
SHORT VERSION OF
YOGA RAMAYANA
LEARN YOGA FROM RAMAYANA

AUM

PARAG GANDHE

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*Dedicated to My Parents
Pushpa and Vijay Gandhe*

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT YOGA AND RAMAYANA

How Does Ramayana Help Me Understand Yoga?

Ramayana is a story with characters, events, and locations, etc. The characters relate to each other like father-son, husband-wife, or hero-villain, etc. **We intuitively understand these characters and their relationships.**

Yoga has concepts like Energy, Consciousness, and Ahamkara (Ego) etc. We have to learn one concept at a time. **These concepts relate to each other in a specific way. We need to learn those relationships.** A student may make a mistake in understanding a concept or relating these concepts with each other. It could be a costly mistake.

Sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana in such a way that he explains Yoga concepts and their relationships in a story. His characters represent fundamental concepts of Yoga. For example, Shri Ram represents Higher Consciousness, Sita represents Energy, and Hanumana represents Prana, etc. We will put characters and their relations of Ramayana side by side to Yoga concepts and their relationships.

We see that we discover a hidden relationship between Yoga concepts. Let us take a few examples of these hidden relationships.

Ramayana Character and Relationship	Yoga Concept and Relationship. Do Yoga Books Explain This Concept?
Ravana abducts Sita.	Our Ahamkara controls the way we use the Energy. Yoga books explain this concept.
Hanumana finds Sita.	In Yoga, we learn that doing Pranayama releases the Energy. This is an example of the wrong relationship between Pranayama and the Energy. Parana awakens the Energy and the Higher Consciousness releases it from control of Ahamkara.
Shri Ram kills Ravana.	Consciousness dissolves the Ahamkara into itself. Most Yoga books explain that we must irradiate Ahamkara.
Shri Ram rescues Sita.	When the Ahamkara dissolves into the Consciousness, it releases the Energy from control of Ahamkara. Yoga books do not explain this relationship.
Shri Ram and Sita separate according to His wish.	This is the final status of the Energy and the Consciousness. Yoga books do not explain this relationship.

As we can see, within five lines of reading Yoga and Ramayana side by side, we discovered three gaps in our understanding of Yoga! This is just a beginning. There are 10 to 15 important characters in Ramayana. Each one of them clarifies a critical concept in Yoga and explains the relationship with other concepts. Imagine the wealth of knowledge if we can map all the characters of Ramayana to Yoga concepts!

Ramayana is the work of an imaginative and an advanced Yogi – Sage Valmiki. Reading Ramayana as a document of Yoga needs an open mind. It is challenging, partly because we do not have sound knowledge of Samkhya, Yoga, or Ramayana. If we do this hard work, the reward is beyond any measurements.

Ramayana teaches us about our Consciousness. Shri Ram is one of many names of the Consciousness. Similarly, Yoga also teaches us about the

Consciousness. Thus, there are two different ways to learn about the Consciousness.

How Yoga And Ramayana Are Related?

Sage Patanjali wrote Yoga Sutra almost a thousand years after sage Valmiki. He relied on Samkhya as a foundation for Yoga. Using his eight steps, he set the goal of Yogi to be in Samadhi, in which Yogi experiences the Universal Consciousness. The first verse of Yoga Sutra teaches about the Consciousness. In the last verse, it teaches us about the Universal Consciousness. Thus, Yoga is a path that takes us to the experience of Universal Consciousness. Sage Patanjali used the word Yoga for the eight-step path, which includes Pranayama. Hence, we will use the word Yoga the way he used it.

When we see Ramayana from the angle of Yoga, we see it teaches us about the goal of Yoga – the experience of Universal Consciousness. It explains the complex concepts of Yoga like the Prana, Kundalini (Energy) and the Consciousness using a story. **It warns a Yogi about the difficulties on a path of Yoga. It offers valuable advice to reach the end goal of Yoga.** Let us see how it helps us learn Yoga.

In this book, we see that Shri Ram represents Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness. Shri Ram is the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu. The Sanskrit word “Vishnu” means “One who is present everywhere”. Thus, Lord Vishnu represents Universal Consciousness.

At the end of Ramayana, Shri Ram takes the form of Lord Vishnu. Hence, Shri Ram represents the Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness. **Thus, both Yoga and Ramayana lead us towards the Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness.**

Looking for Yoga in Ramayana is like searching for salt in the sea water. Once you know the taste of salt in a drop of seawater, you know the entire sea is salty. Similarly, once you know how to relate Yoga to Ramayana, the entire Ramayana unfolds in front of you as an expression of Yoga!

What Benefit Will I Get by Learning about Shri Ram?

Who does not want to live a better life? Everyone cares about his life. Everyone wants to live as long as he can. No one wants pain and misery. As per Yoga, learning about your Consciousness can lead us to a better life.

The Consciousness is the difference between a living person in this moment and his dead body in the next moment. Indian culture gave several names to the Consciousness. Shri Ram is one such a name. From birth to death, we tied His name to every occasion in life. Even after death, people take His name while taking the dead body for cremation.

What is the use of taking His name when a person is dead? However, if a person spends just a few hours of his time in learning about Ramayana, then he can relate himself to Shri Ram. Besides, you already know the story of Ramayana. We can easily relate the story to Yoga. Building a relationship with Shri Ram is neither about Ramayana nor about Yoga. **It is about knowing your Consciousness.** It will be very useful to learn about it, as it can help to live our life much better. Possibly, it may be useful even in the moments before death.

Why Are You Trying to Read Yoga in Ramayana?

Ramayana translates to ‘Advance or movements of Shri Ram’. It refers to the journey of Shri Ram. It mentions nothing about Yoga. These statements are correct. However, let us look at them from a different angle.

We know Shri Ram represents Universal Consciousness. Universal means “One that is everywhere”. **When there is no place without Him, how can He move from place to place?** We need to re-think the meaning of the word Ramayana.

We can see a similar pattern of use of the word “Ayana” in Daxinayana and Uttarayana, meaning, southern and northern solstices. They mean the Sun is passing to the southern and northern side of the equator. We know the Sun does not change its position. The earth is tilted on its axis. Therefore, it appears to the earthlings that the Sun is changing its position.

Now we know that the word “Ayana” in Ramayana means a movement. But the question is, who is moving? Our common experience is when we are sitting in a train in the station and the train on the next track moves, we feel that our train is moving. According to Einstein’s theory of relativity, the movement is always

relative. When object A and object B are coming close to each other, we cannot tell which an object is moving. From the perspective of object A, the object B is coming closer, but in principle, the object B may be stationary, while object A may move towards object B.

Sage Valmiki knows Shri Ram represents the Universal Consciousness. He is everywhere. He has no place to go anywhere. Thus, He is not advancing, moving, or traveling anywhere. Yet, sage Valmiki added “Ayana” or the movement in the word Ramayana. We know that the movement is relative. **If Shri Ram is not moving, then we, as a reader of Ramayana, must move towards Him!**

When we read Ramayana carefully, our views about Him change. Thus, we advance towards Shri Ram. The word “Ayana” shows this movement or advance. **Ramayana leads us, the readers, toward Shri Ram, the Universal Consciousness.** We can agree that this is one of the many meanings of the word Ramayana.

Now, let us see how Ramayana explains Yoga. Here, we are using Yoga as it is defined by sage Patanjali. We also know the key concepts of Yoga come from Samkhya. Those concepts are Consciousness, Energy, and Ahamkara, etc.

Sage Valmiki took each of the key concepts from Samkhya and created a character from it. Shri Ram represents the Higher Consciousness. Sita represents the Energy – we see she is not born naturally and did not die naturally. Hanumana represents Prana – when we breathe, we take Prana from air. In Ramayana, the Hanumana is a son of Air God (Vayu). Laxmana is a brother of Shri Ram. The Sanskrit word “Laxya” means “Focus or Devotion” and “mana” is mind. Thus, Laxmana translates to “Devoted Mind”.

Now, let us see how Ramayana helps us find the Consciousness. **Sage Valmiki knows we know nothing about Shri Ram or the Consciousness. We cannot relate with Him. Hence, sage Valmiki gave us indirect ways to find Him and relate to Him.**

Look at any image or idol of Shri Ram. Three people always surround him. Sita and Lakshmana on his sides and Hanumana at his feet. This image is a beautiful depiction of the secret message given to us through Ramayana. If we figure out just this image, following the entire Ramayana will be simple. When we put the names of characters with their Yoga names, we see the following picture:

- If we find the Energy (Sita), the Consciousness (Shri Ram) will come searching for the Energy, and we will find the Consciousness.
 - If we have a devoted mind (Laxmana) on the Consciousness, it will lead us directly to the Consciousness.
 - Optionally, we can find the Prana by doing breathing techniques called Pranayama. The Prana (Hanumana) will find the Energy (Sita) and we will then find the Energy within our body. When the Consciousness finds the Energy, it will reveal itself to us automatically.
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Trying to find the Energy or the Consciousness directly within ourselves might be challenging. Hence, the other two options – focused mind and breathing techniques of Pranayama become important.

What Is The Proof That Ramayana Is Related To Yoga?

Sage Valmiki's purpose in writing Ramayana was to give the knowledge of Yoga to simple-minded people in a story format. He avoided making it a Yoga text book. However, he tactfully showed that he is explaining Yoga to us. Let us see a few verses from Valmiki Ramayana that relate to Yoga. Later, we will review hundreds of verses explaining a specific topic in Yoga.

1. **Sage Valmiki mentions in the verse 1-4-6 that his purpose of writing Ramayana is to explain Veda.** We know that the Veda has a vast scope. Verse 1-4-6 narrows our scope, but it is not sufficient.
 2. From verses 1-2-33 and 34, we learn that this is a story about the plight of Sita – compared to a wailing bird – and her rescue by Shri Ram. **Do you remember the beginning of Ramayana, where the female bird was in terrible agony over separation from the male bird?** This agony is the same agony the Energy feels over the separation from the Consciousness.
 3. Verse 5-16-30 says, “Sita was in the same pitiable condition as a female bird which has lost her companion male bird.” The female bird’s weeping reminded sage Valmiki of Energy’s plight in captivity of Ahamkara in the Muladhara Chakra. There are several verses that describe Sita in the same words as Kundalini Shakti / Energy trapped in Muladhara Chakra.
 4. Valmiki Ramayana verse 6-117-20 tells us “Shri Ram is AUM.”
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Sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana to guide and help the Energy and the Consciousness reunite within us. It offers immense help and guidance to anyone who is searching for the Energy or the Consciousness. When we see Ramayana from lenses of Yoga, it becomes a map or a travel guide that leads a Yogi to the Higher Consciousness. **It offers several warning signs and guidance instructions to a Yogi.**

How Can We Address Questions about Ramayana?

We see that some events or character's choice in Ramayana makes little sense to us. When we read Ramayana and Yoga books side by side, the knowledge of Yoga helps us explain why characters of Ramayana behave the way they do. Let us see a few examples.

Ramayana Question	Explanation using Yoga Concept
King Janaka found a box with a baby inside while tilling the land. Is it possible to find a live baby in the untitled land?	Tilling of land and finding a live baby cannot happen at the same time. Sita represents the Energy. She was not born normally. It matches Newton's law of Energy. Both agree that we cannot create Energy.
Why did Urmila, Laxman's wife, not go to the jungle with him? She is Sita's sister. They must have the same idea of an ideal wife. When Sita went to the jungle with her husband, why did Urmila stay back in the palace? Valmiki Ramayana does not mention a reason.	"Urmila" means "waves of passion," whereas "Laxman" means "devoted mind." They are quite the opposite qualities of the mind. Laxman focuses on serving Shri Ram, as he represents a mind devoted to god. Urmila represents passion; it cannot coexist with the devoted mind. This is an example of guidance from Ramayana.
How did Sita go through fire and come out unharmed? Why did Shri Ram allow his beloved wife, rescued after a long struggle, to go through fire?	What can go into the fire and come out unaffected? The answer is fire itself. Fire cannot burn fire; one fire can pass through another fire. Sita represents the Energy. Fire is just one manifestation of Energy. Shri Ram knows her very well. Hence, he puts her through fire, knowing very well that fire cannot possibly harm her.

Shri Ram Defeats Ravana: Story and Its Meaning In Terms of Yoga

Shri Ram sent Sita back to the jungle again. She was pregnant. Sita is in agreement with Shri Ram's decision to send her away forever. Why do they separate?	Universal Consciousness had a wish to be many from one and be in multiple forms. To honor that wish, the Energy separated from it and created multitudes of names and forms. If it were not for that wish, there would have been no separation, and therefore, no creation. Similarly, Sita accepted going back to the jungle. It was to honor Shri Ram's wish and to give birth to his children. When they are together, there is only bliss. There can be no creation, or no children.
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As you can see, the reason behind the choices of characters or events comes from Yoga concepts. These questions are precious. It is very important that we ask the question. When we read Ramayana carefully and see a character making a choice that we do not understand, we get a question. **This question has actual relevance to you because they originate from your intelligence and experience.** It leads you straight towards a concept of Yoga. Once you understand that answer, it becomes your point-of-entry into Ramayana. From that point, you can interpret Ramayana all by yourself. Now, it becomes “your” Ramayana. It will not be the same as “my interpretation of Ramayana”. We may differ in our views, and that is okay. **Our roads can be different, but our destination is the same.**

There are several such questions about Ramayana. They all work as a secret message sent in your name. You need to answer only one question on your own. It will establish a link between the sender and you. The sender will know that you are interested in Him. **With a faint smile, He will start pulling you towards Him.**

Why Should I Learn About Yoga From Ramayana?

It is correct that Ramayana teaches us about the paths of Karma and Bhakti. Ramayana teaches us about Shri Ram and other characters as great and ideal people. Through them, it teaches us about duty and right action, which is the path of Karma. **In fact, Ramayana teaches us about four different paths, not just about Karma and Bhakti. Please read the story below told to us by Saint Tulsidas.**

Story: Four Views of Shri Ram Based on Four Types of People

Everyone who knows Ramayana has a question – ‘Was Shri Ram a great human? Or was he a God?’ To answer this question, Saint Tulsidas compared Ramayana with a beautiful lake. This lake has four banks. On each bank of the lake, there is an assembly hall (The Hindi word is “Ghat”, which is a common meeting place). In all assembly halls, people are listening to Ramayana. However, each assembly hall reads the story with a different meaning!

The first assembly hall is for people who seek direct knowledge of “who am I”. It leads them directly to the experience of our true nature. We will use the term Universal Consciousness to refer to our true nature. Lord Shiva is the speaker and Goddess Parvati is the listener. Lord Shiva is explaining how Shri Ram is our true nature or Universal Consciousness.

The second assembly hall is for people who are dedicated to Right Action (Karma). These people focus on good actions and cultivating good habits. They adore prominent people, ideals, values, and live a very honest life. **They do not see any necessity of God, God-ness, or Universal Consciousness to perform the right actions.** They gain experience and knowledge of Universal Consciousness, indirectly by performing proper action. They see Shri Ram as an ideal human being, who is dedicated to right action and adheres to great moral values. Sage Yadnavalkya is the speaker in this hall and sage Bhardwaj is a listener, along with few other people.

The third assembly hall is for people who take the path of Devotion (Bhakti). They have a faith that there is a higher power in the form of God. They believe God creates that world. Their logic is “if there is a pot, there must be a potter”. If science tells them Big Bang created that universe, then they ask who created Big Bang? **They devote themselves completely to God.** They believe that God keeps track of their good actions. They also believe that God returns the results of good action to them, when they need the most. God as an ideal human being is not sufficient to them. **They need a personal relationship with God.** They see God in human form (Saguna). They will gain experience and knowledge of Universal Consciousness, indirectly by their faith. They see Shri Ram as a God, whom they can establish a personal connection by being his devotee. In this hall, a great devotee of God, Sage Kakabhushubdi is the speaker and Garuda, the Eagle, and many others are the listeners.

The fourth assembly hall is for people who surrender to God. Their belief about God is the same as the people in the third hall. They seek help from God. They want God to rescue them from their troubles. **They do not think they can change their situation without God's help.** They know that sometimes they are sinners. They seek forgiveness from God for their sins. They believe that God forgives them and absolves them from their sins. God as a strict accountant of good or bad deeds does not work for them. They will gain experience and knowledge of Universal Consciousness indirectly through surrender. They see Shri Ram as someone who helps them in their need, gives them strength to go on, and he absolves them from their sins. Saint Tulsidas is the speaker in this assembly hall, and common people are the listeners.

This story explains that four types of people can see Ramayana from four different angles. Despite being so different, they get the correct guidance from it. Understanding this alone makes Ramayana a beautiful, interesting, and amazing story!

In this book, we are adding one more angle to Ramayana, without changing a word of Valmiki Ramayana. We see that we can learn Yoga from it. We will see a few examples of guidance Ramayana offers to a Yogi.

Reading Ramayana as a guide of Yoga does not negate its importance to other paths. In fact, it may help us in learning about other paths. The key concepts of Yoga, like Energy and Consciousness etc. come from Samkhya. When we are learning about Yoga, we are indirectly learning about Samkhya. **Samkhya is common to all the paths of spirituality. Hence, learning about the key concepts of Samkhya with help of Ramayana is useful information on all the paths of spirituality.** Defeat of Ahamkara is a common goal across all the paths. For this reason, we will study the entire Yuddha-Kanda by reading it line by line.

Which Version of Ramayana do We Refer? Why?

In this book, we will study the first version of Ramayana, the Valmiki Ramayana. It is a "smriti" meaning, it is "from memory". Since it is an ancient document, there are some interjected verses. However, scholars, grammarians, historians standardized the original text. **It is available on the website <https://www.valmikiramayan.net>.**

We will use this website as a reference source for Valmiki Ramayana. Other versions of Ramayana may have the effect of spiritual practices of that time. For example, Adhyatma Ramayana, which Saint Tulsidas wrote, has significant impressions of Bhakti movement. It adds many stories in Ramayana from the Bhakti side of spirituality.

Our purpose here is to see the Valmiki Ramayana from Yoga side of spirituality. As you see in this book, the original Ramayana, the Valmiki Ramayana was written from the Yoga side of spirituality. It predates sage Patanjali who wrote Yoga Sutra, sage Kapila who wrote Samkhya-Karika and sage Vyasa who wrote Mahabharata. In this book, we will see how Ramayana explains Samkhya and Yoga.

Is There Any Way to Know Valmiki Ramayana without Reading it?

In case the reader does not have time or resources to read the Valmiki Ramayana, then the next best source is the YouTube movie: Ramayana - The Legend of Prince Ram (1992). It is available in English and other languages. It is not exactly the same as Valmiki Ramayana, but it is the closest movie we have.

Most of us know Ramayana from watching TV series. Even those who read Ramayana may have read other versions of Ramayana. These are secondary sources. They are useful as they keep the story of Ramayana going. But they are not much useful for a spiritual aspirant who must know the original source. No one should rely on the Entertainment Industry to provide any kind of knowledge.

Why This Book is called the Short Version of Yoga Ramayana?

In March 2015, I self-published the e-book Yoga Ramayana. In that book, I included explanations of all the unfamiliar concepts of Yoga and their relationships to Ramayana. Hence, the book became too big to read. Because of the large page count, I could not publish it in print. The e-book is hard to access. Therefore, it did not sell.

To reach the readers, I created a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/YogaRamayana/> and posted several of the chapters from the book. I got over a million likes and thousands of comments. It gave me confidence that everyone liked the fundamental concept of the book. **Hence, I am rewriting this book to make it short and printable.**

To make the book short and printable, I did not include the explanations of Yoga concepts in this book. In addition, we are not going line by line of Valmiki Ramayana. I have arranged this book in small, easy-to-read sections.

In case the reader wants to read the original Yoga Ramayana book, it is available on Amazon Kindle format.

This my third and final attempt in the last 15 years to convey the same message. Honestly, rewriting this book has become a time-consuming and very expensive project for me. Without getting support from readers, it is not possible for me to spend more time and money in conveying this message to readers.

Since this book is about Ramayana, which is considered a “religious document”, Amazon will not allow me to advertise the book. Therefore, there is no way for me to reach the readers. **If you like the concept of the book, please post a review or the comments. The word of mouth is the only way this content can reach to other readers.**

For a normal reader, it will take roughly 4 hours to read this book. A 9th grade student can easily understand it. **If you give me 4 hours of your time, I will show you a different side of Ramayana, without changing a line.** I hope you like this book. Welcome to the wonderful and mysterious world of Valmiki Ramayana!

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON VALMIKI RAMAYANA

Valmiki Ramayana is a work of imaginative and highly advanced Yogi. When we see it from Yoga angles, we realize that it is a complex document. Its characters map to several Yoga processes, explain their relationships, give warning signs or guidance to a Yogi, etc. Hence, it is difficult to understand completely.

When we encounter any such a complex document, we try to reduce its complexity by dividing it into pieces or layers. Then, we look at each piece individually and try to understand the function of that part by itself. We identify common patterns. This process is like a process a Software Programmer follows when he comes across a complex software. **Valmiki Ramayana is exactly like a complex software, with layers and patterns in it.** Here are some ways to help us understand the Valmiki Ramayana.

Layers in Valmiki Ramayana

When we build a house, first we put the foundation and then the walls, etc. Similarly, when we read Valmiki Ramayana, we need to understand the layers and their sequence. There are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. Each subsequent layer uses the previous layer, like the walls of the house use the foundation to support them.

1. **The first layer is the characters like Sita, Shri Ram, Laxmana, Hanumana, and Ravana.** These characters represent our Energy, Consciousness, devoted mind, Prana, and Ahamkara, respectively. We will study these characters and their Yoga meaning in the next few chapters.
2. **The way these characters relate to each other becomes the second layer.** For example, Hanumana finds Sita in Lanka. It represents Prana finds Energy in Muladhara Chakra. Each relation in Ramayana teaches us something about Yoga. We saw a few examples earlier.
3. **The third layer is the most important level for us. It has various signs, symptoms, recommended actions, and warnings related to the path of Yoga.** Some warning signs also apply in other paths, not just Yoga. For lack of a better word, we will call them as safeguards for spiritual aspirants. Stories of king Vishwamitra and Trishanku, of demons Viradha and Kabandha, and of actions of Hanumana are all examples of these safeguards. There are hundreds of safeguards in Ramayana. We will study and interpret a few of them.
4. **Finally, as the fourth layer, sage Valmiki indirectly refers to the various Chakras.** He shows their general locations, their effects, suggests how to avoid their imbalance and the effects of such an imbalance. When sage Valmiki deals with the Chakras, he has to go by the indirect references to Chakras like vehicles of Chakra or the color, etc. He cannot declare them explicitly because that hurts the storytelling, and the story risks becoming a discourse. In addition, sage Valmiki does not use chakras in all events. There are many instances where sage

Valmiki gives us safeguards, but does not refer to Chakras. Hence, chakras become the fourth layer.

As you can see, just by considering these layers, we see the complexity of Valmiki Ramayana. **I organized this book based on these layers.** We will study each layer independently. We will not follow the story in a sequence. The assumption is the reader knows the basic story Ramayana. However, the widely known story of Ramayana comes from other versions of Ramayana. **The Valmiki Ramayana differs from other versions. It will be very helpful to read the Valmiki Ramayana.**

Patterns in Valmiki Ramayana

There is one more way sage Valmiki added complexity in Valmiki Ramayana. We will call it a pattern. A pattern is something that an artist ingrains in his artwork. Let us study five patterns.

Pattern #1 - Law of Duplication Ramayana

We often see action-replays while watching sports on TV, where the event is shown multiple times from different angles. If we visualize Ramayana, we see that sage Valmiki replays almost all the events. We see that similar events happen, sometimes back-to-back, sometimes a few chapters later. This duplication of events is the signature style of sage Valmiki. He used it so seriously, as if he was rule-bound to do so. Whenever a particular event happens, the first thing that comes to mind is a similar event occurred somewhere else within Ramayana. Let us take some examples to clarify this point.

1. Shri Ram lifts and breaks Lord Shiva's bow in verse 1-67-17. In verse 1-75-13, he picks up Lord Vishnu's bow.

2. Shurpanakha talks about Sita's beauty to Khara in verse 3-19-17 and then again to Ravana in verse 3-34-16.
3. Sugriva tests Shri Ram's strength two times, the first time with a demon skeleton, and the second time when Shri Ram shoots an arrow through seven trees.
4. Shri Ram takes Sugriva to fight with Vali two times. First time, Shri Ram cannot distinguish Sugriva from Vali because they look very similar to Him. Second time, Shri Ram makes Sugriva wear a garland so Shri Ram can identify Vali.
5. Two demons kidnap Sita. First time, demon Viradha kidnaps her and second time, Ravana abducts her.

There are countless examples of such duplications in Valmiki Ramayana, practically everywhere. With this pattern in mind, we can spot the additions that may be added to the original script of Valmiki Ramayana. These additions to the original script appear just once and thus give away their secret!

For example, the verse pertaining to the creation of the four castes, mentioned in the Purusha-Sukta, appears in Valmiki Ramayana only once, in the Aranya-Kanda (verse 3-14-30). Therefore, this verse is imported from the Purush-Sukta, which is written later than Valmiki Ramayana, and inserted in Valmiki Ramayana at a later date.

Now we know that every event in Ramayana must have a duplicate event somewhere in it, can we think of a duplicate event of Shri Ram's exile from Ayodhya? Was there any other prince of Ayodhya sent into exile? Please see the verse 1-38-21 for an answer.

Pattern # 2 – Sage Valmiki Always Mentioned Shri Ram in Present Tense

Sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana and taught it to Lava and Kusha. They recited it in front of Shri Ram in his court. We read Ramayana the way the twins narrate it in front of Shri Ram. We see the entire story in flashback. Instead of telling a story in

past tense, it is told in present tense. **Sage Valmiki always mentions Shri Ram in the present tense. Shri Ram is the Consciousness. The Consciousness is always in the present tense – here and now.**

Pattern # 3 - Cyclic or Iterative Nature of Ramayana

There are many instances in Ramayana where someone recalls events that had happened earlier on. Let us look at a few examples.

1. In verse 2-118-26, Sita tells the details about their marriage to Anusuya. These details are a repetition of earlier events.
2. In 4-4-6, Laxmana narrates the story to Hanumana, right from King Dasharatha's rule onwards.
3. In verse 5-31-2, when Hanumana meets Sita for the first time, he begins with "there was a king named Dasharatha."

Besides these instances, there are several instances in Ramayana, where sage Valmiki reviews earlier events. Sometimes, he discusses them briefly, at other times he describes the event. It is a pattern sage Valmiki intentionally hard-wired in the story. We will see its meaning after studying the next point.

Pattern # 4 - Shri Ram Discovering Himself as a God

As far as sage Valmiki is concerned, Shri Ram's victory over Ravana is a foregone conclusion. It is surely significant, but it is not the primary theme of the story. **The central theme is Shri Ram discovering Himself as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In terms of Yoga, it is akin to a Yogi discovering his Consciousness is the same as Universal Consciousness.**

If you read carefully, sage Valmiki plants clues about "who Shri Ram is?" and progressively elaborated it. Shri Ram is not even aware that he is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Only a few sages know about it. Let us take a few examples.

1. In verse 1-19-14, sage Vishwamitra asks king Dasharatha to send young Shri Ram to fight the demons and protect his ritual sacrifice. At that instance, he tells king Dasharatha "I know who Shri Ram is." At that instance, sage Vishwamitra could easily reveal to Dasharatha that Shri Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, but he does not do so.
2. Similarly, when Shri Ram breaks Lord Shiva's bow in king Janaka's court, the story could tell us he is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
3. Again, when Shri Ram defeats Parashurama, the story can say that Shri Ram defeated Parashurama because He is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, yet the story does not mention it.

Sage Valmiki waits until the very end of Ramayana, when Shri Ram kills Ravana, to reveal Shri Ram's actual identity. **In verse 6-117-11, Shri Ram asks all the gods, "I think I am human. I do not know who I am; so, please tell me." At that instance, in verse 6-117-13, Lord Brahma tells him, "You are Lord Vishnu."**

Sage Valmiki hides the secret that Shri Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, but he plants clues, builds a case for it, and slowly gives out pieces of information. This progressive elaboration, coupled with many iterations or cycles, brings up the next and a crucial point.

Pattern # 5 – Valmiki Ramayana Begins and Ends With Lord Brahma

Valmiki Ramayana begins with Lord Brahma narrating it to sage Narada, who tells it to sage Valmiki. It ends with Shri Ram going to the "Brahma-Loka" – the abode of Lord Brahma (verses 1-1-95 and 1-1-97). Ramayana is a story of the higher Consciousness. So, it begins and ends with Lord Brahma, the Universal Consciousness. Now, we see how sage Valmiki has closely tied Ramayana to the Universal Consciousness.

A process by which a Yogi realizes his Consciousness is the same as the Universal Consciousness needs someone who knows how to start it – a Guru. In sage Valmiki's example, sage Narada is his guru, and in sage Narada's case, Lord Brahma Himself is his Guru.

The process that takes us towards a higher Consciousness is cyclic or iterative. Each wave or iteration brings more and more clarity about the Consciousness. Initially, it may be very faint, unclear, or hazy, but if you keep at it, each wave makes things clearer. Earlier, we saw that Ramayana has a cyclic pattern. It is sage Valmiki's way of giving us the hint that the entire process of going to the higher Consciousness is cyclic.

Boons and Curses in Ramayana

We see that Ramayana is full of boons and curses, which makes it necessary for us to understand them. There are two types of boons and curses in Ramayana:

- **Boons and Curses Related to Transmission of Energy:** Just as money is an unmistakable reality of our world, Energy is the reality of sage Valmiki's world. **For him, like money, one person can transfer Energy to another as long as the first person has earned enough Energy to transfer.** Like money, someone can take Energy away from the other person. If we consider Energy as a wave, we can see that the intention of the person transferring the Energy decides if it is helpful or harmful. **A beneficial or positive Energy transfer is a boon, whereas a negative or harmful Energy transfer is a curse.** Energy transfer differs from money transfer in one way - here, emotions play a big role. The power of Energy transfer depends upon the intensity of the emotion with which someone transfers Energy. A sorrowful, dying person can cause significant damage with his curse because of his intentions. The curse on king Dasharatha by the dying parents of Shrivana is a good example of a curse having an extreme level of intensity. In verses 2-64-54, 55, we read that Shrivana's parents curse king Dasharatha: Like me, you too will die in agony caused by the loss of your son. Shrivana's dying parents are ordinary people;

yet, they end up causing much damage to king Dasharatha, who is a prominent person.

- **Boons and Curses to Set the Story, With No Energy Transfer: The second type of boons and curses hide the reality, the way a curtain hides things inside the house.** Let us take an example of Dasharatha's boon to his wife, Kaikayi. There is a logical problem with his boon. It is not like king Dasharatha does great deeds, accumulates Energy, and then transfers it to his wife as a boon. The story, in fact, presents precisely the opposite circumstances. King Dasharatha is about to lose a war and his life too. He desperately needs his wife's help to escape impending defeat and death. So, he promises her two boons for her help in the battlefield. **Energy transfer did not happen in this boon.** His boon is like giving a signed blank check to his wife. **Sage Valmiki intentionally creates a hole in the story in the form of Dasharatha's inability to save his life. With it, we can identify it as a simple curtain on reality.**
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Now let us see how Kaikayi uses Dasharatha's boon to create a powerful story. Kaikayi uses this boon to send Shri Ram and Sita in the jungle. Let us take a pause for a second here and see how this event plays in terms of Yoga processes. **Yoga teaches us that our current reality is that our Ahamkara has already abducted our Energy. Sage Valmiki needs to set our current reality into the story of Ramayana, so that Ramayana becomes relevant to us as a guide of Yoga.** Ravana represents Ahamkara. Sita represents the Energy. For Ravana to kidnap Sita, she needs to be in the jungle. For Sita to go to the jungle, Shri Ram needs to be in the jungle. The story needs a reason to achieve this outcome. King Dasharatha's boon to Kaikayi provides the reason. As we saw above, since there was no Energy transfer, this boon is an example of a curtain that hides our current reality.

Shri Ram's Values

To understand Shri Ram, we must understand how He sees the world. He did not know that He is Lord Vishnu, the 7th incarnation. For Him, he is a normal human being. We cannot understand Shri Ram's actions until we understand His Values. His values differ from us because He is also an advanced Yogi. Let us see a few of them to see His values differ from us.

Value #1 - Actions and the Results are Independent

For us, actions and their results are directly connected. In fact, we first decide the results we want, and then perform the actions to get the desired results. If there was no chance of getting a result, we would not think of doing even a small action. Now let us see the contrast between our view and that of Shri Ram's view.

