

STORIES

FROM

VAASISHTA RAAMAAYANAM
(BRHATYOGAVAASISHTAM)

OF

VAALMIKI MAHARSHI

PART TWO

by
Narayanalakshmi

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DEDICATED

TO

ALL THE SEEKERS OF TRUTH

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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STORY OF SAGE SHUKRA

[The three-dimensional world we see outside us is just a projection of the mind. We ourselves are a part of that projection inside which we are seeing a world outside us. Sage Vasishta explains this abstract concept with an event that occurred in the life of Sage Shukraachaarya, the renowned preceptor of 'Asuras' or 'Non-Devas'.

THE DOE-EYED GIRL AND SAGE SHUKRA

USHANAS, THE PROTECTED CHILD

The beautiful Mandara Mountain!
The magical Mountain which served as a churning rod for the Devas when they churned the Ocean of Milk!
Now it was a sacred mountain used by great Sages to perform penance.

Sage Bhrgu, one of the Saptarshis (Seven Sages, extolled in Vedas) had chosen the mountain to remain absorbed in Nirvikalpa (unperturbed) Samadhi.

His only anxiety was about his son Shukra, or Ushanas born through his wife Ushanaa.
The child was his heart throb.

The Sage who was famed for dispassion and Knowledge, was extremely fond of his son.
As soon as the child could be freed of his need for the mother, he had brought him off with him to the summit of Meru. He wanted his son to shine as a great learned Sage like himself.
He had selected a rocky place atop the mountain summit for his penance.
But in order to protect his child from outside influences, he created a magical shield as a fence around his place of penance. A thickly interwoven grove of Kadamba trees surrounded the area of penance. No one could enter through that grove, nor could the child get a glimpse of the outside world.

Sage Bhrgu initiated the child in the art of contemplation and gave him strict instructions of disciplines to be followed, when he himself was absorbed in the trance-state.
In order that the child may not lack any comforts, the father created a virtual world for the child to play around. Beautiful birds and animals rose out of empty space to act as friends for the little boy.
Delicious fruits filled the trees.
Flowers of various hues blossomed everywhere filling the entire virtual world with intoxicating fragrance.
Natural cradles for the child arose in all the trees spread with Kadamba petals and leaves.
The moment he climbed the cradle of creepers, melodious lullabies lured him to peaceful sleep.
The creepers embraced him lovingly as he slept cuddled in their arms.
Milk flowed from the holes in the rocks catering to the hunger of the child.
Trees fed him tiny bits of fruits as he ran around them joyfully.
The creepers, trees and rocks were alive magically and cared for the boy like foster- mothers.
Anything that the child wished for immediately appeared before the boy.
The boy was extremely happy and played around with the deer and rabbits.

The father remained like a rock among rocks absorbed in Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
Now and then, he got up to instruct the boy about the next level of contemplation.

'*Everything is going on fine*' thought Bhrgu. He could make his son a renowned Sage like himself, he felt.
The outside world was kept away and like Shuka the son of Vyaasa, his son also would become a dispassionate Sage, he dreamt.

The child grew like a prince of the 'virtual forest-world' happy and carefree. He looked always cheerful and high spirited; and his father lovingly named him USHANAS, the joyous spirit.
He was now in the tender age reaching teens; and longed for something which he knew not what!

The Sage was free of anxieties about the child and was absorbed for long spans of time in the trance-state.
He came out of his trance now and then to teach his son some spiritual truths and instructions about contemplation.

Of course the boy was becoming adept in contemplation. However, he was in no way near the final realization state, and spent most of his time playing around all over the virtual world. He never knew about the real world that was outside his virtual world. His world consisted of the magical forest, his rock-like father and contemplation. He was quite happy; but not for long.

THE RISE OF PASSION

Ushanas lacked nothing; so his father thought! But time flowed on and soon Ushanas stepped into the threshold of youth. Hitherto unknown feelings started tormenting him. Though by his father's blessing, he could obtain any object that he wished for, he did not even know what he wanted now to fulfil his thirst for that some unknown thing. He felt restless and anxious. Sometimes he lost control of himself and was given to bouts of frustration and irritation. At those times he broke the trees and creepers like a mad person; though later he regretted his acts. What was happening to him, he wondered.

One day, he got the answer for his restlessness. He had been wandering very close to the invisible fence created by his father. Some pleasant voices and laughter made him peep into the outer world. Yes, nowadays he had power enough to crack the magical-shield created by his father and get a tiny glimpse of the outside world.

He could not believe his eyes. Beautiful young girls in the full blossom of youth were sporting in the stream flowing along the mountain. Now Ushanas seemed to understand what he wanted. His heart beat wildly. His breathing was heavy and slow. Sweat drenched his whole body. His eyes stared at the prettiest girl among the crowd. His heart was lost to her. He wanted to cross the magical fence immediately and rush towards that pretty girl. But he knew he could not.

THE DOE-EYED APSARAA

Suddenly he remembered his father's stern face and returned to the place where his father was lost in trance. He sat next to his father and looked up anxiously. But his father was like a statue carved out of stone. He understood that he will never be able to stand before his father with courage and confide his feelings. He decided to control his restlessness through contemplation. He sat next to his father and tried his best to get absorbed in the Self as his father had instructed. However it was a futile attempt. He was soon lost in thoughts about the pretty girl he had seen in the outside world. Again he felt shocked at his own thoughts. He felt ashamed of himself and started to repeat loudly the sacred chants taught by his father. It became a daily routine for him to go near the fence and observe the girls who came to the mountain-stream to sport. He remained staring at the girl who had stolen his heart and sighed silently. But one fine day, the girl somehow got wind of the two large eyes staring at her from behind the trees. She was one of the 'Apsaraas' who served Lord Indra in the Heaven. She knew that she was forbidden to cross that fence and reach the handsome youth hiding behind the trees. Indra had warned these girls about Sage Bhrgu and his anger. But she was moved by passion and managed to flash a smile at the handsome youth behind the trees whenever she could. Ushanas was now completely mad about her. Day and night he thought of her. He tried many a times to get across the fence in vain. He felt stuck as if in a prison. He suffered like a fish out of water. He stopped eating; he could not sleep; moon-light scorched his limbs; his whole body burnt as if set on fire. He wandered aimlessly all over the forest area as if stuck by insanity. He wanted to see that pretty girl at a close range. He wanted to hold her in his hands and pour out all his love for her at her feet. He somehow with great difficulty climbed to the edge of the mountain thirsting for a glimpse of his beloved as she floated in the sky towards the heaven. He lied flat on the grassy ground and waited for her to come along. Time hung heavy on him. His eye-lids were heavy and he felt faint. And then he saw her. A whiff of intoxicating fragrance shocked him to wakefulness.

He glanced upwards.
 Yes, there she was floating away towards the heaven.
 Winds lightly played with the locks on her forehead.
 Garlands of Mandaara flowers danced on her youthful bosom.
 The lovely anklets on her feet made rhythmic sound as she stopped on her way to look at him lying on the flowery summit.
 She stared at him infatuated. Her tender lips slightly opened in a smile.
 Her whole body was shedding golden light; she was like a moon floating in close range to the earth.
 Ushanas stared at her unblinkingly.
 He felt that he was drowning in the ocean of nectar.
 He forgot his father, his forest-home, the Scriptures, everything.
 Only one thought filled his mind that *'he should immediately embrace the doe-eyed beauty fluttering in front of him'*. He had to have her at any cost, he thought.
 He wanted her so much that his mind instantly created a new world of conceptions there itself.

THE MIND-CHARIOT

The original body of Ushanas lay there with closed eyes as if dead and remained motionless.
 But his mind was alive and raging.
 He thought (or dreamt) -
*'I am now following that girl I love.
 I have now reached the Heaven ruled by Indra.
 This is the amazing place where the Devas reside.
 These are the Devas who enjoy all the pleasures unceasingly.
 These are the damsels with doe-eyes.
 Here they are singing melodious songs.
 Here are the Devas Yama, Chandra, Indra, Agni, Varuna and Vaayu. ...'*
 So on and on...

(Ushanas never knew that he was lost in a dream-world created by his own Vaasanaa for pleasures. For him, all the events that occurred were real, and he experienced all the pleasures created by his Vaasanaa, within his own mind.)

He saw every bit of Heaven; saw each and every Deva he had known through the Scriptures.
 He entered the palace of Indra in his mind itself, and saluted him in the mind itself.
 Indra got up and worshipped the Sage duly.
 Indra made him sit next to his throne and said,
"The Heaven are blessed by your arrival. Live here as long as you wish to."
 Bhaargava now shone with a body befitting Heaven and was affectionately embraced by Indra.
 All the Devas saluted him, as if he was the dearest son of Indra.
 Shukra had completely forgotten his previous world of Meru Mount; and had now become a resident of the Heaven.
 He had left his body and entered a new body without going through the pain of death.
 He took leave of Indra soon and got ready to wander the Heaven in search of the girl who had stolen his heart.
 He soon found her playing in the heavenly gardens along with her maids. She also saw him and threw a loving glance at him making him more deluded with passion. Ushanas was filled with an intense longing to have her company immediately. She also reciprocated same feelings.
 Ushanas wished for darkness to cover that garden.
 All those in that garden felt bewildered and quickly moved away from there.
 The doe-eyed girl, 'Vishvaachee' immediately rushed towards him and fell on him like a shower of nectar.
 She spoke sweet words like honey.
 She described her love for him; she shed tears describing her pangs of suffering; she talked of the innate yearning she felt for him; she pleaded with him; she begged him to accept her.
 What more did Ushanas want! His joy knew no bounds. He embraced her with all passion.
 They both enjoyed each other's company unceasingly. It appeared that this happiness would never come to an end.
 Yugas and Yugas passed. After thirty two Yugas of heaven-time, they suddenly found that their heavenly-home was vanishing. The merits of Bhaargava's son were on the decrease. Bhaargava's divine body was melting away.
 The chariot, gardens and all that Indra had bestowed on him with affection disappeared like pictures getting erased by a giant hand.

He was falling towards earth without control.
 His mind had to conceive a new body made of elements to fulfil his unfinished Vaasanaas.
 Even Vishvaachee was dragged towards earth as a punishment for luring Bhrgu's son towards pleasures.
 She also vanished off.

THE FALL

Shukra's body shattered into hundreds of pieces as if stuck by a heavy bolt of lightning. He found himself without any body or form. As he restlessly floated here and there, he suddenly found himself as a sperm in a Brahmin's body and was born as a Brahmin's son. He grew up as a devoted son of his father. Forgotten was his passionate adventure in Heaven and his father's world on Meru summit. But somehow he felt inclined towards a life of penance and sought the company of Sages and became adept in contemplation. He remained performing penance for long almost till one Manu's rule was completed. Some day, he chanced to see a female deer hovering in front of him. The deer's eyes reminded him of something, he knew not what. He was inadvertently attracted towards the deer (his previous beloved who ha incarnated as a deer) and mated with that deer. What is not possible for the mind! Soon the deer gave birth to a human child. He became highly attached to his son and decided to obtain all material comforts for his son. Soon he was living in a city earning wealth for his son and was always worried about his welfare. His anxiety took its toll and his body succumbed to death. Since his 'wealth Vaasanaa' was now the foremost, he was born as a king of Madra. He ruled for long as a king and died of old age. Then again his 'penance-Vaasanaa' was the foremost and he was born again as a Brahmin's son and performed penance on the bank of River Samangaa.

BODY OF SHUKRA WITHERS AWAY

What happened to the body of Bhaargava lying on the summit of Mandara Mountain?
 Well, it was left unattended there. The virtual forest which took care of him like a mother had been left behind. Here on the top of the summit, winds and sun made havoc and the body withered away like a lotus kept on embers. The mind of Bhaargava had forgotten this body and was living as a Brahmin in another body. The mind never remembered its past lives. Unattended by the mind, the body of Bhaargava was like a log of wood, lifeless and inert.

SAGE BHRGHU WAKES UP

After a long time, Sage Bhrgu woke up from his trance-state and looked around for his son. Finding him nowhere, he anxiously searched all over the mountain for him. At last, he found the deteriorated body of Bhaargava on the top-most edge of the mountain. He broke down at the sight of the lifeless carcass lying there like an orphan. The body had not been eaten by any animal because of his own penance power. Yet seeing the skeleton-like dried up body of his loving son, he lost his reason. Without analyzing the events that led to this state of his son, he felt angry towards the Deity of Death, the Supreme Kaala, 'Time', the consumer of all. He took water from his 'Kamandalu' (water-pot) and got ready to curse Kaala for the untimely death of his son.

KAALA EXPLAINS EVERYTHING

'Time' has no form. Yet the abstract principle of destruction appeared before him as if with a form and stood in front of the angry Sage. A huge dark form arose from nowhere and glared at the Sage. The hands of the Sage which held the water drops for cursing became frozen. Kaala let out a terrifying laughter, and looked at the Sage as if looking at a lowly worm. His thundering voice echoed all over the mountain.
"Well Sage, you are going to curse me and destroy me! Great idea indeed! Death for death?"

Kaala laughed again. He continued-

“What do you think I am? A puny creature like you acting with desires and attachment?

There are no ends to the Devas I have consumed or beings I have swallowed.

I am the ‘rule’ created by the Creator. How can you destroy me?

You are one of the renowned Sages respected even by Trinities. Have you lost your reason now?

You are a person who has the Knowledge Supreme, yet you act like an ordinary being of the world!

Do you think I, the great Kaala decided to end your son’s life, out of vengeance or partiality?

How can I have any likes or dislikes?

I am just a function of nature.

How can I do anything wrong?

O Sage, do not act like an idiot.

Come out of your attachments and affections, and see your son’s foolish acts.

See how he went through births after births prompted by his own Vaasanaas.

You imprisoned him in a magical world so that he will remain pure at heart and attain the final beatitude.

But how can you imprison the mind filled with Vaasanaas?

Unable to move out of this place shielded by you, your son has created Heaven and earths in his own mind and now living as a Brahmin on a river bank in his own mind.

He does not remember you or this body. He has gone through innumerable births and deaths in his own mind after he discarded the identity of this body.

At first, he was passionately in love with Vishvaachee and went to Heaven to enjoy her. When the merits were on the decrease he dropped down from heaven like a ripe fruit and fell on earth.

He was sometimes pushed by his Vaasanaa of penance and took birth as a Brahmin and did penance.

Sometimes he was prompted by the Vaasanaa for pleasures and became a king or a wealthy man.

Other Vaasanaas also pushed him here and there and he was born as a hunter once, a donkey once, a bamboo cluster once and so on.

He was even a Vidhyaadhara (Deva-like being) king once and lived for one full Brahma’s Creation, happily.

After the dissolution he was in a suspended state waiting for the next Creation.

Now he is born as a Brahmin again. Now his name is Vaasudeva.

See for yourself with your divine vision!”

BHRGHU VISITS THE LOST SON

Bhrgu apologized for his hasty behaviour.

Within seconds, he saw all the events of his son’s life.

Kaala smiled at him, and holding his hands entered the mental worlds of Bhaargava.

Soon, they both saw the Brahmin performing penance on the bank of River Samangaa.

Bhrgu and Kaala stood in front of the Brahmin.

The Brahmin was happy to see such noble forms blessing him with their visions and he saluted them both, with reverence.

He did not recognize his father in the least.

Bhrgu placed his hand on his head affectionately and said,

“My son, don’t you recognize me? You are not an ignorant person.

You are the son of Bhrgu. Wake up and remember everything.”

The Brahmin closed his eyes and within seconds remembered all that had happened.

He saw even the deteriorated body of Ushanas in his own mind.

Yes! Ushanas was now a Brahmin in the world created by his own mind.

And there itself, inside the mind of Ushanas, he saw the body of the Ushanas also as carcass.

He laughed heartily.

He understood the mystery of Creation.

He had no attachments; no desires; no bindings now.

He was pure like a Sun shining in a cloudless sky.

He even was sorry for his father who doted on the son and acted foolishly.

SHUKRA'S DISPASSION

He looked at his father and said,

“See father, this is the body you lovingly took care of!

This is the body you sheltered from the outside world trying to fulfil your own dreams through him.

Look, it is getting eaten by ants; snakes are crawling all over it.

This is the body which even the divine damsels craved for to fulfill their passion.

Enough of all this!

I do not want to have any limited identity now.

I would not ever get imprisoned again in a body.

Let me remain in the state of Brahman without further getting into deluded worlds.

I will discard the identity of the Brahmin and also of Ushanas and....”

Kaala stopped him in mid-sentence and said,

“Stop child! Do not melt off into the identity-less state of Brahman.

You have work to do. You will have to act as the preceptor of ‘Non-Devas’ in the future.

Many events still await your presence in this Creation.

Please enter the identity of Ushanas and discard the Brahmin’s body”

Ushanas pondered for a few seconds and closed his eyes.

Next mornen, he was waking up as Ushanas on the summit of Mount Meru.

His mind had got out of the identity of Brahmin and decided that it was Ushanas now.

Travelling backwards towards the original conception of Bhaargava, the mind now found itself as a dried up carcass on Meru Mountain. Sage Bhrgu who was standing there in front of the carcass sprinkled sacred waters on the body and uttered some chants.

Ushanas stood up, as fresh and young as he was at the time when he followed Vishvaachee in his mind.

He saluted his father and Kaala with reverence.

Kaala smiled at both, and vanished.

Bhrgu embraced his son affectionately.

They both returned to the place which his father had chosen for the contemplation purposes.

There was no more the necessity of a virtual world to shield Ushanas from the outside world.

