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SAMKHYA-YOGA-RAMAYANA

## AUM

# Why Samkhya-Yoga-Ramayana?

Sage Valmiki wrote the first version of Ramayana more than 3000 years ago. Since then in every century, people modified the story, so that they can relate themselves to Ramayana. Hence, there are many version of Ramayana, with several new stories and events that are not part of Valmiki Ramayana. These versions of Ramayana tell us about the periods in which these modifications were done. The spiritual and other practices of a specific period are reflected in its version of Ramayana. For example, entire Uttara Kanda is not in Valmiki Ramayana. It was added several hundred years later.

In this book, we will study the the first version of Ramayana, the Valmiki Ramayana. It is a "smriti" meaning, it is "from memory". Since it a very old document, there are some interjected verses. However, scholars, grammarians, historians standardized the original text. It is available on the website given below. We will use this website as a reference source for Valmiki Ramayana. https://www.valmikiramayan.net

Sage Valmiki lived at least a thousand years before sage Patanjali. Ramayana surely does not talk about any physical poses or any of the eight steps of Yoga defined by sage Patanjali. **However, we will see that when sage Valmiki was writing Ramayana, he had knowledge of the Kundalini and Chakras, and their effects on a Yogi. He also knew Samkhya. He wrote Ramayana to explain these complex concepts to common men.** In this book, we will study approximately 500 out of 24000 verses of Valmiki Ramayana and see how they relate to Yoga.

Unfortunately, over a three thousand years, because of the several changes in Ramayana, we lost the meaning of Ramayana as it was intended by sage Valmiki. At the same time, the knowledge about Samkhya, Kundalini, and Chakra also became scare. It remained in the books and in hands of few individuals. With very few exceptions, it was not available to common men. For this reason, nobody thinks that Ramayana is related Samkhya and Yoga.

In 19th century, the knowledge about Kundalini and Chakra become widely available. Some of it is being re-discovered from ancient texts. Now, this knowledge is easily available on internet. With global interest in Yoga, the knowledge about Kundalini and Chakra is being studied all over the world. At the same time, the experts have put together the original Valmiki Ramayana. It is easily available on internet too. All we have to do it to read Yoga document and Valmiki Ramayana at the same time!

**In this book, we will take the current knowledge about Samkhya, Kundalini, Yoga, and Chakra and map it back to Ramayana. We will not change even a single word in any of these texts. Yet, we will see that Valmiki Ramayana was indeed written to explain Yoga. It will give us a new perspective about Ramayana. In addition, it will also highlight the knowledge gap in our understanding of Samkhya, Kundalini, Yoga, and Chakra and sage Valmiki’s interpretation of them in his time.**

Reader: Does Yoga and Ramayana relate to each other? How?

### Does Yoga And Ramayana Relate To Each Other? How?

Sage Patanjali wrote Yoga Sutra almost thousand years after sage Valmiki. He heavily 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 Universal Consciousness. The first verse of Yoga Sutra, teaches about the Consciousness. In the last verse, it teaches us about the Universal Consciousness (PSY 4.34). Thus, Yoga is a path that takes us to the the experience of Universal Consciousness. Sage Patanjali used word Yoga for the eight step path, which includes Pranayama as well. Hence, we will use the word Yoga the way he used it.

When we see Ramayana from the angle of Yoga, we see that it teaches us about the the goal of Yoga – the Universal Consciousness. It explains the complex concepts of Yoga like Prana, Kundalini (Energy) and Consciousness using a story. It warns a Yogi about the difficulties on path of Yoga. It offers advice to safely reach the goal of Yoga. Let us see how it helps us learn Yoga, without changing a single word from Valmiki Ramayana.

Ramayana is a story. Its main character is Shri Ram. In this book, we will see that Shri Ram represents Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness. Shri Ram is the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu. Sanskrit word “Vishnu” means “One who is present everywhere”. The Sanskrit word “Vishva” means “Universe”. They both have same root “Vish”. Thus, Lord Vishnu represents Universal Consciousness. At the end of Ramayana, Shri Ram takes 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 sea water, you know that the entire sea is salty. Similarly, once you know how to relate Yoga to Ramayana, entire Ramayana unfolds in front of you as an expression of Yoga!

Reader: Why should I take this effort? What benefit will I get?

Author: Everyone cares about his life. The Consciousness is the difference between a living person in this moment and his dead body in next moment. Indian culture gave a several names to this Consciousness. Shri Ram happens to be one such a name that we come across more often. From birth to death, we tied His name to every occasion in life. Even after death, people take His name, while taking dead body for cremation.

What is the use of taking His name when a person is dead? However, if a person spends just few hours of his time, which is equal to watching TV or reading newspaper of the day, in learning about Ramayana, then he can relate himself to Shri Ram. Besides, you already know the story of Ramayana. Now, it is just the matter of relating to the story in a meaningful way. **Truthfully, building a relation 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 life much better and possibly, it may be useful even in the moments before death.

Reader: Ramayana tells us that Shri Ram went from Ayodhya to Lanka and back to Ayodhya. Ramayana translates to ‘Advance or movements of Shri Ram’ and it refers to this journey of Shri Ram. It does not mention anything about Yoga. It seems wrong to read Yoga out of Ramayana.

Author: Sanskrit word ‘Ayana’ means advance or movement. The word Ramayana generally translates to ‘Advance of Shri Ram’. However, in Yoga, we see as 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 word Ramayana.

We can see similar pattern of use of word “Ayana” in Daxinayana and Uttarayana, meaning, southern and northern solstices. They mean that the sun is passing to the southern side and the northern side of the equator. We know that 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.

According to Einstein’s theory of relativity, the movement is always relative. It means that when object A and object B are coming close to each other, there is no way of telling which object is moving. From the perspective of object A, the object B is coming closer, but in truth, the object B may be stationary, while object A may be moving towards object B.

Sage Valmiki knows that Shri Ram represents the Universal Consciousness. 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 be moving towards Him!**

When we read Ramayana carefully, our views about Him change. Thus, we advance towards Shri Ram. The word “Ayana” indicates this movement or advance. **In other words, Ramayana leads us, the readers, toward Shri Ram, the Universal Consciousness. This is the real meaning of 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 Prana. Please read Yoga’s Theory section in this book for more details.

Sage Valmiki took each of the key concept from Samkhya and created a character out of it. Shri Ram represents Higher Consciousness. Sita represents energy – we see that she is not born naturally and did not die naturally. Newton also told us that energy cannot be created or destroyed. Hanuman represents Prana – we know that when we breathe, we take Prana from air. In Ramayana, the Hanuman is son of Air God (Vayu). Laxmana is brother of Shri Ram. Sanskrit word “Laxya” means “Focus or Dedication” and “mana” is mind. Thus, Laxmana translates to “Dedicated Mind”.

Now, let us see how Ramayana helps us find the Consciousness. Sage Valmiki knows that we do not know anything about Shri Ram or the Consciousness. We cannot relate with Him in any way. Hence, sage Valmiki gave us indirect ways to find Him and relate to Him.

Look at any image or idol of Shri Ram. You will see that three people always surround him. Sita accompanies him on the right, Lakshmana on the left and Hanuman at his feet. This image is a beautiful depiction of the secret message given to us through Ramayana. If we understand just this image, understanding the entire Ramayana will be very easy. When we place the names of characters with their Yoga names, we get 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 (Hanuman) 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.

Trying to find the Energy or the Consciousness directly within ourselves might be challenging. Hence, the other two options – focused mind and breathing techniques – become important.

**Reader: If sage Valmiki wanted to explain Yoga using Ramayana, he would have clearly mentioned it. What is the proof that Ramayana is related to Yoga?**

### What Is The Proof That Ramayana Is Related To Yoga?

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

* Sage Valmiki mentions in the verse 1-4-6 that his purpose of writing Ramayana is to explain Veda. We know that the Veda have a vast scope. Verse 1-4-6 narrows our scope, but it is not sufficient.
* 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.
* 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 ego in the Muladhara Chakra. There are several verses that describe Sita in same words as Kundalini Shakti/energy trapped in Muladhara Chakra.
* Valmiki Ramayana verse 6-117-20 tells us “Shri Ram is AUM.”

**Sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana to initiate, guide, and help the energy and the consciousness reunite and defeat the ego/Ahamkar 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.**

**Reader: How does Ramayana help me understand Yoga?**

### How Does Ramayana Help Me Understand Yoga?

Ramayana is a story. Like any other story, it has characters, events, and locations etc. The characters relate to each other like father-son, husband-wife etc. The structure or a plot of story decides the way in which each character relates or behaves to other character. We instinctively understand these relationships.

Yoga, on other hand, has concepts like Energy or Consciousness. We have to learn one concept at a time. The concepts also relate to each other. However, we do not easily understand their relationship to each other. We have to learn about that relationship. There are several chicken-or-egg first, meaning, which concept comes first type problems. A student may make a mistake in understanding or relating these concepts and it could be very costly mistake. When we are using word Yoga, it also implies Samkhya as well.

Let us see how Ramayana helps us understand Yoga concepts and their relationships. All we have to do it to put a character of Ramayana and the way they relate to each other side by side a Yoga concept. We will see that we discover a hidden relationship between Yoga concepts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ramayana Character and Relationship** | **Yoga Concept and Relationship.** |
| Ravana abducts Sita. | Our ego/Ahamkar controls the way we use energy. This is correct. |
| Hanuman finds Sita. | In Yoga, we learn that doing Pranayama releases the energy. **This is an example of wrong relationship between pranayama and energy.** |
| Shri Ram kills Ravana. | Consciousness dissolves the ego/Ahamkar into itself. This is correct. |
| Shri Ram rescues Sita. | When the ego/Ahamkar dissolves, the energy escapes from its control/ Indirectly, the consciousness frees energy. **This relationship is not clearly explained in Yoga. See the details below.** |
| Shri Ram and Sita separate according to his wish | This is post-yoga status of energy and consciousness. **This relationship is not clearly explained in Yoga.** |

**Shri Ram rescues Sita – Yoga Explanation:** From our general knowledge of Yoga, we know that when energy passes through the Chakra, it activates them. To activate a Chakra, we need a movement of energy. Hence, we do Pranayama. Prana finds and activate the energy in Muladhara Chakra. Then, the energy travels from Muladhara Chakra to the Sahasrara. There is merges with consciousness. At that moment, a Yogi experiences Samadhi – a blissful state of Universal Consciousness.

**Valmiki Ramayana adds a different dimension to this process – descend of higher consciousness from Sahasrara to Muladhara Chakra. In this descend, higher consciousness has a neutralizing and calming effect on all excessive tendencies of Chakras (which were activated because of the energy)**. **It also neutralizes ego/Ahamkar and rescues the energy locked up in Muladhara Chakra. Then, the energy and consciousness ascend to the Sahasrara togethe and Yogi experiences the Samadhi.**

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 extremely imaginative mind of a highly advanced yogi. Reading Ramayana as document of Yoga needs an open mind. We are not accustomed to seeing it that way. Of course, this it is very difficult and 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.

**In the final analysis, Ramayana teaches us about our consciousness. Shri Ram is one of the names of the consciousness. Similarly, Yoga also teaches us about the consciousness. Thus, they are two different ways to learn about consciousness.**

Reader: Ramayana itself presents lot of questions, challenges and inconsistencies. It is very hard for me to accept it “as-is”. How can we address the inconsistencies in Ramayana?

### How Can We Address Questions And Inconsistencies About Ramayana Using Yoga?

We see that the some events or character’s choice in Ramayana does not make 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 few examples.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ramayana Question** | **Explanation using Yoga Concept** |
| King Janak found a box with a baby inside while tilling the land. Is it really 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 an Energy. She was not born normally matches Newton’s law of energy. Both agree that we cannot create Energy. |
| Why Urmila, Laxman’s wife, did not go to jungle with him? She is Sita’s sister. They must have same idea of ideal wife. When Sita went to jungle with her husband, why Urmila stayed back in palace? | “Urmila” means “waves of passion,” whereas “Laxman” means “devoted mind.” As such, 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, which clearly does not go with the devoted mind. This is an example of guidance from Ramayana |
| How did Sita go through fire after Shri Ram defeats Ravana, 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 of the manifestations of Energy. Shri Ram certainly knows her very well. Hence, he puts her through fire, knowing very well that fire cannot possibly harm her. |
| Shri Ram sent Sita back to the jungle again! At that time, 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 in other words, no children. |

As you can see, the reason behind the choices of characters or events comes from Yoga concepts. These questions are very valuable. It is very important that we ask the question. When we read Ramayana carefully and see that 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. It leads you straight towards a concept of Yoga. Once you understand that answer, it becomes your point-of-entry. From that point, you can interpret Ramayana all by yourself. Now, it becomes “your” Ramayana.

There are several such a questions about Ramayana. They all work as a secret message sent in your name. All you need to do is to answer 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.

Reader: According to my information, 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 path of Karma. It also teaches us about path of devotion or Bhakti. **So, why should I learn Yoga from Ramayana?**

### When I Can Learn About Karma And Bhakti, Why Should I Learn About Yoga From Ramayana?

**It is absolutely correct that Ramayana teaches us about paths of Karma and Bhakti. In fact, Ramayana teaches us about four different paths, not just about Karma and Bhakti. Please read the story “Four Views of God Based on Four Types of People” told to us by Saint Tulsidas from this book.**

In this story, Saint Tulsidas compared Ramayana with a beautiful lake. This lake has four banks. On each bank of the lake, there is an assembly hall (Hindi word “Ghat”, which is a place people meet). In all assembly halls, people listen to Ramayana. However, in each assembly hall, people read Ramayana with a completely different interpretation!

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

**In this book, we are adding one more angle to Ramayana, without changing a word of Valmiki Ramayana.** We will see that we can learn Yoga also from it. We will see that Ramayana indirectly refer to Chakras as well. We will see 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 four paths of spirituality.** **Hence, learning about the key concepts of Samkhya with help of Ramayana is useful to all aspirants of spirituality.**

# How to Read Valmiki Ramayana?

As stated earlier, Valmiki Ramayana is a work of extremely imaginative and highly advanced Yogi. It is very difficult to understand it completely. Here are some of the ways to help us understand the Valmiki Ramayana.

### Layers in Valmiki Ramayana:

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

* **The first layer of is the characters like Sita, Shri Ram, Laxmana, Hanuman, and Ravana.** These characters represent our Energy, Consciousness, devoted mind, Prana, and ego/Ahamkar, respectively. We will study these character and their Yoga meaning in the next few chapters.
* **The second layer is the way these characters relate to each other.** For example, Hanuman finds Sita in Lanka. It represents Prana finds Energy in Root Center. Each relation in Ramayana teaches us something about Yoga.
* **The third layer is the most important level for us. It is composed of various signs, symptoms, recommended actions, and warnings related to the path of Yoga.** Some of the warning signs are also applicable 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 Viradh and Kabandh, and of actions of Hanuman are all examples of these safeguards. There are hundreds of safeguards in Ramayana. We will study and interpret few of them.
* **Finally, as the fourth layer, sage Valmiki describes the various Chakras along the path of the Energy and the Consciousness.** **He indicates their general locations and their effects and 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 known references to Chakras. He cannot declare them explicitly as such 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 chakra. Hence, chakras become forth layer.**

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

Even when we are looking at the each character independently of other characters, it is very challenging to separate a character from other characters. When a character has a small role, we will see all four layers at once.

**When we come to the final chapters, where Shri Ram defeats Ravana, we will focus on the story and its meaning in terms of Yoga. It has so many safeguards, which is third layer, that it will be helpful to read the story and all the layers side-by-side.**

### **Patterns in Valmiki Ramayana:**

There is one more way sage Valmiki added complexity in Valmiki Ramayana. We will call it a pattern. A patter is something that an artist ingrains in his art work. Let us study six 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 that a similar event occurred somewhere else within Ramayana. Let us take some examples to clarify this point.

* Shri Ram lifts up and breaks Lord Shiv’s bow in verse 1-67-17. In verse 1-75-13, he picks up Lord Vishnu’s bow.
* Shurpanakha talks about Sita’s beauty to Khara in verse 3-19-17 and then again to Ravana in verse 3-34-16.
* Sugreev tests Shri Ram’s strength two times, first time with a demon skeleton, and the second time when Shri Ram shoots an arrow through seven trees.
* Shri Ram takes Sugreev to fight with Vali two times. First time, Shri Ram is unable to tell Sugreev from Vali because they look very similar to him. Second time, Shri Ram makes Sugreev wear a garland so that he can he identify him easily.
* Two demons kidnap Sita. First time, demon Viradh 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 have been made 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 Purush Sukta, appears in Valmiki Ramayana only once, in the Aranya Kanda (verse 3-14-30). Therefore, this verse was imported from the Purush Sukta and inserted in Valmiki Ramayana at a later date.

Now that 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? In other words, there must be one more prince of Ayodhya, who was driven out of Ayodhya. Please see the verse 1-38-21 for an answer.

**Pattern #2 - Relationship with Gayatri Mantra:**

One more proof of sage Valmiki’s encryption skills comes from a well-known relationship between Valmiki Ramayana and the Gayatri Mantra. Valmiki Ramayana has 24,000 verses, while the Gayatri Mantra has 24. Thus, for every letter of Gayatri Mantra, Valmiki Ramayana has 1000 verses. The first letter of the Gayatri Mantra is the same as the first letter of Valmiki Ramayana. For example, they both start with the word “Ta.” The second letter of the Gayatri Mantra is the same as the first letter of the 1,001th verse of Valmiki Ramayana and so on. Because of this pattern, it becomes very difficult to add or remove verses in Valmiki Ramayana. As we know, the Gayatri Mantra and Ramayana are both dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

**Pattern # 3 - Shri Ram Is Always Mentioned In The Present Tense:**

Sage Valmiki wrote Ramayana and taught it to Luva and Kusha. They recited it in front of Shri Ram in his court. We read Ramayana the way it was narrated by the twins in front of Shri Ram. In other words, we see the entire story in flashback. Instead of telling 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 and the consciousness is always in the present tense – here and now.**

**Pattern # 4 - 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.

• In verse 2-118-26, Sita tells the details about their marriage to Anusuya. These details are a repetition of earlier events.

• In 4-4-6, Laxmana narrates the story to Hanuman, right from King Dasharath’ rule onwards.

• In verse 5-31-2, when Hanuman meets Sita for the first time, he begins with "there was a king named Dasharath."

