

# Fivth DIMENSION



Vinoth

# Fivth Dimension

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# Chapters

## *Prologue*

- 1.The Birth of Questions
- 2.All Aboard the Train of Thoughts
- 3.Let's Take A Detour around Reality
- 4.Mind Over Matter? Really?
- 5.Bite into a Loaf of Space-Time
- 6.What You Take is What You Give
- 7.An Incessant Need For Control
- 8.The Fate Of Society
- 9.How Do I End This?

## *About the Author*

# *Prologue*

A good conversation is worth a thousand great thoughts!!!

## Chapter - 1

# The Birth of Questions

😊 ... 🤔..... I need to write a book 📖.

'A book?... Well, let's write it then... 😊'

😊 ... Is that optimism I feel?

🤔 'What do you want to write about?'

Ummm.... I don't know. 😞 🤔... there's too much going on in my head right now. I can't concentrate on any specific thing. But, somehow, there's this nagging feeling in the back of my head that keeps saying I need to do it.



We're walking down the road in the evening, with the city bustling all around, colourful lights on buildings cracking on and off... on... and off, cars and bikes blowing their hearts out down the road 🚗



Street food joints are popping open slowly here and there. Restaurants, and shops are turning on their signboards with tiny little lights that shone like stars! People keep rushing around, 🚶 sometimes brushing past me. 🚧 Some to get home to get a good night's sleep, and some having a casual walk.

The low rumbling of the modern world around is loud and clear. The whispers, the loud shouts, the buzz from cars and bikes, all made the scene very lively. Adding the canvas is an airplane ✈️ that zoomed above us with its engines tearing the air. It's a usual sight though, people buy things, some sell, some yell. 👧 👦 Children crying "I WANT THAT!!!", with their mom's and dad's clutching them 🤗. A few couples were walking together, holding hands, some with luuuuv in their eyes 💕.



Uuugh, love... I hate that 😡. You would too, if you keep meeting the wrong people in your lives. Having done so much for them, and still kept getting hurt. And yet, we don't...

'Ummm... you're going negative... 😞'

Anyway, we'll get to that part later... 😞

As for me 😊, my name is-

😊 'No!'

😊 'What?'

👋 'No names.'

Why not? A proper introduction is in order, right? 🤔

'Is it so important 🤔? Let's go with some... 😊 ... generality!'

You mean anonymity 👤?

'Oh yes... that too. Like, make it relatable 😊!'

So, no names at all, ever, or... just for now? 😊

🙌🙌 Yeah... no. No names at all!'

Ohhhkay... 🤔! It would be hard though, don't you think? Explaining things without our name. You know... how can we even differentiate between ourselves?

'We'll find a way... relax 😊!'

😞 Ahaan?

😊 How about, I speak from here?'

What?! That's lame... 😞 Also, it would be hell 😡 while editing the book! Get back to this side, right now 🙌

'As if inserting these emojis aren't hard enough already 😂. Relax...I'll speak from this side 🙌, while you speak from there...'

No! 😞.. Can't you see how stupid it would look like in a paper, or even a screen? 😞

'It would look well on a phone 📱, if you think about it 😊!'

I don't know... 😞

'Most people will be reading from their phones 📱. This will be barely noticeable in those small screens.'

That's not convincing enough 😞.

'It will look like a regular text chat on their phones 🙌!'

A book and a chat aren't the same thing, you know 😞.

'Come on ... It would be fun 🤔 .. different even. Let's do it this way!'

😞 ... Fine... If it doesn't go well, you're moving back here 🙌.

'Anytime 😊!'

So, me, and this... thing... here 👤, we've been friends for a long time now. How long has it been then? Four or five years?

'More than that, I'm sure 😊. Also... "thing" 🤔?'

It's a typical long friendship story... we chat a lot and of course argue a lot, we have our interests in spirituality and my favourite, science. So, our chats usually have no end, unless we come to a mutual agreement. And, no rough words or actions, just soft hearted, light conversations. I'm in my late twenties now, with half my life going through so much trouble inside a terribly pessimistic society 😞. A society that's ready to criticise a person for any effort he or she takes. People gossiping about something or the other, or saying stuff like, "don't do this", "😡 you can't do that". I mean what's wrong wit- 😞

'Alright, alright... Enough with the negativity 🙅... and... enough of "us". You're making it sound like we're in a relationship or something 😂. You said something about writing a book, right?'

No, we're not in a relationship 😞. As for the book 📖... I don't know how to start or where or what to start with...

'But, you have a general sense of what you want to write about, right 🤔?'

Ummm... kind of... 😊

😊 Ahaan... Really?'

Yeah... I want to write about, *evvverything* 😄!! I mean... *ellame. Ellatha pathiyum ezhuthanum!!*

'Really? Ponder about Evvverything?!? 🤔'

Do I sense sarcasm? 🤔

'Maybe. So, Mr. *Wanna-write-about-everything*, what exactly do you mean by "evvverything"? 😊😄 and hey, 🙅 I'm just going by your tone here.'

Well, 'everything' 😊 means all of reality from the beginning of time until now, and life... soul, science... quantum physics... astrophysics, spirituality, purpose-

🤔😊 Purpose!?!'

Yes, Purpose 😊. *Noakkam, kaaranam*... all that.. The Purpose of life, purpose of existence, the meaning of life, the final answer, all sorts of things that have the same answer, the final answer as some say, the *only* answer as some others say and of course, there's no such thing as purpose, as some would say... that purpose, yes!!! 😊

'Singular form? 🤔'

What do you mean, singular form? 😊

'Yeah... *why the purpose and not the purposes??* 🙅'

Purposes? .... Hmmm?? 😞 Is that even possible? How can there be so many purposes or I mean, how can there be so many final reasons?

'We just have to look in different ways 😊. Well... let's begin then 🙅.'

What do you mean, "Different ways" 😞??

'We'll get to that part, at the right time.. 🙌🙌... relax. Soooo... what's the plan?'

Plan? 🤔

'Well, you're the one who wants to write about everything *and* the purposes, so... what's the plan on getting it done 😊?'

Oh, right... 🤔 well, to write about the purpose, we need to write about "everything" first. I could go on and explain what "everything" means, but let's first understand what we're doing right now. Let's pause a little and take a closer look at our present moment in our lives. I'm talking about understanding what we go through right this second! 😊 Yeah... that feeling 🙌 ... feeling our own being and figuring out how we came about here. All the decisions, thoughts, & instincts that led us to this moment... Let's think about them all.

'Wow... That was very moving! You should try a romance novel, maybe 😂!'

Ezhuthiruvoam...! 😄 I mean, yeah... I'll definitely write one someday. But, first... Everything.. We need to understand what's going on, around and inside us.

🤔 ... 😂 . Alright... 😊 how do we do... whatever you just said?'

Well, for starters, we're going to use scientific thought to understand stuff 😊. Let's take a rational, pragmatic approach towards the reality.

'Using science and its theories, you mean 🤔?'

Yes. Let's be absolutely rational and get to the bottom of all this 🙌. Also, let's take up spirituality too. I mean, it provides answers to stuff science can't explain, yet. You 🙌 will be discussing spirituality... okay? 😊

🤔 *Ariviyalum, aanmeegamum?* Science and spirituality? They're like polar opposites. How can we use them both? 🤔'

🤔 Blending science & spirituality seems like an odd task, but, I think it could be progressive. You might say it is unimaginable, or even impossible; but, if we can combine these two, I think we can find the purpose to all this.

'Purposes 😊?'

Purposes.... Think about how these two streams of thoughts began 🤔. Some "when" in the past spirituality and scientific thought had their beginnings right? Let's not jump to the man's discovery of fire, or his sculpting a wheel, or a man sitting down to meditate.

'A quick question here.... Why is it a 'man' and 'his', and not a 'woman' and 'her' 🤔?'

Well, you know... 😄

'Know, what? 😊?'

Well...hmmm 🤔... how do I put it?... 👫 Women don't have enough time to think about anything other than themselves 😄!

'HA 😂... Keep that up and no woman will read the book, let alone kill you for this. 😂 *Seththa da...*'



😁 Not really, they'll definitely read this. They like smart guys, you know. He he 😁... And they're always curious to know how much a man can understand them... 😊. And of course, we'll be giving them a handful of thoughts! Won't we?

'Intha aattathukku naan varala 🙌. Aala vidu saami... 😊 I mean, please leave me out of this.'

Not a chance! 😁 Anyway, scientific thought had an old beginning. It was when man started to shape the reality around him to suit his needs. Like, agriculture, tending to ailments, using fire, wheels, sharp stones and so on. 🧠 But, until then, did we understand the nature & reality around us in some way??

'Of course, we did 😊. That's what spirituality is all about, remember? We used to live in harmony with nature; we revered it, gave *meaning* to it, while gaining some back 😊. Most importantly, we didn't fight with it. We used to live peacefully with it. Problems began only when we started acting against the natural flow. It could be something as simple as diverting a stream of water to a different place, or as complex as a major war between groups. Our sense of nature started with reverence. After a while, fear got added to it.

With time, people began worshipping it. But, we diverted from the original meanings and shrunk our minds, giving way to religions. We call the early methods as primitive or even tribal forms of living. Some of us are prudent enough to call them ancient spiritual practices.'

🧠 Right then. Whenever we think about how, we, as a "species" came through such incredible evolution, all that comes into our minds is that, somehow we did it, and somehow we're here... and, let's go with it 🙌!..... Isn't it?

'It's simple actually... it's called "change" ... "maatram" and it is inevitable 😊.'

Huh... Easy for you to say, but *how* does that "maatram" happen? 🧠 More importantly, *why*???

'That's an intriguing thought 🧠. Like you said, we need to pause a bit and re-feel the moments we went through. That should show us how and why change works. Before we move on deeper, tell me, what *izzz* the book about for you? I mean, why do you want to write all that? What's the point 😊😊?'

The point my friend, is for us, and anyone who reads the book, to understand our purpose of life 😊. I want to write a book that makes anyone who reads it, to understand who they are, and how they came to exist here.

'You mean, for us to feel *our purposes* 🙌? By experiencing our.... existence?'

You're soo intent on feeling it more than understanding it, then? 😊

'Just trying to balance your argument 😊. You're taking science... and you want me to take the other side... spirituality. Also... wouldn't it be easier to say some "one" created us for a reason and that "one" will reveal the same after we live a full life? 🙌 That's what all your religions say, don't they?'

Well, for "one", that would be too easy, and two... what if it's all about something... 😊 hmmm... much more interesting?!?! 😊

'More interesting than finding out if there is a "one" 🧠???

Well, yeah.. 🤔 I mean, What if there's more to all this complexities around us? What if we are missing out the purpose in our search for that "one"? What if we can ignore that factor for a while and try to understand the reality, a little more pragmatically?

'Well... that's interesting... 🤔😊'

You think it's a bit ambitious... Don't you? 🤔 I mean, the book... the purpose.

'It is amazingly ambitious, yes. Nevertheless, let's try 😄!!!'

Hmmm... Right. Let's begin, shall we? 🤔 Like all things begin at some point, our book needs a beginning too-

😊 How about we begin it with questions ?'

Questions!?! You're not planning on boring the readers and make them close the book, are you? 🤔'

😊 Yeah.... Questions... *Kaelvigal*. Questions are interesting things you know.'

Ahaan? Tell that to a schoolkid... 😂

'Questions make us curious 😊. They make us aware of stuff around us. They wake up that black hole in our minds that wants answers, but doesn't know how to find them. Questions like, why are we alive?, what're we doing with our lives?, *what is life?*, why're we doing all this?, what's all this about? They always keep us curious, right? Their answers keep eluding us too 🤔.'

😊 They give us sleepless nights, and sometimes really long showers. Also, scientific thought and spiritual experience teach us different, unique answers for these questions.

'True. No matter how much we think about them, deep down, we just can't get enough. You know that to be true 😊.'

Alright.. why do we ask questions in the first place, then? 🤔 Why can't we just accept things as they are and live without doubting anything?

'You mean, like animals, and birds, and other life forms 🤔?'

Yeah, like animals, why can't we accept whatever is happening to us, act on our instincts, and exist peacefully? 🙌

👉 You gave the answer to your question yourself. We can exist peacefully like animals, but there's nothing more than that. We will just exist, we won't *live*... 😞 Not that animals & birds don't live, they don't fully know they are alive, much less than know why.'

That seems like a valid a point 🤔. Animals don't think of too many questions, they don't search for answers either. They just fight for survival, for food, for a safe place to sleep, for a quiet time to raise their young. They don't and can't, ask why they have to be so...

'Sets us apart from them, doesn't it? We have more responsibility because we are more evolved 🤔.'

Seems like a curse to me 😞. This burden, to endlessly seek answers.

'Well, they say ignorance is bliss, but how long can you ignore something you can't resist? 😊 Why see this as a burden in the first place? Maybe, the answers could be worth all the trouble they take us through.'

Mmm... 😊

'Yeah, life is hard, but not all the time 😊. Yes, it should've happened, but didn't. Yes, we could've made it, but we couldn't. But, we're still here, aren't we? 😊 We're still experiencing our existence, aren't we? At the end of all this, we're not going to make it out alive, no one is. So, we might as well search for the answers while we're at it. We can even wait for the moment we are ready to understand those answers in their full glory.'

That sums up the book, then? 😊

😄. Here's the thing... we humans have evolved ability to ask questions. We don't accept things as they are, we try to change them, everything from *who* we are, *what* we eat, *how* we sleep, *where* we go, *when* to do something, and finally asking ourselves, *why* to do all this? These questions are instinctive, that is, they are natural. We get these questions in our minds without any warning, they just pop out of nowhere, don't they? 😊

And, why exactly do they pop out of nowhere, then? I mean, why? 🤔

'I think they have something to do with our senses 😊.'

Our what, now? 😊

'Our senses... *unavugul*. 😊 The six senses. You know, touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing, and reason. We get so many inputs from our senses every second. And those inputs give rise to a lot of questions.'

Just like that? 😊

'No. It involves many... you know... steps 😄, for our brains to finally shape out a question. Still, it begins with the senses and their inputs.'

And ends with...?? 🤔

'With Intelligence... an evolutionary trait. 😊 You see, the questions we keep asking all the time are the very ones that build up our intelligence. The same intelligence that we keep boasting about all the time.'

Well, everyone knows that intelligence is linked to seeking answers to unfathomable questions 😊. We ask questions first, but only if we manage to find the answers, we are established as intellects, or intelligent.

