

BOOK 2

# IMMORTAL TALKS



SHUNYA



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*Book -2*

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FICTION/PHILOSOPHY

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# Chapter 7

## A Thousand Lives

The demoness of poverty had set foot in this house dressed like a royal bride. At first glance, you wouldn't notice her dreadful presence within these elegant walls. Large glass windows in the drawing-room would give you a completely misleading picture. The shiny marble floor would hold your attention long enough to miss the lack of furniture. Flowery patterns painted on the walls would not let you see the oddly missing things that had been sold to buy groceries. A glance inside the modular kitchen would only show you handsome cabinets painted in pleasant yellow and white, and not the empty jars and containers stacked inside them.

After searching the entire kitchen for something to eat, when you have found nothing but four potatoes, one tomato and a few green chillies deposited in a small plastic basket, the hideous face of the demoness of poverty skulking in this house might stand exposed before you.

Her brother, the demon of disease, had done the dirty deed of usurping happiness and prosperity that once ruled this home.

A young couple had spent long, sleepless nights within these walls as they struggled for five long years to free their first child from the deadly claws of a monstrous disease. Despite making the hospitals and temples their second home, they couldn't save the piece of their heart.

The husband couldn't concentrate on his job. His sympathetic employers allowed him to continue working, but at a demoted position.

His old mother kept hiding her own disease until the symptoms became too severe. She didn't want to trouble her family, but death doesn't come easily to those who wish for it.

Meanwhile, Anita went through a complicated pregnancy. Indeed, when problems come, they come in a flock. Her husband met with an accident right after he became a father the second time. He survived, though.

Medicines costlier than gold, and hospital trips costlier than perhaps space travel drained them financially. The property documents and the jewellery that once safely sat in their locker had long become possessions of the lenders.

The friends and relatives who once cackled delightfully in this drawing-room had forgotten them.

The thought of suicide had crossed Anita's mind several times. The God is so cruel, she thought, for giving her a second child to live for even as the first was being taken away from her.

She had started giving tuitions at home to feed the family, and to feed – even more urgently – the loan sharks that were greedily and lustfully eyeing her dignity.

One by one, she had sold all unessential items in the house, and the definition of “unessential” was still expanding. She regretted selling her valuable possessions at dirt-cheap prices, but there was no other option. She was in desperate need of money. The cruel universe, she realised, could smell desperation like predators detect fear in their prey. She heartily donated expensive left-over medicines but giving away her possessions to annoying misers at dirt-cheap prices made her indignant.

She found it easier to cut expenses than gaining income. One by one, she had stopped refilling items that are otherwise considered essential for running a household.

‘Does cumin powder have any nutritional value? Does any spice, for that matter? Can't dishes be prepared without spices? How about oil? Can't the plain and cheap mustard oil substitute for costlier refined oil? How about boiling the vegetables without oil?’

Such questions were sure to draw judgemental looks and contemptuous sneers from human friends. Fortunately, she had a non-human friend that never judged her and always gave favourable answers: her smartphone. She couldn't thank her brother enough for this gift.

Every time an interesting question popped in her mind, she was instinctively drawn to her phone like pangs of hunger pull a person towards the kitchen. The satisfaction of consuming information was no less than consuming food on a hungry stomach. It was perhaps more, for information, was free.

‘How to make baby diapers using old clothes?’ this promising question popped in her mind as she scanned her house, making a mental list of items that were urgently required; she could no longer push a supermarket visit.

She returned to the drawing-room, slumped in a chair and started milking her smartphone for every drop of information that could save her money.

Circumstances had her pinned to the wall. The demoness of dovertv was

squeezing her further and further into misery. Only her smartphone stood beside her like a loyal friend and never failed in protecting her sense of normalcy. Just the other day, when she was drowning into depression, her phone extended a piece of information about “minimalist lifestyle”, about well-to-do people who willingly consumed less. She was a minimalist, she thought, not impoverished.

She used to be a proud and upright woman back in the day. Her past self would feel disgusted, not by the depths to which her living standards had fallen, but by the lack of will to come out of it. She had resigned to this horrible reality. She was now religiously devoted to the demoness of poverty. The gods in whom she had once placed her faith had failed her.

If somebody could hear the point of view of the gods, they would perhaps say the same of her: her soul had failed them. Their conversations about her soul involved use of the phrases such as “problematic Karma”, “must loosen her grip”, “bad road”, “irreparable”, “must be shifted”.

A straightforward interpretation of their mystical utterances could be that her character was stuck on a rough and bumpy road that was destined to take the suicidal turn soon. Her soul didn't have to suffer the same fate. It could be shifted to a character having a better script, a better destiny. The gods could help it do so if it loosened its grip on the problematic Karma.

One of the powerful gods, Lord Hanuman, had not given up on her. He was, in fact, keeping a watch on the bumpy road she was staggering on. He knew that even this wretched road was bound to offer a possibility, however small, to fly her soul out of misery. All He required was a little spark of awareness in her soul. He could see a possibility gleaming just four hours ahead of her when she would be in a supermarket – a place full of things she couldn't purchase.

Apart from being a god determined to make the worldly path comfortable for his devotees, He is a Guru to the souls that seek the absolute truth. When Anita was thinking of going to a supermarket, He was more than a thousand miles away, surrounded by a small group of His most sincere disciples, known as Mahtangs, in a forested mountain across the Indian ocean.

Physical distance is no hurdle for establishing a soul-to-soul connection. Lord Hanuman saw Anita resignedly scanning her house to make a mental list of things to be purchased. Then He saw her hurtling back to her drawing-room to hopefully draw some juicy drops of relief from a shiny thing – her smartphone. He also showed and narrated this one-minute long scene from her life to His disciples, for it offered opportunities to understand the mysteries of the universe.

They watched it with their eyes closed, and it felt like a dream. They



They watched it with their eyes closed, and it felt like a dream. They stomachached it with great difficulty that the woman at the centre of it all, Anita, was struggling to feed her family. As compared to the treacherous mountains and thatched roofs they were accustomed to, the woman's home seemed like a palace. They were cut-off from the materialistic society and oblivious to the fact that such houses were unsatisfactorily owned by millions of "middle-class" people who worked day and night to afford intangible things such as "social status".

The most precious materialistic possession these tribesmen could think to sweat for were honey and rare oils. For them, the idea that some creatures that bore same human appearance, that wore funny clothes stitched from top to bottom, that awarded themselves fancy titles like "modern" and "educated", that owned permanent houses and cars were sweating day and night to lay their hands on imaginary things such as "social status" was laughable and downright insane.

The mainstream people would surely reciprocate the feeling. If you want to see insane laughter upon their mechanical faces, tell them about these isolated tribesmen who live high in densely forested mountains. Tell them about the jungle-dwellers that have no contact with the mainstream society. Tell them about things that are invisible to other human beings but visible for these tribesmen. And try explaining them about a Guru who is immortal and visits this isolated tribe every 41 years. Your mainstream audience would stop at laughter only if you were really unlucky. In a regular course, the insane laughter would be served with mandatory toppings of ready-made decorative labels for these tribesmen such as "lunatics", "retards", "hallucinating dimwits", "schizophrenics", "superstitious baboons".

Mahtangs were thankful for this tendency of quick labelling in their potential assailants. These labels were actually high mental walls the rest of humanity had built around itself, leaving the Mahtangs alone and peaceful in their habitat.

They were equally grateful to the semi-isolated tribes that unknowingly provided them with multiple rings of security by absorbing the depleted and shallow selfie-clicking curiosity of the fancy folks.

And many thanks to the fiercer side of the mother nature, the treacherous heights and impenetrable lengths, that provided an ideal dwelling place for a community that didn't want to be contacted.

Accidental contacts hadn't been entirely blocked, though. Take for example the plane that crashed in December 1971 into the Santh Kanva

example the plane that crashed in December 1974 into the Sapta Kanya mountains, not far away from the then Mahtang hamlet. They had abandoned their hamlet and covered their tracks before the mainstream people reached there to retrieve remains of their dead.

This accident has since become a part of Mahtang history. Those who witnessed it passed on its tale to those who were born after that, a story that spawned deep questions: what causes such horrible accidents? Why do souls have to go through something they don't desire? Why do souls fail to get what they seek? The poor souls on board that plane just wanted to reach their destination safely, not into the mouth of fiery death!

The story of this accident inbred even deeper questions in the curious Mahtang minds: Just days before this plane crash, their immortal Guru was with them imparting the supreme knowledge. It is in their tradition to relocate to a new place within a fortnight of the conclusion of their Guru's visits. They were anyway preparing to abandon their hamlet that night to honour the tradition, but this accident left them no choice.

Their desire to leave the place came from two sources: one, from their own tradition started by their ancestors and followed by them out of their own will; second, from the accident over which they had no control. It begs the question, did they leave the place that night out of their own will, or they were forced by external circumstances?

What makes them follow their traditions so staunchly? A belief system. Where is it installed? In their mind. By whom? They were surely not born with it. They got it from their community. So, the desire to follow the traditions is actually a desire of their mind, not their soul. And the mind is built and influenced by the external factors.

Do all desires get planted on the soul from outside, or is there any such thing as a soul's own desire? A desire to be prosperous, a desire to be happy, a desire to be free, a desire to be bounded by a contract like a marriage or a job, a desire to be spiritual, a desire to be materialistic – don't they all sprout from external things, people and ideas? They all belong to the mind, not the soul. What, then, is a soul's own desire? Does it always have to follow the mind it's attached to?

That cold night of December 1974, when Mahtangs were abandoning their hamlet, on whose desire were they acting upon? Of all people, Mahtangs, having the knowledge that liberates a soul, having the knowledge imparted to them by none other than the immortal Lord Hanuman, couldn't be enslaved by a tradition or a threat of intrusion. They must have acted upon their own

...of a great or invasion. They must have acted upon their own independent desire.

What was it? Can a mind even know and describe the desires of the soul?

Perhaps they desired their next generation to contemplate these questions that can burst the boundary walls of the human mind and open a path to what lies beyond.

Their new generation, having already explored this side of the boundary, was ready to be ushered into the unknown by their immortal Guru who was with them yet again after long 41 years. Many of them were children when He had visited last time, and most hadn't been born.

They had grown, physically and mentally, amidst the storm of hype around the aeroplane accident and the questions it raised. It was natural for them to expect Lord Hanuman to touch upon this subject before everything else. Their Guru, however, knew better. The next round of talks concerned a mainstream woman, Anita, who was submitted to the demoness of poverty. He showed them a scene from her life as it took place in a city more than a thousand miles away.

'Anita's life, especially the incident that is going to happen in next four hours, offers a great lesson you mustn't miss ...,' said Lord Hanuman, a godly figure casting varying visual characteristics on each eye capable of watching Him. Some would describe Him as a giant figure with long, white hair swirling from head to toe. Some would compare Him to a milky white cloud in human shape. Some could see nothing but a figure of light. Some could sense His presence with an absence of light cutting out a three-dimensional human-like shape. And then there were others, those who were blessed with the knowledge that made Him immortal, who could see Him better than everyone else but refused to desecrate the whole image into fragments of mental description.

How would Lord Hanuman describe His own appearance? The superpowers attained by Him through intense Yogic practices enable Him to take up any appearance required for the task in hand. He uses this power within the laws of the realm where His help is sought. To the souls that seek Him in the role of a Guru, He appears in a form that has three distinct features: a long tail, a captivating aura, and a deformed jaw. These three features hold three lessons that a soul must learn to qualify as a seeker.

The long tail reminds that Lord Hanuman was born and raised in the monkey form, or a creature that has the lowest chances of becoming aware. Through Yogic practices, He went on to become a god. The tail teaches that a great lineage is not a prerequisite to start the journey towards the truth.

The captivating aura of Lord Hanuman makes you forget blinking. It stands as a reminder that there are things far more fascinating than the pleasures your present realm has to offer; the worldly pleasures you so desperately desire would seem like trinkets once the truth rewards you with the ultimate treasure.

The deformed jaw has an interesting story behind it. Lord Hanuman grew up in the monkey community, which believes that the Sun is a giant fruit, not a ball of fire. For them, it's not a blind belief but truth. They can actually taste flavours of the Sun Fruit through their skin very much like they taste flavours of other fruits through their tongue. When He was a child, in His desire to know the truth, Lord Hanuman challenged this belief and got punished for it, resulting in a broken jaw.

Just when He had crossed the boundaries of His native belief system, He came across the human belief that the Sun is a ball of fire, a star. All observations made by a human body can validate this belief as the truth. All evidence collected by a human mind and all calculations done by a man-made machine can establish this belief as a fact. However, the young seeker Hanuman took it as just another belief and challenged it; He wanted to explore what lies beyond human reach. He kept on challenging every belief, no matter how truthful it seemed, until the realisation rained on Him: He was a soul, and He could experience the universe in a million different ways through a million different characters available in the universe, the human and the monkey being just two of them.

The deformed jaw encourages the seekers to do the same: challenge the beliefs even if your community, your race, your kind punishes you, mocks you, or smears you with nasty labels. A broken jaw or a painful snide remark is not a high price to pay for the freedom you'd breathe beyond the slums littered with beliefs.

The tail, the aura, and the jaw – all three distinct features of Lord Hanuman are found carved in the millions of stone and metal idols worshipped across the length and breadth of the mainstream society. The worshippers, however, had lost the meaning behind them long ago and gained misery, fear, and uncertainty. Anita was one of them.

'... she will be in a market in less than four hours from now,' Lord Hanuman told a small number of His forest-dweller disciples, who still maintained physical contact with Him at the cost of seclusion from the rest of humanity. 'We have about four hours to discuss why even gods are unable to help this poor soul. First of all, we shall pay our gratitude to her, for her misery is helping you in gaining the knowledge and helping me in imparting it to you.'

is helping you in gaining the knowledge and helping me in imparting it to you.

All Mahtangs, young and old, men and women, closed their eyes and began their ritual of paying gratitude. When they loosened strings of their hearts, many souls swam into focus, the souls that had a claim on their gratitude. Among them were the souls of their ancestors guiding them from the past coordinates of time, the souls of animals and plants part of their habitat, souls of their fellow Mahtangs, the souls whose physical identities weren't known – and the soul of Anita they were just introduced to.

'I see hearts shut tight, not ready to part a single drop of gratitude,' spoke Lord Hanuman in a deep, quiet voice even as His beloved disciples opened their eyes and refastened strings of their hearts.

These words sent chills down the spine of Baba, a thin old man who looked oddly short as though he had shrunken unnaturally. Perhaps, he had diminished due to the massive weight of responsibilities he had been carrying for last 41 years as the Mahtang chieftain, heaviest of them was the responsibility of keeping his tribesmen on the sacred path laid down by his predecessors.

He beseechingly looked into the eyes of Lord Hanuman and pleaded, 'Forgive me, Deva, if any of the younger ones could not open their –'

'Breathe easy, Baba. I'm not talking about anyone from your tribe; they all paid gratitude as I commanded,' said Lord Hanuman, His deep voice sounded like it was coming from a galaxy far away, yet it was clear and incomparably gratifying. 'This time around, I've permitted my talks to reach beyond the usual range. I can see some souls from the mainstream world catching these words in future, and still not pausing to pay their gratitude to Anita's soul.'

Mahtangs let out a short gasp; the sacred white fire ablaze before their deity slightly flickered upon receiving this oblation of shock. A significant vibrating motion was caused in the walls of the hemispherical cave enclosing them. This unusual phenomenon didn't add to their surprise because they knew that the walls weren't made up of stone or any other solid matter. The illusion of a wall-like enclosure was created by nasty flocks of body-less creatures – the Surrachs and the Asurrachs – that were pushing against an invisible barrier, trying with all their might to barge into the sacred ceremony.

The new generation of Mahtangs wondered what good these barriers served if the outsiders were able to sneak into their conversation, apparently by *permission*. Efforts of avoiding contacts with the rest of humanity had been a crucial part of their upbringing. And here they were, being snooped right in the presence of their immortal Guru. They sat in silence and shock, expecting their



chieftain and chieftainess – Baba and his wife Mata – to stand up and seek remedy from Lord Hanuman for this existential jolt.

‘A couple of days ago,’ began Lord Hanuman, taking it upon Himself to soothe the swelling tension in the assembly, ‘three outsider men crossed your chieftain Baba’s path when he was on a honey trail. He was accompanied by Urva – your next chieftain – and two other Mahtangs. Their brief interaction involved Baba throwing a fit of rage – or so it seemed – and the poor outsiders backing away with their hands up in the air indicating surrender. They will return soon to assimilate with you. They will try and be successful in deciphering these talks being recorded by you in your secret linguistic code ...

These talks between you and me, the immortal talks, are private right now, I assure you. Nobody is snooping on you ... The outsiders will take away what you will allow them to take away. Out of what you allow them, they will be able to absorb only what they and their audience are eligible for. Your deeper secrets that might be misused by their materialistic society will stay with you.’

This assurance did nothing to quell the agitated minds of the new generation of Mahtangs. Cracks were opening in the basic cultural framework they had adhered to all these years. How could their deity allow this to happen? From what they had heard, Mahtang culture was supposed to last till the global annihilation. What would happen when thousands of exploitative outsiders so much as get a whiff of their secret existence? It would all be over. The Mahtang culture, as they knew it, would get contaminated and ultimately die. Did that mean the end of the world was near?

‘No harm will come to us,’ said Baba, standing up on a cue from Lord Hanuman. ‘The three men I met don’t seem exploitative. They sincerely seek the truth ... I urge my fellow Mahtangs to douse their questions with the mixture of two facts: one, we’re aware souls, and no corrupt soul can contact us against our desire; two, they successfully established contact with us.’

Baba sat down confidently with an air of a skilled archer that doesn’t require a second shot. He thought he saw several bubbles of unrest puncturing around him.

An assuring clarity could be seen sliding over the faces that were flushed with indignation and agitation moments before. Among them was a thin studious girl in her 20s, sitting bolt upright in the front row, sweeping every questioning corner of her mind with baba’s statement. Some tricky corners remained untouched, prompting her to stand up and whisk the question out.

She said. ‘Baba. if I understood it clearly from what you said. those three

souls you came across are not corrupt, else they would have not succeeded in contacting us.'

'Correct,' said Baba.

Urmi turned to Lord Hanuman and asked, 'Deva, what about others to whom these three will carry the information of our existence? There's no way to make sure that what we share with the three of them will be shared forward to only the sincere souls. They came for a divine purpose: to become messengers of your words. What would become of those who, after knowing about us, might try to locate us without any purpose, or worse still, with a deluded sense of purpose? ... A misguided mob with their own definition of righteousness may prove fatal for our small community. They might wish to erect temples and mark worshipping points where their deity came and spoke to His disciples.'

'They stand no chance of locating you,' said Lord Hanuman serenely. 'I am like clean water. I can manifest anywhere, in any clean vessel. Those who will receive this knowledge in its true essence must focus on cleaning their own vessel instead of making a foolish attempt at grabbing yours, an attempt which is sure to contaminate it. The idea of making such an attempt will occur only to corrupt and deluded souls that anyway can't succeed.'

'But – Deva, what if they *do* succeed?'

'That would happen only when your culture has corrupted already, and things have started taking place against your desires,' replied Lord Hanuman.

'If we look from their point of view, what stands between them and us, Deva? The dense jungle, I am sure, will kill those who attempt to invade our privacy against our wish. What would happen if their powerful kings decided to send their entire armies to hunt us down? Hypothetically speaking, what would they find when they have succeeded in trampling the mighty mother nature guarding us.'

Before Lord Hanuman could answer, Baba staunchly said, 'They can't lay their predatory hands even upon our ashes.'

'Or they might find your bodies alive and well, walking and talking normally,' said Lord Hanuman, exchanging an esoteric look with Baba.

'Yes, Deva. They might find our bodies and minds, but not our souls,' said Baba. 'Before they've reached our bodies, our souls would migrate to some other realm. All our powers reside in the awareness of our souls, not in the way our bodies and minds function ... The assailants would return empty-handed when they've found normal tribesmen calling themselves Mahtangs. This is all

hypothetical, of course. None of this is going to happen. It's against our desires.'

'Why do things happen against the desires of a soul, Deva?' asked Urmi. 'Why Anita, the woman from the vision you showed us, is being tormented by the demoness of poverty? Why can't she live as per her desire, which, I am sure, is to live happily?'

'A question I was keen to ask *you* and to the rest of the seekers gathered here,' said Lord Hanuman with a broad smile, His eyes smoothly sliding from Urmi to the assembly at large. 'Thank you, Urmi. You may sit now, make yourself physically comfortable; your mind is going to take a lot of strain thinking about possible causes of Anita's misery.' He saw Urmi reseating on the ground, and then allowed a question to take off through His slowly and majestically moving lips, 'If you were at my place, what would – or what *could* – you do to pull Anita out of misery?'

He expected His disciples to churn the depths of their minds using this question, and not attempt to answer it immediately. He decided to go into a short *breathing cycle* in the meantime.

His eyelids descended slowly like two fresh leaves, butter smooth and nearly weightless, falling gracefully. Urmi saw His entire figure shimmering like a thinning cloud. She knew, and as did other Mahtangs, that the physical presence of their immortal Guru was dissolving into oblivion. This process was very much like the process of breathing the mortals go through, except its frequency; Lord Hanuman had absolute control over the time gap between His "breathing cycles". It could be a second, a day, a month, or even an incomprehensible interval of time. This one lasted only for a moment, for one of the Mahtangs had blurted out a response to the question.

'Gold, Deva. I would give her gold – mounds of gold – if I were in your place. Yes, I would.'

It was Urva, a tall and handsome young man from every standard of his tribe, a rebel at heart but sensible by nature. He was proclaimed to succeed Baba as the Mahtang chieftain and destined to marry the wisest Mahtang girl, Urmi. For some reason, he looked groggy and sounded totally unlike himself. Apparently, unnoticed by his fellow seekers, he had been sweating and shivering in turn since he saw the scene from Anita's life. Something had delivered a blow to inner wiring of his head when he saw Anita holding that shiny little object, the smartphone.

'Are you alright, Urva?' asked Baba alarmingly, now crouching and ready to leap into action

ready to leap into action.

‘He’s alright, Baba. Don’t worry,’ assured Lord Hanuman, obviously aware of the bug that had bitten Urva.

‘If you say so, Deva,’ said Baba bowing his head. He fell back into a comfortable cross-legged sitting position, mumbling all the same, ‘He would give her gold! The cursed souls have hijacked his mind, as far as I can tell.’

‘You don’t look impressed Baba. I think that’s a pretty neat solution he has suggested – *Give her a mound of gold*,’ said Lord Hanuman, smiling and enjoying dazed expressions on Urva’s face. ‘No harm in exploring this option. Please close your eyes, all of you.’

Urva found himself shrunk to the size of a housefly, hovering above the head of a woman, who was sitting in a chair and jiggling her thumb funnily over a bright object clutched in her palm.

It was Anita tucking into a thick stream of information emanating from her smartphone. The housefly swooped to her nose, making a buzzing sound. She flapped it away, not taking her gaze from her gadget.

Urva felt a sudden jolt, and the vision ended abruptly, bringing him back again in his human body. It wasn’t just him; the scene ended for all Mahtangs who were apparently watching it through his eyes. They all looked at Lord Hanuman, wondering why they were cut short. But Lord Hanuman’s gaze sat at frightened and out-of-breath Urva, who was His most promising disciple in the present generation of Mahtangs.

‘Deva, that *Foon* in her hand,’ spluttered Urva. He was apparently referring to Anita’s smartphone. It sounded as though he was choking; his face had flushed red, but his trembling hands hadn’t flown towards his throat.

Lord Hanuman gently asked, ‘Why does that shiny thing disconcert you so much, Urva? No other Mahtang seemed to care much about it. They reckoned it was a mere toy that shines when rubbed with a thumb. Do you know something they don’t know?’

All Mahtangs peered at him; shadows of fear and guilt were freely dancing all over his face.

‘Nothing – Nothing, Deva,’ sniffled Urva, pressing his chin against his chest in a futile attempt to subdue his trembling body. ‘I – Deva, relaunch me... please ...’