In addition to these instances, there are several instances in Ramayana, where sage Valmiki reviews earlier events. Sometimes, he discusses them briefly, at other times in detail. It is a pattern that sage Valmiki intentionally hardwired in the story. We will see its meaning after studying the next point.

**Pattern # 5 - Shri Ram Is 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.** If you read carefully, sage Valmiki plants clues about "who Shri Ram is?" and progressively elaborates 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.

* In verse 1-19-14, sage Vishwamitra asks king Dasharath to send young Shri Ram to fight the demons and protect his ritual sacrifice. At that instance, he tells king Dasharath "I know who Shri Ram is." Sage Vishwamitra could reveal to Dasharath that Shri Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, but he does not do so.
* Similarly, when Shri Ram breaks Lord Shiv’s bow in Janak’s court, the story could tell us that he is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.
* Again, when Shri Ram defeats Parashuram, it is clear that 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 real identity. **In the end, 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 # 6 - Ramayana Begins and Ends With Lord Brahma:**

Valmiki Ramayana begins with Lord Brahma narrating it to sage Narada, who in turn tells it to sage Valmiki. It ends with Shri Ram going to the "Brahm-Lok” – the abode of Lord Brahma, who is the Universal Consciousness. Ramayana is a story of the higher Consciousness. It has to begin and end with Lord Brahma, the Universal Consciousness. Now, we see how sage Valmiki has closely tied Ramayana to the Universal Consciousness.

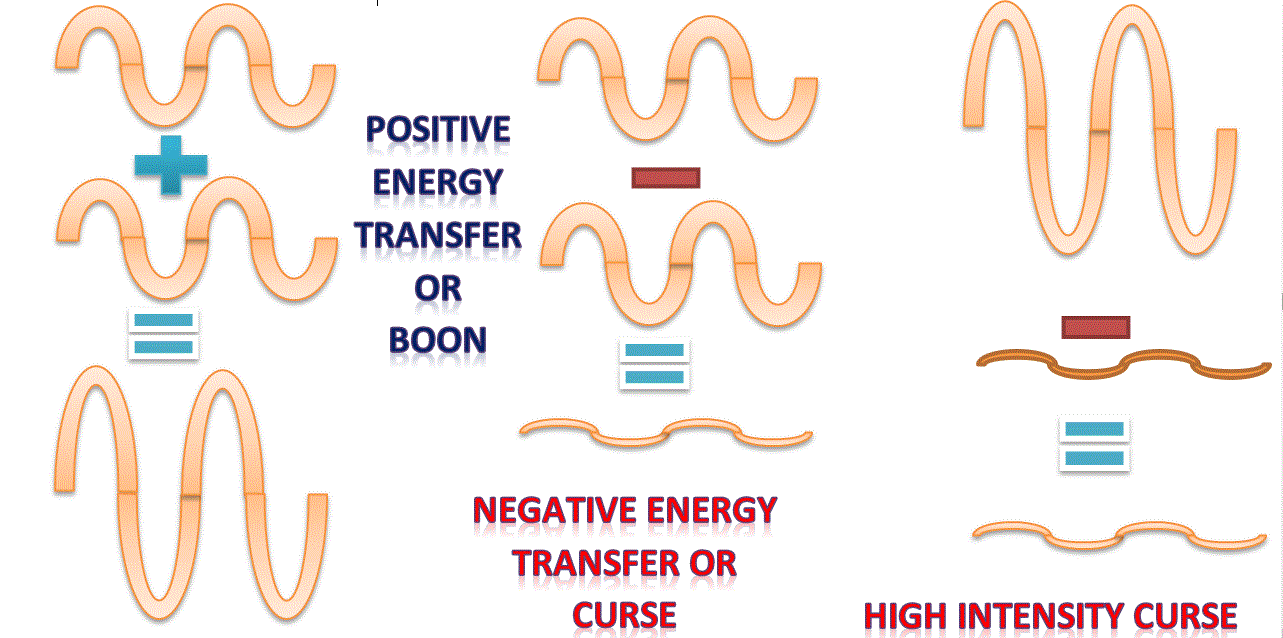
This process of going to the Universal Consciousness needs someone who knows how to start it – a guru. In sage Valmiki’s example, sage Narada is his guru, and in sage Narada’s case, Lord Brahma Himself is his guru.

**The process that takes us towards a higher Consciousness is cyclic or iterative in nature. 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 whole process of going to the higher Consciousness is cyclic in nature.

### 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:

1. **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. In his world, 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 is different 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 a significant damage with his curse because of his intentions. The curse on king Dasharatha by the dying parents of Shravan is a good example of this kind of curse having an extreme level of intensity. In verses 2-64-54, 55 we read that Shravan’s parents curse king Dasharatha: Like me, you too will die in agony caused by loss of your son. Shravan’s dying parents are ordinary people; yet, they end up causing much damage to king Dasharatha, who is a great person.



1. **Boons and Curses to Set the Story, Without Any Energy Transfer**: The second type of boons and curses hide the reality the way a curtain hides things inside the house. Let us take example of Dasharatha’s boon to his wife, Kaikayi, shows logical problem. 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, where king Dasharatha is about to lose a war and his life too. **He desperately needs his wife’s help to escape impending defeat and possible death. So, he promises her two boons in exchange for her help in the battlefield. There is no energy transfer 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 the reality. In this case, the reality is that our ego/Ahamkar represented by Ravana has already abducted our energy, represented by Sita. Sage Valmiki needs a way to set this reality into the story. For Ravan to kidnap her, Sita needs to be in the jungle. For Sita to go to the jungle, Shri Ram must go to the jungle too. The story needs a reason to achieve this and king Dasharath’s boon to Kaikayi provides this reason.

# Layer 1: Characters and Their Samkhya-Yoga Meaning

We saw that there are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. They are – 1) Characters 2) Characters relationship with each other 3) Safeguards for spiritual aspirants and 4) Chakras.

Here we will study Yogic interpretation only few characters. For other characters, please read book Yoga Ramayana. **We will classify the characters according to their complexity to understand in terms of Yoga: Easy, Medium and Complex. Few characters become complex because their meaning depend upon some other concept.** The key concepts like energy, consciousness, and Guna etc. come from Samkhya.

Since Ramayana is a story, it becomes very difficult to separate these layers. In all characters, their relationship with other character is implicit. Particularly, when a character has a small role, all these four layers get mixed in to each other. In that case, we will study all four layers together.

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. There are mind-boggling puzzles in it, when we begin to realize that these are not just characters. **They are real-life entities that matter to us most, in contexts that might be difficult to understand.**

### Easy Character # 1: Sita

There are hundreds of characters in Ramayana, and each character has a puzzle for the reader, but no other character throws more puzzles at the reader than the character of Sita. **It is not possible to understand her role, if we consider her just at the human level. 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, because no amount of ink and paper is enough to underline her importance.

Sita’s birth is a mystery. As the legend goes, king Janak 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 Janak should have found a dead baby or only a skeleton of it. Tilling of land and discovery of a live baby could not have happened 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 Janak. However, we cannot explain her disappearance at the human level, as humans cannot create earthquakes on-demand. **Sita represents energy, and energy cannot be destroyed, which means, she cannot die like humans, so 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 indeed saw Sita as Energy/Shakti/ Kundalini. We will study the verses where Hanuman first saw Sita. Sage Valmiki dedicates three chapters to describe Sita in captivity of Ravana from Hanuman’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 energy in our Muladhara Chakra. Carefully note the words that evoke the golden-fire color or words like “braid” and “snake.” In addition, note the specific details of highly energetic, moving, or bright object encapsulated by some cover.

* Verse 5-14-38 tells us Hanuman saw land, springs, and trees in a golden fire color.
* Verse 5-14-39 says Hanuman saw his body glowing in golden red color, because of the light radiating from the surroundings. If you visit any temple of Hanuman, you will find him in golden red color; that color comes from these verses.
* 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 or of the Kundalini locked up at the Muladhara Chakra. In verse 5-15-19, Hanuman sees Sita for the first time. She is wearing an ochre colored sari, which is soiled. Female demons surround her. She is weak due to fasting. She looks very sad and miserable.
* Verse 5-15-20 describes Sita as a form that emerged out of the fire, glowing with radiance, but veiled in smoke
* In verse 5-15-21, sage Valmiki describes Sita as a lotus plant without a lotus flower, covered with mud.
* 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.
* **Verse 5-15-25 describes Sita as a braid made up of three flexible strands of hair and as a coiled up snake; this is a classic description of the Kundalini.**
* Verse 5-15-32 again describes her as a fire covered by smoke and as a forgotten treasure.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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 that he can avoid a possible attack from Shri Ram.
* **In verse 5-19-9, Ravana sees her as a great, writhing female serpent bound in a spell.**
* **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 extremely critical as they contain the exact description of the Kundalini coiled up at the Root Center. 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.**

### Easy Character # 2: Shri Ram

After the defeat of Ravana, the war ends, and Vibhishana becomes the king of Lanka. Shri Ram asks Vibhishana to bring to him.

In verse 6-115-21, Shri Ram tells Sita, “I won you back to restore my honor.” He then tells her that she is “free to go wherever she likes.” **In verse 6-116-15, in a befitting reply to Shri Ram, Sita reminds him that she was born out of the earth, and her father, Janak, 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 real nature”. However, not wanting to live a life of blame from Shri Ram, she decides to enter into fire and asks Laxmana to set up a bonfire. **Note that Sita does not enter into 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 6-117-1, along with everybody else, Shri Ram becomes very sad, and tears roll off from his eyes. **He does behave like an ordinary man.**

After witnessing this sad turn of these events, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Indra, and a host of other gods, decide to intervene. In verse 6-117-6, they question Shri Ram as to how he could not recognize himself as god. They ask him why he is still behaving like a commoner? **In verse 6-117-11, Shri Ram tells them that he thinks he is a normal human being called Ram, the son of Dasharath of the city of Ayodhya. He asks them, “Since you are gods, you tell me who I am. What is my real nature?”**

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

* In verse 6-117-12, Lord Brahma tells Shri Ram, “You are Lord Vishnu, wielding the discus.”
* 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 end of creation. You are an essential nature of all living beings; your presence is everywhere, and you are four armed (Lord Vishnu).”
* 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.”
* In verse 6-117-16, he says, “You are the rationalizing intellect; you are the origin and dissolution of the entire creation.”
* In verse 6-117-17, he says, “You are behind the working of all senses; you offer protection and refuge to everyone.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* In verse 6-117-24, he says, “Brahma, the creator, is like your heart; all other gods are like mere hair on your limbs.”
* In verse 6-117-25, he says, “There is nothing in this world without you.”
* In verse 6-117-28, he says, “Sita is no other than Goddess Laxmi, and you are Lord Vishnu.”

In verse 6-118-1, the fire god appears in person, with Sita in his hand; Sita had earlier on jumped in the fire. **Verse 6-118-4 tells us that Sita comes out of the fire in exactly the same state in which she went in; even her flower ornaments did not burn in the fire. 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 real nature of his wife, Sita, as the primordial energy. Having known this, he had ignored her jumping in the fire, as he knew the fire could not burn fire.**

* In verse 6-118-15, he says, “I know Sita, who is always in my mind, and she has undivided affection for me.”
* In verse 6-118-16, he says, “Ravana could not harm her as her own power protects Sita.”
* **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.”**
* **In verse 6-118-19, he says, “Sita is no different from me, just as sunlight is no different from the sun.”**

### Easy Character # 3: Hanuman

**As far as we are concerned, Hanuman is “the most important character” of the story for us.** He is the catalyst that brings Sita and Shri Ram together and accelerates the action in the war. Sage Valmiki likes to give us many clues about Hanuman.

**Hanuman is the son of the air god, which connects him directly to air, and thus, to breath. He stands for the Prana in our body, which we take in through the air.** The Prana is a form of energy in our body, but it is different 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 Hanuman as that of 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 Jambuwant reminds Hanuman of his real nature, Hanuman jumps over the ocean toward Lanka. Although he performs several heroic deeds in this story, his journey to locate abducted Sita has no parallel. **Hanuman jumps toward Lanka, the story clearly 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/centers, their effects, and the precautions to take to avoid danger.**

In terms of the human body, the point we need to realize is that the real nature of the breath is prana. One of the functions 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 use the internet to find out any correlations with the Chakras.

**Hanuman’s Five Face Form and Five Types of Prana**

Not many people know about it, but Hanuman has a five-faced form as well. The mysterious story behind it is as follows. **This story is not in Valmiki Ramayana.** However, it is important to understand the nature of Hanuman.

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During Shri Ram’s war against Ravana, Ahiravana – a brother of Ravana – took Shri Ram and Laxmana to the netherworld as captives. The only way for Hanuman to kill Ahiravana was to extinguish five lamps burning in different directions, all at the same instant. Hanuman assumed the “Panchamukh” or “five-face” form and extinguished all the lamps at the same time, thus killing the demon Ahiravana and freeing Shri Ram and Laxmana.

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We know sage Valmiki describes the relationship between the air god and Lord Hanuman as that a father-son duo, as Prana is a vital component of the air that we breathe. We know that the Prana is responsible for sustaining 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.** These activities are classified according to the body part they are associated with. Since the Prana is a form of energy, all these activities are movement or heat related. In other words, in order 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 force or energy behind it.

**Even a child can tell that the most prominent movement in our body is the beating of the heart. The energy or the force that makes our heart beat is called Prana.** The primary source of Prana is the air we breathe. Food is the secondary source. After the activity of the Prana in the heart region, the 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 is a simple looking definition, but it has a lot more to it.

Figuring out 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 does trigger 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 Pranic energy, which operates in the throat and head region is called 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 Pranic energy, which operates in the stomach and is responsible for digestion is called Samaana. The Pranic energy, that circulates blood in the entire body, is called Vyaana. In addition to these five major Pranas, there are five minor Pranas: Naga is responsible for hiccups; Kurma performs the function of opening 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, Pranic activities are difficult to observe. Only when these activities exceed existing levels, do 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 as pumping air in and out of the body alone does not constitute 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. **Note that the 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 Character # 4: Ravana

**Ravana represents our ego/ahamkar.** Our ego is insecure. It tries to grab power. It likes 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 very rich, with golden palaces and marvelous gardens. Even though Ravana has defeated all enemies and he lives on an island, Lanka is strictly guarded. It indicates his insecurity. “Lam” from “Lanka” (in English spelling, letter m is missing) is the letter of the Root Center/Muladhara Chakra. **The Root Center is associated with a sense of insecurity, which in turn is closely related to the ego.**

Ravana is an undisputed king of the demons. Yet, he feels alienated 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 various arts. Our ego surely has all these characteristics.

One of Ravan’s names is "Dashanan," which means "one with ten faces." **His multiple faces represent the various masks that our ego wears.** Probably, our ego has more than ten faces. His other name is "Dashgreev". It means "one with ten tongues." A tongue represents lust and false speech. Ravana and our ego have 10 of those. **Thus, when we see Ravana as an ego, we feel that we are very familiar with him.**

**In addition to personification of the ego/Ahamkar, Ravana is also an example of one more critical concept – the Rajas Guna.** Ravana is very active in nature. He is a very busy demon. He concurred almost all other kings. He rules a very large kingdom. He is an expert in 64 different arts. He is a highly accomplished warrior. He has many other qualities that tell us that he is highly active in nature. Ramayana uses his character to demonstrate the nature of Rajas Guna. **The Rajas Guna is present in everyone. It is responsible for all kind of activities. This force of nature pushes us into action, whether physical or mental.** By itself, it does not recognize any limits or does not check itself on its own. A rajas dominated person is always involved in one action after another, possibly in multiple actions at the same time.

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

* Verse 3-32-4 tells us that Ravana is radiant, and he is sitting in an **exquisite vehicle**.
* Verse 3-32-4 tells us that he **is covered in gold** from top to bottom and seated on a golden throne.
* Verse 3-32-6 tells us that he is a **brave and invincible warrior**.
* Verses 3-32-7, 10, 11, 12, 13 tell us that he fought many wars, and has bruises to prove his valor.
* Verse 3-32-8 tells us that he has twenty arms and ten heads. We could interpret this to mean that he is ten times more active and smart than others.
* Verse 3-32-9 tells us that he is dressed in **beautiful clothes and many ornaments**.
* Verse 3-32-13 tells us that he uses every possible way to humiliate his defeated enemies. Essentially, his standard of values and ethics are substantially lower for his enemies. There is nothing new in this for a student of history, as almost all the victorious armies do the same. The strategy for using substandard values and ethics is to create terror in the heart of the defeated enemy. It helps in quelling any future uprising or challenge against the conqueror.
* In verse 3-32-14, we read about Ravana’s vehicle, which he snatched from someone, and about **his other glittering possessions**.
* Verses 3-32-15 and 3-32-19 tell us that **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.
* In verse 3-32-17, we read that he practiced ascesis before and **acquired a lot of power**.
* Verse 3-32-17 tells us he would not be defeated by any known power in the world.
* Verse 3-32-20 tells us that Ravana is ruthless and brutal with his enemies. He is heartless, when it comes to punishing those, who went against his wishes.
* In verse 3-32-22, we see that **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 pretty 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.

We can be sure that sage Valmiki is 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 want all these things in our lives? Maybe, not all the things, but don’t we want at least a few of them?**

We may think that Ravan was some a 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, Ravana would have been way out of reach for an ordinary person to imagine himself in the role of Ravana.

When we truly understand Ravana, we can begin to see the real Shri Ram. Those, who do not understand Ravana, will not recognize Shri Ram, even if he is staring in their face. **We know that Ravana represents our ego/Ahamkar. We also know that there is no ego/Ahamkar in the higher consciousness. To recognize its absence, we need to recognize its presence.**

### Easy Character # 5: Kumbhakarna

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

**One of the very interesting point of Tamas guna is that it has a momentum.** It means that even if an overweight (as an example of Tamas dominated person) starts exercising, his weight does not start to drop right away. His weight will go up before it starts to go down. In Ramayana, we see that even after Kumbhakarna’s hands are cut, they keep moving. In addition, when his head is cut off, his body crawls long distance**. It tells us that even if a person manages to overcome Tamas Guna, it will continue to exert its power for some time.**

### Easy Character # 6: Vibhishana

“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 deserts Ravana’s camp and joins Shri Ram’s side. He becomes a main advisor to Shri Ram. He helps Laxmana to kill his nephew – mighty and invisible Indrajit. After the defeat of Ravana, Shri Ram honors Vibhishan as a close friend. Shri Ram crowns Vibhishan 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, in the end, Shri Ram steps away from Vibhishana (Sattva Guna) too.