‘Ushanas knew now that the outside world was in the inside only.’

END

SHAMBARA'S STORY

INTRODUCTION

In this story, we are introduced to an intelligent Daitya named Shambara.

He was well-known for his sorcery techniques, creation of virtual worlds, and creation of robots.

(The word 'robota' means literally work, labour, drudgery or hard work. It need not necessarily mean an electro-mechanical machine. Any artificial being who is used for work is a robot).

This king of Daityas was so famed for his skills that the very art of magical feat came to be known as 'Shaambara'- 'Shambara's trick'.

Shambara here, creates three 'robots with minds'; and making them fight the Devas wants to defeat Indra, the king of Devas. Yet by developing arrogance and self-glorification, the three robots get killed by the Devas.

The point Vasishtha wants to prove is that even inert machine-like beings are capable of developing vanity and getting destroyed. 'Ego' is a very dangerous virus that can infect the mind very easily.

The only anti-virus treatment suggested for the blocking of the 'Ego-virus' is, 'Self-knowledge'.

(Ego – Ahamkaara refers to the 'I as identified with the body, and all the ideas that one has about oneself, as the body-self.)

Shambara creates three more robots again, this time with 'Self-knowledge' and they prove to be indestructible and Devas get defeated.

PART ONE

DAAMA, VYAALA AND KATA

DEVAS AND DAITYAS

The Heaven was the residing places of Devas and the Nether world were the residing place of Daityas.

Devas and Daityas were cousins; yet they had developed extreme hatred towards each other.

Indra was the king of Devas and Shambara was the king of Daityas.

It was common occurrence that even a smallest excuse was enough to bring about a war between the two clans.

The Trinities never bothered much about these mindless battles. Only if there was a danger of the Devas getting completely annihilated, they interfered and saved the Devas. They had to do so, because these Devas took care of the Creations in various ways and basically they were not too evil. Except for the pleasure seeking madness, they did not harm any one wilfully. If they acted selfishly and arrogantly, the higher Devas and Sages corrected them strictly.

However, the Daitya-world was an abode of evil-doers and these Asuras never ever heeded to the words of the higher Devas or Sages. They took a sadistic pleasure in harassing Devas and of course the human beings.

They were extremely arrogant and defied all rules of Dharma.

The most powerful of them all was Shambara. He had mastered all magical powers and was a terror to the Devas. He always tormented the heavenly-beings creating delusions and illusions. Indra has been defeated by him countless times through the Daitya-machines created by him, on the likes of slicing-machines. He could make extraordinary forms out of mud, or diamonds or any metal and fill them with life.

SHAMBARA'S MAGICAL WORLD

Shambara's abode was a magical wonder.

He had his palace floating in the sky. A beautiful floating garden decorated the palace all around.

Artificial suns and moons lighted up his world. It was a copy of Indra's heaven, but better than it in all ways.

Precious Gems of all kinds were strewn about like worthless pieces of stones.

Countless comforts awaited in every corner.

Diamond-maidens sang as melodious as the heavenly maidens, by playing the musical instruments he had stolen from the Heaven.

The trees in the gardens were adorned with countless crescent moons.

His harem built out of fully bloomed Sapphire lotuses was a haven to satisfy his never ending lustful ventures.

Swans studded with gems played with golden lotuses in the lake.
 Lotuses bloomed on the edges of all the branches of the golden tree.
 Whenever any one passed under, the 'Karanja' bowers showered Mandara flowers on them.
 His garden-house was built out of fire flames, yet was cool like a snow-mansion.
 The plants and creepers in his garden were always filled with fragrant flowers.
 He had even stolen away the entire Malaya forest of sandalwood along with its animals, through his magical prowess. His wives wore all the gold jewellery stolen from the Heaven and appeared extremely charming.
 The courtyards were piled with varieties of soft flowers reaching up to the knees.
 He watched for fun, live clay-dolls of Daityas and Devas fighting with each other and the Daitya- dolls defeating the Vishnu-doll. The roof of his harem was studded with millions of diamonds shining like stars.
 The dark skies of Netherworld were lighted by hundreds of moons.
 The mechanical statues in his palace extolled his praises through songs, and increased his valour.
 An Aeiraavata elephant was magically constructed by him, which could chase away the real Aeiraavata elephant of Indra. His harem was filled with all the objects of pleasure that Indra had in his palace.
 He owned all the wealth that he desired. All the wealthy ones saluted him.
 He ruled all the clans of the Daitya-world. Thousands of his arms protected the entire Daitya clan.
 He had many intelligent ministers to advise him.
 His terrifying form always made Devas tremble in fear even if there was no battle. But when the battles occurred, the entire Daitya army made havoc in the Heaven, supported by the magical power of their king.

DEVAS ATTACK THE DAITYA-WORLD

However, the king was not a person to stay at home.
 He would wander all over the world, mastering all the available Siddhis, meeting the chiefs of other clans who were the enemies of Devas, or he would just go on a killing spree harassing Sages and saints and creating disturbances in their Sacrificial rites.
 There was nothing he did not learn. He had even understood the meanings of Scriptures and knew the state of realized people. However, he was too much stuck to his own identity as the Daitya king that he did not care for the bliss of the Supreme state.
 When he was on such trips and had left the Daitya clan to fend for itself, Devas made use of that opportunity and attacked the Netherworld. The Daityas had no chance against the powerful missiles of Devas, and soon were on the run.
 When Shambara returned home, he found most of his army in shambles. His anger knew no bounds.
 But he did not want to spend all his time sitting at home and guarding his people. He selected many Daityas with extraordinary strength and made them the chiefs of the Daitya army. Of course he could have taught his magical abilities to his subordinates; but he had no trust in any of his people. His clan was well-known for wickedness and deceit. No one trusted anyone even if they were closely related. Everyone was planning to subdue his own neighbor. Words like friendship, loyalty, trust, love, affection, and kindness were non-existent in their world. Shambara was not an exception. He did not trust his own mother or wife for that matter. Only his magical powers had kept him on top of the world and he was careful that his secrets were not known to anybody.
 So, this time he left again on his adventure trips leaving the Daitya clan in the hands of a few stronger Daityas. But again, they were not powerful enough to face the onslaught of Devas. Again Shambara found his world shattered to pieces when he returned. He almost burnt with the rage kindled by the hatred towards Devas. But still he could not bear to sit at home. He again selected more powerful Daityas to guard his city.
 Again the Devas attacked them and defeated them in his absence.
 Shambara fumed in anger.
 He immediately declared war on Devas and attacked the Heaven.
 Devas informed of his attack through spies escaped from the Heaven and hid themselves in the dense forests of Meru mountain. Some even hid under the hollows of the earth. Shambara found the whole city of Indra empty.
 He burnt the entire city in anger and left.
 The Daityas searched all over the world but could never find the hiding places of Devas.
 Shambara was in a dilemma.
 He could not go out of his city unless he ensured the safety of the Daitya clan. The moment he left, Devas were sure to attack his city.
 He decided to do something concrete this time.

SHAMBARA'S THINKING CHAMBER

Shambara was sitting in his secret chambers. That part of the palace was impenetrable to even those closest to him. Nobody even knew of its existence. He just vanished from the sight of all and returned with some magical creations of his; that is all the information any one had.

The secret room of Shambara was a place of creation. What the modern world achieves through science, he did it through sheer brain power and phonetic effects of his mystic chants. The only thing that was very necessary was the effort needed to concentrate on that creation. He had to mentally create every cell of the object and without missing details had to complete the work. He was a wonder at creating Daityas, girls or men or animals to any specification. *(Robots in the modern language; but these robots were not metallic, but appeared covered with normal skin structures. Nobody could tell the difference between the real and artificial.)*

After these mechanical beings were made, he had to almost identify with them completely and be alive there for a fraction of a second. Instantly those dolls acted with life. He usually had made replicas of Trinities or animals or pretty damsels to entertain himself in his palace. Of course machines were machines; one could never ever get full enjoyments from them as he always knew they were just dolls created by him through magic.

The real 'Apsaraa' had more bliss-giving capacity than the diamond statue that hugged him with love.

That is the main reason that made him envy the Devas. His one cherished dream was to rule the Heaven and get access to all the real pleasures that Indra laid hands on. But his attempts always failed because the Devas were always supported by the Trinities. Like children bringing adults to fight for them, they got these powerful Lords to fight the Daityas. His Daitya-clan could never ever stand in front of the trident or the discus-weapon of those higher Devas. Of course, he had tried hard to manufacture such weapons in his secret work-shop, but they never were equal to the originals. The only satisfaction he got was having a mock fight with the live statues of Vishnu or Shiva and slicing their heads off. These feats entertained the Daityas no doubt, but everyone knew that it was all a fake drama. He had to create some unique beings who were undefeatable by anyone, even by Trinities, he decided.

Shambara was lying on his comfortable couch and thinking. After hours of thinking his eyes brightened up.

THE THREE ROBOTS

Shambara looked at his creations with pride.

Three giants of immense heights and width stood in front of him. He had named them Daama, Vyaala and Kata.

Daama- the binding rope, Vyaala -the vicious, Kata – the encompassing one!

They were the illusory appearances which could bind, which could use stealth and completely overpower the enemy.

They were like Maayaa - the 'illusory power of the Supreme' with her power of binding everyone with Gunas, the power of delusion and the power hiding of the Truth.

These three giants were named after the powers of Maayaa, but modelled on the characters of realized people who performed penance in the forests of Meru mount.

They had all the characters of the realized 'as understood by Shambara'.

He had inculcated all the characters of JeevanMuktas into those beings.

Shambara once again examined them with scrutinizing eyes.

They were staring at him without any expressions; for they had no emotions, no thoughts, and no feelings.

They were just machines with life. They looked solid enough; but were just illusory appearances.

They had no Vaasanaas, no wickedness, no goodness, no likes, no dislikes, and no desires.

They just did what Shambara ordered; not more, not less.

They had no Vaasanaas of the past lives to induce them into any action on their own.

They had no eyes for anything except that which they had to do.

They were like sleep-walkers, only intent on doing what they had to do; otherwise they had no movement at all.

They did not understand defeat or victory. They had no fear of death; they had no need to escape from any dangers.

They did not know who the Devas were or why they had to be attacked.

They knew only one thing that is, that they should destroy any soldier who stood in front of them.

DEVAS ARE DEFEATED

Shambara was fully satisfied.

He informed all his soldiers that these three giants will be their chiefs and lead them in the battlefield. He also warned them that no one should come to the front side of the giants with any weapon. Then they were sure to get killed. He sent his army to search for the hiding Devas and attack them.

He ordered the magical giants to search for all the Devas and destroy them.

From every hollow and holes the Daityas came out making terrifying noises.
 The Devas were forced to come out and battle them.
 A fierce battle went on between the two armies.
 Blood from the wounded bodies of the Devas and Daityas poured down like rains.
 Roaring like a lion, Daama tied the Devas with invisible ropes.
 Vyaala crushed them with his huge rock like hands.
 Kata was everywhere blocking every object and attacked the bewildered Devas ruthlessly.
 The Devas were not at all prepared for the battle and were even more shocked by the strength of three undefeatable giants. They just vanished from the scene.
 The Daityas searched for them for long, without any fruitful results.
 They gleefully returned home and reported their victory to their king.
 Shambara laughed aloud. His laughter echoed all over the three worlds.
 The Devas who were hiding in the dense dark hollows of the earth trembled with fear.
 They all decided to seek the advice of Lord Brahmaa.
 Prayers were sent forth pleading Lord Brahmaa to save them.

DEVAS PRAY TO LORD BRAHMAA

The whole world turned reddish in hue.
 A red-hued Brahmaa seated on a red lotus appeared before them.
 Though he knew everything, he just allowed the Devas to tell the whole story in their own words.
 Brahmaa closed his eyes and was lost in thoughts for a few moments.
 He said at last-
*“Shambara is destined to die at the hands of Vishnu after hundred thousand years.
 But meanwhile you can defeat the three new giants created by Shambara.
 He has created them without egos. That is why you cannot defeat them.
 Now your task is to raise the ego in them.
 The moment they identify with their limited structures, the Vaasanaas will start corrupting their minds.
 Once Vaasanaas make their way, they will become vulnerable.
 So this is what you people will do.
 As usual, take your army and attack the Daityas. Make a fake battle-scene and as soon as you see the three giants, make a great show of getting frightened and escape.
 Repeat the same tactics for long. Then, see what wonders Ahamkaara (ego) is capable of.”*

Brahmaa vanished out of sight. Devas returned discussing their next strategy.
 And they exactly did what Brahmaa had told them to do.

THREE ROBOTS DEVELOP AHAMKAARA

Daama, Vyaala and Kata had changed. Their faces now puffed up with pride.
 They were having lot of fun nowadays.
 They were beginning to like these battles with those cowardly shining beings.
 It was fun to laugh aloud and chase them.
 It was fun to see their terrified pale faces.
 It was fun to make them scream in fear.
 Actually, they needn't even lift their hands or shoot weapons at those dumb Devas.
 The very moment the giants appeared, the Devas screamed and ran helter-skelter as if blinded by fear.
 Daama, Vyaala and Kata now looked forward to the sound of the war-drums.
 Daama, Vyaala and Kata liked these wars.
Daama, Vyaala and Kata had changed. Their faces now puffed up with pride.
 They now looked at other Daityas with ridicule.
 They demanded that the other Daityas should serve them like Lords.
 They were rude with anyone who slightly disregarded them.
 They looked at their own limbs again and again and a smile lit up their faces.
 They brushed their bodies well.
 They garlanded their bodies.
Daama, Vyaala and Kata decorated their bodies with ornaments.

Daama, Vyaala and Kata had changed. Their faces now were creased with worries.

They were worried about the annihilation of their own bodies.

‘Suppose they died like others...?’

Fear had become their constant companion now.

They did not want their precious bodies to get destroyed in the battlefield.

They lost their courage.

They now found out that the Devas were immortals; and Daityas were sure to die some day or other.

They wanted to become immortals like Devas; but it was not possible.

They were destined to die since they were Daityas.

Any moment they could die, they thought anxiously.

They now trembled at the onslaught of Devas. Maybe that day would be the last day of their life, they felt.

Instead of moving in the front, they hid behind other Daityas in the battle-field.

They were not able to face even an ordinary soldier of the Deva-army.

The Devas easily overpowered the Daityas as the three giants were not in the lead.

Every Daitya was hunted out and cut to pieces.

The broken limbs and broken weapons of Daityas fell all over the earth.

Daama, Vyaala and Kata were defeated at last.

THE THREE ROBOTS DIE

Daama, Vyaala and Kata who were hiding from Devas were alive, but now had to face the wrath of their master.

They escaped from his city and hid themselves in the lowermost Nether-world.

That seventh and lowermost world was the abode of Yama’s servants. They lived there guarding the hells.

They were powerful enough to save the three Daityas from Shambara; and moved by compassion they gave them shelter. Later they offered them their daughters also in marriage.

Ten thousand years passed.

The Vaasanaas in the minds of Daama, Vyaala and Kata also increased like their families.

They were extremely attached to their wives, daughters, son-in laws, and constantly worried about them.

Lord Yama once visited that world to complete some work.

The three giants did not know who he was or what his power was.

They ignored him thinking that he was some ordinary servant like themselves. They did not salute him.

Yama felt offended. He lifted his eyebrows in anger, and the very next instant Daama, Vyaala and Kata were burnt to ashes. When their relatives started lamenting on their death, Yama burnt them also.

THE THREE FISH IN THE POND

The bodies of Daama, Vyaala and Kata were destroyed.

But their Vaasanaas were still alive and afloat.

They had lived with the prison guards for so long that now they had to take birth as prison- guards; later they were born as hunters, then as servants of kings, then as crows, then as vultures, then as parrots, then as pigs, then as goats, then as insects....so on.

After countless births as various creatures and animals, they lived as fish in a forest pond.

After a huge forest fire, the pond dried up and there was only some wet mud left.

Trying to suck that little dampness out of the wet mud, they are at present hanging in between life and death.....!

RAMA AND VASISHTA

Sage Vasishtha stopped the story at that point, and smiled at Rama.

Rama who was listening to the story with full absorption questioned the Sage with some disappointment.

“Is that all...? Is there no redemption for these poor souls caught in the web of Ahamkaara?”

Sage Vasishtha looked at him with some amusement and said,

“No, there is more. Their story will continue in the future.

Listen to what will happen to them in their future births.”

THE THREE ROBOTS MERGE INTO BRAHMAN

The story continues...

When Yama burnt Daama, Vyaala and Kata to ashes, the other servants of Yama who had given them shelter became sad at heart. They begged Yama to forgive the Daityas.

Yama consoled them and said, *“When they listen to their own story, they will get redeemed of their fate and attain liberation.”*

So, at present they were living as fish in the tiny puddle in the forest of Kashmir.

Later, they will get repeated births as fish. Slowly their desires will die out.

Then they will be born as Saarasa birds in a beautiful lake filled with fragrant lotuses.

They will live happily for a long time as those birds and will become purified in their minds.

Their upward journey will start then.

There will be a city in the country of Kashmir adorned by forests and mountains.

In the midst of the mountains there will live a king named Yashaskara in a palace built on the top of the mountain.

Vyaala will be born as a cock and live in the corner of the roof.

Daama will be born as a mosquito and live inside the palace.

A minister named Narasimha will live inside that city. He will be learned and a realized man. He will live in a monastery in the city. There in that monastery, Daitya Kata will live as a partridge inside a silver cage, entertaining all.

One day, the minister will take the partridge to the palace to entertain the king. There he will relate the story of Daama, Vyaala and Kata from this Scripture to the king.