‘Doesn’t matter ... Urmi can do it,’ said Lord Hanuman, sliding His gaze to Urmi, who bowed her head and closed her eyes.

Rest of Mahtangs also closed their eyes, though some of them had to go through an extra step of pushing sticky thoughts about Urva's behaviour out of their minds.

This time, they saw the intended vision undisturbed and whole:

Anita, who had initially sat with her smartphone to learn how to make diapers out of old clothes, was now watching a video about making a floor mat using old clothes. Faint, whimsical ideas that involved stitching a large floor mat, converting her entire drawing-room into a classroom, marketing her tuition classes at a large scale, expanding the size of her tuition batches, and starting a new course of Spoken English were inducing a pleasant feeling in her stomach. Daydreaming and imaginary situations were the only sources left for her to draw a few drops of happiness.

To convince herself that it was more than a daydream, she decided to add some strokes of reality into it. She rose at once from her chair, strode to the storeroom, and flung open its door. She sensed a movement within, as though some ghostly creature scurried back into its hole at the sound of the door opening. Or it could just be the air beaten back by the door. Whatever it was, it caused an old and fluffy pet bed, which was hanging at the edge of the attic, to fall onto the floor.

Anita, who had come to assess the number of old clothes stored in the room, slipped into painful memories of parting with her dog, Snoopy. Her family had been spending more time at hospitals than at home. It had become impossible to take care of Snoopy. She reluctantly agreed to give him away to a relative's friend. His memories, along with a few canine accessories, were all that remained of him. The very next day, she had painfully collected all the remaining dog-things strewn about in the house and threw them into the attic of the storeroom.

She had hoped she would take Snoopy back once good times returned, but they never did. In all these years, even the pet bed had managed to fly itself out of the depths of attic onto the floor while her life seemed to be heading more and more into the darkness.

All thoughts of the old clothes and their usage had vanished from her mind. She collected the pet bed from the floor, climbed up the sacks and piles of junk, and slipped herself through a small square door into the attic, which was roomy enough for sleeping arrangement of three people. The concrete attic floor was covered with half an inch of dust. There was a small ventilation window at the far end beside which sat a black wooden trunk



the far end, beside which sat a black wooden trunk.

Even though her clothes were smeared with dust and nose was filled with a mouldy smell, she wished she could stay in that dimly lit enclosure forever like a cavewoman, hidden from the cruel world outside, insulated from the worries of repaying loans, and relieved from the pressure of maintaining a living standard. Her idea of peaceful existence in the attic clashed with the sight of Snoopy's belongings littered around her and the haunting memories they triggered. She decided to get rid of them as quickly as she had decided to climb the attic to reminisce over them.

Things fell down from the attic one by one as though a cat was toppling them over the edge. A minute later, Anita had emptied the attic except for a massive black wooden trunk.

She had fond memories of this trunk. It was brought to the house just days after her marriage. When she had spotted it for the first time, it was in the hall. When she asked her husband about it, he had replied with a straight face, 'It's our glorious family tradition that the newlywed bride wears all her jewellery and curls herself inside this trunk ... and then several people lift it and place upon the groom's head.'

She had believed this lame story for a moment before her husband split into laughter.

She was later told that the trunk contained several bronze utensils, some clothing items, and a few other trinkets. It was once a property of her husband's great-grandmother. It had been gathering dust in the home of her husband's uncle until then. It had to be shifted because the uncle, in the process of migrating abroad along with his family, was selling his house.

She remembered how her husband would privately call this uncle "The Musk Deer" because he always wore an insane amount of perfume that could be smelled from a mile away. Those were happier times; her husband often used to make jokes and make everyone laugh. While heaving the trunk up to the attic, it had flipped over and fallen with a rattling sound. Her husband had quipped, 'Well, the ghost inside the trunk seems unhappy about his new accommodation.'

The fall had caused a severe dent upon rear side of the trunk. They had shoved it into the attic as far as it went and pretended it was intact. That was probably the last time any human hands had touched it.

Years passed by. The ruthless wheel of time rolled and rolled, but this trunk remained where it was, wholly forgotten and eerie black.

Bad times for her family had started soon after the trunk was harmed and

Bad times for her family had started soon after the trunk was damaged and dishonoured, thought Anita. Was it actually occupied by a ghost? Perhaps, a friendly spirit that needed to be placated, or an evil one that must be driven out ...

She stared at it for a solid two minutes and then decided on disposing of it. She knew she alone couldn't lower it down from the attic. She grabbed it by its iron handle and decided to drag it up to the access door. Having overestimated its weight, she applied excessive force, and it slid right into her feet. The intensified mouldy smell made her inspect its rear side which she knew had been dented for years.

In the light coming from the ventilation window, she saw that the dented spot had been completely eaten away by a colony of termites, exposing what appeared to be one of the bronze utensils inside.

She opened the trunk to assess the extent of damage to the things inside. Surprisingly, the termites hadn't eaten all the way through the wooden wall. Then what was that bronze-like thing visible through the irregular hole created by them?

'Gold,' said Lord Hanuman as the visual ended and all Mahtangs opened their eyes. 'In a few hours, she and her husband will realise that gold sheets are hidden in the cavities of those thick wooden walls. They will thank their ancestors for this treasure bestowed on them, and the demoness of poverty will pack her misery and leave their house.'

'Was it real, Deva?' Urmi gave voice to the bewilderment brewing in the assembly. 'Has Anita's soul successfully been shifted from the misery-stricken scenes she was enduring?'

'Close your eyes once again,' directed Lord Hanuman. 'Let me show you the scene her soul is currently going through.'

The first visual they saw was that of the same attic seen through the eyes of a lizard lurking in a corner. There was no wooden trunk. Things that appeared to be a dog's old belongings were scattered all around. Old paint buckets and brushes were kept where the wooden trunk sat in the previous visuals of the attic. There was no sign of any recent human intervention, no sign of Anita having climbed there recently.

The second visual they saw was that of Anita still sitting in her drawing-room, munching on the random information her smartphone was offering her. The idea of making floor mats out of old clothes hadn't crossed her mind. She hadn't sprinted to her storeroom.

‘Which one is the real scene, Deva? The one in which she has found the gold hidden in a decoy trunk, or the one in which no such trunk exists?’ asked Urmi.

‘Both are real,’ said Lord Hanuman in a mystical voice. ‘When you exit the Time and Space, what do you see? Scenes. Countless scenes. The infinite number of them. And they’re not segregated into the three zones of Past, Present and Future. These zones, which make so much sense inside the scope of Time, make no sense outside. You see, looking from outside the Time, everything has already happened. The universe is like a book in which all the scenes are duly recorded. Each scene is made up of characters and things which are both tangible and intangible.

Out of the infinite number of scenes, say, a million of them are about a character called Anita.

Life is a series of scenes that are linked to each other in such a way that one scene leads to another according to the principle of cause-and-effect. There are, say, a thousand lives, existing in parallel to each other, that have Anita as the main character. I showed you scenes from two lives of Anita. In one, she is debt-ridden but then finds a treasure of gold hidden inside a decoy trunk. In the other, she is debt-ridden, and no such forgotten wealth exists; she remains debt-ridden until she and her husband commit suicide after killing their child.

Like that, there are a thousand lives of Anita, each slightly varying from the other. To give you an example of variations, in one of the lives, she has an uncle-in-law who wears a violent amount of perfume; in another, she has an uncle-in-law who wears sunglasses even when he is indoor.

The problem is, out of a thousand lives available for her, Anita’s soul is stuck in the one in which she is destined to commit suicide after a deep financial crisis. I want you to deliberate on this problem. Let me rephrase my question. If you were in my place, what would you do to pull Anita’s soul out of her current life and shift her to a better one? I hope nobody will blurt out answers like “gold” this time, for I have demonstrated that every scene you can imagine exists out there; the difficulty lies in freeing the soul stuck in a rut.’

Mahtangs closed their eyes, this time to take a stroll through dark alleys of their minds and to attempt to cross its ever-stretching boundaries. Lord Hanuman’s question was their guiding light in this pursuit.

The immortal Guru also closed His eyes and went into His breathing cycle.

# Chapter 8

## The Linga Code

After several minutes of contemplation, most of the Mahtangs had arrived at their conclusions. They were ready to speculate why Anita's soul was stuck in a life of misery. And they were eager to suggest what gods ought to do to shift her to a better one.

Having completed His breath cycle, Lord Hanuman materialised once again. After sparing a quick glance at Urva, who was still struggling with his inner conflicts, He sought Urmi's views on the matter.

'I've crossed a jungle of thoughts but reached at no conclusion, Deva,' said Urmi apologetically. 'The clarity I sought to reach came in sight several times but imploded into the confusion each time. It seems to me that the mind is not a competent authority to seal a conclusion on matters related to the souls. So, I have no conclusions to offer. Even insights I encountered along the way have drowned in the mental chaos.'

'If you've reached something, the "nothing" is still out of your reach,' said Lord Hanuman comfortingly. 'You're the "nothingness". You would realise it only when you've stopped clinging to something. Mental excursions don't go in vain, though. They provide the required momentum to take a flight towards nothingness ... Alright, let's first hear those who've got a conclusion to cling to.'

A Mahtang man named Kalandaka, whose face bore a deep scar across his left eyebrow, stood up confidently and presented his conclusion, 'Deva, you showed us visions from two parallel lives of a character called Anita. In "life 1", there is no treasure trunk in her house. In "life 2", there is a decoy trunk stuffed with gold placed in the attic of her storeroom. Her soul can't switch from "life 1" to "life 2" because that would violate the laws of her world, the world where the principle of cause and effect links one scene to another. A trunk can't appear out of thin air without any just cause. That's the underlying problem the gods are unable to overcome, I think ...'

Kalandaka's voice died away along with his confidence; the conclusion that seemed solid in his mind melted away when he heard it aloud in his own

voice. He realised that there was an inherent flaw in his logic.

‘But – but in life 2, she has past memories of that trunk!’ said Kalandaka more to himself than the assembly around him, ‘memories rich in detail. She remembers the uncle from whose house the trunk was shifted to hers. She remembers her husband joking about the trunk and the uncle. She remembers the fall and the dent ... how come? This is so confusing ... I mean, when her soul jumps from Life 1 to Life 2, will it carry the memories of Life 1 into Life 2? Will Anita remember that there was no trunk before the jump, and now the trunk has appeared along with its memories?’

‘Memory is stored inside the mind of a character, not inside the soul,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘The character of Anita in life 2 has memories which are completely independent of memories her character has in life 1. So, when Anita’s soul leaves life 1, it leaves memories of life 1 then and there, and when it enters life 2, it takes up memories of life 2. To answer your question, no, Anita will have no memory that trunk was not in the attic; she will have memories of the trunk being there for years.’

‘Deva, it’s such a thankless job to be a god, isn’t it?’ said Urmi. ‘When you’ve successfully flown Anita’s soul into Life 2, she would not consider it as a miracle. Thanks to the memories of Life 2, she would think that the trunk had been in the attic for years; no big deal. She would thank her husband’s ancestors for leaving the treasure, but not you!’

‘Anita-2 is merely a character that has already been written. It doesn’t matter what Anita-2, or any other mortal being, thinks or remembers; gods are committed to the welfare of their souls,’ replied Lord Hanuman.

Another young Mahtang named Dhanushka, Urva’s best friend, stood up to put forth his conclusion. He said, ‘Deva, I see a solution in that glowing toy she was playing with. I think it makes her forget about her harsh reality. It works much like a dream, doesn’t it? I’ve heard stories of gods using a soul’s excursion into the dreamworld to alter its path in the real world. I think –’

‘That. Is. Not. A. Toy,’ roared Urva through gritted teeth. Dhanushka jumped as though his friendly cat had suddenly transformed into a monstrous lion; he had never seen Urva shouting so menacingly.

Baba stood up in alarm, bowed to Lord Hanuman and implored, ‘Deva, is that a test set by you for Urva? It seems he is failing miserably. Asurrahs might get hold of him soon and desecrate this holy ceremony. He needs help ... Please ...’

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Urva broke into terrible sobs. It felt good to admit that he needed help; he could no longer stand up to the demons he had been fighting since childhood. He had discussed all his nagging nightmares with Baba except the one involving the shiny toys, the one that was bothering him even now, even in the powerful presence of the immortal Guru.

‘Since childhood, Urva has been venturing into a few scenes of mainstream society,’ said Lord Hanuman exchanging a look of understanding with Baba.

‘Oh, the nightmares that one is prohibited from discussing with anyone else. I’d completely forgotten about them,’ mumbled Baba.

Curiosity in the assembly rose up suddenly. It found expression through Urmi, ‘Why would venturing into scenes of mainstream society be a nightmare, Deva? And why are we not allowed to discuss them with each other?’

‘If your soul went and lived a scene of mainstream society right now, would it be able to return without my help?’ Lord Hanuman shot the counter-question and went on to answer it Himself. ‘The illusion is so strong out there that even realised souls tend to get stuck. It’s nothing short of a nightmare for an aware soul to live those scenes. They are such a quagmire that more you discuss them, deeper you slip into their illusion.’

‘So, we should never venture into those scenes?’ inquired Urmi.

‘You should and you will, first with my help and then without it,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘But never discuss them with each other until I’ve fully trained you. Urva has been going through them since childhood because he, as a successor of Baba, required stronger training. He has been regularly seeing scenes filled with tempting objects and challenging situations. He is particularly apprehensive about that shiny thing Anita was holding because it throws an extra layer of illusion upon the soul ... You see, humanity keeps inventing new layers of illusion.’

Baba’s eyes glowed. He had just remembered the things that were popular in mainstream society in his time ... fascinating things just like the shiny toy. He had been trained rigorously not only to save his own soul from the most potent illusions of his time but also to help other Mahtang souls escape if they ever got stuck. Now it was Urva’s turn to complete that training along with other young Mahtangs.

Urmi, a promising face of this generation, was trying to recall the scenes from Anita’s life that she had seen a few minutes ago. She regretted not giving much attention to the shiny toy that had become the central point of the

discussion now.

‘Should we all be apprehensive about that toy, Deva?’ she asked.

‘What you should fear is the shallow and limited curiosity about objects,’ cautioned Lord Hanuman. ‘Limited curiosity pulls you into the illusion and keeps you there. If your curiosity about an object is limitless, no matter what the object is, it will lead you to the truth. A Guru can use any object to show His disciples the truth, and a yogi can use any object as a portal to freedom. In fact, I am going to use that shiny thing to explain to you the mysteries of the universe. Let me first show you a couple of scenes from mainstream society.’

Everyone closed their eyes at once.

A tall statue of Lord Hanuman, taller than a 10-storey building, stood gloriously under the hazy sky. Hundreds of people were looking at it in awe, not through their God-given eyes, but through eyes fitted in small shiny toys held in their hands.

Lord Hanuman’s voice narrated what was happening. They were actually recording the scene so that they could watch it later at their leisure.

The toy was able to record the scene. But how? Was the procedure behind it similar to a painter painting a scene using colours, and a writer describing it using words? How was this process so fast? In terms of speed, it seemed more like the brain capturing a scene in the form of memory.

Could this toy replay the recorded scene as fast as the brain retrieves a memory? Or was it a lengthy process like reading a book?

The scene dissolved into darkness and another scene emerged. A man in his 30’s was sitting in the comfort of his home, moving his fingers upon the shiny toy as though riffling through a book to find a particular chapter. At last, he found what he was looking for. With a final tap, the scene of Lord Hanuman’s statue, which he had recorded several days ago during his physical visit to the place, started playing.

This was a miracle! Why was this man not amazed by the phenomenon? The glowing belly of his smart toy was acting like a window, and it was showing a scene that happened several days back in the past at a place dozens of miles away.

‘It’s amazing, Deva,’ said Urmi, awestruck. ‘This shiny toy records scenes!’

‘And it plays the recorded scenes on demand,’ said Janakirupa, a middle-

aged Mahtang woman, and the best friend of Urmi despite their big age difference.

‘Oh, I was so wrong. I thought it was a portal into the dream world,’ said Dhanushka dejectedly.

‘I still don’t see how this is a new human invention,’ commented Kalandaka, frowning so that lines on his forehead merged with the scar on his brow. ‘I mean, human beings have been recording scenes since the origin of language ... I can describe this scene in my language and write it down. Anybody who knows my language can recreate the scene in his or her mind merely by reading my words. It’s that simple!’

‘But this shiny toy first records and then recreates and replays the scene all by itself. You don’t need to know any language to watch the scenes recorded by it,’ observed Urmi.

‘Does that mean this toy is actually a thinking being?’ wondered Kalandaka. ‘Is it like a new pet animal? Almost all the people who were watching that statue were holding this thing in their hands. Does this pet toy have a secret language of its own in which it records a scene? It has got an eye also.’

‘Two eyes, one in the front and one in the back,’ Urmi corrected him.

‘It all makes sense now,’ said Kalandaka enthusiastically. ‘It is a pet animal, not a toy. It has its own secret language to describe what it sees. Let’s say it wrote three paragraphs in its own language to describe a scene. When asked to play the scene, it translates those paragraphs into ordinary visuals that its human masters can see. That’s an amazing pet animal. Better than a dog, I would say.’

‘The visuals and sounds it records are stunning,’ said Urmi so vibrantly she might have been holding the shiny toy in her hands. ‘They are almost same as the real visuals. That means the language it uses to record the scenes must be very rich and advanced. An ordinary human language can’t describe a scene so clearly. Even the best writers fail to describe a scene exactly as they see it. But this toy – I mean, this pet animal – can.’

‘Children!’ said Lord Hanuman amusingly, ‘you forget that this shiny thing is invented and created by human beings. So, the language –’

‘Deva, have mainstream human beings started giving birth to these tiny pet animals instead of human babies?’ said Kalandaka lamely.

‘– So, the language in which these shiny things record the scenes is also

designed by human beings,’ said Lord Hanuman ignoring Kalandaka’s lame interruption. ‘In fact, this language was envisioned many centuries ago by Acharya Pingala. Spoken human languages usually have about three dozen symbols – the alphabets and the digits. All books written in a particular language, all the scenes, all the stories, all the ideas are basically written down using just three dozen symbols. Acharya Pingala sought to structure it down even further and designed a language system that used only two symbols. It’s called the binary language system.’

‘Just two symbols, Deva?’ repeated Janakirupa to make sure she heard it right.

‘Yes, a language structured upon just two symbols: a binary language,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘That shiny thing is actually an instrument that processes binary language.’

‘The binary language is also not perfect, though, is it, Deva?’ said Janakirupa. ‘I noticed that the shiny toy, the binary instrument, too can’t record the scene exactly as it is. It can only record the visuals and the sound. It can’t record the smell, the taste, the touch of the scene.’

Before Lord Hanuman could reply, Urmi spoke in defence of the shiny toy, ‘But it’s still better than books written in ordinary languages. No writer can describe a scene as clearly as the shiny toy does. Didn’t you see the visuals of the statue playing magnificently upon its belly? They were stunning!’

‘Belly of the shiny toy?’ chuckled Janakirupa. ‘Urmi, that is ridiculous. A writer can record a scene way better than that shiny instrument. A scene has so many invisible and intangible things like thoughts and emotions that only a human writer can record using ordinary languages.’

Urmi couldn’t come up with a retort. Kalandaka took the opportunity to wonder aloud, ‘Is it possible to develop a language that can record a scene exactly as it is. Could there be a book in which scenes are written so perfectly that when you read it, the original scenes play in your mind with all their richness?’

Janakirupa opened her mouth to comment, but her thoughts drowned into the deep voice of Lord Hanuman as He spoke, ‘Yes, that perfect and Absolute Language does exist. All the scenes of the universe have been recorded in it. Unlike ordinary languages which use symbols and words to record a scene, the Absolute Language uses just two variables of the divine light to record all scenes –’

‘The Karma and Desires are those two variables. Right, Deva?’ said Kalandaka at once.

‘Right,’ said Lord Hanuman.

‘What is the structure of this language, Deva? How to learn it? It would be so great to be able to record scenes in all their originality and replay them at will. The replayed scene will be exactly as the original scene!’ said Kalandaka passionately.

Urmi’s infatuation with the shiny toy faded as she took in the attractive idea of the Absolute Language. She said, ‘Wow! We would be able to record scenes better than the shiny toy does. We would be able to record visuals, sounds, smells, emotions, thoughts and everything else that pervades through a scene. And yes, we would be able to replay them at will!’

‘I am afraid your thinking is being clouded by your excitement,’ said Lord Hanuman quietly. ‘Just think clearly. Imagine a piece of information that has recorded a scene in the Absolute Language. When you process this information, you see and experience the original scene, not a duplicate copy of the scene. In other words, this piece of information doesn’t replay the scene; it simply gives you access to the original scene. I repeat, the words that are written in an ordinary book, or the data that is recorded in that shiny binary instrument, only give you access to a duplicate copy of the scene. But the data that is recorded in the Absolute Language gives you access to the original scene; it works as an access key or a passcode of the scene. That is why it is called the Linga Code. If your soul has Linga Code of a particular scene, it can access that scene and live it in all its originality.’

‘Linga what, Deva?’ said Urmi. ‘I know about the Linga body. Is Linga Code same thing or different?’

‘They’re same,’ replied Lord Hanuman. ‘Even your physical body is a unique access code. It gives you access to your home, your family, and everything that is yours. It doesn’t give you access to a stranger’s house. Similarly, the Linga body is a code that gives you access to scenes. You can call it a “Linga body” or “Linga Code” as long as you’re clear what it does. The latter suits better in the context of the shiny toy.’

‘Understood, Deva,’ said Urmi. ‘Each and every scene in the universe has already been recorded in the Absolute Language. The scene from my future in which I am getting married is recorded too. The data of that scene, or the Linga Code of that scene, is already there somewhere. But where? Can I use that Linga Code to get a glimpse of what my marriage scene looks like?’

‘Of course,’ said Lord Hanuman, ‘you can access any scene in the universe if you have the Linga Code of that scene. By you, I mean your soul, your free soul. First, you must free your soul from the present scene. Then it can access any scene it wants to access simply by installing the Linga Code of that scene upon itself.’

‘But where is the Linga Code of my marriage scene, Deva? I can’t wait to get a glimpse,’ said Urmi in spite of herself.

Several girls in the assembly giggled. Lord Hanuman’s reply, however, came in His solemn and quiet voice, ‘In royal palaces, there used to be theatre performances. Passes or tickets used to be available outside the theatre. Similarly, the Linga Code of each scene happening in the theatre of Space-Time is available at its “viewing gallery” from where a soul can “view”, or rather live, the scene.’

‘Viewing gallery?’ mumbled Urmi and then raised her eyebrows as her own mind answered her. ‘Ah, the Shunya tunnels!’

‘Yes,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘A soul doesn’t enter *into* Space-Time to live a scene. It remains in the Shunya Tunnels or the tunnels of nothingness which cut through Space-Time like a network of veins.’

‘Can’t my mind get hold of the Linga Code, Deva? Just wanted to get a glimpse of the scene of my marriage ... didn’t want to actually live it ... just a quick glance,’ said Urmi, unperturbed by the giggles she was causing behind her.

Janakirupa came to her best friend’s rescue and rephrased her query, ‘I was curious too, Deva. Can’t the Absolute Language be understood by our minds? Not even partially? It would become so easy to look into the future scenes if the mind could be trained to decipher the Linga Codes.’

Lord Hanuman looked impressed by Janakirupa’s successful attempt at turning Urmi’s silly blabber into an actual query. Like a ripple caused in a calm lake by a slight breeze, He smiled and said, ‘First of all, the mind exists within the Space-Time while the Linga Codes, or the data recorded in the Absolute Language, exist outside it. Secondly, only a soul knows the Absolute Language. Only a soul can read the data recorded in the Absolute Language. Only a soul can decipher the Linga Codes.’

‘Why can’t human mind do it, Deva?’ asked Janakirupa. ‘It’s just a language, after all, a language with just two symbols instead of several. Is this language so complicated that the human mind can’t grasp it? Can’t we develop an instrument like that which can decipher the Absolute Language and

an instrument like that shiny toy that can decipher the Absolute Language and show us a glimpse of the future scenes from our lives?’