We saw that spirituality, which includes yoga, is an activity dominated by Sattva Guna. However, ‘good’ it is, it is different from consciousness. **In other words, 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 Character # 7: Mandodari

Along with Sita, Mandodari is one of the five important females in Puranic stories. She has small role to play in Ramayana. We know that Ravana represents the ego/ahamkar. Mandodari is Ravana’s wife. She represents the rationalizing intellect/buddhi.

When Ravana abducted Sita and brought her to Lanka, Mandodari did not approve of his action. Mandodari comes out as surprisingly rational about these events. She advises her husband not to take the wrong course of action. Giving advice and keeping composure in a distressing situation is an indication of the rationalizing intellect/buddhi.

### Easy Character # 8: Dasharatha

At the beginning of Ramayana, we meet the king of the city of Ayodhya called as "Dasharatha". His name means, "Ten horse chariot rider." It is a clear 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 of these 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 Character # 9: Laxmana

**The name “Laxmana” translates into "focused mind" because "laxya" means “target” and "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 Dasharath divides the dessert from the ritual sacrifice amongst his queens. Among Dasharath’s wives, Kousalya gets 50%, Sumitra gets 25%, and Kaikayi gets the rest of the 25% in the first pass. In the second round, king Dasharath divides Kaikayi's share, so that Sumitra gets an additional 12.5% and Kaikayi is left with only 12.5%.

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.** The name Shatrughn is difficult to understand in this context, and there is not much of a role for him in Valmiki Ramayana either. As he is born to the same as Laxman, he represents some undefined component of the mind.

Note that all four brothers are born at the same time, 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 into the river Sharayu is different. **First, goes Laxmana, the devoted mind, and then goes Shri Ram, who represents the consciousness. Bharat and Shatrughn, 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 different characters, they correspond to the four parts of the human body-mind-consciousness framework.**

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

### Medium 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 “Jrmbha” 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 Hanuman of his true nature. Hanuman represents the Prana in our breath. Thus, we can say that Jambavan reminded Hanuman that his true nature was that of Prana.

**From being just a normal breath, to being vital breath (that is, Prana), this 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 Hanuman.** In verse 1-57-34, we see clear evidence of Hanuman calling Jambavan as guru. We will also see that in verse 6-128-53, Jambavan, along with Hanuman, playing a unique role in the coronation of Shri Ram.

### Medium Character # 2: Sage Valmiki

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

We can map almost all the main characters of Ramayana to a process inside our energy-consciousness-body-mind processes. 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 be relevant to us. Let us take a close look at his role.

We saw that sage Valmiki is guiding us toward Shri Ram by writing Ramayana. Thus, indirectly becomes our guru. **Sage Valmiki is surely a guiding force that is external to 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 to us. It means he deserves a prominent role as a character in Ramayana as well. He has to have the role of the guru.

Sita represents the Energy. We are all children of the Universal Energy. As per Yoga, Energy separated from Consciousness, according to its wish, so that 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 facts together – us being the children of the energy, and sage Valmiki being our indirect guru – the puzzle of sage Valmiki’s role in Ramayana become 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 role of the guru. 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.

### Medium Character # 3: River Ganga

On their way to Mithila – king Janak’s capital – sage Vishwamitra narrates the story of river Ganga to Shri Ram. Ramayana is the story of the paths of the energy - that is Sita, and the higher consciousness - that is, 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 flows of the energy and the consciousness are working in our body.**

This story is similar to a doctor’s overview of the bone structure in an X-ray to a patient, before explaining fracture in the bones. In this highly creative story, sage Valmiki informs us about the fundamental framework in which the energy and the consciousness work. In his characteristic style, he creates a story that describes Sushumna – the main nadi/track – 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 the heaven to the earth with a massive 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 decides to bear the impact of Ganga’s descent on his head. In verse 1-43-7, while Shiv can sustain the impact, Ganga, unable to find the outer edge of the matted hair-tufts of Lord Shiva, is stuck in it. In verses 1-43-20 to 1-43-22, we get a beautiful picture of how Ganga looks, when she comes out of Shiva’s hair. The description evokes images of hundreds of suns in the cloudless sky at a time, flashy lightning, and silver-clouds of autumn.

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

* The first image is of Ganga’s magnificent fall from heaven on Shiva’s head.
* The second image is of her tumultuous swirling around Shiva’s head.
* 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 in our head; so, we see that Ganga coming out of Shiva’s head.

If we visualize these images, we begin to see sage Valmiki’s intention in describing them. **Undoubtedly, all these images are descriptions of the Sahasrara, where the energy merges with the consciousness.** As we have seen before, we are accustomed to seeing the path of the energy’s ascent to the head and its merger with the consciousness. Sage Valmiki has described the same process in opposite direction. When we create an image in mind, we can safely 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 actual swirling of the energy at the top of the head, producing 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 Sagar. It is the description of the exemsion of the Sushumna Nadi going down from the head toward the Muladhara Chakra and further down to the feet.

We read that Shri Ram’s ancestors are responsible for bringing 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, but we do have other nadis 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. There is an important verse 1-43-38, which tells us that sage Janhu blocks the flow of river Ganga. With reference to the Sushumna Nadi, sage Janhu symbolizes a particular 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 guess the location of this knot based on the description given in the Ganga story. When sage Janhu releases river Ganga, the water comes out from both of his ears. Thus, we can guess that the location of the Shiva Knot is between the ears, just below the Third Eye Center, on the Sushumna Nadi. The opening of this knot is a precondition for the opening of the Third Eye Center. So long as this knot is blocked, a higher amount of energy cannot reach the Third Eye Center, and the person cannot feel the Third Eye Center.

### Medium Character # 4: Shabari

Sage Valmiki devotes the whole chapter of 3-74 about Shabari. Note that this chapter is different in Valmiki Ramayana from other versions of Ramayana. As per the story, Shabari's guru, sage Matang had already left for the 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 instructed by her guru with great devotion. In verse 3-74-6, when Shri Ram comes to the Pampa Lake area, we are introduced to Shabari. Note that sage Valmiki calls her Siddha – a highly 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 replies, “Just now, on seeing you, my ascesis 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 into a ritual fire and assumes 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 Matang. Servant of guru is a way of showing respect for and 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 relationship.

Verse 3-74-35 again mentions that she was a perfect yogi and went to the same place – heaven – where her guru was. Therefore, by portraying Shabari as a maidservant, later versions of Ramayana lost the real meaning of this story. 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.

### Complex Character # 1: Parashuram

In all the avatar stories, a character from the previous story appears in the next story and thus connects the stories to each other. For example, demon Hiranyaksh, who is in the third avatar story, has a brother, demon Hiranyakshipu, who appears in the fourth avatar story. This pattern establishes continuity in these stories.

When we understand the above logic, it becomes clear that Ramayana, as the story of the seventh avatar, needs a connection to the sixth avatar story of Parashuram. Please read the chapter “Levels of the Consciousness – From Normal to Beyond” in this book for details of avatar stories. In that chapter, we saw that Parashuram level of consciousness is a rather crude level of consciousness. We also saw the story of Lord Ganesh and Parashuram, where Ganesh blocked Parashuram from seeing Lord Shiva. It indicated the limits of the Parashuram level of consciousness.

Refinement from a relatively crude level of the consciousness to a finer level means that the crude level has to make way for the finer level of the consciousness. In other words, the crude level of the consciousness has to end, so that the next level of the consciousness can begin to establish its foothold.

For this reason, we read in Ramayana that Parashuram and Shri Ram – both incarnations of Lord Vishnu – enter into a major conflict. In verse 1-75-27, we read that Parashuram 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 to 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 Parashuram, but does not release it. There is a duplication of this event later on, when Shri Ram points a yet another powerful arrow at the ocean. Shri Ram does not kill Parashuram, because Parashuram 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 arrow in such a way that Parashuram 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, it becomes clear that the crude level retires and the refined level replaces it. Note that these events happen right after Sita and Shri Ram marry. It indicates that the actual power of Shri Ram’s level of consciousness manifests itself only after his union with energy.

### Complex Character # 2: Ahalya

In chapters 1-48 and 1-49 of Ramayana, we read an interesting story involving Ahalya, her husband – sage Gautama, and Indra – the king of heaven. The crux of the story is that Indra falls for Ahalya. Tempted by the fact that no less than the king of gods has fallen for her, Ahalya cheats on her husband. There is nothing remarkable or unique in this story, and 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 minor 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 exactly like him. What is it that Ahalya could gain from this cheating – replacing her husband by his replica – given that she risked losing everything?

If you smell 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 as such represents devotion to god. Indra, on the other hand, 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 take a close look at the choice Ahalya makes – she chooses Indra, who comes in the disguise of her husband, over her husband. **In other words, she chooses sensual pleasures, which come 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 seems to be there, but on scrutiny, it is not there. It is a type of faith, where we engage in devotional activities, rituals, or customs, without understanding them. It is the weak or unsure faith, which claims belief and devotion to god and thus, engages in devotional activities. Faith and devotion are surely present in some dormant form, but they do not have a foundation of experience. Please read the Weak or Unsure Faith chapter from this book to understand more about it.

**The weak or unsure faith leads a person to search for some profit from devotional activities. Since solid foundation of faith is not there, the person’s mind takes whatever pleasure or profit it can gain from these activities**. For example, if such a person wants to impress someone, then prayers go on a little longer! Whenever such a person donate some money to the temple, they make sure that 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 other people, there was no way to distinguish between these activities and the real 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 that we plant in this land will not grow. In other words, no actions done with weak or unsure faith, will give good results.

**When a person chooses sensual pleasures, while doing activities that are devotional over pure devotion to god, and only he or she knows it, without any doubt.**

Sage Valmiki gives us a yardstick or a way to measure ourselves regarding the critical matter of faith. According to him, only the person involved in these actions knows the real intention behind them.

**Note that person with weak or unsure faith is honest; he tries to do the right thing, but fails in it. Thus, he has the feeling of remorse, as he knows that he could not do the right thing.** Moreover, he does not fail consistently in keeping his ego in check; he succeeds sometimes and fails at few times. In addition, if this person looks for the presence of remorse after performing such actions, he or she will surely find it.

Sage Valmiki portrays displays these traits in the character of Ahalya. She is a devoted wife of a sage, but has a few weak moments. Thus, we read in verses 1-48-29 and 30 that sage Gautama curses the Ahalya/weak or unsure faith, with becoming invisible and feeling remorseful. We saw earlier how difficult it is to detect a weak or unsure faith, as it blends nicely with faith.

We do not learn that Ahalya pleads for a boon to lift her curse, as seen in all other curse stories. Her husband tells her a way out of the curse, without her asking for it, which establishes her inherent good nature. 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 would do is to lift Ahalya’s curse. Note that Shri Ram, at the time of lifting her curse, was very young. In addition, he did not make an effort to lift the curse. His coming in contact with Ahalya lifted her curse automatically, without any action or intention on his part.

**When a person gets a real experience of the higher consciousness, even though it is very faint, the experience works 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.

### Complex Character # 4: Mandakarni

In the Chakra section, we will see that the event of marriage of Sita and Shri Ram as the opening of the Third Eye Center 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, and the south stands for the direction of the legs.** From the Third Eye Center, 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 Third Eye Center, 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.”** In other words, 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/Sound 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, and 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 the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and in many other 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.**

### Complex Character #5: Jatayu and Sampaati

To identify which body-mind process Jatayu and Sampaati represent, we need to go a few chapters ahead, read a story related to them, and get to know these eagles. While searching for Sita, the monkeys meet Sampaati, 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 Sugreeva and Vali, these two brothers also represent processes in our body-mind-energy-consciousness realm.

According to Sampaati, he and Jatayu were strong, but arrogant eagles, who wanted to follow the sun, as it goes around the earth. Therefore, up they went and followed the sun. 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 managed to track the sun. Jatayu, however, started to fall. Therefore, Sampaati followed him. Since his feathers were burning, he was unable to control himself. Both fell down on the earth at separate places; Jatayu, still having good wings, fell near Janasthana, while Sampaati, with burnt wings, fell on Mt. Vindhya. Probably, Jatayu had no idea where Sampaati fell, or if he was alive. Sampaati came to know that his brother was alive somewhere in Dandaka forest. Wingless, Sampaati stayed near the hermitage of sage Nishakara and somehow survived. Sage Nishakara tasked Sampaati with helping the monkeys to find Sita, so he could get his wings back.

**It is interesting to note that before getting his wings back, Sampaati wanted to take revenge on Ravana for having killed Jatayu. However, the moment Sampaati 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 Hanuman jumping toward the sun as a child. Like Hanuman, they paid a heavy price for their misadventure of going near the sun.

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

* In verse 3-50-6, Jatayu questions Ravana - how a king could lay his hands on another person’s wife.
* In verses 3-50-7 through 3-50-11, he gives Ravana a long sermon telling him why he should not abduct Sita.
* In verse 3-50-12, 13 he calls Ravana evil and a transgressor.
* In verse 3-50-13, 14, he justifies Shri Ram's killing of Khara.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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 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 the conscience, and he dies at the hands of the Ravana, who represents ego/ahamkar.**

If we see Jatayu as the conscience, the question, which arises, is: what body-mind-energy-consciousness process does Sampaati represent? The difficulty here is that what applies to Jatayu does not apply to Sampaati. Jatayu fought against Ravana and died, but Sampaati just flew away.

**Arrogance (Sanskrit word “Darp” as mentioned in verse 4-61-3) and a high sense of conscience, represented by Sampaati and Jatayu, soared high.** However, Sampaati, the arrogance 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 Sampaati as arrogance. **However, it may explain why Sampaati 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 ego/Ravana.**

# Layer 2: Relationship between Characters and its Samkhya-Yoga Meaning

We saw that there are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. They are – 1) Characters 2) Characters relationship with each other 3) Safeguards for spiritual aspirants and 4) Chakras.

### Dasharatha as a Father of Shri Ram

**Yoga says that mere controlling the senses is not its goal and it does not produce everlasting results. However, controlling the senses sets the stage up for something great. It creates conditions or groundwork for our consciousness to get to the next level.** Hence, in Ramayana, we see Shri Ram, representing higher consciousness is born to the king Dasharath, who represents controlling the senses.

### Urmila Does Not Go in Exile with Laxmana

Why does Urmila, Laxmana’s wife, not accompany Laxmana in exile? Urmila is Sita’s sister. We can assume that both sisters have been taught the same things, including 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.” As such, they are quite 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 clearly 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 Abudcts Sita

We know that Ravana abducted Sita and held her in captivity in Lanka. From the body-mind-energy-consciousness perspective, we interpret this event as our ego/ahamkar holding our energy (aka the Kundalini) in the Muladhar Chakra.

Ramayana tells us that Ravana’s sister, Shurpanakha, and a spy called as Akampana, told him about Sita’s beauty, and we get the impression that this led him to abduct her. This reason is not sufficient when see him as our ego/ahamkar. Hence, we need to ask more questions. Why does our ego/ahamkar hold the energy in captivity? What is the nature of the interest of the ego/ahamkar in the energy?

The answer to the question we just posed can come only from introspection. We need to understand the real reason behind our search for energy. **Why do we engage in Yoga or other related 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 attracted to the energy because of the benefits we get from it. Sage Valmiki mapped back this attraction in Ramayana as Ravana’s attraction for Sita.**

The question is rather simple: Do we want to achieve something by doing yoga? On the other hand, do we perform yogic actions to give up something within us, after understanding its true nature? The irony is that the answers to both the questions are positive, and there is an element of truth in both. If you remember the cyclic nature of the energy-consciousness flow, you realize that the first answer leads to the second one.

It is true that we are attracted to the path of Yoga as it a value to our life like better health and mind. We pursue these activities without knowing or understanding the full implications of Yoga. It is only when we hit the road and get some success that we begin to understand that something else exists in us. Apart from the body and the mind, we begin to see the energy and the consciousness components of ourselves. At this instance, the ego/ahamkar comes in and claims the energy as its own. Impressed by the power of the energy, the ego/ahamkar wants to take control of it. Sage Valmiki understood this and described it as Ravana’s attraction to Sita’s beauty. Ravana was not even aware of Sita’s true nature as a universal energy. He was only vaguely aware that she was the wife of Shri Ram, whose power he underestimated. He had never encountered anyone more powerful than him and did not think Shri Ram could pose a challenge to him.

A similar thing happens in our body-mind framework. When we get the first glimpse of the energy, we instinctively claim it as “my” energy. We are completely unaware of the true nature of the energy or her connection 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 it is strong enough to take over our identity and the whole being. We have not encountered anything like that before and are not going to accept its existence or power without any proof.

Eventually, the ego/ahamkar realizes the true nature of the universal energy, and it becomes devoted to it. The ego/ahamkar eventually realizes that the universal energy is operating within our body-mind framework. It also understands that this energy is much more superior to itself; the mind itself is dependent upon the energy. The ego/ahamkar sees that the same energy is flowing through its body and nervous system. It recognizes that the energy can fix 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 loosens its claim of ownership of the energy. This loosening of the grip releases a lot of energy because our mind does not consume it for running its thought processes. The energy travels from the Muladhar Chakra to the Sahasrara through the other centers in between. When it reaches the Sahasrara, we feel a higher level of the consciousness and a greater level of awareness set in. Now, the ego/ahamkar can see its reality as well as that of the energy. It understands that it is just a minor component of the body-mind-energy-consciousness processes. The same ego/ahamkar then seeks its destruction at the hands of the consciousness, but this happens at a later stage.

Note that these are dynamic and simultaneous processes, not a static and fixed structure. When you see the energy ascend to the Sahasrara, you also feel 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 various events that happen within us that lead us ultimately to the higher levels of the consciousness.

### Hanuman finds Sita in Lanka

After Jambavan reminding Hanuman about his powers, Hanuman jumped over the sea toward Lanka. It refers to the Prana in our body jumping toward the Root Center/Muladhar Chakra. We will see the details in the Chakra section. In this chapter, we will see what happens after Hanuman lands in Lanka.