The partridge will hear the story and remember its past and immediately attain the final beatitude.

The cock also will hear the story and get liberated.

The mosquito will also hear the story and attain the Supreme state.

END OF PART ONE

RAMA AND VASISHTA

“That is the end of the story. All the three Daityas will dissolve into the ‘Supreme state’ and will be liberated.”

Sage Vasishtha smiled at Rama.

Rama was happy. His face bloomed like the full moon and he laughed.

“What happened to Shambara? Did he get killed by the Devas?”

Rama questioned again.

Sage Vasishtha continued the story.

PART TWO

BHEEMA, BHAASA AND DRDHA

Shambara was again inside his secret work-shop.

He was thinking day and night as to what could have gone wrong in the creation of Daama, Vyaala and Kata.

Then he decided that the three giants were ignorant and foolish.

Now he decided to add Self-knowledge to his creations and make them wise.

After some hard work, he produced three giants and named them as Bheema (strong), Bhaasa (lustrous) and Drdha (firm). These giants were all-knowers and realized. They had no attachments, no likes, and no dislikes.

Shambara made them the chiefs of his army and sent them to attack the Devas.

These giants were endowed with discrimination. No strategy of Devas could make them egoistic.

Whenever something like an ego popped up in their minds, they immediately started enquiring, ‘Who am I?’ and got rid of it. They knew the body as unreal and never identified with it. They were not afraid of death.

They attacked the Devas ruthlessly and defeated them in no time. Devas ran for their life and reached the abode of Vishnu and pleaded him for help. Vishnu destroyed the Daityas along with Shambara with his ‘Sudarshana chakra’.

The three Daityas melted off into Para Brahman as they had no thought of limited identity.

Finally..

Daama, Vyaala and Kata were programmed to act like realized sages by Shambara.

But one important thing Shambara had forgotten to add- 'Knowledge'.

Daama, Vyaala and Kata had no Knowledge and so were defeated easily.

Bheema, Bhaasa and Drdha had knowledge and so were undefeatable.

Penance, worships, hymns, chants, holy places, rituals – nothing can free a person from this worldly existence except 'Knowledge'.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

DAAMA means binding; VYAALA means deceitful; KATA means covering.

In other words, they are the characteristics of Maayaa, the deluding power, which binds us to false identity; which shows truth as untruth and untruth as truth; and which encompasses our discriminative capacity.

BHEEMA means strong, BHAASA means shining, DRDHA means firm.

In other words, all the three terms represent the Brahman (Self) which is the support of all created worlds; which shines as all these perceived phenomena; which is unchanging and firmly remains always as itself.

Vyaasa finally advises Rama-

“May your life be not dominated by Daama, Vyaala and Kata.
Be in the state of Bheema, Bhaasa, and Drdha
and remain without any grief.”

THE MEANING OF THE STORY

Every individual Self is just an automaton dominated by Daama, Vyaala and Kata – the deluding power of Brahman. Brahman is the trickster here and also the tricked victim. Brahman gets deluded by his own will (nature) and appears as the Perceiver who perceives the perceived phenomena.

Every individual Self develops the limited ego and other vices connected to it.

But all ends, when 'Death, the ruthless consumer of all' arrives.

Suddenly all that was one's cherished world just disappears and becomes nothing.

Then as per one's dominating Vaasanaas, different experiences are gone through by the Jeeva without any control.

Jeeva is just a bundle of Vaasanaas, with no particular identity.

The most dominating Vaasanaa again produces a field of experience with another life-story.

A Vaasanaa for liberation destroys all the other Vaasanaas and leads the Jeeva to higher levels of existence.

Maybe some fine day, in some life, even if it be as lowly as a mosquito, or a bird or anything else, if the truths as instructed by Sage Vasishta are heard and understood, the ego dies and one remains as the 'Supreme Self state' or in other words, 'Bheema, Bhaasa, Drdha state of Brahman'!

END

THE SAGE WHO LIVED ON TOP OF THE KADAMBA TREE

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of Sage Daashoora who in want of a clean place on earth, donned a subtle form and sat on the edge of a sprout on the topmost branch of a Kadamba tree and performed penance. He had a son mentally created by him who was slightly slow in learning any subject. Daashoora teaches him Self-knowledge through many tales and legends for his easy grasping. Even that slow-grasping brain of that boy is able to understand the abstract truths of Brahman, and the boy realizes the Self just by listening to his stories! Then what is difficult for an intelligent student who desires liberation?! Here Vasishtha presents just one such story told by Daashoora to his son.

THE ORPHANED BOY

Long long ago there lived a great Sage named SHARA-LOMA (having grass-like hair) in a huge forest in the country of Magadhas. He had a devoted wife who served him affectionately. In their late years, they both were blessed with an intelligent son. They both loved their son more than their lives and the son also was attached to them very much. However, before the boy even reached his teens, his father breathed his last. His mother also gave up her life the moment she saw her husband's lifeless body.

Daashoora, who suddenly found himself alone in the forest with both his parents lying dead in front of him, screamed in shock. Unable to withstand the shock of their death, he wept uncontrollably.

His screams of agony echoed all over the forest.

As he lay on the ground shedding tears, suddenly he felt a whiff of fragrant air over his face which seemed to caress his face with affection. Soft petals of various flowers rained on him cooling his tender body.

A soft whisper entered his ears soothing his tormented soul.

The invisible voice was that of the Forest-Goddess, who had served Sage Sharaloma by offering fruits and flowers necessary for his daily rituals. Though she had been visible to his father of great penance, Daashoora was not endowed with spiritual powers to see her beautiful form. Unable to see the Sage's son suffering like this, she had condescended to approach the boy and offer him consolation. She talked about the greatness of his father; she repeated the truths of Scriptures his father had explained to her; she talked about the dreams his father had cherished for him; and so on.

Daashoora slowly got up. He washed his tear-stained face. He performed the funeral rites to the best of his ability with the help offered by the Forest-Goddess. He got ready for his lonely life ahead waiting for him.

THE SEARCH FOR SIDDHIS

Daashoora was deep in meditation.

He was analyzing in his mind what penance would be the best of all.

He wanted to acquire all the powers that were possible. He wanted to be eternal; he wanted to visit his parents living in the other world; he wanted never to be helpless again.

At last, he remembered the great penance once his father had mentioned to him which required the observation of countless vows and which would make one attain all Siddhis.

He decided to perform that very penance which his father had proclaimed that no Sage had been able to accomplish till now. After all, what else was life for, if he could not achieve what he wanted.

His father would be proud of him too, if he ever completed that penance.

Daashoora smiled with determination.

THE SEARCH FOR A CLEAN PLACE

First, he approached the Sages in the nearby forests and mastered all the Vedas.

He became adept in all the Scriptures.

Next thing was to find a sacred clean place to perform the penance.

He searched all over the forest with the help of his friend, the Forest-Goddess. But nothing satisfied him.

Even in the cleanest place he felt the presence of invisible micro-sized life forms and rejected those places as unholy. The whole earth appeared crawling with micro-organisms and thus dirty.

Maybe he can perform the penance on the sky; but he had not yet mastered any power to float in the sky. The best solution would be to sit on the topmost edge of the tallest tree in the forest and sit there in contemplation.

Even for that, his body had to be very subtle and tinier than the tiniest. He decided to please the Deity of Fire and get a boon granted to suit his purpose, and he started the Sacrifice to invoke the Deity of Fire. However, even after a long time, the Deity did not appear in front of him. Frustrated, Daashoora took a knife and began to slice off the flesh from his shoulders and offered those flesh pieces in the fire. If still the Deity kept away, he decided to offer his entire body into the fire. Afraid of the sin of killing a Brahmin, the Fire-Deity appeared before him in his entire splendour. He agreed to the request of the young Sage and vanished out of sight. Daashoora could now be in the subtlest form and fit inside even the bud or a tender sprout, and perform his penance. What cleaner place could be there than the newly sprouted bud or leaf?

THE KADAMBA TREE

The invisible Forest-Goddess brought him to a huge Kadamba tree hitherto unseen by him and left him there. The Sage glanced up. He could not see the top. The trunk itself was so huge that thousands of elephants would be like ants crawling in front of it. The branches seemed to spread across the whole world. The sky was completely invisible from where he stood. The tree was like a ladder grown by nature to reach the Heaven. The clouds seem to mistake it for a hill and hung on its branches. Flowers blossomed on all the branches without the least gap and the tree looked like a mountain of flowers. Here and there rainbows appeared, when the leaves wet with dew drops caught a stray ray of the Sun. Countless birds filled the tree and their chirping noises echoed in the quarters like the Vedic chants. It reminded one of the VISHVAROOPA, the Cosmic form of Naaraayana mentioned in the Scriptures. The Sun and Moon were like ear ornaments worn by the Tree-God. Serpents rested on its roots and stars rested on its top most edges. It looked like the great grandfather of all the trees of the forest. Daashoora was very much satisfied by the giant form of the tree. He slowly started climbing it.

THE TOP EDGE OF THE TREE

As he reached the topmost branch, he willed himself to be of the subtlest form. The thinnest branch on the edge was growing straight up. He climbed that too and reached the edge. There was a tiny sprout that burst out that very moment. He entered the inside of it and sat on its soft inner side. From there, he looked all around. Ah! What a sight! He could see the whole of the earth from that topmost point of the sky. The rivers shined like pearl garlands spread out all over the earth. The huge mountains appeared like anthills. The oceans were like small water-holes. The clouds were down below spreading out like the curly locks of the sky-Goddess. The forests all over the earth were like tiny grass-lands. Daashoora sighed in satisfaction. He sat in the lotus-posture and closed his eyes. Soon he was absorbed in intense contemplation.

THE SELF-STATE

Daashoora had no knowledge of the Supreme Self or the individual Self. He had not been instructed about the highest state of Self-realization by anybody. All he knew was the performance of Sacrifices and Fire-rites which his father had meticulously followed. He now decided to perform mentally all the Sacrifices he knew of. One by one he finished the performance of each and every sacrifice that could bestow some power or other. He arranged the bricks mentally, lit the fire mentally, recited the chants mentally, and gave charity mentally. Ten years passed like this only. Somehow, even with so many powers mastered by him, he felt dissatisfied with everything. Strictly adhering to the rule of sitting in a clean place, he had been shifting his residence repeatedly from one sprout to the other newest one on the sky-reaching branch. Changing from branch to branch, sprout to sprout, he was now even above the regions of the sun and the moon.

He suddenly felt the futility of all actions of the routine life.
 He started pondering about his existence, the existence of the world surrounding him and so on.
 As he enquired within himself, he soon was established in the Self state.
 Immersed in the bliss of the Self, he lost his desires for divine powers. His mind was free of all wants.
 He could not see any place which was not his own sacred Self.
 There was no dirt outside or inside for him now.
 Being liberated while living, he just remained absorbed in the bliss of the Self.

THE FOREST-GODDESS

Daashoora opened his eyes, as if disturbed by the wind.
 His Samadhi-state was disturbed by some one pleading for his audience.
 He opened his eyes and saw in front of him the most beautiful damsel he ever could imagine.
 He recognized her as the Forest-Goddess who had helped him when he was a child.
 Now he could see her with his divine vision and greeted her with affection.
 She had had her own troubles in her world, and poured out all her problems in front of him.
 She had gone to attend the festival of Manmatha in the beautiful garden in Heaven.
 All other Forest-Goddesses also arrived there without fail. Every pretty maiden had found herself a companion and had brought her children to the gathering. Only this Forest-Goddess was without a companion and had been the receptacle of their ridicule and laughter. She looked at the Sage with love and asked him whether he would not bless her with a child. She threatened him that she would give up her life in the fire if he did not heed to her request.
 Daashoora was not at all moved by her feminine charms. But he felt compassionate towards her.
 He flashed a benevolent smile at her and held out his hand. The Goddess bent her head in reverence and extended both her hands. A beautiful lotus appeared in Daashoora's hand and he dropped it into her hands. The flower turned into a pretty baby in her hands to the amazement of the Goddess. She hugged the baby to her bosom and saluted the Sage with gratitude.
 The Sage told her that this child would be very intelligent and be a cause of pride to her. But since she had forced him to oblige with her request, the boy would have to struggle a lot to obtain any knowledge.
 The Goddess saluted him and left.
 The Sage went back to his contemplation.

THE SAGE'S SON

Twelve years passed.
 The Forest-Goddess came again to visit the Sage. This time she brought her twelve year old son also with her.
 The handsome boy, the son born out of the 'Samkalpa' (will) of the great Sage Daashoora walked slowly holding his mother's hands tightly. He felt slightly nervous about meeting his father for the first time.
 His mother wiped the sweat forming on his forehead with her flowery hand. She kissed his forehead and flashed a smile of assurance. The boy smiled back half-heartedly. He again was lost in his own thoughts.
 His face portrayed the innocence of his young heart. His eyes betrayed the numerous doubts his heart stored.
 His mother had not spared any effort on her part to educate the child in any learning that was available.
 She had taken him to many Sages in many forests and had made him learn everything.
 Of course, the curse of his father had made it slightly difficult for him to learn any thing easily.
 But curse or no curse, he had struggled hard, worked day and night and had mastered all that was there to learn.
 But, his young heart was not satisfied with all that. He had so many questions burning in his heart.
 Why and how the world came to be?
 Why was he caught in it?
 Why was he limited to the identity of a son of a Forest-Goddess?
 Was there no escape?
 Could there be a state where these names and forms held no meaning?
 So many questions, like torrents had troubled him day and night.
 He had expressed his doubts to many a renowned Sage and of course they had given him lengthy discourses on the topic for hours. But the boy had failed to grasp the inner meanings of their words and had returned crestfallen. His mother had observed his distressed state and had now brought him to his father residing on top of the Kadamba tree.
 At last they reached the magnificent magical tree standing majestic like an emperor gracing the lowly citizens with his vision.

The boy looked at the giant tree standing like a mountain in front of him. He thought of his father living on the topmost edge of the tree. He wondered how any person could live inside a sprout for so long. He could not wait to see his father and his wonder-world. As instructed by his mother, he began to climb the tree slowly. As the tree had been growing high across the skies, the boy even with his youthful energy took quite a long time to reach the top. But, the amazing world of the tree kept him entertained and he did not feel the tediousness of his upward journey.

THE UNIVERSE OF KADAMBA TREE

The Kadamba tree looked like a huge city built of branches and leaves; a city forever expanding and trying to put its roots in every nook and corner of the world. The branches were all over, up, down, sideways. Wherever one looked the tree was growing new branches there. It appeared as if it was trying to reach beyond the horizons. Creepers grew all around the trunks and branches like a lovelorn girl embracing her long lost lover with full passion. There was no tree or leaf or hole, which was not occupied by a bird, or animal or insect. Birds of various hues had made nests in each and every branch and filled the quarters with their joyous chirpings. Light from the Sun pierced through all available holes and created a beautiful panorama of light and shadow. Dew drops sticking on to the flowers played with the sunlight and created mini rainbows all over the tree branches. Branches that were covered completely by fragrant blossoms had become a playground for the Forest-Goddesses. Their joyous screams and shouts joined hands with the chirping of the birds creating a melodious orchestra. Monkeys and birds competed in finishing off the abundant fruits provided by the tree and had given up the task as hopeless. The fruits magically reappeared once they were eaten. Flowers never faded and never stopped their blooming. No bird or animal felt tired or exhausted as they rested peacefully in the affectionate branches of their mother-tree. Even some hollows had become small waterholes catering to the thirsty citizens of the tree-world.

With its numerous pathways of branches and twigs, the Kadamba tree was a universe in itself.

FATHER MEETS HIS SON

The boy had reached the topmost branch. His mother who floated along with him, pointed out to the tiny sprout at the edge of the far reaching tiny branch and told him that, 'that was the little house where his father lived'. The son watched the tiny sprout far above the sky in wonder. He could not climb that tiny branch which had grown high up in the sky like a creeper to peep into the Heaven. Little drops of tears formed in his bee-like eyes. Before they kissed his cheeks, he felt two strong arms around him and lo, he was sitting in front of his father inside the little sprout. He had also a subtle tiny form he noticed. His father embraced him affectionately and kissed his forehead. The Forest-Goddess entered inside the sprout and saluted the Sage. With her duty done, she took leave of the child with an affectionate kiss and vanished. The father seated the boy on his lap and stroked his curly hair with love. He understood that the boy had to be instructed about the abstract knowledge of the Self. Since his own curse had made it a difficult subject for the boy, he decided to give the knowledge the easy way. What easy way is there than a story to reach a child's heart? Feeding tiny bits of the delicious fruits of the Kadamba tree into the boy's mouth and embracing the child to his bosom, the Sage began his fairy tale.

RAMA AND VASISHTA

Vasishta spoke-

"Rama! Once invisible to all, I was moving in the sky towards the Divine Ganges to bathe in its nectar-like waters. On the way I decided to meet Daashoora, and as I went near the top of the Kadamba tree, I heard some sound from the top most edge of the sprout like the humming noise of the bee. As I listened intently, I understood that Sage Daashoora was telling a story to his son. Listen! This is the story."

THE RIDDLE STORY

“My child, have you heard of a great king who is very powerful and brave and who is famous in all the three worlds and who keeps on conquering every bit of land that is there?”

“No. who is he?”

The boy looked at his father in amazement. “What is his name?” he questioned.

The father paused for a moment and said,

“The powerful king’s name is ‘SVOTTHA’ –‘Self-born’.

He was not born of any parents.

He just appeared from nowhere and has been ruling all the three worlds for long.

