Chapter Three

Relationship: Breaking and Bonding

"Darkness and Light, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment of God will never go together... bit by bit we must go towards it". (Swami Vivekananda The Prophet of India, 92)

Life and living is attaining a cognitive knowledge of the presence of a self among many other souls. Human life is not about attaining everything remaining immobile and exercising no will and effort. Physical mobility, displacement, purposeful journey, travel and explorations -- all provide humanity with experience and knowledge. New relationships or understanding the self is possible by means of entering into a new space by means of travel or quest. The willingness to experience the world and attaining thereby the wisdom of disciplining oneself is regarded as 'Quest'. World is outside one's home and the world known and experienced becomes one's own. True understanding of life and life's purpose is available for anyone who is ready to ascend, extend and learn.

Creativity involves capturing the life of human beings who enter into series of relationships which may be either bonding or breaking. This chapter attempts to read the journeying and questing minds, ambitious of attaining experience and enlightenment, made available in the two texts chosen for study. Ramaswamy's experience is physical, intellectual and religious. He attains these three levels of experiences by a process of pursuit, which places him in vantage or chosen relationships bonding as well as breaking away from his moorings of monotony to new domains of excitements or in other words experiences. The key point to be recurrent in Ramaswamy's experiential life is the fact that he is able to transcend
himself in a spiritual axis, for which he does not hesitate to bond with some or break from some others. In the following paragraphs, these relationships of Ramaswamy are subjected to a scrutiny.

The Serpent and the Rope by Raja Rao details several kinds of human relationships - familial, marital and even extra-marital. It also deals with relationship of a sensitive individual with the larger external world. Amidst these apparent and readily noticeable relationships, a relationship that is yearned by the activated soul is also latently and suggestively portrayed. If the former kinds could be termed as illusions in one sense, the latter deserves to become the real. The story of Ramaswamy accords a central place to family and marriage. It is through marriage, a man and a woman learn to see each other overcoming their ego. In other words, love involves self-denial. Raja Rao asserts the significance of marriage thus:

"Woman as the eternal creator is more firmly rooted in things of the body and that of the earth than man, therefore a man must wed to belong to the earth . . . for men are born and men "die" - even women are born and marry and continue to live" (SR, 141)

Man reaches the earth, according to Raja Rao through a marriage. For him, the woman is a creator as earth according to Raja Rao, is the creator of several things in life. So the process of becoming related with creativity experiencing the body of the earth is by affecting a relationship with a similar being namely the woman. In spiritual terms man understands the essence of life in woman. His existence is read and felt as truth because woman is a truth, a fact of existence. Raja Rao seems to assert the point that man realizes himself by dissolving himself in woman. The same could be stated from the point of view of the woman, that man is
the truth and the woman the essence. This way of relating oneself in the other, binds people resulting in the realization that the fact and the essence are within every one.

The illusion has to be overcome so that the reality is sighted. *Jnanam* and its identity with knowledge and existence are made available by way of man's relationships. The entire novel addresses this issue of realization of self, in one's self and also in the other. Marriage is one significant aspect by which one can attain various experiences. Hence Ramaswamy regards marriage as an important step and in Indian marriage system, the ritualistic ceremonies are intended to bring together the idea of *'purusa'* [the cosmic person of Rig Veda] and *'prakrti' [feminine]. Ramaswamy however is not interned by ritualistic marriage. He is ready to break it so that he can enter into the different domains of intellectual and spiritual plane.

In India, marriage is not considered merely as a physical union of a husband and a wife. In traditional and ideal reading, marriage is a union of spirits. Two human beings become one in spirit in true marriage. Raja Rao refers again and again to the explanation of true love given by Yagnyavalkaya to his wife Maitreyi. Love, says Yagnyavalkaya is an activity of self (*atman*) and the self seeks the union with the eternal self (*Brahman*) and it does this by embracing the self in other. A true lover only loves the self through his beloved. He must not try to possess his beloved. His love must not be sensual or selfish. Such a love leads to transcendence and enlightenment. Raja Rao explains the significance of husband thus:

"One cannot possess the world, one can become it... Verily a husband is not dear that you may love the husband, but that you may love the self through the husband, therefore a husband is dear. Verily a wife is..."
not dear that you may love the wife but that you may love the self through the wife, therefore a wife is dear”. (Mathur 146)

In spite of the self-realization in a spatial domain known as home, people have broken the relationships choosing to enter into larger spaces involving greater enterprise. The knowledge that home is the place where you gather grace does not freeze the willing minds from seeking something in an unknown world. Leaving the home is a recurrent motif in ancient Indian literature. Heroes and warriors, kings and emperors celebrated in Hindu mythologies have been known to undertake periodic and strenuous journeys into the dark recess of Aranyas [forest]. In the case of Rama, the hero of The Ramayana, a life in forest is imposed for his empire’s goodness. The five heroes of The Mahabharata, the Panchapandavas, are also ordered to disappear into the forest for long years so as to undergo the process of penance. The concept of leaving the home is not exclusive to the brave and the royal, but it was also imposed on the saintly and the godly. Several saints of many ancient Indian texts provide information about the life in the recluse. Even the story of The Buddha equates self-realization with the renunciation of wife, child and the choice of joys and comforts of palace and power. In true Indian tradition, Raja Rao also imposes on his protagonist Ramaswamy the condition of leaving his wife as he embarks on the religious quest in the wide wild world of India. He wanders from place to place and enters into various relationships. He leaves his wife Madeleine and returns to India. As he detaches himself from her, she lapses into a religion of total detachment by embracing Buddhism. Being a Catholic, she opts for religious conversion and becomes a Buddhist monk. Ramaswamy also involves himself in seeking the truth from the vast external world, beginning his quest for spiritual life.
In fact, Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope presents many married couples. As his mother dies, Ramaswamy’s father remarries and his second wife too dies leaving three daughters behind. He however chooses to re marry again, this time a girl younger than his eldest son. When tragedy strikes, he dies leaving his young widow and their infant son. In the case of Ramaswamy, he marries in defiance of his family tradition, Madeleine, a French woman five years elder to him. Uncle Charles, Madeleine’s uncle too takes a divorcee Tante Zoubie as his third wife. Saroja, Ramsamy’s sister agrees to marry Subramania Sastri in obedience to her brother and naturally it was a marriage without love. French couples Georges and Catherine are also presented to the readers as not so happy. One can read a uniform note of lack of happiness in most of the marriages shown by Raja Rao. This could be read as Raja Rao’s statement that the meaning of life could be understood beyond the familial or marital systems. Ramaswamy reconciles to this fact. In the world of illusions, realization is not possible, hence he even advocates that one can marry any one for it is not going to matter much in the world of illusions.

