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## ESSAY ON HOW GITA CHANGED MY LIFE

By

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Lucky are those, who get to read, memorize, or understand entire Gita. For me, Lord's two words "**prANa-ApAna samAu-krUtvA**" from word Gita, chapter 5 text 27 were sufficient to change my life!

My search to find the meaning of these two words took me to several books, Yoga gurus, many types of Yoga classes, Ramayana, experiments with meditations etc. Finally, it took me deep into a miracle of faith, which is akin to an event horizon of a black hole - a point once crossed, no one can return.

Because of these two words, I stand in front of world as a man of a faith and author of book Yoga Ramayana. It shows how every character, event, and location of Ramayana can be interpreted in context of Yoga. It shows that sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana to guide a yogi through a difficult path of Yoga. However, it did not begin this way.

To be truthful, throughout my adult life, I had a rocky relationship with god, religion, and mythology. I could not figure out "why am I praying in front of an idol, made from a rock?" I thought that the religion was a source of unimaginable misery to humanity. Questions like, "why did Shri Ram leave his pregnant wife in jungle?" were left answered, so mythology (Purana) remained a misty to me.

Leaving these questions un-answered, I migrated to USA. When I started raising two kids in religious environment here, my kids started asking questions. They knew that they look different from other kids. They asked me questions about our religion. Answers, I had none. Without words, their eyes wanted to be assured that we are okay too. That assurance, I could not fake.

I began my search. When I was leaving India, my mother had put a copy of Gita in my luggage. I had kept it with me just to make her happy. I found it and started reading it. My plan was simple – I would read Gita and it will tell everything I needed to know!

To my horror, I could not even understand a single word out of it. For months, I read it, only to realize that I had no idea what those words mean. When I came across “**prANa-ApAna samAu-krUtvA**”, Gita fell from my hand. I decided to focus on them, until I understand them.

I had a vague idea that Gita is describing a yogic process within our body. I knew the word “Prana”, but I had no idea what it means and how to find it? What is “Aapana”? I could not even guess.

I read Dnyaneshwari to see if it gives any information on these two words. It introduced me to Kundalini and chakras. It also gave a curious clue that Hanuman is a representation of Prana.

After some research, I learned that there are five types of Prana, and Aapana is one of them. Curiously, Hanuman also has five-faced form. We take Prana from air, and he is son of Air god (Vayu). This was a clear evidence of logic and connection. I could understand it!

To learn about Kundalini, I read almost all the books – from Hatha Yoga Pradipika to Living with Kundalini. I learned Sahaj Yoga, Vinayasa Yoga, and few other forms of Yoga. I rigorously practiced Kriya Yoga, Sudarshan Kriya, and Kundalini Yoga. All of those Yoga classes taught me about Pranayama. I practiced it regularly for 30 mins every day.

Yoga and Ramayana were two distinct bodies of knowledge. I had a wild thought – is it possible that all the other characters in Ramayana relate to Yoga? I had never heard or seen any book that made such claim. With a new appreciation and a profound sense of wonder, I began to read (Valmiki) Ramayana.

When we do Pranayama properly, it increases level activities of Prana in our body. One of the main role of Prana is to find dormant Shakti (Energy) locked up in the Muladhara chakra. In Ramayana, we see that job of Hanuman was to find Sita, who was locked up in Lanka. Sita went through fire because she represents Energy and fire is a form of Energy. Physics tells us that Energy cannot be created or destroyed. Sita was not born normally and she vanished into earth. Thus, it is clear that Sita represents Shakti (Energy). In Yoga's terminology, Energy unites with Consciousness. Therefore, Shri Ram represents Consciousness.

In Yoga, we learn that the Energy lies dormant in Muladhara Chakra because our ego (Ahamkar) does not let it go. We know that Ravan abducted Sita and took her to Lanka. Therefore, Ravan represents our Ego (Ahamkar) and Lanka represents Muladhara chakra. The root letter of Muladhara Chakra is Lam, from which we get Lanka (m is missing in English).

Gita gives extremely high importance to Samkhya. In Samkhya, we learn that there are three guna – Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva. Chapters 3, 7, 13, 14, 17, and 18 mention Guna. It is one of the most important and difficult concepts in Samkhya.

A Tamas Guna dominated person has a tendency of overeating, oversleeping, and overindulgence in sensual pleasures. This person finds himself resisting the call of action. Kumbhakarn represents Tamas Guna. He eats for six months and sleeps for the remaining six months.

One of the very interesting point of Tamas guna is that it has a momentum. It means that even if an overweight (as an example of Tamas dominated person) starts exercising, his weight does not start to drop right away. His weight will go up, before it starts to go down. In Ramayana, we see that even after Kumbhakarn's hands are cut, they keep moving. Even after his

head is cut off, his body crawls long distance. It tells us that even if a person manages to overcome Tamas guna, it will continue to exert its power for some time as it has a momentum.

Through Vibhishan, Ramayana explains sattva guna. It is attracted towards spirituality. It tries to search for god or higher power or purpose. Rajas and Tamas guna do not know any balance. They do not check themselves. Sattva guna seeks to balance all of them together.

Rajas guna pushes us into action, whether physical or mental. In Ramayana, we see that Ravan is highly active demon. Therefore, he represents Rajas guna.

