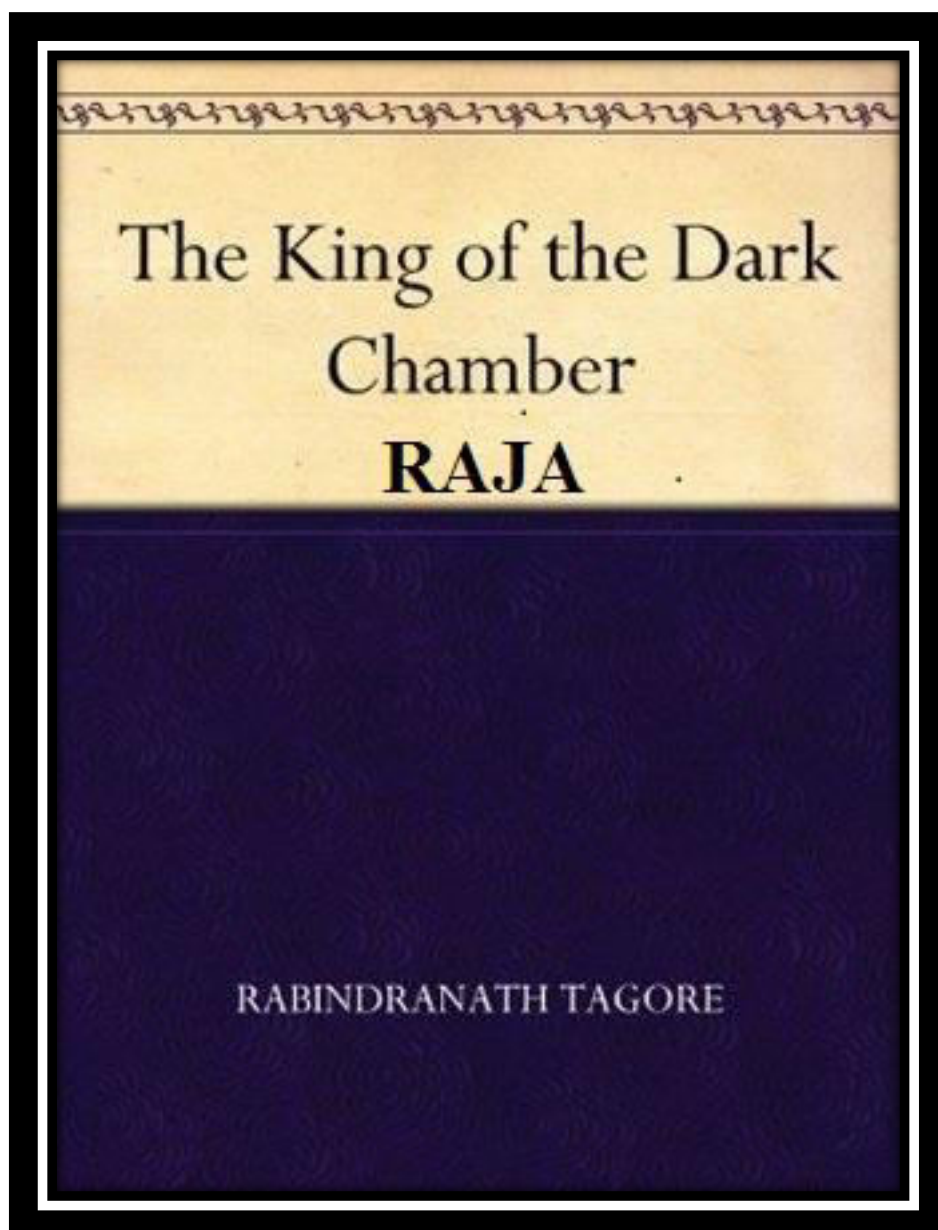


CHAPTER: 2

TEXTUAL ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE PLAY

‘RAJA’ BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE:



**CHAPTER: 2**

**TEXTUAL ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE PLAY**

**‘RAJA’ BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE:**

- In this chapter, a detailed study of the “Play: Raja (The King of Dark Chamber) Written By Rabindranath Tagore” has been discussing and evaluating on the basis of –

**METHODOLOGY:**

**MACRO TEXT VS MICRO TEXT:**

**➔ DRAMATIC TEXT:**

- **INTRODUCTION:**
- **SOURCE OF THE STORY:**
- **DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**
- **SCENE WISE ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**
- **THEMETIC ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**
- **CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**
- **DRAMATIC CRAFTING OF THE PLAY:**

**DRAMATIC TEXT:****INTRODUCTION:**

- Late Rabindranath Tagore is always seen as a colourful poet in all his novels and dramas / plays. His plays and novels portray an eternal struggle between the desired and the evil one (undesirable). He has displayed his struggle through many symbols, signs and signals.
- Raja - The King of the Dark Chamber is Tagore's first really mystic symbolic allegorical play where is seen extensive dramatic employment of the symbolic technique for embodying the sublime theme of humanity's quest for union with divinity. This archetypal play of 'Man / Universe – God / Divine' relationship.
- Play Raja - The King of the Dark Chamber, 'True love does not depend upon selfishness or pride but is actually based upon the abandonment / avoidance and that is what makes it the superior and the best quality'. This kind of love does not simply appreciate the external beauty but instead appreciates the eternal or internal beauty of the soul.
- This play Raja - The King of the Dark Chamber is a Bengali play written in typical Bengali language. It is a play translated by Shree Tagore. The whole play is divided into 20 acts or scenes included 26 songs. The play does not have a unity of place and time, rather it shows envision of work unity and impact of it.

**SOURCE OF THE STORY:****“Buddhist Story of the King Kusa – Mahavastu”**

- The story in its outline is taken from the Buddhist story of the King Kusa – Mahavastu. This source-legend is metamorphosed into a mystic- symbolic love-drama. Referring to Raja, Tagore observes Human soul has its inner drama<sup>1</sup>.

- According to the source, Kusa, the eldest son of Mallaraj, was a profoundly wise but an extremely ugly-looking man. He was married to Pravabati, the uncommonly beautiful daughter of Madraraj. Lest Pravabati should hate him if she saw him by daylight, the mother of Kusa did not allow her son and daughter-in-law to meet in the daytime.
- In order to console Pravabati who was over-insistent on seeing her husband in the broad daylight, her mother-in-law resorted to the stratagem of showing instead the handsome younger brother of Kusa. But the meeting of Kusa and Pravabati could not be prevented for long. Shocked on seeing the ungainly appearance of Kusa, Pravabati left her husband and went away to her father's house.
- To bring back his wife, Kusa went to his father-in-law's place where he was compelled to lead an ignoble life. Finally, however, Kusa saved Madraraj, his father-in-law, from the royal suitors who had gathered to seek Pravabati's hand in marriage and ultimately won his wife's love by his valour.

