# Layer 2: Relationship between Characters and its Yoga Meaning

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

## Dasharatha as a Father of Shri Ram

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

## Urmila Does Not Go in Exile with Laxmana

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

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

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

## Ravana kidnaps Sita

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Hanumana Finds Sita in Lanka

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

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

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

First, Hanumana searches for Sita in the golden palace of Ravana. In these chapters, we get the description of the beauty of Ravana’s palace and the abundance of food and liquor in it. **Verse 5-9-2 mentions the dimensions of Ravana’s palace, which looks like a perfect square.** It is half a unit wide, half a unit long, and one unit prominent place made from gold. **Compare it with a yellow colored square in the image of the Muladhara Chakra.** We can see the resemblance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Hanumana Addresses Sita as Mother

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

## Ravana and Mandodari Give Birth to Indrajit

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

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

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

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

In Ramayana, Laxmana 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 a substantial difference in their nature. Their attitudes, judgments, and activities (or the absence of them), and the eventual results of their actions vary immensely.

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

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

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

Hanumana is the top ace of the battle because his total kill of named demon warriors exceeds that of the others. Everyone kills a handful of major, and countless minor demons. However, Shri Ram kills only two times, letting others fight his war. **There is nothing in the story to show that Shri Ram kills even a single minor demon in this battle, not even by mistake. It implies that for Shri Ram, Kumbhakarna, and Ravana are the only enemies worth fighting.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sage Valmiki writes verses and verses giving ancestry information of Shri Ram. He describes a very long father-son list for Shri Ram from verse 1-70-20 to 1-70-42. All we can remember is that Shri Ram’s family begins with Lord Brahma and continues up to Shri Ram. **Shri Ram stands for the higher Consciousness, so his family begins with Lord Brahma/the Universal Consciousness.** Note that Lord Brahma is the creator of the entire creation, so every family starts with Lord Brahma.

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

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