

# MUSINGS ON YOGA VAASISHTA

## PART IV

### SUSTENANCE

An understanding of any substance begins with a study of its properties. The properties of any material are of two kinds: (1) Intrinsic Properties and (2) Transient or Assumed Properties.

#### **1. INTRINSIC PROPERTY:**

Intrinsic property is the basic nature of any substance. For instance, let us take the moon. Moon is the most brightly appearing object in the sky among many twinkling stars. “Bright appearance” is the natural characteristic of the moon. As long as the ‘bright appearance’ is there, the moon is there. If that quality is absent, moon itself is not there.

#### **2. TRANSIENT OR ASSUMED PROPERTY:**

The properties that a substance assumes temporarily i.e. those characteristics that come and go are the Transient or Assumed properties. For example, we may say, “Look, Peter’s house is the one where the bird is sitting.” The bird does not sit on that house forever. In order to identify Peter’s house amongst many similar dwellings, one made use of the bird sitting at that time on that house. One could identify that particular house because of the bird. One can identify Peter’s house later on, even after the bird flies away.

In order to understand a new material, one has to understand its Intrinsic properties as well as its Assumed (Transient) properties. The intrinsic properties of the Brahman are *Sat* (Reality), *Chit* (Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss). His transient or assumed qualities are Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution. One should know both these qualities of Brahman in order to understand him. It is very difficult to directly comprehend or talk about the intrinsic qualities of Brahman. That’s why, at many places, the Vedas firstly talk about the assumed, temporary or transient qualities of the Brahman and then explain Brahman in terms of his natural intrinsic qualities.

The following quote from Taittiriyaopanishad is very pertinent in this context among all the statements in the Vedas about the transient qualities of Brahman:

“yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante  
yeena jātāni jīvanti  
yatprayantyaabhi samviśanti.”

It means: “Brahman is that from which all the five major elements like the sky are born, by which all that were born are sustained and into which all those sustained finally enter and unify with it.”

The properties of creation, sustenance and dissolution do not always adhere to the Brahman. Therefore, they are to be called as temporarily assumed characteristics. Both Vasishtha and Valmiki Maharishis prepared the scope of their teachings in Yogavaasishta keeping this fact in mind.

A question on the Scheme adopted in presenting the subject matter in Yogavaasishta was discussed at the beginning of the third Chapter - Utpatti (Creation). We felt that an answer would eventually come up. We presented a review of the salient points discussed in that chapter at its end. We understood the gist of the chapter to be that:

- (i) The whole creation is only an illusion of our mind,
- (ii) There is no true “existence” or “beingness” to this world, and
- (iii) The main purpose of the chapter was to establish that “actionlessness” or “inaction” was the true nature of Brahman.

Further, we also felt that the truth of the above statements could be established by observing the actual state of the world.

All this gives us an idea of the approach followed in the book, Yogavaasishta. The book opens with the Chapters on Renunciation and Desire for Liberation. These two chapters can in fact be considered as Introduction to the subject. The real meaty stuff has not been touched at all in these chapters

Substantive issues were taken up for the first time in the third Chapter - Creation (Utpatti) (Published as Part II in our series). It was established in this chapter that the creation of the whole world is merely an illusion of the mind. Following it is the fourth Chapter on Sustenance. Even in this chapter, it is being taught that the continuance of the world too is unreal like a magic show. After this comes the Chapter Dissolution (Upasama). The illusory nature of the world is established in this chapter also. One has to appreciate that these three Chapters together deal with the three temporarily assumed characteristics of the Brahman viz. Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution. The True Intrinsic Characteristics of Brahman and the advantage of gaining the Knowledge of Brahman are discussed in the final and sixth Chapter on Nirvana (Liberation).

Thus, the broad approach in the book, Yogavaasishta is:

Group I: Comprising two introductory chapters (Published as Part I in our series);

Group II: Consisting of the three chapters dealing with the Temporarily assumed characteristics of Brahman as per the aphorism ““yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante”; and,

Group III: Comprising the sixth chapter dealing with the purpose of studying the essential form of Brahman.

The Chapter on Creation (Utpatti) is the most difficult chapter to understand in the second group. Much of the actual subject has been very well covered there. Very same issues are again and again explained from different viewpoints in the next two Chapters on Sustenance and Dissolution (Upasama).

Redundancy is purposefully built in by the author because we often get the same doubts manifesting in different garbs. There is yet another reason for the repetition. For example, musicians sing the same *pallavi* again and again. If one asks them why they do it, they point out at the subtle differences in *sangati*. Only expert musicians can appreciate these nuances. In a similar way, even in the field of philosophical logic, arguments are repeated with certain subtle differences. One cannot ignore these subtleties simply because they are insignificant. Such an attitude can some times defeat the purpose of the main theorem itself.

[**Note:** *Pallavi* refers to the first (usually) two lines of a song and are repeated through out the song. *Sangati* is a technical beauty associated with musical phrases reflecting the essence of both the tune and lyric.]

More over, Lord Sri Rama was by himself an intellectual. To top it, he gained proficiency in many fields. It is but natural that such a person should get quite a number of doubts. That's why, Vasishtha Maharishi had to expand the scope of the book trying to explain the issues from many different angles. In this process, the Chapter on Sustenance became 3,000 sloka strong.

### 3. CHAPTER ON SUSTENANCE OPENS:

Let us now recapitulate briefly the issues discussed in this chapter, keeping in mind the subtleties of the arguments. Vasishtha opened his discourse as follows:

**Vasishtha:** “Rama, we may describe Brahman as one that is unaffected by this world. “Being-unaffected” is an attribute of the Brahman. In the same way, Brahman is sat-chit-ananda – this is another attribute. In fact, these two are not two disparate qualities. Our mind is completely clouded with the mundane worldly impressions. Hence, it is necessary first to rid it of these impressions in order to understand Brahman.

“It is better to approach this topic from the position that Brahman is beyond the world. In other words, this method may be described as “Looking for Brahman-without-worldliness.” When once we have an understanding through this approach, it will be easy to grasp that Brahman is truly sat-chit-ananda. The Vedas talked about “*Yatova...*” etc. only for this reason of enunciating a teaching based on ‘worldlessness’. I too followed this approach in the Chapter on Creation.

“Rama, Vedas did not stop at “*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante.*” They also stated “*yeena jātāni jīvanti*” That means, all living things created are sustained by the very same Brahman. There are many such statements in the Vedas. For example,

1. “*yena dyauh pruthvī druḍhā*” which means, “this Earth is able to exist because of the Brahman.”
2. “*ko hyevānyāt - kah prānyāt - yadeeṣa ākāśa ānando nasyāt.*”, which means, “who can survive in this world without the Brahman?”
3. “*bhīṣāsmādvātah pavate*”, meaning, “the wind moves, sun rises, fire, Indra,

Yama, and all others perform their functions from a fear of Brahman.”

All such sentences confirm the sustenance of the world (universe). Further, we have:

1. “sadeeva somyedamagra āsīt”, this whole universe was existing as ‘*sat* (*truth and beingness*)’ before creation.
2. “ātmāvā idameeka aivāgra āsīt”, this whole world was existing as a non-dual Self (*atma*) before creation.

“Such statements imply that the universe was existing as ‘*sat*’ even at the time of Dissolution.

“On one hand many of these statements from the Vedas go to show that the universe is there now and continues to be there in a subtle form and as ‘*sat*’ even after Dissolution. On the other hand we established in the third Chapter on Creation that the universe was not at all created and it had no existence. From a human intellectual point of view, there is every reason to get several doubts regarding this contradiction. Some people postulate untenable hypotheses to reconcile these contradictions. But, Rama! none of them is valid. The apparent world is:

“ bhaviṣyatpura nirmāṇam  
cittasamsthamivoditam  
markaṭānalatāpānta  
masadevārtha sādhakam (Sarga 1, Sloka 4)

“This entire world is a projection of the mind and is equivalent to the construction of a future city. It is like the heat imagined by a monkey in a branch of a tree.

(We came across this metaphor in the third Chapter on Creation. Some monkeys watched forest fire generated when two branches of a tree rubbed against one another. They believed that fire existed in the tree branches. Therefore, when they feel cold, they tightly hug the tree branches. Because of the intensity of their belief, they do feel warmth in the branches and do not suffer any cold. This is the allusion referred to here).

“This whole world is like that heat in the tree branch. Infact it’s not there, but it causes the feelings of happiness and sadness etc. to the ignorant. Rama, this is the ultimate truth.

#### 4. SEED AND PLANT:

**Rama:** “Holy Master! May be it is more appropriate to say that, in the way the whole tree is there in a seed, the whole world is there in the form of a seed during Dissolution.

“mahākālpakṣaye dṛuśyamāste bīja ivamkurah”

“Many learned people also postulate similarly. Could they be ignorant?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama!

“bṛte ya aiva ma majñatva metattasyāsti śaiśavam”

“Do understand that such people who talk in those terms are ignorant, and childish too. In the example you cited, there is a form (shape, body) to the seed and therefore, the tree could possibly be within it in a finer form. But the Brahman is formless (bodyless)!

“manaṣṣaṣṭhendriyātītam  
yat syādatitarāmaṇu  
bījam tadbhavitum śaktam  
svayambhurjagatām katham”

“Brahman is so subtle that he is beyond comprehension by sensory organs and mind. More over Brahman is self-born. That means, it is not like a seed that is produced by a tree. It is unique and changeless. How such a Brahman could be a seed for something else? Therefore, the truth is that the world does not exist in Brahman.

“Further, the world has not come about through evolution. It arises as an illusion. It’s like a rope appearing as snake. It is not that the snake was present in the rope as a seed before the illusion originated. In the same way, this world too was not there in Brahman at the time of Dissolution.”

**Rama:** “Hoy Master! You said many times in the past that this world is the mental kingdom of Hiranyagarbha. You also said that for that reason, this world did not need any enabling causes for its creation. Hence, one has to say that the world was inherent as a memory within the mind of Hiranyagarbha. And because of this, what’s wrong in saying that the world is able to regenerate from the memory of Hiranyagarbha at the end of the period of Dissolution?”

**Vasishta:** “Let us say, you had a dream. The things you see in a dream did not really exist during the period of your dream. In the same way, a thing appeared in your imagination. It does not have an existence even during the time of your imagination. Suppose you had a recollection. The object of your memory does not exist when you recollect it. When your experience is like this, how is it possible for you to imagine that the world which was as a memory in the mind of Hiranyagarbha at the time of Dissolution can have a truthful existence?”

**Rama:** “Sir, suppose I am in the third state of *Sushupti* (deep sleep) and lost my awareness. Just because of this, all my accumulated impressions do not evaporate. The moment I come back to my normal conscious state (*Jagradavasta*), all my impressions surface and recollections come back. In the same way, Hiranyagarbha could be in an illusory state at the time of dissolution, but he can get back all his memories at the end of Dissolution period. What is wrong in this?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! You did not attain liberation (*moksha*) in that time gap you moved from *sushupti* to wakefulness (*jagradavsta*). The same “you” have been continuing at both the places. Therefore, your memory could come back to you. But the state of Hiranyagarbha

was not the same at the time of Dissolution. Please note that we are not talking about the day-to-day dissolution. I am talking about the Final Dissolution (*Mahapralaya*). Hiranyagarbha attained liberation at that time. He is no more there. A new Hiranyagarbha has come for the next (phase of) creation. He is different. How can the memory of the earlier Hiranyagarbha be carried forward to the new one? Therefore, what you say is not applicable. The fundamental meaning of all the illustrative statements referred to above in the context of Dissolution have one common theme – the world is in a state of Brahman at the time of Dissolution.

“A corollary can be drawn from this. The creation, living being (*Jiva*), and the Creator (*Eswara*) are forms of Brahman (*chinmatraswarupas*). To look at the creation as merely ‘world’ is a delusion. To be able to see the world as Brahman is liberation. If we examine the fundamental basic principle of *Jiva* or *Eswara*, it is Brahman only. Thus Rama delusion or liberation is a function of the way we behold. Unless we negate the visible universe, the devil of our mind does not go away. (Negation here implies recognizing the fact that the visible world is unreal). But you may get a doubt that the mind is within; the visible universe is outside. If we transform the outside world, how can a change come about in the mind that is within? But, please remember, as I told you earlier, the artificial differentiation of within and without is brought about by the mind only. In fact, there is nothing like inside and outside.

“mano jagajjagadakhilam tathā manah  
 parasparam tvavirahite sadaiva hi  
 tayordvayormanasi nirantaram kṣite  
 kṣitam jaga -nnatu jagati kṣite manah” (Sarga 4, Sloka 15)

“Mind is the world. World is the mind. They are not different. If mind ends, the world ends; but by mere ending of the world (as at the time of Dissolution or in deep sleep), mind does not end.”

**Rama:** “How can you substantiate that?”

**Vasishta:** “There is no dearth of evidence. An example for this is the *Aindavopakhyana* (the story of Aindavas) that we narrated earlier. Another proof is in *Indrajalopakhyana* (the story of Magic Show) that tells about the history of Lavana. I agree that these two are told from the standpoint of creation. I shall narrate to you *Bhargavopakhyana* as further confirmation to establish that the state of the world is an outcome of the mind.

## 5. BHARGAVOPAKHYANA

“You know already about the various Periods, dissolutions and final Dissolution. In that sequence, one Great Dissolution was over; the life-period of a Brahma was completed. A new Brahma has come. Creation was started on his first day. An extremely noble person, Brighu was born in that creation. As you are aware, some *Jivas* in spite of lot of austerities (*Tapas*) to their credit in the earlier Periods (*Kalpas*) fail to attain liberation because the Period had ended and Dissolution followed. Such *Jivas* take birth as authoritative officials

in the next Creation in the positions of Manus, Seven Sages, Gods and so on. Their births, life histories etc do not resemble the mundane lives of the usual family-oriented persons. Their whole attitude is different. Brighu belongs to that cadre. He was destined to become one of the Seven Sages in the upcoming Period.

“The word *brighu* means mountain slope. This particular Brighu used to spend most of his time with his wife in observing austerities on the slopes of Mount Mandara. Sukra was born to these pious couple. By the time he was an adolescent, he was as handsome as Cupid, as intelligent as Brihaspati and as intensively meditating as his father.

“The family was living all by themselves. Their habitat was the forest. The father was always in deep meditation and remained motionless like a statue. Whenever his father was out of meditation, Sukra used to serve him with devotion. Inspired by the teachings of his father in such times, Sukra too used to go into deep meditation. But he could not stay long in this position of deep meditation (*Samadhi*). By the time Sukra was out of his meditation, the father used to be back in his own deep meditation and stay immovable like a statue. As he had nothing to do otherwise in such times, Sukra used to roam around the hills and valleys.

“Sukra was by nature, imaginative, kind hearted and poetic. The scenic beauty of the forest exalted him. Peacock calls, flowerbeds, cool breeze and moonlight nights used to intoxicate him. But, his father’s teachings of philosophy reminded him of the transient nature of things. When such rock-stable mountains were said to be impermanent, of what value could be the flowerbeds? Of what significance were the mutually fighting birdcalls? What value was there in the waxing and waning moonlight? He could never decide. On one side was the exciting beauty in nature. On the other side was his desire for meditation and *Brahmajnan* (knowledge of the Supreme). On one side was the feeling that the world was real. On the other side he was longing to understand his self. Vacillating in these contradictions and conflicting pulls, he lost peace of his mind.

“One day during those times of wavering, Sukra tried to meditate in the presence of his father. His father was already in deep meditation (*Samadhi*). Sukra was, however, unsettled and was unable to concentrate. While he was thus struggling, he heard some laughter and giggling from above. He lifted his head to look up. Because of his extrasensory powers obtained as a result of his earlier meditations, he could notice some divine females wandering in the sky. They were not usual sort of girls. They were Apsaras, very beautiful and tantalizing. Because of the impressions of the deeds of the past births, the beauty of one particular girl totally intoxicated him. He did not know how far or away in the sky was that girl, but he was enjoying her body smells and the sound of her moving feet as if the girl was just next to him. In a few moments, the group of girls moved away. Impulsively, Sukra started to follow them in their path.

“But suddenly the seeker in him arose. He (the seeker in him) brought back discretion. He controlled his wayward feelings, brought him back to his senses and walked him back to the side of his father. He advised him to control his mind and meditate. Sukra began his meditation again. All unwanted thoughts stopped. He was almost feeling an empty mind. But suddenly, without his knowledge of how it happened, that beautiful girl once again

came back to his mind and totally occupied his thoughts. After a short while, Sukra forgot himself in her. He identified with her. No, he became one with her!

## 6. THOUGH PRESENT HERE ROAMING ELSEWHERE:

“Sukra did not know how long he stayed in that state. His thoughts and imaginations grew profusely. The dainty group of damsels disappeared. His ladylove alone was present. She was walking ahead and Sukra was following her. She went into heaven. He followed her there. The heavenly world and the beings therein were truly wonderful. The enchanting gardens, magnificent swimming pools, eye-catching mansions, were all a feast to his eyes. Sukra could see everything very clearly. Gradually, Sukra saw the Guardians of the Directions (*Dikapalakas*), heard the sounds of their chariots, observed their houses, their enjoyments, their strolling, songs and dances, boon-giving trees and so on. His ladylove was still on the move. She finally reached the court of Indra, with Sukra still in tow. Seeing Indra seated on the royal throne, Sukra bowed with respect. Indra, equally reciprocating the courtesy, welcomed Sukra and seated him beside himself on the throne. Sukra’s joy knew no bounds.

“Indra arranged a guest house for Sukra. After resting there for a while, Sukra started to explore the town. He saw many beautiful girls on the way. He met with his ladylove too at one place. Both fell in love with each other. Sukra wished for privacy and darkness to befall immediately. Surprisingly night befell. On the top of it, the lovers received “*Amrita*” sent by Indra as a gift in that park. Thus Sukra spent away half of *Krita yuga* (Krita Period) enjoying with that girl. Sukra went back to Indra’s place at the end of that long night. He lived there happily for another four *yugas*.

“puṇyakṣayānu sandhānāt  
tataścāvani maṇḍale  
tayaiva saha māninyā  
papātoopahatākṛtiḥ ” (Sarga 8, Sloka 15)

“It occurred to Sukra, who had been enjoying all happiness in his mental world so far, that the fruits of his good deeds had come to an end. No sooner, he along with his ladylove dropped to the earth. The process of fall was as follows: Because of the thought that the fruits of his good deeds ended, his divine body was destroyed. And so was the body of his ladylove. As a result, the lovers were wandering in their astral bodies like birds in the sky without a place. Slowly, they reached the rays in the moonlight. Through those rays, they entered into some edible seeds. One of the seeds reached the country Dasarna. One Brahmin happened to cook that grain and eat it. The *Jiva* in that seed entered the womb of the Brahmin’s wife through his sperm and was born as a boy. He was named again in this birth as Sukra.

[We should note here that Puranas usually give the same name to a *Jiva* while narrating the various lives of that *Jiva*. This is done purely for the convenience of the story. It could be that the same *Jiva* could have had different names in different births. Because these stories



have the objective of demonstrating the progression of sequence of lives of a particular individual, Rishis usually refer to that *Jiva* by one name.]

“Thus, Brighu’s son, Sukra was reborn in Dasarna country as a Brahmin’s son. He had the company of holy people there too. Under their influence, he learnt the pious ways of life and lived for a *Manvantara* (71 sets of Four Yugas make one *Manvantara*) in meditation. But one day, he came across a strange situation. The beautiful damsel that came from Heaven long back reappeared as a doe and was wandering around the place of his meditation. Though he had been in meditation for a *Manvantara*, his mind succumbed to lust. The doe gave birth to a human looking male baby.

“Ever since the baby boy was born, there was a drastic change in Sukra. With unbounded affection for the boy, he desired for the best of everything for the kid. He wanted the boy to have enormous riches, unparallel education, and sterling character. With this objective, he started looking for his forgotten assets. The boy’s future was a constant worry for him. Because of this anxiety, he lost composure and balance of mind. He did not have a meditative mind any more. While he was thus lost in his intense concern for the child’s future, he suddenly died.

“Sukra was reborn as the king of Madhura in his next birth. He lived there happily for many years, earned name and fame and took *Vanaprastha* (the third stage in the life of a family person). Finally he died. As a result of his good deeds, he was born again in a meditative family on the banks of the “River Samanga”. In this life of his, Sukra was rid of all of his bad qualities, was able to obtain stable *Vairagya* (renunciation), and attained *Samadhi* state. He stayed firm in his meditation.

## 7. ORIGINAL BODY:

“Rama! Do you recall the opening words of this whole story? Did you notice where all this sequence of rebirths took place? All this happened in the mental world of Sukra who was sitting by the side of his father struggling to achieve concentration of his mind. Thousands of years passed while Sukra was thus lost in his cogitations and fancies. With no food and water for so many years, his body desiccated. One day, he collapsed and fell down like a tree cut at its roots.

“Though his body shrunk and dropped like a dried leaf, his mind was prancing and dancing like a youthful deer. After several hundred thousands of years, it finally rested on the banks of the River Samanga.

“ananta vruttānta ghanām pelavām sudruḍhāmapī  
tām śmsrutidaśām śukro videhoonubhavan sthith” (Sarga 9, Sloka 5)

“Sukra could enjoy the worldly pleasures and family life without a body for hundreds of thousands of years. How could he do that? It’s because, one forgets the previous bodies in the illusory belief that the present body is real. Because of the forgetfulness of the previous bodies, the current body and its immediate world appear so solid. All events taking place look concrete. But remember, all this is still a fiction of the mind. If you take a holistic

view, the world is baseless. What Brighu's son did too was to weave a fine fiction in his mind. Hence, he could enjoy so many lives (births) without a body.

“The body that was a substratum for the imaginative mind of Sukra, the physical body, had been totally destroyed by now. The muscles and blood were gone. Mere skin and bones remained. Even though the corpse was lying there, neither any birds nor animals, not even worms tried to feed on it. The reason for this was the presence of Brighu sitting there in meditation. He conquered all feelings of attachment and hatred. He was a great meditative soul. Because of his meditative powers, all creatures including worms and insects behaved in a friendly way towards the corpse.