### **DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**

- **Queen Sudarshana**
- **Queen Sudarshana's Maid Surangama**
- **King (In Invisible Form)**
- **Wayfarers**
- **City Guard**
- **Kaundilya**
- **Bhavadatta**
- **Virupaksha**
- **Vishu**
- **Thakurda**
- **Janardan**
- **Bhavadatta**
- **Heralds**



- **Madhav**
- **Kumbha**
- **King Kanchi**
- **Other Kings – Avanti, Koshala, Vidarbha, and Kalinga**
- **Suvarna - Pretender King**
- **Queen Sudarshana's Companion Rohini**
- **Gardeners**
- **King of Kanyakubja**
- **Kanyakubja's Minister**
- **Messenger**
- **Soldier**
- **Panchala**
- **Virat**
- **Kosliala**

### **SCENE WISE ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**

#### ➤ **SCENE – I Dark Chamber:**

##### ⇒ **Sudarshana being afraid of the Darkness:**

- The play begins with the assertion of the un-awakened ego acting as the obstructing force to the union and ends in the triumphant union through self-surrender a dramatized spiritual paradox of victory in defeat. With the first words uttered the keynote of the drama is struck. Queen Sudarshana whose colourful personality is the center of dramatic action, is shown talking with her maid of honour in a dark chamber. The speech is charged with tension. The dialogue of Queen Sudarshana and her maid Surangama.

**Sudarshana. Light, light! Where is light? Will the lamp never be lighted in this chamber?<sup>2</sup>**

- In this scene, 'Queen Sudarshana' is seen as being scared of the darkness. She even expresses her fear in front of 'Surangama'. 'Surangama' tries to convince her about the benefits of darkness. She says the king is ruthless and cruel. Though he is unparalleled in beauty, he's also good at giving trouble. But 'Sudarshana' is astonished by the thought that if the king is best, how it is that she has not had a chance to see him then. Just then the footsteps of the king are heard. 'Surangama' is acquainted with the footsteps. She assures the queen that with the passing of time she will also be familiar with the king and will be able to recognize him.

⇒ **Sudarshana's meeting with the King:**

- When 'Sudarshana' requested the king to present himself in the light, the king replied that she would be the only one to recognize him in the Dark. But when 'Sudarshana' insisted, he told her that she would not be able to bear his appearance and instead be very much sad and disappointed by his looks. Finally, he convinced her by saying that if she had the vision, she will be able to see the king publically at the festival of Spring – Vasant Utsav. 'Surangama' will also be accompanying her. There would be pleasant music, the flowers will be blooming and the moonlight will be shining over the atmosphere in pleasant sadness.

➤ **SCENE – II A Street:**

⇒ **King's absence and omnipresence:**

- Dark Chamber to the High way, from the beginning, we come to know about the weird behavior of The King of The Dark Chambers. The roads take us towards the main place. The king is not seen but his presence is felt through his behavior. We see many of the citizen criticizing and analyzing this weird behaviour of the king. One of the citizens is seen claiming that the king is so ugly that he fears of not appearing in front of the people.
- All have gathered in the city to celebrate the spring. All agree that the place is beautiful and has a joyous atmosphere but they are wondering where their king is. 'Thakurda' tries to console by saying that the king is everywhere and he has made every other person in the city, the king. The people who have come from elsewhere start believing

that there is actually no king in the city. In this manner, the suspense over the king starts growing.

- The idle gossip of a handful of citizens and wayfarers about the identity of the King who has kept himself in hiding where they have assembled to rejoice at the spring festival. The transition from the interior to the exterior with subtly juxtaposed but interrelated action is dramatically functional.
- The party of foreigners who enliven the stage and are skeptical about the existence of the King, are seen engaged in quibbling discussion which turns on actually seeing the King in the flesh. This prepares the stage for the appearance of a pretender laying claim to being the King, which is the concept of the reality of the King.

⇒ **The Procession of the pretender King:**

- Just then a procession reaches the city. A dummy king is seen seated in his chariot with a symbol of 'Kinshuk' flower on his flag. All the citizens welcome him as if he is the original king. They appreciate him and assure him to be ready for all types of services but 'Thakurda' is not very convinced by this. He knows what the king's nature is. The king does not appreciate all this glamour, so he would not have a lavish procession taken out in the city and moreover, he is not the real king as the king has a 'lotus and a calyx' embalmed on his flag. The real king does not require any bodyguards, any procession neither any musical band nor the bright lights.

➤ **SCENE – III Pleasure Gardens:**

⇒ **Various kings from nearby countries arrive for the spring festival:**

- In the third act, we see many kings from kingdoms like Avanti, Kanchi, Kaushal, Vidarbha, etc. arriving for the spring festival but they do not appreciate mingling with the common man. They wonder if the kingdom has a king or not. They look at the queen 'Sudarshana' with bad intentions. They get the news that the king is going to be present for the festival of spring.
- Avanti, Koshala, Kanchi and others – another thread is introduced into the knot of action in Third Scene.

**Kanchi. Do you really think that fellow spoke the truth? Anybody can pass himself off as the King of this kingless country. Can you not see that the man looks like a dressed-up King--much too over-dressed?**<sup>3</sup>

- The pretender king also is present at the festival celebration. The king of 'Kanchi' asks him to bow down his head in front of him and the pretender king gives in. The king of 'Kanchi' wants to use him as a pawn. The pretender king is also ready to betray his kingdom. The 'Kanchi' king desires to see the queen and the pretender king assures him.

➤ **SCENE – IV Turret of the Royal Palace:**

⇒ **Sudarshana sees the pretender king:**

- In the fourth act, 'Sudarshana' and 'Rohini' are seen waiting for the king and discussing him. 'Sudarshana' is missing 'Surangama'. The king's entry is pronounced. Sudarshana allured by the outer beauty of Subarna maladroitly sends to him through her companion Rohini, some blossoms as her greetings, only to be disillusioned too soon. Sudarshana is told to Rohini that the person whose beautiful exterior so irresistibly draws her is without doubt the King.
- The queen is very happy and believes that her mind and body is delighted with the music heard. But then 'Rohini' comes back and says that the king behaved in such a manner that he has never really behaved. 'Sudarshana' realizes her mistake which now she cannot go back on. She speaks a monologue, "I have been punished for being shameless".
- 'Rohini' tells her, The King of Kanchi presented the dummy king a necklace and that he has sent it for the queen. 'Sudarshana' feels all the more repentance but cannot separate herself from the king's beauty and his gift, the necklace. Even though she could have thrown away the necklace, she did not. Though her love for the king was immense, the necklace was a necklace of thorns which was causing her immense pain but she believed it made her shameless.

➤ **SCENE – V Near the door of the Pleasure House:**

⇒ **Rohini warns about the evil that is to happen:**

- In the fifth act, we see ‘Thakurda’ and the children in a happy and enthusiastic moment. Then Kanchi enters with the pretender King and instructs to set fire to the garden wherein is situated the Queen’s palace.
- The Kanchi king wants to free the kingdom from anarchy. Then arrives the Kaushal king. ‘Rohini’ has a doubt about all that is happening around. She believes something evil is about to happen. In the meantime, even the King of Avanti arrives.