‘On the contrary,’ replied Lord Hanuman, His eyes poring over the empty space as though reading the best book ever written, ‘the Absolute Language is so simple and refined that human mind wouldn’t process it; it would pass right through it. You can’t process already refined flour through a flour mill and filtered juice through a juicer machine. And unless you understand the language, you can’t develop an instrument based on it.’

‘How can the Absolute Language be so simple when the universe is so complicated and complex, Deva?’ asked Janakirupa.

‘Is the universe complicated and complex?’ asked Lord Hanuman quietly.

‘Of course, Deva,’ said Janakirupa. ‘So many colours, sounds, flavours, smells, feelings, emotions, ideas... how can such complex scenes be recorded in a simple language?’

‘The universe is very simple,’ told Lord Hanuman. ‘The limited mind can’t see the simple pattern running through all the complexity. When the monks finally realise how simple everything is, their minds go absolutely quiet. They can find no words to express the simplicity of the universe. They just smile. They smile like a wise man watching a group of blind men quarrelling over the identity of a strange animal – you all have heard the fable of the blind men and an elephant, I suppose?’

‘Yes, Deva,’ said Dhanushka, who loved listening to stories. ‘A group of blind men touching different parts of an elephant come to different conclusions about the thing they are holding. The one grabbing its trunk calls it a thick snake; the one holding its tail thinks it’s a rope; the one leaning against its side calls it a wall; the one embracing its leg reckons it is a tree trunk; the one examining its tusk imagines a smooth spear –’

‘Similarly,’ said Lord Hanuman, ‘when we see the universe as a whole, it’s plain and simple. But the mind is just a small part of the whole; it can’t see the whole. Fortunately, the mind can be expanded. You must have heard about the story of the invisible jungle, I take it.’

‘Yes, Deva,’ said Dhanushka, describing the parable of the invisible jungle, ‘Once upon a time, two human beings entered a dangerous jungle. They were first of their kind to enter it. A tree heard them talking about something dangerous called “jungle”. The tree thought that the “jungle” was a monstrous animal. Out of curiosity, the tree asked the birds whether they were aware of any

such animal. The birds too hadn't heard of it. They asked the cows and cows queried the snakes. Soon all the animals of the jungle were perplexed about the identity of the invisible animal named Jungle.'

'Human beings have come to develop a broader mind than the animals,' said Lord Hanuman. 'That is why they can figure out that the jungle is the "whole" and animals are a part of it. If you wish to see the whole universe in all its simplicity, you must expand your mind even further. Stretch your psychological boundaries as much as you can. Push your beliefs and understanding. Unlearn everything that limits you.'

'At last, when you've expanded your psyche beyond all limits, you would transcend it and realise that you're a free soul. Then you would see the simplicity of the whole. You would see the simple framework within which thrives all the unpredictability and complexity. Then you would realise why the Absolute Language, which records all the scenes there are, is so simple.'

'So... a mind that is expanded beyond all limits can learn the Absolute Language?' said Urmi hopefully.

'That's the irony of it all,' said Lord Hanuman. 'When your mind expands beyond all limits, it doesn't remain a mind anymore. What remains is pure consciousness. You reach this state when you've unlearned everything and risen above the process of learning and unlearning. Any attempt to learn anything pulls you back to the limits of the mind ... From the state of pure consciousness, from the point where illusion is so weak that you clearly see you're not a mind but a soul, you just observe the simplicity; you find no need to learn or understand or describe what you see.'

Urmi, who had been sitting bolt upright in the hope of using the Absolute Language to peep into future, deflated and sighed resignedly. Janakirupa carried on the conversation, 'Deva, there must be a state below pure consciousness. There has to be an optimal level at which the mind is expanded enough to get an overview of the Absolute Language, but not too expanded to have let go of the process of learning. From that level, I am sure we can at least get an idea as to why the Absolute Language is so simple and why the human mind can't construct a similar language. Then, perhaps, we can construct a language which is simplest a human mind can construct.'

'From that level, the human mind has already constructed a language,' said Lord Hanuman, 'It's called Sanskrit. It's the simplest language the human mind can use to describe scenes. The great minds of ancient times sat down and tried to find patterns in everything we see around us. What they came up was



something amazing: it was possible to describe everything using just 2,000 or so root words and a set of concise and clean grammar rules. For example, to describe a tree, you don't need to come up with a whole new word. You know that trees drink water through their feet (roots). The word for feet is "Pada", and the word for drinking is "Pa". So, trees can be simply called "PadaPa" ... Simplifying a language is all about finding patterns and similarities in the things we see around us. Sanskrit is the limit of what the human mind can achieve when it comes to describing a scene concisely.'

'But what about the binary language, Deva?' Urmi came back to the conversation. 'You said that Acharya Pingala had found a method to describe everything using just two symbols. And based on it, the modern human beings have invented that shiny toy, I mean the binary instrument, to record scenes.'

'If you reduce the number of symbols without discovering the patterns to balance out the reduction, you end up with a very complex and impractical linguistic system,' replied Lord Hanuman, and paused for a moment to determine what example to give to elaborate further, and added, 'Urmi, can you tell me how many directions are there in the human world?'

Urmi knew that the answer was ten. She tried to open her mouth to say the same, but she realised that her lips were sealed. She didn't panic. Apparently, her Guru didn't want her to use her mouth to answer the question. She raised both her hands and flashed her ten fingers.

'Correct,' said Lord Hanuman and slid His gaze sideways to look at a disciple who bore a scar across his eyebrow. 'Now, Kalandaka, can you answer the same question?'

Kalandaka too tried to answer with his vocal abilities but found them muted. He raised his hands and realised that they had only one finger each, not five. His suddenly maimed hands didn't terrorise him in the slightest.

Apparently, Lord Hanuman had taken away his eight fingers and given him a memory that he was born with just two fingers.

He had to flash his two fingers five times to answer the question.

'Urmi has ten fingers. She had to flash them only once to answer my question. Kalandaka has two fingers. He had to flash them five times to answer the same question. If we reduce the number of symbols, the mind has to do more work. That is why mind can't process the binary language which uses only two symbols. To do the hard work of processing it, the human race has invented those shiny instruments ... They have reduced the symbols to two without finding more patterns. So, their binary language has become complex.'

making more patterns. So, when binary language has become complex, explained Lord Hanuman.

A question sprung in Urmi's mind and sought the help of her vocal cords to get itself out in the open.

'Deva,' said Urmi, visibly glad that her voice was back, 'by that logic, the Absolute Language must be difficult to process because it also uses just two symbols or two variables of the divine light. How come the soul doesn't need any instrument to process it?'

Lord Hanuman, who was amusingly watching Kalandaka rediscover all his ten fingers, looked at Urmi and said, 'The soul is outside the trap of Space-Time. It can see a simple pattern running through all the scenes in the universe. It doesn't need more than two variables to describe them all. Imagine a very long thread which has been tangled and knotted horribly. Now imagine that an ant is trapped inside the tangle and crawling on the thread to find its way out. It may keep crawling from one knot to another and never come out of the trap. If it happens to be intelligent, it may invent complex theories and complicated formulas to describe the trap. The reality, as you know, is that it's just a single thread. You can see the simple reality because you're outside the trap.'

'What is the nature of the two variables – Karma and Desire – used in the Absolute Language, Deva? Can the mind at least get an idea of what they represent?' asked Janakirupa.

'To get an idea about them,' replied Lord Hanuman, 'you need to imagine that you're a soul and you must try to see the world from a soul's point of view. In reality, you're a soul. But until you realise that, you must at least imagine that you're a soul. Can you?'

'Of course, Deva,' said Janakirupa with her eyes unfocused and voice so unlike her, 'I am a free soul. I am the nothingness, the Shunya. I have no identity, no physical body, no mind, no memories.'

'What do you see?' asked a voice.

'Scenes,' she replied.

'And what are they?'

'A scene is a piece of the universe ... A piece of the fabric of Space-Time,' she replied. 'I am a free soul; therefore, I am devoid of any experiences. The scenes offer me experiences. Every scene has a lead character, which has a body and a mind, through whom everything else is perceived. To live a scene, I must get attached to that character.'

‘How can a soul get attached to a character?’

‘How, Deva? I don’t know,’ said Janakirupa in her own voice, coming back to her character.

‘Imagine the scene of Urmi’s marriage,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘If you want to see the scene from her eyes, to feel what she is feeling, to think exactly what she is thinking, you must know about her past. That means the scene of her marriage depends on the past ones that led to it.

‘Similarly, when you’re watching a scene being enacted on a theatre stage, you would feel attached to the characters if you have watched the past scenes that led to the present one.

‘Imagine a scene in which the character is being crowned as a king. He began his journey as a soldier and finally, his dream of becoming a king is coming true. You can’t feel the emotions involved in this scene if you don’t know his past scenes, which were full of struggles and hopes.’

‘I got it, Deva,’ said Janakirupa. ‘To get attached to a character and live a scene through him, I must have the information about the past scenes that led to it.’

‘You got it right,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Every scene in the universe is dependent on countless other scenes of the past ... Consider the scene in which a character called Urva has just taken birth and let out his first cry. Even though it’s the first scene of Urva’s life, it is not independent. All babies are not the same. Everything in baby Urva’s first scene is different from the first scenes of other new-born characters: the features of the baby, the parents, the surroundings, the time, the place, and so on. Therefore, the first scene of a character is also dependent on many past scenes. This fact gives rise to the concept of rebirth and reincarnation.

‘The past scenes include the scenes that were actually lived and the scenes that were desired but couldn’t be lived. Information about the former is called Karma. Information about the latter is called Unfulfilled Desires – or simply, Desires. A soul must have this information to get attached to a character and live the scene. This information is not called a paragraph of prose or verse; it’s called a Code because it gives you full access to the original scene, not a duplicate copy.’

Kalandaka got a query and expressed it without delay, ‘Deva, aren’t Karma and memory the same thing? Memory, like Karma, is the information of past scenes, isn’t it?’

‘No, Kalandaka,’ said Lord Hanuman, ‘memories exist inside the Space-Time while the Karma exists in the Shunya Tunnels. Memories are *read* by the mind while the Karma is *read* by the soul.’

‘Your present scene is full of objects, both tangible and intangible. Bananas, trees, mountains, animals etc. are all tangible objects. On the other hand, memories, thoughts, ideas, imaginations etc. are intangible objects: you can’t see them, can’t touch them, can’t smell them, but they are there. Your body interacts with the tangible objects while your mind interacts with the intangible objects.’

‘So, memory is an object much like an apple or a banana or a mirror. Like a mirror shows you your current reflection, a memory shows you reflections of past scenes.’

Kalandaka said with a satisfied expression on his face, ‘I understood, Deva. Memories are a record of the past journey of a character while Karma is that of a soul.’

‘No, Kalandaka. That’s incorrect,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘First of all, a soul doesn’t have its own “past” because it exists outside the scope of Time. The character’s past becomes the soul’s past when they get attached. Secondly, memories are not always correct about the past of a character.’

‘If you want to understand about memories, don’t look at a series of scenes. Just consider one scene. Memories are present in a scene just like other objects such as bananas, apples, and mirrors. They have not travelled from any other scene. This scene was here even when you were not here to live it. It will still be here when you move on to some other scene. Memories of this scene were already here. You didn’t bring them. Nor will you take them forward to next scene. And memories of the next scene are already there in the next scene.’

‘Take your time to understand this. It’s tricky, I know. But once you understand it, so many things will become clear to you.’

‘Objects don’t move from one scene to another. You, the soul, move from one scene to another. When you do so, you experience the illusion of movement. Due to this illusion, it feels that objects, including memories, are moving from one scene to another.’

‘What you call as your “life” is nothing but an illusion of movement. Your character is not moving from one scene to another. Your soul is moving. Imagine that somebody took a picture of your character every second from birth till death. Your entire life is a series of those millions of still pictures placed side by side, each slightly overlapping from the one next to it. The universe has always been

by side, each slightly varying from the one next to it. The universe has already taken your character's still pictures in multiple dimensions. Your soul is just moving through them.

'Later, you will learn more about this illusion. You will learn that nothing is moving in this universe. Everything is still and frozen. The universe, as a whole, is like a ball having no movement within it whatsoever. When a soul slides upon the strings of Time, it experiences the illusion of movement.

'Memories, like other objects, remain within a given scene; they don't move. You can compare a memory with a mirror. When you see an image reflected in a mirror, you think, "Ah, that's me." Other characters and things present in the scene might validate your thought. Then you call it a truth.

'Memory is also an object similar to a mirror. It shows you something, and you say, "Ah, that's a scene from my past." When other things present in the scene validate the same, you call it a true memory. Else, it's called a false memory. Let me show you an example ...'

Mahtangs closed their eyes and saw an oddly dressed man marching through a village street. He was shouting war cry of independence. But why? He was already a citizen of an independent country. The invaders from whom he sought independence had fled his country decades ago. He was hailing a queen called Laxmibai who lived more than 150 years ago. He had a false memory that he served as a soldier in her army. People in his village labelled him as mentally ill.

The scene dissolved, and Lord Hanuman's voice emerged just as Mahtangs opened their eyes, 'A false memory is an object that is in contradiction with other objects present in the scene. That's not a big deal. Contradictions and conflicts between objects are as common as validation and harmony.'

After this long explanation about the nature of memories, Lord Hanuman paused the talks for a few moments to allow His disciples to contemplate.

After the pause, Urmi said, 'Deva, may I come back to what we were discussing before the topic of memories came up? May I ask a question about Karma-Desire, about the information a soul must acquire to get attached to a character?'

'Yes, Urmi. Go ahead,' said Lord Hanuman.

'Deva, I agree that a soul must have Karma or the information about the scenes lived by a character in the past. But why does a soul need Desires or the information about the scenes a character desired to live, but never actually lived?' asked Urmi.

'You tell me Urmi!' said Lord Hanuman with a smile that transported Urmi to her childhood at once.

When she was eleven years old, she had heard about a magical creature called Kinnara, which was half-human and half-horse. Possessed with the idea of

meeting a Kinnara, she would sneak off into forbidden territories of the forest. This childish pursuit didn't end well. She fell off a tricky cliff and nearly died. As a result, she developed a fear of heights in general and cliffs in particular. Her desire to meet a Kinnara remained unfulfilled, but the fear developed in its pursuit determined her behaviour to this day.

'Yes, Deva. The unfulfilled desires of the past have a bearing on my present,' admitted Urmi.

'Scene time,' said Lord Hanuman. His disciples took it as a cue to close their eyes.

They saw a scene in which a young man was buying sweets from a sweet shop.

'What does this scene tell you about this man? It just tells that he is somebody who is buying sweets,' came Lord Hanuman's voice. 'Now let me show a scene that he desired to live but didn't live.'

The same young man was seen distracting the shopkeeper and stealing sweets from his shop.

'The fear of getting caught prevented him from living this scene,' narrated Lord Hanuman. 'But this un-lived scene tells you more about him than the scene he actually lived. It reveals that he wouldn't mind stealing somebody else's property if he could get away with it.'

'Still, you wouldn't know much about him. To know him even better, to understand why he tends to steal, you must have the data of the scenes he has lived in the past, and more importantly the ones he desired to live but couldn't.'

'To know him even further, to know him fully, you must have data of scenes that happened even before he was born: the scenes from his past lives. Only when you have that data can you know what it feels like being him. Only then can you live this scene as though you're him. That data is called the Linga Code of this scene because it gives you full access to this scene. It makes you feel that you're buying sweets in this shop. By "you", I mean your soul, which must detach itself from its present character to live a scene from some other character's life.'

A silence followed, which broke dawn of understanding at the horizons of the young Mahtang minds. Although a thin cloud of confusion did soar up in Dhanushka's mind.

He asked, 'Deva, you compared the Linga Code with a ticket or a pass. Isn't it more than that? It not only allows me to watch a scene but also allows me

...isn't it more than that. It not only allows me to watch a scene but also allows me to control it. I can feel that I am in control of my body-mind. Or is that an illusion?'

Lord Hanuman replied, 'When you ride a boat, the boat moves, not you. You feel the movement simply because you sit on the moving boat. In the same way, the soul just "sits upon" the body-mind and feels whatever they're feeling. The soul is not the "doer"; it doesn't do anything. There is no question of a soul controlling or changing anything happening in the theatre of Space-Time. The soul remains a mute spectator.'

'But Deva,' said Dhanushka, 'I can feel that I am doing everything: I am using my mind to think, I am using my mouth to speak. Using my body-mind, I can interact with the rest of the things present in the scene. I can move my body; I can move things around me using my body ... I know that I am neither a body nor a mind. I am a soul, and I *have* the body-mind. But ... But I can control my body-mind. The feeling of control is so real!'

'As I told you,' said Lord Hanuman quietly, 'thoughts are just intangible objects floating around you. Just like your body can use a stone to fell a fruit from a tree, your mind can use a thought to launch your body into action. Your mind controls the body. Your body and mind jointly interact with the rest of the scene. The soul just witnesses everything that body-mind jointly do. The soul doesn't do anything.'

'Then why do I feel that I am doing everything, Deva?' asked Dhanushka.

'Because you're attached to the character that is doing everything,' replied Lord Hanuman. 'When you read a storybook, you get so connected to the hero that you feel what he feels. When he fights the villain, you feel as though you're fighting the villain. When he speaks something, you feel as though he is giving words to your thoughts. Your attachment to the hero grows more and more as you get to know about his past. The same thing happens to the soul. The Linga Code of a scene is nothing but complete information about the past of the lead character. As soon as the soul acquires this information, it gets attached to the character and starts feeling as though it is the character.'

'Does that mean the soul has no freewill, Deva?' asked Dhanushka. 'Everything happening inside the theatre of Space-Time has already happened. Everything has already been scripted. The character lives as per that script. Since a soul can't do anything else but witness the scene, it has no free will; it has no other option but to silently witness what the character does. Is that right, Deva?'

'There is an infinite number of characters in the universe. With a ...'

There is an infinite number of characters in the universe. Why do you want to stay attached to a single character? You – I mean your soul – has the freewill to detach from a character and re-attach to another character of your choice,’ spoke Lord Hanuman making a smooth and graceful flying gesture with His hand. After a small pause, He added, ‘Even if you want to stay with a single character, it should be out of your own will. You should be able to leave whenever you want to.’

‘But how, Deva ... how?’ asked Dhanushka.

‘Your soul knows how,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Your soul knows the Absolute Language. It knows how the Linga Code works. If given freedom, it can spontaneously choose a better character and a better scene for itself.

‘Let it choose the next scene it wants to live. Don’t allow your present character to interfere with your soul’s free will. The journey of a character is already scripted, but your soul is free to write its own script. In short, don’t mimic your character’s choices. Make your own.

‘You get stuck in unfavourable and miserable scenes when you allow your present character to choose your next scenes ... Let me demonstrate.’



# Chapter 9

## Incomplete

For the brief moment, Dhanushka was excited about the demonstration Lord Hanuman promised. He expected celestial bodies to descend and explain the mysteries of the universe by magical means. Little did he know that his body and mind were going to be the tool of the demonstration.

‘Water –,’ he croaked as he clutched at his burning throat.

Urva, whose apprehensions about the shiny toy had now melted away, stood up instinctively to fetch water for his best friend.

‘Wait,’ said Lord Hanuman with His hand outstretched towards Urva and eyes fixed on Dhanushka’s woeful face.

‘Detach from the scene, Dhanu,’ said Urva, who fully understood what the demonstration was all about.

Dhanushka felt irritated on being supplied with a useless suggestion instead of the thing he badly needed: water.

‘In your current scene,’ came the stream of Lord Hanuman’s thirst-quenching voice, ‘your soul is attached to a thirsty character. It can’t do anything about the present scene, but it can certainly choose the next scene a better one. Why doesn’t it? Because it is so attached to the present character that it might just go with his choice instead of making its own ... Tell me, Dhanushka, what do you want your next scene to be.’

Dhanushka removed his hand from his throat. His thirst now felt bearable. He said, ‘Deva, I am a soul currently attached to a thirsty character named Dhanushka. I want my next scene to be the one in which a bowl of water is at this character’s lips.’

‘Such a mundane choice ... isn’t it?’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘If your soul were allowed to make a choice, it would choose a scene in which your character is far better than a thirsty tribesman. Maybe it would choose the character of a prince enjoying an evening in the royal gardens where best musicians of his kingdom are playing melodic tunes.’

‘I can suppress my thirst, Deva, no problem,’ said Dhanushka.

‘Again, that’s such a miserable choice,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘And who is making this choice? Your character. Your mind, to be more specific. But if your soul were allowed to make a choice, it would choose a scene better than that of suppressing a thirst.’

‘Then what should I do, Deva?’ groaned Dhanushka helplessly.

Lord Hanuman suggested, ‘Dhanushka, your soul should be able to distance itself from your character and be like, “O the character named Dhanushka, you do whatever you like: suppress your thirst or quench it – I’ve nothing to do with your choice. I am a soul, and I’m off to live a better scene through some other character. And by the way, your choices are just an illusion. Your journey is fully scripted. Maybe I will come back later to live your character when your script rolls on to some more interesting scenes than this one.”’

While Dhanushka tried to act upon Lord Hanuman’s suggestion, Urmi said, ‘Deva, I am so confused that my head is hurting. To be able to witness the next scene, the soul needs the ticket – I mean the Linga Code – of that scene, right? You said that his character is forcing his soul to move to the scene of his choice. How can he? How can the character supply the soul with the Linga Code of the next scene? How is this exchange between the soul and the character taking place?’

‘The Linga Code is made up of Karma and Desires,’ replied Lord Hanuman. ‘As I told earlier, to get attached to a character, a free soul acquires the Karma and Desires in bulk, which are readily available in the Tunnels of nothingness.

‘But once it gets attached to the character, it starts witnessing a scene through him. If the soul just wants to live the next scene from the same character’s life, it doesn’t need to replace the whole Linga Code with a new one. Even if you add a single Desire or a single Karma to the existing Linga Code, you will get a new unique Linga Code which would serve as a ticket for the next scene.

‘When a soul is already attached to a character, it doesn’t replace its whole Linga Code to move to the next scene. It just modifies the existing Linga Code by adding a single Desire or Karma.

‘And that single Desire or Karma doesn’t come from the soul’s free choice. It just mimics the desires and Karma of the character.’

‘Why, Deva? ... How? What does it mean to mimic a desire or a Karma?’

wondered the Mahtang seekers.

‘Take the current scene of Dhanushka’s life,’ said Lord Hanuman gesturing towards Dhanushka. ‘What’s his character desiring right now?’

Dhanushka gave a start and uttered, ‘I desire nothing but to listen to you, Deva, nothing else. I swear, I desire no water.’

‘Indeed,’ said Lord Hanuman, smiling. ‘In the current scene, his character has two desires: one, he wants to suppress the thirst. Second, he desires to connect with me better so that he can receive the knowledge I am imparting.

‘Please note, these two are actually the desires of his character, not his soul. As far as his soul is concerned, it could simply refuse to put on these desires and detach from the character altogether. But that’s not happening.

‘His soul is not exercising its free will even to choose one of these two desires. That choice is also being made by his character.

‘This is called mimicking or copying: his soul is merely mimicking his character’s desires. His soul is getting the Linga Code for next scene by adding the character’s desire to it.

‘That means that his soul’s next scene is being determined by his character.

‘Please note, the character is not actually supplying or transferring his desire to the soul. No such channel exists between the soul and the character. The former is present in the Shunya Tunnel while the latter in the Space-Time.

‘The soul’s desires exist in the form of the soft data available in the Shunya Tunnels; the character’s desires exist in the form of thoughts, which are intangible objects available in the Space-Time.

‘As soon as the character picks up a desire in the form of a thought, the soul picks up soft data of that desire from the Shunya Tunnel. That’s why it’s called “mimicking” a desire, not “receiving” it.

‘The same thing happens with Karma also. As soon as the character does something, the soul picks up soft data of that action available in the Shunya Tunnel. That’s why it’s called “mimicking” a Karma, not “receiving” a Karma.

