Ketu etc. They are these assistants.”

“Oh! This is the link with them! Yes. Tell. It is very interesting!”

“Though the celestials like Brahma, Rudra, Indra etc. are not visible, these nine planets are moving in the sky in symbolic forms.”

“What is meant by symbolic form?”
“As spheres. Not with their original forms! It can be told what is going to be the Karma experienced by us from their movements. That science is called Astrology or Jyotisha S’aastra. The horoscopes etc. are from this only.”

“As we can infer the presence of the criminals from the movements of the police personnel, we can know our Karma also from the movements of these planets!”

“You said correctly. The person who has properly studied this science, can tell correctly, which Karma is going to be there when for the Jeeva. The fellow who did not study well cannot. That is it.”

“Each individual jeeva will have individual Karma. Isn’t it? So many persons and so many Karmas! But with the Planetary movements being specific how so many variants can be there?”

“All the persons are not at the same place on earth! If the lines are drawn from the planets to the persons, each will be in a separate angle. According to that angle, he has to experience that Karma. Some planets indicate the virtuous while others indicate the vicious Karmas. The resultant will be there for us the jeevas.”

“If we are to experience the consequent results of our Karmas, why are we performing these propitiations to these Grahas – the planets?”

“The court has announced the sentence. The police official enforces that. In spite of that we see small offerings being given to these petty officials by either the convicts or their friends and relatives.”

Raghuramaiah laughed. “You could find illustration from my profession itself!”

“Then there is not much of use of these sacrificial baths being offered to the nine planets!” said Sakuntalamma. She thought of doing something on these lines recently to ward off the ill effects on her daughter. So she is trying to confirm this from Purushottam, while looking at Sastry as though she is seeking his views.

“Madam, if you believe in Vis’ishtaadvaita, then there is not much benefit to you from these sacrificial baths to the nine planets. Even if you are a believer of Advaita, then also there is no benefit from all these because everything is an illusion according to that school. But if it is Poorva Meemaamsa in which you have belief, you must get them performed.” Said Sastry with a smile, which was joined by all.

“Do not come to a conclusion so soon since we have not completed all the Dars’anäs. Still we are to cover Dvaita, S’iva Vis’ishtaadvaita, and Siva advaita. You can decide after all these are covered.”

“I do not know! I feel that this school is suiting me. There is good matching for this with what my elders used to say, what I have heard in the lectures and what I have read in the Puraanas” said Sakuntalamma.

“Yes, madam! The influence of Vis’ishtaadvaita is maximum in our country. The rest of the schools are only next to this. No other school has influenced the life of Indians as much as this school. That is one reason for S’ankara to follow the strains of this school in the public conduct, in spite of his teaching that every thing is illusion and unreal. Had he stuck to his
school of telling everything is illusion, his school would have been wiped out as happened with the Buddha’s theory of Void. Though there are persons who deride the society by using the words ‘Maaya’, ‘Mithya’ for their personal gains, the practice is more in Puraanas, lectures etc. with a mix of the doctrines of Vis’ishtaadvaita.”

“But S’ankara is of a much earlier period! How can he bring Ramanuja’s Vis’ishtaadvaita into practice?”

“Ramanuja had extensively propagated Vis’ishtaadvaita by countering the Advaita. But Vis’ishtaadvaita ahd been there even before S’ankara.”

This is some thing new for me! I did not think so earlier.”

“Some of the historians also are thinking like you. That is wrong. Buddhism, Jainism, Saankhya, Yoga, Naiyaayika, Vais’eshika, Poorva Meemaamsa, Advaita, Bhedaabheda, Vis’ishtaadvaita … including C’aarvaaka, all these are found at one time or other though only as indicative, during Vedic period. Vyaasa was afraid that these would be put into practice thinking that they were all real and bring disorder to the society and for that reason he had countered them.

In spite of that, some persons pulled out those and propounded them as schools of philosophy. Some pronounced that they had drawn these concepts from the Vedas. Some others have boasted that they had created the schools. That is one of the reasons for the historians to conclude that Vyaasa is of a much later period than all these people simply because of the appearance of these theories being countered in the Brahma Sutras. But due to lack of sufficient proofs, his period was pushed back. The reason for the confusion in the historians is precisely this point only. The main six Dars’anas are as old as the Vedas. Which one should be accepted and which should be rejected depends on the individual’s thinking.”

“We are again off the main track. Tell, whether there is no way of escape from the Karma in Vis’ishtaadvaita?”

“Why not? If you stop performing the Karmas afresh, over a period the old ones get completed! Will not the provisions get exhausted if you do not buy afresh?”

“What will happen then?”

“Attains salvation”

“What does that mean?”

“The jeeva, relieved from these Karmas, goes beyond the great shell under the control of Brahma, and reaches the topmost place, that is Parama pada or Vaikuntha. There he will be enjoying the eternal bliss by performing service to Lord Srimannaaraayana. He does not come back. Hence there are no more Karmas for him.”

“Who is this Lord Srimannaaraayana?”

“The Upanishads speaking about the Para Brahman used the words ‘Sat’, ‘Brahma’, ‘Tat’, ‘Aatma’ at different places and finally used the word ‘Naaraayana’. Ramanuja had decided that the name of that Para Brahman or the Supreme Godhead to be Naaraayana”
But you said it is Lord Srimananaaraayana. Is it not?"

“It is extensively discussed in the Vedas that ‘Lakshmi Devi’ and ‘Bhu Devi’ are His consorts. ‘S’ri’ means ‘Lakshmi Devi’. Since He is always with Her, He is Lord Srimananaaraayana.”

“Her picture is painted on His chest. Isn’t it Sir?”

“Then who is Vishnu?”

“Vishnu is the first incarnation of this Lord Srimananaaraayana. This incarnation is in the celestials. Rama and Krishna are the incarnations in the humans. Matsya and Koorma etc are the incarnations in the Tiryaks – the animate. The incarnations such as ‘Dwarf Mango’ etc are the incarnations in the Sthaavaras – the inanimate. “

“We shall discuss them later. Vishnu is the incarnation of Naaraayana! It means He is Naaraayana only. But Brahma, Vishnu and Mahes’vara are described as one cadre!”

“They belong to one cadre only! Rama, Das’aratha and Janaka – do they not belong to one cadre?”

“Understood. The company chairman appoints two General Managers and he becomes another General Manager when the requirement is for three General Managers. In one stage, it is the control over the other two and in another being equal to them.”

“Well said! The Honourable Justice has given a very good illustration.” Purushottam had appreciated. “One G.M is responsible for the raw materials – he is the creator Brahma, the second is responsible for marketing of the products – he is Rudra. The third is responsible for the production from the raw materials – that is Vishnu. It can be said so also.”

“Now I have understood Sir! Vishnu is shown in Puraanas once as a person above Brahma and Rudra and as responsible for their protection. Another time He is being shown on equal footing. Another time he is shown as the one following them. I understand now, why they show him like that,” said Sakuntalamma.

“Vaali had conquered both Raavana as well as Sugriva. If Rama could kill Vaali, where does Sugriva stand! But, Rama had followed Sugriva and killed Raavana.

“All the sages had sought Rama for the elimination of the Raakshasas. Rama bowed at the feet of people like Das’aratha. That does not mean that Das’aratha is greater than the sages! Since it is His incarnation, he conducted himself once like this, another time as more powerful than these people. Similarly, Vishnu also is seen in Puraanas in different roles at different circumstances. I have understood well Sir!”

“Yes! Then proceed Purushottam Garu! After the Jeeva completes all his Karmas, he will attain salvation, i.e., he will go to Srimananaaraayana. He stays beyond the Great Shell of the worlds. Is He same as the Para Vaasudeva, we discussed a little while ago?”

“Yes, it is He only”

“Is this Parama pada situated just beyond the Great Shell of the worlds?”
“Like our Universe, there are another few millions. Beyond these is the River Viraja. As you cross that river, it is Parama pada only.”

“My God! If there are so many Great shells of the worlds, there must be so many Jeevas and so many Brahmas! And the great deluge for all of them!”

“There is no rule that it should happen at the same time. But it can happen also at the same time.”

“If so many Brahmas have to go on changing, there must be deluge and creation on everyday at some place or other. All of these are under the control of that Srimannaarayana in Parama pada?”

“Yes! He takes the form of ‘Vyuha Vaasudeva’. This form of Him takes care of the creation and destruction.”

“Oh! Another form! That takes the number of forms to four! – Para Vaasudeva in Parama pada, Vyuha Vaasudeva for the creation and destruction, incarnations as Rama and Krishna, as Antaryaami for controlling the Karmas. Is that all? It looks like myself taking different roles – as a judge outside, as a head of the house in the house, as a gentleman in the society etc.”

“Yes, It is like that. But there is a small mistake in that that Vyuha Vaasudeva oversees not only the creation and destruction but the protection also.”

“OK. It should not matter. But how does this jeeva reach Parama pada? With which body among the Sura, Nara, Tiryak and Sthaavara classes does he reach Parama pada?”

“All these bodies are only till they reach the River Viraja. These are only for moving in the 14 worlds of this great shell of worlds only.”

“Will they move with these bodies in these 14 worlds? How…?”

“As soon as this body falls, this body will be either burnt or buried! It will break up into the five basic elements viz., the earth, water, fire, air, and sky. All these five hold on to his soul in a miniature form. As soon as he goes to that world where he is to take rebirth with a specific body, these elements transform themselves into that body. Then the soul enters that body and lives as long as his Karma is prescribed for his life in that body. After that ends, the cycle repeats again. These five elements in their miniature form again move along with the soul once more.”

“What about the mind and organs of sense?”

“Whichever mind and organs of sense are obtained by this jeeva in his first creation, that mind and organs of sense will always be with that soul. Though in the deluge they get separated, this jeeva gets back the same mind and organs of sense. He will move around in the different worlds along with them.”

“Will these come along with him to the Parama pada also?”
“No. I said that Viraja River is the border. These will stay back on this side of river Viraja. That means, they will get mixed up with the primordial matter there on this side of Viraja. Only the soul will go to Parama pada.”

“Will there be no body?”

“It will not be there for one category and will be there for another category.”

“What is that again?”

“There are two categories of the souls which get rid of their Karma here in this world. Those who think ‘Oh God! It is sufficient if I am relieved of these Karmas and this body, and I remain as I, that is sufficient’ are one category. For them the salvation is called ‘Kaivalya’. The second category desires that they should be relieved of their bodies and perform the service of Lord Naaraayana.”

“Who is greater? Which is better?”

“The second one is greater and it only is better. The first category souls will not have the bodies and they will be moving in the Parama pada. It is salvation no doubt for them but it is not better than the second category. The souls of second category, will have such bodies as they wish to serve Lord Srimannaaraayana in those bodies and they will remain serving Lord.”

“Does it mean they can go on changing their bodies?”

“Yes! They can stay as it pleases Lord. This is also salvation only. Better salvation at that!”

“Knowing it is not better, who desires the first salvation?”

“Are we not requesting Lord to bless us with wealth, employment, health etc, though we know that it is not the best? Why? It is because of the influence of Rajo Guna and Tamo Gunas. This is also like that only.”

“Yes! True. OK. Then how is it possible for this soul to get relieved of the Karmas?”

“He has to start Karma Yoga first. With that, the occurrence of new Karmas will come to a stop. Then he has to start Jnaana Yoga. With that, the influence of the old Karmas will diminish. Then the devotion will be generated in him. The salvation will be attained with that Bhakti Yoga!”

“It is quite a long process! One has to perform the Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga! All the three are to be performed!”

“It is not performing the three Yogas. While performing Karma Yoga, the new Karmas will not get generated any more.”

“What does it mean? What exactly does it mean by performing Karma Yoga?”
“Whatever work I am doing is the service to The Supreme Godhead only. It is not for my benefit. Thinking in these lines while doing work is Karma Yoga. From the Karma – the deeds which are done in this way, rebirth and experiencing it will not be there any more.”

“Only that! Is it so simple?”

Yes! Only that much! That is the difference between performing Karma and performing Karma Yoga. If it is done for him, it is Karma. If it is done for Supreme Godhead, it is Karma Yoga. This is not that simple. Only it looks simple! While we are talking, walking, whatever is asked, whatever is eaten, what ever is done, it is all Karma only. When whatever is done, thought, talked, is considered to be the service of Supreme Godhead, in all the times, in all the conditions and in all places, then it becomes Karma Yoga.”

“OK, with this, the old Karmas remain but new Karmas are not generated. Then?”

“This Karma Yoga transforms itself into Jnaana Yoga.”

“What will happen by this? What is meant by Jnaana Yoga?”

“The mind will get diverted from the external objects and topics and turns towards the inner soul. That means the thoughts about the characteristics of the soul will be going on in the mind instead of thoughts about external objects and experiences. That is called Jnaana Yoga.”

“While talking about S’ankara’s school, you said that like the sweetness from the sugar, the jnaana should be separated from the objects, from the mind, from the C’ittam and from egoism. Is it the same?”

“Though it appears to be similar, there is lot of difference. There, the Jnaata, Jneya and the Jnaana all will become one. Do you remember?”