'No 🤖. It's the other way around. Being able to ask questions is what makes a... *being*, intelligent. Be it a person, or an animal, or any organism for that matter. The thing is, we are used to the idea that finding a solution to a problem, or, answering a hard question makes a person or even an animal, intelligent. We keep valuing the answers alone, but we must place an equal value over the questions too. Because, an answer without a question is pointless.'

I don't get it. 😊

'Well... 😊 I'm giving you an answer now.'

For what? I didn't ask you a question. 😊

'Exactly 😂. The answer without a question didn't make sense, did it?'

Uhhh... 😞

'Anyway, as I was saying, the questions & their hidden values are the actual reason for intelligence in living beings 😊. Being able to formulate a question in our minds is as hard as shaping an answer for it. Of course, the inputs we need for both the processes are the same. But where the *impulses* for each of them come from.. that's where all the differences come from 😊.'

Impulse to ask a question, impulse to answer the question, it's confusing, very confusing 🤔. Slow down, will you?!

'Let me ask you a question... 😄'

Trying to trick me again 😏? No, I won't fall for that! 😊

'No no. Although you must admit it was a good one 😄. Now let's get serious. Just cool down first. Relax, Relax. How do you feel now? 😊'

What? I'm fine. 😊 So, what's the question then?

'I just asked you. 😄'

Damn it. 😡

'So, you're fine, then? 😄'

Nope. Not anymore. 😞

'Anyway 😄. You feel well, atleast health wise. But, you don't keep on saying 'I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine..' to everyone you meet, or anywhere you go, or whenever you feel like saying it, do you? 😊'

Simple, because if I did that, I'll be sitting in an asylum. 😞

'Yes, but that's not the point 😊. You don't feel the need to say how you feel unless you are asked about it. Let's say you're sick and someone asks you how you feel. What do you say?'

I would say, I'm sick and weak, so don't make me kill you by asking me stupid questions. 😞

'Atleast, you think you would say that... When we are whole and healthy, we don't realise the importance of the question, 'how do you feel?' 😊. We instinctively answer "I'm fine". But, we realise the meaning of that phrase only when we actually get sick.'

😞 What are you ranting about?

'I'm just saying that we don't realise the depth of the question "how do you feel?" until we get the need to understand it 😊!'

So, you're saying intelligence is not just about the answers for the questions. It's also about the ability to ask the right questions at the right situations. 🤔

'Exactly! 😄 We need to *the value* the questions if we need to find the answers. The value, it needs to be underlined here.'

Hmmm. 🤔

'Also, take the impulse to ask questions 😊. Why do you think we feel the need to ask any question at all? It's not just a manner of speaking, isn't it?'

Well, it's called curiosity... *aarvam*. We want to know what happened, or how or where... 🤔

'Just like that? 🤔 I could bore you by asking what "curiosity" actually means and where did it come from?'

It seems we want to learn about the situations we are in, and we want to gain all possible information about them 🤔. We have the basic need to gain knowledge about what's happening around us. We can't just guess what happened all the time; we need to know them first hand. And then, there are several variables around us all the time. Different people, different thoughts, different reactions, and so on 🙌.

'That would also mean we constantly analyse our surroundings? 🤔'

Yes 😊. We figure out the facts surrounding the situations. With those facts, we formulate our own ideas, stories, and conclusions.

'That means we always get the urge to questions our surroundings, right? 😊'

Annd, how is this linked to our senses? 😊

'Come now, how does our body take in information 🙋? We touch objects, we see 👁 people doing silly things, we hear 🗣 and talk 😊 senseless gossip. We go to a restaurant with our stomachs groaning and we see our favourite food, like French fries 🍟, or a fried chicken 🍗, or a salad 🥗 taken past-'

Salad 🥗? Seriously? 😊

'... Good for health, so yes. Anyway, we smell the salty, crispy, golden, fried potatoes 🍟 and almost immediately feel its taste in our tongues 🗣. We go into a jizy imagination thinking savouring the foods. Ah, the taste of it all 😊. I mean, the smell and taste of good food, we feel those sensations all the time. But, we seldom question how they add up knowledge into our minds, let alone our experiences. Our body takes up information through our senses subconsciously. We don't even have to be completely aware of the processes, but they just happen, don't they? 😊'

I'm getting hungry 😊 thinking about food. I mean we could grab a quick bite you know. 😊

😄 Yeah, let's eat something.'

Luckily, we are strolling past quite a busy restaurant 🍽🍷, and I think we could finish dinner there. It is a grand place I would say. The building looks huge from the front 🏢. The hotel could occupy a couple floors from the ground level. The spotlights placed on the ground are making the front wall shine and even, glare 🌟🌟🌟🌟. They made it very easy for passersby to notice the hotel while walking along this road.

'That's a great marketing tactic, you know. 🤔😊'

Yeah... makes them stand out from the rest of the shops on the road. 😊😊

'Let's get in there already 😁.'

The exterior wall has been painted white, and the hotel's name pasted over it with golden lettering. I would spell out the restaurant's name, but this guy here wouldn't want that. In all, the place has a warm, welcoming ambience in its front. 🤔 Let's see how it's on the inside...

"Good evening, sir" smiled a gentleman 👤 at the door as he opened it, and I walked in taking his salute with me. And indeed, it is a bit crowded 👨👩👧👦, but there are a few seats here and there. The dimly lit yellow lights 💡💡 around the edges of the ceiling are soothing. The crimson walls and the white tiled floors are giving off a mildly gloomy look about the place. And like he was talking about, some of our favourite foods are strolling past us. I took a quick whiff as they passed by 🍷. We never mind the eyes around us when it comes to food.

'That's what makes us human, doesn't it? 😊'

Ah, the sweet aroma of spices is making me even more hungry! 😋

'Let's wash the hands first. Where's the washroom? Uh... there... 📍'

Yeah, alright 😊

Suddenly, someone sprang up behind me and a deep voice came through my head, asking me "Dine in, or take away sir?" 👤

I'll... dine away? 😊

I'm sure I confused him 😊. I could see it in his face when he said, "how about there?", waving and pointing at a couple of empty chairs near a square table 🙌📍. The spot is at the corner of the large hall. There was already a young couple sitting in the other side, waiting. It's a busy night, by the looks of it. The food here must be great, maybe that's why so many people flock this place. Busy waiters are fizzing past customers, trying to settle them as soon as they see them. Groups 👨👩👧👦 of dinners chatting loudly, clanks of spoons & forks 🍴🔪 over plates, and all that covered the air.

Yeah, that would be good, I said, smiling 😊 back at him and started towards the washroom... but, why did I say, dine away? 🤔



Unlike the hall outside, the washroom is bright with white lights glaring on all sides. The wash basins are wide, and a bit deep. 😊 Good, I would say, for water wouldn't splash over us from the sink. There are separate mirrors for each basin in the room and there are four separate basins in here. I'm a bit of cleanliness freak, you know 😊. I wash my hands with soap, I rinse, and then I scoop up some water & pour it over the faucet, cleaning it before I touch it to close it.

'Are you keeping your hands clean, or cleaning the sink? This ritual of yours keeps getting complex by the day. 😂'

He smiled, looking through the mirror at me. I couldn't help it 🙄. It's become a habit for me you know.

🤔 Speaking of habits-'

No. I'm hungry! Let's eat first.



We've come back into the dining hall and are walking towards the couple. They looked up a bit and I think they stared 🙄 at me a little when we took our side of the table. I think I'm going to avoid eye contact with them 😂 for the rest of my time here. Alright... Let's see the menu 📄 then... Hmm... 😊

👁️ A good range of choices by the way.'

Yeah... Arabian, Chinese, Italian, South Indian, North Indian, Korean. And around twenty or thirty dishes in each tab. That's a lot of varieties! One of the things I like about globalisation is the cuisines 🍴. I mean, sure famous recipes got across kingdoms in the past, yeah. But with globalisation, the tastes and trends keep changing fast and wildly, right? 🙄

'Indeed! 😄'

I'm in the mood for Italian. A plate of pasta, creamy, cheesy pasta! 🧀🍝

'Hmmm.... I want something spicy too. Barbequed chicken 🍗. Make it pepper BBQ.'

As soon as we sat down, a waiter started walking towards us with a tiny notepad and a pen 📝 in his hands. I could have told him, 'I'm not going to order that much..', but it seems more prudent to just order stuff to him.

Mac n cheese and half a plate barbeque, I gave the order and the kind waiter asked, 🧑 "Plain or pepper barbeque sir?"

'PEPPER 🙄!!!'

The sudden rise in pitch almost scared the waiter, not to mention the couple before us 👁️🙄. I had to give an awkward smile at this point 😂. And the waiter went off with the order and a little laugh 🧑.

'Nice ambiance here... could be better though. 🤔🙄'

How so? 🙄

'Well, if the lights were white and the walls creamy, the interior would be bright, and we can see our food as good as we taste it! 😂 Not that I'm judging... just saying...'

Maybe, yeah... But, I like this gloomy look too; you can't figure out anyone's face completely and no one can do the same about us. No disturbances I mean. The last thing I want is someone I know popping out of nowhere and talking all the while I'm trying to enjoy my meal. 🙄

'Alright, the food's going to take a while. Why don't we continue? 🤔'

Yeah... you were saying? 🤔

'Where were we? 🤔 Hmm... The senses, isn't it? Senses and questions... Right. Let's take an example for this. The food we're going to eat. How and why did you order pasta? You could've ordered anything else, like noodles, or rice, or breads with gravies or even a slice of pizza if you are adamant about Italian. Why did you choose this particular dish? 🤔'

Well... 🤔 I just felt like having it. I haven't eaten it in a while, and I was beginning to forget its tastes.

'Just felt like having it? Good, I mean everyone feels that way, right? 🤔 That feeling we have is our body's way of saying it misses the tastes of a particular food. We have seven basic taste groups, right? Like sweet, sour, salt, bitter, pungency as in chillies, astringent as in unripe bananas, and umami.'

Seven? I thought there were just six tastes 🤔. Sweet - *Inippu*, astringent - *thuvorppu*, sour - *pulippu*, pungency - *kaarppu*, bitter - *kasappu*, salty - *uvarppu*. That's how we call the tastes in Tamil by the way.... And, what's that umami? 🤔

'It's the seventh taste, the savoury flavour like in cheese, you know 😊. You can't put the taste in the other groups, thus, a separate taste group. Anyway, these tastes... when did we start to know which is which?'

What? 😊

'We must've learnt it at some point in our lives, right? 😊 As kids, when we tasted any food for the first time, the very first time, we wouldn't have had the idea which is which. But then, we were taught sugar is sweet, salt is salty, lemons are sour, blah blah blah and so on. As we got acquainted with them meal after meal, we formed a general idea about the taste of any food that we eat. Are you with me?'

Yeah... it's the natural order of things. What's the big deal about it? 😊

'The big deal, my friend, is why is there such variations in flavours at all? 🤔 I mean, if all we need to survive is to eat something, we can eat anything we find near us, right? We could have just eaten fruits and raw vegetables without having to think about their tastes. That way we could eat anything and just move on. I mean all living beings, not just us humans, but all of life, it could've been just blunt and tasteless right?'

🤔 Why do we have a tongue or taste buds at all?'

Where would be the fun in that? 🤔

'Fair enough 😊. But we eat food for survival. I mean that's obvious, so don't give me that look. The taste part is an added feature that's meant to ensure we eat the right stuff that ensures our survival. You might've heard of people who've lost their sense of taste or smell and ended up eating rotten food. They would find out later that it was not good for them. For all sense of the sense itself, we use it find out what we "can" eat, and what we "can't" eat, right? We have the need to know "what" we're eating, right? So, in a way, the sense of taste, answers the very basic questions of "what" to eat and "what not" to eat, right?'

We need to eat, to survive, yes 🤔. All living beings, atleast the ones we know of, selectively eat stuff around them. I mean we don't see a lion or a tiger eating grass.

'Exactly. 😊'



And... 😊?

‘Think of how this sense of taste evolved in life forms. Even better... How about we change our perspective about this? 😊 Maybe let’s start from the moment life forms started eating food for survival. What’s the earliest form of life you can think of?’

An amoeba, or a prokaryote, or just a single cellular organism?

‘There are much simpler beings, like viruses 🙌. They just have a genetic material surrounded by a protein membrane, right? Also, for our discussion’s sake let’s put aside the question whether they are completely alive or not.’

What’s the point of writing about questions if you “put aside one”? 😂

‘We’ll get to that later 🙌. The simple life forms, be it viruses or bacteria or the amoebas, do they eat food based on their tastes? No. They ingest whatever they feel that’s around them. And from that “stuff” they take in, they separate the stuff they need for survival and growth. They keep doing this all the time, and keep growing in size. Of course, once they get big enough, they duplicate themselves. They split their body into two, replicate their genes, and finally become two identical entities.’

Cellular reproduction...? 😊

‘Ahaan. Do you think single cellular life forms can taste them? 😊 Taste, as in our modern understanding of the sense.’

No. You need a tongue to do that. 😂

‘Obviously 😊. Life forms as we see now, all these diverse species didn’t just spring out on our planet in a flash. We evolved from those single cellular beings and ended up with our senses. These single cellular life forms first developed the ingestion habit. Later, we multicellular life forms evolved tongues to differentiate our foods. But simple life forms like these bacteria and fungi can only ingest anything they can find, and make it up with what they get. Like how trees, and earthworms take stuff from the soil. They filter sand and water and take what’s necessary into their bodies. Do the earthworms check if the bacteria they eat is salty enough? No, right? 🙄’

Where are you going with this? 😬

‘I’m saying that senses in life forms, evolved with time, the same way complex life forms evolved on our planet. 😊’

Meaning? 🤔

‘Meaning, life, as a process, exists so that it can keep evolving. It evolves constantly to “experience” the reality around it. Experience... that is, *anubaviththal*. It does it in a better manner than it did yesterday, every day. Evolution ensures that life forms get better equipped to survive, and experience this strange and beautiful existence. 😊 To experience something, you need to feel it first, don’t you? This feeling part started in life forms with the simple sense of “touch” ... Be it in a virus, or a bacterium, or even a simpler living structures like the DNAs and RNAs. The sense of touch began in them with a simple matter of associating stuffs like molecules. Stuff that are desirable for their growth. It helped life forms get the stuff they needed to grow, while rejecting the unnecessary ones. Let me demonstrate the “feeling”

phenomenon. Why don't you try closing your eyes, plug in your earphones so you can stop hearing for a few moments...'

What, right now? 😐

'Yeah, and I mean you too. Yes, you, the one reading this! 😄'

We're sitting in a hotel, man! 😐 Besides, people can't read if you make them close their eyes.