Even the Devas are under his control.

Nobody has the courage to question his commands.

What he says, everybody has to obey!”

“Oh!” said the boy.

His lotus like eyes bloomed in wonder.

“Where does he live then?” he again questioned his wonderful father.

The Sage smiled and said,

“Ah! He lives everywhere.

He does not stay at one place. He keeps moving always.

He wants new new things, new new lands. He is never satisfied with whatever he has.

He has no end of his wants.

He brings under control anyone he meets.

He hurts everyone, yet all go to him alone for fulfilling their wants.

He imprisons all without mercy and keeps them chained in his innumerable prisons.”

“Does he have powerful weapons?” the son asked.

“No!” the Sage answered shaking his head forcefully.

“He has no weapons; no missiles; no army; yet he holds all the three worlds inside his fist as it were!
Even Devas do not understand how he does all this.

However he has three bodies, one white and shiny, one red and dusty, and another dirty and black.

These three bodies fill up the entire three worlds of Heaven, earth and nether worlds!

All these three bodies keep appearing and disappearing everywhere.

They come out of the empty sky and disappear there itself.”

The boy quickly swallowed the juicy fruit and asked with his honey like voice,

“But father, a king should have a city no matter who he is. So where is his city?”

The father patiently continued.

“Yes! Of course he has a huge city of his own! He constructed it himself.

The city has fourteen big high ways. It is divided into three sections.

Huge forests and wild jungles are there in that city. Beautiful hillocks act as his sport-grounds.

Creepers of pearls decorate the land everywhere. Seven wells act as water holes.

Two big lights, one hot and one cold take care of the lighting system of the city.

Lots of houses fill the city; all built for his pleasure only.
 Some float above; some are on the land; some are built down under the earth.
 The roofs of these houses are covered by thatched roofs made of black grass.
 There are nine doors in total.
 Some windows are also there to allow air-circulation.

Five lamps always remain lighted up and keep the darkness away.
 White wooden structures act as the support of the house and keep it up.
 There are pathways to move about also.
 The outside is made soft and mellow by applying clay paste all over.
 Each house is guarded by a giant fierce-looking demigod .
 The king moves quickly among all these houses and plays various games inside them with the demigods.

But nothing satisfies this greedy king.
 He wants more and more sports. He wants more and more lands.
 Not satisfied by anything of the present, he wants to visit even cities which will be there in the future. He sometimes acts mad, and as if possessed by a ghost, runs and tries to see those future cities.
 Sometimes he wants to just perish and immediately gets destroyed. But again he rises from the empty sky and starts his conquering activities once more.
 Sometimes he worries about his life, his sufferings and wanders helplessly.
 Sometime he is happy and increases in size and looks ugly and fat.
 Like a violent ocean stuck by storms, he runs, falls, jumps, roars, does anything and everything that you can think of.
 A great king indeed, don't you think so, my son?"

The Sage paused and looked at his son with a twinkle in the eye.
 The boy was surprised that the story was over so soon.
 Being intelligent, he understood that his father was not telling a meaningless story, but had explained some abstract truth through that story.
 The boy looked directly at the smiling eyes of his father and asked,
"Father! Please tell me who that king is. And moreover, how can he visit a city to be built in the future? It is not possible by any one!"
 Daashoora smiled!
 The boy had enough intelligence to understand the illogical statements.
 That much intelligence is enough to grasp the 'Higher Truths', he thought.
 He explained to his son the meaning of the story.

THE MEANING OF THE STORY

The Sage explained his story in this manner.

"My dear son!
 What you see all around you- myself, yourself, your mother, this tree, its inhabitants and all the worlds of Devas, Daityas and humans, everything you perceive are just names and forms.
 Your own mind draws their pictures and gives them names.
 They are not at all real. All that is there is sheer emptiness.
 Nothing is there actually but the pictures projected from your mind.
 To explain this truth alone, I narrated the story of the king 'Self-born'.

The king is the 'Conceptional power' (Samkalpa) of the mind.

It is itself unreal yet creates a whole universe of names and forms which are unreal.

Look into your own mind.

Thoughts keep rising one after another unceasingly.

Every thought is the expression of the 'Conceptional power' of the mind.

Each thought makes you believe that there is a world out there with countless beings living their lives. Every thought keeps on proving to you the reality of your body and others' also.

This body itself is a projection of the mind, which by projecting senses creates this wonderful world like an expert magician. This 'Conceptional power' rises out of the 'Supreme state of Brahman' which is like a huge ocean with waves. Perceptions of various sorts rise out of this 'CHIT OCEAN' unceasingly, like the waves.

This king keeps increasing his territories greedily.

This 'Conceptional power' first conceives itself as a Creator and through that 'unreal conception of Brahmaa' brings forth all the ever-increasing conceptions of the world.

Even Devas are just the forms conceived by the 'totality of the mind process' called Brahmaa.

These Devas help the 'Conceptional power' to keep its worlds safe.

If this king wishes all dead, a Shiva destroys them all.

If this king wants all safe, a Vishnu maintains them all.

If the king wants them all created anew, Brahmaa creates them all.

He rules even the Devas, and they obey him because the king alone created them through his 'Conceptional power'.

The fourteen Highways are the fourteen worlds.

The three divisions are the higher, lower and middle worlds.

Devas live above; humans live in the middle; and Daityas live down below the earth.

The gardens he plays around are the forests.

The hillocks he sports are the huge mountains like Meru and Mandara.

Cold and hot lamps are the moon and the sun respectively.

The moving garlands of pearls are the rivers shining in the sunlight.

The three bodies of the king are the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the qualities which the mind imbibes.

Because of them, sometimes a person acts unselfish, sometimes selfish, and sometimes dull.

The houses built by him are the bodies.

Bodies are made of mud, namely flesh.

The nine doors are the ear, nose, eyes etc.

White wooden logs are the bones.

The sweaty skin is the paint which covers this ugly house from outside.

Hairs cover the top of the house.

Winds move through the holes or windows in the body and keep it alive.

Shoulders and legs are the pathways because by their movement they create the space around them.

The ego is the demigod guarding the house. You cannot ever kill this ego, and it keeps the identity of the body ascertained and firm.

At every instant the mind keeps creating thoughts of the world and thus makes the world look real.

Where is the Kadamba tree except in your mind, child?
 Where are the three-worlds except in your mind, child?
 Where is your mother except in your mind, child?
 Where is all the past, present and future except in your mind, child?

The moment the thought of any object arises, that object appears in front of you as if it is real and existed all along even without your conception.

Everyone is an unreal conception keeping the conception of the other alive through thoughts. All these thoughts are just waves rising out of the 'Chit' by its conceiving power. Actually, there is no world out there. All is in your mind only. When you see, it appears instantly, satisfying your wish for its reality. You want it to be there and it is there obeying your orders as it were.

So the conception in your own mind is the king which creates you, me and all. The 'Conceptional power' in my mind creates me, you and others. All of us are caught in this mind-game and we keep creating worlds at every moment.

But in truth, the names and forms are all just names and forms imagined by the mind. We believe in our own limited reality and the reality of the world too. Not satisfied with the life at present we wish for a future where more desires could be satisfied and thus create future houses too. We think we die, so we go through a death-scene. We think we are born, so we go through a birth-scene. We think sense pleasures give us joy but end up in diseases and illnesses. We think this, we think that; we think Devas rule us; or we think we are the Devas; or think we are the humans; we can think anything and it will be there. Such is the power of the thought. Think and lo! Magically things appear before you.

If you think and you do not get it, then you start thinking that it was there and that you did not get it because of fate, and suffer immensely.

Mostly, everyone cries for things that are not there at all. Yet they believe in the existence of wealth, lands, gold and what not and waste their whole life trying to acquire them. When there is nothing actually but emptiness, what is there to acquire? Emptiness...?

Does the gold exist inside the box when you close the lid, or does the gold inside the box exist only in your mind? What you see is only the picture of the box projected by the mind. Open it and instantly the gold picture is projected by your mind proving that the gold was always there even when you did not see it.

Do we struggle all our lives only to create pictures in the canvas of emptiness?!

A ghost exists only in the mind of a fool. It can beat him, crush him and torture him. The fool can cry and beg you to save him. But how will you save him from a ghost which is not there at all? He has to just not think about the ghost and it will not be there. The world is there only when you think of it, when you conceive it as real. All the lands stretching out in all the directions are just thoughts in the mind.

Of course, move the hands and legs; you create a road to traverse them.

In the empty expanse of nothingness, endless space gets created just by thinking about the objects that are conceived as existing in space.

Desires, anxieties, greed, envy, hatred, likes, dislikes are all the products of conception.

So, do not fall for the trap of delusion my son.

If any name and form appears in front of you, act in the suitable manner and finish off the conceived scene like a perfect actor without any attachment.

Here you are a son conceived by my mind. I am the father conceived by your mind.

But both forms are pictures drawn by the collective mind process of Brahmaa.

Kill all the conceptions and remain silent.

Killing the conception does not mean that you conceive the destruction of the conception.

It is just another conception and does not help you.

You cannot remain thoughtless by thinking about 'thoughtlessness'.

You cannot realize the Self by thinking that you will realize the Self.

As long as any thought is there, know that the king is alive and thriving.

Just do not bring any thought to the mind.

Even to crush a small jasmine flower you may have to move your fingers.

But to know yourself, you just have to do nothing.

Just 'be'. Do not 'act'.

Do not worship, pray, chant, do not even think of yourself.

Just 'be'. That is enough.

The king will perish once and for all.

He will no more create worlds to entrap you.

Let us be sportive and play the game of father and son, and enjoy each other's company.

But let us always keep in the mind the unreality of everything that exists.

Like we enjoy the magician's show knowing whatever he creates does not exist, let us play this game of life knowingly. Some day the body will succumb to the rule of the Creator and perish.

But in the Supreme state of consciousness, there is no death or birth.

Be always in the Self state and you will never ever die, my son!"

THE CHIT-PLAY

The Sage smiled.

The boy's eyes shone with understanding.

Without any penance, without performing sacrifices, without worshipping the innumerable Devas, he had attained the 'State of the Self' by just listening to a simple story.

He hugged his father tightly and placed a kiss on his cheeks with extreme love. And he ran out to play with the countless citizens of the Kadamba tree.

What need was there anymore for any Sacrifice, or worship or even contemplation!

He was the CHIT now playing the game of life as a Sage's son.

He was the father also in the state of the Self.

He was everywhere; he was everything as the Self.

But nothing was there actually except the Self.

All names and forms were drawn by him every moment, again and again for his own sport.

He could sit and contemplate like his father or play with his bird-friends of the tree.
He chose to play!

Who can tell the CHIT what to do? CHIT was second-less!
When any picture is just a picture drawn on the canvas of emptiness, what does it matter what picture is perceived as a world?
CHIT was both the silence and the noise of the world. There was nothing else.
CHIT in the Daashoora-form remained absorbed in the silent unmanifest state.
CHIT in the form of the boy played all over the Kadamba tree in the manifest state.
Daashoora could hear the joyous shouts of the boy even in his silent state.
It did not affect him in the least.
Was not that joy, the expression of his blissful Self!

'Chit is both manifest and unmanifest!'

OM

RAMA AND VASISHTA

Vasishta spoke-

"Rama! After the story was finished, I entered the sprout where Daashoora was staying.
Daashoora was very excited by my sight. He worshipped me in the due manner.
All three of us spent the night discussing various matters together.
In the morning, I took leave of them both and went off to bathe in the River Ganges in the Heaven.
I told you the story of Daashoora to understand the unreal nature of the world.
Look at the world as advised by Daashoora and remain in the state of the Self which alone is real."

END

KACHA'S SONG OF ECSTASY

Kacha was the son of Brhaspati, the preceptor of Devas.
 Once he was contemplating on the Self sitting in the dense forest of Mount Meru.
 As the practice went on, he suddenly found himself in the natural state of the Self.
 As he did not completely merge off into the Supreme, he opened his eyes to see the perceived world of forms.
 He had lost the identity of his limited Self, yet was conscious as the Supreme Brahman.
 It was a like the state where one wakes up in a dream and continues to analyze the dream.
 Kacha could feel that every form in front of him was his own projection.
 There was no one else but him as the Self.
 There was no one to talk to.
 There was no object that he could desire for, as he felt that he was all the objects that were there.
 It was a unique experience.
 If you wake up and the dream still persists, it will be amusing still.
 Kacha was now the unmanifest Brahman who enjoyed himself as the manifested reality too.
 He was in the 'DakshinaaMoorti state' (unmanifest manifest state) experienced by Aadi Shankara.
 Since he had the voice to express his feelings in the 'Kacha form' he sang in ecstasy-

KACHA'S SONG OF ECSTASY

"What shall I do now?
 I have nothing to do except remaining as myself!
 Where shall I go?
 There is no space to move!
 What shall I hold on to?
 Everything appears like a picture drawn in emptiness!
 What shall I reject?
 There is nothing but myself as everything!
 I am filling the entire created phenomena
 like the ocean flooding the creation!
 I do not feel any pain!
 I do not feel any excitement!
 An inexpressible joy fills my whole being!
 Hitherto unknown quiescent state is what I am!
 What do I lack? What do I want?
 I am everything!
 In all the directions I alone am there!
 Inside and outside of this limited form of a Kacha,
 only I shine forth filling everything!
 Here I am! There I am!
 There is nothing but me everywhere!
 Self alone is everywhere!
 Everything is Self alone!
 Whatever has a name 'that' is 'Self' alone!
 I am like an ocean of bliss!
 I am complete! I am whole!
 I extend beyond the horizons!
 I alone am! I alone am! I alone am!"

{KACHA'S SONG IS COMPLETE}

Laughing and dancing with joy, Kacha experienced the state of Brahman appearing as the entire perceived phenomena.

Then he closed his eyes; recited 'OM' in a slow sonorous voice; and melted off into the Nirvikalpa Samaadhi, even as the 'OMKAARA' tapered off into silence, like the resonance of the bell melts off into the empty sky.

END

KING JANAKA'S STORY OF REALIZATION

Royal garden of Mithilaa!

The entire garden was alive with the melodious songs of cuckoos.

The flowers of various colours bloomed spreading a variety of fragrances all over, intoxicating anyone who happened to be there!

But unaffected by all these, King Janaka walked silently under the shady trees.

His ears did not hear the songs of the birds; nor did he relish the colourful flowers.

His mind was lost in some deep thoughts!

He was alone; he wanted to be alone!

He had sent away the pretty maidens who always accompanied him to the garden to entertain him with their amorous sports.

He had sent away the wise ministers who kept him informed of all that happened in his kingdom regularly.

He felt an unknown depression eating out his heart.

There was nothing he could want more than what he had acquired now.

Name, fame, riches - nothing he lacked.

He was a mine of virtues. He took care of his people like a father.

He was addressed as 'Janaka' (father) by one and all. No one knew his real name.

Scholars adored him; Brahmins found shelter in him; enemies feared him; elders blessed him heartily; yet he felt now that his life was unfulfilled.

Something was missing; some achievement was left over; something he had not bothered to know much!

Of course he had mastered all the sciences that could be mastered and even intellectually comprehended the subject matter of all the Scriptures which talked about Brahman.

There was no Siddhi he had not experimented with; there was no text left unstudied!

Then why this sadness, he wondered!

Exhausted, he sat on a rock and closed his tired eyes.

He heard some rustling noise nearby. He instantly turned back to see who the intruder was. But he could not move.

He remained statue-like as if his body was frozen.

He could not even make any sound.

He just saw a huge lustrous sphere in front of him. Though some moving shapes could be seen inside that shine, they were still indiscernible.

And those shapes spoke; rather sang these hymns.

(Siddhas are not magic-makers; and cannot be seen or approached by ignorant people of any world.

They are Brahman-state itself existing as pure mind-states. They do not maintain any particular identity.

They can create any identity randomly; and live in any conceived world of their choice.

They remain mostly as conscious space itself as some emptiness which has intelligence.)

SIDDHA-GEETAA

[1]

We contemplate on 'That'
 which is without perturbations;
 which manifests from the principle of Self;
 which appears in the intellect
 as the 'experience of bliss' arising from
 the 'union of the perceiver and perceived'.

{Any joy experienced outside in the perceived world is nothing but a droplet of the bliss-essence of Self.}

[2]

Renouncing completely the 'perceiver-perceiving-perceived'
 along with the Vaasanaa,
 we contemplate on the 'Self',
 which is the first appearance seen by the perceiver.

{Ego or the idea of one's own existence (Self) is the first appearance, by renouncing which one remains as the Supreme state of the Self which is without limitations.}

[3]

We contemplate on the Self,
 which lights up all the lights,
 which is eternal,
 which is the state in-between
 the two views of 'is' and 'is not'.

{Self is the subtle essence of consciousness which perceives all the other lights which in turn reveal the perceived objects. Self is not bound by the language wrestling of 'existence and non-existence' theories. Self is the state beyond definitions and explanations.

The theories that state that 'Self is not the world' or the 'Self alone exists' both are incorrect.

The Self 'is' the perceived world like the gem 'is' its shine. There is nothing else other than the Self. }

[4]

We contemplate
 'on that Reality', (TATSATYAM)
 which is everything; (YAHA)
 by which everything exists; (YENA)
 for which everything exists; (YASMAAYA)
 from which everything arises; (YATAHA)
 of which everything exists; (YASYA)
 in which everything exists. (YASMIN)

[5]

The letter 'A' is the first part;
 'HA' letter is the last part;
 and it exists with endless forms;
 it is uttered continuously;
 that Self of mine I contemplate upon.