“Yes. It is said that from the stage of ‘I am knowing this’ gradually one comes to a stage where knowing only will be there after the stage of ‘knowing’ is also overtaken. That sort of ‘knowledge’ will be there in deep sleep only. Further it is said that the reason for saying ‘I had a good sleep’ is the above phenomenon only.”

In the school of Bhagavad Ramanuja, this ‘I’ will not vanish. The Jnaana will always know something or other. Hence this ‘I’ will remain as eternal.”

“They did not give any convincing reasons for saying that ‘I’ also will vanish. Will these show any evidence to say that it will not vanish?”

“They say that in deep sleep the ‘I’ vanishes. Isn’t it? They say after the sleep on being awake, it will be said ‘I had a good sleep.’

“This ‘I’ is there before the sleep and after the sleep also. Where does it vanish in between?”

“They might be saying ‘what is that question? As the snake over the rope vanishes, it vanished.’”
“Ok. I shall reword the question in another way. When will it be comfortable for a man sleeping – will it be after the sleep or during the sleep?”

“He said that he had a comfortable sleep after he woke up from the sleep.”

“If so, when did he know the comfort? Is it during the sleep or after waking up from sleep?”

“Hmm…. Not known”

“One lady said that she sang very well in the music concert after she came back from the concert. Did she sing so that it is sweet now? Or is it that she is telling now that it was sweet while singing?”

“How can she sing so that it is sweet now? Hence she is remembering the sweetness during singing.”

“I saw a pen in your pocket yesterday. Today also, I saw that. I would say that it is the same pen. OK?”

“Yes”

“I recall that I saw yesterday’s pen today only but if I say ‘it is yesterday’s pen’, it does not mean that yesterday, the pen was not there and it is there only today’ Is it not?”

“Yes. It is absurd to say that pen was not there yesterday, it is there only today, while remembering.”

“In the same way, it is recalling the sweetness while singing only and does not mean that sweetness was not there while singing and it is there only now when I am recalling that singing. Is it not so?”

“Yes”

“In the same way, when I say that I had a good sleep after I wake up, it does not mean that the comfort was not there while sleeping and it is there only now.”

“Yes, I am understanding.”

“When was the comfort?”

“While sleeping!”

“How did you know?”

“What is that question? I know it. That is all.”

“It is known because ‘I’ exists. If ‘I’ does not exist, it is not known. This ‘I’ was there when the pen was seen yesterday. When it was sung sweetly, ‘I’ existed. This ‘I’ existed while being comfortable in the sleep also. It would not vanish. Thus argue these people.”

“Well – It is reasonable. But, will it suffice?”
“The S’ruti is there for support!”

“Oh! S’ruti is there for the authenticity! OK, let us come back. What will happen during the Jnaana Yoga?’”

“We said that the Karma Yoga transforms automatically into Jnaana Yoga! Then, the real nature of the soul will start becoming visible.”

“What real nature! ‘I’ means Jnaana only!”

“Is it strange? Since Jnaana is there, we say ‘I’. For understanding this you don’t have to say that you had great realization!”

What else will be known? Is it being comfortable and happy as S’ankara said?”

“When Jnaana is there, the happiness is there. There is nothing special in that!”

“What else?”

“When he is doing the Karma Yoga, he always remembers ‘I am doing service to Supreme Godhead, All this is service to Supreme Godhead only’. What is at that time the relationship between him and the Supreme Godhead?”

“He will be subservient to Supreme Godhead”

“Yes. The characteristics of being subservient will be seen.”

“What is that characteristics of subservient being seen? Servant is a servant only. Is it not known if it is said ‘servant’? Why again call it ‘Jnaana Yoga’?”

“Did you have ride on the giant wheel?”

“Did he have the time for all these? He might have seen on T.V.!” said Sakuntalamma.

Vinita is very quick in responding to such questions. She shouted, “I had a ride of the giant wheel.”

“It will rotate! How did you feel while coming down?”

“I was terribly afraid. Felt that some thing in me is going up. I cannot explain but it was a strange feel!”

“Did you understand Raghuramaiah garu?”

“Yes because of the air pressure, it will be felt like that.”

“How?”

“Feel like something is going up.”

“Are you able to feel what Vinita is saying?”
“How can I feel now? I can feel only when I ride the Giant wheel.”

“That is the point. In the same way, we may say subservient many times, but still the characteristics will not be known. Its realization will start only when the Karma Yoga being practiced again and again, transforms into Jnaana Yoga.”

“Oh! What will happen then?”

“As this Jnaana Yoga in which the subservience is visualized clearly, continues for a considerable time, automatically stage of Bhakti Yoga will start.”

“What is meant by Bhakti Yoga?”

“Thinking about Supreme Godhead with delight.”

“That stage was there in Karma Yoga itself!”

“It was not total in that stage. During Karma Yoga, the thoughts about Supreme Godhead do slip away once in a while. Not only that. Since it is made into a habit by compulsion, there might not be delight in that”

“Does it mean that in this Bhakti Yoga, thoughts of Supreme Godhead are no more forgotten?”

“Yes! It is called ‘tailadhaaraa’ – uninterrupted continuous flow of oil. The meditation on Supreme Godhead continues uninterrupted in Bhakti Yoga, like the flow of oil in which there is no gap in the oil string, like the continuous supply of oil to the wick in an oil lamp.”

“What is the reason for this stage to come from the Jnaana Yoga?”

“The subservience is realized in the Jnaana Yoga! The servant has thought of Master only! He will be always on the look out searching and asking himself which service is to be done. So…”

“There will not be any rest even for a short period? Is it serving only all the time?”

“As long as he is on rest, he will not be a servant! When he is serving, then only he will be subservient! Hence, the thoughts of Supreme Godhead must go on looking for which service is to be done. That also, with extreme delight and not with any compulsion because, the Lord-Servant relationship is seen clearly that he is the servant and Lord is the Supreme Godhead.”

“Is this Bhakti Yoga? Will it suffice if this sort of a meditation is continued or is it that some physical service is to be done?”

“If it is strongly felt that a specific task should be done it comes out automatically and becomes a task. The moment your affection on Vinita swells in your thoughts, you will take her into your arms and hug her and tell her stories or some sweet talk. Similarly, the moment the mind is filled with Bhaktiyoga, everything – the talk, actions, thinking –every thing gets converted into the service to Supreme Godhead only.”
“What is meant by service? I can see duties like cooking, massaging the legs and body etc. But doing these to Supreme Godhead is not possible!”

“What will happen if you do these acts to somebody?”

“He will be happy”

“What did the service become then?”

“Aha! Any work which makes Supreme Godhead happy, becomes service to Him!”

“Yes. That is called ‘providing pre-eminence to Supreme Godhead’ also. The duty of the subservient is to provide pre-eminence to Supreme Godhead only.”

“You are fair and rosy. Whom does it give preeminence?”

“It gives me only”

“Is there any gain for that fairness by that?”

“No. I only look beautiful by that.”

“You have put on a nice dress. For whom is that excellence?”

“It is for me only and not for the dress.”

“But the excellence caused by the dress is temporary because you go on changing the dress. But the preeminence caused by fairness is always there. The preeminence provided by the subservient to the master is called ‘Kainkaryam or Seva’.”

“Understood. But I did not understand well how this transformation takes place from Jnaana Yoga into Bhaktiyoga.”

“Do you remember what we talked about Karma and the topic of asafetida and the container and the smell, that I told?”

“Yes, Yes. I remember. The container in which asafetida was stored. Though the asafetida is removed from it, still its smell remains with the container. When another object is placed in that container, that also will smell that of asafetida only. Similarly, after doing the Karmas, even though the Karmas are completed, the smell of those Karmas remains and it affects the subsequent Karmas.”

“Now listen carefully. When Karma Yoga is performed, the new Karmas are no more generated but the old Karmas are still there and their impressions (Vaasana) are also there. Even though one crosses Karma Yoga and enters the Jnaana Yoga, still the Karma Yoga continues. So, while Jnaana Yoga is continuing, all the old will become His services as soon as they come into experience by the person. The additional effect in the stage of Jnaana Yoga is that the impressions (Vaasananas) of the old Karmas vanish over a period. So there is no possibility of the impressions of the worldly deeds (Karmas) corrupting us. As a result, the meditation of Supreme Godhead continues without any break and with interest or delight. Isn’t it in the Bhakti Yoga?”
“Understood to some extent. You said that as soon as the mind is filled with Bhakti Yoga, the word and action would spill out. Does it mean that as soon as Bhakti Yoga starts, the body falls down and he will go to Parama Pada or Salvation for performing the service to the Supreme Godhead?”

“If performing service to Supreme Godhead is the primary desire, what is the necessity of going to Parama Pada? He will go after experiencing the consequences of the deeds in previous births.”

“Ha! Ha! It is not necessary to go to Parama Pada for salvation!”

“Except that there will be no fear of losing the position due to the connection with the primordial matter – Prakriti, what is the difference in performing the service to the supreme Godhead?”

“Whom will he serve here? The Antaryami will not be seen. Vaasudeva of Parama Pada is extremely distant. Vaasudeva of Vyuha is not approachable. The incarnations are there some time back and presently they are not there. What is to be done then?”

“Because of this problem, He in His fifth form – as Archaa Murthy, that means, in the form of idol has come into the sacred places like Tirumala, Sirrangam etc and into the temples consecrated according to the Aagama Scriptures, and into the houses. As long as He is here, service will be performed to Him in this form.”

“Oh! The importance to these places like Tirupati etc is because of this reason! I had derided them saying they are doing worship to some stone only, but I never imagined that it will have such a purpose!” said Raghuramaiah with slight repentance being reflected in his voice. He again said, “Performing the service to the Archaa Murthy in this way, after some time these people will reach superior Para Vaasudeva for serving Him.”

“What is that superior Para Vaasudeva? Is there any difference between the different forms? After all it is He only!”

“This is still better! How can seeing Supreme Godhead in the idol and seeing real Supreme Godhead be same?”

“This is the wrong concept. When Supreme Godhead had incarnated as Rama, what do we say, whether ‘God is in Rama’ or ‘Rama himself is God’? The idol is also an incarnation like incarnation of Rama. He is not present in the idol as Antaryami as He is in you, me, the tree, this chair etc. That idol itself is Supreme Godhead. This difference must be carefully noted. If we say God in the idol, then it is as good as saying that He is in the chair, He is in the bench etc. Then we have to worship the chair, the bench etc. and serve them.”

Oh, Yes! I was thinking like that only so far. I used to think what is the difference in doing it to that stone idol and this steppingstone. Now I have understood the difference. The idol is Supreme Godhead. In the rest of the objects, He is present as Antaryami. Idolatry means the worship of God only. It is not like what I used to think – seeing God in the idol, but it is seeing the idol as God only. If it is so, idolatry – worshipping Idol God is better than serving God present as Antaryami in the humans and animals. But, is there no difference between the Parama Pada and this idol?”
“We have lighted one candle. With that candle, another four have been lighted. Will there be any difference between the light of the candle that is lighted with the help of another candle? It will not be. Similarly, it does not make any difference whether it is Para Vaasudeva or Vyuha Vaasudeva or Antaryaami Vaasudeva or Avataara Vaasudeva or Vigraha Vaasudeva. All are same.”

All were spellbound as none of them had such thinking so far.

“But, Supreme Godhead in the form of the idol is one way great. In Parama pada, there are no sinners. All are for serving only. Here everybody is there for rejecting Him only! Sitting in front of Him they think of something else only. All of them say that He does not exist.”

“Like Me,” said Raghuramaiah smiling. But in that smile, Sakuntalamma could see the light repentance and pain.

But being a very highly composed personality, Raghuramaiah regained his calmness quickly again.

Purushottam continued. “Hence, Supreme Godhead’s form in Parama Pada is like the lamp during the day time. His form as an Idol is the one with dazzling light during the nights.”

Raghuramaiah nodded his head in approval. But a number of doubts are still cropping in him. “If so, are all these persons worshipping Him in the Idol form, only those who have completed the Karma Yoga and Jnaana Yoga and entered the Bhakti Yoga?” Raghuramaiah doubtfully asked.

“Not like that. It will take very long to complete the Karma Yoga etc and enter the Bhakti Yoga. So for our sake, the practice was turned from this side to the other.”

“What does that mean? If we continue to serve Him in the Idol form and have the concept of being subservient to Him, doing all the deeds and actions for Him, then these Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga will begin one by one and ultimately the real service happens. Is that the concept?”

“Yes. That is the view. That is the reason for us to say that everyone should do the worship everyday. Even in that, the bath, dress up, taking food etc. is offered to Him in the worship. All this is going to turn us towards the Bhakti Yoga gradually.”

“Its importance is understood now. It is sufficient to continue to do the service to the Idol form of Him. That gets transformed over the time as salvation!”

“Ahhaha! It should not be stopped there. He should be delighted by this service. Then it gets ripened.”

“The idol is He only! Is this service not sufficient?”

“Whether He likes these services or not, there is one service with which He becomes extremely pleased. He will accept us much more faster.”

“What is that?”
“It is the certificate given by Him only – ‘Aanris’aamsyam paro dharmah.”

“What is its meaning?”

“Inability to see others suffering and offering them help in some form and measure according to one’s capacity.”