Shri Ram adheres to His duty and morals strictly and rather adamantly. He takes an action for its sake. The results follow, but for Him, the action does not connect to the result. To describe the randomness of the action and its result, Yoga gives an example. A crow flies away from a coconut tree, making a coconut fall on the ground. These two events, the crow's flight and the coconut falling down, are entirely independent, and their connection is imaginary. If someone points to the connection, they are told that it is ignorance.

In Ramayana, Shri Ram is the only one person who takes this view. Hence, He is not angry with His stepmother, Kaikayi, when she forces Him to leave the kingdom and go to the jungle. Except Shri Ram, everyone in the family holds Kaikayi responsible for Shri Ram's exile and Dasharatha's death. **However, for Shri Ram, Kaikeyi is just a "casual" connection, and she is not responsible for His exile.**

Please remember this value when you read Shri Ram destroys a community of robbers of "Abhivas" in verse 6-22-30 to 6-22-40 and Garuda destroys the tribal community of "Nishad" in verse 3-35-32. Bad actors like Ravana get bad results via Shri Ram. He is only a "casual" connection, not the real cause of their demise.

Value #2 – Shri Ram Rejects Fate

Shri Ram rejects fate. He knows that a person performing an action will get the results of the action in due course and that fate has nothing to do with it. A general misconception about Shri Ram is He believes in fate and propagates fatalistic views. To think, people like Shri Ram rely upon fate to decide for them, is an incorrect observation. Let us see the finer point here.

The problem with the logic of fate is that it assumes separateness of the individual from the others. The concept of fate ignores the connectedness a Yogi feels with others. **For the logic of fate to work, you need separate entities, so that one person's loss can be another person's gain. For example, Kaikayi's son will gain a kingdom, only if Shri Ram leaves it.**

Shri Ram does not feel that He is separate from His brother. Hence, there is no loss for Him, if Bharata takes over the kingdom. Since there is no loss for Shri Ram, He does not feel that His stepmother is responsible for it. For Him, He is leaving the kingdom and going in exile at His father's command. He is happily obeying His father's wish, and there is no thought of fate or misfortune in His mind. **For Shri Ram, fate is pure ignorance.**

Value #3 - He is a Highly Active Individual

He is a very active individual. Even in exile, Shri Ram is always on the move, builds an army, builds a bridge across the sea, and invades Lanka. All these activities show that He is highly energetic and brave. Note that Shri Ram did never behave like a vegetable, doing nothing and giving up everything in the name of fate. He did not say that getting abducted is Sita's fate. He did not prescribe the vegetable-like state readers like us. He prescribes action, otherwise there would be no Ramayana for us.

Value #4 - Strong Emphasis on Performing Duty

Shri Ram places a very strong emphasis on performing duty. His true nature is to perform his duty, and it comes to Him effortlessly, with no analysis of the pros

and cons of the actions. Shri Ram obeys his father's commands because, for Him, it is his duty to do so. **He does not obey his father's commands to earn the title of an obedient son or out of fear of the repercussions of disobeying the king.** His strict adherence to duty is visible when He tells Sita He rescued her from Ravana to perform his duty, and not to win her back!

The beauty of this value is that it is not an externally imposed, arbitrary judgment. It was not an externally imposed idea that He arbitrarily adopted, so He could go to heaven or to impress others. **It is an internal, a coherent, and a natural guide.** His duty toward others motivates Him.

Value #5 - Equality of all Life

According to Yoga, the fundamental and self-evident truth is that there is one indivisible, Universal Consciousness within which entire creation happens. Thus, all living beings including humans, birds, animals, trees, and other creatures, have the same Consciousness within them. **This value creates an inherent equality of all living beings and a Yogi cannot not deny it at any cost.** With Energy as a feminine principle at the core of Yoga and Energy being represented by female characters, it saw females as equal to men.

For this reason, we see that Shri Ram treats everyone, including humans and monkeys equally and fairly.

Now, let us look at our values. Just for a moment, let us think about a common value we all follow. Most of us eat or avoid a certain type of food on a specific day. For example, some people fast on some days and some people do not eat non-vegetarian food or drink alcohol on certain days.

Is it not arbitrary to eat or not eat on a specific day? Will we follow this value even at the cost of a life? Is it not being imposed upon us by others? **When we compare ourselves with Shri Ram's values, we can easily see the contradiction in our values.**

Following this line of thinking opens up a door for so many questions. For example, why am I following a certain value? Is it correct to follow a particular

value? Will the history judge me as a bad person if I follow the commonly accepted value? Should I do certain actions because I am told that it pleases God or those actions will help me go to heaven? What if I do not care about God or heaven, then should I take certain actions that are bad? Am I following the law because I am afraid that I will go to jail? Should I break the law, if I am certain that I will not get caught? Can I say something is right or wrong, independent of law, society, culture, God, or heaven or any such an external judge?

The purpose of these questions is not to create an inferiority complex within us. The purpose is to help us introspect our values, which will allow us to drop wrong values we adopted unknowingly, and to move towards accepting the values that have a sound footing of Yoga. **With Shri Ram's character, Ramayana exemplifies the values of a Yogi and thus helps us to adopt values that are internal, a coherent, and a natural to us.**

LAYER 1: CHARACTER AS A YOGA CONCEPT

We saw that there are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. They are – 1) Character as a Yoga Concept 2) Character's Relationship with Each Other 3) Safeguards for Spiritual Aspirants and 4) Indirect References to Chakras.

Here we will study Yoga interpretation of only a few characters. For all other characters, please read e-book Yoga Ramayana.

We will classify the characters according to their complexity to understand the Yoga concept it represents: Easy to understand, Difficult to understand and Hard to understand. Few characters become hard to understand because their meaning depends upon some other concept.

Ramayana is seemingly a simple story of victory of Shri Ram over a Ravana. However, we find an incredible level of complexity, if we map characters used in Ramayana to ourselves. When we realize that these are not just characters, they become mind-boggling puzzles. **They are real-life processes within us. They matter to us most, as a difficult to understand Yoga concepts.**

Easy to Understand Character # 1: Sita

There are hundreds of characters in Ramayana. Each character has its own puzzle for the reader. However, no other character throws more puzzles at the reader than the character of Sita. If we consider her just as a human, it is not possible to understand her role. **Unless we consider her as an Energy/Shakti/Kundalini, to solve these puzzles is impossible.** Let us take some time to understand her character in depth. No amount of ink and paper is enough to underline her importance.

Sita's birth is a mystery. As the legend goes, king Janaka found a box with a baby inside while tilling the land. Think for a moment; if someone had put a live baby underneath land, then that person had already tilled the land. If someone had dug a hole and put a baby in it a few days before, king Janaka should have found a dead baby or only a skeleton. Tilling of land and discovery of a live baby cannot happen at the same time. Then, how do we explain the riddle of Sita's birth at the human level? **The only answer is that she represents an Energy.** The suggestion by Valmiki that she was not born normally matches Newton's law of Energy. Both agree that we cannot create Energy.

When Sita is ready to dissolve her appearance, she requests the earth to open up and swallow her. If she were an ordinary human being, we could have justified her birth as adoption by king Janaka. However, we cannot explain her disappearance as a human. Humans cannot create earthquakes on-demand. **Sita represents the Energy, and the Energy cannot be destroyed, which means she cannot die like humans.** Hence, she disappears into the earth. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki's representation of Energy matches Newton's law of Energy.

Let us go directly to Valmiki Ramayana and confirm that sage Valmiki saw Sita as the Energy/Shakti/ Kundalini. We will study the verses where Hanumana first saw Sita. Sage Valmiki dedicates three chapters to describe Sita in captivity of Ravana from Hanumana's perspective.

Sage Valmiki sets this moment intentionally in the early morning hours, when everything appears golden and fiery red. **The verses in these chapters are the most beautiful and critical verses of Ramayana. Therefore, we will read each verse carefully.** We will try to see if these descriptions create specific images in our mind and help us in our search for the Energy in our Muladhara Chakra. Please focus on the words that evoke the golden-fire color or words like "braid" and

“snake.” In addition, note the specific details of a highly energetic, moving, or bright object encapsulated by some cover.

1. Verse 5-14-38 tells us Hanumana saw land, springs, and trees in a golden-fire color.
2. Verse 5-14-39 says Hanumana saw his body glowing in golden red color, because of the light radiating from the surroundings. If you visit any temple of Hanumana, you will find him in golden red color; that color comes from these verses.
3. In verse 5-15-19 through 5-15-35, sage Valmiki gives the description of Sita in the Ashok garden. It is also a description of the Energy in our body locked up at the Muladhara Chakra. In verse 5-15-19, Hanumana sees Sita for the first time. She is wearing an ochre colored sari, which is soiled. Female demons surround her. She is weak because of fasting. She looks very miserable.
4. Verse 5-15-20 describes Sita as a form that emerged out of the fire, glowing with radiance, but veiled in smoke
5. In verse 5-15-21, sage Valmiki describes Sita as a lotus plant without a lotus flower, covered with mud. The mud is symbolic of earth, which is an element of the Muladhara Chakra.
6. Verse 5-15-24 compares the condition of her being surrounded by female demons with that of a deer separated from its herd and surrounded by hounds, showing the agility with which the Energy moves.
7. **Verse 5-15-25 describes Sita as a braid made up of three flexible strands of hair and as a coiled up snake - a classic description of the Kundalini.**
8. Verse 5-15-32 again describes her as a fire covered by smoke and as a forgotten treasure.
9. In verse 5-15-37, sage Valmiki mentions that she is wearing a coat of dust and looks like a bright moon covered by clouds.
10. Verse 5-16-25 again says that her body is smeared with dirt just as a lotus plant is smeared with mud. Note that dirt is symbolic of earth, which is an element of the Muladhara Chakra.

11. Verse 5-20-7 gives the same description, but this time through the eyes of Ravana, who comes to see Sita to convince her to marry him, so he can avoid a likely attack from Shri Ram.
12. **In verse 5-19-9, Ravana sees her as a great, writhing female serpent bound in a spell.**
13. **Verse 5-19-13 says that Ravana sees her as a blazing faraway fire, capable of destroying the world.**

Verses 5-20-9 and 5-20-13 are critical as they contain the exact description of the Kundalini coiled up at the Muladhara Chakra. If you search the internet, you will come across several pages that describe the Kundalini in the same words. **These verses prove that sage Valmiki saw Sita as the Kundalini, the Energy locked up in the Muladhara Chakra.** In case you still have doubt, please read the next paragraphs carefully.

Let us review the verses at the end of Valmiki Ramayana, where Shri Ram defeats Ravana. After the war ends, Vibhishana becomes the king of Lanka. Shri Ram asks Vibhishana to bring Sita to him. In verse 6-115-21, Shri Ram tells Sita, “I won you back to restore my honor.” He then tells her she is “free to go wherever she likes.”

In verse 6-116-15, in a befitting response to Shri Ram, Sita reminds him she was born out of the earth, and her father, king Janaka, was a mere disguise for her to be born. Sita tells Shri Ram that “he is behaving like someone who does not know of her actual nature”. However, not wanting to live a life of blame, she plans to enter fire and asks Laxmana to set up a bonfire. **Note that Sita does not enter fire to pass any test or to remove any doubts about her purity.** After telling everyone assembled there, “my heart never moves off of Shri Ram,” in verse 6-116-32, Sita plunges into the blazing fire.

In verse 6-118-1, the fire god appears in person, with Sita in his hand. Verse 6-118-4 tells us that Sita comes out of the fire in precisely the same state in which she went in. Even her flower ornaments did not burn in the fire. **What can go through**

fire and come out unharmed? Only fire can go through fire and come out unharmed.

From verse 6-118-15, Shri Ram tells everyone that he had always known the actual nature of his wife, Sita, as the Energy. Having known this, he had ignored her jumping in the fire, as he knew the fire could not burn fire.

1. In verse 6-118-15, he says, “I know Sita, who is always in my mind, and she has undivided affection for me.”
2. In verse 6-118-16, he says, “Ravana could not harm her as her own power protects Sita.”
3. **In verse 6-118-18, he says, “Sita is a blazing tongue of fire; Ravana had no chance of laying his hands on such a fire.”**
4. **In verse 6-118-19, he says, “Sita does not differ from me, just as sunlight does not differ from the sun.”**

These verses tell us the Sita is the Energy. In Yoga terms, the Energy and Consciousness are always together. Hence, Shri Ram must represent the Consciousness.

Here we learn about Sita’s actual nature first, and then we come to understand Shri Ram’s nature. We get an important message here for a Yogi – we understand the Energy first and then the Consciousness.

Easy to Understand Character # 2: Shri Ram

After giving a stern reply to Shri Ram that He is acting like a common man and behaving as if He does not know her real nature as an Energy, Sita jumps into the blazing fire. In verse 6-117-1 we read, Shri Ram becomes very sad, and tears roll off from his eyes. At this instance, He behaves like an ordinary man.

After witnessing this sad turn of these events, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Indra, and a host of other gods intervene. In verse 6-117-6, they question Shri Ram how he could not recognize himself as a god. They ask Him, “Why is he still behaving like a commoner?” In verse 6-117-11, Shri Ram tells them he thinks he is a normal

human being called Ram, the son of Dasharatha, of the city of Ayodhya. He asks them, “Since you are gods, you tell me who I am. What is my actual nature?”

From the verse 6-117-12 to verse 6-117-33, Lord Brahma tells Shri Ram about his actual nature.

1. In verse 6-117-12, Lord Brahma tells Shri Ram, “You are Lord Vishnu, wielding the discus.”
2. **In verse 6-117-14, he says, “You are the Universal Consciousness;** you exist before the beginning of creation, you are in the middle of creation and you remain after the creation ends. You are an essential nature of all living beings; your presence is everywhere, and you are four armed (Lord Vishnu).”
3. In verse 6-117-15, he tells Shri Ram, “You are the lord of senses of human beings; you are the soul of the entire universe.”
4. In verse 6-117-16, he says, “You are the rationalizing intellect; you are the origin and dissolution of the entire creation.”
5. In verse 6-117-17, he says, “You are behind the working of all senses; you offer protection and refuge to everyone.”
6. In verse 6-117-18, he says, “You are the essential teaching of the Vedas. You are the first creator of all worlds and the Lord of all.”
7. In verse 6-117-20, he says, “You are the sacred syllable AUM. No one knows your origin or your end; no one knows who you are.”
8. In verse 6-117-21, he says, “You appear in all created beings, as you appear in a cow and a Brahmin; you exist in all quarters, mountains, and rivers.”
9. In verse 6-117-22, he says, “You have thousands of feet, eyes, and heads; you bear the earth with all its living beings and its mountains.”
10. In verse 6-117-24, he says, “Brahma, the creator, is like your heart; all other gods are like mere hair on your limbs.”
11. In verse 6-117-25, he says, “There is nothing in this world without you.”
12. In verse 6-117-28, he says, “Sita is no other than Goddess Laxmi, and you are Lord Vishnu.”

The verses describe Shri Ram as Universal Consciousness. This event happens at the end of Valmiki Ramayana. At the end of this book, we will see the event where Shri Ram assumes the form of Lord Vishnu. Shri Ram represents both Consciousness operating within the body and Universal Consciousness. We will focus on Shri Ram as Consciousness.

We are used to thinking of Shri Ram as a God. But when Yoga tells us He is the Consciousness within us, then we cannot really understand what that means. We do not have any idea about our Consciousness. That is okay. Sage Valmiki knows that we do not understand the Consciousness. He wrote Ramayana to teach us about it and to give us indirect ways to approach it.

Easy to Understand Character # 3: Hanumana

Hanumana is “the most important character” of the story for us. He is the catalyst that brings Sita and Shri Ram together and speeds up the action in the war. Sage Valmiki gives us many clues about the real nature of Hanumana.

Hanumana is the son of the air god, which connects him directly to air, and thus, to our breath. He stands for the Prana in our body, which we take in through the air. The Prana is a form of the Energy in our body. It differs from the Energy we have discussed so far, which is the consort of the Consciousness. To describe this relationship in a better way, sage Valmiki has depicted the relationship between Sita and Hanumana as that of a mother and a child. The relationship between the Prana and the breath needs no explanation. Prana, the vital breath, circulates through our body and performs various functions. We will learn about the functions of the Prana in subsequent chapters.

After Jambavan reminds Hanumana of his real nature, Hanumana jumps over the ocean toward Lanka. Although he performs several heroic deeds in this story, his journey to locate abducted Sita has no parallel. **When Hanumana jumps toward Lanka, the story mentions all the events and locations in between, which we can use as reference to the Chakras.** In addition, his actions show us the way to go through the Chakras, their effects, and the precautions to take to avoid danger. We will see them when we discuss Chakras.

One function of the Prana is to jump over the Manipura and Swadhisthana Chakras to the Muladhara Chakra. In later chapters, we will study Valmiki Ramayana verse by verse, and find out their correlations with the Chakras.

Prana is a vital component of the air that we breathe. Hence, Sage Valmiki describes the relationship between the air god and Hanumana as that of a father-son duo. Prana sustains our life; when it goes out of the body, we die. However, sustaining life is a very broad term and needs an accurate definition. Let us see what it means.

Within our body, the Prana is responsible for many activities. These are classified into two groups – major and minor, both numbering five. Since the Prana is a form of Energy, all these activities are movement or heat related. To understand the Prana, we must track its movements in our body. When we can identify a particular movement, we can apply logic to see the Prana behind it.

Most prominent movement in our body is the beating of the heart. Energy or the force that makes our heart beat is called the Prana. Primary source of Prana is the air we breathe; food is the secondary source.

Second major activity of the Prana is in the abdomen region, where it controls excretion-related movements of the body. Here, it is called Apaana, and it is a critical concept in Yoga. **Shri Krishna introduces Prana and Apaana in Gita. He summarizes the complete science of Yoga as the “mixing of the Prana and the Apaana”.** This description looks rather simple, but it is very difficult to understand its meaning.

Understanding what Apaana is can be difficult. Making it move upwards toward the Prana is even more challenging. The way is to learn the root lock, practice it for a good amount of time with a wait-and-watch approach. When the root lock triggers the upward movement of the stomach on its own (the word, Yoga uses, is flying instead of moving), you will know the power of Apaana.

The name of Prana operating in the throat and head region is Udaana. These are very low-frequency vibrations. One of the strange things about the Udaana is that its activities go a few centimeters above our head. The name of Prana operating in the stomach is Samaana. It is responsible for digestion. The name of Prana which circulates blood in the entire body is Vyaana.

Besides these five major Prana(s), there are five minor Prana(s): Naga is responsible for hiccups; Kurma performs the function of opening and closing the eyes; Krikara induces hunger or thirst; Devadatta makes us yawn. Finally, Dhananjaya causes decomposition of the body after death.

In the ordinary state of the body, activities of Prana are difficult to observe. Only when these activities exceed existing levels, we feel the Prana in the body. When we do Pranayama, the level of Pranic activity goes up. When it exceeds a certain threshold, we can notice the Prana. **The results of Pranayama are not immediately visible. Pumping air in and out of the body alone does not mean a person is doing Pranayama.** It needs a guru to teach us the conceptual background of the overall framework, a sincere desire to succeed and practice over a period. **Pranic movement happens because of the intention of a person. Hence, if we are looking for proof of the Prana, we must have the intention to see Pranic activity.**

Easy to Understand Character # 4: Ravana

Ravana represents our Ahamkara (Ego). Our Ahamkara is insecure. It seeks to grab power and prefers a life of indulgence. We see these characteristics in Ravana. He is a king of demons. He is powerful, active, and indulgent in sensual pleasures. His capital city, Lanka, is extremely rich, with golden palaces and marvelous gardens. Even though Ravana has defeated all enemies and he lives on an island, Lanka is closely guarded, which shows his insecurity. “Lam” from “Lanka” (in English spelling, letter m is missing) is the letter of the Muladhara Chakra. **It is associated with a sense of insecurity, which is closely related to the Ahamkara.**

Ravana is an undisputed king of the demons, yet, he feels separated from the others. He does not trust anyone. He does not pay heed to any of his counselors. He is a hard worker, a great fighter, and knowledgeable in numerous arts. Our Ahamkara surely has all these qualities.

One of Ravana’s names is "Dashanana," which means "one with ten faces." **His multiple faces show the various masks that our Ahamkara wears. Thus, when we see Ravana as an Ahamkara, we feel that we are familiar with him.**

1. In chapter 3-32, sage Valmiki describes Ravana, with all his characteristics. **Let us understand Ravana a little better and see if any of his traits relates to us.**

2. Verse 3-32-4 tells us Ravana is radiant, and he is sitting in an **exquisite vehicle**.
3. Verse 3-32-4 tells us he **is covered in gold** from top to bottom and seated on a golden throne.
4. Verse 3-32-6 tells us he is a **brave and invincible warrior**.
5. Verses 3-32-7, 10, 11, 12, 13 tell us he fought many wars, and has bruises to prove his valor.
6. Verse 3-32-8 tells us he has twenty arms and ten heads. We could interpret this to mean that he is ten times more active and smart than others.
7. Verse 3-32-9 tells us he is dressed in **beautiful clothes and many ornaments**.
8. Verse 3-32-13 tells us he uses every way to humiliate his defeated enemies. Essentially, his standard of values and ethics are substantially lower for his enemies. For a student of history, there is nothing new in it. All the victorious armies do the same. Using substandard values and ethics creates terror in the heart of the defeated enemy. It helps in quelling any future uprising or challenge against the conqueror.
9. In verse 3-32-14, we read about Ravana's vehicle, which he snatched from someone, and about **his other glittering possessions**.
10. Verses 3-32-15 and 3-32-19 tell us **he collects good things** but is envious of other people's good belongings. Not only is he envious of others, he also makes efforts to destroy their good possessions.
11. In verse 3-32-17, we read he practiced asceticism before and **gained a lot of power**.
12. Verse 3-32-17 tells us any known power in the world would not defeat him.
13. Verse 3-32-20 tells us Ravana is ruthless with his enemies. He is heartless, punishing those, who went against his wishes.
14. In verse 3-32-22, we see **he is dressed in exquisite clothes and jewelry, and looks fantastic in them**.

Do any of these characteristics sound familiar to us? Even though a gap of 3000 years or more separates this description and us, it comes close to us. Even

though Ravana is a demon king, his most terrible crimes look like petty thefts, when compared to the deeds of human dictators and conquerors. There are no massacres of defeated enemies, no mountains of severed heads, no mass graves, and no execution chambers. He has no agenda of ethnic or racial cleansing. He does nothing that matches our experience of dictators and conquerors.

Sage Valmiki was aware of these types of horrible crimes committed by kings in his time too, yet he does not mention them. **Sage Valmiki's Ravana is not as evil as human kings and dictators, modern or ancient. Instead, he is an ordinary person like any of us.**

Unlike Shri Ram, who has practically nothing except a bow, Ravana has everything we desire and adore. **He has pride, power, wealth, position, gold, beautiful palaces, beautiful wives, devotion, valor, selective ethics, conquered enemies, and much more.** Don't we wish all these things in our lives? Maybe, not all the things, but don't we crave at least a few of them?

We may think Ravana was some ruthless dictator of some country in the past, but that is wrong. Ramayana is part of literature dedicated to the "study of self." Thus, its purpose is to help us understand ourselves. If sage Valmiki wanted to write something that matches the horrible acts of dictators, he could have done so easily. In that case, the character of Ravana becomes problematic for a common man to imagine himself in the role of Ravana.

Only when we honestly understand Ravana within ourselves as our Ahamkara, we see the real Shri Ram as the Consciousness. Those who do not understand Ravana, will not recognize Shri Ram, even if he is staring in their face. We know Ravana represents our Ahamkara. We also know there is no Ahamkara in the Higher Consciousness. **To recognize its absence, we need to recognize its presence.**

Besides personification of the Ahamkara, Ravana is also an example of one more significant concept – the Rajas Guna. Ravana is extremely dynamic and a busy demon. He conquered almost all other kings. He rules a large kingdom. He is an expert in 64 different arts. He is an extraordinarily accomplished warrior. He has many other qualities that tell us he is highly active. Ramayana uses his character to show the nature of Rajas Guna. **The Rajas Guna is present in everyone. It is responsible for all the activities we do. This force of nature pushes us into action, whether physical or mental.** By itself, it does not

recognize any limits or does not control itself on its own. A Rajas Guna dominated person gets entangled in one action after another, possibly in multiple actions at the same time.

Easy to Understand Character # 5: Kumbhakarna

Kumbhakarna is Ravana's brother. He eats for six months and sleeps for the remaining six months. It requires an army of demons just to wake him up! **He represents Tamas Guna.** Tamas Guna is characterized by inertia. **A Tamas Guna dominated person has a tendency of overeating, oversleeping, and overindulgence in sensual pleasures. This person resists the call of action.** He can find many reasons for not doing any action or justify his inaction. Tamas Guna is present in everyone. When it dominates, it brings a lot of troubles.

Tamas Guna has momentum. Even if an overweight (as an example of Tamas dominated person) starts exercising, his weight does not drop right away. His weight will go up before it goes down. Even after Kumbhakarna's hands are cut, they keep moving. In addition, when his head is cut off, his body crawls long distances. **It tells us that even if a person overcomes Tamas Guna, it will continue to exert its power for some time.**

Easy to Understand Character # 6: Vibhishana

The Sanskrit word Vibhishana means "not horrible". Like Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana advises Ravana to return Sita to Shri Ram. When Ravana did not pay heed to his advice, Vibhishana deserted Ravana's camp and joined Shri Ram's side. He becomes a key advisor to Shri Ram. He helps Laxmana to kill his nephew – mighty and invisible Indrajit. After the defeat of Ravana, Shri Ram honors Vibhishana as a close friend. Shri Ram crowns Vibhishana as king of Lanka and returns to Ayodhya.

Through Vibhishana, 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.

Both Ravana and Kumbhakarna, symbolic of Rajas and Tamas Guna, battle Shri Ram. However strong and brave they are, Shri Ram ultimately defeats them in battle. Shri Ram defeats Ravana (Rajas), but does not become king of Lanka. Shri Ram

neutralizes Kumbhakarna (Tamas), but does not become lazy. He befriends Vibhishana (Sattva Guna), uses it, and rewards it too. **However, Shri Ram steps away from Vibhishana (Sattva Guna) too as a king of Lama.**

Spirituality is an activity dominated by Sattva Guna. However, 'good' it is, it differs from the Consciousness. **The Consciousness is not the same as these three qualities of nature. It is "above and beyond" them and will always remain that way.** The three Guna and their relation to the Consciousness are the most significant findings of Yoga. Ramayana helps us understand it.

Easy to Understand Character # 7: Mandodari

Along with Sita, Mandodari is one of the five important females in Puranic stories. She has a minor role to play in Ramayana. We know Ravana represents the Ahamkara. Mandodari is Ravana's wife. She represents the Rationalizing Intellect or Buddhi.

When Ravana abducted Sita and brought her to Lanka, Mandodari did not approve of his action. Mandodari comes out as 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 shows the Rationalizing Intellect / Buddhi.

Easy to Understand Character # 8: Dasharatha

At the beginning of Ramayana, we meet the king of the city of Ayodhya called "Dasharatha". His name means, "Ten horse chariot rider." It is an obvious reference to the human body with ten faculties of knowledge. A modern day analogy could be a computer with five input ports and five output devices.

The first five faculties are senses or organs with the help of which we do our work, or express ourselves.

1. Speaking via the throat
2. Grasping via the hands
3. Moving using the legs
4. Defecating via the anus

5. Reproduction using the genital organs

The other five are cognitive senses; we use them to feed the information into our mind.

6. Hearing via the ears
7. Touching via the skin
8. Seeing through the eyes
9. Smelling with the nose
10. Tasting with the tongue

Easy to Understand Character # 9: Laxmana

The Sanskrit word Laxmana translates into "focused mind" because "laxya" means "target" and Sanskrit word "man" means "mind." Sage Valmiki comes up with very creative ways to explain the relative importance of a devoted mind.

In verses 1-16-27, 28, 2, 9 he describes how king Dasharatha divides the dessert from the ritual sacrifice amongst his queens. Kousalya's son, Shri Ram, represents the Consciousness; he is born from the 50% share of the dessert. Sumitra gets two sons; her elder son, Laxmana, who is born from the first 25% of the dessert, and her younger son, Shatrughna, who is born from the 12.5% share of the dessert. Kaikayi with her 12.5% share of the dessert gives birth to Bharat. **The name Bharat means "one who carries the weight" referring to the body itself.**

Note that all four brothers are born but Shri Ram is the eldest of them. They give up their lives almost at the same time but the sequence in which they enter the river Sharayu is different. **First, goes Laxmana, the devoted mind, and then goes Shri Ram, who represents the Consciousness. Bharata and Shatrughna,**

representing the body and an unknown component of the mind, follow the Consciousness at the same time.

Note that these four brothers marry four girls of the same family and give birth to two sons each. All the major events in their lives like birth, marriage, kids, and death coincide one to one. Do we know any family, in any history, that has similar coincidences like this one? The mystery resolves if you consider we are looking at one person from different angles. **Even though sage Valmiki presents them as four unique characters, they correspond to the four parts of the human Body-Mind-Consciousness framework.**

After Hanumana, Laxmana is the second-most important character of the story for us. Both characters are more important to us than Shri Ram. Without them, we cannot find Shri Ram!

Difficult to Understand Character # 1: Jambavan

Of all the characters of Ramayana, Jambavan the bear, is the most unusual character. He is an odd man out, as he is the only bear in the company of monkeys, humans, and demons. His introduction is rather strange. **Jambavan suddenly came forth when Lord Brahma was yawning. Note that “Jmbha” means yawn.**

According to Yoga, yawning is associated with Devadatta Prana, a minor Prana. The bear is a suitable character for someone who is related to yawning, as bears seem to yawn a lot or they look like they are yawning. The primary role played by Jambavan is that he reminds Hanumana of his true nature. Hanumana represents the Prana in our breath. Thus, we can say that Jambavan reminded Hanumana that his true nature was that of Prana.

From being just a normal breath to being vital breath (Prana), is the most critical transition. Who can give this message? Only someone, who understands the Prana and knows it very well, can deliver the message that breath is the Prana. An analogy is only a fire can ignite a fire.

It is the role of a guru to remind us of our true nature. Following this logic, Jambavan becomes the guru of Hanumana. In verse 1-57-34, we see clear evidence of Hanumana calling Jambavan as guru. We also see that in verse 6-128-53, Jambavan, along with Hanumana, played a unique role in the coronation of Shri Ram.

Difficult to Understand Character # 2: Sage Valmiki

We know sage Valmiki as an author of the great epic of Ramayana. In addition, he shows up as a character in Ramayana. He takes care of Sita after Shri Ram sends her to the jungle for good. He becomes a guru of her children and teaches Ramayana to them.

We can map almost all the principal characters of Ramayana to a process inside our Energy-Consciousness-Body-Mind. What process does sage Valmiki represent within us? Why does he come in as a character at the end of Ramayana? Sage Valmiki is a prominent character in Ramayana, so he must apply to us. Let us inspect his role.

Sage Valmiki is guiding us toward Shri Ram by writing Ramayana. Thus, indirectly becomes our guru. **Sage Valmiki is surely a guiding force, and he is not within us. We cannot map him to any process inside us, like the other characters.**

As an indirect guru who is guiding us towards Shri Ram, he is very important to us. He deserves a prominent role of the guru as a character in Ramayana.

Sita represents the Energy. We are all children of Universal Energy. As per Yoga, Energy separated from Consciousness, according to its wish, so she could create multiple names and forms. Energy did a wonderful job and created these species or forms, of which humans are just one kind.

When we put these pieces together – us being the children of the Energy, and sage Valmiki being our indirect guru – the puzzle of sage Valmiki's role in Ramayana becomes easy to solve. He has to have the role of the guru and has to be teaching Sita's children.

This statement may feel like stretching logic a bit too far. However, take a step back. Sage Valmiki is teaching us about Shri Ram; so, he appears in the guru's role. This role comes into action, only after Sita separates from Shri Ram and gives birth to his children. Hence, sage Valmiki takes up the role of the guru of Sita's children and teaches them (and us) about Shri Ram.

