## Preface

One of the common beliefs about Yoga is that the common man did not have access to the knowledge to Yoga. This book shows that information about the esoteric side, which mainly involves explaining the mystical nature of the world and concepts related to the energy/Kundalini, was readily available to the general population in the form of Ramayana. Sage Valmiki, who was an extremely advanced yogi, wrote Ramayana to explain these complex concepts of Yoga in the form of a very easy-to-understand action-based story. Centuries have passed since Ramayana was written, but its value has not diminished even a bit. On the contrary, as Yoga gains a global appeal and as it gathers a strong following, in both eastern and western countries, the value of Ramayana as an easy-to-understand yogic scripture increases exponentially.

In author Lewis Carroll’s famous 1865 novel “Alice in Wonderland,” the central character, Alice, accidentally discovers a rabbit hole and finds herself in a room with locked doors of many sizes. Using her resourcefulness and logic, she figures a way out of the hall and enters into a wonderland. Something similar happens to a person who discovers Yoga practice. Initially, he may come across many locked doors, but with resourcefulness and logic, he can open the locks and see a different world. The new world is still the same as the old one; it is a person’s worldview that is different. Hence, the world looks different. Practice of Yoga is a way to change our views about ourselves and our view of the rest of the world.

We will see in this book that Yoga and Ramayana are the two sides of the same coin. When we have one side of the coin in our hand, we surely have the other side of it in our hand too. It does not matter where we start, because both Yoga and Ramayana lead us to experience the universal consciousness. If we begin from the perspective of Yoga, we realize that Ramayana is an expression of the concepts mentioned in Yoga. If we begin with Ramayana, we see that while learning about Ramayana, we are learning about Yoga.

To get more clarity about AUM and Shri Ram, we have to start where we are, meaning that we will use our limited or partial knowledge of both of them. We will begin with Yoga because information about the mystic side of Yoga, like Kundalini, prana, pranayama, and chakras/energy center is readily available on the internet. Readers are encouraged to research them on the internet to get more clarity about them and verify the details on their own.

I wrote this book to create interest in Ramayana and Yoga and to point out the real sources of information. Even if I have made mistakes in this book, there is no chance that the source books and the gurus will ever go wrong. Therefore, I request readers to treat this book as if they are comparing the notes with a like-minded student, given that I am a student of Yoga. If the readers need details, they are advised to read the original/source books, and if they want to gain real knowledge, they are advised to seek a guru. There might be errors in this book, and I hope the readers will catch them. Please forgive me for any such errors and do correct me. Together, we will try to fix them. In any case, there is no intention to hurt anyone’s feelings about religion and faith. I am merely a vehicle to bring sage Valmiki’s work to the readers. I hope I did justice to this task, which for some unknown reasons, chose me as it’s vehicle. (Marathi : Nimmita matr )

## Introduction to the Framework of Energy-Consciousness

Before embarking on a new venture, we pray to Lord Ganesh. We did the same on the first page of this book. It is but natural for our mind to ask questions like: Why do we pray to Lord Ganesh at the beginning of all activities? Why is he depicted in red color? Why does he have a mouse for his vehicle?

To get the answer to these questions, we need to understand the framework of energy-consciousness of Yoga. They are the building blocks of the universe, including our body-mind. Yogis depict the consciousness as Lord Shiv and the energy as Goddess Parvati. In our body, the place of the consciousness is in the crown of the head, while the energy’s home is at the base of the spine. The spinal cord connects these two points. Both the energy and the consciousness are always active. The energy is moving up the spine, and the consciousness is coming down from the top of the head to the rest of the body.

To sustain life, our body needs a small amount of energy and consciousness. The energy moves up the spine without notice, and thus, brings the consciousness down. The consciousness is neutral and very hard to notice; the energy is vibrant and much natural to feel. Hence, in Yoga, we focus more on the energy; the consciousness is the result that we eventually get to see. The energy and the consciousness are everywhere in the body; there is no cell of the body that does not have either of the two. The consciousness is like water and air – only when there is a contrast do you see the difference. We drink water, but it has no taste; we can differentiate it only when there is some flavor. We breathe air, but it has no smell; we can smell it only when there is some scent. We can experience the calm and neutral feeling of the consciousness by contrasting it against the active, pulsating nature of the energy. The more energy is available in the body, the more conscious you feel against the contrast of the vibrant energy.