“Service to the humanity is service to God!”

“No. If one serves the humanity thinking that it is service to Him, it may become bondage at one stage or other. Hence, the correct one to do is ‘Serve the humanity as service to God.”

“What you are telling is nothing other than, serve the God in the form of Antaryami in the same way as you serve the God in the form of Idol.”

“Yes! With that He will be more pleased.”

“If it is idol, eyes, ears etc. will be there. What about Antaryami?”

“Antaryami also is like that only! Naaraayana Murthy will be present in those who worship him in great measure, in the same form as He is in the Parama Pada. Hello Sastry garu, Is it not said in the Mantra Pushpam – the floral offerings with Hymns, in that way?”

“Yes, saying ‘Neela toyada madhyasthaa…’ that form of Him only is described.”

“Now I got a good picture! One must serve Him who is in the Idol form. Should not pray for the materialistic desires. He should be served as service only. The rest of the things are automatically made available.”

Is it possible not to pray for the materialistic desires? Those prayers also should be asked as the requirements for serving Him only. Suppose you require wealth. You must ask Him to bless you with wealth as a service requirement for serving Him properly. All should be like that only.”

“Can we ask for all these?”

“No. But whom shall we ask? He is the only recourse for us!”

“Ah! Yes! When all these desires are no more popping up, it is the highest stage. Is that these Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga are to be performed all on our own or is there any process?”

“Process means, He will make them success for those who approach Him.”

“That means they also are to be asked! Is it not improper to ask Him to complete the Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga?”

“Since they are for Him, it is not improper.”

“One doubt is bothering me for some time, Sir! It is said that to serve Him is our duty but is there no responsibility for Him in our matter as a master?”
“You have asked a very good question, Madam! In fact the characteristic of the subservient is not asking that he needs one thing for him and the characteristic of the master is to take care of all the requirements of his servant. This is the correct conduct.”

“Then, what will happen to all that was talked a while ago?”

“Though he knows that he is servant, He should know that he is ‘S’eshabhoota’.”

“Oh! What is this again! You are rolling out new words every time like the magician taking out every time a new thing from his hat! What is the meaning of ‘S’eshabhoota’?”

“It means one who is ready to be used in whichever way it suits the user.”

“Daasa (the servant) is one who is available to be used by Him as He wishes, in whichever way and whenever He likes. Good! Which word did you say – ‘S’eshabhoota’? Please explain a little more!”

“Look at this pen in my hand. This pen is mine. I may throw it away, I may break it, I may gift it away, I may use it for myself. It will not say anything to me!”

“Yes. Will it be then ‘S’eshabhoota’?”

“Yes. It is ‘S’eshabhoota’ for me and I am ‘S’eshi’ for it. In the same way, all the Jeevas are ‘S’eshabhootas’ for Him and He is ‘S’eshi’!”

“Then there is no more asking etc. Neither this Karma, Jnaana and Bhakti Yogas etc. Be as He keeps you. This is very good. But what should be done to be like that?”

“Being so is called ‘S’aranaagati’ – the total surrender. It is called ‘Prapatti’ – seeking protection with, being suppliant or submissive to, also. For those who sought this, that means who are like that, no more Karma Yoga etc. are required. This itself will remove all the Karmas.”

“Then you should have told this at the time of telling about the soul and its characteristics. Instead of knowing as a servant, it should be known that being a ‘S’eshabhoota’ is the characteristic of the soul. Then we could do this job!”

“Yes! It will not be known so except only to some great persons that they are ‘S’eshabhootas’. Such great persons are called ‘Azhvars’. They are 12 in number.”

“What is the difference between a Daasa and a S’eshabhoota? It is not clearly understood.”

“Daasa – servant is one who serves his master. S’eshabhoota is one who will be there as the S’eshi desires. It does not appear to have a clear difference but there is a difference.”

“Daasa is one who makes his master happy with his service. S’eshabhoota is one who makes his master happy by doing those services which the S’eshi asks him to do. Can it be said so?”

“Yes. It is almost like that. A servant becomes Daasa only if he serves the master. At times it may be required that he becomes master also!”
“Not understood.”

“Our desire is to bear the lotus feet of the Supreme Godhead on our head. But suppose Godhead has picked us up like a grandfather lifting his grandson on to his shoulders out of affection. The fellow who accepts such a treatment from Godhead becomes a S’eshabhoota and the fellow who objects to such a treatment from Godhead becomes a Daasa.”

“Understood. One should accept whatever is done by supreme Godhead. Whether He bestows ill health or good health, wealth or no wealth, opportunity to serve Him or denies it, it is His wish. One should be able to consider that his status should be as per the wish of the Supreme Godhead and he should be in a condition to accept it willingly. What should be done to come to such a state?”

“One should approach such people who are already in such a state.”

“What does it mean?”

“We get that state if we take refuge with such persons who are already S’eshabhootas to Supreme Godhead”

“That means we should take refuge with the devotees of the Supreme Godhead.”

“We should take refuge with the Bhaagavatottamas.”

What is the difference between the devotees of Supreme Godhead and the Bhaagavatottamas?"

“The devotees can be generally defined as such persons who seek Supreme Godhead through Bhakti Yoga. But Bhaagavatas are such persons who knew that they belong to Supreme Godhead. The Bhaagavatottamas are such persons who knew that belonging as the one with the relationship of the S’esha-S’eshi.”

“In other words, the devotees are such persons who seek to be with the Supreme Godhead by doing something or other. Bhaagavatas are such persons who consider that they belong to Supreme Godhead according to the axioms like ‘the Supreme Godhead is Omnipresent’ etc. Bhaagavatottamas are those who consider that their characteristics are to be available at His disposal for His use, as He desires. OK! What will happen if we take refuge with these Bhaagavatottamas?”

“The Supreme Godhead, Himsel will fix up one of them as the Aac’aarya. He takes you under his refuge after creating the S’esha – S’eshi relationship.”

“Does not Aac’aarya mean spiritual mentor?”

“An Aac’aarya becomes spiritual mentor also. A spiritual mentor can become Aac’aarya also.”

“What is the difference between the Aac’aarya and spiritual mentor?”

“A spiritual mentor is the one who removes the ignorance. An Aac’aarya is one who becomes example in conducting oneself.”
“Oh! One of these Bhaagavatottamas will initiate one into a Mantra – sacred text or Vedic hymn. Later, they teach us the S’esha – S’eshi Bhaava by practicing the same themselves. What next?”

“What is there? All is over. We all in general know that He is controlling us by residing inside us but we do not easily understand that we serve as a body for Him. With the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava that understanding has been achieved!”

I do not understand that topic.”

“You have put on a shirt. Inside the shirt, it is your body. Now, the shirt also is a covering for you only. Is it not?”

“Yes, but it will not be there all the time!”

“Ok. Let it be so. Now, this cover called shirt is there. Who looks after it? Who takes care of its requirements?”

“It is me who looks after that! If it is soiled, either I will change it or wash it!”

“That shirt cover will be there at times only. But what about the body?”

“As long as the Karma that begins to operate is there, it exists.”

“Whose body is that? Who looks after its requirements?”

“That body is mine. If that becomes dirty, the responsibility of bath is mine only.”

“It is not the responsibility of taking bath. The responsibility of bathing that body is yours. Is it not?”

“Yes. ‘I’ and ‘the body’ are different from each other. It is like the shirt only. Hence, cleaning the dirt from it is my responsibility only.”

“Like that, The Supreme Godhead is there inside you – i.e., inside your soul. Isn’t it? Hence, your soul becomes the body for Him! Who is then responsible for this soul? Is it not He?”

“Aha! Understood. It means that the soul does not have the responsibility to bother about the Karma – the deeds because there is somebody else inside that soul! It is like the body or the shirt not having the responsibility to clean themselves the dirt from them. But, is it necessary for us to pray the Supreme Godhead to clean the dirt from us, since the body and the shirt are not asking me to clean the dirt from them?”

“That is the only difference. The shirt and the body are insentient objects, where as we are sentient beings. Hence, we must pray asking Him to rule us, that He should take service from us; that is all. Beyond that we must not say or do any thing on our own like an insentient object, whether He utilises us or not.”

“Is it sufficient to think so in our mind? After all He is Know-all, He must be knowing what is there in our mind!”
“Though mother knows that she should feed the child and she knows that the child needs the food, she will feed him with affection if the child asks for it verbally. Similarly, we are His responsibility whether we ask Him or not for taking our responsibility, but He will be pleased if, we ask Him to take our responsibility. After all, making Him happy is also a characteristic feature of the S’eshabhoota!”

“Ah! This is the meaning of ‘knowing the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava or the S’aranaagati – the total surrender!’ Once this is known, does it mean that the connection with the Aac’aarya and the Bhaagavatottamas is terminated?”

“It will not be lost. If that is terminated, the Supreme Godhead will not be eager. He likes the Aac’aarya and the Bhaagavatottama. That means, not only that we should not loose the connection with them but have the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava towards them. By saluting the King and neglecting His son does not please the King and moreover, it may invite the wrath from Him!”

“You talk about this S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava. It is said that Lord Vishnu lies down on Aadi S’esha – the lord of serpents. Is there any correlation between these two?”

“Anantha is the role model for us in the implementation of S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava. Hence he is known as Aadi S’esha.”

“Probably he is available for His use as He likes. Let it be. It is understood but what is this not knowing the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava until one takes refuge in the Bhaagavatottamas – the most ardent devotees? Why will it not be known before that?”

“Suppose a glass chimney covered with soot is placed as a shield over a lighted candle. Then the light from the candle will not propagate beyond the chimney! The light will be giving light but its brilliance does not travel! In the same way, our soul gets covered by Avidya – the nescience and Karma – the past actions, and as a result of that, we will not know the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava.”

“When S’ankara said that the Maaya – the illusion covers Para Brahma – the Supreme Godhead, it was objected by these from the house tops. But now these are also saying the same!”

“No! It is not the same. There is a difference. For these people, Supreme Godhead is different from Aatma – the soul. That is why, nothing shields or covers Him who is Omnipotent and Omniscient. Only the soul is covered!”

“But the Supreme Godhead is inside the soul!”

“It is explained in the beginning itself that ‘by the intent of that Supreme Godhead and with His permission only, this jeeva – the sentient being does the Karma! Hence the brilliance from the candle gets covered or shielded with the permission from the Supreme Godhead only.’

“But will not the brilliance of the Supreme Godhead also gets shielded?”

“No. We discussed that He is beyond all these. Besides, Bhagavad Ramanuja did not say like S’ankara, that soul means knowledge alone!”
“Did he say that they are two knowledges?”

“Almost! He made distinction of the light and its brilliance. Are the sun and sunlight one and the same? Is the flower and its fragrance the same?”

“It can be considered both ways! But one does not exist separately from the other.”

“In the same way, two divisions are identified in the soul; one which knows the ‘I’ and the other which knows the others. Hence, if the glass chimney covers the candle light, its ability to know the other objects will be constricted but there is no constriction to know about itself!”

“That is to say that the two divisions are the ‘self’ and ‘the characteristics of the self’. Can we call the second as Dharmabhoota Jnana? This knowledge, which is the characteristic becomes more or less due to the effect of the Karma. Isn’t it? Not the first one. Hmm… Is it because of this only, the knowledge either increases or decreases when it enters the bodies of the sura, nara, tiryak, sthaavara i.e., Gods, humans, animate and inanimate respectively?”

“Yes. That is the reason. The nescience and Karma – the past deeds are the causes. If these are removed and the knowledge of the real self is made available, then he will come to know of the S’esha-S’eshi Bhaava and will seek refuge in Him by total surrender. That means he will be willingly available for His usage at His will and pleasure. The Bhaagavatottamas and the Aac’aaryas bestow the removal of the nescience etc.”

“It is good! This Vis’ishtaadvaita Dars’ana is reasonable for explaining. One need not break his head with logic. There is no absurd thinking and it is practical. It is quite clear everywhere without any ambiguity. It appears that in Advaita, they had gone unnecessarily to the extremes. Are these points shown by Ramanuja, quoted in the Upanishads?”

“Definitely. The way all the S’rutis are correlated in this Dars’ana does not happen in the others.”

“How is the word ‘Nirguna’ – sans attributes, correlated here?”

“If mother tells the son to bring the flour of Bengal gram which does not smell, it means that she asked for the flour which is devoid of foul smell. Can there be the flour devoid of its characteristic acceptable smell? With the same analogy, it is said by this Dars’ana that ‘Nirguna’ means devoid of bad attributes.”

“Well! To tell the reality, since everything is unreal, they had quoted a S’ruti vaakya that I don’t remember, which eliminates by saying ‘this is not’, ‘this is not’ etc.”

“They give the meaning for the S’ruti Vaakya – ‘Neti, Neti’, as ‘it is not this’, ‘it is not this’.”

“Yes! How do these people correlate that sentence?”

“If you analyse the word ‘Neti’ it is ‘Na + Iti’. Isn’t it? If they tell the meaning of this as ‘this is not, this is not’, these have said it to be ‘it is not this only, it is not this only’!”