‘To understand it better, you may consider the analogy of a student copying another student in an examination. Your illusioned soul copies the character it’s attached to. What your character writes with the ink of thoughts and actions, your soul copies the same with the ink of Desires and Karma.’

‘Understood, Deva,’ said Urmi more to herself than His Guru, ‘When a soul is free, it can source Karma-Desires in bulk freely from the Shunya Tunnels; it can freely get the Linga Code required to access a particular scene. But when it already has access to a scene, once it is already attached to a character, it’s a completely different story: It simply mimics the character to put on a desire or a Karma. If the character desires to drink water, it picks up the same Desire from the Shunya Tunnel. How foolish! It has the power to choose any Desire from the unlimited stock of Desires available in the Shunya Tunnels, but it picks up a petty Desire such as drinking water or a painful Desire such as suppressing a thirst. This tendency to mimic is the root cause of all sufferings that a soul goes through.’

‘I am glad you all understood this secret. To make this point clearer, let me give you a couple of more analogies,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘A word of caution before that: Don’t overstretch any analogy. We are discussing things that transcend Space and Time. No analogy can perfectly visualise them. Therefore, stick to the technical details and use the analogies only to enrich those details. The first analogy is of the lost sheep. I’m sure you’ve heard the fable of the lost sheep ...’

‘Yes, Deva,’ Dhanushka stood up at once and began telling the tale with great interest, ‘a curious tourist once visited a beautiful but mysterious valley. He was totally new to the place. He didn’t know where to begin exploring it. He saw a local shepherd who was searching for his lost sheep. The tourist offered to join him in his search. This way, he could fulfil his desire of exploring the valley.’

‘The two unlikely companions kept wandering around the valley, one in search of his sheep and the other simply to explore the fascinating place. When the evening fell, the shepherd gave up all hopes of finding his sheep and began walking back to his home. The tourist accompanied him and stayed at his home at night.’

‘Next day, the shepherd set out to graze his herd and to do other routine works. The tourist desired to accompany him because he was now addicted to everything the valley offered him: the visuals, the hardships, the sweat, the relief, and so on. The shepherd allowed him on the condition that he helped him in taking care of his sheep.’

‘The tourist didn’t know how to do a shepherd’s work. So he simply started copying him. This went on for several days. Ultimately, he forgot that he was a tourist, not a shepherd. He forgot his true identity. The legend says that he wanders in the valley to this day, grazing sheep that are not his own. He suffers

wanders in the valley to this day, grazing sheep that are not his own. He suffers all the hardships of a shepherd's life. He doesn't have to do it. He could leave everything and become a tourist once again and move to explore some other place. Nothing is stopping him except his ignorance. If luck favours him, he might meet a Guru and get enlightened about his true identity. Else, he will keep roaming the valley till eternity.'

'Good, Dhanushka,' remarked the immortal Guru. 'In this fable, the tourist is the soul; the shepherd is the character. To explore the scenes happening in the universe, a soul has to get attached to a character. As long as it's enjoying the scenes, it's alright to go along with the character. As soon as unfavourable and miserable scenes start rolling, it should abandon the character at once. Abandoning the character doesn't mean his death. He was here before your soul came; he will be here even after your soul has gone. In fact, your soul can come back later to get attached to him again when good scenes start rolling in his life – now the second analogy. I assume you're familiar with the lodestone?'

'Yes, Deva,' replied Urva. 'It's a black stone that attracts iron pieces.'

Lord Hanuman traced a circle in the air with a smooth movement of His fisted hand. When He opened His fist, three things were sitting in His large palm: a magnetic stone, a piece of iron, and a thick leaf of a banyan tree. Expressions on His face suddenly became childlike as He placed the magnet upon the leaf and magnetically attached the iron piece below it. The magnetic force was working between them despite the barrier placed in the form of the leaf. When He moved the magnet upon the leaf, the iron piece mimicked the movement underneath.

'This lodestone has magnetic power,' spoke the immortal Lord Hanuman. 'It can get attached to any iron piece it likes. In this analogy, the lodestone is a soul, and the iron piece is a character. The soul doesn't have to come *inside* the Time-Space to get attached to a character. It can do so from the Shunya Tunnels.

'Once the lodestone gets attached to an iron piece, an interesting thing happens: the latter also assumes the power to move the former even though it has no magnetic power of its own. When the iron piece moves, the lodestone mimics the motion. Similarly, even though all the power of free will lies with the soul, once it gets attached to a character, it stops exercising that power. It starts mimicking the desires of the character. That means the character gets the power to decide the soul's journey.

'The job of a Guru is to remind the soul of its power of free will.

'Don't take away wrong conclusions from this analogy: the soul doesn't

“control” the character like the lodestone controls the iron piece. The soul just “traces” and “witnesses” the character’s journey. It doesn’t alter or script it in any way. Unlike the lodestone and the iron piece which are bound together due to magnetic force, the soul and the character are not bound by anything except the illusion. The soul mimics the character out of pure illusion and ignorance. If you stick to these technical details, this analogy is great to visualise the illusionary connection between the soul and the character.

‘Another analogy is that of the public transport vehicle. I assume you know what public transport is?’

‘Yes, Deva,’ said Urmi. ‘Large bullock carts owned by the king running from one place to another at fixed time schedule ... Citizens can pay a small fare to get a ride. The route of a public transport vehicle is fixed. The passenger has no control over the vehicle ... In this analogy, the passenger is the soul; the vehicle is the character. Am I correct, Deva?’

‘Correct,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘The driver of such a vehicle has his own desires to follow, his own route to cover. He has to stop at a thousand places and take a million detours before reaching a destination that you desire to reach. You don’t have to go with him. You’re a soul. You can just hop off the vehicle of character and fly directly to your destination through the Shunya Tunnels.’

‘Deva, you spoke about detours in the journey of a character,’ said Urva. ‘I’ve always wondered why the path of a character is always zigzag and full of twists and turns? Why can’t it be a simple straight line? For instance, if a character decides to become a king, he has to go through so many distractions and obstacles. Chances of success are perhaps one in a billion. Most people become kings by chance, and those who set out to become kings end up becoming something else. Why does everything have to be so complicated in this miserable world?’

Lord Hanuman replied, ‘No character wants to become a king or a queen or rich or poor. If you observe deeply, all characters want to become just one thing: “complete”. They feel incomplete all the time. They want to fill that incompleteness.

‘An ordinary citizen believes that kings have everything. He believes that becoming a king would make him complete. A king believes that when he has won all the kingdoms in the world, he will become complete. A winner of all the kingdoms thinks that when he has brought the peace in his empire, he will feel complete.

‘Unmarried characters believe that marriage would make them complete.

Married characters believe that birthing children would make them complete. Parents think that they would feel complete once they've secured their children's future.

'A jobless person sees completeness waiting for him in the form of a job while an employed person sees it in a higher post. A hungry person believes that food would make him complete, and a well-fed person has his own colourful ideas as to what would make him or her complete. A destitute might see completeness in getting a few gold coins while a wealthy person might indulge in charity or spirituality to feel complete, and unsuccessfully so.

'At this moment, your idea of completeness might lie in becoming a king, but the next moment you might crave for some entertainment to feel complete. A couple of hours later, you might feel the need of taking a bath to feel complete. Then a random thought of good food might send you searching for ingredients in the jungle. When you've fed yourself well, some other situation might arise that would threaten your idea of completeness and force you to change your plans. Do you now get a picture as to why a character's path is always zig-zag?'

'Absolutely, Deva,' said Urva. 'I deduce that more a character is focussed on a single goal, straighter his or her path would be. Doing so is impossible when it comes to long term goals. The only constant and unchanging goal of any character is to feel complete. The definition of completeness keeps changing, so do goals. It begs the question, what can truly make a character feel complete?'

'A character can't become complete because it is incomplete by definition,' stated Lord Hanuman. 'A character is nothing but a fraction, a portion, a slice of the whole Space-Time.

'The complete and the whole structure of Space-Time can be imagined as a pure white ball having no feelings, no movements, no activities. The soul that watches the ball of Space-Time as a whole is known as the absolute soul or the Paramatma. It's attached to the entire ball of Space-Time and hence feels nothing, experiences nothing. To be able to feel something, it has to get attached to a small portion, a random fraction of the whole. That random fraction is known as a character. All the feelings and movements arise due to the incompleteness of the character, due to its attempts to become the whole.

'Imagine an infinitely large thread. Imagine that it has been woven in complicated patterns to make an infinitely large white sheet. If you saw the sheet as a whole, it would look plain. If you went closer and looked at a small portion

of the sheet, you would see a complicated pattern. You would see the thread emerging in and out of that portion several times. You wouldn't be able to keep your eyes set on the fixed boundary of that portion. Your eyes would slide along the incomplete pattern to look for the "complete" and "whole".

'When a soul wants to get attached to a character that has just become a king, it just wants to experience how it feels to be in his position. On the other hand, when a character wants to become a king, he is under the belief that when he became a king, he would become complete. Do you see the difference?

'A soul knows that a character can't become complete because characters are incomplete by definition. In fact, the soul itself chooses an incomplete portion of the Space-Time to experience the feelings and movements that the whole lacks altogether – why are you crying, Urva?'

'I don't know, Deva,' said Urva in a constricted voice as tears streamed down his cheeks. 'And ... and ... I don't want to know. The whole and the fraction! The complete and the incomplete! ... I've been studying the patterns around me all my life ... I've been trying to understand why all this is so complicated ... It's not! It's so simple. You've explained it so beautifully, Deva.'

'I am so grateful to you ... and to that poor soul, Anita, whose sufferings have provided the basis of these talks. I now understand why she's suffering. I wish she could listen to these talks ... I am also grateful to the shiny toys invented by mainstream human beings. Because of them, I could understand the concept of Linga Code so clearly. I wish all your devotees from the mainstream society could access these talks. Why just the devotees, let all souls find a way to access these immortal words ...'

'Save your tears, Urva,' said Lord Hanuman. 'We must throw more light on the phenomenon of choosing a character. Is a character something portioned out of the ball of Space-Time like a slice is cut out of an apple?'

'No, Deva,' replied Urva at once. 'Nothing is cut out from the whole. The whole is whole.'

Some of the young Mahtangs looked uncertain. Kalandaka spoke for them, 'If nothing is cut out, how does a character come into existence?'

Lord Hanuman replied, 'Use the analogy of the infinite sheet to visualise it. To enjoy the patterns woven into an infinite sheet, you don't have to cut a piece out of it. You can simply come close to it and choose to see a small, limited area. Similarly, a soul can choose to get attached to a portion of the white ball of Space-Time and experience the emotions resulting from the incompleteness ...'



incompleteness ... Currently, your soul has chosen a portion that is known as a human. Who can tell me the limitations that define a human being?’

‘Deva, human beings can hear only a very –’ Urmi and Urva spoke at once so that their voices entwined in perfect harmony. They looked at each other, smiled, and then Urmi spoke for both of them, ‘Deva, we human beings can hear only a minuscule portion of sound frequencies that are available out there. For example, we can’t hear the sounds that elephants make to talk to each other. Their frequency of sounds is too low for our ears to detect. We also can’t hear high pitched sounds like those made by bats. I think even cats can hear more sounds than us.’

‘Think beyond bats, cats and elephants, Urmi,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘You can’t even imagine how many sounds are floating around you right now. Your ear can pick up only a small range of sounds. What would happen if I expanded the range of your hearing capabilities?’

‘I would go crazy, Deva,’ said Urva before Urmi could speak. ‘I would start hearing creepy whispers and terrifying screeches. I would definitely go crazy.’

‘A minimal expansion would make you lose your mental balance, yes,’ agreed Lord Hanuman. ‘A radical expansion, however, would make you deaf. It’s like trying to expand a water jug made of clay. Any attempt to expand it would just shatter it and make it lose its identity. Your ears are like jugs that scoop up a little sound from the ocean of sounds surrounding you. There’s a limit on how much sound you can fill in them per second. That limit makes you a human being. Same goes for the range of your vision. What would happen if I expanded it?’

‘Again, Deva, I would go crazy,’ replied Urva. ‘I would start seeing strange figures around me. Ghosts ... shadows ... spirits ... I would probably start seeing the air also ... and other things that are normally invisible. And of course, I would go blind if the range of my ocular powers was expanded radically. Too much light would start entering my eyes per second.’

‘Same goes for your capabilities of smell and taste,’ said the immortal Guru. ‘You can’t imagine how many smells are just floating around you. Thankfully, your nose has a limit as to what range of smells it can detect. Similarly, there are tiny particles of matter filled in your mouth. Thankfully, your tongue can’t detect what they taste like. Else you would go restless and ultimately ageusic.’

‘You didn’t mention the ability to touch, Deva,’ Urva pointed out.

‘Same goes for the range of things that you can feel with touch,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Just as there are very low and very high sounds that your ears can’t detect, there are very soft and very hard objects that lie beyond the range of your ability to touch. Extremely solid particles, which are tinier than atoms, are passing through you right now. If you could feel them, they would feel like a million tiny arrows piercing every inch of your skin. And then there are extremely gaseous objects around you. You would start colliding with them if I slightly increased the range of your ability to sense things by touch. The experience would certainly make you lose your mental balance. And a radical increase would kill your sense of touch altogether.’

‘Likewise, each of your ability has an optimal range between minimum and maximum. That incompleteness is what makes you a character, a human. You’re but a small portion chosen out of the infinite ball of Space-Time ...’

‘Our food intake also has an optimal range, Deva,’ said Kalandaka excitedly. ‘There is an upper limit of food intake beyond which our body starts malfunctioning. And there is a lower limit below which our body can’t sustain. Of course, an elephant’s range of food intake is different from that of an ant –’

‘Speaking of food,’ said Urmi, ‘our empathy too has an optimal range. We empathise with other animals. Therefore, we don’t kill and eat them. But we don’t empathise with them so much that we stop consuming honey and milk produced by them.’

Lord Hanuman corrected Urmi, ‘You’ve defined Mahtang range of empathy. There are human beings who kill animals and eat them. And there are human beings who empathise with animals so much that they don’t even consume milk and honey. What would happen if this range of human empathy is altered? If empathy is lowered further, you might turn into a cannibal. If it’s increased further, you might turn into a monk voluntarily fasting to death, a monk that considers it a sin to even consume air because it contains microorganisms.’

‘Our ability to walk too has a range, Deva. We have a minimum and maximum speed. How slow one can go? ... And how fast? There is certainly a limit,’ argued Urmi.

‘Human beings can build vehicles to overcome limits,’ interjected Kalandaka.

Urva countered, ‘Even machines built by humans have limits ... Even our imaginations and assumptions have a limit. We might imagine a vehicle that travels with an infinite speed. That would mean such a vehicle is not bound by

time. That can't be true. Everything is bound by time because everything is inside the structure of Time and Space. Only the "nothing" is free from time.'

'Why can't things be free from Time? Just freeze the Time here and now. Things will still exist when the "Time" is no longer there, won't they? Everything will stop moving, yes. But everything will still exist, right?' wondered Kalandaka.

'What is the definition of a movement? Our ability to detect movements around us also has a range,' said Urmi. 'We can't detect objects that move extremely fast and those that move extremely slow. Our eyes can't see atoms or molecules and the movements within them. So, what do you mean everything will stop moving? Even if large objects stopped moving around us, there would still be movement inside their atoms and molecules. And we can't even imagine objects that are even smaller than atoms. Human beings can't build instruments to see things that are so small or large that we can't even imagine them.'

Urva supported his fiancée's argument, 'And what do we even mean by stopping Time? A unit of Time can be indefinitely small. By stopping Time, do we mean slowing it so much that a second becomes a year, and a day becomes several millennia? In that scenario, there would still be movement, albeit so slow that we wouldn't be able to detect it.'

'In such a scenario, we wouldn't see the objects as we know them. We would see something else, or maybe just a blur,' said Urmi expecting a nod of agreement from Urva. But he responded with a blank expression. Urmi explained her statement, 'Because it takes *time* for rays of light to reach our eyes. And then the brain takes *time* to process the visual data. By slowing time, you're slowing this process. If the process is altered, how can the final image projected on our brains remain the same? The objects would appear differently in such a scenario.'

'And objects would completely disappear if there were no Time,' said Urva brightly. 'The rays would never reach our eyes in the absence of time. The brain would never complete its process. That means we wouldn't see anything. Same goes for our other abilities of hearing, tasting, and so on. We wouldn't be able to feel objects in any way. We would see a blank, flat screen ... we would see the fluid of Space as a whole. That means –'

'Even though all objects are out there in the "Space", we can't see them without elapsing time,' Urmi attempted to complete Urva's sentence.

'Exactly,' said Urva. 'Even to see a stationary object, time is needed. Without time, I am blind, deaf, dumb, and devoid of senses: I see nothing, I hear

without time, I am blind, deaf, dumb, and devoid of senses, I see nothing, I hear nothing, I experience nothing. Without the phenomenon of time, I stare at a flat, blank white mass that is Space.'

'Yes,' Lord Hanuman graced the conversation at last. 'Without Time, Space is unlimited. The strings of Time cut through Space and create portions which are known as characters. A soul has to choose a portion to experience the wonders of the Space. How to choose? Simple. Start sliding upon the strings of Time which run through entire Space like a cobweb. To choose a portion called "human being", a soul has to slide upon seven strings of Time.'

'In other words, a human being is a portion of Space existing in a seven-dimensional mould of Time. This portion, like other portions, strives to become whole, not realising that it's incomplete by definition. This tendency creates varied emotions. A soul can experience these emotions by simply getting attached to this portion.'

'Of course, all seven-dimensional portions are not the same. Each one is unique and has a unique history full of its attempts to become whole. That history data is called the Linga Code. To get attached to a particular portion or character, a soul has to put on the Linga Code of that character. That is not much of a problem. As soon as a soul touches the strings of Time, it automatically gets the Linga Code of the character enclosed therein.'

'I am thirsty, Deva,' said Dhanushka inconsequentially. 'What should I do? If I drank water, I would be doing my body's bidding. When I am suppressing my thirst, I am still doing my mind's bidding. In both cases, my character chooses the next scene of my soul. How can my soul independently choose its next scene without getting influenced by the character? How can I distance and dissociate and detach from my character?'

'It's easy to dissociate from the body, isn't it?' asked Lord Hanuman.

'Yes, Deva. I'm pretty much dissociated from my body right now,' said Dhanushka. 'I am watching my body craving for water. But dissociation from the body is followed by a strong association with my mind. I can't tell you how active my mind is right now while it is struggling to suppress my body's thirst. Thoughts are zooming like mad honeybees ...'

Lord Hanuman said, 'Your body is but Space portioned by Time. It is incomplete, striving to become complete. How? It detects the matter that is within reach of its senses. Right now, your body is seeing coconuts and fruits kept in this basket. It's smelling the smells produced by the fire ritual. It's listening to my voice. It's feeling the touch of the ground beneath you. Out of all

the physical things that are within reach of its senses, it feels that the coconut water can somehow “complete” it. At any point in time, your body has some objects in its sensory range that promise to complete it. Every moment, your body either wants to add some matter to itself or wants to discard some matter from itself. For what? Just to become a perfect and complete body.’

‘A body can’t become complete, Deva,’ said Urva. ‘It’s in constant need of consuming or discarding something. If it drinks water now, it will become thirsty again after a couple of hours. And the breathing cycle is even shorter than that. This moment I am taking in the fresh air, the next moment I’m discarding waste air. Hair, nails and dead skin are coming out of the body every moment to be ultimately removed from it. Rays of light are being absorbed by the skin constantly. There is no such thing as a “complete” body. Even ignorant human beings understand that.’

‘Who makes you understand that?’ asked Lord Hanuman and went on to answer Himself. ‘Your mind. Your mind knows how the body works. It knows that your body’s attempts to become “complete” are foolish. That is why it’s easy for you, with the help of your mind, to disassociate from your body. When your body is thirsty, you can easily be like, “O body, you’re thirsty, not me.” Then you can watch your body from a dissociated point of view as it quenches its thirst ...

‘Your mind exposes the foolish attempts of your body to become perfect and complete, but who will expose the mind? Your mind understands how the body works, but who will understand how the mind works? Your mind helps you dissociate from the body, who will help you to detach from the mind?’

‘What is mind, actually?’ wondered Urmi.

‘The head. The brain. That’s what mind is, isn’t it?’ guessed Kalandaka.

‘The brain is not the mind,’ stated Lord Hanuman. ‘The brain is just a communication bridge between your body and mind. The mind is invisible and intangible. Your senses can’t detect the existence of mind. Let me show you how the mighty mind would look if it were visible – Urva, please stand up and step inside the sacred fire.’

All the Mahtangs gasped, but Urva didn’t so much as flinch at the thought of entering into the fire. There was nothing to fear when the immortal Guru was there to protect him. He stood up at once, fixed his gaze at the source of his fearlessness, and walked gracefully into the red fire, which was emitting white smoke at the centre of the holy hemisphere.

He felt icy flakes beneath his feet, not the burning twigs. The freezing

THE ICE KEY HADEN BENEATH HIS FEET, NOT THE BURNING TWIGS. THE FREEZING sensation travelled to his head and numbed it. He couldn't feel anything above his neck anymore.

His fellow Mahtangs saw, with their mouth agape and breath forgotten, that his head opened like a blooming tulip flower, and out came four brain muscles which stretched in four directions like thin tree roots. At the same instant, four bodies of shimmering intangible matter, having the shape and size of Urva's physical body, appeared in four directions. The outstretched brain muscles acted like four bridges connecting Urva's physical body to his four mental bodies.

# Chapter 10

## The Invisible Four

When Urva had returned to his ordinary self, Lord Hanuman explained the visual of four mental bodies, ‘Human mind is actually a composite of four separate bodies, which are made up of intangible matter. Like your physical body inhales and exhales air, your mental bodies inhale and exhale thoughts. The illusionary strength of your mental bodies lies in the fact that they are invisible and unknown. When they do something, you, the soul, feel that you’re doing it. When they desire something, you mimic those desires as though they are your own. This illusion is good if you just want to experience the scenes in the most intimate way possible. However, when bad and miserable scenes start rolling, and you want to get out of them, the same illusion becomes a problem. To break this illusion, the invisible four must become visible so that when they make a desire, the soul doesn’t mimic it.’

‘Deva, when you’ve trained us fully, would we be able to see our mental bodies as clearly as we see our physical bodies now?’ asked Urmi.

‘When you’re watching your physical body, who is the watcher?’ asked Lord Hanuman.

‘My mind, Deva,’ replied Urmi.

‘And when you’re watching your mind and observing your thoughts, who is the watcher?’

‘Soul?’ said Urmi uncertainly.

Lord Hanuman said, ‘Technically speaking, a soul can’t watch anything by itself. A soul is basically “nothing”. It watches everything through the character, i.e. through the body and mind ... So, the mind can watch the body, but who can watch the mind?’

‘Mind watches itself?’ said Urmi tentatively.

‘Yes, you can make your mental bodies, the invisible four, expose each other just like they jointly expose your physical body,’ said Lord Hanuman.

‘Mind is mighty, but it works in a programmed and predictable manner.

‘My words are going to program your four mental bodies in such a way that they start exposing each other and start realizing their desires. Once that

that they start exposing each other and start owning up their desires. Once that happens, your soul will be like, “O my physical and mental bodies! As you agree, the desire you just expressed is yours, not mine. I am not going to mimic this desire. I am not going to let you decide my next scene. You deal with your desire while I go and live the scene that I want to live through some other character.””

‘Deva,’ began Dhanushka whose thirst had almost died now, ‘my body desires to drink water. On the other hand, my mind desires to suppress my thirst. The body and mind are part of the same character. Then why do they have conflicting desires? You told that a character is incomplete by definition and wants to become complete. So physical and mental bodies of the character should all work in harmony and try to complete it, shouldn’t they? They should work as a team.’

‘It’s a clueless team with an unachievable goal,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘None of them know what the “complete” or “whole” is. They can’t know. A portion can never know the whole. So, they have different approaches as to what might complete the character. The physical body and four mental bodies are like five clueless people, who are bound to each other by unbreakable chains, searching for a mysterious treasure in unknown territory. They all have different ideas and guesses as to where the treasure could be. Even though their goal is the same, their approaches are different. That is why they create different desires. At each step, the most powerful desire wins.’