“If a man understands that world is an illusion like a city seen in a mirror, it matters not who you marry, Subramania Sastri or Pratap.”

(SR 121)

Ramaswamy’s marriage with Madeleine is different from many Indian marriages for parents did not arrange it. It was a love marriage. Both Ramaswamy and Madeleine were happy ritually and finally both of them lost hope and trust on each other, which resulted in their separation. Their family life was a failure and so Ramaswamy opted for the other aspect in life, which was the spiritual life. Thus from the family life he turned slowly towards the spiritual life. Ramaswamy married
Madeleine as a part of his quest for self-realization. He wanted to spiritualize love. He thought that it would be marriage of two souls. But that could not be achieved and so the marriage failed. Madeleine loved him, but did not grab his spirit. Both her sons died. This disturbed her emotionally that she adopted the extreme form of Buddhism, which advocated ascetism, celibacy and mortification of the body. All men were her brothers now. She renounced all pleasures of the body and became a Buddhist Sadhaka. So she could no longer live with Ramaswamy as his wife. If she had remained a Catholic, their marriage would not have been wrecked.

Raja Rao uses Ramaswamy’s relationship with women like Madeleine, Savithri, Pratap’s wife and Lakshmi to highlight his ideas on Hindu marital life as well as spiritual love. His Indian trip and his experience hang around him even after his return to France. On the day he comes back, he dresses his French wife in the saree, which he has brought for her, and they sit down to supper.

“My hand just would not lift”, writes Ramaswamy. “Mado, something has happened, “Yes”, she agrees. “Something has… To whom?” “To everything,” he answers. (SR 65)

Ramaswamy was reared by traditional upbringing as prescribed in the Hindu books for a Brahmin boy. He had read the Upanisads at the tender age of four before he was ‘Brahminised’ with the holy thread. His visits to the holy places of North India and his new status as head of the family after the death of his father renew his awareness of Brahmin birth, which wells up when he sees his French wife, dressed in a saree, for the supper. Madeleine too senses the change in him, and in pain and longing asks him: “Have I failed your Gods?” “No”, he says, “You have failed me”. (Qtd in Harrex 179). Ramaswamy thinks that one has to lose one’s ego
so as to rejoice in the knowledge of the absolute, as he himself does when he falls in love with Savithri. To tell precisely, Raja Rao illuminates Ramaswamy’s moods in effecting a relationship. He speaks of a continuity of relationships that transcends time.

"For men are born and men die – even women are born and marry and continue to live. There is only one woman, not for one life, but for all lives. Indeed the earth was created that we may seek her.” (SR 207)

He finds the illustration of his point in the divine union of Lord Shiva and Parvathi as the novel projects:

“And the question of seeking does not arise either for where the both have shed the lower self... as Shiva and Parvathi did the absolute in union with the absolute to be one. There one does not possess the other ”(SR 207).

C.D. Narasimhaiah comments that the human relationships especially between men and women, should be read as the influence of a divine order, in which what is important is not the desire to possess the other but the quest for the Absolute. Hence he states, "Not for the husbands sake is the husband dear but for the self’s sake.”(Narasimhaiah 96). Raja Rao explains this point by referring to a myth of Krishna and Radha. Lord Krishna once felt that Radha was making the mistake of thinking that she could ‘possess’ him and that he ‘belonged’ to her. So Krishna sent her to Sage Durvasa. Radha thought that the Lord and the Sage were telling her lies. The Lord then explained the truth to her thus:
"The world is, my dear, not a lie, it is an illusion.
Besides tell me, is my body your husband, Radha?"
"no, my lord."
"is my mind your husband, Radha?"
"no my lord."
"then what is it you mean when you say to yourself," "Krishna my husband?"
"Assuredly something beyond the body and beyond the mind – "the principle".
"and tell me, my love, can you possess that, can you possess it?"
"no, my lord, how can I possess the absolute? The 'I' is the absolute.
And she fell at the lord's feet and understood and lived ever after in the light of the truth." (SR 382)

Ramaswamy through Savithri achieves self-transcendence. Their ritual marriage is a true marriage. They are both one in spirit and mind. Ramaswamy has no desire to possess Savithri. His is a pure love for her, and when he yearns for spiritual life he even advises her to marry Pratap and be true to him. Savithri is quite modern and was western in her choice of leisure. She uses to smoke and fixes dance engagements with many youths for the same evening. But when she falls in love with Ramaswamy, she is suddenly transformed and sacrifices her ego completely. Ramaswamy narrates thus:

"Then she knelt before me, removed one by one my slippers and my stockings and put them aside gently distantly. She took flower and
kunkum, and mumbling some song to herself, anointed my feet with them. Now she lit camphor and placing the censer in the middle of the kunkum-water she waved the flame before my face, once, twice and three times in arathi. After this she touched my feet with the water, and made aspersions of it over her head. Kneeling again and placing her head on my feet, she stayed there long, very long, with her breath breaking into gentle sobs. Then she gently held herself up. Taking the kunkum from the box I placed it on her brow, at the parting of her hair, and there where her bosom heaved, the abode of love. I could not touch her any more, nor could she touch me, and we stood for an isolate while” (SR 211)

This was a true marriage. There was no ego in it. There was no sense of possession. Through his relationship with Savithri, Ramaswamy achieved true self-transcendence. While Madeleine touches only his exterior, Savithri enters his inner life. Ramaswamy becomes her Krishna and they have a symbolic marriage after which he says, “We are not married that morning we discovered we had ever been married”. (SR 213) He says, “When Savithri touched my arm, the whole world rose into my awareness” (SR 207). The deathless soul and the soul bonding with another soul are suggested in Ramaswamy and Savithri. He says,

“Savithri was there, not in me but as me; not as someone for, unreal, relegated to a country in rounded space, but as light, which seemed never to fade, never to know where to go - like that constant sound the texts say which in the silence of things, The first vibration, the primary sound, the pranavam OM propounds itself, and from which
all that is world is created. Savithri, as it were, was the meaning of meaning, Sabdharta; and everything read from her, because she was – she is – she will be”. (SR 242)

The name Savithri has glorious mythological associations--The Savithri of the Vedas, of the Satyavan – Savithri story and Aurobindo’s epic symbolizing knowledge, virtue and purity. The very name can conquer death. In The Serpent and the Rope, Savithri represents Shakti and Ramaswamy is her Shiva. In the legend of Savithri and Satyavan, she defeats the God of Death because of her perfect devotion to her husband. In Sri Aurobindo’s great work, Savithri, Satyavan symbolizes truth and Savithri symbolizes the power of devotion. In the novel, The Serpent and the Rope Savithri loves Ramaswamy in the same way as Radha and the Gopikas and Mira loved Krishna. Savithri is Radha and Ramaswamy is her Krishna. She is Mira and Ramaswamy is her lord. “ I have known my Lord for a thousand lives, from Janam to Janam have I known my Krishna” (SR 212).