Difficult to Understand Character # 3: River Ganga

On their way to Mithila, king Janaka's capital, sage Vishwamitra narrates the story of river Ganga to Shri Ram and Laxmana. Ramayana is the story of the paths of the Energy - that is Sita, and the higher Consciousness, Shri Ram. Energy and Consciousness are actual biological processes, and they have well-defined paths in our body. **The story of river Ganga gives us a blueprint or design of how the movements of the Energy and the Consciousness are working in our body.**

This story is like a doctor's overview of the bone structure in an X-ray to a patient, before explaining fracture in the bones. In this immensely creative story, sage Valmiki tells us about the central structure in which the Energy and the Consciousness work. Here, in his characteristic style, he sets up a story that describes Sushumna – the main Nadi – inside the spine.

In verse 1-36-3, we read that river Ganga has three courses that go into three worlds, that is the heaven, the earth, and the plane called Rasaatala. River Ganga descends from heaven to the earth with a tremendous impact like that of a majestic waterfall. The impact is so powerful that it requires Lord Shiva himself to sustain it. We read in verse 1-43-4 that Shiva bears the impact of Ganga's descent on his head. In verse 1-43-7, while Shiva can sustain the impact, Ganga cannot find the outer edge of the matted hair-tufts of Lord Shiva and gets caught in it. In verses 1-43-20 to 1-43-22, we get a splendid picture of how Ganga looks, when she appears out of Shiva's hair. The picture evokes visions of hundreds of suns in the cloudless sky at a time, flash lightning, and silver-clouds of autumn. Anytime we get a description of hundreds of suns at a time, it indirectly represents Sahasrara.

Note that we get three distinct images that relate to Shiva's head and Ganga, with additional effects of vibrations and noise.

1. **The first image is of Ganga's magnificent fall from heaven on Shiva's head.**
2. **The second image is of her tumultuous swirling around Shiva's head.**

3. The third image is of her smooth descent from Shiva's head towards Rasaatala.

Shiva is the representation of the higher Consciousness in the body. The place of the Consciousness is our head. So, we see Ganga coming out of Shiva's head.

If we visualize these images, we see sage Valmiki's purpose in depicting them. **Undoubtedly, all these images are descriptions of the Sahasrara, where the Energy merges with the Consciousness.**

We are accustomed to looking at the path of the Energy's ascent to the head and its merger with the Consciousness. **Sage Valmiki has described the same process in the opposite direction.** When we create an image in mind, we can ignore the direction of the flow of Energy and focus on its path.

The third image described above creates a picture in our mind, where an enormous amount of Energy is going toward the head. The second image shows the tumultuous waterfall-like effect with the current swirling of the Energy at the top of the head, generating sounds and vibrations. The first image shows the actual merger of the Energy and the Consciousness, where they become one, and together go out of the body, leading the Yogi to be in the state of Samadhi.

Once river Ganga comes out of Shiva's head, she cruises smoothly toward Rasaatala, guided by king Sagara. It is the description of the extension of the Sushumna Nadi going from the head toward the Muladhara Chakra and further down to the feet.

We read that Shri Ram's ancestors brought the river Ganga down to Rasaatala. Rasaatala is the second to the last plane of Consciousness in our body. It has animalistic properties. The physical location of Rasaatala is in the ankles; it is the fifth level below the Muladhara Chakra level of the Consciousness. The Sushumna Nadi does not go up to the ankles. However, we have other Nadi(s) that begin in the Muladhara Chakra and go in the feet.

Let us go back to the point after Ganga came out of Shiva's head. The verse 1-43-38, which tells us that sage Janhu blocks the flow of river Ganga. Regarding the Sushumna Nadi, sage Janhu symbolizes a specific knot along the path of the Energy. There are three major knots on the Sushumna Nadi; the one referred here is the "Shiva knot." We can infer the location of this knot based on the description given in the story. When sage Janhu releases river Ganga, the water falls out from both of his ears. Thus, we can guess that the location of the Shiva Knot is between the ears, just below the Aagya Chakra, on the Sushumna Nadi. The opening of this knot is a prerequisite for the opening of the Aagya Chakra. So long as this knot is blocked, a higher amount of Energy cannot reach the Aagya Chakra, and the person cannot feel the Aagya Chakra.

Difficult to Understand Character # 4: Shabari

Sage Valmiki devotes the full chapter of 3-74 about Shabari. As per the story, Shabari's Guru, sage Matanga had previously left for heaven, leaving Shabari behind. Before leaving, he told Shabari to continue her yogic practices, until Shri Ram came to her. From that point onwards, Shabari performed yogic activities, as directed by her Guru with admirable devotion.

In verse 3-74-6, when Shri Ram comes to the Pampa Lake area, he meets Shabari. **Note that sage Valmiki calls her Siddha – an extremely advanced yogi. There are two verses 3-74-7 and 3-74-8, where Shri Ram himself praises her devotion.** Shri Ram asks her, "What were you doing in the Pampa Lake region?" She responds, "Just now, on seeing you, my asceticism is complete.

After showing Shri Ram around the woodlands and her hermitage, Shabari asks His permission to leave her body. When Shri Ram blesses her, Shabari enters a ritual fire and acquires a divine form.

Even though this is a story of a yogi, other versions of Ramayana portray her as a servant or a caretaker. Probably, the confusion about Shabari arose because of verses 3-74-29, 31, and 35. In verse 3-74-29, Shabari calls herself a servant of her guru, sage Matanga. Servant of guru is a way of offering gratitude toward the Guru. A hermitage of a sage may have a few maidservants working and living in it, but they do not have a Guru-disciple relation.

Verse 3-74-35 again mentions that she was a perfect Yogi and went to the same place – heaven, where her Guru was. Sage Valmiki describes Shabari as a devoted

person who dutifully abides by her Guru's commands. **Shri Ram praises her devotion; so, we can interpret Shabari as devotion in our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes.**

Difficult to Understand Character # 5: Named Sages

From Mt. Chitrakuta, Shri Ram goes to the hermitage of sage Atri and his wife Anusuya, where sage Atri gives powerful weapons to Shri Ram. In verse 2-118-21, Anusuya gives divine jewels and cosmetics to Sita. At every step in the Dandaka forest, Shri Ram meets some unnamed sages who complain about the demons. Every complaint drives him deeper and deeper into the jungle in the southward direction. Note that Sage Atri and Anusuya live in the same forest as other sages, so logically, they are informed of the trouble provoked by the demons. **However, they do not complain about the demons to Shri Ram; they behave as if they live in a different forest.**

Shri Ram visits the hermitages of five sages – Atri, Agastya, Agastya's brother (sage Valmiki does not give his name), Shatananda, and Suteekshna and meets the sages and their wives. However, no one of them gives him the slightest hint that they are living amid a civil war type situation. **Even when Shri Ram asks sage Suteekshna about any kind of trouble, in verse 3-7-19, the sage tells him that there is no trouble, except the one posed by animals.**

The reason behind the named sages not complaining about the demons is that the named sages and the unnamed ascetics inhabit entirely different worlds. **The named sages, like Atri, are external persons; they are not a part of our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness system.** They know Sita and Shri Ram as the Energy and the Consciousness within ourselves. All they can do is to provide tools and means to fight against Ahamkara. **They are Guru like people who are advanced Yogis themselves. They help us in the path of Yoga by providing much needed guidance and help.**

Hard to Understand Character # 1: Parashurama

In all the avatar stories, a character from the preceding story appears in the next story and thus connects the stories to each other. For example, demon Hiranyaksha,

who is in the third avatar story, has a brother, demon Hiranyakshipu, who appears in the fourth avatar story. This arrangement establishes continuity in these stories.

When we accept the above logic, Ramayana as the story of the seventh avatar, requires a link to the sixth avatar story of Parashurama. Please read the chapter “Levels of the Consciousness – From Normal to Beyond” from Yoga Ramayana book for details of avatar stories. In that chapter, we saw that the Parashurama level of Consciousness is a rather crude level of Consciousness. We also saw the story of Lord Ganesh and Parashurama, where Lord Ganesh blocked Parashurama from visiting Lord Shiva. It demonstrated the limits of the Parashurama level of Consciousness.

Refinement from a comparatively coarse level of the Consciousness to a finer level means the coarse level has to make way for the finer level of the Consciousness. The coarse level of the Consciousness has to finish, so that the next level of the Consciousness can establish its foothold.

For this reason, we read in Ramayana that Parashurama and Shri Ram – both incarnations of Lord Vishnu - start a big conflict. In verse 1-75-27, we read that Parashurama challenges Shri Ram to pick up the bow of Lord Vishnu and engage with him in battle. Shri Ram takes up the challenge, picks up Lord Vishnu’s bow, and mounts an arrow on it. He had picked up Lord Shiva’s bow earlier, so this event is a duplication, except that the bow does not break. Shri Ram mounts a powerful arrow, aims it at Parashurama, but does not release it. There is a duplication of this event later on, when Shri Ram points yet another powerful arrow at the ocean. Shri Ram does not kill Parashurama, because Parashurama and Shri Ram are not different from each other. They both represent the Consciousness of a person at different, but adjacent levels.

Shri Ram releases an arrow in such a way that Parashurama loses all his powers. He retires, and his role as an avatar of Lord Vishnu ends. Logically, this means that from here on, Shri Ram’s role as an avatar of Lord Vishnu begins. If you see both of them as the continuation of levels of Consciousness, the coarse level retires and the refined level replaces it. Note that these events happen right after Sita and Shri Ram marry. It shows that the actual power of Shri Ram’s level of Consciousness reveals itself only after his union with Energy.

Hard to Understand Character # 2: Ahalya

In chapters 1-48 and 1-49 of Ramayana, we read a fascinating story involving Ahalya, her husband, sage Gautama, and Indra – the king of heaven. The essence of the story is that Indra falls for Ahalya. Tempted because no less than the king of gods has fallen for her, Ahalya cheats on her husband. The story is extraordinary, but we wonder why this story is included in Ramayana?

As we can expect, this story is a puzzle for us, and sage Valmiki gives secret clues in the trivial details of the story. **When Indra approaches Ahalya, he disguises himself as her husband. Ahalya knows that he is Indra and not her husband, although they both look the same.** Thus, Ahalya cheats on her husband, with someone who looks just like him. What is it that Ahalya could benefit from this cheating – replacing her husband by his replica – given that she risked losing everything?

If you detect that something is illogical here, it is time to turn the puzzle card over and see the real meaning behind it. **Ahalya's husband, Gautama, is a sage and represents devotion to god. Indra represents the "indriyas," which means "sense organs."** "Ahalya" translates into "one without ugliness." If we use the word "hal" in her name to mean "plough," we can interpret Ahalya as "barren land."

Let us inspect the choice Ahalya makes – she chooses Indra, who shows up in the disguise of her husband, over her husband. She chooses sensual gratifications, which appears in the form of devotion, instead of pure devotion to god.

Ahalya, for lack of a better word, represents a weak or unsure faith, which appears to be present, but on close scrutiny, it is not there. It is a type of faith, where we engage in devotional activities, rituals, or customs, without understanding them. The weak or unsure faith claims belief and devotion to god and engages in devotional activities. Faith and devotion are present in some dormant form, but they do not have a foundation of an experience. Please read the Weak or Unsure Faith chapter from Yoga Ramayana book to read more about it.

The weak or unsure faith leads a person to seek for some profit from devotional activities. Since a solid foundation of faith is not there, the person's mind accepts whatever pleasure or profit it can earn from these

activities. This point is difficult to understand. So, let us look at a few examples as how a person with a weak faith uses spiritual activities to gain benefit from them.

If a person wishes to impress someone, then his prayers go on a little longer! Whenever a person donates money, they make certain that the coins made a sound of being dropped in the drop-box. They have the intention to donate money, but they are also interested in making sure that others notice it.

For the people around such a person, there is no way to distinguish between the activities and the actual intentions behind them. A person may appear to be doing prayers, but if the hidden intention behind those prayers is to impress someone, the person is treading the wrong path. A person may engage in what seems to be devotional activities or path leading to god, yet, the reality may just be the opposite. An outsider cannot differentiate between these two choices.

We interpreted the name Ahalya as “barren land,” which means any seeds we plant in this land will not grow. No actions done with weak or unsure faith will give good results.

When a person chooses sensual gratifications, while faking a devotional activity, only he knows that he is faking a devotional activity, with no doubt. Sage Valmiki gives us a criterion or a way to test ourselves regarding the faith. According to him, only the person involved in these actions knows the actual intention behind them.

Note that person with weak or unsure faith is honest. He tries to do the right thing, but fails in it. He knew he could not do the right action. Thus, he gets the feeling of remorse. He does not fail consistently in keeping his Ahamkara in control; he succeeds sometimes and fails at a few times. If this person searches for remorse after doing such actions, he or she will inevitably notice it.

Sage Valmiki displays these traits in the character of Ahalya. She is a devoted wife of a sage. But she had a few weak moments. Thus, we read in verses 1-48-29 and 30 that sage Gautama curses the Ahalya/weak or unsure faith to be invisible and feel remorseful. We noticed earlier how challenging it is to recognize a weak or unsure faith, as it blends perfectly with faith.

We do not see Ahalya plead for a boon to lift her curse, as noticed in all other curse stories. Her husband reveals her a way out of the curse, without her pleading for it, which proves her inherent good character. Ahalya, the weak or unsure faith,

needs to wait for an undefined amount of time, and during that time, she is to remain invisible and be remorseful. When Shri Ram begins his journey, the first thing he does is to lift Ahalya's curse. Shri Ram, at the time of lifting her curse, was very young. In addition, he did not make any efforts to lift the curse. Just by His coming in contact with Ahalya lifted her curse automatically, with no effort or intention on His part.

When a person has an experience of the higher Consciousness, even though it is extremely faint, the experience acts like a miracle. With it, the weak or unsure faith makes way for the true faith. Thus, we read that Ahalya – as a weak or unsure faith, unites with her sage husband Gautama – who represents faith.

Hard to Understand Character # 3: Sage Mandakarni

In the Chakra section, we will see the event of the marriage of Sita and Shri Ram as the opening of the Aagya Chakra and the breaking of the Shiva Knot. In terms of our body, this event occurs in the head region.

After killing Viradha, Shri Ram visits a chain of hermitages of various sages. One sage to another, they all lead him deeper into the forest in the southward direction. Now that Shri Ram moves southwards, we need to identify this movement in terms of the actual physical location in the body. **In terms of the body, the north side stands for the crown of the head. The south stands for the direction of the legs.** From the Aagya Chakra, which is right behind the forehead, if we travel downwards, we come to the vicinity of the ears. **If sage Valmiki is leading readers down from the Aagya Chakra, he cannot avoid references to the ears.**

In verse 3-11-7, we read that Shri Ram hears singing and playing musical instruments. **The melodious sounds are coming from the direction of a tranquil lake, but he cannot see anyone. It turns out that there is a sage inside the lake. The sage's name is Mandkarni, in which "mand" means "a very soft musical tone" and "karn" means "ears."** The sage's name refers to a very soft, musical sound, audible to the ears in tranquility, but the source of which is not visible to the eyes. **Thus, we come to one of the fascinating discoveries of Yoga – the Anahata Nad / sound. Anahata means "the sound that comes without striking two objects."**

Please Google “Anahata Nad Yoga” and you will get thousands of search results. This sound is not just for highly advanced yogis who have attained higher states. It is a low-hanging fruit; people can hear it with a little effort. People all over the world have reported hearing it. Anyone with a reasonable practice of Pranayama and sitting in complete silence can easily hear this sound. Initially, the Anahata Nad sounds like the chirping of crickets, and then it changes into the buzzing of bees. Next, it turns into a continuous ringing sound. There are ten different levels of the Anahata Nad/sound, and the higher ones are musical. The Anahata sound is documented in many classical Yoga texts.

In terms of Yoga, the reason behind this sound relates to Prana, which is a form of Energy. We hear this sound when the Prana is passing behind our ears to go toward the crown of our head. This sound does not come from hitting two objects against each other, or from outside of our body. We read that Shri Ram hears the sound but does not see anyone. **When we win the fight against Viradha-like tendencies, the Energy consumed previously by those desires is released, and it travels upwards and if we listen carefully, we can hear this sound.**

Hard to Understand Character #4: Jatayu and Sampati

To identify which Body-Mind process Jatayu and Sampati represent, we need to go a few chapters ahead, read their story, and get to know these eagles. While searching for Sita, the monkeys meet Sampatti, an eagle with no wings. In verse 4-61-3, a crippled Sampaati tells them his story and his adventure with his brother, Jatayu. Just like Sugriva and Vali, these two brothers also represent processes in our Body-Mind.

According to Sampaati, he and Jatayu were strong, but arrogant eagles, who wanted to follow the sun, as it goes around the earth. Sampaati, the older eagle, flew above Jatayu to shield Jatayu from the sun's rays. They went all the way up in the sky, where they could see four mountains in the four directions of the world.

Sampaati got sunburnt, but Jatayu was relatively okay, as he was in Sampaati's shadow. According to verse 4-61-10, suddenly an abnormal fear gripped them, and they became rigid; only their eyes were conscious. Verse 4-61-13 tells us that Sampaati's brain was not functioning, so he focused on using his eyes and tracked the sun. Jatayu, however, fell. Therefore, Sampaati followed him. Since his feathers were burning, he could not control himself. Both fell down on the earth at separate

places; Jatayu, though, having good wings, fell near Janasthana. Sampaaati, with burnt wings, fell on Mt. Vindhya. Jatayu did not know where Sampaaati fell, or if he was alive. Sampaaati came to know that his brother was alive somewhere in Dandaka forest. Wingless, Sampaaati stayed near the hermitage of sage Nishakara and somehow survived. Sage Nishakara tasked Sampaaati with helping the monkeys to find Sita, so he could get his wings back.

It is interesting to see that before receiving his wings back, Sampaaati wanted to take revenge on Ravana for killing Jatayu. However, the moment Sampaaati got his wings back, he just took off and did not help Shri Ram. We can see that the eagles going toward the sun is a duplication of Hanumana jumping toward the sun as a child. Like Hanumana, they paid a heavy price for their misadventure of going near the sun.

In terms of the Body-Mind, what process do these eagles represent? Let us look at Jatayu's dialog with Ravana to see what kind of personality Jatayu has.

- 1. In verse 3-50-6, Jatayu questions Ravana - how a king could lay his hands on another person's wife?**
2. In verses 3-50-7 through 3-50-11, he gives Ravana a long sermon telling him why he should not abduct Sita.
3. In verse 3-50-12, 13 he calls Ravana evil and a transgressor.
4. In verse 3-50-13, 14, he justifies Shri Ram's killing of Khara.
5. In verse 3-50-16, 17, he tries to scare Ravana by informing him about Shri Ram's power. In verse 3-50-18, Jatayu makes an argument to avoid conflict.
6. In verse 3-50-19, he tells Ravana that his actions would not benefit him in any way; instead, they will only put him in harm's way.
7. In verse 3-50-21, he pleads that he is weak and unarmed, but Ravana is young and armed, so their fight is not a fair fight.
8. Even while dying, in verses 3-51-31 and 32, he tries to teach moral values to Ravana, but Ravana does not answer him at all.

After reading these points, we can stretch our imagination and see that Jatayu represents the conscience process of the mind, which deals with the questions of right or wrong, integrity, principles, ethics, and morality. His arguments are strictly based on conscience, and he dies at the hands of the Ravana, who represents Ahamkara.

If we see Jatayu as the conscience, the question, which arises, is: what Body-Mind-Energy -Consciousness process does Sampati represent? The difficulty here is whatever applies to Jatayu does not apply to Sampati. Jatayu fought against Ravana and died, but Sampati just flew away.

Arrogance (Sanskrit word “Darp” as mentioned in verse 4-61-3) and an acute sense of conscience, represented by Sampati and Jatayu, soared high. However, Sampati got hurt and burned its wings, and had to live in a pitiable condition. We can compare the agony of an eagle with burnt wings only with the agony of a humiliated, arrogant person. It might seem far-fetched to consider Sampati as arrogance. **However, it may explain why Sampati just took off and did not play any role in the war. Arrogance has no role to play in the fight of the higher Consciousness / Shri Ram against the Ahamkara / Ravana.**

LAYER 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHARACTERS AND ITS YOGA MEANING

Here we will study the second layer – Relationships between the characters.

Dasharatha as a Father of Shri Ram

King Dasharatha openly acknowledges that Ravana is much stronger than he is. **It means that even if a person has control over all of his ten senses, he cannot defeat his Ahamkara.** Mere controlling the senses does not produce everlasting results, but it sets the stage up for something great. It creates conditions under which the Consciousness can go to higher levels. In Ramayana, we see Dasharatha giving birth to Shri Ram, the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Urmila Does Not Go in Exile with Laxmana

Why does Urmila, Laxmana's wife, did not follow Laxmana in exile? Urmila is Sita's sister. We can assume that both sisters have the same idea about the role of an ideal wife.

To understand Urmila's position, we need to look at her name. Sage Valmiki likes to give clues about people in the names he gives them. "Urmila" means "waves of passion," whereas "Laxmana" means "devoted mind." They are entirely the opposite qualities of the mind. Laxmana focuses on serving Shri Ram. He represents a mind devoted to god. Urmila represents waves of passion; it does not go with the devoted mind. How can a mind devoted to Shri Ram be associated with waves of passion?

Looking at Urmila's absence from the exile from this angle makes the puzzle easy to solve.

Ravana kidnaps Sita

We know that Ravana kidnapped Sita and imprisoned her in Lanka. From the Body-Mind-Energy -Consciousness perspective, we understand this event as our Ahamkara holding our Energy (aka the Kundalini) in the Muladhara Chakra.

Ramayana tells us that Ravana's sister, Shurpanakha, and a spy called Akampana, informed him about Sita's beauty, and we get the sense that this prompted him to kidnap her. This reason is not satisfactory when we view him as our Ahamkara. Hence, we need to ask further questions. Why does our Ahamkara hold the Energy in bondage? Why is Ahamkara interested in Energy? The answer can come only from introspection.

We need to know the reason behind our quest for Energy. **Why do we engage in Yoga or other similar activities? Is it because these activities add or improve upon something that we already have?** Most of us do Yoga for better physical health or peace of mind, etc. By expecting these benefits, we are indirectly expecting benefits of additional Energy created through Yoga. **So, we are indirectly drawn to the Energy because of the benefits we gain from it. Sage Valmiki mapped back this attraction in Ramayana as Ravana's attraction for Sita.** This point is difficult to understand. So, let's explore it a little further.

The question is direct: Do we wish to get something by doing Yoga? Do we perform yogic actions to give up something within us, after understanding its true nature? The irony is the answers to both the questions are positive. If you remember the cyclic nature of the Energy-Consciousness processes, you realize that the first answer leads to the second one.

We are drawn to the path of Yoga as it adds a value to our life like better health and mind. We pursue these activities without knowing or realizing the complete ramifications of Yoga. It is only when we hit the road and get some success, we realize that something else resides in us. Apart from the body and the mind, we see the Energy and the Consciousness components of ourselves. At this instance, the Ahamkara comes in and claims the Energy as its own. Impressed by the power of the Energy, the Ahamkara wants to take control of it. Sage Valmiki understood this and characterized it as Ravana's attraction to Sita's beauty. Ravana was not aware of Sita's true nature as a universal Energy. He knew vaguely that she was the wife of Shri Ram, whose power he miscalculated. He had encountered no one more powerful than him and did not think Shri Ram could pose a challenge to him.

A similar phenomenon takes place in our Body-Mind framework. When we get the first glimpse of the Energy, we instinctively claim it as "my" Energy. We are unaware of the true nature of the Energy or her relationship to the Consciousness. Even though we know that the Consciousness exists in our body somewhere, we are not aware of its true nature. We do not know if the Consciousness is powerful enough to take over our identity and the whole being. We have encountered nothing like that before and we will not admit its presence or power with no proof.

Eventually, the Ahamkara realizes the true nature of the universal Energy, and it becomes devoted to it. The Ahamkara eventually recognizes that the universal Energy is operating within our Body-Mind framework. It also finds out that this Energy is considerably more superior to itself; the mind itself depends on the Energy. The Ahamkara sees the same Energy is circulating through its body and nervous system. It realizes that the Energy can solve the problems of the nervous system or it can wreak havoc on it. Once it realizes that the Energy is the super-user of the Body-Mind, it slackens its hold of the Energy. This loosening of the grip releases an abundance of Energy because our mind does not consume it for driving its thought. The Energy travels from the Muladhara Chakra to the Sahasrara through the other Chakras in between. When it enters the Sahasrara, we notice a higher level

of the Consciousness and a finer level of awareness set in. Now, the Ahamkara can see its reality and of the Energy. It understands that it is just a minor component of the Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes. The Ahamkara then seeks its elimination at the hands of the Consciousness, but this takes place at a later stage.

Note that these are dynamic and simultaneous processes, not a fixed structure. When you see the Energy ascend to the Sahasrara, you also notice the Consciousness descend all over the body. This concept is the basic plot of Ramayana, where sage Valmiki depicts the Consciousness as Shri Ram. Ramayana is a description of numerous events that happen within us that lead us ultimately to the higher levels of the Consciousness.

Hanumana Finds Sita in Lanka

After Jambavan reminding Hanumana about his powers, Hanumana jumped over the ocean toward Lanka. It refers to the Prana in our body jumping toward the Muladhara Chakra. We will examine those details in the Chakra section. In this chapter, we will look at what happens after Hanumana lands in Lanka.

Verse 5-2-1 tells us the city of Lanka is in Mt. Trikuta. Trikuta translates into “mountain with three peaks.” It would be interesting to find out if Sri Lanka, the country, has a mountain range with three peaks big enough to build an enormous city on one peak. In terms of Samkhya-Yoga, the three peaks reference is unmistakable. It refers to the three Guna(s) – Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva. It also means that in Lanka, we will find demons having Rajas, Tamas, or Sattva Guna. The general impression about Ravana’s Lanka is that since it was a city of demons, only evil demons inhabited it. Sage Valmiki tells us that there were good demons in Lanka.

Hanumana enters Lanka at midnight. It is sensible for a spy to enter enemy territory at midnight. When Hanumana is searching for Sita in Lanka, we get the picture of Lanka at midnight and its nightlife. Hanumana sees a magnificent and wealthy city, with demons engaged in diverse kinds of activities. Verse 5-4-13 describes some demons doing spiritual activities, which means Lanka has Sattva Guna people too.

First, Hanumana searches for Sita in the golden palace of Ravana. In these chapters, we get the description of the beauty of Ravana’s palace and the abundance of food and liquor in it. **Verse 5-9-2 mentions the dimensions of Ravana’s palace, which looks like a perfect square.** It is half a unit wide, half a unit long,

and one unit prominent place made from gold. **Compare it with a yellow colored square in the image of the Muladhara Chakra.** We can see the resemblance.

No splendors of Ravana's palace affect Hanumana. However, when he does not find Sita in Ravana's palace, he almost loses his mind and imagines the terrible consequences of not finding Sita. In verse 5-13-37, Lord Hanumana imagines that if he does not find Sita, it will destroy both Ayodhya and Kishkindha. Now we know that these cities represent part of our body. If the Prana cannot reach our Energy in the Muladhara Chakra, further possibilities of spiritual growth cease at that moment.

By the time Hanumana comes to the Ashok garden, the sun is about to rise. Sage Valmiki deliberately times his visit for this hour. Ashok means "no-sadness."

Note that sage Valmiki names this section Sundara-Kanda. It means, "The Section of Beauty." It is an exceptional section name. All other section names refer to either a location or a significant activity. For example, events presented in the sections of Ayodhya or Kishkindha happen in those cities. The sections of Childhood Pastimes or the War describe activities related to those periods. Why does sage Valmiki deviate from this pattern? Why does he call it the "Section of Beauty"? The beauty he is referring to cannot be about Sita's beauty as she is in captivity, hungry, and wearing torn clothes. It could not be the beauty of the city of Lanka, as Hanumana burns major parts of the city in this section.

Sage Valmiki is not talking about the beauty of a place or a person. He is referring to the beauty of a particular moment in time. He named this section after the moment, in which Hanumana sees Sita for the first time. **The moment Lord Hanumana first sees Sita is undoubtedly the most beautiful moment of Ramayana. At this moment, the Prana comes in contact with the Energy.** For the first time, we understand and trust the framework of Yoga. Our blind search for the right path of spirituality ends here and a clear path of Yoga is visible for us. This event opens up further possibilities of going toward higher Consciousness. Is it not a beautiful moment?

Do you remember the beginning of Ramayana, when the female bird was in terrible agony over separation from the male bird? This agony is the same agony Sita, representing the Energy, feels over the separation from Shri Ram, representing the Consciousness. Sage Valmiki compares the anguish of Sita to that of a separated female bird in verse 5-16-30. It says, "Sita was in the same pitiable condition as a female Chakrawak bird, which has lost her companion male bird."

In his deeply compassionate nature, sage Valmiki shows us a way to unite these lovebirds in our body. When we do a Pranayama in the proper manner, with directions from a guru, the Prana can find the Energy locked up in the Muladhara Chakra. Sage Valmiki depicts it as Hanumana finding Sita in Lanka. The moment the Hanumana, representing Prana, discovers the Sita representing Energy, the days of agony and suffering are over for Sita, the Energy. The countdown to the annihilation of the Ahamkara represented by Ravana begins.

Hanumana Addresses Sita as Mother

Hanumana addressed Sita as mother, depicting mother-child relationship. **Since the Prana is a form of Energy, they closely relate to each other. Prana feels similar to the Energy. They both have a throbbing, pulsating quality. However, the Prana does not have the heat that is associated with the Energy.**

Ravana and Mandodari Give Birth to Indrajit

According to Samkhya, the Ahamkara and the rationalizing intellect / Buddhi collectively create the mind. By substitution of words, we get: **Ravana (the Ahamkara) and Mandodari (the rationalizing intellect) gave birth to (create) Indrajit (the mind).**

Indrajit as the mind fits perfectly with the character of Indrajit. **Mind can control the sense organs**, which is why his name means “one who won Indra.” Indra represents sense organs. The word Indra comes from Indriya, which means sense organs.

A mind creates desires, and they bind advanced yogi. In Ramayana, Indrajit uses a network of arrows, which turn into poisonous snakes against Shri Ram and bind Shri Ram.

Mind can produce illusions and deceive a yogi. In Ramayana, Indrajit created an illusionary image of Sita and killed her in front of Shri Ram.

In Ramayana, Laxmana killed Indrajit. Laxmana 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.**

Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana, and Shri Ram

Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishana are brothers, but there is a substantial difference in their nature. Their attitudes, judgments, and activities (or the absence of them), and the eventual results of their actions vary immensely.

Ravana, whom we saw earlier as the personification of the Ahamkara, is highly active. His highly active nature is used by sage Valmiki to explain what Rajas Guna nature is. Sage Valmiki exaggerated it for storytelling. The Rajas Guna **nature is present in everyone and is responsible for many activities. This force of nature forces us into action, whether physical or mental.** By itself, it does not know any limits or does not control itself. Rajas Guna dominated person is always involved in one action after another, possibly in numerous actions at the same time.

Kumbhakarna is an exaggerated illustration of Tamas Guna. He eats for six months and sleeps for the remaining six months. It requires an army of men just to wake him up. **Tamas Guna is characterized by inertia. It too is present in everyone.** A Tamas Guna dominated person has an impulse of overeating, oversleeping, and overindulgence in sensual gratifications. This person defies the call of action. He can find many reasons for not doing any action or justify his inaction.

Both Ravana and Kumbhakarna, token of Rajas and Tamas Guna, battle Shri Ram. However strong and brave they are, they are finally defeated by Shri Ram. **If you study the Yuddha-Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana of Lanka carefully, Shri Ram kills only two main enemy warriors.** It is surprising for us to read that the mightiest warrior of all spends most of his time just overlooking the war. Shri Ram kills Kumbhakarna in verse 6-67-170, and kills Ravana in verse 6-108-22; so, his total kill in the war is just two. Shri Ram also kills Makaraksha, the son of Khara, in verse 6-79-39, but Makaraksha is not a major fighter. **Considering that it is Shri Ram's war to rescue his wife, and that he is the most powerful warrior amongst all, we think he would be in the frontline, doing the maximum harm to the enemy. However, sage Valmiki gives us a different picture where Shri Ram kills only two of the enemy warriors.**

Hanumana is the top ace of the battle because his total kill of named demon warriors exceeds that of the others. Everyone kills a handful of major, and countless minor demons. However, Shri Ram kills only two times, letting others fight his war. **There is nothing in the story to show that Shri Ram kills even a single minor**

demon in this battle, not even by mistake. It implies that for Shri Ram, Kumbhakarna, and Ravana are the only enemies worth fighting.