'Well then, let them try after finishing this paragraph. Hold your breath now 😬, and here comes the hard part... Stop thinking 😂! Okay, it's hard to stop thinking 😄, but you can try focussing on your skin, or just the tip of your fingers. Wherever you've placed them, just let them be, feel your touch, just slowly.... very.... very.... very gently feel that touch! Take as much time you need. Go ahead, try it 👉'



'How did it feel? 😐 Did you feel that gentle softness in your fingers? Or that slight breeze on your cheeks? It tickled you, didn't it? 😄'

Yeah.... But, waaait a minute 😐. I thought we were talking about tastes. You jumped to touch. Don't think you can fool us by skipping the taste part... 👉

'No... 😂 I'm not trying to skip anything. I just began with the actual order of sensory evolution. Actually, in some ways the sense of taste is a by-product of the sense of touch. More like, an extension of the sense. The first sense to evolve was the sense of touch... *thodu unarvu*. This happened when the single cellular organisms started touching everything around them & began feeling them. That moment in time when life forms began touching stuff, was the one that gave birth to one of the most important phenomenon in our lives 😊.'

😐?

'The question "what?" was born there 😊. That particular question came into existence with the birth of the sense of touch 😊! Touch that is, *thodu unarvu* gave rise to the question what? Or *enna?* in Tamil. You see, by sensing the objects around it, by touching them, life began to ask the question "What is this?". Now, while you were feeling your fingers, you felt that question come up in your mind, right? you asked yourself, "What am I touching here?" right? 😊 and your mind came up with answers too, like it's the handle of the chair, or the soft cover of the sofa or anything of the sort. But the important point here, is the question itself.'

Hmmm... 😐

'Getting interested, are we? 😊'

Just give us the full picture. 😐

'Slowly 🙌.... Let's rinate first. Let's feel the sense of touch. How did it feel to sit there without your other senses giving you an idea about your surroundings? Did you feel trapped? 😊 What else did you feel? Could you feel the time around you? Did you know who was sitting nearby, or you.... could you for that matter smell the taste of the delicious food around us and say where it came from? You can't, right? 😊 I think, this part, the part where we question stuff using our senses has been grossly underrated.'

Hmmm 🤔... go on...

'The first question life asked was, "what?". Early life forms felt the presence of objects around them using their sense of touch 😊. Once they sensed the presence of something around them, they took the stuff in... they consumed them. Not consciously mind you, but as an impulsive reaction. Like an extended action-reaction sequence.'

You can't say the question was born if it was just an impulse. I mean, questions have to be intentional, with... us, or even the life forms expecting the answer 😐. If it was impulsive and unintentional, how can you say an exact question was born?

'It's not an exact question. 😊 An exact question has exact variables in it, doesn't it? Like, when you ask "what is that?" after pointing at something. That is an exact question with exact answers like "that is a plate of shawarma", or "that is a chocolate sizzler". We're talking about an absolute question. The kind of questions that exist independently without any one particular answer. These questions can be associated with all possible answers.'

😐 So, you say "what" was the product of a living organism impulsively touching an object, for its own survival-

'To experience what's around it 😊.'

That would mean all life forms keep asking "what" with their sense of touch? 😐 Is that what you're getting at?

'Yes. They might not know they're asking the question. But, they feel it, don't they? 😊'

... 🤔

'You can even see this happening at the molecular level. What are DNAs and RNAs? They are a bunch of molecules that decided to bond with other similar molecules, right? They do so by accepting a few molecules around them, while rejecting others. This acceptance/rejection process involves some form of "touch" between the molecules. 🙌 With this sense of touch came the question "what" is this?... Call it a side effect if you want, but try feeling the question with the sense.'

How did it happen, then? 😐 I mean the part where the molecules started adding themselves & sticking together while rejecting other molecules.

'They're mostly amino acids, right? They're just compounds of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. 😊'

Yes. But, why is this particular set of elements capable of such a feat and not all the molecules? 🤔 Sure, all elements form compounds and mixtures, but we don't call them living, right? 🙌

'Some people do 😊. There are some who believe everything in reality is alive, and have their own degree of consciousness. Like, a rock has the lowest level of consciousness and us, humans boasting the highest. The plants and trees come after rocks, then comes the animal kingdom. The flora is considered to be the multicellular organisms with the sense of touch alone. A crude form maybe, but they have their own way of using it, don't they? Some cults and religions have gone on to say that the entire universe is a living entity, right? 😊'

Is it true, then? 😐

'In some ways, yes 😄 and in many ways no 😂... And, about that RNA and DNA forming the so-called life and the rest of the compounds not so much... it's the "the spark of life" that brought such a difference. To understand that phenomenon, we'll need to delve into the deepest parts of reality 😁'



'You're supposed to ask, "how deep?", here 😁'

Nope. I didn't hear a thing. 😐😐

'After we're done with the questions, why don't we get into quantum physics 😏? We'll have a... how do I put it??... a simpler understanding of reality there. Also, we'll see how the touch and the other senses work at that level... The bandwidths of waves and vibrations involved in the process and so on... 😏'

Whaaat? Quantum physics? The science part is my thing, dude. Stick to your side. 🤔😐

'The way I see it, science and spirituality are two sides of the same coin 😊. You keep seeing the science side alone. I think I can give a better explanation of reality than you can, using your scientific terminologies and theories.'

Is that a bet? 😄😐

'Yes... I mean no. Well, in a manner of speaking... I'm just asking you to stop observing reality to define it... or, to name its processes... or, to classify them... whatever they may be 😊. Instead, why don't we all experience everything just for the sake of it, you know... as a part of it.'

Basically, science is searching for proofs for definitions and ideas. Only with proofs, we can ensure something is a fact. Feeling our lives is a spiritual thing. Spirituality depends on experiences alone, and experiences tend to vary from person to person. There can't be any surety with spirituality 😐.

'Of course, experiences vary between every living being. 😊 But... the *feelings* behind those experiences... they're all the same, aren't they? Joy 😄, sorrow 😞, pain 😫, pleasures 😊... all those feelings are the same for everyone, right?'

Right. 😐 Well... whatever. Let's see if you can give a good explanation. Ok, Let's continue. Where were we? The question, "what?" started with simple life forms. So, What next?

'Dinner! 😊'

Our food is approaching us. I began eyeing it so greedily and jerked up so suddenly that the couple sitting on the opposite were shocked a bit 😬 watching me get frantic. They almost laughed out loud watching me drooling.

'L - O - L 😂. Come on, are you living in the 18th century?'

Well, atleast they killed their smiles fast 😁. They weren't paying much attention to us all along. I mean who would, if they went out on a date 🧑🏻❤️🧑🏻? Even if the whole world came crashing around you on your date night, would you even mind? 😊 and with me closing my eyes and doing some weird shi..

😬!

...stuff in front of them, they didn't seem to notice me at all. Maybe they didn't notice because I have my glasses on me 😎. Anyway, the food is here...

'I'm HUNGRY....! LET'S EAT! 🍴🍴🍴'

Ok... ok 😊 let's see, pasta, creamy like I wanted, with the gleaming soft cheese. *Hmmm... aaah*, smells so beautiful!

'And the barbe, it looks soooo delicious 😍👉. That caramelised crispy skin is blowing spicy steam into my face. It just came off the stove it seems. Wow, I'm in heaven 😊!'

It is *spiiiicy!* 😬 Owww... The chilli is stinging my face. The spice is burning my nose! 😬

'The pasta, *per favore*.... Hmmm... good.... it's really, *really* good! 😊 Is it tasty because we're hungry or, are we getting hungrier because its tasty?'

Who cares? Just eat dammit! 😂

'A bit of both then! 😂'

The food tastes 🍴 so good! Maybe because I'm hungry, or maybe it's just plain good. I am gobbling up the pasta two spoonful at a time. That, with us tearing the chicken 🍗, biting & pulling it vigorously, we didn't give a damn about table manners 😊. In fact, we didn't even mind the couple before us. If you were to watch us eating, you would describe us as a very wild beast that's eating after a week! 😂

'Why don't you describe the tastes now? 😊'

What? 🍴😬

'We are going to talk about the sense of taste next.... So, go ahead... describe the feelings of the tastes. 🍲 😊'

You explained them already, didn't you? 😬

'No, no... I just mentioned them. I want you to describe how these tastes feel like. 😊'

How does that help with... questions? Yeah... how does feeling tastes help with your questions? 😬

'Well, it could help us understand why the sense evolved after the sense of touch. You know, the taste sense is the second to evolve in life forms. Taste, that is, *suvai unarvu* must've evolved for some reason, right? If we are to find that reason, we need to feel the tastes firsthand 🙋.'

You're vague, you know... very vague 😐.

'Just describe how you feel while you go through each of those seven tastes 😊.'

Alright... ok... so how do we do this? I mean.... How do we explain the feelings? Sure... I can describe the tastes.... because I'm science guy, yeah, I can describe..... but I don't know how they feel like 😐. Actually, it's your 🙋 job isn't it? I'm talking while chewing, so don't mind the gaps...

'Well.... it can be done..... It's quite hard, but possible 😊.'

... gulp... Before that.. I have a question about the sense of touch 🙋. So, that sense made life ask the question, "What?", right? What was around it? What should it do with what it found beside it? and so on. You said the sense started with simple living organisms, like bacteria, that is, single cellular organisms. But, there are complex organisms right now that only have the sense of touch, like plants and trees. 🤔👉

'These life forms have evolved past the first sense. 😊 You know, they could be evolving their second sense right now. The plants and trees don't necessarily absorb everything through their roots, do they? They only take in water and some select nutrients for their growth. They have evolved selective absorption techniques. That process is the essence of the second sense... the sense of taste.'

Also, the plants and animals we see now evolved only recently... after the fifth mass extinction event. What of the organisms that lived before? Like, the dinosaurs, or even the various reptiles and amphibians that lived before them? 🤔

'Whatever the period maybe, the sequence in which the senses evolved are the same 😊. That is, touch came first, followed by taste. Then came the smelling sense and eyesight followed it. the fifth sense was hearing and the sixth sense, is obviously...'

Reason 🤔. I'm sure I'm asking this for everyone, how can you say that is the exact order in which the senses evolved 🤔. I mean, it could've changed or it could've been different, right?

'Maybe, it could've been different, or maybe it is so in another planet 🙋. But, in our earth, this order seems to be working well. We can understand this order better if we see the questions that rose along with the senses. I'll give you the full picture before you decide on this order of senses 🙋. The reason for this order is, like I said before, life has to keep evolving to experience reality in a better way than it did yesterday. It needs better senses to experience better 😊. And it needs to ask better questions to understand better.'

That would mean... 🤔

'With better senses... life forms can explore more of the reality around them 😊.'

And... Hold up. I'm sorry... can't concentrate with all the food... one moment... just a bite.... 🤔👉

😄 As I was saying... evolution of life is a constant process. It happens both physically and mentally. Physically, it means growing a body with different parts. Mentally, using the body parts to form an idea of

the reality around it. With senses, life forms record their experiences as information inside them. 😊 This info is what gives rise to understanding... and ultimately, knowledge. In other words, experience and knowledge complement each other. So, in our case, in the beginning life forms began asking “what” with the primitive sense of touch. Consequently, the next step was to evolve the sense of taste and to ask the question-<sup>1</sup>

Where? 🤔

‘... What not? 😊’

Whaaat? 😞

‘No, “What not?” 😊. Not means *illai*, or *indri* in Tamil. So, the question could be *athu indri*, or *yedhu indri*, or *enna indri* etc..’

How? 🤔

‘Simple. 😊 The need for efficiency while searching for food... It prompted life forms to start filtering stuff before they put them into their bodies... 😊’

😞

‘I’ll make it simpler. While eating your food, you suddenly bite into a stone. What do you do? 🤔😊’

*Soathula kall-a?* I would spit it out, obviously... 😞

‘Why didn’t you just bite into it? Maybe it’s just a soft rock or even a seed from a fruit or vegetable. Those stuff aren’t harmful, right? 😊 You can just swallow them... 🙌’

I get where you’re going. So, you’re saying that the sense of taste evolved to regulate consumption of food? To filter stuff... to do it better? 🤔

‘Exactly. Like that selective absorption in plants and trees 😊. When the early life forms repeated that process of rejection & approval over and over again, they became more efficient at it. 😊 They developed a general idea about the stuff that went through them. That is, they began differentiating between what they wanted and what they did not want. Thus came the question, “what not?”. When this sense of differentiating stuff evolved further, it gave way for other life forms to feel different tastes.’

As in, stones taste yuck and meat tastes yum?!? 🤔

‘Kind of like that. 😊 The taste sense wasn’t as diverse in life forms like now. If you think about it, organisms like worms and termites use just the first two senses to survive. But in the beginning, it was just a vague form of feeling, “this stuff is ok 👍” and “this stuff is *not* ok 👎”. Basically, life forms began differentiating between stuff they needed and the stuff they didn’t need. They didn’t know they were raising the questions, though. They were going by their usual instincts to search for food. They consumed stuff that felt digestible, or tasty even...’

Like how amoeba absorbs other microbes into itself? 🤔

‘How would the amoeba feel if it can sense the bad parts in its food beforehand? 😊 If it did, it wouldn’t consume it in the first place, right?’

It would just bite around the stuff like we bite around an apple... leaving the middle part..? 🤔

‘Yes... before the sense of taste evolved, life forms would consume anything. They would extract the nutrients from the stuff they consumed. They couldn’t differentiate between organic compounds like proteins & carbohydrates and inorganic stuff like sand & stones. 😊 So far, the touch sense helped them feel them both. But, with the sense of taste they could feel the difference between them. They used the taste sense to feel if the stuff could be useful for their survival or not.’

And, the question “what not?” evolved out of those situations, you say? 🤔

‘Yeah. Take worms 🐛 and mites... they come across various stuff as they move around. Their sense of taste helps them find out whether something can be digested or not. When they keep consuming certain types of stuff, their bodies form a habit to consume those stuff alone. They grow accustomed to that stuff. As for the other stuff, they would move away from them instinctively. This is the same as saying “I want this”, and “I don’t want this”, right? 😊’

Hmmm... 🤔🤔

‘Over time, life forms evolved complex body parts, like our tongues 🦷, and gave these variations. Like, right now, see the tastes we go through... the chilli in the bbq gives of this hot flavour that stings our tongue and burns our mouth, but still keeps us wanting more 🤔. we go ‘ufff...’ and ‘issss...’ and yet we don’t give up, do we? 😊’

It's a good thing we got this pasta, I mean, the creamy taste is so soothing after the bbq bite 😊. What do you call this taste again? 🤔

‘Umami. 😊’

Describe it will you? 🤔

‘It’s that taste you get when you eat raw tomatoes 🍅. Like, there’s some kind of raw flavour to it but you can’t put it with the others.’