➤ **SCENE – VI Pleasure Gardens:**

- In the sixth act, Rohini worries for the panic stricken gardeners who have served the King all their life are seen hectically running away from the garden. The fire set by Subarna spreading beyond control unexpectedly.

➤ **SCENE – VII At the Door of the Queen’s Palace:**

- In the seventh act, Kanchi has been planning to capture Sudarshana. King Kanchi and suvarna see that the fire they set to the garden near the palace going out of control and preventing their escape from the garden.
- His intention is to clear a garden in a corner but the whole palace catches fire. Kanchi king threatens the dummy king and tells him to show a way out or else, he would kill him but the dummy king discloses that he hasn’t seen the palace so even he does not know the way out. He now repents over his mistake and begs for the freedom to the original king saying, “I am an anarchist, punish me but don’t let me die.”
- King of Kanchi threatens him if he dies, so shall the dummy king. In the meantime, ‘Sudarshana’ comes running, shouting for help. She believes the dummy king to be the real one but he accepts that he isn’t and is a fraud. He throws his crown on the ground and regrets that his fraud and impersonation has punished him. ‘Sudarshana’ is surprised and shocked and says, “Oh God of Fire, please let me die. I offer myself to you. You are the one who makes everything pious or holy. Let my shame, my wants,

my desires burn away”. ‘Rohini’ tries to stop her but the queen is determined and says, “The fire is specially lit for me and I shall enter it.”

➤ **SCENE – VIII Dark Chamber:**

⇒ **The entry of real king in this crisis and the queen’s repentance:**

- In the eighth act, Queen Sudarshana is once again seen conversing with the King in the Dark Chamber. Complexity of her tormented soul, her anguish and ignorance, her passion and offended pride, her desperation and self-will.

**Sudarshana. O King, I shall not hide anything from you. . . . I have another's garland round my neck.**

**King. That garland, too, is mine--how else could he get it? He stole it from my room.<sup>4</sup>**

- We see the real king meeting ‘Sudarshana’ during this crisis situation, but he meets her in the dark chamber. He assures her not to be afraid as the fire would never enter in the dark chamber. Even the queen says she does not have any fear. Her eyes, mouth, and hands have burnt so she feels ashamed. The king pacifies her by saying, all this pain will fade away after some days but she thinks that the burns will never go away as she still has the necklace in her neck which is given to her by someone else. The king consoles her by saying that it was his necklace and it was stolen from his chambers.
  - With repentance, she says that she wants to remove the necklace but is unable to. She even wonders how she has survived the burning fire. The king pacifies her by saying, she finally could see him and her desire is fulfilled. ‘Sudarshana’ talks him through her nightmares before seeing him. He said he wanted to appear before her at the correct moment. She feels she is incompetent for him. The king appreciates her and says she is welcome and acceptable as she has felt the repentance which reassures him and makes him free from worries. He says her punishment has started but the queen is not happy about the king’s appearance and she cannot bear the truth and his ugly face.
- ⇒ For her, love is soft and beautiful. The king tells her, it is like an oasis but she is determined to get away from him. She cannot be with him and wants to move away as her mind is not ready to accept the fact. She believes that if she stays with him, the feeling of betrayal and cheating will never overcome her mind. She is not able to digest the silence and non-resistance and she wishes to get away from the king. He frees her

and lets her go and assures her that no one will get in her way. 'Sudarshana' feels the independence and runs away. She returns after a while only to find out that the king has disappeared. She now wants to leave the dark chamber. 'Surangama' briefs her that the king of Kanchi has accepted his defeat and has gone back to his kingdom.

⇒ **Surangama is with Sudarshana:**

- 'Surangama' understandingly reads the mood of the Queen and expresses her will to accompany 'Sudarshana'. 'Sudarshana' asks her what is it that gives her the courage to accompany her. 'Surangama' answers she doesn't have it now but when she will walk along 'Sudarshana' she will definitely gather it. 'Sudarshana' is not pleased with the company but 'Surangama' insists.

➤ **SCENE – IX The Country of the King Kanya Kubja:**

⇒ **The king of Kanya Kubja dislikes the return of Sudarshana:**

- In the ninth act, we see 'Sudarshana's' father, the king of Kanch-Kubj. 'Sudarshana' has returned to her parent's home but the king does not appreciate this. He believes his daughter has betrayed her husband. Thus he has not even welcomed her in the royal respectful manner but has rather treated her as a slave. He feels if he would acknowledge her behaviour, he will be an undeserving father. He even wants his courtesans not to disclose that 'Sudarshana' is his daughter as it would bring trouble to everyone. He thinks his daughter has brought tension and fear along with her.

➤ **SCENE – X Inner Part of the Kanya Kubja's Palace:**

⇒ **The king of Kanya Kubja dislikes the return of Sudarshana:**

- In the tenth act, we see 'Sudarshana' trapped in such pain, that she is unfamiliar with. Sudarshana talks with Surangama about the utter indifference of the King towards her in not coming to take her back. She wants everything to come to an end and destroyed. She wishes her end to be a dramatic and colossal rather than being just an ordinary end. 'Surangama' tries to console her. 'Sudarshana' feels that she is left all alone. 'Surangama' informs her that the king of Kanchi had set the palace on fire. 'Sudarshana' feels that it is an act of a coward. Deep down in her heart, she feels that

the king should come to meet her but she has not yet overcome her pride. 'Surangama' informs that everyone knows about the king's ruthlessness and firmness. No one can disrupt his intentions. 'Sudarshana' is curious to know why she wants to meet him. 'Surangama' states, "I may regret but my wishes are that he should always have victory and pride."

⇒ **Kanchi king returns:**

- 'Sudarshana' sees a dust storm coming from far away. She thinks it is the king who is coming but 'Surangama' has her doubts. They both come to know that it is the king of Kanchi and beside him is the dummy king, 'Sauvarna'. 'Sudarshana' blames her husband of not taking good care of her and she babbles, "I shall never surrender to him or wish him good luck and victory."

➤ **SCENE – XI Encampment of Kanchi:**

⇒ **The other kings also arrive:**

- In the eleventh act, the Kanchi king sends a messenger to the King of Kanya Kubja. He conveys that the king of Kanchi has come to rescue 'Sudarshana'. She no longer has to be in slavery and in her husband's obedience. 'Sudarshana's' father refuses. So king Kanchi's messenger states that his king will follow the Kshatriya dharma and take her by force but the father's messenger also reverts that he will try to save her with all his might. Kanchi is conversing with the messenger of Sudarshana's father making clear to him that the kings are waiting to rescue Queen Sudarshana from the servitude and degradation of which she is condemned. Kanchi discloses his strategy to Suvarna.