Verse 5-2-1 tells us the city of Lanka is located in Mt. Trikuta. Trikuta translates into “mountain with three peaks.” It would be interesting to see if Sri Lanka, the country, has a mountain range with three peaks big enough to build a huge city on one of the peaks. In terms of Samkhya-Yoga, the three peaks reference is very clear. It refers to the three gunas – rajas, tamas, and satva. It also means that in Lanka, we are going to find demons having rajas, tamas, or satva gunas. The general perception about Ravana’s Lanka is that since it was a city of demons, only bad people populated it. On the contrary, sage Valmiki tells us that there were good people too in Lanka.

Hanuman enters Lanka at night. It is logical for a spy to enter into enemy territory at night. When Hanuman is searching for Sita in Lanka, we get the description of the Lanka at night and its nightlife. Hanuman sees a beautiful and prosperous city, with demons engaged in various kinds of activities. Verse 5-4-13 describes some demons doing spiritual activities, which means, Lanka has satva guna people as well.

First, Hanuman 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 high. It is made of gold. Compare it with a yellow colored square in the image of the Muladhar Chakra. We can easily see the similarities.

No splendors of Ravana’s palace affect Hanuman. However, when he does not find Sita in Ravana's palace, he almost loses his mind and begins to speculate the horrible ramifications of not finding Sita. In verse 5-13-37, Lord Hanuman imagines that if he does not find Sita, it will destroy both Ayodhya and Kishkindha. Now we know that these cities represents part of our body. If the Prana is unable to reach our energy in the Root Center, further possibilities of spiritual growth stop at that point. One of the greatest yogis of the last century, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, specifically mentioned that awakening the Kundalini is necessary for all spiritual growth.

By the time Hanuman 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 given 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 Hanuman burns major parts of the city in this section.

The beauty sage, Valmiki is talking about, is not of a place or a person, but of a single moment in time. He names this section after the moment, in which, Hanuman sees Sita for the first time. The moment Lord Hanuman first sees Sita is undoubtedly the most beautiful moment of Ramayana. At this moment, the Prana comes in contact with the energy. At this moment, our lifelong spiritual quest comes to an end. For the first time in life, we begin to understand and trust the framework of Yoga. 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. The comparison of the anguish of Sita to that of a separated female bird is done in verse 5-16-30 and it says, “Sita was in the same pitiable condition as a female Chakrawak bird, which has lost her companion male bird.”

In his highly compassionate way, sage Valmiki shows us a way to unite these lovebirds in our body. When we do a Pranayama in the right manner, with proper instructions from a guru, the Prana can find the energy locked up in the Root Center. Sage Valmiki depicts it as Hanuman finding Sita in Lanka. The moment the Hanuman, representing Prana, discovers the Sita representing energy, the days of agony and suffering are over for Sita, the energy. The countdown to the destruction of the ego/Ahamkar represented by Ravana begins.

### Hanuman addresses Sita as Mother

Hanuman 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, but the Prana does not have the heat that is associated with the energy.**

### Ravana and Mandodari Give Birth to Indrajit

According to Samkhya, the ego/ahamkar and the rationalizing intellect together create the mind. By substitution of words, we get: **Ravana (the ego) and Mandodari (the rationalizing intellect) together gave birth to (create) Indrajit (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 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 network of arrows, which turn into poisonous snake against Shri Ram and bind Shri Ram. **Mind can create illusions and trick a yogi.** In Ramayana, Indrajit created illusionary image of Sita and killed her in front of Shri Ram.

In Ramayana, Laxmana kills 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 great difference in their nature. Their attitudes, judgments, and activities (or the lack of them), and the final results of their activities vary drastically.

Ravana, whom we saw earlier as the personification of the ego/Ahamkar, is very active in nature. Ravana’s highly active nature is used by sage Valmiki to demonstrate what rajas nature is. Ravana may have had an extremely rajasic nature, and sage Valmiki exaggerated it for the purpose of storytelling. **The rajasic nature is present in everyone and is responsible for all kind of activity. This force of nature pushes us into action, whether physical or mental.** By itself, it does not recognize any limits or does not check itself on its own. A rajasic person is always involved in one action after another, possibly in multiple actions at the same time.

Kumbhakarna, on the other hand, is an extreme example of tamasic nature. This person eats for six month and sleeps for the remaining six months. It requires an army of men just to wake him up. **Tamas is characterized by inertia. It too is present in everyone.** A tamasic person has a tendency of overeating, oversleeping, and overindulgence in sensual pleasures. This person finds himself resisting the call of action. He can find many reasons for not doing any particular action or justify his inaction.

Both Ravan and Kumbhakarn, symbolic of rajasic and tamasic gunas, battle Shri Ram. However strong and brave they are, they are ultimately defeated by Shri Ram. **If you read the description of the war of Lanka carefully, Shri Ram kills only two major 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 surely 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 that he would be in the frontline, doing the maximum damage to the enemy. However, sage Valmiki gives us a completely different picture, where Shri Ram kills only two of the enemy warriors.**

Hanuman 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 chooses to kill only two times, letting others fight his war. **There is nothing in the story to indicate 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 gunas are hurdles on the path of the higher consciousness, but they are ultimately subdued 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 take us to the consciousness? Sage Valmiki provides an answer to this as well. He creates the character of Vibhishana, another brother of Ravana. “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 satva guna nature and is responsible for seeking god or consciousness. Unlike the two other tendencies of nature, this one tries to seek 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 close friend. We can see that Shri Ram does not identify himself with any of these three brothers. He clearly separates himself even from Vibhishana, who fought with Shri Ram, against his own brothers.

**Shri Ram defeats rajas, but does not take its position; he neutralizes tamas, but does not become lazy. He befriends satva guna of nature, uses it, and rewards it too, but in the end, steps away from it. In other words, 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 gunas and their relation to the consciousness are the most significant findings of Yoga. No other discovery of Yoga’s way of life comes close to this one in its importance, and there is no other document, that explains these qualities in such an easy-to-understand way.

### 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 chooses to describe 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 at all. Ravan stands for the ego/Ahamkar and always stands alone, disconnected from the others.**

# Layer 3: Safeguards for a Spiritual Aspirants

We saw that there are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. They are – 1) Characters 2) Characters relationship with each other 3) Safeguards for spiritual aspirants and 4) Chakras. In this chapter, we will study the most important layer – the safeguards for spiritual aspirants. In addition, we will see entire war between Shri Ram and Ravana verse by verse. The war chapters have several safeguards.

### Tataka

The Tataka story is Shri Ram’s very first fight against demons. At the time, Shri Ram is a young boy. He had no experience of any battle, let alone of fighting with a demon. King Dasharath 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 Ravan represents our ego/Ahamkar, the demon Tataka must represent something within us. The clue about demon Tataka’s nature, with respect to our body, comes from a story related to the jungle in which she lives.

**Indra had once washed away his bad habits of uncleanliness 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 abundance 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.” Note that uncleanliness 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 uncleanliness and over-eating 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 too for a Yogi too. If a person meets these conditions, then further possibilities of his spiritual progress will open up.** Numerous Yoga books document Yoga’s insistence on hygiene. Physical cleanliness is the first step of yoga. In addition, all Yoga books clearly advise that a spiritual aspirant should limit food intake and avoid over-indulgence in eating.

### Vishwamitra

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

In his first personality, he is a loving and caring king, as well as 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 his entire army sufficient food. 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, means she can fulfill any wish of her master. Vishwamitra becomes greedy and tries to take control of the Kamadhenu cow by barter. When all attempts fail, he declares war on sage Vashistha. Nevertheless, 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. He decides 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 gets back to praying to get some more weapons.

After that event, we read the story of Thrishanku, who wants to go to the heaven in his human body and Vishwamitra helped him. Even in this story, we see that Vishwamitra is angry and an extremely 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 succeeds in doing this, he becomes a highest-level sage, a bramh-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 drive, to get more and more in life, is the real force behind all our activities. **This drive does not stop, just because we have changed the paradigm, similar to the way Vishwamitra does in the story.** 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 managed to change 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 the solitary life, there was no one to challenge them. **Therefore, sage Valmiki suggests that we need to be ready to change ourselves. The real change needs to happen inside of us. A change of physical location or directions is irrelevant.**

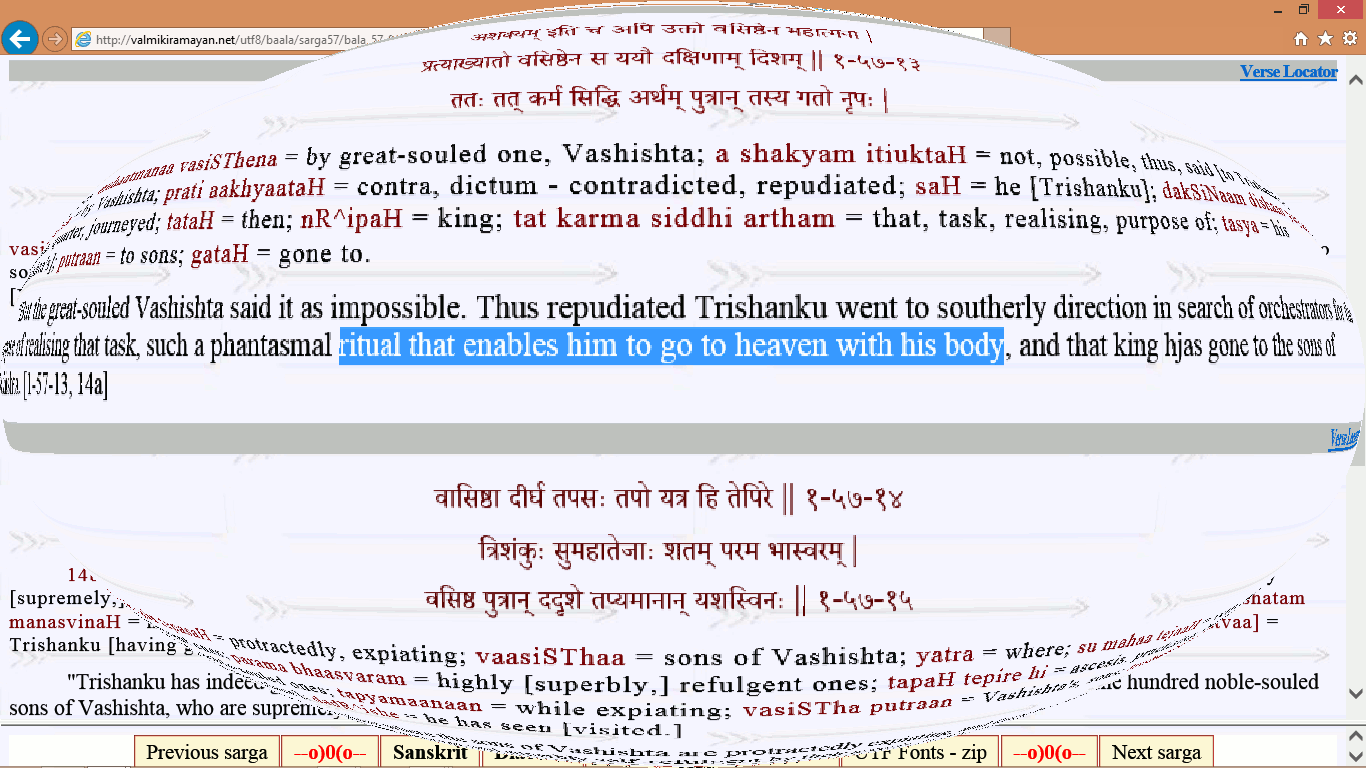
### Trishanku

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 as well. 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 ego/ahamkar, the sense of I that separates us from the others, begins to drive our actions with greed and hatred. In the story of Trishanku, he wants to go to the 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 the heaven at the same time.

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



URL: <http://valmikiramayan.net/utf8/baala/sarga57/bala_57_frame.htm>

Trishanku – a former king – knows that sage Vishwamitra considers sage Vashisth 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 the heaven by giving him energy. Vishwamitra has great powers, but he has not yet crossed the final stage of becoming a bramha-rishi. At this point of time, Vishwamitra is just an arrogant and prideful person with a high 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 the heaven with his body.

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However, going to the heaven with the body is not allowed; hence, Indr, the ruler of heaven, blocks Trishanku’s upward path. If we replace Indr 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 the 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 so that he is free to go up.

URL: <http://valmikiramayan.net/utf8/baala/sarga60/bala_60_frame.htm>

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 the heaven. That means that his name should have been Dwishanku – “hanging from two worlds.” So, what is the third world sage Valmiki might be referring 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 the heaven makes us greedy, and we too would like to go to the heaven as-is. In sage Valmiki’s world, the 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.

Indr 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 the heaven is an intermediate state. People believe that if a person does many good deeds in his lifetime, then he goes to the 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 the heaven requires a great amount of energy; we do not have it, and will not make the efforts to obtain it. If we were to make efforts to obtain energy, we would lose our false identity or the ego/ahamkar. The easy way out is to get help from an external source – a person, who has the acquired energy and is ready to give it to us. If someone were to transfer such a large 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 Root center. The additional energy from the outside merges with our energy at the Root center 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 for the temporary higher state. Our mind is stuck in desires or senses; we are unable to drop our ego/ahamkar, 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 nadis are blocked due to 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 objective 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 nadis 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 ego/ahamkar and the bodily attachments, only then should the guru initiate energy transfer.

### Viradha

To understand demon Viradha, we need to begin reading 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. His name was Tumburu. He used to work for Kuber, the god of wealth, and we can guess that Tumburu (Viradha) had a great life going on for him. He was obssessed to 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, Tumburu (Viradh) spent his time daydreaming about being with Rambha.

So far, everything was okay, and no one seemed to have any problem with Tumburu (Viradh) or his crush on Rambha. However, things changed drastically for Tumburu (Viradh) when he failed to do his duty, probably unintentionally. **The story mentions just 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 was a terrible sin in sage Valmiki's world.** Thus, Kuber cursed Tumburu to be reborn as a terrible demon named Viradha. **Looking at this from the opposite side, we can say that 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 that these strange boons hide some body-mind related processes under the cover.

When he 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 fails to 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 pit. Only when Viradha is in the pit does he realize the real 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 of 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 these tendencies.** Modern psychology has already taught us that suppression of desires by force only reinforces them and makes them stronger.

**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. At that time, the person might be much older and may not have a physical strength to act upon this type of desires to satisfy him or her. Without the strength of body, there is no way to satisfy the desires, and a person remains obsessed with them forever.

It is interesting to note that while dying, in verse 3-4-21, Viradha tells the next course of action to Shri Ram. It means that once we take care of an obsession, it opens up the door towards the events that lead to a better life.

### 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 in 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 the heaven and had the boon of a long life from Lord Brahma. Since he had the boon of a long life, he thought that Indra could not harm him in any way. Therefore, verse 3-71-8, 9 tells us that 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 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." **Kabandh 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 a large stomach, which can gobble up almost anything. With his one infernal, red eye, Kabandha sees nothing except his object of desire, that is, food. One eye is representative of 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. It appears that sage Valmiki’s prescription for greed is not only to act on it, but also to remove it firmly, leaving no trace of it.

### Vali

Hanuman, as the Prana, connects us to our breath. Thus, logically we conclude that he relates to the Heart Center. Hanuman is a minister of Sugriva. Hence, the question that comes to the mind is: What are Vali and Sugreeva in the context of the human body? Why did Shri Ram kill Vali in an odd manner?

Sage Valmiki writes one out of the six sections of Ramayana 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, Sugreeva. 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 Sugreeva explaining his miserable conditions to Shri Ram. Vali suspects that Sugreeva wants to usurp his throne. Therefore, he drives him out of Kishkindha, but forces Sugriva’s wife, Ruma, to stay behind with him. Sugreeva attempts to fight back and challenges Vali multiple times, but fails miserably. Vali drives poor Sugreeva to the end of the world in all four directions. Sugreeva is unable to find a safe-haven, where he can escape from the wrath of Vali. Luckily, for Sugreeva, Vali has a curse that he cannot enter a specific region near Pampa Lake. Shielding behind this curse, Sugreeva spends his time in exile, with a handful of ministers. At this point of the story, Hanuman, as a minister of Sugreeva, arranges a meeting of Shri Ram and Sugreeva 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 will see that most of the poetry is about air, birds, wind, passion, and love. Unmistakably, this place has to be the Heart Center, which has Air as its element. The heart is the place, where air and love related matters come together. We will see that there are more than 200 poetic verses in these chapters and almost all them refer to the Heart Center in some or the other way.

Vali is a son of Indra, and Sugreeva is a son of Sun – a minister of Indra. Sugreeva 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, “Sugreeva” translates into “tamed horse,” which essentially 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 demonstrate his nature. The first example refers to when Vali tells Sugreeva that he is going inside a cave to kill some demon and asks Sugreeva 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 Sugreeva 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 Sugreeva.

The proof of Sugriva’s feminine/soft nature comes when Shri Ram kills Vali. Shri Ram kills Vali for Sugreeva, and yet, Sugreeva cries more than Vali’s wife does. In verse 4-24-23, he even plans to enter into 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. Sugreeva, on the other hand, is much more controllable and softhearted in nature; this “tamed horse” is useful to Shri Ram for his mission.**

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

The readers are left with a big question - why he shot 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 strong ruler/Vali in the heart region by a weak and soft ruler/Sugreeva. 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 in us on the path of Yoga. 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 mellower, kinder, and gentler than before. Their heart, which was demanding and selfish, suddenly becomes much softer and compassionate in nature. This change of heart happens when a person starts to see 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 Sugreeva 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 weak heart. This heart is much more feminine and is much more amenable to the further cause of the consciousness.**

The story tells us that Sugreeva 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.