{A+HA+ Resonance (M)-AHAM –'I'.

This sound exists as denoting the Self; it exists as the 'I' uttered by all that have self-awareness. All our thoughts are centered on this 'I'. This ego is nothing but the Self bound by limitations of space and time ideas. Contemplating on the Self removed of limitations, one remains as the Self state which transcends all limitations.}

[6]

Those who seek another Deva rejecting the Lord
 seated in the cave of the heart,
 they are after an ordinary gem,
 throwing away the many Koustubha gems (worn by Lord Naaraayana)
 kept in their hands.

{Self is the other name for Chit which is the source of all that is perceived with name and form. Devas also come under the perceived category as they have names and forms. Without trying to realize the Self which is also the essence of Devas, if one goes after the 'Devas with form', he is as foolish as a person who throws away the wish-fulfilling Koustubha gem already in his hands and picks up some road-side shining stone; because the Koustubha gem can produce any gem that one wishes for; Self or Chit can appear as any Deva one wishes for. Remaining as the state of CHIT or Self, one exists as the essence of all Devas and other beings.}

[7]

Only by renouncing all the desires, this fruit (Self-Realization) is gained.
 By this (Self-Realization) alone,
 the poisonous creepers of desires get completely uprooted.

That idiot who again binds himself to the thoughts of the objects,
 knowing well the extreme essence-less-ness in them,
 is not a man but a donkey.

[8]

The snakes named senses should be hit hard
 by the 'rod of discrimination' again and again
 as they keep rising up here and there,
 as Indra once hit the mountains with his Vajra weapon.

{Once the mountains supposedly had wings and were causes of destructions when they sat anywhere and everywhere without control. Indra cut off their wings with his Vajra (thunder-bolt) weapon. The senses also similarly act as causes of destruction because they always are after some object or other without discrimination. By using the Vajra weapon of discrimination, these senses should be brought under control.}

One should bring forth the sacred joy of quiescence.
 The mind of the good man becomes
 subdued by practising quiescence.
 When the mind is quiet,
 then the excellent state arises
 bestowing the bliss of the Self forever.

{SIDDHAGEETA IS COMPLETE}

The Hymns were over!
 The lustre-sphere vanished!
 Silence reigned!
 King Janaka suddenly felt his body alive and moving.
 He got up excitedly and searched eagerly all over the garden.
 He could find no one.
 But he had heard real voices. He had no doubt about it.
 Then as he thought back, he understood what had happened.
 They were not ordinary people.
 They were the great Siddha Purushas who wandered all over the fourteen worlds at their will.
 They had no distinct forms or identities. They were realized Sages maintaining vague existences.
 They had blessed him by their presence.

Janaka's eyes were filled with tears!
 What great merits of his had brought them to his earthly garden? And what did they say?
 He wanted to think about those hymns sung by the Great Siddhas.
 He immediately returned to the palace; climbed the topmost storey of his palace; told the guards not to disturb him in any way; and sat there pondering about what he had heard.

Soon, he saw the wasteful ventures of his life and just knew himself as the Self-state without any limitation of name and form. There was nothing more to achieve now!
 He was now in his original nature of Brahman.
 He was all; he was in all!
 The world looked like a picture drawn on emptiness!
 He just remained experiencing the bliss of the Self-state.

But soon he was disturbed by the entrance of his close servant.
 Janaka looked at that shape which was making some sounds.
 He could somehow understand that he was getting requested by the servant to attend to his regular duties and get ready to meet the public awaiting his arrival outside.
 Janaka remained silent.
 He did not feel like breaking the silent-state he was in.
 He remained with closed eyes not bothering to respond in any way to the servant.
 Who had to go where?
 Who had to talk to whom?
 When the Self alone was there, why even bother to move the body which he was not?

The servant was surprised by the silence of the king.
 Sweat formed on his forehead and a shiver ran thorough his body.
 Had he offended the king in any way? Should he not have entered the private room of the king like this?
 The servant stood there silently not knowing how to react to the new situation.

Janaka again pondered in his mind.
 What matters if he moves the body or not?
 The Self-state was not going to vanish away! The bliss was not going to finish away.

Whatever unreal patterns were around him, he was what he was, the untainted, unaffected Self!
 If he managed to move the physical body, the space-time pictures will vary! That is all!
 He would still remain unchanged!
 Why bother what the body acted out, or the mind perceived; he was what he was, the Self of all!
 If as the Brahman he could be all, nothing would matter if he had to act out the character of the king of Mithilaa!

He opened his eyes; flashed an affectionate smile at his servant; got up immediately and followed him to attend to the regular duties as if nothing had happened.
 But something had happened.
 All this time he was dreaming that he was King Janaka.
 Now he had woken up yet continued the dream wilfully.
 How can a dream affect a person who is completely awake?!
 A smile adorned his face.
 [Could Bliss smile?!]

END

STORY OF PUNYA AND PAAVANA

In the forest land surrounding the Mahendra Mountain, on the bank of River Gangaa there lived a Sage named DeerghaTapas (one who performed penance for a long time).
 He had two sons named Punya (Merit) and Paavana (Sacred).

He, his devoted wife and the two sons lived in a solitary cottage on the river bank.
 The sons loved and respected their parents very much.
 Paavana, the youngest was very much attached to his mother, and would never remain away from her for long.

The two sons studied all the Scriptures under the guidance of their father. Punya practised what was taught, and soon attained Self-realization. But Paavana being attached to his parents was not able to reach the Supreme state of the Self.

In course of time, Sage DeerghaTapas felt that he had seen enough of earth life and decided to give up his body. He and his wife discarded their bodies through the Yogic method and attained the bodiless state of liberation.

Paavana saw the lifeless bodies of his parents lying on the ground like logs of wood; and was shocked. He felt his whole world had collapsed. Life was nothing but a desolate experience for him without his parents. He could not imagine a second without the company of his parents. His mind went blank. Unable to bear the grief he ran inside the forest as if stuck by insanity. Somewhere he collapsed on the ground in grief and started to weep aloud calling for his parents.

Punya, the elder one finished the funeral rites alone, and went in search of his brother. He saw the weeping brother; embraced him with love and consoled him like this:
 “My dear brother! Why do you cry so much? I am there for you. I will take care of you like a father. Even I miss our parents. But I know that they have attained liberation and are not suffering in any new birth. Everyone who is born, has to die; but our parents were great Yogis and discarded their body at will! We should also follow their foot steps and attain liberation as they did. Come on! Get up! Let us finish the rest of the funeral rites now.”

But Paavana wouldn't get consoled, and kept on crying, as if his heart would break by the effort. Again Punya said:
 “Dear son! What makes you think that they are our only parents? Visualize the countless births they have gone through and the innumerable bodies you have taken in the past? Who is the son of whom? Who is the father of whom? If you have to cry for the death of parents, then why don't you cry for the parents of those past births?”

Why not cry for parents who will be in your future births?
Of course, if you do not realize the Self, you will go through countless births again till your delusion gets destroyed.

Analyze in your mind as to who you are in essence.
Observe what all the births you had as fish, bird, crow, lion or fox, and what not!
Sometimes due to merits you were born in royal families.
Sometimes due to de-merit you suffered the lowly birth of a Chaandaala.
Sometimes you excelled in all the Scriptures as a Brahmin.
I cannot even mention all births that were yours or mine! They are beyond counting!

Think how many parents, how many relatives you have had when you take all the births into account.
Are you going to sit and cry for all those dead relatives?

This birth is in your memory. So, you are crying for the parents of this body.
But if you could remember all the births and all the parents who loved you at those births, you cannot finish crying for them in one single life time.

Look at that donkey. It was your relative in some birth. Why don't you feel sorry for it now?
Every animal, every bird, every man and woman are related to us through some birth or other.
Are you going to cry for them all?

There is no meaning in grief or happiness in this world.
Everything is momentary.
You must feel happy that in this birth our father guided us towards liberation. Now get up and wash your face.
Let us finish our duties to the parents of this birth and follow the course of life shown by our revered father.
Let us practise the disciplines taught by our father and attain the Self-state.
Let us attain the same state as our parents did.
Stop crying like an ignorant fool!"

Paavana understood how foolish he had been.
He silently got up; and followed his brother home.

Soon they both had attained the Supreme knowledge and remained in the forest happily for long.
Later, they discarded their bodies and attained the body-less liberation like their parents.

END

KING BALI

[1]

Above is the Heaven (Svarga) ruled by Indra; below is the Netherworld (Paataala) ruled by the Daityas ; and Earth (Bhooloka) stays in the middle. All the worlds, above and below were conquered with ease, by the greatest among the Daitya kings, Bali the son of Virochana.

All the heavenly pleasures were his in no time.
His palace now adorned the Meru Mountain, once the sole sporting ground of Devas.
Everyone trembled at the very mention of his name. There was nothing more that he had to conquer now.
There were no beings who dared oppose him. He was the supreme emperor of all the three worlds.
He had done what no other Daitya king of the past had been able to do.
He was the greatest!
He ruled like this for ten crores of years and... now, what next?
Standing near the window of his palace situated on top of the Meru Mountain, Bali was lost in thoughts.

His hands were itching for some battle with some mighty ruler of some world; but who was there left out?
Trinities were out of question, he could never pierce their dimensions!
Rest of the beings...? All were under his control!
Whom should he fight with?

[2]

Bali was bored.
He started to think like this:

'What have I achieved by all this victory?
I am still unsatisfied!
There is no sense-experience that has not been enjoyed by me; even heavenly damsels are ready to oblige my slightest wish!
But what comes of enjoying the same pleasure again and again?
The same routine daily gets followed!
Same pleasures get to be enjoyed again and again!
I feel so embarrassed by own life-style!
It is like children playing house!
Meaninglessly same actions get repeated daily!
Day and night follow each other!
Again and again the same actions get performed! I feel so stupid!
Is there something by which one does not do any action again?
How long will I go on like this?
Eternally I can rule the three worlds; but yet I am bound by these very actions of enjoyments!
Again and again the same sense enjoyments!
Ugh!
Wish there was some joy that is better than all these sensual pleasures!
Wish there was some King who is worth conquering!
Wish there is some action which destroys all actions!
Wish there was some permanent happiness than what these senses experience!'

[3]

As he was thinking like this bored and despondent, he suddenly remembered a conversation he had with his father when he was very young. He had had the same despondency at that time and had questioned his father like this:

*"Father! You know so much about everything!
Tell me for sure if there is any other happiness other than these sense pleasures?
Is there something by attaining which one never wants anything more, never is troubled by desires any more?
Is there some place where there is permanent peace of mind?
Is there anything by attaining which everything gets attained?"*

King Virochana, Bali's father had laughed aloud and said:

"Oh! You want to conquer some country by which you become the owner of all the Creations, is it?
You want to defeat the most powerful king of all and become the Supreme ruler; is it so?
You are bored of all these routine enjoyments and want something better; is it?
Yes, Yes! I know of such a king who rules such a country!

There is a very expansive country which spreads out endlessly in all directions!
 It is so huge that even thousands of Tri-worlds cannot fill it up!
 There no forests or mountains or rivers or oceans there!
 There is neither sky nor winds there!
 There are no Devas or Daityas there!
 No sun or moon shines there!
 Even the Trinities who support these Devas are not there!
 But only one king is there. He is very powerful! He can do anything and is everywhere!
 But he remains very silent. He has by his own will conceived a minister to work for him.

That minister also is very powerful. He can make impossible things happen; or even erase things that have happened! But unfortunately he cannot enjoy anything; nor does he know anything. He is stupid; yet does everything for the king. The king remains always silent and alone!"

[4]

Bali had been amazed to know that there was a king still left unconquered by his father or him. His hand had clutched his sword tightly. With his face flushed with anger he had questioned his father:

*"Who is that king? Where is he? Who is his minister?
 Tell me immediately so I can crush the king and his minister in no time!"*

Virochana had lowered his voice as if whispering a secret and said:

"That minister is not so easy to conquer, my son! He is more powerful than the Devas or Daityas ! He is not Indra or Chandra that you can so easily wield your sword and slice the head!
 No weapons can make even a dent on him! All the Devas and Daityas are under his control.

He is no Vishnu; but he has conquered all the Daityas like Hiranyaaksha and others!
 He has, even Vishnu and other Higher Devas under his control, and makes them do their allotted works! He has allowed the Deva of passion (Manmatha) to wander freely all over the three worlds!
 Because of him alone, the Devas and Daityas fight unceasingly.

All this is merely a child's play for that minister.

He can be controlled only by the king who created him! Suddenly the king sometimes feels that this minister needs to be controlled and he subdues him in no time.

That minister is the mightiest of all! He moves everything in this world!

If you want to be the Supreme Lord of all, then conquer this minister and prove your prowess!

If he is there, sun and moon shine by his power! If he is not there, everything melts away!

If you can conquer him, you are indeed powerful!

If you conquer him, all the worlds get conquered.

Even if you conquer everything and do not conquer this minister, you are not still the mightiest, my son! Therefore, try to defeat him mustering all your effort!"

[5]

Bali was puzzled! He could not grasp what his father was saying. He just asked: *"But how?"*
 Virochana answered with a mischievous smile:

“I know of a trick to conquer that minister easily! Listen attentively!
 Through this trick you can subdue him in a moment!
 Otherwise, he will attack you like a serpent in rage!
 You should quieten him like caressing a child and enter the presence of the king somehow.
 Once the king is seen, the minister will trouble you no more!

If the minister gives you no more trouble, then the king gets seen again!
 If you do not see the king, the minister cannot be subdued!
 If you do not subdue the minister, the king cannot be seen!
 If the king is not seen, the minister becomes evil and gives endless troubles!
 If the minister is not defeated, the king can never be seen!
 Somehow, you should try hard and get both the things done simultaneously.
 The subjugation of the minister and seeing the king both should be done simultaneously.

If you practise without losing heart, you will see the king, bring the minister under control and reach that huge expansive country. If you reach that country, you are not going to feel sad again. You will have no more desires to satisfy. You would have reached the state of complete fulfillment after which nothing needs to be attained.”

[6]

Bali remained silent and puzzled still.
 Virochana continued to speak:

“Listen, I will tell you clearly what I meant by this story.
 The country is ‘Liberation’ which removes all suffering.
 The king is the ‘Self’ or ‘Brahman’ who is the Supremacy, who transcends all.
 The minister is the ‘Mind’ rising out of Brahman.
 Mind alone conceives this entire world-phenomenon.
 If you conquer him, you attain all that needs to be attained!
 He can be conquered not by the power of the sword, but by the trick taught by me!”

Bali still was unable to grasp the abstract meaning of the story told by his father.
 He asked again-
“Tell me father clearly the trick to subdue that minister. I will surely destroy him in no time.”

Virochana explained with extreme patience.

“The main trick in conquering the mind is to develop disinterest towards the pleasures of the senses. By this alone, can that wicked mind be brought under control.
 Do not worry about fate or destiny.
 Do not think only great Sages and saints can pursue this path and attain liberation.
 Even Daityas like us can attain the Supreme state of the Self and shine above the Trinities!
 We get destroyed because we are slaves to our desires.
 But if by practice, we develop dispassion and detach our mind from pleasures, we will be able to contemplate on the Self and thus attain the supreme state of bliss.
 Without getting disheartened we should practice again and again till the success is achieved.
 Anything is possible through sincere effort!”

[7]

Bali for a few moments pondered within his own mind; saw the unending thirst for pleasures within; the hatred burning in the heart for the Devas; the irritation felt against the Trinities; the urge for conquering all the worlds. He sighed! He knew he could never get rid of all the anger and desire in his heart.

He asked again:

“How can I get disinterested in sense pleasures, Father? How can I get rid of all my desires?”

Virochana said-

“You have to force your mind towards the contemplation of the Self (Vichaara/rational thinking) regularly. That alone will help in developing detachment towards pleasures.

As the detachment develops, the contemplation of the Self also becomes possible. Both practices go hand in hand, acting complimentary to each other.

First, divide the activities of the mind into two; one part for pleasures; one part for the study of the Scriptures.

Slowly, one should seek the knowledge also from the Teacher; experience some pleasures also. Then, the mind should be given to study of Scriptures; listening to the teacher and a little experience of pleasures.

Then, one should only have the study of the Scriptures and increase dispassion; have the company of the Knowers and contemplate on the Self.

Slowly, the mind will give up the desire for pleasures and get interested in contemplation.

Every moment, the mind should be guided towards the good, like a child.

Continuously one should analyze the unreal nature of the world.

Always one should try to remain in the witness-state of the Self and develop a natural disinterest in pleasures.

(Witness state means, the practice of observing every thought, action, word of the body-self, and having full control over the character of the Jeeva that acts on the stage of life as the 'I'. It is a state of 24x7 alertness.)

Once the Self-state is attained, the mind will remain subdued always, and the bliss of the Self will become one's true nature.

Any joy that can be attained as a result of performing penance, or charity or worship of deities in temples can never equal the bliss of the Self-state.

My son! Do not worry about destiny or fate.

Just try hard, and surely you will succeed in achieving the Supreme state.

Analyze the faults of the pleasures found here and develop dispassion.

Of course, you should gather wealth and conquer lands.

But along with it, seek the Knowers and in their company develop dispassion.

Study the Scriptures. Analyze the truths. Then the natural state of the Self reveals by itself.”

[8]

After this speech, Virochana had gone off to his private chambers.

Bali had not understood much of what his father had said then.

He had brushed it aside as some sportive conversation.

He remembered it all now; and regretted for not having discussed the topic with his father for more time.