“After a thousand years thus passed (in the count of Brighu), he got up from his meditation. He noticed the dried up body of his son lying beside him. Though he was such a meditative and pious sage, he was overtaken by the feelings of affection for his son. He drowned himself in sorrow. The sorrow turned into anger. In this anger he ruminated thus: “Gosh, scared of my meditative status, all creatures including animals and birds and even worms did not have courage to touch the body of my son; how dare the God of Death take away the life of my son right in my presence when I was alive? I shall curse him.” He was boiling thus with anger.

## **8. DEATH'S TEACHING:**

“Vibrations of his intense angry thoughts reached the God of Death. The God of Death appeared before Brighu and addressed him: “Oh, Maharshi, those that are familiar with the way of the world and who know the rationale of life, do not get annoyed even if there was a mistake on the part of others. Needless to say that such persons never get angry when there was no mistake at all. You are a learned meditative man. We are just officials performing our duties. We don't stop our functions under threats. We respect elders but are not cowed down by them.

“Oh, Ignorant Maharshi! Do not think of cursing me and ruin the good effect of your own austerities. Who do you think I am? I am Time. I swallowed up millions of immense universes. I swallowed up billions of Brahmas, Vishnus, Maheswaras and others. None of them could ever curse me. What are you, after all? Do you think you can curse me?

“If I am absorbing into me so many, it's not because of my likes and dislikes. This is the law of creation. Just as water flows downwards, all living beings fall into the clutches of “Time.” You have certain Laws of Nature to follow. So have I. Do not cross the Laws that have to be obeyed by you in ignorance.

“Further what happened to your discretion? What happened to your meditation? Your clairvoyance? Your philosophical wisdom? You make this entire ruckus simply because your son died. Don't you know that for a *Jiva*, the subtle body is more important than the gross body? What is the subtle body? It is thought. That means mind is the subtle body.

“When you were in deep meditation, your son's mental body traveled in mental worlds. For some distance, it (mental body) assumed the physical body of Sukra as its own. It then

reached Heaven and assumed a godly body. It spent there four Periods (*yugas*) of life in that body. Then it dropped down to earth in Dasarna country where it assumed the body of a Brahmin. Later it took the body of a king of Kosala. In the next birth, it became a villager in a forestland. After that it became a swan on the banks of the Ganges. In the next birth, it was a king again in the Surya dynasty. Further on, it was a priest in Saura and Salwa countries teaching mantras.

“Next it became a Vidhyadhara in the land of Vidhyadharas. Then it was born as a son of a sage (muni) on the earth. Later it became the king of Madra country. Then it was born as the son of Sage (Rishi) Vasudeva and presently doing meditation on the banks of the Samanga River.

“Maharshi! I did not narrate all the births that your son had lived in his imagination. I forgot a few. He was a hunter once on the Vindhya Mountains. He was, another time, a district official in Sauvira country. He was born as a donkey too in Trigarta country. He became a bamboo grove in Kirata land. He was born as a deer in a desert. He was born as a snake on a palm tree once. Another time he was born as a fowl living near *Indian Mulberry (Morinda sp.)* trees. Later he was born as a sorcerer and managed to become a Vidhyadhara.

“He lived for a Kalpa period (4.32 billion years) in the body of a Vidhyadhara. At the end of Kalpa, he was burnt like a moth in the fire of Pralaya (Dissolution). When the creation started afterwards again, he was born as the son of a Brahmin called Vasudeva. Thus, your son’s mind is in the form of Vasudeva’s son now and performing austerities. If you so desire, you can have a look with your clairvoyance.”

[**Note:** Sage Vasishtha did not earlier describe so many births when he himself narrated the story of Brihukumara. Now through the words of the God of Death, many more lives were described. One should note that such details are irrelevant to this story. That is to say that these do not make the principal issue. What these sentences imply is that it took many births and a very long time period. We may not be able to compare the time units of that era and the time units now. Here lies the crucial point. What was a thousand years in the count of Sage Brighu, is equivalent to several hundred thousand years in the count of Sukra’s mental world. This was brought out well in the Lilopakhyaana in the third Chapter on Creation. (Published as Part II). We shall now resume the story.]

Sage Brighu who had been fretting and fuming so far, mellowed with the above words. He bowed to the God of Death and addressed him in these words:

**Brighu:** “Hey, Lord! What are we, compared to you! Because of destiny, I became a victim to the feelings of attachment for my son. Without realizing the strength of your rule, I tried to curse you. I wronged seriously! I deserve to be punished.

“I did look at with clairvoyance. My son is performing austerities on the banks of the Samanga River, as you said. I am now very clear. The mind is not born because of the body. The body comes into existence because of the mind. This solid-looking body made of five elements (*pancha bhutas*) undoubtedly takes shape because of mind.

“mano jagati bhūtānām  
dve śarīree tra sarvam  
mana aiva śarīram hi  
yenedaṁ bāvyate jagat ” (Sarga 11, Sloka 18)

“Therefore, every person has two bodies; not one. One is this physical body. The second is the mind. The physical body is limited. The mind-body is all permeating. That’s what creates the whole world! Even though it looks as if there are apparently two bodies, both these bodies are in fact mind only. They are not different from the mind. Oh, God of Time! This is really wonderful!”

**God of Death:** “Well said, Great Sage! But it is not truly correct when you say that there are two bodies viz. Physical Body and Mind for the *Jiva* (Individual self). The true statement is that the three *lokas* (worlds) are merely mental constructs.

“mano manana nirmāṇamātra metajagattrayam” (Sarga 11, Sloka 23)

“From this it is clear that whatever you see – the sentient or the insentient - in this world is all a mental construct. In other words, they are polymorphs of the mind. This has become possible because only “Existence (*sat*)” is the substratum behind the mind and it is the mind that differentiates the sentient and the insentient based on its own memory impressions (*vasanas*). That is to say that the “Existence” which is the basis of the mind assumes the forms of both insentient things and sentient objects. Or to put it simply, just as the seed becomes the stem, branches, foliage, flowers, fruits and so on, Existence which is the substratum, i.e. Brahman, manifests itself as this great wide world.

“There is only ONE substratum. That is “Existence.” That is the Supreme Brahman (*Parabrahman*). From that alone all these billions of wonderful and surprising mental capabilities are arising. Some of those mental capabilities turned out to be gods. Some turned out to be men. Some turned to be insects. Thus many classes of living beings were born. Gradually gurus and disciples came into existence.

## 9. EXTRA BODY:

“Great Sage! All these are the ramifications of the vibrations in the mind. One such modification is presently sitting on the banks of the Samanga River. Let’s go and have a look.”

“Agreeing on this note, both Brighu and the God of Time traveled high in the sky, went straight to the banks of the Samanga River, looked around for Brighu’s son and finally reached his place.

No sooner he looked at Brighu’s son who was in deep meditation (*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*), the God of Death shouted loudly, “Ah, here is your son!” Disturbed by this shouting, Brighu’s son slowly opened his eyes. He saw the two Brahmins standing in front of him. He bowed with respect to both and seated them on a large stone nearby. He addressed

them as follows: “Reverend Brahmins! I am very delighted to see you. I experience in your presence the rare feeling of being free from delusion – a state that cannot be obtained even after meditating for thousands of years. May I know who you are?”

“When he heard these words, Brighu was moved with tears in his eye. But quickly composing himself, he said, “Son, you were my son in the last birth. You are also an ascetic (*tapasvi*). Look back with clairvoyance.”

“At these words, Brighu’s son looked inwardly. He saw all his past history like reels moving. He regained his normal state after a time. He couldn’t utter a word. He was astounded. He bowed to his father with happiness. Gaining his cool, he said as follows:

“Ah, indeed strange is the way that God works! Because of destiny this whole world is turning like a wheel. Oh, I went through so many births! I am not sure I remember all the births. I wandered so much. I enjoyed so much. I experienced both good and bad. All the wandering has ended. The delusion is gone.

“Father, Please come along. I want to see the body that I left on the Mount Mandara. By now it might have been desiccated like a dried leaf. I do not desire anything now. Nor do I deny anything. I am just observing the fantastic way the destiny runs. That’s why I am! There’s no other work for me. Let us start.”

## **10. THERE LIES THE OLD BODY:**

“When Brighu’s son spoke thus, both Brighu and God of Death felt happy and consented to go with him. All the three went along the path of the sky discussing the secret principles of the world and reached the hermitage of Brighu on Mount Mandara. Sukra saw his old body there. He felt disconsolate when he saw his body of skin and bones, though he had been talking high philosophy thus far. Shedding tears profusely, he bemoaned before his father saying, “Oh Father, this is the old body of mine. Look at its state!” Neither Brighu nor the God of Death said anything. With uncontrollable sadness, Sukra continued, “Behold Father! Do you see how that body so dearly nurtured by you with love and affection had now become? Under your care, this body grew like a strong elephant. After that, this very body moved in the company of the goddesses in Heaven. I am unable to recall when the body had changed like this.

“Oh, Dear Body! What stages have you gone through! How much did I enjoy with you! Such a pleasurable body you were, but now you are no more than skin and bones. One gets the feeling of renunciation by a single look at you. But what for I need even renunciation now? I got rid of the devil of “mind” (*chit*). I am happy now. I do not have sorrow. I do not care for comforts. I do not have doubts. I do not have thoughts. I am in a state of nullified mind. I am in a state of liberation while being alive (*Jeevanmukta*). Even you are lying there without any mental cogitations and vibrations of thoughts. I am happy for this.”

“diṣṭyā paśyāmyamanānām - vane tanu mimāmaham” (Sarga 15, Sloka 26)

Listening to this story, Sri Rama, frowned a bit and questioned as follows:

**Rama:** “Master! What does that mean? Was Sukra happy or sad? He passed through many bodies by now. The body in which he is alive is okay. Why should he have this sort of attachment for a dried up and desiccated old body of his? Is it because of the notion that it was born to such a great personality as Brighu?”

**Vasishtha:** “Not so Rama. The loves and hates of people go by the fruits of their past actions. This *Jiva* called Sukra observed great austerities in the previous Kalpa and desired to achieve, in the following Kalpa, lordship over a planet and the position of being a preceptor for Demons. The fruits of all actions in the previous eras culminated as Sukra’s body in this Kalpa. So the *Jiva* of Sukra of erstwhile era has to live the effects of all those actions in this life in the body of Brighu’s son.

“But before the fruits of those actions blossomed like the petals of a flower, there was a mental perturbation in the mind of youthful Sukra. Under the strength of that mental perturbation, the old body got dropped and many new bodies were generated. But the set of newly generated fresh bodies did not have any old fruits of action chasing them. They were born of newly committed actions, had suffered the corresponding effects of the actions and perished at the end of their period.

“There is still a body of the son of the sage on the banks of the river ‘Samanga’. It is alive. It has yet to experience a few effects of its previous actions. But that is only a small part. The body of the son of Brighu, had to still experience billions of the consequences of the earlier actions. It has to reap the consequences till the end of this Kalpa. That is the reason why it did not petrify even after life had gone out of it. Nor could any worms destroy it. Because this fact is so strongly etched into it, the *Jiva* of Sukra was unable to overcome attachment towards it. This is true for everyone who has a body, however knowledgeable one may be, however detached one may be. No body can escape from this rule – not merely the un-illuminated but even the knowledgeable ones!

“The Sun in the sky is pretty stable. But his reflection in a pond looks shaky. In the same way, the illuminated one too looks unstable and shaky when once he comes into the affairs of the world. If so, you may ask, who is an illuminated person and who is an ignorant one? How does one distinguish them? Okay, I shall tell you that. One is a learned person if his sensory organs stay unattached even when his action organs are functioning. Such a one is a liberated person right in this life. He is the ignorant whose sensory organs stay attached to worldly things even when his action organs are inactive and not working. Such a person is unliberated and stays bound to the world. One can conclude from this that for the dualities of happiness and sorrow or liberation and bondage, the sensory organs are the cause and not the action organs.

“Therefore, though Sukra was liberated by that time, though his sensory organs are unattached to objects, because of the fact that some remainder of the fruits of action had yet to be experienced, the attachment to the earlier body and related processes are going on.

“Rama! Now let us continue our main story.

## 11. BACK TO THE OLD BODY:

“Observing that Sukra who is now in the body of a son of a sage was shaken at the sight of his old dried up body, The God of Time (Death) said in a serious tone as follows:

“ Oh, Son of Brighu! The purpose of this body that was useful for observing austerities on the banks of the river Samanga is over. Now leave this body and enter into the old body. This is eligible for continued austerities (*tapas*). Continue austerities with this, reach the level of being the Guru for Demons, get liberated in this life, live till the end of the Kalpa. Then get rid of this body also and attain total Liberation! May you both be blessed! I shall leave now.”

“Thus saying the God of Time disappeared. Both the son and father were moved at the kindness of the God of Time with tears in their eyes.

“Soon they overcame their feelings. The new Sukra, who already mastered several yogas, could control his mind. Taking help of his knowledge of *Parakayapravesha* (entering into other’s body), he entered into his old body, having shed his present body of the son of a sage. Brighu, at the same time sprinkled holy water on the old body of his son. With that, like a dried stick suddenly blooming, his dried up body got back life into it with all the nerves, blood vessels functioning. His body, having put on flesh, was shining like that of a youth in prime. On one side the body of the son of a sage was dropping down without life. On the other side, the body of the son of Brighu, recently reacquiring life, was up with a smile and was bowing to his father.

“Affection for one’s own son is ecstatic for anyone. Even a Sage like Brighu too was overwhelmed by it. “Is it wise to think that the physical body of his son was born because of him,” he was musing, smiling at himself. Yet he couldn’t help being engulfed by affection thinking, “This is my son.” He hugged his son tightly and blessed him.

## 12. CREMATION OF HIS OWN BODY:

Soon they recovered themselves from the ecstasy. But the corpse of the sage lying there on the bank of Samanga River posed to be a problem. It chilled their mutual affection a bit. They thought over it and reached a conclusion that they should follow the precepts of propriety. They gathered together some dried logs and burnt the corpse. Then they stayed there for a long time in meditation. Eventually, Sage Brighu became one of the seven Sages (*Sapta Rishis*). Sukra became the teacher for the Demons.”

With this we reached the end of *Bhargava Upakhyana*. Sage Vasishtha himself talks about the symbolism and the principles involved in this story. In order to understand clearly, however, let us make a few observations in our own style.

Vasishtha narrated this story only to show that the sustenance of the world is dependent on the mind. The two stories – *Leela Upakhyana* and *Lavana Upakhyana* – told earlier are

adequate to prove that. Still he recounted this story as a new one. What is the extra thing in this story over and above what was there in the earlier two stories?

*Brighu* means a rock slope. In other words a stony surface. No plant can grow out of it. Yet strangely, Sukra was born there. Sukra means semen. It signifies a seed. For a seed to germinate, soil or suitable womb of a mother is necessary. But this Sukra could bring forth, without the need of any such wombs, an entire heaven. Observing austerities for thousands of years, he could bring into existence the body of a seer's son on the banks of the River Samanga.

The story does not say how and when these were created (*Utpatti*). What we see is only their existence. The existence is so concrete that the body of the son of the seer on the banks of the River Samanga had to be actually burnt to be gotten rid off! Who was it that burnt it? The very same person who created it and his creator (father) together. It required two. Who could achieve such strong existence and sustenance? It was Sukra's mind!

Another important point in the story to be noted is the 'death' of Sukra's old body. What is death? If we accept the common understanding, it is the end of 'life'. In this story, Sukra began his fantasy about Heavenly comforts while he was in his old body.

The existence of the Heaven started as a dream world, as castles in air. He did not intend to create. Therefore, he did not originate it. Following an Apsarasa who was already in existence by then, he entered into a Heaven that he thought was already in existence. He enjoyed the comforts. He was not aware when the whole thing took a solid shape. He did not know what summation of antecedent impressions (*samskaras*) reinforced his fantasizing, giving rise to a series of births. As new thoughts were intensifying, the mind and the 'life' dependent on that mind lost their need for the old body. Therefore, it was forgotten. His 'life' was running after newer and newer bodies. That's why that 'life' abandoned the old body like a hot brick.

Under normal circumstances, the God of Death will try to take away the life of a *Jiva* (individual) after the culmination of due time. But the individual struggles not to leave the old body. Finally the God of Death succeeds in taking away the 'life.' On this count, was it death for the old body of Sukra? Or no?

If we take that loss of 'life' is death, then it was 'death' for sure. But why should 'life' leave by itself? The God of Death or God of Time has to take it away. In that case, we cannot call it 'death.' But then words like Death, Time, and God were used. What is their meaning?

No body dwelt on this analysis. Even the Sage Brighu did not do it. He was ready to curse the God of Death under the presumption that what happened there was certainly 'death' and the death was certainly 'caused' by God of Death. This was anger in action. The anger was caused by the sorrow of losing a son. The sorrow was, in turn, caused by his attachment.

Sage Brighu's affection, sorrow and anger coupled with the merit of his past actions were so strong that a Power personified itself in front of Brighu. Because it shone with



luminescence, it was referred to as God (*Deva* = self-shining). That Power was the God of Death; that was the God of Time. The God of Death told Brighu that what happened to his son was not death. He also said that the son was alive and living at some place and asked him to go and find. Brighu found that to be true. Brighu couldn't but be surprised.

The quotidian theory that God Brahma creates all bodies, *Jivas* (individual souls) enter into those bodies and after the expiration of some period the God of Death takes away the 'life' leaving the bodies dead is turned on its head.

It is not possible to argue that Brahma created the body of the Seer's son on the banks of the River Samanga using His own five elements (*pancha bhutas*). Nor is it possible to dispense it away saying that it was a body in a dream of Sukra. We cannot call it a fiction too. It is like a dream but not a dream. It was like magic, but not magic. Logically, it cannot be a physical body. But it behaved completely as if it was solid. If we examine the series of its antecedent births, we can never arrive at the first birth or who caused the very first birth. Nevertheless, its existence was undoubted. Sage Brighu did not have a worldly explanation for any of these mutually contradictory riddles except for philosophical (*tatvic*) answers. Hence he followed the God of Death obediently.

Another event that stands out in this story is that an individual burns his own discarded body. Instead of saying that it was a body created by him, it is better to say that it was a body that had sustenance due to him. Every one, every day makes his dream body vanish, but doesn't burn it. But Sukra had to burn the body of the seer's son as he was not able to make it disappear. It was so because of the strength of the sustenance of the body.

Earlier in the *Leela Upakhyana*, it was stated that there was no big difference between the physical body and the astral body. It was said that thoughts cause the finer subtle world. If those thoughts were to be more and more dense, then that world would gradually condense to be the gross world. We have to apply the same principle for the body of the seer here. Then the question arises - whether only some persons like Sukra will have so much strength of mind to be able to create such gross bodies? Or ordinary folk like us can also do it? We may jump to say that such strength of mind is possible for only a few austere persons. But Rama and Vasishta discussed this question. We shall note what they say. Let us, hence, follow their discussion.

### 13. TRUTHFUL ATTAINMENT OF THOUGHTS:

**Rama:** "Master! I heard the story fully. It is quite interesting. Sukra was really great. He could follow an Apsarasa right into Heaven. He desired to enjoy the Heavenly comforts and he did. He desired to rule over countries and he could. He could even perform austerities and liberate himself when he wanted that. Whatever he thought, that took place. Why is it that everyone's desires do not fructify like that?"

**Vasishta:** "Rama! There are two ways by which one can get one's thoughts fulfilled. One is the fructification of the thoughts coming out of pure mind (*chitta sudhi*). This is also referred to as 'The Power of Truthful Attainment of Thoughts.' The second is that whatever memories of actions swell up in the mind at the time of death, they become a

reality. ‘The Power of Truthful Attainment of Thoughts’ is superior. This is possible for superior *jivas* like Sukra. Depending on the innate tendencies (*sanskara*) of the individuals at the time of death, a limited power of such attainment is obtained by others.”

**Rama:** “Sukra too was born like anybody else. What is the reason for his special power?”

**Vasishta:** “This Sukra performed many meditations in the past Kalpa. Therefore, all the impurities (e.g. likes and dislikes) in his mind have evaporated. That jivi was born for the first time in this Kalpa with a pure mind. Therefore, no new impurities stuck to him. There were no seeds of impurity in his birth. That means he inherited no impurities from his father. There were no impurities acquired from his lineage. Hence his present life was pure and pious. That’s why he could get the “Power of Truthful Attainment of Thoughts.” The present Brahma selected him for the positions of being an officer of a Planet and Teacher of the Demons. Therefore, nothing that he thinks of can be untrue. Coming to ordinary folk, there will be at least one impurity in their births out of those we talked about earlier. So there is no scope for them to attain the power of thought fulfillment. Some of them meditate and get rid of their impurities. Then they attain the power of thought fulfillment.

“Many of the ordinary people, depending on the memories they get at the time of death, they enjoy the comforts and sorrows in their subsequent birth. Some of Sukra's births were of this type too. From this we can conclude:

“svapna sṃkalpanagara vyavahārāḥ parasparam  
pruthgyathā nadruśyante tathaite saṃsṛti bhramāḥ” (Sarga 17, Sloka 10)

“All these visible worlds of existence are like dream worlds. Like castle in the air. That is why each person has his/her own world; his/her own imagination and his/her own sorrows and happiness.”

#### 14. DREAM ARMY OF SOLDIERS:

**Rama:** “Master! Everything is imagination. We shall accept that. But then how do these imaginations take place? They come out of the impressions. Impressions come from the previous experiences. Sukra was born in this Kalpa for the first time. He did not visit the Heaven prior to that. Therefore, he could not possibly have had the memories of the Heaven! In such a case, how is it possible that he went to the Heaven, enjoyed the Heavenly pleasures till his merit diminished, and then went through a series of births? How come all this could happen?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! Formation of impressions is not based merely on prior experience. They can form from what is heard or what is read from books. In Sukra’s case, his father’s words and teachings from scriptures left him with the impressions of Heaven and caused series of births. It is so in our experience too. Even if we have not seen with our own eyes, we dream of things we heard with our ears!