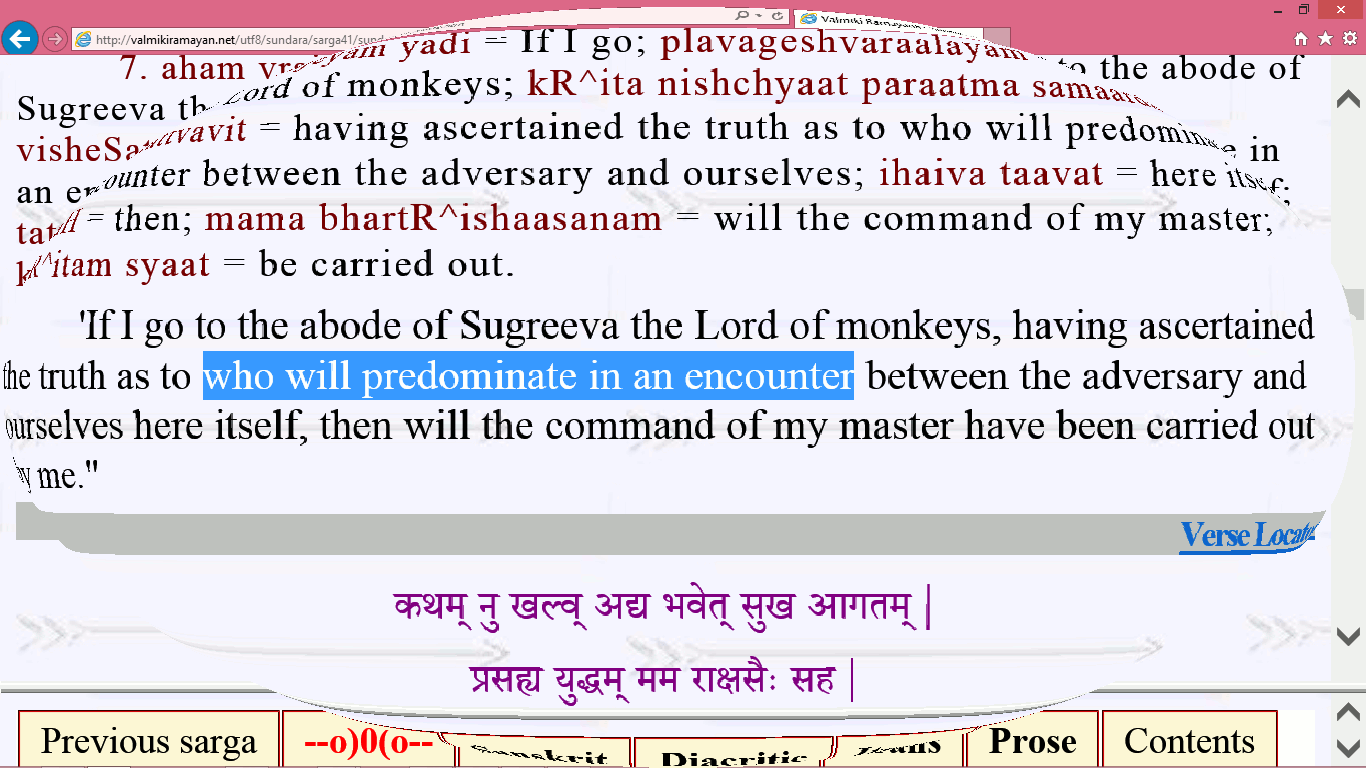
Further, we read that Sugreeva sends Hanuman, who stands for the Prana, in the southern direction. Hanuman’s association with Sugreeva removes any doubts that Sugreeva relates to the heart, and that Sugriva’s massive search mission relates to the pumping of a lot of air to all parts of the body. For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

### Burning of Lanka

Having successfully found mother Sita, Lord Hanuman accomplishes his job of leading a search party and of being a spy. Now, he needs quickly to go back and tell this great news to the other monkeys. They are waiting for him and have not taken any food. Shri Ram is eager to hear this news as well.

There is no need for Lord Hanuman to get into anything that increases the risk of demons catching him, as 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 Lord Hanuman to leave Lanka right away after meeting mother Sita. However, we see that he does not leave Lanka, enters into a messy fight with the demons, and kills a son of Ravan. The demons capture him and he comes very close to losing his life, which opens up the possibility of new problems.

As Lord Hanuman 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 mother Sita. Let us see the details.



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

It seems that Lord Hanuman has already decided that there will be a war and is starting the first combat of the big war. All of these actions are unnecessary for a spy with a critical secret, known only to him, when everyone is eagerly waiting for him. In theory, Lord Hanuman’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, Lord Hanuman gets captured by Indrajit when the latter uses a divine weapon. There again, we see a change in his position.

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* In verse 5-48-44, Lord Hanuman decides that he will be a messenger of Shri Ram to Ravan and wants a dialog with Ravan. There are no such instructions from Shri Ram to Lord Hanuman. Instead, the instructions from Sugreev are to report back as quickly as possible.
* In chapters 5-49, 50 and 51, Lord Hanuman takes up the role of a messenger of Shri Ram
* In verse 5-50-15, he says that he killed the demons in self-defense. 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.

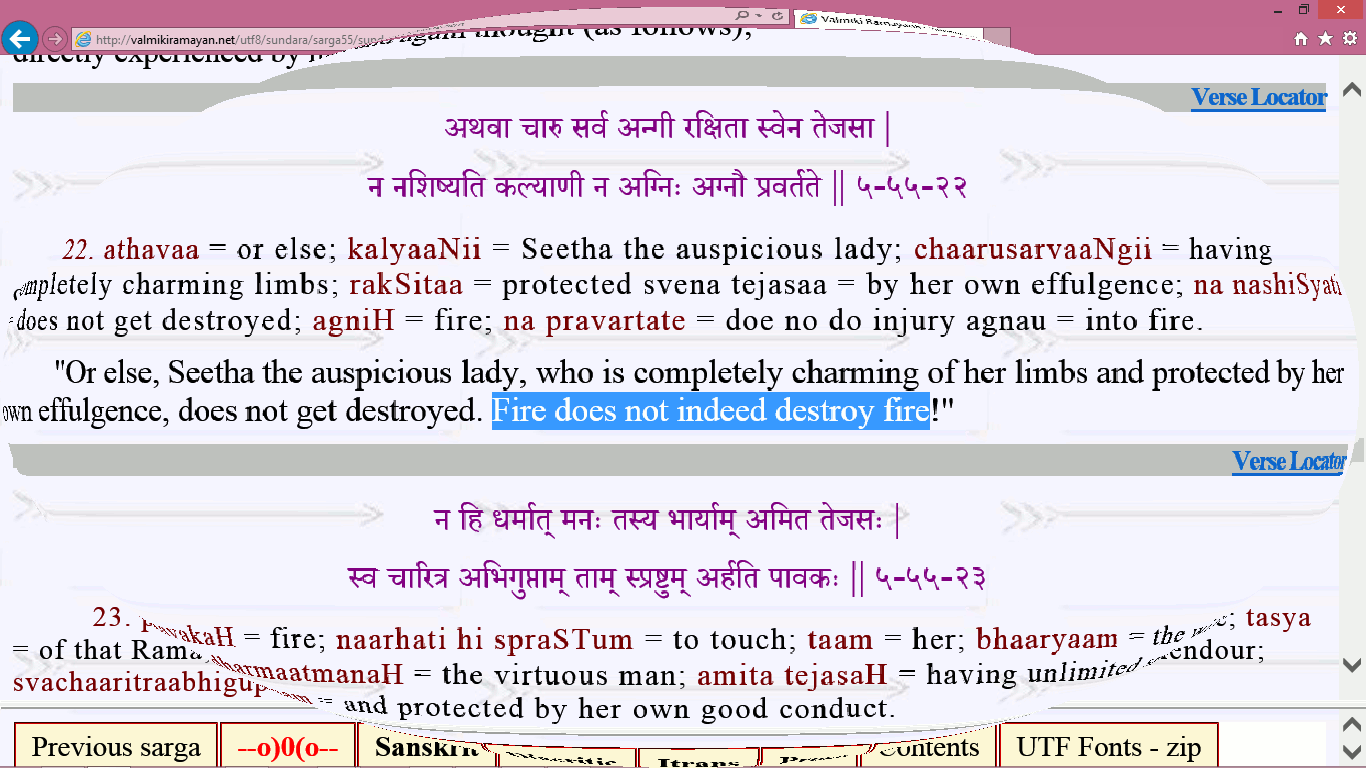
We need to understand why Lord Hanuman takes this path when the stakes are extremely high. In verse 5-51-36, Lord Hanuman warns Ravan that Lanka would burn from the heat radiated from mother Sita. These words suggest us to link the burning of Lanka to the power of mother Sita. Ravan does not pay heed to Lord Hanuman’s message and orders for him to be killed. Luckily, Vibhishan steps in and convinces Ravan to avoid killing Lord Hanuman, as he is a messenger, and punishing him by other means instead. Ravan orders to set Lord Hanuman’s tail to fire as a punishment.

Mother Sita hears this news and requests the fire to be cool to Lord Hanuman. In verse 5-53-35, Lord Hanuman feels that the fire is not burning him and feels like a snowball instead. Taking advantage of the situation, he assumes a big form, kills the demons and escapes. Then, moving swiftly, he spreads the fire throughout Lanka with the exception of Vibhishan’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 Lord Hanuman changing his position from a spy to destroyer. All these logical difficulties are a cover-up for any effects arising from the practice of pranayam. When the pran reaches the Root Center and comes in contact with the energy, it activates the dormant energy. This event activated energy releases in Root Center, but 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/Root Center. It is the same effect which sage Valmiki alludes to in verse 5-51-36 when Lord Hanuman warns Ravan that Lanka would burn from the heat radiated from mother Sita.

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

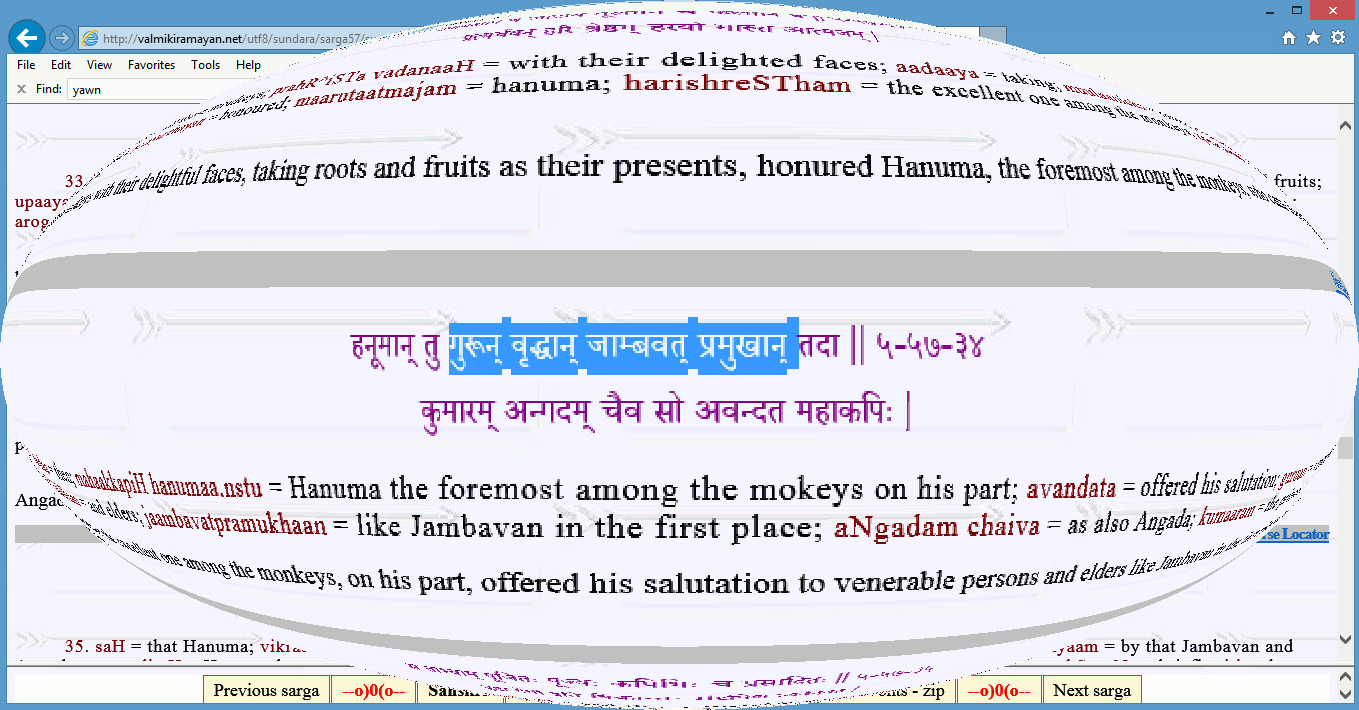


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It is interesting to note that while coming back, in verse 5-56-9, Lord Hanuman ascends a big mountain called Arisht. Arisht means “an impending doom or disaster.” Even active volcanoes around the world do not have such bad names!

Verse 5-57-7 compares Lord Hanuman, while he is coming back, with the moon in the clouds. He is clad in white clothes, indicating 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 mother Sita. In verse 5-57-17, Lord Hanuman touches the molten gold colored Mt. Mainak. We have earlier seen that this is a reference to the Manipur Chakra/Power Center.

Note that going from the Root Center to the Manipur Center, there is a Swadhisthan Chakra/Enjoyment Center in the middle. Madhuvan episode, which we will see next, referring to the Swadhisthan Chakra/Enjoyment Center could not have happened in the sea. Hence, Sage Valmiki changes the order of these two centers for the sake of the story.



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After returning from Lanka, in verse 5-57-34, Lord Hanuman offers salutations to all the monkeys, but first to Jambuwant. For the first time, and the last time, that sage Valmiki explicitly mentions Jambuwant as the guru of Lord Hanuman. For the first time, we understand the significance of a guru. Please note that the English translation of this verse does not have word guru in it but the Sanskrit verse (highlighted above) has word guru in it.

### Madhuvana Episode

In chapter 5-60, Angad thinks that their search party can invade Lanka all by itself and rescue mother Sita from Ravan. Note that earlier Angad had refused to take the challenge to jump over the sea. Suddenly, he finds it easy to jump over it, invade Lanka, and kill Ravan 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 pran. Sage Valmiki writes the Madhuvan chapters to suggest the precautions we need to be take and the consequences of not taking those precautions. In this chapter, Angad is planning an attempt to win mother Sita’s freedom from Lanka without Shri Ram. Thoughts of war with Ravan distract Angad, but Jambuwant steers Angad toward Shri Ram.

In verse 5-61-8, the monkeys come to Madhuvan, which translates into “garden of honey.” Dadhimukh, which means “yogurt mouth,” is protecting this garden. The Swadhisthan Chakra / Enjoyment Center has tongue for its sense organ, and its sense is taste. Thus, the above two names are direct 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 is the result of excessive energy in the Swadhisthan / Enjoyment Chakra, which shoots up from the Root Center after Kundalini awakening. Note that Jambuwant had suggested the monkey of going to Shri Ram as early as possible without taking any diversion. However, the monkeys did not follow this suggestion. The Madhuvan story gives us an example of indulging in unnecessary diversions and the effects thereof.

It is 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 start to pain, and a hammer will fall. It may even injure us as it falls. In the Madhuvan chapters, sage Valmiki suggests that a person, who has awakened the Kundalini, needs to avoid distractions. Without focus, chakras like the Swadhisthan Chakra / Enjoyment Center 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 Lord Hanuman to return, Madhuvan was not there. It is only after Lord Hanuman became successful in his mission that the monkeys could see Madhuvan.

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In verse 5-64-20, Angad asks the monkeys to go to Kishkindha, where Shri Ram and Sugreev are waiting for them. Verse 5-64-21 tells us that they spring into the air, “made space space-less,” and quickly reached Kishkindha in no time. What happened to all the places, which Sugreev had listed for search between Kishkindha and the southern sea? How did they made space 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 Swadhisthan Chakra / Enjoyment Chakra and going to the Anahat Chakra/Heart Center.

### Building a Bridge Across the Sea

Verse 6-4-71 tells us the monkey army led by Sugriv, along with Shri Ram and Laxman, 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 Heart Center, and its location is somewhere near central India. When we tried to understand the search instructions given by Sugreev, we clearly saw that the search began in central India. In those search instructions, there is no reference to Mt. Sahyadri. If the monkey army of Shri Ram is to travel from the Heart Center to the Root Center, then they will go through the Manipur/Power and Swadhisthan/Enjoyment centers. Thus, sage Valmiki needs to provide some form of references for these centers, but hide them very skillfully.

Verse 6-4-78 tells us that royal Mt. Sahya is adorned with red color; it has red color soil because of minerals. We know that the Power Center has a red color triangle in the middle; if we invert it, it looks like a red color 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 Swadhisthan / Enjoyment Center 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 indicate Swadhisthan Center activity. From verses 6-5-4 to 6-5-14, Shri Ram talks about passion and mother Sita’s beauty; we can interpret these verses as references to the Swadhisthan / Enjoyment Center.

When Vibhishan defects from Ravan 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 Vibhishan was indeed a spy of Ravan sent to kill a high-value target, he could have assassinated Shri Ram, Laxman, or Sugreev 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 Vibhishan represents the satva guna, which has a natural propensity to seek the higher consciousness. It is no wonder that Shri Ram welcomes Vibhishan 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 Vibhishan. In verse 6-18-34, Shri Ram declares, “Whoever it is, even Ravan 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. The difference is that the other tendencies do not seek, but rather oppose, the higher consciousness. Eventually, however, the higher consciousness neutralizes them.

After Vibhishan’s coronation as the future king of Lanka, Sugreev and others ask him the daunting question of ideas to cross the sea to enter in Lanka. Note that it is Vibhishan, the satva guna of nature, 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 Ramayan, Shri Ram begins to talk and behave like 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.

