# Layer 4: Indirect References to Chakras

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

1. From our general knowledge of Yoga, we know that Chakras are associated with Energy. When Energy passes through the Chakra, it activates them. To activate a Chakra, we need a movement of Energy. We need to do Pranayama to get the movement of Energy, which will find and activate the Energy. Then, the Energy travels from Muladhara Chakra to the Sahasrara. There is unites with Consciousness. At that moment, a Yogi experiences Samadhi – a blissful state of higher Consciousness. **Valmiki Ramayana adds a different dimension to this process – descend of higher Consciousness from Sahasrara to Muladhara Chakra. While descending towards Muladhara Chakra, higher Consciousness neutralizes and calms the excessive tendencies of Chakras, which are activated because of the movement of the Energy**. It neutralizes Ahamkara and frees the Energy locked up in Muladhara Chakra. Then, the Energy and Consciousness ascend to the Sahasrara. Only then the Sahasrara is activated and Yogi experiences the Samadhi.
2. When sage Valmiki mentions with the Chakras, he mentions them indirectly – using their color, letter, vehicle, etc. He could not declare them explicitly because the story risks becoming a discourse and it hurts the storytelling. Hence, we do not get the word Chakra from sage Valmiki. However, he explains everything else about it. We need to study Chakra independently and search the way by which Ramayana uses Chakra’s properties like color, letter, vehicle etc. Please see the table below for quick reference of Chakras.
3. Chakras plays a minor role for sage Valmiki. For him, they are there, and he acknowledges them, but he is more concerned about their effects.

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

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

## Table of Chakras – Details of Chakras and Examples of Use

When the Energy is blocked at a specific point in its path in the body, it creates a Chakra. Thus, a Chakra redirects the Energy into specific parts of the body. The body parts then consume this Energy to provide specific tangible results - the emotions we feel in the mind and effect of energy on the body. For Yoga, body and mind are same. There are six main Chakras in our body. Sahasrara, which is the eventual destination of the Energy, is not a Chakra. Source of Chakra information is from website given below. I highly recommend readers to to visit this website and see the images of Chakras. <http://www.tantra-kundalini.com>

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chakra/ English Name, Location, and Focus** | **Element, Color, Organs, Sense, Bija-Mantra** | **Shape, Vehicle, and Deity** | **Examples of Use in Valmiki Ramayana** |
| Muladhara Chakra/Root Center - It is located at the base of the [spine](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 starts from sound Lam. Ravana’s palace is golden rectangle, the same shape as in the middle of symbol of Muladhara chakra. |
| Swadhisthana Chakra/ Enjoyment Center - It is located just above the Muladhara Chakra. Its focus is procreation. | Element: Water  Color: Orange  Sense Organ: Tongue  Work Organ: Genitals  Sense: Taste  Sanskrit Letter Sound: Vam | Shape: Circle  Vehicle: Crocodile (representing a surprise attack and forceful grip)  Deity: Vishnu is seated on the Garuda. | Several verses mention ocean as an abode of crocodiles, name “Surasa” translates into "good taste." |
| Manipura Chakra/ Power Center - It is located at Solar Plexus. Its focus is power. | Element: Fire  Color: Yellow  Sense Organ: Eyes  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 a mountain with a golden hue. |
| Anahata Chakra/ Heart Center - It is 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 Anahata Chakra. 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 - It is located at 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”. We see that demon Khara talks too much. |
| 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 an enormous 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 - It is located at the crown of the head. Its focus is truth and reality. |  | N/A | In verse 6-127-51, we read that Shri Ram sees thousands of citizens, appearing like lotus flowers in bloom. |

## References to Manipura, Swadhisthana, and Muladhara Chakras

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

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

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

**Events in terms of Chakra**: Hanumana represents Prana in the body. Prana is in the heart, which is Anahata Chakra. Lanka represents Muladhara Chakra. So, Prana has to jump from Anahata Chakra to Muladhara Chakra. When moment Hanumana realizes his actual nature, he grows, as mentioned in verse 5-1-11. Then he jumps towards Lanka.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The internal organs mentioned in the story surely stand for our intestines. Scratching of the intestines is a reference to the bleeding that may occur because of Pranayama.** The correct practice of Pranayama invariably involves applying a Mula-Bandha/Root Lock. We can use the root lock to direct the Apaana, Prana that works in the abdomen, upwards. In Pranayama, all we are trying to do is bring these two different Prana (Prana and Apaana) together. We force the Apaana upwards by tightening the anus and force the Prana downwards by breathing air deep into the stomach. When these two forms of Prana meet, it creates a connection that facilitates the Prana’s entry into the Muladhara Chakra. This mixing of two components of the Prana is an essential precondition for the upward movement of the Energy.

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

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

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

Here again, we learn that this female demon enjoys a boon granted by Lord Brahma, which is that when a monkey will defeat her, destruction of Lanka will follow. This boon shows us an obvious fact in terms of Body-Mind-Energy-Consciousness. **When we are successful in properly doing Pranayama, the Prana will enter the Muladhara Chakra, and the stage will be set for Ahamkara to lose ground.**

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

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

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

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

**Sage Valmiki knew the peril that may unfold when Prana enters the Muladhara Chakra. Hence, he created the character of Hanumana, who is a symbol of devotion and celibacy. The quality of devotion helps rectify imbalances at the Manipura Chakra. The quality of celibacy helps constrain desires flaming out of the Swadhisthana Chakra.**

## References to Vishuddha Chakra

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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