He had wasted a golden opportunity he felt with remorse.

After Virochana had left, the young Bali had remained for a few hours thinking of what his father had said.

Though it was easy to intellectually comprehend what he had said, Bali had understood that he was not ready for the practice of it yet. His thirst for the conquering of the three worlds could not be subdued so easily. He was still very young. The world of pleasures was beckoning him with the doors wide open. Soon, he had forgotten the conversation with his father and was lost in the world of pleasures and battles. Now when all was done and over with, his mind had remembered the conversation again.

Bali sighed!

So long he had been ignorant and wasted all his life in the pursuit of pleasures and glory. He had never tried to conquer the minister or see the king.

Thousands of years had passed, and still the expansive country of true bliss had remained untouched by him.

Bali felt foolish and stupid. His mind was full of remorse.

He wished he had listened to his father and practised what he commended at that time itself.

Anyhow, he had woken up now to his faults. He decided to see the king now and reach the topmost position above all.

But how? His father was not there to guide him now. He decided to call on his Guru Shukraachaarya.

[9]

Shukraachaarya, the preceptor of Daityas appeared before him instantly.

Bali worshipped him in due manner and asked him:

“Lord! I am no more interested in pleasures any more!

What is all this? Who enjoys? What gets enjoyed? What is the enjoyment?

Who am I? What are all these worlds? Tell me!”

Shukra looked impatiently at his disciple.

If this Daitya could not follow his father’s words then at the prime of youth, what will he achieve now?

After all, Bali had understood everything intellectually. Shukraachaarya did not want to waste his time by giving a huge discourse to a person who just needed only a little effort to practise what he already knew from his father.

He said hurriedly:

“What is there to say anymore?

Here is a brief summary of all; listen!

Chit alone is here.

All this is Chit.

Everything is in essence Chit.

You are Chit. I am Chit. All these worlds are Chit.

If you are really sincere, this much is enough to lead you on.

Otherwise, however much I discourse all will turn into ashes and waste away.

The conception of the mind alone is known as bondage; freedom from it is liberation.

That is all! This is the essence of all Scriptures!

Just feel ascertained about this; instantly you will be in the true state of the Self.

I am very busy. I have to meet the Seven Sages on some important mission.

They are waiting for me. Though I am realized and liberated, I have to attend to my duties as long as this body-appearance is there. I do not want to sit idle doing nothing.”

Shukraachaarya vanished from sight, with this short speech.

{Chit is a term that refers to some subtle awareness of yours which is able to watch your thoughts, actions, ideas and act as the string to hold them all from outside, so you know that you know this and that.

It is the real ‘you’, not the body.

Body is inert, it cannot be aware of anything. It is not ‘you’.

The ‘I’ you imagine as the body-thing, is like identifying with the costume you are wearing.

The real ‘I’ is the Chit, the witness to all the thought and actions of the body-self.

This ‘I’ sense itself rises from one’s awareness of one’s existence, which is in all living things from a worm to a Brahmaa.

This awareness of existence is known as Chit.

This is the common essence in all, like the gold is the common essence of all the shapes it exists as.

If Deva is aware of all its shapes, what would it be like.

You as the self-awareness exist as the awareness of all the objects of the Jagat.

Chit is the very understanding power, the Aatman, the potential state for all the experiences that rise in the Vaasanaa-screen.]

[10]

Bali felt as if he was given a shock treatment.

The words of his Guru, though very few, had shot at him like arrows.

He suddenly felt different. His confusions were gone! His mind felt calm and peaceful.

He was completely absorbed in the analysis of the statements uttered by his Guru.

He pondered and realized that-

'Everything is Chit.

If Chit (self-awareness) is not there, how can any object be cognized as that object?

Sky, wind, moon, sun etc etc; even his own identity was possible because the Chit knows it to be so.

Chit is the essence of all; and he was that Chit.

The limited identity of Bali vanished and he remained as the Chit which was all.

'All' was also not there!

Only Chit was there; silent and blissful; and knowledge.

The minister was nowhere to be seen!

Bali did not just see the king. He was the king.

He was the mightiest of all! He was the Supremacy.

That mighty king had subdued Bali himself who was the ruler of all the three worlds.

Only THAT was there!

But the body of Bali which was the centre-stage of such a drama became stone-like.

There was no movement. A tiny wave of 'Praana' kept the body away from death and decay.

[11]

When the king was not seen for long time, the ministers searched for him all over the worlds and saw him sitting like a statue in his private chambers of the palace on Meru Mountain.

The servants and subordinates became worried.

All the Devas and Sages arrived there to see the wonder of the Daitya king absorbed in Samaadhi.

The ministers were anxious about the state of the country without the king's presence and called for their Guru Shukraachaarya.

He arrived there immediately; consoled the ministers saying that their king had just analyzed the truths of existence and had attained the Supreme state of rest. He assured them that soon Bali will wake up by himself after thousand years.

He advised the ministers to take care of the kingdom till that time.

After thousand years, Bali woke up from the Samaadhi-state to the loud drum-sounds played by the Devas, as instructed by Shukraachaarya.

Bali slowly opened his eyes.

His own form flashed before him like a dream-identity.

No one was around. No one knew that he had woken up.

Bali again pondered in the surrounding silence.

'Ah! What a wonderful state it is!

A moment only elapsed, it seems; and I feel so rested!

I will remain in that state only!

What need do I have for external experiences?'

As he was withdrawing himself into the Samaadhi state again, all his Daitya subordinates arrived; saluted him; stood there awaiting his instructions.

[12]

Bali again pondered:

'I have no mind at all! No uncontrolled thoughts disturb me as before!

What is there for me do discard?

What need do I have for liberation? What has ever bound me?

It is just a child's fantasy that one is bound or one is liberated!

There is no bondage; there is no liberation!

My ignorance is gone!

Whether I remain in contemplation or not, what difference is there?

I am what I am!

Whatever happens happens; I do not gain or lose anything.

Whether I remain contemplating on the Self or whether I keep enjoying the pleasures of the world, there is no difference to my true nature.

I do not live; nor am I dead! I do not exist or non-exist!

Let this perception of the kingdom continue and let me play the character of the king!

Whatever happens I need not bother!

If I am not duty-bound, then why not I do just what I was doing before?'

He acknowledged the salutations of his people and got up from his seat.

Bali ruled the worlds as a JeevanMukta for thousands of years.

Sometime, in the course of life, he felt like performing a great Sacrifice, for the welfare of the entire world.

Lord Vishnu knew that he was not after any achievement of the worldly nature.

He went there to bless the desire-less emperor.

As Indra, his elder brother (of Vaamana) was after the ruler ship of the Heaven and was intent on the pleasures only, Vishnu deceived king Bali and took away the heaven and earth from him and gave them back to Indra.

He imprisoned Bali in the Nether worlds like caging a monkey.

[13]

Sage Vasishtha continued the story:

"Rama! Now Bali remains in the PaataalaLoka, as a JeevanMukta.

He has equal vision towards gain and loss.

He is like the 'space' untouched by any event of his life, just experiencing anything that comes to his lot, randomly.

He will become the ruler of the three worlds again for thousands of years.

He will never feel excited by attaining anything nor will he suffer by losing anything.

Like Bali Rama, you can also analyze by yourself the reality of the world and develop dispassion.

You can also attain the non-dual state by your own effort.

Bali ruled for tens of crores of years and enjoyed everything that was possible in this world; but in the end, he found out that everything was worthless.

Rama! You also understand through this story, the worthlessness of the sense pleasures and develop dispassion. Making all effort possible, attain the Supreme state of the Self through sincere analysis (Vichaara) accompanied by dispassion based on that analysis."

{Vairaagya is not the running away process from home to hill, but to realize that the bracelet of the entire perceived phenomenon from the body-thing to the Deva -thing is just the gold of Self-awareness.
 Enjoy the mirage-magic, but do not rush towards it to drink water.
 Enjoy the blue magic of the sky, but know that it is just empty colourless space only.
 Stay amidst sense-patterns, but be always aware of the emptiness that is covered by these sense-inputs.
 Vairaagya is not running away from one sense-pattern, to another, but to know that all the sense-patterns are the lie-costume worn by the Reality named as Chit, your true self.}

END

KING PRAHLAADA

INTRODUCTION

In this story of Prahlada, taken from YogaVaasishta, Prahlada is an ordinary prince of the Daitya-klan fighting Devas along with his father. In his effort to subdue Vishnu, he meditates on Vishnu and becomes a staunch devotee of the Lord. The devotion purifies his mind and with the guidance of Vishnu he attains the Supreme state of the Self. He rules the Daitya-world till the end of the Creation, as a JeevanMukta.

{1}

PRAHLAADA

Nether worlds were once ruled by a terrifying Daitya-king named HiranyakaShipu.
 Devas and Daityas trembled at his name. He conquered all the worlds including that of Indra.
 He had many children from his many wives.
 Of them all, Prahlada was his favoured son.
 Prahlada proved a great support to his father in all his invasions of the other worlds.
 Because of his son, HiranyakaShipu could battle with any earthly king or Deva ly ruler and be sure of his victory.
 Prahlada was highly valorous and proved to be a terror to the Devas like his father.
 Harassed by the Daityas, the Devas took shelter with Lord Vishnu and prayed to him for help.
 Lord Vishnu took the form of a man-lion and killed HiranyakaShipu in no time.
 His rage was pacified by the Devas and Lord Vishnu returned to his abode in Vaikuntha.

{2}

The Daitya-kingdom wore a forlorn look after the death of their king.
 It was as if a dissolution fire had burnt the whole of the netherworld.
 Most of the Daityas along with Prahlada and other princes had run helter-skelter to different places when the man-lion had appeared. They all returned now to their dead city.
 They performed the funeral rites for all those who were dead.
 Consoling each other somehow, they started their lives anew, swallowing hard all their grief.

{3}

Prahlada was sitting alone in his private chambers lost in thoughts.
 He was thinking of ways to regain what had been lost by the intrusion of the man-lion.
 The very memory of that man-lion brought him mixed emotions of fear, sadness, anger, reverence all at once.
 He knew it was Hari who had taken that form to kill his father.
 What a tricky fellow! If he was not there, the Deva-world would be wallowing under his feet now.
 The Devas were always on the winning side because of 'this one Vishnu' who always helped them out.
 Prahlada wondered whether that Mighty Lord could be subdued by him through direct attack!
 No chance!

That wise one was mightier than all the Devas and would know of his move before he even thought of it!
The Sages said that he lived within all! He was the great Vaasudeva!
Maybe that is why he understood every mind so easily!

Prahlaada wondered if he could think of himself as Vaasudeva, the Lord Vishnu the mightiest, and thus become equal in prowess to that of Vishnu.
If he was as mighty as Vishnu, he could easily overpower him and the Devas would be defeated within minutes!
All the Daityas (women and men) now slaving under the Devas could be freed and brought back to their homeland!
He could become the Vishnu of the Daitya-clan and support the Daityas similar to that Mighty Vishnum who supported the Deva-clan.
All that the Daityas needed was another Mighty Vishnu on their side!
Prahlaada decided to become the Mighty Vishnu of the Daityas.

{4}

Prahlaada sat in the lotus-posture; closed his eyes and meditated on himself as Vishnu. He conceived the form of Vishnu as his.
He conceived the great Milk Ocean around him; the serpent as his bed; the mace and discus weapons in his hands; Deva dess Lakshmi sitting next to him; all Devas including Shiva and Brahma propitiating him.
Bit by bit; slowly, he conceived every detail of Vishnu's form and imagined his form to be that of Vishnu!
Had he become Vishnu? No!
He was still thinking like the son of the Daitya king HiranyakaShipu, and Vishnu's form was still external to him.
However much he tried, he was not able to be the form of Vishnu.
Exhausted, he wondered what to do next.

However, by the constant contemplation on the form of Vishnu, all his evil Vaasanaas had been destroyed.
His mind had purified as by the dip in the holy waters of Ganges.
He now felt no rage towards the form of Vishnu.
A deep emotion of finest love was rising in him towards Vishnu.
He wanted to fall at the tender lotus-feet and surrender all that was his to that adorable Deva.
The best way to express his love was to worship that wonderful Deva, he decided.
He now conceived all the ingredients needed for the worship; his heart filled with utmost devotion and love, he offered worship to the conceived form of MahaaVishnu.
Through repeated acts of devotion and worship, his mind became purer and purer.
After he had satisfied himself that he had expressed his devotion completely, Prahlaada opened his eyes.
He had not become Vishnu. But his every breath and thought were filled with the name and form of Naaraayana.
All his Daitya qualities were annihilated by the thought of the Supreme Godhead.
The Daitya Prahlaada who wanted to become the Vishnu of the Daitya-clan now was the Prahlaada who carried Vishnu in his heart-chamber!
Unable to think of anything other than Vishnu, he taught all the Daityas that Vishnu was the Supreme Godhead, and instructed them to worship Vishnu. He built many worship-places in his kingdom to enable the people to become devotees of the Great Lord.
All the Daityas obeyed their king, and the land echoed everywhere the great mantra 'Om Namō Naaraayanaaya'!
The weapons gathered dust and the Devas were left undisturbed!

{5}

Devas were alarmed by this new development.
They were less apprehensive when the Daityas were attacking them whenever and wherever.
But now the Daityas were worshipping Lord Vishnu. Somehow the Devas were unable to digest this matter.
Were the Daityas planning a secret attack trying to hide their plan behind this faked devotion to Vishnu?
Or, was the devotion real?
But how can that be possible? How can evil become good?
How can that mean old HiranyakaShipu's son be different from his father?
Till now, he was standing next to his father and ruthlessly attacking the Devas!
He had dared even raise his sword against Vishnu!
Now suddenly that wicked Daitya fellow is acting like the greatest devotee of Vishnu!

A lotus cannot bloom on the dry rock! A Daitya cannot have devotion in his heart! It was just impossible! It was surely a trick of Prahlaada to deceive the Devas. Vishnu must be informed about this immediately. So the Devas decided to visit Vishnu and report this new development of the Daitya-world.

Lord Vishnu was ready for the visit of the Devas.

He just brushed aside their irrational fear and assured them that he will himself visit the Daitya Prahlaada and clarify the matters with him. The Devas returned feeling better than before.

{6}

Prahlaada was absorbed in the contemplation of his dear deity in his worship room.

And, his joy knew no bounds when he saw Lord Vishnu standing in front of him for real.

Prahlaada cried; wept; worshipped; saluted again and again; recited hymns of praise; and spoke somehow in a choking voice-

“Lord! Command me whatever you wish me to do!

I am your slave! What else should I do? Is there any fault in my worship?

I do not want anything from you! Your vision itself has fulfilled my life.

I have no desires at all! Even this kingdom is not mine. Everything is yours!

You can do whatever you feel good! I have nothing to gain or lose.

You are my all-in all! Your devotion is enough for me!

Your thought is the most blissful thing in the world!

It is enough that I remember you always with love!”

Vishnu flashed his benevolent smile and spoke with a voice oozing nectar:

“Dear Prahlaada!

I am happy that you love me so much! But that is not enough.

I am not just the bluish form you see adorned by discus, mace and lotus.

You have to reach further heights in your spirituality.

There is the most Supreme state that has to be achieved by you.

Practice ‘Vichaara’ and enquire about the ‘Self’!

Who am ‘I’? Who are ‘You’? What is this world?

Analyze these questions with reason and find the answers.

Till you reach the Supreme state of Brahman, do not stop this enquiry.”

Vishnu vanished like a wave disappearing into the ocean.

{7}

Prahlaada, the obedient devotee immediately started to think and analyze as his beloved Lord had suggested. He understood that all his ancestors were following the unrighteous path prompted by their wicked Vaasanaas. Instead of trying to attain the Supreme state of Brahman they had wasted their lives pursuing the momentary pleasures of senses. He felt disgusted that they were after the Heaven and the ruler-ship of the three worlds, rather than achieving the most blissful state of the Self.

Then, he analyzed the nature of the Self.

He started with the senses and ascertained that he was none of the sense perceptions; not the mind; not the intellect; not the memory faculty; and so on.

As he remained deeply absorbed in the enquiry of the Self, he slipped into the perturbation-less state of Chit.

And his body remained unmoving like a statue.

Time passed on.

He did not get up.

The ministers and his people were alarmed by this statue-like state of the king.

They tried and tried; but he would not wake up.

Thousands of years passed away like this.

The Daitya world became erratic in ways because of the absence of the king.

The father was dead; and the son was a statue!

The Daityas became uncontrollable.

Every one acted as they liked.

The good were harassed. Houses were looted.
 The wicked killed anyone who opposed them.
 Prahlaada was unaware of all this.
 He was lost in the blissful state of Chit!

{8}

Vishnu woke up from his Yoga-Nidraa (contemplative-sleep).
 He scrutinized well, the state of all the three worlds.
 He observed that the nether world was without the attention of a king and had become uncontrollable.
 He saw that Prahlaada was in deep trance.