Rajas and Tamas Guna(s) are hurdles on the path of the higher Consciousness, but they are ultimately overpowered by it. They do not lead us to the Consciousness; the Consciousness is separate from them and will always remain above their reach.

So, what or who will lead us to the Consciousness? Sage Valmiki provides an answer to this. He sets up the character of Vibhishana, another brother of Ravana. The Sanskrit word Vibhishana means "not horrible." Like Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana too advises Ravana to return Sita to Shri Ram. Unlike Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana deserts Ravana's camp and joins Shri Ram's side. Vibhishana stands for Sattva Guna and seeks God or Consciousness. Unlike the two other tendencies of nature, this one tries to balance all of them together.

After the defeat of Ravana, Shri Ram hands over Lanka to Vibhishana and returns to Ayodhya. Note that Shri Ram does not end up ruling Lanka. He honors Vibhishana as a dear friend. Shri Ram does not identify himself with any of these three brothers. He detaches himself from Vibhishana, who fought with Shri Ram, against his own brothers.

Shri Ram defeats Rajas Guna, but does not take its position; he neutralizes Tamas Guna, but does not become lazy. He befriends Sattva Guna, uses it, and honors it, but steps away from it. The Consciousness is not the same as three qualities of nature. It is "above and beyond" them and will always remain that way. The three Guna(s) and their relationship to the Consciousness are the most important discoveries of Yoga. No other discovery of Yoga's way of life comes close to this one in its importance. No other document explains these qualities in such an easy to understand manner.

Shri Ram, Jatayu, and Ravana: Their Views of Their Lineages

Shri Ram, Jatayu, and Ravana contrasting characters, with almost nothing in common. It is interesting to see how they see themselves and how sage Valmiki describes their lineage. **By comparing and contrasting their views of their lineages, we get valuable insights into their inherent nature.**

Sage Valmiki writes verses and verses giving ancestry information of Shri Ram. He describes a very long father-son list for Shri Ram from verse 1-70-20 to 1-70-42. All we can remember is that Shri Ram's family begins with Lord Brahma and

continues up to Shri Ram. **Shri Ram stands for the higher Consciousness, so his family begins with Lord Brahma/the Universal Consciousness.** Note that Lord Brahma is the creator of the entire creation, so every family starts with Lord Brahma.

When Jatayu meets Shri Ram, he narrates his lineage. His family too begins with Lord Brahma. **Unlike Shri Ram's patriarchal lineage, Jatayu has a matriarchal family tree. Each female in this mother-daughter chain stands for the Energy. We learn that from this mother-daughter chain, every kind of animal is born.** Humans, monkeys, eagles, horses, etc. all have come out of this family tree. A female represents each branch of this family tree. **The story of Jatayu's family tree explains how the universal Energy created various names and forms. Here the form stands for a particular species, and the name stands for the name of a person or animal.**

Finally, we see Ravana's lineage in verse 3-47-26, when he appears to abduct Sita. He introduces himself as "I am Ravana, Lord of demons". He does not mention his family or his ancestors. **Even though he is the great grandson of Lord Brahma, he does not refer to that relation. Ravana stands for the Ahamkara and always stands alone, disconnected from the others.**

LAYER 3: SAFEGUARDS FOR A SPIRITUAL ASPIRANTS

Here we will study the most important layer – the safeguards for spiritual aspirants.

Tataka

The Tataka story is Shri Ram's very first fight against demons. At the time in the story, Shri Ram is a young boy. He had no experience of any battle, let alone of fighting with a demon. King Dasharatha pleads with sage Vishwamitra not to seek Shri Ram's help in warding off demons. However, sage Vishwamitra insists on taking Shri Ram's protection.

Sage Vishwamitra leads Shri Ram directly to a dense jungle, where Tataka, a powerful and cruel female demon, lives. A fight between Tataka and Shri Ram is a challenge and a test for Shri Ram. If Shri Ram passes the test, Vishwamitra will give him powerful weapons.

Just as demon Ravana represents our Ahamkara, the demon Tataka must represent something within us. The clue about demon Tataka's nature, regarding our body, comes from a story related to the jungle in which she lives.

Indra had once washed away his bad habits of uncleanness and excessive eating in that area, resulting in that part of the land becoming polluted. Therefore, in verse 1-24-22, Indra blesses that area with an abundance of resources, plants, and animals. However, it remained uninhabited by humans for a long time, and thus turned into a dense forest. Hence, we read in the verses 1-24-12 through 1-24-15 that the forest is atypical, horrendous, and impenetrable.

Indra stands for “indriya,” which means “sense organs.” Uncleanness and excessive eating are body-related bad habits; a healthy person stays away from them. The description of the jungle is sage Valmiki's way of describing the effect of bad habits of uncleanness and overeating or people having these bad habits. Thus, sage Valmiki is suggesting that a spiritual aspirant needs to control excessive eating, and must maintain hygiene of body.

It is the first challenge and the test for a Yogi. If a person meets these conditions, then further possibilities of his spiritual progress will open up. Many Yoga books document Yoga's insistence on hygiene. Physical cleanliness is the first step of Yoga. In addition, all Yoga books advise that a spiritual aspirant should limit food intake and avoid overindulgence in eating.

Vishwamitra

There are two entirely distinct personalities of sage Vishwamitra. The first one is of a king. The second is that of a highest-level sage or a brahma-rishi. Of these two personalities, only the first one applies to us as a warning sign.

In his first personality, he is a loving king, and a mighty warrior. He rules a prosperous kingdom; yet, he is not satisfied. He creates an even bigger army than before and marches it all around the earth, trying to be the most powerful king.

On his march, he comes to the hermitage of sage Vashistha, who offers sufficient food for his entire army. Vishwamitra comes to know that the secret of sage Vashistha's generosity is a cow named Shabala. According to verse 1-52-20, this cow is Kamadhenu, meaning she can fulfill any wish of her master. Vishwamitra becomes greedy and tries to take control of the Kamadhenu cow by bartering. When all attempts fail, he declares war on sage Vashistha. The cow produces an even bigger

army for sage Vashistha, which then annihilates the army of Vishwamitra. Sage Vashistha renders the rest of the army of king Vishwamitra to ashes just by the sound "hum." Vishwamitra loses his sons and the entire force. He feels disgraced and distressed. After a humiliating defeat, Vishwamitra realizes that sage Vashistha is superior to him. Vishwamitra plans to beat sage Vashistha at his own game - the power of Energy.

Vishwamitra gives up his kingdom, becomes a sage, and prays to Shiva for an extended time. Shiva, who is also the god of warfare, gives him many powerful weapons. Now, Vishwamitra is ready to take his revenge; he fires all the weapons on sage Vashistha right away. When those weapons do not work on sage Vashistha, he goes back to praying to gain more weapons.

After that event, we read the story of Trishanku, who wants to go to heaven in his human body and Vishwamitra helped him. Even in this story, we see that Vishwamitra is angry and an egoistic sage. Trishanku's quest fails and Vishwamitra goes back to praying to get more powers. Lord Brahma tells Vishwamitra to control his senses better, if he wants to call himself a highest-level sage. It takes long and hard prayers for him to establish control over his senses, but when he does this, he becomes a highest-level sage, a Brahma-rishi.

We can relate to the story of the first personality of Vishwamitra. It is a classic example of praying to God for benefits. As the story suggests, our desire to get more and more in life is the real driver behind all our activities. Even when we change the **paradigm, similar to Vishwamitra, this drive does not stop.** Earlier Vishwamitra was a king, waging wars for expanding the kingdom, and he tried to take Kamadhenu by force. **He gave up the kingdom to become a sage, but his anger, ego, and jealousy remained the same as before.** Previously, he was running toward, say, the north. Realizing that the south is even more powerful, he started running toward the south. **He changed the direction, but inside, he and his running continued to be the same.**

This story is an important warning sign, and sage Valmiki posts it at the very beginning of the road. He makes us aware of the danger that a change of direction or paradigm does not lead us anywhere. Countless people have made this mistake and taken the wrong turn on this slippery road. Unable to control their senses, they gave up the household life and took up a solitary life. That did not help them. Similar to Vishwamitra, their ego, anger, and senses went with them in

their solitary life. Previously, it was easy for them to see their faults. In solitary life, no one challenges them. **Therefore, sage Valmiki suggests we need to change ourselves. The genuine change needs to happen inside of us. A change of physical location or directions is irrelevant.**

Trishanku

The story of Trishanku is yet another warning sign that comes right after Shri Ram's journey begins. We saw the king Vishwamitra's story as a warning; Trishanku's story is a continuation of the same warning.

We identify ourselves with our body. Our body represents our identity. Associating ourselves with the body means making efforts to satisfy its desires for hunger, sleep, and other things. There is nothing wrong with having desires, and we see in Ramayana that great sages are married and engage in everyday activities.

The problem comes when the Ahamkara, the sense of I that separates us from the others, drives our actions with greed and hatred. In the story of Trishanku, he wants to go to heaven with his body, which means his sense of identity. His problem is that he is greedy; he wants to keep his bodily identity, attachments, and desires as-is and go to heaven at the same time.

As per sage Valmiki, for anyone to go to heaven, he or she must meet one of the two conditions. The first condition is the person must give up bodily attachments and the ego. The second condition is this person must have a lot of accumulated Energy. If a person cannot meet these conditions, death is the only option for him. Many characters, like king Dasharatha, went to heaven only after their death. However, Trishanku is not ready to meet the conditions. He is smart, but lazy to do his hard work for going to heaven. So, he figures out an easy way to achieve his desires. He asks sage Vashistha and his sons for help, but that does not work, and he ends up with a deformed body.

Trishanku – a former king – knows that sage Vishwamitra considers sage Vashistha as an archenemy and uses this animosity of Vishwamitra to his advantage. He butters up Vishwamitra, who is full of pride, anger, and arrogance, and convinces him to send him to heaven by giving him Energy. Vishwamitra has great powers, but he has not yet crossed the ultimate stage of becoming a Brahma-rishi. At this point of time, Vishwamitra is just an arrogant and prideful person with an exorbitant amount of Energy accumulated from doing long austerities. Trishanku is getting a

free ride from Vishwamitra by using the accumulated Energy of Vishwamitra to go to heaven with his body.

However, going to heaven with the body is not allowed. Hence, Indra, the ruler of heaven, blocks Trishanku's upward path. If we replace Indra with Indriya, meaning sense organs, we see that Trishanku's senses and desires block his path. Thus, he is badly stuck in the middle. Neither can he go to heaven with his body, nor can he come back on the earth, as Vishwamitra will not allow that to happen. The only way out for him is to give up his identity and desires. Then, he is free to go up to heaven.

Note the meaning of the name Trishanku. "Tri" means "three" and "shanku" probably means "hanging from." Therefore, his name translates into "hanging from three worlds." The story shows him hanging between two worlds – the earth and heaven. That means that his name should have been Dwishanku – "hanging from two worlds." So, what is the third world sage Valmiki might refer to?

We know that all the worlds are within us, so we need to search deeper within ourselves. Let us not think of Trishanku as someone outside our body, as he too represents us. Our imagination of heaven makes us greedy, and we too would like to go to heaven as-is. In sage Valmiki's world, heaven is a temporary state of Consciousness, which is relatively higher than our normal state. This state is not to be confused with the highest state of Consciousness, which is termed as Brahma-Loka or Lord Brahma's abode.

Indra is the ruler of this temporary state (that is, the heaven), in which all needs, wishes, and desires are fulfilled instantaneously. The existence of desires, their satisfaction, and the connection to senses represent that heaven is an intermediate state. People believe if a person does many good deeds in his lifetime, then he goes to heaven after death and enjoys the fruits of his actions for some time. Once the power of his accumulated good deeds is over, he comes back to the earth and begins a new cycle of birth.

Going to heaven requires a substantial amount of Energy. We do not have it, and will not make the efforts to get it. If we were to make efforts to get Energy, we would lose our false identity or the Ahamkara in the process. The simple way out is to get help from an external source – a person who has the gained Energy and is ready to give it to us. If someone transfers such an enormous amount of Energy to

us, it would easily rise to the top of the crown of our head, and then, we can be in a higher state for some time.

Note that the Energy transfer from the other person has to occur at the base of the spine, the Muladhara Chakra. The additional Energy from the outside merges with our Energy at the Muladhara Chakra and collectively both energies try to rise above as one. Vishwamitra is the example of an external person who is transferring his Energy to Trishanku/us. As per the laws of Energy, this is a valid transfer. However, it may not work if Trishanku/we are not ready. Our mind is stuck in desires or senses; we cannot drop our Ahamkara and do not let ourselves go. In the final countdown, the desire of senses wins over the force of Energy that is helping us to move higher. The Energy cannot travel upwards because the Nadi(s) are blocked because of desires. The result is that the Energy cannot complete its work and thus runs havoc in the body and the mind.

We wondered what the three worlds mentioned in Trishanku's name were and saw that he could not gain access to the temporary higher state. Because of the Energy's abnormal patterns in Trishanku's body, he is in tremendous pain. In addition, his mind is going crazy, so much so, that he is close to madness. The body, the mind, and the temporary higher state are the three worlds his name refers to. If he does not achieve the aim of being in a higher state of Consciousness, he/we lose the body and the mind too. In such a case, the Energy may run downwards from the base of the spine toward the legs, which causes pains in the legs. A documented result of this half-hearted attempt to raise the Energy to the crown is severe pain in the legs.

The only way out from this torturous condition is to sever our ties with the desires that bind us. Once we let go of desires, the blockages in the Nadi(s) open up automatically, and the Energy can go upwards. **Trishanku's story is a warning sign for both the disciple and his guru not to seek or initiate Energy transfer casually. When the disciple is ready to let go of his desires, the Ahamkara, and the bodily attachments, only then the guru should initiate Energy transfer.**

Unnamed Sages, who Direct Shri Ram into Dense Jungle

In verse 2-116-13, the unnamed sages tell Shri Ram, since the time he came to this side of the jungle, the demons have been ill treating them. In verses 2-

116-10 through 19, we read that even demon Khara has started to trouble sages, which shows that earlier Khara was not a troublemaker.

These verses show the correlation between Shri Ram's coming to Mt. Chitrakuta and the demons start to trouble the unnamed sages. **This correlation, as seen by the unnamed sages, irrespective of its correctness, puts the responsibility to protect them on Shri Ram's shoulders.**

The unnamed ascetics and sages are part of our Body-Mind processes, but they seem to play a small part. They refer to our wishes, intentions, and attempts to walk the path of spirituality, to do well, or to search for God. The demons that trouble them, represent our limitations or desires related to our Ahamkara. Thus, these sages need and deserve protection from Shri Ram/the Consciousness, because only the Consciousness can keep the Ahamkara in check.

In verse 2-119-20 and many other verses, we read that the unnamed sages direct Shri Ram southward, deeper in the jungle, which leads Shri Ram straight into demon Viradha's cruel hands.

Shri Ram's entry into the jungle was not his choice; it was his father's wish and order. When he entered the jungle, the demons felt threatened by his mere presence and started the trouble. Thus, to put out the fire started by the demons and to protect the sages, Shri Ram enters deeper into the jungle.

The question, which naturally comes to the mind is why the demons start troubling the ascetics and sages suddenly? Sage Valmiki does not offer the demon side of view related to this question in Ramayana, as he sees no need for it. **However, we are egoistic people, so we are much closer to the demon side, which helps us to understand the demon side of view.**

Before this point in the story, Ahamkara has driven our body and mind almost to the level of insanity. The higher Consciousness we occasionally get from doing Yoga, brings calming sensations to the over-agitated body-mind and thus brings some sense of sanity. **Precisely because of the newly arrived sanity, the level of pre-existing insanity comes to our attention.**

Many people get demoralized after seeing that they have almost no control over their desires related to Ahamkara. Think of it in this way - when someone is insane, the person is not even aware that he is insane. **Only when some sense of sanity is present does the person realize his insanity. Sage Valmiki suggests not to be afraid of this insanity, and to seek protection from the higher**

Consciousness. When such insanity is exposed, it becomes the job of the Consciousness to take action to fix the problem.

Viradha

To understand demon Viradha, we need to read his story in the middle and then read it from start to end. Somewhere in the middle of two chapters devoted to Viradha, we get a small one-liner that explains his character.

Viradha was a nice guy before he became a demon. He used to work for Kuber, the god of wealth, and we can guess that he had a great life going on for him. He was obsessed with a beautiful girl called Rambha, but there is no mention that Rambha was interested in him. It looks like a one-sided affair, and probably he spent his time daydreaming about being with Rambha.

So far, everything was okay, and no one seemed to have any problem with Viradha or his crush on Rambha. However, things changed drastically when he failed to do his duty, probably unintentionally. **The story mentions one-line – while thinking about Rambha, he failed to perform his duty.** It does not give any details about his duty or how he failed to do it or how often it happened.

Dereliction of duty is a terrible sin in sage Valmiki's world. Thus, Kuber cursed Viradha to be reborn as a terrible demon. **Looking at this from the opposite side, we can say a person with an intense obsession becomes a demon himself.**

Viradha has a boon that no weapon can kill him and that only Shri Ram can kill him. By now, we know these strange boons hide a reality. We will see it shortly.

When Viradha sees Sita in the jungle, he throws a cheesy line at her and calls her as "the woman with the best waist". He is attracted to her and right away declares that he wants to marry her. After finding out that Sita would not marry him willingly, he abducts her. This abduction does not surprise us, as we know his character.

When Viradha fights with Shri Ram, he cannot recognize him. He picks Shri Ram and Laxmana up and carries them deep in the jungle; note that Shri Ram intentionally let him do that.

Finally, Shri Ram and Laxmana cut off his hands. Realizing that Viradha will not die from a weapon, they dig a pit and drop Viradha into the pit. Only when Viradha is in the pit does he realize the actual identity of Shri Ram. He then advises Shri Ram to go southwards to the hermitage of sage Sharabhanga.

In terms of our Body-Mind processes, we can easily identify the Viradha-like tendencies to be the sex obsession in our mind. With Viradha's boon that he will not die from a weapon, sage Valmiki suggests that the force does not work on sex obsession. Modern psychology has already taught us that suppression of sexual desires by force only reinforces them and strengthens them.

Sage Valmiki's suggestion is that we must not deny their existence and should not fight them by using force. The best way to deal with them is not to act on these obsessions and not give any attention to them. Sage Valmiki makes this suggestion by showing Shri Ram and Laxmana as cutting off both hands of Viradha, and burying him in a pit, thus removing him from sight.

The worst thing, which can happen to the spiritual aspirant, is Viradha-like tendencies not being removed properly, which allows them to hide safely for a long time. It means that eventually (probably later in a person's life), this obsession will show up again. The person might be much older and may not have the physical strength to act upon this type of desire to satisfy him. Without the strength of body, there is no way to satisfy sexual desires, and a person remains obsessed with them forever.

Kabandha

In verses 3-69-15 through 17, we read that demon Ayomukhi attacks Laxmana and Laxmana cuts off her nose and ears. This story reminds us of demon Shurpanakha, and thus, we can call it a duplication of the Shurpanakha episode.

In verse 3-36-29, a big demon, Kabandha, who is the brother of demon Ayomukhi, appears in front of Shri Ram and Laxmana. He has no neck or head, and his mouth is on his chest. He has only one blazing red eye above his mouth. He has two arms that stretch very long. He grabs anything that has life and hauls it into his mouth.

Kabandha grabs Shri Ram and Laxmana, which is a duplication of Viradha grabbing them. In verse 3-70-8, we read that Shri Ram and Laxmana cutoff Kabandha's hands, just as in the Viradha story. Like Viradha's story, there is an interesting story of why Kabandha became a demon, and it explains his character.

Originally, Kabandha was in heaven and had the boon of a long life from Lord Brahma. Since he had the boon of a long life, he thought Indra could not harm him. Therefore, verse 3-71-8, 9 tells us he got into a fight with Indra, possibly for the

throne of heaven. That, however, turned out to be a miscalculation and Indra struck Kabandha with a thunderbolt, making Kabandha disfigured and a demon.

The full description of greedy Kabandha comes from sage Valmiki's portrayal of him. Using root "bandh" which means, "limits" his name sounds like "one who recognizes no limits." **Kabandha is a personification of greed itself. He has arms that stretch very long, and he uses them only to collect food. He has no head or neck, but an enormous stomach, which can gobble up almost anything. With his one infernal, red eye, Kabandha sees nothing except his object of desire, food. One eye represents the imbalanced outlook of a greedy person, who sees only what interests him.**

The story tells us that Shri Ram and Laxmana cutoff Kabandha's hand, following which Kabandha asks Shri Ram to incinerate him. Sage Valmiki's prescription for greed is not only to act on it but also to remove it firmly, leaving no trace of it.

Ravana gets a Warning

In chapter 3-35, verse 27 onwards, Ravana gets a warning, as he is about to perform a wrong action of abducting Sita. Ravana sees a huge Banyan tree, and he remembers a story about this tree. He remembers that once Garuda, the divine eagle, rapidly descended toward this Banyan tree to eat his prey. Garuda had two prey in his claws – an elephant and a giant tortoise. Because of the rapid descent of Garuda, an enormous tree branch split and began to fall. There were many sages praying to god, sitting on that branch. To prevent the sages from falling, Garuda caught the branch in his beak mid-air, while it was still falling down. Garuda gave the sages enough time to leave the branch safely. Then, Garuda took off, with the prey in one claw and the branch in the other. In verse 3-35-32, we read that Garuda ate his prey mid-air, and then threw the branch down on a tribal community called "Nishad". The community was engaged solely in sensual pleasures, and Garuda destroyed it by dropping a huge branch on them.

The divine eagle or Garuda is a vehicle of Lord Vishnu; therefore, Garuda indirectly refers to Lord Vishnu. We know that sage Valmiki duplicates everything in Ramayana. We also know that in the end, Shri Ram killed Ravana and Kumbhakarna and protected sages from demons. These events need to be duplicated; therefore, something similar has to happen in the story. Garuda killing an elephant and a huge tortoise and saving sages provide this duplication. The

elephant can be a reference to the raw power like that of Ravana. The tortoise can be a reference to lazy Kumbhakarna. Assuming that these two were involved in some kind of wrong activity, Garuda ate them.

Garuda eating his prey (destruction of the evil) and helping the sages (protection of the good) is the precise function of Lord Vishnu and a one-line description of Ramayana itself. We see that Ravana got what he needed the most – a warning sign that Lord Vishnu will act to destroy evil. Nevertheless, Ravana failed to recognize the warning, nor paid heed to it, and goes ahead with his plan to abduct Sita.

Vali and Sugriva

Hanumana, as the Prana, connects us to our breath. Thus, logically, we conclude that he relates to the Anahata Chakra. Hanumana is a minister of Sugriva. Hence, the question that comes to the mind is: What process do Vali and Sugriva represent in the human Body-Mind? Why did Shri Ram kill Vali in an odd manner?

Sage Valmiki writes the entire Kanda (section) about the events in Kishkindha, the capital city of the Monkey Empire. Here we meet two brothers – the powerful and strong-minded monkey king, Vali and his softhearted and weaker brother, Sugriva.

By the time we meet them in the Kishkindha Kanda, their story has already set in, and we get the details about them in flashback, with Sugriva explaining his miserable conditions to Shri Ram. Vali suspected that Sugriva wanted to usurp his throne. Therefore, he drove him out of Kishkindha, but forced Sugriva's wife, Ruma, to stay behind with him. Sugriva attempted to fight back and challenge Vali multiple times, but failed miserably. Vali drove poor Sugriva to the end of the world in all four directions. Sugriva could not find a safe-haven, where he could escape from the wrath of Vali. Luckily, for Sugriva, Vali had a curse that he cannot enter a specific region near Pampa Lake. Shielding behind this curse, Sugriva spent his time in exile with a handful of ministers. At this point of the story, Hanumana, as a minister of Sugriva, arranged a meeting of Shri Ram and Sugriva near the Pampa Lake region.

The Pampa Lake area is one of the best places described in Ramayana, and poetic sage Valmiki finds a perfect place to write poetry about this region. In the next section where we will go verse by verse, we see that most of the poetry is about air, birds, wind, passion, and love. Unmistakably, this place has to be the Anahata

Chakra, which has Air as its element. The heart is the place where air and love related matters come together. We see that there are over 200 poetic verses in these chapters. Almost all verses refer to the Anahata Chakra in some way.

Vali is a son of Indra, and Sugriva is a son of Sun – a minister of Indra. Sugriva is strong, but not as strong as Vali. Vali represents raw, uncontrollable power; replacing V with B in his name, we get “Bali,” which means “a powerful one.” **On other hand, “Sugriva” translates into “tamed horse,” which means he represents a power that can be used for a meaningful purpose.**

Sage Valmiki adds many clues to emphasize the respective nature of these two brothers. Vali is headstrong, and he does not keep his promises. Let us see some examples that show his nature. The first example refers to when Vali tells Sugriva that he is going inside a cave to kill some demon and asks Sugriva to wait outside for seven days. Instead of killing just one demon, Vali enters deep into the cave and ends up killing many of them, but misses his deadline of seven days. The second example of Vali’s uncontrollable nature can be seen when Vali promises his wife, Tara, that he will fight Sugriva to teach him a lesson, not to kill him. Still, when the battle between these two starts, Vali forgets his promise and tries to kill Sugriva.

The proof of Sugriva’s feminine/soft nature comes when Shri Ram kills Vali. Shri Ram kills Vali for Sugriva, and yet, Sugriva cries more than Vali’s wife does. In verse 4-24-23, he even plans to enter the funeral pyre because of his inability to bear the grief of his brother’s death.

Based on these instances, we conclude that Vali represents uncontrollable raw power, and that is the reason Shri Ram removes him. Sugriva is much more controllable and softhearted; this “tamed horse” is useful to Shri Ram for his mission.

As the story goes, Shri Ram asks Sugriva to challenge Vali and hides in the bushes. When Vali is busy fighting Sugriva, Shri Ram shoots an arrow which hits Vali in the back.

It leaves the readers with a big question - why did he shoot Vali in the back from behind the bushes? Why did Shri Ram not offer a duel to Vali, as all warriors are supposed to do?

We can solve this puzzle by referring to a phenomenon in our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness framework. **So far, we know that a higher Consciousness/Shri Ram replaced a powerful ruler/Vali in the heart region**

by a weak ruler/Sugriva. **This change happened by the direct action of a higher Consciousness/Shri Ram, but it is not visible while performing this action.** Vali being the son of Indra, which stands for “indriya,” symbolizes a powerful heart ruled by the senses. The higher Consciousness replaces this heartless heart by a much softer heart. Precisely the same change happens within us on all the paths of spirituality. Many great saints and spiritual persons serve as examples of this type of change of heart. Earlier they were heartless, so to speak. **Upon becoming spiritual, they become mellow, kinder, and gentler than before. Their heart, which was demanding and selfish, suddenly becomes much softer and compassionate. This change of heart happens when a person sees himself as a spiritual person.**

Sage Valmiki himself was a ruthless killer initially, and only later on became spiritual. His heart became so soft that, unable to bear the grief of the death of a bird, he wrote a poem. **This change definitely happens on the path of Yoga. Replacing Vali with Sugriva is a direct reference to this change-of-the-heart operation. When the higher Consciousness enters the heart region, a strong heart gives way to a soft heart. This soft heart is feminine. It is open to the further cause of the higher Consciousness.**

The story tells us that Sugriva sends millions of monkeys to search for Sita in four directions. Heart is the only part of the body, which transports air/oxygen to all parts of the body. **Here, the millions of monkeys, who, in sage Valmiki’s words, “are always jumping in the air,” stand for the air that circulates in our body.** Sugriva sending the monkeys to all four sides represents the additional air that we take in and circulate in the body.

Further, we read that Sugriva sends Hanumana, who stands for the Prana, in the southern direction. Hanumana’s association with Sugriva removes any doubts that Sugriva relates to the heart, and that Sugriva’s massive search mission relates to the pumping of a lot of air to all parts of the body. For this reason, the first lesson in any Yoga class is about breathing.

Amrita – An Amazing Discovery of Yoga

In verse 4-62-8, we come across a critical concept in Yoga – Amrita. Amrita means "elixir of immortality" or deathlessness. According to Yoga, our body creates this honey-like sweet saliva – possibly the sweetest single drop of liquid one can ever

taste – in the higher states of the Consciousness. Technically, it is not a food, but it reduces the need for food. Amrita acts as a food supplement, allowing a person to sustain and deepen higher levels of the Consciousness.

In terms of human biology, the related body part is the pineal gland. It is located near the center of the brain, between the two hemispheres, at the upper end of the spinal cord. This gland creates a hormone called melatonin, which affects our wake and sleep pattern. A small percentage, probably around 10%, of the total melatonin produced by the body, is in our saliva. Apart from controlling wake and sleep patterns, melatonin works as an anti-aging agent, meaning it keeps us younger. Its sweetness is many times higher than that of a spoonful of sugar. Thus, Yoga's name for sweet saliva – Amrita – has an element of truth in it.

In verse 4-62-8, we read that Sita does not taste any food given by Ravana, as he is a cannibal. Hence, Indra gives her this Amrita through saliva. When Sita learns that the food is from Indra, she accepts it. Indra stands for sense organs; thus, Amrita is not outside food.

Burning of Lanka

Having successfully found Sita, Hanumana accomplishes his job of leading a search party and of being a spy. Now, he should go back quickly and tell this splendid news to the other monkeys. They are waiting for him and have taken no food. Shri Ram is eager to hear this news. There is no need for Hanumana to get into any trouble. It increases the risk of demons catching him. Doing so would only prevent him from reaching back to the monkeys. Just a few chapters ago, he had imagined the destruction of both Ayodhya and Kishkindha, if he failed in his mission. Thus, it is logical for Hanumana to leave Lanka right away after meeting mother Sita. However, we see that he does not leave Lanka, starts a messy fight with the demons, and kills a son of Ravana. The demons capture him and he comes very close to losing his life, which opens up the possibility of additional problems.

As Hanumana is the most important character for us, we need to pay very close attention to all his actions. From one event to another, he surely goes way beyond his assigned mission to find Sita. Let us see the details.

1. Verse 5-41-4 mentions that he wants to influence the battle strategies of the demons by creating fear in their minds.
2. Verse 5-41-7 mentions that Hanumana wants to compare the enemy's strength against that of his army.
3. Verse 5-41-8 mentions that Hanumana wants to impress Ravana in the battlefield.
4. Verse 5-41-9 says he wants to fight Ravana and other demons, so he can know their powers.

Hanumana has already decided that there will be a war and is starting the first combat of the big war. These actions are unnecessary for a spy with a critical secret, known only to him, when everyone is eagerly waiting for him. In theory, Hanumana's assumptions of being able to reach the monkeys, the impending war, or the effort to start it could be mistakes. After killing many demons and even a prince, in verse 5-48-43, Hanumana gets captured by Indrajit when the latter uses a divine weapon. There again, we see a change in his position.

1. In verse 5-48-44, Hanumana decides that he will be a messenger of Shri Ram to Ravana and wants a dialog with Ravana. There are no such instructions from Shri Ram to Hanumana. Instead, the instructions from Sugriva were to report back as quickly as possible.
2. In chapters 5-49, 50 and 51, Hanumana takes up the role of a messenger of Shri Ram
3. In verse 5-50-15, he says that he killed the demons in self-defense. However, destroying Ashok garden was his cold and calculated move to attract the demons towards him, so he could test their strength as mentioned in verse 5-41-6.

We need to understand why Hanumana takes this path when the stakes are high. In verse 5-51-36, Hanumana warns Ravana that Lanka would burn from the heat radiated from Sita. These words suggest we can link the burning of Lanka to the power of Sita. Ravana does not pay heed to Hanumana's message and orders him to be killed. Luckily, Vibhishana steps in and convinces Ravana to avoid killing

Hanumana, as he is a messenger, and punishing him by other means instead. Ravana orders to set Hanumana's tail to fire as a punishment.

Sita hears this news and requests the fire to be cool to Hanumana. In verse 5-53-35, Hanumana feels that the fire is not burning him and feels like a snowball instead. Taking advantage of the situation, he assumes a gigantic form, kills the demons and escapes. Then, moving swiftly, he spreads the fire throughout Lanka except for Vibhishana's palace. He burns everything else and kills as many demons as he can.