So, you can’t describe it? 😊

‘It’s reeeaaaally hard to describe a feeling! 😊’

I told you, didn’t I? 😊 Relax... people will understand. They’ll get the feeling when they taste these foods... 🙌

‘Well then, maybe you can tell us what is what in the taste business though... 😊’

What’s there to tell? We’ve all tasted sugar, *inippu*, which is sweet and we have tasted honey 🍯 too, which is a lot sweeter. And then there are fruits like mangoes, bananas, jackfruit. Hmmm.... Jackfruit... its soooo sweet. You should dip it in honey and taste it... it’s amazing I tell you 😊! So, there’s different types of sugar molecules, like sucrose, fructose, glucose and so on. And each food has a different combination and percentage of each of these sugar types 😊. The only difference between regular sugar and honey is that in sugar, the glucose and fructose molecules are bound together to become sucrose.

‘Uhhh... 😊’



-While in honey, these molecules stay independent and give both their flavours independently 😊! In fruits... there are other molecules too, like vitamins and proteins and minerals. They add their unique tastes to them-

'Save it for later 🙅, now, the salt, *uvarppu*? 😊'

A bag of chips? 😂 or sea water..

'Yeah... everyone, and I mean everyone who has been to a beach must have tasted sea water accidentally.

Atleast once in our lives we do that. 😂'

Some do it on purpose, just to see how it tastes. 😊

🤔

No, I didn't. 😁

😂 ... Anyway, sodium chloride, isn't it?'

Yeah... 😐

'What about the other chemical compounds? Like, calcium chloride, copper sulphate and so on...? 🤔'

Chemically, there are different varieties of salts. They all have their own tastes about them. Yes, different tastes, like MSG has that umami taste they say. That raw fish taste, is it? 😐

'Raw tomato, raw fish... yeah.. 😂'

I read that lead diacetate is actually sweet. But it causes lead poisoning 🤢. So, let's just stick around with sodium chloride. And, don't ever go into any chemistry lab and eat that bright blue, strangely attractive, incredibly beeeeeeautiful, copper sulphate 😍.

👉 You have a fetish for copper sulphate. 😂 Also, I think it's cupric sulphate.'

Anyone who loves blue has a fetish for it... 😂

'So... you feel the salty taste when you swim on the beach. Right 😊. Let's move on...'

😊 Next comes, bitterness that is, *kasappu*.

'How about coffee? 🤔'

Make it raw... And, bitter melon. Yuck! 🤢 we had it this afternoon and I can still feel its taste. Oh... yuck... it's killing the mac n cheese in my mouth 🤢.

'Well, stop thinking about it then 🤔.'

Wha..? Why don't YOU try stop feeling the taste?!? 😐

'Alright, alright... bite into the bbq 🍌. The spice should shake it off.'

Chillies dominate this spice mixture in the bbq. The stinging, sharp chilli 🌶️ that burns our mouth. That's what is *kaaram* or *kaarppu*... or in English, pungency. 🤢

'What's that compound in then? 🤔'

Capsaicin, I think 😊. That's chilli. And the bitterness is... ummm... I don't know 🤔.

'Well, look it up in the web. You need to be sure of what is what while writing a book, you know. Atleast now, it's easy now with the internet. It sure must've been tedious before the internet. Going through tons of books and journals to understand every single topic we needed to learn... damn 😞.'

"Bitterness chemical compound" 🙌 I typed into the search bar and the results popped up on the screen 🤔

'Denatonium, Phenyl....thio...caarbamide 🤔. Can't see any one specific compound. A lot of them. Do you notice that they're all mostly C-H-N-O based?'

Yeah... carbon, hydrogen, and stuff... that's how life evolves in our planet, idiot... we are based on these elements, aren't we? Maybe a few more, like sulphur, and phosphorous are involved too. So, we take stuff that are filled with all these elements... oh... 🤔

'Yes 😊... our bodies evolved to filter these specific compounds. They learnt to identify them using our sense of taste. What to eat, and what not to eat... those are the questions that came with the sense 😊.'

Ahaan... So, what about *pulippu* and *thubarppu*, then? Sourness and astringency? 🤔

'As for sourness/*pulippu*, lemon, oranges, the citric types should be good. You know, the types of fruits that make you cringe 😞. They shrink our tongues while the saltiness dries it and we give of a variety of facial expressions. Remember that video of babies tasting lemons for the first time? 😂'

Yeah 😂... That was sooo cute 🥰... And, puppies tasting lemons was hilarious. 😂

😂. And *thubarppu*/astringency, it's in unripe fruits, like raw bananas, or even, raw vegetables. This taste makes our throats feel like they're dry. You know, when you bite into a banana thinking it is ripe & you realise it's not and you get that dry feeling in your throat after you swallow it. That's it.'

Right ... 🤔 📱. The google server seems to be collecting a lot of questions and answers, don't you think?

'Yeah 🤔... they're adding all the information they can to their AI. They are trying to make it think. 🤔 I think they're aiming to make their AI sentient, like us.'

Huh... 🤔? Make their AI think? How? Sentient, as in, intelligent and observant like us? 🤔

'Yeah... They are collecting all possible questions from people through the internet 😊. Also, they're trying to collect their answers too. Their OS & apps are designed to collect any possible data through the internet. From facial expressions that reflect emotions, to smarty pant guys like you jumping in to answer questions in any public platform 😊... pictures, videos of people showing gestures about emotions... All of them. They could be trying the reverse approach, the opposite of how nature evolved intelligence. It's a tedious process by the way, and it's won't be fruitful. 😞'

What? How can you be sure about that? 😞

'Well, to simply put, there's no intelligence without feelings 😊. And, I mean it literally. You only understand a situation when you feel your presence in it. This is one of the purposes of existence by the way. Any life form, or person, gains knowledge about the situations they are in, by feeling them first 😊. Do you think a machine made of metal or silicon can feel like we do? Sure, you can calibrate your sensors to the highest degrees possible. But it's not the same as feeling it with our bodies, is it? So, at the end of the day, the so-called AI.. any ones we see or hear about... they will only be servers that can correlate questions with any possible pre-recorded answer. 😊'

They've built AI apps... 😊

'It's just a show. Just a bunch of super computers that can correlate answers fast. They feel nothing, they have no purpose to grow, nothing to search for 😊. If you think about it, AI doesn't even know or feel it exists. It's just a program. It can be made to say it exists, but no... it is not intelligent. The AI we see now are merely programs that can make computing easier. Think of it like the shift from typewriters to computers... sure, it led to changes across all sectors, but they are still dependent on human directives, aren't they? 😊'

So... Bottomline me here... sentience in AI... is it possible? 😊

'Hmmm 🤔 ... I can't say it is impossible... everything happens at its own pace 🤖. But, right now, with this approach it can't be done. May be there are other ways in the future...'

Okay... so, Terminators aren't going to barge into the hotel anytime soon 😂. Thank goodness! Now, let's not get side-tracked. Back to the topic at hand.

People have a vague idea about foods and their tastes. Yes, you heard me right... Vague 😊. The only time they taste their foods is when they go to a fancy restaurant where chefs put a tiny morsel on a plate & ask them to pay a hefty bill for it 😂. Wait a minute, when we taste the food, we also get a deeper need to know what it is, right? Like, what taste it is, the exact taste of the food.

'Yeah... that means evolution is working well with us 😊. You see, generality gains exactitude with time 😊. And, it's a never-ending process too. The question "what", which is vague in the beginning, becomes more exact with successive senses. Like, when you put food into your mouth, you are curious first, to know "what" it is. When you taste it, you get the ideas about what's in it and what's not in it. This process however, began with simple life forms. With time & evolution, we complex organisms can ask these questions to one another and answer them precisely. 😊'

So... with better senses, better questions, and better answers. Senses evolve in every diverse way possible, just as life forms do. Or, am I phrasing it oddly? 😊

'Evolution of senses results in evolution of life... 😊'

Ok... so, the senses, do they evolve vertically or sideways too? 😊

'🤔 What do you mean?'

😊 I mean like do the senses keep gaining precision as they go move forward? Or, do they diversify within themselves?

'Both 😊. That diversification is what we see as sensations. *Kilarchi... kilarchigal*, in Tamil... I think. You know, how we feel heat & cold with the sense of touch. Why don't you explore the sensations before we get to the other senses? 😊 Go on...'

Well, if senses keep evolving all the time, they have diversify too 🤔. That means sensations have to evolve out of them. The sense of touch began as a simple "this" or "that" response. It could've evolved further to identify the temperature of the surroundings. Life forms must've begun sensing whether the environment around them was hot, or cold, or warm. Also, who could forget pleasure, and pain? They're part of touch too, aren't they? 🤔 And, the varying degrees they come with. Aches, pains, excruciating pains...

'...or pleasance, delightful softness 😊 ... or even the orgasmic "Aahhh.." 😄😏. Speaking of orgasms...'

NO! Nooooo.... NO! Atleast not now! 🤔 Wiiiith sensations, life forms could feel the reality better. They could also feel more precise questions, and seek apt answers for them. Is something too hot to touch?, or is a place too cold to move into? Of course, all this happened with complex multicellular organisms. 🤔 I mean, they have several organs to perform these different functions. From our point of view, when we touch something hot, like boiling water, we not only know what it is, but also what state the water is in. We also know "how" hot it is too, right? When does the "how" come, then? Also, what sensations does the taste sense give off?

'The varying types of tastes are the sensations, aren't they? 🤔 At the beginning it was a simple matter of rejecting unacceptable stuff. With multicellular life, the taste sense evolved "sideways" and gave rise to these tastes. As for the "how" question, it came with the sixth sense, a long way from these two senses.'

Right... So... "what" and "what not?". What next? 🤔

'The bill 😊!'

Yeah... we finished our plates and-

'Let me swipe the spice out of the plate 😄!'



'What? I love that part 😊!'

No one's complaining. Half the time everyone wants to do it, but they *feeeeel* shy, you know 😊. We had a good taste of our food and gave a good sense to taste. Great! What's the time now?

'9.50... close to 10 🕒. A slow walk, maybe? 😊!'

Yeah... I'm feeling full 😊. Let's wash the hands and settle the bill. The couple before us are still eating 🤔. Damn... 😞 I mean, I've done it too, but watching it seems soooo ughhhh... 😞.

'Maybe if you hadn't broken up with your girl and were in a relationship now, you two would've been sitting like this couple here 😊!'

Maybe... but I didn't make that choice, didn't I? 🤔 What about you and your girl? Remember what she said? And, you know what happened with me five years ago, right? 😞'

'Can't forget... 😞 how could I? It's just been about six months, but it still feels like yesterday 😞!'

Wow... Five years... I remember talking with her while we broke up. Yeah... She said, 👤 "It's not gonna matter in five years. You'd move on, I'd move on... we wouldn't even remember anything...". 😞 I don't know about her, I can never forget that day, even though I've forgotten most part of what happened back then. It's just a vague memory now 😞. But I can't forget how I felt back then. I was so much more happier! Very idiotic, very naïve, but happy. We did put each other in a lot of trouble though, I for the most part 😞.

'I didn't give my girl any trouble 😊. I was careful not to make any mistakes... but she wasn't... she wasn't willing to accept me 😞.'

You're soft. You've grown too soft if you ask me 😊. I mean, you needed my character to handle the situations you were in. You needed to be spontaneous, but you kept thinking about what's right and what's wrong every time you spoke with her 😊. And before you could come up with a reply, she made up her mind and left you hanging for words 😡.

😞 Your character? *Your* character? Come now... we both know how your relationship ended up with "your character". You won't even think before you talked with your girl 😞. You were so obsessed with proving yourself right, you wouldn't even listen to her 😞. This "your character", is what I saw in my girl 😡.'

It was the first love for me and obviously, for your girl too 😞.

😞

Let's just move on... The weight is too much. It's dragging us 😞.

😞 Tip the waiter a twenty. I need a walk.'

We walked out with the dear waiter smiling behind us. I mean, the twenty wasn't that much, maybe the others wouldn't give any.. 😞.

'Usually, you give ten 😞 .... Why is it still crowded? What day is it? 😞'

Sure enough, the street seems busier than usual. I whipped out my phone and realised it's a Saturday.

'That's why 😞. The one night the modern society is truly happy about.'

Yeah... Get crushed all week, stretch out one night, relax the next day, and start all over again 😞.

'This system is complicated 😞.'

You mean, reckless? 😞

'No.... I mean, it is reckless, but it has its purpose 😞. It's complicated though.'

Slowly turning people into mindless machines following orders is a purpose? 😞

'What we yearn is what we get. Sometimes, what we fear is what grows up. The more we think about something, even if we don't want it to happen, that's what we give power to come into our lives 😞.'

So, you're saying people *want* this socio-economic system to keep crushing them!? 😞

'They do ask for it, don't they? 😞 After all, they keep running after more and more money. They fix targets and they reward each other for running fast, don't they? Instead of encouraging people to do work, they make them compete with each other to finish it 😞. The system *per se* is not entirely bad. I would say it is very much necessary, but there are a few things that can be improved 😞.'

Like? 😞

'Like rewarding creativity over obedience, and smart work over hard work 😊. Not that hard work is unnecessary. But we can get more work done by encouraging people to work smart, than by punishing them for their delays and mistakes. 🤔 There are too many rules and regulations, & long lists of instructions everywhere. Most of them are constraining people from thinking independently 😞. They do so in the name of organisational ethics, company policies, governmental rules, and so on.'

So, do you want to change the system, or do you want to improve it, or do you want to throw it away altogether? 🤔

'The way I see it, it's gone off-balance. It needs some tweaking and tinkering.... But... it has to be done from the inside.... You can't get over its top and expect the changes to filter down. Nor can we single-handedly make people change by asking them politely. People need to be made to think and feel what they're doing.. 😞'

I thought that's what we were going to do that through the book... 😞

'Um... we'll show them the way 😊. It is up to them to change. If they themselves aren't willing to make the shift, then no one can help them 😞.'

🤔

We started walking into the street and the crowd around us kept bustling as usual. The party mood was clearly visible in their faces 😊. Some families were joyous to have come out 🧑👩👧. Shopping, chatting, laughing, they were all seeming happy. At least for one night, let's put aside the problems, they, I mean, we would think, right? 😊 Suddenly and very suddenly, there came a loud roar of thunder from above. A sharp streak of lightning ⚡ followed it, branching beautifully across the dark clouds.

'Like a silver tree painted on a black canvas 😊! A walk in the rain. Couldn't be merrier 😊.'

