## 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 represents 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, 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 He is afraid of criticism and infamy that will arise from the gossip. It forces us 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 actual 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 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 a few 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, to kill demons that were hiding behind sage Bhrigu’s wife, Lord Vishnu killed both the demons and 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. This curse is an example of curtain that hides reality. Energy and Consciousness must separate, and this curse gives a nice cover for that separation.

In chapter 53, we learn 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. Shatrughna indirectly represents Shri Ram. Therefore, indirectly, the story is telling us 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 obtain 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 gets his life back. 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 overlook it.

Let us see what the word caste means in sage Valmiki’s terminology. Sage Valmiki sees Shri Ram as the Consciousness, and it is everywhere. Thus, he holds all human beings as equal, and for him, there is no caste.

When everything in Valmiki Ramayana is within us, where is the scope for social discrimination, like the one based on caste? We 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 most characters as non-humans. Thus, Valmiki Ramayana steers away from any caste-based discrimination.

Chapters 73 to 76 of the Shambuka 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 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; the concept of four Yugas comes from Mahabharata. Valmiki Ramayana defines only two Yugas. As a Yuga approaches the Kali Yuga, the society allows the lower castes to perform ascetic practices. 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 Muladhara Chakra 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 Yoga pose. 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 why Shri Ram did not give a fair trial to Shambuka or try any other alternative to avoid a 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 Shambuka 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.

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 this story cannot be true and 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 Muladhara Chakra is, we can understand him to represent some ego-driven, selfish process. Since he is at the south side, he is connected to the Muladhara Chakra. Let us inspect this Chakra.

A lotus with four petals symbolizes the Muladhara Chakra. 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 Muladhara Chakra. The source of the Energy is in the Muladhara Chakra. From there, the Energy travels upwards to the top of the head, activating various chakras in its path. Shambuka was doing austere penances to go to heaven, so 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 only bliss. In this bliss, 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, it describes to an advanced Yogi is in the highest state of Consciousness, but lives a normal life to perform his duties.**

**Sage Valmiki writes that Shri Ram has a duty to maintain the caste system. He means the higher Consciousness has a duty to organize all the internal processes in such a way that no one process blocks or takes excessive Energy, depriving other processes of it. This results in a balanced personality of a Yogi.** Thus, we see that when Shri Ram representing the higher Consciousness stops Shambuka (representing an ego-related process), the excessive blocked by this process 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 made an unfortunate choice of using caste-based characters, leading to misinterpretation by the future generations. When a particular culture creates mythological stories, those stories apply to that culture alone. Without the cultural context, the stories lose their right meaning. The misinterpretation of the Shambuka story results from a change in the spiritual practices of society from the Yoga to that of Karma or Bhakti.

## End of a Grand Life

In chapter 90 of the Uttara Kanda, Shri Ram plans to perform the Ashvamedha 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 Ramayana 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 from the context of the Energy-Consciousness framework.

We have already seen that Sita represents the Energy. Thus, she cannot be born/created nor can she die/be destroyed. 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. 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 actual nature. The lion throne represents the ferociousness of the Energy.

In chapter 98, Shri Ram demands the earth should return Sita to him; otherwise, he will destroy the earth. Lord Brahma steps in to remind Shri Ram of his actual 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 personification 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 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 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 plans to leave the earth. Bharata and Shatrughna insist on accompanying him to death. Along with them, millions of monkeys and demons accompany Shri Ram. Sugriva 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 Hanumana to remain alive as it was decided a long time ago. Obviously, Hanumana represents Prana and hence he cannot die. Hanumana 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 paramount, and it offers a great puzzle. The river originates in Lake Manasa, which is believed to be in Brahma-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 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.

Even after the devoted mind – Laxmana – has gone, the Consciousness is still functional in the body. Remember that Laxmana had become unconscious earlier, but at that time, Sita was alive, so Shri Ram did not give up his life.

Once Shri Ram plans 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. Sugriva (soft heart), and many other related characters follow Shri Ram into the river. Hanumana (Prana), Vibhishana (Sattva 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, 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.**

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