Yoga is a practice to release the energy additional to a normal level, move it across the spine, and then merge it into the consciousness. In their merger, we witness the universal consciousness as it was before the separation. Please read Big Bang of Yoga chapter from this book to understand universal consciousness. The imagery of the energy and the consciousness as Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiv is a way to represent their nature to make things easy to understand and remember.

In physics, an atom has a core with positive and neutral components. It also has a negatively charged electron, circling around the core at very high speeds. There is no concept of polarity in Yoga, and hence there are no positive and negative charges. Another difference is that the energy and the consciousness are inseparable and interdependent parts. The consciousness is like the core of an atom except for the positive charge in it. It is always neutral and is the primary life sustaining force. The energy is like an electron except for the negative charge in it. It is always in motion and is attracted to the neutral consciousness.

As per one of Newton’s law, we cannot create energy nor destroy it. We can only convert it from one form to other. Similarly, in Yoga, energy can neither be created nor destroyed. We already have energy in our body, but we do need to make efforts to release it and we can only merge it into the consciousness.

Just as the obstacles in the path of water block the flow of water, the obstacles in the path of the energy block the flow of the energy. The less the amount of water, the harder it is to break through the obstacles. Similarly, the less the amount of energy, the harder it is to remove the obstacles. The blocked water does not stay at the same location forever, but seeps through the ground slowly and continues its journey toward the ocean. The energy too, does not stop when obstacles in its path reduce its flow; rather it leaks and continues to move up, even though less efficiently. The consciousness generated from this feeble supply of the energy is minuscule and not even noticeable. It is a normal and common condition as there are significant blocks in the spine, which do not allow the energy to pass freely.

The higher consciousness, generated at the top of the head (Sahastrar), descends all over the body via direct and indirect paths. The spinal cord is its direct path to the Root Center, but there are other indirect paths as well. If you search the internet for the Kundalini, you will find several sites describing the path of the energy. Direct and indirect paths of the consciousness are my interpretation based on sage Valmiki’s Ramayan. The simple picture above is a rough sketch of the basic framework of Ramayan. While reading this book, please keep this simple looking diagram in mind.



The orange path is the path of the Kundalini as described by several books; the blue path is the path Shri Ram took to find mother Sita. We will enter into the complexities of Ramayan after covering all the basic concepts, so that we can understand it easily. For now, let us focus on the essential concepts of the energy.

We need to be clear about two things about the energy. To succeed in Yoga, we need more energy than before, and we need to remove barriers in its path so it can reach the top of the head. However, we do not want a sudden rush of the energy; an abrupt removal of all barriers to the flow of the energy is not desirable. It can lead to a situation similar to the sudden opening of the floodgates of a dam, creating a flood-like situation in downstream communities. Hence, we try to release the energy and remove the barriers in a “controlled” manner. At this point, we meet Lord Ganesh, and we seek his help. The story of Lord Ganesh’s birth is a little strange, but with the above background, you will appreciate its message.

--Story of Lord Ganesh’s birth

One day, while Goddess Parvati was going for her bath, she rubbed off the dirt from her body and out of it created the figure of a young boy. She infused life into this figure, told him he was her son, and instructed him to guard the entrance while she bathed.

Soon after, Lord Shiv came home, but the young boy blocked his way. Lord Shiv became furious and fought the boy. Quite naturally, the young boy lost the battle to the god of warfare – Lord Shiv – and had his head severed. Goddess Parvati, returning from her bath, saw her headless son. Anguished, she threatened to destroy the heavens and the earth. The gods and Lord Shiv pacified her. Lord Shiv sent out his attendants to bring the head of the first living being sleeping with his head toward the north (the direction associated with wisdom). The first living creature they found sleeping with his head to the north was an elephant. They brought the head of this animal. Lord Shiv placed it on the trunk of the young headless boy and breathed life into him. Goddess Parvati became overjoyed and embraced her son, the elephant-headed boy, whom Lord Shiv named Ganesh, the lord of his special attendants.