And before we knew, it started drizzling 🌧️🌧️🌧️. A cool breeze blew around us and after the hot meal and the even spicier discussion, this kind of feels good, you know.

'Yeeeeeeaaaah. 😊 It's coooold.'

I love walking in the rain. So much so I seldom use an umbrella, even on a thunderstorm.

'... "seldom use an umbrella"? 😂.... Can't you think of anything else to say? 😂'

😂 At least it gave you a laugh...

'Do me a favour. Don't, I mean don't put that in the book. I'll be the only one laughing 😂.'

Too late. So anyway... let's continue. All the other bullsh..



...it can wait. Atleast, like you say it, until the right time 😊.

'Right... so... the next question and the sense that gave way. What do *you* think came next? 😊'

The sense of smell?

'I meant the question. 😊 But yes, the sense of smell came next. *Nugarvu... nugarvunarvu.*'

How about "Where?" 🤔 ... *yengae?*

'Careful, people might think we're making a guesswork here 😊.'

I'm right then? 😊

'Yeah... and before you ask how, it's the same reason as before... aiming for exactitude 😊. To be more precise while searching for food. The physical bodies of life forms grew to adapt better for the environment they were living in. This way, they managed to grow new organs to feel the environment around them... the olfactory organs... noses & stuff 📌 mainly. We have a nose, but we can't say the same to a butterfly, right? It smells through its feet. Come to think about it, what if our feet smelled and we had no nose?'

Well, our feet smell all the time 😂. Especially when you're wearing a sock that hasn't been washed in ages. 😂 And don't offend butterflies, they may kick you with their noses 😂.

😂 Or an elephant may crush us with its nose?'

Yeah 😂. But, I get your point though. Whatever the organs are, the sense of smell came as a predominant effect with them. With the first sense, organisms went about their surroundings consuming anything that came along their way. With the first & second sense, they selectively took in stuff that came along their way. But, with the sense of smell, organisms began to move in search of food & stuff, purposefully. Isn't that it? They began feeling "where" their food was, and started moving towards it.

'Yes 😊.'

Organisms began exploring their environments for food. I think this is the point where an important process in life forms began 🤔.

'Ahaan?... what's that? 🤔'

The difference between predators and preys. Yeah... you might ask me; doesn't the earthworm eat microbes in the soil when it sucks in the mud? Isn't that predation? Sure, it does, but not intentionally, right? 🤔 It's by accident.

'Or... by design, maybe... 😊'

Predation is when an organism purposefully searches for another organism to eat. This is actually a much effective way to collect nutrients, right? "That moving thing looks delicious, let's just eat it", or, "where is that delicious smell coming from?". I think laziness started here too 😂. Also, the sense of taste could have gotten better alongside as predators started liking the hunts 🤔.

'Maybe, we should stop thinking like a human 🤔. It's much simpler, actually. When life forms began smelling stuff, they didn't know the difference between other beings and inanimate matter 😐. All they needed was something to ingest and survive. This pushed some life forms to chase after stuff that smelled good, and consume it. Usually, any life form would chase after stuff that is smaller in size than itself. It's easier to gobble this way. From the smaller being's perspective, it looked like being hunted by a larger life form. Obviously, the larger being wouldn't try consuming anything bigger than it, because it could become their prey 😄. Also, it is easier to gobble up, or fight with smaller beings than large ones. The hunts went on to form the food chain we see now. It started the whole cycles in ecosystems. With so many organisms evolving side by side, the process ended up with what we see in the wild.'

Just the wild? 😊

'So, with the sense of smell, life searched for food by searching "where" it was 😊. With no eyes & ears the three sensed organisms got efficient by the day, slowly & patiently.'

What simple forms and how? Give some examples will you? 🤔

'Take ants 🐜🐜🐜. They have three predominant senses. The first two, and the third, sense of smell, which they use to communicate with their group, to move in a line and so on.'

Oh, yeah 😊. Pheromone trails... They leave a scent behind them while moving so the others could catch up. Also, they have simple forms of eyes. It's like a bunch of LEDs sticking together taking pictures of their surroundings, frame by frame.

🤔 They then put them all together to form an image?'

It's kind of like our earliest cameras taking black and white pictures 😊. A vague picture of what's in front of them...

'Compared to them, our eyes must be like digital cameras with a lot of megapixels resolution 😲.'

Ours... The exact number is, they say, 576mp 🤔.

'Anyway, ants, they have the first three senses. It seems the fourth sense has a mild beginning in them. We can't say the same for all insects. 🤔 Like the first two senses, the sense of smell kept diverging too. We can see that process as more and more varieties of smells became detectable by life forms. Right now, we humans, who boast about having the sixth sense, have only a decent range of smelling capacity. Of course, some smells are extreme... both ends. Too mild or too sharp. Like the sweet smell of freshly baked bread 🍞 or popcorn.'

Or, the stench of a trashcan we're about to walk into 🤢. How the hell did a trashcan get onto the pavement? Aghhhh... the rain's spreading the miasma around. Can we cross the road or something?

'Yeah. The rain's getting thicker. Let's find a roof until it slims down...there 🙋 ... there's a roofed bus stop on the other side. Even better, it has some empty seats too... 😄'

Ah... good spot. Sure enough, the rain is getting heavier by the second 😐. It seems the clouds have decided to get it over with. But we aren't complaining, though 😊. Like I said, I love rain 🌧️! The traffic is getting slower



and thinner, with only a few cars 🚗 occasionally creeping through the road. The street lights in the middle of the road 🛣️, are all gleaming brightly in an order. This, plus the rain are giving of an oddly beautiful view. The rain drops seemed like little drops of sunlight falling from the darkness. As the rain ☁️☁️☁️ got heavier, they turned into cold balls of fury that fell out of the darkness above, making us run across the road to the other side.

'Thank goodness we didn't slip and fall down 😄!'

We quickly hopped to the roofed-up bus stop 🏃, and a few two-wheelers popped up out of nowhere and filled up the little space before us. As the rain grew thicker some people who were walking along the road-side, joined us in our shelter 👤👤👤👤.

'I'm feeling a sense of competition growing here... to capture the seats 😄!'

And out of nowhere, all the people there immediately jumped forward to the seats 🏃🏃🏃.

'Drat... we couldn't get a spot 😞!'

Damn! Just-u miss-u 😞.

'We'll stand. No probs... 😄!'

Almost all of us in the bus stop began laughing at that little hustle we just had 😄. We moved on to a corner and slouched to the pole there. It's a good view from here. The rain seems mesmerizing... 😍.



😍 'Wow... It's beautiful, isn't it?'

The sound of raindrops falling on the trees around us gave of a beautiful buzz, like *shhhhhhh*... and BOOM, a loud, a really loud thunder followed by a ⚡ gave us all a shock. One man standing at the other corner moaned "Great, I'll never get home 😞!".

😞 It was one of these rainy days I met her. It was an evening though. I was drenched all over, water running down from my head to my chin. I wiped the water off my face and that's when I saw her turning around from under an umbrella. She was walking ahead of me and somehow sensed me 👁️👁️ staring at her from behind. Wow... she was pretty 😍! I mean, I have seen her before that, but from a distance though. I didn't mind her back then. But that particular evening it seems, was designed to start killing me 😞😞!'

😞 Every single time it rains! Come on, I've been through worse and you know that very well.

😞!'

Around us, the people are growing restless.. some of them even started fussing 😞. Some groaned about how long the rain's going to pour. What has happened to the society these days? 😞 Can't people enjoy the

rain? I mean, it's not something you get whenever you want it, you know... The rain, as though it heard their thoughts, began slowing down and I could hear a few sighs of relief around us 😊. Slowly, one by one, they started to disperse from the spot. They didn't seem to mind the light drizzle that kept sprinkling from above ☁️.

'Good 😊. I need some alone time.'

Why don't I continue, then 😊? The senses are hard to understand, I agree. We are very much used to them and yet we know so little about *how* they actually work.

😊

Right now, all I can say is that everything and I mean everything in reality has a purpose 😊. All the processes, every event, and the underlying balance between all of them, happen for a reason.

'Reasons 😊.'

Fine... fine 😊. This applies for the senses too. So, with the third sense, the sense of smell, the question "where?" grew in life forms. "Where is it?", "where were you?", "where the hell have you been?" and all such questions have crossed our lives too often, haven't they? It is quite confusing to think such questions had such a humble beginning. Come to think about it, the senses like we realise right now, are their sources 😊. Of course, our sixth sense is the one asking all these questions. But, like our friend here explained a while ago, the senses seek answers by feeling these questions while the sixth sense conceptualised them. It helped us humans verbalise these questions using words. It also meshes all their answers together and rolls an adventurous film before our eyes. 😊 Let me catch my breath...

... Studies say we humans can sense 10 broad groups of odours. Each group has hundreds or even thousands of different flavours within them too! They go like, fragrance, woody or resin, fruity, minty, chemical, sweet, popcorn, yes you heard me right, popcorn 😊. And then comes lemon, pungency and decayed. Yeah, I too felt those smells when I spelled them 🙌 😊. Beautiful aren't they? Except for the decaying smell, but hey... it deserves as much attention as the others. Now don't you go start judging it 🙌.

These varieties of flavour, just like the sense of taste, is what's keeping our lives a little more interesting than we realise, don't you think 😊? The citrusy smell we get while peeling an orange 🍊, or the smell of popcorn that rush to our noses when we enter a cinema. Or, even the sharp smell of smoke from burning wood. Or, do you want to spice things a bit 😊? Think about having a rough day in office and you get back home in the evening. You smell fresh coffee brewing in the kitchen and your spouse brings you a hot cup ☕. They hand it over to you with a little peck in your cheek 😊. Ahhh... What is sweeter? The coffee, or the kiss? 😊 Now, let's not go too far and make our friend here get into his imaginary world with his long-lost girl handing him a cup of coffee.

'I prefer the kiss though 😊.'

Finally... 😊 I mean, I was running out of things to say. 😊

'You were going all fine there. If you'd been as cool as this with your girl, she wouldn't have left, you know 😊.'

HA HA HA... very funny 😊.

‘😏... Anyway, like you promptly put it, yes, it’s the senses that keep our lives interesting. With us giving them very little credits for that matter. We need to slow down a little. Take slower steps forward. Taste every moment. Whatever we go through, pain or pleasure, we need to savour them all 😊.’

Now, that is something hard to do 😊. People are always in a rush these days. Even the food needs to be fast, they say. You saw how a few moments ago how all the people around us were in a hurry to go 😊. They didn’t give a damn about the rain, or the ambience, did they? All they think about is what to do next. Some people always think about what happened in their past. They don’t have time to feel anything in the present 😊.

‘True 😊. The world is divided between people who live in the past and people who keep expecting a future they want 😊. Very few move out of these zones & taste the sweetness of the present 😊. Fewer get to do it more often & even fewer decide to stay in the moment...’

😊... So, What next?

‘The next sense and the question that followed, of course. Make a guess again 😊.’

Next came the sense of vision 👁️, right? *Paarvai unarvu*. The previous question was “where?” so, obviously, it’s going to be “Where NOT?” this time... 😊

😊 A little twist should keep things interesting; don’t you think?’

What do you mean? 😊 I thought one came first and the opposite followed 😊.

‘Well... that’s what I thought too 😊 ... buuuut, it doesn’t seem to fit. “Where not” or “when?”, *yeppothu ...* to be or not to be...? or how about both? 😊😊’

Oh... We’re guessing now? 😊

‘Of course, not 😊... I mean... it doesn’t make much sense with just “where not?” 😊. Think about it... whenever we see things around us, we begin thinking “when?”, right? 😊’

That’s not making much sense 😊. Maybe that’s because we have a clear sense of vision right now. We were talking about organisms like ants stepping up into the next level. If vision came into being, life naturally asks... “When?”, yes. But, the “where not?” questions must also come up with it, right? 😊

‘Curious indeed 😊.’

Well, the sense of vision is indeed a curious one, isn't it? Life forms get to visualise the reality around them... Around us 😊.

‘Each in our own way, too 😊.’

Yeah. Each in our own way. “When?” naturally comes up when we observe 👁️ the reality around us. I mean, days and nights, lights and shadows, colours... 😊😊

‘Yeah... colours. They’re enough to push life to evolve a better eye sight 😊.’

That and many others too. A colourful reality is far better than a black & white one 😄.

‘Yes, when you think about it, beings like crickets... beetles 🐞 ... or scorpions, they have four senses. They seem to mind the time ☀️ they are active, don’t they? They have a fair idea about *when* to come out for food, or *when* to mate, or *when* to hide, *where* to hide, *where* to go. Also, they don’t exactly know *where not* to go yet. They just develop a vague idea over the course of their lives. They roam about for food and when they sense trouble, they start running away. The next time, they will go the same way... they don’t really feel like “let’s not go this side”, yet 🤔.’

They don’t get the idea of “where not to go”. They don’t fully feel it, you say? 🤔

‘Yeah... it’s kind of mid-way between understanding “where” and “where not”. But we can see the same question better developed with the fifth sense, the sense of sound 🤔.. *sevi unarvu*. Even if four sensed life forms develop the habit of being cautious, it doesn’t stick in their genes. Generation after generation they come out from hiding and get killed by one predator or the other 😞.’

Let’s stick with the fourth sense for now. It’s about sensing time, isn’t it? 🤔🤔

‘Yeah. Atleast that’s where it got more pronounced. Before that, the idea of sensing time pass by was not absent, but it was very vague, just as the concept of “living” itself. 😊 The seeds of sensing time were sown with the sense of touch and it got... how do you put it... “enhanced” with every sense. With eyes however, “sensing” time got a whole new meaning 🤔.’

Slow down... slow down... you seem to be rushing here 🙅.

‘The sense of vision 👁️ is about life forms gaining the ability to picturise their surroundings 🤔. To get an idea about where they are, frame by frame. It’s like an extension to the previous sense, the smell. But, only now, life gained more...’

“Exactitude?” 😊

‘What better word?’ 😊

Hmmm... so, the question “when?” evolved with the sense of vision, then? 🤔 It helped life forms grow a pair of eyes. Or even, as many eyes as they needed. And, with this ability they could visualize the change in time around them 😞.

‘Yes... one second the environment around them looked good and the next second it changed. Of course, several factors are involved, like sun ☀️, moon 🌕, planets, the weather, climate, landscapes 🌄, other living organisms, and so on. They observed the changes around them through their eyes and started recording them. With that info, they began changing their habits, suiting the time and place they could go, to get what they need. “When?” began with the sense of sight.’

You said something about habits. How do they grow then? 🤔 I mean, generally... how do we develop our habits?