The real Raja Rao’s Savithri regards life as a game. Ramaswamy is her Krishna and beyond that it is immaterial with whom she dances and whom she marries. For Ramaswamy, Savithri is more of a symbol than woman. She visits Ramaswamy and Madeleine in France, and when Ramaswamy visits England soon after, a deep friendship develops between him and Savithri. When she visits him in his room in London, she considers him as Krishna, the divine lover, and herself as Radha, the beloved of Krishna and offers him a ritual worship, very much like a traditional Hindu bride.

“A Hindu woman knows how to worship her Krishna, her Lord.

When the moon shines over the Jamuna and lights are lit in the
households and the cows are milked, then it is Janaki’s son plays on the banks of the Brindavan... What gopi, my Lord, would not go to this festival of love? ...” (SR 209)

The self-realization or the realization of the Absolute is the reality – the aim and the end of the meaning of the life. Life of relationships effected or broken shall be the cause to arrive at this effect. Raja Rao leads Shankara’s non-duality in terms of reality to the real, which involves dispelling what is unreal. When Savithri, before leaving for England, comes to him with the spirit of Radha, the perfect bride offering Krishna worship, and touches his feet. Ramaswamy tells Savithri: “In marriage both the spouse and the espoused become anointed unto Godhead.” (SR 212). This bonding is a kind of spiritual marriage. Hence Raja Rao states thus: “We were not married that morning we discovered, we had ever been married–else how understand that silent, whole knowledge of one another”. (SR 213). “For to wed a women you must wed her God”. (SR 84). In another place in the novel Raja Rao states: “The God of woman must be the God of her man”. (SR 113). For this reason true marriage was possible between Ramaswamy and Savithi but not between Ramaswamy and Madeleine. Ramaswamy’s relationship with others particularly women also turn out to be an exploration in search of self’s kinship with the eternal and the cosmic. “Jyothir meka Parabrahman,” Little mother always chanted at home, as soon as the lights were lit. “Light alone is the Supreme Brahman”

“You can marry when you are one. That is, you can marry when there is no one to marry another. The real marriage is like 00, not like
010. When the ego is dead is marriage true. Who would remove my ego? “Lord, my Guru!” I cried in the midst of the night . . . (SR 293)

Vishwam in darpanadrishya mananagari
Like a city seen in a mirror is the universe,
Seen within oneself but seemingly of Maya born,
As in sleep;
Yet is it really in the inner self
Of Him who sees at the Point of Light
Within himself, unique, immutable —
To Him incarnate as the holy Guru,
To Sri Dakshinamurthi be my salutation.” (SR 293)

Ramaswamy is fascinated by many things and persons and remains a fascination to some people. Though all these relationships could not be termed as beatific recognition of the Atman and the Brahman, which enables the becoming of a Brahmin, a special mention must be made about his relationship with Madeleine, Saroja and Savithri. Both Savithri and Ramaswamy seem to grow at the sight of each other, their space for love becoming a space of metaphysical illumination. In fact, Savithri is also like Ramaswamy and her craving for the space for love could be real as an exercise in facing the Brahman. Both achieve this state through the other. Ramaswamy himself states,

“Savithri was made of such stuff that the real had to be clothed in terms of the illusory to make it concrete; truth was to be made the revelation of a puzzle, a riddle, a mathematic of wisdom.” (SR 126)
He says, "Savithri gave one the sense that, do what you would, you could only be, and since you could only be, nothing could happen to you." – (SR 128) To this he adds, "I had never felt, no, not even with Saroja, a present that made a gift of life to itself..." (SR 128) More than with Madeleine he sees in his relationship with Savithri possibilities of resolving the I-though imbroglio resulting from his Vedantic fixation. After stating the problem to himself, he discusses it with Savithri:

“If you become me, then there is no problem.”

“How so?”

“Then you, become me, will be the real Savithri.” (SR 360)

In fact, Savithri becomes identical in Ramaswamy’s mind with Vedantha, for he says that when he said “Vedanta”, it was “As though “I’d murmured Savithri” (SR 193). He says,

“I went home and wrote a sweet letter to Madeleine. I told her what to me was a truth. I loved her more than ever... because I had changed, had enlarged into myself, I felt thinner, lighter and with greater curve of being” (SR 193)

It this “greater curve of being “ that enables him to have space enough within him for the merger of his love for Madeleine and that with his love for Savithri. Halfway through the letter he realizes that he was “not in fact writing to Madeleine but to Savithri.” (SR 194) And yet he says of Madeleine,

“I had grown to respect her more, knowing that human love as I knew it then was imperfect... but that love was possible, was real.
the more real and possible because I was far away - I would go further away still." (SR 194)

Ramaswamy's relationship with Madeleine reveals their moments of love followed by understanding, which grows into a kind of respect for each other. Hence he finds a merging of Madeleine and Savithri in his consciousness. He understands that real love is impersonal love, that which exists between him and Madeleine, when physical relationship dies. Ramaswamy explains this as a stateless state.

"What is it separated us, Rama?"
"India"
"India? But I am a Buddhist."
"That is why Buddhism left India. India is impitoyable."
"Yes, and a Christian and a Muslim as well."
"Then?"
"One can never be converted to Hinduism."
"You mean once can only be born a Brahmin?"
"That is - an Indian," I added, as an explanation of India.
"Your India, then, Rama, is in time and space?"
"No. It is contiguous with time and space, but is anywhere, everywhere."
"I do not understand."
"It stands, as it were, vertical to space and time, and is present at all points."
"This is too mystical even for me."
“Would you understand if I were to say, “Love is not a feeling: it is, you might say, a stateless state, the whole condition of oneself?”"

“I don’t. But suppose I did?”

“Can you understand that all things merge, all thoughts and perceptions, in knowledge? It is in knowledge that you know a thing, not in seeing or hearing.”

“Yes”.

“That is India. Jnanam is India”. (SR 331)

Ramaswamy finds in Savithri the principle of ‘womanhood’. She gives Ramaswamy the warmth of spiritual intimacy. Ramaswamy sees in her someone who can intuit the nature of his quest and empathize with it. She gives him rich warmth of spiritual “intimacy” and, while lovingly tells him that she does not love him (“you know I don’t love you?”) she offers him “lush green vistas of an otherness that communes serenely with his own is-ness”. Appropriately, it is in one of his dialogues with Savithri that Ramaswamy first indicates the final direction his quest will take:

[Savithri]: “Lord, take me, and let me forget the world.”