“Further, every person is seeing a world in his wakeful state. All of them think that they are all together seeing the same world. It is like the illusion of the soldiers. I shall explain:

“There was a big battle going on. The soldiers were sleeping in the night. Everybody was dreaming about the war. In every soldier’s dream, there was an army fighting. In truth, each had his dream-army. But when he wakes up, he tells his friends, “I dreamt of *our army* fighting.” It was not “*our army*” that he saw in his dream. It was some army similar to his army. But the soldier did not see the difference. It is the same thing with the world seen by all the people. Hence, elders state that ‘this world is like a long dream.’”

“dīrgha svapnastvidamñ jagat”

(Sarga 17, Sloka 23)

**Rama:** “Great Teacher! You said so previously too! It makes me think. Every person is imagining his world separately. Each person’s dream is his own. If that is your stand, will two person’s worlds meet at any time even for once? Or don’t they? Why I ask this question is because, if my world is like a dream, the teacher whom I meet in this world and who imparts knowledge to me too had to be a part of that dream world. If that is the case, how can that teacher and even his teaching be true? If that teaching itself is not true, how do I then get liberated? Forget about me, none whosoever, can get liberated. This will be the difficulty, if one accepts your hypothesis.”

## 15. DO TWO MENTAL CONSTRUCTS MEET?:

**Vasishta:** “Rama! I shall reply to you in progressive steps. Your question is whether two mental constructs ever meet or not? Do we see two minds merging completely anywhere in the world? Though not seen usually, if two, cent percent pure minds happen to meet, they definitely merge totally. This is because there will be no imaginations in those two minds. Both minds stay in Ultra Pure Supreme State.

“There are two ways to cognize the mental worlds of their neighbors in the case of those with stained minds. Every living individual has got the Supreme Consciousness in his mind (*antahkarana*) as substratum. If a person can achieve concentration on the Supreme Consciousness within him, then he can link his consciousness with the consciousness in others. Then he can see the mental worlds of that other person. If he cannot achieve linkage with all the mental bodies, he may do it with a specific one. This is the second method. You may think that these two methods are for some Yogis only. The methods are the same for ordinary people or for yogis!

“What happens in the case of ordinary folk is that only such objects, such sites, and such worlds surround him as suitable to facilitate his experiencing of the fruits of his past actions. That is to say only a limited world will be visible to him. In other words, he can cognize only such worlds with his sensory organs. It is not that the other worlds do not exist. He will not be aware of them. In case another individual has some residual experience left out for going through similar places and objects, that individual too will join the same mental world. That is to say that the two individuals enter into each other’s worlds depending on the commonality of residual fruits of action to be enjoyed by them.

Thus those two minds meet one another. But this is only a partial linkage and not a full-fledged linkage.

“Among common people, there will be some superior persons. They purify their minds following Yoga techniques like Hatha Yoga and learn special techniques like entering into the bodies of others. With the help of this knowledge, they enter other’s bodies, senses and also mind. Thus they see the world as seen by the others.

“Many are the ways for two minds to link together. Therefore, there is every chance for the world of a teacher who was liberated but had some residual fruits of action yet to be experienced by him to link with the world of a disciple still bound. Though their two worlds are imaginary, it is possible that the purity of the mind of the teacher affects that of the disciple and thus helps the latter attain full purity.

## 16. FOUR STATES:

**Rama:** “Master! You repeatedly said that only Consciousness (Brahman) is real; the whole world is an illusory manifestation; a seeker should purify his mind through discrimination, control of senses, and renunciation; and, depending on the purity of the mind, he will obtain wisdom. I do not deny any of these concepts. But at present we are examining the state of the world through *Bhargava Upakhyana*. Does the whole experience through a series of lives of Bhargava come under “*jagrat*’ (wakeful) state? Or does it count under dream state?”

“I raise this question because, all objects are perceived directly whether in wakeful state or dream state. The appearance of objects being the same, how can one distinguish the two states? How can anybody call one as true and the other as untrue? Unless we resolve this dilemma, we would not know which was the true experience of Bhargava.”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! Let us examine upfront the sleep and dream states. In fact, there is not much difference between the two. If the objects are stable for a longer period, we call it a wakeful state. Otherwise, we call it a dream state. If we recall that we saw the same objects yesterday (possibility for re-cognition), we describe them as substances of wakeful state. If that possibility is not there, we call them as substances of dream state. There is no further distinction. Whether it is a dream object or an object in the wakeful state, experiential effects like sorrow and happiness are same in either state.

“However, the states are not merely two; there are four, viz. Wakeful state, Dream state, Deep Sleep (*Sushupti*) and Fourth (*Turiya*) state. These relate to the individual self (*jiva*) and not to the body. Let us know a bit about these states.

“We have a body. It consists of senses. There are nerves in them. In their background is the mind. There is life-force in it. The memories from the past actions stimulate the mind. The five winds, *Prana*, *Apana* etc. collaborate with the stimulation. This is the normal condition of our body.

“When the effects of the past actions combined with the five winds stimulate the life-force, it crosses the mind, travels through the nerves and stops short of the senses. Under that condition, a world is perceived by us. We experience happiness and sorrow. But it does not stay long. That is Dream state.

“If the stimulus is stronger, the life-force crosses the nerves too and enters the senses. Then again we see objects. We experience a world as well as happiness and sorrow. These stay for a longer period. We call this Wakeful state.

“Life-force gets tired of this movement. The stimulus inside too reduces. The memories of the past actions do not spring up. The five winds do not move. The life-force stays totally inert. It is almost pure consciousness only. This state is called Deep Sleep (*Sushupti*).

“The life-force mulls a little over the basic truths (*tatva*) during Wakeful state. It practices a little Yoga. If lucky, then it attains self-realization. When once self-realization is achieved, the realization is not lost, even if the life-force continues to be in the Wakeful, Dream or Deep Sleep states due to the residual effects of past actions. That stable state of self-realization is the Fourth (*Turiya*) state. This is the supreme state.

“We can also describe in a different manner the change of one state into another.

“Let us start with *Sushupti*. I already said that the Prana etc winds did not move in this state. The reason for this is that the impressions of past actions do not sprout up. After some time, however, they would. The Prana etc. winds get imbalanced. This imbalance causes a perturbation in the life-force. A perturbed life-force assumes the form of “mind.” Then I-consciousness sparks into it. It starts viewing the newly formed mind as different from itself. This I-consciousness is called “Ego.” The I-consciousness, viewing mind as different from itself is called “perturbation” (*Samkshobham*). As the perturbation grows, the feeling that there is a sky comes up. This is described as “Travel in space.” When once existence of space is conceived, scope to facilitate movement appears followed by actual movements. The movement slowly enters the nerves.

“There are some chemicals in the nerves. A flash (*sphurana*) of a feeling of water springs up when the mucosal liquid in there is seen. On viewing pus, blood etcetera, flashes of a feel of sun, rain and so on are experienced. Summation of all these experiences is the Dream state. By that time, the individual self (*jiva*) does not yet cross the nerves and enter into the senses. When he enters the senses, the strength of senses gives him the experience of the outer world. This is the Wakeful state.

“From this sequence, it can be seen that the wakeful and dream state experiences are no more than flashes of feelings (*sphurana*). A firm understanding of this by the intellect is Turiya state.

“Rama, I narrated so much about these states because it helps to comprehend the nature of the mind. The mind is the one producing dream-objects. As well as the objects of wakeful state. But we cannot claim that the objects are nonexistent, because they are seen and also they give the experience of happiness and sorrow. They cannot be dubbed as unreal. But you cannot also say that they exist because they were not derived from any raw materials

other than mind. We cannot describe them as real. Therefore, elders describe these objects and their causative mind as “different from existent and nonexistent.” In other words, they are neither existent nor nonexistent. It is a strange state different from either.

### **17. MIND IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE STATES:**

“If an iron ball is thrown into fire, it becomes a red hot fireball. In the same way, when the *Jiva* forcefully throws the mind into whatever, the mind becomes that. Because mind is *Jiva*, one can say that *Jiva* becomes that. That means he assumes the same form about which he thinks.

“Such a malleable mind can manifest in two styles. One is the individualized style – i.e. one’s own mind. The other is the integrated mind – the integrated mind of all creatures. What is strange is that the integrated mind is the clay and the individual mind is the potter, if we compare this illusory world to a pot. The individual mind is the author, the doer. The integrated mind is the material cause (*upadana karana*). The world is the effect generated from the material cause by that doer.

“If there are excessive pots in our house, there is no use fighting with the clay. If you control the potter, only then the process of pots being made is affected. So also, if the individual limits the mind, controls it, the illusion of the world will diminish, Yogic powers will be obtained. Knowledge of self will dawn.

“You may ask how knowledge of the self will come about if mind is controlled. That doubt is unnecessary. Mind is the individual (*Jiva*) and the individual *jiva* is mind (*jiva* is also referred to as *purusha*, *atma*, *jivatma* and so on). Man is the mind. Man is not his body!

“Because this is the truth, Sukra could get all those births by his mind. He did not get them with his body. Any experience obtained with the mind is different from being existent and nonexistent! It is just delusion!!

“You questioned whether the experience of Bhargava was a dream or wakeful state. Because we already said that the difference was only a function of time, we need not discuss it further. Whether it was a dream state or wakeful state, both are equally illusory. Therefore, what is important is that you focus your mind on “existing” (Real) thing.”

**Rama:** “Great Teacher! All your discussion is centered on mind. What was there to start with was Ultra Pure Consciousness only. That did not have any pollution in it at the very beginning. Then how did the mind, a stain originate from it?”

From this question, it is clear that Rama did not have any more questions on *Bhargava Upakhyaana* and therefore, he diverted the discussion to another topic. Vasishta thought of dealing with this discussion in a forthcoming chapter on Nirvana. Hence, Vasishta replied with a counter question.

**Vasishta:** “Rama! It would have been better if you raised this question after experiencing the Pure Consciousness at least once. It is not there in your experience. Why do you ask

about something that is not based on your experience? What you have in your experience is the stained consciousness. Therefore, our discussion has to be around this experiential state.

“The central point of our discussion is mind. Let us examine how this has come about. What everybody experiences commonly is consciousness with stains. Or, let us say, that Consciousness is modified (changed) and has become nature. What is the description for Nature (*prakriti*)? The first modification that is the root for all future changes is nature.

“If consciousness shelters ‘thought’ (*manana* dharma), it becomes mind. If it supports viewing, it becomes the eye. If it supports hearing, it becomes the ear. In a similar way, by supporting a particular functional faculty, the consciousness is shaping up as that particular sensory or action organ.

“More over, each person thinks of consciousness in his own way. The source for all thinking is the Pure Consciousness. But who ever thinks of it in whatever way, it appears to him in that way. If you move about in a garden of Jasmines, you get the smell of jasmines. If you are in a rose garden, you smell roses, though the air is the same. Air is odorless. So also is the Consciousness. Because of this fact, there are so many theories on the nature of Consciousness.”

## 18. DIFFERENT THEORIES:

**Rama:** “An object that is real should look the same to anybody. If it looks same, the expression of it also should be same. How could so many theories originate?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! There is no rule that an object should look the same to all people. Depending on the impressions of his past actions, each person’s sensory and action organs are formed. His thoughts and deeds take shape depending on his organs. Because of this, the person earns again sin or merit from his actions. In other words, first action was the cause for mind. Later it is mind that is the cause for action. “Let me clarify how it works. Action and mind are like a flower and its fragrance. They have no existence of their own separate from one another.

“Individuals (*jivas*) having a mind that is spurred by action, see things in consonance with their actions and mind. Believing firmly that their way of looking is correct, they try to possess those things. With a firm belief in their own viewpoint, they struggle more and more to possess them. Because of this struggle, same type of karma piles up. Their conviction too will go up with this. With this conviction, new theories are propounded and propagated. I shall show through a few examples that all such theories are no more than a reflection of the mindset of the persons pronouncing them.

“Out of the extant viewpoints, the theory of Kapila is worthy to some extent. It is the Samkhya philosophy. The followers of this theory have a discriminating mind. They took the Great Statement of the Vedas, “*Tatvamasi*”, discussed the meaning of the words ‘*tat*’ (that) and ‘*tvam*’ (you). They determined the meaning for the word ‘*tvam*’ (you) as per the Vedas. When they came to ‘*tat*’, however, they could not accept the Vedic interpretation.

They modified it a bit and proposed that Nature and “Purusha” are different, but both are Real. They theorized that understanding this itself is liberation.

“There are Vedantins. For them Vedas are the supreme authority; but not their own thinking. They decided that the entire visible universe is Brahman as per the Vedas. They theorized that realizing this truth experientially is itself salvation and that there is no other *Brahmalok* (superior world of Brahma) to be attained. You may say that there is no contribution of their thought in this. It is true that they do not have any contribution of their thought as far as the goal is concerned. But they evolved a lot differences in the path to be followed, works to be done etc.

“And there are those that believe in Pure Intelligence (*Vijnana*). They described salvation as entering into Buddhahood. They prescribed control of external and internal senses (*indriyas*) as the path. Then there are Arhatas or Jains. All of them defined salvation in accordance with their own thoughts and prescribed ways and means as suited to their theories.”

[ **Note:** Kapila, Vedanta, Pure Intelligence (*Vijnana*), Arhata philosophies were mentioned by name in the original text. It was stated that all these were creations of human mind. No preference was shown to any of them.

“svām druṣṭim pravivṛṇvanti  
svaireva niyamabhramaiḥ ” (Sarga 21, Sloka 29)

“Each propounds what he views as a theory, formulating it, in accordance with the rules of his own fancy.”

Valmiki, the author (of Yogavaasishta) repeated this statement many times as a song. From this it is clear that the author was not opinionated about different approaches of Vedantins. Even though the original author mentioned the names of four philosophies, he did not discuss the principles of any of them. The commentator of the work, Sri Sri Ananda Bhodendra Saraswati Swami briefly described the main concepts of the four schools of thought. These are given below:

**Kapila Philosophy (Samkhya):** There are three principal elements in this view. These are (i) Purusha; (ii) Prakriti (Nature); and (iii) *Jiva* (individual). Purusha has the attributes of Wisdom and Consciousness. But he does not act and remains merely a witness. Prakriti is made up of the three qualities (*triguanas*). It is inert. But it is the creator. Both these are permanent. *Jiva* thinks that he is different because of his association with nature. There are many such *Jivas*. Salvation for the *Jiva* is to realize that he is no different from the Purusha through discretionary wisdom obtained from practices of yoga.

**Vedanta Philosophy:** According to this view, only the Supreme Brahman is Unchanging, Real and Permanent. Dependent on it and enveloping it is Nescience (*Avidya*) or Illusion (*Maya*). Illusion is neither real nor unreal. It is both existence-inexistence. Because of this *Maya*, the universe, individual (*Jiva*) and Eswara (Lord) are coming into existence through illusory superimposition. Obtaining knowledge of Discrimination, Nescience can be gotten rid off by the *jiva*. Then the three entities – the universe, *jiva* and Eswara disappear and the



*jiva* merges totally into the Supreme Brahman. Knowledge is the only tool for this. Self-introspection is the method to obtain knowledge. Purity of mind is the way for self-introspection. Yoga and good deeds are the process to achieve a pure mind.

**Vijnana Philosophy (Buddhism):** Pure Intelligence (*vijnana*) is the final Reality according to this philosophy. All other objects are ephemeral. Not realizing this truth is binding one to the world (*smasara*). To enter into the Buddhahood is Nirvana. Various methods are prescribed for obtaining Nirvana. There are many varieties in this philosophy. Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Yogacharya, Madhyamika, Hinayana, Mahayana, Vijnanavada etc. are all branches of Buddhism.

**Aarhata Philosophy:** There are seven main parts in this school of thought. Therefore, they refer to their philosophy as “The Sevenfold Approach (*Saptabhanginaya*).” The seven layers are:

- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| (i) <i>Jiva</i>      | - | His size is the same as the size of the body.          |
| (ii) Lifeless things | - | Stones etc.  |
| (iii) <i>Asrava</i>  | - | Indriyas (organs)                                      |
| (iv) <i>Samvaras</i> | - | Yama, Niyama etc.                                      |
| (v) <i>Nirjara</i>   | - | Austerities like shaving head etc.                     |
| (vi) Bondage         | - | Birth and Death  |
| (vii) Salvation      | - | To travel up and up forever in space beyond the world. |

There is another Sevenfold Approach too.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| (i) <i>Syadasti</i>                               | - | It could exist or it could exist with great difficulty.<br>( <i>Syath</i> does not stand for a verb here. It is an unchanging Sanskrit word form (called <i>avyaya</i> ). It means ‘a little’ or ‘somehow’ or ‘with great difficulty.’ <i>Syadasti</i> applies to all the above seven components and implies that nothing can be said for certain about any of them; they could be or they may not be. One has to apply it in the same way with reference to the following six words.) |
| (ii) <i>Syannasti</i>                             | - | may not be.  |
| (iii) <i>Syadasti cha<br/>nasti cha</i>           | - | may be or may not be.  |
| (iv) <i>Syadavaktavyah</i>                        | - | may not be possible to express.  |
| (v) <i>Syadastichaavak-<br/>tavyascha</i>         | - | may be but inexpressible.  |
| (vi) <i>Syannasti-<br/>chaa vaktavyascha</i>      | - | may no be but inexpressible.   |
| (vii) <i>Syadasti nasti-<br/>chaavaktavyascha</i> | - | may be, may not be but inexpressible   |

The existence of so many theories indicates that Reality or Truth is too subtle and very difficult to grasp. Sage Vasishtha says that all the above schools of thought are very strange imaginations as could be seen from their varied approaches.

We have already mentioned in the first chapter (Published as Part I of our series) that from times immemorial such philosophical concepts emerged and that they would disappear for some time and reemerge later. Therefore, we need not discuss them again. After digressing a bit on such intellectual debates, Sage Vasishtha continued his discourse.]

## 19. SEVEN STEPS FOR PURIFICATION OF MIND:

**Vasishtha:** “Rama!

“svām druṣṭiṁ pravivruṇvanti  
svaireva niyamabhramaiḥ ” (Sarga 21, Sloka 29)

“All these people postulate theories based on their own imaginations and rub them on the heads of others, as I told you already. I proved that all these are mere delusions. The reason for these delusions is contemplation on the Consciousness with a stained mind. As the mind is stained, even though Consciousness is pure, Consciousness appears to them as stained. Hence it is necessary that one has to purify one’s own mind first if one wishes to look at a pure entity in a pure way.

“Therefore, Rama, the steps for purifying your mind are:

1. Cut short the mental vibrations.
2. Rid yourself of the levels of ignorance.
3. Reach levels of wisdom.
4. Keep remembering that the entire visible world is merely a different form of the Supreme Consciousness.
5. Understand that nothing other than Supreme Consciousness exists.
6. Stop seeking sensory pleasures.
7. Practicing all the above, emasculate the impressions of past actions.

“Rama! One who reaches this state is a *Jnani* (Realized person). He will not have birth and death.

“vālāgra sūkṣmabhāgāttu  
koṭīśaḥ parikalpitāt  
ahaṁ sūkṣma iti vyāpī  
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati” (Sarga 22, Sloka 26)

“Make a hundred thousand parts of the extreme end-piece of the hair on an animal’s tail. Take one small piece and divide it into ten million parts. I am as small as that fine piece. Though I am so miniscule, I am spread everywhere. Whoever can see this, is the real seer.

“What it means is that whoever has that knowledge, whoever got such an experience, he is truly the Realized person, *Jnani*.”

Using the refrain “*Yah pasyati sa pasyati*”, Sage Vyasa described the qualities of a Realized person till the end of this Chapter. These things were also mentioned in the second Chapter on Behavior of A Liberated person (*Mumukshu VyavaharaPrakarana*) while describing *Shama* (control of mind). We will not repeat them here.

Later in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sarga, the qualities of a man liberated right in this life itself were depicted. In this context, the life of a liberated king named Jeevanmukta was captivatingly described in enchanting poetic beauty, metaphorically comparing his body to a city-state, integrating the behavior of a liberated person with the king’s rule.

In the next Sarga (Sarga 24), Sage Vasishta returned to the questions of a Seeker. He says that for an ordinary person who is not yet liberated, the body itself is a hellish empire, the sense organs are the enemies and so on. The substance of the narration is that a pure mind is the true friend of a seeker and a stained mind is his enemy.

Strictly speaking, *Bhargava Upakhyana* of the Chapter on Sustenance ended with the 16<sup>th</sup> Sarga. From the 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Sargas, Sage Vasishta commented on this story from a variety of angles. Summing up the discussion at the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> Sarga, he addressed Rama saying,

“Rama! Do not be controlled by the mind like an ordinary plebeian. Conquer the sense organs, which are the enemies and rein in the mind. May the fate of *Daama Vyaala* and *Kata* not fall on you! May you be blessed as *Bhima Bhaasa* and *Dridha*!”

Such blessings were a style followed by the authors in the olden days to introduce the forthcoming topic by a reference to certain names in the blessings. It is usual for the main character to ask for the details of the story the names allude to and for the narrator to continue his story-telling. Sage Vasishta followed this method into the 25<sup>th</sup> Sarga with the story of “*Daama Vyaala and Kata*.”

## **20. DAAMA –VYAALA -KATA UPAKHYANA**

A seeker, even after he attains a certain level with considerable purity of mind, has to keep a constant watch not to yield to egoism or succumb to the sensory pleasures. Otherwise, he would slowly wreck himself and will totally fall from grace. If he acts without being affected by egoism, his mind will not be polluted. Sage Vasishta told the following story taking these two opposing effects into consideration. It is better to keep this fact at the back of our mind as we proceed further with the story.

“Long long ago, there used to live one demon by name Sambarasura in the nether worlds. Sambara means water. If illusions were gems, he was like an ocean for such gems. His strength, wealth and comforts and pleasures were boundless. He had a sandalwood plantation. There were no snakes in that, however. In his town, Full Moon had to appear even on a New Moon’s day!

“Once Sambarasura invaded the gods and vanquished them. He looted all their riches. With that booty, he enlarged his military forces and immersed himself in all sorts of pleasures without any fear.