From being a spy, he becomes the destroyer of Lanka. Thus, we see the logical difficulties associated with Hanumana changing his position from a spy to destroyer. All these logical difficulties are a cover-up for any effects arising from the successful practice of Pranayama. **When the Prana reaches the Muladhara Chakra and comes in contact with the Energy, it activates the dormant Energy. However, the pathway for the Energy to go up the spine is blocked. Thus, the released Energy converts itself into excessive heat, which we can feel at the base of the spine.** It is the same effect which sage Valmiki alludes to in verse 5-51-36 when Hanumana warns Ravana that Lanka would burn from the heat radiated from Sita.

Sage Valmiki uses his wonderful imagination and creates the story of the burning of Lanka. We get caught up in the action sequences and forget the correlation of the action-reaction of Pranayama. Just in case we may forget Sita stands for the Energy, sage Valmiki adds yet another chapter to remind us of it. After burning Lanka, Hanumana worries that he inadvertently burned the mother Sita. When the entire city is burning, the wooded Ashok garden inside the city must have caught fire. Thus, Hanumana again visits Sita to confirm that she is all right. This event is in keeping with the law of duplication in Ramayana. **However, verse 5-55-22 states it loud and clear: fire does not burn fire. This verse firmly entrenches the true nature of Sita in our mind as an Energy.**

Verse 5-57-7 compares Hanumana, while he is coming back, with the moon in the clouds. He is clad in white clothes, showing coolness that comes with the air. The image evoked of him here is in contrast to his previous image, where he is portrayed to have the color of molten gold/ fire that is associated with Sita. In verse 5-57-17, Hanumana touches the molten gold-colored Mt. Mainak. We will see in the next section that this is a reference to the Manipur Chakra.

After returning from Lanka, in verse 5-57-34, Hanumana offers salutations to all the monkeys, but first to Jambavan. **For the first time, and the last time, that sage Valmiki explicitly mentions Jambavan as the guru of Lord Hanumana.**

Madhuvana Event

In chapter 5-60, Angada thinks their search party can invade Lanka all by itself and rescue Sita from Ravana. Note that earlier Angada had refused to take the challenge to jump over the sea. Suddenly, he finds it easy to jump over it, invade Lanka, and kill Ravana and all the other demons in battle. The impulsive burst of power is an indicator of the effect of activation of Energy caused by its contact with Prana. Sage Valmiki writes the Madhuvana chapters to suggest the precautions we need to take and the consequences of not taking those precautions. In this chapter, Angada is planning an attempt to win Sita's freedom from Lanka without Shri Ram. Thoughts of war with Ravana distract Angada, but Jambavan steers Angada toward Shri Ram.

In verse 5-61-8, the monkeys come to Madhuvana, which translates into “garden of honey.” Dadhimukha, which means “yogurt mouth,” is protecting this garden. The Swadhisthana Chakra has a tongue for its sense organ, and its sense is taste. Thus, the above two names are indirect references to this Chakra.

From the verse 5-61-13 to verse 5-62-28, we read about monkeys behaving in a mad, drunk, excited, and disorderly manner. This behavior results from excessive Energy in the Swadhisthana Chakra, which shoots up from the Muladhara Chakra after Kundalini awakening. Note that Jambavan had suggested the monkey go to Shri Ram taking no diversion. However, the monkeys did not follow this suggestion. The Madhuvana story gives us an example of indulging in unnecessary diversions and the effects thereof.

The law of Energy that once it is agitated, Energy needs to be used correctly. Any delay in its proper usage will make it work in the destructive way. Consider a simple example of raising a heavy object like a hammer in the air, thus creating potential Energy. A proper use would be to let it fall and use the potential Energy for productive work. What will happen if we raise the heavy hammer in the air and keep it holding up there? Our hands will soon pain, and a hammer will fall. It may even injure us as it falls. In the Madhuvana chapters, sage Valmiki suggests that a person who has awakened the Kundalini needs to avoid distractions. Without focus,

chakras like the Swadhisthana Chakra may consume the excessive Energy, thus creating cravings for overindulgence in desires associated with this chakra, like sex. Note that when the monkeys were starving while waiting for Hanumana to return, Madhuvana was not there. It is only after Lord Hanumana became successful in his mission that the monkeys could see Madhuvana.

In verse 5-64-20, Angada asks the monkeys to go to Kishkindha, where Shri Ram and Sugriva are waiting for them. Verse 5-64-21 tells us they spring into the air, “made space space-less,” and quickly reach Kishkindha in no time. What happened to all the places which Sugriva had listed for search between Kishkindha and the southern sea? How did they make space-less? If they could jump such a long distance, why couldn’t they all jump to Lanka? We can answer these questions, if you consider the monkeys to be at the Swadhisthana Chakra and going to the Anahata Chakra.

Building a Bridge across the Sea

Verse 6-4-71 tells us the monkey army led by Sugriva, along with Shri Ram and Laxmana, marches day and night in the southern direction, without a halt even for a moment, anywhere. After a long march, in verse 6-4-72, they come to a Mt. Sahya, which is now known as Mt. Sahyadri.

In the previous chapters, we saw that Kishkindha represents the Anahata Chakra, and its location is somewhere near central India. If the monkey army of Shri Ram is to travel from the Anahata Chakra to the Muladhara Chakra, then they will go through the Manipur and Swadhisthana Chakra. Thus, sage Valmiki needs to provide a reference for these centers, but hide them skillfully.

Verse 6-4-78 tells us that royal Mt. Sahya is adorned with a red color. It has red color soil because of minerals. We know that the Manipura Chakra has a red color triangle in the middle. If we invert it, it looks like a red mountain. In several verses, we read about the monkeys drinking honey as they march forward. For example, verse 6-4-93 mentions excessive honey drinking. Honey drinking is a reference to the Swadhisthana Chakra as its sense organ is the tongue. However, this time, there is no disorder, because Shri Ram accompanies the monkeys.

If this reference seems too weak, we have many verses in the next chapter about passion, which show Swadhisthana Chakra activity. From verses 6-5-4 to 6-5-14,

Shri Ram talks about passion and Sita's beauty; we can interpret these verses as references to the Swadhisthana Chakra.

When Vibhishana defects from Ravana and seeks refuge in Shri Ram, we see that Shri Ram takes a rather strange position. In verse 6-18-33, Shri Ram says, "I will give refuge to anyone who says, I am yours, even once, and I will assure that person's safety." This position is unnatural for a military commander toward defectors from the enemy camp. If Vibhishana was a spy of Ravana sent to kill a high-value target, he could have assassinated Shri Ram, Laxman, or Sugriva easily. Of all the war strategies – including defection – humanity has seen, no commander has ever given such a blanket assurance. This statement can be viewed as one coming from Shri Ram, the god, giving assurance of refuge to his devotee and not as one coming from the commander of the invading army.

We saw that Vibhishana represents the Sattva Guna, which has a natural propensity to seek the higher Consciousness. It is no wonder that Shri Ram welcomes Vibhishana warmly, despite everyone else taking an opposite stand. Sage Valmiki adds yet another verse to make it clear to us that Shri Ram does not have a bias toward Vibhishana. In verse 6-18-34, Shri Ram declares, "Whoever it is, even Ravana himself, who seeks refuge in me, I will give assurance of safety to him." This verse reminds us that the higher Consciousness is neutral and gives equal treatment to all the other tendencies of nature like Tamas and Rajas Guna. The difference is that the other tendencies do not seek, but oppose, the higher Consciousness. Eventually, however, the higher Consciousness neutralizes them.

After Vibhishana's coronation as the future king of Lanka, Sugriva, and others ask him the daunting question of ideas to cross the sea to enter Lanka. Note that it is Vibhishana, the Sattva Guna, who suggests in verse 6-19-30 that Shri Ram should ask the sea to suggest a way.

It is interesting to see that as we approach the end of Ramayana, Shri Ram talks and behaves like a god. In verses 6-21-1 to 6-21-7, sage Valmiki creates an image of Shri Ram that increasingly resembles that of Lord Vishnu. In verse 6-22-32, based on sea god's recommendation, Shri Ram destroys the Abhivas community that had done nothing wrong to him at all. As we saw before, this is a duplication of the divine eagle, Garuda, destroying a tribal community, which was engaged in sensual pleasures alone.

Coming back to building the bridge across the sea, verses 6-22-66 to 6-22-70 tell us that Nala builds the bridge in five days – on the first day, he builds 14 Yojana, and on the fifth day, he builds 23 Yojana of the bridge. Each day, he builds more of the bridge than the previous day. Thus, his productivity improves each passing day.

In terms of the physical world, the situation could be opposite. On the first day, the bridge builders can haul the raw material (rocks and trees) from nearby locations, but on the fifth day, they need to haul the raw material over a long distance and over the bridge.

In terms of history, many armies generals have attempted the bridge-building strategy to conquer enemy islands with different levels of success. It is a time-consuming strategy, because the enemy keeps trying to blow up the bridge, and it always results in very high casualties for both sides.

Alexander, The Great built a causeway, a pile of rocks laid at the bottom of the sea, until it rose above water, to capture the island of Tyre of Lebanon. His causeway was 200 feet wide by 18 feet deep. It took several months to construct, and it was hard to drag rocks as the enemy shot arrows at the builders. King Sambhaji too attempted this strategy to capture the Fort of Janjira, near present day Mumbai, by building a causeway. After much time and effort, he built half of the causeway, but had to quit because his military priorities shifted.

In contrast to these examples, verse 6-22-74 tells us that Shri Ram's bridge is 10 Yojana wide and 100 Yojana long, and he builds this bridge in five days. Also, Ravana's side does not stop its progress, which is rather unusual.

In verse 6-22-44, the sea god tells Shri Ram that Nala is the son of Vishwakarma, the divine architect. Nala has a boon from his father; Vishwakarma that Nala will be equal to him in his talent as an architect. Sage Valmiki portrays the son as a continuation of the father, so father and son are the same. Note the meaning of the word Vishwakarma; “vishwa” means “world” (or gigantic) and “karma” means “proper action.” **Thus, sage Valmiki is suggesting that a vast amount of proper action will build the path of the higher Consciousness to the Muladhara Chakra.**

This point is not clear in Valmiki Ramayana, so we will take help from the other versions of Ramayana. In some other versions, the sea god tells Shri Ram that if Nala writes Shri Ram's name on a rock, that rock will float in water. The monkeys and the other animals collect huge rocks and bring them to Nala. He inscribes the

word “Shri Ram” on the rocks, and the monkeys drop them in the sea. The rocks float on the water, thus creating a bridge.

Note that seawater is not steady like pond water. There are continuous and strong currents in the sea. Anything that floats on the seawater, the water currents take them away. Therefore, there is no way to build a bridge with rocks floating on the sea. We know that rocks do not float on water. So, Nala building a bridge on the water with floating rocks represents some other reality.

In verse 6-22-79, Vibhishana, who represents the Sattva Guna, is shown guarding the bridge. Now, we can try to put the pieces of the puzzle together – when we perform proper actions guided and guarded by Sattva Guna, the laws of nature reverse. Instead of our efforts being unsuccessful (rocks sinking in the sea), a favorable situation (bridge of floating rocks) arises. The Sattva Guna initiates and guards these proper actions. Thus, the intention of seeking the higher Consciousness is inherent in these actions. **Sage Valmiki tells us that doing Pranayama and awakening the Kundalini mean little in terms of spiritual progress, unless we accompany proper actions with it and that too for a long time.**

Sage Valmiki’s message and advice to us is simple – dedicate yourself to performing proper action, whatever it may be. After many such actions, Shri Ram/the higher Consciousness will enter Lanka/the Muladhara Chakra. With his entry into Lanka/the Muladhara Chakra, the war for eventual victory over Ravana /the Ahamkara will begin.

Verse 6-31-1 mentions that Shri Ram enters Lanka and camps at Mt. Suvela. Suvela translates into “Good vine, climber, or creeper.” Look at any picture of Ida and Pingala Nadi(s), and you will see them as vines or climbers across the spine going from the Muladhara Chakra to the Aagya Chakra.

In verses 6-31-7 and 8, Ravana asks a sorcerer to produce the likeness of Shri Ram’s face to deceive Sita and to deceive her into marrying him. In his smart way, he calculates that if Sita marries him, Shri Ram will have no moral ground to invade Lanka for someone else’s wife. If Sita would marry Ravana, no one would fight for Shri Ram against Ravana, allowing Ravana to win the war without having to do any fighting. **Now we can see Ravana’s strategy to keep Sita alive and unharmed until this point as she is more valuable alive than dead.**

Luckily, this strategy does not work as Sarama, one of the guards of Sita, tells Sita that Shri Ram is alive. In the next three verses, sage Valmiki evokes the image of Shri Ram as higher Consciousness and that of Sita as the Energy. In verse 6-33-36, Sarama compares Shri Ram with the rising moon which is bright and cool and believed to be the source of all medicines. Note that Shri Ram's given name is Ramachandra. Chandra means the moon; thus, we can easily connect it to the moon which. In Yoga, it is considered as a source of all the medicines.

In verse 6-33-38, Sarama compares Sita with Earth endowed with crops, and with a female snake sloughing off its skin. Note the two interesting points in these analogies. The focus is on how mother earth, with crops, would feel after enough rain. Rain, which gives us water, is a source of life itself. Hence, sage Valmiki intentionally compares the higher Consciousness with rainfall. In addition, there is a reference to movement; both the rising moon and the snake sloughing off its skin show some movement. As the higher Consciousness comes closer to the Muladhara Chakra, it attracts the Energy, thus creating movement of the Energy.

LAYER 4: INDIRECT REFERENCES TO CHAKRAS

Here we will study the way all seven Chakras mentioned Valmiki Ramayana. Before we learn about Chakras in Ramayana, let us review the details of Chakra. Sage Valmiki extensively referred to these details in Valmiki Ramayana. In addition, we need to understand the context in which sage Valmiki used Chakras.

1. From our general knowledge of Yoga, we know that Chakras are associated with Energy. When Energy passes through the Chakra, it activates them. To activate a Chakra, we need a movement of Energy. We need to do Pranayama to get the movement of Energy, which will find and activate the Energy. Then, the Energy travels from Muladhara Chakra to the Sahasrara. There is unites with Consciousness. At that moment, a Yogi experiences Samadhi – a blissful state

of higher Consciousness. **Valmiki Ramayana adds a different dimension to this process – descend of higher Consciousness from Sahasrara to Muladhara Chakra. While descending towards Muladhara Chakra, higher Consciousness neutralizes and calms the excessive tendencies of Chakras, which are activated because of the movement of the Energy.** It neutralizes Ahamkara and frees the Energy locked up in Muladhara Chakra. Then, the Energy and Consciousness ascend to the Sahasrara. Only then the Sahasrara is activated and Yogi experiences the Samadhi.

2. When sage Valmiki mentions the Chakras, he mentions them indirectly – using their color, letter, vehicle, etc. He could not declare them explicitly because the story risks becoming a discourse and it hurts the storytelling. Hence, we do not get the word Chakra from sage Valmiki. However, he explains everything else about it. We need to study Chakra independently and search the way by which Ramayana uses properties of Chakra like color, letter, vehicle etc. Please see the table below for quick reference of Chakras.
3. Chakras play a minor role for sage Valmiki. For him, they are there, and he acknowledges them, but he is more concerned about their effects.

The Chakras are important if you travel along the path of the Energy, which is from the base of the spine toward the crown of the head. However, they do not play any part if you consider the descent of the higher Consciousness from the crown of the head to the rest of the body because it has a neutralizing and calming effect on all excessive tendencies of Chakras.

Considering all above factors, sage Valmiki gave relatively less importance to the Chakras. Now, let us see the references to the Chakras.

Table of Chakras – Details of Chakras and Examples of Use

When the Energy is blocked at a specific point in its path in the body, it creates a Chakra. Thus, a Chakra redirects the Energy into specific parts of the body. The body parts then consume this Energy to provide specific tangible results - the emotions we feel in the mind and effect of energy on the body. For Yoga, the body and mind are the same. There are six main Chakras in our body. Sahasrara, which is

the eventual destination of the Energy, is not a Chakra. Source of Chakra information is from the website given below. I highly recommend readers to visit this website and see the images of Chakras. <http://www.tantra-kundalini.com>

Chakra/ English Name, Location, and Focus	Element, Color, Organs, Sense, Bija-Mantra	Shape, Vehicle, and Deity	Examples of Use in Valmiki Ramayana
Muladhara Chakra/Root Center - It is located at the base of the spine in the coccygeal region. Its focus is survival instincts.	Element: Earth Color: Red Sense Organ: Nose Work Organ: Anus Sense: Smell Sanskrit Letter Sound: Lam	Shape: Square Vehicle: Elephant (representing force, resistance, and stability) Deity: Brahma	Lanka, the name of Ravana's capital, starts from the sound Lam. Ravana's palace is golden rectangle, the same shape as in the middle of the symbol of Muladhara chakra.
Swadhisthana Chakra/ Enjoyment Center - It is located just above the Muladhara Chakra. Its focus is procreation.	Element: Water Color: Orange Sense Organ: Tongue Work Organ: Genitals Sense: Taste Sanskrit Letter Sound: Vam	Shape: Circle Vehicle: Crocodile (representing a surprise attack and forceful grip) Deity: Vishnu is seated on the Garuda.	Several verses mention the ocean as an abode of crocodiles, the name "Surasa" translates into "good taste."
Manipura Chakra/ Power Center - It is located at Solar Plexus. Its focus is power.	Element: Fire Color: Yellow Sense Organ: Eyes	Shape: Triangle Vehicle: Ram (an animal, representing dynamism and endurance)	Manipur Chakra picture has a downward-facing red triangle in the middle and fire as its element. It is referred to as a

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	<p>Work Organ: Feet and legs</p> <p>Sense: Sight</p> <p>Sanskrit Letter</p> <p>Sound: Ram</p>	<p>Deity: Old Shiva sitting on Tiger skin</p>	<p>mountain with a golden hue.</p>
<p>Anahata Chakra/ Heart Center - It is located in the heart. Its focus is love and emotions.</p>	<p>Element: Air</p> <p>Color: Green</p> <p>Sense Organ: Skin</p> <p>Work Organ: Hand</p> <p>Sense: Touch</p> <p>Sanskrit Letter</p> <p>Sound: Yam</p>	<p>Shape: Hexagram</p> <p>Vehicle: Black antelope or gazelle (representing lightness and speed)</p> <p>Deity: Ishana Rudra Shiva sitting on Tiger skin with Kakini Shakti sitting in lotus wearing sky-blue sari</p>	<p>Chapter 4-1 has several verses about Anahata Chakra. For example, in verse 4-1-10, mention of breeze, which refers to air and skin. In this verse, it also refers to the love god.</p>
<p>Vishuddha Chakra/ Throat Center - It is located in the throat region. Its focus is self- expression by vocalization.</p>	<p>Element: Space/Ether</p> <p>Color: Blue</p> <p>Sense Organ: Ears</p> <p>Work Organ: vocal cords</p> <p>Sense: Hearing</p> <p>Sanskrit Letter</p> <p>Sound: Ham</p>	<p>Shape: Crescent</p> <p>Vehicle: Airavata (A white elephant with smoky grey color, the color of fog and cloud representing purity)</p> <p>Deity: Panchavaktra Shiva Shiva sitting on Tiger skin with Shakini Shakti sitting in lotus wearing sky- blue sari.</p>	<p>Name Khara comes from the root “kha” which means “space or ether”. We see that demon Khara talks too much.</p>
<p>Aagya Chakra/ Third Eye Center / Shiva- netra - It is located directly behind the</p>	<p>Element: None</p> <p>Color: Blue-white</p> <p>Sanskrit Letter</p> <p>Sound: AUM</p>	<p>Deity: Ardhanarishvara, the half-male, half- female Shiva-Shakti with Hakini Shakti</p>	<p>Shri Ram broke a large bow that belonged to Shiva. Imagine an enormous bow vertically mounted,</p>

center of the forehead. Its focus is vision.		sitting in lotus wearing red sari.	with the bowstring stretched, we get a picture of a close to vertical eye, the Third Eye - Shiva-netra.”
Sahasrara/ Thousand-petal lotus - It is located at the crown of the head. Its focus is truth and reality.		N/A	In verse 6-127-51, we read that Shri Ram sees thousands of citizens, appearing like lotus flowers in bloom.

References to Manipura, Swadhisthana, and Muladhara Chakras

When Hanumana jumps toward Lanka, the story mentions all the events and locations in between, which we can use as reference to the Chakras. **In addition, his actions show us the way to go through the Chakras, their effects, and the precautions to take to avoid danger.** One function of the Prana is to jump over the Manipura and Swadhisthana Chakras to the Muladhara Chakra. We will study Valmiki Ramayana verse by verse, and correlations with the Chakras information. In this chapter, we will focus on the Manipura, Swadhisthana, and Muladhara Chakras.

Let us make a hypothesis and see if we can find any references in Valmiki Ramayana to Chakras that serve as proof: Hanumana / Prana jumps from Anahata Chakra over the Manipura Chakra and the Swadhisthana Chakra to the Muladhara Chakra.

Events that happened before in the story: Ravana had abducted Sita to Lanka. So, Shri Ram sent Hanumana, Jambavan, and others to the south direction to search for Sita. They came to the ocean, which they cannot cross. At this point in the story, Jambavan reminded Hanumana about his actual nature and Hanumana jumped over the ocean.

Events in terms of Chakra: Hanumana represents Prana in the body. Prana is in the heart, which is Anahata Chakra. Lanka represents Muladhara Chakra. So,

Prana has to jump from Anahata Chakra to Muladhara Chakra. When the moment Hanumana realizes his actual nature, he grows, as mentioned in verse 5-1-11. Then he jumps towards Lanka.

Verse 5-1-4 to 5-1-6 describe a “mountain called as Mainak, with golden hue peaks of mountain rose and was like molten gold”. Manipura Chakra has a downward-facing red triangle in the middle and fire as its element. If you invert this triangle, we can imagine it as a mountain with a golden hue as referred to in. Verse 5-1-133 says that Hanumana touches and then flies ahead toward Lanka. This touch-and-go logic regarding the Manipura Chakra shows that the Prana passes by this Chakra.

Verse 5-1-29 and several other verses describe the ocean as an abode of crocodiles. Crocodile symbolizes the Swadhisthana Chakra.

Next, Surasa, a snake-like animal with bloody red eyes and powerful fangs, attacks Hanumana. She is a friendly goddess of some sort and is there to test him. Surely, she is not an enemy. **The name “Surasa” translates to "good taste." It is a reference to the Swadhisthana Chakra because it is associated with a sense of taste and a sense organ, tongue.**

Initially, Hanumana tries to avoid entering the mouth of Surasa as she has assumed a horrible form. Surasa had a boon from Lord Brahma that Hanumana must enter her mouth. Hanumana defeats Surasa by a smart trick. He expands his body, making Surasa open her mouth wider, and then quickly becomes small, enters her mouth, and comes out, avoiding in this way going through her body.

We can interpret Surasa’s boon like this: while going toward the Muladhara Chakra, the Prana must go close to the Swadhisthana Chakra, but not through it. It is the only path available to the Prana while going toward the Muladhara Chakra. There is no way to avoid it.

Hanumana making his body large and small is a reference to Pranayama, where we inflate and deflate our belly with air. Note that Mainak – the gold-colored mountain – and Surasa – the snake-like animal – are not hostile. They represent two points on the map of the body, which the Prana has to pass by closely.

Next, a demon by the name of Simhika attracts Hanumana by his shadow. In verse 5-1-191, we read that her mouth is as big as Hanumana’s body, so he can see her internal organs. This time again, he becomes minuscule and enters the demon’s

mouth. While passing through her, he tears her internal organs with his nails and comes out.

The internal organs mentioned in the story surely stand for our intestines. Scratching of the intestines is a reference to the bleeding that may occur because of Pranayama. The correct practice of Pranayama invariably involves applying a Mula-Bandha/Root Lock. We can use the root lock to direct the Apaana, Prana that works in the abdomen, upwards. In Pranayama, all we are trying to do is bring these two different Prana (Prana and Apaana) together. We force the Apaana upwards by tightening the anus 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. This mixing of two components of the Prana is an essential precondition for the upward movement of the Energy.

Expanding and contracting the stomach and applying the root lock stretches intestines and rectal organs. Doing it excessively, forcibly, and without a guru's guidance, may cause bleeding. It is an important warning sign given to us by sage Valmiki.

According to verse 5-1-206, when Hanumana reaches Lanka again, he becomes regular in size. Verse 5-2-49 tells us that Hanumana reduces himself to the size of a cat while entering Lanka. **It shows that we need a minuscule amount of the Prana to enter the Muladhara Chakra. We need not apply an excessive force. We need to avoid strenuous breathing.**

When Hanumana is at the gate of the city of Lanka, a female demon attacks him. **Verse 5-3-40 mentions that Hanumana does not use his full strength to hit her; he hits her as gently as possible. It is a reference to the gentleness required while performing Pranayama.** It tells us to avoid being too forceful in doing Pranayama. The reason is that the use of excessive force takes the attention away from Pranayama, and it allows the Ahamkara to attach itself to the process which reinforces the Ahamkara.

Here again, we learn that this female demon enjoys a boon granted by Lord Brahma, which is that when a monkey will defeat her, destruction of Lanka will follow. This boon shows us an obvious fact in terms of Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness. **When we are successful in properly doing Pranayama, the**

Prana will enter the Muladhara Chakra, and the stage will be set for Ahamkara to lose ground.

The role of Pranayama ends when the Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra. However, the Prana / Hanumana continues to play a vital role throughout the rest of Ramayana. When Hanumana locates Sita, he respectfully requests her to come with him. Although it sounds very logical for her to run away with him, Sita refuses this quick escape.

Sita or the Kundalini stands for the Energy, which manifests itself as fire. Her name is Sita, which may mean “coolness” because of the root “sit” in her name, but she is cool only in the presence of Shri Ram. **Sita escaping with Hanumana means the Kundalini rising the moment the Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra. With no higher Consciousness/Shri Ram around to tame her fire, it might mean a human may get a large amount of heat in the body.** As is, when the Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra, it releases a fractional amount of the Energy. This small amount of the Energy not only burns the Chakra but also heats the entire body. If you Google "Kundalini Heat," you will find several posts asking for help. You will find posts from people who did unguided and unrestrained Pranayama, cannot bear the heat generated because of it. Yogis knew this phenomenon, and it is documented in the Yoga books. This phenomenon directly results from Pranayama, and it is a sign that the Prana has entered the Muladhara Chakra. Even a minor twist in this coiled up Energy can create an unbearable firestorm inside our body. A complete rise of the Energy at this stage will feel like a nuclear explosion within us; it is best to avoid it.

Sage Valmiki is compassionate in describing this event in advance for us. He famously represents it as Hanumana burning Ravana's Lanka. This is an important warning sign and a symptom of the success of Pranayama. The heat released by the Kundalini may affect the Swadhisthana Chakra as it is very near to the Muladhara Chakra. It may cause an imbalance, as the person may try overindulgence in desires generated from the Swadhisthana Chakra.

A similar effect may occur at the Manipura Chakra, where a person may overcome desires created by the Swadhisthana Chakra, but may succumb to those created by the Manipura Chakra.

Sage Valmiki knew the peril that may unfold when Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra. Hence, he created the character of Hanumana, who is a

symbol of devotion and celibacy. The quality of devotion helps rectify imbalances at the Manipura Chakra. The quality of celibacy helps constrain desires flaming out of the Swadhisthana Chakra.

References to Vishuddha Chakra

Events that happened before in the story: In verse 3-11-7, we read that Shri Ram hears singing and playing musical instruments. The melodious sounds are coming from the direction of a tranquil lake, but he cannot see anyone. We saw this event when we discussed the character of sage Mandakarni. In Yoga terms, we saw that it refers to Anahat Nad. We will not repeat that content here.

In verse 3-13-13, sage Agastya suggests living in Panchavati area to Shri Ram. It describes the Panchavati area as a relatively small and beautiful place in the tropical dense Dandaka forest. Verse 3-15-28 mentions that Sita is thrilled with the new area and their new beautifully constructed hermitage. Verse 3-15-31 mentions they lived happily at Panchavati for some time.

Events in terms of Chakra: Anahata sound, which is related to ears. In terms of body, if we travel southwards or down from the ears, we come to the throat region. This is the region of Vishuddha Chakra. **To correlate Vishuddha Chakra to Panchavati, we need to compare their details side by side.**

First, let us get the details of Vishuddha Chakra. Vishuddha Chakra's vehicle is Airavat - a snow white elephant. Its element is ether and its sense organs are ears and mouth. Its plane is Jana-Loka, meaning a "general population area"; make a note of the word Jana. It's deity is Panchavakra Shiva; make a note of the word "Panch." **The image of the Vishuddha Chakra has a silver crescent shining in a white circular background.**

In verse 4-16-4 onwards, we read Laxmana describing the beauty of the forest in the winter season. In verse 4-16-9, he talks about **snow**. In verse 4-16-11, there is a description of **snow** again; in verse 4-16-12, we read about **fog**, which is also white. In verse 4-16-13, we read **lusterless moon**. In verse 4-16-14, we get **unbright moonlight blemished by mist**. In verse 4-16-15, we read about **snow** again; in verse 4-16-21, we get elephants. In verse 4-16-23, we read about snowy darkness. In verse 4-16-24, we get to imagine **white glittering sand banks** and **calling of water birds that can be heard, but not seen**. In verse 4-16-25, there is a mention of snow again.

We may think about these verses in terms of poetic imagination. However, if we carefully search for Vishuddha Chakra details, we find some connection. **Also, note that snowfall is a rare event in central India, yet sage Valmiki mentions it many times.** We get several lines describing snowy whiteness can be reference to silver crescent in the white circular background in the image of Vishuddha Chakra and Airavat's whiteness. It connects the birdcalls in a foggy river to a sense of hearing. Ears are sense organs of Vishuddha Chakra.

The deity of Vishuddha Chakra, Panchavakra Shiva, has the word “Pancha,” which means digit five in his name as he has five faces. The name of Panchavati has the word Pancha in it – the connection to the word Pancha is clear. The place of actual fight with Khara is called Janasthana, which means “general population area.” Why would someone name a place called a “general population area” deep inside of a dense forest? Therefore, the word Jana in Janasthana has to come from the plane of Vishuddha Chakra - Jana-Loka.

When a female demon called as Shurpanakha inquires about Shri Ram and asks if he would like to marry her, Shri Ram refuses her proposal. However, he asks her to marry Laxmana, and tells her that Laxmana is without a wife, but Laxmana also refuses to marry her. According to verse 3-17-18, Shri Ram surely knows that she is a female demon (demoness). Still, in verse 3-18-3, Shri Ram redirects her to Laxmana, possibly knowing that rejection from both of them will make her angry. This could be sage Valmiki's way of indicating to us that Shri Ram is inviting for trouble. Angry Shurpanakha attacks Sita and Laxmana cut off her nose and ears. Strange as it sounds, in chapter 3-69, Laxmana cuts off ears and nose of another female demon Ayomukhi, and starts a war with her brother, which is a duplication of this event.

In chapter 3-19, Shurpanakha, the female demon wounded by Laxmana, comes to demon Khara for help. **Even before Shurpanakha speaks a single word, Khara talks from verse 3-19-1 through verse 3-19-12.** Khara sends 14 demons with Shurpanakha to kill Shri Ram, but they fail, and Shurpanakha comes back crying. Once again, in verse 3-22-2, Khara speaks first.

In Sanskrit, the root “kha” means “space or ether” or “in the sky. Khara surely has a big mouth, and he talks a lot. It shows high Vishuddha Chakra activity. His war with Shri Ram looks like a passionate debate.

Khara's army comprises many demons, whose names relate to the throat, the mouth, or space. The name Vihangama, which means “moving in the sky,” surely relates to the space element. Dushana, meaning, “Cursing, or speaking ill”.

There is, however, one unusual name: Akampana. Akampana means “no vibration,” and it is unusual because every organ connected to the throat vibrates. Vishuddha Chakra has vocal cords as its work organ. In the battle, Shri Ram kills Khara and all the demons, but only Akampana escapes!

There are three interesting points to note in this story related to Khara.

1. Shri Ram makes fun of Shurpanakha and insults her; thus, He invites trouble.
2. Shurpanakha tells Khara about Sita's beauty and thus starts a war. She plays the same card with Ravana. It fits perfectly with the law of duplication in Ramayana.
3. Sage Valmiki does not go into details of what happens when the higher Consciousness enters the Vishuddha Chakra. **The reason is that the Consciousness has a neutralizing effect – it removes what is wrong.** Several books and sites describe the effect of the opening of the Vishuddha Chakra. However, these books describe an effect of the Energy, not that of the Consciousness.