[Rama] : “Savithri, who can take whom?... you can but take yourself”

[Savithri]: “quickly then. How can it be achieved?”

[Rama]: “By—by discipleship.” (SR 363).

When Ramaswamy comes to know of the marriage between Pratap and Savithri he persuades her to go back to her husband and says, “I must leave, leave this world, “he writes in his diary, “I must leave, leave this world.” (SR 399)
Lakshmi’s love, which is presented as a short sensual interlude in this Ramaswamy’s story of love, is just a chance meeting, which consummates in physical gratification. Encouraged by Lakshmi’s hearty welcome and fine entertainment, Ramaswamy one night “slipped slowly and deliberately into Lakshmi’s bed” (SR 295). Both of them were sensually starved, they bonded with mutual need. As her husband Shyam Sunder returned from Europe, he did not show affection to the brown skinned Lakshmi and hence Lakshmi became so much attached to Ramaswamy that she could never think of a separation from him. Consequently when she came to learn about his plans to leave for Europe, she was highly upset and infuriated, and even abused him calling him “eunuch” and “treacherous coward” (SR 296). Lakshmi’s love for Ramaswamy is purely carnal. Such a love is narrow and selfish, and devoid of growth. The same kind of understanding is revealed by the actions of Ramaswamy introducing ‘Rakhi’ to his European friends, a ritual of brotherhood relationships. A silken spangled string in yellow tied round the waist of brothers and friends of a woman towards whom they feel protective, for Rakhi means “protection”.

“... The Indian man would have Rakhi tied by every woman he meet, feel her elder brother, protect her love, and enjoy the pride of an uncle at marriage and at childbirth...” (SR 155)

Ramaswamy became very close to Georges, and used to play with his son Vera, while Georges corrected and translated his research work into French. Catherine once told Ramaswamy that he need not go to India for a job and as Vera loved him and they could accommodate him in his old room. There he could write his abstruse theories and Georges would translate his ideas into French.
Ramaswamy said jokingly that he would agree to stay if they had another baby. Georges said that by his intuition Ramaswamy hit upon the truth. Catherine said that after all he was a Brahmin. Georges said he and Ramaswamy must have been brothers in the past life. Ramaswamy’s goal was now clear. “Let us go to Travancore”. He explained that his spiritual home was now Travancore. Madeleine gradually drifts away from Ramaswamy into an ascetic form of Buddhism and comes to feel that marriage is irrelevant to this body composed of elements. Buddhism attracted her because Buddhism also believes in the separate existence of the object.

“To have compassion”, explains Ramaswamy before they finally part, “Presupposes the existence of the world. You must have compassion toward some suffering thing, so suffering exists and compassion as well. The Buddhists say that the world, perception is real; the Vedantist says that perception is real, but that reality is my self”. (SR 334)

Uma Parameswaran gives the following reason for the failure of their marriage:

“Marriage involves interaction and Ramaswamy’s essential weakness is that he cannot survive interaction. Ramaswamy lives within his illusory realm, a snake charmer piping tunes to serpent that dance as and when he wills, then to Madeleine is the rope, the only reality that intrudes upon his insular world. He builds a romantic image of her also, but the very state of cohabitation makes continuous idealization, impossible. This trait in Ramaswamy’s character precludes ideal marriage and since he would not have been
satisfied with anything else, no marriage would have brought him happiness” (M.K.Naik 79)

According to Hinduism, a happy woman is one who has a husband and children. Buddhism takes Madeleine away from this idea. M.K.Naik considers this as the main reason, for the breaking of their marriage.

“Madeleine is essentially a nun. There is no place in Hinduism for a nun. In rejecting a man, woman rejects womanhood and creation and thus condemns herself.” (M.K.Naik 170).

As Madeleine married Ramaswamy, in order to come closer to her, Ramaswamy started moving towards Catholics. There is much in common between the Hinduism and Catholics. If Madeleine had reminded a Catholic, their marriage would not have failed. But the irony was that in order to come closer to Ramaswamy, Madeleine started moving away from Catholicism towards Buddhism, resulting which broke their marriage. The death of Madeleine’s second child at birth hastens this. During his second homecoming, after another visit to India, a changed Ramaswamy encounters a changed Madeleine. Buddhism has now become for her an all-absorbing spiritual quest. She gradually withdraws from Ramaswamy and from the world. The failure of the marriage of Ramaswamy and Madeleine is tragic, for it had begun so promisingly and had known moments of joy and even vocational fulfillment. The narrative suggests that Madeleine has a premonition of the wreck of their marriage. She writes to Ramaswamy while the latter was in India, “I love you, Ramaswamy, and with a strange, distant, impenitent love- as though in loving you I say I do not in fact love you...” (SR 40).
She declares that he was at once 'noble' and 'inhuman'. Madeleine and Ramaswamy belong to different cultural and racial backgrounds and yet they make a good couple, enviable for many. Georges, a minor character in the novel, once remarked, “for a Christian what is fascinating, is your relationship with Madeleine” (SR 81). Their love was in the beginning full of all sensuous charms and physical attraction. Ramaswamy observers that he loves Madeleine as he says, “in bits and parts and all, like an antelope does its dove, the elephant does with the ichors dripping from his brows” (SR 158). The chapter entitled ‘Pages from My Diary’ gives details of his sensuous attraction for the graces of Madeleine’s charming body:

“I loved the curved nape of her neck, so gentle, so like marble for me, almost saffron-coloured under the light of the moon, or I call her to myself in the day, and take her in my arms, how her throat smells of some known musk”. (SR 158).

Madeleine’s love for him is not of the ordinary kind. She wants him to be big and true so that she may "pour her love" on him (SR 80). This kind of love involves dedication and oneness. Madeleine also has faith and respect for Ramaswamy’s Gods—Nandi, Lord Shiva’s beloved bull and the Shivalinga. She also began pouring holy water on the head of the Shivalinga. Obviously, this is the first stage of spiritual transformation that takes place in Madeleine on account of her dedication to Ramaswamy. Her love at this stage is essentially emotional as she begins to love all that is Indian for the sake of Ramaswamy, she loves and respects everything that is holy to Ramaswamy. This respect and admiration or in other words the faith leads Madeleine to an intellectual quest for Indian thought and
philosophy. Madeleine’s spiritual love for Ramaswamy is brought into relief by a sharp contrast with Lakshmi’s physical passion as well as Savithri’s intellectual and platonic love for him. Curiously Ramaswamy is the common object of love for all these three women, very much like Lord Krishna to the Gopikas. Ramaswamy however remains detached at one stage.