If the Daityas were not under a king, he knew that the Daitya clan will soon perish and it would bring an imbalance state in the Creation.
 The Devas will not have any purpose in life and would merge in the Chit-state.
 The earth will be without penance and Sacrifices because of the absence of Devas.
 And soon, earth will also perish. The entire creation which had to remain till the end of Kalpa, will vanish before time, like a snow-flake by heat.
 And with the Creation gone, the Trinities would have no duties to perform and so will dissolve into ParaBrahman.
 Nothing good will come out of this, he thought!
 Only if the Daityas thrive, the Devas can exist!
 Only if Devas exist, the earth-beings would perform Sacrifices and penance to get the required fruits.
 The worldly-existence can go on, only if the earth-beings get their fruits of actions through the Devas.
 If any other king takes over the Daitya-clan, he will attack the Devas again and make trouble.
 Prahlaada alone was fit to rule the Daitya-world for some more time.
 This is the ordained course of things.
 Prahlaada has to live till the end of this Kalpa as a JeevanMukta.
 In that case, the Creation will not perish; the good and bad will be balanced in a proper way.
 Only then could he himself play around the Creation, saving the good and destroying the evil.
 Though he actually was not affected by the existence or non-existence of the Creation, he had to see that nothing untoward happened to the Creation. That was his duty.
 What had started as a created phenomenon had to continue till the end of the process.
 So Vishnu decided to give a visit to the Daitya-world and wake up his devotee.

{9}

Lord Vishnu stood the next instant in front of Prahlaada and blew his conch.
 Prahlaada woke up immediately and opened his eyes.
 Vishnu reminded him of his duties and told him not to remain in the trance forever.
 He chided him for discarding the body unattended like this.
 He advised him that he should rule the nether-world till the end of the Kalpa.

Prahlaada apologized, and said to him that he had just rested there for a moment enjoying the bliss and had never thought of discarding the body named Prahlaada.
 He was exhausted and tired by the past battles and had lost himself in the restful state of the Self.
 As it really made no difference to him whether he remained in trance-state or not, as he always was the 'Self', he promised Vishnu that he would rule the kingdom from then onwards.

Lord Vishnu consecrated him again on the throne of the nether-world; blessed him; took leave of him; and disappeared.
 The Devas returned the imprisoned Daityas. Both the Devas and Daityas stopped fighting with each other.
 They rather helped each other like brothers.
 No one cried. No one was tormented. No blood flowed. No hatred reigned.
 Vishnu remained on his serpent bed; the Devas in the Heaven; the Daityas in the netherworld.
 All remained happy forever till the end of the Creation!

Rama had many doubts to clear.
He shot forth questions after questions to Sage Vasishtha.

RAMA:

“How can Prahlaada wake up just to the sound of a conch?”

VASISHTA:

“Prahlaada was just absorbed in the contemplation of the Self-state.
He was not dead. His body remained alive by the streak of Praana lingering within.
He was a JeevanMukta. He had attained liberation while living.
The liberated ones who have discarded the bodies cannot be seen at all.
They are like crushed seeds. Not so Prahlaada.

He can be woken up from his Samaadhi state even after thousands of years.
He still had pure Vaasanaas within.
So he woke up when the conch-sound of Vishnu was heard!

And Rama, Vishnu resides in all the minds as Vaasudeva.
Whatever he thinks will happen immediately.
He thought that Prahlaada should wake up and Prahlaada woke up.
So, what is there to feel surprised about that?”

The Chit only appears as Vishnu with a form.
If the Self is realized, Vishnu is seen!
If Vishnu is seen the Self gets realized!”

RAMA:

“Lord! You always advise me that everything gets achieved through self-effort! Then how is it that Prahlaada reached the Self-state because of Vishnu’s boon?”

VASISHTA:

“Rama! Who said that Vishnu gave the boon of Self-knowledge?
Knowledge cannot be attained through a boon or merit or by favouring a deity.
Knowledge is possible only through self-effort.
Vishnu merely guided Prahlaada in the correct path.
Prahlaada enquired about the Self for long and reached the Self-state by himself.
No Deva or Guru can bestow self-knowledge even if he is worshipped for hundreds of years.
Each person has to understand the truths by his own intellect and pursue the path of enquiry.
Then only, Self-knowledge becomes possible.
If one does not develop dispassion and sense-control, the worship of any Deva becomes meaningless! If one develops dispassion and sense-control, then also worship of a Deva becomes meaningless!
Vishnu or Shiva get pleased and grace the devotee, only if he develops dispassion and enquiry of the Self.
If a person develops dispassion and Self-enquiry, then why one has to please Vishnu or Shiva?
Forms of Devas are just expressions of Chit.

The worship methods of Devas were invented only for those who were incapable of enquiry and sense-control.

By worshipping Devas with forms, the mind gets purified easily. One slowly reached the state of the Self, like a seed becoming a huge tree in course of time.

If a devotee worships Lord Vishnu and Vishnu gives him a boon that he can attain Self-Knowledge, still the person has to reach that state through his own effort only.

Without effort nothing gets achieved!

Trying to gain knowledge through mere penance or favouring a Deva is like trying to empty the ocean using one's hands as a tool!

Mind-control is the only means to achieve the Highest state O Rama!"

Rama remained silent and thoughtful as he had no more doubts.

END

STORY OF BRAHMIN GAADHI

In the country of Kosala lived a Brahmin named Gaadhi.

He had lost his parents when he was very young. He had no relatives to speak of either. Most of them lived far from where he stayed.

Growing amidst some kind noble Brahmins who sheltered him, he had mastered all the Scriptures and had become the mine of virtues. His mind was given to dispassion even when very young.

He was of a simple nature and was satisfied with his life.

Being an ardent devotee of Naaraayana he took life as it was.

He had nothing to complain about. Of course he was slightly proud that he was a Brahmin by birth.

He 'pitied those who were not Brahmins as they would never be able to perform the worship of the fire etc, and reach the higher worlds. Especially he loathed the Chaandaalas and would avoid even the sight of them.

He even bathed uttering sacred chants if he ever met one accidentally.

Chaandaalas were the worst class of beings according to him. Thank Heaven he was a Brahmin, he thought.

About the royal clan, he had not much opinion except that they spent their whole life in enjoying the pleasures.

Though a slight envy was there in him about the royal clan who got every pleasure on earth for free, he never glanced at a woman ever. Women were pathways to hell he believed. Their sight itself would entrap a man and drown him in sufferings untold, he thought. He had remained a celibate all this time and had decided to spend his life in doing the regular duties of a Brahmin as ordained by the Scriptures.

The life was the same every day. Nothing much happened.

Yet he felt a slight dissatisfaction about everything.

He had never tried to bother about the knowledge-portion of the Vedas (Upanishads), and believed that his regular duties (Karma/Fire-rites) would lead him to the final beatitude whatever it was. He had of course heard some words regularly uttered by Sages about Maayaa, liberation etc, and he always wondered what those terms meant.

He was a Brahmin and he was doing his duties regularly.

He never was entrapped by a woman's glance and he was not in any delusion at all.

So, what was this Maayaa that the Sages talked about, he wondered.

Whom else to question but the originator of this Maayaa, Lord Vishnu! He decided to get his doubts cleared from Lord Vishnu himself who enveloped the entire Creation with his 'Maayaa' (the Deluding Power).

He bid farewell to all his friends and well-wishers and went to the forest to do penance.

He found a beautiful lake filled with lotuses in the midst of the jungle.

After purifying himself, he entered the lake; stood in the water reaching up to his neck; remained contemplating on the Great God Naaraayana, having made a firm decision to stand like that till the Lord appeared before him.

His head appeared like a new lotus species surrounded by all the lotuses of the lake.

Eight months passed! Lord Vishnu appeared before him and asked him what boon he wanted.

Though Gaadhi could have asked even for a life in heaven, he spoke to the Supreme Being, without wavering in his mind- “Lord! I want to understand the deluding power of yours which is appearing as this expansive universe. Let me have a glimpse of it.”

Lord Vishnu was pleased by his dispassionate attitude. He said- “Of course you will see it and be freed of it too.” Next instant he vanished.

{What could Vishnu say?

If a person who is sunk in deep waters asks where the water is, what can he say?

The very identity of Gaadhi was a delusion. The very ideas that ruled his mind, that ‘he was a Brahmin, he was of a superior caste, he was a devotee of Vishnu’ – all these thoughts were also a part of Maayaa.

And Gaadhi’s mind was not yet ready understand the Supreme truth, as it was filled with so many likes and dislikes. His Vaasanaas would block his mind from understanding the truth.

So, Vishnu quickly said ‘Yes’ to the simple request of Gaadhi and vanished before Gaadhi could say anything more. But Gaadhi’s journey towards the Supreme had started with the first step in the ‘Vichaara’ method, with the question ‘What is Maayaa?’ So, he will surely be free of it too, even without a boon from a God.

{As Ramakrishna Paramahansa says-

The fish which understand that they are caught in a net alone will have the chance to escape and struggle for it; not those fish who do not even know that they are caught in the net of Maayaa, and are happy in their ignorant states.}

Gaadhi slowly came out of the lake. He was happy that he had seen the Lord in person.

He did not know what the words of his deity meant. He decided to wait and see what would happen.

He built a small hut in that forest and remained there regularly performing his routine duties.

Every day, he went to the same lake to take bath and recite the sacred hymns of Naaraayana, remaining submerged inside the waters of the lake.

One day he entered the water pondering about what his Lord had said the other day.

‘Why nothing had happened yet? Was it all a dream?’

Would he really see the Maayaa of his Lord? What events would prove the words of the Lord?’

Lost in such thoughts, he dipped fully inside the water and started reciting the chants which will ward of evil, as ordained by the Scriptures.

Suddenly he felt a jerk; his head started reeling; and he forgot everything- the waters, the Mantra recitation and his own identity as Gaadhi, the celibate Brahmin who was trying to understand Maayaa.

There was only the blank mind of Gaadhi suddenly experiencing amazing events of another life.

[Gaadhi had an amazing experience of another life inside the waters within a few minutes.

When he came out of the water, he thought that he had understood what ‘Maayaa’ was!]

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

that-

his body was lying dead in his house;

his relatives sitting next to the body and crying;

his wife sitting at his feet and shedding tears;

his mother lamenting loudly, holding the face of her young son...;

that-

his inauspicious lifeless body getting carried to the cremation ground filled with blood thirsty ravens and foxes;

his body getting burnt to ashes by a blazing fire...;

that-

the Jeeva from the dead body entering the womb of a Chaandaala woman;

getting born as black hued baby; being the darling of his low caste parents;

then becoming twelve years old; then turning sixteen with a muscular and strong body;

then wandering from forest to forest with his dogs;
 then getting attracted to a young girl of his own caste;
 marrying her; getting children from her;
 then gradually becoming old;
 then returning to his own birth-place near the country called BhootaMandala;
 constructing a small hut out of leaves;
 living there with his dearest sons and wife;
 his family growing huge and getting filled with many members;
 himself leading a cruel life;
 himself rude and violent towards all;
 all his people dying suddenly by some calamity...;

that-

himself wandering alone in the forest weeping and crying for the dead; leaving his birth-place and wandering away to other countries walking aimlessly, his heart heavy with grief; reaching the prosperous country ruled by Keeras in course of his wanderings; wondering at the beauty of the city walking on the main road...;

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

The city wore a festive look on that day.

Even the trees on the road were decorated with expensive cloth-garlands studded with diamonds and gems.

Roads were covered by flowers. Crowds of men and women filled the side-walks.

Everyone acted highly excited.

As the old Chaandaala walked on the road, he was wonder-struck at the beauty of it all.

As he trod slowly he suddenly froze in surprise by the sudden appearance of a huge elephant in front of him.

The elephant was not ordinary. It was covered with golden ornaments. Diamonds and Gem-studded clothes covered its body. It had auspicious paints painted on its face.

Since the king had died in that city, the royal elephant was left loose to choose the next ruler as per the custom of the country.

The old Chaandaala stared with amazement at the huge elephant decorated with precious stones and shiny garments.

Before he understood what was happening, the huge trunk of the elephant had lifted him and he found himself sitting on its back. Flowers showered on him from all directions.

Drums sounded deafening one and all.

'Victory to the king' 'Victory to the king' – the shouts of the citizens filled the quarters.

Soon he was led to the palace.

Beautiful girls surrounded him immediately. He was bathed in fragrant waters.

Red paste was applied all over his limbs. Silken garments woven with gold strings covered his dark body.

Ornaments studded with precious gems adorned his chest.

Fragrant flower garlands decorated his dark bosom.

He was carried to the court. He was seated on the royal throne. Holy waters dampened his hair.

Auspicious chants filled the air. A crown adorned his head.

He was officially the king of the Keeras now.

Because of his dark hue, he was named as Gavala (wild buffalo).

The Chaandaala of the BhootaMandala country now was the adored king of Keeras.

Nobody bothered about his true origin.

The elephant's selection was Deva's verdict. Nobody raised their voice against such a miraculous happening.

Gavala, the Chaandaala now was the supreme ruler of the Keeras!

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

Soon, the King was in full command. He took control of the whole country. He made his own rules.

He enjoyed the royal pleasures, like a hungry crow coming upon a fat dead deer.

His words were obeyed without question. Beautiful girls served him like slaves.

Ministers helped him in all the matters of the country with utmost respect.

He soon learnt the ways of the king and imitated the civilized behaviour of the royal personages.

He had forgotten his own Chaandaala-identity completely.

He had forgotten also his dead family. He grieved for them no more.
 Happy at the good fortune that befell him, he enjoyed all the pleasures his royal status had access to.
 He hid from all, his real caste and birth origin, for fear of losing the royal status.
 He was careful never to expose his natural behaviour in the presence of others.
 Eight years passed like this.

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

Gavala was now proud and arrogant.
 His ego had bloated up enough to blind him to his own original identity.
 He was becoming slightly careless in hiding the Chaandaala-ness from others.

Once he was sitting alone in his private chambers. No one was around.
 Gavala tired of all the heavy attires he was forced to wear as a king, decided to remain as himself for some time.
 Eight years were a long span of time.
 There was no danger anymore of losing his royal status.
 He thought that nobody would care any more. He was the king and nobody dare question him about his origin!
 He removed all the gold and diamond ornaments and also the shining royal garments. He wore some simple garments. He now was his own self, the dark-hued Chaandaala.

Attired in a simple cloth, his dark body shining like a moonless starless sky, he walked out of the room.
 His heart felt light.

His life was settled. No more will he suffer the tormented life of a Chaandaala.

He will live as a king and die as a king, enjoying every moment the pleasures of a royal status.

He smiled with contentment.

Slowly he descended down the steps of the palace leading towards the servant quarters.

His lifted his head high proud and arrogant.

All these lowly creatures will serve him like slaves.

Look at their misfortune living in the lowly courtyard waiting for his command like dogs; whereas fate had favored him and lifted him high above them all and placed him at the peak of the heaven as it were!

In the courtyard at the back of the palace, the servants were grouped together as per their status and caste differentiations. Gavala smiled with a sadistic contentment.

He felt like walking among those lowly creatures and taste the joy of being a Master to all of them.

Huddled in a corner of the courtyard, a group of Chaandaalas were engaged in singing their own favourite songs to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The sound was heavenly to the Chaandaala king who was tired of the music played by the palace musicians. He felt soothed by the melodious voice of the singer and inadvertently walked towards the group.

Some old memories stirred deep in his heart.

He for a few moments forgot that he was enacting the king's role now and should not go near the low caste men at any cost. But nature cannot be conquered by any one and the deceitful king was standing next to the group of Chaandaalas who were enjoying their songs.

Suddenly an old man in the group jumped up in joy. He was the leader of the group.

He could see the king's face clearly now from that short distance and identified him as his old friend Katanja.

He shouted excitedly-"Hey Katanja!" and moved towards the king to embrace him.

He felt that since his friend was now the ruler, all the Chaandaalas will henceforward enjoy the favours of the king and become rich. What a fortunate thing that one of his clan has been parading as a king now!

His joy knew no bounds! But to his amazement, the king was moving away from that place very fast, angrily retorting to the servant's insolent behaviour.

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

Poor Gavala!

He never expected the turn of events that happened so fast!

He was shocked to see his old friend getting up from the group and running towards him, shouting his original name! God forbid if any palace resident found out his true identity!

He quickly climbed up the stairs and entered the safety of his private chambers, before the old Chaandaala servant messed up the things further.

The surprised old man had been held back and pushed back to his own corner by the angry guards.

Gavala sighed with relief in the safety of his own room and smiled at the ladies who were supposed to decorate him with garlands and ornaments. But nobody moved. They all stood like statues and stared at him defiantly.

Their faces were flushed as if they had been shocked by some untoward event.

Why won't they be?!

When the king had walked out of his private chambers without any decorations, the girls had felt curious and observed his actions from the window. They had seen how he was lured by the music of the Chaandaalas; how he had stood there enjoying their songs; how one old man had jumped up in excitement and had recognized the king as his old friend etc etc.

Now they knew the secret of the king's origin.

They were disgusted; horrified; shocked; grieved!

The word spread like wild fire.

Their king was a Chaandaala!

All these days, all these years they were ruled by a Chaandaala!

They had touched him; worshipped him; adored him; obeyed him!

Oof!

Every citizen, every man and woman felt that they had committed an enormous sin!

All the ministers felt that they were deceived by a low-caste idiot and felt foolish!

Gaadhi saw within the few minutes inside the waters...

Gavala tried to say something; no one listened!

He cried, pleaded; no one bothered!

He stood with his black body bereft of all decorations alone in the middle of the room bearing the humiliating look from one and all. Even the servants looked at him with disgust as if he was a corpse placed in the palace.

The women-folk cried and wept disgusted with their own bodies which had contacted the Chaandaala.

No one wanted to live anymore. The whole city was polluted. They could never ever perform any auspicious act after this. There was no use in holding on to a life where the four-fold goals of life could not be pursued!

All of them held a meeting and the decision was reached that death alone could atone their sin of living in the contact of a Chaandaala.

Huge fires were lit everywhere.

Men, women, children all entered the fire weeping and screaming!

Soon the entire city turned into ashes!

Smell of the burning flesh filled the quarters.