“Doe that mean ‘Supreme Godhead means it is not this only and some thing else is there’?”
“Yes. They say that it is beyond the understanding of the mind. But these say that it is beyond total understanding of the mind.”

“How do these people explain the S’ruti which tells that everything is Brahma – the Supreme Godhead only?”

“Is it the S’ruti – ‘Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma’? These people asked that if one says that this curry is full of salt does it mean that the salt only is the curry and does not contain any vegetables etc.”

“A nice way of correlation!” Raghuramaiah smiled away and asked, “There is another – ‘Tat Tvam Asi’. How did they explain that?”

“They said the meaning of Tat-tvam-asi as follows: ‘Tat – that, tvam – you, The Supreme Godhead devoid of any attributes is you only. For the same sentence, these people explain as follows: tvam – you have as soul, that Tat – the Supreme Godhead, the cause for the creation, protection and destruction.”

“These also said tvam means the Supreme Godhead! Does not tvam mean the person in front of you?”

“Suppose you said ‘Vinita! Come here.’ Who will come?”

“Vinita”

“No! Tell correctly, After all the discussions on metaphysics, is this the answer?”

“It means… OK! Let me tell! The body of Vinita will come… wait a bit… the body and soul also… No, the body, the soul and the Supreme Godhead also will come.”

“Is it not? If so, who is Vinita?

“Is it not the name of the body?”

“If it is so, only the body should come!”

“But the body cannot survive without the soul!”
Chapter - 14

“Here, Vinita! Come! All have come”, called Sakuntalamma.

After Vinita came and sat down, all had laughed saying ‘Can we take it that the VIP listener has come?’, except Avadhani. It appears that he is more irked than Vinita for this.

“Keep observing. If she comes regularly to me, I shall make her the real VIP listener.”

“Vinita! Will you go?” asked Purushottam with a smile on his lips. Vinita nodded her head in agreement saying “Oh! Yes!”

“I did not understand one point in the Vis’ishtaadvaita. The Jeeva – the sentient being goes on committing the mistakes, isn’t it? Instead of following the Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga etc to mitigate the ill effects of the mistakes committed, if he goes to Srimannaaraayana saying ‘you are the only savior of me, I have no other refuge except you’, why should He accept? This point is not clearly understood by me,” said Sastry.

“I too have that doubt,” said Dr. Subrahmanyam. “If it is so, one can go on committing mistakes, seek the refuge in the Supreme Godhead and get away with the mistakes committed from the punishment!”

“True! Srimannaaraayana is determined to protect and punish according to the individual’s Karma. But Lakshmi Devi – His consort, who is always with Him, takes pity on Jeeva’s deplorable condition and recommends to the Lord to condone and save him.”

“Will He immediately accept Her recommendation?”

“Can a husband say no to the recommendation of His beloved wife?”

“Sir Purushottam! It appears that the recommendation of Lakshmi Devi is a must in this school! How did this anthropomorphism found its entry into this Ramanuja Dars’ana?” said Raghuramaiah.

“What is meant by anthropomorphism?” Sastry asked.

“The meaning of anthropomorphism is ‘attributing of human characteristics to God’. In other words, considering that God also is having the shape and form of the human beings, and does have wives, servants, houses etc. like we the human beings but His status is many more times greater that ours, is called anthropomorphism.”

“The so called modern critics have their criticism of this Dars’ana on this aspect. But the Ramanujeeyas say that this is exactly as per the Vedas since this school is based on the trust on the Vedas.”

“What are the Praamaanas – the authenticities for them?

“There are only three viz., Pratyaksha, Anumaana and S’abda. That is all.”

“Are there no criticisms of this school as the Advaita School has the criticisms?”
“Though the criticism of desperation as applicable to the Advaita is not there, there are other criticisms.”

“What are they?”

“Primarily the criticism the Advaitins have, is that this school has been evolved because of the incapability to even imagine the Jnaana which does not have even the egoism! According to them, the dualism or Dvaita is a very rudimental school and Vis’ishtaadvaita is the one of slightly more improved knowledge. And they say that the Advaita is the school of fully developed knowledge.”

“I suppose we discussed this criticism earlier already. According to the Advaitins, there is no knowledge without egoism. We further discussed that the Advaitins criticize the Vis’ishtaadvaitins as those who cannot attain such high status. Similarly, we also discussed that the Vis’ishtaadvaitins say that such a status as the Advaitins claim does not exist at all! Are there any more criticisms?”

“Though Ramanuja has propounded the school of the Vis’ishtaadvaita with the help of the Brahma Sutras taking the authentic quotes and pramaanas from the Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita only, it is said that in practice Agama S’astra to some extent has to be used. The Advaitins quote this to say that the Vis’ishtaadvaita is Avaidiki- against the Vedas.”

“We have learnt that Agama S’astra means Tantra S’astra. Is it the same?”

“Yes it is the same. The Agamas are primarily divided into two – the S’aiva Agamas and Vaishnava Agamas. The Vaishnava Agama has again two divisions viz., the Paanc’araatra and Vaikhaanasa. There are minor differences between both of them.”

“How do they answer Advaitins for their criticism that the Vis’ishtaadvaita is Avaidiki?”

“They ask the Advaitins to show what is contra to the Vedas in the Vaishnava Agamas instead of merely saying that it is not as per the Vedas. Whatever is shown by the Advaitins as answer to this question is countered by the references to the Vedas and proves that they are as per Vedas only. But this proof is not accepted by the Advaitins. Even while the argument is arising out, the Advaitins close with the last point ‘whatever is told to these people with the dualism thinking will not go into their brains!’ and the issues remain unresolved.”

“Are these the only criticisms?”

“One more is there. The Vis’ishtaadvaitins regard one treatise called ‘Dravida Veda’. The Tamil mystic poets called ‘Azhvars’, twelve in number, have rendered the entire essence of the Sanskrit Vedas in Tamil. This is extensively recited and the Azhvars are worshipped in the Vaishnava temples. According to the Advaitins this also is contra to the Vedas.”

“There is no damage I suppose to the basic tenets by this practice! Ramanuja did not use the Pramaanas from ‘Dravida Veda’ while writing his commentary to the Brahma Sutras!”

“No. The Vis’ishtaadvaitins say that for a person to be a Vaishnavite, the ‘Mantropades’a’ – the initiation of the hymn by the spiritual mentor, is an essential qualification. During that Mantropades’a, the icons of the weapons of Lord Vishnu – viz., S’ankha – the divine conch and C’akra – the divine discus are indented on the physical body
of the devotee. For indenting, the icons are heated in the sacred fire and then indented by the spiritual mentor. There are many criticisms on this aspect in the society.”

“Is it not according to the Vedas?”

“Why not? They show all the Vedic Pramaanas in support of the indentation. But those who do not like it, denigrate this practice by comparing the act like the one used to put the marks on the animals for identification and reject it outright.”

“When there is authenticity from the Vedas, it should be countered with proper arguments only. This sort of denigrating will become jealousy only and not a healthy criticism.”

“There is another major regulation in the Vaishnava school, that is, non-acceptance of worshipping the other deities. Visiting temples of other deities is prohibited. Even if some one visits such temples, they do not take the ‘Teertha prasadam’ – the sacred offerings given in that temple.”

“This also has been discussed by us earlier. When the whole world is turning towards worship of one God, this sort of a practice has come in almost all the main religions of the world! We need not take this criticism seriously.”

“Now the last criticism – In their school of philosophy, one is restrained from eating anything anywhere. Because of that, the Vis’ishtaadvaitins do not eat anything in others houses or outside places. The others scoff at this considering it as an affront to them.”

“Why do they have such a regulation? For example, I also do not like to eat in others’ houses even though they may be best of my friends or relatives. That is my policy and that is all. Whenever my wife goes anywhere, she carries a bottle of mineral water and she drinks that water only. The friends and relatives where we go do consider to be insulting saying that their water is also as good as the water carried by her, but since we have to take care of our health, we have never attempted to change our practice.”

“All that what you are telling is about the health of the bodies. According to the Vis’ishtaadvaitins, the Rajo-Guna, Tamo-Guna, and Sattva-Guna can get attached to the Aatma – the soul. These attributes may increase. They feel that, the things which come from the hands of others and which are shown to the other deities should not harm their soul.”

“Oh! OK, since it is a policy, in my opinion, criticism on this aspect is unnecessary. Are there no breaks-away in Vis’ishtaadvaita?”

“Why not? However, there are no serious differences. The Tenkalais – people belonging to one of the two divisions, are of the opinion that caste considerations need not be taken seriously in the cases of Bhagavadbhaktas – the staunch devotees of Supreme Godhead. However, the Vadakalais – those belonging to the second division insist that it should be practiced. The Tenkalais take the Dravida Veda as more important where as the Vadakalais consider the Sanskrit Veda to be more important. There are some more differences of course! But when we discussed the Siddhaanta, we had taken all the important aspects together only. Hence we need not go into the details again.”

“Was Vis’ishtaadvaita also after Ramanuja subjected to the changes as it happened with the S’ankara’s school in the post-S’ankara period?”
“Apart from the differences of Tenkalai and Vadakalai, there are no changes to the basic tenets of the School. Since it is based on the scriptures – the S’astras, it is not that an easy task to effect the changes. If you consider S’ankara’s Advaita, after you reach a particular stage, an indication is given that one can disregard even the S’astras – the scriptures, and hence, there are differences according to their individual knowledge and academic capabilities. However, it is not rare to find the criticism that the differences in the Vis’ishtaadvaita of Ramanuja in the form of Tenkalai and Vadakalai are the aberrations in the basic tenets only”

“What about the practices? You opined that some of the Advaitic Sanyaasins are digressing into the wrong paths under the shield that everything is illusory and mirage only! Like that are there no digressions in Vis’ishtaadvaita?”

“I am of the opinion that such a situation has cropped up in Advaita because, accepting the asceticism – the sanyaasa is one qualification in Advaita for attaining the Moksha – the salvation. There is no such rule in Vis’ishtaadvaita that salvation is attainable only when one accepts asceticism. There will not be any urge to digress into unwanted paths for those who take to asceticism with the real disinterest on the family life – the Grihasthaas’rama. However there is one criticism that some had gone to the extremes in the subject that if one surrenders totally to Supreme Godhead, nothing else is required to be done. According to Ramanuja, those who surrender totally need not perform any other act as a means to attain the ultimate Supreme Godhead. The moment one accepts the indentures of the sacred Conch and Discuss, that itself is the total surrender. Hence, some say that after having the indentures of the divine Conch and Discuss on the shoulders, these persons are not conducting themselves the way the true S’aranaagatas should conduct themselves. Instead they are deeply engrossed in the day-to-day activities of a materialistic human being, and not practice even the basic requirements of the Vaishnavite like performing the daily worship of the Supreme Godhead, wearing the Tilak – the upright mark on the forehead, not worshipping other deities, etc. This criticism is quite strongly making rounds.”

“Sir, Is this practice of having indentures of the sacred Discuss and Conch on the shoulders, only in Vis’ishtaadvaita” asked Sakuntalamma.

“No madam! It is there in Dvaita also. But they get the indenturing done many times, whereas the Vis’ishtaadvaitins get it done only once in their lifetime. That is the difference.”

“Does it not mean by the word Dvaita that there are two? If so what are these two?”

“According to them, these two are the Jeeva – the sentient being and the Supreme Godhead. Since there are variations in Jeevas, they further say that the two are ‘one Jeeva’ and ‘another Jeeva’. They say again that the Jeeva and the universe are the two. Yet again, they say that since there is difference between the objects in the universe, the two are ‘one object’ and ‘another object’. They said that there are two namely the Supreme godhead and the Jeeva.”

“Oh my God! There are so many differences! One pair of two is ‘The supreme Godhead and the Jeeva’. The second pair of two is ‘the Universe and the Jeeva’ the third pair of two is Universe and the Controller – the Supreme Godhead’. Another pair of two is ‘the different Jeevas’. Yet, another pair of two is ‘the difference in the objects in the universe’. In total, there are five sets of twos! There is no resemblance of S’ankara’s Advaita to this at all!”
“Total contrast! The Ramanujaeyas with some difference with Advaita, might have used the word Advaita by combining it with Vis’ishta, but Madhvaachaarya is very angry with the Advaitins.”

“Why so angry with them? After all, Advaita is one of the many Dars’anas we have! Why angry particularly with the Advaitins only when there is no anger with the rest of the Dars’anas? Ramanuja also should be subject of anger then!”

“There are never that serious differences between the Ramanujaeyas and Maadhvas. It is like the brothers separated and having separate kitchens but staying in the same house. But both of them react very strongly against the Advaitins.”

“Yes Exactly. Why? Why that anger which is absent with the rest of the Dars’anas e.g., Buddhism etc.?”

“What will be dispute with Buddha who has not accepted the Veda as an authority? He is left to fend for himself. They feel that untold damage has been caused to the Vedic school of philosophy by the Advaita, by presenting the goofed up and masqueraded Buddhism as Vedic School while saying at the same time that they are firm believers in the Vedas and they are the pramaana for them. That is the reason for them to criticize the Advaita so strongly.”

“Are all the critics of S’ankara almost like that?”