‘Deva, I know that my physical body is desiring for water right now. Out of the four mental bodies, which body is desiring to suppress the thirst?’ enquired Dhanushka.

‘You will know soon enough,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘These are the names of the four mental bodies: the intelligence body, the intellect body, the Samskara body, and the Chitta body. I am calling them “bodies” to emphasise that they are very much like your physical body except that they’re invisible and intangible. Once that’s clear to you, you may drop the word “body” and simply call them intelligence, intellect, Samskara and Chitta. Also, when I use the word “body” alone, it means the physical body.’

‘The physical body, as you know, is made up of tangible matter and interacts with the tangible matter that falls within the range of its senses. When you see or smell mangoes and want to eat them, that’s your body’s desire. It believes that the “complete” and “whole” is a perfect and immortal body that never gets hungry, thirsty, old, or sick. It classifies matter in two categories: the matter that helps it get better and nearer to perfection and hence must be



consumed, and the matter that makes it worse and takes it farther from perfection and thus must be discarded. The whole mechanism of your body is based on consuming the former category of matter and disposing of the latter.'

'My physical body craves for buckets full of delicious honey, Deva,' said Urva, grinning. 'Does it really believe that doing so will take it nearer to immortality? It does the opposite. It takes it nearer to death.'

'Well,' said Urmi, 'I guess mental bodies know that. Hence, they overpower your body's natural desires and superimpose their desires on it.'

'Does that mean if I didn't have a mind, my physical body would self-destruct within a day? It would die like an ant in a pool of honey?' wondered Urva.

'No, not so fast,' said Lord Hanuman. 'How much honey can you eat in one go? The body doesn't want to harm itself. Once it has consumed enough honey, it would turn its hope of perfection towards something else, maybe something salty. Don't forget, your physical body has a mechanism to discard the consumed matter that doesn't suit it, including the harmful matter. Besides, how much honey could you procure without the help of your mental bodies? Not much; your ability to smell the honey has a limit. Therefore, it's wrong to speculate that your physical body would die within a day if it didn't have the support of mental bodies. Most of the time, desires created by your mental bodies wreak havoc on your physical body. Look at the trees. They have an almost non-existent mind, but they live very long, longer than human beings.'

'Maybe my desire to eat mounds of honey is not entirely my body's desire, Deva?' guessed Urva.

'Yes, a physical body free from other influences doesn't desire anything self-destructive,' said Lord Hanuman. 'Your physical body lives in the present and categorises things within its reach in two categories: things that it should consume or retain, and the things that it should discard or reject. This categorisation is based on its desire to become the "whole". Of course, it doesn't know what the whole is. All its efforts to become the whole are futile. That is not your soul's concern, though. Your soul is only interested in the emotions that result from these efforts.'

'Ah! That explains it,' exclaimed Urva looking at his fiancée Urmi.

'Explains what?' Urmi raised her eyebrows.

'Nothing,' said Urva and returned His gaze to Lord Hanuman. But the immortal Guru had closed His eyes to allow His disciples a thoughtful pause, to

help them fully absorb the knowledge of the physical body. Urmi and Urva took full advantage of this pause and had a silent conversation that went something like this:

‘It explains it, doesn’t it?’

‘I don’t get it. Explain what?’

‘The desire to procreate. The desire to give birth to children.’

‘I don’t know what you mean.’

‘You know very well, Urmi. You’re the one who keeps dreaming about marriage.’

‘Well, we have to procreate to produce next generation of Mahtangs. There’s nothing physical about it.’

‘Maybe it’s a collective desire of our physical body and mental bodies. The physical body is definitely involved. You can’t deny that. Why do we feel attracted to each other? Because my physical body sees the possibility of immortality in becoming one with you, and so does your body. I am attracted towards your seed, and you towards mine.’

‘Who told you that I am attracted towards you? The gods have chosen us to lead our tribe and procreate if required. Gods will decide whether they want us to procreate or not,’ communicated Urmi with glowering expressions on her face.

‘Ok, forget about us. Forget about human beings too. Why do any male and female get attracted to each other? If it were a desire triggered by higher faculties of mind, animals wouldn’t be procreating. It’s a physical desire, I’m telling you.’

‘Yes, I can agree with that,’ nodded Urmi.

‘Well, here’s my understanding: First physical bodies try to grow and become immortal by themselves. When they stop growing and start decaying, they look for alternative means to become immortal. That stage is called puberty. That’s when my body started looking for seeds to create almost identical bodies that would live long after I’ve died. I’ve been trying to understand this attraction all these years. Now that I’ve understood it, I feel less attracted.’

‘You speak for yourself, Urva. Don’t speak on my behalf. I’ve never been attracted in the first place.’

‘Alright, alright. Let’s speak for other males and females then,’ sighed Urva. ‘Having their own children is not enough, they want to live long enough to

Urva. Having their own children is not enough, they want to live long enough to see their children procreate too and give them grandchildren, just to be sure that a part of them will survive long after they've gone –'

'A physical body can't think about the future,' a mysterious voice rang in Urva's head.

The same voice had whispered in Urmi's head too. With a jubilant expression on her face, she silently communicated, 'See ... Not everything is physical, Urva.'

'The attraction, the desire to reach the seed, is purely physical. I agree that the mind thinks about the future, not the body. In that case, the mind has its own reasons to get attracted to you. But physical attraction is different... The body wants to reach the seed that can make it immortal. It's pure and simple .... No calculations about the future are required for that.'

'A desire can be endorsed by more than one of your five bodies,' said Lord Hanuman when He opened His eyes. Since this statement seemed in response to Urva and Urmi's silent conversation, they gave a start. Lord Hanuman continued, 'In other words, more than one of your bodies can be on the same page to pursue a desire, for different reasons, of course. You will be able to understand it better once you know about all the –'

'Intelligence body,' interrupted Urva nervously. 'Tell us about the intelligence body, Deva ... I'm so excited. It feels like I have learned more in the last two hours than in the last two decades of my life. Intelligence body – how does it try to complete a character?'

'By trying to mend the past and secure the future,' said Lord Hanuman. 'Your intelligence body imagines the future and memorises the past. When you desire to do something out of guilt or to redeem mistakes of the past, you can be sure that it's your intelligence body's desire. When you desire to do something to secure your future or do something that will give you results in the future, you can be sure that it's your intelligence body's desire. So, your intelligence body's idea of the "whole" and "complete" is a present that has a perfect past and perfect future attached to it. Of course, that "complete" present never comes.'

'What about the intellect body, Deva?' asked Urva impatiently.

'Your intellect body believes that an individual can't be the whole and complete,' replied the immortal Guru. 'It believes that if there is something that is "complete", it is made up of many characters, each positioned at an ideal distance from the main character. So, to make your character whole, your intellect tries and builds new relationships with other characters and tries to

perfect the existing relationships. It marks other characters as a friend or a foe, just like your physical body marks things as consumable and non-consumable. It desires to push some characters away and bring others closer to your character. If distance can't be altered, it desires to change their behaviour by all means possible. How does it try to do all this? By sharing thoughts, things and time with other characters.'

'I desire to bring some changes in my tribe, Deva,' said Urva authoritatively and drew surprising looks from his tribesman, especially the current chieftain Baba. 'I will start acting on this desire when I become the chieftain. Is it my soul's desire, or am I just mimicking a desire of my intellect?'

'Family, friend circle, community, tribe, village, town, class, race, kingdom, and so on are fixed boundary lines drawn by your intellect,' replied Lord Hanuman. 'These lines give a fair idea of the distance of other characters from you. For instance, your family and friends are intellectually closer to you than people in the tribe or community. Usually, you can't push characters out of these boundaries just because they don't fit in your intellect's idea of what they should be ... For instance, you can't just get rid of a family member who doesn't fit in your intellect's idea of what a family member should be.'

'When your intellect believes that other characters are not the ideal constituents of its idea of the whole, it desires to change their conduct and behaviour. If you're in a position of authority, you make rules. If you've no such powers, you just want to yell and relay your opinions about other people as far as possible. To answer your question, Urva, your desire to bring changes in the functioning of your tribe is certainly your intellect's desire.'

No one except Urmi noticed the use of the phrase "intellectually closer" by the immortal Guru. She couldn't help requesting for elaboration, 'Deva, my family and friends are *emotionally closer* to me, not intellectually closer. This phrase gives an impression as though my loved ones are just pieces on a chessboard.'

'Emotions and feelings are the by-products of your bodies attempting to become whole. Your intellect body is not the only one that triggers emotions,' stated Lord Hanuman.

'Ah, chessboard!' Urva turned to Urmi and exclaimed. 'Just the example I was looking for to visualise the intellect's idea of the whole. Thanks, Urmi.'

Lord Hanuman closed His eyes.

'I didn't use it in a positive context,' frowned Urmi. 'Loved ones are not

pieces of chessboard available for our intellect to play with.’

‘Just think about it without prejudices and preconceived notions,’ suggested Urva. ‘Like a chessboard has squares, the intellect-board has many concentric circles such as the circle that represents life partner, the circle that represents family, the friend circle, the community circle ... The intellect believes that once all these circles are filled with ideal characters and all relationships are in harmony, the main character will feel complete and whole. All its desires to perfect the relationships come from this idea of the whole. When these desires approach towards fulfilment, we feel positive emotions, else we feel negative emotions.’ Urva’s face contorted funnily because he tried to suppress a chuckle as he said, ‘Of course, Urmi, your intellect feels that I am an ideal character to occupy the position of your life partner. So, you feel positive emotions of love and affection towards me. I understand that. But whether you like it or not, the truth is that I am just a piece on your intellect-board, and you on mine.’

‘Enjoy the little pleasure you get by shrugging off your emotions. You’re trapped in an image of a carefree person. That image makes you belittle emotions,’ counselled Urmi.

‘I’m aware of that image. But I’m not belittling emotions. You are completely missing my point here,’ said Urva.

‘Am I? I just sought to understand the phrase “intellectually closer”. It’s you who compared relationships with a chessboard,’ said Urmi calmly.

‘No, Urmi. I just used the concept of the chessboard as a reference to come up with the idea of the “intellect-board”,’ said Urva with a voice that threatened to implode at each syllable due to the pain of being misunderstood. ‘I just tried to imagine what the intellect considers to be whole and complete. Unlike the physical body and the intelligence body, the intellect body believes that individuals can’t be complete on their own. Its idea of the whole is certainly a “larger body” made up of many characters. It’s difficult to imagine a larger body. So, I came up with the imagination of an intellect-board upon which all characters of my life are placed.’

Lord Hanuman returned to the talks, ‘That’s why one should use the metaphors and analogies very carefully while understanding the mysteries of the mind and soul. Stick to the technical details. Drop the analogy as soon as it starts dragging you away from the truth ...

‘Urva, I can understand the use of the chessboard analogy by you; you can keep using it as long as you’re clear that your intellect is not playing chess,

it's trying to find ideal pieces to fill the *intellect-board* .

‘And Urmi, I can understand where you're coming from; intellect is often confused with intelligence, and that is why you thought that use of the phrase “intellectually closer” didn't do justice to the selfless nature of relationships.

‘The desires of the intellect are always selfless because its approach to make your character complete is not individualistic but collective. On the other hand, your intelligence, because of its individualistic approach to make your character whole, always makes self-centred desires.

‘Often, intelligence and intellect desire the same thing, though for different reasons. Take the example of friendship. You may desire to be friends with somebody for two reasons: One, to secure your future: your *intelligence* sees friendship as a transactional relationship in which you expect your friend to help you in future whenever the need arises. Two, you feel a selfless bond with that person: your *intellect* desires to bring that person closer in your –’

Urmi interrupted, ‘Exactly, Deva. That's what I'm talking about. Some relationships are completely selfless. In some relationships, one can even sacrifice their life for the sake of other characters ... The parent-child relationship, for instance.’

‘The desire of sacrificing your own needs for the sake of another character may sprout when your intellect values them as better pieces of the whole than yourself,’ told Lord Hanuman.

‘Deva, how does intellect determine the *value* of other characters? ... based on logic or it's purely a spontaneous feeling?’ asked Urva.

‘Purely a spontaneous feeling,’ replied Lord Hanuman. ‘When your intellect comes across a character, it values them spontaneously and unconsciously; it determines precisely where that character should be placed in its idea of the whole: closer to you or farther from you or it doesn't matter. This gives rise to the feeling of like or dislike.

‘When the intellect is questioned why it likes or dislikes a certain person, it can't explain the feeling with logic. That's when it seeks the help of intelligence; after all, the logic requires imagination and memory, which fall in the domain of the intelligence. That's the reason why people mistake intelligence for intellect. They are two different mental bodies. The intellect just feels. It can't even communicate because communication requires utilising the memory of words and planning of sentences which only the intelligence can do.’

‘And what a bad job the intelligence does in communicating or finding

the logic behind the feelings of the intellect!’ sighed Urva.

‘Awful job, indeed,’ Urmi concurred. ‘Even physical body is better at communicating than the intelligence when it comes to relationships: Tears are better than ink; the face is better than a paper to scribble emotions.’

‘The body can’t communicate,’ said Urva. ‘But it can certainly demonstrate the feelings of intellect by sharing everything it can with the other person, by doing everything it can for the other person.’ He got a follow-up thought that he kept to himself, ‘My intellect values Urmi more than anybody else in the world. It wants to take help of my physical body to express these intimate feelings. So, my desire to become one with Urmi is not purely physical. It is endorsed by my intellect too.’

‘When Prabhu Shri Ram was ruling His kingdom from Ayodhya,’ said the immortal Lord Hanuman reminiscently, ‘majority of citizens loved Him and supported His decisions. But He had His share of critics even though He was the most ideal king one could be. His ardent supporters would try to reason with the naysayers to no avail. Some supporters went to the extreme of labelling the naysayers as evil. Before it could turn into hatred between groups, Prabhu Ram requested the monks to spread awareness about the nature of intellect. The supporters finally understood that it was alright to dislike even someone of the stature of Prabhu Ram ... Even though your tribe is a group of few people, some of them dislike you, Urva. How would you deal with them?’

‘That’s alright, Deva,’ said Urva. ‘Their intellect bodies have their own idea about the whole. There is a position of tribe chieftain marked upon their intellect-board. They believe that I don’t deserve to be in that position. That’s why they dislike me. That’s completely alright. I share their belief. My intellect body also feels that my character doesn’t deserve to be in the position I am. I dislike myself, and I wonder what gods saw in me that they chose me to lead this great tribe. I am just a normal man.’

‘Well, that’s unusual,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Usually, people value themselves more than others value them. They think they deserve to be in a better position in their family and community. They work very hard to better their own position – Yes, Urmi, you have a question?’

‘Yes ... Deva,’ said Urmi, ‘if somebody dislikes me now, will they always dislike me? Is there no way to get their intellect to accept me as likeable?’

‘Share more information about you,’ suggested Lord Hanuman. ‘Try to present yourself in a better way. If they don’t like you even after you’ve fully

revealed your character to them, you can only hope that their idea of the “whole” will change and you will start to fit in that idea.

‘You must keep in mind that their intellect and intelligence are two different bodies. If their intellect dislikes you, there is no point in clashing with their intelligence. Yes, if you want to convince them that you’re useful to them, go ahead and engage with their intelligence because intelligence only cares about using people to secure future. Intellect, on the other hand, determines the selfless connection.

‘If they don’t like you even after you’ve given them a full picture of your personality, there is no point in arguing or debating; Let them live with their negative opinion about you. What intellect feels, it feels; there is no logic behind selfless connections.

‘It also includes opinions people have about their kings, queens, famous people, and even fictional characters. There is no point in arguing and trying to change their opinions. Best you can do is give information and try to present a better picture of the person they dislike.

‘Half of the human noise in this world is all about people flexing their intelligence to defend and promote choices made by their intellect. There would be so much peace if people understood the nature and tendencies of their mental bodies and respected each other’s likes and dislikes.’

‘Better to be yourself and accept that it’s not possible to get everyone to like you,’ Urva advised his fiancée.

‘That’s true,’ agreed Urmi. ‘And it’s not necessary that those who like me today will like me tomorrow. All deciding factors are continuously changing: my personality, their intellect’s idea of the whole, the extent of my personality revealed to them, my ability to communicate and to present myself the way I am, their ability to receive communication without misunderstanding it, and so on.’

‘If somebody dislikes you because they don’t know your true personality, they dislike whatever wrong image they have of you, not you,’ said Urva comfortingly.

‘Just like other bodies,’ came Lord Hanuman’s deep voice, ‘the intellect is also deluded when it comes to knowing the whole. It can never know what the whole is. Its desires to make your character whole and complete are not going to yield any results. No matter how many characters it adds in your life and how many it omits, that ideal collective “whole” it wishes to build is never going to become a reality. Therefore, your soul must disassociate from desires made by



your intellect.

‘Let me give you some more examples of desires triggered by your intellect: It desires to listen to all kinds of stories, gossips, news etc. about regular or famous people. It desires to relay opinions about other living or dead characters. It desires to make your family, community, country, planet better. It desires to take care of other human beings, dogs, cats, elephants and whatnots. It desires to not care about a certain kind of people and animals. It desires to label people as good and bad.’

The immortal Guru allowed a minute of silence in which His disciples groped through their own bags of desires and tried to identify the ones that were birthed or supported by their intellect-bodies.

Urva broke the silence, ‘Deva, I think the three bodies we’ve discussed – the physical, the intelligence, the intellect – account for all the desires my character makes. I wonder what the remaining two bodies desire.’

‘What makes you follow a daily routine?’ asked Lord Hanuman. ‘You desire to wake up every day at the same time. All of you try to eat your meals at fixed times during the day. You form habits. You like to arrange things in order. You desire cleanliness. There is too much chaos, unpredictability, and disorder in the world. You desire to bring as much consistency, predictability, and orderliness in your life. Which one of your five bodies makes you do that?’

‘Samskara body,’ guessed the young disciples.

‘Correct,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Your Samskara body too wants to complete your character, wants to make you whole and perfect. It believes that whatever the whole and complete is, it is consistent, orderly, predictable, systematic, certain, uniform and perhaps unchanging. It desires to do everything that can take you closer to its idea of the whole. It desires everything that can bring order and consistency in your life. Can you think of some examples from your desires that have a strong imprint of Samskara?’

‘Deva,’ said Urmi apologetically, ‘I can’t see things unclean and untidy. Even if my physical body were dying, my Samskara body would desire to tidy the hut and make my deathbed.’

‘I am not that extreme,’ said Urva, ‘but if I missed a bath during the day, a voice in my head – must be that of my Samskara body – would make me feel disgusted even if my physical body didn’t require cleaning.’

‘Think of some examples beyond cleaning,’ said Lord Hanuman in a disappointed voice. ‘Chaos, uncertainty, disorder etc. frighten most people. They

always prefer some simple rules, rituals and traditions over an uncertain and winding path to pursue the truth. They always find comfort in simple ideas of hell and heaven, good and bad, virtue and sin. They always seek a shell, a framework, a box within which they can spend their lives comfortably. Why? Because of Samskara body.

‘Nothing about you is constant. You’re changing every moment. Everything around you is changing. Still, you manage to build a consistent image of yourself and try to stick to that. A significant character of Mahabharata times, the mighty Bhishma, is a great example to understand the desires made by your Samskara body.

‘Bhishma was a great warrior who had built a very rigid image of himself. This image had led him to make the vow that he would always serve the crown, but he would never become a king. Unfortunately, an evil man occupied the throne that he had sworn allegiance to. Because of his desire to stick to the image, he ended up helping the evil king. His desire to adhere to a rigid moral code made him a party to some of the most immoral deeds in human history. He preferred enabling the bloodiest war of all times over breaking the image he had built of himself.

‘You all have an image you try to stick to. There are often two faces of this image: the front face which is directed towards others, and the rear face which is directed towards yourself. The former is how you want others to see you, and the latter is how you see yourself. So many of your routine desires revolve around protecting and repairing this image. You may live with a broken rear face, but you try to preserve the front face at any cost.

‘Consider the example of hapless Anita. She tries to project that everything is normal in her life. She wouldn’t beg food from neighbours or friends because she has an image to protect. The rear face of this image of normalcy is broken; she knows that things are not normal in her life.

‘If I asked you to tell about yourself aloud, you would be describing the front face of your image. If I asked you to introspect who you are, you would be reading the rear face of your image.

‘Even though each day that has passed in your life has been different, you see a consistency in your behaviour. You desire to maintain that consistency because your Samskara body believes that doing so will make your character whole and complete. Of course, this idea of the whole is faulty. Your Samskara can never know what the whole is. You, the soul, know what the whole is. You should, therefore, be able to dissociate from your character’s Samskara body

whenever you want to leave the character.'

This revelation about the nature of Samskara body renewed Dhanushka's desire to drink water. He said, 'Deva, suppressing the thirst is my Samskara body's desire. I have got an image that I am a strong-willed person who can suppress the desire to drink and eat. In the past, I've proudly done fasting for long periods. Now that I see my Samskara body's hand in it, I don't see any point in suppressing my thirst. I want to drink water now.'

'But Dhanushka,' said his friend Urva, 'drinking water, which is your physical body's desire, is no better than suppressing thirst as far as freedom of the soul is concerned. In both the scenarios, your soul is just mimicking a desire instead of making an independent choice.'

'Dhanushka, go ahead with your physical body's desire,' suggested Lord Hanuman. When Dhanushka had quenched his thirst, Lord Hanuman added, 'It's not a bad thing to go along with desires made by your five bodies. You can keep enjoying these beautiful illusions as long as you want. But you should learn how to get out of them at your will. Else, your soul is nothing but a slave at the mercy of your five bodies.'

'I am confused, Deva,' came the feeble voice of Kalandaka whose puzzled mind had apparently not given attention to Lord Hanuman's reply to Dhanushka. 'Should I stop cleaning and tidying the place where I live? Should I not follow the rules? Should I not be consistent in life? How am I supposed to resist the desires made by my Samskara body?'

'Why do you want to resist?' asked Lord Hanuman. 'When you resist desires of your one body, you end up supporting desires of one of your other four bodies. Your five bodies make a perfect enclosure with no scope of a loophole. Resisting a desire is not going to free you from this enclosure. The idea is to detach and dissociate. Let your Samskara desire cleaning, let your character do the cleaning, but you, the soul, don't have to mimic that desire.'

Once Kalandaka's confusion had cleared, Urva took the talks forward by asking, 'What does the fifth body desire, Deva?'

'The Chitta body's desires are opposite to that of your Samskara body,' said Lord Hanuman. 'Your Chitta too wants to make your character whole and complete. It believes that if there is any such thing as whole and complete, it is chaotic, random, abstract, unknowable, disorderly, unsystematic, unpredictable, and irrational. Have you ever felt a desire to break the rules, to do risky and reckless things, to consume unhealthy and harmful substances, to walk in random directions, to venture into the unknown, to do something illegal, to kill

someone, or to just kill yourself? They're your Chitta body's desires.'

Several jaws fell open in the assembly. Urva remarked, 'I've felt the mild presence of that darkness in my mind, Deva. I never knew it's in everyone.'

'Does the Chitta body always make bad desires, Deva?' asked Urmi.

'Chitta makes pathbreaking desires; they can be extremely good or profoundly bad,' told the immortal Guru. 'Have you ever desired to be a hero? Do you imagine impossible and unrealistic scenarios in which you get to save the lives of people? You must have thought about anonymously donating everything you have. You must have desired to give yourself and your loved ones unimaginable physical and psychological pleasures. You must have desired to rebel against the existing norms and traditions.'

'Yes, Deva. That's me! But I have never acted on such desires. Most I have done is daydream about all this,' confessed Urva.

'Deva,' said Urmi, 'these are all extreme desires. They occur to us rarely. Am I correct to infer that our Chitta bodies have no role to play in our regular lives?'