Savithri is charmed more by Ramaswamy’s intellect than by anything else. Although her love is not devoid of emotional intensity, it is inspired much by a touch of intellectual desire and healthy admiration, which takes the form of infatuation later. She is so much impressed by Ramaswamy’s ability to discover values and metaphysical truths that she accepts him as her guru. As a result, her love is of an abstract and rational nature that it does not allow the development of the emotion into a passionate urge. She loves the very idea of love and her love has a platonic strand. She loves him knowing well that he is already married to Madeleine. This kind of love is likely to blossom into a spiritual one, for here lies the scope for denial of self. Raja Rao takes up this point as he fashions the conversation between Savithri and Ramaswamy thus:

“No, you can love another, But love can never be a movement, a feeling, an act, All that acts can only be of the body, or the mind, or the ego, only the selfish can love And the loveless?” (Savithri asked) ’They become love’ (answered Ramaswamy)” (SR 177).

Savithri shows the power to rise from the level of the body to that of the mind and to go even higher but she cannot become a true lover, for she is not marching to free herself completely from the idea of personal love. As she is unable to annihilate her ego she has to marry Pratap if she cannot marry Ramaswamy. Her
aesthetic sense of possession attracts her to Ramaswamy and it is her self-consciousness that stands between herself and Ramaswamy, who also knows it as he says: "But we were not one silence, we were two solitudes. What stood between Savithri and me was not Pratap, but Savithri herself". (SR 179).

Unlike Lakshmi, Savithri could successfully detach herself from the claims of the body, but mentally she is so profoundly attached to Ramaswamy that she is content to accept him even as spiritual husband before she takes Pratap as her wedded husband. Where physical marriage with one, and spiritual love with another, could go together without violating the claims of either, Savithri finds her comfort zone, although she attains a very high order of impersonality in love as she detaches herself from the sense of physical possession of Ramaswamy even after her secret marriage with him (SR 211-213). Nevertheless, she could not free herself from the claims of the environment in which she is placed. Madeleine is ready to divorce her husband, while Savithri could not be as much helpless as is Madeleine. However Savithri achieves spiritual development in love, like Madeleine who attains self-realization through love. What is to be recognized, in these marital bonds and breaks is the fact that both the kinds of marriages – self-realizing love or self-suffering love— are relative and cannot exist in the realm of the absolute. What appears, as a serpent at the level of the relative becomes a mere rope when looked upon from the angle of the Absolute. Hence the love of a self-realized soul becomes impersonal and universal. When truth is born, the person dies, and this very Advaitic truth is told through Madeleine’s spiritual progress in love. Madeleine divorces Ramaswamy not out of hatred, animosity or jealousy but out of love. It is for the sake of her deep love for her husband that she becomes a staunch Buddhist. She in
all sincerity says, "Beloved, it is you who have brought me all this... I am a Sadhaka now" (SR 314). Ramaswamy is convinced that "no man can love a woman for her personal self" (SR 310), and he loves a woman "for the self within her" as Yagnavalkya said to Maitreyi". (SR 310). Ramaswamy asserts that, "when the ego is dead is marriage true" (SR 203), and Madeleine is a Sadhaka in the sense that throughout her life she tries her best for the annihilation of her ego. Ramaswamy and Madeleine are both lovers of truth. Madeleine loves bridges and feels that "the truth was always on the other side". She seeks the truth in Buddhism. Ramaswamy, too seeks the guidance of a guru to seek the truth. Thus the search or quest for truth takes Ramaswamy and Madeleine to different directions.

Critics of Raja Rao have addressed the complexities in Ramaswamy's relationships with different women. M.K.Naik thus reasons out the breaking of relationship between Ramaswamy and Madeleine,

"The symbolism of the ritual marriage between Ramaswamy and Savithri is plain. The individual self (Ramaswamy) has been united to purity and power of devotion (Savithri). The masculine principle has been wedded to the feminine principle. The outcome of this union is self- realization, the fact that the marriage of Ramaswamy and Madeleine ultimately proves barren, both their children dying in infancy may be considered symbolic of Madeleine's failure to be the true feminine principle" (M.K.Naik 99)

S.Nagarajan in his work An Indian novel claims that the source of this failure of love is cultural and philosophical incompatibility because for Ramaswamy the world is not real except in the way that illusions are while they last (512-13),
whereas Madeleine believes in the actual reality of the world and of human person. in the marriage of Ramaswamy and Madeleine, Nagarajan continues, two contrary world, views, two contrary epistemologies, come together and the novel is a study of that encounter. While Raja Rao pictures the marriage of Ramaswamy and Savithri as a ritualistic marriage of Radha and Krishna, Jayakanthan gives a different picture of the relationship of Mahalingam and Uma. In his letter to Adi, Mahalingam himself mentions:

"I feel strange when I think of the ‘family life’, Uma and I have been leading. None in this vicinity knows Tamil. Uma is supposed to be a nurse working in a private nursing home. I am supposed to be her unemployed husband taking care of the cooking and other household chores..."(JJS 292).

Time and situation make them to live together in one place like a husband and wife but their true relationship, is brought out by Jayakanthan, to insist the fact that a man and woman need not necessarily be a husband and wife, but could live like a brother and sister as well. This relationship is brought out from the words of Mahalingam who says,

"Just like Vedam, Uma is another sister to me. What is wrong with brother and sister playing the role of Rama and Sita in a play? Please be relaxed, without any worry or fear about us. We, the youth of the land, will smash this vicious dictatorship!". (JJS 293).

Jayakanthan insists on the fact that it is the mind, which accepts the nature of relationships. Mahalingam and Uma live together, as brother and sister and attempt
to reach their path of truth. In *Jaya Jaya Shankara*, the marriage of Adi and Swatantra Devi can be accepted as a true marriage, as it was between two pure souls of true love and for them the marriage is not just mere possession. And their marriage is symbolic of the creation of a casteless society. Unlike Ramaswamy, Adi is not so well versed in the philosophy of Hinduism. But he follows the narrow ethical code of the Hindus. He marries Swatantra Devi and loves her very much and he does not fall into any kind of relationship with other woman in his life, as is the case of Ramaswamy.

The very name Adi in Tamil means the source, the beginning. Thus by naming his character Adi, Jayakanthan creates Adi the man from a lower caste as one who is the first, who ironically has to battle for his survival. The caste conscious people refuse to give social sanction to marriages of partners hailing from different castes. Jayakanthan writes thus:

"Whenever he saw him, Shankaran was reminded of the immortal Tamil classic *Thirukkural*, because, this name Adi occurs with reference to God Almighty in the very first couplet of the classic. Shankaran completed his ritual sunset prayers. Adi collected the few goats, which had strayed away and was guiding them to the other side of the river.