References to Anahata Chakra

Events that happened before in the story: Ravana had abducted Sita. Shri Ram is searching for her. He misses Sita and is very much disturbed. He has not met Hanumana yet.

Events in terms of Chakra: From Vishuddha Chakra, higher Consciousness is coming down to Anahata Chakra.

Before looking for the references to the Anahata Chakra, let us see its features. Since the story relates to the heart, there are many emotions involved in it. The Anahata Chakra has air as its element, so we can expect references to air. The sense organ of this Chakra is skin, with a touch being the sense associated with it. The Chakra has black antelope for its vehicle. The presiding deity is Ishan-Rudra Shiva,

who has blue skin and wears the skin of a yellow tiger. The goddess of the Anahata Chakra is Kakini, who wears a sky-blue sari and sits on a pink lotus.

Now, we will go over each line of chapter 4-1 and see if it has any reference to the Anahata Chakra.

- In verse 4-1-1, we read that Shri Ram feels disturbed by remembering Sita. This emotion indirectly refers to the heart.
- In verse 4-1-2, passion overcomes Shri Ram.
- In verse 4-1-3, there is a reference to the lotus flower.
- In verse 4-1-5, Shri Ram is distressed.
- In verse 4-1-6, he is disquieted.
- In verse 4-1-7, there are references to lotus, deer, and birds, which refer to air.
- In verse 4-1-8, colors blue and yellow are mentioned, which are references to the deity of the Anahata Chakra.
- In verse 4-1-10, there is a mention of breeze, which refers to air and skin. There is also a reference to the love god.
- In verses 4-1-11 and 12, - clouds and winds, which refer to air
- In verses 4-1-13 and 14 - air
- In verse 4-1-15 - breeze and air
- In verse 4-1-16 - air
- In verse 4-1-17 - a breeze
- In verses 4-1-18 and 19 - air again
- In verse 4-1-22 - birds and emotions
- In verse 4-1-23 - birds and the love god
- In verse 4-1-25 - birds and emotions
- In verse 4-1-26 - love, romance, and birds
- In verse 4-1-28 - birds and love
- In verses 4-1-30 and 32 - powerful emotions
- In verse 4-1-33 - the love god

- In verse 4-1-34, there is a slight change in the topic; it refers to touch, the sense related to the Anahata Chakra.
- In verse 4-1-35 - emotions and breeze
- In verse 4-1-36 - wind
- In verses 4-1-37, 38 and 39 - love
- In verses 4-1-40 to 43 - love and emotions
- In verse 4-1-46 - birds and love
- In verses 4-1-47 through 52 - love and emotions
- In verses 4-1-53 and 54 - breeze and emotions
- In verses 4-1-55 and 56 - birds and emotions
- In verse 4-1-57 - birds
- In verse 4-1-58 - love
- Verse 4-1-59 - emotions and wind
- Verse 4-1-62, 63 – lotus
- Verse 4-1-65 – deer
- Verse 4-1-66 - deer and lotus
- Verse 4-1-67 - lotus and emotions
- Verses 4-1-68 and 69 - love god and emotions
- Verse 4-1-70 – emotions
- Verse 4-1-71 - lotus and emotions
- Verse 4-1-77 - breeze, lotus, and heart
- Verse 4-1-74, 84 - wind again
- Verse 4-1-85 – breeze
- Verse 4-1-93 - birds and emotions
- Verse 4-1-97 - heart and emotions
- Verse 4-1-98 - lotuses and birds
- Verse 4-1-99 – birds
- Verse 4-1-100 – emotions
- Verse 4-1-101 - deer, heart, and emotions

- Verse 4-1-103 - breeze and lotuses
- Verse 4-1-104 through verse 4-1-110 – emotions
- Verse 4-1-111 - love and emotions
- Verses 4-1-112 and 113 - emotions

Finally, in verse 4-1-114, Laxmana steps in and stops Shri Ram from going on and on about love, emotions, birds, and air. In case someone still has doubts, two more chapters – 4-28 and 4-30 – contain references to the Anahata Chakra.

After killing Vali, Shri Ram stays on a mountain near Kishkindha. He describes the rainy season-view of the mountain and its vicinity. Here again, there are many references to clouds, breeze, sky, fog, breath, and emotions. Let us look at the verses of these chapters to see if they are related to the Anahata Chakra.

- Verse 4-28-5 - cloud and sky
- Verse 4-28-6 - breath, sky, and emotions
- Verse 4-28-7 – emotions
- Verse 4-28-8 - cloud and breeze
- Verse 4-28-10 - cloud, deer, and breeze
- Verse 4-28-11 – sky
- Verses 4-28-12 and 13 - cloud and emotions
- Verse 4-28-14 - vapor and emotions
- Verse 4-28-15 - dust and breeze
- Verse 4-28-16 – birds
- Verse 4-28-17 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-19 – wind
- Verse 4-28-20 – cloud
- Verse 4-28-23 - clouds, birds, lotuses, wind, and sky

- Verse 4-28-24 - birds, clouds, and emotions
- Verse 4-28-27 - clouds and elephant
- Verse 4-28-31 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-32 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-33 – peacock, a beautiful bird
- Verse 4-28-35 – birds
- Verse 4-28-36 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-37 – peacock
- Verses 4-28-38 and 40 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-41 – peacock
- Verse 4-28-42 – lotus
- Verses 4-28-43, 44 and 47 – clouds
- Verse 4-28-49 – peacock
- Verse 4-28-52 - birds and lotuses
- Verses 4-28-58 and 59 – emotions
- Verse 4-30-5 - sky and birds
- Verse 4-30-7 - birds and emotions
- Verse 4-30-8, 9 – emotions
- Verse 4-30-10 - birds, lotus, and emotions
- Verse 4-30-11 – emotions
- Verse 4-30-12 – emotions, with a reference to the love god
- Verse 4-30-23 – clouds
- Verse 4-30-24 - clouds, lotus, and elephant
- Verse 4-30-25 – wind
- Verse 4-30-26 - clouds, elephant, and peacock
- Verse 4-30-27 – cloud
- Verse 4-30-29 – lotus
- Verse 4-30-30 – breeze
- Verse 4-30-31 - birds and lotus

- Verse 4-30-33 - sky, clouds, peacock, and emotions
- Verse 4-30-35 - fragrance and lotus; verse 4-30-36 - sky and breeze
- Verse 4-30-37, 38 - dust in the air
- Verse 4-30-39 – passion
- Verse 4-30-40 – birds
- Verse 4-30-42 - birds and lotus
- Verse 4-30-42 – birds
- Verse 4-30-43 - cloud and wind
- Verse 4-30-44 – cloud
- Verse 4-30-47 - birds, sky, and wind
- Verse 4-30-48 - birds, lotus, sky, and clouds
- Verse 4-30-49 - birds and lotus
- Verse 4-30-50, 51 - breeze;
- Verse 4-30-52 - lotus, breeze, and love
- Verse 4-30-53 - breeze and birds
- Verse 4-30-54 – love; verse 4-30-55 birds
- Verse 4-30-56 - love-god
- Verse 4-30-57 - cloud and sky
- Verse 4-30-59 – birds
- Verse 4-30-63 – birds
- Verse 4-30-64 – grief
- Verse 4-30-65 - birds and grief

We can see that there are hundreds of references to the heart and the Anahata Chakra.

References to Aagya Chakra

Events that happened before in the story: King Janaka, father of Sita, had set a hard condition for giving Sita's hand in marriage. Being a sage himself, he surely knew the actual nature of Sita as an Energy. According to the condition, Sita will marry a man strong enough to put the bowstring on the bow of Lord Shiva. Shri Ram not only lifts and string the great bow, but while doing it, He breaks the middle.

Events in terms of Chakra: In the Ganga chapter, we saw that there are three knots on the Sushumna Nadi, of which the Shiva Knot is in our head region. From the point of view of Energy going upwards to the top of head, this is the last knot. Once it is open, the Energy's path to merge into the Consciousness is clear. **Unless this knot opens up, the Energy and the higher Consciousness cannot meet, and we cannot see the higher level of Consciousness.**

Opening of the Shiva Knot, which allows the Energy and the Consciousness to meet, represents the condition of king Janaka for giving Sita's hand in marriage to Shri Ram. According to the condition, Sita will marry a man strong enough to put the bowstring on the bow of Shiva. It is not a surprise that Shri Ram does it with ease, and he even breaks the bow.

To understand the breaking of the bow by Shri Ram, we need to know how the Shiva Knot feels before, during, and after it is open. Before opening, this knot blocks the path of Energy going upwards, which creates a strong localized pain inside a hollow head. **When the knot opens up, there is a feeling of the Energy rushing from that spot toward the crown. This opening of the knot and the release of the Energy is like an explosion.** Sage Valmiki describes the level of sounds, lights, and waves associated with it. In verse 1-67-18, he describes them as "an explosion like down plunging thunder" and "shock-waves from an exploding mountain." The thunderous sound, the explosive lightning, and the waves or vibrations show the movement of an enormous amount of Energy. Yoga books describe these extraordinary sensations associated with the opening of the Shiva Knot.

In ancient India, the bows used to be 6 to 8 feet long shafts, vertically mounted, with a bowstring tied to them just before use. **If you imagine an enormous bow vertically mounted, with the bowstring stretched, you will get a picture of a close to vertical eye, the Third Eye.** The Aagya Chakra is named after Shiva and is called "Shiva-netra." Sage Valmiki superimposes two different body parts – the

Shiva Knot and the Shiva-netra – on the breaking of Shiva’s bow. Because of the proximity of the physical location of the opening of the Shiva Knot and the Aagya Chakra, sage Valmiki may have superimposed them.

References to the Sahasrara

Events that happened before in the story: Ramayana has three remarkable journeys. We have already seen Hanumana’s critical journey to find Sita in Lanka, and Shri Ram’s journey to Lanka. After Shri Ram’s victory over Ravana and after Sita and Shri Ram realizing their true nature, it is time for the third journey. Sage Valmiki dedicates the complete chapter of 6-123 to Sita’s journey with Shri Ram to Ayodhya from Lanka in Pushpaka airplane. At this point in the story, Sita and Shri Ram are together, and they are approaching the city of Ayodhya in the Pushpaka airplane.

Events in terms of Chakra: If you consider the accepted geographical positions of Ayodhya, Kishkindha, and Lanka, you get a triangular shape. There is no need for an aerial vehicle to go over Kishkindha. It does not fall on the direct aerial route to Ayodhya from Lanka. Just to confirm that we understand this, in verse 6-123-25, we have Sita asking for a stop to pick up Tara, Sugriva’s wife. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki is showing to readers that, for Pushpaka, these three locations are in a straight line.

The path followed by Pushpaka is the path of the Sushumna Nadi in the spine. Therefore, we see Pushpaka going from the Muladhara Chakra to the top of the head. On its way, it has to go through all the chakras, and thus, in chapter 6-123, we see that sage Valmiki describes all the previous places again.

The word Sushumna means “a gracious way of extinguishing the fire.” The Energy takes this path, when it is entirely free from the Muladhara Chakra and never returns to the Muladhara Chakra. This journey is the final ascent of the Energy toward the Sahasrara. There is no coming back to the Muladhara Chakra. It is the most documented, coveted and celebrated journey, and yogis call it Kundalini’s ascent to the Sahasrara.

Now we will see the references to the Sahasrara. **In verse 6-127-51, we read that Shri Ram sees thousands of citizens, appearing like lotus flowers in bloom. It is a classic description of the Sahasrara.**

Verse 6-128-4 is a relatively strange verse in which Bharat says to Shri Ram that to control the kingdom is as difficult as controlling a broken dam. It is about time in this story, where all controls on the Energy are removed, and that a massive flood of the Energy merges with the Consciousness at Sahasrara.

In verse 6-128-12, Bharat relinquishes the control of the kingdom of Ayodhya to Shri Ram, and Shri Ram accepts it by saying: so be it. **The importance of this verse is that, from this point onwards, sage Valmiki changes the description of the events from the present tense to the past tense.** From this point onwards, there is only a blissful state, in which there is no concept of time. Hence, sage Valmiki describes it in the past tense. The rest of the verses describing the joyous occasion of the coronation of Sita and Shri Ram are explicitly mentioned in the past tense.

In verse 6-128-33, sage Valmiki says that Shri Ram proceeded to Ayodhya accompanied by the sound of conches and kettledrums buzzing in the ears. These sounds are documented types of the Anahata sound. It shows a massive movement of the Energy in the temporal region.

Verse 6-128-52 tells us Jambavan and Hanumana got water from 500 rivers. Please note that Jambavan's name comes first as he is a guru, and we relate him to the Prana. **This event shows activities of Prana all over the body through various Nadi(s).** All these activities of Prana are directed toward the top of the head as the Prana gets absorbed at Sahasrara.

In verse 6-128-59, sage Valmiki tells us that Vashistha led Shri Ram, duly accompanied by Sita, to the royal throne. **Thus, the royal throne is not for the king alone, but for the king and the queen together.**

Verse 6-128-69 mentions Shatrughna holding a white parasol, Sugriva and Vibhishana holding a white whisk over Shri Ram. **We can see that almost everything around Shri Ram is white; this white color represents the Sahasrara. Verses 6-128-70 and 71 tell us that encouraged by Indra, the Air God provided hundreds of lotuses and diamonds to Shri Ram.** Indra stands for the sense organs. The sense organs are now cooperating with the higher Consciousness and giving it presents. An old enemy is now a dear friend.

This occasion of the highest state of the human Consciousness comes with multiple benefits as a side effect. Thus, we read in one story that Shri Ram gave away a lot of gifts to almost everyone present during his coronation.

In verse 6-128-94, Shri Ram repeatedly asked Laxmana to take up the position of the prince, but Laxmana refused it. When the Energy and the higher Consciousness are together in a blissful state, what role is there for the devoted mind?

Verse 6-128-96 mentions Shri Ram performed hundreds of horse sacrifices over ten thousand years. The mention of ten thousand years shows a long and undefined time. We read that during this time, no one died. There was no danger of wild animals, no diseases, no thieves, and no one felt worthless. Everybody was happy; everybody followed a life of virtue, and people lived for thousands of years, with thousands of kids with no sickness or grief. Trees had regular flowers and fruits, and there were no pests, nor any insects. A cloud rained in time, and the wind was delightful. Everyone was satisfied with his or her work, and no one was greedy. It is the description of Ram-Rajya, the rule of Shri Ram. **It is also the description of the blissful state of the higher Consciousness over undefined time.**

Valmiki Ramayana ends with this description, but the story does not end here. **To see the actual ending of Valmiki Ramayana, we need to read the last verse of the first chapter.** Verse 1-1-97 mentions that after doing hundreds of horse sacrifices and ruling for thousands of years, Shri Ram went to Lord Brahma's abode. **Thus, sage Valmiki leads us back to the first chapter where the cycle of Ramayana starts again, only to highlight even finer points and possibly take us to an even higher level of Consciousness.**

SHRI RAM DEFEATS RAVANA: STORY AND ITS MEANING IN TERMS OF YOGA

Until now, we saw Valmiki Ramayana from different angles. **Now, we will focus on the story and its meaning in terms of Yoga.** We will go line by line of Yuddha-Kanda, starting from chapter 6-40, where events of the war are described.

Sugriva's Brash Reaction

In verse 6-40-1, Shri Ram, Sugriva, and others ascend Mount Suvela to get a magnificent view of Lanka. Before war, any general of an army would like to survey the battlefield from the highest viewpoint. Verse 6-40-2 tells us that Lanka is a beautiful city, with excellent layout and beautiful groves. Shri Ram looks at the town as if he is a tourist and there is no information about Lanka that could be useful for the upcoming battle.

From the top of Mt. Suvela, Shri Ram, Sugriva, and others see Ravana standing outside of his palace, probably looking at Shri Ram's army. Verses 6-40-3 to 6-40-6

give a description of Ravana. What we get is a description of him we are already familiar with. Ravana is wearing a red cloak, and he has smeared red sandalwood paste all over his body. He is adorned with golden ornaments. He proudly displays scars on his body, which are marks of enormous battles he has won. **We know that Ravana stands for Ahamkara, and his red color comes from the color of the Muladhara Chakra. Besides red, the Muladhara Chakra also has a golden color in it. So, we see that Ravana is wearing golden ornaments.**

According to verse 6-40-8, when Sugriva sees Ravana from the top of Mt. Suvela, he becomes angry and, in an impulsive reaction, jumps toward Ravana. Verse 6-40-9 tells us that Sugriva completely underestimates Ravana and considers him a mere straw.

From verses 6-40-10 to 6-40-27, we get the description of a fierce battle between Sugriva and Ravana. There is no mention of either of them winning. Thus, they were both equal in power. **In verse 6-40-28, we read that Ravana uses his magical powers to fight against Sugriva. Sugriva recognizes his limitation against Ravana's powerful magic and backs off.** Verse 6-40-29 tells us that Sugriva jumps back from Ravana's palace and returns to Mt. Suvela, where Shri Ram is.

As expected, Shri Ram does not approve of this misadventure. He tells Sugriva that it was a wrong and reckless action, not fit for a king. Sugriva's impulsive attack and the act of backing-off make little sense to anyone and confuses Ravana too.

In terms of military strategy to win the war, Shri Ram, and others who stayed with him, missed an excellent opportunity for a quick victory. Ravana was a high-value target for Shri Ram's army, and they spotted him with no guards accompanying him. Therefore, killing Ravana was the correct military strategy. It would have saved them from bloodsheds and would have ensured a quick victory for them.

In fact, Sugriva's impulsive decision to attack Ravana in this situation is very logical. Ideally, Shri Ram and others should have followed his lead. If we think in terms of military strategy, where winning the war with minimum losses to your side is the aim, then Shri Ram is wrong.

The only justification for Shri Ram to be correct in this situation is if Shri Ram and his army were not ready to start the war for some strategic reason. In that case, Sugriva would provoke a war when his side was not ready. However, this is not the

case for Shri Ram's army because, immediately after scolding Sugriva in verse 6-41-26, Shri Ram marches His army toward the city of Lanka. Nothing happens in between these two events, so there is no reason for Sugriva or anyone to hold back from attacking Ravana. **Therefore, Sugriva was correct in attacking Ravana at this instance, while Shri Ram is wrong in not following Sugriva's lead and incorrect in scolding him.**

Whenever we see Shri Ram is not following our normally understood conventions or logic, we are looking at a puzzle. Like all other puzzles we see in Ramayana, this one puzzle too resolves itself, if we consider this event to be happening within ourselves. When we consider Shri Ram as the Consciousness, then the whole thing reveals itself as an obvious fact.

What does it mean when we say that a soft heart (Sugriva) attacked the Ahamkara (Ravana), and the Consciousness (Shri Ram) stood by?

This event represents yet another warning sign by sage Valmiki. He warns us not to fight the Ahamkara with a soft heart (with the emotions) because it is not possible to defeat the Ahamkara emotionally. Although the heart, filled with lots of emotions, seems to be a worthy competitor for the Ahamkara, the Ahamkara has something more that the heart cannot beat. The Ahamkara has a vast array of tricks, and the emotions of the heart have no solutions to those tricks.

The central message of this story is the pursuit of spirituality should not be a knee-jerk action, with no thought in it. It should not be an emotional response. In that case, the Ahamkara wins the war easily.

If we understand this warning sign, we can understand the reasons behind Shri Ram's inactions – he is not ready for the last war with the Ahamkara. The existence of an emotional response itself means that the stage is not yet set for the last war with the Ahamkara. Therefore, the Shri Ram waits for the right moment.

In verse 6-41-25, we read that Shri Ram knows the right time to act against Ravana is, and knows that this time is not the right one. Therefore, instead of killing Ravana swiftly in a commando style of action, Shri Ram advances the entire army toward Lanka.

To certify that Shri Ram knew the best time to act. We get many omens. Those signs have nothing to do with the actual story. Signs like a harsh wind blowing in verse 6-41-13, and many others until verse 6-41-20, are in the same category – a cover for Shri Ram's inaction, because he has to wait for the right moment.

Shri Ram's Strange Message to Ravana

In chapter 6-41, we read that Shri Ram calls Angada to deliver his ultimate message to Ravana. In verses 6-41-61 to 6-41-73, Shri Ram sends a long and stern message to Ravana and gives him a last chance. Even in this ultimatum, sage Valmiki does not forget to tell us that Shri Ram stands for the higher Consciousness and is not a typical army general. In verse 6-41-66, we read a message that no general of an army gave to his adversary in the entire human history. **The message Shri Ram sends to Ravana is: When Shri Ram kills Ravana, Ravana will attain heaven.** We would have liked to imagine that Shri Ram told Ravana that Ravana would go to hell for eternity, but we do not see any hate in Shri Ram's words.

Why does Shri Ram say Ravana will go to heaven? Going to heaven is a reward, not a punishment. When we consider this verse in relation to our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes, we can interpret it. In this odd-looking verse, sage Valmiki makes three hidden points.

1. When the Consciousness terminates the Ahamkara, it absorbs or dissolves the Ahamkara into itself. Thus, the Ahamkara /Ravana will dissolve into the Consciousness/Shri Ram. At this point in the story, sage Valmiki cannot say that Shri Ram will absorb Ravana. Note that in some versions of Ramayana, when Shri Ram kills Ravana, Ravana's soul merges into Shri Ram.
2. As sage Valmiki has shown earlier, Shri Ram is resembling Lord Vishnu/the Universal Consciousness. Now, we can think of Shri Ram as the Universal Consciousness. Many verses indirectly show Shri Ram looks and behaves like Lord Vishnu. Although Shri Ram realizing that he is Lord Vishnu happens in verse 6-117-13, he appears and sounds like Lord Vishnu earlier than that. We also need to keep in mind the thumb rule that says that everything, which applies to the body, is also applicable universally. Thus, when we see Shri Ram as the higher Consciousness, we can also see him as a Universal Consciousness as they are the same.

3. We can see that Shri Ram or the higher Consciousness is equidistant from both love and hate. Thus, those who love Shri Ram will go toward him, but even those who hate him, will also go toward him. It is a bewildering statement from sage Valmiki as it beats all our logical assertions. We understand love, but we cannot see that intense hate also brings the same results. We know love connects people, but so does the hatred. Either way, there is a string of connection binding the two ends. The nature of the higher Consciousness is such that it pulls you toward itself. It does not matter whether you love it or hate it. We see that just as Sugriva connects to Shri Ram by love, Ravana connects to Shri Ram because of his hatred for him. Hence, they are both eligible for a pull toward Shri Ram. For that reason, we do not see any hate in Shri Ram's message to Ravana.

In verse 6-41-77, Angada delivers Shri Ram's message to Ravana verbatim. Nevertheless, Angada omits verse 6-41-66 or anything that mentions that Ravana will go to heaven. Thus, even those who fight for Shri Ram, do not know him.

Indrajit – A Mighty and an Invisible Warrior

When Ravana does not pay heed to Shri Ram's ultimatum, Shri Ram orders Sugriva to launch an attack on Lanka. Shri Ram's strategy is to attack all four gates of Lanka at the same time.

In verse 6-43-27, Shri Ram confronts four demons – Agniketu, Rashmikutu, Suptoghna, and Yadnyakopa, but he does not kill any of them. Verses 6-44-20 and 21 tell us that six named demons attack Shri Ram. Shri Ram merely wounds them, allowing them to live to fight another day.

In verse 6-44-30, Angada strikes Indrajit, but instead of fighting with Angada, Indrajit vanishes magically from the battlefield. However, Angada's victory over Indrajit is short-lived as Indrajit uses his supernatural powers. **He becomes invisible and takes the battle directly to Shri Ram.**

Verse 6-45-8 mentions that Indrajit severely wounds both Shri Ram and Laxmana, so much so that according to verse 6-45-16, they cannot look even up. In verse 6-45-22, Shri Ram falls down to the ground. In verse 6-45-25, Laxmana loses hope for his life and falls down too. Luckily, Hanumana, with the help of the other monkeys, surrounds Shri Ram and Laxmana from the invisible Indrajit and rescues them.

Verse 6-46-2 tells us that Indrajit finishes his work and retires the way Indra would retire after finishing his work. There are many verses that relate Indrajit to Indra. The name Indrajit means “one who defeated Indra.”

In verse 6-46-10, only Vibhishana, who stands for the Sattva Guna, can see the invisible Indrajit, but that does not help much either. Indrajit continues to inflict significant damage on Shri Ram’s side and brings down almost half of the leadership with his sharp arrows. However, he makes the mistake of believing that Shri Ram and Laxmana are dead, and therefore, he stops his shower of arrows. From verses 6-46-29 to 6-46-44, we read about Sugriva (soft heart) crying, and Vibhishana trying to console him.

Indrajit comes back on the battlefield and corrects his earlier mistake. This time, Indrajit binds Shri Ram and Laxmana with his network of magical arrows. Both of them are conscious, but unable to move.

In his cruel way, Ravana sends Sita in his Pushpaka airplane to see the dead Shri Ram and Laxmana. She falls for this ugly trick. Coincidentally, she is accompanied by a female demon Trijata, who points out that Shri Ram and Laxmana are alive. **In verse 6-48-25, Trijata tells mother Sita that Pushpaka airplane could not come near Shri Ram, if Shri Ram was dead. It means if Shri Ram was dead, Pushpaka could not fly.**

Now, we know the logic behind these strange correlations – if there is no Consciousness, meaning, Consciousness has left the body, and the person is dead, and thus, there is no Pushpaka either.

When Sita /the Energy comes close to Shri Ram/the Consciousness, Shri Ram gets his strength back. Thus, Ravana’s trick backfires on him as it only helps Shri Ram recover his strength.

When Ahamkara releases its control over the Energy and allows it to go near the Consciousness, Ahamkara indirectly helps the Consciousness and re-energizes it.

When Shri Ram gets his strength back, he sees Laxmana in the network of magical arrows and assumes him to be dead. In verse 6-49-17, Shri Ram plans to give up his life and follow Laxmana to the region of death. In verse 6-49-24, He orders Sugriva to go back to Kishkindha. Luckily, in verse 6-50-37, the divine eagle Garuda comes to the rescue of Shri Ram and Laxmana. He tells Shri Ram about the actual nature of Indrajit's arrows. In verse 6-50-49, Garuda reveals that the arrows are poisonous snakes. We can interpret poisonous snakes to mean wrong desires of our mind, which bind and sting an advanced yogi.

So far, we know that Indrajit, son of Ravana, is a mighty and fierce warrior. He can become invisible, and he has already defeated Indra, the king of gods. Therefore, Indrajit represents “the invisible power of the Ahamkara, which can bind the Consciousness and the devoted mind, with the help of untamed desires.” **This statement is a warning sign given by sage Valmiki telling us that, at this crucial juncture, a network of untamed desires can overpower the higher Consciousness.** Something similar happened when Gautama Buddha was about to achieve enlightenment. Mara, a representation of the Ahamkara, tried to entice Gautama Buddha by various desires, albeit with no luck.

In Verse 6-50-37, merely by the arrival of Garuda near Shri Ram and Laxmana, the snakes give up their magical form of arrows and go away. In verse 6-50-43, Shri Ram tells that, in the presence of Garuda, he feels like he is with his father and paternal grandfather, who are in heaven.

In our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes, Garuda does not represent any process within us. It is some external intervention to rescue the Consciousness from the network of untamed desires. In verse 6-50-46, to respond to Shri Ram in a truthful but indirect manner, Garuda tells Shri Ram that he is a dear friend, as dear as his breath. At this point of time in the war, Shri Ram does not know that He is Lord Vishnu. Garuda cannot disclose this secret to Him, nor tell him about his relation to Shri Ram. Hence, in verse 6-50-57, he says, “You will know me after you win the battle.” It is interesting to see that sage Valmiki writes with great conviction that Shri Ram will surely win the war and come to know his actual nature. He omits legalese like: You will know me, if you win the battle, and you are in a condition to know me.”

The critical point to note here is that it is difficult for Shri Ram to cut through Indrajit's network of poisonous snakes. It means that even the higher

Consciousness finds it difficult to rise above the untamed desires created by the invisible Ahamkara. Sage Valmiki, however, gives us the solution. In verse 6-50-53, he tells Shri Ram the pure-mindedness is Shri Ram's strength, but the demons are deceitful by nature, so he must be vigilant. This statement works only when we consider it in a spiritual context. In regular warfare, pure-mindedness against a deceitful enemy is a recipe for defeat and death.

In verse 6-50-60, after healing Shri Ram and Laxman, Garuda flies away to heaven. When the monkeys see that Shri Ram and Laxmana have recovered, they start fighting the demons again.

War Continues, but Shri Ram Does Not Kill

In verse 6-52-37, Hanumana kills demon Dhrumraksha, whose name means "Smokey-eyed," and opens his account of killing named demons. In verse 6-54-35, Angada kills Vajradamshtra, whose name means "Iron rust or bite," and with this, Angada, the youngest monkey on the battlefield, also opens his account.

In chapter 6-57, Ravana sends Akampana, who is like a dark cloud, to fight Shri Ram's army. Earlier, Akampana had escaped the battle of Janasthana and had given Ravana the idea of abducting Sita. With this history, Shri Ram needs to fight and kill Akampana, but he does not do so. Instead, in verse 6-56-30, Hanumana kills Akampana, taking his count of killing named demons to two.

In verse 6-58-2, Shri Ram enquires about Prahasta, but does not pick up any weapon against him. After a long and fierce battle, in verse 6-58-54, Nila kills Prahasta and opens his account of killing named demons.

In chapter 6-59, Ravana ups the ante and enters the war himself, along with almost every other major demon warrior. Sugriva attacks Ravana right away, but falls down quickly. In verse 6-59-32, Shri Ram enters battle, but he does not fight against Ravana. On the contrary, in verse 6-59-47, Laxmana asks Shri Ram's permission to fight Ravana, which Shri Ram is quick to give. Hanumana, too fights Ravana, and he loses the fight. However, according to verse 6-59-70, Ravana does not kill Hanumana and allows him to take a rest.

In verse 6-59-90, Ravana defeats Neel. Neel falls on the ground, but gets back up to fight again. After defeating Sugriva, Hanumana, and Nila, Ravana battles Laxmana, and, in verse 6-59-109, he brings down Laxmana too.

Until this point in the war, the reader feels like he is reading the description of a fierce but typical battle. After this point, there is a sudden turn of events that depict spiritual processes, which is why we see many actions are hard to explain.

Ravana has in his arsenal a powerful spear gifted to him by Lord Brahma. He shoots that spear into Laxmana's heart. He does not stop there; he rushes to the severely wounded Laxmana. Ravana takes him by the hand and tries to pick him up. In verse 6-59-111, sage Valmiki mentions that even though Ravana had lifted gigantic mountains earlier, he could not lift Laxmana. In verse 6-59-112, almost on the verge of death, Laxmana remembers that he is a fraction of Lord Vishnu.

Meanwhile, Hanumana gets his strength back and in verse 6-59-114, he strikes Ravana and stops him from killing Laxmana. In verse 6-59-119, Laxmana becomes light in weight, to allow Hanumana to pick him up and take him to Shri Ram. The moment Hanumana brings Laxmana near Shri Ram, the spear comes out of Laxmana's heart and returns to Ravana. In verse 6-59-122, Laxman is cured of the wound and becomes fit to fight again.

Sage Valmiki does not give any details about the spear, except that Lord Brahma had given it to Ravana. Hence, we have to assume that the Ahamkara has some inbuilt capacity to make the devoted mind dysfunctional for a short period. According to sage Valmiki, we can use two remedies in this type of situation.

1. First, take the help of the Prana by doing Pranayama. Doing Pranayama will bring the dysfunctional devoted mind in contact with the higher Consciousness, revitalizing the devoted mind. Note that Ravana tried to lift the injured Laxmana, so he could kill him, but he could not do so. Sage Valmiki sets up this event to emphasize that even though the Ahamkara can make the devoted mind dysfunctional, it cannot possibly kill it.
2. Second, the suggestion to a distressed devoted mind is to remember that it is a part of a higher Consciousness, and it will survive. Laxmana knew that Ravana was trying to kill him and thought he could die soon. Just then, Laxmana recollected that he was a fraction of Lord Vishnu. Following the law of

duplication, Laxmana once again remembers that he is a fraction of Lord Vishnu in verse 6-59-122.

Both the devoted mind and Ahamkara are part of Consciousness. The difference is that Ahamkara does not feel that way. Ravana is the direct grandson of Lord Brahma. So, he is also a part of the same family. But he separates himself and wants to rule over others.

