## Easy to Understand 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 an obvious reference to the human body with ten faculties of knowledge. A modern day analogy could be a computer with five input ports and five output devices.

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

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

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

1. Hearing via the ears
2. Touching via the skin
3. Seeing through the eyes
4. Smelling with the nose
5. Tasting with the tongue

## Easy to Understand Character # 9: Laxmana

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

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

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

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

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

## Difficult to Understand Character # 1: Jambavan

Of all the characters of Ramayana, Jambavan the bear, is the most unusual character. He is an odd man out, as he is the only bear in the company of monkeys, humans, and demons. His introduction is rather strange. **Jambavan suddenly came forth when Lord Brahma was yawning. Note that “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 Hanumana of his true nature. Hanumana represents the Prana in our breath. Thus, we can say that Jambavan reminded Hanumana that his true nature was that of Prana.

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

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

## Difficult to Understand Character # 2: Sage Valmiki

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

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

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

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

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

When we put these pieces together – us being the children of the Energy, and sage Valmiki being our indirect guru – the puzzle of sage Valmiki’s role in Ramayana 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 guru's role. This role comes into action, only after Sita separates from Shri Ram and gives birth to his children. Hence, sage Valmiki takes up the role of the guru of Sita’s children and teaches them (and us) about Shri Ram.

## Difficult to Understand Character # 3: River Ganga

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

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

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

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

* **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 our head. So, we see that Ganga coming out of Shiva’s head.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Difficult to Understand Character # 4: Shabari

Sage Valmiki devotes the full chapter of 3-74 about Shabari. As per the story, Shabari's Guru, sage Matanga had previously left for 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 directed by her Guru with admirable devotion.

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

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

Verse 3-74-35 again mentions that she was a perfect Yogi and went to the same place – heaven, where her Guru was. Sage Valmiki describes Shabari as a devoted person who dutifully abides by her Guru's commands. **Shri Ram praises her devotion; so, we can interpret Shabari as devotion in our Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness processes.**