“Aha! None except S’ankara and his followers have accepted the theory of illusion – the Maayaa-Vaada. All do criticize S’ankara that he tried to fix up the interpretation that does not exist in the Brahma Sutras. Even the modern philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan did not accept that the universe is illusion.”

“Yes. This matter has been discussed earlier by us. Let it be so! Kindly tell about the Dvaita.”

“After understanding the Vis’ishtaadvaita, Dvaita will be understood easily even without being extensively told. For them also, as with the Vis’ishtaadvaitins, the Supreme Godhead is Naaraayana Murthy only. He is in Parama pada with Lakshmi Devi. But for them, they need not worship Him along with Lakshmi Devi as Vis’ishtaadvaitins do. She does not do any recommendations etc.”

“Oh!”

“Similarly, the spiritual mentor – the Aac’aarya is not needed through out and is required only until he attains a particular stage.”

“Uh!”

“S’aranaaagati – the total surrender is the supreme (best) for the Ramanujaeyas. That question does not arise at all in the case of Dvaitins

For Ramanuja, the Lord in the form of Idol is main. For the Dvaitins, it is only complimentary or subsidiary in nature.”

“Look, opinion of the Dvaitins is the same as yours,” said Raghuramaiah looking at his wife.
“Raamaayana is important for the Ramanujeeyas and Bhaagavata is for the Dvaitins.”

“Hmm!”

“Ramanujeeyas say that the Jeeva and Prakriti are the bodies for the Supreme Godhead. For the Dvaitins, they are obedient like the bodies.”

“That is to say that in that, all the three constitute a single unit where as in this, it is not so!”

“For the Ramanujeeyas, the eternal bliss in salvation for all the Jeevas is the same i.e., to serve the Supreme Godhead. But for the Dvaitins, it is different for different Jeevas – according to their qualification. For some, it is any world that belongs to the Supreme Godhead, who is spread out everywhere. For some more, it is the courtship of the Supreme Godhead and for some others it is the form of the Supreme Godhead.”

“This looks to be unjustified!”

“Well, it is their school! Listen further. All the Jeevas are same for the Vis’ishtaadvaitins. That means that all the souls can attain the salvation. The only difference is the time factor, but for Dvaitins, it is not so. Only some are eligible for it. Some can never attain salvation. Some will always be against Supreme Godhead only.”

“This is very unjustified!”

“According to the Dvaita, some souls are women, some are men, some more are animals, yet some more are birds, and some more further are trees. In the worldly life though these souls have different bodies, their celestial bodies remain in their original form. It is not so with Ramanujeeyas. For them all the souls are the knowledge forms only. They take different types of bodies during the worldly life as per their Karma. During the stage of salvation, a suitable form of body is obtained by the independence and intention of the Supreme Godhead.”

“Well! It is OK, but both Ramanuja and S’ankara have explained the aphorism ‘Tattvam Asi’ more or less according to the Advaita only, that is to say that two are not there! Hoe did it get explained in Dvaita?”

“In the Upanishads, it is quoted as ‘Sa Aatma Tattvam Asi’. Both Ramanuja and S’ankara have separated ‘Sa Aatma’ and ‘Tattvam Asi’ and explained the aphorism. Madhvaachaarya had separated the words ‘Sa Aatma’ ‘Atattvam Asi’ with the ‘Savarna Deergha Sandhi’ a grammatical joint. Hence the break up of the words ‘tvam-atat-asi’ and this break up gives the meaning: ‘you may be thinking that you are some thing great but it is not so! There is somebody else, who has bestowed this knowledge etc. He is greater than you’.”

“Oh! It is something fantastic if we consider how the intelligence unfolds itself in so many different ways in different persons!”

“For these people, Vaayudeva is the greatest of the celestials. He can recommend also to some extent if necessary. His first incarnation is ‘Hanuman’, the next is Bheema’ and the third is – this Madhvaacharya. “

“Where do you find them mostly?”
“You know Udupi I suppose! That is their main place.”

“Did they not contradict Ramanuja’s school?”

“They did! The theory of ‘Pancheekarana’ of Upanishads as we discussed earlier was not accepted by them”

“We discussed earlier about the theory that every object has the qualities of other objects to some extent. Is it that?”

“Yes! He said that such an existence would not be there. Talk of the object, that itself means the difference. Every single object is different from every other object according to him.”

“How one will have the illusion of one resembling the other?”

“It is the fault of the experience by the sense organ. That is all.”

“Each has his own explanation. OK, the detailing of Madhvaachaarya is done. Theirs is also Vaishnavism only. Isn’t it?”

“Yes! It is total Vaishnavism only. It has become as prominent as Vis’ishtaadvaita of Ramanuja and Advaita of S’ankara. This Dvaita has taken main role in our country for the spread of ‘Krishna Bhakti – the devotion to Krishna.”

“Does S’aivism – the devotion to S’iva, differ with this?”

“Different are the paths for both. Some of the S’aivas have gone along with Vis’ishtaadvaita and some with Advaita, but it is not prominent if some have gone along with the Dvaita” said Purushottam. “I think you are to proceed to Mumbai tomorrow morning itself. You must be having a lot of packing etc.! Shall we stop this discussion?”

Both Raghuramaiah and Sakuntalamma in unison have not agreed to the stopping. “Yes, it is true that we are to proceed tomorrow morning. But, we must listen about the remaining religions and Dars’anas even briefly today. Our packing! It is almost over. Only leaving Vinita in her uncle’s house is yet to be done. That is all!”

“Why? Is Vinita not coming to Mumbai to see you off?” asked Sastry and Avadhani also.

“No! There is nobody to bring her back. Moreover, she has some exams also. We stay in Mumbai for about four days and then proceed to States leisurely.” said Sakuntalamma.

“No worry aunty! Even if it becomes evening or night, I shall leave Vinita in her uncle’s house, if needed, but let us complete this discussion at least in some measure,” said Dr. Subrahmanyam.

“That is my intention also,” said Raghuramaiah.

“In our region, for S’aivam, many have considered the Vis’ishtaadvaita, that was told earlier, and some others have considered Advaita. Though they have considered Advaita, none of them have at all accepted the theory of the illusion and mirage as it exists in S’ankara’s Advaita,” continued Purushottam.
“Though there are many branches in S’aiyam also as it happens in other religions, let us consider mainly for the purpose of our discussions, that there are two branches namely S’iiva-Advaita and Siva-Vis’ishtaadvaita. Many more will be noticed according to the S’aiya Agamas and Tantras with the minor differences. Whichever way we may look, the main true states are three viz., Pas’u, Paas’a and Pas’upati.”

“Is it like Ramanuja’s C’it, Ac’it and Is’vera?”

“Slight difference is there. Pas’u means the Jeeva, Paas’a is used to mean the bondage or the Karma. Pas’upati means S’iiva.”

“Is the relationship similar?”

“There is a difference in this religion. Some confusion may arise while we discuss this religion. Listen with attention because they have used the words Advaita and Vis’ishtaadvaita with different views.”

“OK. I shall be noting them as and when they are being mentioned.”

“Can you recall what we have discussed earlier about Paas’upata?”

“Yes! The one that was causing some distaste in the civilized people, with its practices. We discussed that some Lakulees’a or Naakulees’a as its propounder.”

“Both in this and in the one that has been evolved with more refinements to make it acceptable to the civilized populace, the Jeeva becomes independent in salvation. He becomes S’iiva, it means.”

“Will all these Upaasakas – those who meditate become S’ivas, like all those who attained salvation becoming Buddhas in Buddhism?”

“Yes! Only in Veeras’aiva, they remain subservient to S’iva. As per Kashmira-S’aiya they shall realize that they are S’ivas themselves.”

“You have mentioned that there are only two divisions but are telling three differences now!”

“That is why I have asked you to note with attention. These are consequential differences. The confusion occurs in them only. Do you remember that we have talked about S’iiva Tantras, Rudra Tantras, and Bhairava Tantras, during the discussion of the Tantra S’aastra and S’aakteya? Because of those differences, one observes these Dvaita, Advaita and Vis’ishtaadvaita differences.”

“Does it mean that all the varieties in entire S’aiyam depend upon these Tantras only?”

“Almost. Tantras or Aagamas are the lifeline for the S’aiya religion. One branch of S’aiyam was propounded with the help of Brahma Sutras, by one Srikantha, and this has many resemblances with the Vis’ishtaadvaita School. The historians say that he belongs to the original Paas’upata and his Dars’ana has been evolved after a majority of the people developed hatred on that Paas’upata, which had the obnoxious practices.”
“Aha! Is that the reason you had cautioned that the confusion will arise as to whether this is Paas’upata or S’aiva?”

“Not only that, it is called S’iva-Advaita.”

“What is that again? The name is S’iva-Advaita, it resembles Vis’ishtaadvaita, and the expounders are Paas’upatas! It is quite strange!”

“So did I ask you to listen with attention. One Sripati had written a Dars’ana, which had names of S’akti-Vis’ishtaadvaita and Veeras’aiva, as ‘Srikara Bhaashya’. Apart from this, Kashmira-Advaita is different.”

“OK, I shall listen with attention. Please tell us about the Srikantha’s Bhaashya!”

“Some say that Srikantha Bhaashya itself is Nilakantha Bhaashya, but some academics opine that it is not so. The branch of S’aiva that has been regarded by the great Appayya Deekshita is this only. According to this, S’iva and Pas’upati are the names of the Supreme Godhead only. He describes the Supreme Godhead as the one with all the virtuous attributes like Naaraayana of Ramanuja.”

“Was it not said that Naaraayana means S’iva?”

“It was tried but was not possible. Earlier we discussed this aspect that because of ‘n’amu’ problem, this name does not apply to any other. ‘Naara’ when joined with ‘Ayana’ it could have become Naaraayana but according to the grammar as it became ‘Naaraayan’a’ no other meaning could emerge from the word ‘Naaraayan’a’.”

“OK. How are the Jeevas related to the Is’vara?”

“The Is’vara is permeating throughout Jeeva like the fire in the wood.”

“Oh! This is the slight difference! Is it indicated by this illustration that if wood is rubbed against, the fire will be generated?”

“May be. S’iva should be meditated by knowing the Vedanta-Vaakyas- the holy sentences of the Vedantas. Then one obtains the direct perception. That is the cause for attaining the salvation.”

“How should one meditate?”

“Saying ‘S’ivoham’ meaning one should continuously think ‘I am S’iva’, ‘I am S’iva’. By doing so, the bondage disintegrates – that is to say that the Karma becomes extinct and the Saadhaka himself becomes S’iva.”

“How is the explanation of the Vaakya ‘Tattvam Asi’ etc. possible?”

“Why is it not possible? They explain: ‘Tat’ means that S’iva, ‘Tvam’ means you only, ‘Asi’ mean ‘are’. In other words, it means that ‘you are that S’iva’.”

If the Jeevas become S’ivas, how many S’ivas will be there for creation etc?”
“One attains the position of S’iva or Brahmatva, but the jeevas do not have the capabilities for creation etc. in the salvaged state – the Moksha Das’a.”

“Why this name ‘S’iva-Advaita for this? It could have as well be called as S’iva-Vis’ishtaadvaita, by the resemblances!”

“It is because, Advaita has been shown by stating that the Brahma or Is’vara associated with the miniature ‘C’it and Ac’it’ and the Brahma or Is’vara associated with large ‘C’it and Ac’it’ are one and the same like the way Ramanuja has described in Vis’ishtadvaita.”

“That is it! It should be hence named as ‘S’iva-Vis’ishtaadvaita’!”

“Not said so! It is named as ‘Siva-Advaita only. That is why I have been continuously asking you not to get confused.”

“Except for the difference in the name, if it is almost the Vis’ishtaadvaita of Ramanuja only, we may not further discuss about this!”

“We need not. One more point that is important should be noted. The saying ‘Yadbhaavah, Tadbhavati’ has become widely popular after them only.”

“What does that mean?”

“You will become what you think, – the way you meditate, strongly and continuously.”

“Aha! Jeevas have the Ahamkaara – the egoism, namely ‘this body is I’. That must get removed and the egoism, namely ‘I am S’iva only’ should evolve. The shade of that old Paas’upata – that of Nakulees’a does appear in this!”

“Yes. It is there. It is said that another branch is there either in these people or in that Nakulees’as – it may be a little less known! It is said that they consider that the eternal bliss for the Jeeva, who becomes S’iva on salvation is enjoyment while drinking liquors, with beautiful woman like Paarvati. Some of the academics view that such branches, propounded by those, who could not get rid of the materialistic desires, are bringing bad name to the religions and Dars’anas.”

“Yes, it appears so!”

“If we consider that branch, which is being widely proclaimed as S’aiva in Karnataka region, it is Veeras’aiva only. They are called ‘Lingaayats’ also since they wear a miniature lingam around their neck.”

“Do you say that this Veeras’aiva is not prevalent in Andhra Pradesh?”

“It is there but those wearing lingam in their neck is mostly in Karnataka only. It is mentioned in Basava Puraana that Basava, born as an incarnation of Nandi – the sacred Bull and the official carriage of S’iva, had brought that into prominence there!”

“Who brought it into prominence in our region?”