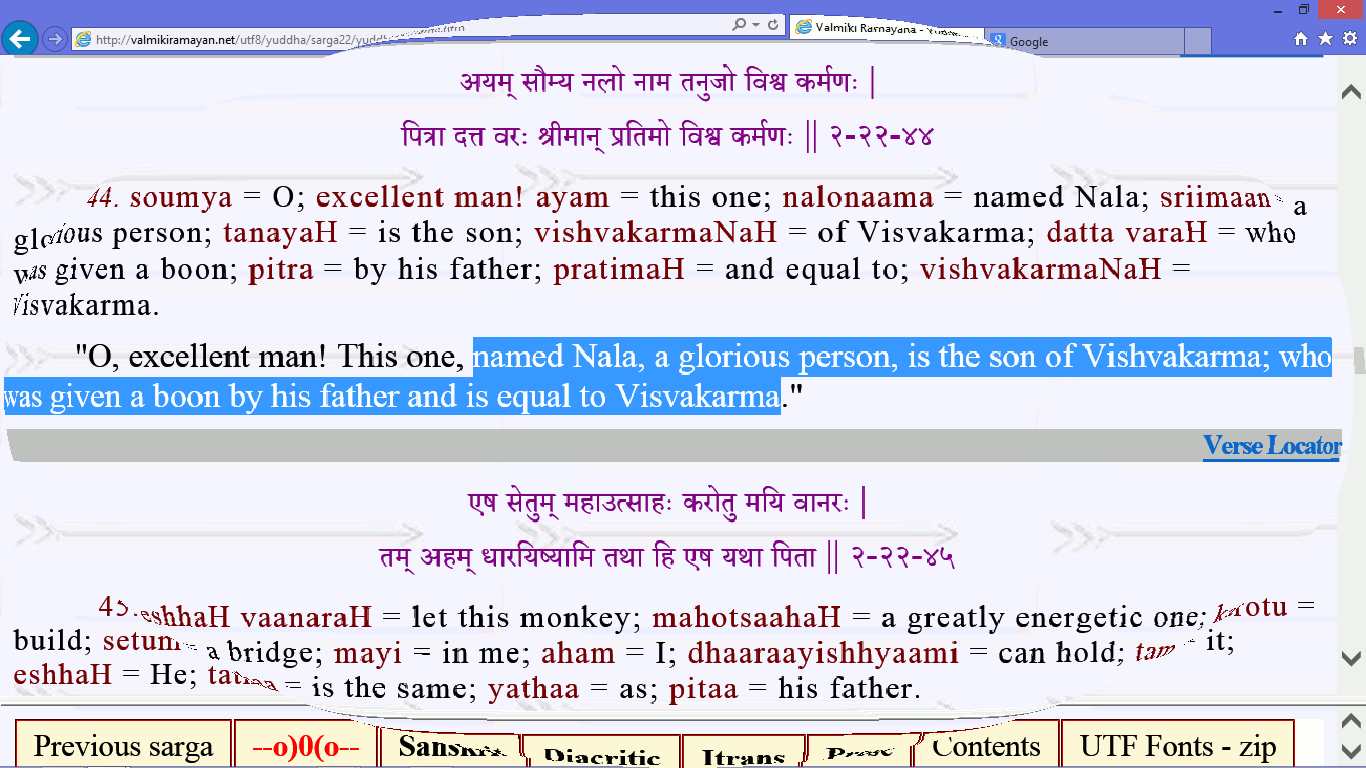
Coming back to building the bridge across the sea, verses 6-22-66 to 6-22-70 tell us that Nal builds the bridge in five days – on the first day, he builds 14 Yojan, and on the fifth day, he builds 23 Yojan of the bridge. Each day, he builds more of the bridge than the previous day; thus, his productivity 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 as well.

In terms of history, many army 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 causalities 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 managed to build 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 Yojan wide and 100 Yojan long, and he builds this bridge in five days. What’s more, Ravan’s side does not attempt to stop its progress, which is rather unusual.



URL: <http://valmikiramayan.net/utf8/yuddha/sarga22/yuddha_22_frame.htm>

In verse 6-22-44, the sea god tells Shri Ram that Nal is the son of Vishwakarma, the divine architect. Nal has a boon from his father; Vishwakarma that Nal will be equal to him in his talent as an architect. Sage Valmiki portrays the son as a continuation of the father, which means that father and son are the same. Note the meaning of the word Vishwakarma; “vishwa” means “world” (or in other words, 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 Root Center.

This point is not clear in Valmiki Ramayan, so we will take help from the other versions of Ramayan. In some other versions, the sea god tells Shri Ram that if Nal writes Shri Ram’s name on a rock, that rock will float in water. Consequently, the monkeys and the other animals collect huge rocks and bring them to Nal. Nal inscribes the word “Shri Ram” on the rocks, and the monkeys drop them in the sea. The rocks begin to 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 Nal building a bridge on the water with floating rocks represents some other reality.

In verse 6-22-79, Vibhishan, who represents the satva 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 satva 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 satva guna initiates and guards these proper actions. Thus, the intention of seeking the higher consciousness is inherent in these actions, which is why sage Valmiki tells us that doing pranayam and awakening the Kundalini do not mean anything, unless proper actions accompany them and that too for a long time.

Sage Valmiki’s message and advice to us is indeed simple – dedicate yourself to performing proper action, whatever it may be. After numerous such actions, Shri Ram/the higher consciousness will enter Lanka/the Root Center. With his entry into Lanka/the Root Center, the war for final victory over Ravan/the ego will begin.

Verse 6-31-1 mentions that Shri Ram enters Lanka and camps at Mt. Suvel. Suvel translates into “Good vine, climber, or creeper.” Look at any picture of Ida and Pingala Nadis, and you will see them as vines or climbers across the spine going from the Root Center to the Third Eye Center.

In verses 6-31-7 and 8, Ravan asks a sorcerer to produce the likeness of Shri Ram’s face to deceive mother Sita and to deceive her into marrying him. In his smart way, he calculates that if mother Sita marries him, Shri Ram will have no moral ground to invade Lanka for someone else’s wife. If mother Sita would marry Ravan, no one will fight for Shri Ram against Ravan, allowing Ravan to win the war without having to do any fighting. We can easily guess Ravan’s strategy to keep mother 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 mother Sita, tells mother 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 mother 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 Ramchandra. Chandra means the moon; thus, we can easily connect it to the moon, which, in Yoga, is considered to be a source of all the medicines.

In verse 6-33-38, Sarama compares mother Sita with mother 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 indicate some movement. As the higher consciousness comes closer to the Root Center, it attracts the energy, thus creating movement of the energy.

# Layer 4: References to Chakras

We saw that there are four layers in Valmiki Ramayana. They are – 1) Characters 2) Characters relationship with each other 3) Safeguards for spiritual aspirants and 4) Chakras. In last section, we saw many characters and their relationships. In this section, 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. We also 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 must have a movement of energy. To get the movement of energy, we need to do Pranayama. Prana finds the energy. Then, the energy travels from Muladhara Chakra to the Sahasrara. There is merges 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. In this descend, higher consciousness has a neutralizing and calming effect on all excessive tendencies of Chakras (which were activated because of the energy)**. **It also neutralizes ego/Ahamkar 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 with the Chakras, he mentions them indirectly – using their color, letter, vehicle etc. He could not declare them explicitly as such because that hurts the storytelling, and the story risks becoming a discourse. It means that we will not get the word Chakra from sage Valmiki. But he will explain everything else about it. We need to study Chakra independently and search the way its properties like color, letter, vehicle etc. are being used in Ramayana. See the table of chakras above for quick reference.
3. Chakras seem to 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. As we have seen before, the consciousness plays a neutralizing and calming effect on all excessive tendencies of Chakras created because of the higher energy.**

Considering all above factors, sage Valmiki gave relatively less importance to the Chakras. Now, let us see the references of 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. There are six main chakras in our body. The top of the head, which is the final destination of the energy, is not a chakra. Source of chakra information: <http://www.tantra-kundalini.com>

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chakra/ Energy center name and Location** | **Element, Color and Organs** | **Shape, Vehicle and Deity** | **Examples of Use in Valmiki Ramayana** |
| Muladhara Chakra/Root Center, located at the base of the [spine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertebral_column) in the [coccygeal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coccyx) 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 comes from sound Lam. Ravana’s palace is golden rectangle, the same shape as in middle of symbol of Muladhara chakra. |
| Swadhisthana Chakra/ Enjoyment Center, situated just above the Root Center. 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 strong grip)  Deity: Vishnu is seated on the Garuda. | Ocean as an abode of crocodiles, name “Surasa” translates into "good taste." |
| Manipura Chakra/ Power Center, located at Solar Plexus. Its focus is power. | Element: Fire  **Color: Yellow**  Sense Organ: Eyes  Work Organ: Feet and legs  Sense: Sight  Sanskrit Letter Sound: Ram | **Shape: Triangle**  Vehicle: Ram (an animal, representing dynamism and endurance)  Deity: Old Shiva sitting on Tiger skin | Manipur Chakra picture has downward-facing red triangle in the middle and fire as its element. It is referred as as a mountain with a golden hue. |
| Anahata Chakra/ Heart Center, located in the heart. **Its focus is love and emotions.** | **Element: Air**  Color: Green  Sense Organ: Skin  Work Organ: Hand  **Sense: Touch**  Sanskrit Letter Sound: Yam | Shape: Hexagram  Vehicle: Black antelope or gazelle (representing lightness and speed)  Deity: Ishana Rudra Shiva sitting on Tiger skin with Kakini Shakti sitting in lotus wearing sky-blue sari | Chapter 4-1 has several verses about Heart center. For example, in verse 4-1-10, mention of breeze, which refers to air and skin. In this verse, also refers to the love god. |
| Vishuddha Chakra/ Throat Center, located in the throat region. Its focus is self-expression by vocalization. | **Element: Space/Ether**  Color: Blue  Sense Organ: Ears  Work Organ: vocal cords  Sense: Hearing  Sanskrit Letter Sound: Ham | Shape: Crescent  Vehicle: Airavata (A white elephant with smoky grey color, the color of fog and cloud representing purity)  Deity: Panchavaktra Shiva Shiva sitting on Tiger skin with Shakini Shakti sitting in lotus wearing sky-blue sari. | Name Khara comes from the root “kha” which means “space or ether”. |
| Aagya Chakra/ Third Eye Center/ - Shiva-netra. It is located directly behind the center of the forehead. Its focus is vision. | Element: None  Color: Blue-white  Sanskrit Letter Sound: AUM | Deity: Ardhanarishvara, the half-male, half-female Shiva-Shakti with Hakini Shakti sitting in lotus wearing red sari. | Shri Ram broke a large a bow that belong to Shiva. Imagine a large bow vertically mounted, with the bowstring stretched, we get a picture of a close to vertical eye, the Third Eye - Shiva-netra.” |
| Sahasrara/ Thousand-petal lotus, 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 Hanuman jumps toward Lanka, the story clearly 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 of the functions 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: Hanuman / Prana jumps over the Manipura Chakra and the Swadhisthana Chakra to the Muladhara Chakra.**

**Events that happened before in the story:** Ravana has abducted Sita to Lamka. Shri Ram sends Hanuman, Jambavan, and others to the south direction to search for Sita. They come to ocean, which they cannot cross. At this point, Jambavan reminds Hanuman about his real nature.

**Events in terms of Chakra**: We know that Hanuman represents Prana in the body. Prana is in Heart Center. Lamka represents Root Center. So, Prana has to jump from Heart Center to Root Center.

When moment Hanuman realizes his real nature, he begins to grow, as mentioned in verse 5-1-11. The change of size of Hanuman is a reference to the practice of Pranayama.

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 Hanuman touches the mountain and then flies ahead toward Lanka. This touch-and-go logic with respect to the Manipura Chakra indicates 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 Hanuman. She is a friendly goddess of some sort and is there to test him. Surely, she is not an enemy. **The name “Surasa” translates into "good taste." It is a reference to the Swadhisthana Chakra as it is associated with a sense of taste and a sense organ, tongue.** Initially, Hanuman tries to avoid entering into the mouth of Surasa as she has assumed a horrible form. Surasa has a boon from Lord Brahma that Hanuman must enter into her mouth. Hanuman 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, and there is no way to avoid it.** Hanuman 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 Hanuman by his shadow. In verse 5-1-191, we read that her mouth is as big as Hanuman’s body, so that he can see her internal organs. This time again, he becomes minuscule and enters into 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, a form of Prana that works in the abdomen, upwards. In Pranayama, all we are trying to do is bring these two different forms of 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 Muladhar/Root Center. 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 result in bleeding. It is an important warning sign given to us by sage Valmiki.**

According to verse 5-1-206, when Hanuman reaches Lanka again, he becomes regular in size. Verse 5-2-49 tells us that Hanuman reduces himself to the size of a cat while entering Lanka. **It indicates that we need a minuscule amount of the Prana to enter into the Muladhara Chakra. There is no need to use excessive force; we need to avoid strenuous breathing.**

When Hanuman is at the gate of the city of Lanka, a female demon attacks him. **Verse 5-3-40 mentions that Hanuman does not use his full strength to hit her; he hits her as gently as possible. It is a reference to the kind of 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 ego to attach itself to the process, which in turn reinforces the ego. 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 processes. **When we succeed in doing Pranayama, the Prana will enter the Root Center, and the ego/ahamkar will begin to lose ground.**

The role of Pranayama ends, when the Prana enters the Root Center. However, the Prana / Hanuman, continues to play a vital role throughout the rest of Ramayana. When Hanuman 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 as well. 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 Hanuman 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 large amount of heat in 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 up 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 documented it in Yoga books. This phenomenon is a direct result of Pranayama and is an indication 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 very compassionate in describing this event in advance for us. He famously represents it as Hanuman burning Ravan’s Lanka.** This warning is an important warning sign and a symptom of 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 over-indulgence in desires generated from the Swadhisthana Chakra. A similar effect may occur at the Manipura Chakra as well, where a person may succeed in overcoming 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 Hanuman, who is a symbol of devotion and celibacy. The quality of devotion helps rectify imbalances at the Manipura Chakra/Power Center. The quality of celibacy helps constrain desires flaming out of the Swadhisthana Chakra.**

### References to Throat Center

**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. (Anahata Nad)**

In verse 3-13-13, sage Agastya suggests to live in Panchavati area to Shri Ram. The Panchavati area is described as a relatively small and beautiful place in the tropical dense Dandaka forest. Verse 3-15-28 mentions that Sita is very happy with the new area and their new beautifully constructed hermitage. Verse 3-15-31 mentions that 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 ears, we come to throat region. This is the region of Vishudha Chakra. **In order to co-relate Throat Center to Panchavati, we need to compare their details side by side.**

First, let us get the details of Throat Center. Throat Center’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. Its deity is Panchavktra Shiva; make a note of the word “Panch.” **The image of the Throat center has a silver crescent shining in a white circular background.**

In verse 4-16-4 onwards, we read Laxmana describing the beauty of forest in winter season. In verse 4-16-9, he talks about **snow**. In verse 4-16-11, there is 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 **un-bright 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 **a 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.

Generally, we may think about these verses in terms of poetic imagination. However, if we carefully search for Throat Center details, we find some connection. **Also, note that snowfall is an extremely 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 Throat Center and Airavat 's whiteness. The birdcalls in foggy river are connected to sense of hearing. Ears are sense organ of Throat Center.

The deity of Throat Center has word “Panch,” which means, digit five in his name as he has five faces. The name of Panchavati has word Panch in it – connection to word Panch is clear. The place of actual fight with Khara is called Janasthana, which means “general population area.” Why would someone name a place called as “general population area” deep inside of a dense forest? Therefore, the word Jana in Janasthana has to come from plane of Throat Center - 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 re-directs 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 in turn, 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 indicates high Throat Center activity. His war with Shri Ram looks like a passionate debate.

**Khara's army consists of many demons, whose names relate to the throat, the mouth, or space.** The name Vihamgam, which means “moving in sky,” surely relates to the space element. There is, however, one unusual name: Akampana. Akampana means “no vibration,” and it is unusual because every organ connected to the throat vibrates. Throat Center has vocal cords as its work organ. In the battle, Shri Ram kills Khara and all the demons, but only Akampana escapes!

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

* Shri Ram himself makes fun of Shurpanakha and insults her; thus, he invites trouble. We have already seen that Shri Ram intends to fight. Almost ten years have passed since his last fight with Viradha. Therefore, we see that he is ready for a major fight.
* 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.
* Sage Valmiki does not go into details of what happens when the higher consciousness enters the Throat Center. 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 Throat Center. However, what these books describe is an effect of the energy, not that of the consciousness.

### References to Heart Center

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

**Events in terms of Chakra:** From Throat Center, higher consciousness is coming down to Heart Center.

Before looking for the references to the Heart Center, let us see its features. Since the story relates to the heart, there is no doubt that there are many emotions involved in it. The Heart Center has air as its element, so we can expect references to air. The sense organ of this center is skin, with a touch being the sense associated with it. The center has black antelope for its vehicle. The presiding deity is Ishan-Rudr Shiva, who has blue skin and wears the skin of a yellow tiger. The goddess of the Heart Center is Kakini, who wears a sky blue sari and sits on a pink lotus.

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

* 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 Heart Center.
* In verse 4-1-10, there is a mention of breeze, which refers to air and skin. In this verse, there is 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 - strong emotions
* In verse 4-1-33 - the love god
* In verse 4-1-34, there is a slight change in the topic; a reference is made to touch, the sense related to the Heart Center.
* 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 Heart Center.

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 Heart Center.

* 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 Heart Center. We have seen the characters of Vali and Sugriva. Shri Ram replaces Vali with Sugriva. We saw these event as untamable heart being replaced by tamable heart. **This change happens in spiritual people, when higher consciousness enters into their heart. This is a major sign or indication of spiritual progress given to us by Sage Valmiki.**

### References to Third Eye Center

**Events that happened before in the story:** King Janak, father of Sita, had set a very difficult condition for giving Sita’s hand in marriage. Being a sage himself, he surely the real nature of Sita (as 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, the bow breaks in 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. **From the point of view of the consciousness descending from the crown of the head toward the base of the spine, this knot becomes the first hurdle. 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 Janak 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 Lord Shiv. It is not a surprise that Shri Ram manages to do 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 clearly 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 “shockwaves from an exploding mountain.” The thunderous sound, the explosive lightening, and the waves or vibrations are indication of the movement of a large amount of energy. Many 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 a large bow vertically mounted, with the bowstring stretched, you will get a picture of a close to vertical eye, the Third Eye.** The Third Eye Center is named after Shiva, and is called “Shiva-netra.” It seems that sage Valmiki superimposes two different body parts – the Shiva Knot and the Shiva-netra – on the breaking of Shiva’s bow. The superimposition might be because of the proximity of the physical location of the opening of the Shiva Knot and the Third Eye Center.

### References to the Sahasrara

**Events that happened before in the story:** Ramayana has three remarkable journeys. We have already seen Hanuman’s critical journey to find Sita in Lanka, and Shri Ram’s journey to Lanka. After Shri Ram’s victory over Ravan 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 Pushpak airplane. At this point in the story, Sita and Shri Ram are together, and they are approaching the city of Ayodhya in the Pushpak airplane.

**Events in terms of Chakra:** If you consider the currently 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, as 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, Sugreev’s wife. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki is clearly indicating to readers that, for Pushpak, these three locations are in a straight line.