“When he was thus lost in his enjoyment and was careless, the gods invaded his land. Sambara ordered his warriors to fight with the gods, but he himself continued to live in his pleasures in an inebriated state. Taking advantage, the gods killed all the warriors of Sambara. Waking up to this loss, Sambara was raging mad. He attacked the Heaven all-alone by himself. The gods, who were fighting the warriors of Sambara so far, trembled when Sambara attacked their land. That was because, the gods knew better the strength of the illusory ocean of Sambara than his own followers.

“The gods thought over and disappeared from their own city. Sambara could not find anybody, even an insect there. He could not understand what happened. He went around all houses. Not even a single god could be seen. He robbed every valuable thing in the houses and then burnt them. Then he cooled down a bit. He waited for some more days. Still he did not find any gods. He then developed new warriors from his army, assigned the towns of the gods to them and returned to his nether lands.

“No sooner than he left, the gods regrouped, assaulted the demon warriors in the towns of Heaven, finished them off and escaped. When Sambara came to know of this, he seethed with anger and searched for the gods all over. But it was in vain. He could not locate the gods. He waited again for some time, appointed a new set of warriors to look after the towns in Heaven and returned home. Waiting for a suitable opportunity, the gods struck again and killed all the demon warriors. It happened this way repeatedly several times. In the process, Sambara's forces were decimated.

“Sambarasura thought over his predicament and developed a plan mustering all his powers. He created three Demons using his magical prowess. The first was named “Daama.” Daama means a thread. Sambara felt that Daama could tie down the enemy soldiers with the rope (of threads) and render them helpless. Daama is derived from ‘damayatīti dāmaḥ.’

“The second Demon was named “Vyaala.” Vyaala means a snake. Sambara expected that Vyaala could bite all the enemy soldiers and kill them. Vyaala is derived from ‘viśeṣena ā samaṁtāt ālatīti vyālaḥ - āla parivyāptau.’

“He named the third Demon as “Kata.” Kata means a mat or a shield like a mesh. Sambarasura hoped that Kata would cover his soldiers and protect them from the enemy weaponry. Kata is derived from ‘kaṭati āvruṇotīti kaṭḥ.’

“Sambara appointed these three as the new Army Chiefs. As it was, there were quite a number of chiefs in his army. But there was a great difference - like that between a mosquito and an elephant - between those earlier chiefs and the three new chiefs appointed now. For example:

1. The new Chiefs do not have any past impressions or effects of actions from past births carried over to them into the present life.
2. How were they born then? Sambarasura was born as he had some effects of past actions still left out to be experienced. The new chiefs were born because of Sambara's wizardry. So they are like the creations of a magician. Normally persons created through magic have a very short life. However, the life for these three is slightly longer. That's all the difference. In a way, they are comparable to sparks emanating out of a fire called Sambarasura.
3. How could they perform any acts in this life in the absence of residual effects of past lives? They perform actions as per the doctrine of "Andhaparampara." It means they blindly imitate others that are around. Things work out more by fluke for them. Their actions resemble the actions of little children who are half-asleep.
4. They have no prior knowledge of wars, invasions, attacks, escapes or killings. Dualities like success and defeat, righteousness and evil action, yes and no are unknown to them. They know neither fear nor any doubt. They were born with one quality - to obey the intentions that arise in the mind of Sambarasura. As a result, whenever they notice the enemies of Sambarasura, they could recollect their magic skills triggered by the feeling of enmity.
5. Yogis with their powers of yoga can create many bodies so that they can fulfill the suffrage of the residual effects of their past actions at one go (like parallel processing). What Sambarasura had done was something similar. But as these (the three new army chiefs magically created) are bodies emerging out of anger and hatred, they are not useful to dissolve the effects of past actions. They are useful only to compound the actions and thereby the effects.

"Sambarasura tested the strength of the three warriors he created. He felt very happy seeing them. He reorganized his army, appointed Daama, Vyaala and Kata as Chiefs and sent them over to attack the Heaven. As expected, Daama could tie up all the gods. Vyaala hit them with his sword. Kata took care to see that his side of the army did not suffer losses. The gods were vanquished and had to run for their life. Daama, Vyaala and Kata chased them. But the gods disappeared without being caught. After looking for them for some time, the Demon chiefs returned to their own land.

## **21. BRAHMA'S ADVICE:**

"Saved by the skin of their teeth, the gods thought over and approached Brahma for advice. Brahma listened to their plight and told them as follows:

**Brahma:** "Oh, gods! You have been fighting quite vigilantly. But Daama, Vyaala and Kata are not defeated. First you must understand why is it so. If you understand the reason, you can work out a plan to defeat them. So I shall tell you that reason. Please listen to me carefully.

"Whoever does not have any impressions of past actions carried forward into their mind, they are composed in their intellect and are balanced. They do not have either happiness or sorrow. No body can conquer such persons in this world. In contrast to this, if a person is

tied up with the impressions of past, even a child can upset him irrespective of any scholarly knowledge acquired by him. It will be possible to defeat such a person at one time or the other.

“Out of all the effects from the past actions, the feeling that “I am the body” is a very strong one. This is referred to as “Impression of Body-Self Identity.” Also called as “Misconception of identity of Body and self.” Whatever name is given, it means the same thing. To think, “I am the body.” This is the first impression. From there, it gets enlarged as “my senses are me, this spouse and kids are mine” and so on.

“You may ask what is wrong with the impressions of the past actions. If ever there is an entity other than the Supreme Consciousness, then the thought that “I am that entity” could be valid. But as a matter of fact that is not the position. There is nothing other than the Supreme Consciousness. In such a case, would it not be incorrect to carry the impression that those other entities are I?

“The long and short of it is that only those who carry the impressions based on unreality can be vanquished. The three, Daama, Vyaala and Kata you were referring to, almost have no impressions of past action carried over to them. Therefore, they do not have the feelings of ‘me and mine’. Depending on the situation arising, their organs are acting in a timely and befitting manner. They stay aloof as mere witnesses. There is no limit to their inner strength (*antahsaara*).

“The only way to overcome the situation is, you have to think of a method to make them, by hook or crook, carry the impressions of past actions. There is no other way. Hence the method to follow is for you to continue your war in a manner that it provokes new thoughts in them about worldly affairs, self-protection, the pleasures of senses etc. It may take a hundred thousand years for the new thoughts to germinate in them. Sambara has also got that much longevity. At the end of that time, the new thoughts will consolidate in them. You can guess what would happen after that.

“Speaking thus, Brahma disappeared. The gods could grasp the situation well. They waited for an opportune time to seize the Demons. This time they openly declared a war. Demons from every nook and corner gathered and fought under the leadership of Daama, Vyaala and Kata. The battles were furious. There were floods of blood all over.

## **22. APING THE GODS:**

“Just at the time when it appeared that the gods were winning, the gods stopped the war, appealed for truce and raised white flags. They sent huge gifts to Daama, Vyaala and Kata. The three Demon leaders responded favorably to the truce. But the terms of peace led to serious arguments and real war started all over again. This time the gods waged covert wars. Even then, they had to flee. Yet, they sent some divine damsels as gifts. The war ceased for some time. Unexpectedly it resumed again. Each side was trying to cheat the other. As millennia of years thus went by with the war going on, new thoughts did emerge in Daama, Vyaala and Kata. They could see how the gods, who drank the elixir of

immortality, were taking care of their own bodies. The three Demons got the thought that they too should take good care of their bodies.

“The Demon trio understood how much the gods were struggling for the pleasures of the senses. Similar desires arose in them. They observed how the gods were cheating. Deceit took root in them. They saw the gods running away to escape death. The three Demons too were now scared of death. With time, Daama, Vyaala and Kata were like any other Demon warriors. Consequently in the next battle, they were totally defeated. It’s their turn to run away. Their army went helter-skelter. The gods were pleased with themselves that they could win over Daama, Vyaala and Kata much earlier than the hundred thousand years predicted by Brahma.

“As the news of their defeat reached Sambarasura, he was furious. He resented that the very three brave Demons created by him expending all his strength of wizardry became so naïve. He shouted fiercely that they should be caught and tied up. He searched in all directions for them. Scared of the ruckus, Daama and the others ran away. Yet they were clueless where to go. But because of the culture imbibed by them in the company of other demons, they ran towards hell. There they felt an affinity towards the scary-looking soldiers of the Hell (*Yamakinkaras*). The Demon trio sought refuge under them. The *Yamakinkaras* assured them of protection, hid them in their houses and saved them from Sambarasura.

“Daama, Vyaala and Kata, saved thus wondered how to lead their life. Fortunately for them, the *Yamakinkaras* considered them to be diligent. Three elderly *Yamakinkaras* offered their daughters in marriage to the trio. They also arranged some jobs for the trio. As thousands of years thus went by, attachment to body, family, friends, their land and so on grew around them like a huge web.

“Once Yamadharma raja (the King of Hell and Death) came unannounced in disguise without any royal pomp and glory for an inspection of his city. Daama, Vyaala and Kata were substituting their fathers-in-law in the duties at that time. Without realizing that it was the King Yama himself that had come, the trio behaved arrogantly in their usual manner. Yamadharma raja was furious at this. He made enquiries about the three. For their wrongs, he threw them along with their relatives into the severest part of the hell. The punishments were severe and several. They were burnt in waist deep fires. They were fried in boiling oil. Their heads were smashed against rocks. Even then they did not die. It went on like that for a long time.

“The Daama trio had their birth in the community of demons. They had relationship with *Yamakinkaras*. They had to suffer the punishments in the Hell. All this was not for nothing. They became Jailors in charge of punishing criminals in their next birth. Committing injustices in that life, they were born as crows afterwards. Later they were born as eagles. Further, they were born as parrots. Later they were born as pigs, and sheep and then as worms.

“Rama! Daama, Vyaala and Kata were reborn many times. Presently they are living as little fish in a dirty cesspool in a dense forest with frequent forest-fires in Kashmir. They are hanging between life and death and passing their time as living corpses.

“Rama! I narrated this story to show how befallen were Daama, Vyaala and Kata, though they started off their lives with almost no impressions of past actions impinging on them. Behold the contrast! Where is the leadership of being the army chiefs that could shake up even the gods and where is the life of a fish in a cesspool? Where is the Reality of a mind with no I-consciousness and where is the polluted intellect full of egoism that invited onto itself repeated births? The reason for such a great fall is the absence of discriminating wisdom. What is that discriminating wisdom? It is to realize the fact that the mighty tree of world (*samsara*) germinates from the seedling of egoism.

“ahaṁkāra piśācārtā dāma vyāla kaṭāstrayaḥ  
gatā ssattā masantoopi māyāmāhātmyadānavāḥ” (Sarga 31, Sloka 9)

“To start with, there was no beingness for the Daama trio. They did not have existence. Because of the power of Maya (wizardry), all the three got beingness. They got sustenance. Consumed by the devil of egoism, all the three were trapped in sorrow. They were carried away by the flow of *Samsara*.

“Therefore, Rama, I told you this story to caution you from such a sorry state befalling on you. Hence, I bless you that the fate of Daama, Vyaala and Kata should not befall on you!”

### 23. NONEXISTENT EXISTENCE:

**Rama:** “Great Teacher! While discussing, you said,

“gatā ssattā masantoopi māyāmāhātmyadānavāḥ.”

“The three Demons who had no beingness in the beginning, had subsequently obtained beingness. How can that be possible?

“nā satoo vidyate bhāvaḥ nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.”

“What it means is that for which there is no beingness, there can never be any existence. And for that which has beingness, it can never be inexistent.

“In other words, whatever is not there, it is never there. Whatever is there, will never go away. Is it not the rule?

“If such is the case, how could the three Demons who had no existence get existence later on?

[Note: The sentence, “nā satoo vidyate bhāvaḥ nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ” also appears in Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter II, Sloka 16) as it is. This sentence even proved to be quite tough for the Three Great Acharyas – Sankara, Madhwa and Ramanuja when they were writing their commentaries on Gita. Even so, we cannot say that one author or the other plagiarized this sentence. It is quite common to find same or similar sentences appearing in



different scriptures of Vedanta. Let us now take up the reply given by Sage Vasishta to Rama's question.]

**Vasishta:** “Oh, yes. That is our position too. When a thing that is already there in a very subtle form becomes gross for some reason, then it is said to have been “born.” A thing that is gross first becomes subtle later for some reason, it is said to have been “dead.” In my opinion, the meaning we can give to the words, “Born and Dead” is only this much. Show me an example if there is anything contrary to this -- something that was not there is newly born. Or give me an example of something that was there but totally gone. Then I can agree.”

**Rama:** “There is no need for me to give an example. You yourself have been giving one! People like us have existence and people like Daama trio did not have existence as they were born of wizardry, as you said. What you said too looks quite reasonable. The fact that all of us have existence is directly perceivable. To say that Daama, Vyaala and Kata were born out of wizardry implies that they were not there. You showed in your story the birth of those three who were not there. From this you have clearly indicated that there is a difference between those three and us. What more example is needed than what you yourself have given?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! It is true that I said that Daama, Vyaala and Kata were born of wizardry. But I have not discussed how people like us are born. Just as water has come into existence into a mirage, so also Daama, Vyaala and Kata were born into this world. Even you and I are also born in the same way. I have not discussed this because, unless a clear understanding of the logic is attained, a teacher should not rush up to teach the aphorism, “*Brahma satyam; jagat mithya (Brahman is Real and the universe is unreal)*.” If he does so, the ignoramus will not understand. On the top of it they will make fun of such statement.

“From a discussion of the logic we are considering, a question may come to your mind. “If Daama, Vyaala and Kata were born because of Maya (Wizardry), because of what were we born?”

“You have that doubt; but you have no answer. A person in that state is called ‘*Kinchid jna*’ – one who knows a little. I am giving this exposition for the sake of such people only. I said so in the first Chapter on Renunciation (Vairagya) . What I said there was, “*nātyaṁta majño notajñāḥ so smin śastredhikāravān .*” It means he is neither fully knowing nor fully unknowing. I said that my teaching is for such persons.

“Because this question has come to your mind, I am giving my response. We are born exactly the same way as Daama, Vyaala and Kata. They were also as much born as we are. Scriptures, teachings, Great Sages – are all establishing this as fact.”

**Rama:** “If all of us are like Daama, Vyaala and Kata, if we do not have a birth, how are all this world, so many living creatures, genealogies and series of births seen?”

**Vasishta:** “One person saw on waking up that some balls of hair were flying around in the sky and he was also surrounded by such balls. He chided the ladies in the house saying that

they were throwing balls of hair all around the house when they comb hair making plaits. Tired of his shouting at them, they took him to an eye doctor. The doctor examined his eyes and declared that the person was suffering from night-blindness and that's why he kept seeing balls of hair all around.

“Now you analyze your experience from the angle of that eye patient. He was able to see the balls of hair directly all around. Therefore, he feels that the balls were truth. But people close to him (his well wishers) like the doctor do not agree. For, a ball of hair to be born out of the sky is not acceptable to our intellect. The experience of healthy persons with good eyesight around too does not support this. Therefore, even if the person with visual defect did see the balls of hair for sure, one has to say that the balls were unreal.

“In the same way, all the ordinary people, suffering from the disease of nescience, see the world directly in their experience. The Vedas that are well wishers to everybody do not accept this. The existence of the world cannot be ratiocinated. The experiential knowledge of the self-knowing persons too is contrary to the ordinary experience. Therefore, it is inevitable but to accept that this world is visible in spite of being inexistent! Hence, Rama, we are also just like Daama, Vyaala and Kata.

#### **24. WE ARE EQUALLY ILLUSORY:**

“We are classifying Daama, Vyaala and Kata as one group and Rama and Vasishta as another group and examining which group has existence. Get the spotlight closer. What Rama thinks is, “If somebody at all is not existing, possibly Vasishta could be non-existent. But I am real.” Vasishta too thinks in the same way. If every living creature in the world thinks in the same way, how does one establish the truth? Let us proceed logically.

“It was a peak hot summer day. The place was a desert. The time was mid-noon. One sees a river-like body in the distance. An experienced traveler decided that it was not a water-body but a mirage. But the eye sees continuously the flow of water. The accompanying boy asks, “Where from the water has come into the mirage?” What reply would you give him? You would say to him, “There is no water at all in it. The sunlight itself appears as water. That's all.” Don't you do so? In the same way, what appear, as Vasishta, Rama, Peter or John, me, you and all things around are nothing but Supreme Consciousness. There is no other thing whatsoever. If the Supreme Consciousness appears as objects outside you, we call it “the world.” The state of seeing like that is “being bound.”

“When the Supreme Consciousness exists without any external form, we name it as Pure Consciousness or the Substratum. We call this state as liberation (*Moksha*).

“Based on the above, are “being bound” and “being liberated” two states? No. They are notional states. Why did we imagine like that? It is only to help our understanding we invoked two states. Just as we distinguished sunlight and water as if they are two separate things in order to explain a mirage, in the same way, we proposed here two states to instruct about the Self. Therefore, Rama,

“sarvatra sarvamidamasti yathānubhūtaṃ  
noo kiṃcana kvacidihāsti na cānubhūtam |  
śāntaṃ sadeeka midamātata mittha māste  
saṃtyakta śokabhaya bheda matastva māssva” || (Sarga 31, Sloka 47)

“There are two approaches to decipher Reality.

“One viewpoint is that the entire visible world is Supreme Brahman only. That means, this world comes into form because of a series of superimpositions on Brahman. The sequence of the superimpositions is as follows: the Unmanifested (*Avyakta*) results from a superimposition of Maya (nescience or ignorance) on Supreme Brahman. Intellectual Principle (*Mahat*) will result from a superimposition of Maya on the Unmanifested. The result of the next superimposition of Maya is I-consciousness (*ahankara*). Then follow the five elements (*Pancha bhutaas*) and finally the visible world, as result of the five elements. In other words, whatever we experience everywhere and in every way is Supreme Consciousness. This is called as the “View of Superimpositions (*Adhyaropa drishti*).”

“In the second viewpoint too, there is no entity anywhere. Nor is there any experience whatsoever. The five elements (*Pancha Bhutaas*) are the cause for all the visible physical objects. But compared to effect, cause is more real, as cause precedes the effect. Therefore, the visible world is unreal and the *Pnacha Bhutaas* have to be real. This is Step One in our Process of Elimination. The purpose of the Process is to move gradually towards truth by elimination. Compared to the *Pancha bhutaas*, their causative principle viz. ‘Cosmic consciousness (*Hiranyagarbha ahankara*)’ is true. This is step Two. In the same way gradually, Intellectual Principle (*Mahat*) and the Unmanifested (*Avyakta*) are eliminated. At the end, the unchanging, Pure Supreme Brhaman will be remaining. This is called the “View of Elimination (*Apavada drishti*).”

“Whichever viewpoint is adopted, what is obtained finally is one. And that is the Supreme Brahman. That pervades everything. That is Perfect (*paripurna*). That is Real.

“Hence, Rama! Leave sorrow, fear and duality and learn to live in a state of perfection.”

**Rama:** “Master! You gave an uncontestable answer to my question about how we see the world. Nevertheless, my present state is like that of Daama, Vyaala and Kata. Is there a way for such of us to be rid of the misery from the binding world?”

## 25. CONTINUATION OF DAAMA-VYAALA-KATA STORY:

**Vasishta:** “I was myself planning to address this issue. I left out a part of the story of Daama, Vyaala and Kata for this reason. I shall narrate that part now.

“When Daama, Vyaala and Kata were going through all the tortures in the Hell because of the anger of Yamadharmaraja, their fathers-in-law were sorry for them and pitied their plight. They approached Yamadharmaraja at a favorable moment and appealed to him to indicate a way out for their sons-in-law. Yamadharmaraja thought over a bit and said,

“When the three hear their complete life story, they will attain liberation.” The fathers-in-law were happy to note that and returned to their city.

**Rama:** “Oh, Great Sage! You said that the Daama trio is now living as little fish in a cesspool after going through thousands of births. Who could possibly narrate their full story to those fish? What can the fish understand even if they hear?”

**Vasishtha:** “Rama, do not think that the series of their births is already concluded. In their next birth, they are going to be born as Swans. They will get, as Swans, an ability to think with discrimination. After that, they will be born in a town called Adhistanā. There will be a small mountain named “Pradyumna” nearby. There will be a small cottage on the hill Pradyumna. There will be a small nest on the northeast wall of that house. Vyaala will be born as a parrot in that nest. Daama will be born as a mosquito in a crack in a pillar of the same house. Kata will be born as a mainah somewhere and by God’s grace will find his way into a cage in the same cottage. Narasimha, a minister in the court of King Yasaskara lives in that cottage. Narasimha possesses Divine knowledge and is a knower of truth. One day he will notice the maninah in the cage and know about its history. He will sing the history as a song. He makes it clear through the song that Daama, Vyaala and Kata were illusory beings, their life was an illusion, the entire series of births was nothing more than a fiction and that their true nature is untainted non-dualistic Consciousness.

“Kata listening to this song everyday will recall his total life story and muse over it. Immersed in such meditative thoughts, he will be filled with Supreme Consciousness and attain salvation. As everybody in the house starts singing that song, the parrot in the nest and the mosquito in the crack in the pillar too will listen to it, recollect their own life story and achieve salvation.

“Therefore, Rama, because of the association with a noble person like that minister, because of introspection and self-analysis in the form of ruminating their life stories, the three of them are going to achieve liberation. Good efforts made in this direction by anybody will never be a waste. A number of evidences are available for this.

“Out of all the good efforts, effort for understanding the self is far superior. The first step for this is renunciation (*vairagya*). Renunciation means an ability to identify the evil in the objects of pleasure. It feels miserable if one has to leave the very things one had been enjoying thus far. Unless one accepts this misery, one cannot learn to renounce. After renunciation comes into hold, it will not be difficult to drop even enjoyable things. One has to bear with a little difficulty in the beginning. To obtain this fortitude, one has to control his mind (*Sama*).

“Mind is amenable to control. So it cannot be Supreme Brahman. Looked at from this angle, both control and its opposite, not controlling, belongs to the visible world. Thus they are equivalent. Supreme Happiness expresses itself through control of mind only. Association with noble people is the principal means for the control of mind to take root and grow. Egoism is the antagonist that throws living beings into bondage (*samsara*). Those who could conquer egoism are truly noble persons.”