In verse 6-59-123, upon seeing that his army has been devastated by Ravana, Shri Ram enters the war to confront Ravana. Hanumana sees that Ravana is in a chariot, whereas Shri Ram is on foot. Thus, Ravana has a clear strategic military advantage over Shri Ram. To compensate for Ravana's strategic advantage, Hanumana requests Shri Ram, in verse 6-59-125, to mount on his back.

Mounting on Lord Hanumana's back, Shri Ram enters the battle against Ravana. Interestingly, the first arrows Ravana shoots are not aimed at Shri Ram, but at Hanumana. Shri Ram destroys Ravana's chariot, and finally, in verse 6-59-138, he shoots an arrow into Ravana's chest that brings him down. However, in verse 6-59-143, Shri Ram allows Ravana to walk away, because Ravana was tired, and as per the rules of war, Shri Ram could not kill him in that condition.

This kind of moralistic warfare, even from Ravana's side, is unique to Ramayana, and it is not reported anywhere in the world. We can easily contrast it with Mahabharata, where six to seven warriors killed a young boy and the war did not spare even fetuses.

These characters represent the Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes within us. If one of them dies, it affects the person unfavorably. Killing Hanumana, who stands for the Prana in the body, means that the Prana leaves the body, and thus, the person dies. Killing Sugriva, who stands for a soft heart, means that the heart stops beating, the outcome of which is the same as that of killing of Hanumana.

Of all these warriors, Ravana, the Ahamkara within us die, but the stage is not set for Ravana to die yet. The higher Consciousness has killed the Ahamkara in all previous incarnation stories or levels of the Consciousness, and yet, it has managed to survive. To defeat the Ahamkara for the good requires eradicating all associated

desires and tendencies. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki writes several chapters on the war before Ravana's death.

So far, Laxmana has killed two named demons, and he almost died two times. It shows that he took more risk as compared to any other warrior on the battlefield. Hanumana also has killed two demons, and he got defeated once. **However, Shri Ram has killed none of the named demons yet, but it is about to change.**

Kumbhakarna – the Tamas Guna of Nature

Sage Valmiki dedicates a staggering eight chapters to Kumbhakarna, a brother of Ravana, to underscore his importance. He depicts Kumbhakarna as the most feared warrior on the demons' side. In these chapters, we not only learn about Kumbhakarna but also get to understand the nature of the Tamas Guna through his character.

After suffering a humiliating defeat at the hands of Shri Ram, in verse 6-60-13, Ravana plans to wake up Kumbhakarna. **Sage Valmiki exaggerates the depiction of the Tamas Guna for storytelling. Kumbhakarna perfectly represents all the flaws of the Tamas Guna in him. Thus, he is the best character in Ramayana.**

In verse 6-60-16, sage Valmiki mentions that Kumbhakarna is sleeping happily, with no cares. His intelligence becomes dull because of lust and sleep; he sleeps for seven, eight, or even nine months at a stretch. Verse 6-60-19 tells us that Kumbhakarna is foremost amongst the demons and that he is a great warrior. However, he is fond of simple pleasures in life and loves to sleep!

After receiving Ravana's order to wake Kumbhakarna up, a large group of demons go to Kumbhakarna's cave. From the verse 6-60-22 to verse 6-60-65, they try to wake him up. It highlights Kumbhakarna's deep sleep and adds a touch of comedy. Kumbhakarna also eats food and drinks wine in enormously large quantities. Verse 6-60-92 specifies that he drank 2000 pitchers of wine after waking up, but he felt a little high.

When Shri Ram questions Vibhishana about Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana tells him that Kumbhakarna had won Indra in battle. It is easy to understand as laziness can overpower all the sense organs or Indra.

Just as sage Valmiki compares Indrajit with Indra, he compares Kumbhakarna with Yama, the god of death, and mentions that Kumbhakarna had defeated Yama.

More than anything else, this comparison underscores the threat the Tamas Guna poses to the progress of a spiritual aspirant.

Verses 6-61-10 through 6-61-29 tell us how Lord Brahma cursed Kumbhakarna that he would sleep for six months and wake up only for a day. Wherever we get boons and curses with no energy transfer, we know that we are looking at some aspect of reality hidden nicely behind the story.

Kumbhakarna is a grandson of Lord Brahma. Right since his birth, he was starving; so, he started eating every living being. In contrast to the other demons, whose strength comes from various boons from gods, Kumbhakarna's power comes from his very nature. Indra tried to stop Kumbhakarna, but he was badly hurt and had to run to Lord Brahma for protection. Lord Brahma cursed Kumbhakarna to fall asleep, as if he was dead, but Ravana questioned Lord Brahma's judgment. At Ravana's request, Lord Brahma altered his curse a little, allowing Kumbhakarna to sleep for six months and wake up for one day, just to eat. Thus, inside the curse story, we get to understand the nature of the Tamas Guna, which is very much a part of us too.

As mentioned in verse 6-60-16, overindulgence dims the intelligence of a person, making the person lazy. If you search the internet, you will come across several sites that describe a Tamasic person as evil or like the villain of a movie, with the characteristics of being ignorant, insensitive, immoral, dishonest, exploitative, deceptive, unkind, and a host of other such traits. This kind of characterization is not accurate.

The Tamas Guna is just a resistive force of nature. Anything else is a play of Ahamkara. That is the reason we do not see sage Valmiki portraying Kumbhakarna as a villain, even though he fights on the side of the demons.

Maybe sage Valmiki was aware of our tendency to characterize the Tamas Guna as an evil force of nature. Hence, he wrote a few chapters that give us a very different picture of Kumbhakarna. For example, in verses 6-63-2 to 6-63-18, Kumbhakarna scolds Ravana for not following the duties of a king and tells Ravana that he is listening to bad advisors. Here, we get a picture of a person who has very high regard for books and scriptures, and who dislikes brutality and greed for wealth. Even at the cost of getting Ravana mad at him, Kumbhakarna does not hesitate to give excellent advice to Ravana. From verse 6-63-33 to verse 6-63-58, he gently and firmly tells Ravana that he will do Ravana's bidding.

In chapter 6-64, demon Mahodara – meaning “big-belly” – who is a close advisor to Ravana, rebukes Kumbhakarna and shows off his talent. According to Mahodara, Ravana has deliberated all aspects and consequences before choosing his course of actions. From verses 6-64-4 to 6-64-10, Mahodara evokes the concepts of karma, virtue, etc. but ends up justifying Ravana’s actions. These four verses are valuable to us, because they show how words from scriptures end up being an instrument of justification of wrong actions.

In verse 6-64-6, Mahodara says that righteousness (Dharma), wealth (Artha) and fulfillment of legitimate desires (Kama) always go together. He takes out the fourth word from this list, which is salvation or liberation (Moksha). Thus, he uses these words completely out of context. Instead of saying “righteousness brings wealth, fulfillment of legitimate desires, and liberation,” Mahodara interprets it in the wrong way. He broadens the scope of legitimate desires to include illegitimate desires and equates their fulfillment with righteousness. In three verses, 6-64-7, 8, and 9 – Mahodara justifies Ravana’s abduction of Sita. These verses are difficult to translate and very difficult to interpret because of their twisted logic. **In these verses, sage Valmiki shows and gives us yet another warning that the people may quote scriptures out of context to justify wrong actions.**

Mahodara’s use of scriptures as a means to justify his ends reminds us of the warning given in the Isavasya Upanishad. It says that a person who merely collects knowledge from the scriptures but does not use it correctly, goes to even more darkness than an individual who does not read scriptures at all. Based on the logic Mahodara makes use of, we conclude that he has a twisted mind. Almost to prove that this is true, in the next few verses Mahodara hatches a wicked plan to trick Sita into Ravana’s submission by creating a fake drama of victory over Shri Ram and Laxmana.

Coming back to the story of Kumbhakarna, in verse 6-65-23, Ravana orders Kumbhakarna to go to war along with the army of Lanka against Shri Ram. The discussion of Kumbhakarna going to the battle alone, with none of Ravana’s army, keeps on popping up in these chapters. Its reason will be clear later.

Verses 6-65-40 and 41 tell us the exact size of Kumbhakarna. He is 600 bows tall and 100 bows wide. The bows used in ancient times were very tall. If we consider a bow’s height to be five feet, we get Kumbhakarna’s height to be 3000 feet, which is three times that of Eiffel tower. As for his width, he is 500 feet wide.

In chapters 6-66 and 6-67, Kumbhakarna decimates and devours the monkey army, even as Angada tries to raise the monkeys' spirits. In verse 6-67-18, Hanumana tries to stop Kumbhakarna and gets badly hurt in a single hit from him. In verses 6-67-24 through 6-67-30, sage Valmiki tells us that five monkey leaders attack Kumbhakarna at the same time. However, Kumbhakarna defeats all of them easily.

Because of his agility, little Angada gives a good fight to Kumbhakarna. However, in verse 6-67-50, Kumbhakarna catches Angada in his fist and throws him down; Angada falls unconscious. Sugriva tries to stop Kumbhakarna, but fails. Instead, in verse 6-67-62, Kumbhakarna tries to kill Sugriva by his spike. Fortunately, in verse 6-67-63, Hanumana steps in and stops the spike from killing Sugriva.

At this point, all the monkey leaders are collectively trying to stop Kumbhakarna. They are not following the one-to-one-fight rule, and yet they cannot contain Kumbhakarna. In verse 6-67-67, Kumbhakarna strikes Sugriva with a mountain, making Sugriva unconscious. So far, Sugriva has fallen unconscious three times with no confirmed killing of any named demon to his credit. Instead of killing Sugriva on the spot, Kumbhakarna plans to take him to Lanka first and then kill him there.

In verse 6-67-72, Kumbhakarna thinks if he kills Sugriva, it will defeat Shri Ram. This logic works only if we consider Sugriva to be the heart. When the heart stops, the Consciousness has to leave the body.

Fortunately, in verses 6-67-84 to 6-67-89, Sugriva regains his consciousness. He escapes from Lanka and unites with Shri Ram. Sugriva cuts off Kumbhakarna's nose, ears, and thus, Kumbhakarna looks even more frightening than before.

Let us step back a little and see Hanumana's reaction at the time, when Kumbhakarna was carrying Sugriva away to Lanka to kill him. Hanumana could have tried to stop Kumbhakarna from carrying unconscious Sugriva away, but he chooses not to do so. From the verse 6-67-74 to verse 6-67-80, Hanumana decides the right course of action for him, while the enemy carries his king away. First, he thinks of killing Kumbhakarna to help Sugriva. However, he thinks it would be shameful for Sugriva to need help. Therefore, in verse 6-67-81, he waits and cheers up the monkey army in the meantime. It does not appear to be logical. Just a few verses ago, Hanumana had stopped the spike hurled by Kumbhakarna toward Sugriva. At that time, Sugriva definitely needed help, which Hanumana offered as a duty. Just a few verses before, all the monkey leaders fought together against

Kumbhakarna. None of them felt any shame in it. So, why would Sugriva feel ashamed if he got help when he was unconscious and was being carried away to be killed by an enemy? **Surely, sage Valmiki has a secret message in the actions of Hanumana. Interestingly, as per the law of duplication, same illogical actions happen again. This time, Laxmana makes a blunder.**

In verse 6-67-94, the mighty Kumbhakarna is back in the battlefield. He is angry, drenched in blood and without his nose and ears. Laxmana tries to stop him and gives him a good fight. In verses 6-67-106 through 6-67-111, Kumbhakarna praises Laxmana's bravery, but mildly and respectfully refuses to fight. He tells Laxman that he is interested in killing only Shri Ram, because when he kills Shri Ram, the rest of the army dies with him. **Strangely, in verse 6-67-114, Laxmana happily directs Kumbhakarna to Shri Ram.** Kumbhakarna brushes Laxmana away and rushes toward Shri Ram, intending to kill him. Ideally, Laxmana should have told Kumbhakarna that he could fight Shri Ram only when Laxmana was dead. It makes little sense to direct an enemy to your king, as it increases the chances of the enemy killing the king.

Hanumana and Laxmana not engaging Kumbhakarna and putting Sugriva and Shri Ram in harm's way is a puzzle of Ramayana. What Sage Valmiki is suggesting here is that Prana and a devoted mind, though strong, are no match for the Tamas Guna. Only the power of the higher Consciousness can nullify the Tamas Guna. That is the reason we see Shri Ram killing a named demon for the first time in battle and opening his account.

This solution prescribed by sage Valmiki is rather difficult to understand. Let us try to read it from our daily experience, because that is the only useful reference for us. When we are in a phase of eating and spending too much time sleeping, we are full of Tamas Guna. These types of phases happen to all spiritual aspirants where, suddenly, a strange lethargy and laziness take them over. We cannot devote our mind, because our mind refuses to focus. We cannot spare the efforts to do Pranayama. Even if we try, it does not work. The central premise of Ramayana is the use of the devoted mind or Prana to find the Energy and the Consciousness. But now, these practices do not work against the power of the Tamas Guna. How do we proceed, if the tools we have used so far become blunt against a powerful force?

The suggestion sage Valmiki seems to give is that we did our job. It is now for the higher Consciousness to fight its battle. **Sage Valmiki's prescription at this point in the battle is: step aside. Do not even engage in either of these practices. Be aware and leave it up to the higher Consciousness to fight the Tamas Guna.** For this reason, we see that Hanumana does not engage in battle with Kumbhakarna. By the same token, we see that Laxmana happily points Kumbhakarna to Shri Ram in war.

From verse 6-67-115 onwards, Kumbhakarna battles Shri Ram. Kumbhakarna rushes towards Shri Ram to kill him. Shri Ram shoots arrows into Kumbhakarna's chest and makes him weaponless. Wounded Kumbhakarna then runs around the battlefield, eating soldiers from the enemy, and his army. Now, we understand the reason Kumbhakarna wanted to go to the battle alone. Kumbhakarna knew that he may be wounded in the battlefield and he may lose his sense to distinguish between friend and foe. He did not want any demon soldiers on the battlefield, so he could kill the enemy without having to worry about friendly fire for the demon army.

We see that not only does Kumbhakarna give a lecture to Ravana on morality, he also kills demons on the battlefield. Even though the Tamas Guna fights for the Ahamkara, Tamas Guna can be a problem for the Ahamkara's side too. Sage Valmiki is reinforcing the idea that the Tamas Guna is a pure force of nature. When nature unleashes the Tamas Guna, it does not discriminate between a friend and a foe. Just as a sword cuts anyone it falls upon, with no regard for a friend or a foe, the Tamas Guna too takes no sides. Hence, Ravana does not wake up Kumbhakarna on the first shot of the battle. Rather, he waits until Shri Ram defeats him.

In verse 6-67-131, Laxmana suggests using Kumbhakarna's weight against Kumbhakarna and making him crawl on the battleground. Laxmana suggests that the monkeys jump on Kumbhakarna, make him fall on the ground and kill him when he cannot move. In verse 6-67-132, the monkeys jump on Kumbhakarna, but they cannot bring him down. Hence, Shri Ram steps into the battle against Kumbhakarna.

In verse 6-67-158, Shri Ram chops off one of Kumbhakarna's arms, and then, in verse 6-67-162, he cuts the other arm of Kumbhakarna. The verse 6-67-162 has a very unusual description regarding the broken arm of Kumbhakarna. It says the arm, even though it is cut off from the body, keeps moving hither, thither and yon. It hits the monkeys, the demons, and the trees.

In verse 6-67-163, Shri Ram cuts both legs of Kumbhakarna and brings him down on the ground as suggested by Laxman in verse 6-67-131. Sage Valmiki reemphasizes that Kumbhakarna falls flat on the ground, with no legs or arms. Mighty Kumbhakarna, with no legs or hands or nose or ears, crawls toward Shri Ram with his mouth as his weapon. In verse 6-67-166, Shri Ram shoots several arrows into the crawling Kumbhakarna's mouth and closes it for good.

In verse 6-67-170, Shri Ram cuts off Kumbhakarna's head, finally killing the mighty Kumbhakarna. Even as he dies, Kumbhakarna creates a puzzle for us. Verses 6-67-172 and 173 mentions that Kumbhakarna's head fell in the streets of Lanka and that his body fell into the sea, killing many alligators and fishes.

Kumbhakarna's head falling in the street of Lanka gives us an estimate of the respective locations of Kumbhakarna and Shri Ram in the battlefield, regarding Lanka and the sea. Shri Ram is facing Lanka and has the sea behind him. Legless Kumbhakarna is crawling toward Shri Ram, with his face toward the sea. When Shri Ram cuts off Kumbhakarna's head with a powerful arrow, we can imagine the force of the arrow that carries his head towards Lanka. **However, how could a heavy, dead, helpless, legless body of Kumbhakarna cross Shri Ram and fall in the sea?**

Just a few verses ago, Laxmana tried to kill Kumbhakarna using Kumbhakarna's weight against him. In addition, sage Valmiki has repeatedly compared Kumbhakarna with a mountain. It means that his body would stay at the same place where it was. Now, we see that there is a clear, logical discrepancy in Kumbhakarna's legless, dead body reaching the sea and falling in it. We can answer this puzzle in the spiritual realm by considering Kumbhakarna as the Tamas Guna.

There is a story in Valmiki Ramayana, which tells us that Shri Ram's ancestors had built that sea. Thus, there is a direct connection between the sea and Shri Ram. **Submerging Kumbhakarna's body in the sea is an indirect way of telling that Kumbhakarna disappears into Shri Ram. Shri Ram / the higher Consciousness, upon defeating the Tamas Guna for good, absorbs it into himself/itself.**

Now we understand the compulsion of sage Valmiki to find some or the other way to drop Kumbhakarna's dead body into the sea. He shows that Kumbhakarna's body kept crawling, even after his head was cut off, and thus, his headless body landed in the sea. Remember the verse 6-67-162 where Kumbhakarna's hand kept

on moving even after being removed from the body and kept killing others? Sage Valmiki added this creepy effect to make it easy for us to imagine Kumbhakarna's headless, legless dead body crawling toward the sea and providing a duplication.

Hanumana Brings the Mountain of Herbs to Lanka

Even after Kumbhakarna's death, Ravana still has many skilled warriors in his army. However, Shri Ram's army kills them all, one by one.

In verse 6-73-21, Indrajit performs a sacrificial fire before entering the battlefield again. In verse 6-73-27, he prepares a missile presided over by Lord Brahma, which he plans to kill Shri Ram. When a divine missile presided over by Lord Brahma is invoked by a warrior, it is attached to a single arrow aimed at one person. Indrajit, however, invokes a missile attached to a quiver full of sharp arrows. Verses 6-73-62 to 65 tell us that Indrajit strikes down the entire leadership of the monkey army by using arrows presided over by Lord Brahma. In verse 6-73-66, Indrajit showers those powerful arrows on Shri Ram and Laxman. Shri Ram does not even attempt to stop him.

In verse 6-73-69, Shri Ram says to Laxmana that there is no way to stop Indrajit today because of the power of arrows presided over by Lord Brahma. All they can do is to take this horrible shower of arrows upon themselves and hope that Indrajit presumes them to be dead, by seeing them hurt and unconscious. This is not a good plan, because Indrajit might come near them to make sure they are dead. Luckily, however, Shri Ram's plan works. Indrajit assumes that Shri Ram and Laxman are dead and returns to Lanka.

In verse 6-74-3, Vibhishana consoles the monkey army by pointing out that Shri Ram and Laxman honored the missile presided over by Lord Brahma. When a warrior honors a divine missile presided over by Lord Brahma, the divine missile does not kill the warrior.

Vibhishana and Hanumana search the battlefield for the rest of the monkey leadership and find most of them hurt badly. Then they search for Jambavan, probably by calling his name aloud. Jambavan's eyes are injured, but he recognizes Vibhishana's voice. In verse 6-74-18, Jambavan asks about Hanumana before asking about anyone else. Vibhishana questions him, why he is not asking about Shri Ram? Jambavan replies, in verse 6-74-22, saying that if Hanumana is alive, then they are

all alive. Otherwise, they are dead even if alive. This is a critical verse that underscores Hanumana's importance as the Prana in our body.

In verse 6-74-29, Jambavan asks Hanumana to go to the Himalayas to fetch four life-saving herbs. These herbs are on a mountain between Mt. Kailash and Mt. Rishabh. They illuminate the entire region, because they emit light. Verse 6-74-33 gives the names of the herbs as: Mrit-Sanjivani, which can restore the dead to life; Vishalyakarani, which heals all wounds; Souvarnakarani, which can restore skin to a healthy complexion; and Sandhani, which join severed or fractured bones.

In verse 6-74-34, Jambavan says that not only would these herbs heal Shri Ram and Laxman, but they would also inject life into the dead monkey warriors and heal the wounded army. In verse 6-74-55, sage Valmiki tells us that Hanumana flies toward the Himalayas with the speed of the wind, shaking the earth with a powerful sound. In verse 6-74-56, Hanumana arrives at the Himalayas, meaning he did not stop anywhere. It does not mention any other place on his journey to the Himalayas from Lanka. In verse 6-74-59, he sees the abodes of Indra, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Agni (fire god), Kuber (god of wealth), and a few other places. In verse 6-74-60, he sees a sort of hole through which one can enter the earth and go all the way down.

In verse 6-74-61, he sees mount Rishabh, all illuminated because of the light emitting herbs and as if on fire, just as Jambavan had described it. In verse 6-74-64, upon learning that someone is looking for them, all the distinguished herbs disappear, preventing Hanumana from seeing them.

In verse 6-74-65, Lord Hanumana gets angry at the mountain and plans to carry the top of the mountain with herbs to Lanka. Verse 6-74-74 tells us the reason Hanumana brought an entire mountain of herbs back instead of a few herbs.

Verse 6-74-69 calls Hanumana a second sun and gives us a picture of brightness, in which two suns are shining at the same time. The next verse describes him as shining as Lord Vishnu wielding his flaming discus of a thousand edges.

In verse 6-74-73, Shri Ram and Laxman inhale the fragrance of the herbs, which heal their wounds. Similarly, all the other monkey warriors also inhale the fragrance, and their wounds heal too. Verse 6-74-74 says that even dead warriors got up too.

In verses 6-74-75 and 76, Ravana asks the monkey army to throw the dead bodies of the demons into the sea to honor them. In the Kumbhakarna story, we saw the meaning of dead demons thrown in the sea, and this event provides a

duplication of the same. Verse 6-74-77 tells us about Hanumana carrying the mountain of herbs back to the Himalayas.

Bringing the mountain of herbs to Lanka to revive Shri Ram, Laxmana, and the rest of the monkey army is the second-most significant action of Lord Hanumana, the first being to find mother Sita in Lanka. Hanumana is the most important character for us. Hence, we need to understand every action performed by him. Let us try to interpret this significant event.

First, let us map the geography of the Indian subcontinent to our body. We know that Lanka stands for the Muladhara Chakra. The Himalayas, which are to the north, stand for the Sahasrara. As verse 6-74-59 mentions, Lord Hanumana saw abodes of Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva in the Himalayas; this shows the Sahasrara. The blazing mountains, lit because of the self-illuminating herbs, show the relative brightness of the Sahasrara. The herbs sense that someone is searching for them; so, they stop self-illuminating and become invisible to Hanumana. Sage Valmiki added this magic-like event, so that Hanumana could find a justification to bring the mountain to Lanka. Let us solve this puzzle.

Verse 6-74-69 tells us that Hanumana looks like a second sun and like Lord Vishnu with his thousand-edged discus. The image of a thousand-edged discus closely resembles the picture of the Sahasrara, which means a lotus with thousand petals. His brightness being equal to the second sun reminds us of the thousand-sun effect mentioned in Gita, when Shri Krishna shows Arjuna his actual form.

The Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra to find the Energy. Hanumana finding Sita in Lanka depicts it. Hanumana's flying to the Himalayas in the north represents the first passage of the Prana toward the Sahasrara. **The Prana travels to the Sahasrara via the Sushumna Nadi. Thus, Sage Valmiki depicts Hanumana as flying in the air, describing no other location between the Muladhara Chakra and the Sahasrara.**

The Prana's earlier journey to the Muladhara Chakra from the Anahata Chakra is not through the Sushumna Nadi, as its access is not open yet. The Sushumna Nadi has its opening in the Muladhara Chakra. Once the Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra, it can access the opening of Sushumna Nadi.

Yogis depict the Energy or the Kundalini as a snake, with three and half coils, lying dormant in the Muladhara Chakra. It has an opening of the Sushumna Nadi in its mouth, meaning that it blocks access to the Sushumna Nadi. When the Prana

finds the Energy in the Muladhara Chakra, it automatically finds the opening of the Sushumna Nadi automatically. With a guru's grace and some luck, it can enter the Sushumna Nadi and travels upwards for the first time.

It is a significant event in the body for a person, and the person will surely recognize it. By focusing attention on the base of the spine, we can feel this event. As we saw before in verse 6-74-55, when Hanumana jumped toward the Himalayas, it shook all sides of the earth with a powerful sound. When the Prana travels through the Sushumna Nadi for the first time, it creates vibrations and sound similar to those mentioned in these verses.

When the Prana reaches the Sahasrara, it converts into the higher Consciousness. This higher Consciousness, which is a little higher than the current normal level, has a medicine like calming and neutralizing effect on the body. The Prana reaches the Sahasrara only when the Energy level in the body is substantially higher than the normal Energy level. Since the Prana is reaching up to the Sahasrara for the first time, it finds blockages in its path, which means a large percentage of the Energy of Prana converts into vibrations or even heat. Thus, by the time the Prana reaches the Sahasrara, the body has already taken up a good amount of vibrations and heat.

When the higher Consciousness descends from the Sahasrara, we feel its neutralizing effects strongly against the backdrop of the Energy's violent movements in the body. The calming effect slowly descends to the Muladhara Chakra and spreads all over the body. If you imagine sitting in a cross-legged position, you see the body in the shape of a triangle. We can imagine this triangular shape as the mountain that Hanumana carried to Lanka or the Muladhara Chakra. You will find several images of Lord Hanumana carrying a mountain in his hand. They refer to the effect on the body of the higher Consciousness, when the Prana reaches the Sahasrara. The effect of the precious life-giving herbs is the effect of the higher Consciousness itself.

Laxmana Defeats Indrajit

Upon hearing the news of death of Makaraksha, Ravana becomes furious and calls upon Indrajit to kill Shri Ram and Laxmana. After performing a ritual sacrifice, Indrajit ascends on a chariot which can disappear.

In verse 6-80-13, sage Valmiki says Indrajit's chariot has images of an antelope, a full moon, and a half-moon. The antelope indicates his agility. The full moon and the half-moon show his ability to be visible, partially visible, and invisible to his enemies. If a new moon could be depicted pictorially, it would be there too. Verse 6-80-15 mentions that he is still protected by a missile presided over by Lord Brahma. Thus, we get a picture of Indrajit as an invisible, super-fast, and powerful warrior with a strong, protective shield.

In verse 6-80-82, hidden from sight, Indrajit strikes Shri Ram and Laxmana with arrows. Shri Ram and Laxmana could not hear the horses, chariot wheels, or the bowstring of Indrajit. Finally, Laxmana plans to use a missile presided over by Lord Brahma and kill Indrajit. However, Shri Ram stops him in verse 6-80-38 and asks him to use high-speed arrows instead. According to Shri Ram, using a missile presided over by Lord Brahma would kill the entire demons race, since Laxmana would not know where to point the missile precisely, so he would end up killing all the demons for the sake of killing the invisible Indrajit. Note that there are friendly demons like Vibhishana too.

By the time Shri Ram plans to thwart Indrajit's attacks for the first time by using high-speed arrows, Indrajit returns to Lanka. Verse 6-81-1 reveals that Indrajit sensed the retaliation plan of Shri Ram and quickly changed his battle tactics. Indrajit comes back with an illusionary image of Sita in his chariot, but instead of going toward Shri Ram, he goes toward the monkeys. Hanumana recognizes Sita in Indrajit's chariot as he had seen her before. In verse 6-81-29, Indrajit slices Sita's throat with a sword. This trick works wonders for him. After a fierce battle in verse 6-82-20, Hanumana asks the monkey army to retreat. In verse 6-82-24, Indrajit goes back to perform his ritual sacrifice as his magical power/battery seems to have run out.

In verse 6-83-8, Hanumana tells the sad news of the murder of Sita to Shri Ram. In verse 6-83-9, Shri Ram, filled with grief upon hearing this news, falls on the ground. He is conscious but disturbed. From the verse 6-83-13 to verse 6-83-44, Laxmana responds to this sad turn of events with utter frustration. At this stage, we recognize that Laxmana stands for the devoted mind. Even though he is devoted, he represents the mind. In response to severe circumstances, our mind has a tendency to give up our earlier position and swing to the opposite position. Thus,

we see that Laxmana, who is all about virtue, proper conduct, etc. suddenly turns around and takes opposite views.

Luckily, Vibhishana comes to the rescue and tells everyone that Indrajit slayed an illusion of Sita, not real Sita. In verse 6-84-9, Vibhishana tells everyone that Indrajit killing real Sita is as absurd as the drying up of the sea. **Carefully read the verse 6-84-12, where he explains why it is impossible to kill real Sita. According to him, it is not possible to see Sita, even by doing philanthropic activities, waging war, or by any other strategy.**

Why does Vibhishana say that Sita is not visible by any strategy, when though Ravana had abducted her by force?

In this verse, sage Valmiki changes the context, so he is now referring to Sita as the Energy. He is telling us it is not possible to perceive Energy by employing any strategy that goes beyond our inner forces. To cover-up for this twist, sage Valmiki tells us in verse 6-84-10 that Ravana has evil intentions toward mother Sita. So, he will not kill her.

In verse 6-84-14, Vibhishana tells Shri Ram that Indrajit gets his magical powers by performing a ritual sacrifice. The only way, to defeat him, is to fight him after his power has run out and before he has time to recharge himself. Until now, Indrajit has proved himself much stronger than anyone in the battlefield, whether fighting alone or collectively. He almost killed Shri Ram and Laxmana twice and pushed back the monkey army single handedly. **Now we come to know his fatal weakness – he has an external power source, and his battery life is very short. He needs to recharge his battery regularly. The enemy can defeat or kill him, when his battery power is weak or dead.**

What Body-Mind process is so powerful that it can subdue the Consciousness and the devoted mind? The process has to be related to the Ahamkara as Indrajit is Ravana's son. This process must be able to control the sense organs given that its name is Indrajit.

In Verse 6-84-15, Vibhishana tells Shri Ram that Indrajit was expecting interruption in his ritual sacrifice from the monkey army. To keep the monkey army occupied, until he finished performing his next sacrifice, he tricked them by killing illusory mother Sita.

In verse 6-84-18, Vibhishana suggests to Shri Ram that since Shri Ram is still in shock, Laxmana should be allowed to battle Indrajit with the entire monkey army.

Following the law of duplication, Shri Ram asks Vibhishana, in verse 6-85-3, to repeat his statements, as He could not understand them.

Verses 6-85-14 and 15 tell us about a boon of Lord Brahma to Indrajit. Indrajit cannot be defeated when his magic, powered by his ritual sacrifices, is available to him. Indrajit's weakness or curse is that he is in danger, when he is going to perform or has yet not finished performing his ritual sacrifice.

This complex statement of boon or curse resolves to a simple statement that modern readers can understand from their experience. It reminds us of the first generation of smartphones. They were great when they were fully charged, but their battery would not last for long. Once the battery was dead, these phones were useless, until we charged them again. Now we can see that a simple fact works as a boon or a curse depending upon how we interpret it. It works as a boon for Indrajit when his battery is fully charged and as a curse when his battery is down.

In verse 6-85-22, Shri Ram directs Laxmana to take Hanumana and the entire army along to kill Indrajit. Indrajit has caused great destruction to Shri Ram's army. **Shri Ram, being the most powerful warrior, should battle against Indrajit, but He does not. Instead, He allows Laxman to take on Indrajit.**

Even when his magical powers are not functioning, Indrajit takes good care to protect himself. He surrounds himself with the demon army and keeps a magical flying horse to escape from the cave whenever required. He knows his weakness and carefully guards himself against all eventualities.

In verse 6-86-2 to 6-86-5, Vibhishana tells Laxmana to ignore the demon army, focus on Indrajit, and deny him a chance of becoming invisible. He suggests that Hanumana and the rest of the army should fight the other demons, so that Laxmana can interrupt Indrajit's ritual sacrifice.