“A great scholar named ‘Panditaaraadhya’ did it. Their sect is called ‘Aaraadhya S’aakha’. The followers of this sect also wear lingam around their necks etc. But they follow
the Brahmin practices. Those that became prominent in Andhra Pradesh have not jettisoned their ‘Varna’srama Dharma’ – the rituals and practices in accordance with the castes.”

“Basava’s efforts had been mainly against the system of castes only. Since the Vedas do not accept such topics, basing on S’iva Tantras, he campaigned extensively against the caste system. It appears that the Lingaayats there need not practice the caste system. It seems that they are called ‘Jangams’ also.

“In our areas also we have ‘Jangam Devaras’!”

“They are many more in that area! One Sripati, who is held with high reverence by the Aaraadhya Brahmans, has authored Srikara Bhaashya – a commentary on Brahma Sutras, and has become prominent.”

“Does he also belong to the Veera S’aiva sect only?”

“Yes! That is what we are discussing now! This school is being called as Vis’esha-advaita, Dvaitaadvaita and S’akti Vis’ishtaadvaita also.”

“What is the main tenet of this school?”

“Three words viz., Sthala, Linga and Anga are very important for them. Sthala does not mean place here but that which is the base for the entire universe – that is the Supreme Godhead – the Ultimate Reality.”

“Is that ultimate reality, S’iva?”

“Wait a bit! Do not be in a hurry – this theory on basis of the Ultimate Reality is called ‘Ghana Linga’. That is changing its shape and emerging as ‘Linga’, suitable for meditation, out of pity on the Jeevas.”

“Oh! What is meant by ‘Anga’ then?”

“Those who worship Linga are called Anga.”

“Linga and Anga are thus separate!”

No! Not at all. S’iva is formless, Eternal and Omniscient. He is accompanied by S’akti necessarily. S’iva and S’akti are always together like the word and the meaning. In explanation of this S’akti phenomenon, two words viz., ‘Mahaa Maaya’ and ‘Maaya’ are always quoted. Among them, Mahaa Maaya is always associated with the unique Sattva Guna. The ordinary ‘Maaya’ is associated with all the three Gunas viz., Sattva, Rajas, and Tamo Gunas and is producer of illusion. S’iva when associated with Mahaa Maaya, is in the form of a Linga – the shape of a cylinder with one side being half of a sphere. S’iva shrouded by the ordinary Maaya becomes the Jeeva. This form is Anga!”

“Understood. The same reality of S’iva transforms into Linga and Anga also because of the shrouding by Maaya. What about this universe?”

“Here the universe is not a myth as it in the case of S’ankara but is reality only. This universe is created so that the Jeevas experience similar to that of Supreme Godhead. One aspect should not be forgotten here. Though they have not accepted that the universe is an
illusion, have accepted the reality called ‘Maaya’. It is not the same Maaya of Advaitins, but is the form of S’akti only.”

“Hmm! I am following.”

“There are 26 realities for the Saankhyas etc., but for these people, they are 36 in number. The six positions in the human body are important for these. The ultimate here, is unison with S’iva by obtaining the knowledge of the Self through control of the disturbances in the nerves – the conduits for the flow of knowledge in the body.”

“It was mentioned earlier that there are six planes or ‘C’akras’ in the human body and the energy of Kundalini. Do the six positions mean the same?”

“There are contradicting views in these religious books itself that they are same as well as that they are not. Not only that. Do you recall that it has been said that ‘Sthala’ means the support for the universe? In some of the books, it is stated that ‘Sthala’ means these six only.”

“If ‘Sthala’ means these six only, then Linga and Anga is one and same!”

“It is said so also. Though Linga and Anga mean the same, Anga, not knowing that, considers it to be this body only. This Anga should overcome that limitation – that means to break out of the thinking that Anga means this body only, and should perceive the Mahaa tattva – the great reality, on its own.”

“This is more or less like that system of six planes, told by you. This might have been the base for the practices of the S’aaakteyas.”

“Might be, but it is not made compulsory in Veeras’aiva. Linga is of three types. They are Bhaava Linga, Praana Linga, and Ishta Linga. Bhaava Linga among them is unavailable even for the thoughts except for the highly knowledgeable. One can imagine Praana Linga in one form.”

“Doesn’t that mean these are different stages?”

“Since both the above are not possible for a common man, he wears the Ishta Linga around his neck, near his heart, so that it touches the heart every time, and by this he will be able to concentrate on meditation and comes to know that he is S’iva shrouded by Maaya. And this is salvation.”

“Oh! Is the wearing of the Linga around the neck for this purpose? Good, but how does this become Vis’ishtaadvaita? Is it not Advaita in which one realizes that he and S’iva are one and the same only?”

“No. Here S’iva is qualified by S’akti. That means he is along with S’akti. Mahaa Maaya and Maaya are the associated Realities of that S’akti only. Only because of that, both Linga and Anga are evolved. Since the entire thing has moved because of The S’iva qualified by S’akti, it has been primarily named as S’iva-Vis’ishtaadvaita.”

“Please tell us once again how the Anga is separated and the way it is united from Linga.”

“Consider that the fire is blazing brightly. From that the sparks do come, isn’t it? Remember that Fire symbolizes the Linga and the sparks the Anga. Consider the normal fire
to be the eternal reality of S’iva – the Anantha S’iva Tattva. The moment it is associated with S’akti, it will be blazing brightly. The sparks emanate. They are the Angas. Joining the same fire telling that we are not separate entities but we are from the same fire is Salvation – that is the union of Linga and Anga.”

“It is understood. But, for unison of S’akti with Siva, wherefrom does S’akti come?”

“It will not come from anywhere. It is there only. Where does the meaning of a word lie? It is there in the word itself!”

“Then what is that blazing when united with S’akti? Since it is always in unison, is it not blazing?”

“You are going to Mumbai tomorrow. There in the market if somebody talks to you in Marathi, you will not respond because you do not understand. He made some sounds. But you do not know the meaning of that. That means, though there is meaning in the words, you did not respond. Suppose you have understood the meaning, will you not respond? Similarly, though S’akti is in S’iva itself, if it is not revealed, S’iva is eternal. By his intention if it is revealed, then everything moves as a chain as told earlier.”

“Is this S’akti the Maaya? Maaya means ignorance, isn’t it?”

“OK, you may call this S’akti as Maaya also – it may be understood well by you in this way. But Maaya of Advaitins is illusion, and Maaya as per these people is reasoning power.”

“Does that mean the one that can be known by discerning?”

“Yes. This power of reasoning or discerning only is called by the names ‘Paarvati’ and ‘Uma’.”

“During the unison of the Linga and Anga in the Upaasana or meditation- do these people also say ‘S’ivoham’?”

“May be said so. But by Srikantha’s meditation of ‘S’ivoham’, they become like S’iva. By Sripati’s meditation of ‘S’ivoham’ they become one with S’iva.”

“Though it is slightly confusing, it is OK. If we refer to the notes once again, it will become clear.”

Now, let us know Kaashmiras’aiva the third branch. This also is called S’iva-advaita only. There is another name – ‘Pratyabhijnaavaada’.”

“What is meant by Pratyabhijna?”

“You saw me yesterday. Today also, you saw me. Will it not be known: ‘aha! He is the same person, whom I saw yesterday’? Knowing that is called ‘Pratyabhijna’!”

“We have discussed something similar to this earlier! About the happiness during the sleep, haven’t we?”

“Yes. It is the same! They say that Parama S’iva has five faces actually. Through these faces, He had reeled out the S’aiva tantras – the S’iva-Aagamas very fast. Everybody started
practicing them. But unable to know S’iva’s intentions, they entered the Dvaita – dualism. Hence, it is said that sage Doorvaasa has again narrated these Aagamas according to the Advaita School!”

“Is he the propounder of this school?”

“He was from the Puraanas. While Vasugupata was meditating according to sage Doorvaasa’s books, the stone slate-board, which was on the Mahadevagiri – a hillock, was seen by him in the dream. He read all the 77 aphorisms appearing on that slate board and propagated this Kaashmiraadvaita.”

“This also is obtained by doing penance like Buddha and Jina only! But S’ankara and Ramanuja have said that they are telling it according to the Vedas. They have not declared that they have either seen it in the dream or obtained from the meditation. OK, Please tell.”

“After Vasugupata, Somananda etc. have arrived into this. This religion was split due to some difference of opinions.”

“Did Kaashmiraadvaita also get split?”

“Yes! In the branch called ‘Pratyabhijna dars’ana’ only the name of Abhinavagupta, who campaigned for it, became more prominent than the names of the founders.”

“Aha!”

“We have discussed that S’iva is always associated with S’akti. Do you recall it?”

“Yes. But that was not in this context, but in Veeras’aiva!”

“Some say that Veera-S’aiva also has emerged from this base only. Hence, many topics do match. So do not get confused!”

“S’iva is always associated with S’akti! That S’akti is of 5 types. If one is able to visualise this universe, it means that these five types of S’akti are flashing on the mind only. That is it.”

“Oh! Gleaming of this S’akti only is this universe!”

“They say that if the Supreme Godhead sees himself in a mirror, the image he sees is the universe.”

“What is mirror?”

“S’akti only is like mirror”

“If He sees in the mirror, He should see His image. But how is the universe seen?”

“That is how all have taken and are taking it as Dvaita – the dualism. In fact, it is Advaita – the monism only. If S’iva sees His image, only it would have been known to everybody clearly that it is advaita only. But He felt that the universe is His reflection only. With that, it is taken that S’iva and Universe are two different entities and it is considered to be Dvaita and being considered to be Dvaita – the dualism.”
“Hmm! OK.”

“The total number of Tattvas – the realities is 36. The first is S’iva. That means Parama S’iva. This is the Supreme Reality. As soon as the Ichchaa S’akti – one of the five S’aktis that we have talked about a while ago, moves in Him, He will have the feeling of ‘I’. This is the second reality. Now there are two tattvas – the realities i.e., – S’iva and S’akti! Some movement starts and He sees into the mirror. Then a stage comes in which He feels that there may be the Universe. This is the third tattva. Its name is ‘Sadaa S’iva’. The external form of this Sadaa S’iva only is Is’vara. This is the fourth tattva. While talking about Veera S’aiva, we have discussed about Mahaa Maaya. Do you remember? Similar to that named ‘S’uddha Vidya – the pure knowledge, emerges here as the fifth tattva. Now He joins with the Kriyaa S’akti – the kinetic energy, of all the five S’aktis. By this time, Maaya emerges. With that, S’iva becomes Jeeva. With that He becomes the one with constricted Jnaana and S’akti – the knowledge and power.”

“In this also as is in the other, it appears that Is’vara is from S’uddha Vidya – the pure knowledge and Jeeva is from Maaya!”

“Yes. Then Jeeva becomes Pas’u – the animal. Immediately the Paas’a – the bondage emerges. The rest is as told in Saankhya only. This only is the cycle of life and death.”

“If one, thinking oneself to be Jeeva, comes to know that one is S’iva only, that is if ‘Pratyabhijna’ emerges, that is salvation – the Moksha.”

“How does it emerge?”

“There are three ways. In the first method, one takes the ‘S’aakta Deeksha’ –dedicating one self to S’akti. Listen what it means: S’akti means nothing other than the power of Kundalini. This should be taken through the spinal chord via the Brahma Naadi – the nerve connecting the brain, and unite it with Parama S’iva – the Supreme Godhead. For this, the spiritual mentor, enters in miniature form, the inner body of S’iva, carries the Kundalini himself, and unites it with Parama S’iva. His subject does nothing in this.”

“Why should the mentor unite like this?”

“Well, this is an act that is carried out by the mentor, who knows that he is S’iva only and is, out of compassion on the subject, desirous that his subject also becomes aware that he also is S’iva only.”

“Why is the desire that his student also should know that he also is S’iva only when the mentor already knows that he is S’iva only since S’iva is one in totality?”

“Uh! All your questions are only later! Let the main portion be completed. Please tell us Sir!’ said Sakuntala. She is interested in listening but at the same time would like to pack her luggage. Lot of work is there!

“In the second method, one should take the pledge of S’aambhavi – S’aambhavi Deeksha’. In this, the mentor just glances at his subject. Immediately the plane of Sahasraara opens up and it goes into the state of Samaadhi – the intense meditative stage, and the unison of S’iva and S’akti occurs.”

“It is very easy for the student! He does not have to work at all!”
The third path is the pledge of Hymns – the ‘Mantra Deeksha’. The spiritual mentor initiates the student with a mantra – the hymn and the student chants that mantra repeatedly. Over a period of such repeated chanting, the student will come to know that he is S’iva only. Thus, in Kaashmira Advaita, one attains salvation by three methods.”

“If so, can we say: ‘Paas’upata is of Srikantha, S’aiva is of Sripati and KaashmiraS’aiva is of Abhinavagupta’?”

“They are not calling them by those fixed names. They call both Srikantha’s and Abhinavagupta’s as S’iva-Advaita only. That of Sripati is called S’iva-Vis’ishtaadvaita. Veeras’aiva is definitely of Sripati only. The salvation as per both Sripati and Abhinavagupta appear to be same. In one, it is unison with S’iva and in the other; it is knowing that he is S’iva only. But in Paas’upata, it is becoming like S’iva.”