## 26. THE THREE EGOISMS:

**Rama:** “Great Sage! How does one conquer egoism?”

**Vasishta:** “It is by contemplation of the Self.”

**Rama:** “Great Sage! I heard that egoism is of two types. If the egoism is based on the feeling ‘the physical body is me’, then it is called ‘*Sasarira ahamkara* (egoism associated with the body)’ and if it is based on the feeling ‘intellect is me’, it is ‘*Asarira ahamkara* (egoism without body).’ Have these two to go? Some say that the egoism during the wakeful state is ‘*Sasarira ahamkara*’, and the one in dreams, daydreams and desires is ‘*Asarira ahamkara*.’ What is your take on this?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! None of these classifications are of any use for our discussion.

“trividho rāghavāstīha tvahaṁkāro jagattraye” (Sarga 33, Sloka 49)

“For our purpose, there are three types of egoisms. We shall take up in descending order. The first two are good. The third is the undesirable one and should be gotten rid off.

“ahaṁ sarvamidaṁ viśvaṁ  
paramātmāha macyutaḥ  
nānyadastīti paramā  
vijñeyā sāhyahaṁkṛtiḥ (Sarga 33, Sloka 50)

“This entire visible world is me, the endless Supreme Consciousness is me, there is nothing different from me – such thoughts are also a type of *ahamkara*, egoism. But this is a superior type. It is there in liberated persons. If this feeling is present, one has achieved salvation. None advises to get rid of this type of egoism. There is another egoism, contrary to this.

“sarvasmādvyatiriktoohaṁ  
vālāgraśata kalpataḥ  
iti yā saṁvideeśāsau  
dvtiyāhaṁkṛtiśsubhā” (Sarga 33, Sloka 52)

“To think that ‘I am not any of these visible objects. Nothing touches me. I am subtler than the subtlest. More minute than minutiae’ is the second type of egoism. This is also a good one. This will also lead to liberation. Some *Jivanmuktas* (persons liberated in this very life) think on these lines. It is not necessary to rid oneself of this egoism.”

**Rama:** “In that case, can you refer to those two contemplations as egoism?”

**Vasishta:** “A good question. These two egoisms are the usual experiences of those who follow the “Seven Step Knowledge (*Saptajnanabhumika*).” In fact, considering from the

point of view of those in the seventh step, Egoism is not a 'real' (*satya*) thing. But for those in the sixth sage, the body is still there. That is to say that they are still alive. Unless they have some type of ego bonding, it is not possible to have life-principle in them. Hence their experience is referred to as egoism. This is just for name's sake. Please notice that there is no difference in the paths of the one who says that 'everything is me' and the one who says that 'nothing is me.' They are expressing the same experience in different words. That's all."

**Rama:** "You clarified very well, Great Sage! Please explain now the third egoism."

**Vasishta:** "This is the worldly egoism. It teaches, "The body is me." You may call it '*Sasarira ahamkara*' or '*Asarira ahamkara*'. Irrespective of the name, the egoism that causes a feeling of identity of the body and 'me' is the worst enemy of mankind. Because of this, Daama, Vyaala and Kata fell from a high state to a mean base level!"

**Rama:** "What is the way to get rid of the third type of egoism?"

**Vasishta:** "Understand the first two types of egoism well and achieve one of them. That is the best way. This is the acceptable path for true seekers."

**Rama:** "Teacher! How does one who lost the worldly egoism, look like? What are its effects?"

**Vasishta:** "He will be in the same way as one who is in the Sixth Stage of Liberation. Is there any need to talk about the effect? Union with the Supreme Consciousness is the effect."

“nāhaṁ na tena mama kiṁcidapīti matvā  
sarvaṁ ca me sakalamastyahameva ceti  
labdhāspadaṁ manasi saṁvidameevamīdyāṁ  
nītvā sthitiṁ paramupaiti padaṁ mahātmā (Sarga 33, Sloka 71)

“One should contemplate that, “I am not this phenomenal world. I am not this body at all. There is no use of any of these for me.” Later, he should feel that the whole world belongs to him and all are his own people. As one meditates on these terms, a spark of wisdom will strike in his mind. That wisdom should be firmed up. The noble person who can do that will reach Brahman.

“Rama! This is the method. Proceed on this path.

## **27. BHIMA, BHAASA AND DRIDHA:**

“Coming back to our story of the Daama trio, I have to add a few things. You will understand my idea if you listen to this also. While running after the Daama trio, we forgot about Sambarasura, the hero of the story. Not only us; even the gods of that time did the same mistake. It turned out to be a blessing for Sambara.

“Smbarasura lost his army, his kingdom was broken, and he was dethroned. Initially he boiled with rage. But later, he cooled down and analyzed the reason for his defeat. He could figure out the mistake made by the Daama trio. He became revengeful. He thought of a scheme. His planning was, “I shall again create three more Demons. They will also be born of wizardry. I shall add a bit of knowledge about truth and discretion to them so that they will not get perverted in their thinking. They will not seethe with anger but will respond as per the demands of the situation. The war culture that goes into their lives through me will enable them to battle it out as per the needs of time. Even if the gods try to lure them, they will not succumb to them as they have discretionary knowledge. That way the gods will be ruined.”

“māyayotpādayāmāsa  
budbudāniva vāridhiḥ (Sarga 34, Sloka 7)

“He used his magic to create three more Demons like bubbles in a sea. Please remember the simile. You will know its significance later. Sambarasura named the three as Bhima, Bhaasa and Dridha. Bhima means Shiva. Bhaasa means light. Dridha means stable forever. As planned by Sambarasura, all three of them were imparted well with truth and were valor.

“As expected the war between gods and the demons erupted. Gods were shocked at first. They composed themselves and started applying the trick taught by Brahma. New desires used to spring in Bhima, Bhaasa and Dridha. But the discretion within them made them to think. They questioned themselves as follows:

“I want this, this is mine; he is my enemy; I do not want him. What is this “this”? Who is that “me”?” They used to contemplate on those lines. In that contemplative analysis, they could see that no object was “true”. Their desires, fears etc then disappeared. They used to realize afresh each time that only the Supreme Consciousness was the truth.

Meanwhile the gods used to invade them. The Bhima trio never hesitated about action. They never thought about failure or success; they did not have loyalty to Sambarasura or hatred towards gods. They let things take their own course. They just used to react to the situations befittingly. This is, after all, “Attitude of Timely Action (*Praptakalatvam*).” The Bhima trio waged the war with the simple feeling that because they were born to fight on behalf of the demons, it was their duty to fight on their side. The gods couldn’t face them. They had to run for their lives. The gods regrouped secretly at a place and analyzed the issue. They understood that it was their mistake to have hurried in throwing out the Daama trio much before the hundred thousand years that Brahma indicated. They felt it awkward to go back to Brahma again for advice. They sought refuge now in Vishnu.

“Vishnu cajoled them. He told them, “There is no use killing the illusory demons. The causal force, the first Maya, is Sambarasura. You cannot solve your problem unless you kill him. But that is beyond you. I shall accomplish it for your sake. Take shelter in my city till then.” Thus speaking, he readied himself for a fight with Sambarasua.

“The Bhima trio stood solidly behind Sambarasura in the ensuing war. But their strength was nothing before that of Vishnu. They were like little moths. Sambara, along with his followers, was flattened in the war. By that we mean they were leveled down. Rama, please remember the words “flattened and leveled.”

“A lamp can glow only in air; but is also blown out by air. Similarly Vishnu extinguished the Bhima trio. They did not have any residual impressions to be carried forward to. So just like the light of a blown out lamp, they too did not have any destination to go to. Nor did they have to go to any other world. They had not to take another birth. They had been in all-pervading Brahman state before losing the body. And they were in the same state even after the body was lost. Rama, the death of *Jeevanmuktas*, *i.e.* persons who do not have any residual impressions of actions to be carried forward, will be like that. Please understand from this:

“tasmādvāsanayā baddhaṁ  
muktaṁ nirvāsaṇaṁ manah” (Sarga 34, Sloka 27)

“If impressions are carried, the mind is bound. If impressions are lost, the mind is freed.”

“For the lamp of mind, impressions are truly the fuel. Unpretentious and true contemplation evaporates the fuel. When all the memories go away, the lamp of mind is snuffed out. The true contemplation is to realize that there is not even a grain of truth in the entire visible world. To recognize that there is hardly any need to cogitate is called *Sameecheena bhavana* (Proper meditation). This is also referred to as *Samyageekshana* (Proper vision).

“Rama! Though possessed of powers of wizardry and discretion, Sambarasura lacked proper vision. Therefore, he could not get the *sarvatma bhaava*, a feeling that all things are nothing but Self. Because he died at the hands of Vishnu himself, he obtained eligibility to go straight to Vishnulok, the abode of Vishnu. You are already aware of the supremacy of Vishnu.

“Rama, if a child is under an illusion that he had seen a ghost, we have to help him to slowly get out of the thought of a ghost. We have to encourage him to develop discretion. In a similar way, if the mind is overtaken by the impressions of memories and ego, we have to eliminate these by learning about the life history of the Daama trio. The nature of true Consciousness has to be inculcated through the stories of Bhima, Bhaasa and Dridha.

“Because of their egos, the Daama trio went to hell; being egoless, the Bhima trio got liberation, though they took part in many activities. We have to continuously keep teaching this to our mind.”

Thus spoke Vasishta as the closing lines of this story. Before taking up his next discourse, it behoves us to give a break here and review the salient issues.



## 28. REVISITING THE STORY:

The name of the story is *Daama Vyaala Kata Upakhyana*. *Daama* means thread; *Vyaala* is snake and *kata* is a mat. Two examples are famously used in Vedanta to illustrate illusion. Major illusion is to see a snake instead of a rope. That is called “Illusory Snake in a Rope (*Rajju Sarpa Bhraanti*).” Substituting the words *Daama* and *Vyaala* in the above, it can be called *Daama Vyaala Bhranti*.

If the threads (*daama*) in the rope are woven in a warp and weft, it will be a cloth or a mat (*kata*). Let us examine what is cloth. Suppose as part of examining we strip it into threads. Then what happens? There is no cloth any more. Nor are there the warp and weft. There are only shreds of the thread. If the shreds are together, it is a thread. If the threads are rolled together, we call it a ball. If they are woven in warp and weft, we call it a cloth. Therefore, cloth is not a true thing appearing from somewhere. It is an illusion like the snake in the rope. This is “Illusory Mat in Thread (*Daama Kata Bhranti*).”

The entire visible world is full of these two types of illusory substances. In order to convey the essential truth (*tatva*) of the phenomenal world, Vasistha adapted the three Imaginary creatures – *Daama*, *Vyaala* and *Kata*.

In the illusions stated above, we treated the thread (*Daama*) as if it is true. How did the thread come about? A metaphor will suggest an answer. Water, waves, bubbles and lather are a good example. In the normal view, water, bubbles, waves etc are all different from one another. Each has its own form. But if one thinks deeply, lather is bubbles, bubbles are waves, and waves are water. So the basic source for all is water. Another word for water in Sanskrit is *Sambara*. Sage Vasistha gave this name to the hero of the story. Indicating his method of nomenclature, he even said at one place,

“māyāmutvā dayāmāna budbudāniva vāradhiḥ” (Sarga 34, Sloka 7)

It means – just as the sea creates bubbles, *Sambara* created *Bhima* and others.

Again, he expressed the same idea in the following Sloka too.

“dāma vyāla kaṭākārai  
ścetaḥ pariṇatamaṅ yathā” (Sarga 34, Sloka 34)

(Just as the mind changed into rope, snake or mat, the Supreme Self modifies itself into visible objects).

The above statement also makes it clear about the naming of characters adopted by Vasistha.

Whereas there are many words for water in Sanskrit, Vasistha selected “*Sambara*” for another reason too. The word is derived from: “śamṅ vṛṇoti āvṛṇootiti śamṅbaraḥ.”

‘*Sam*’ means peace. Sambara is one who envelops *sam* – peace. But it is in fact *Maya* (illusion) that envelops peace as per Vedantic concepts. That’s why, Sambara was shown to be a wizard of magic (illusion).

If Sambara (the enveloping cover) is removed, what is left will be *sam* – peace. To indicate this, the author poet used the word ‘flattened and leveled’ (*sasaama*) in the episode on the destruction of Sambarasura.

Knowledge about the sense objects and knowledge about Truth - both are part of *Maya* (illusion). Concepts of bondage and liberation exist only in nescience. That is why, Sambarasura could create not only the Daama trio but also the Bhima trio.

*Bhima* means Shiva. The author poet used this word to show an object of Truth. *Bhaasa* means luminous. This word is used in the sense of wisdom (*jnana*). *Dridha* means ever lasting. This word is used to indicate infinity.

If we summate these three, we arrive at the Vedic statement,

“*satyam jñānamanantaṁ brahma.*”

This means that Brahman is Truth (Reality), Wisdom and Infinity. That is the reason that Bhima, Bhaasa and Dridha never went anywhere after leaving their bodies. They remained where they were.

It is said in the Upanishads at several places that noble persons knowledgeable of Reality after achieving unity with the Supreme Consciousness do not have ascension beyond life (*pranotkramana*) and they attain the feeling that all things are nothing but Self (*Sarvatma bhava*). Sage Vasishtha allegorically described the same through this story.

The word *vishnu* here means “All pervading Supreme Self.” Vishnu’s war with Sambara signifies the fight between Supreme Reality and Illusion (*maya*). Though *Maya* is dependent on the Supreme Self, it envelops Him. That is the nature of *Maya*. Hence Sage Vasishtha said in the Utpatti Prakarana (Part II of our Volumes on Yogavaasishta) that bondage was only for Eswara.

On whomsoever the grace of Eswara falls, those creatures will be free of *Maya*. They become fully liberated. That is what happened to the Bhima trio.

What happens to Sambarasura who is total *Maya*? It does not go away fully. It gets subsided and stays as dissolution (*pralaya*). The author poet showed, therefore, that Sambara was flattened and leveled. When the new Period (*kalpa*) starts, *Maya* will rise again. This cycle is beginningless.

In this allegory, gods mean “the powers of senses (*indriya sakti*).” Brahma is the quality of Movement (*Rajo guna*) with a desire to create. The powers of senses (gods) could win for sometime with the backing of *rajoguna* but were later defeated. They realized their limitation, approached the *Satva guna* personified in the form of Vishnu. Vishnu himself had to fight for the gods and achieve final success.

Further, Sage Vasishtha was also teaching in this story a way for salvation. The ordinary folk who move under the force of *Rajo guna* have first to worship the God, who is an embodiment of Truth and Reality. Then, through self-introspection comprehend him to be the Supreme Self pervading all. This is the only way to get rid of the bondage and liberate our minds.

Every living being is born because of illusion (*maya*). The very first seed of his genealogy is illusion. But everybody forgets this and thinks that the story from the birth of his physical body to its death is his life-story. Instead of that, if he learns the story from the time the first seed of illusion is laid to the present, that will constitute the truly complete story of his self. One who is aware of this full story will appreciate that he got so many bodies because of illusion and his true nature is in fact Pure Consciousness. That understanding is liberation. Sage Vasishtha, through the incident of a boon granted by Yamadharmaraja (the God of Death) in the story of the Daama trio, indicated the importance of knowing the full life-story for obtaining salvation. It may be recalled that while bestowing the boon, the God of Death declared, “When the three of your sons-in-law listen to the full story of their births, then they will be free of all difficulties.”

To “be free of all difficulties” denotes liberation. “To listen to the full story of their births” signifies the preceding self-analysis (*atma vichara*). Sage Vasishtha portrayed that a parrot, mynah and mosquito were liberated to connote that even the most wretched could attain salvation through self-analysis. It also suggests another thing that Sage Vasishtha had in mind. If trivial living things like even mosquitoes can be liberated, it cannot be that only certain human sects can pull off enlightenment and not others.

Sage Vasishtha said that a *mantri* (minister) narrated the life stories. A Mantri is one who has a *mantra*. That is to say one who has good thinking. Or in other words, he is a Knower (*jnani*). It points to a Guru, a good teacher. Some more details of such allegorical significance were pointed out during the narration. It will be of immense benefit to the reader to go through the story once again keeping the inner meaning in mind.

We shall now resume the discourse given by Sage Vasishtha.

**Vasishtha:** “Rama! You questioned how a ‘stain’ called mind originated from an Ultra Pure Self. I said at that time that it was premature to discuss it.

“We learnt what people of different faiths said on this issue. We analyzed their opinions and concluded that their views were mere illusions and only Vedas teach the right path. In that context we also said that the tool available for an ordinary person for obtaining liberation was mind. We remarked that mind had to be controlled vigilantly as otherwise one could fall from grace even after attaining a higher level. We said that a disciplined and groomed mind could lead straight to liberation. We narrated the Daama Vyaala Kata Upakhyana and Bhima Bhaasa Dridha Upakhyana as illustrations. We have now to make a study of the means of calming down the mind which is the cause for both bondage and deliverance.”

With these words, Vasishtha planned to continue his philosophical instruction with the story of “*Dasura vara pradana*.” In preparation to this, he gave a detailed theoretical exposition from 35<sup>th</sup> to 46<sup>th</sup> Sargas - a length of 12 sargas. It was a rigorous discussion full of jargon and occasionally repetitious. Culling out parts of it contextually, we shall briefly present the substantial points here. Vasishtha started the dialogue.

**Vasishtha:** “Rama, I already said that it was essential that the mind should be calmed to be rid of bondage and to be liberated. You may ask how mind is connected to the issue of bondage and liberation. The essence of Wisdom (*Jnana*) lies in understanding that relation.

“śrūyatāṃ jñāna sarvasvaṃ  
śrtvā cai vāvdhāryatām  
bhoogechā mātrakoo baṃdhaḥ  
tattyā goo mookṣa ucyate” (Sarga 35, Sloka 3)

“Desire to experience pleasures is bondage. Dropping that desire is liberation.”

“Desire and dropping of desire are both mind-related. How mind is related to liberation or bondage is clear from this.

“Rama, we can express the same thing in another way.

“sarvage svātmani svachee  
aiṣaha miti bhāvanā  
aitat tat baṃdhanam loke  
sva vikalpoopa kalpitam” (Sarga 35, Sloka 39)

“The Self forgets that it pervades everything and everywhere. It imagines falsely that ‘I am within this body.’ It identifies with the limited adjunct of the body though it is itself infinite. Such a thought of identification is delimiting, binding. Please observe that! The keyword for producing bondage as per this definition also is “thought”. The opposite thought is liberation.

“anaṅtoosmī śvaroosmīti  
niścyena viliyate” (Sarga 35, Sloka 38)

“I am that infinity. I am the Lord of the Cosmos (Eswara).” This determination destroys the bondage produced by the imaginary delimiting fiction. That is to say, liberation is obtained.

“Even here, bondage and liberation are defined in relation to the mind.”

**Rama:** “But what is mind, My Teacher?”

**Vasishta:**

“dṛśya dṛṣṭiḥ sphuṭā yeeyaṁ  
sāhyavaśya masanmayī  
tanmayatvaṁ ca manasaḥ  
svarūpaṁ viddhi neetarat” (Sarga 35, Sloka 47)

“We see a variety of objects all around us.

“Are the things we see really there or do they appear to be there even without being there? Can things that are not there be seen at all? Well, yes.

“Don’t we see hills and valleys in a dream even if nothing is there? Will you say that the things that we see around are not like dream world because these things are stable and they exist for a long time?

“It is true that they are seen for a long time. But it is also equally true that they have a point of beginning and an end. That means, they had not been there prior to their beginning and they will not be after they are gone. Such things that were not in existence earlier and will not exist later, but appear in the intermittent time cannot be real. Hence, what are visible to us are apparitional objects (*Drishya drishti*) but not true objects! The ‘seeing’ (*drishti*) in the form of visibles (*drisyas*) is unreal (*asanmaya*) – that is to say it shows non-existing things as existing!

“The strange thing is that the seer identifies himself (*tanmaya*) with the unreal objects seen because of the unreal nature of ‘seeing’. This identification of the seer with the unreal objects is the true form of mind!

“That gives us the definition for mind.

The impressions (*vasanas*) of unreal objects being seen get consolidated over several births.

“What comes out of all this is: The consolidated impressions of past births of an individual (*Jiva*) is called mind.

“When you are awake, you had some experiences. When some of them are consolidated, you get a dream. You become a king in that dream. The king has a mind. Strictly speaking, that mind is the king! Where from the dream mind had come? The solidified impressions of the wakeful state have become the mind of the king. In the same way, the impressions gathered and solidified in the past births form your present mind. Hence, Rama, please understand that your impressions are your mind!

“Earlier, we gave two definitions for bondage. The gist of those definitions is that to pile up impressions is bondage. To terminate them is liberation! The mind is like a seed. If you sow a specific seed, you get a particular tree. But you pre-treat the seed in some way, the tree that comes out of it will not be like the usual tree.

“āmlaṁ madhurasāsiktaṁ  
madhuraṁ madhuraṁjitam  
bījaṁ prativiṣākalka  
siktaṁ ca kaṭu jāyatee” (Sarga 35, Sloka 29)

“If you sow a tamarind seed after pre-treating it with some prescribed procedures like soaking in sugarcane juice etc., the tree that comes out of it would look like a normal tamarind tree; but its fruits will be sweet and not sour. The same tamarind seed, if treated in a different way could give raise to a tamarind tree whose fruits could be bitter.

Rama, you read about these details in your Botany texts. The mind is also like the tamarind tree. If you soak it well in the juices of good thoughts, it will become noble and lead to salvation.”

[Readers may note that a scientific point is made out here. Some seed manipulative techniques akin to genetic modification have been mentioned in the example. As this is not a text on Botany, further details were not discussed in Yogavaasishta. It is clear from this, however, that such of plant modification techniques were known to the people of those days.]

Sage Vasishtha continues:

**Vasishtha:** “Therefore, Rama, Practice noble thoughts. “I am limited and subjected to change.” This is a wrong feeling that takes shape without effort in everybody. Counter it with another set of thoughts. Think “I am infinite. I am the Lord of Cosmos.” With such thoughts, gradually the mind itself will get annihilated.