‘Well, habits grow out of our actions, don’t they? 🤔 We keep repeating our actions around situations, and those actions become habits. Take our walking habit 🚶 ... We all have our own style of walk. Some walk

fast, some slow. Some swing their arms to their sides, while some keep them close to their torso. 😊 Some take small steps, while some take long ones. These variations come up because we developed our own style over our course of life. We keep repeating those actions all the time, and eventually they become our habits. As for how these habits begin, it's through the instincts we feel through our senses. If we get the instinct to walk fast all the time, we develop the habit of fast-walking 🏃. If someday, we decide to take a walk and a cool breeze flows over us, we get the instinct to slow down. We decide to walk slower from then on. Of course, we can't change our fast-walking habit in a day. But, if we keep walking slow every day, we eventually develop the new habit of walking slow 🚶 ... 🚶. You get my point here? 😊

Kind of... So, every living organism develops its own set of habits because of the instincts they feel from the environment 🤔.

'Yes. The lifespan of any organism has a say in it too 🤔. That is, how long they live decides what kind of habits develop in them. Their actions solidify through their lifetime and sometimes they are mimicked by other members of the species. The whole of the species then continues using the habits that prove useful to them. 🤔 On the other hand, they also forget & eliminate the habits that get them into trouble.'

Hmmm... evolution 🤔. Okay so, was there any kind of control in the process? 🤔 And for that matter, was there any control on how many organs each organism had to grow for each sense?

'That depends 🤔. That's where the environment's influence comes in. Organisms developed senses, and their respective organs based on their surroundings. Their need to survive & explore are at the base, then came the need to improve their abilities. So, they have to improve as much as they can. Take giraffes 🦒 for example. They wanted to eat leaves, & so they had to reach up to the tree branches. They kept extending their necks until their whole body began customising itself. After years and years of extending their necks, they're huge now. I mean, they could've just gone to some place where they could've bent down and eaten some shrubs or grass, but, no. They wanted the tasty leaves, right? 😊 It seems there is no such control over life forms to develop their organs, both in quantity and quality 😊. I mean, if need be, we can grow a pair of wings *if* we wanted. We just have to ask the people to keep jumping off from tall places and flap their hands. Maybe in a couple million years our hands may evolve into wings! But they have to mean it though. 😊

Don't give off stupid ideas 😊. Some geniuses may actually try that and blame it on the book.

😂 Evolution is a complex process. It has so many variables with it. Also, there is a lot of uncertainty in this too. Or, in other words, anything is possible 😊. Change one variable in any condition, and the result is a totally different effect. Like in our environment, if we change the salinity of the oceans by even 0.1 %, the ocean life starts changing. We read about it as climate change and environmental damage in our newspapers. Any and.... or, all variables cause change that affects life forms. It's just... natural 😊!

Hmmm... I have a doubt 🤔. It's totally unrelated to this, but, I want answers. When did life begin to split into two sexes? Did it start off with any particular sense or was it something else? It's important to write that too, right?

'Yeah... of course, it's important 😊. I think gender division is a separate process. We have trees and plants that have both male and female reproductive organs. They have the first sense alone. It's been identified that sexual reproduction began with early prokaryotes, single cellular organisms. So... the division between

sexes began early. Very early indeed. But, this difference, like the ones we see in multi-cellular organisms now, must've come up after predation became normal among life forms 🤔.'

How so? 😬

'Well, when predation became rampant, one group of the species started playing a greater role in reproduction 🤔. That group became crucial for the protection of the successive generations. The other group had to ensure the survival of the present generations. They had to search for food, and protect the group from predation.'

The females protected the successive generations, while the males protected the present ones? 😬

'Ummm.. Yes 😊. Also, smaller life forms had to make offsprings in larger numbers. This is because even if some of them get hunted, the others might survive. Aside from the sizes, being warm blooded or cold blooded, and the environment, each had their own effects. 😊 Like, whether they're born out of a womb or an egg, or how long they have to gestate and so on. For example, some dinosaurs, however large they were, laid up to 20 eggs at a time. The reason why so many eggs? Predators, of course. Just so we are clear, we are all preys to dinosaurs 😊, but some of them are preys within themselves.'

That's relativity 😊.

'Smaller organisms usually end up being preys to larger organisms. But, there's always something larger 😊. Seeing the number of extinction events that've crossed our planet's surface-

Five and many others in the middle. 😊

'... The predator/prey difference might have led to this pronounced difference between sexes 😊.'

Hold up... something's not right. About the males searching for food and protecting the others 🤔.

..🤔..

Are we guys, really that responsible 😬? I mean, in more than half the species, it's the females that search or hunt for food and they protect their young ones too. Take lionesses for example 😬.

..😂..

Wait a minute! Are we f\*\*\*ing useless!?! 🤔😬

'Ahem... 😂 Quite. But, not all the time. We are very much needed for "reproduction", right? 😂'

I don't believe this 🤔. I mean, all we guys think about is sex and food. Yeah... and I can't think of anything else. Why can't I think of anything else?!? 🤔

..😂..

Yeah... you keep laughing... I'm talking about us, guys 😬👉.

By the time we finished laughing, we realised everyone in the bus stop had left. We have been standing near the empty seats for a long time 😬.

'Being intelligent doesn't always mean being smart, you know 😊. Not that you're intelligent either.'

Mirror. And that means, right back at you! 😁👉

'Still living in the 90's, eh? 😂. Let's sit down for a while.'

I slowly sat down and it is now my turn to reminisce 😊.

Ahh... 90s were the good old days! 😊 No internet, playing in the street, playing & fighting with guys from other blocks, great cartoons. 😄 Who could forget all that? I miss them. If there's one thing in the universe I want, I would love to get back to those days 😊 and live them all over again, and again, and again...

'Yeah... we spoke face to face with people 🗣️, read stories, breathed cleaner air. We saw the moon 🌕 every night and used to wonder how the old lady got up there...! Yeah... good old days. Curious thing, isn't it? 😊 Time. Won't let us go back, but makes us miss it all the... 😊.... time.'

There are people who say and even *believe* time is an illusion you know. I think so too 🤔.

'How so? 😊'

They say it exists only in our minds. Without us, life forms, no one or nothing can say or even know it exists. 😂

'Seems valid doesn't it? 😄 Yes, it's an illusion alright. But how much of that illusion can we experience? That's what matters, right?'

Okay... we'll talk about time, later 😊 ... let's get back to being useless. How could it possibly be? I can't believe it 😞. What went wrong?

'Now, come on, we males aren't completely useless like you say 😄. What about the bees? They are hardworking 🐝. They collect nectar. They pollinate 😄.'

It's the females that work there 😊. Male bees just mate and have their penises cut off 😞. It seems we; males are indeed useless 😊.

😄 Hold on... 🙌 hold on. Don't generalise anything. Life for every organism is different. We all have different purposes 😄. We all have our own reasons to live. Males of all species have an important role. We ensure order and continuity. Think of a world without any males in any species, like only the females exist 😊. Let's say they can reproduce themselves, feed and nurture their young ones and survive. Do you think there will be any order in it? 😊'

There'd be chaos? How so? 😊

'The females of all species have a top priority, that is, to ensure their off-springs survive 😊. They do this at all costs. At all costs, mind you 😊. They don't just hunt for food to feed their young ones; they also kill other life forms to protect their young from being hunted. Naturally, they break any or all rules to make sure their young ones survive and live 😊. Think of the long-term consequences if this 🐾 happens on a

large scale; involving all species of life forms 😞. Every female of every species would keep hunting, or killing other species for food & safety, without any form of control 😞.'

And finally, they all destroy each other and... everything? 🤔

'Exactly 😞. *Aavathum pennale, azhivathum pennale.*'

He meant, women can create *and* destroy anything and everything. Hmm... so how do "we" fit in the picture? 🤔

'*Intha idathula thaan namma aambala singam entry kudukuraar* 😂. Don't mind, I'll translate... I meant "Thus comes the Lion into the picture." Good enough? 😞'

Terrific 😞.

😂 Anyway, I'll explain this phenomenon with a situation. What do you think a lion 🦁 does in a jungle? He doesn't just while away his time after eating the hunt of his lionesses. He holds a territory. He fights with any animal that comes within his territory, especially other predators. If any other lion challenges him, he obviously fights with him... 🦁 vs 🦁 ... After the fight, the winner gets that territory along with the lionesses and the cubs. The loser, however, goes on to find another territory and challenges another lion living there to a fight. This is how lions maintain regions within jungles. And that's why lions are the kings of the Jungle. Now, think of a male of a prey species, like deer 🦌. When a male deer senses he's inside a lion's territory, he becomes cautious while leading his pack into the region. He will make sure the pack doesn't come across lionesses, or any other predators in the region. He will take longer routes along the forest floor, go around ponds and lakes, taking the pack with him. If the pack encounters a predator, the male deer will try to fight with it. 😞 He will signal the pack to run away while distracting the predator with the fight.'

Hmmm... 😞

'Now, let's say a female deer is in charge of the pack. Her main concern is feeding & nurturing her fawn, isn't it? 😞 She doesn't mind if she is treading the path of predators. She will lead her young ones to wherever she could find good food for them. She wouldn't mind if it is a lion's territory or not. Her concern for her young ones supersedes the cautions and precautions in the region. She could even stray into the lion's territory along with the pack. If, and when she does, you know what happens next. 😞'

Lionesses hunt them? 😞

'Definitely 😞. They do so to feed their own young ones. The lionesses have their own top priority, don't they? They need to nurture their young ones. They can't see their cubs suffer from hunger. They have to hunt for food. They wouldn't mind killing the whole pack of deer to feed their hungry cubs 😞. If this process of endless hunting keeps going on, do you think there will be any deer packs left in the territory?'

Hmmm... 🤔

'Now, to the point 😞. What can you tell about males from this little story?'

Males are necessary for the safety of a species 🤔... and...



'We ensure there are certain rules in place 🧑. We make sure there is some kind of backup for our species. All males do that for their respective species. We provide a larger circle of protection; we make laws & enforce them. 😊 We think logically, reason more than the females-'

Iru, iru... Thirumba sollu... Wait... Repeat what you just said 😊.

'Repeat what? 🤔'

You said something about females now. Say that again. 😊

'Why? what's wrong? 🤔'

We reason more than females? 😊

'Yeah. What's wrong in saying that? 🤔'

We think logically? 😊

'Ahaan... I still don't understand where you're going with this. 😊'

That means, you're saying women are illogical, and they can't reason like us. 😊

'I didn't say that! 🤔'

But, you meant that 😊.

'No. Hell, no! 🤔'

That's how women would interpret this, idiot 😊.

'Oh, for crying out loud... 🤔'

And, you thought I would get into trouble with women 😊.

'What I meant was, we think deeper, while the females think broader and at the moment alone 😊. We mind the consequences of every action around us 😊. That's how males think and behave. It doesn't mean women can't do all that 🤔.'

Too late 😊. You, sir, have offended women. Your 🙅 words will be used against you 😊.

'That's not fair 😊.'

That's women for you 😊.

'Damn 🤔. Fine.... Just let me continue my point. 😊'

Right 😊.

'Where was I? I mean, we guys see the situation deeper than women 😊. And women get the broader understanding of the situation 🙌. Sure, there are other sides to all this. Our need to keep the situation in

check creates dominance 🦵. Sometimes it leads to excessive control, wrongs, and pains, and all that 🙅.  
Just as there are males and females, there is reason and emotion..'

...Chaos and order?

'Yeah... the two sides of the same coin 😊. They both exist together.'

Sooo... we're not useless, but our uses are invisible? 😊

'Kind of like that 🙄!'

Right... that's a little comforting. For a moment there... 😊 Now, where were we?

😊 We were talking about the sense of sight and the questions "where not" & "when?". "when" came predominantly with the sense of vision. "where not" could have begun with the sense. However, this question came out well with the sense of sound 💡 ... *sevi unarvu..'*

Ah yes... 😊 The sense of sound. "When Not" must have come up with the sense too, right?

'Yeah... When not to go somewhere and when not to do anything and so on... 😊. As life forms evolved more, they needed to be more careful. There's so many challenges around them all the time. The caution towards their surroundings made life forms more and more sensitive. There's changing environments, increase in populations of different species and of course, threats from predators. All that and possibly many more reasons made life forms grow more vigilant. In the beginning, the sense of sound 💡 began as a receptor ability, just like other senses. Over time, it grew more advanced than the other senses. We can even say that this sense is as unique as the sixth sense. 😊'

You mean the vocal cords? The ability to make sounds 🤔.

'Yeah... to receive and produce sounds 😊. With this sense life forms can identify different sounds and also make some of them. They get used to the ones that pose no threats, while fearing the sounds that could endanger them. Like zebras 🦓 running away as soon as they hear a rumble in the grass. Life forms started realising "where not" to go and "when not" to go there too. 😊 With the first three senses the simpler life forms don't know what to do when they faced the same situation again and again, like being hunted by a predator. Take flies and spiders for example. Flies & bugs 🐞 get stuck into spiderwebs 🕸 all the time, while spiders 🕷 get eaten up by geckos 🦎 all the time.'

Hmmm... 😊

'The sense of sound 💡 helped in other ways too, like communication within the species 🗣️. We call it speech for ourselves and for other species, we name each of their sounds. Used effectively, the sounds we make have a variety of applications. Like a parrot 🦜 or a cockatoo mimicking the sounds of other animals to escape predators. Or, sometimes the sounds may even get us into trouble, like a frog 🐸 sneaked upon by a snake 🐍.'

There are variations in frequencies of the sounds too, right? 😊 Like bats 🦇 using the ultrasonic frequencies.

'Or, even beluga whales 🐋. They're quite interesting, aren't they? 😊 Using sound to hunt and even migrate. Our sounds on the other hand have evolved beautifully into a multitude of languages 🗣️!'

Yeah, yeah. They started as sounds, became scripts, evolved into languages, which then gave rise to different cultures. The very cultures that ended up causing wars between ourselves 😞.

'Let's focus on the positives, shall we? 😊'

Hey, we missed out the sensations of vision 🤔.

'Oh... they're not particularly sensations, more like variations 🤔. Like, we humans see one part of the spectrum and call it the visible range ☀️. I don't know about other organisms if they can see the other ranges or not, like infrared, or ultraviolet. But, within the visible range, there are animals that have far better eyesight than us.'

Like eagles? 🦅 It's a bird of prey, so it's pretty obvious. We have pretty good eyesight ourselves too, you know. Better than cats 🐱 or rats 🐭 or flies or mosquitoes..

'But still, 🦅 eagles' eyesight is far sharper than ours. They have HD vision and they say they have ultra-violet vision too.'