'It plays a vital role in your regular lives,' Lord Hanuman corrected her. 'Indeed, Chitta rarely comes in the foreground to push its own extreme desires; it remains in the background and endorses desires made by other bodies. If it weren't for Chitta, you wouldn't do so many things that you do in your daily life. It just gives that little crucial push to the desires made by other bodies, which makes all the difference. Let me give you an example.'

'Suppose you're at somebody's house and they offer you food. From the look and smell of it, your body immediately desires *not* to eat it. Then your Samskara comes to the forefront. You have an image that you can't hurt anybody's feelings, and you can't say "no" when something is asked of you. Your Samskara wants to stick to this image. So, it desires to eat the offered food. Your physical body opposes Samskara. Both are equally strong. Who wins? The one that has the backing of Chitta. Let's say your Chitta throws its weight behind Samskara; your physical body is forced to eat undesirable food. Chitta comes on the same page as Samskara just to cause chaos in your physical well-being.'

'Chitta craves for chaos and disorder. It can also decide to back your physical body to damage your Samskara image and cause chaos in your Samskara wellbeing.'

Urmi's eyes dilated, and her hand flew to her mouth. 'That's just pure evil, Deva.'

Urva shrugged. ‘No, it’s not. Without chaos and disorder, we can’t make any real progress.’

Lord Hanuman smiled and said to Urmi, ‘That’s your Samskara labelling your Chitta as evil.’ Addressing the entire assembly, He added, ‘Chitta desires what it desires with pure intentions. Like your other four bodies, it desires to bring the sense of completeness and wholeness to your character. It truly believes that the whole lies in randomness and chaos. Yes, if Chitta remained unchecked and unopposed by your other bodies, you would perish before long. But if your Chitta were fully restricted, your other four bodies would get stuck in a monotonous loop in their pursuit to find the whole. Progress happens when there is a balance between your Chitta and Samskara. New discoveries happen when Chitta is allowed to jump into the unknown but not without being tethered to Samskara.’

‘Does that also include progress on the path of freeing my soul, Deva? ... On the path of enlightenment, on the path of attaining Yogic powers?’ asked Urva.

‘As I said, to free your soul, you have to make your invisible mental bodies visible. Most of the seekers can successfully reveal the other three, but not Chitta. In fact, more they get to know about their Chitta, more they try to cover it up further,’ stated Lord Hanuman.

‘Why so, Deva?’

‘In childhood, you have heard stories about the child-eating monster that lives beyond the boundaries of your hamlet, haven’t you?’ asked Lord Hanuman.

‘Yes, Deva. We were told those stories so that we wouldn’t stray away from our hamlet,’ said Urmi. ‘Now we know that no such monster exists ... But fear of that legendary monster saved us from real dangers of the jungle.’

‘Your Chitta is like that monster except that it *does* exist and it’s not always evil,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘It remains hidden and unknown. It influences your desires regularly, but it does so from the background by simply giving a determinantal push to the desires made by your other four bodies. Your direct encounters with your Chitta are rare and unpleasant. Instead of confronting it, you run back to your other four bodies and deny its existence altogether. Like the unknown monster kept you confined to your hamlet for almost a decade of your life, fear of Chitta may keep you confined to the prison of your mind for your entire life. You must confront it and try to bring it to the fore. On the rare occasions when it comes to the fore on its own, it’s not a pleasant picture. Let

me show you a scene ...’

Mahtangs closed their eyes and saw a young man with a sunken face who was sitting in a cluttered and congested dark room. His hands were trembling as he attempted to write something on a piece of paper.

Lord Hanuman narrated, ‘This young man, who is not even 20 years old, is seriously considering suicide. Why? ... Because his Chitta has overpowered his other four bodies.

‘His intellect body, which deals with his relationship with other characters in his life, has been groomed to staunchly believe that his parents are the central figures in his life and that he would feel complete only when their desires have fulfilled.

‘He has an image of a devoted son; The only purpose of his life has been to make his parents proud. His Samskara has always desired to maintain and strengthen that image.

‘He has been preparing for an examination for the last one year. His intelligence has been working towards a day in future when he would pass the exam, his parents would be proud, and he would feel complete.

‘Today, he has failed the examination. His intelligence, intellect and Samskara have given up the guard against Chitta. Their ideas of completing the character have crumbled. They are effectively saying to Chitta, “We have failed in trying to complete the character. Now do whatever you want to do.”

‘His Chitta brings up the most radical desire to the fore: kill the physical body. It believes that if there is any such thing as the whole and the complete, it is way beyond this small figure made up of flesh and blood. His physical body desires to live, but it doesn’t have the backing of any other body; Chitta has a free run.’

‘That’s terrible, Deva,’ said Urmi. ‘Do we have to be so broken to have a direct encounter with our Chitta? Is there no easy way?’

‘Daydreaming is an easy way to know your Chitta,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Imagine that you’ve got superpowers. First of all, what superpowers would you like to have? Being invisible? Being able to plant thoughts in people’s minds? Having an infinite amount of gold? Choose one superpower and then daydream what would you like to do with it. Don’t hold back anything.

‘Now consider a situation opposite of getting superpowers. Imagine that everything has been taken away from you: You have no food, no shelter, no clothes; your past and future are a blur; you have no family, no friends, no

course, your past and future are a blur, you have no family, no friends, no relationships whatsoever; you have no image to protect, you have no respect to lose. Now daydream how you would start building yourself up from scratch? This is a situation that demands a radical and random approach. Your Chitta would be the one in charge here.

‘Surrendering yourself to these two types of daydreams for a few times will give you a fair idea of what your Chitta is. Then you can start identifying your Chitta’s effects on your routine desires.

‘You will try to run away from your revealed and exposed Chitta; you will try to take shelter in a pool of strong emotions like shame, fear, elation, and anger. If you observe those emotions, you will be able to trace them back to your four other bodies. You will realise that your Samskara is ashamed, not your soul; your intelligence is fearful, not your soul; your intellect is angry, not your soul; your physical body is elated, not your soul. You will be able to crack the fool-proof trap made up by your five bodies.’

# Chapter 11

## The Awareness Setting

After a short break, Lord Hanuman resumed His talks with a question, ‘Dear disciples, what is the difference between an ignorant soul and an aware soul?’

Urmi replied quickly, ‘Deva, an aware soul is a relatively free soul: it can withdraw from or enter into a scene at its own will. On the other hand, an ignorant soul blindly rolls from one scene to another by imitating the character it’s attached to.’

Urva replied, ‘Deva, an aware soul knows that the character’s desires are foolish because they all emanate from the root desire of becoming complete, which is never going to be fulfilled. It is aware that the character is incomplete by definition. It gets attached to a character at its own free will just to enjoy the feelings and emotions which result from a character’s attempts to become complete.’

Janakirupa replied, ‘Deva, an ignorant soul identifies itself with the mind, which is the composite of four mental bodies. On the other hand, an aware soul can separate itself from the mind.’

‘Indeed,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘When the mind feels pleasure, pain or anything else, an ignorant soul is bound to feel the same. An aware soul, on the other hand, can withdraw from feelings of the mind at its own will. The question is, how to make an ignorant soul aware?’

‘By making the mind visible, Deva,’ replied Janakirupa. ‘You just made all our souls aware by telling us the secret of the invisible four, by making them visible. Now my soul is not mistaking itself as a mind. Right at this moment, my soul is a mute spectator as it watches my character speak these words.’

A serene smile stretched upon Lord Hanuman’s face as He quietly said, ‘If your mental bodies have become visible to you, I should take your leave. There’s nothing more to be taught.’

‘No, Deva,’ said Urva at once. ‘They’re not visible yet.’

Janakirupa corrected herself, ‘They’re not as visible as my physical body,



Deva. Only their outline has become visible yet ... that too is very faint ...’

Lord Hanuman said, ‘I just gave you basic technical knowledge about your mental bodies. Now you have to start practising it. While acting on a desire, you should try to trace it back to your mental bodies. Behind every desire, one or more of your mental bodies are involved. When you start practising, you will mentally feel like a toddler in the process of learning about various bodily functions. To help you practice, I will take you to different scenes from different times, ranging from long before Ramayana period to this day. When you make your mental bodies completely visible, you will be able to change your characters without my help.’

‘That’s what I’m waiting for, Deva,’ said Urva excitedly. ‘The first thing I want to do is get into the character of a mainstream human being. I want to experience high levels of greed, ego and ignorance.’

Urmi spared Urva a contemptuous look before speaking to the immortal Guru, ‘Deva, I am apprehensive about venturing into other characters. What if my soul gets stuck in an ignorant character? I will have to repeat the long process of finding a Guru and getting the supreme knowledge to free my soul.’

Urmi’s apprehensions punctured Urva’s excitement. He said glumly, ‘Deva, that’s a valid concern. When my soul migrates to another character, all the memories and knowledge earned by my “Urva” character will stay with Urva. As soon as I enter a greedy and ignorant character, I will lose my knowledge and skill of switching characters. I will not be able to come out from that character.’

Lord Hanuman waited for a moment. When nobody else confirmed or denied this concern, He asked, ‘In the process of imparting knowledge to your character and making your mental bodies visible, what happens to the soul?’

‘Some change happens in the Linga Code of the soul, Deva,’ guessed Urmi.

‘The soul becomes aware,’ said Urva.

‘What do you mean by an aware soul?’ asked Lord Hanuman.

‘An aware soul can withdraw itself from a scene. An aware soul can distance itself from a character,’ answered Urva.

‘What is the structural difference between an aware soul and an unaware soul?’ asked Lord Hanuman.

Urmi began, ‘A soul is nothing but the Linga Code it wears, Deva. So any

difference between an aware soul and an ignorant soul has to be in the Linga Code.’

Lord Hanuman said, ‘In the core of the Linga Code of a soul, there is an arrangement of Karma and Desire that determines the awareness of a soul. That arrangement is known as “Awareness Setting”.

‘Your Linga Code determines which scene you can experience; your awareness setting determines how closely or distantly you experience it.

‘It is called a “setting” because its value varies from a minimum and maximum, say, from zero to hundred. When your soul’s awareness setting is set to zero, it has no awareness at all; it’s completely ignorant. Through these talks, I’m enabling you to –’

‘To set it to 100,’ Urva enthusiastically attempted to complete His Guru’s sentence.

‘No,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘When your awareness is 100, you can’t experience a scene at all. Awareness takes you away from experience. Imagine that your character is eating something delicious while you’re aware that you’re a soul, not the character. You will not be able to enjoy the experience of eating delicious food as much, will you? When your awareness is zero, you experience a scene in most intimate way possible.’

‘That intimate experience costs me my freedom, Deva,’ said Urmi. ‘My soul would get trapped inside the character if its awareness dropped to zero.’

‘So, awareness must be somewhere in between zero and hundred, not zero, not hundred,’ deduced Urva.

The immortal Yogi relayed what He had learned from His experiences, ‘When your awareness is more than 50, the scene feels like it’s happening on a stage and you’re a mere audience. When it goes below 50, you start identifying with the character; you start feeling that you’re the character.’

‘I think my awareness is somewhere between 10 and 20 right now, Deva. By the end of these talks, will it reach 99?’ asked Urva.

‘The goal of these talks is to enable your soul to change its awareness setting at its own will from 1 to 99,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Changing awareness setting is like moving a smooth pottery wheel. It’s dangerously easy to go from 99 to zero, from freedom to trap. I want you to master your awareness setting so that you never, not even by accident, switch to zero awareness while enjoying a scene. It’s a challenging task because zero awareness tantalisingly allows you to

enjoy a scene in the most intimate way. The knowledge I am giving you is not supposed to sit in your mind. It's not for conducting esoteric debates and feeling good about it. Not even a sentence spoken in these talks will remain with you when you change your character. Everything will be left here. Your soul's mastery over its awareness setting is the only thing that will stay with you.'

All young Mahtangs felt as though they had been robbed of something precious. What was it? Perhaps, their pride in receiving the supreme knowledge from the immortal Guru.

Dhanushka spoke for all of them, 'Decades spent waiting for your arrival, Deva ... years and years of preparing to receive this knowledge ... hundreds of hours of talks that have barely started ... was it all just for a small setting in the Linga Codes of our souls?'

'Yes. If you can master your awareness setting, you can live any scene you want to live in the universe. To migrate to a better life, you don't even need to master the full range of awareness setting. A little bit of awareness is enough for gods to help you shift to a better life. That's what is going to happen with Anita's soul shortly: I am going to help her migrate from scenes of poverty to the scenes of prosperity at first break of awareness,' said Lord Hanuman.

'But she hasn't got any knowledge, Deva ... She hasn't made her invisible mental bodies visible. How can her soul become aware suddenly?' asked Urmi.

'There are mainly two paths to make your mental bodies visible,' told Lord Hanuman. 'One is the path of knowledge, the path on which you're progressing. The other is the path of devotion on which knowingly or unknowingly many characters, including Anita, are progressing. Those who have a strong Chitta body are suggested to follow the path of knowledge while the path of devotion is suitable for those having a strong Samskara body.'

'Why so, Deva?'

'Those who are not afraid to break the norm, those who don't fear uncertainty, those who dare to venture into the unknown, those who can question the unquestionable are the right candidates for the path of knowledge. A strong Chitta makes you eligible to receive the supreme knowledge which I am imparting to you through these talks. You all are good seekers. The journey of most seekers ends even before it starts. They fail to cross the "Expert Barrier" which you have already crossed,' said the immortal Guru.

'Should we not know about the "Expert Barrier" which we have unknowingly crossed, Deva?' asked Urmi.

‘I think I know about it,’ said Urva. ‘We are experiencing this world through the instrument of our body-mind. Different instruments can show the same thing differently. We human beings, out of ego or ignorance, believe that what we see is the only reality. This belief is the biggest barrier in the path of knowledge. Because of this barrier, we examine the existence of the things around us without examining the examiner itself. This has to be crossed.’

‘But why is it called the Expert Barrier?’ wondered Urmi.

‘Perhaps because we human beings consider ourselves the knowers, the masters, the experts of everything,’ guessed Urva expecting a nod from the immortal Guru.

Lord Hanuman explained, ‘You can understand the mysteries of this universe by thoroughly studying any single thing. Let’s say you directed your curiosity towards a piece of metal. You don’t have to study anything else. Just a piece of metal, if studied thoroughly, if explored beyond all barriers, can lead you to the absolute truth. You will meet the biggest barrier in the shape of a belief that you’ve become an expert in the science of metals, that you’ve studied everything there is to study about metals. Especially for mainstream seekers, this barrier is almost impossible to break. Just imagine that you’re a mainstream seeker who has become an expert in the science of metals. What would be your next goal?’

‘To become better and better in the science of metals?’ reckoned Urva.

‘Even worse,’ said Lord Hanuman in a sad voice, ‘you would try to use your knowledge to secure your and your family’s future, to build relationships, to earn and maintain an image in the society. When you become an expert in something, your intelligence, intellect, and Samskara taste satisfaction and get tethered to the belief that completion, wholeness, and happiness lies within the Expert Barrier. If your Chitta is strong enough to overpower your other three mental bodies, you can break that barrier and start exploring philosophical, metaphysical, and even deeper aspects of your field of expertise. A strong Chitta makes you break the norms, pushes you beyond your comfort zone, shatters your beliefs of human supremacy, paves the way to know the knower, brings the observer under observation, forces your invisible mental bodies to reveal themselves.’

‘Deva, since it’s all about revealing the four mental bodies, why not study the mind from the beginning instead of wasting time in studying metals and other things?’ queried Urmi.

‘Or better still, study the soul,’ added Janakirupa.

‘A mind expert, or a soul expert, is not any nearer to the truth than, say, a metal expert,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘No matter in what domain you’ve gleaned knowledge, if your intelligence, intellect, and Samskara are feeling satisfied, you’ve not crossed the Expert Barrier. Your journey on the path of knowledge truly begins only when you’ve crossed this crucial barrier.’

‘Deva, from what I could gather from the scenes you showed us,’ said Urmi, ‘Anita hasn’t been following the path of knowledge.’

‘She has been following the path of devotion,’ told Lord Hanuman. ‘Majority of the human population is following this path rightly or wrongly, knowingly or unknowingly.’

‘Does the path of devotion also involve exposing the mental bodies, Deva, and thereby enabling the soul to master its awareness setting?’ asked Urmi.

Lord Hanuman replied, ‘On the path of devotion, devotees cut off their original mental bodies that are invisible and adopt new ready-made mental bodies that are simple and visible.’

‘Cut off mental bodies? How, Deva? How can I cut off my mental bodies?’

‘First, you have to surrender yourself to a Guru or a deity with utmost faith,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘He or she will give you a new intelligence body, a new intellect body, a new Samskara body, and a new Chitta body. Your Guru will provide you with a new approach to live life, a simple belief system. Let’s examine how.

‘Your original intelligence body is too complex. It keeps on making and modifying vibrant future goals. Your Guru replaces it with a simple intelligence body that has one simple and unchangeable future goal. For instance, the goal of securing a place in something called heaven –’

‘Heaven?’ murmured Urva.

‘One future goal that you fully believe in. It can be anything. Different Gurus give different goals,’ said Lord Hanuman. Once Urva’s doubt was clarified, Lord Hanuman continued, ‘Your original intellect categorises people in dozens of different categories such as family, friend, fellow tribesmen, fellow countrymen, close relatives, distant relatives, and so on. Your Guru replaces it with a straightforward intellect that categorises people in just two categories: people who have the same faith as yours, and those who don’t.

‘Your original Samskara has no mechanism to maintain. Your Guru

Your original Samskara has so many images to maintain. Your Guru replaces it with a simple Samskara with only one image to keep: that of a sincere devotee.

‘Your original Chitta craves chaos and disorder in so many ways. Your Guru replaces it with a simple Chitta with just one idea of chaos: Do as your Guru says without any second thought no matter how radical it may seem.

‘This way, your Guru replaces all your original mental bodies with new ones. Do you now understand why the majority of human beings are following the path of devotion?’

‘Yes, Deva,’ said Urva. ‘It simplifies everything. It reduces the complex multidimensional world into a flat black and white painting.’

‘Faith is like a thick smoke that engulfs everything so that you see what you believe, not what is out there,’ stated Lord Hanuman. ‘It’s a simple path to make your soul aware. Successfully or unsuccessfully, the majority of human beings are following this path. Your Guru can be visible or invisible, living or non-living. Even a field of art can be your Guru. For example, musicians are devotees of music. For them, music is a Guru that replaces their original complex mental bodies with simple ones.’

‘Getting new mental bodies is like getting a new character. Isn’t it, Deva? Do all devotees have two characters, one original and the other adopted?’ queried Urva.

‘Indeed,’ replied Lord Hanuman. ‘As I explained earlier, when a soul commands seven strings of Time, it gets attached to a human character. When you surrender to your Guru, your soul starts expanding its command on T-strings. The number of T-strings commanded by devotee souls is more than seven and less than or equal to 14.’

‘And the idea is to kill the original character, to cut off original mental bodies?’

‘Not necessarily,’ replied Lord Hanuman. ‘Some devotees can cut off, and others can’t. On that basis, the path of devotion splits into two: the path of “loving devotion” and the path of “disciplined devotion”.

‘Devotees on the path of loving devotion can’t block access to their original mental bodies fully. Although they sincerely try to adhere to the adopted bodies, they have their weak moments in which they fall for desires triggered by their original mental bodies. They don’t feel guilty about it because they love their deity or Guru. They believe that they are allowed to go off track once in a while. They believe that love and sincerity matter more than anything else.’

while. They believe that love and sincerity matter more than anything else.

‘But how would their souls become aware if they didn’t follow their Gurus properly ... if they didn’t fully adopt the mental bodies given by their Gurus?’ asked Urmi.

‘When a soul frequently switches between the original mental bodies and the adopted ones, it realises that it is separate from both. It realises that the soul and the mind are not the same things. It becomes aware of the freedom of switching from one character to another,’ answered the immortal Guru.

‘Deva, that means devotees who fail on the path of devotion also have a chance at becoming aware,’ observed Urmi.

‘No, you understood it wrong,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘First, you must successfully adopt the mental bodies given by your Guru. Then only the question of cutting off your original mental bodies arises. You may cut them off entirely by following the path of discipline, or you can keep accessing them sporadically by following the path of loving devotion.’

‘If you’re following the path of loving devotion, your sincerity and love must overpower any trace of guilt that may surface as you fall for desires of your original mental bodies. Being a guilty devotee is worse than being ignorant. Attempts to hide the guilt can turn you into a hypocritical and dishonest fundamentalist, someone who draws satisfaction in preaching others what he fails to practice himself.’

‘Devotees who are on the path of disciplined devotion practice everything strictly. They’re so disciplined that they completely block their original mental bodies. They strictly adhere to their adopted mental bodies. Every aspect of their lives – their plans of future, their relationships, their idea of consistency, their idea of chaos – is simple.’

‘But Deva,’ said Urva, ‘that also means that they can’t think freely. Their intelligence and intellect are squeezed to a bare minimum. Their belief system is very rigid. They are narrow-minded. How is being narrow-minded better for soul awareness than being open-minded?’

‘Narrow-minded is not the right word here, Urva. Use the word minimal-minded. One is like living in a small dirty room, the other is like living inside a tiny, natural cave,’ suggested Lord Hanuman.

‘Deva, if we locked a human being inside a tiny, natural cave for a long time, it would turn into a small dirty room,’ said Urva.

‘I understand your point,’ said the immortal Guru. ‘Yes, there is a risk on

the path of disciplined devotion: you might grow accustomed to the adopted mental bodies just the way a frog gets accustomed to a pond. After all, shifting from original mental bodies to the adopted ones is just like moving from a large prison cell to a tiny one. To make your soul aware, your Guru is supposed to wield the final blow and shatter everything he has given you.

‘A Guru first makes you enter into a tiny prison cell, and then he breaks it as soon as you successfully enter into it. Only your Guru can do it, not anyone else. Because if someone other than your Guru tried to attack your belief system, you would protect it fervently. If you’ve entered into a belief system without a Guru, you are doomed.’

‘Does Anita have a Guru, Deva? It didn’t seem so,’ said Urmi in a concerned voice.

‘Yes, she does,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Her life is her Guru. Her life has initiated her into the path of disciplined devotion. Circumstances have cut her off of her original mental bodies. To cope with challenging situations in life, she has adopted simple and minimal mental bodies.’

‘Her intelligence had so many future plans before bad times came knocking at her door. Now farthest she can think about is the next meal. Similarly, her intellect has shrunk to a bare minimum: all friends and relatives have deserted her; her husband and her child are the only relationships in her life now. And talking of Samskara, the single image she is trying to protect now is that of an ordinary middle-class person; there is nothing else consistent in her life in these turbulent times. Her Chitta now has only one radical idea of chaos: suicide.’

‘That means her invisible Guru, her life, has successfully confined her inside a tiny prison cell of simple mental bodies. To ignite a spark of awareness, and to thereby allow me to transport her soul from a life of misery to a life of prosperity, all she needs is a final strike on this prison cell. At least one of her adopted mental bodies has to be shattered. Only her Guru, her invisible Guru, can do that. I will just give a final crucial push to make this happen ... She is entering a supermarket now. Let me take you there ...’

All Mahtangs closed their eyes. A spark of curiosity made Urva reopen his eyes and ask, ‘Deva, is her soul going to migrate into any random life out of a thousand lives we discussed? Or will it migrate into that particular life in which Anita’s character has found a decoy trunk stuffed with gold?’

‘Not the one with the decoy trunk,’ said Lord Hanuman quietly. ‘And not any random life either. It will migrate into a life of its choosing. Of course, it



will choose a better life than the present one.'

A thousand miles away, a woman in mainstream society walked into a busy supermarket. She looked normal, just another anonymous addition to the mainstream crowd. She was thankful that nobody bothered to look closely at strangers in this city. She was grateful to the shiny toys that had absorbed all the attention of curious human minds. Nobody had time and empathy to see faded colour and worn-out fabric of her clothes. As long as she kept walking in the crowd normally, nobody would notice her cracked heels sticking out of her oddly deformed slippers.

The only person who was stressed about how she looked was herself. She had been trying hard to maintain the image of normalcy, the image of a middle-class housewife out for shopping on an ordinary afternoon. She wasn't aware that Lord Hanuman was about to trigger the destruction of this image for her own good.