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Let us try to analyze this story using the lenses of Yoga, to see if we can find any message in it for us. Goddess Parvati wanted to take a bath while Lord Shiv was away. Therefore, she needed someone to guard the home. She created a boy from mud or dirt on her body and put him in charge of guarding the door. Make a note that she created an entire statue from the mud from her body, which means there must have been a good amount of it. It is not logical to have such a large amount of mud on the body. Could it be that there is some a hidden message in this? At the base of the spine lies the Muladhar Chakra / Root Center, with earth as its element. In the context of Ganesh’s story, the mud or dirt stands for earth, which indirectly refers to the Muladhar Chakra / Root Center. Goddess Parvati being at home and asking the boy to guard the door means that the energy is at the base of the spine, and there is no access to it.

When Lord Shiv – Parvati’s husband – came home, the boy stopped him from entering his house. Lord Shiv got angry and chopped off the boy’s head. Parvati came out from the bath and saw the headless, dead boy; in grief and panic, she lost control of her mind and was about to destroy the entire universe with her anger.

Please take a moment here to see the complete picture in terms of our body. It is important to understand the consequences of forced entry of the consciousness at the base of the spine. The higher consciousness can force its entry into the home of the energy as it has the power to do so, and nothing can stop it. It means that all the locks that control the flow of the energy are suddenly open, and a large amount of the energy is released instantaneously. Akin to a dam bursting and creating a flood in its path, this sudden release of the energy is not safe for the human body. The mind may lose control, the immune system may get whacked up, and the body parts may become dysfunctional. With body-mind damaged so much, even death seems a fair option.

As the story goes, Lord Shiv implanted the head of an elephant on the boy’s body and restored life to him. He gave him the name Ganesh and gave him a mouse as his vehicle. Lord Ganesh’s primary role is to remove obstacles in the path of flow of the energy in a controlled manner. It ensures the release of the appropriate amount of the energy for an individual. The higher the energy levels, the higher the amount of the energy that reaches the top of the head, where it merges with the consciousness. It creates a higher consciousness, which then comes down through the spine and the other body parts. It is a cyclical process, since higher energy produces higher consciousness than before. Higher consciousness in turn fuels a greater amount of the energy. At this point, we meet Lord Ganesh’s parents but not as separate entities. They are dynamic, intertwined, co-dependent, indivisible processes that create and sustain life itself.



Once these processes are set in motion, they continue to go to higher levels at their pace. However, some body part becomes a bottleneck, and the energy and the consciousness cannot continue to go at higher levels. In that case, the processes stay at the same level. When the higher consciousness is available for the body parts and the cells, it has a medicine-like effect, and it rejuvenates the cells of the body. There is a saying in Yoga: You are as old as your spine. It says us a lot about the biological prowess of the spine.

When we re move the blocks in the path of the energy, the energy merges with the consciousness. This merger gives rise to a higher the consciousness and provides us true knowledge. For this reason, we consider Lord Ganesh as the god of knowledge. He clears wrong perceptions and helps us to know one’s true nature. Removing blocks in the energy’s paths allows the energy to merge with the consciousness, and in that process, we gain knowledge about our true nature.

The place of Lord Ganesh in our body is at the home of the energy that is, the Muladhar Chakra / Root Chakra at the base of the spine. Since the Muladhar Chakra / Root Chakra is red in color, you will always see the color red associated with Lord Ganesh. Nevertheless, why does he have an elephant's head and not that of any other animal? The answer is that the physical traits of an elephant’s head represent the attributes we require. The long ears suggest that we need to be good listeners. The small eyes indicate that we need a sharp vision and concentration. The trunk signifies curiosity, and finally, his large head is a sign of evolved brainpower that we need.

Why does he have a tiny mouse for a vehicle? It is like using a small car engine to drive a big 16-wheeler truck; if it works, it will make it very slow. Why does he not drive something that matches his size and status?

A little mouse as a vehicle indicates that he comes slowly, without any rush. Like all good things in life, real knowledge comes very slowly, with hard work and patience.