“manasoobhyudayoo nāśaḥ  
manoo nāśoo mahoodayaḥ  
jñamanoo nāśamabhyeti  
manoojñasya vivardhatee” (Sarga 35, Sloka 18)

“Rama! Mind is a strange thing. An expansive mind is one that is extinguished. When the mind is wiped out, it has really expanded!

“A truly knowledgeable person’s mind is eliminated. Only an unknowing (ignorant) person’s mind balloons up!!

**Rama:** “Teacher! You speak strangely indeed! They are mutually contradictory statements. You have some inner meaning to convey and are talking in riddles. Will you please clarify?

**Vasishtha:** “Rama! There is no big secret here. We already said that mind was nothing but the consolidated impressions. Impressions are thoughts and counter thoughts. When impressions exist, the mind becomes restless. Restlessness is destruction. (Destruction

here means absence of the original expansive state of Consciousness). If such a mind grows, agitation increases. A ballooned up mind is a spoiled mind.

“Eradication of mind means suppression of thoughts and counter thoughts. If those are flattened, what is there as mind? Mind itself is not there! In the absence thoughts and counter thoughts, there will be unlimited peace. Peace is real improvement. Hence annihilation of mind is actually an improvement!

“To emphasize this point, I said that a Knowledgeable person (*jnani*) would not have mind. Mind is destroyed in him; an ignorant person will have a bloated mind. You will not find my words contradictory if you understand them from this perspective. Therefore, Rama, try to eliminate thoughts and counter thoughts.”

## 29. NONEXISTING WORLD GETS EXISTENCE:

**Rama:** “Teacher! You said that the objects seen were unreal and absolutely non-existent. It means that the entire visible world is not there at all. But the Supreme Self is truly existent. How could the non-existent world get sustenance in the ever-existent Supreme Self? You talked about it earlier. But in the light of what you have said now, new doubts are coming up. Please expand on this.”

**Vasishta:** “Rama, The Supreme Self is Consciousness. Consciousness is of two types. The Consciousness is luminescent in persons of Knowledge (*Jnani*). It projects the wheel of births and deaths (*samsara*) in the ignorant.”

**Rama:** “What is the Supreme Self and what is *samsara* – the wheel of births and deaths?”

**Vasishta:** “This whole wide world is seen by both the Knowledgeable and the ignorant ones. Both the grand father and his grand son see the waves, bubbles and lather. The grand father knows that all those waves, bubbles, lather are nothing but water. The grand son thinks that they are all different. In the same way, a knowledgeable person sees in everything visible, the same Consciousness that is all pervading and continuously existing. This is the perspective of the grand father. Experiencing this is nothing but the Supreme Consciousness being luminescent. Experiencing the visible things as diverse and existing is like the perspective of the young lad. That experience is the *samsara*.

“The sum and substance of this is that which is the Supreme Consciousness to the Knowledgeable ones, is the creator in the eyes of the ignorant ones. The ‘doership’ (*kartrutva*) of the creator is unlike that of, say, the potter. Here the Supreme Consciousness itself becomes the very things that come out of it – the five elements like the earth, physical objects etc. The potter does not himself become the pot. But the Supreme Consciousness manifests itself as the universe. That is the difference between the doership of a potter and that of the creator.

“ But then, can one call the transformation of the Supreme Consciousness as authorship or doership? That is up to you. It depends on the viewpoint. Because it is a change and

because the author of that change is the supreme Consciousness, do you like to describe it as the author? You may; but note that this authorship is different from that of the potter!

“A subject, (i.e. a doer, an author) needs a tool; a material cause; an intention; an action and many more. Then only he can be an author (*karta*). The Supreme Consciousness does not have any of these adjuncts. Hence, it cannot be an author. Therefore, ‘doership’ cannot be attributed to it. If you argue on these lines, okay, it is not the creator.

“These are two perspectives. Two different points of view. Yet, these have a commonality too. The Absolute Intelligent Self (*chidatma*), being a non-doer, exists immanently in all objects, propels them to do their respective functions, being itself untouched (unaffected) and remaining resplendent.

“Let us take an example. A seed is sown in the soil. *Chidatma* is in it. Because of *Chidatma*, the shoots try to come out. The seed is surrounded by soil. But there is space (*akasa*) in-between soil-grains. The porous space around the soil particles gives an opportunity to the shoot to come up. Space is that which gives an opportunity for objects to exist. What this implies is, the *Chidatma*, permeating the space is helping the shoot to come out.

Next is air. By air, we mean, the life giving wind useful for the respiration of the plant. The *Chidatma* permeating the air resonates and pulls up the shoot. Similar is the case with water. Even though it is inert, the *Chidatma* in water moistens the seed and softens it. The *Chidatma* permeating the earth gives its strength to the roots and supports it. Next is the fire. Fire enters the plant through the sunrays. The *Chidatma* permeating fire gives a form to the plant. From the form, it gets its unique identity.

“In this way, each of the five elements (*pancha bhutas*) helps every action in the world in its own way. “Time” too adds its contribution. The all-pervading immanent Self (*antaryaami*) in the form of Time is much stronger. He engulfs the creations that take place for eons and eons.

“Rama, what comes out of all this is: The all pervading *Chidatma* is assuming all forms. So the unreal but visible objects are within *Chidatma*. Who is viewing? *Chidatma* himself is viewing. How is this possible? For a highly inebriated person, he himself appears as another. *Chidatma* covered by Maya (illusion) appears as inert for himself. So I have named it as “The Creationist View (*srishti drishti*)” or “Object View (*drisya drishti*).” Expressing it in the usual Vedantic jargon, the entire visible world is the “Illusory Appearance” (*vivarta*) of *Chidatma*. “Illusory Appearance” is like seeing a snake in a rope - seeing the world in *Chidatma*.

“To sum up, there is nothing different from Self in the entire world. When there is nothing different from you, there is no question of desiring something. How can you then create something or how can you get something as an effect? Therefore, Rama, whatever you do, leave out the feeling of authorship and perform the deed. You will then attract no sorrow.”



### 30. WHAT IS DOERSHIP?

**Rama:** “Master, I asked how the non-existent world could come to exist in the *Chidatma* who transcends the world. Undoubtedly this was an old question. Your answer was also on the same old lines. But guessing the reason for my question, you molded your reply in a befitting manner. As an extension of it, you tell me to develop “Non-doership.” Is it possible to be a non-doer? On the top of it, when even highly learned persons take certain ritualistic actions, does it not mean that they have doership for their actions? Why should I abandon authorship when they are not abandoning?”

**Vsishtha:** “Rama, what do you understand by authorship? Suppose a person moved in his sleep. Unknown to him, the clay on the ground molds into some shape. Now is he the author of that shape? If you say so, he must be able to make similar shapes again and again. He cannot do it. Therefore, you will not get authorship by mere action of the body.

“You get authorship when a work is done intentionally desiring a specific result. Thus authorship is dependent on three things: (i) awareness; (ii) desire; and (iii) effort. Awareness means awareness of the outcome of an action. Desire is the wish to acquire that result. Effort is to act with the sensory and action organs. Work is done when those three conditions are fulfilled. Even if the three conditions exist silently in the mind, it is as good as doing a deed, though no obvious external action has taken place. Then the person gets doership.

“An act even if done openly but without the three steps will not attract authorship to the doer. This is the case with *jnanis* (knowledgeable persons). Whether it is a worldly action or yogic action, they will not have the awareness or desire doing it. Mere movement of organs takes place based on the strength of the past practices. Hence they do not get any doership linked to it.

“The ignorant ones though visibly not moving their organs, keep thinking in their mind about the outcomes. They intend to achieve the outcomes. They keep scheming actions within their mind. Hence doership will stick to such persons.

“And whoever has doership has to necessarily reap the consequences.

“Hence, Rama, wiping out awareness and desires from mind amounts to “non-doership.” And that is quite possible. Those knowledgeable of Truth achieved this. You should also get it!”

[**Note:** All of this is in the 38<sup>th</sup> Sarga. Sage Valmiki went into prose mode here with a detailed philosophical presentation on the subject. He wrote: “mano yatkaroti tatkr̥taṃ bhavati | yanna karooti tanna kr̥taṃ bhavati | atoo mana aiva kartru na deehaḥ ” Let us continue with Sage Vasishta.]

### 31. CAUSES OF DISTRESS:

**Vasishta:** “Rama, by the way, I know why you asked me this question! You want to say that non-doership is impossible even for the Supreme Self. Let us keep it aside for a while. Let me ask you a question.

“There are some things in this world that we can accept (receive) and some we have to discard. Is that not correct? Please tell me which of those cause misery?”

**Rama:** “There is no question of getting sorrow from things which have to be given up. Which are the things to be given up? If a thing was with us and caused misery for us, then obviously, it has to be thrown out. Once we know that it is a thing to be avoided, we will not touch it. It can then produce no misery for us.”

“A thing is acceptable in our view until we know that it should be avoided. So I feel that there are two types of acceptable things.

1. Those that are truly acceptable, and
2. Those we accept because we did not know that they have to be avoided.

We may get grief out of the first group. There is no scope for grief from the second group.”

**Vasishta:** “No, that wouldn’t work! I shall explain why. Are the two types of things you are talking about permanent or perishable? Let us analyze from both angles.

“Suppose they are impermanent. Things that cannot save themselves cannot bring permanent distress to others. Therefore, those of the acceptable things that are impermanent cannot cause sorrow!

“If the acceptable thing is permanent, Vedas say, “*atonyadartam.*” It means any thing other than Self is perishable. Hence, it cannot be possible that imperishable things would exist amongst acceptable ones. So there are no two types in acceptable things, as you contended. Only perishables exist and they cannot cause unhappiness.

“So, those which have to be discarded or those which can be accepted cannot cause any sadness. In other words, there is nothing that can cause melancholy in the world.

“If Self does not have grief, we need not specially say that it does not have “doership.” Hence it will not have to suffer the consequences also. If it appears like an author, we have to deduce that it is so because the ignorant ones are attributing the doership to Self.

“Knowers of truth too cannot escape the ‘attributed doership’. That does not affect the state of truthfulness of the knower.

“Hence Rama, do not think that non-doership is impossible to the Supreme Self. It is ‘attributed doership’ that you see in the knowers and also in the Supreme Self.”

**Rama:** “Gurudeva! Willy-nilly what you are saying is that the Supreme Self is perfect, is permeating everywhere; and bondage and freedom are no more than the constructs of an ignorant mind. If what you said is true – if bondage and freedom are non-existent things – where from could this creation in nothingness appear? How could it come about? What for? Where there is no wall, can a wall-painting be there?”

Vasishta thought over a bit on this question. After all, the same questions are being repeated. He mused within himself. “Is it because Rama is not able to catch up with the subject matter of ‘Attributeless Brahman’ (*Nirguna Brahman*) that I am talking about? Or is it because he did not like my argument? Is he indecisive and not clear? Whatever it is, unless I know his state, I should not respond to him straight away.” Thinking thus, he finally spoke as follows.

**Vasishta:** “Rama! The Supreme Self is omnipotent. He can take any shape he wants to. One of his infinite powers is that mutually contradictory principles can coexist at the same time and at the same place supported by him. Existence - non-existence; Oneness - multiplicity; Beginning - end and similar opposites stay in him without conflict. From that strange power this world comes into existence. In front of his unimaginable potential, questions like ‘how could there be a painting without a canvass’ are irrelevant.”

**Rama:** “Master! You are proceeding in your reply from a perspective of modification – that the Supreme Brahman gets modified. In this method, the quality of the causal substance inheres in the modified form. Fire will have heat and not coldness. Ice will have coldness and not heat. The contrary position is impossible.

“In the same way, in the Supreme Self who transcends senses cannot have perishability. The substances that are perceptible to the senses cannot have permanency. In the process of modification, the qualities of the cause will inhere in the effect; just like the quality of clay being present in the pot. If the world comes into existence out of a modification of the Ultra Pure *Chidatma*, the permanency character of *Chidatma* has to be inherited by the world. The ‘changelessness’ of *Chidatma* should be present in the world. But we do not see that!

“Hence we cannot say that the world has come about from a modification of the Supreme Self. In that case, one has to postulate that the Supreme Self and the World are different. That will be equivalent to saying that there is an inert matter disparate from the Supreme Self. To say that is an affront on the Supreme Self! Therefore, your reply is not acceptable.”

**Vasishta:** “Rama, you put it well! I just wanted to assess your understanding and hence I took recourse to the “Theory of Modification” (*parinama vada*). You could catch the weak points in it. Now I shall come to the actual position. Please follow this carefully. There are no two entities called the world and Brahman. Both are one only. It is not that fire is different from heat. Similarly, it is not that the world is distinct from the Supreme Self!”

**Rama:** “This does not clarify a thing. Neither sorrow nor the pairs of opposites exist in the Supreme Brahman that you speak of. But this world has both of these. How can then the world and Brahman be one?”

**Vasishta:** “Rama! This is something you have to resolve by yourself through your experience! Even if one attempts to reply this question according to the scriptural tradition, the answer has to be provided towards the end, that is at the time of summing up the final conclusion and not now. For the present, think of the Supreme Brahman as a great Magician! A magician can change a mouse into a mountain or a mountain into a mouse. The Supreme Brahman too can do any thing like that!!

“Is not the ocean producing waves? A particular phase of the ocean water is called a wave. A particular phase of the Supreme Brahman is the world. There is neither any creator nor any enjoyer of the transformation of the world.”

### **32. ORIGINATION OF INDIVIDUALS:**

**Rama:** “Teacher! You are suggesting that I should view the creation from the perspective of a Brahman with Attributes (*saguna brhaman*). In that case, how many individuals are being originated from him? How do they originate? When do they originate?”

**Vasishta:** “What I am going to do is to establish that the world and all the creatures in it are in their essential nature (*swarupa*) nothing but the Supreme Brahman, himself. It is not to say that Brahman and the world are different. Please keep this in mind while listening to the creation of the individual beings.

“First there was the Power of Pure Consciousness. An intention (*sankalpa*) to create arose in that Power of Consciousness. The reason for this thought is the residual impressions of actions of the earlier Kalpa (Kalpa refers to a cycle of 4.32 billion years). These impressions could be many, variegated and very startling. Therefore, it is difficult to state decisively how and when this ‘thought to create’ arises. Elders state that it happens randomly (without expectation, “*yadruchaya*”). The Pure Consciousness associated with the intention of creation is called *Jiva*.

“When the intention condenses, it gives raise to a vibration referred to as a manifestation of “I” in *Jiva*. This is called “Throb of Self or I-consciousness.” It gets further dense to become mind. The mind serves as a container to help *Jiva* to manifest himself.

“The mind in association with the *Jiva*, fantasizes this whole world in no time, like building castles in the air. In this fantasy, mind pretends to have lost first its state of Pure Consciousness and then its state of being the seer (*drigrupa*).

“The *Jiva* in that state does not comprehend his own Pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness appears as “vacuum” to him. He calls it space (*akasa*).

“The *jiva* experiences, under his power of intention, a creation as if a creator, a four-faced Brahma, is creating it. Then the fourteen worlds (*lokas*) come up. Where from have all these come? Please observe. They have originated from the intention of the *Jiva* i.e. the mind of *Jiva*!

“Now, we shall consider the individual beings. We shall classify them into three groups for our discussion, viz. 1. Totally Deluded; 2. Discerning by Birth; and 3. Lacking Detachment.

“The Totally Deluded persons are one hundred percent ignoramus. The second group, The Discerning by Birth, as the name implies, are perfectly wise and knowledgeable right from birth. The third group comprises those who, though trying for liberation, are undecided and vacillating. The first two types are not concerned with Truth, knowledge or spiritual practices. The first group, the Totally deluded, is nowhere near Truth, knowledge or spiritual practices. The group of people who are Discerning by Birth have both knowledge and an understanding of truth. Therefore truth, knowledge or spiritual practices are of no use for this group, as their purpose was already served.

All the teachings and methods of practices for salvation are for the undecided third group!

“In order to inculcate detachment into them, God introduced a series of sorrows and comforts. Under the impact of these, they go through varied forms of *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* pursuits. All this perturbation is like high turbulent waves in a fierce storm on high seas. And like the endless ocean, there is one seamless Beingness! If a part of it acquires ‘individual selfhood’ (*jiva bhava*), the movement called creation begins. I shall describe this in detail later on.”

### 33. PLAY OF WORDS:

**Rama:** “Teacher! Just a second. On one hand you say that It is seamless and infinite. On other hand you say a part moves. How can you reconcile these two statements?”

**Vasishta:** “A good question Rama! To tell you the truth, these two can never be reconciled. Do not feel bad. The Vedas and scriptures speak in those terms. Even though it is known to be false, the scriptures continue to talk and write like that.

“Some time back I compared the origin of the universe from the Supreme Self like that of a lamp from another lamp. Even this is a fabrication.

“Are there two entities there like two lamps? Is the Supreme Self a type of entity that can give birth to anything?”

“In such a case, what is the purpose of using such words? When the disciple is at a lower level, this type of dialog is necessary to direct his attention towards Truth.

“vākprapañcaṃ vinā tveetat  
ajñānamatulaṃ tamaḥ  
bheettu manyonyamuditaṃ  
yatnaṃ kartuṃ na śakyate ” (Sarga 41, Sloka 12)

“Ignorance comes in two forms. One is “Spiritual Path Related.” The other is “Primordial Ignorance” in the mind of the seeker. The pair strengthens and reinforces one another. One should make an attempt to cut them at the same time. That attempt cannot be done in the absence of such a play of words.”

**Rama:** “Master! You yourself are admitting that what you have been teaching is untrue. Any knowledge gained from falsehood would also be false and a part of nescience. One mendacity cannot be the opposite of another mendacity. How can then your teaching destroy nescience?”

**Vasishta:** “Some devoted wives follow their husbands into the funeral pyre. Don’t they know that their bodies will be burnt by this? They know! Still they do it with the belief that it will help their souls. Even in nescience, there is some superior type. The superior type ignorance enters into the mind of an individual as a result of his meritorious deeds of past lives. These are referred to as “the *sattvic* ignorance (the ignorance which is dominated by *sattva guna* – purity, goodness, softness and the like).” The ‘*sattvic* ignorance’ has a strong motive to do good to the individual who is its master. It desires that pure knowledge should dawn on the individual. Who hinders wisdom from inhabiting him? Ignorance blocks wisdom! The ‘*sattvic* ignorance’, like the devoted wives, purposefully invites on to itself pure knowledge that destroys it. The ‘*sattvic* ignorance’ takes root and intensifies with my play of words.”

**Rama:** “Teacher, you talk of nescience and illusion. What is illusion (*Maya*)?”

**Vasishta:** “apreekṣamāṇā sphurati  
preekṣitātu vinaśyati” (Sarga 41, Sloka 17)

“Rama, it will be visible, if you do not see; if you look at it, it will disappear! Illusion is strange indeed! The less we talk about it, the better it is.

“kutoo jāteeyamiti te  
rāma māstu vicāraṇā  
imaṅ kathamaḥaṅ hanmī  
tyeeṣā teestu vicāraṇā” (Sarga 41, Sloka 31-32)

“Rama! Do not worry about the questions of Wherefrom, Why and How about illusion. Think of the ways of getting rid of it!

“avidyā vitatavyādheeḥ  
auṣadhaṅ śruṇu rāghava” (Sarga 42, Sloka 1)

“I shall tell you the medicine for the disease of nescience. Please listen.”

Sage Vasishta talked about various methods of getting rid of the disease of ignorance in the next six Sargas. They were mostly a recapitulation of what was already covered.

Nevertheless, he effected occasional changes to his presentation incorporating some fresh viewpoints and clarifications in the understanding of the state of the universe.

### 34. DESCENT OF JIVA:

He described the origination of *jiva* in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Sarga. The central point is expressed in the following sloka:

“krameṇa pākavaśataḥ  
phalameeti yathānyatām  
avasthayaiva nākṛtyā  
jīvoo malavaśāttathā” (Sarga 42, Sloka 27)

There is a small fruit on the tree. Slowly it grew and ripened. It's not that something is lost and a new thing is born. Whatever was already there changed its state. It is a transition of phase. Still, people talk as if raw and ripened fruits are different. Similarly, the association of ignorance brings in a change of phase in the individual (*jiva*). The thing does not change, but the state changes. Nevertheless, the world refers to it as if the thing has changed.

There is only one Consciousness. Because of the force of impressions, it looks as though it developed an attachment (*abhimana*) as “me” on a base, i.e. a body. Then that Consciousness is called “knower of the field of the body” (*kshetrajna*). If the impressions condense further, the same Consciousness is known as “Ego or I-consciousness (*ahamkara*).” More consolidation of ego in a decisional function – *nischayatmaka vritti* is referred to as Intellect (*buddhi*). When ‘thought and counter thought (*sankalpa vikalpa*) enter it, it becomes Mind (*manas*). When the thoughts firm up, it becomes senses. Further solidification makes it the physical body. All of this is akin to the raw fruit changing into a ripened one. A phase change – that is what Sage Vasishtha established in this Sarga.

Determining thus, Vasishtha could put forward that the modifications of life take place because of the force of impressions. The 43<sup>rd</sup> Sarga discusses the way of action (*karmagati*) and the consequential births of the *jivas*. Vasishtha maintained that all the individuals (*jivas*) at the end (i.e. at the time of dissolution – *pralaya*) merge into Nature (*prakriti*) that exists like a seed. The 44<sup>th</sup> Sarga starts with a question on this concept. The question was if all the individuals merge with the Nature at the time of dissolution, how creation could begin again as all the *jivas* got liberated at that time. Vasishtha was a bit annoyed at this question. He chided Rama saying that he answered this long back and asked Rama, “Can't you infer even if I had not told you? *Semushi kva gataa tava?* – what happened to your intelligence?”

However, he once again narrated the origination of the universe in his own way. He proposed that a noble virtuous person (of the previous Kalpa) whose effects of past deeds fructified would get the body of Chaturmukha Brahma in the present Kalpa and with the force of his intention, this entire world would come into existence.