**Kanchi. In the beginning we must all fight together. Let the battle with Kanya Kubja first be over, then we shall find some way out of the difficulty.<sup>5</sup>**

- In the meantime, the kings of Kaushal, Avanti and Kalinga also arrive. All of them desire 'Sudarshana'. Kanchi king fears that this would create more trouble as all of them would be fighting amongst each other. Even the kings of Virat, Panchal and Vidarbha come there. The Kanchi king now wishes to end the war with the King of Kanya Kubja. The dummy king, 'Sauvarna' is trying to run away but Kanchi king wants to use him still.



➤ **SCENE – XII Inner Part of the Kanya Kubja's Palace:**

⇒ **Sudarshana feels repentance internally:**

- The twelfth act, witnesses the war. The king of Kanya Kubja blames 'Sudarshana' for all the bad happenings and says, "You left your king in pride and came here only to bring more trouble and you brought seven more kings. I feel like breaking you into seven pieces and distributing you among them. Now 'Sudarshana' desperately feels the absence of her husband. She comes to know that the pretender king has tried to run away but her father has captured and imprisoned him.
- After Sudarshana's father has been defeated Kanchi is order to avoid any fight among the princes makes the proposal for holding a 'Svayamvar'. Now 'Sudarshana' desperately calls out for her husband, "Oh King, My King. If you had come and helped my father, it would not have dishonoured your fame at all".
- Just then she hears the melodious sound of a harp from the window. (Which indicates that the king has arrived). 'Surangama' also tells her that she is fond of darkness as she has always been a servant of Darkness. 'Sudarshana' gets the news that her father is captured and is being imprisoned. After hearing this, she faints.

➤ **SCENE – XIII Encampment of Kanchi:**

⇒ **Kanchi king acts as a villain:**

- The pretender king, 'Sauvarna' is seen with the Kanchi king in the thirteenth act. 'Sauvarna' is wondering why the Kanchi king did not have to fight more in the battle and the king replies, "I have convinced all the other kings that the queen only will select her husband and all others will have to let go of her. All the other kings will have to be under his rule." The clever Kanchi king thinks that 'Saurvarna' is in the good books of 'Sudarshana' as she is wearing the necklace given by the dummy king. This will give Kanchi king the opportunity to control 'Saurvarna' and give him a chance to capture the whole kingdom.

➤ **SCENE – XIV At Window Inner Part of the Kanya Kubja's Palace:**

⇒ **The King arranges a Swayamwar:**

- In the fourteenth act, Sudarshana and Surangama discussing the question of the Queen's attending the 'Svayamvar', only way left by which the life of her imprisoned father can be saved. 'Sudarshana' is given an opportunity to choose one from all the kings who have gathered. She is threatened that her father's life will be at risk if she doesn't agree. Kanchi king smartly has sent this message with 'Surangama' reminding 'Sudarshana' of the necklace presented to her at the spring festival. Although that necklace is a pain giving memory for 'Sudarshana', she is very much attracted towards the dummy king as he indeed is very handsome.
- She is now worried how she is going to get out of this situation. 'Surangama' reminds her that it is only possible if 'Sudarshana' clears her vision in the darkness. 'Sudarshana' finally agrees to go to the king's chambers with the necklace and a dagger but before entering, she recalls her king. She says, "Oh the Dark Chamber of my heart, where the King who used to come to meet me is now empty and she never let anyone else into it." Here she addresses her heart, a dark and empty corner, The Dark Chamber and she is desperately waiting for her king to arrive.

➤ **SCENE – XV The Gathering of the Princes:**

- In the fifteenth act, we see the Kanchi king dressed simply whereas 'Saurvarna' is laden with jewellery. Virat king, Kaushal king and Kaling king envy the king of Kanchi. Vidarbha king notices someone coming. He feels it to be a bad omen but all the other kings are reluctant and reflect their inability and incompetency to fight anyone. We see Kalinga king listening to music in this tense situation. Now the 'Thakurda' enters and dressed as a warrior, to fling his challenge at the kings by telling them that, the King has come.
- He also suggests all the other kings to unite with his but they deny as they want the 'Swayamwar' to finish. The Kanchi king comes to know that his flag bearer, 'Sauvarna' has run away and his flag is actually lying on the floor. The Kanchi king proceeds to fight the king all by himself.

➤ **SCENE – XVI Inner Part of the Kanya Kubja's Palace:**

- In the sixteenth act, the war has ended. The king has won. 'Sudarshana' is now waiting for her king. She is happy and has love for her king but is ashamed of presenting herself in front of the king. 'Surangama' tells her that she should confront the king with complete humility. If she would leave her pride, all the shame will vanish within no time. But 'Sudarshana' is unable to be polite due to her pride which she repents and is greatly saddened by it that she has to ask for other's help. 'Thakurda' informs that the war is now over and the king has returned to his kingdom. 'Sudarshana' with annoyance calls him cold-hearted and ruthless and says, "He has devastated my life and is still not satisfied?" Sudarshana and Surangama are closeted together discussing the outcome of the 'Symbolic Light'.

➤ **SCENE – XVII A Band of Citizens:**

- In the seventeenth act, we see unidentified characters, chorus like commenting on the other king's defeat and state of action following the eventful battle. First, the citizens began discussing the nature of the battle which to them was little more than the mockery of a battle for the kings could not make a concerted attack. Second, they were all agreed that Kanchi, fought like a real hero. The third for discussion was the punishment meted out to the rebel kings.
- The other kings didn't have faith in each other and none of them had the vision to fight the battle. All the other kings were thinking that if someone else is going to reap the benefit, why should I suffer or die for him. It was only the Kanchi king who fought with bravery, so he was freed and made the king again.

➤ **SCENE – XVIII The Street:**

⇒ **Self – realization of Kanchi king:**

- In the eighteenth act, Kanchi proves a blissful defeat. The transformation of the King of Kanchi from an insurgent to a believer is the transformation of the agnostic for the battle he waged was the battle of an unbeliever with the Supreme Reality. Kanchi king

wants to meet the real king so he can appreciate his bravery. He asks 'Thakurda' as to why he is walking on the road. 'Thakurda' replies that, "It is my happy freedom journey where I shall sacrifice everything."

➤ **SCENE – XIX A Road:**

⇒ **Sudarshana gets to understand only through pain:**

- In the nineteenth act we see, two errant Queen Sudarshana and the King of Kanchi and the two perceptive Surangama and Thakurda. The locale symbolically suggest is the 'Road – The spiritualized journey of growth'.
- We see 'Sudarshana' lose her pride. Now she is also walking on the road. She believes that it is her defeat that has given her freedom. Now she has understood, that it was not the king who should have come to meet her but instead she should have gone to him. She has been crying for the whole night. 'Surangama' also agrees that it was indeed a sad and disappointed night, full of darkness. But 'Sudarshana' had heard the melodious notes of the harp in that dark night and she thinks, a person who plays such melodious music cannot be so cruel and terrible.
- 'Sudarshana' walks on the road with the feeling of sacrificing everything. It is only because of him that she is walking on this hard and tiring road and crying out loud. It's only when she rejected her pride, and adamant nature and walked on the road that she realized that he is walking beside her. 'Surangama' and 'Sudarshana' both notice that there is yet another person walking besides them. It is the Kanchi king who is now pure at heart. He asks for the chariot to be brought in for the queen but she refuses.