Again, in verse 6-86-34, when Indrajit is fighting Hanumana, Vibhishana tells Laxmana to fight Indrajit himself. Once again, in verse 87-6-6, Vibhishana shows Laxmana the place, where Indrajit performs the ritual sacrifice and asks him to kill Indrajit. There must be a reason behind Vibhishana repeatedly nudging Laxmana to kill Indrajit. Even before this battle, Vibhishana had, in verse 6-84-18, specifically asked Laxmana to engage Indrajit.

Finally, Laxmana gets the message and engages Indrajit, but before the battle begins, he gives a lecture on virtue and righteousness to Indrajit. Since Indrajit is sitting in a chariot, Laxmana ascends upon Hanumana's back and begins a fierce

battle with Indrajit. In verse 88-6-41, Vibhishana asks Laxman to hurry and kill Indrajit. In verse 88-6-79, seeing that Laxmana is getting tired, Vibhishana fights Indrajit, but he cannot bear the thought of killing his nephew (also, he was no match for his nephew in the battle). Laxmana joins battle again and after a long and fierce battle, Laxman shoots a missile presided over by Indra, with a prayer to Shri Ram, to kill Indrajit. Finally, in verse 90-6-74, Indrajit's head falls to the ground, and Laxman settles the score with Indrajit.

When Laxman and Vibhishana tell this news of victory to Shri Ram, he becomes happy. In verses 91-6-9 through 12, Shri Ram places Laxmana on his lap and smells his head repeatedly. **In verses 91-6-13 through 18, Shri Ram says, “When Indrajit is killed, Ravana is as good as killed, so I am victorious.”**

In these verses, he gives the credit of victory to Hanumana and Vibhishana too, as they all collectively killed Indrajit. After receiving medical treatment from Sushena, Laxmana, and the rest of the army recover completely from the wounds of the war. In verse 91-6-27, Shri Ram, Laxmana, Sugriva, and the army celebrate this victory, the celebration continuing for a long time.

Earlier in this book, we saw the character of Ravana represents the Ahamkara. The character of Mandodari represents rationalizing intellect. Samkhya tells us that “The Consciousness created the faculty of rationalizing intellect / Buddhi. The Ahamkara and the rationalizing intellect together created the mind.”

By mere substitution of words, we get: Ravana representing the Ahamkara and Mandodari representing the rationalizing intellect together gave birth to Indrajit, who represents the mind. Indrajit as the mind itself fits perfectly with the character of Indrajit. Mind can control the sense organs, which is why his name means “one who won Indra”. Indra word comes from Indriya, which means sense organs.

In chapter 6-48, we saw that Indrajit could bind Shri Ram and Laxman with a network of serpents, which we interpreted as wicked desires of the mind. In this chapter, we saw the symbols of agility, visibility, and power on Indrajit's chariot. They make sense when we consider Indrajit as the mind.

In this chapter, we saw that Shri Ram chose not to fight against Indrajit and that Vibhishana kept insisting that Laxmana should kill Indrajit. Thus, according to sage Valmiki, Indrajit is not the equivalent of Shri Ram. However, Laxmana and Indrajit are equal and opposite processes within the mind itself.

The difficulty in considering Indrajit as the mind is that Laxmana represents the devoted mind, which is a part of the mind. With this information, we get a two-way split of the mind of an advanced Yogi. A Yogi has both processes of mind - a devoted mind and the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind. They are the two processes within the mind represented by Laxmana and Indrajit.

The next series of questions are about Indrajit's ritual sacrifices, which work as a source of power for him. We saw that once Indrajit completes his ritual sacrifice, no one can defeat him, not even Shri Ram. What then is its source of power? What is it that temporarily charges this component of the mind so much that even the Consciousness cannot stop it?

Sage Valmiki does not give any details about this power source, except that it is an external power supply. Probably it represents some kind of powerful spell started by the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind, which grips a Yogi at this advanced stage. According to sage Valmiki, so long as this spell is active, a Yogi cannot do or should do anything to fight this spell. Sage Valmiki recommends that the best thing to do is to wait it out, because even though the spell is powerful, it is short-lived. Sage Valmiki mentions that Indrajit's battery life, powered by an external source, is rather limited. Once his battery is down, he is vulnerable. Laxmana, with the help of Hanumana and Vibhishana, took him out.

With this event, sage Valmiki gives us a crucial warning that there is a possibility that a Yogi may come under some kind of spell started by the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind. He recommends waiting it out until the spell ends, and then, guided by the Sattva Guna, to use the devoted mind and the practice of Pranayama to finish the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind.

The question that arises next, is: Since Indrajit is equal to and the opposite of Laxmana, does Laxmana depend upon a power source too? Does he have a limited battery too? **Although not the same as Indrajit, we saw several instances before where a wounded Laxmana recovered merely by coming in contact with Shri Ram, which is his power source.**

Ravana at His Best

After hearing the news of Indrajit's death, Ravana becomes furious. In verses 92-6-20, 92-6-34 and 92-6-44, he plans to kill Sita to take revenge. Luckily, in verse 92-6-62, Suparshava, meaning "good-behind," a good-natured minister of Ravana stops him from killing Sita. He tells Ravana to win Sita by killing Shri Ram in war. It is the first time when Ravana accepts advice from a good-natured minister.

In verse 93-6-6, Ravana dispatches the demon army to the battleground, and, in verse 93-6-18, Shri Ram, joins the battle right away. Verse 93-6-21 tells us that the demons cannot see Shri Ram, who is hitting them, and they end up hitting each other. **Verse 93-6-23 again mentions the demons cannot see Shri Ram, just as created beings cannot see the Consciousness operating behind the senses.** According to verses 93-6-29 and 30, the demons see Shri Ram as the discus of Lord Vishnu, killing the demons like the wheel of time.

For the first time in the war, we learn in verse 93-6-23, that Shri Ram kills several demons. However, no named demon is mentioned among those dead. After hearing the news of a defeat of the demons at the hands of Shri Ram, Ravana enters the battlefield, according to verse 6-95-28.

In verse 6-96-16, Sugriva battles Virupaksha, whose name means "not-good-looking-eyes." After a fierce battle, Sugriva kills the demon. Thus, this demon becomes the second named demon Sugriva killed. In verse 6-97-9, Mahodara, meaning "big-belly," enters the battlefield. Sugriva responds again, and, in verse 6-97-33, kills Mahodara. In verse 6-98-1, Mahaparshava or "big behind," attacks Angada, and, in verse 6-98-22, Angada kills Mahaparshava.

Now, the only remaining named demon is Ravana. In verse 6-99-6, he attacks Shri Ram. Instead of fighting with Ravana himself, Shri Ram makes Laxmana fight him. However, Ravana overpowers Laxman and attacks Shri Ram. While Ravana battles Shri Ram, Laxmana, and Vibhishana destroy Ravana's chariot and horses in verses 6-100-13 through 18.

In verse 6-100-25, Ravana plans to kill his brother Vibhishana with a great spear designed by demon Maya. Laxmana attempts to stop Ravana. Therefore, instead of throwing a spear at Vibhishana, Ravana shoots it at Laxmana. In verse 6-100-34, the spear goes through Laxmana's chest, making him fall to the ground again. In verse 6-100-44, Shri Ram takes out the spear from Laxmana's chest and breaks it into two pieces.

In verse 6-100-48, Shri Ram vows to either kill Ravana or die in battle the same day itself. However, in verses 6-101-3 through 23, Shri Ram is ready to give up the war, because Laxmana is almost dead. In verse 6-101-24, Sushena tells Shri Ram not to despair, as Laxmana did not die. In verses 6-101-31 through 33, Sushena asks Hanumana to bring life savings herbs again. In verse 6-101-35, Hanumana plans to take the mountain of herbs with him to Lanka. In verse 6-101-45, Sushena administers the herbs to Laxmana, and Laxmana becomes fit.

When Laxmana becomes fit to talk again, he reminds Shri Ram of his oath to kill Ravana that day itself. In verse 6-102-7, seeing that Shri Ram is a foot soldier and Ravana is on a chariot, Indra sends his chariot driver to Shri Ram. Indra stands for Indriya, which means sense organs. In previous stories, we saw that the chariot is a reference to our body. Thus, this puzzle resolves to a simple statement: **now, the sense organs are helping the Consciousness fight the battle against the Ahamkara.**

In chapter 6-105, sage Agastya advises Shri Ram, who is exhausted because of the battle, to worship the Sun God. Unlike most of the characters we have seen, sage Agastya represents someone outside of our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness framework. In fact, he represents someone who can see what is happening within our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness. Thus, he can guide or help us during the critical moments of war between our Consciousness and our Ahamkara. In chapter 6-105, sage Agastya praises the Sun God as Lord Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Sage Valmiki adds this odd chapter here, so he can duplicate its content, when Shri Ram learns about his actual nature.

In verse 6-107-55, Shri Ram chops off Ravana's head, but a second head appears. Verse 6-107-57 tells us that Shri Ram chops off hundreds of heads of Ravana and each time new heads appear. The battle goes on for seven days, with no break even for a moment.

In verse 6-108-2, Indra's charioteer Matali suggests using a missile presided over by Lord Brahma against Ravana. In these verses, we get to understand the details about the missile presided over by Lord Brahma. **Verse 6-108-6 tells us it has feathers; its endpoint has fire; it is heavy as mountains, and its shaft is made of space. From the description, it looks like sage Valmiki is pointing to something made of the five elements, except that the water element is**

missing here. Verse 6-108-7 corrects that right away; it tells us that the arrow is made of all the five elements and with the illuminating power of the Sun.

We know our body is made up from the Energy and the Consciousness. The Energy has created five elements, and we are a combination of these elements. In chapter 6-105, we saw that sage Agastya relates Sun to Lord Brahma. Therefore, the words “illuminating power of the sun” lead us to the Consciousness. **Thus, Shri Ram using a missile presided over by Lord Brahma signifies the higher Consciousness using all the Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness. When every single fiber of us, visible or not, is filled with a higher Consciousness, the Ahamkara has no place to hide, and can be defeated for good.**

The Ahamkara has been defeated in the previous six incarnation stories, and it will be defeated in the next two incarnation stories too. However, the way it is defeated in this seventh incarnation (Shri Ram) story is uncommon among all these stories.

In verse 6-108-18, the blazing arrow presided over by Lord Brahma falls upon Ravana’s heart and tears it off. In the other versions of Ramayana, Shri Ram is asked to shoot an arrow into Ravana’s stomach. **In all versions of Ramayana, Ravana does not die when Shri Ram tries to chop off his head, as a new head keeps appearing in its place. It is a critical warning sign Sage Valmiki is giving that even the higher Consciousness cannot defeat the Ahamkara in a head-to-head battle.**

We know that our Ahamkara is an expert in giving arguments that seem to be very logical. Thus, a head-to-head battle with the Ahamkara means attempting to defeat it by logical arguments. The Ahamkara might lose an argument, but that does not stop it from giving more arguments. **One seemingly logical argument replaces another seemingly logical argument, so that eventually, the Ahamkara is back in full force.** Ravana having a new head reflects this phenomenon, where the Ahamkara repeatedly rises, even after its complete defeat. Shri Ram can eliminate him only by piercing through his heart or stomach, the heart, or the stomach representing his source of power. Our Ahamkara is like a very resilient weed (an undesirable grass in the garden) that grows back after we remove it. Only if we uproot it completely, we can get rid of it. Likewise, the Ahamkara needs to be eliminated entirely from its source.

In verse 6-109-25, Shri Ram tells Vibhishana to perform Ravana's funeral. Until now, they were throwing the bodies of the demons into the ocean. He also says that hostilities end with the enemy's death. Shri Ram says, "Ravana is as good as mine as yours" and repeats it in verse 6-102-111.

In other versions of Ramayana, after Ravana's death, Ravana's soul merges into Shri Ram, showing that the Ahankara finally merges into the Consciousness. Sage Valmiki just leaves it at "he is as good as mine as yours"; the reason could be that Shri Ram is yet to assume his real god-nature.

The Real Nature of Sita and Shri Ram

In verse 6-112-24, Shri Ram sends Hanumana as his messenger to Sita again. Sage Valmiki dedicates chapter 6-113 to describe the discussions between Sita and Hanumana. In verse 6-113-34, Hanumana requests Sita for her permission to kill all the female demons that tormented her. She refuses this permission, saying female demons did all the bad things to her on Ravana's order and she forgave those female demons.

After the defeat of Ravana, the war ends, and Vibhishana becomes the king of Lanka. Shri Ram asks Vibhishana to bring Sita to him after making sure that she takes a bath and dresses up well. Sita wants to see her husband right away, but Vibhishana follows Shri Ram's instructions not to bring her to Him in an as-is condition. Vibhishana brings her in a covered vehicle, but Shri Ram asks her to walk, so that everyone can see her. Back then, it was uncommon for royals to walk in front of everyone.

Now, we know why he wants her to be clean and well dressed. Despite it being a sweet moment where, after winning the war, Shri Ram gets to see Sita after a long time, Shri Ram knows that it is a Public Relations moment too. **While it is what our logical mind thinks, the reality is very different. Sage Valmiki is just setting the stage for the duplication of her walking into the fire.**

When we studied the main characters, we studied Sita and Shri Ram. We will not review the events like Sita jumping in fire and then coming out of fire unharmed. Later Lord Brahma told Shri Ram that He is Lord Vishnu. We saw their real nature as Energy and Consciousness. There is no need to repeat the same content here. Those verses are the most important verses of the entire Valmiki Ramayana. Please read them carefully.

In verse 6-121-10, Vibhishana suggests that Shri Ram should take the Pushpaka airplane, so they can reach Ayodhya in a day. In verse 6-122-6, Shri Ram asks Vibhishana to reward the monkey army with gifts of precious gold and ornaments.

Shri Ram disbands the army and asks Sugriva to return to Kishkindha and Vibhishana to rule Lanka. In verse 6-122-16, Shri Ram tells Vibhishana that Lanka is now under his protection, and even Indra cannot attack Lanka.

In verse 6-122-17, Shri Ram bids adieu to everyone and says that he will go to Ayodhya. However, Vibhishana requests to accompany him to Ayodhya to see his coronation ceremony. Shri Ram gladly accepts this request.

In verse 6-122-24, everyone, including Sugriva and Vibhishana, along with his counselors, board the Pushpaka airplane. After Shri Ram dually allows the Pushpaka airplane to take them to Ayodhya, it takes off in the sky toward Ayodhya.

Arial Journey Back to Ayodhya

Ramayana has three remarkable journeys. We have already seen Hanumana's critical journey to find Sita in Lanka, and Shri Ram's journey to Lanka. After Sita and Shri Ram realize their true nature, it is time for the third journey. **Sage Valmiki dedicates the complete chapter of 6-123 to Sita's journey to Ayodhya from Lanka.** It highlights the importance of this journey.

The path followed by Pushpaka is nothing but the path of the Sushumna Nadi in the spine. Therefore, we see Pushpaka going from the Muladhara Chakra to the top of the head. On its way, it has to go through all the chakras, and thus, in chapter 6-123, we see that sage Valmiki describes all the previous places again.

The Sanskrit word Sushumna is a combination of "su," which means "gracious" and "shamna," which means, "to extinguish the fire." "Su" changes "shamna" and makes it "shumna." Thus, the word Sushumna means "a gracious way of extinguishing the fire." The Energy takes this path, when it is entirely free from the Muladhara Chakra and never returns to the Muladhara Chakra. In the context of the Kundalini, Sushumna as a "gracious way to extinguish the fire" sounds more appropriate than other meanings of it found on the internet.

If you consider the geographical positions of Ayodhya, Kishkindha, and Lanka, you get a triangular shape. An aerial vehicle need not go over Kishkindha. It does not fall on the direct aerial route to Ayodhya from Lanka. Just to confirm that we understand this, in verse 6-123-25, we have Sita asking for a stop to pick up Tara,

Sugriva's wife. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki is showing to readers that, for Pushpaka, these three locations are in a straight line.

This journey is the final ascent of the Energy toward the Sahasrara. The Energy will not come back to the Muladhara Chakra after this. **It is the most documented, coveted and celebrated journey, and yogis call it Kundalini's ascent to the Sahasrara.** There is a lot of information available on this topic. The reader is advised to read the original documents like Hatha Yoga Pradipika or Yoga-Kundalini Upanishad and other sacred texts.

Uttara-Kanda as a Sequel to Ramayana

Now, we will study the Uttara-Kanda. It is an integral part of Ramayana, and it adds value to our knowledge of Yoga. According to The Cultural Heritage of India, Volume 4, Chapter 1 by R. C. Majumdar, sage Valmiki did not write the Uttara-Kanda. Since the Uttara-Kanda does not follow the law of duplication that sage Valmiki used extensively, sage Valmiki did not write it. However, someone with knowledge and compassion comparable to sage Valmiki wrote a few chapters of Uttara-Kanda. Hence, it is treasured along with Valmiki Ramayana. We will study those parts of Uttara-Kanda which add to our knowledge of Yoga.

Valmiki Ramayana by Sage Valmiki ends when Sita and Shri Ram leave for Lord Brahma's abode. Uttara-Kanda means "Last Chapter"; it takes a step back and starts the story after Shri Ram becomes the king of Ayodhya.

To be fair to the authors of the Uttara-Kanda, we have to acknowledge the significant challenges they faced and successfully met. They had to work within the framework of Valmiki Ramayana, and they had to meet its very high standard of quality in various aspects. They took a complex document, written way before the period to which they belonged, and changed it to keep it alive. If they had not altered Valmiki Ramayana, we might have lost the entire Valmiki Ramayana.

There can be one more reason for the modification of Valmiki Ramayana through the Uttara-Kanda. By the time they wrote the Uttara-Kanda, the society changed its spiritual practices. It switched from the Energy-Consciousness based practices (path of Yoga) to devotion or karma practices (path of Bhakti and Karma). With this change, it becomes necessary to adapt Valmiki Ramayana to these new practices. With the Uttara-Kanda, Ramayana became a simpler document, with easy to remember stories and with a focus on the devotional tradition, and de-emphasis

of the framework of Energy-Consciousness. Adhyatma Ramayana and many other versions of Ramayana later followed this trend.

We will refer to the website <http://ramayana.tigercoder.com/template.php?c=07uttara>. It has all the chapters of Uttara-Kanda. There are 111 chapters of the Uttara-Kanda given on this website. Let us see what information we can find in them. **We are interested only in those chapters, which add to our knowledge about Energy-Consciousness.**

Separation of Sita and Shri Ram, Again

We know that the Energy separated from the Consciousness according to its wish to create various names and forms. Shri Ram stands for Consciousness and Sita represents the Energy. Now, we see that Sita's pregnancy and her separation from Shri Ram are closely related. For this reason, the chapter on her pregnancy (chapter 42) precedes the chapter where Shri Ram wishes separation from her (chapter 43).

In chapter 42 of the Uttara-Kanda, we read that Sita is pregnant. The happy couple is getting ready for the baby's arrival. In chapter 43, Shri Ram hears that the people of Ayodhya find it inappropriate for Him to be with Sita. The logic given is that if Shri Ram accepts Sita, the residents of Ayodhya too will have to take their wives back, should their wives be abducted like Sita. In their declaration, "people will imitate the king," they ignore the fact that Shri Ram attacked Lanka and killed Ravana for abducting His wife. In chapter 45, paragraph 4, Shri Ram tells his brothers He is afraid of criticism and infamy that will arise from the gossip. It forces us to ask ourselves "how someone, who attacked a country and killed its king, can be afraid of gossip among his subjects?" In addition, we need to refer to the statements of Shri Ram about the actual nature of Sita. In verse 6-118-15 of Valmiki Ramayana, Shri Ram says, "I know Sita, who is always in my mind, and she has undivided affection to me." In verse 6-118-16, he says, "Ravana cannot possibly harm Sita as her power protects her." In verse 6-118-18, he says, "Sita is a blazing tongue of fire. Ravana has no chance of laying his hands on such a fire." Shri Ram's disproportionate response to a silly rumor about Sita, when He has such confidence in her power, is like a big signpost to the reader to read between the lines.

In paragraph five of chapter 45, Shri Ram orders Laxmana to take Sita to the other side of River Ganga, in the jungle, and leave her there. He instructs Laxmana

to leave her near the hermitage of sage Valmiki. He firmly declares, “This is my wish, and it must be obeyed.”

The reintroduction of sage Valmiki in the Uttara-Kanda is a great value addition of the Uttara-Kanda. Sage Valmiki’s role as a guru of Shri Ram’s children is present in Valmiki Ramayana too, but it is mentioned in a few verses only. Uttara-Kanda takes this role and adds more details about it.

In chapter 50, charioteer Sumatra tells a grieving Laxmana that the separation of Sita and Shri Ram was unavoidable. Chapter 51 contains an excellent story about sage Bhrigu’s curse on Lord Vishnu, and it links this story back to Shri Ram’s separation from Sita. In this story, to kill demons that were hiding behind sage Bhrigu’s wife, Lord Vishnu killed both the demons and the sage’s wife. Sage Bhrigu cursed Lord Vishnu to have to undergo the pain of separation from his wife. Lord Vishnu accepted the curse for the betterment of the world. This curse is an example of a curtain that hides reality. Energy and Consciousness must separate, and this curse gives a nice cover for that separation.

In chapter 53, we learn Shri Krishna will be born to Vasudeva of the Yadu dynasty. Valmiki Ramayana does not mention Shri Krishna at all. This mention of Shri Krishna also works as proof that the Uttara-Kanda was written at a later date as compared to Valmiki Ramayana.

Chapter 66 tells us Sita gave birth to two children – Luva and Kusha. It also tells us that Shatrughna was present at sage Valmiki’s hermitage at the time of the birth of these two kids. Shatrughna indirectly represents Shri Ram. Therefore, indirectly, the story is telling us Shri Ram is present at the time of the birth of his kids.

Shambuka – a Mental Process, Not a Person

In chapters 73 to 76 of the Uttara Kanda, we come across the story of Shambuka of the Shudra caste, performing austerities to obtain the status of gods and go to heaven. The story mentions that the son of a Brahmin had died because of Shambuka. Shri Ram kills Shambuka, and the boy gets his life back. The Uttara-Kanda devotes four chapters to this story, which shows that it is an important story for the authors of the Uttara Kanda. Moreover, the story involves Shri Ram; so, we cannot overlook it.

Let us see what the word caste means in sage Valmiki's terminology. Sage Valmiki sees Shri Ram as the Consciousness, and it is everywhere. Thus, he holds all human beings as equal, and for him, there is no caste.

When everything in Valmiki Ramayana is within us, where is the scope for social discrimination, like the one based on caste? We see that sage Valmiki describes Shri Ram as Kshatriya and the other sages as Brahmin. However, apart from these two references, there is no mention of the caste system in Valmiki Ramayana. It has most characters as non-humans. Thus, Valmiki Ramayana steers away from any caste-based discrimination.

Chapters 73 to 76 of the Shambuka story must be a puzzle in the realm of Energy-Consciousness. Let us see if we find any useful clues to solve it. In chapter 73, a Brahmin comes to Shri Ram with the body of his dead son and blames Shri Ram for the death. In the first paragraph, this person attempts to link his Karma to the death of his son. Next, he says that never has a child died. He demands that Shri Ram bring back his dead boy to life, failing that, Shri Ram and his kingdom are doomed. According to him, if the king is not pious, then he commits sins. The sins of the king bring calamities on the citizens, and they die.

In the next chapter, we get the four Yuga views; the concept of four Yugas comes from Mahabharata. Valmiki Ramayana defines only two Yugas. As a Yuga approaches the Kali Yuga, the society allows the lower castes to perform ascetic practices. Somewhere in Shri Ram's kingdom, a person from the Shudra caste is doing penances that led to the death of the Brahmin's boy.

In the next chapter, Shri Ram summons the Pushpaka airplane. In Valmiki Ramayana, the airplane did not fly without Sita in it, but in the Uttara Kanda, it not only flies but talks too. Reading carefully, we see that Shri Ram first goes to the north, and then he searches the east, the west, and finally, the south. It is useful information as we have seen that the north represents the top of the head, and the south stands for the Muladhara Chakra and below.

As per the story, Shri Ram finds an ascetic doing most austere penances, with his head turned upside down, and his legs are pointing up - a Yoga pose. The ascetic tells Shri Ram that he is Shambuka of the Shudra caste and that he is performing penances, because he wants to go to heaven with his body. Upon hearing these words, Shri Ram takes out his sword and cuts Shambuka's head off. We wonder

why Shri Ram did not give a fair trial to Shambuka or try any other alternative to avoid a life sentence?

The story tells us that because of the execution of Shambuka, the Brahmin boy regained his life. It is also valuable and helpful information. The chapter continues with Shri Ram visiting sage Agastya, who tells him yet another story. For now, however, we will focus on the Shambuka episode.

Based on the three critical pieces of information, we have enough information to understand the story in its spiritual context. First, Shri Ram is directly involved in the story. Second, Shri Ram finds Shambuka in the southern direction. Third, when Shri Ram executes Shambuka, the Brahmin boy regains life.

It is not possible that when a person is killed, another person comes to life. Hence, this story cannot be true in the social, logical, or historical realms. People, who blame Shri Ram for injustice, know this story cannot be true and there has to be a misunderstanding.

Like all the characters in Valmiki Ramayana, Shambuka also represents a Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness process. Based on his location at the southern side, which is where the Muladhara Chakra is, we can understand him to represent some ego-driven, selfish process. Since he is at the south side, he is connected to the Muladhara Chakra. Let us inspect this Chakra.

A lotus with four petals symbolizes the Muladhara Chakra. On each petal is a letter – vam, sham, sam, and Sham. The English spellings of two of the petals are alike, but in Sanskrit, the word Shambuka starts with “sham,” the second petal of the Muladhara Chakra. The source of the Energy is in the Muladhara Chakra. From there, the Energy travels upwards to the top of the head, activating various chakras in its path. Shambuka was doing austere penances to go to heaven, so he was accumulating Energy for himself. Hence, he represents a block in the path of the Energy.

Note that this story happens after Sita and Shri Ram have separated from each other. This story relates to their separation and is not a random event. When the Energy and the Consciousness are together, there is only bliss. In this bliss, there is no way for any other process, let alone an ego-related process, to raise its head and block the path of the Energy. This story comes only after Shri Ram defeats Ravana, he becomes the king of Ayodhya and Sita separates from him. **Thus, it describes**

an advanced Yogi is in the highest state of Consciousness, but lives a normal life to perform his duties.

Sage Valmiki writes that Shri Ram has a duty to maintain the caste system. He means the higher Consciousness has a duty to organize all the internal processes in such a way that no one process blocks or takes excessive Energy, depriving other processes of it. This results in a balanced personality of a Yogi. Thus, we see that when Shri Ram representing the higher Consciousness stops Shambuka (representing an ego-related process), the excessive Energy blocked by this process is released, and the life of another process (represented by the Brahmin boy), is restored.

When we see this story in the Energy-Consciousness realm, we understand that it has nothing to do with the caste system. The authors made an unfortunate choice of using caste-based characters, leading to misinterpretation by the future generations. When a particular culture creates mythological stories, those stories apply to that culture alone. Without the cultural context, the stories lose their right meaning. The misinterpretation of the Shambuka story results from a change in the spiritual practices of society from the Yoga to that of Karma or Bhakti.

End of a Grand Life

In chapter 90 of the Uttara Kanda, Shri Ram plans to perform the Ashvamedha ritual sacrifice, having heard about its benefits. He invites sage Valmiki to Ayodhya. In chapter 92, sage Valmiki arrives at Ayodhya with Lava and Kusha – the sons of Shri Ram. Sita stays back in the hermitage of sage Valmiki. Lava and Kusha give a beautiful recital of Valmiki Ramayana in Shri Ram's court. Shri Ram listens to it attentively.

While listening to the story, Shri Ram realizes that Lava and Kusha are his sons, but the story does not give any reason for it. We can imagine that based on the fine details, known only to a few people and owing to the presence of sage Valmiki, Shri Ram can guess that these are his and Sita's kids.

In the following chapter, Shri Ram asks sage Valmiki to bring Sita to him. Sita comes to Ayodhya, because Shri Ram asked her to do so. However, she declines to join him and to become the queen of Ayodhya. In chapter 97, Sita requests the earth to open up for her; the earth does so. A divine lion throne supported by thousands of snakes emerges, Sita sits on it, and while everyone in the court is looking at this

miracle, the throne descends into the earth. Just when a happy family union was possible, why does Sita decline to join Shri Ram? It is a puzzle in the spiritual realm, and we can interpret it from the context of the Energy-Consciousness framework.

We have already seen that Sita represents Energy. Thus, she cannot be born/created nor can she die/be destroyed. Sita separated from Shri Ram to honor his wish to be many and gave birth to his children – Luva and Kusha. When the kids grow up, Sita hands them over to Shri Ram. She requests the earth to open up and disappears into it.

In the spiritual context, Sita representing the Energy joining Shri Ram representing the Consciousness in Ayodhya would mean the condition of Samadhi. It would mean that the rest of the story can no longer continue. To avoid that, she stays away from Shri Ram. When the earth opens up, several snakes support the throne that emerges out of earth. The snake correlates Sita to the Energy, giving one more clue about mother Sita's actual nature. The lion throne represents the ferociousness of the Energy.

In chapter 98, Shri Ram demands the earth should return Sita to him; otherwise, he will destroy the earth. Lord Brahma steps in to remind Shri Ram of his actual nature and tells him to listen to the rest of the story. In chapters 103 and 104, Shri Ram hears Lord Brahma's message reminding Shri Ram to take the form of Lord Vishnu, given that his time on the earth has ended. Kaal, a personification of time and death, delivers this message to Shri Ram.

In chapter 105, the authors of the Uttara-Kanda cleverly add the story of sage Durvasa, so that Laxmana has no choice but to disrupt the meeting between Shri Ram and Kaal, the personification of death. The punishment for disrupting the king's meeting was death. Laxmana chooses death over letting all of Ayodhya come under the curse of Durvasa.

Meanwhile, Shri Ram already knows his time on the earth has ended. So, he begins the process of leaving the world. **Laxmana stands for the devoted mind, and at the time of death, the mind goes out first.** When the higher Consciousness is ready to leave the body, the mind gets absorbed into it. Thus, Laxmana enters the river Sharayu before Shri Ram. In chapter 106, we read that Laxmana goes to the riverbank, vanishes from sight, and enters the heavenly world.

In chapter 107, Shri Ram plans to leave the earth. Bharata and Shatrughna insist on accompanying him to death. Along with them, millions of monkeys and demons

accompany Shri Ram. Sugriva makes a similar request, and Shri Ram agrees. In the same chapter, Shri Ram instructs Vibhishana to “stay alive as long as people are living in this world.” Vibhishana is to rule Lanka until the end of the world, which means Sattva Guna, will stay alive until the end of the world. Shri Ram asks Hanumana to remain alive as it was decided a long time ago. Obviously, Hanumana represents Prana and hence he cannot die. Hanumana agrees, saying, “as long as Shri Ram’s stories are current in this world, he will stay alive.” Shri Ram also asks old Jambavan, Mainda, and Dvidida to remain alive until the end of the Kali Yuga. It means he asked them to stay alive till the end of this world cycle.

In chapter 109, all living beings in Ayodhya accompany Shri Ram to the banks of river Sharayu. In chapter 110, Shri Ram steps into the river and then assumes the form of Lord Vishnu.

The passing away of Shri Ram is an important event, and it must have a parallel in our body. The reference to river Sharayu is paramount, and it offers a great puzzle. The river originates in Lake Manasa, which is believed to be in Brahma-Loka or Lord Brahma’s abode. There is a physical equivalent of the abode of Lord Brahma in our body. A small hole in the crown of our head is called Brahma-randra or Brahma hole. Yogis say when a person’s Consciousness passes away from this hole, the person does not return to the earth to take birth. It is supposed to be the best type of death as the bodily Consciousness merges directly with the Universal Consciousness.

Even after the devoted mind – Laxmana – has gone, the Consciousness is still functional in the body. Remember that Laxmana had become unconscious earlier, but at that time, Sita was alive, so Shri Ram did not give up his life.

Once Shri Ram plans to enter the river Sharayu, Bharata follows him. Bharat stands for the body. Since the body cannot sustain itself without the Consciousness, it goes with the higher Consciousness. Sugriva (soft heart), and many other related characters follow Shri Ram into the river. Hanumana (Prana), Vibhishana (Sattva Guna), and Jambavan (type of Prana) are asked to stay back until the end of this world cycle.

The tragic ending of this great epic is not so tragic, when we see them as Body-Mind-Energy -Consciousness processes. When we read carefully, the story tells us about one of the best lives lived on the earth, and the death described in the story is the best form of death available to humans.

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