Adi and Shankaran were genuine friends. Who would believe that such a bond could flourish between the Agraharam and Moongil Kudi on either side of the Shankarabharanam River? And the river flows relentlessly, holding two obstinate banks. The river that
separates the village also sets up the banks and preserves all the
delicate boundaries?" (JJS 35).

True service to mankind is a step towards self-realization. In Jaya Jaya Shankara, Swamigal points out that Adi had failed to do his duty as a father to his son Mahalingam whom he sends out of his house just because of his faith in Communism which is very much against Adi's Gandian ideals. Raja Rao in The Serpent and The Rope highlights the physical life of narrator whereas Jayakanthan in Jaya Jaya Shankara reflects on ascetic renunciation. The parrot which is fed with fruits and taken care of, one day is let out free which flies high in the sky like Mahalingam with his own ideas and principles. Young Shankaran at that time thinks of becoming a sannyasin to get free from the worldly life, which is full of desires. Shankaran says,

"The worldly life is like a river... Love, attachment and the like are the crocodiles. The Sannyasin is beyond these bonds. Anyone with a firm resolve to take to Sannyasa would easily shake of these crocodiles". (JJS 44)

Thus by insisting on the fact that guru and Sannyasin have power not only to guide one towards truth and reality but also guard them against the worldly desires and illusions, and make them attain 'Brahman'.

Jayakanthan takes up the experiences of individuals as beings caught up in social, political and of personal spheres of life. These experiences are also physical as well as the spiritual. Jayakanthan traces the principles of Hinduism in the interconnected segments of human life that ding-dongs between the 'Samsara' and
‘Sanyasam’, married life and ascetic life respectively. The most important point Jayakanthan emphasizes is the fact that the mission of quest is not always an exercise of the internal self. It also extends outside the home and the mind. The true meaning of life lies in striking a soulful relationship with fellow human beings cutting across the state of caste and age. Jayakanthan informs his audience that the process of salvation is not achieved either by a ritualistic worship of god or a state of introspection of the soul. It is as well the ‘karma’ (an action) and serving as an agent for a meaningful action. This process asks for a helping hand of a guru undergoing a process of enlightenment and different stations engendered by the process of education. A great soul is an emitter of a meaningful message to the other, irrespective of man’s social station or barriers of birth. Hence Jayakanthan advocates the institution of an Ashram by the side of each temple. A conscious illuminative process of education should discipline the unconscious movement towards godhead. The story of Adi and Mahalingam and Vedavalli revolves around this message of leading a disciplined life—a life which takes care of the human code of living in true reverence to traditions and customs, in true faith of teaching and service. It is apparent that Jayakanthan’s story moves into a philosophical plane at the eternal level, while Raja Rao’s philosophy is grounded in the inner experience of truth by characters. While it is a quest internal for Ramaswamy, for Jayakanthan it is something visible, apparent, eternal and social.

In Jaya Jaya Shankara, Jayakanthan brings the family life of Adi into focus. Adi respects his wife, trusts her and gives her equal freedom in her thought and deeds. Trust is another Hindu ethical code, which builds up the marriage and keeps together the life of a man and a woman from any danger of collapse. It provides
strength to the couple caught by a relationship and well anchored in mutual understanding. Jayakanthan gives a clear idea of the marriage of Adi and Swatantra Devi and its impact on their life, society and children. Sadashiva Iyer, the family man is kept out of his caste just because he mingle with Harijan people and works for their upliftment. Finally he shifts to the Ashram started by him, to spend rest of his life there. After the death of his wife, he is alone with his daughter Swatantra Devi. Adi, learns all ‘sastras’ (holy books) and Hindu mythical stories through Shankaran. His soul and mind are like a pure Hindu, devoutly following the Hindu dharma. And by marrying a Brahmin girl and giving her a life and a status in the society, Adi moves up in the social ladder, and his success lies in his perfect understanding of his wife. He knows the dharma that transcends the apparent illusions. Devi too describes her husband, as the noblest person, “a great Brahmin who embodied the best in the great tradition rooted in spiritual involvement and committed to national welfare”. She declares that he has no interest in material goods, and hence could internalize the Vedas through the time-honored process of ‘learning by hearing’. She finds her father’s noble spirits in her husband’s way of life. Acharya also affirms that, “Though he is a born Harijan, in appearance he is like lord Parameswara who came in the disguise of a chandala.” (JJS 79)

The quest to seek the Brahman or the reality occurs either by intuition or by a crisis of compulsion. To the extraordinary and the divinely inspired the intuition show up at a particular point of time as it occurred in the life of Adi Shankara. For the Acharya Shankara of Jayakanthan also, and inner voice leads the persons to visit a guru, though of course Adi plays his role as a cause for such an action. However for an average man, the crisis caused by either by relationship or by a disruption of
relationship becomes the motivation for the quest. Adi who marries the daughter of the Brahmin and leads a happy family life, without sacrificing his commitments to his ideals finds life smooth sailing but a moment of crisis arrives when his relationship with his son Mahalingam threatens of breakup. When he finds that Mahalingam chooses a violent political path, the Gandhian in him rebels against it. Hence with an emotional crisis he meets the Acharya for guidance. The Acharya impresses upon him the reality that the conflict between the Gandhian and the Marxist would disappear when the Brahman in him and the Brahman in his son will be seen by them. The illusion that is external will be dispelled by the illumination of the reality within. Perhaps the very separation between the son and the father becomes the cause for the final reunion, which should be symbolically understood as “understanding the Absolute”.