Then a question arose with regard to the details of the way the body would build up. In an answer, Vasishtha described the body as “Eight-part-town (*Puryashtaka*)” – a composite of eight parts. The commentator described as:

“karma jñāneem̐driyagaṇau  
bhūtaprāṇa manoo gaṇāḥ  
avidyā kāma karmāṇi  
liṅgaiḥ puryashtakam̐ viduḥ” (Commentary to the Sloka 24)

“The Eight-part-town is composed of :

1. The Action Organs;
2. The Sense Organs;
3. The Subtle Five Great Elements;
4. The Five Airs;
5. The Manas (thoughts and counter thoughts), Buddhi (decisions), Chitta (recapitulations), ahankarra (I-consciousness);
6. Ignorance;
7. Desire; and
8. Action.”

With the above eight parts coming together, the subtle body (*sukshma sarira* or *linga sarira*) forms. From this concept, it is easy to show that the physical body forms from the technique of “*Panchikaranm*” (combination of five elements in certain proportions) and consolidation. Thus it also makes it easy to say that the physical body which forms from the subtle five elements through *Panchikarana* is an illusion. Vasishtha explained this in the 45<sup>th</sup> Sarga.

From this it easily follows that this phenomenal world is an illusion like that of seeing a snake in a rope, and Jeevan Muktas (persons liberated right in this birth) who understand the truth of this could transcend the sorrows like old age, birth and death. Sage Vasishtha gave a captivating description of the qualities of a Jeevan Mukta in the 46<sup>th</sup> Sarga in 32 slokas.

Sri Rama was not swept away by that poetic description. He asked Vasishtha to spell the details of the way the world was created from the intention of Hiranyagarbha as Vasishtha referred to Hiranyagarbha earlier while discussing Hiranyagarbha’s origin.

### **35. MYRIADS OF HIRANYAGARBHAS:**

Rama’s question suited well Vasishtha’s plan of teaching. In 90 slokas in the 47<sup>th</sup> Sarga, Vasishtha talked of the process of creation and how creation would change in different Kalpa periods. In so doing, he demonstrated once again that the whole world was an illusion.

We shall now look into this in some detail.



**Vasishta:** “Rama, you mention Hiranyagarbha. Which Hiranyagarbha and which of his intentions should I speak about? By now several thousands of Brahmas have gone. Hundreds of Vishnus and Shivas are gone. Millions of Indras are gone. Billions of universes related to them are also past now. Trillions of *jivas* (individuals) and zillions of their generations exited! All these were like things born in a magic! Can there be an order for creation or sustenance of things in a magic?”

“The intentions and creations of Hiranyagarbha also go in a similar way. Some of these creations were of Brahma. Some are of Vishnu. Some are of Shiva. Some could even be those of Sages!! There are very many such creations.

“yathā taramṅā jaladhau  
mṛgatrūṣṇā marau yathā  
kusumāni yathā cūtee  
tathā viśvaśriyaḥ pare” (Sarga 47, Sloka 15)

“Like the number of waves in an ocean, like the number of mirages in a desert or the number of flowers on a fully blossomed mango tree, there are infinite universes in the Supreme Consciousness.

“There is no rule that the creations, though of Brahma, will be all alike. Brahma was born from a lotus once. Another time from water. Still another time from an egg. Yet another time from just space. In one universe, Shiva is supreme. In another universe, Vishnu is supreme. In yet another, Indra is above these two.

“In one creation, there were trees to start with on the earth. Another creation took off with mountains, slowly giving raise to life. It is impossible to narrate all the varieties. Whatever may be the number of creations, not one can stay for ever.

“yathā maśaka jālāni  
varṣādiṣvākulāni tu  
uttpattyoṭpatya naśyaṃti  
tatheemā lookaśṛṣṭayaḥ” (Sarga 47, Sloka 17)

“Similar to mosquitoes in rainy season born and dead everyday, the creations come and go. In one Kalpa space may come out first. From space other things take shape. In another Kalpa wind may come up first and from that other elements are generated. The generation of beings is also quite variable in that way.

“Sometimes a sound may come from the mouth of Prajapati ( lord of the people - creator) and the rest of creation has its origin in that sound. The creation may take place from his leg or eye!

“The differences in creation come up because of the differences in the cogitations and contemplations that took place in the mind of a given Brahma during his preceding Kalpas when he had been a virtuous aspirant.”

**Rama:** “Teacher! It is often said that Brahma was born from the lotus of the navel of Narayana. You also indicated that it was possible. Narayana signifies Ultra Pure Existence Consciousness. How could there be a navel for Consciousness? And a lotus in it? On the top of it, Brahma being born out of it? Does it not all sound incongruous?”

**Vasishta:** “How can there be rules for a dream? The whole creation is a dream! Each night’s dream is different. Therefore, the Puranas portrayed the emergence of the universes in a number of ways. At one place, it is said that with the power of the intention of Vishnu, a golden egg came into existence and Hiranyagarbha was born out of it. In another place it is said that the Supreme being seeded the waters that were spread all around and the universe sprouted out of it. One Purana says that the Sun of an earlier Kalpa is the Brahma of this Kalpa and another Purana says that the earlier Varuna is the present Brahma.

“We may deduce from putting together all these words that the world is no more than a projection of mind and nothing else! Only to substantiate this that I have been recounting the sequences of creations.

“Rama, in every Kalpa Creation and Dissolution at its end and Creation again – the wheel of magic has been going on eternally. It is a great mysterious cycle.”

“kimeetasmin mahāmāyā  
ḍambaree dīrgha śāmbaree  
rāma satyamasatyaṅ vā  
nirṇeyaṅ yadihoocyatee” (Sarga 47, Sloka 88)

“In this great cycle of magic, in this unending delusion, what is there to determine truth or untruth? Nothing! In order to make things more clear, I shall narrate the story called “Daasura Upakhyana.”

### **36. DAASURA UPAKHYANA:**

“Rama, once upon a time there was the kingdom of Magadha where there used to be many Anthocephelus (kadamba - Latin name: Adina cordifolia) trees. Sage “Saraloma” used to meditate below one of these trees on a hill. His only son was Daasura. Daasura too used to meditate below another tree. Eventually, Saraloma passed away. His wife followed him into the funeral pyre. Daasura was left alone in that huge forest. He couldn’t bear the loss of his parents and wept loudly. He wept for a long time.

“One day a goddess traveling by sky heard his crying and pitied him. She approached him in an invisible shape and consoled him with these words: “Son of a Great Sage! Why do you cry? Even Brahma cannot escape his end. How can your father escape? Don’t you realize that this world is impermanent? Please understand this and stop crying.”

“Consoled and cajoled at these words, he felt relieved. He could remember the scriptures that he read. He could overcome his sorrow and performed the funeral rites for his parents. Then he went back to his meditation.

“Without the guidance and advice of his father, his meditation was not going okay. Still, determinedly he pursued reciting Vedas and musing about their meaning. He developed concentration well. But the Truth about Self contained in the last parts of the Vedas eluded him. As a result, his mind did not attain serenity. He felt that the reason for his restless mind and his inability to be united with the Supreme could be the unholiness of the place. He went around the earth looking for an alternate place. He couldn’t find any. He returned to his old Kadamba tree.

“He thought over seriously. He resolved that the earth itself was not sanctified; that it was impious; and that living on it was not sacred. Hence he decided to live on the top of the tree like a bird in the sky, and continue his meditation there.

“A man can have sustenance on the earth but not on the tip of a tree. This *jivi* is wishing for sustenance at a place where sustenance is not possible for him. Therefore, he thought rigorously over this and embarked on severe practices. He lit a fire on the ground and made an offering of his own flesh into the fire. A man exists if there is flesh and muscle. If man exists he can eke out sustenance somewhere or other. This person wishing for sustenance at the tip of the tree was burning away his flesh and muscle!

“Even the Fire God was agitated at his practice. He was apprehensive that the gods might get burnt if he carried and gave the meat of that noble Brahmin to them. So he appeared before Daasura and appealed to him in these words “Please ask for whatever you want. Take a boon from me as if you are taking your own gem from a box – “*koośākāśāt maṇim̐ yathā*”

[The poet used a beautiful expression here. He did not just say, “take a gem from the box.” He said, “take a gem from the space in the box.” Can there be sustenance for a gem in space whether the space is within a box or outside? The poet with this metaphor is hinting sustenance of a thing where its sustenance is not possible. This is the key issue that repeatedly comes up in the story of Daasura.]

“Daasura was quite happy. He requested Fire God, “Oh, God of Fire! I do not see a sacred place on the earth. ‘*Vrikshanam upari stitih astu mee*’, let me have sustenance on the top of the trees.” The Fire God blessed, “May it be so!” and disappeared. Soon Daasura reached the tip of the tree. The condition of Daasura there resembled Dissolution time when the whole creation was flooded with water and Child Krishna reached the top of a banyan tree. Daasura sat in lotus pose on a tender leaf on the last branch. As he was seated on an Anthocephelus Kadamba tree, he came to be known as “Kadamba Daasura.”

“Daasura was not able to focus his mind on the truth of Self. His mind was inclined to perform rituals. But he was not on the ground to be able to perform rituals. Therefore, he started sacrificial rituals mentally. He worshipped gods mentally. This is a very powerful

path for seekers. In course of time, because of his sincere practices, his mind was purified, he could recollect the teachings from his past lives and achieved self-realization.

“One day, when he was in that state, a goddess of the forest approached him and stood in a pathetic condition taking support of a creeper on the Anthocephelus tree. Daasura looked at her and asked her who she was and the reason for her sadness. The goddess replied to him, “Oh, Great Muni! Elders say that a visit to pious persons fulfils even impossible desires. I have not come here newly. You have been staying at the end of the tree. I have been living on this creeper from a long time.

“The other day, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the Full moon half of the first month of the year (*chaitra*), garden festivities were celebrated in the world of gods (*deva loka*). I too went there. My woman friends were all there. I was the only woman without a son. I am childless. I felt very sad when I realized this. When you, a boon fulfilling well, are there near me on the top of this Anthocephelus tree, how can I be orphaned? How can I be without a son? I came with this hope. Therefore, Beloved, please bless me with a son. If you don’t, not pieces of flesh like you did, but I will offer my entire body to the fire as a sacrifice.”

“Kadamba Daasura was not moved by her words. Nor did he express anger. He smiled at her and tossed a flower gently into her hands. He told her, “Hey, Beauty! Don’t be sad. Wear this flower in your hair. Within a month’s time, you will have son. But because you came to me with an emotion to end yourself, your son will be a Knower of Truth.” The goddess felt very happy and wanted to serve him. The Muni did not accept her offer and sent her away.

Twelve years passed by. The sage never even thought of the goddess in the mean time. One day she came along with a 12 year old boy and bowed to him respectfully. She addressed him, “Bhagavan, this boy is our son. He is schooled in all the Vedas and scriptures. He has not yet learnt the *Brahma Vidya* (Knowledge of the Supreme Self) that can remove the worldly sorrows. Please teach him that.

“koo hi nāma kule jātaṃ putraṃ maurkhyeṇa yoojayeet” (Sarga 51, Sloka 28)

“Will any father leave his own son as a fool?”

“Daasura gazed sternly at them for some time and said, “Leave the disciple here and you go.”

“Daasura treated the boy as a disciple and not as his son. The boy too reciprocated as a student towards his teacher. The boy served his teacher well with tolerance and forbearance. After a considerable period, the father began his instructions. As a result, the boy could gain only theoretical knowledge of truth as described in scriptures.

“Daasura, though had been living alone so far, used to contemplate deeply on the meaning of Vedas. Hence, he could teach the knowledge of the truth of Self (*atma tatva jnana*) as short stories. Under the influence of such stories, the boy could establish himself firmly in the direct (not indirect – *aparokhsa*) experience of truth of Self.

“Rama, please do not feel that I am telling you some fictitious story. I am telling you something I had seen with my own eyes.

“I was once proceeding to have a holy dip in the Gangotri (source of the River Ganges) in the Himalayas. I stopped for the night beneath an Anthocephalus kadamba tree. I heard after some time a sweet voice like the drone of a dragon fly. The sound was so fascinating that I listened to it with curiosity. One person was telling a story to another on that tree. The story went as follows:

### **37. A STORY IN A STORY:**

Once upon a time there was a rich king. His name was “Swottha.” Swottha means one who is born of himself. He was so dauntless that his orders were obeyed not merely by men but even the gods including Brahma and others. The gods of Eight Directions too could not oppose him. It was so because he had not one but three bodies. He could occupy the three worlds with these bodies. He roamed all the time in space (the sky) with his three bodies. In fact he was born there. He built a big town in space. He created in that town a few worldly creatures who were totally lost in the desires of various objects. He gave long life to some of them and a short span for others. He kept them separately. He called those with the short life as “Apavarakas” and in order to protect them, he arranged guards. He established business and commercial relations within the two groups.

“Whatever may be his arrangements, the king never allowed any thing to stay permanently. He himself was indecisive and wavering by temperament. No body could predict his thoughts. He used to intend all of a sudden to build new towns, instantly enter the yet-to-be-built towns, live in them for some time and destroy them by himself. He was a Royal Highness in one town and a beggar in another. He was a healthy happy go lucky guy at one place and a diseased person in another. Finally one day he completely ceased to be and disappeared.

“An elderly voice was relating the story. A young voice interrupted and asked a question as follows: “Father, it looks that there is an inner meaning to what you are saying. You seem to believe more in the inner meaning. You said that the king used to enter the to-be-built towns. ‘To enter’ indicates present tense. ‘To-be-built’, indicates future tense. What is the meaning behind? Please bring forth the implication of all this.

“The father was pleased with the question.

“He replied, “Son, I told you that the name of the king was Swottha. ‘*Swath utthah iti swotthah.*’ It means one who is born of himself. What can be born of itself in the creation? Only the mind! It is born of the un-manifested (*avyakrita*) space and ends there. I called the mind as “king.” The entire world is mind. If an intention is there, there is world. There is no world in the absence of intention. Right from Brahma, Vishnu etc. all the creatures are hanging on to the branches of the mighty tree of intention!”

“What is the substance on which the mind could base itself to build the world? It is the Ultra Pure Supreme Brahman Consciousness. Another name for that substratum is “Vacuum Space (*sunyaakasa*).” So I said that the king constructed the town in space. The town I described represents the entire world.

“Men are the short-term creatures. Gods are with long lives. I named men as “Apavarakas.” Apavaraka means a room. A room bounds (shields) the space. Man lives in the Supreme Consciousness. But he cannot see Him because he puts on a veil on himself. So I compared man to a room.

“Men worship gods with a desire to get benefits. Gods try to receive offerings from men through the sacrificial rites. So I compared the relation to that of a business between these two.

“Son! Every living individual has an I-consciousness or I-ness. But the I-ness does not stay the same all the time.

“yathā kusūlee mārjāloo  
bhastrāyāṁ bhujagoo yathā  
muktāphalaṁ yathā veṇau  
ahaṁkārastathā tanau”

(Sarga 53, Sloka 23)

“Sometimes the I-ness lies around like the cat in a silo. The cat thinks. But the thoughts are to no effect. It is called “Inertial I-ness” – *Tamasa ahamkara*. That is the I-ness in Sushupti. I-ness in this sense is not arrogance. It is simply a consciousness of ‘me.’

“Sometimes the I-ness may strike like a “snake in bellows” when the bellows are pressed with hand.

[“Snake in Bellows” is a saying which may not be familiar to the present day readers. It alludes to the olden times when ironsmiths operated bellows to blow air into the furnace used for heating iron. A leather bag is connected to the furnace by a tube. When the bag is pressed, air will go to the fire in the furnace. During nights when the bellows were not operational, there was scope for snakes to take shelter inside them. If the workers operate the bellows next morning without checking, the snakes in it may bite hissing at the workers.]

“I-ness of this type is referred to as ‘Active I-ness’ – *Rajasa ahamkara*. The cause of happiness and sorrow in the dream world is *Rajasa ahamkara*.

“I-ness comes in a third form too. It is like the pearl in a bamboo! A bamboo refers to a worthless thing. But sometimes pearls grow on its nodes. They have a great value. Similarly, valuable “Illuminating I-ness” – *sattvik ahamkara* may generate from the unworthy body. Usually an ability to bestow discretion vests with the I-ness in wakeful state. So it is called Illuminating I-ness or *sattvik ahamkara*. In order to indicate the changeable nature of I-ness, I described the king as wavering.

“Every creature sees the world. It looks as though every one is looking at the same world. But each person is looking at what he himself conjures up as per his intentions. He sees as and when he conjures. I described this by saying that the king enters the future-town instataneously.

“bhaviṣyapyannava nirmāṇaṃ  
sa vyāpnooti tathā puram  
yathā samkalpitaṃ vastu  
kṣaṇādeeva prapaśyati”

(Sarga 53, Sloka 25)

“Supposing your dream is your future world, aren’t you entering into it? If you take this world as a dream, entering this world is akin to going into a future-world! The present and future tense is contradictory here. Still the entry is going on. People accept the time contradiction because conceptualization, construction and entering all take place at once. I compared this to the entry of the king into a future-town.

“An individual (*jiva*) runs round and round with the three types of I-ness, he assumes the births of a king, a beggar, a common man and so on. I described this as the king living in different towns in different styles. As the wheel rotates thus, somewhere along, he catches by good fortune, detachment (*vairagya*). As he gets absorbed in Self and gains knowledge of Truth about Self, the individual is liberated. The king in my story “ceased and disappeared” implies the same. The individual who reached salvation merges in the Supreme Consciousness. Hence he does not have a distinct appearance any more. “*Nasam*” is used in Sanskrit to describe disappearance. “*Nasa adarsane*” is the root meaning; it does not connote death.

### 38. EMPTY THE MIND:

“In essence, your mind is the king and I depicted the wanderings of the mind in my story. When there is a thought, world (*samsara*) arises. Whether it is the world in wakeful state or dream state, it is a world! If the thoughts are extinguished temporarily, it is *sushupti* (deep sleep) state. Though it does not appear like a world (*samsara*), deep sleep state is also *samsara*. If you terminate the thoughts in your mind completely then you will obtain permanent liberation. Make an effort for that!

“You may feel that eradicating thought is very difficult and want to have a shortcut technique. The trinity of Gods cannot also suggest an alternate approach. Even if you burn yourself in fire, you will not find a second method. So stop thinking astray and work on ending thought.”

“Rama! After this exposition, the son thought over for a long time and asked his father, “What is thought? How does it originate? How does it grow? How does it end?”

“It’s a truly thought-provoking question and his father gave an equally profound answer.

## Dasura (The Father):

“anaṁtasyātma tatvasya  
sattā sāmānya rūpiṇaḥ |  
citaśceetyoonmukhatvaṁ yat  
tatsaṁ kalpāṁkuraṁ viduḥ” || (Sarga 54, Sloka 2)

“There is Supreme Self. It is infinite. The ‘existence’ principle – the beingness in everything in this world - is Its real form. Such ‘existence’ is called “common beingness (*sattaa saamanyam*).” Its true essential nature is consciousness. Another name for this is *Chit* (Pure Knowledge). Still another name is *Drik* (A seer without any object to be seen).

“If we refer to Consciousness as the Seer, the world is the ‘seen’ (*drisya*). If we call Consciousness as Pure Knowledge (*Chit*), the world is what is known (*chetya*). *Drik* – *Drisya* and *Chit* – *Chetya* are word pairs. *Drik* is not truly related to *Drisya*. In the same way, we may say that *Chit* is not related to *Chetya*.

Though unrelated, if *Chit* tends towards *Chetya*, that tendency is “thought – *sankalpa*.” This is the seedling stage for thought process. That is the way thought originates.

“Pure knowledge is real. *Chetya* is different from that. So it is unreal. If knowledge is tending towards *Chetya*, it means reality is tending towards unreality. So what comes out will be unreal, but not real. So thought can be unreal only and never real. The seedling of thought when it grows and swells brings out the “you-me”, “we-they”, “this-that” differences and manifests the whole world. Hence, the entire world is unreal!

“I have told you how thought originates and also how it expands. I have to tell you now the ways and means of annihilating it.

“saṁkalpeenaiva saṁkalpaṁ  
manasā svamanoo munee |  
chitvā svātmani tiṣṭhatvaṁ  
kimeetāvati duṣkaram” || (Sarga 54, Sloka 18)

“Please be aware: any thought is untrue. Do not think of anything hereafter. Do not ruminate on the past comforts and sorrows. This is the best course for eradicating thought.

“To say, ‘I will not think any more’ is also a thought. This is referred to as “nullifying thought (*asankalpana sankalpa*).” This can wipe out all other thoughts and also obliterate itself.

“With a slight difference, there is another method. You have a mind. That which thinks is mind. Think without a break on the truth of self in your mind. This can also eliminate the mind. Is there any difficulty to do this?



“There is yet another method to stop thoughts. Think of the world as an illusion. Earlier you thought of the world as real. You thought the world exists. Hence it settled down as solid real. It is creating all sorts of problems for you. Now start thinking strongly that it is all unreal. That’s all; it will be unreal!!

“Why go that far! Start putting together through scriptural words, through logic, through experience that the world is unreal. That’s enough! Attachments and hatred will reduce in you. The intensity of happiness and sorrow will go down. The world becomes totally unreal!”

**Son of Daasura:** “Master! If mind is the one creating and wiping out the whole world, why does the mind not carve out the world in a manner convenient to it? Does any one think of a fantasy that hurts oneself?”

**Daasura:** “Why not? People with a fickle mind do that! Does not a monkey in the forest stick its leg into a clutter of branches and become crippled? Your mind is covered with the impressions of past lives. It is like a fuzzy mirror. By its own nature, it has a connection to the substratum Consciousness (*adhistana chaitanya*). But what’s the use? Under the influence of the stain, the connection to the Consciousness modifies into vibration which appears as visible objects, and infects the mind with a new taint of capriciousness. That’s why your mind behaves like the proverbial monkey in the jungle and hurts itself.

“The plaque on a copper pot will go away by polishing. The plaque on the mind will go away by the exercise of purging thoughts.