**What a relief, Surangama, what freedom! It is my defeat that has brought me freedom. Oh, what an iron pride was mine! Nothing could move it or soften it. My darkened mind could not in any way be brought to see the plain truth that it was not the King who was to come, it was I who ought to have gone to him. All through yesternight I lay alone on the dusty floor before that window--lay there through the desolate hours and wept! All night the southern winds blew and shrieked and moaned like the pain that was biting at my heart; and all through it I heard the plaintive "Speak, wife!" of the nightbird echoing in the tumult outside! . . . It was the helpless wail of the dark night, Surangama!**<sup>6</sup>

- ‘Thakurda’ informs that the walk is almost over and now dawn is approaching. He also informs that the king has not sent any vehicle to welcome her but ‘Sudarshana’ is pleased because she believes that the golden skies are enough to be of a welcome to her. Now she believes herself to be a servant of the king. ‘Thakurda’ informs her that she would also see him as a commoner and he was able to appreciate her beauty because it was pure like his own heart. Now the sun has risen.
- The valiant hearted Kanchi vanquished but regenerated it out on the road questing for inner realization. Scene ends with the words of Surangama – There rises the Sun.

➤ **SCENE – XX Dark Chamber:**

⇒ **Sudarshana finally meets the king:**

- In this last act, we see play closes is in the Dark Chamber where the play began. ‘Sudarshana’ praying to the king in front of the Dark Chamber. She is requesting him to be his servant and to serve him forever. The king tells her that even she had the heart The Dark Chamber which was comparable to his. Now ‘Sudarshana’ offers everything to her king. The king says, “Now I open all the doors of my Dark Chamber”. In this manner, the play ends where ‘Sudarshana’ sacrifices herself and offers love towards her king. The Queen to whom the Dark Chamber was only Dark now sees Light in it.
- The whole play and all characters are symbolic. In the play, the King is always portrayed as a shadow, a symbol. His heart as a Dark Chamber. Queen Sudarshana, The king of Kanchi, pretender King, Surangama, and ‘Thakurda’ all are also portrayed as symbols. Love is always based on sacrifices and pride can only be an obstacle, that is what the reality is and this romantic play expresses the same.

**THEMETIC ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S RAJA / THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER**