In Jaya Jaya Shankara, the story of Adi is portrayed in two different phases. In the first phase Jayakanthan introduces him as a simple shepherd boy, tending ‘as an orphan’, taken care of by his uncle—“Along with the goats his uncle brought him up”—he had a sort of brotherly affection towards animals and also he is a vegetarian, very unusual of a Harijan. Naturally, given to know of these family details, young Shankaran sympathizes with him and believes that there is something divine in Adi, when Adi saves young Shankaran’s life, he accepts him as god but at the same time young Shankaran is ashamed and rather disturbed at the thought that his wet clothes have been polluted by the touch of a Harijan boy. Acharya Sankaran at Krishnaswamy’s words later says, “It seems he was Harijan in his poorvaashram”, responds: “If he alone is Harijan, are all the others Shivjan?” (JJS 78).
The term, ‘Harijan’, literally means the child of Hari, Lord Vishnu, while ‘Shivjan’ means the child of Lord Shiva. While former term, popularised by Mahatma Gandhi stays with entire connotation associated with the term untouchable, much against the very spirit of brotherhood that Gandhi wanted to invest it, the latter term, ‘Shivjan’ is Jayakanthan’s subtle counterpoint. Even a staunch believer of Lord Shiva does not employ this term. Jayakanthan tosses the term ‘Shivjan’ as a counterpoint to the usage ‘Harijan’. In reality Gandhi’s term is well meeting attempt, which ended in failure. The facts are simple; post Gandhi days have witnessed no attitudinal changes, and people burdened with hierarchical caste stamps continue to suffer the emotional divide. Acharya Swamigal’s rejoinder to his assistant, Krishnaswamy lands on him as a riddle. Acharya remarks very subtly that like sannyasins having first station before renunciation—Poorvashram, followed by an elevated status of the saint, Adi’s ‘Poorvashram’ was the Harijan station and now he has transcended it. Normally the term ‘Poorvashram’ is reserved for saints, and the family man is considered to entertain only the station—the Samsara. He clears Krishnaswamy’s doubt by explaining the character of Adi

“Why this shower of gold sovereigns for me? Why all this paraphernalia of elephant ride? What is important for the head of the madam (Ashram)? His character, his integrity and his austerity and he embodies all these high qualities” (JJS.83)

This is to say that Adi is also an Acharya without the paraphernalia of decorations and elephant ride. In this appreciation of Adi, Jayakanthan condemns the false pomp of Sannyasins. The second phase of Adi begins with his married life. Adi is transformed as a very unique person. He is well versed in Veddas and Sastras
and staunchly follows the Gandhian principles in his life. Adi is firm in his beliefs unlike Ramaswamy who wanders from place to place in search of truth, breaking the Hindu culture and tradition. Adi knows very well that his marriage to a Hindu Brahmin woman does not make him a Brahmin. But as for as Swatantra Devi is concerned, Adi is a ‘noble Brahmin’ whose Vedas are Gandhian principles. She says: "My comrade whom I have adopted as my dear husband as in a swayamwara is the noblest Brahmin I have known in my life." (JJS 89)

Jayakanthan has structured a two-tier process of signification in Adi’s characterization. He is married to a Brahmin woman who loves him and respects him. He is also ‘becoming’ Brahmin by a process of appropriation. He has read Vedas and Sastras. He does not dismiss like a modern Dalit does. But amidst this two-tier process of invested Brahmin in him, he also has to be faith in Gandhism. The relationships, physical, intellectual and emotional provide an opportunity for an inner growth. Acharya Swamigal understands this change in him, and acknowledges his greatness. When he is at loggerhead with his son, a phenomenon of change from Gandhian to post Gandhian politics, Adi’s crisis is heightened. He finds that Gandhian in him disowns his Marxist son. It conflict between ideational loyalty and parental passion. Like a real Sannyasin the value-maker and value-worshipper in him prevails over the father in him. When Acharya happens to know this, he understands the conflict in Adi mind. One should be a real Sannyasin to disown his family and plod on his path of a quest. Adi’s growth makes the Acharya respect him, and yet in perfect understanding of Samsara Dharma, wants to put Adi in the right slot, and advises him to seek his son’s present station and bring him back home.
Paradoxically, Adi fails to accept the ideas and views of his son Mahalingam, who does not accept the life style of Adi. He chooses modern life and dismisses Adi’s simplicity. He wants to represent the changing time. He cannot be a Gandhian. Here are seen two contrast characters, one being patient and accepting the social station of his birth as a Harijan, though he has cultivated the Brahminical qualities, and the other being a vibrant youth who wants to seek new goals entertaining principles. Adi and Mahalingam are for Jayakanthan metaphors of past and present, informing the reader that life is not frozen but is on the move. Mahaligam feels:

"I feel it is better to be a slave to the society and swing my arms freely rather than be a slave to the family, pushing a time-worn toddler’s cart you are all dualistic nuts you have no qualms about crushing your children at the altar of your ideals and idiosyncrasies.”(JJ 122)

For Jayakanthan the older generations still follow the values and traditions in life but when the younger generation thinks it in term of reforms and are ready to break the tradition, ideas and values there is a clash in the family and as a result, one of the members of the family has to walk out of the house to seek his principles. Thus by their inter-caste marriage, Adi and Swatantra Devi involved in a happy life of human values and principles with religious fervour. However, their faith and principles do have an impact on their relationship with the society. The badly affected are their offsprings. Their son and daughter find themselves pushed to oppose their parents. Adi’s daughter Vedavalli possesses all the goodly qualities but is referred to by people only ‘as one born of an illegal wedlock’. The society will
neither accept her as a Brahmin nor a Harijan. But she bears these brunts bravely and remains calm unlike her brother Mahalingam who walks out of the house. The bonding and breaking of relationships are not emotional incidences but they are identical ones as well as pragmatic.

Jayakanthan deals with the pros and cons of the inter-caste marriage in Hindu society. Adi faces all odds calmly without giving up his principles. At one stage when Acharya Swamigal points out to him that it was his anger that drove away his son from him, Adi accepts his fault and takes up the advise of Acharya to go in search of his son for reunion. Adi remains a loving father to his children and a fine husband to his wife. The author thus reveals his commitment to his family:

“Adi always had the habit of debating the pros and cons of various matters within himself before embarking on a course of action. Further, he respected Devi. Brushing aside her reasoned positions with the typical boorishness of a domineering husband was simply beyond him. So he agreed to go along with Devi’s idea of sending the children to the nearby schools. Concurrently he commenced his instruction too to shape them for higher goals. As a result, Mahalingam and Vedavalli used to overwhelm their teachers with their range of knowledge in intellectual acuity. The entire school would marvel at their knowledge of the Sanskrit language and Tamil literature and their skill in spinning. Adi’s children were models of civilized contact and fine culture. At the same time Adi’s started realizing that his son was gradually falling prey to a counterfeit culture. He was also very harsh on him on many occasions” (UJS, 119)
Adi has every reason to rebel against Hindu faith, which has brought on him the burden—the stigma of birth, and the cruel denial of relationship with the other. His marriage with the Brahmin is a 'step' on traditionalists as it is also a kind of transcendence for him but he is chastened by this relationship, and becomes himself a symbol of 'old generation' in the eyes of his own son. The point is, for Jayakanthan, the inevitability cultural shift that surrounds modern living, asks for new change in attitude. He and his wife follow the social and cultural order of the society keeping their positions of birth in mind. But the new generation represented by Mahalingam proclaims the shift that demands strength to stand up against the evil in our society. Mahalingam urges for a change in the minds of the people and wants them to come out of that narrow world. Adi realizes his mistake. He chooses to be by the side of his son relaxing his stubbornness and reconciling to the news of new generation. He tells Acharya:

"Yes, swamy. I had been very harsh, particularly in Mahalingam's case. Adi was struck with remorse. If a son takes to evil ways, his father should also bear a share of the responsibility. Leave aside fate and the sway of karma... I am confident that one who is blessed to be your son will never ever take to evil ways." Adi's heart swelled with pride at swamy's words (JJS 111).