I thought you said you didn't know about other animals? 🤔

'Just looked up on the internet 😄📱. Wow... so much information, so little time to read. Does everyone feel the same way? 🤔'

Nope 😞. Absolutely not. We have an amazing tendency to ignore anything that comes for free, while chasing after things with high price tags attached to them. We call it, having a "class" 😊.

'Class, or pomp? 😊'

😄 Hmmm... it also says eagles have 340-degree vision 🤖. It's because their eyes are angled at 30-degrees away from the middle of their face. We have a binocular vision. Just straight up and a little to the left and right 🤔👉👈.

'Strain on either side too long and the eyes start aching 😞.'

These two senses, sight and sound, seem to make life more cautious, don't they? Like, they make organisms to be vigilant all the time 🤖. I mean, think about a rat 🐭 coming out of its hole and an eagle 🦅 spots it way above from the clouds ☁️. As soon as the rat sees the eagle, he tries running away, but gets caught. The rat's family watch it all from the hole, peeping their tiny heads out. So sad 😞... But still, life learns when and where not to go, day by day. The first three senses seemed to be so cool. Organisms with just three senses didn't give a damn about other organisms or anything. They just roam around, never having to worry about being hunted. But vision and sound seem to make life afraid 🤖.

'They turned life more precautious 😊!'

Hmmm 😊 ... we've come quite far. It's good. So, what, what not, where, where not, when and when not.  
"How?" then? 🤔... *yeppadi?*

'More than that 😊.'

The sixth sense... 😊

'Very special indeed. 😊 The sense of reason... *kaarana arivu*. The most incredible thing that could ever happen in life forms.. 😊'

It is amazing, isn't it? yeah... to get to understand we exist... 😊

'...To get to completely feel *alive*... 😊'

To know we are here, even though we don't know what "here" is 😊.

'We got a beautiful chance to experience this 😊. I don't know the odds to all this happening, or not happening. But, here's reality with each of us having a special seat in the middle wondering "Why the hell is all this happening?" 😊'

😊 Not just "How?" then? ... Hmmm... "How NOT?" too? 🤔.

'.. 😊..'

What are you grinning for? 😊

'.. 😊..'

"Why" too?!? 😊

'.. 😊.. *Aen?? Yes.*'

What happened? 🤔 Why aren't you saying something? Went back to brooding again? Ohhh.... "why NOT?" too? 😊

'Absolutely... "*aen illai?*" Sorry... I couldn't get over the sense of reason and its magnificence 😊. And yes... all those questions come with it, or at least like the other questions, begin with it 😊. There's also the questions "who?".. "*yaar?*", & "which" ... "*yedhu?*". 🤔 They came only after the sixth sense evolved. They differentiate between people and stuff, don't they?'

That's a lot of questions to come up with one sense 🤔. Buuuut, the sixth sense is special, soooo okay... 🙌

'Yeah... it's complicated 😊. So many inputs, so many sensations, so many emotions and so many questions with their own little answers 🤔. They all come with the sixth sense. 😊'

At least now, we can take human lives as examples, right? 😊

😊 That's a lot of examples, but if you still don't understand how the questions "how?", "how not?", "why?" and "why not?" works, I don't know how to explain it to you 😊.'

What do you mean? 😞 We've come this far. Just go with it 🙄.

'What? This entire chapter has been explaining "how" things got started 😞 and atleast to some extent, "why" it all started. Do you really need more examples than this? 😞'

😄 ... I get it... I get it... alright... what about "how not?" and "why not?" 🤔?

'Why don't you explain them? 🤔'

What? Me? But you're the one who started all this 😞.

'I'm giving you a chance to think now 😞. Go ahead and think about how things work around us and how they shouldn't, couldn't or wouldn't. You watch so many documentaries, right? "How it's made", "how do they do it?" all that. Think of anything and think about "why" it wouldn't work if it's done in any other way than its already done 😄.'

Uhhhh... 😞

'Take your time 😄.'

How it's made... hmmm... I saw several episodes of that, yet, I can't remember them now. Hmmm... 🤔 let's see.. How not to do anything is something you learn by making mistakes isn't it? 😄 Trial and error type of thing. And "why not?" is the root for "how not?" 🤔

'Ahaan 😄.'

An example... an example 🤔... ooh... I got a good one 😄. It's been confusing me for a while now. It's about gravity and Isaac Newton 😄.

'... 😄.'

Newton discovered gravity and it's a fact now 😄. How he did it, the story behind it is something only the science freaks-

'Like you.. 🤔'

Read about 🤔. So anyway, Newton saw an apple 🍏 falling from the tree and hitting the ground-

'It fell on his head, didn't it? 🤔'

No, it didn't. 😞 Why would you think that way?

'Well, you know, people say that all the time 😞. An apple fell on Newton's head and he began pondering 🤔 about the force that pulled the apple towards the ground. There are even memes on the internet that describe that discovery.'

Don't believe everything you see on the internet. 😄 He saw 🤖 an apple hit the ground and began wondering why it fell down in the first place. He then asked himself, why didn't the apple go sideways or upwards when it got cut off from the branch. 😄

'Oh... *why not* this way and *why not* that way? 😊'

Yeah... He was a brilliant man who saw the ordinary but only in a different way. 🤔

'Ok... So, how did he ask "How not?" there? 🤔'

That's what my confusion is about 😊. You see, many questions must have popped up in his mind at that moment 🤔. He must have begun wondering 🤔 *why* the apple fell straight to the ground and not in any other directions. Questions like, "how does this happen?", "how could it not go sideways?", "how could it not go upwards?" 🤔. Or even, "how did the earth attract the apple towards it?" "Could it be possible the apple attracted the ground towards it along with the rest of the landscape?" 🤔. All that could've, or even would've crossed his mind. If they didn't, atleast now, they're crossing through me and us. There 😊.

😊 There, what?'

You asked for an example 😊. On your face 🙄.

'I was expecting a simple one 😊. Like the fact that you're holding the phone 📱 in your hand in one way and learnt *how not* 🙄 to hold it in any other way. You did so in the fear of dropping it 😊. You've observed people holding their phones oddly and dropping them at times. You've been careful not make those mistakes yourself, right? 😊 *why not* hold it this way so it's more comfortable or *why not* put it in your pocket after using it, so it's safe?'

😊

'Right? 😊'

Faq off 😡!

'Keep it simple, I always say 😊. Experiences teach us a lot if we are willing to be open-minded 😊. Sometimes they teach us more than what our educational systems teach. Big or small, experiences matter too, you know. In fact, it's the experiences that shape our outlook about everything. I'm not just saying this for the questions but also for our mindsets 😊.'

More than what our education systems teach us? 😊 Come now, education is the only thing that turns people open-minded. You can have all the experiences in your life, but only with proper education you will know that other people's experiences are valid too 😊.

'You're mistaking empathy for education 😊. Yes, education makes people well informed, know the facts and stuff. It is essential and it is necessary 😊. It gives us an idea about what's going on around us. But, our current educational systems seldom make people analyse those facts, doesn't it? 🤔 Analyse, like, questioning what's being taught, contemplate about it, find out why or how a thing exists as it does 🤔. Not all people do all that, do they? 🙄 Most people stick with the facts, they don't imagine, they don't conceptualize, they don't argue about them. Most people just accept them as they are, leaving the questions "how not?" and "why not?" hiding in their brains 😊.'

Some do 😞. We call them scholars, researchers, scientists, and so on. Also, in their defence, if they don't accept things as they are, people like us won't get into spotlight, would we? 😂

'So, you are doing this for the fame? I mean, the book.. 😊'

Partly, yes... I mean, who wouldn't? 😂

😊 Well... atleast you are "partly" honest about it.'

So, you're saying most people don't think, even the educated ones 😐?

'Yes 😐. Think about it. The socio-economic system we see around us... The one that keeps people employed, salaried, while following rules and laws. Who do you think are the cogs in the machines in this system? Your so called "educated" ones, are they not? 😐 How did they end up in such a complicated set up?'

It didn't come up in a single day, you know 😐. It grew gradually, taking in changes day by day over a long time 😐. It's complicated because there are so many steps and levels involved in it.

'Levels with their own rules and regulations 😐. Let me ask you something. 😐 Do you really want to follow these rules and regulations everywhere, absolutely, without any question? Or do you ever get a feeling of bending them or breaking them whenever you get the chance? 😊'

Well... I get that urge, time to time 😐. But, of course, I wouldn't want to hurt anyone in the process. Or, if I could save anyone while breaking the rules, yes, I would do it 😊.

'You must've felt, more than once in your life that "something's wrong about this" 😐. Or, "I can't do that 🤢!", or "I would never do that, it's against me 😡!" and all that.'

Sure, we would think that way if something clashes with our personal ethics and values 😐. But the rules and regulations are framed based on majority opinion and need. Sometimes the need of the hour, or sometimes with an amendable clause 😊.

'Good. So, what did you do when you faced such situations? 😐 Did you go by the rules as they were, or did you use your sixth sense to come up with a better solution? 😐 Or did you just stop with whatever you were doing and postponed it, and passed the decision to someone else?'

What does education and experience have to do with all this? 😐

'You would easily come up with that "better solution" if your education had taught you to question everything 😐. If your education had taught you to think better, you wouldn't end up being indecisive. If your education had taught you to contemplate better, you would start searching for solutions from similar situations you've faced before 😊. You would've learnt to analyse the situations effectively. The problem with our educational system is that it doesn't make everyone think 🤔. And, I mean, everyone. It's oriented towards facts and information, and not towards analysing them. Questioning stuff and seeking answers is how intelligence grows in our minds. Our educational system makes people value grades & certificates more than the knowledge they gain through learning 😐. It seldom allows critical reasoning in people. It doesn't make them ask the questions "why?" or "how not?", or even "why not?" 😐. Instead, it only tests

people's understanding about the status quo. Only a handful of educational institutions train their people to think. Others, they just turn people into obedient idiots 🙄. We can even say this educational system values obedience more than intelligence. It wants people to follow orders, more than to think.'

Well, we all need jobs to make money 🙄. We need money to survive and live 😞. And, we need grades & certificates to get those jobs. Also, jobs require obedience and punctuality 🙄.

'That's it, isn't it? Jobs... those are the end goals 😞. What happened to your knowledge? What about your intellect? 🙄 Are you even intelligent? Are you even capable of questioning everything that's happening around you? Can you find the answers for those questions yourself? Because, if you can't, you never learnt anything in your life. You only gained grades and certificates for a job. 😞'

Not everyone's interested in knowing about what's happening around them, you know 🙄. Most people just want a simple life 😊. They want to wake up every morning & go to a job that pays them regularly at the end of the month 😊. They want nothing more and nothing less.

'Are you sure about that? 😊'

Yeah... why? 🙄

'If that's the case, why are people craving for fame and richness, then? 😊 Why do they want to get hold of a lot of money, and feel popular?'

The money... it's for a comfortable life 😊. Fame 😊... well, it feels good to be popular, isn't it? So, naturally, people want to be famous 😊.

'And, is everyone making an effort to gain their fame and money? Or atleast, using their intellect to gain them both? 😊'

Not everyone, sadly 😊. Many try though. To be honest, some try. These days with social media, they do weird stuff to get famous overnight 😊.

'That's the thing 😊. Yes, there is an innate desire to be recognised by everyone 😊. That's the basic need for fame. As for money... yes, it is necessary for a comfortable life. I can agree with them both. I would even say, the more of them, the better.'

What's your problem, then? 🙄

'What I'm saying is that, if people had grown their intellect better, while they were young, they wouldn't be doing all this weird stuff in social media 🙄. They'll be using their intellect to gain that fame & money 😊. They wouldn't have to suffer so hard to find a place for themselves in the world 😊.'

Well, there are other ways to gain them both 🙄. I mean, good looks can get you famous, and that can get you rich 😊. Take movie stars for example...

'Good looks can get you far, but without a good intellect, you will end up looking a famous idiot 🙄.'

Wait... wait... where are you going with this? I mean, what's your point? 🙄



'My point is, we need an intellectual society around us 😊. Not a population with sheep mentality. Of all the species in the planet, we grew out the sixth sense first. Now, we need to hone it 🙌. For that, we need to use it well, not blunt it out. The present educational system is curtailing the sixth sense 😞. It is turning our minds very passive 😞. What we need to do is ask more questions. We need to question everything we come across. Merely learning the facts and talking about them is not enough 🙌. We need to question the facts to understand how they became facts in the first place.'

You mean, ask "how" and "why" at everything? 🤔

'Also "how not?" and "why not?" 😊. Of course, it requires a lot of critical thinking. We need to be vigilant about our thoughts 😞. We need to be aware of what's happening around us 😞. And yes, we need to keep in mind all the details about the events we go through, all the time. But, here's a simple way to do all that 😊. Try living your life one second at a time. Just experience every second of every day of your lives completely. You will feel all sorts of questions popping up in your minds in those complete moments 😊. Feel your senses raise those questions in your mind. Then, try finding the answers for those questions. Once you find the answers, analyse them 😊. Keep doing all this until you get a complete understanding about things. This way, you will definitely understand your life better. 😊 You can also solve all the problems you face in your regular life. 😊 So, feel your life first. Think next. Just think... that's all I'm asking you 😊.'

Well... we're used to thinking what could've happened, what should've been said and all that. 😂. This will be a little hard... Buuuut, we'll try. And then, what? 😊

'And then? Well, I won't say. Try it for yourself and feel the change 😊. You'll see how much you can live your life. You will see the broader picture before you. You will turn smarter, wiser, and more confident too 😊.'

Some say we need to accept things as they are 😞. That everything happens for a reason and we just need to accept them, no matter what.

'That is totally different from what I'm saying 😞. What happens in our lives are out of our control, yes. But, how we perceive what's happening in our lives is definitely under our control. We gain that control with vigilance over our thoughts and actions 🙌.'

Okay. What about that part where things happening in our lives are out of our control? 😞 Some might think we don't have to put any effort to make any change and they might stop trying.

'And that will stop the universe from working? 😞 No... situations will force the efforts out of people and they'll get to feel that too. If you are vigilant enough, you will completely feel what's happening around you. If you question those experiences, you will understand the meanings behind those events 😊.'

Hmmm... so, once we start thinking about what happened and how it happened, we'll be asking the other questions? 🤔

'Ahaan... you'll realise why it happened so, when you're ready 😊. And, once you understand why, you'll move on to "why not?" and "how not?" 😊.'

“When” we’re ready? Or if we’re ready? 😐

‘When.... We will feel the why, “when” we’re ready 😊.’