Shri Ram defeats Ravan, but does not become king of Lanka. Shri Ram neutralizes Kumbhakarn. He befriends Vibhishan, uses him, and rewards him too. However, in the end, Shri Ram steps away from Vibhishan too and goes to Ayodhya.

In other words, Consciousness is not the same as these three qualities of nature. It is “above and beyond” them and will always remain that way. Gita mentions it and Ramayana helps us understand it.

When Ravan brought Sita to Lanka, Mandodari did not approve of his action. Mandodari comes out as surprisingly rational about these events. She advises her husband not to take the wrong course of action. Giving advice and keeping composure in a distressing situation is an indication of the Rationalizing Intellect (Buddhi).

In Samkhya, we learn that the Ego (Ahamkar) and the Rationalizing Intellect together create the Mind. By substitution of words, we get - Ravan (Ego) and Mandodari (Rationalizing Intellect) together gave birth to (create) Indrajit (Mind). Indrajit as the mind fits perfectly with the character of Indrajit. Indra word comes from Indriya, which means sense organs. Mind can control the sense organs, which is why his name means “one who won Indra (who represents sense organs).”

In Ramayana, Lakshmana kills Indrajit. Lakshya means focused. Lakshmana represents Devoted Mind. Hence, we Indrajit represent an “Opposite of Devoted Mind” component of mind. Ramayana teaches us a lot about the mind from the character of Indrajit.

In Ramayana, we see that Shri Ram represents both normal Consciousness and Universal Consciousness. To know “who am I?” Universal Consciousness becomes normal Consciousness. To honor this wish, Energy separates from Universal Consciousness and gives rise to creation. In Ramayana, Sita separates from Shri Ram as per his wish and then she gave birth to his kids. It explains the difficult question about Shri Ram as why he left his pregnant wife.

Look at any image or idol of Shri Ram. It is a beautiful depiction of the secret message given to us through Ramayana. If we find the Energy (Sita), the Consciousness (Shri Ram) will come searching for Energy (Sita), and we will find the Consciousness (Shri Ram). If we have a Devoted Mind (Lakshmana) on the Consciousness (Shri Ram), it will lead us directly to the Consciousness (Shri Ram).

Optionally, we can find the Prana (Hanuman ), by doing Pranayama. The Prana (Hanuman) will find the Energy (Sita) in Muladhara Chakra (Lanka), and we will then find the Energy (Sita) within our body. When the Consciousness (Shri Ram) comes down to find the Energy (Sita), it (He) will reveal itself (Himself) to us automatically.

Yoga tells us that when we do Pramayana, heat is generated within our body. In Ramayana, we see that when Hanuman finds Sita, he sets fire in Lanka. Pranayama takes Prana from Anahata Chakra to Muladhara Chakra. In between, there are Manipur and Swadhisthana Chakras. In Ramayana, we see that Hanuman increases and decreases his body size. It refers to Pranayama.

While going to Lanka, Hanuman touches the golden-hue mountain. Manipur Chakra has a downward-facing golden-hue triangle in the middle.

Next, Surasa (good taste) a snake-like animal attacks Hanuman. It is a reference to the Swadhisthana Chakra. It is associated with a sense of taste and a sense organ, tongue.

Next, Hanuman tears intestines of demon Simhika with his nails. It is a reference to bleeding that may occur because of Pranayama.

Energy activated due to Pranayama affects the Manipur and Swadhisthana Chakras. It may create imbalance in a person, by making him power-hungry as effect of Manipur Chakra or sex-obsessed as effect of Swadhisthana Chakras. For this reason, we see that Hanuman is devoted and celibate person. It gives a suggestion to a yogi to adhere to these qualities.

We force the Aapana upwards by applying a Mula-Bandha and force the Prana downwards by breathing air deep into the stomach. When these two forms of Prana meet, it creates a connection that facilitates the Prana's entry into the Muladhara Chakra. It is an essential precondition for descend of Consciousness (Shri Ram) towards Muladhara Chakra (Lanka), defeat Ravan (Ahamkar), and ascend of both Energy and Consciousness (Sita and Shri Ram) together to Sahastrar (Ayodhya). That is the meaning of “**prANa-ApAna samAu-krUtvA**”.

Now we see that (Valmiki) Ramayana as four different layers. 1) The main characters that are key elements of Yoga 2) Their relationships to each other like Shri Ram (Consciousness) defeats Ravan (Ahamkar) 3) Various warning signs like burning of Lanka 4) Weak references to Chakra. The third layer is the most important layer of Ramayana. Sage Valmiki gave countless such warning signs in Ramayana.

Did you notice that all the events in (Valmiki) Ramayana occur twice? For example, Mareech encounters Shri Ram two times, Sugriva and Vali fight two times etc. (Valmiki) Ramayana carefully duplicates all the events. If an event happens once in (Valmiki) Ramayana, then we can suspect that it may not be original work of sage Valmiki. It works as a kind of encryption. There

are three additional design patterns. It makes (Valmiki) Ramayana exceedingly complex poetry, almost like a complex system!

As I write this, I am starting to work on Mahabharata. It may take up to 20 years to complete. Probably, no one will read it either. Yet, I must go on. As we know, faith is similar to event horizon of black hole. Once you cross it, there is no turning back!

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