The marriage of Adi and Devi announces a social meaning and their successful union is an affirmation of a larger religious truth. Marriage in Indian social system is not just a physical union of a man and woman it a relationship 'ordained by divine sanction' and it involves 'acceptance of the other' rather than
enjoying physical pleasures. Adi hence remains a dedicated husband accepting the other in his Brahmin wife.

"By all means I myself meant to tell you. I was waiting because it would be more appropriate if the idea came from you," said Adi. Ever since they knew each other he used to address her in the 'respectful plural' form (unlike the familiar 'singular' form of address commonly adopted by Tamil husbands). Vedavalli who presently joined them told her mother: "amma, when you visit the sage it would be very becoming if you wear the saree in traditional malsar style... Why? You seem to be feeling shy about it." The mother cut in saying, "not that I am shy. I am not used to that style." The father smiled in appropriate in appreciative endorsement of the daughter's idea. "I am also eager to see you in that traditional style"; he turned to his wife with a chuckle. She turned pink in a gush of bashfulness. (JJS 81)

This passage clearly shows the happy and contented family life of Adi and his sincerity to his wife. When he errs, in his rejection of his son, the Acharya enforces the relationship. Adi social and familial role completes the vision of Brahman. He understands the divide and difference of opinions as the illusions. They do understand the problems faced by their children this society. Devi puts it thus:

"It is not that our ideals have not been accomplished; that they are subject to question and ridicule by our own progeny really hurts us... We have brought up our children on the lines we ourselves grew up
in the Ashram. Still, we have not been able to protect them from the evil forces rationalized by this cruel society. What a cruel turn of fate that our ideal son stooped to seek a government jobs on the questionable premise that he belonged to a depressed community.

(JJS 91)

As a wife she has to accept and respect her husband’s principles; as a mother she has the responsibility to protect her son. Moreover she is upset at the very thought of their children, are being labeled as untouchables. She has a beautiful daughter, Vedavalli, and she is concerned of a daughter’s future:

“This daughter of mine... Vedavalli. If only she had access to the ashram ambience, what an ideal woman she would turn out to be. I do not think so out of my natural affection for her. She has attained the maturity to interact with me like a trusted friend. She is proud of the lives we lead and is genuinely committed to her father’s principles. Still, she is being commonly referred to only as one born of an unholy wedlock. Her stated position against marriage is not the usual bashful remonstration of a young girl. The grim determination behind her position bothers me no end ... She says that not out of a sense of renunciation. A young girl adopting a monastic mode only out of a feeling of frustration and disgust over her personal predicament.... Is this not cruel self-flagellation?” (JJS 91-92)

Jayakanthan takes up the issue of man and woman relationship in his portrayal of Mahaligam and Uma whose friendship is not at all physical. Jayakanthan glorifies the woman characters in Jaya Jaya Shankara, Swatantra Devi,
Vedam, Uma are all presented as various forms of Sakthi in a refined manner. Raja Rao considers woman in their various strength. His portrayal of Madeleine and Savithri are idealistic. Raja Rao's idealization of woman "pertains to poetry, sainthood and paradise rather than truth".

"The woman needs our worship for our fulfillment, for in the worshiping her we know the world annihilate it, absorbing it into our self. We should reach Siva that woman be dissolved-and with her the world. For the world is meat not for denial but for dissolution. The object, I said to myself, is woman hence the concupiscence of ascetics for their loin cloth, their Kamandala, their stick or naked feet." (SR 172)

Woman in Raja Rao tend more to break away than unite with man after the brief temptations spiritual or physical relationship, they tend to recede. Hence Ramaswamy fails in his 'Samsara' tenor. His failure in family life and his relationships with many women make him seek the spiritual life. Woman give Ramaswamy the knowledge of himself, the Bombay woman makes him understand his carnally; Little mother, evokes his family bond; Savithri wakes up the quester in him Madeleine teaches him the Christian sense of sacrifice and also compassion of a Buddhist sense. Ramaswamy attempts to find the meaning of life through all these women. But he realizes the bridal path to god or to go to god alone is a basic question and chief issue of dharma, which Raja Rao works out in terms of Ramaswamy's sole-search and his relationship with Madeleine and Savithri. Adi and Ramaswamy attain 'knowledge' of and need to quest the 'Brahman' by a process of relationship with the other in case of Adi it is progressively cementing
kind of relationship, and increased tripling into Samsara. For Ramaswamy, the relationships are constantly shifting. It is by breaking the relationships that he gains the space for reflection and the drive for spiritual quests.

Raja Rao and Jayakanthan conclude that marriage is a commitment and it involves bondage for those who do not love as well as for those who realize the truth of love. There is a kind of interlocking in Jayakanthan's novel that shows that these three levels are not demarcated or distinctively different. The one overlaps the other. So an ultimate experience is available as a thread that connects the three. When self-realization is attained, these experiences disappear as tentative involvements. In the case of Ramaswamy the experiences overlap and at one stage he believes that he has to transfer these levels of experience and reach illumination. This is suggested by the break in the family life, which he feels, that facilitates him towards spiritual and intellectual experiences.

Life is, for both writers, living with a purpose, that is, towards reaching a kind of realization. This realization is an ultimate meaning one gets by an intense process of living of different stages of human life. A true Hindu understands the need for realization—of reaching the Absolute. Such an understanding is made available by experiential knowledge. Any individual has to undergo the process of experience in life, which alone provides an illuminated knowledge, the one, that is different from the knowledge obtained by way of books, scriptures and other religious texts. Ramaswamy and Adi gain this knowledge provided by experience the felt knowledge. In the case of Adi, his transcendence from the Dalit outcaste feeling to be respected as guru is unfolded in context of his relationship with Swatantra Devi, Shankaran (Acharya Swamigal) and his son Mahaligam and the
citizens of his son’s world like Uma and Sathyamoorthy. He understands the meaning of life not by education but by intuition, insight, and experience. These three elements are available to any human being in this world, and what is needed is the effort or the willingness to receive. This aspect is addressed in the next chapter entitled “Realization - Displacement and Self Realization”.

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