“Yes. It is understood. In Paas’upata, S’iva transforms Himself into the Universe. In Veeras’aiva, the universe emerges through unison of S’iva S’akti. In KaashmiraS’aiva, image and reflections are S’iva and Universe. Is it not?”

“Don’t such monism thoughts – like becoming united with the supreme Godhead etc. emerge in Vaishnavism?”

Why not? They have emerged! In that, preceptors like Vallabha, Nimbaarka, C’aitanya Mahaaprabhu etc. have introduced some theories. But the style in S’aiva is different from that in Vaishnavism.”

“How about in S’aakteya? Did these splits occur with the Advaitic thoughts in that branch?”

“Indeed, S’aakteya should be accepted as part of S’aiva only. The realities for both of them are 36 only. In both of them, the unison of S’iva and S’akti are talked. Here, mainly, S’iva means the Supreme Godhead and S’akti means His conduct. Beyond that, no religion has become prominent having the thoughts that Mother is the Supreme Godhead and attaining Her court is salvation. But, it is not that there are no beliefs that She is the cause of the creation and Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahes’vara are part of that creation only. But in that thinking also, S’akti is described as the power of S’iva only and She is not given any independency of being the Supreme Godhead. There is another argument that She holds the Jeevas in nescience and S’iva releases them from nescience. There is another argument saying that if one takes refuge in her, She will not allow nescience to take over the Jeeva and for this S’iva is not required. Like this each has propounded depending on his intelligence.”

“Whatever it might be, all these are based on mainly Tantra and not on the Vedas, aren’t they?”

“The view of most of the Dars’anakaaras is that only. Most of them opine that S’aiva and S’aakteya also are based mostly on the Taantric Scriptures only and have taken very little from the Upanishads. Further it is considered that age-old Paas’upata is totally based on the Tantra S’astra only. The branch which has been propagated by Srikantha and Appayya Deekshita known as modernized Paas’upata though has the theory part based on the Upanishad, however the practice part does again show inclination towards the Taantric S’astras only.”
“We said that there are branches in Vaishnavism! How did the thoughts of Advaita find their place in it?”

“Let us first take up Nimbaarka. He has also propounded the Bheda-Abheda School of Bhaaskara only. But he has brought out some changes in Bhaskara’s arguments.”

“Bhaskara’s argument is that which says that there is difference as well as no difference between Jeeva – the sentient being and Supreme Godhead – Paramaatma like the difference between the waves of the sea and sea. You are talking about that Bhaskara only. Aren’t you?”

“Oh! Yes, he only. This Nimbaarka also has propounded more or less like that only. Are the leaves of the tree different from the tree or not? Is the brilliance difference from the light or not? Similarly, the Jeeva- the sentient being will never exist separate from Brahma – the Supreme Godhead. Jeeva is His Ams’a – the partial incarnation of the Supreme Godhead, only. Under no circumstances, he will become one with Supreme Godhead.”

“How did the creation occur?”

“The Supreme Godhead had created. The raw material for the Universe is He only. He is the one who intended to create and who created also.”

“It is called the ‘Ahi Kundala Nyaaya’ – a popular maxim. That means: Is the serpent the same or not when it is sleeping in coiled form and when it is straightened and moving? Similar is the relationship between the Supreme Godhead and the sentient being and the Universe.”

“Oh! There is difference and no difference also. Both of them are correct! OK! How is the salvation for them?”

“Their Supreme Godhead is Srikrishna only. Since He is beyond the Universe, it can be said that He is without attributes. Since He is the creator, He can be called as Saguna – the One with attributes. They worship His consort Radha along with Him. One should meditate keeping the relationship between him and the Supreme Godhead. Bhakti is only the love evolved in the Supreme Godhead. One attains Moksha – the salvation by that only.”

“What is meant by Moksha – the salvation?”

“Moksha is obtaining nature along with the attributes similar to those of the Supreme Godhead. It is not unison with Him.”

“Is it that one should become Krishna in this school like one becoming S’iva in Paas’upata?”

“No, there is difference. There one feels that he is S’iva. Here it is not said so. It is only the equality in the attributes. The spiritual mentor is a must for one to come to this state. For them also, ‘Prapatti’ is there.”

On the whole, it is close to the Ramanuja Dars’ana. But it is said in this that Krishna is Paratattva – the Supreme Reality. They do not say Naaraayana to be Paratattva.”

“Is Krishna mentioned in the Upanishads? Where from this thought has come?”
“One has to literally search for mention of Krishna and Rudra in the Upanishads that have been accepted as authorities by both Ramanuja and S’ankara. That is why both do not bring such thinking anywhere in their Dars’anas. But since Ramanujeeyas accept Krishna as an incarnation of Naaraayana, there is no hitch worth mention with the followers of Nimbaarka. Ramanujeeyas do not at all accept Paas’upata etc. since S’iva has fought wars either with Vishnu, Naaraayana or Krishna, in the Puraanas.”

“What about the S’aankaras – the followers of S’ankara?”

“For them it is all the same since everything is illusion only! No problem. It is total peace.”

“Is the traditional doctrine of Nimbaarka, Vaishnavism only?”

“Yes! There are four traditions in the Vaishnavism. The four are, tradition of Brahma, tradition of Rudra, tradition of Sanaka and lastly tradition of S’ri. Among them, S’ri tradition means the Ramanuja School. Sanaka tradition means Nimbaarka School. This school is called Radhakrishna tradition also by some people.”

“Is it Radhakrishna School or Radhasvami School?”

It is Radhakrishna School only. Not Radhasvami School. That is different. The school of Dayalbagh in Agra is called Radhasvami School. In this, Radhasvami means neither Radha nor Krishna whom we all know. It is only the name they have selected like that. They do not have belief in Vedas. Neither, they accept idolatry. They have no special feeling of God also. Their prayer place does not resemble even a Gurudwars also. It is a peculiar and non-Vedic religion. It is not like any of the religions that we have studied so far. Let us keep it aside what we are discussing now is Radhakrishna school of Nimbaarka.”

“Do they have the Dravida Veda, Azhvars etc.?"

“That question does not arise at all.”

“Is there anybody else who have Srikrishna as the Supreme Reality?”

“Vallabhaac’arya, of later period has propounded S’uddha-Advaita.”

“Does S’uddha-Advaita mean some thing like S’ankara’s Advaita? Will there be more Maaya and Mithya?”

“While S’ankara establishes that the Maaya and Mithya shroud Para Brahma, according to this Vallabhaac’aarya, if such a Maaya is shrouding, then it cannot become real Advaita and it means that there are two tattvas – the realities. Hence, he has propounded that real Tattva is the Para Brahma without the Maaya. Hence, his school has come to be known as S’uddha-Advaita. That is all.”

“What are the characteristics of Jeeva and Para Brahma in their system?”

“Their Para Brahma is ‘Sat-c’it-ananda Svaroopa.”

“What does this mean?”
“Sat means existence. C’it means the conscience or having life. You know what is Aananda! This is called Sat-C’it-Ananda Svaroop. The jeevas according to this school are the forms of Sat and C’it only. Aananda is not associated with them. Hence, they are always immersed in the misery. For their universe, existence is the only characteristic. This way their tenets or doctrines run.”

“Well, how does the creation take place?”

“Para Brahma, the Almighty undergoes transformation for the divine play for His pleasure. The jeevas evolve out of Parama Aatma, like the sparks emanating from the blazing fire.”

“The concepts of Veera-S’aiva are mixed up in the concepts of this school to a small extent?”

“To a small extent! Their Supreme Godhead is Srikrishna only. It is said that Vallabhae’aarya had the vision of Krishna in a dream, while he was in Brindavan, and Krishna asked him to dig out His Srinatha-idol from a particular place in Govardhanagiri at which it was buried under the earth. According to those indications, Srinathji was brought out and a temple was built in Brindavan.”

“Ah! Such great evidence? Is the temple still existing?”

“If questioned whether it is an evidence, some narrate that the idol was found out without the mention of the dream. Though the temple was built there, only indications are remaining there presently. Rajputs have shifted many of the Gods – rather their idols out of fear from the attacks of Mohammedans, to the different places in Rajasthan from Brindavan. Presently, there is a temple for Srinathji in a place called Nath-dvaraka near Udaipur. One can visit Him there. It is said that that temple, in wealth is only next to Tirupati in our country.”

“Is it so? If Srikrishna is the Supreme Godhead in their view, were Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra created by Krishna only?”

“No. According to this school, there are three parts in Srikrishna viz. Sattva, Rajo, and Tamo Gunas. Among them, Sattva Guna is Vishnu, Rajoguna is Brahma, and Tamoguna is Rudra. Srikrishna stays in the Goloka – the world of cows.”

“Is it Vaikuntha?”

“No. It is beyond Vaikuntha far away.”

“How does it look like? What is there in that? What does Krishna do there?”

“He incarnated Himself in Brindavan only to show us what he does there in Goloka. That means, in Goloka, same will be happening what used to happen in Brindavan during the days of His incarnation. He had played Raasa with Gopikas. Brindavan of those days is an image of Goloka. All the Jeevas who reach there by His favour or obliging will be enjoying eternal bliss like the Gopikas.”

“Oh! How does one obtain that?”
“There are two types of devotees in Vallabha School. One is Maryadaabhakta and the other is Pushtibhakta.”

“What is meant by Maryadaabhakta?”

“Maryadaabhaktas are those, who without crossing their limits, meditate on Srikrishna. They are always immersed in the service of His feet. They take refuge at His feet only. Association with Him is available for them. They have desire for associating with Him. Ambareesha is an illustration for them.”

“Good. Who are the Pushtibhaktas?”

“The favour of the supreme Godhead is called ‘Poshana’ in Bhaagavata. Those who accepted ‘poshana’ as the instrument to attain salvation are the people in the path of Pushti. They offer everything to Him and then take it for themselves. If Maryadaabhakta love the feet of Krishna, these people get ecstasy by seeing His face. They have no specific desire unlike the Maryadaabhakta. Gopikas are the illustration for them.”

“What does that mean?”

“Reaching Him and getting relief, after they wither in the longing for Krishna the moment they loose His sight, is their salvation. The ultimate benefit for them is the flood of the eternal Bliss filled with unfathomable sentiment of love of Krishna only.”

“Ah! How nice is this feeling! While such an experience of the sentiments and bliss in salvation is told in Vaishnava Dars’anas, such a feeling does not appear that much in S’iva Dars’anas! Why is it so?”

“S’iva is roaming in the cemeteries and burning ghats expressing absence of worldly desires or passions and aversion. He anoints himself with the ashes. Whether it is Vishnu or Krishna, He shines always adorned with all the ornaments. Hence the difference is unavoidable!”

“If we believe that life is given by Supreme Godhead only, in my opinion it should not be filled with despair. Absence of worldly desires or passion or aversion to the worldly desires is different from the despair. One should not keep their bodies in torrid conditions in the name of aversion to the worldly desires, so as to create difficulties for persons around him. The experience shall be for the pleasure of the Supreme Godhead instead of for one’s own self. I am of the opinion that, that type of aversion to the worldly desires, would lead to certain optimism.”

“Well, is it possible for people to author their Dars’anas as per your opinions? They will write according to their views. After that, it is for us either to practice them or not.”

“OK, let us leave it at that. Is this tradition of Vallabha in wide practice presently?”

“Very much. The followers of Pushtimaarga are quite large in north India. But since the attire and language being not so strictly observed, we are unable to know who is what. It is said that tradition of Vishnusvami was prevailing originally. By the time, it has started loosing its sheen; Vallabha has tkaen birth and has started his tradition based on those basic tenets. Over the period, Vallabha’s name only has remained. In fact, another tradition similar to that of Vallabha has also been introduced in the same period.”
“Who introduced that?”

“It did not come because of any specific efforts to introduce it. It could be said that it evolved on its own. While Vallabha was precepting his school in the region of Mathura and Brindavan, one Krishna C’aitanya Mahaa Prabhu, became ecstatic with the love for Krishna and was going around in Bengal and Orissa.”

“Is it the people from Hare Rama Hare Krishna Raising?”

“Yes! They would be more known with that name only. While he was in the meditation of Krishna, he was experiencing the happiness of unison with Krishna. As soon as he would come out of the meditation, he used to be ecstatic about the experience and used to long for that happiness.”

“A school based on experience! What is the characteristic of the ‘Para-Brahma’ – the Supreme Godhead in his view?”

“Krishna is undoubtedly the Supreme Godhead. Bhaagavata is the exposition of the Brahma Sutras only. Hence, he has not authored any book on this subject. Two brothers Roopa Goswamy and Sanaataana Goswamy, who are his main disciples, also have not authored commentary on Brahma Sutras, though they had authored many other books. Their brother’s son, Jeerva Goswamy only has authored an interpretation of Bhaagavata. according to the doctrines of C’aitanya Mahaaaprabhu and the three Goswamis, one Baladeva Bhushana, of their tradition only, has authored a commentary on Brahma Sutras after a long time since. That only has become prominent as the school of Krishna C’aitanya Mahaaaprabhu.”

“Oh, such a long story is there behind! What is the name of this school?”