Gavala stood there watching all that happened.

He was shocked by the fact that he had been the cause of all these deaths.

His heart burnt with remorse. He felt that he had no right to live any more. He was a sinner and he deserved death! He walked into the blazing flames. He withered in pain as the flames slowly engulfed his entire body and turned it into ashes.

Gaadhi woke up crying in pain inside the waters of the lake!

Gaadhi woke up. He was not burning in fire as he had imagined.

There was cold water all around him, above and below.

He slowly came out of the water and collapsed on the bank exhausted and confused.

For a moment, he wondered who he was. Then slowly all the things came back to his mind.

He remembered that he was Gaadhi the Brahmin who was having his holy dip in the lake.

Then, what had he experienced, he wondered.

A life as a Chaandaala? The lowly beings who ate raw flesh of animals and lived in a state worse than the animals?

He felt disgusted that he had even in imagination had become a Chaandaala.
He took bath again and walked back to the hermitage.

Though the Chaandaala-experience was a vivid experience of his mind, he brushed it away as a stupid imagination of his mind. Or he might have had fainted inside the waters for a few minutes and dreamed it all.

Good that it was just a dream! Feeling relieved that he was still Gaadhi the Brahmin of esteemed character, he slowly tread his way back to the hut.

But his mind would not rest. The experience of a life-time of a Chaandaala was not just a dream, he thought.
But why such an experience?

Who was that Gaadhi who died in his dream-like life? Who were there sitting as his mother and wife?

His actual parents had died when he was very young; and he for sure had no wife to speak of. He did not even glance at a woman in his celibate-life of the Brahmin.

Then who were all those relatives crying for the dead Gaadhi?

All his relatives, if he had any, lived very far in different countries. He didn't even know of them!

And why was he born as a Chaandaala?

After performing penance for so long, and after having the vision of Lord Vishnu, what demerit gave him such an experience?

Gaadhi's mind was troubled by the whole thing. He decided to forget all of it like a distasteful nightmare and continue to live the routine life of worship and fire-rites.

One day, a Brahmin arrived there asking for shelter. He looked very thin and emaciated as if he had gone without food for long. He was tired and hungry. The ever-compassionate Gaadhi welcomed him heartily; offered him food and water. At night, when they were resting after the day's duties, Gaadhi asked the guest-Brahmin as to why he was so tired and emaciated in structure?

The guest told him a strange story.

He had in course of wanderings had gone to the country of Keeras; had enjoyed their hospitality for more than a month; but was shocked to hear that their country was ruled by a Chaandaala king for eight years and that all the Brahmins and others had entered the fire because of that, and the king also had entered the fire and killed himself. The guest told him that shocked by such news, he had enquired many more citizens and verified the facts, and found it to be true. Feeling that he was polluted by enjoying the hospitality of that Chaandaala-ruled country, he had performed the Chaandraayana Vrata thrice and purified himself. That is why he was tired and emaciated.

{Chaandraayana Vrata- a religious observance – fifteen mouthfuls at the full moon; diminishing one mouthful everyday during the dark fortnight; zero mouthfuls on the new moon; increased again in the next fortnight}

Gaadhi was shocked by this report. He repeatedly questioned the guest wondering whether he had heard the report rightly. The guest untiringly spoke of where that country was, who that king was, again and again.

In the morning, the guest went away after thanking him profusely for his hospitality.

However, Gaadhi was feeling restless. The Brahmin's words had again brought back all the memories of the Chaandaala life, and he felt disgusted with himself.

Was the guest lying? Gaadhi did not think that man as capable of lying!

Had the guest imagined everything as he had done?

Gaadhi decided to find out the truth for himself.

He packed his personal things and started on the journey to visit the places seen in his dream-delusion experience.

Gaadhi crossed many a mountain and river and arrived at the country named BhootaMandala.

On the outskirts he found the huge forest he had lived as a Chaandaala.

He remembered all the areas of that forest, and guided by his memory arrived at a broken down ruins of a hut lived by him in the delusory life.

The hut was not looking like a hut now. All the walls were broken. Grass shoots grew from each and every corner. Tattered remains of the clothes were thrown all over by the winds. The hollow skulls used by him for eating were now filled with rain-water and stinking.

Gaadhi could remember everything that had happened in his life inside that little hut.

Unable to believe what he saw, he spent a long time wandering all over that forest recognizing and remembering every moment of his Chaandaala life.

Then to gather further proof of everything, he went to the village that was situated at the end of the forest.

He enquired everyone there about the Chaandaala group living in the forest area. All of them repeated the same story; that an old man named Katanja lived there with his family; that his family members all had died by some misfortune; that he had left that place and gone away unable to bear the grief of their loss.

As he repeatedly went on asking all the villagers the same question, they started wondering what relation had this Brahmin to the old Chaandaala. Gaadhi hid his embarrassment of being that very Chaandaala; quickly thanked them all for their kindness, and moved away.

He was quite shocked by all the reports he had heard about the Chaandaala. He returned to the forest-region, where he had lived the entire life (from birth to death) minute by minute as a Chaandaala in the other life.

He wandered for a long time in those areas trying to confirm that it was the very same place he had seen in his delusion-state under the waters of the lake.

Then he left that place trying to find the kingdom of Keeras.

After crossing many cities and hills, he reached the Keera country. There also, the people told him the same story that he had experienced as a Chaandaala king. They told him that twelve years back the country was ruled by a Chaandaala for eight years as he was chosen as the ruler by the royal elephant; that when the people found out about his lowly origin, all of them had entered the fire and the king also had did the same.

Gaadhi could not believe his ears.

As he walked in the royal road dazed and confused, he saw the temple of Lord Vishnu.

At that moment, a procession came out of that temple with the king seated on the elephant.

Lord Vishnu himself was seated there as the king.

Immediately all the scenes of the royal life rose up flooding the mind of Gaadhi.

He remembered the city, the roads, the people, the palace, the garden, the pleasure grounds, the pretty maidens, the ministers, everything and anything of that king's experience of eight years.

The vision of Vishnu as the king made him understand the cause of all the events.

As he had requested, Lord Vishnu had shown him the power of delusion as a direct experience. He was a fool not to understand all this as the act of the Lord. His mind filled with so many Vaasanaas had created the experiences and he had gone through them like a helpless bird caught in a net. He was ignorant for sure.

The knowledge of why and what for this Maayaa exists must be sought for.

Who can be a better person than Naaraayana when aspiring for knowledge? He was the greatest teacher!

Gaadhi decided to clear his doubts from the Lord himself.

He found a solitary cave in some hill; lived only on a handful of water and performed penance on Naaraayana.

One and a half years passed.

Lord Vishnu stood before him and asked him what he wanted now.

Lord Vishnu asked,

“You wanted to have a glimpse of my Maayaa! You experienced it! Now what more do you want?”

Gaadhi offered flowers at the feet of his beloved Lord and said-

“Lord? What is all this? What really happened? I feel so confused.

The Chaandaala-life was my personal experience perceived for just a few moments under the water like a dream!

How could those dream-events occur in the outside real world in a long span of so many years?

How can a dream experienced in the mind become a reality in the waking state?

Explain to me everything.”

Lord Vishnu answered-

“What waking state? What dream state?

An ignorant mind always is deluded and dreaming!

The mind riddled with Vaasanaas dreams that it dreams; dreams that it woke up; dreams that it sleeps!

Where does the dream end? Where does the reality begin?

The reality of the world projected by the mind itself is unreal.

Your belief in the identity of Gaadhi is one such delusion.

Your experience as Katanja and Gavala is another dream dreamt inside the ‘Gaadhi’s dream’!

Anyhow, assuming Gaadhi to be a real character, let us analyze where all you were deluded!

You got inside the water to chant the Mantras.

Within a few minutes under-water you lived a full life of Chaandaala from birth to death. You got out of the water and thought that the delusion was over with. But it was not. The delusion of the Chaandaala-life was so vivid in your mind that you could not dismiss it as a dream. You wondered whether it was true or not. This thought projected another delusion for you. Even as you were seated in your hermitage, wondering whether the Chaandaala life was real, the mind projected the continuation of your Chaandaala experience. As a result, a Brahmin guest appeared at the door and talked about the Keera country and King Gavala. After that Brahmin-guest vanished, the delusion had stopped again. But you believed the guest's words as true and started on the journey to find the BhootaMandala and the Keera country. But they were not there in the real world. It was your personal experience. Tired and exhausted you entered a cave and rested awhile. The hidden Vaasanaa in you, which wanted the Chaandaala experience to be true, projected the delusion again of your visiting the BhootaMandala and Keera country. In the delusion itself you again reached the same cave and woke up from your sleep. You could not find the difference between real and false experiences. You were confused. You performed penance in the same cave you had rested in your journey. Now, I am here answering your questions.

The BhootaMandala, the Keera country, the Brahmin guest, the people you met are all unreal and they never existed. Your mind alone created them forced by the Vaasanaas. As long as Vaasanaas are there, such experiences will keep on occurring like a seed placed in the fertile earth becoming a huge tree. Tree is within the seed. Events are within the mind. At some point, the fruits and flowers inside the seed get projected outside. At some random point, the Vaasanaas inside the mind are experienced as events as if in an outside world. Space, time are all projections of the mind. The events of many years can be experienced within a few seconds because of delusion.

Within a few minutes inside the waters, you lived and died as a Chaandaala, in your mind! Within a few minutes inside the hermitage, you saw the guest and conversed with him, in your mind. Within a few minutes inside the cave, you visited Katanja's house, and the Keera country; and got the proof of your Chaandaala life, in your mind!

This is the Maayaa that envelops an ignorant mind!
 Get up. Go home. Do your duties as you deem fit.
 Performance of the ordained duties alone leads a man towards his welfare."

Lord Vishnu immediately vanished leaving Gaadhi to sort out the workings of his mind himself.

Gaadhi sat and analyzed all the events that had happened in his life after he came to the forest. He could not dismiss all the events as unreal as Lord Vishnu suggested. He had a vivid experience of the Chaandaala life second by second, minute by minute. They were a part of his memory now. He, Gaadhi had experienced the life of a Chaandaala truly and vividly. Delusion or no-delusion, the experience was real! The BhootaMandala must be there as a real country and the Keera country too.

The delusion-states will not occur again as Lord Vishnu had explained them.

Therefore, assured of the reality of the world lying in front of him, Gaadhi set out to visit the Chaandaala-village and the Keera country once again. He walked through the same paths, traversed the same distances, reached the same places; met the same people; asked them the same questions; and they all repeated the same story.

Gaadhi was now assured of the reality of his Chaandaala life. It was real!

The people he met were real! They confirmed his story!

Then why did Lord Vishnu tell him that no such country existed; and nothing happened?

Gaadhi returned to the cave; performed penance again.

Lord Vishnu stood in front of him asking him what more he needed.

Gaadhi told him that he found the real Keera country; and a Gavala had ruled them. Everything was real!

Why then did the Lord say that nothing existed?

Lord Vishnu explained-

“Everything in this world occurs as a random experience.

Mind alone projects itself out, as an event occurring in space and time.

The ideas of ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ also are just the projections of the mind.

When many people meet, many minds collide.

Each mind reflects the ideas of the others.

A simultaneous event is experienced by all!

It is a possibility that on his journey towards the Chaandaala dwellings, Gaadhi just happened to see a ruined old hut and immediately thought that it was the same hut he had lived in, as Katanja!

It was the same mind which experienced the delusion of the Chaandaala-life under the waters.

It was the same mind which says that the old hut in the forest is the hut Katanja lived!

Who can disprove what the mind says? Man is the mind alone!

So Gaadhi might have imagined that he had lived in the forest hut.

When he met the other Chaandaalas, their minds would have mirrored the same experiences and they would have talked of it as real. For them also, Katanja was a real person!

The same thing would have happened in the Keera country.

The Keera citizens might have been affected by the arrival of Gaadhi, and immediately reflected his own experiences in their minds. For them also, Gavala became a real person.

Each mind is a dreamer; a projector of unreal events.

When many minds join together, they all project the same unreality and believe it to be true.

Each mind proves the illusory-state experienced by the other as real.

The world is a dream perceived by Brahmaa through so many minds.

All the dreamers of his dream see the same dream as real!

What is Time? Again, it is also a projection of the mind!

Mind conceives some objects; imagines the ‘Time’ based on the changes occurring to those objects; invents actions based on those time-conceptions.

Time is not some object. It is just an abstract phenomenon setting a boundary to the events that occur in our life.

Time is beginning less and endless. Time has no likes and dislikes.

Time does not favour someone and hurt some one else.

Time is a conception of the mind creating the boundary for experiences rising through Vaasanaas.

Time is Brahmaa himself, as he is the first phenomenon rising from Brahman, bound by 'time and space' Dear Gaadhi! Now go back and engage yourself in performing your duties. Try to analyze the Self through the method of enquiry and discrimination. Be free of delusion."

Lord Vishnu vanished from sight.

Gaadhi remained for a few months in the cave thinking about all the events of his life.

Still, he was unable to grasp the true essence of the events.

The life experienced as a Chaandaala was still lingering in his mind as memories.

He was unable to get out of that polluted state and felt grieved.

He decided to take shelter in Lord Vishnu again.

He performed penance again in that cave, desiring for the vision of Lord Vishnu.

One fine day, Vishnu graced him by his vision.

Gaadhi gave word to his grievance.

"Lord! I still am not able to rid of the memories of my Chaandaala life.

This Maayaa confuses me more and more.

Who am I – the Chaandaala or the Brahmin?

Please explain everything. Do not immediately disappear after explaining everything.

Stay with me and tell me exactly what duties I should perform."

Lord Vishnu said-

"Delusion means seeing something which is not there in reality.

Maayaa hides the reality and makes something else appear as reality.

Only a person who is freed of ignorance, can escape the clutches of Maayaa.

If the Chaandaala-identity is troubling you as a false superimposition, then you must be equally troubled by the identity of the Brahmin Gaadhi also.

Both identities are false.

In delusions, you cannot label one as better than the other.

All delusions are just some random projections of the mind.

Every event in life is just a random expression of the perceiver, perceived and perception; the Seer, Seen and Seeing.

As long as the mind is contaminated with ignorance, some identity with some life event will keep arising in the mind-arena.

Whether it is Katanja, or Gavala or Gaadhi, all are just some delusory experiences in the total mind of Brahmaa. No one is real. Nothing is there except the Supreme Brahman.

All experiences are delusions projected through ignorance.

Time is also just a part of the illusory experience.

What you remember as already unfolded, you label it as past; what is not yet unfolded, you label it as future. What is unfolding, you label it as present.

Past, present or future are just terms used for some unfoldment-mode of the Vaasanaas.

All memories or unfulfilled Vaasanaas remain in the unmanifest state of Brahman. When they unfold randomly through a Brahma, the world is perceived as populated by many.

All minds are just channels for various Vaasanaa-unfoldments.

Mind is an amazing phenomenon.

It can create any experience at any time-mode for long or short durations, and fool you.

Gaadhi or Katanja, both are illusory identities unfolding some Vaasanaa fulfilment.

How many lives and experiences an individual undergoes simultaneously, is beyond comprehension.

Because of my blessing, you were able to analyze one such amazing experience and could have a glimpse of Maayaa.

Otherwise, what experiences an individual Self undergoes as which identity at any particular moment, is never understood by anybody.

At every experience, there is only a combined phenomenon of Seer, Seen and Seeing.

What identity the Seer dons to perceive what experience, is determined randomly by a Vaasanaa.

The Vaasanaa for hoarding could be the rat hiding in your home.

The Vaasanaa for freedom could be the bird floating in the far sky.

The Vaasanaa for play could be the child running around you.

Who is who? Everything is just a Vaasanaa unfoldment. There are no real identities.

At one particular experience, an identity is projected by the mind as some form and name.

What is real or what is unreal can never be understood by the person steeped in ignorance.

Like a dry leaf tossed about by the storm, the individual goes through countless experiences as countless identities.

All this is caused by ignorance.

A Knower of Brahman never is affected by any experience he undergoes.

He is person who is wide awake in a dream.

He remains always as the Self (Brahman) and remains untouched by the events of his life.

He has no Vaasanaas and his mind stops projecting Vaasanaa unfoldment.

His mind is like a burnt seed. It never again sprouts into birth and death experiences.

Living as a JeevanMukta till the body falls, the Knower of Brahman attains the bodiless liberation.

Knowledge alone is the cure for delusion.

Delusions cannot be explained. It will be equal to explaining the actions of a ghost.

When the ghost itself is non-existent, its actions are also non-existent.

Why do you bother about how your delusion of being a Chaandaala became real in the outside world? Gaadhi's life is also an illusory experience. Katanja's life also is an illusory experience.

What other life- experiences you could have had at any other time, is also due to illusion.

Instead of trying to figure out the meanings of the unreal life-experiences projected by the stupid mind, analyze the nature of the Self and realize the Truth.

Remain here in this cave itself and seek the knowledge of the Self through the process of enquiry."

Lord Vishnu vanished like the cloud of the autumn season.

Gaadhi remained in that cave for many years practising Self-knowledge and soon was freed of ignorance.

He then retired to the RishyaMooka Mountain and remained there absorbed in the Self-state.

After many years, he reached the state of the 'Knower of Brahman' and attained liberation.

*After getting Self-knowledge,
Gaadhi the great one,
realizing his true essence; freed of fear and grief;
established in the state of JeevanMukti;
remaining in the Quiescent state;
with a mind filled with unbroken bliss;
shone forth in the Brahman-sky, like the moon complete with all digits.*