The path followed by Pushpak is the path of the Sushumna Nadi in the spine. Therefore, we see Pushpak going from the Root Center 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 Root Center and never returns to the Root Center. This journey is the final ascent of the energy toward the Sahasrara; there is no coming back to the Root Center after this. 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 also 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.** **Both these sounds buzzing in the ears are documented types of the Anahata sound, and this is indicative of a massive movement of the energy in the temporal region.**

Verse 6-128-52 tells us that Jambavan and Hanuman got water from 500 rivers. Please note that Jambavan’s name comes first as he is a guru, and he is related to the Prana. **This event indicates activities of Prana all over the body through various nadis.** All this activities of Prana is 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, we learn that 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, Sugreeva and Vibhishana holding a white whisk over Shri Ram. **We can see that almost everything around Shri Ram is white in color; this indicates 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. We see that the sense organs are now cooperating with the higher consciousness and giving it presents. An old enemy is now a friend.

This occasion does not come without multiple benefits that come as a side effect of the highest state of the human consciousness. Thus, we read in one particular 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 time of ten thousand years definitely indicates 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 thousand 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 have to go to the end of the first chapter, not the last one.** 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 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.**

## Sugreev’s Brash Reaction

In verse 6-40-1, Shri Ram, Sugreeva, and others ascend Mount Suvela to get a good view of Lanka. Before war, any general of an army would like to survey the battlefield from the highest possible 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, Sugreeva, 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 that we are already familiar with. Ravana is wearing a red cloak, and he had 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 big battles he has won. We know that Ravana stands for ego/Ahamkar, and his red color comes from the color of the Root Center. In addition to red, the Root Center also has a golden color in it; so, we see that Ravana is wearing golden ornaments.

According to verse 6-40-8, when Sugreeva 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 Sugreeva 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 Sugreeva and Ravana. There is no mention of either of them winning; thus, it seems that they were both equal in power. In verse 6-40-28, we read that Ravana starts to use his magical powers to fight against Sugreeva. Sugreeva recognizes his limitation against Ravana’s powerful magic and backs off. Verse 6-40-29 tells us that Sugreeva jumps back from Ravana’s palace and returns to Mt. Suvela, where Shri Ram is.

As expected, Shri Ram clearly does not approve of this misadventure. He tells Sugreeva that it was a wrong and reckless action, not fit for a king. Sugreeva’s impulsive attack and the act of backing-off do not make sense to anyone and confuses Ravana as well.

On the contrary, 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 saw him without any 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, Sugreeva’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 objective, 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 yet for some strategic reason. In that case, Sugreeva would have been responsible for provoking a war when his side, for whatever reason, was not yet ready, or when it does not suit his side to go to battle at the given instance. However, this is not the case for Shri Ram’s army because, immediately after scolding Sugreeva in verse 6-41-26, Shri Ram marches toward the city of Lanka. Nothing happens in between these two events, which means that there is no reason for Sugreeva or anyone to hold back. Therefore, Sugreeva was correct in attacking Ravana at this instance, while Shri Ram is wrong in not following Sugreeva’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. Sage Valmiki explains it very clearly.

What does it mean when we say that a soft heart (Sugreeva) attacked the ego (Ravana), and the consciousness (Shri Ram) stood by?

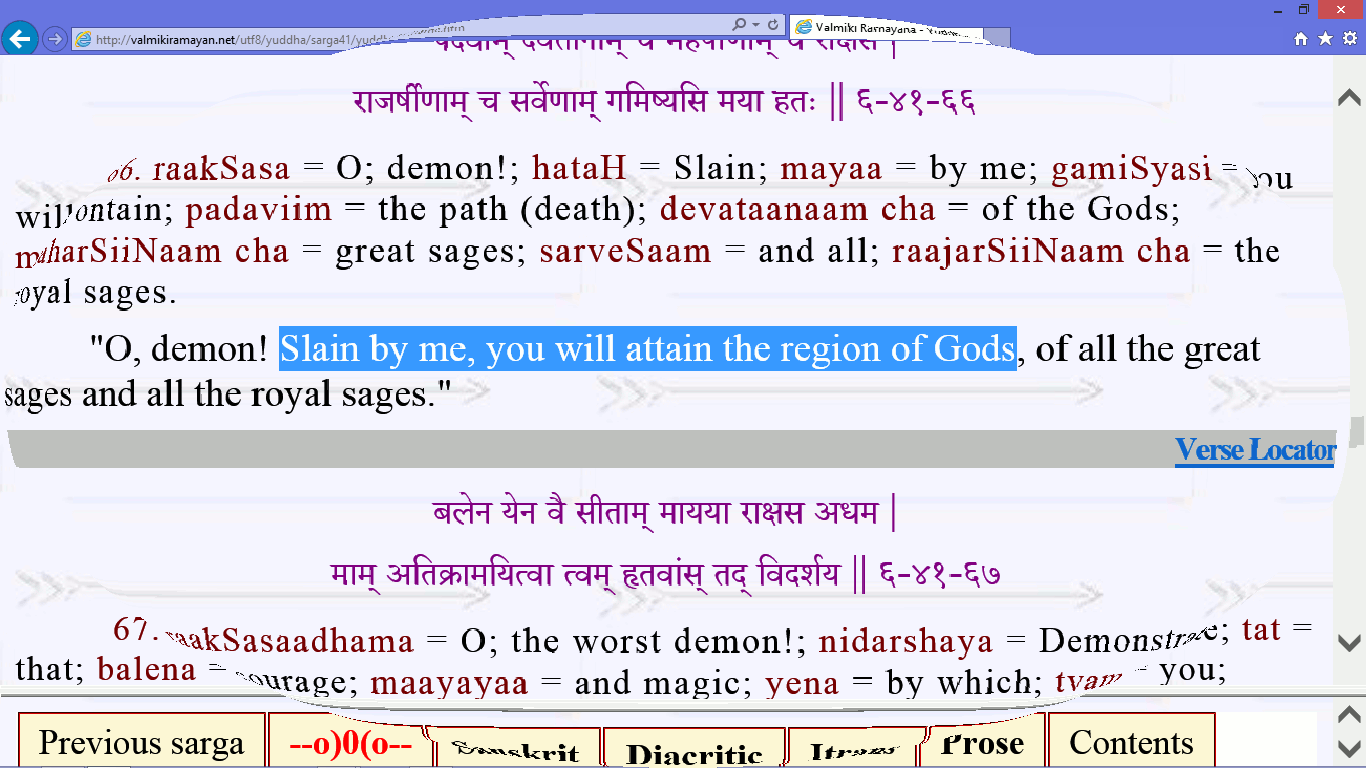
This event represents yet another warning sign by sage Valmiki. He warns us not to fight the ego /ahamkar with a soft heart (with the emotions) because it is not possible to defeat the ego/ahamkar emotionally. Although the heart, filled with lots of emotions, seems to be a worthy competitor for the ego/ahamkar, the ego/ahamkar has something more that the heart cannot beat. The ego/ahamkar 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 that an attempt to go to the higher levels of the consciousness should not be an emotional response. Spirituality should not be a knee-jerk action, without any thought in it, for that would allow the ego/ahamkar to win the war quite easily.** If we understand this warning sign, we can understand the reasons behind Shri Ram’s inactions in this event – he is not ready for the final war with the ego/ahamkar. The existence of an emotional response itself means that the stage is not yet set for the final war with the ego/ahamkar. Therefore, the consciousness has to wait 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, and those signs have nothing to do with the real 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 Ravan

In chapter 6-41, we read that Shri Ram calls Angad to deliver his final message to Ravan. In verses 6-41-61 to 6-41-73, Shri Ram sends a long and stern message to Ravan 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 Ravan is: When Shri Ram kills Ravan, Ravan will attain the heaven. We would have liked to imagine that Shri Ram told Ravan that Ravan would go to hell for eternity, but we do not see any hate in Shri Ram’s words.



URL: <http://valmikiramayan.net/utf8/yuddha/sarga41/yuddha_41_frame.htm>

Why does Shri Ram say that Ravan will go to the heaven? In general, going to the heaven is a reward, not a punishment for sure. 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.

* When the consciousness terminates the ego, it absorbs or dissolves the ego into itself. Thus, the ego/Ravan will dissolve into the consciousness/Shri Ram. At this point in the story, sage Valmiki cannot say that Shri Ram will absorb Ravan. Note that in some versions of Ramayana, when Shri Ram kills Ravan, Ravan’s soul merges into Shri Ram.
* As sage Valmiki has indicated earlier, Shri Ram is beginning to resemble Lord Vishnu/the universal consciousness. Now, we can think of Shri Ram as the universal consciousness. There are many verses indicate indirectly how Shri Ram looks and behaves like Lord Vishnu. Although Shri Ram realizing that he is Lord Vishnu happens in verse 6-117-13, he begins to appear and sound like Lord Vishnu earlier than that. We also need to keep in mind the thumb rule that says that everything, which is applicable 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 one and the same.
* 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 do understand love, but we fail to see that intense hate also brings the same results. We know that 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 Sugreev connects to Shri Ram by love, Ravan 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 Ravan.

In verse 6-41-77, Angad delivers Shri Ram’s message to Ravan verbatim. Nevertheless, Angad does omit verse 6-41-66 or anything that mentions that Ravan will go to the 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 Sugreeva 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, Rashmiketu, 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, Angad strikes Indrajit, but instead of fighting with Angad, Indrajit vanishes magically from the battlefield. However, Angad’s victory over Indrajit is short-lived as Indrajit starts using 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 are unable to 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, Hanuman, 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 that verses relate Indrajit to Indra. The name Indrajit means “one who defeated Indra.”

In verse 6-46-10, only Vibhishana, who stands for the satva 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 Sugreeva (soft heart) crying, and Vibhishana trying to console him.

Indrajit comes back in 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 alive and 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 does fall 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 have come near Shri Ram, had Shri Ram been actually dead. The meaning of this verse is that if Shri Ram were dead (when the consciousness has left the body), Pushpaka could not fly.

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.

Now, we know the logic behind these strange events – if there is no consciousness, there is no energy, and thus, there is no Pushpaka either. **When the ego releases its control over the energy and allows it go near the consciousness, the ego 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 decides to give up his life and follow Laxmana to the region of death. In verse 6-49-24, he orders Sugreeva 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 real 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 extremely 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 ego/ahamkar, 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. Mar, a representation of the ego/ahamkar, 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 the heaven.

In the context of 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 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 real nature. He omits legalese like: You will know me, if and when you win the battle, and you are in a condition to know me.”

The critical point to note here is that it not easy 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 ego/ahamkar. 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 a 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 the 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, Hanuman kills demon Dhrumraksha, whose name means “Smokey-eyed,” and opens his account of killing named demons. In verse 6-54-35, Angad kills Vajradamshtra, whose name means “Iron rust or bite,” and with this, Angad, 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, Neela 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. Sugreeva attacks Ravana right away, but falls down quickly. In verse 6-59-32, Shri Ram enters into 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. Hanuman, too fights Ravana, and he loses the fight. However, according to verse 6-59-70, Ravana does not kill Hanuman and allows him to take a rest.

In verse 6-59-90, Ravan defeats Neel. Neel falls on the ground, but gets back up to fight again. After defeating Sugreeva, Hanuman, and Neela, Ravan 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 that are hard to explain.**

Ravana has in his arsenal a powerful spear gifted to him by Lord Brahma. H 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 huge mountains earlier, he could not lift Laxmana. Conscious and almost on the verge of death, Laxmana remembers, in verse 6-59-112, that he is a fraction of Lord Vishnu.

Meanwhile, Hanuman 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 Hanuman to pick him up and take him to Shri Ram. The moment Hanuman brings Laxmana near Shri Ram, the spear comes out of Laxmana’s heart and returns to Ravan. 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 ego/ahamkar has some inbuilt capacity to make the devoted mind dysfunctional for a short period. According to sage Valmiki, we can employ two remedies in this type of situation.

* 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 was not able to do so. This event has been set up to emphasize that even though the ego/ahamkar can make the devoted mind dysfunctional, it cannot possibly kill it.
* 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.

Just as the devoted mind is a part of a higher consciousness, the ego/ahamkar is also a part and function of the higher consciousness, but it does not feel that way. Note that 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. Hanuman 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, Hanuman requests Shri Ram, in verse 6-59-125, to mount on his back.

Mounting on Lord Hanuman’s back, Shri Ram enters into battle against Ravana. Interestingly, the first arrows Ravana shoots are not aimed at Shri Ram, but at Hanuman. 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.

We have seen that all these characters represent some body-mind-energy-consciousness processes within us. If one of them dies, it affects the person unfavorably. Killing Hanuman, who stands for the Prana in the body, means that the Prana leaves the body, and thus, the person dies. Killing Sugreeva, who stands for a soft heart, means that the heart stops beating, the outcome of which is the same as that of killing of Hanuman.

Of all these warriors, Ravana, the ego/ahamkar within us, actually dies, but the stage is not set for Ravana to die yet. The higher consciousness has killed the ego/ahamkar in all previous incarnation stories or levels of the consciousness and yet, it has managed to survive. To defeat the ego/ahamkar 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 indicates that he took more risk as compared to any another warrior on the battlefield. Hanuman also has killed two demons, and he got defeated once. **However, Shri Ram has not killed any named demon 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 decides 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, without any 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 prefers to sleep for most of the time.

After receiving Ravana’s order to wake Kumbhakarna up, a large group of demons goes 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, in other words.

Just as sage Valmiki compares Indrajit with Indra, he compares Kumbhakarna with Yama, the god of death and mentions that Kumbhakarna had defeated Yama as well. 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 for only for a day. Wherever we get boons and curses in Ramayana, 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 very hungry; 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 ego/ahamkar. 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 good advice to Ravana. At the same time, 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 carefully considered 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 particularly valuable to us, because they show how good words end up being an instrument of justification of wrong actions.

In verse 6-64-6, Mahodara says that righteousness (dharma), wealth (artha) and the 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 demonstrates 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, without any 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 Eifel 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 Angad tries to raise the monkeys’ spirits. In verse 6-67-18, Hanuman 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 quite easily.

Because of his agility, little Angad manages to give a good fight to Kumbhakarna. However, in verse 6-67-50, Kumbhakarna catches Angad in his fist and throws him down; Angad falls unconscious. Sugreeva tries to stop Kumbhakarna, but does not succeed. Instead, in verse 6-67-62, Kumbhakarna tries to kill Sugreeva by his spike. Fortunately, in verse 6-67-63, Hanuman steps in and stops the spike from killing Sugreeva.

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 manages to strike Sugreeva with a mountain, making Sugreeva unconscious. So far, Sugreeva has fallen unconscious three times with no confirmed killing of any named demon to his credit. Instead of killing Sugreeva on the spot, Kumbhakarna decides to take him to Lanka first and then kill him there.

In verse 6-67-72, Kumbhakarna thinks that if he kills Sugreeva, the entire army of Shri Ram will be defeated. This logic works only if we consider Sugreeva 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, Sugreeva regains his consciousness. He escapes from Lanka and unites with Shri Ram. Sugreeva manages to cut-off Kumbhakarna’s nose, ears, and thus, Kumbhakarna looks even more frightening than before.

Let us step back a little and see Hanuman’s reaction at the time, when Kumbhakarna was carrying Sugreeva away to Lanka to kill him. Hanuman could have tried to stop Kumbhakarna from carrying unconscious Sugreeva away, but he chooses not to do so. From the verse 6-67-74 to verse 6-67-80, Hanuman decides the right course of action for him, while the enemy carries his king away. First, he thinks of killing Kumbhakarna to help Sugreeva. However, then, he thinks that it would be shameful for Sugreeva to need help. Therefore, in verse 6-67-81, he decides to wait and decides to cheer up the monkey army in the meantime. It does not appear to be logical. Just a few verses ago, Hanuman had stopped the spike hurled by Kumbhakarna toward Sugreeva. At that time, Sugreeva definitely needed help, which Hanuman 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 Sugreeva 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 Hanuman. 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 manages to give 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, with the intent to kill him. Ideally, Laxmana should have told Kumbhakarna that he could fight Shri Ram only when Laxmana was dead. It does not make 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 Sugreev and Shri Ram in harm’s way is a puzzle of Ramayan.** **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. At this point, we are unable to devote our mind, because our mind simply refuses to focus. At the same time, we are not able to spare the efforts to do Pranayama. Even if we try, it does not work. Remember that the central premise of Ramayana is the use of the devoted mind or Prana to find the energy and the consciousness. We were able to come this far by following this path, but now these two devices will 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 two practices. Be aware and leave it up to the consciousness to fight the the Tamas Guna.** For this reason, we see that Hanuman 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, as well as his army. Now, we get to know the reason Kumbhakarna wanted to go to the battle alone. Kumbhakarn 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 ego/ahamkar, Tamas Guna can be a problem for the ego’s/ahamkar’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, without any regard for a friend or a foe, the Tamas Guna too takes no sides. That is the reason we see that Ravana does not wake up Kumbhakarn 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, then, kill him when he is unable to move. In verse 6-67-132, the monkeys jump on Kumbhakarna, but they are not able to 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 arm, 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, without any 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 Kumbhakarn’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 one of Lanka’s street and that his body fell into the sea, killing many alligators and fishes.

Kumbhakarn’s head falling in the street of Lanka gives us an estimate of the respective locations of Kumbhakarna and Shri Ram in the battlefield, with respect to Lanka and the sea. Shri Ram is facing Lanka and has the sea behind him. Legless Kumbhakarn 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, handless, 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 managing to reach the sea and fall in it. We can answer this puzzle in the spiritual realm by considering Kumbhakarna as the Tamas Guna.

There is a story in Valmiki Ramayan, 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 indicates that Kumbhakarna’s body kept crawling, even after his head had been cut off, and thus, it landed in the sea. Remember the verse 6-67-162 where Kumbhakarn’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 provide a duplication as well.

## Hanuman Brings the Mountain of Herbs to Lanka

Even after Kumbhakarna’s death, Ravan still has many great 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 into the battlefield, again. In verse 6-73-27, he prepares a missile presided over by Lord Brahma, which he is going to use to kill Shri Ram. In general, 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 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 plan does not look like a good plan, because Indrajit may come near them to make sure that they are indeed dead. Luckily, however, Shri Ram’s plan works. Indrajit assumes that Shri Ram and Laxman are indeed 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. Apparently, Indrajit did not know this or did not look carefully to ensure that both Shri Ram and Laxman were dead.