She knew that her image was safe when the security guard of the supermarket opened the glass door for her. Her body language hadn't betrayed the fact that the beggar begging across the street perhaps had more money than she had.

The first thing she noticed in the supermarket was a poster that announced a lucrative offer: Get one kilogram of either wheat flour or sugar absolutely free on a purchase worth Rupees 500. Sugar was a luxury for her. She decided to get wheat flour through this offer.

She didn't take much time to pick up things she wanted to purchase. She was clear as to what she needed. She didn't have the luxury of exploring various shelves. At last, when she had picked up items worth around Rupees 450, she reached the shelf where many types of pulses were stored.

Her clarity faltered at this shelf. She was confused because she had to bring her purchase to a total of Rupees 500, but not overshoot it more than ten rupees. If she picked one type of pulse, she would fall short of the target of Rupees 500. If she chose another one, she would exceed it beyond her pitiful budget.

She was busy checking prices on packets of all types of pulses when she sensed the presence of someone at the adjacent shelf. She froze. She didn't dare move her neck to look at her shopping neighbour. Her image of a normal middle-class housewife felt threatened. What would anybody think if they saw her shuffling so many packets to check prices? She prayed and hoped that the person next to her would go away.

person next to her would go away.

Mahtangs were remotely watching this scene, perhaps through the eyes of a spider or a fly present in the supermarket. They saw that there was nobody near her. She was imagining. It was all in her head: the tension, the stress, the embarrassment, the inferiority complex, the horrible mixture of emotions concocting in her head without any reason. Perhaps this was the crucial push Lord Hanuman was talking about. He had created an illusion of somebody's presence near her. Or was *He* present there in some form?

Anita couldn't bear the horrible stress anymore. She decided to lift her head to look at the imaginary stranger. She tried to shuffle her feet to release the unbearable tension that had accumulated in her frozen body.

She fumbled. So many things happened together: two packets of pulses dropped and burst open on the floor; her one foot clumsily landed on the other foot with the result that her slippers broke; she slipped on the scattered pulses and fell on the floor with a loud thud; store employees came running to check what happened.

She was ashamed. The illusion of normalcy had crashed. With broken slippers in hand, she started crying. Why was this happening to her? What wrong she had done which warranted such misery? Why was nothing in her control? Why were gods so cruel to her? Didn't she deserve a normal life? So many bad people enjoy the luxuries of life. Why was a righteous person like herself being punished for no reason? What was her crime?

Tears slid down her cheeks. She didn't try to stop them. Store employees were staring at her awkwardly. She didn't have energy left to act normal and pick herself up. She had given up.

And then it happened. The soul separated from her mind. She felt that the person who was crying on the floor wasn't her. The embarrassment ... the misery ... the victimhood ... Nothing was hers. She was a mere spectator. A witness that had the choice to pull out of all the drama.

'Look at her closely,' Lord Hanuman's voice instructed His disciples. 'Her soul is going to change the character now. Let's call her present character "Anita-728". Her soul is going to migrate to Anita-849. You will notice many differences between the two characters, and interestingly, she would remain totally oblivious of the change.'

The scene dissolved into momentary darkness from which emerged a new scene: the place where there was a mess of scattered pulses, broken footwear, and a crying human being a moment ago was neat and clean. There

was no sign of damage either.

This scene terminated abruptly giving way to another scene not far from there: Anita could be seen exiting the supermarket. She was holding two bags in one hand: the bag of groceries she had just purchased and her small handbag. A muffled ringing sound unmuffled as she pulled her mobile phone out of her purse.

‘Notice her clothes, feet, and forehead,’ suggested Lord Hanuman’s voice.

The woman in this scene looked precisely like the Anita character that had collapsed inside the supermarket, but her clothes were different, her slippers were missing, her forehead was adorned with a fresh red Tilak.

‘The woman you see is Anita-849, not Anita-728,’ told Lord Hanuman. ‘She had come from home barefooted because she wanted to visit a temple before visiting the supermarket. She got this Tilak from the temple. The breakdown incident inside the supermarket didn’t happen to her; it happened to Anita-728. She has separate memories, separate life, separate past from that of Anita-728. These two characters – Anita-728 and Anita-849 – are like two parallel roads. The characters have not moved or interacted with each other in any way; Only the soul has moved from one character to another. Both characters were suffering from poverty. Both were overwhelmed by misery. The woman you see – Anita-849 – is going to receive good news now. Her life is going to change for the better ...’

Mahtangs figured that she was going to receive the news through the shiny toy that she had held against her ear. And they were right.

It was her ecstatic husband on the phone call. No, he hadn’t found any decoy trunk stuffed with gold. He had found something even better: an ancestral land he was unaware of till today. His uncle’s family had been fighting a case for possession of the long-forgotten ancestral property. A part of it had been awarded to him too. It was worth more than the money he owed to loan sharks and banks.

She didn’t believe it for a moment. After long years of suffering, good news like this seemed too good to be true. After a minute of loud gibberish and a couple of ecstatic shrieks, tears of joy rolled down her cheeks. When the news settled in, she turned around and started walking towards the temple she had visited a short while ago. She had to thank her deity. She had no idea that He was with her right where she stood. How could she even in her wildest daydreams believe that Lord Hanuman was watching her along with His secret

disciples.

‘But Deva – But what happened to the earlier character, Anita-728?’ asked Urmi as the scene dissolved and all Mahtangs opened their eyes.

‘Ah, Anita-728? She’s still crashed on the floor with broken footwear. Would you like to see her?’ said Lord Hanuman dispassionately.

‘But there is no soul in that character now. Anita’s soul is in Anita-849 character now,’ said Urmi confusedly.

‘There is no dearth of souls. Swarms of cursed souls are waiting to occupy empty bodies,’ said Lord Hanuman.

Urmi’s jaw fell with horror. She said, ‘Asurrahs? Has Anita-728 been occupied by Asurrahs? That’s horrible, Deva. What will happen to her?’

‘That character will continue to live as per the script,’ said Lord Hanuman peacefully.

‘What’s the fate of that character, Deva? I am curious,’ asked Urmi even though she knew the answer.

‘Do you want to ruin the pleasant scene you just saw?’

‘No, Deva. I think I don’t want to confirm my doubts. So many horrible things are happening in this cruel theatre of Space-Time,’ sighed Urmi.

‘They’re horrible for an ordinary soul. Asurrahs enjoy them. Anita’s soul has successfully migrated to a better life,’ said Lord Hanuman satisfactorily.

‘What about so many other souls that are stuck in horrible lives, Deva? Making a soul aware is not easy. Not everyone can come out of the prison of the mind,’ said Urmi sadly.

‘Souls change characters more often than you think, with or without the help of gods,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘The process of changing a character doesn’t get recorded in memory. Take the example of Anita. She has no idea that her soul just migrated from one character to another just now.’

‘But how would a soul change character without being aware, Deva?’ asked Urva sitting up straight with heightened curiosity.

‘To change a character, your soul doesn’t have to master a full range of its awareness setting. Just a little or intermittent awareness is enough for gods to reach out to your soul and help it migrate to a better life,’ said Lord Hanuman.

‘But that little awareness is not easy to attain, Deva. It requires massive efforts.’ said Urva scintillatingly.

‘If devotees didn’t get intermittent awareness,’ said Lord Hanuman serenely, ‘it would be impossible for gods to function in this world and help the needy. Intermittent awareness is not difficult. You don’t have to study awareness to become aware. People who haven’t read a book in their lifetime can also have aware souls. As I said, the path of devotion works in unknown ways. Even evil people who are devoted to something can become aware and migrate to a better life.’

‘Deva, our goal is to be able to change characters without godly help. Still, I am curious how intermittent awareness works,’ said Urva.

‘Analogy of a student writing an exam works best to explain this,’ said Lord Hanuman. ‘Imagine that you’re writing an exam you haven’t prepared for. You’re copying the student sitting in front of you. That student is further copying from students sitting around him. In this analogy, you’re the soul. The student you’re copying from is your character. Other students are other souls that are operating within the same scene.’

‘And what’s being copied? Karma and Desire. The implications of copying answers are just failing or passing an exam. But the consequences of copying Karma and Desire are real-life happy and sad situations. If you’ve awareness, you copy Karma-Desire smartly; you copy what benefits you and leave what doesn’t. On the other hand, lack of awareness makes you copy blindly due to which your fate gets tied to that of your character.’

‘Consider this situation: you’re a soul; your character is an employee in the royal palace; an officer is yelling at you; your character feels angry, humiliated, and rebellious; your soul also feels what your character feels. Do you see how the transfer of Karma-Desire is taking place here?’

‘The officer makes your character angry. That anger triggers the desire to rebel in your character. Your soul mimics that desire. That means the officer has the power to induce a desire on your soul. How can your soul nullify this power and be free from the officer’s influence?’

‘It’s simple. Your soul should detach and dissociate from your character. If your character wants to yell back at the officer, let him do it. You’re a soul. You should just witness what’s happening. It’s in the script of your character to be yelled at and to yell back. Your soul doesn’t have to go with that script.’

‘If you keep attached to your character in this scene, the officer’s soul will be able to infect your soul with bad Karma. Let the officer’s action trigger a reaction in your character and bounce back from there; cushion your soul from

this action-reaction.

‘Your intellect forms relationships with other characters and there are souls behind those characters. And then there are cursed souls – the Surrachs and Asurrachs. If you can just cushion your soul against Karma and Desires induced by these souls, you can keep migrating to an exceedingly better life. If not all souls, just detach from souls with whom you have a one-sided relationship.

‘Take any interaction between a good person and a bad person. They’re always one-sided. The bad person doesn’t feel as much emotion as does the good person. Bad people yell mechanically, without any feelings. Bad people show love or hate cosmetically like an unfeeling machine. It’s the good people who show real emotions and get infected with bad Karma of bad people. As a result, good people suffer while bad people enjoy luxuries.

‘I must clarify again: detachment doesn’t mean inaction or apathy. Let your character react or not react. You, the soul, should dissociate from that reaction or lack of it. If your character wants to yell back, let him do it while you, the soul, remain a mute spectator.

‘There is another important aspect of smart copying: smart revision. Again, imagine the student you’re copying from. He writes his answers, you copy them, and then he goes back to revise his answers. Copying the first time is not enough. You must revise when he revises. And we’re talking about a lot of revision here. The human mind does a lot of revision when it comes to desires. Its idea of the “whole” keeps changing, and so do its desires.

‘For your mind, desires are just thoughts. Consuming and discarding them is like breathing in the fresh air and breathing out processed air. If they have gone deep, your mind discards them during sleep. But what about the soul that has mimicked those desires? The soul must discard them too. When the mind goes to sleep, the soul goes to the dream world just to discard the desires that the mind has already discarded. For a soul, it’s not as easy as it is for the mind. The soul has to have those desires “lived” through disposable characters available in the dream world.

‘A soul doesn’t need to be aware to discard those desires. Every human soul does it every night. Why? Because of its attachment to the character. It wants to stay with the same character. If it didn’t discard those desires, it would not be able to continue with the same character.

‘So, as far as Desires are concerned, your soul does smart copying and smart revision; it effortlessly syncs with your mind. But what about Karma?

‘If your character has harmed someone, it’s not necessary that the harm

If your character has harmed someone, it's not necessary that the harm will come back to him. Your character's actions may get discarded without any consequences because of so many factors. But what about the soul which has mimicked those actions by accumulating Karma? The soul also has to discard them to stay in sync with the mind. But how?

'Imagine that your character committed some action, the consequence of which is death. Suppose some external factors cancelled out this consequence and made your character immune to it. But the soul has already mimicked that action by putting on respective Karma, which will definitely bear fruits in the form of the experience of death. Since the present character has become immune, this Karma will force your soul to migrate to a worse character and experience death. To avoid this imminent threat of migration, it has to get rid of this Karma.

'Unwanted desires can be dumped in the dream world, but not Karma. Then how does a soul try to get rid of such Karma?

'Unaware souls try to transfer such Karma to souls that are attached to them. One-sided attachments, which I explained earlier, become dumping grounds of such Karma. This phenomenon also forms the basis of dark sciences such as black magic: If you want to hurt somebody, get them attached to you but don't get attached to them in return. This way, your bad Karma start flowing towards them.

'Aware souls don't have to resort to such evil ways to get rid of their bad Karma. They can do so cleanly and properly. For instance, to get rid of a bad Karma that may cause you the experience of death, your soul can leave the present character for some time and go to one that is dying naturally.

'Of course, you don't have to be a master of your awareness setting. Gods can help you in discarding such Karma even if you have an intermittent awareness.

'Now that we have covered most of the technical knowledge, I will take you through scenes from different periods of human history to demonstrate the application of this knowledge. After that, I will allow you to practice this knowledge to move from one character to another without godly help.'

# Chapter 12

## Continuity

After a short break, Mahtangs assembled again in the holy hemisphere. Lord Hanuman told them the story of a girl called Sulochana. Mahtangs listened to it with their eyes closed. It was a unique storytelling method; the narration in Lord Hanuman's deep voice was enriched by actual visuals of the respective scenes:

Dear Disciples, this incident happened a few years ago in the life of a girl called Sulochana. When she was in her mid-teens, she got attached to an evil man who was more than a decade older to her. This attachment resulted in a brutal assault on her; she was cruelly violated by him and his evil friends.

When I say “evil”, don't visualise a man with big horns. If it were that easy to identify evil people, nobody would get hurt. Their outlook and demeanour don't give away their evil designs.

This man used to work as a low-wage worker in the school where Sulochana used to study. Nothing was common between them. She was from a well-to-do family while he lived from hand to mouth. She was fair, he was dark. She was brought up in a small family while he had many siblings. She wasn't even an adult while he was a married man having three children. They were from different communities. Their belief systems were different.

Then why did she get attached to him?

To get the answer to this question, let's examine the power dynamics among the five bodies of a quintessential teenager.

As I explained earlier, intelligence has no role to play in selfless attachments. It only deals with future security and past amendment. Sulochana's intelligence was perhaps screaming out loud about the danger she was walking into. It got overpowered by other bodies.

The intellect likes what it likes. There is no rationality involved in its desires.

Talking of Samskara, teenagers have an image to protect: the image of being progressive and modern.



They have a Chitta that seeks chaos, fuels rebellion, and feeds foolish courage.

As far as the physical body is concerned, puberty opens a new dimension that promises immortality by way of reproducing an identical body.

In effect, teenagers have their intelligence on one side and remaining four bodies on the other. It causes foolish and reckless behaviour.

Power dynamics among your five bodies notwithstanding, they never push fatal and devastating life choices. After all, they have good intentions; they just want to make your character complete. Damage starts when they get hijacked by the Surrachs and the Asurrachs.

If there were no Surrachs and Asurrachs, it would be easy to become aware of the illusion of Space-Time. Once you have understood the nature of your five bodies, everything would seem mechanical and predictable. It's the Surrachs and Asurrachs that bring further unpredictability and randomness. So, understanding your five bodies is not enough. You must also expose the Surrachs and Asurrachs that keep you hooked to this grand illusion of life.

As you know, Surrachs and Asurrachs don't have their own physical bodies. They have a minimal mind having single desire each: Surrachs desire to enjoy positive emotions and Asurrachs desire to relish negative emotions. To fulfil their desires, these body-less creatures hijack human bodies and minds by planting thoughts.

Your physical body may like sweets, but if it's addicted to them, it's hijacked by the Surrachs. When addiction starts harming your body, Asurrachs too take over your body to enjoy the pain. This loop of positive and negative emotions, pleasure and pain, addiction and self-harm is a clear sign of the infestation of Surrachs and Asurrachs. One half of this loop incubates the Surrachs and the other half festers the Asurrachs.

Worrying about the future is a natural tendency of your intelligence. But what happens when Surrachs and Asurrachs hijack your intelligence? It depends on which one of them hijacks it first. If Surrachs do it first, they dissolve your worry into complacency; Asurrachs come soon afterwards to enjoy the frustration of not being able to concentrate on securing future. If Asurrachs do it first, they inflate your worry into anxiety; when you're anxious, you seek short-term pleasures, which then attract Surrachs.

Feeling guilty about something and trying to heal it is also a natural tendency of your intelligence. But Surrachs make you go out of your way to do charitable deeds to cover up the guilt. This is a widespread template of Surrach

Charitable deeds to cover up the guilt. This is a widespread template of Surrah attack. I have seen this happening throughout human history, especially with kind-hearted people born in well-to-do families. In any royal family, you can find a princess suffering from this kind of Surrah infestation. This is important for our story of Sulochana too. She wasn't a princess, but her family was wealthy while her assailant was dirt poor.

Here is how this template works: A princess is kind-hearted, has access to all the luxuries of life. Guilt sprouts up mostly because she feels that her family has acquired wealth through illegal means of war, extortion, and corruption. In some cases, guilt springs up even when the family's wealth is not ill-gotten. The princess just feels guilty of being born rich; she thinks that she doesn't deserve the easy wealth.

The straightforward way to heal this guilt is to renounce the inherited wealth and start living an ordinary life. But it's not as easy as it sounds. For various reasons, she can't separate from her family. It's much harder for a princess to live ordinary life than it's for an average person. She is used to the luxury. Furthermore, who would give a regular job to a princess? The guilt of being born rich doesn't leave her no matter what she does.

Then Surrachs suggest her a remedy: she finds poor and oppressed sections of society and starts doing charity. It's not a charity done out of compassion. It's a charity done by Surrachs to feel the pleasure of doing it and to wash away the guilt of being born rich. Surrachs do everything to the extremes. The princess gets extremely attached to the oppressed people. She starts believing that they can't commit any wrong. She feels that even if they do crimes, it's justified. She starts advocating for their right to do violence. She starts interfering in the justice system. Thus, Asurrachs too come to nest in her mind and enjoy the negativity resulting from extreme of positivity.

Asurrachs don't just enjoy the negativity. They add fuel to the fire. The princess who has now become an ardent advocate of the oppressed community finds an enemy to direct her anger. She can't rebel against her own family because she is dependent on them. So, she marks another community as the cause of all problems in society. The delicious meal for both Surrachs and Asurrachs starts cooking: Extreme hatred and violence in one pot, extreme charity and morality in the other.

I have also seen men of royal and wealthy families succumbing to the same design, but not as often as women. Indeed, there are always equal numbers of kind-hearted men taking birth in well-to-do families. They carry the same guilt. They too get infested by the Surrachs and Asurrachs, but in a slightly

different way. Asurrahs creep into their minds before Surrachs do: The guilt-ridden princes try to drown their guilt into overwhelming acts of cruelty and insensitivity. They become ruthless warriors and businessmen. I have seen extremely kind-hearted men turning into heartless monsters because of this guilt and the Asurrahs it attracts. Of course, Surrachs join the feast soon after: The heartless monsters try to soothe their painful existence by indulging in mindless pleasures.

Talking of intellect, liking and disliking people is normal, but if you obsessively love some people and spit vitriolic hate on others, your intellect is infested with the Surrachs and Asurrahs. Sulochana's intellect certainly was; she developed a delusional and obsessive love for new people whom she called friends and started hating her own family.

Seeking some consistency in life and trying to maintain an image is a natural thing for your Samskara. If the images you adhere to are too rigid, it's challenging to keep them. They either require too much self-discipline, too big sacrifices, or they clash with each other and create a dilemma. That is when Surrachs and Asurrahs sneak in and offer you a solution: how about you maintain an image just for the sake of showing off to other people? For example, if your image is that of an extremely religious person, you can choose to maintain it only when you're around other people; privately, you can do whatever you like. This double life creates a loop of pleasure and pain. Surrachs enjoy the respect and joy that comes with maintaining an external image; Asurrahs enjoy the self-loathing triggered by this duplicity.

Sometimes Asurrahs and Surrachs make you cling to an image that is exactly opposite to your true nature. For example, in childhood, Sulochana loved hearing stories of gods and goddesses. However, in teenage, she adopted an image of a progressive and modern person. That was not her original image. Naturally progressive people don't feel insecure about their image. Sulochana was insecure and hence always tried to bolster her borrowed image by mocking rituals and traditions.

There is nothing wrong in being progressive if it comes naturally to you. Your work and your contribution to humanity should speak about your progressiveness. Mocking conservative people should not become your work. If the progressive section of the society is the rolling wheel of the human race, the conservative section is the fixed axle of that wheel. Determine your natural leanings and work accordingly. Clinging to an image that is against your true nature is a sign that your Samskara is infested with the Surrachs and Asurrahs.

Coming to Chitta, it's natural to seek some disorder and chaos in life

Coming to Chitta, it's natural to seek some disorder and chaos in life. When you feel that you're stuck in a rut, you want to do something out of your comfort zone. It's good for your materialistic and spiritual growth. But it's not easy to throw yourself into uncertainty and chaos. Surrachs and Asurrachs suggest an alternative that allows you to enjoy the pleasures of chaos without risking yourself: why not create chaos in other people's lives? You start playing deceitful games. You start manipulating people. You start creating misunderstandings among people around you. Asurrachs relish the callousness and perversion. Obviously, Surrachs too get their meal of positivity when you start acting as a saviour and mediator in the conflicts engineered by you.

Sulochana's Chitta was not infested with Surrachs and Asurrachs. Her Chitta bestowed her with rebellious and bold nature, which are largely unharmed tendencies. But rest of her bodies – physical body, intelligence, intellect, and Samskara – were contaminated.

On that fateful day, when she decided to accompany her assailant after school, what was clouding her natural instincts? A swarm of Surrachs and Asurrachs. Most prominent hook used by them on her was the juvenile belief that all poor and oppressed people are saints while all prosperous people are evil.

Surrachs and Asurrachs don't orchestrate such a horrific crime often. They are known to use their host characters as long as they can to extract the juice of positive and negative emotions. Guilt-ridden characters belonging to influential families are their highly valuable assets because they can be used to create an extremely high level of polarisation in the society, to create an abundance of both positives and negatives. In the case of Sulochana, her uninfected Chitta, the source of her bold and rebellious nature, became an unintended enabler of a chain of events that led to that gruesome incident.

Just a little bit of awareness could have allowed any of the gods to intervene and save her soul. I did detect a fleeting moment of awareness in her mother a day before this incident. At that moment, I managed to feed her some thoughts laced with the warning. Her mind successfully registered that thought and created a wave of foreboding. But this wave was not powerful enough to cut through the noise that exists in the mind of an ordinary householder like her. She didn't want to believe that anything like that could happen. She failed to act on the foreboding. If she had acted, she would come to collect her daughter from the school that day, and Sulochana's soul wouldn't have gone through that horror.

On that fateful day too, all souls connected to Sulochana were under my observation. I could detect even the dimmest flicker of awareness in nearby

souls. I managed to feed a thought in one of her teacher's mind. Acting on that thought, he asked her to join a group of students that was overstaying the school that day to help in a cultural project. She wriggled out of this invitation and decided to go with that evil man instead.

Before every horrible incident, the gods try very hard to warn the souls in different ways. Most of these warnings go in vain. Awareness is the key; if not in you, in a soul connected to you. When it comes to helping you, gods are only as powerful as awareness of your soul and that of the souls you're connected to. It's a continuous war between the gods and evil forces. And awareness, or lack of it, determines who wins.

The words I am speaking now are also a form of help being offered by me in my capacity as a god. Will it reach the needy souls? To even know that such help exists, a soul must have at least some awareness, or it should be connected to an aware soul that already knows about it.

Unfortunately, awareness, if any, dawns only after horrible things have happened and the evil forces have succeeded in their designs. After that, most a god can do is heal the wounded soul and help it come back to the track. Sulochana was found in an unconscious state after the evil forces had charred her soul.

She went into a state of coma. A bizarre attachment developed between her soul and her character. Her soul neither desired to leave the character nor desired to live it. Her soul was feeling disgusted with her character. We usually see this kind of attachment between two enemies that can neither live with each other nor without. It's rare to see enmity developing between a soul and the character it's attached to. It's rare to see a soul desiring to witness her own character die a slow death.