“It is called – ‘Ac’intya Bheda-Abheda’. It is the same as the one professed by Nimbaarka and Vallabha but with some differences. The subject of Supreme Godhead is considered to be ‘Ac’intya’ – the one that is beyond imagination.”

“How?”

“S’akti – the Power, and S’aktimanta – the one with power. When we consider both these, there is a difference between them also there is no difference! Hence, it is ‘Bhedaa-Abheda’ – the difference and no difference. Since it is beyond imagination, it is ‘Ac’intya-Bheda-Abheda.’”

“Is Brahma with attributes or without?”

“Brahma is with attributes only. He is Krishna Paramaatma – Lord Krishna only. His form which is endless will be available for His devotees as limited form. It can be said as without attributes also because it is devoid of Sattva-Rajas-Tamo Gunas.”

“How is salvation in this?”

“Through devotion only. In that also, it is sweet devotion only that is accepted by Him.”

“How many types of devotion are there?”
“Some say that there are nine types of devotion. In this school, mainly five types are told. One is S’aantabhakti – the peaceful devotion like the one experienced by sages Sanaka, Sanandana etc. There can be D’aasyabhakti – service devotion like the one practiced by Prahlada and Hanumaan. It can be Sakhyabhakti – the devotion by friendship like that of Arjuna and Kuc’ela. It can be Vaatsalyabhakti – the devotion in the form of affection like that of Yas’oda. Then the last one is Madhurabhakti – the sweet devotion, that is practiced by the lovers.”

“It means considering Krishna to be the beloved while self being the mistress or wife!”

“Yes! In fact, there is none better than this among various types of such devotions by service etc. Giving more happiness to the Supreme Godhead through this type of devotion is the main objective in this. This school emphasizes that there is no other feeling better than this feeling for cuddling oneself in the beloved.”

“What is that in salvation?”

“It is the same state of enjoying the bliss with Supreme Godhead in the world of Goloka. This is called ‘Gaudeeya Vaishnavism’ also. This has come into extensive prominence in the country. Vaishnavism in north India means this only.”

“I think this has spread in the foreign lands also!”

“During later period it had splits in it. It split mainly into two and one of it is International Society for Krishna Consciousness – ISKCON and the second is the ordinary Gaudeeya Vaishnavism. Though there are smaller splits in Gaudeeya Vaishnavism, on the whole there are no in principle differences among any of them.”

“Such devotees – I mean the sweet devotees are many in our country like Meerabai etc. I suppose.”

“Yes! Meerabai, Jayadeva, C’andeedas etc. If south India is taken, there are many like Andal etc.”

“Did anybody praise Rama as the Supreme Godhead apart from Krishna being praised as Supreme Godhead?”

“Who are Tulasidas, Kabir etc, if they have not praised Rama as the Supreme Godhead? Apart from that, I suppose we have discussed about Raamaananda, the mentor of Kabir.”

“Yes, I remember him to some extent.”

“He authored Aananda Bhaashya – a treatise on Brahma Sutras. In that treatise, he has proved that Rama is the Supreme Godhead only; in the same way as Ramanuja has proved in his Sribhashyam that Naaraayana is the Para-Brahma – the Supreme Godhead. The rest of the topics are as usual in that also.”

“Sir! We see something called Paanduranga Vittal on the TV. Which school is this tradition?”

“That is also Vaishnavism only. As much Ranganatha and Srirangam in Tamilnadu are important for the Ramanujeeya Vaishnavas, Pandarpur and Paandurangasvami are that much
important in Maharashtra. When Pundarika, the devotee calls, Krishna comes from Dvaraka to Pandarpur. He throws a brick at Him asking Him to wait since he is busy in the service of his parents and Krishna accepts that request and waits standing on that brick waiting for Pundareeka. Vittal in Marathi means the one who waits. That temple is very famous there.”

“There are many traditions of Vaishnavism like this!”

Yes. But since the attire and languages are not known, it is felt that the Vaishnavites are fewer compared to other schools. That is all! In addition to this school, there is another Vaishnava tradition in Gujarat called ‘Swaminaaraayan’ sect.”

“What are its specialties?”

“This Swaminaaraayan tradition has been evolved on the basis of the exposition of Brahma Sutras by one Muktaananda. The school is mostly according to Ramanuja’s Vis‘ishtaavadvaaita only but there is difference in practice. There is not even a mention of Azhvars etc.”

“What else?”

“One sees one tradition called Rasika Tradition in the region of Brindavan. Theirs is also sweet devotion only with minor difference. In Assam, Vaishnavism introduced by one S’ankara Deva is quite famous. Though he is influenced by Ramanuja’s school of Vaishnavism and has preached the Vaishnavism, practices of Ramanuja are absent even as a test case in today’s followers of S’ankara Deva. Since it remained farther from main Indian peninsula, it appears, this difference might have been there.”

“Are there any more in Vaishnavism worth being discussed?”

“There are no more in this. It is said that one S’uka has authored a treatise on the Brahma Sutras supporting the Dvaita School. But it hasd not come into prominence.”

“Purushottam garu, you are able to tell so many details! Is your brain a computer? How do you remember all of them?” asked Raghuramaiah.

“As you remember the sections of the criminal and civil codes, so it is for me also” Purushottam laughed away. He said again, “Madam Sakuntalamma! Have you not drawn any more graphs?”

“Before she could answer, Raghuramaiah answered. “Why not! That is her job everyday. Except what has been discussed today, all have been put on the graphs. Why don’t you show?” he asked her.

She gave all those she had prepared till that time with all the humility and asked “Please tell if they are correct.”
EXPLANATION: The path for Kaivalya starts with Yama, Niyama etc. However, the self realization starts the Dharana and when getting into Dhyana and Samadhi. Moksha is the eternal goal.

SCHOOL OF VAIS'ES'IKAS

Elimination Of Sorrow

Material Knowledge
EXPLANATION: The path for Kaivalya starts with Yama, Niyama etc. However, the self realization starts the Dharana and when getting into Dhyana and Samadhi. Moksha is the eternal goal.

EXPLANATION: Virtual knowledge vanishes due to spiritual knowledge. Then we stop doing any activity. Then no rebirths. Thus the sorrow is eliminated. This is the pinnacle – Moksha.
EXPLANATION: Loss of rebirth is Moksha. Negative Y axis moves towards Moksha. Positive Y axis means getting deeper and deeper into the mundane family affairs. Carrying out any action will not stop rebirths because it is not correct to stop action. Carrying out action without any selfish motive and without anticipation of any fruit leads to Moksha. X axis can be indicated as Apoorva & negative end of the Y axis can be called as Moksha. It is not possible to have the zero point on the Y axis and thus it is appropriate to consider the same as two graphs.
EXPLANATION: Due to Divine (Great) Preaching the delusion is removed. However, the experience of the Supreme God Head with attributes and the world is still felt although it is known that they do not exist. Hence, before the Divine (Great) preaching these are apparent truths. After the Divine Preaching these are worldly. Once one is devoid of the body these are ultimate truths. The origin (0,0) here indicates the existence of delusion to others even if one is devoid of delusion oneself.
EXPLANATION: Bhakti means thinking of Supreme God Head continuously with love. In any world the happiness is achieved with Bhakti. However the Great Eternal Happiness is possible only at the abode of the Supreme God Head i.e. Paramapada. One achieves it as one’s Bhakti keeps increasing eternally. The pinnacle of Bhakti can lead to Prapatti. Those who do Prapatti may also get Bhakti. However, followers of Prapatti do not have so many stages. It is the abode of Supreme God Head only. For the Vengal cult, the Kaivalya means the nether worlds of Paramapada. For the Tengal cult Kaivalya means the inferior happiness in Paramapada itself. The great Eternal Happiness is one without any mix of sorrow.

They are good, Madam! They are really very good. Graphs for Today’s subject are similar to those on Dvaita! If you write the comment for that, it will suffice. Depending on the relative importance of the Jeevas- the sentient beings, some will have salvation and some will not have. So, an ordinary graph cannot depict. The graph depicting the jeevas of the highest category – that is of those who are qualified to attain salvation, is a straight line at 45° incline. It will be like the graph of the Vis’ishtaadvaita. However, there is no mention of even the Kaivalya or Prapatti. Since there is no salvation for the others, there will not be any graph. The rest are religions. Since all these are parts of some Dars’ana or other to some extent, these graphs are enough. You need not prepare any graphs for them!” said Purushottam.

“Sir, will it not be good if all that we have discussed in the past 5,6 months comes out as a book? It will be useful for us as well as for others as a reference book!” said Avadhani.

“Best idea, Avadhani garu! I shall bear the printing charges,” said Dr. Subrahmanynam.
“Excepting by some highly qualified scholars, the narration by people like me is not fit to be brought out as a book. If brought out in the book form, it will become a laughing stock.” Saying so, Purushottam had turned down the proposal.

“Let it be Sir, Who ever laughs at it, will only bare his teeth to the public. There are any number of books by those scholars as you mentioned but for all practical purposes, they are ‘Ayah Pindas’ only,” said Sastry.

“What are Ayah Pindas?” asked Dr. Subrahmanyam.

“They are ‘balls of iron’. They cannot be chewed. They cannot be soaked in water so that it becomes soft! That means, it is very difficult to understand.” Sastry only answered the question.

“If one really desires to read them, he will learn the language and literature etc. Then where will be the difficulty to understand those books of the scholars?” asked Purushottam.

To create interest in those who are not interested, it should be in the form of the discussion, questions, and answers, in the way you have told us and it should be in the same style and language with simple illustrations. Once the reader gets the general idea of the subject and he desires to know further, then he can go for further study of those works by the scholars.”

“Then uncle! Have you given the consent? What should be the title for that book?” Dr. Subrahmanyam asked enthusiastically.

“Let us name it as Gods” said Avadhani.

“It may be good if we name it ‘Supreme Godhead’ said Sakuntalamma.

“How about naming it ‘Dars’anas and Religions’?” asked Sastry.

“Let us call it ‘We and our Dars’anas’,” said Raghuramaiah.

“None of your suggested titles is good. Let it be named as ‘The Almighty, Gods, and We, the Human Beings’,,” said Vinita like an experienced adult.

“Why should we name it so?” asked admiringly Purushottam.

“Some have accepted Supreme Godhead or Almighty, and some did not. Some have accepted the Gods and some did not accept them. Some said that we, the human beings only are there. Some others said that we also do not exist. Hence to suit everybody’s taste, only ‘Almighty, Gods and We, the Human Beings’ will suit well, Grandpa!” She told clearly.

All have admired at her suggestion and have clapped their hands in approval saying “very good,” and kissed that seven-year-old girl.

“How well does she think! All those who have accepted the Almighty say that He is one only and so it is singular. Since the Gods are many, it is plural number. Similarly, We also are many and hence the plural number. ‘We’ will suit both – those who consider this body to be the soul and those who think otherwise also,” confirmed Avadhani.
All got up and moved out saying ‘it is not known when we shall meet again!’ with warm send off to each other.

After all have crossed the main gate, Raghuramaiah told Purushottam in loud voice, “Purushottam Garu, I am reminding you once again that you should teach us the exposition of Brahma Sutras in detail!”

He made signs in the affirmative while smiling at him. He suddenly remembered and asked Dr. Subrahmanyam, “Doctor, you said you would drop Vinita! But you started coming with us!”

Doctor went back to the Justice and Sakuntalamma and when they said that it was not necessary for him to drop Vinita, he came back fast and joined the other three. All the four were walking silently. When they reached the centre where they are to part, Purushottam asked all the three, “Is there any influence of these discussions on you?”

“Dr. Subrahmanyam only answered first. “A lot. Probably you will see very shortly the change in me.”

“Sir, after listening to this, all looks quite vivid. It has been quite a confusion earlier,” said Sastry.

“These discussions have helped me to nearly come to a conclusion as to what I should do,” said Avadhani.

All have parted with smiles saying ‘Namaskaram’ and went on their way.
Chapter - 15

Raghuramaiah, and his wife also are standing in the line for the security check in the Sahar International Airport. Though the line is moving fast, both of them are getting bored with the standing in the line and they are feeling as though it is taking unduly long.

Suddenly, Sakuntalamma asked her husband, “Which of the religions and Dars’anas told by Purushottam did appeal to you?”

“How have you remembered this subject now”, laughed Raghuramaiah, and said, “What is there for appealing in the religions? Everything is on faith only!”

“OK, Which of the Dars’anas did appeal you?” asked she inquisitively. She is eager to know how far her thoughts are matching with his thoughts.

“Only two among all of them look to be reasonable, and they are Advaita and Vis’ishtaadvaita. That is all. Ramanuja’s and S’ankara’s teachings are good.”

“Oh! No! Not that! Tell me which one between those two had appealed you better?” she asked him again.

“Among those two? On deep thinking, … in my opinion only! … That which is well defined and well suited for practices also …”

Before he could complete the sentence one of the airline staff came quickly and hastened saying, “please move on – please – line is interrupted and delayed.”

Then they noticed that the line in front of them has become empty and the persons behind them are asking them to move forward. Saying, “Sorry, sorry,” the retired Justice of the Supreme Court of India along with his wife Sakuntalamma moved forward.

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