**FIRST MYSTIC SYMBOLIC ALLEGORICAL PLAY**



**EXTENSIVE DRAMATIC EMPLOYMENT OF THE SYMBOLIC TECHNIQUE**



**EMBODYING THE SUBLIME THEME**



**HUMANITY'S QUEST FOR UNION WITH DIVINITY**



**PARADOX OF LIGHT IN DARKNESS**



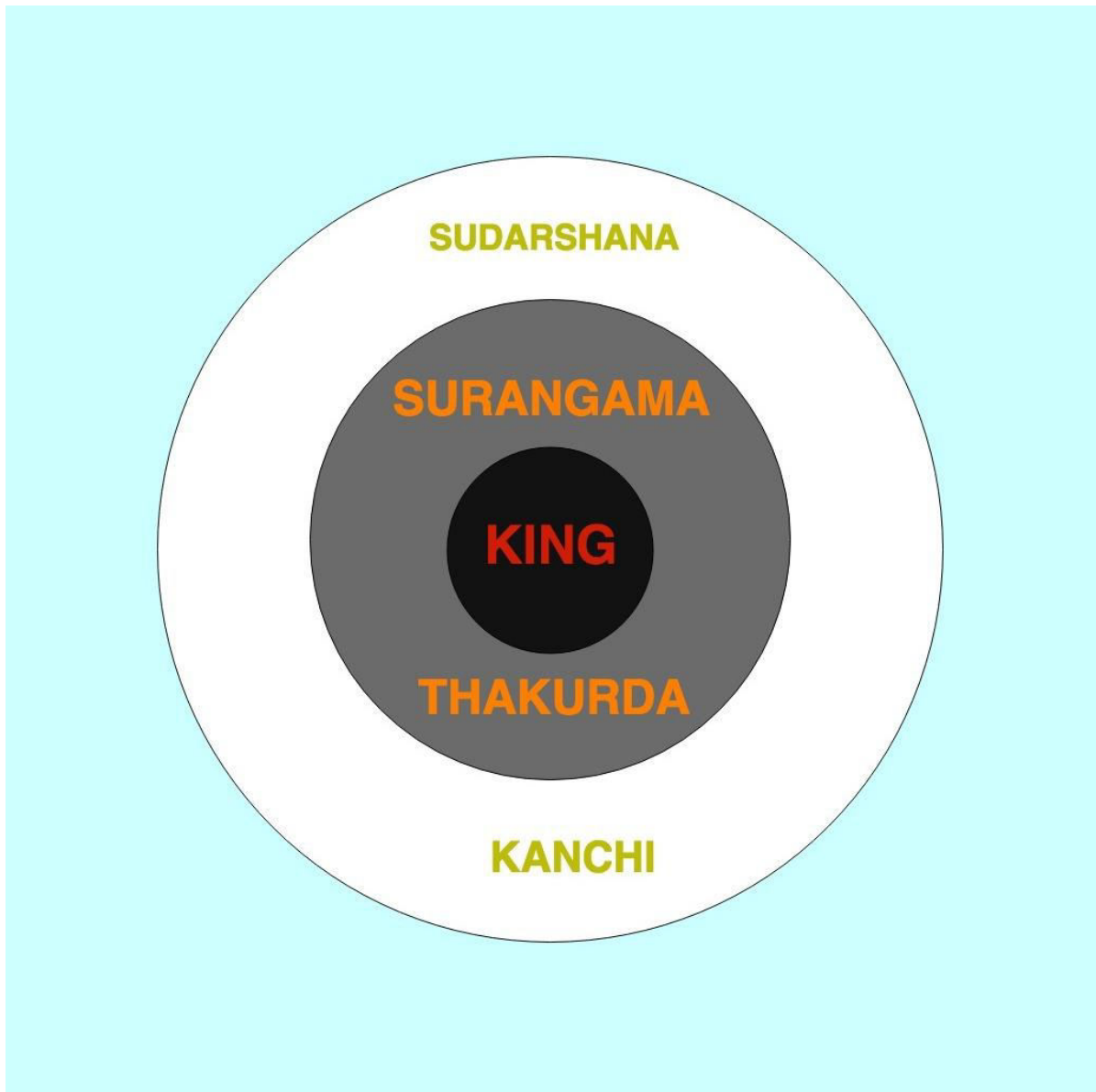
**METAPHYSICAL SPECULATION**



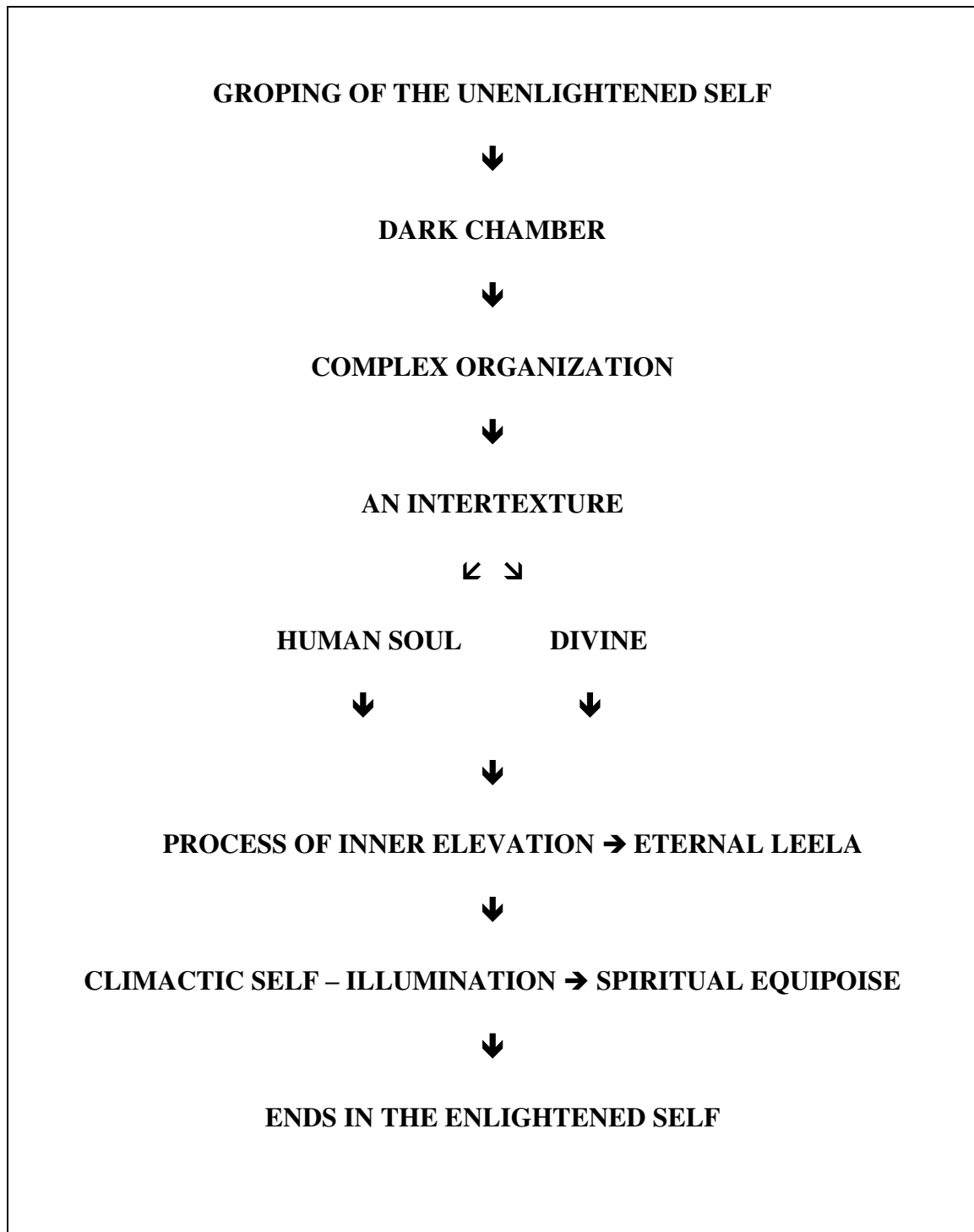
**CONTINUAL UNFOLDMENT**

**“CREATION COMES THROUGH TOTAL DESTRUCTION”<sup>7</sup>**

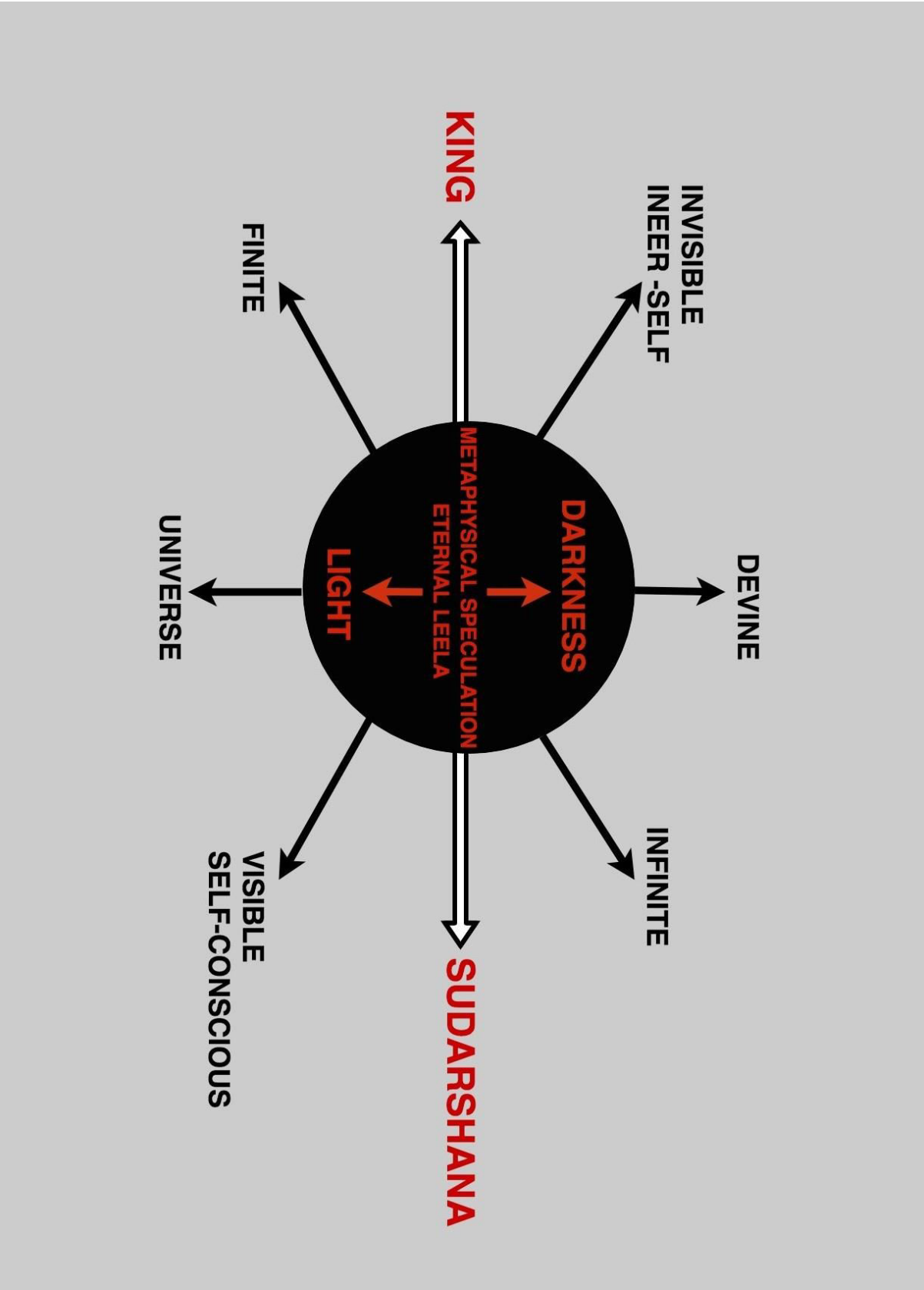
- In Raja Sudarshana sought to see her unembodied King and infatuated by the beauty of appearance put her garland round the neck of the wrong king and thereafter through that error and sin the conflagration that she caused and the terrible war she incited and the great unrest she stirred up within and without she is led to the true union. Creation comes through total destruction.
- Deepest reality can be seen with the eye of the heart alone. There are people who can see outwardly but cannot feel inwardly:



**“PRE-EXISTING BUT UNREALIZED RELATIONSHIP”<sup>8</sup>**

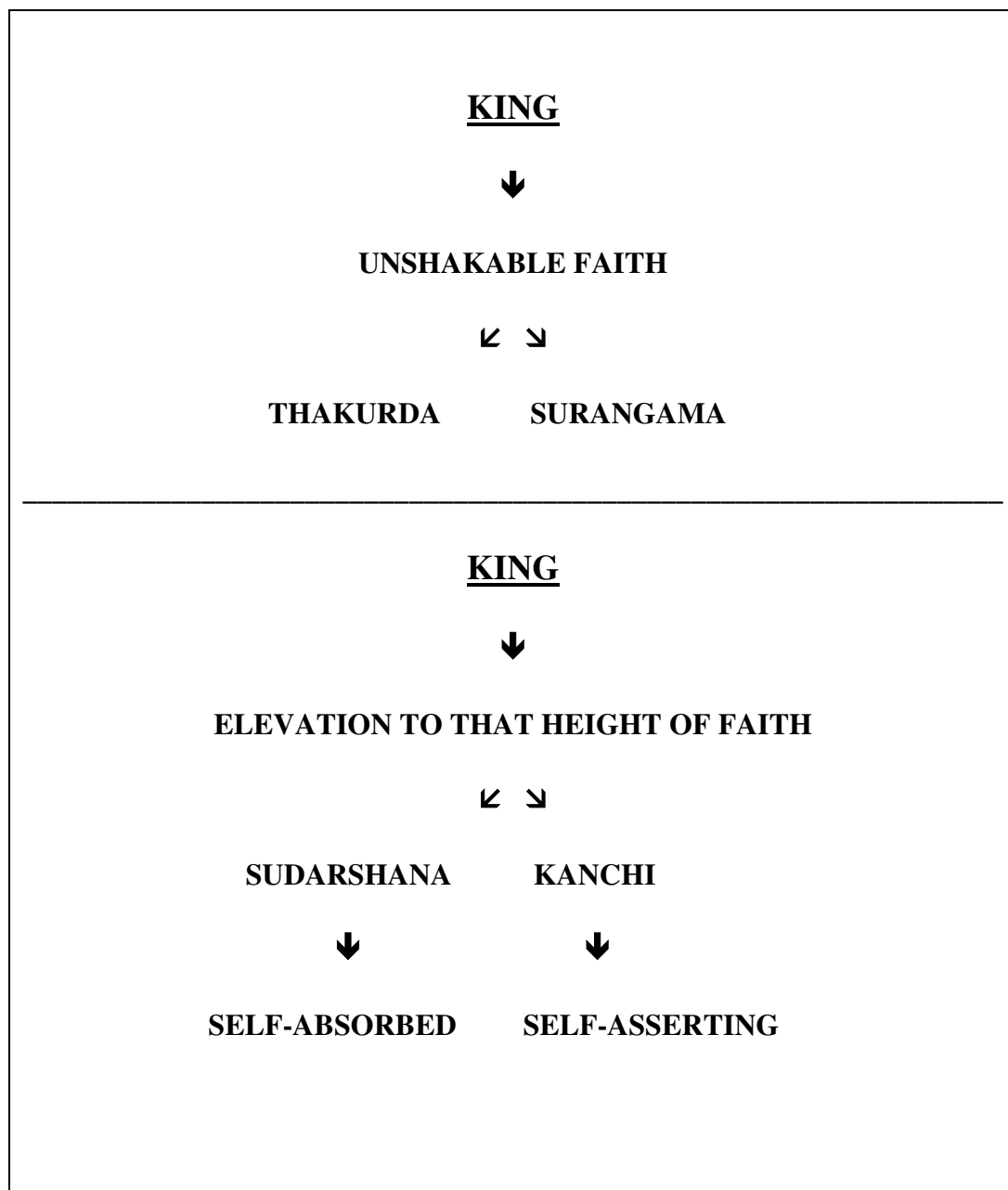


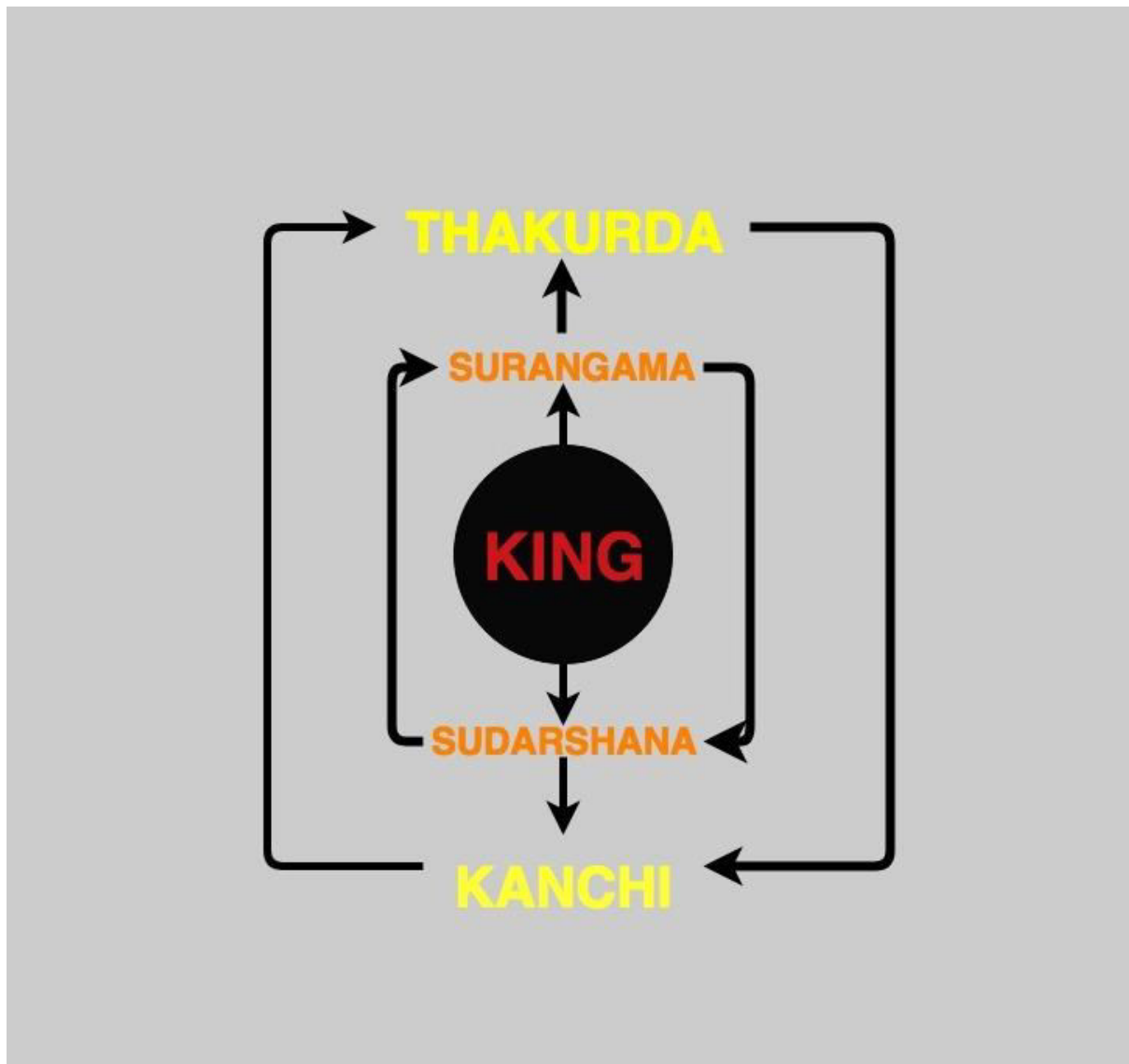




**CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:**

- Raja – The King is no doubt a character but he is also more than a character. He is the Supreme Being, and as such a Universal Concept, the Concept of Divine.
- Sudarshana – Consciousness of the Self there is Separation.



**“RELATIONSHIP OF CHARACTERS”****⇒ Relation Sudarshana and Surangama:**

- Outwardly a maid of honour Surangama is truly a devotee of the King, an awakened soul with unwavering faith in the reality of the Supreme Being. Her thoughts are the thoughts of a mind spiritually attuned to the Divine Spirit. She knows the nature of her self-willed Queen and seeks to prepare her for her union with the King. When Sudarshana complains about the eternal darkness in her chamber she tells her:

**Surangama. My Queen, all your other rooms are lighted--will you never long to escape from the light into a dark room like this?<sup>9</sup>**

- The dialogue of the two focuses on the central issue of the play and as such deserve to be extracted at some length:

**Sudarshana. But why should this room be kept dark?**

**Surangama. Because otherwise you would know neither light nor darkness.**

**Sudarshana. Living in this dark room you have grown to speak darkly and strangely--I cannot understand you, Surangama. But tell me, in what part of the palace is this chamber situated? I cannot make out either the entrance or the way out of this room.**

**Surangama. This room is placed deep down, in the very heart of the earth. The King has built this room especially for your sake.**

**Sudarshana. Why, he has no dearth of rooms--why need he have made this chamber of darkness especially for me?**

**Surangama. You can meet others in the lighted rooms: but only in this dark room can you meet your lord.<sup>10</sup>**

⇒ **Relation King and Surangama:**

**Surangama. Do you not feel a faint breeze blowing?**

**Sudarshana. A breeze? Where?**

**Surangama. Do you not smell a soft perfume?**

**Sudarshana. No, I don't.**

**Surangama. The large door has opened . . . he is coming; my King is coming in.**

**Sudarshana. How can you perceive when he comes?<sup>11</sup>**

- The contrast of the two planes of perception is adroitly and delicately introduced into the conversation of the two.

**Surangama. I cannot say: I seem to hear his footsteps in my own heart. Being his servant of this dark chamber, I have developed a sense-I can know and feel without seeing.**

**Sudarshana. Would that I had this sense too, Surangama!**

⇒ **Relation King and Sudarshana:**