If a spare soul came and lived her character, there were chances that her soul would heal. Many aware souls assist gods in their fight against the evil forces. When you master your awareness setting, you can change characters at will and become an assistant to gods. Dirgha was one such assistant soul.

Before deploying Dirgha on the task of healing Sulochana, I warned her, 'O Dirgha! You're going to get attached to a character that is burning with intense emotions. You're going to live a character that has gone through the most horrible experience one can go through. There are high chances that you will forget your awareness setting. Once your awareness drops to zero, you will forget that you're Dirgha; you will forget that you're a soul sent for the healing purpose; you will start identifying with Sulochana's character; you will have no

memory of what we're talking right now; Sulochana's memories will become your memories.'

She replied, 'Don't worry, Deva. I've gone through intense training to master my awareness setting. I'm not an ordinary soul. I'm assistant to gods for a reason. I will not be fooled by the illusionary trap of Space-Time.'

'This ego,' I told her, 'is the reason why you're stuck at the level of being an assistant to gods. This last bit of rigid Linga Code is not letting you become a god. To practice and get better hold on your awareness setting, I suggest you go through a few scenes of the dream world and the human world before entering the character of Sulochana. If you got stuck in Sulochana's identity, I would use tricks of the dream world to inject awareness in you. And yes, don't forget to take blessings of Shri Vishnu before commencing the task.'

After taking all the precautions and blessings, Dirgha took on Sulochana's identity. She became part of a special arrangement in which she led Sulochana's soul towards healing. Within a week, Sulochana came back to consciousness, and within a few months, she overcame the mental trauma. When memories of that horrible incident had successfully been shredded, Dirgha's task was over. Sulochana's soul, now no longer disgusted with her character, wanted to experience life through her rightful body-mind.

But Dirgha was not ready to leave Sulochana's character. She had lost hold on her awareness setting. Her awareness had dropped to dead zero. Fooled by the illusion of Space-Time, she had started identifying as Sulochana.

When two souls fight for the same character, the pain is unimaginable. Both souls desire to follow different scripts. You feel like something is tearing you apart from inside. You feel like exploding from within. Yelling also doesn't help. When a part of you wails in grief, another part lets out mirthless laughter. The force of a thousand demons haunts you whether you're asleep or awake. Imagine you are eating and not eating at the same time; it feels like somebody is shoving food down your throat. Imagine you are moving and stationary at the same time; you feel a heavy rock stuck inside your body that you have to drag everywhere. Imagine you are breathing and choking at the same time; it feels like you're inhaling and exhaling crushed stone particles. It's a struggle to even move your eyelids. Not a moment of peace. Not a moment of rest.

To cope with this horrible situation, Sulochana would wish herself death, a death so painful that it dwarfed all her pains. She would visualise herself descending into a large frying pan filled with boiling oil. She would imagine sharp knives slowly slicing her flesh inch by inch. How much pain one has to be

in to take refuge in such horrible imagery?

It's even worse for your loved ones to watch you in pain and not being able to help. No doctor can heal you in such a state because the problem lies in the soul, beyond the physical and mental bodies. Sulochana's parents tried everything. They took her to every place where there was a hope of healing. Some would say she was possessed by ghosts; others suggested the role of an angry ancestor soul. No healer or charlatan could possibly imagine that the problem was caused by her own soul trying to occupy her own rightful body.

Since none of them knew the exact problem, their suggested solutions were only making the situation worse. The answer was to inject a little bit of awareness in Dirgha's soul so that she could detach from Sulochana's character. Her awareness had dropped to dead zero. But unlike any ordinary soul, she just needed a tiny spark of awareness to realise who she really was.

I tried to feed her awareness-inducing thoughts, but they ricocheted off the barrier of complete ignorance. Thankfully, Sulochana's tired family was open to the idea of a stranger monk attempting to heal their daughter. All I had to do was to find a monk character that was destined to cross their path.

Soon enough, I reached outside their house in the character of a wandering sage. I didn't knock. I simply sat outside their house like an exhausted passer-by. An hour and a half later, Sulochana's mother opened the door and noticed me. I lifted my head, and without speaking a word, I conveyed to her that I was hungry. She invited me inside and served me food.

I, the character of a wandering sage, was actually starving. I hadn't eaten cooked food for a long time. When the first morsel of food reached my empty stomach, tears surfaced in my eyes and blessings on my lips.

I wished Sulochana's mother best of health, happiness and prosperity. She instead requested me to bless her daughter. With a choked throat, she recounted the horror Sulochana had gone through.

To prevent Sulochana from harming herself and others, they had been keeping her locked inside a room. I could hear muffled sounds of someone feebly beating a door. It was Sulochana, tired of thrashing around and exhausted of begging her mother to open the door.

I finished my meal and waited a little longer until all the unpleasant sounds died down. Then Sulochana's mother and I went inside the lockup room, which indeed looked like a prison cell as everything had been removed from there.

The prisoner was collapsed on the floor, in a state of sleep, dreaming bizarre dreams. Souls of both Sulochana and Dirgha were in the dream world.

I took the help of Lord Indra and Lord Kala – the god of Space and the god of Time respectively – to keep Sulochana’s soul busy in the dream world. Within a few minutes, Sulochana’s character woke up with only one soul: Dirgha’s soul.

Dirgha knew me. I looked in Sulochana’s eyes to try to reach out to Dirgha’s soul. Before a connection could be established, her mind created impenetrable noise. She gave me a peaceful look for a split second before her mind labelled me as a stranger and made her sit up in alarm.

One glance from me to her mother and back, she understood that I was a healer. She joined her palms and bowed her head. I took it as a gesture of respect, but it might have been an expression of being fed up with healers and charlatans.

‘Who are you, my child,’ I asked her in a mystical whisper.

‘Sulochana,’ she replied at once and looked at her mother confusedly.

I requested her mother to bring a cup of water.

When she had gone out of the room, I said with an air of heightened mystery, ‘You’re not Sulochana, my child. You’re Dirgha.’

Her heart started beating fast, her breaths became heavy, a mixture of terror and confusion flushed her pale face. She expected me to speak more and withdraw my claim. I instead let silence amplify my claim further. Her identity started crumbling, but her mind rushed the enforcement in the form of pointed thoughts. I left her in that state and walked out of the room.

I met her mother in the hall coming back with a cup of water in her hand. To her questioning expression, I responded, ‘Water – yes ... give it to Sulochana. I will come tomorrow morning again.’

Meanwhile, Sulochana’s own soul was still in the dream world. Lord Indra and Kala informed me that they wouldn’t be able to hold it for long. I discussed with them how it could be kept busy in the dream world for a day and a night. I wanted Sulochana to get some quiet and peaceful time so that she could pursue the quest I had just induced; the usual fight between Sulochana and Dirgha’s soul could sabotage my plan.

With her warring soul away, Sulochana felt calm and peaceful after a long time. The demonic violence and insanity had suddenly left her. Her mother was pleasantly surprised. She didn’t have to lock up her daughter anymore.



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Sulochana, calmly and peacefully, toured her own house as though it were that of a stranger. Her mother watched her cautiously for a while and then left her on her own.

Impact of my statement didn't last long; she couldn't feel like a stranger in her own house for long. After all, she had been brought up there. She was familiar with every nook and corner. She went to the rooftop where a pair of her clothes had been hung to dry. How could clothes lie? She had bought that pair just before ... before ... before ... She didn't want to poke the dark memories.

She came down and strolled out of the house into the street that had given her the best memories of her life, the memories of her childhood. She could identify the exact spot where she got injured when she was eight years old. The mark of that injury was still there on her leg.

It felt good but strange to be walking in the street after being confined in the house for so long. When she walked past her neighbour's house, she noticed one of her friends secretly watching her through a mesh window. Although all her friends had labelled her as ghost-possessed, they would still confirm her identity as Sulochana.

Human beings can be cruel and mean. But what about the trees standing tall in the main street for years. They had witnessed Sulochana grow in these streets. They were living proof that she was indeed Sulochana, not Dirgha.

After spending some time outside, she came back to her house. My mystically soft voice was still echoing in her mind, 'You're not Sulochana, my child. You're Dirgha.'

She continued her quest until evening. Her family was happy that she was miraculously calm and non-violent. They didn't know that her belligerent soul was only temporarily held up in the dream world. Her healing depended on how fast she solved the riddle I had presented to her.

She hadn't progressed any nearer to awareness. After dinner, when she was alone in her room with her mother, she broke into sobs. There were no tears left to shed. Her throat was dry too when she said, 'Mother, I am tired ... I am tired of seeing these healers and charlatans. None of them can understand my pain. They know nothing about my problem. Nobody can understand what I am going through ... The monk who came today was most clueless of them all. I am not Sulochana, he said. How is that possible? You gave birth to me. Do you also think that I am somebody else, not Sulochana? Why would anybody make such a troubling statement? Does wearing saffron robes give them a right to mess with

anybody's head? Don't you remember I grew up in this very home? Please don't subject me to this additional torture. I am already torn by insufferable pain ... Please, I beg you ... Please don't allow these healers to experiment with my vulnerable mind ... Please, mother ...'

Her mother broke down too. And she had enough tears for both of them. The mother and daughter hugged each other. At that moment they forgave each other, Sulochana for all the violence and her mother for having to keep her confined like cattle.

'We won't take any help of any healer anymore,' promised the mother. 'We will just pray. The almighty God brought you back from the jaws of death. I had lost all hopes when you were in a coma. He gave you a new life. I am sure He will heal you from this complication too ...'

Given how calm her daughter was, she was hoping that the complication had already been cured. She prayed that whatever supernatural thing had been troubling her daughter never returned. She had no idea that it was her daughter's own soul attempting to reclaim her rightful character. Prayers become self-contradictory if they are too specific. It's better to pray, 'O the gods of the universe, you know everything. You know what's good for my family and me. Please help.'

Early in the morning the next day, I reached their house to help them anyway. I was in the character of the same wandering sage. I thought I would be received warmly for bringing peace in their home after so long. I was instead received very coldly by Sulochana's mother. The cup of tea she served me was cold too.

'How is Sulochana,' I asked.

'She isn't here, Baba ... I sent her to a relative's place,' she replied evasively.

'That's fine. But ... how is she?' I repeated my question. I was amused at her feeble attempt at lying.

'I am very grateful to you, Baba,' she said, 'I really am ... But ...'

'She slept peacefully last night, didn't she? I understand the root cause of her problem. Allow me to cure it permanently. I just need to talk to her for a few minutes,' I requested her.

She nodded and gestured towards the room where Sulochana was still sleeping. The souls of both Sulochana and Dirgha were away in the dream world

word.

I knew the scenes Dirgha's soul was wading through in the dream world. I waited for a few minutes for a suitable scene. It did come: She was enjoying a ride on a rope swing that was set up on a tree. She knew this tree. It was the one in her neighbourhood. Strangely, she thought that the tree was her father cradling her in his arms. And then the rope broke. The protective arms turned predatory and threw her away as though she were a sack full of leftovers.

She felt a sudden jerk in her real body, and she woke up disoriented. She saw me as soon as she opened her eyes.

'Good news,' I said with a warm smile, 'It was just a dream. You're safe. No broken swing here. No fall from the protective hands into the unknown.'

'How ...' she mumbled as she sat up and rubbed her eyes.

'You are not in a dream anymore, Dirgha,' I said quietly.

She was amazed and slightly scared that I knew what she was dreaming. She had no doubts about my skills anymore. She knew that I wasn't like all other charlatans and healers that had experimented on her psyche.

'What were you dreaming?' I asked.

'But ... but you already know, Baba,' she mumbled.

'It's important that you describe whatever you remember,' I said.

'Incoherent visuals, Baba ... difficult to describe ....'

And then she remembered the scenes before the swing scene. She looked at me, horror-struck.

'Go on,' I urged her.

'I was ... I was in a camel cart,' she said, 'riding through hot desert ... riding away from a sandstorm. I was with my father. And we were going to our farm ... It's all irrational. It doesn't make any sense.'

'It doesn't have to. Tell me what happened next,' I said.

'Then I noticed that the man next to me was not my father,' she said in a shaky voice. 'A strange man, he was ... Was it you? He had covered his face with a blanket. But why was he wearing a blanket in a hot desert? It's absurd ...'

'What did the strange man in the dream say to you?' I asked.

'He whispered in my ears,' she said, 'He whispered, "You're not Sharmila, my child. You're Sulochana." Of course, I am not Sharmila ... But why did I insist that I was Sharmila?'

‘Who is Sharmila?’ I asked.

‘I am Sharmila. I mean ... I was Sharmila,’ she said. ‘My name was Sharmila in my own dreams.’

‘But he was telling you that you weren’t Sharmila, you were Sulochana?’

‘Yes, Baba. He was trying to convince me that I was Sulochana. I was trying to contradict him. I was trying to prove that I was Sharmila,’ she said in a fast pace, high pitched voice.

‘Why? Why did you believe that you were Sharmila, not Sulochana? You are Sulochana, right?’ I said boring into her eyes, trying to contact Dirgha’s soul who, I knew, was behind that confused character.

‘Yes, I am Sulochana here. In my dreams, I was Sharmila. I screamed very loudly to that strange man. I told him that I was Sharmila, not Sulochana.’

‘But why, Dirgha? Why did you say –’

‘I’m Sulochana, not Dirgha,’ she screamed.

‘Screaming won’t help, Dirgha,’ I said quietly. ‘Enquire who you really are.’

‘I don’t know,’ she said in frustration. ‘My name was Sharmila in my dreams, and I was fully convinced about it.’

‘And here you’re fully convinced that you are Sulochana. What’s the reality? Who are you? Sulochana ... Sharmila ... Dirgha ... What is your real name?’

‘I am Sulochana, Baba. Ask my mother. Ask my friends. Ask the trees in the neighbourhood. Every particle of this universe will testify that I am Sulochana,’ she said patiently.

I invited silence to fill the room. I simply looked in Sulochana’s eyes.

After a few moments, she asked in a barely audible whisper, ‘Is this a dream too, Baba? Why am I trying to convince you that I am Sulochana? I could be Dirgha if you say so. Is there any other reality where my name is Dirgha?’

‘It’s not just about the name,’ I told her. ‘Do you remember what you looked like in the dream? Do you remember how your father looked like when he was sitting next to you in the camel cart? Do you remember the faces?’

‘There was no mirror, Baba. How would I know what I looked like in the dream?’ she reasoned.

‘Did you see your hands? Or your overall personality? Was it the same as you have right now?’ I asked.

‘Now come to think about it,’ she said, ‘my father in the dream was nothing like my father here. But when I was in the dream, I was convinced that he was my father, fully convinced. I didn’t find it strange. Why didn’t I?’

‘Even if you started living the character of a goat named Sharmila, you would be convinced that you are the goat, the goat’s mother is your mother, the goat’s father is your father and so on. You would find nothing strange while you live that character,’ I explained.

‘Was that a completely different character, Baba,’ she said with an expression of incredulity on her face.

‘Absolutely,’ I said. ‘Not one character, but several. When you’re in the dream world, you switch characters very fast. The scene of you and your father transitioned into the scene of you and a strange man who called you “Sharmila”, and then into another scene.’

‘A horrible feeling is rising in me, Baba. Am I still in a dream? Is there any other reality where my name is Dirgha, not Sulochana? Who am I? What is my true identity?’ she said shivering visibly.

‘You will know soon enough,’ I calmed her down. ‘Tell me what happened next in your dream.’

‘Then I started driving the camel cart,’ she said. ‘It’s absurd. I don’t even know how to hold the leash ... But I was driving it perfectly. I was in charge of the situation. My father was no longer there. That stranger had also gone. Now there were many children in the cart. They were all happy. I was taking them to an annual fair.’

‘Where did your father disappear suddenly? Did the stranger vanish in thin air? How did the passengers of camel cart change while it was on the move?’ I asked.

‘I don’t know, Baba ... It was a dream,’ she replied. ‘There is no continuity in the dreams. That is why they’re called dreams. Here, in reality, there is continuity. This is my reality. I am Sulochana. I should just ignore that Sharmila-Sulochana confusion. It was just a bizarre dream.’

‘But it was real while you were living it,’ I said. ‘You might call this reality bizarre if you woke up into some other reality.’

‘This reality has continuity, Baba. Why would it seem absurd?’ her

intelligence queried.

Dear disciples, it took me a while to make her understand, but you can grasp it quickly. Here is how I would explain it to you: Imagine three roads that run parallel to each other. There is no link between them. Suppose there is a point R1 on the first road. When you are standing on R1, you see the first road in its continuity with a part of it behind you and the rest in front of you. Nothing seems broken or amiss.

Now you *fly* to the second road – you have to fly because there is no link between the first and second road – and land on a point R2. While you're standing on R2, you see the second road in its continuity. Nothing seems broken or amiss. Now you *fly* to third road and land on a point R3. While you're standing on R3, you see the third road in its continuity. Nothing seems broken. But if you see these three points – R1, R2, and R3 – together, you realise that they are not linked with each other. You find it absurd because there is no crossroad linking R1, R2 and R3. This is what happens when you are hopping from one scene to another in the dream world.

No matter which scene you are living, there is always a past attached behind that scene, and a future attached ahead of that scene. That is why nothing seems amiss while you are in that scene. You see it in its continuity. And when you fly to another scene of another reality, you leave behind everything that belongs to the present one. When you enter the new scene, which obviously has its own past and future, you see it in its own continuity. Nothing seems amiss or broken.

‘Every scene has a continuity,’ I told Sulochana. ‘You perceive that continuity when you are inside that scene. Continuity is an illusion created by memories and imaginations that are right here in this scene. They are neither in the past nor in the future. They are intangible objects existing right here at this moment. They give us a glimpse of past and future scenes, thereby creating an illusion of continuity.’

I also helped her see the universe in terms of scenes instead of objects. I told her, ‘In your present scene, you're in your room. There is a scene at a different point of time in which you are in your kitchen. If I flew your soul, not your body, to that scene right away, you wouldn't feel any discontinuity. That scene has a memory that you normally walked into the kitchen during the day, that no flying was involved.’

‘My present reality does feel like a horrible nightmare to me, Baba,’ she said. ‘I can't describe the mountain of pain I carry on my back every moment. I

do hope that you're right. I do hope that it's just a dream. Please help me wake up into a better reality. I accept that I am Dirgha, not Sulochana. Help me wake up as Dirgha.'

'Yes, you're Dirgha,' I said. 'You came here to live the Sulochana character for a purpose which is now over. I will help you wake up as Dirgha, but mere hope is not going to get you there. You must realise that you're not Sulochana.'

'I do realise, Deva,' she said.

'No, you don't. Not yet. You're still attached to the Sulochana character.'

'I am not,' she shrieked. 'It's painful to be in this character. Why would I be attached to it?' she argued.

'When you've truly detached from this character, you would detach from the pain too. Then you wouldn't want to run away from the pain. You would simply transcend it,' I explained the difference between detachment and negative attachment.

'Deep inside, I know that it is the reality,' she said dejectedly. 'I have to live this pain. There is no escape. This is the hard truth. It's no dream ... I remember nothing about Dirgha. If I were Dirgha, I should have some memory of it. I remember so many things from what I dream. Why do I not remember anything about Dirgha?'

'You don't remember all the scenes from your dreams,' I explained her. 'You remember only those scenes that are in the neighbourhood of your waking reality. Just before you wake up, your soul comes passing through the neighbouring scenes. And the link of memory that they share with your waking reality is fragile. Unless you revisit and reinforce those memories after waking up, they just fade away. You don't remember anything about Dirgha because her reality doesn't have anything common with Sulochana's reality ... No link whatsoever. They're mutually exclusive and far away from each other.'

She asked, 'Baba, I can reach the dream world simply by going to sleep. Is there a simple way so that I could sleep here and wake up as Dirgha?'

I replied, 'This Sulochana identity is that of an ordinary human being. Your Dirgha identity is that of an assistant to the gods. You were sent here to heal Sulochana's soul. To go back to your minimal identity of Dirgha, you have to detach from Sulochana's identity. You have to transcend everything that has to do with Sulochana.'

'Then what will happen to this body. Baba? Will it die?' she asked.

‘As I said, you have to let go of everything that belongs to Sulochana. The worry about Sulochana belongs to Sulochana. You have to transcend this worry,’ I replied.

‘That is so insensitive, Baba. Of all people, how can you, a monk, advise me to not worry about the wellbeing of my present character named Sulochana?’

‘I didn’t ask your character to stop worrying. Let Sulochana do whatever she wants. Let her worry or not worry. You are not Sulochana. You are Dirgha.’

She expressed her fears again, ‘But what will happen to my family? I can’t leave them.’

I sternly said, ‘I’m trying to help you get out of the pit of ignorance. Don’t fall to the bottom again and again ... They are not your family. They are Sulochana’s family. In the scenes of the dream world, you had a different father, didn’t you? You left him there and came here. In every reality, the main character is related to several people in different ways. When a soul migrates from one reality to another, those relations don’t migrate with it. Nothing migrates with the soul. Everything that belongs to Sulochana will stay here when you move to Dirgha’s identity. For Dirgha, her deity Shri Vishnu is everything. She doesn’t crave for any relationship other than that.’

‘I just want an assurance, Baba,’ she said stubbornly. ‘Please assure me that Sulochana’s character won’t die when I leave this reality. Also, please assure me that my present family will not have any reason to grieve when I’m gone.’

‘I will give no such assurance,’ I said flatly. After a pause, I whispered the following words that finally helped Dirgha break free from Sulochana’s character, ‘This is a trap, Dirgha. Assurance is no better than worry for your liberation from this scene. You’ve to transcend both. Let Sulochana seek assurance. Let her react to my refusal to give assurance. You must stop mimicking Sulochana. If you keep circling with Sulochana in the loops of question-answer, worry-assurance, fear-fearlessness, sympathy-indifference and so on, you will not be able to leave her.’

Just a tiny spark was needed for Dirgha to get hold of her awareness setting again. She left Sulochana’s character. Precisely at the same moment, Sulochana’s own soul returned to her character; Lord Indra and Lord Kaala couldn’t hold her soul in the dream world any longer because her unoccupied character was under threat of being occupied by the cursed souls.

The trickiest part to understand the continuity is this: At that moment, no



physical disruption took place. Sulochana's character didn't feel anything odd when her own soul replaced that of Dirgha. The conversation continued as she said, 'Baba, I can't leave Sulochana's character. I can't leave my parents unless you give me the assurance that they will be alright.'

Did you notice any discontinuity in the conversation? Her character was still asking for the same assurance. But something behind it had changed between her previous request of assurance and this one: Dirgha's soul had been replaced by Sulochana's own soul.

'You don't need to leave Sulochana's character,' I replied, 'You're Sulochana.'

'But you said I was Dirgha,' she said in utter disbelief.

'Let's say I was right when I said you were Dirgha, and I am right when I'm saying you're Sulochana,' I said serenely. I was genuinely happy that I had successfully freed Dirgha's soul. I let out deranged laughter and some incoherent sentences to give Sulochana an impression that I was talking to supernatural beings. I heightened the drama by suddenly drawing away all expressions from my face. Then I dramatically pulled out a tiny paper-packet out of nowhere – or so it seemed to her – and gave it to her. In a purposeful tone, I said, 'These are the holy ashes I prepared especially for you. Rub a pinch of it on your forehead before going to sleep. Within the next seven days, I promise you, your pains and mental conflicts will go away permanently.'

On my way out, I met her anxious mother in the hall. I gave her some random instructions to follow for the next seven days, and she listened with folded hands.

I left the character of the wandering sage as soon as I came out of their house.

When Sulochana came out of her room, her remarks were about me. 'Mother,' she said, 'that monk was strange. First, he convinced me that I am Dirgha, not Sulochana, and then he retracted his claim. He seemed to be a learned monk, though. He knew what I was dreaming.'

'Indeed,' said her teary-eyed mother. 'After wandering here and there in search of a cure, just when we had lost all hopes, the almighty God sent a healer at our door. Mysterious are His ways!'

They followed all my instructions for the next seven days. As you know, the ashes and the instructions had no role to play in the healing. But they had a huge role to play in preventing side-effects. They ensured that Sulochana drew

out all thoughts about Dirgha and Sharmila from her mind.