“Son! This is not all that difficult a job! After all you are not trying to get rid of something that is there. What you are doing is to get rid of something that is not really there, but appears to be there!

“kvāsadvastu ciraṃ sthitaṃ?”

(Sarga 54, Sloka 39)

“Can a non-existing thing stick for long? Hence, strive hard for the annihilation of thought.”

**Vasishta:** “Rama, I felt very happy on that night to listen to the conversation of the father and son who were sitting on the last branches of the tree. I went and stood in front of Daasura. Daasura welcomed me respectfully. I joined the duo and narrated some strange stories of truth. We spent the night in pious discussions. I left at dawn back on my way.

“Rama, I told you the story that Daasura told his son. No father will tell a lie to his son. He narrated his own experience. That is a fact.

“tasmādvikalpaṃ malamātmanastvaṃ  
nirdhūya paśyāmalamātmatatvam |  
āsādayiṣyasyacirātpadaṃ tat  
bhaviṣyasijyoo bhuvaneeṣu yeena” ||

(Sarga 55, Sloka 40)

“Therefore, Rama, recognize that the dirt on your mind is thought. Remove it and see the stainless knowledge of Self. Just have a look and you become that! You will be worshipped by the whole world if you get that stage.”

[With this Sage Vasishtha completed what he wanted to teach about sustenance of world. He was yet to teach about the Dissolution of the world. His teaching had to combine dissolution of the mind along with the dissolution of the world in the next chapter as he proceeds to talk about the methods of obtaining a thoughtless state. Sage Vasishtha allotted seven Sargas for this topic. The discussion went on from the 56<sup>th</sup> to 62<sup>nd</sup> Sarga. He presented what had already been talked about using technical and scriptural jargon. We shall cover them as briefly as possible. The 56<sup>th</sup> Sarga opens with a question raised by Vasishtha himself.]

### 39. SCRIPTURAL DISCUSSION:

**Vasishtha:** “Rama! You have affection for this world. Do you love it because it is true or untrue? Or both true and untrue? What happens under each assumption? Let us see!

“Let the world be true. That is to say it is real. You are also real. You are the seer (subject). The world is the view (object). If these two are real, is the objective world dependent on you? Or is it independent? We cannot call it independent and real substance, if it is dependent on you. A reality that does not have independence is not reality at all! Then why to have affection for something that is not real? Why attachment? Leave all that!

“Okay, let us grant for the moment that the visible objective world is real, independent and different from you. If that is true, there is no relation subsisting between you both. Why should you have affection for something you are not related to? Why should you have attachment on some part of it as “me” and some part of it as “mine?” So even from this angle, you should leave all that!

“If you accept that the world is unreal, any attachment to it is a waste. So leave it!

“Do you like to say that the world is a combination of real and unreal? When its quality is undecided, what for is your love for it? Even in this case, attachment to the world is unworthy!

“Lastly, is there a creator (author) for this world? Or there is none? In other words, is it authored or unauthored? Or a combination of authored and unauthored? Just as we have concluded in all the above cases, even here, it is not befitting to have love for the world!”

**Rama:** “Teacher! The matter is not so crystal clear. The scriptures say, “*yeto va imani bhutani jayante*”, “*viswasya karta bhuvanasya gopta*” etc. – meaning thereby that the Supreme Lord is the author of the universe, can we call this world authorless?”

**Vasishtha:** “The Vedas did not just stop with those two sentences.

“yattadadreesyamagrāhya mavarṇama cakṣuḥśrootraṃ  
tadapāṇipādaṃ nityaṃ vibhuṃ  
sarva gataṃ susūkṣmaṃ tadavyayaṃ  
tadbhūtayooniṃ paripaśyaṃti dhīrāḥ”

“There are hundreds of sentences like the above. The Supreme Lord is described here as unattached, actionless, unauthoring.”

**Rama:** “Which sentences are important? Which sentences are secondary?”

**Vasishta:** “One has to see which sentence appears in what context. If you examine that way, it will be clear that all such sentences as “*viswasya karta*” were figuratively propounded to prove indirectly that the world is untrue! Hence, it is proper to decide that the world is unauthored (uncreated). What wisdom is it to develop attachment for such a world?”

**Rama:** “You keep saying that the Supreme Self is luminescent. Just as the sun is the cause for the brilliance (visibility) of the objects, why can’t the Supreme Self be the author of this creation?”

**Vasishta:** “People say that the sun shines. That means sun is the author for the action of brilliance. Let us see how far this is true.

“sarvechā rahitee bhānau  
yathā vyoomani tiṣṭhati  
jāyatee vyavahāraśc  
sati deevee tathā kriyā” (Sarga 56, Sloka 29)

“In making an object brilliant, is there an effort by the sun? Does he have a desire to make something brilliant? Does he have any ego that “I am the one making things brilliant”? An object is there. Is sun possessive of it to make it brilliant? He does not have any of these attributes. How can the sun who does not have ego, possessiveness, desire or effort be an author?”

“The sun is there by himself unconcerned. Objects gathered beside him. Soon the ignorant declare that the sun is the author of brilliance. It means that they are attributing the action of illumination to the sun depending on the object beside him!

“It’s happening in the same way in the case of Self too. Supreme Self is self-luminescent. Knowledge is its essential nature. (It is also called *Drigrupa*). There are no modifications for that. It stays as witness to all minds. In spite of that, when an object (*drisya*) like the mind comes beside it, the ignorant people declare “The Supreme Self is the author of mind.” This is happening due the superimposition of the three *gunas*. All this means that the Supreme Self by his very nature does not have any authorship!

“If you think intelligently like that, there is no reason to have any love for the world.

“Therefore, Rama, you can contemplate and meditate in three ways.

“kartā nāsmi na cāhamasmi sa iti jñātvyaivamaṁtaḥ sphuṭaṁ  
kartā cāsmi samagramasmi tadita jñātvāthavā niścayam  
koopyeevāsmi na kiṁcideevamiti vā nirṇīya sarvottamee  
tiṣṭha tvaṁ svapadee sthitāḥ padavidoo yatroottamāḥ sādhaḥ  
(Sarga 56, Sloka 49)

“kartā nāsmi na cāhamasmi sa iti jñātvyaivamaṁtaḥ sphuṭaṁ”

“I am not the body etc. which attribute authorship to me. I am not any object in this world”, thus can one contemplate.

“kartā cāsmi samagramasmi tadita jñātvāthavā niścayam” ||

“A twist is there in this sentence. The word “*samagra*” can be applied in two ways. One application is “*samgram karta cha asmi.*” Here *samagra* is singular number, objective case. The other application is “*samagram tat asmi.*” Here the word “*samagra*” is nominative case, singular number. Rama, the particular meaning coming out is: I am the author for the whole world; not just for part of it. Not only that – the entire Universe is completely me!

“Be in that resolve. This is the second method.

“koopyeevāsmi na kiṁcideevamiti vā nirṇīya sarvottamee”

“Or, Think on the line that “I am neither that nor this. It is not possible to decide what I am.” This is the third method.

“Rama, you may contemplate in any of the three methods, you will be in the form of Supreme, Perfect, Blissful Consciousness. Noble practitioners of times past who obtained knowledge of Brahman meditated like that. Please follow them.

Sage Vasishtha completed the 56<sup>th</sup> Sarga on that note.

Sri Rama, partly immersed in contemplating the Truth of Self, had this question.

#### 40. ANNIHILATION OF IMPRESSIONS:

**Rama:** “Teacher! I understand now clearly. What you said is true. There is no reality at all in this world. But in the case of the everlasting, real Supreme Self why did mutually contradicting ideas like unreal - real, author - not author, limited – infinite etc. originate? There cannot be snow in the sun! Could differentiation be imagined in the Supreme? I am not able to get rid of this doubt. Please answer me.

**Vasishta:** “Rama! I am happy. You could comprehend the subject well. But the impressions of past actions in you have not yet fully evaporated. That is the reason for your doubt. I shall give you a proper answer while teaching the final principles in the forthcoming chapter on Nirvana. For the present, I shall confer on how to annul impressions. Rama! Please know this:

“baṁdhoo hi vāsanā baṁdho mokṣassyāt vāsanākṣayaḥ ” (Sarga 57, Sloka 19)

“Being tied down with impressions is bondage; eradication of impressions is liberation.

“Cultivate the four qualities that are talked about in standard Yoga Books. These four are “Friendliness, compassion, cheerfulness and indifference.” Be friendly towards happy people; be compassionate to those who are in sorrow; be cheerful with meritorious people; and be indifferent towards sinners. Contemplating in this manner brings calmness to the mind. A calm mind facilitates abidance in deep meditation (*Samadhi nishta*). When once established like that, leave even this contemplation and enter firmly into Supreme Consciousness through *asamprajnata samadhi*. *Asamprajnata samadhi* is the topmost of the variety of *samadhis* (deep meditation) propounded in yoga books.

“śeeṣee sthirasamādhānee yeena tyajasi tattyaja” (Sarga 57, Sloka 22)

“You will see then for yourself your true nature as Supreme Consciousness.

“Rama, there is another method to achieve this. We should meditate on great persons who conquered their senses. Another technique is also there. Whatever may be the number of universes, all of them are composed of the five elements. There is no sixth one. The five elements are modifications of the substratum (Brahman) only. If you deeply investigate on this by analysis, you will lose all attraction for the comforts of the earth, heaven or nether worlds and that will lead to final liberation.

Sage Vasishta thus articulated in detail the path to be followed by Sri Rama and moved on to the 58<sup>th</sup> Sarga.

**Vasishta:** “Rama! You may wonder if a state that is totally free of bondage and filled with Supreme Consciousness is experienced at all by any!

“Long back Kacha, the son of Brihaspati had such an experience. Look at the songs he sang spontaneously in that state.

“Everybody keeps telling stories about many struggles that Kacha went through in acquiring the special “Sanjivini knowledge.” Bringing back the dead to life is the specialized subject of Sanjivini knowledge. Nobody bothered what happened to him after that. That great individual left his teacher’s place, stayed all alone in a forest and practiced rigorously seeking the knowledge of Brahman. In due course of time, he had that marvelous experience of Supreme Consciousness. With happiness at a crescendo, with rapturous ecstasy, he occasionally used to sing melodious tunes.

“kiñ karoomi kva gachāmi  
kiñ gr̥hṇāmi tyajāmi kim  
ātmanā pūritam̐ viśvam̐  
mahā kalpāmbunā yathā” (Sarga 58, Sloka 5 onwards)

“Ah! What’s there to do? Go whereunto?  
What to be rid of; or hang on to?  
Whole universe is with me permeated  
As floods of Dissolution all over spread.

Delight or distress, both I am.  
The enjoying entity as well I am.  
All paths to Truth are what I am  
For surely in the Supreme Self I am.

Up above or down below,  
Right in front or just behind,  
Here or there, it’s me anywhere.  
No space where I don’t grace.

Quarks or sparks in there I exist.  
Whole worlds in me persist.  
Like infinite waters oceanic,  
Bliss I am, whole and idyllic.

“Rama! Kacha used to sing thus in rhapsodies about his ineffable experience. So you do not need to have a doubt about it. Hence with resolute intellect, leave out attraction for enjoyment and contemplate on the Universal Self.”

Rama brooded on these words. When he asked a philosophical question regarding the Supreme Consciousness (Brahman), the teacher declared that he was not eligible for an answer as yet. So he wanted to gather more information about Brahma with attributes, the creator of the universe. With this in mind, he asked a question again.

#### **41. FROM SUBTELITY TO GROSSNESS:**

**Rama:** “Master, Mind is a subtle substance. One particular mind of the erstwhile Kalpa attained the position (title) of Hiranyagarbha in this Kalpa and embarked on creation. How does the solid physical material evolve from the subtle mind substance? How is Hiranyagarbha bringing about this transformation from subtlety to grossness? Will you please tell me in detail?”

**Vasishta:** “That is the power of intention!

“sañkalpa jālarūpasya  
manasā kalpitākṛteḥ

akarottasya saṁkalpa  
lakṣmīḥ padamathottaree”

(Sarga 59, Sloka 15)

“Rama! The thoughts of his past Kalpa make up his present form. That means his present form takes shape based on his past thoughts. His wealth is the wealth of thoughts (and intentions) only. It is these thoughts that continue the creation. To give an example, he got a thought about Fire. He entered into that thought. The thought took a gross form. That has become the Sun. We see that sun everyday even now. This is the process by which grossness comes into being from subtlety in all substances.”

Once again Sage Vasishtha described the sequence of creation. In order to explain in terms of the three *gunas*, he extended the narration to over two and half Sargas. He added contextually methods of spiritual practice at some places. We shall not go into them now as these were all discussed earlier.

Sage Vasishtha closed the Chapter on Sustenance with the 62<sup>nd</sup> Sarga where he brought out a convergence in his depiction of creation in terms of three *gunas* and the description of the path for liberation.

“hitam mahāsatvatayātmatatvam  
vidhāya budhyā bhava vītaśokaḥ  
tava krameṇaiva tato janoyam  
mukto bhaviṣyatyaatha vītaśokaḥ”

(Sarga 62, Sloka 20)

“Rama, develop *sattva* quality in yourself. When the mind becomes pure, knowledge of truth will be dear and close to you. You will experience it. Unhappiness will disappear. If you do like that, others will follow you and attain the state of liberty which is devoid of unhappiness.”

Thus did Sage Vasishtha end the Chapter on Sustenance and about to enter into the Chapter on Dissolution. Before we follow him into the next chapter, let us review the progressive steps in his teaching in the Chapter on Sustenance!

## 42. SUMMARY OF PART IV – SUSTENANCE:

It is generally accepted that there are six types of changes, labeled “Six fold change”, for any substance in the world. The six changes are:

- |                 |   |                      |
|-----------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Birth        | – | <i>jayate.</i>       |
| 2. Existence    | – | <i>asti.</i>         |
| 3. Development  | – | <i>vardhate.</i>     |
| 4. Modification | – | <i>viparinamate.</i> |
| 5. Decline      | – | <i>apakshiyate.</i>  |
| 6. Death        | - | <i>vinasyati.</i>    |

The inevitability of the six types of changes can be grasped well with the following example. Let us say there is a flower on a plant in a farmland. Next day, it dried up and there was a small bulge at the stalk. The farmer who observes it would gleefully express, “Fruit is being born.” This is *jayate*.

After a few days, the raw fruit would appear. The farmer will say, “Tender fruit is there.” This is *asti*.

As the farmer keeps observing it, the fruit grows to full size. This is *vardhate*.

The growth stops after some days and it slowly matures and ripens. Its phase changes. This is *viparinamate*.

After a few more days, it dries up and shrinks. This is *apakshiyate*.

Finally one day, it drops down. That is *vinasyati*.

Though not apparent as clearly as depicted in the above example, every substance in the world necessarily goes through the six changes. More commonly the states of birth (*jayate*) and death (*vinasyati*) are recognized. It is a general practice to club together the intermittent four stages and refer to them by one word – *sthiti* or sustenance. Sage Vasishtha also used the word *sthiti* in this sense.

In this world, there cannot be sustenance for a substance unless it is born. When once it is dead or destroyed, there is no sustenance for it back again. Every one believes this strongly to be a fact. How far is this belief justified? Sage Vasishtha dealt with this topic in this Chapter.

In the last chapter (Part II: Creation (Utpatti)), Vasishtha established that the world was not created at all. When some thing was not created, there cannot be sustenance (*sthiti*) for it. When there is no sustenance what is there to be discussed on it? To answer this question, he opened the Chapter on Sustenance with “*Bhargava Upakhyana*.”

In that story, Sukra was in a deep penance on a hill slope at some place on the earth. At that time, he experienced joys in heaven with a second body. When was the second body born? As a matter of fact, it was never born. *Jayate* is not applicable to it. It started with existence (*asti*). Sustenance continued from then on. Is this condition like a dream or magic? We cannot say so. The second body sustained several births and deaths. At the end, Sukra entered back into his old body with the help of the teachings of the God of Death and burnt the second body. That means, the second body started with *asti*, crossed the phases of *vardhate*, *viparinamate*, *apakshiyate* and then ended (reached the final phase viz. *vinasyati*). However, in the meanwhile, his original body stayed at *asti* stage. This implies that Sukra got back into sustenance even after the sixth phase of death. How could this be possible? Intellectuals have to delve on this puzzle.

Vedantins (Philosophers) usually cite the experience of a dream, magic or fantasy to show that the world is unreal and illusory. Sometimes seeker disciples get tired of the very same examples quoted to illustrate the illusory nature. Sage Vasishtha circumvented that ennu



narrating to Sri Rama, as an example, an event that actually took place at the time of the beginning of the Kalpa. Vasishtha said that at the start of the Kalpa, when it opened with Krita Yuga, a variety of very strange creatures were born. One of such strange living beings was Sukra. The example given by Vasishtha was the life history of Sukra.

Through the story of Sukra, he focused the spotlight honing onto a strange situation and provided an enlarged view for clarity. That is sustenance (*sthiti*) without birth. The sustenance continues even after *vinasyati* – death. What shall we call sustenance when it lacks of both the beginning and the end? It has to be an illusion. There is no scope to be any other way. The essence of the entire Chapter on *sthiti* (Sustenance) is reflected in this story.

But the questions continue! How can such a condition exist? How does it occur? These doubts trouble any disciple.

In answer to these questions, Sage Vasishtha narrated “*Daama Vyaala Kata Upakhyana*.” This story is an allegory and we discussed in detail the inner meaning in the text. The snake (*vyaala*) got sustenance on the rope. But the same threads woven together in another way gave sustenance to a mat (*kata*). This was illustrated in the “*Daama Vyaala Kata Upakhyana*.” Vasishtha did not cook up the story. It was a true event. Even here he described sustenance without birth. But it was a dependent sustenance. Daama, Vyaala and Kata’s sustenance was dependent on Sambara. Likewise the sustenance of Bhima, Bhaasa and Dridha too depended on Sambara.

But Sage Vasishtha did not focus on the continuation of sustenance after death. How long can sustenance that was not preceded by birth continue? When does it annihilate? How does it annihilate? These were the questions he concentrated on. That is the reason that he told Sri Rama in the discourse after the presentation of the story:

“kutojāteeyamiti tee  
rāma māstu vicāraṇā  
imāññ kathamaḥaṇñ hanmī  
tyeeṣā teestu vicāraṇā a” (Sarga 41, Sloka 31-32)

“Rama! Don’t worry yourself with questions like wherefrom did this illusion originate? Or Why did it originate? Or How? The only question you have to inquire into is ‘How am I to get rid of it?’”

As a clue, he said through Yamadharmaraja’s words that Daama, Vyaala and Kata had to know their entire life history if they had to be free of their sorrows. By “To know their entire life history” it is meant that their sustenance was actually dependent on ‘Sambara’ (they did not have independent *sthiti*) and because they forgot about that fact, they had to go through so many births and deaths!

Okay, Daama, Vyaala and Kata were dependent on Sambara for their sustenance. What about us, the ordinary folk? Our sustenance depends on the “Root Nescience” or in other words, ignorance. If we understand this much, it is enough, ignorance will be gone. We

become free of the bondage of this world. That was the central point conveyed by Sage Vasishtha in Daama, Vyaala and Kata story.

The Sage spent considerable time in the discourse that followed the story on the issue of calming down the mind. It amounts to the same thing whether we say mind has calmed down or ignorance has disappeared. The route is Self-inquiry. To emphasize the point, Sage Vasishtha portrayed “*Kadamba Daasura Upakhyana*.”

Kadamba Daasura is a peculiar name! It is derived from Sanskrit: “*kaṁ vāyum - damayatīti kadambaḥ*” *Kadamba* means one which controls the group of diseases based on *vata* (*vata* can be approximately expressed as bodily imbalance of gases). It refers to *Anthocephalus Kadamba* tree. That is the usual grammatical meaning. The sense it is used in this Chapter comes from another interpretation. *Vata* means the air we breathe. *Kadamba* means the one who controls the breath through *Pranayama*.

“*calee vātee calaṁ cittam - niścalee niścalaṁ bhaveet*” is a saying in the Yoga science. It means that if breath moves in a man, his mind too moves. If the breath stops, the mind becomes still!

Because Daasura was a person who achieved an unperturbed state of the mind, he was Kadamba Daasura. In the story, he was seated on the top of the Kadamba tree, which is the cure for gas imbalance problems.

The word Daasura has also a special meaning. The poet used it with a little bit of a twist. “*Dasa dane*” is the root word in Sanskrit. *Daasah* means to give alms (gifts). Based on this root word, Vishnu got the name as “*Daasaarha*.” In the thousand names used for the worship of Vishnu, one word is “*dāśārha sātvatāmpatiḥ*” One who is adept at giving alms is “*Daasasura*” or “*Daasura*.”

What is meant by alms? To give away what one has amounts to giving alms. Another word for giving alms is sacrifice. Renunciation is yet another word. The hero of the story, Daasura was also a great giver. He renounced anger too along with desire! He did not get angry when the forest damsel requested him for bestowing children. Nor was he aroused sensually. Daasura was a true renouncer, an adept giver!

Of all knowledge, knowledge of Brahman is the most supreme. Imparting knowledge too is giving alms! Daasura had become a great giver by teaching skillfully Self-knowledge through simple stories. The fact that Vasishtha himself appreciated in the last part of the story, the way Daasura gave away the knowledge was already mentioned in the text.

Though Sage Vasishtha presented the story of Daasura sitting at the tip of a tree where sustenance was not possible, he did not emphasize the point about sustenance as it was already mentioned twice. He focused, in stead, on the illusory nature of the world and on the methods to be adopted by a seeker to get rid of ignorance and to obtain annihilation of mind.

In order to prove that such experience of being free from ignorance is truly possible for noble men, Vasishtha talked about Kacha, son of Brihaspati. He then described the state of world in terms of the three *gunas*. By inculcating the *Sattva guna*, into the mind, he advised to annihilate the mind and arrive at a state of sorrowlessness. With these words, he closed the Chapter. The next Chapter on Dissolution was then taken up.

We too shall follow Sage Vasishtha into the next Chapter on Dissolution after once again reviewing thoroughly within ourselves the events depicted in the stories and thinking over the points made out in this short summary.

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