**Sudarshana. Why do you not allow me to see you in the light?**

**King. So you want to see me in the midst of a thousand things in broad daylight! Why should I not be the only thing you can feel in this darkness?**

**Sudarshana. But I must see you--I am longing to have a sight of you.**

**King. You will not be able to bear the sight of me--it will only give you pain, poignant and overpowering.**

**Sudarshana. How can you say that I shall be unable to bear your sight? Oh, I can feel even in this dark how lovely and wonderful you are: why should I be afraid of you in the light? But tell me, can you see me in the dark?**

**King. Yes, I can.**

⇒ **Relation King and Thakurda:**

**We are all Kings in the kingdom of our King.**

**Were it not so, how could we hope in our heart to meet him!**

**We do what we like, yet we do what he likes;**

**We are not bound with the chain of fear at the feet of a slave-owning King.**

**Were it not so, how could we hope in our heart to meet him!**

⇒ **Relation Sudarshana and Suvarna:**

**Sudarshana.** [*Entering*] **King, O my King! Save me, save me from death! I am surrounded by fire.**

**"King".** Who is the King? I am no King.

**Sudarshana.** You are not the King?

**"King".** No, I am a hypocrite, I am a scoundrel. [*Flinging his crown on the ground.*] Let my deception and hypocrisy be shattered into dust! [*Goes out with KANCHI.*]

**Sudarshana.** No King! He is not the King? Then, O thou God of fire, burn me, reduce me to ashes! I shall throw myself into thy hands, O thou great purifier; burn to ashes my shame, my longing, my desire.<sup>12</sup>

### **DRAMATIC CRAFTING OF THE PLAY:**

- Eastern dramatics sensibility, an artistic failure, suffers from rigid adherence to welcome technical innovations of a mode of playmaking that did not fall within certain known patterns of playmaking.
- Dramatization of the spiritual material that goes to the making of the play. Raja – The King is no doubt a character but he is also more than a character. He is the ‘Supreme Being’, and as such a ‘Universal Concept’, the ‘Concept of Divine’<sup>13</sup>.
- King through a “Voice / Sound / Speech Sound” and audio sensory perception of this profound spiritual conception are major theatrical innovation of the playwright.
- The technical problem of anthropomorphic presentation of the invisible divine entity is central of the play.

- It is a play in 20 seemingly loosely linked scenes and 26 songs is well-known for its striking use of songs which further Dramatic action. Songs are perfectly integrated to the thematic idea.
- For example, the first song the key song dramatizing the divine lover's approach to human heart.

**Open your door. I am waiting.**

**The ferry of the light from the dawn to the dark is done for the day,**

**The evening star is up.**

**Have you gathered your flowers, braided your hair,**

**And donned your white robe for the night?**

**The cattle have come to their folds and birds to their nests.**

**The cross paths that run to all quarters have merged into one in the dark.**

**Open your door. I am waiting.<sup>14</sup>**

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