That’s a lot to go through 😐. But, I get your point; questions begin with senses and they keep evolving. We are at a vantage point in the history of life forms on our planet. We’re supposed to be more responsible, more creative when it comes to admiring the reality 😄. Wait... something’s itching at the back of my head 😐. It’s too messy out in the world, isn’t it? Like, somewhere, something went wrong and we’re now going through a time where everything seems bizarre, or even wrong.

‘Depends on perspectives 😐. If you keep focussing on the bad, everything seems bad. If you focus on the good, you’ll at least see some of the reasons behind them. Can’t say there’s nothing wrong here, but there is so much happening around us. We have so little time and so little potential to understand it all 😊. Like I said, everything makes sense at the right time. In the meantime, we just have to do our best everywhere. Be it in thoughts, or words, or actions.’

If I have to focus on my present, I just have to hope that I can do my best in the book. You know... if at least one of them reads it and it helps them with their life, it’ll be worth it 😊.

😊 Hope? You?’

Why not? I’m optimistic, you know... well... at least sometimes 😄.

‘When I’m around, yes 😄.’

So... senses gave rise to questions, huh? 😊 They are really something else.

😊 Yeah...’

The sky has calmed down while we were talking 😐. A few streaks of lightning ⚡ then and there but the rain has stopped, at least for now. ⚡ There’s this silence around us, you know... you would’ve felt it when you were awake at night staring out into the night. You find it so calming... that silence... 😊

‘Usually, we could hear frogs 🐸 croaking and crickets 🦗 chirping after a rain. But, sitting in a bus stop a long way from home at dead night, you can’t expect them, can you? 🤔 What’s the time now?’

😊 10.30.

‘We’ve been here for half an hour? 😐.’

Feeling sleepy? 😊 😊

‘Nah... 😊.’

😊 Yeah... let’s enjoy this silence for a while...

‘Yeah... it is indeed peaceful 😊.’

Just then, an old man came riding his bicycle along the road. 😐 As he crossed the bus stop, I heard some music coming out of his shirt pocket.

'He seems to be listening to the radio. What's that song? 🤔👉💡'

🎵 *Kaelvi piranthathu andru*

*Nalla bathil kidaithathu indru...*

*Aasai piranthathu andru*

*Yaavum nadanthathu indru* 🎵

Situation song-u? 😊

'... Nalla irukku... 😊 It's good.'

## Chapter - 2

# All Aboard the Train of Thoughts



😊 Let's move, shall we?

The road is nearly empty now. It's as if the rain 🌧️ has declared a sudden holiday for the night.

'Yeah... Let's continue 😊.'

Wait... I don't think there'll be anyone in the road at this time of the hour. What if we get caught by cops along the way and end up sleeping in a police station? 😅

😂 ... Well, we could walk for a while and then go to the bus terminus. We can sit there and get back on our feet in in the morning.'

Wow... for someone who goes with the flow, that's a lot of planning 😊!



Right 😅. It's a long way from here though.

'Atleast, we aren't walking during the day 😬.'

Yeah... That would be hell 😬. The traffic, the smoke, the sun, and the fumes burning the skin.

'Don't forget the dust 😞.'

It's better right now 😊. Cool and calm with a wet breeze 😊.

So, we started walking from the bus stop to towards the terminus. Yeah, you could ask me why a bus terminus of all places? 😅. Well, that's one of the places in a city that's open all the time for the public. Also, no one minds others there, right? 😊 Everyone goes about their business... a crowded place where you feel lonely all the time... 😞



The pavement is bumpy, a lot, making little pools occasionally along the way. Sometimes the drain pipes from the buildings 🏢 along the side emptied the muck from the roofs onto those little pools. The trees 🌳 had lost a few leaves 🍃 too, some fresh, some dry and some dead. All that mess is making our path slippery. Sometimes I have to catch a pole or two to get a grip. Not complaining, but, it's one of those days, nights, you know... you need to be careful where you step 🚶.

'Slow... slowly 😬.'

We are approaching a wider puddle. Get ready to jump. Yeah... right... this could take a bit more getting used to. Annnnd... HUH 🏃💧 ... Don't mind me... continue with the story.

'Story? What story? 😊'

You were talking about questions, right? go on... Get to the next part 😊.

'I thought you wanted to write the book... 🙋 you. You should be talking more... right? 😊'

Oh... I thought we agreed on taking turns 🤔.

'In that case, it's 🙋 your turn. So, why don't you blow our minds with some of your great ideas? 😊'

Hmmm... I got many ideas... how about I continue with what you started? 🤔

'You mean, questions? 🤔'

You gave a vague idea about them 😊 ... 😊. You said they begin with senses and end with intelligence. I think I can bridge everything in between. It's a complex mess. You know... how it all works, but, yeah... I think I can simplify them 😊.

'Complex, as in...? 🤔'

😊 As in, "the working of the mind, conscious and sub-conscious in humans." complex.

'Oh. Where does all that feeling and questioning and thinking happen, you mean? 🤔 This should be interesting... 😊'

Ahaan 😊. You talked about how these questions started off in life forms. But, it's unclear how all the species handle those questions. Atleast those raw form of questions...

'Like I said... most life forms don't realise they are questioning stuff in the first place 😊. It's just their impulse to question. We, on the other hand, use words to give structure to those questions 🤔. We have a relatively clearer idea about what we are doing... so...'

Right. That 🙋 "relatively clearer idea" happens as thoughts and ends up as the mind 😊.

'Isn't it the other way around? 🤔 Like, the mind gives rise to thoughts?'

I kept thinking like that too, but, after meditating for the past few years, I've changed my mind about it 😊. 🤔.

'Spirituality is working for you, then 😊?'

With reason 😊, yes. Anyway, the thoughts and mind...

'Ennangal and-'

Manam... mind.

'Oooh... a palindrome... 😊'

But, it's not an English word 🤔. Thoughts and minds... they happen in our brains 🧠, and our brain is a whole bunch of neurons. They are all connected with each other and they're constantly making up with something 😊. They say there's each part of the brain doing a specific function. Like, the frontal lobe or the brain beneath our forehead is for concentration. It also controls our thoughts 🤔, personality, motor functions and so on. The occipital lobe... it's in the back. It is responsible for eye sight 👁️. Everything from recognising images, eye movements, -

'Hold up 🤔... The back of the brain controls the front of the head? 😂'

Yes... Yes. That's a long trip indeed. 😂

'I have a question here. So, there's a specific function for each part of the brain, right? 🤔 How did people figure out which is which? 🤔 I mean, it's not possible to do it by just dissecting the brain right?'

Well... you know how... 🤔

'I have a vague idea. Have to confirm it, though 😊!'

How vague 🤔?

'Well... doctors study people's behaviours and match it with their brain conditions, don't they? 🤔 Sometimes when people get into accidents... their perceptions and behaviours change. They study the changes in their brains after that 🤔!'

That sounds crude 😊, but you're right. You see, we have ideas about how our brains 🧠 work. Neurologists study brains by analysing our behaviours. Usually, they compare the altered brain with an ideal brain and see what part has changed. Also, alterations need not happen only through accidents. They can happen through old age 👴 👵, stress 😫, and so on. As for the ideal brain, that too is not a standard thing. It's a generalised idea of how a brain works. It's been developed by studying the behaviours of healthy individuals. This cross-verification between brains yields several results too.



Of course, exactitude is a long way 🙄, but, surety is the first aim of science. So, the results of analyses are updated constantly and the general idea is developed.

'Ummm.. What's "ideal"? and what's not? 😊'

Well, we have developed this idea within ourselves 😊. Some behaviours, actions, words are generally accepted by everyone, while some others are looked down. Those stuff that are accepted at the societal level, are considered normal, or ideal 👍. And then, there's this "normal" behaviour standards in individuals, families, relationships, and stuff. It's a long story. In short, there's something at the back of our minds 🤔 telling us "that's ideal & therefore normal" and "that's not normal so, don't do that" in almost every aspect of our lives.

'It's called conscience 😂😂!'

Maybe... Normalcy is the expectation of a desired result out of any situation 😊. If the results deviate, even slightly, its termed abnormal and given a different name for that matter.

'Ahaan 🤔!'

Also, it varies from person to person, with situations... you know 🙋 ... relative-to...

'Right... 😊'

So, anyway, the brain 🧠 ... *moolai*, with its different lobes and their functions, it's a whole lot of neurons. They get programmed to do certain functions; some more than others and some less than the others too.

🤔 Like, the frontal lobe could've taken up the eyesight and visual functions too. Or, the back of the brain could've taken up personality and stuff. But, there's this differentiation within the brain and its how we humans evolved. Each part of the brain do their own jobs, while they all contribute towards thoughts in the frontal lobe.

'Oh, so, this is where all our experiences through our senses converge? 🤔'

Yes. 😊 The neurons process the experience we gain through our senses and adds them up inside them. Everything we see, touch, smell, hear... all that become inputs for our neurons. They process them, put them all together and bring out a meaningful picture of the reality around us, inside our brains. That meaningful picture is what we call information ⓘ.

🤔 Experience becomes.. information?'

Yes. While talking about tastes... we realised we must've tasted the foods for the first time, without any prejudice, right? In our childhood 😊... We accepted them as they were too. Chilli's burn your mouth. That was a lesson, right?

'Yeah, yeah 😊!'

Obviously, the reactions we made those first times were funny too 😂. Like, when babies taste lemons 🍋 for the first time. Or, feeling pleasant while hearing a soothing note from a musical instrument 🎹🎵. Well, maybe not just the first time, but anytime. The thing is, we experience them with our senses and that experience gets registered in our brains. The brain then changes those experiences into information. Say, right now, we're walking along an empty sidewalk 🚶 . Think 🤔 of the last time you went on a walk after a rain... Can you remember how you felt back then? 😊 The damp air around you, or the silence of the night.

🤔!'

Every time we go through some experience, our neurons add all the feelings from our senses and put them together. Feeling pleasant, painful, happy, sad, whatever it is... they keep doing it all the time, in all contexts and situations we go through 😊. This is done seamlessly and continuously. These added up experiences are then stored in our brains.

'As information ⓘ ...? 😊'

As information... It's experiences basically, like you point out all the time, the feelings 😊. But, once we take the inputs from our senses and make out a picture in our minds, they become information ⓘ. When that experience is thought upon again and again with different points of views, it becomes knowledge 🧠.. 😊.

We also gain different points of views when we observe people going through the same kind of experiences we've gone through. We gain more knowledge this way.

'Can I give an example for this? 😊'

Don't! 😞

'Like porn 😂!'

Like no one watches it already 😏. I was going for a simpler example and you had to ruin the moment.

'Totally worth it! 😂'

😞 huuuuuh. Take a rose 🌹. Think of the last time you smelled one. What do you remember? 😏

'It smelled beautiful 😊!'

When was the first time you ever smelled a rose? 😏

'I don't remember 😂. Do you? Well, you should know that, right? 😂'

Ummm... I have a vague memory of smelling roses in a wedding hall. I must have been 7 or 8 by then... 😏... When you think about it, the very first time we smelled a rose, we were curious, weren't we? 😏 We didn't know how it would be like. We were told it would smell nice, and we believed it to be nice and then when we sniffed 🤨 it. That's when we felt its sweet aroma 🙌.

'Yeah... That sweet, soothing aroma, we had the first taste of that smell 🌸!'

We must've been curious, right? 😏 You know curiosity, that feeling that makes us forget everything else in the moment 😏. It makes us concentrate on feeling & knowing the yet unknown things in our lives...

'Another purpose of life... 😂'

Yeah... *aarvam*... it totally blanks our minds, doesn't it?! 😏 Makes us fully aware of what we experience. No matter what the consequences may be... pushing us to take that risk, at that exact moment 😏.

'Not minding any danger that might come with it 😂 ... It stops us from thinking and just be there, at that moment and feel it. Makes us feel alive. Yes... I can almost smell a rose 🌹 right now 😊!'

When we smelled the rose for the first time, we naturally asked the question, "what is the smell?" 🤔 and a chain of questions followed, like, "how is the smell?", or even, "how long does it last?", while the smell slowly drifted away. And then, we sniffed it again and again till our noses 🙌 got saturated by that smell 🤔.

'So, all those questions add up to become information? 🤔'

Yeah... and when we start thinking about it, we raise even more questions around that experience. We ask ourselves, "is that the only smell that comes from the rose 😏... 🤔?" ... implying... "what not?" or "what do other flowers smell like 🤔?", or even, "where does the smell come from the flower? The petals or the bud inside? 🤔" and so on. All this happens in a really fast manner and we don't mind all that happening in our brains.



'Don't *mind* all that? 😊'

At that moment, when we are experiencing the smell, we don't mind the questions or the answers 😊. Later on, when we ruminate over that experience, we think of those questions again. That's when we begin searching for the answers too. We ask all those questions a little slowly this time, and that's where thinking begins 🤔. These experiences form the base and above it rises the questions and above them we piece together the answers. All these form the information ⓘ part.

'Right 😊!'

If we were to smell a rose right now, those earlier experiences will pop-up in our brains again 🧠. Then, we start comparing our earlier experiences with the new one, almost immediately. Those earlier experiences are what we call memories. 😊... *ninaivugal*.

'Memories... 🤔'

Also, if you observe closely, every memory related to smells tend to come up before our eyes during these moments 😊. As soon as we remember one event where we smelled something nice, another memory comes up. It could be the same memory about the time we smelled a rose, or something even better.

'Like, one after the other? Or, all together? 🤔'

One after the other... Our memories resurface before our eyes one by one. Then comes a comparison between those memories. It's as if we live through those moments again... every detail we can remember comes up, right? 😊

'Yeah... 😊'

All these flashes of memories, & the information that shapes up in our brains... those questions we raised, the answers we found... both of them combined, are what we call, thoughts 🤔. Are you catching up? 😊

'Oh... 🤔. *Ennangal!*'

A long chain of thoughts come out of our memories & information, and we naturally gain a focus 👁️ over them. We see one image after the other, and sometimes, feel our past moments all over again 😊. We can observe our thoughts like a video playing inside our eyes 🎥. That point 📍 ... where our thoughts and our focus meet up, is where our mind ✨ ✨ ✨ is formed.

'You mean to say that thoughts about any incident, or a process converge to form the mind? 🤔'

Couldn't have put it better 😊.

'That means, if we remain thoughtless, we won't have a mind 🤔, or if we have too many thoughts? 🤔'

We can't make up our mind, can we? 😊

'Oh... 😊'

Yeah 😄. That's not all 😄. The way thoughts branch out is an even complex process. We'll get to that soon. But first, the memories. Do you remember your childhood? What's your earliest memory? 😊 Don't you think, sometimes, a large part of our childhood is a huge blank? 😊

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