Vibhishana and Hanuman search the battlefield for the rest of the monkey leadership and find most of them hurt badly. Then, they search for Jambuwant, probably by calling his name aloud. Jambavan eyes are injured, but he recognizes Vibhishana’s voice. In verse 6-74-18, Jambavan asks about Hanuman 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 Hanuman is alive, then they are all alive. Otherwise, they are dead even if alive. This critical verse underscores Hanuman’s importance as the Prana in our body.

In verse 6-74-29, Jambavan asks Lord Hanuman to go to the Himalayas to fetch four life-saving herbs. These herbs are located on a mountain between Mt. Kailasha and Mt. Rishabha. 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 joins 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 Hanuman flies toward the Himalayas with the speed of the wind, shaking the earth with a powerful sound. In verse 6-74-56, Hanuman arrives at the Himalayas, meaning he did not stop anywhere. In addition, there is no mention of 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 a hole through which one can enter into the earth and go all the way down.

In verse 6-74-61, he sees mount Rishabha, 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 from sight, preventing Hanuman from seeing them.

In verse 6-74-65, Lord Hanuman gets angry at the mountain and decides to carry the top of the mountain with herbs to Lanka. Verse 6-74-74 tells us the reason as to why Hanuman brought a whole mountain of herbs back instead of a few herbs.

Verse 6-74-69 calls Hanuman 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 like 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 heals 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 Hanuman 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 Hanuman, the first being to find mother Sita in Lanka. Hanuman 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, as we have done in all the other stories. We know that Lanka stands for the Root Center. The Himalayas, which are to the north, stand for the Sahasrara. As verse 6-74-59 mentions, Lord Hanuman saw abodes of Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva in the Himalayas; this indicates 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 Hanuman. Sage Valmiki added this magic-like event, so that Hanuman could find a justification to bring the mountain to Lanka. Let us solve this puzzle.

Verse 6-74-69 tells us that Hanuman 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 showed Arjuna his real form.

We saw that to find the dormant energy, the Prana enters the Root Center. Lord Hanuman finding Sita in Lanka depicts it. Hanuman’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 Hanuman as flying in the air, without describing any other location between the Root Center and the Sahasrara.**

The Prana’s earlier journey to the Root Center from the Heart Center is not through the Sushumna Nadi, as its access is not open yet. The Sushumna Nadi has its opening in the Root center. Once the Prana enters the Root Center, it can access the opening of Sushumna Nadi.

In general, yogis depict the energy or the Kundalini as a snake, with three and half coils, lying dormant in the Root Center. It has an opening of the Sushumna Nadi in its mouth, meaning that it blocks the access to the Sushumna Nadi. When the Prana finds the energy in the Root Center, it finds the opening of the Sushumna Nadi automatically. With a guru's grace and some luck, it can enter the Sushumna Nadi and begins to travel upwards for the first time.

It is a significant event in the body for a person, and the person is bound to 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 Hanuman jumped toward 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 bit 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 begins to descend 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 all the way down to the Root Center 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 Hanuman carried to Lanka or the Root Center. You will find several images of Lord Hanuman 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, Ravan becomes furious and calls upon Indrajit to kill Shri Ram and Laxmana. After performing a ritual sacrifice, Indrajit ascends on a chariot that can disappear.

**In verse 6-80-13, sage Valmiki says that 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 sound of the horses, chariot wheels, or the bowstring of Indrajit. Finally, Laxmana decides to employ 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 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 Vibhishan too.

By the time Shri Ram decides 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. Hanuman 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, Hanuman 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, Hanuman 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 extremely 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 must recognize that Laxmana stands for the devoted mind. Even though he is devoted, he represnts 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, Vibhishan comes to the rescue and tells everyone that Indrajit slayed an illusion of Sita, not real Sita. In verse 6-84-9, Vibhishan 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 Vibhishan say that Sita is not visible by any strategy, when though Ravan had abducted her by force?**

**In this verse, sage Valmiki changes the context, so that he is now referring to Sita as the energy. He is telling us that 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 Ravan has evil intentions toward mother Sita; so, he will not kill her.

In verse 6-84-14, Vibhishan 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 gets a chance to recharge himself. Until now, Indrajit has proved himself much stronger that anyone in the battlefield, whether fighting alone or collectively. He almost killed Shri Ram and Laxmana twice and managed to push back the monkey army singlehandedly. **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 has a chance to defeat or kill him, when his battery power is weak or dead.**

What process in body-mind is powerful enough temporarily to subdue both the consciousness and the devoted mind? The process has to be related to the ego as Indrajit is Ravan’s son. This process must be able to control the sense organs given that its name is Indrajit.

In Verse 6-84-15, Vibhishan tells Shri Ram that Indrajit was expecting interruption in his ritual sacrifice from the monkey army. In order 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, Vibhishan 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 Vibhishan, 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 charge them again. Now we can see that a simple fact works as a boon or a curse depending upon how we choose to 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 Lord Hanuman 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, Vibhishan tells Laxmana to ignore the demon army, focus on Indrajit, and deny him a chance of becoming invisible. He suggests that Hanuman and the rest of the army should be left to fight the demons, so that Laxmana can interrupt Indrajit’s ritual sacrifice. Again, in verse 6-86-34, when Indrajit is fighting Hanuman, Vibhishan tells Laxmana to fight Indrajit himself. Once again, in verse 87-6-6, Vibhishan shows Laxmana the place, where Indrajit performs the ritual sacrifice and asks him to kill Indrajit. There must be a reason behind Vibhishan repeatedly nudging Laxmana to kill Indrajit. Even before this battle, Vibhishan 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 Hanuman’s back and begins a fierce battle with Indrajit. In verse 88-6-41, Vibhishan asks Laxman to hurry up and kill Indrajit. In verse 88-6-79, seeing that Laxmana is getting tired, Vibhishan starts fighting Indrajit, but he is unable to 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 Vibhishan 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, Ravan is as good as killed, so I am victorious.”**

In these verses, he gives the credit of victory to Hanuman and Vibhishan 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, Sugreeva, and the army celebrate this victory, the celebration continuing for a long time.

Earlier in this book, we have seen that the character of Ravana represents the ego/Ahamkar. The character of Mandodari represents rationalizing intellect. Samkhya tells us that “The consciousness created the faculty of rationalizing intellect / buddhi. The ego/ahamkar and the rationalizing intellect together created the mind.”

By mere substitution of words, we get: Ravana representing the ego/Ahamkar and Mandodari representing the rationalizing intellect together gave birth to Indrajit reprenting 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 ftom Indriya, which mean sense organs.

In chapter 6-48, we saw that Indrajit was able to bind Shri Ram and Laxman with a network of serpents, which we interpreted as bad 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 Vibhishan kept insisting that Laxmana 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 we know for sure that Laxmana represents the devoted mind. With this information, we get a two-way split between the mind of an advanced yogi represented by Laxmana and Indrajit. It means that a Yogi has both, a devoted mind and the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind. The devoted mind and the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind 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. In all probability, it represents some kind of a powerful spell initiated 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 clearly 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 Hanuman and Vibhishan, easily 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 a spell initiated by the opposite-of-the-devoted-mind. He recommends waiting it out until the spell ends, and then, guided by the satva guna, to use the devoted mind and the practice of Pranayama to finish off 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.**

Ravan 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 decides to kill Sita to take revenge. Luckily, in verse 92-6-62, Suparshava, meaning “good-behind,” a good-natured minister of Ravan 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 are unable to see Shri Ram, who is hitting them, and they end up hitting each other. **Verse 93-6-23 again mentions that the demons fail to see Shri Ram, just as created beings are unable to 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 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, Sugreeva battles Virupaksha, whose name means “not-good-looking-eyes.” After a fierce battle, Sugreeva kills the demon. Thus, this demon becomes the second named demon Sugreev killed. In verse 6-97-9, Mahodara, meaning “big-belly,” enters the battlefield. Sugreeva responds again, and, in verse 6-97-33, kills Mahodara. In verse 6-98-1, Mahaparshava or “big behind,” attacks Angad, and, in verse 6-98-22, Angad 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 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 decides 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, Ravan 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 Hanuman to bring life savings herbs again. In verse 6-101-35, Lord Hanuman decides 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 ego/ahamkar.**

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 that 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 ego/ahamkar. In chapter 6-105, sage Agastya praises the Sun God as Lord Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Sage Valmiki adds this odd chapter here, so that he can duplicate its content, when Shri Ram learns about his real 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, without any 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 that 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 that our body is made up of 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 processes.** When every single fiber of us, visible or not, is filled with a higher consciousness, the ego/ahamkar has no place to hide, and can be defeated for good.

The ego/ahamkar 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, we see that 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 ego/ahamkar in a head-to-head battle.**

**We know that our ego/ahamkar is an expert in giving arguments that seem to be very logical. Thus, a head-to-head battle with the ego/ahamkar means attempting to defeat it by logical arguments. The ego/ahamkar 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 ego/ahamkar is back in full force.** Ravana having a new head reflects this phenomenon, where the ego/ahamkar 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 ego/ahamkar 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 ego/ahamkar 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 had been 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 Ravan’s death, Ravana’s soul merges into Shri Ram, indicating that the ego/ahamkar 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 Mother Sita and Shri Ram

In verse 6-112-24, Shri Ram sends Hanuman as his messenger to Sita again. Sage Valmiki dedicates chapter 6-113 to describe the discussions between Sita and Lord Hanuman. In verse 6-113-34, Hanuman requests Sita for her permission to kill all the female demons that tormented her. She refuses this permission saying that female demons did all the bad things to her on Ravana’s order and 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 him to make her 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 is well aware 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.**

In verse 6-115-21, Shri Ram tells Sita, “I won you back to restore my honor.” He then tells her that she is “free to go wherever she likes.” **In verse 6-116-15, in a befitting reply to Shri Ram, Sita reminds him that she was born out of the earth, and her father, Janak, 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 real nature”.** However, not wanting to live a life of blame from Shri Ram, she decides to enter into fire and asks Laxmana to set up a bonfire. Note that she does not enter into 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 6-117-1, along with everybody else, Shri Ram becomes very sad, and tears roll off from his eyes. He does behave like an ordinary man.

After witnessing this sad turn of these events, Lord Brahma, Shiva, Indra, and a host of other gods, decide to intervene. In verse 6-117-6, they question Shri Ram as to how he could not recognize himself as god. They ask him “why he is still behaving like a common man?” **In verse 6-117-11, Shri Ram tells them that he thinks he is a normal human being called Ram, the son of Dasharath of the city of Ayodhya. He asks them, “Since you are gods, you tell me who I am. What is my real nature?”**

In previous verses, like in verse 6-117-9, an unnamed god had told Shri Ram, “You are beyond beginning and end of creation.” However, Shri Ram ignored him. The answer to his question had to come from Lord Brahma, as he is the creator of the world. From the verse 6-117-12 to verse 6-117-33, Lord Brahma tells Shri Ram about his real nature.

* In verse 6-117-12, Lord Brahma tells Shri Ram, “You are Lord Vishnu, wielding the discus.”
* 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 end of creation. You are an essential nature of all living beings; your presence is everywhere, and you are four armed (Lord Vishnu).”
* 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.”
* In verse 6-117-16, he says, “You are the rationalizing intellect; you are the origin and dissolution of the entire creation.”
* In verse 6-117-17, he says, “You are behind the working of all senses; you offer protection and refuge to everyone.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* 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.”
* In verse 6-117-24, he says, “Brahma, the creator, is like your heart; all other gods are like mere hair on your limbs.”
* In verse 6-117-25, he says, “There is nothing in this world without you.”
* In verse 6-117-28, he says, “Sita is no other than Goddess Laxmi, and you are Lord Vishnu.”

In verse 6-118-1, the fire god appears in person, with Sita in his hand. Sita had earlier on jumped in the fire. Verse 6-118-4 tells us that mother Sita comes out of the fire in exactly the same state in which she went in. Even her flower ornaments did not burn in the fire. From verse 6-118-15, Shri Ram tells everyone that he had always known the real nature of his wife, Sita, as the primordial energy. Having known this, he had ignored her jumping in the fire, as he knew the fire could not burn fire.

* In verse 6-118-15, he says, “I know Sita, who is always in my mind, and she has undivided affection for me.”
* In verse 6-118-16, he says, “Ravana could not harm her as her own power protects Sita.”
* 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.”
* In verse 6-118-19, he says, “Sita is no different from me, just as sunlight is no different from the Sun.”

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 Sugreeva 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 Sugreeva and Vibhishana, along with his counselors, boards the Pushpaka airplane. After Shri Ram duly authorizes 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 Hanuman’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 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 Root Center 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.

Sanskrit word Sushumna is a combination of “su,” which means “gracious” and “shamna,” which means, “to extinguish the fire.” “Su” modifies “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 Root Center and never returns to the Root Center. It 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 currently 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, as 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, Sugreeva’s wife. Thus, we see that sage Valmiki is clearly indicating 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; there is no coming back to the Root Center 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 read the original documents like Hatha Yoga Pradipika or Yoga-Kundalini Upanishad and other sacred texts.

## Uttara Kanda as a Sequel to Ramayana

We will study the Uttara Kanda in this book because 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, it is certain that sage Valmiki did not write it. However, someone with knowledge and compassion comparable to that of sage Valmiki wrote major part of Uttara Kanda. Hence, it is treasured along with Valmiki Ramayana.

Valmiki Ramayan by Sage Valmiki ends when mother 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 modified it to keep it alive. In other words, if they had not altered Valmiki Ramayana, we would possibly have lost the entire Valmiki Ramayana.

There can be one more reason for the modification of Valmiki Ramayana by way of the Uttara Kanda. By the time the Uttara Kanda was written, the society in general 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 become 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 is a classic example of this trend.

We will refer to the website <http://ramayana.tigercoder.com/template.php?c=07uttara>. It has all the chapters of Uttar Kand in detail. There are 111 chapters of the Uttar Kand given on this website. Let us see what information we can find in them. Note that 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 the consciousness and Sita represens 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, we learn that 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 that he is afraid of criticism and infamy that will arise from the gossip. We are forced 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 real 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 mother 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 mentioned in couple of 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, in order to kill demons that were hiding behind sage Bhrigu’s wife, Lord Vishnu killed the demons as well as 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.

In chapter 53, we learn that 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. Shatrughn indirectly represents Shri Ram. Therefore, in a way, the story is telling us that 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 achieve 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 comes back to life. 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 ignore it.

Let us see what the word caste means in sage Valmiki’s terminology. Sage Valmiki sees Shri Ram as the the consciousness, and it is everywhere. Thus, he holds all human beings as equal, and for him, there is no caste. We saw that Valmiki Ramayana is a complex representation of the system of energy-consciousness. It tells us how to unlock the energy trapped in the Root Center by the ego/ahamkar and gives various warning signs in the process. Its stated goal is to expound upon difficult-to-understand Yoga related concepts in the Veda and make them available to the common person.

When we truly understand the scope and purpose of Valmiki Ramayana, we realize that these events are happening within us. We have mapped almost all the main characters of Valmiki Ramayana to our body-mind-energy-consciousness framework. When everything in Valmiki Ramayana is within us, where is the scope for social discrimination, like the one based on caste? We do 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 the majority of characters as non-humans. Thus, Valmiki Ramayana clearly steers away from any caste-based discrimination.

Chapters 73 to 76 of the Shambuk 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 before 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 view; we have seen that Valmiki Ramayan defines only two Yugas, and the concept of four Yugs comes from Mahabharat. In this chapter, we come to know that as a Yuga approaches the Kali Yuga, the society allows the lower castes to perform ascetic practices. In the end, this chapter tells us that 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 Root Center 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 yogasana. 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 the heaven with his body. Upon hearing these words, Shri Ram takes out his sword and cuts Shambuka’s head off. We wonder as to why Shri Ram did not give a fair trial to Shambuka or try any other alternative to avoid 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 Shambuk 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.

We know that 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 that this story cannot be true and that 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 Root Center is, we can understand him to represent some ego-driven, selfish process.

We have seen a pattern in Valmiki Ramayana, whereby the names of almost all the characters are related to some chakra. Shambuka is no exception. Since he is at the south side, he is connected to the Root Center. Let us take a closer look at this center.

A lotus with four petals symbolizes the Root Center. 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 Root Center.** We know that the source of the energy is in the Root Center. From there, the energy travels upwards to the top of the head, activating various chakras in the process. **Shambuka was doing austere penances to go to heaven, which means that 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 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, we know that it relates to an extremely advanced yogi, who is in the highest state of consciousness, but lives a normal life to perform his duties.**

**When sage Valmiki writes that Shri Ram has a duty to maintain the caste system, he means that the higher consciousness has a duty to organize the internal processes in such a way that no one process blocks or takes excessive energy, depriving other processes of it, which means that this person has a balanced personality.** Thus, we see that when Shri Ram representing the higher consciousness stops Shambuka, reptrsenting an ego-related process, the excessive energy this process blocks 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 did make an unfortunate choice of using caste-based characters, leading to misinterpretation by the future generations. When particular culture creates mythological stories, those stories are relevant to that culture alone. Without the cultural context, the stories lose their right meaning. The misinterpretation of the Shambuka story is the result of a change in the spiritual practicesof scociety from the system of energy-consciousness to that of Karma or Bhakti.

## End of a Great Life

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

While listening to the story, Shri Ram realizes that Luva 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 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 the context of the energy-consciousness framework.

We have already seen that Sita represents the universal energy. Thus, she cannot be born/created nor can she die/be destroyed. We know that 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. An interesting observation here is that 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 real nature. The lion throne represents the ferociousness of the energy.

In chapter 98, Shri Ram demands that the earth should return Sita to him; otherwise, he will destroy the earth. Lord Brahma steps in to remind Shri Ram of his real 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 persinification 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 that 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 into 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 decides to leave the earth. Bharata and Shatrughna insist on accompanying him to death. Along with them, millions of monkeys and demons accompany Shri Ram. Sugreeva 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 Hanuman to remain alive as it was decided a long time ago. Obviously, Hanuman represets Prana and hence he cannot die. Hanuman 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 Dvivida 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 a paramount one, and it offers a great puzzle. The river originates in Lake Manasa, which is believed to be in Brahm 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 that 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.

Note that even after the devoted mind – Laxmana – has gone, the consciousness is still functional in the body. Note that Laxmana had become unconscious earlier as well, but at that time, Sita was alive, so Shri Ram did not give up his life. Once Shri Ram decides to enter 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. Sugreev (soft heart), and many other related characters follow Shri Ram into the river. Hanuman (Prana), Vibhishana (Satva 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, we understand that 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.**

## AUM